

INKA STOCK

# TIME, MIGRATION AND FORCED IMMOBILITY

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRANTS  
IN MOROCCO



GLOBAL MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE



# TIME, MIGRATION AND FORCED IMMOBILITY

Sub-Saharan African Migrants  
in Morocco

Inka Stock



First published in Great Britain in 2019 by

Bristol University Press  
University of Bristol  
1–9 Old Park Hill  
Bristol  
BS2 8BB  
UK  
t: +44 (0)117 954 5940  
[www.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk](http://www.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk)

North America office:  
Policy Press  
c/o The University of Chicago Press  
1427 East 60th Street  
Chicago, IL 60637, USA  
t: +1 773 702 7700  
f: +1 773-702-9756  
[sales@press.uchicago.edu](mailto:sales@press.uchicago.edu)  
[www.press.uchicago.edu](http://www.press.uchicago.edu)

© Bristol University Press 2019

The digital PDF and ePub versions of this title are available Open Access and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) which permits adaptation, alteration, reproduction and distribution for non-commercial use without further permission provided the original work is attributed.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 978-1-5292-0197-0 hardcover

ISBN 978-1-5292-0199-4 ePub

ISBN 978-1-5292-0200-7 Mobi

ISBN 978-1-5292-0198-7 ePdf

The right of Inka Stock to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved: no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission of Bristol University Press.

The statements and opinions contained within this publication are solely those of the author and not of the University of Bristol or Bristol University Press. The University of Bristol and Bristol University Press disclaim responsibility for any injury to persons or property resulting from any material published in this publication.

Bristol University Press works to counter discrimination on grounds of gender, race, disability, age and sexuality.

Cover design by Andrew Corbett

Front cover image: Luis De Vega

Printed and bound in Great Britain by

CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Bristol University Press uses environmentally responsible print partners



# GLOBAL MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

This series showcases original research that looks at the nexus between migration, citizenship and social change. It advances new scholarship in migration and refugee studies and fosters cross- and inter-disciplinary dialogue in this field. The series includes research-based monographs and edited collections, informed by a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

## Series editors:

Nando Sigona, University of Birmingham, UK  
[n.sigona@bham.ac.uk](mailto:n.sigona@bham.ac.uk)

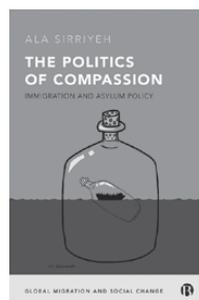
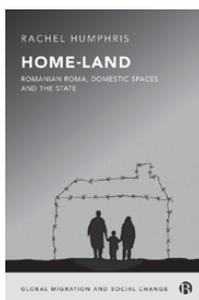
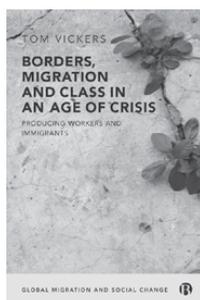
Alan Gamlen, Monash University, Australia  
[alan.gamlen@monash.edu](mailto:alan.gamlen@monash.edu)

## Forthcoming:

Negotiating Migration in the Context of Climate Change  
**Sarah Nash**, Oct 2019

Belonging Translation in Translation  
**Reiko Shindo**, Aug 2019

## Out now in the series:





# Contents

List of Figures and Tables	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Series Preface	viii
1 Introduction	1
2 EU Externalization Policies and their Impact on Migrants in Morocco	23
3 Travelling Adventures: Migration as an Existential Quest	37
4 Arriving in Morocco: Becoming Trapped in a Context of Uncertainty	65
5 Facing Time and the Absurd	83
6 Migrant Communities in Morocco	107
7 Waiting in Desperate Hope	129
8 Conclusion	153
Bibliography	169
Index	185

# List of Figures and Tables

## Figures

1	Map of Morocco with railway connections	16
2	Map of research site	17
3	Programme of church anniversary	114
4	Pierre's handmade collage with snippets from an air plane ticket and the invitation letter from the German student organization	141

## Tables

1	Women's accounts of reasons for leaving	43
2	Men's accounts of reasons for leaving	43
3	Migrants' original destinations differentiated by gender	46
4	Changes in destinations differentiated by gender	46

# Acknowledgements

The idea for this book originates in my experiences in Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa, where I lived and worked with my family for extended periods between 1999 and 2012. I am particularly grateful for the unconditional support of David Cuenca: his critical insights and patience have been crucial in bringing all this together. Maribel Cuenca was always there in difficult moments – even at a distance. A great thank you goes also to my daughters Maya and Anaïs, who participated in fieldwork trips and had to endure my ‘absent presence’ during writing periods. A big thank you goes also to the Duat-Wilbeaux family, who helped me overcome the logistical challenges of doing fieldwork with children and provided me with such unforgettable times in Rabat. I would also like to thank all the migrants and members of local and international organizations and charities who shared their opinions and thoughts with me over the years. I am grateful for their openness and willingness to take the time to talk about painful experiences and events. During the writing phases, I have been lucky to count on the help and support of a number of people. First and foremost, the academic advice and encouragement of Julia O’Connell Davidson and Elisabetta Zontini, without which this book would not have seen the light of day. Words cannot express my gratitude for their support, which often reached far beyond the professional realm. At Bielefeld University, I am grateful for the fruitful discussions I had with Thomas Faist, Basak Bilecen, Yaatsil Guevara Gonzales, Joanna Fröhlich, Susanne Schultz and Christian Ulbricht. Without Phill Wilcox’s analytical mind and thoughtful criticisms, [Chapter 2](#) would probably not exist in its current form. I am also grateful for the enlightening discussions with Aysen Üstübici about migration policy making in Morocco. Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this book to Uta Stock, who made me understand what desperate hope is and how to think of it as a powerful resource in life’s darkest hours.

## Series Preface

### **A Window into the Lives of Immobilised Migrants at the Borders of Europe**

*Time, Migration and Forced Immobility* is the third book in the *Global Migration and Social Change* series published by Bristol University Press. The aim of the series is to offer a platform for new scholarship that challenges established understandings and explores under-researched topics in migration and refugee studies. Inka Stock's timely and readable ethnographic investigation does exactly this. It casts a novel light on the unfolding lives of a group of migrants stranded in Morocco. Neither settling nor moving on, the book shows how their in-between position gradually leads to them, in Stock's words, losing 'their name, their status, their home, their past and their future'.

Stock's migrant-centred approach offers a nuanced and original perspective on the interplay of forces and interests which condition movement and stay in a country such as Morocco, a crucial transit node along the western Mediterranean route to Europe. For its position, Morocco plays a strategic role in Spain and the European Union's efforts to curtail onward migration from Sub-Saharan Africa, and over the years the country has been party in numerous EU-sponsored initiatives aimed at controlling the southern Mediterranean border. From the perspective of European policy makers, the partnership with Morocco is considered a model of successful cooperation in migration management. At the peak of the so-called Mediterranean refugee crisis in 2015, when sea arrivals in Greece exceeded 800,000 migrants and over 150,000 individuals disembarked in Italy, Spain received just over 5,000 boat migrants. The western Mediterranean route was *de facto* sealed, while Europe's border regime was failing to cope with inflows from Libya and Turkey.

However, what policy makers may qualify as a success looks very different from the perspectives of those who are immobilized in Morocco,

unable to fulfil their migration goals and suspended in a condition of protracted temporariness with no end in sight.

This book opens a window into the existential reverberations of geopolitical arrangements between Morocco and the EU, offering a compassionate and eloquent illustration of the process by which immobilised migrants become displaced within humanity. They survive in an in-between space, where normal rules and codes of behaviour through which we recognise the humanity of others are suspended.

By centring her analysis on the ‘forcefully immobilised’ rather than ‘transiting’ migrants, Stock wants to challenge dominant perspectives that inform much of policy-driven migration research. As she explains in the introduction, this approach enables her to expose ‘the underlying contradictions in the conventional way of conceptualising mobility and migration’.

Besides offering a critical appraisal of the human consequences of migration control policies in Europe and beyond, Stock’s book offers insights into how policy measures that help to criminalise and persecute migrants also challenge them to experiment and find strategies to maintain their dignity in extremely adverse and otherwise disempowering circumstances.

*Nando Sigona*  
*University of Birmingham, April 2019*



# Introduction

## Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco

The first Sub-Saharan African migrant I ever met in Morocco was in 1999. He was sitting next to me on a bus when I was travelling from Tangier to Tetuan, two cities on Morocco's Mediterranean coast. While we were chatting, he explained to me that he had been living in both Morocco and Spain for several years, depending on where he could get seasonal work. He also said that irregular border crossing had never been an insurmountable problem in the past, but that in recent years increasing controls in the Strait of Gibraltar were making it very difficult.

At that time I lived in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, and worked in the social sector. Since the year 2000, I had noticed that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were beginning to draw attention to the humanitarian problems of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, particularly those who were continuing on and arriving at Spanish shores. Media reports about irregular boat people who attempted to reach Spain were multiplying. Whereas some years before, such reports had focused on irregular migrants from Morocco, now, images of half-drowned Sub-Saharan African migrants being assisted by tourists on the crowded beaches in Andalucía were frequently featured in Spanish newspapers. By the time I left Morocco in the summer of 2001, the boats with irregular migrants from Morocco's northern coasts were filled almost exclusively with Sub-Saharan African migrants who had replaced the mostly Moroccan migrants that had boarded them until then (Belguendouz 2009).

When I returned to live in Morocco at the end of 2007, the situation had changed. Rather than being a topic rarely talked about in government circles and NGOs, African migrants living in precarious conditions *in Morocco* had become a key area of interest for many organizations, including

certain local NGOs and the academic community in Rabat and beyond. Migrants were living in marginalized areas, often deprived of the most basic rights and services, suffering exclusion and poverty. Even though it appeared that the overall number of migrants present in Morocco had not changed significantly since 2000,<sup>1</sup> migrants were more and more visible in Rabat and Casablanca, and less frequently concentrated in the woods surrounding Oujda, Ceuta, Tangier and Melilla, the places from where the inflatable zodiacs and fishing boats used to leave for Spain. Now it appeared that the numbers of boats leaving the coasts were diminishing, in part because border surveillance had increased and Ceuta and Melilla were surrounded by a fence of barbed wire. The transition camp in Oujda, close to the Algerian border, where most migrants used to stop over before taking the clandestine boats, was now significantly smaller.<sup>2</sup> The dynamics of this migration seemed to have changed. Migrants appeared to ‘get stuck’ in Morocco in increasingly difficult conditions and for increasingly longer periods, instead of travelling through it (Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou 2008). Strangely enough, in policy circles, the term ‘transit migration’ appeared to be used much more frequently to describe the situation or characteristics of these migrants than it had been six years previously. NGOs made funding applications for projects concerning ‘transit migrants’, policy documents were written about people ‘transiting’ through Morocco, and the country itself became labelled a ‘transit country’ (Khachani 2008, Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou 2008). The new popularity of the term was curious, given that migrants seemed not to ‘transit’ very actively towards Spain now, but rather found themselves in a situation of ‘forced immobility’ in Morocco. Khachani (2008) for example, found in a survey of more than 1,000 Sub-Saharan African migrants in Rabat and Casablanca that, on average, the majority had been in Morocco two and a half years – some of them significantly longer than that. More than 75 per cent of them stated that they wanted to leave Morocco as soon as possible but were unable to do so. Stuck for indeterminate periods in Morocco, they felt stripped of the possibility to participate meaningfully in economic, political and social life.

This situation started to change slightly in 2013, when the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, amended the newly established immigration legislation of 2003 by introducing a one-off regulation decree, which allowed undocumented migrants in Morocco temporarily to claim restricted residency and work permits (FIDH/GADEM 2015). While this measure indeed helped over 20,000 migrants to legalize their status at least temporarily, it had only a very marginal impact on their employment situation and their access to social services, or indeed on their abilities to move on (Mourji et al 2016). Moreover, as an extraordinary measure, it did not impact on the situation of the continuing new arrivals.

This book is specifically designed to look at the life conditions of this group of migrants, because they are on the one hand migrant settlers in Morocco and at the same time potential onward migrants towards Europe who are only temporarily immobilized during their travels. Their case exemplifies the complicated interplay of forces which condition movement and stay as well as the consequences of this situation for the life worlds of the people concerned. The book shows how they are virtually living in a 'no man's land', in which they gradually lose their name, their status, their home, their past and their future. Throughout the book, the existential consequences of forced immobility on people's lives are explored and related to questions of inequality and lack of rights.

Migrants' 'stuckness' in Morocco is not a unique feature in today's world of increasingly restrictive migration regimes. It has striking and worrying parallels with situations in other places in the world where migrants are successfully immobilized during their migration trajectories (see for example Schuster 2005a, Hamood 2006, Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou 2008, Suter 2012, Schapendonk 2011) or else are unable to move in the first place (Carling 2002, Lubkemann 2008, Chu 2010, Alpes 2011). This book warns of the existential consequences of these practices for the people concerned and shows how they impact on the social, moral and political fabric of the many places in which they occur. In fact, the book contributes evidence of the paradox between the proclaimed moral world polity of human rights and their selective application in practice (Faist 2018a).

## **Aims of this book**

The process by which immobilized migrants become displaced within humanity is a theme that runs through this book. In effect, by looking at migrants' lives in Morocco ethnographically, this book seeks to make them visible as part of some unaccounted for movement of people through a space between worlds, where the normal rules and codes through which we recognize the humanity of others are in suspension. Designed to look at these processes from a migrant's point of view, this text links their changing feelings of belonging and identity to the interplay of political and economic structures that shape migration trajectories over time and in different places. By privileging a migrant's perspective in this research, I hope to contribute to the transformation of practices in migration policy in the hope that it may in future afford more centrality to migrants' rights. Marginalized in much migration theory, undocumented migrants' life worlds are often absent or misrepresented in policy-making processes and

theorizing on migration. This is the case for undocumented migrants in Morocco. I believe that this state of affairs has negative consequences for the applicability and relevance of migration policy and theory in general, but particularly with respect to migrants' own interests. Furthermore, the vision that currently informs policy making can only lead to a partial understanding of the effects of mobility and immobility in people's lives, because it rests on a static and categorical distinction between legal and illegal mobility which does not hold true in reality for the majority of migratory movements. The aims of this book are threefold. First, it aims to add to the critical literature that documents the human consequences of migration control policies in Europe and beyond (Schuster 2005b, Carling 2007, Willen 2007, Streiff-Fénart & Segatti 2011, Anderson 2012, Andersson 2014b). In addition to exploring the constraints such policies impose on migrants' lives, this text explores how policy measures that help to criminalize and persecute migrants also challenge them to design a creative life plan and find strategies to maintain their individual human dignity. Second, through a critical assessment of migration from a perspective of 'forced immobility', the study contributes to literature that challenges some of the bias in contemporary migration theory with respect to the importance accorded to mobility at the expense of immobility as well as liberal economic thinking at the expense of universal human rights values. By doing this, I aim to add to a body of literature that highlights fundamental contradictions between the concepts, norms and rationalities evident in much contemporary migration policy and the lived experiences of migrants (Malkki 1995b, Carling 2002, Bakewell 2008b, Alpes 2011, Anderson 2012).

Third, the book contributes to an emerging concern with temporality in migration literature and brings questions about time into dialogue with questions about migrants' aspirations and immobility (Cwerner 2000, King 2002, Griffiths et al 2013, Andersson 2014a, Griffiths 2014, Elliot 2016). In doing so, it adds to a growing body of literature on existential aspects of migration (Hage 2005, Madison 2006).

The guiding question which runs through this book was initially framed as: 'What does the experience of "being stuck" do to the lives of Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco?' In the course of the research process, I decided to approach this question through various, more specific sub-questions that run through the different chapters: Why and when did migrants become immobilized during their migration trajectory? Which individual and structural factors contributed to this situation? How do migrants experience this state existentially and physically? How does immobility shape their participation in and identification with community networks in Morocco? How does immobility influence migrants' actions

and their perspectives on their present and their future? How does a life in forced immobility influence migrants' view of time? And, last but not least, how are these experiences gendered?

In order to answer these questions, however, it is useful to place them first within current thinking in migration theory by presenting the crucial conceptual approaches which guide the book's content. What becomes apparent is that thinking through the answers to these questions forces us to question some of the established concepts and ideas guiding migration theory and policy making and focus instead of hidden aspects of migrants' experiences.

## **Revisiting policy-charged concepts in migration research**

As mentioned earlier, Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco are often labelled as 'transit migrants', even though they are immobilized for long periods of time. Only very few researchers and policy makers in Morocco have investigated exactly how and why 'transit' is no longer best described as a 'fragmented journey' (Collyer 2010) but increasingly becomes a 'fragmented stay' when migrants are living for years in the country without actually wanting to. 'Transit' migration is mostly approached as a form of movement, and the nature of the periods of 'involuntary stay' that most so-called transit migrants are also subjected to are only rarely explored. A typical transit migrant is generally assumed to be young, single, male and unskilled, that is, the traditional image of the guest worker and migrant labourer (Icduygu 2005). Furthermore, in much of the discourse on transit migration, individual migrants are considered as rational and economic men whose positions in the various stages of the migration process are determined by their 'human capital' and their own 'free will'. As a consequence, economic considerations are given priority in explanations of transit, making the individual the primary conditioning factor for migratory movements and strategies from Africa towards Europe. This type of 'transit' research consequently relies heavily on neoclassical push-and-pull theories of migration (Castles & Miller 2003: 22) to explain migrants' motivations for travel. In many studies on transit migration, great attention is furthermore paid to the irregularity of migrants' movements, and the functioning of so-called smuggling and trafficking rings, their routes and how they are organized. Rarely is there a detailed ethnographic analysis of migrants' migratory trajectory from their own viewpoint, in which their decision-making processes with regard to travel arrangements are revisited in light of both choice and coercion, as

has been done in the critical literature on ‘trafficking’, for example (Agustin 2005, O’Connell Davidson 2008b, Alpes 2011). There is therefore an absence of critical analysis of the ways in which ‘legal’ movement and ‘illegal’ stay are categories constructed by the state and the market, rather than being objectively verifiable aspects of migration.

Consequently, policy makers can easily conclude that the phenomenon of transit migration represents a ‘security threat’ to European governments in the form of migrants intending to circumvent border controls and enter the European Union unauthorized, ‘snatching’ local jobs. The ‘myth of invasion’ (De Haas 2008) was born. In such a discourse it is generally not acknowledged that the state and the market actually condition these ‘irregular’ migratory strategies through specific legislation and economic interdependencies. The roles states undertake in migration management are only analysed with reference to their ability to control borders. Despite this reductionist view, these ideas have become widely accepted in policy talk. If policy documents on migration in Morocco (or elsewhere) refer to ‘transit’ today, the term is normally used in the context of measures to prevent and control migration through increased border enforcement or disincentives for irregular migration in the countries of origin or in the countries of transit (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008, Collyer 2010, Streiff-Fénart & Segatti 2011).

Undoubtedly, the increasing visibility of Sub-Saharan African migrants who have travelled to and through Morocco in the last 20 years appears to reflect changes in the scope and dynamics of migration in the region which require investigation and academic research. This, however, is something that the transit terminology is not able to explain adequately. My own research and that of other authors increasingly demonstrates that many migrants’ trajectories are far more complicated than the abovementioned definition of transit migration suggests (Icduygu 2005, Cassarino & Fargues 2006, Escoffier 2006, Pian 2009, Schapendonk 2011). It is increasingly clear that migrants’ trajectories differ between countries according to the policy framework, economic situation, social and cultural ties and the role and nature of migrant networks. In the specific case of Morocco, critical research has shown, for example, that migrants travelled across various countries overland where they stayed sometimes for years before travelling on to Morocco (Collyer 2006, De Haas 2008, Schapendonk 2011). In the remainder of this book it will become evident that these dynamics are due to a series of complicated political, economic and social developments in the European Union and beyond which cannot be reduced to market forces alone.

According to Turton (2003a: 3) the usefulness of conceptualizing something means constructing it as an object of knowledge, not simply

describing what is already there. In his words, the analytical usefulness of concepts lies in their role as ordering devices:

A concept is a mental representation which stands for, or represents something in the external world, such as a table. We need concepts in order to think about the world, to make sense of it, to interpret it and to act in relation to it. You can't think with a table. You can only think with the concept or representation of a table.

The problem is that certain concepts are more influential than others and shape not only research agendas but also help to consolidate political projects. In a highly policy-driven area of research such as migration (Malkki 1995a, De Haas 2006, Bakewell 2008b), concepts have always played a major role in defining models and theories on human movement and settlement. In migration theory, the liberal-economic inspired distinction between economic push-and-pull factors has until now served as a basis for many economics-based models of migration (Castles & Miller 2003). The distinction made between political and economic migrants, which soon became the basis for refugee protection policies, has its origins in particular political views on the nation state and international relations (Malkki 1995a, Turton 2003a). Similarly, particular ideas about family, work, nation states and civil rights have laid the foundations for our current understanding of 'mobility' and 'settlement' (Turton 2003a, Vertovec 2006). These notions in turn have been used to a great extent to determine what actually counts as migration and what doesn't (Hammar et al 1997, Anderson 2012).

The ways in which concepts such as transit migration are created and converted into objects of knowledge is never value free and can perpetuate or even exacerbate the biased nature of already existing concepts. The perspective from which this knowledge is generated can have profound consequences for the people concerned, particularly if their actual experience is not reflected in the concepts we use (Turton 2003a). The transit concept forcefully demonstrates how conceptual binary divisions like those alluded to above threaten to generate oversimplified analyses of far more complicated realities (Malkki 1992, Turton 2004, Bakewell 2008b). Moreover, by giving preference to one binary opposition over the other, some aspects of migrants' experience tend to be systematically overlooked in both research and policy making. Typically, it is the vision of the market that prevails in contemporary migration policy and research (Alpes 2011). This can lead to a distorted picture of migrants' experiences and to a lack of understanding of

what a migrant's life entails and what its main challenges are. A range of critical migration scholars have, for example, drawn attention to the fact that particular meanings given to mobility or settlement in migration theory and policy making have given rise to approaches that focus on the immigrant instead of those left behind (Carling 2002, Lubkemann 2008, Madziva 2010b), while often ignoring the important interconnections between these two populations (Bash et al 1994, Faist 2000, Sayed 2004, Carling 2008). Liberal models of migration also have a tendency to overlook how structural factors, like gender or class, influence the trajectories and experiences of migrants (Massey 1993, Pessar & Mahler 2003). The focus on voluntary or forced mobility has also given rise to bureaucratic classifications of migrants as asylum seekers, refugees, guest workers or 'highly skilled migrants', trafficking victims or illegal criminals, which are imagined often with a fixed set of characteristics 'as persons'. Bakewell (2008b) criticizes the use of these classifications in both policy making and research as analytical categories because this procedure often obscures the fact that migrants are above all normal people. Adding to this, Willen (2007) argues that treating irregular migrants as 'freeloaders' and 'criminals' causes them to lose their status as persons who deserve full human rights regardless of their citizenship status. Furthermore, such thinking overlooks the fact that bureaucratic classifications are not static, but rather constantly changing (Schuster 2005a), and therefore have little if any analytical value in terms of describing a bounded group of people and their characteristics. But more than anything, the 'forced/voluntary' divide in mobility thinking completely obscures the fact that 'immobility' too might be differentiated with respect to its 'voluntary' or 'involuntary' status, particularly in a world that is increasingly characterized by migration controls (Carling 2002).

## **Forced immobility**

While the transit concept does not adequately describe migrants' situation in Morocco, or the conditions which cause their particular mobility trajectories, the creation of the term does indicate that there is something in these migrants' experiences that has been overlooked in earlier approaches to migration theory and research, which focused on the binary distinction between either settlement or movement.

Moving away from the transit concept requires the construction of a different lens through which to view and analyse migrants' experience. As I have argued above, this is important not only for analytical purposes,

but also for more adequate policy making. Therefore, I chose to look at migrants' experience in Morocco from the vantage point of 'forced immobility' rather than 'transit'. As mentioned earlier, concepts can help us to look at aspects of a phenomenon that have been thus far obscured. By talking about the 'forcibly immobilized' rather than 'transiting' migrants, we change the perspective through which we analyse migration and people's choices, and can start to approach migrants' experiences in Morocco from their own perspective. It is the explanatory power of 'forced immobility' and its relation to migrants' rights that justifies its use over the concept of transit here, because it exposes the underlying contradictions in the conventional way of conceptualizing mobility and migration, which are evident in much migration policy in Morocco.

The analytical power of 'immobility' has been recognized by a number of migration researchers in recent years (Hammar et al 1997, Faist 2000, Carling 2002, Lubkemann 2008). Carling (2002) and Lubkemann (2008) both refer to 'involuntary immobility' in a context where an individual has the aspiration to migrate, but is unable to do so in a context of very limited capabilities. Also Hammar and colleagues (1997) and Faist (2000) contrast the immobility of most people with the mobility of the few who are actually migrating in order to show that the forces that hold people in place are often far more significant than those making them leave. While these efforts are very important, this approach maintains the distinction between the 'non-migrant' as the immobile person and migrants as the mobile, the travellers. This opposition obscures the fact that migrants too can be forcibly immobilized during their migratory journey. Movement and immobility are two interdependent parts of the same coin (Schapendonk 2011, Moret 2018). By questioning the connection between the migrant and mobility as self-evident, I hope to disrupt another binary account of mobility and settlement in contemporary theory.

As Turton (2003a) points out, the English word 'involuntary' gives the impression of an act that is done without thinking or without deliberation or as an act over which one has no agency at all. However, being immobilized or 'stuck' is actually not comparable to such a situation. Migrants in Morocco who were inhibited from moving further did not stay there without thinking about their alternatives. In fact, many of the people I encountered had tried to move or were consciously weighing their decisions in this respect. For this reason, I prefer to speak of 'forced immobility', because it allows me to convey that migrants are not moving because they find that they have a lack of feasible alternatives to do so, which they are nevertheless pondering over. Being 'forced' to be immobile is also very different from being 'forced to settle' because the latter suggests some kind of acceptance on the migrants' part of staying in a place of

resettlement and making it their own, even though they did not intend to be there in the first place (Turton 2003a: 7). As we will see, this is not the case for most migrants in my research.

Conceptualizing the ‘forcibly immobilized’ as a distinct group of people is not possible or desirable, given their heterogeneous legal status and migration history. In addition to that, forced immobility can be experienced as a transitory status and its effects can be felt differently in different places and at different times. Therefore, forced immobility should be seen as being a part of the migratory trajectory of most migrants, not only those that are ‘stuck’ in Morocco. The subjective experience of every migrant will not be represented in the concept of forced immobility, but nevertheless it can still be useful as an ordering device that distinguishes this condition from ‘forced settlement’, ‘transit’ or ‘immigration’.

In this book, I will be using forced immobility as an analytical concept in three very different ways: as a distinctive phase during a migratory process; as a rightless state of being; and as a condition of life. All three aspects may or may not be experienced at any one time or at once by an individual migrant. They are not chronological ‘phases’ but interrelated aspects of the phenomenon. The book is centred particularly upon the ways in which forced immobility is experienced by migrants as a condition and a way of being in the world. In order to explore this, it is first necessary to show when and where forced immobility is created in the Moroccan context and how it converts migrants into rightless beings.

Forced immobility as a distinct phase in a migration process can be analysed by approaching migration from a standpoint of autonomy (Papadopoulos et al 2008) rather than from the standpoint of a mere structurally conditioned movement over borders and countries. In this context, Hage (2005) talks of migration as essentially a project of ‘improving’ oneself, of ‘moving’ existentially as well as physically to ‘greener pastures’. For the group of migrants in my study, existential motivations for migrating need to be taken into consideration when analysing the influence of other ‘regulating factors’ on migrants’ trajectories, such as the state, markets or family and other networks (Alpes 2011). In this book, I am concerned with how these multiple factors not only foster but also curtail migratory projects. I will show how regulatory forces and existential considerations actually constantly change and play out differently along the way, leading to stopovers of varying lengths during the trajectory. In every new stopover on their way, migrants have to weigh the price they pay in terms of reputation, status, resources and future possibilities when pursuing their travels. This discussion ties in with a concept of the migratory process in which phases of stopover and ongoing mobility are interdependent rather than conceived of as a linear line from A to B

(Cresswell 2006, Collyer 2010, Schapendonk 2011). A focus on processes can help us acknowledge that the regulatory frameworks that shape mobility and immobility are in fact dynamic. Rather than inhibiting migrants' movement altogether, these forces constrain migrants' ability to control their migratory trajectory in certain instances and therefore structure their migratory process in particular ways. What is important in this method of analysing the interplay between mobility and immobility in 'transit' is that it helps us move beyond the binary representation of migrants as either agents or victims, and brings immobility and mobility into a different relation with each other.

Second, I will approach forced immobility as a state of rightless being. As Alpes (2011: 23) notes, the state has been largely neglected in migration theory as an effective regulator of migration at the expense of other regulatory instances, such as the market and/or migrant networks. To this, I would add that, in the Moroccan case, the state has also been neglected as an effective regulator of migrants' settlement. In connection with this claim, my analysis shows that migration policies in Morocco exemplify the particular sedentary bias in contemporary discourses on rights (Malkki 1995a). In such a discourse, those who are considered 'settled' are deemed to have rights, but migrants who are 'transiting' are not. As a consequence, migrants in Morocco, who are supposedly 'on the move' (even though they are not moving), are systematically excluded from civic, social and economic participation through a particular policy framework that gives them only limited possibilities of legalizing their stay in the country. As a consequence, Moroccan migration policy discourse on the 'transit figure' can be understood as an excuse (Bredeloup 2012) to convert migrants into rightless beings. The figure of the transit migrant enables governments to uphold the idea that rights and citizenship are tied to nationality and to long-term settlement. But it is also based on a notion of rights that are temporarily restricted and can be given or taken away after a certain period of time, as is evident in the regulation of residency permits. This conceptual link between time, settlement and rights furthermore exempts the Moroccan state from taking any responsibility for the rights of 'transit migrants' on their soil and leads to a situation in which it is almost impossible for migrants to participate actively in society while living there.

The third way of looking at forced immobility is by analysing the specific ways in which it is experienced by migrants themselves as a 'condition'. Here, I am building on work by Willen (2007), who has analysed migrants' illegality in this way. I start from the premise that migration is a deeply personal life project that is closely related to processes of identity formation and belonging (Madison 2006) and community

building (Hage 2005). I will argue that forced immobility changes migrants' existential outlook on life and leads them to modify their personal values and goals. This has profound consequences for the nature of their migratory project and their relationships with others. In the main part of the book, I will bring together the ways in which a life without rights and the struggle to change their social status in Morocco creates specific conditions for migrants' lives which influence the way they experience the world, their own identity and their options with respect to how they can position themselves towards the different regulating forces of mobility and settlement. I use these three perspectives of forced immobility as a conceptual framework in order to analyse migration in Morocco. I find that by differentiating between these three levels of analysis, one can describe some of the complex dynamic interaction between migrants' actions and the state's reactions.

## **Time and temporality**

Another important conceptual approach used to analyse the situation of migrants in this book is temporality. As Cwerner (2001) notes, social theories of time have to date been largely overlooked in migration literature, despite the fact that temporalities, rhythms and time frames are often implicitly present in conventional migration theory. This may be due to the complicated nature of social theories of time and the great diversity of approaches existing within them (Adam 1995). In recent years, however, time and temporality have started to be acknowledged as important for the study of communities more generally (Bastian 2011a) and migrant communities in particular (Cwerner 2001, Griffiths et al 2013, Andersson 2014b, Kleist & Thorsen 2017, Fontanari 2019). Social theories of time are also particularly useful for understanding the situation of the Sub-Saharan African migrants I encountered in Morocco. Precisely the fact that time and temporality can be understood, lived and felt in a variety of different ways makes them an important starting point for the arguments presented here. By working out the different and competing time perspectives of migrants, states and markets, it is possible to uncover the friction between migrants' contradictory notions of time in immobility and how they attempt to adapt to changing temporal frames of reference. The book thus connects theories on time and temporality to migrants' own understanding of themselves and their existential outlook on life.

Living outside generally accepted categories of successful migrants who are able to advance their reputation, wealth and community standing through their trajectory, the subjects in this book have had to come to

terms with their peculiar situation of ‘stuckness’. In this respect, I felt that my conversations with migrants displayed above all a life in contradiction. We often talked about how little sense everything made to them. In their dealings with aid organizations, border regimes, the asylum system and the Moroccan state, they frequently complained about the lack of logic in the application of the law, of being able to ‘play by the rules’ and regularize their stay in Morocco or to continue travelling legally. On the one hand, they often talked about hopelessness and, on the other, about the need for continued survival. We also talked about the contradiction between their ideas of a successful life, community, family, belonging and their proper life in the present, the link to their past and their imagined future.

In many ways, the migrants I met had to grapple with how their moral values, their beliefs in human rights and their identity started to crumble while they were living in ‘different times’, in which past and future were losing their meaning. A feeling of alienation marked their stories and their actions and reminded me of Camus’ (1942) description of the absurd. For him, absurdity was a feeling that one’s actions are divorced from the setting in which they occur. According to Camus, absurdity was similar to feeling estranged from home and hope of a predictable future. Absurdity thus implies an estrangement from time and place and can therefore be compared to what it means to feel ‘stuck’.

Adam (1994) argues that particular notions of industrial time, where time is money, are generally at the heart of notions about progress and modernity. She goes on to argue that other experiences of time constantly coexist with these temporal discourses of modernity and have to be brought into meaningful relationships with them in order to make our contemporary life courses worthwhile and dignified in our own eyes and those of others. Similar approaches of analysis are also to be found in literature on feminist notions of time, which investigate the dominant and binary discourses in contemporary notions of time and temporality in order to uncover their particular consequences for women’s time uses (Davies 1990), political activism (Adam 2002, Tronto 2003) and feeling of life’s worth (Gardner 2002).

Dominant western discourse on successful migration also reproduces a certain linear narrative of migrants’ time, in which successful migrants use their lifetime to accumulate wealth and social capital for a prosperous future (Sayad 2004). The migrants I encountered had to come to terms with the fact that this notion of time did not match their own feeling of temporality in Morocco, where their present was not ‘moving’ into a future, but effectively standing still. This made their time effectively ‘useless’ – at least in the eyes of migration policy makers, and sometimes also in their own eyes.

## **Ethnography of immobility and time**

Robertson (2015) argues that traditional ethnographic methods which often occur at fixed moments and over fixed durations often fail to engage with the complex questions around migration and time. It is important to capture both the times of states and markets and other regulatory authorities in the migration context in their efforts to seize people's time or shape their rhythms. At the same time, one has to focus on how time is felt and lived by migrants themselves and how different time perspectives interact with each other. Therefore, I have made an effort to gather data over a long period of time. Much of the data regarding the meaning of immobility and time in migrants' own accounts has been gathered through an ethnographic research methodology based on participant observation, interviews and conversations which span a period of over ten years, from 2007 until 2017. Most of the data, however, was obtained between 2007 and 2012, when I interviewed and observed the same migrants over several years, thus being able to document the way in which their lives evolved over time. Using documentary analysis of policy documents, NGO pamphlets and newspaper articles, as well as semi-structured interviews with a range of organizations providing social services for migrants in Morocco, I wanted to contrast migrants' interpretations and perspectives with concepts used in the practical application of migration policy and theory.

During the research, it became obvious to me that underlying unequal power structures like gender, class, age and ethnic origin influence migrants' activities, motivations and feelings, and needed to be incorporated in the analysis of mobility and immobility. While a differentiated analysis of how gender class, age or other heterogeneities shape the experiences and existential outlook of migration is beyond this study, I have attempted to describe the differential experiences of both my male and female informants when describing migration trajectories, forms of survival and also ways of waiting in immobility. By analysing male and female migrants' actions and perceptions as motivated by and produced through their particular positions within unequal power dynamics, I hope to link the research to one of the central, yet still unresolved, intellectual puzzles in migration theory, which is the dynamics between individuals' particular migratory strategies and larger, structural influences on mobility and immobility. In this context, I have been inspired by Roitman's (2005) concept of regulatory authorities and Alpes' (2011) application of the concept in the context of migration in Africa. Alpes' work in particular is revealing of the ways in which migrants navigate between the regulatory authorities of family, state and market to realize their migratory aspirations

in a context of restricted mobility. I have expanded this to the situation of migrants in Morocco to explain how their relation to different regulatory authorities changes during their travels and is, in fact, dynamic (Vigh 2009). I then attempt to link this to migrants' changing perceptions of their own life course and the existential dilemmas this brings about in their lives (Johnson-Hanks 2002, Madison 2006, Hage 2009b).

In my fieldwork I have privileged two different settings in Rabat which represented separate and distinct environments for migrants' actions and behaviour: I conducted research in migrants' homes and neighbourhoods, where most of their private and community life took place, and I visited and observed migrants in churches, parks and NGOs, where they interacted with other migrants. I interviewed 21 women and 19 men from nine different countries (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger and Nigeria) but I have spoken with and observed many more migrants, albeit not as intensively or repeatedly, and these informal contacts have also contributed data to the research process. Migrants were both Muslim and Christian. The 40 that appear in this text all participated in the research from 2009 until 2010 and in eight cases until 2012. All migrants have been interviewed at least twice, once in 2009 and once in 2010. Five of the initial forty migrants were interviewed again in 2015, 2016 and 2017. I have spent considerable time with the migrants. I followed them while they were going about their daily chores or met them in churches, NGOs or at their workplaces in the street where they were selling items, begging or waiting for work. I accompanied them to football matches and social gatherings and did participant observation at a summer school with children and women, organized by a Spanish church-based association. Once I had left Rabat, I was able to keep in contact with some migrants via chat, email and Facebook. A regular exchange developed with only four of them, as the majority were not able to use the internet frequently because of the cost or because of their limited familiarity with computers. The names of respondents that appear in this book are pseudonyms.

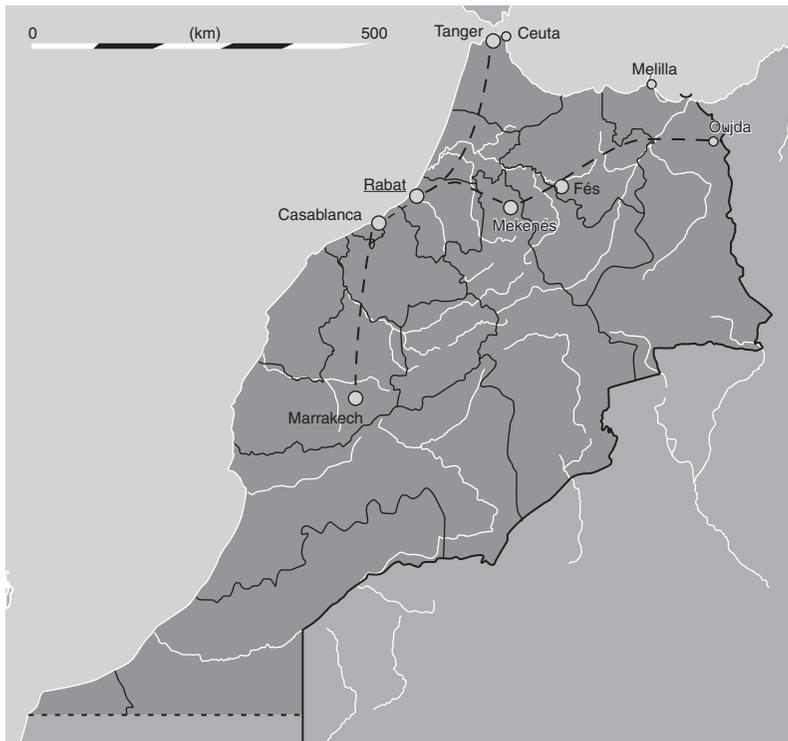
## **A brief note about the research context in Morocco**

At the time I was undertaking my research, most Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco were living in Rabat. As the country's capital, Rabat has roughly 600,000 inhabitants and is situated only about 50 kilometres from Casablanca, the main industrial port in Morocco and the city with

the biggest international airport. These cities are connected through a fairly modern railway and a highway (see [Figure 1](#)). As well as the Moroccan government, most embassies and international organizations are located in Rabat and there is a strong military and police presence to protect the safety of the royal family, who have their main residence here. In comparison to Casablanca and Tangier, Rabat has no industrial port, even though it is a coastal town. It has some industry, notably in the textile, food processing and construction sectors, but much employment is generated through government-related administration and civil service. Therefore, unemployment, sub-employment and poverty among the young, unqualified population are very high (Royaume du Maroc, Haut-Commissariat du Plan 2007).<sup>3</sup> The move of the impoverished rural population towards the cities has increased this trend in the past 40 years (Abouhani 1995). Simultaneously, Rabat is the home of some of the country's elite and certain families close to the monarchy are politically, socially and economically highly influential through a system of patronage.

Over the past ten years, the King of Morocco Mohammed VI and his government have increasingly invested in modernizing the centre of

**Figure 1:** Map of Morocco with railway connections



Rabat in order to improve its profile. A modern marina has been built, as well as a tramway system and a number of important new government buildings. Certain residential areas have become comparable with those of any rich, western, industrialized city: shopping malls, expensive restaurants, nightclubs and villas fill extensive areas in Rabat and testify to the luxurious lifestyle of rich, secularized Rabatis and mostly European expatriates. The subsequent increase in real estate prices has accelerated the segregation between 'rich' and 'poor' parts of town. Housing in the centre of Rabat and its main residential areas has become increasingly expensive, so that many middle class Rabatis are now obliged to live in suburbs which were once small villages adjacent to Rabat, like Temara or Khemisset. More and more working class Rabatis also tend to live or work in Sale, the neighbouring city, which is only separated from Rabat by the mouth of the river Bou Regreg (see [Figure 2](#)). Sale has large suburbs where the majority of local workers, rural migrants and poorer people live. An increasing number of middle class white-collar workers also buy houses in residential areas there, because they are comparatively cheaper than similar housing in the outskirts of Rabat on the other side of the river. From all these areas, Rabat can be

**Figure 2:** Map of research site



reached through shared taxis, the tramway, buses or by train, but transport is generally time-consuming and expensive.

Because of the difficulties connected with transport, many working class Rabatis who do not own a car still prefer living in areas of town that are relatively close to the centre. Some of these areas developed from shanty towns that were occupied by clandestine settlers at the beginning of the twentieth century and during the time of rural mass exodus towards the cities from the 1970s onwards (Abouhany 1995). These parts of town have since undergone enormous transformation, but half-finished buildings are still seen alongside two or three storey houses. Lively informal markets, small parks and businesses are scattered everywhere and the regions are reasonably well connected to the centre of town through buses and taxis. Urban planning has been largely neglected and much of the construction there is provisional, unplanned and 'home-made'. There are only a limited number of asphalt roads apart from the main 'arteries', and public infrastructure such as schools, sports grounds and parks are limited. Within Rabat, most of my research was conducted in two municipalities (or *communes* in French), which belong to these parts of town (see Figure 2, map of research site). These are Yacoub El Mansour and Youssoufia. Within Youssoufia, I worked extensively in Takadoum, Hay Senai, DjiBlaisy and Douar Doum. In Yacoub El Mansour, my research was concentrated – but not limited to – the areas of Ain Cora, El Quoas, Kamra, G3 and G5. These parts of town have a large informal economy and housing remains quite affordable. They are still mostly inhabited by the Moroccan working class but are also the main areas where Sub-Saharan African migrants live, even though many of them are also moving to Sale and further out of the centre in recent years.

Most organizations working for Sub-Saharan African migrants maintain their offices in Rabat. There is a vast array of institutions that migrants can turn to for advice, help and support. These can roughly be divided into four groups: international organizations, international NGOs, national NGOs and diplomatic missions and/or development agencies.

A large number of Sub-Saharan African migrants are practising Christians. There is a Catholic church and a Protestant church in the centre of Rabat dating back to the colonial period. Both churches run an English- and a French-speaking service on Sundays. Sub-Saharan African nationals – mostly diplomats, students and migrants – still represent the majority of the attendees of francophone services in the Protestant church in the centre of the city. Their presence is particularly visible in the gospel choir, which plays an important part in services.<sup>4</sup> However, the majority of practising migrants belong to Pentecostal church communities, which I also frequently visited during the research.

## Chapter structure

If the people whose experience I describe had followed a linear journey, I would have started with their travels and ended the book with their arrival in a country of settlement. However, as this book is led by their experience, the chapters explore different dimensions of life in limbo in a circular manner. There is no escaping from forced immobility for the subjects I encountered. The eight chapters of this book are therefore not organized in chronological order and do not pretend to present temporally sequential information but rather overlapping aspects of my research subjects' lives in Morocco. In [Chapter 2](#), I present the ways in which international policy makers in the European Union have been able to frame migrants as rightless beings who cannot count on the protection of the international community of states, even though human rights are recognized as a kind of world moral polity of sorts ([Faist 2018a](#)). By giving an overview of the evolution of European migration policy and its effects on Morocco, I am describing how time and space have come to serve as powerful tools in global migration governance to discipline and punish unauthorized movements and stays through forced immobility and temporary protection. Morocco's case is introduced as a particularly telling example of how these policies impact on people outside European borders. [Chapter 3](#) focuses on migrants' journeys from their countries of origin to Morocco. This chapter analyses how phases of mobility and immobility are interdependent parts of the complex migration trajectories of my migrant research subjects. It explores the variety of obstacles that migrants encountered during travel towards Morocco, and the ways in which they continued to negotiate their social locations with respect to mobility along the way. Thus, rather than 'transiting' through different places relatively unchanged, the data shows how migrants' stays in various places and the ways in which they travel have a profound impact on them and their future migratory project. Following from this, in [Chapter 4](#), I describe how migrants actually arrive in Morocco. The data presented in the chapter situates their lives there in a context of extreme political, economic and social marginalization. I show how 'transit' migrants' rightlessness in Morocco has been reinforced by the Moroccan state through a national politics of migration that increases migrants' feeling of insecurity. I argue that this is a government strategy inherent in Moroccan governance structures which is aimed at disciplining and subduing potentially defiant populations under the rule of the authoritarian state. Insecurity and fear make life for migrants unpredictable and shape their existential outlook on life. [Chapter 5](#) therefore changes the perspective and focuses on migrants' image of themselves when stuck in Morocco. It describes the experience

of being stuck in transit as an existential dilemma and analyses migrants' effort to resynchronize their temporal frames of reference with those of the external world. Through the stories of migrants I interviewed, I show how people become gradually disconnected from the past and the future and struggle with a meaningless life in the present. [Chapter 6](#) then shifts the view from how migrants see their own life to how they view each other. The chapter explores the contradictory community relations between migrants in Morocco by looking at moments of reciprocity and mutual help on the one hand, and exploitation on the other. I discuss how migrants' relation to mobility, place and time conditions these dynamics. [Chapter 7](#) is about the diverse strategies migrants use to 'revolt' against the absurd conditions they find themselves in by attempting to leave the country. The description of migrants' activities in view of their departure shows how they employ a variety of waiting strategies that help them re-establish some sense of temporal and spatial order in their lives.

The conclusion in [Chapter 8](#) wraps up the arguments made in the course of the book and attempts to give some tentative answers to the main question concerning the consequences of 'stuckness' on people's lives in Morocco. In summary, the book shows how the current policy mechanisms which limit certain people's mobility through border controls can have particularly negative effects on the life course of individuals. The discussion of migrants' situation in Morocco shows how international migration control policies are actively hampering migrants' and would-be migrants' abilities to design a dignified, self-controlled life plan and to establish productive and mutually supportive relations with others. Such policies foster segregation, marginalization and exploitation. As such, control policies are doing much more than simply inhibiting movement. They are also inhibiting people's effective settlement and their development as persons.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> According to unofficial estimates from NGO representatives I interviewed who had worked in the country since then.
- <sup>2</sup> According to humanitarian workers from NGOs working in Oujda, there were 300 migrants in the camps in the summer of 2009, as opposed to roughly 600–800 three years earlier.
- <sup>3</sup> It is estimated that in urban areas of Morocco, around 35 per cent of the population relies on work in the informal sector, most of which is concentrated in business and service sectors. (Haute Commissariat du Plan 2007, Enquete Nationale sur le secteur informel 2006–07, Rapport de synthese, p. 39, [www.wcp.ma](http://www.wcp.ma)). According to recent official statistics, in the region of Rabat there are approximately 127 food processing industries, 89 textile and leather industries, 234 chemical industries and 119 metal-related industries. Together, these sectors generate only 38,000 jobs, of

## INTRODUCTION

which almost two-thirds are in the textile industry. The current unemployment rate is officially 16 per cent, but is unofficially estimated to be 25 per cent of the active population (Royaume du Maroc, Haute Commissariat du Plan 2009, Annuaire Statistique de la Region Rabat Sale Zemmour Zaer, [www.wcp.ma](http://www.wcp.ma)).

- <sup>4</sup> The English-speaking Protestant community is more divided and there is a strong prominence of American religious social workers and missionaries whose rites are becoming dominant in the anglophone service of the Protestant city centre church. English-speaking migrants from Africa are present here less often and the majority of community members are still predominantly white American or European.



# EU Externalization Policies and their Impact on Migrants in Morocco

## Introduction

On 28 September and the night of 6 October 2005, hundreds of Sub-Saharan African migrants collectively attempted to climb the barbed wire fences of the two Spanish exclaves Ceuta and Melilla on the Moroccan border in a desperate attempt to cross the border. Many managed to reach Spanish ground but over 100 migrants were caught and severely injured when they fell from fences and got stuck in the barbed wire. Several migrants were hit by bullets from border guards and 11 migrants died during these events (Goldschmidt 2006, Schapendonk 2011). This was the first time that such a mass assault on the borders of Europe had occurred. The fact that it happened then was not a coincidence. In fact, it presented a desperate attempt on migrants' side to circumvent the increasingly effective border controls which had been established by both the Moroccan government and the EU in the years preceding the event. This made it impossible for migrants to leave Morocco for Europe or return to their countries of origin.

The events had severe policy implications for both migrants and governments. On the one hand, they were followed by unprecedented levels of violence employed by Moroccan police and military forces against irregular migrants (MSF 2005, Yene 2010). There is also evidence that migrants were simply 'banned' from the territory in Morocco to 'dissuade' them from returning and attempting again to cross the border to Spain. Human rights organisations in Morocco had made public that the government organised mass deportations of migrants into the Algerian

desert and to the southern provinces in the desert of Morocco during this time. On the European side, the events triggered the development of the first draft of the Global Approach to Migration (GAMM) by the European Commission and its rapid implementation (Collyer 2010). The GAMM emerges in subsequent years through three policy initiatives between European and African states which involve a great number of sending nations in Africa, so-called ‘transit countries’ in the Maghreb and destination countries in Europe. The initiatives are primarily geared to manage migration from South to North, with emphasis being put particularly on increased border control to prevent irregular migration (Collyer 2010). They have been accompanied by a great number of measures to externalize border controls and migration management to African host and origin countries. Through the GAMM, the EU effectively extended its effort to externalize controls and migration management by transferring it not only to so-called transit states in Africa but even also to origin countries.

Sub-Saharan African migrants’ desperate actions to escape forced immobility in Morocco in 2005 and beyond can therefore be said to have significantly shaped European migratory policies in Africa. Instead of preventing irregular migration, however, the policies have had quite different and adverse effects. Streiff-Fénart and Segatti (2011) show, for example, how recent containment policies aimed at regulating immigration flows toward Europe have profoundly altered the dynamics of migration in Africa. The impact of these policies is apparent in the redefinition of the routes, itineraries and actors of migration. The Moroccan case furthermore shows how they have had devastating effects on the rights of migrants and their possibilities to realize a dignified life plan. Sub-Saharan African migrants have severely restricted access to social, economic and political rights in Morocco and very often do not have the financial capital to compensate. This is because migrants without work contracts or money to invest in the country generally face difficulties in acquiring residency or work permits. Most undocumented migrants in Morocco are therefore living in precarious circumstances. The increased efforts geared to the criminalization of migrants wishing to enter the European Union have therefore had important existential consequences for the migrants concerned and I will focus on this in subsequent chapters.

The number of migrants with Sub-Saharan African origins in Morocco has been estimated at around 40,000 people (Khachani 2014, IOM 2017). Compared to other migrant populations which are also resident in Morocco, such as foreign university students (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck 2015, Natter 2016) or pensioners from Spain, France and Germany (Khachani 2010), they are actually a minority within the total

migrant population. Given this fact, it is quite interesting that a relatively small number of people have received so much policy attention in the last two decades from both national and international actors and institutions while suffering such devastating consequences from it. As we will see in the remainder of this chapter, this is understandable one takes into account that the difficult situation of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco is simultaneously connected to a set of important national and international policy concerns in the European Union, such as border security, economic development policies and human rights. The Moroccan case therefore provides an interesting example of how international, national and local policy interests in migration management merge and produce forced immobility and rightlessness for particular groups of people outside European borders while simultaneously the claim for a moral polity of rights that guides migration management is still alive in international migration policy (Faist 2018b).

The historical evolution of EU migration policies directed towards Morocco over the last two decades evidences how the EU has effectively coined a very particular understanding of mobility and migrant rights which structures the ways in which the logic of migration management through the intensification and externalization of border controls could be justified. The overview of EU migration management in this chapter therefore serves to highlight the political context in which particular understandings of mobility and migration have come to structure both spatial and temporal migration management tactics which are effectively employed and exported to third countries in order to halt the movement of people, to discipline migrants and to produce immobility and rightlessness.

Through a review of EU policy developments in the region, I next describe how time and space have been used as government tools (Baumann 2000, Andersson 2014a) in migration policies to justify and control both mobility and access to rights for specific migrants in Morocco and represent a new *dispositif*<sup>1</sup> of migration management, in the Foucauldian sense of the term (Foucault 1977), which helps to legitimize otherwise unjustifiable contradictions in EU migration policies with respect to human rights. I am focusing here on how this has been successful in producing and legitimizing a situation of forced immobility for Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco and contributed to the framing of migrants' rights as a short-term humanitarian concern, rather than a longer-term development issue. I will show how EU policies have effectively contributed to keeping migrants in situations of forced immobility, without any possibility to claim legal settlement in Morocco. In fact, migrants in Morocco have effectively become rightless persons in

international law, without any recognized protection from either national or international entities.

## **Migration governance: its justifications and its effects on migrants' rights**

Politics of border enforcement are usually accompanied by intensive political efforts aimed at legitimizing and rationalizing these (Streiff-Fénart and Segatti 2011: x). In order to do this, parameters are necessary to define migration as either desirable or undesirable and to make migration projects appear legitimate or else a criminal act of trespass. One way to do this is to classify migrants as 'legal' or 'illegal' migrants, as forced or voluntary movers or to separate those who are 'trafficked' from those who are 'smuggled'. It is in this sense that migration theory has a great influence on what counts as migration and what does not, what is considered to cause it, and on how migrants are defined and classified into either legitimate or illegitimate movers.

Anderson (2012) shows, for example, how states are framing the right to mobility and stay by linking it to the notion of the 'good citizen' who is included in society through rules which link the individual in a particular relationship to the state and the market. By contrast, irregular migrants are 'non-citizens', because they cannot fulfil the criteria that would make them eligible to participate in state, market and families. From such a political and social perspective on human mobility, it follows that wealthy tourists, students and businessmen are generally free to move from country to country, while migrants in search of protection or work are controlled and persecuted, because they are seen as a burden to the host society.

These concerns are based more often than not on economic push and pull models of migration (Lee 1969) which are also often at the root of descriptions of Sub-Saharan African 'transit' migrants in Morocco and strongly inform EU and Moroccan policy making. Accordingly, migrants are imagined as rational individuals, calculating the risks involved in illegal travel in light of the expectations of high economic returns as successful labour migrants in the country of destination (Chiswick 2008). In policy documents, research and the media, for example, Sub-Saharan African migrants appear to fit the classical description of the male labour migrant, who is determined to reach Europe in search of work (De Haas 2008). However, as we will see in the next chapter, this rarely depicts the complex and multifaceted reality of migration from Africa.

So while such economic perspectives on the migrant are generally misleading, they usually serve to justify containment policies that are

designed to do two things. On the one hand, they are geared towards heightening the cost of migration to impede movement and, on the other hand, they serve to regulate migrants' settlement in host countries by linking their access to human rights to citizenship. As we will see further on in the chapter, this approach to migration management is characteristic of EU migration governance and usually results in increased border controls and a politics of migration status that differentiates migrants' access to rights and protection in host countries. De Genova (2004) has termed these processes the legal production of migrant illegality, because the assignment or refusal of administrative status then has the effect of excluding migrants from rights and government protection by leading to criminalization and control, rather than to the protection of people's rights.

The particular understanding of migration which is at the root of these containment policies serves the interests of states, rather than migrants. The situation in which migrants in Morocco find themselves as a result recalls worrying aspects of our recent European history. The situation of effective rightlessness, in which migrants are unable to claim a legitimate right to leave Morocco or to settle there, recalls the situation of the stateless as described by Arendt (1958). Arendt uncovers in her analysis of stateless persons after World War II how universal human rights are in effect worth nothing if one has been denied effective government protection through the national laws applicable in the country of refuge. She highlights the double standards by which nation states actually determine through citizenship laws what human rights are worth in practice at any given place and time, while claiming their universal and indivisible nature in theory (Bowring 2011: 191). Even though migrants in Morocco are generally not stateless in the legal sense of the term because they retain formal citizenship of their country of origin,<sup>2</sup> they are nevertheless deprived of their rights in a way similar to the group of stateless people referred to by Arendt. According to Arendt (1958: 294), rightlessness entails the loss of home, or 'a distinct place in the world' where one is judged by one's actions and opinions and, secondly, 'the loss of government protection and legal standing'. This critical stance regarding the applicability of international human rights theory is still useful for the analysis of the human rights of migrants in Morocco.

### **The tools used to implement and justify containment policies: space and time**

On first sight, it appears that efforts to relocate border controls in countries outside the EU, which is generally understood as processes

of externalization of border control (Betts 2011), is above all a matter of governing through space (Baumann 2000), because it relies on the extension of EU power to control borders and to select and choose candidates for legal mobility far into Africa.

However, policies of selection, management and containment of migrants through administrative categories are not only regulated through space, but equally by exerting control over and through time (Tazzioli 2018: 15, Fontanari 2019). In fact, as Andersson (2014a: 2) has rightly stated, time has become a multifaceted tool in the fight against illegal migration in the EU. This is not only visible in the ways in which control technologies are becoming swifter but also by producing people who are waiting in limbo for indeterminate periods of time without being assigned any clear administrative status. In the following, I will show that such externalization policies do not only imply the spatial relocation of border control outside the frontiers with the EU and within Morocco, but also affect the transformation of temporal borders and settlement options with which migrants are confronted. In this way, EU migration governance actually not only affects migrants' mobility options, but also profoundly alters the frames of reference available to them to organize their lives in space and time when they are 'trapped' along the way. Both spatialized and temporalized forms of migration control are contributing to forced immobility and to rightlessness.

The two subsections below describe how the European Union's externalization policies of migration control, together with Morocco's migration politics, have contributed to Sub-Saharan African migrants' long stays in precarious administrative conditions and without access to rights and services in the country. It will become evident that the policies have shaped the lives of migrants in two fundamental ways: First, by producing migrants' forced immobility as a distinct phase in the migration process; second, by creating a time of crisis, in which migrants' access to rights and services is converted into a humanitarian issue to be relieved in the short term rather than treated with a longer-term perspective.

*Externalizing migration management in space: producing forcibly immobilized migrants as a distinct phase in the migration process*

In order to understand that forced immobility is produced through migration policies and is not a natural feature of migrants' journeys, it is important to recall that Sub-Saharan African migration has existed in Morocco for centuries and is not a new phenomenon (De Haas 2008); likewise Moroccan migration to Europe. However, before the 1990s

neither Morocco nor the European Union had a coherent immigration policy with reference to Sub-Saharan African migrants or, for that matter, Moroccan would-be migrants. Border controls were sporadic and rules to distinguish regular and irregular migration were often not enforced through effective policy instruments. The first significant policy measures between the European Union and Morocco to change this state of affairs dates to the beginning of the 1990s in relation to the Moroccan-European partnership treaty.<sup>3</sup> At this time, EU migration policy towards Morocco was primarily directed to prevent the irregular migration of *Moroccan* nationals to Spain and other European countries (European Commission 1998, De Haas 2008, Belguendouz 2009).

Generally speaking, migration policy becomes visible in the partnership treaty through the inclusion of two types of measures: on the one hand, those that are designed to prevent unwanted migration, and on the other those designed to promote wanted migration. In the first category we usually find measures to combat illegal migration and trafficking, and everything related to the recruitment of labour migrants falls into the second category. Refugee and asylum protection is a third element of migration policy but is a marginal part of the European partnership treaty (Collyer 2010).

To implement these measures effectively, Moroccan migrants were classified through a range of administrative, institutional and legal measures as either illegitimate migrants, who were imagined as illegal or trafficked, or 'legitimate' migrants, who were refugees and labour migrants. However, the latter two categories were largely ignored in policy measures, making 'legitimate' migration a contingency, rather than the general axis of policy making. The great effectiveness of subsequent migration controls to deter illegitimate Moroccan migrants resulted in the number of African migrants intercepted at Spanish borders increasing from year to year, while the number of Moroccan nationals decreased (Belguendouz 2009). From 2000 onwards, this started to provoke strong policy reactions from both Spain and the European Union, despite the relatively small proportion these migrants represented of the total number of irregular migrants in Spain (Azkona 2011) and within Morocco (De Haas 2008).

The measures implemented during the next decade by the European Union suggested that migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and Moroccan nationals needed to be deported, criminalized or persecuted by the police, rather than integrated as worthy citizens into host communities. A particularly powerful example of this approach is the creation by EU member states of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX). FRONTEX was created as an

independent body tasked with operational coordination in the field of border security among member states (European Commission 2004). The organization played a particularly important role in European migration policy developments because it operationalized the intention to convert border control in the Mediterranean region into a policy priority (Belguendouz 2009, Collyer 2010). FRONTEX (2012) maintains that it primarily assists member states' governments in maximizing efficiency and cost-effectiveness in deportations while also ensuring respect for the fundamental rights and human dignity of returnees. However, it is disputed whether it has really helped to diminish fatalities in crossings by irregular migrants or indeed diminish the number of crossings attempted. Instead, there is evidence to suggest that FRONTEX has contributed to the change of routes. Whereas before 2005 most migrants attempted to cross the Strait of Gibraltar, in more recent years they have increasingly used the much longer and more dangerous sea routes from Mauritania and the Western Sahara to the Canary Islands. This not only increased the costs of the journey for migrants, but also the risks involved in leaving Morocco as this route involves overland travel in particularly dangerous regions that are prone to conflict (Carling 2007).

So, while EU border enforcement policies did contribute to forced immobility, they did not in themselves hinder onward migration altogether. What did shape forced immobility in profound ways was the efforts of the EU to involve the Moroccan state in measures to sanction, deport and criminalize irregular migrants on Moroccan soil. In this way, the EU successfully changed the spatial processes of migration control and migration management by transferring it outside its own borders. As one of the first states in the Maghreb region, Morocco responded to the concerns voiced by EU member states regarding the changing migration dynamics in the region by reforming its migration policies. In order to do this in line with EU requirements, the government of Morocco accepted financial means, personnel and infrastructure to improve the policing of its own borders with Europe. Another set of measures included the reformation of the country's legislative measures. Until November 2003, Morocco's legislation regarding immigration was restricted to a handful of *Dahirs* (Royal Decrees) from the time of the Spanish and French protectorate, dating back to 1934–49 (GADEM 2009b). In 2003 the new law abrogated all *Dahirs* from the colonial period and replaced them with new regulations (Royaume du Maroc 2003). However, the content of the new regulations was not necessarily adapted to the specifics of the Moroccan migratory reality and its political and economic context. The content of the law has been substantially based on contemporary French immigration law – in places it is an exact copy of it (Belguendouz 2009). Most of these legislative

elements of migration governance which have been introduced since then in the country have been devised and elaborated in close cooperation with the European Union, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and European states like Spain and France. It is therefore important to analyse the evolution of Moroccan migration policy in the context of European migration management, in order to understand its particular features as well as its intended and unintended effects for Sub-Saharan African migrants. As a result of these changes, Sub-Saharan African migrants who arrived in Morocco with tourist visas or no visas at all had almost no possibility to regulate their stay there, and had to face sanctions and prohibitions relating to their participation in the job market or in finding accommodation. As irregular migrants, it became almost impossible for them to stay in the country in dignified conditions (see [Chapter 4](#)), and their lack of residency rights made them prone to criminal prosecution by the police and border officials.

In 2005, the emergence of the GAMM marked a clear move from a former 'dual' migration approach, which was characterized by bilateral agreements between Morocco and European countries, towards a multilateral migration approach which attempted to unify policy responses to migration across the EU and beyond (Pinyol 2008). In this sense, the Global Approach to Migration has gone a step further in producing forced immobility as a distinct phase in the migration process because now mobility controls and migration management could be introduced in countries of origin as well as in a range of 'transit countries' along the way, and not only in those directly bordering the EU. In the past ten years since the beginning of the international policy processes which the GAMM initiated, neither the Moroccan state nor the European Union made significant progress in promoting legal migration channels from Africa to Europe (Collyer 2010). The fact that refugee policies have never been strong on the international agenda in these meetings is another case in point in this context. There is evidence to suggest that there are large numbers of potential asylum seekers in Morocco who choose not to file a claim or do not know how to do so (Wender 2004, Collyer 2010). It was not until 2004 that the EU recommended the implementation of an asylum system, which has still not come into being. However, international pressure finally led to Morocco assigning legal representation to the UNHCR in 2007. Since then, the UNHCR has been in charge of Morocco's determination processes for refugees.

The analysis of EU migration policy developments in 2000 presented above reveals that the phenomenon of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco has been understood by international policy makers primarily as a security problem when migrants attempt to access otherwise closed

borders through land or sea routes that seem little controlled (Wender 2004, Belguendouz 2009, GADEM 2009b, Collyer 2010, Gabrielli 2011). In this way, the situation in ‘transit countries’ such as Morocco served as a trigger to justify the EU’s need to assist African countries in order to implement increased border controls and to tighten their migration regimes in order to allow for the implementation of European-inspired immigration and mobility policies. However, Gabrielli (2011: 4) is right to argue that, in practice, the extraterritorialization of migration control in transit areas has tended to displace the Euro–African migration border even further south on the African continent, and has aimed to transfer the responsibility of migration control to African states.

*The migration–development nexus: migrants as humanitarian crisis victims*

A second feature of EU politics with regard to Sub-Saharan African migrants’ situation in Morocco is the focus on crisis management and humanitarian relief, rather than support for sustainable and long-term development measures which would facilitate migrants’ settlement in the country and focus on their access to social, economic and political rights. Generally speaking, humanitarian aid is designed to save lives and alleviate suffering during and in the immediate aftermath of emergencies, whereas development responds to ongoing structural inequalities, particularly systemic poverty and unequal access to rights for different groups in any given society. Development is generally understood as a long-term endeavour aimed at reversing unjust social relations.

Questions of how the international community of states should be made accountable for upholding the social, economic and political rights of stranded migrants in countries at the ‘fringes of Europe’ (Düvell 2006) has not been the subject of much policy debate in the EU. Even though the cross-cutting nature of migrants’ human rights in all areas of intervention is highlighted (European Union 2018), policy measures focus predominantly on the need to combat human rights violations against migrant rights to life in cases of trafficking or smuggling (Cuttina 2017). Thus, migrants’ rights to life is used as an underlying rationale to ‘humanize’ border control policies by constructing irregular or vulnerable migrants as victims who need immediate relief aid, rather than as individuals with rights that states have the responsibility to uphold (Fassin 2012, Tiktin 2016).

While the EU is voicing the need for effective integration of migration into national development and poverty reduction plans in middle and low income countries in order to guarantee their social, economic and cultural

rights (European Commission 2013: 8), a review of policy documents shows that the EU generally remains silent on the concrete responsibilities it sees for itself to protect the social and economic rights of vulnerable migrants and would-be migrants in low and middle income countries outside the EU. In fact, the EU itself admits that it needs to deepen its understanding of the social and economic consequences of migration for development, especially in sectors such as health, education, employment and agriculture (European Commission 2013: 12). This confirms that policy makers generally view migration as an issue that needs to be controlled, largely neglecting the political questions of migrants' rights and the obligations of national, regional and international actors to protect them when they have been successfully stopped from crossing borders (Hujo 2013).

A review of the development programmes implemented in Morocco by the EU in the past confirms this because poverty reduction measures for migrants on Moroccan soil is rarely mentioned at all. From 1996 to 2006, the EU's financial support for Morocco's economic transition towards a possible European membership in the future was mainly implemented and financed through the MEDA (Mésures d'Accompagnement or Accompanying Measures) programme, which aimed to increase competitiveness by developing the private sector and promoting good governance. According to the EU, the programme focused primarily on the implementation of the Association Agreement aimed at boosting jobs and growth and reducing poverty (European Commission 2012). Meanwhile, significant funds from the MEDA programme have targeted the stated goal of immigration reduction. Of the total MEDA aid budget of €426 million for 2000–2006, €115 million (27 per cent) are being spent on the control of illegal immigration and rural development programmes.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, MEDA has been one of the first policy instruments in Morocco that links migration control to the funding of socioeconomic development initiatives in sending countries (Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou 2008, Belguendouz 2009, Collyer 2010). However, I have found no evidence that as a part of this goal significant funds were allocated to reduce social and economic exclusion of immigrants in Moroccan society during that time.

The new policy instrument Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED) replaced MEDA from 2007 onwards. It sets the framework for cooperation between Morocco and the European Union and incorporates activities relating to fostering the links of migration and development, fighting illegal migration and trafficking, as well as promoting the asylum policies and the protection of stateless persons in Morocco. EUROMED clearly recognizes for the first time the need to tackle migrants living in poverty in Morocco. But again, the budget distribution

confirms that most weight has been put on border enforcement and migration control, rather than on the promotion of legal migration or the improvement of access to social and economic rights for migrants already living in Morocco. European funds channelled through the programme increasingly finance capacity building of Moroccan coastguards and other security forces with the aim of detecting and deporting irregular migrants (Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou 2008, Collyer 2010).

While integration through development does not appear to feature prominently on the EU agenda, there is evidence to suggest that the EU is particularly interested in framing the situation of stranded migrants in Morocco as a humanitarian crisis which requires the community of states to assist the Moroccan state in urgent relief programmes. Instead of investing in the long-term integration of migrants into Moroccan society, individual member states of the EU, and the EU itself, have channelled increasing amounts of funding over the past two decades through NGOs to finance short-term humanitarian relief programmes for Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. This, in turn, has led to the emergence of non-state actors being involved in providing humanitarian relief to stranded and vulnerable migrants in border areas and has contributed to the establishment of a veritable migration–rescue industry (Andersson 2014a). The interventions in Morocco consisted particularly in the provision of temporary shelters and emergency healthcare in migrants’ self-erected camps in border areas, as well as in short-term emergency support for particularly vulnerable groups such as women and children in the cities. Meanwhile, programmes geared to increase migrants’ longer-term economic, social and political participation in Moroccan society are still scarce.

Fassin (2012) has argued that such a humanitarian lens is complicit in the governance of migration generally and serves strategic ends. In fact, it is a useful tool to justify the inherent contradiction which exists between the general moral claim in the current world polity (Faist 2018a) to uphold universal human rights for everyone and the unwillingness of states to take responsibility for the protection of the rights of non-citizens outside the confines of the nation state. In difference to development, humanitarian relief is often framed in political discourse as apolitical – a neutral act of solidarity for people in need (Nyers 2006). Thus, humanitarian aid can be framed as a voluntary act of support for non-citizens, rather than as a responsibility to be claimed from the international community of states. Framing the situation of stranded migrants as a humanitarian crisis rather than a human rights violation provides the EU with a discourse which activates a *dispositif* of helping, and avoids an explicit political, spatial and temporal contextualization of assistance (Fleischmann & Steinpichler 2017). In short, by limiting support to migrants in so-called transit

countries to short-term interventions, the political responsibilities of the international community in terms of the protection of migrants' human rights become reduced to migrants' right to bare life (Ticktin 2011).<sup>5</sup>

In addition, such an approach rests on a temporary understanding of rights which forgoes any long-term vision of change or necessary power struggles to achieve this change. Short-term interventions to protect migrants in crisis entail a certain arbitrariness and uncertainty in the provision of international assistance and make it possible to delegate this task to non-state actors on the national level. This is particularly worrying in contexts with limited democratic government structures, such as in Morocco.

### **Conclusion: the existential consequences of migration management on the border of Europe for migrants and refugees**

In this chapter, I have shown how the situation of forced immobility and a perception of temporary crisis has been a by-product of the EU externalization policies of migration in Morocco. The emergence of Sub-Saharan African migrants on southern European borders has triggered the development of a specific migration approach by both the European Union and its partner, the government of Morocco. This 'new' so-called Global Approach to Migration, devised by the European Union, is characterized by extended efforts to hamper the mobility of Sub-Saharan African migrants as well as Moroccan nationals towards European countries (Collett 2007). I have also described how the EU has collaborated with the Moroccan state to externalize its border controls to the Moroccan mainland through a variety of measures, which include juridical, technical and financial tools. At the same time, however, the EU has also used a temporal conception of migrant rights to successfully limit its responsibility for stranded migrants' access to rights and services in Morocco by constructing their situation as a humanitarian crisis rather than a development problem. In this sense, EU migration policy in the guise of the GAMM has contributed to discursively frame Sub-Saharan African migrants as rightless beings in Morocco, particularly by concentrating their collaboration with third countries on the effective prevention of mobility and settlement of Sub-Saharan African migrants. I have shown that, in order to do this, the EU uses both spatial and temporal measures which are geared to sanction and prevent particular practices of migration and settlement while promoting others.

For now, it appears that neither development efforts nor migration policies of the EU are actually responding effectively to the new

challenges of migration management in Morocco today. The situation of forcibly immobilized non-citizens in Morocco does not produce binding responsibilities on the international community to act. The social, economic and cultural rights of a population in limbo somewhere in a no man's land is outside international governance measures. This appears as a paradox, considering that human rights have advanced to the moral polity in migration management globally (Faist 2018b).

The chapter has illustrated that the only way in which migrants' rights outside the national confines are recognized is through a humanitarian lens. This produces a certain temporality of rights talk in international migration policy. When migrants' rights are made an international concern, it is mostly in relation to short-term humanitarian relief responses which are geared to protect migrants' right to life. The much more long-term changes needed to guarantee social, economic or political rights for migrants in other nation states remain an underdeveloped issue in development cooperation and migration policy.

The effects of the GAMM are not only felt in Morocco. Similar effects can be observed in countries like Turkey (Suter 2012), Argentina (Salvio-Vammen 2018) or Sudan (Belloni 2015). It is important therefore to embed the effect of forced immobility on migrants' lives within a perspective on international policy making and human rights discourse, as well as connected to a temporal perspective on rights, which has the tendency to relieve the international community of states from its responsibilities to uphold the human rights of people who find themselves outside their own national borders

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Foucault (1977: 194) defines a *dispositif* as: 'a heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical and moral and philanthropic propositions'.
- <sup>2</sup> Some of the asylum seekers and recognized refugees in Morocco could be compared to de facto stateless persons, because while they are recognized as refugees and asylum seekers by the UNHCR, they are not granted citizenship rights in Morocco. They are therefore no longer able to claim the legal protection of any state.
- <sup>3</sup> Signed in 1996.
- <sup>4</sup> In particular, the funds target the northern provinces of Morocco, which were seen as a primary source of poverty, drugs, human smuggling and illegal migration (De Haas 2006).
- <sup>5</sup> Bare life refers here to Giorgio Agamben's (1998) use of the term. For Agamben, 'bare life' exists outside the political and social dimensions of life. It is just biological survival. The way a life is lived, by which Agamben means its possibilities and potentialities, is eliminated in the concept of 'bare life'.

# Travelling Adventures: Migration as an Existential Quest

## Introduction

In this chapter I will look at the reasons why people migrated to Morocco and the ways in which their journeys evolved by relying on migrants' own accounts of their travels. I will analyse both men's and women's journeys, indicating significant similarities and differences within them. I contend that this helps to analyse migration, its causes, and migrants' journeys from a standpoint that goes beyond a mere economic perspective on human mobility. By reviewing Sub-Saharan African migrants' conditions of departure and the variety of regulatory authorities (market, state and family) that structure their movement I will show how aspirations and capabilities to migrate are produced and reproduced not only at the point of departure, but also along the way. I conclude that on their way to Morocco, the status of migrants can shift from legal to illegal, forced to voluntary or trafficked to smuggled, and the amount of control they have over these processes changes with the places they travel to and the time they spend there. The particularly long journeys I describe significantly shape the experience of migration and mark migrants' gendered identities in a way that the ordinary everyday movements of people do not. In fact, the migration processes described here are full of vital conjunctures, which are zones of possibility that emerge around specific periods of potential transformation in life (Johnson-Hanks 2016: 7). According to Johnson-Hanks (2016: 7), vital conjunctures are particularly critical moments when more than usual is at stake. They are outside of normal time in that they no longer entail the expectation of a particular trajectory which would lead to a particular future in some ordered way (Johnson-Hanks 2002).

These processes shape migrants' outlook on life and their life course. They bring to the fore how migration for them is best seen as an existential quest, rather than a mere movement from A to B. Migrants change not only their physical location but also their social location (Pessar and Mahler 2003, Hage 2009a, Stock 2012) and their aspirations and expectations of the future are shaped by these experiences (Johnson-Hanks 2002).

## **Migration as an existential quest**

Contrasting the state's view of the migration process presented previously with a description of migrants' journeys from their own perspectives lets us appreciate migrants' complicated relationship to mobility and settlement. It brings to the fore how their changing migration status and control over their trajectory is mediated by state policies, but also by the market and a diversity of migrant networks. To start with, I look at migrants as 'adventurers' for whom migration is essentially an existential quest rather than a mere economic endeavour. I agree with Hage (2005: 469) that in contemporary migration politics and theory, the significance of movement in migrants' lives is not considered important in order to define them as migrants. Coming from a mobility perspective, Schapendonk (2011) argues, for example, that neoclassical migration theory has resulted in a general tendency in migration research to focus on departure and settlement at the expense of travel. Transnational scholars too have critiqued economically oriented theories for neglecting migrants' continuing relations with home countries and the fact that migrants tend to travel back and forth between home and host countries (Glick Schiller et al 1992). Because of this, some have accused migration researchers of 'methodological nationalism' when they restrict the analysis of migrants' citizenship status to their social, economic, political and cultural relations with host countries (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2003).

However, recent research by authors like Hage (2005), Chu (2010) and Alpes (2011) highlights that the structural position of an individual in their country of origin is particularly critical in shaping the ways in which movement across borders is becoming a significant and important event in people's lives, outweighing all possible setbacks and risks. Rather than being merely a means to cross borders, migration can be meaningfully understood as a movement that helps people to 'go places', in the sense of being a means to individual development, which cannot be realized where they are living, and they therefore choose to pursue this elsewhere. Hage argues in this context that migrants usually do not link their right

and desire for mobility to their social or citizenship status. Instead, he states that mobility is often conceived as a means to increase social and personal freedom and possibilities:

We do not engage in existential mobility in order to experience physical mobility. The contrary is true: we engage in the kind of physical mobility that defines us as migrants because we feel another geographical space is a better launching pad for our existential selves. (Hage 2005: 470)

For Hage (2005), this is what distinguishes migrants' travel from tourists' journeys. It follows that in order to feel migration as a significant event in one's life it must involve being uprooted from things that one is familiar with and a sense of being out of place. This sense of being out of place could well be defined as being displaced from one's social location. Pessar and Mahler (2003: 816) define social location as a person's position within interconnected power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors. The idea of social location is helpful to understand how migrants' existential motives interact with other regulating factors in creating mobility and immobility in different places and times. I agree with Hage (2005: 471) that taking into account this relationship between existential and physical movement allows us to better explain different kinds of mobility rather than equating the experience of the 'totally at home having fun tourist' and that of the 'fragile, dislocated and hesitant refugee'. It also allows us to go beyond the binary representation of the tourist as 'good citizen' and the irregular immigrant as 'benefit scrounger'. By reconstructing the understandings migrants have about their trajectories in the remainder of this chapter, I attempt to outline the tensions and contradictions between aspirations for migration and detention, moving and settling, and overlapping migrant categories, which migration policies seek to distinguish and demarcate.

## **The adventurers**

For migrants in Morocco, migration is a significant, existential movement through which they hope to shift their social location. My interviewees never considered themselves as 'transit migrants' but frequently referred to themselves as 'adventurers' instead.<sup>1</sup> For the adventurers, migration is like a rite of passage that must be overcome in order for them to become a more complete individual, someone the community can be proud of,

like the adolescent child that can face important challenges and tests in life by going through a ‘rite of passage’. Like a rite of passage, migration is necessary for the building of one’s future because it involves becoming uprooted from things one is no longer suited to.<sup>2</sup> That migrants consider themselves as adventurers illustrates that they are already in a liminal situation in their countries of origin, which separates their social existence from the dignity that they hope to achieve through migration (Streiff-Fénart & Segatti 2011).

Jean, a young man from Cameroon who became one of my key informants, described himself to me as an ‘adventurer’. According to his story, he had no obvious economic or political reasons to leave his parents’ home. He grew up in a very strict household in Yaoundé, not very rich, but not poor either. All in all, he considered that he lived a fairly comfortable life and he was able to attend a good school. But while his older brother and sister were excellent students (his brother now holds a PhD and has a good position at a research institute, and his sister is working and has a family), Jean achieved rather mediocre results. His father, a military man, and his mother, a businesswoman, were worried about his future. When he turned 18, he knew that he did not want to go to university and dreamt of a career in acting, an option not approved of by his family. He felt like an outsider in the family, because he had not been as successful as his older siblings and did not want to follow similar paths, but thought that he had to prove himself in his own way. This became the primary reason for him to leave the country. He told me that he did not plan his journey very much at all. One day, after a dispute with his father, he took the little money he had and, without uttering a single word to anyone, took a bus and left for Chad. His example illustrates that existential reasons to migrate are not always dependent on economic conditions in the country of departure, but rather are based on a person’s own perception of their social location with respect to possibilities and choices open to them in life. Both women and men referred to migration as *aller en aventure* (Escoffier 2006, Pian 2009, Alpes 2011), but clearly with gendered undertones. Lise, a woman in her late twenties from Congo, is a good example of this.

Like Jean, Lise came from a middle class household, and both her sister and aunt were French residents, living in Paris. Because of this, her family counted on frequent remittances from them and Lise knew a lot about life in Europe, particularly in France. Despite holding a good job in customer relations for a Belgian firm, she wanted to see the world and ‘amuse herself’, as she told me. Her family was very much against her leaving the country, so she made the preparations secretly and only

told her brother in Kinshasa and her sister in France about her migration plans. She told me:

“They didn’t understand why. They couldn’t see a valid reason. There were no money problems, my life was OK. They thought that if I was to go, I should be waiting to marry someone abroad. Because of my family, I could have married someone well established, some Cameroonian abroad, in France, maybe. True. But I wanted to go, see the world, do something different. I did not want to wait for a man to come and get me.”

Jean and Lise both migrated in the hope of finding a place where they could be free from the family constraints that prevented them from pursuing their own wishes and goals for a future they had freely chosen.

## **The adventure and its relation to economic and political reasons for departure**

At this point, it is worthwhile pointing out that only four of the migrants I interviewed talked about their migration as an existential question in similar terms to Jean and Lise. The majority described their decision to leave as motivated primarily by a mixture of economic and political factors in which a desire for ‘adventure’ was just a part of other, complex reasons. Similar to Pian (2009), I found that the refugees and asylum seekers I encountered were adamant in distinguishing themselves from ‘adventurers’, because they did not choose to leave primarily in order to improve their social status but because they feared for their lives. However, even refugees generally acknowledge that they are ‘in the adventure’ when they refer to their travels through Africa. This indicates that existential motives can exist alongside others, even in cases of forced migration. The migrants’ description of the adventure complicates the idea of a clear-cut difference between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ migration, to which policy makers usually refer.

I got the impression from interviews that migrants’ decision to leave their home countries often came at a moment when something unexpected had happened and disrupted their lives. In fact, migration appeared to be the response to some profound uprooting. The migration project resembled a coping strategy that helped them to deal with existential shocks. Angelique from Cameroon is a good example of a

migrant who had very mixed motives for leaving, which could be described as both ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’, but who preferred nevertheless to give me the adventure-story reason for leaving. According to her description, Angélique also comes from a fairly middle class background:

“I had a good job, an apartment, a husband, a little daughter ... everything was fine. But then, the business where I worked got broken into, they stole everything and killed the boss, so I got laid off. Then, a bit later, my husband left me, just from one day to the next, I think he was sick and tired of the economic difficulties. I guess he went to Gambia for work. I don’t know, I never heard from him again. So I was sitting there on my own, with my daughter to look after. It was very hard. I started to get angry at my husband because I thought: He just leaves me here to deal with everything. So I thought, I can do the same thing he can, if he can go on the adventure, I can as well! I had heard that people were going to Spain and picked oranges there. I thought: I am strong, I am young, I am not going to stay here, hands crossed and lament myself. And this is how I decided to leave my daughter with my mother and come to Spain.”

In Angélique’s case, migration was her solution for recuperating or maintaining a certain status as mother, employee and wife, which she had lost when she lost her job and her husband left her. In her narrative, and other accounts I heard, the ‘adventure line’ was used as a rhetorical means to give their story a more ‘heroic’ or exciting turn and to make it more of a deliberate choice than a ‘forced’ act of desperation. By turning migration into an adventure, migrants regained control over their decision, at least while talking about it. Furthermore, the adventure reasoning made migration look like a legitimate choice and a good alternative in the face of otherwise daunting perspectives for their future lives. I found that women’s motivations in particular to migrate together with their husband and/or children was often related to their fear of losing their status as mother and wife if they stayed behind alone, or fear of political persecution related to their partner’s political activities (see [Table 1](#)).

By contrast, in male migrants’ accounts, migration was often narrated as a strategy to become someone important in public life, someone to stand out in the community as a respectable individual who was contributing to the reputation of his family and kin. They felt that achieving this status would have been impossible had they stayed. An illustration of this point is that in eight cases of male migrants with whom I talked, the decision to

leave coincided with moments in which men had lost business ventures, jobs or other means of making money (see Table 2). Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the diversity of events that have triggered migrants' decisions to leave and which emerged during my interviews with migrants. Often, several events and reasons were combined in their accounts and not all of them wished to talk about them.

Often, migrants' accounts revealed that there was not just one clear reason to leave but that the decision was taken in response to a variety of factors and events (see also Escoffier 2006, Collyer 2010, Schapendonk 2011). So rather than representing simply an economic move, in these accounts migration was legitimized by migrants as a desire to modify, maintain or attain a certain 'social location'. As Pessar and Mahler (2003) imply, social status or self-worth is often also intrinsically interwoven with economic means or political power. Therefore, existential motives for migration should not be viewed separately from economic or political

**Table 1:** Women's accounts of reasons for leaving

<b>Important events in female migrants' accounts that influenced their decision to leave their country of origin</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
• Follow husband in order not to be left behind	9
• Violent attacks on home or possessions	8
• Separation or death of partner/husband	6
• Partner's loss of job	6
• Political persecution	3
• Death of family members	3
• Wish to increase business success	3
• Lack of choices regarding career and lifestyle or those of their children	3

**Table 2:** Men's accounts of reasons for leaving

<b>Important events in male migrants' accounts that influenced their decision to leave their country of origin</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
• Lack of choices regarding career and lifestyle	8
• Political persecution	8
• Loss of job/income	8
• Financial obligations towards family members	5
• Family problems	3
• Accumulation of debt	4
• Violent attacks on home or possessions	4
• Death of family members	3
• Violent conflict with neighbours over land access	3
• Conflict with business partner over money issues	2

ones, which are very often also present, or are even the primary motives. The point I want to make, however, is that it is often the more existential aspirations for migration that give the migratory project its legitimacy from migrants' own viewpoints. In their view, they are not seeking money or freedom simply for the sake of it, but in order to improve themselves as a person or, by extension, offer their families and communities the opportunity for improvement. In some conversations, like that with Angélique, it became clear to me that 'going into the adventure', not the fact of actually arriving somewhere, was also a way of re-establishing themselves as worthwhile community members. Despite the difficulties, risks and uprootedness which migration involved, it was considered a 'courageous act of determination' and better than 'staying put', doing nothing. The challenge of border crossing in a world of increasing mobility controls gives a heroic and social dimension to mobility, and as such the category of the adventurer is distinct from that of the labour migrant or the trafficked victim, for whom migration is thought to be motivated by desperation or mere economic calculations (Streiff-Fénart & Segatti 2011: x).

### **When existential reasons develop during the journey**

Existential motivations for migration also develop during the migratory project and are not always clear at the outset. Pierre's story is a good example of a case in which even a 'forced' exit from his country later turned into a search for personal growth that resulted in his conversion from a refugee into an illegal migrant.

Pierre had to leave Congo due to his activities as a student activist at university. He first managed to get to Benin, where he successfully claimed refugee status. He was very disorientated at first, and tried to survive through a variety of odd jobs, until he finally started to play in a band together with some friends, mostly to make some extra money. Congolese musicians have a positive reputation in many parts of Africa and are often sought after for their particular style of music. This opened up a new world for him. He told me:

“You know, I am a very timid person, really. I do not talk much. But this singing there in front of the audience, that really helped me to become more outgoing. I started to approach people, I was able to negotiate stuff. I was wearing fashionable clothes. I started to have a lot of friends from everywhere.

I learned English because I started talking to people ... I don't know, music just suddenly became this very important thing for me, for my whole life. I cannot be without music ever since. And then I thought, I must make something with this, I want to do more with life than just sitting here and grow old. I want to BE a musician.”

This became Pierre's main reason to migrate further, because Benin simply became too small for a successful career in music. These examples of the mixture of existential, economic and political motivations to travel demonstrate a point that Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2007: 35) make convincingly by suggesting that migrants' identities are actually constantly in the making, and they are reconfigured by the spaces and places they are travelling through and the interactions they have in these places.

Migration is not the evacuation of a place and the occupation of a different one, it is the making and remaking of one's own life on the scenery of the world. World-making. You cannot measure migration in changes of position or location, but in the increase in inclusiveness and the amplitude of its intensities. Even if migration starts sometimes as a form of dislocation (forced by poverty, patriarchal exploitation, war, famine), its target is not relocation but the active transformation of social space. (Papadopoulos & Tsianos 2007: 35)

Taking 'adventure' as a starting point is revealing in how far migration is lived as a negative or positive experience by migrants, in how far it is conceived as a voluntary or a forced strategy, and why it is perceived as the best option available despite the risks it involves.

## **The long road to becoming a successful migrant**

Contrary to transit explanations of migration, migration projects do not always follow carefully considered, predetermined plans. For the adventurers, migration is not limited to a fixed destination, but rather is open to opportunities that develop during the journey (Schapendonk 2011: 100).

Of the 40 migrants I interviewed, only 23 left their country of origin with the clear aim of 'going to Europe'. Some of these, however, were women and men who followed their brother, husband or friend in order not to be left behind and did not have a clear idea of where they

were going. Ten of the remaining migrants were forced migrants and the remaining seven were heading to other destinations, such as Libya or Mali. However, all of them ended up in Morocco after their initial plans for effective settlement did not work out (see Tables 3 and 4).

The 23 migrants who clearly wanted to go to Europe had rather vague ideas of the countries they wanted to travel to and why, where they were located on a map and how they would get there. For them, supporting findings by Kastner (2010), Alpes (2011) and Schapendonk (2011), ‘Europe’ stood for an indefinite place where life was better, pastures were greener and money was to be found.

These examples contradict the idea that people who end up in Morocco do so because they had planned from the start to go there. They also contradict the idea that migrants’ direction of transit is always towards economically developed countries. For many, the desire to reach Europe only became stronger during the journey, and after the realization that other options were not feasible. In a way, some migrants appeared to see it as a ‘last chance’ to escape poverty and exclusion or to be successful in life. It was the ‘last thing’ on the hierarchy of a large number of countries they had been travelling through without finding what they were looking for: a decent way to live. Europe was not a clearly defined destination, but some unspecified goal that would signal the end of their migratory trajectory, the end of the search for a better life. The reasons why migrants cannot have clear ideas about where they will eventually settle is not only related to their limited mobility options but also to their ability to make the available avenues for migration work for them.

**Table 3:** Migrants’ original destinations differentiated by gender

<b>Original destination</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>Other destinations</b>	<b>Did not know</b>
Male migrants (19)	12	3	4
Female migrants (21)	11	4	6

**Table 4:** Changes in destinations differentiated by gender

<b>Change of desired destination during travels</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>1 time</b>	<b>2 times</b>	<b>3 or more times</b>
Male migrants (19)	10	3	4	2
Female migrants (21)	12	5	4	

*The long road to paradise*

Aspirations to migrate do not square neatly with capabilities to do so, leaving a great part of the population in developing countries relegated to a mass of would-be migrants in forced immobility, as the works of Hammar and colleagues (1997), Carling (2002), Chu (2010) and Alpes (2011) demonstrate. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the outcome of states' efforts to restrict migrants' capabilities to move in Africa is resulting in a decrease in the desire to migrate. Rather, the migrants' journeys described here demonstrate that the increasing restrictions for legal migration in Africa lead above all to migrants taking longer and more risky journeys. Most of the migrants I encountered had travelled overland for between six months and a year before finally reaching Morocco. Five had spent between three and seven years to get there.

It was evident from migrants' travel accounts that they had dismissed the possibility of migrating legally to Europe (or elsewhere) or of travelling by aeroplane. Their inability to do so was related to increasing migratory controls in developed nations, combined with the legal and financial difficulties of accessing passports, visas and plane tickets (Alpes 2011: 80). Furthermore, some of the migrants I interviewed, like Jean and Lise, migrated against the explicit will of their families, from whom they had received no financial or practical support in planning their migration. As Alpes (2011) shows in her study on Cameroonian would-be migrants, however, family connections, money and institutional support are often instrumental in ensuring success in visa and passport applications. Despite these constraints, the migrants I encountered did find a way out of their countries of origin, often aware of the risks involved, but unsure about the time the journey would take. Jacques' story exemplifies how changing migratory regimes in the past 15 years have had a tangible impact on personal migration histories but do not necessarily deter people from moving.

In 1992, Jacques flew from Congo to Germany. At that time he was able to access a valid passport and a tourist visa without any great problem. When he arrived at Munich airport, he filed for asylum. He stayed there for over five years before he was deported back when his claim was rejected. Once back in Congo, he set up various successful businesses with the money he had saved while working in Germany and became rather well-off. At that time, he told me, he was not thinking of migrating again. However, due to the civil war that broke out soon after he arrived, he lost all his assets. Chased from his business and house, he found himself left with nothing and had to leave the country again. This time, however, he was unable to obtain a passport or a visa to Germany and had no money

for an airfare. This is why he finally opted to take the land route instead. After spending two years in Chad and several months in Nigeria, he finally travelled through the desert to Morocco, where he was still waiting for a possibility to reach Germany when I met him. Jacques told me that he had never expected the trajectory to be so long. He initially thought he would be able to travel there within a matter of weeks.

Only five of the migrants I encountered had actually been able to fly to Morocco directly from their home countries. The others had all travelled overland through a variety of countries before reaching Morocco. In the 1990s, the majority of Congolese refugees in Morocco could enter the country by plane (Goldschmidt 2002). By contrast, many of my Congolese respondents who had arrived in Morocco almost ten years later came via land through Cameroon, Benin, Mali, Niger, Algeria, entering Morocco through Oujda. Migrants from Cameroon, Mali, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Nigeria used similar routes through the Saharan desert. Almost all of them spent long periods of time in different countries before moving on.

It is interesting to question why, despite the increasingly difficult conditions for migration and ever more restrictive regimes, the migrants I encountered were able to make the journey and determined to continue their travels. In the following sections, I will attempt to describe how migrants move in a context of chasing high aspirations with limited capacity to do so. Other researchers have documented these migratory strategies of travel with few resources in Africa (Van Hear 2004, Escoffier 2006, Collyer 2007, Bazonzi 2008, Khachani 2008, Pian 2009). My point, however, is to show how plans for further migration were refined, changed or dismissed while migrants were living and travelling through different places. I argue that these fragmented journeys (Collyer 2010) actually influenced the ways in which they made sense of their migration trajectory. The fragmented nature of their journey forced them to find justifications for the ways in which their possibilities for mobility were modified and their motivations adapted to the reality surrounding them. In this way, the person beginning the journey is not the same person during the journey or at its finish.

### **Moving through the barriers: the regulatory authorities that structure migrants' moves and stays**

Ibrahim and Abdoul had arrived in Rabat six months before I first met them on the street in Takadoum. They had just turned 18 and were

childhood friends who had migrated together from the same village in order to try their luck, hoping to play as professionals in one of Morocco's football clubs. When I asked them about how they actually planned their trip, the two started laughing: "We had no idea, really. We thought that there was a big asphalted highway that would lead from Guinea straight through the desert to Morocco!" At first, I could not understand this seeming naiveté and lack of planning. I was surprised to find out that Abdoul's and Ibrahim's story was not an exception. Very few of the migrants I interviewed knew at the beginning of their travels how they would reach their destination or even where exactly their destination was.

I soon learnt that it was wrong to confuse this lack of knowledge with ignorance and lack of planning. Rather, I came to understand that decisions about how and where to go were not so much based on how much they knew about their destinations, but how they interpreted the knowledge they had as credible or not (Alpes 2011: 7). Migrants' destinations and ways of travelling were marked by a constant evaluation of the available opportunities and the risks involved, according to the information they possessed.

Their calculations were more strongly related to evaluation of their opportunities to succeed in a context generally full of constraints and uncertainties about possibilities to move. Echoing Alpes' (2011) descriptions of aspirations to migrate in north-west Cameroon and Schapendonk's (2011) and Branchet's (2011) ethnographic account of transit from Africa to Europe, the migrants I encountered described how planning for their journey was often futile because the regulatory frameworks which make it possible to leave and to settle do not follow clearly discernible rules. Instead, it is a matter of luck and one's position within networks that most often determine where one finally travels to and by which means. As a side effect of these dynamics, migrants' journeys stretched out into infinite lengths.

Building on the work of Alpes (2011: 211) and Roitman (2005), I contend that multiple regulatory frameworks shape trajectories and migrant flows as well as migrants' particular migratory strategies. The state, the market, family and migrant networks are all implicated in the modification of plans, destinations and forms of travel. The migrant experiences I describe here illustrate that these regulatory frameworks do not only play out at the outset of the migratory project or in the country of destination, but are omnipresent throughout the journey. In what follows, I will give a few examples of how the state uses the production of papers to exert control over migrants' movements, and how this is experienced as an uncontrollable challenge for migrants during their trajectory.

*The state and production of papers*

Visa regulations within Africa are a case in point. Many West African nationals who are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)<sup>3</sup> are visa exempt from travel into neighbouring countries. By contrast, Congolese and Cameroonians, for example, do need visas to enter ECOWAS countries. This in itself determined the fact that some migrants travelled legally for part of their journey but without documents for another.

Often, migrants did not know about the particular visa restrictions in the countries they were travelling through. As visas can normally only be obtained in the country of origin, it is difficult to continue regular travel if one is already on the way. Furthermore, a valid passport is necessary in order to obtain a visa. While it seems that it should be easy for a citizen of a state to apply for a passport, in reality, this is not always the case, at least not for the migrants I encountered. Apart from the obvious problems that refugees face with regard to travel documents, passports can also be a difficult issue for other migrants. Peter from Nigeria told me about his particular problems:

“When I left, I had a passport, a real good Nigerian passport. Cost me a lot of money. You see, you have to bribe people, because otherwise you wait forever to get one. But then, when I came to Niger, I was told that I needed a Malian passport to cross over the border to Algeria because I didn’t have a visa in mine. But as I was already in Niger, I couldn’t go back. So, the people offered me to take my passport in exchange for a Malian one. But in Algeria, the police got me and they said it was a false passport, and this is why they put me in prison.”

For Peter, the fact that his Malian passport was ‘false’ and ‘irregular’ made little sense, considering that he had acquired his own ‘legal’ passport by bribing an official. For him, both visas and passports were obtainable through payment so the distinction between regular and irregular travel in terms of documents became blurred. For Peter, obtaining of a passport was regulated by access to resources and people, rather than through laws and regulations.

Pierre, who I mentioned earlier, actually received refugee status upon his arrival in Benin. However, when he decided to travel on to Morocco, he had to do so irregularly, because his status did not allow him to travel unauthorized. When he arrived in Morocco and attempted to renew his asylum claim on the basis of his prior status in Benin, he was advised not to do so. Instead, he was told to lie and pretend that he had never had a

status and that this was his first asylum claim. Using this strategy, Pierre was eventually granted refugee status. Had he been honest about his prior status in Benin, it is most likely that he would not have been recognized in Morocco as a refugee.

Needless to say that while Pierre could refer back to some traumatic event in his life that made his migratory project seem ‘legitimate’ to the state in Benin and in Morocco, other migrants, such as Jean and Lise, were not able to construct themselves as ‘legitimate’ migrants in the same way. They were, and remained for most parts of their journey, illegal trespassers in the eyes of the law. The ways in which refugee status was accorded to some and not to others was a mystery to most migrants I met. They did not understand why certain life stories were deemed to accord refugee status while others were rendered illegitimate. In a conversation about this, Marlene and Bia were talking about the senselessness of these categories. Marlene said:

“Look at us, we are both from Congo, we are both in a similar situation: small children, no husband. Poverty. Difficult life. And yet Bia has refugee status because she has seen the war. I am from a region where there were no bullets, but there was hunger. So I am a refugee of hunger. That should be counted as refugee as well.”

### *The market: public transport, bribes and money*

It is not only visas, passports or migration status that frame mobility and directions of travel. Other papers, such as tickets for public transport, are also a problem which impacts on not only the time people spend in places but also how and where they are able to travel. In certain parts of their journey, such as in Niger, means of transport are scarce and expensive. Particularly in the Sahel, this is sometimes because there is limited access to suitable roads for motor vehicles or because minefields from former armed conflicts in the area make journeys dangerous and complicated – or both (Branchet 2011). Migrants often rely on drivers and local knowledge in order to know where to go and how to get there. In many instances, bribes must be paid to police officials, drivers, border officials and informants who know the region. Jean told me that this characterized his passage through Niger, where infrastructures are particularly scarce:

“Once you get into Niger, everyone is corrupt. The taxi drivers, the bus drivers, everyone. Even the public bus

company is corrupt. They work together with the police. So you pay a lot of money to get to the Algerian border. They have just made a business out of the people that want to travel to Algeria.”

The examples mentioned above show that the criteria by which illegal and legal movement is defined by states and other regulatory agencies in the market are subject to changing political priorities (Anderson 2012) and the economic contexts in which they occur. Often, states are implicated in fraud while policing these regulations (Alpes 2011). This makes it particularly difficult for migrants to decipher and understand the rules attached to movement and settlement during their journey through Africa. In fact, this insight stands awkwardly in opposition to the view that migrants are travelling ‘illegally’ towards Morocco because it challenges the basis upon which legal and illegal movements are produced.

### *Families, friends and other mediators*

In such circumstances, migrants often need recourse to connections, mediators or friends and family who provide them with the right information, money or contacts in order to access the necessary ‘papers’ or resources for the next leg of their journey (Riccio 2001, Escoffier 2006, Collyer 2007, Grillo 2007, Alpes 2011, Schapendonk 2011). But families, brokers and smuggling networks can also create their own regulations for onward travel, which can lead to changes in direction and a loss of control over the journey. Often, migrants have to ask for help from others in order to find their way and continue their journey. Friendships grow and travel companions are found in these extreme circumstances. After Jean arrived in Chad by bus from Cameroon, he was very lucky to fall into the hands of a particularly nice individual who marked his entire journey thereafter, as he told me:

“When I arrived in Chad I did not know what to do. I went to a hotel and asked the owner where I could go and get a bus to Niger or Algeria. He laughed at me and told me that I had to go back to Nigeria and from there to Niger, that there was no direct connection to Niger from Ndjamena. I was quite depressed. At the bus station, I met this Nigerian student, a girl, who was going to university in Ndjamena. She was going back to see her parents in Nigeria and she told me simply to come with her to her parents’ home! I went with her and

stayed in her house for six weeks. Then, she accompanied me to Kano and from there, I took the bus to Niger. I will never forget her. I have lost her number, I cannot contact her anymore ... but she was such a kind person. I have never, never met anyone like her again. Who knows where I would have ended up without her?"

Jean was aware that this particular encounter was in fact very significant and saved him from the kind of trouble many other migrants go through when arriving in foreign places without knowledge of the future travel possibilities.

Eleven of the women I encountered travelled at least part of the way with male companions who were either their husbands or 'travel husbands' (Kastner 2010, Alpes 2011). According to their accounts, this provided them with the necessary protection and help. While I would not say that these women necessarily always felt better protected or helped if they were accompanied, it did *legitimize* their travelling in their own eyes. For example, in five cases, the women explained to me that their husband could not protect them from being attacked or robbed along the way. Four women also told me that they had to pay for the majority of the trip with their own money. In all cases, it appeared that it was usually the husband/travel companion who made the decisions about where and when they were leaving for the next destination and arranged the onward trip. But despite this lack of autonomy, it felt to me that by adopting the role of the female in need of protection, women could justify their need for male company and support. Paradoxically, this also helped them to maintain and/or increase their social status, and therefore maintain a certain control over their migratory trajectory as a socially acceptable strategy (Alpes 2011). It often meant, however, that women who travelled in this way did not make a choice about where they wanted to travel, but rather followed their husband or companion.

Families are important in facilitating access to papers and connections in another way. In Lise's case, it was her sister in France who sponsored her first (failed) trip to Paris and her aunt in Cameroon who determined her first destination when travelling overland the second time. Most of the migrants I knew were dependent on some kind of remittances from their family members during their time in Morocco or while they were travelling in order to be able to continue their journey.<sup>4</sup> Family members, however, are not always beneficial and trustworthy individuals who help migrants to succeed; they also can shape migratory trajectories in unexpected ways. In two cases I witnessed, for example, family members were involved in deceit and exploitation. Two young men from Guinea

who were friends of Ibrahim and Abdoul (mentioned earlier), had been promised a football contract in a professional team in exchange for a fee by a family member who was already in Morocco. One of the young boys went first to Mauritania to work as a domestic servant for an entire year to get the money together before embarking on his trip to Morocco. However, when they arrived in the country together, the contract never materialized and the family member had vanished with their money.

### *Ghettos*

More often than not, however, it is not strangers or family members that migrants have to rely on but fellow migrants they encounter on the way. This is increasingly the case the further away they move from their own countries of origin. In general, migrants have to submit to the rules of intermediaries who help them to access travel documents, find work or shelter and pay for these services and not all of them have the best interests of migrants in mind when they offer their services to them (Escoffier 2006, Branchet 2011, Schapendonk 2011). Silvester from Ghana put it even more bluntly:

“When you travel, you pay. You pay all the time, for every little thing you can’t do yourself. And there are many things you cannot do yourself. You need help from other people. That’s the way it is. So you pay or you stay!”

Many migrants I talked to had to rely on ‘migrant ghettos’ during their journeys at some point or another in order to get help and information. These groups normally include fellow migrants who are also ‘on the road’ and organize further legs of the journey, provide accommodation for new arrivals and help them in the quest for work. However, they are not always supportive or altruistic structures for compatriots in a foreign land. Instead, in ghettos migrants often exploit other migrants. Yene (2010), whom I met in Morocco, describes these networks in his autobiographical account of his trip from Cameroon to Chad:

He crossed the frontier between Cameroon and Chad on his motorbike, without any controls. The strangers appeared unwelcoming to him. Nevertheless, he managed to find a place where some other compatriots were renting rooms. He was guided to a bar where two women asked him to choose between the Congolese ghetto and a room to rent.

Alain had never heard of a ‘ghetto’ and was perplexed. He thought of a structured organization, planned by the embassy to welcome the nationals. Therefore, he agreed to be brought there. He found himself in a shed behind the bar and saw six men, without shirts, smoking cigarettes. One of them welcomed him: Don’t be afraid, I am the boss here, welcome in Chad. Which city do you come from? You will pay me 2,000 francs to stay here some time, this is what we call the right of the ghetto. How does your country do? Your roads, are they now asphalted? ... I don’t know a lot about this damn country any longer. ... Ah, you are travelling to Europe! Well, if you have the money, we will provide you the necessary papers. You will arrive in Libya and you can work there some months. The rest depends on you. You can then continue to Italy or you can return to your country with your money. (Yene 2010: 57)<sup>5</sup>

## **Losing control in the desert**

While the previous sections have attempted to show how migrants retain a certain control over their migration trajectories and their dealings with the different regulatory forces that shape them, the further they travel away from support networks such as families and friends, the more they lose control over the forces which structure their mobility.

Many of my interviewees found that the relative control they had over the timing and type of their migratory strategy diminished as they travelled across the Sahara from Niger, through Algeria to Morocco. Most migrants lose complete control over where they end up when they place themselves in the hands of smugglers. This is in part because travel through the desert is the only existing means to reach Morocco or Libya by land. The non-existence of public transport infrastructure and the fact that migration controls in Algeria and Libya have been tightening since 2005 make independent travel almost impossible (Branchet 2011). In this context, Jean continued to tell me about his trip from Niger to Algeria:

“Half of the trip I didn’t even know where I was, because I was just put into cars and from there to a house and the next day I was told I had to pay again and was brought to a different place and from there again somewhere else ... I thought we had crossed the border to Algeria but soon found out that I was still in Niger.”

My interview data suggests that migrants experience most difficulties in their migratory project in the desert, as this part of the journey is heavily controlled by smuggling rings and is therefore expensive and very strictly organized according to very male-dominated power hierarchies in which single women migrants are particularly vulnerable and subordinated to male control. Migrants pay middlemen, who then guide them to migrant houses in different towns in the desert, where they have to wait (often crammed together in small rooms) until they can continue the journey or where they have to work until they can pay for the next part of the journey (Escoffier 2006, Branchet 2011, Schapendonk 2011). Even Lise, who until then had been able to migrate relatively autonomously because of financial support from home, recalls traumatic experiences of being stuck in a desert town, without any money to continue the journey and forced to provide sexual services to the smugglers she was dependent upon:

“You just want to get away from all these men, ... they are everywhere, they sleep in the same room, they eat from the same plate, ... So you do whatever to get away from there. So you pay with what you have got, with your body, anything. You clean their mess. You do things you would never imagine yourself to be doing elsewhere.”

Research has documented how women and children are often sexually abused or forced to work in order to pay for the next part of the trip (Keynaert et al 2008). Often they engage in prostitution in order to make the necessary money to continue the trip through the desert (Noel 2007, Keynaert et al 2008, Kastner 2010). This is particularly likely if they are travelling alone, or are separated from their male travel companions.

Jules and Sara, a couple from Central African Republic also recall that they tried to avoid separation from each other and their child at all costs, because they knew that a frequent strategy employed by smugglers was to extort money from couples and single women travelling with children in this way. Almost all migrants I talked to evoke their trip through the desert as the most horrible migratory experience. Many migrants I encountered were so traumatized by the memories of it that they did not want to talk about it.

## **Trafficking, smuggling and regulatory authorities**

According to the international treaties<sup>6</sup> and most international policy documents, the practices described above would probably be considered

as both smuggling and trafficking. According to these definitions, people who are forced against their will to cross borders and who are coerced to work in exploitative conditions in the destination country are considered to be trafficked and those who wilfully and voluntarily establish a commercial transaction with others in order to be brought by irregular means into a country are supposed to have been smuggled in (Gallagher 2002). One could therefore assert that while they are in the desert, all migrants, irrespective of their prior trajectories, their gender or their class, and their former migratory status, become ‘victims of trafficking’ because, for the most part, they do not know where they are, where they are going or how to get there. Equally, all of them could qualify as being smuggled because they pay for their transport, their passports and their guides in order to reach the other side of the border. However, the processes I have described above and by which the migrants I encountered had to move around display a complicated interplay between moments of ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ movements as well as ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ stays and crossings. It is therefore difficult to establish an exact cut-off point at which legal migration ends, trafficking starts or smuggling begins. It is also difficult to pinpoint with clarity which actors are effectively ‘legalizing’ which types of movement and vice versa. It is difficult to say at which point ‘illegality’ actually begins.

Contrary to the assumptions conventional trafficking discourse tends towards, it is not only migrant ghettos and smuggling networks that are responsible for inhumane and exploitative conditions in the desert and migrants’ irregular forms of movement. According to the accounts I heard, the Algerian police had a great deal to contribute as well. Again, Jean’s story in the desert is illustrative of the ways in which state security forces can become implicated in human smuggling.

“One day, when we were on the truck, the chief told us to get down, to start walking. We all had to get off the truck and had to start walking. He told us, you just go, the town is 14 km away, you just walk along this road. And we walked. We had almost no water left. It was getting dark. And then, of course, the Algerian police got us. They pillaged everything, they took everything we had, they even took our passports and they raped the women. They took us to prison. I stayed there for six weeks. I remember that I got my last money from selling a pair of jeans that I had left to one of the guards. When I got out, they deported us back to another town in the desert. Really far away, there was nothing. No possibility to get work or transport back. I had to stay there

six months until I was able to get the necessary money to travel back to Maghnia with one of the trucks that supplied the military with food.”

The fact that Jean was eventually able to continue his trip through the help of military-related transport on a truck that took him back to a place where he could rejoin smuggler networks, is a striking example of the ways in which ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ is a matter of legal and normative conventions. Alpes (2011: 138) is right to point out that the ways in which states establish legitimate and illegitimate types of mediation for documents is productive of the very notion of the state and the law. It creates a narrative of legality that implies that ‘the law’ is guaranteed to be transparent and fair and thus by extension supposedly unmediated and external to monetary logic. That the law is not always universally applicable, transparent and fair, but indeed is arbitrary and place and time dependent, is exemplified by the fact that the extent to which migrants are forced to rely on mediation outside state institutions to access papers, money, work or transport is actually dependent on the places they are travelling through. So while it appears that in certain places the structural impediments to legal migration are extremely high, there are other spaces and places in which migrants are able to access the necessary means for mobility – even through state-mediated institutions. To get credible information about how to work around and with existing rules and regulatory authorities was therefore key for the migrants I encountered. This turned out to be the major challenge for many, not only in the moment of departure but during the whole trajectory.

When migrants reach Morocco having travelled through the desert in such conditions, they are usually not the same people they were when they set out from their countries of origin. All of the migrants I talked to said that they had lost all their money during the journey, were often in a bad physical state and generally frightened and exhausted. Women had often been physically abused and separated from their travel companions. Ten people told me that they witnessed friends or family members and children dying along the way. At this point, their ‘adventure’ becomes a nightmare and they are more than aware of the overwhelming forces of migration control. In all the travel accounts of the migrants I spoke to, the desert route was described as a turning point in their experience of migration and a moment in which they were fearful for their lives. The desert had converted them all into destitute and vulnerable individuals with few options concerning their future migration project.

## Changing destinations – changing social location – changing self

During their travels, moments of immobility were used by migrants to orientate their social location in relation to their opportunities for movement. The constant change of destinations which characterized many migrants' plans during these phases of the journey also reflects their struggle to adapt to the regulatory authorities that structure successful movement and stay.

Mirroring the ways in which the state, the market and social networks legally and normatively construct migrants on the basis of how and why they move, the figure of the citizen is a political and legal construct, based around how and why people settle and participate in a particular community (Anderson 2012). As migrants or citizens, people's ability to take part in a society is therefore dependent on a range of political, legal, economic and also social factors that determine their social location with regard to movement and settlement. For example, Hibou (1999) and Roitman (2005) show how, in Africa, through the fragile position of the state, informal networks and economies are gaining increasing importance as regulatory authorities for citizenship. However, Roitman (2005) in particular argues that these alternative regulatory authorities are not replacing the state in questions of citizenship. Rather, they are working alongside it, perpetuating often exploitative relationships and hierarchies, which serve to impede some people's ability to access citizenship (Roitman 2005). Migrants are exposed to these unequal power relationships, which stop them settling as rightful citizens in the places they are travelling through.

Almost all the migrants I encountered in Morocco had tried to find somewhere to build their lives in one or more of the countries they had travelled through. Sebastien is a good example of a person whose trajectory is marked by a constant search for a place to settle. He attempted several times, without success, to find a suitable 'social location' within the hierarchies of power that he encountered in the countries he travelled to. A chemistry graduate who originally fled Congo after being politically persecuted, Sebastien first tried to establish himself in Cameroon. He managed to get a residency permit for a year, but was unable to renew it. It was difficult for him to find a satisfactory job under these circumstances. He therefore decided to move to Nigeria, where he stayed for two years, making whiskey without a licence. He used his chemistry skills to make high-quality alcohol and earned a reasonable salary from it. While he was

in Nigeria, he learnt English and made considerable efforts to get a job in the chemical industry because he considered staying in Nigeria for good. Everything was going fine until a group of competitors in the whiskey business threatened to denounce him at the immigration office for irregular stay and brewing without a licence. As they had the necessary contacts to do this while he did not, he felt compelled to travel further. He told me:

“You know, if I had known people in Nigeria who could have protected me, maybe I would have stayed. But I knew that with these people, the whiskey people, it was better not to mess with them. I had no chance. They were influential people, they had connections.”

Even for people like Sebastien, who is relatively well-educated, skilled and without dependants, migration towards Morocco became the only feasible alternative after several failed attempts to become a ‘rightful citizen’ elsewhere. It is easy to imagine that people like Bia, who travelled with her two children from Congo, where she had been raped and victimized by combatants, are far less likely to overcome the barriers to citizenship:

“I don’t even remember all the countries I have been travelling through. I did not stay anywhere for long, because there was nowhere to stay. Most of the time, I have been thinking of surviving. Simply surviving. I did not go to see the UNHCR, I did not even know what the UNHCR was. I was just trying to make it to the next day.”

Unlike Sebastien but in common with many of the other women I met in Morocco, Bia could not count on formal qualifications or skills that could have facilitated her entry into a comfortable life in another African country. Instead, she told me that for the most part she was dependent on financial support from male travel companions and working in prostitution. Sebastien and Bia had no access to the vital informal networks that dominate life and survival strategies in so many parts of Africa today (Hibou 2004, Roitman 2005). Both were outsiders in countries in which neither the state nor other ‘institutions’ protect and cater for the rights of vulnerable people or migrants.

While some migrants are able to use their role as ‘foreigner’, ‘woman’ or ‘worker’ to fit into the receiving society, in many circumstances, by doing so, they are relegated to marginal exterritorial spaces in these countries, from which they can only escape through onward migration. These spaces are largely the by-product of tightening migration control policies that on the

one hand regulate migration status, and, on the other, heighten the power of other, non-state regulatory authorities of settlement when migrants cannot access migration status (Streiff-Fénart & Segatti 2011). The problem of finding a decent life in other African countries is not only connected to the lack of economic opportunities but also to the limited control migrants have over the regulatory authorities which structure citizenship.

## **Conclusion: the existential consequences of migratory processes**

In this chapter I have analysed why the migrants I encountered in Morocco persisted in migrating despite their limited capacities to do so. The examples I have given show that migrants' motivations to leave their country are often linked with a desire to change their social status, and cannot be reduced to simple economic or political push factors. It is therefore misleading to describe Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco as labour migrants with a desire to reach the European Union.

Furthermore, the data in this chapter has shown that migrants do not conceive of their travels as illegitimate or criminal acts of trespassing. Nor do they necessarily conceive of themselves as 'trafficked victims' or 'smuggled' beings. Instead, migrants talk about their travels in ways that demonstrate that the regulatory authorities which shape migration opportunities are in fact multiple (Alpes 2011). State institutions sometimes overlap and compete with informal economic agents such as migration brokers, smuggling networks, friends and family ties in the regulation of migrants' trajectories and ways of travelling. All of them shape the different mechanisms through which migration becomes possible and is made a 'legitimate' form of travel. Migrants have to navigate their ways through these diverse legal, economic and social boundaries to movement and settlement. As migration controls have become increasingly severe in Africa and Europe in the last two decades, it is increasingly necessary for migrants to depend on informal networks, either social or economic, to access papers, travel permits, money and protection during their journeys. These networks, or informal regulatory authorities, as they may well be called, are omnipresent in Africa in a variety of areas of life and have increasingly come to define people's livelihoods. This is in part the consequence of a decline of state power due to privatization and conflict in many countries in Africa (Hibou 2004, Roitman 2005). Migrants therefore do not question such regulatory authorities as legitimate or illegitimate but rather perceive them as facts of life and part of their daily reality (Alpes 2011).

According to their social location, their gender and their class, migrants have more or less control over these processes and use different strategies to overcome possible barriers to mobility and settlement. But migrants' abilities and opportunities to migrate (Carling 2002) are changing during their trajectory, and are, in fact, dynamic. Migrants' social location with respect to mobility as well as the opportunities they have to realize their aspirations are shaped by the configuration of power relations between regulatory authorities in different places and over time (Massey 1999). Therefore, for many migrants it is necessary to spend increasingly longer periods of time in different countries in order to finance and organize the next leg of the journey or to compensate for their limited access to social relations and networks that could mediate access to mobility for them.

In places where state regulation is absent, and informal economic systems prevail, not only is migration difficult but long-term settlement is too. In the cases of the migrants I have presented here, some attempted to stay in countries along the way only to discover that their dream of a better life could not be fulfilled when the rules and norms of citizenship and state protections did not apply to them. In these instances, onward mobility becomes a necessity rather than a choice, and settlement is no longer a rational or logical option. Europe as a destination therefore often becomes more of a last resort than a clearly envisioned goal for most of the migrants I encountered. Schapendonk (2011: 112) is right to argue that both temporal and spatial aspects of migrants' trajectories determine moving aspirations and capabilities, and contradict the idea of migration as a single shift from origin to destination.

For this reason also, I agree with Collyer (2010) that is easy to mistake the motivations of migrants engaged in 'fragmented journeys', as he calls them, if only the most recent stage of their trajectory is considered. In order to be able to understand the actions of these migrants, their attitude towards life in Morocco and their aspirations for the future, one must include those aspects that defined them in the past and still resonate with them in the present (Emirbayer & Mische 1998). The reasons for their current situation can only be understood by a longer-term perspective of the previous stages of their journey. In short, answering the question 'Who are the migrants in Morocco?' requires drawing out a spatial-temporal link between migrants' situation in Morocco and their particular journey to arrive there.

In neoclassical migration theory, the migratory trajectory is often understood as a linear process from A to B, characterized by a relatively short, time-limited 'phase' of travelling and a definite period of 'settlement' in the new, host country. Often, this also entails a view of migration as a 'modernizing process' (Senay 2009), in which a one-way movement

ends with settlement, leaving behind ‘underdeveloped selves’ in order to become ‘better ones’. In this discourse, the migrant becomes the signifier of a particular conceptualization of mobility: the individualized subject laboriously calculating the cost–benefit ratio of their trip and then starting an itinerary with fixed points of departure and arrival (Papadopoulos & Tsianos 2007). This view on migration is also implicit in neoliberal descriptions of globalization as ‘time–space compression’ (Harvey 1989), in which mobility is usually depicted as unfettered and as an increasingly universal feature of the ‘modern’ world we live in. According to these views, access to mobility is not mediated by power differentials, but governed by individual interests and needs and generally open to everyone, notwithstanding their social position. People moving in this ideal world are understood as living a ‘modern’ lifestyle. The fragmented journeys of the migrants in question here complicate this picture. They suggest that migration might be better understood as a dynamic journey, which is virtually continual over a lifetime. In the process, migrants change who they are, what they are and who they want to be but also where they want to go. Also, crucially, they move in and out of the statist categories that are used to classify different groups of migrants as either legal or illegal, voluntary or forced, trafficked or smuggled.

Furthermore, the examples I have given indicate that this journey is not the same for everyone and instead of making people richer, happier and more powerful, it can also render them powerless and dependent upon others. Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2007) add to this that migrants are also simultaneously changing the environment around them through and during the migration process.

Migration is like big waves, they never appear precisely where they are expected, their arrival can never be predicted exactly, but they always come, they have a magnitude to reorder the whole given geography of a seashore, the sandbanks, the seabed, the maritime animals and plants, the rocks, the beach. (Papadopoulos & Tsianos 2007: 3)

An acknowledgement of this remaking of motivations, identities and the structural environment around them challenges the usefulness of reified and static migration categories for controlling, regulating and channelling individual people’s movements and settlement through state policies. It questions the use of time as ‘eternal’ in migrant categories such as illegal/legal, forced/voluntary, trafficked/smuggled because people are constantly shifting statuses. Furthermore, people can occupy more than one category at a time, when they are, for example, both smuggled and seeking asylum.

They are also often categorized differently in different places. Therefore, inherent in the use of these kinds of classifications is a certain violence and objectification which stems from the desire to fix and pin down what is actually fluid and profoundly human.

By the time migrants reach Morocco they are no longer at the same point as when they departed. Their expectations of being able to become someone through migration are still not realized. They are still searching, but now they have lost the relative control they once had over their journey. After their journey through the desert, migration has become a negative experience for most of them. However, as the next chapter will explain in more detail, this is just the starting point of a long period of forced immobility in which they are effectively stuck in a country against their will.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This has equally been noted by Escoffier (2006), Pian (2009) and Schapendonk (2011).
- <sup>2</sup> According to the work of Bredeloup (1994), Pian (2009) and Alpes (2011) similar terms for migration exist in a variety of African countries. 'Bush falling', for example, is used in some parts of Cameroon. According to Alpes (2011), this term refers back to tribal practices of 'hunting in the wilderness' in which members of tribes go out fighting and surviving in 'bush', in order to come back as stronger and better individuals and leaders, usually equipped with 'trophies' like money or other status symbols.
- <sup>3</sup> ECOWAS is composed of 15 states: Benin, Burkina, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.
- <sup>4</sup> This is also corroborated by other research (Collyer 2007, Pian 2009, Branchet 2011, Schapendonk 2011).
- <sup>5</sup> My translation from the original French text.
- <sup>6</sup> These are the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Article 3 (a) and the Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Article 3 (a).

# Arriving in Morocco: Becoming Trapped in a Context of Uncertainty

## Introduction

While the previous chapter analysed how migrants navigate more or less successfully the multiple obstacles to mobility on their way to Europe and change who they are in the process, in this chapter, I demonstrate how migrants become increasingly unable to confront the particular powerful state mechanisms of migration control once they arrive in Morocco without documents. In order to do this, I am analysing the local consequences of national policy measures on migrants' lives. I concentrate on describing how migrants are left in a sort of legal limbo in Morocco, from where they have no place from which to claim rights but are vulnerable to potential persecution and exploitation by both state and non-state actors. I compare the situation to Agamben's (1998) analysis of the state of exception in which migrants become effectively 'non-persons' before the law and are forced to live in the big cities, mostly in marginal positions in relation to the Moroccan host population.

As indicated in [Chapter 2](#), the use of time and tempo in border control practices is part and parcel of modern-day migration governance in the European Union and in the US (see for example Haas 2017, Brux et al 2018). It is characterized by anticipatory action and deterrence, by real-time surveillance of territorial borders and the punishment of migrants through various forms of seized time (Anderson 2014, Tazzioli 2018). Many of these measures have been successfully exported into countries bordering the European Union, like Morocco. Biehl (2015) shows, for

example how Turkey is using similar measures to discipline and control asylum seekers in its territory.

Rather than looking at time as a tool in migration control in order to shape where people are going, I focus in this chapter specifically on states' uses of time as a tool to control how people are staying. That is, I am looking at the temporalities and tempos that come into play when people are seeking to incorporate themselves into the rhythms of society in meaningful ways (Cwerner 2001). For that to happen, people have to be able to predict action to a certain extent. This produces security and possibilities to anticipate dangers and risks as well as opportunities (Gasparini 2004). Insecurity and unpredictability of actions generally produces fear and paralysis. I argue that the Moroccan state is successful in producing a situation in which migrants have difficulty in anticipating state action and are thus forced to live in constant insecurity.

In contrast to the EU, the Moroccan state is less concerned with migrants as a threat to national security or to its welfare system – there are in any case no noteworthy welfare structures in place. On the contrary, the country is characterized by strong social and economic inequalities and authoritarian rule. Here, migration management is increasingly used as a bargaining chip in its foreign policy endeavours in Africa and in the European Union (Cherti & Collyer 2015) and as a tool to discipline and subdue foreign subjects to the will of the authoritarian state by containing, demobilizing and criminalizing them through the normalization of uncertainty (Biehl 2015). The example of Morocco is helpful to understand how states can use time to discipline citizens generally through the creation of uncertainty and fear, and how this is particularly the case in states which have a history of authoritarian regimes.

As a consequence, the particularly difficult experiences of legal and social limbo in which migrants are trapped in Morocco is compounded by state measures which structure the time and tempo of migrants' lives in particular ways. Time as a tool to structure mechanisms of social protection and abuse, through unpredictable action and inaction, is used strategically by the state to assert its power over the migrant subject.

## **Arriving in Morocco: city confinement and insecurity**

As suggested in the previous chapter, apart from five migrants who arrived by plane, all the other migrants I encountered had entered Morocco by land via the Saharan desert and the officially closed Moroccan–Algerian

border, close to Oujda, a Moroccan coastal town on the Mediterranean sea<sup>1</sup> (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1). Upon arrival in Oujda, migrants are usually temporarily housed in *tranquilos*, half-abandoned houses, and in improvised camps in the vicinity of Oujda, as well as on the university campus (Schapendonk 2011). From there, they attempt to make their way to Rabat or Casablanca.

In 1999, when I first came into contact with the migration issue, migrants waited in the camps around Oujda or hid in the forests around Ceuta, Melilla and Tangier for relatively short periods until they secured a place on one of the *pateras*<sup>2</sup> that departed from different points on the northern Moroccan coast to the Spanish mainland. Alternatively, they tried to enter the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta from the Moroccan mainland by hiding in trucks and other vehicles that crossed the land border to these towns (Wender 2004, Collyer 2007, Kastner 2010).

This situation changed in subsequent years, when stricter border controls in the Strait of Gibraltar and on the Melilla and Ceuta borders made it more difficult to cross to the Spanish mainland and migrants had to wait for ever longer periods for an opportunity to arise. At the same time, Moroccan police were increasingly persecuting migrants in the camps. Police would often enter the camps to destroy migrants' tents and belongings (Yene 2010). As a consequence of the longer 'waits' and difficult living conditions in the camps, migrants started to move towards the cities of Rabat and Casablanca where they could retain a certain anonymity and protect themselves more easily from arbitrary police persecution and raids. Furthermore, these cities provide some, albeit precarious, work opportunities within their large, informal economies. Additionally, in Rabat and Casablanca, migrants could count on assistance from informal migrant networks, churches and mosques, NGOs, and international organizations such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) or the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), as well as embassies and consulates. The migrants I encountered told me that, when they arrived in Oujda, they soon realized that it was almost impossible to continue directly towards Spain. Jean told me:

“You know, when I arrived in Oujda, I was totally broke. I had spent every single bit of my money, and there was no possibility to work in the camps. I didn't have the money I needed to pay for the trip to Spain. I knew it would take me a time to get that money and everybody who is in the camps knows that. You only stay if you have someone who sponsors you to leave immediately.”

Most migrants I encountered were in a similar situation to Jean. When they arrived, they were exhausted, without resources and generally just happy to have survived the desert. Most of them had experienced violent encounters with bandits, Algerian soldiers or police in the desert and were afraid of being attacked again. The conditions for children in the camps were particularly difficult; according to information I gained from a medical organization that operates in the camps, respiratory diseases and diarrhoea were frequent and particularly affected women and small children. Apart from seeking help from NGOs, there is no possibility for irregular migrants to access health services in Morocco for free. For all these reasons, migrants make their way to the cities as soon as they are able to do so. When I started my fieldwork in 2009, NGOs estimated that between 3,000 and 8,000 Sub-Saharan African migrants lived in Rabat alone, and another 1,000–3,000 in Casablanca, whereas in the camps around Oujda, Tangier, Ceuta and Melilla there were between 200–500 migrants. The camps have increasingly become temporary hubs, where only those who either had already secured a place on a boat or else were attempting to cross by their own means (by swimming to Ceuta or by crossing with false papers) would stay.

Most migrants arrive in the big cities like Casablanca or Rabat without any resources and no contacts, often forced to sleep rough in the streets. Some of them are taken into communal houses which are run by their fellow migrant communities. In recent years, migrants have also started to run associations with the help of international support networks that aim to assist the most vulnerable groups, such as young people, women and small children, and provide them with a safe place to sleep for at least the first few days and weeks in the new city. Pentecostal church communities, run by Sub-Saharan African migrants sometimes offer shelter for the newly arrived, and I have heard that some mosques were also offering help. These solutions are nevertheless mostly only temporary, and later on migrants are usually left to fend for themselves. Finding housing in Rabat or Casablanca is expensive and difficult, and often only possible in shared accommodation on the outskirts and shantytowns. Work options are limited and most migrants are engaged as wage labourers, domestic workers or street vendors of various kinds. Some survive on begging and sex work (Pickerill 2011, Khachani 2014).

As indicated in the introduction, all of my interviewees were undocumented migrants in Morocco by the time I met them. I include in this number the nine recognized refugees amongst them, because while they had UNHCR status, they had not been recognized by the Moroccan government as refugees. They had no right to work in Morocco and no legal residence permit. While this situation may be similar to that

experienced by migrants in other African countries during their travels, people were adamant that the situation in Morocco was different. Pierre explained to me the difference between Morocco and other countries he had travelled through:

“Yes, the problem with work and papers, you have everywhere. But here, there is so much violence. There is violence between migrants. There is violence between migrants and Moroccans. And there is the police. Too much violence. And work is so difficult to get. In Algeria, for example, you get work a lot easier.”

It is interesting that migrants generally accepted that the situation in Morocco was difficult, but they also tended to acknowledge that they were less exposed to police persecution than in Algeria. Sandrine from Congo, for example, explained to me:

“In Algeria, I was even able to get work as a domestic sometimes. Here in Morocco I can’t. Nobody takes Blacks. Also medication was easier. It is a lot less expensive over there to buy medication. But the police is fierce over there. If they get you, you better pray. They rape the women, they take your money. Also, they are everywhere. Here, if you stay calm, if you don’t make trouble, they leave you alone. You just don’t have to go close to the borders, you just make sure you do not move a lot around the country. You have to stay put. Then, you are fine.”

At first sight, this appears to be a contradiction. On the one hand, police deter people from living in the camps, but on the other hand they do not constitute a persistent threat to migrants once they are in the cities. However, a closer look at the situation reveals a certain logic. As I will demonstrate in the remainder of the chapter, the strategy of ‘city confinement’ and deliberate attempts to deny them any administrative status enables the Moroccan state to retain control over migrants’ movements, and in fact ‘cages’ them by curtailing their capacity to either move or settle. It is related to Morocco’s particular migration policy and the European Union’s involvement, which create a slightly different situation to those of other African countries migrants have travelled through on their way to Morocco. In order to do this, I will rely on Alpes’ (2011: 212) approach to illustrate how interactions and frictions between different actors help to explain how the cost of migration is produced.

Alpes' (2011) argument is that states use different strategies in trying to monopolize and thus legitimize state authority over migration control. To do so, state authorities need to distinguish themselves from other authorities. In migration management, they do so by constructing artificial boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate powers of states, market and families in controlling and facilitating migration. So states construct certain forms of migration as 'smuggling' or 'trafficking' while others are considered legitimate. As we have seen in [Chapter 3](#), Alpes (2011) is right to point out that, in reality, these boundaries do not hold true because states are often involved in monetary transactions that are geared to legitimize migration, for example by charging visa fees. At the same time, brokers and family relations can be involved in facilitating access to legitimate travel documents or by giving the correct information about how to travel according to the law. So while they are not self-evidently distinguishable spheres or realities, these boundaries and the migrant categories they create serve the function of asserting state power. This approach is not only fruitful in explaining how migration governance structures movements of people, but equally serves to understand how it has become a field in which the government of Morocco can seize power to structure migrants' stays in the country in particular ways.

The analysis of Moroccan policy towards migrants in Morocco will reveal that, by blurring the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate forms of migration and by using force arbitrarily, the Moroccan state has actually gone a step further in asserting its power over migrants' settlement than implied by Alpes (2011). The confusing situation of being in between rightful citizen and possible criminal allows the state to rely on arbitrary interpretation of whose responsibility it is to safeguard migrants' human rights and provides the justification to switch without warning from 'protection' to 'abuse'. This creates a situation of unpredictability and insecurity which makes it difficult for migrants to anticipate states' actions and reactions.

### **Seized time: waiting to become 'legal'**

A variety of scholars like Andersson (2014a), Biehl (2015) and Tazzioli (2018) have drawn attention to the fact that states use different techniques to seize asylum seekers' time in order to create uncertainty and fear. Often this is achieved by making them wait for indeterminate lengths of time for a decision on refugee status (Fontanari 2019). In the case of Morocco, the government has extended techniques to seize migrants' time from asylum seekers to other migrants, simply by making it almost impossible

for people with Sub-Saharan African origins to claim legal residency once they have arrived on Moroccan soil. This has been achieved mainly through two types of measures: first, through the deliberate vagueness of administrative procedures to assign legal residency and, second, through the long periods of waiting for procedures to be implemented.

As indicated in [Chapter 2](#), Morocco's immigration law 02-03 of 2003 can be seen as a legal framework primarily created to anchor the basis for 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' migration firmly in the Moroccan juridical system (Belguendouz 2009, GADEM 2009b). In addition to the hasty development of its content, the government of Morocco did not invest great efforts in the mechanisms necessary for the correct implementation of the law. Procedures and institutions in charge of the regulation of migration have remained vague until today. Even though the government of Morocco has since 2014 changed its discourse towards declaring its commitment to migrants' human rights in public policy making, there are no clear signs so far that this has actually translated into concrete measures. There are still no efficient systems for determining the status of refugees and asylum seekers, and regularization procedures for irregular migrants are still exceptional measures which do not necessarily provide migrants with guaranteed access to social, political or economic rights in the country (EuroMed Rights 2015). These circumstances contribute to the blurring of the categories of legitimate and illegitimate migrants and allow the government to leave the question of state responsibilities regarding the protection of migrants' rights in Morocco open to interpretation. They create protracted uncertainty (Biehl 2015) through indefinite waiting times for residency permits, unpredictable legal status and unregulated access to state services and protection.

The regulations regarding residency permits are one example of the lack administrative and institutional frameworks to implement migration policies in favour of migrants' rights. According to the law 02-03, foreigners who arrive in Morocco with valid tourist visas can only obtain a residency permit if they have the financial resources to sustain themselves and can demonstrate this through bank statements, if they have a work contract in the country or if they are full-time students there. Family reunification, for example, is only a vaguely defined area of Moroccan immigration law. This in turn makes it more difficult for unaccompanied children to gain residency status when they arrive in Morocco. In practice, legitimacy for residency is determined by the 'type' of work and money that migrants have: residency must be related to formal economic structures.

It is a paradox that these precise formal economic structures are almost absent in the country as a whole and only partially accessible to the majority of Moroccan citizens. Many Moroccans do not have a bank

account in their name and a great proportion works in the informal sector. However, their citizenship status is not based on this fact. Similarly, the migrants I encountered sustained themselves financially for years in Morocco through remittances or jobs in the informal sector, but until the first legalization campaign in 2014 none of them had been able to obtain a residency card or a bank account in their name, nor did they know anyone in their circles who had been able to do so. Apart from that, none of the migrants I talked to had been able to get a formal work contract. So, in fact, the requisites for being a 'legal migrant' and therefore a 'rightful citizen' with possibilities for settlement are almost impossible to fulfil in a country like Morocco, even for people born there.

The extraordinary legalization campaign in 2014 did not actually change this legal framework significantly. Once it ended, new arrivals continued to come to Morocco and the number of undocumented migrants rose continuously again.<sup>3</sup> In order to start the legalization procedure in 2014, migrants had to provide proof of either having stayed in the country for five years, or having been working at least for two years with a valid contract. Most of the Sub-Saharan African migrants (65 per cent) who obtained a temporary residency permit in the extraordinary legalization campaign did so because they could prove a minimum stay of five years in the country whereas only 4 per cent of the migrants obtained it because they could demonstrate that they were in possession of a valid working contract and had been in employment consecutively for the past two years (FIDH/GADEM 2015).

This suggests that a considerable number of these Sub-Saharan African migrants had been in Morocco five years or longer without secure administrative status and without legal employment. This observation squares with my own sample. Of all the migrants I interviewed in 2010, only five had arrived a year or less earlier. Nine had been there between two and four years, arriving after 2006. Fifteen migrants, however, had arrived before 2005. They had stayed in Morocco 5–8 years and two people had already spent 12 years in Morocco.<sup>4</sup> None of the migrants I talked to had a legal work contract. So, in fact, the migration laws actually produced irregularity over extended periods of time instead of providing legal avenues for rightful stay in the country.

Furthermore, residence permits do not necessarily provide migrants with longer-term prospects of a secure stay in the country because most of the migrants only obtained residency for a limited time, normally for a year or two.<sup>5</sup> Regarding forced migrants, it is worth remembering that Morocco has not yet implemented legislation regulating the processes whereby refugee status is accorded and demands can be processed. This is still handled by the UNHCR. Therefore, asylum seekers who obtain

refugee status through the UNHCR are not necessarily recognized as such by the Moroccan government.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the temporal restrictions on mobility and settlement rights that are thus established, the connection between residency and social and economic rights remains weak. Even recognized refugees do not necessarily have greater access to work or social services in Morocco. They are, furthermore, not allowed to leave the country. Pierre, whom I introduced in the preceding chapter, told me that in his view refugee status was effectively useless:

“You know, having this card here from the UNHCR is only symbolic. It has no real value because you cannot do anything with it. You cannot find work, you get no financial support, you cannot travel, you have no passport. So it’s not really anything at all.”

In fact, this situation is not unique to refugees. Some of the migrants I met in 2009 when they had recently arrived in the country without papers were subsequently able to acquire residency status through the extraordinary legalization procedure in 2014. I met two of them in 2017. While all of them stated that the residency card had given them the right to work, as well as some protection from police persecution, it did not improve their access to citizenship rights or social protection in significant ways: they had not found work in accordance with their qualifications and had no access to free healthcare or any other social services (Khachani 2014). They were still living in the same shared accommodation as before they received residency status. In addition, their residency permits did not protect them from occasional police harassment. Both were adamant about their plans to leave the country as soon as they were able to do so.

## **Governance through uncertainty**

In fact, migrants had the impression that since migration status has been regulated through the new law it has become more difficult to access services or employment without any kind of legal residency permit. My interviews revealed that companies and institutions were reluctant to offer work to individuals on tourist visas or to irregular migrants, whereas before the introduction of the law and the regulation measures this was not the case.<sup>7</sup> While the former *Dahirs* had regulated immigration status, they did so mainly only on paper. Now these new regulations were actually policed, which made it more risky for individuals, companies and institutions not

to acknowledge immigration status or the migration laws – particularly if they are already in partial infringement of the law through the informal nature of their activities. Yann explained this to me:

“I have tried to get jobs, a lot of times. But the shop owners, the workshop owners, what have you, they were all not interested, they do not want to get into trouble, they do not want to expose themselves having a black person in their workshop and offering a chance to their envious neighbour to get the *mkadem*<sup>8</sup> onto their backs.”

In a country like Morocco, where a large proportion of the population is employed in the informal sector, it might appear that ‘papers’ are not important at all. However, this greatly depends on who needs papers and for what. While some people may be able to use their influence to make alternative regulatory authorities work for them, poor people are less able to do so and succumb to the regulatory authority of the state, particularly if the state – or members of its bureaucratic institutions – have the necessary resources to police infringements of the law or can use their authority to threaten others with police persecution. In this context, I would like to give the example of Nadia, my Moroccan childminder. I am grateful to her for underscoring that the issue of papers and legal status is not only a problem that migrants struggle with but also affects Moroccan citizens. This is an inherent feature of the hierarchical power and government structures within Moroccan society.

Nadia explained to me that in order to renew her identity card, she needed an attestation from the local *mkadem*, to confirm her residency in the house where she had been living for the last three years. This person was not willing to grant her the attestation without a considerable payment, a payment Nadia refused to make because she considered it abusive and unlawful. The mediation of her brother, a local police officer, did not prove to be of help in the matter. As a consequence, Nadia has been unable to register her new employment in order to continue with her pension contributions and is without health insurance coverage, as she needs her identity card in order to legalize this. This situation had been ongoing for two years and Nadia was considering moving to a different part of town in which she would be able to get a certificate from the local *mkadem* without further problems.

Like Nadia, migrants without papers are very vulnerable to abuses of power by state officials, bureaucrats and Moroccans. The lack of detail in the new legislation and the vague definitions of procedures and responsibilities have also increased the opportunities for state officials

to abuse their power in relation to migrants. This has been exacerbated by a growth in international funding for migration control, which has increased the resources of police and other security personnel. It is in this sense that the Moroccan state is disciplining both its citizens and migrants successfully through the creation and maintenance of uncertainty. Without knowing if and how it is possible to obtain papers, the predictability of future possibilities is difficult to discern for most people in Morocco – even for its citizens.

Migrants suffer particularly from discrimination and abuse because they have few resources with which to protect themselves from it. This is true because they cannot make alternative regulatory authorities, like the market or families, work for them to compensate for the lack of state protection and uncertainty. While Nadia may engage in a power struggle with the local *mkadem* through her family contacts in the local police or through the payment of some *baksheesh* (bribe), most migrants I encountered had fewer opportunities and resources to do so. Migrants have frequent dealings with *mkadems* because good relations with them are often a prerequisite of protection from the police or aggression and exploitation at the hands of local residents. Again, it is the particular resources individual migrants can count on that determine the extent to which they are able to work and live without further interference from state authorities. Silvester, for example, explained to me that since the local *mkadem* had come to his stand to get his and his family's shoes repaired for free, he had never experienced any significant problems with the police or other Moroccan residents concerning his activities as a street shoemaker without a licence. In fact, he felt somewhat protected since gaining the *mkadem's* gratitude. Abdoul and Ibrahim, by contrast, who only work a few hundred metres away repairing shoes, were constantly abused by local youths. They had to charge very low prices and often changed location when chased away by local shopkeepers or the police. The *mkadem* never appeared actively on the scene, but nor did he interfere in the harassment taking place.

Apart from the evident problems with local authorities, papers also play a vital role in accessing education. Without papers, for example, children cannot enrol in state schools. Despite the efforts of several NGOs, this situation has not significantly changed in the last ten years and undocumented migrants' access to healthcare and education is still largely dependent on the mediation of international organizations and NGOs that often have to negotiate migrants' access to schools and hospitals on a case-by-case basis (Sibout 2014).

As Nadia's story shows, legal documentation is necessary for a variety of important transactions in Morocco, such as receiving remittances,

sending and receiving mail, renting premises and houses or opening bank accounts. While many of these transactions are not important if one is only passing through, they become more essential the longer one stays in a country. One way of circumventing problems is to 'hire' documents, either from African students (Goldschmidt 2002), African legal residents and diplomats, or from locals (Pian 2009, Schapendonk 2011). Some migrants I encountered paid Moroccans or legally resident African students to receive remittances through Western Union in their names, and even to put savings into Moroccan bank accounts. These practices can make migrants particularly vulnerable and dependent upon others (Pian 2009) and influence the types of relationships they have with Moroccans or other migrants by relegating them to a patron-client relationship. Being without papers, migrants cannot denounce any deceitful or exploitative practices by third parties for fear of being deported themselves. Some of the migrants I talked to received regular remittances from either their family in Europe or from family and friends in their home countries, which helped them to navigate around the restrictions imposed by the state in finding jobs and accessing documents. However, others had already used up all their families' resources or were not lucky enough to be able to count on families and friends abroad. For many, this situation appeared to have worsened in recent years, during which migrants' friends in southern Europe were also facing increasing economic problems. Silvester, for example, told me:

“Me? I don't get any money from home, I am the one who is supposed to send them some! My father is old, he has not much land. But I have a friend in Italy and one in Spain, I got to know them when I was working in Libya. They kept on sending me some money whenever they could. But now, one of them just got married and he has less money now. And the other one told me that life is hard in Spain. A baguette can cost you more than a euro! So he is sending very little. Very little.”

### **Arbitrary abuse of power and lack of state protection**

The above shows how the existing legislation regarding migrants can foster irregularity rather than protecting them from it. In doing so, it establishes the basis for migrants' economic exploitation and/or dependence upon both state and non-state actors for access to social services, housing and legal protection. Migrants live mostly in poor working class areas of town, where unemployment and social conflict are high. I have also learnt that

xenophobia and racism are rampant and can, at times, result in violent attacks against migrants. I myself have witnessed how migrants are spat at, called names or made fun of in the street and other public places (see also Bachelet 2016).<sup>9</sup> In conversations with migrant mediators who work for several international organizations and the church, I was told that these incidents were not exceptional and that migrants were regularly victims of armed assault and attacks, which they did not, however, bring to the attention of authorities.<sup>10</sup> One member of an NGO working with migrants told me in this context:

“If you are irregular in Morocco, we recommend that you do not go near a police commissariat or a military base if you can avoid it, because you risk being put into prison immediately, without possibilities for legal advice, translation or else. Even Moroccans know that police is the worst thing that can happen to you. Policemen are corrupt, they do not care, their actions are unpredictable. So can you imagine how many migrants go to report it when they have been raped, burgled, or cheated? No one. You have to find your own support networks to protect yourself.”

According to information I was able to collect from NGO workers and migrants themselves, random raids in migrant neighbourhoods have been very common in the big cities like Rabat and Casablanca. Due to Morocco’s agreement to assist the EU in the fight against illegal migration, police action against smugglers and traffickers is an important aspect of the government’s efforts to demonstrate its commitment to achieve targets and deliver on outcomes (Gabrielli 2011). Since the government’s announcement of its new politics of immigration based on human rights concerns in 2013, these raids have diminished. However, organizations and migrants told me in 2017 that they are still taking place – albeit selectively.

Although there have also been instances where migrants have been deported back to their countries of origin by the police or the military (Feliu Martinez 2009, GADEM 2009b, Kastner 2010), this practice is not routine. It is more common that Moroccan officials take migrants to the border, which in practice means that they are left in the no man’s land at the Algerian Border.<sup>11</sup> The border between Algeria and Morocco is officially closed, so deportations there are strictly speaking illegal. However, once deported into the desert, migrants have literally no other choice than to make their way back to Oujda, the border town with Morocco, because in Algeria they are often victims of criminal gangs or the Algerian police, who detain them as illegal border crossers. Therefore, rather than ‘getting

rid' of migrants, these practices only serve to 'punish them' and to remind them of their marginal status in society.

When I discussed the issue of migrants and police persecution with Nadia, she offered her own explanation of the situation, arguing that the ways in which police treated migrants was in no way different from the treatment of the Moroccan population. Nadia reminded me of the practice of police surveillance and repression of the civilian population under Hassan II, the former king who had died in 1999:

“You know, under Hassan II, people were never told what was right and what was wrong, what was legal according to the law and what was illegal. He was clever, you see. He did not say anything at all and left everything open to interpretation. In this way, everything was potentially a crime, everything was potentially illegal, everything was potentially punishable. You could never know. Nobody would ever tell a joke in a public place because you never knew if it could have been considered an insult to the monarchy, for example! And you know how much people love to tell jokes here. I tell you, people were terrified. You did not need the police to go after people anymore. Only knowing that they *could* come after you, people were so afraid, they didn't even dare to piss next to a tree in the street.”

While Nadia was also saying that times had changed since then and that Hassan's son, Mohammed V, was doing things differently, she was not so sure if this was also true for those considered 'non-citizens' and 'non-Muslims'. I found this view of the state as an arbitrary and authoritative judge over the law on the 'migrant question' was widespread among Moroccan friends, workers in international organizations and the church.

### **Conclusion: how to confront governance through uncertainty and unpredictability?**

During a round table discussion about the situation of refugees, organized by Fondation Orient-Occident (2007: 19) which brought together a range of institutions as well as government representatives, a female representative of a refugee organization in Morocco summarized the way she experienced her stay in Morocco: 'Here, our rights are trod upon, this is like a free prison'.<sup>12</sup> This image vividly depicts the idea of 'forced immobility' as a condition of rightlessness and simultaneously as control.

The short policy review in this chapter has shown how the link between immobility and being without rights in Morocco is shaped by leaving the exact criteria for what migrants' rights are and what state protection looks like open to interpretation. By inhibiting the creation of clear procedures that would help to determine 'legal' migration status, the Moroccan state has successfully retained power over the determination of 'legal' and 'illegal' forms of migration. The 'legal limbo' in which migrants find themselves is an effective means by which the state retains regulatory authority over migrants' lives. In such a construction of rights, their access is not universal, but instead linked to people's particular position in the market or towards the state at any given time.

Through making migrants wait for an indefinite time for an opportunity to legalize their stay, migrants are 'moulded' to the needs of policy makers as illegal, and above all temporary, residents who can be legitimately persecuted and controlled. At the same time, this allows the state to avoid any duty to protect them whilst they are residing in Morocco. By confining migrants to specific places in the cities, where their abilities to meet their economic and social needs are restricted, and by threatening them with police persecution and arbitrary arrests, the state makes life for migrants unpredictable. Furthermore, the legal vacuum created through a lack of effective regulations and procedures increases migrants' risk of being exploited by others without the possibility of seeking protection from the state. In this sense, migrants are converted into rightless 'prisoners' in a no man's land. Migrants are particularly vulnerable in such a situation, because their ability to make other regulatory authorities work for them in order to access services and mobility are severely hampered. Family networks are far away and they have limited access to money and the market.

In this way, the implementation of immigration policies in Morocco allows the state to largely concentrate on fulfilling its obligation of border control, leaving the provision of social, economic or cultural services to NGOs and non-state actors (Norman 2015). While the Moroccan government is no longer threatening and inhibiting this type of work by civil society, it nevertheless does not take any significant political or financial responsibility for it. In fact, in this way, while migrants have recently acquired restricted possibilities to legalize their stay, they mostly remain excluded from claiming any citizenship rights from the Moroccan state.

This condition of rightlessness also resembles what Agamben (1998) describes in his book *Homo Sacer*. Agamben goes further than Arendt in his analysis of state sovereignty. He uses a juridical term from archaic Roman law, 'Homo Sacer', to describe an individual who, in response to a grave misdemeanour, is cast out of the city and criminalized.

Accordingly, 'Homo Sacer' can be killed without punishment and yet is not formally banned from the community, no longer having any worth within it. In De la Durantaye's (2009: 206) terms, the person is removed from the continuum of social activity and communal legislation: the only rule that still applies is the one that irrevocably casts them out of the communal sphere. By applying the figure of Homo Sacer to the inmates of a concentration camp, Agamben (1998) depicts the inhabitants of the camp as those who are deemed to have no claim on the nation but paradoxically are brought even more firmly under its control by virtue of their exclusion from its laws. Agamben describes them as living a life in a state of exception, as the law is no longer applicable to them, although they are still subdued by state power. They are subdued to the sovereign precisely because they have been stripped of rights and citizenship without having been banned. They are living in a status of abjection, in between places, neither within the system nor outside it. In this sense, they are left with what Agamben terms their 'bare life', which is one of pure survival and outside any meaningful political and community action. His theory has been used frequently by critical migration theorists to describe the zones of exclusion in which asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants find themselves in many different parts of the world, due to increasingly restrictive migration legislation and policies (Pratt 2005b, Lee 2010, Madziva 2010b, Mountz 2011). By applying his work on the modern sovereign state and its dehumanizing facets to the question of migration, these researchers have shown a way to bring the state back into migration theory, where its role was often downplayed in the past (Alpes 2011).

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the state is undoubtedly an important actor in migration management in Morocco and therefore requires serious attention, particularly when analysing the human rights situation of migrants. It is in this respect that I find Agamben's framework of analysis useful to uncover the hidden logic behind migrants' rightlessness as produced through state politics. Nevertheless, it is also important to acknowledge that 'bringing the state back in' alone cannot satisfactorily answer the question about what 'bare life' actually means for migrants and whether it is experienced equally by each individual. In part because he grants too much importance to the role of the state and the law, Agamben's 'Homo Sacer' concept has been rightly criticized for depicting humans as undifferentiated individuals, subdued to the will of the state, depoliticized and dissocialized (Gunddodu 2006: 15, Mountz 2011). Mountz (2011: 8) argues, for example, that Agamben's theory on zones of exception leaves the universal figure, an undifferentiated, gender blind, unspecified body, always paradoxically outside of the law. The continuous logic of sovereignty

in Agamben's analysis of bare life, whose final consequence is the loss of humanity altogether with no possibility to change the course of events, is difficult to accept (Gunddodu 2006: 15–16).

In this sense, I find that it is not sufficient to examine the role of the state in migrants' lives in Morocco, because this does not capture the manifold ways in which migrants experience life in immobility, uncertainty and without rights. It is necessary to go further in the analysis of state power and to trace the different ways in which migrants face up to these conditions in order to understand how these affect their feelings of belonging, their relation to others and their differentiated struggles to overcome their state. It is here that the differentiated aspects of life in immobility come to the fore. Particularly important in this context are the ways in which time and place are experienced differently by migrants and influence their actions and strategies in reacting to state policies. In particular, it is important to look at the ways in which migrants live with and confront their seized time constructively in order to gain control over a certain form of predictability in their lives which they need in order to plan for a future. This is what I will turn to in subsequent chapters.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The border between Morocco and Algeria has been officially closed since 1994 when the Moroccan government took a unilateral decision to close it following terrorist attacks in Marrakech, which, according to the Moroccan government, were perpetrated by the Algerian secret services.
- <sup>2</sup> *Patera* is an originally Spanish word for the small fishing boats or zodiacs that bring migrants over the Strait of Gibraltar to the Spanish mainland. It is used all over Morocco to refer to boats that transport migrants.
- <sup>3</sup> As an indication of this development, it is fruitful to look at the high number of applications the government received in 2016 for a second round of regularizations. The National Committee of Human Rights (CNDH) announced at the end of 2017 that it has already received over 26,000 applications, mostly from undocumented Sub-Saharan African migrants (La Tribune Politique 2017).
- <sup>4</sup> This is on average significantly longer than figures provided by a census taken by MSF [Medecins sans Frontières] (2010a) of 623 migrants, of whom 64 per cent had been in Morocco between one and five years, 27 per cent less than a year and 9 per cent over five years. In a similar census, undertaken by AFVIC (2007), the average length of stay in Morocco was 4–12 years for 24 per cent and 1–3 years for 65.5 per cent of all informants. Only 10.5 per cent had stayed in Morocco less than a year at the time of the survey. Regardless of these differences, the above figures suggest that there is a tendency towards increasingly longer stays in Morocco.
- <sup>5</sup> Actually, the number of migrants holding temporary residency permits has increased in recent years as a direct effect of the extraordinary legalization initiative in 2014, which granted over 25,000 migrants the opportunity to obtain temporary residence permits (FIDH/GADEM 2015).

- <sup>6</sup> According to figures provided by UNHCR (2016), Morocco was hosting 5,473 asylum seekers and recognized refugees in 2015. This is an increase of 80 per cent on the previous year. Recognized refugees in Morocco come from 36 countries, but above all from Syria. This indicates that the chances for migrants from Sub-Saharan African states to claim asylum in Morocco are rather limited.
- <sup>7</sup> I have been told by migrants and NGO workers that since the introduction of the law and later the regularization campaigns, it has been more and more difficult to convince potential employers to accept migrant workers without residency permits – even for short-term internships to gain work experience and references from Moroccan employers.
- <sup>8</sup> The *mkadem* is linked to the Ministry of the Interior on the level of the *arrondissement* or quarter of town. *Mkadems* are appointed by the Caid and one of their functions is to update resident registers. The *mkadem* can also denounce infringements of the law to the Ministry of the Interior if he is aware of them, such as tax fraud or administrative irregularities.
- <sup>9</sup> I do not want to give the impression that all Moroccans are hostile towards migrants. On the contrary, there is a lot of solidarity and collaboration between them (Alioua 2005). However, racism is a significant fact of migrants' lives in Morocco. That this is structural, rather than localized is evidenced by the treatment of migration in the Moroccan press. One local newspaper, for example, described migrants as 'black locusts invading the country' (Goldschmidt 2006, Belguendouz 2009).
- <sup>10</sup> This was also evident in a survey published by MSF (2010a).
- <sup>11</sup> Amnesty International (2018), for example, reports that as recently as July 2018 over 5,000 migrants' dwellings in the northern cities of Tangiers, Nador and Tetouan were raided and an estimated 5,000 people were abandoned in remote areas close to the Algerian border or in the south of the country.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ici, nos droits sont bafués, c'est sort d'un prison libre.*

# Facing Time and the Absurd

## Introduction

Having described in the previous chapter migrants' political, economic and social conditions of non-citizenship, in this chapter I want to analyse migrants' own perceptions of 'being stuck' in Morocco. In so doing, I will provide a glimpse of how living in limbo becomes a way of 'being in the world' and represents a fundamental break with previous values, beliefs and feelings of belonging.

While the existential feeling of 'being stuck' can be a trigger for contemplating migration, as indicated in Chapter 3, Hage (2005: 474) is right to argue that the real drama of 'being stuck' is when one becomes 'stuck' having left one's country of origin. He points out that the trauma of migration sets in when one realizes that one has ended up being stuck in the host country too, in unfamiliar, rather than familiar surroundings. This is exactly the situation of the migrants I interviewed in Morocco. In the following pages, I intend to link migrants' feeling of 'being stuck' and their long stays in Morocco to their perspective on time. In so doing, I describe the processes whereby migrants must alter their perspective on their own present, past and future in forced immobility. 'Being stuck' in Morocco marks a period in their lives in which they start to rethink their relation to life, death and belonging.

I begin from the premise that our experience of time is shaped by our social, economic and political environment and the social and cultural practices we draw on to engage with different time perspectives (Adam 1994). From this follows the notion that time is not experienced equally by everyone and is dependent on one's social position within unequal structures of power. In order to highlight the changed experience of

migrants' time, I will draw particularly on the different accounts of women and men with respect to how they experience time in the present and the past and how they imagine their futures. This is followed by a discussion of liminal times and migrants' connection to the feeling of absurdity, a term borrowed from the French writer Albert Camus (1991).

The chapter concludes that the tension between migrants' inability to move on, return or settle in Morocco is intrinsically linked to their perspective on time and makes their lives in Morocco seem meaningless. Despite this – and perhaps because of it – migrants continue to see mobility as the only way of making life worthwhile. However, in such absurd conditions, migration changes its meaning. Whereas before the 'adventurer' was in part responsible for their fate and distinguished by their ability to manipulate or influence differing regulatory authorities, now failed attempts to do so equate to personal failure. Migration becomes a battle and no longer an adventure.

## **An introductory note about time**

Adam (1994, 2004) powerfully demonstrates how, in our contemporary world, quests for the commodification and control of time as clock-time are pervasive in life and culture. Adam (1994: 107) recognizes that in societies structured to the time of clocks and calendars, we can only escape time's hold to a very limited extent. As shown in [Chapter 4](#), it is clear that migrants' lives in Morocco are also dependent on and structured by the time restrictions applied to visas, asylum petitions and even on their perceived temporary stay in Morocco as 'transit migrants' who cannot exchange their time against money on the market by seeking formal employment. In effect, rather than benefiting from the structuring forces of clock time, migrants are forcefully excluded from society by it. Their time is made useless. Adam (1994: 101) suggests that:

only when the human creation of calendar and clock time was recognised *as* the only time, that time became a receptacle to be filled, a resource to be used and allocated, and a commodity to be sold and exchanged on the labour market. Only with the conceptualisation of the created time *as* time does it become necessary to ground our understanding of social time in the relations of power.

She adds:

The question of who controls the time of whom can only be posed after time has become conceptualised as something we can use, allocate, spend or fill. (Adam 1994: 120)

Adam insists that, rather than *being* time, these perspectives on time coexist with other, much older human interactions with time, aiming not so much to control time as to transcend it. By this she means particular cultural practices that aim to make time stand still through the repetition of cyclical rituals, like annual celebrations, rhythmical activities and repetition. Acts of remembering and worship of the dead are means to respond to finitude by making us live forever through the coming generations. Adam concludes:

It is the search for transcendence, immortality and the eternal in the face of transience, finitude and change that moves the human spirit to its greatest achievement. The awareness of finitude, the conscious search for transcendence, and the construction of immutability need therefore to be conceptualized as culturally coeval. (Adam 2004: 100)

Migrants' confrontation with time as clock time in Morocco interacts with their own conception of time in relation to transcendence and immortality. 'Being stuck' is thus experienced as living in liminal times where one is neither part of processes that structure time as clock time, nor embedded in times of transcendence which would make life meaningful.

### **Wasting time: survival in the present**

It is useful to analyse migrants' relation to time by starting with their perception of the present. A starting point for this analysis is migrants' constant struggle to survive in the cities in search for work, as their daily routines are often dominated by the search for money and a desire to commodify their time in order to be part of society. In what follows, I will describe the gendered aspects of this struggle to survive in more detail in order to carve out how life in immobility alters migrants' own view of themselves.

*For a man, time is money*

All of the migrants I was in contact with were adamant about the fact that they did not like being in Morocco. I was intrigued to find out why this was, given that I imagined they had seen and lived in worse conditions while travelling across so many different countries. What was it that made them dislike being in Morocco so much? A first clue came when I asked Fred from Nigeria about this. He replied: “I don’t like it, because I am wasting my talent here.” This comment surprised me a little, because he had told me before that he worked painting cars and in the clothes business, selling jeans and second-hand clothes. I also knew that he left school after sixth grade and was clearly what could be called an ‘unskilled’ worker. So the way he used the word ‘talent’ could hardly be understood in relation to his professional qualifications or his work experience. To get behind its meaning, I asked him what he thought he would be doing when he got to Europe in order to use his talent. Fred, rather impatient by now about my apparent naïveté, tried to explain to me that he did not care about what kind of job he would be doing, as long as it enabled him to make money. He needed money to have a house, a car and good clothes. He clarified that he does not want to be rich, but simply able to live a good life and work and get paid enough to live decently. Then, he explained to me why this was not possible in Morocco:

“You see, Moroccans are strange because they rather prefer people to beg than giving them jobs. That is not normal. This is why I don’t like it here. I have tried, but they don’t give me jobs, even though I really am a good worker and I am strong.”

To put Fred’s answer into context, it is important to clarify that not all migrants have to go begging in Morocco in order to survive. The ones I encountered also worked – sometimes even two or three jobs simultaneously. However, their jobs were extremely precarious. Male migrants in particular rely on work in the informal sector, mostly in construction, but also in occupations such as house guardian, car washer or as helpers on market stalls, for example.

Migrants frequently complained to me that they were usually underpaid, particularly in comparison to their Moroccan neighbours. In construction work, Moroccan labourers earn 80–150 dirhams a day,<sup>1</sup> whereas a migrant worker is lucky to get 50–60 dirhams for similar jobs. These types of jobs are usually unstable. Like many Moroccans in similar situations, migrants rely on daily wage labour. In order to find such work, migrants usually go to particular meeting places that are well known

throughout the city. In the morning, both migrants and Moroccans gather there to wait until drivers in vans turn up, shout out the number of people they need and load them onto the truck. In the evening, they are usually brought back to where they were picked up. The unpredictability of the work was summed up by Abdoul from Guinea, who told me:

“Oh you never know where they take you. It could be anywhere in the outskirts, once they have taken me down to Marrakech to a building site and I had to stay there for three days [Marrakech is about 200km away]. You don’t even know what they will pay and if they pay you. It’s completely random. Sometimes you are lucky, sometimes you are not.”

While migrants shun such difficult, unstable and humiliating work, they nevertheless accept it in times of extreme necessity. All the male migrants I interviewed, independent of their educational background, had done construction work at one point or another. However, they preferred not to talk about it too much. Marco, for example, told me that working on construction sites was not an option for him because of the health risks involved. To my surprise, I met him one morning queuing in Takadoum at one of the corners where local construction owners would hire daily labourers, together with a bunch of other migrant men I had met before. He was sheepishly looking at his feet when he saw me pass and first tried to get away unperceived. When I approached him he told me that he was ‘just trying his luck for the day’. I frequently saw migrants I knew in these queues in the early mornings when I was waiting for the bus, and they always attempted to avoid being noticed by me.

One alternative to these unpopular activities is to set up informal businesses and other independent entrepreneurial activities. Hairdressing, cobbling, sewing, selling foodstuffs or African goods, and the reselling of cheap Moroccan textiles to friends or family in Europe are just some of these activities.<sup>2</sup> Begging is a frequent occupation for many of the migrants I encountered during my fieldwork. Pickerill (2011), who has documented a range of entrepreneurial activities undertaken by migrants in Morocco, rightly concludes that their profitability and success is severely hampered by a number of factors but, most importantly, violence and police interference, illegal taxing by authorities and local residents, lack of capital and the inaccessibility of suitable places to attract and sell to clientele.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to Pickerill’s analysis, I contend that these activities are not an expression of migrants’ entrepreneurial creativity but rather an expression of their helplessness and lack of alternatives. All the migrants I conversed with who undertook independent work were adamant that

it was not covering their living expenses and that they were relying on additional outside help to make ends meet, either through remittances from outside or through dependence on charities. This is underscored by the fact that – apart from two migrants – none of the businesses I witnessed survived long and migrants frequently had to change their income activities and tactics.

In light of this information, it is understandable that Fred thinks he is ‘wasting his talent’. He means his ability to work is going unused. In a literal sense, Fred means that he is wasting his potential to make money by staying in Morocco. He is confident that he could make money, using his body and mind, if he were just in the right place. He is convinced that he is needed somewhere. He cannot understand how it is possible to be unable to put yourself to use to earn money if you are healthy and strong. For him, being in Morocco is a waste of his life, time and energy, because migration was supposed to put his work power to better use in order to obtain financial security for his old age and secure the future of his children. He knows that the time he has to work and make money is running out, because every year without working is a year lost (see also Ahmad 2008).

When I talked with Jean about his perception of being a failure in life because of not having been able to use his youth to make money abroad, my intention was to help him restore his sense of self-worth by pointing out that he had achieved extraordinary things by having the courage to leave, overcoming all the obstacles in his way and surviving in Morocco. I stressed that few people were actually able to do what he had done and that this in itself was a great achievement, which made him an outstanding, courageous young man. However, he just shook his head while listening to me:

“You don’t understand. In Africa, it doesn’t matter what you *tell* people. Your experiences, your stories, what you know, all that doesn’t count. You have to *show* them that you *are* someone. You have to have a car, good clothes, material things, you know. *That* is what counts. Like that you *are* someone in your community. You will be respected. The rest is not important.”

Apart from their inability to work, Jean and Fred’s comments demonstrate how they faced a contradiction between their idea of a migrant’s purpose in life as material success and the reality that they were living in forced immobility. In particular, this feeling of being trapped in a present of joblessness and poverty has a profound impact on male migrants’ relation

to their own identity as successful providers for the family and public figures in the community. Their idea of a present filled with hard work as a means to gather money in order to be viewed in the future as successful by those back in their home country is slowly eroded while they are living in Morocco. At this point, it might be important to clarify that the male migrants I interviewed did not aspire to work ‘as much as they could’ but ‘to gain as much money as they could’. They had no need to fill their time but to make it valuable in monetary terms. In this way, their quest ‘to become a man’ was strongly related to their ability to commodify their time, which for them was essentially what ‘development’ and ‘modernity’ is all about (Adam 2004, Schweizer 2008). Their present in Morocco represented a wasted life in a literal no man’s land where they no longer identified with social markers like wealth and work, which would make them ‘real men’ in a modern world, in which time equals money.

### *Being a woman*

Compared to the men, women had far fewer options available for finding paid employment in Morocco. According to their accounts, they were generally rejected as domestics because of their phenotype or, if employed, treated like slaves.<sup>4</sup> Most women I encountered therefore concentrated on ethnic businesses, such as selling African foot products, hair dressing and tailoring in the main for other Sub-Saharan African migrants. Only two women I met worked for Moroccan employers in the local market, sorting out vegetables.

Women generally did not look for jobs and money in the same way as men did. Even though most of the women I encountered had worked outside the home in some way or another in their countries of origin (mostly doing business, sewing or sometimes as employees and civil servants), they indicated to me in various ways that what made them women was not this work but rather their roles as wives or mothers. This was also why problems of being separated from their husbands or male companions – or abandoned by them financially – was one of the major concerns women expressed. Often, they voiced concern over the abnormality of providing for their male companions, or husbands back home, rather than the other way round. As mentioned earlier in [Chapter 3](#), it should be noted here that many of the women I interviewed had travelled together with a male companion and/or had children to care for. For them, their primary problem remained how to provide for their children and for themselves in Morocco, rather than thinking about providing for

others back home.<sup>5</sup> For the women I talked to, this was tightly linked to the idea of having lost their status as women.

Nicole, for example, a woman from Congo, had travelled to Morocco when she was eight months pregnant. She had planned to cross over the border to Spain on a ferry, using her sister's French passport and give birth in Europe, so as to secure citizenship and then bring over her husband later. Even before the ferry left the harbour of Tangier, she was intercepted by Spanish coastguards and returned to the mainland. Since then, she had been stuck in Morocco with her husband still in Congo. By the time I met her, her child was four years old. She was presented to me by church employees as a 'successful entrepreneur' who had managed to keep a small business of dried fish and homemade peanut butter afloat thanks to an injection of funding from a church-based organization. Nicole was popular in the church community, and when she offered her products in front of the church on Sundays, she sold out every time. I accompanied her on many errands during the week: we went to the fish market in Sale, bought peanuts on the market in Takadoum, recovered second-hand glass containers from the recycling people down the road and delivered her products to clients all over Rabat. Nicole was an extremely busy woman. Apart from that, she looked after her small son and even had to support her younger (adult) brother, who also lived in Rabat.

Of all the migrants I met, Nicole was the one who had the most carefully maintained dwelling in Youssoufia. She owned a television, good kitchen utensils and had exclusive use of a large roof terrace where she produced the fish and peanut butter. She even managed to send her child to a privately run Moroccan nursery, rather than putting him in the crèche run by one of the international charities, which many other Congolese pre-school children attend for free. It appeared that 'she had made it' as far as one could make it in Morocco. When I confronted her with this idea, she became quite incredulous: "This is what you think? That I am a respectable person here in the community? That I can be proud of what I have achieved?" She shook her head.

"You know, in Congo I have *never had to do* this kind of work. Never. I was spoiled. I did not even have to do my own washing. My husband brought the money home. Here, even my husband in Congo wants me to send him money even though I have nothing! My brother is scrounging on me! This is the world upside down!"

It was not that Nicole resented having to provide for everyone else. It was more that she had hoped that migration would make her life easier,

not more difficult, with respect to work. She felt that, as a woman, she should not be doing all this; she should be the one being looked after.

Apart from the women who were living with their husbands in Morocco, others had either a husband or boyfriend abroad or were living with some other migrants in Morocco. Only six of the women I interviewed lived with the father of their children, while the 13 others were single mothers or had a husband or boyfriend abroad. The nine women I encountered who had no boyfriend or husband at the time I knew them were particularly resentful about men in general. They voiced their disappointment about the short-lived relationships or the inability of their husbands and boyfriends to maintain them 'as it was due' and about men's failure to assume their financial and moral responsibilities.

Sandrine, for example, shared with me her disappointing experience with men. Widowed with a small daughter, she married again while still in Congo. This new husband repeatedly insisted that she should join him on his trip to Morocco, together with her daughter. Just after arriving in Morocco, she became pregnant with his child. The family believed that her pregnancy would help her to avoid deportation once she and her older daughter arrived in Spain. The idea was that her husband would join her later. However, she found out just before her departure that her husband had sexually abused her older daughter and decided to leave him, despite the fact that she would lose his financial support in securing a place on the boat and would have to raise her two children alone. She told me:

“I am through with men. This was it. No more men. Instead of looking after you, they use you, for their own interest. There is no more advantage to being with someone when you live here. On the contrary, it's all only sacrifice, sacrifice, for their sake. What do you gain from marriage here I ask you? Nothing. The men you find here, they do not look for *real women*. They look for prostitutes.”

That men considered other women migrants as prostitutes was actually not too far removed from reality. When I enquired about Ghanaian women in Morocco, Silvester was adamant: “There are no Ghanaian girls in Morocco, only the ones that come to study here. Ghanaian women do not travel like this. The ones you find are all Nigerian and they all have been working in their countries beforehand.”<sup>6</sup>

Migrant women were often aware of their need, because of their circumstances, to transgress their own normative frames of reference when it came to their relationships to men. This was put plainly to me

when observing a discussion between Lise and her husband concerning promiscuity. From earlier conversations, I knew that Lise was involved in prostitution before meeting her Congolese husband in Rabat, some years before. But now she was living a respectable life as a housewife in a relatively comfortable flat, still close to the rest of the Congolese community. Thanks to the generous remittances she and her family received from her husband's family in Europe, they were finally able to escape poverty. During a visit with my baby daughter to her place after she had given birth herself, Lise's husband came in upset. He told us that he had seen one of Lise's friends on the street flirting with one of his friends. He was upset about this, claiming that she was behaving badly, letting herself go and being 'easy'. He accused her of trying to get into a relationship with his friends in order to gain financial benefits. Lise defended her friend by saying:

“What is the problem here? OK, if we would be in Congo now, I would agree with you. It is not right. But we are not in Congo. Everyone here has to find their way out of this. You know that you cannot compare this to Congo. You cannot judge her like that. Who are you to tell her what to do or what not to do? Have you lived a life without sin since you came here? And anyway, the saying goes that men are like hospital beds, ... they receive anyone. So if she is doing this, it is because men allow women to do it.”

In the examples I have given, men were unable to commodify their labour power and their 'time' while women were forced to do so, which created a situation in which otherwise unacceptable behaviour was sometimes tolerated and excused as being necessary in exceptional times and places. This also meant that both men and women struggled with the contradictions between these situations and the definitions they used to value a man or woman as 'respectable'.

This had implications for relationships and the prospects of family life for both men and women. It contradicted their ideas of the 'right time' for marriage and children and distorted the culturally accepted rhythms of the life cycle. Apart from Lise, most other migrants I knew who lived in a family with husband and children had married in their country of origin or had a husband abroad. In the three cases I witnessed in which Congolese females had found a husband in Morocco, the men were either able to count on constant remittances from family in Europe or had refugee status in Morocco. None of the single, male migrants married in

Morocco while I knew them. Silvester made it clear to me why for him marriage in Morocco was not an option:

“There are no women to marry here in Morocco. As I told you, there are no real Ghanaian women here. When I am in Spain I will look for a wife and children. I will bring over a wife from Ghana. It is not good to get married before one is earning money. Women eat the money up and you are left with nothing. I will never get to Europe like that!”

However, when I asked Yann if he could consider marrying someone from a different country, he told me:

“I don’t really care what country, colour or age the person is. It is important that you connect with each other, I think. But this is difficult here, to find someone to connect with, because everyone is only thinking about money and interest. Where there is only interest, love cannot grow.”

These examples illustrate how the constant struggle for survival in the present can seriously affect men and women’s ideas about themselves and others. It may distort the views they held about a prescribed life in the past. Their failure to participate in the timescapes of industrial time (Adam 2004), in which success as a person is dominated by one’s ability to commodify time, control it and use it, also altered their view of their value as people and affected their relationships.

## Spinning around

As indicated earlier, some of the migrants I knew worked two or three jobs simultaneously, or else changed jobs frequently according to seasons or opportunities (Pickerill 2011). Migrants also frequently had to change their places of residence when unable to pay rent or because of persecution by police. During the three years of my research, most migrants I interviewed changed their residence at least twice, and I know that at least five did so more often.

Between periods of random and restless activity, migrants could go for days and sometimes weeks without finding any employment at all. They often had to ask their relatives, friends or other migrants to help them out, often without knowing when the much-needed financial help

would arrive. While migrants could spend days on end without doing anything at all, their minds were racing about what they *could be* doing and what they *could become*. Jean, from Cameroon, whom I mentioned earlier, reluctantly agreed to describe his daily routine to me and the meaninglessness he felt was clearly evident when he said:

“Well, I am getting up, I wait to see if I feel like getting dressed, then normally I go out, just walk around and maybe see some friends, watch television, see if there’s something up, go back home, ask someone for some money, buy some food, eat, have a nap in the afternoon, and in the evening go out again, maybe go to the cyber<sup>7</sup> if I have the money ... I don’t know. It’s always the same. Nothing interesting, very boring. Nothing important to mention there. If there is no work, there is nothing. Just you and nothing.”

It appeared to me that migrants’ lives in the present were marked by a continuous tension between doing nothing and constantly trying to find a temporary job for survival, a new house to live in or some food for the children. In such an unpredictable environment there was no possibility to rest and relax, even (and particularly) in moments of boredom and inactivity.

This constant tension between boredom and restlessness was voiced by migrants independent of their gender. Migrants I spoke with explained often that they felt as if they were starting from the same point of departure every day, even though they were trying to change their situation. They felt as if there was no real evolution. Instead, migrants’ entire energy went into fighting to maintain the status quo, to make the necessary money to pay the rent, get food and buy a bottle of butane gas for the cooking. When the mind is preoccupied with survival, there is no space for creativity or projects – and the longer such a situation lasts, the more it becomes a way of life. Many of my respondents therefore considered that they were ‘losing time’, ‘wasting time’, ‘spinning around’, in an exhausting and eternal present from which there was no escape. These expressions were recurring and frequent in migrants’ accounts of their daily routines. Angelique expressed it like this: “You feel like a rat in a wheel. Running and running and running and using all your force, just to spin around, not getting anywhere. I want to go back home or finally get to Spain, just anything else than staying here.”

This situation seemed to make migrants feel that they no longer had any control over the ‘system’ and over the forces that mark social status,

because they no longer had any control over their own ‘time’. Yann, the young refugee from Congo, expressed this feeling to me by talking about the unpredictability of his daily life:

Y: “You know, sometimes, I get up in the morning, and my little brother asks me: what are you going to do today? And I say: I don’t know. And at that moment, I really don’t know. Most often, there is no reason to get up even. But then, it can happen that the telephone starts to ring, like today, for example, and I go and accompany my Moroccan boss to do some errands, and after that, I receive your phone call and we meet up and without wanting it, the whole day just falls into place, without me doing anything. And my brother says: You always say you don’t do anything and then you are always away!”

Me: “But that is a good thing, isn’t it? It’s good to be able to do things.”

Y: “Yes and no. Because it is not me who is deciding what I am doing, it is usually other people. It is never me who says: let’s do this or that today. I can never do that. I can never plan anything.”

In such situations, migrants’ former visions of migration as an adventure finally begin to crumble, because they no longer ‘control’ the adventure at all. At this point in their trajectory, it becomes obvious that their story of migration is becoming a different story: adventure is slowly replaced by boredom, the feeling of being part of the flow of life is replaced by the feeling of being outside time and place while being controlled by outside forces that govern their moving and staying. They feel overwhelmed and betrayed by a reality they cannot understand because they have no place within it.

## **Losing the past**

As well as the feeling of being trapped in the present, migrants also have difficulties connecting the present meaningfully to their own past. It appears that when living in limbo, the past can be felt as useless, or as a lost part of one’s life. Adam (2004: 65) points out that the present is not only defined by past and future, but defines them as well. In other words,

it is the present that gives meaning to the way we perceive and talk about the past and the future. With reference to George Herbert Mead, Adam (2004: 66) explains that humans' relationship to time is interactively and subjectively constituted. By this she means that the way in which past and future are preserved, evoked and selected is open to change.

However, the migrants I interviewed often found it difficult to make their past meaningful in the present they were living. Some of the migrants I interviewed expressed this in relation to how their abilities, skills or experience were no longer relevant in Morocco. They felt they had lost their past in this way, along with all the effort or sacrifices they had made to achieve the status they had held. This both affected their relations to their past and added to the feeling of living a useless present. However, it was experienced differently among the men and the women with whom I was in contact.

### *When the past is no longer relevant to the present*

It is not only the present that is difficult to make sense of. The migrants I met gave accounts of difficult relationships with both their past lives and with family members still living in their countries of origin. These were constant issues that affected their present lives. In the case of Sebastien, the chemistry graduate I mentioned earlier, it was his inability to put his skills to use and to be recognized as part of his country's intellectual elite that meant for him that his past was going to waste, his former life being annulled as irrelevant in the present. Sebastien had been presented to me by an NGO worker as an example of a successful migrant who managed to run his own candle production business. Instead of concentrating on how he had achieved this, however, Sebastien chose to give me a very detailed account of his childhood and youth, in order that I should understand why his success in the candle business meant little for him.

He went to great lengths to point out the sacrifices and obstacles he had faced in order to attend university despite having achieved excellent results in school, and how he finally gained a chemistry degree after years of study and hard work. It was of great importance to him to stress that he gained all his qualifications through merit, not because of his family's resources or contacts. He then went on to explain that after several years of staying intermittently in Nigeria and Cameroon, he arrived in Morocco where he hoped to finally secure a decent job in accordance with his educational background. However, having received an offer for a research post at the University of Meknes, he failed to obtain a work permit because he was unable to present a formal university diploma or his

publications and research data from scientific projects in Congo. Following many unsuccessful administrative negotiations between universities, ministries and diplomats from both Morocco and Congo, he finally lost the offer of the post. The UNHCR also rejected his claim for asylum and he was left with no status, no work permit and – worst of all according to him – no real prospect of a promising future. As a result, Sebastien suffered for a long time from clinical depression. He told me that he felt as if his whole life was going to waste and he had lost the energy to start all over again. He told me that the feeling that overwhelmed him was one of impotence, of helplessness, of injustice: “You think to yourself: Why me? What have I done to deserve this? I have tried to do everything the right way.” Sebastien was particularly angry and disappointed by the ways in which his quest for a job and asylum seeker status were not considered legitimate, despite his promising past as both a brilliant student and a political refugee. In light of this, his current ‘success’ in building up his business was meaningless to him.

In another case, Claude, a refugee from Congo, who had been granted asylum in Chad where he had stayed for several years with his wife and children, decided to come to Morocco when he was no longer granted any subsidies and had difficulties making ends meet. Upon arrival in Morocco, his claim for asylum was rejected because he had left Chad unauthorized and could not accredit his former refugee status. Every time I saw him, he showed me a folder of newspaper clippings covering refugee protests in Chad that he had participated in. He held on to this stack of papers as if it was a case full of money. He believed that he had played by the rules. He had documented evidence of his past. He could not accept that his past had become useless in the eyes of the international organizations, NGOs and the Moroccan government, which would not believe his story despite the written evidence he produced. His past – both on paper and lived – had become useless. Not being able to have your paper-past recognized, despite being able to document it, was perceived by more than one of the migrants I had encountered as a particularly perverse form of deceit, because it appeared to contradict the very rules of ‘paper-past importance’ that state regulatory authorities had drawn up in making migration legitimate.

*When the present has no meaning for the past*

Claude’s life story is interesting in another respect. After living in Chad became unviable, he decided to migrate further north, while his wife and children went back to Congo to live with one of his sisters-in-law. As a

former military official, Claude had lost all his assets and land in Congo and feared persecution if he returned. Following years of separation, his family and particularly his adult children were hardly in contact with him and refused to speak to him over the phone. He told me that they were angry with him because he was eluding his financial responsibility to support them with the cost for their university education. He felt guilty about having failed them as a father. Being over 50, Claude was one of the oldest migrants I met in Morocco. When asked what he would do differently now if he could start his life all over again, he made a very surprising confession: “Perhaps I would have spent more time with my family and my children. I would have made a greater effort. Because now, they do not need me anymore. They have forgotten about me. I am old now and I have no one.” Silvester and Claude referred to having lost their place because they had not ‘marked’ their presence socially through financial means or other forms of contact that would have enabled them to uphold the obligations and reciprocal ties that defined their relationships with communities back home (Lubkemann 2011). It is important to note that it was not so much economic necessity that prompted family members back home to cut off ties (as in Claude’s case), but more often migrants’ incapacity to comply with social obligations.

Lise, whom I mentioned earlier, received a telephone call from her mother in Congo while I was with her in her house because one of her aunts had died and the family was organizing the funeral celebration. Her mother expected her to contribute to this financially. Lise told me that her mother counted on frequent remittances from her sister in France and was a successful businesswoman herself.

“It is not that she needs the money. She can pay for this herself. But it makes her look bad in the eyes of the others that I am not sending anything. It looks as if I don’t care about my family any longer, you see? But you cannot explain to them how we are living here, they don’t understand the situation at all. For them, everything outside Congo is paradise and the money is growing on trees. Also, they don’t know that it is difficult to send money from here. I cannot send dirhams to Congo, for example. My mother does not understand that you cannot send euros or dollars over from here.”<sup>8</sup>

Apart from not being able to comply with social obligations, migrants also voiced concerns about having become a burden rather than an asset to their families. Women with children in their charge often mentioned this as one of the reasons for not returning home. Blessing told me (pointing

at her three children): “I cannot go back like this, with nothing to pay for the rice and only three more mouths to fill. No, I cannot go back like this.” Esther was particularly wary of returning home with a mixed race child: “I cannot do this to my family, you know. People look down on you if you have a child like this. I can only come back if I am able to go with a lot of money. A lot of money.”

For all these reasons people were adamant that they could not return to their countries of origin. The migrants I knew who had enquired about returning voluntarily through the IOM programme, for example, told me that their main reluctance to do so was related to the fact that this option did not offer sufficient economic and political security to build a new life in their home country.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Esther’s need to be autonomous was connected to her realization that her life had evolved differently from their friends and family back home. When I asked her if she stayed in regular contact with them, she said:

“Me? No, I do not contact much. You know, I don’t really know what to say, because they don’t know what I have been through, they have such a different life. But they would not understand what I am doing here, my life is different.”

The fact of knowing that life in their countries of origin goes on without them marks migrants’ perception of their past as unrelated to their lived present. While they were standing still, even their past was evolving. Being disconnected from their past in this way has strong personal implications for migrants. Ties to family and friends become more superficial or distant and in cases this can lead to an identity crisis in which migrants are no longer sure about their former values about migration, the group they belong to or where their roots are. This loss of ‘belonging’ to a community suggests a link between time and belonging. The cases discussed above indicate that the ways in which people develop connections to others is dependent not only on place but also on time lived together and apart. The next section will show that a loss of community can have clear consequences for the ways in which people are able to envision their future.

## **Losing the future**

In a situation in which past and present have become meaningless, migrants also have increasing difficulties in focusing on a brighter future. While migrants were usually still filled with the conviction of a better life for themselves elsewhere when they started their migration trajectory, this

certainty was slowly eroded the longer they stayed in Morocco. This was often related to a growing awareness of their own life course running in a different direction from the one they had dreamed of. Often, this appeared clearly in conversations with migrants about family and children. In one of my many internet chats with Jean, after three years of knowing him, I asked him what he was doing and he replied: “Me? Nothing much, just life that passes and passes. No wife, no children, no future. It’s rubbish.” I was surprised to hear this from him as I had always seen him as a bit of a womanizer, constantly partying and surrounded by friends. Actually, when I first met him, he told me that having a family was the least important thing to him at that moment. When I asked him three years later if he wanted to have children he answered: “Everyone would like that, this is to a great extent our objective on this earth. Multiply the world. But I don’t get there despite my age, if you have no children, you will disappear like you have never come to the world.”

Similar themes were often echoed in conversations with other single migrants without children or family. The longer migrants stayed in Morocco, and the older they became, the more they realized that the possibility of having a family in the way they understood it was slowly growing more remote. This issue was predominantly evident in conversations with young, unmarried migrant men, as most women and older men I interviewed actually had children either with them or back in their home countries. Women related their thoughts of the future directly to their offspring, albeit in different ways. Sandrine showed me her two children and said:

“Look at them, I mean, what will become of them? The years are passing. And we are still here in this Morocco. They will get older, they need to go to a good school. They need to get jobs. ... I do not know what to do about this, honestly. I wanted a future for them. There is no future for them. Not here and not there [back in Congo].”

For mothers, the fact that their children would not have a job or a house was important as they saw their offspring as the extension of husbands, brothers and other male members of the family who would look after them in old age. If children were living in poverty it meant that their mothers would die in poverty too. This is how, in some women’s eyes, a better future was directly related to the degree to which they were able to provide a bright future for their own children.

Lubkemann (2011) has argued that African migrants often compensate for their physical absence in these community activities of remembrance

through the sending of remittances. For him, migrants are marking their place in the future symbolically through financial contributions to the community back home. However, when migrants live in forced immobility for a long period of time, their relation to the future and future generations is slowly altered: they no longer see their meaningful contribution to the circle of life. In this sense, their ability to transcend time through their children is disrupted. This, however, is a vital human desire, which is linked to our sense of existence. Having lost this transcendence, some migrants lose part of their existential reason for being in the world.

## **Facing the absurd**

After our long chat about the difficulty of finding a wife and having children, Jean ended the internet chat with: “I am frankly lost in hopelessness.” In many conversations I had with migrants, a feeling of alienation marked their stories and a contention that nothing any longer made sense. Almost all of them had experienced periods of deep depression and a sense of personal failure because of it. In conversations with representatives from two of the main international NGOs working with migrants in Morocco, both organizations stressed mental health problems among the migrant population as one of their major health concerns in recent years.<sup>10</sup> Migration no longer appeared as an adventure which would help them become better individuals and enable them to return to their home country one day. Instead it had converted them into shadows of themselves. The link between existential mobility and physical mobility was broken.

If migration was no longer a road to change, there was no other road to change possible. The only thing that was left was death. Yann shared with me a text he had written on his view on life that illustrates this feeling of senselessness.

### *A man's life*

Man's only happiness is to eat, drink and enjoy the results of their hard work. Human beings work hard on this earth, but what does this bring? One generation passes and another generation is born and the world is still there; the sun rises, the sun sets, what existed still exists; there is nothing new any day that can make us say: 'look here's something new'. This has always been the case for a long time, a long time before us, though we forget what has happened in the past, just as

the next generation will also forget what happened after us. Seeing all the evil that man has made on this earth, he must give what he has to another who has done nothing. Every day we suffer and try hard to get what we want; we do not even rest at night!

I hate life, I hate all that we have achieved on this earth, all the evil that I have done to this earth. I will happily leave the benefits to he who will take my place...

His words illustrate his consciousness of the senseless and never changing conditions that bind the past, the present and the future in the same unjust and always returning cycle of life from which there is no escape. Yann's words also describe his consciousness of death. The everlasting present creates a situation in which migrants perceive their life as standing still, while that of others, their family and friends, is constantly going on, towards death. They know that even though their time is standing still, their life is also finite and eventually will lead to death. This creates a situation in which time is 'endured' until death, the inevitable end (Schweizer 2008). Enduring time equals suffering time, because it is just time, without being filled with any meaningful project that could give back sense to life.

Even though Yann is a man, I have had conversations with women echoing similar feelings about the uselessness of life and the appreciation of inevitable death. However, women were sometimes able to mitigate the situation by focusing on the present and on the responsibility they had towards their children, towards life. Emma, for example, told me that her husband was still in psychological care because he had difficulties coming to terms with the situation of not being anyone. She believed that she was coping better because: "Women always have to be stronger because they have to be there for the children, life has to go on, you cannot just sit down and cry. That doesn't put food on the table." She admitted to me, however, that she also had difficult times. She told me about her last two pregnancies.

"I was so unhappy about the fourth pregnancy, always crying because I was worried about how we were going to manage with another child now. I suffered a lot. And, just after I had stopped breastfeeding, I fell pregnant again! But this time, I swore to myself that I was not going to get depressed, that I was going to live my life because I had only one. And it was important to live every day of it. And this has been the change in my mind, I think and it makes things easier to live with, it really does. I concentrate on now, not on tomorrow. And

going to church has helped me a lot too [...] You would not believe it, but I am very happy with my five children now. I mean, I am still suffering, but I am at peace with myself.”

Not everyone was able to concentrate on the present in the way Emma did, in order to get some sense back from life. This was particularly so because some migrants started losing faith in spiritual guidance as a way to endure the present. Some of the migrants told me how they lost faith in God or changed their religious orientation during a period in which they doubted life and its sense. Pierre and Sandrine actually converted to Islam after they had felt betrayed by God in one of their unsuccessful migration attempts, but soon after they recovered their Christian faith. Three Muslim migrants confessed to me that they had been disappointed by their faith upon learning that Morocco, as a Muslim country, was in no way hospitable and welcoming to them. But rather than loss of faith altogether, it is its reorientation and reconsideration which I uncovered repeatedly in migrants' stories. Of the 40 migrants I encountered, only five told me that they no longer believed in God at all. The majority were spiritual in some way or another, even though many of them had experienced a crisis of faith in the past. I interpret this as a consequence of their confrontation with the absurd. Albert Camus (1991: 5) describes the feeling of absurdity of life as follows:

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.

In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus (1942) describes the absurd as a world that is unexplainable through reason or religion. For Camus, accepting the absurd means accepting that there is no higher force that should guide our lives on this earth or scientific laws or ideologies that could explain its mysteries. In many of the conversations I had with migrants, their life in Morocco resembled an absurd world, in which their prior belief in the systems and values that guided migration, or even in God, were at least temporarily suspended and out of place. It could not be made sense of. As the adventure of migration slowly loses its sense, so do the rules that until now accompanied it and the migrant's belief in their own person.

## Conclusion

As my contact with migrants evolved, I realized they fall into limbo not only because they feel in between places, but also because they live 'in between' times: their future was uncertain, their present was preoccupied with immediate survival and their past had little meaning in their present situation. Cwerner (2001) has theorized about migrants' changing perspective of time in an exploration of the 'times of migration', as he calls them. In his theoretical approach to time he describes migrants' lives through a series of existential processes or transitional life stages that are interlocked without any clear linear succession of events. Among these, liminal time is perhaps the feeling that best matches the experiences described by the migrants in my research who had stayed in Morocco for years. Cwerner (2001: 27–28) says about liminal times:

Liminality is not only about transition. Its fundamental ambivalence creates a time 'out of the ordinary' when anything can happen. The old rules do not apply, while the new ones are still to be internalised. In this situation, many immigrants can endure living circumstances that would not be envisaged were they living in their own country or had they settled in the host society.

I find that migrants' changing perspectives on past, present and future correspond to this description of 'liminal times'. Old values and ideas lose their meaning while new ones are not yet to be found. When the present no longer links meaningfully to a past and a future and when the past and future no longer help to explain a life in the present, migrants are living desynchronized lives, which affect their own constructions of themselves as adventurers and their potential to transform their lives, creating a better future for themselves and their children.

In such a situation, migrants also perceive a fundamental contradiction between the eternal, unchanging and ongoing time of the world and humans' contradictory quest for improvement and betterment despite the world's eternal structures of injustice and fear. The possibilities of what one could become slowly diminish; there is a limit to the infinite possibilities that were previously open, and the most basic references to what it means to be someone, like having a family, are severely undermined. In such circumstances, it is difficult to contribute to any meaningful community life, to engage in activities, to be in any way a socially active person. Forced immobility creates marginality and dislocation.

Camus (1942) argues that the awareness of one's own death makes life the only thing worth living, rather than believing and trusting in an

afterlife. Awareness and consciousness of death leads to an acceptance that the present is the only thing controllable by humans. As life after death cannot be known, or influenced, suicide is not an option to escape the absurdity of life, because it gives in to death and annihilates life. Camus believed that the only way of conquering death is by living one's life to the fullest while abandoning any hope for improvement. He termed this 'revolting against the absurd'.

His perspective on life and death is particularly illustrative of migrants' perspective on life in liminal times. In her analysis of Zimbabwean asylum seekers in the UK, Madziva (2010b) shows how the sense of life and death is reconsidered when both migration and settlement become a negative experience, similar to social death. Migrants in Morocco also experience their liminal times as a time in between life and death, in which everything is reduced to life in the present. In contrast to Madziva's case, however, migrants in Morocco are still hoping to escape their situation through onward movement. Their ways of confronting their absurd situation seem contradictory to the idea of revolt without hope, because while they are forced to preoccupy themselves with the immediate present, most of them hold on to a belief in the future in order to reaffirm the worth of their existence. I see their behaviour as a constant moving in and out of hopelessness and acceptance of the status quo. This is what I call 'desperate hope'.

In the following chapter, I will concentrate on how the constant desire to create new futures elsewhere while attempting to make the immediate present liveable plays out in the relations that migrants have with each other in forced immobility. I will show how migrants' lives in the present and their particular perspectives on past and future mark their ambivalent relations with each other.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Eleven dirhams (dh) equate to approximately €1 at the time of the research, so 80–150 dh is €7–14 a day and 50 dh is approximately €4 a day.
- <sup>2</sup> Morocco has a thriving textile industry and produces clothes for many European brands, mostly in factories and sweatshops located in Tangier, Casablanca and Rabat. Some of the sweatshop-produced clothes can be purchased for little money on the black market and migrants often attempt to send clothes to friends in Europe via the normal post so that they can then be resold there for profit. However, these business ventures are hampered by the fact that customs controls for parcels are very strict and do not allow migrants to send more than three or four pieces of clothing at any one time.
- <sup>3</sup> In this context, I have witnessed that migrants in Rabat and Casablanca are actually competing in these occupations with many unemployed Moroccans who are trying to make their living through similar means. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for migrants not only to find work or to recruit clients but also to secure a place on the street (if selling there or begging), as frequently, the best locations are already taken and violent conflicts about who is able to use them are common.

- <sup>4</sup> During the nineteenth century and up into the beginning of the twentieth century, black slaves and soldiers from Sub-Saharan Africa were commonly found in south-west Morocco and signified status for their 'owners'. Black and white people rarely married or mixed, as black people were generally conferred an inferior status (Ennaji 1994: 108). The term *azi* (which means black and slave) is still used frequently to refer to black African migrants in the streets, and it is not uncommon to find Moroccans displaying a feeling of superiority towards black people (Pian 2009). This is particularly so in relation to black domestic workers, whether male or female, Moroccan or foreign.
- <sup>5</sup> I only encountered two cases in which women had left one or several children in their country of origin and in the care of family. Three others had sent their children unaccompanied over the border to Spain and France. In these cases, women were very concerned about their financial responsibilities towards these children and their inability to comply with their roles as mothers.
- <sup>6</sup> In referring to 'working', he means prostitution. I am not sure about the actual number of female Ghanaian migrants in Rabat and I have never met one myself. Nevertheless, I was told by other migrants that there were a limited number of Ghanaian women in town, although nobody was able to confirm the prostitution hypothesis to me. Pian (2009: 57) notes that Ghanaian migrants in Morocco are indeed to be found in prostitution networks. Carling (2005), Pian (2009) and Kastner (2010) have documented the dynamics of prostitution among Nigerian women in Morocco.
- <sup>7</sup> Internet café.
- <sup>8</sup> The Moroccan currency, the dirham, cannot be exported and even Moroccans have a legal limit on foreign currency exchange unless they have an international foreign currency account at a Moroccan bank, something that is difficult to access. Undocumented migrants cannot exchange money officially at the bank and have to do this on the black market, which is costly and risky. Sending foreign currency to another country through private money transfer businesses is illegal.
- <sup>9</sup> The programme for voluntary return run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was set up in collaboration with different European governments (Germany, UK, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Norway, Netherlands and Switzerland) and the European Union and its activities are coordinated between the Moroccan government and African home countries. From 2005 until February 2010, 2,831 irregular migrants returned through the IOM to 29 different African home countries. Only 1,818 of them were provided with financial aid of €485 to start an economic activity upon return. Most economic activities concern informal business ventures (IOM 2010). The evaluation of the reinsertion projects undertaken in 2009 states that all migrants whose projects have been visited consider that the financial means provided by the IOM for their economic project are not sufficient to guarantee its sustainability (IOM 2009: 9).
- <sup>10</sup> I have not been able to provide official figures from either organization to prove this point because both interviewees' observations were based on internal data which is not yet published. However, both assured me that cases of depression, anxiety attacks and sleep problems were frequent pathologies which they had observed among the migrant population. While they related them in great part also to traumatic events that happened during their trip to Morocco or in their home country, both were positive about the fact that living conditions in Morocco contributed greatly to the development of these disorders.

# Migrant Communities in Morocco

## Introduction

In the previous chapter, I indicated how migrants lose their sense of belonging and identity through their altered relation to time. In this chapter, I want to focus on migrants' interaction with community structures in Morocco, in order to demonstrate how forced immobility also alters their relationship to place. The data presented here shows that migrants' social relations in forced immobility are on the one hand a site for recovering identity and social significance, but on the other hand also position some of them in relationships of dependence and exploitation. These contradictory relationships to 'place making' are at the root of migrants' desire to keep on moving, and also inhibit them from becoming 'rooted' transnationally. This insight questions the usefulness of describing migrant community structures in 'transit' either negatively as exploitative trafficking networks (Crisp 1999) or overly positively as social capital (Evergeti & Zontini 2006). Instead, I argue that a deeper look at migrant community relations in forced immobility helps us to appreciate the complicated nature of reciprocity, solidarity and mutual dependence among the migrant community in Morocco and the weight these factors have in informing migrants' self-worth and personhood. Such an analysis could have important repercussions for changing priorities in community projects with migrants in Morocco.

My initial interest in this subject was not to study migrant communities per se, but to look at how individual migrants experienced life in immobility. Despite this, during fieldwork it became obvious to me that migrants' relations with other migrants constituted an important aspect of

their daily lives and shaped their experience of forced immobility and their own personhood. I decided to include an analysis of migrants' community relations here in order to demonstrate the link between the individual's way of conceiving their life and how they are perceived and evaluated by other migrants. This tension enables one to appreciate that migrant communities are important factors in mitigating how migrants deal with prolonged situations of uncertainty through strategies of active waiting and hopeful anticipations of the future (Brun 2015). Nevertheless, I am aware that the perspective on community life represented here is shaped by the methodological limitations of my research process and does not constitute an exhaustive analysis of the diversity of migrants' community experiences in Morocco.

The following chapter is based on my interactions with two community structures in Morocco: a Pentecostal Nigerian church community; and Cameroonian, Congolese and Ivory Coast migrant 'governments'. As already touched upon in [Chapter 2](#), government is the name given by some migrants to the kind of migrant community networks operating in Morocco, which are mainly defined by nationality. I have chosen these structures because of their importance in the lives of the migrants included in my study: almost all of them had participated in a religious community in Morocco and had dealings with their respective migrant government at some point. The chapter begins with a brief review of the meaning of community in migration literature and its relation to the specific case in Morocco. This is followed by an analysis of the power divisions within migrant community networks in Morocco and a detailed ethnographic description of their activities. This leads me to a detailed discussion on the economy of morals at work between migrants in Morocco and the inequalities thereof.

## **What is community?**

There is a growing literature on migrant communities in contemporary migration studies and as a consequence a variety of definitions of migrant communities exist. I am referring to community networks here as dynamic structures that involve social relations between the members of a group. Migrant communities are formed through networks of people that can span over different places and times. Thus, I am defining community and networks in both temporal and spatial terms. I prefer the term 'community networks' rather than using solely 'community' or 'networks', because this combination stresses the interdependence of both concepts. This definition is consistent with research by transnational scholars of migration,

who emphasize that migrant communities often function across national boundaries of home and host countries and across several generations of migrants (Glick Schiller et al 1992, Portes et al 1999, Bauböck & Faist 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Hage (2005) has argued that migrant communities constitute a point of attachment; they can be a nourishing source for individuals. For him, migrant community networks reaffirm a person's roots or help to construct a social identity that is related to the context or place in which the migrant lives as well as the one that was left behind. The importance of migrants' mobility for maintaining social relations across different nations is often stressed by scholars of diaspora and transnationalism (Glick Schiller et al 1992, Bauböck & Faist 2010). The fact that migrants in Morocco are unable to move is therefore an important aspect when analysing migrants' community structures because it makes it more difficult for them to be transnationally active. I argue that because of the impossibility of maintaining social relations across national borders, migrant communities in Morocco become a substitute for the 'nourishing source of attachment' that social relations with families, neighbours and friends in the home country usually represent.

It could be argued that social relations are precisely those aspects of migrant community networks in Morocco that are often brittle and fragile in a situation of imminent movement and constant reconfiguration of groups. As migratory networks, they might be better seen as a form of organization used by people on the move, defining a field of potential social, emotional and physical mobility for their members (Tarris 2002, Hage 2005, Schapendonk 2011). As such, they may represent a 'network of roads', rather than a 'network of roots'. The existing research on 'transiting' migrant communities in Morocco has taken up this view and primarily investigated communities' functions as migratory networks (Escoffier 2006, Collyer 2007, Pian 2009, Schapendonk 2011). Escoffier (2006) therefore talks about them as 'itinerant communities'.

Perhaps also because of this, certain community structures have received greater attention than others in research. Migrant governments in Morocco, for example, are commonly described in contemporary literature as 'the' community networks; in their analysis of the governments' activities most researchers focus on those which are directly or indirectly related to the organization of onward travel out of Morocco (Alioua 2005, Escoffier 2006, Pian 2009, Schapendonk 2011). In these accounts, it appears that migrant governments do *nothing but* help fellow migrants to cross the border to Spain. The data presented in this chapter provides a complementary view on migrant governments which goes beyond their role as 'roads' and analyses them as important actors in providing migrants with social and cultural 'roots' in a no man's land.

While the activities of migrant governments have been analysed in the context of their role as facilitators for organizing onward movement to the European mainland, migrants' religious communities have received scarce attention. Apart from the general acknowledgement of migrants' deep religiosity, implicit in the ethnographic work of Alioua (2005), Escoffier (2006), Pian (2009) and Schapendonk (2011), there is no detailed analysis of religious communities and their activities in Morocco. Johnson and colleagues (2010) find that even though religion is an important signifier of meaning, it is not often taken into consideration when investigating migrants' sociality pattern. According to my research in Morocco, Pentecostal migrant church communities are of growing importance as community structures. This is particularly true for the English-speaking migrant communities – in this case most often Nigerian migrants. Pastors and ministers are sought out by both social workers and migrant organizations to act as gatekeepers for negotiating access to hard-to-reach groups of the migrant community – for example women and children. So while religious communities play an increasingly vital part for migrants as a source of attachment, they are rarely acknowledged as doing so in the existing literature on migration in Morocco.

My analysis highlights the interdependent nature of religious networks and other community networks with both acting as facilitators of onward movement and stay – particularly against a backdrop of forced immobility and hopelessness. Despite the relative absence of transnational elements in the community activities of the migrants I encountered, community relations can adequately be described as a site of continuing struggle to 'create a place' in both Morocco and abroad. Like Dahinden (2010: 51), I find that aspects of locality in mobility, or mobility in locality have not been sufficiently theorized in research on migrant communities. In order to become mobile, it is necessary for migrants to develop some local ties and to be embedded in specific localities, and this can only happen over time and according to the social position one is in with respect to others in a given place (Massey 1993). Adding to the work of Dahinden (2010) and Massey (1999), I therefore maintain that not only the social and economic contexts, but also the time one stays in a place plays a significant role in how far locality can be constructed through communities.

I also highlight how unequal power relations and social differences impact on the ways in which community networks function. In some of the literature on migrant communities in Morocco, these are described as based on a sense of otherness in relation to the environment migrants pass through. Alioua (2005), Collyer (2006), Escoffier (2006), Pian (2009) and Branchet (2011) all emphasize the role of solidarity in community structures as a strategy of survival in otherwise isolating and marginalizing

conditions. Without wishing to invalidate this analysis, I want to highlight that community network relations between migrants are not always best analysed by looking at the similarities between their members. On the contrary, it is useful to analyse how members are linked together in relations of difference and sometimes also in relations of dependence.

I argue that the difficult contexts of forced immobility and the long duration of unwanted stay can actually heighten differences between members of migrant communities rather than strengthen their similarities. This may also lead to exploitation and deceit among migrants, as well as to heightened interdependence, support and solidarity. Such an analysis complicates the conceptual link that is often made between 'forced' migrants and 'exploitation' through smuggling networks. It is often implicit in policy documents and media reports on 'transit' migrants that migrants have exclusively exploitative and dependent relations with smugglers and 'traffickers' (Migration News 1995, Mavris 2002). On the contrary, migrant community groups such as the church are often treated as solidarity structures and as such their leaders are sought out by aid organizations as gatekeepers for initiating contact with the community. This was invariably evident in conversations I had with NGO professionals. Such binary representations of community structures conceal the complicated power relations evident in the social relations between migrants in forced immobility. They do not take sufficient account of the fact that the same people are often involved in relations that are simultaneously exploitative and supportive.

### **Characteristics of migrant community networks: unequal divisions of power and spaces of social agency**

In contemporary migration literature, communities are often defined through similarities between members, such as ethnic or family ties, or common interests (Evergeti & Zontini 2006). Accordingly, people's solidarity structures are explained through shared values or interests. This is also an argument made in the literature of migrant community structures in Morocco, where migrants' relations with each other are explained above all on the basis of their shared wish to migrate further (Alioua 2005, Escoffier 2006, Schapendonk 2011, Bachelet 2016).

In the two community structures I observed, a shared ethnicity and the experience of migration were both crucial aspects through which community groups identified their members. However, according to the data I was able to gather, social differences between people rather than equality structure these migrants' community relations in Morocco. This

was particularly true because of the existence of very authoritative and hierarchical structures of leadership inherent within them. In common with research findings by Johnson and colleagues (2010), I found that despite existing relations of dependence and power, migrants were able to express a certain social agency through their community activities – at least some of the time. In this sense, my data suggests that social relations were a vital aspect of making migrants human again and represented a shared ethics across divisions of power.

### *Pastor Moses and the Pentecostal church*

My first example is based on observation and interviews in a Nigerian Pentecostal church community in Rabat.<sup>2</sup> The church was run by Pastor Moses and a group of his collaborators. They had hired an old, traditionally built two-storey house in the middle of one of the Takadoum's poorest neighbourhoods. I had been introduced to Pastor Moses by Silvester from Ghana, who frequented the church regularly. Silvester had chosen the church despite the fact that he was the only Ghanaian attending the service. When I asked Silvester why he had chosen to frequent the church despite his being Ghanaian, he told me that he felt he could identify with the church members because he could still speak pidgin with the Nigerians. He also told me that there was no similar church community only for Ghanaians and that he did not feel like going to one of the francophone Pentecostal churches because of problems with language. When I asked Moses about the fact that most of the church members were Nigerian, he answered that as head of the church, he was open to all nationalities, but that mostly Nigerians would be there because they knew the rituals and the songs, understood English and were neighbours who could trust each other. He added: "I prefer them being Nigerian, to be honest. Because they know pidgin and I know where they come from. It is better to stick to people from your country, because you cannot know about the rest." Here, the importance of ethnicity, based on nationality as a prerequisite for community membership was made clear. Pastor Moses clearly distinguished migrants according to their origin. The mere experience of migration, and even their religious orientation was subordinated to their nationality in order to qualify for membership in the church. Moses invited me to attend a service one Sunday and I had arranged with Silvester to meet up beforehand so that he could guide me to the place. When we arrived, there were at least 60 people crammed into 50 square metres, over three rooms. Women and children in the audience outnumbered men by far, but there were no female ministers. The place

for the ministers was elevated and distinguishable by flowers, comfortable chairs and carefully selected decorations. The 'ordinary' churchgoers were seated on plastic chairs. On several occasions, Pastor Moses felt the need to make his position of authority clear to me.

When, for instance, I wanted to approach Pastor Moses at the altar to thank him personally for his kindness in allowing me to be part of the ceremony, Silvester's unease made me reconsider. I had broken the rules; I had infringed Moses' authority by walking up to him directly. When I asked for a personal interview, he smiled but did not answer and made it appear as if he had not really acknowledged me. Days later, he called me up and informed me that he was willing to be interviewed. When I arrived at the place of the interview, Moses and a group of six Nigerian men sitting in a circle around a table and in front of a television welcomed me. The whole atmosphere was a demonstration of authority and pride. I had to convince them of the necessity of my research. I was talking to leaders, and I was expected to make clear to them that I knew this. Moses wanted me to know that he was someone to be taken into consideration, someone with the ability to direct the course of events. In subsequent meetings, our relations relaxed considerably. Pastor Moses actually invited me several times to his home over the years I did fieldwork. With time, he relaxed in my presence, particularly in intimate meetings when a very reduced number of collaborators were present. Because of this behaviour, I came to believe that in acting out a hierarchical relationship to me, Moses was making a public statement that was vital in order for him to maintain his role as a church leader in the eyes of the community.

I also noticed that particular rules and rituals were an important part of the services and served to establish unity and difference among members. Moments of prayer, preaching and singing altered in particular sequences (see [Figure 3](#)). Song and music had a particularly important place in the ceremony. On a second occasion when I was present, during which the third anniversary of the church was celebrated, 'special guests' had been invited. They were composed of a group of other Pentecostal pastors from neighbouring churches in the area, all Nigerian, who were lined up in their best finery and sat in comfortable chairs at the front of the altar. It was an atmosphere of celebration and occasion, but also of unity within different congregations. By the time we were sitting in the church, it was almost noon, and inside the church the temperature had risen to around 45 degrees Celsius. There were no windows, only some ventilation slots and two old electric fans. Despite this, women appeared in ball gowns and men were wearing carefully ironed long-sleeved shirts, blazers, ties, gold chains and bulky watches. In this respect, the situation very much resembled the church-going customs in many

**Figure 3:** Programme of church anniversary

<b>Order of Programme of the 4th Anniversary of the Church on Sat. 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010</b>	
1.	Opening prayer
2.	Praise and worship
3.	Intercession
4.	Individual special numbers
5.	Host choir special number
6.	Introduction of guest
7.	Invited choirs special numbers
8.	Drama presentation
9.	Host choir special number
10.	Message
11.	Offering and tithes
12.	Raising of funds
13.	Biography of the church
14.	Refreshment and vote of thanks
15.	Benediction

African countries. The clothing gave the whole situation a solemn touch, and was used to symbolize a special occasion. The church was a special place that gave members the feeling of being part of a common whole, thus enabling them to distinguish themselves from everyone else. It was like a festive club event. I got the impression that rituals like dress codes, seating orders and ceremonial activities were vital for the functioning of the church community because they helped to construct the church as an extraordinary space. As a member of that community one could feel ‘special’ – and thus the church became an important point of refuge in a world in which migrants were treated as outcasts.

However, this ‘special place’ was also highly socially stratified. While anyone could be a member, not all members were equal and there was a clear hierarchy of command. The pastor and his collaborators maintained authority over the other members, women ranking on the lowest scale. As an example of this, during the entire time I knew the ministers and their collaborators, it was impossible for me to establish contacts with female members of the church. There were a restricted number of women active in the church structures, but Moses was not happy for me to talk to them. ‘Some other time’ he would say every time I asked.<sup>3</sup>

### *A trip to Angelique’s new home: migrant government structures*

My impression of authority, ethnicity and gender relations in migrant religious communities was further extended in my encounters with

members of migrant governments. These structures are also called 'parliaments', 'ghettos' or 'communities' and are generally organized by nationality. Almost all nationalities are represented through a government, which usually designates one or several chairmen as its leader (Alioua 2005, Escoffier 2006, Collyer 2007, Pian 2009, Yene 2010). These structures appear to have emerged at the very beginning of migrants' arrival in Morocco, at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, and resemble similar structures that exist in many other African countries through which migrants pass on their way to Morocco (Escoffier 2006, Yene 2010). In the forests around Oujda, Ceuta and Tangier, these national communities emerged to organize the life of migrants of different nationalities in the camps. However, when migrants started to move into the cities, the organization of migrant communities started to take shape there too. In the cities they serve to mediate conflicts between different migrant groups and with Moroccan neighbourhood groups, and act as a sort of paralegal and social community service for migrants. According to what I could gather in my interviews with NGO workers, chairmen of migrant governments have become important interlocutors with international organizations and NGOs as well as with a range of African embassies. Even though the chairmen tend to be men, there are also some influential migrant women in each government who adopt mediation roles and act as mobilizers, linking migrants with the work of charitable organizations. While there is normally one government per nationality, in some communities, like those of the Senegalese (Pian 2009), several chairmen exist. In the Nigerian community it is not uncommon to find several chairmen who group Nigerians according to ethnicity. From the information I was able to gather, the most numerous Nigerian ethnic groups present in Morocco were Edo and Igbo, mainly coming from the south of the country. I know, for example, that Pastor Moses was in close contact with leaders of several Nigerian migrant governments - but particularly those of the Edo groups.

While migrants talked about their frequent dealings with 'migrant governments' on a range of occasions, I never sought out direct contact with the chairmen, except for one time, and that happened almost by accident. One day, when I was heading to an interview with Angelique, one of my informants from the Cameroonian community, she guided me to her chairman's house. We had agreed to meet in her home, so I was quite surprised to end up in an area of town where new apartment blocks were being built. Angelique explained to me that she now was living at the chairman's place, after having lost her job as a community worker in one of the NGOs working with migrants. The chairman lived in a new apartment block in a resettlement area for former slum inhabitants. It was

a modern apartment, very unlike the shabby residences most migrants were living in. There was even an internet connection, a computer and a fully equipped kitchen. Several people were present in the two-bedroom flat, which had been converted, using a handmade separator, into a three-bedroom flat. The apartment was more than full: mattresses were lying everywhere, and there were people coming and going all the time.

I was offered a drink and then Angelique left me alone in the room, pretending to have a conversation with another woman in another room. Here, I was supposed to wait for the chairman, who asked to greet me first. I could hear him in animated conversation behind the room separator. I got the point: he was busy. I was not his priority. I had to wait. When we finally met, we learnt that we had met some years before at one of the NGOs, long before I started my fieldwork. I had interviewed him then as a representative of Cameroonian migrants. He then enquired about the nature of my research. The conversation was, above all, a demonstration of power and an investigation into my real motivations. As with Moses, he let me know that he had been informed about my interviewing Cameroonians of 'his' community. He also informed me about his activities in several migrant rights organizations, mentioning people of influence in international organizations in the process. This introduction served to make me aware of his position in the community as a wealthy, connected, intelligent and – above all – important figure of authority.

When I asked him why he was sharing his apartment with so many people, he said that he felt obliged to help fellow Cameroonians in their difficult situation. He told me that he would be willing to help in my research if it was going to contribute to a better life for all of them. All in all, he wished to emphasize that in his role as chairman, he had to use his authority to protect and help his community. When Angelique reappeared after a while on the scene, the chairman spoke and she was silent. We continued our interview when she accompanied me back to the bus station a mile away. The chairman had promised her that he would use his contacts to get her a job as a domestic in one of the diplomat households so that she would be able to live autonomously again.

“He is a good man, you see, he has connections to the Cameroonian embassy, and he got a residency permit. He knows how to speak, you see. This is how he really helps people. If it were not for him, I would be on the street right now.”

I have described my encounter with the chairman as an example of how the migrant government structures of authority were similar to those found in the ghettos that migrants experience during their travels to Morocco (Escoffier 2006, Yene 2010, Schapendonk 2011). As in other locations on their trajectory, migrant chairmen act as connections in Morocco: they actually can help migrants to access contacts, jobs or other services and they can protect them from problems with other migrants or local authorities. In order to maintain a credible role as chairmen, however, it is vital to demonstrate the power and ability to help others: chairmen have to work hard to maintain their position as 'big men' in the migrant community, as people who can make things and people move (Alpes 2011). This necessarily means that they must physically evidence their power: for the chairman I described above, inviting people to live in his home for free and representing their interests before NGOs was an effective way to do this.

### *Victims or agents?*

A closer look at the structural characteristics of both the Pentecostal church and migrant governments reveals the ways structures of authority and membership are constructed. These mirror migrants' social structures of community life and family relations in their homelands, but equally resemble the organization of mobility networks during their travels. Ethnicity and authoritative leadership remain important characteristics of community life at home as well as abroad, but are adapted to the migratory context. For example, I noticed that Nigerians identified with each other above all on the basis of their nationality and not primarily through tribal membership or ancestry as is common in Nigeria (Abah & Okwori 2005). Additionally, among migrants from different countries, nationality became an important ethnic signifier that enabled them to distinguish among themselves. This was particularly true because their nationality also implied differential treatment by the state and international organizations.<sup>4</sup> National stereotypes were used by migrants themselves in order to defend their particular role in the migrant community: Congolese migrants often referred to themselves as politically persecuted, educated intellectuals who deserved a preferential status as refugees (Goldschmidt 2006). Cameroonians were proud of their good relations with their diplomatic representatives and their ability to organize their communities. Meanwhile, Ghanaian migrants emphasized that, in contrast to Nigerians, they had a reputation for

being hardworking. Gender relations in migrant communities were marked by the fact that women usually adopted the role of ‘protected’ individuals. In this respect, they seemed to replicate the relations they experienced during their migratory project and (often) in their countries of origin. As I indicated in [Chapter 3](#), seeking protection through men is a recurring feature of women’s journeys to Morocco.

It is possible that these practices help migrants to feel rooted and secure in a situation of profound displacement by re-establishing borders and social categories known to them from the past (Turton 2004). This does not mean, however, that these social differences are egalitarian. As we have seen in relation to gender, migrant women are mostly absent from influential roles in both the church and the migrant government. In fact, they are almost excluded from participating in any relevant decision-making processes and yet they benefit from their position as ‘protected individuals’. Nationality is not only a signifier of ethnicity; in certain situations it can determine community membership or differential treatment by other migrants. In this respect, while migrants community activities were clearly marked by relations of dependence and hierarchy, it would be wrong to dismiss them as spaces that reinforce migrants’ image as ‘culturally impoverished docile bodies’ (Johnson et al 2010: 219) who are living a ‘bare life’ (Agamben 1998) without rights and obligations. On the contrary, within these spaces of difference, migrants are able to exert a certain degree of social agency by identifying with other members of the same group. In the next section, I will deepen this argument by looking more closely at the activities of migrants’ community networks.

### **Activities of community networks: self-esteem, protection and onward migration**

The following sections analyse the activities of migrant communities from a standpoint of sociability and ‘place making’ *and* as a means for organizing onward movement. I show how these aspects of migrants’ relations are actually difficult to separate out in practice. They form part of a complicated whole of relations which mirrors the particularly difficult conditions for sociability in situations of ‘stuckness’ in forced immobility. So, it is not easy to determine how far communities act primarily as agents of movement or settlement in Morocco. The interdependent nature of activities for movement and settlement are precisely what helps migrants to regain a sense of control over their lives in their situation of forced immobility.

*The church anniversary and other services*

Let me return to Pastor Moses and my participation in the celebrations for the church anniversary in order to describe the different types of services the church was offering. There was a mix of activities to consolidate belonging, self-esteem and protection of the weak. At the same time, the church actually acted as an important facilitator for onward migration.

Firstly, it struck me that, despite the apparent hierarchical organization and the strong authoritative structures on display, the services offered were structured in highly participatory ways. Individual church members were asked to read the bible or to sing in front of the audience and lead the rhythm. In contrast to the ‘collaborators’ and pastors, they were instructed to stand up and received clear indications about when to intervene and in what form. There were also ‘dancers’ who jumped up in front of the audience to perform while others were singing. At the end of the ceremony, people were asked to write on a piece of paper their hope for the future. These were read out loudly in front of the audience and subsequently a communal prayer was organized in order to make the dreams come true.

When talking to Moses about the participation of church members in the service, he explained why, for him, this type of activity was a vital part of the social glue which held the church community together. He told me that, in his view, this was one of the things that distinguished his church from the more established churches in town. He said:

“You see, these people, they come here because they are in despair. They feel depressed. They do not think they are worth anything. At the big church in town, no one really lets you participate. You sit down, you sing when all sing, you listen, but you are not asked to contribute. Making people contribute gives them back a sense of worth. They feel they can do something – even if it is only singing in front of others. They feel that others are listening to them again. It makes them feel good.”

Other important group activities of the church included weekly meetings for bible study, choir practice and Sunday school for children. According to Moses, the choir was particularly popular among female migrants. At the church anniversary celebrations, different gospel choirs from other Pentecostal churches performed for the audiences, looking professional in matching outfits, especially made for the performances. The great

importance of this for people in the church was later confirmed to me by one of the woman who sang in the choir, whom I bumped into at the migrant summer school.<sup>5</sup> “I like going there on Sundays, you should come! You forget the suffering, you dance and sing for a while and when you get back home, life is good. Until Monday!” While I was attending the church anniversary party, food was prepared for every participant. This included huge amounts of rice and some chicken, juice and popcorn. It was a demonstration of abundance and happiness. Everyone was provided for and everything was for free – the church was offering to the needy. The communal sharing of the meal was redolent of living in a ‘big family’ and celebrating together. All these activities were clearly helping migrants to reconstruct social bonds to other migrants and to feel ‘emplaced’ again, at least spiritually and socially, in a community of equals.

In the meantime, I was witnessing people going up and down the stairs to the second floor of the three-storey building in which the church was housed in order to get the food for everyone. Silvester told me that a number of Nigerians, mostly women and children, were housed there by the church. They were also the ones who had been preparing the meal for the occasion. According to Pastor Moses’ version of circumstances, these were individuals who could not afford to rent a place, were ill or otherwise in need of protection. The church covered their expenses and needs until they were able to find a way to sustain themselves. Pastor Moses also told me that the church had plans to establish a crèche for some of the most vulnerable children in the community but had not yet been able to put them into practice. Pierre, my Congolese friend, was of a different opinion, however:

“It is not exactly like that, you see. I think the people who are living there are those that are waiting to leave. They wait for the connection man to take them to Oujda, to get on the boat. They are the ones that have paid already for the place on the *patera*. Maybe there are some who are really in a bad state, one thing does not exclude the other. But you can never know. Of course Pastor Moses, he gets a benefit from hosting them. He receives percentages on the price. Otherwise he would not house them. He is looking for his own interest.”

In this example, the mix between community functions as ‘travel agent’ and also as a source of attachment is particularly evident. It is difficult to establish up to what point either Pierre or Pastor Moses were giving

the most accurate explanation for women's and children's presence in the upstairs flat. It is very likely that both of them were telling the truth.

*Football, illness and finding the road*

This interdependence of activities that on the one hand are geared to protect people and form a sense of community and on the other hand generate possibilities for future movement is also evident in migrant governments but in different forms. In what follows, I give some examples of similar dynamics in migrant governments, particularly in relation to the organization of cultural activities.

Apart from going to church, Silvester was an active football player. He would go every Friday at six o'clock in the morning to train with other Ghanaians on the outskirts of Rabat. On one occasion, I accompanied him to his training. The team was composed of Ghanaians only. Silvester had participated in a number of tournaments between different 'national' teams in the migrant community over the years. I had heard of many other Congolese and Cameroonian and Ivorian Coast migrants doing this as well. Many had participated in these activities and remembered them fondly. Jacques from Congo told me his particular memories:

“We play music and everyone comes to cheer their team. If you are in the team, you feel great. When you score, all hell breaks loose. It's real fun! But you have to train hard to get into the team, man. They don't take everyone.”

I was told that different migrant communities were organizing the tournaments. When I said to Pierre that I liked the idea of getting people together and cheering them up, and therefore helping to restore their self-worth and make them feel like they were important in some way, he just shrugged his shoulders. “You know, it's just another way of putting a little thing on the side, you see. Nothing is for free.” I learnt that football had a price. The 'event management' of the tournaments was also a business opportunity for community members. Participation in the event was 'taxed' by the government of each 'country'. But it was not only the chairmen who benefited financially from these activities. Sandrine from Congo told me, for example, that she always made a bit of extra money selling food and snacks to guests and players at the tournament. In this way, tournaments became a cultural activity with economic undertones for a range of different people in the migrant community.

Apart from tournaments, I learnt that migrant governments were providing a lot of services to the community that were generally highly valued by its members. Chairmen were organizing collections for the sick among community members and also intervened in cases of violent conflict between different migrant communities. In some cases, community government also protected migrants from aggression from Moroccan gangs and groups. Patrick told me about a case he had witnessed himself. While we were walking through a migrant neighbourhood, Patrick pointed out to me a young man who stood in a middle of a group of migrants, dressed in fashionable clothes and sunglasses.

“See him? Cameroonian. See all the girls at his side? See how smart he is? Well, he is in the money forging business. Makes dollars. They sell them to Moroccans. But I tell you, it is a risky business. One day, they got him. The Moroccans found out that he had sold them fake money. So they came after him. He could only escape because the Cameroonians protected him and helped him to get out of the city and hide for a while. Others are not so lucky and they end up in prison, or they get killed even. But this one, he is ok, he has the connections, I guess. Look he is back here now, looking smart. He is not fearing anyone.”

In some instances, community networks were helping migrants to access remittances from abroad or else to send back remittances to their home countries. However, the management of these activities was heavily controlled by chairmen and their closest collaborators, who often demanded fees in return for these services. Pian (2009) has described similar dynamics in the case of the Senegalese migrant community in Rabat and Casablanca. Escoffier (2006: 119) documents that these types of services are also offered through pastors and Pentecostal church communities.

In interviews with migrants I was told that, like the Pentecostal church's structures, structures in governments were based on the idea of creating the possibility for their leaders and other migrants to leave, or at least to provide them with additional financial resources to do so. Money made from the protection of vulnerable individuals and cultural activities were used in part to finance the leaders' chances of reaching Europe. Aside from this, it should be noted that chairmen and leaders were also involved less disingenuously with migrant organizations in Morocco, collaborating with western NGOs in efforts to improve living conditions for migrants. One chairman I met was the founder of an

organization which campaigned for migrants' rights and collaborated with international networks of human rights organizations. Chairmen of different nationalities were also involved in protests in 2010, which consisted of several days of sit-ins in front of the UNHCR offices to campaign for resettlement of recognized refugees. The protests ended with the violent intervention of Moroccan authorities and the incarceration of several migrant leaders.

### *Routes or roots, time or place?*

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, existing literature on migrants' relations with one another in Morocco places much emphasis on their activities relating to onward migration (Escoffier 2006, Collyer 2007, Pian 2009). While I have shown that this is at the heart of many activities, I have also shown that equally, mutual support, recreational activities and protection of the weak are important aspects of community life. For this reason it is reductionist to analyse migrant communities in Morocco with reference to itinerant communities, because such a denomination underestimates migrant communities' importance as place makers in a highly hostile environment. Dahinden (2010) and Schapendonk (2011) see locality production and quests for mobility in a functional relationship to mobility and space, arguing that locally embedded social relations are needed for facilitating migrants' onward mobility and vice versa. I find that the interdependent nature of both place making and mobility strategies in community relations can also be interpreted with reference to time-controlling strategies. Bastian (2011b) and Cwerner (2001) for example, have pointed out that community life is vital in establishing people's temporal frames of reference. I also find that migrants' community activities help them to bring order to their otherwise asynchronous lives. Constructing a place by relying on past identity signifiers and cultural practices is a way of connecting with the past and making it meaningful to the present. The quest for onward mobility connects the present life meaningfully to a future elsewhere. In this way, time is reconstructed in a meaningful sequence of events in which the community plays a vital part. However, the ways in which migrants are able to participate in community activities are determined by their changing social positions in hierarchies of power. The higher a position they achieve within migrant community structures over time, the more they are able to benefit from community participation. This illustrates that even within community relations everything takes time and nothing is predetermined from the start. The passing of time in immobility is given a new and more optimistic meaning.

## Conclusion

By focusing on the example of one Pentecostal church and migrants' relations with national communities, I have shown the ambivalent relationships migrants develop with one another. While communities help migrants to maintain the hope of onward movement by promising to provide opportunities to do so, they also make the present more liveable by creating an environment of belonging and identification with like-minded individuals, predominantly based on connecting with rituals and ethnic and national markers of their past. I have tried to show that the different functions that communities serve are in fact interdependent and should not be analysed separately. This leads me to reject a description of them as 'itinerant communities' (Escoffier 2006) or trafficking networks. They are better seen as networks of 'roots' and 'roads'. I will not negate the fragile basis upon which 'roots' and 'roads' are based. It is important to recognize that the context of forced immobility conditions the extent to which migrant communities serve to 'create a sense of place' for migrants in Morocco as well as 'roads' for future mobility. The context of rightlessness and marginality also makes migrants' 'roads' much more important than 'roots' in the hierarchy of functions that communities display.

My findings suggest that contexts, place and time have an impact on the social relations that can be created among migrants. Common pasts among migrants in Morocco are reconstructed on the basis of shared ideas of ethnicity, gender roles and moral values concerning virtuous and transgressive behaviour that often has its beginnings in the countries of origin. The reproduction of these shared 'roots' then serves as a community 'glue' in order to create a sense of place and a certain sociality in the present. It is therefore not surprising that gender, ethnicity and relations of reciprocity recurrently structure relations and practices in community life. A shared desire to create a future far away from Morocco also has an impact on migrants' relations with one another and the importance of community activities geared to promote onward movement.

Turton (2004: 12) borrows from Appadurai (1996) the distinction between 'neighbourhood' and 'locality' to argue for a contextual nature of the sense of place that humans develop through different kinds of interaction. He argues that the extent to which one develops a sense of place through one's participation in community life is dependent on one's ability to maintain it against various kinds of odds – particularly outside pressures from other communities. While community activities help people to identify themselves as local subjects and as actors who properly belong to a community of kin, he stresses that the work of locality production is, always and everywhere, a constant struggle to keep at bay an endemic sense

of instability in social life. Turton (2004: 56) postulates that communities are 'context-generative social formations', producing organized power over places and settings. However, he also acknowledges that some communities have greater power over place making than others. In particular, he argues that the most powerful context-generative social formation that any neighbourhood is likely to encounter is the nation state. Borrowing from Turton's analysis, I would suggest that migrant communities are context-generative social formations, which are creating a place in the world for the migrants they are composed of. As such, they represent a form of cultural capital upon which migrants can act socially and create something like 'roots' in a hostile world. However, this 'locality production' is heavily limited by the marginality that migrants must contend with in Morocco and the length of time they stay there. Bauman (1998) has referred to this situation as located existence in marginality.

Roitman (2005) and Lubkemann (2011) both start from the premise that all sociality is both morally prescribed and morally prescribing. Both authors argue that there are generally rules in social groups about what constitutes virtuous behaviour and transgression, so as to be able to distinguish the legitimacy of actions on the one hand and the need for sanctions on the other. By investigating how prices are established in contemporary Cameroon, Roitman (2005), for example, makes an argument about how global relations of capitalism and the workings of the nation state in Africa actually influence the moral codes of communities, so as to establish new rules for transgression and socially sanctioned behaviour. In her analysis, moral economies sometimes convert into economies of morals when the monetary logic of equality in exchange begins to prevail in community relations marked by social difference. Carling (2008) and Lubkemann (2011) use a similar argument by contrasting the particular socio-cultural and economic contexts of migrants and non-migrants and the remittances practices of the former in order to explain differences and similarities in the social value assigned to monetary transactions by both migrants and non-migrants.

In the course of this chapter, I have built on these arguments to explain how external economic and political contexts actually change the moral prescriptions of adequate social behaviour in migrant community networks in Morocco. This can create situations in which inequality between migrants is no longer acknowledged as a relevant factor in determining what is right or wrong, and deceit is no longer perceived as an exception but increasingly as the defining characteristic of social relations with other migrants. It appears that, for migrants, the moral economies of social relations in forced immobility actually convert into merely fiscal economies when migrant authorities attempt to use their status and power

to further their chances of onward migration rather than to increase their reputation and social standing amongst migrants.

A consideration of the particular context in which social relations are created in forced immobility also avoids the tendency to categorize migrant community networks too simplistically either as social capital or as trafficking networks. The above has shown that community networks in Morocco enable migrants to become socially active and, to a certain extent, agents of their own lives. They are therefore a lot more than simple exploitative structures that need to be ‘criminalized’ and destroyed, as is sometimes argued by those who wish to end human trafficking. However, it is important to acknowledge that community relations can also lead to differentiation, fragmentation and exclusion and should therefore not be celebrated overly optimistically as social capital (Evergeti & Zontini 2006: 1029). The power relations in migrant communities in Morocco are marked by male-dominated hierarchies in which women are often relegated to the role of victims who seek protection, while opportunities for movement and status are reserved for men. This shows that networks and how they are used are neither gender nor class neutral and depend instead on one’s social position in them (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). These contradictory aspects of community networks sometimes cause migrants difficulty in identifying with the communities and lead them to experience a form of ‘existential homelessness’ (Madison 2006), in which they no longer feel they belong to anywhere, anyone or anything. In times of self-doubt and depression, communities help migrants to find security, self-esteem and identity through participation in community structures. However, this does not mean that individuals can be what they want to be. They are conditioned by the rules and social structures that guide community networks and it is very difficult for them to change their place within these.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Transnational research on second-generation migrants has also gathered new insights into the connection of communities with time and space. Research in this field has shown, for example, that several generations of family members are socially linked with each other over different countries and therefore connect past, present and future as well as different localities through social relations of care (Zontini 2007).
- <sup>2</sup> A range of Pentecostal churches have emerged in Rabat and Casablanca over the past decade. These churches are run by migrant ministers and services take place in rented houses and apartments in the neighbourhoods where most migrants live. Most churches are almost exclusively frequented by members of the same nationality, and I have been told about the existence of several Nigerian, Cameroonian, Congolese, Ivory Coast and Guinean churches in town. The largest number of Pentecostal churches were apparently maintained by the Nigerian migrant community and

the church I visited regularly in Takadoum was one of them. At this point, it is important to note that the Nigerian members of the church came from a variety of ethnic groups. There were some migrants from the Beni and others from the Ibo ethnic group, and beyond this there were further distinctions and language divisions. They all communicated with each other in Pidgin English.

- <sup>3</sup> I actually did interview some of the women in the end because they were attending the migrant summer school where I did participant observation. I am sure that Pastor Moses knew about this because one of the women I interviewed told me that he enquired about my conversations with her some days after the interview. In doing so, he clearly signalled that he expected to be kept informed. He wanted to make clear that not everyone was free to speak with me without asking him first.
- <sup>4</sup> In conversations with Nigerians this issue was frequently alluded to. Apparently, Nigerians were particularly persecuted by the Moroccan police because they were considered to be involved in the violent organization of human trafficking networks. According to my informants, Nigerians and other anglophone migrants had greater difficulties in accessing social and legal assistance through charitable organizations as these were mostly francophone organizations that could only communicate minimally with them in English.
- <sup>5</sup> The summer school for women and children was organized every year by one of the charity organizations in Rabat and aimed to provide women with a chance to learn income-generating activities and give children the chance to participate in leisure activities. I conducted participant observation there.



# Waiting in Desperate Hope

## Introduction

Chapter 5 of this book has shown how migrants become slowly disembedded from dominant time perspectives while living in Morocco, and Chapter 6 showed how forced immobility influences their relationships with each other. Both chapters describe how migrants' ideas about their own self-worth and their ability to shift their social location in relation to others is conditioned by the peculiar times and tempos they are living and the spaces and places they are occupying in forced immobility. This chapter will build on these previous insights by looking at people's strategies to leave the country. By describing the process followed by migrants who are waiting to depart, I will examine the connection between time and social agency.

The data presented in this chapter shows that migrants' opportunities for leaving or staying are shaped by their capabilities to influence the forces of mobility on the one hand and luck on the other. Capabilities and luck, however, are both difficult to control in situations of extreme marginality. Rather than planning for departure, migrants have to wait for unpredictable opportunities to arise. Waiting like this can be seen as an act of choice to create a new future within very limiting constraints for action in the present. In the conclusion of this chapter, I contrast this perspective on unpredictable futures with contemporary ideas about time and modernity in order to show why migrants waiting for departure create such an uncomfortable situation for migration policy makers.

## What migrants are waiting for and how waiting feels

Hage (2009b) has argued that waiting emphasizes a dimension of life where the problem of our agency comes to the forefront. While waiting can be analysed as a lack of agency, it is also possible to look at it as an exercise of agency, because it emphasizes the choice *not* to act in a predetermined way. In this case, it is akin to resistance (Lakha 2009). In this respect, why people wait and for whom is a political question. Referring to the work of Bourdieu, Hage (2009b: 2) adds:

There is a politics around what waiting entails. And there is a politics around how to wait and how to organise waiting into a social system. Waiting can, for example, define class and status relations in the very obvious sense of ‘who waits for whom’ which also means: who has the power to make their time appear more valuable than somebody else’s time?

By focusing on the politics of waiting, it is possible to analyse migrants’ behaviour in forced immobility as a form of social action – albeit in a context of great precarity (Khosravi 2018). Waiting for departure forms the basis of a variety of strategies to construct new pasts, presents and futures and an emplacement ‘elsewhere’.

I agree with Elliot (2016) that waiting for migration produces and requires particular social subjects. The omnipresence of waiting for departure marked all of my respondents’ life rhythms. Most of the migrants I encountered were constantly thinking about possible migration opportunities out of Morocco. This fact did not change over the years of our relationship. Even those migrants I first met in 2009 and subsequently talked to again in 2017 told me that they were still thinking about leaving the country as soon as a possibility arose. Of the migrants I encountered, only six men and six women had unsuccessfully attempted one or more times to either get to Europe or to another African country. And yet everyone I talked to remained adamant about their plans to leave Morocco as soon as possible. Everyone had some kind of plan ready to recount for me. These ranged from attempts for resettlement for recognized refugees, through the purchase of papers or the buying of ‘*patera* tickets’ to ‘cyber marriage’<sup>1</sup> or reunion with family members who had already secured citizenship rights in a European country. The list of possibilities seemed never-ending. Nevertheless, almost nobody ever moved. Of the 40 migrants I encountered, only two successfully reached Europe between 2009 and 2013.<sup>2</sup>

In some of the work on migrants in Morocco, life in transit is described as ‘waiting’ (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008: 86, Pian 2009, Schapendonk 2011: 156, Timara 2011: 203, Bachelet 2016, Elliot 2016). In these accounts, authors inherently link waiting to departure. While Schapendonk (2011: 256) conceptualizes waiting as the longing for movement, Papadopoulou-Kourkoula (2008: 86) compares it to a wish for settlement somewhere else. My own research with migrants confirms both aspects of waiting. None of the 40 migrants I talked to had given up the hope of eventually leaving Morocco for good. Only three people told me explicitly that they would even consider staying there if they found a decent way to live. But even these individuals were ‘waiting’ for this to happen. As the previous chapters have shown, the migrants’ lives were defined by waiting for the opportunity to leave the country and set up home somewhere else.

Their desire to leave Morocco is indicative of their urge to be able to become a person again. While they were waiting to escape their situation in order to be someone else, they were never exactly sure if it would happen or what form their escape would take. They did not know what they would become and where they would end up but they knew that something had to change, someday. So, in fact, migrants were not only waiting to leave, but also hoping to recover a social status, an identity. In effect, they were waiting to be reintegrated into the flow of time. In this context, it is no coincidence that in most of the church services I attended, the book of Isaiah was such a prominent component of preaching. The biblical story of how God’s people were led out of exile and back to Zion, meaning Jerusalem, after Yahweh had conquered the gods of Babylon, as depicted in the prophecy of Isaiah (40:3–5, 40:9–31), was frequently cited. This narrative echoes the migrants’ urge to escape the forces of evil, their wish to finally return to Zion, an ideal place far away from Morocco, where freedom and peace reigns. As already alluded to in [Chapter 3](#), in these imaginings physical mobility is intrinsically intertwined with existential mobility.

### *What waiting does to people: suffering*

In order to understand migrants’ constant efforts to leave and their reluctance to settle, it is useful to analyse in more detail what the experience of waiting *did* to them as persons and to their outlook on life. Migrants were not usually indifferent to waiting – and this concerned not only waiting for departure, but more often than not waiting for services in Morocco. Often, complaints were raised in our conversations about the

useless hours they had spent waiting for a paper, medication, social support or something else.

Adam (1994: 124) points out that in this context waiting for some future benefit is only gratifying if those future rewards are reasonably certain and to some degree under a person's control. She adds that these conditions are rarely found among those who live in poverty. According to her analysis, only those with economic security can value this kind of waiting for deferred gratification, because they have a trusting relationship to a future in which the rules of capital and credit apply. The migrants I encountered, in contrast, felt waiting was degrading because from their perspective of necessity in the immediate present, only the powerless wait (Schweitzer 2008: 4).

Migrants did not want to be waiting for settlement because this was a constant reminder of how little control they had over their lives. And yet they endured waiting for departure as this was the only possibility they had of claiming back the right to a future in a different place. Even though the possibility for departure was as uncertain as that of settlement, waiting for *departure* was a way not to succumb to the idea of a lost life. In this respect, waiting was a positive force that helped migrants to continue living because it was a means of recovering a past, a present and a future.

In order to understand this contradictory relationship to waiting, I use Dwyer's (2009: 21) distinction between situational and existential waiting to analyse migrants' different experiences. Dwyer refers to 'situational waiting' as a situation in which one is waiting for a specific person or event to arrive. In situational waiting, the person is sure about how and when the waiting will end. Waiting for a bus or a train to attend a meeting are examples of such situational waiting. In other words, situational waiting is fully embedded in time and place. At first sight, migrants' lives seem full of examples of – supposedly – situational waiting. Asylum seekers are waiting to be recognized as refugees; refugees are waiting to be resettled. Migrants are waiting for money to be sent to them, or for a job to pay the rent. Often, I accompanied migrants while they were waiting in NGO waiting rooms to receive medical attention or social support, or when they were queuing for a daily construction job in Takkadoum. However, even in these instances, waiting slipped out of their control: Maybe today there were no jobs? Maybe today the doctor would not arrive at the charity health service or the pharmacy would no longer accept the medication vouchers from the charity? Maybe resettlement would never happen? In Chapter 4, I explored the various ways in which the Moroccan government prolonged asylum and residence permit applications to infinite lengths through the non-definition of procedures. In such a context, waiting for refugee status became anything but situational waiting, because the person

waiting had no control about when or if the desired object would arrive. This uncertainty about waiting was extended to almost every sphere of the migrants' lives so that even the simplest events became impossible to plan for. This notion is captured in the quote by Yann, in [Chapter 5](#), in which he explained to me how the fact of not knowing what was going to happen the next day made it impossible for him to organize his days in advance.

In these instances, situational waiting becomes a different kind of waiting, which Dwyer (2009: 21) calls existential waiting and Schweitzer (2008) calls endurance. Migrants were enduring the duration of their own lives, rather than time that could be measured by clock time. Dwyer (2009: 21) defines existential waiting as 'seemingly removed from time or rather, from the meanings – linear and repetitive, yet endlessly consuming, consumed and irreversible – accorded to time in conventional Western settings'. This kind of waiting is difficult to bear because it separates people's ideas about themselves from the actions they are able to control. It is therefore akin to suffering, which, in contrast to pain, extends beyond the bounds of mere bodily sensation so as to encompass our entire experience of personhood in body, mind and spirit (Wilkinson 2004:21). Wilkinson (2004) demonstrates that human suffering is experienced in its strongest form through the everyday language and social practices that people are forced to live by in the aftermath of painful events, and which make the brutal facts of affliction most violating. He argues that social suffering may be read as detailing the multiple ways in which people come to be regarded by others and to experience themselves as superfluous and that the most intense experiences of suffering are reported to take place in the dynamics of social relationships that may all too readily be perceived as 'banal' (Wilkinson 2004: 93–95).

In migrants' accounts, waiting reminds them continuously of the violence of everyday life they have to endure in a context in which they are left as non-persons and which is perceived by others as banal and unimportant. They are just waiting. I found this particularly evident in the ways in which migrants would greet me when we met, or also in opening statements in chats over the internet. On my asking 'How are you?' a frequent response was 'I am here', rather than 'I am fine'. Sometimes, they would even leave out the personal pronoun altogether: 'Here, suffering'. Rarely would migrants acknowledge a specific state of mind or existence, other than indicating in the greeting that they were 'merely existing' and 'fighting'.

Dwyer (2009: 21) acknowledges that the distinction between situational and existential waiting is itself artificial. 'There is no fixed line that separates situational and existential waiting. There is, instead, a

personally experienced and context-dependent, threshold.’ However, the distinction between the two types of waiting is helpful in understanding why migrants in Morocco seek an end to waiting through the waiting for departure, and will not give up waiting even though this means a life of suffering and endurance.

## **Waiting is not settlement**

In what follows, I would like to give an example of how migrants experience existential waiting in relation to the possibility of leaving. What I want to show is that existential waiting for departure is not dependent upon one’s apparent economic and social ‘rootedness’ but rather relates to a profound desire to shift one’s status and role in relation to others and with respect to the future. The present is just a vehicle for the future; it is not really lived for its own sake. One is waiting for futures – even the most irrational and insecure futures.

### *Silvester’s attempts to leave*

By the time I knew him, Silvester had spent almost four years in Morocco, working as a cobbler in Youssoufia, where he also lived. As previously noted in [Chapters 5](#) and [6](#), Silvester was in many respects a lot more ‘established’ than other migrants I had met. Unlike many of his Sub-Saharan African migrant colleagues in the area, he was making reasonably good money, enjoyed a great number of clients and had privileged relationships with the local *mkadem* and the local police who came to get their shoes repaired at his stand. Unlike other migrants I knew, he was friendly with his Moroccan neighbours and spoke Arabic. He even shared tools and clients with a Moroccan cobbler down the street and was able to store his belongings in the Moroccan businesses next to his stand on the road. One could say he appeared ‘integrated’ into Moroccan society. He was in a rather privileged position, compared to Abdoul and Ibrahim, the two footballers I mentioned in [Chapter 3](#), who were camping with their cobbler utensils two blocks down the road from him, but were constantly harassed and made little money. What was also particular about Silvester was that his day was packed with work and leisure activities. He had strict opening times, from nine in the morning to seven in the evening. He only rested on Fridays and Sundays. On Mondays, he went to bible study after work. On Friday, he played football and afterwards went to a particular neighbourhood where he could buy supplies for his business.

On Saturday, he did his shopping in the local market and cleaned the house. On Sunday, he went to church. Silvester had no need to ask NGOs for help. He rarely ever did. Referring to healthcare provided through charities, he argued: “These people, they make you wait the whole day, for a prescription. It’s like begging. I don’t like it.” He appeared not to be waiting for anyone or anything; he was in charge of his time. In fact, one could have thought that he was settled. And yet Silvester was waiting in a far more profound way. His longing to leave Morocco was evident in every conversation we had. He told me that he had spent at least €5,000 so far on his diverse attempts to cross the Mediterranean ocean by boat and that he was still determined to get there one day. Once, in Libya, he was forced to return when the boat’s engine had a problem. A second time, in Morocco, he almost drowned when the boat capsized. He could not swim and survived by hanging on to a piece of wood until he was rescued by a Moroccan fishing boat that guided all surviving migrants back to the shore. He and four Bangladeshis were the only survivors.

“You know, they could swim, these Asians. All the Blacks died. I just survived because God helped me. I saw all these dead people floating around me ... and all this money. One person had lost his money, it was falling out of his pockets, but he was dead. It was swimming around in the water, around me ... Euros. I didn’t pick them. Can you imagine? I just let it go down with the waves, because I was busy holding on to this wood.”

Silvester told me that he had lost faith in God a long time ago, but after this event, he started believing again and became a ‘born-again’ Christian. He told me that in the sea he had experienced a feeling of his whole life passing in front of his eyes like a film. And he instantly knew that this was a religious experience. Right after he came back to Rabat, he joined Pastor Moses’ church.

“I had been smoking and drinking a lot before that, you know. I never prayed. I didn’t really achieve anything. I was not in good shape, to tell the truth. Now, God has found me. And I have found him. And since then, everything is getting better. See, this is why I am all right now. I am doing OK now. He is looking after me.”

Silvester had spent all the money he had saved during the seven years he had been working abroad as well as quite a lot of money from friends

that had made it to Europe in the meantime. I asked him if it would not have been wiser to invest all this money in a piece of land in Ghana and whether he sometimes thought about this, and about what he could have done with all that money. I also asked him if he had ever thought of simply staying, making a life in Morocco, saving up more money and then professionalizing his business. After some reflection his answer came quickly:

“When you are going, you are not thinking about it like that. You are only thinking about how much you need for the next time. I need another 800 for the next time. I have to go. I am OK now. God has been good to me. I am not hungry. I have found God in Morocco. But it is not enough, I am just a little happy. I need to be more happy.”

Silvester attempted to explain to me that, despite believing he had been able to control his time, this was not what he wanted for his future. He wanted more. He was not satisfied. He wanted to be a different person. But his continuous setbacks in achieving this made his life difficult to support. When waiting becomes a condition, as in Silvester’s case, it alters people’s perception of time and their own position within it. Schweitzer (2008: 4) argues:

Although time is supposed to function like a door or a hall through which we pass unaware, in waiting, the door jams and the hall is endless. The hour does not pass. The line does not move. Time must suddenly be endured rather than traversed, felt rather than thought. In waiting, time is slow and thick. Waiting is more than merely an inconvenient delay. It is more than a matter of time.

Schweitzer (2008) and Cash (2009) both argue that, as such a condition, existential waiting is unbearable. Silvester turning to drinking and cigarettes demonstrates this. But he knew he was letting himself go. He ‘didn’t achieve anything’. Religion was Silvester’s way of enduring suffering and existential waiting. By finding God, he was able to give sense to the seemingly uncontrollable way in which the world worked. The belief that fate is in God’s hand made him confident that he would try again to cross, despite the risks.

I actually met Silvester again in 2017. He was still repairing and making shoes and leather utensils, however in a proper workshop which he ran together with a Moroccan partner. He could afford to rent a two-bedroom

apartment, where he invited me for a meal. He was still not married but had a legal residency permit. However, he was still thinking of leaving the country. When I asked him what the legal residency had changed in his life, he promptly said:

“I have been able to go home to Ghana, see my family and come back. That was very important to me. And I was able to set up this business the right way. But apart from that, nothing has changed really ... Morocco stays Morocco, you know that!”

*Following rhythms, believing in God, but not feeling settled*

Silvester's case also shows that the unbearable side of existential waiting can be broken up by activity, by rules and rhythms. Silvester was able to 'kill' waiting by focusing on his daily life, on his routines and his present day. He 'killed waiting' by concentrating on life in the present. In truth, the fact that he was actively busy, not waiting physically for anything, was just a vehicle for enduring time. It is for this reason that his situation could not be compared to settlement.

At this point I should say that migrants often mentioned to me their need to break up time by following rhythms, daily routines and fixed schedules in order to preserve their mental health. For three of the migrants I knew, sport was an important way of doing this. Ann, for example, had joined a gym in the neighbourhood and went religiously every week at the same time. Jacques went jogging every day in the early morning hours, and Silvester, Abdoul and Ibrahim used any spare time they had to go and play football. Yann told me that sometimes, when he was feeling depressed, he did so much sport that he became sick with exhaustion afterwards.

When I did an evaluation of an international organization's project activities for migrants in 2008, it turned out that the weekly women's group they had organized was valued as far more important by women than other services. It allowed them to leave the house, see other people, and provided a fixed appointment to keep every week, to punctuate time. For some migrants, like Emma and Silvester, religion was a way to keep suffering at bay. Due to a strong belief in God, they were able to adapt to the unbearable condition of waiting that characterized their lives. As I noted in [Chapters 2 and 6](#), Sub-Saharan African migrants represent the majority of churchgoers in both the Protestant and Catholic churches in town. I also mentioned in the previous chapter the importance of

Pentecostal churches for migrants' community building and self-esteem. However, it is also religion's importance as a remedy for suffering that makes migrants turn to it or – for those who had already been religious in the past – to reinforce their faith in God.

In reference to migrants' long stays in forced immobility, Schapendonk (2011: 167) denies that they are actually settled because indicators like attachment to the social environment, or even the time spent there, do not necessarily mean that the person in question is less likely to be waiting for departure. The examples I have given consolidate this argument. The long duration of their stay and their ability to become included in social networks or receive migration status does not necessarily diminish migrants' desire to leave the country. This is above all related to the fact that in such conceptualizations of settlement, the existential waiting for a better life is not acknowledged as a driver for people's decisions or aspirations for migration or – for that matter – a deterrent to their effective settlement.

## Waiting for others

Adam (1994) and Hage (2009a) are right to point out that how one is waiting is not only dependent on the person who waits, but also on the context or the person one is waiting for. Adam (1994) argues that making people wait may not only signify the importance of the one, but also signal the disregard for the other. According to Adam, waiting time serves to validate and legitimize existing power relations when it is transformed into a resource. By making people wait, the power of the person, the service, or their status is maintained and enhanced. It is in this way that waiting is intimately bound up with social status and power, and can be understood as a ritualized expression of asymmetric social relations. For Adam, power may be linked to the immunity from waiting through the possession of such resources as money, influence or expertise. Alternatively, it may be associated with who determines waiting for whom, the right to impose waiting and the duty to wait (Adam 1994: 123–125). In the following example, I illustrate how Pierre attempts to overcome the imbalanced power relations in waiting for others. The example illustrates how he tries to modify his social status with regard to the institutions and individuals with the power to make people wait.

When Pierre arrived in Morocco, he waited for a long time for his asylum claim to come through. After a failed attempt to cross via *patera*, conversion to Islam and reconversion into Christianity, he was picked up by a pastor in Rabat and worked with him as a volunteer in a small organization giving social aid to migrants in the city. He soon gained

a reputation for being a hard worker and a friendly and trustworthy individual. When a well-renowned international organization was looking for an *agent de proximité*,<sup>3</sup> the pastor recommended him and thus got him a job with a regular salary and decent living conditions. During this time, Pierre also finally became recognized as a refugee by the UNHCR.

Pierre now had a salary. He was also becoming an important personality in a variety of institutional networks. He was a musician at the Protestant church in Rabat and participated in the choir. This brought him into contact with Sub-Saharan African students and diplomats who frequented the church. He was also in contact with his Congolese community and in his function as community worker with international organizations became a vital contact person for both chairmen and other international organizations. As part of his work, he had to interact with a range of different chairmen from different national migrant groups in order to negotiate migrants' access to health services provided by the organization he worked for. Because of this, he also maintained privileged relations with the UNHCR, which recognized him as an important link with the refugee community. As a member of an international NGO, he was invited to some of their meetings and helped other migrants in their asylum petitions.

Despite his relatively privileged position, Pierre had not given up his dream of travelling to Europe. On the contrary, he was actively using every minute of his free time to plan his way out of the country. He frequently told me that he was searching the internet for possibilities of a job abroad, or else a work placement. Once, he even got an offer for a volunteer post from a charity in the United States. However, as a refugee, he was not allowed to leave the country and had difficulties applying for visas. At first, Pierre could not understand this. He asked me frequently: "Why do they not grant me a visa, if I am now a legally recognized migrant? I am a refugee, I have UNHCR protection! Why can I not go where they want me?" That legal status and rights to mobility were not necessarily compatible was difficult for him to conceive. Despite this setback, Pierre persisted in searching the internet for other opportunities. Due to his musical activities and his advocacy for other migrants, he managed to get an invitation to participate in an international cultural festival arranged by a well-known student organization in Germany. He was invited to give a talk as a representative of Sub-Saharan African refugees in Morocco and perform his songs, which talked about their situation. Apart from a letter of invitation, Pierre had received a plane ticket in his name. With this, Pierre went to see the UNHCR, hoping to get support from them to acquire a German tourist visa in order to take part in the event.

Pierre told me he knew that many refugees, particularly community leaders who had campaigned for refugee rights, had been ‘resettled’ in Europe this way: he told me that friends had been sponsored by the UNHCR to participate in international events and then simply overstayed their visas. He expected a similar ‘collaboration’ from the UNHCR because of his privileged position within the system of international aid in Morocco. To his surprise, the visa did not come through but it was unclear whether this was related to the actions of the German consulate or the UNHCR. Pierre, however, was particularly bitter about the UNHCR:

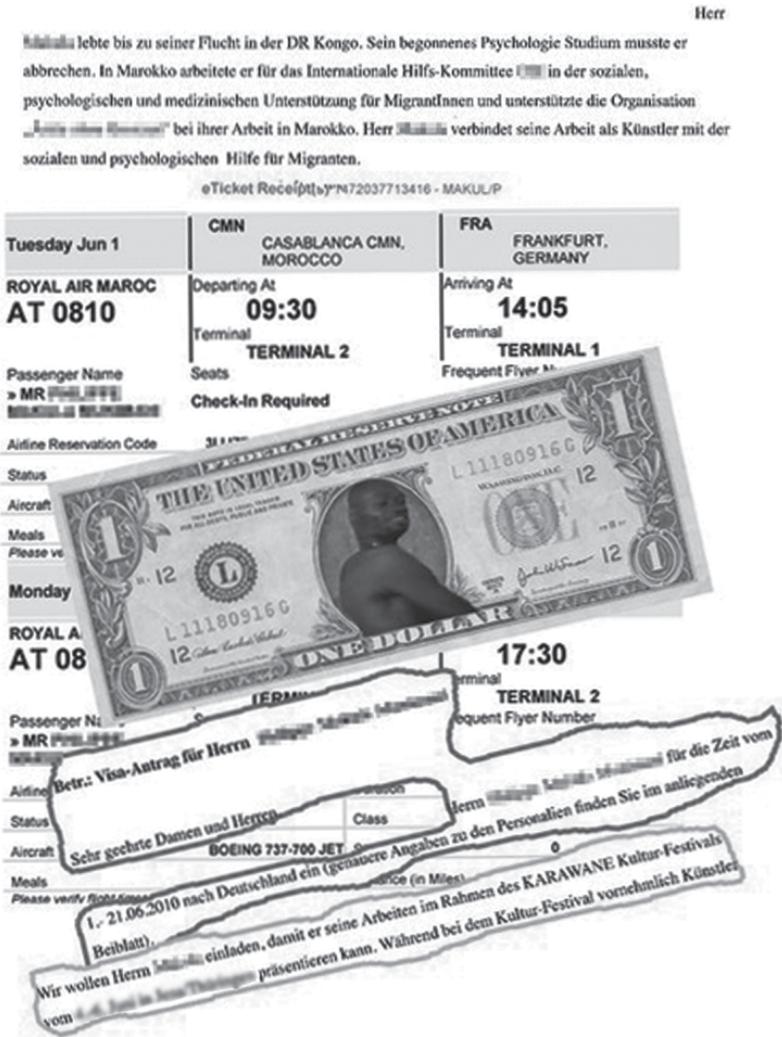
“You know me, I have been really a service to the community. I have been helping people. The other refugees they sent to conferences had been making trouble, they were all involved in some campaign about resettlement. I have never participated in any of that. I never disturbed anyone. And what do they do? They make them leave because they want to get rid of the troublemakers. And the others, like me, who do not kick up any fuss, they don’t help them. I find this is not fair at all.”

When I was suggesting to him that the German consulate could also be responsible for the situation he was in, Pierre did not agree. For him, the main person to blame was the head of the UNHCR, who he personally knew from church. In his anger, he designed a collage depicting a naked body inside a dollar bill, surrounded by snippets from the invitation letter and the ticket he had received. He titled the collage with the name of the head of the UNHCR. It clearly expressed his feeling of no longer being a person, just a nameless, unspecified commodity in relation to mobility (see [Figure 4](#)). His ‘exchange value’ appeared worthless to international organizations. When he posted this collage on his Facebook page, the following exchange with a Rastafarian friend ensued:

Friend: Pierre onna babylon train trekking to Zion. X5.  
Jeh show your mercy.  
Pierre: Thanks man, we are all in the same battle.

In the Rastafarian movement, Zion stands for a utopia of unity, peace and freedom, as opposed to Babylon, the oppressive, exploitative system of the western world and a place of evil. Again, it refers to the archetypes of the king of Zion and the king of Babylon, who are depicted in the prophecy of Isaiah, in the Old Testament. Pierre’s story shows how he attempts to shift his social location in relation to the forces of movement. However, for him, these are not only determined by laws and rules but

**Figure 4:** Pierre’s handmade collage with snippets from an air plane ticket and the invitation letter from the German student organization



The content of the original word document has been modified to guarantee anonymity

also constructed by particularly powerful people and networks, that are able to bend the rules to fit them to the particular necessities of people wanting to move. He is not waiting for the rules to change, but for people to make the rules work for him. Instead of passively waiting for this to happen, though, he made active attempts to facilitate it: he searched for a valid reason to be invited to a festival abroad, he organized his plane fare

to be paid and an invitation letter to be issued. This is what he alludes to when he refers to his ‘battle’. Through this perspective, his wait for people to make decisions is actually more accurately framed as a battle, and makes clear why migrants refer to their life in Morocco as ‘continuing to fight’.

### **Who is waiting for whom? Waiting by choosing not to do something**

Silvester and Pierre both demonstrate that existential waiting is not easily defined through victimhood and passivity. On the contrary, it is also an opportunity to apply skills in order to improve one’s social location with respect to the forces that govern mobility. Both men were able to improve their opportunities to leave by working, saving up money, connecting to the church and international organizations and by believing in themselves again. However, even though they were successful in doing this, they did not succeed in leaving the country. In the above examples, waiting involves activity. However, I want to focus now on a case in which waiting signified not doing something, refusing to act and ‘sticking it out’.

Dwyer (2009: 23) has argued that those passive ways of waiting do not necessarily equal loss of agency. Rather, choosing not to act, to stick a situation out, can be seen as a choice on an equal footing with taking action. People take into consideration a frame of contexts and consequences when they choose to wait actively or passively, but there is no difference in their capacity to act. In the following example, I examine such a case through the perspective of a migrant who refused to send her children to school while waiting for resettlement through the UNHCR.

Hawa was from the Ivory Coast and when she arrived in Morocco she did so together with her two children and her Congolese partner, whom she had met on the way. She successfully claimed refugee status and had two more children with her partner. He, however, did not get status and finally left her. When I talked to Hawa, her two children attended the only crèche for migrant children that had been set up by an international NGO in Rabat. One of Hawa’s children was six years old and about to start school. In 2009, the NGO decided for the first time that migrant children who reached school age had to be enrolled in one of the public schools, rather than continuing informal education in their centre. Firstly, this was because the organization did not feel it had the capacity to provide quality education according to the Moroccan school curriculum at primary education level, and secondly, it considered that it was the responsibility of the state to take children of school age into the state structures (Sibout 2014).<sup>4</sup> Hawa’s daughter was one of around ten

undocumented and refugee migrant children who had been referred by the NGO and the UNHCR to local public schools, following informal negotiations with the Ministry for Education. For the NGO, this was a success, because it meant that the state was responding for once to some of the NGO claims regarding the provision of basic services for migrants. However, Hawa did not see it the same way.

“I am not going to send this child to this school. It is no good. They treat the children badly there, you see. They throw stones at them. They don’t help them because they are black. And they speak only Arabic. This is no use to me. I want them to go to a French school.”

Hawa’s opinion squared with those of other migrants I interviewed during the evaluation I conducted for the abovementioned NGO in 2008. In this evaluation, the organization wanted to find out parents’ opinions about their plan to send migrant children to state schools in the future, rather than continuing with the informal education at their social centre in Rabat.

In connection with this, it is also worthwhile to quote here an extract of a conference report on the life of refugees in Morocco, organized by Fondation Orient Occident in collaboration with representatives of the migrant community, the UNHCR, Moroccan state institutions, academics and various nongovernmental organizations in Rabat. In the concluding statement of the conference, one of the recommendations reads as follows: ‘To find an urgent solution for refugee children’s education. In a perspective of shared responsibility, the enrolment of the children in international European schools in Morocco should be envisaged’ (Foundation Orient Occident 2007 :35).<sup>5</sup> Even though this recommendation does not say anything about who would be responsible for implementing and financing such a solution, it is surprising to find it so explicitly set out in a published document. This is because there are very few official statements made by any policy maker regarding education of migrant children in Morocco. After I had a chance to see the quality of Moroccan public schools myself, I understood this recommendation even better.

In June 2010, I had the chance to talk to Congolese migrant Sandrine and her daughter Aisha, who had been included in the group of children enrolled in public schools in Rabat through the UNHCR and the aforementioned NGO. I also accompanied a social worker from the NGO on a supervision visit to the class where Aisha had now been for almost a whole school year. The teacher struggled to keep around 40 children attentive in a classroom with very few educational resources. Among the

children were several with special educational needs. According to the teacher, there were furthermore children whose family backgrounds were disruptive and who suffered from attention problems. She told the NGO worker that she had tried her best to give Aisha some special tasks to help her with the language but that she was unable to dedicate the necessary time to her in light of the overwhelming difficulties she faced teaching such a large and diverse group of children. Aisha herself told me that she liked school but that she had no real friends there and preferred to play with the other Sub-Saharan African children in the neighbourhood. She also told me that she found homework difficult because she did not understand the language very well. I witnessed Aisha being excluded by the other children during playtime in the school yard. Despite these difficulties, Aisha attended school regularly. This was an exception, because from the teacher's and the social worker's accounts it transpired that during the school year, six of the school's ten migrant children attended irregularly.

Aisha's persistence at school was largely the result of her mother's efforts to make her go there. After strong initial reluctance, Sandrine was one of the few migrant women who went to great lengths to make her child succeed at school. However, she still had mixed feelings about this, particularly when comparing the progress of her daughter with that of other Congolese children in the neighbourhood, who were educated in a French-speaking private school through the financial assistance offered by an international aid organization.<sup>6</sup>

“The other children, they speak really good French now. They know lots of things, and their parents can help them with the homework, because it is all in French. But I cannot help Aisha with anything, you see, because it is all in Arabic. I sent her to do her homework with the landlady and her son. But still, I feel the children don't learn anything at that school. Aisha could do so much better than that.”

Sandrine told me that she had long thought about not sending Aisha to school but then decided to go through with it because “She needs to know how to read and write. She needs to learn maths and all that. I cannot afford to put her somewhere else but I'd rather preferred her to go to a different place.” Hawa and Sandrine both resented the requirement to put their children into Moroccan schools because it equalled ‘settlement’ and confirmed their inferior status as poor migrants. Both women told me that they did not think that the NGO schooling policy was correct, because it did not take into consideration the special needs of their children and it completely ignored their hope of a future in Europe. Sandrine told me:

“I don’t understand why they are doing this. Because, you see, we do not want to be here. All the Europeans, for example, they don’t put their children in Moroccan schools either. Why? Well you know why. Because they are not going to stay here. So why do we have to put them there? We are not one of them.”

In comparison to Hawa, Sandrine’s hopes of reaching Europe were dim. Unlike Hawa, she had no resettlement options because she was not a recognized refugee. She therefore felt that she had no other choice but to accept the option she was given and send Aisha to a local school even though she resented it. Hawa was still adamant in her hope of being resettled in a European country. Because of this, she decided not to send her child to school at all in the following school year. The NGO tried several times to convince her, all in vain. The child stayed at home and Hawa justified her decision to me by saying: “I am waiting for that, you know. They will resettle me. People who know computers have told me that they resettle women with children. So this is me. I just have to be patient.” Hawa’s example shows that, rather than passivity, waiting can also be understood as an *active* choice *not* to act in the face of adverse conditions (Dwyer 2009, Lakha 2009). In such a situation, it is not the capacity to act which marks passivity, but the choice not to act. Resisting settlement (in Morocco) in relation to schooling and other social services can be a technique used by migrants to highlight to governments or NGOs their need for resettlement in European countries, or their demands for migrant-specific services (like private schools), where their needs could be met and their rights fulfilled. In this respect, it is worthwhile acknowledging the difference between Sandrine’s and Hawa’s positions. Sandrine gave in to the schooling policy only because she considered that she was not in a position to pressure institutions through non-action in the same way that Hawa did. Sandrine did not have refugee status. She was aware that her daughter had only been included in the schooling programme because of the particular mediation of the NGO. Many other children of undocumented migrants did not have the ‘luck’ of being offered a place at a public school at all. In this respect, choosing not to act is related to Hawa’s apparent superior capacity to act, derived from her particular migration status.<sup>7</sup>

## **When one cannot stop waiting**

Early in 2011, Pierre called me from the CETI<sup>8</sup> in Ceuta, the Spanish enclave on the Moroccan coast, which he had reached by *swimming* there.

He did not tell even his closest friends about his plans and almost died in the attempt. When we talked, he assured me that he left without the help of any network or contacts. The trigger for his decision was related to the fact that soon after the incident with the German visa, Pierre had also lost his job at the international NGO. As a consequence, all of a sudden, Pierre had lost his networks and his economic stability. In this situation, his opportunities to leave became more remote with every day he stayed in Morocco. He told me that he just felt that he could not wait any longer for a better future because his possibilities for active waiting were exhausted. He said he made the decision to swim when he realized that his fate depended on God and luck alone.

As I said in the beginning, Pierre was actually an exceptional case because of the 40 migrants I interviewed repeatedly over the years, only two left Morocco during the four years I knew them. Although it is generally assumed that migrants will eventually cross, taking the risky trip by boat, for the majority this is increasingly not the case and the assumption neglects to take account of the power of waiting.

Duklevska Schubert (2009: 117) argues that waiting is actually very difficult to end, once one has been waiting for a long time. In her study on bachelors waiting to get married in Macedonia, respondents demonstrated a certain objectification of that which is 'external' or 'beyond one's control'. Duklevska Schubert draws particular attention to the fact that men who had married long after the culturally legitimate age to do so still displayed behavioural characteristics of 'bachelors', such as drinking sprees and partying. Despite their new responsibilities as fathers, husbands and sons-in-law, they would still continue to frequent bars with friends and drink a lot – even though they received very negative reactions from the family because of this. Duklevska Schubert concludes that these long periods of waiting for a bride had an impact on men's heightening of their own sensory perceptions – being attuned to their own needs, wants and desires and indulgence of the body as the only fields within the bounds of individual agency (Duklevska Schubert 2009: 115). In effect, the research shows that waiting can become an excuse to take action to change one's attitude to life or to take responsibility for one's future. Her example shows how waiting may indeed serve some people as an excuse to depend upon others or to stop conforming to the rules of sociality.

Paraphrasing Duklevska Schubert (2009: 118), I contend that waiting can make people reconsider what it is that makes them a person beyond being a migrant. Applying her conclusions to the case of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, I find that prolonged waiting for departure can certainly intensify the consciousness of being 'a failed migrant', or of being caught up in a spiral of 'useless trying'. Once one identifies with

this image, it is more and more difficult to actually plan for departure, to change the course of one's life, to take risks or to start anew. This is especially the case when migrants start to indulge in their condition as either 'victim' or 'villain'. This was particularly evident in my interviews with migrants who had never been able to even attempt to leave the country and who had never really been in a position to access money through a stable job like Silvester, a privileged position in networks like Pierre or status as recognized refugee like Hawa.

Sandrine, for example, had been in Morocco for three years at the time of the research. Although she talked about leaving, she had never actually made a real attempt to do so. When I asked her once if we would meet in the next year, she replied: "Of course we will! Where do you want me to go? I will be here. Probably for eternity." Sandrine spent her time attempting to get services from all the different NGOs she could possibly sign up to. I frequently saw her in different NGOs when I was visiting. Everyone knew her. "You know, when I am down, I go round Terre des Hommes or Caritas, and I tell them and cry a little. They listen, you see. The other migrants, I cannot talk to them, everyone has their own problems." Sandrine used her condition as a victim frequently in our conversations. There was always a certain blaming of others for her situation, a need to justify her right to services, attention and support. On one occasion, when she was told that she was to contribute a small amount of money for receiving diapers and second-hand children's clothes from one of the organizations she was hoping to receive social assistance from, she angrily told me:

"All these NGOs, they get money from their states to help us. They get funding for us. So they should give us the money. Why do I have to pay for the diapers? It is not my fault that I am here. They have to give them to me for free."

Jean had given up on trying to leave at all. He told me during a chat: "It is useless. I have thought about it. I will never have enough money to leave. I have no family in Europe, I have no connections. It is going to be impossible." At the same time, Jean was adamant about the fact that he was never going to go back to Cameroon. As indicated in [Chapter 5](#), he would frequently reply to questions of return: "I rather die here." Jean actually had turned down several training opportunities and job placements which someone in one of the social organizations had tried to organize for him to take part in. He had lost his job as a community worker with an international NGO because of his lack of engagement with the work and his constant womanizing. To me, he justified his lack of enthusiasm

at work with the fact that he was bored with everything. By the end of my research, I found out that Jean had started to commit petty crime. He was also involved in some money forging activities. In general, he always took particular care of his appearance, being well dressed and wearing expensive-looking watches and sunglasses. He was involved in a variety of conflicts with other members of the Cameroonian community around issues of deceit and fraud, but on the other hand had gained a certain status. Despite this, he was certainly not a happy man and often declared to me that he had no friends and that he had tried to kill himself several times.

This indulgence in either victimhood or being a villain is an expression of migrants' inability to stop waiting for departure. Being unable to leave or to stay, they are caught up in a life of waiting in which victimhood or marginality are used to justify their paralysis. The victim-villain card is often looked down upon as the excuse of the weak and powerless by other migrants but it is also viewed with unease by international aid organizations that have to deal with these victim-villain images on frequent occasions. That migrants represent themselves to international aid organizations as victims or villains, rather than as active social agents, can create a difficult ethical terrain. Those institutions wish to frame their social assistance in terms of human rights and political struggle in which migrants become actively involved in order to defend their interests. The victim/villain constructs are contrary to this. Migrant 'victims' and 'villains' can also defy the image of the 'transit' migrant who enthusiastically organizes the onward trip and who is generally future orientated.

## **Conclusion: waiting in desperate hope – migration policies in Morocco and time**

In our capitalist society, time is money (Adam 1994, 2004) and the ultimate goal of development and progress is the utmost control of clock time. This is called efficiency. The longer it takes to complete a task, the more expensive is the end product. In such a context, the cost of one's waiting experience is calculated not just in money, but also in frustration, anger and other stresses (Schweitzer 2008). For this reason, people generally do not want to wait. In modern times, it is assumed that people who do not wait are in control of their time. They are masters of it. The fact that people have to wait, then, is generally understood as a sign of a dysfunctional economy or the technologies and institutions charged with 'getting things done' (Hage 2009a).

In a commentary to Daumier's drawing 'Un wagon de troisième classe', which depicts the expressionless faces of people travelling in a

third-class compartment of a train, Schweitzer (2008: 6) argues that passive waiting:

is still generally assigned to the poor and powerless so as to ritualistically reinforce social and political demarcations and that their wait has almost always meant never. The poor will always be with us, the poor will always wait. Their time is not money. Daumier's passengers don't travel. They just wait to arrive.

When applying this argument to migration policies in Morocco, there are striking parallels to be found. The concept of transit migration does not acknowledge migrants as 'waiting subjects'. Instead, it prefers to see them as 'moving' people, determined to reach their goal, in charge of their time. At the same time, the new integration policies in Morocco do not acknowledge migrants as 'waiting subjects'; instead, they conceptualize them as new settlers. Maintaining such discourses hides the fact of possible dysfunction in the regulation of migrants' mobilities. It helps us to ignore that increasing control and repression of migration, as well as unsatisfactory social support to those that aim to settle actually imply human costs of frustration, anger and stress for those who are excluded from the benefits of citizenship and legal mobility options.

The waiting for departure is thus not acknowledged by international organizations, NGOs or governments. When migrants' waiting is acknowledged by institutions it normally refers to an idea of situational waiting for services and papers. In these cases, however, waiting is mostly explained in terms of migrants' position as victims and justified on the basis of their marginalized status in society. This is why those recognized as worthy of assistance are those imagined as particularly vulnerable, like women, children or refugees.

Schweitzer quotes French philosopher Simone Weil as saying that waiting must be relearned as a form of attention because imagining time as money, or else as uselessness and powerlessness, the significance and content of time itself is lost (Schweitzer 2008: 2–4). By looking at migrants' wait for departure as an existential type of waiting, one can draw attention to the fact that time is not experienced equally for everyone and that waiting for uncertain futures implies suffering. This is waiting in desperate hope. The stories of migrants' strategies to move on in time and place show how their social and existential forms of waiting are forcing us to challenge economic notions of time as clock time. The duration of immobility in 'transit' is only meaningful if the experience of marginality and the struggle to overcome it are taken into consideration.

The indignities of waiting in a culture of the instant, of flows, are also the discomforts of being out of sync with modernity. In this respect, Bastian's (2011b) work points to the fact that the linear constructions of time which are at the roots of current notions of modernity are actually something that, in reality, only the privileged, liberal subject has access to. She refers back to the work of Greenhouse (1996), who argues that the non-idealized body generally does not experience time as linear. In the same way the idea of a 'modern being' is an idealized notion in liberal thought, so is their relation to linear time an ideal construct. Paying attention to waiting may indeed serve to highlight that 'modernity' is a thing not accessible to all, and that this stratified access is a prerequisite for its existence. In this respect, Massey (1993: 61) argues in her theory called 'power geometry of space' that immobility for some is connected and dependent upon the mobility of others. Paraphrasing her argument in the context of time, one could add that the unprecedented speed of travel possible for some people implies waiting for departure for a large number of others (Andersson 2014b).

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Cyber-marriage is a term given by migrants to finding a suitable partner abroad through the internet. In the cases I witnessed, it was considered possible to acquire a visa through marriage with a European or American citizen. The practice was common among both women and men. Mostly, contacts are sought through social network programmes or other contact pages that do not require the payment of membership fees. This practice is not limited to Morocco but also frequently takes place in other African countries (Alpes 2011).
- <sup>2</sup> This is also evidenced through data collected by other institutions. For example, the International Organization for Migration (2010) stated that, of a total of 2,831 migrants who received assistance through its voluntary return programme between 2005 and 2010, 6 per cent had attempted to reach Spain more than five times, and 45 per cent had attempted between one and five times.
- <sup>3</sup> Community worker in French. Most international aid organizations rely on Sub-Saharan African migrants as community workers to do outreach work with migrant groups in the cities. This facilitates access to hard-to-reach groups.
- <sup>4</sup> From 2014 onwards, all migrant children (independent of their migration status) are theoretically allowed to attend Moroccan public schools. However, there are still many migrant children out of school because of generally poor conditions in public schools, lack of individualized support for migrant children's special needs and also because of experiences of racism. Because of this, several informal schools run by migrants themselves exist in Rabat and Casablanca. These, however, do not comply with national educational standards in Morocco.
- <sup>5</sup> My translation from the original French text.
- <sup>6</sup> This organization had been running a scholarship programme for migrant children, which enabled them to attend private French-speaking schools in Rabat. In 2010, this organization stopped giving out new bursaries and only continued to

finance those children who had already been beneficiaries in earlier years. In my conversations with one of the managers, it transpired that this had been done in agreement with other charities' new policies to foster the enrolment of migrant children in state schools.

- 7 Although Hawa was a recognized refugee, it is doubtful whether she would ever have qualified for resettlement. According to what I could find out in informal interviews with members of the UNHCR and NGOs, resettlement is *not* the preferred policy solution for refugees in Morocco. Instead, efforts by the UNHCR are concentrated on facilitating better conditions for their settlement in Morocco. Nevertheless, in her own perception, Hawa thought that refugee status gave her particular advantages in relation to resettlement.
- 8 Centro de Estancia Temporal de Immigrantes (Centre for Migrants' Temporary Stay) is the institution where migrants are kept after having been intercepted by Spanish border police upon entering Ceuta irregularly.



# Conclusion

## Introduction

The main aim of this book has been to document and describe the life of a group of migrants who had been stuck in Morocco for many years in order to shed light on what forced immobility has actually done to them as persons. In particular, the book has attempted to uncover how migrants' lives in Morocco have affected their sense of self and their prospects for the future.

The description of migrants' personal experiences has been framed against academic and policy discourses which are centred on notions of transit migration. As I argued in the introduction, transit migration is based on a variety of concepts which have been criticized frequently for their dichotomist usage in general migration theory and policy making. The most notorious among them are certainly mobility versus immobility (Schapendonk 2011), illegal versus legal (Willen 2007, Alpes 2011), forced versus voluntary migration (Malkki 1995b, Turton 2003a, Bakewell 2008b) but also place versus time (Harvey 1989, Cwerner 2001).

In transit discourse, mobility has preference over immobility and illegal over legal forms of migration. As a consequence, transit migrants are imagined as 'mobile' and on the move rather than as 'stuck'. This is reflected in the concentration of state efforts to strengthen border enforcement in 'transit countries' in order to contain migrants' predicted movement further north. It is further reflected in recent immigration policies which grant migrants only temporary residency permits and restricted access to economic, social and political rights in the country. As indicated in [Chapter 3](#), this stems from a rather reductionist view of 'the migrant' as a rational, economic animal, who migrates primarily to maximize his or her profit and economic possibilities by moving toward

the economically more developed European mainland. The overwhelming concern with mobility at the expense of immobility is also evident in the little interest states devote to the development of coherent asylum and settlement policies for migrants in so-called transit countries. Thus, illegality of migrants is actually reinforced and created by the state itself when legal options to migrate or settle become close to non-existent. By concentrating policy efforts on borders, illegality and movement, the transit discourse also favours place over time because it neglects to acknowledge national and international states' responsibility for the long duration of migrants' legal, economic and political limbo in transit countries. I have linked these biases in transit thinking to a certain neoliberal, economic approach to migration theory, in which the economic interests of markets overshadow other parameters of analysis in migrants' behaviour and state reactions.

Through a critical assessment of migration in Morocco from a perspective of forced immobility and temporality, this study has contributed to the literature that challenges some of these biases in contemporary migration theory and highlights fundamental contradictions between the concepts, norms and rationalities evident in much of contemporary migration policy and the lived experience of migrants. It is particularly the idea of migration as a linear process through time and space that underlies the policies of border control and exclusion of migrants. Like the travel plans of tourists, migrants' trajectories are often imagined to be linear trajectories from A to B. They are supposedly limited in time and rationally calculated moves (Chiswick 2008). However, migrants' own perspectives on time and place in Morocco contrast sharply with this view. As I have attempted to show throughout the book, these simplistic ways of conceptualizing the migration process of Sub-Saharan African 'transit migrants' do not square with the complicated relation to life and migration which the migrants I encountered described to me. Sadly, they also tend to have negative consequences for migrants affected by them and – contrary to policy makers' stated objectives – they do little to protect migrants' human rights. If anything, they help states to effectively monopolize the regulatory authorities that structure mobility and settlement.

The situation of Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco can be compared meaningfully to similar situations throughout the world in which migrants are either forced to stay where they are without being able to leave at all (Carling 2002, Chu 2010, Alpes 2011) or are 'stuck' in the middle of their journey (Branchet 2011, Schapendonk 2011, Streiff-Fénart & Segatti 2011). In effect, this phenomenon appears to be occurring more and more frequently and to be proportionally related to the growing importance of border controls and the social, political and

economic restrictions to migrants' effective participation in the societies they are migrating to or coming from.

In this respect, this book responds to key issues and problems in migration literature more generally. In what follows, I will therefore revisit some of the most important findings and relate them more broadly to academic scholarship on migration and policy developments in Morocco and to the European Union. My aim is to use my findings specifically to critique those components of the transit discourse that are also recurring elements in other areas of contemporary migration theory. I wish to disrupt the binary representations at the root of these components of migration theory and to uncover the interdependencies of opposing aspects of the same phenomenon by looking at them from a different perspective. First, I challenge the representations of migrants as primarily economic agents by looking at the existential motives of migration. Then, I discuss the nature of the interplay between structural and individual factors of migration by focusing on the migratory process rather than on the economic, political and social contexts in host and home countries. A consideration of new ways of conceptualizing migrants' community networks by looking at their role as 'place makers' will follow. I then go on to examine ideas about settlement and movement through a lens of temporality. Finally, I will discuss the difficulty of an approach to migration that focuses on 'globalizing policies'. By looking at the localized effects of 'global' policies, I hope to show how, as a social problem involving humans with different interests and states which struggle to maintain their sovereign power, it is difficult to argue for internationally applicable political standards to migration management if they are not intrinsically connected to an internationally shared responsibility to safeguard the human rights of migrants.

### **From statist migrant categories to a reconsideration of universal human rights**

The first important conclusion I wish to draw refers to the use of migration categories as obstacles to migrants' access to state protection and human rights. It is my contention that the use of migration categories such as legal or illegal migrants, forced or voluntary migrants, temporary or long-term residents do not help us to analytically understand the complicated nature of human migration (Turton 2003b) and can even lead to policy-irrelevant research (Bakewell 2008b). The data in this book has demonstrated how migrants slip in and out of different migration categories during their trajectories and according to the places they are travelling to. They are

sometimes tourists, illegal migrants, then asylum seekers, refugees or trafficked victims – and sometimes even several categories at once. Rather than being a static given, migrants' migration statuses shift in time and place (Schuster 2005a). Furthermore, the stories in Chapters 3 and 4 illustrate that the criteria by which people are designated a particular migration status in different places depending on a variety of economic, administrative and political factors, many of which are time and place dependent and outside people's control.

More importantly though, the book has shown that the bureaucratic construction of migrants' *non-status* can be a tool used deliberately by the state to justify migrants' exclusion from access to basic services, work and residency rights. The Moroccan state has achieved this by making it difficult for unauthorized migrants to legalize their stay once they have arrived on Moroccan soil. In fact, it is mostly through the provision of evidence of several years of (irregular) stay in the country that temporary residency permits can be obtained. By extension, the non-citizenship status of many migrants is used as justification for the state's reluctance to take responsibility for protecting the social, economic and political rights of those migrants.

Interestingly, the state is able to do this by relying on the notion of migrants as a-temporal and moving subjects who are not attached to place. This reasoning mirrors policy debates on 'traveller-gypsies' and other seemingly mobile people in the UK and elsewhere (Okely 1983). Livelihood strategies that have been based on intermittent access to land, like nomadism, for example, have historically almost always been treated with suspicion by policy makers practically everywhere in the world (Drakkakis Smith 2007). And, likewise, the label 'nomadism' has been used in the past in a variety of instances to restrict people's access to land rights. Drakkakis Smith (2007) argues, for example, that nomadism became a term attached to traveller-gypsies as a means of underlining a non-attachment to space, land and place, irrespective of the fact that some families own land and many families have been born in or reported to a single geographical location for generations. Similarly, the example of migration policy in Morocco demonstrates that states' responsibilities and people's claim to mobility and settlement rights are first and foremost evaluated against their 'attachment to place' and this is for the most part explained in terms of their degree of economic participation in society and less so on ideas about cultural or social forms of attachment. Furthermore, these policies demonstrate how success in achieving an 'attachment to place' is assumed to be largely dependent on migrants' own initiative rather than on any affirmative actions on the part of the state or host society.

Like the notion of the state of exception in Agamben's *Homo Sacer* (1998), the state uses the transit category as a pretext for exerting its sovereign control over migrants and suspending human rights law (Bredeloup 2012). This policy of non-determination excludes migrants while binding them even more firmly to state power in the form of abjection. Migration status (or rather the lack thereof) is therefore not a neutral category, but a highly political construct that serves the interests of states, rather than of migrants. I have shown throughout that the effect of *non-status* policies is devastating for migrants. They produce a form of displacement that is not only spatial, but also existential, political and social in nature. This is because denying people a status is linked to denying them a political identity, so that their rights are worth nothing. In this respect, the situation of the migrants I have been describing is similar to those stateless persons that Arendt (1958) describes in her work. Like Arendt, I find that the practice of stripping people of legal status uncovers the contradictions of the liberal human rights regime in migration policies, which simultaneously insists on the universality of rights and at the same time defends the nation state's right to maintain its borders in order to safeguard the rights of its citizens. This leads to an unsolvable dilemma in which citizenship rights acquire a status that is worth more than universal human rights.

## **From economic migrants to migration as an existential quest**

In a time of economic crisis, environmental degradation and increasing international conflicts, more and more people, particularly in the Global South, are considering whether to migrate away from their countries of origin in order to improve their livelihoods. It is a paradox of terms that the majority of people with high aspirations to leave these countries have increasingly limited capability to do so. Carling (2002) might therefore be right to talk of ours as an age of 'involuntary immobility' rather than an 'age of migration' (Castles & Miller 2003).

In light of this, it is interesting to look at why the migrants I encountered were able to move against all odds and whether their trajectories and experiences are different from those documented in research on migrants who were able to reach their final destinations in European countries relatively easily, like guest workers, for example. This would also help us to evaluate the claim put forward by certain migration scholars that 'transit' migrants represent a 'new' phenomenon which

points to a ‘missing link’ in mainstream theory (Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou 2008). In order to do so, it is helpful to revisit critically perceived ideas about migrants’ ‘aspirations’ to migrate and their ‘capabilities’ to do so in contemporary migration theory (Carling 2002).

In this respect, push and pull theories of migration have been very influential in dominant definitions of migrants’ aspirations and capabilities for movement. On the basis of these theories, aspirations and capabilities are generally linked to economic considerations (Carling 2002, Chiswick 2008). Network theories of migration (Goss & Lindquist 1995), as well as researchers of transnationalism (Glick Schiller et al 1992, Portes et al 1999) and system theorists (Massey & Garcia Espana 1987) have gone further to include social and cultural capital in host and home countries in their analysis of capabilities and aspirations. Nonetheless, it is often the case that capabilities and aspirations for migration are analysed in relative isolation from the political context in which they operate. The state is often overlooked as an important context of generative power in this respect, and the focus rests more on the economic and social forces that drive migration (Alpes 2011).

In order to understand the peculiar trajectories of ‘transit’ migrants, it is important to reframe aspirations to migrate in the economic, political, social and cultural context in which they are created. Therefore, in Chapter 3 of this book (echoing the work of Escoffier 2006 and Pian 2009), I described migrants’ journeys towards Morocco from the point of view of an adventure, rather than as an economically calculated move or as a politically motivated ‘exit’. My endeavour has been to show how migration as an adventure is recounted by migrants as though it were an existential quest. The ‘adventure’ is created out of aspirations for social mobility. For the migrants I met, migration *in itself, regardless of where to and for what*, had a social significance in the countries of origin equal to success and status. Europe is only one possible destination within a vast array of possibilities that have no clear order of preference. Whether migration was realized through irregular or regular entry, with a stable job at hand or not, was largely irrelevant for the migrants I encountered, at least at the outset of their journeys. For this reason too, the migration plans of my research participants have no prior fixed destination or point of arrival. As an existential quest, the trajectory generates a life of its own, is ‘never-ending’ and is always open to new possibilities. What I have also shown, however, is that after many failed attempts to settle somewhere else, migrants finally continue their migratory trajectory with the aim of reaching Europe, as the ‘last resort’, but without having a clear idea if it will be the place they had dreamt of.

This way of understanding the aspiration to migrate is closely related to findings of other researchers who have investigated would-be migrants' intentions in China (Chu 2010), Cape Verde (Carling 2002, 2008) and north-west Cameroon (Alpes 2011). Here it is important to highlight that aspirations to migrate can be understood as a strategy to overcome 'stuckness' at home both in terms of feeling stuck on the road to modernity, as Chu (2010) demonstrates for her subjects in China, or else as stuck on the way to inclusion and participation in society (Carling 2002, Alpes 2011). Viewed from this perspective, migration becomes also a political rather than merely an economic project when it is geared to changing one's own positioning in prevalent power structures in the country of origin and beyond.

While these researchers did not investigate 'transit' as such, the experiences of the migrants they encountered had much in common with those I have documented here. This thought stands in opposition to the predominantly economically inspired theories on migration that still dominate much of academic and political thinking on human mobility, and particularly with regard to migration from the Global South. It offers a new perspective on the reasons why people continue to migrate in the hope of a better future, despite increasing border controls and daunting economic prospects in the countries of destination.

## **Revisiting capabilities for movement and their connection to existential quests: from adventurers to fighters**

In Chapters 3 and 4, I referred to Alpes' (2011) conceptualization regarding multiple regulatory authorities of migration in order to explain how migrants' trajectories evolve. State, market and family are all implicated in facilitating and inhibiting mobility options. How migrants are able to use mobility options is not only dependent on the context, but also on their own social location within the forces that regulate movement and stay. By social location, I mean Pessar and Mahler's (2003) idea of a person's position within interrelated historically produced power relationships. Seen from this perspective, migrants' trajectories are both forced and voluntary, as they involve making choices. However these choices are limited and constrained by the particular regulatory framework in which they occur and the social position of the subject in relation to them (Alpes 2011). The extent to which migrants become 'stuck' in transit is therefore dependent on both structural and individual factors.

The stories of migrants' travels as well as their differing strategies to escape from Morocco all underline the relevance of this theory. While visas, passports and other 'papers' are constantly on migrants' minds, the differing access they have to them and the extent to which these make travel possible is marked by their social position in each country they are travelling through. The extent to which they are able to make family or other networks work for them in the struggle for transport, work or travel options is also largely dependent on their networking abilities. I have drawn particular attention here to the gendered differences in access to networks (Boyd 1989, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Last but not least, the stories of the migrants I describe make clear that money and the market can become important factors in facilitating or hindering mobility, therefore bringing back the issue of class in determining where and how people are able to travel (Van Hear 2004). All this demonstrates that the structural differences between migrants' access to mobility are socially constructed through historically entrenched power differences between people, rather than existing objectively as given facts (Massey 1993). However, seeing structural differences as socially constructed means also acknowledging that they can be changed by humans and are dynamic in place and time, rather than fixed.

Following from this there is another point: in the same way that structural conditions for mobility are human constructs and therefore dynamic and changing, they do not leave people unchanged. Over time, they have an impact on individual and group behaviour related to migration. This is demonstrated by the fact that the aspirations of migrants encountered in this study changed significantly through the process of their migration. While they started out as optimistic adventurers, during their travels they became aware of the limited choices they have and the prospect of failure and loss of status that migration also entails. They actually became fighters, as expressed in their view that they are 'in a battle' or 'struggling'. In light of this, their hopes and dreams about a different future were frequently reorganized during their trajectory and particularly once they arrived in Morocco, although they were never given up completely. The stories of their travels show that migrants' aspirations and capabilities to migrate are better understood as dynamic.

This also means that the nature of the journey itself and the duration of movement and settlement in different places gives a specific meaning to migration and determines how far it is experienced as a significant movement in peoples' lives *over time*. Second, it means that during their journey, migrants change not only their objectives, plans and ideas about where and how to migrate but also *who they are* because their social location is adapting to the context in which they are living. I make this point in

order to show that a limited capacity to move does not only make migrants' trajectories longer and more difficult but can significantly shape the ways in which they experience their migratory project as a personal failure. As shown in [Chapter 5](#), migrants frequently hold themselves personally responsible for their inability to cross borders or build up a satisfactory life in a foreign place. Rather than blaming structure, they are blaming themselves for being lazy or stupid, or else they take issue with fate and God (Chu 2010, Alpes 2011).

In short, I agree with Papadopoulos and colleagues (2008) that migration is an autonomous project. However, rather than seeing it entirely as a positive force for renewing one's identity – as is implied in their analysis, I contend that increasingly stringent migration controls have converted migration into a negative experience for many migrants. The data presented in this book has shown that the contemporary conditions of many migrants can also negatively alter individuals' perception of themselves and their relation to others, as well as impacting severely on their abilities to seize opportunities for further movement and settlement.

In essence, what distinguishes the Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco from labour migrants, tourists, businesspeople, or other migrants in Europe is not only *why* they travel, but also *how they travel and how they stay*. This is placed in opposition to the simplistic view that any type of migration is simply a movement from A to B. This view does not take into account that the movement itself is likely to affect people's social status, their power in relation to others and their idea of themselves. Migration as a significant movement can be a positive as well as a negative experience. This is not only dependent on the degree of economic development in the migrants' country of arrival, or their migration status there and the networks they are inserted into, but also the ways in which migrants' journeys evolve.

## **From social capital to relations of dependence: place in migration theory**

In [Chapter 6](#) of this book, I described how migrants relate to each other in a situation of forced immobility. In this context, I conceptualized the role of migrants' communities in their lives as both 'making place' in a no man's land and constructing a place elsewhere. By looking at the example of a Pentecostal church and the several national migrant community structures, I argued that relations are characterized both by a desire to connect to others in order to make the present liveable and at the same time as a way to foster an individual's own project of onward migration and a future

elsewhere. In this context, relations of dependence and mutual support between migrants are interdependent aspects of each other.

Migrant communities build their identity on values that defined them in the past, such as nationality, ethnicity, patriarchal structures of leadership and an economy of morals that is built on social difference. However these – particularly social difference – become distorted through the specific migration context in which migrants find themselves, so that equality and acknowledgement of social difference are no longer at the basis of relations of reciprocity and protection. As an example of this, the book discussed some data on women migrants' relationships in community networks in order to explain how they struggle to overcome situations of exploitation and dependency while at the same time fearing isolation.

This leads me to conclude that migrant networks should neither be celebrated as social capital nor dismissed as trafficking or smuggling networks. The data shows that the loss or gain that migrants can derive from networks is dependent upon their social position within them and their ability to shift that social status. This is particularly difficult for women because they have difficulties finding support outside of these structures. These conclusions sit awkwardly in between a certain strand of literature on transnationalism on the one hand and international organizations' trafficking/smuggling discourse on the other.

One strand of the literature on transnationalism in migration studies tends to emphasize the positive aspects of migrant networks as vehicles for movement and social support and bases their cohesion on a nomadic identity (Tarris 2002, Alioua 2005, Escoffier 2006, Bruneau 2010). This is based on their identification with fellow migrants, rather than on shared ethnicity ties or rules and norms. Contrary to this, in government discourses on smuggling, migrants' networks are most often identified as exploitative structures which render people vulnerable (Gallagher 2002, Agustin 2005, O'Connell Davidson 2008b). In effect, the crackdown on migrant networks as 'smuggling networks' in Morocco and elsewhere is mostly based on this view. It emphasizes that migrants have to be 'protected' from networks in order to be persons again. What both of these discourses neglect to analyse in depth is the reciprocal nature of migrants' relationships with each other and how these are based upon both mutual interests and power differentials between people. This is also an issue in contemporary debates on social capital in migration theory (Portes et al 1999, Evergeti & Zontini 2006, Bauböck & Faist 2010). While in these critical analyses of migrant community networks the roles of ethnicity, rules and norms are recognized as important signifiers of identity, the emphasis is put on the question of how far these are resources for fostering onward mobility or settlement and for whom. In this context, the crucial

importance of migrants' structural positions of power within networks is recognized by a variety of authors. This has been particularly analysed from the perspective of gender relations (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, Pessar & Mahler 2003, Hellermann 2006, Zontini 2007). My analysis shows that the extent to which migrants identify with other migrants is not only dependent on internal power struggles and cultural norms but is also very much related to the political, economic and cultural context within which their community relations are embedded. In Morocco, the general marginalization that is forced upon migrants by the state makes it extremely difficult for them to participate in alternative communities such as the nation state of the host country or in their home countries. They are therefore relegated to adapting to the sometimes exploitative structures of migrant communities. At the same time, the difficult living conditions also have an impact on internal rules, norms and functions and heighten relationships of power and domination between migrants.

So while it could be seen that communities are 'smuggling networks' because they primarily focus on moving and not staying, it should be recognized that this is in part the result of restrictive migration policies and the criminalization of migrants. While cracking down on illegal migration, governments have done little to address either the insatiable demand for cheap labour in destination countries, or the lack of dignified living conditions in source countries, both of which make trafficking and smuggling so profitable in the first place. I agree with Gallagher (2002: 28) that, at best, this is misguided and, at worst, it is actively hypocritical.

## **From settling and moving to waiting for departure: time in migration theory**

This book has problematized the situation of living in between movement and settlement. In order to do this, I have approached living in limbo from the perspective of time and temporality in migrants' lives.

In transit discourse, migrants' experience of their time in Morocco is temporalized through clock time by making it measurable in days, weeks, years or decades. The word 'transit' suggests that it is a 'phase' that migrants are passing through and they are relatively unaffected by it in their very being. A perspective on social time, however, highlights that this view is misleading. In Chapter 5, particularly, I described how forced immobility in Morocco can affect migrants' perception of time. They perceive a dislocation between present, past and future that can lead to an identity crisis and to the sense of a meaningless life. For migrants, waiting for time to pass, for the right moment to act or for another person to do something is

neither settlement nor comparable to ‘transit’ or ‘passing through’, because it is indeterminate. This finding disrupts conventional understandings of the role of time in people’s lives. While time is generally acknowledged as an ordering device for social life (Hagerstrand 1975, Adam 1994), it is less often acknowledged that living outside temporal frames of references can have a bearing on people’s actions and wellbeing (Cwerner 2001).

In Chapter 7, I concentrated on migrants’ waiting strategies to underline the tense relationship between their limited agency and their strong desire to bring sense back into their asynchronous lives. I was shown how waiting to leave can become a form of resistance to the status quo and also signal hope for a better future. In this sense, waiting is a positive force that helps people to keep on living. Waiting itself does not necessarily signify passivity when it is broken up by activity and routines and by attempts to change both external conditions and one’s own positioning towards the forces of movement. In fact, waiting can make migrants appear busy and purposeful.

I indicated in Chapter 5 that for Camus (1942), the fact of acting in the face of meaninglessness and hopelessness means revolting against the absurd. For him, action in the face of life’s meaninglessness was the only possible way to escape from despair and also the only way to remain dignified. This revolt is crucial for Camus in order to ‘survive’ the condition of absurdity, at least temporarily. Driven by a state of extreme alienation and contradiction, I have seen migrants display signs of what Camus would term ‘revolt’ against the absurd – often by using strategies of waiting. Through waiting, migrants are able to link contradictory temporalities back together and regain a sense of life and a certain autonomy. When migrants’ actions in forced immobility are understood and analysed from their very own time perspective, it is possible to see them as actors rather than victims, and as responsible persons rather than criminal freeloaders, as they are often portrayed in policy and research on irregular migrants (Willen 2007).

On the other hand, the data in this book has shown that waiting also often means that migrants are not focused on a specific plan or opportunity, but rather are waiting for indeterminate times and undefined chances. This type of waiting is existential and difficult to bear, particularly if one is not religious. In an article on the play *Waiting for Godot*, in which he analyses the existential aspects of waiting for uncertain futures, Cash (2009) comes to the conclusion that no one can spend a life waiting for something uncertain without going crazy. Existential waiting can lead to a situation in which it is difficult to stop waiting for change and it can easily lead to passivity, despair and giving in to a feeling of victimhood.

By highlighting migrants' relation to present, past and future in [Chapter 5](#) and by exploring their waiting strategies in [Chapter 7](#), I sought to demonstrate two points. First, migrants' perspectives on their own lifetimes help us to better understand the extent to which migrants see themselves as protagonists in their own lives despite their limited abilities to increase their abilities to move. It is their desire to leave that gives them their dignity and hope of having a choice.

Second, there is a difference between the various phases of forced immobility during migrants' journeys to Morocco and the situation of forced immobility they experience while living in the country. While migrants are waiting in both contexts for the opportunity to leave, during their journeys they can be sure that, at one point or another, they will have the capacity to do so. In contrast, while they are in Morocco, they cannot be sure that they will ever leave the country. Situational waiting for departure is slowly replaced by existential waiting and endurance of time. This situation is created through a political and economic context in which migrants lose the ability to plan and adjust their lives to dominant temporalities, like the commoditization of their time, or the times of citizenship and political participation. There is therefore a strong connection between migrants' time perspective and the political and economic times of the contexts they have to live in.

Apart from this policy-relevant point, looking at migrants' attempts to depart through a perspective on past, present and future is also relevant for academic debates on the role of time in the migration process. While place is a dominant feature in the literature on human mobility, time is very much less recognized as an important factor in shaping people's relation to migration (Cwerner 2001). Indeed, the material presented in [Chapters 5](#) to [7](#) of this book underlines the significance of Adam's (2004) premise that social life consists of an intersection of various time perspectives that coexist with each other. In this way, natural and social time, industrial clock time or cyclical rhythms are interdependent parts of the same phenomenon. In this context, Adam (2004) speaks of the dualities of time, rather than dualisms. I argue that the problematic definition of 'transit' rests on a particular conceptualization of migrants' time which is closely related to ideas of industrial and clock time. This view tends to overshadow our knowledge of migrants' temporal experiences and needs and thus leads to only partial understanding of their worldviews. For that reason, it is fruitful to deconstruct the dominant discourse of time and temporality inherent in migration theory and transit talk in particular, and to analyse in more depth the particular consequences of the temporal aspects of migration on migrants' lives.

I agree with Cwerner (2001: 15) that the study of time is arguably more crucial in situations where time is itself problematized by individuals and social groups. He rightly asserts that it is in contexts of crisis and radical change such as migration that the normal rhythms and flows, sequences and frequencies, the duration of activities, the pace of daily life, the social narratives and the works of memory all become problematic. By revealing these inconsistencies between old and new time perspectives in migrants' lives, it has been possible to better understand the process dynamics and possibilities of the migration process. In this sense, time should not be seen as a detached aspect of migrants' social activities, but more as a constitutive element of the immigrant experience.

### **From preventing transit to the creation of forced immobility: globalizing migration policies and localized effects**

The stories of my respondents highlight that once they arrived in Morocco, their main problem was no longer so much one of 'forced' or 'voluntary' movement, but rather of 'forced' stay. Their situation therefore points to the need to recognize that the forces that shape movement are also those that shape immobility along the way. States, families and markets are effective mediators for movement *and* settlement, but like 'rightful' movement, states can use their authority to monopolize 'rightful' settlement and participation in host societies in a variety of ways.

Furthermore, I argue that rather than being a national issue related to state sovereignty, this is an international phenomenon that extends beyond the borders of individual nation states. I attempted to show in [Chapter 2](#) how through the development of the Global Approach to Migration, several states are actually implicated in restricting migrants' movement and settlement in Morocco. While African and European states have concentrated their financial and political efforts in measures designed to increase border controls in both African sending nations and transit countries on the 'fringes of Europe' (Düvell 2006), measures to promote legal migration between African countries or between African and European countries have not been developed so fast. So, in effect, global migration policies on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar have translated into measures to prevent and restrict migration rather than to promote it.

Measures to discourage migration have also targeted would-be migrants in their countries of origin through granting development aid to particularly migration-prone countries in the south (Bakewell 2008a). The material presented in [Chapter 2](#) illustrated that in Morocco, development

aid has been invested in areas of particularly high out-migration of Moroccan nationals in order to improve living conditions there (De Haas 2006, Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008). At the time of writing, very little international aid funding has been explicitly dedicated to projects aimed at improving the livelihoods of Sub-Saharan African nationals living in Morocco in a sustainable manner. Instead, most of international funding has first and foremost been used to finance emergency support to migrants. In this respect, the policy framework of the Global Approach to Migration which I briefly revisited in [Chapter 2](#) is leaving migrants in the Global South outside any relevant policy initiatives regarding the improvement of their possibilities for settlement in the medium and long term.

As a consequence, the non-acceptance of responsibility towards Sub-Saharan African migrants by the Moroccan state which I described in [Chapter 4](#) is actually unsurprising, as it is directly related to the logic of global migration policies. Thus, linking migrants' access to economic or social rights in society to the nation's general social development objectives has become a legitimate policy rhetoric for Moroccan politicians who now recognize that migrants are coming to Morocco to stay. Transit discourse, on the other hand, still gives the international community the legitimacy to suspend any claim made by migrants concerning the protection of their human rights through the international community. Thus, 'transit' can function as a pretext for suspending international human rights law for migrants. Paradoxically, this is only possible in a world in which human rights are still subordinated to the power of the nation state and in which those who are categorized as 'moving subjects' fall outside the responsibilities of states as protectors of human rights (Grant 2005a).

In summary, while the policy framework of the Global Approach to Migration advocates that the enforcement of borders is a shared responsibility of all member states of the European Union, it is a lot less clear about the shared responsibility of states for safeguarding the human rights of migrants in *other* states. This means that even though the rationale for border enforcement in migration policy making is increasingly global, there are important national and local differences in how this policy plays out in the lives of migrants. This is particularly evident in countries like Morocco, where a lack of democratic government structures makes migrants vulnerable to human rights violations through exploitation and persecution by both non-state and state actors. As I have shown, Morocco's non-status policies create a 'state of exception' in which the law suspends itself in order to justify state power.

In fact, by providing the financial means for sophisticated police surveillance and border control, countries of the European Union have actually facilitated the state of exception taking hold in Morocco, which

has an authoritarian regime, a particularly weak human rights record and only partially democratically functioning state institutions. I argue that, given that the EU created and sustained the financial means for improved police capacity and border control in Morocco, it should now be equally concerned about the lack of human rights protection for migrants who are forced to live there against their will. Neither international policy initiatives that are simply designed to improve migrants' living conditions in Morocco without tackling their conditions of rightlessness nor voluntary return programmes acknowledge migrants' primary need to become real persons again. Only policies that attempt to tackle head-on the real causes of the isolation and exclusion of migrants, such as their inability to achieve formal status, their inability to make claims on their rights and their lack of exposure to democratic forms of government, will ever actually get to the root of the problem.

# Bibliography

- Abah, O. and Okwori, J. (2005) A nation in search of citizens: problems of citizenship in the Nigerian context. In: Kabeer, N. (Ed) *Inclusive Citizenship*. London: Zed Books.
- Abouhani, A. (Ed) (1995) *L'état et les quartiers populaires au Maroc: de la marginalisation à l'émeute*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Adam, B. (1994) *Time and Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Adam, B. (1995) *Timewatch: The Social Analysis of Time*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Adam, B. (2002) The gendered time politics of globalization: of shadowlands and elusive justice. *Feminist Review* 70 (Summer): 3–29.
- Adam, B. (2004) *Time*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer: El poder soberano y la nuda vida*. Valencia: Pre-Textos.
- Agamben, G. (2005) *State of Exception*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Agustin, L. M. (2005) Migrants in the mistress's house: other voices in the 'trafficking' debate. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 12 (1): 96–117.
- Ahmad, A. N. (2008) Dead men working: time and space in London's (illegal) migrant economy. *Work Employment Society* 22 (2): 301–318.
- Alioua, M. (2005) La migration transnationale des Africains subsahariens au Maghreb: l'exemple de l'étape marocaine. *Maghreb-Machrek* 185 (Autumn): 37–58.
- Alpes, M. J. (2011) *Bushfalling: how young Cameroonians dare to migrate*. PhD thesis. Faculty of Social Sciences. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.
- Amnesty International (2018) Morocco: relentless crackdown on thousands of sub-Saharan migrants and refugees is unlawful [online]. Available from: [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/morocco-relentless-crackdown-on-thousands-of-sub-saharan-migrants-and-refugees-is-unlawful/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/morocco-relentless-crackdown-on-thousands-of-sub-saharan-migrants-and-refugees-is-unlawful/)
- Anderson, B. (2012) *Us and Them? The Dangerous Politics of Migration Controls*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Andersson, R. (2014a) Time and the migrant other: European border controls and the temporal economics of illegality. *American Anthropologist* 116 (4): 795–809.
- Andersson, R. (2014b) *Illegality, Inc.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Arendt, H. (1958) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Cleveland: World Publishing Company.
- Association Francaise des victimes de l'immigration clandestine (AFVIC) (2007) *Synthèse des principaux résultats de l'Enquête: profil des migrants Subsahariens au Maroc 2007*. Rabat: AFVIC.
- Azkona, N. (2011) *Políticas de Control migratorio y de cooperación al desarrollo entre España y África Occidental durante la ejecución del primer Plan África*. Madrid: Entreculturas.
- Bachelet, S. (2016) *Irregular sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco: illegality, immobility, uncertainty and "adventure" in Rabat*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Edinburgh.
- Bakewell, O. (2007) Researching refugees: lessons from the past, current challenges and future directions. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 26 (3): 6–14.
- Bakewell, O. (2008a) Keeping them in their place: the ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa. *Third World Quarterly* 29 (7): 1341–1358.
- Bakewell, O. (2008b) Research beyond the categories: the importance of policy irrelevant research into forced migration. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21 (4): 432–453.
- Bash, L., Glick Schiller, N. and Szanton Blanc, C. (Eds) (1994) *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach.
- Bastian, M. (2011a) *Temporal Connectivities: A Scoping Study of the Available Research on Time and Community*. Connected Communities Programme, Centre for Research on Sociocultural Change [online]. Manchester: University of Manchester. Available from: [www.temporalbelongings.org](http://www.temporalbelongings.org)
- Bastian, M. (2011b) The contradictory simultaneity of being with others: exploring concepts of time and community in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa. *Feminist Review* 97: 151–167.
- Bauböck, R. and Faist, T. (Eds) (2010) *Diaspora and Transnationalism*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Bauman, Z. (1998) *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Bauman, Z. (2000) Time and Space reunited. *Time and Society*. 9 (2): pp. 171–185.
- Bazonzi, J. M. (2008) Dynamique migratoire inter-africaine et mobilité féminine: analyse du courant centrifuge au départ de Kinshasa. In: *African Migrations Research Workshop: Methods and Methodology*. Oxford. 26–29 November [online]. Oxford: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford. Available from: <https://www.imi-n.org/files/events/bazonzi.pdf>
- Belguendouz, A. (2009) *Le Maroc et la migration irreguliere: une analyse sociopolitique*. CARIM-AS 2009/07 [online]. Florence: European University Institute (RSCAS). Available from: <http://hdl.handle.net/1814/10799>
- Belloni, M. (2015) *Cosmologies of destinations: routes and routes of Eritrean forced migration towards Europe*. PhD thesis. University of Trento.
- Betts, A. (2011) *Global Migration Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Biehl, K. S. (2015) Governing through uncertainty: experiences of being a refugee in Turkey as a country for temporary asylum. *Social Analysis* 59 (1): 57–75.
- Bowring, F. (2011) *Hannah Arendt: A Critical Introduction*. London: Pluto Press.
- Boyd, M. (1989) Family and personal networks in international migration: recent developments and new agendas. *International Migration Review* 23 (3): 638–670.
- Branchet, J. (2011) Stuck in the desert: hampered mobility among transit migrants in northern Niger. In: Streiff-Fénart, J. and Segatti, A. (Eds) *The Challenge of the Threshold*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Bredeloup, S. (1994) L'aventure contemporaine des diamantaires sénégalais. *Politique africaine* 56: 77–93.
- Bredeloup, S. (2012) Sahara transit: times, spaces, people. *Population, Space and Place* 18 (4): 457–467.
- Brun, C. (2015) Active waiting and changing hopes: toward a time perspective on protracted displacement. *Social Analysis* 59 (1): 19–37.
- Bruneau, M. (2010) Diasporas, transnational spaces and communities. In: Bauböck, R. and Faist, T. (Eds) *Diaspora and Transnationalism*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Brux, C., Hilden, P. K. and Middelthon, A.-L. O. (2018) Klokka tikker, tiden gar. Time and irregular migration [online]. *Time and Society* Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X18783356>
- Camus, A. (1942) *Le mythe de Sisyphe*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Camus, A. (1991) *The Myth of Sisyphus*. London: Vintage international Edition.

- Carling, J. (2002) Migration in the age of involuntary immobility: theoretical reflections and Cape Verdean experiences. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28 (1): 5–42.
- Carling, J. (2005) Trafficking in women from Nigeria to Europe. *Migration Information Source* [online]. Available from: [www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=318](http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=318)
- Carling, J. (2007) Migration control and migrant fatalities at the Spanish–African borders. *International Migration Review* 41 (2): 316–343.
- Carling, J. (2008) The human dynamics of migrant transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (8): 1452–1477.
- Cash, J. (2009) Waiting for sociality: the (re)birth, astride a grave, of the social. In: Hage, G. (Ed) *Waiting*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Cassarino, J.-P. and Fargues, P. (2006) Policy responses in MENA countries of transit for migrants: an analytical framework for policy making. In: Nynberg Sorensen, N. (Ed) *Mediterranean Transit Migration*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Castles, S. and Miller, M. (Eds) (2003) *The Age of Migration*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cherti, M. and Collyer, M. (2015) Immigration and pensee d’etat: Moroccan migration policy changes as transformation of ‘geopolitical’ culture. *Journal of North African Studies* 20 (4): 590–604.
- Chiswick, B. (2008) Are immigrants favourably self-selected? In: Brettell, C. and Hollifield, J. (Eds) *Migration Theory – Talking across Disciplines*. New York: Routledge.
- Chu, J. (2010) *Cosmologies of Credit*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Collett, E. (2007) The global approach to migration: rhetoric or reality? *Policy Brief* November [online]. European Policy Centre. Available from: [www.files.ethz.ch/isn/45563/PB\\_Nov\\_07\\_Global\\_Migration.pdf](http://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/45563/PB_Nov_07_Global_Migration.pdf)
- Collyer, M. (2006) *States of Insecurity: Consequences of Saharan Transit Migration*. COMPAS Working Paper WP 06-31 [online]. Oxford: Centre on Migration Policy and Society, University of Oxford. Available from: [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP-2006-031-Collyer\\_Saharan\\_Transit\\_Migration.pdf](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP-2006-031-Collyer_Saharan_Transit_Migration.pdf)
- Collyer, M. (2007) In-between places: trans-Saharan transit migrants in Morocco and the fragmented journey to Europe. *Antipode* 39 (4): 699–690.
- Collyer, M. (2010) Stranded migrants and the fragmented journey. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23 (3): 273–293.
- Cresswell, T. (2006) The right to mobility: the production of mobility in the courtroom. *Antipode* 38 (4): 735–754.

- Crisp, J. (1999) *Policy Challenges of the New Diasporas: Migrant Networks and their Impact on Asylum Flows and Regimes*. Working Paper 05 [online]. Policy Research Unit, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Available from: [www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/riia3.pdf](http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/riia3.pdf)
- Cuttina, P. (2017) Delocalization, humanitarianism and human rights: the mediterranean border between exclusion and inclusion. *Antipode*. doi. 10.1111/anti.12337.
- Cwerner, S. B. (2000) The chronopolitan ideal: time, belonging and globalization. *Time and Society* 9 (2/3): 331–345.
- Cwerner, S. B. (2001) The times of migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (1): 7–36.
- Dahinden, J. (2010) The dynamics of migrants' transnational formations: between mobility and locality. In: Bauböck, R. and Faist, T. (Eds) *Diaspora and Transnationalism*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Davies, K. (1990) *Women and Time: Weaving the Strands of Everyday Life*. Avebury: Aldershot.
- De Genova, N. (2004) The legal production of migrant 'illegality'. *Latino Studies* 2: 160–185
- De Haas, H. (2006) Trans-Saharan migration to North Africa and the EU: historical roots and current trends. *Migration Information Source* [online]. Available from: [www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?id=484](http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?id=484)
- De Haas, H. (2008) The myth of invasion: the inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe. *Third World Quarterly* 29 (7): 1305–1322.
- De la Durantaye, L. (2009) *Giorgio Agamben: A Critical Introduction*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Drakkakis Smith, A. (2007) Nomadism: a moving myth? Policies of exclusion and the gypsy/traveller response. *Mobilities* 2 (3): 463–487.
- Duklevska Schubert, V. (2009) Out of 'turn', out of sync: waiting for marriage in Macedonia. In: Hage, G. (Ed) *Waiting*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Düvell, F. (2006) *Crossing the Fringes of Europe: Transit Migration in the EU's Neighbourhood*. COMPAS Working Paper WP-06-33 [online] Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford. Available from: [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP-2006-033-D%C3%BCvell\\_Fringe\\_Migration.pdf](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP-2006-033-D%C3%BCvell_Fringe_Migration.pdf)
- Dwyer, P. (2009) World of waiting. In: Hage, G. (Ed) *Waiting*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Elliot, A. (2016) Paused subjects: waiting for migration in North Africa. *Time & Society* 25 (1): 102–116.

- Emirbayer, M. and Mishe, A. (1998) What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (4): 962–1023.
- Ennaji, M. (1994) *Soldats, Domestiques et Concubines*. Casablanca: Editions EDDIF.
- Escoffier, C. (2006) *Communautés d'itinérance et savoir-circuler des transmigrant-e-s au Maghreb*. Thèse pour le doctorat nouveau régime Sociologie et Sciences Sociales. Toulouse: Université Toulouse II.
- EuroMed Rights (2015) *Maroc: Droits économiques et sociaux des personnes migrantes et réfugiées*[online]. Euro-mediterranean Human Rights Network. Available from: <https://euromedrights.org/fr/publication/maroc-droits-economiques-et-sociaux-des-personnes-migrantes-et-refugiees-2/>
- European Commission (1998) *Euro Mediterranean Agreement*. Official Journal of the European Community (L097/2) [online]. Brussels: European Commission. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:L:1998:097:SOM:EN:HTML>
- European Commission (2004) *Establishing the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union*. Council Regulation No. 2007/2004 of 26 October [online]. Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union. Available from: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/docs/frontex\\_regulation\\_consolidated\\_2011\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/docs/frontex_regulation_consolidated_2011_en.pdf)
- European Commission (2012) Development and cooperation. *EUROPE AID* [online]. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/morocco/morocco\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/morocco/morocco_en.htm)
- European Commission (2013) *Maximising the Development Impact of Migration*. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. COM (2013) 292 final. Available from: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-maximising-the-development-impact-of-migration\\_en\\_11.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-maximising-the-development-impact-of-migration_en_11.pdf)
- European Union External Action (EEAS) (2018) Promouvoir l'intégration des migrants au Maroc- Programme d'appui au partenariat pour la mobilité EU – Maroc [online]. Available from: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/morocco/52235/node/52235\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/morocco/52235/node/52235_en)

- Evergeti, V. and Zontini, E. (2006) Introduction: some critical reflections on social capital, migration and transnational families. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (6): 1025–1039.
- Faist, T. (2000) *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Faist, T. (2018a) The moral polity of forced migration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41 (3): 412–423.
- Faist, T. (2018b) *The Transnationalized Social Question: Migration and the Politics of Social Inequalities in the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fassin, D. (2012) *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme (FIDH) and Le groupe antiraciste de défense et d'accompagnement des étrangers et migrants (GADEM) (Eds) (2015) *Maroc. entre raffles et régularisations: bilan d'une politique migratoire indecise* [online]. Rabat: GADEM. Available from: [www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport\\_maroc\\_migration\\_fr.pdf](http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_maroc_migration_fr.pdf)
- Feliu Martinez, L. (2009) Les migrations en transit au Maroc. Attitudes et comportement de la société civile face au phénomène [online]. *L'année du Maghreb*. Available from: <https://journals.openedition.org/anneemaghreb/611>
- Fleischmann, L. and Steinpichler, E. (2017) The myth of apolitical volunteering for refugees: German welcome culture and new dispositif of helping. *Social Inclusion* 5 (3).
- Fondation Orient Occident (2007) *La protection des Réfugiés dans les Flux Migratoires Mixtes. Conférence du 9 au 11 décembre*. Rabat: Fondation Orient-Occident-UNHCR.
- Fontanari, E. (2019) *Lives in Transit: An Ethnographic Study of Refugees' Subjectivity across European Borders*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1977) The confessions of the flesh. In: Cerda, C. (Ed) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings. 1972–1977*. New York. Pantheon Books.
- Frontex (2012) Frontex home page [online]. Available from: [www.frontex.europa.eu](http://www.frontex.europa.eu)
- Gabrielli, L. (2011) European immigration policies outside the Union: an impact analysis on migration dynamics in North African transit areas. In: Streiff-Fénart, J. and Segatti, A. (Eds) *The Challenge of the Threshold*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Gallagher, A. (2002) Trafficking, smuggling and human rights: tricks and treaties. *Forced Migration Review* 12 (January): 25–28.

- Gardner, K. (2002) *Age, Narrative and Migration: The Life Course and Life Histories of Bengali Elders in London*. Oxford: Berg.
- Gasparini, G. (2004) Anticipation and the surprises of everyday life. *Social Science Information* 43 (3): 339–348.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L. and Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992) Towards a transnational perspective on migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645: 1–24.
- Goldschmidt, E. (2002) Migrants congolais en route vers l'Europe. *Les Temps Modernes* 620–621 (4): 208–239.
- Goldschmidt, E. (2006) Storming the fences: Morocco and Europe's anti-migration policy. *Middle East Research and Information Project* 239 (Summer)[online]. Available from: [www.merip.org/mer/mer239/storming-fences](http://www.merip.org/mer/mer239/storming-fences)
- Goss, J. and Lindquist, B. (1995) Conceptualizing International labour migration: a structuration perspective. *International Migration Review* 29 (2): 317–351.
- Grant, S. (2005a) Migrants' human rights: from the margins to the mainstream. *Migration Information Source* [online]. Available from: [www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/print.cfm?ID=291](http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/print.cfm?ID=291)
- Greenhouse, C. (1996) *A Moment's Notice: Time Politics across Cultures*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Griffiths, M. (2014) Out of time: the temporal uncertainties of refused asylum seekers and immigration detainees. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40 (12): 1991–2009.
- Griffiths, M., Rogers, A., and Anderson, B. (2013) Migration, time and temporalities: review and prospect. *COMPAS Research Resources Paper* [online]. Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford. Available from: [https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/RR-2013-Migration\\_Time\\_Temporalities.pdf](https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/RR-2013-Migration_Time_Temporalities.pdf)
- Grillo, R. (2007) Betwixt and between: trajectories and projects of transmigration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33 (2): 199–217.
- Groupe Antiraciste de Défense et d'Accompagnement des Etrangers et Migrants (GADEM) (2009b) *Maroc: Le cadre juridique relatif à la condition des étrangers au regard de l'application du pouvoir exécutif et de l'interprétation du juge* [online]. Rabat: GADEM. Available from: [www.lacimade.org/publication/maroc-le-cadre-juridique-relatif-a-la-condition-des-etrangers/](http://www.lacimade.org/publication/maroc-le-cadre-juridique-relatif-a-la-condition-des-etrangers/)
- Gundodu, A. (2006) Right to have rights: Arendt and Agamben on politics of human rights. In: *Political Theory Colloquium, Department of Political Science*. 3 March. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

- Haas, B. (2017) Citizens-in-waiting, deportees-in-waiting: power, temporality and suffering in the US asylum system. *Ethos* 45(1): 75–97
- Hage, G. (2005) A not so multi-sited ethnography of a not so imagined community. *Anthropological Theory* 5 (4): 463–475.
- Hage, G. (2009a) Waiting out the crisis: on stuckedness and governmentality. In: Hage, G. (Ed) *Waiting*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Hage, G. (Ed) (2009b) *Waiting*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Hagerstrand, T. (1975) Space, time and human condition. In Karlquist, A., Lundquist, L. and Snickars, F. (Eds) *Dynamic Allocation of Urban Space*. Westmead: Saxon House DC Health.
- Hammar, T., Brochmann, G., Tamas, K. and Faist, T. (1997) *International Migration, Immobility and Development*. Oxford: Berg.
- Hamood, S. (2006) *African Transit Migration through Libya to Europe* [online]. Cairo: American University in Cairo. Available from: [www.migreurop.org/IMG/pdf/hamood-libya.pdf](http://www.migreurop.org/IMG/pdf/hamood-libya.pdf)
- Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hellermann, C. (2006) Migrating alone: tackling social capital? Women from Eastern Europe in Portugal. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (6): 1135–1152.
- Hibou, B. (1999) The ‘social capital’ of the state as an agent of deception or the ruses of economic intelligence. In: Bayart, J. F., Ellis, S. and Hibou, B. (Eds) *The Criminalisation of the State in Africa*. London: Villiers Publications.
- Hibou, B. (Ed) (2004) *Privatising the State*. Oxford: Hurst and Co.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1994) *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hujo, K. (2013) Linking social policy, migration and development in a regional context: the case of sub-Saharan Africa. *Regions & Cohesion* 3(3): 30–55.
- Icduygu, A. (2005) *Transit Migration in Turkey Trends, Pattern and Issues*. CARIM Research Report 2005/4 [online]. Florence: European University Institute (RSCAS). Available from: <http://hdl.handle.net/1814/6277>
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2009) *Projet de Retour Volontaire Assisté et de Réinsertion- Mission d’évaluation du volet réinsertion au Congo Brazzaville, Guinée Conakry et Sénégal*. Rabat: IOM.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2010) Programme de retour volontaire assisté de migrants en situation irrégulière au Maroc et de réinsertion dans leur pays d’origine (AVRR). Rabat: IOM. (Unpublished work).

- International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2017) Maroc: Vue d'ensemble des activités de la IOM [online]. Available from: [www.iom.int/fr/countries/morocco](http://www.iom.int/fr/countries/morocco)
- Johnson, M., Liebelt, C., McKay, D., Pingol, A. and Werbner, P. (2010) Sacred journeys, diasporic lives: sociality and the religious imagination among Filipinos in the Middle East. In: Knott, K. and Mc Loughlin, S. (Eds) *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*. London: Zed Books.
- Johnson-Hanks, J. (2002) On the limits of life stages in ethnography: toward a theory of vital conjunctures. *American Anthropologist* 104 (3): 865–880.
- Johnson-Hanks, J. (2016) Vital conjunctures revisited. In: Sieveking N. and Dallywater L. (Eds) *Vital Conjunctures Revisited: Gender in Times of Uncertainty*: Leipzig: University of Leipzig.
- Kastner, K. (2010) Moving relationships: family ties of Nigerian migrants on their way to Europe. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 3 (1): 317–351.
- Keynaert, I., Van Den Aemele, S., Keynaert, J., Manco, A. and Temmerman, M. (2008) *La route de la souffrance: Rapport des résultats de la recherche: La violence sexuelle et transmigrants subsahariens au Maroc: Un partenariat participatif pour la prévention* [online]. Gant: University of Gant. Available from: <https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/979677>
- Khachani, M. (2008) *La migration clandestine au Maroc*. CARIM-AS 2008/50 [online]. Florence: European University Institute (RSCAS). Available from: [http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/10094/CARIM\\_AS%26N\\_2008\\_50.pdf?sequence=1](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/10094/CARIM_AS%26N_2008_50.pdf?sequence=1)
- Khachani, M. (2010) *Maroc: Migration, marché de travail et développement. Document de travail* [online]. Geneva: International Labour Organisation (ILO). Available from: [www.ilo.org/public/french/bureau/inst/download/maroc.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/french/bureau/inst/download/maroc.pdf)
- Khachani, M. (2014) Contexte migratoire et espaces d'intégration au Maroc. In: Royaume du Maroc. Ministère Chargé des Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger et des Affaires de la Migration (Ed) *Actes du Séminaire international sur l'intégration des immigrés au Maroc sous le thème: La nouvelle politique migratoire au Maroc. Quelle stratégie d'intégration?* Rabat. (Ministère Charge des Marocains Résidant à L'étranger et des Affaires de la Migration. Available from: [www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-Morocco-Actes-seminaire-final-30-Jun-2014.pdf](http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-Morocco-Actes-seminaire-final-30-Jun-2014.pdf)
- Khosravi, S. (2018) *Precarious Lives: Waiting and Hope in Iran*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- King, R. (2002) Towards a new map of European migration. *International Journal of Population Geography* 8: 89–106.

- Kleist, N. and Thorsen, D. (2017) *Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration*. London: Routledge.
- La Tribune Politique (Ed) (2017) *Régularisation des migrants au Maroc: 26 000 demandes déposées* [online]. Available from: <https://lnt.ma/regularisation-migrants-maroc-26-000-demandes-deposees/>
- Lakha, S. (2009) Waiting to return home: modes of immigrant waiting. In: Hage, G. (Ed) *Waiting*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Lee, C. T. (2010) Bare life, interstices and third space of citizenship. *Women's Studies Quarterly* 38 (182): 57–81.
- Lee, E. S. (1969) A theory of migration. In: Jackson, J. A. (Ed) *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lubkemann, S. (2008) Involuntary Immobility: on a theoretical invisibility in forced migration studies. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21 (4): 454–475.
- Lubkemann, S. (2011) The meaning of remittance and return: moral capital and the migratory performance of sociality. In: *Migrant Moralities*. Oslo. 12–15 December. Oslo: PRIO.
- Madison, G. (2006) Existential migration. *Existential Analysis* 17 (2): 238–260.
- Madziva, R. (2010b) *Being torn apart: Zimbabwean migrants in the UK who have left their children behind*. PhD thesis. School of Sociology and Social Policy. Nottingham: University of Nottingham.
- Malkki, L. (1992) National geographic: the rooting of peoples and the territorialisation of national identity among scholars and refugees. *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1): 24–44.
- Malkki, L. (1995a) *Purity and Exile*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Malkki, L. (1995b) Refugees and exile: from 'refugee studies' to the national order of things. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 495–523.
- Massey, D. (1993) Power geometry and a progressive sense of place. In: Bird, J., Curtis, B., Putman, T. and Tickner, L. (Eds) *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*. London: Routledge.
- Massey, D. (1999) Imagining globalization: power-geometries of time-space. In: Brah, A., Hickman, M. and Mac An Ghail, M. (Eds) *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalization*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Massey, D. S. and Garcia Espana, F. (1987) The social process of international migration. *Science* 237: 733–738.
- Mavris, L. (2002) *Human Smugglers and Social Networks: Transit Migration through the States of Former Yugoslavia*. New Issues in Refugee Research, Working Paper No. 72 [online]. Geneva: UNHCR. Available from: [www.unhcr.org/3e19aa494.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/3e19aa494.pdf)

- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) (2005) *Violence et immigration: Rapport sur l'immigration d'origine subsaharienne en situation irrégulière au Maroc*. Barcelona: MSF Spain.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) (2010a) *Recensement ISS à Rabat, Sale, Casablanca, Nador et Oujda- Novembre-Décembre 2009 et Janvier 2010*. Rabat: MSF Spain.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) (2010b) *Violence sexuelle et migration- La réalité cachée des femmes subsahariennes arrêtées au Maroc sur la route de l'Europe*. Rabat: MSF Spain.
- Migration News (1995) IOM reports on trafficking, transit migration [online]. Available from: <https://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=528>
- Moret, J. (2018) *European Somalis' Post-Migration Movements*. New York: Springer International Publishing.
- Mountz, A. (2011) Where asylum-seekers wait: feminist counter-topographies of sites between states. *Gender, Place and Culture* 18 (3): 381–399.
- Mourji, F., Ferrié, J., Radi, S. and Alioua, M. (2016) *Les migrants subsahariens au Maroc: enjeux d'une migration de résidence* [online]. Rabat: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. Available from: [www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas\\_47249-1522-1-30.pdf?161205155425](http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_47249-1522-1-30.pdf?161205155425)
- Noel, J. (Ed) (2007) *Paroles d'Exiles*. Paris: Le Chant des rues.
- Norman, K. P. (2015) Morocco's New approach to migration: meaningful reform or political posturing? Critical investigations into humanitarianism in Africa [online]. Available from: [www.cihablog.com/moroccos-new-approach-to-migration-meaningful-reform-or-political-posturing/](http://www.cihablog.com/moroccos-new-approach-to-migration-meaningful-reform-or-political-posturing/)
- Nyers, P. (2006) *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond State of Emergency*. New York: Routledge.
- O'Connell Davidson, J. (2008b) Trafficking, modern slavery and the human security agenda. *Human Security Journal* 6 (Spring): 8–15.
- Okely, J. (1983) *The Traveller-Gypsies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Papadopoulos, D. and Tsianos, V. (2007) The autonomy of migration: the animals of undocumented mobility. In: Hickey-Moody, A. and Malins, P. (Eds) *Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Papadopoulos, D., Stephenson, N. and Tsianos, V. (2008) *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century*. London: Pluto Press.
- Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, A. (2008) *Transit Migration: The Missing Link between Emigration and Settlement*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Pessar, P. and Mahler, S. (2003) Transnational migration: bringing gender in. *International Migration Review* 37 (3): 812–846.
- Pian, A. (2009) *Aux nouvelles frontières de l'Europe*. Paris: La Dispute.
- Pickerill, E. (2011) Informal and entrepreneurial strategies among sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. *Journal of North African Studies* 16 (3): 395–413.
- Pinyol, G. (2008) Inmigración española como un nuevo instrumento de acción exterior. In: Barbé, E. (Ed) *España en Europa 2004–2008*. Barcelona: Institut Universitari d'Estudies Europeus.
- Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E. and Landolt, P. (1999) The study of transnationalism: pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2): 217–237.
- Pratt, G. (2005b) Abandoned women and spaces of the exception. *Antipode* 37 (5): 1052–1078.
- Riccio, B. (2001) From 'ethnic group' to 'transnational community'? Senegalese migrants' ambivalent experiences and multiple trajectories. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (4): 583–599.
- Robertson, S. (2015) The temporalities of international migration: implications for ethnographic research. In: Castles, S., Ozkul D., and Cubas M. A. (Eds) *Social Transformations and Migration*. London: Palgrave Macmillan 45–60.
- Roitman, J. (2005) *Fiscal Disobedience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Royaume du Maroc, Haut Commissariat Du Plan (Direction Régionale à Rabat) (2007) *Enquête Nationale sur le secteur informel 2006–2007 : Rapport de Synthèse*. Rabat: Haut Commissariat du Plan.
- Royaume du Maroc, Haut Commissariat Du Plan (Direction Régionale à Rabat) (2009) *Annuaire statistique régional Rabat-Sale-Zemmour-Zaer*. Rabat: Haut Commissariat du Plan.
- Salvio-Vammen, I. (2018) *The madness of migration: an ethnographic account of Senegalese migrants' mobility and lives in Buenos Aires*. PhD thesis. University of Denmark. Copenhagen.
- Sayad, A. (2004) *The Suffering of the Immigrant*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Schapendonk, J. (2011) *Turbulent trajectories: Sub-Saharan African migrants heading north*. PhD thesis. Management Studies. Nijmegen: University Nijmegen.
- Schuster, L. (2005a) The continuing mobility of migrants in Italy: Shifting between places and statuses. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31 (4): 757–774.
- Schuster, L. (2005b) A sledgehammer to crack a nut: deportation, detention and dispersal in Europe. *Social Policy and Administration* 39 (6): 606–621.
- Schweizer, H. (2008) *On Waiting*. New York: Routledge.

- Şenay, B. (2009) A condition of homelessness or a state of double consciousness? Turkish migrants and home-making in Australia. *International Journal on Multicultural Studies* 11 (2): 248–262.
- Sibout, V. (2014) Jeune migrant: entre intégration et spécificité, quel projet éducatif? In: Royaume du Maroc. Ministère Chargé des Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger et des Affaires de la Migration (Ed) *Actes du Séminaire international sur l'intégration des immigrés au Maroc sous le thème: La nouvelle politique migratoire au Maroc. Quelle stratégie d'intégration?* Rabat: Ministère Chargé des Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger et des Affaires de la Migration. Available from: [www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-Morocco-Actes-seminaire-final-30-Jun-2014.pdf](http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-Morocco-Actes-seminaire-final-30-Jun-2014.pdf)
- Stock, I. (2012) Gender and the dynamics of mobility: African migrant mothers and 'transit migration' in Morocco. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (9): 1577–1595.
- Streiff-Fénart and Segatti, A. (Eds) (2011) *The Challenge of the Threshold*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Suter, B. (2012) Social networks in transit: experiences of Nigerian migrants in Istanbul. *Journal of Immigration and Refugee Studies* 10 (2): 204–222.
- Tarrius, A. (2002) *La mondialisation par le bas: les nouveaux nomades de l'économie souterraine*. Paris: Balland.
- Tazzioli, M. (2018) The temporal borders of asylum: temporality of control in the EU border regime. *Political Geography* 64: 13–22.
- Ticktin, M. (2011) *Casualties of Care: Immigration and Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ticktin, M. (2016) Thinking beyond humanitarian borders. *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 82(2): 255–271.
- Tronto, J. (2003) Time's place. *Feminist Theory* 4 (2): 119–138.
- Turton, D. (2003a) *Conceptualising Forced Migration*. RSC Working Paper Series No. 12 [online]. Oxford: Refugees Studies Centre, University of Oxford. Available from: [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/working-papers-folder\\_contents/RSCworkingpaper12.pdf](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/working-papers-folder_contents/RSCworkingpaper12.pdf)
- Turton, D. (2003b) *Refugees and Other Forced Migrants*. RSC Working Paper Series No. 13 [online]. Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. Available from: [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/working-papers-folder\\_contents/RSCworkingpaper13.pdf](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/working-papers-folder_contents/RSCworkingpaper13.pdf)
- Turton, D. (2004) *The Meaning of Place in a World of Movement: Lessons from Long-Term Field Research in Southern Ethiopia*. RSC Working Paper Series No. 18 [online]. Oxford: Refugees Studies Centre, University of Oxford. Available from: [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/working-papers-folder\\_contents/RSCworkingpaper18.pdf](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/working-papers-folder_contents/RSCworkingpaper18.pdf)

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2016) Morocco. *Global Focus* [online]. Geneva: UNHCR. Available from: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/10331>
- Van Hear, N. (2004) *I Went as Far as My Money Would Take Me: Conflict, Forced Migration and Class*. COMPAS Working Paper WP-04-06 [online]. Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford. Available from: [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2004/wp-2004-006-vanhear\\_forced\\_migration\\_class/](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2004/wp-2004-006-vanhear_forced_migration_class/)
- Vertovec, S. (2006) *Diasporas Good? Diasporas Bad?* COMPAS Working Paper WP-06-41 [online]. Oxford: Centre on Migration Policy and Society, University of Oxford. Available from: [www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2006/wp-2006-041-vertovec\\_diasporas\\_good\\_bad/](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2006/wp-2006-041-vertovec_diasporas_good_bad/)
- Vigh, H. E. (2009) Motion squared: a second look at the concept of social navigation. *Anthropological Theory* 9 (4): 419–438.
- Wender, A. S. (2004) *La situation alarmante des migrants subsahariens en transit au Maroc et les conséquences des politiques de l'Union Européenne*. Paris: CIMADE.
- Wilkinson, I. (2004) *Suffering: A Sociological Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Willen, S. (2007) Toward a critical phenomenology of 'illegality', state power, criminalization and abjectivity among undocumented migrant workers in Tel Aviv. *International Migration Review* 45 (3): 8–38.
- Wimmer, A. and Glick Schiller, N. (2003) Methodological nationalism and the study of migration. *International Migration Review* 37 (3): 576–610.
- Woldegiorgis, E. and Doevenspeck, M. (2015) Current trends, challenges and prospects of student mobility in the African higher education landscape. *International Journal of Higher Education* (2): 105–115.
- Yene, F. D. (2010) *Migrant au pied du mur*. Biarritz: Segulier.
- Zontini, E. (2007) Continuity and change in transnational Italian families: the caring practices of second-generation women. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33 (7): 1103–1119.



# Index

Note: Page numbers in **bold** refer to tables and in *italics* to figures.

## A

absurdity (Camus) 13, 101–103, 105, 164  
Accompanying Measures programme *see* MEDA (Mésures d'Accompagnement)  
Adam, B. 13, 84–85, 95–96, 132, 138, 165  
Agamben, G. 36n5, 65, 79–81, 157  
Algeria  
border closure 66, 77  
deportations to 23  
migration control 55  
military persecution 68  
police persecution 50, 57–58, 68, 69  
transit and 48, 55  
Alioua, M. 110  
Alpes, M. J. 11, 14, 46, 47, 49, 58, 64n2, 69–70  
Amnesty International 82n11  
Anderson, B. 26  
Andersson, R. 28  
anglophone migrants 21n4, 110, 127n4  
anticipatory action 65  
Appadurai, A. 124  
Arendt, H. 27, 157  
Argentina 36  
asylum seekers  
and European Union migration policy 29, 31, 33, 154

and existential migration 41  
individual experiences of 47, 50–51, 97  
numbers of 82n6  
as stateless 36n2  
temporality and 70–73, 132  
in Turkey 66  
zones of exclusion and 80  
Zimbabwean 105  
authoritarianism 66, 168

## B

Bakewell, O. 8  
Bastian, M. 123, 150  
Bauman, Z. 125  
begging 68, 87, 105n3  
belonging 81, 83, 99, 119, 124  
Biehl, K. S. 65–66  
border enforcement  
externalization of 23–36  
governance and 26–27  
as humanitarian crisis 32–53  
and space 28–31  
and time 28  
Bou Regreg (river) 17  
Bourdieu, P. 130  
Branchet, J. 49, 110  
Bredeloup, S. 64n2  
bribery 50, 51–52, 74–75

**C**

Cameroon 47, 125  
 Cameroon, migration from  
   community networks 115–117,  
   121, 122, 147–148  
   documentation 49, 50  
   individual experiences of 40–42,  
   52, 54, 94, 147–148  
   Pentecostal churches 126n2  
   political reasons for 159  
   route for 48  
 camps 2, 34, 67–69, 115  
 Camus, A. 13, 103, 104–105, 164  
 Canary Islands 30  
 Carling, J. 9, 47, 106n6, 125, 157  
 Casablanca 2, 67–68, 105n2,  
   105n3, 122, 126n2, 150n4  
 Cash, J. 136, 164  
 Catholicism 18, 137  
 CETI (Centro de Estancia  
   Temporal de Inmigrantes)  
   (Centre for Migrants'  
   Temporary Stay)  
   Ceuta 151n8  
 Ceuta 2, 23, 67, 68, 145, 151n8  
 charities 88, 90, 115, 135, 151n6  
 children  
   the church and 119–120  
   education and 75, 142–145,  
   150n4, 150n6  
   and female employment 89–93  
   health in camps 68  
   and impossibility of return 98–99  
   and parents' future 100–101  
   refugees 143  
   sexual abuse of 56  
   women's attitude and 102–103,  
   142–145  
   unaccompanied 71, 106n5  
 Christianity 18, 103, 135–138  
 Chu, J. 47, 159  
 citizenship  
   human rights and 8, 11, 27, 157  
   informal networks and 59–61, 72  
   *see also non-citizenship*  
 class 17, 18, 62, 126, 130, 160  
 classification of migrants 8, 26, 29  
 CNDH (National Committee of  
   Human Rights) 81n3

Collyer, M. 62, 110  
 community networks 107–126  
   cultural activities 121–123  
   ethnicity and 112–118  
   and gender 118  
   hierarchies of power 110–118,  
   123–126  
   services 122  
 concepts and value 6–8  
 conflict zones 30, 51, 61  
 Congo, migration from  
   and Economic Community of West  
   African States (ECOWAS) 50  
   football and 121  
   individual experiences of 40–41,  
   44, 47–48, 51, 54, 59–60, 69,  
   90–92, 95, 97, 98, 100, 120,  
   139, 143, 144  
   national stereotypes 117  
   Pentecostal churches and 126n2  
 construction work 16, 86–87  
 control, loss of 52, 55–58, 111  
 corruption 51–52, 77  
   *see also bribery*  
 cost-benefit ratio 63  
 criminalization of migrants 24, 27,  
   29–31, 66, 70, 79, 163  
 critical migration theory 8, 80  
 Cwerner, S. B. 12, 104, 123, 166

**D**

Dahinden, J. 110, 123  
*Dahirs* (royal decrees) 30, 73  
 daily wage labour 86–87  
 De Genova, N. 27  
 De Haas, Hein 6, 7, 26, 28, 29, 167  
 De la Durantaye, L. 80  
 death 101–102, 104–105  
 deportation 23–24, 29–30,  
   34, 76, 77  
   individual experiences of 47, 57  
 desert crossing *see Sahara desert*  
 deterrence 29, 65  
 development approach 25, 32–36,  
   166–167  
 discrimination *see racism*  
 documentation 49, 50–51, 54, 58,  
   70, 73–76, 139  
 Drakkakis Smith, A. 156

Duklevska Schubert, V. 146  
Dwyer, P. 132–134, 142

## E

economic rights 24, 32, 33,  
36, 71, 73  
ECOWAS (Economic Community  
of West African States) 50  
education, access to 75,  
142–145, 150n6  
informal schools 150n4  
Elliot, A. 130  
employment  
female 89–93  
informal sector 20n3, 72  
male 86–89, 92  
multiple 93  
unemployment 16, 21n3,  
76, 105n3  
urban 67, 68  
visas and 73, 84  
English-speaking migrants *see*  
Anglophone migrants  
entrepreneurialism 87, 89  
Escoffier, C. 109, 110, 122  
ethnicity 111, 112–118, 162  
ethnographic approach 14–15,  
49, 110  
EU *see* European Union  
EUROMED (Euro-Mediterranean  
Partnership) 33–34  
European Agency for the  
Management of Operational  
Cooperation at the External  
Borders of the Member States  
of the European Union *see*  
FRONTEX  
European Commission 24  
European Union  
asylum seekers and 29, 31, 33, 154  
externalization of border  
control 23–36  
and Morocco 29, 33, 34, 77  
'security threat' from migrants 6  
existential movement, migration as  
10, 37–64, 157–159  
criminalization and 24  
development during  
journey 44–47

individual experiences of 40–42  
regulation and 48–55, 56–58  
waiting and 101, 104, 132, 133,  
134–138, 142, 149, 164–165

## F

Faist, T. 9  
family  
loss of future 100–101  
networks 42, 43, 47, 52–54, 70,  
76, 79, 98, 160  
reunification 71, 130  
Fassin, D. 34  
female migrants  
and children 98–99  
danger and 56  
desert crossing 56, 58  
destinations for migration 46  
employment 89–93  
groups 137  
health 68  
lack of qualifications 60  
legitimization by males 53  
motives for migration  
41–42, 43  
religious hierarchy 114  
sexual abuse 56  
*see also* gender  
feminism 13  
financial capital 24  
Fondation Orient–Occident  
78, 143  
football 49, 54, 121, 137  
Foucauldianism 25  
Foucault, M. 36n1  
francophone communication 18,  
112, 127n4  
FRONTEX (European Agency for  
the Management of Operational  
Cooperation at the External  
Borders of the Member States of  
the European Union) 29–30  
funding for migration control  
33–34, 75, 167

## G

Gabrielli, L. 32  
Gallagher, A. 163

- GAMM (Global Approach to Migration) 24, 31, 35–36  
 gender 37, 40–41, 46, 62, 86–93, 118, 163  
 Ghana, migration from  
 individual experiences of 54, 91, 93, 106n6, 112, 121, 137  
 national stereotype 117  
 ghettos 54–55, 117  
 Global Approach to Migration  
*see* GAMM  
 globalization 63, 166–168  
 Greenhouse, C. 150  
 Guinea, migration from 48, 87, 126n2
- H**
- Hage, G. 10, 38–39, 83, 109, 130, 138  
 Hammar, T. et al (1997) 9, 47  
 Hassan II, King of Morocco 78  
 health insurance 74  
 healthcare, access to 68, 73, 75, 135  
 emergency 34  
 Hibou, B. 59  
 ‘Homo Sacer’ (Agamben) 79–80, 157  
 human rights  
 and citizenship 27  
 classification and 8, 155–157  
 insecurity and 70–71  
 international aid and 148  
 migration policy and 25, 32, 34–36, 77  
 transit and 167  
 humanitarian issue, migration as 25, 28, 32–36
- I**
- identity cards 74  
 immobility, forced 8–12  
 community networks and 118, 124, 126  
 ethnographic approach 14–15  
 and European Union policies 24, 25, 28–32  
 and waiting 138  
*see also* temporality and time
- individualization 63  
 informal economic sector 18, 20n3, 72, 74, 86–87  
 informal networks 59, 60, 61  
 international aid organizations 144, 148, 150n3, 167  
 IOM (International Organisation for Migration) 67, 99, 106n9, 150n2  
 Isaiah, Book of (Old Testament) 131, 140  
 Islam 15, 68, 103  
 Ivory Coast, migration from 48, 126n2, 142
- J**
- Johnson, M. et al (2010) 110, 112  
 Johnson-Hanks, J. 37
- K**
- Kastner, K. 46, 106n6  
 Khachani, M. 2
- L**
- labour migration 26, 29, 44  
 land rights 156  
 land route 48, 55, 67  
 legal and illegal migration  
 classification of 63, 153–154, 156  
 documentation and 50–52, 139  
 and migration policy 4, 6, 11, 26–29, 31, 33, 47, 79, 157, 166  
 regulation of 56–58  
 temporality and time 70–74  
 legalization campaign 72, 73, 81n5  
 liberal models of migration 8  
 Libya 55  
 liminality 40, 85, 104–105  
 locality and place 110, 123, 124–125  
 Lubkemann, S. 9, 100, 125
- M**
- Madziva, R. 105  
 Maghreb 24  
 Mahler, S. 39, 43, 159

- male migrants  
 destinations **46**  
 employment and time 86–89, 92  
 hierarchies 56, 110–118, 123–126  
 loss of future family 100–101  
 marriage 146  
 motives for migration 42–43  
 stereotype of labour migrant 26  
*see also* gender
- Mali, migration from 48
- Marrakeh **81n1**, 87
- marriage 91–93, 130, 146
- Massey, D. 110, 150
- Mauritania 30
- Mead, G. H. 96
- meals, communal 120
- MEDA (Mésures  
 d'Accompagnement)  
 (Accompanying Measures)  
 programme **33**
- media representation of migration  
 1, 26, 111
- mediation  
 informal 52–54, 62, 115  
 legitimate and illegitimate 58  
 organizational 75, 145
- Medecins sans Frontières *see* MSF
- Melilla 2, 23, 67, 68
- mental health 97, 101–103,  
 106n10, 119, 126, 137
- Mésures d'Accompagnement  
 (Accompanying Measures)  
 programme *see* MEDA
- mkadems* (government  
 representatives) 74–75, 134
- modernity 13, 89, 150, 159
- Mohammed V, King of  
 Morocco **78**
- Mohammed VI, King of  
 Morocco 2, 16
- Morocco  
 authoritarianism 66  
 colonial era 30  
 and European Union 29, 34, 77  
 immigration legislation 30–31, 71  
 legalization campaign 72,  
 73, **81n5**  
 migration and foreign policy 66  
*mkadems* (government  
 representatives) 74–75, 134  
 number of migrants 24  
 royal family 16
- Mountz, A. 80
- MSF (Medecins sans  
 Frontières) **81n4**
- multilateral migration approach 31
- N**
- Nador **82n11**
- National Committee of Human  
 Rights *see* CNDH
- national communities 114–117
- neoclassical migration theory  
 5, 38, 62
- neoliberalism 63, 154
- network theories of migration 158
- Niger 48, 50, 51–52, 55
- Nigeria, migration from  
 ethnic groups 115  
 individual experiences of 50, 52,  
 59–60, 86, 91  
 nationality 117  
 Pentecostal church and 110,  
 112–113, 120, 126n2  
 prostitution 106n6  
 route of 48
- nomadism 156, 162
- non-citizenship 34, 36n2, 73,  
 79–80, 149, 156
- non-state actors 34, 35, 61, 76,  
 79, 167
- O**
- otherness 110
- Oujda 2, 48, 67, 77, 115, 120
- P**
- Papadopoulos, D. 45, 63
- Papadopoulos, D. et al (2008) 161
- Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, A. 131
- passports 47, 50, 57
- patron–client relationships 16, 76
- Pentecostal church communities  
 community networks  
 117–120, 122  
 importance of 18, 110, 126n2  
 individual experiences of  
 112–114, 135

- shelter and 68
  - persecution 4, 26, 42, 167
    - by military 68
    - by police 23, 29, 31, 50, 57, 67–68, 69, 73, 74, 77–79, 87, 93, 127n4
    - political 42, 43, 59, 117
  - Pessar, P. 39, 43, 159
  - Pian, A. 41, 64n2, 106n6, 110, 122
  - Pickerill, E. 87
  - police
    - bribery of 51, 52, 75
    - funding of 75, 167–168
    - persecution by 23, 29, 31, 50, 57, 67–68, 69, 73, 74, 77–79, 87, 93, 127n4
    - in Rabat 16
  - political rights 24, 32, 36
  - power
    - abuse of 74–78
    - and community networks 110–118, 123, 125–126
    - hierarchies of 14, 39, 56, 59, 74, 161, 162, 163
    - political 43
    - state 61–62, 66, 70, 74–81, 157–159, 167
    - time and 83, 84, 130, 132, 138, 141, 146, 148–150
  - privatization 61
  - prostitution 56, 60, 68, 91–92, 106n6
  - Protestantism 18
  - public transport 51–52, 55
  - push and pull models of migration 5, 7, 26–27, 158
- R**
- Rabat
    - employment 20n3, 67, 105n2, 105n3
    - geography 15–18
    - informal schools 150n4
    - migrant visibility 2
    - numbers of migrants 68
    - Pentecostal church community 112–114, 135
    - textile industry 105n2
  - racism 75, 77, 150n4
  - rape 57, 60, 69
  - rationality 5, 26
  - refugees
    - children 143
    - classification of 29
    - documentation 50
    - existential movement and 41, 44
    - individual experiences of 44, 50–51, 92, 95, 97, 139–140, 142, 145
    - international policy 31
    - lack of rights 78
    - numbers of 82n6
    - political and economic migration and 7
    - route of 48
    - statelessness 36n2
    - waiting and 70, 71, 72–73, 132
    - see also* UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees)
  - regulatory authorities
    - ethnographic approach 14–15
    - individual experiences of 74
    - and mobility 48–55, 61–62
    - state 74, 79, 154
    - trafficking and smuggling 56–59
  - religious networks 110
    - see also* Pentecostal church communities
  - remembrance, acts of 100–101
  - remittances
    - community networks and 122
    - individual experiences of 40, 53, 72, 76, 88, 92, 98
    - symbolism of 101, 125
  - residence, changes of 93
  - residency permits
    - individual experiences of 137
    - legislation and 2, 81n5, 82n7
    - restricted rights and 11, 24, 153, 156
    - waiting and 71–73
  - right to work 68–69, 73
  - rightlessness
    - and criminalization 27
    - and forced immobility 10, 11, 25, 28, 35, 78–80, 124
  - Robertson, S. 14
  - Roitman, J. 14, 49, 59, 125
  - rough sleeping 68

- routes, change of 30, 48, 58  
 rural–urban migration 16
- S**
- Sahara desert, crossing of 30, 48, 55–58, 66, 68, 77  
 the Sahel 51  
 Sale 17, 18  
 Schapendonk, J. 38, 46, 49, 62, 110, 123, 131, 138  
 schools, informal 150n5  
 Schweitzer, H. 133, 136, 149  
 Segatti, A. 24  
 self-esteem 119, 126, 138  
 Senegal, migration from 115, 122  
 sex work *see* prostitution  
 sexual abuse 56  
 situational waiting 132–133  
 smuggling networks  
   construction of 70  
   human rights and 32  
   police and 77, 162–163  
   loss of control and 52, 55–58, 111  
 social location 38–40, 43, 59–62, 140, 142, 159–160  
 social media 15  
 social obligations 98  
 social relations 32, 62, 133, 138  
   *see also* community networks  
 social rights 24, 32, 33, 36, 71, 73, 167  
 social status  
   community networks and 161–162  
   existentialism and 43  
   female 53  
   lack of control and 94  
   power and 138–142  
   waiting and 131, 138  
 space  
   existentialism and 39  
   governance and 28–32, 60–61  
   identity and 45  
   nomadism and 156  
   social relations and 123, 150  
 Spain 1–2, 29, 109, 150n2  
   individual experiences of 42, 67, 90, 91, 93, 106n5  
   state, power of 61–62, 66, 70, 74–81, 157–159, 167  
   stereotypes 26, 117  
   Strait of Gibraltar 1, 30, 67, 81n2  
   Streiff-Fénart, J. 24  
   Sudan 36  
   surveillance 65, 78, 167  
   Syria, refugees from 82n6  
   system theory 158
- T**
- Tangier 2, 67, 68, 82n11, 105n2, 115  
 temporality and time 12–15  
   and the absurd 83–105  
   community relations 123  
   externalization of borders and 28  
   feminism and 13  
   and the future 13, 37–38, 40, 84, 95–96, 99–105, 108, 132, 134, 146, 149, 164  
   and immortality 85  
   industrial time 13  
   legal and illegal migration and 70–74  
   linear constructions of time 113, 50  
   and the past 95–99  
   and punishment 65  
   social theories of time 12  
   uncertainty and 70–73  
   wasting time 85–93  
   *see also* waiting  
 Tetouan 82n11  
 textile industry 105n2  
 tourist visas 31, 47, 71, 73  
 trafficking 5–6, 26, 44, 56–58, 111, 148, 149  
*tranquilos* (half-abandoned houses) 67  
 transit migration discourse 2, 5–7, 11, 26, 84, 111, 153–158  
 transnationalism 38, 108–109, 126n1, 158, 162  
 ‘traveller-gypsies’ 156  
 Tsianos, V. 45, 63  
 Turkey 36, 66  
 Turton, D. 6–7, 9, 124–125

**U**

- uncertainty 65–81
  - community networks and 108
  - regulation and 73–76
  - waiting and 70–73, 133
- undocumented migration 2–4, 24, 68, 72, 75, 81n3, 106n8, 143–145
- unemployment 16, 21n3, 76, 105n3
- UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees)
  - assistance and 67
  - asylum claims 97
  - education and 143
  - governance and 31
  - refugee status claims and 72–73, 139–140, 151n7
- US, migration governance 65

**V**

- visas
  - employment and 73, 84
  - fees 70
  - individual experiences and 139–140

- irregular migration and 31
- marriage and 150n1
- migration control and 47, 50
- residency permits and 71

**W**

- waiting 129–150
  - and agency 130, 132–133
  - endurance and 131–134
  - existential 101, 104, 132, 133, 134–138, 142, 149, 164–165
  - and perception of time 136
  - refugees and 70, 71, 72–73, 132
  - situational 132–133
  - social status and power 138–142
  - uncertainty and 70–73, 133
- Weil, S. 149
- Western Union 76
- Willen, S. 8, 11
- work permits 2, 24, 96
- Yene, F. D. 54–55

**Z**

- zones of exception 80

**"A vibrant, in-depth and accurate account of the lived experiences of European migration control and its lasting effects on neighbouring countries."**

Federica Infantino, FNRS/Université Libre de Bruxelles

**"Drawing on ethnographic research conducted over ten years this beautifully written, must-read book enables us to rethink the fundamental tools of the study of migration, migration policy and politics."**

Bridget Anderson, University of Bristol

**"This important and insightful book unites analysis of EU externalization policies in Africa with ethnographic depth on Sub-Saharan migrants' lives in Morocco, offering fresh perspectives on 'transit' migration and involuntary immobility."**

Nauja Kleist, Danish Institute for International Studies

*Inka Stock is a researcher in the department of Sociology at Bielefeld University in Germany.*

This book is concerned with the effects of migration policy making in Europe on migrants in the Global South and challenges current migration politics to consider alternative ways of looking at the modern migratory phenomenon. Based on in-depth ethnographic research in Morocco with migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, the author considers current migration dynamics from the perspectives of migrants themselves to examine the long-term social effects of immobility experienced by migrants who get stuck in 'transit' countries. This book is an invaluable learning resource for those wishing to understand the social and political processes that migration policies lead to, particularly in countries in the Global South.

## GLOBAL MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

This series showcases ground-breaking research that looks at the nexus between migration, citizenship and social change. It advances new scholarship in migration and refugee studies and fosters cross- and interdisciplinary dialogue in this field.

### Series Editors

Nando Sigona, University of Birmingham, and Alan Gamlen, Monash University

