Moroccan-Spanish Relations from Above and Below
(1990 – 2012)

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by

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Abstract

This study sets out to analyse the dynamics and complexities of Moroccan-Spanish relations “from above and from below” over a period of 22 years (1990 to 2012) by exploring the impact of the supra-state (EU) and the sub-state (Catalan) entities on the bilateral relationship. While the Rabat-Madrid nexus is the main focus, the thesis also surveys Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations, focussing on economic, migration and cooperation policy areas where Spain, the EU and Catalonia have shared but varying degrees of competence. The investigation seeks to examine whether the complexity of relations and actors turn out to be beneficial or detrimental to the Rabat-Madrid bilateral ties, and strives to produce a theoretically informed investigation by framing the dynamics of this complex relationship in theoretical terms. Multi-level governance, Europeanization, Complex Interdependence and Omnibalancing are the main theoretical frameworks discussed.

With regard to the central relationship (Moroccan-Spanish relations), the research highlights its complex, multifaceted and cyclical nature. It underlines some of the structural problems plaguing the bilateral ties such as the dissimilar political systems, the territorial squabbles, economic interests and disparities, migration and security challenges, and the negative public opinion; and it also points to the flourishing web of interdependencies forcing the two neighbours to cooperate such as the intensifying economic, political, and social issues.

As to Morocco-EU relations, it transpires that Madrid looms relatively large in most EU-Moroccan ties, especially in economic (fisheries and agricultural) and migration issues. Brussels also plays an on-going structural role allowing Madrid to de-problematize some of its dealings with Rabat, by providing resources and a platform allowing Rabat and Madrid to focus on more constructive issues. Importance of Moroccan-Catalan relations is illustrated by the large proportion of Moroccan immigrants living in the autonomous region and the sustained economic and official relations between Barcelona and Rabat. Although Catalonia has its own priorities linked to its economic interests, identity, security, international prestige, and influence in Spanish politics, Barcelona’s impact on Rabat-Madrid relations has mainly been positive, if not complementary.

The research also highlights the lingering and potential structural problems in the inter-state bilateral relationship including territorial issues, economic interests and disparities, security challenges, negative perceptions, etc. However, it concludes that the proliferation of actors and the diversification of interests has largely generated a shield of common interdependencies that mitigate tensions and prevent potential conflicts. The thesis argues, therefore, for Complex Interdependence as a fairly satisfactory theoretical base, albeit with limitations. The theory has the potential to frame the dynamics of this complex relationship where increased interdependencies seems to create a buffer of common interests withstanding conflict. Within this framework, the EU and Catalonia can be perceived as external actors and contact channels, largely facilitating relations and alleviating tensions.

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Table of Contents

List of tables and figures 6

List of acronyms and abbreviations 7

Chapter one - Introduction, questions, and review of literature 10

- General introduction 10
- Research questions and assumptions 11
- Research relevance, rationale and limitations 14
- Methodology 20
- Research structure 24
- Review of literature 27
  - Publications with a predominantly southern perspective 28
  - Publications with a predominantly northern perspective 32
  - Comments on the literature review 40

Chapter two - A theoretical framework 42

- Introduction 42
- The proliferation of theoretical contenders 43
- The theoretical framework 47
  - Multi-level Governance theory 48
  - Europeanization 51
  - Complex Interdependence theory 54
  - Omnibalancing 59
- The theoretical complex 65
- Limitations 68

Chapter three - Moroccan-Spanish relations: a complex partnership 70

- Introduction 70
- A tale of two systems 71
  - Spain: the success story? 71
  - Morocco: the weight of history and tradition 73
- Spain and Morocco: two strangers with vested interests? 76
- PSOE and PP policies towards Morocco: playing musical chairs? 82
- Major bilateral issues: land, money, people and the neighbours 85
  - Territorial issues 85
  - Migration, social and security issues 88
  - Economy and cooperation: 92

External sources of influence 98
Civil society, media and public opinion: the stereotype trap 101
The case of Spain 101
The case of Morocco 105
Conclusions 109
Chapter four - The place of Spain in Moroccan-EU relations........ 113
Introduction 113
The evolution of EU-Moroccan relations and the place of Spain 115
Major Moroccan-EU bilateral issues and Spain’s input 121
The territorial issues 121
Fisheries: 122
Good governance, democracy and human rights 124
Migration 127
Agriculture 129
Development aid and other cooperation issues 131
Spain, Morocco and the EU 134
Conclusions 138
Chapter five - Moroccan-Catalan relations and the place of Spain 142
Introduction 142
The historical perspective: 144
The rise of Catalan nationalism 149
Immigration 153
The Economy 161
Institutional cooperation and civil society 166
Conclusions 169
Chapter six - Analysis of the triple dyadic relations dynamics 173
Introduction 173
Dynamics of a triple bilateral relationship 173
Analysis of each period: 177
First phase (1990 to 1993) 177
Second phase (1994 to October 1995) 179
Third phase (November 1995 – 1999) 180
Fourth phase (2000 – 2002) 181
Fifth phase (2004 – 2008) 183
Sixth phase (2009 – 2010) 184
Seventh phase (2011 –) 186

The most salient observations 187
    Moroccan-Spanish relations: central, cyclical, fickle, yet improving 187
    The impact of the EU and Catalonia 193
    Theoretical conceptualization of the triple bilateral relationship. 198
Conclusions 205
Appendices 211
Appendix 1- List of interviewees 211
Appendix 2 – Interview questions 213
Primary sources: 214
Published official documents: 214
    European Community / European Union documents: 214
    Documents from Catalan official sources 214
Statistical databases and surveys 215
Newspapers and Magazines 215
Websites 216
Secondary sources 217

List of tables and figures

Table 1.1 Catalonia’s relative importance in economy and migration issues

Table 3.1 – What countries pose a serious threat to Spain’s peace and security?

Table 3.2 – Public perception of conflict issues between Spain and Morocco by degree of importance

Table 3.3 Tourism flows to Morocco from France, Spain and Germany (2000 to 2011)

Table 4.1 Financial assistance EU-Morocco (1995-2013)

Figure 2.1 The theoretical complex

Figure 3.1 Evolution of Moroccan immigration in Spain (1991 – 2012)

Figure 3.2 Spanish-Moroccan trade (1995 - 2012)

Figure 3.3 FDI in Morocco from France, the UAE and Spain (2000 – 2010)

Figure 3.4 Morocco’s image in Spain

Figure 4.1 EU-Morocco trade volume in goods (in millions of Euro) (1990 – 2012)

Figure 5.1 - Evolution of the number of Moroccan immigrants in Catalonia (1991-2012)

Figure 6.1 Distribution of the 10 Moroccan-Spanish High-level Meetings (1993-2012)

Figure 6.2 Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations (1990 – 2012)

Figure 6.3 Evolution of Moroccan immigration to Spain and Catalonia (1991 – 2012)

Figure 6.4 Moroccan-Spanish average annual bilateral trade (imports + exports) and trade balance (1990 – 2012)

List of acronyms and abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
ACCD	Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (Catalan Development Cooperation Agency)
AMDH	Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (Moroccan Association for Human Rights)
AP	Alianza Popular, predecessor to PP
ARLEM	Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly
ACC1Ó	Agency for the Innovation and Internationalization of Catalan Enterprise
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCOO	Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras
CESID	Centro Superior de Información y Defensa (Spanish Intelligence Service, renamed CNI in 2002)
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIRES	Centro de Investigaciones sobre la Realidad Social (Social Investigations Centre)
CIS	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Sociological Research Centre)
CIT	Complex Interdependence Theory
CiU	Convergència i Unió (Catalan Convergence and Union party)
CIDOB	Centre d'Informació i Documentació Internacionals a Barcelona (Barcelona Centre for International Information and Documentation, a think-tank)
CAN	Catalan News Agency
CNI	Centro Nacional de Inteligencia (Spanish Intelligence Service)
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Community
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EFP	EU Foreign Policy
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EMHRN	Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument

EP	European Parliament
ERC	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Catalan Republican Left party)
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPA	Fisheries Partnership Agreement
Frontex	Frontières extérieures (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External EU Borders)
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMP	Global Mediterranean Policy
ICV	Iniciativa per Catalunya and Els Verds (Initiative for Catalonia Greens)
Idescat	Catalan Statistical Institute
IEMed	European Institute for the Mediterranean
IER	Instance Equité et Réconciliation (Equity and Reconciliation Commission)
INCIPE	Instituto de Cuestiones Internacionales y Política Exterior (Institute of International Issues and External Relations)
INDH	Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain (National Human Development Initiative)
INE	Spanish Statistical Institute
Istiqlal	Independence Party
MEDA	Mesures d’Ajustements/d’Accompagnement
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MINURSO	UN mission in Western Sahara
MLG	Multi-level Governance theory
MPC	Mediterranean Partner Country
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Aid
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OMDH	Organisation Marocaine des Droits de I’Homme (Moroccan Organization for Human Rights)
PSC	Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (Socialists' Party of Catalonia)
PIMEC	Catalan representation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

POLISARIO	Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro
PP	Partido Popular (right-wing Popular Party)
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Socialist party)
PxC	Plataforma per Catalunya
RAN	Reunion de Alto Nivel (High-level meeting)
SIVE	Sistema Integral de Vigilancia Exterior (Comprehensive external control system)
TM	Transparency Maroc
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCD	Unión de Centro Democrático (The Union of the Democratic Centre)
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores (General Union of Workers)
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UN	United Nations
USFP	Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (The Socialist Union of Popular Forces)
USOC	Unió Sindical Obrera de Catalunya (Labour Syndical Union of Catalonia)
XILA	Xarxa d’Informació i Selecció Laboral en Origen (Labour Selection and Information Network in Countries of Origin)

Chapter one - Introduction, questions, and review of literature

General introduction

For centuries, the story of Morocco and Spain has been, and continues to be, frenzied, fertile and fascinating. It is the tale of two incongruent neighbours with a long lasting love-hate relationship, a history fraught with chapters of mutual domination and capitulation, tension and détente, as well as cooperation and grand accomplishments. Almost everything matters in the analysis of the unpredictable, complex and convoluted relationship of this couple: history, geography, religion, race, culture, politics, economy, security, strategy, etc. The point of encounter between them marks the meeting between Africa and Europe, Islam and Christianity, South and North, and East and West, with premonitions of mutual entrenchment, prejudice, aversion, and bellicosity; or the promise of mutual appreciation, cross-learning, abundance, and productive cooperation. Their common history is everything but dull, as they share a turbulent yet extremely lush legacy. The nine centuries of Arab and Islamic influence in the peninsula that started from the first Arab/Berber conquest of 711 until the final expulsion of the *Moriscos* in 1610,[1] and the almost five centuries of Iberian presence in North Africa have left a lasting heritage of tensions, suspicion, mistrust and, ironically, ignorance on both sides of the Strait. Yet it also left records of abundant exchanges and miscegenation, tales of fabled cohabitation, splendid monuments and architecture, and the promise of more to come.

The more recent past beginning with the strained period of the Spanish protectorate in Morocco between 1912 and 1956, however, made the schism grow even deeper. After Morocco's independence, the bilateral relations were still disrupted by intermittent crises and spats, but they started changing course, veering towards periods of pragmatism, negotiation and cooperation. The last half century was, therefore, characterized by cycles of hostility and friendship, rapprochement and disputes, and cooperation and conflict. Tensions over Tarfaya in 1958, Ifni in 1969, the Green March in 1975, the major fisheries crises of 1995 and 2001, and the 2001 to 2002 diplomatic crises were punctuated by no less than 105 agreements between Madrid and Rabat over the 1956 – 2005 period (second only to France with 148 agreements, and ahead of the USA with 76 agreements and Germany with 66 agreements) (Torrejon Rodríguez, 2006: 5-6).

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[1] The term "Moriscos" refers to the (two to three million) descendants of the Muslim populations in Spain and Portugal who chose to remain in the Peninsula (sometimes forcibly converting to Christianity) after the downfall of the last Muslim bastion of Granada in 1492. On April 9th 1609, Philip III of Spain ordered the expulsion of the last half million of them. See (Lane-Poole, 1990: 279). For further details see also (Bernabé Pons, 2009) and (Caro Baroja, 2003).

Aside from a rich and fascinating past, the contemporary relationship of these two countries, presents a host of intriguing elements. Even after Spain surrendered the occupied northern territories to the newly independent Moroccan kingdom in 1956, the bilateral relationship remained edgy compared to Morocco's relations with France, the other colonial power, mainly since Spain was still occupying territories in the country. However, in the aftermath of Spain's accession to the European Community (EC) in 1986 (the main focus of this research), the relationship gradually entered a new stage. While old elements of tension did not disappear (territorial issues, political disagreements, economic squabbles, historical legacies, perceptions, etc.), bilateral relations started to proliferate and consolidate, creating a buffer of incremental common interests that managed to counterbalance the adversarial aspects in the relationship. Probably, another assuaging factor was the EC accession itself, as it ushered in a new player in the form of the European Community. The EC (and later the EU) gradually converted itself into a key partner for Morocco but also an important component in Moroccan-Spanish relations. Finally, the period also coincided with the budding of Spain's devolved political system and the entry into play of some of its prominent regions such as Catalonia and Andalucía. Such historical Spanish regions started to act as fully-fledged autonomies, conducting their own external relations and driving their distinctive goals and policy priorities. This research aims to bring these elements together, examining contemporary Moroccan-Spanish relations and exploring the impact of the supranational as well as the sub-state dimensions.

Research questions and assumptions

Considerable research and numerous studies have looked at contemporary Spanish relations with countries south of the Mediterranean in general, and with Morocco in particular. But as the review of literature will reveal, the majority of these mainly focused on the strictly bilateral relationships. While some experts have explored the EU's part in the relationship (Villaverde, 2000; López García and De Larramendi, 2002; Martín, 2003; Vaquer, 2004b; González García, 2006; Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, 2007; Bremberg, 2012), fewer studies have examined more complex scopes of the relationship that would include the contribution of other players in shaping the bilateral ties, such as the neighbouring countries, the superpowers, non-state actors, or the Spanish autonomous regions. This research aspires to examine relations between Morocco and Spain over a period of 22 years (1990 – 2012) “from above and from below”, gauging the contribution and the impact of the EU as well as the autonomous region of Catalonia. While the Rabat-Madrid nexus is the main focus and the key component of this set of connections (a substantial part of this project will be dedicated to the wider Moroccan-Spanish bilateral aspects), the research will equally evaluate the input of the EU and Catalonia to see the extent to which they converge with, impact, or shape the Rabat-Madrid bilateral ties. For this purpose, the thesis will also examine the two other (Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan) bilateral relations, focussing on issues where the three actors (Spain, the EU and Catalonia) have shared, but varying, degrees of competence with regard to their relations with Morocco. The result will be the exploration the three dyadic relationships where the main objective is to capture some of the complexities of the wider Moroccan-Spanish ties. The main research questions this research is seeking to answer, therefore, are as follows:

1- How can Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations during the (1990 - 2012) period be characterised, especially in the areas of migration, the economy and cooperation?

2- What kind of impact did the EU and Catalonia have on Moroccan-Spanish relations during this period and does the complexity of relations and actors turn out to be beneficial or detrimental to the Rabat-Madrid relationship?

3- Finally, how can this complex North-South relationship be adequately captured in theoretical terms?

This investigation, therefore, examines some of the major aspects involved in Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations, but will concentrate on policy areas (migration, economic, and cooperation issues) where Madrid, Brussels and Barcelona possess varying degrees of competence in order to see how each of these actors manages these issues and pursues their interests and what drives them to do so. The research also aims to find out whether motives, policies and actions of Madrid, Barcelona and Brussels towards Rabat converge or diverge; it also seeks to explore the impact of Catalonia’s and EU’s parallel relationships with Rabat on Spain’s approach, interests and policy outcomes. By doing so, the research also aims to find out whether this variety of interlocutors generates a concert or a cacophony, i.e. whether the multiplicity of actors in the relationship creates a basis for more security, stability and improvement in Moroccan-Spanish relationship or makes it more complicated and difficult to manage. Last but not least, the thesis seeks to produce a theoretically informed analysis and tries to identify possible conceptual paradigms likely to adequately frame this complex relationship.

The thesis advances a number of postulations with regard to the research questions. Its first assumption is that due to the continuing upward and downward shifts of influence towards the supranational level and the sub-state levels at the expense of the traditional monopoly of central governments in the European context, relationships and foreign policy agenda are no longer shaped and determined solely through centralized decisions. These agenda rather emerge from a complex process of strategies, negotiations, bargains and concessions that involve other non-state actors. Policy-making, and therefore power, is shared across multiple levels of government, including the state, the sub-state and the supra-state. It would, therefore, follow from this that both Catalonia and Brussels bring their weight to bear in the Rabat-Madrid bilateral relationship, thereby forming a complex web of multiple relationships, interests, bargains, concessions and agenda.

The second assumption is that while the objectives and actions of these players do not necessarily converge (due to their diverging priorities, identities and goals),[2] they do share some common values, norms, interests and visions. This may create simultaneous processes of convergence and divergence, leaving the overall situation fairly mixed and in need of a balanced assessment. I also postulate that while Spain may find it debilitating and irritating to have competing and meddling actors, and while Morocco may find it both convenient and tedious to have a multiplicity of interlocutors, the presence of the supranational and sub-state channels brings a largely constructive contribution to this traditionally difficult bilateral relationship. These non-state actors may create a proliferation of cooperation opportunities, mediate or intervene during crisis periods. Equally, they may alleviate tensions by directly assuming responsibility to negotiate or manage some of the sticking points in the relationship.

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[2] Madrid defends its national interest, the EU defends the wider European interests and Barcelona is partly driven by a desire to assert its autonomy and national identity.

Finally, I would propose that this complex relationship may not be framed using a simple conceptual paradigm due to the multiplicity of issues and actors involved, the existence of cooperation and conflict elements and the disparate environments in which the actors revolve (Morocco, on one side, and Spain, the EU and Catalonia, on the other). A creative combination of conceptual frameworks and theories may be necessary.

Research relevance, rationale and limitations

As was highlighted in the general introduction, this research aims at exploring a unique aspect of international relations considering the dimensions of the case under scrutiny (a North/South and East/West nexus) and the actors involved (two distinct countries, a supranational entity and a sub-state actor), which makes this "relationship complex"[3] a particularly exciting and rich subject, potentially in terms of tensions but also with regard to the need to cooperate in close proximity. This relationship acquires even deeper significance considering the international geo-strategic importance of the Strait of Gibraltar as well as the significance of this locus to the wider Euro-Mediterranean relations. Indeed, the bilateral relationship is not only important to the two actors but is also of strategic and symbolic importance to the Mediterranean region, the wider Europe and other world powers such as the United States. Stability, cooperation and increased interdependence appear to be the main priorities for these regional and international actors with a view to avoiding situations or tensions likely to trigger serious security, economic, political or humanitarian crises. The importance of this relationship is probably best appreciated during times of bilateral crises, such as the 2002 Perejil/Laila crisis,[4] that often see considerable international involvement to resolve potentially problematic issues.

However, while bearing a number of distinctive hallmarks, this complex relationship is by no means a singular or an isolated example. The Spanish-Moroccan relationship does indeed boast some historical, strategic and geographic specificities and Spain's patent decentralisation is an extra distinctive feature. However, the case also represents an example of the increasingly dense North-South relations spanning the Euro-Mediterranean interface. This research may, therefore, also hold relevance for other significant North-South relationships extending into the south-western Neighbourhood (Morocco-France, Algeria-France, Algeria-Spain, Tunisia-France, Tunisia-Italy, etc.). Therefore, quite apart from the relationship itself, the case can be used as a model for similar Mediterranean (or even international) relationship complexes and may bear equally significant theoretical implications (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 and the concluding chapter).

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[3] This concept is equally interesting from a theoretical perspective (see Chapter 2), as it will help us conceptualize this complex set of relationships relying on such conceptual frameworks as the Multi-level Governance debate (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Bache and Flinders, 2004; Piattoni, 2010, etc.) and Buzan and Waever's concept of "Security Complexes" (Buzan and Waever, 2003).

[4] Perejil in Spanish, Leila in Arabic or Taura in Berber is the name of the islet the size of a football field over which Spain and Morocco almost came to blows in July 2002. It is situated at about 150 meters off the Moroccan coast and 11 kilometres west of Ceuta. The resolution of the spat over this "stupid little island" saw the intervention of such super powers as the EU, France and the US. Colin Powell, then US Secretary of State, dedicated two full days of "telephone diplomacy" to secure a return to the status quo ante (Gillespie, 2006: 120).

But before proceeding any further, there are a number of questions that still beg for an answer. First of all, what justifies the choice of the autonomous region of Catalonia when other regions such as Andalucía, Galicia or the Canary Islands could have been chosen instead? What is the rationale behind the choice of the time frame, particularly the year 1990 as a starting date? Why concentrate on the areas of migration, economy, and cooperation? What do these areas actually comprise? And will these be sufficient to substantiate and warrant valid empirical and theoretical conclusions?

While the role of the EU in the bilateral relationship has been reasonably well examined and might be self-evident due to its on-going structural role, the relevance of a Spanish region might sound less so. Catalonia's place in this quadrilateral equation, however, becomes particularly pertinent when we consider a number of facts. With almost 16% of the overall Spanish population, Catalonia was home to some 270,000 Moroccan immigrants by 2010 (some 35% of their total in Spain); it was by far the largest foreign community in the autonomous region, followed by the Romanian (88,000) and the Ecuadorian (80,000).[5] Equally significant, more than one-third of Spanish companies established in Morocco are Catalan and the region's share of overall Spanish investments in Morocco between 1990 and 2010 represented almost a third, and exceeded 50% in 2011.[6] Moreover, since the early 1990s, strong Catalan-Moroccan bilateral relations kept evolving. Rabat is not only the first destination of Spanish Prime Ministers' foreign visits but that of Catalan premiers as well. Jordi Pujol, Pascual Maragall, José Montilla and Artur Mas have all made Rabat their first destination outside of Europe. And aside from economic cooperation and migration issues, other issues such as the Sahara, civil society cooperation, tourism, education, culture and other social projects make the Catalan dimension loom even larger in the equation.

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[5] See statistical data available at the Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya Idescat.cat

[6] Interview with the Director General of external affairs at the Catalan Generalitat (20 June 2012).

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter five, the choice of the autonomous community of Catalonia is justified by its historic importance in the Morocco-Spain nexus as well. Indeed, Catalonia is also part of Spain's relation with Morocco in that it often provides a support role for Madrid in its ties with Rabat. On numerous occasions, Catalan officials have played intermediation roles between the two countries, especially during difficult periods. At the same time, the central government in Madrid remains wary of Catalonia's behaviour with regard to the region's own interests and nationalistic aspirations. Catalonia does indeed loom large in all the policy areas chosen in this investigation (migration, economy and cooperation issues), and acquires additional importance when we consider the region's strong sense of autonomy and national identity. Catalonia, much like the Basque country or Galicia, is one of Spain's "historic regions", not the result of some arbitrary administrative segmentation. And although it behaves as one of the Spanish regions, its significance equally resides in its pretensions to a deeper autonomy and even independence. Policies in areas such as language, education, culture, and immigration are strong indicators that nationalism is a major driver for Catalonia. Its external relations are, therefore, partly perceived as international relations rather than simple external dealings, and the fact that successive governments have been closely involved in promoting, sometimes mediating in, Spain's relations with Morocco, or that Catalonia has been playing a prominent role in the Euro-Mediterranean process are strong indications of the Catalan singularity and importance. Finally, Barcelona-based institutions such as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) permanent secretariat, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), and the European Institute for the Mediterranean (IEMed), as well as the presence of two important Moroccan consulates in the region (in Barcelona and Tarragona) are extra signs of the strategic importance of Catalonia at the bilateral, multilateral and regional levels.

Regarding the second question, it is true that landmark years such as 1986 (marking Spain's EEC accession), or 1995 (marking the launching of the Barcelona process) are more symbolic dates that this study might have opted for as starting years for this research analysis. However, 1990 was chosen not so much because it is a round number but rather because it sufficiently captures the many consequences of Spain's EEC accession and its impact on Morocco, while also capturing the chain of events that led to the 1995 Barcelona process.

Indeed, the effects of Spain's EU accession on Moroccan-Spanish relations started to be felt only in the beginning of the 1990s. It took a few years of adaptation before Europeanization of Spain's external relations started to be felt. The beginning of the decade also marks the coming to maturity of a shift in Spain's attitude and policies towards Morocco from a predominantly zero-sum to an increasingly win-win logic and from competition to rapprochement principles. Also, Catalonia's role in the bilateral relationship was hardly significant before the early 1990s. In fact, the region's impact and external projection, especially with regard to its relations with Rabat and the southern Mediterranean, started to become visible only a few years into the decade. The choice of the time span (22 years) was also motivated by a host of reasons. The period, in the author's view, is neither too short nor too long, and it encompasses a number of key events and transitions. In Spain, it covers three important political transitions: from the socialist party (PSOE) dominance since 1982 to the right wing Popular Party (PP) in 1996, back to the socialists in 2004, and back again to the PP in 2011. The time frame also provides a convenient framework since it captures a good representative sample of important events, incidents, ups and downs that can shed light on the complexities of the bilateral relationship as well as Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations, and warrant conclusions and interpretations. This time period is also opportune from the Moroccan perspective as it includes an important decade of Hassan II's rule, the launching of the liberalisation process with the first *alternance* government of 1998,[7] and the coming to power of Mohamed VI in 1999; it even catches a glimpse of the aftermath of the so-called "Arab Spring". As far as Morocco-EU relations are concerned, the time frame proves equally apt as it covers the first Moroccan-EU bilateral crisis of 1992, the negotiation period leading up to the 1995 Association Agreement (AA), its entry into force in 2000, and the granting to Morocco of the so-called "advanced status" in 2008. Finally, from the Catalan perspective, this period is equally interesting as it captures important government transitions: from *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) government[8] to two leftist coalitions in 2003 and 2006, then back to a CiU government in 2010. This period also witnessed a number of official visits by Catalan premiers to Morocco (in 1994, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2012).

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[7] In Morocco, 1998 was marked by the election of a new government led by the long-standing opposition socialist party (USFP). At its helm stood the leader of the party and chosen Prime Minister Abderrahmane El Youssoufi. This stage in Morocco's political transition is referred to as the "Alternance".

[8] CiU (Convergència i Unió) (Convergence and Union) is a federation of two constituent parties, the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) and its smaller counterpart, the Democratic Union of Catalonia (UDC). It is a moderate nationalist party in Catalonia. It ruled the autonomous region from 1980 to 2003 under Jordi Pujol and came back to power in 2010 under its leader Artur Mas, currently the President of the Catalan Government.

The ‘policy-specific’ thematic choice is not arbitrary either. The literature on Spanish-Moroccan relations encompasses a vast array of potentially pertinent subjects and issues: most salient and recurrent among which are historical and perceptual issues, territorial disputes (the Sahara, Ceuta and Melilla, etc.), migration, security, economic relations, fisheries, agriculture, and cooperation issues. Themes like history and perceptions, territorial issues and security are crucial and will be discussed in the sections where they are most pertinent, but they do not lend themselves to the top and bottom analysis we are seeking to undertake here. In fact, while this research will touch upon all these issues, it will focus more on the shared issues among the three polity levels. Rather than trying to be unrealistically comprehensive and for the sake of practicality, this research is concentrating on a fairly adequate number of representative policy areas that are important, relevant at all levels of analysis, and carry sufficient elements of tension and cooperation to substantiate valid conclusions. Indeed, important bilateral issues will crop up and be discussed, but more focus will be more on migration, economic and cooperation issues that represent major policy areas whose relevance is clear and assessable at the three levels of analysis. Migration is an increasingly crucial issue for Morocco, Spain, Catalonia and the EU, and its relevance, magnitude and centrality have been intensifying since the mid-1990s. The number of Moroccan immigrants in the EU, Spain and Catalonia is significant (estimated at 2.75 million, 870 and 280 thousand respectively). Migration became a priority issue in Morocco’s relations with its three European partners, and immigrants are a source of much needed remittances, tourism and development projects for their country of origin. Their integration, contribution and control of illicit immigration are increasingly burning subjects for the four actors.

The second issue that will be analysed in more detail is the economic aspect. More specifically, the thesis will scrutinize some macro-economic aspects such as GDP, trade exchange volumes, trade balance and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The reason behind the focus on these macroeconomic economic criteria is because they are pertinent for the four entities, growing in importance, constitute a sizeable component in the relationships, and are fairly representative of the overall economic balance of power. These benchmarks also have the advantage that they are quantifiable, evolving and comparable across the three levels of analysis. Macroeconomic indicators such as GDP, trade balance or FDI are not only important per se. Trade balance deficit or surplus, for example, reflects the economic balance of power and dominant/dependent positions. For instance, the fact that Moroccan-Spanish bilateral trade represents almost 20% for the Alawi Kingdom as opposed to between 1 and 1.5% for Spain[9] (with the EU, figures stand at 60 to 70% as opposed to less than 1%) is an important indicator when it comes to analysing sensitivities and vulnerabilities (see Chapter 2 under Complex Interdependence theory). Trade is equally important since it reveals each party's comparative advantages as well as the various conditions, restrictions and regulations associated with these, which are yet more indicators of power distribution as well as the afore-mentioned asymmetries. Finally, the broad theme of cooperation also applies to all the four actors. Under this heading, the thesis explores both tangible and the intangible components. Through this theme the research will touch on issues such as official visits and agreement signatures, collaboration on various issues, development aid, technical support, etc. as well as collaboration at the level of civil society and non-state actors. This issue is not only important for its symbolic, political and diplomatic implications, but it is also a crucial gauge for the state of the relationships that lends itself to a horizontal analysis encompassing the state, sub-state and supranational levels.

Nevertheless, this enterprise is not without its limitations and potential pitfalls. Trying to obtain conclusions relative to the European Union's and Catalonia's contribution to Moroccan-Spanish relations based on migration, economic, and cooperation issues is certainly important and bears thematic and theoretical value, but determining the scope and impact of Brussels and Barcelona on the Rabat-Madrid ties based solely on three policy areas might be problematic, as the bilateral relationship is much more complex and multifarious, and Catalonia's and the EU's respective roles transcend these two aspects. However, for the sake of focus and consistency this research has chosen issues that bear enough importance and carry sufficient elements of cooperation and tension to warrant plausible analysis and conclusions. Also, as previously explained, migration, economy and cooperation issues are outstanding and central aspects in the relationship. It would probably be best to focus on these key representative issues to portray the broader multilateral relationship dynamics rather than try to be comprehensive at the risk of superficiality.

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[9] Figures stood at less than 1% until 2001 and only reached 1.5% in 2011 as a result of the enduring economic crisis in Spain and the massive orientation to new markets like Latin America and Morocco (Zibaoui, 2012) (see economy and cooperation section in Chapter 3). In 2012, the total volume of Spanish exports to Morocco hit a new record, exceeding 2% (See El País article "Doble récord comercial con Marruecos" 24 March 2013.).

Another potential "Achilles' heel" for this endeavour is its reliance on a single regional case study (Catalonia) to draw conclusions on the role of sub-state actors in this complex relationship, as opposed to a wider comparative enterprise. While Morocco has no such intra-state entities, Andalucía and the Canary Islands are certainly two potentially relevant cases whose inclusion would have strengthened this investigation (had resources and time scale permitted), considering their strong ties with Morocco and their weight in overall Moroccan-Spanish relations. Whereas it is to be hoped that studies focusing on Andalucía and the Canary Islands will ensue, this limitation is partly counterweighed by the substantial and singular role of Catalonia, its advanced autonomy status and its nationalistic aspirations, making it a more fully-fledged and even a "quasi-international" actor. In fact, Catalonia's status could become even more important if the region's recent pro-independence tendencies were to reach fruition. With regard to the policy areas under scrutiny, and as was previously argued, Catalonia is much more relevant considering its strong official relationship with Morocco, its advanced and comparatively more comprehensive migration policy, the high percentage of Moroccans living there and the more significant volume of trade and economic relations between the two, as the following table illustrates.

Table 1.1 Catalonia's relative importance in economy and migration issues

	2011 Population (in million)	Number of Moroccan immigrants (2011 figures)	Average annual trade volume with Morocco 2007 – 2012*	Estimated number of companies active in Morocco (2011)
Spain	47 .2	788 000	6.1 billion	800
Catalonia	7.6 (16%)	272 000 (35%)	1.45 billion (23.7%)	300 (37.5%)

Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from Spanish and Catalan official statistical agencies (www.ene.es and www.idescat.cat), as well as data from www.icex.es and www.maec.es

** It should be noted, however, that Morocco maintains trade deficits with both Spain and Catalonia.*

Methodology

Having stated the research questions and discussed the rationale behind the choice of actors, time frame and policy areas chosen as well as some of the research limitations, this section will discuss how the research activities were elaborated and developed out of the research questions.

In other words, how the research questions were progressed and expounded into research strategies and actions and how the author went about carrying out these strategies and actions. The questions this research has asked involve various polity layers, different thematic levels, empirical and theoretical discussions. Trying to provide a coherent interpretation and conceptualisation of this hybrid relationship within the policy areas chosen means the resort to a range of strategies involving empirical data collection, field work, interviews, some archival exploration as well as an extensive study of the material published on the subject in the form of books and academic articles, theses, official documents and publications, newspapers, magazines, specialized websites and other online material and statistical data.

There is a wealth of second-hand bibliographic material on Spanish-Moroccan, EU-Moroccan and some publications on Catalan-Moroccan relations. The review of literature will subsequently cover some of the most outstanding works on these subjects. The research activities started with a fairly thorough study of these sources in order to identify perspectives, arguments, data and information, analysis, conceptual interpretations, as well as gaps and possible research niches. These sources proved to be extremely useful in a number of ways. First, after reading a variety of books and research articles in Arabic, Spanish, French, Catalan and English, an interesting trend of perspectives started to emerge. These written sources have provided valuable insight into the diversity of outlooks and approaches that prompted the author to subsequently organise the literature review in terms of the two most salient perspectives: A northern and a southern viewpoint, as will be later discussed. Second, these secondary sources also provided a wealth of analysis, facts and evidence on the state of the three pairs of relationships under investigation. Sources in Spanish have proved to be particularly valuable in this regard, thanks to the interest of Spanish academics and experts in Moroccan-Spanish relations and thanks to the existence of a range of relatively independent research institutes and centres keen on the subject, especially in Madrid, Andalucía and Barcelona. In-depth discussion and analysis of migration issues, economic relations, and other aspects of bilateral relations is constantly updated and debated, reflecting the significance of the subject in Spain and popular interest in the issue. Third, some of these sources (especially academic theses) have equally offered some theoretical discussions and interpretations, mainly of Moroccan-Spanish relations, and occasionally of the role of the EU in the bilateral relationship. In Arabic, on the other hand, there is a plethora of journalistic articles and non-peer reviewed material on the subject, but fewer books and research articles. Predictably enough, these sources offer a fairly different thematic focus and perspective, as will be discussed later.

These sources have proved to be essential in deepening the author's understanding of the issues, but in order to approach the research questions convincingly and with some degree of comprehensiveness there was also a need to fill a number of gaps. First, as the research is covering a contemporary period and a conflictual relationship, there was a need to seek up-to-date and contrasted sources of information. The approach with regard to this first gap was to resort to newspaper and magazine coverage, especially in Arabic and Spanish. In fact, the research often relied on some relatively independent sources from both sides, such as El País and El Mundo in Spain or non-partisan Moroccan publications such as Tel Quel, Al Massae or l'Economiste. El País in particular proved to be a useful source of information mainly due to its comprehensive coverage of Spanish-Moroccan relations, although its approach tends to echo the predominantly negative coverage of Morocco found throughout the Spanish media (on which more Chapter 3). Second, there was little research available on Moroccan-Catalan relations. This is obviously a fringe topic and, aside from a few academic articles and specialized publications, there was a need to address this lacuna through field work, archival research and interviews. During the course of this research, three visits were made to Barcelona where data was collected from such institutions as CIDOB, IEMed and ACC1Ó, and where interviews were conducted with Catalan government representatives, former officials, business representations, civil society actors, investors, experts and researchers, etc. This work was also complemented by the collection of some articles published by some Catalonia-based newspapers and publications like La Vanguardia, Afkar and Avui. Third, the research also needed to cover the quantitative and measurable aspects since it focuses on such issues as trade exchanges, trade balance, the evolution of the number of immigrants, data on remittances, FDI, development aid, etc. This information was mainly accessible through government and EU reports and publications, official documents and institutional websites such as the Spanish Statistical Institute (INE), the Catalan Statistical Institute (Idescat), Moroccan Exchanges Office (Office des Changes), Spanish ministry of industry and commerce, Moroccan ministry of economy and industry, etc. This official information and statistical data was a crucial part of the analysis since the research chose policy areas requiring evidence-based arguments, evolutionary statistical and official data. Finally, it was equally important to seek an original and up-to-date manner to collect information on official relations, business relations, views and opinions of officials, civil society actors and experts. For this reason, an important part of the research strategy was to access policy documents, directives, statements and speeches, and to devise and conduct a good number of semi-structured elite interviews likely to shed light on some of the dark corners and fill specific gaps.

The semi-structured elite interviews came in the form of a set of basic questions providing a general framework of themes to be explored, but also a set of customized questions depending on the context and on the individual interviewees (See appendix 2 for the list of basic questions asked). Moroccan, Spanish or Catalan interviewees, for example, were given a core of identical questions, but these also varied depending on whether the person was an entrepreneur, a civil society actor, a diplomat or an expert. Interviews were conducted in Barcelona, Rabat and Madrid with policy makers, diplomats, journalists, experts, business people, civil society actors, etc. (see appendix 1 for the full list of interviewees).[10] Some phone interviews were also carried out with some technocrats and spokespersons in Brussels, targeting directorates-general (DGs) such as Agriculture (DG AGRI), Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), and Trade (DG TRADE), as well as services like the European External Action Service (EEAS). The semi-structured interviews also sought to shed light on aspects of the relationships that were unclear, contentious or recent. Responses to similar questions were then grouped together and processed to identify significant trends, convergences or divergences, etc.; while answers to specific questions were evaluated for their fitness to substantiate arguments or illustrate views and analyses. Some of the most revealing statements are quoted directly to reinforce arguments made or lend substance to assessments or interpretations. The trips were also an opportunity to undertake some archival investigations, digging out some relevant documents that have provided further insight into the web of relationships under scrutiny (Morocco-Spain-Catalonia-EU), especially those relating to migration, cooperation and economic issues.

In total, more than 40 interviews were conducted. The choice of interviewees was motivated by their thematic relevance, official position, expertise or experience. And as mentioned earlier, selection was also influenced by the complementary potential that these interviews were likely to offer. In other words, interviews were mainly meant to fill existing gaps and shed light either on less contemporary events and information, or the latest developments in the relationships under study. The higher proportion of interviewees from Catalonia, for example, reflects the scarcity of information available on Moroccan-Catalan relations and the need to seek first-hand information and data. Overall, the range and quality of interviews was satisfactory given that a number of senior officials, experts and people with experience were able to share their views and knowledge with the author. Some interview requests, however, remained unanswered. But some of those that took place have had an important added-value on the research.

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[10] Names of interviewees are not included as per the University of Liverpool ethics requirements.

Finally, having a dual citizenship (Moroccan and Spanish) and having lived and worked in both countries, the research is equally influenced by some of the author’s own experience and knowledge. This has certainly been an advantage as well as a drawback. On the positive side, this made it possible for the author to access a variety of sources in different languages and proved helpful in gaining access to people and information. Corresponding and talking to interviewees in their mother tongues proved particularly useful in establishing a degree of familiarity and confidence, allowing a deeper exchange in a relaxed atmosphere. That also created a propitious context that facilitated the expression of views with a degree of openness and straightforwardness. However, one important challenge was guarding against subjectivity since there was a risk that the author’s views and opinions might influence the research or put a personal slant on the questions asked, the research angle or the interpretation of information obtained. Aside from the thesis supervision that provided a valuable level of check, and the fact that the author does not hold strong opinions with regard to the issues and polities under investigation, the policy areas chosen and the criteria utilised to measure them are clear and objective enough as to allow a fairly balanced evaluation and analysis of the issues. Also, being able to appreciate and understand different viewpoints and perspectives thanks to the wide range of sources consulted in various languages and the different views collected during the interviews was probably the best guard against partiality and bias.

Research structure

As to the organization of this research and the way it will attempt to provide answers to the various research questions raised, after providing a reasonably comprehensive review of literature of the works published on this subject since the 1990s later in this chapter, the second chapter offers some of the conceptual frameworks likely to frame the triple bilateral relationships under study. It offers some clues with regard to possible theoretical interpretations of this complex relationship, first by offering Multi-level Governance theory as a general analytical framework to account for the dynamics at play between Spain, the EU and Catalonia, and the seepage of power and influence from the national to the sub-state and supranational levels. The conceptual debate equally explores a number of theories, mainly Europeanization and Complex Interdependence, to try to conceptualize the nature of the relationships binding Madrid, Barcelona and Brussels with Rabat. The theory chapter also explores "Omnibalancing" theory to see the extent to which it can shed light and conceptualize Rabat's behaviour with the European trio.

Next, the research proceeds to the examination of each case, starting with the rich and multifaceted aspects of the Rabat-Madrid relationship in Chapter three, examining the historical specificities and decision-making structures of these two actors, with a view to elucidating the power distribution, workings, processes and actors involved in each one of the two national contexts. This clarification is crucial since we are not analysing two countries with similar political cultures and structures: Spain is an EU member, a recognised, albeit fledgling, democracy and with advanced regionalism, while Morocco is largely considered an authoritarian country with a centralized decision-making process, at best "democratizing", and with a distinctive power hierarchy (Albrecht and Wegner, 2006; Dalmasso, 2012; Storm 2007). This section is also crucial because it exposes the contradictions between the Moroccan and Spanish systems of governance and the resulting misunderstandings, suspicions and pitfalls. The chapter also provides an account of the wide-ranging issues in the bilateral relationship, highlights the priorities, sensitivities and interests of the two neighbours, as well the key internal and external actors involved in the relationship. It tries to reflect the wider debate on the relationship while dedicating special attention to official cooperation, trade relations, immigration and public opinion.

The analysis of the wider scope of internal and external influences and actors at play in the Moroccan-Spanish bilateral dynamics partly serves as an introduction to the on-going structural role and framework of the EU and the part it plays, as well as the place and impact of autonomous regions such as Catalonia. Once the nature of the Moroccan and Spanish systems has been clarified and the range of bilateral relations defined, Chapter four goes on to examine Moroccan-EU relations in more detail, but with a special focus on issues relating to immigration cooperation and management as well as economic and trade issues, especially within the framework of the various agreements signed between the two. The analysis of these aspects helps us appreciate the extent to which Brussels influences ties between Rabat and Madrid as well as the ways in which Spain and Morocco use and undergo the sway of the supranational entity. This chapter benefits from second-hand sources referring to and analysing the existing literature on Moroccan-EU relations, within reference to the wider framework of the Euro-Mediterranean relationship. It also falls back on primary sources in the form of EU documents, country reports, strategy papers, as well as telephone interviews with EU officials, especially at the EU delegation to Morocco, European External Action Service (EEAS), Trade, Agriculture and Fisheries DGs.

In the same vein, Chapter five focuses on Moroccan-Catalan relationship starting with a historical background and a section on the rise of Catalan nationalism. These are two important dimension that shed more light on the rationale behind the choice of Catalonia and its importance in the research. The chapter, then, goes on to illuminate the range of relationships involved in the Rabat-Barcelona axis, with a special focus on immigration, economic relations and cooperation issue. It also helps establish whether, how and why a Spanish region like Catalonia uses its autonomy privileges and leeway to shape and influence the bilateral relationship between Rabat and Madrid. This chapter draws upon the limited literature available on Moroccan-Catalan relations and is further elaborated using a range of first-hand documents, speeches and semi-structured interviews that proved extremely useful both in getting up-to-date information and deepening understanding and analysis of Moroccan-Catalan relations.

Once the nature and functioning of Moroccan and Spanish systems are unveiled, the scope of their relationship depicted, the Rabat-Brussels and Rabat-Barcelona connections in relevant and comparable areas illustrated, a final analysis of the extent, motivations and impact of their influence in the bilateral relationship becomes a more straightforward enterprise. Chapter six constitutes an important part of the thesis since it endeavours to find a way to map the three relationships, examine their convergences and divergences, analyse and interpret them. The final chapter also offers a theoretical discussion based on the paradigms introduced in Chapter two and tries to find ways to frame the triple dyadic relationship in appropriate and more parsimonious ways. Finally, the conclusions sum up the discussion, highlight the thesis contributions, explore the research agenda and make some informed speculations on the future of these relationships.

Review of literature

Academic coverage of Spanish-Moroccan relations has known a qualitative and a quantitative leap, attracting increasing interest over the last two decades.[11] This recent mounting interest is attributed to a host of reasons, but can be boiled down to two main factors: migration and Spain's economic and political achievements. Indeed, on the one hand, Morocco re-emerged[12] in the Spanish literature as a subject of interest in the early 1990s mainly due to the growing number of immigrants finding home in various Spanish provinces. This immigration was a new phenomenon in the country, visible and mediatised, multiplying exponentially, with an alarming illegal component, and was a source of increasing concern and interest in the country.[13] Spain, on the other hand, became increasingly significant for Moroccans following its EEC accession in 1986, its subsequent consolidated democratization and its economic miracle, three aspects that are sources of interest and fascination in Morocco.[14] These factors increasingly made Spain the new Eldorado for swathes of Moroccan youth eager to make a living, find jobs and new opportunities. Morocco's interest in Spain is also due to its growing importance for the country's economy,[15] its vital role in the Sahara issue as well as the series of cyclical spats between the two neighbours over such issues as fisheries, Ceuta and Melilla and the Sahara.

A number of books, book chapters, research articles and theses have been written on the subject since the 1990s in Spanish, Arabic, English and French. The following review of literature will mainly concentrate on publications that have tried to provide comprehensive analyses of the relationship. These mainly include published books and theses on the bilateral relationship but include as well the most influential and seminal academic and research articles published in various academic journals and edited volumes, or by research institutes such as (López García, 2003; López Garcíaand De Larramendi, 2002; Moré, 2004; Gillespie, 2006; Amirah-Fernandez, 2008, etc.). Since this study tries to avoid a single issue analysis and highlights the multifaceted nature of Moroccan-Spanish relationship by bringing into play the regional and supranational dimensions, it will mainly focus on works that have tried to offer a more rounded and wide-ranging analysis of the relationship. This review is by no means exhaustive but tries to analyse the main contributions to the subject over the last two decades. There are many ways in which this review could be organized. It could be separated out in terms of works offering a "perspective" value and those that have a more "explanatory" value, but these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It could also be organized along thematic lines, except that this would result in a proliferation of categories that are not necessarily clear-cut. Instead, a more amenable, though not ideal, grouping based on the "perspective" of the publications was adopted. This, by no means, implies the prevalence of "nationalistic" discourses around the subject but rather reflects the predominance of certain themes and subjects that reflect Moroccan concerns, perspectives and interests and others that reflect European concerns, interests and perspectives. One way, therefore, to collapse the, otherwise multiple, themes into a pair of manageable and reader-friendly angles is to make a distinction between these publications based on the subjects, concerns and view point they convey. This distribution might also prove useful with regard to the research ambition, i.e. to examine Moroccan-Spanish *relationship*. Regrouping recurrent themes from a "Southern" and a "Northern" perspective is already one step towards that objective. The review will, therefore, dedicate one part to the books or articles published by Moroccans or from a predominantly southern perspective and a second part to publications by Spanish/European authors or from a predominantly northern perspective. This exercise is not only important *per se*, but it is also essential at this stage as it will provide us with a crucial insight into the genres, themes, issues and perspectives of these publications that will reinforce, explain and justify the research niche that the study in your hands has identified.

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[11] For a more in-depth bibliographical analysis of Spanish-Moroccan relations see (López García, and De Larramendi, 2007). Of particular interest see article by Vicente Moga Romero as well as those in part 3 of the book.

[12] Eloy Martín Corrales refers to the more significant academic and research interest in Morocco between 1850 and 1956 compared to the last 50 years (Corrales, 2007: 217).

[13] During the 1980s, Spain quickly moved from a country of emigration to one of immigration. In the early 2000s, immigration accounted for more than ¾ of the population growth in Spain and the country was hosting 23% of the total number of immigrants settling in the EU of 15. See (Cohen, 2009: 4-6; Balch, 2010: 58-60).

[14] In 1970, Spanish economy was barely 4 times the size of its Moroccan counterpart, by 2002 it was a whopping 13 times its size (Moré, 2004: 165).

[15] In the early 2000s, Spain quickly positioned itself as Morocco's second economic partner and second source of FDI after France (Durán, 2009: 1).

Publications with a predominantly southern perspective

Mostly available in Arabic and French, the literature on Moroccan-Spanish relations over the last two decades is diverse and deals with historical, cultural, political, economic and social issues. A large proportion of this literature, however, deals with memory and legacies from the past as well as issues of image and perceptions. It remains largely hostage to the historical and cultural paradigms, mainly concentrating on the golden Islamic period of Al Andalus, the colonial period, or studies analysing the contemporary relationship with a substantial reference to the historic, cultural and religious fault lines, as well as the ensuing issues of image and perception. Books such as Mohamed Ali Dahech's *Al maghrib fi muwajahat ispania: Safahat fi alkifah alwatani didda alisti'mar (1903-1927)* [Morocco facing Spain: pages in the national resistance against colonialism (1903-1927)] (Dahech, 2011); *Aturath alhadari almushtarak bayna ispania wal maghrib* [The common civilizational heritage between Morocco and Spain] (Moroccan Academy Documents, 1992); Muhammed Razzuq's *Al andaluciouna wa hijraatuhum ilal maghrib bayn alqarnain 16 wa 17* [The Andalusians and their migrations from Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries] (Razzuq, 1989); or Mustapha Shak'ah's *Al Maghrib wal Andalus* [Morocco and Al Andalus] (Shak'ah, 1987), are all illustrations of this tendency. The overwhelming majority of these references provide a wealth of historical knowledge regarding the medieval, renaissance and colonial periods. They will, however, not be analysed in more depth here as they provide scant added value to the study of modern-day political, economic and cultural relations that interest us the most in this study. However, their value probably resides in the light they shed on the kind of concerns, views and discourses that these publications perpetrate and that undoubtedly reflect the interests and perspectives of their readership. Such publications tend to provide long accounts of the Islamic Golden Age of Al Andalus, the heritage and contributions of the Moorish populations that were expelled from Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Spanish colonial period in Morocco (1912 – 1956) and the struggle for independence.

Mohammed Larbi Messari's *Al maghrib wa ispania: al alakat asaaba* [Morocco and Spain: the difficult relations], also available in Spanish under the title *Las relaciones difíciles: Marruecos y España* (Messari, 2009), is among the notable exceptions to this tendency as it brings a wider strategic, political and cultural perspective to the issue, combined with the author's long and rich career experience as a political activist, diplomat and journalist. His contribution also discusses the contemporary issues and sheds light on the intricate and intractable nature of the Moroccan-Spanish bilateral relationship. It engages in an elegant analysis of the different aspects, stages and causes of this "messy relationship". Messari's valuable work, however, is tinged with a slightly nationalistic overtone and does not escape the trap of "historical and cultural determinism" that seems to influence a wide range of publications emanating from the south. The book tends to allocate a disproportional importance to historical events such as the 1767 Treaty of Marrakech signed between Carlos III y Mohamed III, the Treaty of Algeciras, or the impact of the 15th century territorial disputes on the contemporary bilateral relations.

Noureddine Affaya and Driss Guerraoui's study titled *L'image de l'Espagne au Maroc* (Affaya and Guerraoui, 2005) is another important contribution that brought novel elements to the debate. It published the welcome results of an interesting opinion poll on Moroccans' perceptions of Spain. The survey brought a long-awaited, thorough and empirical answer to the issue of perceptions from a Moroccan angle.[16] The poll, indeed, managed to bring some vital answers to cover this research gap. Its most prominent findings were the fact that, unlike their northern counterparts,[17] almost 70% of Moroccans had a positive image of Spain; that the main sources of tension between the two countries are respectively the colonial past, the Sahara issue, fisheries, Ceuta and Melilla, and migration; and that the majority of Moroccans view with fascination the economic, political and social rise of Spain over the last 30 years and link it mainly to EU support and the country's democratization process. The study includes many other interesting conclusions and comes with an interesting final section containing intimate testimonials of eminent Moroccan personalities such as Omar Azzimane, Larbi Messari, Aziza Bennani, Driss Benhima and Oumama Aouad Lahrech. What slightly marred this endeavour was the relatively limited number of survey respondents (1031 participants), and (more seriously) the high percentage of participants with an advanced education level (65.2%), which makes it an elite survey unreflective of the overwhelmingly uneducated or moderately educated Moroccan population.

In a different register, articles such as Abdallah Saaf's *Sebta et Melilla et les relations Hispano-Marocaines* (Saaf 1990) or Said Saddiki's *Les clôtures de Ceuta et de Melilla: Une frontière européenne multidimensionnelle* (Saddiki, 2012) reflect the continuing interest of Moroccan authors in the Moroccan-Spanish territorial conflict and the central importance and role of this issue from a Moroccan perspective. Such publications mainly reiterate that Moroccans perceive the Ceuta and Melilla situation as an anachronism with problematic potential, especially with regard to illegal migration, illicit one-way trade activities (i.e. to

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[16] In 1995, the Moroccan monthly Shu'un Maghribiya directed by Larbi Messari published the results of a similar (though less comprehensive) survey on the same subject. The survey showed that Moroccans consider Spain to be their third role model after Germany and Japan, followed by France in the fourth position. See (De Larramendi 2000: 39).

[17] See the periodic opinion polls conducted by the *Real Instituto Elcano*. More discussion of the issue is also provided in Chapter 3.

For example, a 2010 *Real Instituto Elcano* survey revealed that Morocco is negatively perceived by Spaniards with an overall score of 3.9 out of 10, worse than Israel (4.1), China (4.5), Cuba (4.6) and Russia (4.7). The only country that is perceived more negatively is Iran with 3 out of 10. Similar surveys of the Spanish institute conducted since 2002 have been showing similar results (see Chapter three).

Morocco) and their negative repercussions on bilateral relations. The conflict is equally cited as an illustration of the Spanish and EU contradictory discourse and strategies pushing for political, economic and cultural integration with one hand, while perpetuating an unsustainable situation and erecting new border reinforcements between the north and the south with the other.

More recently, however, interest in the ramifications of the current bilateral relations has picked up in Morocco. Two recently published books in French by Moroccan authors demonstrate this tendency. The two books bring interesting contributions to the debate and are worth mentioning for varying reasons: Omar Dahbi's *Maroc-Espagne: La guerre des ombres 2000-2010* (Dahbi, 2011), and Samir Bennis' *Maroc-Espagne. Les relations politiques, économiques et culturelles 1956-2005* (Bennis, 2008). Dahbi's is a rather subjective journalistic investigation that finds its way into this review not so much thanks to research rigor or thorough analysis, but for two separate reasons. First because it sheds light on an aspect of the relationship that is rarely analysed, i.e. the part played by intelligence services in Moroccan-Spanish bilateral ties; second because the contribution in itself is revealing as it elucidates the role that some media outlets can play in the relationship, in this case by perpetuating mutual tensions and deepening suspicions.[18] The book starts and finishes with a rather sombre perspective, admitting to the absence of mutual trust and highlighting the stereotypes and clichés such as the Spanish common expression *hay Moros en la costa*[19] (Dahbi 2011: 15-16). But the essay's main focus is the role of the Spanish national intelligence services[20] headed by General Javier Calderón, an Aznar appointee, in the design of Spanish foreign policy towards Morocco, especially during the PP's terms of office (1996 – 2004) and the 2001 to 2003 Perejil/Laila crisis. The essay also talks about the supposed collusion between Spanish politicians, media organs and journalists aiming at "destabilizing" Morocco. The book's off-centre tone and un-nuanced thesis border conspiracy theory and offer a rather pessimistic perspective and simplistic explanation to an extremely complex relationship.

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[18] The author is former editor of Moroccan daily Aujourd'hui le Maroc, and ALM, the book publisher, is also the publisher of the daily.

[19] Literally, the expression means: "there are moors around". It is used as a colloquial expression in Spanish to refer to the existence of danger or trouble.

[20] CESID (Centro Superior de Información y Defensa) renamed CNI (Centro Nacional de Inteligencia) in 2002.

Bennis', on the other hand, is a published doctoral thesis looking at 50 years of the bilateral relationship. The book dedicates its first three chapters to the territorial issues (Ifni, the Sahara question, Ceuta and Melilla) that started plaguing relations at the dawn of the Morocco's independence in 1956. It then goes on to examine the other bones of contention, namely migration and fisheries, before it tackles economic relations and cooperation. It also addresses the crucial issue of negative perceptions that have endured throughout the years as a result of history, religion and the series of confrontations and conflict that the two countries witnessed for centuries. The book breaks away from the traditional approach and offers a rich discussion of issues spanning over half a century. However, it does not bringing a conceptual contribution to the debate and addresses a plethora of subjects over a long period of time, occasionally resulting superficial examination of certain issues such as the economic aspects of relations or the origins of the Sahara conflict. Nonetheless, the work succeeds in highlighting the complexity of issues and the convoluted history binding the two neighbours linking both to current crises and problems afflicting the relationship.

Publications with a predominantly northern perspective

In Spanish, interest in the subject and the number of books on the bilateral relationship have increased markedly over the last two decades mainly for the reasons that were established earlier. The themes of these books largely reflect the contemporary preoccupations, concerns and debates predominating in Europe in general, and Spain in particular, such as those relating to security, foreign policy, migration, democratization, cooperation, etc. Other cultural, historical and perceptual issues did not disappear, however, as the theme of "otherness" never disappeared from the scene either. The perception, therefore, remained largely one-dimensional with a predominating "view from the north", with absent and, at times, meagre and sketchy southern perspectives and contributions. Books such as the one edited by Bernabé López García and Abdelkrim Belguendouz, *España-Magreb siglo XXI : el porvenir de una vecindad* (1992), the one written by Miguel Hernando De Larramendi and Jesús Núñez in 1996 *La política exterior y de cooperación de España en el Magreb 1982-95* (1996), and *La última frontera: Marruecos el vecino inquietante* (Valenzuela and Masegosa, 1996) written by the two journalists Javier Valenzuela and Alberto Masegosa effectively started this new Spanish wave of publications regarding Morocco, but also a new multifaceted approach that marked a clearer break with the hitherto overwhelmingly historical and cultural coverage of the relationships, underlining issues of migration, territory and security as well as the problematic, yet essential and unavoidable, relationship between the two neighbours.

López García and Belguendouz' edited volume regroups a wide range of contributions on political, economic, sociological and literary issues on the Maghreb region, with a particular focus on Morocco, but what the volume gains in amplitude and breadth it loses in focus and thematic coherence as it remains more of a collection of some individually valuable manuscripts, but with vague common denominators and an absent conceptual framework. Published in 1996, De Larramendi and Núñez' volume starts with an identification of the various territorial, economic, security and socio-cultural Spanish interests in the Maghreb, followed by a hierarchical account of the various institutional actors in Spanish foreign policy towards the region, and a chronological and thematic analysis of relations since the 1970s. The book was one of the first investigations providing an insightful and structured analysis of Spanish foreign policy towards the Maghreb in general, and Morocco in particular, thus quickly converting itself into a must-read for the emerging research community interested in the subject. The volume, however, achieves little besides making an inventory of Spanish interests in the region, policy actors, instruments and the evolution of the relationship. It had the opportunity to offer an in-depth analysis and engage with theoretical literature on North-South relations but missed the chance to place the analysis into an appropriate conceptual debate. The rigid compartmentalization of the issues, the absence of a chapter dedicated to migration (an issue that had started gaining in visibility by then) and the exclusively northern perspective constitute further limitations of this otherwise influential contribution.

In the same year (1996) also appeared one of the most cited journalistic investigations authored by two eminent Spanish journalists (Javier Valenzuela and Alberto Masegosa) with ample experience and knowledge of Morocco. The title of their volume (which translates as "The last frontier: Morocco the disquieting neighbour") pretty much defines the perspective, tone and focus of the publication. Punctuated by interview excerpts and historical references, the book successfully highlights the growing importance of Morocco as a major concern for Spanish foreign policy. It mostly dips into the most controversial aspects of the Spanish-Moroccan relationship such as the thorny territorial disputes (Ceuta, Melilla and the Sahara), fisheries, illegal migration, drug trafficking, and Islamic terrorism. The volume which exceeds 400 pages, however, is little more than a compilation of slightly elaborated journalistic investigations, with few references and no clear added-value. As the book's title indicates, its portrayal of the southern neighbour offers a rather one-dimensional and alarming picture of a country that poses a wide range of serious threats to the stability of their native country, with hardly any concession or reference to the more positive aspects and potential of the bilateral relationship.

The early 2000s saw what may be referred to as a “second wave” of interest in Moroccan-Spanish relations owing to the coming to power of the Popular Party, and especially due to the series of bilateral crises between 2001 and 2002. In 2001, the journalist and ex-diplomat Alfonso de la Serna produced a valuable contribution that was translated into Arabic entitled *Al sur de Tarifa, Marruecos-España: un malentendido histórico* (De la Serna, 2001), where he skilfully discussed some of the historical and geopolitical issues that not only make of the country 14 kilometres south of Tarifa the beginning of a different continent, but a different culture, civilization and world worth exploring and understanding. The book provides a pertinent, detailed and meticulous historical account of Moroccan-Spanish encounters, starting with the eighth century Muslim conquests of Spain and finishing with the completion of the Spanish conquest of northern Morocco and the surrender of Abd El-Krim Khattabi to French and Spanish forces in 1926. The book also offers ample insights into other cultural, geographical and political aspects of Morocco, and devotes two detailed chapters to the Sahara and Ceuta and Melilla issues. De la Serna’s work remains a crucial reference for all students interested in the history and evolution of this bilateral relationship and keen to gain a thorough understanding of their neighbour to the south, offering (in the author’s view) one of the most balanced, rigorous and comprehensive accounts of the origins of the mutual discontent and “otherness” perceived by both sides. The book is, however, not the right reference for those researchers and students interested in contemporary political, economic and social issues, or in conceptual and theoretical debates as it offers little in this regard.

In 2003, and in the wake of the most serious bilateral crisis between Spain and Morocco (the Perejil/Laila crisis), Carla Fibla García-Sala a Spanish journalist with expertise in Spanish-Moroccan affairs coordinated the publication of an interesting publication titled *España-Marruecos desde la orilla sur*: *la relación hispano-marroquí: opiniones e ideas* (García-Sala, 2003). The book starts by providing a background, an analysis and insights into the evolution of Spanish-Moroccan bilateral relations, then goes on to an ‘opinions’ section detailing the views of distinguished Moroccan, Spanish and international contributors, highlighting the weight of history and mutual misunderstandings in the bilateral relationship. It also includes interviews with Mohamed Benaissa and Miguel Ángel Moratinos, former ministers of Moroccan and Spanish foreign affairs respectively, and a section on the main controversial issues between the two countries such as fisheries, agriculture, migration, perceptions, border delimitation and territorial issues. The book's main strength and originality reside in the fact that it brought to the fore the complexity of the relationship and its diverse aspects. However, the book's strength is in itself a weakness since it endeavours to put together a wide range of loosely related pieces, especially in the opinions chapter. Also, the fact that it was largely a reaction to the 2001 to 2002 diplomatic crisis limited its research scope and potential. Last but not least, the volume did not engage extensively with the academic and research debate, making scant references to existing literature and no conceptual framing of the issues.

Also, in 2003 María José Molina García's PhD thesis (later published in book form) *España-Marruecos 1996-2002: un modelo de política exterior para el Magreb* (Molina García, 2003) brought a welcome contribution to the debate. As its title indicates, the main research question of the book was whether Spanish foreign policy could serve as a model for other countries in the Maghreb region. The thesis successfully underscored the complex nature of the bilateral relationship that includes history, geography, identity, security and cooperation before putting the finger on the main bones of contention between the two neighbours (or what the author refers to as the structural elements in the bilateral relationship), namely the territorial disputes, the Sahara issue, fisheries and immigration. The thesis also emphasizes the importance of the Spanish autonomous communities, the economic relations as well as other technical, financial, educational and cultural cooperation issues. The work's main contributions are its treatment of an extensive set of components in the bilateral relation and a balanced approach, highlighting the positive aspects of the relationship as well as the sour issues. Its main weaknesses reside in its fluffy theoretical section that did little towards a proper academic conceptualization of the issues; its almost exclusive northern perspective in the analysis of the "relationship"; and the fact that the overall scrutiny was not adequately packaged and organised for it to serve as a "model" for Spanish foreign policy towards other southern neighbours as the thesis purported initially. In any case, modelling Spain's foreign policy on an analysis of a six-year bilateral relationship was probably bound to be a far-fetched undertaking.

The 2004 volume directed by Bernabé López García and Mohamed Berriane *Atlas 2004 de la inmigración marroquí en España* (López García and Berriane 2004), published by the *Taller* *de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos* at the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), a continuation of its 1996 edition, has established itself as a veritable reference for researchers and students interested in Moroccan immigration to Spain. It is also among the rare and important publications that are the fruit of Spanish-Moroccan research collaboration, as it also includes an important contribution from the *Laboratoire d'Infographie de I'UFRDAR* in Rabat headed by Mohamed Berriane. Organized in ten thematic blocks, this fleshy volume regroups some 140 articles with contributions from Moroccan and Spanish researchers. The study includes data and statistics on the origins and destinations of Moroccan immigrants living in Spain, as well as thematic contributions from renowned researchers and experts on various issues relating to the subject. This work finds its place in the shelf of any researcher interested in the bilateral relations as a kind of "almanac" on migration issues, but it is no substitute for academic books and research articles, as most of the pieces it provides tend to be succinct, informative and with limited references.

Some Spanish economists such as Iván Martín, Gonzalo Escribano, and Iñigo Moré have also examined various aspects of Spain's relations with the Maghreb, but one particular article published in *Mediterranean Politics* by the latter deserves special attention. "The Economic Step between Neighbours: The Case of Spain-Morocco" (Moré, 2004) looks at the economic differences between Morocco and Spain, with a special focus on GDP per capita disparities between the two neighbours. Spain's was four times higher than Morocco's in 1970 but since then the differential grew exponentially to reach thirteen in 2002 (by 2005 it almost reached 15). The article also highlights the absence of policies aimed at reducing the increasing economic gap and points to the risks associated with such acute inequality, which include regional instability, increased illegal migration and other forms of illicit activities. But while offering some useful comparisons, especially with the USA-Mexico and Germany-Poland cases, the article falls short of suggesting an adequate solution on how to reduce the economic gap.

The years 2005 and 2006 also brought their fair share of interesting books and articles regarding the Spanish-Moroccan question in light, and with a deeper analysis, of the near-military confrontation between the two countries over Perejil/Laila, as well as the recent political changes in Morocco following the coronation of King Mohamed VI and the semblance of a democratization process in the country. Paloma González del Miño's book *Las Relaciones Entre España y Marruecos: Perspectivas para el Siglo XXI* (González del

Miño, 2005) is, in my view, one of the best contributions to this debate as it brought a well-researched and in-depth study to the relationship. The book starts prior to Hassan II's death with the appointment of the Socialist government of Abderrahman el Youssoufi that marked, what is now largely agreed to be, the first concrete steps towards the country's liberalisation and the hoped-for democratisation. It then goes on to explore the other key liberalisation endeavours undertaken by Mohamed V, before getting to grips with the complex and interconnected issues and actors involved in the relationship, the cyclical nature of the bilateral conflicts, as well as the tremendous positive potential of the relations and the shared interests. The volume brought a series of undisputed added values, starting with the balanced treatment of the relationship where Morocco is not only meticulously analysed but discussed as an independent actor. It also reiterates a more balanced perspective that scrutinised both the opportunities and the threats facing the relationship, all in a well-documented and argued piece. The work's main weaknesses, however, were its failure to conceptualize the relationship and the absence of an adequate synthesis and concluding remarks or a prospective analysis to seal the wealth of the subjects discussed.

Another prominent and well researched journalistic investigation that shed new light on the 2001 to 2003 crisis and that aptly chronicled the bilateral relationship between 1999 and 2006 with rigour and originality was written by Ignacio Cembrero (the El País star journalist specialized in the Maghreb) through his book *Vecinos alejados: los secretos de la crisis entre España y Marruecos* (Cembrero, 2006). Cembrero not only managed to reveal many fresh details regarding the unfolding and the resolution of the worst crisis in the two countries' recent history, but he also succeeded in highlighting the divergent political cultures and practices, the misunderstandings, the mistrust as well as the complexity of the dividing issues and the role of external actors such as France, Algeria and the EU. Among the book's most salient contributions are its revealing interviews,[21] the diversity and stature of the interviewees (many of them high ranking officials or influential figures on both sides), and the long, meticulous and in-depth research that the work required. But that did not prevent the account from being portrayed from a largely Spanish perspective, with much of the bilateral crisis details taking on a predominantly partisan perspective. Dedicating a whole chapter of the book to the "pro-Moroccan" French role (brushing aside EU and NATO's support for Spain), under the heading "Jacques el Alaoui" in reference to former French President

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[21] Of particular interest are original facts and details provided by José Maria Aznar in a written response to the author's questions regarding the Laila/Perejil crisis and its aftermath.

Jacques Chirac’s closeness to the Alawi Kingdom (Morocco), is among the illustrations of such a tendency. The work is, therefore, a tremendous and well researched contribution to the debate and brings valuable substance and revelations to the issue, but it unfortunately did not escape the “partisan” stance that tends to characterise journalistic coverage of the issue on both sides of the Strait.

Academic articles from reputed academics include Richard Gillespie’s contribution published in *International Politics* (2006) which offers one of the most authoritative and theoretically grounded analyses of the Perejil/Laila crisis. It puts the crisis into its historical and geopolitical setting before proceeding to a meticulous examination of the crisis and its evolution, while testing the so-called ‘web of shared interests’ between Morocco and Spain. The article, however, mainly brings an analysis from a Spanish perspective, examining the strategy informing Madrid’s policy towards Morocco. It does not offer insight on Rabat’s position or the priorities and policies underlying its relationship with Madrid. Another contribution was Amirah-Fernandez’s book chapter (2008) that is yet another fairly well cited article on the relationship that mainly focuses on the Spanish perspective. It discusses the priority that Spain accords to the Maghreb region in general and Morocco in particular, and how the stability of the region remains of utmost importance to Madrid. The article also revisits Spain’s problematic and shifting relationship with Maghreb countries, dedicating a special attention to democratization, human rights and the Sahara imbroglio. It equally covers the post-PP rapprochement between Rabat and Madrid under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s Socialist government, examining the concept of ‘‘dynamic stability,’’ used by some Spanish policy makers to refer to the ‘‘timid willingness to support gradual democratizing changes in the political processes of North African countries, providing that these do not interfere with Spain’s strategic and economic interests” (Amirah-Fernandez, 2008: 358). Yet again, the article adopts an almost exclusively northern perspective, focusing on Spain’s policies towards Morocco.

Two more volumes came subsequently from academic experts to further enrich the historical, political, social, economic and cultural panorama between Morocco and Spain. The first was coordinated by Bernabé López García and Miguel Hernando De Larramendi under the heading *Historia y Memoria de las Relaciones Hispano-Marroquíes: Un Balance en el Cincuentenario de la Independencia de Marruecos* (López García and De Larramendi, 2007). The book mainly revisited the Spanish protectorate period in Morocco and its legacy. It also addressed the role of academics and civil society in the bilateral relationship and covered some issues relating to image and mutual perceptions. The volume also made an attempt at providing a thorough inventory of the bibliography and research made on the bilateral relationship during Morocco's fifty years of independence. The book's thematic organisation was sound but the contributions were markedly unbalanced. Some articles such as Martín Corrales' were informative and well researched, while others such as Ben Othmane's were rather impressionistic and meagrely investigated. The overall added value of the volume and its contribution to the debate over the bilateral relationship were also limited.

The second volume edited by the two eminent researchers Miguel Hernando De Larramendi and Aurelia Mañé Estrada entitled *La Política Exterior Española Hacia el Magreb: Actores e Intereses* (De Larramendi and Mañé Estrada, 2009), on the other hand, quickly converted itself into a central reference for specialists in Moroccan-Spanish relations. Aside from the up-to-date and rich information its contributors provide, its original contribution was the insight it gave into the complex decision making process of Madrid with regard to Rabat. The book sheds light on the intricacies and issues of the relationship, as well as the wide range of contributors to this process. It devotes separate chapters to each actor, starting with the role of the political parties, the prime minister, the ministries, civil society actors, the autonomous regions, the media and other Spanish lobbies and interest groups. The volume's strength, however, is arguably its limitation as well since it dedicated a disproportionally big section to the actors but provided less analysis of the complexity of Spanish interests and issues. Also, in the overall analysis, the different contributors tended to analyse the various actors in a compartmentalized fashion as if these were largely independent from each other, and in isolation from their Moroccan and international counterparts. Once again, the largely "northern" perspective of the edited volume constituted an extra weak spot.

Jordi Vaquer's PhD thesis titled *Spanish Policy towards Morocco (1986 – 2002); the Impact of EC/EU Membership* (Vaquer, 2004b) is yet another example of a seriously researched and well-structured study that looks at the relationship from a purely "Spanish" standpoint. The thesis examines the evolution of Spain's foreign policy since its accession to the EC in 1986, and uses its relationship with Morocco as a case study. Its strengths include its solid theoretical grounding that mainly relied on Europeanization theory, as well as its reliance on the key areas of fisheries, economic relations, immigration and the territorial disputes to substantiate its analysis. The thesis conclusions are equally interesting, highlighting the policy areas where the EC/EU proved instrumental in shaping Madrid's foreign policy (such as in fisheries and trade venues), areas that were affected by Spain's re-definition of its interests (such as economic and migration issues), areas that were affected by changes in decision-making mechanisms (such as fisheries and migration), and areas that were affected by the Europeanization of Spanish foreign policy (such as immigration control and development cooperation). The analysis of other policy areas such as agriculture and security would have lent additional potency to this already well-rounded piece of research.

Another recently published PhD thesis worth including in this review is Niklas Bremberg's *Exploring the Dynamics of Security Community-Building in the Post-Cold War Era: Spain, Morocco and the European Union* (Bremberg, 2012). With Moroccan-Spanish relationship in the background, the thesis mainly seeks to explore whether/how the European Union works as a security community-building institution *vis-à-vis* Spain and Morocco, examining three EU areas: trade, Common Security and Defence Policy, and civil protection as policy venues that have influence over Spanish-Moroccan relations. One particularly important finding of this research is that the EU enhances these relations by supporting "communities of practitioners" that transcend institutional divides and promote the development of common practices. The thesis is well researched with a solid theoretical component and original conceptual contributions. However, its conclusions, while interesting and insightful, rely on a limited set of policy areas to warrant the conclusions put forward. The exclusive reliance on the Constructivist theoretical approach to capture the dynamics of a cyclically problematic relationship is yet another limitation of this, otherwise valuable, contribution.

Comments on the literature review

Works on Moroccan-Spanish relations over the past two decades include many more studies, and other books could have been included here (Moha, 1994; Dezcallar, 1998; Balfour, 2002; Corrales, 2002; Martín Muñoz, 2003; Planet and Ramos, 2005; López García, 2007; Sandoval and El Fathi, 2009; etc.). But this review of literature is fairly representative of the themes, focus and perspectives of this body of literature that marks a clear transition from the historical, territorial, cultural, perceptual, and identity issues to the newly emerging subjects such as migration, security, cooperation and economic issues that have overlapped with the old. What transpires from this review is that the bulk of works published on Moroccan-Spanish relations are mainly by historians, when not by journalists and diplomats. Outside the relatively few academic publications and PhD theses, the narratives tend to be historical, event-oriented and even impressionistic at times, with some works more analytical than others. There also appears to be little interest in offering a perceptual and theoretical conceptualization or in applying an analysis based on interpretation of the various schools of International Relations. By employing conceptual tools such as Europeanization, Complex Interdependence and Omnibalancing, this research hopes to bring a more theoretically-grounded analysis and put to the test some of the most recurrent conceptual frameworks to examine this relationship. Also, rather than adopting a specific "southern" or "northern" perspective, this study will strive to examine the *relationship* itself, bringing together the realities, considerations and views from Rabat, Madrid, Brussels and Barcelona with an empirical and theoretical scrutiny. Moreover, while some PhD theses have extended analysis of Moroccan-Spanish relations to the EU and regional dimensions, this work brings these two dimensions to the heart of the debate and tries to extend the conceptual interpretations "above" and "below" to include the supranational and the regional facets of the Moroccan-Spanish bilateral relationship. Last but not least, the review also corroborates and reinforces the importance of migration and economic issues in the bilateral relationship, both of which are at the heart of this analysis. Let us now turn our attention to the theoretical aspects of this research to discuss possible conceptualizations of the triple bilateral relationship we are seeking to explore.

Chapter two - A theoretical framework

Introduction

By trying to gauge the impact of a sub-state entity (Catalonia) and a supranational body (the EU) on an already dense and multifaceted North-South country relationship (Spain and Morocco), this research sets itself a quite exciting but intricate objective from an empirical as well as a theoretical standpoints. From a theoretical perspective, tackling Moroccan-Spanish relations, partly through the lenses of the EU and Catalonia is an endeavour bound to be original and complex in a number of ways. The research will explore the relationship but will also be looking beyond the strictly bilateral bonds of the two countries to include the European dimension and an internal source of potential influence, that of an autonomous Spanish region. The undertaking becomes even more daunting and appealing at the same time when we realise that the bilateral ties we are about to analyse involve two neighbouring countries whose political, economic and social evolution, environment, and culture are significantly dissimilar, and whose relations carry elements of conflict and elements of cooperation (see next chapter for a more detailed discussion of these differences). Trying to adequately frame this fluctuating, multifarious and incongruous relationship from a theoretical point of view, therefore, presents us with significant challenges.

Clearly there is no off-the-peg theoretical framework that would account for this multi-layered and complex relationship involving a semi-authoritarian North African regime and what has mostly been perceived as a democracy in southern Europe. In a number of ways, we stand before a typical case where power and interdependence are competing notions, mirroring the theoretical struggle between the Realist and Liberal traditions that tests the primacy of "power" over "plenty" or “balance of power” over “balance of trade” (Viner, 1948: 2). Indeed, the relationships under study (particularly the bilateral state relationship) may lend substance to either the Realist interpretation that explains how each player seeks to pursue their interests and drive their separate agenda primarily to assert their power and maximize their *relative gains* as Stephen Krasner would argue (Krasner 1985: 12); or to the Liberal reading that espouses a ‘win-win’ logic, holding that post-cold war North-South relations are characterized by an intensification of economic, political and social relations, and that *absolute gains* and interdependence have since replaced zero-sum views of the world (Brown 2002: 189).

The proliferation of theoretical contenders

Indeed, as discussed earlier, this elaborate relationship presents us not with a problem of conceptual scarcity but with an abundance of possibilities. Its North-South characteristic, the presence of elements of tension and elements of cooperation, the diversity of issues, the multiplicity of actors and disparities in the nature of those actors make the relationship open to various theoretical interpretations. For instance, the state-centric bilateral relations and decision-making, the proliferation and centrality of territorial and security-related issues (Ceuta and Melilla, migration, the Sahara, fisheries, terrorism etc.), the cyclical spats and crises (1995, 2001-2002, 2009-2010), the prevalent lack of mutual trust and the drive to prevail and maximize individual gains are all strong characteristics that favour a more Realist interpretation. Indeed, in a number of ways the relationship highlights elements of power not cooperation, tends to emphasize prospects for conflict and seems to be governed largely by the quest for relative rather than absolute gains. All these are strong reasons for the adoption of a structural realist approach to the case (Waltz, 1959: 198). However, a strictly Realist interpretation would certainly struggle to account for the important cooperation and increasing interdependencies between the actors involved. It would also need to justify the absence of actual conflict, and the growing role of non-state actors such as the EU. Equally important is the difficulty to argue for a zero-sum relationship since the actors involved do at least take account of each other’s interests and appear to be more concerned with absolute rather than relative gains.

Another interesting paradigm that may also be useful in the conceptualization of this hybrid relationship and that is close to the Realist tradition is Game Theory (Von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1944; Schelling, 1960; etc.) or other adaptions of it that are equally suitable to IR analysis such as Theory of Moves (TOM) (Brams, 1994; Zeager and Bascom 1996). Based on notions of "strategies" and “moves and countermoves”, these theories would consider the four polities we are analysing as “players” faced with various possible courses of action that generate a set of possible outcomes depending on the combinations of strategies they choose. The theories would also calculate “preference functions” and “consequences of countermoves” for each player indicating the degree of utility/damage of each possible outcome (Bennett, 1995: 22). Put this way, Game Theory or TOM would appear to be parsimonious and elegant ways to conceptualize these relationships. But while they would possibly be an interesting venue to explore for the main bilateral state relationship (Spain and Morocco), a number of limitations would render them less useful for this analysis. The complexity of the relationships, the disparities in the status of "players" (two states, one sub-state and one supra-state), the multiplicity of issues that do not necessarily lend themselves to quantification, and the fact that in our case substance and form of interactions are as important as interactions themselves, all constitute important constraints for the use of these two theories in this analysis.

Yet another contender is Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems theory that highlights the relationship of dominance between unequal countries: the strong "core" and the weaker "periphery" countries (Wallerstein, 2006: 12). According to this framework, Spain and the EU could conceivably be perceived as the "core" engulfing "periphery" countries in their vicinity such as Morocco to perpetuate their economic and political supremacy. However, the Wallersteinian approach with its deterministic and rigid relationship between "core" and "periphery" ill suits the case at hand, for in spite of the asymmetrical relationship between a "strong" Spain (and EU) and a "relatively weaker" Morocco, the relationship is still not one of unilateral dominance. As will be shown later, Morocco does have a degree of leverage in the relationship. Complex Interdependence theory may provide a more nuanced and realistic account of the asymmetry by highlighting mutual vulnerabilities and sensitivities (Nye, 1976: 133-5), as will be further explained in this chapter.

In all cases, aside from aspects suggesting the predominance of power relationships, strategizing tactics and the propensity for conflict, other important features of these bilateral ties are telling a different story. For despite the tendency for the relationship to go sour and notwithstanding the cyclicality of crises, the two neighbours have cooperated more often and never came to blows over issues since their mutual problems have habitually been negotiated and resolved peacefully, albeit with resort to occasional pressure and brinkmanship. Economic, social and institutional relations between the two have always trumped hostilities and kept increasing continuously and significantly, especially over the last two decades, to the extent that Spain is now Morocco's first trade partner (even ahead of France, the country's historic partner),[22] and Morocco is a privileged EU partner. What is more, Rabat and Madrid have been bound by a friendship and cooperation treaty since 1991, consider each other to be strategic partners, and have managed to prioritize pragmatism and preserve cordial ties for many decades.

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[22] Further discussion on the issue is provided in Chapter three under economic cooperation section. Also see El País article "España-Marruecos: La buena racha económica aleja los nubarrones políticos", (2 October 2012).

In fact, instead of reinventing the wheel, the research prefers to test theories that have already been applied when analysing Spanish-Moroccan and Spanish-EU-Moroccan relations. Three important conceptual frameworks have often been used to account for these: Constructivism (Adler and Crawford, 2006; Bicchi, 2006; Bremberg, 2012, etc.), Europeanization (Torreblanca, 2001; Vaquer, 2004b; Ruano, 2013 etc.), and Complex Interdepence theory (López García and De Larramendi, 2002; Gillespie, 2006; Fernandez, 2008, etc.). And since these theories have often been used to explain Spain's (and EU's) behaviour towards Morocco but rarely the other way around, this research will also seek theoretical understanding of Moroccan political strategy by critically examining the idea of Omnibalancing (David, 1991; Willis and Messari, 2005) that has been used to conceptualize Morocco's (and other third-world country's) foreign policy behaviour, especially when dealing with regional powers or superpowers. Also, the EU and the Catalan dimensions call for supplementary analytical frameworks likely to allow us to integrate these two levels into the analysis. Multi-level Governance (MLG) theory which underlines the importance of the complex and multi-layered decision processes gaining ground beneath and above the state level might prove a convenient analytical framework (Keating and Hooghe, 1996; Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Le Galès and Lequesne, 2002; Bache and Flinders, 2004; Piattoni, 2010). This theory, while recognizing the central role of the state, is likely to be extremely useful in framing the dispersion of the decision-making process at the European level among the state, the region and the EU. The theory, however, has limitations in terms of explaining North/South relationships.

Before proceeding any further, however, it would be worth highlighting that this research will not concentrate on the constructivist approach for reasons that will be explained in this paragraph. Indeed, the in-vogue constructivist framework, especially the "security communities" paradigm[23] (Deutsch, *et al.* 1957; Adler and Barnett, 1998; Acharya, 2001; Adler and Crawford, 2006; Bremberg, 2012),[24] has often been used in framing Euro-Mediterranean relations and holds that the EU, as a security community, is engaged in a process of region-building. It is shaping its Mediterranean vicinity by promoting normative guidelines and constructing common institutions, cultures, identities and practices that are strong and dependable enough to engender peace, collaboration and security (Adler and Crawford, 2006: 7-13; Acharya, 2001: 16; Bremberg, 2012: 18-30). Adapted to North-South relations in the region, the theory talks about the likely emergence of a Euro-Mediterranean region "built on Western Enlightenment principles and values" and based on shared norms and institutions (Adler and Crawford, 2006: 4). It also holds that the Barcelona Process "is a laboratory where one of the most outstanding experiments in international relations may have started… [demonstrating] the social engineering of a regional identity that rests, neither on blood nor on religion, but on civil society voluntary networks and civic beliefs" (Adler and Crawford, 2006: 19). While they certainly provide powerful explanatory grounds for the EU member and candidate states, the constructivist "security communities" and normative ideas are in a number of ways incompatible with the relationship dynamics taking place between northern and southern countries of the Mediterranean. Morocco's relations with the EU (and Spain for that matter) might not be mature yet to warrant the use of these analytical tools. While the relationship might be a case of a "nascent" security community (Adler and Barnett, 1998: 48), talking about societal networks, the creation of common institutions, cultures, identities and practices is premature. As our analysis will illustrate, EU-Moroccan and Spanish-Moroccan relations involve strong economic, political and security components, probably even dependencies (Lister, 1997: 74), but still have not produced the paradigm shift suggested by the constructivists. The theory would also suggest that the supranational role supplants the state bilateral relationship, something that our analysis does not substantiate either. Also, as our analysis will reveal, the rift at the societal level and the lingering negative perceptions make it hard to justify talk about the emergence of "civil society voluntary networks and civic beliefs". Moreover, processes like the EMP that have partly spurred the constructivist enthusiasm towards the Mediterranean region have proved their limits,[25] and, finally, the useful essence of this theory, i.e. the importance of the normative and institutional power of the EU may be captured more adequately by our extended definition of Europeanization, as will be subsequently explained.

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[23] Bremberg (2007) used Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) (Buzan and Waever, 2003) to frame Moroccan-Spanish relationship. It argues that the Mediterranean forms a link between two distinct regional security complexes (RSCs). While this interpretation brings a more realistic touch to the analysis, it still endeavours to conceptualize the relationship from a "regions" percepective and gives precedance to security issues.

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[24] For a detailed analysis of the dynamics of security-community building among Morocco, Spain and the EU, see Niklas Bremberg's thesis: Exploring the Dynamics of Security Community-Building in the post-Cold War Era: Spain, Morocco and the European Union (Stockholm University) 2012.

[25] The absence of almost all southern leaders from the 2005 Barcelona summit was a strong symbolic statement indicating their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Barcelona Process (Cardwell, 2011: 228; Gillespie, 2012: 1)

The theoretical framework

Spain and Morocco are often portrayed as two neighbours engaged in a relationship consisting of a web of interdependencies or "a cushion of shared interests" that boosts relations, increases cooperation, and withstands serious crises (López García and De Larramendi, 2002: 171; Gillespie, 2006: 120; Fernandez, 2008: 352). Moroccan-EU relations seem to follow the same trend as well. These relationship traits would clearly be better conceptualized through a theoretical lens that is likely to account for the resilience of the bilateral relationship in the face of adverse conditions. Complex Interdependence Theory (CIT) might provide us with such a framework. Its underlying assumptions tell us that states are no longer coherent units since transnational actors are increasingly important, that economic and institutional (rather than military) means are more relevant, and that welfare issues are gaining importance over security issues. It also holds that an increase in economic, political, institutional, social and cultural linkages and cooperation between countries gradually set the stage for more stable relations and mutual dependencies, thus making conflict between them too costly to be pursued (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 10). Even if this theory has mainly been used to account for the stability that has characterised relationships among western countries, especially since WWII, it can still prove to be useful in our case. CIT can clearly be useful to analyse and study relations between Morocco and Spain as it talks about the importance of economic, political, institutional and social cooperation as a means to avoid potential clashes and other types of conflict. It should also be noted that it can be applied to the supranational level and, to a certain extent, to the sub-state levels as well. As will be further analysed in Chapters four and five, the EU's Mediterranean policy, like Spain's, is influenced by CIT and Catalonia's approach also seems to be informed by a similar philosophy, although the potential conflicts that are averted are of a different nature to the country-to-country clashes.

Europeanization is yet another important theoretical framework that has the potential to strongly account for the role of the supranational entity in the bilateral relationship. The term "Europeanization" has been widely used and includes various notions most outstanding among which are the top-down (reception) aspect whereby the EU influences policy areas in EU countries such as Spain and the bottom-up (projection) feature whereby policy competencies are transferred from the member-state to the supranational level (Ladrech, 1994; Börzel, 2002:

6; Schneider and Häge, 2008: 16-17; Torreblanca, 2001: 12-13; Vaquer, 2004b: 41-42). Yet, for the purpose of this research, another equally important aspect of Europeanization will be considered. It is what is now commonly referred to as "Neighbourhood Europeanization", in reference to the tangible and non-tangible benefits, support and norm-based socialization that come as a result of cooperation between the EU and countries in its neighbourhood in such areas as democracy promotion, economic cooperation, security collaboration, etc. (Gawrich *et al*, 2010; Franke, *et al*, 2010). In fact, Neighbourhood Europeanization as a concept is particularly practical not only for the sake of parsimony (allowing us to collapse three importance processes under one referent "Europeanization"), but also because it better captures and moderates the degree of the normative, institutional and economic potential of the EU. Let us now look more closely at the four paradigms that this thesis will be testing, starting with the Multi-level Governance analytical framework.

Multi-level Governance theory

Making sense of what is referred to as "the hollowing out of the state" (Rhodes, 1994) in the case of European States like Spain, and the diffusion of authority to the regional (Catalan) and supranational (EU) levels compels us to look into existing conceptual paradigms on devolution likely to elucidate the power sharing and influence competition at work. The literature on federalism (Elazar, 1987; Aja, 1999; Agranoff, 2005; Burgess, 2006), broadly defined as an ideological or normative concept that reflects a power-sharing system between the central and the regional governments and a way of living which combines a degree of 'self' and 'shared' rule (Elazar, 1987: 5), is probably the first conceptual framework that comes to mind when thinking about conceptualizing relations between the EU, its member states and their respective autonomous regions. Federalism, however, lacks the conceptual potential to adequately account for the three-level European relations (autonomous region – state - supranational entity), unless we view the EU as a federal entity, which would be quite a stretch. And even if Brussels is regarded as the main pivot of a federalist interpretation in our case, that would still not fit the bill, as the central role of Madrid would defy the analysis, and the regional dimension would be harder to account for.

But despite the limitations of the Federalist approach as a theoretical framework to account for the dynamics at work at the European level, we probably should not completely abandon the trail of devolution and power transfers and their implications. In fact, other theories in the same vein on regional and supranational governance might provide adequate grounds to analyse the

European triangular relationship at hand. Spain has been a member of the European Union since 1986 and is also considered to be the prototype of a stable political system with asymmetrical decentralization. This system is made up of some historic regions that have deeply rooted identities (Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia), and less historic regions that have equally benefited from the devolved powers in what is known as *café para todos* or “coffee for everyone” (Agranoff, 1999: 108), although these concessions remain differentiated in areas such as policing and taxation. Spain’s history as far back as the eighth century accounts for the existence of different kingdoms (Asturias, León, Navarre, Castile) and countries (Urgell, Barcelona, Aragón) (Cuadrado-Roua, 2009: 5). The historic regions are the living remnants of this past and still keep their unique cultural identities, distinctive social configurations, special economic profiles, exceptional institutional conditions, etc. (Bukowski *et al,* 2003).

Over the last 35 years, Spain has gradually been shifting from the centralized Franco dictatorship to a democracy with an intermediate level of government (Autonomous Communities) that has been concentrating and expanding considerable powers and responsibilities from the state as stipulated in the 1978 Spanish constitution. These prerogatives have been evolving and expending in a constant process of dialogue, renegotiation, redefinition and political bargains (see next chapter for a more detailed discussion). The EC/EU has also played an important role in the relevance of the regions, mainly in providing a vital lifeline to their growth and visibility within the Union. In essence, in the EU areas of structural funds, regional and cohesion policies, regions were called upon to contribute to the policy-making process without the supervision of their national governments, through such mechanisms as the Committee of Regions and the regional delegations in Brussels. “Their formal or informal involvement in European regional policy gave them an additional argument in their struggle with their central governments for larger devolutionary powers and fanned regionalist aspirations for autonomy” (Sharpe, 1993 quoted in Piattoni, 2009: 6).

Probably the most widely accepted theoretical formulation accounting for the role of the EU and the emergence of national sub-groupings within state systems is Multi-level Governance (MLG) theory (Hooghe, 1995, 1996; Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Marks and Blank, 1996; Keating and Hooghe, 1996; Jeffery, 2000; Le Galès and Lequesne, 2002; Bache and Flinders, 2004; Piattoni, 2009). The debate on MLG has been in vogue for the last two decades, especially since the publication of the influential article by Gary Marks “Structural Policy in the European Community” in 1992, which was initially meant to present a useful concept for understanding some of the decision-making dynamics of the EC. Marks was, in fact, a pioneer in identifying and underlining the importance of the complex and multifaceted decision-making processes that were gaining ground beneath and above the European state level. He had rightly observed that the “European Community seems to be part of a new political (dis)order that is multi-layered, constitutionally open-ended, and programmatically diverse” (Marks, 1992: 221).

MLG is now a widely used and accepted term in European integration and international relations forums, defined as the ‘dispersion of authoritative decision-making across multiple territorial levels’ (Hooghe and Marks, 2001: xi). This approach acknowledges the central position of national governments in the European context, but challenges their traditional monopoly and highlights their changing nature. Contemporary European states’ competencies have, thus, gradually been shifting “both up to the supranational level and down to the sub-national level” (Marks *et al*, 1996: 167) in such a way that “authority and policy-making are shared across multiple levels of government – subnational, national and supranational” (Hooghe and Marks, 2001: 2).

MLG also points to fundamental changes in contemporary European governance as reflected by the structural transformations affecting contemporary European states under the impact of the process of European integration as it “invites normative reflection on the conditions under which binding decisions gain widespread acceptance and bestow legitimacy on the institutions that produce them” (Piattoni, 2010: 1). MLG, in fact, managed to put on the map new levels of relevance to the EU equation, adding a new level to the more traditional notion of the national and the supranational levels (long echoed by the famous two-level theory of Putnam (Putnam, 1988)).

> “The point of departure for this multi-level governance is the existence of overlapping competencies among multiple levels of governments and the interaction of political actors across those levels… Instead of the two level game assumptions adopted by state centrists, MLG theorists posit a set of overarching, multi-level policy networks… The presumption of multi-level governance is that these actors participate in diverse policy networks and this may involve subnational actors -interest groups and subnational governments- dealing directly with supranational actors” (Marks and Blank, 1996: 167).

Although there is an increasing trend of intergovernmentalism, the EU is not home to centralized and unitary states (Loughlin, 2001; Strange, 1996; Schneider and Häge, 2008: 17-

20). This is not only a result of the growing diffusion of state authority to markets and international institutions (Strange, 1996: 4), but is also a consequence of the delegation of decision-making powers to supranational entities and to peripheral government levels, especially the regions. Although this trend has taken a slower rhythm since the 1990s and taken a further hit during the on-going 2008 financial crisis,[26] and "[r]egardless of whether this pressure is created by sub-state nationalisms... or rather by the willingness of the central state to offload some of the burdensome tasks taken up during the heyday of the welfare state (regionalization)" (Piattoni, 2010: 9), the devolution trend in Europe is both a fact and a continuing process. MLG denotes, thus, "a diverse set of arrangements, a panoply of systems of coordination and negotiation among formally independent but functionally interdependent entities that stand in complex relations to one another and that, through coordination and negotiation, keep redefining these relations" (Piattoni, 2010: 26). MLG, therefore, does indeed seem to offer at least an analytical framework, if not a conceptual basis, for the triangular dynamics at work at the European level.

Europeanization

Europeanization is a buzz-term that has been widely used mainly to refer to the impact of the EU and the European integration on the politics and policies of member states. The term has also been applied to the reverse process (Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003), denoting the sway that national governments may have over the EU. The term has also been used to refer to the degree of this latter's influence on its vicinity, and the world as a whole. But the concept was also overused and applied to various policy areas triggering a proliferation of definitions (Ladrech, 2002: 391), to the extent that Claudio Radaelli warned of a "conceptual stretching" (Radaelli, 2000). For the purpose of this research, however, we will mainly be concentrating on the application of the concept in the foreign policy area, highlighting three of its aspects: Top-down Europeanization, bottom-up Europeanization, and Neighbourhood Europeanization.

The initial and dominant application of the term refers to the process whereby the EU dimension penetrates national spheres resulting in a reorientation of member countries' policies to adapt to EU dynamics (Ladrech, 1994: 69). More precisely, Europeanization mainly refers to how the EU "influences 'policy, polity and politics' in each of its constituent states, i.e. the nature and content of public policy (policy), the constitutional and institutional architecture of the system (polity) and the issues and actors in the political process (politics)" (Dardanelli, 2009: 49). This salient definition, therefore, mainly highlights the top-down process of the term where member states are at the receiving end as the ones being "Europeanized". Radaelli provided a more comprehensive illustration of this describing Europeanization as a processes of "(a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli, 2000: 4). Top-down Europeanization of foreign policy, one of our main concerns here, seems to have indeed taken effect since member countries have seen their foreign relations significantly changed, "if not transformed, by participation over time in foreign policy making at the European level" (White, 2001: 6).

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[26] One has to recognize that recently there are also some countervailing and recentralising tendencies, especially in Spain, and in the EU as a whole, in response to the 2008 financial crisis (such as the protagonism of heads of states in the management of the crisis and the ways in which financial assistance is associated with central monitoring and control).

Equally important for our analysis is the bottom-up feature of Europeanization, i.e. how European member states affect EU policies by exporting or "up-loading" their agendas, priorities and issues to the supranational level (Torreblanca, 2001; Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Vaquer, 2004b; Kelley, 2006). This is a highly pertinent and important process in the Rabat-Madrid bilateral relationship. While it is generally agreed that Spanish-Moroccan relations were characterized by state-centrism prior to Spain's EU accession in 1986, these started to be Europeanized from then onwards (López García and De Larramendi, 2002: 170), when Spain started "exporting" parts of its foreign policy priorities to the EU (Torreblanca, 2001: 12). Europeanization can, therefore, also be achieved when a country starts using the EU as a conduit to deal with other countries. But this process should not always be viewed as a voluntary or premeditated strategy. As more and more policy areas come under EU jurisdiction, this process is largely inevitable and becoming more and more frequent. In a number of its critical dealings with Rabat, Madrid is increasingly finding itself in this situation. Issues such as democratization, human rights, fisheries, agriculture or immigration are continuously Europeanized as they come under the various EU policy areas. This may produce adverse as well as positive effects for the member states (See Chapter 3 for further discussion). On the one hand, bottom-up Europeanization clearly impinges on state sovereignty and deprives individual countries of the powers to defend some of their national interests or simply convey their distinctive outlook. On the other hand, the process can be advantageous as it may be a way to delegate management of potentially delicate issues to the supranational level, and a means to increase leverage. Indeed, by externalizing some of their thorny issues to the European level, countries manage to de-problematize their foreign policies to certain extents, and find themselves in more comfortable positions to concentrate on the more positive and fruitful aspects of their external relationships. Third countries like Morocco are well aware of member states' influence over EU policy and try, therefore, to lobby them as well as Brussels. Agriculture and fisheries policies, for example, are to some extent shaped by countries like France, Spain and Italy. Moreover, when the sticky issues are handled by the EU, they generally acquire increased status and imminence, and are no longer perceived as purely bilateral issues, but rather collective matters where all EU members have a stake, and potentially a say. Spain has experienced both the positive and negative effects of bottom-up Europeanization in its foreign policy issues with Morocco (Barbé, 1995; Torreblanca, 2001). On balance, however, this form of policy externalization has been beneficial in a number of ways, as our subsequent analysis will show.

As stated earlier, our conceptualization of Europeanization will not only concentrate on EU-member state mutual policy "transfers" or "exportations" (Torreblanca, 2001: 12), i.e. intra-EU processes of "reception" and "projection" (Vaquer, 2004a: 41-42). The concept here will be further extended to incorporate what is referred to as "Neighbourhood Europeanization" (Gawrich *et al*, 2010; Franke, *et al*, 2010). This recent extension of the notion to account for EU effects and normative influence beyond its borders (Manners, 2002; Emerson *et al*, 2005) is equally important for this research as it attempts to gauge the EU's transformative potential outside of its borders and the normative connotation of its foreign policy (Bicchi, 2006: 287). This influence has mainly been examined through such tools as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) or the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in areas such as democracy promotion, economic cooperation and institutional collaboration (Gawrich *et al*, 2010: 1212-1214). Neighbourhood Europeanization, therefore, is not a two-way process since it only has a "reception" component. It might also be seen as a "light" or "decaf" Europeanization of the EU's neighbourhood, since its impact is bound to be less significant for these countries compared to member or candidate states. For the purpose of this study, however, the concept fills an important gap and provides a useful conceptual dosage. While recognizing a degree of of the supranational actor's influence over its neighbourhood through such instruments as the EMP or ENP, it falls rightly short of trumpeting the emergence of a "we-feeling" resulting from the establishment of "common institutions, cultures, identities and practices", as the disciples of constructivist “security communities” would claim; and adequately captures the embryonic normative and institutional weight of the EU in its vicinity. It is hard to argue against the persuasive potential of European institutions, values and norms as the recent Arab revolutions seem to confirm; but this influence has not resulted (yet) nor showed signs of any significant modification of cultures, institutionalization of practices, or transformation of perceptions and identities.

Complex Interdependence theory

As argued earlier, relations between Spain and Morocco have often been explained in terms of Complex Interdependence theory as two neighbouring countries engaged in a relationship that becomes a cushion of shared interests that boosts relations, increases cooperation, avoids inter-issue contagion and stands in the face of serious crises (López García and De Larramendi, 2002: 171; Gillespie, 2006: 120-1; Fernandez, 2008: 352). In fact, Liberals of all stripes share the basic assumptions of this theory that contends that interdependence among states pacifies political relations and prevents, or at least decreases incentives for conflict as it becomes too costly compared to the shared network of mutual benefits that develop.

The Complex Interdependence paradigm was initially developed by Keohane and Nye in order to gauge interactions among industrialized pluralist societies tied up by economic and intergovernmental relations but also by a complex web of treaties, multinational cooperation and civil society interaction (Gillespie, 2006: 120). Its basic assumption is that as relationships among countries develop and interdependence grows, confrontation becomes a relatively costly way to pursue their interests (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 10). More precisely, the defining characteristics of complex interdependence are: the multiplicity of actors (including the non-state actors), the multiplicity of channels through which these actors interact in the system, the shifting (or absence of) hierarchy among issues, and the non-resort to force in mutual interactions (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 24–5). In other words, the environment in which countries’ decisions are made is considerably broadened, the stakes (economic, institutional, social and otherwise) are increased, the issues and the channels of contact between states and societies multiply, and force becomes increasingly irrelevant for most policy objectives. This, in turn, expands the scope for agreements “by multiplying points of interaction among governments and therefore increasing incentives to comply with commitments in a situation characterized by practices of ‘tit for tat’ reciprocity” (Keohane, 1984: 104). The theory also underlines the importance and function of asymmetries, sensitivity and vulnerability as sources of power. Relations in a complex interdependence context are not necessarily balanced and symmetrical: in fact, ‘most significant instances of manifest interdependence are asymmetrical and unbalanced’ (Jones and Willetts, 1984: 14). Keohane and Nye, therefore, insist that “it is *asymmetries* in dependence that are most likely to provide sources of influence for actors in their dealings with one another. Less dependent actors can often use the interdependent relationship as a source of power.” (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 10-11, italics original).

Complex interdependence, as said earlier, was initially developed to account for relations between pluralistic western democracies and was not seen as an adequate model to typify the politics of more turbulent regions such as the Middle East (Keohane, 1984: 197). But neither these inadequacies nor the conflict-prone relationship dynamics between Morocco and Spain should deter us from testing this concept as a potential framework for analysing contemporary relations between the two countries, especially since the European ‘neighbourhood’ has become a reality since Keohane and Nye excluded the Middle East from consideration. Indeed, complex interdependence seems interesting precisely because it accounts for such ups and downs between states. After all, and as explained earlier, Keohane and Nye’s assumption is that as relations increase, common institutions are reinforced and interdependence grows; confrontation becomes a relatively costly way for states to pursue their interests (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 10-24; Keohane, 1998: 83-87).

Contrary to the Realist claim that world politics is based on relationships among states focusing on force, security and self-help, complex interdependence essentially states that power does not only lie in the hands of the state and is not always gauged by the power to coerce, but that it also involves growing transnational, intergovernmental, and trans-governmental relationships (Keohane and Nye, 1974: 42-49). In fact, even influential realists such as Robert Gilpin do not deny the paramount importance of interdependence in international politics, except that they over-emphasize its economic aspect, and especially its detrimental potential. Interdependence of national economies, writes Gilpin, “creates economic power, defined as the capacity of one state to damage another through the interruption of commercial and financial relations. The attempts to create and to escape from such dependency relationships constitute an important aspect of international relations in the modern era” (Gilpin, 1975: 38). In the same vein, Albert Hirshman had explained that national power and influence, in the sense of the capability of one nation to coerce another, can also be applied through “peaceful” means. One way for a country to achieve such influence is through ‘negative sanctions’, whereby the country in the dominant position tips the balance in its favour which creates a situation of asymmetrical interdependence through trade or other relations (Hirschman, 1945: 16). David Baldwin also drew attention to the fact that influence can also be achieved through 'positive sanctions' that increase a partner's expectations, arguing that statecraft works best when combined with both the threat of negative sanctions and the promise of positive ones. Positive sanctions are, therefore, more relevant to international politics in an interdependent context than the negative ones (Baldwin, 1985: 213). In all cases, however, it remains important to recall that the effectiveness of any such influence will also depend on the interactions of external variables and the configuration of state-society relations that often "mediate, refract, and filter the policy impact of transnational activities" (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 293), which further exhibits the essential role of social, political, institutional and economic networks.

In addition, complex interdependence provides other fertile concepts and tools that may prove useful in the analysis of Spanish-Moroccan, EU-Moroccan and Catalan-Moroccan relations such as the concepts of sensitivity and vulnerability. Sensitivity is defined as "the degree of responsiveness within a policy framework – how quickly do changes in one country bring costly changes in another". Vulnerability, on the other hand, is defined as "the relative availability and costliness of the alternatives that various actors face" (Keohane and Nye, 1989:12–13). Sensitivity, in other words, is the proneness to costly consequences caused by another country prior to any policies being undertaken to try to alter a given situation, while vulnerability means a sustained proneness to these consequences even after initiatives have been taken to reverse the situation. "Vulnerability is determined by whether we have reasonable alternatives. [It] is a matter of degree and varies with the costs and time involved in developing alternatives. In the economic sphere, for example, this implies hard policy choices about acceptable degrees of dependence and how willing we are to sacrifice the economic benefits of cheaper foreign supplies (Nye, 2004: 155).

However, it seems that many relationships in a complex interdependence context involve "relatively trivial sensitivity dependence in one direction, but a critical dependence, of high vulnerability, in the other" (Jones 1995: 8). While this seems to characterize to a large extent the bilateral relationships under scrutiny in this research as the Moroccan-Spanish partnership appears to be largely asymmetrical and tilted in favour of the northern neighbour in a number of aspects (Moré, 2004: 178; Gillespie, 2006: 121; Galduf, 2004: 185), a more meticulous analysis is in order to define the means of pressure and gauge the consequences on each side.

For advocates of complex interdependence, asymmetry and imbalances are important concepts that are "prevalent within the contemporary international system' (Jones, 1995: 8) and the international system would not function in complete symmetry where each group would give and receive equally:

> "Asymmetries in interdependence are important both economically and politically. Economically, they make one country or group of countries sensitive to economic policies and economic cycles in other countries that are not so dependent themselves. Politically, asymmetries create power relations between countries and vulnerabilities open to political exploitation. They give countries that are less dependent leverage over countries that are more dependent." (Levine, 1996: 39).

Here, therefore, is a useful tool provided by complex interdependence to analyse the wide range of Spanish-Moroccan and Catalan-Moroccan relationships. Asymmetrical ties would, therefore, not only allow us to look at the purely economic exchanges and test the likelihood of influences resulting from macroeconomic indicators, trade agreements, commercial and investment asymmetries, but also at the political, institutional and social leverage that one side may have over the other. While involving a number of inherent caveats and far from providing a comprehensive framework, complex interdependence may turn out to be a valuable tool in the analysis of Spanish-Moroccan relations in particular and the quadrilateral complex in general.

Complex Interdependence, therefore, seems to be a suitable model against which Spanish-Moroccan (and even EU-Moroccan and Catalan-Moroccan) relations could be analysed. Our case study certainly exhibits a number of limitations, not least the fact that the two countries are not the type of countries the theory was meant to frame and were at loggerheads over issues such as the fisheries episodes of 1995 and 2001 (Fernandez, 2008: 353) and the Perejil/Laila dispute of July 2002 (Gillespie, 2006: 120). But it could well be argued that such 'spats' mainly took place at early stages when interdependence was at its embryonic phase. Moroccan-Spanish relations rather seem to be a case of deepening economic interdependence punctuated by political tensions that are usually successfully dodged, giving way to more significant economic, institutional and social considerations. Notwithstanding the repeated frictions, the two countries have never engaged in an open conflict during recent decades as the shared and deepening interests between the two have proved to be more resilient in the face of the recurring chapters of hostility. This general state of economic, social and institutional reinforcement, punctuated by political tensions has been characterizing this bilateral relationship up until today. After all, Nye reminds us that complex interdependence does not mean the end of the struggle for dominance as “power remains important even in domains characterized by complex interdependence” (Nye, 2004: 198).

Seen from this perspective, Moroccan-Spanish relationship at least starts to make more sense. The “cushion of shared interests” linking the two countries does seem to act as a buffer against potential open hostilities and assuages the recurrent “tit for tat” reciprocities. The Perejil/Laila incident, the worst chapter in the two countries’ recent relations, can be interpreted as the exception that confirms the rule and that indicates that the underlying “cushion of shared interests” can survive. Cooperation can be affected but only temporarily. The two countries, indeed, seem to be successfully engaged in a relationship “of multiple interactions in which recourse to force is excluded” (Keohane, 2002: 17). Their complex interdependence creates a whole network of contacts and interests where overall state interactions are actively sustained by “a complex network or web of transnational and bilateral bargains” (Strange, 1985: 234).

The particular framework of sensitivity and vulnerability concepts, applied to our case, is also likely to provide us with valuable insights and tools to gauge the Morocco-EU and Morocco-Catalonia relationship dynamics, especially when examining such issues as bilateral trade, foreign direct investment and migration. Indeed, these concepts may also be useful to investigate other issues outside the scope of this research such as the territorial issues, the Sahara issue, drug trafficking and other instances of policy issues and stances that if altered by one side would provoke costly consequences to the other. These concepts would also provide us with insights into the power relationships between these players, as the less sensitive and less vulnerable actor would have more influence and control over the other. In economic terms, for example, Morocco appears to be more vulnerable at least from a volume point of view. While trade with Spain constitutes a sizable chunk of the country’s operations, Madrid’s trade with the country constitutes a fraction of its foreign economic exchanges. Morocco, therefore, would need to be vigilant not to further its dependence and vulnerability as it “cannot allow itself to increase the specific weight of its relations with Spain… a greater economic relationship would mean a greater deficit” (Moré, 2004: 180).

But complex interdependence may also have positive effects on the more dependent side in the equation. Morocco’s increasing political, economic, institutional and social relations with Spain, the EU and Catalonia (the preferential official visits, the Friendship, Good

Neighbourliness and Cooperation treaty signed with Spain in 1991, the advanced EU status signed in 2008 pushed for jointly with France, etc.) do bestow upon it additional prestige and regional leverage. All these special relationships can be seen as important factors in bolstering its international image and its regional reputation and, thus, influence, especially given that Morocco's deepening relations with Spain and the EU have not greatly constrained or restrained its capacity to pursue an independent regional and foreign policy.

The case of Spain and Morocco would also provide us with unexpected cases of sensitivity and vulnerability since it is not necessarily the "less influential" partner that always suffers the negative effects. Spain, at certain points, has been in situations of sensitivity and vulnerability towards Morocco as reflected by the spring 2001 crisis, after the collapse of fisheries negotiations between the EU and Morocco. José María Aznar the conservative Prime Minister, "feeling that Morocco did not honor its promises, thus damaging Spanish interests, declared that 'there would be consequences for relations between Morocco and Spain'" (Fernandez, 2008: 353). Such declarations demonstrate the degree of sensitivity that Morocco caused Spain following the suspension of the agreement, momentarily causing it to look for other costly alternatives. Other such instances may be less perceptible and more subtle, affecting intangible points of sensitivity, such as prestige. It could be argued that the mobilization of the Arab media, especially Al Jazeera, which Morocco undertook during the 2002 Perejil/Laila crisis may have been perceived as a threat by Spain and may have affected the country's image and status in the Arab world.

Omnibalancing

Since this research has set itself the objective of examining Catalonia and the EU's impact on Moroccan-Spanish relations (not Spanish policy towards Morocco or vice-versa), it needs to frame the whole *relationship*. Multilevel Governance, Europeanization, and Complex Interdependence provide us with valuable clues to do that, but we feel that there is an important aspect of this relationship that would not be sufficiently accounted for relying solely on these three paradigms. The main reason is that they would fall short of a thorough conceptualization of Morocco's behaviour in this quadrilateral interaction. The Neighbourhood side of Europeanization and Complex Interdependence undoubtedly have some significant explanatory potential. However, there is still a need to bring to light and conceptualize the specificities of the Moroccan state, the nature of Moroccan power and government structures, as well as Morocco's foreign policy priorities and behaviour in general, and with Europe, Spain and Catalonia in particular. In fact, understanding Moroccan power structures is part and parcel of understanding the manner in which it seeks its objectives (See next chapter for an in-depth discussion of this).

Foreign policy in the Arab world has often been depicted from a predominantly Realist perspective, with an emphasis on external-systemic determinants, state centrism and the preponderance of anarchy as the main variables in understanding the behaviour of countries of the region. Domestic sources of foreign policy are largely pushed to one side as marginally significant, while psychological and idiosyncratic considerations are privileged, insisting on the leaders' role and 'psychological environment'. But while such explanations encapsulate significant factors accounting for these countries' foreign policy behaviour, the impact of internal as well as external economic, political and social factors should not be quickly dismissed as they can also prove to be decisive (Korany and Dessouki, 2008: 22-26).

Morocco, in fact, comes well within this depiction, albeit with a number of distinctive characteristics. Despite the presence of a plural political party system, a burgeoning and vibrant civil society, as well as some improvements in human rights, women's rights and freedom of expression, Morocco remains largely controlled by the *Makhzen* system: the "shadowy power structure around the King, which includes senior security officials, the royal cabinet, royal advisers, and a fluid palace entourage of prominent families and dignitaries -in addition to the central government- all accountable only to the King" (Howe, 2005: 355). The country's foreign policy decision making operates within this rigid and hierarchical *Makhzen* structure (El Houdaïgui, 2003: 27; Molina, 2007: 35) where the government, the parliament, the political parties, and the non-state actors wield little influence, while the palace and its surrounding circles of influence remain the ultimate sources of power (Layachi, 1998: 98; Munson, 1999: 259 - 274; Waltz, 1999: 283 - 296).

In its foreign policy approach, the regime has always adopted pragmatism and practicality and sought to avoid confrontation, build partnerships and maintain equilibrium between its eastern and western relations, while preserving its strategic interests in Africa in what is referred to as its "*profondeur Africaine*" (African depth). It has remained largely pro-western and heavily tied up to (even dependent on) Europe, while preserving its alliance and solidarity with Arab and Muslim countries, thereby sustaining a balancing act whereby the country preserves relations and reaps benefits on both fronts. Rabat's overriding priorities in its relations overseas have been (a) the defence and preservation of its territorial integrity, especially with regard to sovereignty over the Sahara, (b) the boosting and expansion of economic and partnership opportunities, and (c) the improvement of its international image and enhancement of its regional privileges and prestige.

> The “three concentric circles” of Mohammed VI’s foreign policy—neighborliness, solidarity, and partnership— are functional, not geographic, but they all have specific geographical referents as well as indications of a style and approach in foreign relations. As foreign policy values, they are pragmatic, related to specific policies and relations, and aimed at protecting the territorial integrity of the country and enhancing its economic welfare. Any state’s foreign policy is first of all designed to protect the state’s independence and integrity, but this has special importance in Morocco’s case because of the Saharan question. Not only is the Western Sahara seen as an integral part of the nation but the issue itself is recognized as an existential question for the state, a matter of political stability, and a popular cause as well as the basis of the monarchical system (Rosenblum and Zartman, 2008: 330).

Indeed, in order to appreciate Moroccan foreign policy one has to understand the specificities of the Moroccan regime, its priorities, its historical evolution, the different power struggle stages that culminated in the monarchy’s control of most political and economic walks of life, as well as the ruling elite’s composition, concerns and approaches (see next chapter for detailed analysis). In parallel, it is also crucial to gauge the influence of the international and the domestic conditions on the elite’s political and economic power and preferences. Another way of portraying this is by stating that an understanding of foreign policy choices in Morocco requires us, aside from the historical knowledge, to map the dynamics and interests of the ruling elite interacting with the societal actors and the international political and economic system, striving to strike a balance with the ultimate objective of thriving and maintaining power and control. The policy preferences of the decision makers and their potential sources of alliance or conflict are largely linked to the endogenous and exogenous forces surrounding the state. A good vantage point from where one can appreciate Moroccan foreign policy choices, therefore, is at the crossroads where survival and quest for power and ambitions meet the international context and the domestic and societal considerations. State foreign policy is often located at this junction and reflects the state’s relationship with the external and internal dimensions. Joel Migdal expressed it mildly by saying that the state is found “in society” as well as “in the international system” (Migdal, 1994: 17).

The engineering of Moroccan foreign policy is the result of multi-layered, complex and dynamic processes. These not only involve pressures and opportunities dictated by the regional and remote international powers, internal alliances, power struggles and non-state actors: they also include, as our case will clearly indicate, a considerable degree of top leadership political will and initiative reflecting perceived opportunities and threats to the regime. But beyond all these complex levels of interpretation, the overriding priority of the state is the survival of the regime, economic welfare and the preservation of the privileges of the elites that benefit from it. Foreign policy in countries such as Morocco, in Gerd Nonneman's words, is often defined through the lens of the ruling elite's perceptions about "the security of their regime, about the opportunities and challenges presented by both their domestic and their external environments; and, to varying extents, about their own identities" (Nonneman, 2005: 10).

In his book, *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*, Steven David initially developed '*Omnibalancing*' theory to explain the reasons why third-world countries change alliances between the Eastern and Western blocks, especially in the cold war context. David argued that third-world countries tended to shift alliance depending on which super-power offers durable guarantees and preserves their interests. The theory, however, found renewed application and usage in the post-cold war era due to the enduring validity of its premises even after the breaking up of the Soviet Union. The theory's main argument that alliance decisions in third world countries do not necessarily follow a 'balance of power' logic but rather the overall balance of internal as well as external political factors remained valid. The theory also argues that these alliances are constantly shifting and changing, depending on the rational calculations around the security needs of ruling regimes, and depending on "which outside power is most likely to do what is necessary to keep them in power" (David, 1991: 6).[27] Threats and opportunities from the external environment have to be counterweighed against domestic variables and pressures too, as countries must juggle between internal and external pressures in the process of designing their foreign policy (Willis and Messari, 2005: 153). Foreign policy outcomes will, therefore, often be shaped with regard to the relative weight as well as the source of such threats and opportunities.

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[27] An interesting application of the concept in the analysis of Moroccan foreign policy was used by Willis and Messari (see Willis and Messari, 2005).

North-South relations such as Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-French or Moroccan-US relations appear to validate this theory. Morocco, for example, does not hesitate to swing from one ally to another or offer them attractive deals or concessions, depending on which power is most likely to defend and preserve its strategic interests. It is not surprising, therefore, to see Morocco seeking support for its strategic interests (such as on the Sahara issue) and pursuing better partnership deals with the regional and international powers, offering better terms to the power(s) presenting the strongest guarantees. This alliance shift is sometimes designed to respond to pressures emanating from within the country as well, when domestic pressures grow strong. John Ikenberry refers to this as "state adjustment strategies" and describes it as the constant negotiation and bargaining processes between states and their respective societies that brings about policies and strategies befitting international changes and pressures. The ensuing choices will often depend on opportunity-cost considerations (Ikenberry, 1986: 54-60). In fact, a good illustration of this was provided during the so-called "Arab Spring" when the Moroccan regime had to juggle between internal pressures, mainly from February 20th Movement, the regional and international context, and its own underlying interests of survival, stability and power maximization (see Hoffmann and König, 2013).

In more concrete terms and to transpose Ikenberry's "adjustment strategies" and David's Omnibalancing models onto our case, post-independence Moroccan foreign policy did indeed strive to strike a balance and take into account these several dimensions and actors. Varying degrees of leadership idiosyncrasies, domestic interests and considerations, regional and international contexts have always constituted the various backdrops for Moroccan foreign policy endeavours. These have all factored in the ultimate goals of regime preponderance, preservation of the ruling elite and the boosting of its kudos and privileges.

A quick look at Morocco's foreign policy counterparts and the issues involved reveals that the Sahara issue by far trumps all other Moroccan foreign policy priorities; it is a national sacred subject and most of Morocco's international endeavours directly or indirectly serve to rally maximum backing for the corroboration of its claims on the region. Be it with Algeria, France, Spain or the USA, it is difficult to overstate the importance of this issue in Rabat's diplomatic relations. The main reason, as stated earlier, is that the Sahara is intimately linked to Morocco's sacrosanct pillar of territorial integrity, which itself is tightly related to the regime and the monarchy's legitimacy, image and stability (Rosenblum and Zartman, 2008: 330). Also, and as mentioned earlier as well, Morocco's positions have mostly been pro-Western but pragmatic at the same time. In this sense, and despite its deep and inevitable political and economic anchorage to Europe, the country has also kept its options open and engaged with the USA, Turkey, Africa, the Middle East and now increasingly with Asia. Indeed, partnership diversification continues to be a key Moroccan foreign policy strategy. Hassan II was particularly skilful in performing a balancing act between staunch support for the Arab and Muslim causes and ingratiating himself with the United States and France (White 2001: 42). From a theoretical perspective, this weakens the dependency-based analyses of Moroccan foreign policy since Morocco does not solely operate within the framework of a European or French (let alone Spanish) circle of influence, but it also cultivates other political and economic relations. Its 2008 Advanced Status and 2000 Association Agreement with the EU, its 2006 Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the USA, its 2004 FTA with Turkey, the 2004 Morocco-Tunisia-Egypt-Jordan Free Trade Area that followed the Agadir Declaration, its privileged status among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries,[28] etc. should all be seen in this light.

This is indeed where such concepts as Omnibabalncing become useful. As a country that wields little international influence and has no major resources to bring to bear, Morocco resorts to triangulation or multilateral strategies, whereby it either exploits good relations with one party to try to strike better deals with another, involves a third party to try to advance its position with other counterparts, or simply pursues the same objective with multiple counterparts.[29] Morocco-EU-US, Morocco-Spain-US, Morocco-Spain-France, Morocco-Spain-Arab World, Morocco-Israel-Arab World, Morocco-US-Arab World, etc. are all examples of such strategies that Morocco would resort to in order to achieve its foreign policy objectives (Willis and Messari, 2005: 165-8). Also, Rabat’s alternation between pro-Western and non-aligned stances, its love-hate relationship with Spain, it’s cosying up with France and the United States, its support for the Arab cause and pro-Palestinian policies yet continuing dialogue with Israel, its proactive role in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) as well as its spats with Iran that ended in suspension of diplomatic relations in 2012, can all partly be understood in light of this international balancing act aiming at regime preservation, interest maximization and image enhancement. In the face of crises and opportunities alike, the country launches parallel (at times similar) processes with different powerful counterparts in order to maximize its options, multiply its opportunities, exert pressure, or boost its international standing and prestige in multiple ways. But this triangulation strategy serves other purposes as well, since it also helps guarantee a sort of omnipresence of the country in the different international platforms and broadens the scope of its alternatives, allowing it to put its eggs in more than one basket.

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[28] During the GCC Consultative Summit of May 2011, member States invited Jordan and Morocco to apply for membership to the GCC (Al-Ebadi, 2012).

[29] Morocco often resorts to such strategies in its foreign policy. For example, During the Laila/Perejil crisis, Rabat relied on Paris for support to counterbalance Madrid’s efforts to rally EU support. Also, in April 2013 Morocco managed to block a US draft resolution that sought to expand MINURSO's mandate to include human rights monitoring, claiming it threatened its sovereignty over the Sahara. To achieve this goal, Morocco resorted to risky counterbalancing strategies involving Washington, Paris, Madrid and even Moscow (see Amnesty International article “UN 'miss opportunity' to allow Western Sahara human rights monitoring” 25 April 2013.

Omnibalancing, therefore, seems to be the missing link in this multifarious complex of relationships we are about to scrutinize. This research will test its validity as a conceptual framework to account not only for Morocco's bilateral relations with Spain, but within our quadrilateral framework as well. In other words, it will be worthwhile finding out the extent to which Rabat, in its relations with Madrid, resorts to triangulation[30] or multilateral strategies to try to defend its interests and secure better deals for itself. We will also try to investigate whether the same dynamics might account for Morocco's behaviour with the European trio (Madrid, Brussels and Barcelona). The main objective in this case will be to find out the extent to which Rabat uses or instrumentalises its Spanish, Catalan and EU links to maximize benefits, resolve problems or gain prominence.

The theoretical complex

This research, therefore, offers a theoretical complex made up of four key approaches to try to capture our convoluted quadrilateral relationship. As our theoretical map indicates (see figure 2.1), no single theory seems to adequately manage and comprehensively capture the reciprocal role of the four players in our analysis (Rabat, Madrid, Barcelona and Brussels). Omnibalancing and Complex Interdependence theory do span the full panorama but they should be seen as one-directional only. They are almost mirror images of each other; the first providing a possible interpretation of Rabat's behaviour towards its three northern partners, and the second doing the reverse. In this complex skeleton that regroups all the aforementioned frameworks (that we will refer to as a 'theoretical complex') MLG would be very helpful in making sense of the dynamics taking place among the northern players from a state point of view. It is likely to better capture the relative power diffusion at the Spanish level and the roles of Catalonia and the EU in Rabat-Madrid bilateral relations. Europeanization, on the other hand, brings the supranational perspective even more saliently. It is an equally crucial concept that complements MLG and boasts the potential to account for the important EU 'ins' and 'outs' of influence. The uploading and downloading of policies between the state and the supranational entity, as well as the moderate normative and institutional influence of this latter on its vicinity (Neighbourhood Europeanization) are key concepts depicting the role and span of the EU. Complex Interdependence theory, as said earlier, carries the potential to account for the dynamics informing behaviour of our four actors, but it may mean over-stretching the concept. However, it may prove especially potent in capturing the key Rabat-Madrid axis and framing the increasing mutual interdependencies that seem to withstand dangerous escalations of tension. The increasing interdependence appears to inform and constrain options on both sides (and probably all sides). In the theoretical map (Figure 2.1), we have extended it to the EU and Catalonia as well. Finally the state-centric Omnibalancing approach with its insistence on state survival, quest for diversification and multiple options, and defence of national interest (Korany and Dessouki, 2008: 22-3) is likely to be conceptually helpful when accounting for Morocco's behaviour within the quadrilateral relationship. If European behaviour is likely to be informed by the creation of a multitude of interdependencies with the southern neighbour, Morocco's behaviour is probably motivated by the availability and proliferation of choices and options. Omnibalancing is, therefore, crucial in explaining how Rabat may juggle between Madrid, Barcelona and Brussels, our key concerns here, and could even be accommodating when it comes to explaining how Rabat strives to balance out its relations with Madrid by activating connections with such capitals as Paris or Washington.

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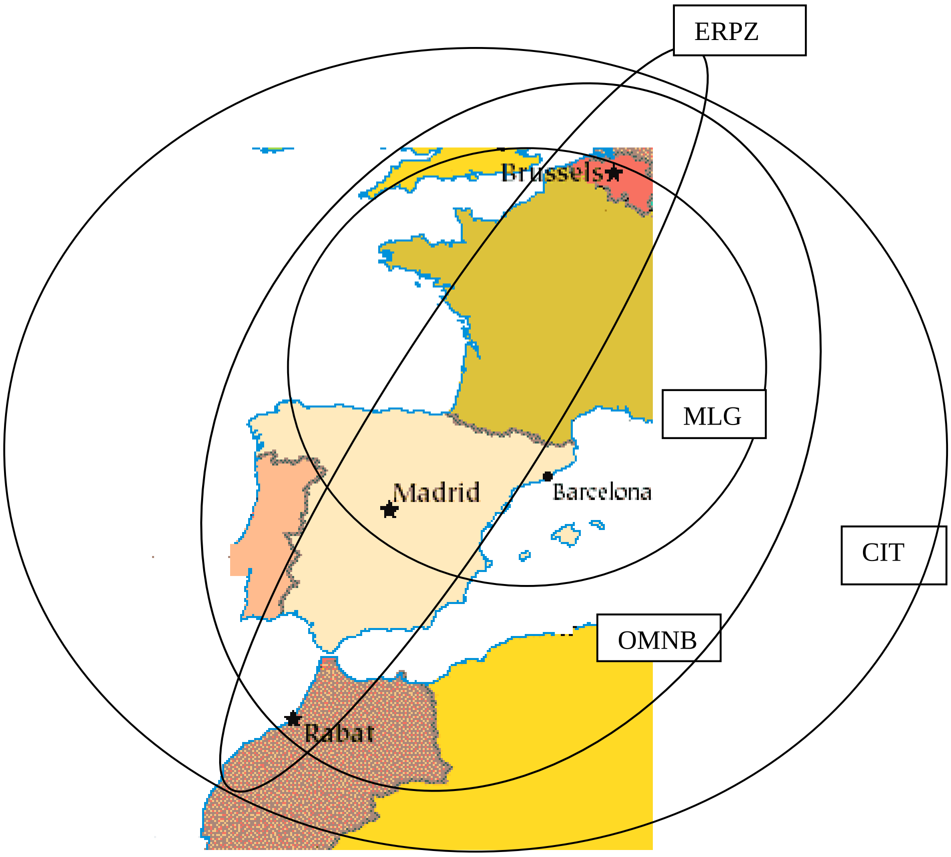
[30] It should also be noted that Spain sometimes uses triangulation as well, especially in relations involving the EU and third countries where it has some influence, like (Spain-EU-Latin America) or (Spain-EU-Mediterranean).

Figure 2.1 The theoretical complex



Key: ERPZ (Europeanization theory)
MLG (Multi-level Governance theory)
OMNB (Omnibalancing theory)
CIT (Complex Interdependence theory)

Although the demarcation lines of these theories appear to be firm and strictly inclusive or exclusive, these are in fact more elastic and open to interpretation. The conceptual limits reflected in our theoretical map translate the most salient (but not exclusive) tendencies. Europeanization, for example, can be limited to the Brussels-Madrid axis as it can be extended to Barcelona, but in this case we have made the concept stretch along the Brussels-Madrid-Rabat alignment as this better mirrors our definition of the term, having included Neighbourhood Europeanization in the conceptualization. Complex Interdependence is an equally supple concept as it can also shrink to the strictly bilateral state relationship or can include the supranational player only, especially with regard to the strong institutional aspect of interdependence. The choice to opt for a comprehensive Rabat-Madrid-Barcelona-Brussels framework, in this case, echoes the predominance of the economic, political, institutional and social aspects of complex interdependence, as our subsequent analysis will elucidate. Finally, Omnibalancing is an equally malleable concept as it can be restricted to the bilateral level to portray Rabat's foreign policy behaviour, where Madrid is one among other "capitals" such as Paris or Washington that are involved in this balancing act. Or it could have been extended only to Brussels since Barcelona could be viewed as a less prominent player in the eyes of Rabat. We have chosen, however, to stretch it to all the European parties since there is sufficient ground to suggest that Rabat deals with the three European players, albeit in varying degrees, to reach its objectives and maximize its benefits.

Limitations

As explained from the outset, this thesis aims at exploring a fairly complex area in International Relations. It tackles a North-South bilateral relationship while bringing the sub-national and supranational levels into play. This is bound to be an endeavour fraught with conceptual, empirical and analytical pitfalls. To try to adequately theorize this hybrid set of relations, this research has opted for an equally complex battery of conceptual frameworks, each bearing the promise to account for particular aspects and actors in the relationship. But this ambitious endeavour might prove to be the research's main limitation. First, combining one analytical framework and three theories (MLG + CIT, Europeanization and Omnibalancing) to account for the relationship is certainly not a graceful or parsimonious way to frame these relationships when other interpretations adopted more elegant and simple theoretical mantles (such as the constructivist approach). However, beyond the inadequacy of constructivism argued for earlier, the complexity of this endeavour will certainly require a combination of approaches. It is also important to remember that the objective here is to account for the whole *relationship*, by providing a range of possible frameworks that will be tested in this thesis to be confirmed or contested after the analysis. Second, the frameworks brought forward are not perfectly complementary. In fact, they overlap in a number of aspects and may even create theoretical tensions. Omnibalancing and Neighbourhood Europeanization, for example, do not sit comfortably together since the first highlights interest-driven behaviour and the second highlights norm-driven behaviour from the southern partner. Third, Europeanization and MLG appear to have some redundant aspects such as the overlap between uploading and downloading depicted by Europeanization, and the upward and downward power seepage described by MLG. But in fact, all these conceptual frameworks are crucial in their own rights. MLG accounts for the hollowing out of the state and mainly describes the erosion of state central powers in both directions: up towards the EU, and down towards the region (Catalonia in our case). Europeanization, on the other hand, places the spotlight on the European dimension and its political, economic, institutional and normative role. Its potential to embrace EU ties with the vicinity (through Neighbourhood Europeanization) is valuable for our analysis as well.

Another potential drawback lies in the way we customized Europeanization as a term, especially after pointing out the risk of conceptual overstretch identified by Radaelli and others (Radaelli, 2000; Gawrich, 2010). Fortunately, Neighbourhood Europeanization is not a novel addition and in our case. In fact, it proves particularly convenient having discarded the constructivist interpretation. Also, relying on Omnibalancing alone to explain Morocco's behaviour in this complex relationship might also prove insufficient, or even inadequate. This state-centric approach may not adequately and comprehensively grasp Rabat's strategies and orientations. Also, while it might account for Morocco's tactics, it might not fully make sense of its motives, objectives and policy content. But hopefully, this is where Complex Interdependence may prove useful as it has ample conceptual firepower to fill such gaps. Finally, Complex Interdependence and Europeanization might seem self-standing and sufficient paradigms, but that can only be established or rejected in the conclusion. Indeed, only after these paradigms are tested and tried can we decide whether to discard, include, adjust or creatively combine them. Our subsequent analysis will help us recalibrate this conceptual battery.

Chapter three - Moroccan-Spanish relations: a complex partnership

Introduction

Following on from the research questions and the methodology section, the purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for the analysis by offering an in-depth examination of the key bilateral Moroccan-Spanish relationship. Being the most comprehensive and crucial relationship, the purpose here is to start by unpicking its various components and layers before getting to grips with the two other bilateral relations and the analysis of the contributions of the supranational (EU) and the sub-state (Catalan) entities in the two next chapters. It is crucial, therefore, to start by revealing the wider dimensions of the Rabat-Madrid bilateral ties by means of examining the various aspects, issues and players involved. Key to appreciating the complexity and intricacies of the Moroccan-Spanish relationship, beyond the depiction of issues, conflict and cooperation patterns and actors involved, is an understanding of the nature of these two countries' regimes, the way these have evolved during the last few decades, their distinctive power structures and distribution, and how these dissimilar characteristics condition and affect their relationship. Failure to place each polity in its proper context, appreciate their recent history, comprehend their distinct command mechanisms, power distribution and their diverse decision-making "cultures", would most likely result in a flawed or truncated understanding of the bilateral relationship. A good grasp of the place and role of the elected governments, the political parties, the monarchies, the non-state actors, etc. is indispensable for any sound appreciation of the workings of the bilateral relationship. Equally important to this understanding is an appreciation of the weight and evolution of each of the main issues and concerns that affect the bilateral ties, the sticking points and the sensitivities. Fundamental and recurrent questions such as the territorial issues, the status of the Sahara, fisheries and agriculture negotiations, economic relations and public perceptions, along with issues that have gained increasing importance in the 1990s and early 2000s such as immigration, security and terrorism, all need to be analysed and placed in their appropriate context. An awareness of the wider context within which the two neighbours interact, i.e. an understanding of the role and impact of the external actors in this partnership also needs to be established in order to put the thematic (economy, cooperation and migration) and agency (the EU and Catalonia) focus of this research in their relevant context.

A tale of two systems

Shedding light on the Moroccan and Spanish government systems and the way they evolved is key to understanding relationship dynamics and complications. It is important, therefore, to start by discussing the democratization process in Spain and its development over the last three decades, as well as the nature of the Moroccan regime, its authoritarian features and the enduring central role of the Monarchy since the country's independence in 1956. It is also crucial to analyse aspects of foreign policy decision-making processes and discuss the centres of power in each of the two polities. In so doing, this section seeks to illuminate some of the characteristics and challenges resulting from the interaction between the two different systems (a democracy vs. a semi-authoritarian regime, a European vs. a North African country, a high income vs. a medium-low income country, etc.), and to contextualize the misunderstandings and discords resulting from such regime disparities.

Spain: the success story?

Following a short-lived experiment in democracy (the Second Republic) that ended as a result of the Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939), Spain came under Franco's dictatorship for almost 40 years. After Franco's death in 1975, the country started erecting the foundations for a stable system that soon transformed the country from an authoritarian regime to a democracy with a largely decentralized state system. It is not the purpose of this study to contribute to the wider debate on what the most appropriate indicators of Spanish democracy are, evaluate its 'good governance', or determine the different stages of its democratization (nor is it our purpose to engage in such an analysis in the Moroccan case either). But using minimalist definitions of democracy and a number of procedural yardsticks, such as the existence of free and open elections where opposition stands chances of winning office, relatively low barriers to participation, genuine political competition, and wide protection of civil liberties (Dahl 1971: 2-3), or Juan Linz's categorization that insists on the freedom of citizens to make political choices, based on their rights to association, information and communication, and on free, fair, peaceful, all-inclusive and regular competition among political rivals (Linz, 1975: 182-3), one can comfortably reach the conclusion that Spain is indeed a democracy, in spite of some post-2008 indications that it might still be fledgling.

Whether the democratization of Spain was triggered by an internal crisis following the death of Franco (Alonso and Muro, 2011: 2), the result of the "deepening of the internal contradictions of the regime" prior to the dictator's death (Preston, 1986: 2), the result of a peaceful and negotiated transition (Linz and Stepan, 1996), or the product of a "profound transformation of Spain's political elites from disunity into consensual unity" (Gunther, 1992: 40), the fact remains that the country's transition to democracy was a success story, relatively peaceful,[31] and a source of international inspiration. Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Czech and other Eastern European leaders looked at the Spanish transition example for lessons after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, as did some Latin American countries such as Argentina and Chile (Alonso and Muro, 2011: 1-2).

But the transition itself was not completely smooth. Some seven years after the passing of Franco, the country went through various stages of power struggle, internal conflicts, negotiations, bargains and attempted coups, culminating in the October 1982 elections that also took place under threats of unrest. The results were a humiliating defeat for the centre-right party UCD (with 6.17% of the total votes cast), a clear rejection of Manuel Fraga's right wing party Alianza Popular AP (with 25.89%), and a landslide victory for the socialist PSOE (with 47.26%). The overwhelming popular commitment to Spain's democratic transition "definitively put an end to the claim that the army could interpret the national will better than could elected politicians" (Preston, 1986: 167-8). During the 1980s, the socialists played a crucial role in reinforcing the welfare state, oversaw the country's accession to the EEC in 1986, and worked towards the adoption of free market policies and privatization in the 1990s (Alva and Navarro, 2008: 196). They also started implementing the regional devolution system of the 17 autonomous communities commonly referred to as the *Estado de las Autonomías*, whereby "historical" regions[32] such as Catalonia were initially granted extensive powers, although these were later largely watered down by being extended to the rest of the autonomous communities by the end of the 1990s.

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[31] It is important to remember, however, that the transition to democracy in Spain was not an entirely peaceful process as hundreds of people died as a result of political violence between 1976 and 1979 (Hooper, 2006: 80-89).

[32] Spanish regions with a stronger sense of identity such as Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia are often referred to as the "historical" regions, as opposed to other regions with less pronounced identities or whose creation was merely the results of administrative partitioning. For a comprehensive analysis of Spanish decentralization process see (Aja, 2003).

Nowadays, Spain is often cited as a model of transition from dictatorship to democratic legitimacy and consolidation, which means that the country has managed to successfully adapt democratic structures and norms that have been institutionalized and legitimized by most citizens (Burton *et al*, 1992: 20-3).[33] But the Spanish “miracle” did not take place at the political front alone. In economic terms, after 1995 Spain’s annual growth “comfortably outstripped the average for the EU-15 [and] in 2006 Spain’s GDP per capita was well above the EU-27 average” (Chari and Heywood, 2009: 26). Compared to its southern neighbour, Spain’s per capita GDP was barely four times that of Morocco in 1970 and by the mid-2000s the disparity had already shot up nearly fourfold (Moré, 2011: 114-5). It is often argued that this gaping economic disparity constitutes part of the “pull” factor that started attracting immigrants from Morocco and other African countries. Last but not least, this combined political and economic clout that Spain achieved in a record period of time and the trumpeting of its transition model as an example to emulate were also a source of considerable prestige that gave Spain a voice, weight and influence on the international scene. The 2008 financial crisis, however, has affected these gains but without damaging them irreversibly so far.

Morocco: the weight of history and tradition

In spite of its geographic proximity with Spain and the shared historical ties, Morocco has largely developed in a quiet different “ecosystem”, and has not broken away from the influence and the weight of its imposing past, traditions and established identity associated to a large extent to its Islamic, Arab components.[34] Unlike many of its Middle East and North African peers, Morocco has constructed an collective identity based on its stronger historical pedigree (Rosenblum and Zartman 2008: 332-3). Its monarchy prides itself in dating back to the end of the 8th century with the Idrisids dynasty that ruled Morocco with Fes as its capital. From the early 11th to early 17th century, a string of powerful dynasties succeeded, albeit intermittently, in ruling the country (Al Moravids, Al Mohads, the Merinides, the Watasids and the Saadis). Sometimes their influence stretched as far east as Tripoli, other times as far south as the Niger River or as far north as Spain’s borders with France. Moroccan (and

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[33] It is worth mentioning, however, that recently executive power grew at the expense of parliament amid the current financial crisis. For example, in 2012 Rajoy’s government has issued 29 “Royal Decrees” compared to less than 12 decrees issued per year the previous decade. Also, introducing fiscal measures by decree has become commonplace. See Financial Times article: “Spain rules by decree to drive reform” (7 March 2013).

[34] In fact, other identity components (mainly the Berber one) were suppressed for the sake of unitarism and state homogenization.

Islam's) influence on the history and culture of Spain lasted from the first Muslim conquest of the peninsula in 711 until the ousting of the last Moriscos from Al-Andalus in 1614, and Spain came under direct rule of Al Moravid and Al Mohad dynasties from late 11th to early 13th century.[35] In the mid-17th century the Alawis (Morocco's current ruling dynasty) came to power and soon gained a firm grip on the whole country through King Mouley Ismail's succession in 1672 (Pennell, 2003: 30-99). The dynasty's influence waxed then waned, until the country was finally colonized by the French and the Spanish in 1912. But the preponderant role of the monarchy proved resilient. The monarchical establishment itself was savvily boosted by King Mohammed V (and by the nationalist resistance movements as well) during Morocco's struggle for independence to such a point that, following his death in 1961, the royal institution had become "a revived and transformed office" (Geertz, 1968: 75). To further uphold its supremacy, the Moroccan monarchy relied on its historical, political and religious legitimacy (Waltz, 1995: 44–45; Rosenblum and Zartman, 2008: 320), as well as the allegiance of the army and its monopoly of the constitutional codification processes (Berramdane, 1987: 411).

During the first decades of independence, Morocco's politics started bearing the hallmark of an enduring power struggle between the hitherto allies against the French and Spanish colonial power. A prolonged, at times bloody, tug-of-war between King Hassan and the two main opposition parties - Istiqlal (Independence) and the USFP (the Socialists) parties - continued up until the 1980s (Maghraoui 2002: 28). During that period, the Palace also promoted a multi-party system (and the creation of political organizations sympathetic to the monarchy) in a bid to undermine the two dominant opponents and to prevent them from gaining mass support (Waltz 1995: 109-121; Zartman 1990: 223–230; Cammet 2007: 82-3). But the rivalry persisted and the regime sought new strategies, including repression, state largess, appropriation of ideas and co-option. The appropriation of rivals' initiatives as the monarchy's own has been common practice and continues to be a shrewd regime strategy practiced to this date. Probably the first post-independence instance of this was the monarchy's inspiration from the hitherto Istiqlal party discourse of "Greater Morocco"

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[35] With regard to the distent past, it is important to notice that despite the long shared history between Spain and Morocco, the discourses and the memory remain different and selective. If Moroccans celebrate such feats as the Islamization of Spain, the "golden era" of Al Andalus or Annual victory, their Spanish counterparts mark the beginning of their "golden age" in 1492, a date that marks the "reconquest" and the fall of Granada as well as the launching of the sea voyages of Christopher Columbus to the New World. The history of that Golden age is written by such iconic figures as the Catholic Kings, Charles I and Philip II.

(Waltz 1995: 115) which motivated the monarch to step up territorial demands. And one of the latest manifestations of it was seen on March 9th 2011 when Mohamed VI, in reaction to mounting social protests and the toppling of the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes, gave a speech promising reforms that rivalled and almost eclipsed the demands made by the February 20th Movement,[36] thereby outbidding their own demands and outfoxing their tactics (Benchemsi, 2012). Examples of co-option are rife as well; they consist of attracting previously vocal public figures with alternative discourses to the decision-making arena without affecting state power (Sater, 2007: 150–151; Linn, 2011: 5).

In the early 1970s, a more serious threat to the monarchy came from the military. The 1971 and 1972 coup d'états exposed the fragility of the regime and provided it with extra arguments to tighten its grip on state policies and structures. Faced with these challenges, Hassan II also sought to strengthen the position of the monarchy by assuming the leadership of the Army and later on by successfully launching the campaign to "complete Morocco's territorial integrity" through the annexation of the Sahara. Being so tightly linked to regime legitimacy, the "Moroccanness" of the Sahara, therefore, became a symbol of national unity and a core priority for Moroccan foreign policy. This practically made the issue of "territorial integrity" Morocco's top foreign policy concern (Damis 1987: 198; Willis and Messari 2005: 156; Rosenblum and Zartman 2008: 321; Rivlin 2009: 188-9).

As far as democratization is concerned, Morocco is usually classified somewhere between the democratic and the undemocratic regimes. At times it is labelled as a straight "autocracy" (Albrecht and Wegner, 2006), other times a "liberalized autocracy" (Brumberg 2002), an "enlightened authoritarian regime" (Boukhars 2011), a "sustainable authoritarian regime" (Dalmasso, 2012), or at best a "democratizing" country (Storm 2007: 164-5). Regardless of the hue or flavour associated with it, there is a large academic consensus on the fact that post-independence Morocco continues to be a centralized constitutional monarchy characterized by authoritarianism. And despite the existence of an elected government, a multitude of political parties, a parliament, and other legislative and judicial bodies, these wield a limited influence compared to the Palace and its entourage, which remain the definitive hub of power in the country (Munson, 1999: 259; Waltz, 1999: 296; Cammett, 2007: 84; Rosenblum and Zartman 2008: 332). The monarchy usually maintains power through a web of alliances and relatively diffuse networks of patronage, eventually leading back to the Palace. As is the case to this day, political opposition is chronically weakened and its leaders often end up seeking support from the monarchy rather than challenging its authority (Waterbury, 1970: 318; Holden, 2005: 463). Even the most recent constitution which emerged following mass protests of 2011 still maintains the King as the army's commander-in-chief, who promulgates laws, appoints and dismisses the prime minister and other high-level government officials. Successive governments since the country's independence have had no effective power to govern, since they were constantly, albeit in varying degrees, subordinated to non-elected elites and the King in the first place (Storm 2007: 160). Governments, therefore, "merely executed rather than deliberated over policies devised by the King and his close advisors" (Cammett, 2007: 84).

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[36] The "February 20th Movement" is the name that was given to the 2011 protest movement in Morocco as part of the wave of protests in the Arab world. The name emanates from the first massive demonstration (on February 20th 2011) where tens of thousands of protestors took to the streets of over 50 Moroccan cities. See (Hoffmann and König, 2013: 5-6).

Unlike its northern neighbour, therefore, Morocco is far from being a fully-fledged democracy. Its political system is essentially shaped by a longstanding historical legacy and by the post-independence struggle for power that largely ended in favour of a dominant Monarchy. Recently, however, the country has undertaken some important reform measures that make it stand out in comparison to other Middle Eastern countries such as the establishment of an Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER) to deal with past human rights abuses. The country also adopted a more liberal personal status law (*moudawanna*), a much trumpeted National Human Development Initiative (INDH), basic civil liberties, freedom of speech and the press, and extended prerogatives to the government (Layachi 1998, 98; Storm 2007: 164-5; Kausch 2008: 2). Also, the country has engaged in a process of liberalization and enjoys a degree of political openness. The existence of political and social structure such as a multi-party system, regular elections, an increasingly vocal parliament and a growing civil society makes the country among the most open and reforming MENA countries.

Spain and Morocco: two strangers with vested interests?

The "country profiles" that have been established in the previous section is an important exercise for the rest of the research. Not only do the disparities between Spanish and Moroccan political systems explain some of the existing tensions and misunderstandings but they will also help in gaining a better appreciation of the reciprocal and lingering stereotypes.

In fact, the Spanish-Moroccan relationship should not be disassociated either from the remote and recent pasts or from the nature of the two countries systems of governance and their respective evolution. Such origins and the disparities resulting from them do indeed explain part of the reasons why bilateral relations have remained unpredictable, complex and precarious. Akin to the encounter of two strangers with vested (not necessarily common) interests in each other, the relationship exhibits a number of awkward features and incongruous aspects. Each of the two countries considers the other a close and strategic partner: they signed the first Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation in the region back in1991, relationships between the two monarchs are cordial, and government relations are given priority with high level summits and priority foreign visits (Amirah-Fernandez 2008: 354). All Spanish prime ministers have chosen Morocco as their first foreign visit destination (occasionally their first outside of the EU): Felipe González in 1983, Aznar in 1996 and 2000, Zapatero in 2004 and 2008, and Rajoy in 2012. Economic relations have increased as well, with accumulated Spanish investments in Morocco at 3 billion Euros between 1993 and 2008, trade relations growing seven-fold between 1995 and 2008, and official aid tripling between 1997 and 2008 to reach 81.3 million Euros (De Larramendi and Azaola, 2010: 514). Also, Rabat enjoys a preferential status in Spain's external relations and is arguably its top priority in the Mediterranean region (Amirah-Fernandez, 2008: 348; López García and De Larramendi, 2002: 170, Gillespie, 2001: 3-4), and at around 760,000 officially registered immigrants, Moroccans had become the largest group of non-Europeans residing in Spain by 2010 (Barreñada 2010, p.7). Yet, the bilateral relationship keeps producing awkward spasms that produce such crises as the fisheries episode of 2001 (Amirah-Fernandez 2008, p. 353), the Perejil/Laila dispute of July 2002 (Gillespie 2006) or the more recent Haidar and Laayoun spats[37] which further damage the countries' mutual relationships and perception of each other.

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[37] Aminatu Haidar is a human rights activist who went on a hunger strike at the Spanish airport of Lanzarote in November 2009 after Moroccan authorities denied her entry at Laayoun airport having declared herself a citizen of Western Sahara. Her hunger strike was widely covered by Spanish media and resulted in a diplomatic crisis between Spain and Morocco after the Spanish Parliament called upon Zapatero to pressure Morocco to accept her unconditional return and to support the extension of the mandate of the UN mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to include human rights monitoring. Morocco viewed this as a provocation and intervention in its sovereignty. One year later, Morocco proceeded to the dismantling of the Agdim Izik camp (12 kilometres from Laayoun) that attracted some 20 000 demonstrators by October 2010. The intervention resulted in bloody confrontations and casualties, mainly among Moroccan security forces. The incident also sparked tensions between the two countries, especially after the Spanish parliament adopted a motion calling upon the government to condemn the violence of the Moroccan intervention in dismantling the camp. See (Soler and Vaquer, 2010: 76-77) as well as El País articles "El Congreso fuerza al Gobierno a subir la presión a Rabat por Haidar" (16 December 2009), and "Marruecos amenaza con desatar una crisis con España por el Sáhara" (03 December 2010).

What is more, the complexity of Moroccan-Spanish relations is such that it has created a “proliferation of foreign policy actors” (De Larramendi and Mañé Estrada, 2009: 20). But although almost all significant actors on both sides are involved in varying degrees in shaping or affecting bilateral relations, the nature of the two regimes makes it that the major foreign policy powers sit with a restricted, yet distinct, circle of actors and institutions in each country. The fact that both monarchs are actively engaged in their respective country’s foreign policy, as well as the heads of governments, key ministries, parliaments, armed forces, political parties, the press, Spanish Autonomous Communities, NGOs, civil societies actors, interest groups and lobbies, etc. (De Larramendi and Mañé Estrada, 2009), does not mean that these actors play equivalent roles on both sides of the Strait. The existence of analogous institutions and comparable state structures in both countries can be misleading and does, sometimes, generate misunderstandings, false expectations, or even clashes.

Ignacio Cembrero in his 2006 book starts off his interesting investigation by admitting the gaping mutual ignorance and misunderstanding resulting from that, even at elite levels. He mentions, for example, the conviction that Moroccan authorities hold that the Spanish government can exert influence on the press to moderate its critical approach towards Morocco (Cembrero, 2006: 10), or on pro-Saharawi civil society movements. In 2001 Morocco deemed hostile a largely mediatised mock referendum on the Sahara’s self-determination organized by pro-Saharawi civil society groups in Andalucía (Arieff, 2011: 20), and blamed Madrid for its lack of neutrality on the Sahara. As a result it recalled its ambassador, thereby partly kicking off the worst crisis (2001 to 2002) in the two countries’ bilateral relationship since 1975. The Spaniards also fail to fully appreciate decision-making processes in Morocco or tend to fall into the same ignorance trap. Some may place disproportional expectation on a Moroccan ministerial or parliamentary visit, or not appreciate the real weight of certain royal advisors; others may not fully realize that they are dealing with a country whose GDP is less than 6% that of their own country (Cembrero, 2006: 10). What is more, hostility that Moroccans sometimes perceive from their Spanish counterparts following fisheries or agricultural negotiations tend to generate feelings of disappointment, frustration and unfairness at the popular as well as official levels. Seeing the wealthy northern neighbour set to maximize its gains and keen not to make concessions despite the already considerable prosperity divide between the two countries tends to engender such sentiments. At the heart of misunderstandings, therefore, lies not only mutual ignorance but also perceived “self-interest” or “fairness”, confusion between apparently similar systems, as well as the partial media coverage of the “other” at both ends.

Start with Morocco. In the Alawi Kingdom, the key foreign policy decisions are taken in the royal palace. In fact, along with the other *ministères de souveraineté* (where ministers were directly appointed by the King) that included Justice, the Interior and Religious Affairs, Foreign Affairs used to be a *domaine réservé* of the Monarch[38] who occupies centre stage among foreign policy actors (El Houdaïgui 2003b: 27). While decisions have sometimes been influenced by popular demands and inclinations or by international pressures, the royal institution has been holding a firm grip on major foreign policy decisions since the country’s independence, and even more so since its fierce power struggle with the Istiqlal and the USFP parties abated, without ceasing completely, in the 1970s. Following the 1975 Moroccan Green March that resulted in the annexation of the Sahara, the prestige of the Palace soared, and a number of “sacred lines” were firmly drawn. These were relative to the country’s territorial integrity (i.e. unanimity on the “Moroccanness” of the Sahara), state religion (Islam) and state regime (the monarchy) (Loudiy and Smith, 2005: 1070f, cited in Hoffmann and König, 2013: 9). This triptych soon became synonymous with national unity and the King became tightly associated with the concept of state *pérennité* (i.e. continuity and permanence of the state). Notwithstanding the “constitutional monarchy” label often used to describe the country, Morocco, therefore, remained far from being a liberal democratic country and the decision-making process in its foreign policy, as well as in major state policies, has since been closely dominated by the King. As a result of this state of affairs, foreign policy decisions in Morocco are more a result of “bandwaggoning” rather than “balancing” (Willis and Messari 2005: 155), which implies frequent alignment of the various political forces behind the major foreign policy decisions that are, in one way or another, influenced by the King. Aside from external pressures, popular demands and protests which sometimes manage to shift policies, the remaining national actors (political parties, civil society actors, the parliament, lobby and pressure groups, the press, etc.) wield little influence while the Palace and its surrounding circles of influence remain the ultimate sources of power (Layachi 1998: 98; Munson 1999: 259 - 274; Waltz 1999: 283 - 296).

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[38] It should be noted that, with the 2011 constitution, two of the four ministerial positions mentioned (Justice and Foreign Affairs) are no longer royal appointments but come from majority government parties.

According to Rachid El Houdaïgui, Moroccan foreign policy decision-making operates within a rigid structure in which the various actors intervene according to “a hierarchic and rational configuration”. At the top of the pyramid lies “the central decision unit” (the King, the royal cabinet –i.e. the King’s advisors- and the army). Supporting this key unit is the “subordinate decision unit” made up of the government and the parliament. The political parties, civil society actors, business organizations, etc. constitute the least significant “marginalized decision unit” (El Houdaïgui 2003b: 27). But the royal institution does not only exert foreign policy powers. Even after the adoption of the new constitution in July 2011 following mass protests in the midst of the so-called “Arab Spring”, the King hardly lost any of his key privileges as he remains commander of the faithful, in command of the army, appoints and dismisses ministers and other high-level government officials, rules by decree and retains the power to dissolve parliament (Theofilopoulou, 2012).

In Spain, on the other hand, although a wide range of actors are involved in shaping, influencing and conducting foreign policy, including the political parties, the prime minister, the ministry of foreign affairs, the autonomous regions and public opinion (De Larramendi and Mañé Estrada, 2009), power mainly resides with the executive headed by the prime minister. The ministries of foreign affairs, defence, economy and others not only compete against each other for influence but have seen the emergence of new rivals in the form of the autonomous regional governments that also engage in “external activities” by virtue of the Spanish constitution (Gillespie, 2000: 34-5). And although the Cortes (Spanish parliament) can at times nudge the prime minister towards certain directions, its role remains limited. Its prestige had started to dwindle after the 1979 elections, and its role was even further eclipsed following the PSOE’s 1982 absolute majority which provided Felipe Gonzalez with a free hand not only in domestic policies but in external affairs as well (Heywood, 1991: 110). Indeed, the Spanish executive enjoys a high degree of power. The prime minister stands at the heart of the country’s political system, supported by a body of advisers and specialised departments. In foreign policy matters he enjoys large prerogatives to the extent of “personalization of foreign policy” (Gillespie, 2000: 35). A quick consideration of Spanish foreign policy towards Morocco over the last two decades would undoubtedly confirm that. Gonzalez’s, Aznar’s and Zapatero’s tenures were not only characterized by difference in style, but one can probably decipher the weight of their personal world-views and convictions in the outcomes of their foreign policies.

But that does not mean that in democratic Spain the prime minister holds absolute power when it comes to foreign policy matters. Aside from the role of other ministries, specialised departments, and the autonomous communities, the foreign policy agenda is sometimes affected by public opinion, the press and the input of other political parties in opposition or within informal coalitions that sometimes form with victorious parties when these fail to achieve an absolute majority. This was the case for the Socialists in 1993 when they had to negotiate with the Catalan and/or Basque nationalist parties, for Aznar's Partido Popular's first term in office (1996 – 2000), and (to some extent) for Zapatero's 2004 term. Also, even though Spanish citizens have traditionally shown little interest in foreign affairs (Heywood, 1991: 112), massive protests have often influenced key foreign policy decisions, as was the case with regard to the popular manifestations against the Iraq war that contributed to the decision to withdraw Spanish troops in 2004, or the youth protests led by the *indignados* (the indignant) in cities such as Madrid and Barcelona that followed the 2008 financial crisis and the Arab revolutions in 2011.[39] Finally, unlike his Moroccan counterpart, the Spanish monarch King Juan Carlos wields inconsequential foreign policy authority as he plays a largely ceremonial role, and at best may be charged with specific missions akin to those of a senior diplomat. When it comes to relations with Morocco, however, his role acquires more significance since the Moroccan monarchy likes to deal with its Spanish counterpart for symbolic reasons and to proffer prestige to the office itself.

Having similar state structures (with few exceptions such as regional governments in Spain), therefore, does not mean that power distribution is comparable. Indeed, the similarities sometimes convert into sources of confusion and may even trigger discord. When former Prime Minister Aznar made his infamous statement threatening that there would be consequences for Moroccan-Spanish and Moroccan-EU relations following the breakdown of the April 2001 fisheries negotiations, Morocco interpreted it as a threat. The King's entourage's biggest fear was a blockading of Spanish ports by local fishermen, hampering the transit of the hundreds of thousands of Moroccan immigrants that return to Morocco every summer via Spain (Cembrero, 2006: 18-21). Such blown up assumptions and reactions at such a high level further illustrate not only the degree of suspicion and mistrust that can sometimes surface but the degree of mutual ignorance on the part of Madrid that was not able to predict Morocco's reactions to such declarations, and on the part of Rabat whose extreme suspicions denoted its oversized misapprehensions towards Spain. It is probably no coincidence, then, that some of the honeymoon periods in the relationship took place when clued-up, skilled and culturally insightful diplomats were in charge. Ambassadors like Alfonso de la Sena, Jorge Dezcallar, Omar Azzimane, or foreign ministers like Miguel Angel Moratinos (an Arabist and a connoisseur of Morocco and the Middle East) and Mohammed Benaissa have certainly had a positive influence on the bilateral relationship.

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[39] The Indignados movement (the indignants or the outraged) refers to the series of youth-led protests and demonstrations in Spain that originated from cyber activism and social networks. The movement is also known as the "15M movement" (in reference to its start day of May 15, 2011). The movement erupted right after the "Arab Spring" protests in Tunisia and Egypt, although its surge is also attributed to the 2008 financial crisis in Spain. For a brief discussion of the subject, see (Badia and Sarsanedas, 2012).

PSOE and PP policies towards Morocco: playing musical chairs?

Unlike its Iberian neighbour, Morocco's heavily centralised *Makhzen* system may make the decision-making process shadowy and unpredictable, but it remains largely monophonic as there are no significant internal opposition forces that can make their weight felt in the various government decisions. There is also an implicit consensus that the Palace has the final say regarding major foreign policy decisions; it is the King who draws the main policy guidelines, and major crises between the two neighbours are mainly resolved through his direct intervention (Barreñada 2010: 8).

In Spain too, and despite the highly polarised political scene between the two main political parties, up until the early 2000s many crucial foreign policy issues such as the country's Mediterranean, Latin American and Transatlantic policies used to constitute issues of considerable political consensus, often referred to as '*Poltíca de Estado*' (State policy), between the right wing People's Party and the Socialist Party (Gillespie 2007: 29). However, over certain issues relating to Morocco, the two parties seem to act out exchangeable roles depending on whether they are in government or in opposition. Rivalries between incumbent and opposition parties sometimes reflect their struggle for power and quest for votes more than the pursuit of significantly diverging agenda based on ideological or partisan principles. This change of roles was see, for example, when the two parties started modifying their positions with regard to the Sahara issue as early as the 1970s. The socialist PSOE party was, then, a fervent defender of the Polisario Front's[40] cause, a bitter critic of Morocco and a huge supporter of the Saharawi self-determination. Once in power following its massive victory in

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[40] The Polisario Front is a Sahrawi rebel national liberation movement seeking to end Morocco's control over Western Sahara. Their name is derived from initials of the Spanish name of the Front: Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro (The Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguía el Hamra and Río de Oro).

1982, however, the party adopted a more pragmatic approach, implementing policies of friendship towards Rabat and maintaining the Madrid Tripartite Agreement,[41] contrary to their previous calls for its invalidation (Morán, 1990: 78-83; De Larramendi, 1997: 405-408; De Larramendi and Azaola 2010: 512). The hostile attitudes towards Morocco soon gave way to stronger links and a diversification and intensification of relations between the two countries, starting with the institutionalisation of top-level summits in 1990s (Gillespie, 1995: 167), to the extent that the dominant perception nowadays is that the PSOE is much more Rabat-friendly than the PP. After the Socialist party victory of 1982, however, the centre-right PP (the successor of the *Alianza Popular* an offspring of the Franco regime that had signed the 1975 Tripartite Treaty) started calling for a firmer policy towards Morocco regarding the Sahara question. This game of musical chairs seemed to continue prior to the PP election such as when Aznar made a reassuring visit to Morocco in 1994, promising continuity in the relations. In the same vein, Zapatero's 2001 visit to Rabat as opposition leader (at the height of Morocco's crisis with the PP) was attributed by some to his keenness to pursue a relationship that his party (and Felipe Gonzalez in particular) had previously invested and believed in; but another explanation was that Zapatero saw in the crisis an opportunity to project himself as a statesman who could play a constructive role in his country's international relations.

Although the fisheries issue corresponds to a more cyclical EU-Morocco calendar, it is nevertheless another area that demonstrates this quasi-role play. During the 1995 fisheries negotiations between Morocco and the EU, the PP had severely criticized the PSOE for its laxity in the negotiations, opposed Morocco's demands and accused Felipe González, Spain's prime minister at the time, of being more concerned about his pro-European image than Spain's national interests (Jones 2000: 152). However, after winning the 1996 elections, the PP had to accept and adopt the very fishing agreements it had previously vilified, proving yet again that its previous stance was motivated by a vote-seeking political agenda in tune with the overwhelming public opinion at the time, rather than on the basis of purely partisan convictions and principles (Jones, 2000: 152-3). Predictably enough, five years later, it was the PSOE's turn to try to undermine the PP's credibility, blaming the failure of the 2001 fishing negotiations and the steady degradation of relations between the two countries on the government's failure to maintain previous relations (López García and Larramendi, 2002: 188).

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[41] The Tripartite agreement refers to the November 1975 treaty between Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania whereby Madrid ended its presence in Western Sahara, opening the door to Morocco's Green March to reclaim the Sahara.

Other instances of the instrumentalization of Morocco-related issues in Spanish politics keep reoccurring. For instance, in 2007 King Juan Carlos, with a Socialist government blessing apparently motivated by the imminent 2008 elections, made an official visit to Ceuta (the first made by a Spanish head of state in 74 years). Coming just one day prior to the Moroccan Green March anniversary celebrations, the visit deeply infuriated the Moroccan government and revived the long dormant tensions between the two countries. However, other visits to Melilla made in 2010 by José Maria Aznar and Mariano Rajoy, PP former prime minister and the party leader respectively, were harshly criticized by the PSOE government as acts of provocation.[42] The events in Laayoun later that same year further demonstrated the exploitation of such issues by the two main rivals when Rajoy openly criticized Zapatero's leniency towards Morocco and accused him of "abdicating" his government responsibilities by abandoning the consensual state policy towards the Sahara issue.[43] Rajoy's declarations backfired as they ignited massive demonstrations in Casablanca in 2010 which rallied hundreds of thousands in protest against the PP.[44] Soon after his general election victory in November 2011, however, Rajoy chose Morocco for his first official visit, in spite of the critical economic conditions of his country and the deepening Euro crisis that might have led him to prioritize a visit to Germany or France instead. Symbolically at least, once in office, the PP did not veer from the tradition of giving precedence to Rabat. The last act of the musical chairs game towards Morocco was still to be written.

Although one might easily argue that relations between Rabat and Madrid have generally been better under the Socialists compared to the PP or UCD before them, successive governments have largely followed similar policy patterns towards Morocco, in spite of their pre-electoral declarations. While economic, immigration and territorial policies remained unchanged, what tends to slightly differ are positions over the Sahara, over the approach (i.e. the balance between incentives and sanctions, or "positive conditionality" vs. "negative conditionality") (Pinyol Jiménez, 2009), or over the management of other immaterial issues relating to the realm of perceptions, history or symbols (Del Pino 2005: 80-81). The shifts in the PSOE's and PP's declarations and stances towards Morocco, therefore, can mainly be interpreted in two ways: realpolitik and opportunism (vote-seeking). More precisely, when in power, political parties follow a more pragmatic approach towards Morocco with regard to the multiple opportunities and risks involved with alienating the neighbour. When in opposition or in the run up to elections, however, potentially problematic issues can constitute opportunities for the competing parties to reap political dividends and gain more votes, knowing that the public is not indifferent towards Morocco, and might sometimes welcome goodwill gestures and other times firm stances towards a country that they do not particularly trust or hold much esteem for, as opinion polls tend to reveal.[45]

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[42] See El País article: "La coincidencia de la visita del Rey a Ceuta con la Marcha Verde enfureció a Marruecos", (13 October 2012).

[43] See El País article: "Rajoy asegura que Zapatero ha "abdicado" en el conflicto sobre el Sáhara" (13 November 2010).

[44] See El País articles "Todos los líderes políticos marroquíes arremeten contra el Partido Popular" (26 November 2010) and "Jiménez intenta blindar la relación con Marruecos" (27 October 2011).

Major bilateral issues: land, money, people and the neighbours

The relationship between Morocco and Spain involves a host of problematic issues such as legal and illegal migration, drug smuggling, fishing access rights, trade with the EU, maritime delimitation disputes, the Sahara issue and that of Ceuta and Melilla (Del Sarto, 2006:197). But they also involve other positive issues such as growing economic exchanges, increasing security cooperation, multiplication of aid programs, as well as political, social and cultural collaboration. The most important aspects of this relationship, however, could be summed up under three major headings: territorial issues (comprising the Sahara, Ceuta, Melilla and the islets and rocks under Spanish control), migration and security (including drug smuggling, criminal networks and terrorism), and economic and cooperation issues (including fisheries, agriculture, trade, aid, investments, etc.).

Territorial issues

Historically and according to Fernando Morán, Morocco and Spain's bilateral relationship prior to Spain's EU accession was mainly characterised by territorial disputes and by recurrent incidents over fishing rights and territorial demarcation, punctuated by diplomatic tensions and escalations. Spain often resorted to the instrumentalisation of regional rivalries (mainly between Algeria and Morocco), and made "Morocco, not the Cold War, the Spanish army's principal conflict scenario" (Morán, 1980 cited in Torreblanca, 2001:14). Indeed, geographic proximity and history ensure that Spain and Morocco not only share maritime borders but land borders as well. Ceuta and Melilla on the North African coast with populations of 75,000 and 65,000 inhabitants respectively have been controlled by Spain for centuries (since 1668 and 1497 respectively). Morocco has continuously been claiming them along with other islets and rocks just off the Moroccan coast (Islas Chafarinas, Peñón de Alhucemas and Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera) since its independence in 1956 on the grounds of completing its territorial reunification. But Spain always maintained that the territories were Spanish long before the establishment of the modern state of Morocco (Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, 2007:86, Gillespie, 2010: 88).

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[45] See section on the role of public opinion and civil society later in this chapter.

The main aspect of bilateral discord between Spain and Morocco, however, is arguably the Sahara, a former Spanish colony that was regained by Morocco in 1975. The territory constitutes for Morocco a central issue for the stability of its political system and can even be said to have been made into an "existential" and sacred issue for the state over which internal dissent is not tolerated. While Rabat insists that the 1975 Green March commemorates yet another milestone towards the completion of the country's territorial integrity, the majority of the Spanish population and political parties generally support the right of the Saharawi population to self-determination. The Spanish government stance, however, has largely shifted from support for the right to self-determination of its ex-colony to the call for "a mutually-accepted solution" i.e. a compromise position between the Moroccan and Polisario Front objectives, including a significant degree of autonomy to the region based on the devolution proposal presented by Morocco to the UN Security Council in April 2007.[46] The "soft" position adopted by Madrid towards this crucial issue for Rabat is often interpreted as evidence of Spain's "belief that putting too much pressure on the Moroccan regime … would ultimately produce its downfall... [which] could initiate a period of instability and perhaps even chaos in the country, resulting in grave consequences for Spain" (Amirah-Fernández, 2008: 355). This "soft" position, however, is sometimes hardened depending on the state of bilateral relations or on pressures emanating from the parliament, political parties or civil society.

The worst territorial crisis between the two countries in recent decades, however, did not take place over Ceuta and Melilla of the Sahara but over a miniscule islet. The crisis was seen from the outside, and rightly so, as one of the most ludicrous conflicts of the 21st century, but that does not make it any less serious. It ignited in the summer of 2002 over Laila/Perejil, an islet the size of a football pitch 150 meters off Morocco's cost, which was "occupied" successively by Moroccan then by Spanish forces before the former US Secretary of State Colin Powel spent considerable time and effort to restore the status quo ante (Gillespie 2006). But the bilateral relationship had started to go sour many months before with Spain's ambivalence over the endorsement of the Baker I plan which advocated a large amount of autonomy for the Sahara, a position that Morocco favours over vote for self-determination. The relationship was further exacerbated by a series of events including the repeated failures of EU-Morocco fisheries negotiations, rows over the increasing waves of illegal immigrants reaching Spain via Morocco, disputes over treatment of Moroccan immigrants living in Spain, and the recall of the Moroccan ambassador following the mock referendum over the Sahara.

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[46] Although questions remain as to how substantial the Moroccan notion of devolution would be since Rabat did not offer plans or a clear model for the autonomy or for the advanced country-wide regionalization project.

Albeit brief and ultimately contained, the Laila/Perejil spat is a symbolic chapter that looked like a textbook case of a "precipitating factor" that may lead to larger scale confrontation. It exposed the precariousness of the bilateral relationship, the lingering bilateral suspicions and the incapacity of the EU, compared to the US, to find a solution to the dispute. But the short-lived nature and ultimate resolution of this potentially dangerous conflict reveals other facts. In spite of the accumulating dark clouds that were likely to provoke an ominous storm, a solution was found in the eleventh hour. In many ways, that also illustrates some of the virtues of the so-called *colchón de intereses comunes* (cushion of shared interests): the Spanish doctrine that promotes an increase of exchanges between the two countries to boost trust and avoid confrontation. Despite the brinkmanship, it appears that open conflict was not an option for both countries as it would have brought about more serious political, economic and social consequences that neither country wanted to face. Conflict was clearly too costly compared to the shared benefits that they both reap from the peaceful relationship. Even in the middle of the crisis, constant efforts were made to avoid a stalemate, and when a deadlock actually occurred, efforts were immediately made to secure the intervention of the US Secretary of State Collin Powel (Cembrero: 44). The Laila/Perejil episode, in many ways, gives credence to a case of growing interdependence between the two neighbours that has been increasing since then. With the advent of the Socialist government in 2004, and with Miguel Ángel Moratinos spearheading Spain's foreign policy, the Moroccan-Spanish relationship indeed managed to regain some of its glimmer (Vaquer, 2007: 5). Although the honeymoon was short-lived as the partnership fell victim to new problems and spats such as the Laayoune and Haidar events, demonstrating, yet again, the cyclicality of conflicts and the enduring love-hate feelings underlying the relationship. In parallel with that, however, relationships keep growing and intensifying barring the road to actual confrontation.

Migration, social and security issues

Immigration is a fairly recent phenomenon in modern-day Spain. In fact, prior to its EC accession, the country was a net migrant exporter, but starting in 1997 a huge new wave of immigrants started bringing a much needed workforce mainly from Latin America, Africa and Eastern and Central Europe. A combination of Spain's spectacular economic growth and population aging and shrinkage[47] boosted the phenomenon even further. Between 2000 and 2009 Spain absorbed about five million immigrants (13.8% of the population).[48] With this remarkable surge in immigration, illegal north-bound migration across the Mediterranean also gained prominence. It became one of the most covered subjects in the Spanish media and started constituting one of the top concerns of Spanish people, making Morocco look like a source of the problem. In the years 2000-2010, the issue often figured among the three major worries of Spaniards after unemployment and terrorism (Balch, 2010: 69).

Moroccan immigration to Spain is a relatively recent phenomenon compared to other countries like France where the Moroccan community has been settling for generations. Its increase over the last two decades has been phenomenal. As Figure 3.1 shows, the total number of immigrants went from around 50 000 in 1991 to about 200 000 in 2000 and reached almost 870 000 in 2012. The increase in numbers had particularly been significant between 2000 and 2008. Spain's "economic miracle" and Morocco's poverty and stagnant growth during that period have constituted considerable "pull" and "push" factors for this migratory trend. With a per capita GDP 15 times that of Morocco in 2005 (Moré, 2011: 114), Spain inevitably converted itself into a new "Eldorado" for Moroccans as well as other immigrants. However, with the collapse of the economy (particularly the construction sector) and the soaring unemployment, migration has slowed down and the trend may well start to reverse in the next few years.

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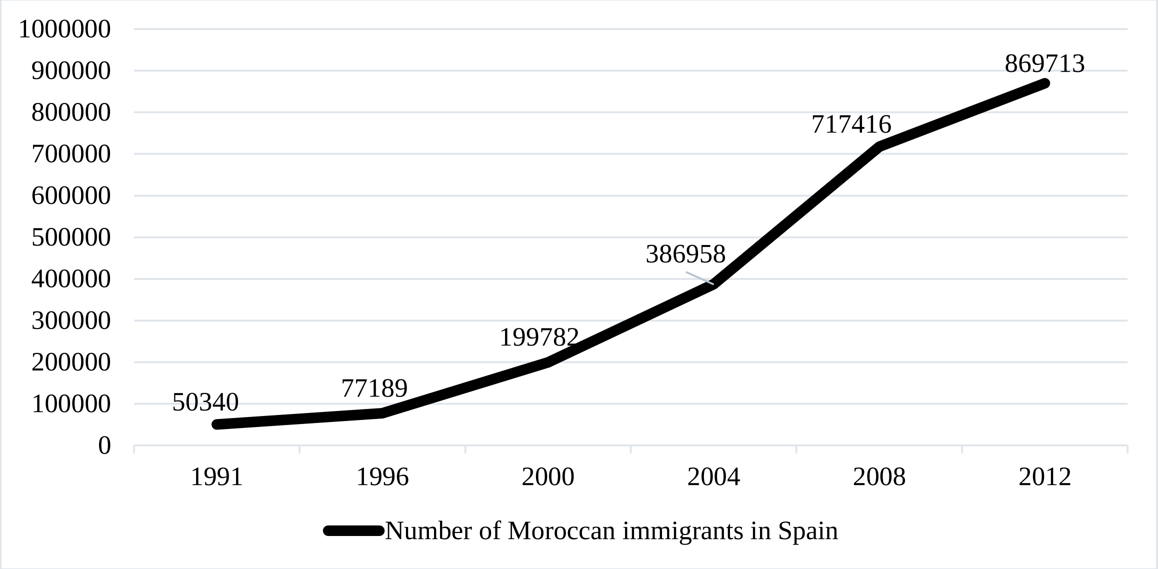
[47] A UN report in 2000 warned that by 2050 Spain would lose more than 9 million inhabitants. And the National Institute of Statistics (INE) reported in 1999 that the birth rate in Spain was 1.07, much below the population replacement rate of 2.1 (Balch 2010: 54-5).

[48] See the Economist article "Buttonwood: A Great Migration" 1 June 2013.

Figure 3.1 Evolution of Moroccan immigration in Spain (1991 - 2012)



Source: Author's graph based on statistical data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)

Beyond the numbers, it is also important to realise that the majority of Moroccans who migrated to Spain during the last two decades are characterised by their low education level and relatively low skills. Most of them found jobs in such sectors as construction, agriculture and domestic work,[49] which explains their alarming unemployment rates since the 2008 economic crisis. According to the *Consejo de la Comunidad Marroquí en el Extranjero* (Council of Moroccan Community Abroad, and NGO), in 2012 more than half of Moroccan immigrants living in Spain were jobless.[50] Immigration is also significant in terms of immigrants' contribution to their home country economy. In 2006, Spain became the second-largest remittance-sending country to Morocco after France. Between 2007 and 2010, remittances from Moroccan immigrants living in Spain accounted for about 13.5% of the total received (second to France that accounted for 50.6%) (Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 2013: 16), despite a 33% decrease due to the economic crisis.[51] Overall official remittances to Morocco from abroad reached some 5.6 billion US dollars in 2006, about six times the value of direct foreign investment and development aid combined (De Haas 2007). Up until 2011, remittances proved resilient to the crisis, consistently exceeding the $6 billion mark. But transfers from Spain started declining compared to previous years representing just 10.7% of total remittances in 2011,[52] and are likely to dip even further in the future. From an economic perspective, the importance of emigration and migrants for Morocco is, therefore, inestimable. In simple terms, the country manages to export unskilled and unemployed labour that quickly converts itself into remittance-sending workforce. This has huge political and social implications for the country as this emigration constitutes an important escape valve, easing up the internal tensions and offering a much needed social and economic support.

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[49] See Le Monde Diplomatique article "¿Fin de la inmigración marroquí en España?" (June 2009).

[50] See El Mundo article "'Muchos marroquíes retornan para mantener a sus familias en España'" (19 July 2012).

[51] In 2010, unemployment among Moroccan workers living in Spain stood at over 50% (twice the national level). See The Christian Science Monitor article "Spain loses title as Moroccans' land of opportunity" (23 October 2012).

However, the phenomenon does not only have positive sides. In the host country (Spain), Moroccan immigration is generally disliked, and is at times even considered a threat to Spanish cultural identity (De Lucas, 2002: 23-48; Martín Muñoz, 1996: 9-16). The issue also contributes to the already negative image of the country among Spaniards on top of the other cultural, historical, political and economic reasons. An opinion poll conducted by the *Real Instituto Elcano* in 2010 showed Morocco was the least appreciated country in Spanish public opinion, with an overall grade of 3.9 out of 10 (only Iran scored worse).[53] In a separate survey conducted by the Sociological Research Centre (CIS) in 2003, the results also showed that Moroccans were the least respected immigrant group with an overall grade of 5.3 out of 10. The same poll revealed that while 59.6% of the Spanish population preferred Ecuadorian immigrants and 18% favoured European immigrants, barely 4.4% of them had a preference for Moroccan immigrants (Marrero, 2005: 422). In the early 1990s, similar negative perceptions towards Arabs, and Moroccans in particular, were also reported by the *Centro de Investigaciones sobre la Realidad Social* (CIRES) and the CIS. Moroccans were not only the least appreciated immigrant group but were also often associated with unwanted immigration and unsuccessful integration (Izquierdo, 1996: 171-5). As will be further discussion in the section on public opinion, far from being exceptional results, such surveys reflect a steady pattern detected throughout the different opinion polls conducted in Spain over the last two decades.[54] Language, culture and religion appear to be other sources of the negative perception. For example, Spain's admission policies tend to privilege people coming from countries with a Christian tradition such as Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Philippines. A powerful expression of this selective migrant admission is found in the

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[52] For more comprehensive data see Moroccan Office des Changes website at www.oc.gov.ma.

[53] See El País article "La imagen de Marruecos empeora en España" (17 December 2010).

[54] See El Publico article "La imagen de Marruecos en España cae en picado" (17 December 2010).

Spanish naturalisation process. The state may grant Spanish citizenship to Philippinos and Ecuadorians after only two years of residence in Spain, while those coming from Morocco need to have spent ten years on Spanish soil before becoming eligible for naturalisation (Joppke, 2003 cited in Vicente et.al, 2010: 62).

On occasion, popular discontent and rejection of immigrants transcends the realm of sentiments and translates into riots and racial violence, as was the case in El Ejido in February 2000 when the murder of a Spanish woman by an apparently deranged Moroccan immigrant sparked a series of mob attacks against Moroccan immigrants and their businesses, in what became the worst chapter of racial violence in recent Spanish history. The event also shed light on immigrants' precarious living conditions and contributed to the development of a new immigration policy framework (Balch, 2010: 75). There are worries among Moroccan immigrants that similar waves of racial violence might reoccur, especially in the wake of the recent financial crisis, the alarmingly high unemployment rates and the new acts of xenophobic in the country.[55]

Immigration in general and Moroccan immigration in particular, therefore, converted themselves into a high government priority and the subject of considerable partisan squabbling. Even though illegal immigration from Morocco barely constitutes some 10 per cent of the annual overall volume of illicit immigrants coming to Spain, Morocco and Moroccans are enduring symbols of this phenomenon. In fact, according to Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, most of the illicit immigrants are Latin Americans abusing their tourist visas and coming by air, rather than the rickety fishing boats that used to symbolize the immigration outpour into Spain. The second biggest source of illegal migration to the Iberian Peninsula comes through terrestrial channels such as the Pyrenees (Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, 2007:87-9).

Yet the fact remains that some illegal immigrants come by sea, via Moroccan shores,[56] and in the 1990s and 2000s, the Spanish media have contributed to the construction of a frightening image of an 'avalanche' of immigrants coming from Africa, via Morocco, and 'invading'

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[55] This worry was reflected in a number of interviews conducted by the author in 2012 with Moroccan immigrants living in Spain and some civil society actors as well. The emergence of anti-immigrant political groups such as Plataforma per Catalunya (PXC) and España 2000 (E2000) is another indicator that may substantiate such worries.

[56] Most, however, do not arrive by sea but rather through airports, with valid tourist visas. Also, a number of legal Moroccan immigrants become illegal once resident in Spain after their residence permits expire (Crespo, 2006: 21-26).

Spain and Europe. Morocco's northern and western shores are indeed among the major sources of sub-Saharan African illicit immigrants, recently making it more a country of transit than an exporter of local migrants as was the case during the 1990s and 2000s. Illegal immigration and the other social and security issues directly or indirectly related to it, such as border control, immigrant integration, drug trafficking, and terrorist and criminal activities are the cause of considerable apprehension in Spain and the EU (Amirah-Fernandez, 2008: 355). But although issues such as anti-terrorism and drugs cooperation have sometimes been said to be affected by mistrust between the two countries (Reinares, 2006: 3), these remain the subject of continuing cooperation between the two neighbouring countries, especially since the Madrid terrorist attacks of March 2004. Migration is also a major cooperation area; close collaboration and joint policing measures resulted in the number of illegal migrants from Morocco to Spain substantially decreasing from 2007 (Vaquer, 2007: 15; Wolff, 2008: 253; Aragall, 2010: 278). It is thought, however, that Morocco sometimes uses its degree of cooperation over these issues, along with claims over Ceuta and Melilla, as a bargaining chip and pressure tool to advance its own agenda or express discontent (Shelley, 2005: 74). This is yet another example of how a seemingly "weak" country in the relationship can be the source of concern and discomfort to its "stronger" counterpart.

Assuming, however, that government regulation and control greatly affect licit and illicit migration flows is to ignore the consensus over the fact that the phenomenon is largely the result of pull-push factors which are very difficult to manage (Portes and Böröcz, 1989). As much as governments like to depict themselves as major actors in migration regulation and even when their will is strong, the issue remains beyond their capacity. This is even more the case for destination countries such as Spain than it is for countries of origin such as Morocco. Despite the deployment of Frontex (the EU agency that promotes, coordinates and develops European border management), Spain's extension of its external security net SIVE (*Sistema Integral de Vigilancia Exterior*), and Morocco's cooperation in policing the borders incentivised by Spanish and EU generous funds (Balch, 2010: 86), it has only pushed desperate migrants and human trafficking networks to change routes.

Economy and cooperation:

After its EC accession in 1986 and the start of its economic surge, Spain gradually started to change its position over Morocco from a logic of competition to one of collaboration. The early 1990s were marked by a political and economic rapprochement between the two countries, reinforced by the signature of the 1991 Friendship and Cooperation Treaty and its entry into force in 1993. Bilateral high level summits (*Reunion de Alto Nivel* – RAN-) between the two countries were institutionalised and measures to increase cooperation in a number of sectors were established. A total of ten high level summits were held between 1993 and 2012. These occasions regroup large delegations from both countries addressing the major issues of bilateral interest and are usually a good indication of the state of bilateral relationship. They are usually held during symbiotic periods and postponed during the difficult ones.

Spain also played a crucial role in the different EU Mediterranean policy initiatives in favour of its southern neighbour during its first and second presidency (1989 and 1995), culminating in the organization of the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean conference and the ensuing Barcelona Process. And in February 1996, the Spanish government adopted a new economic and financial cooperation agreement with Morocco for the 1996–2000 period (De Larramendi, 1997: 429). This was followed by other such agreements structuring the bilateral economic and financial relationship, coinciding with the two countries high level summits. With the entry into force of Morocco's EU Association Agreement in 2000, bilateral trade more than doubled compared to 1995, reaching €2.33 billion. The trend kept gradually intensifying to the extent that Spain's trade with Morocco became greater than its exchanges with historic Latin American partners during the 2000s. By 2004 trade volume exceeded €4 billion annually and Rabat confirmed its place as Madrid's largest trade partner in Africa, and the third outside the EU (behind the United States and Turkey).[57] With 12% of Moroccan exports to the EU destined for Spain and 17% of its EU imports coming from Spain by 2011, Madrid started to compete closely with France as Morocco's first trading partner (Zibaoui, 2012). Some even argued that if the illicit trade exchanged between Ceuta and Melilla and northern Morocco were included,[58] Spain would easily outstrip France of its leadership position. Without including this informal trade, however, Spain did indeed become Morocco's first trade partner in 2012, outperforming Rabat's traditional partner.[59] In that year, total economic exchanges exceeded the €8 billion mark. Between 1995 and 2012 bilateral economic exchanges had multiplied eight-fold from €1.02 billion to €8.25 (See Figure 3.2).

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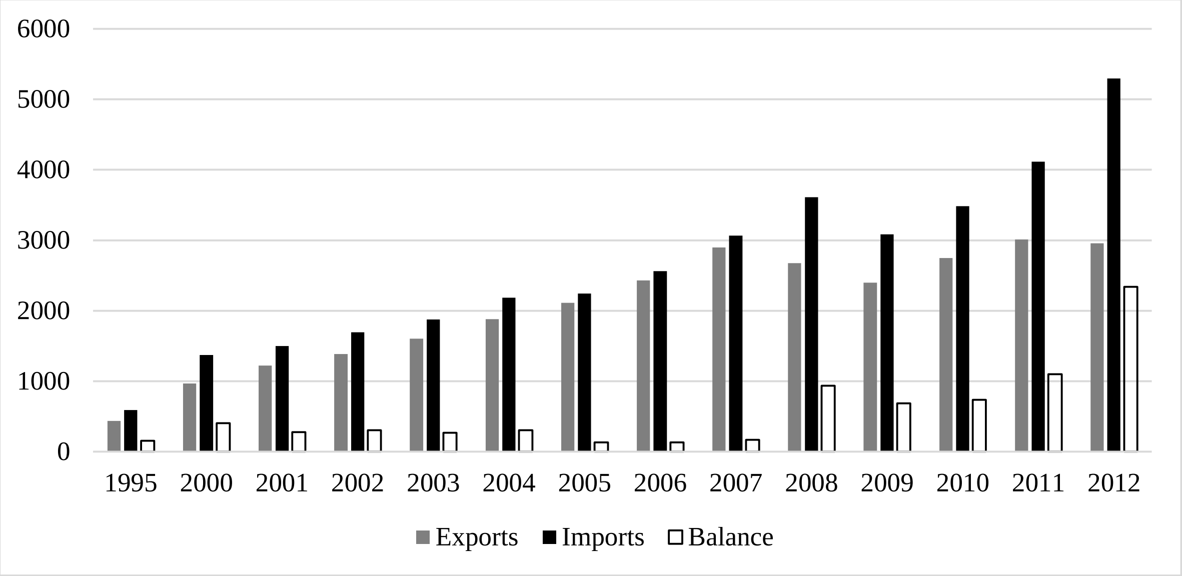
[57] In fact, 2012 figures show that Morocco has even surpassed Turkey to become Spain's second economic partner (outside the EU) after the US. See El País article "Doble récord comercial con Marruecos" (24 March 2013).

[58] This illegal land border trade is a one-way trade only that considerably increases Morocco's negative trade balance with Spain. It is estimated at €1.4 to €1.5 billion per year. See El País article "Doble récord comercial con Marruecos" (24 March 2013).

[59] With exports to Morocco almost reaching 5.3 billion Euros in 2012 (a 28% increase compared with 2011), Spain did indeed convert itself into the first economic partner of Morocco. Morocco became Spain's 9th export

Figure 3.2 Spanish-Moroccan Trade (1995 - 2012)



Source: Author's graph based on statistical data from Dirección General de Comercio e Inversiones. Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio.

However, the impressive cumulative figures often cited by Spain are not interpreted in the same way by their Moroccan counterparts. Exchanges only account for a modest 1.5% of Spain's total foreign trade (0.9% in 2001) (Barreñada 2010: 7) and the balance of trade is largely in favour of Spain. Indeed, Rabat often shows concern towards its growing negative trade balance with Spain that increased from €154 million in 1995 to €2.34 billion in 2012 (See Figure 3.2).[60] Moreover, aside from the fact that Spain tends to relegate its relationship with Rabat to a secondary position, especially during crisis periods like the period between 2001 and 2002 (Gillespie, 1997: 11– 12), Madrid, along with other like-minded EU members such as Italy and France, often blocks talks on further concessions to Moroccan agricultural

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market after the United States and other countries in the EU, with 33.7% of total Spanish exports to the African continent and almost half of the country's exports to North Africa (See La Vanguardia (04 October 2012) and article at the *Red de Oficinas Económicas y Comerciales de España en el Exterior* website "España, primer socio comercial de Marruecos" (11 March 2013).

[60] Two interviews conducted by the author at the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs revealed a large degree of discontent with the trend of economic exchanges with Spain, insisting that the negative trade balance that Morocco incurs is not so much a problem of competitiveness but of market access. The quota and calendar restrictions imposed on Moroccan agricultural products are thought to widen the gap and prevent the country from developing a more competitive agricultural and fisheries sector.

exports (De Larramendi, 1997: 416– 17). Indeed, since the onset of the economic crisis in Spain, trade balance between Rabat and Madrid soared from €1 billion between 2003 and 2007 to a whopping €5.8 billion between 2008 and 2012, making Morocco an important export outlet and, ultimately, part of Madrid's solution to weather the crisis to the detriment of Rabat's own economic balance. Trade and economic relations between the two neighbours have never developed at the spectacular and mutually beneficial levels that the discourse around the relationship would suggest.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Aid (ODA) do not meet Rabat's expectations either. France by far still represents the main investor in the country by an average of almost 44% of total foreign investments between 2000 and 2011. Spain's share in FDI attracted by Morocco remains modest with an average of 10% of the total over the same period (See Figure 3.3). It also represents a rather meagre 0.5% of total Spanish FDI between 1993 and 2008 (De Larramendi and Azaola, 2010: 514). Although more than 1500 Spanish firms in various sectors such as electricity, telecommunications, real estate, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, distribution, transportation, textiles, banking, energy, engineering, consulting, automotive industry and aeronautics are doing business in Morocco, countries like the United Arab Emirates have far exceeded Spain's FDI in the country as of 2007. The modest levels of direct investment, for Morocco, translates Madrid's lack of long-term commitment. Many Moroccans complain that Spanish companies tend to perceive their country as a market not as a partner. The 2008 economic crisis has pushed many Spanish entrepreneurs to explore the southern neighbour, but so far their interest remains largely aimed at putting their products on the market,[61] and did not give rise to the long-awaited wave of peer-to-peer partnerships, investments or joint-ventures with Moroccan partners. Spanish counterparts, on the other hand, talk about the administrative, cultural and linguistic difficulties that they have encountered as well as their lack of experience in a new environment. They believe that more opportunities are in the process of maturing and that Spanish entrepreneurs need to gain more experience and confidence before venturing any further into the market. Also, despite the efforts of the Moroccan government with regard to streamlining and simplification of administrative procedures and formalities, the Moroccan administrative machinery and corruption still hamper some investment opportunities.[62]

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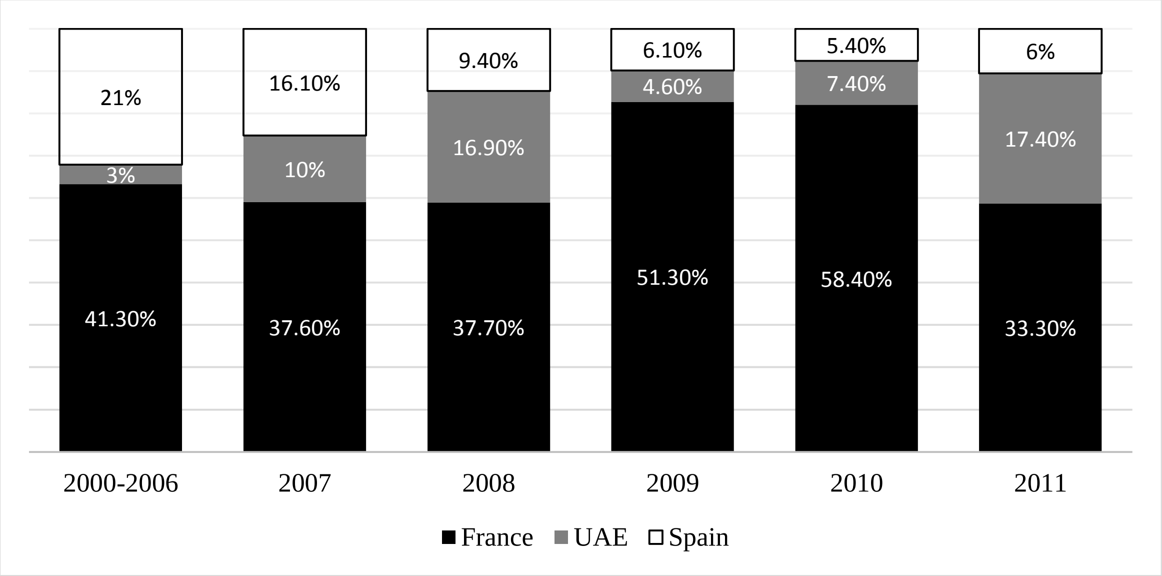
[61] The field work conducted in Spain and Morocco corroborates this. The impression came up repeatedly during the interviews. Spanish business persons as well as staff working in government agencies promoting business opportunities outside of Spain such as the Catalan ACC1Ó tend to talk about being interested in Morocco to "sell products" and "open distribution branches" rather than invest or establish joint-ventures. Moroccan businessmen also tend to complain about their Spanish partners not perceiving them as partners but more like "business agents".

Figure 3.3 FDI in Morocco from France, the UAE and Spain (2000 – 2010)



Source author's elaboration relying on data from l'Office des Changes (www.oc.gov.ma).

ODA is yet another aspect of the bilateral relationship deemed unbecoming of the level of relationships by Morocco. Having lingered in the vicinity of €40 million a year between 2000 and 2005, the amount of Spanish official development aid dedicated to Morocco gradually reached its record level of €158 in 2009 but dropped considerably since then. The figures are also considered distorted with regard to the refundable Development Aid Funds that are also included, and the fact that part of the aid package funds expenses of the Spanish cultural missions and centres in the country.

More serious still is the yawning economic disparities between Morocco and Spain. The gap in GDP and Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) between the neighbours remains among the most abysmal in the world. In 1970, the Spanish GDP per capita was four times that of Morocco, in 2004 it became 14.5 times higher (15 times in 2005), and almost 6 times higher in PPP terms (Amirah-Fernandez 2008: 361; Moré, 2011: 114). This represents the most acute chasm across external EU and OECD borders. To attenuate the gap, Spanish economist Iñigo Moré called for more engagement from Spain, emulating the US-Mexican model where the gap is much smaller and where the USA tolerates a negative trade balance with its neighbour in order to preserve stability and avoid dangerous disparities (Moré, 2004: 165-7). Allowing more favourable trade terms, increasing Morocco's exports quotas of agricultural products where the country is most competitive (such as tomatoes), assisting the country to develop its fishing industry and facilitating fishing exports towards Spain and Europe, and encouraging more Spanish foreign direct investment in the country are some of the strategies that Spanish governments could work towards in order to diminish the increasing economic chasm that ends up affecting both neighbours. But the Spanish have been loath to alienate their fisheries and agricultural workforce and remained largely protective of their farming sector and their privileged access to the EU market, maintaining strong resistance against more significant concessions for competing Moroccan products,[63] while invoking pretexts such as the Sahara issue, labour cost differentials or EU safety, environmental and working conditions standards.[64]

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[62] These issues were expressed by the director of the Euro-Mediterranean Business Association, headquartered in Barcelona. Similar concerns were also voiced by two Spanish entrepreneurs. Language and cultural issues were particularly highlighted as the main obstacles to embarking on joint-ventures or big investments in Morocco, and one interviewee also mentioned the negative experience of a group of Spanish entrepreneurs in Morocco «Association des Affectés par l'Extorsion au Maroc» (Association of victims of extortion in Morocco) as an illustration of the still rampant red tape and corruption in the country.

The worldwide average economic difference between neighbours is 3.5 (Moré, 2004: 165) and the fact that Spain is 15 times richer than its southern neighbour remains an open invitation to illegal immigration that generates other more serious and costly drawbacks for the two. These include the rising pace of illegal migration with all its ensuing consequences and the cyclical economic, political and diplomatic crises between the two countries. The economic step between Morocco and Spain also favours illegal activities such as contraband, drug trafficking, and other criminal actions. The income gap might also explain part of the negative perceptions whereby the rich northerners may look down upon their poorer southerners. Some (pre-2008 financial crisis) sources estimated the number of North African emigration candidates at 20 million, all cherishing hopes of crossing over to Europe where salaries were eight to ten times higher than in the South (Calleya, 2005:128).

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[63] The latest EU-Morocco agricultural agreement of December 2009 stipulates that Morocco would allow the EU immediate duty-free access for 45% of its agriculture and food exports, rising to 70% over ten years, in return for immediate duty-free access for 55% of Moroccan agriculture and food exports to the EU. However, excluded from the agreement were products such as tomatoes that remained subject to strict quota, enter price and calendar restrictions (Kausch, 2010: 4). In February 2012, the ratification of this reciprocal agriculture Free Trade Agreement by the European Parliament between the EU and Morocco led to a tough political battle between the region of Andalusia and the Spanish central government. The autonomous region accused the government of Mariano Rajoy of not wanting to block the adoption of the new agricultural agreement that allows entry into Europe of greater amounts of Moroccan fruits and vegetables. See El País article "Andalucía acusa al Gobierno de no frenar el acuerdo agrícola con Marruecos" (16 February 2012).

[64] See Capreform.eu article "EU-Moroccan agricultural trade deal running into trouble in European Parliament" (25 July 2011).

External sources of influence

The western Euro-Mediterranean region is subject to a chain of interdependencies and the importance of relationships with other neighbouring countries and with the US cannot be understated. Both Spain and Morocco remain sensitive to external sources of influence, and at times may even depend on the very external forces they are swayed by. The issues of contention between them being so rife and the two countries being situated at strategic, cultural, economic and political fault-lines makes their relationship the business of both close and distant powers. This multiplicity of strong and influential actors reduces the two countries' scope for manoeuvre and freedom of action, thus increasing their respective frustration and powerlessness at times. But at other times, the presence of external players can be a blessing in disguise, as they can also intervene in crisis situations. The countries that have the strongest impact on the bilateral relationship are France, Algeria and the USA. The on-going structural role of the EU that is an equally considerable source of "external" influence will be examined separately in the next chapter.

The "French factor is a constant that needs to be taken into account at all times when analysing Hispano-Moroccan relations" (Amirah-Fernandez, 2008: 353). France is considered to be Morocco's main partner and ally. Rabat has remained largely dependent on it for economic, security and political support (Calleya, 2005:16). This is also evidenced by the frequent and continuing French support of its position with regard to the Sahara issue and other territorial disputes such as its success in vetoing EU support for Spain during the Laila/Parejil crisis (Gillespie, 2006: 119). Up until 2012 when Spain superseded it, France has always been the Kingdom's principal trade partner and still remains, by far, the largest investor in the country (see Figure 3.3), which makes its economic partnership much more valued and appreciated by its Moroccan counterparts. Paris has equally kept posing a serious challenge to Madrid's attempts to become the EU Mediterranean champion and may be said to have effectively established itself as the leader with the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) project in 2008 to replace the agonising Barcelona Process. Madrid had felt threatened by this move, seeing in it a new French foreign policy ambition to renew its influence in a region that it had dominated during colonial times and throughout the early years of EEC through the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP), and steal the spotlight and prestige from Spain in its Mediterranean engagement. While welcoming France’s renewed commitment to the Mediterranean, Madrid had lobbied hard with Italy and Germany to keep the Barcelona seal on the UfM (Barbé et al, 2007: 46; Gillespie, 2008: 279; Cusi 2009; Martín, 2010: 2). And despite its official launch in July 2008, some still consider Spain a major player in the EU Mediterranean agenda since it “scored a diplomatic coup by securing Barcelona as the headquarters for the UfM Secretariat” (Martín, 2010: 3). Others, on the other hand, speak of a possible Spanish de-prioritisation due to French competition, a lack of original and new ideas and financial means, and the fact that governments of the southern shore of the Mediterranean “have deliberately squandered the immense incentives and opportunities offered by Europe” (Torreblanca, 2010: 13). It appears, however, that the growing Mediterranean role played by countries like France combined with Spain’s reduced state budget, dwindling official assistance aid fire power, the limited role it played in the Arab revolutions and its increased reliance on the EU for reform support might be making it less relevant and with much less kudos in Europe and in the eyes of its southern neighbour.

Algeria is yet another important player in the Moroccan-Spanish bilateral relationship. Its military, diplomatic and financial backing of the Polisario Front, its position as a major energy supplier for Spain and its cold and competing relationship with Morocco make it a crucial actor in the Rabat-Madrid axis. Morocco sees Algeria as the main stumbling block to the resolution of the Sahara conflict, its priority concern. The two countries’ distant relationship is also the main cause for the stalled Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) project and the lack of regional integration. At 1.3%, economic exchange between the Maghreb states represents the lowest regional trade in the world (Zoubir, 2010: 72). The two southern Mediterranean neighbours are also in constant competition for regional supremacy and privileged status with the EU through such instruments as Morocco’s ‘advanced status’ or Algeria’s ‘strategic partnership’ (Gillespie 2008, p. 285). Still, Algerian gas is exported to Spain through a pipeline that crosses Morocco, travel between the two countries is still visa-free (although land borders have been closed since 1994), and the two countries still cooperate in counter-terrorism and security issues and have not engaged in conflict since the 1963 “sands war”. All these are indications that a good deal of pragmatism and a degree of friendliness still characterises their relationship.

Spain’s relations with Algeria, on the other hand, were first within the framework of the strategy of ‘equilibrium’ that Spain adopted towards its southern neighbours during the 1970s which sought to foster good relations with both Rabat and Algiers at times and play on their regional rivalries other times. But with the PSOE in power from early 1980s, the relationship shifted to a more global approach towards the region when Spain sought to prioritise stability and promote more interdependence (Gillespie, 2000: 30-33). In real terms, however, relations between Madrid and Algiers compared to those with Rabat or Tunis remain limited and involve little aside from trade (especially in energy) and counter-terrorism cooperation (see Ghilès, 2013). They are also less marred by controversial issues such as the territorial, historical or migration factors. More recently, however, Madrid has been revitalising its bilateral diplomatic and cultural relations with Algiers, and, at times, it also resorts to old ‘equilibrium’ strategies as a pressure tool against Rabat during crisis periods such as (2001 – 2002).

Finally, the USA also plays occasional but crucial roles in the bilateral relationship. For Morocco, the superpower, along with France, often protected its interests and supported its claims over the Sahara; equally it backed Morocco’s 2007 autonomy plan (Gillespie, 2010: 88; Zoubir, 2010: 74). The USA’s decisive intervention to resolve the Laila/Perejil crisis, the most critical spat in the two countries’ recent history, not only exposed the EU’s inadequate Common Foreign and Security Policy but had also proved Washington’s crucial conflict resolution role, and the USA’s position as the sole security superpower in the region (Gillespie 2010, p. 91). The resolution of the Haidar case in late 2009 seems to have relied on US intervention as well (Soler and Vaquer, 2010: 76 -77). America’s political, economic and security interest in the region did increase in the region, especially after 9/11 (Zoubir, 2009: 977), but it still considers both countries as important allies and strives to keep the region conflict-free, given that such disruption would affect its interests. However, there are signs that seem to indicate a US desire to scale down its responsibilities in the region during Obama’s presidency reflected by their reluctance to lead on Libya in 2011 or intervene in Mali in 2013. This not only meant that the EU had to take more responsibility for its own defence and security, but it may also imply that countries like Spain and Morocco might no longer be able to rely on the US undertaking the crucial mediation role it has played between the two in 2002 and 2009.

Civil society, media and public opinion: the stereotype trap

The case of Spain

Compared to European countries that democratized during the 1970s, such as Portugal and Greece where political participation remained low and associationalism weaker (Doukas, 1993: 514-5; Corkill, 1993: 532-3), Spain has a stronger culture and tradition of associational life, which emerged in the 1930s and started thriving during the post-Franco era in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Gillespie 1993, p. 538). However, compared to its northern European counterparts like France, the UK or Germany (developed democracies for many more decades), civil society in Spain appears to be lacking in social organisation. Sporadic mobilisation is a feature of Spanish politics as demonstrated by huge public protests over NATO entry, the Iraq War, terrorist attacks, or the May 15th 2011 youth protesters *Indignados* against the Spanish political establishment. In more general terms, the younger generations tend to prefer protest politics and certain forms of social and associational engagement, while the senior generations tend to prefer electoral and partisan types of participation (Morales, 2003: 29). However, society in general is believed to have perpetuated an apolitical culture that has not allowed civil society to emerge fully (Vázquez, 2007: 172). This, in turn, explains the weakness of the trade unions or the use of the party list system that creates a top-down dynamic in political parties, itself a disincentive to party members to get politically involved (Gillespie 1990: 139-41). Finally, "political apathy, compared to low participation in elections and in civil society activities, and the rigidity and hierarchical nature of Spanish political parties, are thought to be some of the legacies of the dictatorship" (Aguilar 2006: 246).

Yet, despite the limited level of social and political involvement and mobilization in Spain, the quasi-apolitical attitudes and the meagre associative activity,[65] questions that relate directly to Morocco happen to be issues of public interest, where civil society actors seem to be comparatively more interested and active. For example, support for the Polisario Front, and therefore antipathy towards the Moroccan position towards the Sahara, has a large base in Spain. The pro-Saharawi movement in Spain enjoys wide public patronage (Vaquer,

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[65] According to the Social Barometer of Spain http://www.barometrosocial.es, overall citizen participation remains at less than 4 points on a scale of 1 to 10; Spain, Portugal, Greece and Malta score the worst in Western Europe. Similar percentages are reported by the World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Values Study (EVS) (See Cantijoch and Martin 2009; Laraña 2007; Montero 2006)

2004b: 107-8), and according to the Spanish press there appear to be more than 400 active Spanish pro-Saharawi associations in the country.[66] This may reflect the perceived "historic debt" that many Spaniards still feel towards the Saharawi as many of them deeply resent the current situation in the Sahara and believe that the Franco regime abandoned the ex-colony to a new "Moroccan colonial power", in complete disregard and disrespect of the Saharawi right of self-determination.

Any thorough analysis of Spanish-Moroccan relations needs to give proper consideration to public opinion and civil society as non-state actors have proved able to contribute to the improvement or deterioration in bilateral relations, as was the case in September of 2001 after the mock referendum held in Andalucía that incensed Moroccan authorities, in which 125,000 participants voted in support of self-determination in the Sahara (Gillespie, 2004: 21). As the section on immigration argued, Moroccans are the worst appreciated foreign contingent. The image of the country as a whole does not fare any better either. A series of opinion polls conducted by the *Real Instituto Elcano* and *Instituto de Cuestiones Internacionales y Política Exterior* (INCIPE) since 1991 (see Figure 3.4 and Table 3.1) reveal that most Spaniards view the country negatively and see it as a threat. In a list of tens of countries, Morocco always figures at the bottom of the list next to Iran and Israel as the worst valued, with a considerable gap separating it from such countries as Russia, China, Mexico or the United States. The percentage of Spaniards who view Morocco as a threat is even more alarming, it peaked in 2002 with almost half of the population considering the country as the main potential threat to their peace and security (see Table 3.1). Moroccans are also negatively viewed and portrayed in Spanish media.[67] They appear sporadically in Spanish headlines, mainly for a few negative issues (see Table 3.2). It is argued that Madrid has often regarded Rabat in terms of the so-called 'negative mutual dependencies', i.e. through the twin prisms of security obsessions and a negative vision of illegal migration from the south (López García and Larramendi, 2002: 188). This same state perception can be found at the popular level as well. The images and stereotypes associated with Moroccans are often those of illegal immigration, territorial conflict, agricultural and fisheries squabbles, drug trafficking, and more recently radical Islam and terrorism, especially after the 2004

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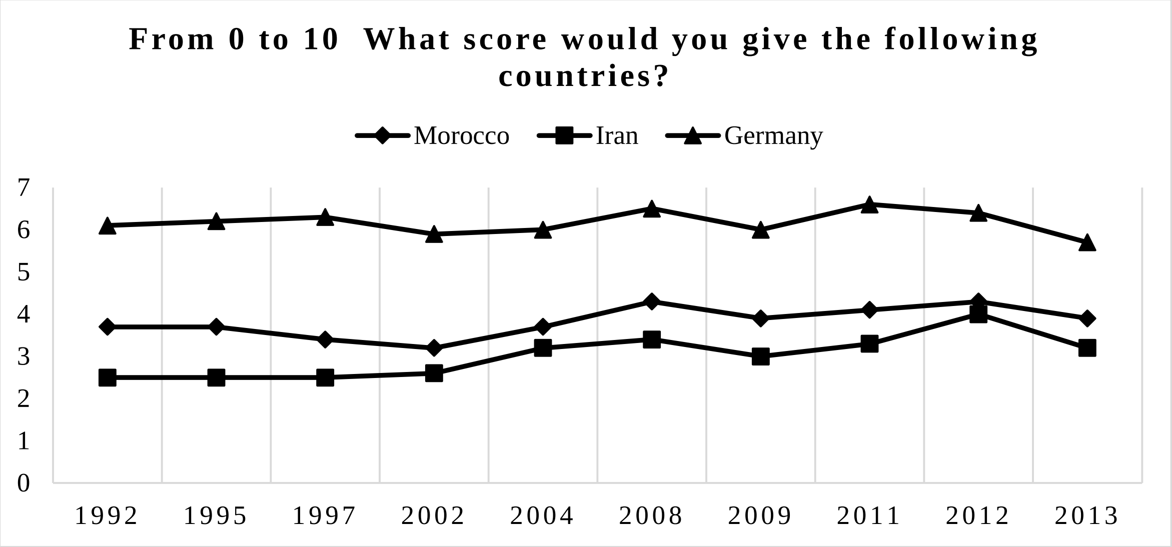
[66] See el Publico article "Los prosaharauis cuentan con 400 asociaciones en España" (01 September 2010).

[67] For a detailed discussion of such aspects, see the work of Inmaculada Szmolka, based on her PhD thesis (Szmolka, 2005)

Madrid terrorist attacks whose main perpetrators originated from Morocco and belonged to the Moroccan Combatant Islamic Group (Reinares, 2008: 14).

Figure 3.4 Morocco's image in Spain.



Source author's own elaboration based on data from the "Barómetro del Real Instituto Elcano" and Instituto de Cuestiones Internacionales y Política Exterior (INCIPE) 2006 report (Díez, 2006: 22).

Table 3.1 – What countries pose a serious threat to Spain's peace and security?

	1991	1992	1995	1997	2002	2006
Morocco	42%	40%	36%	32%	48%	24%
Other countries *	58%	60%	64%	68%	58%	76%

Source: author's own elaboration based on (Díez, 2006: 176).
**The list includes a list of other countries but mainly Iran, Iraq, other Arab countries, other Islamic countries, the United States*

Table 3.2 – Public perception of conflict issues between Spain and Morocco by degree of importance

Issue	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not important	No opinion
Morocco-EU fisheries agreement	24%	59%	7%	1%	10%
Illegal immigration from Morocco	45%	43%	5%	1%	6%
Spanish territories in Africa	19%	55%	14%	1%	10%
Spain's position over the Sahara	14%	58%	10%	4%	13%
Competition of Moroccan products	22%	54%	13%	2%	9%

Source (Díez, 2006: 89).

In fact, the little that the Spanish know about Morocco is often a reflection of the scant media coverage that remains selective, determined by the political agenda and limited to a specific set of issues (Vicente *et al*, 2010: 62). Positive stories on Moroccan economic, political and social achievements, or accounts on Moroccan-Spanish cooperation in economic, political and social venues rarely feature in the Spanish media. Despite the considerable differences between media outlets in Spain with regard to their editorial line, when it comes to Morocco they still tend to mainly cover negative issues that generally trigger adverse perceptions of the country and its population. Whether media outlets supply an existing public demand for such stories or themselves have contributed to the engineering of negative public opinion towards Morocco, the fact remains that Spanish radio, TV and newspaper headlines get populated with Morocco-related stories mainly when negative issues pop up to the surface (Vicente *et al*, 2010: 61).

This negative public opinion stands in sharp contrast to official government relations characterized by pragmatism and quest for increased interdependence as a means to consolidate and improve relations. It is also hoped that the recent rise in Spanish tourists and the increasing business opportunities in Morocco may be slowly modifying this tendency. As Table 3.3 indicates, although French tourists still constitutes the majority of visitors, the percentage of Spanish tourists doubled between 2000 and 2011. In fact, in real terms, their number has jumped from about 270 000 to more than a million per year over the same period (Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 2013: 122).

Table 3.3 Tourism flows to Morocco from France, Spain and Germany (2000 to 2011).

	2000 to 2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
France	40.1%	39.8%	40.5%	39.6%	36.2%	35.7%
Spain	10.7%	13.4%	14.1%	15%	22%	21%
Germany	6.5%	4%	4.3%	4.1%	5.3%	5.7%

Source: (Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 2013 : 122).

The case of Morocco

As far as Morocco is concerned, the salient impression seems to be that the country is dominated by a strong centralized Makhzen system that only allows a modicum of liberties to its population and civil society actors, and that as long as the political elite in Morocco is not changed, there would be no significant change in the role of its non-state actors or public opinion. The nature of the Moroccan political regime has been identified as a major impediment to meaningful reform and civil society activism (Haddadi, 2002; Cavatorta *et al*, 2006), and the role of the monarchy as the central institution in the political and economic activities is beyond doubt. Although Morocco is far lagging behind with regard to civil society mobilisation and role and its situation cannot be compared to its Spanish counterpart, the country started developing spaces for its public opinion and witnessing the emergence of organized associations and other civil society actors from the mid-1980s (Gandolfi, 2003: 28; Sater, 2007: 160).

> The relative retreat of the state from certain economic and social domains during the 1980s encouraged a spring in associational life in socio-cultural and economic spheres. Associational life in its modern form started during the mid-1980s with cultural regional associations such as ‘Ribat Al Fath’, ‘Fes-Saiss’, ‘Bou Regrag’, ‘Souss- Casablanca’, and so on [Layachi, 1998]. Most of these associations were created and headed by individuals close to the Palace. Their objectives and activities were limited to socio-cultural development, the environment, arts and sports. Progressive political liberalization in the 1990s led to a burgeoning of associations with a more active spirit in the spheres of human rights and democratic development. (Haddadi, 2003: 80)

Civil society actors in Morocco often operate under many constraints, including the slanted application of NGO laws, a lack of professional, financial and human resources, and the limited membership and audience of these associations (Denoeux, 2000: 169). With more than 30 000 registered and active associations in 2002, Morocco is in fact a leading Arab country in civil society mobilisation (Claret, 2002: 12). This is partly due to the country’s historically important labour movement and trade unions, the relatively open press, and the growing number of human rights and advocacy groups such as the *Association Marocaine des Droits Humains* (AMDH), the *Organisation Marocaine des Droits de I’Homme* (OMDH), *Transparency Maroc* (TM), *Maroc 2020,* etc. (Dillman, 2003: 179, Denoeux, 2000: 169-71).

In the mid-1980s, civil society in Morocco gradually started developing some coherent public discourses and challenging the old power structures. These new associations were generally focused on single issues outside of the political sphere. But their very presence started shaping public discourses, creating a new generation of mobilized and aware citizens committed to public issues. This mobilization contributed to the increase of the public sphere's autonomy from the established dominant power structures and seems to also have given independent and critical journalism an impetus, reducing and seriously competing with the state's media hegemony. A tug-of-war between the state and these new non-state actors lasted throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, culminating in the state engaging this new public sphere (associations, NGOs, independent press, etc.) through three main strategies: boundary setting, integration, and co-optation, especially after the King's introduction of the "new concept of authority" in 2003, which curtailed some of the previously acquired leeway and freedoms (Sater, 2007: 160-1). This state encroachment also resulted in its appropriation of some civil society slogans and claims, and therefore stole protagonism and earned credit for issues that were previously championed by Moroccan civil society actors such as human rights issues, the Family Code (*Moudawana*), and the Berber language (*Tamazight)* status, as it did more recently during the 2011constitutional reform process.

There is no doubt that associations and NGOs in Morocco play a less significant role compared to their European and Spanish counterparts, especially in the context of the centralized Moroccan decision-making apparatus. But in the Spanish-Moroccan bilateral relationship, Moroccan civil society actors often bring their weight to bear in the equation, playing positive and negative roles. The Moroccan spectrum is full of associations, universities and NGOs collaborating with their Spanish counterparts in different areas ranging from educational and cultural exchanges, women and children's rights, humanitarian and health awareness activities, etc.[68] However, the Moroccan state also tolerates and might even encourage anti-Spanish groups and demonstrations. Indeed, many associations, intellectuals and publications in Morocco sometimes contribute to a negative portrayal of Spain as an unreliable partner standing in the way of Morocco's interests and territorial integrity and call for the "decolonization" of the bilateral relationship (Messari, 2009: 111-112). The voices of such public expressions and media campaigns are heard especially during crisis periods between the two countries. The Spanish-Moroccan spats over El Ejido or the Laila/Perejil islet, for example, provoked a deep national outcry and saw the organization of massive public protests and indignation. A more recent illustration of this was the November 2010 massive march in Casablanca which rallied hundreds of thousands in protest against the perceived hostile reactions in Spain in general, and the PP policies in particular, following the Laayoun incidents earlier the same month. Other demonstrations of associations in the north of Morocco calling for the liberation of Ceuta and Melilla[69] or for compensation and an official apology from Spain for its massacres during the Rif wars in the 1920s and its use of chemical weapons (Balfour, 2002: Chapter 5) are other relevant instances reflecting the adverse feelings of the Moroccan street against Spain.

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[68] The north of Morocco, in particular, boasts a number of associations, educational institutions and NGOs that work in close collaboration with Spanish partners, especially from Andalucia and Catalonia.

Less research and fewer studies have been conducted on Spain's image among Moroccans. But the scant studies carried out actually reveal a high percentage of Moroccans having a positive image of their northern neighbour (69.4%), mainly due to the successful Spanish effort to integrate itself into the European Union and its impressive development and democratic transition (Affaya and Guerraoui, 2006: 73; Messari 2009: 12), as well as due to its key role in influencing EU decisions in Morocco's favour (Hernando De Larramendi, 1997: 407). Spanish sporting prowess is also often mentioned by Moroccans as a source of fascination. In Morocco, as in other countries, hordes of young people follow with passion achievements of such Spanish sports icons as FC Barcelona, Real Madrid or Rafael Nadal. However, there remains a lingering negative perception of Spain due to other historical, territorial, political and cultural issues. Some political parties and certain media outlets continue to echo the old nationalistic discourses that indulge in the logic of barren confrontation and "decolonization". The dissatisfaction of Moroccan nationalist forces with Spain dates back to the days of colonization but probably finds its roots in the more distant past starting with the Arab conquest of the Peninsula at the beginning of the 8th century. The opacity of the Moroccan regime also contributed for a long time to the lack of open debates about many issues and of meaningful involvement of the political and social organizations; civil society actors have barely started to participate in the debate and shape the perception process since the early 1990s.

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[69] See El País article: "La coincidencia de la visita del Rey a Ceuta con la Marcha Verde enfureció a Marruecos" (13 December 2010)

Also, public opinion in Morocco remains significantly influenced by the media and recently by the Internet as well. The audio-visual part of the Moroccan media landscape is still largely dominated by the state, despite the emergence of vibrant pan-Arab satellite channels such as *Al-Jazeera* and *Al Arabia* whose coverage of such bilateral issues as Moroccan-Spanish relations remains insignificant after all. The state-dominated media and the written party newspapers, especially those in Arabic such as *Al Alam* (the nationalistic Istiqlal Party newspaper), tend to play a negative role in the bilateral relationship and reinforce negative perceptions of Spain, sometimes leading to the aggravation of already fragile situations (Rojo, 2005: 147; García-Sala, 2005: 206-7). Some of the recurring themes about Spain include its keenness to "destabilize" Morocco, its "arrogant attitude towards Rabat", its "selfishness" in defending its interests despite the increasing disparities, its "lack of objectivity and sympathy" towards the country, its "lack of trust" and its perception of the country through "security lenses", etc. Books such as *Maroc-Espagne: La guerre des ombres 2000-2010* (Dahbi, 2011), written by the former editor of a Moroccan daily *Aujourd'hui le Maroc* (a daily that often publishes incendiary anti-Spanish editorials), reflect such attitudes and can mar perceptions at a more elite level as it reinforces these suspicions and clichés. The more independent publications in Morocco, on the other hand, offer a quite different account, often criticizing the immaturity or incompetence of Moroccan diplomacy in managing serious crises with the Iberian neighbour. Two eloquent examples of this were the critical articles by the independent Arabic newspaper *Al Ayyam* of Morocco's management of the Laila/Perejil crisis in 2002 (Rojo, 2005: 150), as well as the independent weekly *Tel Quel* criticism of the erratic and irresponsible declarations of the Moroccan government in the aftermath of the Gdeim Izik camp dismantlement in November 2010 and the ensuing crisis between the two countries. Ahmed Reda Benchemsi, the influential former editor-in-chief of the publication, summed up the situation in one of his editorials saying:

> "What our officials cannot (or refuse to) understand is that Spain is made up of institutions, each respecting and distancing itself from the other. The government is responsible, the parliament is sovereign, the judiciary is independent and the press is free. Each of the four powers plays its role, and the alliance of these four components forms a system called democracy. Spanish democracy is not perfect, of course. As elsewhere, it is influenced by tacit interests and lobbies [...] It is up to us to respond to this influence by ad hoc communication strategies [...] Until then, please, gentlemen our

> ministers, stop shaming us by your careless declarations. Where you see zealous patriotism, the world sees immaturity.”[70]

Conclusions

This chapter has tried to look at key aspects forming part of the bigger picture in the Spanish-Moroccan relationship that we deem essential for a more thorough understanding of these relations and for the definition of the wider context prior to our focus on the specific roles that Catalonia and the EU may play in framing, influencing and driving the relationship. The chapter reveals a host of important observations. First, we notice that despite a common (albeit distant) past, the two neighbours remember it differently and have evolved in separate environments and in quite different ways. The result of this evolution is that one country is a relatively established democracy and a vibrant economy (at least until very recently); while the other is still gripped by authoritarianism, making turtle steps towards economic, social and political progress. Morocco and Spain indeed belong to quite different leagues and revolve in separate (though increasingly overlapping) galaxies. Yet their contiguous presence forces them to face a series of serious political, economic, historical and human responsibilities that they both have to manage. It also emerges that while state structures and institutions in the two countries may be comparable, they by no means have the same positions or functions. While power, including foreign policy decisions, revolves around the Palace in Morocco, the Spanish monarch remains a symbolic figure and the key decisions in the Spanish case are mostly the prerogative of the executive. We have seen how such false similarities can be sources of confusion and may be at the heart of unnecessary sensitivities, misunderstandings and even confrontation.

Issues such as the Sahara and Morocco’s territorial claims are among the major sources of discord and have shown the potential to produce real conflicts. Some indications might suggest that the reinforcement of bilateral cooperation and the exponential increase in economic, institutional and social exchanges may not only constitute mutual opportunities for the two neighbours but counterbalance belligerent tendencies on both sides as well. While increased interdependence proves to be the constructive way forward, immigration, the new problem on the block, seems to be casting a long shadow over the optimistic view of the future. What come into sight are two main aspects related to it. On the one hand the issue of immigration (and illegal immigration in particular) costs tremendous energy for both governments and tends to create tensions, engendering mutual accusations and deepening mistrust. The number of immigrants of Moroccan origin also seems to be viewed with concern and discontent by large portions of the Spanish population.[71] This reinforces prejudice and negative perceptions which are crucial issues in the relationship, as the section on public opinion reveals. On the other hand, immigration itself is converting itself into an element of interdependence since both countries have to multiply their cooperation and interactions in order to find mutually acceptable solutions for its management.

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[70] See Tel Quel article: « Les mots, nos maux » (17 November 2010).

The chapter also indicated how each of the two countries keeps on striving to advance their national interest while being carefully attentive to the neighbour's ups and downs. In this sense, both countries utilise all the means available to them to cut the best deals for themselves while being keen on preserving the shaky (but strengthening) bilateral balance to prevent serious tensions. Spain keeps an eye open for opportunities south of the Strait and endeavours to prevent Morocco from gaining more access to the EU market, but it favours more aid instead and keeps playing an active role as an advocate and a legitimiser of the Moroccan regime within the EU. It also keeps increasing the level of shared common interests with Morocco that have so far withstood the test of serious episodes of hostility such as during the 2001-2002 crisis and, to a lesser extent, the 2009-2010 period. Morocco, on the other hand, has been watching with fascination the rapid transformation of its Iberian neighbour over the last 30 years. It has been trying to emulate it and learn from it at times, or pressurise and criticise it at other times for its perceived condescending behaviour, lack of support on its crucial issues, and what Moroccans see as Spain's unwillingness to commit to a more consistent policies aimed at anchoring the country to the more prosperous European shores. The economic gap between the two neighbours is huge indeed and if left unchanged will surely continue to pose a threat to bilateral relations. Moreover, in spite of the impressive economic exchange figures, Spain remains the main beneficiary with a considerable trade surplus and with little to show for in terms of direct investments in the Kingdom. The widening trade balance is only partly offset by remittances and tourism proceeds. Also, in many respects the Spanish model has entered into a crisis since 2008. It would be expected that the economic, political and social problems that the country is struggling with would also further degrade perceptions and relations both at the popular and official levels.

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[71] Although recently concerns about the economic situation, job security and the political system are gaining more prominence.

The two neighbours' relationship also remains highly asymmetrical and somewhat incongruous, given their distinct economic size, political clout, style of life, stereotypes and their incompatible priorities: Morocco seeking to garner maximum support for its territorial claims, reap maximum economic benefits from relations with the EU and project prestige and strategic self-importance in the region; while Spain's main priority towards Morocco is linked to security issues such as illegal migration, terrorism, drug trafficking and other factors that may affect its neighbour's stability like economic stagnation, the Sahara issue and lack the of political reform. Morocco and Spain appear to be sitting on different sides of history and the deepening of their cooperation seems to be hindered by internal forces of resistance consciously or unconsciously standing in the way of further integration and understanding.

What also comes out of the comparison between Spanish and Moroccan public opinion, civil society and media contribution to the overall bilateral relationship are a number of interesting conclusions. First we realise the extent to which some influential opinion leaders and media organs are still hostage to the weighty historical, perceptual, cultural, political and security issues that seem to largely define the parameters of this relationship and the debate agenda. On both sides, these actors also seem to be confined to a limited set of issues (territory, migration, security, criminal activities, as well as the gaping economic, democratic and human rights disparities between the two). This seems to mirror to a large extent the preoccupations at government and political party levels as well. Second, at the level of overall perception of the other, it appears that the trends are different. While the image of Morocco and Moroccans seems to have worsened over the years in Spain, mainly due to immigration and the 2004 Madrid attacks, the image of Spain and Spaniards seems to be slightly better in Morocco mainly due to Spain's political, social and economic feats. It appears that unless civil society actors in both countries are able to transcend the limited set of issues that monopolise the debates, and unless they manage to overcome the psychological, cultural, historical, political, security and economic stumbling blocks, few breakthroughs are to be expected from the role of these actors in deepening or improving Spanish-Moroccan bilateral relations.

Finally, in theoretical terms, Moroccan-Spanish relations, in spite of the lingering aquabbles and cyclical problems, seem to lend substance to a case of deepening and complex interdependence since bilateral ties keep developing, interdependence growing and confrontation is increasingly considered non-viable (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 10). In fact, the relationship also corresponds to other premises of the theory such as the proliferation of actors and the multiplicity of channels (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 24–5). The active role of the EU, the Spanish regions, superpowers, non-state actors, the existence of a large immigrant community, economic interests, political and security matters, etc. reflect the multiplicity of channels, issues and interests that force dialogue and cooperation. All these linkages consolidate the web of common interests and mutual dependencies, making the option of conflict harder to contemplate. The main theoretical premise that the relationship does not correspond to is the "flexible (or absence of) hierarchy among issues". Indeed, territorial issues still matter to Rabat more than others; and migration and security concerns seem to be preponderant for Madrid. Nevertheless, the two countries are increasingly adopting conciliatory policies towards these issues. Rabat is offering more cooperation on migration and security matters, and Madrid is adopting a largely appeasing position, especially towards the Sahara issue in spite of its unpopularity. Finally, the relationship presents ample evidence of asymmetry in the relationship. It includes a host of mutual "sensitivities" and "vulnerabilities" that entail either a high degree of mutual dependence on the policies adopted by the other, or costly (sometimes unavailable) alternatives in case policies are changed at the other end (Keohane and Nye, 1989:12–13). A wide range of policy areas involved in the relationship reflect these mutual sensitivities and vulnerabilities, such as economic issues (especially fisheries and agriculture for Spain and Morocco, respectively), territorial issues (the Sahara for Morocco and Ceuta and Melilla for Spain), and the issue of migration (mainly for Spain).

Chapter four - The place of Spain in Moroccan-EU relations

Introduction

As was discussed in the previous chapter, analysing relationship dynamics between two countries is already a complex, multifaceted and intricate undertaking due to the variety of actors and influences that shape the processes and outcomes for each party. External relations, for each country, can be seen as the result of international relations influences and imperatives; as the outcome of internal pressures, demands and policy making dynamics; as the translation of preferences and orientations of groups and individuals at the executive level; or as a combination of some or all these factors. This chapter aims at examining an important component of the influence emanating from outside the bilateral relationship. After briefly exploring the impact of key countries like France, Algerian and the USA, the aim here is to shed light on Moroccan-EU relations in general, with particular focus on aspects of the relationship that affect Moroccan-Spanish relations.

Examining relations between a country and a supranational entity (Morocco and the EU in this case) is a daunting enterprise. Extra levels of complexity are aggregated to the simple country to country analysis when we are dealing with a compound international institution representing a host of other countries and lacking a single decision-making centre and a clear and coherent strategy. Indeed, the EU is far from being a unitary actor, but it cannot be reduced to an international organisation or an intergovernmental actor either. It is, in fact, an "arena for collective bargaining and decision-making among the member states due to the varying degree of institutionalization and delegated authority across EU policy areas" (Bremberg, 2012: 19). Its decisions are also shaped by its agenda-setting, unelected technocratic experts, its increasingly influential parliament, its vocal pressure groups, and, depending on the nature of the issues, by member states most concerned by policy areas in question.

EU Foreign Policy (EFP) as an expression, therefore, almost becomes oxymoronic because of the diffuse and uncertain nature of decision-making dynamics, giving place to what has been called: the European Foreign Policy Analysis dilemma (White, 1999). In an attempt to offer a more parsimonious definition, Hill and Wallace described it as "a system of international relations, a collective enterprise through which national actors conduct partly common, and partly separate, international actions” (Hill and Wallace, 1996: 5). Christopher Hill also offered a useful working definition of European foreign policy as “the ensemble of the international activities of the European Union, including output from all three of the EU’s pillars, and not just that relating to the CFSP” (Hill, 2004: 145). But as mentioned earlier, in varying degrees and according to the policy areas, EFP often reflects the foreign policy preferences of national constituencies, the European intergovernmental negotiation and cooperation frameworks such as the CFSP, as well as the views of its official foreign policy representations (Hill, 1993: 322–3; White, 1999: 46–47). The aim of this Chapter is to examine aspects of Moroccan-EU relations that are of most relevance to Moroccan-Spanish relations. It will explore the extent to which EU policies towards Morocco express interests, agendas and preferences of the countries that have a stake in specific policy issues, such as Spain with regard to immigration, fisheries, agriculture, human rights and cooperation issues. In other words, aside from shedding light on the history and range of issues involved in Moroccan-EU relations, the Chapter intends to examine the degree to which Madrid influences decisions in Brussels that are of relevance to Rabat and the degree to which Brussels impacts the bilateral relationship. This exercise will eventually allow us to appreciate the degree of convergence or divergence in the Rabat-Madrid and Rabat-Brussels relations.

To provide some answers to these questions, this Chapter will first look at the evolution and the importance of the Brussels-Rabat relationship since the signing of their first agreement in 1969 all the way to the unprecedented March 2010 Granada summit between the two to discuss, among other issues, the proposals included in the joint document on the “advanced status” granted to Morocco in 2008. The second section of this chapter will look more closely at the range and the evolution of the relationship, with a focus on discord and cooperation issues between the two. A special spotlight will be shed on the major crises and the outstanding sticking points in this relationship, especially those where Madrid is involved such as the Sahara, human rights, migration, agriculture, and fisheries issues. A close analysis of these is more likely to disclose the workings and dynamics of the relationship and reveal the decision-making mechanisms and the way they operate at the EU level. The analysis will also bring us closer to the role of Madrid in this partnership. This, in turn, should facilitate the Rabat-Brussels-Madrid triangulation mapping we are seeking to analyse and interpret here. Finally, we will try to come up with some insights and conclusions, and look into the future prospects of the relationship.

The evolution of EU-Moroccan relations and the place of Spain

Moroccan-European partnership dates back to the genesis of the Common Market. It started taking shape soon after the signature of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 with the application of a protocol annexed to the Treaty whereby traditional concessions granted by France to Moroccan agricultural exports since independence took effect at the wider EEC level as well. But the real birth of contractual relations between the EEC and Morocco was in 1969 with the signing of an initial five-year association agreement that was strictly commercial in nature and that granted product and calendar-specific concessions to some Moroccan exports. These exports mainly concerned agricultural and fisheries products. This agreement was followed by the 1976 Association Agreement that added new economic, technical and financial terms to the initial partnership (Jaïdi and Martín, 2010:7). The agreement was in line with the Community's Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP), adopted during the 1972 Paris Summit and that came with a more coherent strategy, replacing the previous piecemeal approach towards Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) (Panebianco, 2003:5). The GMP hinted at a change in the European Community's approach towards its southern partner since its declared objective was more global in nature and had as a stated objective the "social and economic development of Morocco, taking into account the country's priorities and development programs" (Jordan Galduf, 2004: 180).

However, as the test of time would subsequently demonstrate, such lofty objectives and lyrical declarations are rarely carried through but rather pertain to the domain of the mutual ringing discourses exchanged by both parties. In fact, during the two decades following the agreement, Euro-Moroccan relations went through a stage of relative stagnation as economic relations never improved markedly. In fact, from the late 1960s till the mid-1990s, "the combined export shares of [Moroccan] primary agriculture and food products declined from over 70 percent to less than 25 percent"; these were only compensated by the hike in exports of manufactured products during the same period (Elbehri, 2006: 5). Rabat was keenly seeking an ever closer partnership epitomized by its unsuccessful membership bid of 1987. Its rejection effectively put an end to any membership prospect on the grounds that the Kingdom was not a European state (Dawson 2009:51). As the bilateral relationship barely budged, the asymmetrical nature of the association increased even further in favour of the

Community.[72] The insignificant trade concessions and the slight increase in the financial protocols never reached sufficient levels for growth-boosting or policy-shifting dynamics in Morocco. What is more, some of the initial Moroccan aspirations for an agricultural free exchange between the two started fading, leaving only sectoral liberalization moves, especially following the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986 (Tovias, 1997: 126; Jaïdi and Martín, 2010: 8-9). In fact, with the entry of the new southern European members in the 1980s, the European Community achieved a form of agricultural self-reliance and became increasingly dependent on agricultural products coming from the south of Europe. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) literally barred the way to extra-community imports, thereby benefitting countries such as Spain and penalizing others like Morocco (Bicchi, 2007:122).

In 1996, a new association agreement was signed in Brussels and entered into force in March of 2000, replacing the 1976 agreement. This was part of the new generation of agreements that the EU signed with Mediterranean third countries and came with a new set of embellishing guiding principles that centred on security, political stability, economic freedom, human rights and democratic values. The agreement came under the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) launched in Barcelona the previous year and was centred on four main axes: the gradual creation of a free-trade area; economic, financial and technical assistance; social and cultural cooperation; and continuing political and security dialogue. Although the EU's primary agenda with regard to the EMP has been a subject of debate, with some experts leaning towards Realist interpretations and others seeing in its programmes a more Liberal/socializing perspective (Attinà, 2003: 200), the security component of this new generation of association agreements was probably the most important. The Barcelona Process came mainly as a response not only to the new Middle East peace process marked by the 1991 Madrid Conference and the 1993 Oslo I Accord, but to the post-Cold War international context, the Algerian civil war, the 1991 Gulf War, the mounting threat of radical Islamism and the increasing pace of illegal immigration as well (Bichara, 2009: 13-15). Southern European countries like Spain, France and Italy had succeeded in attracting more attention to the Mediterranean dimension of the EU neighbourhood and making more associations between the stability and prosperity of the EU and that of its southern vicinity (De Larramendi and Azaola, 2010: 76).

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[72] Since the 1980s, 50 to 60% of Moroccan imports and exports activities have been with the EC/EU while this latter's trade with Morocco has constantly represented less than 1%. Morocco has also seen its negative trade balance with the EC/EU increase from a few million Euros in 1988 to 6 billion Euros in 2008 (Bremberg, 2011: 4-5).

Yet, for all the great expectations raised by the resounding and promising objectives of a "common area of peace and stability" and "shared prosperity", the Barcelona Process did not meet the expectations and failed to bring about the much hoped for dawn of peace, democracy and prosperity for all. Its symbolic decline was marked by the absence of almost all southern leaders from the 2005 Barcelona summit (Cardwell, 2011: 228; Gillespie, 2012: 1). In fact, not only did democratization take a back seat and major conflicts in the region mar any significant achievements, but the agreements signed with southern partners such as Morocco did not even bring novel trade concessions, especially in the areas where these countries have a clear comparative advantage. Even the financial instruments (MEDA I and MEDA II programmes) proved to be too weak and too limited to bring about significant changes in southern Mediterranean countries' governance, growth or human rights achievements. For Morocco, the biggest beneficiary from EU financial assistance to southern partners, the 1995–1999 MEDA I programme, for example, had earmarked some 660 million ECU for Morocco (less than 4 ECU per person per year), yet by the end of 2000 only 25% of the funds had in effect been disbursed, due to a lack of efficiency, experience and credible projects on the Moroccan side, but mainly due to the strict conditions and procedures attached to EU aid programmes (Dillman, 2003: 35). Conditions were later alleviated and management improved, allowing the country to absorb most of the funds allocated to it (from 25% in 1995 to 90% in 2003) (Bichara, 2009: 57).

In all cases, throughout the stages of this Association Agreement, the EU did not show a strong engagement and its approach was lacking the political and financial teeth likely to convince the Moroccan regime or the country's modernizing and democracy-seeking elites to introduce significant changes. Europe adopted a largely soft approach towards Morocco, refraining from strong criticism of the Kingdom's authoritarianism, and its incentives remained limited to aid and technical assistance which have proved to be a poor instrument for transforming the Moroccan governance predicament or its political economy (Holden, 2005: 177; Dawson, 2009: 55). Such limited engagement from above failed to eradicate Morocco's patronage networks and tended to discourage opposition, "sustain existing elites" and enable "the buying off of would-be losers" (Dillman, 2003: 190).

But in spite of the inadequate engagement, the disappointing aid packages and the limited trade concessions, Morocco remained keen on furthering its privileged relations with the EU. This reflected on the one hand the lack of substitute options that the country has in the context of dismal regional prospects and a hugely asymmetrical political and economic dependency on Europe. On the other hand, Morocco still reaped some material gains (albeit limited) from this relationship as well as important symbolic rewards reflecting positively on the regime. In fact, the regional and international prestige that the country boasts as an EU good and privileged student seems to be an objective in itself for Rabat. Close partnership with the EU does convey a symbolic meaning that tends to portray the country as an 'avant-garde' country within its neighbourhood and beyond (Emerson *et al.*, 2007: 26; Levenex and Schimmelfennig, 2007:151; Bremberg, 2012: 120), as well as a reform torch-bearer in the region and a key EU partner. The Moroccan regime has been instrumentalising this prestige at home to garner its domestic image and "advertising this trophy considerably in the region, and the EU has deliberately let it do so" (Kausch, 2010: 2). Indeed, the EU not only seems conscious about the importance of such emblematic aspects but it seems to coin and also use them dexterously, partly through inventing and rebranding forms of association, statuses and hierarchies -'special relationship', 'privileged relationship', 'advanced status', etc. (Martín, 2009: 244) - as carrots and competition prizes for the MPCs. The "advanced status" that was first granted to Morocco, then negotiated with Tunisia and Israel, and subsequently granted to Jordan in 2010 as well, is a case in point (Fatmi, forthcoming).

Indeed, soon after the entering into force of the Morocco-EU Association Agreement in 2000, Rabat started seeking a more significant form of association with the EU that would deepen the existing relationship and preserve its supposed "privileged status" with the EU. In March 2000 on his first official visit as King, Mohamed VI called upon the EU to open a new chapter in its relation with Morocco by granting the country a more advanced status that would be "[m]ore and better than association… and, perhaps for a while still, a bit less than membership that is nevertheless dictated by reason, geography and the daily realities of economic, social and cultural lives of our countries".[73] In 2008 an "advanced status" was indeed granted to Morocco following several meetings and fine-tuning of different draft proposals submitted by Moroccan and EU delegations. This new status calls for the widening of the scope of mutual cooperation and foresees an increase in bilateral diplomatic and trade relations between the EU and Morocco. It also involves a wide variety of political, economic and cultural issues, ranging from trade issues to sustainable development, cultural and human exchanges, security, regional cooperation, good governance, the fight against terrorism, the regulation of migration, promotion of human rights, cooperation in employment and social affairs, energy cooperation, research and innovation, the environment and sustainable development (Jaïdi and Martín, 2010: 9-10). Given the loose nature of the agreement, Morocco's initial expectations from the "advanced status" were substantial,[74] but they were content with it even if it only ended up sanctioning the country's political, social and economic advances, furthering its economic benefits, and preserving the status of the EU's closest Arab partner.[75] For the EU, the new partnership has been described as a strategy akin to the conversion process that EU candidates have to go through, to draw Morocco closer and leave it irreversibly tied to the EU. It was also seen as a way to guarantee Morocco's cooperation in key issues such as migration, counter-terrorism and organized crime and to open up the Moroccan market to EU exports (Kausch, 2010: 4). But so far the new status remains devoid of concrete content as it does not seem to bring novelties other than what is already indicated in the EU-Morocco Action Plan under the ENP. And beyond "the declaratory effect and the political rhetoric... the added value of the new Advanced Status framework in relation to the current European Neighbourhood Policy is unclear" (Martín, 2009: 241). With regard to Morocco's strategic interests, the Joint Document of the partnership did not grant substantial concessions such as the liberalization of agricultural trade, the mobility of citizens or more significant levels of financial cooperation that were already fixed at 165 million Euros (5 Euros per inhabitant per year) until 2014 (Martín, 2009 240-1).

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[73] Speech of Mohammed VI in Paris, (20 March 2000). Available at http://www.maroc.ma.

As the next section on the main sticking issues between Morocco and the EU shows, Spain looms relatively large in almost all their relationship aspects. Indeed, in spite of recurring crises, Spain's perception and conduct towards Morocco largely shifted since its 1986 EC accession.[76] As explained earlier, the relationship went from a logic based on rivalry and direct engagement to one characterised by a combination of competition and collaboration, as well as the utilization of the supranational interface. Indeed, Madrid's EC/EU membership significantly conditioned Spanish-Moroccan relations and affected the way various issues in the relationship were treated (Vaquer, 2004b; Barbé, 2007). The fact that a number of problematic issues such as fisheries accords, agricultural agreements and immigration control shifted to a large extent to the realm of the EU (through such mechanisms as the Common Fisheries Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy and the EU Home Affairs policies that regroup migration, asylum and internal security) significantly affected the bilateral relationship. The availability of these mechanisms, as was discussed in the previous Chapter, allowed a degree of de-problematization of issues, avoidance of direct confrontation, and the use of supranational (rather than national) resources to address them, in the case of Spain. The fact that Madrid was able to "upload" to the EU level some of its problematic issues with Rabat did, indeed, reduce tensions and make room for new cooperation opportunities. Moreover, on occasions, Spain also used its EC/EU membership to promote some of Morocco's interests and acted as a legitimiser for the regime, pushing for a deeper association between Morocco and the EU, lobbying for more aid and acting as a champion for the southern Mediterranean in general.

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[74] Interviews in the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (August 15th 2012) and with an EU Commission official (February 18th 2013) revealed that Morocco was seeking the creation of "Common Spaces" with the EU that would involve deeper sectoral collaboration in such areas as higher education, renewable energy, science and technology, etc. along with deeper economic integration, liberalization of agricultural trade, agreements on mobility, and even access to EU structural funds. According to a Commission official, the EU might have more leeway with mobility but the other Moroccan expectations relative to structural funds or agricultural liberalization are not likely to be met.

[75] See the declarations of Mr. Taib Fassi-Fihri, Moroccan foreign affairs minister in Le Matin article "Statut avancé : Une nouvelle ère dans les relations avec l'UE", (31 December 2008).

On the other hand, Spain's EC/EU accession also had negative consequences for Morocco as it lost the privileged partnership it had with the EC before the 1986 enlargement thanks to its special relationship with France (Vaquer, 2004b: 332). The country also suffered in term of market access. The accession of Spain and Portugal had direct implications for its agricultural and fisheries exports to the EC since its two main European competitors became part of the club and almost managed to meet the continents needs in terms of those products. To this day, Spain and other southern European members continue to block more significant EU concessions in these products, favouring an increase in aid and technical support rather than market access. The next section on the sticking points between Morocco and the EU will further detail the extent of Spain's importance.

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[76] It is also worth mentioning that a number of experts hold that the first shift in Spain's policy towards Morocco took place after the PSOE came to power in 1982, with the implementation of a new "global approach" towards the Maghreb (particularly Morocco) by the Socialists (Gillespie, 2000: 53; Vaquer, 2004: 321-2). Lemus de la Iglesia (2003), on the other hand, talks about three key reasons behind the change in Spain's policy towards Morocco, mentioning its EC and NATO accession as the first reason, the successive strong Spanish governments that used their absolute majorities to implement innovative policies and programs, and the enduring tensions with Morocco that also encouraged Spain's executives to seek more cooperative policies (Vaquer, 2004: 322). However, Spain's EU accession brought with it a series of new possibilities and mechanisms such as Europeanization of policies that was, hitherto, inexistent.

Major Moroccan-EU bilateral issues and Spain's input

Since the outset, Moroccan-EU relations have been diverse and slightly incremental, ranging from trade and economic issues, political dialogue, security and defence cooperation and cultural and human cooperation. However, the bilateral relationship has also been marred by a host of recurrent issues that often bring cooperation to a halt or even bring the two parties to invoke retaliation measures such as the blocking of financial packages or the suspension of trade or fishing negotiations. Although such obstacles have rarely arisen and are far from representing the wider array of bilateral cooperation, they nevertheless provide a useful insight into the structural differences between the two partners, the limitations to their association, the underlying deeper interests for each one of them, as well as the influence of key member states in the relationship, such as Spain. The main sticking points in the Rabat-Brussels relationship have been territorial issues (mainly the Sahara issue), fisheries, democracy and human rights, and illegal migration.

The territorial issues

As was established earlier, it is hard to exaggerate the importance of the Sahara issue in Moroccan foreign policy. The issue sits at the top of the country's priorities and is intimately linked to its untouchable pillar of territorial integrity, which itself is closely tied to the regime and the monarchy's image and stability (Damis 1987: 198; Willis and Messari 2005: 156; Rosenblum and Zartman 2008: 321; Rivlin 2009: 188-9). Aware of this condition and of the crucial importance of this issue for Morocco, most EU institutions often keep a low profile regarding the issue of the Sahara in comparison to their more pronounced engagement in other Mediterranean issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Bosnian or the Cyprus issues (Vaquer, 2004a: 95). The European Parliament (EP), however, has often showed a remarkable degree of autonomy in sharp contrast to individual European countries. At certain stages, the EP became the only European institution to openly support the cause of self-determination for the Saharawi people and bash Morocco for human rights issues in the region. Spanish MEPs, however, have often made efforts to stymie such initiatives. Indeed, countries like France and Spain often voiced support for Rabat and pushed for policies of engagement leading to incremental change, rather than confrontation. In 1992, the European Parliament even managed to block the fourth financial protocol with Morocco, calling upon the country to abide by human rights principles and UN Security Council resolutions, in a reference to the Sahara. This had infuriated the Moroccan authorities who resorted to the suspension of the fisheries agreement with the EC (Vaquer, 2004a: 102-4). During that period, Moroccan relations with France were also at a low, but Gonzalez' government fully supported Morocco achieving a significant rapprochement between Rabat and Madrid. The European Parliament also directed strong criticism to Morocco on various other occasions such as during the Aminatu Haidar incident in 2009 or following the 2010 intervention by Moroccan authorities to dismantle the Gdaim Izyk camp near the town of Laâyoune, calling for the setting-up of human rights monitoring mechanisms in the Sahara and calling upon the Kingdom to abide by international law regarding the exploitation of the natural resources of the region (European Parliament, 2010).

Although not as important as the Sahara, another territorial issue that is also present in Moroccan-EU relations where Spain has the biggest stake is the question of Ceuta and Melilla and the other African territories under Spanish control. Indeed, with these becoming Spanish as well as EU territories after the 1986 enlargement, and with the drawing of the external EU border engendering an overlap "of two meaningful territorial lines: the border between Spain and Morocco, and the border between EU and non-EU territory" (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2009: 25), Morocco's territorial struggle with Spain has suddenly become an EU-wide issue. Even if the Laila/Perejil conflict represented an embarrassment for EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) back in 2002, mainly due to the insignificance of the islet and France's sympathetic position towards Morocco (Monar, 2002: 251-253; Gillespie, 2006: 117-118), potential squabbles over Ceuta and Melilla are likely to see Rabat contending with Madrid and Brussels at the same time.

Fisheries:

Relations between Morocco and the European Union have also been heavily conditioned by the question of fisheries, an issue that is intimately involved in Spanish-Moroccan relations. The EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was born in the 1970s when the Commission acquired exclusive competences in the signature of international fishing agreements with third countries. With the 1986 Iberian enlargement, the CFP acquired importance within the European Community since it had doubled both its fleet and its fisheries production. Although Spain was constrained to downscale its fishing capacity mainly via the modernisation of its fleet, Morocco remained an important partner with regard to the policy since Madrid continued to heavily rely on access to its waters abundant in fishing resources. With the EC becoming responsible for negotiations, a number of fishing agreements were concluded that allowed the Community's fleet access to Moroccan waters in return for financial and technical assistance (Vaquer, 2003: 61-62). Morocco was well aware of the fisheries trump card it possessed and was ready to use it against the EC/EU and Spain (the main beneficiary in this case) to nullify political pressures or seek political and economic concessions (as it did in 1992 in response the EP's financial blockage).

The 1994–95 fisheries negotiations constituted a difficult phase in the Rabat-Brussels bilateral relations exposing even further the difficult nature of this issue. The episode culminated in an EU–Morocco crisis that was only surmounted by linking the issue to Morocco's Association Agreement negotiations. The two negotiations took place in parallel and ended with the signing of both agreements just two weeks prior to the start of the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona (Damis, 1998: 61; Vaquer, 2003: 64). The Moroccans felt that the deal was to their disadvantage but were willing to make concessions in return for substantial agricultural concessions and other privileged partnership terms. In fact, the unsatisfactory outcome of the 1994-5 negotiations came to cast its long shadow on the inconclusive 2000–01 fisheries negotiations between Morocco and the EU. However, this time, only Moroccan-Spanish relationship was affected with Prime Minister Aznar threatening that there would be consequences for the relationship between Spain and Morocco and between Morocco and the European Union.[77] But the breakup of the fisheries negotiations did not greatly affect Moroccan-EU relations as much as it soured those between Rabat and Madrid (Vaquer 2003:75-6). Indeed, no other fisheries agreement was concluded after 1999 until the coming into force of the 2007 EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) which provided for financial compensation of 144 million Euros to Morocco in return for granting fishing access to 119 European vessels (mainly from Spain) in "waters falling within the sovereignty or the jurisdiction of Morocco" (European Commission, 2006), which implied the extension of fishing activities to Western Sahara waters. But an attempt to extend the agreement in December 2011 was voted down by the European Parliament on legal, environmental and economic grounds. The EP called for full respect for international law and for any new agreement to benefit the Sahrawi population, for the need for more environment-friendly fishing practices, and for more efficient use of EU resources.[78] In this sense, EU-Moroccan relations also reflect the incremental increase in the powers of the European Parliament as a result of the Maastricht and the Lisbon treaties.

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[77] El País, (26 April 2001)

Good governance, democracy and human rights

It was the 1993 Maastricht Treaty and the coming into existence of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that were behind the consolidation of good governance principles as conditionality instruments of the EU's external relations towards third countries (Haddadi, 2003: 74). Under the EMP and the ENP, the EU mainly relied on these instruments to promote democracy and human rights. The rewards for adherence to values of good governance had strings attached to them that mainly consisted of stronger relations with the EU and increased assistance. The EU's approach relied on persuasion and 'soft power' using its financial and institutional firepower. Funding for judicial transparency and security programs, empowerment of non-state actors, and the setting up of institutions such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) were among the main methods that were adopted (Aliboni 2005, 48-51).

Between Morocco and the EU, democracy and human rights issues have constituted yet another bone of contention. As with other MPC, the issues are among the conditionality tools that the Union uses to continue supporting the Kingdom economically and diplomatically. Pre-Lisbon Treaty, democracy promotion, as in the case of Morocco, mainly came under the mantle of the European Commission, but since then the European Parliament, the European Endowment for Democracy (an autonomous institution) and the European External Action Service have been gaining increasing prominence in this area as well. EU member states are also vocal in these issues, but some like Spain seem to adopt more pragmatic positions on such issues favouring a "status quo" rather than engagement approach (López García and De Larramendi, 2002: 171), or prefer to delegate these issues to European institutions. Such solutions may spare them the diplomatic and economic consequences that they would assume if they were to express their criticism to Rabat directly. The EU, therefore, provides "the necessary 'scale and diplomatic cover' which member states are unable or unwilling to deploy bilaterally" (Kausch, 2008: 4).

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[78] See European Parliament News release "MEPs reject extension of the EU-Morocco fisheries agreement and call for a better deal" (14 December 2011).

In comparison to its neighbours, the reform strings attached to EU support seem to have yielded for Morocco some results on the human rights and governance fronts, especially following the establishment in 2006 of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER) to shed light on human rights violations between 1956 and 1999. But the achievements remained fragile and under threat, especially following the terrorist bombings in Casablanca in 2003 which halted the reforms underway and thereby effectively ended the 'era of leniency' in the country (Sater, 2009: 186; Storm, 2009: 1008; Cavatorta and Dalmasso, 2009: 500). Cases of EU criticism towards Rabat due to human rights issues are not unusual. Aside from the 1992 EP decision to freeze the renewal of Morocco's financial protocol largely due to human rights abuses committed by the regime, several EU Parliament and Commission reports highlighted the issue. For example, the 2004 ENP country report prepared by the Commission pointed to a number of serious democratic flaws and lingering defects in the Moroccan political system such as the lack of respect towards constitutional principles, the absence of a separation of powers, the restricted powers of the parliament and government, the absence of judicial independence, the insignificant role of the political parties and the restricted role of civil society (European Commission, 2004). The 2007-13 Commission 'Country Strategy Paper for Morocco' also noted that despite some progress, Morocco still needed to improve its record on democracy, respect for human rights, good governance, and consolidation of the rule of law (European Commission, 2007).

However, not only has EU conditionality terms been criticized as ineffective and lacking rigour (Aliboni 2005, 52), but the EU's "strategies" are not backed up by adequate resources likely to help implement changes in such crucial areas either. Even with a broad definition of democracy and human rights issues (which would include participatory rural development programmes and technical aid to the judiciary), the amounts allocated remain inadequate (less than 5% of the MEDA/ENPI allocation to Morocco). And in spite of the positive conditionality through ENP mechanisms, the EU still lacks clear strategies and political will in this respect (Youngs, 2001; Aliboni 2005, 53). According to the person in charge of EU coordination and advocacy at the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), "even after the Arab Revolutions human rights issues remained visible in treaties and communications, but in real politics the issue is not a priority... More strategic and security-related issues such as immigrant readmission and the externalization of European borders management clearly gain precedence”.[79]

Moreover, with earmarking and distinction not always clear cut, MEDA/ENPI funds designated for democratization are directly channelled through government bodies and programmes and are at times redirected for modernisation rather than democratization projects (Holden, 2005: 468), and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) funds that go directly to NGOs remain far less significant (Kausch, 2008: 9). Qualitatively, human rights and democratization projects are also criticized for their lack of efficiency with budget allocations at times financing projects with little impact on these issues.[80] In a sense, this demonstrates the little priority that the EU and its member states give to human rights issues and the promotion of democracy in Morocco. On the bright side, however, this toothless conditionality at least maintains the issues of reform, good governance and democratization on the agenda through regular discussions, reports and action plans within the framework of the ENP structures. In 2009, as on previous occasions, the European Commission highlighted the slow pace and superficial nature of judicial reforms and the country’s regression in international corruption indices. It also warned against the legal impediments to free press, the sluggish advances in the application of Equity and Reconciliation Commission recommendations relative to the adoption of international recommendations, judicial independence and the separation of powers, as well as the need to consolidate fundamental social rights and labour norms (European Commission, 2009). Most observers, however, agree that good governance, democracy and human rights promotion have increasingly taken a backseat in return for regional stability and the resulting economic and security priorities (Kausch and Youngs, 2009: 697; Bicchi, 2011: 11; Van Hüllen, 2012: 119; Grant, 2012: 4). This is also reflected in the priority shifts between the EMP and the Union for the Mediterranean and the resulting de-politicization of Euro-Mediterranean relations; while the EMP had a tendency to promote a more normative and regionalist approach, the UfM prioritized a more project-specific agenda (Aliboni and Ammor, 2009: 7; Seeberg, 2010: 287).

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[79] Interview with the officer in charge of EU coordination and advocacy at the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, (15 March 2013).

[80] In the interview with Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network officer, it perspired that budget allocations can also be problematic as they are often dedicated to such things as the purchase of goods (computers, laptops, office equipment, etc.) rather than to more value-added actions, such as training programs for judges, civil society actors and human rights activists, etc.

Migration

With a yawning and remarkably steady income gap since the 1980s between Morocco and the EU that stood (at least until the 2008 economic crisis) at 1 to 9, massive immigration from Morocco to Europe was an inevitable outcome and soon converted itself into a crucial aspect in the bilateral relation in the early 1990s (De Haas and Vezzoli, 2010). Moroccans residing abroad are estimated at almost 3.2 million citizens (about 10% of the country's population) and some 2.75 million of these officially live in the European Union, with an extra 200,000 illegal immigrants thought to be living mainly in southern European countries such as Spain and Italy (De Haas and Vezzoli, 2010). Immigrant remittances have shown an increasing trend over the past decades and make a considerable contribution to Morocco's economy, accounting for 8 to 9% of its GDP, and constituting a vital and relatively stable source of foreign capital (De Haas and Plug 2006: 603; Berriane and Aderghal, 2008: 34; De Hass 2009). Remittances have so far proved surprisingly resilient to the 2008 economic crisis. According to World Bank data, these amounted to about US$4.22 billion in 2004, US$5.45 billion in 2006, US$6.9 billion in 2008 and US$6.45 billion in 2010. In 2008, for example, remittances far exceeded Foreign Direct Investment (US$2.5) and Official Development Aid (US$1.2) combined, and were equivalent to almost 20% of the country's overall exports in goods and services.[81] In fact, they were more important than phosphate exports even when their prices peaked in 2008 (US$5.9 billion), constituting 33% of the overall country's exports in goods.[82] And the EU is not only the source of livelihood for a huge number of economically active Moroccans who would probably have remained jobless, but it is also a vital source for poverty alleviation and an important reservoir of investment capital. In 2006 Morocco was the largest remittance receiver in Africa and its economy remains very reliant on these inflows (Rivlin 2009: 185; De Hass 2009).

> "Europe is the safety valve for the explosive race between demography and economy, and if the demographic growth rate has been brought down to 1.9 percent, the Moroccan economy still has to sprint fast to catch up. Emigration helps bridge the gap: since 1990, remittances have brought in 30 percent more foreign exchange than either tourism or phosphate sales, the next two most important sources." (Rosenblum and Zartman 2008: 337).

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[81] See Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011.

[82] See BBC article "Morocco's fish fight: High stakes over Western Sahara" (5 December 2011).

With regard to migration, the priority for Morocco has been to "cherish the goose with the golden egg", push for immigrant integration in host countries, and develop "enlightened" and favourable policies towards its population abroad, with a view to strengthening their bonds with their home country (De Haas and Plug, 2006: 603). Rabat has also sought enhanced European assistance in return for border control and a lowering of the barrier for its legal migration (Kausch, 2008: 3). On the other hand, Europe, while officially acknowledging the importance that migration in the relationships, has largely perceived the phenomenon as a threat and its main concern has been to control legal migration and keep illicit immigrants at bay. This, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, reflected its securitized perception of the issue as well as of its relationship with Morocco (Kausch and Youngs, 2009: 970; Bicchi, 2007: 23–24). Migration control has continued to represent an EU priority in its relationship with the southern neighbourhood in general and with Morocco in particular. It continues to be a bone of contention, not only because Rabat is uncomfortable with the idea of acting as the 'Gendarme of Europe' (Belguendouz, 2003), but also because it is increasingly affected by externalities of European "fortification" as more and more transit migrants to Europe end up staying in Morocco (Wunderlich, 2010: 249-250).

Spain, France and Italy, the EU countries most affected by illegal immigration from the South and which host large contingents of Moroccan legal and illegal immigrants, have been seeking to stop the flow of illicit transit by bringing the issue to the top of the European agenda. Spain in particular managed to persuade other EU member states that its borders with Morocco are not only Spanish but European borders as well. The issue of northbound illegal immigration originating from Morocco became Europeanized, with EU resources for border control made available through the European agency Frontex from 2005[83] (Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, 2007: 89; Pérez, 2010: 103). Gradually, EU immigration policy came to be made up of two basic instruments: coordination mechanisms across EU countries for regularisation processes,[84] as well as the fight against black labour markets and the coordination of border control and cooperation among countries of origin and transit that include readmission clauses (Mestres, 2011: 4). The EU gave paramount importance to collaboration on illegal migration among countries of origin, destination and transit with the "Rabat Process"[85] initiated in 2006. The EU also put in place "efficient border management, readmission agreements and the effective return of 'irregular immigrants'", thus successfully externalising its immigration control policies to third countries such as Morocco through capacity building, export of surveillance technology, and information exchange with its neighbours (Bilgin and Bilgiç, 2011: 3-4). The issues of migratory flows management, fight against human trafficking and readmission of nationals and non-nationals have been hot issues throughout the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process. The EU's response strategy included increasing coupling measures between resolution of these issues and assistance incentives (Saarinen, 2008 in Darbouche, 2009: 233-242). In fact, Rosemary Hollis says that "all the EU initiatives and bilateral agreements with Arab and other neighbouring states have included commitments to cooperate on border controls... the implementation of specific measures for migration control is among the conditions to be met by the MPCs in order to receive more EU financial assistance" (Hollis, 2012: 93).

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[83] See http://www.frontex.europa.eu/partners/third-countries.

[84] It is, however, worth mentioning here the wave of discontent that Spain provoked within the EU, especially following its 2005 regularization process of hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants. Member states like France and Germany criticized Zapatero for the *efecto llamada* (the invitation effect) that the process created and called upon Spain to discuss and harmonize such big decisions in the future since they affect all member countries (Karaboytcheva, 2006: 21).

Agriculture

Agriculture is yet another vital sector in the Moroccan economy as it represents about 15 percent of the country's GDP and employs more than 40 percent of the labour force. Because of its proximity, Europe is the country's main trading partner and importer of over two-thirds of its agricultural and food products exports. The equivalent of some $1.3 billion dollars is absorbed by the EU market.[86] Trade in agricultural products is a recurrent and contentious issue in Moroccan-EU relations. Yet again, Spain happens to be a key part in this equation.

In spite of its persistent efforts, Morocco's access to the European market is far from comprehensive and a number of its most competitive products are restricted by means of tariff-rate quotas and import schedules. As a result of pressures by militant farmers but also to preserve their privileged access to the EU market, some European governments (mainly Spain, but also Italy and France) have remained largely protective of their European market share that is directly threatened by cheap competing agricultural products coming from Morocco. Since the 1980s, they maintained a remarkable resistance against more significant concessions for Moroccan fisheries and agricultural products, evoking excuses such as the Sahara issue, labour cost differentials or EU safety, environmental and working conditions standards.[87]

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[85] The Rabat Process refers to the July 2006 Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development that was held in the Moroccan capital. It involved the 27 EU member state in addition to Norway, Iceland and Switzerland and 27 African states, with Algeria notably absent. The conference resulted in an action plan to facilitate legal migration, fight irregular migration and promote migration and development (Collyer, 2009: 282).

[86] See United States Department of Agriculture Morocco Agricultural Economy and Policy Paper (March 2009) at: http://www.fas.usda.gov/country/Morocco/Morocco.asp (accessed 18 June 2012).

A quick look at the bigger picture reveals the extent to which Moroccan-EU relations are extremely asymmetrical. While Morocco provides some 0.5% of EU imports and receives some 1% of its exports, the Union represents some 60% to 70% of both its imports and exports (Martínez Capdevila, 2012: 181). What is more, according to the EU Trade Directorate General, over the 2007 to 2011 period, the overall trade balance was largely favourable to the European Union, with exports averaging €13.6 billion per year relative to imports of €7.9 billion, resulting in a whopping yearly average trade deficit of €5.72 billion.[88] Among the few products where Morocco had a competitive advantage over the EU and its major Mediterranean countries (Spain, France and Italy) over the 2008 – 2010 period were certain fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes with an average trade surplus of about €479 million, pulses (€275 million), citrus (€270 million), melons, watermelons and papayas (€103 million), and other vegetables (€256 million) (Pappalardo, 2012: 40-1). Yet, few concessions have been made with regard to such products in over four decades of EU-Moroccan bilateral relations. It took Morocco and the EU three years to achieve their first agricultural agreement under the 2000 Association Agreement, which reveals the complexity of the negotiations and the difficulties in achieving an agreement. Finally, in September 2003 a four year agreement was adopted but no major concessions were made with regard to agricultural products where Morocco was more competitive.

Negotiations for a new agricultural deal stalled for almost four years. Finally, a new agreement was reached in 2010 and approved by the European Parliament in February 2012, overcoming pressures from agricultural lobbies and hostile campaigning from Spanish, Italian and French delegates.[89] The deal would allow the EU immediate duty-free access for

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[87] See Capreform.eu article: "EU-Moroccan Agricultural Trade Deal Running into Trouble in European Parliament", (25 July 2011).

[88] See DG Trade document "Morocco: EU bilateral trade and trade with the world" (23 May 2013).

[89] Interview with European Commission Official, (18 February 2013).

45% of its agriculture and food exports, rising to 70% over ten years, in return for immediate duty-free access for 55% of Moroccan agriculture and food exports to the EU. However, excluded from the agreement were the very products where Morocco has the highest comparative advantage, such as tomatoes, that remained subject to strict quotas, calendar restrictions and entry price systems.[90] "Put simply: EU exporters get wide access to Moroccan markets while Morocco is still not allowed to freely sell its cheap agricultural products in the EU because European politicians need to protect Spanish tomatoes and French courgettes" (Kausch, 2010: 4). Indeed, the result of the new agreement was nowhere close to what the Moroccans had wished for in terms of an "advanced agricultural status" that would result in the country's inclusion in the Common Market Organization of Fruits and Vegetables.[91] Instead, all that the agreement achieved was a puny 22% increase over four years (compared to the previous agreement), with the lingering of the same market access restrictions (Martínez Capdevila, 2012: 188-190). Finally, even Morocco's "advanced status" with the EU does not refer to the dismantling of agricultural trade restrictions. Instead, it offers support for Morocco's 'Green Plan' and assistance in modernization of its agricultural sector. "Such an explicit focus on non-tariff issues relating to agricultural trade rather than focusing on dismantling tariffs on the EU side can of course be seen as poorly disguised protectionism" (Bremberg, 2012: 126).

Development aid and other cooperation issues

In spite of its limited nature, development aid granted to Morocco remains important, not only in quantitative but in qualitative terms as well. Rabat is the main Mediterranean beneficiary of EU development aid with €1.6 billion between 1995 and 2006 within the framework of Meda I and Meda II programs and €1.34 billion between 2007 and 2013 under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) (Martínez Capdevila, 2012: 182) (See Table 4.1). Morocco has also benefited from €887 million in loans delivered by the European Investment Bank (Miller and Bower, 2010: 504). This generosity might be explained, as Tovias argued, by the fact that the EU was willing to concede more "aid not trade" in a bid to "shake up" Mediterranean non-member countries such as Morocco in order to restructure their economies and adjust to industrial free trade imperatives (Tovias, 2006: 193-194).

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[90] Increases in quotas of "sensitive" agricultural products were not significant: Tomatoes go from 233,000 to 285,000 tons, courgettes from 25,000 to 50,000 and clementines from 130,000 to 175,000 in. Also, tariffs for olive oil were removed. To illustrate the limited impact of these concessions on the economy of a country such as Spain, consider that Morocco produces 130,000 tons of olive oil but barely exports 25,000 tons, while Spain is the world's biggest olive oil exporter and producer (its yearly production is estimated at 1.4 million tons). See El País articles, "El sector agrícola rechaza de plano el acuerdo de la UE con Marruecos" 18 February 2012 and "El aceite andaluz, en la encrucijada" 19 February 2012.

[91] Interview with European Commission Official, (18 February 2013).

Table 4.1 Financial assistance EU-Morocco (1995-2013)

	Total amount (million euro)	Amount per year (million euro)	Amount per inhabitant (euro)
MEDA I (1995-1999)	660	132	4,7
MEDA II (2000-2006)	982	140,3	4,8
ENPI (2007-2010)	654	163,5	5,45
ENPI (2011-2013)	580	193,3	6,2

Sources: (Jaïdi and Martín, 2010: 70)

Aid, however, has rarely proved an efficient way to boost economies, especially when it trickles down in limited proportions as opposed to Marshall-like initiatives. What is much more likely to "shake up" and transform economies is the unleashing of countries' own competitive potential that ultimately helps people help themselves. With a mediocre global competitiveness ranking,[92] Morocco still has a long way to go before its economy becomes as competitive as its European neighbours. However, should the EU adopt a reverse policy based on trade rather than aid, more salutary economic effects may follow. This would encourage competitiveness, entrepreneurship and local and foreign investment likely to trigger multiplyer economic, political and social effects. Removing the restrictions imposed on Moroccan agricultural and fisheries exports is one way of achieving this. Spain is among the key European players (if not the main) preventing such policy shifts. As Figure 4.1 clearly indicates, Morocco's trade balance in goods with the EU soared between 1990 and 2012. It went from a positive trade balance in favour of the EU of about €500 million a year throughout the first half of the 1990s to almost €8 billion in 2012.

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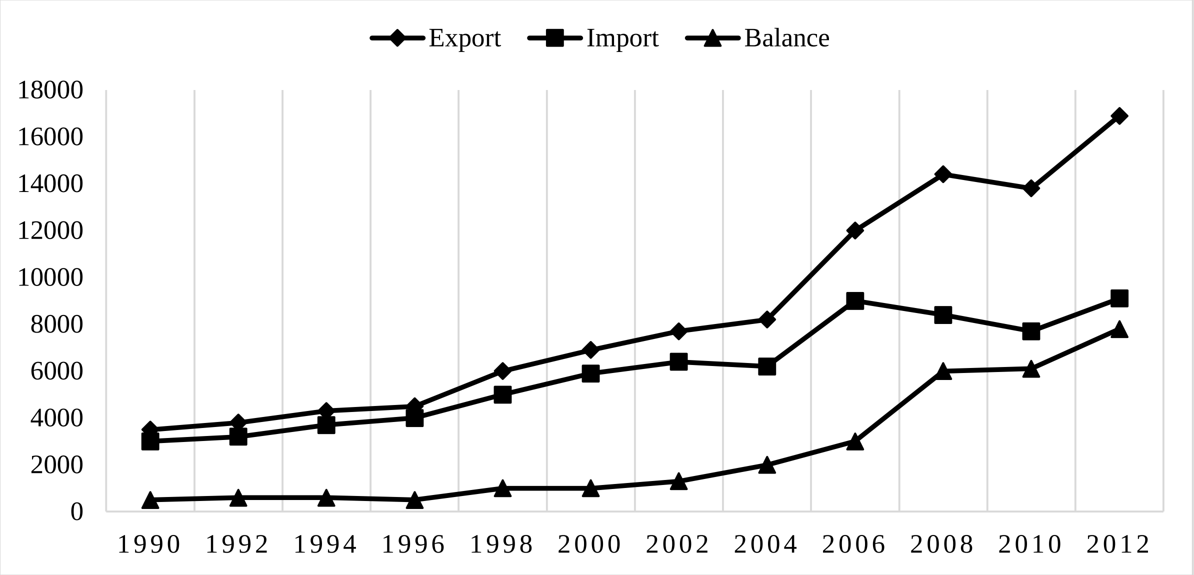
[92] According to Global Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report (2012-2013), Morocco is ranked 70th out of 144 countries, with a score of 4.1, which is considered not competitive enough (Schwab, 2013: 264-5).

Figure 4.1 EU-Morocco trade volume in goods (in millions of Euro) (1990 - 2012)



Sources: European Commission - Trade DG (Morocco).

Aside from development aid, Morocco also participates in various other programmes offering expertise, technical assistance, mobility and cooperation (such as Twinning, regional cooperation, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, and the Erasmus Mundus External Co-operation Window programme).[93] Rabat and Brussels have also increased civil protection cooperation, liberalized air traffic since 2006 (Grant, 2012: 4) and developed close information sharing, defence, security and counter-terrorism collaboration (Keohane, 2008: 143). In fact, security and defence issues are pressing concerns for the EU (and Spain) and for which the Union seeks to deepen cooperation with Morocco. Against the background of regional instability, illegal immigration networks, terrorist threats, drug trafficking[94] and organised crime, the EU has often expressed its appreciation of Morocco's stabilizing influence in the region and its close collaboration. The country is considered to be of strategic importance for Europe regarding all these issues as well as the lingering threat of North African-based terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), especially in the aftermath of 9/11 (Wennerholm *et al*, 2010: 15-16). A major part of this cooperation has increasingly been taking place with Spain, especially following the March

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[93] See more details posted at the EU Commission Morocco country profile.

[94] "Intelligence reports and criminal justice statistics still indicate that Morocco constitutes the primary foreign source for cannabis resin (or hashish)... Moroccan and Spanish trafficking enterprises are primarily responsible for bringing hashish into Spain, which is the natural European entry point" (Paoli and Reuter, 2008: 21).

2004 Madrid bombings (Jordán and Horsburgh, 2006). EU-Moroccan cooperation extends to European defence as well. In 2005, Morocco agreed to contribute with military personnel and assets to operation EUFOR Althea to boost EU's peace-keeping efforts in former Bosnia-Herzegovina. 150 Moroccan troops were subsequently deployed under European command in the region, making it the only Arab contingent to serve in an EU-led operation (El Katiri, 2010: 3). Security, defence and counterterrorism cooperation, however, is often criticized as being too prioritized at the expense of reform, democratization, development and social priorities (Kausch and Youngs, 2009: 696).

Spain, Morocco and the EU

France may be the European country with the closest affinities as well as political and economic ties with Morocco, but Spain is catching up fast (especially economically).[95] Madrid and Paris are also the two European capitals with most influence on Rabat's relationship with the EU (see Tovias, 1998; Soler and Vaquer, 2010). Indeed, as the above analysis has shown, Spain is closely involved in almost all the important aspects of the Moroccan-EU relationship: the territorial issues, fisheries, migration, agriculture, security and counterterrorism, etc. Depending on the nature of the issues and its vested interest, it can sometimes promote and defend Rabat's interests or block and lobby against them. Indeed, as much as it favours its neighbour's closer integration with the EU as it did on various occasions, including in 2010 with the organisation of the first EU-Morocco summit under its presidency (Barreñada, 2010: 7), it has been known also to campaign against increases in Rabat's agricultural and fisheries exports to the EU. The most dominant issues illustrating the Rabat-Madrid-Brussels trilateral relations, however, are fisheries and migration.

Prior to its EC accession in 1986 and until the early 1990's, the Moroccan-Spanish relationship was mainly bilateral, with the occasional intervention or implication of third parties such as France or Algeria. During its EC accession negotiations, Madrid was mainly concerned with cutting beneficial deals for itself with the EC, perceiving Morocco in competitive terms (Gillespie, 2000: 136-8), especially with regard to agricultural exports. In the early 1990s, however, Madrid's perception of the southern Mediterranean countries in general, and Morocco in particular, started to shift, particularly following the fall of Berlin

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[95] As previously mentioned, in 2012, Spain overtook France to become Morocco's first commercial partner. See La Vanguardia editorial; "España en Marruecos" (10 October 2012).

Wall in 1989 and the Algerian military intervention in the early 1990s. With the EC showing enthusiasm to incorporate the central and eastern European countries and fearing that "the centre of gravity of the European Union might shift eastwards, leaving Spain once more on the periphery" (López García and Larramendi, 2002: 182), Spain started promoting the Mediterranean cause. Its reputation as a "champion of Mediterranean and Moroccan interests" within Europe was further reinforced by the organisation of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona in November 1995 and its subsequent endeavours to secure more equity in the distribution of EU funds between the ex-eastern bloc countries and the Mediterranean. (Barbé, 1995: 109-12).

Unsurprisingly, and at least up until 2007 and the launching of Sarkozy's Union for the Mediterranean project, Spain was probably the European member state most committed to promoting EU Mediterranean policy (Baixeras, 1996: 150), while demonstrating its political entrepreneurship skills by building alliances within the EU and working with like-minded member states to find backing for its Mediterranean vision (Bicchi, 2011: 7). Madrid's 1989, 1995, 2002 and 2010 EC/EU-Presidencies were all seen as opportunities to promote the Mediterranean as a European priority (Soler and Vaquer, 2010: 1). With regard to Morocco, therefore, the dominant logic for Spain since 1986 has shifted from a zero-sum to an increasingly win-win approach. Madrid realised it would be more beneficial for it to defend Morocco's interest within the EC/EU by pushing for increased aid to Morocco rather than trade concessions. Not only did this imply a low-cost solution since it did not devote its own but EU resources (especially when the country was a net recipient under successive EU budgets), but that also meant that its privileged access to the EU market was not under threat from cheaper Moroccan products. Rabat, on the other hand, also started off within a zero-sum logic prior to Spain's accession, but since 1986 it resorted to seeking compensation from the EU for the perceived adverse consequences of Madrid's accession and started multiplying efforts to consolidate relations with the EC. Its unsuccessful 1987 membership application should probably be seen in this light (De Larramendi, 1997: 271– 6, Gillespie, 2000: 139).

With its EC accession, Spain also saw the issues linking it to Morocco become increasingly "Europeanized"[96] since the accession treaties bound it to such policies as the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy which directly affect its interests and relationship with Morocco. Europeanization in itself often proved beneficial for Spain since it allowed it to use EU resources, avoid direct confrontation and gain a higher negotiation ground in such thorny issues as fisheries, agriculture or migration (De Larramendi and Azaola, 2010: 512, Gillespie, 2000: 134). In the process, Spain was also using its status as a privileged interlocutor of the Maghreb states to acquire "a voice within the international organizations, where it could influence among other things the trade and aid offers made by the EC in the course of negotiating international agreements,'' (Gillespie, 2001: 17). A clear illustration of the Europeanization process is evidenced by a closer look at EU-Morocco fisheries agreements. Spain's first socialist government under Felipe González succeeded in establishing a tight network of economic interests with Morocco which helped attenuate the bilateral security and diplomatic problems. This partly explains how Spanish vessels (that accounted for half the EU fishing capacity) represented 92% of the EU fleet operating in Moroccan waters at the time when it joined the EC in 1986 (Torreblanca 2001: 17). The transfer of responsibilities from Madrid to Brussels during the renewal of negotiations with Rabat on fisheries in 1995 was fairly advantageous to Spain since it brought an uncoupling of this thorny issue from the economic, cultural and security issues, as well as the political and territorial differences plaguing the two countries' relations (Gillespie, 1995: 167– 8). Even though the final agreement had a number of strings attached and meant reduced access for Spanish boats, Madrid had managed to use EU financial resources to "rent" Moroccan waters for its fishing fleet, succeeded in sparing itself Moroccan confrontation and pressures, and used the higher supranational bargaining ground for negotiations. The results were a far better fisheries agreement than it would have otherwise achieved using bilateral channels (Jones, 2000: 139; Torreblanca, 2001: 17).

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[96] See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of the concept.

However, far from being a panacea, Europeanizing issues with Rabat did not always guarantee the expected results for Madrid as it sometimes backfired (Vaquer, 2007: 3). During the subsequent 2000-1 fisheries negotiations, Spain had to face a different reality to that of 1995. With negotiations in the hands of the EU Commission, Morocco this time squarely refused to renew the accords without guarantees of more substantial compensation and assistance in modernising its own fishing fleet and industry (Torreblanca, 2001: 17). Left with no political or diplomatic bilateral instruments to reach an agreement with Morocco, Spain was unable to tone down the rising voices of opposition from the fishing community. Europeanization and the bilateral vacuum, on this occasion, only exacerbated tensions between Rabat and Madrid. Aznar's notorious declaration that ''there would be consequences for relations between Morocco and Spain' (Amirah-Fernandez, 2008: 352) only made the situation worse. Mutual withdrawal of ambassadors and the Laila/Perejil episode were soon to follow (Escribano and San Martín, 2005: 14-5).

Equally, the issue of illegal migration was soon Europeanized as well. By lobbying hard and raising awareness within the EU, Spain along with other southern European countries such as Italy managed to persuade the member states that the phenomenon and its implications do not only affect the south but the EU community as a whole, and that border control should be a Europe-wide concern (Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, 2007: 89). In this endeavour, Spain and its allies succeeded. Soon afterwards, European, rather than Spanish, Agreements of Return started to be issued; additional EU resources for border control through the European agency Frontex were made available; and European labour offices started operating in countries of origin to regulate legal labour immigration (Zapata-Barrero and De Witte, 2007: 89). Unlike other issues such as fisheries where EU members may have competitive interests, the fight against illegal migration is a subject of considerable consensus among EU member states.

Yet, Moroccan cooperation and close Spanish-Moroccan collaboration are essential for efforts to succeed. Aznar's attempts in the late 1990s and early 2000s to use EU pressure against Rabat to curb northbound migratory flows came to naught (Belguendouz, 2003), and his attempts to link EU aid and cooperation with third country collaboration to combat illegal immigration and facilitate re-admission also flopped, partly thanks to French opposition (Vaquer, 2004b: 242-244). But a few years afterwards, a combination of internal pressures, reconciliation with Madrid, the desire to Europeanize its own border policing and the promise of more Spanish and EU funds finally convinced King Mohammad VI to collaborate in the fight against illegal migration (Wunderlich, 2010: 263). Just as the Spanish government incorporated migration control and security cooperation conditions to its development aid with North African countries (Kausch and Youngs, 2009: 696), the 2002 EU Council Conclusions stipulated that "any future cooperation, association or equivalent agreement which the European Union or the European Community concludes with any country should include a clause on joint management of migration flows and on compulsory readmission in the event of illegal immigration' (Council of the European Union, 2002: 10). Morocco had since continued close collaboration with Spain and the EU on border control, especially under the administration of Zapatero, but it continues to oppose the readmission of non-Moroccan citizens. Once again, “EU cooperation with Morocco was strongly influenced by Spanish–Moroccan relations” (Wunderlich, 2010: 263).

Conclusions

EU-Moroccan relations have often been hailed as laudable in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy contexts; it is a relationship that has been improving for the last four decades, with Morocco and the EU both showing considerable enthusiasm for a deeper partnership that culminated in the latest “advanced status”. The relationship involves a host of issues ranging from economy to migration, territorial issues, democracy promotion, cooperation and aid programs, etc. Since its official inception in 1969, the bilateral ties kept consolidating. However, the socio-economic rift between Morocco and the EU remains huge and despite a substantial and swelling positive trade balance, the EU (partly influenced by Mediterranean European countries such as Spain) still acts in defence of rather narrow economic interests while offering little in the way of economic concessions, labour movement and even financial assistance. This has not only been the case with agriculture and fisheries agreements which continue to reflect the interests of European countries (and mainly Spanish interests) more than those of the Alawi Kingdom, but is also reflected in the insufficient aid packages that still remain below growth-stimulating levels, especially when contrasted with the soaring trade deficit for Morocco that almost reached €8 billion in 2012. What is likely to alleviate the deficit is not more aid but more market access, something that southern members like Spain lobby hard against

Furthermore, judging by the budgetary breakdown of its financial protocols as well as its lukewarm positions, the EU also appears to give secondary importance to democracy and human rights issues in Morocco compared to its other economic, political and security priorities. The regime structures in place are, therefore, bolstered at the expense of the modernizing and democratizing forces in the country. On the political and economic fronts, the means the EU provides are too limited to constitute strong incentives for change or any significant breakthroughs. And with the absence of a potential EU membership “carrot”, prospects for deeper reforms remain slim (Dillman, 2003: 193). Moreover, even if the political will materializes, Europe in its present crisis would be unable to offer much in terms of the three “Ms” (access to EU Markets, increased aid Money and free Movement of people).[97] In the meantime, Morocco remains content with such prized symbolic trophies as the “advanced status” that transmit an EU legitimization and maintain the country’s status as ‘role model’ for other Arab Mediterranean countries (Martín, 2009 : 242).

What is more, while the incessant reshaping and reformulation of EU initiatives towards Mediterranean third states such as Morocco over the last 15 years (the 1995 Euromed Barcelona Process, the 2004 ENP, the 2008 Union for the Mediterranean and the latest Advanced Status) can be considered as a means for the EU “to fulfil its external aims and promote its values”. However, it can also be seen as “a disjointed, even chaotic EU approach to the region” (Cardwell, 2011: 237, 220), or criticized as “introducing a growing level of complexity and confusion... [and] eroding the credibility of the EU’s strategy in the region” (Martín, 2009: 245). From the perspective of southern MPCs like Morocco, this glut of initiatives does not contribute to establishing a coherent, durable and effective strategy likely to bring MPCs closer to the European norms and governance style.[98] The most promising framework that Morocco signed up to is the so-called “advanced status”, but it remains a largely empty shell and is also likely to crack under the weight of the thorny issues of the Sahara, human rights, immigration control and the gap between the lofty objectives and the means deployed to achieve them. To complicate things further, the timing of this new status could not have been worse for Morocco and other MPCs as it is happening during a prolonged period of EU economic and financial crisis, high unemployment, EU countries bailouts, record high sovereign debts and mounting fears about the Euro and the Union itself.

Equally, our analysis has not only demonstrated the pivotal role of Madrid in almost all the policy areas involved in the Moroccan-EU relations, but it has also illustrated the central role of member states like Spain in hindering or facilitating EU cooperation and ultimately policy convergence with third countries such as Morocco (Wunderlich, 2010: 262). Finally, the analysis also reveals that beyond the fancy labels and grandiloquent discourse emanating from Madrid or Brussels, concessions are inconsequential and often come with strings attached. The keenness to preserve vested interests is therefore cloaked behind a veil of discursive courtesy and symbolic gestures but, in actuality, relations are getting increasingly securitized, gains maximized and the move towards democratization and reforms minimized.

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[97] Interview with an EU Commission official (18 February 2013)

[98] Interview with a consultant at Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (12 August 2012).

In theoretical terms, the question relative to the EU's "normative power" remains open (Manners 2002: 241; Lavenex 2004: 695; Bicchi 2006: 286-7; Adler and Crawford, 2006: 7-10). For can we claim that European engagement towards Mediterranean third countries such as Morocco has brought about a "reorientation or reshaping of politics (and governance)…in ways that reflect policies, practices or preferences advanced through the EU system of governance"? (Bache and Jordan, 2006: 30). In other words, has Morocco's exposure to European governance practices contributed to significant political, social and economic changes in the country? There is no doubt that EU engagement with Morocco does bring with it a refreshing breeze of universal values and healthy norms and procedures of governance, but even after more than four decades of deliberate orientation and exposure to the EU model, it would be hard to talk about any significant changes in the country's policies, governance or level of economic development. EU's "softly-softly" approach with Morocco has only brought meagre results with regard to good governance, democratization and human rights and the country still operates according to its old norm, perpetuating old practices and adhering to its distinctive code of values.

Also, Europeanization with its exporting (or uploading) and importing (or downloading) aspects appears to carry sufficient conceptual firepower to account for the role of the supranational entity in the bilateral relationship from a "northern" perspective. Indeed, the theoretical framework seems to adequately explain the process whereby a number of key Spanish policy areas such as fisheries, agriculture, migration or trade have been partly or fully Europeanized. Negotiation, policy frameworks and resource provision have partially or completely shifted from Madrid to Brussels with positive and negative consequences for Spain and Morocco. The fact that fisheries agreements, for example, started to be a Brussels-Rabat affair removed Madrid's control over the final outcome and invited the views of other EU member states, but it removed pressure and confrontation prospects with Rabat as well. The change also offered Spain a more persuasive negotiation (EU) platform and compensations when agreements break up. For Morocco, this change may have implied less negotiation leverage but it also brought with it a wider range of negotiation prospects that were previously unavailable with Madrid. "Neighbourhood Europeanization" also accounts for the whiff of values and normative contagion reflected in the conditional EU assistance and the lip-service paid to issues of good governance, democratization and human rights. However, Europeanization only accounts for one side of the relationship since Morocco's relations with Spain (or the EU for that matter) are not Europeanized. Rabat’s external relations, as we have seen, remain mainly intergovernmental and are driven by priorities of defence of territorial integrity, regime preservation, ever-closer partnership with Europe and maximization of ensuing gain. Its main strategy in achieving these goals resides in diversification of options, triangulations and omnibalancing, as well as negative sanctions and lack of cooperation. Europeanization, therefore, covers only one side of the relationship, which begs the question whether Omnibalancing theory might be able to account for Rabat’s behaviour. However, considering that no clear evidence to that effect could be highlighted – as Rabat does not appear to resort to triangulation strategies between the EU and Spain, the way it does between Spain and other countries – it seems that the Realist theory would not apply to this case.

However, the supranational entity, within the logic of Europeanization, does play an important role for both countries. In fact, since the mid-1990s it has increasingly been serving as a platform where a number of critical Spanish-Moroccan issues are debated and resolved. The role that the EU plays can simply be seen as an illustration of the contributions made by non-state actors in this intergovernmental relationship. This way, Brussels’ role can be said to form part of a wider web of actors and contact channels in Moroccan-Spanish relations, which would edge us closer to Complex Interdependence theory. One of its main premises, aside from the absence of hierarchy among issues and non-resort to force in international relations, is *the proliferation of actors (including non-state actors) and channels through which countries interact*. In this framework, the EU can be seen as a conduit facilitating an increasingly diverse network of interdependencies. This would probably be a simplification or “essentialization” of the role of the EU since it is a full-fledged actor, but it would suit the conceptualization of the *EU impact on Spanish-Moroccan bilateral relations*. This would also allow the adoption of a simpler and parsimonious conceptual mantle to this triple relationship.

Chapter five - Moroccan-Catalan relations and the place of Spain

Introduction

> *"For a national movement to triumph it needs two indispensable conditions: it needs a considerable internal momentum and it needs, as well, external prestige and sympathy; without the internal strength and the external prestige, its life, the life of a national movement is impossible".*
>
> *Antoni Rovira i Virgili*[99]

Having examined Moroccan-Spanish relations and covered the most salient aspects in the relationship, and highlighted Moroccan-EU relations with a special focus on the issues where Madrid is most relevant, this Chapter seeks to cover Moroccan-Catalan relations and bring out aspects of the relationship that impact Madrid-Rabat relations. But analysing the relationship between a sovereign state and a region within another sovereign state is not the most usual undertaking. It is bound to be an unbalanced and conceptually challenging exercise as it would normally involve the comparison of two dissimilar entities with structurally different mechanisms, drives and objectives, and the scrutiny of areas where power is not equally distributed between the actors. But in this particular case, the task starts to make more sense once key characteristics of Catalonia's devolution, identity, nationalism and its perceived (as well as actual) role within and outside Spain are clarified. The areas that will come under special scrutiny in this chapter (immigration, economic and cooperation issues) come within the remit of both the state and the sub-state entities, and although the Spanish constitution considers international relations a state prerogative, subsequent constitutional evolutions in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s that were the result of political negotiation and legislation allowed for additional prerogatives to be given to autonomous communities in such areas as immigration management, cooperation policies and trade promotion networks (Barbé and Soler i Lecha, 2009: 432-3). As will be discussed in more details, the boundaries of such prerogatives, however, are not totally clear and constitute a subject of constant interpretation, negotiation, bargaining and even struggle between Barcelona and Madrid. Prospects such as the establishment of enhanced autonomy statutes by the Spanish autonomous communities, like the Catalan *Estatut* of 2006, have been further opportunities for historical regions such as Catalonia to increase devolved powers and assert their international projection. And the quest for increased autonomy and the growing sense of national identity in Catalonia constitute further crucial clues likely to help us shed light and better comprehend the nature, advancement and future of Catalan-Spanish as well as Catalan-Moroccan relations.

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[99] This is a famous quote that Antoni Rovira i Virgili, a renowned Catalan politician and a respected historical figure, pronounced in 1915. See article: "Una proposta geopolítica i geoestratègica per a les relacions internacionals de la Catalunya del segle XXI", March 2010, Fundació CATmón.

Talking about Spanish-Catalan relations may be understandable to some extent considering the nature of the Spanish devolved state system that includes regions such as Catalonia and the Basque Country that boast advanced regional governments, strong nationalist identities and distinctive historical legacies. Analysing Moroccan-Catalan relations, however, may not sound so obvious, especially with regard to the nature of the two polities, Morocco's interests and orientations and the seemingly scarce issues of common interest that may necessitate the establishment of a fully-fledged "relationship". But the undertaking starts to make sense when objective reasons reflecting the pertinence of this relationship are considered: Both the old and the recent histories bear witness to the importance of the relationship between Morocco and Catalonia, with significant chapters in their past and present attesting to enduring impacts and long-held memories and impressions that go beyond the simple awareness of the existence of the other. Catalonia also happens to be a significant player both in Spanish political life, in the EU and in the Mediterranean. Its relations with Morocco constitute a priority compared to other Mediterranean countries. Besides, more than a third of Moroccan immigrants living in Spain reside in Catalonia, a region that barely constitutes 16% of the Spanish population. Moreover, more than a third of Spanish businesses operating in Morocco are Catalan (Aubarell, 2004b: 66), and the region's investments in Morocco represent almost a quarter of Spain's investments in Morocco. A growing network of civil society actors is equally contributing to the development of this bilateral relationship. Finally, Catalan Premiers and diplomats have traditionally played important political and economic roles in the Mediterranean region, have undertaken mediation roles between Spain and Morocco and have been received with honours in the Alawi Kingdom. Of all the other Spanish autonomous communities, only Andalucía (remotely followed by the Canary Islands and the Madrid region) might claim a status second to Catalonia.

This chapter will shed light on all these issues to try to gauge and evaluate this bilateral relationship and examine the extent to which it corresponds to and impacts Spain's relations with Morocco. But before touching upon that, the chapter will first take a look at some of the most significant distant and recent historical chapters that left their impact on the collective memories and discourses on both sides, and whose effects can still be detected to this day. This historical depiction will also underline the various recent initiatives that have brought the two sides closer since the 1980s. The chapter will also devote a section to the explanation of Catalan nationalism that is a key factor in making sense of the region's enthusiasm for establishing international relations as well as its approach, strategy and objectives in such endeavours. Moroccan migration to the autonomous region will equally be gauged and discussed, with a special focus on the issues where Catalonia has obvious competences such as immigrant outreach and integration. In this section, a discussion of Catalonia's influence on Spain's migration policies and its bargaining for further competences will also be discussed. The situation of the Moroccan contingent in Catalonia, its major characterising traits, employment conditions, social issues, integration and education levels will also be looked at. The chapter will equally highlight the increasing importance of business and trade relations between Catalonia and Morocco, as well as the growing economic opportunities and the top-down institutional roles especially undertaken from the Catalan side. The part played by the Catalan regional government *La Generalitat*, its agencies and the business associations, the degree to which they complement or oppose Spain's efforts, as well as the Moroccan evaluation and response to these initiatives will also be elucidated. Finally, the chapter will look at some aspects of institutional cooperation and civil society initiative and try to come up with some conclusions.

The historical perspective:

The first significant encounter between the Catalans and Arab and Berber forces coming from Morocco took place shortly after Tariq Ibn Ziyad first crossed the strait of Gibraltar in 711. By 718, Visigoth Catalonia would fall into the hands of the Muslim newcomers who only managed to control the region for less than a century, while holding a firmer grip on most parts of Spain, including some Catalan areas like the Ebro region that would not be forfeited until the beginning of the 12th Century. However, miscegenation and the social and cultural blending would go on for several centuries as the Muslim influence, the social evolution and the cultural transformation of the region "continued until the eventual expulsion of the Moriscos in the seventeenth century" (Catlos, 2004: 390). Another key event in the history of Catalonia that seems to have contributed to the emergence of the first traits of a Catalan national identity[100] is intimately related to another Moorish invasion. Indeed, a strong historical current in Catalonia sees in the July 985 breaching of the walls of Barcelona and subsequent sacking of the city by Al Mansur's armies coming all the way from Cordoba "a formative step in the creation of a Catalan national identity" due to the significant impact it had on the collective Catalan imaginary (Kosto, 2004: 1). The repeated unheeded appeals of Borrell II of Barcelona to the Frankish court for help with this new Arab invasion in return for renewed allegiance finally made the Catalans decide to go their own way by 988, planting the first seeds of Catalan nationalism (Zimmermann, 1983: 5-40; Freedman, 1989: 117-129, cited in Kosto 2004: 1-2). Interestingly enough, such events do not seem to have given rise to an underlying negativity towards the Moors the way they did in Spain. Finally, it is also significant that the coming together of the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile through the marriage of the "Catholic Kings" Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella I of Castile in 1469 was motivated by the objective to conquer the last Muslim kingdom of Granada, which was achieved in 1492. The union eventually had negative consequences for the crown of Aragon (and therefore Catalonia)[101] that was significantly overshadowed by Castile to the point that tensions resulted in the Catalan revolts of 1640 to 1652 against the crown of Philip IV (Guibernau, 2012: 157).[102]

While these may seem remote historical events with little impact on Catalan perceptions, the fact that the Catalan government decided to celebrate with fanfare the millennium commemoration of its national identity back in 1988 (García de Cortázar, 1988) shows the strong symbolism and impact that such historical events may have and how the Catalan nationalists can utilize them. Such events may not necessarily be collective historical memories surviving throughout the centuries, but they seem to be rediscovered or reinvented by Catalan nationalist intellectuals and political parties as new or renewed historical landmarks. Also, with regard to Morocco, these distant historical events are not likely to endear Morocco to the Catalans as these have largely been adverse historical chapters. It might be worth noting, however, that Catalan nationalism is generally asserted in opposition to Castile, and Spain in general (not Morocco), and that these historical events have not spawned such popular *fiestas* as *Moros y Cristianos*[103] famous in other regions of Spain that dramatize and perpetuate the image of the “Moro” as the “other”.

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[100] It is important to clarify at this stage that Catalonia as a name, a political entity or with its current borders did not exist at the time. It was rather a loosely united set of small kingdoms established around the County of Barcelona that constituted a buffer zone between the Muslim and the Frankish kingdoms. These small kingdoms mostly shared some common cultural and geographic traits and extend north to parts to today's France, while parts of today's Catalonia were still under Muslim rule.

[101] The union between the County of Barcelona and Aragon (under the Crown of Aragon) took place in 1089 and can be described as a "political" arrangement, with the blessing of Pope Urban II, aiming at conquering the Islamic emirate of Zaragoza, an objective that was achieved in 1118. It is also worth mentioning that during their union (1089 – 1716), Catalonia and Aragon each kept their own laws, language and assemblies. For more on the subject, see (Davies, 2011: 151-228).

[102] The revolts reached their peak with the so-called *Guerra dels Segadors* (Revolt of the Reapers) of June 7th 1640 that is considered by some Catalan historians as one of the first European nationalist revolutions (Guibernau, 2012: 157). It is also worth mentioning that the Catalan national anthem is called *Els Segadors* (the reapers), in reference to these revolts.

In the more recent history, the Moroccan question also had an impact on Catalonia and its population, directly or indirectly. One outstanding example of this is the important role that the Spanish humiliating defeat in the Annual battle in 1921[104] played in Miguel Primo de Rivera’s accession to power and the establishment of the 1923-1929 dictatorship. The consequences of this event (along with the ensuing widespread protests in Barcelona against conscription) were calamitous for the Catalans as it would deeply curtail their autonomy and usher in a dark era in their history (Chumillas i Coromina 2007: 18-22). The other more recent traumatic episode between the two was during the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War following the notorious contribution of the *Regulares* (the Moorish Guard), the 85 000 Moroccans who fought for General Franco against Republican regions such as Catalonia. These were greatly feared during the war because of their military prowess and were widely regarded as bloodthirsty and ruthless. The notorious roles they played during the war and the fall of Catalonia (1938-9), such as during the Ebro battle or the capitulation of Barcelona, also marked the Catalan collective mind (Esenwein: 154). These more recent encounters between Catalans and Moroccans are more vivid and partly contribute to the negative portrayal of the latter’s. The stereotypes evolved and worsened even further following the massive immigration of Moroccans to the region as will be discussed later.

More recently, however, and soon after the ratification of the new Spanish constitution in 1978 and the creation of the system of regional autonomies that include Catalonia, most of the initiatives to strengthen the Moroccan-Catalan bilateral relationship seemed to come mostly from Catalonia. In many ways, the paradox reflects Catalan pragmatism, quest for economic opportunities and a sense of anticipation of looming problems. The first initiatives and strategic orientations were outlined by former Catalan President of the *Generalitat* Jordi Pujol (1980-2003) who was among the first to promote a Spanish policy towards the Mediterranean in general, and towards Morocco in particular. Since the late 1980s, Pujol's Catalonia started having ambitions to see itself "emerging as a cohesive space in Europe and the Mediterranean" and considering the Maghreb region among the vehicles for its internationalization policy, with Morocco establishing itself as the focus of Catalonia's Mediterranean relations (Aubarell 2004a: 78). As early as 1987, for example, Barcelona hosted a meeting sponsored by the Aspen Institute of Italy, the Catalan autonomous government and the Barcelona City Council on Mediterranean development. From this meeting emerged the "Barcelona Declaration" that called for continued support from Europe to the countries of the southern rim of the Mediterranean with a view to avoiding grave disparities in the Mediterranean and in Europe at large.[105] Such early initiatives denote the pioneering role of Catalonia in the subsequent Euro-Mediterranean Process (or the Barcelona Process) and the idea of a shared area of prosperity in the western Mediterranean. In the same vein, Jordi Pujol and his government had constantly made the southern Mediterranean, and the Maghreb in particular, one of their priorities, working towards putting the issue both on the European and the Spanish agenda. In a speech in Tunis in 1991, Pujol reiterated Europe's and Spain's need to get involved in the region and in the development of the Maghreb in these terms:

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[103] The festivals are famous in the south of Spain and in Valencia. They are representations of the Christian “reconquest” of Spanish cities that were under Moorish rule.

[104] The battle of Annual occurred during Spain’s colonial period in northern Morocco (1912 – 1956). It saw 13000 Spanish soldiers defeated by some 3000 Moroccan resistance fighters. The defeat left a traumatic impact and led to a major political crisis in Spain and a redefinition of its colonial rule in Morocco.

> The northern Mediterranean countries will have to get prepared to face the cultural, social, economic and human problems that migration is likely to cause. *Most importantly, we have to undertake a huge effort to promote development aid for the Maghreb countries… For the sake of solidarity as well as self-interest*, Europe will have to contribute strongly to the development of the Maghreb… I think that Spain is now in a good position to launch the initiative. *It has been a while since Catalonia suggested to the Spanish government the usefulness to take the lead in such an initiative*. We still insist on this, knowing, as I said previously, that now is a good moment to do this.[106]

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[105] Speech by ex-president Jordi Pujol in Stockholm on November 5th 1987 titled "The political and economic importance of the north-western Mediterranean" (Paraules del President, 1987: 15).

[106] Speech by ex-president Jordi Pujol in Tunis on November 5th 1991 titled "La Mediterrania, les migracions i el desenvolupament economic" (Paraules del President, 1991: 380-381).

Pujol made three official visits to Morocco (in 1994, 2000 and 2001). His initiatives have continued almost unchanged by the subsequent governments of Pasqual Maragall (2003-2006), José Montilla (2006-2010) and Artur Mas (2010 - present). Within the Maghreb, Morocco was (and continues to be) Catalonia's main priority. The 2011-2014 development cooperation plan of the *Generalitat* reveals that the country continues to figure as the top "priority country" for Catalonia's foreign relations and cooperation, followed by Palestine, Western Sahara, and other African and Latin American countries (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2011). But far from being purely altruistic or driven by sheer solidarity, this prioritization has largely been motivated by "self-interest", as Pujol put it in the quote. We argue here that this self-interest has evolved over time and has been tightly linked to five main priorities: economic opportunism, security concerns, immigration control, international projection, and an ambition to influence Spanish politics and reap dividend. Indeed, solving the "problem" of the massive Moroccan immigration that was already looming in the 1980s and started to become a reality in the 1990s and 2000s is one of Catalonia's main priorities that will be further discussed. Getting the most out of the economic opportunities that the southern neighbours represent (including Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) is yet another objective driving Catalonia's prioritization of the Maghreb. Another priority towards the Maghreb is to pre-empt any problems likely to threaten the stability of the region for fear of security spill-overs. Finally, Catalonia's eagerness to be involved abroad and influence Spain's international relations through negotiation and compromise also translates its quest for internal influence and "international prestige and sympathy" that the opening quote by Rovira i Virgili refers to. Catalonia played a role in Spain as well by promoting and adopting a policy of engagement towards the Maghreb.[107] In so doing, Catalonia's preferred method was based on political influence from within the Spanish political framework (especially after 1993 and 1996 hung parliaments that forced the Socialist and Popular parties to pact with the Catalan CiU), offering support to the central governments in exchange for increased autonomy and political participation. In 1998, for example, when the number of immigrants in Spain was barely 700 000, CiU submitted a bill aimed at promoting immigrant integration and regulating future migratory flows that later culminated in the 2000 *Ley de Extranjería* (Aliens Act) (Enriquez 2011: 124). But before getting to grips with these issues, there is first a need to shed light on the most salient characteristics of Catalan identity and nationalistic drives, an exercise that is crucial for a better appreciation of these issues as well as the Catalan-Moroccan bilateral relationship.

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[107] Catalans are credited with their early engagement with Morocco and the Maghreb in general. For example, it was Pere Duran Farrell, a Catalan businessman, who first had the idea of a gas pipeline from Algeria to Spain via Morocco back in 1969. The idea took form long after his death and the gas pipeline now bears his name (Ghilès, 3013).

The rise of Catalan nationalism

It is important to realize that Catalonia, according to the nationalist discourse, is not a mere Spanish region but a full-fledged nation with distinct features: a typical culture and history; traditional institutions and local legal traditions; an ethnic consciousness and identity; and a distinctive socio-economic reality (Canal, 2011: 62). As alluded to earlier, nationalistic feelings in Catalonia, although intermittent, can be traced back over hundreds of years. More recently, however, calls for a federal Spain with a bottom-up construction of the state started emerging by the middle of the nineteenth century, promoted by such Catalan ideologues as Pi i Maragall. This gradually gathered momentum and gave rise to movements for cultural renaissance (*Renaixença*), including the revival of the Catalan language that had been neglected for more than two centuries prior to that. The movements "constituted the basis for political nationalism" (Muro and Quiroga, 2004: 23) and eventually culminated in a decade of relative self-rule under the administrative government of the *Mancomunitat* [108] (1913 - 1923) (Canal, 2011: 62), before being crushed by the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera. Led by Francesc Macia, Catalanism revived under the Second Spanish Republic (1931 – 1938) which granted the region a strong but limited autonomy before it was halted once again by General Francisco Franco's dictatorship. Forty years later, Catalonia recovered its autonomous government (*La Generalitat*), endorsing by referendum a new status of autonomy in 1979 (León, 2003:16-17; Guibernau, 2012: 157-8).

After 23 years under the moderate nationalist party coalition *Convergència i Unió (CiU)* (1980 to 2003) that was never openly advocating secessionism but sought incremental autonomy from within the central government, more radical political changes were initiated under the presidency of Pasquall Maragall after the November 2003 Catalan elections. The Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSC), in coalition with the Catalan Republican Left (ERC) and the Initiative for Catalonia-Greens (ICV), took over promising more social democratic policies but also bolder and more assertive policies towards Madrid. In fact, with the 2003 election, the Catalan political map was substantially redrawn especially after ERC (a political party that openly supports secessionism) became the third political force in the autonomy. The most distinctive initiative of Maragall was to call for the drafting of a more ambitious Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia than the one of 1979. An amended version of the Catalan Statute was indeed amendment in 2005 through negotiation at the level of the Spanish parliament, following a compromise between Spanish president Zapatero and the CiU. The amended version was endorsement by a popular referendum in Catalonia as well as 90% of the Catalan Parliament. However, following an appeal of the Popular Party and other national constituencies, the Spanish Constitutional Court finally watered down the newly adopted Statute in 2010, to the dismay of a large portion of the Catalan population and political elite (Guibernau, 2012: 160-3). Public consternation was made worse since the clauses that were particularly deemed unconstitutional were the ones relative to Catalan identity, nationalism and fiscal autonomy (references to Catalonia as a “nation”, reference to its “national” symbols, the preferential status and importance accorded to Catalan language, conditionality over Catalonia’s contribution to Spain’s “Solidarity Fund”, the possibility for it to raise its own taxes, etc., were especially amended) (Tornos Mas, 2011; Guibernau, 2012: 166-7). A general consensus among the Catalan political elite holds that the watering down of the Catalan Statute constituted a watershed moment. Many indeed say it represented a “before” and “after” phases in the Catalan nationalist discourse (Pujol, 2011; Canal, 2011: 68).

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[108] The *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* is an administrative liaison that was officially set up in 1914 in Barcelona to coordinate between the four main regions of Catalonia, referred to as *diputaciones* (Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida and Girona) (Conversi, 1997: 31).

As a matter of fact, voices calling for independence started to grow louder even before that as a result of a general feeling of political marginalization. The radicalization of the Catalan political panorama, concern over immigration and social issues, and the 2008 economic crisis conspired to make demands for secession all the more resounding. According to an opinion poll conducted by the Spanish Council of Sociological Research (CIS) in 2008, 35% of the Catalans were supporting independence, while some 45% opposed it and 20% were undecided (Belzunces, 2008), a significant shift compared to the hitherto timid support for independence.[109] In June and July 2010, two opinion polls (by El Periodico newspaper and the Noxa institute respectively) showed that support for independence among the Catalans had grown even more, and was, then, oscillating between 47 and 48 per cent, against 35 to 36 per cent who stood against it (Guibernau, 2012: 163-4). In June 2012, another opinion poll showed that 51% of the Catalans intended to vote in favour of independence.[110] Aside from popular disgruntlement and political radicalization, the rapid surge in support for independence over the last few years is also explained by Spain's and Catalonia's stifling economic crisis and the ever-increasing public debt. Not only did the Catalans start to feel the need to negotiate a new tax deal that would allow them to retain a higher share of the levies raised in their territory, especially in times of crisis, but there was also a growing frustration regarding the ingratitude and even hostility of the rest of Spain towards the Catalans because of their demands in the context of a difficult situation.[111] Reminiscent of the 2010 march in Barcelona that gathered over a million Catalan demonstrators resentful towards the watering down of their Statute, an estimated 1.5 million people joined a protest rally on September 11th 2012 in Barcelona in support of some form of independence.[112] Faced with the mounting wave of protests, the reluctance of the central government to make concessions or even negotiate demands for a new financial mechanism similar to the one in force in Euskadi and Navarra, and sensing a unique opportunity to bolster his party's popularity, the leader of the reputedly moderate nationalist coalition party (CiU), Artur Mas, dissolved the parliament and called for new elections, promising to hold a referendum on self-determination, if re-elected.

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[109] On average, overall support for independence in Catalonia was less than 20% between 1991 and 2007 (Civit i Carbonell 2013: 21)

The roots of the mounting support for Catalan independence, however, go back at least a decade before that, especially following Prime Minister Aznar's landslide victory in March 2000. One of the implications of that victory entailed that the Popular Party no longer needed the support of other parties for a parliamentary majority, unlike during its previous mandate when it relied on the backing of such regional parties as CiU. As a result, the PP's previously open attitude towards Catalan claims was replaced by "a neo-centralist political discourse charged with conservative overtones. During its [second] mandate, the PP was dismissive of claims for greater autonomy for the historical nationalities and adopted an arrogant attitude towards former political allies" (Guibernau, 2012: 164). This has, directly or indirectly, contributed to the rise of the leftist republican party ERC as the third political force in Catalonia in the 2003 Catalan elections (the second in the 2012 elections) and the subsequent replacement of the twenty three-long political dominance of CiU in Catalonia (1980 – 2003) by the tripartite (PSC, ERC and ICV) that lasted for almost eight years (2003 – 2010).

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[110] See The Economist Article "Europe's next independent state?" (22 September 2012).

NB. Although these comparisons do not emanate from surveys by a single organization asking precisely the same questions, the disparities remain nevertheless significant.

[111] Such frustrations came up in a number of interviews and may explain the recent rise in nationalistic feelings in Catalonia since 2008. An interviewee expressed the feeling in the following terms: "I was never a supporter of Catalonia's Independence, I even used to ridicule those who talked about secession. But now that I see the degree of unfairness and the way people in Madrid are calling us tight-fisted, arrogant and selfish after all the years we spent supporting the poor regions in this country, I feel more independentist now tan ever before." (Interview with Catalan university official 04 September 2012).

[112] See Time magazine article "Barcelona Warns Madrid: Pay Up, or Catalonia Leaves Spain" (11 September 2012).

Besides Catalonia's political marginalization by the central government (rectified to a certain extent during the Zapatero years), and the downgrading of its Statute by the Spanish Constitutional Court, the acute sense of nationalism also grew during the last decade as a result of other factors such as the increasing migration and the perceived significant Catalan financial contribution to the poorer regions of Spain in a context of increased economic difficulties. Indeed (as will be explained later), migration especially from Latin America, Morocco and Eastern Europe increased the Catalan population by almost 1 million between 2000 and 2010. The percentage of immigrants living there increased from less than 3% of the total population to almost 15% (OECD Review, 2008: 8). But in spite of the considerable contribution of immigrants to the enhancement of the Catalan economy, immigration keeps being considered among the top concerns of the population besides unemployment and the economic and housing crises (although these two issues have gained prominence after 2008). Indeed, as in the rest of Spain, immigration is viewed by the nationalists as a menace to the social, linguistic and cultural cohesion of the community, and to job security, especially since the 2008 economic crisis. The limited say that the Catalan regional government has over issues of immigration undoubtedly increased its desire for more autonomy over such issues threatening its sense of identity. Finally, the perceived increasing net contribution of Catalonia to the Spanish coffers, and its lack of control over fiscal matters (provided for by the Spanish constitution to the Basque Country and Navarra) were probably the most important factors behind the strong resurgence of Catalan nationalism over the last decade and the ensuing secessionist claims, especially since 2008 with the aggravation of Spain's sovereign debt, the deepening economic crisis, the stubbornly high year on year deficit and the rocketing unemployment rates (Kennedy, 2012: 679). Between 2007 and 2009, the Catalan government estimates its net fiscal contribution to the central government at over 8% of the region's GDP, peaking at 17.2 billion Euros in 2008 (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2012a: 55). Although such calculations are disputed by some economists, the fact remains that the net contribution to the central government (within the framework of the so-called "solidarity clause") started to be felt especially acutely among the Catalans at a moment of increased austerity, economic recession, worsening credit ratings, increased cuts in health care, education and other social services. It should be noted, however, that within the wider Spanish context, Catalonia's situation is far from being exceptional since several regions are in a similar situation, contributing more to the system than they get from it.

Immigration

Between 1999 and 2009, Catalonia's population grew by 1,259,890, jumping from 6,207,533 to 7,467,423. While the growth among the native population (i.e. those holding Spanish nationality) accounted for 17.5% of the total increase, the growth among the immigrant population, which exceeds a million in the autonomous community, accounted for 82.5% (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009a: 13-15). Among these, the Moroccan migrant contingent, with a population exceeding 280 000 in 2012 (up from less than 3500 in 1986, 72 748 in 2000 and 135 976 in 2004), constitutes by far the largest cluster of immigrants (See Figure 5.1). Romanians (the biggest immigrant community in Spain) come a distant second with a contingent of less than 90 000 in 2010. Moroccan immigrants in Catalonia, thus, constitute about 25% of the total number of immigrants in the autonomous community. They consistently have been the main immigrant group in Catalonia since the mid-1990s. At the national level, these figures do not correlate as the size of the Moroccan immigrant population, though important (at 754 080 in 2010), comes second to the Romanian (831 235 immigrant),[113] and constituted around 13% of Spain's immigrant population in 2010 (5,747,734). Therefore, more than 33% of Moroccan immigrants in Spain reside in Catalonia, a region that constitutes less than 16% of the total Spanish population.

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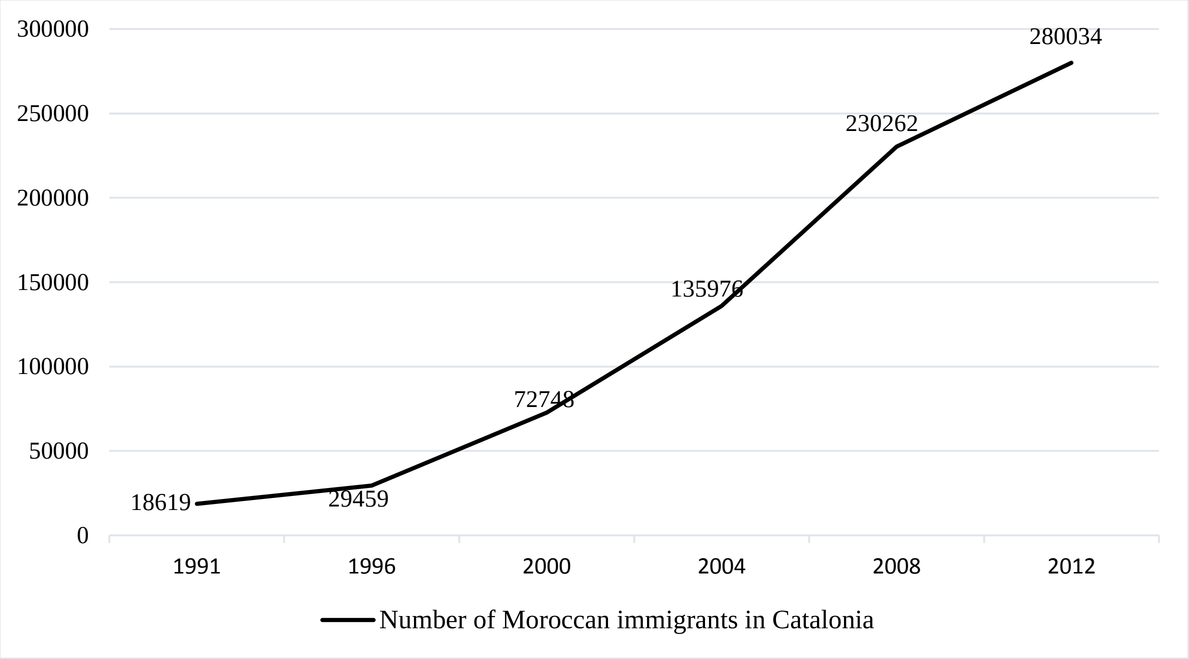
[113] See *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE) report "Avance del Padrón municipal a 1 de enero de 2011".

Figure 5.1 - Evolution of the number of Moroccan immigrants in Catalonia (1991-2012)



Source: Author's graph based on statistical data from Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (Idescat).

Probably the main reason behind the high concentration of Moroccan immigrants in Catalonia is its attractive labour market. But alone, the labour market may not sufficiently account for the phenomenon, for other reasons such as social and family networks, regional immigration policy, and even a comparatively higher openness towards North African immigration are not to be discarded. Indeed, despite a mounting wave of xenophobia against Muslims (Amnesty International, 2012: 84-89), a number of 2012 interviews offer indicative evidence of the extent to which Moroccans feel comparatively more "tolerated" in Catalonia compared to the rest of Spain. "Here at least, we are treated with some dignity. I used to live in Alicante, and the treatment of Moroccans there was worse. In fact, here you are more likely to feel racism from a non-Catalan Spaniard than from a Catalan".[114] Catalonia's economic attraction and immigration network dynamics,[115] however, remains the main reason behind this concentration. The community bears an added importance as its sheer size makes it, by default, the representative of the wider Arab and Muslim communities living in

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[114] Interview conducted by the author with a Moroccan social assistant working at Barcelona courts as translator for Moroccan immigrants (04 September 2012).

[115] A study by Jordi Moreras found that Moroccan immigration to Catalonia, as to other regions of Spain, follows certain trends linked to the geographic origins of immigrants. For example, there is a greater concentration of immigrants from certain Moroccan cities such as Nador, Larache and Tangier living in the region (Moreras, 2004: 310-311).

Catalonia (Aubarell 2004b: 68). However, in spite of the relatively more hospitable conditions that Catalonia offers, the Moroccan contingent remains among the least desired immigrant groups and remains far from being integrated both for self-induced and external reasons. The discrimination against Muslims and the limited integration of the Moroccan contingent largely due to cultural, linguistic and educational factors are probably the most outstanding reasons (on which more later).

Immigration is an area where the autonomous government of Catalonia has limited prerogatives, and even though the June 18th 2006 *Estatut* conferred some additional powers on the *Generalitat*, the key immigration responsibilities such as visa issuance, work permits, regularisation of the status of illegal immigrants, etc. are still largely within the competence scope of the Spanish central government. Article 138 of the *Estatut* does, however, devolve further powers to Catalonia including immigrant outreach, reception, guidance, and integration, as well as a partial say in the issuance of work permits for foreigners whose employment is in Catalonia (in coordination with the central government) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009a: 62-63). But these powers hardly bear any significance with regard to more decisive issues such as providing Catalonia with a major say in selecting or regularizing the situation of its immigrants. The margin available to the Catalan Government through its new Statute, therefore, barely allows it to develop programmes and government actions to try to target desired sources of immigration. Despite this limited scope of competence, the *Generalitat* invests huge efforts and resources to attract a skilled and qualified workforce and to insure the successful integration of its immigrants founded upon the promotion of a Catalanist/nationalist identity that is mainly driven by language learning, as will be further explained.

Catalonia's immigrant outreach endeavours have mainly concentrated on Morocco, Eastern Europe and Latin America. In 2003, the Convergence and Union (CiU) former government established a Catalan delegation in Casablanca called (*Xarxa d'Informació i Selecció Laboral en Origen* or *XILA* -Information and Labour Selection Network in Countries of Origin) for the purpose of selecting potential qualified Moroccan migrants (similar offices were also set up in Poland and Colombia). The idea behind the establishment of the office was not to increase the number of Moroccan immigrants but rather to target and attract the most skilled among them and equip them with the necessary linguistic and cultural skills for their integration. This office, therefore, served as a training and guidance centre for Moroccan workers seeking to migrate to Catalonia, thus providing a different approach to immigrant outreach. But this initiative, along with the opening of the government office in Casablanca, was not without controversy with Madrid since the central government saw these offices as quasi-embassies, thus creating a sovereignty conflict. These offices were consequently declared unconstitutional and the Spanish Constitutional Court called for their closure (Larroque, 2012).

Another immigration-related, albeit dwindling, phenomenon that the autonomous government has been concerned about and the subject of considerable press coverage as well as Moroccan-Catalan cooperation is the illegal immigration of unaccompanied minors. The issue had prompted a series of official contacts, including the 2001 visit to Morocco of Jordi Pujol (thought to have been encouraged by Aznar as it took place during difficult bilateral relations between Rabat and Madrid). During the visit, Pujol called upon Morocco to accept the repatriation of the minors and urged it to step up its migration controls.[116] The problem was particularly sensitive as it affected a vulnerable group of unprotected and undocumented underage immigrants that could not be treated the same way as regular illegal immigrants. The Catalan government and NGOs (such as Fundació Jaume Bofill and Association Ibn Batuta) tried to learn from the French experience and the experience of other Spanish regions such as Andalucía, and multiplied their efforts and contacts with Moroccan officials and NGOs (such as Association Darna in Tangier) to find a solution to the problem (Quiroga, 2002). Eventually, a programme called "Catalunya-Magrib" was elaborated in 2006 and funded by the Catalan government, the EU and the Moroccan government for the prevention, repatriation and training of Moroccan unaccompanied underage illegal immigrants. In 2009, the total budget for this programme exceeded 3.5 million Euros.[117] This issue remains important in Catalan-Moroccan relations, although the number of registered underage illegal immigrants decreased from its 2003 peak of 1100 to reach 580 cases in 2006 and 466 in 2007 (Aubarell 2004a: 79). The phenomenon was also serious in other autonomous communities such as Andalucía, Canarias and the Basque Country (Quiroga 2009: 39).

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[116] See El País article “Pujol reclama a Marruecos más control policial sobre sus fronteras” (15 February 2001).

[117] For more details on this Project, see http://www.catalunyamagrib.cat/. Also see Generalitat article: “El Programa Catalunya-Magrib de la Generalitat gradua els primers menors marroquins que han rebut formació” (04 March 2009).

Yet another area where Catalonia has been seeking to play an increasing role is integration of immigrants. The issue has been particularly significant since it is intimately tied to Catalan identity, culture, language and nationalistic aspirations. In its ‘nation-building’ process, successive Catalan governments have been promoting differentiated national identity characteristics distinct from the ones associated with Spain; they have put in place integration strategies for their immigrants based on this vision. The various integration plans (1993-2000, 2001-2004, 2005-2008, as well as the National Pact on Immigration signed in 2008) designed by the CiU and ERC (the two political parties that were in charge of integration issues) have been largely driven by nationalist/Catalanist integration policies. In essence, a successful integration also meant embracing the Catalan cultural and linguistic identity, a basic message that rallied most of the political hues in Catalonia (Larroque, 2012). A key aspect of this paradigm is the Catalan language, the main national integration instrument. Indeed, language is so closely linked to nationalism in Catalonia that many experts talk about Catalan “linguistic nationalism” (Boyer, 2004; Zapata-Barrero, 2008: 144). Catalonia devotes a third of its linguistic policy budget to Catalan “welcome classes” for the benefit of new immigrants. Mastery of Catalan language certainly increases immigrants’ integration chances and makes a difference in the labour market, but most immigrants see little added value in learning the language (Larroque, 2012), which may be due to the temporary nature of some labour migration in Catalonia and the fact that most immigrants by far prefer to invest efforts in learning Spanish rather than Catalan. Another reason may also be attributed to Catalans themselves and their tendency to use Spanish, rather than Catalan, when conversing with immigrants.[118] For Catalonia, however, the issue bears almost existential implications as the survival of the Catalan culture (therefore Catalanism and nationalism) almost hinges on a successful promotion of the language.

The issue of integration is, therefore, a crucial, complex and problematic matter mainly owing to cultural, social, linguistic and educational reasons. As far as the Moroccan population is concerned, it remains far from being assimilated into Catalan society both for external and autogenous reasons. For example, among the characteristics of the Moroccan immigrant population in Catalonia (shared with other immigrant contingents) is the phenomenon of “cultural ghettos”. Moroccans tend to favour living within cultural clusters inside cities and in small towns. In many Catalan towns, Moroccans constitute an important percentage of the population (Ullà 25.1%, Manlleu 16.8%, Salt 15.1%, etc.) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009b). Another important factor is the contingent's limited educational achievements which affect their integration, professional prospects and social mobility. Out of almost 15 000 Moroccans aged between 16 and 20, barely 2000 pursue secondary education, reflecting the alarmingly small number of Moroccan immigrants that go beyond the stage of compulsory education (typically from 6 to 16 years of age).[119]

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[118] This observation was made by former Generalitat President Jordi Pujol in an interview with the author (05 September 2012).

The 2008 economic crisis in Spain exposed this vulnerability and the precarious working conditions of this group. Shortly before the crisis hit Spain, the rate of unemployment among Moroccans in Catalonia was below 15% in 2007 (compared to 5% among Spanish citizens and 12% among other immigrant groups). By 2009 their unemployment rate jumped to 44% (compared to 12.7% among Spaniards and 30% among other immigrants) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009b). These figures reflect the Moroccans' comparatively low educational and skill levels, lack of integration and the bias against the group, as the CIS and the *Real Instituto Elcano* polls indicate (see Chapter 4). Other features that set the Moroccan immigrant population apart are its high birth rate (11% of the population are babies aged 0 to 4 years), its youth (the average age is 27 years compared to an average of 42 years among the native population) and the high percentage of men compared to that of women (156 men for 100 women, which is also typical among other Muslim immigrant communities in Catalonia such as the Pakistani and Malian) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009b).

The group's lack of integration as well as its ethnic and religious difference exposes it to various types of stereotypes and discrimination as well. Moroccans or "Moros"[120] in Catalonia, as in the rest of Spain, are often associated with the least favoured group of immigrants (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion). At times, they are even subjected to various kinds of social and cultural marginalization, segregation and even aggression.

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[119] From experience while living in Tarragona (south of Barcelona) and volunteering with *Fundació Pere Tarrés*, a non-profit organization dedicated to educational action, the author noticed first-hand the difficulties of convincing Moroccan children and parents to pursue further education as they were more attracted or contrived to seek employment opportunities to help with family finances, or because they failed to perceive the added value of further education.

[120] A derogatory term that generally refers to populations of Muslim origin, especially north Africans and Moroccans.

Illustrations of these abound, but some of the most iconic examples of discrimination are the cases of Catalan towns and neighbourhoods (such as Premià de Mar, Badalona, Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Poble Sec, and Salt) protesting against the building of mosques in their vicinity (Hernandez-Carr, 2011a: 102-3; Amnesty International, 2012:80). Also, cases of violent behaviour, although rare, do exist as well. Examples of these are incidents that took place in 1999 and 2003 in Ca n'Anglada, a neighbourhood of Terrassa (a town in the province of Barcelona) with a high concentration of Moroccan immigrants. The incidents involved various acts of racism, attacks with Molotov cocktails, and stabbing, all perpetrated by young skinheads.[121] Particularly worrying, however, is the rise of xenophobic political movements such as *Plataforma per Catalunya* (PxC) and *Vía Democrática* whose discourse is primarily anti-immigrant and anti-Moroccan. Places where these movements have thrived also happen to be those with a high concentration of Moroccan immigrants, such as Vic, Manlleu, El Vendrell, l'Hospitalet de Llobragat, Mataró and Santa Coloma de Gramanet. While lacking parliamentary representation, these political groups have been extending their sphere of influence since 2007, culminating in the autonomous and municipal elections of 2010 and 2011, respectively. In 2010, for example, PxC achieved 75000 votes (2.42% of the total), compared to less than 5000 votes it had obtained back in 2003 (Hernandez-Carr, 2011b). The economic crisis in Spain certainly accounts for a good part of this rise in xenophobic movements. However, the phenomenal surge and the rapid expansion of such, hitherto, unknown openly racist groups in Catalonia constitute serious worries for Moroccan immigrants and deal a severe blow to Spanish and Catalan exceptionalism in such matters.

> Since 2008 Moroccan immigrants are the victims of all sorts of negative repercussions. They are the ones being fired the most, they are the ones blamed for the crisis and joblessness and are increasingly subjected to acts of racism. Not a week goes by without hearing of at least an incident involving assaults against Moroccans. What is strange is that these incidents happen in our own neighbourhoods and are often perpetrated by non-Catalan Spaniards.[122]

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[121] See El País articles “Los 'skins' vuelven a Ca n'Anglada” and “Olvidar Ca n'Anglada” (15 May 2003).

[122] Interview conducted by the author with a Moroccan social assistant working at Barcelona courts as translator for Moroccan immigrants (04 September 2012).

Such testimonials clearly denote the link between such incidents and the current economic crisis in Spain. The fact that such acts are perpetrated by other Spanish immigrant groups may denote that these originate from social groups who see the Moroccan contingent as the main source of competition in the labour market. The same observation was highlighted by an official at the *Generalitat* who mentioned that over 90% of the members PxC are not Catalan but other Spanish citizens who migrated to Catalonia in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and that they mainly hail from such neighbourhoods as Santa Coloma de Gramanet.[123] It remains unclear, however, whether such declarations are founded on empirical evidence or are personal impressions.

With the frantic mobilization around independence in Catalonia that accentuated in 2012 and a possible referendum in the offing, immigrants have, all of a sudden, become a central piece in the equation. The final result of the plebiscite on independence remains uncertain, which explains the relentless offensive by parties of all political hues to win over the sympathy of the immigrants who represent more than 15% of the Catalan population[124] (although it still remains unclear whether a referendum would be open to legal resident immigrants, i.e. non-citizens).[125] In many ways, Catalan nationalists fear a Quebec scenario where a motion to secede from Canada was very narrowly defeated in 1995 (50.58% to 49.42%), with the migrant vote proving decisive (Mumme and Duncan, 1996: 86-89). The Moroccan contingent is among the groups being especially targeted by such campaigns, with promises of better conditions and treatment by Catalanist campaigners.[126] Defenders of Spanish unity, on the other hand, sketch a scenario of possible marginalization and loss of acquired rights for immigrants (nationality or residency permits) should Catalonia become independent.[127] The Moroccan and Spanish governments are not standing neutral in this debate. Rabat fears the implications of a seceding Catalonia on the status of the Sahara, especially given that the Catalan form of autonomy had long been trumpeted as a model to follow within the framework of Morocco's autonomy proposal for the Sahara. And Madrid indirectly fights all forms of Catalan nationalist campaigns, including those directed at immigrants,[128] in a bid to weaken Catalonia's independence movement.

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[123] Interview conducted by the author with a Moroccan social assistant working at Barcelona courts as translator for Moroccan immigrants (06 September 2012).

[124] See the Catalan Statistics Institute at http://www.idescat.cat/poblacioestrangera/?b=0 .

[125] See the New York Times article "Immigrants have helped set Catalonia apart in Spain" (31 October 2012).

[126] Inaugurated in 2012, the headquarters of Fundació Nous Catalans (foundation new Catalans), a Catalan Government-backed establishment that regroups representations of various immigrant communities living in Catalonia. The establishment offers a space for various immigrant groups to meet and organize activities. But, as its name suggests, it is used to promote the Catalan identity and culture. One of its active groups is the "Catalano-Moroccan" units that has been used as a platform to promote a nationalistic discourse, including in mosques, schools and homes. See the unit's webpage at: http://www.nouscatalans.cat/component/contingut/categoria/espai-catalanomarroqui

[127] See El País article: "Atraer al inmigrante al 'Estat propi'" (17 November 2012).

The Economy

The geographical proximity between Morocco and Catalonia, increasing business opportunities, mutual political will as well as the long and consolidated economic relations between the two partners have contributed to making Catalonia Morocco's first economic partner in Spain since the 1980s. Between 2000 and 2009, imports and exports between the two have consistently been around 22% of the total exchanges with the Spanish state, slightly higher that Catalonia's share of Spanish GDP. In 2010 and 2011, new records were registered with Moroccan exports to Catalonia accounting for almost 25% and imports around 23% of trade exchanges with the northern neighbour. Also, Catalan investments between 2000 and 2011 represented 23.6% of total Spanish investments in Morocco (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2012b: 5-6), and firms hailing from the autonomous community started representing some 40% of the Spanish firms active in Morocco.[129] The Catalan government, its Chamber of Commerce, business associations such as PIMEC as well as government business agencies such as ACC1Ó (which established an office in Casablanca in 1990 providing support to hundreds of Catalan firms) have been reinforcing their cooperation strategies with Morocco since the 1980s. The business opportunities for Catalan companies are spread across various sectors ranging from agriculture and food industry to tourism, energy, infrastructure, construction, off-shoring, renewable energy, chemical industry, telecommunications and textiles (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2007).[130] The companies active in Morocco, however, are mostly SMEs, despite the existence of big companies in Catalonia. The business opportunities not only derive from the geographical proximity and complementarities of the economies but also from the comparatively cheaper and reasonably skilled Moroccan workforce, the opportunities afforded by the Free Trade Agreements that Morocco signed with the United States, Turkey, Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt, as well the access tariff advantage that Morocco has based on its 2000 Association Agreement with the EU. In 2008, Joaquim Llimona, formerly responsible for external relations at the *Generalitat* and president of the PIMEC international commission, said that "Morocco is the most strategic country for us. Our economic exchanges are in net progression… We are assisting over 100 Catalan businesses in Morocco, mainly in the north of the country".[131] In fact, for decades and especially with the economic crisis hitting Spain since 2008, Catalonia seems to have increasingly directed its focus towards its southern partner, relying on Morocco's potential for growth, and aligning itself on Rabat's development strategies. Most of the Catalan business endeavours correspond to such Moroccan strategies as "Maroc Vert" (aiming at developing the agricultural sector), "Plan Emergence" (aiming at reinforcing and modernizing the Moroccan industrial sector, particularly off-shoring, automotive industry, aeronautics, electronics, textile, agricultural and food industry), and "Plan Azur" (aiming at converting the country into one of the twenty top tourist destinations in the world by doubling its hosting capacity) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2012b: 8).

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[128] See El País article: "El agente 007 de Marruecos en Cataluña" (19 May 2013).

[129] See article in Diario Calle de Agua "La patronal catalana programa una visita a Marruecos en el próximo mes de mayo", (05 February 2010).

[130] See also the Catalan Chamber of Commerce, Presentation note on Morocco (17 January 2011) available at: http://www.cambrabcn.org/pai08/downloadPdf?pdfId=22629 (accessed 6 March 2012).

The increase in trade and economic relations is also partly due to the consolidation of institutional relations and mutual political will. Following Jordi Pujol's footsteps, the two subsequent socialist Catalan presidents adhered to equally dynamic political and economic strategies towards Rabat. Pasqual Maragall made two official visits to the country (2004 and 2006) [132] where he sought to consolidate bilateral economic and institutional relations. In 2008 José Montilla visited the country with a delegation of over 60 Catalan businesses,[133] and in 2012, Artur Mas, leading a delegation of some 120 businessmen, also chose Morocco as his first destination outside of the European Union. His trip was largely business-oriented with a delegation made up of entrepreneurs hailing from the construction and services sectors, where Morocco is planning some €10 billion investment package over the 2010 –

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[131] See l'Economiste article : « Les PME catalanes intéressées par l'ALE Maroc-USA » (7 July 2008).

[132] See El País article: "Maragall visita Marruecos para reforzar los lazos euromediterráneos" (16 January 2006).

[133] See article on the Generalitat de Catalunya website: "Una seixantena d'empreses catalanes viatgen al Marroc per estrènyer llaços comercials i estudiar noves inversions" (07 April 2008).

2020 period.[134] It is unclear whether such high-level visits actually achieve their declared economic objectives, but they nevertheless remain significant political gestures.

Morocco, on the other hand, while showing no indication of a coherent and thorough business strategy towards Catalonia, remains predisposed and open to Catalan initiatives so long as they do not cause it any frictions with Madrid, Rabat's main priority in this equation. "All our dealings with our Catalan counterparts are coordinated with the Spanish embassy [in Rabat]"[135] said an official at the Moroccan foreign ministry when asked about the level of involvement of the Spanish authorities in Catalan-Moroccan relations. Rabat also values Barcelona's role as an intermediary in Morocco's bilateral relations with Madrid and is aware of the economic opportunities involved in maintaining good relations with Catalonia. The Catalan director general for development cooperation at the Generalitat told a revealing anecdote in an interview in 2012. During his visit to Morocco after the Laayoun events of November 2010 which negatively affected relations between Morocco and Spain, the Spanish ambassador in Morocco conveyed to him a message from former Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero to the newly elected president of the *Generalitat* Artur Mas, asking the latter to act as an intermediary and help in the improvement of relations between Madrid and Rabat.[136] This role is in fact a continuation of a long tradition mainly initiated by Jordi Pujol.[137] But the rosy trade indicators and the ever increasing business and institutional relations conceal other less encouraging aspects, some of which bring about scepticism and even scorn.

For Catalans, the positive aspects associated with Morocco, including lower production costs, proximity, an open market, political stability and a convenient entry point to other markets in the region, are often counterweighted by a host of negative factors. These include rampant poverty, illiteracy, cultural and linguistic barriers, red tape and corruption. Indeed, a number of Catalan entrepreneurs as well as representatives of the Catalan business agencies active in the country identify the three last points as particularly off-putting and depriving the country of further Catalan investment inflows. This was reflected by a number of interviewees. A Catalan businessman active in Morocco explained how “Catalan investors need a longer time and a lot of patience to adapt to the Moroccan context... They need to speak at least French and need to understand that business in Morocco happens at the personal level... you have to invest a lot in the personal relationships and learn to appreciate the culture”.[138] Another interviewee explained how “business deals in Morocco are often sealed face-to-face around a dinner table... part of it is to understand the culture”.[139] An official in charge of Africa and the Middle East at the Catalan agency ACC1Ó explained that bureaucracy and especially corruption are often reported among the serious problems mentioned by Catalan investors.[140] These aspects seem to restrict the economic growth potential in this relationship and might explain the gap between the official efforts and enthusiasm, and the reality on the ground.

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[134] See El País article: "Artur Mas viaja a Marruecos con 120 empresarios catalanes" (28 February 2012).

[135] Interview conducted by the author with a Moroccan official at the ministry of foreign affairs (15 August 2012).

[136] Interview conducted by the author with director general for development cooperation at the *Generalitat* (06 September 2012).

[137] In an interview conducted with former president of the Generalitat Jordi Pujol (05 September 2012), he confirmed to the author the intermediation role during times of crises and the reinforcement role during periods of cooperation that his government used to play between Spain and Morocco. He mentioned as an example his three-day visit to Morocco in 2001 to try to intervene during the early stages of the crisis between Spain and Morocco. He was received by the King and thanked for his efforts through the award of the Alaui Wissam (A Royal medal awarded to distinguished endeavours).

From the Moroccan perspective, different kinds of issues are raised but they largely echo complaints levied against Spanish firms in general. There is a general feeling that the country is perceived by its Catalan (and Spanish) counterparts as a mere outlet where merchandise can be sold, that Moroccan business collaborators are not perceived as equals but merely as potential “agents” who would help in getting Catalan products into the Moroccan market for a fee, that there are not enough employment-boosting projects or joint-ventures and that the investment levels in the country remain derisory.[141] Indeed, such observations find support elsewhere. Various interviews with Catalan business people, agency representatives and in their brochures and literature make reference to expressions such as: “sell our products”, “access the market”, “open franchises”, “provide material and equipment”. In contrast, there is little of what Moroccan counterparts seem to favour, in terms of peer-to-peer relationships, developing partnerships and joint-ventures, creating employment opportunities, technology and know-how transfer, etc.

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[138] Interview conducted by the author with a Catalan investor in Morocco (28 June 2012).

[139] Interview conducted by the author with a Catalan investor in Morocco (30 June 2012).

[140] Interview conducted by the author with the consultant for internationalization and African and Middle Eastern Markets at ACC1Ó (05 September 2012).

[141] As indicated in Chapter three, overall Spanish FDI at 3 billion Euros between 1993 and 2008, represents less than 5% of the country’s total international investments.

Macroeconomic data on economic relations and the level of investments between Catalonia (as well as Spain) and Morocco also reflects these concerns. Between 2000 and 2011 not only did Morocco maintain a negative trade balance with Catalonia (€ 5.4 billion to € 6.7 billion), but the level of investments and job creation also remained puny. During the same period, Catalan investments averaged less than € 65 million per year (23.6% of the total Spanish investments in the country) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2012b: 7), a fraction compared to investments made by some Gulf countries such as the UAE and Qatar, or the remittances of Moroccans living in Spain.[142] As one Moroccan official in the Ministry of foreign affairs put it, "Spain and Catalonia are indeed becoming primary trade partners, but Morocco still sustains a deficit in this relationship... the level of their investment remains much less significant than the hype made around it".[143] Clearly, for Catalonia, the more significant economic opportunities do not lie in the southern Mediterranean, but Morocco still remains the large fish in a regional pond. However, such disparities between discourse and reality may reflect an over-sell of the relationship as a whole.

Just as Catalonia multiplies its official visits to Morocco, Moroccan officials also organize formal and informal visits to Barcelona (with prior coordination with Madrid). These visits are usually opportunities to strengthen official ties, promote Moroccan initiatives, lobby for special projects such as Morocco's autonomy proposal for the Sahara, reach out to Moroccan immigrants, or encourage economic ties and promote Catalan investments in the country. The relationship also includes cultural and religious cooperation given that the Moroccan immigrant contingent constitutes the biggest Muslim community in Catalonia. It is even believed that Morocco works towards extending its influence over the Moroccan immigrant community using religion through such organizations as the *Federación Española de*

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[142] Although remittances from Spain barely account for 11% of what the country receives from abroad (see Al-Monitor article "Euro Crisis Sends Moroccan Workers Packing", in 2006 Morocco received close to €520 million in remittances from Spain (the share of Catalonia being 35 to 40% of the total). See United Nations document on Moroccan migration to Spain at http://www.un-instraw.org/data/media/documents/Remittances/UNDP%20project%20local%20dev/1-FACT%20SHEET%20MOROCCO-ENweb.pdf (accessed 16 November 2012).

[143] Interview conducted by the author with a Moroccan official at the ministry of foreign affairs (14 August 2012).

Entidades Religiosas Islámicas (the Federation of Islamic Religious Entities in Spain) at the Spanish level and the *Consell Islàmic Cultural de Catalunya* (The Islamic Cultural Council of Catalonia) at the Catalan level.[144]

The formal relationships, however, do not seem to yield ground-breaking or original ways of boosting economic relations or solving migration problems. While certainly facilitating relations and constituting important cooperation frameworks, official visits at times seem out of touch with reality or missing valuable opportunities. Arguably, both Catalonia and Morocco have suffered in their relations from being over-bureaucratised; thus much of the official effort is self-serving and not sufficiently achievement-oriented. For example, both Spanish and Catalan representatives seem to place a disproportional emphasis on the meeting with the monarch during their official visits, even if this is of substantive as well as symbolic significance. Some of the most creative and fruit-bearing initiatives, however, seem to emanate from outside the state. Cases in point were revealed through interviews that demonstrated, on the one hand, the degree of resourcefulness of individuals and independent institutions, and on the other hand the limited vision and field of action available to government. For example, three interviewees pointed to the untapped potential between Morocco and Catalonia in the context of the current financial crisis,[145] a context that can (and is proving to be) propitious rather than deleterious to economic relations.

Institutional cooperation and civil society

At the institutional and civil society levels, Catalonia and Morocco have also been active, signing partnership agreements, increasing cooperation, and stepping up exchanges between associations and other civil society actors. In the area of cooperation and development projects, Morocco is clearly Catalonia's priority (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010: 42215).

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[144] See El Pais article: "Marruecos utiliza la religión para controlar a sus inmigrantes en España" 2 August 2011.

[145] One of the interviewees (Interview with a Moroccan-Catalan investor in Barcelona -28 June 2012-) pointed to the fact that many unemployed Moroccan immigrants in Spain are currently receiving meagre unemployment benefits (some 420 Euros a month), when there is an opportunity for both governments to consolidate these funds with Moroccan start-up funds in the form of investment packages (rather than hand-outs as the Spanish government offered in 2008). That would likely offer better opportunities to these unemployed immigrants, boost investment opportunities in Morocco, benefit Morocco with the immigrants' know-how and skills acquired in Spain and reduce the number of unemployed immigrants in Spain. Instead, these immigrants are idly depleting their accumulated benefits, and governments are wasting valuable opportunities and time. Another interviewee (Interview with the director of a Moroccan bank with an office in Barcelona -04 September 2012-) referred to the May 2012 three-day visit of Moroccan head of government Abdelilah Benkirane to Catalonia as demonstrating a "visible unawareness and short-sightedness of the Moroccan government with regard to possible business opportunities with Catalonia in particular and Spain in general".

The Catalan Parliament and the Moroccan House of Representatives have signed various cooperation agreements mainly focusing on immigration and mutual investment. The Catalan government has often allocated investment funds to promote bilateral business, such as the 2008 European Fund for the Mediterranean for which 62 million Euros were earmarked.[146] The Catalan Development Cooperation Agency (ACCD), which has an office in northern Morocco, has also increased its aid package dedicated to Morocco from an average of 90,000 Euros per year since 1995 to 1.1 million in 2002 and 1.25 million in 2003. These cooperation projects are mainly focused on Moroccan northern regions due to historical ties with them, given that these areas came under the Spanish protectorate between 1912 and 1956. Education and training, productivity improvement, good governance, promotion of renewable energy, water and projects aimed at female empowerment constitute the bulk of these projects (Aubarell 2004a: 78-79). The visibility and impact of such actions, however, remain minimal. They are sometimes regarded in Morocco as public relations acts serving more to buff up the image than to achieve impact. New venues of cooperation that are starting to yield some impact, however, are Catalan co-development policies that have started making it possible for Moroccan migrants to help their towns and villages of origin with financial and logistical support for development projects, and although these projects have not reached the level registered in other European countries such as the Netherlands, France or Belgium, the mobilization of Moroccan immigrants in Catalonia around such projects is starting to pick up (Østergaard-Nielsen 2009: 1628-30).

More significantly, however, Catalonia has endeavoured to be at the epicentre of the Euro-Mediterranean process. The process itself is associated with it and bears the name of its capital (Barcelona). Moreover, initiatives such as the establishment of the Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), initially established in the late eighties by the Catalan government but which now represents a consortium (made up of the *Generalitat*, Barcelona City Council and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) is an important forum for the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. It was this institute that was entrusted with the organization in Barcelona of the Euro-Med Civil Forum (in conjunction with the Euro-Mediterranean conference in 1995) as a result of sustained lobbying by the Catalan government both of Felipe González and at the EU level (Barbé and Soleri Lecha 2009: 344). Since then, IEMed has positioned itself as an important vehicle devoted to Mediterranean issues. Also, the establishment in the city of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) and the confirmation of the city as the headquarters of the permanent secretariat for the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) are further examples of Catalonia's international projection and strategic positioning in the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. Successive Catalan governments have also been pushing for a Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank, with headquarters in Barcelona, to boost investments directed towards the southern Mediterranean rim in general, and towards Morocco in particular (Barbé and Soleri Lecha, 2009: 347-350).

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[146] See El País article, “Cataluña y Marruecos piden reimpulsar la cooperación euromediterránea” (10 April 2008).

Barcelona Town Hall *Ajuntament de Barcelona*, the Barcelona Provincial Council *Diputació de Barcelona*, and the development agency of the Catalan municipalities *Fons Català de Cooperació al Desenvolupament* have also provided technical, human and financial support to their Moroccan counterparts. What is more, activities of Catalan civil society actors such as *Pagesos Solidaris, Jaume Bofill, Món-3, Sodepau, Entrepobles* and *Un sol Món* (Nieto 2006: 297 - 282) or organizations such as *Ibn Batuta, ATIME, Fundación Tanja* and *Al Wafae* denote the increasing participation of non-state actors involved in co-development projects, mutual dialogue, integration and other immigration issues. These associations offer a range of activities that are directed towards the population and where officials are often involved. Their role, visibility and impact are increasing, prompting the Catalan and Moroccan governments to support them and organise joint activities with them. Trade unions in Catalonia such as UGT, CCOO and USOC have also traditionally offered support to immigrant workers, including Moroccan immigrants. Their support ranges from legal counselling and advice to support classes and administrative procedures.[147]

Other projects aimed at consolidating mutual understanding and cooperation such as the establishment of a *Maison du Maroc* (a kind of Moroccan cultural centre) in Barcelona are also advancing.[148] However, similar to the situation across Spain, it is worth underlining that a number of Catalan political parties such as ERC and a number of civil society actors do not hold much sympathy for Morocco mainly because of the Sahara, immigration and the negative media coverage of the community. These factors negatively influences Catalan public opinion towards the country and the Moroccan community as a whole. Morocco's government, on the other hand, strives to gain the sympathy of the Catalan government and public opinion, especially since the country seeks to maximize backing for its 2007 autonomy proposal for the Sahara. Catalonia's autonomy model is often brought up by the two sides as a viable solution to the stalemate in the region.[149]

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[147] An interview with the coordinator of immigration issues at Unió Sindical Obrera de Catalunya (USOC) revealed that assistance provided to migrant workers increased following the 2008 economic crisis. Demand for Catalan and Spanish support classes increased and the number of assistance requests soared, reflecting the massive labour crisis that affected immigrant, especially the Moroccan contingent.

[148] See L'Economiste article "Une Maison du Maroc à Barcelone" (09 November 2009).

Conclusions

As the initial quote from Antoni Rovira i Virgili implies, the need for external recognition, prestige and sympathy certainly provides some explanation for Catalonia's Mediterranean (and Moroccan) policies, as one driver is the political ambition of Catalan nationalism. But this analysis sheds light on some of the other reasons behind Catalonia's prioritization of Morocco in its policy towards this region as well as Rabat's attitude and reactions. Catalonia's enthusiasm for Morocco is equally explained by the growing business opportunities that Morocco represents, the security threats posed by radical Islamist networks and related criminal activities, as well as identity concerns provoked by the "ghettoization" and difficult integration of the Moroccan contingent whose growth in the autonomous region took phenomenal proportions since 1990. Catalonia also seems to have long had a vision not only of the benefits to be had from an EU Mediterranean policy and the positioning of Spain as a leading actor in this respect, but also (at least up until 2008) for the potential risks behind the massive Moroccan immigration to the region as well as the need to amend the laws governing foreign residents to make them easier for immigrants to integrate. For this purpose and for the sake of external prestige, Catalonia also sought to expand its internationalization and intermediation efforts. It also sought to exert an influence upon Madrid in this regard with a view to achieving its own goals and interests.

Therefore, underlying Catalonia's keenness to gain international prominence (the external prestige that Rovira i Virgili refers to) is the nationalistic aspirations held by an increasing number of the Catalan elite and population, as well as concerns and interests that drive it to pursue increased relationships and projection towards countries such as Morocco. Nationalism and the prioritization of identity, security, prestige, political influence and cultural issues help us account for the region's economic, cooperation and immigration and linguistic policies. It is important, therefore, to appreciate that Catalonia's predisposition towards Morocco largely stems from pragmatic and utilitarian considerations. In an interview with former president Jordi Pujol, he put it this way:

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[149] See El País article, "Cataluña y Marruecos piden reimpulsar la cooperación euromediterránea" (10 April 2008). Also see the Catalan News Agency (CNA): "The Catalan President asks Morocco to give an autonomous regime to Western Sahara" (24 February 2011).

> I have always believed that a good relationship between Spain and Morocco would be useful for both countries, and Catalonia, Spain and Europe have always been interested in a quick and significant development of Morocco... because as long as Morocco doesn't develop, it may create a degree of instability that can, in certain aspects, project itself outside in such forms as massive immigration... We [Catalans] like to welcome people from outside, *but we would have preferred an immigration from Morocco that is smaller in size. That is why we have always believed that Spain and Catalonia have to assist Morocco in its development*... because we cannot keep saying "we do not want Moroccan oranges and tomatoes", "we want the right to fish in Morocco", "we want to keep our investments in Spain or in Catalonia"... and at the same time say that we do not want Moroccan immigration."[150]

Such lucid and straightforward explanations (that rarely come from politicians' mouths) partly endorse these interpretations and make such ideas as the conversion of the Mediterranean into an area of shared prosperity acquire more sense. Far from being an altruistic objective in itself, the concern over the prosperity of the Mediterranean region appears to be mainly driven by security concerns such as the desire to reduce migration flows and instability threats. Pragmatism and security concerns (immigration included) override other "solidarity" or "region building" discourses. When this statement is combined with the earlier one referring to Mediterranean development being an imperative both for "the sake of solidarity as well as self-interest", with the overriding importance of Catalan identity and the difficult integration of Moroccan immigrant, the main priorities of the region start to make more sense.

Morocco, on the other hand, is aware of the importance of Catalonia and has established two important consulates there (one in Barcelona and the other in Tarragona). The country welcomes and seeks to maintain and boost its privileged position with its Catalan partners. Rabat's prioritization by the Catalan government and businesses, the growing direct investments and the rising number of Catalan companies choosing to operate in the country not only reflect the increasing number of opportunities there but also Rabat’s desire to step up the cooperation. The prominent hospitality given to official visits (Catalan delegations have often been received by the king) and the country’s openness to cooperate and find solutions to issues such as the one related to unaccompanied underage illegal immigration is a testimony to its diplomatic flexibility aimed at preserving its priority position.

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[150] Interview conducted by the author with former Catalan President of the Generalitat (05 September 2012).

Morocco is also keen on the integration and well-being of its quarter million-strong immigrant population in Catalonia that is not only a source of important remittances but also possesses important potential for Morocco’s influence in Spain and Catalonia in particular. The large number of Moroccans living in Catalonia not only means that the country remains an important interlocutor and preserves its position as a priority partner, it also means that Morocco becomes a key actor with regard to other social, religious and cultural aspects organizing the lives of its own community there, and to some extent the Muslim community living in Catalonia as a whole. Finally, Morocco also seeks to defend and promote its interests relative to its foreign policy priority issue, namely the Sahara. Part of the Moroccan strategy behind the promotion of bilateral relations and the increasing linkages between civil society actors at both ends seems to be the toning down, if not the reversal, of Catalan sympathy and support for the Polisario. The evocation, at least up until 2012, of the Catalan autonomy model as a source of inspiration for the country’s claimed decentralization policy that would start in the Sahara is yet another illustration of how Rabat seeks to consolidate this strategy, temper the sticking issues and preserve its privileged partnership.

Catalonia has developed an interest in continued outreach in the Mediterranean region since the mid-1980s (at times focusing exclusively on a north-west Mediterranean arc). This interest stems not only from geographical proximity but also from an explicit commitment to and vision of a western Mediterranean area of shared prosperity (Escribano and Jordán, 1999: 133; Gallina, 2006: 17). Europe and the Maghreb have consistently been at the epicentre of much of the Catalan internationalization strategy and the Catalan government has been particularly conscious of the importance of this region for the future of Europe, Spain and Catalonia (Aubarell 2004a: 78). Barcelona has also worked hard to promote and lobby for this vision in Spain. From Morocco’s side, however, there seems to be little evidence to suggest that the country has been proactively seeking to capitalize on its relationship with its Catalan counterpart to achieve political objectives with Madrid; while it has always remained open and welcoming Barcelona’s initiatives, it seems to have mostly been on the receiving end. The Moroccan state outlook has predominantly remained “Realist”, predisposing it to deal on a state-to-state basis as Rabat’s ultimate priority is visibly its relationship with Madrid. As the country’s foreign policy “omnibalancing” strategy would suggest (see Chapter 2), Rabat’s predisposition towards Barcelona should have been more obvious. But while the country maintains and advances good relations with the region so as to reap the benefits of this rapprochement, Rabat gives greater importance to its relationship with Spain. Evidence suggests that Rabat coordinates with Madrid most of its dealings with Barcelona and does not seem to engage in triangulation strategies in this context either. Once again, this offers the possibility to construe the role of the autonomous region as yet another actor and contact channels in an essentially intergovernmental relationship. And Catalonia has proved to take up intermediation roles during difficult periods, and its consolidated relations with Morocco are, at least for Rabat, improvements of relations with Spain as a whole. Catalonia could, therefore, be seen as another component of the intensifying network of relations binding Spain and Morocco, which would lend further credence to a conceptualization based on Complex Interdependence.

Chapter six - Analysis of the triple dyadic relations dynamics

Introduction

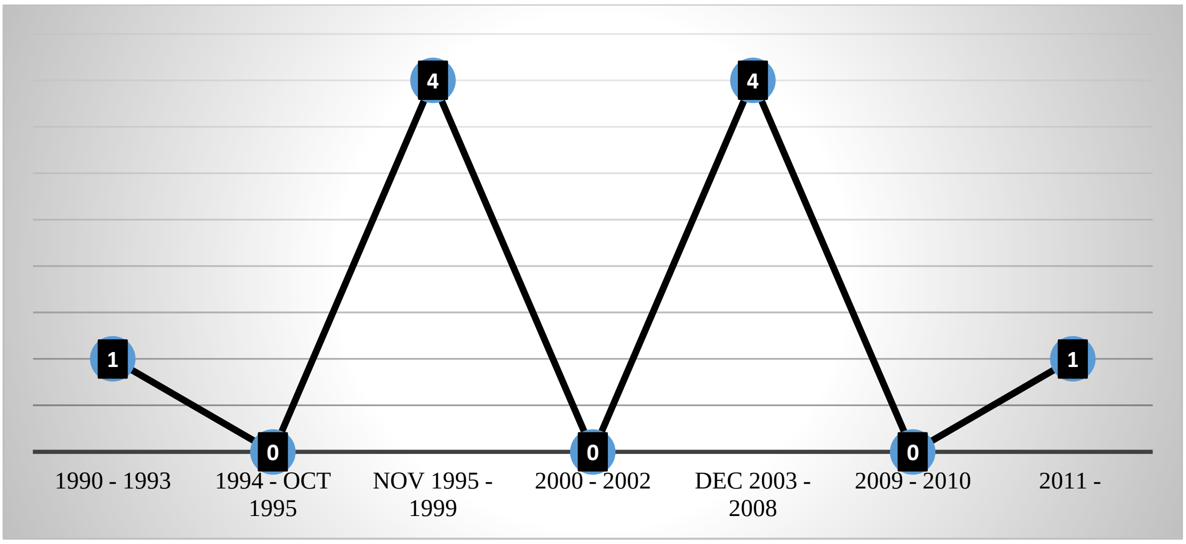
Having separately scrutinised Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations in the last three chapters, this analysis chapter aims at achieving two main objectives linked to the research questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation. First, it will try to close the loop with regard to a collective characterization and analysis of the three bilateral relations during the (1990 - 2012) period, as well as the contribution and impact of Catalonia and the EU in Moroccan-Spanish relations. To do that, the chapter will primarily recapitulate and try to organize the three dyadic relationships in a manner more amenable to interpretation and analysis, while concentrating on the policy areas most common among all four actors, namely economy, migration and cooperation. After scrutinizing the main intergovernmental axis, the chapter will also try to distinguish trends among the three bilateral relationships to see whether they have taken similar courses or have deviated from each other, while trying to provide interpretations for such trends. Then it will try to come up with an informed evaluation, based on the analysis established so far, of the degree of importance and impact of the sub-state and the supra-state actors, and whether this complexity of actors and relationships has proven to be constructive or damaging to Moroccan-Spanish interactions. As to the second objective, the chapter will revisit the theoretical debate introduced in Chapter 2 and that has informed the analysis throughout the three subsequent chapters to see how to adequately conceptualize this complex set of relationships and capture the three levels of the relationship in theoretical terms. Besides the empirical exercise, therefore, the other purpose of this conclusion is tie together the different theories suggested and discussed in the body of the thesis with a view to come up with some theoretical conclusions and contributions.

Dynamics of a triple bilateral relationship

In the last three chapters covering Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations, this research has sought to provide a detailed account of the three dyadic relationships over a time frame of 22 years and with more focus on the policy areas affecting the three polity levels under study: immigration, economic and cooperation issues. The research also sought to highlight in every chapter the degree of impact or involvement of the other actors. This chapter, however, offers the opportunity to draw together the conclusions reached in the previous chapter and bring together all the threads of this three-pronged relationship to see and appreciate how they fared, behaved and interacted collectively. This exercise would involve superposition of the three pairs of relationships with a view to shedding light on individual and combined relationship patterns. The exercise may also establish the extent to which these relations have converged or deviated from each other and, consequently, the degree to which they have impacted each other positively or negatively. The question is: which would be the best way to gauge the trends of this triple relationship? One way to map the three European actors' relationships with Rabat over the two decades timeframe that this research has established would be to graphically chart the three bilateral relationships between 1990 and 2012, indicating their respective highs and lows based on a set of reliable criteria. Easier said than done, though, because that is a task replete with uncertainties, approximations and potential pitfalls. "Measuring" relationships is a very hard and potentially unmanageable task, and gauging improvements or deteriorations in ties would need to be assessed against a set of constant and objective criteria that are particularly hard to determine, let alone measure. Trying to compare relationships involving three kinds of polities (two states, a supranational actor and a sub-state entity) is a task that is even more intimidating. Moreover, relationships are largely matters of perception and perspective; and views also depend on the different levels of actors. Relationships between Spain and Morocco, for example, may be perceived by government officials as deteriorating while they are thriving among civil society actors or business people. Finally, another difficulty with regard to the mapping exercise is the time line. On the one hand, the period spans over 22 years, and it would be particularly complicated to follow the evolution of these relationships on a year-on-year basis. Things become even more intricate when we realise that relations may vary sometimes within the same year. For example, it is hard to assign a value to official Moroccan-Spanish relations, say, in 1995 since during most of that year relations were at a low level due to the inconclusive fisheries negotiations with the EU (which had an impact on Spanish-Moroccan bilateral ties) but they improved markedly towards the end of the year as a result of the signing of a new fisheries deal, Morocco's Association Agreement with the EU, and the launching of the Barcelona Process in November of that year.

However, given the importance of finding a way to illustrate and plot these relationships, this research has adopted a trade-off solution that may help us gain some insight into the behaviour and evolution of these relationships and the degree of convergence or divergence of relationships between Rabat and Madrid, Rabat and Brussels, and Rabat and Barcelona. It may not be comprehensive but it is likely to help us, nonetheless, capitalise on some key moments and events in this complex relationship that are hardly debatable and that would facilitate an assessment of overarching trends and mutual impact. To achieve this approximation, this analysis will mainly concentrate on the major highs and lows as reflected in selected official relations and data. In other words, the analysis will look at some outstanding events and incidents, official visits, initiatives, declaration and reactions, as well as corresponding figures and data, especially concerning trade and immigration flows between the two neighbours. This chapter will, for example, focus on the timing of the ten High Level Meetings between Spain and Morocco in this 22 year phase. As mentioned in Chapter 3, these are widely considered to be an effective tool to measure the temperature of the bilateral relationship (see Figure 6.1). It will also look at specific major events and incidents. For instance, there is hardly any disagreement over the fact that Moroccan-Spanish relations went through a crisis period between 2001 and 2002, with July 2002 representing the lowest point in the relationship over the last two decades. Starting 2004, however, the bilateral relationship started to warm up, especially following Zapatero's election in March of that year. Also, as mentioned in Chapter 4, 1992 is yet another symbolic year marking a serious breakdown in Moroccan-EU relations, following the European Parliament's blockage of the fourth financial protocol with Morocco as a result of the country's dismal human rights record. 2003, as referred to in Chapter 5, marks a high in Moroccan-Catalan relations with the launching of a representation office of Catalonia in Casablanca shortly before the leftist tripartite Catalan government (PSC, ERC and ICV) took over from Jordi Pujol's CiU. It is important, however, that data and events highlighted here be read in conjunction with the preceding analysis. Aside from events, there are processes that have been referred to in the body of the thesis and that will be revisited here as well.

Figure 6.1 Distribution of the 10 Moroccan-Spanish High-level Meetings (1993-2012).



Source: Author's graph based on dates of the High-level meetings between 1993 and 2012.

NB. These visits have been distributed according to the same time-frame pattern adopted in Figure 6.2 to see if they correspond to the highs and lows on the overall relationship as will be discussed later.

In order to be able to appreciate the evolution of the three linked relationships over more than two decades in a clearer and more illustrative way, key periods will be collapsed together instead of following the relationship on a year-on-year basis. This is not merely a solution dictated by the potential complexity of a yearly analysis and the imperative of parsimony but it also makes more sense since overall crisis or collaboration periods tend to spread over long periods of time,[151] as the subsequent analysis will demonstrate. In order to make sense of these peaks and troughs in Morocco's relation with Spain, the EU and Catalonia from 1990 to 2012, values ranging from (1) representing poor relations to (5) representing excellent relations will be allocated. These values are assigned by the author based on the argumentation that will follow in this analysis and that echoes the analysis throughout the thesis as well. This way, the trend of bilateral as well as collective relationships will be appreciated. As the following chart shows, values have been assigned for seven periods marked by significant changes in the relationships (1990-1993, 1994-October 1995, November 1995-1999, 2000-2002, 2004-2008, 2009-2010, and 2011-).[152] In doing so, the analysis is certainly "sacrificing" and overlooking some years and events that are undoubtedly important in these relationships. However, concentrating on the dates and events chosen was also motivated by the overall aggregate symbolism and significance of these as the ensuing analysis will show. Our chart looks as follows:

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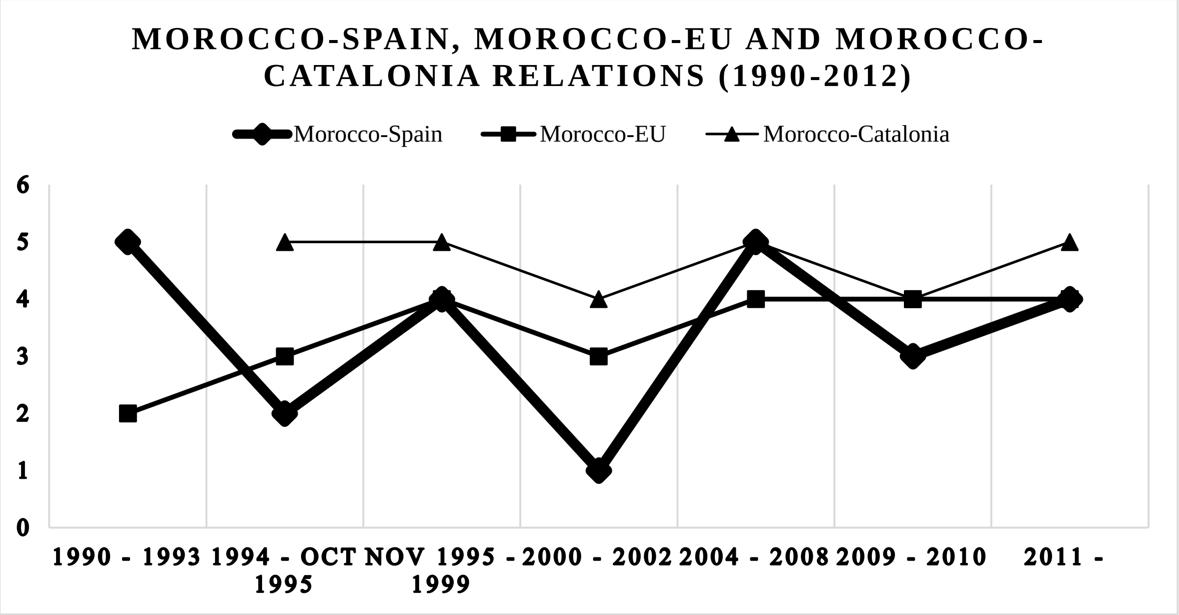
[151] As the subsequent analysis will reveal, phases of tension or close collaboration indeed have tended to spread over relatively long periods of time, but this does not mean that collaboration phases were tension-free or that difficult periods were characterised by an absence of collaboration. The salient observation, however, is that the relationship appears to develop in a cyclical pattern showing a seesaw trend, and that these cycles tend to spread over periods of two to four years.

Figure 6.2 Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations (1990 – 2012)



Source: Author's graph based on data and analysis provided.
Note: Moroccan-Catalan relations only gained sufficient significance by 1994.

Analysis of each period:

First phase (1990 to 1993)

The 1990 to 1993 period is important for a host of reasons. One of these is the fact that it marks a particularly critical phase for the Moroccan regime's international image and prestige, especially with regard to human rights issues. Internationally and *vis-à-vis* the EC/EU, the country was under heavy criticism due to its human rights abuses and alleged non-compliance with the UN Peace Plan for Western Sahara (Vaquer, 2004b: 133). Because of that, even its relationship with its closest ally (France) was undergoing its worst crisis since the country's independence in 1956. This was aggravated by other incidents such as the publication of *Notre Ami Le Roi* (Gilles Perrault's disparaging book of King Hassan II), and the pro-Saharawi initiatives of Danielle Mitterand, the wife of the former French President (Vaquer, 2004b: 108). In this period Morocco started deepening its relations with other partners such as the United States[153] and Spain. The rapprochement between Rabat and Madrid had, in fact, started with King Hassan's visit to Spain in September of 1989 which was marked by the signature of a number of bilateral cooperation, military and economic agreements (González Campos, 2004: 19). Felipe González' December 1990 visit to Morocco came to confirm this tendency and consolidate Madrid's ties with Rabat. For Morocco, this represented an opportunity to counterbalance its deteriorating relations with Paris (El Houdaigui, 2003: 124), and for Spain it was a way to cement its political and economic relations with its southern neighbour, especially in a context of increasing economic opportunities and mounting security risks, notably with regard to rising religious fundamentalism in the region as well as the ensuing 1991 Algerian civil war. This period is also characterised by the signature of the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation, the renewal of the Fisheries Agreements between Morocco and the EC in 1992, and the holding of the first Spanish-Moroccan High Level Meeting in 1993.

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[152] This is not to suggest that these periods work precisely for each relationship. In fact, these phases work fundamentally for the Morocco-Spain axis. The two other relations do not seem to have hugely distinct periodization.

Between Morocco and the EC/EU, however, the period represents probably the lowest point in their bilateral relationship, mainly due to successive revelations on the country's human rights abuses. This culminated in 1992 when the EP blocked the fourth financial protocol with Morocco, and called upon the country to abide by human rights principles and UN Security Council resolutions. It is interesting to note in this stage the marked divergence between Spain's and EC/EU's relations with Morocco as opposed to the remaining periods. This probably illustrates the slow adaptation and Europeanization process that took some years after Spain's accession. It is also noteworthy that the relevance of Catalonia at this stage was hardly significant, partly because Morocco had not fully elaborated its relationship with the Spanish regions, and the country's importance for the autonomous region was still marginal as economic exchanges and the number of Moroccan immigrants living there (still less than 20,000 as shown in Figure 6.3) were still inconsequential.

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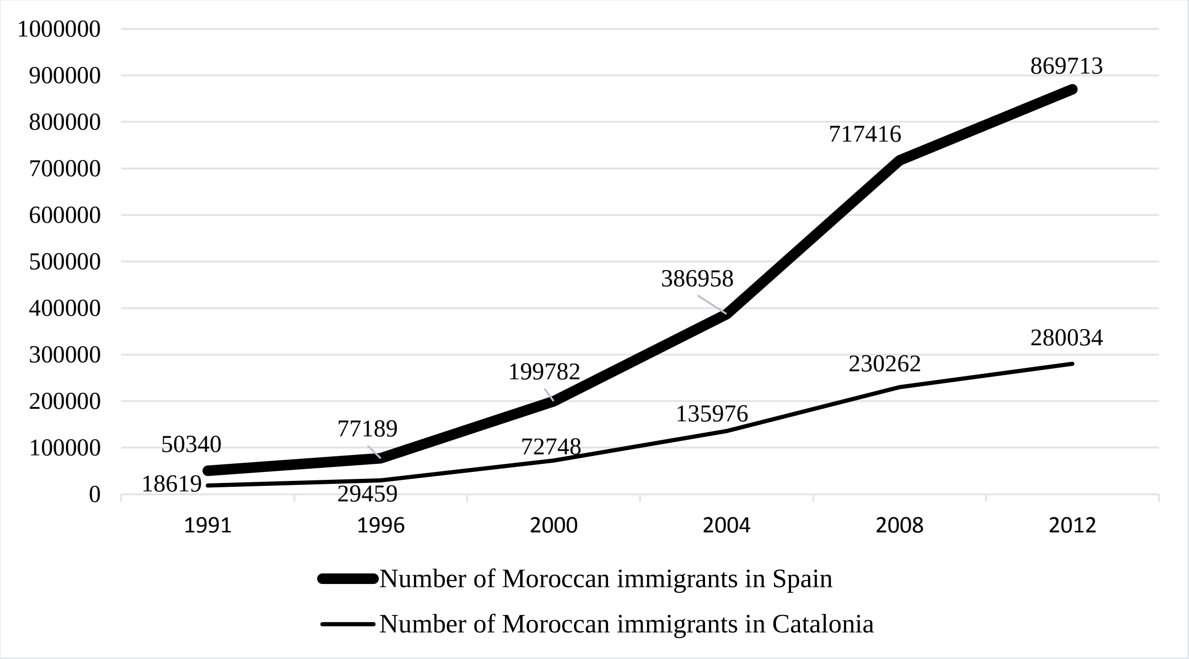
[153] This is probably best illustrated by Morocco's participation in the coalition of the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991) opposed to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Figure 6.3 Evolution of Moroccan immigration in Spain and Catalonia (1991 – 2012)



Source: Author's graph based on statistical data from Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) and Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (Idescat).

Second phase (1994 to October 1995)

The phase between 1994 to late 1995, however, marked the first dip of this 22-year period in Moroccan-Spanish relations. During those two years Morocco, partly responding to internal pressures emanating from opposition parties, made repeated claims to its sovereignty over Ceuta and Melilla, including at the UN General Assembly where former Moroccan Prime Minister Abdellatif Filali referred to the two cities as "the last colonies in Africa". The granting by Spain of autonomy status to the two cities in September 1994 worsened the crisis and increased the diplomatic tensions between the two neighbours (González Campos, 2004: 20). As a result, Morocco started threatening to suspend the 1992 Fisheries Agreement, which it finally did in April 1995. In the same period, relations with the EU had improved slightly compared to their lowest 1992 level, and Catalonia entered the stage in 1994 with the first in a series of three visits by its premier (Jordi Pujol) whose CiU party had entered a pact with the PSOE following the 1993 elections. Pujol's high-profile visit to Morocco and his reception by King Hassan II signalled the opening of a new chapter in Moroccan-Catalan relations.[154] Among the objectives of the visit was to discuss the prospects of a wider regional partnership (the eventual Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) and establish a parallel channel of communication to find a solution to the ongoing Moroccan-Spanish problems.[155] Signs of Catalonia's international projection and keenness to play a regional role had started to emerge.

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[154] See El País article "Jordi Pujol viaja a Marruecos como invitado personal del rey Hassan" (19 September 1994).

Third phase (November 1995 – 1999)

November of 1995 laid the foundations for improved relations across the board. That month saw the renewal of the Fisheries Agreement until 1999, the signature of Morocco's Association Agreement with the EU, and the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona, all within two weeks. The Barcelona Process would usher in a new chapter in Moroccan-Spanish, Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations marked by optimism and high hopes for which Morocco was willing to make concessions such as the renewal of the fisheries accords under terms that it judged unfavourable (Damis, 1998: 61; Vaquer, 2003: 64). Moreover, in February 1996, the Spanish government adopted a new economic and financial cooperation agreement with Morocco (De Larramendi, 1997: 429). In this four-year period, relations between Rabat and Madrid were largely fluid, with the holding of four more High Level Meetings. Average yearly commercial transactions between the two also improved markedly multiplying by almost 2.3 compared to the previous 1994 to October 1995 phase (see Figure 6.4). For Catalonia, the Barcelona Process would boost its prestige regionally and internationally and would consolidate the role it played in the Mediterranean region in general and with Morocco in particular. But although Moroccan relations with Spain and the EU improved, there were still some outstanding expectations, lingering suspicions and a feeling of unfairness on the part of Morocco. Rabat was on the outlook for individualised forms of preferential treatment and economic reward considering that it had made important concessions in the form of the renewal of the fisheries agreement which it announced would be the last.

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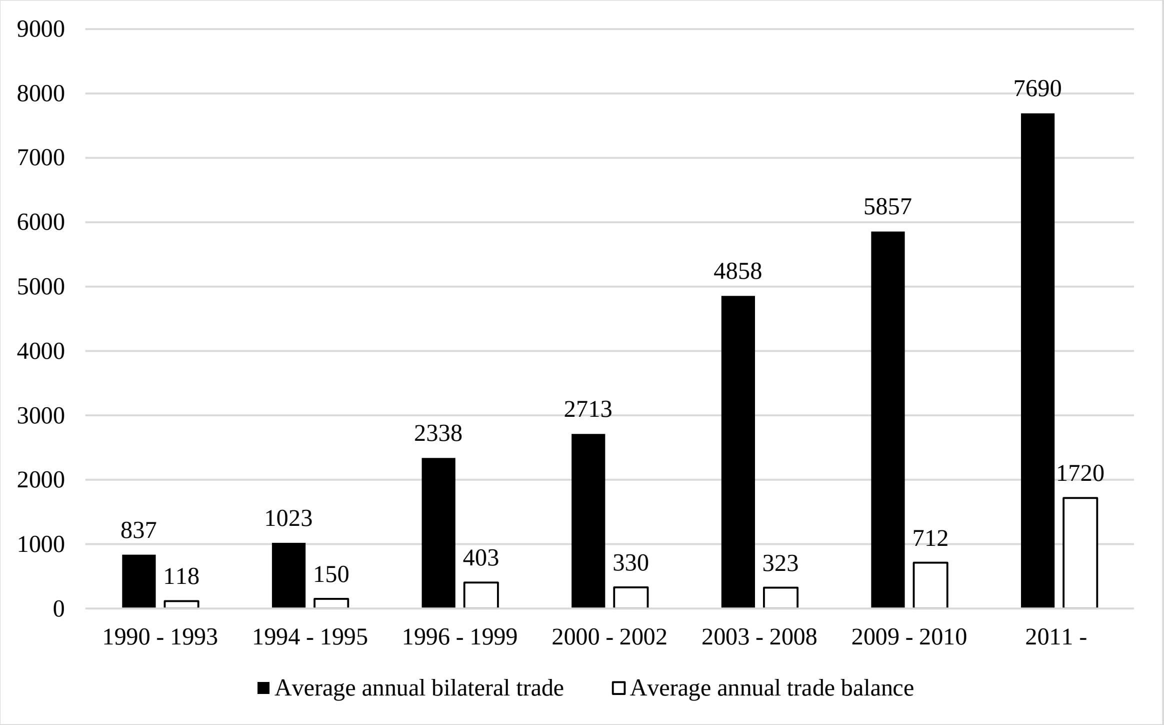
[155] Interview with former president of the Generalitat Jordi Pujol (05 September 2012).

Figure 6.4 Moroccan-Spanish average annual bilateral trade (imports + exports) and trade balance (positive for Spain). (1990 – 2012)



Source: Author's graph based on statistics from Dirección General de Comercio e Inversiones. Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio.

Fourth phase (2000 – 2002)

The fourth phase in our graphic representation (2000 – 2002) undeniably represents the worst crisis phase in Moroccan-Spanish relations due to a number of reasons and a succession of adverse events and incidents, most salient among which were the following: First, unlike Zapatero who was then in opposition, Aznar's government showed ambivalence over support of the Baker I plan recommending extended autonomy for the Sahara rather than independence. Second, the two parties and the EU failed to reach an agreement over the renewal of the fisheries accord which had expired in 1999. Third, the relationship between Madrid and Rabat was further marred by the mounting issues of drug trafficking and immigration. The number of Moroccan immigrants had more than doubled over the previous three years hitting the symbolic 200,000 mark (see Figure 6.3), and illegal immigration in particular started to constitute a particularly thorny issue that would keep swelling at least up until the 2008 economic crisis.[156] Fourth, in February 2000 there were the El Ejido events which saw various acts of xenophobia and racism directed especially against Moroccan immigrants and which prompted the Moroccan government to demand the protection of Moroccans living in the region and that Spanish authorities commit to the enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation between the two countries.[157] Fifth, in October 2001 Morocco withdrew its Ambassador in protest over the mock-referendum on Western Sahara independence held in 200 municipalities of Andalucía, considering the incident a grave provocation. Sixth, in the run-up to the June 2002 European Council in Seville, Spain started to gather support within the EU to force countries such as Morocco to cooperate in the fight against illegal immigration, which was perceived as an initiative to seek retribution mainly against Morocco (Vaquer, 2004b: 243). Finally, the bilateral troubles came to a peak following the Laila/Perejil crisis in July 2002 when the two neighbours came as close as ever before to direct confrontation following successive "occupation" of the tiny islet by Moroccan and then Spanish forces. From an economic perspective, average bilateral exchanges during this period increased, but not dramatically (multiplying by less than 0.2) (see Figure 6.4).

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[156] In the summer of 2001 more than 18,500 illegal immigrants had reached Spanish coasts by small fishing boats (pateras), a hitherto unprecedented level (Vaquer, 2004b: 232).

Moroccan-EU relations were also affected at this stage, especially due to the inconclusive fisheries negotiations, but not to the same degree as in 1994-1995 (Vaquer 2003:75-6). Although the European Union rejected Morocco's fisheries proposal in April 2001, it stopped short of imposing any sanctions on the country as requested by Spain, partly due to French opposition (Cembrero, 2006: 50-51). During this crisis, Catalonia also saw fit to enter the scene. Jordi Pujol made two trips to the country (in July 2000 and February 2001), the first of which was meant mainly to consolidate business relations while the second was an official visit when he was received by King Mohammed VI and decorated with the Grand Cordon Alawi Wissam, the second highest distinction in the country. It became increasingly clear that even if it lost the ability to influence Spanish politics from within the government (as the CiU was no longer collaborating with the government through parliamentary pacts as it did back in 1993 and 1996, following the PP's absolute majority in March 2000 elections), Catalonia continued its regional and international outreach and projection. Pujol's second visit also reflected the growing importance that Morocco started to represent for the region with regard to economic opportunities and the looming problems of immigration. As Figure 6.3 shows, by 2002, the number of Moroccan immigrants living in Catalonia exceeded the 100,000 mark. Pujol’s reproachful remarks towards Morocco at the end of his visit, urging the country to strengthen its migration controls, put a little dent in the relationship.[158]

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[157] El País 11 February 2000.

Fifth phase (2004 – 2008)

The return of ambassadors in January 2003 to Rabat and Madrid put an end to a bilateral crisis that lasted for 15 months. In December of the same year, the sixth High Level Meeting was held in Marrakech (four years after the previous one). The meeting addressed a number of sticking issues, ranging from illegal immigration, fisheries, agriculture, territorial issues and terrorism. Effective cooperation on these issues, however, only started with the coming to power of the PSOE under Zapatero’s leadership in the 2004 elections. In his official visit to Morocco in April, just weeks after his election and his first trip abroad, Zapatero announced the opening of a new chapter in the bilateral relationship.[159] His first term did, indeed, inaugurate a new phase of reconciliation, rapprochement and cooperation in Moroccan-Spanish relations. This post-Aznar optimism was also reflected in a 2005 opinion poll by the *Real Instituto Elcano* in which 31% of those polled believed relations with Morocco would improve, while barely 10% believed their country’s relationship with the US would improve[160] (largely in reaction to Spain’s withdrawal from Iraq).

Although this stage also had its share of problems and minor spats, the 2004 to 2008 period was largely characterised by collaboration and trust-building. Spain’s King made two visits to Morocco (in 2005 and 2006) and three more High Level meetings were organized (in 2005, 2007 and 2008).[161] In February 2007, a new EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement was signed that made it possible for Spanish boats to resume fishing in Moroccan waters for the first time since 1999, and in March of the same year Zapatero promised that his country would be Rabat’s main ally within the EU.[162] As Figure 6.4 indicates, average annual bilateral trade soared as well during this period compared to the previous one, as exchanges almost doubled. With Spanish exports to its southern neighbour exceeding € 2.5 billion by 2006, Morocco came to represent 37% of total Spanish exports to the African continent (Valle Muñoz, 2007: 28). Average trade balance at 130 million Euros, although still favourable to Spain, stood at its lowest level of the 22-year period under study.

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[158] See El País article “Pujol reclama a Marruecos más control policial sobre sus fronteras” (15 February 2001).

[159] See El Mundo article “Zapatero anuncia una nueva etapa en las relaciones con Marruecos tras reunirse con Mohamed VI” (25 April 2004).

[160] See *Real Instituto Elcano* Barometer 10th wave.

[161] It is important to notice that the next High-level meeting (the tenth) would not be held until 2012, four years after the ninth, which also testifies to the relative chill that marked the relationship during Zapatero’s second term.

[162] See El Mundo article « Zapatero garantiza que España será el 'mejor aliado' de Rabat en la UE » (5 March 2007).

But just as discord periods are punctuated with instances of cooperation, this does not mean that this four-year period was devoid of complications. For instance, in 2007 King Juan Carlos made an official visit to Ceuta that deeply infuriated the Moroccan government, prompting a brief recall of its ambassador.[163] However, the adoption of Morocco's Advanced Status with the EU in 2008, partly thanks to Spain's support, helped dispel some of the accumulating tensions. The Advanced Status, despite its largely symbolic value, also represented the culmination of improved Moroccan-EU relations during that period whereby Rabat managed to assert itself as the good pupil among the rest of the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) (Jaïdi and Martín, 2010: 10-11). Catalan-Moroccan relations had also been consolidated since 2003 through the increase in business relations, official cooperation mainly over immigration issues, and institutional collaboration projects such as the establishment of the short-lived Catalan delegation (subsequently closed due to disagreements with Madrid over its constitutionality, as discussed in Chapter 5). Two official visits by the former President of the *Generalitat* Pascual Maragall in 2004 and 2006, and another visit by his successor José Montilla in 2008 illustrated the on-going significance of Morocco for the autonomous region, and a continuation of Pujol's vision of ever-closer cooperation with Rabat.

Sixth phase (2009 – 2010)

Predictably enough, it was just a matter of time before bilateral relations between Rabat and Madrid started to dip once again. The 2009 to 2010 period brought its share of problematic issues that would cast a long shadow on otherwise stable and slowly improving ties. The first ripples in the relationship came in December of 2009 as a result of Morocco's expulsion of the Aminatu Haidar. Her ensuing hunger strike at the Spanish airport of Lanzarote not only affected Morocco's international image but exposed Zapatero's government support for the country as well (Capella Soler, 2011: 3). A motion proposed by the Socialist group in the Spanish parliament forced the government to step up pressure against Morocco to accept the unconditional return of Haidar and urged it to support the extension of the mandate of the UN mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to human rights monitoring, two initiatives that deeply exasperated Morocco.[164]

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[163] See El País acticles "Marruecos llama a consultas a su embajador en España" (2 November 2007) and "La coincidencia de la visita del Rey a Ceuta con la Marcha Verde enfureció a Marruecos" (13 December 2010).

Less than a year afterwards, another episode came to put yet another blotch on the relationship when Moroccan forces proceeded to dismantle the Agdim Izik camp near Laayoun, resulting in bloody confrontations (although most casualties were among the Moroccan security forces). The incidents also sparked tensions between Morocco and Spain (Soler and Vaquer, 2010: 76-77) and, as in the Haidar case, the Spanish parliament adopted a motion calling upon the government to condemn the violence of the Moroccan intervention in dismantling the camp. Moroccan reaction came in the form of official complaints[165] and a massive march directed against the Popular Party where hundreds of thousands of protesters led by former Moroccan Prime Minister Abbas el Fassi massed in Casablanca in late November 2010.[166] The 2009 and 2010 crises, however, were probably not as serious as the preceding ones, reflecting on the one hand Zapatero's efforts to maintain good relations with Rabat, and the increasing maturity and interdependence in the relationship between the two countries. Relations with the EU were not greatly affected either. In fact, 2010 saw the celebration of the Morocco-EU summit in Granada (the first of its kind ever in Euro-Mediterranean relations) which the Spanish government had supported as an objective of its EU presidency. Moroccan-Catalan relations did not register any major changes either, but the post-2008 economic conditions started to affect Catalonia's immigrants the hardest, especially the Moroccan community. Unemployment and social tensions started to spark various incidents and acts of xenophobia, which affected official relations as well.[167]

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[164] See El País article "El Congreso fuerza al Gobierno a subir la presión a Rabat por Haidar" (16 December 2009).

[165] Moroccan reactions were expressed by Khalid Naciri, former government spokesperson, who described the position of Spanish parties and actors as "negative and hostile", mentioning that Spain should have congratulated Morocco for its "responsibility", instead, and presented condolences to the families of the 11 Moroccan law enforcement agents who perished during the dismantling process. See El País article "Marruecos amenaza con desatar una crisis con España por el Sáhara" (3 December 2010).

[166] See l'Express article. "Manifestation au Maroc contre un parti espagnol sur le Sahara" (20 November 2010).

[167] See La Vanguardia article "El Gobierno marroquí sigue con preocupación el caso Vic" (9 June 2010).

Seventh phase (2011 –)

Finally, Arab revolutions context is an equally important stage in Moroccan-Spanish relations worth examining. Morocco's "Arab Spring" protests were mainly led by the February 20th movement, named after the initial country-wide demonstrations. Some 37,000 people (according to official estimations; 300,000 according to the protesters) took part in the protests, causing widespread mayhem (Hoffmann and König, 2013: 5-6). Under these critical circumstances, the Spanish reaction was quick to materialize, reflecting the deep concern of Madrid over the stability of its southern neighbour and the desire not to see the situation spiral out of control as it did in Tunisia and Egypt. On February 22nd, two days after the protests had begun, Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero in an interview with Reuters insisted on the singularity of the Moroccan case in the context of Arab revolts, pointing to the country's multiparty political system and early democratization and reform processes, and its greater "potential for stability and gradual progress".[168] Given the general context, the gravity of the situation and the fact that France had previously paid a hefty diplomatic price for its hurried support of Ben Ali's regime,[169] Zapatero's stance was extremely bold and determined, reflecting the nature of the two countries' relationship in critical circumstances.

The reaction of the newly elected PP leader Mariano Rajoy was unequivocal too. Soon after his election in November 2011, and following in the footsteps of his predecessors (González, Aznar and Zapatero), Rajoy announced that his first official visit would be to Morocco in spite of the critical economic conditions of his country and the deepening Euro crisis that might have entailed the prioritization of a visit to Germany or France instead.[170] His trip came a few weeks after his election during which he reiterated his friendship, support and congratulations for the reforms undertaken by Rabat, declaring that they "have placed Morocco in the vanguard of the Arab world" and that they were "an example to be followed by many other countries".[171] At the European level, and despite incidents like the voting down of the Morocco-EU Fisheries Agreements by the EP in December 2011, relations with

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[168] See Reuters article "Spain urges Europe to embrace Middle East democracy" (22 February 2011).

[169] See L'Express article « Tunisie: Alliot-Marie doit-elle démissionner? » (17 January 2011).

[170] See El País article "Rajoy prepara su primer viaje a Marruecos para la próxima semana" (11 January 2012).

[171] See full statement of Rajoy at the *Moncloa* (presidency) website upon concluding his visit to Morocco on 18 January 2012 http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/idiomas/9/presidente/intervenciones/otros/20120118_pdg_statement_morocco.htm

Rabat were maintained at a high level with Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Stefan Füle, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, both supporting the country's transition plans and welcoming its new constitution (European Union, 2011). Relations with Catalonia remained positive as well, with the consolidation of business relations and bilateral visits and initiatives. Although still puny, Catalan investments in Morocco saw a record increase in 2011 from less than 30% of Spain's total to over 50%.[172] In 2012, Artur Mas also chose Morocco as his first destination outside of the European Union and came to the country on an official visit, heading a delegation of some 120 businessmen.

The most salient observations

Having broken down the 22 years of this triple set of bilateral relationships under scrutiny into seven approximate key phases, and having mapped and analysed these relying on a synthesis of arguments, data, major events and incidents surrounding the relationships, one can now evaluate these three relationships, look at their underpinning dynamics and provide some informed observations on the way these relations behaved together and impacted on each other. This evaluation will be divided under two major headings, one evaluating Moroccan-Spanish relations and the other gauging the impact of Catalonia and the EU on the bilateral relationship.

Moroccan-Spanish relations: central, cyclical, fickle, yet improving

Many observations can be extracted from this analysis as far as Moroccan-Spanish relations are concerned. This section will highlight four of the most important ones to emerge. First, it will discuss the centrality of the Moroccan-Spanish bilateral relationship in this complex web of relations as well as the significance of intergovernmental ties. Second, it will focus on the cyclicality of the relationship, its fickle nature as well as its surprising resilience in the face of adversity, which brings us to the debate over interdependencies and the central themes of migration, the economy and cooperation. The third observation relates to the main motives that seem to inform and guide the relationship since 1990, focussing on the pragmatic and opportunistic motivation that are also tightly linked to the three policy areas that this research has focussed on. This sub-section will also explore the varying pressure tools at the disposal of each player to achieve its objective. Finally, the section will highlight the significance of popular perceptions and discuss the apparent dissonance between official relations and public opinion, as well as the reasons behind this divergence and the enduring attitudes.

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[172] Interview with the Director General of external affairs at the Catalan Generalitat (20 June 2012).

Intergovernmentalism

The Rabat-Madrid relationship is by far the main axis in this triple relationship. Its centrality is expressed directly through official declarations and the protagonism of both countries' executives, and indirectly through state-driven initiatives and policies. It reflects the degree of intergovernmentalism and the extent of state-centric decisions on both sides of the Strait. Indeed, the analysis so far has confirmed the extent to which Moroccan and Spanish relations in general, and towards each other in particular, is largely the preserve of both countries executive powers (the Palace and the office of the Prime Minister, respectively). In Morocco, the monarchy has often occupied centre stage, playing critical roles in times of crisis (such as the suspension of the fisheries agreement in 1994, the Perejil/Laila crisis in 2002, the resolution of the Haidar stalemate, etc.), and in times of rapprochement (such as the 1989 to1992 entente between the two neighbours, the run-up to the Euro-Mediterranean conference in October-November 1995, King Mohammed VI's honeymoon period with King Juan Carlos and Zapatero between 2004 and 2006, etc.). Other forces have also had an impact on bilateral ties, but they never significantly overshadowed the role of the Palace. Actors such as the political parties contributed, albeit marginally (especially the nationalist Istiqlal and the leftist USFP parties whose pressure often urged the Palace to step up claims to Ceuta and Melilla). Popular protests and foreign interventions (such as the United States intervention to resolve the Perejil/Laila and the Haidar problems, or France's occasional pro-Moroccan stances at EU levels) also affected the relationship.

In Spain, on the other hand, the predominant role in the bilateral relationship throughout this 22-year period seems to have been mostly undertaken by the Prime Ministers both in the positive and negative turns of events. For example, Aznar's uncompromising, at times confrontational, attitudes have certainly contributed to the worsening of bilateral relations between 2001 and 2002, and Zapatero's resolve to preserve the relationship during difficult moments in the 2009 to 2010 period undoubtedly helped avoid the deterioration of the relationship. As in the Moroccan case, external influences of other countries and the EU (on which more later) have at times had an impact, while internal influence has mainly emanated from the main opposition parties, the parliament (as was the case during the Haidar and Agdim Izik parliamentary motions prompting Prime Ministerial actions against Morocco), or civil society. Initiatives coming from this latter sometimes triggered small crises or placed the government in uncomfortable positions (such as 2001 tensions caused by the mock-referendum on Western Sahara independence held by pro-Saharawi groups in Andalucía). However, the role of the executive proved to be primordial throughout the 22-year period, to the extent that bilateral relations, at times, seemed to reflect perspectives and world-views of different prime ministers (Aznar vs. Zapatero, for instance).

Contrary to what some experts believe,[173] Moroccan-Spanish relations have proved to be better under the Socialists compared to the right wing Popular Party in the last two decades, which largely reflects the political parties' principles and the importance of leaders' world-views and attitudes. Granted that the parties tend to adopt their discourse depending on whether they sit in opposition or in power, that relations with Morocco is a subject of popular interest and partisan manipulation, and that increased interdependence seems to have reduced the number and impact of contentious issues; however, party principles and personal outlooks have proved to be equally important. PSOE's policy change towards Morocco in 1980s, González's consolidation of the bilateral relationship in the early 1990's and Zapatero's continued positive engagement with Rabat stand in sharp contradiction with the PP's and Aznar's adversarial approach. Indeed, with the coming to power of the socialists in 2004, for example, relations with Morocco improved significantly in comparison with the conflict-ridden bilateral ties with the right-wing government, especially in the period between 2000 and 2002. Although the honeymoon was marred in 2009 and 2010 as a result the usual divisive issues that came back to haunt the two counterparts, Zapatero successfully managed to weather the storm and downplay mounting tensions.

Cyclicality, sensitivity and resilience of the relationship

The analysis has also clearly shown the boom and bust phases in Moroccan-Spanish relations, a cyclical pattern that is particularly worth analysing further. This pattern reveals the multiplicity and complexity of issues, the degree of sensitivity of the issues involved and of both actors towards each other, and the volatility and prickliness of the relationship itself. Indeed, the analysis has revealed that bilateral relations can go sour for a number of reasons such as territorial issues involving Ceuta and Melilla, the Sahara or over a miniscule islet such as Perejil/Laila. Tension can also be provoked by immigration issues such as the 2000 El Ejido problem or discord caused by lack of cooperation in immigration control; economic issues such as the fisheries or agricultural disagreements; or even symbolic issues such as King Juan Carlos' visit to Ceuta and Melilla in 2007 which provoked a diplomatic crisis between the two countries. Indeed, this last example highlights the precariousness and unpredictability of the relationship, as well as the misunderstandings that can occur. A high level visit or declaration, a news story or media coverage, a civil society initiative, or a parliamentary motion can be the source of official discord with the potential to lead to serious crises. Although both countries exhibit degrees of sensitivity, Morocco seems to be the pricklier partner when it comes to reactions to the various incidents. This may be partly explained by the country's perceived unfairness (Since Morocco is the less endowed and the less developed partner) or victimhood (seeing its territories still usurped, waters still exploited, expectation of full European partnership still unfulfilled, access to EU market restricted, etc.).

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[173] Del Pino (2005: 79) believe that the role of the party in power may be important when it comes to the approach, but when it comes to problematic issues such as territorial disagreements, migration spats, and other perceptual, symbolic and historical issues, the response of both parties (PP and PSOE) tends to be similar.

It is also worth exploring in more general terms the reasons why escalations occur, how they can convert into crises, and why they prove abortive. On occasions, escalations seem unpredictable. This is explained, to some extent, by the suspicions characterising the bilateral relationship as well as miscalculations, false anticipations or simple unawareness, which all seem to substantiate the disparities in political systems, cultures and outlooks. Here, Morocco seems to be the more sensitive partner. Examples of these are rife, they include the adoption of an autonomy status for Ceuta and Melilla, the security/military interventions in Laila/Perejil by Moroccan and Spanish forces, King Juan Carlos' visit to Ceuta, Morocco's reaction to the mock-referendum in Andalucía, etc. Other times, however, they seem premeditated and aiming at achieving specific goals. Suspension of agreements, refusal to cooperate, economic sanctions, or deliberate negative campaigns illustrate this. Here, both neighbours can be instigators as well as victims.

The fact that crises have gradually lost intensity and durability is another important observation. Indeed, the bilateral relationship since 1990 is characterised by ever longer periods of cooperation, shorter periods of tension, and less intense conflicts. As explained earlier, the main reason why the 2001 to 2002 crisis peaked in July 2002 was because of the existence of multiple issues that reinforced each other. But the other reason why subsequent problems have been successfully stemmed before they morphed into serious crises, aside from leaders' political will, is the increased interdependencies that have equally keep crises at bay. Indeed, multiplication of economic relations, increased political and institutional cooperation, and the crucial need to cooperate in migration and security issues have constituted an effective buffer of mutually critical issues preventing the two neighbours from opting for escalation, preferring pragmatism and cooperation in order not to jeopardize interests and preserve stability.

Pragmatism and opportunism

Indeed, realpolitik, cautiousness and keenness not to jeopardise achievements seem to inform a considerable portion of mutual behaviour. This gives credence to the principle of the *colchón de intereses comunes* (cushion of shared interests) that seems to underpin Spain's strategy towards Morocco to boost relations, increase cooperation, and prevent serious crises (López García and De Larramendi, 2002: 171; Gillespie, 2006: 120; Fernandez, 2008: 352). In fact, this cushion of shared interests seems to be increasing and ramifying as the years go by. As discussed earlier, the common interests are being reinforced on the economic, political institutional, social and security fronts. For example, not only did Spain manage to strip France of its leading place as Morocco's first economic partner in 2012, but its backing of Morocco's regime and political interests, its support for its privileged status with the EU, the continuing cooperation and high-level encounters, and the increasing socialisation through development projects, migration and tourism deepen and reinforce the bilateral relationship even further. Rabat also seems involved in this process of cumulative interdepence; its ever closer collaboration in immigration control and repatriation, security and counter-terrorism efforts, and its increasing prioritization of Spain as a political and economic partner illustrate this tendency as well. Practicality and realism are also reflected in other aspects of official relations. When coming to power, governments tend to put to one side the more populist, at times denigrating, discourses that they held toward each other when in opposition (and that probably helped bringing them to power in the first place). This is clear, for example, in the shift of the PP and Rajoy's pre- and post-November 2011 discourses towards Rabat, as well as the Moroccan government's reactions to these. In November 2010 popular demonstration were led by the Moroccan Prime Minister against the PP and Rajoy's hostile declarations, and one year after that the same Rajoy was received with honours by the newly elected Islamist Prime Minister.

However, when it comes to achieving or maximizing individual interests, pressure tools at every country's disposal are different. To coerce or entice its southern neighbour, Spain tends to use its vast economic and financial firepower, its political support of the regime, its (constructive as well as destructive) lobbying within the EU, and a largely (albeit domestically unpopular) neutral stance with regard to the Sahara issue (Morocco's top foreign policy priority). Morocco, in spite of its perceived "weaker" status in the relationship, proves to have a host of persuasion tools at its disposal as well. These can mainly be labelled "negative" or "disquieting". The country does have some carrots to bring to bear such as the economic and strategic opportunities that come with improved relations with Madrid, but some of its main persuasion instruments seem to reside in what it can take away, levy or claim rather than what it can offer. As we have seen, Morocco has often cancelled or threatened to cancel fisheries agreements, renewed claims over Ceuta and Melilla, suspended collaboration over security issues, withdrawn support for immigration control, and even withdrawn ambassadors. Morocco also poses a threat for Spain, and Europe in general, if it becomes unstable or by "going rogue". Indeed, Madrid (and Brussels) has not only been keen on maximizing economic, strategic and political gains with its southern neighbour but has also been concerned over its stability and regional security as a whole. The prospect of a troubled or radicalized Morocco invokes nightmare scenarios of mass immigration, security threats, extremism and the fear of an unknown political and economic future in the region. In transitional or critical moments such as the Arab protests and their aftermath, it was important for the departing and new Spanish prime ministers to leave differences and contentious issues aside and show support for the neighbouring regime.

Perceptions and public opinion

However, in stark opposition to official initiatives and declarations stands a largely hostile and deeply suspicious Spanish public opinion that has revealed through repeated opinion polls, media coverage and civil society actions the low esteem that Spaniards have of their Moroccan counterparts. Interestingly enough, these perceptions and attitudes do not seem to have changed much throughout these 22 years or been affected by Spain's European membership. While it is hard to make assertions about such attitudes or the reasons behind their longevity (the debate being beyond the scope of this research), it seems plausible that history (both distant and recent), selective and negative media coverage, the Sahara issue, immigration, and the cyclical crises provide some answers. The few opinion polls covering Moroccans' perception of their northern counterparts, on the other hand, reveal a relatively more positive attitudes largely attributable to Spain's political, economic, social and sporting feats as well as the perceived positive role that it plays in Morocco's favour. The negativity shown by their northern counterparts, however, is regularly reported and covered by Moroccan media and might generate a trend of "reactive-negativity". Finally, while the growth in Spanish tourism and investments in Morocco may be positively influencing perceptions in the north, the growing intolerance towards Moroccan immigrants living in Spain may be counterbalancing the process.

The impact of the EU and Catalonia

The impact of the EU

Since this research wanted to analyse the bilateral relationship but also look beyond it to examine the extent to which it has been impacted by a sub-state actor and the supranational entity, this section will evaluate the input of these two players. As the analysis and the graphic chart (Figure 6.2) indicate, with the exception of the 1990 to 1992 phase where there was a clear divergence between Spain's relationship and the EC's relationship *vis a vis* Morocco, and where Catalonia's prominence was not yet evident, one can perceive an overall faint convergence between the behaviour of the three actors towards Morocco. This convergence, however, is not perfect and happens to take place more at the higher end of Moroccan-Spanish relationship. In other words, both Catalonia's and the EU's relations with Rabat tend to improve when the Moroccan-Spanish relationship improves, but they do not decline as much when the latter deteriorates. Also, while Spanish and EU relations, at times, appear to be influenced by similar or comparable factors (fisheries negotiations, agricultural agreements, Euro-Mediterranean process, etc.), Barcelona's relationship with Rabat, at times, seems to behave according to different reasons and agenda. All these aspects, therefore, deserve some in-depth scrutiny.

The discord between the European and the national levels that seems to mark the first phase of this study is indeed interesting. Morocco was under considerable international pressure in the early 1990s because of the revelations surrounding human rights issues in the country. France and the EC's reaction at the time reflected this pressure, but the improvement registered in relations with Madrid was probably a way for Rabat to compensate for its declining relations with key allies (France and the EC), and for Spain the occasion was an opportunity to secure the renewal of a fisheries agreement, to position itself strategically with regard to emerging economic opportunities in the southern neighbour, and a way to deepen the concept of a “cushion of shared interests” that started to take shape within Felipe González’ administration. This early divergence between Spain and the EU is probably understandable as well in view of Spain’s recent EC accession and the fact that its relations with the supranational entity were still not fully Europeanized.

Subsequent to this period, there is a clearer tendency of movements in tandem between Brussels and Madrid in their respective relationship with Rabat. This may reflect Madrid’s increasing Europeanization as of 1994 when it started to reap some of the rewards of its EC/EU membership by channelling some of its objectives and interests via the supranational entity, at relatively low cost. This strategy of “uploading” national issues to the European level, and “downloading” and conforming to EU norms and directives has consolidated this convergence tendency and proved to substitute some of the previous “national” policies with “European” policies. This has particularly been the case with EU common policies such as fisheries, agriculture and trade as well as immigration. While Spain has certainly lost a degree of control and autonomy in these areas with negotiation results at times not going its way, the shift in management of these issues from Madrid to Brussels has also brought beneficial outcomes for the country. Spain would use a higher negotiation platform echoing the voice of the EU community rather than a single country, avoid direct confrontation with Rabat, and deploy EU rather than its own resources and funds. At times these resources would directly support or compensate its own fishing or agricultural sectors during negotiation stalemates, agreement suspensions or the adoption of new agreements unfavourable to Spain.

Through Europeanization, Spain also achieved the objective of playing an advocacy role for Morocco within the EU but without endangering its own interests that would have been jeopardized if Moroccan agricultural and fisheries products were granted more access to the EU market. Spain’s support for “more trade than aid” principle for Morocco placed it in a comfortable position with regard to Rabat, portraying itself as its European advocate and defender of interests, while rallying support of likeminded countries such as France and Italy to block further trade concessions in areas where Rabat has a clear comparative advantage. Consequently, Morocco could only “compete” for paltry aid moneys with other Mediterranean Partner Countries, without being able to develop its competitive sectors that are more likely to bring about more genuine development opportunities for the country. Europeanization of migration issues is another area where Spain made significant advances compared with late the 1990s and early 2000s when it struggled to push for linkage between readmission of non-national illegal immigrants and EU cooperation and aid. Since then, countries like Morocco have increased their cooperation in migration control, partly thanks to the carrots and sticks involved, but also because illegal immigration to Europe started to affect Morocco as well.

The impact of Catalonia

Catalonia's case tells a different story. While its overall impact on the relationship has proved less significant than the EU's role in Spanish-Moroccan relations, its own drives and objectives remain interesting to analyse. Moroccan-Catalan relations on the chart suggest largely positive relations that tend to converge slightly with Moroccan-Spanish relations during times of crises between Rabat and Madrid. Rather than a reflection of "excellence" in Moroccan-Catalan relations, the positiveness of the overall trend should probably be read as an indication of scarcity of potentially conflictual issues (the problematic aspects of migration issues being largely the preserve of national governments), and the mainly business-oriented and cordial relations that have developed between Morocco and Catalonia. The interests of Catalonia, however, seem to be driven by five main objectives: 1) economic opportunism, 2) security concerns, 3) identity apprehensions, 4) regional outreach, international projection and the prestige of intermediation, and 5) influence upon Spain's politics in a way that suits Catalonia's interests.

Since Jordi Pujol's first visit to Morocco in 1994, the consolidation of economic relations has always been a priority in the bilateral relationship. Most official visits headed by Catalan premiers (1994, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2012) have been accompanied by hordes of potential investors, business persons, and specialised agencies. This partly explains the growth registered in bilateral imports and exports (in 2010 and 2011 these started to represent almost 25% of total trade exchanges with Spain), and the considerable share of Catalan businesses active in Morocco (almost 40% of total Spanish businesses over the same period). More importantly, Catalonia's share of Spanish investments in the country represents over 50% of the total, a feat often trumpeted by Catalan officials (although the total value of investments is far from being significant).

As was established in Chapter five, such initiatives combine a Catalan quest for business opportunities with the pursuit of a solution to rising Moroccan immigration, as a third of the Moroccan contingent is attracted to the autonomous region. Catalonia's preferred strategy towards Morocco includes institutional, security and legal instruments in coordination with Madrid to curb and control inflows of migrants, repatriate illegals and integrate existing ones, combined with economic development projects, without which the issue of immigration would be impossible to contain. In some ways, Catalonia perceives itself as a region that has a history of dealing with immigrants (the region having received internal and external migrants since the 1960s and 1970s), as opposed to Spain which had only converted from an emigration to immigration country in the 1980s. Massive Moroccan (and Muslim) immigration to the region seems to constitute a source of other security and identity concerns for Catalonia as well. The community is often associated with radicalism and security threats, and its difficult integration is, at times, construed as an added risk for the consolidation of a Catalan identity.

Catalonia's other motives include its quest for international recognition and the prestige that come partly with outreach and intermediation functions. International projection and recognition, as discussed in Chapter five, seem to be closely linked with the region's sense of history, identity and quest for increased autonomy as well as nationalistic aspirations of an increasing number of Catalan people and political parties. Engaging in parallel diplomacy with countries like Morocco seems to provide it with a sense of independence and seems to bolster the popularity of the political parties that seek to increase Catalonia's internationalization. Such initiatives are sometimes welcome, even encouraged, by Madrid. There is some evidence to suggest that a number of visits of Catalan Premiers had partly an intermediation objective (like Pujol's 2001 visit and Mas' visit in 2010) that was encouraged by the central government. Other times, however, Catalonia's initiatives tended to antagonize Madrid. The row between Madrid and Barcelona following the 2003 establishment of Catalan delegations in Morocco (and other countries) on the grounds that these quasi-embassies are unconstitutional and create a sovereignty conflict is one such example. Madrid, therefore, seems happy for Catalonia to act as a region, coordinating with the centre, but not as an autonomous nation. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Madrid has started to view Catalan external actions with increasing suspicion since this latter started to call for an independence referendum by 2014.[174]

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[174] See Catalan News Agency article "The Spanish Government aims to 'centralise' the external action services of the Autonomous Communities" (1 March 2013).

Catalonia's nationalism has often been described as peaceful, politically inclusive and accommodating, in opposition to Basque nationalism often referred to as exclusionary and violence-prone (Conversi, 1997: 224; Encarnación, 2008: 92). This non-confrontational trait seems to characterise Catalan politics as well. Catalan politicians seem to favour negotiated and incremental gains over clashes or hostilities. Catalonia's policies towards Morocco (and interaction with Spain in this regard) seem to confirm a tendency to gradually negotiate and influence politics, in order to achieve its objectives. Its relations with Morocco, therefore, have not witnessed any major ripples and its efforts towards the country have largely reinforced Spain's objectives. Indeed, aside from few exceptions like the 2003 disagreement with Madrid, Catalan premiers have mostly had similar objectives towards Morocco (immigration control issues, promotion of commercial activities, closer association of the country with the Euro-Mediterranean process, etc.), or acted to diffuse tensions between the two countries. Post-2012 Catalonia, however, seems to take more assertive external relations steps that correspond to its independentist aspirations.[175]

For Morocco, on the other hand, the main relationship and focus has always been towards Madrid. While Rabat welcomed relations with Catalan executives, entrepreneurs and representatives (as it does with representatives from Andalucía or the Canary Islands, for example), coordination with Madrid seems to always have been sought. The fact that certain visits by Catalan premiers were treated with special honours (such as Pujol's 1994 and 2001, and Maragall's 2006 visits when they were both received by the King) may reflect the importance and esteem given to these official visits from economic and protocol perspectives but does not seem to carry further diplomatic implications beyond that. Rabat, in fact, seems to welcome these initiatives not only because of the economic and political opportunities that they represent, but also on account of the reconciliatory or intermediation aspects they may carry. There is no evidence to suggest, however, that Morocco has tried to use its relationship with Catalonia (or the EU for that matter) to counterbalance or "omnibalance" its relationship with Madrid, which reflects Morocco's Realist perspective and further reinforces the state-centric and intergovernmental character of Moroccan-Spanish relations. While omnibalancing and triangulation is a well-established government strategy, there is more evidence of its use between countries (Madrid, Paris, Washington, Moscow, etc.), but is does not seem present in this country/sub-state/supra-state dynamic. The most obvious interpretations being the comparatively slim advantage that Rabat can reap in activating a triangulation strategy in this context, and the importance it gives to intergovernmental relations.

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[175] See Catalan News Agency article "The Catalan Government announces it will increase its external relations action as it is 'more needed than ever'" 29 January 2013.

Theoretical conceptualization of the triple bilateral relationship.

The discussions in Chapters one and two have indicated that research on Spanish-Moroccan relations has rarely involved theoretical conceptualizations, although it involved epistemological assumptions built into the analysis. The studies that founded their analysis on theoretical grounds when addressing the bilateral relationship or its Euro-Mediterranean dimension have revealed that there are three main theoretical frameworks that have contended to frame the dynamics of these relationships. These are the Constructivist approach (Adler and Crawford, 2006; Bicchi, 2006; Bremberg, 2012, etc.), Europeanization theory (Manners and Whitman 2000; Torreblanca, 2001; Vaquer, 2004b, etc.), and Complex Interdependence Theory (López García and De Larramendi, 2002; Gillespie, 2006; Fernandez, 2008, etc.). The theory chapter also introduced Steven David's (1991) concept of "Omnibalancing" to account for Morocco's behaviour towards the three actors to test whether Rabat adopts a strategy of "shifting alliances" depending on which outside power is more likely to uphold its interests.

The constructivist conceptual interpretations of Euro-Mediterranean partnerships such as Morocco and Spain have based their analysis on the premise of community and security (Adler and Crawford, 2006: 7-13; Acharya, 2001: 16, cited in Bremberg, 2012: 18-30). According to this interpretation, a Euro-Mediterranean community (or Regional Security Complex (Buzan and Waever, 2003; Bremberg, 2007)) imbibed with EU normative principles might potentially emerge through aspects of regional collaboration, culminating in the construction of a region (or sub-region). Spanish-Moroccan, EU-Moroccan (and to some extent Catalan-Moroccan) relations do involve economic, political and security components, but our analysis so far mainly suggests that the Moroccan and Spanish polities revolve in separate constellations, are informed by different political traditions and practices, are still characterised by deep misunderstanding, suspicions and sensitivities, but have increasing common interests. Rather than the emergence of a "we-feeling" or a process of region building, what seems to stand in the way of serious conflict are issues related to incremental interdependencies and pragmatic considerations with regard to each party's concerns, interests, weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Multi-level Governance theory (MLG) accounting for the hollowing out of state power within the EU context, and the shift of influence upwards and downwards still holds as a conceptual framework capturing dynamics at the EU level, but it offers little added value when it comes to the interpretation of the North-South dynamics at play. Also, Steven David's Omnibalancing concept is an undeniably valuable framework as well that has a powerful potential to expound how a country like Morocco rationally seeks to diversify its options, shift alliances and build parallel channels and networks with a view to achieving objectives, preserving power and maximizing gains. One venue that seemed worth exploring was the extent to which Morocco resorts to such strategies in its dealings with the three European actors (Spain, the EU and Catalonia). The analysis, however, does not give credit to this assumption. There is no outstanding evidence suggesting that Rabat's relations with Brussels or Barcelona carry competitive or duplicate elements likely to maximize the country's odds in achieving its objectives. At these three levels, the relationships from Morocco's end appear quite compartmentalized, with a strong degree of prioritization of the intergovernmental dimension. Rabat's priority is clearly its relationship with Madrid. There is no evidence to suggest that it actively seeks to instrumentalize its relations with Catalonia or the EU to advance or maximize its interests with Spain as these do not seem to represent "alternative options" for Rabat. Omnibalancing, however, would have been an extremely useful theoretical paradigm if we were to look at multiple relationships involving other state actors. The resort to French support during the Laila/Perejil crisis to offset Spain's quest for EU support is a case in point.

Europeanization is yet another important theoretical framework that was explored since it had the potential to account for the role of the supranational entity in the bilateral relationship. The theory mainly refers to the impact of the EU on the politics and policies of member states as well as the sway that national governments may have over EU policies. It, therefore, includes a the top-down (reception) aspect whereby the EU influences policy areas in member countries such as Spain, and the bottom-up (projection) feature whereby policy competencies are transferred from the member-state to the supranational level (Börzel, 2002: 6; Schneider and Häge, 2008: 16-17; Torreblanca, 2001: 12-13; Vaquer, 2004b: 41-42). Europeanization does, therefore, prove to be valuable for Euro-Mediterranean relations analyses such as this one as it captures cases where competence has been transferred from national to EU levels and from EU to national levels (in such policy areas as fisheries, agriculture or trade, in our case), and where both facets of Europeanization (uploading and downloading) are verifiable. “Neighbourhood Europeanization” was also introduced in this research as it refers to all kinds of benefits and assistance that neighbourhood countries such as Morocco may reap as a result of their cooperation with the EU, as well as the norm-based socialization that follows from that (Gawrich et al, 2010; Franke, et al, 2010). Neighbourhood Europeanization, in fact, brings an interesting “constructivist” tinge to Europeanization theory, but without the insistence on the “community building” or institutional, cultural and identity components promoted by advocates of the Social Constructivist theory. Neighbourhood Europeanization also helps us account for European influence through such tools as the EMP or the ENP in areas such as democracy promotion, economic cooperation and institutional collaboration.

Applied to our case, however, Europeanization reveals its limitations and pits us against a number of challenges. Besides its European focus and inadequacy to capture the intergovernmentalism and interdependencies discussed earlier, it presents other insufficiencies as well. First, it only sheds light on this complex relationship from a northern perspective, failing to capture the reverse process, i.e. the way we can account for Morocco’s relationship with Spain and the EU, especially having established the crucial state-centric aspect of our case study. Second, while Europeanization covers areas that have been effectively Europeanized (trade, agriculture, fisheries, etc.), it is more difficult to analyse Europeanization of foreign policy since it remains largely the preserve of national governments. Last but not least, and as was suggested in the conclusions of Chapter 4, the process conveyed by Europeanization itself can be regarded differently. Indeed, a possible interpretation of the role played by the supranational entity could further bolster arguments proposed by Complex Interdepence theory when it underlines the importance of multiplication of actors and channels as one of the three pre-conditions. This way, the assuaging roles assumed by Brussels (as well as Barcelona) would be interpreted according to CIT terms as a case of “the multiple intra-governmental and trans-governmental communication channels” necessary for complex interdependence to flourish. The added advantage of this interpretation is that it starts accounting for the whole *relationship* instead of the north-to-south limitation in Europeanization theory. One limitation to the adoption of this interpretation is a framing of the well rounded “actoredness” of the EU, reducing its contribution to that of an “external actor”, thus alluding the complex functional and normative role it plays. However, given that the analysis looks at the EU role only in so far as its impact on Spanish-Moroccan relations is concerned, the interpretation holds water to a large extent.

Indeed, the basic assumption of Complex Interdependence Theory is that as relationships among countries develop and interdependence grows, confrontation becomes a relatively costly way to pursue their interests (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 10). The main defining characteristics of the theory are the multiplicity of actors (including non-state actors), the multiplicity of channels through which these actors interact, the shifting (or absence of) hierarchy among issues, and the non-resort to force in mutual interactions (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 24–5). With regard to the theory’s basic assumptions, our case study correspond fairly well to these premises. The increase in the “cushion of shared interests” in the form of cooperation, economic, political, institutional, social and cultural linkages between Morocco and Spain appears to gradually set the stage for more stable relations and mutual dependencies, thus discarding the potential of discord and conflict. Indeed, the environment in which the two countries’ decisions are made is increasingly broadened, the stakes (economic, political, institutional, security, social etc.) are increased, and the points of encounter and channels of contact between the two states have multiplied (the role played by the EU and Catalonia here further reinforces the interpretation as they substantiatiate the premises relative to the multiplicity of actors an channels). The main condition that our case seems to resist, however, is the issue of irrelevance or absence of hierarchy among issues. Moroccan-Spanish relations seem to be characterised by a high degree of rigidity of issues. For Morocco, it appears that the territorial issues (primarily legitimacy of its claims over Western Sahara and Ceuta and Melilla to a certain degree) constitute priority concerns overshadowing the rest. Spain’s relationship with Morocco, on the other hand, seems to be devoid of such pyramidal arrangement of issues, although immigration, at times, tends to constitute a concern that sometimes overrides the rest.

Additionally, complex interdependence provides other convenient concepts and tools that prove useful in the analysis of Spanish-Moroccan relations such as the concepts of asymmetry, sensitivity and vulnerability. Our analysis has shown that bilateral relations are fairly asymmetrical and are characterised by sensitivities and vulnerabilities on both sides. Indeed, economically and politically at least, Morocco does wield relatively little political and economic influence compared to its northern neighbours. But although it may appear to be the “weaker” partner in this relationship, Morocco has the ability to cause discomfort to its neighbour and does possess the means to make Spain sensitive and vulnerable to its policy changes. Fisheries, immigration control and security cooperation represent some of the policy areas where Spain is likely to be sensitive (implying immediate impact when Morocco changes policy) or vulnerable (implying likely absence or costliness of alternatives) (Keohane and Nye, 1989:12–13). In fact, Morocco’s own stability may be considered as a potential vulnerability issue for Spain as well. A chaotic or unstable situation in the country would imply serious security threats to Spain and the EU as a whole. For Morocco vulnerabilities or sensitivities may be caused by Spain’s adoption of an adverse position on Western Sahara, denigration of Rabat’s regime, policies affecting Moroccan immigrants living in Spain, negative lobbying within the EU or other forms of economic and political sanctions. Indeed, negative changes in Spain’s political, economic or migration policies towards Morocco are likely to prove damaging for Morocco. None of these, however, are in Spain’s interest since Morocco’s stability remains a priority for Madrid. What is interesting as previously discussed, however, is that Morocco can only activate the ‘negative sanctions’ (Hirschman, 1945: 16) when it seeks to influence its neighbour, while Spain tends to resort to more positive means involving incentives and support to achieve its purposes. This does not suggest, however, deliberate strategies but rather reflects the range of possible options at each country’s disposal as well as the least costly ones. For example, it is likely that the 2002 conflict with Morocco proved to be a learning opportunity for Spain, having realised that such episodes can be draining and even traumatic and that inducement tactics are less costly and more readily available.

This analysis of Moroccan-Spanish relations, indeed, seems to suggest a case of emerging complex interdependence, where we witness phases of extensive and increasing exchanges and interaction, punctuated by political tensions that are usually successfully dodged because of the potential hefty price if cooperation is jeopardized. There is ample evidence to suggest that the relationship binding Rabat and Madrid is increasingly dictated by the ever-growing web of interdependencies at the political, economic, social, institutional and security fronts. The two neighbours are gradually finding themselves enmeshed and conditioned by these interdependencies as they start to constitute sizable sources of reciprocal benefits as well as sensitivities and vulnerabilities. It is gradually becoming more and more mutually beneficial to amplify the scope of these interdependencies, and more and more costly to jeopardize them. Indeed, notwithstanding the repeated frictions and spats, the two countries have never engaged in an open conflict during recent decades as the shared and increasing interests between the two have proved to be more resilient in the face of the recurring chapters of hostility. This general state of economic, social and institutional reinforcement, punctuated by political tensions has been characterizing this bilateral relationship up until today. After all, Nye reminds us that complex interdependence does not mean the end of the struggle for dominance as “power remains important even in domains characterized by complex interdependence” (Nye, 2004: 198).

Although Complex Interdependence paradigm presents some limitations when adopted to our case as it does not satisfy the condition of “absence of hierarchy among issues” and offers a limited conceptualisation of the sub-state and supranational role; and although it is not clear whether Morocco and Spain have achieved the advanced degree of interdependence that the theory is likely to account for,[176] Complex Interdependence proves to be the most comprehensive and parsimonious theory for this case analysis. In fact, with the inclusion of the sub-state and supra-state actors the theory still makes good sense. When Catalonia and the EU are perceived as additional actors and channels through which Moroccan-Spanish relations increase and gain amplitude, the theory proves even more potent and pertinent. Our analysis has, indeed, shown that in many instances the EU opens up the scope of bilateral connections and acts as a buffer that absorbs potential shocks in the Rabat-Madrid bilateral ties. Barcelona, as well, has proved to be acting as a facilitator and mediator in the bilateral relationship, in spite of its distinctive goals and priorities. Ultimately, both Catalonia and the EU play a reinforcing role in the growing Moroccan-Spanish interdependence. Used critically, Complex Interdependence is not only a valuable analysis framework for contiguous North-South relations such as Morocco and Spain, but its interpretative potential is likely to increase in significance given the increasingly ramified and multiplying interdependencies in Moroccan-Spanish relations in particular and in areas such as the Euro-Mediterranean region in general.

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[176] The theory does not provide tools to measure interdependencies and decide the threshold beyond which the paradigm would apply, but in spite of the difficulty to benchmark Complex Interdependence based on measurable yardsticks, our case presents interesting indications and tendencies in this respect. Clearly the relationship presents us with a number of serious asymmetries, especially in the economic aspect where Spain’s exports to Morocco remain limited. However, economic relations reached for Spain (the least sensitive partner) important levels worth preserving. At almost €5.3 billion in 2012 (more than 2% of the country’s exports) and a positive trade balance of nearly €2.34 billion (See Figure 3.2) in a context of crisis, the relationship becomes increasingly important and, therefore, “sensitive”. See El País article “Doble récord comercial con Marruecos” (24 March 2013). What is equally important to notice is that both countries are becoming increasing “sensitive” and “vulnerable” towards each other in a number of other policy areas. For example, Spain may find itself exposed in case Morocco changes policy over such areas as migration control, security cooperation, and fisheries agreements or step up calls for Ceuta and Melilla. Morocco would find itself even more exposed if Madrid decided to alter policies on the Sahara, restrict access to its market, discourage Moroccan immigration, discredit the regime, or oppose EU assistance and trade. What is more important is that such policy choices for both countries are starting to become increasingly unthinkable as they would imply far higher costs for both, which bolsters even further the case for Complex Interdependence.

Conclusions

These conclusions will first provide a general recapitulation of what the research set out to achieve, highlight the thesis main findings and arguments, and sum up the answers to the research questions posed in the introduction. They will, then, offer some informed speculative insights on where the relations under scrutiny might be heading based on recent developments in the region such as the Arab revolutions, the European and Spanish economic crises. This section will also highlight some of the original contributions of this research and, bearing in mind the limitations of this investigation, it will touch upon the research agenda to try to identify further investigation venues likely to enrich the debate on North-South Euro-Mediterranean relations from empirical and theoretical viewpoints.

This research has set out to explore the dynamics of a complex bilateral relationship, a fascinating North-South case that also marks the encounter of disparate historical narratives, cultural practices, political traditions and economic realities. It is the story of two countries "condemned to agree, since geography cannot be altered", as King Hassan once put it.[177] The relationship, however, is at the mercy of a myriad of interlaced and spikey issues spanning a wide range of areas: difficult historical legacies, inauspicious perceptions, cultural differences, severe economic disparities, territorial tensions, political discrepancies, immigration and security concerns, etc. The contemporary bilateral relationship has essentially been driven by intergovernmental policies but has also been conditioned by internal and external influences in the form of popular pressure, non-state actors, neighbours and superpowers. The main objective of this investigation has been to provide an updated examination of the workings the Moroccan-Spanish relationship since the 1990s, while exploring influences emanating from the supra-state (EU) and the sub-state (Catalan) entities. In so doing, the research opted for a substantive survey of the three bilateral relations (Morocco-Spain, Morocco-EU and Morocco-Catalan ties), including an analysis of the impact of the two non-state actors on the inter-state relationship.

The investigation covered a period of 22 years (1990 to 2012). And while it touched upon the most significant areas in these three bilateral relationships, it dedicated slightly more focus to policy areas where the three actors have varying degrees of influence, namely migration, economic and cooperation issues. The research also sought to produce a theoretically informed and grounded investigation by mainly resorting to conceptual frameworks that were already suggested for the conceptualization of the bilateral relationship and the EU input therein. It proceeded to exploring such theories as Multi-level governance, Europeanization, Complex Interdependence and Omnibalancing, while also engaging with other paradigms such as Constructivism, Game Theory and World Systems Theory. This work also relied on a method combining extensive literature research, field work and interviews to try to access the widest possible range of empirical and theoretical evidence.

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[177] See Le Matin editorial « Maroc-Espagne, un même défi » (28 February 2012).

The research made several observations and reached a number of interesting conclusions with regard to the empirical and conceptual components of the analysis. With regard to the first research question and the central relationship (Spanish-Moroccan relations), the research highlighted its complex, multifaceted and cyclical nature, underlined some of the structural problems plaguing the relationship such as the dissimilar political systems, negative public opinion, the territorial squabbles, economic interests and disparities, migration and security challenges, etc. But the research also pointed to the flourishing web of interdependencies between the two neighbours reflected in the intensifying economic, political, human and cultural exchanges, and in the number of critical issues that force cooperation (such as illegal immigration and security concerns). The research concluded that the proliferation and consolidation of mutual interdependences generate a shield of common interests that mitigate degeneration of bilateral relations and prevent ominous escalations or potential conflicts. From a conceptual perspective, this provides ample substance to argue for Complex Interdependence as a theoretical base likely to frame this relationship given that the increase in all forms of interdependence and cooperation opportunities between the two states makes conflict all the more unlikely.

The second research question had sought to examine the role and impact of the European Union and a Spanish autonomous region (Catalonia) on relations between Rabat and Madrid. EU-Moroccan relations was, therefore, the other dyad that was examined with a view to revealing the extent of Brussels' impact on the inter-state relations. The research explored the history and the wide range of issues involved in this bilateral relationship spanning territorial issues, economic relations, migration, good governance and human rights, as well as development aid and cooperation issues. The main focus, however, was on the issues where Spain was mostly involved and had an interest or influence. It transpired that Madrid loomed large in one form or another in most EU-Moroccan ties, especially in economy-related issues such as fisheries and agricultural negotiations, in migration matters and in regional cooperation issues, given the role that Spain and other southern European countries played in EU Mediterranean politics. On the one hand, Spain mostly found it convenient to export the difficult issues to the supranational entity, albeit with some undesirable consequences. Morocco, on the other hand, quickly adapted to the new situation, drew some concrete and symbolic advantages but continued to incur increasing economic costs caused by a gaping trade deficit that is only partly offset by immigrant remittances and tourism revenues. Brussels has played an on-going structural role allowing Madrid to de-problematize some of its dealings with Rabat, providing resources, support and funding when necessary. The EU has also provided an important contact channel allowing Rabat and Madrid to focus on the constructive issues. It successfully absorbed some of the tensions in the bilateral relationship by assuming responsibility for (and throwing resources at) such thorny bilateral issues as fisheries and agriculture negotiation, immigrant control and repatriation, and governance and human rights issues. Under this limelight, the research has suggested that the role played by the EU (and Catalonia) be also read within the framework of Complex Interdependence (as external actors and contact channels) rather than Europeanization due to the limitations of this latter, especially when it comes to accounting for the full *mutual relationship*.

The Moroccan-Catalan relationship was held to be the best representative case for the role played by Spanish regions in the county’s external relations in general, and with Morocco in particular. Catalonia is indeed an important player with regard to the large proportion of Moroccan immigrants living there, the sustained level of official relations between Barcelona and Rabat since the early 1990s, and the important economic relations between the two. Barcelona is also an important case in view of the strengthening nationalistic aspirations brewing in the autonomous region as well as the distinctive identity characteristics distinguishing it. Catalonia’s and Spain’s priorities have not necessarily converged. In its dealings with Rabat, the autonomous region has mainly been concerned about maximization of its economic interests, preservation of its identity and security, international prestige, and an intermediation likely to result in political dividend and influence with Madrid. Barcelona’s impact on relations between Rabat and Madrid, however, has mainly been positive, if not complementary. As stated earlier, Catalonia’s role, from a theoretical point of view, reinforces Complex Interdependence interpretation since it can also be construed as an extra actor and channel in the complex web of interdepencies linking the two countries.

Indeed, the final research question relative to the ways in which our triple dyadic relationship can be captured from a theoretical point of view has found a substantive answer in Complex Interdependence theory. It is true that our case resists certain conceptual principles, as issues involved in the bilateral relationship are still rigid and the theory does not fully account for Morocco's state-centric tendencies. However, Complex Interdependence theory offers a fairly satisfactory theoretical framework accounting for a good part of the dynamics at work in Spanish-Moroccan relations as well as the impact of Catalonia and the EU therein. As was discussed at length, relations between Rabat and Madrid involve a host of mutually interdependent issues ranging from political, economic, institutional, and security issues. These issues keep gaining importance and spinning webs of new relationships; some of them also constitute sources of increased sensitivities and vulnerabilities to both partners. Their preservation and consolidation, therefore, proves less costly than their disruption. The role played by the EU and Catalona within the framework of Moroccan-Spanish relations reinforces this interpretation since the sub-state and the supra-state actors act as additional communication conduits between the two states and largely facilitate their bilateral relations by deproblematizing, mediating and proliferating issues. In this regard, the role of the two non-state actors, therefore, befits and reinforces Complex Interdependence interpretation.

This is not to suggest that Moroccan-Spanish relations are ideal. In fact, the two partners, still seem unable to transcend and make the spectacular leap forward long hoped for by many observers, despite the bourgeoning political, economic, institutional and social ties and the existence of considerable untapped opportunities for both parties; progress in the relationship is still thwarted by recurring crises and spats, albeit diminishing in size and intensity. Indeed, the last decade has seen an unprecedented surge in bilateral collaboration, migration flows, tourist visits and economic exchanges that seem to have curbed conflict threats in the long run. What seem to linger, however, are the more fundamental and structural issues that affect the relationship such as state structures, territorial problems, perception and identity issues, competing economies, etc. With the prospect of deepening democratization fading away and the Arab Revolutions looking increasingly like a missed opportunity, it is unlikely that attitudes will change in Morocco any time soon. The economic crisis plaguing Spain and the EU since 2008 has also constituted a considerable setback, affecting exchanges, aggravating problematic issues, limiting resources and incentives, and concentrating attention on EU problems and survival. The quandary shows no sign of abating.

Also, there is no current evidence of emerging change in the state structures, perceptions or perspectives towards territorial issues. The potential for periodic crises, therefore, may not be a thing of the past just yet. The increase in trade, socialization and institutional relations could be counterbalanced potentially by a new generation of bilateral problems such as the mounting xenophobia and racism towards Moroccan immigrants in Spain, the increasing competitiveness over exports of agricultural products (especially in the context of a deepening economic crisis), or the border delimitation issues and oil prospections in the Atlantic Ocean. Some of the old problems such as fisheries may be dwindling, but others are still alive and kicking (Western Sahara, Ceuta and Melilla, drug trafficking, terrorism, etc.). Also, the hope that an ever-closer EU partnership or an Advanced Status for Morocco might bring a new momentum to the relationship seems to have dwindled with regard to the slim carrots and incentives on the table partly due to the lingering European crisis. Last but not least, the spectacular increase in bilateral economic relations should not veil the considerable and growing negative trade balance incurred by Morocco and the meagre investments and joint ventures. In fact, one cannot help but notice the contradictions between official discourses calling for the creation of a region of common prosperity and the stark reality where economic and political interests are fought for without mercy.

Surprinsingly, however, Moroccan-Spanish (and Moroccan-EU) relations have shown considerable resilience and have, so far, managed to weather the storms of the European economic crisis and the Arab revolutions. Also, the support that Spain and the EU have shown Morocco at the height of the February 20th protests, that constituted a real threat to the regime, provides further substance to the robustness of their relationship and the ever-tighter web of interdepencies linking them. This is clearly explained by the mutual political, economic and symbolic benefits reaped by both sides, but also by interdependencies resulting from the potential threats and negative consequences that can be triggered by a regional breakdown in the case of a political vacuum or state failure. This enduring partnership, therefore, gives further credence to the complex interdependence dynamics at work in the region.

This research has, hopefully, brought some novel empirical and theoretical contributions to the existing debate on Moroccan-Spanish relations. In view of the existing literature, this research does not only provide an update of the state of bilateral relations, but its originality resides in the comprehensive scope of analysis it sought to adopt. Indeed, this may well be the first piece of work to have examined the key aspects of the bilateral relationship while bringing the sub-state and supra-state dimensions into full discussion. Having done that, the research highlights new important perspectives in the quadrilateral relationship. It sheds light on the complex relationship dynamics in Moroccan-EU and Moroccan-Catalan relations and also touches upon Spanish-Catalan and Spanish-EU relations. It also looks at the two non-state entities as independent actors to fully appreciate their drives, priorities and strategies. The thesis also provides a theoretically informed and grounded analysis throughout. It explores a number of possible paradigms and tries to account for the whole *relationship,* rather than one single perspective of it. It also argues for a case of Complex Interdependence as a theoretical framework that captures the state, sub-state and supra-state dimensions of the relationship, while underlining the main limitations of this conceptualization. The research hopefully contributes to the wider debate on North-South Euro-Mediterranean relations joining an existing body of literature on the subject (Howorth, 1996; Testas, 2001; Amirah-Fernandez, 2008; Darbouch, 2009, etc.). Future research may find it useful to study similar North-South relations in the region or analyse the role of other Spanish regions such as Andalucia and the Canary Islands to further explore the main empical and theoretical conclusions of the thesis.

Appendices

Appendix 1- List of interviewees[178]

#	Position	Date
1	Director of CIDOB	25/06/2012
2	Member of Catalan Parliament of Moroccan Origins, and founder of Asociación Socio-Cultural Ibn Batuta	27/06/2012
3	Expert in Moroccan-Spanish relations, journalist and Ex-minister of communication and ambassador	09/04/2012
4	Director general of external relations at the Catalan Generalitat	20/06/2012
5	Manager, Asociación Socio-Cultural Ibn Batuta	28/06/2012
6	Migration coordinator at the Ayuntamiento de Sabadell	28/06/2012
7	Secretary General for Foreign Affairs at the Catalan Generalitat and President of the Executive Committee of the IEMed	06/04/2012
8	Former Secretary of Immigration Issues (CiU)	06/04/2012
9	Director, Euro-Mediterranean Business Association	28/06/2012
10	Coordinator of immigration issues, Unió Sindical Obrera de Catalunya (USOC)	28/06/2012
11	Moroccan-Catalan investor	29/06/2012
12	Official at the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, head of the Direction de l'Union Européenne et des Processus Méditerranéens	15/08/2012
13	Official at the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, head of Direction Générale des Relations Bilatérales et des Affaires Régionales	15/08/2012
14	Official at the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chef de la Division de l'Europe Meditérranéenne,	15/08/2012
15	Consultant at Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	15/08/2012
16	Research Fellow at CIDOB	07/04/2012
17	Director, ACC1Ó Casablanca, Business Competitiveness Office, Generalitat de Catalunya	16/08/2012
18	Former President, Generalitat de Catalunya	05/09/2012
19	Consultant at the Business Competitiveness Office, Generalitat de Catalunya, division: Mercats d'Àfrica i Orient Mitjà Centre d'Internacionalització, ACC1Ó,	05/09/2012
20	Coordinator at the Business Competitiveness Office, Generalitat de Catalunya: Entitats, Secretaria d'ACC1Ó,	05/09/2012
21	Representative of a Barcelona-based pharmaceutical company with sales in Morocco	04/09/2012
22	Chargée de l'Information et de la Communication à la Délégation de l'Union européenne à Rabat, Maroc	28/08/2012
23	Chargée de Culture et de Communication at European Union - Délégation de l'Union européenne au Maroc	28/08/2012
24	University lecturer (UAB)	06/09/2012

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[178] The names of interviewees have not been included in accordance with the University of Liverpool's Ethics Committee recommendations.

25	Translator/interpreter at Barcelona courts for Moroccan immigrants	04/09/2012
26	Social assistant, translator/interpreter at Barcelona courts for Moroccan immigrants	04/09/2012
27	Social assistant, translator and former interpreter at Barcelona courts for Moroccan immigrants	04/09/2012
28	Account administrator of Moroccan bank (BMCE) in Barcelona	04/09/2012
29	Head of Internationalization at Rivira i Virgili University and former expat in Morocco.	06/09/2012
30	Director general at the Catalan Development Cooperation Agency, (Cooperació al Desenvolupament, Generalitat de Catalunya)	06/09/2012
31	Assistant to the Director general of the Catalan Development Cooperation Agency (Cooperació al Desenvolupament, Generalitat de Catalunya)	06/09/2012
32	Former president of Moroccan migrants association ATIME (Asociaciones de inmigrantes marroquíes en España)	20/12/2012
33	Chargé des affaires commerciales, Délégation de l'Union européenne au Maroc	06/01/2013
34	European External Action Service, Deputy Head of Division, Maghreb	25/02/2013
35	European External Action Service, Maghreb Division,	06/03/2013
36	European External Action Service, Maghreb Division, Desk Morocco	28/02/2013
37	DG Communication, Press Officer, European Commission	04/01/2013
38	Coordinator at the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network	13/03/2013
39	DG (Trade), Bilateral Trade Coordinator, Trade Relations with non-EU countries.	11/03/2013
40	DG (MARE), Press officer, maritime affairs and fisheries	04/03/2013
41	Media Officer for International Cooperation,	04/03/2013
42	Official at the Moroccan Press Agency (La MAP)	12/05/2013

Appendix 2 – Interview questions[179]

1- Can you briefly comment on the pattern of Spanish-Moroccan relations between 1990 and 2012?
2- What do you think are the main driving forces and strengths behind these relations?
3- What in your opinions are the main weaknesses and threats to these relationships?
4- What role do you think economic and trade relations play in these relationships?
5- What role does immigration and immigrants play in these relationships?
6- What is the role that the European Union plays in these relations?
7- What role do businesses play in these relationships and what more can they do?
8- What role do associations and other civil society actors play in these relationships?
9- What role have governments been playing since 1990?
10- Do you think the relationship is one that can be described as "Interdependent"?
11- What kind of events or circumstances bring about crises or improvement in relations? Can you cite some examples?
12- What lessons can be learned from the 2001-2002) crisis in Moroccan-Spanish relations?
13- Can you briefly comment on the pattern of Moroccan-Catalan relations between 1990 and 2012?
14- What do you think are the main driving forces and strengths behind these relations?
15- What in your opinions are the main weaknesses and threats to these relationships?
16- What role do you think economic and trade relations play in these relationships?
17- What role does immigration and immigrants play in these relationships?
18- What role do associations and other civil society actors play in these relationships?
19- What role has the Catalan and the Moroccan governments been playing since 1990?
20- Is it positive for Spanish regions to be playing a role in Spanish-Moroccan relations?
21- Can it be said that the Spanish and Catalan authorities mutually reinforce each other's efforts in their relations with Morocco?
22- What kind of coordination is there between Barcelona and Madrid in this regard? Is there information-sharing?, is cooperation structured or ad-hoc / improvised?
23- Is it positive for the EU to be playing a role in Spanish-Moroccan relations?
24- Does the Euro-med framework facilitate Spanish/Moroccan and Catalan/Moroccan relations?
25- How do you see the future of relations between Morocco and Catalonia and Morocco and Spain? What opportunities or threats can you identify?
26- What other aspects aside from migrations and the economy do you think play (or will play) a major role in these relations?
27- What do you think qualified Morocco to be the first EU Mediterranean partner to benefit from an Advanced Status?
28- Do you think the Advanced Status will soon translate into a more concrete action plan?
29- The EU's new "mantra" with its neighbourhood is "more for more". How can the EU offer more in the context of the current economic crisis?
30- How does the EU regard the recent political reforms in Morocco and its new constitution?
31- How did the EU respond to these reforms and what else is the Union expecting from the country?
32- What do you think are Morocco's expectations with regard to the Advanced Status with the EU?
33- Will Morocco's Advanced Status imply further European concessions relative to Morocco's agricultural and fisheries exports to the EU?
34- What are the major differences among EU countries with regard to offering Morocco more market access?
35- What impact did the southern European agricultural interest groups (Spain/France) have on the February 2012 EU-Morocco agreement on agriculture and fisheries before and after the deal?

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[179] The list shows all the core questions that were asked. However, the choice of which questions to ask depended on the interviewee's profile. Other related questions were asked depending on the conversations.

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