





# **DEMOGRAPHY AND URBANIZATION, THE HIDDEN KEYS TO DEVELOPMENT**

The Moroccan case



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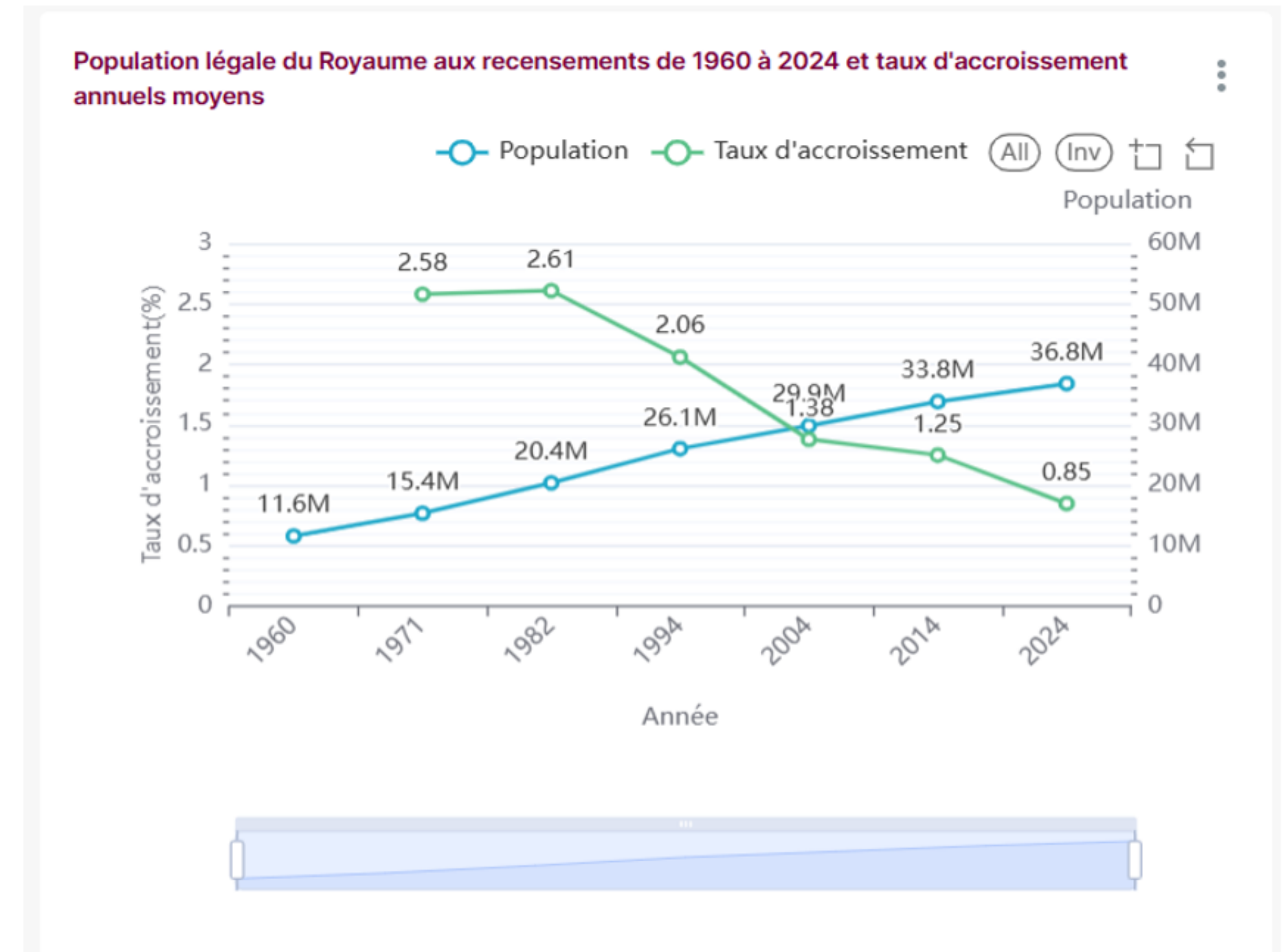
# Urbanization is causing the population to fall:

## Demographic implosion :

- The demographic transition: fertility rate from 4.5% in 1960 to 2.1% in 2003.
- The growth rate has increased from 2.58% in 1971 to 0.85% in 2024

## Thanks to urbanization:

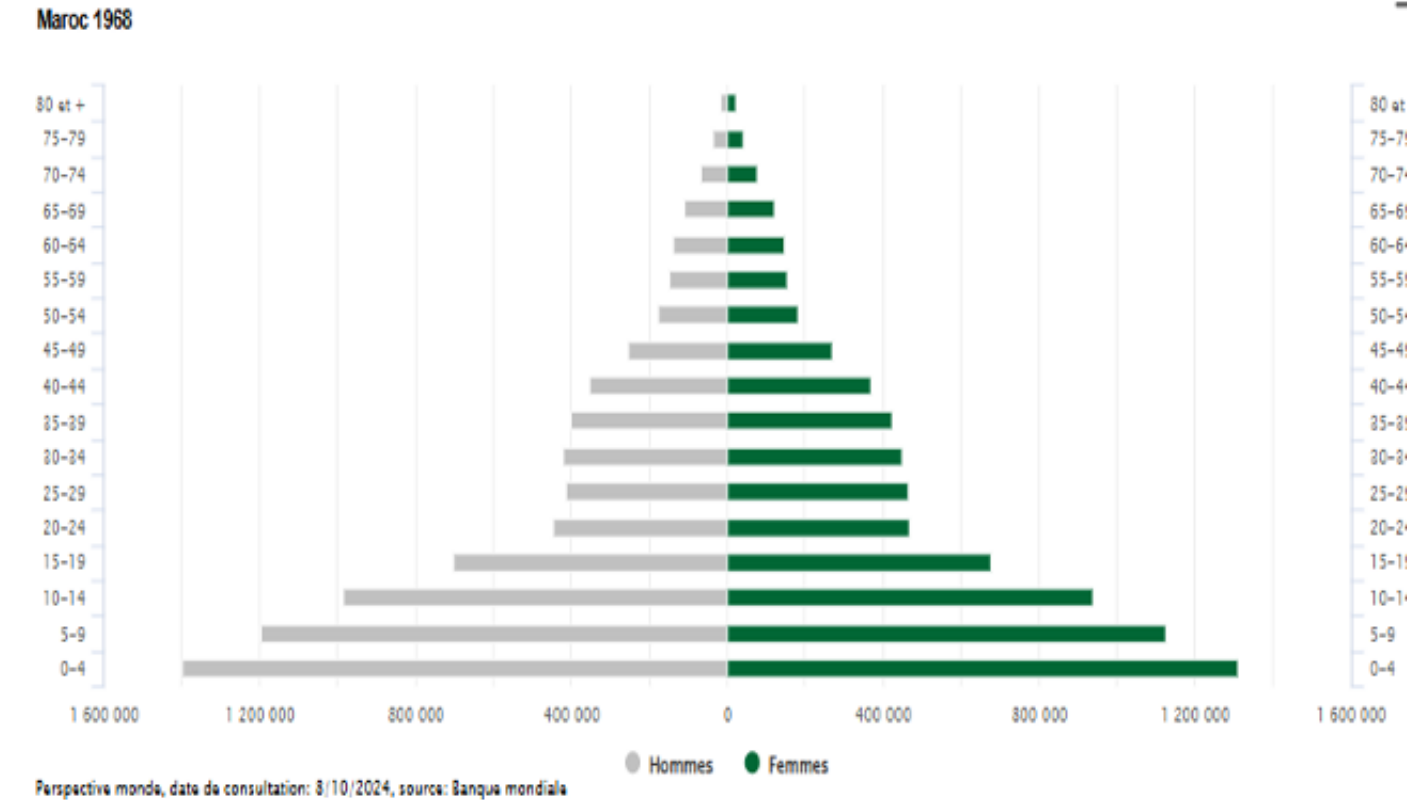
- Massive rural exodus: urbanization from about 30% (1960) to 62.8% (2024).
- The urban population has grown from 8.8 million in 1982 to about 23.1 million in 2024.



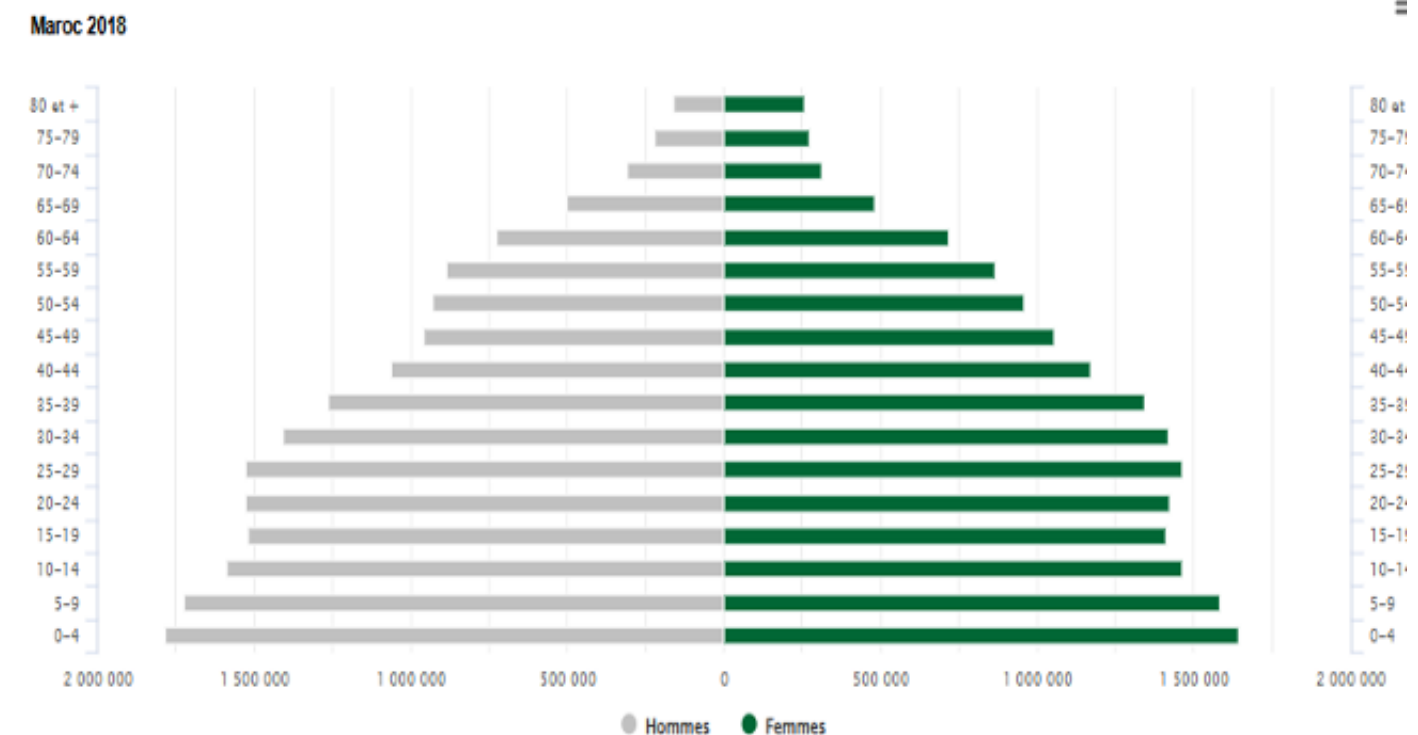
# Morocco's demographic transition

- Decline in fertility: 4.5 children/woman in 1960 to around 2 in 2024 (1.8 in urban areas and 2.4 in rural areas)
- Too much human pressure on the rural territories is pushing for rural exodus, with the rural population remaining stable.
- Access to services, health, education and urban services, and the prospect of integration through employment make the cities attractive.
- The Moroccan state has contained the growth of urban spaces: 45m<sup>2</sup> per household in social housing for 120m<sup>2</sup> in rural areas, which contributes to the tightening of the family unit : achieving metropolization versus rurbanization
- Finally, the desire for women's liberation and an improvement in the standard of living encouraged a reduction in the number of children.
- The Moroccan state has developed permament and successful family planning campaigns.
- The average age of marriage for women has risen above 25 years old.

## Age Pyramid in Morocco – 1968



## Age Pyramid in Morocco – 2018



Source : World Bank

# The Demographic Dividend

A period of demographic transition is called the demographic dividend when the percentage of minors decreases sharply while the percentage of seniors remains low. Seniors and minors are dependent age groups that are cared for by the working population.

The locomotive of the economy has fewer expenses than before, and the total savings capacity increases accordingly.

## **Limitations of this approach:**

- To maximize the demographic dividend, the national economy needs to benefit from maximum productive efficiency, which in turn depends on the availability of the human quality factor.
- The demographic dividend is short-lived: as soon as the population ages, the ratio between the working population and the dependent age groups decreases again.

**Has Morocco maximized the benefits of the demographic dividend ?**

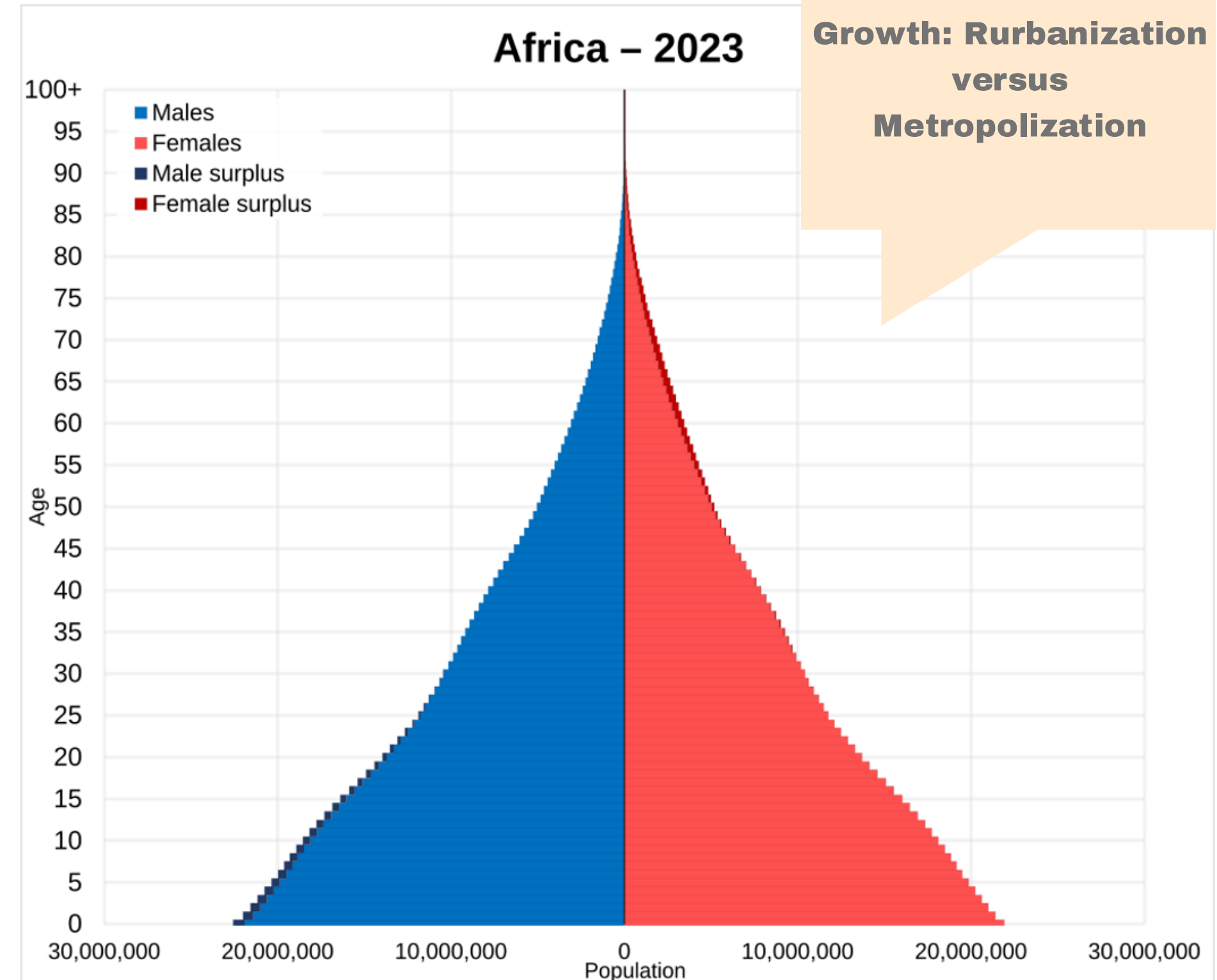
# The quality of human capital, a key factor for growth

- Morocco spends 5.3% of its GDP on education, which places it in the average of emerging countries, but this is still lower than the percentages in developed countries, 7% for example in Scandinavia.
- Compared to the amounts devoted to education per student, the gap is more negative compared to developed countries: the factor is 1 to 8.
- Growth opportunities have been limited by the lack in trained people.
- The countries of Southeast Asia, called dragons, experienced growth rates between 7 and 9% during their demographic boom.
- Morocco continues to stagnate between 3 and 5%.
- Where has the savings capacity released by the demographic dividend been invested ? Public investment in infrastructure versus a deficit of industrial projects.
- Anyway, despite these limitations due to the human factor, Moroccan state acquired, because of the demographic dividend, new strategic capacities.

**What lessons can be learned for Africa ?**

# Morocco is ahead of Africa

- Sub-Saharan Africa is lagging behind the demographic curve and the birth rate by thirty years compared to Morocco.
- Africa is in a phase of accelerated urbanization.
- Morocco has lost 2.5 points of fertility in 60 years, sub-Saharan Africa has lost one point in the last ten years, and so the minimum renewal rate of 2.1 will be reached before 2050.
- If urbanization and especially if metropolization accelerate compared to forecasts, sub-Saharan Africa will enter the demographic dividend much faster than expected.
- It remains to invest in human capital and avoid the rurbanization of cities.





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