

The emergence of temporary and circular labor migration: a focus on the Moroccan experience

Émergence de la migration temporaire et circulaire de main d'œuvre : un focus sur l'expérience Marocaine

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Abstract:

In a world characterised by increasing economic openness and rapid technological progress, transnational mobility has become easier and cheaper. Recognising the benefits of the free global movement of people, policymakers are focusing on creating dynamic transnational mobility to benefit from regular immigration, while mitigating the challenges of long-term integration and reducing the risks of illegal migration.

The selective migration policies adopted by many host countries aim to attract highly-skilled migrants to strengthen their human capital, while encouraging the skilled diaspora to return to their countries of origin to boost economic development. In this context, Temporary and Circular Migration (TCM) is emerging as a model of human mobility that benefits countries of origin, host countries and the migrants themselves.

This article explores the importance of TCM as a new model of human mobility, examines the impact of migration policies on future migration trajectories, and analyses the experience of Morocco in this area. By focusing on these aspects through a narrative literature review, our work aims to better understand this new migration paradigm and its role in the current global context.

Keywords: Migration, Temporary, circular, economy, Governance.

Classification JEL: J F22, J61, O15

Paper type: Theoretical Research

Résumé :

Dans un monde caractérisé par une ouverture économique croissante et des progrès technologiques rapides, les déplacements transnationaux sont devenus plus faciles et moins coûteux. Reconnaisant les avantages du libre mouvement des personnes à l'échelle mondiale, les décideurs politiques se concentrent sur la création d'une mobilité transnationale dynamique pour bénéficier de l'immigration régulière, tout en atténuant les défis de l'intégration à long terme et en réduisant les risques de migration illégale.

Les politiques migratoires sélectives adoptées par de nombreux pays d'accueil visent à attirer les migrants hautement qualifiés pour renforcer leur capital humain, tout en encourageant la diaspora qualifiée à revenir dans leur pays d'origine pour stimuler le développement économique. Dans ce contexte, la Migration Temporaire et Circulaire (MTC) émerge comme un modèle de mobilité humaine bénéfique pour les pays d'origine, les pays d'accueil et les migrants eux-mêmes.

Cet article explore l'importance de la MTC en tant que nouveau modèle de mobilité humaine, examine l'impact des politiques migratoires sur les trajectoires futures de migration, et analyse l'expérience du Maroc en la matière. En mettant l'accent sur ces aspects, grâce à une revue de littérature narrative, notre travail vise à mieux comprendre ce nouveau paradigme migratoire et son rôle dans le contexte mondial actuel.

Mots clés : Migration, temporaire, circulaire, économie, gouvernance.

JEL Classification : F22, J61, O15

Type du papier : Recherche Théorique

1. Introduction

International migration a century ago is very different from what it is today. In the past, migration was one-way and consisted of large flows of migrants, such as Africans to Europe or Europeans to North America. Basically, migration at that time consisted of permanent and non-return mobility to the country of destination (Gmelch, 1980). Today, international migration is no longer an irreversible one-way human mobility, but rather a two-way movement between the countries of origin and the countries of destination, which is characterized by a significant return of migrants to their countries of origin (Poot and al., 2008).

In this new era of international economic openness and technological progress, opportunities for transnational travel are increasing, thanks to communication and human mobility that have become easier and cheaper. Aware of the advantages of free movement of persons in the world, which adds to the benefits of trade and financial flows, the political sphere has focused more on the added value of creating a more dynamic, transnational, effective and rapid circularity that is part of a framework of bilateral or multilateral cooperation to benefit from orderly and regular immigration, while minimising the challenges of long-term integration of immigrants in destination countries and limiting the dangers of illegal migration (McCann and al., 2010; Newland, 2009).

Social and economic phenomena, such as ageing and declining populations, skills shortages and the growth of knowledge-based economies, have prompted several host countries to adopt selective migration policies that facilitate the circulation of highly-skilled migrants, and through which they welcome the most talented profiles from around the world in order to improve their human capital resources (Bailey, 2016). Meanwhile, sending countries are developing their own migration policies to encourage their highly qualified diaspora to return to their homelands, to take advantage of this internationally-placed human capital and to boost the economic development of their home countries (Duncan, 2012, Black and King, 2004). Whereas for low-skilled profiles, although labour is also in demand in industrialised economies, governments view their mobility less favourably (Pritchett, 2006). As a result, low-skilled migrants are less likely to move despite the important role they play in reducing labour shortages in seasonal work, especially in the primary sector (Gibson and McKenzie, 2014).

In this regard, in order to cope with the above-mentioned perpetual changes at the host country level, Temporary and Circular Migration (TCM) emerges as a relatively new “triple-win” circulation model, benefiting countries of origin, host countries and the migrants themselves.

Through this article, we seek to answer the following questions: What is the importance of TCM as a new model of human mobility? And, what is the experience of Morocco in this area? Our work aims to understand this new model of movement and the role it plays in the current global context, to demonstrate how migration policies can influence future migration trajectories and finally to give an insight into Morocco’s experience in terms of TCM. To this end, we offer a synthesis of a narrative literature review that analyses the growing importance of TCM as a new model of human mobility. It also explores the impact of migration policies on future migration pathways, focusing particularly on the Moroccan experience. Through this methodical approach, our study aspires a better understanding of this new migration paradigm and its evolving role in the contemporary world landscape.

Our article is divided into three sections: the first consists of an overview of the theoretical literature of the TCM, while the second attempts to clarify how this type of migration is governed in the light of some practices in certain countries that have adopted this model of mobility, and finally the third section highlights the experience of Morocco in this regard.

2. Overview of theoretical literature

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) defines immigration as: “From the

perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one's country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence" (IOM, 2019). Immigration is, therefore, the act of leaving the country of origin and, or of birth, to enter temporarily or permanently, a foreign country of which one is not a national. The term applies to persons who have been granted permanent residence by the authorities, i.e. who have a legal status.

Massey (1990) expresses and synthesises the "world-system" theory as follows: "International migration, thus, appears as a natural consequence of disruptions and upheavals, this inevitably occurs in the process of capitalist development." Here, we identify the notions of "displacement", the change of country and the notion of "long-term" that will be interesting for our subject. The latter notion is absent from the Temporary and Circular Migration (TCM) concept.

The current political debate on TCM is disturbed by a lack of conceptual clarity. There is no standard definition, and it varies considerably depending on its academic, legal or political dimension. Researchers often adopt a broader and more generic definition, describing and analysing the current phenomenon. Many of them are also making a critical assessment of recent political developments. Legal instruments record and formally express the rights and obligations that can be legally imposed. International organisations relating to migrant workers, such as ILO, IOM or other United Nations (UN) organisations, refer to migrants without distinguishing between types of migration, or use the terms "temporary migration", without referring to "circular migration". In fact, the TCM does not refer to any category of migrants having, for example, a specific legal status.

The European Commission (EC) promotes TCM as a policy tool to achieve specific objectives, as stated in the Commission's communication on circular migration and mobility partnerships between the European Union (EU) and third countries (EU Council, 2007).

It is well known that one of the main reasons for migration is income (Martin et Taylor, 1996; De Haas, 2007). Neoclassical theories not only focus in their analysis on the difference in wages or employment conditions between countries, but they add a key factor to it, which is migration costs (Todaro, 1969; Todaro & Maruszko, 1987). The migration cost concept is driven by differences in wages and employment opportunities between regions or countries. Individuals make rational decisions to migrate based on a cost-benefit analysis, where they weigh the potential earnings in the destination country against the costs of migrating, which include transportation costs, the cost of acquiring information, the psychological cost of leaving home, and the risk of uncertainty in the new location (Massey et al., 1993). Neoclassical theories of migration consider the economic variable as the main cause of migration. They are divided into two theories: macroeconomic and microeconomic.

At the macroeconomic level, it is the difference in wages that leads to the choice to emigrate, so the theory states that the difference of wages between countries leads to human movements from a low-wage country to another with high wages. Hence, individuals choose to immigrate to maximise their income. This difference creates two types of flows, the first being the movement of labour, and the second being capital flows.

At the microeconomic level, neoclassical economics proposes a model of rational individual choice (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1969; Harris and Todaro, 1970). Rational individuals decide to emigrate following a positive cost-benefit calculation in favour of emigration, a potential migrant goes where his expected net returns are highest. As a result, the economic distance between the migrant's country of origin and the host country can be seen as a factor in whether, or not, the immigrant will integrate into the new economic environment.

The wage differential will lead to a movement of workers from low-wage countries to high-wage countries. This movement will therefore lead to a decrease in the supply of labour in the countries of origin, causing wages to rise. At the same time, in the host countries, the increase

in labour supply will lead to a fall in wages. This will lead to a new market balance, making it possible to absorb the flow of migrants and the new incoming workforce (Massey et al., 1998). The neoclassical theory in general focuses on the difference in wages between countries. This difference causes the shift of a labour force from a low-wage country to another high-wage country. These flows originate in poor (less developed), which are characterised by an abundance of low-skilled labour and a lack of capital (Sjaastad, 1962).

Basically, there are two types of TCM: First, there is “De Facto” temporary and circular migration, also known as “natural” or “spontaneous” TCM. Secondly, there is managed TCM, which acts as a political instrument (Cremona, 2008; Newland and al., 2008). This distinction largely reflects the difference between the academic perspective, particularly sociological and anthropological, alongside the political perspective on TCM mentioned above.

TCM includes both regular and irregular migration and occurs mainly due to the geographical proximity between places of origin and destination. Cassarino (2008) describes TCM as repetitive and fluid cross-border mobility. Wickramasekara (2011) questions the idea of some authors that TCM is the natural choice of many migrants, pointing to the lack of significant empirical evidence. Instead, it suggests that skilled workers, who often have the opportunity to emigrate with their families, may consider long-term migration. Similarly, university students may choose to stay in destination countries to acquire skills and experience, or even settle in a foreign country. On the other hand, low-skilled workers from developing countries may find themselves with no legal option other than to emigrate under temporary or circular migration programmes.

Wickramasekara (2011) argues: “Migration is always a difficult choice, and there is no reason to assume that migrants would prefer to leave and return repeatedly rather than staying and settling, or staying until they have been able to earn and save an amount that they consider sufficient to live comfortably in their home country before returning home definitively. Therefore, circulation is not necessarily an ideal that migrants pursue. Circular migration rarely allows family reunification due to immigration restrictions imposed by destination countries, and it is difficult to suggest that migrants naturally prefer to be without their families in host societies.”

In its above-mentioned communication (EU Council, 2007), the European Commission sets out its vision of the TCM. The latter is described as a form of managed migration designed to allow for two-way legal mobility between two countries. The Commission states that, if properly orchestrated, this form of migration could help to fill the European Union's labour shortage, while helping the countries of origin to maximise the benefits of emigration and mitigate its disadvantages, while reducing incentives for illegal immigration. The European Commission has focused on managed and legal mobility, identifying two forms of TCM that it considers relevant in the EU context.

On the one hand, there is the TCM for third-country nationals already established in the EU, which allows them to pursue an activity in their country of origin while retaining their residence in a Member State, without losing their legal status. On the other hand, it proposes a framework TCM for third-country nationals still residing in those countries, offering them the opportunity to come temporarily to the EU to work, study, train, etc., provided that these migrants return to their countries of origin and establish their residence and main activity there at the end of their stay in the EU.

It is therefore possible to distinguish the main motivations and factors of TCMs for migrants to temporarily leave their countries of origin and then return. First of all, there are economic opportunities: The search for better economic opportunities is a frequent reason for temporary migration. Migrants often seek higher salaries abroad in order to support their families and improve their standard of living. Secondly, seasonal work: Seasonal jobs, particularly in agriculture or tourism, often require a regular flow of temporary workers to meet seasonal needs

(Vadean and Piracha, 2009). These opportunities attract migrants seeking to make money during specific periods of the year. The best known and oldest is also education and training: International students decide to migrate temporarily to pursue higher education or to acquire specialised skills in another country. Some choose to return to their home countries after completing their studies, bringing with them a knowledge transfer. And finally, highly qualified work: Highly qualified professionals join the TCM to occupy specific positions in areas such as medicine, information technology, etc. Having acquired experience abroad, some are considering returning to their home countries to monitor their careers (Newland and al., 2008).

2.1. Temporary and Circular Migration Benefits

According to Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack (1972) and their macro-structural approach to immigration, they meet the needs of capital and employers. They made significant assumptions about the economic contribution of immigrants, particularly in Europe, highlighting the hierarchy in the job structure and the fact that immigrants often find themselves at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, reinforcing the gap within the labour class. Several research influenced by the Marxist perspective have emphasised the negative effects of immigration, an idea that has influenced further studies on migration and development (Lewis, 1986; Lipton, 1980; Almeida, 1973 and Reichert, 1981). The diversity of results is attributed to the complexity of the models' parameters and the short-term orientation of the analyses, whereas the benefits of immigration are often manifested in the medium and long-term.

In fact, immigration can have significant impact on the entire economic structure, including activity rates, the level of qualification of the population, the quantity and quality of human capital, and the organisation of production (Carter and Sutch, 1998). A summary of the debate on the implications of immigration in developed countries concludes that the impacts are positive overall, in terms of growth, innovation and tax contributions (Goldin and al., 2011). Agunias and Newland (2007) argue that TCM has benefits for countries of destination, countries of origin and migrants themselves, thereby creating a win-win-win (or triple-win) situation. These programmes are seen as effective migration management tools, facilitating the mobility of people to destination countries. They can meet labour market needs, thus, stimulating economic growth. Furthermore, they are seen as a means of reducing illegal immigration by opening up legal opportunities through reintegration agreements (Agunias, 2006).

Policymakers in host countries, mainly developed nations with a rising political right, support these programmes, not only because they offer a legal alternative to illegal immigration and a constant supply of workers without the demands of long-term integration (Agunias, 2007), but also because the majority of the local population does not approve of permanent immigration and because policymakers do not want to lose their popularity.

Migrants are also seen as contributors to the development of their countries of origin. Sending countries promote TCM as they provide financial flows, encourage investment, increase the circulation of human capital and facilitate the transfer of skills and technologies (Agunias and Newland, 2007). TCM can also represent an alternative to mitigating the brain drain. Allocating quotas to countries of origin for legal migration should encourage them to cooperate with host countries in the fight against illegal migration.

The benefits of TCM programmes for migrants include new options for legal migration, increasing income and savings, improving skills and reducing the negative social impacts of traditional migration mainly due to temporary separation from their families (ILO, 2022).

While discussions and proposals for new MTC programmes do not neglect the negative consequences of previous programmes, advocates argue that these experiments should not hide the process' potential to achieve a triple win. They believe that innovative policy ideas can avoid mistakes of the past and generate sufficient benefits for all stakeholders.

2.2. Temporary and Circular Migration Costs

Although TCM can contribute positively to development in both sending and receiving countries, it also presents significant challenges for migrants as well as for the countries concerned. One of the main obstacles is the difficulty of quantifying this type of migration. Registration procedures in host countries are generally designed to track the movements of migrants who settle permanently, which makes capturing TCM flows complex and imprecise (Hugo, 2013). Censuses and administrative data are often inadequate to accurately measure the entrances and exits of these migrants, much less to classify them into different categories such as tourists, seasonal workers, business travellers, or international students (UNECE, 2016). The impact of TCM on the development of sending and receiving countries varies considerably depending on various factors. The socio-economic conditions in the country of origin, the circumstances of returning migrants (voluntary or forced) and the profile of migrants themselves (skilled or unskilled) play a crucial role in this dynamic (Tran and al., 2020). The return of circulating migrants is often hampered by obstacles such as high costs and difficult reintegration in the country of origin, which leads some to perceive return as an unattractive prospect.

Moreover, strengthened ties with the host country and weakened ties with the home country, may discourage migrants from returning to their countries of origin, thus, promoting temporary visits rather than permanent returns (Parthasarathi, 2006). Temporary migrant workers, especially those with a low level of education and experience, sometimes return with no savings, no reintegration plan and no new skills to apply in their countries of origin, hence, compromising the potential benefits of TCM.

Additionally, termination of contracts can lead to a situation of irregularity for temporary migrant workers, exposing them to the risk of arrest and deportation if they continue to work without authorisation in the informal sector (Wickramasekara, 2011). These challenges highlight the need for more appropriate migration policies and accompanying measures to maximise the benefits of temporary and circular migration while mitigating its potential adverse effects.

3. Governance of Temporary and Circular Migration

TCM represents a distinct and complex initiative. It encompasses fluid, repetitive, short- and medium-term mobility between countries with shared interests, often within a unified economic area. However, when examining the underlying philosophy of this type of migration, two distinct schools of thought emerge:

A school of supporters who perceive this type of migration as a new model for migration based on the establishment of mechanisms and migratory corridors that aim to fluidify the movement between the countries of origin and those of host, through bilateral or multilateral agreements. Through this TCM model, countries of origin and destination can both benefit from the transnational economic links forged by migrants who maintain a foothold in both territories (Tran and al., 2020). Developed countries in need of labour have seen a significant increase in temporary jobs in recent decades to fill shortages and meet labour market needs, such as Australia, the United States, Germany. Countries of origin also have their own priorities that the TCM enables them to achieve, such as gaining access to the labour markets of developed countries and benefiting from the resulting technical and financial transfers. This school of thought advocates the opening up of new routes to the TCM of the labour force, by opening up space for more free and productive dialogue between countries (Especially, TCM senders and receiver) and by further easing administrative procedures such as for the granting of visas where necessary (Skeldon, 2012).

The school of protagonists that believes TCM is just an atypical migration that promotes precarious work and the exploitation of low-skilled migrants and encourages brain drain among highly-skilled immigrants. According to this school, destination countries (often rich countries) take advantage of this type of migration to serve their priorities and meet the needs of their labour markets without incurring social and fiscal costs, they may also have the advantage of permanently retaining the most talented and brilliant profiles among these circular migrants (Duncan and al., 2020). However, these same countries often find themselves with large numbers of temporary migrants who remain and settle in their territories clandestinely, which drives host countries to converge efforts to prevent permanent settlement in their territory, requiring circular migrants to return hastily to their countries of origin without really bringing significant savings or skills, limiting the chances that the positive spillovers of this migration occurs (Wickramasekara, 2011).

This is the dilemma that TCM represents, between a vision that aims to be ambitious and beneficial to all stakeholders and a mobility that could quickly turn into a negative, irregular or even unethical circularity.

Nevertheless, TCM has been at the forefront of development agendas in recent years, particularly in developing countries, as a means of hoping to reduce brain drain. Through policies aimed at actively attracting or re-attracting migrants, governments at both ends of the migration process offer various incentives to migrants such as entry visas, tax benefits or educational and professional opportunities (Skeldon, 2012).

The TCM initiatives that have been successful so far are those based on flexible and adaptive rules. One of the strengths of TCM is that it relies on a fairly diverse panel of actors including governments, the private sector, civil society, the international community in addition to the migrants themselves as active agents who contribute greatly to their own mobility (UNECE, 2016). Bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements, free movement agreements, TCM programmes (Young Professionals), institutional arrangements, and other TCM corridors (i.g. intra-company transfers, students, seconded workers who are sent by their employers, etc.) are all examples of mechanisms that facilitate TCM (Jouant, 2008). These mechanisms make it possible to structure and regulate migratory flows while offering flexibility and adaptability to the changing needs of migrants and labour markets.

TCM programmes involve the temporary and/or repeated residence of migrant workers and require considerable financial and logistical resources, such as mechanisms and institutions for the selection, training and migrants return.

Agunias and Newland (2007) state that it is crucial to conceptualise TCM schemes to be implemented between sending and receiving countries according to three factors:

- 1) Make the TCM system effective, innovative and beneficial for both the country of origin and destination, as well as for the migrant. In other words, the TCM corridor must fall within a clear and specific agenda, focused on meeting a need for the host country, and developing a well-defined sphere for the country of origin (post-return). As was the case with the John E. Fogarty International Centre (FIC) of the National Institute of Health in the United States of America (USA), which aims to strengthen the capacity of institutions in low and middle-income countries to conduct HIV/AIDS-related research by training African researchers in the USA and continuing to collaborate with them after returning to their home countries. On the other hand, investing in infrastructures and institutions linked to the sphere to be developed maximises the benefits of these programmes.
- 2) Determine thoroughly the administrative procedures for TCM, in terms of eligibility and granting of visas, for example, opting for the use of short-term visas to dissuade migrants from switching to a longer or permanent stay, which will prevent their countries of origin from benefiting from new skills and know-how acquired during their migration, thus limiting the positive impact of TCM on the development of their economies.

3) Leverage implementations from other countries: Field experience has shown that TCM programmes targeting migrants from less developed countries for low-skilled jobs such as seasonal agricultural work, hospitality jobs, catering or construction sectors are theoretically beneficial to both sending and receiving countries, and even for the migrants themselves. However, the implementation of these programmes is rather difficult, as the incentives for emigration, and especially those for return, vary from one profile to another. Without a voluntary, spontaneous and well-planned return, the MTC turns into permanent and irregular migration with all these new statuses can generate for stakeholders. Temporary and circular mobility schemes are based on short-term contracts, mostly non-renewable contracts and generally do not give access to permanent status, which can increase frustration among migrants and lead them to remain in the host country illegally.

In order to make TCM corridors more successful in practice, each country is responsible for designating or creating a body responsible for organising and coordinating TCM initiatives, and overseeing issues relating to their nationals around the world and expatriates in their territories. Some countries have actually adopted bilateral and/or multilateral executive decrees and agreements in this regard (Costa and Martin, 2018). These bodies also have the role of strengthening the links between emigrants and their countries of origin and facilitating their reintegration once they have returned. In addition, international organisations - such as IOM and ILO- intervene to conceptualise and implement circular mobility schemes or support countries and migrants in the process of temporary and circular immigration and reintegration, although their interventions are generally limited and significantly costly.

Governments and international organisations are working together to make the return of migrants, whether temporary or permanent, to their countries of origin more attractive through a range of incentives. However, these incentives are mainly targeted at highly-skilled migrants. While for less-skilled migrant workers, the migration policies of some destination countries have made their integration in their territories rather complex, in order to preserve the temporary and circular nature of this type of migration (Agunias and Newland, 2007). Among the measures adopted in this regard are the following:

- Mandatory accommodation of migrant workers (assured by employers) outside the big cities and guaranteed daily transportation to the workplace make the integration of these migrants quite difficult (As in the case of the United Arab Emirates).
- Prohibition of marriage between foreign female domestic workers and Singaporean men. Otherwise, the foreigner is at risk of deportation (The case of Singapore).
- Savings accounts into which temporary migrant workers automatically pay part of their wages are required by the host company. These funds can only be used after returning to their countries of origin (Case of Taiwan, USA, UK, etc.)
- The severe penalties that are applied for any overdue stay, which can range from payment of fines, confiscation of deposits to imprisonment (Case of Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand), or even corporal punishment in extreme cases.

Employers, on the other hand, are not subject to sanctions and are rarely prosecuted if their temporary migrant employees decide to remain illegally in the host country. The most important incentives in this TCM circuit continue to be returns. To achieve this, the link between the migrants and their countries of origin should be strengthened and consolidated so that their return can be carried out in an amicable and well-prepared manner in advance.

4. Moroccan experience Temporary and Circular Migration

In the 1990s, Morocco took its first steps in the field of TCM. Two major initiatives were taken by the Moroccan authorities at that time. First, the TOKTEN programme (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals), launched in 1993 in Morocco, aimed to mobilise

Moroccan scientific expertise abroad to promote research and development in the country (Elmadmad, 2008). Unfortunately, despite its success elsewhere, as was the case in Turkey and China, the programme failed to achieve the desired objectives in Morocco, despite the establishment of a Moroccan skills directory and the creation of an industrial engineering research group.

Then, in 2004, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in collaboration with the delegate department responsible for Moroccan nationals abroad at the time, launched the FINCOME programme (International Forum of Moroccans Abroad Skills). The aim was to establish institutional links with Moroccan skills abroad, both in public and private sectors. The programme aimed to support research and development, promote the transfer of technology and know-how, as well as attract investment and business partnerships (Mghari, 2008).

These initiatives, although commendable in their intention, have encountered significant challenges in their implementation. Despite meetings and efforts deployed, the results remain below initial expectations. However, these early attempts have laid the foundation for continued reflection on how to leverage Moroccan skills abroad for the country's development.

4.1. Young Professionals Contract Agreement with France

Labour migration to France has taken two distinct forms: firstly, seasonal migration initiated in the 1960s. In 1963, a Franco-Moroccan agreement established Morocco as an official supplier of labour to France. The purpose of this agreement was to ensure the security of Moroccan emigrants in France by centralising applications for labour in France and forwarding them to the Moroccan Ministry of Labour (Filali Meknasi, 2019). This was followed by an innovative agreement, signed on 24 May 2001, between the French and Moroccan Governments regarding young professional exchanges. This agreement allows young people aged between 18 and 35 years to practice their profession for 3 to 18 months in partner countries, encouraging the temporary immigration of young foreign professionals to France. It also aims to promote the inter-company mobility of young professionals from both countries, giving them the opportunity to gain enriching international experience in various sectors of activity. On a operational level, the agreement is implemented in Morocco by the ANAPEC and in France by the “*Espace Emploi International*” (International Employment Space), with a quota of 300 contracts in place for Morocco (Van der Erf and Heering, 2002).

4.2. Labour Agreement with Italy

In November 2005, Morocco and Italy concluded a labour agreement aimed at regulating and organising the flow of workers between the two countries, in accordance with Italian legislation and the Italian three-year programming document on immigration policies. Article 7 of the Agreement stipulates that “the Italian Party will favourably consider the entry into Italy of Moroccan nationals for seasonal or non-seasonal employment” (Khachani, 2008). This agreement, which is unique in its indefinite duration, may be terminated by notification from either of the contracting parties.

The Italian government recently established new entry quotas for the three-years period, 2023-2025, thus reflecting the country's changing labour market needs. These quotas break down as follows: “136,000 entries for 2023, 151,000 for 2024 and 165,000 for 2025, illustrating the gradual growth expected to diversified needs of expanding sectors” (Webag_Redazione, 2024). A crucial aspect to be considered is seasonal work, which is vital for Italy due to its important agricultural and tourism industry. The government has therefore adopted the “Flow Decree”, an annual measure to regulate and facilitate the entry of non-EU workers for professional reasons, whether seasonal or not, as well as for starting up self-employment activities. These quotas are adjusted according to the requirements of the labour market and international relations (Cassa, 2019).

In 2023, particular attention was paid to the employment of seasonal workers, especially for fruit harvestings. The government approved legislation allowing the employment of an additional 40,000 additional non-EU seasonal workers in the agricultural and tourism sectors. The decree reserves 15,000 of these posts to employers' associations, giving priority to applications already submitted at the time of its publication (Webag_Redazione, 2024). Applications for these seasonal workers will be managed by local immigration offices. Seasonal workers in Italy come mainly from countries such as Romania, Morocco, India and Albania.

4.3. Labour agreements with Spain

In order to regulate labour flows in an orderly and coordinated manner, an agreement was concluded in 1999 between Morocco and Spain. Under this agreement, the Spanish authorities inform the Moroccan authorities of their labour needs, while the Moroccans will propose Moroccan workers wishing to go to Spain to respond to this need (Khachani, 2008).

Chapter IV of this agreement is specifically dedicated to seasonal workers. Under its terms, the authorities of both countries undertake to strengthen their cooperation in the field of monitoring labour legislation, in particular to prevent the exploitation of Moroccan workers in an irregular situation in Spain.

This agreement has been the basis for three other agreements for the recruitment of seasonal migrants. The first, signed on 8 December 2003, is the Framework Collaboration Agreement for the Accompanying and Selection of a Thousand Young People between the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC) and the VIPS Group. It enabled the recruitment of one thousand people between 2003 and 2008. The second agreement is the Framework Partnership Convention between ANAPEC and the Spanish Group VIPS (20 companies), aimed at the selection, recruiting and training 2,000 people over five years, from 2007 to 2011, i.e. an average of 400 people per year. The success of the previous agreement has made it possible to recruit a thousand people from Morocco (Khachani, 2008).

Finally, the Framework Partnership Convention between ANAPEC and the Municipality of Cartaya, which entered into effect in July 2006, was approved by the EU as part of the AENEAS-CARTAYA project, officially known as the "Integrated Management of Seasonal Immigration Programme". This convention aims to provide assistance to employers, professional associations and seasonal workers, as well as to process job offers in Huelva. It is concluded for a period of one year, renewable by tacit renewal. This labour exchange is largely organised by ANAPEC in Morocco, which facilitates the recruitment, training and administrative procedures for migrant workers.

This seasonal migration presents economic benefits for female migrant workers and both economies, but it also presents significant challenges. These women often face precarious working conditions, housing problems, language barriers and cultural integration difficulties. Moreover, this seasonal migration often involves prolonged family separation for those who leave their families behind in Morocco (Ibrouk and al., 2022).

Circular migration is beneficial for the participating women, but does not constitute a significant lever for local or family development. Although it may promote children's schooling and the creation of small businesses, most of the women lack the necessary skills. Moroccan stakeholders aspire to extend this practice to other regions and longer stays, while also calling for greater stability, as workers are not guaranteed to be recruited in each campaign. The family and social repercussions of maternal absence are discussed, but the exact effects remain unclear. Some children stay with relatives, but none of them can replace the mother's presence. Many husbands oppose the participation of their wives in seasonal work in Spain for cultural reasons, thus creating a major challenge for this experience. Moroccan villages, marked by tradition and patriarchy, often perceive the departure of women as a sign of marital failure or inappropriate behaviour, further complicating the dynamics of circular migration (Arab and al., 2021).

This circular migration programme between Morocco and Spain has enabled female migrant agricultural workers to gain financial independence. This is reflected in a significantly higher incomes than those earned in Morocco, enabling them to support the needs of their families, particularly those from disadvantaged rural areas (Ibrouk and al., 2022). In addition, the savings made at the end of their stay in Spain can improve their living conditions and those of their families when they return to Morocco. Some have even been able to invest in income-generating activities, whether in their area of expertise, such as agriculture, or not. Approximately 25% have changed profession, notably to trade or agriculture (Arab and al., 2021).

It is important to emphasise that the experience of circular migration increases the mobility of women workers at the national level, thereby strengthening their sense of social acceptance and their families' confidence in them. However, the impact of this migration on rural development in Morocco remains limited, and the skills acquired are not fully exploited, which does not support the development of the country of origin (Arab and al., 2021). ANAPEC, for its part, faces challenges in managing international placements.

Thus, the seasonal migration of female agricultural workers between Morocco and Spain, supervised by ANAPEC, remains a crucial aspect of bilateral relations. Although it offers economic opportunities, it also poses significant challenges in terms of working conditions, integration for migrant women and for host societies, and their post-return socio-economic reintegration.

Despite the many advantages that circular migration offers to Morocco, particularly in terms of regulating the labour market, generating foreign currency flows, promoting regional development and limiting the brain drain, there are still aspects that need to be improved to ensure that this type of migration is genuinely beneficial to all stakeholders. These include the need to improve accommodation conditions, strengthen language training programmes, raise migrants' awareness of their social rights and support them in managing their money, as well as establishing support programmes for return and reintegration, both to meet their needs and to capitalise on their expertise and know-how for the benefit of their communities of origin. In addition, the strengthening of employment services in Morocco, mainly the ANAPEC, is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of the labour agreements signed between the two countries (Ibrouk and al., 2022).

5. Conclusion

The TCM emerges as a response to short-term labour shortages, adapting to the changing needs of both sending and receiving countries. This development is partly due to difficulties encountered in integrating migrants into host societies and the increasing complexity of managing migratory flows for public policies. In this context, international organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) play a crucial role in promoting dialogue and proposing policies to better understand and address the challenges associated with temporary and circular migration.

However, it is essential for policymakers to recognise that, despite the many programmes and initiatives on TCM, there is no perfect model. It is therefore recommended to design flexible policies, tailored to the specificities of each country, by combining different proven approaches. In this context, it is crucial to understand that incentives for the return of migrants, highly skilled workers, may be limited by the socio-economic and political conditions of their countries of origin.

Therefore, incentives need to be designed in a concrete, feasible and flexible way, offering longer and more flexible employment contracts as well as the portability of social benefits such as pension and health insurance.

Furthermore, reliable data collection is essential for monitoring and evaluating circular migration movements. The governments of countries of origin and destination should cooperate to establish common databases to facilitate job search in the countries of origin prior to migrants return and to help employers identify skills required abroad.

Investments in the development of migrant skills are also essential in order to facilitate their successful reintegration into their countries of origin. This could include vocational training programmes and partnerships with the private sector to ensure that skills acquired abroad can be applied in a local context.

Although the TCM initiatives launched by Morocco from the 1990s onwards had ambitious development objectives, they encountered significant challenges and did not achieve the expected results. Morocco's efforts to regulate labour migration to France, Italy and Spain have helped to structure migration flows while offering economic opportunities. However, improvements are needed to maximise the benefits of these agreements and better support migrants and their communities of origin.

In conclusion, as we consider the implications of Temporary and Circular Migration (TCM) as a new model of human mobility, and reflect on Morocco's experiences in this domain, a key question arises: *what mechanisms should Morocco, in partnership with host countries, adopt to optimise the benefits of TCM while addressing the challenges it presents, to ensure sustainable development and mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties involved?*

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