



EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



EUMAGINE
*Imagining Europe
from the Outside*

Morocco-Europe Relations through the Image of the Other

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INTRODUCTION

A breakthrough in the understanding of relations between Morocco and Europe

EUMAGINE is a research project that examines the perception of Europe by its neighboring countries, including Morocco. It departs from the image that Moroccans have of the old continent through indicators that inform about their perceptions of human rights and democracy in Europe as well as in Morocco.

In addition, the project tries to investigate if these perceptions influence or not aspirations, and therefore, decisions to emigrate. The aim of the project is to understand how these perceptions interplay with other determinants and aspirations for migration to Europe that make of it a life project, in comparison with other migration destinations.

The four regions selected for research are Todgha valley around Tinghir (region of high emigration), the city of Tangier (region of high immigration), the central Plateau around the center of Oulmès (region of limited emigration) and the eastern High Atlas around Tounfite (a region suffering from problems of human rights violations in the larger sense). The target population is men and women between age 18 and 39.

Key messages for policy-makers

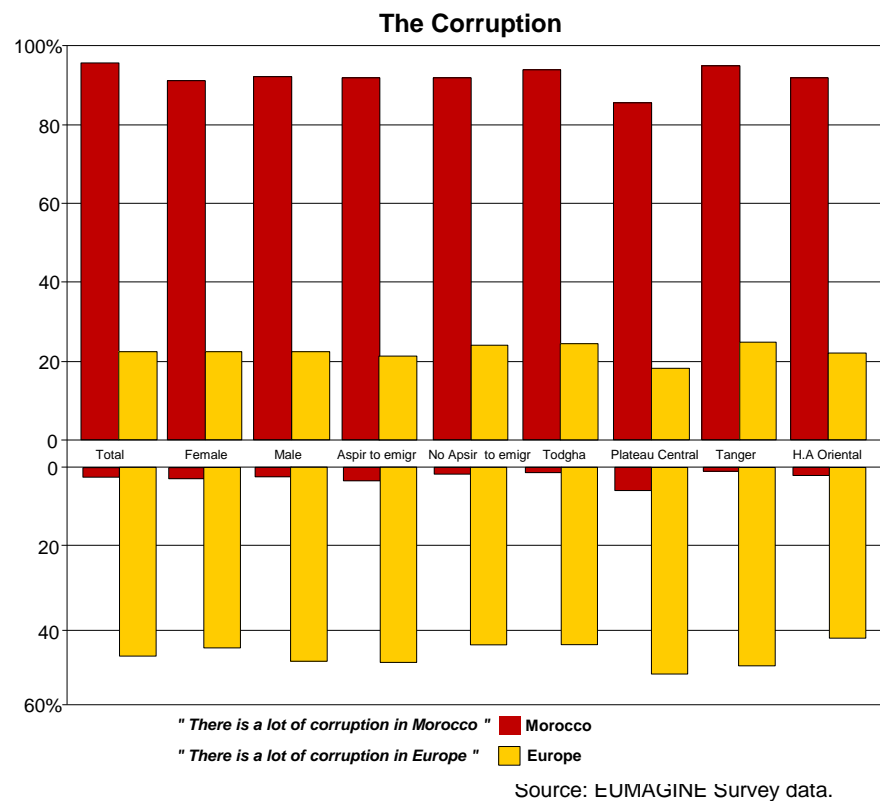
The main finding of the research is that the pattern of relations between Morocco and Europe in terms of migration tends to change. The results suggest changes in perceptions and attitudes on the subject. In the four studied regions, the population is sensitive to the changes in the context of their countries of origin (improvement of freedom spaces) and those to which they aspire to emigrate (effects of the crisis in Europe) (see policy implications).

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Major differences in the perception of human rights in Europe and Morocco

The difference between Morocco and Europe in the perception of democracy and human rights is confirmed. This concerns access to social services, widespread corruption, public assistance to the undeserved, role of the elected and their commitment, and life condition in general regardless of gender differences. The situation in Europe, compared to that of Morocco, is often envied and contrasts are emphatically underlined, making Europe in the minds of the investigated population appear as "a paradise".

Figure 1 - Example of Moroccans' perception of corruption in Europe and Morocco



The treatment of Moroccans: A negative image of Europe

This idyllic image of Europe is highly questionable when it comes to the **treatment of Moroccans living in Europe**. Unequal treatments before the law and in the labour market, racism, racial profiling, etc. are all recurring themes in the conducted interviews. In fact, they confirm the findings of the quantitative research. The role of the economic crisis as a cause of maltreatment and the differences between countries are equally highlighted. The positive image of Europe is seriously damaged upon reception of such treatment.

The effects of the crisis on Europe's image and aspirations to migrate are seriously felt

Europe's image as an "Eldorado" is challenged by another image that reflects the effects of the economic crisis. Only 46% of the survey respondents "agree to strongly agree" that *it is easy to find a good job in Europe*. This rate would have been higher had emigration flows not decreased, due to economic reasons. There is

currently a reverse trend in the traditional Morocco/Europe destination with regards to employment.

The crisis has also contributed to the amplification of 'return mobility', which started a few years ago. The reason is that migrants who have lost their jobs or have retired are now seeking ways to reintegrate their country of origin. The crisis in Europe has thus altered its image in the people's imaginary and has led to a transformation in migratory practices.

A space of circulatory mobility has been constructed between Morocco and Europe. In this space, migrants experience residential instability and seek the improvement of their financial situation in the interstices of the informal economy, between here/there, and/or of seasonal work. According to the informants, the economic crisis first falls on the immigrants. This, ultimately, translates in the aspirations to migrate, which according to the qualitative interviews, tend to slightly decline.

A significant change in perceptions and attitudes on migration

The choice of the four regions in Morocco speculates that the phenomenon of migration is not identical in scale and forms in all the investigated regions. The indicators used to analyze the relationship between the construction of Europe's image and its perception, the aspiration to emigrate or not and the movement to action reveal quite nuanced results depending on the region.

The views expressed do not constitute a clear cut break with the images on Europe and emigration. However, we can deduce from the survey results that a change in perceptions and attitudes is occurring in this regard. The population on whom the study was conducted has demonstrated that it is sensitive to the changes in the contexts of Morocco and Europe. The characteristics of the profile of the new migratory context to be currently considered are the following:

- A migrant population not represented in the house sphere anymore;
- Remittances from migrants are not a primary source of income for households with one or more members in a migration situation;
- Younger generations increasingly seek opportunities in Morocco rather than opt for emigration;
- The relationships within families are based on competition between the members who chose to remain in the home country and those who emigrated;
- The desire to emigrate is not directly tied to the degree of dissatisfaction with the financial situation, particularly with regards to the availability of services such as health;
- The differences in terms of human rights and democracy have been reduced between Morocco and Europe.

These new contextual elements are important in the construction of images on Europe and, therefore, in determining attitudes towards emigration, material and psychological predispositions to go abroad or stay in the home country.

The role of access to services in the aspiration to emigrate

Economic factors are important determinants for migration. This is evident through the material aspects reflecting satisfaction with life in general (satisfaction with the financial situation, life conditions measured through the purchasing power and, to a lesser extent, the deterioration of the latter throughout time). These aspects influence aspirations towards migration. However, Eumagine has shown that the correlation between the degree of dissatisfaction and the desire to emigrate is not always obvious.

In the domain of education, the Moroccan school is evaluated as "poor to very poor" (according to more than 70% of respondents), unlike the European school, which is perceived by 90% of the investigated population as having good quality. In addition to factors related to school equipment, the geographical distribution of schools, training and curricula, it is in fact the quality of qualifications and the school's ability to allow social promotion which is mostly underlined. The difference between the two schooling systems, according to our interlocutors, is that European degrees allow for an immediate access to the labor market, while the Moroccan degree has no value.

However, if the quality of education in Europe continues to justify the aspirations to migrate, the deficit in terms of health services in Morocco are not characterized by the same attitude. While 84.5% of the respondents have a negative opinion on health services, 94.8% think the opposite about health services in Europe. Health requirements do not seem to influence migration aspirations. It is the hope for the treatment of serious health issues which brings forth aspirations for migration.

Gender and migration: Opportunities for rebalancing gender dynamics

Women's migration is a recent trait of Moroccan emigration. Single women, in particular, are forced to leave their countries in search of better work and life conditions. One would expect that migration has reversed the man-woman relationship, given the financial autonomy that emigration allows for. It was, therefore, important to investigate whether the economic necessity made society permissive and sufficient to conclude that the migration of women is positively perceived as a beneficial experience.

Women's migration was considered positive by only 43.9% versus 55.1% of respondents who reported a negative attitude or declared themselves neutral. While women's migration is an undisputed fact in the Moroccan society, the woman is still considered, according to conformist norms, as dependent on man. The stand towards women's migration is characterized by antagonistic considerations, both ethical and economic. Women's mobility is, therefore, tolerated but is also seen as a violation of morality and traditions.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Making migration policy less security-based is an essential approach to migration

A more flexible and less restrictive policy will result in the reduction of illegal immigration, the encouragement of 'return migration' and the normalization of circulatory mobility between Morocco and the European host countries. It is advisable to incorporate this aspect in discussions on partnerships between Morocco and Europe without being limited to the security dimension and the control of mobility.

Revisiting the co-development policy: Towards policy generalization over the E.U. vs. a case-by-case country approach

An efficient policy should be concerned with working towards the reduction of economic disparities by directing migration policies towards development-based investment that involves migrant participation. New forms of co-development should be devised by drawing on past experiences.

It is recommended that the co-development actions be integrated in the frame of programs conceived at the European level, and not solely devised by each host country. In Morocco, these actions would aim at meeting the real needs of the population. They would be conducted by bodies established for this particular purpose and in which representatives of migrant groups and local populations are involved.

Morocco and Europe must change their view on the migrant

Morocco and the European host countries should overcome the perception of the migrant as a mere economic actor, who competes in the labour market against European nationals, and as remittance sender. Considering migrants as political actors, equally to nationals, would facilitate their involvement in the development process in the frame of a policy regulating migration.

Consolidating Morocco's achievement in democracy and human rights

Achievements in the stabilization of political life, the fight against corruption, the reduction of human rights violations and in particular the struggle against women's segregation should all be consolidated. This notion of human rights should also apply to domains such as health, education, access to resources and welfare in general.

Efforts for communication and transparency should encompass the management of public affairs pertaining to administration, elected institutions or civil society. Even when incomes are limited, improved living conditions is believed to reduce the aspiration to migrate for young people.

Accompanying female seasonal migration

Seasonal migration has become a key element of current emigration. However, returns after short stays in Europe yield disturbances in terms of behavior and generate social conflict at the local and family level. Women are perceived differently after their return and are subject to male prejudices. In fact, their reinsertion in the family or conjugal life becomes difficult. Seasonal recruitment organizations (ANAPEC) should consider the establishment of accompanying structures before and after the return. Raising public awareness about the reality of women's work in the host country and providing

assistance for their reintegration in the home country must be an integral part in these efforts.

Accompanying Youth

Youth in schooling age aspire to emigrate. However, because of the information overload they receive through the media or the Internet, young people are unaware of the realities in the European countries. In this regard, educational institutions can provide a platform for awareness campaigns in order to inform the youth about the hazards of illegal emigration. This would also restore the value of academic success which allows them to broaden their perspectives beyond those of emigration. Equally important are the exchanges between Moroccan and European youth, particularly through travel, summer camps, youth projects, and scholarships. Though this practice has already been initiated, its generalization is in order.

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

EUMAGINE seeks to understand why people want to migrate to Europe or not

Imagining Europe from the Outside (EUMAGINE) sets out to understand why people in Europe's neighbouring regions may or may not want to migrate to Europe. The project paid particular attention to people's perceptions of human rights and democracy—both in Europe and in their own country.

Data collection was carried out in Senegal, Morocco, Turkey and Ukraine. Within each country, the project team selected four research areas to represent diverse socio-economic and migration contexts.

A detailed survey was conducted with 8000 people

Quantitative data collection consisted of a survey that was carried out with 500 respondents in each Research Area, yielding a project-wide total of 8000. Plans for random sampling were elaborated for each research area, depending on local conditions.

A detailed questionnaire was developed over a ten-month period, including extensive pilot testing in each research area. Questions covered household migration histories, individual migration aspirations, perceptions of human rights and democracy, and a range of other issues.

Qualitative interviews provided deeper insights

Qualitative data collection entailed in-depth interviews and observation. In each research area the team conducted twenty interviews. The qualitative material provided an opportunity to contextualize the quantitative results and understand more of the social processes behind statistical patterns.

The qualitative interviews also allowed for addressing the effects of the financial crisis in Europe, which unfolded while data collection was under way.

The interview transcripts and observation reports were analysed with a specialized software (NVivo) to explore and systematically analyse the rich data provided by in-depth interviews.

PROJECT IDENTITY

Coordinator	Prof. Christiane Timmerman (University of Antwerp, BE) <hr/>
Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University of Antwerp, BE• University of Oxford, UK• Peace Research Institute Oslo, NO• Koç University, TR• Université Mohamed V – Agdal, MA• Centre of Sociological Research, UA• Université Cheikh Anta Diop, SN <hr/>
Duration	February 2010–January 2013 <hr/>
Funding scheme	Collaborative Project Small or medium-scale focused research project <hr/>
Budget	€ 2,415.000 (of which EU contribution: € 1,852,000) <hr/>
Website	www.eumagine.org <hr/>
Further reading on the topic of this policy brief	Mohamed Berriane, Mohammed Aderghal, Dominique Jolivet et Lahoucine Amzil (2012), Within country analysis: Morocco, EUMAGINE Project Paper 10, Rabat et Oxford, www.eumagine.org . <hr/>
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