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Mediterranean Migrations

History of Immigration

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Europe's Security Policy: A Failed Endeavour

Since the Moorish invasion of Spain in 711 AD, and more recently, the formation of the Spanish and French Moroccan protectorates in 1830, Morocco, France and Spain have been heavily linked both economically and politically. These early ties resulted in a mixing of European and African cultures with large movements of people both back and forth across the Strait of Gibraltar. Migration between these two regions has always been high given the short distance of 9 miles that separates these two continents. At present, the largest populations of Moroccan immigrants living overseas are found in France and Spain. While during the first half of the twentieth century, Northern African immigration to Western Europe was a relatively simple procedure, decolonisation, the wars of independence beginning in the 1960's, and the European oil crisis in 1973 meant that Europe began to close her borders and restrict the number of immigrants permitted entry, creating problems for hopeful Northern Africans looking to migrate. Although open immigration was stopped, and the number of immigrants selected was limited, the Northern African migrant communities in Europe continued to grow, and not just through natural population growth. With the increasing difficulties in getting legal immigration visas, rates of clandestine immigration began to rise drastically. Although the European Union encouraged her member states to tighten border security in order to prevent undocumented immigrants from entering Europe, this irregular migration has continued. Thus we can conclude

that the European Union's aims were not achieved; undocumented migration has not been prevented and a sustainable and healthy level of migration between Northern Africa and Europe has not been attained. So how and why has the European Union's security outlook failed to prevent illegal immigration? Looking at France, Spain and Morocco in particular, what role did Morocco and her immigration policy play in the European Union's failure and what have been the ramifications of the European Union's attempts at creating security legislation and immigration policy? By examining the evidence, it is clear to see that the one-sidedness of the European Union's security outlook, the absence of a Europe-wide security policy and immigration policy, and the importance of remittances to the Moroccan economy (thus the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Moroccans to help prevent migration) have all helped to ruin Europe's chances at reducing illegal immigration. These causes have also meant that a mutually beneficial level of migration has not yet been achieved, and at present, migration does more harm than good in terms of development in Northern Africa.

The European Union has failed to prevent illegal migration due to current European border control policy and legislation that tends to be too one-sided, with no consistent European policy on asylum, border control, and the expulsion of illegal immigrants back to their home countries (Baldwin-Edwards, 14). Nations such as France and Spain have focussed more on how they can keep illegal immigrants (particularly those from North Africa) from crossing the border into Europe, rather than how they can work together with the sending nations to keep these clandestine migrants in Africa. An example of this is the problems with the borders between Morocco and Spain, namely the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla that border Tétouan and Nador respectively. Although recently the Moroccan government has agreed to prune the bushes around the walls of the cities (immigrants looking to scale the security fences use these plants as

hiding spots), realistically, this is going to do very little in preventing the mass climbing of the walls, leaving most of the border security to Spain. In 2004, the Moroccan government also promised to help Spain patrol the Moroccan coastline, but again, as evidenced by the growing population of immigrants, this is doing very little to prevent illegal migration from Morocco to Spain and then into the rest of Europe.

The primary reason that the European Union and thus Europe as a whole has failed to prevent clandestine immigration is the lack of a consistent European policy on border security and immigration. Despite both British and German/Italian attempts in 2003 and 2004 respectively to suggest new directions that the European Union could take in regards to its security policy, both of their proposals were refused (Baldwin-Edwards, 15). Thus in the absence of a continent-wide policy, both Spain and Italy made their own attempts to pursue arrangements with Northern African countries leading to the increasing militarization and crime control focus of Europe's Mediterranean borders (Baldwin-Edwards, 15). Italy caused controversy in October 2004, when she returned over a thousand illegal immigrants to Libya without allowing them to claim asylum (Baldwin-Edwards, 15). The European Parliament and the United Nations Human Rights Commission both judged Italy's expulsions of immigrants to be illegal activity. Spain also came under fire in the aftermath of October 2005, when 14 migrants were killed in their attempts to scale the security fences around the Spanish North African cities of Ceuta and Melilla.

More recently, efforts have been again made in an attempt to create a consistent immigration policy for members of the European Union. Although this policy is still under construction, according to the European Commission's website, their plan is to "establish a framework for legal migration, taking fully into account the importance of integration into host societies." However, until this policy is released, and the member states of the European Union

decide to take this under advisement or legislate according to the European Commission's wishes, Europe will continue to flounder in the absence of any consistent policy regarding immigration for employment (other than the Blue Card directive), rights for long-term immigrants and the legalization of clandestine immigrants.

Regarding immigration, naturalization and security policy with Europe, Morocco is stuck between a rock and a hard place. Morocco wants to be seen as cooperating with the European continent in terms of immigration and illegal immigration, yet at the same time, the money sent home to Morocco by immigrants living abroad makes up a large part of her economy. According to the CARIM Migration profiles, in 2007, remittances amounted to 7.11 million U.S. dollars, approximately nine percent of Morocco's GDP. Without remittances, 600,000 households would fall below the poverty line, increasing the nation's poverty by four percent. Although migrants have been accused of spending their overseas earnings on superfluous unnecessary items, the injection of money into the country's economy gives it a boost. In the 1990's Morocco revealed just how vital immigration, and the remittances sent home were to the country, with laws set up to reduce the chance of integration into the host country's society and secure the loyalty of Moroccans abroad (Kreienbrink, 200). Imams and Arabic language teachers were sent into France and Spain (and other countries with large Moroccan immigrant populations) in an attempt to strengthen bonds between immigrants and immigrant children with their country of origin (Kreienbrink, 200). Moroccan authorities also made it more difficult for Moroccans to give up their citizenship, and children born to Moroccan fathers were also given citizenship automatically after birth. Although in the late 90's these host countries made a push to get rid of these efforts to prevent integration, as they believed they caused more harm than good, the

lengths that the Moroccan government went to to retain immigrants' ties with their home countries shows just how important they considered remittances to their economy.

More recently, negotiations with Spain resulted in an agreement that meant in return for 390 million Euros of development aid, Morocco must help the Spanish Guardia Civil to patrol the coast to prevent illegal immigration (Kreienbrink, 213). Since 2004 the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie and the Guardia Civil patrol Morocco's coast together (Kreienbrink, 213). Despite Morocco's cooperation on this point, her efforts to reduce illegal immigration have seemed insufficient, at least in the Europeans' point of view and the Moroccan government has been accused of hypocrisy in terms of her negative perspective on migration to Morocco and her positive encouragement of migration from Morocco, to Europe and North America (Kreienbrink, 22).

In conclusion, the European Union's attempts to prevent illegal migration and create healthy, sustainable migratory patterns have been unsuccessful as of yet. This failure has been caused by the one-sidedness of European border security, with a focus on keeping out immigrants, rather than preventing them from leaving; the absence of any Europe-wide consistent policy regarding immigration for employment, the legalization of illegal immigrants and the rights and eventual naturalization of long-term immigrants; as well as a lack of desire on the part of the Moroccans to limit illegal immigration, due to the importance of remittances to the Moroccan economy. While the European Union has promised to release new immigration policy in the next year or so, this legislation is coming into play a little too late in the game and there are no guarantees that her member states will agree to make the changes necessary, which means, until real changes are made, this unsustainable and unhealthy migration will continue to retard the development of many North African nations.

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