

Chapter 21

The Institutional Channeling of Transnational Economic Mobilization in Three Moroccan Regions



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21.1 Introduction

Whether from, to, or through Morocco, international migration is a structural component of the evolution of the Kingdom's economy, demography, society, and territorial organization. Throughout the twentieth century, Morocco has experienced several "ages of emigration" (Sayad, 1999), with varying rhythms and trends. Since then, Moroccan international emigration has been undergoing complex socio-demographic changes that are accelerating in relation to global developments.

After its independence in 1956, Morocco became one of the main emigration countries in the world and the number of Moroccans residing abroad (MRA) is constantly increasing. This phenomenon now concerns all Moroccan social strata and practically all regions of the country. This generalization of emigration has resulted in a globalization of destinations; while the Moroccan emigrations was essentially directed to the Western European countries, now this emigration concern the five continents.

The High Commission for Planning (HCP, 2020) estimates the number of Moroccans living abroad at five million, equivalent to 13% of the country's total population, spread over more than 100 countries around the world. Europe remains by far the continent where the majority of the Moroccan expatriate community is settled, and France remains the country of immigration where the largest number of MRAs reside. According to OECD data for the year 2020, there are just over one million of them living in France, 935,000 in Spain and 440,000 in Italy. These three countries account for nearly three-quarters of all Moroccan emigrants living in OECD countries.

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Like many diaspora communities, MRAs have developed and continue to maintain economic, financial, social, and cultural ties with their country of origin. Indeed, for several decades, MRAs, on their own initiative, have been investing in the development of their territories of origin by building basic infrastructure in various fields (electrification, drinking water supply and sanitation, construction of roads and dispensaries, rehabilitation of schools, development of agricultural projects and income-generating activities, etc.). Considering their multidimensional contributions, particularly the importance of their remittances in the balance of payments, the Moroccan government has been deploying diaspora policies since the early 1990s (Dufoix, 2010) that aims to make these expatriates agents for the socio-economic development of their country of origin.

For many sending countries, identifying, organizing, gathering and mobilizing the diaspora are major concerns in their international migration governance strategies. This chapter aims to identify a series of state practices designed to promote the contribution of migration to local and regional development, both in countries of departure and destination. The objective is to reflect on the Moroccan strategy towards Moroccans living abroad (MRAs).

In order to analyze the regional deployment of Morocco's migration policy towards its citizens living abroad, the paper proposes an analysis of projects and initiatives implemented in the three regions and seeks to grasp their contributions but also their limitations. The paper is based on semi-structured interviews conducted between 2021 and 2022 with local actors concerned with the mobilization of Moroccans living abroad for regional development.

21.2 Morocco: A Crossroad at the Heart of an Old Tradition of Migration

Due to its geographical location, at the junction between the African and European continents, and following the successive conquests and colonizations (Phoenician, Roman, Arab, Spanish and French), Morocco has always been a crossroads of civilizations and a territory of population mixing, meeting and cohabitation of cultures as diverse as they are different. Michel Abitbol's work (2009) provides an original "biography" of Morocco from antiquity to the present day. He traces the various tributaries that have shaped its history and identity, making it a plural country, at once "Berber", Arab, African and Mediterranean. The movements of the people from, to and through the Moroccan territory occupy a prominent place in this narrative.

Moreover, Moroccan society has always experienced, in one way or another, international migration, with inconstant forms and orientations. The very distant past of this phenomenon goes far beyond the time of the French protectorate in Morocco (1912–1956) and even the colonization of its neighboring country, Algeria, in 1830. Indeed, for a long time and until the middle of the nineteenth century, Moroccan

international migration was South-South oriented. Throughout this period, movements of people were structured along two distinct axes: one joining the Middle East through North Africa and the Levant, the other joining West Africa through the Sahara. The first axis, probably the oldest and most important, is inseparable from the spread of Islam. Several testimonies attest to the definitive settlement of pilgrims along the route leading to Saudi Arabia and their progressive insertion into the exchange networks leading to Mecca. The second axis is oriented North-South. It linked Morocco to what was then known as Bilad es Soudan, the countries of the Sudan, known today as the countries of the Sahel and West Africa, via the Atlas Mountains, the Saharan oases and a series of mythical cities such as Sijilmassa or Timbuktu (Charef, 2003).

Thus, the ancient trans-Saharan caravan trade routes, linking Morocco to the Sahelian empires (Abitbol, 1980; Pascon, 1980) have generated, on the margins of the economy, a great migratory dynamic between the two shores of the Sahara, leading Moroccan traders to settle since the mid-nineteenth century in West Africa, particularly in Senegal, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire (Abou El Farah, 2007; Lanza, 2011), but also the anchoring of a population of sub-Saharan origin in various regions of Morocco. Moreover, this sub-Saharan population was not the only one to choose Morocco as a place to settle. The history of emigration, or rather of expulsion and exile of Muslims and Jews from Spain, shows how the latter took refuge in Morocco between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, and settled in certain cities such as Tetouan, Fez, Salé or Meknes (Kenbib, 1994).

If the long history of these population movements approves the position of Morocco as a great Mediterranean migratory crossroads, it is since the beginning of the twentieth century that the migratory flows from this country towards Europe, particularly towards France, will take an unprecedented scale.

Like all international migrations, the one originating from Morocco is constantly undergoing complex socio-demographic changes, which are accelerating in relation to world developments. Throughout the twentieth century, Morocco has become one of the main countries of emigration on an international scale. Since the country's independence in 1956, the number of emigrants has not stopped growing and the social base of emigration has widened until today it concerns practically all social strata and all regions of the Kingdom. This generalization of emigration is accompanied by a globalization of destinations. It is no longer limited to Western European countries, where Moroccans rank among the leading immigrant communities in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy, but now concerns all five continents.

It is difficult to obtain accurate statistics on emigration from Morocco since there is no systematic monitoring of the phenomenon. Therefore, for this section, we have used the latest information note on migration data prepared by the OECD. It has the merit of providing updated statistics on the number of Moroccans residing mainly in OECD member countries, disaggregated by gender and education level. These statistics are collected and compiled by the OECD from the database of population censuses or population registers of its member countries. It should be noted that the data in this note refer only to Moroccan emigrants, i.e., those who were born in Morocco and reside in another country, in this case an OECD country.

According to OECD data, in 2020 there were about 3.3 million Moroccan emigrants residing in the OECD member countries, up from just over 3 million in 2015–2016, an increase of 8% over the past 5 years. In relative terms, this increase in the Moroccan emigrant population is more modest than that observed in previous periods (+25% between 2005 and 2010, then +13% between 2010 and 2015). Indeed, over the past 20 years, the total number of Moroccan-born emigrants residing in OECD countries has doubled. France remains by far the country where the largest number of them reside, with just over one million Moroccan emigrants, followed by Spain (935,000 Moroccan emigrants) and Italy (440,000 Moroccan emigrants). These three countries account for nearly three-quarters of all Moroccan emigrants living in OECD countries.

Spain and Italy are also the countries where their numbers have increased most rapidly over the last 20 years, with a more than threefold increase in both countries, while the Moroccan diaspora in France has seen its numbers increase by about 50% over the same period. The other main destination countries for Moroccan emigrants are Belgium (nearly 230,000 Moroccan emigrants in 2020), Israel (which is the only country where the number of Moroccan-born has decreased since 2000, due to the drying up of flows and the aging of this group), the Netherlands, and Germany (where the number of Moroccan emigrants has more than doubled in 20 years) (Fig. 21.1).

Among Moroccan-born migrants residing in OECD countries in 2015–2016, nearly 48% were women, a share that has been steadily increasing since the early 2000s. This trend is also observable in France, the main country of settlement for Moroccan migrants: between 2000 and 2019, the share of women among Moroccan-born individuals aged 15 and older increased from 47% to nearly 51% (Fig. 21.2).

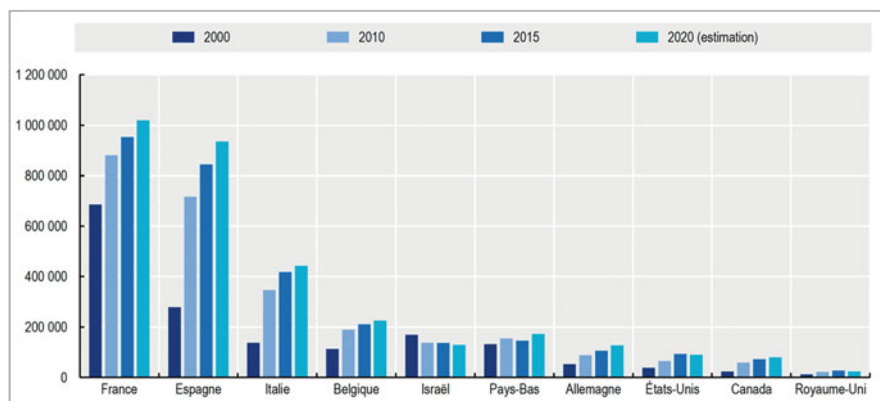


Fig. 21.1 Moroccan immigrants in the main OECD destination countries, 2000–2020

Source: Database on immigrants in OECD countries (DIOC)

See: Information note on migration data, March 2022

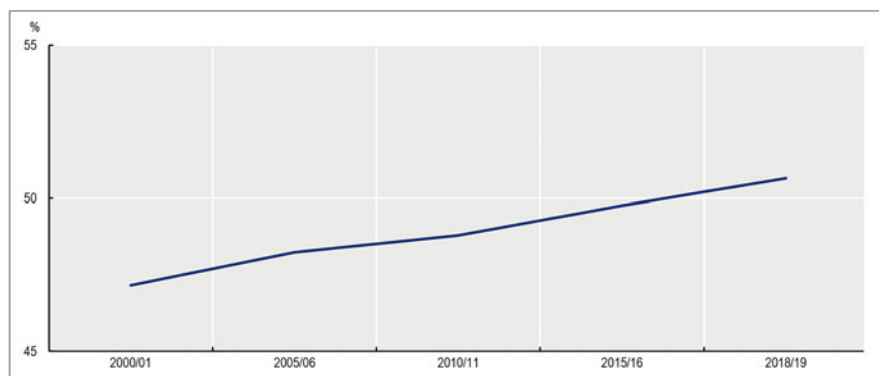


Fig. 21.2 Share of women among Moroccan-born persons living in France aged 15 and over, 2000–2019

Source: Database on immigrants in OECD countries (DIOC), INSEE, French population census
See: Information note on migration data, March 2022

This evolution reflects both the feminization of migration flows from Morocco in recent years and the aging of the cohorts of emigrants who arrived in OECD countries several decades ago, mostly men who arrived as labor migrants.

Education is also one of the key characteristics for diaspora analysis, as it largely conditions the socio-economic integration of émigrés in destination countries, as well as the contribution of émigrés to the development of their country of origin. As far as Moroccan emigrants are concerned, the share of graduates has increased over the past 15 years, from 14% to 17% between 2000–2001 and 2015–2016. However, Moroccan emigrants in OECD countries remain on average less educated than immigrants overall and natives of OECD countries. Moreover, among Moroccan emigrants, women have a slightly less favorable education distribution than men. For example, in 2015–2016, about 16% of Moroccan emigrant women and 18% of Moroccan emigrant men had a tertiary degree, while these proportions were 34% and 32% among all immigrants residing in OECD countries (Fig. 21.3).

At the same time, the share of Moroccan emigrants with a low level of education (59% among women and 56% among men) is significantly higher than that observed among all immigrants (31% for both men and women) or among natives (36% among women and 34% among men). However, there are major differences according to the country of destination. For example, among Moroccan emigrants living in France in 2015–2016, nearly a quarter had higher education degrees. This proportion was much lower in Spain (6%) and Italy (5%), as well as in Belgium (10%) and the Netherlands (14%). In the case of France, the magnitude of student mobility from Morocco to France offsets the large number of poorly educated Moroccan emigrants residing there. Yet, Moroccan emigrants living in North America are, on average, much better educated than those living in Europe: more than 40% have a college degree in the United States, and more than 70% in Canada.

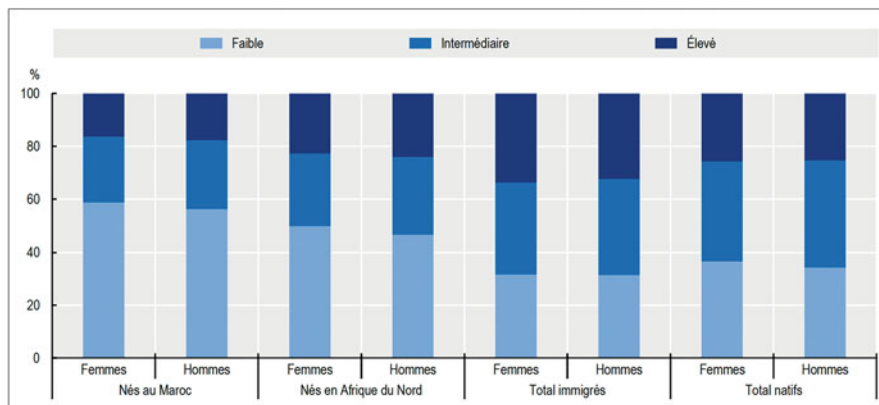


Fig. 21.3 Distribution of educational attainment of Moroccan emigrants and several comparison groups in OECD countries, 2015/16

Source: Database on immigrants in OECD countries (DIOC)

See: Information note on migration data, March 2022

21.3 Moroccan Diaspora Policies

For a long time, the stay of Moroccans and their families abroad was considered temporary or provisional. In this perspective, efforts were made to strengthen their sense of attachment to their country of origin, at least in discursive terms. Thus, until the mid-1970s, Moroccan international migration, which was already a social phenomenon, did not receive the attention it deserved from the public authorities. Certainly, it was managed through conventions with host countries and efforts were made to develop the repatriation of foreign currency since 1966. In reality, it can be said that this period was marked by a passive, even distrustful attitude of the Moroccan state towards its nationals abroad. It was not until the early 1990s that the beginnings of a tangible policy towards them were noticed. This chapter therefore provides an overview of the evolution of the Moroccan government's interest in its expatriates, while analyzing the terms by which they are referred to and the institutions set up to manage the affairs of MRAs.

Until the early 1970s, Moroccans living abroad were referred to as “Moroccan workers abroad” (MWA). In fact, most Moroccan international migration during the 1950s and 1960s was economic, involving low or unskilled labor. This was largely ordered through several bilateral agreements signed between Morocco and certain Western European countries, such as France (in 1963), Belgium (in 1964) and the Netherlands (in 1969). In this context of strong demands from the host countries, Moroccan migrants were reduced to the exclusive contribution of their labor force. This was intended to meet the needs of European industry on the one hand, and to see the country of origin benefit from their remittances on the other. These

emigrants, temporarily installed abroad to work, were for the most part keen to return to their country as soon as their contracts expired and some savings were made (Sayad, 1999). As a result, they were always considered and perceived as foreigners in the places where they settled and, in official Moroccan discourse, as eternal “subjects” of the King, bound by the act of allegiance to his sovereignty. Circumscribed in this perception of an obsolescence of the presence and of a look purely articulated to the utilitarianism of the work in the chain in emigration and to the returns in economic resources towards the country of origin, neither Morocco, nor even the countries of immigration were concerned about the conditions of life and work of these Moroccan workers abroad. Their civic and political rights, as well as their social and cultural life, thus remained in the blind spot of public policies “here” and “there” (Brand, 2010).

After the unilateral cessation of labor immigration by host countries (1972–1973), Moroccan international immigration underwent considerable structural changes. From a labor immigration composed of young, single, isolated men, it was transformed into a “settlement immigration” (Sayad, 1999). The latter was reinforced by the rise of family reunification, the birth of children abroad and the arrival of new profiles of Moroccan migrants. With the lasting and definitive settlement of Moroccan migrants, as well as the social and demographic transformations of their immigration, it is no longer possible to think of this phenomenon solely in terms of work and thus reduce Moroccans living abroad to a simple group of temporarily present “workers” or “subjects” of the King from a distance. The evolution of this situation will cause the conceptual term to evolve in the same vein. Thus, the acronym changed from MWA (Moroccan Workers Abroad) to MLA (Moroccans Living Abroad).

The management of the affairs of the MRAs and their descendants were, until then, essentially the responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and Foreign Affairs and was thus channeled through the Moroccan consular authorities in the countries of immigration. Morocco’s main concerns during this period were to manage its migrant population, optimize its economic contribution, maintain its allegiance to the Kingdom, and monitor the political and trade union activities of activists or opponents in a context of political tensions.

To ensure the observation of the dynamics of MRA, the Moroccan consulates set up a network of associations, known as “Amicales des Travailleurs et Commerçants Marocains à l’Étranger”. Their mission was to “maintain the link between migrants and Morocco, and to control [their] political trajectories” (Lacroix, 2005: 93). As the economist Abdelkrim Belguendouz points out, these associations “functioned [rather] as instruments of the Moroccan consulates to supervise, enlist and monitor migrants, even preventing them from participating in claims and labor struggles to protect their rights or to have equal treatment with the natives” (Belguendouz, 2006: 4). The security aspect of the “Amicales” will therefore end up taking precedence over the cultural activities and animations. The latter were supposed to strengthen the bond of allegiance of Moroccan migrants with their country of origin, but the achievement of the expected objective remained unattained.

If this pioneering period was marked by the passive, disinterested, distanced and even distrustful attitude of the Moroccan state towards its nationals living abroad, the beginning of the 1990s will initiate an important institutional change in the relationship with those who will end up being called Moroccans residing abroad (MRA). This new political trend initiated the beginnings of an active institutional approach. For example, in July 1990, the King of Morocco created the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Living Abroad (Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger-MRE) by law 19–89, promulgated by dahir (royal decree). The main objective of this non-profit institution was to “consolidate the socio-cultural links between Moroccan migrants and Morocco by sending imams to mosques and teachers to teach language and culture of origin, as well as organizing vacation camps in Morocco, providing financial, legal and technical assistance to migrants wishing to invest in Morocco, and financing associative, festive and sports activities” (Dumont, 2007: 338).

It is notably through the Hassan II Foundation that the new name of Moroccan migrants (Moroccans living abroad-MRE) has become established. It contains a significant nuance and attests to the new approach of Morocco’s migration policy, which is aware of the indefinite duration or irremediable settlements of the descendants of early migrants. Still relying on the link with the country of origin and the indefectible Moroccanity, the new policy aimed at the reinforcement and the perpetuation of the ties of the MRA with their country of origin. This relationship between the State and its diaspora is based on the preservation of the Moroccan national and cultural identity. It takes various forms such as the promotion of Koranic reading in the Moroccan style, the animation by the folklore and the cultures of the country and by the teaching of the national anthem to the young vacationers-scouts.

In the wake of the launch of the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccan expatriates, the Moroccan government appointed Rafik Haddaoui, then Moroccan ambassador to Moscow, as Minister Delegate in charge of the Moroccan community living abroad, reporting to the Prime Minister. This was at the end of July 1990. In collaboration with the country’s other institutions, the prerogatives of this new ministry consisted of “promoting social, economic and cultural action in the direction of MREs, monitoring the migratory movements of Moroccans, participating in negotiations relating to emigration and the living conditions of Moroccans abroad, as well as setting up programs to ensure their effective reintegration upon their final return to Morocco” (Brand, 2010, p. 134).

However, the Ministry of Rafik Haddaoui, later taken over by Ahmed El Ouardi, did not succeed in creating harmony among the multiple bodies in charge of the Moroccan international migration file. Indeed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation was quite hostile to what it considered to be a loss of prerogatives. Belguendouz illustrates this gradual loss of momentum of a dedicated ministry and the forces that participated in one way or another in its reconsideration: “the status of the ministry [in charge of the affairs of the Moroccan community residing abroad] was quickly distorted and its experience halted due in particular to the susceptibilities of certain central officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, certain

ambassadors and consuls posted in the countries of immigration who reproached it for taking up the cause, (in parliament in particular) in the defense of the rights of Moroccan emigrants, implicitly laying bare the shortcomings of diplomatic and consular action in this area” (translated from French to English by the Authors 2009, p. 6).

Thus, in February 1995, this Ministry was eventually attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and dissolved into an Under-Secretariat of State in charge of the Moroccan community abroad. Taking advantage of the 1997 ministerial amendment, the Prime Minister, Abdellatif Filali, who was also Minister of Foreign Affairs, put an end to this Under-Secretariat of State and attached its attributions to a department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through decree that was never published in the Official Bulletin (Op.cit., p.10).

The government of “consensual alternation” (1998–2002), presided over by the socialist Abderrahmane El Youssefi, a long-time opponent of King Hassan II, did not re-establish the Ministry in charge of the Moroccan community abroad, and its entire term of office was marked by indecision on the subject of MRAs. It was the Prime Minister of the following government (2002–2007), Driss Jettou, who supported the filling of this institutional void by restoring the Ministry of MRAs and appointing the socialist Nezha Chekrouni as its head. If a framework was more or less revisited to give image to the institutional management dedicated to the MRAs, the margin obtained by Nouzha Chekrouni remains modest, even weak, leaving little room for a real and efficient political action.

It was not until the government of Abbas El Fassi, Prime Minister appointed by King Mohamed VI in 2007, that a new chapter in the Moroccan state’s policy towards Moroccans living abroad took place. One of the portfolios of this government will be assigned to Minister Mohamed Ameer, in charge of MRAs and, this time, directly delegated to the Prime Minister. This shift in responsibilities reflects a tangible change in the way affairs related to Moroccans living abroad are handled. It is also felt at the political, institutional and organizational levels. Thus, the new Ministry of MRAs is required to set up a real government policy towards Moroccan communities living abroad, most of which are in Europe. In order to achieve the objectives set, Mohamed Ameer will develop a five-year action plan. It is then called: “Preliminary Action Plan for the promotion of the situation of Moroccan citizens abroad 2008–2012”. It is structured in four pillars-missions: “(1) Support the rooting of new generations in host countries, without uprooting from the country of origin; (2) defend the rights and interests of MRAs both in Morocco and in host countries; (3) involve high-skilled Moroccans abroad in development projects in Morocco; (4) encourage productive investment of Moroccans abroad in the country of origin.

The year 2007 also corresponds to the establishment of the Consultative Council of Moroccans Abroad (CCME). Indeed, it was in his speech of November 6th, 2006 delivered in Agadir on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of the Green March that King Mohamed VI announced the creation of this dedicated institution. To do so, he entrusted the Advisory Council on Human Rights (CCDH) with the task of conducting broad consultations with all parties concerned in order to issue an advisory opinion on the creation of this new Council, which must combine, in its composition, the requirements

of competence, representativeness, efficiency and credibility. In light of the CCDH's opinion, King Mohamed VI, by dahir n°1.07.208, appointed Driss El Yazami on December 21, 2007 to head the CCME. 37 members will join him to carry out a first transitional mandate of 4 years. Established in the Constitution in July 2011, the CCME is an institution in charge of "monitoring and evaluating the Kingdom's public policies towards its nationals abroad". Its mission is also to issue opinions to ensure the defense of the interests of Moroccans abroad inside and outside Morocco, to strengthen their contribution to the economic, social and human development of the country and to consolidate relations of friendship and cooperation between Morocco and the countries of residence.

The CCME, the Ministry in charge of the Moroccan Community Abroad, and the Hassan II Foundation remain the main institutional actors directly dedicated to the affairs of Moroccans living abroad. The chronology of the creation of these three institutions undoubtedly embodies an evolution in the relationship of the Moroccan state with its international migrants and reflects the refinement of the term that designates them. From Moroccan Workers Abroad (MWA), to Moroccan Nationals Abroad (MNA), we have arrived to Moroccans Residing Abroad (MRA), and even Moroccans of the World (MoW).

21.4 The Regional Turn in Moroccan Diaspora Policies: Three Case-Studies

As early as 2014, Morocco launched a new National Strategy for Moroccans Residing Abroad (SNMRE). This strategy was developed as part of the new immigration and asylum policy, initiated in September 2013 by King Mohammed VI and formally adopted in 2014. The strategy has three strategic objectives: (1) Preserve the identity of MREs; (2) Protect the rights and interests of MREs; (3) Encourage the contributions of MRAs to the country's development. This latter objective is particularly aimed at mobilizing "skills", attracting investment from MRAs and improving their access to public services.

The SNMRE aims to mobilize different national and international institutions working on the link between migration and development, in order to create synergies and capitalize on past actions and initiatives. The challenge for the SNMRE today is to develop its objectives according to the logic of the "advanced regionalization" project adopted by Morocco since 2011.

The institutional channelling of MRAs' investments is increasingly associated with these regional approaches. A quick scan of the various initiatives and programs set up at regional level to achieve the objectives set out by the SNMRE show that these programs are often carried in partnership with international cooperation agencies (the Belgian Enabel, the French AFD or the German GIZ). National institutions (CRI, CGEM), NGOs (national and international) are also involved in these territorialization of Moroccan diaspora policies, as shown in the three case-studies presented below.

21.5 The Oriental Region

The Oriental is a former emigration hotspot towards Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France and since the 1980s to Spain. One of the specificities of the region is its geographical position, on the border with Algeria and the Spanish enclave of Melilla. According to existing documentation and exchanges with many interlocutors, Moroccan migrants from this region are mainly young people, investors, highly skilled people and retired migrants. Migration in this region is characterized by its movement between the two shores of the Mediterranean. It constitutes a development potential for the region, particularly in the information technology, real estate and agri-food sectors. However, as in other regions, public authorities and national and international organizations have always sought to take better advantage of the potential of international migration and benefit from its contribution to territorial development.

The Oriental region have signed several national, international and local conventions on the mobilization of MRAs. These conventions have resulted in the creation of spaces of consultation. These spaces aim to bring together the key in public and non-governmental action aimed at mobilizing the skills of MRAs. However, these spaces for dialogue between stakeholders are not institutionalized on a permanent basis. They are mainly dependent on initiatives carried out in the framework of specific cooperation projects.

We have noted that these spaces of consultations are sidelines, as the participations of the public directly concerned (MRAs) is inexistant. This is due the lack of links with this population by the side of regional actors of diaspora mobilization. Beyond these shortcomings, the mobilization of MRA skills is an issue that is beginning to take its place in the actions of public institutions. To Draw on this path, the Regional Investment Center (CRI) offers a reception and orientation unit for investors, with a focus on sectoral activity and associated investment opportunities. According to the interlocutors we met, the interest is to channel the investment potential of Moroccans living abroad, considered as a resource to be valorized for the territorial development.

The findings arising from the field noticed that the offer provided by the decentralized services do not distinguish between “Moroccans living abroad” and “Moroccans living in Morocco”, despite the specific needs of the migrant population. The interlocutors have informed as well that frequency of recourse by Moroccan living abroad to the initiatives deployed to mobilize their investment potentialities is not optimal. According to them, this is due to the mistrust of the MRAs towards the administrations in charge of their affairs. According to our respondents, the challenge today in the region is to think and establish strong and durable ties with the MRAs who have investment potential and to provide them with information on the territorial offer and existing investment opportunities.

21.6 The Beni Mellal-Khenifra Region

The Beni Mellal-Khenifra region is a hotspot of international emigration and an emerging circulation space associated with South/North mobility. Its transnational connections are mainly linked to the traditional destination countries of MRAs, namely Italy, Spain and France. Emigration is closely associated with the transformations of the rural world of the region. Indeed, it is estimated that the profiles of emigrants are mainly composed of former farmers and agricultural workers, skilled workers and micro-entrepreneurs. According to some interlocutors, the new generation of returnees also includes investors and entrepreneurs who constitute a potential for the territorial development of the region.

Channeling the skills of MRAs is an emerging issue in the BMK region. With the DEPOMI project, the mobilization of MRA investors has taken on a new dimension with the involvement of several institutional actors, such as the CRI. The latter recently launched Izdihar, a program dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs. Within this program, a component called Izdihar MdM is specially dedicated to MRAs with investment projects in the region.

In the region of Beni Mellal – Khénifra, the CRI and the Maison des MRE in Beni Mellal and Khouribga are the actors who officially adopt the vocation of mobilizing the skills of the MRA for territorial development. If the CRI is in charge of accompanying the investments of the MRAs, the main mission of the Maison des MRE includes their reception and orientation.

Given the diversity of the dynamics observed in the region, it is difficult to reach a consensus on the definition of the public problem around which local and regional actors should be federated with regard to the mobilization of MRA skills. The question of support for MRAs is not posed in the same way as in other regions. While in other regions, the mobilization of MRA investors is the focus of deconcentrated services, the region of Beni Mellal-Khénifra faces a plurality of processes around which it is necessary to federate actors (return migration, the problems of reintegration of returning migrants and their children, internal and international migration of Moroccans, irregular emigration of young people, etc.) This specificity is undoubtedly due to the conditions under which return migration of MRA families, mainly from Italy and Spain, took place after the economic and financial crisis of 2008.

International cooperation actors stimulate and animate the dynamics of governance and the positioning of actors in relation to the issue of channeling the potential of MRAs for development. However, at the time of our observation, the governance of migration had not yet been integrated into planning documents such as the RDP (Regional Development Plan).

The actors involved in the channeling and mobilization of MRAs for development, with the DEPOMI project, have initiated a Regional Consultation Space on Migration which brings together actors to plan the mobilization of migration for regional development. According to some interlocutors, there is a lack of communication on the territorial offer that can stimulate the interest of MRAs. Indeed, the

latter are unaware of the opportunities and development sites that exist in the region. One of the interlocutors we met said that the projects of the MRAs, which are likely to play an important role in the development of the region, are often confronted with dysfunctions of the channels of support and guidance. The projects of the MRAs are thus hindered by the inadequate offer of the competent administrations.

There are indeed individual investments of the MRAs in the region, but the lack of initiatives and an adapted accompaniment represents a real constraint, hindering in addition the objectives of local development. In terms of mechanisms, there are relatively few mechanisms that are entirely and exclusively dedicated to channeling MRAs' investments (with the exception of the Izdihar MdM program). Currently, international cooperation plays a role in stimulating reflection on this subject. However, these are generally initiatives that follow the logic of one-off projects. These actions stimulate dialogue between regional and local actors, but to continue to fulfill this function, a capitalization system is necessary.

21.7 The Souss Massa Region

For centuries, the Souss region has played the role of an important crossroads linking the Mediterranean world and sub-Saharan Africa. The geostrategic situation of this region has made it a gathering for civilizations and a crossroads of caravan routes that have played an important role in the history of Morocco (Lahnite, 2011). In one of his publications where he analyzes the archives entrusted to him by one of the heirs of the last lords of the *Zaouia* of Iligh, Paul Pascon shows the place of the Souss – through the kingdom of Tazerwalt – as an international platform for trade and as a departure and arrival point for the great caravans of the Southern Sahara. At the regional and national level too, the Souss has shown great economic and commercial dynamism, as evidenced by the many souks and Moussems held there, and even to this today.

The Souss-Massa region is also an ancient focus of internal migratory dynamics. In Morocco, the Soussis, known as “Chleuhs”, are present in all regions of the Kingdom, particularly in Casablanca. Their emigration to this large city dates back to the beginning of the last century. Many young Soussis, attracted by the arrival of Europeans, the expansion of urban centers and the development of the modern economy, left their poor villages to work in the metropolis. In Casablanca, the Soussis took over the food trade, first in retail and then in wholesale. Renowned for their community solidarity and hard work, some of them became great businessmen. In nearly three quarters of a century, they have gone from being simple middle men to businessmen, managing fortunes and leading family businesses.

The international emigration of the Soussis has been taken place well before the establishment of the protectorate over the Kingdom. Initially, towards the end of the nineteenth century, they were seasonal workers who went to Oranien and Tunisia. In Europe, Joanny Ray asserts the presence of this ethnic group in France since 1910. After 1912 and until the end of the 1950s, the Souss region remained the main source

of emigration to Europe, mainly to France. Whether it was military or labor migration, colonization was the factor responsible for the proliferation of the migration process from this region (Atouf, 2009). As soon as the first conventions on the export of labor to other European countries were signed, the Souss region was no longer the only departure point for Moroccan migrants; the international migratory field extended to other regions of the country.

In spite of the age and depth of migration in the Souss-Massa region, the MRAs have always established a unique and lasting relationship with their territory of origin or that of their ancestors. They represent a key partner able to provide a structuring response to development and migration issues, particularly at the local and regional levels. Thus, most of the founders of village associations for local development from migrant backgrounds confirm that their initial motivation was to contribute to improving the living conditions of their relatives in villages where there was neither water nor electricity. An example to this, is the association *Migrations et Développement*. This association have focused on electrification, access to potable water, access to sanitation and the construction of dams. The projects are often adapted to the reality of each village in the region.

The channeling and mobilization of MRA resources for development is carried, in large part, in the Souss Massa region by a proactive associative fabric. The association *Migrations et Développement* represents, since its foundation, a locomotive of co-development initiatives carried by migrants in the region. Through the know-how it has accumulated over more than thirty years now, and the professionalization of its agents, particularly in the mastery of project design and management and the mobilization of national and international donors, the *Migrations et Développement* association presents itself as a central animator and channeler of the skills of the MRAs.

In the region of Souss Massa, we notice the pro-active role of academicians and researchers in the reflection of matters related to migration and development. The Regional Observatory of Migration Spaces and Societies (ORMES) created in 1996 at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University Ibn Zohr, Agadir is a major research structure in this sense. ORMES is a forum for study, research, training, information and animation at the service of the scientific community, migrants and decision makers. It monitors the evolution of the migration movement. There is also a Master's program "Migration and Sustainable Development" at the Faculty of Letters and Humanities (FLSH) of the University Ibn Zohr of Agadir.

The channeling of MRAs potentials essentially involves consultation between the actors animating this dynamic in the Souss region. Recently, with the DEPOMI (Enabel) and PRIM (Expertise France/AFD) projects, we have seen the multiplication of consultation spaces animating dynamics such as the conception, coordination and communication of the territorial offer towards expatriates.

Issues related to the mobilization of skills and the attraction of MRA entrepreneurs are strongly represented in the words of elected officials and decentralized services. Nonetheless, the consultation spaces for federating the action of public institutions are ad hoc spaces, hence not institutionalized in a durable way. They depend on the temporalities of international cooperation programs and projects.

We have raised the point that there are relatively few support mechanisms set up to attract and channel MRAs for development. The mechanisms proposed to facilitate the investment of MRAs fall under the offer of the CRI. The latter intervenes mainly on the problem of land lots faced by the MRAs.

With the DEPOMI project, a network of the economic ambassadors of the Souss Massa region was created. This network seeks to optimize the circulation of information on the territorial offer and investment opportunities in the region. It also focuses on promotional activities, sponsorship of entrepreneurs and networking serving the interests of their members. However, the fruit of this network is to be observed in the coming months/years.

Overall, with the exception of the M&D association, there are few organizations specialized on the issue of mobilizing MRAs for local development. In light of the interviews conducted with elected officials, actors from the deconcentrated services and civil society, the link with the MRAs in the region is always maintained through the development networks run by local associations. However, the link with expatriates bringing productive investments is yet to be strengthened. Interlocutors also emphasize that the mobilization of MRAs for local development can be envisaged through a multiple approach. In addition to solidarity and productive action, the region can rely on the social capital available to the MRAs and integrate their capabilities in the initiatives conducted by official actors.

21.8 Conclusion

In Morocco, diaspora policies are emerging in various forms. Government initiatives and programs have multiplied to encourage expatriate nationals to engage in development actions in their country of origin. Today, the multiple contributions of Moroccan expatriates to the development of the territories of origin, their power and their developmental potential are obvious: financial remittances, productive investment, scientific and technical remittances, etc. Following this logic, many programs are structured to channel the productive investment of the diaspora on the three regions examined, federating project committees, various stakeholders and different profiles of actors from deconcentrated services of the State. Notwithstanding their relevance, these interventions are on the one hand few in number and on the other hand dependent on their main funders, namely European governments and/or international organizations. Also, the majority of the offers proposed by Moroccan public institutions for the channeling of MRA's investments have currently a limited geographical range. They are located in the main cities of the regions. Thus, investments carried in peripheral cities are out of the scoop of the institutional accompaniment emerging offer.

We have noticed that the channeling of MRA's investment consists of technologies deployed by the State and international NGOs and other bodies to (re)configure how migrant investors and entrepreneurs are managed and their contribution to development agenda. Be that as it may, this form of channeling must not be

understood as a fixed and objective reality, but instead to be the effect and the product of an ongoing governance dynamics of migration.

In this respect, the field of diaspora mobilization is a key site where the fabrication of migrants' categories is realized and made manifest. Likewise, both the proliferation of initiatives to mobilize *Moroccan migrant investors and entrepreneurs* and the increasing consolidation of supra-national cooperation on the matter, which encompasses and integrate multiple states and non-governmental organizations, emerge as complementary sites for the State's unfinished work of diaspora mobilization. As the programs of diaspora mobilization seek to canalize and stimulate certain migratory movements deemed useful for the development of certain territories, we observe that the various practices involved introduce new configurations in the territories concerned, with the aim of involving people into processes of co-development. These dynamics notably should be recognized as variable forms of migration governance, through fluxes stimulation and investment opportunity creation. Indeed, these measures that seem to govern the movement of people are arguably examples of a mode of migration governance in the Euro-Mediterranean sphere.

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