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**Illegal Smuggling and International Organized Crime from Africa to Europe:
The Moroccan Perspective**

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Abstract

This paper explores the proliferation of illicit human smuggling and trafficking on the routes from Africa to Europe. The record-breaking number of migrants attempting to reach Europe by whatever means necessary presents organized crime with the opportunity for a new source of revenue with few consequences. Many long-established transnational organized criminal groups are involved in this highly lucrative practice of smuggling humans. This situation is exacerbated by a lack of consensus and cohesion by the European Union (EU), Spain, and Italy. This phenomenon is undermining state structures, reinforcing corruption, and putting at risk institutions throughout Europe. A thorough understanding of the smuggling routes from Africa, the criminal groups involved, and their operations will inform the policy recommendations proposed in this paper for combatting this phenomenon.

Background

The smuggling routes from Africa to Europe have always been amongst the most lucrative in the world for organized crime. Although this mass migration poses implications for security, economic well-being, and political stability throughout the region, policy research explores the licit and illicit structures that allow migrants to travel. The number of migrants hoping to make their way into Europe escalates every year, and will keep on doing so in the coming years. Therefore, it is essential that governments understand the implications of the ongoing migration trends and mitigate the potential threats of mass movements, for both states' security and for the safety of the migrants.

The current situation is due to a variety of factors including lack of economic opportunity, political upheaval, and war creating a security threat at the international level. This project addresses the significant policy gaps that enable illicit activity to not only exist but also to prosper during. Three main security concerns justify this research project: the expansion of illicit networks, the disjointed international policy, and the ever-growing migrant populations.

It is essential to first properly define the terms “refugee” and “migrant” due to their confusion and conflation by mass media. The term *migrant* denotes a person who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions. Three different categories of migrants fall under this definition. Legal migrants who use lawful channels to gain access to their destination country. Irregular migrants, who cross borders without government knowledge and approval. The third category of migrants are *refugees* who are defined as: A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. For the purposes of clarity in this paper, the word migrant will be used as the encompassing term for both irregular migrants and refugees.

It involves the provision of a service, typically transportation or fraudulent documents, to an individual who voluntarily seeks to gain illegal entry into a foreign country. Human smuggling centers on transportation and involves the deliberate evasion of immigration laws. Smuggling is the voluntary movement of people from an origin country to a destination country by deliberately avoiding legal immigration requirements. Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting, or obtaining a person through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjugation.

Human smugglers and traffickers are often in a position of power relative to their “cargo” due to the demand for their networks, routes, and experience. In the midst of the migration process, organized criminal groups who once focused on the trafficking of illicit goods have transitioned to the movement of people with little disruption to their traditional networks. Furthermore, they have profited from the massive demand for their services from migrants and the relatively risk-free nature of this criminal enterprise¹. Smugglers and traffickers who shift to the movement of people benefit not only from the operational camouflage of the mass migration. The raw numbers of individuals enable organized crime to infiltrate groups and carry out their operations with little risk of detection. Likewise, the lesser penalties associated with human trafficking compared to its drug trafficking counterpart is also an incentive to the shift in dealing with humans.

Migration

Migration is caused by push and pull factors. Push factors cause people to leave their country of origin due to a variety of motivations. For instance, refugees seek to escape from political, religious and ethnic persecution. Other migrants, meanwhile, may leave their countries of origin because of instability and violence. Although the conditions may not allow them to be considered refugees under the 1951 United Nations Convention, the situation in their home country may be significantly dire. Pull factors are often more applicable to economic migrants, who leave their countries of origin to seek a higher income and increased quality of life.

The atrocities and instability generated by the rise of Boko Haram, Ansar Dine and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) constitute a significant push factor from within Western Africa^{2,3}. Nigeria, its government, and its people are facing constant uncertainty and insecurity due to the non-state militant groups including Boko Haram. The resultant chaos and war have left thousands of dead, maimed, and homeless. Thousands more have fled in what amounts to some of the largest waves of migrations of people to Europe in modern times. For many of these desperate individuals, the routes from Morocco to Spain and Libya to Italy have become the preferred means of escaping their daily lives.

Other migrants seek economic opportunity and increased stability, both of which are currently lacking in parts of Western Africa, Central Africa, and sometimes Northern Africa. Economic migrants face a lack of employment prospects and a deepening poverty in their states. Europe, specifically Western Europe continues to be viewed as a destination for economic prosperity, and serves as a pulling agent for millions of individuals with the hope of a better life⁴ this phenomenon can be observed in France since it is the favorite migration destination of the Francophone Africans, who dream of the social benefits that France offers to the asylum seekers, involving *le Revenu D'insertion Social (RSI)*.

The individual routes taken by migrants from their countries of origin, through Morocco, and into Spain may vary on a case-by-case basis, but the data on their chosen route's points to some broad patterns. Information on migrant flows within Morocco is particularly scarce due to the opacity of the government on the topic of migration. As a result, much of the mapping through the country is done based on the digital breadcrumbs and individual accounts migrants leave behind. Some anecdotal accounts refer to individuals using Google Maps to walk the distance from the border,

to the port cities of Tangier or the enclaves of Ceuta⁵. At the same time, the role of personal digital mapping services should also not be discounted. These services can serve as a means to identify waypoints and a potential means of verifying a smuggler's intentions, and as such could conceivably be used to mark progress through Morocco. In short, although the precise routes retain a high margin of error, the trends of systems such as Google Maps and Facebook can highlight potentially popular paths to the northern coastlines. The migrants often attempt to cross over to the Spanish Canary Islands, as well as the Portuguese Madeira Island. These naval routes remain widely facilitated by organized criminals, who often make use of inflatable rafts, dinghies, or yachts to smuggle the migrants out of Morocco⁶. Finally, after they are moved from the Islands to Spain, migrants often make their way North to Andorra before attempting to cross the border out of Spain and into France, their preferred final destination.

While migrants conceivably have the tools to chart and plan their journey across Africa to Europe, the difficulties of it, including distance and safety make the trip near impossible without the help of a third party. For many of these migrants who lack contacts and resources in the countries they are traversing, organized crime comes into play.

Organized Crime

Organized crime's influence on the migration poses a transnational threat to the EU, Spain, Italy and Morocco. Members of organized crime groups are attracted to profit and will pursue any opportunity to exploit or benefit from the situation. With the rise of globalization and the removal of commercial barriers, illicit activity flows freely from country to country. These transnational criminal enterprises involve an array of illicit activities that include narcotics trafficking, counterfeiting, money laundering, and human trafficking.

Organized criminals see the mass influx of desperate populations hoping to cross a dangerous body of water as yet another opportunity for profit. Vulnerable people, in this case migrants, will employ any means, legal or otherwise, to reach their destination. As more countries resist accepting migrants, organized criminal activity and the demand for their services increase.⁷ Smugglers' charges vary depending on the financial abilities of each migrant, ranging from €500 (MAD 5,323) to €4000 (MAD 42,586) for safe passage towards Melilla. Others use large cargo ships and can fill them for a fee of \$500 per migrant.⁸ Organized crime sees the emergence of this new maritime route as a money-making opportunity with thousands of refugees as customers.

Due to the geographic locations of Africa and Europe, organized criminals in these countries are well placed, equipped, and connected to profit from the ongoing migration in the Mediterranean Sea. Although the extent of African organized crime is difficult to gauge due to the lack of transparency of the African regimes, the effects of the illicit groups are far clearer. Morocco's geography makes it a bridge between Africa and Europe, establishing it as a historically important thoroughfare for goods, people, and drugs. Tangier remains a crucial gateway for the "*Green Gold*" Cannabis/Hashish trade into Europe through Spain, although this practice is becoming more hazardous for the traffickers since the controls have increased, in the recent past years, Cannabis is now entering Europe through the Algerian ports of Alger's and Oran, through Tunisia, and also through Libya and towards Italy, Malta and the Balkans⁹. The European Union's failed attempts to stop the trafficking of Cannabis and its processed forms can be observed by the political liberal movement to decriminalize and legalize the use of Cannabis in EU member-states including for recreational use. The Netherlands has coffee shops selling Cannabis, in December 2021 Malta legalized recreational use of cannabis, in Germany the government introduced a law that allows adults to carry small amounts of Cannabis with them, however specialized shops will not be allowed. In Luxembourg the government is working on a law to ensure a legal pathway towards legalization of Cannabis for recreational use, Denmark introduced a proposal to its parliament in March of 2022 to experiment a 5-years legalization of the substance¹⁰.

One of the more notorious European criminal organizations, the Albanian Mafia, also serves as one of the criminal groups exploiting migrants. Indeed, Balkan gangs are now leading global smugglers¹¹ and are notorious for human trafficking and Cannabis smuggling operations along the Balkan Route. The Albanian mafia understood the economic principle of the law of offer and demand, and as this opportunity for revenue rose, they diversified their operations to increase their profits by smuggling drugs in addition to their human trafficking enterprise.

Morocco is an obvious source country for Cannabis, the bounty from delivering Cannabis in Western Europe has been effective in part due to the Albanian bodies already living in Belgium, Greece, Germany, and Switzerland. Using the aforementioned community, Albanian mafia members distribute Cannabis and proliferate their hold over illicit activity further into Europe¹². While the Albanian Mafia is discreet enough as to not get flagged, evidence reports implicates the Albanian mafia in the act of smuggling humans, more easily observable during crises involving refugee migration, analysts accuse the group due to their history of illicit activity.

The Moroccan government has increased its collaboration efforts with the European Union to combat the smugglers, the European Commission has engaged itself in the fight against irregular migration into the European Union and intensifying cooperation with Morocco following the deaths of 23 individuals at the Moroccan-Spanish border. The European Commissioner to internal affairs, Ylva Johansson and the Spanish Internal Affairs minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska met the internal affairs minister Abdelouafi Laftit to discuss the events of the 24 of June 2022 when hundreds of sub-Saharan migrants and refugees attempted to enter the frontier post and climb over the wall to Melilla. In addition to the deaths there has also been a noted 70 injured, the European Commission responded that the police cooperation with Morocco will be reinforced, specifically via the means of conjunction investigations. The images from that day, featuring black bodies bleeding to death under Moroccan soldiers caused a public outrage in the United Nations, and denunciation from a high-commissioner of a United Nations representative. Other images featured a group of men climbing the fence and throwing rocks at the Moroccan riot police. Grande-Marlaska and Johansson congratulated Morocco for having done an important job that is worth mentioning towards containing irregular migration, which according to the European Commission, prevented 26 000 irregular migrants¹³.

In theory, anyone can engage in smuggling activities, but it is important to recognize that smuggling is illegal and carries significant legal and ethical consequences. Engaging in smuggling can lead to criminal charges, imprisonment, and other severe penalties in most jurisdictions. While anyone theoretically has the capacity to involve themselves in smuggling, certain factors may make individuals more likely to participate such as financial gain, it is a common motivation for individuals to become involved in smuggling. Economic pressures or the allure of quick profits can tempt individuals to engage in illegal activities.

Network and connections with existing smugglers or criminal organizations can increase the likelihood of involvement. Some individuals may be drawn into smuggling through family or social connections. Knowledge and skills, a specific knowledge, skills, or expertise related to smuggling operations, such as logistics, transportation, or navigating border controls, can make someone more attracted to criminal networks involved in smuggling. Vulnerable circumstances, individuals facing socio economic challenges, limited opportunities, or desperation may be more susceptible to becoming involved in smuggling as a means of survival, or as a means of improving their financial situation. Individuals with prior involvement in illegal activities and that have a

criminal background may be more inclined to participate in smuggling due to their existing connections and/or familiarity with illicit operations.

Identifying the largest human trafficking group or network in Africa is challenging due to the clandestine nature of human trafficking and the constantly evolving dynamics of criminal organizations. Human trafficking is a complex and illicit activity that involves multiple networks, both local and transnational, operating across borders.

It's important to note that human trafficking can involve various forms, including forced labor, sexual exploitation, child trafficking, and organ trafficking. Different criminal groups may specialize in different types of trafficking or operate in specific regions, it is known that human trafficking networks can be highly decentralized and interconnected. They often involve numerous smaller groups or individuals working together to facilitate the trafficking of victims. Efforts to combat human trafficking in Africa involve collaboration between local and international law enforcement agencies, as well as NGOs and international organizations. They work towards identifying and dismantling these networks, prosecuting traffickers, and providing support to victims. Over the years, various criminal networks and groups have been involved in human trafficking in different regions of Africa. Some notable examples of human trafficking groups or networks that have been reported in Africa include

Boko Haram, the extremist group based in Nigeria that has been involved in the trafficking of women and girls, particularly known for abducting schoolgirls and using them for forced labor, sexual exploitation, and as suicide bombers. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, operating in Uganda, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Central African Republic (CAR). They have been involved in various criminal activities, including the abduction and exploitation of children as child soldiers, porters, and sex slaves.

Mediterranean Trafficking Networks, facilitating the smuggling and trafficking of migrants, particularly from North Africa to Europe through sea routes. These operations involve a range of criminal groups and individuals operating in multiple countries along the routes.¹⁴

The specific amount of money that migrants pay to smugglers when traveling to France can vary significantly and is influenced by numerous factors. It is challenging to provide precise figures as these transactions occur within illegal and clandestine networks.

However, to provide a general idea, the fees charged by smugglers can range from a few hundred to several thousand euros per person. The cost depends on factors such as the distance traveled,

the complexity of the journey, the mode of transportation, the level of risk involved, and the additional services provided by the smugglers. For example, migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa to reach France might pay several thousand euros to smugglers who organize the perilous journey on overcrowded boats. On the other hand, migrants opting for overland routes or utilizing forged documents might pay lower fees, although it can still amount to several hundred or even thousands of euros. It is crucial to reiterate that engaging with smugglers is illegal, dangerous, and highly discouraged. Migrants are strongly advised to pursue legal and safe pathways for migration, such as seeking asylum through proper channels or exploring regular migration options provided by governments and international organizations. For more accurate and up-to-date information on the costs associated with smuggling and migration to France, I recommend consulting official reports, studies on migration, or reaching out to relevant governmental or non-governmental organizations working in the field of migration and human trafficking.¹⁵

The future of migration to France, or any other country, is influenced by numerous complex and interrelated factors. Migration patterns can be influenced by changes in political, economic, social, and environmental conditions both within France and in countries of origin or transit. Several factors can impact migration trends to France in the future. For starters the political factors caused by immigration policies, both in France and in other countries, will influence migration flows. Stricter or more lenient immigration laws, refugee policies, and bilateral agreements can all play a role in shaping migration patterns. Economic conditions, opportunities, and job prospects in France can attract or deter potential migrants. These economic fluctuations and employment prospects are what affect people's decisions to migrate for work or better livelihoods. Demographic trends and population dynamics, such as aging populations and labor market demands can influence migration trends. Countries facing labor shortages might seek to attract foreign workers, which could impact migration to France. Conflict and instability, political unrest, armed conflicts, and humanitarian crises in neighboring regions can lead to forced displacement and irregular migration to France, depending on geopolitical developments. Climate change and environmental factors, indeed environmental challenges and natural disasters can impact migration patterns, as people might be forced to leave their homes due to environmental degradation or climate-related issues. Unexpected global events, such as pandemics or economic crises, can also affect migration trends by influencing mobility and travel restrictions. Given the complexity of these factors and

their interplay, it's challenging to predict with certainty whether migration to France will increase or decrease in the future. Governments and international organizations continually assess and respond to migration challenges, aiming to develop policies that balance humanitarian concerns, economic needs, and border management.

Organized crime's role in crises is, and will continue to be, highly influential and must be addressed through policy between African states and the European Union. Any disjointed policies will create a power vacuum that criminals will fill. The migration route across the Mediterranean Sea is a money-making opportunity for traffickers and organized crime syndicates. These groups pose a serious and imminent threat to migrants desperately moving to Europe along the maritime route from Morocco to Spain.

Social and Cultural Contention

The European response to the migrant crisis has been nothing if not dynamic. Following the publicized images of Alan Kurdi—the young Syrian boy who was found dead on the shores of Bodrum in Turkey after a failed attempt to reach Greek territory—the public welcomed migrants at border crossings, train stations, and soccer stadiums. This outpouring of good will was reflected in the tenor of discussions over the acceptance of migrant quotas—most notably in Germany. In response to the people's support, countries initially opened their borders to the migrants. Yet as the migrant crisis has continued to grow, tensions have risen within the host countries as economic and social services are strained to accommodate the deluge of new occupants. Moreover, the aftershocks of the November 13, 2015 Paris attacks as well as the March 22, 2016 Brussels bombings have exacerbated the already precarious relationship between the local populations and their migrant counterparts. Outrage has replaced empathy and pressure is increasing for governments to rescind their open-door policies.³⁰ This unrest over security, economic well-being, and cultural zeitgeist also manifests itself in the rise of the far right in Europe. Political parties take advantage of the public's fear and inability to discern between economic migrants, refugees, and potential terrorists. Far-right parties—including Sweden's Democrats Party and the Greek Golden Dawn—have witnessed significant growth in the last year through isolationist and xenophobic messaging.³¹ As a consequence, the political conversation regarding many countries' stance on migrants has similarly shifted to the right.³² The combination of literal barriers to entry

into Europe and the growth of suspicion and resentment over migrants both work to organized crime's favor as demand for safe passage and security into Europe only grows.

Research Design & Methodology

This section will discuss the design of this article and the methodology used to assemble it. In order to roughly track migrant movements through Morocco and into Europe, this capstone project gathered its information through an array of primary and secondary sources. Investigations were led in Morocco with the help of some non-profit non-governmental agencies such as the association *La Cigogne* in Rabat, in charge of welcoming and aiding the migrants when they reach Morocco, in order to assist them with their healthcare, and their literacy education. It served as the foundation for the project's research due to its accessibility and closeness to migrants, which was primordial to contacting individuals during their journey through Morocco and into Spain. In addition to *La Cigogne*, another association was of great value towards hearing the voice of migrants, and that is the *La voix des femmes migrantes au Maroc* association, that mostly aids women by caretaking for them, by clothing them, looking after their children, shelter them, and assist them with their literacy education. The secondary sources I used are the *Cathedrale Saint Pierre de Rabat*, of Father Daniel where he shared with me his experiences with migrants as a priest. The cathedral, with its scarce means are still aiding the migrants, in the administrations for their paperwork, available on a weekly basis, migrants seek shelter in the Cathedral. The methodology was to meet with the migrants in Morocco and interview them about their paths from their countries of origin and their travel to Morocco.

Discussion

This section will discuss the varied effects of organized crime in the migration crisis and examine how organized crime impacts the crisis as a whole. The influx of migrants surging into Europe via Africa, combined with the fragmented policy, with which EU states have approached the waves of migrants created a power vacuum within the EU for illicit organizations to fill. Without a concerted effort and unified implementation of policy for the effective processing, transportation, and harboring of these migrants, the potential for further instability exists within the EU. In particular, this lack of policy unity is straining the institutions within France. The migrant populations from primarily Sub-Saharan countries such as Mali, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Nigeria. The North Africans countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. When it comes to the final

destination, that is France, those migrants also migrate from Eastern Europe, such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania have been observed, Asians from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, finally from the Middle east such as Syria, Iraq and Iran. All these migrants threaten European security by tolling on economies, draining resources from military and maritime operations, and upsetting political stability. Economic issues arise as a result of migrants flooding into Europe's already inflated economy, which is unable and unprepared to bear the brunt of the costs associated with the massive inflows. Yet, the European Commission as well as the United Nations on carrying out military and maritime operations in the Mediterranean to rescue migrants and collect all of the drowned bodies. Moreover, the influx of immigrants and the increase in domestic terror attacks across the EU has generated a backlash among EU citizens. Not only has there been a rise in xenophobia and signs of increasing support for the far-right political groups, but there are also indications of a rise in discontent with the EU's governing body as whole.¹⁶The period of demonstrations that recently happened in France might become more recurrent as time flows due to the amount of migrant living in European countries, for context a 17 year old man called Nahel was shot in his car as he was driving, and believed to be under the effect of a substance. a police officer shot him which resulted in his death, demonstrations sparked conversations about racial justice, policing reform, and the need to address inequalities. Many protesters advocated for meaningful changes in policing practices, criminal justice reform, and initiatives to combat racism and xenophobia.

Current Policy

Morocco Policy

Morocco has implemented various measures to prevent smuggling activities and manage migration flows, aiming to address the challenges posed by irregular migration and smuggling routes towards Europe. Some of the actions taken by Morocco include strengthened border controls, Morocco has reinforced its border control measures, particularly in the areas neighboring the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. This includes the deployment of additional security forces, surveillance technologies, and infrastructure improvements to enhance border management. stronger cooperation with the European Union, Morocco has collaborated closely with the EU on migration and border control issues. The country has engaged in partnerships and agreements with the EU, including the implementation of the 2004 Morocco-EU

Readmission Agreement, aimed at facilitating the return of irregular migrants to their countries of origin. an enhanced maritime security, Morocco has increased its maritime security efforts to prevent irregular migration and smuggling attempts across the Mediterranean Sea. This includes surveillance operations, patrols, and cooperation with neighboring countries and international actors to intercept smuggling vessels. Morocco entered into bilateral agreements with countries of origin and transit to address migration challenges. These agreements involve collaboration on border management, information sharing, and initiatives to discourage irregular migration and combat smuggling networks. Socio economic development initiatives to address the root causes of irregular migration, Morocco has implemented socioeconomic development programs in regions prone to migration, aiming to create employment opportunities, improve living conditions, and provide alternatives for potential migrants. Crackdown on smuggling networks, Moroccan law enforcement agencies have conducted operations targeting smuggling networks and individuals involved in facilitating irregular migration. These efforts involve arrests, prosecutions, and dismantling of criminal organizations engaged in smuggling activities.¹⁷

European Policy

Some key elements of the EU's policy towards combating smuggling and managing migrants include Frontex, The EU's border and coast guard agency, it plays a crucial role in assisting member states with border management and enhancing operational cooperation to prevent irregular migration and combat smuggling. The EU has supported search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea to save lives and assist vessels in distress. This involves coordination with member states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international partners. The EU has established migration partnerships with countries of origin and transit to address migration issues together, promote legal migration channels, and tackle the root causes of irregular migration. The EU has developed common asylum and refugee policies to ensure a fair and efficient asylum process, share responsibilities among member states, and protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. The EU aims to facilitate the return of irregular migrants to their countries of origin through readmission agreements and enhanced cooperation with non-EU countries. The EU focuses on combating human trafficking and smuggling networks through coordinated law enforcement efforts, intelligence sharing, and cooperation with non-EU countries. The EU supports legal migration channels to address labor market needs and promote orderly migration,

reducing the reliance on irregular migration. The EU encourages the integration and social inclusion of migrants who legally reside in member states, promoting their participation in society and access to education, healthcare, and employment. It is important to emphasize that migration is a complex issue, and the EU's policy approach involves a balance between safeguarding borders, protecting human rights, promoting humanitarian values, and addressing the root causes of migration.¹⁸

Necessity for change in Policy

Spain Policy

Migration in Spain is an evolving phenomenon that has been shaped by historical, economic, political, and social factors. Spain has been both a destination and a transit country for migrants, and its migration patterns have experienced changes over time. Historically, Spain has been a country of emigration, with millions of Spaniards leaving the country in search of better opportunities, especially during periods of economic hardship in the 20th century. However, in recent decades, Spain has become an attractive destination for immigrants, particularly from Latin America, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Eastern Europe. Some key aspects of migration in Spain include irregular migration. With its Mediterranean coastline, Spain has faced challenges related to irregular migration, as migrants attempt to cross the sea in small boats or makeshift vessels. The Canary Islands have also been a focal point for arrivals of irregular migrants from Africa. Economic factors have played a significant role in driving migration to Spain. Many immigrants come seeking employment opportunities, especially in sectors like agriculture, construction, domestic work, and tourism. Spain has received asylum seekers and refugees fleeing conflicts and persecution in their home countries, particularly from Syria and other parts of the Middle East. As a member of the European Union (EU), Spain has participated in EU policies and initiatives related to migration and asylum, including the Common European Asylum System and Frontex, the EU's border and coast guard agency. Spain has implemented integration policies to facilitate the social and economic inclusion of migrants. These efforts aim to promote multiculturalism and provide access to education, healthcare, and employment for migrants. Spain has conducted regularization campaigns that allow some undocumented immigrants to regularize their status, granting them temporary or permanent residency permits under certain conditions. Spanish immigration law has been updated over the years to respond to changing migration trends

and address various challenges. Migration has had demographic implications for Spain, contributing to population growth and affecting the age structure of the population. It's important to note that migration is a sensitive issue, and public debates on immigration can vary. Spain, like other countries, faces both opportunities and challenges related to migration. The country's approach to migration policies and integration efforts continues to evolve based on its economic needs, humanitarian considerations, and adherence to international obligations.^{19 20 21}

Italy Policy

Italy has been a significant entry point for irregular migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Fluctuations in migrant arrivals may require policy adjustments to manage migration flows effectively and address humanitarian concerns. Effective policies may be required to support the integration and social inclusion of migrants who legally reside in Italy, reducing the risks of exploitation and vulnerability to trafficking. Italy is a signatory to various international conventions and protocols related to trafficking and smuggling. Policy changes might be required to fulfill international obligations and commitments. Italy may need to enhance its border control measures to prevent irregular migration and disrupt smuggling networks effectively. Public perceptions and political priorities can influence policy decisions. If smuggling and human trafficking become significant concerns for the public or political discourse, it may prompt policy changes. Additionally, coordinated efforts with other countries, international organizations, and NGOs are essential to combat these complex and cross-border challenges effectively. Moreover, some Italian crime syndicates are extremely powerful such as the 'Ndrangheta. It is a powerful and notorious organized crime syndicate based in Calabria, a region in southern Italy. It is considered one of the most significant and dangerous criminal organizations in the world, with its operations extending far beyond Italy's borders. The 'Ndrangheta operates as a secret society with a hierarchical structure, and it engages in a wide range of illegal activities, including drug trafficking, arms smuggling, money laundering, extortion, kidnapping, and other forms of organized crime. The group's origins can be traced back to the late 19th century, and it has since grown in influence and global reach. The 'Ndrangheta operates on the basis of familial and kinship ties, with membership being passed down through generations within clans. This tight-knit structure allows the organization to maintain secrecy and loyalty among its members. The 'Ndrangheta has developed an extensive international network, with significant operations in Europe, particularly

in Germany, the Netherlands, and other parts of the world, including Canada, Australia, and South America. The 'Ndrangheta is heavily involved in the global cocaine trade, with a dominant presence in Europe. It controls significant portions of the cocaine supply chain, from production in South America to distribution in European markets. The organization has infiltrated various sectors of society, including politics, business, and law enforcement, allowing it to exert influence and evade law enforcement efforts. The 'Ndrangheta has a reputation for using violence and intimidation to maintain control over its territories and protect its interests. The 'Ndrangheta has demonstrated resilience and adaptability over the years, successfully evading law enforcement efforts and maintaining its criminal operations. The fight against the 'Ndrangheta and other organized crime groups remains a significant challenge for Italian authorities and international law enforcement agencies. Italy has implemented various measures to combat the 'Ndrangheta, but its secretive and sophisticated nature makes it challenging to dismantle completely. It's important to note that discussing criminal organizations such as the 'Ndrangheta can be sensitive due to the risks involved. Authorities worldwide are actively engaged in efforts to combat organized crime and dismantle their operations to ensure the safety and security of communities.²²

European Union Policy

The European Union (EU) had a comprehensive policy framework to combat smuggling and human trafficking. However, the need for policy changes and updates might arise due to several factors: Changing Migration Patterns: Migration flows and smuggling routes can evolve over time due to various factors such as geopolitical developments, conflicts, or changes in migratory trends. The EU may need to adapt its policies to address emerging challenges in managing irregular migration and combating smuggling. Smuggling and human trafficking often involve transnational criminal networks that operate across multiple EU member states and beyond. The EU may need to enhance cooperation and intelligence-sharing among member states to effectively combat these criminal activities. Human trafficking involves grave human rights violations, and the EU might need to place greater emphasis on protecting the rights of victims and providing support and assistance to survivors. As the EU consists of multiple member states, coordination and solidarity among member states are crucial in effectively combating smuggling and human trafficking. Policy changes are required to foster greater cooperation and joint efforts in addressing these challenges. The EU seeks to address the root causes of irregular migration, such as instability,

poverty, and lack of opportunities in countries of origin, through development initiatives and partnerships with non-EU countries. Regular evaluation of existing policies is essential to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Policy changes might be necessary based on lessons learned from previous approaches. Criminal networks may exploit advancements in technology and communication to facilitate smuggling and trafficking activities. The EU may need to adapt its policies to respond to new tactics employed by smugglers and traffickers. The EU is a signatory to various international conventions and protocols related to trafficking and smuggling. Policy changes may be necessary to fulfill international obligations and commitments. The EU might focus on enhancing its efforts to prevent smuggling and trafficking and prosecuting offenders to deter future criminal activities. Public perceptions and political priorities can influence policy decisions. If smuggling and human trafficking become significant concerns for the public or political discourse, it may prompt policy changes. It's important to note that policy changes related to smuggling and human trafficking should be grounded in respect for human rights, international law, and humanitarian principles. Additionally, close cooperation with non-EU countries, international organizations, and NGOs is essential to combat these complex and cross-border challenges effectively.²³

Policy Recommendation

Morocco

Countries often reassess and adapt their policies over time to address emerging challenges and developments in various sectors, including migration and border control.

Given the dynamic nature of migration and smuggling issues, it is possible that Morocco has been working on policy evolution or intends to expand its efforts towards combating smuggling since then. Some potential areas of policy evolution could include an enhanced border security. Morocco may invest in further strengthening its border security infrastructure, including the use of advanced technologies and surveillance systems to monitor and control its borders more effectively, examples of advanced surveillance systems could be the Chinese model of surveillance, as well as the use of surveillance drones. Morocco might seek to enhance cooperation with neighboring countries, transit countries, and international organizations to share intelligence, exchange information on smuggling networks, and coordinate efforts to combat illicit activities, such as the United States is doing with Mexico involving the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The country

could focus on enhancing the capacity of its law enforcement agencies and border control forces to tackle smuggling networks more efficiently. This could involve specialized training, equipment upgrades, and improved coordination between various agencies. Morocco might emphasize addressing the underlying factors that drive irregular migration and smuggling, such as socioeconomic challenges, lack of opportunities, and push factors in countries of origin. Investing in development initiatives and poverty alleviation programs could be part of this approach. The country may review and update its legal and judicial framework to strengthen penalties for smuggling-related offenses and improve the prosecution of smugglers. Morocco could deepen its collaboration with international organizations and neighboring countries to address migration and smuggling challenges through multilateral and regional initiatives. It's essential to keep in mind that the above points are speculative

Spain

While Spain has made efforts to combat smuggling and human trafficking, there are reasons or factors that prompt the need for policy changes or improvements. Some reasons for reevaluating and updating Spain's policy towards smuggling and human trafficking include an observable increasing irregular migration, indeed Spain faces an increasing irregular migration flow, this necessitates a reevaluation of existing policies and the development of more effective measures to manage and address this issue. Smuggling networks often operate across borders and involve multiple countries. Spain therefore needs to strengthen its collaboration with neighboring countries and international partners to effectively combat these transnational criminal activities. Human trafficking involves the exploitation and abuse of vulnerable individuals, including women and children, for various purposes. Spain needs to emphasize enhancing protections for victims of trafficking and ensuring their access to support services. Migration patterns can change over time due to geopolitical developments, conflicts, or other factors. Spain's policy needs to adapt to address emerging challenges and trends in migration and smuggling. As an EU member state, Spain needs to align its policies with EU regulations and international conventions related to smuggling, trafficking, and the protection of human rights. Periodic review and evaluation of existing policies are essential to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Spain needs to update its policies based on lessons learned from past experiences. Human trafficking and smuggling are serious crimes that can have severe consequences for individuals

and society. Spain seeks to enhance its efforts to prevent these criminal activities through deterrence and enforcement. Addressing the root causes of irregular migration, such as poverty, conflict, and lack of opportunities in countries of origin, is crucial to reducing the demand for smuggling services. Spain works on initiatives that contribute to addressing these underlying factors. Overall, policy changes are often driven by the need to adapt to evolving challenges, promote effective responses, and ensure the protection of human rights and the well-being of individuals affected by smuggling and human trafficking.

Italy

Italy should invest in strengthening its law enforcement agencies' capabilities to investigate, arrest, and prosecute members of the 'Ndrangheta and smuggling networks. This includes providing specialized training and resources to tackle organized crime effectively. Improve intelligence gathering on criminal networks, their activities, and financial transactions. Enhance cooperation and information sharing with other law enforcement agencies and international partners to tackle the transnational nature of the 'Ndrangheta and smuggling networks. Italy should intensify efforts to seize the assets of criminal organizations and dismantle their financial networks. Targeting their revenue streams can significantly impact their operations. Increase public awareness of the dangers of organized crime and smuggling, encouraging citizens to report suspicious activities to law enforcement authorities. Implement robust witness protection programs to encourage cooperation from witnesses and whistleblowers, as this can be crucial in building strong cases against criminal organizations. Introduce legislation specifically targeting the activities of the 'Ndrangheta and smuggling networks, with provisions designed to disrupt their operations and provide law enforcement with the necessary tools to combat them effectively. Strengthen cooperation with other countries affected by the 'Ndrangheta and smuggling activities, sharing intelligence, and coordinating efforts to combat transnational criminal networks. Tackle the underlying socioeconomic factors that contribute to the growth of organized crime, such as poverty, lack of opportunities, and social exclusion. Strengthen the judicial system to expedite criminal proceedings and ensure fair and efficient trials, enabling timely and effective prosecution of criminals. Engage with local communities affected by organized crime to build trust and cooperation between law enforcement and citizens in identifying and addressing criminal activities. Implement measures to protect vulnerable groups, such as potential victims of human

trafficking, by providing them with support and assistance. Invest in prevention programs targeting youth at risk of involvement in criminal activities, focusing on education, skill development, and social integration. Combating the 'Ndrangheta and smuggling requires a sustained and coordinated effort from law enforcement agencies, government institutions, civil society, and international partners. It's important to implement these measures while respecting human rights and the rule of law to ensure a comprehensive and effective response.

European Union

To be more effective at combating migratory crises, criminal, and terrorist groups, the European Union (EU) can consider a range of measures that involve cooperation, prevention, law enforcement, and addressing root causes. Strengthening the EU's external borders and improving cooperation among member states and neighboring countries can help prevent irregular migration and disrupt criminal activities. Improving intelligence sharing and cooperation among EU member states' law enforcement agencies can enhance the detection and dismantling of criminal and terrorist networks. Integrating databases and facilitating information exchange between relevant authorities can improve the EU's ability to identify threats and coordinate responses. Supporting efforts to strengthen the rule of law, good governance, and accountability in countries facing migratory crises can help address security challenges at their source. Implementing targeted sanctions and travel bans against individuals and entities involved in criminal and terrorist activities can hinder their operations. Prioritizing intelligence-led approaches to counterterrorism can help prevent attacks and protect EU citizens. Engaging with local communities and civil society organizations can build trust and cooperation in the fight against criminal and terrorist groups. Ensuring a coordinated and timely response to migratory crises can help manage humanitarian challenges and protect vulnerable populations. Engaging with non-EU countries through diplomatic channels can promote cooperation on migration and security issues. Supporting preventive initiatives, such as countering radicalization and promoting social cohesion, can reduce the appeal of criminal and terrorist ideologies. Providing technical assistance and capacity building to countries dealing with migratory crises and security challenges can strengthen their ability to respond effectively. It's essential for the EU to implement these measures while upholding fundamental rights and humanitarian principles. An integrated and comprehensive approach that

involves multiple stakeholders is crucial for addressing these complex and interrelated challenges effectively.

African Union

To be more effective at combating migratory crises and addressing criminal and terrorist groups, the African Union (AU) can adopt a comprehensive and coordinated approach that involves cooperation, prevention, capacity building, and addressing root causes. Strengthening regional cooperation among African countries and enhancing intelligence sharing can improve the detection and response to criminal and terrorist activities. Enhancing border security and control measures can help prevent irregular migration and disrupt the movement of criminal and terrorist groups across borders. Developing targeted legislation and policies to combat criminal and terrorist activities can facilitate more effective responses. Providing technical assistance, training, and capacity building to African countries can strengthen their law enforcement, security, and intelligence capabilities. Supporting preventive initiatives, such as countering radicalization and promoting social cohesion, can reduce the appeal of criminal and terrorist ideologies. Promoting inclusive and sustainable development can contribute to reducing the socio-economic drivers of migration and criminal activities. Collaborating with international partners, including other regional organizations, can enhance collective efforts in addressing common security challenges. It's crucial for the AU to work closely with its member states, other regional organizations, and international partners to implement these measures effectively. A coordinated and holistic approach that involves multiple stakeholders is essential to address the complex and interrelated challenges of migratory crises and criminal and terrorist activities in Africa.

United Nations

To be more effective at combating migratory crises and addressing criminal and terrorist groups, the United Nations (UN) can play a critical role in fostering international cooperation, promoting preventive measures, and addressing the root causes of these challenges. Facilitating cooperation and information sharing among member states can enhance the global response to migratory crises and cross-border criminal and terrorist activities. Supporting the development and implementation of international legal frameworks can help member states combat criminal activities and address migration challenges effectively. Establishing mechanisms for intelligence sharing among member

states can improve the detection and disruption of criminal and terrorist networks. Supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts can address the root causes of migratory crises and contribute to reducing terrorism and violence. Advocating for and upholding human rights, particularly of vulnerable populations such as refugees and migrants, is essential in addressing migration crises. Supporting peacekeeping missions and peace support operations can contribute to stabilizing conflict-affected regions and preventing violence. Providing humanitarian aid and protection to migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons can help manage migratory crises and ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations. As a global organization with a mandate for peace, security, and human rights, the UN is uniquely positioned to facilitate international cooperation and provide a platform for addressing the complex and interconnected challenges of migratory crises and criminal and terrorist activities.

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Appendices Interviews

Interview with Fatima Zinebi, retired of the Moroccan public education, active volunteer member in Non-Profit Non-Governmental Associations

- 1) What are the motivations for migration? Migrants flee poverty and seek a better life for themselves, to ameliorate their living conditions, to get a better life than the one they have in Africa. In order to support their families still living in Africa, such as many Moroccan migrants that migrate to France and send money back to Morocco via Western Unions, etc.... They are looking for healthcare as well, since there aren't any public services in their countries.
- 2) Are migrants' national security threats to states in the EU? Not at all, since when they arrive in Europe, they are expecting to receive from Europeans better living conditions, a professional formation, school for their children, and work. Europe is a paradise in the eyes

of those migrants, it's a way out of their misery, they see solutions for themselves and their families, for them Europe is salvation, that's why they risk their lives to cross the Ocean, it is not to be a menace for Europe, it is to seek their salvation "*a lifebuoy*". In Europe he can seek freedom and equality, two things that simply don't exist in their country of origin. This freedom is important for their individuals, some women escape their countries in islamic states to not be abused anymore.

- 3) What can Morocco do to prevent illegal smuggling to Europe? Morocco cannot do much with this, it requires a lot of means, financial and human resources, and technical, airplanes, etc... Because Morocco is a poor country, how can Morocco prevent illegal migration, the migrants will always have the intention to travel to Europe, it is meant to be a country of transit and here's why: there is a high rate of illiteracy (*oumiya*) not a lot of infrastructure, hospital or jobs, some Moroccans don't have jobs, there is about 10% of the permanent population that is unemployed, how can Morocco prevent migration? Unless Morocco takes the lead to educate those migrants, smugglers come to Morocco because the closest point to Europe is through Morocco, also Morocco is the most welcoming country towards migrants, in other countries such as Libya they are mistreated by the government that exploits them, in Algeria they get beaten by the authorities, Tunisia deports them the Tunisian President Kais Said declared "*Tunisia is not a hotel room*".
- 4) What can Morocco do to aid those migrants? By facilitating the integration of the migrants, Morocco asks from migrants' money in their bank accounts to regularize their paperwork, since most Africans when they arrive have no money, it is one of the main reasons why they migrate: they have no economic prospects. Integrating them into studies in Morocco, that they can be accepted easily in the public education sector, and in the center for professional formations (*Takouin al Mihani*). For the migrants to have an easier access to the Health Services, access to housing and employment, and to make the process for justifying their presence in Morocco easier, in terms of paperwork. Centers to take care of the underage migrants there are a lot of children and teenagers. With all of these efforts, it is likely that they will still yearn to cross to Europe, but at the very least they will have a higher literacy rate. Some Europeans here have helped the Africans with their degrees such as the Moroccan Baccalaureate, and got it, and then left for Europe, without informing these Europeans NGO volunteers. So, Africans will always have the dream of Europe.

Amongst these migrants, some already feel welcomed in Morocco and no longer think of migrating to Europe, however they are a minority.

Interview with Bouzemouri Benhammou, retired of the Moroccan forestry administration

- 1) What are the motivations for migration? There are 2 principal motivations, first it is an economic motivation for the overwhelming majority, economic incentive they cannot find employment in their countries, therefore they are seeking to reach Europe to ameliorate their living conditions, and further their professional lives and help their families in need, that's the economic aspect. Second motivation, as a minority, some people are at risk from staying in their countries, where they are generally persecuted by the authorities, due to their political views, or actions, therefore they are worried to be imprisoned or neutralized, they migrate to seek asylum in some European countries, these are from my perspective the two main driving factors of migration.
- 2) Are migrants' national security threats to states in the EU? I'd say they are not a threat, because migration of the first generation of migrants began after the Second World War, this migration of the first generation happened so well that we find migrants perfectly integrated in their host country and we even find amongst them some officials in public institutions that were naturalized, in France some communal officials that are originary migrants. Nowadays we hear of migration as an issue since the past 15 to 20 years, therefore migration could continue without a threat to European Security, as it was done with the 1st or 2nd generation of migrants. Nowadays there is certainly much more migrants than in the previous Century, however the expected goal is multifaceted, for starters there is freedom, equality and the search for democracy, and in that scope, the migrants are seeking a professional formation as well as employment, all the meanwhile reaching the health services, and the education of their children.
- 3) What can Morocco do to prevent illegal smuggling to Europe? The geographical situation in Morocco makes the country the closest point to Europe and therefore a transit country by its geography. Although there are efforts made by Morocco to stabilize the phenomenon of migration towards Europe, Morocco doesn't have enough means, financial and human resources to contain the flow of migrants, which keeps on increasing. Therefore, Morocco

cannot guarantee in a sense at one hundred percent, the stopping of illegal smuggling into Europe. However, Morocco provides efforts towards slowing down at the national level, a portion of the migrants in the measure where a great number of these migrants have established positions in Morocco with a job, and better life conditions than in their countries of origin. The challenge in Morocco remains the question of employment, since the rate of unemployment is high, that doesn't ensure integration of foreigners, since even nationals are currently looking for a job.

- 4) What is the role of the European Union in the phenomenon of immigration? I believe the role of the European Union is first of all to give aid to the countries of origin, when it comes to development, in order to stabilize the populations in these countries, in such a manner as they remain in their countries of origin. This aid can be under the form of investments, of formations, of technology transfers, of industrialization for the transformation of primary materials in the countries of origin.

Interview with the Cathedral of Rabat where migrants can seek assistance

- 1) What are the motivations for migration? There are numerous reasons that motivate migration, some migrants are issued from a poor background, the migrants have the illusion that Europe is paradise once they reach it, they discover the *Paris Syndrome*, that they only had the illusion that the grass was greener on the other side. The inadequate wealth distribution in their countries of origin, where the rich are very rich and the poor are very poor, and that causes even those with some degree of education to still be unable to find work and have no choice but to seek a better life elsewhere, they aren't just going to let themselves die, they push forward in life in hope of a better tomorrow. Sometimes diseases can also be a push factor that have them hit the road and migrate north to find a hospital since some of their countries don't provide any health benefits for them. In addition to all of that there is also the general state of affairs, indeed politics, wars, create political alienation of the refugees. On top of that there is the question of gender identity, homosexuality, it is poorly seen in some regions and oftentimes those individuals face serious consequences for their sexual preferences. Forced marriages make women flee also. There is a variety of motivations really since every case by case is different.

- 2) Are migrants' national security threats to states in the EU? Yes and no, this question depends on the category of migrant, as well as how they are reinserted in society, as well as why they left their home country, what are their objectives once they arrive to their destination, all the migrants don't have the same status due to their level of studies, low degree of education as well as maybe a religious indoctrinate they might have received at school instead of an education, this question deserves reflex ion to know how the EU can turn the migration situation to its advantage.
- 3) What can Morocco do to prevent illegal smuggling to Europe? Yes, it is difficult but not impossible, it is important to prevent human trafficking and to sensibilize and combat the deep root causes of smuggling by investigating where the problem comes from and why it creates a problem in the first place. Morocco must strengthen diplomatic cooperation with the countries where this phenomenon is observed with a goal to unveil the drivers of smuggling, the decision-takers, to finally be able to have the law be upheld and respected, to protect the victims, etc.... Morocco and the organs that aid migrants have to create a filial of safe migration, since its absence provokes as a result the smuggling of humans. Simply dismantling the network doesn't solve the problem, it creates a vacuum, that vacuum will eventually be filled by even more smugglers.
- 4) The migrants can be very different in their perception of the world as most people; indeed, some migrants don't like to be perceived as suffering and feeling powerless, they do feel however when they are not being welcomed or are the recipients of pity or condescendence from their aid providers.
- 5) Many of these migrants would prefer to remain in their countries of origin however the violence, oppression and poverty doesn't allow them the choice. For as long as life health and stability of these people in perilous situations have the possibility of migrating to escape their circumstances, they do migrate out of strategy but all of them have to pay a very high toll for their departures, both emotionally, financially and physically, but at least they get to survive.

Interview with the Cathedral of Rabat where migrants can seek assistance

- 1) What are the motivations for migration? They are trying to get to Europe, most of them are from Guinea Conakry, they come on foot, walking, all very young, as young as 10 to 18, some in their 20s to 30s, really young people, no idea what they are getting into, asylum seekers, the military is a problem for them, the politics is broken down, their families are dead, been killed, they don't usually say that they are hungry, not enough food, they are hoping to work their way in Europe, they don't know they are coming to a country that don't want to have them. They are so young, depressed, they all speak French. I don't know how many actually make it to Europe, however, some of them try to cross to Spain and can't because they get caught up in the wall with the barbed wires, and they are efficient at tearing flesh, which leaves them harmed. Some NGOs offer to send them back home for free.
- 2) Are migrants' national security threats to states in the EU? No, they are just kids, that's the silliest question I've ever heard, they don't have enough to eat and are moving from their countries, they see on TV the western way of life and are tempted to join into Europe to be able of being a part of that life of bountifulness where they feel like they just have so much opportunities and freedom
- 3) What can Morocco do to prevent illegal smuggling to Europe? Some of these young men are incredibly intelligent and resilient, they wish they could go to school, and they wish they can have jobs, in fact some of them find jobs in construction sites where they work for a couple days before they have to move out, however they get kicked out because they are blacks, and there is still a lot of racism in Morocco. None of the European Nations, and despite a population drop in some European Community, where ships of these kids end up drowning by the 500, they do find work with people that work in the food industry, with fresh food. The Moroccan government could make some agreements with the Moroccan government for work permits, the Algerians are worse than the Moroccans is what the migrants say, they come to Morocco through Algeria
- 4) Morocco could stop the boats from going to Europe, or they could provide working boats that won't sink 40 people in rowboat, and none of them know how to swim, and none of

them can buy a life preserver, catch 22 (book) it's a circle of bad things that reinforce each other, the government has to think of what to do with the impoverished Moroccans, these Moroccans can help its population, then there'd be less smugglers, but if Morocco did that, there'd be a higher surge of migrants, and Morocco doesn't want that either. Some migrants make it to Europe, and they have friends and relatives in Europe. Most of them don't know the name of the countries, if they knew they'd go to Scandinavian countries, but most of them just dream of Europe while having no information about their travel or their destination.