

Policy Report

Do they really want to stay in the EU? Policies of flexibility towards Maghrebi youth migrants

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CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Context and overview: Demographic evolution and current state of the art**
- 3. Policies of return and temporary mobility**
 - 3.1. Destination countries: the European Union as an actor in migration policies**
 - 3.2. Origin country inaction: the policy of not having a policy**
- 4. “I’ll be back”: desires and expectations of Maghrebi youth migrants**
 - 4.1. Picturing the “wannabe returnees”**
 - 4.2. Addressing returnees: policy recommendations**
- 5. Conclusion**
- 6. References**

1. Introduction

The Mediterranean has become a crucial area of passage for both migrants and refugees moving from the South towards the North. During the 1990s and early 2000s, the European Union focused on developing policies that allowed them to handle the arrival of people from the southern Mediterranean countries; now those countries are starting to be treated as areas of transit. On one hand, this is because the flows of people from southern Mediterranean countries have fallen. On the other hand, it is due to a higher number of people arriving from Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle Eastern countries in conflict (Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, in particular) who get stuck in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEM). The characteristics of migrants coming from these countries have changed over time: they tend to be young people who emigrate alone and are increasingly well qualified, both in terms of their education and training (OECD, 2015).

Given these changes in flows and complexity, questions arise about the need to restructure the migration policies developed in the EU framework in recent years. Though the immediate consequence of the changing flows has been the fortification of the EU, especially through a policy of externalising borders (Carreras et al., 2016), this cannot and must not be the only response. The complexity of the migration flows, especially those from Maghreb countries¹ – the largest group of emigrants hosted in the EU – requires a flexible policy that is able to adapt to the new reality. Though today's agenda focusses elsewhere, migration from these countries continues to take place and is important both in terms of absolute numbers and impact on the countries of origin and transit.

Furthermore, to date, many of the migration policies with the South have been based on the premise that this migration is work-related and that migrants aim to settle in the destination countries. The consequence has been that the destination countries have concentrated on integration policies in order to better accommodate migrants to their new circumstances. However, assuming that immigrants want to settle in the countries that receive them does not wholly match the reality. Though there are examples of short-term movement within the EU, such as the temporary and seasonal migrants programmes (Lopez Sala and Sánchez-Montijano, 2014), which permit flexible mobility, they are minor examples in the larger whole of movements taking place. Managing immigration from the SEM countries requires the development of long-term and fluid mobility policies. This flow is distinct from the traditional single cycle of movement characterised by departure and settlement, in which the migrant leaves their role as passive actor behind and becomes an agent able to control their own mobility (Newland, Agunias and Terrazas, 2008). Managing this kind of mobility requires the involvement of various actors working together in a coordinated manner: above all, the countries of origin and destination.

In the same vein, return migration has been inadequately approached due to a poor understanding of the impact and consequences for the origin and destination countries. Origin countries have persistently focused on improving the situation of their nationals in the destination countries (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2013). Based on the research performed by Gmelch (1980), the three main categories of return migrants: i) temporary migrants (who intend to migrate temporarily); ii) forced returnees (migrants who attempted permanent migration but were obliged to return); and, iii) voluntary returnees (migrants who

¹ This study covers the cases of Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian youth.

aimed to migrate permanently but resolved to return to their home country). These categories describe different realities when dealing with migrants who return to the origin country; the circumstances and nature of the returnees diverge remarkably.

In this context, this paper seeks to address the importance of flexible mobility given the complexity of the migration flows taking shape in the Mediterranean. The paper is based on the premise of the wish of potential emigrants either not to leave their countries of origin at all (Sánchez-Montijano and Girona-Raventós, 2017), or to return once they have made the journey on a voluntary basis. Nevertheless, given the wide range of realities of the youth wanting to emigrate, we will seek to learn both their main socio-demographic characteristics and their main motivations for intending to leave their country only to later return. Specifically, we aim to identify the characteristics that define them, as well as their interests and needs, in order to recommend policies that suit their reality.

To pursue these objectives, this paper analyses the results of the SAHWA Project, which is based on a comparative study of young people aged between 15 and 29 from five countries: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The document will focus on the analyses of three countries: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, as they are the most similar cases in terms of mobility patterns towards the EU, as explained below. The text will analyse the data extracted from the representative survey of 10,000 young people: 2,000 per country (SAHWA Youth Survey 2016). Specifically, it considers the young people who answered the question “Would you like to emigrate or re-emigrate?” in the affirmative, which was 1713 in total for the three countries (Algeria: 514; Morocco: 138; and Tunisia: 1061). Once the sample is established, the analysis focuses on the data that emerges from the question “What are your plans once abroad?” The text is structured in the following way: The first section reviews the context in which the movement in the Mediterranean takes place. It looks at migration flows and their characteristics. Secondly, it reviews European Union policies in terms of flexible mobility as well as policies promoted by the countries of origin to re-attract their emigrants (return policies). The following section looks in detail at young people’s interest in returning to their countries of origin or establishing themselves abroad. In particular it concentrates on getting to know the characteristics of these young people. Keeping this analysis in mind policy recommendations are suggested. The text ends with conclusions.

2. Context and overview: Demographic evolution and current state of the art

Mobility in the Mediterranean has undergone significant transformations in recent years, notably in terms of demographics. Policies put in place by the various levels of government involved have shifted accordingly. In this sense, to understand the current situation of the migration phenomenon as well as the responses or action taken, it is necessary to review the demographic dimension. This first analysis will provide us with the elements necessary to focus on those countries with most interest for the European Union: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

Young people aged between 18 and 29 are much more likely to emigrate than any other group, and for many countries make up almost the total of those who move (United Nations, 2011: 1–2). As we do not have current data disaggregated by age with which to analyse the situation of young migrants, the United Nations data is used in general terms. It is therefore

understood that the patterns of migrants as a group may be extrapolated to the reality of the movement of young people.

Focusing on the five countries studied by the SAHWA Project, we observe that the differences in the migration flows are meaningful. First, movement from these countries has changed over time in absolute figures, although there is less change in terms of destination countries. In just 25 years the number of citizens abroad has doubled, growing from a little more than 4.7 million in 1990 to over 9.3 million in 2015 (Table 1). Similarly, although much less marked, the destination of these immigrants has varied over time. An even distribution of these migrants over time is observed between developed and developing countries, with the main reception countries those in the immediate environment – Asia and Europe. Approximately 70% of immigrants from these countries find themselves in just six of the surrounding countries: France (2,823,819), the United Arab Emirates (1,000,345), Saudi Arabia (845,185), Spain (765,309), Italy (670,956), and Kuwait (404,104).

Table 1. Number of immigrants from the five countries by region of destination and year. Absolute data and percentage

Area of destination	1990		2000		2010		2015	
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
WORLD	4 772 123	-	5 714 446	-	8 339 962	-	9 316 566	-
Developed regions	3 295 811	69.06	3 923 031	68.65	5 693 132	68.26	5 992 644	64.32
Developing regions	1 476 312	30.94	1 791 415	31.35	2 646 830	31.74	3 323 922	35.68
Africa	105 812	2.22	114 946	2.01	126 713	1.52	143 815	1.54
Asia	1 325 651	27.78	1 636 587	28.64	2 486 534	29.81	3 141 950	33.72
Europe	2 896 776	60.70	3 373 846	59.04	4 975 469	59.66	5 189 868	55.71
Latin America and the Caribbean	43 074	0.90	38 248	0.67	32 168	0.39	36 614	0.39
Northern America	278 525	5.84	427 216	7.48	579 427	6.95	653 840	7.02
Oceania	122 285	2.56	123 603	2.16	139 651	1.67	150 479	1.62

Source: United Nations, 2015. Compiled by authors.

Second, the flow and type of emigration differs substantially from one country to the other. Not all the countries have the same number of nationals living beyond their borders and their demographic, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds are not the same either. The differences among these five countries may be highly significant in this sense: nearly 14% of the Lebanese youth reside in a third country while only 3.6% of Egyptians do. Between these two extremes are Algeria with 4.4%, Tunisia with 5.8%, and Morocco, 8.3% of whose youngsters live abroad. Analysing the gender of these immigrants also shows significant differences. Though males dominate the five countries' migration, the case of Egypt is especially significant: 65% of Egyptians abroad are men. At the other end is Morocco, with men making up 54% of the emigrants.

Education is also a dimension to take into consideration. As the OECD points out (2015: 314), in the 2010/2011 period 28% of all the migrants from the MENA region had a higher education. The phenomenon of highly qualified mobility has grown ceaselessly since disaggregated data has been collected. Morocco and Algeria are characterised by less qualified migration, with only a fifth of the emigrants from these countries being educated.

The reality of Lebanon and Egypt, by contrast, is very different; almost half of their nationals living abroad have pursued higher education. In essence, it seems reasonable to conclude that the interest of the origin countries in their diaspora is likely to vary according to the number of nationals living abroad and their intrinsic characteristics. In this regard, the measures put in place by the governments must also respond to these migration patterns.

In general terms, migration from these countries can be divided into three groups according to the destination, region and country to which they emigrate. The majority of the migrants from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia are found in EU countries. In fact, 90% of Algerians, 87% of Moroccans and 88% of Tunisians living abroad have settled in an EU member state (Table 2). The case of Lebanon is characterised by the dispersed nature of the diaspora: 27% of Lebanese live in the EU, 27% are found in Asia (mainly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), and another 27% live in North America. By contrast, we observe that only 9% of Egyptians reside in the EU; 82% are in Asia, with countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait being the main destinations. These considerable differences in flows mean the analysis must target the country level instead of the regional.

Concentrating the analysis on the EU, the member states do not host the same amount of immigrants. Most of the migrants are concentrated in France, Spain, Italy, Germany and Netherlands. Overall, these five countries host 92% of the immigrants currently residing in the EU. As the data above showed, the differences according to country of origin and destination are significant. France is the country which hosts most of the nationals of Francophone countries: 90% of the Algerians currently in the EU, 37% of Moroccans and 68% of Tunisians (Table 2). Due to a noteworthy difference in concentrations of migrants among the European Union countries, the interest in them within the EU varies.

Table 2. Number of immigrants from the five countries to the EU in 2015. Absolute data and percentage of the total

	Algeria	%		Egypt	%		Lebanon	%
WORLD	1 763 771	-	WORLD	3 268 970	-	WORLD	798 140	-
EU	1 585 624	90	EU	278 054	9	EU	209 859	26
UK	26 826	2	UK	33 686	12	Denmark	13 061	6
Italy	22 471	1	Italy	108 490	39	Sweden	26 279	13
Spain	55 306	3	Austria	14 891	5	UK	17 128	8
France	1 430 656	90	France	30 937	11	France	47 162	22
Germany	23 272	1	Germany	23 350	8	Germany	79 534	38
Others	27 093	2	Others	66 700	24	Others	26 695	13

	Morocco	%		Tunisia	%
WORLD	2 834 641	-	WORLD	651 044	-
EU	2 480 119	87	EU	571 802	88
Italy	425 238	17	UK	6 606	1
Spain	699 800	28	Italy	107 671	19
Belgium	93 012	4	Belgium	5 730	1
France	926 466	37	France	388 598	68
Germany	114 552	5	Germany	41 332	7
Others	221 051	9	Others	21 865	4

Source: United Nations, 2015. Compiled by authors.

3. Policies of return and temporary mobility

The rationale of the United Nations' activity in terms of human mobility is based in large part on promulgating the win-win-win of mobility for countries of origin, countries of destination and migrants themselves. Remittances, investment from the diaspora, releasing pressure in labour markets and demographics (ageing population) are the drivers behind the decisions taken (United Nations, 2013). Many of the policies of both countries of origin and of destination have been founded on these premises, but, nevertheless, the needs and interests of people who decide to migrate have remained on the margins.

The measures taken by some of the different actors involved in handling migration in the Mediterranean were the product of demographics, the domestic requirements of particular countries and the international context (the 2011 uprisings, for example). In this section we will make a brief presentation of those policies, considering only those that can be linked to the topic of this paper. We will therefore focus first on reviewing the policies of legal, flexible movement from the countries and on the measures taken by those countries of origin of interest to the EU (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) to re-attract their emigrants.

3.1 Destination countries: the European Union as an actor in migration policies

The European Union's migration policy with regard to the countries of the southern and eastern basin of the Mediterranean, especially the Maghreb, has been transformed in recent years. It has changed according to the needs of the workforce in EU countries and the dynamics of the migration flows. Since the start of the 21st century, many of the measures taken in this field have focused on developing a border and mobility control policy (Gabrielli, 2016). In other words the policy has focused on the development of the external dimension, and particularly on the so-called externalisation of borders and securitisation of migration issues (Geddes, 2009; Guiraudon, 2001; Lavenex, 2006). It becomes especially visible with the approval of the "Structured dialogues on migration, mobility and security" with the countries of the southern Mediterranean in 2011.²

This is not the only policy directed at managing migration flows that the EU has put in place in the context of the Maghreb. Other measures, both in the EU as a whole and in the member states, have been developed in order to find channels of regular access. Many of these policies have sought mobility that is not based on permanent settlement. At the heart of these policies there is a win-win-win logic for all the actors involved and, therefore, the development of the countries of origin. Hence, they have mainly taken two paths: temporary movement, and voluntary and assisted return for people in a regular situation.

The development of flow management on these lines began with the approval of the Global Approach to Migration (GAM) in 2005 and its development via the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) of 2011 of the European Commission. In the past ten years, a number of instruments and funds have sought to maintain the new migration channels with the AMCs. Among them, worth highlighting are the mechanisms developed in the Development Cooperation Instruments (the AENEAS Program, 2004–06, is one

² A dialogue for migration, mobility and security with the southern Mediterranean countries. COM (2011) 292 final. Brussels, 24.5.2011.

example), the European Development Funds, and the funds set up by Home Affairs (den Hertog, 2016).

Certainly, from the amalgam of measures it is worth highlighting the Mobility Partnerships (MP),³ and their subsequent development through the Mobility Partnership Facility (MPF). One of its objectives is the development of new mobility channels. These initiatives, which are defined as agreements between the EU and third countries in terms of handling flows, have been signed with certain neighbouring countries, among them Morocco (2013) and Tunisia (2014). These agreements include the management of worker mobility between some countries and others, plans for circular and temporary movement, as well as setting up programmes of assisted return for immigrants in a regular situation seeking to return to their countries. These partnerships include the possibility of starting negotiations on agreements that could facilitate the Schengen visa (short term) for some groups, particularly students, researchers and professionals. The EU explicitly recognises that the flows must respond to the needs of the labour market (especially in certain work niches), as well as the interests of all the actors involved, creating win-win-win processes.

Though these initiatives promoted by the European Commission could involve measures being developed within the framework of a flexible mobility, it is certain is that they are neither being exploited nor developed fully. Much of the criticism of these initiatives comes from the fact that, despite gathering new channels of mobility and seeking to promote development in the countries of origin, in reality they are new instruments of migration control externalisation (Brozca and Paulhart, 2015; Reslow, 2015). Tools that to a large extent have been signed by taking advantage of the fragile situations in these countries – especially following the uprisings of 2011 – and which seek to impose compulsory cooperation with the EU itself (Limam and Del Sarto, 2015).

In any case, it is the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) with the “Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration” of migrants program who leads the return policy in the EU framework, with the support of the member states. This governmental organisation provides various forms of assistance to migrants in order to facilitate return, based on voluntary return, informed decisions and integration responses to reintegration needs (Koser and Kuschminder, 2015).

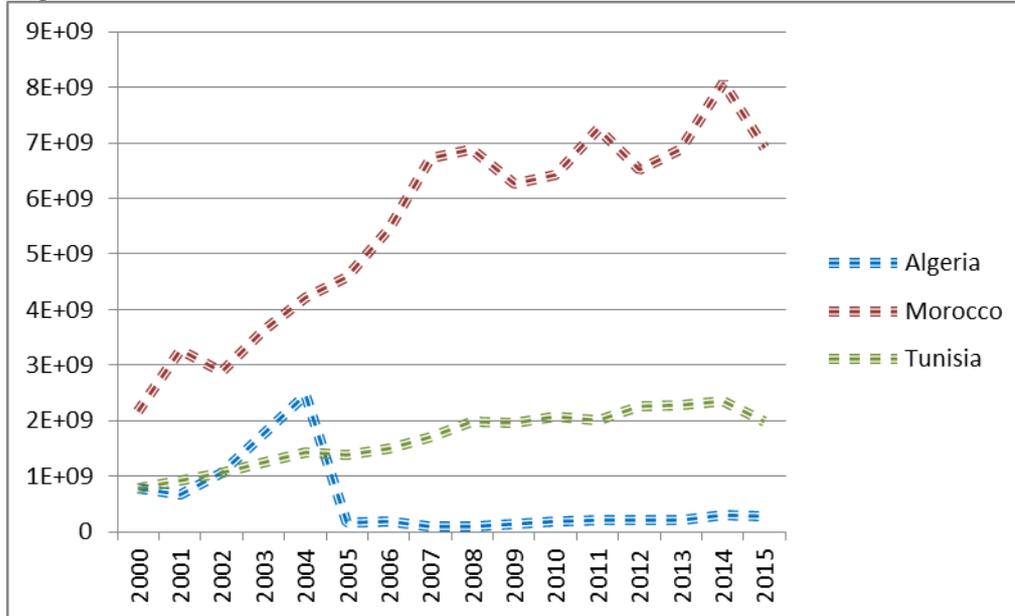
3.2 Origin country inaction: the policy of not having a policy

There are several factors that make the origin countries’ position towards returnees slightly ambiguous. On the one hand, remittances are a convenient source of income for them. As shown in the figure below, the selected Maghreb countries have benefited from persistent inward capital flows from their nationals abroad. The sustained inflow of foreign currency to the countries has had a positive impact on the macro overview of the countries balances as well as the disposable income of its citizens. For instance, in Morocco, these financial transfers represent the second largest source of hard currency after tourism receipts, themselves brought by Moroccan expatriates spending their summer break in the origin country (Migration Policy Center, 2013). In addition to the cash inflow, migration is also seen as a way to relieve tensions in the labour market created due by labour oversupply.

³ European Commission. Mobility partnerships as a tool of the Global Approach to Migration. SEC 1240 final. Brussels, 2009.

Rigidities in the market make it extremely hard to properly accommodate demand and supply for work, generating high levels of unemployment.

Figure 1. Remittances



Source: World Development Indicators, UN.

However, return migrants present certain characteristics that might counterbalance the negative effects of the end of remittances and the inclusion of more workers in the labour market. On one hand, millennials are more risk-averse than previous generations (Moskowitz, 2015).⁴ This means that they tend to accumulate more capital in cash and spend less than the generations before, which can be seen as an opportunity if they move back to their origin countries with their capital and invest it there. On the other hand, voluntary and temporary return migrants tend to have acquired educational or professional experience abroad, thus expanding their knowledge. Therefore, the youth from the Maghreb countries not only come back with money and goods, they are also human capital that could be immensely useful for the countries' development. However, sustainable return is key to benefitting from the synergies and experience acquired abroad. Without a proper agenda on return migration, the possibility of failing to capture the spillover effects are significant.

Have the Maghreb countries implemented policies regarding return migrants? According to the UN, Algeria and Morocco have done so.⁵ They have enforced initiatives to encourage the return of citizens. Nevertheless, young people have idiosyncratic characteristics that require targeted policies. In the next sections, the current state of affairs in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco is analysed.

⁴ The generation born between the mid-1980s and late-2000s.

⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/policy/international-migration-policies-2013.shtml>.

Algeria

The current socioeconomic situation in the country (57.7% of the employed youth are currently working without social security coverage)⁶ has obliged young people to look for opportunities elsewhere. However, after some time, some of these young people are willing to return home and continue their life there. As the results from the SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 present, almost two in five youngsters are willing to go abroad and then move back to their origin country.

When addressing the issue of return migrants, Algeria has played a double game. On the one hand, it is interested in continuing with the remittances inflow that alleviates its debt and credit constraints. On the other, it has also announced a series of measures to stimulate the return of its nationals. Its reinsertion policies have been in place since Decree no. 81-80 of May 2nd 1981 through which the *Comité National de la reinsertion des nationaux résidant à l'étranger* was created. Since then the ministries have adapted the text to their own capacities and various initiatives have been set up: ZHUN for housing,⁷ CNEP to open a currency account,⁸ assistance in order to establish a micro-business and re-schooling of children that have been studying abroad.

For the presidential elections of 2014, the cabinet of the president announced a series of measures to tackle the rising interest of young Algerians in coming back to their country of origin (L'Obs, 2014). These measures concern different areas in order to have an integrated approach to the matter. The majority are related to economic factors, which are young people's main concern.⁹ However, there are also some initiatives related to the social dimension and inclusion (see Annex). Unfortunately, three years on, none of these measures had been implemented (Mediaterranee, 2015) and the government pulled back from its initial intentions of carrying out all the activities due to the incapacity to handle the large number of applications for them (Algerie-Focus, 2015). These measures were presented in addition to the classic ones related to import of a passenger vehicle without tax charges and repatriation of all personal belongings free of charge.

Tunisia

Tunisia has made significant efforts to improve the conditions of the diaspora. It has several public institutions dedicated to the issue of migration as well as return migration. However,

⁶ SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 (2017).

⁷ ZHUN: Zone Habitat Urbaine Nouvelle.

⁸ CNEP: Caisse Nationale d'Épargne Populaire. Bank specialised in real estate loans.

⁹ According to the SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 employment and the economic situation are the major concerns of young people in Algeria.

their efficacy is questioned due to overlapping organisations and a lack of reliable information regarding the implementation of announced initiatives. In order to tackle these issues, Tunisia has set up several websites related to the matter, the most relevant of which are the *Douane*, the Tunisian Government Portal and the *Office des Tunisiens à l'Étranger* (OTE), which is dependent on the Ministry of Social Affairs. Even though there has been an improvement in terms of access to resources, the majority of the websites lack detailed information for the nationals, thus enhancing the arduous bureaucratic process of obtaining all the permissions in order to properly move back.

Although there are some measures put in place for nationals such as a total exemption from customs duties on the import of work equipment and capital goods as well as a vehicle, there is scope for improvement and further measures comprising a more holistic approach. For instance, one of the main concerns of the return migrants is the lack of support for reintegration (Cassarino, 2007). On this matter, the project implemented by the French Office of Immigration and Integration in Tunisia (OFII) and the Tunisian Agency for Employment and Vocational Training (ANETI) is a good example of integration policies. The aforementioned scheme facilitates the resettlement of Tunisian nationals who have lived in France by providing financial and technical support for the start-up of economic projects.

Nonetheless, according to a UN report from 2015, Tunisia is the only country among the surveyed Maghreb countries that has no policy to encourage the return of citizens. There is no general scheme on general migrants willing to return and youth is also neglected. There are no specific policies directed towards returning young migrants.

Morocco

Morocco is one of the countries most affected by migration, due to the large numbers of its nationals travelling to the opposite shore of the Mediterranean. The benefits from migrants' remittances are significant and a constant source of revenues for the country. Therefore, the country has been more concerned by the regularisation and integration of its nationals overseas than in their return to Morocco (Cherti, Balaram, & Szilard, 2013).

Nonetheless, Morocco has in the last years seen a window of opportunity regarding migrants willing to come back to their country. Therefore, it has implemented some projects targeting nationals abroad. Two important ones are the FINCOME and the *Maghribcom* initiative.¹⁰ These projects are carried out by the Ministry for Moroccan Residents Abroad in partnership with local and international stakeholders that aim to broaden the business and investment opportunities currently existing in the country.

There are also other initiatives that signal a tendency towards protecting return migration and channelling it towards the productive development of Moroccan society. The initiative *Nationale de Développement Humain* (INDH) created in 2005, the agricultural programmes encouraging foreign investors as well as investment from nationals living overseas, and the creation in 2003 of an investment framework to promote small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are examples of this.

¹⁰ www.maghribcom.gov.ma

However, many barriers are still in place. According to a survey carried out by the European University Institute in 2007, 54% of Moroccan migrants declared having been confronted with red tape when moving back to their country. Though the government has persistently declared its concern regarding this issue, it has not yet acquired a determined agenda.

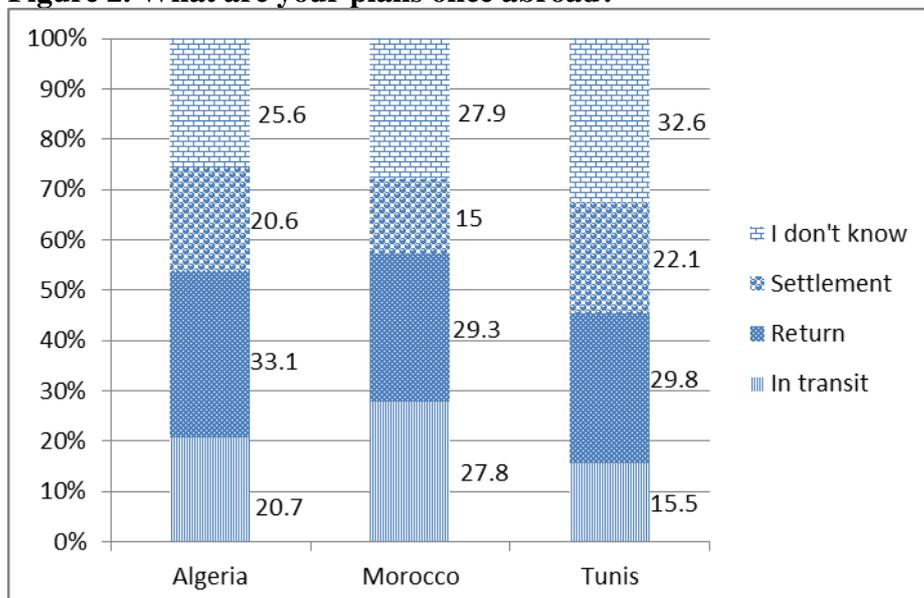
4. “I’ll be back”: desires and expectations of Maghrebi youth migrants

The purpose of the paper is to analyse the current situation of the youth in three Maghreb countries that are willing to emigrate and return, taking into account the results from the SAHWA Youth Survey 2016. Hence, in the next paragraphs, the main outcomes of the survey will be presented and analysed while discussing policy recommendations for the countries mentioned.

4. 1. Picturing the “wannabe returnees”

According to the SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 results, it is a fact that that almost one in three youths that is willing to migrate intends to stay in the destination country a certain amount of time and then return to their origin countries (see Figure 2). The three countries analysed present very similar results, although there is a slightly higher desire to return in Algeria than in the other two Maghreb countries. It seems that one in three young people do not want to emigrate to a third country with the aim of settling permanently. In fact the willingness to settle in the destination country is rather low, especially among the Algerian and Moroccan youth.

Figure 2. What are your plans once abroad?

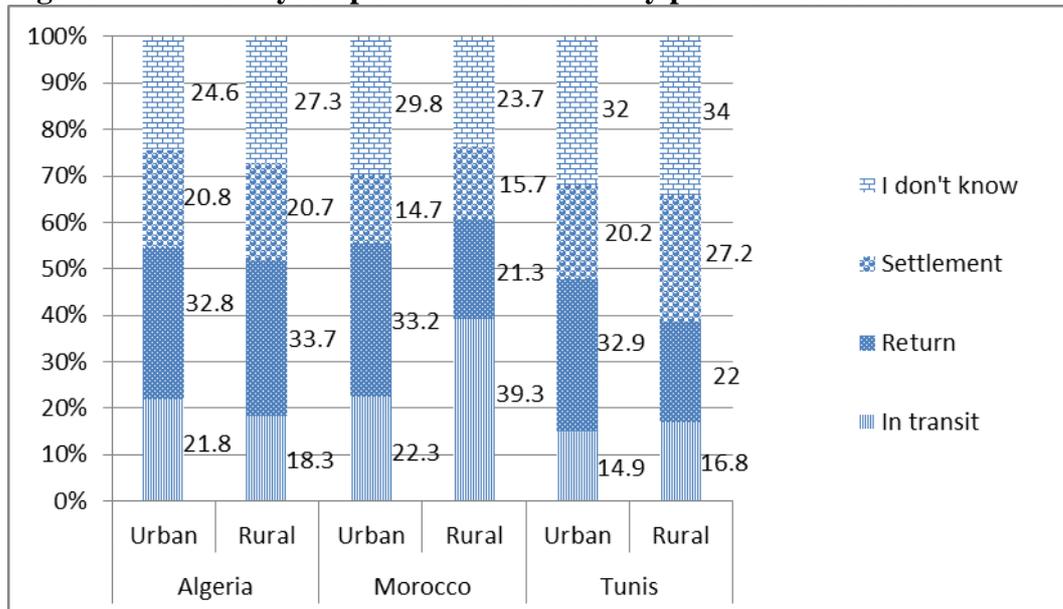


Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

This has several implications for the origin countries. The fact that an important percentage of the youth seeks to return after several years abroad can be extremely interesting for these

countries, which are suffering from brain drain as well as brain waste. When trying to take a closer look at the picture obtained, it is relevant to note that the profile of prospective return migrants is not homogenous among the surveyed countries. In Morocco and Tunisia, there is a difference among the young people that want to return of ten percentage points that relates to their place of residence (Figure 3): almost one in three young people residing in urban areas is willing to migrate and then return, however only one in four youths from rural areas wants to do so. Young people suffer from severe labour market rigidities in urban areas in Maghreb countries and there is also the persistent issue of underemployment. Understanding the push factors of these environments is pivotal in order to design policies that accommodate their needs with the countries' own once they come back. In the case of Algeria, there is no significant difference between the urban and rural environment. This has to be taken in account when devising initiatives. Knowing that one in three youths from rural environments wishes to come back to their origin country – in the case of Algeria – helps shift resources from mainly urban initiatives to the countryside.

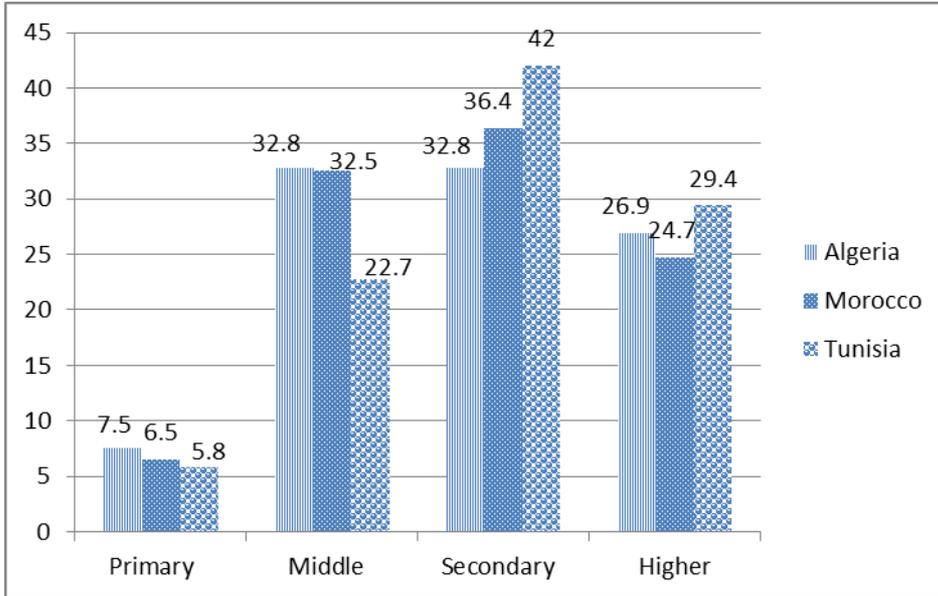
Figure 3. What are your plans once abroad? By place of residence



Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

The level of education is also fairly relevant (Figure 4). In the cases of Algeria and Morocco, three out of five young people wishing to migrate and come back have secondary or higher education before migrating. In the case of Tunisia, the amount of educated young people wishing to return increases to 70%. This has several implications for the origin countries: recognising that part of the “brain drain” wants to return broadens the possibilities of benefitting from this youth that is educated and that will have experience abroad. Some of these possibilities are presented below.

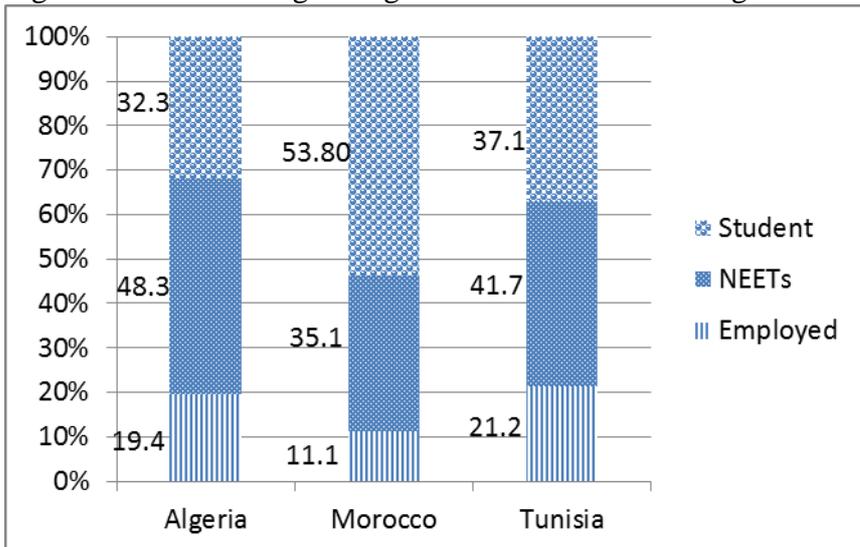
Figure 4. Youth willing to migrate and return to their origin country. By education level



Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

The status of the youth that wish to migrate and return is divergent (Figure 4). In the case of Morocco, more than half of them are students, and only 11% are employed. Per contra, in Algeria and Tunisia the bulk are the NEETs and students represent one in three youngsters.

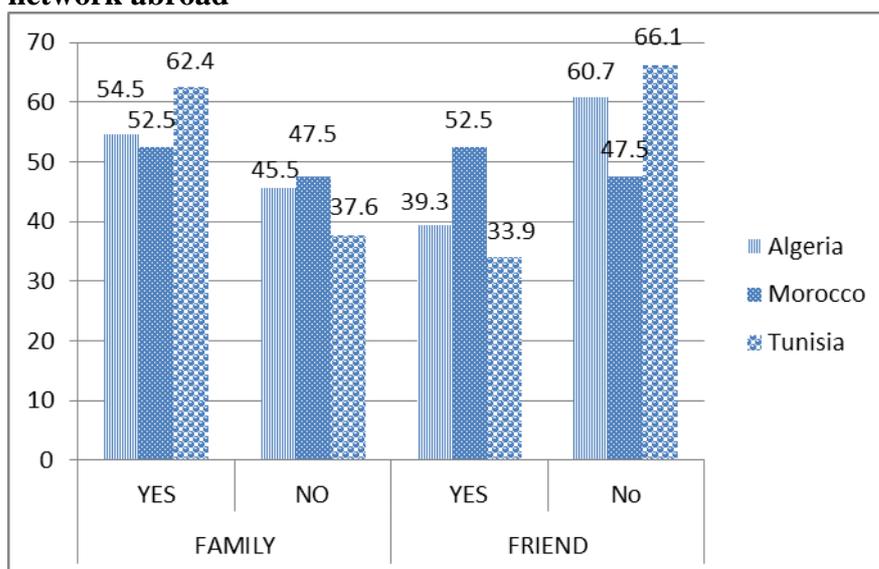
Figure 5. Youth willing to migrate and return to their origin country. By status



Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

The social dimension also plays an important role in the decision-making of the young. In the three analysed countries, more than half the surveyed young people have some family members in the destination country. The numbers decrease when focusing on friends abroad; however, it is interesting to note that half the young Moroccans that wish to migrate and return have friends abroad. In Algeria this number decreases to 40% and in Tunisia it is one in three (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Youth willing to migrate and return to their origin country. By social network abroad



Source: SAHWA Youth Survey.

4.2. Addressing returnees: policy recommendations

The information presented above has plenty of implications for the origin countries in different dimensions: human capital, investment capital, cultural and political norms (Chauvet & Mercier, 2014) and even economic structure. However, it is important not to fall into the mistake of generalising policies for all these countries. The three Maghreb countries have different realities in terms of demographic and socioeconomic dimensions: Algeria has a population of 40 million people and its median age is 27.8 years old. More than 70% of its population is currently residing in cities (CIA, 2017). Its youth has been coping with rampant unemployment rates – 30% of young males and 30.4% of young females are not currently employed.¹¹ Tunisia has a population of 11 million inhabitants, a median age of 32.4 years and the urban population is 66.8% of the total population (CIA, 2017). Morocco is undergoing a demographic transition. Its total population is 33.5 million, its median age is slightly lower than in Tunisia but higher than in Algeria. Its percentage of urban population is the lowest of the three presented in Maghreb countries: around 60% of the total population resides in cities. However, its urbanisation rate is the highest, accounting for a 2.26% annual rate of change (CIA, 2017).

When designing policies, different dimensions should be acknowledged. First, in order to attain sustainable returns, there are some crucial elements that have to be taken in account:

¹¹ SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

social, economic and psychosocial reintegration in the country of origin (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2013). Second, return migration does not start when arriving in the country of origin, but when the migrant decides that they want to move back. This implies that the process shifts its start point from the geographical border of the country to the country of residence of the nationals. Third, we cannot neglect the nature of the migrants: youth. Therefore, the measures should be specifically shaped for the characteristics of nationals between 15 and 29 years old. Using the results obtained from the SAHWA Youth Survey 2016, a range of policies is proposed specifically framed around Maghrebi youth returnees. At this point, several measures can be implemented concerning the different stages of the migration. In order to facilitate comprehension, three main phases are presented: pre-departure, departure, and post-arrival.

Pre-departure support

This is the phase when the migrant has decided that they want to move back to their origin country. At this stage, the origin country should facilitate the information flow so the returnee has access to all the material concerning customs and mechanisms to move back. Using the internet as the main communication platform is a good alternative to consulate and embassy work and can complement their activities. The internet penetration rate worldwide demonstrates that it is the perfect ally for spreading the needed information and advancing the procedures.

Diaspora organisations and NGOs could work with the government to prevent social disconnection from the country of origin. The means with which to learn the language or have access to the local labour market from the place of residence are fundamental.

The SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 depicts a youth that is educated and wishes to migrate for some years and then return to their origin countries. Some of these young people might continue with their studies abroad, some will start training abroad. Easing the pathway for their return should be a priority. One of the biggest problems regarding youngsters is the timeframe of diploma equivalence. In some of the Maghreb countries, the equivalence can take up to two years to be completed, and it might also require specific exams and/or a year of practice.¹² This negatively affects the willingness to move back. When the migrant is confronted with a waiting time of 7–10 months in order to have their foreign degree recognised in their origin country, it discourages them from continuing the process. However, the process can easily be standardised and centralised. Exploiting the opportunities of the internet again, the same platform that compiles information regarding customs could also be used in order to manage this matter. Thus, saving transaction costs and improving the efficiency of the process.

Returnees move back with their personal belongings as well as physical capital. In order to channel the capital, youth accounts could be set up in domestic banks with branches abroad, offering the possibility to invest in the origin country or at least ease the access to their savings once they are back. Lastly, the psychological dimension should also be considered. Policymakers need to identify the importance of assuring that the return migrants are mentally prepared for their new life back in their origin country.

¹² <http://www.enssup.gov.ma/>.

Changing policies or announcing them but not carrying them out could be even more detrimental for the returnees than the lack of initiatives. Giving contradictory signs can cause frustration, unrest and dissatisfaction, thus negatively affecting the motivation and the willingness of the youth to move back. Policymakers need to engage in an unambiguous pathway in order to transmit security and competence to the youth. Destination countries should support all these initiatives in the pre-departure phase in order to pave the way for the future returnees.

Departure assistance

While returning, young people will be confronted with travel costs. The majority of the countries do have some policies regarding transport of the migrant's goods. However, it is important to decrease the cost of moving back as much as possible. An important actor is the transportation market and the firms operating in it. On the one hand, economic support and agreements with travel agencies or transport companies from destination countries must be considered. On the other hand, origin countries must understand that prices should be affordable for their returnees, otherwise the cost of moving back might be too high, thus increasing red tape. Morocco and Tunisia have liberalised transportation markets, thus creating competition among the carriers and lowering the price for the passengers. In the case of Algeria, it is state-controlled and prices are remarkably high compared to its neighbours.

Although international bodies such as the IOM, the European Union and some European member states have independently worked on measures to help develop a secured network, their actions have had a short range. In this regard, institutional coordination is pivotal to avoid duplication and resource misuse.

Post-arrival support

Once arriving in the country, the returnee is confronted with several upfront costs and a reintegration process that starts taking place. It is fundamental that stakeholders – national and international – work together in order to reintegrate the nationals in the society and that no social problems arise from the policies implemented in order to attract nationals abroad.

It is also very important to facilitate the entry of the returnees to the labour market and to exploit the skills acquired abroad in order to improve the domestic labour mismatch. For this purpose, the private sector has to be actively engaged in these projects in order to develop synergies that are beneficial to society. Training courses and sector-specific education schemes could make a change and better prepare the society for the new changing economic environment.

Indicators such as Ease of Doing Business from the World Bank reveal some divergences between the three studied countries. While Morocco is placed number 68 out of 190 countries, Algeria ranks 156 and Tunisia number 77. In the case of Algeria, it is relevant to mention that it has improved seven positions since last year. Ease of Doing Business appraises several dimensions. We have selected two of them that are relevant for youth

returnees: starting a business and getting credit. In terms of starting a business, Tunisia ranks 103, Morocco 40 and Algeria 142. As for credit access, Algeria is placed number 175, Morocco and Tunisia are both in number 101. There is still scope to improve but it is evident that some countries have been making efforts in order to advance their business climate. Investment projects related to microcredit or SMEs should be put in place, specifically targeting the youth and their skills.

As stated before, there is a difference between Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria in terms of the young people's place of residence. In the first two countries one in three young people that lives in an urban area is willing to migrate and then return, while only one in four from rural areas wants to do so. In Algeria both percentages are the same. In terms of policies, this has particular relevance. While Tunisia and Morocco should strengthen their urban job market and concentrate on creating urban networks for the returnees and the youth that has not migrated, Algeria should encourage rural initiatives in order to benefit from the knowledge spillover from the returnees to the countryside.

From Figure 5, it is evident that attention should be directed to students in Morocco. There is an underlying issue related to labour market access for young graduates in the country. However, they also manifest the wish to return. Therefore the country should work on policies related to adjusting their national education to international standards in order to facilitate the integration of the youth in the international labour markets. Moreover, policies must also be directed towards a more inclusive relationship between the private sector and academia, promoting in-company training for young workers and incentives to hire interns.

The majority of the Maghrebi youth that were willing to migrate and then return to their origin countries have some family member or friends abroad. This shows the importance of the social dimension. Policymakers should also bear in mind the social network and the importance of families and friends in migration decisions (ACP observatory on Migration, 2013). Including them in initiatives related to re-integration is a step forward.

5. Conclusion

After the analysis of the current state of affairs, there is a need to propound country specific mobility policies rather than regional ones. Moreover, the needs and the individual perspectives of future emigrants must also be taken into consideration. A successful migration policy, in addition to macro interests of attraction and expulsion countries, must be built on the interests and concerns of migrants.

The European Union possesses adequate instruments to enforce new mobility logics between the two regions. The "Mobility Partnership" largely includes plans that would allow voluntary return according to the interests of immigrants themselves. However, they are not being used. The instruments already negotiated can become a successful alternative in order to incorporate the interests of the different stakeholders. On the one hand, it could diminish the pressure on some host countries that are experiencing high levels of unemployment. On the other hand, it can encourage the return of migrants with experience abroad and fulfilled expectations.

Return migration is an unexplored issue. Origin countries have different agendas and there is no consensus on how to proceed with returnees. However, the present circumstances make it fundamental for the countries analysed to take a closer look and determinedly undertake action. In order for this to be a success story, it is fundamental to have a holistic approach to the matter. Origin countries have persistently neglected the reality of youth returnees. However, they do have a positive impact on society: return migrants have the potential to firmly develop their origin countries through different channels.

Policymakers need to develop an agenda for the coming years. The socioeconomic characteristics of the host countries have drastically changed and plenty of young people are willing to gain experience abroad and afterwards return to their origin country. Sustainable return needs to keep in mind a medium-long term horizon. Thus, policies should be conceived to generate productive growth and a positive integration climate for the returnees, easing the pathway for the following years. In order to engage in good policies, it is essential to have detailed information. Initiatives like the SAHWA Youth Survey 2016 provide policymakers with an accurate picture in order to follow the ongoing situation in the civil society; however, it is also in the origin country's interest to engage in regular surveys to update the information.

This is a golden opportunity that must be seized. It will take real effort but, most importantly, young people need to be incorporated into the debate and the decision-making process.

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Annex

Hereafter follows a list of the main measures proposed by the government and their characteristics. The initiatives that have not yet been implemented are in purple. In orange the reader can identify the measures that are in the process of being enforced or that have been partially implemented since 2014.

Area	Measure	Characteristics
Economic	Access to public housing	i) Logement Public Unique (LPU): state support (price of land, capping of margins, etc.) for those who wish to acquire a property to reside there; ii) unrestricted real estate programmes for those who wish to invest in a property to rent or resell.
Economic	Access to the ANSEJ system	Young people from immigrant backgrounds will be able to access the National Youth Employment Support Agency (ANSEJ) scheme in the framework of autonomous entrepreneurship. The ANSEJ scheme will offer financial aid of up to 10 million dinars (approximately 95,000 euros) to young people of immigrant backgrounds who have maintained a tie with the country of origin.
Economic	Opening branches of Algerian banks	Prepare the conditions for the short-term opening of branches of Algerian banks in countries with a strong presence of the Algerian community.
Economic	Strengthening Air Algeria's fleet	Additional flight authorisations for airlines operating to Algeria, setting up a quota of seats with reductions for families and the elderly, especially during the peak season.
Economic	Increasing supply of maritime transport	Strengthen the capabilities of national maritime carriers to increase their supply and improve their services. Increase supply and turnover with major French ports and lower prices, especially for families.
Economic	Internships	Set up a scholarship for professional internships in companies and institutions in Algeria.
Economic	Medical Professionals: Offer of Expertise Contract	The health system needs the skills of established medical professionals who wish to return, permanently or for a time, to practice in Algeria. This expertise will be managed directly by the holder(s) of the management contract for the future hospitals.
Social	Advocacy of associations	Encourage the associative movement in host countries to: strengthen ties with the country of origin; help return skills to the country; increase productive investment to reduce imports; contribute to transfer of technology and know-how.
Economic	Access for Algerian-owned enterprises to public procurement	System of access for companies held by Algerians to public procurement in Algeria.
Diplomacy	Improvement of reception conditions at consulate level	Emergency programme to increase the capacities of reception and service at the level of the major consulates.
Legal	Extended legal aid	Set up a free legal aid system around consular posts with the collaboration of associations that are active in the interests of the community.



Researching
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Towards a New Social Contract



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