World Research of Political Science Journal
An International Journal

http://dx.doi.org/10.18576 /WRPSJ/070204

Looking South The Moroccan Dream: Foreign Policy Theoretical Perspectives and Morocco's Turn towards Mother Africa

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Received: 1 Jul. 2024; Revised: 12 Aug. 2024; Accepted: 25 Sep. 2024.
Published online: 1 Dec. 2024.

Abstract : This work examines Morocco's unprecedented foreign policy choice toward sub-Saharan Africa under the auspices of liberalism and realism in foreign policy analysis frameworks. It argues that while Morocco's foreign policy toward the region is one of liberal character, that is market and business oriented, it is still aimed at realist grounds. In other words, while liberalism helps extract Morocco's liberal motives for choosing Sub-Saharan Africa, it does not provide the whole picture. Considering Morocco's national integrity and security objectives, the Western Sahara issue provides explanation for the geopolitical and strategic motives behind this foreign policy for which the realist model is used. The article further argues that while religion is a major component in the way the foreign policy is carried it is neither a motive nor an end in itself rather an institutional and political tool to serve liberal and realist objectives. The research is carried through a literature review.

Keywords: Foreign Policy analysis, Liberalism, Realism, Political Islam, Morocco, Sub-Saharan Africa.

Introduction

Situated at the most westerly tip of Africa's Arabized West, North Africa, Morocco has a copious history of intercultural diversity between European, Amazigh, African and Arab interactions. Known for its long rule by different Muslim dynasties rooted in moderate Islam, Morocco has mainly played key roles in the area through trade relations and civilization thanks to its position at the transition point between the African and European continent.

Having witnessed a significant transitional phase in the last decades with the coming to the throne of the young and dynamic King Mohammed VI, Morocco's strategic, political and economic implication in the African continent is more significant than it has ever been. The country's revolutionary rise through social reform, market liberalization and modernization was carried along a reformed, proactive and unprecedentedly dynamic foreign policy under the counsel and instruction of the King Mohammed VI.

Foreign policy is of essential importance to the monarchy and is closely interlinked with social and domestic priorities being marketed as liberalization, modernization and above all Morocco's national raison d'etre, the Western Sahara. For this reason, the king has been carrying the foreign policy dossiers at the palace level and has been rejuvenating his foreign policy entourage through inclusion of different advisors, including the business sector, changing ambassadors and carrying regular visits to significant destinations for foreign policy.

Morocco's main foreign policy targets remain to keep its historical alliance with the U.S as well as France as a traditional priority along European countries, and the Arab countries namely the Gulf countries. Moroccan foreign policy, however, took an unprecedented turn toward sub-Saharan African countries, west Africa especially. While relations with African countries during other kings' eras have always been consistent, they have never been as dynamic and meaning as they are presently.

Since coming to the throne, the king has made sub-Saharan Africa an important foreign policy target. Consequently, but in

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the last decade the region has been the priority of Morocco's foreign policy agenda and has been subject to a very dynamic, focused and multidimensional foreign policy. The region has been offered the best of the country's potential for collaboration starting from business cooperation, agreements, to religious diplomacy, security, socio-economic development, training and education. The move toward the region was also accompanied by a significant move to return to African Union, which it had left in 1984 upon the acceptance of membership of Polisario front.[1]

Besides the return to African Union, Morocco's foreign policy toward the region is carried through other multiple platforms such as official tours of the king around Africa, reception of African leaders in Morocco, bilateral and multilateral agreements and cooperation in the economic, security and socio-economic sectors.
This foreign policy choice comes in a context of liberalization and modernization of the country and a vision to become Africa's second largest economy after South Africa. Considering this, liberalism for foreign policy analysis provides the best candidate framework to explain Morocco's foreign policy toward the region. However, while the foreign policy choice comes in a period of liberalization, it also comes in a sensitive period of heightened pressure on Morocco concerning the western Sahara issue.

The territory is of high national significance for Morocco and regaining it requires a proactive diplomacy, especially regionally. On this variable, liberalism as a foreign policy framework does not help explain the motives behind the cooperation and benefits that are of more realist nature than just a liberal one. To fill this gap, the article adopts realism to examine the realist, strategic and geopolitical motives behind Morocco's move toward western Africa. It also reviews the functional use of religion as an institutional and political tool for the liberal and realist motives against constructivist argument of religion and identity being a motive behind a foreign policy choice.

Research question

The article seeks to thread Morocco's foreign policy through the eyes of liberalism. It aims to answer the following question: *To what extent does liberalism explain Morocco's foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa?* In an attempt to answer this question, the article argues that while liberalism offers the best and most comprehensive framework for the analysis of the foreign policy at hand it leaves out an important explanation which can only be understood through a realist perspective. Morocco's foreign policy can only be understood through the auspices of both liberalism and realism since it is one of liberal character it is also of realist origins. By doing so, the article aims to challenge the gap between liberalism and realism and calls for a reconsideration of the separation between liberal and realist foreign policy motives, especially considering the strong, inseparable intertwinement between economy and security.

Objectives and Contributions

This research objective is fourfold. Firstly, it seeks to understand the motives and objectives of Morocco's turn toward sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, it aims at evaluating liberal approach in explaining Morocco's foreign policy. Thirdly, the article investigates a specific case study (Morocco), as such, aims to supplement the scant literature available on Morocco's foreign policy and to contribute to the academic literature on the country given its increasing importance in the MENA region and African continent. Finally, it is the ambition of this work to contribute to theoretical debates around foreign policy analysis.

Sections outline

The first section will give an overview of liberalism theoretical framework for foreign policy analysis. The second section will be for analysis. The first subsection of the analysis section will explain the foreign policy of Morocco according to the liberalism framework and draw a conclusion on the extent to which the framework explains the foreign policy at hand. Following that, the second subsection will adopt perspectives from realism to supplement the analysis. The third, will discuss the role of religion as an institutional tool. Finally, the last section will provide a conclusion of the work.

I. Theoretical Framework: Liberalism and Foreign Policy

In explaining foreign policy through liberalism, scholars like Juliet Kaarbo, Michael Doyle, Keohane, Moravcsick and Grieco point to the importance of economic cooperation in mitigating the effects of the international system and allowing

1 The Polisario front is a guerilla movement which was formed in 1973. It opposes Morocco's sovereignty over the western Sahara and claims for self-determination. Upon exile by the Moroccan government, the guerilla movement created a state in exile in Algeria, Tindouf. They sought recognition from African countries and stopped joining the African Union in 1984, leading Morocco to step out from it. Having rejected to give allegiance to the sultans. they are now refusing to be under Morocco's sovereignty and calling for separation.

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trustful and more bounding relations among nation-states through mutual interests and benefits. Michael Doyle argues that the function of liberalism comes from its root in the domestic level before the international. Liberalism starts at home before foreign policy through market liberalisation, capitalism, liberal values of democracy, rule of law and equality. Prosperity and economic interests become a state priority along with liberal values of modernization. Subsequently, states develop rationality in decision making and favour cooperation, utility maximization and benefit over relative gains and cooperation. They seek foreign relations that guarantee absolute gains and promote their economic wealth.[2] As such, foreign policy becomes about prospering together instead of surviving alone, thus, one that is driven by rational choice, utility maximization and calculations as argued by Keohane (1984) and Moravcsik (1997). To maintain their cooperation, states create institutional platforms for information sharing and developing trust. In this context, adds Keohane, reputation becomes the new currency. While game theory and prisoner's dilemma scholars such as Grieco (1988) expect states to continue cheating, Keohane (1984) argues that the high costs of such actions through reputation and trust which carry either reward or punishment discourages states from cheating short term benefits are sacrificed for long term ones.[3] This is due to the interdependent nature of the system created by the liberals. According to Kaarbo (2012), the first characteristic of liberal foreign policy is economic interdependence. States share costs as much as they share benefits and every action carries benefits or costs for all of them given their interdependent, transnational market through exchange, trade and investment. As a result of this, in addition to their developed trust and liberal values, states create a zone of peace with each other to promote stability over conflicts. Issue linkage is also a major component of this type of foreign policy whereby states become linked through more than one sector. This leads states to create institutions, reduce their sovereignty restrictions, seek regional integration and create a 'zone of security'. [4]

Furthermore, liberals develop a positive duty not only toward each other but also toward citizens. They seek each other progress and promote social developments for the betterment of the life of the common citizen. The positive duty is carried through three platforms: preserving, expanding and mitigating trade offs. Firstly, states preserve and support each other's regimes and countries in times of difficulty. While an outcome their shared values commitment, this is a result of their interdependence which makes negative incidents one contage the other. Secondly, states expand liberal benefits and well beings to citizens by carrying a social responsibility through economic cooperation that carry socio-economic benefits for the citizens. The states, as such, in addition to their peace and security zones, create a socio-economic zone. Thirdly, mitigate trade offs by inspiring and instigating. They inspire others through their own modernization model which makes others aspire for the same. This is done at home by modernizing the economy and adopting Kantian and Lockean principles of rule of law, juridical equality, freedom of expression, rights to property, democracy etc. Their own success makes them be a city on the hill that shines light to follow. In addition to this, liberal states seek to instigate their values and progress in others. This is done by sharing and exporting their expertise, values and model abroad.[5]

Moreover, a liberal foreign policy is also characterised by the participation of non-state actors such as business leaders and groups in foreign policy making.[6] Lastly liberal states develop suspicion toward non-liberals and see them as a threat to their progress, security and values.[7]

In a sum, the liberal approach is characterized by utility maximization and rational choice which start with the adoption of liberalism both at home and abroad. Other characteristics of liberalism are economic interdependence, a zone of peace

2 Michael Doyle, "Liberalism and Foreign Policy," in Foreign Policy, Theories, Actors, Cases, Steve Smith et al. eds., **Oxford: Oxford University Press**, 200, pp. 49-70.

3 Robert Keohane, **After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy**, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, pp. 45-110.

Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics", **International Organization**, Vol. 51, No. 4, (1997), pp. 513-553.

Joseph Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism", **International Organization**, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1988, pp. 485-507.

4 Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, and Ryan K. Beasley "The Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective," in Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior, 2nd Edition, Ryan K. Beasley et. al. eds., **Washington D.C.: CQ Press**, 2012, pp. 10-12.

Doyle, 58.

5 Doyle, 49-70.

6 Kaarbo, p. 12.

7 Doyle, p. 54.

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through institutional platforms and cooperation to increase trust and information sharing. Issue linkage and a zone of security are important in liberalism. Positive duty by preserving, expanding and mitigating trade offs through inspiring and instigating. Inclusion of non-state actors such as business groups and leaders in foreign policy decision making are also characteristics of liberalism

A. Liberal Analysis of Moroccan Foreign Policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa

1. Rational choice and utility maximization

As expected by the liberal framework, Moroccan foreign policy is one carried at home first through market liberalization and modernization sustained with a rational choice foreign policy that meets the country's national economic and internationalization objectives. Since the coming to the throne of the king Mohammed VI, the kingdom had witnessed a significant economic boom and modernization as well as a social liberalization through key reforms in multiple sectors. In terms of market liberalisation, Morocco has in the last decade adopted a National Pact for Industrial Emergence and an Acceleration Plan (2007-2015) with objectives to make Morocco a regional exporting and industrial power and a destination for foreign investment from around the world. It aims to increase the exports by 22% a year, attract international manufacturers, foreign companies to aeronautics and support small businesses initiation locally through bank loans. The Pact included the creation of a Tangier free zone area, a Tangier automobile city, industrial parks and an Atlantic free zone in the city of Kenitra, next to the country's capital. It included tax exemptions for the first five years and significant reduction for another 25 years for investors. It also targeted increasing free trade agreements which the country managed to secure largely, about 56 trade agreements with key economies such U.S and EU since 2013. Accordingly, Morocco adopted the vision to become the gateway to Africa for foreign investors from around the world with hopes to expand to the growing African market. Other projects included the Green Morocco plan for agro-industry, five solar energy projects to become a "clean" energy exporter along with creation of eco-systems by 2020 and leading its fast growing automotive sector in the continent.
To fulfil its vision, the country built a financial city in Casablanca in 2010 which serves as a hub of foreign investors from around the world willing to expand to Sub-Saharan African market. [8] A Tangier Metropolis port, functioning as the second largest port line in the world, was also created and connected to the rest of Morocco through a highly sophisticated road infrastructure. [9]A high-speed train, TGV (Train Grand Vitesse), was launched to link Tangier and Casablanca in 2 hours only to facilitate investors' movement.[10]

In line with its vision calculations, the country accelerated its economic cooperation and agreements with Sub-Saharan African countries which presented significant market opportunities. The region presents Morocco with a raw market and a large middle class, willing to consume its products. It increases its foreign investments at home by those wishing to expand to the African continent by benefiting from its stability and experience. The region is considered as the second fastest growing in the world and has an important market for Morocco's phosphate export. Morocco's phosphate richness is a key component in fertilizers and west Africa while providing a perfect market for importing phosphate products from Morocco is also abundant with resources that are essential for Morocco's phosphate industry progress mainly natural gas.[11] Between 2003-2013 the trade with the region tripled and the country declared its objectives to increase its shares in the sub-Saharan African market by way of direct investment which reached 85% of its foreign investment in 2016.[12] The choice of the region was, thus, one stemming from market analysis, rational choice, benefits and interests' calculation in accordance with the country's liberalised market needs and visions as expected by the liberal model. This economic rise was also carried with a range of social reforms that sought to enforce democracy, rule of law and equality to a certain extent.

2. Transnational market

Morocco concluded a range of economic agreements and remarkably increased its economic presence in the area through sectors such as banking, real estate, agriculture and telecommunication. In terms of banking, Morocco's leading banks such

8 Mohammed El Kadiri, "From Assistance to Partnership: Morocco and its Foreign Policy in West Africa", **Strategic Institute Studies and U.S Army War College**, 2015, 1-59.

9 The Report.

10 Vincent Castel, "African Economic Outlook Report 2016", **African Development Bank Group,** 2016

https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/north-africa/morocco/morocco-economic-outlook/

11 El Kadiri, p. 8.

12 Tadlaoui, p. 4.

John Peter Pham, "King Affirms Africa as Top Priority in Moroccan Foreign Policy", **Atlantic Council**, 22 August 2016.

http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/africasource/king-affirms-africa-as-top-priority-in-moroccan-foreign-policy

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Attijariwafa Bank, the Banque Populaire (BP) and Moroccan Bank for International Commerce (BMCE) expanded throughout the region, gained maximum shares in local banks and created multiple branches with an unprecedented success in the region and assumed leadership position in the sector. Attijariwafa Bank, for example, created 414 branches in 11 countries in West and Central Africa. The Banque Populaire took control over the Atlantic Ivorian Bank and created new banks in the regions such as the Banque Populaire Morocco-Centre Africaine and Banque Populaire Morocco-Guinea and realised a presence in 7 countries in the region as well as membership in West African Economic and Monetary Union. Moroccan Bank for International Commerce (BMCE), achieved 72,6% share in the Bank of Africa with a large presence of its 461 branches throughout 16 countries in the region.[13] Other leading companies in different sectors include Addoha for real estate, OCP Morocco's Cherifien Office of Phosphate and Maroc Telecom which Morocco's leading telecommunication company. Addoha which is a real estate and property developer in Morocco and targets the lower middle classes, created cement factories in countries like Gabon, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory coast (Cote d'ivoire) as well as Congo Bozaville. The billionaire real estate investor expanded its successful project in Morocco, which offers modest housing with an affordable range of prices for the middle classes and below, to countries like Mali, Cameroon and Congo Bozaville. OCP, Office Cherifien of Phosphate, is a public conglomerate owned by the monarchy and a global leader in the production of the country's richness, phosphate, created a special unit in Morocco dedicated to serving the West African market demands. The new unit produces customized products for the needs of region's soil type, its whole production is exported to the region. OCP also concluded partnerships with a public company in west Africa to develop products through a synergy of phosphate and natural gas that target the Sub-Saharan African market. [14] In telecommunications, Morocco's Maroc Telecom realised an unprecedented success in the region reaching 53 million customers which is beyond the number of its subscribers at home.[15]

3. Interdependence

As expected by the liberal model, a transnational market leads to economic interdependence that carries benefits but also costs and dangers for the partners such as inflation. In two critical contexts the region's market was shaken by security instabilities and Morocco's businesses and economy suffered from inflation effects. A political and military crisis in Ivory Coats (Cote d'ivoire) in 2002, for instance, carried harmful costs to Moroccan investments. In 2011, the regional context of instability triggered by the Arab Spring and affecting sub-Saharan countries caused important drops in revenues for Moroccan investments. Attijariwafa Bank, for example, had to close its operations in the region for a period of time, the same effect reached to the Moroccan Popular Bank in the region following a security and economic crisis in Central African Republic. This directly affected the country's economy and the business elite of which the monarchy members are the major component.[16]

4. Zone of peace

According to the liberal model, liberal states are supposed to form a zone of peace through cooperation and institutional platforms where they share information, reduce uncertainties and increase trust. The countries are joined through an African Development Bank. In 2016, Morocco expressed its decision to return to where it belongs, the African Union, from which it had stepped down in 1984. The union serves as a regional integration platform where states seek to cooperate in different fields and tackle common threats and difficulties while fostering cooperation, sharing information and building mutual trust as one community. In 2008, Morocco concluded a preferential trade and investment agreement with the West-African Economic Monetary Union (UEMOA). It also signed strategic partnership accords with ECOWAS and the Economic Monetary Community of Central African States CEMAC through which they aspire for a creation of a free zone of trade.[17]

5. Issue linkage

While cooperation makes states bound to each other by peace, economic interdependence, mutual costs and benefits it also ties them through issue linkage which is an outcome of their interdependence and transnational market. Security is especially important in this sense. States become mutually affected by security threats and instabilities affecting their partners. Trade carries with it an increase of movement of people which poses significant challenges to the security of states. 2011, for example, witnessed a flood of weapons and rebels from Libya along with terrorist groups which practice trafficking in arms and fighters. In addition to terrorists and weapons, Morocco also seized several attempts of proceeding cocaine from West

13 El Kadiri, p. 11.

14 El Kadiri, pp. 10-13.

15 S. Bensouda, A. El Machat, "Maroc Telecom Financial Report 2016", **IAM**, 2016, p.10

http://www.iam.ma/Lists/TelechargementFinance/Attachments/895/Financial%20Report%20H1%202016_EN.pdf

16 El Kadiri, p. 17-18.

17 Tadlaoui, p. 4.

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African countries by way of ports and airports.[18] This as a result, resulted into the country putting its security sector as a major priority, strengthening its security measures and intelligence service, creating police units for terrorism and cybercrimes along with committing itself to investing in the security of Sub-Saharan countries to reduce threats to itself and interests. Morocco sought the creation of a zone of security among the members by reviving initiatives such as CEN-SAD and Tripoli Process, originally created by Gaddafi. Morocco held a series of conferences and meetings for the countries to discuss measures for coping with trafficking, transnational crimes and terrorism. The second ministerial conference on border security between Sahel and Maghreb states was held by Morocco and attended by officials and representatives from U.S, France and the E.U. The conference agreed to create a training centre for regional border security management to be hosted by the country. Through the centre, the countries would share expertise, practices, institutions and policies to mutually cope with the security dangers of the region. It also worked to create a ministerial conference for African states bordering the Atlantic to strengthen security between twenty two states.[19] In addition to this, Morocco led the creation of a "climate cooperation zone" among African countries. In line with its solar energy and Green Morocco projects, Morocco concluded climate cooperation for solar energy projects with countries like Nigeria and hosted in 2016 the COP22 Summit, the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change.[20]

5. Positive duty

a. Preserving

Morocco conducted the liberal positive duty by preserving, expanding and inspiring. In terms of preservation, Morocco has showed support and solidarity with its economic partners at multiple occasions. It constantly provided aid through humanitarian, military, medical and technical assistance in natural disasters or conflicts. In 2013, Morocco set a surgical military hospital in Bamako, Mali and in 2014 Guinea Conakry.[21] In 2004, it sent a peacekeeping force to Ivory Coast (Cote d'ivoire). It offered military training and education in Moroccan military academies for military officers from western African countries. It also established funded exchange programs for Malian officers with a commitment to counter extremism and terrorism in the country. [22] Morocco supported the French led operation that was served in Mali upon an Islamists insurgency in the country. To preserve the country's regime and stability, Morocco mediated in Mali between the Bamako's central government and the rebel group Tuareg of Northern Mali. It offered $5 million to African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA).[23] During the Ebola period, Morocco showed significant solidarity by maintaining its flights to the most affected regions by Royal Air Morocco company (RAM) with the aim to allow movement of medical aid and staff to the affected areas.[24]

b. Expanding

Morocco pursued the expansion of its liberal values to benefit the society and the citizens as an inherent duty of its liberal direction by the creation of a socio-economic zone. Morocco defined its cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa to be mainly driven by the objective of the improvement of the lives of African citizens. It showed a commitment to prioritizing and supporting economic projects that have social aspects and attributes. While itself a receiver of international aid, Morocco in 2000, according to Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation, cancelled loans for the least developed African countries. It adhered in 2001 to the Communaute des Etats Sahelo Sahariens and to the Partnership for Development of Africa (NEPAD) as well as to the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa. In 2007, Morocco organized a conference in human development in partnership with the UN program for Development, which was the first of its type emphasizing the South-South cooperation which has become Morocco's foreign policy priority. Morocco also insisted on the need to amend policies of the Sahelo-Saharien investment Commerce bank to meet the socio-economic development of the countries and

18 El Kadiri, p. 18-19.

19 El kadiri, p. 22-23.

20 "South-South Cooperation on Climate Change Gaining Traction," **MamaNews**, 29 November 2016.

http://namanews.org/news/2016/11/29/south-south-cooperation-on-climate-change-gaining-traction/

Xinhua News Agency, "Morocco Africa Vow to Deepen Cooperation to Fight Climate Change in Africa", **ChinaAfrica**, 23 August, 2016.

http://www.chinafrica.cn/The_Latest_Headlines/201608/t20160824_800065709.html

21 "HM the king, accompanied by Malian president, visits Moroccan field hospital in Bamako," **Maghreb Arab Press**, 20 September, 2013.

http://www.mapnews.ma/en/activites-royales/hm-king-accompanied-malian-president-visits-moroccan-field-hospital-bamako

El kadiri, p. 6.

22 El kadiri, p. 20.

23 Tadlaoui, p. 3.

24 El kadiri, p. 16.

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benefit citizens. It emphasized on the need to support business projects and incentives with a socio-economic character. In consolidation with its African "brothers" and its duty to share burdens, Morocco legalized the situations of African immigrants who have been in the country for a long period of time waiting to cross its sea toward the European dream regardless of its struggle with the illegal immigration crisis in its territory. Additionally, Morocco expressed its solidarity and commitment to socio-economic development in the region by sharing and promoting knowledge and education. The Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation (AMCI) supports education of western African citizens in Moroccan public institutes. Between 2008-2009, for instance, Moroccan public institutions received 7064 foreign students from about 41 countries, majority of whom with a scholarship (6668). Morocco also developed internships and training programs to professionals in different sectors from West African countries. It offered 600 internships and 250 missions of experts since 2001. It also negotiated a tripartite cooperation to train more than 900 professional in sectors like aeronautics, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, textile, maritime fishing, maritime business, health, customs etc.[25]

c. Inspiring

As explained by Doyle, a state self-modernization serves as an inspiration for others and make it a city on a hill for the rest. Besides the economic modernization, the King had initiated a series of social reforms with the goal to empower democracy, Moroccans and women especially. He carried investigations into his own father's human rights abuse against activists and human rightists and rewarded them instead by leadership roles in human rights sector in the country and through other means such as royal medals etc. He adopted a revolutionary reform called the Moudawana which gave women unprecedented power and independence. The law gave women the right to divorce themselves with full shares of husband heritage, forbade polygamy and made it subject to women permission with jail punishments for the husband in case of breaching this law while securing the woman half his fortune and properties. It gave them equal heritage rights which were a remarkably secular and modern move. He increased women and youth participation in leadership roles and made them part of his advisory entourage, parliament, ministries, foreign policy, science, religion etc. Under this liberal age of the country, Morocco was able to witness a first woman khateeb, lecturer or preacher, offering a Friday sermon lecture to an audience of public officials, monarchy members and notably the king which carried a significant symbol for a modernized Muslim state.
The country witnessed a range of other reforms reaching to an increase in separation of power, empowering the parliament and distancing the king from elections etc. while keeping his sacred role and share of power over the parliament management in times of emergency. After the 2011 constitution, Morocco witnessed its first fair and just election where a moderate Islamist party was allowed to govern out of the people choice, which would otherwise have never been given a chance by the secularly driven system. [26] These reform moves made the country to turn the dark phase of Arab spring into a positive one whereby the king intelligently managed to lead a smooth change through stability without shaking his power or the country. A success that was looked upon by the rest of the region was in fact an outstanding model. Religious reforms were also adopted as way of crisis management to cope with the spread of fundamentalism among the youth and maintain instead a moderate form of Islam. Reforms included moderate religious TV channels and strict procedures for issuing fatwas that is under supervision of the ministry and making sure the preachers to be educated scholars. Many other reforms targeted reintegration of single women, prisoners, uneducated youth, eradication of illiteracy through education of old people in villages etc. These reforms made Sub-Saharan African countries, struggling with extremism and a region of constant turmoil and stability look over Morocco as a city on a hill with an African model mitigating between tradition, religion, modernity and openness through stability.

d. Instigating

Morocco did not stop at carrying reforms for itself that were an inspiration for the rest of the region but also sought to instigate its liberal values on others by sharing its experience with them. Morocco offered to train preachers and religious scholars from the sub-Saharan countries in its territory. In 2013, it signed an agreement between Moroccan Ministry of endowments and religious affairs and Malian government to offer a 2-year training to 500 Malian preacher in order to promote an Islam of moderation and tolerance and make them able to engage in debates against fundamentalists. The offer was spread to a range of other countries, upon demand, such as Guinea, Ivory Coast, etc. In 2015, Mohammed VI Institute for training preachers was established and another Mohammed VI foundation for African preachers was also created in collaboration with African countries with the aim to carry scientific research in Islamic studies and raise awareness about Islamic cultural civilization which aim spreading a moderate version of Islam against the fundamentalist one spread by Saudi

25 Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres et de la Cooperation), "Diplomatie marocaine en Afrique: Une approche renouvelee au service d'une priorite strategique (Moroccan Diplomacy in Africa: a renewed approach for a strategic priority)", **Diplomatie.ma**, 10 August, 2012. https://www.diplomatie.ma/Portals/0/adil4.pdf

26 "Morocco's Economic Outlook", **The World Bank**, October, 2016.
http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/morocco/publication/economic-outlook-fall-2016

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Arabia and other.[27]

6. Non-state actors and suspicion from non-liberals

In a typical liberal way, Moroccan foreign policy making toward Sub-Saharan Africa includes non-traditional diplomatic actors mainly from the private sector. The economic liberalization of the country gave rise to importance of private sector in political sector and especially in foreign policy making. The foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa as pointed out by El kadiri (2015), was carried through the involvement of Moroccan businessmen and investors in Sub-Saharan Africa who offered the government with a market analysis of the region, their experience, contacts etc. They gave insights about the opportunities for the country in the region and facilitated Morocco's market integration, making their participation in the foreign policy making toward the area a crucial one. When making decision makings on foreign policy files in the palace, the king makes sure to include notable Moroccan business leaders in his advisory entourage.[28] In his last large tour around Africa, the king was accompanied by a very large number of business leaders, hundreds, who signed around 118 business agreements in a short period of time in countries like Mali, Ivory Coast, Gabon and Guinea.[29] One major active leader in foreign policy making in the era of Mohammed VI is Mrs Meriem Bensaleh Chaqroun, a Moroccan business woman who owns a range of companies and is the head of CGEM, the General Confederation of Moroccan Companies. Nicknamed as the patron, Mrs. Bensaleh has a strong presence in the foreign policy making and advising of the king. She serves as his right hand in sub-Saharan African diplomacy, accompanies him in all his tours, leading the visits, projects inaugurations and agreements herself. Lastly, Morocco shares a suspicion from the non-liberal and socialist Algeria which presents the threat of a socialist Islam, instability and aggression. Morocco is suspicious of its non-democratic government and its incentives for aggression, offensives and instability encouragement in the country through funding and military support of the Polisario guerrilla movement threatening Morocco's national security, integrity and stability.

To conclude, the liberal framework offered a perfectly fit perspective to explain and explore Morocco's foreign policy through its theoretical concepts and model. The model's characteristics of utility maximization, rational choice, zone of peace, interdependence, issue linkage, positive duty through preserving, expanding and mitigating trade-offs by inspiring and instigating as well the involvement of non-traditional actors in foreign policy making and suspicion from non-liberals are all present in Moroccan foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa. However, while this model explains the foreign policy to us from the economic and market interests layer, it leaves off an important variable which is related to security and power politics and that is the western Sahara. Western Sahara is a major security priority of Morocco and is the major drive of its foreign policy. To explain this foreign policy variable a realist model approach for foreign policy analysis is adopted.

II. A Different Lens: Realism and Moroccan Foreign Policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa

Unlike liberals, realists focus on security, survival and threat as major motives and drives behind foreign policy instead of prosperity and cooperation. According to Kaarbo (2012), in a realist approach it is anarchy not interdependence which shapes states foreign policy choices. Anarchy carrying potential threats and dangers to states' survival, borders and security makes them obliged to seek military strength and power. Security comes as the major foreign policy priority and economic wealth is pursued to sustain this one.[30] Defensive realism, security dilemma and balance of threat as well as concepts of alliances, economic wealth and geography are the applicable realism characteristics for the scope of this article.

To defend their national security, states seek economic wealth and power that is a requisite for their military power and security grow. According to Kaarbo (2012), economic wealth is sought to purchase strong military equipment and resources while alliance is sought as a strategic counterbalance against the offender. States seek alliances as way of balance against threats. They use alliances to counter the threat by building a sort of protection and support for themselves that can compensate for their potential weaknesses or enhance their power against the counterparts. Alliances, as a result, come from power calculation and a strategic defence against potential threats and enemies.[31] In this context Jervis (2008), emphasizes the role of geography and technology in driving and shaping foreign policy.[32] According to Wohlforth (2008), a defensive state seeks to protect itself without threatening others unlike the offensive ones. A threat, he adds, is determined according

27 El kadiri, p. 24.

28 El kadiri, p. 11.

29 Tadlaoui, p. 4.

30 Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey Lantis, and Ryan K. Beasley "The Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective," in Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior, 2nd Edition, Ryan K. Beasley et. al. eds., **Washington D.C.: CQ Press**, 2012, pp. 7-10.

31 Kaarbo, p. 8.

32 Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under Security Dilemma", **World Politics**, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1978, pp. 167-214.

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aggregate capabilities, geography and perceptions of aggressive intentions.[33] Furthermore, Morganthau (1948) discusses the use and power of the diplomacy of prestige as a form of balancing whereby the state seeks to manifest its power and maintain it through impressing its enemies by way of prestige and in some cases show off of military capabilities. The level of a state strength in prestige and protocol in receptions, gatherings, visits etc. is an expression of its power and a way of balance against a potential threat, the respect shown by other to its diplomacy is a measure of its power.[34]

From a realist point of view, Morocco's foreign policy move toward sub-Saharan Africa is of realist nature. Western Sahara, a disputed territory in Morocco has had become subject of power politics between Morocco and Algeria. After Mauritania gave up its claims on the territory in 1979, Algeria intensified its support to the guerrilla movement fighting against Morocco's sovereignty over the land by providing it with exile in its territory, military material and training as well as financial support. This is done out of its security dilemma toward Morocco's recent noticeable power growth economically and militarily. The western Sahara, the size of Great Britain, is geopolitically very significant and has the potential to make Morocco a regional power. Geopolitically, the territory has caught the interest not only of Algeria and African countries but also of European ones and the international community. Its southwestern shore of Mediterranean provides a strategic gate to an important water way which has maritime richness's like fishing. In addition to this, the region is very rich in resources especially phosphate which if officially under Morocco's sovereignty, would make Morocco have monopoly over the world phosphate with a share of 80% instead of its official 60%. This would give Morocco control over international prices of the resource and fertilizers making it a key power in the field of agriculture.[35] Recent explorations claimed a potential of oil and natural gas in the south of the territory from which the rebels rose.[36] Morocco without natural gas nor oil is realising a remarkable growth that is making Algeria, a country rich in oil and natural gas, have increasing insecurity which it balances against not by developing itself but by countering Morocco's growth. Moreover, western Sahara with its exotic deserts, nature and culture is a real touristic richness provider for Morocco. After Marrakesh, Tangier and Fez most tourists fantasize for Morocco for its dunes of deserts and camels. The desert is also crucial for Morocco's new field of power which is solar energy. The country is targeting solar energy field and having objectives to be the number one exporter of solar energy to the rest of Africa and Europe. Western Sahara is pillar for this solar and green energy projects.[37] Algeria's security dilemma made it present threats to Morocco's power increase and growth by supporting and guiding the guerrilla movement, who was able to launch a war at Morocco for years and to mobilize international support for itself against Morocco calling the country's claims over the land colonialism. This had weakened Morocco's position, which though was largely supported by the U.S and France who have make sure to veto and block every step or move against Morocco's interests, did not manage to pull the dispute officially toward its side by the international community. Superpowers support was not enough to do away with the Polisario which kept gaining supports from human rightists and international community.

Having submitted its autonomy plan in 2007, whereby Morocco seeks to maintain its sovereignty over the area in foreign affairs, security, defence, national flag, anthem etc. and suggests to give the territory its autonomy in managing its own local affairs and administration Morocco engineered a new strategy to win the conflict. [38] To support its autonomy plan, Morocco carried a new foreign policy strategy targeting regional politics instead of international ones. Morocco understood the game and moved to defend its national security objective and balance against the threat presented by Polisario and Algeria by a proactive, well orchestrated diplomacy that allows it to cut the basis of the power of the threat instead of being absent from the area, letting it flourish and seeking allies elsewhere. The group's source of strength was coming from Morocco's absence in the African continent and Union, which it knew how to make use of and managed to secure recognition from fellow African countries. Morocco's new diplomacy accompanying its autonomy plan is directly targeting gaining the support of African countries that have had otherwise given support to Polisario by claiming back its presence in the continent. This defensive diplomacy is composed of a geographical strategy, alliance and economic wealth.

Geography

Sub-Saharan African countries are the geographical base of the Polisario and the only source of its recognition. Targeting these countries Morocco directly attacks the basis of existence of the Polisario, funded by Algeria. By making the countries

33 William C. Wohlforth, "Realism ad Foreign Policy," in Foreign Policy, Theories, Actors, Cases, Steve Smith et al. eds., **Oxford: Oxford University Press**, 2008, pp. 32-48.

34 Hans J. Morganthau, **Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace**, Alfered Aknof: New York, 1948

35 Abdelsalam Maghraoui, "Ambiguities of Sovereignty: Morocco, The Hague and the Western Sahara Dispute", **Mediterranean Politics**, Vol.8, No.1, 2003, pp. 113-126.

36 Khadija Mohsen-Finan, "The Western Sahara Dispute under UN Pressure", **Mediterranean Politics**, Vol.7. No. 2, 2002, pp. 1-13.

37 Associated Press, CNN, "Clean Energy Caught in the Crossfire", **Earth Island Journal**, January, 2013.

http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/eij/article/around_the_world8/

38 William Zartman, "Time for a Solution in the Western Sahara Conflict", **Middle East Policy Council**, Vol. XIV, No. 4, 2007.

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sympathise with Morocco's side and retrieving the recognition they had offered the Polisario, which is its source of support at the international level and Morocco's weakness, Morocco counterbalance the threat of Polisario through a geographical strategy.

Alliances

These alliances, economic, religious, security, socio-economic support etc. make the states have way too much benefits to seek from cooperating with Morocco, which directly means recognizing its sovereignty claims over Sahara, then supporting a guerrilla movement backed by a deteriorating state with no future to offer the African continent compared to Morocco. The move was a strategic, realistic one and it did give fruit as most of the African states who had previously recognized the state of Polisario retrieved their support and recognition and sided instead with Moroccan autonomy plan.

Economic wealth and military power

Thirdly, the alliances which the majority are of economic nature are a direct source of Moroccan economic wealth for military power. In parallel with its economic development, Morocco has been unprecedently developing its military and security field and becoming an inspiration for other African countries in the sector. Morocco has in the last decade bought very advanced military material, hardware and technologies from the U.S. It has also gotten involved in military cooperation and actions in the region with Saudi Arabia and others in events such as the Hazm Coalition against the Yemeni Houthis. It has signed many military and security deals with the U.S. such as the FMF training program for enhancing the skills of its military.[39] Recently, Morocco initiated a training cooperation between the U.K's Royal Gibraltar Regiment and the Moroccan Deuxieme Brigade d'Infanterie Parachutiste (2BIP) forces.[40]

Additionally, the policy of prestige highly used by Morocco in approaching the Sub-Saharan countries through prestigious receptions of leaders in the monarchs palaces and official visits in their countries is as explained by Morgenthau a power tool to defend against the threat of Algeria and Polisario. It is used to show off Morocco's strong presence in the continent and increasing power. It is also a way to impress the African leaders by leaving a powerful impression through protocol and prestige which spices their cooperation and serves as an appetiser.

III. Political Islam

Religion has a remarkable presence in this foreign policy as a soft power tool. However, unlike what the constructivist would expect it is not in this case a source of motivation, beliefs or ideas but is employed as an institutional and political tool to have influence over others. It seeks to create an identity sense among the countries to facilitate Morocco's way to the hearts of the leaders and increase its opportunity incentives. Political Islam is closely interlinked with the Monarchy's power and legitimacy in its domestic politics stemming from the king's ALaouite dynasty descendency from the prophet Mohammed. This sacred link gives the king a sacred position as the *leader of the faithful*. African countries with majority Muslim populations have claimed ties to Moroccan sufi saints and orders and have over the history saw the king's link to the prophet as one of divinity. Sufi believers in the region have historically considered the country as a center of sufism and Islamic civilization in the region with Fez being a center for pilgrimage, which offers a good market to consume Morocco's religious product of the sacred.[41]

Components of political Islam as a soft power present in this foreign policy include religious cooperation and offers by Morocco to export its form of moderate Islam to the countries through education of their preachers and religious scholars in its institutions and creation of institutions. The distribution of Quran by the King and his Foundation for Holy Quran during his visits in Senegal and Madagaskar was part of this policy. [42] Moreover, building mosques under the title "Mohammed VI" in different countries such as Senegal, Nigeria and Guinea also contributed to the building of this Moroccan soft power in Sub-Saharan Africa. Signing an agreement between the Royal Moroccan airlines and the Tijani Brotherhood in Bamako with preferential rates to visit the city of Fez, which they consider sacred was also a significant move.[43] The religious and sacred entitlement of the king employed through his symbolic religious presence in the African countries, reinforces his effect on leaders and makes him a non-common one. This religious power empowers him further and creates a sense of community among the countries. Which increases his gains and support from the countries on the national priority matter of the Western

39 Thomas Keaney, Barry Rubin, Armed Forces in the Middle East: Politics and Strategy, **Frank Cass Publishers: Great Britain**, 2005. Pp. 41-67.

40 Ministry of Defense, "Royal Gibraltar Regiment trains with Moroccan Army", **Gov.uk**, 18 November, 2013.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/royal-gibraltar-regiment-trains-with-moroccan-army

41 Tadlaoui, p. 2

42 Said Temsamani, "Morocco's Religious Diplomacy in Africa: Well Timed Royal Initiative", **Eurasia Review**, 28 January, 2016.

http://www.eurasiareview.com/28112016-moroccos-religious-diplomacy-in-africa-well-timed-royal-initiative-oped/

43 Tadlaoui, p.2

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Sahara and effectively weakens the polisario and Algeria legitimacy and recognition claims on the territory.

Conclusion

This article sought to explore the objectives and motives behind Morocco's historical turn toward mother Africa. Given the economic character of the foreign policy, the study employed liberalism which offered the best theoretical candidate to explain the economically driven policy. The framework, indeed, offered a very fit and comprehensive explanation and model for the foreign policy ranging from domestic modernisation to what is beyond economic incentives such as the peace, security, socio-economic zones that tie the countries together and make them bound in multiple area superseding material gains and interests. However, digging deeper brings to the surface realist motives and proves the policy not to be void of realist aspects even if carried in a liberal way. The realist approach helps shed the light on Algeria's security dilemma, Moroccan defensive realism and balance of threat through geography, alliances and economic wealth which it transfers to a military power. The article also shed the light on the power politics and realism behind religion through employment of political Islam as a soft power tool which is against constructivism expectations about religion to be a source of ideas and beliefs. The study concludes that while liberalism to a large extent explains Moroccan foreign policy it misses an important realist explanation, necessitating the adoption of a realist approach to explain the Western Sahara puzzle. As the case in hand shows, separating liberal foreign policy and realist motives can be challenging. Given the strong, direct link between economy and military, one would highly question the separation between these theoretical perspectives and to the extent that liberalism can alone explain international politics while leaving out balance of power and relative gains. While the approach explains the foreign policy with the liberal partners it leaves out the reality and the system outside the borders of the liberal cooperation, usually limited to a group of countries and not all. It also provides a model for western superpowers and does not offer an approach for the developing countries that though have embarked in the road of modernization can still be stuck in lagging non-liberal practices. The model is not perfectly fit for Global South developing countries liberals and politics. Applied to a non-western context it gives a systematic, operational and superficial perspective and does not allow digging deeper than the cooperations as well as business agreements. This is not to negate that it is a valuable, accurate and comprehensive approach which flawlessly applies to the Moroccan case. But as the case infers, it is only through a combination of different variables and approaches from different models that a complete image of a Global South country with a religion aspect, a significant geopolitical position in a turbulent region with distinctive economic rise through liberalization and modernization can be achieved. As a result, research recommendations from this work can be to investigate further in the link between liberal cooperation and realist motives by focusing on the power politics enhanced by liberal cooperation outside the liberal zone borders. Considering the contexts of Global South countries and the hybridity between liberalism and non-liberalism, liberalism in the context of regional insecurity and the role of constructivist variables such as religion, What is the place of religion in a liberal foreign policy that is basically rational or a realist foreign policy driven by insecurity, defense or offense. Does religion serve liberal and realist interests, in this sense used as a rational tool, or does it drive liberal or realist foreign policies. Can it have a space in a liberal platform at all? Taking these questions into consideration along with the Global South contect can help prosper the theoretical cooperations to be more responsive and relative to reality contexts, which necessitate a sort of grand theory, or at least cooperation and flexibility instead of the elusive long walls and borders between theories, existing only in their world for myths of great debates that are void of purpose for policy making, reality understanding and conflict resolution.

Declaration of Interest Statement:
No Conflicts of Interest to declare.

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