Theoretical and Methodological Contributions of a Multi-Situated Approach and the Analysis of Migration Routes: The Example of Migration between Morocco and Canada

Contribuciones teóricas y metodológicas de un acercamiento multi-posicional y el análisis de rutas migratorias: El ejemplo de migración entre Marruecos y Canadá

Stéphanie Garneau
École de service social, Université d'Ottawa
Dirección electrónica: sgarneau@uottawa.ca

ABSTRACT

Based on a series of research results on Moroccan migration to Canada, this paper seeks to prove how focusing on the migration routes of a specific national group of migrants and using a multi-situated methodological approach will not lead to the "ethnisizing", culturalizing or nationalizing of the experienced realities, but rather to the placing of actions within their political, cultural, social and economic structuring contexts. By resorting to an inductive approach, this perspective allows us to identify frontiers (in a symbolic sense) other than cultural or national belonging, reminding us of the internal heterogeneity of the studied national group, allowing us to apprehend other decisive factors in the migration route, and favoring our understanding of the plurality of the space practices and integration strategies developed by social actors when facing the concrete opportunities and limitations found during the whole migration process.

Keywords: 1. Moroccan migration, 2. ethnic category, 3. migration routes, 4. multi-situated approach, 5. inductive reasoning.

RESUMEN

Basado en una serie de resultados de investigación sobre la migración marroquí a Canadá, este ensayo busca probar cómo el enfoque sobre las rutas migratorias de un grupo nacional de emigrantes específico y la utilización de un enfoque multi-posicional metodológico, no conducirá a la "etnificación", culturalización o nacionalización de las realidades experimentadas sino al posicionamiento de las acciones dentro de sus contextos estructurales políticos, culturales, sociales y económicos. Al recurrir a un enfoque inductivo, esta perspectiva nos permite identificar fronteras (en un sentido simbólico) más allá de las culturales o de pertenencia nacional, recordándonos la heterogeneidad interna del grupo nacional estudiado, permitiéndonos capturar otros factores decisivos sobre la ruta migratoria, y beneficiando nuestra comprensión sobre la pluralidad de las prácticas espaciales y estrategias de integración desarrolladas por ejecutivos sociales al enfrentar las oportunidades y limitaciones concretas que se encuentran durante todo el proceso migratorio.

Palabras clave: 1. Migración marroquí, 2. categoría étnica, 3. rutas migratorias, 4. enfoque multi-posicional, 5. razonamiento inductivo.

Not long ago, immigration sociology approached international migratory pheno-mena by resorting to the conceptual pair "emigration-immigration". One could linger on the deterrent and attractive factors that encouraged individuals or even whole sections of the population to leave their countries, or one could prefer studying the conditions of arrival and integration of the newly arrived in the host society. These classical approaches not only tend to deny the phenomenon's complexity, they also fail to consider both poles of the migration trajectory as part of the same reality. Particularly when they linger on the integration modalities of immigrants in the city, they neglect the social and historical relations within the departure society, as well as the reciprocal influence relations that develop within the departure and arrival societies through migratory networks, and contribute to the structuring of flows and spaces.

Moreover, when research focuses exclusively on the arrival of immigrants and on their integration conditions, there is a high probability that it will tend to classi-fy the studied groups according to their success or failure to integrate. This is even truer in societies where data are indexed, through large national statistical agen-cies, based on national and ethnic origin. In Quebec, for instance, a large number of surveys conducted during recent years based on a group of newcomers accor-ding to their geographical origin revealed that "North Africans" or "Maghrebis", notably, found important obstacles when trying to enter the Quebecois labor mar-ket (Godin, 2004; Renaud and Cayn, 2006). The situation is politically sensitive because most newly arrived migrants were admitted according to their education level and professional qualifications, which questions, if not Quebec's policy of "selected" immigration, at least its selection criteria. This geographical division is evidently questionable, since it groups social actors belonging to differentia-ted political spaces–"imagined communities", as Anderson (1996) calls them–, historically built on the basis of an interactive and continuous work of frontier maintenance and redefinition. Their actions are, therefore, very likely to have par-ticular resiliencies, meanings, and interests that escape a subtle comprehension of the observed social realities. When ethnic or national categories defined *a priori* are systematically employed, the risk exists that they will function within scientific analyses as variables explaining social behaviors, rather than as categories with productive mechanisms worth studying. These categories might lead to a cultu-ralist reasoning, to the "ideology of globalization" condemned by Bayart (1996) which posits the irreducible difference of ethnic (cultural) identities. Moreover, since it presupposes univocal causality between ways of acting and cultures, cultu-ralist thought might offer a premise to justify a number of discriminative actions.

Two issues are at stake here: the essentially complex and dynamic nature of migratory phenomena, which requires restoring the inadequately drawn–perhaps for political and scientific, or maybe even empirical reasons–frontier between emigration and immigration; and the appropriateness of using ethnic and national categories in the social sciences. While research resorting to transnationalisms and multi-situated analyses as theoretical and methodological frameworks has abounded during recent years–with views to fill in the void left by a statistic apprehension of migratory phenomena–, it is still criticized for bestowing migrants with too large a room for maneuver and giving the illusion that governments have lost control of their frontiers (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2004).

The debate about the use of ethnic categories in the social sciences and its potential consequences is certainly not new, nor has it concluded. The most frequent counterarguments are, first, the need to measure the concrete discriminative situations in order to prevent or correct them and, second, the risk of producing a pernicious ethnicization of social relations, or even providing an ideological cover for the real mechanisms generating social disparity. We believe, with Felouzis (2008), that instead of determining whether naming ethnic or national groups is legitimate or not, we should discuss the more reasonable way of doing it; which, by the way, brings us to the concrete *modalities of construction* of the categories employed in the social sciences.

Based on a series of research results on Moroccan migration to Canada, this paper seeks to prove how focusing on the migration *routes* of a *specific* national group of migrants and using a multi-situated methodological approach will not lead to the "ethnisizing", culturalizing or nationalizing of the experienced realities, but rather to the placing of actions within their political, cultural, social and economic structuring contexts. By resorting to an inductive approach, this perspective allows us to identify frontiers (in a symbolic sense) other than cultural or national belonging, reminding us of the internal heterogeneity of the studied national group, allowing us to apprehend other decisive factors in the migration route, and favoring our understanding of the plurality of the space practices and integration strategies developed by social actors when facing the concrete opportunities and limitations found during the whole migration process. At this point, some methodological precisions must be made regarding the ethnographic process. Moroccan migrations to Canada are re-placed in the core of the general migration history of Morocco with views to recall–against the opponents of transnational approaches–the active role of governments, through their immigration policies and different frontier control measures, in structuring migration flows.

METHODOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

The first part of our field work was done in Montreal during the summer of 2006, and then in Morocco from September to December of the same year. In order to collect their life stories, three women and two men of Moroccan origin were interviewed in Montreal, as well as five women and five men in Morocco–in Rabat, Casablanca, Tangier and Fez. From these 15 individuals, seven had migrated to Montreal, two of which were back in Morocco when we met them. The other eight interviewees live in Morocco and have never migrated to Canada. One or more of their immediate relatives (spouse, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister) live in Canada (Montreal, Toronto and Calgary). With one exception, there is no relation between the interviewees from Morocco and those from Montreal. The interviewees were contacted through a Moroccan association and a job search club located in Montreal. The interviewees in Morocco were found using the snowball sampling method, resorting to individuals from different social environments (colleagues, employees of frequently visited shops, etc.).

Since biographical interviews constitute a survey method that provides both objective data (facts, such as trades or professions) and subjective data (opinions, motivations) (Beaud, 1996), we included the facts offered by the interviewees in Morocco regarding their family in Canada (the migrant's location changes, jobs…). Therefore, although the comments of the interviewees in Morocco and Canada intersect in this paper, we were careful not to analyze the motivations attributed to migrants by their families, unless this interpretation explained the representation that Moroccans in Morocco have of Canada as a migration pole.

In order to achieve a greater closeness with the field staff and a better "affective and sensitive quality of results" (Céfaï, 2003:515), life stories were complemented by participant observations during meetings with families in Morocco and a Moroccan association's general assembly in Montreal. Finally, we completed the survey process by interviewing different institutional actors more or less related to migration to Canada: Moroccan associations in Montreal, immigration consultants and lawyers in Canada with offices in Rabat and Casablanca, the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans abroad, etc.

All interviewees live or lived, before leaving Morocco, in a large or medium-sized city (Casablanca, Rabat, Tangier, Fez, Meknes and Agadir). Six of them, however, used to live in rural areas in l'Oriental, Meknes-Tafilalt, the High Atlas, Tadla-Azilal, and the Sous. This means that, at some point, they migrated internally with or without their parents, and that for some of them, of Berber origin,

migration is historically a familial and collective survival strategy. While all interviewees are educated (having reached from high-school to Ph. D. levels), five of them come from the most wealthy classes (diplomat father, important retailer grandfather, magistrate), one has a parent working as a middle rank civil servant, and all the others have one parent working as small tradesmen, artisans, or employees with at least a primary school level. All interviewees are Muslims.

Out of the seven interviewees who migrated, three arrived to Quebec before September 11, 2001. The first migration took place in 1992 and the most recent one in 2005. The average age is 39, the youngest person being 27 years old and the oldest 52. While four interviewees entered Canada under the category of "independent workers", two arrived with a student visa, one with a tourist visa, and the last one was sponsored by his Quebecoise wife. Only one individual had a second nationality (French) before migrating. The education level of these interviewees went from high school (2) to Ph. D. (1). With the exception of the young girl who migrated as a student in the first place, the other participants used to work in Morocco as middle or high rank civil servants or in the private sector.

THE CLOSURE OF EUROPEAN BORDERS AND THE (PARTIAL) OPENING OF QUEBECOIS AND CANADIAN BORDERS

Although Moroccan migration to Canada has been continually increasing during the last 15 years, North America is still a marginal destination for Moroccan emigration candidates. In 2002, out of 2.6 million Moroccans residing abroad, 85% were in Europe, 9% in Arab countries, and only 6% in North America (Bouoiyour, 2006:28). Historically, Moroccan and European migration policies, together with the economic differences between these national spaces, have built the migratory traditions between the North and South of the Mediterranean, as well as a particular notion of "the elsewhere", which are recently nourishing Quebecois and Canadian immigration policies. Thus, subjective motivations to migrate to Canada, polymorphous as in any migration, and the uses of territorial spaces through these shifts, cannot be properly understood unless they are re-placed in the collective and familial history of the social actors.

Morocco has a long tradition of emigration to Europe, which started during the early 20th century and accelerated after the Second World War, as European countries in reconstruction turned to their ex-colonies to cover their workforce needs. During this first phase of Moroccan migration flows, migrants were pri-

marily male adults traveling alone, leaving from poor and rural regions of Mo-
rocco, particularly the Berber zone of the Sous (south of Morocco), and headed
to France, Belgium and the Netherlands (Simon, 1990). The emigration flow of
Berber groups, in this case of the Chleus from Southern Morocco, spearheaded
Moroccan migration to Europe. Due to the longevity and importance of these
groups, their local social organization developed alongside their mobility through
the long-distance demand of family and community ties. This explains why, even
to date, the ties between nationals abroad and family and community members in
Morocco remain strong (Lacroix, 2005).

The border closure that followed the 1973-1974 oil crisis marked the begin-
ning of the second phase in the history of Moroccan migration flows. From this
moment and throughout the 1980's, labor migration, as well as student migration
to France (Borgogno and Streiff-Fenard, 1997; Simon, 2000), slowed down in
favor of women and children migration, owing to the family reunification policies
introduced in the host countries. Besides prompting clandestine migration (hra-
gue), this shift in the migration policies of traditional host countries had the effect
of diversifying the countries of destination–Moroccan migrants were now headed
towards Italy, Spain, Germany and the Scandinavian countries, as well as towards
Libya and the oil producing Gulf countries–and extending the departure points to
regions such as the Rif, l'Oriental, the agricultural plains, medium-sized cities (Fez,
Agadir, Meknes, etc.), and even Casablanca. By the late 1980's, Morocco was the
Maghrebi country with the largest number of departees and the most widespread
migratory space (Simon, 1990). Based on the existing migrant networks in Europe,
ties were created between certain regions of Morocco and European countries, so
that the life of several Moroccan regions became inextricably linked to the econo-
mic conditions prevailing to the north of the Mediterranean (Lazaâr, 1987; CERAU,
2006). Throughout this period, Moroccan migration policies also contributed to
the structuring of this general picture by facilitating the flow of workers abroad
as a means to relieve a saturated local labor market and benefit from Moroccan
fund transfers from abroad (Charef, 1981; Lazaâr, 1987). Furthermore, the fact
that "the elsewhere" had long been part of the collective history nourished for
many the ghost of the foreign, seen by many as a symbol of social and economic
success. Although, according to one of our interviewees, "Moroccans […] dream
of going abroad", this desire to migrate varies and it has not always nor equally
affected all social groups of the population.

The 1990's represented a shift in the evolution of Moroccan migration flows.
Due to the drop in phosphate prices during the 1980's, structural adjustment mea-

sures (withdrawal of the State, privatization) required by international financial, and free trade agreements signed with the European Union, Morocco entered a period of economic crisis. The sale of public companies, the striking arrival of foreign firms to Moroccan territory, and the ensuing "leveling" of Moroccan industries brought about job losses, an increased unemployment rate, pauperization, the deepening of the socioeconomic gap between urban and rural populations, as well as the expansion of the informal economy, drug related activities and smuggling. To this scene of economic restructuring, we must add the issue of Western Sahara, still unsolved on the international level, which continues to generate important military expenses.

Moreover, in spite of the democratic advances following the "years of lead" –the emergence of different political parties, more transparent elections, a greater freedom of expression, a reformed family code *(Moudawana),* a more open policy regarding the Berber cause *(amazigh)*–, the Moroccan strong and centralized administrative-political system, the *Makhzen,* remains an authoritarian political regime whose political and economic functioning hinders the introduction and implementation of reforms. In the field of education, for instance, there is no real debate on the renewal of the schooling system, although current problems are patent. Morocco has, in fact, a low literacy rate (50.7% in 2002) compared to Tunisia (73.3%) and Algeria (68.9%) (Troin, 2006:11). Under-schooling is present in rural areas and among girls (Mellakh, 2000; Escallier, 2006), as well as a persisting socially unequal access to primary and higher education, and a surging unemployment among degree holders. The dissatisfaction and disenchantment is palpable, particularly among the younger generations and middle or "rising" classes. The boisterous demonstrations of the higher-education unemployedprofessionals (Bennani-Chraïbi, 1994; Emperador-Badimon, in print) and the increasing clandestine emigration (as well as the sometimes accompanying human drama), even among literate populations (Arab, 2007; Peraldi and Rahmi, 2007), are proof of the increasing precariousness and the climate of anxiety over the future.

Alongside these economic, political and social developments, Europeans strengthened their frontier controls during the 1990's by applying the Schengen agreements, thus fueling Moroccans' desire to leave their country (Talahite, 1997). It is against this backdrop that the Canadian immigration policy enters the scene, particularly after the 1991 Canada-Quebec Agreement, which endowed Quebec with greater selection powers. In 1996, indeed, the Quebecois government established a new selection grid for immigrants, prioritizing "active young people" and "young families", workers registering for professions in demand, highly qualified

people, and Francophones. Maghreb countries constituted a target region. Moreover, Canadian and Quebecois recruiting offensives were quite conspicuous in Morocco, where a real market for emigration to Canada was deployed: billboards, multiplying advertisements in newspapers and magazines, countless immigration consultant and lawyer offices, and information sessions at hotels.

This intensive recruitment, together with the closure of European borders and a specific social, political and economic national context, not only kindled the interest of some Moroccans in Canada as a potential destination, but also led middle and wealthy classes to consider migration, for the first time, as a means to achieve economic security, or else as a survival or social mobility strategy. This recent interest in Canada has indeed a new flavor: it comprises both the traditional candidates for work migration and qualified workers educated in Morocco or Europe, most of whom have a job at the time of migrating. Morocco went from being the eleventh main country of birth of immigrants accepted in Quebec between 1993 and 1997 to the first position since 2007 (MRCI, 2005-2007; ICCQ, 2008).

THE MULTIPLE SUBJECTIVE MOTIVATIONS FOR MIGRATION TO CANADA

When asked about their reasons for migrating to Montreal, some interviewees declared themselves disappointed with the political immobility which seemed to endure despite the arrival of the new king in 1999. They have lost hope that reforms will bring about important economic and social changes in a near future: "it's not democratic" (Fatima); "The whole governmental budget went to Western Sahara" (Fatiha); "We are the elite, so to speak, but it's difficult with the people who rule this country. There are no development programs" (Driss). In addition, Fatiha and her husband were worried about the extent of unemployment and questioned the "need" that developed in Morocco to resort to private schooling–which is very expensive–for their children to successfully complete an education. Despite the fact that they both worked as public servants in Casablanca since finishing college in 1978, they chose to migrate to Montreal in order to offer their three children a first-rate, less expensive education, as well as what they anticipate will be an easier professional integration in their new host country. Fatima alluded to the prejudices and limited possibilities of professional development for women in Morocco: "As a woman, I was tied up, I didn't have a future, I was starting to stagnate" (Fatima). Salma was weary of the accusing looks and offensive comments she had

to endure as an "over-westernized" woman. For her, an important incentive to migrate was what she considers a prevailing religious "fundamentalism". "Incivility" and "insecurity" were also mentioned as causes for the decision to migrate to "a developed country" (Fatiha). Both male and female interviewees agreed that it was the lack of professional acknowledgement based on merit, and the fact that they had an insufficiently remunerated job which did not meet their qualifications, that led them to consider migration. Others decided to leave because they did not have "the right relations", an "influential family" or "parents behind them with a certain fortune" (Amine), which they consider necessary to attain a good professional position in Morocco. For all interviewees, the decision to migrate was an upward mobility strategy, either for them or their children. Migration became the means of improving their quality of life when achieving it appeared impossible in Morocco without considerable sacrifices. Permanently returning to Morocco is not generally excluded, but it is not considered for the short or medium term. Houria told us that his brother in Calgary, with whom he communicates every day, expects to live 15 years in Canada before settling down in Morocco: "He doesn't want to return like that, empty-handed. He bought his house, I don't know for how much, if he wants to sell it, he can do it for a real lot of money, and with this he can invest in Morocco".

That said, a number of interviewees from the more privileged classes of Moroccan society see emigration as a strategy to avoid certain local obstacles, to enable an ulterior professional integration in Morocco, and to live an enriching experience both in the personal and professional levels. In these cases, migration is a priori conceived as something temporary, although circumstances might lead to a more permanent residence. Given the extremely selective higher education system in Morocco, getting a degree and acquiring professional experience abroad represent, for some, an alternative when their academic record does not allow them to attend a graduate school in their home country. On other cases, as for Lamia, the experience of working in Canada–"well-known for being one of the best in technology"–will enhance her CV when she decides to return to Morocco. Elias, "come from a very well-placed family on the political level, on the economic level", explains that he "hates routine" and that he "decided to go to Canada just as [he] could have gone to Australia or somewhere else". In this case, migrating was linked to a desire of change, and both departure and destination were of an evident voluntary nature.

For most interviewees, however, choosing Quebec or another Canadian province was strongly determined by the closure of European frontiers, on the one

hand, and the intensive recruitment of the Quebecois and Canadian governments, on the other. For Amine and Lamia, who attended university in France during the mid 1990's and early 2000's, respectively, it was the non-renewal of their student visas, consequent to the tightening of the French border, which made them turn to Quebec. For interviewees belonging to the privileged social classes, immigration did not use to be part of their professional strategies, except for attending university. In fact, it was even perceived as something negative: "being an immigrant was even a little pejorative, it was socially frowned upon because it's people who need to work, who need money, who haven't studied" (Fatima). In their case, it was due to the selective nature of immigration in Quebec and Canada that it became a valued possibility: "they seek us because we have degrees, because we're intellectuals" (Fatiha). Gradually, ties were created and continue to be created between Moroccans in Canada and those who remained home, ties which contribute to Canada's appeal, be it through effective migration or via sponsoring and family reunification.

JOB INTEGRATION IN CANADA: THE HETEROGENEITY OF MOROCCAN MIGRANTS

Our interviewees have unequal sets of social, economic, cultural, symbolic and spatial resources. As has already been mentioned, some of them were born to very privileged families who, due to their economic or symbolic and social resources, had rarely faced hindrances to move within the international space (particularly to obtain tourist visas). Salma, daughter to a big Fassi family whose parents were in the fabric business, spent part of her childhood travelling around Sub-Saharan Africa: "for us, going abroad didn't mean going into the unknown". Since Salma and her husband had attended university in France, it was normal for their son and two daughters to study abroad. For these individuals and their family, the international space has historically been a space of action within the realm of the possible. Moreover, it is locally viewed as a sign of "exceptional distinction" (Moatassime, 2000:12). Elias, whose father was a diplomat, spent his childhood and adolescence in several countries where he studied, like the children of the families studied by Wagner (1998), in international schools or French high schools abroad. With a double Franco-Moroccan citizenship, plus work experience in France, Elias is the only interviewee of our sample of migrants who found a qualified job at his arrival. Besides him and Lamia, who emigrated as a student, all

the others resigned themselves, after a sterile search for work, to follow technical training programs at the Cégep (Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel-College of General and Vocational Education) or the University.

Some migrants, initially less privileged in the socioeconomic department, had nevertheless acquired cultural, symbolic and social resources before migrating. Some of them attended French high schools or took language courses at an American cultural centre, which provided them with a socially admired education and a good oral and written command of French or English. Others, like Bachir's and Driss's brothers, respectively, had received professional training in Canada previous to their intention to migrate or else were already collaborating with a Canadian company from home. Since they were hired by the same companies, it is safe to think that their prior experiences and social networks greatly facilitated their professional integration in the host society, or maybe even kindled the migration project. Finally, some had postgraduate studies in Europe prior to migration which allowed them to develop a body of knowledge and competences (abilities to quickly adapt to a new cultural environment, to move around Canada depending on job offers, job-searching methods, etc.), besides providing them with cultural and symbolic resources highly valued within the Canadian work market. Professional integration in Canada for these individuals was relatively comfortable. They hold a position related to their field of study and education level, all of them found jobs within just a few weeks and, in time, many of them were in a position to buy property.

On the other hand, migrants who were educated exclusively in Moroccan schools, who have a Moroccan degree and who did not have any academic or professional experience abroad had to face professional downgrading, a phenomenon observed in other pieces of research (Fortin and Renaud, 2004; Renaud and Cayn, 2006). Many had to confront not only professional bodies in Quebec, but also several obstacles of bureaucratic and administrative nature. This is the case of Fatiha, who had been informed she had to take three training courses to work as a nurse in Quebec, but she did not know beforehand that there was a selection exam to enter these courses, or that there was a long waiting list to register for the exam. While most migrants find employment assistance resources accessible, they often denounce the initial lack of information, or even disinformation, during the interview. These interviewees added that it is difficult to outline a professional career in Canada when immigration procedures take three to five years, during which uncertainty about the results is always present. Immigration services, for all that, do not seem to assist in keeping track of the file: "they didn't say anything,

they sent us to a place where they had only put up some statistics" (Habiba). When the migrants' age and the date of their degrees are added to these restraints –finding a job for someone on their late 40's is not easy and a degree from more than 25 years ago is not so valuable in 2005–, entering the work market is a real obstacle course which might end with a downgrading or a return to college.

The interruption of the professional socialization process suffered by migrants when going from their home country to the host country is more difficult for members of the privileged social classes. Fatima, who was a high executive at a bank in Morocco, describes the traumatic experience of frequenting job centers after months of fruitless work search: "It was exasperating, I found myself lining up after uneducated people, poor people. Me, who was a high executive in Morocco, it was horrible, a horrible experience". The selection grid seems to send a dissonant message, namely that, on the one hand, Canada welcomes migrants so that they "benefit from their expertise" contributing to the economic development of the country while, on the other hand, they do not really have the right qualifications. The discourse accompanying the Canadian immigration policy leads to a paradox: moving to Canada symbolizes success, but at the same time the social and professional downgrading does not allow migrants to send money to their countries and complicates their return, "return, to do what?" (Younès). This situation may produce a sense of failure and the migrant's social isolation.

Thus, for most migrants, establishing in Montreal equals experiencing employment programs, fixed-duration contracts, and the return to school, sometimes together with a part-time job: "I had a full-time job, it was at night, it was trying, when it was over, I took my bike to the Cégep…" (Younès). Mohammed's brother, who attended a French high-school and worked as a technician at the ONCF (Office national des chemins de ferre-the National Rail Office in Morocco) before migrating to Quebec, is still working in the informal economy three years after his arrival in Montreal. Other relatives of the participants interviewed in Morocco are still searching for work after more than five years in Canada. For Habiba's husband and Houria's brother, the fruitless job search in Montreal, their arrival point in Canada, ended with their departure to Calgary, where they both work since then as engineers in a multinational company.

In order to get round the inherent obstacles of living in Canada, some families deliberately chose spatial dispersion or were able to benefit from it after migrating. Fatima, come from a wealthy social class, explains that her family migrated by stages. Her son's departure to study in Canada preceded her own migration: "I came to test the water. Deciding to migrate, to get settled, is not easy, you have a house,

a mortgage […] then I told my husband 'why not send the children to study first?'". Moreover, this family limited their economic losses by retaining a house and the husband's business in Morocco. After an unsuccessful economic integration in Montreal, the husband returned to his home country: "I worked a little and my husband didn't remain, he was here three months, he went back, he came, he went, it was him who sent us money to live". Fatiha and her husband decided to migrate with their three school-age children, although their 22 year-old daughter, who had just married a doctor, remained in Morocco: "I would prefer having my daughter with me but I don't encourage them to migrate. I heard this story about a pharmacist who was told he had to repeat all his training and an Egyptian cardiologist who is currently following a training to become a nurse's aide". Since her arrival in Montreal, 10 months ago, Fatiha has returned to Morocco once, for her daughter's delivery, thanks to her son-in-law who bought her the plane ticket.

Except for the members of wealthy families, most migrants were not able to return to Morocco until three or four years after their arrival in Canada because of their insufficient financial resources and an extended professional instability. In these cases, however, many of them benefited from the multi-polarity of their familial networks. Omar's brother and sister, for instance, send their children to Morocco during summer vacations. For Omar, this allows them to maintain strong ties with their cousins in Morocco, and encourages them to learn and preserve the *tachelhit* language (a Berber language) and their home culture. It is doubtless also a way for Omar to ensure certain closeness to his younger brother and sister, who are living in a country he does not know: "we are aware of the problems they're going through, even if they don't want to talk about it". In other situations, as in the case of Omar's and Houria's families, it was the mothers remaining in Morocco who visited their children in Canada and helped them in their integration process. Some of them take care of their grandchildren and have an important role in the transmission of dialectal Moroccan and Berber languages. That said, within families with a long tradition of migration to Europe, particularly those stemming from the Berber regions of Tadla-Azilal, the Sous or the High Atlas, mothers travel between Canada, France, Spain, Italy and Switzerland, according to their children's place of settlement: "she spends two months in Casa, three months in Canada, then she leaves, goes to Geneva for a while, then to Paris to visit her daughter, and like that, she wanders around" (Chadia). During our meetings with the Moroccan interviewees, we were able to ascertain that the Internet and, more particularly, webcams play a major role in maintaining the ties between the family's different migratory spaces. From among our interviewees, none of the migrants

in Canada sends money to Morocco, since they are more focused on settling in their host society. However, some of them contribute to fulfill specific needs of their families in Morocco: subscribing to the Internet, buying a webcam, restoring the family house, sending laboratory material, etc.

For family members still living in Morocco, the continuing ties with their relatives abroad connect these multiple and scattered spaces and lead them to realize the existence of a potential multi-polar space of action, to represent themselves in a de-compartmentalized space. While a number of European countries were already part, for many, of the family geographic monad, it was only when their relatives migrated, "by the presence of these persons", that Canada or North America, in the broad sense of the term, "became a place" (Omar). The spatial scattering of the family allows them to recognize the broadening of their potential area of action, prerequisite to an effective appropriation. Thus, now that Omar's brother and sister are in Montreal, Omar has the alternative of sending his children to their aunt when the time comes for them to attend university. Since their brother lives in Calgary, Houria's sister and her husband applied to immigrate to Canada with views to join him, in company of their children. According to what they told him, the main objective of this family migration is having their son and daughter attend university, "but only until they graduate and then go back".

In this regard, migrants benefit from the possibility offered by Canada to obtain a second citizenship in a relatively short time, and then apply for residence in a European country. This is what Chadia says regarding her sister: "She didn't remain in Canada, she just spent the compulsory three-year period to get her nationality… Then she left for Paris. Right now she's there and when she doesn't have a job, she goes back. She lives between France and Canada" (Chadia). The same happened with their older brother, who left Toronto to settle in Geneva. In other cases, the Canadian citizenship offers a highly appreciated circulation freedom, since a tourist visa is not so easily granted by all countries: "Now, well, it's true that they can go wherever they want" (Omar, referring to his brother and sister and their families). The legal appropriation of a national space, embodied in the passport, becomes a resource that multiplies the spaces where migrants have rights: right to work, right to study, right to travel, right to sponsor a family member. Even for Moroccans in Canada who count on returning to Morocco after amassing enough economic, cultural and symbolic resources to settle down with ease, double citizenship acts as an escape valve, an asset they will be able to use for themselves or their children in order to search for a job, study or simply travel.

Both the meanings given to migration to Canada and the mobilization of the multiple national homes constituting the familial migratory space show how, for migrants, space becomes a resource. Prior to migration, appropriating the Canadian territory through access to the different rights and resources it offers is part of an individual or familial strategy of social, professional and/or economic ascent. This ascent can come to happen either in the host country, in the home country, or in Europe (valued, among other reasons, for its proximity to Morocco), according to the initial socio-economic status of migrants and the subjective meaning they conferred to their departure. Similarly, the different transnational familial dynamics developed in Morocco after migration are partly determined by the migrants' motivations, their initial resource baggage (such as the previous family migration experience), and the obstacles faced by them during their integration in the host society's work market.

CONCLUSIONS

Moroccans perceive Quebecois and Canadian policies regarding immigration as structural opportunities in a context of restrictions to traditional immigration to Europe. By highlighting the migration of skills and of skilled workers, their selection process contributes to a differentiated appraisal of the destinations that constitute the Moroccan migratory space, where Canada acquires a distinctive value. This, together with the local economic and political situation and the familial and collective history of migration, fuels the strategies of social, economic and professional upward mobility linked to being abroad, particularly within those social milieus where migration did not use to be part of peoples' aspirations, let alone of their needs. The modes of economic integration into the host country and the related transnational practices are shaped by these conditions for the construction of the migration project.

Based on these analyses, we can outline differentiated profiles of Moroccan migrations to Quebec and Canada. For some, middle-class families from cities hitherto spared from the economic need to migrate, but who nevertheless feel that social mobility has become stagnant, leaving to Canada appears more like an individual project. Migration is relatively definite and aims at an ascending professional and social career. Trained at Moroccan universities and lacking a familial migration past endowing them with knowledge of mobility and the use of de-territorialized networks, these migrants have a reduced stock of resources to

get round the obstacles found in the host society. Motivated by high professional aspirations, they have a more bitter and abrupt experience of the shock of down-grading. For others, the project of migrating to Canada also seeks to fulfill individual social advancement ambitions (or of the nuclear family). However, since they come from rural areas with initially limited resources, their families and communities have a long history of emigration to Europe. They have already gone through a first internal migration. Moreover, they belong to tightly woven family and community networks, so that an individual migration project is also a family project. The same happens with the choice of returning to the home country or of not migrating to such a distant country as Canada. These de-territorialized and multi-polar networks connect multiple spaces of potential action which constitute as many mobilized or potentially usable resources both for family members in Morocco (family reunification, a place for children to attend university...) and for migrants themselves. For them, activating these transnational networks and mobilizing multiple national spaces are both strategies of professional integration in the host society and means to consolidate an eventual economic integration in Morocco or a European country. We can imagine that, in their case, the reception conditions in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada will play an important role in their decision to remain or go back home. Finally, Moroccan migration flows into Quebec and Canada set in motion wealthy populations, heirs to an international socialization, particularly regarding family travels or studies abroad. For them, access to the international sphere is traditionally part of the natural order of things, particularly to attend the most prestigious universities, always with a view to returning home.

The multiple migration routes taken by migrants remind us that the Moroccan society is divided and that different social and historical factors contribute to an unequal appropriation of space as a resource. While we do not reject the use of ethnic and national categories in the social sciences, we do insist on the importance of inductive processes with local and partial goals–which may nevertheless be applied generally by resorting to subsequent statistical validations–as a strategy to challenge those categories inappropriately tending to reification.

Our intention was to prevent against any approach that would turn the cultural matrix (embodied in the use of ethnic categories viewed as homogenous and as having a content defined *a priori)* into the starting point of the analysis. The idea is to emphasize, as Barth (1969) invites us to do, that a shared culture is the result of the way a group organizes itself, and not its first characteristic, the one determining its behaviors. Our research object is, therefore, the study of the

mechanisms that are likely to produce this or that behavior, mechanisms made up of a historical and detailed entwinement of material forces, modes of political organization, and beliefs.

In the field of migration, one of the ways of achieving this is to focus on the migration route analysis in order to better comprehend the factors that characterize all spaces–understood as a normative order built by a number of structuring forces at a specific moment–constituting the migrants' route, thus enhancing the importance of their meanings and the way of appropriating them in practice.

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