

## The Origin and Evolution of Migration Governance Policy in Morocco: A Historical and Policy Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

Migration Studies is an interdisciplinary field that draws on sociology, economics, history, anthropology, law, and post-colonial studies. The discipline is enriched with studies on the causes of migration, the nature of migration, the effects of migration, laws on migration, and migration governing policies of various nation-states and international organizations. The rising number of migrants crossing international borders has made migration-governing policies of nation-states as the new center for academic inquiry and research in the emerging discipline of Migration Studies. One such unique case of migration governing policies is of Morocco. Morocco is a country in the north-western tip of the African continent and its geographical proximity to Europe makes it one of the most sought-after routes for migration to Europe by migrants. Morocco's own trends of migration from the 1960s onwards, make its status uniquely rotating between sending country to transit country to host country of migrants. Another dimension in Morocco's migration governing policy is the lack of indigenous African context and the predominance of the European Union's policies. African context of migration governing policy can be developed by deducing major treaties, protocols, and frameworks like the Abuja Treaty (1994), Agenda 2063, Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa, and Plan of Action (2018-2027) of African Union, etc. at the continental and regional level. Morocco has sought to move away from Africa's migration governance framework and is an outright active member participating in European Union's exhaustive migration governing policies. In this light, Morocco's migration governing policy and its various facets provides a good case to be studied and analyzed in detail. This study examines the origin and evolution of migration governance policy in Morocco, tracing its development from colonial times to the present day.

**Keywords:** Morocco, migration policy, migration governance, African migration, African -Euro migration.

### INTRODUCTION

Morocco's migration governance policy has evolved significantly over the years, influenced by historical, political, economic, and social factors.

Migration has a long tradition in the Euro - African geography. Seasonal and circular migration patterns between some rural areas and towns in western and northern Morocco have existed for centuries from the pre-colonial era to the colonial era to the independence era. It was not a linear but circular motion. Though, this took a radical expansion in the 1960s as Morocco turned out to be a leading emigrant country due to guest-worker programs of north-western European countries. This trend resulted in Moroccans being amongst the most prominent diaspora in Europe in the 1960s. Moroccan migration shifted during the 1970s-80s from a primarily circular and labor-based version to a more linear permanent form. Since the 1960s, the Moroccan government has encouraged emigration and has used it as a tool to achieve political and economic approbation. It stimulated emigration labor recruitment from relatively marginal Berber-speaking areas of the southwestern Sous valley, the oases of south-eastern Morocco, and the northern Rif Mountains, to suppress ethnic rebellions against central authority in the country. Economically, remittances were expected to reduce poverty and unemployment, and boost growth via investment. In this era, Morocco's government had attempted strictly control on diaspora present outside Morocco, especially in Europe. There were strict rules regarding the intermingling of Moroccans living outside to discourage their integration into receiving societies. The Moroccan government used cultural means like sending Moroccan teachers and imams abroad to provide education to migrants' children in the Arabic language, to remind them of their roots, to prevent integration and instill patriotism. It created 'Amicales'- a state-centered organization for migrants via embassies, and consulates to inhibit them from constituting independent organizations, trade unions, etc. The moves were politically and economically motivated. Politically, it was to restrain any attempt of political opposition from the diaspora's liberal ideas influenced by the European system in the future. Economically, fear of loss of remittances and the inability to diversify the economy drove the restricted attempts. This stance was reversed later because of

international backlashing and reduced investment due to limited liberty which led to the frustration of the diaspora. The focus shifted from controlling Diaspora to engaging Diaspora in the 1990s via establishing a ministry for Moroccans residing and financial reforms for easy transfer and investment of remittances.

1973 Oil Crisis and economic recessions at the beginning of the 1980s resulted in economic stagnation, rising unemployment trickling down to lower demand for unskilled labor, and the introduction of visa requirements resulted in the closing of frontiers for new labor immigrants in Western Europe. The restrictive visa policy and political instability and repression (coup d etats in 1971 and 1972) within Morocco, interrupted traditional circular migration. With the addition of family reunification, it resulted in permanent migration from Morocco. Due to low return migration rates, Moroccans emerged to be the biggest community in Europe. Till 1990- the total number of Moroccan migrants' stock was 704,000 in selected western European countries and 1.2 million in total (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Morocco). Currently, there are no official statistics about the number of irregular migrants living but as per Morocco's Ministry of Interior- it is under 10,000.

Morocco's migration governance policy has transitioned from a focus on emigration to a comprehensive approach addressing immigration, integration, and international cooperation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Migration governance encompasses policies, laws, and institutions regulating migration. Morocco's migration policy has been shaped by its colonial past, regional dynamics, and international cooperation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a historical and policy analysis approach, examining policy documents, laws, and secondary data from colonial times to the present day.

## **CHANGES IN THE LAST DECADE OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

Post-1990s, Morocco started witnessing major changes. It includes changing destinations countries, increasing irregularity, etc.

The following changes were observed from the 1990s onwards:

1. Increasing visa restrictions resulted in a permanent settlement of Moroccan migrants along with families in North-Western European Countries.
2. Destination countries were changed from north-western European Countries to southern European countries like Spain and Italy. It was in the context of restrictive policies in North-Western Countries; geographical proximity, benefits of cheap labor, and the late closing of borders by Spain and Italy.
3. The focal of outmigration in Morocco shifted from Berber speaking region (Sous, Rif) to the central region of Khenifra (in the Middle Atlas), the region of Laârache (south of Tangiers), and the Tadla plain (south of Khouribga) with a clear orientation to Italy and Spain in mid-1980s. Between 1980 and 2004, the combined Moroccan population officially residing in Spain and Italy increased from about 20,000 to 650,000.
4. Primary family reunification in North-Western European Countries was largely completed at the end of the 1980s. The 1990s witnessed the development of secondary family formation as the result of new marriages between the second generation and native Moroccans - the major source of the new version of migration from Morocco to the old destination in north-western Europe.
5. Changes from low-skilled migrants to migrants with certain educational backgrounds were also visible.
6. The formation of the European Union led to restricted visa rules and border controlling measures (Tampere Conclusions 1999); elevated irregularity of migrants as Spain and Italy also introduced visa restrictions in the 1990s as an elongation of the European Union's policy.
7. The 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century were marred with internal unrest in some Arab and African especially sub-Saharan regions. It brought an ever-increasing influx of migrants to Morocco aiming toward Europe. It radically changed the migration pattern of Morocco as it was no more restricted to Moroccans only and Morocco's status as an emigrating country changed to a country in transit for sub-Saharan African migrants. Indeed, Morocco acted as a buffer state for migrants attempting to enter Europe for the past 2 decades.

Before analyzing various facets of Morocco's migration governing policy, it is important to understand the constitutional and international provisions that Morocco is obliged to implement with respect to migrants.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS**

Originally, the Moroccan constitution was bereft of any hidden or direct reference to conditions and rights related to migrants. Though, in response to popular demands, the constitution underwent significant changes in 2011 and redefined

national institutions and policies from the human rights perspective. After its due attention to the socio-economic concerns of Moroccan citizens, it brought in fresh commitments to human rights and non-discrimination to all. A minimal level of protection is guaranteed by the new constitution under Article 30 which guarantees the protection of fundamental human rights of all Moroccan citizens and migrants (implicitly, both regular and irregular migrants). National Council for Human Rights (Conseil National de Droits de l'Homme, or CNDH) – towards a more balanced response to irregular immigration was formed. So far, however, these constitutional changes have not yet translated into legal policy, laws with justiciability, or institution with constitutional mandate. On the contrary, the issue is side-lined in the name of prioritizing citizens.

Morocco has ratified most of the international and regional concerns related to migrants and refugee issues. The major reason is Morocco has been an emigration-based country, therefore it will safeguard the socio-economic rights of its citizen abroad and keep receiving remittances (as the major contributor to Morocco's economy). It will provide an international and regional stage to bring in the issue of discrimination by receiving countries and channel the voice of Morocco. Morocco has ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention). As per the 1951 Geneva Convention- UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a permanent office in Rabat since 2007 and is now able to determine the refugee status of irregular migrants and recommend the list for Residency Card- which is crucial for housing, jobs, education, and health-care access.

Morocco was amongst the first nation to ratify the 1990 International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The central idea was the socio-economic integration of migrant workers and their families. It has also ratified the 1969 Organisation for African Union's (OAU)- Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, though Morocco withdrew from OAU in 1984 following the organization's acceptance of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic as a member state. Morocco rejoined OAU in 2017. OAU Convention is more inclusive than the 1951 Geneva Convention as it covers sharing the responsibility of refugees by member-states. Given all the signings by Morocco, it fell short of measures when it saw the upsurge of migrants in its own country. On the contrary, the xenophobic and racist attitude of silent polity, colonized mindset of society, and temporary healthcare and public education in the economy might make an observer feel like rebutting all the signings. The rue of lack of transition of these signings into law and institution continues. Given the obligations, Morocco legislated Dahir N°. 1-57-271 of 26 August 1957, based on the application of the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Dahir N°. 2-57-1256 of 29 August 1957. As per the given Law- entry and stay of foreign nationals into Morocco requires the delivery of a Residency Card (Carte de Séjour). Morocco was the first among Maghreb countries to have a law on the status of irregular immigrants. Yet it was not comprehensive and left a huge vacuum in migration governing policy of Morocco. Therefore, the necessity of constituting comprehensive migration governing policy in Morocco was felt. It led to the formulation of Morocco's first law on migration-Law 02-03.

### **Morocco's First Law on Migration: Law 02-03**

The newly formulated, first-of-a-kind law changed Morocco's migration policy– from a space of near absence of regulation to strong border control. It was influenced by the EU's approach towards migrants because, the European Council in its meeting held in Seville (Spain), in June 2002 decided to bring a radical shift in the EU's migration policy by using a carrot-and-stick approach. It initiated links with third-party countries and migration policies pursued by these countries with a clear focus on Morocco. It asserted to include a clause of 'joint management of migration flows and compulsory admission in case of irregular immigration' in future cooperation and agreement with a third-party country. This gave an idea of cooperation, joint management, and link with the third party- giving a carrot's approach of persuasion. The stick was the use of technology in border control and ensuring near-death expulsion- installation of SIVE - The Integrated System of External Vigilance along the Strait of Gibraltar, budgeted around 150 million euros and based on early detections and central command. The regional challenges for Morocco were aggravated by domestic issues like an increase in human trafficking cases and most importantly Casablanca terror attack of May 2003. The given terror attack was quickly used to ensure the unanimous adoption of the first law (constituted in January 2003) on emigration and irregular immigration in Morocco by the Government of Rabat. Therefore, Law 02-03 came into force in November 2003.

Since the stages of formulation, adoption, and enforcement; the law was touted as 'emergency legislation' by civil society activists, human rights lawyers, etc. The law was based on a security-driven approach focusing on securitizing immigrants by increasing the means of irregularity. The reasons cited to call the law emergency legislation were:

1. It was said to be the manifesto of the policeman role ordered by the EU as it imposes harsh and inhumane treatment of irregular immigrants.
2. Colonial-era led oppressive fines, punishments, and sanctions-Article 42 of the law criminalizes the entry and presence of irregular migrants who have not presented themselves to the border authorities with a valid passport or travel document. Article 50 of Law 02-03 applies to irregular emigration from Morocco and provides for exorbitantly high fines; imprisonment against any person who illegally leaves Moroccan land, sea, or air borders notwithstanding provisions of the penal code.

3. Irregularization of migrants exponentially increased - Art 38 provides for 'waiting areas' at ports and airports where rejected aliens are kept; pending their expulsion.

The law was substantiated with the institutional framework of the Directorate of Migration and Border Surveillance under the Ministry of Interior in November 2003 and Migration Observatory with the official mandate of 'rationalizing the working methods, sharpening analysis tools and optimizing the deployment of operational surveillance units at the infiltration points of illegal migrants.' The term illegal migrants and measures resorted to the use of surveillance strengthen the fear of irregularization of migration in Morocco. It changed the traditional networks and linkages to infiltration points and surveillance units. The institutions were meant to serve the dual purpose of fighting human trafficking and implementing the EU's desperate move to curb irregular migrants. At the government level, the operational application of the migration policy was handled by the Ministry of Interior entirely.

### **Impact of Law 02-03**

1. Criminalization of irregular migrants especially sub-Saharan African immigrants-opening up of alien centers at the Airport, distortion of traditional networks of movements, and forceful expulsion resulted in the violation of the principle of non-refoulement. This culminated in the deterioration of relations with neighboring African countries.

2. Media discourse in particular local newspapers depicted irregular migration as Sub-Saharan African migration and stigmatize the group with the spread of diseases such as HIV and moral decadence giving rise to xenophobia, and racist slurs in the atmosphere. It supported the restrictive policies adopted by the state in the name of geographical disadvantage and national security.

3. Along with close cooperation EU and the deployment of SIVE and Frontex across EU- Morocco borders; Morocco managed to reduce the number of migrants by nearly 20,000 from 2001 to 2006 and thereby reducing the 'threat of invasion' but it increased violence on borders. For Ex-an attempt carried out by hundreds of migrants to access Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco in 2005 turned out violent with the death of at least 15 migrants at the hand of Moroccan and Spanish authorities making it in the words of Natter (2014)- was the dirtiest affair Moroccan diplomacy ever had to face.

Therefore, the given law was not a sufficient, and comprehensive migration governing policy. It needed more regularization efforts, programmes and inclusiveness in its approach toward migrants. Therefore, the Migration and Asylum Policy of 2013 came into the picture.

### **MIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY OF 2013**

Post law 02-03, Morocco participated in numerous EU policies and programs like Euro- Africa Mediterranean Network, European Neighborhood Programme, etc. Its status alleviated to mobility partner in the EU's mode of action against irregular migrants. Along the lines of cooperation with the EU, Morocco was also under severe local, regional, and international stress to formulate a comprehensive policy. This resulted in the formulation of another policy dealing with irregular migration namely- the 'Migration and Asylum Policy' in 2013 for foreign residents and especially irregular migrants in the kingdom. The policy was lauded universally and was acclaimed as shifting the geopolitical culture of Morocco from its imagined European connectivity to real proximity to Africa. The policy brought a humane touch to the issue in congruence with regional concerns of sub-Saharan African countries, domestic backlashing by civil rights groups, the desire for economic might in Africa and to prevent international defamation for violation of the Refugee Convention and Human Rights. As per the Migration Policy Centre (based in Morocco) in 2012: an estimated 77,798 foreign nationals were residing legally in Morocco out of a population of around 33 million. The population of long-term undocumented migrants was somewhere between 30,000 and 60,000.

### **Migration and Asylum Policy of 2013: Causes for Shift in Policy**

Regional compulsions were economic in nature as Morocco lacks natural oil resources like neighboring Maghreb countries and is among the top 5 economies in Africa. To bolster the economy through a 10-fold increase in trade from 2 billion dirhams in 2002 to 12.8 billion dirhams in 2012, Morocco considered good relations with sub-Saharan African nations will help in penetrating the African market of 54 countries. Sub-Saharan Africa constitutes nearly 7% of Morocco's international trade. It will provide a bargaining chip in the case of the Western Sahara- Morocco territorial dispute and also initiate the re-joining of the African Union. The changes were a reflection of Morocco's view of itself navigating entirely from north (Europe) to tilting a bit towards the south (Africa). This was evident in 4 trips of Mohammed VI (King of Morocco) to sub-Saharan African nations like Mali, Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Gabon in 1 year. Arab Spring being anti-monarchy also spread tension in Morocco and became one of the causes of loosening rigidity. The Migration and Asylum Policy of 2013 is also said to be a demonstration effect to the EU and shift in Spain's and EU's policies from spending on border infrastructure to capacity-building in third countries for irregular immigrants' integration and management within the country. EU's 'Sharaka' project aimed at supporting the Moroccan National Strategy on Migration and Asylum, especially at the institutional level (2014-2017). Currently, budget support by the EU



for the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum (2016-2020) is 35 million (European Commission, 2020).

Other compulsions were continuous Civil Society efforts domestically, for ex- disturbing reports of Groupe antiracist d'Accompagnement et de Defense des Etrangers et Migrants (GADEM), and being a signatory to the UN 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Convention Against Torture; continuous human rights violation of migrants, as depicted in a BBC documentary of 2013, led to international defamation.

### **Features of the Migration and Asylum Policy of 2013**

The announcement was regarded as a change in the geopolitical culture of Morocco. As per Cherti & Collyer (2015) changes in Moroccan Migration Policy Transformation as Geopolitical Culture- Morocco's geopolitical culture is connected to how Morocco is connected to the countries around it and as per Sayad (2018)-immigration policy is influenced by the geopolitical culture of a state. Therefore, the humanization of immigration policy was defined in the context of Africa.

The elements of the new migration policy were:

1. An exceptional regularization program for immigrants was carried out in 2014 and 2017.
2. The relationship between UNHCR and the Kingdom of Morocco improved between 2003 – 2013 and UNHCR became the only institution to regularize irregular migration and to grant asylum to seekers in Morocco therefore, larger powers were given to the UNHCR to grant the right of asylum to a more significant number of asylum-seekers in the given policy.
3. New laws allowing a better integration into social life and education, health, legal protection, social and humanitarian assistance, vocational training, and employment in Morocco were declared to be made accessible.
4. Reintegrating the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) into the mandate of the Bureau of Refugees and Stateless Persons associated with the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNHCR and adoption of National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum with a vision of 'coherent, overall, humanistic and responsible policy' was taken up.
5. Conformity with international law leading to international cooperation and shared responsibility: as a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Morocco has to abide by the principle of non-refoulment.
6. In addition to this, a Minister for Migration Affairs associated with the portfolio of the Ministry in charge of Moroccans Residing Abroad was formed.

### **Impact of Migration and Asylum Policy of 2013**

The regularization program helped in improving the situation for migrants as well as the position of Morocco in Africa. It was a success from the government's perspective. It provided a breeding ground for re-entry to African Union, improved relations, and economic cooperation with regional neighbors. According to the World Bank, more than 25,000 individuals from 116 different countries received one-year residency permits in the 2014 regularization process. The program accepted the applications of all women and children who applied, and the overall acceptance rate was over 60%. The validated requests were 17,916 out of a total of 27,332 requests. The second round of regularization was announced in 2017 and regularized around 24,000 individuals.

Despite flooding of exhaustive measures, many non-governmental associations advocating for the rights of migrants considered that the regularization campaign did not materialize as many irregular migrants were unable to meet the overly strict requirements set (for ex- length and continuity of presence in the country or requiring proof of employment). For Ex- the Amnesty International Report of November 2015 indicated that the regularization procedure was followed by raids on migrant camps in the north of Morocco and the detention of a large number of individuals. In addition, other criticisms were the varying interpretation of selection criteria across different regions and that the regularization campaign has benefited mainly people falling under other categories like students. The other constant issues were the lack of institutionalization and attribution of the legal framework to irregular migrants. There has been no legislation to ensure amendment to Law 02-03. No institution with the mandate to establish criteria or the procedure to regularize and ensure integration at the social, economic, and political levels was constituted. The continued violence at the social level in the form of racial slurs, and xenophobic attitude is common in Morocco. On the contrary, the continued police raids where police dress up as civilians for racial profiling of the migrants leading to arbitrary arrest, and deportation to southern cities have caused the clear violation of new policy, the principle of non-refoulment, and the charter of human rights. Even regularization processes were marred with corruption and a selective approach was pursued. Despite facing every version of migration, Morocco still doesn't have a proper institution dedicated to the group and related activities. The Refugee Status Determination process remains with the UNHCR but it does not provide any possibility of permitting the UNHCR to grant a document to foreigners- Refugee Status. It eventually leads to a discrepancy between the numbers of UNHCR-recognized refugees and asylum seekers in proportionate to the numbers obtaining Moroccan residency permits; the final decision is with Morocco's Ministry of Interior.

The condition of the sub-Saharan community in main cities like Rabat, Marrakesh, and Casablanca is better with healthcare, education, and employment sustainability. Though, continuous economic discrimination is visible despite possessing residency permits in Morocco- housing, employment, or school enrolment. The other region even lacks

standards for these basic necessities. The problem lies not alone in providing basic facilities but in the attitude of Moroccan polity towards African migrants. The cracks in social response against sub-Saharan African migrants are played upon by Moroccan polity and especially by the media. It brings in rigid stereotypes and proliferates it to deduce the possibility of socio-economic integration. This is visible in the later survey by the Association of Migrant Studies and Research (AMERM, 2014). Association of Migrant Studies and Research (AMERM, 2014) assessed Moroccans in a report for their opinions on sub-Saharan peoples. It can trace the changes from the 2009 survey onwards. It concluded that 40% of those surveyed did not relate to sub-Saharan Africans as their neighbors, 70% would refuse to share housing with someone of sub-Saharan origin, and 60% would not marry someone from sub-Saharan region.

Considering how this socio-cultural context exudes hostility toward living, working, and cohabitating with sub-Saharan Africans, the difficulties of integration for immigrants seem self-evident. Therefore, the given migration governance regime is still short of inclusivity and is driven by Morocco's neighbour in the north (Europe) rather than the south (Africa). It lacks African context and approach towards migration.

### **AFRICAN CONTEXT IN MIGRATION**

There is a lack of academic literature in understanding what constitutes the African context in migration. Yet multiple regional and continental treaties provide guidance towards defining African context in migration. One of the first such treaties on migration in Africa was Abuja Treaty. It came into force in 1994 and called upon the Regional Economic Communities and their member states to consider the adoption and implementation of appropriate protocols to achieve the free movement of persons and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of residence, and access to legal employment in host countries. Abuja Treaty went one step forward to make an inclusive regional attempt by establishing regional labor exchanges to facilitate the channelization of the human resource of one member-states to others. Morocco joined it later. Similarly, the Organization for African Unity (OAU)- Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem does not deal in specific with the issue of irregular migrants but does pave a way for deriving regional and continental-based solutions regarding the people who are on move. The preamble of the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa has asserted all nation-states to be convinced that all the problems of our continent must be solved in the spirit of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity. OAU Convention is more inclusive than the 1951 Geneva Convention as it provides regional and shared responsibility of member states in support to host countries by other members- states and essentially respects the voluntary character of repatriation. Another policy framework on the continental level was the Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030) of the African Union (AU). It is not binding yet lists 'integration of migrants in host community' and 'upholding the humanitarian principles of migration' as the guiding principles for the management of migration for AU member-states. It calls on members to harmonize national laws with international law on the issue and stresses integration and social and cultural acceptance of migrants in host countries. It has dealt in detail with the measures that African countries should resort to so as to reduce the ill-effects of irregular migrants along with protecting the rights of irregular migrants. A special focus on vulnerable groups like women, children, and minors is given. Despite, being inclusive in every sense; these measures fall short of institutional and binding mechanisms for concrete policy-driven action on the grounds.

These treaties, policy frameworks, and agendas do give a constructive view of how Africa with its ideational values of shared responsibility, unity, and cooperation is ready to resolve every situation. Yet with respect to Morocco, efforts by a vocal leader of the continent (in economic, and political terms) are largely missing to bring robust participation and institutional changes with respect to a humane approach toward migrants at the continental and regional level, enshrining values and principles of the African context.

### **CONCLUSION**

Wendt (1992) argues in his article 'Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics', that people act toward objects as per the meaning they associate with objects. In his writing, he stresses the social construction of power politics by states as its creation pertains to the different meanings associated with it. The concept of social construction can also be applied to migrants and especially irregular migrants. Natter (2014)- Moroccan authorities legitimated (1) their concern about irregular migration by inscribing it into the broader national interest 'or rather by constructing it as the issue of national interest or an issue threatening national interest' and (2) their restrictive stance by framing irregular migration as a solely sub-Saharan problem 'or constructing the sub-Saharan irregular immigration as a problem to side-line the fact that Morocco is deliberately creating the same problem for others. According to Huysmans (2000)- security construction relating immigrants to drugs, terrorism, diseases, and asylum belongs to Western Europe specifically (and is inherited by Morocco). This construction was further enhanced by the media which has brought rigidity to stereotypes of disease, unhygienic, reckless, etc. association with sub-Saharan irregular migrants. The problems look unmoving because of their imagined origin in social differences and not in political language. Its alliance with the EU has been bereft of the elaborative and humane regional and continental context of Africa that despite lacking resources

and suffering historical-colonial deprivation, has not securitized borders even though the whole continent is on move within and outside. Morocco has also placed military satellites on its borders, an increase in racism in society, economic discrimination against black migrants, and restricted electronic travel authorization with African neighbors to follow the footsteps of its northern colonizers. The influence of European ideas is manifested in migration policy where it has constructed a social identity of 'other' to get dual benefits: financial bargaining in the name of regulating migrants to EU and legitimizing internal state authority by diverting the issue and ensuring its necessity in fighting 'other'. The representation of Morocco in nearly every global forum of the EU with respect to migrants doesn't transcend Morocco into representing African interests but working as a sole unit whose entire focus is on bartering the issue with the EU. The treatment of migrants is not cohesive as per the inclusive African context rather the absence of law and institution has ultimately resulted in vulnerability and repression of the group.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to develop and refine migration governance policy
- Enhance international cooperation and regional dialogue
- Address ongoing challenges, such as irregular migration and migrant integration

## LIMITATIONS

The study focused on policy documents and secondary data, and may not capture migrants' experiences and perspectives.

## FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- Investigate migrants' experiences and perceptions of Morocco's migration governance
- Analyze the impact of EU-Morocco cooperation on migration governance
- Explore the role of civil society in promoting migrants' rights in Morocco

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