

International Perspectives on Migration 3

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# Migration and Transformation

Multi-Level Analysis of Migrant  
Transnationalism

 Springer

# Chapter 3

## Franco–Moroccan Transnational Space: Continuity and Transformations

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### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates transnational activities and mobility in the geographical space between Metropolitan France<sup>1</sup> and Morocco. As shown by several previous studies, Moroccans living abroad engage actively in transnational practices on various levels, from frequent travel, communication, and financial remittances to construction of a home in two spaces and engagement in local development in Morocco (Salih 2003; Lacroix 2005; Fibbi and D'Amato 2008; Harrami and Mahdi 2008; Laffort 2009; Daoud 2011).

The two most important reasons for intensive movement of people, goods, and ideas between France and Morocco are the former French colonial presence in Morocco and the long history of emigration to France. The presence of the “other” is visible in everyday life in both countries: Arab grocery stores and halal butchers, mosques, Arabic language, couscous as a national dish in France and French schools, newspapers, cafés and churches in Morocco. Both countries have enriched each other's languages, music, art, cinema, and literature and generated new hybrid forms of popular culture such as *beur* culture (Rosello and Bjornson 1993; Tarr 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding French overseas *départments* and territories.

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To ascertain what kind of characteristics can be found in the Franco–Moroccan space, we use Faist’s (2007: 4) definition of transnational social spaces as cross-border communities including both migrants and non-migrants. They may be for instance professional or family groups that are tied together through a certain regularity of actions and communication. We acknowledge that not all migrants engage in transnational activities in a similar way; rather we aim to explore the *meanings* that transnational migrants attach to their activities. Thus, our approach is narrative: we do not attempt an all-encompassing ethnographic thick description of respondents’ transnational activities, but we are looking at their narratives of transnationality.

The first part of the chapter provides an insight into the colonial and migration history of Morocco and France. To understand the current mobility in the Franco–Moroccan space, it is necessary to look back to the connections between the countries in the historical perspective. Some historical elements are presented in the background section to understand the role of Moroccan and French states in channeling transborder migration. The first part presents the history of mobility from France to Morocco; the second part deals with the context of migratory flows from Morocco, while the third part deals with the current situation in the French and Moroccan immigration policies.

We then proceed to the research findings. After describing the scope of transnational activities of the respondents we continue with the analyses of institutional transformations in four focal areas, political, economic, sociocultural, and educational, by looking at how hegemonic power structures are maintained and contested in the Franco–Moroccan transnational space.

## 3.2 Background

### 3.2.1 *Colonial Past, Migration History, and Current Situation*

To understand the current, postcolonial situation with intensive transnational connections it is important to look at the colonial and migration history of the past century. During the first half of the twentieth century, Morocco experienced colonization for a fairly long period. The majority of Morocco’s territory was under French occupation from 1912 to 1956. Some other areas in the north and south of the country were Spanish protectorates. Colonization soon triggered important waves of migrants from Europe to Morocco. During the colonial period (1912–1956), the mobility of the French to Morocco kept increasing at a steady pace, whereas in 1955 as Morocco was likely to gain its independence, departures began to outweigh arrivals. Since then the French population in Morocco has been continuously decreasing in size. The independence of Morocco ushered in the “Moroccanization” of a part of the administration, which caused many French people to leave the country. These departures temporarily decreased in the 1960s, and then resumed in the early 1970s with the “Moroccanization” of agricultural lands, putting an end to the last vestiges of the colonial period (Cassaigne 1964). On the other hand, there was also intense

cooperation between the two countries in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, through the scholarship system offered by the French state.

After independence the French came to be legally bound by the rules governing foreigners; however, so far even if these legal rules were theoretically applicable to French nationals, in fact they were not enforced. When the Moroccan government introduced a special registration card for foreigners in 1963, many French people were against this measure, which they considered offensive to them. Yet the measure offered French nationals many privileges as regards residence and employment compared with other foreigners in Morocco (Cassaigne 1964). The overseas migration of Moroccans to France that began in the early twentieth century is related to the colonial history of the region. France, the major colonial European power in North Africa, resorted to workers from North Africa to offset the shortage of labor caused by the general mobilization decreed in 1914. Starting in 1916, the recourse to colonial workers intensified as the demand from armament factories was increasing. A service of colonial workers was created within the War Department to recruit, locate, and manage colonial and Chinese workers (Mauco 1932: 70). This originally civilian workforce was put under the control of the army. At the end of World War I, the number of Moroccan workers introduced into the framework of this operation was estimated at 35,000, which is about 16% of the total Chinese and colonial workforce recruited during that period.

Besides the above-mentioned workers, many soldiers were recruited in Morocco and North Africa at that time under French occupation. In 1918, the number of North African soldiers who joined France during the war was estimated at about 175,000 (Fadloulah 1996: 145). They occupied the lowest positions in the military structure, and were subject to special rules barring any possibility of promotion (Thobie et al. 1990). However, the pressing reconstruction needs of France urged the recruitment of labor from its colonies. According to Ray (1973), the first 6 years following the war were marked by such an influx of migrants to France that it caused a labor shortage in Morocco. This increasing migration continued despite the adoption between 1925 and 1931 of a set of measures limiting the number of Moroccans going to France (Ray 1973: 50–63). In 1924, the number of Moroccans in France neared 10,000, whereas Algerians numbered 100,000 (Rager 1950: 66).

The same scenario occurred again during the Second World War. The number of Moroccan workers introduced into France between 1939 and 1940 was estimated at 30,000 (Sanson 1947: 165), and the Moroccan soldiers mobilized in support of France and the Allies during World War II exceeded 80,000 (Thobie et al. 1990: 341). In the 1960s, some Western European countries living the postwar era commonly known as “The Glorious Thirty” had labor force shortages that drove economic operators to recruit on southern Mediterranean shores. This led to the first wave of emigration, predominantly composed of single males, which greatly contributed to the reconstruction of Europe. To ensure a steady supply of Maghrebi labor, France signed a number of agreements with Morocco and Tunisia in 1963, and with Algeria in 1964.

Moroccan emigration cannot be explained by economic factors alone, without looking at certain political transformations in the country of origin. De Haas (2005, 2007a)

has pointed out that the Moroccan state has an ambivalent position in simultaneously controlling and encouraging emigration. Since the 1960s, the Moroccan state has actively encouraged emigration from certain regions for political and economic reasons. The northern mountain area of Rif, for instance, is well known for active resistance to government as well as for its drug trade and local mafia. The control of migrants was initially in the hands of the Moroccan administration, which issued passports. In short, by sending to Europe the “troublemakers” and those who tried to challenge the power hegemony, the Moroccan power elite consolidated its dominant position.

The outbreak of the economic crisis in European countries in 1974, following the first oil crisis of 1973 and growing unemployment, led these countries to reverse their migration policies. France decided to stop immigration from the Maghreb. However, these restrictive policies did not fully halt immigration; on the contrary, it continued to grow under different forms and strategies (family reunion, undocumented migration, highly skilled labor migration, etc.). Among the migrants there were also politically active individuals, often leftist opponents, who were considered a threat by the ruling class. To control its subjects abroad, the Moroccan state established a control system that expanded its national borders (De Haas 2007b: 12)

Today, statistics of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in Morocco puts the number of Moroccans residing abroad at more than three million individuals. The number has gradually risen from 160,000 in 1968 to 3,185,382 in 2005. More than 2½ million Moroccans were living in Europe in 2005, representing the highest percentage of Moroccans residing abroad (85.9%). Nearly 32.6% of all the Moroccans living abroad are living in France<sup>2</sup>; Spain and Belgium rank second and third; followed by Italy, the Netherlands, and Germany. The US comes after Europe, followed by the Arab countries, while only very few Moroccans live in sub-Saharan African countries. The Moroccan immigration population is slightly male dominated, although today women already account for 45% of the total number of Moroccans in Europe (Daoud 2011: 17).

Until the first half of the twentieth century, Morocco was a country of immigration, receiving relatively large migration flows from some European countries, particularly from France. Since then it has become a country of emigration, mainly directed to the EU Member States. For the aforementioned historical reasons, the French presence in Morocco remains important today. The French community is currently the largest foreign presence in Morocco; their number is more than 42,000<sup>3</sup>. The French mainly reside in the coastal areas and in large cities, such as Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakech, Agadir, Fez, and Tangiers. They are mostly expatriates, aid workers, diplomats, business people, international students, retired people, members of mixed couples, and lifestyle migrants. Further, more than a 1,000 French companies

<sup>2</sup> The majority of Moroccans in France (155,674) live in the Ile-de-France (the area around Paris). The second largest population can be found in the Languedoc-Roussillon region (40,547) and the third important area is the Center of France (26,749).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.ambafrance-ma.org/presence-francaise/index.cfm>

are located in Morocco, covering such areas of activity as food, pharmaceuticals, banking, insurance, environment and energy, tourism, telecommunications, electrical and electronic equipment, textiles, and so on.

### 3.2.2 *Migration Policies and Transformation of Migrant Categories*

Migration policies in France changed decisively in 1974, when labor migration was officially halted because of increased unemployment among the immigrant population and concern over the Gulf War and oil crisis. At that time, family reunification became the most common type of entry visa, together with students (counted in France as immigrants if staying more than 1 year). After decades of heated public debate on “immigration,” following the general European tendency, France is aiming at selective immigration (*l’immigration choisie*) as opposed to enforced immigration (*l’immigration subie*): from family and undocumented migration toward highly skilled migration. It has to be noted that what is commonly referred to as an *immigration* debate in France would be referred to as a debate on *ethnic relations* in Anglo-American discourses, because the populations whose housing, schooling, and integration are in question are usually second and third generation immigrants and mostly French nationals.

In his doctoral dissertation, Bruno Laffort (2009) analyzed former Moroccan students who arrived in France between 1975 and 1983. He comes to the conclusion that the process of immigration and settling down in France of these student migrants was different from what he calls *primo-arrivals*, the first generation of labor migrants, whose migration experience was, as argued by Abdelmalek Sayad (1999), characterized by double absence: being marginalized both in the receiving society and in the sending society. Instead of keeping up the illusion of return to Morocco in the future, these “new” migrants invested in staying by, for example, making mixed marriages. They developed what Laffort calls *third way of integration*, maintaining intensive ties with Morocco. This transformation in profiles and practices of migrants is significant for our study, because most of our respondents are among those who migrated after 1974. Therefore, they belong to the generation of migrants with varied profiles and more intensive transnational ties.

Morocco put in place a very important institutional system to manage and monitor its migrant population. Three government agencies are dedicated to managing the relationships of these migrants with their home country: The Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Residing Abroad, the Advisory Board of the Moroccan Community Abroad, and the Ministry for the Moroccan Community Residing Abroad (CCMRE). Given the economic weight of money transfers made by Moroccans residing abroad, which constitute the first source of foreign currency, the government of Morocco put in place a very important institutional system to manage and monitor its migrant population.

The migratory flows departing from or transiting through Morocco and heading for the southern borders of Europe have become so pressing for both Morocco and Europe that the issue of migration has been taken into account in Moroccan public policies. Indeed, since the 1990s, Moroccan government adopted a security approach to migration issues, with various devices to control the flows of uncontrolled migrants originating from Morocco and sub-Saharan regions. In 2003 a national strategy was adopted to halt undocumented migration on a double basis: an institutional basis (creation of the National Survey of migration and control of borders) and a legal basis (bill 02–03).<sup>4</sup> As the laws about Moroccan migration and foreigners' entry and stay in Morocco went back to the time of the Protectorate, the bill 02–03 aimed at filling a gap and meeting a new situation: Morocco has turned out to be a transit area for migrants from Maghreb and sub-Saharan countries. Beside that restrictive policy, there is no integration procedure in Morocco. No support is given by the State to help the integration of foreigners who wish to settle in the country.

### 3.3 Data and Methods

This chapter is based on empirical data from a total of 161 qualitative interviews, supplemented by 40 life-course interviews.<sup>5</sup> The data were collected among migrants and nonmigrants who maintain cross-border ties. The respondents differed from each other in terms of political and socioeconomic status. They belonged to three groups: (1) ethnic<sup>6</sup> Moroccans living in France; (2) ethnic French living in Morocco; and (3) ethnic Moroccans having returned to Morocco after emigration to France.

Through its two phases, the study involved altogether 161 persons. We interviewed different categories of migrants: expatriates, retired migrants, students, humanitarian migrants, "guest" migrants, family-based migrants, labor migrants, investing migrants, and Moroccan returnee migrants. We interviewed 41 men and 40 women in Morocco, and 24 women and 56 men in France. The respondents in France were aged between 22 and 60 years and in Morocco between 20 and 74. The majority of French in Morocco had arrived with tourist status. At the time of our research, ten of them still had tourist status, forcing them to leave Moroccan territory every 3 months, whereas the others had obtained a residence permit based on a working contract, investment, marriage to a Moroccan, or retirement.

<sup>4</sup> See [www.justice.gov.ma/fr/legislation/legislation\\_.aspx?ty=2&id\\_1=140](http://www.justice.gov.ma/fr/legislation/legislation_.aspx?ty=2&id_1=140); [www.carim.org/Publications/CARIM-AS04\\_01-Elmadmad.pdf](http://www.carim.org/Publications/CARIM-AS04_01-Elmadmad.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> We would like to thank all the members of the research team both in Morocco and in France: Frédéric Calmès, Omar Fassi, Hayat Naciri, Fath-Zohour Ounejma, Omar Yessef, Khaled Mouna, Bruno Laffort, Claire Carapezzi, and Kamel Aoudjehane.

<sup>6</sup> By "ethnic" we refer here to the national culture the person is born into and socialized into in childhood. The division is made for analytical purposes. In this article we describe people's feeling of belonging or identification with an ethnic group; or a person's current nationality may be more complex.

The majority of Moroccans in France had arrived on student visas. The others had moved there and obtained a residence permit thanks to family reunification, an employment contract, or a political refugee status. At the time of our interviews, less than one third had been naturalized. More than one third of the participants were married before migrating. At the time of the interviews, more than half of them were married. Two thirds were living with their spouse, and only one third of them were living with children. All the interviewees had at least the level of secondary school education.

In France, the 20 life-course interviews were conducted with respondents who can be classified as the *new generation* of Moroccan migrants. In the 1960s, when France actively recruited labor migrants from Morocco, most immigrants came from rural, Berber-speaking areas: Souss, Anti-Atlas, and after 1963, from Rif, when a labor agreement was signed with France (Lacroix 2005: 90). In our sample, respondents came primarily from Arabic and often also French-speaking families and from urban areas: Casablanca, Rabat, Tétouan, Marrakech, or Meknes. None of these areas are considered as traditional migration source areas in Morocco. Yet when respondents were questioned about the origin of their parents, it turned out that many of them belonged to the recently urbanized generation. Students were slightly over-represented in the study for many reasons. Because the respondents were found using the snowball method of recruiting, students had the largest social circles and seemed to socialize more with their compatriots. They were also more often available for longer interviews than people with families and full-time occupations.

In Morocco, apart from a few French participants who had been living in Morocco ever since the time of the protectorate, most of the respondents (as well the French migrants as the Moroccan returnees) had settled in Morocco fairly recently. More than half of the interviewees had settled in Morocco after 2000. It is important to note that although all the Moroccans interviewed for this study were of Muslim background (although not always actively religious or religious at all), Morocco had the largest Jewish population of all the Arab countries until the foundation of Israel in 1948, when there was an important Jewish emigration from Morocco, mainly to Israel, France, and Canada. Some, although not many, Moroccan interviewees mentioned the importance of the shared cultural background of Moroccan Jews and Muslims in everyday life, whereas others implicitly associated being Moroccan with being a Muslim.

The respondents were recruited mainly using the snowball sampling technique and interviews were recorded and transcribed. Most interviews were conducted in French. Only six were held in Arabic. All participants were interviewed face to face, except one who was interviewed by telephone. Primarily, we sought to meet individuals who maintained transnational ties or who were involved in transnational economic, political, religious, and family activities. As for the Moroccan returnees, we selected a sample of individuals who maintained transnational ties, so it enabled us to learn about a still largely unexplored category of migrants. The interviews took place in public places such as cafés or parks, but also very often at the respondents' homes. Time spent with respondents allowed us in fact to collect rich ethnographic data with many informal discussions and observations, which cannot all be discussed

within this report but will provide useful data for further studies. The average duration of the interviews was 1 h. As with semistructured interviews, life-course interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the interpretive content analyses method, by looking at different themes emerging from the narratives.

### 3.4 Effects of State Regulations on Migration Channels

The various migration channels in the Franco–Moroccan space cannot be listed unless the effects of state regulations on mobility are disclosed. Holders of French passports can easily cross Moroccan borders whereas immigration to France is strictly controlled, which determines the configuration of different channels. On the one hand, French natives can freely move between France and Morocco. If they are not residents in Morocco, they must exit the country every 3 months, even if only by going to Ceuta, a Spanish enclave located on the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. Thus they can easily build their migration project during their various sojourns, and even start without a defined project. On the other hand, the Moroccans who want to go to France have to work out a precise migration project to apply for a visa<sup>7</sup> allowing them to migrate to France. The differences in the channels followed by French people and Moroccans are therefore closely linked to state regulations.

Regarding the Moroccan migrants we met during the field work, the most common migratory channels had been through studies and family reunification. Because most of the respondents were members of the post–labor-migration generation, they had arrived in France on student visas. In most cases, their migration was based on a concrete study project considered as a part of educational qualification, but for some of them, studies were merely the “official” motive for their settling in France. For example, it was thanks to a student visa that Karim was allowed to leave a social and family context where he did not feel free to live according to his sexual orientation.

I could not stay in Morocco anymore. I know some people started to have doubts about my sexual orientation. I was afraid my family would find out. I was horrified by this thought. Fortunately I could leave; this way I can keep my secret. (Karim, male, Moroccan living in France)

Because immigration to France has been strictly regulated since 1974, it is legally impossible for a Moroccan to reside in France with the declared purpose of finding a job (except for seasonal employment). This means that the Moroccans who had migrated to France on the strength of an employment contract had migrated before 1974. After 1974, they had to obtain a residence permit in some other way (either studies or family reunification), and only after this procedure were they allowed to take up a legal job.

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<sup>7</sup> According to the French Embassy, there are different types of visas: for family reunifications, tourists, students, scientists, artists, athletes, refugees, persons with health problems, and so on.

Our field work revealed some migration channels that are not often dealt with in research literature: people with health problems (comprising permanent residents in Morocco who frequently travel to France for long periods to undergo their medical treatments, and others who actually settle in France),<sup>8</sup> graduates who went to France to gain professional experience through a training session, and political refugees (both those with residence permits and, in some cases, French nationality thanks to their status and those who considered themselves symbolic refugees, but had not officially been assigned this status). As expected, international marriages also influenced migration. For a Moroccan, marriage to a French national makes it possible to obtain a residence permit.<sup>9</sup> Marriage also stimulates migration (whether desired or not) and can lead to settlement for a long time. Such unions, either before or after migration, facilitate Moroccans' administrative and socioeconomic integration.

For a French man or woman, marriage to a Moroccan national allows him or her to obtain a residence permit in Morocco, because he or she can get it with a contract of employment or an application as an investor or a senior citizen. However, it appeared in our research that because French people can settle in Morocco with mere tourist status (without resident status), marriage was not considered as a migratory channel. Besides, some mixed couples, after living a few years in Morocco, had signed a contract of marriage in the presence of an *adul* (the only legal marriage for Moroccan authorities, to simplify administrative procedures). For these mixed couples, deciding to settle in Morocco marriage was a factor that triggered migration or return to Morocco.

For several French interviewed for this research, migration to Morocco had been stimulated by a professional challenge, whether it was in the frame of an expatriate contract,<sup>10</sup> a local job, a project to create an enterprise, or a religious vocation. Some had moved to Morocco once they had retired. Yet one should be careful in classifying people as "retired" because, in fact, our field work confirmed the findings of previous studies (e.g., O'Reilly 2007): many of the officially retired respondents were working or involved in informal labor activities. Some had moved to Morocco for a training period, but after that period, they were still working in Morocco in local or international organizations.

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<sup>8</sup> They arrive either on a tourist visa or a Schengen visa if their state of health is considered serious and incurable in their country. The French authorities decide if a person can be given a visa according to the status of his/her disease and its degree of severity.

<sup>9</sup> The migrants are aware of the suspicions about unconsummated marriages (used as a means to enter the French territory), which are discussed in political debates on mixed marriages. Those obtaining French nationality in some other way prefer to highlight this in discussions. Some others who have acquired a second nationality before coming to France (like Najib who had stayed in Canada) say they feel freer and not suspected when choosing their partner for marriage.

<sup>10</sup> Expatriates work for France in Morocco on fixed term contracts. They include teachers, diplomats, and people working for a French cultural service or French enterprises. Most of them had applied for a position in different countries and were finally sent to Morocco. Many French teachers have a resident or local contract and do not receive comparable salaries and advantages.

### 3.4.1 Searching for a Better Quality of Life

Regarding the French respondents, it was found that their migration channels reflect the views of O'Reilly (2007) on lifestyle migration. According to O'Reilly (2007: 1), lifestyle migrants are "relatively affluent individuals, moving *en masse*, either part or full-time, permanently or temporarily, to countries where the cost of living and/or the price of property is cheaper, places which, for various reasons, signify something loosely defined as quality of life. The key motivation for those migrations has been the search for something intangible encapsulated in the phrase 'quality of life'." It is possible for them to settle in the country with the only objective to search for a better quality of life. Such a project can take various aspects from an artistic quest to a spiritual vocation, the search for recognition, the desire for a comfortable way of life, or even the attainment of a dream. In our sample, Michel explained his experiences as follows.

It is the result of the exasperation caused by the entire French system, a system where charges and taxes accumulate. Add all that you have to pay: health insurance, old age, Ursaf,<sup>11</sup> tax paid by professional people, property tax, income tax; at that point you realize you work for the state, and at the end of the year you have no money left to go on vacation. Then you come to think too much is too much. (Michel, male, French living in Morocco)

Indeed, departures were often rooted in individual lives. Many French respondents had made their migratory plans after a hardship which, directly or indirectly, had motivated their departure: a divorce or a separation, a disease, an expropriation, redundancy, a difficult economic situation, bereavement, weariness with life. What seems to be the main characteristic of their migration is a desire for "somewhere else," which, in most cases, refers to a desire for a change of scene. Morocco offers a kind of nearby exoticism and gives those French people an experience of cultural differences within reassuring colonial frames of reference. The search for a better quality of life and/or the strong desire for somewhere else were juxtaposed in their stories with a feeling of weariness owing to the social, economic, and political climate in France (heavy taxes, rise of the right wing, cold human relationships, pace of work, conditions of life). For the Moroccans who migrated to France, the desire for somewhere else was significant too, but it did not have the same meaning. Marwan stated,

I felt incapable of doing things in Morocco. I still loved to work in trade, but in Morocco I didn't see many openings in that field. I needed some capital to start with...and how to achieve that capital in Morocco? It's really impossible. I needed a visa. I wanted to work for me and my family. I wanted a better future for my children. (Marwan, male, Moroccan, living in France)

It is noteworthy that although "somewhere else" may represent a desire for a different way of life, it was usually linked with the search for social and economic

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<sup>11</sup>URSAF stands for L'Union de Recouvrement des Cotisations de Sécurité Sociale et d'Allocations Familiales.

improvement compared with the local social and economic climate, considered frustrating for several reasons: weight of traditions, mistrust of the political system, police controls, lack of future work prospects, social pressure, the difficulty to live freely according to sexual preferences, precarious work situation, and low salaries.

### 3.4.2 *Continuity Through Family History and Connections*

Given the colonial history of the Franco–Moroccan space, it was not surprising to note that individual migration projects were often connected to wider historical factors and family memories. In this way, some French migrants made a connection between their presence in Morocco and that of a relative or a grandparent who had lived there during the era of the French protectorate.

Ever since I was a baby, I had been told stories (mostly by my father) about relatives who were here, and especially one of his uncles, my great uncle, who was a photographer in Fez. I needed to come back here to find my roots, which I had a bit lost and which my family tried to make me forget. (Carl, male, French living in Morocco)

A French female interviewee, Elizabeth, told us that she went to Morocco aiming to recreate the fantasy world of her grandparents' colonial life. She rented a colonial house in Fez and recreated the fanciful world in which they were supposed to have lived, surrounded with objects, pictures, and books of the colonial era. She viewed her migration as "a need for family continuity." In the same way, some Moroccans mentioned links between their departure to France and their family history, intimately connected to the colonial past of Morocco. Some migrants' fathers or grandfathers, for example, had gone to France during the World Wars to fight as soldiers in the French army. Some others had left Morocco as soon as immigration to France had been made possible as a result of international agreements in the wake of the postwar period. After being recruited by French entrepreneurs who had been settled earlier in Morocco, they had been working in France in the building trade. Some of them were still living in France; others used to move between the countries after their retirement.

It is relevant to point out that the transnational networks and links established before departure seem to influence migration patterns. In particular, for Moroccan respondents, the networks of relatives and friends, as well as scholarships or partnerships between French and Moroccan schools and universities, played a crucial role in their migration to France. They were materially and symbolically supported by transnational networks both in France and in Morocco, which helped them to implement their migratory plans.

On the other hand, the migratory projects of the French respondents had been more individual since the beginning, benefiting from very little support from their groups or relationships. Several French interviewees were "initiated" into Morocco through some acquaintances who had been there. Before settling in Morocco, the possibility of frequent trips between France and Morocco for French passport holders had enabled some of them to gradually establish support networks. In the course of

several sojourns in the country before migrating, they had created ties and professional networks. Apart from expatriates and married people who went to Morocco to live with their spouse, such previous relationships had proved to be professionally useful, too. Michel, a French man living in Morocco, stated, "I have absolutely no desire to return to the wolf's mouth." For the majority of French living in Morocco the idea of a return did not make a lot of sense, simply because they did not consider they ever really left their homeland. Rather, their life took place in both countries.

Let's say I'm like a migratory bird. My roots are on two sides. It looks as if I could do both seasons and have two lives in the same way. It would be impossible today to live in one without the other. (Béatrice, female, French born in Morocco)

Some of the respondents hoped to be able to live both in Morocco and France as long as their health and the political situation allow it. The return was typically mentioned as evident in the cases of health problems or political instability in the country of settlement.

Anyway, if things turn ugly I will pack up and go back to France. (Gérard, male, French living in Morocco)

For Moroccan labor migrants, migration was usually considered temporary, but for the new generations of Moroccan migrants return was a more ambivalent question. Following their migratory experiences in France, some Moroccans who were interviewed for this study had been motivated to return to Morocco by a work contract with a better economic status improving their image, the opportunities offered by Morocco to start a business, or a desire to help build their own country. Majid said,

I feel that it is imperative to return to your roots to better build yourself and grow. And back to your past town or village, there are also the people who can recognize you as the son of so and so and see you progress. So in a way I was no longer anonymous. (Majid, male, Moroccan returnee)

The reasons mentioned by the Moroccan respondents often revealed a sense of dissatisfaction with their past experiences in France: "not to be anonymous any longer"; "to be recognized for your diplomas"; "to be your own boss"; "to be able to use your skills and experience to the benefit of the people of your country." Several Moroccans who had come back to Morocco were offered jobs and a better social status than they could reach in France. For them, it was clear that it would have been much more difficult to obtain an equivalent position in France, unless "you become the eternal interchangeable part timer," as said by an interviewee who had returned to Morocco because he had found there a position as a university professor. Moroccan returnees continued to maintain contacts with France because they were seen as a source of professional and personal enrichment. Most of them felt they had valuable experiences in France. Some had spent more than half of their lives there. In fact, the majority of the Moroccan returnees could not conceive giving up life in either country.

I want to continue dividing myself between France and Morocco. (Yacine, male, Moroccan returnee)

It is interesting to scrutinize in detail the cases of the Moroccans who regularly used to go to France. Their reasons were diverse. Some had a wife and/or children living in France; in these cases, their daily life followed the rhythm of regular border crossings. Some retired older people declared a residence in France to get a higher pension; in these cases, they had to go back to France to receive their pension. Some did business with France. Some others had created associations for sport or development necessitating regular mobility between France and Morocco. Even those who had completed their migratory trajectories and seemed to have come back to Morocco did not consider they had really returned, because they continued to maintain transnational links or transnational lifestyles.

### 3.5 Political Orientation

#### 3.5.1 *Nationality and Citizenship: Perceptions and Strategies*

The research revealed that, as regards *citizenship*, French and Moroccans moving in the Franco–Moroccan space have different conceptions and strategies. Among the French respondents, the rate of naturalization was very low. This can partly be explained by the restrictive Moroccan laws, in spite of the recent reform of the Code of Nationality.<sup>12</sup> Considering that low rate, it was not surprising to observe that none of the 60 French respondents had taken Moroccan nationality, except for one woman who had dual nationality because her parents were a mixed couple. The restrictive regulations cannot be the only explanation because none of the French respondents had applied for a Moroccan nationality, and only two of them reported that they would like to obtain Moroccan citizenship if it were possible. Some justified their definite rejection by explanations such as “the lack of freedom,” “corruption,” “women’s status,” “fatalism,” and “subjection to the king.” The exceptional character of naturalization among the French residents was also due to the fact that they regarded Moroccan naturalization to be of no use to them, because anyone with French nationality can easily cross the Moroccan borders. Besides, there are only very few impediments due to the status of a foreigner.<sup>13</sup>

Instead, about one third of the Moroccan respondents had taken French nationality, and one third had attained dual nationality. Few Moroccans (most of them married to a French spouse), considered applying for French nationality or had started the naturalization process. Sometimes the Moroccan respondents thought that the naturalization process might be a kind of disloyalty to their country of origin but, in most

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<sup>12</sup> The Moroccan Nationality Code was modified on March 23, 2007. Thanks to this reform, Moroccan women can transmit their nationality. So far children have inherited their father’s nationality.

<sup>13</sup> Only nationals can acquire farmland or join the Moroccan civil service. Only foreigners married to a Moroccan national are allowed to engage in private practice as lawyers, doctors, chemists, etc.

cases, the advantages conferred by the French nationality overrode the loyalty to their country. In most cases, their points of view and motivations can be explained by pragmatic reasons (freedom of circulation, access to employment sectors reserved for nationals, etc.).

### 3.5.2 *Political Participation*

The possibilities for political participation are not the same in France and Morocco. Morocco is a monarchy, in which political practices and democratic means are limited. Therefore, in the Moroccan case, one should be careful in drawing conclusions of people's political commitment solely by looking at formal political activities such as voting or being a member of a political party.

Among the Moroccan respondents, some had a politically oriented background, mainly in the Marxist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The political conditions in Morocco had clearly influenced their desire to migrate. In fact, the political actions of these leftists consisted of defending citizens' rights in Morocco rather than of participating in the political life in France. Only two Moroccans had taken an active part in French politics and had been involved in a political party. The networks of French and international associations for the defence of human rights were of great importance in denouncing the transgression of human rights and supporting Moroccan political prisoners. Another aspect of political participation for Moroccans living in France was their activities in trade unions. Many of them had already been active in trade unions in Morocco, mostly by participating in strikes and demonstrations. The kind of events that motivated such politically active Moroccan participants were demonstrations against racism, the Israeli occupation of Palestine, or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example.

The "Arab Spring" of 2011, with revolts and protests nearly everywhere in the Middle East and North Africa, showed the importance of virtual platforms in the organization of protests. Despite some speculations in the francophone media about Morocco being a stable exception in North Africa, the same elements that brought Tunisians and Egyptians onto the streets can be found in Morocco, too (Telquel 2011a, b). Facebook, Twitter, blogs and various online forums are public spheres of political organization and protest. Although our study did not include Internet ethnography or another type of systematic observation of the use of the Internet among the respondents, it became apparent that particularly among the students the Internet is the main source of information on political events and means of spreading information to contest existing power structures or react to social inequalities. This kind of participation clearly exceeds interest in traditional party politics, particularly among younger interviewees. The Internet was also sometimes present in the interviews. For example, in an interview with two Moroccan students, when discussing corruption in Morocco, their narrative was interacting with videos they showed from YouTube or information they verified through Wikipedia.

The French people interviewed in Morocco did not mention political activity, apart from the right to vote, which a good many of them exercised. Most of them had only little or no interest in Moroccan political life. They did not care about Moroccan citizenship as they did not have the right to vote or participate in a Moroccan political party. If the majority of the French respondents expressed indifference to Moroccan policy, it was not because they were not interested in politics in general—in fact many of them followed the French political news and voted in the presidential elections. Rather, the reason is that many of them felt themselves as outsiders. Although they were residents in Morocco, they did not concern themselves with Moroccan political life: they were not subjects of the king and, with very few exceptions, they were not Muslims. Unlike France, which is a *laïque* (secular) republic in which all legal residents enjoy the same rights and have the same obligations (except the right to vote is only granted to citizens), Morocco is a Muslim monarchy and its legislation is based on different personal status related to religion: Muslim personal status, Jewish personal status, the civil condition of foreigners (such as French residents). Foreigners, except those who are in mixed marriages, are free to benefit from the advantages of the country while keeping at a distance from the legal and religious local system.<sup>14</sup>

Several respondents (Moroccan and French) defined their political participation by way of civic commitment to local or transnational associations. The most important transnational network concerned civil institutions, associations, or NGOs, such as migrants' associations for Maghrebi immigrants in France; French associations for French or French-speaking people in Morocco; associations involved in development with a project located in Morocco; and various associations organizing sports, artistic, and intercultural exchanges between Morocco and France.

### 3.6 Symbolic Boundaries Through Affiliations

According to the research findings, it seems to be easier to feel at *home* in two countries than to be really affiliated to both states (Rodriguez 2001; Casado Diaz 2006; Lucas and Purkayastha 2007; Gustafon 2008). The affiliations mentioned both by the Moroccan and French respondents showed a variability of the symbolic boundaries (Barth 1969). For instance, the position of the French as “outsiders” in Morocco could be felt in their different affiliations. With the exception of two women (one born in Morocco), none mentioned any affiliation to Morocco or defined themselves as Moroccans. The vast majority regarded themselves as French. However a closer

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<sup>14</sup>The Muslim personal status code is valid for the foreigner in a mixed couple. The laws deliver a clear message to those who get married to a Moroccan Muslim (men or women): it is the foreigner who has to get integrated into the Muslim system if he/she wants to have some rights; the country does not have to open up to foreigners. It is imperative to preserve a Muslim country and maintain social cohesion.

analysis leads us to make a distinction between a minority who identified themselves with the French nation and embraced patriotic feelings, and those who defined themselves as French but emphasized that their sense of membership was not connected to an idea of nation or territory. Let us take the first case.

In France, I find all the values that are mine, republican values, because my family grew up there, and I would say, fought for the country. For me, the feeling of belonging to a nation comes as a result of fighting during a war to stay in this nation, that's all. That's the whole history of my family. This personal history, I bear it in me. My country is France, and it will never be any other country. Never! Even if I have traveled a lot. (Marcelline, female, French living in Morocco)

On the other hand, those French individuals who tended to dissociate their belonging to France from any nationalist connotation attached their sense of affiliation to cultural markers, to the French value system, to the French language, or to a "French mentality," which they often defined as Western.

Am I French? Yes, I speak French, my parents are French. I have an attachment to France, but I have no patriotic pride. In fact, I think I do reject what is Moroccan. It is a rejection of their values. They are very archaic, and it deeply bothers me. If we speak of values, it would rather be the French values, the values of the Enlightenment, the beautiful French values, the great western philosophical values—undeniably. (Sophie, female, French born in Morocco)

Some French interviewees defined themselves as European, pointing to a wider circle of reference. In their discourse, there were two categories: French and Europeans (we), which referred to an ethnic border rather than a national or territorial border, and differentiated themselves from the Moroccan category (they; the others). On the other hand, for the Moroccans, nationality and sometimes the origins in the same place in Morocco were the primary source of affiliation. For them, local affiliation demonstrated the importance of territorial attachment within a national or transnational context. In addition to national identities, other possible ethnic identifications such as "Arab," "Maghrebi," "North African," "Mediterranean," or "African" were used by the respondents. Surprisingly, identification as a "European" did not appear at all in the narratives of the Moroccan interviewees, although their migratory projects were usually directed toward Europe.

It appeared that state regulations have a clear impact on factors shaping national identification. For example, Françoise, a French woman born in Morocco, stated that it was difficult for her to claim a sense of belonging to Morocco because she was constantly referred to as "a foreigner."

Here, I'm not at home. I'm in their country.

Q: Why is it so clear?

A: I don't have to assert my right; it is not a right. It is their home.

Q: Why?

A: Because it's their country.

Q: But you were born here?

A: Yes, but I'm not Moroccan; I don't have Moroccan nationality. I cannot get it.

Several authors have pointed out that the identification is plural (Meintel 1992; Mucchielli 2002) and multidimensional (Gallissot 1987). Each individual draws

from a palette of available dimensions and develop his/her own definition of him/herself (Devereux 1970). In the frame of this study, the plurality of identifications was especially apparent in the Moroccan narratives. Most Moroccans who had lived in France for several years identified themselves as French as well as Moroccan.

I am French and Moroccan and I am fine with it. I feel very well and I am comfortable with this identity. (Touria, female, French–Moroccan returnee)

This was true even for those who had not taken French citizenship. Indeed, even if they could not officially claim to be French,<sup>15</sup> some of them felt as deeply French, finding their identity in the French culture, language, and values.

I am much more French than Moroccan. Besides, at work I am different, I stick out in the way I dress, I speak, I behave with the others....I show that I come from France. I can't say 'I am French' (I would not allow myself to go that far), but I value my knowledge of French civilization. For me it is a key asset. (Nouha, female, Moroccan returnee)

The respondents with dual citizenship defined themselves as Franco–Moroccan and eagerly supported their belonging to both countries. An important factor in their affiliation was the family. For those respondents whose parents were in Morocco and whose children were born in France, the choice of one country would have been difficult to make.

Choosing between Morocco and France is like choosing between your mother and your father. (Zakaria, male, French–Moroccan, living in France)

The fact that one feels and defines him- or herself as Franco–Moroccan or as being of French or Moroccan origin does not necessarily mean that other people will recognize him or her as such. Some respondents with dual citizenship expressed their discomfort when they had to cope with what they called *a duty of belonging*. Such persons with multiple affiliations were often confronted with others' desire to give them a single label. Sophie spoke of a great inconsistency between the fact that she considered herself emotionally at home in Morocco (since she was born and raised there), and the fact that she was not granted the opportunity to attain citizenship of the country.

I feel that there is this duty of belonging. This sense of belonging is supposed to be for me a duty, but I don't feel it that way. All these questions, having to choose something—it makes me flee. For other people, you have to feel you belong. Mom says you must not betray your country. But why is it absolutely necessary to belong to a country? Why? And, with all these problems about migration, you feel the difficulties at the borders and with the administration, you have to be confined to one country; but I do not see it that way. I feel from nowhere, and it makes me feel uncomfortable because I have to choose, I have to belong. (Sophie, female, French born in Morocco)

For Moroccans, the French people born in Morocco and living there were only “French” or “Gawria” or “Shania.” Sophia continued,

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<sup>15</sup>This situation clearly shows the impact of state regulations on the construction of identities and the process of identification.

For the others, I am French, that's all [...]. In the street, I am permanently a *gawria* (a foreigner), and even in our relationships with customers in our company, I'm the French woman. That's insuperable. Yes, people put you in boxes.

Another French female respondent, Françoise (born in Morocco) said,

The Moroccans say "You're Moroccan" out of kindness. It's nice, but they do not believe it for a moment.

The same phenomenon was observed among children born in France by Moroccan parents. Though they were French citizens, they were often classified through exclusive categories, such as "Moroccan," "Arab," "Muslim," "Beur," and so on. Those categories obviously indicated a barrier between "them" and "us." Many of the respondents still conceived that the different facets of their affiliations were "a source of richness," although not without ambivalence. For some of them, the discomfort with their identity stemmed from their difficulty in having their mixed heritage recognized.

Finally, the number of French and Moroccans who defined themselves as *world citizens* was quite significant. The respondents did not seem to be tied to any particular country but said that they could live anywhere. Many of them referred to a process of identification beyond national or ethnic limits.

Q: What is the impact of your religious practice on your identity?

A: First I think it is what enables me to feel well in the two cultures, I don't have to choose either. It's what makes me feel at peace.

Q: But why is it a consequence of religion?

A: Because it enables me to go beyond that attachment to a nation. (Touria, female, French-Moroccan returnee)

### 3.6.1 *Narratives of Home and Belonging*

By going deeper into the representations of home, we can see that transnational mobility and the negotiations between several spaces of reference had an impact on the definitions and constructions of a sense of home. More than half of the respondents considered themselves to be at home both in Morocco and France. The identity space was often mentioned related to two countries; a kind of intermediate space, here and over there at the same time (Tarrus 2004). In practice, many of the respondents lived their everyday lives in two countries, but some interviewees were unable to determine their principal place of residence. They could not imagine giving up life in either country because, according to them, it was their mobility between the countries that made their way of life rich. The idea of a return did not make a lot of sense, simply because they did not consider they had really left their homeland.

The multiple representations of home support the ideas about deterritorialized identity, presented by Gupta and Ferguson (1992). In the frame of our study, the sense of feeling at home was associated with atmospheres, familiar smells and landscapes, various ties, a sense of fulfillment, memories, projects, a way of life, and

familiar cultural references. For the great majority of the respondents, these frames of reference were conceived of as plural and movable; they seemed to correspond to symbolic ties<sup>16</sup> rather than roots in a territory or a nation, showing a deterritorialized representation of home. The interviewees often mentioned their house/home, which did not just mean the material house, but also symbolic roots related to their own private lives, the people living with them, some personal items (a box, books, photos, pictures, clothes, etc.), daily routine, and so on.

Border-crossing mobility and other transnational activities had led some respondents to transform their initial cultural references through various experiences, like a conversion or the adoption of new values. According to Guilbert (1993), cultural transformation concerns values and the individual relation to these values. This means an adjustment, an adaptation, a harmonization of original values with another value system. Guilbert warns that one should not confuse the concept of cultural transformation with pragmatic adjustments (integrating new tastes in cooking, listening to “ethnic” music, learning to use a new currency), which are realized through new knowledge. Cultural transformation does not mean something more, but something different. Such cultural transformations analyzed by Therrien (2009) became evident in our study. However, the empirical data prevent us from extolling what Riccio (2006) terms *a nomadic version of the world* or generalizing that search for a sense of plural homes. Indeed, home was sometimes inextricably linked with the homeland and sometimes with the idea of nation. The initial conception of migration projects—whether temporary or long term, either motivated by social and economic advantages or by a wish to live in a different way—was associated with the feeling of a unique home.

In the social sphere of transnational life, presence and distance can be negotiated in different ways. Increased frequency of cross-border visits has often been explained, in a simplifying way, by the development of transport systems and more affordable prices. In fact, the geographical proximity of Morocco and France, and the low cost and speed of means of communication and transport greatly helped the respondents to maintain close cross-border links with friends and relatives.<sup>17</sup> Yet these factors are not enough to explain the vitality of transnational links in the Franco–Moroccan space; emotional ties were also considered important indices as they helped reduce the distance by allowing migrants not to feel too far from home.

Our data suggest that the frequency of visits may depend on other factors, too, such as social constraints. For one homosexual respondent, the return to Morocco was always complicated because he had to face friends and family enquiries about his family life. In fact, moving to France had been the only solution for him to live his life as a homosexual and in a pair relationship with another man without his family in Morocco knowing about it. In this case, the life in France was seen as a

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<sup>16</sup> According to Lucas et al. (2007) “home” embodies specific feelings of safety, familiarity, comfort, love, and belonging.

<sup>17</sup> Some French people said that it is not so costly to visit their relatives and clients in France since they reside in Morocco.

strategy to keep up appearances in Morocco and the visits were kept very brief to avoid troublesome inquiries about the respondent's personal life. Some other narratives reflected the respondents' worries over "what people may say" in Morocco. Two student migrants confessed that they preferred not to go to Morocco outside the official holiday season even if they had the opportunity, because this might cause an occasion for some people to gossip that they are "not really doing anything in France," meaning that people there would suspect they are not studying and working. By contrast, some French respondents living in Morocco said that they had become closer with their friends or family members. When they come over for a visit, they stay longer in Morocco because the country is popular as a holiday destination.

The quality of the migrants' welcome had an impact on the sense of home. There was a significant contrast between the discrimination situations experienced by Moroccans in France and the surprise, even embarrassment, of some French people facing positive stereotyping and recognition in Morocco. Such a contrast indicates the different modes of negotiation of the foreign presence, and the way symbolic dominating relations are internalized in the Franco–Moroccan space. Transnational links with familiar sociocultural references (relatives, friends, language, religion, associations, social security, health care) may enable migrants to feel at home even outside their homeland. Regular ties with family and friends<sup>18</sup> were the most often mentioned familiar references. The chance to stay in touch despite the distance greatly helped many respondents not to feel cut off from their home(s) abroad. They all maintained frequent links (even every day in some cases) with relatives or friends in France or Morocco by telephone, Internet, programs such as Skype, VoIP, or MSN Messenger, and so on. Most of the respondents were also very mobile between France and Morocco for personal or professional reasons.

Language is also an important reference point. It is noteworthy that all Moroccans encountered in France or in Morocco could speak French<sup>19</sup> whereas just very few French respondents could speak Moroccan Arabic. Yet those French who were not able to speak Arabic and communicated exclusively in French, even on Moroccan territory (at home, at work, in their children's French schools) did not feel less at home in Morocco. The difficulties in communicating with Moroccans seemed to be a worry for a few of them who were trying to learn the local language. On the other hand, the Moroccans living in France often mentioned the difficulty of passing on the Arabic language to their children, but some Moroccan returnee migrants from France had decided not to teach Arabic to their children.

Religion or spiritual life<sup>20</sup> appeared to be another criterion of familiarity with home. According to the respondents, it was the faith and spirituality much more

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<sup>18</sup> We mention relatives and friends in the same way because some French people maintain stronger and more frequent links with their friends than with their family. As for Moroccan returnees, none of them had family in France.

<sup>19</sup> Some had arrived with little knowledge of French, but all of them had made efforts to improve their command of oral and written French.

<sup>20</sup> For this research we did not elicit religious practice, but only transnational links owing to religious or spiritual practice.

than religion that created ties beyond national and cultural borders. For some respondents, belonging to a religious denomination (whether Christian, Baha'i, Muslim, or other) largely contributed to a feeling of closeness with home. For these believers, God united people beyond frontiers and faith created transnational links. Because it is easy to travel between France and Morocco, people can go back to their roots and revitalize their religious practices. They often choose the dates of their journeys in relation with particular periods or religious events (fasting, pilgrimages, ceremonies, rituals, etc.). In some cases, involvement in a religious or spiritual community or a group of common affinities (yoga, members of a fraternity, freemasons) gives spiritual comfort and a fellow feeling wherever the people are. For some respondents, the friendly welcome on their arrival within such a group and the support of such a community had mitigated their impression of distance and facilitated their integration.

An opportunity for the French nationals to maintain links with the French health care system gave them a feeling of security. Many of them had national insurance cover. Some Moroccans who were returning to Morocco applied for residence in France to retain their residence permits, and to be entitled to social security. For them the French health care system was clearly defined as the best preference. The proximity of France and affordable means of transport explain why they could have medical follow-up in France, buy medicines, be operated on, or have their medical tests interpreted by French doctors in France. For some French respondents who had decided to break with the French sociopolitical system and lived in Morocco, the contribution to French mutual insurance was presented as the very last tie.

What is striking is the different ways to connect the feeling of home with the question of integration among the French in Morocco and Moroccans in France. Indeed, even a monolingual French person can feel at home in Morocco, maybe working for a French company or a relocated firm, send his or her children to a French school, follow French media, enjoy French social and medical care, practice religion, or transmit "French" values to his or her children, all the while staying aloof from the Moroccan religious, political, and legal system. Although the Moroccans in France may also keep some religious and cultural references and enjoy Moroccan or Maghrebi social networks, it is difficult for them to reside in France and speak only Arabic; they have to send their children to a French school and they cannot engage in religious practices that break French laws.

In their discourse, the Moroccan respondents insisted that their integration into French society increased their impression of being at home, whereas the French did not draw a parallel between their feeling of home and their integration into Morocco. Moreover, several Moroccans returning to their original homeland explained that they left France because they felt frustrated because there was no real social and economic effort on the part of French society at their integration into the job market.<sup>21</sup> Many of them reported that their job did not correspond to the level of their degrees or qualifications.

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<sup>21</sup> Only one French woman had returned to her country of origin because, according to the law, she was not entitled to open a pathology laboratory in Morocco.

It is important to add that through our field work, we also met some French who could speak colloquial Arabic fluently, worked for Moroccan companies, had placed their children in Moroccan private schools, or were integrated into a Moroccan family through marriage.<sup>22</sup> What we try to underline is the difference between the free nature of integration in the Moroccan context and the required (virtually compulsory) nature of integration in the French context. The pattern of assimilation adopted by the integration policy in the French Republic and the policy based on different kinds of status in the Moroccan Muslim monarchy are certainly reflected in these two contexts.

### 3.7 Employment and Economic Strategies

Although it is clear that the Moroccan and French economies cannot be compared on the same basis; Morocco is a North African developing country and France a Western postindustrial country, there is a lot of economic cooperation between the countries. The economic ties between Morocco and France mainly take the forms of investments, transnational enterprises, and financial and monetary remittances. The French postwar economy was built with a significant contribution of migrant labor, whereas in Morocco the economy rests mostly on three sectors: tourism, migrant remittances, and phosphate as a natural resource. Of these, remittances are by far the most important source of income, exceeding three to four times development aid and representing three times private investments (Daoud 2011: 122).

Several economic agreements have been signed between France and Morocco, and France has traditionally been the most important foreign investor in Morocco with 41% of IDE (Integrated Development Environment) flows for the period of 1998–2003. Several fiscal and financial measures have been established in order to create a proper environment to attract foreign investors, including agreements such as the *Accord de Promotion et de Protection des Investissements* (APPI). The Moroccan state has actively encouraged Moroccans living abroad to invest in Morocco. As a concrete act of encouragement, special saving accounts for emigrants were established at *La Banque Populaire* (Lacroix 2005).

Within the TRANS-NET (transnationalization, migration, and transformation: multi-level analysis of migrant transnationalism) study, most of the respondents said they were employed or self-employed, apart from students and those who were permanently or temporarily disabled because of illness.<sup>23</sup> One third of the migrants interviewed in Morocco were employees on fixed-term contracts, one third worked

<sup>22</sup> Therefore they were submitted to the legislation based on Muslim personal status.

<sup>23</sup> One third of the respondents were wage earners; another third were self-employed, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, and craftsmen. Eleven respondents were retired, two women were housewives, three were students (trainees or taking correspondence courses), and three unemployed. Their occupations spanned diverse sectors such as education and research, agriculture, art and culture, tourism, the caregiving field, religion, foreign affairs, trade, or industry.

autonomously as craftsmen, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, for instance. Many returnee migrants interviewed in Morocco had been motivated by the idea of being able to create an enterprise or work independently, projects they felt they could not have realized in France. In France, nearly two thirds of our participants were employees, and 40% of employees had permanent employment, indicating a certain professional stability. One fourth were working half-time or part-time on short-term contracts and were therefore in a more precarious situation. The others were students or working independently; only one person was unemployed. The professional categories in two countries were relatively similar: entrepreneurs, teachers, professors, researchers, film makers, shopkeepers, artists, taxi drivers, consultants, students and PhD students, engineers, hostesses, pharmacists, and blue collar workers. In the Moroccan field, there were more entrepreneurs and independent workers than in France.

As seen previously, in Morocco, the economic and social development rests heavily on migrants' shoulders. Among the so-called first generation, labor migrants who arrived before 1974, the motivation for departure was dictated by strong economic needs, and sometimes hunger and social distress in the country of origin. Because the living conditions in France were rather hard, the only positive future perspective for many immigrants was to invest in Morocco so as to guarantee a better future for their children. Today, the migratory profiles have diversified and extended to other social categories beyond low skilled labor migrants, but still the idea of "migrants debt" to the homeland and those who stayed behind remains important in migrants' narratives (Daoud 2011: 9).

Although it is common to explain the unemployment of Maghrebi women in France by "the cultural norms prevailing in Islamic countries, where female employment outside home is often discouraged" (Hargreaves 1995: 42), our empirical data do not support this conception. All the Moroccan women interviewed were economically active. In some cases, their family had been against their participation in the working life, but this was rather because the work they were doing was perceived as a low status job by their middle-class families and therefore not suitable for them. In some cases, this could also apply to male respondents: some students reported that their families were against the idea to take a part-time job, because they were supposed to study.

In fact, in the Moroccan and French contexts, gender, social class, ethnicity and nationality seemed to affect participation in the economic life differently and in complex ways. Ethnic or national belonging could appear as an asset or a handicap in the labor market. Many French people estimated that they found better opportunities and greater responsibilities in Morocco than in France. A French woman had been offered a job as a teacher while waiting for her child from school, just because she looked French. The same "ethnic advantage" did not apply to Moroccans in France who seemed to have more difficulties in transforming their "ethnic capital" into "economic capital" in the professional fields. Many Moroccans referred to ethnic discrimination in their professional life in France. Some Moroccan students explained that it was difficult for them to find an enterprise for their internship because French nationals were given preference. A Moroccan female IT worker

estimated that she might have an advantage over men in recruitment because she can “mask” her ethnic origin by putting forward her gender identity and dressing up stylishly, in a feminine way. She added that female Arab names have less negative connotations than male ones. In some fields of economic activity, being a Moroccan could be an advantage too, mainly in new innovative professional fields or in the fields with very little competition with French people. A woman working as a cleaner in a hotel responded that a decisive factor in her recruitment was the fact that the manager had lived in Morocco and therefore “loved Moroccans.”

In the Moroccan-French context, some innovative professional activities had emerged thanks to cultural competence put into practice: small-scale enterprises specialized in the organization of wedding ceremonies for mixed couples, clothes, or pottery design drawing inspiration from their origin and “ethnic” restaurants and catering businesses. Artistic and scientific fields were fruitful grounds for transnational cross-border collaboration, and migrants working in those fields could actually benefit from their transnational connections. Morocco, or a migration experience, could serve as a source of inspiration for film-makers, playwrights, musicians, or other artists, and for some researchers, their field work or academic collaboration had taken place in Morocco. These networks were often mentioned in connection with professional activities.

To conclude, the research showed various strategies for dealing with employment and managing transnational lives. Economic motivations to migrate remained important. As mentioned before, the majority of French move to Morocco stimulated by a professional challenge. For their part, a lot of Moroccans still migrate for economic reasons, but after reaching a satisfactory standard of living, they tend to take into account other factors, too, such as quality of life, family life, spirituality, political conditions, and so on.

### ***3.7.1 Importance of Transnational Networks in the Professional Field***

On both sides of the Mediterranean, maintaining networks and social relationships across national borders seemed crucial for economic and professional activities. For the French settled in Morocco, their ties with France were mentioned as an advantage or even a necessity in the professional field. In the case of Moroccans in France, personal networks were important to find employment in France, whereas professional nets with Moroccans were a part of a wider strategy to maintain ties with the country of origin. Some French in Morocco had clients or business partners in both countries. The Internet was a crucial, even indispensable, instrument for working in distant and international networks. It was used to communicate with business partners, purchase equipment, consult colleagues, transfer medical records, and create websites. However, the Moroccans in France emphasized their direct physical presence in Morocco rather than communication at a distance in the way they managed their enterprises, property, and investments.

A number of innovations and the latest technological achievements were transferred from France to Morocco, both in scientific, medical, and technical domains. To keep informed about the recent developments in various fields was perceived as a professional asset by both French and returnee Moroccans. The exchange of knowledge and expertise was seen as profitable for all, even if the lack of sufficient material conditions might delay development in some spheres.

The French going to Morocco for a practical training session or a master's degree considered such an experience as a valuable asset, mostly for work in NGOs. In those cases, working experience abroad was a part of their professional strategy. In the same way, Moroccan students returning to Morocco felt that working experience or practical training session in France was highly valued in Morocco.

For French entrepreneurs in Morocco, Morocco was considered a first step toward wider international markets. The fiscal and financial advantages in Morocco were motivating factors for them to create a business or move their enterprises to Morocco. Self-employment seems to be an important source of income both for French settled in Morocco and for Moroccans living in France. Transnational migrants were perceived as a potential market for those Moroccans in France who had founded small businesses based on observations of demands and needs for particular goods or services: grocer's shops, the organization of various celebrations, furniture stores, restaurants, and catering companies. Thus a transnational enterprise created by Moroccans in France typically primarily targets migrant population and perhaps later, once established, will address wider groups of clients.

### ***3.7.2 Remittances, Investments, and Material Flows Across the Borders***

The Moroccan economy relies to a large extent on financial remittances from Moroccans abroad. Through remittance revenue many regions of the country have managed to prosper. According to De Haas (2007b: 5), the durability of transnational and transgenerational links is one of the main reasons for the structural solidarity of remittances. The three principal channels of monetary flows are: (1) remittances sent through agencies specialized in money transfers, such as Western Union or Moneygram, or bureau de change that sell these services, most often with high commissions; (2) transfers sent directly through Moroccan banks operating in France; and (3) money brought directly to Morocco in cash or withdrawn in Morocco from migrants' accounts in French banks. Our research revealed that there are financial flows from Morocco to France, too. The Moroccan parents finance their children's studies in France, and a number of wealthy Moroccans invest their extra money in France, by buying apartments or businesses. However, the ideal type of migrant who sends money and provides for his family in Morocco was still very strong in the narratives of Moroccan respondents. A migrant is expected to "succeed" and, whether he or she is really well off or not, as evidence of this supposed success, he or she may have to offer material support to relatives living in Morocco.

Apart from the financial flows, different types of material flows move in both directions. However, the material flows from and to Morocco and from and to France are not the same: there are clear preferences regarding what should be purchased and where. Many visitors to Morocco are expected to offer to friends and relatives gifts bought in France. These items, fashionable clothes, perfumes, or household items, must reflect European or French characteristics, such as the latest fashion, a better quality, or technological development, whereas the Moroccan items, such as carpets or jewels, are often valued as precious handmade works of craftsmen. These material cross-border flows reflect an idea of Morocco associated with “leisure,” “family,” “tradition,” “craftsmanship,” whereas France is represented through the conceptions of “technology,” “professionalism,” “style,” “fashion,” and “modernity.”

### 3.8 Education, Schooling, and Transnational Connections

The educational systems of France and Morocco need to be considered on different bases: whereas in France 99% of girls and 98% of boys are enrolled in primary education, in Morocco there is a high percentage of illiteracy, especially among women and elderly people. In the 2008 UNESCO<sup>24</sup> statistics, literacy rates in Morocco were 56.4% for adults and 76.6% for young people. The gender ratio of education is also slightly different: the rates are 87 for girls and 92 for boys. The average years of education per person in Morocco is 10.2, whereas in France the corresponding number is 16.1 years (2006 statistics, UNESCO).

Today, the network of French schools in Morocco is the densest in the world. French education began in Morocco in the middle of the nineteenth century. At that time, French education was administered by religious denominations. Alongside the French Protectorate system, a public secular education was established in 1912. The independence of Morocco in 1956 brought fundamental changes to the education system in Morocco. The cultural agreement signed between Morocco and France in 1957 gave a new lease on life to French education under the label Mission Universitaire et Culturelle Française au Maroc. Faced with a severe shortage of teachers after independence, Morocco began (and continued for the following 20 years) to recruit French teachers, *coopérants*, for its public schools. The departure of most of those teachers from Moroccan public schools from 1977 to 1979 coincided with the introduction of Arabic language in Moroccan schools. In the Barcelona Declaration for Euro-Mediterranean Collaboration the partner countries, including both France and Morocco, promised to promote cultural and linguistic exchange between participating countries, respecting each partners' cultural identity, and to establish a sustainable policy for cultural and education programs. Under the new agreement of Morocco-European Union Association in February 1996, cultural

<sup>24</sup> See [http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=198&IF\\_Language=fra](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=198&IF_Language=fra)

cooperation is mentioned, but not as explicitly as in the Barcelona Declaration. Educational activities worth mentioning here include the Arabic language teaching programs financed by the Moroccan state. In 1997/1998, 53,685 Moroccan children were able to follow ELCO classes (*Enseignement de la langue et de la culture de l'origine*) offered by 433 Moroccan teachers and financed by the Moroccan state.

Apart from offering language courses for schoolchildren, associations of Moroccans in France have a strong educational tradition. The activities of these associations have ranged from offering cultural training on Moroccan or Arab Islamic culture, and education against racism and islamophobia. They also offer tutoring for newly arrived Moroccan and other foreign students to help them to adapt to the French university system.

In our research, higher education received more attention than other aspects of the educational domain. There are several reasons for this. Because a significant number of respondents had a university degree,<sup>25</sup> a student visa had been one of the most common types of entry visa to enter France. Among those Moroccan students interviewed by the Moroccan research team as returnee migrants, nearly half had initially moved to France for studies. As noted by Gérard (2008: 13), for Moroccan students France still is an important place, and going to France for studies is perceived as an integral part of the academic career. In Morocco, the French education system is, according to the French embassy in Morocco,<sup>26</sup> more present than elsewhere in the world. This concerns all levels of schooling. Moreover, the influence of French in the socialization process of Moroccans is not limited to formal schooling: francophone media, French music, literature, fashion, and tourism have highlighted the value of France as a country of progress in the eyes of Moroccans (Laffort 2009: 93–95).

It is worth noting that the profile of Moroccan high school students in France has changed considerably during the few past decades. Whereas the post-independence student migrants largely belonged to the elite layer of Moroccan society, since the 1980s the profiles have diversified and a degree from a French university has become an accessible dream for a wider section of the population.<sup>27</sup> Although the education landscape in Morocco has changed in recent decades, with the creation of many institutions of higher education covering all fields of learning, there remains the fact that a French degree is still a definite asset in Morocco. This explains why most Moroccans who can afford it hope to register their children in the French school or university. Some parents are willing to make considerable financial sacrifices to ensure that their children could 1 day gain easier access to the job market. In Morocco, there seem to be promising openings for fresh graduates. After graduation, some applied for employment in Morocco and got an offer even while they

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<sup>25</sup> In our data, all the respondents had attended at least secondary level education and had often continued to higher education.

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.ambafrance.ma-org/efmaroc/lycee/index.php>

<sup>27</sup> Currently, the United States and Canada have become increasingly popular destinations for the children of the wealthier social classes (Laffort 2009: 85).

were still in France. Moroccan graduates also get information from each other about the employment prospects in Morocco and compare the benefits.

International connections of educational institutions seemed to play an important role in channeling student migration. Several Moroccan respondents who studied in France said that they came to France through bilateral agreements between universities or through transnational study programs.

I received a scholarship from the Moroccan government, for me that represented a noble and efficient way of studying abroad. It was precisely the idea of going abroad: not necessarily to France. To Europe or to North America—France for its linguistic closeness and also because the Moroccan education system is based on the French model, that's why most people came to France. (Samir, 46 years old, arrived in France as a student)

Highly educated migrants are the target group of the new French migration policy. The current immigration policy follows the general global trend, which emphasizes the educational background of immigrants with a tendency to favor highly skilled and highly educated migrants. In France, this is reflected in the emphasis of *immigration choisie* as opposed to *l'immigration subie*, following the global trends of the knowledge economy, knowledge and innovation being at the top of the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth, and scientific and student mobility, both within Member States and from outside the EU.

Nevertheless, several recent Moroccan graduates complained about difficulties in finding their place in the French employment market, and those who found employment emphasized that they had been "very lucky." Most often the way to employment went through either formal networks (institutional connections between schools and enterprises) or informal networks (through friends or relatives). It was also found that, among all respondents, the Moroccan students in French higher education were those who had most to complain about: housing conditions and discrimination in finding funding, differences in academic practices, cost of living, difficulties in finding employment, and even unpaid internships.

### 3.9 Migration and Social Mobility

Transnational migration nearly always involves some changes in one's social status. When migrating to another country, individuals need to renegotiate their status in the new host society, but their status also changes in the sending society: they become migrants in the eyes of those who stayed behind. For Moroccans, becoming a legal migrant, i.e., obtaining a visa, is to a large extent a positively perceived issue, suggesting possibilities for social mobility. When a person's status as a migrant is confirmed by a successful visa application, this is sometimes celebrated in the migrant's family with special meals typically used for religious celebrations, for instance cooking a festive meal of *méchoui*, a lamb roast.

Among Moroccans, the image of France as a source of wealth as discussed previously is today less based on observation of the lifestyle of the French living in Morocco, because the community is considerably smaller than some decades ago.

Apart from media images, perhaps the most important ambassadors of the “French way of life” are the migrants themselves. The return of migrants for the holiday season has traditionally involved the distribution of presents supposed to reflect a migrant’s wealth and success abroad. When the migrants return to their home country, their display of consumer goods and way of life (not accessible to those who stayed) may provoke envy but also encourage others to leave, too. Loubna, a 32-year-old female migrant who first moved to Germany as an undocumented migrant and later on to France in 1999 with her French–Moroccan spouse, admitted that already at a young age, she admired immigrants living in France and used to observe them when they returned to Morocco for their summer holidays.

When I saw all these girls, well dressed with nice make-up, who spoke French to each other, I also wanted to leave and become an immigrant. It was a dream for me.

However, if in the past migration facilitated one’s upward social mobility by means of increased consumer power and being able to afford houses, cars, and other objects that were not accessible for those who stayed, in today’s increasingly interconnected world, migrants’ social position is a much more complex issue. For the blue-collar migrants of the 1960s and 1970s, the hard work in harsh living conditions in France was justified by the hope of achieving better social status for oneself and for one’s family in the country of origin. Today, as migrants’ sociocultural profiles are more diversified, the more educated migrants critically observe labor migrants’ attempts toward upward social mobility.

There are those who come back [to Morocco] in July and who we call “Tati Migrants.” It means those who arrive in cars and who have Tati shopping bags. I’ve met those people and I wouldn’t believe my eyes. I don’t want to generalize but those are the people I met when I was in the village and therefore I met people who live abroad but come over for the summer season. Those people have a very schizophrenic relationship with France. Because when they are in France they clean in the subway and all that, but when they are in Morocco they tell something different. Their discourse is not in phase with their lived experiences. Those are people who do not go to the theater; they don’t go to the cinema or to see exhibitions. Because why spend money on unnecessary things? All the money has to be sent to Morocco. That is a sign of upward social mobility. (Amine, male, Moroccan)

This interview sample demonstrates a 35-year-old academically educated migrant’s vision of “traditional” blue-collar migrants who, as he says, are commonly called “Tati”<sup>28</sup> migrants. For him, the remittance-sending low skilled migrants who save money to buy property in Morocco lack cultural capital (they come from villages, do not care about cultural activities, do not buy designer labels, etc.). Yet the respondent shows that he recognizes their importance to Morocco and to those people who are dependent on the remittances by admitting later on (not without irony) that, “we would all like to be like them.” Another point that comes out in Amine’s quote is how one’s social status is not constructed locally but within a transnational space.

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<sup>28</sup> Tati is a French department store known for its cheap prices.

For the older generations, living and working in France was considered to be a temporary phase; they were only aiming to accomplish the objective of saving enough money to buy property in Morocco. Therefore, a migrant's professional success or lifestyle in France had very little importance and most of those who stayed in Morocco had only little knowledge about migrants' living conditions in France. Rather, the economic and social success of migrants was estimated by the wealth displayed during the regular visits. Amine raises this issue of contradiction in his interview: a migrant who works in menial work in France but hides the fact in Morocco by telling something different to the family. It is not known how the situation will change when information flows more frequently across the borders and the diasporic communities will become larger. But our data clearly suggest that the bigger the migrant community is, the more important become the distinctions between migrants belonging to different social classes.

In fact, for educated middle class Moroccan migrants, a life in the Franco-Moroccan transnational space may offer a double challenge: they are not on the margins of the host society, and their social networks most often include many host nationals: colleagues, classmates, and so on. They need to negotiate their social position in *both* societies, whereas the "old" generation of migrants was mainly concerned with their society of origin. For example, Yasmina, a 29-year-old Moroccan engineer confessed how hard it is to live in Paris.

You have to have everything: a nice apartment, fashionable clothes, and travel frequently abroad....

She did not send remittances, but every now and then she sent presents to her family members in Morocco. She was also saving money to invest 1 day in her home country. Yet there was no question of saving on appearances: former classmates from Morocco may show up at any time in Paris. Yasmina was surprised how often in Paris she met someone who had been studying with her in Morocco.

It's a bit surprising in a capital city of 14 million people. But it means that we all live more or less in the same neighborhood and move in the same circles. We are either in Opéra, Champs-Elysees or in La Défense. Sometimes I recognize faces in the bus although I don't know their names.

For French residents in Morocco there seemed to be a short-cut available to social positions they could not have imagined in France. Many French respondents said that their Moroccan employers trust them and give them responsibilities that they would never have had in France, or at least not so quickly. Several interviewees said that to be French opens doors in Morocco that would have remained closed to them in France.

I could do things that are almost impossible to do in France. I even obtained royal sponsorship (from His Majesty) to organize a major sailing event, for example. (Béatrice, born in Morocco)

Likewise, for Moroccans in France migration was generally motivated by prospects of upward social mobility. Still, this did not necessarily mean that people leave

from poor conditions. In fact, several respondents had a relatively stable life situation in Morocco. As Sihame, a Moroccan female respondent said,

I told myself that since I have a stable professional situation in Morocco, if I will go to France it's not going to be to regress but to progress, to be useful for myself and my family. My travels to this country have allowed me to discover another culture, another way of life, another way of working and freedom to act. (Sihame, female, Moroccan living in France)

This was even more true for the French in Morocco: the departure was expected to bring some kind of improvement in life, but it was not solely explained by upward social mobility in terms of income or social class. Rather it could be related to a willingness to “be somebody” as one French respondent put it. The respondents of Moroccan origin particularly emphasized the role of education as a promoter of upward social mobility. Several respondents mentioned that a university degree was an objective set by their parents; and not just any degree, but preferably one in the field that was considered to offer the best career prospects. A qualification obtained in France was valued, but many students also dreamt about studies in the USA or Canada. Laffort (2009: 85) has observed the increased popularity of the United States as a destination for upper classes, whereas studying in France has become democratized. Nevertheless, for most respondents France seemed to remain the logical or “natural” choice, for geographical proximity, familiarity of language, and existing connections.

### 3.10 Transformation of Gender Roles

Particularly for Moroccans, migration implies reconfiguration of gender roles and profound changes in the matrimonial institution. This is not to say that other elements do not affect the changes in gender roles: for example, the reform of the Moroccan Family Code in 2003 is an important development that has brought, at least on paper, significant changes to women's position in Morocco (Virkama 2009). Perhaps the most important gender-related legal reform in recent years, thanks to the reform of the nationality Code in 2007, has been the law that allows Moroccan women to pass their nationality on to their children, whereas in the past the nationality was inherited through the father.

The feminization of migration has been observed by many scholars concerned with migrants from Maghreb countries to Europe. Moroccan women migrate independently and not only through family reunification, as was most often the case in 1960s and 1970s (Harrami and Mahdi 2008: 264). In our data, the majority of respondents were male, but the narratives of female respondents were often more rich in detail and offered interesting insights into different sociocultural transformations taking place within transnational settings. Most of the Moroccan women interviewed for this study said that they had migrated on their own initiative, sometimes working hard to achieve what they wanted in life.

For Moroccans, migration impacts the search for a suitable spouse. Traditionally, the demand for ethnic and religious endogamy lies heavily upon women. Today, the average age of marriage has risen in Morocco, partly because of the emigration of young men. Emigrant men are preferred marital partners for many young women and emigrant women are envied by those who stay in the source country (Harrami and Mahdi 2008: 275). Living abroad seems to widen the scope of potential partners for Moroccan women, and among our respondents some had ethnic French partners. The importance of a shared Islamic background was mentioned as a criterion by some, whereas ethnic background seemed to be slightly less important. Changes in attitudes toward spouses of foreign origin seem to take place slowly. In some cases, mixed marriages bring to the surface the colonial power relations as in the case of the Franco-Moroccan-Algerian Samira, herself married to a Frenchman, who remembers her aunt's decision to marry a non-Muslim, foreign man:

The family in Algeria had turned their back on her—you have to see the things in the context of that time period, the war in Algeria and uncles who have been fighting in that war, so it was quite difficult for her. So she had decided to leave and live elsewhere.

Interestingly, even if for Muslim men there is no religious obstacle to marrying a woman of Christian background, and in fact many of our married respondents had done so, being a migrant seemed to have a rather hindering effect. This is because the marriage migration from North Africa to Europe is often perceived as a covert form of undocumented migration. For fear of being stigmatized, several male respondents mentioned that marrying a woman with French nationality was problematic because they did not want to appear opportunists by seeking nationality through marriage.

Whereas Moroccan male respondents often emphasized political and cultural freedom in France, female respondents particularly mentioned that living abroad meant increased personal freedom. For one young Moroccan female respondent, the first years in Europe were a discovery of personal freedom she was not used to in Morocco. "It was great for me, I had lots of fun, I went out and nobody said anything. Those were great years." Samira, a Moroccan-Algerian returnee migrant married to a Frenchman, described moving abroad as a strategy to escape from the narrow box reserved for girls in Morocco, "...where girls are expected to sit and wait for the prince charming—submission; let's put it the way it is: an education to be submissive." Meryem, 46 years old, came to Paris when she was in her early twenties and moved in with her future husband before they got married, years later. In Morocco, because of the Islamic legislation, the couple would have had to be married to share the same roof.

### 3.11 Conclusion and Discussion

Thus, how was Franco-Moroccan transnational space narrated in the interviews? The respondents reported that in general they maintained intensive cross-border ties. In this respect, our findings support those of earlier studies conducted on the

Moroccan diaspora in Europe highlighting the fairly active participation in the original home country (Fibbi and D'Amato 2008; Daoud 2011). The transnational ties are not only explained by individual or small group decisions, but are rooted in the colonial and migration history of the countries. Therefore it is not surprising that the migrants' narratives echo the colonial history, although differently at each end of the migration axis. Narrating one's own migration history also means locating oneself in the larger social category of migrants and making either a distinction from or connection with the earlier generation of migrants.

Motivations to migrate seemed to be diverse. It is clear that because a migration project sometimes requires significant financial investment, the departure is often motivated by perspectives of an economically better life. However, a desire for "somewhere else" also came up as an important motivation for departure. Whereas the principal motivation among the French migrants was the search for something intangible encapsulated in the phrase "quality of life," for Moroccans, this desire for "somewhere else" was usually linked with the search for social and economic improvement. Cultural poverty was also mentioned by some respondents. The desire for departure was often embedded in specific events in individual life courses. The search for a better quality of life and or a strong desire for somewhere else were juxtaposed in many stories with a feeling of weariness owing to the social, economic, and political climate in the sending country.

It was found that the migratory plans of Moroccans were often supported by existing transnational networks in Morocco and France. However, in their narratives, the respondents often emphasized individual decision-making processes, and for the new generations, particularly students, the importance of ethnic networks seems to diminish in favor of other types of supporting actors, either professional or institutional. The migratory plans among the French respondents seem to be more individualistic and personal. Premigratory experiences significantly influence their transnational trajectories. This was the case among Moroccans too. Many respondents had previous experiences of traveling or living in another country. For Moroccans, a family history of international or internal migration was an important factor. The colonial history came up in many narratives, explaining why several migration projects were directly connected with historical elements or family memories. This concerned for example a Frenchman whose parents had lived in Morocco under the French protectorate, or a Moroccan whose grandfather was a circular labor migrant, "the one who built France."

Symbolic boundaries were constructed in the migrants' narratives. The vast majority of the French respondents regarded themselves as French without mentioning any affiliation to Morocco. Many of them reported being outsiders in Moroccan society, whereas Moroccan narratives displayed a wider variety of possible identities. Participation in protests and demonstrations was mentioned, too, as well as utilizing virtual social platforms such as Facebook or YouTube to spread political material. Among Moroccans, the practical advantages (freedom of movement, access to certain professions, etc.) of holding a French passport were emphasized, more than associating the nationality with certain values or identity. Conversely, the French living in Morocco did not regard Moroccan naturalization as being useful for them. The low

number of naturalizations among French people can partly be explained by restrictive Moroccan laws, in spite of the recent reform of the Code of Nationality.

Migrants' associations in France have traditionally played a vital role in informing migrants about their rights. The associations have their roots in the political and trade union activism of the 1960s and 1970s. This tradition was still reflected in the respondents' associative activities, although the younger generations of Moroccans seemed to have more interest in professional or hobby clubs than in politically oriented associations.

Most respondents were actively working and represented a variety of professions, yet there appeared to be differences in the status of nationality in the labor market in Morocco and France. Whereas the French had the advantage of being favored for their nationality in Morocco, many Moroccans in France felt that their nationality could be a cause for discrimination. Although the French enjoyed fiscal advantages in Morocco because of the variety of profiles of French residents in the country, it cannot be said that they all had a privileged economic position. For many Moroccans returning to Morocco, the prospects of finding steady employment and better salary were an important motivation to move back. In some cases, cross-border professional activities were used as a strategy to deal with a precarious work situation, and for some, cultural capital acquired during the migration process was converted into economic capital, for example by introducing new, innovative business ideas. In general, professional transnational ties were important, even crucial, for many respondents.

Small scale enterprises and investments were considered an important economic strategy, particularly among Moroccan respondents. As expected, Moroccans in France were active in financing various projects in Morocco and in sending remittances. However, we found that financial and material remittances move both ways, and particularly students regularly received financial assistance from Morocco. The status and image of objects purchased in France and those purchased in Morocco were not the same: French objects were associated with quality, modernity, and the latest technology or fashion, whereas objects purchased in Morocco reflected craftsmanship and exoticized authenticity.

The migration profiles of individuals interviewed in France and Morocco were notably different in terms of the conventional idea of migration as a social mobility strategy determined by economic rationale. For both French in Morocco and Moroccans in France, the possibility to improve one's socioeconomic standing was an important factor, but it does not alone explain the decision to migrate. The considerable differences in sending and receiving contexts, Morocco and France, for example with regard to the migration history, immigration policies, religions, and social status of migrants, naturally have an impact on how the migration experience is narrated.

The French education system was generally valued more highly than the Moroccan one, and university studies and working experience from France were considered as a way to upward social mobility in Morocco. Because most of the respondents were educated and had a wide knowledge of colonial and migration history, in many interview situations, the respondents constructed their own individual migration

narratives by contesting or echoing other possible narratives of migration. The Moroccan migrants acknowledged the importance of labor migration in France, but simultaneously wanted to mark a symbolic departure from this traditional form of migration, for example by putting forward their identity as students, scholars, or artists.

Transnational connections between Moroccan and French educational institutions promote and channel migration between the countries. Universities offer exchange programs and joint degrees, some of the Moroccan students interviewed had started their French curricula in Morocco. The Moroccan state is also engaged in offering Arabic teaching for children of Arabic speaking families in France and provides funding for this. In Morocco, French schools have traditionally been very much present and French education is highly appreciated and sought after by parents. University studies in France are a motivating factor for many migrants. Consequently, the student migration is an important type of migration channel in the Franco–Moroccan space. Moving to France as a student was perceived as an honorable way to migrate.

Migration in general was often referred to as a valuable learning experience. It was said that an adaptation process to the new country helps to open up to unknown practices and ways of thinking. As a result, some respondents claimed they had become bicultural, capable of operating successfully in France and Morocco. In transnational settings, families need to carefully consider where to educate their children. In some cases, this means sacrifices because family members need to live in different countries: a Moroccan returnee migrant woman said that her children stayed in France with their father because of their primary education, whereas the mother took up a job opportunity in Morocco. For many respondents, a firm belief in the superiority of the French education system was present in their narratives. This applied to all educational levels: primary and secondary education in French education institutions in Morocco and tertiary education in France, either at the state universities (*faculté*) or prestigious schools (*grandes écoles*). As expected, familiarity with the French language and socialization through French schooling were factors that motivated migration to France.

For Moroccans, the most common strategy seemed to be to get their diploma and first work experience in France, then return to Morocco for better employment prospects: higher salaries, a more stable professional position, a more socially prestigious profession, or just to find employment in general if in France it seemed difficult. The French in Morocco, however, most of whom had moved for other than professional reasons, felt that it was not so much the degrees they possessed but merely the fact of “being French” that opened up career prospects—even some that they could not have accessed in France.

Transnational mobility and negotiations between several reference spaces have an impact on the definition and construction of a sense of home. More than half of the participants considered themselves at home in both countries. Our empirical data prevent us from extolling what Riccio (2006) calls “a nomadic version of the world” or generalizing the search for a sense of plural homes. Indeed, home is sometimes intrinsically linked with the homeland and sometimes with the idea of nation. The way in which migrants were perceived by the receiving society influenced

their feelings of home. There was a significant contrast between the discriminating situations experienced by some Moroccans in France and the surprise, even embarrassment, of some French people facing positive stereotyping and recognition in Morocco. Such a contrast shows the different modes of negotiation of foreign presence and the way symbolic dominating relations are internalized in the Franco-Moroccan space.

In today's world, possible connections with some familiar sociocultural references enable migrants to feel at home even outside their homeland. The geographic proximity of the countries, and the low cost and speed of means of communication and transport greatly help to maintain close links in the Franco-Moroccan space. Yet these objective factors are not enough to explain the vitality of transnational links: emotional ties are also considered important factors as they help reduce the distance by enabling these people to feel not too far away from home.

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