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Resilience and governance of dispersed sub-Saharan migration in Morocco: The case of the refuge-cities of Tiznit and Taza

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This article aims to contribute to the construction of theoretical and empirical milestones of the concept of urban resilience by applying it to the field of sub-Saharan migration geography in Morocco. Our analysis is based on participatory action research conducted between 2017 and 2020 with a cohort of 215 migrants dispersed by the Moroccan state from the northern border areas of the country and forcibly relocated to the peripheral cities of Tiznit (south) and Taza (northeast). These two territories, to which the state delegates de facto responsibility for receiving and assisting dispersed migrants, have been transformed into refuge-cities. By mobilizing a set of indicators, we present an operational definition of resilient urban governance of sub-Saharan migration. While exploring the link between resilience and local hospitable mobilizations, we highlight the processes underlying the construction of urban initiatives to host dispersed migrants. We show that the framework of urban resilience is revelatory of inclusive reception dynamics, of the autonomous agency, and the innovative capacity of refuge-cities in the core of a debordering process.

KEYWORDS

dispersal, governance, Morocco, policies, refuge-cities, resilience, sub-Saharan migration

Introduction

In our fluid and globalized world, new challenges, such as the need to cope with the impacts of climate change, the migrant and refugee crisis of 2015, the growing urbanization of poverty, the health crisis, are creating a climate of uncertainty that directly and differentially affects the territories in which we live. This effervescent current events provide material to mobilize the concept of urban resilience, which seems to have become the response of international organizations and public authorities, the alpha and omega of the management of different shocks and crises (Reghezza-Zit and Rufat, 2015, p. 15).

Embedded in a dynamic of change, the concept of “resilience” is a polysemous concept, difficult to operationalize and whose measurement indicators vary according to the fields of application, scales of action, processes and trajectories (historical, institutional, cultural, socio-economic, strategic, geographical) specific to the territories

considered (Hamdouch et al., 2012). In Southern countries, this concept is gradually being introduced alongside public policies for economic development, geopolitical conflict prevention and governance. Resilience has thus become the “guiding principle” of political governance (Chandler, 2014, p. 1) *via* a multi-stakeholder and multi-level systemic approach (Reghezza-Zitt and Jon, 2019).

For the purposes of rigor and clarity, we aim to provide theoretical and empirical insights into this concept, which we extend and transfer to the field of migration governance in Morocco. This paper analyzes resilience in migration governance in the case of Morocco, where the presence of sub-Saharan migrants has become a stable and increasingly important reality. It is worth noting that Morocco, historically a country of origin and transit, has become a destination country for sub-Saharan African immigrants since the mid-1990s.

Out of a population of 33.8 million recorded in 2014, the number of foreigners residing in Morocco reached 84,001; a proportion of 0.25% of the total Moroccan population. According to data provided by the High Commission for Planning¹ (HCP), the foreign population in Morocco has recorded an absolute increase of 32,566 foreigners compared to 2004, representing an overall growth rate of 63.3% over the intercensal period. This represents 41.6% of Africans (34,966 people), 64.5% of whom are from sub-Saharan countries. Irregular sub-Saharan migrants attempt to cross the Strait of Gibraltar from Tangier to Spain or to clandestinely cross the fences separating Morocco from the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, the only two European communities on the African continent (Norman, 2020, p. 1164). The Moroccan state has reformed and liberalized its national migration policy by initiating since September 2013 a “new immigration and asylum policy” that aims to be coherent and humanistic.

As part of this process, the country has also reterritorialized its national migration policy by shifting from emigration to immigration, including the territorial implementation of policies for regularized migrants. In this regard, it launched a National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA) as part of its African diplomacy, inaugurating a new approach to migration management aimed at «decentralizing the coordination of migrant reception programs and services to municipal and regional authorities» (Kutz and Wolff, 2021, p. 3). This local turn in its migration policy is one of the diplomatic tools of Morocco’s soft power (Ferrié, 2020) developed around an institutional will to achieve a decent reception of sub-Saharan migrants. On the one hand, this migration diplomacy is translated into the launch of two exceptional regularization campaigns as a result of which the administrative status of more than 54,000 sub-Saharan nationals (2014–2017) was regularized. On the other hand, the country began a process of advanced

regionalization in 2011, in order to strengthen participatory democracy, empowerment and the capacity of each region to autonomously manage its affairs and resources. This led to the region being given the status of an autonomous local authority and a greater role for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs, in coordinating migration policy (Kutz and Wolff, 2021, p. 6).

At the same time, the management of sub-Saharan migration has also seen a paradigm shift in the “spatialization of control” of sub-Saharan migration since 2015. The Moroccan state has implemented a new mode of controlling the mobility of sub-Saharan migrants *via* the policy of “spatial dispersal” coupled with a dynamic of bordering (Mbembe, 2020). The dispersal policy involves the forced displacement by bus of sub-Saharan migrants wishing to reach Europe from the northern areas of the country, and their forced relocation to peripheral cities in the interior or further south. The Moroccan state *de facto* leaves the management of reception to peripheral cities such as Tiznit (south) and Taza (northeast), which are our two focal points of observation. Local actors are confronted with the urgency and challenges of the unpredictable arrival of dispersed migrants whether or not they have formal powers to receive and manage migration. In response, practices of solidarity are invented and a horizon of possibilities (Delmas-Marty, 2020) for resilience as a communal level emerges as a “reinvention of forms of hospitality” (Agier, 2018). This redimensioning of migration governance thus raises the question of the resilience of peripheral Moroccan cities, which have become the springboard of resistance to dispersal and new key actors of public migration policies.

Research on sub-Saharan migration in Morocco has mainly addressed migration governance through the security matrix linked to the Europeanization of national migration policies (El Qadim, 2010; Guiraudon, 2010) in an increased logic of externalization of flow control and border relocation (Belguendouz, 2005; Alioua, 2013; El-Qadim, 2015). However, few research studies have explicitly examined the role of peripheral cities in receiving sub-Saharan migrants, especially in a context marked by the implementation of a new development model in Morocco that includes as strategic axes of transformation “opportunities for inclusion for all and a consolidated social link” (axis 3) and “resilient territories, places of anchoring development” (axis 4). Our article presents a new lens through which to analyze the situations and conditions in which urban resilience has contributed to the emergence of refuge-cities in Morocco. To this end, this paper will draw on two case studies (Tiznit and Taza) to test the heuristic relevance and operationality of the notion of resilience in the context of sub-Saharan migration in Morocco. The peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza represent two emblematic fields of resilient practices of local actors and their own governance mechanisms in the context of welcoming and inclusive policies. Peripheral cities reconfigure the steering of public action

¹ Briefing note from the High Commission for Planning on the occasion of International Migrants Day December 18, 2017.

through the emergence of new modalities of intervention, new places of alliances and participation in decision-making and new capacities for local action.

This article contributes to the scientific debate by shedding light on the new role of peripheral cities such as Tiznit and Taza, which are far from the administrative and economic resources that are essential for sub-Saharan migrants and which are not central places of power on a national scale. Although they do not correspond to the traditional areas where sub-Saharan migrants settle and where competent associations for the care and support of migrants are located, they have become a stopgap measure for the Moroccan state's disengagement from receiving migrants dispersed at the local level. In the context of the policy of dispersal and the withdrawal of the state, the cities of Tiznit and Taza have been transformed into spaces for the installation of dispersed migrants and have assumed the mission of welcoming and including them, which was initially the responsibility of the state. We will argue throughout this article that the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza, characterized by a long tradition of hospitality, have engaged in a dynamic of resilience in the context of dissuasive migration policies at the national level.

Beyond the contingency of this government policy, the cities of Tiznit and Taza have voluntarily developed resilience propitious to the consolidation of their autonomous agency in the formulation of their own hospitable policies. This pragmatic and symbolic struggle transforms them into refuge-cities for dispersed migrants. We will mobilize the theoretical model of urban resilience, which we define both as a set of internal attributes that the agents of a city possess (or properties that they develop), but also as a dynamic process that depends on the actors who invest in it, by the resources they have and by the characteristics of the territory in question, whether they are socio-economic, cultural or political. We will show that the resilience of these two peripheral cities can be measured by their capacity to anticipate (proactively), adapt (reactively), share local skills and self-organize in the face of contingencies and emergencies by finding the right spatiotemporal scale, in particular to manage the organization of flows in the public space.

Our research aims to highlight the indicators of a resilient city in terms of migratory governance in Morocco, independently of the norms of economic production and productivity standards, performance and competitiveness criteria. Can a peripheral city that is not economically prosperous be a resilient city and by deploying which means? What roles do the actors in the resilient peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza play? What do the logic of hospitality and the voluntary geography of the peripheral cities tell us about urban resilience and local migratory governance? These are the questions that guide our study of these two cases.

We will show that urban resilience is as much linked to elements of local specificity (identity, traditions), to collective referents (social, solidarity, cultural, etc.), to existing resources,

to the proactive logic of the locals, as to the capacities for action, adaptability and the creation of new skills. The positioning of communities (Caponio and Pettrachin, 2021), the capacity for self-organization, innovative citizen solidarity and the will to cooperate at different levels of power appears to be decisive in examining the resilient city from the perspective of the city as a refuge. In this respect, the new experiences of the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza have led local actors to develop new mechanisms of migratory governance and organization of reception based on the needs and expectations of the migrants received. Resilience becomes an opportunity to renew the migrant's experience by addressing their needs for well being and mitigating their vulnerability through access to social rights, urban spaces, safety, and legal, social and emotional recognition (Honneth, 2013). In terms of "basic capabilities" (Sen, 1987) in a migratory situation, we argue that the resilient city allows the migrant to receive what authorizes him or her to have a certain capacity in the sense of the capability to function, to be free, to take part in collective life. The agglomeration of these indicators allows resilient cities to build their autonomy of action (agency) and to overcome constraints, especially in the context of uncertainty and imprecision, thanks to the articulation of different levels of governance (local, national and supranational governmental actors). We thus consider urban resilience as an aspect of urban migration governance that involves an interaction between vertical and horizontal dimensions and multi-level arrangements—in relation to the national government.

On this premise, we can already formulate the questions to which this article is devoted. To what extent do the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza build urban resilience to receive sub-Saharan migrants when confronted with the national policy of dispersal? How does urban resilience translate to the local level for the reception and urban inclusion of dispersed migrants, and how does it contribute to transforming the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza into refuge-cities?

As a methodological preamble, we will provide the methodology used to select the cases and the indicators used to measure and empirically attest to the existence or not of this resilience in the two local contexts studied. In order to answer our questions, this article will be structured along three lines of thought. First, we review the research literature on the relationship between resilience and urban governance of migrant reception. On the basis of this literature review and our empirical material, we conceptualize the notion of urban resilience by shedding light on the operationality and added value of this concept in the study of migration governance in Morocco. Second, we outline the main characteristics of urban governance in Morocco, its dependence on the central state and regional levels, and how this framework contributes to urban resilience in the two peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza. Finally, we will discuss the results of our research in a detailed and analytical manner by examining the concept of

urban resilience in light of the politics of dispersal. To this end, we will draw on the results of our research conducted in the cities of Tiznit and Taza over the period 2017–2020. In our conclusion, we will assess the achievements and limitations of local policies for the reception and inclusion of dispersed migrants and the effectiveness of these responses by outlining some lines of investigation for future comparative research.

Conceptualizing urban resilience in the study of migration governance: State of the art

The polysemy and elasticity of the concept of resilience make it of theoretical-practical interest, as they allow its mobilization by distinct fields of application. As [Reghezza-Zit and Rufat \(2015\)](#) point out, although the concept receives multiple meanings depending on the authors and the disciplinary frame of reference ([Burayidi et al., 2019](#)), they refer to the same starting point and a common intuition: «when a system suffers a disturbance, a shock, it either recovers or disappears» (p. 32). In order to make a transition from a visionary intuition to a practical solution, in this section we provide a State of the Art in scientific studies that offers an interpretive framework for mapping the link between migration governance and urban resilience. We aim to explore current migration research by examining the ideas and norms that underlie the different concepts mobilized and local practices in urban migration governance.

In the context of the crisis of nation-states facing mobility challenges in 2015 ([Agier, 2018](#)), several cities have transformed themselves into new scales of action for the reception of migrants and refugees by developing their own initiatives and networked solidarity (of cities, metropolises, departments, regions and elected officials) in the name of hospitality ([Stavo-Debaugue, 2017](#)). This phase of building autonomy and empowerment of cities, which have become scales of action and actors of the migration issue ([Babels, 2018](#)) has been explored from the perspective of welcoming cities ([Hannape, 2020](#)), refuge-cities ([Furri, 2017](#)), but also resilient cities ([Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017](#)). These different categories of open cities bringing back, to the forefront, the concept of urban resilience, which [Zapata-Barrero \(2021\)](#) defines as a political strategy to “empower cities, develop urban capacities, and learn to govern with the range of uncertainties, hazards, and risks associated with the constraints of migration”. According to the author, the normative basis of resilience would be “ontological security” (security of the self) that operates, on the one hand, at the social level *via* the preservation of cohesion and, on the other hand, at the individual level, when municipalities seek to provide migrants with the minimum inclusive level of the “right to have rights” ([Zapata-Barrero, 2021](#)). We were able to observe this link between ontological security and resilience-building

processes at the scale of the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza in Morocco, paradigmatic places of cohabitation between two categories that try to invent a fragile urban co-presence. To this end, we show how resilient debordering strategies are translated in these refuge-cities that assert their own resources and contribute to the processes of political subjectivation, thus becoming a heuristic perspective within the tangible meaning of urban resilience.

The literature on the urban governance of migration reception in the countries of the global North thus highlights the practical considerations ([Le Blanc, 2011](#)), ideological issues and strategic motivations of locals, as well as the constraints that cities must face in setting up their migration governance. They assess the recognition of the power of cities to influence the mobility and settlement (inclusive policies, diversity policies) of migrants by demonstrating a *de facto* dependence between different levels of public action ([Flamant and Lacroix, 2021](#)). Some of the research conducted in municipalities in different EU countries as part of the “Cities of Refuge” project sheds light on the contribution of interactionist, multiscalar approaches and multi-actor cooperation to the development of more resilient municipal policies that are also welcoming and inclusive in terms of the reception and protection of migrant populations. This work reveals the potential for innovation, the power to act, pragmatism, and the progressive positioning of cities ([Lacroix and Spencer, 2022](#)) that want to be activist territories in the context of the local turn in migration governance. Some authors emphasize the need for local actors to adapt and become more resilient in the context of migration shocks ([Ahouga, 2017](#)) and pressures on their legal, institutional and political infrastructure ([International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) and The UN Migration Agency, 2017](#)), while others shift the focus to the resilience of migrants and exiles in the light of dispersal policies ([Flamant et al., 2020](#)). The concept of resilience in the field of migration thus provides a relevant frame of reference and a powerful analytical tool to grasp the dynamics of humanitarian reception of migrants, whether from the perspective of local public authorities or citizen initiatives.

Other similar approaches and concepts have been mobilized in order to account for the causal factors, processes and strategies that shape this new structural parameter that is the urban governance of migration. One prominent example is the concept of political leadership mobilized by [Sabchev \(2021\)](#) in his article on the role of local political leadership in the reception of forced migrants using the example of Greece. The author favors an interactionist approach that promotes the understanding of local political leadership as the product of the interaction between the leader, on the one hand, and institutions and society, on the other. In this regard, the formal powers granted to local authorities in the field of reception of forced migrants must be considered within a multi-level governance framework of migration ([Caponio and Jones-Correa, 2017](#)) taking into account the reactions and demands of the local society. The

author argues that the practice of interactive and multi-level political leadership would allow mayors the advancement of innovative practices in the reception of forced migrants, to promote their political objectives in the governance of migration and by extension, to consolidate the protection and respect of migrants' fundamental rights. The examples of her two study sites, Thermi and Delta, suggest that successful and well-exercised leadership occurs through a combination of policy, operational and discursive responses by local politicians that enable them to influence policy processes at the national and transnational levels of urban migration governance.

In the same spirit, [Spencer and Delvino \(2019\)](#) explore the concept of municipal activism through a study based on the testimonies of policy-makers in several cities, with a view to understanding the challenges posed by the exclusion of irregular migrants and the reasons why policy-makers mobilize for their inclusion. The concept of municipal activism reflects a political will to remove practical barriers to irregular migrants' access to welfare services in order to promote their inclusion, despite restrictive national measures. The authors argue that municipal activism could go some way to mitigating the effects of restrictive national legal and policy frameworks for irregular migrants. A form of local resilience emerges through interactions between different levels of government and negotiations that include necessary "framework thinking" ([Schon and Rein, 1994](#); [Spencer, 2017](#)). This framing of inclusive approaches at the local level is as much the product of pragmatic responses as it is the result of values held by local actors and shaped by the "urban imaginary" that local decision-makers have of their city. The authors highlight a security framework whose beneficiaries are national residents (law enforcement in the city and effective immigration controls), a humanitarian framework (whose primary beneficiaries are irregular migrants and which focuses on their vulnerability and concrete needs) from which a human rights framework follows in which irregular migrants benefit from the protection of their fundamental rights. Finally, the socio-economic framework in which the exclusion of irregular migrants is seen as likely to turn into an economic or social threat, and the efficiency framework in which exclusion undermines the effectiveness of the city government and its service delivery ([Spencer and Delvino, 2019](#)).

Embedded in this inclusive dynamic, the city of Barcelona has developed its own innovative local policies and proclaimed itself a refuge-city, with the aim of transforming refugee reception into a more decentralized and bottom-up system with a major role in cities ([Garcés-Mascreñas and Gebhardt, 2020](#)). In their article on municipality political entrepreneurship in a centralized refugee system, [Garcés-Mascreñas and Gebhardt \(2020\)](#) highlight a significant advance in the development of city autonomy in formulating its own policies and a capacity for self-organization in refugee reception across ideological lines and institutional constraints. The city of Barcelona is an example

of a city that has become "entrepreneurial" by implementing its own policy and taking policy directions distinct from the national government ([Scholten and Penninx, 2016](#)). Municipal policy entrepreneurship attests to the proactivity of cities engaging internationally and becoming entrepreneurial in their interaction with other levels of government in an effort to reconfigure migration governance.

In the Moroccan field, we observed another register of municipal political entrepreneurship, linked to a multiscale configuration linking the local to the global for the reception of migrants, which reveals the autonomy of the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza and their proactivity. The city of Tiznit has set an example as a refuge-city by developing innovative local policies, and a municipalist position in coalition with other cities at the national and international level in the framework of decentralized cooperation. Among the areas of communal action in Tiznit, we cite the defense of human rights in all its forms, mainly those related to the decent life of citizens and foreigners (sub-Saharan migrant populations) and the dissemination of values of solidarity and convergence of cultures and languages. In addition to preserving close ties with the diaspora of Tiznit abroad and the dynamism of its associative network, the political decision-makers of Tiznit have shown a willingness to build bridges between the municipality of Tiznit and other cities around the world, within a conventional, coordinated and structured framework, which has contributed to the promotion of the image of a resilient city.

In this line, [Schiller's \(2015\)](#) innovative work provides information not only on the autonomy of cities in welcoming migrants, but more importantly on their actual capacities to implement these migrant integration philosophies in a coherent manner. In her article "The implementation trap: the local level and diversity policies", the author draws on a level-by-level study of the governance of immigrant integration by European municipalities, focusing on cities with diversity policies (in Antwerp, Amsterdam and Leeds). She criticizes the gap between the implementation activities of diversity policies and the objectives formulated in these policies at the local level, which invites a close examination of institutional structures and logic of governmentality in managing migration diversity.

The author's reflections are in accordance with the theory of urban regimes, which has flourished in the American literature and which allows for the analysis of the interrelationships and collaboration of various actors in the implementation of urban policies. Applying it in an innovative way to the study of the governance of migration-related diversity and mobilizing the concept of "urban diversity regimes", Schiller highlights the new coalitions that have emerged between governmental and non-governmental actors through repeated and institutionalized (collaborative or conflictual) negotiations and interactions over time. It emphasizes the interdependence between these different levels of power, which is accentuated by the influence of regional and national levels on local policies, particularly through

political discourse, legal frameworks and funding (Schiller, 2022).

This “paradigmatic pragmatism” (Schiller, 2015) that some Western European cities rely on to address the mobilization of difference and heterogeneity in the city leads us to the concept of collaborative governance mobilized in the article “A relational approach to local immigrant policy-making: collaboration with immigrant advocacy bodies in French and German cities” (Schiller et al., 2020). Based on an original survey conducted in forty French and German cities and on empirical work in one French and one German city, the authors highlight the role of immigrant advocacy bodies in collaborative policy-making in cities and analyze their links and factors in collaboration with relevant municipal actors. The collaboration between French and German city actors and immigrant councils and associations representing the rights of immigrants reflects a trend toward increased recognition of immigrant advocacy organizations, not just as mere grantees, but as collaborative partners for state and non-state actors. These interactions are most significant between the branches of government concerned with immigrant integration and immigrant advocacy organizations in contrast to private and public economic actors (business actors, administrative actors working on economic development) who develop less intense ties with immigrant advocacy organizations (Schiller et al., 2020).

This overview of the literature reveals a willingness to create a link between the local and global dimensions through the transition from centralized and hierarchical governance to a more transversal, collaborative, shared and multi-scalar governance of resilience. The above-mentioned authors consider the relationship with central government as a defining characteristic of the role of cities (the vertical dimension). From this perspective, in order for urban resilience to emerge, interaction on the vertical dimension of multi-level arrangements—that is, in relation to the national government—is required. In this sense, resilience extends beyond the realm of the local and includes higher levels of public authority. The shared assumption is that resilience emerges in a decentralized, cooperative and multilateral approach to territory through the commitment and activism of host cities that have been able to interpret a solidarity effort much better than states, driving a collaborative turn in international relations (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020).

These fertile concepts highlight the role of cities in the reception and integration of migrants, but do not account for the territorial recompositions that are organized around the question of the geography of migratory reception. Indeed, migration not only redefines the role of cities, but also transforms them, as the example of the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza shows. As a result of the dispersal policy orchestrated by the state, they have been transformed into refuge-cities by building their autonomous agency in an unstable environment.

The Moroccan refuge-cities as a space for actualizing urban resilience in dispersed migrant’s reception

In Southern countries such as Morocco, there has been little systematic effort to theorize a resilience approach and give it operational content in the field of urban governance of migration. The issue of urban resilience, linked to the strategies deployed by host communities faced with the challenges of migration on the African continent, particularly in North Africa, has been little theorized and scientifically peripheralized. Rare exceptions include the work of Agier (2018) in West Africa on camp resilience and hospitality practices as a form of social mobilization that resuscitates the individualist framework. We also mention Kutz and Wolff (2021) analyses focused on the implementation of the decentralization process of migration policy in Morocco and the “democratization” objectives of the SNIA (National Immigration and Asylum Strategy). However, this epistemological shortcoming led us to conduct research to transcend legalistic and bureaucratic approaches to reception (Gill, 2018) as well as normative approaches to resilience. These mask the capacity of cities to empower themselves and to offer social and urban alternatives by positioning themselves in opposition to security postures.

To do this, we have tried to transcend the Eurocentric reading grid in order to also consider the positioning of a Southern country in terms of local migratory governance, seen through the prism of a decentralized focus of public policies (policy decentring). We have chosen Morocco as our field of study, going beyond its classic places of observation (metropolises) of sub-Saharan migration dynamics and focusing on the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza. Since 2015, these cities have taken on the reception mission legally devolved to the State and are relevant territories for observing the dynamics of resilience in terms of the organization of the city in its dimension as a reception space for migrants. Local actors in both cities are emerging figures in local inclusion policies and, through their citizen mobilizations, work for socio-economic and spatial justice (Soja, 2010) for migrants. We conducted several empirical observations from the two cities in order to assess and evaluate their urban resilience, based on different indicators (interpretation and evaluation matrix that we have put together and that we detail below). We also relied on Mathieu Berger’s tri-distinction (between inclusive city, hospitable city and friendly city) and on his conception of urban inclusivity (Berger and Moritz, 2018), which appears in a welcoming device marked by “inner qualities, capable of channeling, receiving, welcoming and sheltering presences, uses and activities, enclosing resources, values and goods” (Berger and Moritz, 2018).

Applied to the Moroccan migration context, the concept of resilience allows us to question the capacity of local actors,

in their diversity, to become a palliative to the disengagement of the state for the reception and urban inclusion of dispersed migrants. Whether we understand urban resilience in the sense of a collective as well as an individual process of resistance to crises, or in the sense of the intrinsic property of peripheral cities that become a refuge for dispersed migrants, we realize that it is performative. Indeed, its implementation is carried out through territorial practices and modalities of action at distinct levels. We describe a refuge-city as a resilient city whose actors have an individual and collective capacity to react, to adapt autonomously, to transform (social relations, construction of new living spaces, appropriation and forms of urbanity, making the voice of immigrants heard in policy-making). Urban resilience is measured in terms of the relationship to inequality, alterity and action. It is not fixed in the logic of profitability, statistics, mass or security management of flows. It presupposes a humanitarian framework of openness (sharing of common spaces, sharing of socio-spatial experiences with migrants), of reception in different living spaces, of accessibility (of basic services) as well as of transformability (recognition of the migrant actor by instituting his rights).

In the cities of Tiznit and Taza, resilience emerged as a reaction to discretionary policy (Darling, 2022), but also as the result of a legal-administrative arrangement and a societal dynamic, based on a willingness to act collectively to welcome dispersed migrants. We understand urban resilience, first of all, as a property (capability) and intrinsic quality of the peripheral cities studied, which can be broken down into a reactive dimension (ability to cope with a restrictive policy and the unpredictable arrival of migrant flows) and a proactive dimension (ability to increase one's adaptability, one's capacity for resistance, anticipation, self-organization and assistance). Reactivity is an indicator of technical and organizational resilience, which makes it possible to evaluate the capacity to absorb (Derrida, 1996) the arrival of a "newcomer" in a moment of urgency and of social and political mobilization to deal with a shock. Proactivity refers to anticipation, which consists of acting before the event, thus acting on the basis of a graduated analysis of the risk (Delmas-Marty, 2013, p. 96), which favors learning capacities, which allows one to learn from the event and to strengthen oneself (reinforce). We argue that urban resilience is expressed by a force of reaction to the unpredictable, of proposals, of local initiative and imagination of an organization and hospitality, to compensate for the state's deficiencies and failures in terms of reception and recognition of the migrant-subject.

Secondly, urban resilience is also a process and a construct that designates the succession of responses following the disruptive event in the cities of Tiznit and Taza in order to mitigate the vulnerability of migrants and meet their welfare needs. This process operates according to different local dynamics and action levers observed locally. It is fed by a political or communal dynamic that unites all the components

of society around it. The resilience strategy developed by municipalities and provinces, through a proactive reception policy, seeks to maintain social cohesion and public order for the proper functioning of the city. Then, we will highlight the individual dynamics that are concretized by private initiatives of hospitality and citizen claims based on a religious, axiological and ethical requirement. Citizen networks seek to provide migrants with a secure relational framework and basic social services by mobilizing their own material resources. Citizens also have a role to play, either individually or through collectives (associations, unions, etc.).

Finally, the collective social dynamics of formal or informal urban coalitions (individuals, public and community institutions) for the public management of migration *via* the networking of stakeholders by thinking about the interactions of scales, their synergy and the functional coherence of the spaces concerned. Citizens are actors of a collective resilience and can contribute to a better understanding of the situation and to the elaboration of responses best adapted to the needs and interests of migrants (as defined by the immigrants themselves) because of the proximity links woven on the ground (Agier and Le Courant, 2022). Urban inclusiveness is one of the goals of these actors; it relies on a mesh of services, personal resources, support relationships, protective links and places made available to dispersed migrants leading them from refuge or "shelter" to a more or less permanent settlement (Deschamps et al., 2018). There is solidarity here that is not necessarily linked to large associative or political movements, but a very local solidarity. The ability to combine spontaneous individual and collective behaviors is also an indicator of an awareness of the existence of a community of destiny in adversity (Coursaget and Haas, 2015, pp. 1–3).

Regardless of the organizational perimeter and field of action, urban resilience is not limited to civil society actors. We see urban resilience as an aspect of urban governance that encompasses both state and non-state actors, and that only happens if municipal institutions and civil society are involved in inclusive policy making. We also support the importance of the interventionism of the national government, which must assume its share of responsibility by being part of the process of caring for migrants by attenuating centralized control by the state. This allows for the relationships between instituted and non-instituted actors to be viewed in an interactive model (Delmas-Marty, 2013, p. 91) and an ethical regime of cooperation (Sennett, 2014). The operationalization of urban resilience applies distinctly according to whether it is a non-state actor or a state actor whose modalities of action are correlated. The implementation of resilience must not suffer from political-administrative fragmentation and, more broadly, there needs to be a match between the scales of migration management and the scales where resilience is played out. In the following section, we will empirically evaluate the importance and concrete application of these dynamics in the two cities studied.

Methodology

We conducted an empirical study in the context of an action research supported by a participatory method. Our observations and surveys were conducted with a cohort of 215 sub-Saharan migrants, including 151 in Tiznit and 64 in Taza between 2017 and 2019, which allowed us to shed light on the paths, motivations and profiles of the dispersed migrants. We privileged a combined approach marked by non-directive or semi-directive interviews, observations (participant or non-participant), and focus groups. Our research was conducted in a comparative perspective in the peripheral cities of Tiznit (South) and Taza (northeast). These two cities are emblematic of the dynamics of urban resilience in terms of the reception and local governance of sub-Saharan migration.

Research protocol

We conducted several focus groups in the form of workshops punctuated by regular meetings organized with the help of dispersed sub-Saharan migrants and the collaboration of civil society and the local authorities of the two cities studied. Our work is also the combination of spatial analysis, the mobilization of cartographic tools and the analysis of migrants' life stories that give this work its interest. We established a participator research protocol that allowed us to define links that go beyond the functional and hierarchical terms of the field, but also to suspend the social effects of the dissymmetry linked to the social distance between the researcher and the respondent (Bourdieu, 1993). We used the criteria defined by the Center for Collaborative Research at the University of California, in order to respect the ethical standards of participatory research. Our research was equity-oriented, conducted in collaborative formats, and conducted with the participation of all participants.

Aware of the great material need of migrants, we have set up a non-stigmatizing protocol that does not increase the monetary precariousness of the migrants surveyed by providing them with some concrete benefits: compensation, integration into local association networks, training workshop projects, organization of meals and charity events. This protocol made it also possible to build, over time, a bond of trust with the migrants surveyed (to dissociate oneself from a political institution and a security logic) but also a privileged knowledge of the relationships they maintain with each other and to overcome the barriers of access to informal camps. To this end, we have built our surveys on the basis of two principles: that of conviviality (organization of collective meals) and collective negotiation upstream on the issue of the migrants' allowance. Collective negotiation avoids individual monetization by establishing a clear framework prior to conviviality.

The first sequence consisted of the co-construction of a Situationist questionnaire², administered to dispersed migrants during Focus groups, and that mobilizes the categories of intelligibility specific to the observed field and the migrants' reflexivity. This means the involvement of migrants in the research is not as research objects, but as actors who can bring a critical perspective on the investigation tools. Also, the established questionnaire takes into account the migrants' experience and their resilient strategies *via* the infra-political perspective (Scott, 2006) by reinstating the migrant, within our empirical and theoretical work, in a process of political subjectivation.

A second sequence consisted of an individual survey, which also led to particular modalities (the invitation to a café). Respondents were compensated for their time in filling in the questionnaire (which ranged from half an hour to 1.5 h) by 20 dirhams (2 euros). Moreover, we have invested ourselves on a personal level in helping these migrants in the two cities by organizing charity events. We have also contributed to establishing links between local associations and territorial communities under the auspices of the political authorities, particularly with the governors and Mayors of Tiznit and Taza. Our involvement in Taza began in 2017 when we cofounded with Ms Rhoumi Touria an association which offers a system of assistance and support of a social, administrative, material, daily and punctual nature on the field. The association does not only act within the framework of humanitarian aid but also works in intermodality with volunteers, elected officials, nurses, doctors, agents of the General Directorate of National Security, among others. The creation of this legal framework allowed us to be identified by the authorities and the migrants as an institutionalized organization, a resource person and a mediator in the case of conflicts. This approach allowed us to present a poorly documented situation, that of "resilient Moroccan cities that welcomes" and to participate in the adoption of a migration section in the municipal plan of Taza. The participationist context had an effect on the mobilization of citizens and members of the association who became resource persons by developing resilient strategies to host migrants. As for the researcher, working with clandestine migrants in this context, the boundary between the posture of personal commitment and the posture of research was flexible and reconfigurable. Scientific objectivity could only be achieved by a reflective distance after the investigation, which allowed us to occupy a different place in the interplay of tensions in the field.

² We were led to co-construct a questionnaire with the migrants, taking as a starting point the questionnaire of Jean-Noël Ferrié and Mehdi Alioua with a view to improving it. This questionnaire was modified and expanded by adding more exhaustive categories of migrants, in order to define criteria adapted to all migrants, including those who were not integrated and those whose administrative situation was regularized.

Case selection

Our case study selection procedure is based on both empirical and theoretical considerations. We have built a reflection on the dynamics of reception of dispersed migrants and migration governance measures by subnational level actors mobilizing local resources with a view to resilience beyond the major Moroccan metropolitan centers, and more specifically in peripheral cities. These cities represent spaces that are too often neglected by migration studies (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2009). The point is to look away from major Moroccan agglomerations to focus on other host spaces as fluid analytical entry points and alternative pathways for inclusion and incorporation of dispersed migrants. The examination of urban resilience in the case of two peripheral cities allows us to take the opposite view of studies that are too often objectivist and focused on a more national scale, concentrated on the metropolises of Morocco. We therefore decided to select two peripheral cities that have been targeted by Moroccan authorities and assigned as reception spaces for dispersed migrants since 2015. As such, the comparative approach allows us to characterize urban resilience in a relative and not absolute way *via* highlighting both the local specificities and the common dynamics of two cities whose resilience has shaped the pathways, experiences, and possibilities of the settlement and urban anchoring of dispersed migrants.

We selected specific dimensions of theoretical interest for our research based on the indicators we develop in this section in order to define peripheral cities and make our case selection. Thus, Salet and Savini's (2015) reflections on "peripheral cities" offered us an interesting entry point to classify the type of cities chosen for our case studies. We chose to qualify our case studies as "peripheral cities". By this term, we mean places on the outskirts of more prosperous urban centers (such as Casablanca or the capital Rabat), but which remain connected to the agglomerations of northern Morocco and to the national transport network, making them transit points for the migrants we surveyed. The city of Tiznit enjoys a crossroads situation between the north and south of the Kingdom, but also between Europe and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The city of Tiznit is located 90 km south of Agadir, 107 km from Guelmim (gateway to the desert) and 12 km from the beach Aglou (Atlantic Ocean). The city of Taza is located in the northeast of the Kingdom and is attached to the region "Fez-Meknes" and is located at the junction between the Rif and the Middle Atlas, which makes it a privileged place to study the forms of voluntary and forced movements of dispersed migrants.

Furthermore, one of the criteria for defining "small-scale cities" suggested by Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2010) complements our definition of peripheral cities. The cities of Tiznit and Taza are at a disadvantage in terms of insertion into global hierarchies. The concept of downscaled cities thus does not refer to the absolute size of the cities studied in

terms of population, but rather to their relative positioning in these emerging hierarchical configurations of power at the national, regional, and global scales (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2010). Both of our study areas are more sparsely endowed with urban and social services and kept away from the large foreign investments that are concentrated around large coastal metropolises (Goeury and Deau, 2019). These cities are less densely populated compared to adjacent metropolises (Agadir in the case of Tiznit and Fez in the case of Taza). According to data from the 2014 general population and housing census, the population of Taza is estimated at 528,419 inhabitants (High Commission for Planning, RGPH 2014). As for the population of Tiznit, it will reach 90,260 inhabitants in 2021 (Regional Directorate of the High Commission for Planning—Agadir).

In the heart of these peripheral cities, the social and ethnic diversity of the populations is less than in global metropolises. Minorities such as migrants and associative structures working within the framework of migration are few (in the case of Tiznit) or non-existent (in the case of Taza) compared to the metropolises. Despite their development potential, these cities have a low spending capacity for local services, a high dependence on incoming investments (Salet and Savini, 2015), but also a reduced access to public funds and resources. In addition, policies such as social services dedicated to the reception and inclusion of migrants are weakly present in these urban spaces. In terms of economic dynamism and territorial competitiveness, the economic capacities of peripheral areas are not yet mature (Salet and Savini, 2015) and may suffer from weak conditions of investment attractiveness (example of Taza) compared to other regions and a lack of diversification of the economy by not prospecting for high value-added activities (example of Tiznit). Socio-economic indicators reveal the weakness of prospects for urban youth, but also stagnation or even economic regression of some peripheral cities, which favors the redeployment of clientelistic political networks (Goeury and Deau, 2019).

As for the Souss-Massa region (city of Tiznit), it has significant economic potential based primarily on the sectors of agriculture, fishing and tourism. However, the economic vocation, traditionally known for the region, shows signs of both resilience and breathlessness, to improve the dynamics of wealth creation. The three sectors (Agriculture, Tourism, Fisheries) that constitute the economic base contribute to creating regional wealth only to the extent of (25%). Regarding the city of Taza, according to the criterion of social inclusion, the unemployment rate in the city is high compared to the national average (16.3%), which highlights the need to invest to provide new employment opportunities (Action Plan of the municipality of Taza, 2017-2022).

The study of the impact of dispersal policies on peripheral cities whose economic vitality may be lacking shows, nevertheless, their capacity to receive migrants by allowing them not to stagnate in a position of prolonged waiting and total

dependence on the state (employment opportunities on farms). In each case, we explored the relationship between resilience, citizen logic of reception, the opportunity structures that peripheral cities offered to natives and migrants, and the paths of inclusion taken by local actors in their diversity. A selection indicator common to both cities that we have mobilized is the identification of a category of migrants with independent and voluntary return movements to the informal camps of the cities of Tiznit and Taza after their dispersal. The return of migrants to these peripheral cities is an expression of the sensitive and functional relationship that arises between foreigners and the resilient welcoming city. Resilient cities are also able to federate private and public actors and civil society in a collective action approach for the inclusion of dispersed migrants.

Despite their contexts (economic, institutional, cultural, historical) and the orientation of actors' choices as well as the rhythm (more frequent arrivals of waves of dispersed migrants in Tiznit) of the differentiated disruptions that affect the two cities of Tiznit and Taza, they have both developed territorial resilience in both its static and dynamic dimensions (Pike et al., 2010a,b; Hamdouch et al., 2012). Indeed, our choice fell on the city of Tiznit, which emerged as a frame of reference in 2017, since it was receiving a considerable number of migrants dispersed by the Moroccan authorities. Its remoteness and spatial distancing from border areas and this location constraint envisaged as deterrence to border crossing attempts by sub-Saharan migrants has become a situational rent for the Moroccan state. The static resilience of the city of Tiznit is firstly a mechanism for adjusting to the temporalities and spatialities of dispersal imposed by the Moroccan state. It is then a capacity to provide operational and pragmatic responses in an emergency, mobilizing existing local resources (human, material, social) in favor of migrants. As for the city of Taza, we have observed a dynamic resilience as a capacity for innovation of associations favorable to the development of new fields of action, skills and activities where they play an active role in the implementation of an inclusive public policy for migrants. We chose Taza because of its ability to invent and deploy new resources, skills and values—without necessarily denying existing resources, whether traditional or inherited from the past—allowing it to fork out and thus fit advantageously into a hospitable dynamic (Hamdouch et al., 2012) driven by the unpredictable arrival of migrants.

Finally, in order to monitor the resilience processes of these two cities, we set up a long-term survey system that allowed us to establish a common criterion for the two cities studied. It concerns their hospitable dynamics, and their degree of inclusiveness in setting up decent and beneficial reception conditions for migrants (access to micro-resources in the long term, providing security and punctual spaces of refuge) and mitigating the dehumanizing effects of the dispersal policy. Both cities have developed resilient strategies for anchoring and incorporating migrants' ethnic and non-ethnic cultures into the life of the city (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2009), particularly

through networks (interpersonal, inter-organizational, formal, informal). These networks provide migrants with social and symbolic capital (easier access to locals, volunteer help to find a job and provide a range of support) by asserting their right to the city. We observed that these even tenuous bonds and mutuality that underpin everyday sociability (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2009, p. 18) are based not on tolerance of difference, but in recognition of commonalities (cultural, religious, mutual respect, shared aspirations and difficulties) between Moroccans and migrants. The two resilient cities thus provide them with various kinds of opportunities for incorporation that would have been much more difficult to achieve in the metropolises of northern Morocco, as our respondents have attested.

While the idea that dispersal policy reveals the resilience of peripheral cities, which contributes to making them refuge-cities, is generally accepted, the epistemological obstacle of urban resilience being the hallmark of the most affluent, attractive/competitive and economically successful agglomerations needs to be overcome. In other words, the question arises as to what shapes, affects or enables the inclusion of migrants in cities which, because of their size and economic structure, are generally not considered in the literature as the classic places for the reception and settlement of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Taking into account local specificities invites us to question the capacity of peripheral cities to act locally beyond national borders by developing innovative reception initiatives in their territories in the face of constraining national migration policies.

Findings

The reform of territorial governance in Morocco and the new local approach to migration management

Morocco undertook a constitutional reform after the 2011 legislative elections in order to give new impetus to an integrated and sustainable regional development and to realize the democratization of local governance. The concern for sustainability and resilience is highlighted in the recent report³ on Morocco's new development model, in which a new organizational doctrine appears: the complementarity between a "strong State"⁴ (*The Special Commission on the Development Model, 2021*), which guarantees justice, security, dignity and

3 The new development model of Morocco's report. Available at: <https://hellosafe.ma/modeles/developpement-maroc-pdf>.

4 A State that follows a mode of regulation and operation that requires capacities of anticipation and resilience to protect itself from risks but also to seize opportunities, and great agility to adapt permanently to new international economic, financial, technological, health and environmental conditions.

citizens' freedoms, and a "strong and dynamic Society". The goal is to build an inclusive, sustainable and resilient Morocco by ensuring the protection of citizens in the face of fragility and crises and by providing a framework conducive to general well being and the deployment of all energies for local and national development.

The administrative reform of the Moroccan state reinforces this observation; it is reflected in the decentralization, deconcentration and advanced regionalization stipulated by the Constitution of July 29, 2011. The latter represents a decisive turning point in the completion of the construction of the State of Law (Khrouz, 2019) by emphasizing the decentralized character of the Kingdom's territorial organization, the importance of political unity and the expressions of territorial diversity in order to ensure good governance and local participatory democracy.

This approach is based on the regionalization initiated in 2015, which aims to break with a centralizing perspective and extends a movement to decentralize the Moroccan political-administrative apparatus that began in the late 1980s' (Lacroix and Desille, 2018, pp. 115–130). This advanced regionalization is based on a process of "expanded pluralization" (Goeury and Deau, 2019) of political institutions (through decentralization) but also civic (through the proliferation of associations) and finally economy (through private investment). Among its objectives, we cite the development of the resilience of peripheral cities to crises through their territorial revitalization in terms of development and to meet the demands of Moroccan youth but also to form a Moroccan middle class. Indeed, this 2015 territorial reform consisted of betting on a transformation of the technocratic conduct of local affairs favored until then by a distribution of competences between the central state and the territorial authorities (Goeury and Deau, 2019). It is a question of administering the territory of articulation with the representatives of the central power (deconcentration) and of making a transition "from a system of 'traditional' administrative tutelage to a posteriori jurisdictional control of administrative and financial affairs" (Goehrs, 2015, p. 19). The objective of this approach is to empower and enable local authorities to become the main actors of local development *via* the granting of expanded prerogatives (Catusse and Karam, 2009; Benmoumen, 2017). In this context, the desire to strengthen the resilience of local actors can be understood in terms of the recognition of a right to participation (participation of civil society and youth, right of popular initiative, right of petition) and the empowerment of municipalities (financial autonomy, principle of free administration, cooperation, reduction of guardianship, among others).

Nevertheless, this reform does not exclude the existence of state control over the activities of local entities. As the World Bank Group (2018, p. 14) points out, "The organization and functioning of territories remain largely dominated by the central state and by top-down logic" which highlights

the structural limits of decentralization and the difficulty of implementing development projects and a coherent public policy. In this respect, the localized crises and massive collective mobilizations extended over time in certain peripheral Moroccan cities have been symptomatic of the deficiencies of this system, which is confronted with the territorial realities of these declining cities (Rachik, 2016). Indeed, this instrumentalization of the local level does not alter the pervasive influence of the central power but consolidates the principle of dependence of peripheral cities on the central state and restructures its visibility and articulation through new contingent policies, new actors and delocalized control schemes (Bloch and Schuster, 2005). The new approach to local management of sub-Saharan migration is, for example, emblematic of this "facade decentralization" and indicative of what Kutz and Wolff (2021) describe as a "localist trap". Indeed, this decentralized approach has been deployed in response to the negative perception of the security management of migration in Morocco, which produces both the multiple and problematic vulnerabilities (Garrau, 2018) of migrants and humanitarian emergencies. This new approach therefore redefines the role of peripheral cities, which are now involved in migration management and urged to integrate the issue of migrant reception into their social, political and administrative activities.

In this context, the resilient city can thus offer an alternative logic for managing sub-Saharan migration by mobilizing an approach based on responsible pluralism and democratic practices that include the perspectives of the different levels of power (state and non-state), as well as those of migrant actors in an inclusive process. We will show in our article that the combination of these considerations and the decentering of migration governance can strengthen the resilience of peripheral cities. These cities thus become generators of new possibilities for reinventing urban spaces of refuge where the responsibilities of relational policies (Darling, 2009) and an ethic of reception are built around local dynamics of solidarity.

Resilience through the lens of decentralized urban governance of sub-Saharan migration in Morocco

Morocco, a country of emigration and immigration, adopted in 2013 a new migration policy considering migration as a lever for development. This policy includes the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum (SNIA), which inaugurates a new approach to sub-Saharan migration governance through the process of decentralization of administrative power and, consequently, the strengthening of the decision-making capabilities of local authorities, particularly for the coordination of development initiatives related to migration.

This strategy has been implemented through a national governance mechanism, which brings together different committees and involves all actors in charge of migration

issues. It responds to humanitarian challenges (human rights, discrimination, human trafficking and integration) and facilitates access to health, training, housing and employment, and defines the shared responsibility of public authority actors for better national, regional and international governance of migration [Inter-Parliamentary Union, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), 2015]. In this sense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Residing Abroad is engaged in a process of territorialization of the SNIA. The objective is to include the migration dimension in regional and local development programmes and projects and to establish a sharing of responsibility between actors and stakeholders at national, regional and local levels in the implementation of programmes for the integration of migrants in Morocco. The extension of municipal competences has in fact gradually shifted the center of gravity of “migration and development” policy to local authorities (Lacroix and Desille, 2018). The new migration policy thus takes into consideration migration as a catalyst for development, which has resulted in projects related to the integration of migration into local and national development policies.

With the recent advances in Moroccan migration policy, important new local issues related to strengthening the local and regional integration of sub-Saharan migrants are being expressed. In this respect, we mention two main projects that have been implemented. On the one hand, the “Protection-Resilience-Migration” project, funded by the European Union and implemented by Oxfam Morocco. This project aims to strengthen the protection and resilience of migrants and host populations in Morocco. Within the framework of this project, the Council of Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco (CMSM), in partnership with Oxfam Morocco, organized in January 2022, training days for migrant associations working in favor of migrants’ rights in Morocco. In this sense, the PRM project has a double objective: improving access to legal support, emergency assistance and mental health services for vulnerable migrants. As for the second objective, the aim is to ensure the strengthening of the resources of civil society organizations for collective and better coordinated advocacy in favor of improving access to services.

On the other hand, the City-to-City Migration in the Mediterranean (MC2CM) project has been implemented since 2015 and brings together city leaders, civil servants and local, national and international experts to contribute to a better governance of migration on the urban scale is an emblematic example. This project coordinated by ICMPD and funded by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation aims to develop, “urban migration profiles. The municipality of Tangier, as an example of the project’s implementation, provides financial support and encourages civil society organizations to set up partnerships

with local governmental actors around the issues of socio-economic integration of migrants (intercultural dialogue, access to housing, training and health). In the same perspective, the province of Nador is also committed to the inclusion of migrants by training media professionals to fight against negative stereotypes on migration and by raising public awareness of a more balanced discourse on migration. Also, the city of Rabat has targeted as action the improvement of participatory planning and the migration data management system (capacity building for data collection). The aim is to achieve evidence-based decision-making on migration at the local level and to better manage migration flows and the resulting vulnerabilities at the city level. Activities include the establishment of a Municipal Migration Observatory to support local decision-makers with a local migration governance approach, the organization of participatory workshops to build capacity for decision-makers on the use of migration data, among others.

In the framework of the MC2CM program, the first International Seminar on Migration and Cooperation between Mediterranean Cities was organized to launch a process of dialogue between local authorities at the local level, and civil society, organizations working in the field of migrants’ rights, and other supra-municipal entities at the national and regional levels. This seminar is the result of the synergy between two projects funded by the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented by UN Habitat, UCLG and ICMPD. The first project, entitled “Governance and Interculturality: Mediterranean Cities, Diverse Cities” is led by the Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI). The aim is to promote tools for diversity management by local governments, cooperation relations and diversity policy measures between local and regional authorities. The second project is entitled “How to build our cities through social cohesion: Building a living together” and is implemented by the ANMAR Federation of Local Authorities of Northern Morocco and Andalusia. The aim is to contribute to a territorial planning conducive to the social and cultural inclusion of the migrant population in the cities of Tétouan, Larache and Ksar el-Kebir. The private sector can also play a significant role in the resilience of cities and the integration of migrants. In this respect, the MC2CM project has already highlighted in its policy recommendations the importance of communicating and coordinating with the private sector in the governance of migration beyond its role as employers or financial supporters. Indeed, the private sector can bring its experience and good practices in areas such as mobility, recognition and development of migrants’ skills. The latter can in turn contribute to the feeding and implementation of government-supported initiatives and policies.

In this context, other programs illustrate the new modalities of articulation between migration and development, such as the Support Program for the Improvement of the Performance of Municipalities in Morocco (PAPC)², planned for a period of

5 years (2019–2023) and which came into effect in 2020. This program, which targets a hundred urban municipalities and 18 million inhabitants, is a project carried out in partnership between the General Direction of Local Authorities (DGCT) of the Ministry of the Interior, the World Bank and the French Development Agency. The aim of the project is to strengthen good governance in municipalities in order to improve services to citizens and businesses and to transform the relationship between municipalities and central government from one of tutelage to one of accompaniment. The integration of migration into governance and planning of local and national sectoral policies has also been at the heart of IOM's projects in Morocco, which take into account protection and resilience in a concomitant manner in its strategies by prioritizing the rights of individuals. It is in this sense that IOM Morocco is committed to supporting the Moroccan authorities and institutional partners at national and territorial levels in the implementation of national migration strategies in the framework of advanced regionalization. In this regard, IOM supports national actors in improving access to social, medical (psychological support, accompaniment to health structures) and legal services (legal aid, assistance for voluntary return) for migrant populations in vulnerable situations. IOM Morocco, together with national stakeholders and civil society partners, implements direct assistance and protection initiatives at the national, regional and local levels to help build the resilience of vulnerable migrant populations. Special attention is given to the most vulnerable populations such as women, unaccompanied minors, victims of human trafficking and cross-border smuggling networks.

Context of arrivals and reception of dispersed migrants in Tiznit and Taza in 2015–2020

In this second section, we present an operationalization of the concept of urban resilience, applied to the local level of the cities of Tiznit and Taza. Using our empirical findings based on focus groups, individual surveys and participatory observations, we will assess the resilience of the cities studied by mobilizing the indicators cited in the theoretical section. Our empirical results allow us to provide a detailed description, but also to analyze the resilient measures and initiatives developed in the two cities and their effects on the reconfiguration of public action in terms of welcoming migrants. We will highlight the key moments and reasons why resilient and hospitable reception strategies have been adopted by local actors, underlining the limits and even the constraints arising from these local choices.

It is worth briefly recalling the general context of the implementation of dispersal, and the aims of this policy, which has led the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza to develop resilience in receiving sub-Saharan migrants. We define "dispersal" as the forced displacement by bus of main West and Central African migrants by the Moroccan Auxiliary Forces (FAM) and the Royal police force from border areas and cities

in the eastern and northern regions of Morocco (close to the Spanish border enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) to cities in the interior or south. This policy is linked to a process of bordering, which we understand in the sense of Mbembe (2020) as the process by which the border is no longer just a demarcation line that separates distinct sovereign entities. It becomes an ontological device and functions on its own and in itself, anonymous and impersonal, with its own laws. Thus, certain spaces prized by migrants become impenetrable places (Michalon, 2012), as is the case on the outskirts of Ceuta, where they attempt to settle, notably in the Cassiagio/Belyounech forests, on the southwestern periphery of the Moroccan port city of Tangier, overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar. Other migrants favor Mount Gourougou, located in the province of Nador (a city in northeastern Morocco, in the eastern Rif region) 500 km northeast of Rabat. The areas of forced relocation of dispersed migrants have gradually diversified, moving to the cities of Taza, Tiznit, Agadir, Errachidia or Beni Mellal, among others. The policy of dispersal extends the socio-economic precariousness of migrants by moving them away from the industrialized cities that capture the majority of flows and by fixing them in peripheral cities that are not economically viable. Indeed, the cities of Tiznit and Taza lack economic opportunities and are distant from the three regions of Casablanca-Settat, Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, and Tangier-Tétouan-Al Hoceima, which alone concentrate 58% of the total wealth created in Morocco [High Commission for Planning (Morocco), 2014]. The lowest activity rates are in the regions of Fez-Meknes (42.7%) where Taza is located; the Souss-Massa region where Tiznit is located in southern Morocco (43%) [according to the Information Note of the High Commission for Planning (HCP), reflect the situation of the labor market during the first quarter of the year 2020].

It should be noted that the spatial dispersal also targeted women, unaccompanied minors and migrants with a valid residence permit, thus reinforcing the myopic effect of the dispersal technique, which took the form of forced displacement in the public space, but also of workers in front of their place of work. Other respondents were arrested in popular neighborhoods, in broad daylight or at night, or in the city centers of metropolises (Rabat, Casablanca, among others). The dispersal policy spatially distributes migrants in an unbalanced, random, and disorganized manner throughout Morocco in order to reduce their spatial concentration (Tazzioli, 2019) in border areas and limit the creation of camps and community ghettos. Dispersal is a strategy that allows the Moroccan state to manage multiplicity, organize it and fix its locations (Foucault, 1978) through coercive (Abizadeh, 2008) and dissuasive measures in order to reduce pressure on the points of entry to Europe. Given its geographical location and distance from the borders (located more than 1,000 km from the enclaves and more than 850 km south of Tangier), the city of Tiznit has been targeted by Moroccan authorities and has become a space of forced relocation and protracted waiting for

dispersed migrants since 2015. On February 10, 2015, more than 1,200 people were arrested near the Gourougou Mountain Settlement (Nador, Eastern Region). Our field investigations have identified a total of 2034 sub-Saharan migrants dispersed and relocated to Tiznit between April 4, 2015, and February 2, 2017, and 9200 migrants dispersed over the period 2017–2019. According to the anti-racist group for the defense and accompaniment of foreigners and migrants (GADEM), the state forcibly moved more than 6,500 sub-Saharans to the south between July and early September 2018. The number of migrants dispersed during each bus convoy varies between 30 and 65 migrants. Regarding the city of Taza, it is located in northeastern Morocco, south of the Rif Mountains. According to our surveys, we counted a total of more than 500 migrants dispersed and relocated to Taza over the period 2017–2020. The number of migrants dispersed during each bus convoy varies between 30 and 50 migrants.

The context of dispersal reveals the differentiated treatment of the sub-Saharan migratory phenomenon in Morocco, which is the subject of unequal and territorial confrontations. In the field, we have observed this tension between the logic of rejection in the nearby border cities, which are involved in the process of bordering (Meier, 2019) and reinforcing filtering and classification mechanisms, and the hospitable logic of the peripheral cities, which produce refuge-cities where new alternative struggles are being formulated that make it possible to rethink a dignified welcome for migrants. The organization and solidarity dynamics that run through the refuge-cities of Tiznit and Taza raise the question of their resilience and their ability to empower themselves and develop urban capacities in order to learn to govern with the range of uncertainties, socio-spatial and political constraints inherent to the politics of dispersal.

The nature of the reception confirms the development of urban resilience in Tiznit and Taza as a counterpoint to national security injunctions. In our two survey sites (Tiznit and Taza), a reverse trend was revealed, where the treatment of migrants and their perception in the metropolises did not correspond to their treatment and perception in the peripheral cities. In concrete terms, the testimonies collected from dispersed migrants reveal a sense of insecurity and symbolic violence specific to certain neighborhoods in the northern metropolises, marked by different practices: dismantling of camps, evacuation of informal camps, repositioning (Gill, 2009) and constant deprivation of space (Michalon, 2012), deployment of exclusionary practices (Schuster, 2005) at the northern Moroccan-Spanish border by the police. In comparison with the northern metropolises, 77% of migrants in Tiznit and 78% in Taza consider that these two cities provide them with the most security, human warmth and well being. The “feeling of welcome” is also induced by the perception that the presence of migrants brings insecurity or well being. The narratives of the migrants interviewed often emphasize these inter-relational aspects and the conditions for

the development of mutual respect and trust, which can be created by an authentic welcome in these resilient cities.

Resilience and the concrete reception modalities inherent to it has consequently induced differences in the appropriation of territories by dispersed sub-Saharan migrants, but also an impact on their mobility on a national scale. Indeed, we have been able to observe forms of counter-spatialities marked by undertakings of circulation or anchoring reintroduced by migrants in the unpredictability of their journeys, notably through their voluntary returns to border areas. These return journeys give an unprecedented thickness to the border, which takes on a concrete dimension of hundreds of kilometers; Tiznit being located more than 1,000 km from the enclaves and more than 850 km south of Tangier.

The dispersal and the process of bordering (Cuttitta, 2015) orchestrated by the state lead other delocalized levels of power, such as the peripheral cities, to manage their effects on their societal and urban systems. What are the resilient debordering strategies developed by the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza? We understand debordering in the sense of Zapata-Barrero (2021) who defines it as a process of opening up borders by removing existing restrictions and symbolically, it can also refer to the fact of overcoming legal, political, social borders placed by the higher power. Urban resilience would be a means of defrontization to respond to the challenges posed to peripheral cities by sub-Saharan migrations and which participates in their transformation into refuge-cities. These cities are presented as a social, political and urban alternative to the dissuasive and security logic crystallized in the metropolises of northern Morocco.

From dispersal policy to resilient refuge-cities: The example of Tiznit and Taza in perspective

In our two study areas, resilience appears primarily as a reactive capacity for managing humanitarian emergencies and helping vulnerable categories targeted by dispersal policy. The associations and local officials we met in the two cities of Tiznit and Taza criticize the expeditious treatment of sub-Saharan migrants, which also affects the categories of people protected by Law No. 02–03 (2003) on the entry and stay of foreigners in the Kingdom of Morocco, and on irregular emigration and immigration. These categories include pregnant women, children and unaccompanied minors.

Local actors in Tiznit have also been forced to develop resilience in adopting a security framework for maintaining law and order in the face of the arrival of dispersed migrant flows in 2015. Indeed, any institutional or social ignorance of this phenomenon was likely to lead to security problems. This is due to the increasing number of migrants, the accumulation of informal camps for the shelter of migrants in the city center, their situation of accentuated precariousness. These factors can create instability (Darling, 2016), uncertainty and violence in the city of

Tiznit. This awareness refers to what Sabchev (2021) calls “sense-making” which involves the detection of an emerging crisis and its meaning. As such, local actors have prepared operational responses and pragmatic readjustments in an emergency and reactive manner. In this sense, resilience can be assessed in terms of its relationship to action, insofar as it is a kind of action/reaction and a capacity to absorb a shock and take measures to deal with an unpredictable situation.

We have observed a form of static resilience that is reflected in citizens’ capacity for self-organization, their ability to adapt to the policy of dispersal and to build autonomy by mobilizing local resources in the absence of state financial support. As Michel Agier points out, shelter is above all a moment of emergency when it is important to respond to immediate needs. One of the first forms of solidarity mobilization that appeared in Tiznit was the installation of two large tents behind a hotel in downtown Tiznit where the dispersed migrants spent their first nights. They then organized and agglomerated the scattered tents, which led to the construction of an informal camp located in the avenue of Bir Anzarane, on the national road between Agadir (a city in southwest Morocco, located on the Atlantic coast) and Guelmim (a city in southwest Morocco). The migrants were then taken in charge by *Dar Taliba* structure (student residence), which agreed to provide them with temporary accommodation, where they had access to basic means of subsistence (housing, food, etc.), under the supervision and control of regional authorities. Local associations acted autonomously and proactively to provide migrants with access to shelter, housing, food, warm clothing, blankets, medical (free medical examinations in public health centers), legal and educational services, regardless of their administrative status. However, these accommodation solutions remain temporary in the absence of reception structures and a sustainable housing policy, developed in a decentralized manner and in consultation with the local elected officials of the city in order to consider the conditions for its deployment in the territory concerned. Migrants could benefit, in these reception centers, from social support and legal assistance in order to meet the needs in terms of legal aid with a follow-up of emblematic cases.

The resilience of the city is also measured by its capacity and availability to respond to the demands of foreigners. This is a capacity for anticipation and adaptation on the part of local actors, which is a matter for the public sphere. This form of resilience is linked to a formal and structured urban governance of the migration phenomenon. The province and the municipality of Tiznit, as well as various agents of the deconcentrated services of the state, have mobilized to ensure decent treatment of migrants. This is reflected in the regular provision of basic material goods to migrants, such as the distribution of buckets and plastic sheeting for the construction of tents. In addition, the municipalities ensured that migrants had free access to public toilets, the installation of waste containers near the camp, the provision of a water tank for

a regular supply of drinking water, and the distribution of foodstuffs. The authorities in Tiznit have become resource persons for the migrant population, allowing them to find urban interstices to take refuge in, and the possibility of finding temporary employment. In Tiznit, associations regularly organize medical campaigns, cultural and sports activities, and clean-up days to maintain the camp clean. Our field observations in Tiznit allowed us to identify another indicator of the city’s urban resilience in welcoming migrants, which is reflected in an approach based on inclusion and hospitality. The testimony of Mostapha, a security guard at the “Mauritania” hotel, located near the migrant camp, whom we met in 2018, corroborates this fact:

Every Friday, citizens leave plates of couscous in front of the camp, some bring blankets, food or give them money in front of the traffic lights. I myself once gave a migrant woman 2 kilos of rice and vegetables. If they are sick, I try to take them to the public hospital. I have also already taken some of them to the hairdresser and bought them clothes. The residents of Tiznit even invite the migrants to eat in the restaurants and share convivial moments with them in the camp or in the café (...)

As with Mostapha in Tiznit, the citizens we interviewed in Taza emphasize the need to create a viable, protective and inclusive environment for migrants. This inclusivity aims at both a change in the spaces on which it acts, and the social relations on which these spaces are meant to act (Berger, 2018). In the two cities of Tiznit and Taza, resilient urban action is declined as a force of socializing that allows for refuge as well as connection in order to “make the city” and carry forward the claim of “the right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1968; Agier, 2015). My observations of the lived spaces of migrants have allowed me to better shed light on their daily experience and sociability in the two cities of Tiznit and Taza. Resilience translates as a differential enactment of differences (Revel, 2009) and was experienced as a sharing of these differences, as the construction of a space—political, subjective, and life—where migrants and locals in Tiznit and Taza consolidate, through their own differences, the power of their community with the other (Delmas-Marty, 2006). In the same ways as in Tiznit and Taza, the reception of migrants has an inherently emotional and relational dimension (Gill, 2018). In this perspective, resilience nurtures an ethic of conviction and a capacity to transform the condition of these fragile existences. This form of resilience that we observed in the two peripheral cities draws its foundation from an axiological dimension and is based on a principle of spiritual connection and a moral awareness of assistance to the fragile. It functions mainly on the basis of a gift, an unregulated volunteerism, referring to a form of unconditional hospitality for a symbolic benefit. From this perspective, the cities of Tiznit and Taza share a capacity to build their autonomy in an unfavorable environment, by combining public management of the emergency, governance and the demand for a decent reception of migrants.

In the peripheral city of Taza, we observed the development of a form of dynamic resilience that translates into the capacity to create new skills, new activities and social structures and to develop its own practical local hospitality initiatives. Indeed, the phenomenon of dispersal marked a new turning point in the city of Taza in 2015 following the gradual arrival of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers from northern Morocco. The first buses carrying migrants were directed to Taza high (main artery of the old city) to shelter them by offering them accommodation at *Dar el Mouwaten* (citizen's house). This institution is the relay of the provincial delegation of the National Mutual Aid of Taza, for proximity actions to fight against the precariousness of vulnerable populations. The three main areas of intervention in Taza are accommodation, material assistance and access to health care, without requiring identity documents that many migrants cannot provide. Our interviews with local authorities in the city revealed that the three main institutional actors involved in the issue of reception are the province, national security (police and gendarmes) and the municipality of Taza. Thus, migrants who decided to stay in the city were able to benefit (50 migrants in April 2020 and 38 migrants in January 2018) from *ad hoc* donations such as blankets and food, especially during the period of Ramadan and cold waves.

Urban resilience has emerged in Taza as a force for initiative and innovation through the implementation of strategic and proactive practices that contribute to re-establishing the issue of welcoming migrants as a matter of duties and rights occupying a central place in the collective consciousness of citizens. The creation of a local association specializing in the reception and accompaniment of dispersed sub-Saharan migrants in 2017 marked a turning point in the management of the reception of migrants, in the establishment of a bond of trust between migrants and locals, in the modification of local representations in the sub-Saharan migratory issue, particularly through the valorization (of skills and line of conduct) of the settled migrants. Indeed, the association is at the interface of local public action and the needs of migrants and makes adjustments so that the aid provided by local actors is targeted and in accordance with the migrants' expectations.

The association of migrants has created better access to the city, which has legitimized the urban visibility of migrants and expanded their possibilities of anchoring in places (Storey, 2020) invested with uses and meanings (cafés, mosques, markets) that have become landmarks for dispersed migrants. Resilience is also a power of inclusion of migrants to social rights, mainly in the field of health, legal protection and access to education, thus affirming the socio-economic claims of migrants. In this regard, the association of migrants has established an agreement with the Provincial Delegation of Health of the province of Taza, which has allowed migrants to benefit from free health services in public health institutions without the need for regularity of residence or proof of identity. On the socio-judicial level, the association in question has also joined the "Unit of care for

women and children victims of violence" under the authority of the Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and Family. It has extended its interventions to serve sub-Saharan migrant women and children dispersed in Taza in order to provide them with criminal protection, strengthen their rights through the enforcement of the principle of equality and the fight against all forms of discrimination and violence against women. All migrants in Taza are protected by the municipal police against any intrusion that could threaten their sphere of freedom. In this extension, migrants can file a complaint with the local police, have violence recognized in case of aggression. In this line, the migrants' association has extended its scales of intervention by being the bearer of a strong normative expectation with regard to the local authorities and has raised the question of the reception of migrants in terms of public policy. This has led to the inclusion of the migration issue in the political agenda (2017–2022) and in local programs to fight against precariousness and for parity. Initiative that has institutionalized the dimension "Migration and Development" in the local political planning of the city of Taza. In this sense, the hospitality of resilient cities also becomes a common construction in the dialectic of local associations that act in the context of constraints and contingency and transform the law into an instrument of resistance to dispersal.

In terms of the relationship to inequalities, resilience is reflected in the consideration of the needs and difficulties of female migration, particularly in terms of scales of autonomy (body, public space, choices and decisions, interactions), which questions the links between individuality and gendered socialization as a political process (Schmoll, 2020). The specific demands of migrant women in the two cities of Tiznit and Taza are generally related to access to health care, exposure to violence and social domination, or the demand for recognition of their children's rights (regularization and schooling). Considered the most vulnerable population in the city of Taza, they have been able to benefit from protection, institutional care and social treatment more advantageous than that given to men because of their specific needs and certain considerations: isolation, distance from their partners, pregnant, often alone in the camp or accompanied by their children. The migrant association of Taza has created a partnership with the medical-social school and university center of the provincial delegation of Taza to allow the children to attend public schools or private institutions in the city. In Tiznit, migrant women have often been invited by local authorities, not as observers or recipients of aid, but as participants in an exchange to better diagnose their experiences and living conditions.

In this light, we define urban resilience in migration also as a responsibility for protection (Delmas-Marty, 2019) and cooperation between different actors at local, but also national and international level. Migration governance and urban resilience also concern the instruments of city diplomacy (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020) by reconciling humanistic values and

local interests. In this respect, the city of Tiznit has strengthened its bilateral and multilateral interactions with foreign actors, particularly in cities, to ensure a decent reception of migrants and their access to rights. The city of Tiznit has put in place a twinning and decentralized cooperation agreement signed in 2005 with the municipality of Saint-Denis (France) for the development of a participatory strategy including the human rights framework and the fight against the exclusion, especially of minority and vulnerable populations (women, homeless people, migrants). Exchanges of representatives and technicians and the setting up of training courses have been designed to meet a need for expertise, particularly in the field of the reception of migrants. The associative projects and citizen initiatives accompanying the cooperation projects have been strongly supported.

Another example is the Twin Cities partnership between the cities of Somerville, Massachusetts and Tiznit in 2010, which encompasses the promotion of international goodwill and mutual understanding between the two cities and their respective nations in a wide variety of economic, social, cultural, municipal, educational and artistic activities. The two cities promote cooperation and exchange of expertise in terms of migration governance and projects to facilitate the integration of migrants. It should be noted that the cities of Tiznit and Taza are atypical cases in Morocco because of their dynamic associative fabric and innovative participation mechanisms put in place by the municipality and the province to promote civic and political culture. The municipality and the province of the two cities encourage the creation of associations and their participation in the public affairs system by covering different aspects of communal life, including the issue of migration. This extract from the speech of the President of the municipal council of Tiznit during the workshop on “immigration and asylum” held on January 21, 2016, in Tiznit confirms a willingness to welcome migrants, creating at least basic conditions for their inclusion and welfare:

With regard to migrants from sub-Saharan African countries, the current situation requires a clear vision to find solutions according to a comprehensive and participatory approach to migration issues and themes, with the need to master the migration file in a humanitarian approach, as emphasized by His Majesty King Mohamed VI, and in coordination with the report and recommendations of the National Council for Human Rights. His Majesty insisted on the need to put in place a tolerant, fair and successful policy in the field of migration, which guarantees a better integration of migrants in Morocco. Indeed, it is a policy that involves the participation of all state institutions and national councils as well as civil society.

From this perspective, urban resilience is constructed within a triple social, legal, and affective recognition (Honneth, 2013) to address the vulnerability of migrants. It is a humanitarian framework whose beneficiaries are the migrants by focusing

on their well being needs, vulnerability and merit of municipal and civic support (Spencer and Delvino, 2019). Meanwhile, in the refuge-city of Taza, I observed that migrants had organized themselves by appointing a representative and had succeeded *via* local associations in being invited to the municipal council of the town hall in order to organize migrants’ lives, offer them employment opportunities, and accommodate their social grievances. This form of cognitive consideration of the migrant as a reflexive subject of law, endowed with absolute value, moral responsibility, and the ability to deliberate and assert one’s own rights, establishes a “communicational ethic” (Habermas, 1981). This resilient pattern of the struggle for the recognition of migrants in the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza as individuals with concrete needs, as legal persons and subjects in their individual particularity, carried by the associations, is much more difficult to produce in a border city like Nador.

While the cases of the refuge-cities of Tiznit and Taza provide information on the forms of empowerment and emancipation of the cities of state security logic, the field experience reveals certain boundaries. It is important to highlight the disjunction between the resilient dynamics of the cities studied and the weakness of socio-economic opportunities, which constitutes a barrier to the integration of migrants. The central government asks local decision-makers and cities with weak urban and social services, which have little room for maneuver and limited means, to implement local measures for the reception of sub-Saharan migrants without assuming the material responsibility. Associations struggle to intervene, as they do not have the financial means or the organizational dimension to deal with waves of dispersed migrants exceeding a hundred (in the case of Tiznit). The accumulation and settlement of a considerable number of migrants in the same camp raise the concern of citizens who see it as a potential rear base for deviant practices and a space for urban tensions at different scales. This can lead to high tensions between locals and migrants, undermining the trust between the two. Some newcomers have boycotted medical campaigns and refused material aid and training offers from local associations. The testimonies of associations and municipal officials underline a feeling of powerlessness and of being overwhelmed by a policy that is perpetuated in the absence of consultation and cooperation with the cities concerned.

Our case studies reveal the emergence of inclusive refuge territories as an alternative and resilient form of governance for hosting dispersed migrants in Morocco. Urban resilience offers a perspective that transcends mere emergency management and reception issues for dispersed migrants. It provides a relational framework and an experience of urban anchorage to satisfy the primary needs of dispersed migrants for affirmation of subjectivity and identity as well as a desire for social life and a sense of security. The idea of resilience implies that the refuge-city develops more of its own initiatives, in a humanitarian and pragmatic way, in the management of dispersed migration,

which allows it to free itself from the state in this area. This horizon affirms own redefinitions of the processes of political subjectivation and strengthens the power of action of the cities of the constitution of a migrant-subject, which composes in all its breadth the ethics of the refuge-city (Sennett, 2018). Urban resilience thus contributes to laying the foundations of the politics of the in-common (Mbembe, 2020).

Discussion and conclusion

In conclusion, our article fills a gap in the literature on local migration governance and the resilience of peripheral cities in receiving sub-Saharan Africans in Morocco. Our approach attempts to strike a better balance between the primacy of studies on migration policies and the institutional mechanisms at play in the processes of bordering and control of migration flows, on the one hand, and the scarcity of analyses on urban resilience and the processes of political subjectivation that emanate from it in the Moroccan terrain on the other. This article examines local responses to restrictive national policies and interrogates the local geography of reception in the specific context of the decentralized governance of sub-Saharan migration in Morocco. The move from a centralized governance associated with the central state to a decentered local governance of urban authorities and citizens that requires urban struggles, compromise, and claims of rights for socio-spatial justice is indicative of an urban resilience of peripheral cities (Lévy et al., 2018).

We operationalized the concept of urban resilience by testing it on the Moroccan ground and evaluating it in light of indicators that empirically show the resilience capacity of two peripheral cities that we chose as case studies (Tiznit and Taza). We then considered these two cities through their resilience in the specific context of spatial dispersal policy, which allowed us to identify characteristics that are common to them as well as their local specificities of reception and the diversity of their inclusive and hospitable approaches. The two peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza have been assigned as reception spaces for sub-Saharan nationals by the national dispersal policy since 2015 and have been responsible for their support and assistance in the context of state withdrawal. Dispersal, associated with the process of bordering, translates into a dynamic of contingent spatial distribution experienced by sub-Saharan migrants, observable throughout the Moroccan territory. The latter, hoping to reach the European continent, are taken by bus and forcibly displaced from the border camps in the north of Morocco to the inland cities or those in the south of the country. The spatial distribution of migrants, orchestrated by the Moroccan state, in cities such as Tiznit and Taza and their removal from the northern border areas of Morocco, aims to make migrants invisible and to prevent or mitigate the effects of so-called spatial concentration and encampment. The dispersal

and rejection logic in the northern Moroccan metropolises have led the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza to present themselves as a heterotopic alternative to the dissuasive and control mechanisms that characterize certain areas in proximity to the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (Foucault, 2004).

The results of our investigation show that our two observation sites have been transformed into refuge-cities by developing urban capabilities and reacting autonomously to the challenges of the daily organization of the city as a space for welcoming and living with dispersed migrants. These refuge spaces, approached from the perspective of urban resilience, can thus be seen as creative and pioneering responses provided by the collective actions of citizens and migrants who imagine new configurations of welcome and new connections to place, social rights and belonging toward urban inclusion. Despite their low economic dynamism and limited room for maneuver, the peripheral cities studied have deployed their own initiatives, mobilized their local resources, and developed resilient strategies to welcome migrants caught between two antagonistic poles. These spontaneous resilient strategies translate into a capacity for reactivity, proactivity, and potential for innovation and adaptability in order to provide a welcoming environment and micro-hospitality to attenuate the vulnerability of dispersed migrants. The migration issue is thus reconfigured through the prism of tension, and the resilience of peripheral cities is expressed in various strategies and supportive actions undertaken to counterbalance inhospitable urban policies. This urban resilience allows peripheral cities to consolidate their autonomous agency and their capacity for self-organization in order to be independent of the state in the area of migrant reception.

Our local-level data show that resilience can help us better understand the tension resulting from the logic of control and confrontation (of migrants with state surveillance devices) in metropolises—the tension and the quest for appeasement that correspond to the development of a new equilibrium in a fractured migratory path.

The concept of urban resilience thus invites us to see how the migration issue is reconfigured through the prism of this dialectic, which leads, in the cities of Tiznit and Taza, to the negotiation of an urban consensus, of coexistence and of a humanitarian and inclusive framework, which is the bearer of other possibilities. It should be noted, however, that since 2013 the Moroccan state has been investing at the national level in the design of a migration governance strategy, according to a humanist approach. This new public action strategy is based on a new immigration policy and on the launch of campaigns to regularize the administrative status of irregular migrants. The implementation of the 2011 constitutional reform and advanced regionalization is helping to reposition peripheral Moroccan cities as actors in migration governance in order to meet the broader challenges and issues of reception and integration of sub-Saharan migrants after the regularization

process. In this regard, the analysis of the dispersal policy and its effects on peripheral cities receiving dispersed migratory flows raises questions about the new mechanisms put in place by Morocco for a policy of regionalization and decentralization of the administration in relation to the central state. The analysis of reception practices and resilient strategies in Tiznit and Taza in the context of the dispersal policy reveals the dual approach to migration governance in Morocco. This approach reconciles the security and preventive dimension of managing sub-Saharan migratory flows in the major metropolises with the efficient and pragmatic dimension of relocating the control of migrant mobility and disengaging the state. The latter delegates the mission of receiving migrants dispersed at the level of northern metropolises to peripheral cities.

One of the most significant results of our research is that the peripheral cities of Tiznit and Taza, whose structural positioning reflects poor access to economic, political and cultural capital, are also able to build urban resilience in the light of a migratory governance of emergency and control. Our results show that these localities with limited opportunity structures can be resilient and initiate an innovative governance centered on the needs, claims and expectations of the first concerned by public action, in this case the dispersed migrants. They propose an alternative form of multi-level governance of the reception of migrants by federating a wide range of actors: various local associations, voluntary residents, managers, social workers, agents of decentralized services, local authorities, scientists, among others. More than in the Moroccan metropolises, assistance policies and reception arrangements are organized at the individual level through citizen initiatives and the daily mobilization of members of associations supporting migrants in informal camps, as illustrated by the case of the city of Taza. The resilience of the city of Tiznit shows another configuration of reception that is public, institutional and organized in networks of actors federating private actors, public actors and civil society in a collaborative, inclusive and multilevel approach. The individual and collective, but also intimate and political dimensions of the urban mobilizations can be intertwined, allowing for the transition from an ethical and political problematic of welcoming dispersed migrants to a public policy issue.

Our case studies highlight resilience fuelled by alliance and complementarity relationships between municipalities and civil society actors, which has an influence on the effectiveness of public actions to support migrants, their sustainability and the quality of services provided. Our results also show the role of the resilient cities of Tiznit and Taza in migration governance at the local level. These cities implement resilient strategies to adjust and circumvent restrictive migration policies in order to compensate for the lack of state action and sometimes institutional inaction in terms of receiving and caring for migrants. The cities of Tiznit and Taza, through their potential for resilience, have contributed to alleviating the vulnerability

of dispersed migrants (job offers, administrative guidance, socialization, the right to the city and to security, inclusion) and to renewing the lived experiences of dispersed migrants by establishing their local rights and by responding to their needs for social, emotional and legal recognition. In these refuge-cities, migration governance related to resilience could be defined, at best, as “more inclusive restorative governance”. They attempt, more or less, to compensate for the hostile logic that enamel some border agglomerations, by developing in an opposite way: resilience, decent reception (political actions, collective actions, inter-individual relations) of sub-Saharan migrants, hospitality and solidarity become among its tools. This alternative migratory governance set up by the refuge-cities of Tiznit and Taza is intended to break away from a security-based governance that is indifferent to the future of the migrant-subject, and which goes hand in hand with inhospitality and asymmetric treatment.

This form of governance is only possible because it emanates from concretization of commitments by municipal officials and citizens in solidarity, a welcoming stance and an alliance of local actors that offer a resilient perspective that transcends the security paradigm and the interplay of borders. This urban resilience is based on an ethic of conviction, an ethic of responsibility and finally an ethic of recognition that contribute to the construction of a reception that shows forms of adaptation transforming migration as a resource for the diplomacy of peripheral cities. Urban resilience in the refuge-cities of Tiznit and Taza is thus revealing of the way in which local actors contribute to reforming or transforming the migrant condition and give meaning to their city, to the place of migrants within it and to their claims, and to the values carried by policy-makers themselves.

As our in-depth interviews with migrants attest, resilience and migration governance arrangements in refuge-cities lead some migrants to choose to settle permanently in Morocco when their initial plan was to reach European shores. What we do not know from our data is whether such a resilient, multi-level governance approach to migration, as suggested by the literature and our empirical material, competes with migration control objectives, i.e., whether the inclusiveness of Moroccan refuge-cities attracts more migrants (regularized or not) to come or stay in these particular localities. To broaden this field of research and go further in the analysis and operationalization of resilience, additional comparative research would be relevant to clarify the conceptual relevance of urban resilience in migration studies. Thus, taking into account differentiated geographical and cultural contexts through the integration of Moroccan metropolises and port cities as a scale of analysis would make it possible to conceptually and empirically distinguish between resilient and non-resilient cities in terms of hosting sub-Saharan migration. This would allow for a better understanding of the specificity of resilient cities and their innovative character for the inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Refuge-cities would be understood both as an emerging concept embodying a new figure of urban innovation and not simply as an exception or an accidental place, but also as strategic heuristic scales asserting their own definitions of urban resilience in its dimensions of acting and being-together.

Understanding resilience as it relates to migration governance and the resulting relationship between migrants and peripheral cities in the South (in the case of Morocco) can provide African, European, and Anglo-Saxon scholars with insight into the wide range of pathways to migrant inclusion, many of which have not been sufficiently addressed in the migration literature. The urban inventiveness and resilience at stake in peripheral cities with low urban, social and economic endowments invites researchers to think about the mechanisms and modalities of the transition from vulnerability to resilience, from uncertainty to innovation, but also the articulation between individual social dispositions and the social structures that determine them. Moreover, even if these cities are not classic places of reception and settlement for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, who represent only a small percentage of the total population, they can be significant actors in the processes of resilience in peripheral cities. Our research thus invites us to lay the foundations for a renewed debate on infra-politics and the role of migrant actors as agents of local development and artisans of resilience who can contribute to the improvement of urban and community resilience, but also to the restructuring and rebranding of these peripheral cities. These elements can be explored in order to outline responses to contemporary migrant crises in the countries of the South and global North. This future research would make it possible to test the operative character of the notion of urban resilience in its relationship to the infra-politics. This would highlight its role as both a consolidator of subjectivity and the power to act of migrants and of those who receive them, but also as a transformer of migration as a resource for city diplomacy.

Author's note

This research is accompanied by an empirical interrogation with conceptual and epistemological considerations based on the relationship between the governance of sub-Saharan migration and urban resilience. We are led to evaluate the role of Moroccan peripheral cities in the architecture of the new Moroccan immigration and asylum policy and their participation in the management of the reception of sub-Saharan migrant populations in the specific context of spatial dispersal policy. These cities are marked by the emergence of new urban practices under the seal of hospitality and bear innovative and alternative forms of reception, inviting us to rethink resilient migratory governance. Thus, we show the particularities, the dynamism, the challenges and the opportunities, but also the

tensions and forms of local resistance that are reflected in the scale of refuge-cities in the context of a decentralized governance of migration.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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