



REPORT

Regional Power Rivalry and the Failure of the Arab Maghreb Union

Yasmina Allouche

Regional Power Rivalry and the Failure of the Arab Maghreb Union

Yasmina Allouche

© TRT WORLD RESEARCH CENTRE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

WRITTEN BY

Yasmina Allouche

PUBLISHER

TRT WORLD RESEARCH CENTRE

JANUARY 2019

TRT WORLD İSTANBUL

AHMET ADNAN SAYGUN STREET NO:83 34347

ULUS, BEŞİKTAŞ

İSTANBUL / TURKEY

TRT WORLD LONDON

PORTLAND HOUSE

4 GREAT PORTLAND STREET NO:4

LONDON / UNITED KINGDOM

TRT WORLD WASHINGTON D.C.

1819 L STREET NW SUITE 700 20036

WASHINGTON DC

www.trtworld.com

researchcentre.trtworld.com

Introduction



he Maghreb, which can be literally translated in Arabic as a “place of setting of the sun” to denote the commonly used meaning of the “West”, is the term by which North Africa is referred to.

The three French-colonised states of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as well as Libya and Mauritania are connected by religion, language and culture and have a shared population of nearly 100 million. The centuries of colonialism that unite the experiences of the region were vital in creating the foundations for the post-independence structuring to be defined by Maghreb integration (Bush and Seddon, 1999).

Momentum for political integration gathered in the 1980's following a number of meetings between the Maghreb state leaders from the 1950's onward. On February 17, 1989, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was established and a treaty signed in Marrakech by the five member states. The aim of the treaty was to advance economic integration, strengthen cooperation in foreign and defence policies, work towards the progress and prosperity of their societies, preserve peace, justice and equality and achieve free movement of persons and transfer of services, goods and capital (NATO Strategic Direction, 2018). The treaty also established a customs union to be functioning by 1995, a common economic market in 2000, and subsequently a shared security regime.

However, since its inception, very little has been achieved. Only six of the more than 30 agreements signed have been ratified by all

five member states and despite the intention of promoting economic growth among its members, the AMU has in fact lost more than half of its economic weight in the world with exports falling to less than 0.5% due to its lack of integration, the value of which annually has been estimated at €7.5 billion.

The large potential of the Maghreb region has been lost to continuous political divisions among state leaders unable to set aside differences or compromise for the sake of making the project of Maghreb integration a success. Instead, the process has been constantly derailed and the treaty's articles unable to significantly improve the social, economic and political aspects of the region as intended.

The last AMU summit that included all members took place in 1994 and since then the five member states have felt it sufficient to simply repeat rhetorical commitments to Maghreb integration whilst actively investing efforts elsewhere, in turn, disregarding the tenants of the agreement.

The main reason for the failure of the AMU has been the rivalry and competition between the region's powerhouses, Algeria and Morocco. These neighbours have not had a shared border since 1994 and relations have remained sour due to the contested Western Sahara issue.

Though the AMU's renewal is perceived by Algeria and Morocco as a key opportunity to address the security and economic challenges of the Maghreb, progress will remain stagnant for the region so long as the key players fail to resolve their differences.

From Dream to Attempted Reality

By the inception of the AMU, a number of events had contributed to the fragmentation of the region before reconciliation brought forth the quest for Maghreb unity. North Africa was defined by the follies of European colonialism marked during the 19th and 20th centuries. In order to protect L'Algérie Française following its invasion in 1830, France invaded Tunisia in 1881 and Morocco in 1912 incorporating these protectorate states into the French Empire. Libya was invaded in 1911 by Italy and Mauritania, suffering the least colonial interest, was part of French West Africa forming a strategic connection linking North and West Africa.

The splitting of homogeneous ethnic groups into British and French camps provoked the rise of new national identities and circumvented possibilities of sovereignty through ethnic solidarity (Miles, 2015). The borders that defined North and West Africa were set up as defence lines reflecting a history marked by military conflicts and diplomatic compromises instead of boundary lines formed through the course of natural history. All the boundaries in North Africa were French colonial creations that lacked knowledge of the terrain and the tribal structures within them.

They acted as administrative divisions which in turn would provoke delimitation, demarcation, irredentism and territorial claims, which the nations promised each other would be resolved in brotherly fashion post-independence. However, the primacy of national independence was the esteemed goal for national policy-makers over conflicting values of development and unity (Zartman, 1965).

The Sand War¹ between Algeria and Morocco in 1963 until the state border agreement of 1973- ratified by Morocco only in 1989-; the dispute over Mauritania and Morocco's recognition in 1969; territorial disputes between Tunisia and Algeria until 1970; and the Gulf of Gabès issue between Libya and Tunisia until 1988, highlighted the fragmentation of the region and the vital importance of integration (Busquets, 2014).

The Tangier meeting in 1958 and the establishment of the Permanent Consultative Committee in 1964 in Tunis began the process of actualising sentiments of Maghreb unity through frameworks of coordination and economic harmonisation (Mkimer, 2008). In June 1985, Morocco's King Hassan II presented Morocco's candidature to the European Commission (EC) at the European Summit at Fontainebleau in France- in the same year the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs announced Algeria's commitment to economic integration and the Maghreb union. The Maghreb High Commission and other specialised commissions were established during a summit meeting in Zeralda in Algeria in June 1988 and a year later the AMU was signed into existence by King Hassan II (Morocco), Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Tunisia), Chadli Bendjedid (Algeria), Muammar Gaddafi (Libya) and Maaouya Ould Sid'ahmed Taya (Mauritania) (Treaty establishing the Arab Maghreb Union, 1989).

The 1987 reconciliation of Tunisia and Libya and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Algeria and Morocco in 1988 set the conditions that made progression to the AMU possible (Taylor, 1993).

The AMU represented a medium that would prioritise the hopes of leaders, businessmen and citizens that may have felt side-lined by the Arab League, representative of 300 million, and the African Union, representing over one billion. Initially, five observatory sub-committees were created to look at the pros and cons of Maghreb unification: economy, education, finances and customs, culture and information, social, human and security issues and institutions.

Morocco and Algeria would lead on the economic committee, security would fall under Tunisia and Libya would preside over institutions which required consolidating the differing standpoints of the AMU members. The framework of the AMU was modelled on similar economic integration platforms like the League of Arab States (LAS) and the European Economic Community (EEC) that the AMU could implement as an example of successful regional unity.

¹ In September 1963, a year after Algeria's independence, a border conflict resulted in war over portions of Algeria's provinces of Tindouf and Bechar which Morocco claimed to be a part of its territories. The absence of a delineation between Morocco and Algeria following Algeria's independence resulted in the conflict.

Neo-liberal political scientists like Joseph Nye, classify regional integration as the basis upon which the AMU was modelled, centred on governmental policies designed to remove or reduce barriers for the mutual exchange of services, goods and people (Palmer, 1993).

The Presidential Council would consist of the five heads of state as the primary decision makers in the institution. A consultative assembly in Algiers was established, a Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (BMICE) in Tunis, a regional judicial authority in Nouakchott, a General Secretariat in Rabat and a Maghreb University and academy in Tripoli (El-Maghur, 2011).

The AMU was primarily viewed as an economic strategy that would capitalise on the region's assets and relaunch the Maghreb as a trade hub, drawing from its position between the Mediterranean and Atlantic and utilising the vast reserves of oil, gas, water and uranium of the Maghreb to revolutionise the region's economy (Hudson, 1991).

The 19 articles in the treaty discuss the union's organisation, defence and security, the final provisions and stipulated goals. Of the 38 agreements signed in the AMU's treaty, 21 are economic in line with the goal of creating a trade hub in the region that would excel domestically as well as internationally (El-Maghur, 2011).

Regional integration would help increase domestic and foreign investment, global competitiveness, promote the region's public goods and prevent conflict (Economic Commission for Africa, 2004). However despite its best intentions, the AMU has failed to actualise substantial change or indeed honour its commitment of Maghreb unity.

The organisation has remained dormant since its last summit held in 1994 in Tunisia and little of the treaty's principles have been honoured. The shakeup of the region following the Arab Spring in 2011 had the potential to redevelop the AMU as a platform by which frustrated citizens might be able to see some substantial change, however, the region has become more fragmented than ever, despite its vast potential.



(Jalal Morchidi / Anadolu Agency)

A Failed Institution

Despite the intentions of Maghreb unity post-independence, national endeavours within the enforced colonial borders took precedence. The AMU's beginnings were marked by the end of the Cold War. Arguably, its foundation would have been influenced by the events of Europe and not solely driven by the needs of the region and of its citizens.

By the end of the Cold War, the Maghreb was divided between the opposing ideological camps: Libya and Algeria leant towards that of communism and Tunisia and Morocco could be defined in certain ways to be of a capitalist nature. Instead of consolidating the contrasting ideologies, the divisions were left to fester and solidify positions that set back any progress for economic integration (El-Maghur, 2011).

Trust in the system began to disintegrate as member states began to look elsewhere for cooperation. The legal and financial structuring of cross border regional projects became complex once states became members of different committees. Tripoli refocused its efforts to the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-CAD) following the imposition of sanctions resulting from the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, and Mauritania embarked on structural adjustment programmes under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Multiple memberships to several integration blocs have proven beneficial for weaker-performing states like Mauritania, who founded the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union until its withdrawal in 2000 (Pazzanita, 2008).

For the region's stronger performing economies like Morocco, looking to further its own economic outreach, platforms like ECOWAS have proven worthwhile to invest in. In 2017, the same year as its repatriation to the African Union, Morocco filed a request to join ECOWAS ("Morocco ECOWAS Bid", 2017). The same year, Tunisia also became a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) which has a combined population of 625 million and GDPs totalling \$1 trillion (Ghanmi,

2017). Both moves contribute to greater African, however, they ultimately further disadvantage the existent aim of the project of Maghreb integration.

Investment opportunities have mirrored the individual state outlook of the best progression of the AMU and whether integration with the Middle East or Africa was the best direction for the success of the AMU or prioritising its partnership with Europe. Libyan president Muammar Gaddafi's interests were directed in strengthening ties with sub-Saharan Africa; Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika focused on strengthening ties with the rest of the Arab world; and Tunisia's Zine el Abidine and Morocco's King Hassan II anchored their stance by advocating for stronger ties with the European Union.

These tensions are often used as an opportunity to develop the respective economies of member states particular with the European Union (EU). Each of the member states have a separate treaty with the EU irrespective of the agreements signed by their neighbours or in contradiction with previous agreements in the AMU which encourages a joint custom economic union. Stipulated in the AMU is how members can negotiate with the EU through a single European market and encourages trade and economic co-operation by allowing freedom of movement across frontiers mirroring the ECC's 1957 treaty. The AMU would then serve as a negotiating block bettering ties with Europe, the United States and China. However, members of the AMU member states have chosen to instead prioritise the development of their respective economies and relations with external bodies to the detriment of their fellow members in the Maghreb Union ("The Forgotten Dream, 2018).

In terms of issues of security and immigration, the EU has stipulated its preference to trade with Maghreb states as a single entity vis a vis the AMU but at the same time acquiring gains from Maghreb competition in their provision of concessions in economic affairs by dealing with each member state separately in turn contributing to the redundancy of the AMU (Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies, 2013).

1.1 Dysfunction and Disunity

Lack of a definitive position has also weakened any progress in moulding the Maghreb as a key geo-strategic partner, connecting member states with the lucrative sub-Saharan African market for example.

Global actors attempting to dominate the economy as primary traders in the region often also end up exacerbating the region's competitiveness particularly if separate trade agreements come at the detriment of the region's economic development. The EU, for example, trades with Morocco via Spain making Morocco the largest exporter of fish products to Spain. Morocco then exports the fish to Europe, which is often in contradiction of the treaty which states that regional trade should be prioritised.

Economic reforms adopted by member states have often only progressed if deemed to be a safe distance from impeaching upon power or control of individual states leaving little room for improvement. The socialist approach adopted by Algiers enabled a position of refusal to cooperate on anything which it deemed a threat to its domestic economic control. As a result, liberal economic reform across the five member states was stunted by Algeria refusing foreign investment in its financial sector and its strong stance on privatisation (El-Maghur, 2011).

Its dysfunction as a unified platform has prevented the AMU from serving as an institution by which member states can be represented as a unit. This was exemplified by the second Gulf War where two stances were adopted by the Maghreb states. Morocco and Tunisia supported the Arab League of States (ALS)'s vote condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait; Algeria refused to vote, opposing the mediation of the United Nations; and Libya, like Algeria, reiterated initiatives that would not allow for the intervention of external forces in the Gulf. Mauritania- loyal to Iraq for its support of the country during its war with Senegal- opposed the ALS's decision to condemn Iraq.

The treaty reiterated the sanctity of the state's internal affairs and called on member states to avoid adopting measures or acting in any way that would threaten a member's sovereignty and security which would be deemed as hostile action against all. However, power politics and prioritisation of domestic policies

have effectively relegated the AMU from serving as an institution which enshrines the security of each member state for the sake of regional integration.

The period of the 1990's best exemplifies this- Mauritania for example failed to receive the backing it needed during its conflict with Senegal, the rest of its neighbours supported sanctions against Libya which lead to its subsequent temporal withdrawal, and Algeria was isolated during its civil war in the 1990s.

However the worst culprit of the AMU's continuous failure is the power play between Algeria and Morocco and their competitive dominance which has cultivated the Maghreb that exists today (Aixala, and Fabro, 2008). Because of this rivalry, neighbouring states have either allied themselves to Morocco or Algeria, and in doing so, weakening this power bloc, or allied themselves with each other and strengthened their respective positions.

The competition and rivalry between Algeria and Morocco is emphasised by two factors: geography- more than half of the region's populations and land mass is accounted for by Algeria and Morocco- and, more significantly, the contentious Western Sahara issue, which has been a long-time wedge in relations between the neighbouring states.

The Western Sahara was annexed by Morocco in 1975 after the Spanish Kingdom transferred control of the region, which it had held since 1884, to Mauritania and Morocco, the former of which would relinquish its own control in later years. The Polisario Front, founded in 1973 and backed by Algeria, founded the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic in 1976. Both the Polisario and Algeria have Morocco's position that the Western Sahara should remain as an autonomous, self-governing entity under Moroccan sovereignty (Hodges 1983).

Moving beyond the contentiousness of the Western Sahara issue, the latter was not used as a prerequisite for the region's integration by Bendjedid and Hassan II in the mid-1980s during the Saudi-brokered talks to address the ongoing tensions (Boukhars, 2018). Initially, Algeria and Morocco viewed integration as the framework by which the decades-long dispute would be resolved, however, four years after the treaty signing it became evident that the AMU would not be the apparatus of reconciliation that was hoped for. As a result, many of the proposed summit meetings failed to materialise.

Morocco's Berm, a 1,600-mile-long and 10-foot-tall sand wall along the Western Sahara completed in 1987 is one of the world's largest active military barriers and was erected to prevent guerrilla fighters from infiltrating Moroccan territory. The border, dotted with landmines, has effectively isolated the Sahrawis.

Mediation efforts by external states, successful or not, have also contributed to the AMU's stagnation. The United Nations has been the primary mediator and peacekeeper in the Western Sahara. Through a combination of ceasefires and buffer zones, it has positively contributed to regional stability albeit on a temporary basis (Lamiri, 2014). The other side of the coin, however, was that the AMU was not deemed potent enough to attempt solutions and mediate efforts.

However, given the entrenched nature of the disputes between regional powers, it is unlikely that the feuds that characterize regional relations will allow for the Maghreb states to serve as competent mediators for regional conflicts. Algeria, despite its counter-terrorism track record, has been side-lined by France in leading mediation efforts in the Mali crisis and is not part of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel launched in 2017, which fellow Maghreb member Mauritania is.

Its own effort, the Joint Military Staff Committee of the Sahel Region (CEMOC), failed to accomplish anything of significance. This was partly the consequent of a lack of cooperation and funding from its AMU members ("Right role of G5 Sahel summit", 2017).

1.2 The loss of Economic Potential

As a result of the "legislative barriers and trade restrictions", the Maghreb loses some \$530 billion dollars annually (Konsentio, 2013). The Maghreb has underperformed significantly in domestic trade with its neighbours, standing at less than 3percent compared with its commercial transaction standing with the EU which amounts to 65 percent of its trade transactions (Busquets, 2014).

The worst performing for inter-trade transactions are Libya and Algeria who, unlike Morocco and Tunisia, lack the diversification of their exports due to their primary reliance on hydrocarbons, to which Morocco and Tunisia are not as beholden to. Mauritania remains

the weakest member, overshadowed by its more developed neighbours. .

In 2015, intra-Maghreb trade accounted for just 3.6 percent of the region's total trade transactions and contributed a mere 2.05 percent to the combined GDP of the countries. (Azam Mahjoub, 2017). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations accounted for 22 percent of its trade and ECOWAS saw 20 percent (Achy, 2012).

Despite Morocco being the region's lead fish exporter, Tunisia and Libya import their sources of fish from Europe- namely Spain and Italy- who in turn have imported fish from Morocco. The result is that instead of the Maghreb benefiting from inter-trade, European parties are instead the main benefactors from direct trade and the region's economic development is dealt a blow by having to go through third-parties.

Morocco's more diverse exports of textiles, mechanics and electrics, though better in performance, are still not pumping the numbers needed to alter significantly the region's economic standing and inter-trade efforts. Morocco remains the only country to have improved its export potential with all the member states except Algeria which has accounted for just 4.05 percent in 2015 (Busquets, 2014).

In terms of joint trade, Algeria's exports to Morocco have merely reached 13 percent of their expected potential. The joint ventures of both countries should have more than doubled by 2015, but instead, Algeria's exports to Morocco expanded "only by 33 percent and Morocco by 37 percent" ("Morocco and Algeria keep building more Barriers," 2017).

The 2004 Agadir free trade agreement between Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan has had some notable successes, however, Morocco and Tunisia have maintained non-tariff measures in place that still prioritises their individual states (Boukhars, 2018). The competition between the members mean that projects that could benefit from a collective partnership, are being cannibalised by competition. For instance, Algeria announced last year plans to build a \$3.3 billion port and industrial zones, which should aid the maritime connectivity of the region, but will instead most likely be used to compete with Morocco's own network of ports.

Algeria's safety net, by way of its oil and gas production, has buoyed its self-sufficiency since independence, however falling oil prices since 2014 and the downward spiral of its foreign currency reserves has forced the country to adopt a number of reforms to try to halt what is ultimately an inevitable crisis. Economic orthodoxy reiterated by economists to cut imports and diversify exports needs to include sales outside the oil and gas sector and an alternative to sole reliance on shale gas. Algeria's long-time lead in this field should also force it to seek genuine efforts at integration with the greater

Maghreb through the realisation that joint efforts will raise the economic foundations of the region and also deter economic crisis for each of the states.

If complementary economic measures were normalised in the Maghreb, instead of competition that has enabled the region's integration failure, joint ventures of Morocco's phosphates and Algeria's hydrocarbons and natural minerals could provide the type of fertiliser production that would be a force in attracting foreign investments and employment opportunities.

Future Outlook

In January 2017, Morocco's King Mohammed VI declared at an African Union summit in Addis Ababa that "the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) is dead" (Middle East Monitor, 2018), echoing previous sentiments of Gaddafi when Libya failed to attain presidency of the Union from Algeria in 1994, that it was time to put the dormant institution "in the freezer" (Le Quotidien d'Oran, 2003). Algeria's foreign minister Abdelkader Messahel hit back at the King's subsequent comments in response, reiterating Algeria's belief in "Maghreb integration for historical, cultural, political and economic reasons" ("Algeria accuses Morocco of preventing Maghreb Union growth", 2018).

Over the past decades there have been a number of efforts at integration which have all fallen through with the last summit meeting having taken place in Tunis in 1994. Since then, repeated calls to revitalise the organisation and repeated warnings that the Maghreb is failing have proven to be empty rhetoric.

Since the Arab Spring, Tunisia has become more vocal in pushing for an AMU revival. Former president Moncef Marzouki toured the Maghreb in 2012 renewing calls for regional cooperation. Marzouki's efforts in 2016 were also echoed by Morocco and Algeria's own calls in mid and late 2018. Hope that the institution can be revived once more is grounded by the fact that none of the five AMU member states have expressed desires to cut membership with the Union. Additionally, initiatives have been adopted in recent years, which indicate that belief in its potential still exists.

The Union for the Maghreb (UPM), launched in 2008 in Paris during regional disparity and lack of economic growth in the southern Mediterranean, provided a new boost in the North-South Mediterranean partnership. December 2012, the EU's offer to support the Maghreb's regional cooperation on the basis of solid proposals set forth by the five member states was initiated by a joint communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (European Commission, 2012). The agreement promoted compliance with European standards and further trade and investments in the Americas and Asia. Environment and sustainable development, education, transport, economy and society were the basis of the cooperation to boost intra-regional specialties that places the Maghreb on the global market.

The launch of the Maghreb Bank of Investment and Foreign Trade (BMICE) in December 2015, headquartered in Tunisia, with an initial capital of \$150 million is yet another step to boost investments, create the freer flow of people and goods in the region and improve shared infrastructures particularly the poor maritime connections which is the "the lowest logistical performance index among Maghreb countries" (Mohamed-Chérif and Ducruet, 2016). Despite it being one of the founding tenets of the agreement the better-late-than-never attitude is an indication that, aside from its pace, there is some form of development that can instil some hope in the concept.

The Maghreb consists of states with fragmented markets, which can only be improved through increased trade and foreign investment. The African Economic Community is a prime example in indicating how economic integration and intra-regional trade promoted greater diversification and African unity as well as easing the fragmentation of much of the continent's markets (Easterly and Levine, 1997).

The Maghreb has the potential to be a strong global economic platform that has instead been set aside by the lack of commitment, effort and opportunism whose fulfilment exists outside of the region. Oil resources, foreign exchange reserves and manageable inflation are all factors that should provide a strong-enough foundation for reforms and external investments for the AMU framework to be a success instead of the failure it has been. The importance of recognising the benefits of regional integration, economic diversification and liberalisation and better collective living standards benefit each member state instead of adopting measures that are in sole accordance with state interests which limit trade and investments.

Algeria and Morocco opening their border for the free flow of goods and citizens would be a start to reigniting integration along with greater transport infrastructures, upgrading the trade levels of smaller companies, and consistent regulation of services would aid in the region's markets being less fragmented and stimulating domestic trade investments such as was seen with Central America. These endeavours could be further boosted if they utilise Europe's Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area which can prove beneficial as a middle base between the region and the global arena (El-Maghur, 2011).

The significance of bilateral relations between the EU and the Maghreb is a factor that needs to be developed further but by primarily placing the region's economic development at the forefront of all agreements and prioritising inter-regional trade. The Europe Maghreb Pipeline Limited (EMPL)-incorporated in July 1992 to promote and finance the Maghreb-Europe Gas Pipeline (MEG) from Algeria to Spain and the rest of Europe through Morocco-are one of the few initiatives that have boosted the economic partnership of the Mediterranean and the Maghreb (Europe Maghreb Pipeline Limited).

The domino-effect of the Arab Spring in 2011 throughout the region and the Middle East should have acted as a new spark to revolutionise the region and reiterate the urgent need for unity and cooperation carried forward by the spirit of the region's marginalised and frustrated youth. Those present in the Zeralda summit have since departed the political scene and the Arab Spring has changed the face of the region- both Tunisia and Libya ousted their long-time rulers with notable success for the former and war and political instability for the latter. However, the quest for democratisation should act as an incentive to adopt more reforms, vary governmental structures and liberalise institutions that are open to creating and receiving opportunities that benefit citizens who are more empowered than ever.

Six years later, with the effect of terrorism rippling through the region- Libya's porous borders exporting Daesh militants, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's (AQIM) operations in Algeria and Mali, and Tunisia's growing militant insurgency- regional cooperation and shared initiatives utilising the expertise of member states for a counter-terrorism apparatus that can be applied regionally and in coordination with European efforts have, like the AMU, failed to be of much measurable benefit.

The transnational terror threat has forced the five AMU members to reinforce security and military presence at their respective borders, undermining the final aim of the Union which calls for the free movement of persons, services and goods. Instead, member states are erecting border fences and walls for the sake of securitising their lands against trans-border crimes, in turn, further isolating themselves from one another. In 2017, a barbed wire wall equipped with surveillance camera and control towers was erected along Algeria's border with Morocco ("Algeria Seals Land Borders with Morocco", 2017).

Similarly, in 2016, Tunisia announced plans to build a border wall along its border with Libya to help stem the flow of militants, illegal immigrants, firearms and drugs into the country and the broader Maghreb. In 2018, the US Department of Defence stated its intention to fund the security border with \$20 million worth of cameras to add to the sensor system funded by Germany ("Tunisia \$20 million border security package, 2018). Following suit in 2016, Algeria

announced plans to build sand barriers with Libya and Tunisia.

Whilst beneficial for the wider international arena in preventing its exposure to terrorism and drug cartels, these borders are at the detriment to the development of the AMU and its potential as a body by which a systematic response to national security concerns can be utilised.

Transport infrastructure must be upgraded and geared towards regional integration. New social regulations must be put in place, particularly with regard to the job market. Extending Maghreb integration should stimulate growth, increase the region's attractiveness of direct foreign investments and entail new trade dynamics. Such a trend should give birth to new forms of intra-regional specialisations that can pave the way for a profitable integration of the Maghreb to the global market, differentiate trade and put in place systems of steady profit and scale economies ("The Cost of Non Maghreb", 2008).

However, like other integrated networks, development of the institution is still a work in progress but

emphasis must be placed on developing its key sector of economics. The more recent AU, for example, is riddled with strategic and influence limitations within its partnership with multilateral bodies but has set out clear goals for the next 10 years in its socio-economic development. Similarly, the EU, an exemplary body for integrative bodies, has had to deal with many obstacles- most recently Britain's move to exit the Union has made it appear fallible and has forced it to adopt measures that ensure that remaining key members do not follow suit and further weaken the body.

Another example is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, founded in 1967, for stability and cooperation, which has been marred by corruption but has continue to succeed as a growing market for more than 600 million consumers. Launching the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 has cemented more integration, fostered a single market and allowed for a revised Trans-Pacific Partnership (Mahmood, 2018). As long as there remains an absence of integration in the region, the AMU will not be able to succeed and the aim of Maghreb unity will remain a utopian concept.

Conclusion

The movement of Maghreb integration and unity during the resistance to centuries of colonialism was tunnelled into the region's post-independence reconstruction. The AMU was created by five states that recognised the benefits integration and unity would bring for their states, the continent and the globe, but, 29 years later, efforts to resuscitate the dormant institution have been lacklustre.

Hope lies in the recognition that exists within the circle of the five-member states that Maghreb integration is still attainable, reiterated by renewed calls over the years by members recommitting efforts to make the AMU work and recognising its potential in actualising the dream of millions.

The Union must be able to cultivate a common identity aided by the cultural and language similarities, utilise its surplus for the sake of social stability and in fortifying its national security. The tumultuous shift in the Maghreb to democratise systems and transition

to competitive, productive economies are some of the ongoing challenges that states face on a national level.

Serious focus on bettering each of their human rights records, as well as contentious minority issues can build a fortitude of tolerance and good governance needed to fight the deep- levels of corruption of those in power who are greatly out of tune with their young population (Al-Jazeera Centre for Studies, 2013).

Recognising the need to reinforce efforts in civil society is vital in building regional unity and reiterating the importance of the AMU through positive reaffirmation of the gains to be had through its support. Activating the articles concerning the opening of borders and the guarantee of free movement for capital and individuals is a positive start but requires a complimentary attitude that opposes competition among countries of the Maghreb which looks at difference as an opportunity to compromise and advance.

Bettering the relationship with each of their civilian populations will create an understanding centred on trust where concerns, such as the high unemployment rates that plague the region, are acknowledged and active steps are taken to show that reforms are possible. At the moment, maintaining damaging status quos and interests of governments driven by the power elite are prioritised over the concerns of the population which were the ripe conditions by which the Arab Spring ignited (The Arab Maghreb and Current Regional Transformations, 2013).

The need for integration of the Maghreb as a complementary bloc is tantamount in becoming a credible coalition that can exist in the same successful integrated systems such as the EU and where it can attract dependency particularly for smaller enterprises or aid economically weaker states like Mauritania. Due to the politics and divisions between states, an external mediator that can initiate talks with a clear objective of seeing the AMU succeed could also present itself as a solution for the current stagnation. A mediator from a member state of the African Union (AU) or ALS, that would not be seen as intervening in the region, could be an option and would by learned enough of the region's sensitives and could draw from their own membership experience in order to drive positive discussions and mediate soured relations.

The absence of a functioning AMU south of the Mediterranean has contributed no doubt to the frozen conflict stalemate of the Western Sahara. All the stakeholders would be best pressed to come to a compromise to stabilise the Maghreb through a concrete Western Sahara settlement which in turn could be the means by which the AMU is resuscitated. The potential of the AMU acting as the platform by which other integrated institutions like the AU could utilise as their representative in the Maghreb has also been lost. If the AU had had this regional medium then it is likely the institution would have played a much more significant part in mediating the Libyan crisis, following the ousting of Gaddafi during the Arab Spring, and overridden the need for external forces to intervene and subsequently divide north from south of the Sahara (Komegay, 2015).

The dream is indeed attainable however as long as the region's rivalry between Algeria and Morocco remains unsolved and is allowed to fester indefinitely then it

is unlikely that any developments will occur enough to garner interest in seeing its success. Meaningful diplomatic efforts need to be in force in order to restart the initiative and calls by member states need to be heeded jointly so that words turn into action and the region's mass of potential is utilised well.

The Arab Spring, with its revolutionary spirit carried forward by the voices of a people holding their regimes to account for neglect and worse should have provoked a ripple of change that would revolutionise the region. However, states are more fragmented than ever, economies are suffering, conflict and terrorism are rife and the Maghreb states have remained fixated in advancing domestic goals with little interest in contributing to the collective benefit.

Until steps are taken to actively change this, it is unlikely the AMU as a model of Maghreb integration will amount to much but a missed opportunity. As recently as November 2018, Algeria extended calls for the Arab Maghreb Union Council of Foreign Ministers to meet following calls by Morocco for dialogue between the states. Tunisia has also reiterated its willingness to present itself as a mediator for Algeria and Morocco in order for the calls to be actualised successfully which the AU, ALS and France have expressed hope for. However, with Libya still without a recognised unity government and Algeria anticipating its presidential elections next year it remains to be seen whether a 35th meeting will prove successful for a region so in need of Maghreb unity.

Bibliography

Abedini, J., & Péridy, N. (2008). The Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA): an Estimation of Its Trade Effects. *Journal of Economic Integration*, 23(4), 848-872.

Abdenaby, L. (2014). Development of the peace process in the Western Sahara Conflict (Thesis, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, US) Retrieved from <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a611727.pdf>

Achy, L. (2012, March). The Arab Spring Revives Maghreb Integration. Retrieved November 20, 2018, from <http://carnegie-mec.org/2012/03/06/arab-spring-revives-maghreb-integration-pub-47385>

Arab Maghreb Union: Where is it when we need it? (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/08/7-challenges-to-business-in-the-asean-region-and-how-to-solve-them/>

African Union Peace and Security Council 679th Meeting. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/679th-com-g5sahel-13-04-2017.pdf>

Algeria accuses Morocco of preventing Maghreb Union growth (2018, February 21). Retrieved November 22, 2018, from <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180221-algeria-accuses-morocco-of-preventing-maghreb-union-growth/>

Algeria Seals Land Borders with Morocco. (2018, November 29). Retrieved from <http://northafricapost.com/26507-algeria-seals-land-borders-with-morocco.html>

Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, (2018). The Arab Maghreb and Current Regional Transformations. Retrieved from <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/evens/2013/04/201342104624548637.html>

Bush, R and Seddon, D. (1999). North Africa in Africa, Review of African Political Economy, Vol. 26, No. 82, North Africa in Africa

Chan K. and Gemayel E., Risk Instability and the Pattern of Foreign Direct Investment in the Middle East and North

Africa Region, IMF Working Paper WP/04/139. August 2004, p. 14.

Deng, M. F. and I. Zartman, William. I (2002). A Strategic Vision for Africa: The Kampala Movement; Demilitarizing the Mind: African Agendas for Peace and Security. pp. 20-22.

Easterly, W., & Levine, R. (1997). Africa's growth tragedy. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson Center for Political Economy.

El-Maghur, M (2011). Evolution, Challenges and Prospects of the Arab Maghreb Union 1951-2010 (Thesis, University of Nairobi, Kenya) Retrieved from http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/3550/Mohamed_Evolution.%20challenges%20and%20Prospects%20of%20the%20Arab%20Maghreb%20Union,%201951-2010.pdf?sequence=1

Finding the Right Role for the G5 Sahel Joint Force. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/burkina-faso/258-force-du-g5-sahel-trouver-sa-place-dans-lembouteillage-securitaire>

Ghanmi, L. (2017). Arab Maghreb Union: A big idea that has gone nowhere. Retrieved from <https://the arabweekly.com/arab-maghreb-union-big-idea-has-gone-nowhere>

Hodges, T. (1983). Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War (1st ed.). Lawrence Hill Books.

Hudson, M.C. (1991). After the Gulf War: prospects for democratization in the Arab world. *Middle East Journal*, 45(7), 1991, 407-426

Issues of the Maghreb integration "The Cost of Non Maghreb". (2008). Retrieved from https://www.finances.gov.ma/Docs/2008/depf/2435_issuesofthemaghrebintegration.pdf

IMF. (2004). Risk Instability and the Pattern of Foreign Direct Investment in the Middle East and North Africa Region, Working Paper WP/04/139. p. 14

- Konsentio, (2013). Making the Case for Maghreb Business in Times of Change. Retrieved from https://di.dk/SiteCollectionDocuments/DIBD/AE-Network/Network%20Meetings%202014/Konsentio_IMCI_Draft%20report.pdf
- Mahjoub, A. et.al (2017). Intégration régionale: quelles alternatives populaires pour une intégration effective et durable du Maghreb?”. Retrieved from <http://ftdes.net/rapports/resume.coutdunonmaghreb.pdf>
- Miles, W. (2015) Postcolonial Borderland Legacies of Anglo-French Partition in West Africa. *African Studies Review*, 58(3), 191-213. doi:10.1017/asr.2015.71
- Mohamed-Chérif, F and Ducruet, César (2016). Regional integration and maritime connectivity across the Maghreb seaport system. *Journal of Transport Geography*, Elsevier, 2016, 51, pp.280-293 retrieved from <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01145664/document>
- Morocco and Algeria keep building more barriers. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2017/07/27/morocco-and-algeria-keep-building-more-barriers>
- NATO. The Arab Maghreb Union: The Forgotten Dream. (2018) Retrieved from http://www.thesouthernhub.org/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=1108&ver=1
- Norman D. P (1993). *The New Regionalism in Asia and the Pacific*. Lexington Books, 1991
- Nkala, O. (2018). Tunisia getting \$20 million sensor package for border security. Retrieved from http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50895:tunisia-getting-20-million-sensor-package-for-border-security&catid=87:border-security&Itemid=188
- Palmer, N. (1991). *The new regionalism in Asia and the Pacific*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.
- Risk Instability and the Pattern of Foreign Direct Investment in the Middle East and North Africa Region. (2004). Retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2016/12/30/Risk-Instability-and-the-Pattern-of-Foreign-Direct-Investment-in-the-Middle-East-and-North-17518>
- Supporting closer cooperation and regional integration in the Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia | EU Neighbourhood Library. (2012). Retrieved from <https://library.euneighbours.eu/content/supporting-closer-cooperation-and-regional-integration-maghreb-algeria-libya-mauritania-moro>
- United Nations. Economic Commission for Africa; United Nations Trade and Regional Integration Division (2004). *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa*. (2018). Retrieved from <http://Economic Commission for Africa>
- Aixala, J. and Fabro, G. 'Does the Impact of Institutional Quality on Economic Growth Depend on Initial Income Level? *Economic Affairs*, Vol:28, No:3, 2008, p. 45-49.
- Zartman, I. (1965). The Politics of Boundaries in North and West Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3(2), 155-173. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/158700>

