First cracks in the relation

A research in domestic and international factors in Morocco's foreign policy

How can Morocco's diminished willingness to cooperate with the EU be explained?

Justin Hamster

Thesis Supervisor

Dr. N.R.J.B. Blarel

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Leiden University

s1253921   08-08-17

justinhamster@hotmail.com   Word count: 10040

Abstract

This thesis covers the changed foreign policy of Morocco vis-à-vis the EU. In order to explain this change three core international aspects influencing Morocco are assessed: migration, terrorism and the Western Sahara. For each aspect both the consequences on the EU-Morocco relation and the domestic situation are addressed. This study argues that due to rising migration numbers and an increased terror threat, Morocco became increasingly important to the EU. Simultaneously this study argues that the Moroccan King has become more occupied with stabilizing his country since the Arab Spring. In order to maintain stability, a halt on cooperation with the EU on migration was required. Domestic developments allocated greater importance to the Western Sahara question rendering prominence to the EU's aloof position vis-à-vis the Western Sahara. This study demonstrates that a state's foreign policy is a result of both international and domestic factors.

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1. Introduction

In January 2017 Morocco re-joined the African Union (AU) after an absence of 33 years. The Moroccan press hailed the return of Morocco in the AU and heralded it as a glorious result of the efforts of Morocco's King Mohammed VI. The King himself portrayed the new membership in his own words as an act of retaking Morocco's "natural place inside the African family"[1]. Mohammed VI declared that Morocco would support the further development of Africa[2].

The renewed membership is not an isolated event, but part of a general shift of Morocco's policy towards Africa. Over the last years, a change in Morocco's political focus has become visible: slowly but steadily Africa is becoming more important in Morocco's foreign policy (Tadlou 2015). Lately, Morocco has been investing in trade agreements with countries throughout Africa. 118 Business agreements were signed on the Kings last trips, and the overall trade tripled (Berahab 2017, 4). Morocco is also intensifying direct investments in Africa and is even surpassing several European countries on direct investment in Africa (Berahab 2017, 4). Besides the thriving economic ties between Morocco and Africa, the political ties show an increasing development as well. The King visits more African countries than European ones to demonstrate his country's engagement in Africa (DEPF 2017, 7). During these trips charity projects are generously initiated, with a view to portray Morocco´s goodwill towards Africa. Finally, the King seeks to strengthen the ties with the other Muslim countries in Africa from a religious angle as well. When the King visits Islamic states in Africa, he brings Korans and on occasions he is even accompanied by Imams to convey a moderate Islam (Tadloui 2015, 5).

Alongside with Morocco's shift of attention towards Africa, Morocco is also taking a harder stance towards the European Union (EU). Morocco is becoming more and more reluctant to prevent migrants from entering the EU. In February some six hundred migrants were able to enter the Spanish enclaves in Morocco, while Morocco arguably had the means and opportunities to prevent it. It is therefore seen as a case of wilful negligence

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[1] Speech of Mohammed VI during the 27th AU summit July 2017 *Available at* <*http://allafrica.com/stories/201607181039.html* >

[2] Speech of Mohammed VI during the King and People's Revolution Day August 20, 2016 *Available at* <*https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2016/08/194754/text-king-mohammed-vis-speech-king-peoples-revolution-day/*>

of Morocco in taking care of its border security in order to show the EU its control on the situation (Aljazeera 2017). Morocco's tone towards the EU changed too. Where Morocco would previously remain dutifully silent on EU policies it disapproved of, it currently even dared to condemn the EU publicly. After the Court of Justice of the European Union found the EU-Morocco trade agreement not applicable to the territory of the Western Sahara, Morocco showed its discontent. Morocco explicitly demands the EU to solve the problems in the execution of the trade agreement resulting from this judgment, meanwhile threatening to stop controlling the borders. This is a tone unheard of a decade ago (Aljazeera 2017). Furthermore, although Morocco and the EU partly agreed to cooperate on the return of illegal migrants from the EU to Morocco (The Council of the EU 2013), it currently refuses to admit both third country migrants and Moroccan migrants coming from the EU (Zardo & Cavatorta 2016, 13).

These developments do indeed warrant the question why Morocco is changing its policy. This change at first sight appears illogical when one considers the strength of the ties between Morocco and the EU. For decades Morocco has been a steadfast partner of the EU (Maggi 2016, 96). Morocco obtained an exceptionally positive European Neighbourhood Policy with the EU before any other country in the region did so (European Union 2013). In 2008, Morocco was the first country in the region to achieve the 'advanced status' (the highest possible status) inside the Neighbourhood Policy (European Union 2013; Arieff 2012, 14). In addition to the advanced status, an agreement to further improve the relation between Morocco and the EU in the near future was signed. In 2010, a summit was held between the EU and Morocco, reaffirming and applauding the strength of the cooperation and ending with a firm handshake on even warmer and more strategic cooperation (Council of The EU 2010; Arieff 2012, 15). In conclusion; Morocco historically and until very recently, clearly and solely focused on the EU having strong economic ties with Europe (European Union 2013).

The overarching question that thus comes to mind is the following: why did Morocco change its foreign policy? The 'advanced status' within the EU Neighbourhood Policy, paved the way for years of stable trade and foreign policy. Moreover, Morocco would already have thumbed its nose to Europe by mere economic expansion to Africa, but the change is broader and more substantial. The sympathy act performed by the King in Africa indeed lends support to the thought that Morocco is actively trying to create stronger diplomatic relations with African countries as well, rather than solely economically. In this

research I will focus on the developments in the relationship between Morocco and the EU to see if they provide for an explanation for Morocco´s changed policy. I work from the following question: *What led to Morocco's foreign policy change towards the European Union?*

To answer this question I use the following structure. Chapter 2 covers the literature review. This part seeks to discuss the relevant literature and to find an approach of foreign policy helpful for conducting this research. Chapter 3 describes Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell's *'type III'* of neoclassical realism (2016), which I consider suitable to explain Morocco's change in foreign policy. This *type*, in short, depicts a realist external behaviour of states, in which the behaviour is influenced by the system and domestic factors. In Chapter 4, the research method, the case, the variables and the operationalization of this study are set out. Chapter 5 elaborates on the empirical analysis in the relation between the EU and Morocco divided in three sub-categories; migration, terrorism and the Western Sahara. For each sub-category I argue that either a change in reciprocal importance occurred between Morocco and the EU favouring Morocco or a clear domestic discontent occurred caused by the relation with the EU. In respect of migration, I find evidence of both. Finally I discuss the validity of neoclassical realism and the hypotheses together with the main findings.

2. Literature review

How Morocco's political landscape is approached in the literature

This research focuses on explaining Morocco's changed behavior towards the EU. Little to no literature directly addresses this subject or Morocco's external behavior in general. This as a result of years of stable and uneventful governance before the Arab Spring (Fernandez-Molina 2015, 9). I therefore broadened the subject of this literature review and assessed what the literature tells about essential aspects of Moroccan decision making in general. What aspects did other scholars address while researching Morocco and what is seen as essential in Moroccan policy making? What level of analyses is used: system, domestic or actor? The scholars mentioned in this review do not all directly address Morocco's foreign policy change, but do address Moroccan policy making. I use this literature review to build on other scholars' findings on Morocco and to see whether aspects are missing in the

literature. From this basis I will select a theoretical approach to conduct this research. Two main issues prevail as important while analyzing literature.

First, the literature takes the Moroccan system as one that upholds democratic and authoritarian characteristics. As Ter Laan (2016) elaborates in her book, Morocco is a democracy by its constitution, although it certainly is not a paragon of democracy. The Moroccan system is a multi-party system forcing parties to cooperate in order to form a coalition (Ter Laan 2011, 583). So, on paper the system appears to have some characteristics of a democracy. However, the actual implementation falls short. The interest and trust of Moroccans in politics is rather low. This causes a low election turnout[3], low political participation and subsequently low expectations on what politicians can achieve. Poorly functioning party politics that lack any substantial influence on actual policies are the consequence (Daadaoui 2010, 5; Ter Laan 2011, 583; Maghraoui 2011, 681/4). The literature also centers on the King as only and most important decision maker. The King has a decisive function, creating elected politicians to barely have influence on the large majority of policies (Benchemsi 2013, 20). The little literature directly addressing the role of the King of Vermeren (2009), Benchemsi (2012/2013) and Fernandez-Molina (2015) above all buttresses the importance of him on Morocco's policy. Especially Bechemsi (2012a) takes a hard stance.

> "a closer look can see that behind the elaborate democratic veneer lies an archaic and corrupt absolute monarchy. It is a regime under which the three fundamental powers of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—are subjected to the will of one man; where this man's cronies act as puppetmasters of the political system and ransack the economy; and where those who dare to speak out against abuses are promptly crushed." (67)

The political direction the state takes, all relevant decisions and all (foreign) policies are in control of the King. Moreover, he heads every cabinet meeting and is capable of firing Ministers at his own will. Almost all scholars addressing the political realm in Morocco solely use the King as `central decision maker´ (Ottaway and Riley 2006, 3; Mohsen-Finan & Zeghal 2006, 85; Arieff 2012, 5; Vermeren 2009, 129-31; Ter Laan 2011/2016, 58-9; Koprowski 2011, 19; Gallala-Arndt 2012, 141; Benchemsi 2012/2013, 21). In short, I take from these aspects that Morocco is a hybrid regime, including domestic factors which are overshadowed by autocratic characteristics (Desrues 2013).

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[3] Generally less than 50% *available at* <http://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/146/ >

Second, up until the events of the Arab Spring the King was lighthearted about his position and wide supported unrest. The Arab Spring has become the essential tipping point in this situation, endangering domestic stability. The public has become more outspoken and demanding, changing the King's attitude and policy (Lynch 2012; Benchemsi 2012b). As a result of the Arab Spring terrorism also increased influencing the King's policy even more. The events demonstrably influenced Morocco's policy. In the years from the Arab Spring onwards, the King's domestic and (making this aspect valuable) foreign policies can be traced back to a result of threats for domestic instability caused by the Arab Spring (Fernandez-Molina 2011, 439; Lalami 2011; Arieff 2012, 10; Desrues 2013; Hoffman & Konig, 2013; Benchemsi 2012a/2012b, 26). Although the King himself has not yet personally been attacked in the protest, he realizes that his position will be in danger when unrest will erupt and the country will disintegrate[4]. This led to a policy in which the King, out of fear for unrest, tightened his control on the status quo, whereby opposing the origin of the protest "all process of domestic change (*edit* result Arab Spring) […] are heavily influenced by the interest of the King" (Maggi 2013, 30). The literature explicitly mentions that the King reacts to the groups but hardly accommodates the demands in policy; he reacts by safeguarding domestic stability and his position (Fernandez-Molina 2011/2015; Benchemsi 2012/2013; Maggi 2016). Fernandez-Molina (2015, 7) mentions the following about the aftermath "Even though it did not result in democratization […] they have involved an increase […] on the domestic constrains exerted on the central decision-making unit". So, the demands of the public, able to pose such threat for the King, matter indirectly. What directly matters are the King's policies to diminish public instability and maintain the status quo. This includes meeting the demands or to actively counter them, as long as the policy manages to diminish the threat for the King's position.

Alongside with the domestic transition discussed in the literature, I argue that a power transition favoring Morocco over the last years is influential for Moroccan policy. I have found that the consequences of this power transition are underexposed in the literature. Morocco seems to hold important cards in debates with the EU concerning migration and terrorism. This asks for an approach in which also international power changes (systemic analyses) are included. In addition, hybrid states in general pursue power preservation both internally as externally in a rather aggressive manner (Zakaria 1997)[5]. In sum, a theory is

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[4] Seen in the aftermath of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.
[5] Zakaria uses the term illiberal democracies instead of hybrid regimes, which I perceive as interchangeable.

required which includes variables at the system level together with variables at the domestic level which both influence a central decision maker.

Although Liberalism includes domestic factors in explaining a state's behavior I do not see it as suitable for this research. Liberalism, with its focus on benign cooperation in and among states, is mainly used to explain the behavior of liberal and democratic states (Moravcsik 1997; Snyder 2004). Furthermore, according to Liberalism, the domestic influence should lead to policies equal to the domestic desires; representatives listen to the public and do not follow their own preferences (Moravcsik 1997, 513). In Morocco I do not observe this process from the literature. Domestic factors influence the King but the domestic factors are not heard and sometimes even opposed.

Constructivism also appears suitable for incorporating domestic aspects, although the approach has its shortcomings for this research. This approach builds on changes in collective norms shared within a state as the bedrock of a state's policy (Wendt 1992, 402). Policy and change originate from collective values and social identities. Despite Morocco's shift in identity and general idea of the public demanding a more social society showcased in the Arab Spring, it is not translated into politics. The domestic urge for changes is not accommodated into policy. So despite the new shared value in society it did lead to a change. The approach thereby opposes the idea of a prescribed national interest and leader-driven power politics (Hurd 2008), a characteristic of Morocco I obtain from the literature and the assumption of Morocco as a hybrid state. Constructivism is mainly successful in explaining processes of liberalization and a growing importance on human rights (Finnemore, 1996). An aspect wanted by the mass but not incorporated in Morocco's policy.

The expected change in Morocco's relation with the EU provides systemic incentives. Together with the pursuit of power seen in hybrid explanation of states, a framework tends to be found in the family of realist theories. Realist theories focus on the struggle of power, state preservation, systemic incentives and a policy of self-interest (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). However, the majority of realist theories fail to include domestic variables in the explanation of a state's foreign policy and merely consider the driving forces behind a state's behavior to be founded at the system level. Inside the realist family, one approach provides room for assessing both internal and external aspects separately in explaining Morocco's foreign policy: neoclassical realism.

3. Theoretical argument

Neoclassical realism shares with realism its view on the power struggle between states as being of prime importance. Simultaneously however, the importance of the domestic circumstances on a state's policy is recognized. This joint focus on international incentives and the domestic context, predominantly explain the choice for neoclassical realism in this research. I argue that neoclassical realism and especially Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell's (2016) model of *type III neoclassical realism* is suitable to explain change and incorporate external and internal incentives in a state's behavior. Because their model is almost entirely embedded in and building upon neoclassical realism, I first elaborate on the general aspects of neoclassical realism, after which I specify the characteristics of type III neoclassical realism.

Neoclassical realism is a relatively new track inside realism, dating from the end of the last century. The idea of neoclassical realism stems from neo-realism yet seeks to better explain the unsatisfying explanations of neo-realism for differing states' policies in response to similar international events. "Neoclassical realism seeks to explain variation in the foreign policies of the same state over time or across different states, facing similar external constraints" (Taliaferro et al. 2009, 21). Neoclassical realism distinguishes several key characteristics of States (Schweller 2004; Zakaria 1998; Wohlforth 1993; Rose 1998, 152; Taliaferro *et al.* 2009, 21). Most importantly, it holds that states are not similar in their reaction to and perception of international stimuli. This thesis is defined by Taliaferro *et al.* 2009 as;

> "[…][N]eoclassical realism locates causal properties at both the structural and unit levels, the unit-level factors help to explain state external behavior." (page 21)

> "Neoclassical realists [….] view policy responses as a product of state–society coordination and, at times, struggle." (page 27)

So, a state's reaction to international stimuli (events, changes or threats) is not a predetermined, identical process for every state. Its reaction is influenced by domestic circumstances shaping a state's policy towards international stimuli. Thus, it follows that international stimuli can be perceived paramount by one country and as unimportant for another country. States can "channel, mediate and (re)direct" (Schweller 2004, 164) foreign policy according to their domestic situation. A state's domestic level serves as a filter

through which a state's decision on foreign policy funnels and is mediated. The aspects covered by these domestic circumstances are 'comprehensive'. These can include: the elite, institutions, organization, civil societies, political parties but also domestic unrest and protests. Which elements matter is different for each country and needs to be disclosed for every country separately.

The selfish behavior of states, and consequently "[..] the conflictual nature of politics [..]" (Taliaferro *et al.* 2009, 19) – which is an important tenet of realism – is still present in neoclassical realism. Although the domestic factors of a state are considered as intervening variables creating differences in states' behavior, a state is still predominantly occupied with its own survival. The domestic circumstances can never cause a deviation from the states final endgame of survival and power (Rose 1996, 146). It solely provides a temporary strategy in order to obtain a stronger position in respect of that goal. The state's position in the anarchistic international system remains the bedrock of a state's policy (Taliaferro *et al.* 2009, 22/43).

Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell (2016) extend the explanation of neoclassical realism. The above interpretations of neoclassical realism focus mainly on states' reactions to specific short term events and are therefore not well-suited to address a broad policy change or strategy. Such short term events could for example be an invasion, attack or coup d'état happening inside or outside its borders. The policy in reaction to such events – which is the type of policy that former interpretations seek to explain – is mostly also a short term policy. Type III neoclassical realism provides a more comprehensive and a less directly power-driven approach towards foreign policy, being more concerned with the "broader patterns of international outcomes and structural change" (page *x introduction*). The scope of neoclassical realism is thus broadened in order to explain the long term foreign policy strategy of states. "We argued [.....] that the potential scope of the dependent variables (*edit* international stimuli) for type III neoclassical realism grows over time and is much broader than previous neoclassical realists have heretofore acknowledged" (109).

According to Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell's type III neoclassical realism, a state's foreign policy/overarching strategy (being the dependent variable) is the interaction between two variables; the independent and the intervening variable. The independent variable is an opportunity or threat for a country present in the international system (systemic level). These opportunities or threats are balanced out by states in the context of

their power and position, which results in different opportunities or threats for each state. Similar to general neoclassical realism, the domestic intervening variable remains influential for a state's reaction to international events. The difference here is that, due to the broadened studied scope of the state's behavior; the intervening variable covers a broad domestic change or altered tendency in the state (94). Those aspects covered in the intervening variable remain the same as in the former versions.

4. Research design

4.1. The case

The dependent variable in this case study is Morocco's less cooperative attitude towards the EU. I observe a change in Morocco's foreign policy from 2011 coinciding with the start of the Arab Spring in Morocco. From this point forward several Arab countries tumbled into chaos and disorder and subsequently international terrorism and emigration arose rapidly. I conduct this research till the beginning of 2017, after Morocco faced the summit of migration and terror threats. Possible explanations for Morocco's policy change towards the EU are examined in this time frame. This research solely analyses the occurrence of the dependent variable and not its consequences. This subject is important for the EU, as Morocco and the EU closely cooperated and Morocco is very valuable to the EU. A better understanding of the causes of Morocco's policy change might alter the EU's policy taken vis-à-vis Morocco. I do not directly expect the findings of this research to be applicable on other cases because Morocco's current situation is too unique. Nevertheless, I see similarities with Turkey, a country that has also been changing its policy regarding the EU making it possible to draw parallels. Furthermore, Morocco shares characteristics with North African countries regarding migration and terrorism policies towards the EU. The development seen in Morocco can be a prelude for a change in these countries.

4.2. Methodology

This study is a single case study. I asses one single case (Morocco's policy change towards the EU), which I try to explain by conducting in-depth research of both Morocco's domestic as well as its international situation. Given that Morocco obtained and resumed close cooperation with the EU for a prolonged time but decided to open op to Africa and becoming reluctant in cooperation with the EU, this topic makes for a *deviant case study*. I test the hypotheses by using the congruence method. In this method, the values of the

independent variables and intervening variables are examined to see whether, and to what extent, they affect the value of the dependent variable of interest. When the values of the variables align with these predictions, the reliability of a causal relation is strengthened (George & Bennett 2005, 152). According to neoclassical realism a state's foreign policy starts with an international posed threat or opportunity. The international threat or opportunity is shaped by the independent variable. So to acquire congruence between the predictions of neoclassical realism and this research, the independent variable must include a threat or an opportunity (an international stimulus) vis-à-vis the EU. The threat or opportunity is mediated by the domestic situation (the intervening variable). To acquire congruence the intervening variable includes domestic conditions that influence a state's policy. These conditions mediate and influence the role of the independent variable on the dependent variable, leading to a better explanation of the dependent variable.

4.3. Operationalization

This research is constructed by using both independent and intervening variables causing the hypotheses to cover two aspects; international changes (independent systemic variables) influencing Morocco's external behavior and domestic factors influencing (domestic intervening variables) Morocco's external behavior. The main hypotheses are formulated using the independent variable because, according to neoclassical realism, the international stimuli remain the bedrock of a state´s changed policy. The hypothesis of the intervening variable covers how the domestic conditions relate to the independent variable.

The systemic independent variable changes for each hypothesis, addressing different sources capable of influencing Morocco´s policy.

> *H1: Increased trans-border migration caused Morocco to alter its position*
> *vis-a-vis the EU.*

For H1 the independent variable is increased trans-border migration for Morocco. Morocco is omnipresent and actively involved with the EU in the migration crisis. I expect that the consequences of this crisis to have possibly led to a new relation between the EU and Morocco.

> *H2: Increased international terrorism caused Morocco to alter its position*
> *vis-a-vis the EU.*

For H2 the independent variable is increased terrorism. Morocco became subject to several terrorist attacks and is vigilant in order to prevent possible new attacks. Furthermore, radicalized Moroccans are broadly present in terrorist networks making it an issue of great importance for Morocco.

> *H3: The intensification of the Western Sahara question caused Morocco to alter its position vis-a-vis the EU.*

For H3, the independent variable is the intensification of the Western Sahara question. Although the situation remained relatively unchanged, the conflict has intensified the last year as both the EU and Morocco publicly showcased their positions. The EU did so by annulling a trade agreement due to the question and Morocco by expelling UN-observers of the conflict. Because of the sensitivity of the question I expect that small changes in the variable can cause an enlarged reaction. Furthermore I see it as a subject of too much importance regarding Morocco's foreign and domestic policy to be ignored.

Three arguments justify the study and evaluation of the causal weight of these variables. First, these variables are among the most important aspects of the relationship between the EU and Morocco and feature widely in statements of both the EU and Morocco on their cooperation. Second, a substantial amount of academic literature addresses the role of these variables, which makes them suitable for an elaborate analysis. Third, with the exception of H3, these variables are subject to a change and assumedly also affected the relations between Morocco and the EU. If there are grounds for Morocco's shift of focus vis-a-vis the EU, I expect them to be found in these cases.

The time span in which H1 and H2 are tested, align with the time span of the dependent variable, so from 2011 till the beginning of 2017. I use two indicators to analyze the systemic consequences of each independent variable and to indicate possible power transitions in the relation between Morocco and the EU: *Morocco's political interest in aligning with the EU* and *the EU's political interest in aligning with Morocco*. These indicators are chosen to portray a possible position change in the EU-Morocco relation. The level of analysis is therefore solely the international system. The value of the independent variables will be measured as an ordinal variable including the values for the indicators; unchanged, low and high. These indicators align with neoclassical realism in which the value of the independent variable is embedded in international power indicators. Because the

Western Sahara question is not related to the Arab Spring, I research the period from 2009 till 2017, a period including an intensification of the question (Fernandez-Molina 2016, 70-3).

The domestic intervening variable is triggered by the independent variable and mediates the value of the independent variable, capable of strengthening or weakening the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The intervening variable provides an additional level of analysis to better explain the dependent variable. For the intervening variable I use the following hypothesis.

> *H4 (intervening): the independent variables mediated by the King´s perceived prospect of domestic political survival, caused Morocco to alter its position vis-a-vis the EU.*

The intervening variable is the King´s perceived prospect of domestic political survival. I specify the value of the intervening variable by assessing any consequences for the King's domestic political position. The strength of this intervening variable is also measured as an ordinal variable to portray the level of domestic prospect for the King. I use *high* and *low* as ranking for the prospect of domestic survival. I test the same intervening variable for each independent variable, to see whether and how they relate. Due to the King's importance and command in Moroccan politics -as mentioned in the literature review-, the value of the domestic variable is solely measured using the King as the 'central decision maker' of Morocco's foreign policy (Vermeren 2009, 55-6). To determine the King´s prospect of domestic political survival as a result of the independent variable and subsequently its influence on the dependent variable, I use three indicators. These are the presence of *youth unemployment, domestic terror threat,* and *nationalism/a sense of unity.* These indicators are chosen because according to the literature from these aspects domestic unrest originates.

4.4 Data collection

The data I postulate my conclusion upon, mainly consist of qualitative primary and secondary sources. In order to analyze the EU's stance, I chiefly use primary sources. The EU is an accessible institution which abundantly publishes documents concerning terrorism and migration. For both H1 and H2, I primarily use official EU publications to unravel the EU's political stance. For the testing of H1, the EU's specially targeted organization for

border control (Frontex), is a rich source of information on migration. Obtaining primary sources from the Moroccan side is more difficult. Morocco hardly publishes documents regarding its policy making process. Furthermore, due to the King's pivotal position the policy making occurs rather individualistically and is not meticulously traced. In order to indicate Morocco's stance, motive and position, I mostly focus on secondhand sources, consisting of academic publications and news articles. For H3, solely secondary sources are used. The sensitivity of the subject and the fact that both the EU and Morocco have hidden agendas on the subject, make it difficult to obtain primary sources.

The ultimate aim of this research is building on the hypotheses to explain Morocco's changed policy vis-a-vis the EU. However, the hypotheses are not verified in order to exclude each other mutually. I expect that each hypothesis, to a certain degree, offers a partial explanation to the main question. In the conclusion, the validity of each hypothesis is discussed individually and eventually jointly from the angle of the international aspect and the domestic aspect. This is in order to see if they, all together, provide an international and domestic causal logic for the changed policy towards the EU.

5. Empirical section

5.1 Migration

Background

The Moroccan-EU relation on migration has a long history. In the sixties the so-called Moroccan "guest workers" migrated from Morocco to Western Europe for work (Lahlou 2015, 2). A substantial part of these workers decided to stay or were forced to stay due to the domestic situation in Morocco (Belair 2016, 1). However, it is not this historic relationship of migration which is at the forefront of the current discussions between Morocco and the EU on migration. The present debate on cooperation with respect to migration, concerns the illegal flow of immigrants into the EU via and from Morocco. The Arab Spring and subsequently the rise of ISIS, boosted the number of immigrants almost to 300.000 from both Arab and African countries to the EU (Cherti & Grand 2013, 10; UNHCR 2014; Frontex 2017).

As Morocco is Africa´s most adjacent country to Europe and with a waterway of only 14 kilometers, it is a relatively easy hurdle to take for migrants pursuing their European

dream. This hurdle is not even always present: it is easier for migrants to reach European land through the Spanish enclaves in Morocco; Melilla and Ceuta (Lahlou 2015, 5; Frontex ARA report 2017). Once migrants have climbed the fence surrounding the enclaves and touched EU soil, they can start their bid for European asylum. Did twenty years ago only some Algerian and Moroccan fortune seekers try to reach Spain using this itinerary (De Haas 2005, 10), it now is a major migrant route to Europe (Katsiaficas 2016). Moreover, the migrants are not only Moroccans and Algerians anymore, but a diverse mix of migrants from Arab and Sub-Saharan countries (Frontex FRAN Q4 report 2015; Lahlou 2015, 2). This group finds themselves flocked in the bottleneck called Morocco, waiting to board a fragile boat or to storm a high fence surrounding the Spanish enclaves (Cherti & Grand 2013: 49; Carrera *et all* 2016, 4). Currently the EU is trying to avoid the vast influx of migrants, being more than 10,000 in 2016 [6]. Morocco is trying to avoid becoming an immigration country, and the migrants are trying to avoid remaining in Morocco. The EU is the only one being relatively successful in its aspirations.

Morocco is more and more developing into an immigration country, which is contrary to its policy and vision of society (Nasser 2013, 16; De Haas 2015). An increasing number of Sub-Saharans have decided to accept Morocco as a second-best, after having given up their European dream. They currently live in large numbers in Fez, Tangier and Rabat (De Haas 2015; Lahlou 2015, 2; Carrera *et all* 2016, 5). Due to this inflow of Sub-Saharans in Morocco, an economical circuit developed in Moroccan cities operated *by* Sub-Saharans of specialized small businesses providing goods and services *to* Sub-Saharans (Cherti & Grand 2013: 45). These developments increasingly cause migrants to not even venture entering the EU. Morocco, scrutinized and accused by the EU of discriminating and neglecting these Sub-Saharan migrants, had to address the problem with serious policies (Médecins sans Frontières 2013; Belair 2016, 1-2). Noteworthy are the policies that allow migrants to obtain citizenship and that provide schooling opportunities for children from illegal migrants (Lahlou 2015, 12-4). However, the main reason for these policies are more perceived as political to improve its image regarding the EU and Africa, than as policies truly implemented to improve the life of illegal immigrants (De Haas 2014; Berriane *et al.* 2015, 515-6; Carrera *et all* 2016, 10/12). As will be discussed in this paragraph, none of the

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[6] Exact numbers for the last three years (2014: 7840) (2015: 7164) (2016: 10231) *available at* <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/western-mediterranean-route/>.

actors find themselves really comfortable with the current situation and interests are strongly opposing.

EU-Morocco relation and increased migration (Systemic independent variable)

The boost of migrants from 2011 onwards made the migration problem from a minor problem to a core element of EU policy towards Morocco (Yildiz 2016, 12-3). The EU was confronted with a tension between its wish to be an open society on the one hand and the fear of expected destabilizing effects of migration on the other hand (De Haas 2015; Carrera *et all* 2016, 4; Yildiz 2016, 13;), Thus, the EU, while remaining relatively open to 'war refugees', was less open to economic migrants from the Sub-Sahara (European Commission 2016; Belair 2016, 1). To counter the problem of economic immigration from Sub-Saharan Africa, a policy was developed to better protect the EU's outer borders (European Commission 2015) *see also* (Cherti & Grand 2013: 12; Noutcheva 2015, 24-5; Yildiz 2016, 13-4; Carrera *et all* 2016, 1-2).

It is this development which has created a new chapter in the Morocco-EU relation (Haas 2014). As evidenced by the refugee deal with Turkey, the EU is actively trying to host migrants outside of the EU (Natter 2013, 16; European Council 2015/2016; Zardo & Cavatorta 2016, 2). This policy is also reflected in the EU's stance towards Morocco (Council of the EU 2013, 7). The current EU's policy is to make Morocco responsible for countering migration or in EU's words; "help (*edit* bordering countries) to stem irregular migration" (European Council 2015, 7) through the Western Mediterranean route (Natter 2013, 15; Council of the EU 2013, 7; Belair 2016, 1). Where the other migrant routes diminished and the EU got a grip on the influx, this was not so for the Western Mediterranean route; the number steadily increased "With almost 2 757 detections (*edit* in the third quarter of May), the number of irregular migrants using boats to reach Spain, was 78% higher than in […] 2015 and 50% higher than in the second quarter of 2016" (Frontex FRAN Q3 report 2016, 9) *also see* (Wittenberg 2017, 18). Aside from these sub-Saharans, an increasing amount of Moroccans, more than 20.000 in 2016[7], (Frontex FRAN report Q4 2016, 8) tried to make their way into the EU and subsequently tried to stay (Berriane *et al.* 2015, 506). This has created an even more delicate problem in EU-Moroccan relations.

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[7] This might seem contradict with the total number of illegal border crossings via Morocco in 2016, but Moroccan migrants use other migration routes too making their illegal passing's higher than the total illegal crossings via Morocco.

Around a million illegal Moroccans are currently residing in the EU (European Union 2013, 10). This group hardly gets granted asylum in the EU countries (Belair 2016, 7). With already a huge burden of hosting migrants from warzones (European Commission, 2016), the last issue the EU is eager to deal with are illegal Moroccan migrants. The pivotal issue here is that Morocco hardly cooperates with the repatriation of these migrants and wishes them to remain hosted in the EU (Haas, 2014; Hennebry *et al.* 2014, 69). The EU is presently paying for the shelter and food of thousands of illegal Moroccan migrants (European Commission, 2016).

On the other hand, Morocco is currently supportive of the EU's policy to prevent the migrants from reaching the EU, by hosting them in Morocco (Frontex AFIC report 2014, 33; Moroccan Government 2015 *also see* Cherti & Grand 2013: 12; Hennebry *et al.* 2014, 69; Lahlou 2015, 12; Carrera *et all* 1-2 2016). Obviously, Morocco's cooperation with this policy has always come at a price (European Union 2013, 17). It gave Morocco the possibility to postulate a special relationship with the EU (Belair 2016, 1; Yildiz 2016, 171). Morocco demanded (and obtained) financial assistance -60 million in 2016[8]- in exchange for its willingness to cooperate in the execution of the EU's policy (Cherti & Grand 2013: 13; European Commission 2015; European Council 2015).

Increased migration and the King's prospect of domestic survival (domestic intervening variable)

From a domestic perspective, Morocco is not positive on hosting migrants within its borders at all (Wunderlich 2012, 1423; Carrera *et all* 2016, 5/7). If it was up to Morocco it would freely let both Sub-Saharan and Moroccans migrants try to reach European soil rather than having them stay in Morocco. The unease with the current situation has three main reasons. Firstly, with an already very high unemployment rate, an influx of foreign work forces leads to even higher unemployment rates (Hennebry *et al.* 2014, 69; Belair 2016, 1). Sub-Saharans accept an income lower than Moroccan workers and create unequal competition for the Moroccan jobseekers, increasing unemployment and discontent with the state (De Haas 2014).

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[8] Exact numbers are difficult to obtain. It is rather difficult to demarcate funds directly linked to migration, funds which partly help Morocco to host migrants and funds which have nothing to do with migration but are indirectly given to Morocco in exchange for hosting Migrants. The EU pins the amount on 60 million *see* https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/morocco_en

The second point concerns the position of the Moroccan migrants. "From the Moroccan perspective, migration constitutes a vital development resource that alleviates poverty and unemployment, increases political stability and generates remittances. In the context of the Arab Spring and increasing domestic pressure for reform, emigration is believed to have an important stabilizing function" (Haas 2014). Morocco rather sees its uneducated and unemployed youth leave and find work outside of Morocco, and especially in the EU. Preferably, Morocco would therefore rather not cooperate with the EU on this subject (El Qadim 2015, 229-38; Belair 2016, 1). Despite the fact that it might seem curious to not prevent your inhabitants from departing, it makes sense. Living standards and social security are high in the EU, creating little incentive for Morocco to repatriate this group (De Haas 2015). More importantly, due to strict Moroccan family ties and government control, the focus of the migrant will remain in Morocco (Fargues & Fandrich 2012, 8; Berriane et all 2015, 510).Finally, this results in generous remittances from these immigrants to their Moroccan families, once they have found a (illegal) job (Worldbank 2015[9]). These foreign exchanges are a welcome contribution to the Moroccan society, by alleviating poverty and creating domestic investments (De Haas, 2014). Furthermore it pales the support provided by the EU on migration[10].

I argue that H1 is confirmed only when mediated by H4. Increased migration made it possible for Morocco to change its policy towards to the EU, as the EU's interest in aligning with Morocco was high. Yet, the systemic consequence of increased migration falls short in explaining why Morocco used this option to turn away from the EU. In combination with H4, increased migration provides an argument for change. The domestic consequences of the increased migration -increased unemployment rate and a diminished level of remittances- is disadvantageous for the King due to the possibility of domestic unrest. The King's position is strengthened when fewer migrants would remain in and return to Morocco, a situation achievable when Morocco shifts from the EU. In this light I see H4 in combination with H1 confirmed.

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[9] The last decade remittances were around 7.3% of the GDP for Morocco. *Available at* <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?end=2015&locations=MA&start=2006&view=chart>.
[10] Morocco receives around 60 million each year for hosting migrants while the remittances yearly exceed 6 billion (see link above). Important to note here: the majority of these remittances are not from illegal Moroccans in the EU. Although, even when 1% of the remittances were done by Moroccans illegal residing in Morocco it would still exceed the EU's aid on migration by millions.

5.2 Terrorism

Background

The Moroccan society is almost intertwined with terrorism, as terrorist threats and counter terrorism policies have become part of the daily life. Terrorist groups have had a longtime presence becoming only a serious actor since the terror attacks of 9-11. Terrorist groups used the instability and power vacuum after the Arab Spring to gain prominence throughout the region. This increase also affects Morocco where groups tried and try to destabilize the country. Morocco is one of the most moderate Islamic countries and relatively open to other religions (Tadlaoui 2015, 3). A vast group in Morocco opposes this open stance and wishes Morocco to be more fundamental in its religious policies. The idea that the King has a religious heritage and a religious function[11] is also opposed by this group, directing part of their anger directly towards the King (Arieff 2012, 7; Benchemsi 2013, 21; Ter Laan 2016, 59). Presently this group exists of religious intellectuals and youngsters seeking social shelter and acceptance inside the fundamental family (Dialmy 2005, 68). The religious group can count on an increase of support from uneducated, unemployed and neglected young men who cannot escape their circle of poverty and are thus easily exposed to fundamentalists' teachings (Dialmy 2005, 70; Coleman 2006; Masbah 2015, 3; Huber 2017, 118). This fundamentalist education makes them prone to enhancing a hostile approach towards society (Dialmy 2005, 69/79). The group's method to pursue change is by using violence and conducting attacks, a method shown to be effective in destabilizing the country.

Morocco was startled by a terrorist attack in 2003 which caused 45 deaths and over a hundred injured. These 'Casablanca bombings' were conducted by Islamic fundamentalists aiming to target western spots and places with a Jewish heritage (Arieff 2012, 7). The attacks caused a wave of outcry throughout the country against any kind of terror and demands were made for a harsh approach (Arieff 2012, 10; Bartolucci 2015, 111). The bombing exposed Morocco's vulnerability to possible terrorist attacks. The assaulters came from shanty towns north of Casablanca and were neglected and excluded from society (Dialmy 2005, 77). Despite their perceived inferiority they diminished tourism and got the country off track for a few years. The number of tourists visiting the country stalled

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[11] The royal family of Morocco -the Alawite dynasty- claims to be descendants of Prophet Mohammed. This makes the King the religious leader of Morocco, the head of all Moroccan Muslims and Saint-like.

immediately, having a negative effect on Morocco's economy (Worldbank 2017). The shanty towns were violently raided making the inhabitants feel even further excluded from Moroccan society (Dialmy 2005, 77). After the attacks Morocco reacted vigorously, heralding a period of strict laws (law 03.03[12]) and fierce discourse regarding terrorism[13] (Koprowski 2011,15; Arieff 2012, 10; Bartolucci 2014, 13; Wainscott 2015, 641-2; Alexander 2017, 14).

EU-Morocco relation and the increased terrorism threat (systematic independent variable)

Morocco's importance for the EU in fighting terrorism is rooted in two aspects. Firstly, Morocco has a decade's long experience in fighting drug traffic. Part of the tactic tackling drug traffic was infiltrating in the process and the smuggle routes. This provided the Moroccan government with detailed in-depth intelligence of the routes and those involved (Masbah 2015, 1). Those present in the drugs traffic were and are often young, poor, uneducated men, vulnerable for the ideas of radical Islam or familiar with those adhering radical Islam (Dialmy 2013, 71; Masbah 2015, 1). This made the drug routes a useful hub in the terrorism network. Having informants almost everywhere in the network was extremely useful for Morocco in fighting terrorism. Secondly and more obvious; relatively many Moroccans are adherents of the radical Islam and Morocco is the second biggest provider of IS-fighters (Masbah 2015, 1). This made the fight on terrorism of paramount for Morocco and caused that European states often turn to Morocco for information about Moroccan terrorists (Arieff 2012, 6-7).

The EU's stance on terrorism is rather obvious. The terrorist attacks of September 11 2001 ushered in a period in which counter terrorism prevailed on the EU's agenda, posing a threat to the EU stability (Argomaniz 2015 192-3). Since the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist terror threat, the stance of the EU became quite simple; do everything required to counter it (European Council 2015; Argomaniz 2015). For Morocco this means that; "in the context of the EU's growing cooperation with third countries in the fight against terrorism, Morocco is a key country and could become the "pilot" country for actions with other partners in the

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[12] This law provides the state with a broad liberty to counter the extremely broad definition of a "terrorists". Any small scale sign of extremism is punished with a minimum of ten years in prison Law 03-03, "Loi Relative à la Lutte contre le Terrorisme" < Law on the fight against terrorism >.
Available at <http://adala.justice.gov.ma/production/legislation/fr/penal/luttecontreterrorisme.htm>
[13] Speech Mohammed VI Discours de S.M le Roi Mohammed VI suite aux attentats de Casablanca du 16 mai 2003. < Speech given by His Majesty King Mohammed VI following the Casablanca bombings of 16 May 2003> *Available at* <http://www.maroc.ma/fr/discours-royaux/discours-de-sm-le-roi-mohammed-vi-suite-aux-attentats-de-casablanca-du-16-mai-2003>

region" (ENPI 2013, 10). The rise of Muslim terrorism made Morocco significantly more important to the EU and the EU partly depended on Morocco (Koprowski 2011, 17; Mackenzie 2013; 147; European Union 2013; Ilbiz *et al.* 2015, 11-2; Tadlaoui 2015, 4; Monar 2015, 344; European Parliament 2017). Both in Paris and Brussels searches for terrorists were partly successful due to information provided by Moroccan authorities (Tadlaoui 2015, 4). Also when it comes to the prevention of possible terrorist attacks, Moroccan intelligence is paramount and a close cooperation, boosted by the rise of ISIS, exists between Morocco and the EU (Ilbiz *et al.* 2015, 11-3). The migration crisis created a delicate discussion on the division of responsibilities between Morocco and the EU: the inflow of migrants could be perceived as a failure of adequate border protection policies by Morocco. However, the rise of international terrorism has not resulted in the imposition of further international obligations upon Morocco. Every little detail obtained by EU´s intelligence services coming from Morocco is welcome.

An increased terrorism threat and the King's prospect of domestic survival (domestic intervening variable)

For Morocco, boosting the anti-terror policy is like killing two birds with the same stone. Morocco is extremely happy with its current unique status in the Arab world; the Arab Spring did not work out positively for the majority of Arab countries. Morocco's relatively stable situation makes it extremely interesting for partnerships, foreign investments and tourism (Arieff 2012, 4). Secondly, the presence of the threat of terrorism is for the time being also to a certain extent useful for the King. The fear present in society caused by terrorism, gives the King sufficient leeway to fight any opposing voices heard in society (Lalami 2011b; De Mas 2013, 53; Wainscott 2015, 641). Thus, there is no reason to believe that the cooperation on terrorism bothers Morocco in any way, on the contrary: the terror threat suits the King in following through a harsh policy on opposing voices. This explains from the domestic point of view why the King is actively pursuing a foreign policy of cooperation on terrorism.

H2 provides a clear change although I find no arguments linked to explaining Morocco's foreign policy change. Morocco's intelligence clearly led to a more important position vis-à-vis the EU, resulting in serious need to align with Morocco for the EU. Nevertheless, a high value on this variable falls again short to explain why Morocco turned from the EU. The domestic factor also fails to explain Morocco's turn. No unsatisfying

aspects were present for the King as a result of the cooperation with the EU on terrorism. H2 is both solely and in combination with the intervening variable H4 rejected. Nevertheless H2 provides a power increase in Morocco's position vis-à-vis the EU.

5.3 The Western Sahara question

Background

The root of the Western Sahara conflict is the withdrawal of Spain (1975) from its former colony the Western Sahara. Both Morocco and Mauritania claimed to have rights in respect of the territory, while the indigenous group *Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro* (POLISARIO) fought for its right to self-determination. A 16-year long war erupted, resulting in Mauritania withdrawing its claim (Stephan & Mundy 2010, 4-6). The war ended in a ceasefire with no clear winner. The POLISARIO fighters proclaimed their own state: Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). However, they only control a small piece of land positioned at the east side of the Western Sahara and rely heavily on the backing of Algeria for their survival. The tension of war is still tangible and a wall, constructed by Morocco, is currently dividing the warring parties (Stephan & Mundy 2010, 4-6). This conflict has not gone unnoticed by the international community. The 1991 ceasefire was implemented by the United Nations (UN) and overseen by peacekeepers from the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) (White 2015, 345). Initially a referendum on self-determination was supposed to be held among the citizens of the Western Sahara. This referendum however was -and is- blocked endlessly by both parties due to the opacity on eligibility (Theofilopoulou 2012, 691; White 2015, 345). Currently SADR possesses only 20% of the Western Sahara, the other part is controlled by Morocco. The UN considers the Western Sahara to be a non-self-regulating country, meaning it does not accept SADR as a state. SADR indeed misses some key elements of statehood, with a population within the SADR territory of not over half a million and a large part of the population as well as the government being exiled in Algeria (Pham 2010, 12-8).

EU-Morocco relation and the increased Western Sahara stalemate (systemic independent variable)

Morocco wants the EU to acknowledge that the Western Sahara is, as a whole, part of its territory (Benaddallah 2009, 420). Officially the EU opposes Morocco´s claim on the Western Sahara. However, the EU, on purpose, never goes public with its position in respect

of the conflict (Gillespie 2009, 91-2), as the member states fail to align themselves in respect of the choice between a desirable friendship with Morocco on the one hand and the EU's role as a protagonist of self-determination for suppressed populations on the other hand (Benaddallah 2009, 433; European council 2013; Grande-Gascón 2017, 80-1). The southern countries France and Spain are relatively open to the idea of the Western Sahara being part of Morocco (Gillespie 2009, 93; Stephan & Mundy 2010, 75/80-81). In stark contrast, Sweden continues to argue for a free Western-Saharan state (Darbouche & Zoubir 2008, 101; Gillespie 2009, 96). This internal trouble causes the EU to be parsimonious in addressing the issue (Gillespie 2009, 93). Although the EU would like to ignore the Western Sahara, it cannot (Darbouche & Zoubir 2008, 102). The policy of self-determination for the indigenous people is a route irreversible for the EU (Benaddallah 2009, 433). This continues to create problems in the relationship between the EU and Morocco, for example when it comes to establishing treaties (White 2015, 350-1). Since 2012 the question tensed as the subject prevailed on the EU's foreign agenda again. A lingering lawsuit on the applicability of a trade agreement to the Western Sahara arose. The Court of Justice of the European Union stated in 2017 that the trade agreement between the EU and Morocco was not applicable to the territory of the Western Sahara, which outraged Morocco (Court of Justice of the European Union 2016; European Parliament 2017; Aljazeera 2017).

An increased Western Sahara stalemate and the King's prospect of domestic survival (domestic intervening variable)

The importance of the Western Sahara as a domestic factor within Morocco started with the Green March in 1975. A crowd of 350.000 boisterous nationalists waving Moroccan flags, walked into the Western Sahara in order to settle the area and emphasize its Moroccan legacy (White 2015, 345). With the initiation of the Green March, Morocco and especially former King Hassan II, decided to take a hard stance on the situation; an irreversible stance which had to be followed by his son Mohammed VI (Stephan & Mundy 2010, 216-17). This means that every deviation of this chosen route would be considered as Morocco losing face (Stephan & Mundy 2010, 56). Although the continued occupation of the Western Sahara is a substantial financial burden for Morocco, it is also useful and used for feeding nationalism (Pham 2010, 12; Stephan & Mundy 2010, 43). In a country with different tribes, communities and opinions, the Western Sahara serves as the cement of the society. It is used to ease down the population by creating a common enemy (Damis 2000, 28; Mohsen-Finan

& Zeghal 2006, 84; Stephan & Mundy 2010, 43; Mundy 2017, 62-3), postulated by Damis (2000, 28) as "To distract public attention from domestic problems and stifle political dissent". Furthermore it legitimizes the need for a strong regime: "The prolonged crisis at the heart of the Moroccan state, the Western Sahara impasse, has become central to the legitimation of the Moroccan regime and its ability to construct a comprehensive apparatus capable of governing a diverse and divided population" (Mundy 2017, 64). It helps the King in preserving his strong domestic position (Willis 2009, 233). Morocco however also understands that the EU will not change its stance on the Western Sahara anytime soon, because it is just as deadlocked in the situation as Morocco is. To keep the nationalist fire burning Morocco needs to search for other options to include the Western Sahara in its territory, or at least keep up the appearance that it is a prosperous process (Mundy 2017, 62-3).

I see H3 as the only hypothesis confirmed without the direct meditating of the intervening variable. As seen in the developments over the last years, the Western Sahara provided an argument for Morocco to become less dependent on the EU. Having a pivotal partner refusing to fulfill a wish must have been a thorn in the Moroccan eye. Nevertheless I consider the changes in this variable as too low and insufficient to explain the policy change on its own, as the Western Sahara had always been a delicate and controversial issue in the relation. Mediated by H4 I see a strengthened argument for why the Western Sahara is a tipping point in Morocco's policy towards the EU. The unifying factor of the Western Sahara became more important than before due to domestic instability. A loss in believe of prosperity on the Western Sahara claim among the population takes away the unifying factor, undermining the King's position. So the weak international changed value is strengthened by the domestic factor providing an aspect of greater importance. The mediating value of the intervening variable is high confirming H4 for this variable.

6. Conclusion

This study sought to explain Morocco's changed policy regarding the EU. Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell's explanation of a state's foreign policy was used for this research. In performing this research I assessed international variables (systematic level) and domestic variables (individual level) to explain Morocco's external policy change.

This research has led to a strong confirmation of the first and fourth hypothesis together; *increased trans-border migration* and *the perceived domestic survival of the King*.

The analyses of the domestic and the international factor in respect of the cooperation between the EU and Morocco on migration, explain why Morocco has taken a different position towards the EU. This explanation centers on the increase of Morocco's power and leverage in its relation with the EU as well as on the serious domestic problems migration causes in the Moroccan society. Morocco's relevance for the EU grew as it held the key to successful execution of the EU's policy. If Morocco ceases to fulfill its obligations under the migration agreements with the EU, it is the EU that will experience the consequences. For the EU Morocco's role in the migrant crisis became too valuable to react with countermeasures. The King can thus take a different stance without directly jeopardizing Morocco's position and facing consequences. At the same time the King became more occupied with stabilizing the country and his position. The EU's demands on migration contain perceived threats to the domestic stability. More unemployed youngsters and fewer remittances jeopardize the economy and thereby indirectly the Kings situation. Because it is not in Morocco´s interest to comply with the EU, it is a logical choice for the King to turn away from close cooperation with the EU in this respect and so safeguard his position.

The second hypothesis -*Increased international terrorism caused Morocco to alter its position vis-a-vis the EU*- is rejected both individually and in combination with H4. Nevertheless, I see the results as useful in the broader light of the research. Whereas the study of the increased terrorism portrays a change in Morocco's position, it has not led to an explanation of the specific change. The value of the domestic intervening variable resulting from the international change is also not pervasive in providing an argument for the changed policy. This hypothesis holds an increased leverage for Morocco in its relation with the EU. Morocco's position strengthened in light of the EU's dependency on Moroccan intelligence and thus caused an increased Moroccan value for the EU. Nevertheless, Morocco's strong position in the fight against terror neither provides threats, nor any domestic undesirable side effects for the King's domestic survival. Therefore, grounds for a changed policy towards the EU are lacking. From the perspective of international terrorism the King has no urge to change its policy. Although there is no reason for the King to change his policy vis-à-vis the EU in respect of cooperation on terrorism, being of more value made a development towards less obedience in Morocco's policy towards the EU possible. This increased leverage adds up to Morocco's increased influence in the field of migration. Leverage fostering Morocco´s capacity to, harmless vis-à-vis its relation with the EU, solve the domestic discontent caused by migration.

The third hypothesis, the intensification of the Western Sahara question, as expected did not include a strong stimulus although it was the only hypothesis to provide a mild argument for change. Linked to the intervening variable, the Western Sahara brings a more solid argument. The increased domestic situation made the issue of the Western Sahara more important for Morocco and as a result the EU's uncooperativeness in the recognition pressing. A nationwide success in obtaining control over the Western Sahara question, or at least obtaining recognition for its claim from its partners, is beneficial for Morocco, as it helps to provide for the required unity in Morocco. For Morocco the annulled trade agreement is another affirmation of adversity on its Western Sahara claim, reinforcing the continuity of the EU's unwillingness to recognize Morocco's claim. Given the importance of the Western Sahara issue domestically, it is understandable that Morocco insists on the necessity that its partners, amongst them the EU, should recognize its claim on the Western Sahara. The EU fails to fulfill Morocco's wishes, which renders the EU less important for Morocco in this respect. The deadlock of uncooperativeness due to the EU´s annulled agreement together with the increased domestic tense situation, explains Morocco´s growing desire to turn from the EU. At the same time, I concluded that Morocco has become more powerful in its relation with the EU in respect of the other two cases that were discussed in this research. Logically, this created leeway for the King to focus increasingly on obtaining the Western Sahara. This includes a policy in which the EU upholds a position less important than previously.

Overall, I see a change in Morocco's international value for the EU. Morocco became increasingly important and even essential for the EU in fulfilling external policies. Although the independent variables solely fall short in providing a convincing argument to explain Morocco's changed policy vis-à-vis the EU, the domestic events that unfolded in the relevant period for this study, fill this gap. Combined with the increased importance seen in the independent variables, the King's fear of domestic instability provided incentives to deviate from a EU focused policy. So, a combination of the international and domestic variables provides an explanation for Morocco's change policy; a perceived opportunity for Morocco at the systemic level -the increased leverage- where the intervening variable at the domestic level directs how to deal with this opportunity. For both H1 and H3 the intervening variable H4 changed the original value in such a way that it led to an explanation of Morocco's policy change. So in conclusion, neoclassical realism has been useful for focusing on international and domestic factors. It rightfully argues that neither international

nor domestic factors alone can explain a state's policy. Nevertheless, for this research solely the issue of the increasing migration, the interaction between the independent variable and the intervening variable depicted a clear causal logic for Morocco's changed policy. For the other hypotheses of this research the prescribed values of the process between the independent and intervening variable were weak or not present. Furthermore the congruence method mostly focuses on correlation of the variables and falls short in exposing causal relation between the variables. *Process tracing* would have overcome this problem but the absence of sources from Morocco's decision making, expectedly caused an unsatisfying research.

In order to arrive at a broad, comprehensive understanding of Morocco's foreign policy, other research should focus on Africa's and the Middle-Eastern potential regarding Morocco. Africa experienced a rapid economic growth over the last decade. I do expect this development in Africa contributing to Morocco's changed policy towards the EU. Furthermore I advise for further research to pay attention to the unrest in Arab countries. The disintegration of several Arab states possibly contributed to Morocco's rapprochement towards Africa and not to the Middle-East. I hope that combined further research will eventually lead to a comprehensive overarching explanation.

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