

2 Concurrent heatwaves and extreme O₃ 3 episodes: combined atmospheric patterns and impact 4 on human health

5 Kenza Khomsi ^{1,2,*}, Youssef Chelhaoui ¹, Soukaina Alilou³, Rania Sour³, Houda Najmi ¹ and
6 Zineb Souhaili ²

7 ¹ General Directorate of Meteorology; Casablanca, Morocco

8 ² Laboratory of Drugs Science, Biomedical and Biotechnological Research. Faculty of Medicine and
9 Pharmacy; Casablanca, Morocco

11 * Correspondence: k.khomsi@gmail.com

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13 **Abstract:** More recurrent heatwaves and extreme ozone episodes are likely to occur during the next
14 decades and a key question is about the concurrence of those hazards, the atmospheric patterns
15 behind their appearance and their joint effect on human health. In this work, we use surface
16 maximum temperature and O₃ observations during extended summers in two cities from Morocco:
17 Casablanca and Marrakech, between 2010 and 2019. We assess the connection between these data
18 and climate indexes (North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), Mediterranean Oscillation (MO) and
19 Saharan Oscillation (SaOI)). We then identify concurrent heatwaves and ozone episodes, the
20 weather type behind this concurrence and the combined health risks. Our findings show that the
21 concurrence of heatwaves and O₃ episodes depends both on the specific city and the large-scale
22 atmospheric circulation. The likely identified synoptic pattern is when the country is under the
23 combined influence of an anticyclonic area in the north and the Saharan trough extending the
24 depression centered in the south. This pattern generates a warm flow and may foster photochemical
25 pollution. Our study is the first step towards the establishment of an alert system. It will help to
26 provide recommendations for coping with concurrent heatwaves and air pollution episodes.

27 **Keywords:** Heatwave, Ozone episode, Morocco, NAO, MO, SaO, Human health

28

29 1. Introduction

30 Industrial and traffic activities emit various pollutants that are harmful to human health. Ozone
31 (O₃) is among these air pollutants. Ozone is formed by a complex photochemical interaction triggered
32 by sunlight and the presence of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), or volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The
33 latter can act as a sink or source of ozone depending on their availability [1,2]. The total chemical
34 balance is:

35
$$+h \rightarrow +$$

36
$$+2 \rightarrow 1$$

37
$$2+2 \rightarrow +3$$

38

39 According to [3], these reactions may be potentiated by higher air temperatures exceeding 20°C;
40 the highest ozone mixing ratios are observed under the warmest conditions. Consequently, the
41 ambient O₃ concentration is governed both by the emissions of its precursors, VOCs and NO_x, and

42 by the meteorological state. Temperature is the main meteorological factor to be directly involved in
43 resulting in ozone extreme events [1,2].

44 Within this framework, several studies have been carried out at national and international levels.
45 In the Pearl River Delta region from China for example, [1] used measured surface ozone
46 concentration and meteorological parameters to study the impact of local meteorological events on
47 O₃ spatio-temporal concentration during the extended summer (April-October), between 2006 and
48 2017. Authors show that ozone formation is triggered when temperatures exceed 33°C and that
49 extreme ozone events are largely initiated by hot events. Heatwaves increase the ozone exceedance
50 rate by 2.5 times. Another study was carried out over Europe to assess the relationship between local
51 and synoptic meteorological conditions and surface ozone concentration in spring and summer, over
52 the period 1998-2012 [4]. It has shown that climate change is expected to affect regional
53 meteorological conditions, such as warmer temperatures or stagnant conditions, as well as increase
54 heatwaves that affect ozone levels. The study has also identified regions, in Europe, that may be
55 particularly vulnerable to increased ozone episodes. In Sydney, Australia, [2] showed that hot events
56 occurrence may worsen air quality levels in the city.

57 In Morocco, [5] studied the concurrence of extreme ozone and hot events in two urban cities
58 during the extended summer (April-September), between 2009 and 2016. The study showed that 33%
59 of hot events were accompanied by extreme ozone episodes in the coastal city of Casablanca, as
60 compared to 70% in the inland city of Marrakech. This has questioned the role that humidity and
61 thus the general circulation would play in the occurrence of such events.

62 The main purpose of our research is to complete the latter study through assessing how extreme
63 temperature may trigger the appearance of high ozone levels and how this concurrence could be
64 linked to the synoptic general circulation. Common impact on human health and wellbeing was also
65 discussed. Our results will bring to light some potential mechanisms that are responsible of
66 heatwaves and air pollution. They may lead to new insights in managing climate extremes and their
67 risk for public health.

68 **2. Experiments**

69 *2.1. Study Area*

70 Morocco is located in northwest Africa [5], it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west,
71 Algeria to the east, Mauritania to the south, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north (Figure 1).

72 Four mountain ranges dominate the country's topography and divide it into three geographical
73 regions: the mountainous interior, including fertile plateaus and valleys; the Atlantic coastal
74 lowlands; and the semi-arid and arid areas of eastern and southern Morocco, where the mountains
75 gradually lie down into the Sahara Desert [6].

76 Casablanca and Marrakech (Figure 1) are two large urban cities in Morocco, where serious
77 pollution concerns may be met. Particularly, significant increase in the cities' population rates was
78 observed; 11% in Casablanca and 12% in Marrakech between 2004 and 2014. Casablanca is a coastal
79 city and is the first most populous city in Morocco with more than 3,000,000 inhabitants and the
80 highest rate of economic activities. Marrakech is an inland city, it is the fourth largest city in the
81 country with a population of over 900,000 inhabitants [7].
82

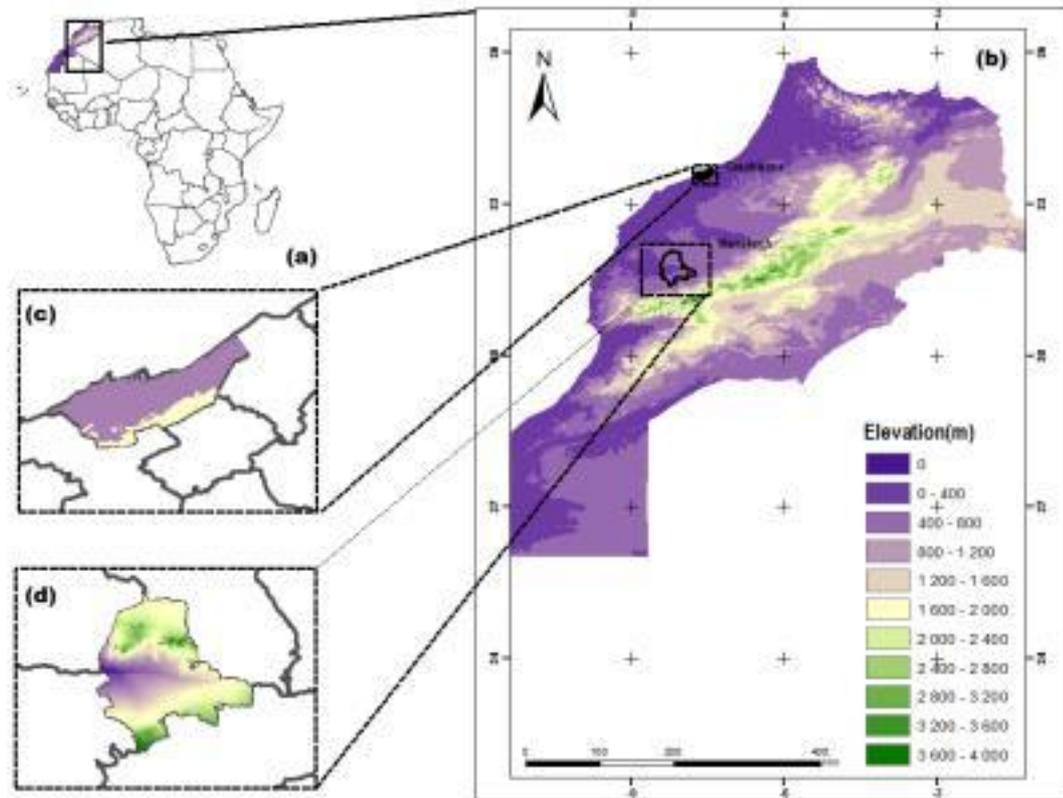


Figure 1. Location of the study area. Africa (a), North Morocco (b), Casablanca (c) and Marrakech (d)

83 2.2. Data

84 2.2.1. Temperature and Ozone data

85 For the purpose of this study, we have used daily maximum temperature and ozone data in
 86 Casablanca and Marrakech for the extended summer (April-September) between 2010-2019. This data
 87 was provided by the General Directorate of Meteorology in Morocco and is quality controlled before
 88 being available.

89 2.2.1. Climate indexes data

90 A climate index is a simple diagnostic quantity that is used to characterize an aspect of a
 91 geophysical system such as a circulation pattern. For the purpose of this study, three indexes were
 92 used. The North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) Index, the Mediterranean Oscillation (MO) Index and
 93 the Saharan Oscillation (SaO) Index.

94 The pressure centers for the NAO are located in the Atlantic Ocean. This connection consists of
 95 a north-south dipole of the Sea Level Pressure (SLP) anomalies, one centered in Greenland and the
 96 other in the central North Atlantic [8]. The MO index represents a regional atmospheric circulation
 97 that characterizes the Mediterranean basin. It is a model of low frequency variability producing the
 98 opposition of barometric, thermal and rainfall anomalies between the extremes of the basin. The
 99 Mediterranean Oscillation Index is defined as the difference in geo-potential height anomalies
 100 between Algiers and Cairo [9]. The daily data of the NAO and MO indexes during the study period,
 101 were collected from the Climatic Research Unit (CRU, <http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk/cru/data>) website.

102 The SaO index was first suggested by [7]. It represents the atmospheric circulation that
 103 characterizes the Saharan desert in the south of Morocco. It is defined as the difference between the
 104 normalized pressure at the Azores (37.79°N, -25.5°E) and the normalized pressure at Niamey

105 (13.51°N, 2.10°E). For the aim of this work, the SaO was calculated using the formula proposed by
 106 the authors [7] :

$$SaOI = \frac{P_{na} - P_{na,ref}}{P_{na,ref}} \quad (1)$$

108 *SaOI*: daily Saharan Oscillation Index;
 109 *P_{na}*: daily normalized pressure during the study period.

110
 111 The SaO index data was calculated based on the Sea Level Pressure data provided by the ERA5
 112 reanalysis accessible in the Climate Data Store (CDS;
 113 <https://cds.climate.copernicus.eu/#!/search?text=ERA5&type=dataset>).

114 2.3. Methods

115 To identify yearly extreme events in temperature and ozone, the 90th percentiles, calculated for
 116 each year, were used as thresholds. This thresholding method is widely employed and recommended
 117 by the STARDEX (STATistical and Regional dynamical Downscaling of EXTremes for European
 118 regions; <http://www.cru.uea.ac.uk/projects/stardex/>) and the ETCCDI (Expert Team on Climate
 119 Change Detection and Indices; <http://cccma.seos.uvic.ca/ETCCDI/>) projects. Many studies in
 120 Morocco have used this approach as well [5,7,10].

121 For the purpose of this study, the thresholding approach was applied to summer maximum
 122 temperature and ozone data, between 2010 and 2019. The same definitions as in [5] were used:

- 123 - A hot event is a day that recorded maximum temperature greater than or equal to the 90th
 124 percentile;
- 125 - A heat wave is a succession of three hot events or more;
- 126 - An extreme ozone (O₃) event is a day that recorded maximum ozone (O₃) greater than or
 127 equal to the 90th percentile.

128 The magnitudes of trends in the studied time series were analyzed using the non-parametric
 129 method proposed by Theil and Sen for univariate time series [11,12]. This approach involves
 130 computing slopes for all the pairs of ordinal time points and then using the median of these slopes as
 131 an estimate of the overall slope. Sen's slope is robust against outliers, it is widely used for the
 132 estimation of trending magnitudes of climate series [7,10,13,14]. The statistical significance of the
 133 trends is tested using the modified Mann–Kendall test proposed by Hamed and Rao [15] for
 134 autocorrelated time series. The test is performed at significance level of 5%.

135 The percentile thresholds calculated for maximum ozone data time series were compared to the
 136 thresholds stated by the Morocco national ambient air quality standards. The later sets ozone (O₃)
 137 alert and information thresholds respectively to 200 µg m⁻³ and 260 µg m⁻³ for hourly averages.

138 Correlations between time series were estimated employing the Spearman coefficient. This
 139 statistical coefficient is used to measure the strength of the association between two variables and is
 140 widely used in climate studies [7,16].

141 Health impact of concurrent heatwaves and ozone (O₃) episodes were assessed through the
 142 evaluation of the related Heat Index (HI) and Air Quality Health Index (AQHI). HI as in equation (2),
 143 was suggested by [17,18]. It is also known as the apparent temperature and is based upon
 144 assumptions about human physiology, behavior, clothing and shade availability.

$$HI = T + \frac{R - 25}{4} (T - 58) \quad (2)$$

146 *HI*: Heat Index (in degrees Celsius);
 147 *T*: Ambient air temperature (in degrees Celsius)
 148 *R*: Relative humidity (percentage value between 0 and 100)
 149 Table 1 links HI values to the effects on human body.

Table1. Heat Index and impact on human comfort

Temperature (°C)	Impact on human comfort
27-32°C	Caution Fatigue is possible with prolonged exposure and activity. Continuing activity could result heat cramps

32-41°C	Extreme caution: heat cramps and heat exhaustion are possible. Continuing activity could result in heat stroke.
41-54°C	Danger: heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely; heat stroke is probable with continued activity.
Over 54°C	Extreme danger: heat stroke is imminent

151

152 AQHI as in equation (3), is an index that helps understand the impact of air quality on health. It
 153 provides advice on how to improve air quality and pays particular attention to people who are
 154 sensitive to air pollution [19].

155
$$AQHI = \frac{1}{10} \left(\frac{O_3}{100} + \frac{NO_2}{100} + \frac{PM_{2.5}}{100} \right) \quad (3)$$

156 *AQHI: Air Quality Health Index;*

157 *O₃: Average concentration of ozone (O₃)*

158 *NO₂: Average concentration of nitrogen dioxide*

159 *PM_{2.5}: Average concentration of particles with a diameter of less than 2.5 μm (PM_{2.5})*

160 Table 2 links AQHI to human health risk.

Table2. Air Quality Health Index and health risk

AQHI	Health Risk
1-3	Low Risk
4-6	Moderate Risk
7-10	High Risk
Above 10	Very High Risk

161 **3. Results**

162 *3.1. Trends in extremes of temperature and ozone (O₃)*

163 Figure 2 shows the evolution and the trend magnitudes of extreme temperature and ozone (O₃)
 164 at the studied meteorological and air quality stations, during the summer seasons between 2010 and
 165 2019. The magnitude of the trends in yearly average extreme temperature in the cities of Casablanca
 166 and Marrakech are negligible. 2015 and 2012 are the years that recorded the highest temperatures in
 167 Casablanca (25.69°C) and Marrakech (34.95°C), respectively. While 2018 has recorded the lowest
 168 temperature in both cities.

169 Extreme ozone (O₃) is decreasing significantly in Casablanca and increasing in Marrakech.

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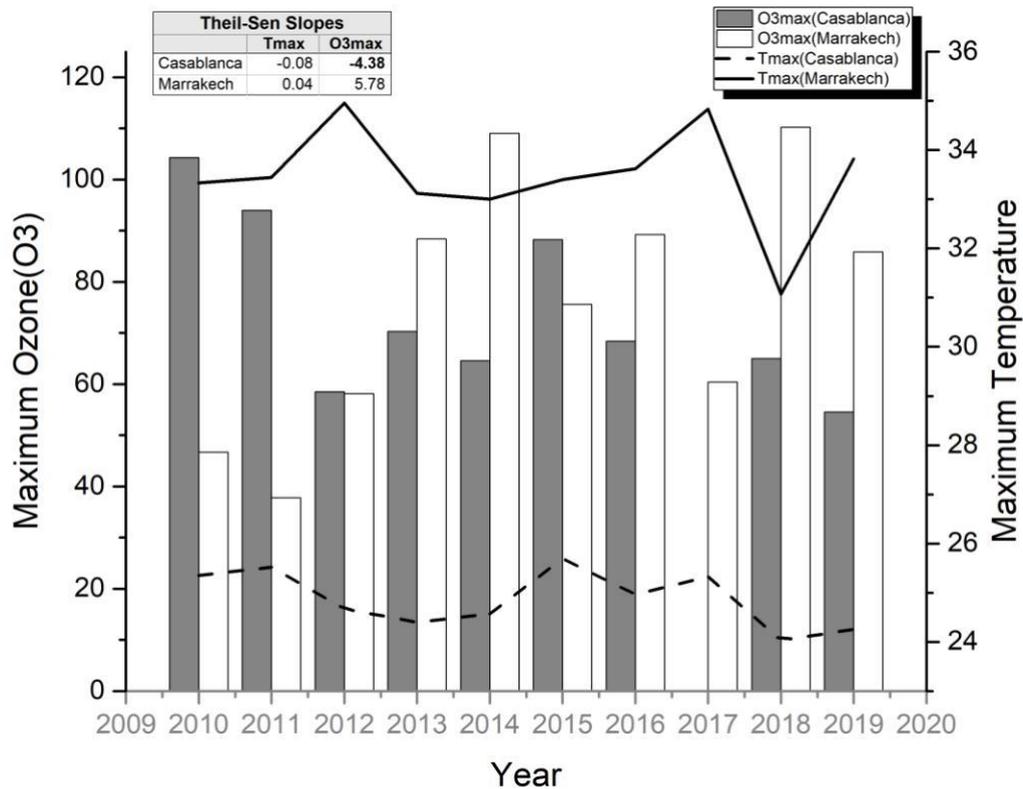


Figure 2. Evolution and trend magnitudes in extreme temperature and ozone, during the summer season between 2010 and 2019. Spearman’s coefficient is significant when bold.

171

172 3.2. Trends in temperature and ozone (O₃) percentiles

173 Figure 3 shows the evolution and the trend magnitudes of the 90th percentile of extreme
 174 temperature and ozone (O₃). Trends in extreme temperature percentiles in the cities of Casablanca
 175 and Marrakech are decreasing. Percentiles of extreme ozone (O₃) are decreasing in Casablanca and
 176 increasing in Marrakech. None of the trends is statistically significant. Ozone (O₃) percentiles still
 177 below the national thresholds for hourly averages.
 178

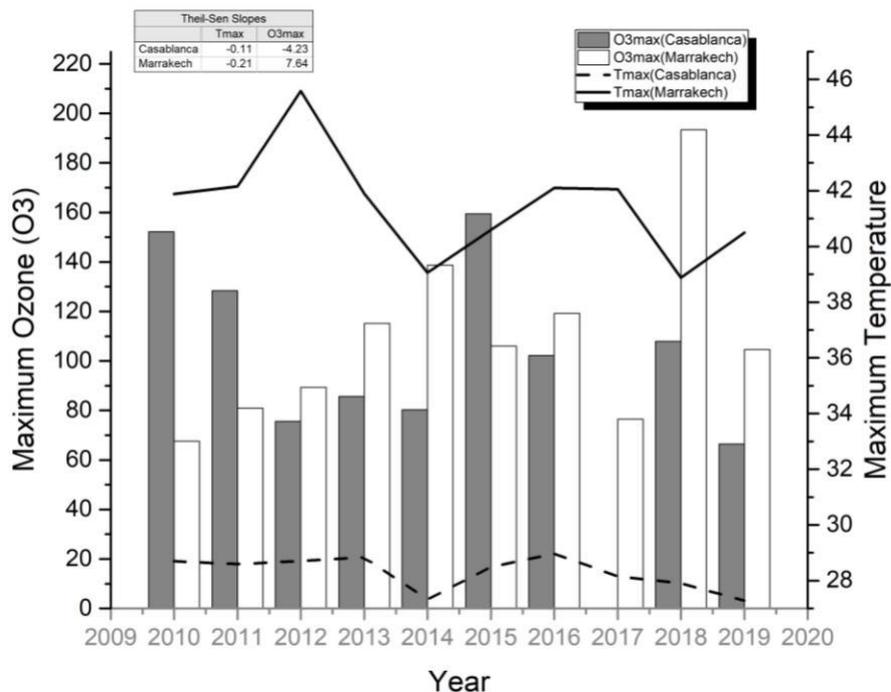


Figure 3. Evolution and trend magnitudes in percentiles in extreme temperature and ozone, during the summer season between 2010 and 2019 Spearman's coefficient is significant when bold.

179

180 3.3. Trends in heatwaves and ozone episodes (O3)

181 Figure 4 shows the evolution and the trend magnitudes of heatwaves and ozone episodes in the
 182 cities of Casablanca and Marrakech. Ozone episodes are slightly increasing in Marrakech, meanwhile
 183 all the other trends are not statistically significant.

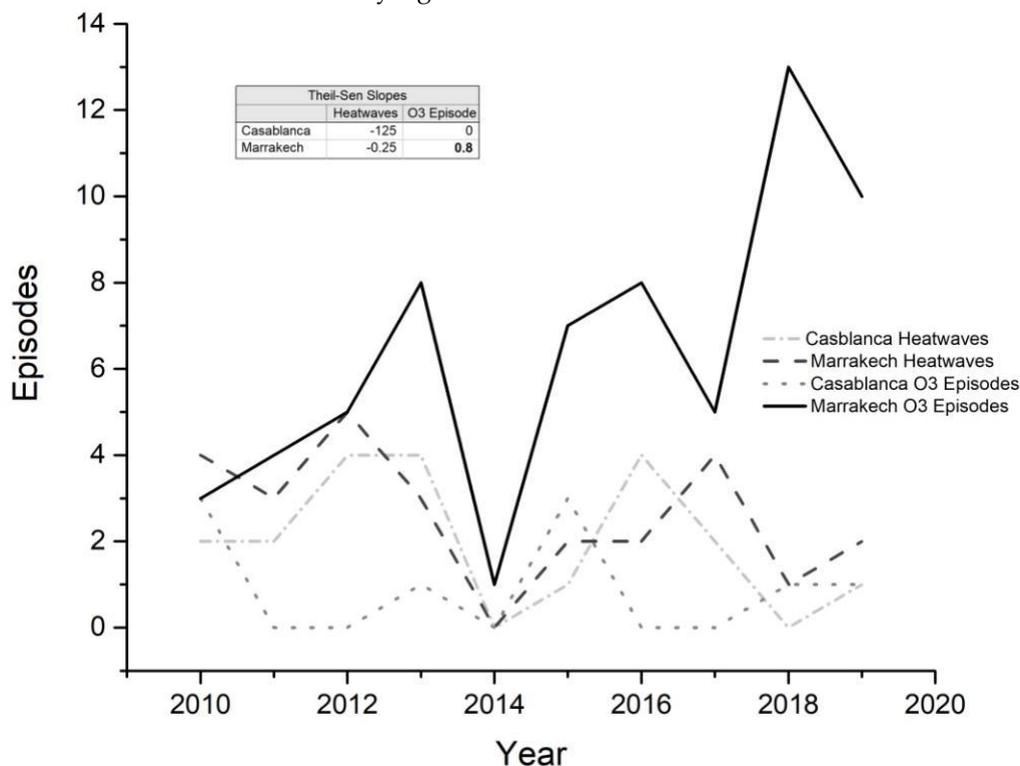


Figure 4. Evolution and trend magnitudes in temperature and ozone episodes, during the summer season between 2010 and 2019. Spearman's coefficient is significant when bold.

184 3.4. Concurrence of heatwaves and ozone episodes (O₃)

185 The city of Casablanca has recorded 20 heatwaves during the study period, only one heatwave
186 is accompanied with an ozone extreme that also appeared in the city of Marrakech. Marrakech in turn
187 has registered 26 heatwaves, 14 of which was accompanied by ozone episodes. Figure 4 shows the
188 concurrence between heatwaves and ozone episodes. In many cases, ozone extremes match the first
189 day of heatwave or appear slightly offset in time.
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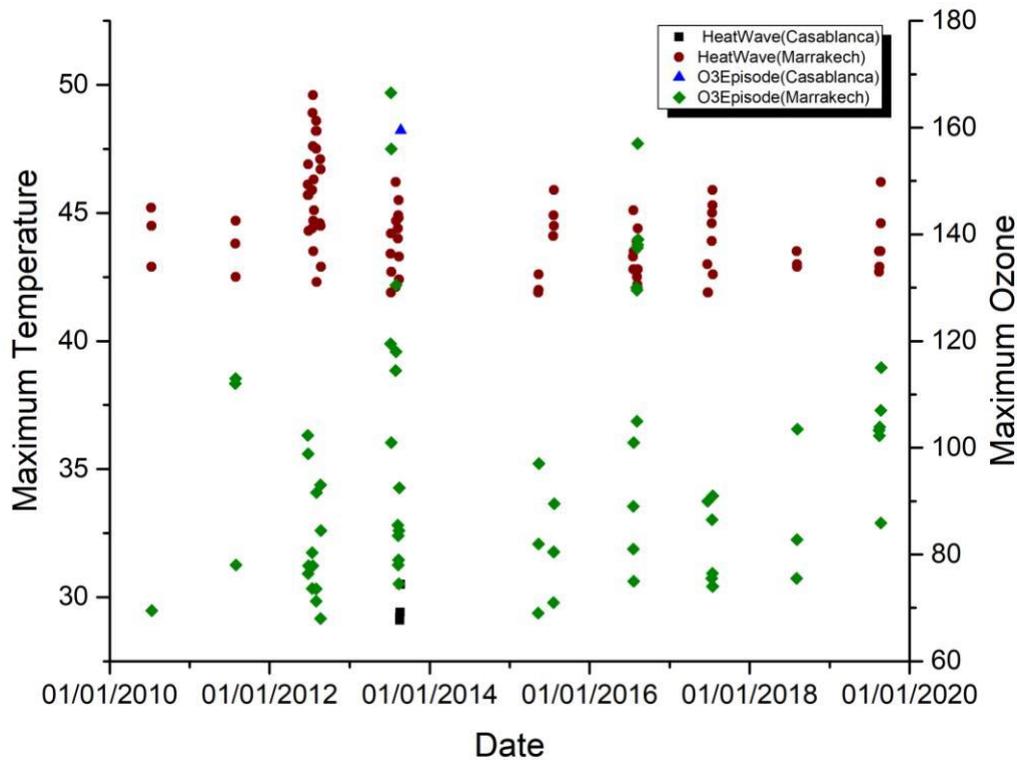


Figure 4. Concurrence between heatwaves and ozone episodes, during the summer season between 2010 and 2019

191 3.5. Heatwaves and ozone episodes (O₃) combined meteorological patterns

192 The difference in the occurrence of extreme episodes between Casablanca and Marrakech may
193 be due to the impact of meteorological patterns and geographical location knowing that Casablanca
194 is a coastal city and Marrakech is inland. In this paragraph, we investigate the relationship of
195 observed maximum temperature and ozone (O₃) with humidity in one hand and with the above
196 defined climate indexes (NAO, MO and SaO) in the other hand. This work is performed in both
197 Casablanca and Marrakech. Graphs and spearman coefficients in figures 5 and 6 show that significant
198 relationships, yet very weak in many cases, exist between extreme ozone in both cities, humidity and
199 climate indexes. Maximum ozone in Casablanca is negatively correlated with NAO index and
200 positively correlated with the remaining parameters. Meanwhile in Marrakech, correlation is
201 negative with humidity and positive for the other factors. Correlation between maximum
202 temperature and humidity in Marrakech is negative and quite strong. Positive, moderate and
203 significant correlations appear between maximum temperature and MO index in both cities.
204 Correlations of the same order, yet negative, appear between maximum temperature and SaO.

205 In parallel to this analysis, SLP field for the only registered common heatwave and ozone
206 episode recorded in both cities were redrawn to analyze the flow impacting the study area at the
207 large scale. This event lasts 5 days in Casablanca (August 09th, 2013 to August 13th, 2013) and 7 days
208 in Marrakech (August 09th, 2013 to August 15th, 2013). Ozone episodes appear slightly offset in time
209 in Casablanca (August 17th, 2013 to August 22th, 2013) and in the same period in Marrakech (August
210 09th, 2013 to August 13th, 2013). According to the SLP field redrawn in Figure 7, the country is under

211 the combined influence of the Azores High, spreading over the Atlantic and the Western Europe, and
 212 the Saharan trough extending the depression centered in the south. This trough invades the country,
 213 reach the south of the European continent and generates a warm southern flow over the region.
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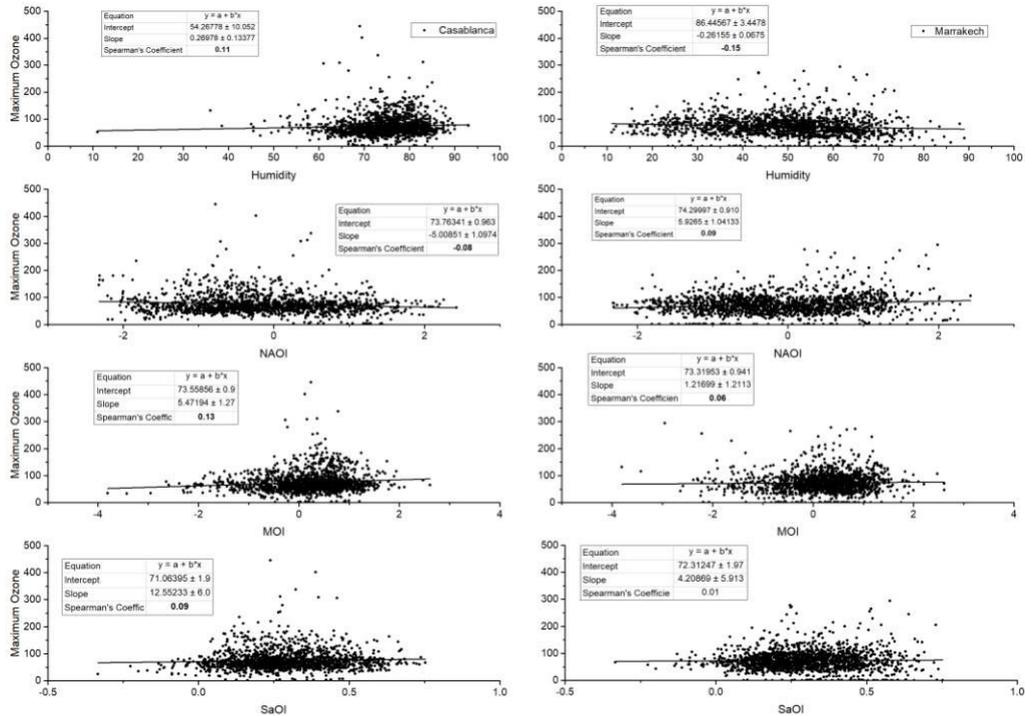


Figure 5. Correlation between extreme ozone, humidity and climate indexes, during the summer season between 2010 and 2019. Spearman's coefficient is significant when bold.

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 216
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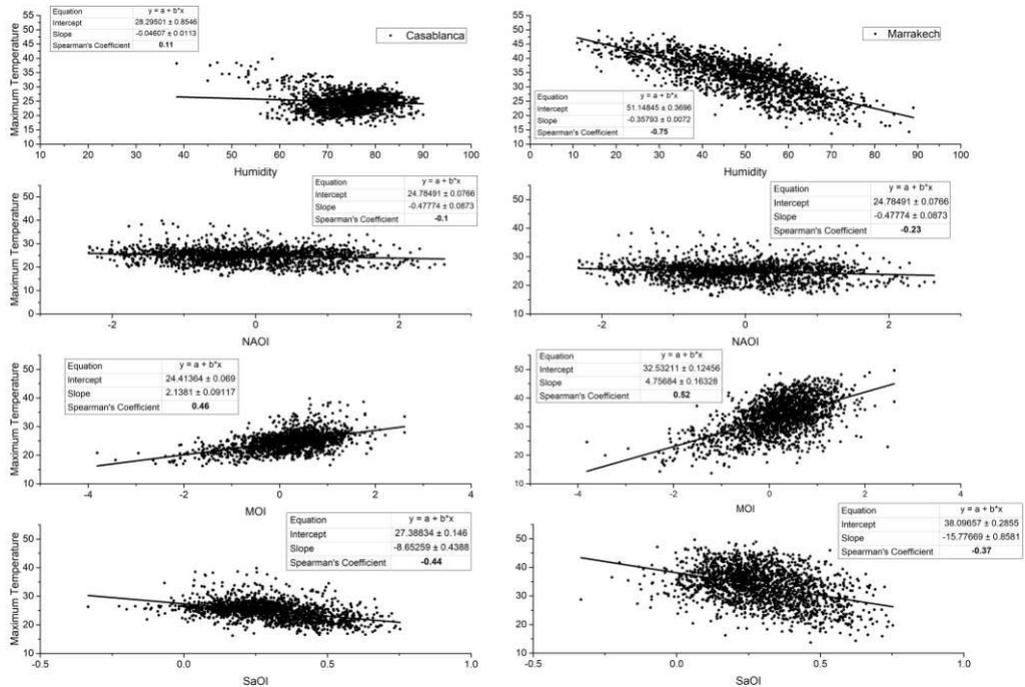


Figure 6. Correlation between maximum temperature, humidity and climate indexes, during the summer season between 2010 and 2019. Spearman's coefficient is significant when bold.

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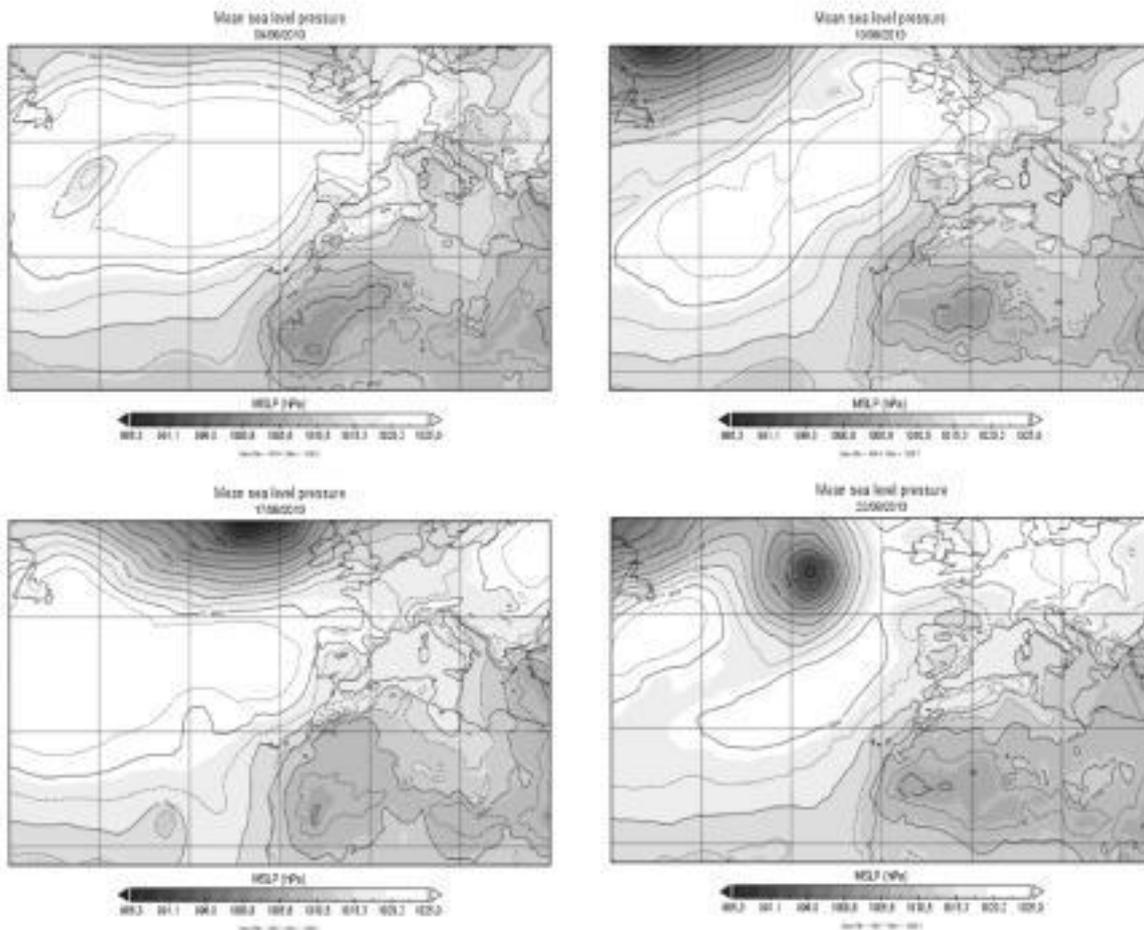


Figure 7. SLP fields for the 08-13-17-22/08/2013

220 3.6. Impact of concurrent heatwaves and ozone episodes (O₃) on human health

221 Table 3 shows HI and AQHI that were assessed for the heatwave and the ozone episode period
 222 that occurred between August 09th, 2013 and August 22th, 2013, in Casablanca and Marrakech.
 223 Marrakech tends to register more heat alerts than Casablanca. Hot days recorded in Casablanca
 224 didn't alert to any heat risk meanwhile the city registered a day with very high risk and 5 days with
 225 high risk caused by unhealthy air quality levels. Marrakech recorded 5 days with combined extreme
 226 heat warning and high risk of unhealthy air quality which may have a joined impact on human
 227 respiratory health and thermal comfort.
 228

Table3. Heat and Air Quality Health indexes between August 09th, 2013 and August 22th, 2013, in Casablanca and Marrakech

Days of the episode	Casablanca		Marrakech	
	Heat Risk	Air Quality Risk	Heat Risk	Air Quality Risk
August 09 th , 2013	No Risk	High Risk	Extreme Caution	High Risk
August 10 th , 2013	No Risk	High Risk	Extreme Caution	High Risk
August 11 th , 2013	No Risk	Very High Risk	Extreme Caution	Moderate Risk
August 12 th , 2013	No Risk	High Risk	Extreme Caution	Moderate Risk
August 13 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	Extreme Caution	High Risk
August 14 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	Extreme Caution	Moderate Risk
August 15 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	Extreme Caution	High Risk
August 16 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	Caution	High Risk
August 17 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	No Risk	Moderate Risk

August 18 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	Caution	High Risk
August 19 th , 2013	No Risk	High Risk	Caution	High Risk
August 20 th , 2013	No Risk	High Risk	Extreme Caution	High Risk
August 21 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	Caution	High Risk
August 22 th , 2013	No Risk	Moderate Risk	Caution	Moderate Risk

229 4. Discussion

230 In this study we used observed data during the extended summer (April-September) between
 231 2010 and 2019, in two cities from Morocco, Casablanca and Marrakech. We analysed their trends and
 232 their correlations with atmospheric indexes. We identified heatwaves and ozone (O₃) episodes and
 233 analysed their concurrence. We identified the atmospheric patterns behind this concurrence and the
 234 possible combined impacts on human health. Taken together, our results suggest that during the
 235 study period:

236 - No trends were recognized in average extreme temperature in both cities. This finding
 237 doesn't reinforce the general results of warmer trends in the country [10,20–22] and may be
 238 due to the short used study period or to the consideration of more recent data. Indeed, 2018
 239 data was considered; this year has recorded the lowest temperature in both cities and was
 240 characterized with below normal winter temperatures and snowfall in the country [23]. This
 241 may have affected the expected warming trend.

242 Extreme ozone (O₃) is decreasing significantly in Casablanca and increasing in Marrakech.
 243 This may be due to the different geographical positions of the cities and the various local
 244 characteristics of outdoor pollution in each city. Casablanca is coastal, it plays a leading role
 245 in the economic development of Morocco. It hosts various industrial activities, an important
 246 automobile park, energy production and distribution and the country's largest ports and
 247 airport [24,25]. Considering its geographical position, Casablanca still underexposed to
 248 sunlight and even if it may register high NO₂ and VOCs concentration levels, the
 249 photochemical pollution is not its main feature. Moreover, Casablanca Tramway
 250 implementation in 2012 has played an important role in reducing NO₂ emissions and then
 251 ozone (O₃) generation. Marrakech, an inland city, hosts weak industrial activities and a rather
 252 important density of vehicles causing high NO₂ concentrations levels. This makes the city a
 253 subject to photochemical pollution mainly due to its geographical location inducing strong
 254 sunlight. During spring and summer, ozone (O₃) concentrations in the city reach alarming
 255 levels and exceed the thresholds [26,27].

256 - Trends in temperature and ozone (O₃) percentiles and extreme events echo the trends in
 257 averages. Extreme events may be partly explained by averages. This statement is in complete
 258 agreement with many other climatological and air pollution studies over the area
 259 [5,10,20,28].

260 - Concurrence of heatwaves and ozone (O₃) episodes in both cities were not systemic. Yet,
 261 when it happens, ozone (O₃) episodes appear either in the first day of the heatwave or
 262 slightly offset in time. Marrakech recorded more concurring events than Casablanca. This
 263 spotlights the role of the geographical location of the cities and the influence of
 264 meteorological parameters, mainly humidity, on events' occurrence. This influence was
 265 highlighted in many previous studies as well [1,4,5,29]. For example, [29] concluded that

266 soaring ozone concentrations across China in 2017 could be mainly attributed to the notable
267 change of meteorological conditions in 2017, characterized with rising temperature and
268 sunshine duration and decreasing humidity. This finding explains the correlations between
269 extreme ozone (O₃) and humidity in Casablanca (positive) and Marrakech (negative) and
270 clarifies the strong negative correlation between maximum temperature and humidity in
271 Marrakech.

272 - Positive, moderate and significant correlations appear between maximum temperature and
273 MO index in both cities. Negative correlations of the same order appear with the SaO index.
274 This finding recalls results from [10] and [7]. [10] confirms that summer average maximum
275 temperature is affected by the MO in Marrakech. [7] elucidates the relationship between the
276 MO and the average concentrations of particulate matter 10 micrometers or less in diameter
277 (PM₁₀) and confirms that MO and SaO are affecting the particulate pollution oppositely.
278 The northeasterly to southwesterly continental warm flow that is triggered by the Saharan
279 trough and influenced by the high-pressure area in the north causes the temperature to
280 increase and foster particulate pollution. If extended, the high-pressure area in the north of
281 Morocco can create a blocking situation and induce photochemical pollution as well.

282 - We expected stronger correlations between maximum ozone (O₃), humidity and climate
283 indexes. The found weak links may be due to the local features of photochemical pollution
284 in both cities and the continuous supply of local primary pollutants (NO_x and COVs) from
285 the large vehicle fleet in both cities or from industrial activities in Casablanca. Moreover,
286 this study was conducted in the extended summer when sunshine duration is the main
287 factor responsible of ozone (O₃) generation.

288 - The case study of the heatwave from August 09th, 2013 to August 22th, 2013 confirmed the
289 above findings. Ozone episodes appear slightly offset in time in Casablanca and in the same
290 period in Marrakech. The country was under the combined influence of the Azores High,
291 spreading over the Atlantic and the Western Europe, and the Saharan trough extending the
292 depression centered in the south. This trough invades the country, reach the south of the
293 European continent and generates a warm southern flow over the region. This synoptic
294 pattern explains the correlations between maximum temperatures and MO and SaO indexes
295 and explicates the role of the anticyclonic area over the north of Morocco in trapping the
296 warm air over the country or allowing it to attend the European continent.

297 - During the above-mentioned case study, combined risk on human health and thermal
298 comfort was registered mainly in Marrakech. Humidity in the coastal city of Casablanca
299 reduced the heat risk, yet, the high risk of unhealthy air quality levels was registered. If
300 available, exposure data can help in further developing this aspect.

301 The analysis in this study examines heatwaves and ozone (O₃) episodes in Casablanca and
302 Marrakech and therefore the results are limited to these regions that have their own geographical
303 locations and climate conditions. The results are also limited to the study period and the methods
304 used, especially to identify extreme events. Further studies are worth to be conducted, when data are
305 available, to cover more regions, include other atmospheric indexes such us ENSO or SaO in different
306 pressure levels or extend the temporal coverage in the future. Heat and air pollution related mortality
307 and morbidity data are worth to be considered, when available, to study in depth the combined
308 impact of heatwaves and air pollution episodes on human health and well-being.

309 5. Conclusions

310 This work has focused on the study of the concurrence of heatwaves and ozone (O₃) episodes,
311 their relationship with atmospheric circulation indexes and their combined impact on human health
312 and well-being. It was carried out, in two cities from Morocco: Casablanca and Marrakech, during
313 the summer season between 2010 and 2019.

314 The research doesn't support the simple mechanistic argument stipulating that warmer
315 temperatures make ozone pollution more severe. It confirms that the concurrence of heatwaves and
316 ozone episodes depends both on the specific city—hence, local sources—and on large-scale
317 atmospheric circulation—thus, meteorological parameters, mainly humidity. The study identified
318 the likely synoptic pattern behind the occurrence of these events. This pattern and related
319 meteorological factors can be linked to direct health effects.

320 When more data becomes available, the contribution from local and global pollution sources
321 may be estimated. This emphasizes the need for more local to regional studies. It would be
322 worthwhile making such a study for other regions in Morocco and considering other pollutants.
323 Obtained results could then be compared with those of the present study.

324 Although many previous researches have examined air pollution in Casablanca and Marrakech,
325 our study is the first attempt to assess combined features inducing large-scale atmospheric circulation
326 and health effects. Our work explores the hypothesis that particular weather patterns increase the
327 vulnerability of individuals especially those sensitive to air pollution. Additional studies may aid the
328 establishment of an alert system and provide recommendations for coping with concurrent
329 heatwaves and air pollution episodes.

330 **Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, Kenza Khomsi, Youssef Chelhaoui, Houda Najmi and Zineb
331 Souhaili; Data curation, Kenza Khomsi, Youssef Chelhaoui, Soukaina Alilou, Rania Souri and Houda Najmi;
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333 acquisition, Soukaina Alilou; Investigation, Kenza Khomsi, Youssef Chelhaoui, Soukaina Alilou, Rania Souri
334 and Houda Najmi; Methodology, Kenza Khomsi, Youssef Chelhaoui, Soukaina Alilou, Rania Souri, Houda
335 Najmi and Zineb Souhaili; Project administration, Kenza Khomsi, Soukaina Alilou and Rania Souri; Resources,
336 Kenza Khomsi, Youssef Chelhaoui, Soukaina Alilou and Rania Souri; Software, Kenza Khomsi, Youssef
337 Chelhaoui, Rania Souri and Houda Najmi; Validation, Kenza Khomsi, Youssef Chelhaoui and Zineb Souhaili;
338 Visualization, Kenza Khomsi, Youssef Chelhaoui, Soukaina Alilou and Rania Souri; Writing – original draft,
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342 Meteorology that made meteorology and air quality data available for the present study. These data are not
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