

# MIGRATION MYTHS AND IMAGINARIES IN THE RECEPTION OF TELEVISION IN MOROCCO

MITOS E IMAGINARIOS MIGRATORIOS EN LA RECEPCIÓN DE LA TELEVISIÓN EN MARRUECOS

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**Abstract:** The analysis of the discourses of Moroccan candidates to migrate regarding the images offered by Western television shows a mythical imaginary of life opportunities in the North. Fieldwork<sup>1</sup> done in Morocco during two years tried to gather varied information from 204 informers from cities as well as rural areas. The results were analyzed with the help of Atlas.ti, a qualitative software which allows for the creation of mental maps of the opinions and discourses of interviewees. In the process preceding the decision to migrate, candidates try to confirm the images seen on TV through social conversations and the experience of others, in a climate of collective euphoria. Moroccan migrants then move towards an imaginary and idealized place. The idea of mobility is systematically linked to the Western world and to quality of life, social capital and consumption –all of which become mythical elements in a reaction to what are seen as poor expectations offered by life in Morocco. **Keywords:** Imaginary; Television; Spain; Morocco.

**Resumen:** El análisis de los discursos de los candidatos a la migración de Marruecos en relación a las imágenes ofrecidas por las televisiones occidentales muestra un imaginario mítico de las posibilidades de vida en los países del Norte. El trabajo de campo, realizado en Marruecos durante dos años, trató de recoger la información más variada, reuniendo un total de 204 informantes tanto en ciudades como en zonas rurales del país. Los resultados se analizaron con el apoyo del software cualitativo Atlas.ti, que permite trazar mapas mentales de las opiniones y discursos de los entrevistados. En el proceso previo a la decisión de migrar, los candidatos tratan de confirmar las imágenes vistas en las

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televisiónes a través de las conversaciones sociales y de la experiencia de otros, en un clima de euforia colectiva. Los migrantes marroquíes se dirigen a un lugar imaginario e idealizado. La idea de movilidad se relaciona sistemáticamente con Occidente, y está asociada a la calidad de vida, el capital social y al consumo, cuestiones que se mitifican ante las reducidas expectativas que entienden que les ofrece la vida en Marruecos. **Palabras clave:** imaginario; televisión; España; Marruecos.

### 1. The imaginary as a worldview

Audiovisual culture offers images and proposals, ambitions of mythical proportions, an aesthetic of feedback that makes it easier to live in the local environment. Media –which offer images to everyday life and ensure social cohesion through the use of myths– found and support community as a source for the production of subjectivity in which the contradiction between creation and innovation are managed side by side with control and domination in the system of social power: “It is the institution of society that determines what is ‘real’ and what is not, what is ‘meaningful’ and what is meaningless”, in the words of Castoriadis (1986).

The media imaginary conditions social events, their transformation and the new definitions of social organization as “universes of sense” in which human beings live. Vizer (1999: 138) proposes engaging them from communication “as processes to organize categories and universes of social and cultural sense” because the field of representation (shared by myths, imaginaries and society) together with the interaction between image and imaginary has great power in globalized societies. Changes are registered in the individual and the collective spheres by their circulation and by the capacity of representation to produce new ways of looking at fiction and fantasy (Martín Barbero, 2007: 89).

Media images are part of the flows crossing the planet, feeding all the “mediascapes” that broaden the horizons of the constrained worlds of those who are entrapped by their lack of expectations. The impact of these images in places of the world where life options are scant cannot be denied. Appadurai (2001a: 48-49) coined the concept of “mediascape” as the capabilities of production and dissemination of electronic images which build imaginary worlds (or “possible lives”), increase the difference between the center and the periphery and broaden the expectations on life with an imaginary and uninterrupted proximity, due to the media's transmission of a specific idea of subjective style.

What prevails in reception is the work of imagination as understood by Appadurai (2001a: 21), that is, the transformation operated by common

people on what is seen in “the way in which mediation and movement contextualize each other”; a way in which imagination has broken out of the expressive space of myth, ritual and art in order to become an everyday task. Appadurai (1999, 2001a and 2001b) has described precisely many of the phenomena surrounding the complex composition of the experienced or imagined reality of migrants starting from a cross-analysis of communication and migration flows. His works rely on the cultural and transcultural reconstruction that takes place in meeting points, nexuses in Castells' space of flows.

The relationships between these two fields –communication and mobility– are those that build civilization and culture as something singular, not so much regarding one's own identity as the possibility and ways of transformation that appear in the enrichment of contact, where the key points of the complexity of contemporary transformations come from. These forces of resistance, emancipation, social control and subjectivity belong to dynamics which are no longer individual but collective: “There is a growing evidence that the consumption of mass media throughout the world provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and in general, audience *agency*” (Appadurai, 2001a: 22). Out of the combination of information and imaginary, where communication and migrations take place, a specific subjectivity is produced, a “delocalized” identity interwoven with subversion, transformation and creativity.

In fact, Appadurai (1999) integrates all these vectors in the imagination considered as a force that inspires emigration: “It allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress and design new forms of civic association and collaboration across national boundaries”. A sort of labor of the imagination stimulating survival and contradictory reproduction, inasmuch as, on one hand, citizens are disciplined and controlled by states, but, on the other, they also offer a stimulus for new ideas and ways of life.

Communication and mobility disrupt the creation of sense of local universes in the shape of a new system of Western dominion of the Colonial type that now operates by amplifying the advantages of a Western model of development. The universe of sense of the media depicts many areas of the world according to a discourse generated in its place of origin which alters and rebuilds the local one: “The South sees itself with Northern eyes” (Gubern, 2000: 64).

Appadurai's works follow a long epistemological tradition regarding the imaginary, such as the studies by Escobar (1998) on the symbolic production of the Third World or those regarding coloniality by Quijano (1997) and Mignolo (2003). Along that same vein, García Canclini has made important contributions regarding the imaginaries of globalization (199: 2004), Mato

(2001: 152-153) has created a proposal for the transnational imaginary and Fueyo (2002) has worked on the paradises and poverty of the South. Latouche (2007: 78) supports the need to *decolonize* this imaginary in order to understand ourselves, whereas Balandier (1996: 93) considers it essential in order to take apart the ambivalence on which our conception of what's human relies.

Carretero (2006: 109-124) considers that the imaginary crystallizes in myths, recipes to fight the uncertainty of the world's contingent nature, individual and collective creations that transcend reason because, in fact, they are often based on emotional aspects, in a sort of re-enchantment that is easily manipulated for the benefit of commerce and consumption. For Beck (2002: 45-46) they are “discourse coalitions” of the globalized world, a way of producing the cognitive orientation of societies and individuals that includes a previous design aimed at action, at a self-produced reality with a double meaning, because it is built both from words and the actions confirming them. The narrative styles with which they are developed take on a new validity for the marketing industry, one which adapts to the fluidity of the virtual world because it can operate in any type of medium while synchronizing into “worldviews” (Salmon, 2008: 64).

Communicative transformations have focused during the past few decades in the production of images and the central position of what's visual in our lives, due to its high capacity for concentrating meaning and symbols as well as its apparently easy understanding. Thus, there is a sort of image oversaturation that, curiously enough, runs parallel to the one taking place in speculative economy since it split ways from productive economy (Gil Calvo, 2003: 202).

Representation and virtuality, the speculation with images, produces an “emerging reality” and stimulates the social imaginary to overcome everyday life and the surrounding environment: “Consumer society rests its case on the promise to satisfy human desires in a way no other society in the past could do or dream of doing” (Bauman, 2007: 73). Concerning this imaginary, the flow of communication, specifically that of television, acts as a specific weight, as a precise type of message that apparently has no filters, as if it was a slice of life, which contributes to the myth of transparency: “The entire strategy of seduction is to wear things to a state of pure appearance, to make them radiate and wear themselves out in the game of appearances (but the game has its rule and its possibly rigorous ritual)” (Baudrillard, 1988: 53).

Bauman (2004) proposes different types of imagination that matter in the management of social and individual life: sedentary, transfixing, nomadic, disengaged, privatized. Thus, he points out different aspects of the transformation of the imaginary which I propose as a new category of social stratification in globa-

lity, starting from the imaginary that transforms every other element: identity, citizenship, consumption, borders and the most efficient of them all, mobility, with its great power for action.

Symbolic control acts on those who are candidates to migrate through media consumption, by which they evaluate the similarities and differences between societies and which they compare with the other system of information, the one taking place by way of “physical” interactions. We must not forget that viewers are producers of sense that end up actively appropriating the messages of the media (Hall, 2004: 219-221). The imaginary of migrants is the horizon towards which they move, an idealized representation of the future, forged not so much in reality and by corroborating information as, quite often, in the experiences of other countrymen and migrants, in audiovisual discourses, in the communicative interactions stemming from the messages of the media, in the confusing flows of communication and mobility, in the space of *ubiquity* and *asynchrony*.

## 2. Myth, power and discourse

Audiovisual culture offers images and proposals, ambitions of mythical proportions, an aesthetic of feedback that makes it easier to live in the local environment because it has a specific function: “They stop people from having, from that moment onwards, a naked connection to the world” (Carretero, 2006: 110). For Lipovetsky (2007: 325) this amalgam of myths and dreams that shapes the imaginary is a trajectory for the future against a discouraging present and, in fact, achieves a possibility of re-enchantment with the world. In the same vein, Maffesoli (2009b: 2004: 83, 97) considers that diversities are integrated horizontally towards the re-enchantment of the world, with a new starring role of the imaginary integrating myths, dreams and fantasies, all of them forms of linking tinged with a great emotional element. Both Maffesoli and Castoriadis (1987) agree on the imaginary's power for social transformation as a decisive and self-produced (autopoietic) production which enables its development and expansion, that is, an alternative to vertical control.

Even from the individualistic opinions of the “ethics of self-fulfillment” that encourage the creation of an individual identity, according to Beck (2002: 13), a new cosmopolitanism can be created, an alternative organization of globality and the imaginary: “Any attempt to come up with a new concept that would provide social cohesion must depart from acknowledging that individualism, diversity and skepticism are rooted in Western culture”. In fact, it can be understood that the imaginary nurtured by communication is the stage in which cultural conflicts can be renegotiated through creativity, advancing to the understanding of alte-

riety through the production of sense of what's desirable for society. If the field of representation –which is common ground for myths, imaginaries and social aspects– enables a certain type of specific knowledge and common sense for each society, modeling collective behaviors, the interaction between image and imaginary reaches a great power in globalized societies. Changes are registered in the individual and collective spheres through their movement and the capacity deployed by representation to generate new perspectives in fiction and fantasy (Martín Barbero, 2007: 89).

Migration myths generate the symbolic control that encourages the movements of workers needed by economy and also the perception of migration based on legal, political and economic constructions; all of them force the acknowledgment of migrant individuals to depend exclusively on their papers, their legal or illegal situation inside the society receiving them, with new rules of exclusion. In many occasions, the contrast between the context of reception and the images turning up on the screen is violent in itself, and more so when these accounts and perspectives also include narratives regarding the migrant's own position in the world, as it usually happens. In the context of reception, the myths, “mediascapes” and imaginaries concerning the North and abundance are also transferred to those who have lived the experience of migration; the simple fact of having traveled and been to Europe bestows prestige and social consideration not only on the migrant but also on his or her whole family.

According to Barthes (2000: 200-201, 212) myths are unstable and form a malleable and creative territory, partly because of their historical founding but also due to their forms of appropriation and their previous significant consciousness: “Pictures, to be sure, are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke, without analyzing or diluting it”. Their translation into sense is done by way of distortion, a “theft of language”, an ideographic system that nowadays has a great impact (Barthes, 2000: 214, 220, 225). The cultural imaginary of these societies has also been built as a result of the effects of globalization, as a sort of neo-Colonialism amplifying the advantages of a Western type of development and displaying them daily on the media: “As the great modern ritual it has become, television is also a extraordinary vehicle for the transmission of myths” (Imbert, 2003: 61).

As a discursive construction, television approaches mythical qualities insofar as it ignores the subject and relies on symbolic constructions: “The breakthrough to a language from which the subject is excluded, the bringing to light of a perhaps irremediable incompatibility between the appearing of language in its being and consciousness of the self in its identity, is an experience now being heralded at diverse points in culture” (Foucault, 2008: 16).

The cultural impact, which also has economic consequences, is very important and produces a dependence on the interests and tastes of the dominant world. The symbolic discourses and mythical construction of many aspects regarding migration in the societies of origin have an impact in the social and family strategies for social mobility, for they add aspects which are “not so rational: the imaginary and symbolic ingredient usually carries a considerable weight on strategic behavior (Oso, 2005: 87). In this sense, media play their role in producing the supremacy of the discourse criticized by Van Dijk (2009: 33):

The illusion of freedom and diversity may be one of the best ways to produce the ideological hegemony that will be in the interest of the dominant powers in society, not least of the companies that produce the very technologies and media contents that produce such an illusion.

For his analysis of ideology and discourse, Van Dijk (2009: 69) proposes, as an alternative to those developed in social sciences, “a more systematic socio-cognitive analysis of the ideological frames and the processes involved in the (trans)formation and application of those frames”. This is precisely the area in which Castells delves (2009: 215-217) after the analysis of different quantitative researches, holding the opinion that the big processes intervening in the relationship between media and people, both in the transmission and the reception of news, are agenda setting, priming and framing as figures of social significance: “*The framing of public opinion is done through processes which mainly take place in the media*”.

Castells' position (2009: 165) inserts cultural and emotional aspects in the process, as well as a certain inclination to accept suggested frames. It confirms and clarifies those aspects that Hall (2004: 220-221) has defended as essential elements in decoding: “Effects, uses, ‘rewards’, are also framed inside interpretation structures as well as inside social and economic structures that enable their ‘understanding’ at the end of the chain of reception and which allow the messages carried by language to turn into conducts or consciousness”.

This symbolic universe is a space of negotiation, resistance and creativity, including the possibility to appropriate both subjective and collective meanings; its transformative power is the basis for changes in the culture and sense of traditional universes. This is how Appadurai (2001a: 6) understands it in his idea of the broadening of horizons and ways out, in the form of imaginary identities and imaginary worlds, and that he explains with the “migration of sense”, similar to

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[02] Italics from the original.

the *ubiquity* of globalized life. Appadurai (2001a: 195-196) interprets these processes from the building of neighborhoods (as contexts where they acquire a meaning and historical potential) and of local subjects, because he believes that audiences are active in the appropriation of media messages, although “the power relations that affect the production of locality are fundamentally translocal”.

And that is the point in which the superposition of narratives concerning mobility and expectations on new lifestyles comes into play, and it has other consequences, in the shape of complex forms of homogenization and diversity: “Not only there is a growing polarization between countries and regions, but also an internal dualization of *national* societies” (Alonso, quoted by Maquieira, Gregorio and Gutiérrez, 2000: 380).

According to Castells (2009: 55), nowadays, the most important influence in the world is value creation through the transformation of thought; for it, media, as global corporate groups, are the source of transmission of messages and images: “*Thus, value is, in fact, an expression of power*<sup>3</sup>: whoever holds power (often, different from whoever is in government) decides what is valuable”. In his research on communication power, Castells (2009: 33) defines it as the capacity to influence other people's decisions through asymmetric relations and in order to favor your own interests or values. It can also be exerted “through the construction of meanings on the basis of the discourses through which social actors guide their actions”. The capacity to influence creates homogeneity –Chomsky and Ramonet (1996) call it the ‘single thought’– which, for the field of communication, has meant the predominance of economics over politics, the construction of the field of communication on values of competition and competitiveness coming from the corporate world, a workfield of deregulation and the privatization and appropriation of space.

The fields of symbolic control and hegemonic discourse are present when unraveling the strategy for continuity in the system and its transformations towards the society of consumption or the society of hyper-consumption. With technological development there has been a global expansion of the model thanks to the possibility of an easy reproduction, record and storage of those cultural products fragmenting culture (Lipovetsky, 2007: 260). In globality, Augé (2001: 125) interprets the symbolic world as having suffered a disruption, insomuch as the spaces of communication, mobility and consumption are more anonymous, because the social link is diluted along with perceptions: “Communication replaces language and the show replaces the landscape”.

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[03] Italics from the original.



In the context of globalization, as described by Appadurai (2001a: 78-79), revision is essential because the games of power take place all over the world –just as their discourses and priorities–, partly due to the passage from national to transnational references as new frames for action but also for the continuous disruption of historical and territorial references moving with diasporas and flows.

This point of view had already been described by Castells (2005: 130, 227) when upholding the idea that global economy is not a planetary economy because it does not engulf every process, individual and territory but it does affect the subsistence of the whole of humanity by virtue of the international division of labor. All this goes hand in hand with a decentralized vision of social organization and power, starting in the collapse of hierarchies shown by Deleuze and Guattari (1995) in the perception of knowledge and reality as forms of resistance and transformation of discourses and power. It was also an important point for change in Foucault, who looked to interweave power, discourse and knowledge into rizomatic positions for the subject regarding freedom and subjectivity; power would take part in the subjectivation through a network of lifestyle options that are built in discursivity. This way, he proposed a model of analysis connecting the micro with the macro.

### **3. The imaginary of migrants and television**

If the system of information of those people who are candidates to migrate is affected by these influences, it will be necessary to address to which extent it feeds on the imaginaries and myths received by television. And this is done by approaching the matter from its origin and in its own context, in a field study in Morocco, through the social and subjective discourses of the people involved in migration projects.

There are few previous proposals such as this: King and Wood (2001), regarding the importance of the images of the destination of migration as a source of information and the attraction exerted by certain lifestyles over others which are more stressed, such as those related to the cultural difference of migrants; or, more recently, a research concerning the consumption of media by migrants in their communities of destination. We should add the work developed by Mai (2001) regarding the influence of television in Albanian migration flows to Italy or the one directed by Denise Cogo (2008), which offers a complete picture, as it fills in the information from both poles of migration. Along these same lines, García and Verdú (2008), with a really interesting method, stress in their conclusions the real value that migrants give to their dream –which is built in communication– as part of their own personal fulfillment; it is the result of a very dense imaginary which “encourages the production and reproduction of migration” (García y Verdú, 2008:

98) although they also acknowledge that the “European dream” suffers an adjustment when the destination is reached.

On the other hand, research on migration imaginaries has a richer previous history, such as Díaz Nosty's work (2007), which, on the basis of the influence of media, focuses on the images migrants have of the communities of destination, through the use of qualitative analysis based on in-depth interviews –although we could object that they were made after migration. These lines of research, while showing singular characteristics of the migrant imaginary as a mythical construction of the land of destination, are limited, in the sense that the thoughts and opinions of migrants, as well as their capacity to decode messages, have already been influenced by the contrast with reality once inserted in the society of destination. In that same direction we can find the work of González Cortés (2006) which stresses in his conclusions the weight of the dissemination of images concerning lifestyles and development in places of destination for migrants.

#### **4. History of the migrant imaginary**

The idealized vision of migration and Europe and the exaltation of migrants in the social imaginary of their countries of origin becomes a mythic discourse in those same countries –so much that it poses only arguments in favor of human movement–, a discourse which is constantly reinforced against its radical opposition: the lack of a future in the homeland. The image of a rich North, full of new lifestyles, plays a role in the project of migrants aspiring to social mobility –equaling the idyllic model glimpsed thanks to the media– as much as the idea of a lack of future and possibilities to satisfy one's own ambitions. In Morocco, just as in other lands of origin of migrants, there are people living from the prestige of offering information, even false information, about someone who lives in Europe, being family with some migrant or having migrated.

In the case of Morocco, the imaginary regarding Spain has been forged also by virtue of the migration trend affecting all the geography and society of the former, to the point of creating a true “culture of migration” in which that sort of mobility is understood as a synonym for success and social acknowledgment, as stated by Villar (2005: 132): “The fact of migrating, the fascination for the *harich* (the foreigner) rests on the collective imaginary, rising as a sort of barricade against everyday reality”. Villar links this imaginary both to media and the return of migrants during their summer holidays, and even sees in Moroccan television itself that discourse –“each summer, Moroccan public television broadcasts the image of the emigrant whose project was a success returning to his or her country with a new car, money and presents for family and friends”–, as well as the effects that those messages have among those who still live in the country.

Spain, considered as a land of destination for migrants, has also undergone an evolution from being a land of passage on the way to France to a very different condition: "It has become (by virtue of its successful democratic transition and its model economic and social modernization) a sort of Eldorado attracting many Moroccans in search of a job and a better life" (Affaya and Guerraoui, 2006: 62). It is partly due to the "undeniable impact of the media in the construction of that image. All the answers of the surveyed people mention the media and the press" (Affaya and Guerraoui, 2006: 66). In this sense, it also matches the research carried out by Díaz Nosty (2007: 26-27) in which the people surveyed define Spain as a destiny with a very positive evaluation, which reaches the 75 per cent and with a predominant reference to the wealth of the country. Only 16 per cent felt let down regarding their expectations before migrating and the percentage is even lower when it comes to explaining their own personal situation in the country, as only 5.6 per cent claims to feel little or no satisfaction.

The weight of History in the Moroccan imaginary concerning Spain is still alive, even if it transmits a positive image. Affaya and Guerraoui (2006: 95, 106) have researched with documentary sources and surveys the image of Spain in Morocco, which reaches a high percentage of positive views and imaginaries (69.4 % of the surveyed people) and is reinforced by the real knowledge of the country: "Of those that have visited Spain, 74.5 % declared that the image they had of it matches the reality they found and 24.8 % had a negative reaction". The evolution of this image is very striking, because the Colonial past only reaches a positive image for "23.4 % of the surveyed people. Fez, Tangiers and Al-Hoceima stand out with a relatively important portion of positive opinions, respectively 42.4, 42.2 and 35.1 %". (Affaya and Guerraoui, 2006: 129.)

The positive image relies mainly on the process of democratic construction in Spain, which is used to call for a similar type of Moroccan transition, as well as a similar economic development, according to Majdoubi (2009: 212, 217), who provides data from different surveys to show positive ideas among Maghrebis. In fact, he mentions that there is not one symbol regarding Spanish people which might be similar to the opposite idea of the "Moor". He describes a new tendency, though, and one which might block again the dialogue between both countries, as independent Moroccan press has started to consolidate the image of Spain and the Spanish people as the "other", because, according to Majdoubi (2009: 305) the use of this symbolic load has an effect as "Spain is seen as a threat and Spanish people, supposedly, as the historical enemy".

## **5. Mythical references in the imaginary of migration through television reception in Morocco**

Along with all these elements, television and its “mediascapes” are received in Moroccan daily life and its expectations, and these international TV stations show worlds of opulence, consumption and wellbeing. I have studied this influence for the past two years conducting a fieldwork with 204 informants selected through the whole country, from big cities such as Tangiers and Rabat to rural areas, with surveys, qualitative interviews and discussion groups. All of this was done with the following steps and criteria:

- ▶ 1.- Previous exploration research with some in-depth interviews (total of 25) to individuals from rural areas selected with flexible criteria. The results were eloquent and offered an optimum level of saturation, so they were incorporated into the general research.
- ▶ 2.- Surveys in French to students from the Abdemalek Esaâdi University of Tangiers (total of 144). The questions for the mixed quantitative survey, including both open and closed questions, were developed from the topic guideline of the research.
- ▶ 3.- In-depth interviews with three journalists from Tangiers and Tétouan, in order to ascertain if there was a difference in the perception of the topic between information professionals and the general audience (not regarding their work in the production of such information).
- ▶ 4.- Fieldwork interviews: these semi-structured interviews followed the same topic guideline (10 in total) focused in the area of Beni Mellal and its neighboring villages, both in a family and an educational environment. The criteria for the selection of the sample involved the “snowball” method until an adequate level of saturation was achieved.
- ▶ 5.- Debate groups: they were designed with attention to the context, with a Moroccan mediator and they were conducted in colloquial Arabic. The number of participants and meetings was reduced, considering the difficulties this research method presents in Morocco: there were five discussion groups with only five members each. The selection of individuals (25) was made according to a previous design that complemented the rest of the fieldwork regarding its socio-demographic profiles and in urban areas. Gender was not considered an excluding criterion, although different pat-

terns in the consumption of television and in interactions and social relations advised in favor of the creation of a discussion group formed only by women, which took place in Tétouan. When selecting the villages and counties, the rate of migration and other descriptive socio-demographic aspects were taken into account (López y Berriane, 2004).

The fieldwork took into consideration the duality of Moroccan society, divided between the strong growing urban presence in cities such as Tangiers, Rabat, Meknes or Tétouan and rural areas from the central region around Boukfrane, Azrou and Sefrou, paying special attention to one of the big focal points of Moroccan illegal migration, Beni Mellal. The design produces a deviation towards the North regarding the results with a bigger consumption of Western television, a stronger impact of Colonial issues and a closer point of view regarding Europe.

The analysis of the discourses of the informants has been made with the assistance of qualitative software with a complex code design, trying to detail the orientation with which the system of information is built, as well as the accompanying communication processes, the context in which the discourses are produced and the evaluation from subjectivity as well as the connections to identity constructions. All of it is linked with the media system, critical objects focused on the elements of social stratification of globality and a series of complementary explicative variables.

Firstly, the informants orientate themselves mainly through emotions, dominantly linked to mobility and reaching a great power of expression regarding work and money as typical models of Moroccan migration. Regarding the relation between mobility and expectations, there is an almost systematic negative view of Morocco in different fields –specially work, opportunities and development–, which also comes to show that the desire to move is not necessarily linked to expectations regarding the Western world, which could simply be interpreted as one way out. Quality of life, along with mobility and the imaginary, are mainly associated with the Western world, clearly surpassing these same concepts for the Moroccan situation, while there are no results regarding the Arab world. Low expectations about life in Morocco are linked with the imaginary and the “mediascapes” as worlds of opulence, consumption and well-being, something that is confirmed through interactions and experiences, such as the perception of more opportunities. This experience of mobility –which connects with the past of Arab expansion and the nomad spirit– exalts those people taking part in the project with words coming from the imaginary, such as “dream” and “paradise”.

From the whole group of contributions of the informants we can reach the conclusion that there is a big difference in the perception registered regarding life expectations in Morocco as compared to the imaginary regarding the Western world; a social discourse which stems both from mediations and the confirming effects of interactions and experiences. The mediating condition of television affects the system of information of the people candidate for migration, but also their social interactions, because there is a complex and ambiguous desire to confirm in which subjectivity selects information and projects that encourage mobility.

The figures juggled as costs of the migration project are excessive for their personal economies, but the social logic which assumes mobility as something positive and desirable considers such problems as just another part of the project. Often, there is an air of collective euphoria, of emotion for the promise of a new world, which seldom stops or is confronted with the appropriate dose of common sense.

The imaginary regarding mobility is positive, displays other ties to "money", as well as "citizenship" and "consumption", whereas this couple is powerful in relation with "mediation" and "television", specially towards the "West" and practically insignificant regarding "Morocco" and "Arab". This idea has mutated towards more subjective values and as a sort of escape to the North; in fact, the arguments coincide with the recent revolts in the Maghreb and its political dimension aiming for visibility.

It is important to note that the accounts of this process are loaded with descriptions such as "dream" (31<sup>4</sup>), while also describing the world from which they return or to which they march as a "paradise" (54), always in association with the Western world, the North or Spain. Men and women taking part in this experience have been considered as "heroes", and in many cases they still are.

But changes in migration also cause a reevaluation of one's own identity in returning, resulting in a more critical point of view. Starting by the contact with returning migrants, both on holidays and on their final return, interactions are not only productive as sources of information, in the logic of confirmation or rebuttal, but also for the so called "proof effect", a pattern of consumption in which returning migrants position themselves as a higher class and which is one of the most referenced elements in the collection of accounts. The model finds an example in the word "car" (123), which sums up the benefit of mobility, although it is usually hand in hand with "house", "clothes" or "things" as the

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[04] Between brackets there is the total number of times each of these words turns up in the overall count of the study.

best signs of prosperity and success. Similarly, associating money with the world of the North, the imaginary of the West and mobility is a recurring theme. As a single word, “money” (181) appears in a multitude of contexts referring to the success of migration, the project and the confirmation of the wealth existing in Spain and Europe.

Money linked to the lack of expectations in Morocco is as frequent as its connection with the lack of a job and the difficulties for professional and personal promotion due to the network of power logics stalling any advance. Negative expectations regarding their own country are also expressed with reasonings tied to citizenship, freedom, human rights and democracy. Freedom of speech and journalism understood as a democratic and civic value are also among the worries of some informants, who express a positive imaginary of the Western world accompanied by the usual negative one concerning Morocco, and which is not always corroborated with other sources of information.

In contrast with this image of democracy and citizenship in Spain and Europe, the systems of differences built on the border and in connection to its reinforcement are not understood by the informants as something in contradiction with the promises of the Western world, but only as a border construction of the ideas of meeting and cohabitation. The lack of papers and permits, the difference in the access to rights in the paradise of citizenship, exclusion and the new distance with the dream they were pursuing are recurring themes, but they are more often expressed in terms of a personal stigma than a mechanism of otherness.

The problem with “papers” opens a debate concerning the system and political alternatives, whereas the reference to pateras as the model of Moroccan migration is also present in the accounts of informants as a symbol of toils, barriers and the border, a symbol which is almost always associated to death. The message of prevention regarding illegal migration does not often appear on television screens –which show pateras as an emotional narrative resource to attract the viewer's attention–, but it has recently become a regulatory discourse having more to do with the economic crisis and the lack of jobs in the Western world than with enhancing the system of information for the candidates to migrate.

The idea is completed with another set of discourses where the changes in migration policies are depicted and which embody a very recent change of argumentation. The accounts collected in this fieldwork do show a perception of new legislative policies in the expulsions and repatriations, both by Morocco and specially by the European Union. This rich series of details and perceptions has been collected exclusively during the fieldwork, in the groups

of discussion, which have developed as more intimate and natural spaces for expression thanks to the presence as moderator of a Moroccan journalist. The collection of information shows that, for many audiences in that country, specially those comprising males and of a urban kind, there is a game of political interests hidden behind the discourses of the regulation of migrations, a game in which migrants become trapped by states and governments on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar.

This level of analysis has not been detected in general neither in the information obtained in rural areas nor from informers with a low level of education. Groups also allowed to speak with more detail and depth regarding other discourse strategies about xenophobia, racism and identity, which become troublesome and complex issues due to the stereotypes created by otherness and to intercultural exchange. Among the results, we have to stress with more detail two discursive situations of interest. On one hand, the inclusion of verbalized expressions such as “immigrant”/“immigrants”/“immigration” sometimes offers the possibility to detect a complete assimilation of the interests of Northern countries and their discursive strategies, in a sort of automatic reproduction due to the self-assimilation of those arguments or to the reproduction of what's shown in the international TV stations seen in Morocco. I have detected a total of 59 occasions in which the prefix “im-” is used in arguments and debates concerning different topics. First and primarily, the use of the “im-” prefix (21) coincides with the place from which the discourse is enunciated—where media are from and production takes place.

There are many examples of this sort of reproduction that include critical nuances, but they also mean an incorporation of external values. On other occasions, there are ambiguous points of view, a sort of non-definition, and even a change of shore in the expression of the speaker. Others display a point of view from the globality of migration movements, a perspective which offers a higher cultural value and respects the history and context of the flows that move in both directions along the same line.

A few times they spoke of a more recent Moroccan position in migrations, which is that of a space of passage: Spanish logic of security and control and the involvement of Morocco as a gatekeeper have condemned sub-Saharan migrants to remain trapped between two worlds, specially in big cities such as Rabat or Tangiers. Their accounts acknowledge the condition of “immigrants” of these men and women that come from black Africa. In these discourses they recreate a new system of control in which to construct the otherness of those living still further South and with still darker skins, those coming from sub-Saharan Africa.



One of the more striking elements of the accounts collected is a confirmatory insistence between interactions –due to personal exchanges and conversations with people that experienced migration or have first-hand accounts of it– and mediations, in which the messages of the media and their negotiation by viewers are mixed. The result is a mutual confirmation of these two communication fields, in which the mythical vision of the Western world, Spain and Europe as places of wealth, jobs and freedoms is accepted and confirmed. With this position, they refuse to accept that the images from television, the myths of the “mediascapes” might not be true, a sort of resistance to the re-enchantment of the world coming to their television screens.

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