

‘BEING MOROCCAN’ TODAY: DILEMMAS OF IDENTITY RELATED TO THE ORIGIN OF MOROCCAN MIGRANTS IN EUROPE

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Researchers on Muslim migrants' presence in Europe are mainly interested in following their integration paths in their new countries, and, to a lesser extent, their dilemmas linked to the specificity of their countries of origin. In this article the focus is on the influence of ethnicity, understood in terms of categories inherent in the sending context, on the dilemmas of identity of Moroccan interviewees in Granada and Paris.

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Badania nad obecnością imigrantów muzułmańskich w Europie często koncentrują się na ścieżkach integracji w nowych krajach z uwzględnieniem ich specyfiki, w mniejszym zaś stopniu na kontekstach warunkujących tożsamościowe wybory badanych, które odnoszą się do specyfiki ich kraju pochodzenia. W niniejszym artykule analizuję wpływ etniczności rozumianej w kategoriach wyniesionych z kraju pochodzenia na tożsamościowe rozterki moich marokańskich rozmówców w Paryżu i Granadzie.

Key words: Moroccans, ethnicity, regionalisms, migration

The reflections presented in this article were provided by research conducted between 2006 and 2010. The Islamic presence in Europe is exemplified as perceived and as self-perceived; as Moroccans and as Senegalese; and in three countries: Spain, Italy and France. The main goal has been to gain a better knowledge about the Muslim migration experience in particular concerning integration in its social and economic dimensions. The most important source of information has been a series of interviews with migrants, the aim of which was to explore and present the Muslim migrants' perspective: their vision of the world, their terminology, their categorizations of different phenomena and how they define themselves. These elements have been examined in terms of social cohesion and of challenges to it at the beginning of the 21st century and in a sense of security. However, as a starting point, the manifold issue of ethnicity and religion of the interviewees was addressed. The issue of religion has been already treated in detail in another article (Stryjewski 2009) therefore here ethnicity, as seen

by 42 Moroccan migrants interviewed during research visits to Granada and Paris between 2006 and 2010, will be the reference.

The starting point is a categorization based on a political indicator (citizenship). There must be an awareness of the arbitrariness of the political borders of the 'sending country' in question. Talking about 'Moroccans' in terms of ethnicity is quite risky and this categorization is being put forward in full awareness that some groups from Eastern Morocco are closer, no matter whether it is judged with objective or subjective criteria, to Western Algerian groups than to the inhabitants of Western Morocco. Likewise Rifi people often perceive themselves as Rifis and Berbers and avoid being classified as 'Moroccan' (the problem of Western Sahara and its population's identity has been put aside as it is of little significance for today's immigration to France and Spain).

Even among individuals who accept being called 'Moroccan' the internal diversity in both sending and receiving contexts can be tremendous (Boukous 1995). The main cleavage here is between Arabs and Berbers (who can themselves be further subdivided into Tashelhit, Tarifit, Tamazight, pan-Berber renaissance activists, etc.). Intra-Moroccan relations can be extremely ambiguous. Many interviewees, while referring to the lack of solidarity between Muslims from different countries (Stryjewski 2012), for instance: "When the frontier between Morocco and Algeria was opened, many Algerians entered and we did not even want to look at them, and we are all Arabs", indicate this lack (even 'racism') among the citizens of their state of origin: "There is racism in Morocco as well – between us, Arabs and Berbers" (an Arab from Wajda, interviewed in Paris).

As a starting point, it was decided to interview migrants from all these categories. The identity meeting points in Morocco are so crowded that it would be artificial to divide into possible but inflexible categories. Among my interviewees the following lines of ethnic and regional division can be outlined:

- Arabs vs. Berbers (especially Rifi Berbers);
- Regional differences between interviewees: on the one hand, two main regional blocks, firstly the Tangiers Peninsula and Eastern Morocco with a clear resentment towards the Moroccan State, and secondly Central and Atlantic Morocco which appear to be fully integrated into Morocco as a political project; whereas on the other, the dynamic regions of the north, Casablanca or Marrakech are opposed to the somehow stagnant regions of Rabat, Fes or Meknes.

According to interviewees' statements, the perception of Morocco, and the fact of being Moroccan, depends on many variables such as region of origin, education, social class, rural or urban, age and sex. A person's 'birthplace', however, should be the crucial indicator of 'how to speak' to the given interviewee:

"In Morocco many things depend on your birthplace. Whether you are from the countryside or a small town or... (...) So it depends on the region. A small village with one street where everybody has to be in the mosque on Friday, be the same as everybody else, and to do what their grandfather did; it is different... When you talk to a Moroccan you should know where he is from, it has an impact

on what he is, what he says, what he thinks. Apart from the economic or social class, you should be aware of his birthplace” (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

Consequently, the line of division between different identities and ways of thinking among interviewees depends mainly on their region of origin. The Tangiers Peninsula and the Rif (Zougari 1991, Montgomery Hart & Raha Ahmed 1999, Khalid 2010) appear as the most separatist regions; both of them in terms of identity, but the Rif politically as well. The north (Tangiers Peninsula, the Rif and the Eastern province) appears sharply contrasted with the south (the rest of Morocco). The north-south rivalry reveals many aspects of internal Moroccan fractures, the south being perceived by the north in terms of political oppression, political supremacy, and a ‘foreign’ administration that wants to be felt as superior to the local. Against this background, northern Moroccans perceive themselves as oppressed and deprived of their legitimate rights:

“In Morocco there is some rivalry, north-south for example, yes, especially north-south but I think we are all equal. But the north-south rivalry has a reason, it is because the north was always oppressed by the leaders who are from the south, that is why those from the north always think they are deprived of something which was given to those from the south. It creates a series of conflicts and it has no sense because it’s not the people’s fault. It is our administration that is truly guilty of that. Anyway, this rivalry is very stupid but also very common nowadays, you can’t speak normally with a guy from Casablanca...; it’s stupid but on the other hand it’s true that people from the south are a bit presumptuous, they consider themselves superior... because... I don’t know why. But they think they are superior. So obviously we don’t like that, we are very proud, even his Majesty called us ‘wild’, he said so in a royal speech (laughing)” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

The adverse south is often identified with the Moroccan state¹, which, in turn, is seen by northern Moroccans as a mere distributor of posts and privileges (“nobody gave us, so...”). Northern resentment towards the south/ the state relies on the south’s political primacy gained after independence:

“Nothing... the Rifi... look, Abd el-Krim al-Khattabi² who fought against the Spaniards and the French, where was he detained? In the south. The north fought, people fought against the Spaniards, they had arms and everything, they belonged to organisations, they fought more than the south but when they fought against the Protectorate people from the south, especially from Fes, who went to university, and when independence came and the government looked for people for the different posts they looked to the north that had been fighting, and they didn’t find anybody, so they resorted to Fes where people were educated. Now those in the highest posts say ‘in the times of the Protectorate I did... whatever...’; the truth is that he did nothing! And those who fought and did not expect anything from their country were forgotten as, for example, my grandfather, he fought and nothing, he died and did not receive anything, neither a post nor a simple ‘thank you’” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

¹ For more about Moroccan political life under Hasan II and Mohammed VI, see Vermeren 2011, Dalle 2011.

² The leader of a revolt in the Rif against French and Spanish colonial occupation, which resulted in the establishment of the short-lived Republic of the Rif.

The riots of 1984 and the military intervention of the royal force in the north constitute a more recent base for the north's claims and demands:

"In Tetuan there was a problem as well, some strikes, some days of strikes and then a lot of people with no education came and started to break things, which always happens during strikes, and the King had to intervene and, as the problem was serious, the soldiers had to intervene too and it became very, very big" (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

After 1984 northern Morocco became an anathematized region forgotten by the central government residing in the central part of the country:

"Since 1984 the King has never come to the north, in 1984 there was a strike, which was national in character, but people from the north suffered more than the others, tanks came to Tetuan, helicopters, they started shooting, a siege was announced, one hundred and fifty people died, children, old people..., even those who only tried to put up their washing on the balcony. The north has always been a bit anti-monarchist. Hasan II in one of his speeches called people from the north *aubash*, which means trash, he offended us... That's why those from the north are in opposition, because he was not fair, the north always fought, always defended Morocco but afterwards nobody helped the north" (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

Some of my interviewees from central and southern Morocco admit that northern claims are well-founded and legitimate. When I ask: "And why does the north complain so much?", a Moroccan from Casablanca answers:

"The north? (laughing) Yes, but I think they have never been well-treated, for example by our former King, and this area was never well developed, it is the least developed part, a bit forgotten" (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Paris).

The same interviewee, however, rushes to relativize the northern claims through pointing out the currently shifting policy towards this region:

"Now there are attempts to do something but it will last many years... There is great investment in Tangier's port and there's another close to Tetuan, I think this will be the biggest Moroccan port, it means many jobs".

Another interviewee from Fes adopts the same narrative strategy. On the one hand, he recognizes the legitimacy of the northern argument against the central government:

"It's true that it's the least developed part, well, the least developed is the Rif, which is more in the east but anyway the north is a very abandoned region".

However, in the same sentence he expresses his own disdain towards the north, which, according to his statement, is shared by the northern Moroccans themselves:

"It's normal that they complain but even they do not want to live in the north, I would definitely not like to live there, nor would my friends because we do not see the north as an attractive region. It can be attractive for tourists but to live in, no, you don't feel good living there. I can spend ten days of my holiday there...; and people from the north don't like people from the interior..."

Interviewees from central and southern Morocco willingly use the 'north' as a synonym of the Tangiers Peninsula, Rif and the Eastern Province, but they do not like it when northern Moroccans call them the 'south'. When I say "They call you the 'south'", an interviewee from Casablanca reacts by laughing, "For them everything south of Tangiers is the south, isn't it? (laughing)" (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada). Refusing such a label, the same interviewee sees the 'south' being perceived in this way in the 'north' as one more factor of the sharp difference between both regions and their populations: "We are so different, there is such a big difference..."

Unsurprisingly, the Rifi Berbers, the Moroccan vanguard of the Berber renaissance³, have the best knowledge of other Berber groups either inside or outside Morocco:

"There are two parts to the north: the west of Tangiers and Chawen who speak Arabic and the east that speaks Berber, Nador... We are called Amazigh, Berbers in general...; those from Rif are Rifi. A Rifi is an Amazigh of northern Morocco, there are Amazighs in the south called Swasa, there are Amazighs in the centre, in the Atlas they are called Shluh, there are Amazighs in Algeria called Qaba'il. But I can't understand a Shleuh or a Qaba'il. Amazigh has many meanings. Our language is Tarifit, Tashelhit is the language of the Shluh, I am Tarifit, I speak Tarifit" (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

Although my Arab interviewees from the Atlantic, from central and southern Morocco do not have much information on the intra-Berber diversity (Boukous 1995, Arab 2009), they are, on the one hand, aware of their supremacy over different Berber groups, not only the Rifi:

"There are also some Berbers in the south, in the part called Sus, alike but very different at the same time, they are a bit isolated in Morocco, uneducated, with no opinions, we consider them misers..." (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

And on the other hand, of the current efforts to create a kind of pan-Berber Moroccan front (the Berber renaissance), which they meaningfully describe as a 'myth':

"The Berbers belong to the same ethnic group, even they now want to create something like a pan-Berber language but it is a myth, it is very difficult, there are too many differences. They try to support Berber culture, which for many years was forgotten, now the Berber language is taught in schools, it is to save this language" (Arab from Fes, interviewed in Paris).

Interviewees from central and southern Morocco complain about 'northern' ignorance when it comes to regional specificity. However, the same interviewees' knowledge of the 'north' does not seem to be any better. More specifically, the interviews carried out among Moroccan migrants in France and Spain bring four different *native* visions of the north and the Arab-Berber conflict with significant shifts in interviewees' identities and their concept on the north and its specificity:

³ For the Berber and pan-Berber movement, see Stryjewski 2016.

1. Urban Arabs from the Tangiers Peninsula;
2. Urban Arabs from the Moroccan interior;
3. Berbers with a strong Islamic identity;
4. Berbers with a weak Islamic identity.

As said above, among Arab interviewees (even those from the north) there is a common acceptance of the legitimacy of northern and Rifi resentment towards the Moroccan state:

“The north means the Berbers, the Rifi Berbers, many years ago, during Hasan II’s rule there was this problem that the Rifi wanted to become independent, they want the same as Catalonia now... And Hasan II resorted to force, he did not want to give them their rights, there was a tremendous war in the Rif..., planes came and dropped bombs... yes, I don’t know the year but my grandmother told me about it” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

The urban Arabs from the Tangiers Peninsula manifest, however, an ambivalent approach to the Rifi problem. On the one hand, the Rifi emerges as a partner, an ally in the framework of the Moroccan north-south and north-state rivalries, in such cases integrated in ‘*we*’; whereas on the other, in the strictly northern context, the Rifi become ‘*strangers*’. An interviewee from Tetuan, talking about south-north discrepancies, situates all northern populations in the same front:

“Because people from the north are more independent..., ideologically speaking, people from the south are a bit more submissive, they have something of the donkey, easier to control, but you can’t control the Rifi, God!, They’d rather die than let you control them” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

The urban Arabs from the Tangiers Peninsula, however, tend to underestimate the Rifi problem, which is presented as from the past, a kind of utopia, a minority will:

“There are some Arab-Berber frictions but they are less and less acute... My grandmother is Berber, my father is Berber, my mother is Moorish, Arab I mean... My husband is Berber and it isn’t a problem! It’s losing its importance” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

Another interview with a migrant from Tetuan seems to bring the same perspective:

“There is no difference in being a Moroccan Arab or a Moroccan Berber. In some families it can be important, rather before, some families didn’t accept marriages between Arabs and Berbers. Now it’s not so important..., at least in our northern cities... Some Rifi don’t want to be Moroccans..., yes, there was an attempt to create a republic called Rif, it is a utopia, this republic of Rif tried to emerge for years, it failed and it had to fail just because the majority were not interested in it” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

According to Berber renaissance ideology the Arabs are strangers in north Africa. The cradle of the Rifi movement is the Rif, but some Rifi ideologues extend the Rifi territorial claims to the whole of the north, the cities of Tetuan and Tangiers

included. Unsurprisingly, the Arabs from the north who, in the north-state conflict, see the Rifi as a partner, are changing their approach and, in face of Rifi separatism, are looking for some common background with the Berbers, which could be the Moroccan state or Islam:

“The Rifi problem is the problem of independence, that’s all, if you look at Abd al-Krim al-Khattabi who is the symbol, their ‘national’ symbol, you will see that he looked for the unification of Morocco. I don’t like this Morocco of different parts... I don’t want it! This does not mean that I’m against the Rifi nation..., we are all citizens, why does one part always say: ‘us, us’! Those who don’t want the Arabs are the minority..., Berbers? Arabs? Where is the difference?! We are all Muslims... If you’re Muslim look for that in your religion! If not, it means that you’re ignorant, that there is some imperfection, religion is perfection, religion invites us to aim towards perfection” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

This from an interview with an Arab Moroccan from Tetuan can be strengthened with the following statement of an Arab interviewee from Tangiers:

“And with the Rifi there is no problem, the Rifi are Muslims, they entered into religion and their race, colour etc. has no importance any more, the only important thing is how they behave. We are all equal, being Muslims we are all equal” (Arab from Tanger, interviewed in Granada).

This view seems to be shared by some Rifi Berbers who opt for Islam as a main identity trait. Significantly, one interviewee, a Rifi Berber from Nador working in a *halal* butcher’s in Granada, answers a question on Arab-Rifi Berber discrepancies in the following way:

“It is not important whether the regime is a monarchy or a republic. People have rejected the foreign ideas of communism and nationalism. They now want an Islamic regime. The migrant advocates the idea of a caliphate, as it was at the beginning of Islam, a caliphate that can be characterized by the word ‘justice’. People are now asking for a government that would act according to the Islamic perspective. That’s why there are so many Islamic movements now that have more and more well-wishers” (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

The Rifi Berbers themselves, however, perceive the Arabs as north Africa’s conquerors and strangers. The conflict seems to have two dimensions, one that sees the Arab state as being associated with power, whereas the Rifi Berbers’ unique trait, with which they confront the state, is honour:

“My origin is Berber. And... Yes! Yes! It’s very important to me! I feel very emotional about this! I’m very proud of that when I’m in Morocco! According to history, we are at the source of human presence in Morocco, Moroccan origin, and the indigenous... Yes! the Arabs came afterwards from the Arabiyya Island, from Saudi Arabia, that is what history tells us..” (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

When the same interviewee is asked whether there are any differences between Arabs and Berbers in Morocco he states:

“Yes, yes, the Arabs have the political power, they are the government, the Berbers have their honour but nothing to say in the country, they emigrate, the majority of people abroad are Berbers from the north”.

The Arabs dominate in the symbolic dimension as well, in linguistic terms for example. In general, *being a Rifi Berber* is seen by Berbers themselves as *being left out* by the dominant Arab government:

“In the schools there is only Arabic..., on television there is only five minutes for the news in Tarifit, five minutes for Tamazight, five minutes for Swasi, Tasusit..., because the government puts this Berber issue aside” (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

Different to the northern Moroccan Arabs, the Rifi in the testimonies of Arab immigrants from the Moroccan interior, are exclusively ‘strangers’. In their opinion, the Rifi are either internal immigrants to big cities, such as Casablanca, or their counterparts from the Rif constitute another aspect of exoticism of the not well known Moroccan north. The interviewees from Casablanca do not know much about the Moroccan Berbers, especially the Rifi. While talking about Berbers, the Rifi often appear as a ‘different’, ‘separate’, ‘not-like-other-Berber group’:

“Even in Casablanca, I met some Berbers who maintain their Berber origin, who speak Berber at home, it is especially so among the Rifi, and they can do that for generations. When they get mixed with Arabs, this Berber trait evaporates... The Berber problem in Morocco is rather a Rifi problem. I don’t know why, it’s more because of history... They were always against the system, against Morocco, because they always had their identity, indigenous and autonomous region and don’t consider themselves Moroccans. They often say: ‘I am Rifi’ and that is all, they don’t say they’re Moroccans... The others consider themselves Berbers and Moroccans. The Rifi don’t want the monarchy, they want a Rif Republic, this Rifi identity is very strong, very strong there”⁴ (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

The Arab interviewees from central and southern Morocco confirm the strong attachment of the Rifi Berbers to their language, which also, in the interviewees’ perception, distinguish them from other Berber groups:

“The Moroccan Berbers, even if they speak exclusively in Berber at home, learn Arabic at school, at work, via TV... But there are many people in Rif, especially in the Nador region, and especially older people who don’t speak Arabic. That’s another reason for this friction, as we don’t have any contact through language” (Arab from Marrakech, interviewed in Granada).

In one of the interviews quoted above there is a hint of the emigrant character of the Moroccan north (“the Berbers have their honour but nothing to say in the country,

⁴ During my research among Moroccan migrants between 2006 and 2010 I did not meet anybody who definitely *did not consider themselves Moroccan*. However, when interviewing Moroccans in Madrid when I was still a student (2000–1) I met some Rifi Berbers of Moroccan citizenship who explicitly refused to be called Moroccan. They advocated independence of their region of origin, the Rif, as a republican state (the Republic of Rif).

they emigrate, the majority of people abroad are Berbers from the north”). It is also worth mentioning that the north is perceived as the major emigration region by all interviewees. It is acknowledged by both Arab:

“Well... recently many people have emigrated from northern Morocco, I don't know the reason but surely it was because of money” (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada)

and Berber interviewees:

“Yes, many people leave..., there were people going to France, to Germany, the former emigrants, today Spain is the usual target. Here it is easier, it's more difficult to enter other countries. Before it was not like that because people said that Spain was like Morocco, that's why people travelled as far as Holland... People going to Spain are from the north and east, while people from the south and centre go to Italy. For instance, Casablanca or Muhammadiyya go to Italy... They go on a ship from Casablanca to Tunis and then from Tunis to Italy..., it depends on the trafficking... for us; people from the north, there is no trafficking to Italy..., so everybody thinks of entering Spain... Trafficking in human beings, simply trafficking..., there are people organizing it, one has to pay, they have transportation, ships... It's illegal but people arranging it know people in the police, Moroccan and Spanish as well” (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

The north is also a transit region for migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa:

“There are also a lot of Sub-Saharans, they went there and wait for the opportunity to go to Spain, to enter Melilla because from Melilla they can get there. You didn't hear how many died there? There was a big fight with the police, Moroccan, Spanish, crossing from Melilla is very difficult, before it was very easy but now it has changed” (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

According to my interviewees' statements, the situation does not differ so much on the border of the second Spanish enclave on the Moroccan shore – Ceuta:

“Especially working there, in the north, as my father does, there, at the frontier, with the contraband... Imagine being responsible for an area such as Tetuan, the mixture, the frontier with Ceuta, the worst frontier in the world, arms, drugs, prostitution, money, immigration, everything, many days without the possibility of sleeping or taking a rest..., and he was the chief, you know, you are the chief in such a place and you have forty five people only two can read and write, it is complicated and, besides, the Moroccan administration works in French and they do not know this language...” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

However, this emigration, being mainly for economic reasons, can also shift to a political motivation in the case of some Berbers as, for instance, Moroccan Berber activists, persecuted for their commitment to a political project based on their ethnicity:

“However, those who desire such a republic [the Republic of Rif] are still numerous..., the majority of them are abroad. Why? Because they talk about a republic and it's a political question which can lead you to jail... But they have very good relations with simple people, there have never been any problems with simple people, it is a problem with the Moroccan state, not with the people” (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

The colonial past and geographical distance from Europe also have an impact on the intra-regional differences between my interviewees and their migration destinations. Migrants from northern Morocco especially are familiar with Spanish reality. Due to the tradition of Muslim Spain (Al-Andalus) inherited by Tetuan (Gozalbes Busto 1992, Razuq 1998, Stryjewski 2014), post-colonial interdependencies between northern Morocco and Spain or the modern influence of Spanish culture (the Spanish educational network in northern Morocco, the Spanish media, Spaniards working in or visiting the region). Immigration imposes comparisons with some positive conclusions for integration (“Tetuan is like Granada”) and some negative concerning the evaluation of the reality of the sending context, especially in its political dimension:

“Tetuan is like Granada, the architecture, the streets, but they take care of Granada and nobody cares about Tetuan, nobody takes care of the north, it is for political reasons” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada),

or:

“I have many friends who say that Granada is a larger Tetuan because it is the same style, the same life, that’s why we see it like this” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

Another interviewee from Tetuan states:

“My uncle speaks Spanish, my grandmother speaks Spanish, half of my family speaks Spanish... because of the Protectorate. In the north it is also very much spoken. It is a language of Tetuan. All older people speak Spanish fluently. The younger ones who did not study speak it badly but they can still speak it, they understand without any trouble, if you speak Spanish there everybody will understand you... It is a very Spanish city, the TV is in Spanish, many people support Barça or Madrid in football... It is the same for the whole area, also Tanger, Larache, Arzila..., and then if you go down a bit, it starts to be more complicated, it’s more French and Berber..., but practically the whole area called el-Rif speaks Spanish” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

With reference to the migratory problems linked to the two Spanish enclaves on the Moroccan shore, it is worth mentioning the ambiguous relationship between migrants from Morocco and their co-believers from Ceuta and Melilla. Despite official Moroccan propaganda stating that there is no difference between the two groups, claiming that the Muslim population of the Spanish cities are Moroccan, the Moroccans themselves do not seem to know their specificity. A female interviewee from Morocco gives the following statement on her husband’s fate, a Muslim from Melilla of Berber origin whom she married in Spain:

“The truth is that he is quite a special case..., he suffers here what every Arab does and goes to Morocco and suffers what any foreigner does..., when he wanted to marry me, they treated him like a stranger... Finally, we got married in a small village close to Melilla where people know that those from the city are Arabs and Moroccans but have Spanish citizenship, so I went there because in my village nobody wanted to marry us, the notary asked: ‘What? How? How can he be an Arab when

he does not speak Arabic? How can he be Spanish when he has an Arabic face?" (Arab from Wajda, interviewed in Granada).

Apart from the ethnic divisions, the interviewees can be further split into regional categories. As we have seen, the main line of division splits the Moroccan interviewees into two parts: Central and Atlantic Morocco on the one hand and the Tangiers Peninsula and Eastern Morocco, on the other. After Mohamed VI's accession to the throne on 23 July 1999 and the start of his reconciliation policy towards the northern regions, the Tangiers Peninsula became a new investment pole: "That's why there is big investment in the northern cities, Tangier, Tetuan, as well" (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada). The modest enthusiasm of my interviewees from the Tangiers Peninsula concerning a possible better future for their region in economic terms is not shared by those coming from the Eastern Province unchangeably perceived as the most abandoned Moroccan region:

"I am from Nador. It is in the east, north-east, close to Oujda, not so far from Algeria..., it is life that you can afford but it is a very sad, very difficult life" (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

In interviewees' statements, the Eastern Province appears as the most affected by unemployment, also among young graduates from Moroccan universities:

"In Morocco I am always nervous... Because it is very difficult to be a university graduate and to remain on the street, people are disappointed, in Rabat it is a bit better but where I live there is no work" (Berber from Nador, interviewed in Granada).

Regarding the specificity of Central and Atlantic Morocco, one of the major changes stressed by interviewees is the gradual decline of Casablanca's supremacy in the economic life of the country. In the interviewees' statements, Marrakech emerges as the main competitor to Casablanca (as we have seen above, the new investments were indicated in the case of Tangiers and Tetuan as well). Casablanca, as seen by the interviewees, is a city with no tradition due to the fact that its population is composed of internal migrants from all the Moroccan regions. Unsurprisingly, accustomed to this regional pan-Moroccan mixture, the interviewees from Casablanca have the most acute sense of being Moroccans in the Western sense (close to the Western concept of a nation-state identity type) in spite of the regional differences. Their answers to the questions concerning the sending region are consequently focused more on Morocco as such, less on the immediate regional background. As far as the interviewees of Berber origin are concerned, Berber identity, in the context of a big, modern city, has been quickly switched into an Arab identity. The fact that the interviewees of Berber origin do not know the Moroccan Berbers' specificity or sub-divisions can be a manifestation of such a process. The same ignorance of intra-Berber divisions is characteristic of all interviewees from Casablanca who claim Arab identity. In that case, as usual, the dominant does not know the dominated:

“Casablanca is a city that does not have any history, a young city, it became huge people went there for work, and what is the result? The result is that people from the whole country started to live in one place, Berbers, Rifi, people from Marrakech and Sahara... They got all mixed up, for example, in my case, my father is a Berber from Warzazat..., but I don't even know from which group because there are three or five, he cannot speak Berber, my mother is not Berber, my parents were born in Casablanca. As in the city people mainly speak Arabic my father has lost his Berber, my grandfather yes, he spoke... So in Casablanca the difference is more social than that of origin... Origin is something on the margins of your life, you can have friends all your life and never know their parents' origin..., but in other regions yes, it is important” (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

This modern vision is rather exceptional and not familiar to Moroccans from other regions:

“For the rest of Morocco Casablanca is a world apart..., it is not like that... We are still a part of Morocco but, yes, this is a very liberal city, more liberal and more open. (...) Casablanca has been famous and successful and everybody wants to go there and settle there, it is known as a developed city, a city that offers everything..., and the truth is that it offers you everything, if you want an education it is here, if you want the best hospitals, if you want the best of whatever, you will find it in Casablanca” (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

The interviewees from Casablanca, however, talk about its ‘oversaturation’ making life difficult, if not impossible, due to a lack of proper infrastructure, particularly in reference to culture inherent in cities with some ‘roots’:

“Casablanca, yes, is still the economic capital but it is a bit oversaturated. There are some attempts to improve life there, besides the economy, you know, in terms of cultural life for example (...). Casablanca has experienced this development for many, many years and as a city it's become a bit too much of a good thing... Even for people from other regions, people are looking for a quieter life (...) Casablanca has no attractions, there is only modernism and nothing more, it is very big, very large, a lot of cars, traffic jams and people are starting to leave” (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

For those reasons Casablanca is losing its attractiveness, its charm. This is what we learn from the interviews conducted with Moroccans from the north who appear to be rather sceptical towards metropolitan cities as well as towards Casablanca's or Rabat's primacy and leadership:

“There are Esawira, Agadir, Tangier as well, great cities, better than Casablanca which is very big but has nothing special. In Casablanca (with disdain) there are people from the whole of Morocco..., there is nothing, industry, bars and many poor people, and the only thing is this mosque... and bars, bars... Rabat yes, a bit..., it is a bit cleaner because the King lives there (laughing)” (Arab from Tetuan, interviewed in Granada).

It is also clear in the statements made by the interviewees from Central and Atlantic Morocco, Casablanca included, who emphasise the emerging economic centre of the country which is Marrakech: “The majority of Moroccans now want to live in Marrakech” (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

Coming back to the case of Marrakech, although the interviewees from Casablanca see the development of Marrakech differently from the north's economic growth, they still see it in positive terms. The Marrakech population is described as '*we*' not '*they*' as northern Moroccans are. The immigrants from Marrakech also enter into the '*we*' category as far as friendship in the immigration context is concerned (friends from the region are perceived as '*mine*')

"Right now Marrakech is outstripping Casablanca. Marrakech is becoming a world in itself... the cultural life... cinema festivals... many things benefiting from being what we call the frontier between north and south. The attractions it has..., this red everywhere, this atmosphere making us think about the Sahara, it draws people in, and this heat... There is a lot of investment in Marrakech, a lot of building. I could see all this when I was there for my last holiday, Marrakech has really developed a great deal during these last years... in the real estate market, for example, if you want a house there, the prices are similar to those in Casablanca. Marrakech competes in many aspects with Casablanca" (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

Another interviewee from Casablanca gives more details:

"Now the principal destination in Morocco is Marrakech. There is a lot of tourism. The cinema is created between Marrakech and Warzazat. So many actors from Hollywood... Marrakech festivals, it attracts... many official meetings, of the King, etc. are held in Marrakech. It is growing a lot... Apart from that, people from Marrakech are very nice in comparison with those from Casablanca. They are famous for being very entertaining, very sociable and their way of speaking is very nice as well..., their pronunciation and they are less stressed, they love life..., the south attracts a lot" (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

Another interviewee from Fes shares the views of his compatriots from Casablanca: "I know that Marrakech attracts people a lot now. Warzazat, many Americans with their movies" (Arab from Fes, interviewed in Granada). Marrakech and regions beyond this city seen by the "Casablançais" as a "gate to the south" are subject to a kind of internal, intra-Moroccan orientalism with the typical romanticism, idealisation and paternalism towards its target. An interviewee from Casablanca states, for instance:

"The more you go to the south, the more people you find who are not contaminated by development..., they are very, very nice, even too nice... There you find a kind of hospitality that can bother you! They see you in the street, they realize that you are a stranger and automatically they invite you to have a cup of tea with them..., the places there are very nice but people make this south even nicer..., people who don't expect anything from you and offer you everything they have..., it is something extremely nice, something that moves your soul" (Arab from Casablanca, interviewed in Granada).

Casablanca, followed by the north and Marrakech, seems to be perceived as the most dynamic part of the current Alawit⁵ kingdom. Traditional 'imperial cities' (Marrakech

⁵ The Alawit dynasty is the name of the current Moroccan royal family, the ruling house of Morocco from the 17th century.

being an exception) like Fes, Meknes or Rabat appear as being somehow ‘asleep’. Rabat, the political capital of the kingdom, owes its current position to the French Protectorate, being to a large degree settled by internal migrants, which could bring it closer to Casablanca’s profile. The capital is, however, more traditional than Casablanca due to its Andalusian roots (especially Rabat’s twin city of Salé) and the fact that the main royal residence is there: “Rabat is a bit more traditional than Casablanca, it is a more conservative city..., but it depends on where you go. The social ‘control’ in Rabat is more acute, in Casablanca less”. Fes, perceived as the *cultural capital* of the kingdom, with its population appearing to live more in the past glory of the Arab-Andalusian tradition, the famous Al-Qarawiyyin mosque-university⁶ and its intellectuals feeding into the political elite of the kingdom after gaining independence in 1956:

“Fes is a cultural town, I think it’s the cultural capital of Morocco (...) and so Fes has a rich history, so many monuments, but recently it has been a little forgotten by the government” (Arab from Fes, interviewed in Granada),

or:

“The majority of the Fes population are Arabs, there is a big Andalusian tradition, the minority are Berbers, many Berbers come, for example, from the region of Nador, the Rifi, they come for business purposes, they come to Fes because wherever you go from Nador you must pass through Fes” (Arab from Fes, interviewed in Granada).

Also the strong multiculturalism of the city appears as linked more to the past than to current circumstances:

“The majority are Muslims, there are Christians, some Christians, but they are not Moroccans, there are Jews as well, but not many, fewer and fewer, but still...”

However, there are a growing number of students from Sub-Saharan Africa:

“Many foreigners from Africa, Senegal, many students from Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Nigeria, some of them Muslims and some not, but that’s not a problem, there is a church in Fes...” (Arab from Fes, interviewed in Granada).

In this mainly static picture of the city, there are some hints of changes which are, however, always perceived as being too slow. An example of a new investment, an attempt to link the past with the future, are some developments in the field of tourism:

“The climate now is a bit different, many tourists go there so the government tries to change something but it’s taking too long” (Arab from Fes, interviewed in Granada).

According to the scope of this article, only questions linked to ethnicity and regionalism in the country of origin have been highlighted as seen by the Moroccan

⁶ Founded in 859, one of the leading spiritual and educational centres of the historic Muslim world.

can interviewees from France and Spain. Another article could be devoted to the influence of their identity related to the ethnic and regional diversity in Morocco on their integration paths in their receiving countries. Such issues as 'Arabness' and 'Berberness' emerge here as being particularly relevant. Interviewees from France, for instance, while showing me places (shops, restaurants, etc.), where I could expect to meet migrants from Morocco, usually considered it important to indicate who from among my potential interviewees would be Berber and who Arab. This difference was apparently significant for them. The Moroccans living in Spain, often younger and less advanced in their migratory process than from France, men without families, and as far as accommodation is concerned, looking mainly for a room in a *piso compartido* (shared flat), clearly declare that, while searching for a flat, they prefer sharing it with a person from a region perceived as 'theirs'.

The patterns of dealing with diversity 'brought' from the country of origin are provided by the sending context, in which the ethnic and regional mixture of Casablanca seems to somehow better prepare its migrants to deal with the internal diversity of Moroccans abroad. However, these patterns can also be provided by the receiving context. The Rifi Berbers, for instance, once in Europe, can be subject to a kind of radicalization in their separatism towards the Moroccan state, due to, on the one hand, freedom of speech and association, and, on the other, the support of the well-developed Berber movement (the 'Berber renaissance' activists) promoted by the Moroccan and non-Moroccan Berber émigré organizations. In the specific case of Spain, as has already been suggested in one of the quotations in this article, the 'know how' of dealing with diversity on the political level, is provided by the state regime (both Spain and Morocco are monarchies) as well as its policy and practice of *comunidades autónomas* (autonomic regions). Specifically the Rifi Berbers carefully observe the development of Catalan nationalism and the political type of separatist movement taking place in Catalonia.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that interviewees from France seem not to pay as much attention to the intra-Moroccan ethnic and regional differences as those interviewed in Spain. The reason could be that, while in Spain the Moroccans are a dominant Arab-Islamic migrant group which fosters the persistence of intra-group differences, Moroccans in France are dominated by Algerians and seem to shift their identity (especially the second generation) to a kind of 'Maghrebness' in spite of ethnic and regional Moroccan divisions.

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