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Morocco's regional integration in Africa: what gains for Moroccan trade and FDI?

L'intégration régionale du Maroc en Afrique : quels gains pour les échanges commerciaux et les IDE marocains ?

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Abstract:

The emergence of new regional powers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has led to the creation of new regional organizations. Some countries tend to consolidate their complex, informal, and multifaceted nature represented by the new regionalism of the post-Cold War era, while others opt for the emergence of a more competitive regionalism.Africa has continued to attract particular interest from Morocco in recent years. The motivations behind this new strategic vision can be appreciated from two essential points: commercial and sociopolitical. Indeed, the reorientation of Moroccan commercial interests and investments towards Africa, particularly Francophone West Africa, is mainly explained by the failure of the Arab Maghreb Union project, the maturity phase characterizing its commercial exchanges in Europe, the projected growth potential of West African economies, as well as their rapid demographic progression and consumer power.In this context, the objective of this article is, first, to present the main definitions of regional integration and to outline its potential gains through a review of traditional literature. Secondly, it will provide an assessment of the current state of regional integration of Morocco in Africa, discussing the cases of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), ultimately leading to an analysis of the impact of this regional integration on Moroccan commercial exchanges and foreign direct investment (FDI).

Keywords: regional integration, trade, FDI.
Classification JEL: F1, F2, F4
Paper type: theoretical Research

Résumé :

L’émergence de nouvelles puissances régionales en Asie, en Afrique et en Amérique latine a conduit à la création de nouvelles organisations régionales. Certains pays tendent à consolider leur caractère complexe, informel et multiforme représenté par le nouveau régionalisme de l'après-guerre froide, d'autres optent pour l'émergence d'un régionalisme plus compétitif. L’Afrique ne cesse de susciter l’intérêt particulier du Maroc ces dernières années. Les motivations de cette nouvelle vision stratégique peuvent être appréciées selon deux points essentiels : le commercial et le sociopolitique. En effet, la réorientation des intérêts commerciaux et des investissements marocains vers l’Afrique et notamment l'Afrique de l'Ouest francophones s’explique principalement par l’échec du projet de l’Union du Maghreb arabe, la phase de maturité qui caractérisent ses échanges commerciaux avec l’Europe, le potentiel de croissance projeté des économies ouest-africaines ainsi que par leur progression rapide en matière de démographie et leur pouvoir de consommation. Dans ce contexte, l’objectif du présent article est de présenter dans un premier temps, les principales définitions de l’intégration régionale ainsi que d’exposer ses gains potentiels à travers une revue de littérature traditionnelle. Et dans un second temps, il dressera un bilan sur l’état des lieux de l’intégration régionale du Maroc en Afrique en évoquant les cas de l’UMA, de l’UA, de la CEDEAO et de la ZLECAF, pour déboucher enfin vers une analyse de l’impact de cette intégration régionale sur les échanges commerciaux et les IDE marocains.

Mots clés : intégration régionale, les échanges commerciaux, les IDE
JEL Classification : F1, F2, F4.
Type du papier : article théorique.

1. Introduction

The proliferation of trade agreements has been remarkably successful since the 1980s. These agreements have gone beyond trade issues to address rules and public governance. Several factors contribute to this economic rapprochement between countries, including unfair competition, deregulation of international trade, and technological progress that reduces the geographical distance between countries.

The term regional integration has been used to address the grouping of countries into regional blocs. This concept was defined by the World Trade Organization as "any form of institutional arrangement aimed to liberalize or facilitate trade at a level other than multilateral." C. Deblock (2005) criticized this definition because it only considers the case of trade liberalization.

Regional integration takes various forms, but the classification confirmed in economic literature is that of B. Balassa (1962), who showed that regional integration involves five stages: a Free Trade Area, a Customs Union, a Common Market, an Economic Union, and finally, Total Economic Integration.

The theoretical development of regional integration, initiated by the works of (J. Viner, 1950; J. Meade, 1950; F. Perroux, 1958; B. Balassa, 1961; etc.) has encouraged countries to engage in this process for several reasons, including the reduction of costs related to intra-regional trade and the increase in trade volume, the creation of economies of scale in terms of regional production, and the improvement of social well-being.

"Regional integration is therefore a means of achieving effective industrialization with a spillover effect on neighboring countries and beneficial effects for these countries" (African Development Bank, 2000, p.6).

The trend of developing regional economic groupings has been initiated for several years by European countries to strengthen their presence in the global economy. Following the same example, African countries are also faced with the challenge of creating economic and monetary blocs, motivated by the reduction of the degree of marginalization of these countries as well as the promotion of socio-economic and institutional development. However, several experiences of African integration have not been successful or have not met expectations for two main reasons. The first is that this integration goes beyond the economic or commercial framework, while the second is that this grouping expresses a desire to break with the colonial past. Its primary objective was the construction of economically viable and politically solidaristic geographic entities (N. Bourenane, 2004).

The reorientation of Moroccan foreign policy towards Africa is mainly explained by the integration and development issues within the UMA, the slowdown of its commercial exchanges in Europe, and the projected growth potential of African economies, particularly in West Africa. Morocco's strategic choice to integrate into African regional blocs has been justified by the potential represented by this continent in terms of productivity and regional competitiveness (Fofack, 2018, 2020; IMF, 2019). The expected productivity gains and higher returns on investment will strengthen investor confidence and growth prospects in the region.

This work aims to shed light on the different experiences of Morocco's regional integration in Africa and its effects on commercial exchanges and Moroccan FDI, drawing on both literature and empirical studies conducted by national institutions, notably the Office des Changes. To achieve this, the article will be divided into 3 parts. Firstly, we will begin with a section dedicated to the literature review related to regional integration and its potential gains according to theory. Secondly, we will present an overview of the different experiences of Morocco's regional integration in Africa. While in the last part, we will analyze the impact of this regional integration on Moroccan trade and FDI.

2. Literature review on the concept of regional integration:

Regional integration is a complex and multidimensional process aimed at increasing cooperation and economic exchanges among countries in the same region. This process can take various forms, ranging from simple reduction of trade barriers to the creation of a complete economic and monetary union.

The literature on regional integration is vast and diverse. It covers a wide range of topics, such as the motivations of countries to integrate, the different forms of regional integration, the economic and political effects of integration, the challenges and obstacles to integration, and the future prospects for regional integration. Balassa (1978) noted that it is a phenomenon of an economic nature with political components. According to Viner, customs unions are primarily non-economic institutions.

Fritz Machlup (1976, p.14) observes three factors in the integration process: regional division of labor, mobility of goods and/or factors, and preferential treatment given to goods and factors of member countries in the zone. Alexander Grlickov (1969) considers the integration process as a complex social phenomenon of dialectical nature, where the economic content should reflect the political significance that underlies this process. For him, any political or economic alliance represents two inseparable elements - economic and political - of the same development process. Gunnar Myrdal (1957) and Charles Kindleberger (1959) define integration as the creation of economic links between nations as well as between individual units within a national economy. Balassa emphasizes that "if the initial motivations are economic, the need for political unity may appear at a later stage" (1962, p.7). There are different forms of regional integration, distinguished by the degree of cooperation and interdependence among member countries. The most common forms of regional integration are as follows:

- Free Trade Area (FTA): An FTA is a group of countries that have eliminated tariff and non-tariff barriers on mutual trade in goods.
- Customs union: A customs union is a free trade area in which member countries apply a common external tariff to imports from third countries.
- Common market: A common market is a customs union in which member countries allow the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.
- Economic and monetary union: An economic and monetary union is a common market in which member countries share a common currency.

3. Gains from regional integration according to theory

Regional integration offers numerous potential benefits for member countries, including:

- Increased trade and exports: The elimination of customs duties and other trade restrictions within a regional bloc stimulates trade between member countries, facilitating access to new markets and increasing exports. From a theoretical standpoint, regional integration plays a crucial role in improving trade among member countries. The majority of studies have demonstrated that regional integration generates gains for member countries, notably Balassa (1965), De Melo et al. (1993), Krugman (1991), and Hugon (2001). However, this analysis does not have unanimous support among theorists, as Viner (1950), based on his theory of the effects of creation and diversion of trade, demonstrates for the first time that customs unions are beneficial for intra-regional trade only under certain conditions, notably when the price practiced by the member countries of the union is lower than the price practiced by the rest of the world and when one of the partner countries is a producer of the same goods as third countries.

- The increase in market size: Linder (1966) shows that integration increases market size and helps reduce costs through economies of scale. An integrated regional market offers a larger

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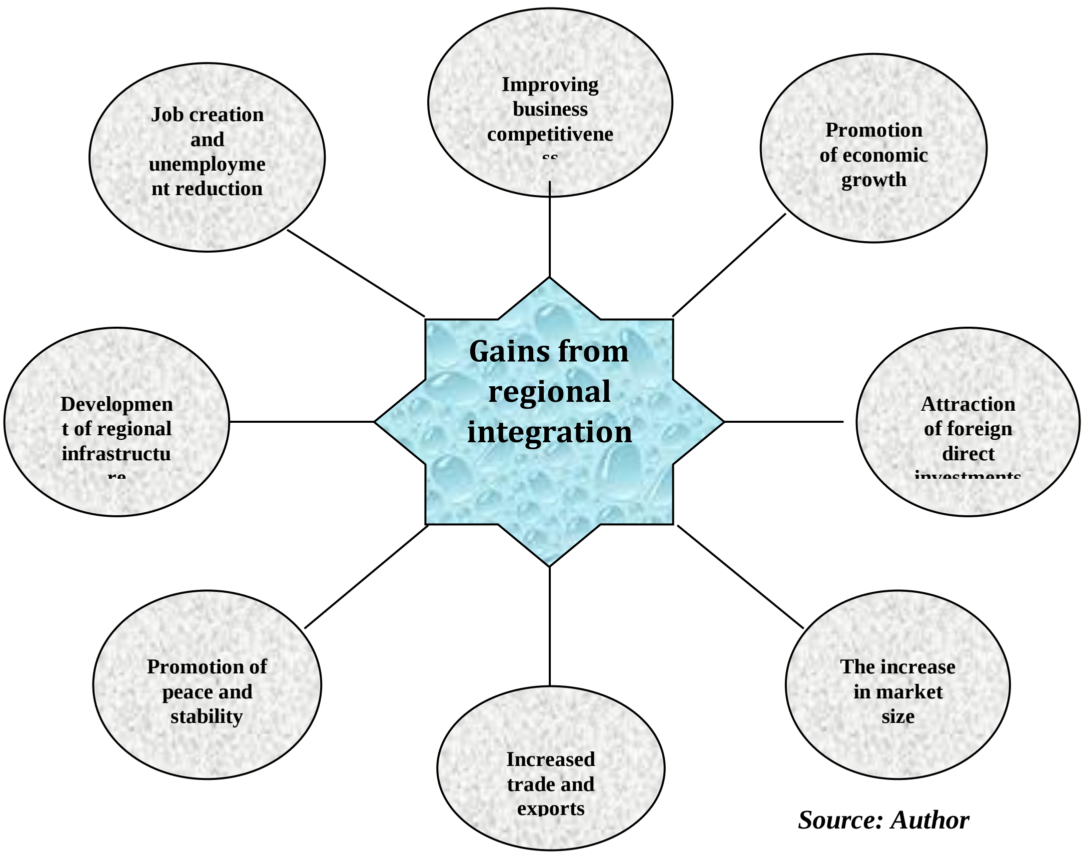
market to companies, allowing them to achieve economies of scale, reduce production costs, and improve their competitiveness.

- Attraction of foreign direct investments (FDI): Sakamoto (1969) found that integration contributes to increased investments. An integrated regional market offers a more stable and predictable investment environment, attracting more foreign investors.
- Promotion of economic growth: Sakamoto (1969) also concluded that integration leads to stronger and sustainable economic growth through the stimulation of production and consumption.
- Improving business competitiveness: Increased exposure to competition in a regional market drives companies to enhance their efficiency, innovation, and production quality. According to Hosny (2013, p.143), "most developing countries consider economic integration as a tool to increase competitiveness."
- Job creation and unemployment reduction: Stronger economic growth results in job creation and a reduction in unemployment, improving the well-being of the population. Sakamoto (1969) has shown that the benefits of integration on employment are even more evident.
- Development of regional infrastructure: Regional cooperation encourages the establishment of common infrastructure, such as roads, ports, and communication networks, improving connectivity among neighboring countries and facilitating trade. Balassa believes that transportation costs between two neighboring developing countries can actually be higher than those between two distant developed countries.
- Promotion of peace and stability: Regional integration can contribute to strengthening political and security cooperation among member countries, promoting peace and stability in the region. Vicard (2012) found that deep economic integration between countries significantly reduces the probability of conflict.

- **Research model :**

From the above, we can deduce the following model

Figure 1: Research model



Source: Author

4. Assessment of Morocco's regional integration in Africa

Morocco has actively engaged in the process of regional integration in Africa in recent years by participating in various regional agreements and initiatives. This process has allowed the country to make significant progress, but also to face certain challenges.

4.1. Failure of the Arab Maghreb Union project

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was established in Marrakech on February 17, 1989, as a historic agreement between the heads of state of Morocco, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Mauritania. Its ambition is to promote political and economic unity among the countries of the Maghreb, whose total population is around 102 million. Its main objective is to create a force that can negotiate with the European Union.

The intangible cultural heritage of the Maghreb countries is rooted in a long history, influenced by a wide range of different cultures. These countries share archaeological remains, spoken languages (Berber and Arabic Maghreb), culinary art, oral literature, as well as music and dance styles. This led to the idea of coming together within the framework of a larger regional project. However, the AMU project has remained inoperative since 1994 for several reasons. These reasons revolve around differences in the conception of the state, in the type of regimes and political systems adopted, in forms of government, and in the economic models implemented, thus representing a barrier to the promotion of forms of cooperation leading to further intra-Maghreb integration. Also, the Western Sahara conflict is considered one of the main causes of the interruption of the AMU integration process and a manifestation of the failure of the integration process.

In 2007, Morocco proposed a solution for the autonomy of the territory while retaining powers in areas such as defense, foreign relations, and the constitutional and religious attributions of the King. This initiative was deemed "serious and credible" by the United Nations Security Council. However, Algeria deemed Morocco's autonomy plan as unacceptable.

The structural weakness of the AMU is also due to certain economic variables that have generated a low level of trade relations among its members. After gaining independence, the Maghreb governments decided to implement development policies based on import substitution industrialization, agricultural reform, and the accumulation of foreign capital. Within this model, the Maghreb economies, heavily dependent on exports of primary products to the European Union, began to take off autonomously. The effort in industrial development produced significant results, especially considering the extremely low starting point. However, Maghreb's industrialization failed to surpass the level of natural resource transformation, as it was only in the 1990s that the emergence of an export-oriented manufacturing industry, mainly in textiles, was emphasized. On one hand, this industrial system developed without coordination with the rest of the economy, characterized by a high level of technological dependence and absorption of enormous financial resources. On the other hand, the concentration of resources in the industrial sector led to the failure of agricultural reforms. This situation was accompanied by the limitation of agricultural land, population growth, and the intensity of rural exodus, all factors that led to a significant deterioration of the agricultural balance.

As a result, the implementation of the development model has not led to horizontal economic cooperation and intra-Maghreb trade has remained at very low levels. This is mainly due to the small size of local markets and the weakness of national economies, which are unattractive for foreign investments

4.2. Morocco's return to the African Union

The African Union (AU) was established in 2002 after the adoption of the Constitutive Act in 2001 to replace the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was established in 1963 to combat apartheid in Southern Africa and help countries still under colonial domination to achieve their independence. Among the ambitious objectives of the AU are peace and security, trade liberalization, food security, sustainable use of natural resources and energy, climate change, and migration.

After decades of absence and the use of the empty chair policy within the main African institution, the African Union (AU), known until July 2002 as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), for political reasons related to the Moroccan Sahara, King Mohammed VI changed Morocco's diplomatic vision and submitted a formal request in September 2016 to join the AU. Aware of the significant role that the African Union could play in the process of resolving the conflict in the Moroccan Sahara, Morocco has opted for a change in policy by choosing to defend its claim over the Sahara and to break the unwavering support of many African leaders of the Polisario. This new direction was considered by Morocco due to its belief that it could be more effective to act within the AU, especially since many African leaders have repeatedly invited the kingdom to move forward by joining the organization to better defend its national cause.

On January 31, 2017, Morocco became the 55th member of the African Union (AU), but this was not an easy task as expected. Our country's return to the African Union represents the culmination of a year of long and fervent diplomatic battles due to the resistance of Algeria and South Africa on this issue. While the accession of South Sudan was accepted within three weeks of its submission to the AU, Morocco, which was one of the main founders of the OAU in 1963, had to wait nearly four months before regaining its seat within the AU.

4.3. Blocking of Morocco's accession to ECOWAS

ECOWAS is one of the largest regional trade groups in Africa, established in 1975 and comprising Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. ECOWAS represents a quarter of sub-Saharan Africa's GDP. Nigeria alone contributes 77.3% to the GDP of ECOWAS, making it the most powerful economy in the region. In terms of its weight in global trade, it represents less than 1% of international trade, a share that remains extremely low. Nigeria records a trade surplus mainly due to oil exports, while other countries experience a structural trade deficit.

Since 2013, Morocco has expressed its desire to more significantly integrate into the Economic Community of West African States, notably through the royal appeal made by His Majesty at the 42nd summit of ECOWAS heads of state in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast. Indeed, the sovereign emphasized the kingdom's willingness to expand its status from a mere observer to new perspectives, allowing it to play a decisive role in political, economic, sociocultural, and strategic matters. Morocco has officially submitted an application for membership in ECOWAS. Our country assumed that the process of joining ECOWAS would proceed smoothly given the friendly relations it has with member countries, pre-existing ties in terms of investment and trade, and particularly bilateral relations with countries such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Mali. The reality is that the kingdom has not yet been officially recognized as a member of ECOWAS, although a "principle agreement" for membership was granted at the Monrovia summit on June 4, 2017. The blocking of Morocco's accession to ECOWAS is an undeniable fact, and this situation should prompt us to reflect at length not only on the reasons affecting our candidacy, ranging from geopolitics to sociopolitics and the active lobbying of local economic actors in West Africa, but also on the legal accommodations to be made to the Lagos Treaty and the structural deficiencies of trade in West and Northwest Africa.

4.4. Signature of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement

The AfCFTA is a project of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Its purpose is to integrate fifty-five African states. This agreement was adopted by fifty-four African leaders in March

2018 and has garnered significant attention in academic and political circles as well as within the international community. The growing interest in the AfCFTA partly reflects the fact that the African continent is boldly opposing a global trend towards greater protectionism (Gunnella and Quaglietti, 2019; Fajgelbaum et al., 2020). This project also represents a break from the past on a continent where market fragmentation has historically been seen as a major constraint to economic growth and development (Collier and Venables, 2008; Fofack, 2018; IMF, 2019) and offers the opportunity to accelerate the transformation of African economies and strengthen their integration into the global economy.
The new African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) marks a significant change in the international legal order. African continental integration is not a new proposal, as the legal basis for a pan-African trade pact has been established since the Abuja Treaty of 1991, establishing the African Economic Community and the Constitutive Act of the African Union in 2000, based on the Organization of African Unity (OAU).
Morocco has contributed to the development of an African development model through a strategy of regional cooperation with African countries for nearly two decades. Efforts have been made on the continent in various areas, including the economy, finance, investment, and telecommunications. The kingdom also stands out as a major player in sharing successful experiences, given its consolidated position on the continent through the signing of numerous cooperation agreements in various fields and the strengthening of commercial exchanges. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, signed by Morocco on March 21, 2018, aims to progressively eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, cooperation in investment, customs, trade facilitation measures, and the establishment of a common legal and institutional framework. Most studies on the impact of the AfCFTA have focused on the evolution of intra-African trade and the GDP of member states, which is expected to increase by 1 to 3%. However, not all countries will be immediate winners, hence the need to provide compensation mechanisms for the losers. In this context, Morocco is among the short and long-term winners. These gains vary from one study to another depending on the degree of openness of a given economy and the level of diversification of an exportable offer.

5. Current status of trade and FDI between Morocco and Africa

5.1. Trade between Morocco and Africa.

Over the past decade, Morocco has shown commitment and effectiveness in consolidating its relations with the African continent. Its power lies in the economic and social sectors, as clearly indicated by the African Development Bank, with 85% of Morocco's foreign direct investments made in Africa.
Starting from 2013, King Mohamed VI has strengthened this economic, cultural, social, and religious collaboration and commitment to the African continent by making several personal official visits to over thirty-five sub-Saharan African countries. This initiative has led to the establishment of over 500 bilateral agreements in the fields of trade, investment promotion, infrastructure, transportation, and human development-related projects.
Trade between Morocco and the rest of Africa has been steadily increasing over the years, recording an average annual growth of 6.1% from 2009 to 2019, according to the Office of Changes. The share of this trade in relation to the overall volume of the Kingdom's trade stood at 5.1% in 2019. During this period, these trade relations have been marked by a structural change starting from 2015. Indeed, from that year onwards, Morocco's trade balance became surplus.
This trade surplus is due to a greater increase in exports compared to imports. Indeed, the sales of goods destined for Africa almost tripled during the last ten years, from 8.3 billion DH in

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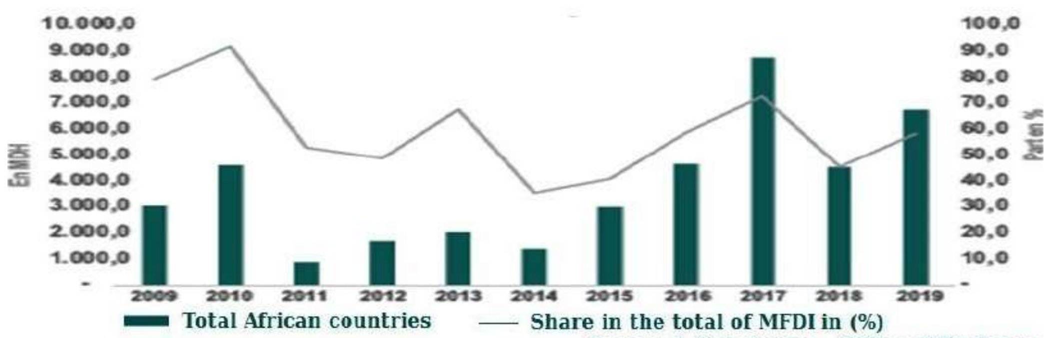
2009 to 21.6 billion DH in 2019. Imports, on the other hand, amounted to 17.9 billion DH in 2019 compared to 13.7 billion DH in 2009, representing an increase of 4.2 billion DH.
The trade balance of these exchanges shows a surplus in favor of Morocco, amounting to +3.7 billion DH in 2019, compared to a deficit of 5.5 billion DH in 2009. During the same period, the coverage rate improved by 60.6 points, rising from 60.2% in 2009 to 120.8% in 2019. This rate reached its highest level in 2017 at 145.6%.

5.2. Moroccan Direct Investments in Africa

Similar to trade exchanges, financial exchanges between Morocco and the rest of the African continent have experienced a new dynamic over the past decade.
During the period from 2009 to 2019, Moroccan direct investments in Africa increased from 3 billion DH in 2009 to 6.8 billion DH in 2019, showing an average annual growth rate of 8.3%. These investments reached their highest level during this period in 2017, at a value of 8.8 billion DH. The share of Moroccan direct investments in Africa in the total of Moroccan direct investments abroad stood at 58.7% in 2019, with an average share of 59.5% during the period 2009-2019.

Evolution of Moroccan Direct Investments in Africa



Source & Calculation : Office of Exchange
2019 Provisional figures

In 2019, Moroccan investments in Africa are present in 29 countries, compared to only 9 countries in 2009. Côte d'Ivoire ranks first with a share of 21.4% in 2019, followed by Chad with 19.8%, and then Senegal with a share of 14.7%. These three countries alone represent 55.9% of the total Moroccan direct investments in Africa in 2019.
Egypt considered as the recipient of a record amount of these investments in 2017, ranks 7th in 2019 (3.7% of the total FDI in Africa in 2019 compared to 61.1% in 2017).
By sector, Moroccan FDI in Africa covers a significant number of sectors (more than 13 sectors in 2019 compared to only 7 sectors in 2009).
The banking sector ranks first with a share of 39.4% in 2019 (almost stable compared to 2009: 36.3%). The telecommunications sector comes in second with a share of 21.1% (a decrease from 2009 with a share of 59.9%). In third place is the industry sector with a share of 13.5% (an increase from 2009 with a share of only 2.6%). These three sectors account for 74.1% of the total FDI to Africa in 2019.

Table n°1: Distribution by sector of activity of direct investments destined for Africa

Secteur	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*	2019**
Banks	1 106,6	1 494,4	595,6	1 300,5	1 373,7	353,2	1 323,7	1 160,6	6 415,0	939,2	2 669,2
Holding	5,7	883,8	-	-	9,5	13,2	620,5	57,3	88,7	56,3	35,7
Real Estate	-	-	-	129,8	189,4	353,6	270,0	181,0	284,6	99,9	13,4
Trade	7,5	172,5	3,3	19,6	10,9	266,0	239,6	12,9	101,9	81,3	839,4
Industry	77,9	70,2	123,9	53,7	137,8	153,2	80,3	2 464,0	574,3	900,4	916,2
Energy & mining	-	-	-	-	8,8	-	27,3	7,8	40,2	418,5	107,9
Insurance	-	-	-	73,5	191,9	91,7	20,2	175,8	498,4	184,2	512,7
Telecom	1 823,3	1 963,8	149,1	108,4	84,8	21,0	5,4	360,4	683,5	1 759,1	1 427,4
Tourisme	-	-	-	-	-	15,7	0,9	12,0	9,9	6,6	0,9
Transport	-	-	0,3	1,4	1,0	1,0	0,8	0,4	1,9	5,9	61,5
Major works	21,3	-	1,2	7,0	6,7	30,3	0,6	3,2	28,2	39,3	73,9
Studies	-	-	-	-	-	0,1	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,1	2,7	2,5	-
Other services	3,9	40,2	38,9	32,8	35,0	104,1	440,4	215,0	15,0	34,3	110,6
Diverse	-	-	-	-	0,2	9,4	0,6	4,7	9,4	3,6	0,4
Total	**3 046,2**	**4 624,9**	**912,3**	**1 727,0**	**2 050,0**	**1 413,0**	**3 030,0**	**4 668,0**	**8 754,0**	**4 531,0**	**6 769,0**

**** Updated figures ; ** Provisional figures***

Source & calculation: Office of exchanges

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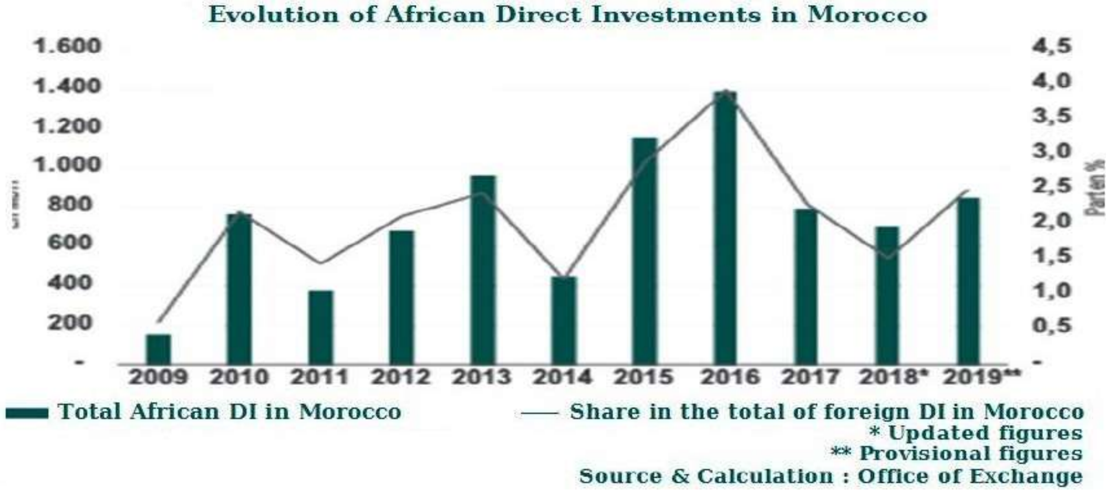
5.3. Foreign Direct Investment from Africa

Foreign direct investment from Africa represents 2.5% of total FDI inflows in 2019.



These investments reached 846.6 MDH in 2019, compared to only 151 MDH in 2009, representing an average annual growth rate of 18.8%. During this period, these investments reached their highest level in 2016, with a value of 1.4 billion Dirham.
Distributed by country, FDI from Mauritius has held the top position for the fourth consecutive year, reaching 619.3 MDH in 2019. Their share of African FDI in Morocco is thus 73.2%.
The distribution of African investments in Morocco by sector is characterized by the diversity of target sectors for these investments. In 2019, the Energy and Mining sector occupies the first place (219.3 MDH), followed by the Holding sector (158.5 MDH) and the Real Estate sector (150.1 MDH). The share of these three sectors amounts to 62.4% of the total African FDI in Morocco.

6. Conclusion

Despite these commendable efforts and positive results, the benefits of these partnerships have not yet fully achieved all the intended objectives and remain evidently below the opportunities offered by regional integration in terms of economic development and the aspirations of the populations. The level of trade between Morocco and African countries, accounting for no more than 4% of our total trade, does not reflect the true potential and complementarities that could be established. The regional value chains with African partners also remain limited and depend almost exclusively on foreign sectors, depriving African economies of locally generated job opportunities, added value, and technology transfers. Overall, regional integration remains a challenge in Africa, requiring ongoing efforts to harmonize trade and economic policies and to establish dynamic and sustainable integration strategies.
At the national level, Morocco's ambition for regional integration in Africa requires the development of a dedicated integrated strategy supported by appropriate tools to strengthen the effects of initiatives developed by Morocco to accelerate its regional integration. This is accentuated by the absence of strategic planning with other countries to conduct joint programs in the fields of education, transportation, energy, industry, health, tourism, and culture. Other structural constraints also limit the prospects of this integration. They are related to the continent's low level of industrialization, low value-added creation, and generally insufficient infrastructure oriented toward the needs of non-African markets.
To meet the challenge of Morocco's regional integration in Africa, it is necessary to promote a mutually beneficial partnership in terms of economic development, solidarity consolidation, knowledge sharing, and improvement of the well-being of the population. The achievement of

this ambition requires the implementation of integrated regional policies articulated with sectoral strategies developed by Morocco. The success of this approach relies on a synergy of partnerships, close coordination in the intervention of various public and private actors, as well as the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for financing, transportation infrastructure, and strengthening human capacities while ensuring the consolidation of the role of economic diplomacy.

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