Socio-Economic Development and Violent Extremism in Morocco: Morocco's Regional Policy, Migration and (De-)Radicalization - Policy Briefs from the Region and Europe
Kabis-Kechrid, Laura Lale (Ed.)

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Socio-Economic Development and Violent Extremism in Morocco

Morocco's Regional Policy, Migration and (De-)Radicalization – Policy Briefs from the Region and Europe

Edited by Laura Lale Kabis-Kechrid

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Table of content

INTRODUCTION

Laura Lale Kabis-Kechrid

Similar to many other countries in the region, violent extremist groups and ideologies pose a significant threat to Moroccan society and the stability of the country. In response, the government has pursued a highly security-based approach, which has resulted in the arrest of over 3,000 (alleged) jihadis and the dismantling of 186 terrorist cells between 2002 and 2018. While the root causes are multi-faceted, Morocco's ongoing socio-economic challenges, which have reinforced economic and political grievances, have fueled radicalization. For this reason, some have demanded that the government prioritize greater domestic engagement instead of increasing investment in countries south of the Sahara. Over the past years, Morocco has reoriented its regional foreign policy and accelerated its economic integration with Sub-Saharan Africa. In its efforts to champion itself as a regional leader and geostrategic hub, Morocco has not only increased its economic and diplomatic ties with its southern neighbors, but has also used its new migration policy as a soft diplomacy tool.

This edited volume brings together papers written by participants in the workshop series "Promotion of Think Tank Work on Violent Extremism in Morocco as well as Morocco's Regional Policy in Sub-Sahara Africa and the MENA Region," held in Berlin in December 2018 and Rabat in March 2019. The workshop was conducted as part of DGAP's project on strengthening think tanks and similar institutions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and Europe. The authors analyze key aspects and challenges of Morocco's strategy to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE), and assess the different facets and implications of its regional policy in Sub-Sahara Africa and the MENA region. The volume offers recommendations for the Moroccan government as well as the EU and its member states.

Among the recommendations are the following: the Moroccan government should develop a more holistic approach to prevent and counter violent extremism that involves and empowers a broader range of actors. Measures should place greater emphasis on addressing the root causes of violent extremism and reintegration programs. More research should be conducted in order to better understand different drivers of radicalization and to develop tailor-made programs. In addition, religious associations and scholars should be trained to enhance their ability to

counter extremist narratives. Overall, a better coordination between the various stakeholders is considered crucial in order to synergize their activities. While the potential of women as actors in P/CVE is increasingly recognized by the Moroccan state, their involvement should be expanded to penetrate all levels of P/CVE activities rather than being confined to a gendered approach.

In addition to targeted P/CVE programs, targeted policies to support socio-economic development would be essential to tackle radicalization. In this context, Morocco's increasing economic cooperation with Sub-Saharan African countries could offer new opportunities. In order to alleviate concerns among politicians and private sector groups in some of those countries regarding the possible negative impact of Morocco's integration into the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on their domestic economies, the Moroccan government and its partner countries should engage more closely with private sector representatives.

Greater cooperation between Morocco and its southern neighbors could also benefit the EU and its member states. Expanding its cooperation with Morocco could allow the EU easier access to African markets. In addition, Morocco's "soft" security approach, which relies on the religious authority of the King and Morocco's Sufi tradition, to help Sub-Saharan African countries in the fight against extremist ideologies, could support the EU's own security efforts in the region. Hence, the EU should adjust its assistance to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) to encourage a more comprehensive "soft" security cooperation between Morocco and Sub-Saharan African countries. At the same time, the EU should ensure that safeguards are put in place to make sure that the possible authoritarian side-effects of Morocco's strategy are kept in check.

The Contributions in Short

Chapter I: Violent Extremism and Preventing/ Countering Violent Extremism Strategies in Morocco

"*Morocco's Female Islamic State Migrants – A Neglected Aspect of the Foreign Fighter Problem*": Lisa Watanabe draws attention to the fact that the drivers of female migration to the Islamic State as well as the specific challenges related to their return remain understudied. She argues that more gender-conscious research is needed to enhance understanding

of the dynamics and to develop counter-narratives, as well as de-radicalization and reintegration programs for female returnees.

"*Promoting the Agency of Women in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Morocco*": Assessing the inclusion of women in P/CVE strategies in Morocco, Clarisse Anceau advocates for granting women a more prominent role in such programs and enhancing women's agency. To this end, women in areas particularly affected by radicalization should be involved in the design and implementation of P/CVE programs. In addition, greater support should be extended to women's organizations and cooperation with these actors should be increased.

"*Morocco's Murshidat as Actors in Counter-Radicalization Policies*": Meriem El Haitami discusses the role of female religious leaders (*murshidat*) in Morocco's strategy to counter and prevent violent extremism. While she highlights the contribution of murshidats to the state's C/PVE approach, she warns against a gendered approach and emphasizes that the role of women should not only focus on prevention efforts. Rather, women should also be included in reconstruction and peacebuilding processes. Privileging the practice of independent reasoning (ijtihad) could allow murshidats to play an important role in advancing a more tolerant interpretation of Islam.

"*Official Islam's Involvement in Preventing Violent Extremism – Critical Insights from Morocco*": Salim Hmimnat analyses the role of Morocco's religious bureaucracy in the state's strategy to prevent violent extremism. He argues that the creation of an intergovernmental body could facilitate better coordination of activities between different institutions and create new synergies. In addition, providing training for religious associations and scholars as well as evaluating the impact of activities based on assessment indicators could increase the effectiveness of Morocco's PVE efforts.

"*Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism – The Role of Local Community Broadcasting*": Drawing on best practice examples of community radio programs in Morocco, Hamdi Echkaou emphasizes the importance and ability of community radio broadcasting to address social issues and positively serve communities by focusing on their particular needs. He advocates for the use of community radio broadcasting to prevent violent extremism. Such an approach would need to engender new attitudes of interaction that adapt to the nature of the topics aired and the community being targeted.

Chapter II: Morocco's Regional Policy and Implications for EU-Morocco Relations

"*Streamlining Moroccan 'Soft' Security in Sub-Saharan Africa – Inclusion is Key*": Žilvinas Švedkauskas analyses the use of Sufism and Sufi networks in Morocco's foreign policy strategy vis-à-vis Sub-Saharan Africa. He cautions that despite the international recognition for Morocco's "soft" security approach, the authoritarian side-effects of Rabat's efforts to transpose its approach southwards should not be overlooked. For this reason, the European Union and its member states should formulate a strategy that acknowledges the merits of Morocco's regional engagement, while ensuring that safeguards against authoritarian exploitation exist.

"*Rethinking the Economics of Morocco's Regional Policy*": Abdelouahed Eloufir assesses the economics of Morocco's new regional policy, which has seen a shift towards increasing engagement with Sub-Saharan African countries. According to the author, Morocco and its Sub-Saharan African partner countries should engage more proactively with private sector representatives, who have voiced concern over Morocco's integration into ECOWAS. In addition, European and African businesses could benefit from positive economic spillover effects if cooperation between Morocco and Algeria improved. Consequently, the EU and the African Union should increase efforts to mediate between the two sides and support regional economic integration.

"*Morocco's South-South Cooperation Strategies – An Advantage for Existing North-South Partnerships*": Ingrid Heidlmayr-Chegdaly argues that Morocco's growing engagement with its southern neighborhood presents an opportunity for European decision-makers. Morocco's strategic position and relations with Sub-Saharan African countries could benefit the EU's own Africa policy. Expanding cooperation with Morocco could improve the accessibility of African markets for the EU. At the same time, Morocco should use its own economic and political institutions in a more targeted way to better advance its agenda with the EU.

"*Morocco's Migration Policy at Stake – Between Foreign Policy Gains and Human Rights Costs*": Tachfine Baida analyses the new Moroccan migration policy, which was adopted in the aftermath of the Arab

Uprisings of 2011. He argues that while the policy has helped Morocco's international image, it has only had limited success in facilitating the integration of migrants at home and protecting their rights. For this reason, an adjustment of the policy is needed. This includes the introduction of measures that protect migrants from violence, the adoption of a migration and asylum law in line with human rights standards, and an increase in funds for integration and protection programs.

Chapter I: Violent Extremism and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism Strategies in Morocco

MOROCCO'S FEMALE ISLAMIC STATE MIGRANTS – A NEGLECTED ASPECT OF THE FOREIGN FIGHTER PROBLEM

Lisa Watanabe

Moroccan women were heavily represented amongst female migrants to the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq. Yet, the focus so far has tended to be on male foreign fighters from Morocco and their return. Comparatively little is understood about the motivations of women who migrated to IS-held territories in the Levant or the challenges related to their return. Gaining a better understanding of this group of IS migrants will be critical to developing effective measures aimed at preventing radicalization of women and girls in Morocco, as well as ensuring that female returnees do not contribute to bringing up the next generation of IS militants. Gender-conscious research and analysis, counter-narratives informed by female-specific drivers of radicalization, and de-radicalization and reintegration programs for female returnees are urgently needed.

Comparatively little attention has been paid to female radicalization and migration to Islamic State (IS)-held territories, perhaps because women are often not directly involved in jihadist violence, and have travelled in smaller numbers to Syria and Iraq, and beyond. Yet, female IS militants are not a homogeneous group. While many have followed their husbands and adopted supportive roles, including caring for their husbands and families, some have taken up active roles after migrating to IS-held territories, including perpetrating attacks. This risk associated with those who have had active roles will be especially elevated. However, even some of those women who have not been actively involved in attacks could play a key role in transmitting the ideology and legacy of IS to their children.[1] Female IS migrants, thus, deserve greater attention.

Moroccan women were among the five largest national cohorts of women to have travelled to Syria and Iraq.[2] Of just over 1,600 Moroccan jihadist migrants to Syria and Iraq, some 300 were women.[3] Some of these women have already returned to Morocco, while others are being detained abroad in the hope of one day returning home.[4] Moroccan authorities not only face the challenge of preventing further radicalization of women and girls, but also of minimizing the risks related to female returnees. At present, there is a gap in the knowledge about female-specific drivers of radicalization in Morocco, as well as insufficient measures aimed at preventing female radicalization and ensuring that female returnees successfully (re)integrate into society. As long as this is the case, Morocco could experience more terrorist activities perpetrated by or involving women.

Female Migrants to IS Territories

Studies have shown that in general no one profile of female migrants to IS territories in Iraq and Syria fits all. However, several factors do stand out. Female migrants have tended to be younger than their male counterparts, on average 21, compared to an average age of 25 for male jihadist migrants. Some were even teenagers. Their level of education is variable, though many have tended to have a fairly basic knowledge of Islam. Social media and the internet appear to be the principle means by which females have been recruited and radicalized.[5]

The motivations of female migrants, linked to factors that have contributed to their marginalization within society ("push factors") and those that have attracted them to IS ("pull factors"), have been shown to vary. This suggests that there is no one pathway to radicalization and violent extremism. Even so, it is possible to identify drivers that are common to many individuals. Studies of female radicalization have identified a number of such factors. These include the search for belonging and identity, the idea of the caliphate as a place where pious women are respected, the perception that the community of Muslims (*Umma*) is under threat, the desire to be part of a utopian and divine project, to live under sharia law, as well as the desire for adventure and the prospect of marriage.[6]

Although women who have travelled to IS-held territories in Iraq and Syria are often portrayed as "jihadi brides", this does not accurately capture the reality of this diverse group of women. In fact, female IS

1   Joana Cook and Gina Vale, "From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State," ICRS, 2018, p. 7.

2   Ibid., p. 22.

3   Ibid., p. 16.

4   Interview with Bahija Jamal, Public law Department, Hassan II University, Aïn Chock, Casablanca, Morocco, November 5, 2018.

5   Nabila Hamza, "Femmes djihadistes: victimes ou 'impossibles coupables'," in Fatima Sadiqi and Helmut Reifeld (eds), "Women and Resistance to Radicalisation," Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Centre ISIS pour Femmes et Développement, 2017, pp. 46-9; Cook and Vale, "From Daesh to 'Diaspora'," p. 23.

6   Cook and Vale, ibid., p. 26.

migrants have had a variety of roles. While it is true that these roles were largely limited to being wives and mothers, with responsibility for raising their children according to IS ideology, women have also been active in the recruitment of other women. In addition, they have held positions within education, media services, healthcare, moral policing, and tax collection.[7] Reports have also emerged of women taking up more operational roles, including as suicide bombers as the Caliphate fell in 2017.[8] Female migrants to IS-held territories are, thus, a heterogeneous group, whose activities and experiences differ considerably.

The Moroccan Contingent

Due to the lack of attention Moroccan female IS migrants have received so far, information regarding their profiles is sparse. At present, researchers do not have access to variables such as the geographic areas from which they hail, their social backgrounds, or their level of education, for example. Nevertheless, a number of characteristics can be discerned. Although the exact age range of female IS migrants is not public knowledge, IS recruiters in Morocco are known to have targeted young women, particularly minors.[9] They are also not believed to come from especially religious families,[10] which suggests that their level of religious education may not be very high, as is the case more generally.

In line with what is occurring elsewhere in the world, recruitment for travel to IS-held territories in Iraq and Syria has tended to take place in the private sphere, via social media and the internet, invariably by other women. Some has, nevertheless, taken place face-to-face in places such as mosques and hammams. Recruitment cells, at least in some cases, have been transnational, spanning Moroccan and Spanish territories. In 2014, transnational networks operating out of Fnideq and Sebta in northern Morocco and in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, where IS recruitment in Spain is particularly pronounced, were discovered, for instance.[11]

A clear picture of the motivations linked to push factors for female Moroccan migrants has yet to emerge. The only report that helps to shed some light on these factors is a 2014 report published by the Tetouan-based North Observatory for Human Rights. Its findings are based on surveys of a sample of thirty jihadists, of whom two were women, from areas in Northern Morocco from which many jihadist migrants to Syria and Iraq hailed. Although the report does not attempt to carry out a gender-conscious analysis, it does suggest that some push factors are common to both men and women in these areas. Almost three-quarters of those surveyed came from disadvantaged social classes, often hailing from shantytowns of Fnideq, Martil, and Tetouan. Those surveyed stated that they were not socially integrated into society, and tended to be economically marginalized, often working in the informal sector. They neither belonged to political parties nor associations, although some did partake in the February 20 Movement.[12] This indicates that socio-economic and political marginalization were major push factors, at least for females in these areas.

> *Moroccan women were among the five largest cohorts of women to travel to Syria and Iraq*

Gender-specific pull factors that have drawn females towards IS are easier to discern. Many women have been susceptible to recruitment because of the way that IS propaganda has exploited the value that many Moroccan women ascribe to traditional female gender roles, and combined this with a sense of empowerment that traveling to the Caliphate seemed to offer. The importance attached to the role of

7   James Rothwell, "Morocco Arrests Ten Female Isil Suicide Bombers Who 'Planned to Strike on Election Day'," The Telegraph, October 5, 2016.

8   "Radicalisation and Violent Extremism – Focus on Women: How Women Become Radicalised, and How to Empower Them to Prevent Radicalisation," Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate General for Internal Policies, European Parliament, 2017, p. 28.

9   "As Caliphate Crumbles, ISIS 'Turns to Female Suicide Bombers'," The Arab Weekly, December 4, 2016.

10   Moha Ennaji, "Recruitment of Foreign Male and Female Fighters to Jihad: Morocco's Multifaceted Counter-terror Strategy," International Review of Sociology (Vol. 26, Issue 3, 2016), p. 551.

11   "Moroccan Police Busts Terrorist Cell Recruiting Women to IS," www.maroc.ma, December 16, 2014; Interview with Jamal; Comment made by Mohammed Benaissa, President, North Observatory of Human Rights, at the workshop "Promotion of Think Tank Work on Violent Extremism in Morocco as well as Morocco's Regional Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa and the MENA Region," organized by DGAP-RSSI, Rabat, March 14-16, 2019.

12   Bahija Jamal, "Moroccan Counter-terrorism Policy: Case of Moroccan Female Migrants to ISIS," International Journal of Criminology, 2018, pp. 3-4; Imrane Binoual, "'What Is happening in Syria Is Not Jihad'," The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, January 24, 2015.

women in the Caliphate has also tapped into a desire for recognition and to be part of a divine project. Women are, for example, told that they will have the same status as male fighters in paradise.[13] In many instances, females followed husbands, fathers, and brothers. Patriarchal norms within Moroccan society thus also had a role in drawing some women and girls towards IS territories in Syria and Iraq.[14]

While Moroccan women in IS territories in Syria and Iraq were often wives and mothers, some worked in media operations, as well as in the all-female Al-Khansaa Brigade, which was responsible for the enforcement of morals amongst females within Syria.[15] Several Moroccan women are also believed to have been in charge of female fighters in Syria.[16]

At least in some cases, recruitment cells have been transnational

After the Caliphate

As the Caliphate began to fall in 2017, female immigrants began to try to flee, with some returning to their home countries and others becoming detained whilst trying. A good number of these women have been accompanied by children.[17] Some 52 Moroccan women have returned to Morocco.[18] A number are also known to be waiting in detention centers in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey in the hope of coming home. Morocco is obliged to accept them back, as long as their nationality can be proved.[19]

While those Moroccan women who have been engaged in terrorist-related offenses will face prosecution on their return, the vast majority would not

have been involved in fighting and will therefore go free. Although many within the latter group pose little threat to society or the state, this will not hold for all. While some would certainly have been coerced by their husbands to travel to Iraq and Syria, others would have freely chosen to do so. Indeed, one Moroccan female returnee interviewed in the media admitted that it was her idea to travel to Syria and that it was she who persuaded her husband to join IS.[20] Therefore, when assessing the risk that female returnees pose, the level of intent will be important.

Evaluating the extent to which female returnees are indoctrinated will present another challenge. While a wife or mother may not have been heavily indoctrinated, someone involved in developing propaganda or enforcing moral codes would have been. It cannot, therefore, be assumed that all female returnees will be happy to resume their previous lives. Some may wish to carry forward the cause, either by raising their children according to IS precepts and keeping alive the memory of the Caliphate or by actively engaging in recruitment or terrorist acts.

The lack of de-radicalization programs for highly-indoctrinated female returnees makes it more likely that they will get involved in terrorist-related activities on their return. The changing roles of women within IS increases the risk of this. Although IS did not initially allow women to take on operational and combat roles, when the Caliphate came under pressure in 2017, some are reported to have carried out suicide attacks in defense of IS territories. IS propaganda has also recently announced that it is the duty of women to wage jihad against its "enemies."[21]

This shift in the official IS position on female roles in the group is accompanied by an increasing amount of all-female, family cells including women, and lone women perpetrating attacks globally. A precedent already exists in Morocco. In 2016, Moroccan security forces discovered a ten-member, all-female IS cell in Rabat, whose members were suspected of planning suicide bombings in multiple locations to coincide

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13   Interview with Jamal.
14   Benaissa (see footnote 11).
15   "ISIS Brides Returning Home and Raising Next Generation of Jihadist Martyrs," National Post, November 27, 2017.
16   Interview with Jamal.
17   "ISIS Brides Returning Home."
18   Interview with Jamal.
19   Souad Mekhennet and Joby Warrick, "The Jihadist Plan to Use Women to Launch the Next Incarnation of ISIS," The Washington Post, November 26, 2017.
20   "ISIS Brides Returning Home."
21   Cook and Vale, "From Daesh to 'Diaspora'," p. 54.

with parliamentary elections held that year.[22] Four of its members had married IS fighters based in Syria and Iraq over the internet.[23]

Even female returnees who are not heavily indoctrinated will need psychological support, at the very least. Many have been through traumatic experiences. Living healthy lives and feeling part of society could prove extremely challenging. Moreover, if the conditions that pushed some women to become marginalized in society in the first place still exist when they return to Morocco, their vulnerability to recruiters will persist.

Since the 2003 Casablanca bombings, which targeted tourist and Jewish cultural sites and left 45 people dead, Morocco has done a great deal to put in place a comprehensive approach to preventing violent extremism (PVE). To some extent, gender-specific drivers of radicalization have been taken into consideration. As part of the reform of the religious sphere, a program has been established to train approximately fifty female religious councilors (*murshidat*) a year with the aim of spreading a tolerant and moderate understanding of Islam. Although their counseling largely takes place in mosques, they also go out into the community to provide spiritual guidance. Much still remains to be done to address socio-economic and political factors that contribute to the radicalization of women and girls, however.

Recommendations

- *Establish a national PVE research network, with transnational links*

More needs to be done to develop gender-conscious research and analysis that examines push and pull factors specific to women and girls in Morocco. The development of a national PVE research network should be encouraged by Moroccan authorities. The latter could facilitate the creation of such a network by providing a platform for academics and policy analysts from think tanks to connect with each other and share their research findings, as well as financial support research and meetings. Given the transnational nature of jihadi networks and recruitment, links between Moroccan PVE researchers and those within other North African and European countries should also be fostered.

- *Develop a more complete range of PVE measures aimed at women and girls*

The findings of empirically based, gender-conscious studies should be used to inform a wider array of policy interventions. So far, counter-radicalization measures in Morocco have tended to place a great deal of emphasis on reform of the religious sphere. However, the drivers of radicalization, including that of females, also include issues such as socio-economic and political marginalization. A broader set of evidence-based policies targeted at women, particularly young women, is required.

- *Extend bridges to at-risk females in marginalized communities*

Effective bridges to those at risk in marginalized communities also need to be built. The inclusion of *Murshidat* (female religious leaders) in the religious sphere is a step in the right direction. They provide a means of reaching out to women and girls who may be vulnerable to radicalization. However, those who are most at risk may not be receptive to counter-narratives sanctioned by official religious institutions. One way to address this is to boost the credibility of *Murshidat* by allowing them the freedom to encourage critical thinking. In addition, other actors who have credibility within communities where there are known to be large numbers of at-risk females should also be identified, and their potential role in preventing violent extremism explored.

- *Create online counter-narratives aimed specifically at females*

Online counter-narratives informed by an understanding of female-specific drivers will also be critical. Information and research on female radicalization in Morocco suggest that women and girls are particularly at risk from online recruitment. The Mohammedian League of Islamic scholars (*Arrabita al-Mohammadia*) has recently developed initiatives to counter online jihadi propaganda aimed especially at youth.[24] A website dedicated to female-specific counter-narratives would be a welcome addition.

22   Lydia O'Neal, "Women in ISIS: Morocco Islamic State Attack Avoided After Terror Cell Arrested For Alleged Planned Suicide Bombing," ibtimes.com, October 4, 2016.
23   Cook and Vale, "From Daesh to 'Diaspora'," p. 55.
24   Assia Bensalah Alaoui, "Morocco's Security Strategy: Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism," European Review (Vol. 16, 2017), p. 109.

- *Explore the merit of de-radicalization and re-integration programs for female returnees*

De-radicalization programs and re-integration programs for female returnees should be looked into. Such programs for men already exist within the prison system in Morocco.[25] However, most female IS migrants will not be convicted on their return. This means that de-radicalization and re-integration programs for female returnees living in the community are likely to be more appropriate. Examining "exit" programs in other countries could be a good place to start. The Netherlands, for example, has considerable experience in running exit programs, as well as community-based counter-radicalization programs for females, and could provide useful insights.[26] Psychological support for female returnees who show very low levels of indoctrination should also be made available.

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25   Mohammed Masbah, "The Limits of Morocco's Attempt to Comprehensively Counter Violent Extremism," Middle East Brief, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, No. 118, May 2018, p. 5.

26   Lorenzo Vidino, "A Preliminary Assessment of Counter-Radicalisation in The Netherlands," CTC Sentinel (Vol. 1, Issue 9, 2008); Amy-Jane Gielen, "Exit programs for Female Jihadists: A Proposal for Conducting Realistic Evaluation of the Dutch Approach, International Sociology (Vol. 33, No. 4, 2018).

PROMOTING THE AGENCY OF WOMEN IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN MOROCCO

Clarisse Anceau

Policy- and decision-makers striving to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) in Morocco have recently started to engage women in their programs. Considering women as a means to enter the private sphere, policymakers have often reduced women's role to their influence within the family. However, women have also played crucial roles beyond the scope of the household, taking the fight against violent extremism as an opportunity to transform gender norms and access the political sphere. In their efforts to include women in P/CVE programs, policymakers should give women a leading role in order to increase the efficiency of their actions as well as to promote women's agency.

In recent years, the special potential of women in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) has started to be recognized. In Morocco, various initiatives funded and designed by international organizations, governmental, and non-governmental organizations aim to support women's roles in P/CVE. These efforts have been based on different discourses and developed through various approaches.

In widespread security discourse, women are of interest to policy-makers as potential de-radicalizers and early warning systems. They are perceived to embody the role of inside mediators in families and communities, representing an entry point to the private sphere and, as such, enabling outside parties to reach individuals who are difficult to access and influence. This discourse relies on gender stereotypes such as women's emotional influence over children, relational capacities, and inherent peacefulness. As such, they are based on questionable assumptions that overlook the active role that women have taken in political violence and violent extremism as recruiters, propagators, or suicide bombers. As expressed in the OSCE's 2012 final report on "Women and Terrorist Radicalization": "a woman should not be assumed to be more or less dangerous [than men], nor more

prone to peace, dialogue, non-violence and co-operation than a man. [...] The very image of the peaceful woman has been used by terrorist groups to recruit women and to claim an innocent and non-violent character by highlighting the involvement of women in their organizations."[27]

This leads to a second problem: women's presumed relational capacities have also been used by violent extremist groups by working with them as recruitment tools. Using the same rhetoric as the groups against whom one acts seems to be inconsistent and counter-productive. In such discourse, the relevance of women in P/CVE only derives from their role in the family and their presumed qualities. Women are understood as mere subjects and the vehicles of programs, not as rights-holders and activists with complex identities operating in both public and private spheres.[28] They are engaged as a means of justifying security policies rather than as part of an endeavor that acknowledges their political agency.[29]

The multiple roles that women can play in P/CVE as policy shapers, educators, community members, and activists have already been highlighted by the OSCE report.[30] Two types of approach to further women's agency in P/CVE programs can be distinguished: accommodating approaches and transformative approaches. Agency means the capacity to act independently according to one's own will and goals, and the ability to have control over one's behavior and choices.

Assessing Accommodating Approaches in P/CVE

Accommodating approaches tend to increase women's presence and voice in community matters without requiring the transformation of social and cultural norms between men and women. Through these approaches, women are presented with the opportunity to be visible and heard in public within the constraints of their culturally and socially specific gendered identities.[31] In terms of P/CVE, this translates mostly into a type of approach that allows spaces for women to share and exchange knowledge acquired through their experiences of violent extremism, as well as receiving training in order to

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27   "Women and Terrorist Radicalization: Final Report," Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, February 2013, p. 3. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/99919?download=true> (accessed May 9, 2019).

28   F. Ní Aoláin, "Jihad, counter-terrorism and mother," Just Security, March 4, 2015, <https://www.justsecurity.org/20407/jihad-counter-terrorism-mothers/> (accessed May 9, 2019).

29   M. Satterthwaite and J. Huckerby, Gender, National Security and Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Perspectives (Abingdon, 2013), p. 50.

30   Ibid.

31   S. Dharmapuri, "UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Countering Violent Extremism: Using a Gender Perspective to Enhance Operational Effectiveness," in Naureen Chowdhury Fink et. al. (eds), A Man's World: Exploring the Role of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, The Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2016, p. 41.

deter young people, especially their children, from joining extremist groups.

In Morocco, the Rabita Mohammadia des Oulémas is a public interest foundation promoting a moderate and tolerant Islam through scientific research and public education. Its P/CVE efforts specifically involving women include capacity building for young women for awareness-raising on at-risk behaviors, as well as training mothers to detect signs of radicalization, to seek information, obtain alternative messages, and report behavior to authorities.[32] Trained women will then become educators for their peers. Creative Associates leads a US Department of State P/CVE project integrating women, although gender was not an initial focus. In Salé, the team works with mothers in marginalized neighborhoods and teaches them how to detect radicalization among youth, including girls recruited through promises of marriage. Sixty mothers and unemployed young women have been trained to detect hate speech and signs of extremism and other signs of radicalization, and to provide psychological support to relatives at risk of radicalization.[33]

Murshidat have become religious authorities and community leaders

These approaches are laudable as they provide women with psychological support, tools, and a network to face difficult situations with radicalized children. They are not purely exploitative as they try to integrate women into a network and offer them support. However, involving women in P/CVE through their mother status and maternal role presents some risks for these women as well as barriers to effective programs.

Firstly, gender inequality, including women's financial dependencies, means that women might not be willing or able to speak up when members of their family are radicalized. Mothers in particular may be tempted by their children's pledges to improve conditions for the family, resulting in the mothers "protecting" their children from community and law enforcement interventions. In such cases, women easily become passive, if not active, enablers of violent extremist ideologies.[34] Secondly, participants in a similar program have pointed out that women with less formal education struggle to recognize the warning signs, as they may perceive their children as merely becoming more religious and consider the change to be positive.[35] Besides, mothers are sometimes expected to report information to local authorities. This spying component is particularly dangerous for women as they could be viewed with suspicion or even rejected by their own community. It also creates a sense of women being "used" and "exploited" rather than being empowered to participate fully in society. Last but not least, underpinning the focus on mothers is the notion that perceived poor parenting, including the failure to provide a good religious education, correlates to radicalization of children.[36] As a result, it shifts the responsibility from the state to civil society, and in particular to mothers who are assigned blame for the potential radicalization of their children.

However, when affected women themselves initiate P/CVE efforts, the potential feeling of being "used" fades away, leaving space for agency. One example of an innovative and positive venture is the Moroccan Association of Victims of Terrorism (AMVT), created by Soad Begdouri Elkammal after losing her husband and son in the suicide attacks in Casablanca on May 16, 2003. Even when acting as a mother and wife, she has gone beyond this role by launching a P/CVE campaign in schools and using her skills as a teacher to reach poor young people and raise civil society awareness of violent extremism through public events. As such, her activism stems from her experience as a mother but extends beyond the household and maternal role itself.

32   "USAID/Morocco Gender Analysis (Final)," United States Agency for International Development, March 2018, p. 68 <https://banyanglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/USAID-Morocoo-Gender-Analysis-2018.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2019).

33   Ibid.

34   C. De Jonge Oudraat, "Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: The Role of Women and Women's Organizations," in Chowdhury Fink, A Man's World, p. 29.

35   More precisely, participants in the Women Without Borders/Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) 2010 workshop in Yemen.

36   K. Brown, "Gender and Counter-Radicalization, Women and emerging Counter-Terrorism measures" in Satterthwaite and Huckerby, Gender, National Security and Counter-Terrorism, p.36-59.

Assessing Transformative Approaches in P/CVE: The Case of the Murshidat

Transformative P/CVE efforts actively strive to question and change rigid gender norms and inequalities between men and women. For instance, such approaches can increase men's and women's critical awareness of gender roles and power relationships in the community, promote new positions for women in the society, and enable access to the same resources for men and women.[37] The training of women religious guides (*murshidat*) in Morocco is a good example of a state-sponsored program endorsing a transformative approach and promoting women's participation in the sociopolitical domain.

After the 2003 terrorist attacks in Casablanca that killed over 40 people and injured around 100, King Mohammed VI decided to restructure the religious sector and promote a moderate message of Islam in order to limit the spread of jihad ideology and contain extremist groups. Both feminist and Islamist women attempted to position themselves as appropriate agents in this crisis, activating a feminist agenda addressed to the state. While feminist groups who appropriated the discourses of modernity and democracy pushed for a reform of family law, Islamist women directed their efforts at articulating a radical demand: they wanted to be admitted to positions of religious leadership and to be recognized for their ability to lecture in state-controlled mosques.[38]

More specifically, women activists of Islamist political movements[39] redefined motherhood according to the Koranic concept of *wassat*, which characterizes Muslims as the people of the middle way, meaning that they occupy both a median location and a moderate position. This term enabled Islamist women to articulate new identities around an imagined motherhood, linked to women's role as mediators. As the term "moderation" was used by the Moroccan government to justify reforming the religious field and controlling the discourse of the mosque, Islamist women's appropriation of this term provided them with negotiating power in dealing with the Moroc-

can state in order to obtain official recognition as full players on the religious and political scene.[40]

When affected women launch P/CVE efforts, the feeling of being "used" fades away

By receiving a solid education in religious and social disciplines, the *murshidat* of this program have been able to become religious authorities and community leaders, working at prisons, hospitals, orphanages, schools, and nursing homes. This program has placed women in leadership positions and increased the number of female imams from 50 to 500 between 2005 and 2014.[41] According to Meriem El Haitami, "the deployment of women into the religious field implies a redefinition of religious spaces, such as mosques and religious councils, which have long been male-dominated centers of Islamic authority."[42] This shift from predominantly private forms of religiosity to a legitimated public expression challenges the commonly held assumption that male official religious authority is more legitimate.[43]

The *murshidat* program has been viewed not only as a success in the fight against terrorism, but also as a way to transform the status of women by giving them non-traditional roles. Women themselves were able to use gender stereotypes in order to access spaces they could not access beforehand and redefine gender norms. Although this program is initiated and supported by the state, women are not passive beneficiaries. It is rather their activism in revising the Islamic sharia and reforming the Islamist movements that allowed them to obtain a leading role in P/CVE.

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37   Dharmapuri, "UN Security Council Resolution 1325," p. 43.

38   Z. Salime, "The War on Terrorism: Appropriation and Subversion by Moroccan Women," in K. Alexander and M. Hawkesworth (eds), War & Terror. Feminist Perspectives (Chicago, 2008), p. 431.

39   I refer here to interviews conducted by Zakia Salime with women activists of two Islamist political movements "al-Adl w-al-Ihsane" and "a-Adala w-al-Tanmia." Ibid., p. 431.

40   Ibid.

41   "A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism. Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco," Foreign Policy at Brookings, July 2014, p. 43 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Women-CVE-Formatted-72914-Couture-FINAL2.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2019).

42   M. El Haitami, "Restructuring Female Religious Authority: State-Sponsored Women Religious Guide (Murshidat) and Scholars ('Alimat) in Contemporary Morocco," Mediterranean Studies (No. 2, 2012), p. 228.

43   Ibid., p. 230.

Despite these perceived successes, the program is not premised on strict equality between sexes. *Murshidat* do not receive as rigorous a training in the Koran as men, and are prohibited from leading prayers and giving sermons. Nor do they receive exactly the same teaching content as men, and are excluded from courses on leadership, for instance. Rather, the program seems premised on the essentialist assumption that women will offer something different from what men offer to Islam. It is widely understood that the increased emphasis on femininity, specifically on women as emotional, sentimental, and motherly, will cultivate positive images of the Islamic faith and in return decrease invalid beliefs affiliated with radical and extremist tendencies. The risk is then to leave gender dualisms – that is, the fixed categorization of what constitutes a "man" and what constitutes a "woman" – intact inside the public sphere where men have intellectual rigor, while women are sentimental.

The ability of the *murshidat* to freely use the space they have acquired and to share their own interpretation of the Koran is limited in practice. Depending on the audience they are addressing, they more or less have freedom to spread their own thoughts and thus have a personal influence. Moreover, when speaking in mosques, the *murshidat* are limited to voicing the state's religious discourse, especially with regard to the identity of women. This creates a risk that the gendered pattern will be strengthened within an institutionalized framework through the voices of women having a non-transformative discourse on gender roles.

Combining Both Approaches

These two types of approach suit women of varying socio-economic backgrounds. One should not be weighed against another but used in parallel, depending on the target groups. Because transformative approaches might require participants to be personally strongly invested in the project, it can be difficult for many women to implement it. That is why accommodating approaches are also to be encouraged when designed in a way that take women's needs and concerns into account.

For both approaches, the critical point is to include women as agents, not subjects. The more they are involved at every step of the strategies against violent extremism, the higher the degree of their inclusion. High inclusion of women is crucial for the success of the program, as it would avoid the aforementioned risks for women and increase the success of P/CVE programs.

Recommendations

- *Private foundations and other international donors willing to provide funds for P/CVE efforts in Morocco should support women's own initiatives*

Women and women's organizations should be encouraged and supported with funding when they themselves initiate efforts in P/CVE. Even if the approach developed is an accommodating one, supporting those women can have a transformative effect as they will become role models to their communities.

- *Project designers and managers in international and Moroccan organizations or NGOs should involve affected women in the design and implementation of their P/CVE programs*

In order to ensure that programs do no harm, women living in areas specifically affected by radicalization should be engaged in all decision-making processes to design and implement P/CVE programs. Performing such a contextual analysis of gender dynamics on the ground prior to designing programs or writing policy would enable a better understanding of the environment in which they operate. Women targeted by the program would thus be able to assess the risks such programs can represent for themselves. They should be involved not only through consultation but also in hiring women to draft and drive the projects. It would further encourage women's agency, as they will not be the subjects of state and organizational programs but the actors of such programs. In a project proposal, their activism and capacity to shape policy should be highlighted instead of describing them in need of action.

- *International and Moroccan organizations dealing with P/CVE should coordinate their actions and cooperate with national and local women's organizations, such as l'Union Nationale des Femmes du Maroc (UNFM) and l'Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF)*

When organizations negotiate the design and implementation of P/CVE programs with the state, women's organizations should be integrated into negotiations. Cooperation with women's organizations would enable women's concerns and claims to be voiced, and programs to be better tailored in

order to address these concerns. This would also improve coordination with efforts that have already been deployed to change gender norms.

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MOROCCO'S MURSHIDAT AS ACTORS IN COUNTER-RADICALIZATION POLICIES

Meriem El Haitami

Morocco's innovative counter-radicalization policies in the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca terrorist attacks were particularly marked by the training of female religious leaders (murshidat) to promote moderate values based on the practice of Maliki-Sufi Islam. Morocco's deployment of women as active players in preserving the country's "spiritual security" highlights the role of organized women's agency in addressing the socio-economic needs of at-risk members of society. That said, women are still relegated to caregiving roles as mothers, sisters, and wives who are well positioned to identify early signs of radicalization, which produces a gendered approach to Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism (P/CVE) programs. Effective counter-radicalization efforts should include women in processes of reconstruction and peacebuilding and not limit their roles to preventing radicalization. Privileging the practice of independent reasoning (ijtihad) to counterbalance monolithic or extremist interpretations of religious texts is also critically important.

Morocco's major challenge over the past decade has been to conceptualize ways to counter the rise of religious extremism by launching religious reforms and promoting moderate mainstream Islam to maintain political and social cohesion and strengthen the country's "spiritual security." The concept of "spiritual security" emerged in the context of the 2003 terrorist attacks which took place in Casablanca. The tragic magnitude of the event prompted Moroccan authorities to reconsider the state's religious policy and promote moderate values based on the practice of the legal Maliki school of thought and Sufi-inspired values to establish religious homogeneity and thus maintain a "kind of 'Moroccan moral order.'"[44] As a result, Morocco has placed countering violent extremism (CVE) at the top of its policy priorities both domestically and transnationally, and its efforts have gone widely acknowledged.

Morocco's commitment to counter-radicalization efforts was marked by a range of initiatives that include the training of male imams and female *murshidat* (female religious leaders); reforming religious structures and monitoring places of worship; estab-

lishing a religious council in Europe for Moroccans residing abroad; and launching radio and television channels to promote moderate teachings. According to the Minister of Islamic Affairs, Ahmed Taoufiq, the main purpose of the imam and *murshidat* training program is to spread a tolerant and moderate message of Islam in order to curb all emerging forms of extremism. Taoufiq further highlights that the relevance of the work of the imams and *murshidat* lies in preventing the intrusion of foreign agents who try to violate Morocco's tolerant values and traditions.[45]

Further, the country continues to make headways in its strategy to promote religious tolerance. The re-evaluation of religious education curricula and textbooks to introduce values consistent with the state's vision of tolerant Islam is a major component of Morocco's strategy to counter religious extremism. The conference on the rights of minorities in the Islamic world held in Marrakesh in January 2016 reiterated the state's message of religious tolerance and represented a particularly significant milestone in the conversation on minority rights in Muslim-majority countries, highlighting the country's promising movement toward promoting a more inclusive national identity.

The Murshidat as Providers of Spiritual Security

The mainstreaming of a gendered approach to Morocco's counter-radicalization strategy is particularly compelling. State-sponsored women's religious activism emerged as a byproduct of the state's endeavor to control and monitor the religious field and was marked by the deployment of *murshidat*, who offer religious teachings and counseling in mosques and other institutions including schools, hospitals, and prisons.

One hundred *murshidat* graduate every year after completing a 12-month training program during which they take a variety of courses, with the main focus on religious training. The *murshidat* are appointed in different mosques across the country in both urban and rural settings. Their mosque-based activities include structured classes addressing specific religious disciplines based on the Maliki-Sufi interpretation and attracting regular attendees. Religious instruction is oftentimes complemented by literacy classes. Another element of the *murshidats'* work incorporates the education of women and youth in a range of social venues. According to a

44   Driss Maghraoui, "The Strengths and Limits of Religious Reforms in Morocco," Mediterranean Politics, Vol. 14, No. 2, July 2009, pp. 195–211 (p. 197).

45   "Morocco Women Preachers Appointed," BBC World News, May 4, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4971792.stm> (accessed May 15, 2019).

number of religious functionaries, the program was groundbreaking for its modernization of the religious sphere in Morocco and its impact on society at large.

The relevance of the *murshidat*'s work lies in their proximity to women and youth's concerns through a number of activities, such as mobilizing members of the community to arrange visits to places such as schools, hospitals, and youth centers with the purpose of constructive exchange. According to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, "more than 500 *murshidat* have graduated since 2006, which means a squad of educated women who invest great effort in countering extremism."[46] The *murshidat*'s "official" role impacts their ability to contribute to de-radicalization, by educating women and providing a safe and productive avenue for women and youths and therefore deter potential catalysts towards radicalization. Their newfound role in the fight against extremism enables them to have a significant impact and alters structures of religious authority. They are increasingly appropriating such religious spaces as mosques and religious councils, and attracting a broad female following.

In addition to their work with women and youths in mosques and social venues, the *murshidats* also work in the prison system with female inmates. Their work includes offering religious and literacy classes, offering awareness of social, religious, cultural, and health issues, as well as providing emotional and social support to prison inmates and monitoring them to encourage their re-inclusion in society. According to Hanane Dahi, a *murshida* who works with prison inmates, the focus should be on "integrating these women into society and give them jobs and an education (…) they do not have a source of income and their communities and families do not necessarily welcome them back."[47] Another *murshida*, Khadija Aktami, believes that the *murshidat*'s major challenge is to change the way society perceives prison inmates: "one main challenge is to make the situation of women in prison a social concern and create structures that support these women until they're able to be financially independent".[48]

The *murshidat*'s work therefore suggests significant shifts in the social order. Through their ability to offer social services and reach out to communities at risk, they define a new model of activism, which has become a key component of Morocco's CVE program.

The Murshidat as CVE Actors: Promises and Limitations

Since their recruitment, the *murshidat* have significantly contributed to disseminating the state's vision of moderate mainstream Islam as a counterweight to extremist ideology. The state vision of Islam acknowledges the importance of mainstreaming women in CVE programs. That said, the *murshidats*' work remains confined to traditional roles as "caregivers"[49] who are "well-positioned" to identify and prevent possible catalysts, and target women as agents of peace and contributors to deradicalization among their immediate communities: "women in the role of 'mothers' can act as ambassadors of constructive change with their children by teaching (and modeling) moderation, tolerance, and acceptance."[50] The latter assumes that women are inherent allies to CVE, due to their conventional ties as wives or mothers to radicalized men: "when women are considered to be potential violent extremists themselves, the rhetoric often emphasizes the grooming and emotional instability that leads to such radicalization."[51]

State-sponsored women's religious activism was marked by the deployment of murshidat

However, the assumption that women are peaceful allies neglects the narratives of radicalized women as active actors and perpetrators within radicalized circles, as well as the diversity of their motivation,

46   "Murshidat Diniyyat Yuharibna Tatarruf," Alaraby, May 26, 2016<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/society/2016/5/23/-مرشدات-دينيات-يحاربن-التطرف-في-المغرب-1 (accessed May 15, 2019).

47   Author interview with Dahi Hanane, March 2012.

48   Author interview with Aktami Khadija, March 2012.

49   Krista London-Couture, "A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco," Foreign Policy at Brookings, July 2014, p. 11.

50   Ibid.

51   Ibid.

which "ranges from a quest for belonging, the aspiration to help build a utopian Islamic state, to belong to something bigger and divine and a (perceived) moral duty to support their Muslim brothers and sisters, to a sense of adventure, the prospect of marriage, or a combination thereof."[52]

Youth's disenchantment with monitored discourses limits the murshidats' impact

In 2017, Morocco initiated a pilot program called "Musalaha," geared towards Jihadi-Salafi prisoners. The program aims at promoting dialogue and reconciliation based on three components: psychological rehabilitation, reintegration in society, and reconciliation with moderate interpretations of religious texts.[53] That said, the Musalaha program lacks a gender-sensitive approach. Women represent five percent of prisoners convicted of terror charges,[54] however, they are not included in reconciliation initiatives. Further, the *murshidat* are not included in mentoring and vocational training processes, which points to how terrorism and counter-terrorism remain a male domain. According to the US State Department, "historically, girls and women have not been viewed as a terrorist problem or solution, so are not looked at through a counterterrorism lens (...) women represent an enormously under-utilized resource in the struggle against violent extremism."[55] The underrepresentation of the *murshidat* in processes of counter-radicalization and de-radicalization represents a major limitation to contributing to sustainable deradicalization and rehabilitation processes.

Other factors that limit the *murshidat's* impact on the larger community include increasing youth dis-

enchantment with monitored religious discourse and the dominant political ideologies; other platforms have emerged as alternative sources of knowledge and practice, creating multiple forms of religiosity. Morocco is witnessing mixtures of traditional practices and norms with novel religious interpretations and sets of values that result from dynamic cultural processes as well as hybridized local and global influences. Technology plays a particularly important role in constructing collective and individual identities. It provides easier access to religious scholarship beyond the authority of local preachers, and gives a voice to young Muslims who have become more engaged in criticizing the religious establishment and creating their own interpretations. Dale Eickelman notes that access to new technologies has multiplied the channels through which ideas and information can be circulated: "It has eroded the ability of authorities to censor and repress, to project an uncontested 'central' message defining political and religious issues for large numbers of people... Censors may still restrict what is said in the mainstream press and broadcast media, but these media have lost the exclusivity they once had. Mass education and the availability of alternative media have irrevocably altered how 'authoritative' discourse is read and heard."[56]

The *murshidats'* work is instrumental in maintaining social and political order and addressing the needs of struggling youth. The latter however raises questions about the impact they can have in accounting for the increasingly diverse public space by stretching the limits of state-promoted or traditional interpretations of Islam. The homogenization of religious expression through the construction of a "Moroccan Islam" limits the potential for a diverse public space and interpretive diversity, although the country claims to make headways in its strategy to promote religious tolerance. The promise of progressive *ijtihad* (the practice of independent reasoning) that underpins religious reform remains thus highly questionable, since the official religious establishment has full control over its process and execution. The discursive construction of Morocco's religio-political space therefore demonstrates how women are expected to promote propriety and systemic change

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52   Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, "Radicalization and Violent Extremism-Focus on Women: How women become radicalized, and how to empower them to prevent radicalization," Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs, December 2017, p. 9.

53   CSIS Headquarters, "Security in the Maghreb: Identifying Threats, Assessing Strategies, and Defining Success," December 4, 2017 <https://www.csis.org/events/security-maghreb-identifying-threats-assessing-strategies-and-defining-success> (accessed May 15, 2019).

54   "almaghreb : al-Irhab Taraja' wa Nisa' La'ibna Dawran Kabiran Fi Tajnid Chabab," Al 'Alam Al 'Arabi, July 1, 2018 <https://arabic.sputniknews.com/arab_world/201807011033459433-لشباب-تجنيد-في-كبيرا-دورا-لعبن-النساء-ابا-ارهاب-المغرب > (accessed May 15, 2019).

55   London-Couture, "A Gendered Approach," p. 10.

56   Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson (eds), New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere (Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 33.

as opposed to anti-systemic change. The latter gender-specific challenges reveal a lack of a comprehensive gender-sensitive strategy.

Recommendations

- *Prioritize progressive ijtihad*

The *murshidat*, as well as other religious actors, can play an important role in advancing a more tolerant interpretation of Islam if more independent exercise of theological knowledge is encouraged, especially given that they have better access to different social categories and social institutions due to their official status.

- *Foster greater inclusion of women in counter-terrorism and peacebuilding processes*

The emergence and expansion of state-based female religious action is a product of the state's hegemony over the public sphere, which reveals an intricate interplay between the politics of religion, gender, and the rhetoric of political liberalization in Morocco. Therefore, although women are afforded expanded space in structures of institutionalized Islam, they still negotiate their marginality in the masculinized "national security processes." State-sponsored religious actors can serve as key partners and collaborators, by engaging women and developing necessary training to ensure more effective partnerships and more inclusive security processes, as well as greater involvement in the different stages of CVE process, in which women are still significantly underrepresented.

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OFFICIAL ISLAM'S INVOLVEMENT IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM – CRITICAL INSIGHTS FROM MOROCCO

Salim Hmimnat

The Moroccan experience presents a typical case of how religion is intensively incorporated into a multi-pronged strategy to combat violent extremism. Morocco's religion-based Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) strategy lies in its reliance on a well-structured religious bureaucracy that functions in line with a politically-oriented, inclusive vision using persuasive, sophisticated tools, and which supposedly operates in tandem the other socio-economic and security aspects that comprise the total national PVE strategy. Nevertheless, this religion-based strategy suffers from several challenges and deficiencies, including the ideological vision framing it, its instrumentalization to serve certain political interests, and the uncertain efficacy and effectiveness of its modes of functioning, outreach, and scope of action. In order to improve coordination between the different institutions involved in Morocco's PVE strategy, an intergovernmental body should be created that can synergize their fragmented activities. In addition, state-run religious institutions should develop indicators to assess the impact of their activities. Finally, religious associations and scholars should be involved and provided with appropriate training to effectively contribute to Morocco's PVE efforts.

Morocco presents a significant case study of how religion can be incorporated as a crucial component in a multidimensional strategy for preventing violent extremism (PVE). The significance of religion lies not only in sustaining the effectiveness of the country's PVE strategy in the medium- and long-term, but also in transforming Morocco's experience, accumulated over the preceding 15 years, into a marketing tool for promoting the Kingdom's image as a key leader in regional counter-terrorism efforts. The increasing interest by African and European countries to engage extensively with Morocco in bilateral cooperation on

religious matters[57] is a perfect indicator of the growing visibility and significance of this experience.

Leaving aside this questionable "success story," an examination of the Moroccan PVE experience in the light of factual and empirical evidence raises an interesting paradox: the Moroccan state tends to publicize its national PVE strategy as a "unique," "pioneering" model in tackling the ideological sources of extremism. This official discourse offers as evidence the fact that the country witnesses the least number of terrorist attacks compared to its neighbors. However, it is surprising to observe, first, the growing proportion of Moroccan fighters reportedly involved in international terrorist groups operating in the Middle East[58] and Europe. Second, the rise of recidivism among former extremist detainees is estimated at 225 cases.[59] Third is the growing number of terrorist cells dismantled by the Moroccan security authorities. According to the latest figures published by the Central Bureau of Judiciary Investigations (BCIJ),[60] 187 terrorist cells planning terrorist actions in the Kingdom were dismantled in the period between 2002 until January 2019, and more than 3,202 people were arrested.

The figures recorded above can be interpreted in two different ways. At first glance, they indicate the Moroccan security services' high vigilance and professional capacities in dealing proactively with terrorist plots. The same figures, in contrast, can be seen problematic in the sense they cast doubt on the official narrative of Morocco's "pioneering, unique model" in combating terrorism in the region. The recent terrorist murder of two Scandinavian tourists in Morocco's Atlas Mountains on December 12, 2018, only exacerbated the very problem it purports to address: the Kingdom provides a fertile "terror hotbed" for homegrown violent extremism that threatens security and also supplies transnational terrorist groups with potential foreign fighters. The four Moroccan suspects involved in the double murder were reportedly steeped in extremist ideology, "acting alone," while having pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS).[61] The BCIJ chief, Abdelhak Khiam,

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57   For a detailed account of Moroccan African cooperation on religious matters, see S. Hmimnat, "'Spiritual security' as a (meta-)political strategy to compete over regional leadership: formation of Morocco's transnational religious policy towards Africa," The Journal of North African Studies November 21, 2018, DOI: <10.1080/13629387.2018.1544073>.

58   According to the US State Department's 2017 Country Reports on Terrorism (September 2018, p. 148), the number of returned Moroccan Jihadi fighters form "Jihad lands" is estimated at 1,660 <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/283100.pdf> (accessed May 15, 2019).

59   Ibid.

60   L'observateur, 11-17 January, 2019, p. 17.

61   "Morocco: suspects in tourists' killing were 'acting alone'," Aljazeera, December 24, 2018 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/12/morocco-suspects-tourists-killing-acting-181224075720902.html> (accessed May 15, 2019).

has revealed that three of the 22 suspects brought before the judge overseeing terrorism cases were identified as already having "a court record linked to terrorist acts."[62] Abdessamad al-Jud, the emir of the terrorist "Imlil Cell," was arrested in 2014 for trying to recruit Moroccan fighters for Syrian jihadi groups, then brought to justice and sentenced to three years in prison before being released in 2015.[63]

Contextualizing Moroccan Religion-Based PVE

The 2003 Casablanca terrorist attacks, known as the "Moroccan 9/11", were a critical turning point in the history of contemporary Morocco. The attacks generated a feeling of uncertainty and anxiety about the existence of a home-grown form of religious extremism that threatens the country's security and stability. The attacks further undermined the official narrative of "Moroccan exceptionalism," which is used to represent the kingdom as an "oasis of stability" and a symbol of coexistence and tolerance, thus deeming the country immune to such religious fanaticism. In this uncertain context, religion has been shifted from a source of legitimization to an object of securitization.[64]

Shocked by these terrorist attacks, Moroccan authorities primarily reacted through undertaking coercive measures including mass arrests of nearly 2,000 suspected Salafi extremists and the endorsement of anti-terror and anti–money-laundering legislation. Other repressive measures were taken with a view to enhancing intelligence-gathering and internal security governance, which culminated in the creation of the Central Bureau of Judiciary Investigations in 2015, branded as the "Moroccan FBI." Seemingly aware of the limitations of relying excessively on a purely security-based strategy, a multi-pronged counterterrorism strategy has been developed since 2004, intended to address the breeding grounds of growing radicalization, especially among the younger generation. In addition to the security component, this encompasses the initiation of social and human development programs (INDH) to tackle poverty and other socio-economic vulnerabilities and the promotion of social inclusion of deprived people and groups. It also includes deep reforms in the religious field, with the goal of curbing the extremist doctrines

and ideologies associated with Wahabism or Salafi Jihadism.

The Key Contents of Moroccan Religion-Based PVE (MRPVE)

MRPVE stems from the state's vision of the necessity to strengthen the Commandership of the Faithful's religious legitimacy and preserve the country's spiritual identity. In the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca attacks, enormous efforts were made to reshape the official version of Islam, to strengthen the religious bureaucracy's central role, and to extend its reach in firm compliance with official directions. This vision aims, inter alia, to enable the state to assume its responsibility as a key player in "Islamization from above," safeguard "spiritual security," and immunize Morocco's religious constants (*al-thawabit*) against all "threatening" opponents, including Islamist movements, Salafists (quietist and jihadist), Shiites, and Christian proselytizing missionaries.[65]

Three major official religious institutions are engaged in carrying out this vision: the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, the *Ulama* Councils, and the Mohammadian Rabita of Religious Scholars. Such an engagement is supposed to proceed, theoretically speaking, with a sort of collaborative coordination and horizontal "division of labor" among these institutions while respecting their particular roles.

Overall, the efforts and initiatives undertaken by these institutions can be summarized into three main areas. First is the intensive religious supervision of society in compliance with the doctrinal choices of "Moroccan Islam" (Maliki jurisprudence, Ash'ari doctrine, and Sunni Sufism) and its specificities marked by tolerance and moderation. Following a proximity-based approach, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs oversees religious supervision and provides religious services and adequate equipment so that people practice their faith in appropriate conditions. The Ministry also makes every effort to place mosques and preaching sites under tight control of state authorities.

The second area is the monopolization of entry and credentials to acquire religious authority – speaking in the name of Islam – via the regulation of institu-

62   "Moroccan Interior Minister: The killing of the tourists is not related to a large terrorist organization, but to individuals who are steeped in extremist ideology," [in Arabic] Al Quds, December 26, 2018 (accessed ‹وزير الداخلي- اة-للعمّ برـيضق-ةمقـت اللـسائ›https://www.alquds.co.uk/ 2019). 15, May

63   Abdelhak Khiame, "On a évité le pire," interview with L'Observateur, January 11-17, 2019, p. 14-17.

64   M. Tozy, "Des oulémas frondeurs à la bureaucratie du "croire": les péripéties d'une restructuration annoncée du champ religieux au Maroc," in B. Hibou (ed.), La Bureaucratisation néolibérale (Paris, 2013), p. 132.

65   D. Maghraoui, "The Strengths and Limits of Religious Reforms in Morocco," Mediterranean Politics 14:2 (2009), pp. 195-211.

tional channels used to transmit religious knowledge and normative values in society. This includes the institutionalization of the issuance of fatwa, the training of a new generation of imams and female guides (*Murshidat*), and the upgrading and revision of religious programs and curricula in traditional education and public schools.[66]

After 2003, efforts were made to reshape the official version of Islam

Third is the involvement, even belatedly, in de-radicalization and immunization efforts, through an intellectual engagement with the rhetoric and ideologies of violent extremism and the promotion of moderate Islam in academia, the media, and online. The Mohammedian Rabita of Moroccan Ulema (Arrabita) has made a distinguished contribution in this regard, by targeting areas commonly deemed the "front-lines" and that are the most vulnerable to violent extremism. Arrabita adopts a two-pronged approach: the first focuses in general on elaborating "safe" religious contents, while the second produces counter-extremism narratives aimed at dismantling the core foundations underpinning jihadist ideologies[67] and helping to "immunize" society against the rhetoric of violent extremism. To distinguish itself from other religious institutions, Arrabita's discourse frequently uses the term "immunization" (*al-tamni'*) instead of "prevention" (*al-tahsine*). "Immunization" is essentially a much more efficient and sustainable approach than "prevention."[68] The former term refers to the act of individuals acquiring an internal resilience against all forms of threats, while the latter is confined to defensive protection by means of precautionary measures.

The *Barnamaj Musalaha* (Reconciliation Program), initially launched in May 2017 in partnership between the General Delegation for Prison Administration and Reintegration (DGAPR), Arrabita, and the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH), remains thus far the most prominent example in the field of de-radicalization and rehabilitation. The Mussalaha Program aims at reconciling convicted jihadists with the "Self," "with the religious text," and "with society."[69] It covers four areas. The first concerns the religious aspect intended to assure a "good understanding" and "assimilation" of the sacred texts. The second axis, related to human rights, aims at informing participants about the legal framework governing interactions within society and about their rights and obligations. The third axis concerns provision of rehabilitation and psychological support. The fourth axis focuses mainly on socio-economic rehabilitation. The purpose of the program is to facilitate "the full, effective reintegration of extremist prisoners into society." [70]

In addition to Mussalaha, Arrabita has launched other immunization and rehabilitation programs to "vaccinate" teenagers and youths, empower vulnerable groups, and rehabilitate prisoners in the realm of public rights. They use innovative approaches such as peer-to-peer education and competency building methods, including educational support and spiritual counselling in prisons, sensitization campaigns and capacity building trainings in schools and fragile neighborhoods. Digital interactive platforms and intervention in the virtual media sphere are also part of the program.[71] The aim is to deconstruct misleading and extremist speeches broadcast on the internet and social media through producing an "alternative content based on the values and constants of the Moroccan nation."[72]

Moroccan Religion-based PVE Strategy: A Primary Assessment

Due to the overlapping aspects of the holistic, comprehensive Moroccan counterterrorism strategy, it is difficult to assess accurately the porous lines between the religion-based strategy's effective-

66   A. M. Wainscott, Bureaucratizing Islam: Morocco and the War on Terror (New York, 2017), pp. 158-179.

67   A. Abbadi, Fi tafkik khitab al-tatarruf (Rabat, 2018). See the collection of booklets "Dafatir tafkik khitab al-tatarruf," which deal with the notions of "Jiziya," "Jihad," "Hakimiya," "al-qital fi sabil allah," "mina al-khilafa ila al-dawla," and "al-dawla al-islamiya." Arrabita has also published, under the same title Tafkik Khitab al-tatarruf (2018), the proceedings of an international conference organized in collaboration with the Muslim World League.

68   Author's interview with a senior researcher at Arrabita, November 2018.

69   DGAPR, Annual Activities Report 2017 [in Arabic] (Rabat: 2018), p. 55.

70   Ibid.

71   Online platforms such as "al-Raid," "Chabab.ma," and www.alfetra.ma.

72   O. Sara, "La Rabita Mohammedia des oulémas lance un site pour lutter contre l'extrémisme," TelQuel, October 1, 2017 <https://telquel.ma/2017/01/10/rabita-mohammedia-oulemas-lance-site-lutter-contre-discours-extremiste_1530585> (accessed May 15, 2019).

ness and the security services' constant vigilance and intelligence performance. It therefore remains unclear to what extent they complement, cover, or hide each other's weaknesses and shortcomings. Putting this issue aside, three main criteria can be used to assess the functioning and outputs of this religion-based strategy.

MRPVE's Ideological Vision and its Political Use

MRPVE is built upon an ideological vision that stems from the pillars of Moroccan Islam[73] and endeavors to unify, from the top, the doctrinal bases of Moroccan religious identity. In fact, this can be seen as a kind of dominance and a step towards restricting the pluralistic nature of the Moroccan religious fabric, which is not as entirely cohesive and inclusive as official political discourse pretends it is, when considering the individual and popular patterns of locally practiced religiosity.

Like many political regimes in the MENA region, Morocco has attempted to exploit the anxiety generated by terrorist threats since September 2001 in order to achieve political goals of an authoritarian nature.[74] In overseeing MRPVE, the religious establishment's ultimate goal moves beyond the fight against terror to achieve political goals such as marginalizing religious actors and silencing the opposition and social movements that criticize the status quo and demand greater power-sharing and reform of the existing political system. On the other hand, placing the "fight against extremism" as the central priority of ongoing religious policy covers other stakes and issues of no less importance, such as the political use of religion as a positive catalyst or handicap to the process of democratization and modernization in Morocco.[75] The positions taken respectively by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and the Highest Council of Ulama during the 2011 Constitution referendum and Hirak al-Rif (2016)[76] are two indicative moments, among many others, that reveal how the Moroccan regime uses official Islam to discredit popular protests and take control over the ongoing post-2011 political dynamics.

Although it is too early to make a sound assessment of the Mussalaha program's potential effectiveness and impacts, based on its two sessions held in 2017 and 2018, it can be said that this deradicalization program is not all-encompassing. It started with a limited number of people convicted on terrorism and extremism charges: out of 1,000 prisoners, no more than fifty inmates have been allowed to participate so far. All the participants were carefully selected by the penitentiary administration based on their "free choice" and the determination to represent various jihadist streams.[77] The fact that a royal pardon was offered to 36 alumni of the program (14 in 2017 and 22 in 2018) can be seen as a reassuring sign to extend the reach of the program to larger numbers of Jihadi inmates. In contrast, linking participation in the program with the privilege of receiving immediate royal pardon can hinder the principal concept framing this program and questions its credibility.

Morocco has tried to use the fear of terrorism for political purposes

Taking into consideration the conditions in which inmates are forced to live, one might argue that this endeavor would be a violation of the freedoms of thought and conscience. Self-reconciliation is known to be a long evolving process that should be undertaken beyond any institutional constraint or forced conditions. As one conflict resolution expert puts it, "it is problematic to bring a psychologist to erase thoughts and convictions from a human's mind in order to supplant new (pro-state) ones."[78]

Reconciliation with the "sacred text" is another controversial issue. Jihadist inmates have problems relating to certain interpretations of religion rather than with the text itself. In fact, all the religious scholars involved as leaders in *Mussalaha* belong to the official

73   Tozy, "Des oulémas frondeurs."

74   Wainscott, Bureaucratizing Islam.

75   For further insights on this point, see S. Hmimnat, The Religious Policy in Morocco (1984-2002): State Fundamentalism and Authoritarian Modernization [in Arabic] (Casablanca, 2018).

76   M. Monjib, "The Relentless Tide of Morocco's Rif Protests," Sada Journal, June 21, 2017 <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/71331> (accessed May 15, 2019).

77   DGAPR, Annual Activities Report, p. 56.

78   Author interview with Naoufal Abboud, February 2019.

religious establishment. This means that the clear intention is to champion the state's interpretation of Islam over other individualistic, Salafi interpretations. However, the issue resides not in the religious interpretation per se, but rather in a certain dogmatic understanding of Islam that can lead to violent acts.[79]

The third issue concerns "reconciliation with society." In principle, society can be represented in many different ways including the parliament, civil society, and representatives of the victims or their families. This kind of reconciliation thus remains meaningless unless all or some of those key social or political groups are involved in the enterprise. While state institutions take a significant role in the ongoing program,[80] it is surprising to note that many societal stakeholders were completely marginalized. For example, a *Muraja'at* (dialog) program was initiated in prison between 2006-2010 by a group of Jihadist ideologues including Abu Hafs and others who were later released,[81] and provided a viable path for building a credible national reconciliation between the state, the Salafi Jihadists, and the families of victims of terrorist acts. However, it is surprising to note that none of *Muraja'at*'s leaders were included in Musalaha program.

Accordingly, having embedded the program in a transitional justice context in a country experiencing "permanent" democratic transition since the early 1990s, it can be argued that *Mussalaha* does not really offer a radically different alternative to violent extremism. It just creates a new context for the Moroccan state in which the issue is merely: "how to renew the state's legitimacy and maintain autocracy, without resorting to the illegitimate violence of the past."[82]

Coordination Between Institutions Involved in MRPVE Implementation

MRPVE relies on a well-structured religious bureaucracy that consists of the three official religious institutions cited above. Each of these institutions presides over enormous human resources, material resources, and significant practical experience that allow them to operate on multiple fronts and target

large segments of Moroccan society. While this institutional pluralism can be seen as positive in bringing multidimensional support for MRPVE, several problems arise concerning the complementarity and presumed coordination among the aforementioned institutions.

The religious institutions involved in MRPVE are supposed to operate with a "functional integration" and close coordination under the umbrella of the Commander of the Faithful. In fact, a sort of silent, implicit competition has been observed among these institutions. It seems that the regime manages the religious field in line with the same strategy of fragmentation – a policy pursued since 1956 – in order to ensure a balance between different religious actors so that none would pose a potential threat to the regime itself.[83] This lack of coordination, however, weakens the strength of MRPVE and challenges its effectiveness in the field.

MRPVE's outreach and scope of action

Apart the bold initiatives undertaken by Arrabita, the other religious institutions do not reach or may not have the appropriate tools to deal with hot spots where Jihadist groups manage to disseminate violent ideas and recruit potential extremists. The scope of action covered by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and the Ulama Councils is limited to mosques and the state-sponsored TV channels and radio (al-Ssadissa), even though the radicalization process is known to operate and flourish elsewhere, especially on social media and in prisons where sophisticated communication strategies are used to recruit individuals.

Three further challenges are worth highlighting, since they are likely to affect the MRPVE's efficacy negatively. First, religious institutions lack the internal tools and indicators to measure their effectiveness and capacity to reach the desired results. The *Mitaq al-Ulama* charter of scholars is a perfect example that reflects this deficiency. Second, a significant part of official religious discourse is still immersed in traditional advocacy and religious guidance, which remains less influential and less interesting, either in form or in content, to the current generation of

79   Ibid.

80   Beside the DGAPD, Arrabita, and CNDH, the second version of Mussalaha program includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs, the Supreme Court for the Judiciary, the Presidium of the Public Prosecution Service, and the Mohammed VI Foundation for the Reintegration of Prisoners.

81   S. Hmimnat, "The Moroccan State and the dialogue with the Salafist jihadist prisoners," [in Arabic] in M. Monjib (ed.): Debates between Islamists and Laïcs in Morocco (IKV & Centre Averroès, 2008), p. 127-143.

82   "Abdelhay Moudden (Dialogue avec)," in F. Ait Mous and D. Ksikes, Le métier d'intellectuel (Casablanca, 2014), p. 313.

83   M. Zeghal, Les islamistes marocains : le défi à la monarchie (Casablanca, 2005).

young people. Third, official religious discourse and all state-sponsored initiatives in general are regarded cautiously by the populace for lacking credibility.

Recommendations

- *Morocco should consider creating an intergovernmental body to ensure coordination between state and non-state institutions*

Such an institution, for instance an inter-ministerial delegate, should ensure coordination on a permanent and day-to-day basis, synergizing the fragmented activities of state and non-state institutions, bringing together their efforts and resources into a unified, well-coordinated, and monitored action agenda in the field of PVE. Furthermore, the available practical knowledge on the Moroccan experience should be officially documented, including the basic political vision and conceptual framework, and the different axes, plans, and actors involved in the implementation of the PVE strategy (including the religious establishment). Instead of occasional and dispersed statements by state officials, this intergovernmental body would gather and formulate all those programs, actions, and best practices that constitute the Moroccan experience in this area into a "white book." This would help to raise its visibility at international level and help upgrade its core elements, if needed.

- *Religious associations and volunteer scholars should be involved and provided with the appropriate training and opportunities to maximize the MRPVE's efficacy and effectiveness*

In parallel to the efforts made by state-run religious institutions, independent religious clerics and moderate Islamist associations should be provided with a margin of action, which would ultimately strengthen and corroborate MRPVE.

- *State-run religious institutions should develop internal indicators to assess objectively the impacts of MRPVE measures, plans, and programs*

PVE programs run in mosques and elsewhere need to show greater interest in assessing their real outcomes and impacts. There are a few exceptions, such as the Musalaha program, which measures impact and assesses prison inmates' responsiveness based on "accurate scientific indicators" and "experimental tests,"[84] to determine the degree of their disen-

gagement and behavioral recovery from extremist discourse.

- *Observatories, think tanks, or any other collaborative initiatives that bring together policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working on PVE, and other stakeholders, should be established*

Currently, local scholars and specialists in PVE mostly find themselves in the dark concerning practical knowledge on the topic, as they lack first-hand data and credible figures to substantiate their research and studies. Such an initiative would provide an appropriate space to foster the exchange of insights, contrast different theoretical and practical expertise, and, hopefully, produce concerted alternative PVE measures that would inform decision makers and policy-making.

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84   DGAPR, Annual Activities Report, p. 57.

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISMM – THE ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY BROADCASTING

Hamdi Echkaou

Preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) have become urgent concerns in the consolidation of social development and security in North Africa and the Sahel regions. Morocco uses multiple outlets to project its comprehensive policy of dismantling radicalization and terrorist narratives that engender violent actions. With youth access to media broadcasting tools increasing, participatory community radio provides an advanced platform for citizens' engagement in sharing news, following ongoing events, and most importantly, preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization attempts. In this context, a community radio broadcasting approach to P/CVE is required to engender new attitudes of interaction that can adapt to the topics being aired and the community being targeted.

The Moroccan policy of both countering and preventing violent extremism (C/PVE)[85] aims to consolidate the existing approach to de-radicalization.[86] The country's communication landscape is increasingly gravitating towards alternative media as tools for broadcasting and voicing peoples' demands and realities. Community radios are an emerging media described as *al ithāʿāt al jamʿawiyyah* or *al jamāʿatiyyah*, associative radios. Within the changing media landscape, community radios help nurture a culture of civic engagement by addressing neighborhood issues, marginalized groups (including youth, women, and ethnic minorities), social and economic repression, poverty, and the lack of resources.

Ideologically-motivated violence often flourishes in communities and neighborhoods with very limited prospects for development. Raising awareness about the threats of extremism and violent narratives requires the constant engagement of local broadcasting media. A few community radio stations, locally termed *Al ithāʿāt al jamʿawiyyah* or *al jamāʿatiyyah*,[87] broadcast in different regions of Morocco,

covering mostly regional news, but their purpose is not to counter violent extremism. The case studies of the three stations Sawt Ouarzazate, Izrfan Radio, and 100% Mamans Tanger demonstrate how community radio can strengthen the community of listeners through broadcast content. With limited broadcasting hardware and software, these radios establish safe spaces for participation at an intellectual level appropriate to their listeners. All three have gained popularity for their accessible, interactive, and low-budget broadcasting across all age groups in their respective regions. Each channel actively encourages feedback and interaction with listeners on local and daily community concerns.

Examples of the Existing Moroccan Community Radio Landscape

Community radio stations are characterized by their active role in associative engagement, addressing social topics of development, youth issues, minority exclusion, radical extremism, and cultural enhancement. By linking entertainment with a serious cause and practicing and promoting the benefits of exchange, radios can increase their audience and influence.

Existing community radios center a great deal of their participation around the cultural and linguistic needs of under-represented communities such as the Amazigh (indigenous peoples across North Africa, also referred to as Berbers). Stations such as Izrfan Radio and Radio Sawt Ouarzazate depict the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural reality of the country at the same time as demanding fair representation for marginalized groups. Sawt Ouarzazate, a web radio station,[88] focuses on listener discussions of local and southern issues, in particular education, infrastructure, and the need for responsible government intervention. Izrfan Radio[89] pursues a more artistic approach, promoting the musical, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the Amazigh community. Similarly, Radio Imazighen also uses music as a bridge to connect communities both at home and abroad. Phone-in programs are also a popular means of allowing listeners to reflect on their culture and propose ways to promote it.

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85 "The 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism' Approach: A Guidance Note for National Societies," International Committee of the Red Cross, July 19, 2017 <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/guidance-note-national-societies-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-approach> (accessed June 19, 2019).

86 Other examples of the comprehensive approach include governance, security, and development. See the policing approach in Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach, OSCE, Vienna, 2014 <https://www.osce.org/atu/111438> (accessed May 31, 2019).

87 The transliteration is based on the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies chart <https://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/docs/TransChart.pdf> (accessed May 31, 2019).

88 Radio Sawt Ouarzazate, Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/sawtozte/> (accessed June 19, 2019).

89 Izrfan Web Radio, Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/izrfanradio/> (accessed June 19, 2019).

The best example of community radio is 100% Mamans Tanger (100 Percent Tangiers Mothers),[90] which focuses on single mothers in Morocco, a topic that is still taboo in some regions. Originating from the non-profit organization 100% Mamans Tanger, this platform actively challenges stereotypical judgements of women by creating the space for dynamic interaction on civil society topics. The radio station promotes events including fundraising, international and national days for women and children, and official visits from ambassadors and other international organizations. It also relays positive media coverage of the station's own activities. Furthermore, online sessions allow single mothers to access legal support in court cases. This grassroots-based station promotes legal reforms to improve women's rights, promote events, and organize national and international advocacy meetings. In effect, this has created a new forum for single mothers to express themselves and pressure the government into paying more attention to their concerns.

The Impact of Community Radios on Changing Listener Attitudes

By placing community interests and issues at the center of their programming, community radio opens up new possibilities for social interaction and co-existence, which can help transform both individual and group attitudes through broadcast and online discussion to broaden debate and regional knowledge, and play a role in P/CVE.

Importantly, community radios can foster self-expression and self-criticism. The three stations mentioned above show how radio has provided an alternative channel to voice smaller groups' daily concerns. The listener is no longer a mere receiver, but rather the producer of information for community radio, which can improve its audience's self-expression capacities and allow underrepresented voices to be heard and demand change. For vulnerable groups often subjected to violent narratives, a broadcasting platform can help transform the environment and provide psychological support, as seen in the case of the single mothers' radio station.

Community radio also provides an opportunity for self-criticism: when audiences can learn from one another, hear others' stories, discuss, and argue, they can also address the pitfalls in their own communities and neighborhoods, and seek solutions. In effect,

this transfers responsibility from government to the local community itself, through a genuine form of interaction between radio station and audience. This can open up possibilities for constructive discussion of serious, pertinent topics, while at the same time giving space and microphone time to people who never thought their contributions would be heard, let alone brought to the attention of the national public. For example, Sawt Ouarzazate, based in a city in the south east, has succeeded in bringing local community struggles and recommendations to the attention of local policy makers.

Community radios greatly consider the needs of under-represented communities

In addition, community radio can serve as a means to foster solidarity and tolerance. In general, community radios can foster solidarity within and beyond communities by sharing local realities and challenges such as the lack of development projects. Through involving audiences from other regions, organizing fundraising events, and collaborating with local authorities, community radios can effectively improve their communities through shared good practices. A review of the three radio stations' broadcast content and audience online comments confirms how listeners appreciate the reiteration of their experiences via radio, and how broadcast content contributes to consolidating their community.

Recommendations

A form of alternative media, community radio needs to function as a supporting platform for community consolidation and safety, partnering with local and national authorities where possible to bring about change. A community radio broadcasting approach to P/CVE engenders new attitudes towards interaction specific to the topics being aired and the community being targeted.

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90   100% Mamans Tanger, Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/centpourcentmamans.tanger/> (accessed June 19, 2019).

Community radios can foster self-expression and self-criticism

– Set up a community radio with a clear focus on P/CVE

Such community radios should be established in areas with high recruitment levels for violent radical groups. Granting communities the opportunity to air and record their voices and concerns at both an individual and group level allows for the promotion of values such as respect, tolerance, and mutual understanding as key determinants in social transformation, and as shields against radical tendencies within the local communities where those radios function. In addition, it would provide a welcoming space for locals as participants in discussions, in which views on social, religious, cultural, and ritual issues can be aired and effectively challenged.

The P/CVE content of such programs should meet the demands and expectations of the listeners as a community and initiate difficult dialogs on taboo topics. Community radio platforms need to engage religious imams, leaders, preachers, and ex-affiliates of terrorist groups. This would provide insights into the early features of radicalism and help mobilize against ideologies that may be increasingly popular in local neighborhoods, and which may lead to future violent actions. Phone-in programs can further allow listeners to reflect upon counterterrorist measures that make them uneasy, thus fostering understanding between the local community and the authorities. Community radio stations can also publicize jobs for youth, promote opportunities elsewhere, and counter the inertia that increases the chance of youth being snatched up by radical violent extremists.

– Use community radio to support local authorities

Community radio can take a P/CVE role framed by cooperative support and governmental assistance to overcome inconsistent coverage. By reporting local abuses and aggression, community radio stations can assist the local authorities to establish stable and safe conditions, instead of mere police supervision and control. Radio stations can function as platforms to equip and empower the community against narratives that support violent extremist attitudes, and also encourage discussions between factions concerning drugs, religious extremism, and pressing human rights issues, notwithstanding the radio stations' lack of resources.

– Learn from international organizations

Coordinating international models of training and support should also be pursued to maintain community radios' ability to address pressing topics such as radical extremism.

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Chapter II: Morocco's Regional Policy and Implications for EU-Morocco Relations

STREAMLINING MOROCCAN "SOFT" SECURITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA – INCLUSION IS KEY

Žilvinas Švedkauskas[1]

As Moroccan foreign policy undertakes a political and economic "shift to Africa," the transnational heritage of Sufism has been actively employed as a tool of "religious diplomacy." The Moroccan monarchy is tapping into Sufi networks connecting Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa not only to promote its formula of "moderate Islam," but also to establish King Mohammed VI's authority both at home and abroad. European policymakers, seeking sustainable security measures in Sub-Saharan Africa, should support this engagement of the Moroccan government, but remain cautious of the authoritarian side-effects.

A recent report by the European Court of Auditors has concluded that EU support for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the overarching set of institutions, legislation, and procedures for conflict prevention of the African Union (AU), has not been disbursed effectively.[2] European support for the APSA has increased the AU's role as Africa's leading organization in the field of security. However, EU allowances have long been used to cover basic operational costs rather than capacity-building, and lack a long-term strategy, failing to transfer the ownership of APSA to the AU and ten mandated sub-regional organizations. Moreover, analysts have also criticized the prioritization of military solutions by APSA, which are perceived as being pushed by European donors seeking to seal their southern borders. For example, the deployment of around 20,000 multinational troops in the Sahel in 2017 to fight Islamist insurgents was seen by many as disproportional, jeopardizing and encouraging further radicalization of local populations.

Some have made alternative suggestions, calling for the EU to support "soft" security measures in line with its commitment to the security-development nexus enshrined in strategic documents on Africa-EU cooperation.[3] Assistance for local processes of peace, mediation, facilitation, and reconciliation, backed by local religious and political leaders, could be more effective in the long run than the prevailing "hard" security paradigm. In the light of these suggestions, the evolving pro-active security cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and some African countries has already received significant attention.

Morocco has long marketed itself as a regional champion of political stability and counter-terrorism. Its "soft" security approach is defined by state dominance in the domestic religious sphere, based on the presumed religious legitimacy of the Moroccan monarchy and a long-standing tradition of peaceful Sufi Islam.[4] In international acknowledgment of its success defusing security threats, since 2016, Morocco has co-chaired the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and a number of European countries, including Italy, Spain, and Belgium, have reached out to Moroccan authorities, with a view to cooperating in areas of religious education and counter-extremism. Nonetheless, the undemocratic nature of the evolving Moroccan engagement with Africa, transposing its "soft" security southwards, may be a serious spoiler.

Moroccan Africa Policy as Domaine Reservé

In 2017, to the surprise of many, Morocco ended its 33-year "empty-chair" policy at the AU, and in October 2018, submitted its bid to join Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The ambition to play a role in these transnational African institutions sums up the trajectory of Moroccan foreign policy under King Mohammed VI. Unlike his father King Hassan II, who focused on the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the current King aims to diversify Morocco's partnerships and establish the Kingdom as a vital link between the EU and Sub-Saharan Africa.[5] Since his accession to the throne in 1999, Mohammed VI has spent a lot of his time on a "charm offensive" travelling around the continent.[6] By mid-2018, he had made over 51 visits

1   The author would like to thank organizers and participants of the DGAP workshop on the promotion of think tank work on Morocco for their valuable comments on the draft versions this paper. In particular, thanks to Dina Fakoussa, Laura Kabis-Kechrid, Tonja Klaussman and Dr. Salim Hmimnat.

2   European Court of Auditors, "The African Peace and Security Architecture: need to refocus EU support," Special report no. 20, 2018 <https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18_20/SR_APS_EN.pdf> [sign-in required].

3   Bernardo Venturi, "The EU and the Sahel: A Laboratory of Experimentation for the Security–Migration–Development Nexus," IAI Working Papers 17/38 (December 2017). <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwp1738.pdf> (accessed May 17, 2019).

4   Anthony Dworkin and Fatim-Zohra El Malki, "The southern front line: EU counter-terrorism cooperation with Tunisia and Morocco," European Council on Foreign Relations, 2018 <https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/the_southern_front_line_eu_counter_terrorism_cooperation> (accessed May 17, 2019).

5   Vish Sakthivel, "Morocco's New Africa Policy? The African Union, Algeria, and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy," Foreign Policy Research Institute, July 22, 2016 <https://www.fpri.org/2016/07/moroccos-new-africa-policy/> (accessed May 17, 2019).

6   Nizar Messari, "Morocco's African Foreign Policy," MENARA Future Notes 12 (June 2018) <http://www.menaraproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/menara_fn_12.pdf> (accessed May 17, 2019).

to 26 African states and signed nearly one thousand bilateral agreements, presenting these initiatives as an expression of mutually beneficial South-South cooperation.[7]

This has borne fruit. Between 2000 and 2015, the annual growth of trade between Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa reached 12.8 percent.[8] From 2006 to 2016, 85 percent of Morocco's outward foreign direct investments (FDI) went to Africa and were concentrated in sectors such as banking, telecommunications, and energy.[9] Nonetheless, as an indicator of the deep-running cronyism of this expansion, companies such as Maroc Télécom, Attijariwafa Bank, BMCE Bank, BCP Bank, OCP Group, and Royal Air Maroc, with shares held by the Moroccan royal family via the Al Mada investment group and its subsidiaries, have been among the main Moroccan investors in the continent.[10]

Royal ownership of Moroccan Africa policy is further evident in the manner with which diplomatic relations with Sub-Saharan Africa have been nourished. Counter to the spirit of the 2011 Constitution, which broadened the powers of the government *vis-à-vis* the royal palace, members of the "ruling" Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) have been involved neither in the formulation, nor in the implementation of Moroccan Africa policies.[11] For instance, intense negotiations on Morocco's return to the AU were undertaken in the second half of 2016, in the face of a legislative deadlock following the October 2016 elections. The legislative paralysis was only briefly interrupted on January 16, 2017, when the royal palace needed parliamentary approval of the law pertaining to the AU's constituent act.[12]

Furthermore, in his numerous visits to African capitals, the King has been accompanied by technocrats and managers of royal corporations rather than elected politicians. This entourage has included figures such as advisors to the King, Fouad Ali El Himma

and Yassir Zenagui, the technocratic Ministers of Foreign and Islamic Affairs, Nasser Bourita and Ahmed Toufiq, as well as some loyal independents and members of pro-palace political parties. Thus, by excluding the ruling Islamist party and manipulating the legislature to rubberstamp its "shift to Africa," the Moroccan monarchy has effectively distanced the elected government from foreign policy-making and insisted that, despite a façade of political reforms undertaken during the Arab Spring, it remains a royal *domaine reservé*.

Morocco's "soft" security is defined by state dominance in the religious sphere

Inherent Risks of Moroccan "Soft" Security

In order to legitimize and facilitate new-found pan-Africanism at home and abroad, the Moroccan monarchy has mobilized its religious "soft" power and transnational networks of Sufi groups, already co-opted at the domestic level and offering an effective link southward. Morocco boasts a rich history of Islamic Sufi mysticism, practiced by hierarchical Sufi brotherhoods. The Budshishiyya, Tijaniyya, Darqawiyya, and Shadhili are just some of those successfully functioning up to this day. Historically, Sufi organizations existed as politically autonomous or even oppositional entities.[13] However, religious centralization carried out under Hassan II brought Moroccan Sufism under state supervision.[14]

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7   Rim Berahab, "Relations between Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa: What is the potential for trade and foreign direct investment?," OCP Policy Center, 2017 <http://www.ocppc.ma/sites/default/files/OCPPC-PB1704vEn.pdf> (accessed May 17, 2019).

8   Maghreb Arabe Presse, "Message de SM le Roi adresse aux participants au Forum Crans Montana de Dakhla," press release, March 18, 2016 <www.maroc.ma/fr/discours-royaux/sm-le-roi-adresse-un-message-aux-participants-au-forum-crans-montana-de-dakhla> (accessed May 17, 2019).

9   African Development Bank Group, "Morocco in Line with AfDB's High 5s," press release, July 22, 2016 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201607221044.html> (accessed May 17, 2019).

10   The North Africa Post, "Morocco's SNI Changes Name into Al Mada, Gears Activity to Africa," March 28, 2018 <http://northafricapost.com/22909-moroccos-sni-changes-name-al-mada-gears-activity-africa.html> (accessed May 17, 2019).

11   Yasmina Abouzzohour and Beatriz Tomé-Alonso, "Moroccan foreign policy after the Arab Spring: a turn for the Islamists or persistence of royal leadership?," The Journal of North African Studies 22, no. 3 (2018), pp. 1–24 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2018.1454652> (accessed May 17, 2019).

12   Miguel Hernando de Larramendi and Beatriz Tomé-Alonso, "The Return of Morocco to the African Union," IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2017, pp. 229–32 <https://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/med.2017/IEMed_MedYearbook2017_morocco_african_union_Larramendi_alonso.pdf/> (accessed May 17, 2019).

13   Fait Muedini, Sponsoring Sufism: How Governments Promote Mystical Islam in their Domestic and Foreign Policies, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy (New York, 2015) <http://gbv.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=4001933> (accessed May 17, 2019).

14   Rachida Chih, "Sufism, education and politics in contemporary Morocco," Journal for Islamic Studies 32, no. 1 (2012), pp. 24-46.

Under Mohammed VI, Sufism as an integral part of the discourse on moderate Moroccan Islam came to serve as a cornerstone of the country's antiterrorism strategy, successfully advertised on a global stage.[15] In July 2003, the traditional Throne Day speech was used by the King to denounce the recent terrorist attacks in Casablanca, carried out by the homegrown terrorist group Salafia Jihadia. He further called for religious reforms in the Kingdom and unilaterally declared Sufism as one of the three "cornerstones" of Moroccan Islam (together with adherence to Maliki school of Islamic law and Ash'ari theology).[16] The fourth informal "ingredient" of the Moroccan religious formula has been enshrined in the country's constitution since 1962 and awards the King with the title of *Amir al-Muᵓminin* or "the commander of the faithful," reflecting the belief that the Alaouite dynasty has a blood link with the Prophet Muhammad. Even though the actual relevance of the title is contentious, historically, it has been regularly instrumentalized to portray the monarchy as "the key institution of the Moroccan religious system.[17]"

Sufi orders may act as a sort of an institutional substitute

From an institutional point of view, the Moroccan monarchy acts as a patron of Sufi brotherhoods and rewards sheiks and their families, who are responsible for administrating the budgets of their organizations. In return, in some areas less penetrated by the state, Sufi orders may act as a sort of an institutional substitute, functioning as local multifunctional centers of education, family advice, or arbitration in local disputes.[18] The paramount example of domestic cohabitation between Sufi groups and the Moroccan monarchy is evident in the special treatment given to the Budshishiyya brotherhood. State-controlled media is used for its promotional purposes, including coverage of the Budshishiyya's special gatherings and daily activities. Co-optation of individual budshishis is particularly apparent with the royal appointments of Ahmed Toufiq and Ahmad Qustas, prominent members of the brotherhood, to serve as the Minister and the Chancellor at the Ministry of Religious Property and Islamic Affairs respectively.

In return, through this support, the monarchy has secured a solid partnership with an organization that has significant capacities to mobilize its mass following. A vivid example of this came in 2011, when members of the Budshishiyya, together with other pro-palace civil society organizations, participated in an ambiguous march in Casablanca in support of the new constitution proposed by the King, aiming to defuse popular contention of the Arab Spring. The mobilization of thousands of budschishis was essentially directed against the 20 February Movement, a loose coalition of moderate and opposition Salafists and Secularists, protesting and demanding comprehensive social and political reforms in the Kingdom. Thus, at the domestic level, the Budshishiyya came to be seen as the "brotherhood of the palace."[19] Yet the Moroccan "shift to Africa" relies on networks of another Sufi order – the Tijaniyya, an organization with traditional links to West Africa, facilitating the Moroccan expansion southwards.

Building Institutions for Religious Diplomacy

The Moroccan economic and political turn to Africa follows in the footsteps of its religious diplomacy. Faced with similar terrorist threats emanating from organizations such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Din, Boko Haram, and their off-shoots, over recent years Sub-Saharan African countries have sought Moroccan expertise in religious governance and moderation, for instance, in the Northern Mali conflict. Trust in Moroccan regional religious authority has long roots, dating back to the precolonial Islamization of West Africa carried out by the Almoravids, a Berber dynasty of Morocco.

The Tijaniyya has been instrumental in nurturing these religious bonds until today. The brotherhood

15   Fatima Ghoulaichi, "Of Saints and Sharifian Kings in Morocco: Three examples of the politics of reimagining history through reinventing king/saint relationship," PhD thesis, University of Maryland, 2005.

16   Cédric Baylocq and Aziz Hlaoua, "Diffuser un «islam du juste milieu»?," Afrique contemporaine 257, no. 1 (2016), pp. 113–28 <https://doi.org/10.3917/afco.257.0113> (accessed May 17, 2019).

17   Clifford Geertz, Islam Observed: Religious development in Morocco and Indonesia (Chicago, 1971).

18   Žilvinas Švedkauskas, "Facilitating Political Stability: Cohabitation of non-legalistic Islam and the Moroccan monarchy," Studia Orientalia Electronica 5 (2017), pp. 1–26 <https://doi.org/10.23993/store.55591> (accessed May 17, 2019).

19   Isabelle Werenfels, "Beyond authoritarian upgrading: the re-emergence of Sufi orders in Maghrebi politics," The Journal of North African Studies 19, no. 3 (2014), pp. 275–95 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2013.858036> (accessed May 17, 2019).

was founded by an Algerian Sufi exile Ahmad al-Tijani, who died in Fez in 1815. His following soon spread to Sub-Saharan Africa and turned al-Tijani's mausoleum into a destination of religious pilgrimage for devotees from West and Central Africa. Today, there are millions of tijani Muslims in countries such as Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, and others, who look up to Morocco and its royal dynasty for religious guidance.

Under Hassan II, Morocco had already instrumentalized tijani networks as a lever in regional disputes. For example, after the Organization of African Union (OAU) voted in favor of admitting Western Sahara into its ranks, the Moroccan Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs organized a massive conference of the Tijaniyya in Fez to drum up support for its opposition to Algerian-backed Sahrawi independence claims.[20] Two associations, the League of Scholars of Morocco and Senegal and the Association of Ulama of Morocco and Nigeria, were created following the conference, and served for the appropriation of tijani religious networks in furthering Moroccan foreign policy interests.[21]

With Africa as his foreign policy priority, Mohammed VI has continued to intervene in the governance of transnational tijani networks. He has not only appointed personal representatives to the brotherhood, but also determined that Mohammed al-Kabir al-Tijani take the position of the sheik at the Moroccan branch of the Tijaniyya, and regularly sends letters and royal delegations to major tijani gatherings in Morocco and abroad.[22] Over recent years, Moroccan religious foreign policy has become much more comprehensive.[23] Starting with an agreement signed in September 2013 with Mali's government to train 500 Malian imams in an effort to promote a more tolerant version of Islam, Morocco has accepted similar requests from other West and Central African countries, announced plans to build a number of mosques and rehabilitate religious schools in the region, and

offered to provide copies of Koran with moderate exegesis by Moroccan religious scholars.

Two flagship institutions stand out in this regard. In March 2015, Mohammed VI inaugurated the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Mourchidin and Mourchidat (male and female spiritual guides). The majority of students at the institute come from Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Tunisia. Smaller groups of students come from France, Nigeria, Chad, and Morocco itself.[24] The institute has already been extended three times and offers both short and long-term programs with a capacity to accommodate around 800 students, the majority of whom, as a result of selection procedures that favor applicants with Sufi over other Islamic backgrounds, have connections to the Tijaniyya.[25] The institute also serves as a destination for foreign delegations. For example, in June 2018, Nigerian president Muhamadu Buhari paid a visit to the institute highlighting religious assistance received from the Moroccan monarchy.[26] The visit was later completed by the signing of strategic bilateral cooperation agreements, including one on a landmark Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline project.

In July 2015, the Mohammed VI Foundation of African Ulama was launched. Building on the legacy of League of Scholars of Morocco and Senegal, the Association of Ulama of Morocco and Nigeria, and the Mohammedan League of Ulama (founded in 2006), it serves to host conferences, publish studies and legal rulings, and advise governments. The Foundation's High Council is based in Fez and includes around 120 scholars from thirty countries all across Africa, with many of its members having tijani or Sufi-connections.[27] With King Mohammed VI serving as the chairman and Ahmed Toufiq as its deputy chairman, the Foundation symbolizes the ambition to enlarge the space of the Moroccan monarch's religious authority and further instrumentalize Sufi networks to this purpose.

20   Ann Marie Wainscott, "Religious Regulation as Foreign Policy: Morocco's Islamic Diplomacy in West Africa," Politics and Religion 11, no. 1 (2018), pp. 1–26 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048317000591> (accessed May 17, 2019).

21   Bakary Sambe, "Tidjaniya usages diplomatiques d'une confrérie soufie," Politique étrangère Hiver, no. 4 (2010), pp. 843–54 <https://www.cairn.info/load_pdf.php?ID_ARTICLE=PE_104_084> (accessed May 17, 2019).

22   Salim Hmimnat, "'Spiritual security' as a (meta-)political strategy to compete over regional leadership: formation of Morocco's transnational religious policy towards Africa," The Journal of North African Studies 3, no. 68 (2018), pp. 1–39.

23   Ghita Tadlaoui, "Morocco's religious diplomacy in Africa," FRIDE policy brief 196 (2015).

24   Maghreb Arabe Presse, "HM the King Inaugurates Extension Project of Mohammed VI Institute for Imams Training," press release, October 20, 2017 <http://www.maroc.ma/en/royal-activities/hm-king-inaugurates-extension-project-mohammed-vi-institute-imams-training> (accessed May 17, 2019).

25   Hmimnat, "Spiritual Security."

26   Maghreb Arabe Presse, "Nigerian President Visits Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Morchidines and Morchidates," press release, June 11, 2018 <http://www.maroc.ma/en/news/nigerian-president-visits-mohammed-vi-institute-training-imams-morchidines-and-morchidates> (accessed May 17, 2019).

27   "Fondation Mohammed VI des ouléma africains," Le Matin, June 14, 2016 <https://lematin.ma/journal/2016/liste-des-membres-du-conseil-superieur-de-la-fondation--mohammed-vi-des-oulema-africains/249161.html> (accessed May 17, 2019).

Recommendations

The European Union and its member states should not passively observe how the Moroccan monarchy works its way south, but seek to apply a smart strategy and effectively steer the transposition of Moroccan "soft" security in other African countries. At the same time, appropriate safeguards against authoritarian exploitation have to be set in place.

- *At high-level political fora, Europeans should acknowledge the merits of Moroccan regional efforts to counter the influence of radical Islamist ideologies, at the same time as pinpointing its inherent risks*

The outlook of employing Moroccan religious "soft" power and infrastructure for fighting jihadi ideologies on a global stage should further be explored in dialogue between Morocco and the EU. Simultaneously, the EU and its member states ought to use the existing dialogue platforms to encourage a more inclusive Moroccan foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa, one that would not only benefit a closed circle of palace-connected economic and political interests, but address wider segments of society both in Morocco and its target countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- *At the program level, Europeans should support more inclusive "soft" security cooperation between Morocco and Sub-Saharan African countries*

The EU should refocus its assistance for APSA to encourage development of more comprehensive "soft" security cooperation and capacity-building programs based on inter-African exchange. In doing so, Europeans would avoid being perceived as intrusive and encourage local ownership of African security policies.

Within the updated APSA support framework, allowances for the extension of programs at the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Mourchidin and Mourchidat, and the Mohammed VI Foundation of African Ulama would create a double window of opportunity. On the one hand, engaging these institutions would acknowledge the importance of the work already carried out with royal patronage, and create incentives for more comprehensive cooperation. On the other hand, allocated European resources would enable the EU to call for the inclusion of a broader list of stakeholders (Salafists, both in Morocco and the Sub-Saharan Africa,

diaspora networks, groups marginalized by selective royal patronage policies, and so on), make "soft" security cooperation less susceptible to authoritarian manipulation and more integral in the eyes of populations in receiving African countries, and thus more effective, overall.

- *Transposing the Moroccan "soft" security approach should be simultaneously programmed at EU-Moroccan and EU-African cooperation levels*

The institutional context is ripe for the EU to seize the moment and act upon the recommendations above. In November 2018, the EU-Morocco Association Council decided to extend the EU-Morocco Action Plan (2013-2017) by one year. This means that a new five-year action plan, providing a road map for the development of EU-Morocco association, should be drafted in the near future. Moreover, the European Neighbourhood Instrument reaches the end of its current period in 2020. At the same time, revision to the expiring Cotonou agreement – which governs Africa-EU relations in the fields of development cooperation, peace and security, and economic investment – is currently under way. Therefore, the timing is appropriate to seek synergies between different levels of EU foreign policy, and to use European levers for effectively streamlining Moroccan "soft" security in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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RETHINKING THE ECONOMICS OF MOROCCO'S REGIONAL POLICY

Abdelouahed Eloufir

Over the past years, Morocco has adopted an increasingly voluntarist regional policy towards its southern partners, epitomizing a historical shift from decades of immobilism on the African continent. The country's historical come-back to the African Union in 2017, after decades of absence, is a formal concretization of the monarchy's increased efforts to enhance cooperation with Sub-Saharan African countries. Rabat's new regional policy is motivated by several interrelated objectives, of which three stand out: becoming an economic regional hub, reducing its over-reliance on traditional European partners and, over the long run, establishing a de jure sovereignty over the disputed Western Sahara territory. Fostering available forms of cooperation with Algeria should be a short-term priority, with the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), and their member countries promoting the gradual resolution of contentious issues between North African neighbors. Rabat's foreign policy further needs to level governance structures and promote the participation of private sector actors. Producing such attitudinal changes would help all parties exit previous zero-sum game paradigms and avoid falling into new ones.

Rabat's increasingly flexible stance as well as the political will shown by its leadership allow for cautious optimism regarding its regional policy. However, while the Kingdom's ambitions imply real and significant opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships, several obstacles lie ahead. In particular, long-lasting disagreements with Algeria and concerns expressed by representatives of the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) private sector are hindering the attainment of Rabat's foreign policy objectives.

Morocco's shift southward was in great part generated by the overlap of the European economic and sovereign debt crises and the 2011 Arab uprisings. The two events had substantial negative spillovers on the Moroccan economy and were key factors leading to the rethinking of both domestic and foreign economic policies of the Kingdom. For a country with a relatively limited market size and productivity levels such as Morocco, fostering economic growth means greater regional integration as well as trade and investment diversification.[28]

At present, Morocco's trade patterns run counter to the gravity model of international trade, which posits that international trade patterns can be estimated according to the economic dimensions and distance between two countries.[29] In effect, the Kingdom currently trades more with the European Union than it does with the Maghreb and SSA combined (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Morocco selected trade partners in 2017 (% of total trade)

Source: UN COMTRADE, 2017, data accessed through the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution portal <https://wits.worldbank.org> (accessed July 4, 2019).

This is even true for trade ties between the Kingdom and a significantly less populated, distant European country such as the Netherlands, compared to trade with bordering countries, Algeria and Mauritania. While the lack of infrastructure and ethnolinguistic distance can partly explain such an anomaly for SSA countries, in the case of Algeria, political factors prevail. Subsequently, it is incumbent upon policymakers to move away from this economically underperforming status quo.

Sluggish Maghreb Union: Unbearable Costs

The Western Sahara question can be singled out as decisive in Morocco's new regional policy. In effect, it remains one of the most divisive questions between Rabat and Algiers: the former claims sovereignty over the disputed territories while the latter backs the independence movement led by the Polisario front. Among the few attempts to estimate public

28   Dani Rodrik, "The Future of Economic Convergence," National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 17400, August 2011 <https://www.nber.org/papers/w17400> (accessed July 4, 2019).

29   Edward Leamer and James Levinsohn, "International Trade Theory: The Evidence," NBER Working paper No. 4940, 1994 <https://www.nber.org/papers/w4940> (accessed July 4, 2019).

expenditures in Western Sahara, Abdelmoumni has established that USD 3.27 billion was spent on developing basic infrastructure and investment projects in the region between 1988 and 2007.[30] In 2015, King Mohammed VI announced the launch of the new development plan for the region with a budget of USD 8 billion – 7.3 percent of the country's GDP. In that context, regardless of normative and historical factors, any solution that rules out the Kingdom's legal sovereignty over these territories will most likely be rejected by Morocco's political leadership.

Morocco's integration into ECOWAS concerns West African business communities

In turn, this issue has contributed to the death of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), rendering much-needed economic integration with Algeria improbable in the short-term future. While the AMU generated high hopes after its creation in 1989, following the 1994 Marrakesh terrorist attack, Morocco decided that Algerian citizens would require visas to enter the Kingdom, which led to the eventual closing of land borders between the two countries. Nevertheless, the very fact that these borders were open beforehand demonstrates that cooperation is possible outside the definitive resolution of the Western Sahara question. In effect, discussions between Rabat and Algiers remain deadlocked because of a broader detrimental zero-sum game paradigm[31] which divides political regimes rather than societies.

According to the World Bank, deeper integration between Maghreb countries would have increased Algeria's and Morocco's GDP per capita by 34 percent and 27 percent respectively between 2005 and 2015,[32]

allowing both countries to reach the World Bank's upper-middle income threshold, a decisive step towards economic emergence. These projections are inherently linked to the two countries' cultural, ethnolinguistic, and geographic proximity which, in the framework of deeper cooperation, would certainly generate sizable production flows. Amid increased socio-economic pressures and in the revolutionary moment the region finds itself in,[33] economic cooperation seems inescapable. In effect, youth unemployment remains above 20 percent and average annual growth rates amounted to only 3.5 percent over the past ten years in Maghreb countries (excluding Libya). Further, the aforementioned projections are perfectly in line with the theoretical literature: economists such as Jacob Viner pointed out the benefits of integration for economic welfare as early as 1950.[34] Finally, increased integration would enhance development both quantitatively and qualitatively, with greater integration in global value chains contributing to inclusive, job-creating, and productivity-enhancing growth.

Despite these well-documented and established opportunity costs, Algerian and Moroccan policymakers continue to perceive any economic success of their neighbor as detrimental to their own interest. Within this framework, Morocco's recent shift towards its southern neighbors is often depicted as an alternative to the AMU. According to a former Moroccan finance minister, it was in fact a move taken "out of desperation" regarding the impossible integration with Algeria that Rabat opted for this new strategy.

The Reality of Morocco's Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa

In effect, the unfolding of an increasingly active economic, political, and cultural diplomacy towards SSA countries underscores Morocco's continuous efforts over the past decade to strengthen ties with its Southern partners. According to the OCP Policy Center,[35] between 2008 and 2013, 66 percent of Moroccan foreign direct investment (FDI) outflows went to Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the African Devel-

30   Fouad Abdelmoumni, "Western Sahara: The Cost of the Conflict," Crisis Group report, June 11, 2007 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/western-sahara/western-sahara-cost-conflict> (accessed July 4, 2019).

31   Robert Axelrod, The Evolution of Cooperation (New York, 1984).

32   "Economic Integration in the Maghreb," World Bank report, October 1, 2010 <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/969341468278074872/pdf/575190WP0Box353768B01PUBLIC10Maghrebpub.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2019).

33   Jean-Pierre Filiu and Stéphane Lacroix, Revisiting the Arab Uprisings: The Politics of a Revolutionary Moment (Oxford, 2018).

34   Jacob Viner, The Customs Union Issue (Oxford, 1950).

35   Moubarack Lo, "Relations Maroc-Afrique subsaharienne : quel bilan pour les 15 dernières années?", OCP Policy Center, Research Paper, November 2016 <http://www.ocppc.ma/sites/default/files/OCPPC-RP1610v2.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2019).

opment Bank (ADB), this figure was up to 85 percent in 2016.[36] In the political arena, the most apparent achievement was Rabat's official return to the African Union (AU) in 2017 after 33 years of absence. This marks the swiftest break from the past, overturning an ultimatum strategy that Morocco had realized was detrimental to its interests. In effect, it reflects an increasingly flexible stance, with Rabat accepting participation in an organization whose constitutive act was signed by the president of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), mentioned in the AU charter as a Head of State. This new strategy was in fact outlined by King Mohammed VI himself in a royal address to the AU in July 2016, stating that "when a body is sick, it is treated more effectively from the inside than from the outside."

Morocco has also engaged in religious diplomacy through the construction of mosques and the training of imams, thereby adding a "soft power" layer to its foreign policy shift southward, strengthening the cultural bonds it shares with SSA countries.[37] First, King Mohammed VI has made over 51 visits to SSA states, culminating in the signature of almost one thousand bilateral agreements related to education, agriculture, development, and religious affairs. Furthermore, the Kingdom has relied heavily on the *Tijaniyya* Sufi brotherhoods, which have millions of followers across West African countries, many of which visit Ahmad al-Tijani's mausolea in Fes. In recent years, the monarchy has engaged in a more aggressive strategy, appointing personal representatives to the *Tijaniyya* brotherhood and strengthening ties with West African representatives of the religious network. Finally, since its inception in 2015, the Mohammed VI Institute for the training of imams has welcomed students from a number of SSA countries and was even visited by Nigerian president Muhamadu Buhari in June 2018.

However, despite these efforts, Morocco has failed to join the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) more than two years after benefiting from a political agreement in principle. Moreover, and in spite of these aforementioned issues, it is notable that Morocco currently trades more with Algeria than with Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria com-

bined (see Figure 2), illustrating the limits of political voluntarism.[38]

Figure 2: Morocco selected trade partners in 2017 (% of total trade)
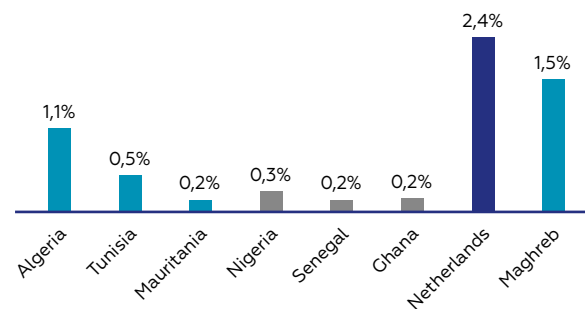
Source: UN COMTRADE data accessed through the World Bank's World Integrated Trade Solution portal <https://wits.worldbank.org> (accessed July 4, 2019).

It was West African private sector representatives who first voiced clear opposition to the Kingdom's inclusion in the trading bloc. In Nigeria and Senegal, both of which are already suffering from deindustrialization,[39] business communities and unions are claiming that Morocco's integration would further threaten some of their industries and manufacturing bases, mainly due to the trade agreement the Kingdom has with the EU.

Disagreements with Algeria hinder Rabat's foreign policy aims

Second, the benefits of Morocco's Sub-Saharan African policy on its national economy are unclear. While Moroccan investments in SSA have been on the rise since the early 2000s, these remain limited to companies that benefit from the support of polit-

36   "85% of Morocco's Foreign Direct Investments is in Africa = AfDB," AllAfrica, July 22, 2016 <http://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00044894.html> (accessed July 4, 2019).

37   Ann Marie Wainscott, Religious Regulation as Foreign Policy: Morocco's Islamic Diplomacy in West Africa (Cambridge, 2017).

38   Riccardo Fabiani, Morocco's Difficult Path to ECOWAS Membership, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 28, 2018 <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/75926> (accessed July 4, 2019).

39   Richard Grabowski, "Deindustrialization in Africa," International Journal of African Development 1 (2015).

ically powerful actors, such as OCP, Managem, Attijariwafa Bank, BMCE Bank, Maroc Télécom, and the ONEE.[40] Crucially, most of these companies operate in the financial and commodity extraction sectors, limiting the prospects for sizable job and trade creation between Morocco and its southern partners. Moubarack Lo's OCP-sponsored econometric analysis has estimated that a 1 percent increase in Moroccan FDIs towards Sub-Saharan Africa has led to a 0.01 percent increase in the Kingdom's GDP per capita.[41] Regardless of the magnitude, it remains unclear what impact investment had in terms of jobs and trade creation, and which segments of the population benefitted from capital inflows.

Third, a top-down integration process can lead to potential drawbacks that could seriously dampen cooperation in the long run. Notwithstanding these precautionary remarks, it should be emphasized that greater cooperation between Morocco and SSA countries can be economically pertinent and mutually beneficial over the long-run. A tailored integration into ECOWAS can help the Kingdom achieve its objective of becoming a trade and production hub between the European, African, and American trading blocs. Part of this strategy consists of favoring the internationalization of Moroccan companies which can hardly compete with European firms and are therefore pursuing economies of scale in SSA. In turn, SSA economies would benefit from knowledge transfers and improved access to European markets.

Recommendations

- *Moroccan and Sub-Saharan African political leaderships should better integrate their respective private sectors and workers' representatives in negotiations, privileging long-term over short-term gains*

While Morocco's internationalization strategy has the potential to be economically pertinent, Rabat should acknowledge that it can threaten SSA's nascent industries. While political discussions between the Moroccan and West African heads of states in the framework of the Kingdom's admission to the ECOWAS are very advanced, West African interest groups have voiced significant opposition to this integration. The significant gap between governments and private sector representatives needs to be reduced. Governance should therefore be made more horizontal and involve all stakeholders affected by

Morocco's regional economic policy. While enlarging the negotiation will likely lengthen the integration process, it is necessary to establish much-needed trust, transparency, and accountability. Moroccan and West African public and private sectors would thereby secure sound, long-term cooperation, which surely has the potential to be mutually beneficial.

- *European and Sub-Saharan decision-makers should acknowledge the game-changing potential of economic integration between Morocco and Algeria and make greater use of diplomacy to foster cooperation*

Depending on the degree of such integration, potential positive economic spillovers include increased investment opportunities and market access for European and African firms, enhanced productivity, industrialization, job creation, and in the longer term, lower migration flows. European and African diplomatic corps should encourage Algeria and Morocco to attend multilateral meetings and conferences to mediate between the two North African neighbors, whose non-cooperation impacts negatively on the whole Mediterranean region. The outcome of the ongoing power restructuring process in Algeria remains unclear and is a primarily national matter. The aforementioned stakeholders should however, be proactive in seizing windows of opportunity and promoting the reactivation of the AMU.

- *North African, Sub-Saharan African, and European policymakers, and their private sector representatives should put greater emphasis on fostering cooperation between Morocco and Algeria*

Such a step is certainly not mutually exclusive with Morocco's economically relevant, pro-active policy towards its southern neighbors. Nonetheless, even if successful, the latter will most likely be a complex and lengthy process. Further, due to these countries' ethnolinguistic and economic development profiles, according to leading international financial institutions, trade integration with Maghreb countries is more likely to generate job and growth creation over a relatively short timeframe.

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40   Louis Delatronchette, "Cartographie de la présence des grandes entreprises marocaines en Afrique," Telquel, May 11, 2017 <https://telquel.ma/2017/05/11/cartographie-de-la-presence-des-grandes-entreprises-marocaines-en-afrique_1545709> (accessed July 4, 2019).

41   See footnote 35.

– *Morocco and Algeria should establish formal mechanisms to discuss contentious issues and prioritize private sector-led initiatives*

Given the complexity of the two states' long-standing dispute, political will and courage from all involved parties will be required to solve this issue. Achievable, private sector-oriented development projects should be established in the infrastructure sector, such as the trans-Maghreb railway presented last March by the secretary general of the Arab Maghreb Union. The support of several international financial institutions, including the African Development Bank, demonstrates that such projects are economically sound, bankable, and achievable should sufficient political will be shown.

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MOROCCO'S SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION STRATEGIES – AN ADVANTAGE FOR EXISTING NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

Ingrid Heidlmayr-Chegdaly

The economic and financial crisis of 2008 has shown that unexpected changes in economic development also affect partner countries, which were not directly touched by the crisis. If economic and political cooperation and partnerships are exhausted, or if the economic and political gains of external cooperation become less attractive for partner countries, the search for alternative cooperation partners and forms becomes inevitable. The loss of economic gains and advantages in existing EU-Moroccan partnerships has urged Morocco to find new trading opportunities, especially on the African continent. However, European policymakers should consider Morocco's accession to the African Union (AU) and its application for full membership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as an opportunity to strengthen Europe's Africa policy. Europe must thus be aware of Morocco's external policy shift towards Africa and find ways to tackle the trilateral cooperation between Africa, Morocco, and Europe in the future. Considering Morocco as a regional hub and entrance to the African market, the EU should use Morocco's leverage and geographic position as a mediation tool for its own Africa policy. Stronger cooperation between Morocco and the EU beyond existing economic and political frameworks would enable the EU to access the African market more easily.

In recent years, Morocco has progressively improved relations with the EU, primarily through the Association Agreement, the negotiations on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), and the statut avancé.[42] As Morocco cannot apply for EU membership, the EU cannot offer closer institutional, political, and economic cooperation beyond already existing forms of partnership. In particular, the offer to share everything but institutions[43] sets clear limits on integration possibilities for neighboring countries.

In 2009, the annual import and export rates between Morocco and the EU partners declined. Even though the commercial trade between the EU and Morocco resumed growth in 2010, the economic crisis in 2008 proved how economic shifts in Europe affect economic partner countries.[44] Despite Morocco's good relations with Europe, the country strengthened economic and political ties with countries of different regions in the world, particularly the Gulf states, Turkey, the United States, and Asia. However, the perspectives of these relations rarely go beyond the frameworks of economic free-trade agreements.

Due to its emerging markets, population growth, growing middle class, and existing natural resources, the African continent provides various opportunities for investment and development.[45] Over the past decade, Morocco has tried to diversify its traditionally northern-oriented foreign relations southwards. Between 2007 and 2017, Morocco could increase its commercial trade with the African continent by a yearly average of five percent.[46] By developing closer economic and political relations with Sub-Saharan African countries, Morocco intends to improve its regional image and boost exports. In particular, King Mohammed VI's official visits and the signing of numerous cooperation agreements with African countries demonstrate a profound shift in Morocco's foreign relations with Africa.[47]

The search for new institutional, political, and economic cooperation thus became inevitable for Morocco. Under the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, Morocco signed a bilateral agreement with China in November 2017 to expand and foster commercial exchanges. Additionally, a Morocco-China business council was established to promote China's gigantic Silk Road project.[48] In January 2017, Morocco was admitted to the African Union (AU), and in February the same year, it submitted its application for full

42   Morocco was granted the statut avancé (advanced status) by the EU in 2008 to continue and deepen relations within the framework of the Association Agreement signed in 1996.

43   Romano Prodi, "A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the key to stability," speech given in December 2002 at the Peace, Security And Stability International Dialogue and the Role of the EU conference in Brussels <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm> (accessed May 10, 2019).

44   European Commission, "European Union, Trade in goods with Morocco," <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/country/details_morocco_en.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2019).

45   S. El Khayat, "Les enjeux de la politique africaine du Maroc," Revue Espace Géographie et Société Marocaine (No. 5, 2015), pp. 66, 70.

46   "Maroc-Afrique : Hausse moyenne de 5% des échanges commerciaux en 10 ans," November 8, 2019 <https://lnt.ma/maroc-afrique-hausse-moyenne-de-5-echanges-commerciaux-10-ans/> (accessed May 10, 2018).

47   Ghita Tadlaoui, "Morocco's Religious Diplomacy in Africa – Analysis," Eurasia Review, March 1, 2015 <https://www.eurasiareview.com/01032015-moroccos-religious-diplomacy-in-africa-analysis/> (accessed May 10, 2019).

48   Tamba François Koundouno, "'Morocco-China Silk Road Council' to Boost Sino-Moroccan Relations," Morocco World News, March 29, 2018 <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2018/03/243348/morocco-china-silk-road-council-boost-sino-moroccan-relations/> (accessed May 10, 2019).

membership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Even though ECOWAS members have agreed "in principle" to Morocco's accession, West African businesses fear Moroccan competitors would crush them. In Nigeria, ECOWAS's largest economy, criticism of Morocco's membership bid is especially strong, as they fear Morocco would benefit from freer trade but not respect other rules, such as visa-free travel. Thus, Morocco's membership demand seems at the moment to be on hold. In the long-term however, Morocco's potential ECOWAS membership can potentially benefit Europe, especially European private sector investments.

Morocco's African Foreign Policy

Morocco's African foreign policy is neither a new nor a recent phenomenon, but differs on various points from its previous foreign policies. First, Morocco's new African policy strongly focusses on the economic sector, particularly on investments and trade, such as banking, mining, telecommunications, and construction. Second, this policy not only encompasses but goes beyond francophone partner countries, especially towards East African countries. Recently, cooperation agreements with Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Zambia have been concluded. The third characteristic is the dominant role of King Mohammed VI, who regularly visits African partner countries and generally holds high-level talks and inaugurates development projects.[49] King Mohammed VI's commitment to the African continent was highlighted by his decision to establish a Ministry for African Affairs. The new Minister for African Cooperation, Mohcine Jazouli, was appointed in January 2018 with the mission to boost Morocco's investment strategy on the African continent.[50] In addition, Morocco intends to promote peace and counter extremism in the Sub-Saharan region through exporting its "spiritual security" experience.

However, the new Africa-oriented religious policy is not a new policy orientation, but an extension of earlier religious policies developed in the mid-1980s as a form of alternative or parallel diplomacy. The aim of Morocco's transnational religious policy is to consolidate spiritual heritage and strategic partnerships with African countries and to protect the

country's national security by countering terrorism and extremism all over the continent. Additionally, it is a transnational instrument to join the African community by surpassing the division between Algeria and Morocco.[51] Politically, it is easier for Morocco to strengthen partnerships across the Sahara than in its own neighborhood, as regional economic and political integration in the Maghreb still suffers from a long-running rivalry with Algeria.

> *Morocco's African foreign policy is neither a new nor a recenet phenomenon*

Morocco's turn towards stronger south-south cooperation is a response to its exhausted northern cooperation partnerships, which do not offer cooperation possibilities beyond those that already exist. This rapprochement coincides with a difficult period of EU-Moroccan relations, especially regarding goods originating from the disputed southern provinces. Even though Morocco expected more pro-Moroccan reactions from the EU, its re-integration to the AU and ECOWAS membership bid should certainly not be considered as Morocco turning away from the EU. The country certainly aims to rely on good relations with its partner countries across the Mediterranean. However, Morocco also uses the opportunity to engage with every possible ally.[52]

The Hub Between Europe and Africa

Morocco's existing strong relations with Europe (especially the statut avancé and DCFTA negotiations) as well as the country's foreign policy orientation towards African countries strengthen its position as a mediator between Europe and Africa on the institutional and political level. Aware of its role as a hub and link between Europe and Africa, Morocco skillfully uses its leverage for strengthening its economic and political ties with European and African coun-

49   N. Messari, "Morocco's African Foreign Policy," Menara Papers Future Notes 5, Rome, 2018.

50   "Maroc : Rabat nomme son nouveau « Monsieur Afrique »," La Tribune Afrique, January, 23, 2018 <https://afrique.latribune.fr/politique/integration-regionale/2018-01-23/maroc-rabat-nomme-son-nouveau-monsieur-afrique-765752.html> (accessed January 2, 2019).

51   Salim Hmimnat, "Morocco's Religious 'Soft Power' in Africa: As a strategy supporting Morocco's stretching in Africa," Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis, June 6, 2018, pp. 6-7, 10-11 <http://mipa.institute/5642> (accessed May 10, 2019).

52   Vish Sakthivel, "Morocco's New Africa Policy? The African Union, Algeria, and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy," Foreign Policy Research Institute, July 22, 2016 <https://www.fpri.org/2016/07/moroccos-new-africa-policy/> (accessed May 10, 2019).

tries. Security cooperation and migration are gaining increasing importance in the Europe-Morocco-Africa triangle. To date, Morocco already participates in trilateral cooperation between Africa-Morocco and Japan, France, and Belgium, namely in the areas of infrastructure, health care, development, and agriculture. Trilateral cooperation within the advanced status with the EU enables Morocco to provide its knowledge in the fields of renewable energy, tourism, local governance, and public housing.[53]

Creating a Ministry for African Affairs reflects the king's commitment

Since 2009, trade between Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa has increased annually by 12.8 percent. However, the share of Morocco's external trade of Sub-Saharan African countries remains low in comparison to other partners, such as the EU or the MENA region. This might be due to the weakness of African capital markets' infrastructure, the non-application of trade protocols, and the absence of direct land or sea transport lines.[54] Besides numerous bilateral cooperation agreements with Sub-Saharan African states, Morocco's efforts to conclude multilateral agreements or to join supranational communities, such as the ECOWAS, confirms the country's intention to foster a regionally oriented and far-reaching economic investment policy.

Morocco's Multiple Identities

Morocco's multiple identities enable the North African country to position itself as a hub and intermediator. Lesson-drawing and experience-sharing with African, Arab, and European states enables Morocco to select best practices and benefit advantageously from each regions' expertise and advantages. Morocco's geographic location and African identity enables the country to benefit from a comparative advantage on the regional and continent-wide level, because many African states consider Morocco as a role model for political and economic development. This is due, among other factors, to Morocco's proactive soft diplomacy in higher education and socialization efforts of future African leaders.

Every year, around 16,000 African students from 47 different countries study at Moroccan universities, with almost 6,500 receiving scholarships from the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation (AMCI).[55] Additionally, special leadership programs provide professional trainings for public sector officials. This training cooperation is based on strong institutional partnerships and ties.[56] Besides the institutional and interpersonal relations between students and public officials with their host institutions, these students become political and economic leaders once they return to their home countries. In their public positions, they will maintain good relations with Morocco and adopt pro-Moroccan approaches in their professional environment.

Furthermore, Morocco's religious identity is an important tool of its soft diplomacy. The Mohammed VI Institute, established in 2015, trains imams from Arab, African, and European countries with the goal of forming a religious elite. In addition to selection criteria favoring members of certain religious orders, access to the Mohamed VI Institute can also serve concrete political interests, either of the imams' home countries or of Morocco, such as support for ruling power circles.[57]

Moreover, Mohamed VI uses a moderate discourse of Islam to help build new economic and political ties. Besides the king's status of "Commander of the Faithful," according to the Moroccan constitution, citizens in West African countries also consider him as a religious leader, especially members of the Tijaniyyah Brotherhood, a Sufi group within Sunni Islam.[58] Additionally, Morocco is not only a recipient of interna-

53   Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES), "Les relations Maroc-Afrique: les voies d'une stratégie globale et rénovée. Rapport général de l'étude thématique" (Rabat, 2012), p. 21 <http://www.ires.ma/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RAPPORT_AFRIQUE.pdf> (accessed February 12, 2019).

54   R. Berahab, "Relations between Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa: What is the potential for trade and foreign direct investment?," Policy Brief PB-17/04, OCP Policy Center, Rabat, 2017, p. 1.

55   IRES, "La Politique Africaine du Maroc," October 26, 2015, p. 4.

56   Moussa Diop and Khalil Essalek, "Mohamed Methqal de l'AMCI: déjà 25.000 diplômés africains formés au Maroc," Le360Afrique, October 1, 2017 <http://afrique.le360.ma/maroc/politique/2017/10/01/15468-video-mohamed-methqal-de-lamci-deja-25000-diplomes-africains-formes-au-maroc-15468> (accessed February 12, 2019).

57   Salim Hmimnat, "Training Malian Imams in Morocco: Challenges and Prospects," Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis, March 21, 2019 <https://mipa.institute/6639?fbclid=IwAR3N3XcyuNTXQY6jQl_k1CRs 8wExuyw1K_hWqdkZwKFMop9AylRccS2tsSs> (accessed March 23, 2019).

58   Tadlaoui, "Morocco's Religious Diplomacy in Africa," p. 2.

tional development aid, but also provides large sums of development aid to Sub-Saharan African countries. Morocco cancelled debt for the least developed countries on the continent and granted trade preferences, triangle cooperation, and development projects for African partner countries.[59]

Recommendations

European policymakers should thus consider Morocco's regional experiences and integrate the country's sector-specific expertise and knowledge, especially in the fields of renewable energy, infrastructure, and administrative regionalization. Strengthening institutional ties with Moroccan public authorities and higher education institutions may further enable the EU to create strong partnerships with African partner institutions.

> – *The EU should strategically use Morocco's leverage as a hub and intermediator between Africa, the MENA region, and Europe in its own Africa policy*

Due to its multiple identities as well as its geographic location, Morocco has become an important hub and intermediator between the Euro-Mediterranean region and Africa over the past few decades. Regarding its regional leverage as well as its expertise in securitization, institutional development, and socioeconomic transformation, the EU should strategically benefit from Morocco's regional advantage and important position as a global player for its own regional MENA and African policies. Close ties and linkages between European economic policymakers and entrepreneurs will enable European private actors to invest more easily on the African continent.

> – *European policymakers should show greater flexibility in negotiations within the DCFTA and other trade and agricultural agreements*

Morocco has a strong and competitive economy, a good investment infrastructure, and Moroccan companies and groups are represented in numerous African countries. As the gateway to Africa, Europe should consider Morocco's economic power in its own foreign trade relations. Morocco's growing economy has enabled the country to search for new and alternative trading partners and allies beyond existing ones. A probable ECOWAS membership would boost the country's economy even further, and constitutes a potential benefit for EU and

European private actors. Thus, European leaders and policymakers should take the opportunity to engage more strongly with Morocco by offering advantages in existing and future trade agreements, in order to benefit from Morocco's regional economic clout.

> – *Europe should encourage Morocco's soft diplomacy, security, and development strategy in Africa to combat global terrorism and poverty*

Besides engaging in diverse development and security programs, the EU should strengthen Morocco's efforts in its African security and development policy. Morocco transfers not only financial aid but also knowledge to African countries in the fields of production, administration, and security. Due to Morocco's strong religious, cultural, and societal ties, cooperation in these fields will boost the impact of foreign securitization and development policies in the region. The exchange of experiences and best practices will also enable European actors to improve EU security and development strategies as well as their implementation. By supporting Morocco's security and development strategies in Africa, the EU can gain from Morocco's experiences and knowledge to improve its own cooperation strategies.

> – *Morocco should define more clearly the role of its economic and political institutions in its foreign policy strategies towards the EU and Africa*

Aware of its own distinct path of democratic transition, Morocco should deploy its own economic institutions and political actors more precisely to better advance its agenda with the EU. While having a clear vision of projects and timelines within Morocco's Africa policy, the African agenda should however remain a distinct approach in Morocco's foreign policy.

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59   IRES, "La Politique Africaine du Maroc," p. 4.

MOROCCO'S MIGRATION POLICY AT STAKE – BETWEEN FOREIGN POLICY GAINS AND HUMAN RIGHTS COSTS

Tachfine Baida

Morocco's adoption of a new migration policy in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring has resulted in paradoxical outcomes. Whereas this strategy has succeeded in serving Morocco's diplomatic interests in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly through bolstering its image as a regional power, its effectiveness in protecting migrants' rights and promoting their integration at a domestic level has been limited. Furthermore, with the arrival of more migrants in the country and growing pressure to increase surveillance at its borders, Morocco has shown ambivalence in its treatment of migrants. If the Moroccan government wants to maintain its image as a regional "leader" on migration, considerable efforts to adjust policy need to be made. It is particularly recommended that Morocco: establishes a mechanism to prevent acts of violence against migrants, expedites the adoption of a migration and asylum law in line with international human rights standards, and allocates more funds to integration and protection programs.

Long disregarded by Moroccan policymakers, sub-Saharan Africa has been the focus of much attention in recent years. In the power vacuum created with the retreat of North African powers following the 2011 upheavals, Morocco saw an opportunity to be seized. The political instability of regional powers such as Libya and Egypt provided Morocco prospects for (re)claiming a key role in Africa. One of the main aspects of this foreign policy shift consisted of representing the country as a safe haven for migrants. In 2013, under the initiative of King Mohammed VI, the country adopted the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum, (SNIA), with the aim of "ensuring a better integration of migrants and a better management of migratory flows in the framework of a coherent, global, humanist, and responsible policy."[60] Since the SNIA's adoption, Morocco has sought to display the image of a host country that welcomes migrants. Breaking with the view of migration as a problem, official discourses represented it as an opportunity. In parallel, two campaigns to regularize migrants

were conducted in 2014 and 2017, which benefitted some 50,000 individuals, most of whom come from sub-Saharan African countries.[61]

Morocco's adoption of the SNIA contributed substantially to reinforcing the country's diplomatic ties with African countries. King Mohammed VI's appointment as the African Union "Champion" of Migration only one year after Morocco's return to the pan-African organization became emblematic of the country's new role as a regional model for migration management in Africa. On the occasion of the 30th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union (AU) in January 2018, the King submitted a report entitled "For an African Agenda on Migration." The report boldly advocates an "Afro-centric and humanistic" approach to migration. It dismisses control of migratory flows as ineffective in addressing the root causes of migration and recognizes migration as an opportunity for development.[62] In December 2018, Morocco was mandated by the AU to host an African Observatory on Migrations within its territory, the first institution of its kind on the continent.

The strategy of positioning Morocco as a regional model for managing migration in Africa also paid off at a global level. Indeed, the SNIA was effective in attracting the interest of Western donors to fund numerous programs and projects associated with migration. In the view of many donors, including the European Union (EU), the SNIA provided a framework to facilitate the integration of migrants in Morocco and prevent them from seeking further opportunities in Europe.

The Pitfalls of Morocco's Migration Policy

Morocco's decision to enact a new policy on migration management proved effective insofar as it enabled the country to strengthen its ties with African countries as well as with the EU. Nevertheless, whereas the SNIA initially resulted in positive outcomes for Morocco's diplomacy, the country seems to be facing increasing difficulties with migration at the domestic level. At the same time as Moroccan officials continue to depict Morocco as a safe haven for migrants, migrants' rights in Morocco have shown little improvement. Furthermore, recent

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60   Royaume du Maroc, "Politique Nationale d'Immigration et d'Asile 2013-2016," (2016).

61   Hassina Mechaï, "Maroc: au-delà du pacte de Marrakech, faire entendre sa voix en Afrique, Le Point Afrique, December 19, 2018 <http://afrique.lepoint.fr/actualites/maroc-au-dela-du-pacte-de-marrakech-faire-entendre-la-voix-de-l-afrique-page-3-19-12-2018-2280798_2365.php> (accessed May 11, 2019).

62   African Union, "For An African Agenda on Migration: Report of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, Leader on Migration, to the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union," January 2018.

developments have shown the limits of the Moroccan approach to managing migration. Most importantly, the upsurge of acts of violence against migrants, the ongoing absence of a legal framework for asylum and migration, and the lack of prospects for migrants' socioeconomic integration have threatened the sustainability of the SNIA. In the long-run, this could result in damage to Morocco's relations with both its African neighbors as well as with the EU.

Resurgence of Violence Against Migrants

Perhaps the best illustration of Morocco's ambivalent approach to migration is the resurgence of violence against migrants in the country. In 2018, the Italian government's decision to block migrants arriving by sea resulted in increased numbers of migrants crossing the Mediterranean through Morocco and Spain. As a result, EU states started to pressure Morocco to increase border surveillance and stop illegal crossings. Although Rabat officially refused,[63] state authorities conducted violent operations to disperse migrant populations in the country. In the summer of 2018, hundreds of migrants were deported from the regions of Tangiers, Tetouan, and Nador to the south of the country.[64] In the same period, migrant camps along the northern coast were destroyed and several migrants were expelled from the territory.[65] These operations were conducted outside of any legal basis or procedure.

Acts of racism and discrimination against migrants also continue to plague the atmosphere in the country. As described in a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, many migrants have reported experiencing acts of discrimination when seeking access to public services, including healthcare, education, and employment.[66] Several civil society organizations also report a rise of racism in the country, criticizing the fact that acts of discrimination committed against migrants of color often remain unpunished.

Lack of Long-Term Integration Prospects

Whereas the SNIA was supposed to set the stage for the establishment of a legal framework for migration in Morocco, the government has not yet introduced adequate reforms to ensure the proper integration of migrants in the country. Current legal provisions can be problematic. For example, Law 02-03 on the entry and residency of foreigners in the Kingdom of Morocco and on irregular emigration and immigration has not been amended since its adoption. This law, adopted in the aftermath of the 2003 terrorist attacks, has today become obsolete insofar as it can be used to legitimize the expulsion of migrants from the country. The law refers to "foreigners who constitute a threat to public order" (Articles 4, 14, 16, 21, and 25), and allows authorities to expel them from Moroccan territory (Article 25). What a "threat to public order" means however is not defined, which can potentially result in abuses.[67] In addition, Moroccan authorities are still unable to process asylum claims. The Office of Refugees and Stateless Persons (BRA) which opened in 2013, is not functional because there is no legal basis that allows it to process asylum claims. In the absence of a working mechanism in Morocco, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is still taking responsibility for receiving and processing asylum claims, as well as providing relevant protection for refugees.

> *Despite Rabat's official refusal, authorities used violence against migrants*

Five years after the adoption of the SNIA, migrants still face substantial difficulties settling in Morocco. In spite of state discourses, very few migrants, even those who have benefitted from the two regularization campaigns, are able to make a decent living

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63   In a press conference held on 26 October 2018, Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita said that "Morocco has never been and never will be the police of anyone." <https://lematin.ma/journal/2018/nasser-bourita-maroc-n-ete-n-sera-gendarme/303571.html> (accessed May 11, 2019).

64   GADEM, "Coûts et blessures : Rapport sur les opérations des forces de l'ordre menées dans le nord du Maroc entre juillet et septembre 2018" <https://www.lacimade.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20180927_GADEM_Couts_et_blessures.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2019).

65   GADEM, "Expulsions gratuites: Note d'analyse sur les mesures d'éloignement mises en œuvre hors de tout cadre légal entre septembre et octobre 2018," 2018.

66   Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, "Déclaration de fin de mission de la Rapporteuse spéciale sur les formes contemporaines de racisme, de discrimination raciale, de xénophobie et de l'intolérance qui y est associée à l'issue de sa mission au Royaume du Maroc," December 21, 2018.

67   Royaume du Maroc, Loi n° 02-03 du 20 novembre 2003 relative à l'entrée et au séjour des étrangers au Royaume du Maroc, à l'émigration et l'immigration irrégulières. <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/83963/93068/F122010 3868/MAR-83963.pdf > (accessed May 11, 2019).

in the country. While the government adopted several decrees to allow migrants and Moroccans equal access to public services, national social services still lack the capacity to respond to vulnerable migrants' needs. As a result, migrants often find it challenging to access basic services, including healthcare, emergency housing, and employment services.[68] Instead of investing more resources to provide these services to migrants, Morocco has been encouraging so-called voluntary return plans, which provide financial aid to migrants to return to their home countries. However, these strategies are controversial and do little to serve the objectives of the SNIA.

Funds directed at protection programs have been steadily diminishing

Making EU Border Security a Priority over Migrants' Protection

Faced with what has been labelled as "Europe's migrant crisis," a number of foreign aid instruments have been developed by European states to address migration flows.[69] Given its central position in migratory movements, Morocco has, in the past few years, been one of the main recipients of this aid. One of the main instruments currently targeting Morocco is the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF). for addressing the root causes of irregular migration in Africa Established following the Valetta Summit in 2015, this multi-donor fund is meant to provide quick and effective funding for projects aimed at ensuring stability through better "management of migration."[70] Nonetheless, while this fund was initially meant to address the actual causes of migration in close cooperation with recipient governments in Africa, much of this aid is being unilaterally diverted to border security management. Indeed, with the growth of illegal crossings to Spain in 2018, the EU has been pushing for the reallocation of the EUTF to border manage-

ment on the southern Mediterranean coastline. Since 2018, the EU has adopted two major projects aimed at enhancing border authorities' capacity to stop illegal crossings in the western Mediterranean, totaling of €95 million. At the same time, funds directed at protection programs have been steadily diminishing. As of December 2018, they represented a mere 10 percent of European cooperation dedicated to migration in Morocco.[71] With Moroccan authorities still unable to respond to basic migrants' rights, there is serious cause to fear that numerous migrants in vulnerable conditions could suffer from the consequences of this trend.

Whereas border management might seem imperative in the light of recent political developments in Europe, it does not address the root causes of migration and does not serve the purposes of the SNIA. Border management is unproductive and results in creating a security focus unconducive to integration. The management of foreign aid dedicated to migration seems to be increasingly ruled by a narrow security vision at the expense of a broader development approach. In the long-run however, protection and integration programs can be more effective in limiting irregular migration. Research already suggests that a considerable number of migrants in Morocco may not want to go to Europe if the conditions guaranteeing their integration and protection are present. According to a study carried out by the Université Internationale de Rabat, 67 percent of migrants claim that they would rather stay and live in Morocco than go to Europe.[72] It is the ongoing lack of perspectives for socio-economic integration that makes migrants eventually abandon prospects of staying in Morocco.

Recommendations

Morocco's SNIA has proved to be a useful policy insofar as it has enabled the country to bolster its reputation in both Africa and Europe. Yet the government's inability to address migrants' rights domestically may substantially limit its impact. As such, urgent steps need to be made to ensure the integration of migrants, and thus safeguard Morocco's diplomatic interests abroad.

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68   Plateforme Nationale de Protection des Migrants, "Etat des lieux de l'accès aux services pour les personnes migrantes," 2017.

69   Tubiana Jérôme et al., "Multilateral Damage: The impact of EU migration policies on central Saharan routes," Clingendael, September 2018 <https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2018-09/multilateral-damage.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2019).

70   "Plan D'Action" Valetta Summit on Migration, 2015 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21838/action-plan-fr-2.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2019).

71   European Commission, "EU Cooperation on Migration with Morocco," December 2018 <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eu-morocco-factsheet.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2019).

72   Fouzi Mourji et al., Migrants subsahariens au Maroc : enjeux d'une migration de résidence," Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Rabat, 2016.

– *Establish a mechanism to ensure respect for migrants' rights*

The first step for Morocco to reclaim its credibility as a regional "leader" on migration and ensure the sustainability of the SNIA is to prevent any further acts of violence against migrants. Preventing violence not only means providing funds for training and sensitization campaigns for the police, who have insufficient resources to ensure the protection of migrants' rights. More efforts to fight the abuse of force and impunity need to be made. The government should establish an independent mechanism to monitor respect for migrants' rights, hosted within the Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme (Moroccan Council of Human Rights). The latter, which already works on safeguarding human rights in the country, could be given a mandate to specifically monitor migrants' rights, receive relevant complaints, and ensure their follow-up with the judiciary.

– *Expedite the adoption of a legal framework on migration and asylum*

The migration policy enacted by Morocco since 2013 remains incomplete without a clear legal framework for migration and asylum that is in line with international human rights standards. The most urgent reform is to revise Law 02.03 on the entry and residency of foreigners in the Kingdom of Morocco, irregular emigration, and immigration. It is important to adopt a comprehensive law that grants migrants the same rights as nationals in terms of access to basic services. The second step is for the Moroccan government to accelerate the adoption of an asylum law. The government should establish a clear and transparent legal framework that defines the procedures and modalities of granting asylum. As such, the BRA should be transformed into a functional body in charge of identifying refugees and providing them with the protection they need.

– *(Re)allocate funds and foreign aid to prioritize integration and protection programs*

The government should be able to better channel public development aid into programs that can contribute to the integration of migrants in the country. The Moroccan government and its European partners should allocate more funds to protect migrants' rights and ensure their integration, rather than spending them on border policing. The EUTF represents a cooperation instrument that can be used in this respect. For example, it would be advantageous

to build on the capacity of national institutions in charge of providing social services to migrants, such as the Entraide Nationale. More funds should also be allocated to NGOs in contact with migrants, especially in the fields of healthcare, professional training, emergency housing, and legal aid. Morocco can capitalize on its own experience hosting migrants to better negotiate programs with international donors – including the EU – that are most relevant to ensuring the integration of migrants in the country.

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