

Religion and Migration in Morocco: Governability and Diaspora*

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Abstract

This article analyses recent Moroccan policies towards its emigrants using Spain as the observation site and the religious arena as the specific focus. Given that the framework for analysing migration and transnationalism has become progressively more complex, the study of Moroccan policies regarding migrants must include –among the many factors that combine to preserve ties with the country of origin– a more detailed and dynamic analysis of religion. This includes examining changes in policies designed to manage religious questions in the current Moroccan context and the material and symbolic efforts made to sustain Moroccan/Muslim citizens in the diaspora. All of these entanglements of citizenship and religion are affected by debates and policies in the specific local and national contexts where migrants settle and is enriched by the commitments made by individual migrants and their descendants on a daily basis and by unstoppable processes of de facto incorporation as citizens in host countries.

The most recent constitutional reform in Morocco, carried out at the behest of the king in 2011 in the context of the Arab Spring, maintained Islam as the country's official religion along with the principle of freedom of religion. This reform upheld the symbolic role of the Moroccan monarchy in religious terms and the reference to its Sherifian origins. Several efforts have been made to promote an Islam that is suitable for all citizens, with inherent tensions between more and less moderate views. Morocco has also been receptive to the arguments and needs of Moroccans living abroad regarding religion.

Keywords: Morocco, Sociology of religion, religious politics, 2011 constitutional reform, diaspora politics, Moroccans in Spain

Introduction

During the last third of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, many countries have been affected by migration processes in which a part of

their population has left and settled more or less permanently in other countries that offer more favourable working and living conditions. A wide variety of approaches have been applied to the study of international migrations and the impact on the countries of origin and destination. The neo-realist perspective looks at migrations, policies in the country of origin and return policies with a win-win view of the situation. The new skills learned and put into circulation by individual migrants who succeed in their migration proj-

¹ This article was written under the auspices of the research project "Reform, Change and Conflict in the Euro-Mediterranean: Implications for Spanish Foreign Policy towards the Arab and Muslim World" financed as an R&D&I project by the Ministry of Finance and Competitiveness (CSO2011-29438-C05-01) and the project "Cambio religioso en España. Secularización, diversidad religiosa e Islam" financed by the Junta de Comunidades de Castilla La-Mancha (PPII11-0184-6065).

ects are returned to the society of origin in the form of material and immaterial goods –remittances, education and experience– and they also produce citizens with a greater ability to act at local and transnational level. On the other hand, the neo-structuralist perspective, which is also based on economic considerations but is less optimistic, looks at the policies and working conditions in the countries of origin and host countries and sees that the individuals in these diasporas are victims of inequality in both countries. They work in positions that are poorly paid, are valued little by host society and the return to the country of origin is not easy in terms of job options (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003).

An analysis of the country's policies with respect to its migrants clearly shows that Morocco has proposed to manage emigration abroad, both by increasing the political and administrative resources initially developed to deal with the RME (*ressortissants marocains à l'étranger* or Moroccan nationals abroad) and with its recent proliferation of new immigration policies.¹ Generally speaking, what began as a set of policies to provide consular services aimed at maintaining the channels needed to send remittances now consists of various programmes and

projects coming from different branches of the administration, including public foundations and specific councils created to handle these questions.

Over the course of the last two decades, the Moroccan state has created a transnational field of action that fosters a sense of belonging among those living abroad. Transnational spaces have been developed not only where migration flows and where entries and exits are managed, but also where the identities, sense of belonging, and unique forms of citizen development -- that are part of progressively more intricate international relation -- are negotiated. These "diaspora policies" consist of an array of measures, including ministerial and consular reforms, investment policies to attract remittances, the extension of political rights (dual citizenship, the right to vote from abroad), and the extension of state protection or services and symbolic policies, all of which are meant to reinforce a sense of belonging (Levitt and De La Dehesa 2003). Religious aspects are present as well, with ancillary material elements of worship, the inclusion of religious content in classes on the language and culture of origin for children of Moroccans and the creation of a symbolic language of belonging to a community defined by religion.

However, it is important not to lose sight of at least two pieces of evidence: 1) despite the mechanisms described to create a transnational dimension and to integrate the migrant population in the host countries, Moroccan immigrants in Europe continue to live in situations of subordination and subalternity, in spaces of "non-citizenship" embodied by the impossibility of participating in the process of electing the ruling elite in Morocco. Their participation in the politics of their country of origin continues to be limited and they are seen more as the objects of policy than its subjects; and 2) emigrants tend to go to places where the appearance of foreigners, and specifically Muslim foreigners, is not accepted in a calm and harmonious context, but rather in complicated social contexts, exacerbating the social tensions and debates inherent in

¹ We are aware that by using the term Morocco, it may seem that we are operating in terms of what Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick have categorized as "methodological nationalism" in which the nation-state is naturalized and understood as a container encompassing a culture, a polity, an economy and a homogeneous social group. Regarding the origin of emigrants, this methodological nationalism, which is implicit in the use of the word "Morocco", is able to project the idea of a world in which the fact of coming from the same place is tantamount to sharing a single identity and culture and where relationships between people who share a single national origin are communitarian and produce minority or ethnic communities. This is in no way the intention of this article. If we use the national category, it is because our proposal is not to analyse the transnational strategies developed by emigrants through the creation of social fields that connect their place/nation of origin and their place/nation of settlement and involve multiple relationships that go beyond borders (familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, political) but the efforts developed by their country of origin in this particular field.

arguments of resistance. These tensions range from the discourse of protecting secularism to discourses on the threat to homogeneity or the invasion of the eternal antagonist (Bravo López 2005).

Behind the term “*ressortissants marocains à l'étranger*” lies more than a simple administrative category. With this name and the accompanying policies, a renewed diasporized national identity is being constructed with which the state is trying to design new forms of belonging and commitment to the nation for its citizens who have settled abroad. This partially-new identity is not only formed around the concept of belonging based on nationality, but also draws on other constantly evolving and plural forms in which religious identity seems to play a key role. On the one hand, these forms facilitate the positive symbolic incorporation of emigrants and encourage their civic participation in host countries and countries of origin. At the same time, they reinforce a sense of ethnic belonging, of belonging to the nation, based on more than the use of a language or knowledge and socialisation in a culture. They seek to make an exercise of citizenship visible in the countries of origin and destination that does not deny or hide its origin, but values those elements that differentiate Moroccan emigrants. By participating in associations and going to the mosque as part of their daily life, Moroccan emigrants should be able to maintain their commitment to their nation as Muslim Moroccans belonging to the Maliki school of Islam and, as believers, be committed to the human rights and the laws of the host country. This is the content that is transmitted through Morocco's most recent religious policy abroad (Réragui 2013).

Moreover, the pluralist political games in Morocco that concern religious legitimacy take on a different colour in the diaspora. In lands where Islam is new, the elements championed by the Moroccan state to manage religion in the diaspora –educating imams, establishing a presence in communities, sending women as spiritual guides– merge with other proposals for local management and strategies coming from other

states that contribute to the creation of religious transnationality, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Pakistan, or from groups found in the Moroccan religious/political sphere like al-Adl wal-Ihsane (Darif 2010).

Religion and its Governance in Morocco

Tracking down religion in the context of Morocco today and understanding the mechanisms by which religion makes itself manifest in that country and abroad it is not an easy venture. An attempt to understand the characteristics of Islam in Morocco has motivated studies in the social sciences since before the country's independence. As C. Geertz noted in his book *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, the key is to recognize “the material reasons why Moroccan Islam became activist, rigorous, dogmatic and more than a little anthropolatrous” (1968: 20). Like A. Bel and Westermack before him, Geertz tried to understand and explain Islam in Morocco as a cultural whole homogenized over time by the contact between rural tribes and city dwellers. Westermarck wrote that in their religious practice, Moroccans “endeavour to benefit by the baraka and to escape the bas” (1968: chap. III). The extent to which these statements characterize the relationship between Moroccans and religion in their practices today was analysed recently with a survey of 1,156 people, the basis of the book *L'islam au quotidien* by M. El Ayadi, H. Rachik, and M. Tozy (El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy 2007). This work looks at a significant number of aspects and makes it possible to form a picture of Islam in Morocco today.

In terms of religious practice, 15% of Moroccans say they never pray and only 16% go to the mosque to do so (only 2% of women). The level increases with age (using morning prayer as an example, 9.8% of 18-24 year olds practice it, compared to 57.6% of people over 60) (El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy 2007: 51-55). Despite the proliferation of practices like pilgrimages and religious festivals, pilgrimage seems to attract increasingly fewer Moroccans (El Ayadi, Rachik

and Tozy 2007: 61-62). Young people are more active practitioners than before, although this is seen in conjunction with religious and political fervour at a time of tension with the West. The common use of specific religious vocabulary among young people reveals a generational and ideological break and a greater understanding of their religion, indicated by 56.7% of the survey respondents (El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy 2007: 75). Religious knowledge is trending upwards, not only among the well educated, with their scripturalist explanations of religion, but in general. Simple practice no longer appears to be sufficient; rather, there is a growing interest in knowing religious history and doctrine better (El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy 2007: 97).

The study offers empirical data about the secularization of Moroccan society. Moroccans increasingly support separating religion and politics: 41.5% believe that politicians should not be involved in religion and that religious scholars –ulemas– should not be involved in politics (35.4%), although 25.2% believe the opposite (El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy 2007: 82). Additionally, an important number of the survey respondents say they have no opinion about the matter. For the authors, after the 2003 Casablanca attacks and subsequent events, part of the population became disinterested in questions related to Islam and politics. They suggest that a lack of information about the subject may explain this. The direct question about the place of the monarch in this “triangle” between politics and religion was not asked in the survey.

None of this contradicts the fact that 93% of Moroccans continue to define themselves as religious according to Win/Gallup 2014. The results of the study also show that religious practice plays a declining role in daily life: *‘leur utilisation de la religion est de plus en plus circonscrite dans un espace et un temps bien délimités’* (El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy 2007: 227), which, along with opinions about the separation of religion and politics, constitutes the basis for any secularization process.

Politically and sociologically speaking, Morocco is a country that is often seen as the product of several tensions: between tradition and modernity, between the growing urban influence and the rural base, between openness and control (López García 2000). Since the mid-1990s, the processes of openness taking place in the country have involved reform proposals that affect the economy, political life and the social landscape (Desrues and Hernando de Larramendi 2011). These reforms, which include changes in the territorial organization of the state and the balance of powers, have preserved the centrality of the monarchy in the system revealing, in turn, a decided commitment to extending democratization to various public spheres in a complex context of international pressure and regional instability.

Formally defined as a constitutional monarchy accompanied by an administrative apparatus inherited from earlier times known as the Makhzen (Boukhars 2011), the Moroccan system faces the great challenge of ensuring its permanence and its prerogatives while dealing with a public with a growing capacity to mobilize. Mohammed VI, who has been on the throne since the death of his father Hassan II in June 1999, began his government with a proposal to reform from within, trying to strengthen the parliamentary institution and executive powers using the Spanish parliamentary monarchy as a model. During the early years of the reign of Mohammed VI, a number of complex issues were addressed. In 2001, an advisory committee was created to reform the Moudawana, or family code, and between 2004 and 2005, the Equity and Reconciliation Commission, which answers to the Advisory Council on Human Rights, reviewed crimes committed during the harshest years of Hassan II’s reign. Additionally, a number of new organizations were created: the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture, headquartered in Rabat, the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS) (2006), the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad (CCME)

(2007) and the Advisory Council on Regionalization (CCR) (2010).

The challenge of religious reform for the monarchy –which witnessed the polarization of public opinion during the debate on reforming the Moudawana between supporters of the reform and those who considered any reform an attack on Islam and religious values– is a complex one. Considering the religious characterization of Moroccans, the question has entailed taking into account both the desire for more secularization expressed by some citizens and the maintenance of tradition requested by others. This needs to be done without relinquishing control of religious affairs in an international context where security and control are needed to prevent the infiltration of destabilizing interests or doctrines, as seen in the 6 June 2003 attacks in Casablanca. Furthermore, as one of the elements used to guarantee its permanence, the religious legitimacy that underpins the regime must be underscored, the role of the monarch as the guarantor of traditional religion and religious arbiter discreetly maintained, and therefore the appearance and spread of religiously inspired parties and movements controlled.

Eleven years after his accession to the throne, the regional context created by the Arab Spring and the street demonstrations of the 20 February Movement –a politically heterogeneous movement that initially brought together both militant leftist youth and the local Islamist movement al-Adl wal-Ihsane– accelerated the processes of debating and approving a new constitution that, without establishing a definitive separation of powers, advanced the course of democratization and offered a potentially transformative legal framework. In March 2011, Mohammed VI announced the constitutional reforms in a speech he gave a few weeks after the onset of protests calling for the democratization of the political system and measures to combat corruption.²

² The body in charge of drafting the constitutional reform proposal was not the parliament or a constitu-

The monarch continues to play a central role in the Moroccan political system in the 21st century (Boukhars 2011). Although no longer considered ‘sacred’, as he was described in Article 23 of the previous 1996 constitution, he is still defined as the Commander of the Faithful, the highest religious authority, and presides over the Supreme Ulema Council, which has the power to issue *fatwas* and religious rulings. Despite losing his sacred status, however, the king still has other sources of what could be called traditional legitimacy as the *khalifa* or foremost religious authority in the country, such as *sultan*, the holder of earthly power, and *sharif*, a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed with *barakah*, divine grace (Tozy 2009, Daadaoui 2011).

The traditional elements in the revised 2011 constitution include the nature of the Moroccan monarchy, which was partially reformed and defined in Article 1 as ‘constitutional, democratic, parliamentary and social’, adding the term “parliamentary” to the 1996 constitution. The relationship between the monarch and the executive power was also modified, with some of the royal prerogatives ceded to a prime minister, now the head of government chosen from the

ent assembly, but a consultative commission directly appointed by the sovereign. It was made up of 18 individuals from various sectors and with different sensibilities (union representatives, political parties, civil society, human rights organizations, activists and technocrats). During the short debate process, the commission received memoranda from most of the political parties. The PJD acted as a “veto player” regarding article 25, asking the commission not to include the freedom of conscience. On 1 July 2011, the new constitution, which substantially modified the 1996 constitution, was approved by referendum with 98.4% of the vote. With the constitutional reform and the announcement of a more even distribution of powers, the sovereign suppressed the momentum of protests that had managed to take down presidents Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak in Tunisia and Egypt, respectively, in a matter of weeks. The preamble to the new constitution defines Morocco as a sovereign Muslim state whose unity is forged by the convergence of its Arab-Islamist, Amazigh (now a co-official language along with Arabic) and Saharan-Hasanic components, enriched by its African, Andalusian, Hebraic and Mediterranean currents.

largest party elected to parliament, and a new breakdown of the tasks entrusted to the executive. Additionally, the powers of parliament were reinforced and its functions expanded to allow it to grant general amnesties and ratify international treaties (once the exclusive prerogative of the king), reopening the debate on citizen participation in institutions and the role of political parties in it. The Moroccan monarchy has played and continues to play a decisive role beyond the borders of the country, not only at the diplomatic level but also as the highest representative of the country, and is a key player in the policies created for emigrants living abroad. As such, the fact that the monarchy has maintained its traditional character in a context of reforms is particularly important. The role of the monarch used to be considered an institution in the construction of individual allegiances –*baia*– both explicit and implicit, among citizens. The subject-citizen used to be connected rhetorically to the monarch via his powers in the area of religion, producing a bond between the king and the citizen-believers, whether or not they live in Morocco. With Mohammed VI, and since the reforms proposed beginning in 2004, this field has become increasingly better organized administratively (Bruce 2013). This does not mean, however, that the monarch has renounced his guiding role in this area. The “asymmetric cohabitation” of the Monarch and the PJD after 2011 elections shows that control of religious sphere continues to be a “*domaine réservé de la monarchie*” (López García 2011).

Thus, the state has faced a dual task regarding firstly, ideology and discourse building and secondly, specific actions. In terms of the discourse, the clear option has been to increasingly appeal to Moroccan particularism. In this respect, as Mohamed Tozy has shown, Moroccans have recourse to religious independence with respect to other influences through their king. By confirming their commitment to the Maliki rite of Islam, they are able to distance themselves from other more austere options like the Hanbali school, which is closer to Wah-

habism (Tozy 2009). A discourse of this nature is able to ease any suspicions resulting from a progressive image of Islam reflected in the cities or in individual actions among members of the more traditionalist camps both inside and outside the country, who are willing to accept the Makhzen/the monarch’s proposal due to the symbolic capital accumulated by the monarch over the centuries as Amir al Mu’minin, Commander of the Faithful. Given the many actors and settings, an increasingly clear and moderate discourse has been established that is maintained by everyone: religious authorities, politicians, academics...and consular authorities. The role of the Minister for Religious Affairs, Ahmed Tawfiq, who was appointed in November 2002, is important in this respect. In order to be efficient, a complex action strategy must be mobilized for all the different actors involved. Indeed, it would be simplistic and orientalist to view Morocco’s current positioning in terms of religion as a step back in the modernization of the country. Rather, new or renewed forms of organizing religious power are appearing during a time of tension when religion is losing its social power, producing a return to Islam (Belal 2011). When traditions weaken and the mechanism of faith begins to be used, the reaction is a return to Islam, as C. Geertz has observed (Geertz 1968). As Belal has noted, the loss of the structuring power of religion makes way for new emotional communities, like al-Adl wal-Ihsan (Belal 2011), or increases the appeal and credibility of brotherhoods like Boutchichiyya (Regragui 2013).

In his speech on 30 April 2004, the king laid the foundation for the proposed reform (El-Katiri 2012). Far from delegating the task to others, he evoked his role as Amir al Mu’minin (*‘Nous astreignant au pacte sacré de l’allégeance et aux devoirs qui en découlent d’assurer la protection de la religion et de ses adeptes’*³) to

³ Published in its entirety on <http://www.habous.gov.ma/fr/Islam-au-maroc/29-Activit%C3%A9s-d-Amir-Al-mouminine/574-Discours-royal-relatif-%C3%A0-la-restructuration-du-champ-religieux-au-Maroc.html>

call for renewed commitment from all involved, announcing his intention to bolster religious education and overhaul the structure of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and calling for more involvement from the ulemas with social issues. From a doctrinal point of view, *'exige que l'on s'attache au référentiel historique unique qui est le nôtre, à savoir le rite Malékite sunnite sur lequel s'est construite l'unanimité de cette nation et dont la protection est un devoir et une mission dont Nous sommes le dépositaire'*. There is no doubt that he used religion to provide continuity and unity to the nation: *'Nous considérons que notre attachement à notre unité doctrinale, au plan religieux, s'apparente à notre engagement constitutionnel pour défendre l'intégrité territoriale et l'unité nationale de la patrie'*.

To maintain this discourse on faith and citizenship, the state has not looked to new spaces or created new institutions for religious governance, but rather has worked with existing institutions. In this respect, the country's imams and ulemas have been invited by the Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs to apply the instructions of the Amir al Mu'minin, to exchange experiences, reflect and learn how to bear witness to this tolerant, open and moderate Moroccan Islam from an orthodox perspective.⁴

At the same time, some religious traditions that have seemingly weakened have been recovered (El Ayadi, Rachik and Tozy 2007: 61-62), highlighting their traditional Moroccan character. Examples include the brotherhoods of Sufism, which have been visibilized and reclaimed in high-level cultural reunions like the Festival of Sacred Music in Fez and the Sidi Chiker World Meetings of Adherents of Sufism (Régragui 2013).

Emigration Management Policies in Morocco: Towards a Policy of Diaspora?

Since the middle of the last century, Morocco has shown a clear commitment to creating institutions that manage structural emigration. Moreover, a study of the ways power is exercised by

the Moroccan regime also provides a tool with which to assess the importance of emigration and emigrants for the regime.

As in other countries, the first organizations to concern themselves with Moroccan emigrants were based in consulates and focused on handling issues related to work and maintaining a political profile of immigrant participation that can be qualified as low. In light of the limited power of these "mutual societies" to act, other policies were quickly put into effect that involved broadening perspectives; it was suggested that in addition to receiving social assistance, emigrants needed to contribute something in exchange. In 1990, the Hassan II Foundation for Non-Resident Moroccans was created by royal initiative with the declared objective of helping Moroccans living abroad to maintain their religious and cultural identity through educational and cultural assistance for new generations.⁵

The Hassan II Foundation focused its efforts on developing programmes related to teaching Moroccan language and culture to the children of nationals who had settled in foreign countries and on studying migrations (Mijares 2011). The Hassan II Foundation was partially reformed in 1997 and continued to operate. In the reform, the Foundation was restructured to incorporate a migration observatory that organized its work around several axes: cooperation, education, culture, sports and youth, and social and legal assistance. Programmes were also designed to facilitate investment and business creation, which quickly raised two issues common in countries that create these types of institutions (Gamlen 2006): the need to explain to the population why money was being spent on policies for people who did not live in the country or pay taxes for its maintenance; and the overlap –and at times open competition– between government departments with jurisdiction in the matter and also with other institutions created by the

⁴ Published on <http://habous.gov.ma/fr/guide-de-l-imam.html>

⁵ Law 19/89 creating the Hassan II Foundation for Non-Resident Moroccans, published in the Official Bulletin of the Kingdom of Morocco No. 4055, 18 July 1990.

state. The objective of public and private institutions has been to attract emigrants to spend money or invest in the country, as seen in the campaigns designed by banks, real estate companies and insurance companies that greet emigrants when they return for their annual vacation (Belguendouz 2006).

In managing Moroccan emigration during these years, there has been a constant risk of overlapping institutional structures. There is a complex relationship between these institutions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the country's principle actor abroad through its network of embassies and consulates. The explanation for this overlap or competition is that while the question of non-resident Moroccans is an internal matter that by its very nature extends beyond borders, it is not a diplomatic action *per se*. Although it is true that diaspora policies may be aimed at emigrants living abroad, it is important to remember that they also apply when the migrants return to their country of origin; this can be seen in the form of specific services like protection against rackets or advantageous investment conditions (Levitt and De La Dehesa 2003). In short, there are some Moroccans who live outside the country but have domestic interests and who are the object of government attention because of the economic importance of the remittances they send.

At this time, if states are to be successful in creating and maintaining power relations with their non-resident citizens, this cannot be solely based on the provision of social and cultural services. The difficulty in controlling a diaspora spread out over five continents has an inarguable material basis and entails a complex question: how can a state foster citizenship among emigrants that, following the classic model, includes political, civil and social rights? Advancing in the provision of any of these rights in isolation is an extremely delicate question, both because of the material resources needed and the legal difficulties inherent in taking action in another country. Protecting the exercise of civil and political rights is an exceptionally complex question since it involves

an in-depth review of legislation and procedures in order to advance, little by little, towards new forms of exercising citizenship and towards other possibilities.

The impossibility of reducing the lives of Moroccans living abroad to a single associative model, the pervasive clientelism and the suspicions that this was an instrument of political control being operated from Rabat significantly determined how the policies developed during the 1990s were received (Coslovi and Gomes-Faria 2009, Brand 2006). The renewed efforts made by Morocco and other states must be seen in relation to the dynamics of integration affecting Moroccans living abroad. This has been especially true in France, where the Association Law of 1981 lifted restrictions and allowed foreigners to form associations, opening the way to new debates and the creation of organizational strategies by the migrants themselves and their descendants: *les Beurs* (Planet 2009).

The Moroccan government was aware of the underlying problems regarding emigration and knew that it would not be sufficient to simply keep the consulates and civil registries operating or respond to the discontent expressed by non-resident Moroccans about how they were being treated by their country of origin (complaints about the lack of assistance during Operation Transit,⁶ denunciations of fraudulent real estate promotions aimed at these workers, financial abuse at the border, etc.). One turning point occurred in 1999, when the socialist Prime Minister A. Youssoufi proposed that the matter be handled directly from his cabinet along with the recently opened dossier on human rights, thus being able to deny the charge that non-resident Moroccans had been consigned to oblivion by the new "alternating government" (Belguendouz 2006).

For four years, the question of Moroccan emigrants remained in the hands of the presidential

⁶ In 2000, the Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity was founded. Since then, it has been responsible for organizing what is called Operation Transit, a task previously handled by the Hassan II Foundation.

cabinet, during which time it was assisted by the Hassan II Foundation. In 2002, with Mohammed VI now on the throne, a proposal was made to hand the matter over to a lower-level ministry and member of the government, a delegate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The intention was to breathe fresh air into the question of managing Moroccan emigration and to establish the basis for new policies. In March 2003, a strategy note was sent out by the delegate minister that proposed an ambitious universal plan for emigration that included objectives in the host countries and in Morocco, as well as presenting a detailed action plan (with more explicit details in the case of the host country).⁷

The initiative's marked transnational trend is indicative of the current stage of migration in Morocco: the prospect of return exists, but is not the central axis. The most innovative ideas, which continue to be implemented today, encourage Moroccans living abroad to participate in the politics, unions and associations in their country of residence and to organize pressure groups to influence national and international strategic options, along with a commitment on the part of Morocco to guarantee full citizenship rights. These concepts were added to the objectives discussed above concerning the children of emigrants and the defence of strategic national causes. Working with lobbies and speaking up in host countries was now one of the obligations for non-resident Moroccans who, as in other diasporas, form an integral part of "symbolic nation-building policies." No longer solely perceived as remittance senders, emigrants today disseminate the values of their countries of origin (Gamlen 2006).

The issue of political participation for Moroccans living abroad was addressed in this plan in a vaguely worded phrase: 'to guarantee the community's right to full citizenship via better political participation'. While Moroccans were encouraged to be

active in associations, unions and politics in their host countries, this document says very little about how to participate fully as citizens in their country of origin where they never lose their nationality, according to the current civil code in the country.⁸ As with other government actions, the delegate minister's proposal does not appear to have been autonomous from the central sphere of power, i.e. the monarchy, given that it echoed a royal speech delivered to mark Throne Day in July 2002, during which Mohammed VI addressed participation by non-resident nationals in national institutions. However, these remarks did not entail any real progress regarding the question of representation, as "participate" does not necessarily mean "to be represented" in the current established strategy.

Although those who wish to participate in politics by voting from abroad continue to present their demands, it has become clear that a new kind of logic is at play in Morocco regarding migrants, although the issue has never been removed from government control. In his comparative studies on the question, A. Gamlen has explored how it is possible for two types of mechanisms to operate simultaneously in diaspora policies, one supporting "diaspora building" and the other "diaspora integration". Diaspora building aims at cultivating diaspora identity or recog-

⁸ During these years, there was no defined way to guarantee that Moroccan emigrants would be involved and participate in their country of origin. Between 1984 and 1992, the difficulties in including emigrant votes in the organization of political representation in Moroccan institutions became apparent. At that time, five of the 204 deputies in the parliament were elected in constituencies abroad that included a vast area: one of the constituencies alone included Spain, Italy, Portugal, England, the United States and Canada, all of South America and Africa, with the exception of the Arab countries. This shed doubt upon the legitimacy of the elected officials with regard to the effectiveness of their participation and jeopardized the influence of the parliamentary proposals they made as they struggled to be heard, even within their own political groups. As a result, the parties, voters and political class in general gradually lost interest in this process (Lacroix 2005).

⁷ These documents and action plans are available at the ministry website: www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma

inition, while diaspora integration concerns re-integration in the country of origin. If emigrants can be re-integrated into homeland policies via their rights, such as the right to retain citizenship both abroad and at home, the policies towards them can facilitate political participation: being able to vote in elections in their country of origin at consulates, for example, or other measures that have an impact on civic participation such as the creation of “consulting expatriate councils or advisory bodies” (Gamlen 2006). At issue here is not only a new form of institutional development, but also a new way of understanding citizenship as explained from within (although this idea may not be shared by all migrants, some of whom take a different approach to their actions).

As in other spheres of politics, a new institution was created in Morocco to tackle the question of non-resident Moroccans, the Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad (hereafter CCME), whose objectives, bodies and operational procedures are defined in its charter (Fernández Molina 2011).⁹ The CCME is a consultative institution with administrative and financial autonomy whose mission is to guarantee the control and evaluation of the Kingdom of Morocco’s public policies related to emigrant nationals and to collaborate in their improvement. As a forum for reflection and debate with no executive powers, its objectives include ‘contributing to the development of relationships between Morocco and the governments and the societies in the countries where Moroccan emigrants reside’. With a complex structure, the CCME is made up of two categories of members:¹⁰ the decision makers (a president, secretary-general and fifty members selected from Moroccans living abroad who have distinguished themselves by their mediation skills and their professional and social success) and seventeen observer members, including ten ministries¹¹ and six institutions that have some

⁹ The committee was created by Royal Dahir 1.07.208 of 21 December 2007.

¹⁰ See the transitional provisions in Article 24 of this Royal Dahir.

¹¹ These are the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation,

involvement in the circumstances of Moroccans living permanently abroad: the Supreme Ulema Council, the Council of Ulema of Europe, the Consultative Council for Human Rights, the Diwan Al Madhalim¹² and the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture, as well as the Hassan II Foundation and the Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity.

As is the case with the other councils created since Mohammad VI ascended to the throne and those created during the reign of Hassan II, this institution has ambitious and wide-ranging objectives and, while it has no executive capacity, it is not limited by parliamentary political dynamics. It is a non-executive deliberative body with its own budget and which shares specific objectives with other existing institutions. When it was created, the council was criticized for the lack of transparency in the choice of its decision-making members; additionally, its ability to operate without a clear action programme was questioned (Fernández Molina 2011). Today, the response of the council’s leaders to this criticism revolves around the fact that the consultative nature of the council is not fully understood nor, as a consequence, is its inability to take executive decisions. The CCME leaders also argue that its resources are too limited for the complexity of the task at hand and that the proliferation of institutions dealing with topics related to immigration –which do not always work in harmony– further complicates their task.¹³

Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Professional Training, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Employment and Professional Training, Ministry of Social Development, Family and Solidarity and, of course, the Delegate Minister to the Prime Minister responsible for the non-resident Moroccan community.

¹² The Diwan Al Madhalim or “Office of Grievances” was created in 1992 by Royal Dahir 1.01.298 as an ombudsman to ‘examine the claims and complaints of citizens who believe themselves to be victims of any decision or act originating from public administrations, local groups, public institutions and any body with the official powers of a public authority that are incompatible with the principles of the rule of law and justice’.

¹³ Interview with Abdallah Boussouf, October 2014. Available on: www.ccme.org.ma/es/entrevistas/37301

The CCME's ability to act has not been limited by its lack of executive capacity. On the contrary, the council is able to weigh in on legislative bills and regulations regarding emigration and non-resident Moroccans and participate in drafting guidelines for the public policies designed to maintain close ties between Moroccan emigrants and their Moroccan identity with respect to language, religious education and cultural activities. Working alongside the ministry responsible for non-resident Moroccans, the council can also propose measures to guarantee their rights and protect their interests, encourage collaboration with institutions and a variety of sectors in their country of origin and support a number of activities in Morocco and the host countries.¹⁴

With the creation of the council, the Moroccan state initiated a new policy towards its emigrants, and in doing so it has come into conflict with the actions and programmes promoted by other actors in the diaspora. Intellectuals and migrants with experience in the NGO sector and grievance groups who were not invited to join the council organized themselves a few months after the CCME was constituted as a sort of opposition movement. In particular, they view the council as an indirect way to curb or eliminate aspirations for political participation in Morocco among non-resident Moroccans.

However, this type of policy has not satisfied everyone and from time to time, voices are heard insisting on the need for direct participation as emigrant voters and elected representatives. At the end of 2009, the Moroccan parliament received some members of Daba 2012, a movement whose primary demand was the removal of obstacles making it difficult for emigrants to participate in elections as voters and candidates in the 2012 elections.¹⁵ Some experts argued

that the presence of the CCME as a consultative body could take this issue out of the hands of the parliament (which has legislative powers) and the ministries that enact the necessary electoral law reforms (Coslovi and Gómez Faría 2009). The proposal, then, was not to eliminate the council, but to reformulate its advisory capacity and reposition it within Moroccan institutions like the Social and Economic Council or the Hassan II Foundation and its directive committee.

The Transnational Capacity of the Moroccan State in the Area of Religion

The introduction discussed how the religious reforms implemented in Morocco also have an impact when they are exported to other countries. This circumstance has opened up a broad field of analysis that requires more research. To paraphrase C. Geertz (Geertz 1968), observing the Islam of Moroccans in the diaspora requires recognizing that the religious expression of immigrant populations has a great deal to do with the existing legal framework, including regulations regarding religious freedom and the promotion of this freedom through dialogue with the state and the administration. Equally important are the types of religious infrastructure migrants find when they arrive, the degree of recognition/non-recognition of their religious expression and any existing stereotypes, all of which can lead to processes in which religion is reformulated in longer-term migration trajectories. This involves the possibility of new ways of approaching religion or belief, and concerns religiosity, the way in which believers experience their relationship with their religion.

Here, again, freedom of religion is at stake, but mistrust and suspicion play a particularly important role. Clearly, at issue in the European context is the coexistence of secularism, which dominates public space, alongside the religion practiced by emigrants. The effort made by Morocco since 2003 to prevent any form of extremism, which has been qualified as incompatible with the Islam advocated by the Moroccan state, is consistent with the requirements of European

¹⁴ The council has a regularly updated website featuring the activities it has participated in since it was created. See www.ccme.org.ma

¹⁵ This theme appears frequently in the demands made by various associations, which stress the importance of being included on the electoral rolls (as set out in Law 23.06) in the creation of a Moroccan identity for young people born outside the country.

authorities. This task of regulating the presence of Islam in public life is resolved using constant reminders that official Moroccan Islam is a secular Islam that does not interfere with politics, but is present in political life in the form of the values and beliefs of the citizenry. Therefore, at this time, Islamic content in the discourse or practice of Moroccan leaders cannot be interpreted as an indication of non-integration; neither does its absence indicate better or more fully integrated citizens (Planet 2009).

The Moroccan state's possibilities for influencing this religious sphere are both ideological and material. And both discourse and action come into play.

To find out about the situation of Moroccan immigrants and their religious practices in Spain, some specific surveys have looked at the question of the religious practice of immigrant Muslims.¹⁶ In these surveys, Moroccans constitute the largest group (Moroccans 57%, Senegalese 13%, Pakistanis 11% and Algerians 5%). Most settled in Spain relatively recently (50% have lived in the country for between two and ten years), are workers (76%) and believe they have adapted to Spanish customs and the lifestyle (95% in the case of the survey recipients who have lived in Spain for more than ten years). When asked what they value about Spain, they cite the freedom, the level of state assistance, the standard of living and respect for beliefs (78%). In terms of personal religiosity, the survey speaks of people who consider themselves religious (7.6 on a scale 1-10), with 41% defining themselves as seriously practising Muslims. Just 13% of the immigrants polled said they had faced obstacles in the practice of their religion, most often mentioning the lack of a mosque as being the biggest hurdle (8%). This assertion is surprising given that a constant complaint made by spokesmen for various associations involves

the lack of religious infrastructure, mosques and specific cemeteries. This survey shows different processes of reconstruction and religiosity, but despite its undoubted interest, it does not help to specifically understand how the respondents evaluate the policies of their country of origin.

Any evaluation of the impact of the policies developed in the last decade in Morocco regarding Spain and related to the creation of a religious transnational field must be framed in the context of Spanish-Moroccan relations. The relations between the two countries are structured around a network of interests and a framework agreement, the Spanish-Moroccan Treaty of Friendship, which was signed in 1991 when migrant movements were starting to grow. There is very little in the agreement about migration and, of course, it does not contain any reference to religious cooperation. Moreover, the way in which minority church-state relations are managed by the Spanish state –unlike with the Catholic Church– does not anticipate relations with third countries with regard to religion. In Spain, religious freedom and the freedom to worship is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Ministry of Justice. In the case of Islam, religious associations are registered with the Ministry of Justice to be able to benefit from the Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) signed in 1992. Dialogue with the state is done through the CIE, an umbrella organization, whose operation is hampered by the fact that it is made up of two federations with strategies and interests that are not always parallel: the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE) and the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (FEERI). Since 1992, management and dialogue policies have been instituted at a fairly unsteady rhythm, unflinchingly attempting to empower Spanish Islam to the fullest with respect to foreign references. While there is little more to say about this topic in terms of relations between states, this does not mean that the associations do not maintain relationships with their members' countries of

¹⁶ Metroscopia, a social research and survey institute in Madrid, has been conducting annual polls on Muslims in Spain since September 2006 under the heading 'Barometer of opinion of the Muslim community of immigrant origin in Spain'. The most recent results were published in March 2010.

origin, although no in-depth studies have been made in this field to date (Planet 2014).

However, while there is no room for dialogue at state level, some regional administrative bodies –specifically the Government of Catalonia– have been implementing specific policies to manage religious affairs since 2002. In the Catalanian case, migration and the management of Islam as an important element of migrations from Pakistan and North Africa are influenced by complex considerations related to the Catalanian political situation. In short, Catalanian nationalism has developed a policy of collaboration with religious communities in its pursuit of ulterior political support, which gives the question of dialogue and influence a degree of dynamism not found in other regions of Spain.¹⁷ With the emergence of groups like the decidedly Islamophobic Platform for Cataluña party, the Catalanian electoral situation reveals the visibility of these policies and the suspicions that can arise about extremist positions among a specific portion of the electorate (Guía 2014). Similarly, the Government of Catalonia's foreign relations with Morocco in the last two decades have been highly politicized and become part of a regional strategy. The 2014-2017 Moroccan Plan presented in September 2014 included specific actions for the Catalanian population of Moroccan origin, such as educating Moroccan religious leaders and providing pastoral care in jails, both of which are the responsibility of the Directorate-General for Religious Affairs in Catalonia, and providing assistance from the Department of Governance about opening spaces for worship and introducing Islamic religious education by the education authorities. With the exception of the last case, these policies have been implemented in the last decade.

¹⁷ The situation in Melilla and Ceuta, Spanish autonomous cities on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco, is different. The percentage of Muslims in these cities is very high and relations with Morocco, which wants to reclaim the cities, merit a more complex analysis. With regard to religion, the cities contain mosques that are owned by Morocco and the religious influence, fostered by proximity, is unmistakable. Briones, Tarrés and Salguero published a study on this topic in 2013.

Moroccan religious policy for its emigrants who have settled in Spain is currently focused on three investment areas, both materially and symbolically. The highest level includes activities developed by the European Council of Moroccan Ulema (*Conseil marocain des oulemas pour l'Europe*),¹⁸ whose operation parallels that of the Ulema Council of Morocco. This institution's goals are broad and indicative of the concerns that led to its creation, expressing the need to promote dialogue with society and to ensure that young people are educated, ties are maintained and that room is made for a Moroccan religious outlook in Europe. All of the Council's activities can be read about in the Moroccan press.¹⁹ The Council also collaborates on the instruction of imams and overseas missions of imams to demonstrate religious values, organises pilgrimages to holy sites, and holds working groups on the Moroccan community abroad and the participation of female spiritual guides (*murshidat*) in communities at home and abroad, which is an exercise in modernizing the role of women in transmitting religious knowledge and applying it to daily life (Dirèche 2010). The Council has carried out some activities in Spain as a joint venture with other institutions. In Madrid in October 2010, for example, the Council co-organized a training seminar with one of the largest federations (FEERI), whose leadership at that time was mainly Moroccan, in the Islamic League's Great Mosque in the capital. In Barcelona two months later, a similar conference was held, this time with the collaboration of IEMED (European Institute of the Mediterranean). However, this was not the first conference of imams held in Barcelona; in October 2004, the Islamic Council of Catalonia organized a meeting on imams and mosques attended by Moroccan consular authorities, Moroccan scholars from other European coun-

¹⁸ Created by Royal Dahir 1.08.17 published on 20 October 2008 in the Official Gazette of the Kingdom of Morocco. To operate in Europe, the association has a headquarters in Belgium.

¹⁹ The news that appears can be consulted on <http://www.maghress.com/>

tries, members of the Council of Catalonia and Mohammed Chaib.

With regard to direct support for associations and mosques, according to Moroccan official sources, very few religious associations have made use of the funds that the Moroccan Ministry of Religious Affairs proposed for that purpose. For example, a 2013 activity report published by the Ministry listed only four associations headquartered in Spain that requested and received financing (the Union of Islamic Cultural Centres of Catalonia, the As-Salam Mosque, the Al-Noor Islamic Association and the Maresme Islamic Association).²⁰ Similarly, initiatives to build mosques in countries like France have not been echoed in Spain to date.²¹

The Hassan II Foundation has, in turn, used its religious leadership programme for Moroccan communities abroad to send imams overseas for Ramadan. In 2014, 20 Moroccans were sent to Spain, 10 preachers, 7 university professors and 3 imams (although no further information is available about exactly where they went).²² The incorporation of these envoys, which included *murshidats*, into mosques was seen as a positive development by the heads of the associations who had requested their presence. When asked about the programme, one imam in the Community of Madrid responded that it was 'evidence of the country of origin's interest in educating imams' at the same time that it indicated that

'managing religious affairs is the responsibility of the Spanish state'.²³

Finally, the growing participation of Moroccans in interlocution processes, which was quite negligible in the 1990s, has become significant with regard to both state and regional bodies in recent years (Planet 2014). Gone are the days when participation only occurred at the community level. Spurred by the development of dialogue with the Muslim community, which intensified after the terrorist attacks in Madrid in March 2004, there has been a notable increase in the presence of Moroccans, whether they have Spanish nationality or not, in the leadership ranks of religious organizations at national level. At state level, Moroccan association leaders have become visible in leadership positions in the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (FEERI), but it is far from being a Moroccan official initiative. This has been apparent since the January 2006 assembly, but became extremely clear with the election of Mounir Benjelloun as FEERI president in the January 2010 assembly (an election that was challenged but upheld in January 2012). It should not be thought that the incorporation of these figures is due to efforts promoted by Morocco, since the journey made by these associations and their leaders to reach these levels of representation has been a long one. In this particular case, it is a group of associations joined together in the Organización Nacional para el Diálogo y la Participación (ONDA), which has a strong showing in the regions of Murcia, Andalusia and Madrid. Although this organisation maintains close ties with al-Adl wa al-Ihssane, it has called for these ties with the Moroccan organisation to be formally broken (Arigita 2010). This group has become increasingly involved in Spanish religious matters, challenging attempts made by the Moroccan authorities to control this sphere (Planet and Larramendi 2013).

In Catalonia, as noted above, the Islamic Council of Catalonia was created in 2002 in an attempt to create a federation of associations with roots

²⁰ The activity reports are available in Arabic on the official Ministry of Religious Affairs webpage: <http://www.habous.gov.ma/component/content/article/19-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%AA/216-2012-05-17-09-50-02.html>

²¹ Press accounts indicate the extent of Morocco's interest in promoting the construction of a great mosque in Badalona, with the idea of fostering the influence of Moroccan Islam from there. This particular project would be done in collaboration with the Union of Cultural Centres of Catalonia. See <http://www.abc.es/espana/20150424/abci-mezquita-auge-salafista-barcelona-201504241253.html>.

²² See <http://www.fh2mre.ma/promotion-culturelle/animation-religieuse/mission-en-cours.html>

²³ Interview done in March 2015 by F. Tahiri as part of the reference research project.

in Catalonia and with which the Government of Catalonia has maintained particularly close relations since the beginning. Efforts have been made to create interlocution spaces for a Catalan Islam to integrate Muslim immigrants, alongside other citizen participation initiatives like the Ibn Battuta Association. The speed with which this process has occurred suggests that the Catalan authorities see dialogue as something that befits the political moment in the region (Guía 2014: 101-129), but it cannot be understood without the political drive and perspective of one of the most active intermediaries and politicians working with Moroccan emigration in Catalonia, the Moroccan Catalan Mohammed Chaib.

Conclusion

Migration generates a multiplicity of “life courses”. It cannot be argued that the processes of adapting, integrating or assimilating migrants into a new context result in the loss of their native cultural matrix and that preserving this matrix is, therefore, a duty of the state of origin.

Morocco’s diaspora policies should not be analysed simplistically or from a do-gooder perspective with the idea that the end goal is to maintain the culture of origin. Instead, they are some of the resources that the state has drawn on to strengthen and consolidate the political regime and political system in a broader sense, actions that operate on the periphery of the state at the service of emigrant citizens. They can only be understood from the perspective of the means, strategies and policies seen as conducive to the preservation of the Moroccan nation at a time of transition in the kingdom and relegitimization of the new monarch.

In the area of religion, the reforms introduced by Mohammed VI after he came to the throne and the constitutional reform a decade later continue to indicate the close ties between Islam and national identity. One innovative aspect is how what was traditionally used by the monarchy as a sign of legitimacy has been incorporated into the institutional framework, the administrative apparatus with close ties to the palace, but

clearly modern in its communication and the policies created and promoted by existing institutions. In the creation of a transnational space, a citizenry in the diaspora, the needs expressed by a mature community of Moroccans abroad are being met by new institutions –the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad– and are quite apparent as well in the religious reforms.

Is this a coordinated action or a convergence of interests? It is perhaps best described as a shared progression that reminds Moroccans that Islam, which belongs to everyone, is also a source of legitimacy that gives meaning to the Moroccan community whether at home or abroad. The community may be identified with a religion that continues to be dominated by a central stakeholder, but each and every citizen is a participant (Belal 2011). The action, however, is not spontaneous, but rather coordinated by a state working at home and abroad to reinforce an image and recover deep traditional Islamic values for public action and public discourse. With this effort, the state seeks to exclude those who intend to invoke an Islam beyond the religion proposed by the authorities.

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