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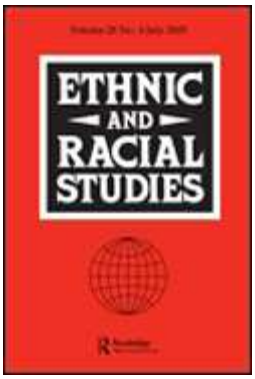

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Abstract : Most of the Moroccan migrants in France are politically voiceless, regarding their exclusion from the voting rights in both countries of settlement and of origin. As other transnational groups, these migrants have created many organizations in order to represent their interests and to express their sense of belonging. These organizations contribute to renew the French and Moroccan citizenship's models, by developing transnational political practices and collective identities. Based on qualitative data and interviews with the militants of some of these organizations, this article explores this renewal by focusing on three dimensions of this Moroccan political transnationalism, which are its long and turbulent history, the particular places in which it occurs and the transformation of state policies it implies.

Key words : citizenship, France, migrants organization, migration, Morocco, transnationalism.

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Transnationalism is a worldwide phenomenon which consists in a growing dissociation between identity process, political regulation and nation-states borders. In migration studies, transnationalism corresponds to a process in which some international migrants are building their social environment across borders, through their everyday life, socio-economic activities, regular and intense links with their homeland and other places of settlement. Moroccan migrants doubtlessly constitute a transnational group, partly because of their intense circulation between Morocco and Europe, which involves nearly two millions people every summer. Furthermore, the amount of remittance sent to Morocco reached four millions Euros in 2005 and still constitutes the first source of national income.

Even if their relationships with Morocco are mostly based on family and kinship groups, the 500,000 Moroccan migrants settled in France have created many voluntary associations, among which some are leading transnational activities. Whether they are autonomous or remotely controlled by the Moroccan state, these migrants organizations are a strong component of transnational spaces, as social networks and state institutions (Faist 2000, p. 199).

Many activities in which these transnational social spaces are embodied have already been the subjects of geographical studies, such as media (Charef 1999) and development (Lacroix 2005) networks between places of origin and places of settlement. In this paper, I shall focus on the political dimension of these spaces and, especially, on what we can call political transnationalism.

This term generally designates the political involvement of migrants in their country of origin and, reciprocally, the sending countries' governmental support or opposition in

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the political activities of migrants in the receiving countries. On this, I would argue for a broad conception, that includes other topics of interest, such as migrants' citizenship regime (legal status, voting rights, etc.) and political representation of migrants in both states by a wide range of new actors, including migrants organizations.

To understand why these two topics are central in this paper, one has to consider the double electoral exclusion of a large majority of Moroccan migrants in contemporary France. They do not enjoy the absentee voting right in Morocco and more than 70 per cent of them, who are not naturalized, do not have the right to vote in France. Almost 30 per cent of them are binationals, but not 'dual citizens', as long as the Moroccan external citizenship remains uneffective. In such a context, migrants organizations are a kind of substitute for political representation in both countries. These voluntary associations are not always perceived as representative, but they still seem to give voice to the voiceless and regularly act as spokesmen for all Moroccan migrants. This representative function could partly be explained by the history of Moroccan migration.

Morocco became a massive workforce provider in the mid-sixties, when domestic political struggles were reaching an apex. Until the eighties, emigration was similar to a safety valve which allowed to weaken political unrest. For this reason, it could be described as an 'exit' from a declining system system, in terms of personal satisfaction (Hirschman 1970). According to the first version of Hirschman theoretical framework, the easier the exit from a territory, the weaker the 'voice', the ability to protest against the system's failures inside this very territory. Migrants' political transnationalism modifies quite drastically this scenario, as exit and voice could go all together. As Faist (2000, p. 321) argued, 'transnational immigrant organizations can contribute to forge a new mix of exit and voice in nationally-bounded but ever more transnationally

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interlinked civil societies'. My PhD research, which has been led in a dozen of French cities, confirms Faist's statement by showing that migrants organizations turned to be places where Moroccan political refugees and economic migrants, for instance, could meet and share the same feelings and claims towards both states (Dumont 2007).

Meanwhile, I do not argue that Moroccan migrants are more associative than other groups. Firstly, it is clearly not the case in France. Secondly, as a literature review recently showed, it is the migration process in itself that stimulates the formation of such organizations, because it heightens ethnic, national or religious identities (Moya 2005, p. 839). However, studying Moroccan political transnationalism by looking only at Moroccan migrants organizations could allow me to think beyond the three theoretical weaknesses I identify in some works inspired by the transnational approach.

The first weakness could be boiled down to this question : what is really new about political transnationalism ? For instance, Moroccan long distance nationalism has got a long history in France, which started during the French colonization of Morocco (1912-1956). As Waldinger (2006) argued, many transnational studies do not care enough about this 'presence of the past' in today's transnationalism. That is why I propose herein a brief history of Moroccan migrants organizations in France.

The second weakness is that most studies inspired by this approach underestimate the significance of space in the constitution of various forms of transnationalism. Indeed, space is not only a material support of transnationalism, it is also deeply affected by this phenomenon. Transnationalism occurs in different geographical contexts and according to different spatialities, diasporic ones for example (Jackson and Crang and Dwyer

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2003, pp. 1-3). That is why I will specify the precise locations of the Moroccan migrants organizations and the spatial dimension of their political practices.

The last weakness of the transnational approach is related to the state : does its role vanish in the transnational spaces ? Most researchers do no think so (Koopmans and Statham 2001), as the state can use transnational networks to reach national goals, like promoting long distance nationalism among expatriates or attract migrants' remittances to develop its economy (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003), as does the Moroccan state. But to define its new role, I will not use expressions like 'transnational kingdom' (Iskander 2005) or 'deterritorialized nation-state' (Basch and Glick Schiller and Szanton-Blanc 1994), which are too ambitious, regarding the lack of empirical studies on Moroccan political transnationalism. Furthermore, my perspective here is rather to consider the political transnationalism as a 'globalization from below' (Portes 1997). That is why, in this article, I shall argue that Moroccan political transnationalism can not be understood without considering migrants as the actors of their own lives. In this way, migrants organizations can be seen as political groups, relatively or potentially autonomous from both states of origin and 'transplanted' identities. This perspective will lead me to analyse the deconstruction of the national citizenship's practices within a transnational context.

According to the comparative work of Koopmans and Statham (2001, pp. 70-3), two main elements affect the collective identities and claims of migrants' organisations in Europe : national citizenship and integration regime in the country of settlement and the sending country's policy regarding its emigrants. These two elements are analysed in the first two sections, where I examine the Moroccan migrants' integration into the French and Moroccan political systems. On the one hand, I stress the difficulties faced

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by naturalized Moroccans when they want to be recognized as French citizens by other political actors, without being suspected of double loyalty. On the other hand, I demonstrate that, until the nineties, the Moroccan state did not develop an effective policy towards its emigrants, who were and still are largely excluded from the Moroccan political system, but also discouraged to become political actors in the country of settlement.

In the last three sections, I describe some major past and present Moroccan migrants organizations as collective answers to solve these difficulties. Citizenship is not only perceived as a set of rights and duties, but also as a sense of belonging to a political community, by assuming various roles in the society : neighbour, parent, user of public services or worker are some of them. Looking at concrete practices of citizenship, embedded in places, spaces and networks allows me to identify three historical forms of Moroccan political transnationalism.

The first one emerged from the convergence, from the sixties to the eighties, of Moroccan leftism and French trade-union and gathers migrants as 'Moroccan workers (or students) in France'. The second form, emerging in the nineties at national level with a little help from both states, is related to organizations claiming to represent Moroccan migrants as muslims. Finally, the third form includes all organizations whose members express a 'French-Moroccan' identity. In the fifth section, I take one of these organizations as representative of the others' characteristics and difficulties. These three forms of organization are places where we can observe the persistent tension between the Moroccan state-sponsored long distance nationalism and the migrants' desire for autonomy.

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1. When Moroccans become French. Representing migrants as French citizens

This section means to explore the French citizenship regime' impact on Moroccan political transnationalism. French conception of citizenship has not really been changed since the beginning of the massive Moroccan migrations in the sixties. As voting rights are still limited to nationals, French governmental discourses emphasize naturalization as the only way for migrants to become (French) citizens (paragraph 11) ; but when naturalized Moroccans are (or try to be) elected as representatives, they are not perceived the same way as other French citizens (paragraph 12).

11. Naturalization and integration as preconditions for a real political representation

From 1990 to 1999, the number of Moroccans who became French has almost doubled, reaching to 133,962 individuals : it represents 25,6 per cent of all Moroccan migrants.[1] As the French naturalization does not imply the loss of Moroccan nationality, naturalized Moroccans could be French-Moroccan citizens. However, rights enjoyed by Moroccan migrants and derived from Moroccan external citizenship are not totally effective. It is obviously the case for voting rights, as I argue in the next section. This gap could provoke, inside naturalized migrants' minds, a more distant relationship towards their homeland and, consequently, a quicker assimilation to the French society and its political system.

Nevertheless, the very few number of naturalized Moroccans who are elected are often perceived by other political actors as Moroccan or Maghrebian representatives, who have to speak only for migrants and their descendants. These perceptions illustrate the maintaining of a certain 'indirect rule', which implies the use of a 'local elite', elected

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or not, to administrate the foreign-born population living in deprived urban districts. When Moroccans become French citizens, they are often suspected of double loyalty and most migrants organizations are accused of promoting 'communautarism'. These overwhelming suspicions are due to the French state's hostility to any sort of multiculturalism. Its republican rhetoric insists on universalism, shared values (especially the 'laïcité') and loyalty towards democratic principles (Wihtol de Wenden et al. 1999, pp. 70-2). This mythologized view of French republic is reproduced in debates about the integration of foreigners and, especially, about the visibility of signs of cultural difference in the public sphere (Silverman 2007).

This ideological context explains why there is no real policy to encourage minorities' political integration, which is still limited to consultative bodies, parties, trade unions and associations. But consultative bodies receive very little participation from migrants, which can be explained by their weak impact on the public decision-making process. Non naturalized Moroccans have obviously no interest in joigning a French party, for which they can not vote. French trade unions are much more opened to migrants participation, as the third section demonstrates it.

Moroccan migrants develop complex dual national strategies. Naturalization is not perceived by them as a means of political participation in France, and more often intrumentalized to facilitate mobility and circulation between France and Morocco and in the whole European space. If these strategies could reinforce suspicious perceptions about their 'Frenchness', they can not be understood without taking into account individual histories, as Belbah and Chattou (2002, pp. 42-6) have shown. A similar qualitative approach is exposed in the next paragraph, concerning two naturalized Moroccans engaged in French politics.

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12. Candidates and representatives of Moroccan origin in two cities of Western France

There is a very small number of representatives of Moroccan origin in France at the local level (and almost none at the national level), due to the fear and conservatism of mainstream political parties. Here, I will argue that entering the political arena directly and individually (as in the second example) is easier for naturalized Moroccans than moving from the associative field to the political arena, with the support of some existing migrants organizations (as in the first example). However, both strategies are not totally satisfying in terms of representation of migrants' concerns. As a comparison of four European cities has shown, 'the political mobilisation of Moroccans in the four cities has had a very weak impact on the course of local policies. (…) The success of Moroccan politicians has been quite limited' (Bousetta 2001, pp. 354-5).

In Angers (220,000 inhabitants) a new political group called 'Citoyenneté pour tous' (Citizenship for all) was launched in 2001, partly by local members of the AMF (Association for the Moroccans living in France), which is the oldest Moroccan organisation in Europe (see third section). At the 2001 municipal elections, the candidates from Citoyenneté pour tous gathered only 4,7 per cent of votes. But at the 2002 national elections, their rates raised to 10 per cent in some constituencies. Mohamed, who had supported these candidates, explained to me his choice :

'Moroccans settled in France are maintaining their culture, but they are French and it is the French citizenship that must come first, in my view ! (…) As Moroccans, we do not have the right to vote at the Moroccan elections. So what is the use of being Moroccan ? It does not interest me. (…) I do not want to have the right to vote in Morocco. But I do

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want my father, who has lived in France since 40 years, to enjoy the right to vote here, not there. I must say, I want to vote where I am living, where my parents are living, where my children are living ! I want to participate in political changes in the country where I am living ! If need be, I will go to Morocco on holidays, as a tourist, but not as a traditional Moroccan.'[2]

In Saint-Nazaire (130,000 inhabitants), Mehdi, who arrived in France in 1981 when he was 8 years-old, decided in 1999 to join the communist party. He explained it by the limited impact migrants organizations have on local policy. He did not want to become an 'ethnic mediator devoted to guarantee social peace cheaply in deprived districts'[3] and, for him, 'mint tea and couscous conferences about multiculturalism are too restricted activities and really constitute an alibi for French political parties and representatives.' After being elected as a municipal councillor in 2001, he faced some conflicts with the mayor, notably about muslim faith and migrants' integration. On the one hand, he says that it is difficult not to be seen as a muslim or a Maghrebian representative. On the other hand, muslim faith and integration are topics about which he feels competent enough to be listened to. Mehdi's sense of belonging is rather complex :

'It took me time to accept myself as a French person, but I feel French. What I mean is that I am feeling French with an arabic-islamic culture. I am not a chauvinistic Moroccan, I rather feel like I belong to a culture, an arabic-islamic culture. That is a part of me. I have the double nationality but you may know that people never loose their Moroccan nationality. We could have 36 000 nationalities, we will still be Moroccans. When we go back to Morocco, we put our French identity card away and it is no use to

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show our French passport. In Morocco, we are Moroccans, in spite of French nationality.'

To conclude, I can argue that the French political system offers little possibilities for Moroccan migrants to express their complex sense of belonging and their interests as inhabitants or as French citizens (for naturalized Moroccans). The question remaining is whether these politically voiceless migrants are better heard or not by the Moroccan state.

2. Beyond borders, still Moroccan ? Representing migrants as Moroccan citizens.

Until recently, the Moroccan state was restraining integration and naturalization of its expatriates in France, without having a real policy for them (paragraph 21). Moroccan political parties did not engage a real campaign to change this situation, but some migrants organizations developed transnational strategies to enter the Moroccan political system (paragraph 22).

21. An extra-territorial conception of nationhood without an effective external citizenship

Legally, Moroccan migrants' allegiance is firstly based on their preserving of Moroccan nationality and its transmission to their foreign-born children, all the more so since, according to legal experts, the loss of the nationality is not allowed by Moroccan laws. Secondly, since 1999, King Mohammed VI has kept on emphasizing migrants' place in the national community. Like his father, King Hassan II, he defends an extra-territorial conception of the national allegiance based on religion, as the Alaouite dynasty is

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considered to be directly descending ('sherif') from the prophet Mohammed. Until 1986, naturalization was rejected by the King. During the first 'headscarf affair' in October 1989, Hassan II gave a speech on French television, speaking favourably of quiet ways to be Muslim in France. Thirdly, since 1973, the Moroccan state created many remote-controlled organizations in Europe, called the Friendship societies, to maintain migrants' allegiance to the King and to counter-balance Moroccan leftist activism in host countries. This policy is analysed in the third section.

This extra-territorial conception of nationhood is not counterbalanced by an effective external citizenship, including the right to vote and to be eligible at Moroccan elections. This key citizenship right question has come into force for a period of eight years at the national level (1984-1992), when migrants elected five deputies at the national parliament, including two for France (Paris, Lyon). This experience has been strongly criticized in Morocco, mainly because three of these deputies changed their party's affiliation. But other difficulties occurred. For instance, these deputies had less contacts with migrants themselves. With the launching of a Ministry of overseas Moroccan community in 1990[4], such deputies seemed to have become useless, as this ministry was supposed to represent migrants' concerns (Belguendouz 2003, pp. 45-59).

Another specific institution has been created in 1990 to include migrants in domestic policies : the Hassan II Foundation, whose main goal is to strengthen migrants ties with their homeland. For that purpose, this Foundation exports hundred of Moroccan teachers in France in order to provide an Arabic teaching and some civic and cultural knowledges about Morocco for voluntary pupils. But the only migrants who are represented in the Hassan II Foundation are coming from the Friendship societies.

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Concerning the Ministry of overseas Moroccans, it has done little in favour of real migrants' representation, because of its dependency on the foreign affairs Ministry, its nonexistence in settlement countries and its lack of financial and human resources. In this respect, the numerous recommendations of the National workshop on migration held on 26-27 July 2006 in Rabat (Morocco) seem largely unrealistic.

The actual minister Nouzha Chekrouni has made symbolic actions, like the launching of a yearly national migrants' day (on 10 August), which has been less successfull than all the numerous local migrants' days celebrated each summer in high migration rate villages (Dumont 2005, p. 101). Nouzha Chekrouni has also participated, on 10 June 2003, in the first online dialogue ever realized by a minister with Moroccan migrants on Yabiladi.com, a website created in France by a young Moroccan. There, Mrs Chekrouni said : 'I confirm the legitimacy of political participation of Moroccan citizens settled abroad. (…) You are all invited to contribute to this effort of community internal organization, in order to have an institutional discussion partner.'[5] By saying that, she answered to a large mobilization of migrants organizations.

22. Absentee voting rights and Moroccan political parties in France

In the late nineties, many migrants organizations brought the absentee's vote as a major problem in the maintaining of their homeland attachement. These organizations were mainly composed of elite migrants. For instance, the one which wrote an open letter to the King, then made an appeal to the Supreme Court in 2002 (rejected on 31 July 2003), was a Moroccan associative network led by a doctor.

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Before the first Moroccan democratic elections in 1997, no migrants organizations would have claimed for that kind of right, knowing its poor effectiveness. Furthermore, there is often a strong opposition in sending countries against absentee's voting rights, especially among domestic political parties, 'who think that they may not have any support base among overseas voters' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, p. 214). Finally, the King announced on 6 November 2005 that migrants will recover the right to vote to national elections in a near future. But on 16 June 2006, the Ministry of interior declared that this reform was delayed, due to technical difficulties and despite some protests from migrants organizations. When elections took place in september 2007, while postal voting or voting in embassies were totally impossible, Moroccan migrants had to return home to vote in a constituency where a relative lives or where his home or his entreprise is located.

In this context, few Moroccan parties have included migrants' concerns in their programs or have tried to gain their support for electoral campaigns, because they do not benefit directly from doing a such thing, as opposed to Algerian political parties for example. Few exceptions have been noticed. For instance, on 28 May 2005, a USFP (Socialist Union of Popular Forces) meeting was organized in Bagnolet, a parisian suburb, focusing on 'migration and democracy', which gathered modestly about fifty people. Another left-wing party, the PPS (Socialism and Progress Party), has held a conference in Paris on 19 June 2004 about the new Moroccan family law. Then, in 2006, major PPS officials have travelled across France to meet migrants organizations. Lastly, in 2004, the Istiqlal (Independence) has introduced a bill, which failed, in the Moroccan parliament to create a consultative council for Moroccan migrants, whose members would be partly elected by migrants. The royal discourse on 6 November 2005 took this idea up. This bill was followed by an internal committee, in order to 'preserve

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the national identity of millions of Moroccans anxious to remain Moroccan forever, without space or time break.'[6]

In recent years, some migrants organizations settled in Europe, partly composed of ancient exiles, have established new lobbying networks to protest against this political exclusion. About thirty organizations from Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands and Spain gathered in Paris on 5 January 2006, creating the Al Monadara network. Their goal was to open a national debate in Morocco about the 'diaspora'. Their initiative echoes recommendations made by the Equity and Reconciliation Authority in 2005. Finally, participants of the Al Monadara meeting, held in Rabat on 13 December 2006, insist on the necessity for the Moroccan state to integrate migrants organizations into policy-making and ask Moroccan media to promote a better image of the 'diaspora'.

As a conclusion, Moroccan migrants organizations have developed transnational strategies in order to participate in consultative bodies launched by the Moroccan state, but also to protest against their exclusion from the Moroccan political system. These strategies are not new, but result from a history of struggles which began in the sixties.

3. Representing Moroccan migrants as temporary workers or students in France

Until the early eighties, most Moroccan migrants were concerned with homeland politics and were quite dynamic in French trade-union activism (Withol de Wenden et al. 1999, p. 59). They were represented as temporary workers or, on a lower level, as students, both by autonomous (paragraphs 31, 32 and 34) and remote-controlled organizations (paragraph 33). This class identity mobilizing in France echoed political struggles in Morocco.

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31. Nation-building process and the Association of Moroccans living in France (1956-1973)

After the independence in 1956, the Moroccan nation-building process was struggling with violent debates : while King Mohammed V and King Hassan II (1961) wanted to establish a constitutional monarchy based on religious legitimacy, the UNFP, a left-wing party launched in 1959, argued for a parliamentary monarchy based on democratic norms and practices. In 1965, King Hassan II decided to suspend the 1962 constitution : from that moment began a strong repression. According to Faist revisiting Hirschmann's framework, the less opposition is tolerated in a country, the more it is likely to unfold within its migrants. That is what happened for Moroccans in France, since the creation, in November 1960, of the AMF by UNFP leaders in exile in Paris. At this time, all Moroccan migrants perceived themselves as temporary. The AMF deeply agreed with this feeling, pointing to the fact that Moroccan migrants were a true part of the Moroccan people.

In the seventies, the AMF gained new positions in north-western parisian suburbs, where many Moroccan have settled since, by founding seven new local associations (Gennevilliers, Argenteuil, Saint-Denis, Bondy, then Nanterre, Sartrouville, Flins). This spatial expanding corresponded to new political opportunities, as French leftism grew bigger and became a potential support for the AMF. But it could also be explained by ideology : the AMF's marxism needed to be grass rooted and local sections had to be close, geographically speaking, to suburbs and factories where most of the Moroccan workers were employed. This expanding announced major changes in the AMF activities, from homeland politics to immigrant issues. In fact, after a series of car

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industry strikes in 1971-1972, AMF gained its autonomy from the Moroccan left and became a migrant workers organisation.

32. Political repression and the Moroccan students national union (1973-1981)

Founded in 1957 in Morocco, the UNEM (Moroccan Students National Union) broke up both with the monarchy in 1961. In 1969, the UNEM embodied the 'Moroccan marxism-leninism' (Rollinde 2002, p. 146) and, after the 1973 congress, radical trends seized the leadership. Repression became stronger and the UNEM was forbidden within few days. Its national leader, Abdelaziz Menehbi, flew to Paris, as many other UNEM militants, to escape repression.

Then, many local associations linked to UNEM appeared in a dozen of French cities with universities (Bordeaux, Grenoble, Toulouse, etc.). This organization was quite powerful until 1981, when it became legal again in Morocco and, consequently, vanished in France. In the seventies, the UNEM counted as many members and representatives as its French counterpart, the UNEF (Geisser 1997, p. 102). The growing number of Moroccan students in France, who reached 18,437 individuals in 1982, could partly explained this success, which is also due to a favourable ideological context for marxist-leninist organizations claiming for revolutionary changes in countries of origin.

33. Remote control and the Friendship societies of Moroccan workers and merchants (1973-1993)

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In order to stop the AMF and the UNEM from growing in France, the Friendships societies of Moroccan workers and merchants were launched in 1973 in Belgium, France and the Netherlands. Officially devised for providing cultural activities, these Friendships quickly evolved towards political control of migrants. They were remote-controlled organizations, very closed to consulates, tolerated by receiving states and located in the major areas of migrants settlement. In the French case, they could be found in the western parisian suburbs (Argenteuil, Bezons, Gennevilliers, etc.) and, sometimes, within car industry factories, like Renault in Boulogne-Billancourt, within which AMF militants were also already active. They were gathering migrants mostly via cultural events and administrative benefits. For instance, being a Friendship's member allowed to get a new passport quicker. Nevertheless, their main goal was to animate networks of informers in mosques and factories, who could then provoke arrests or violence against politically active migrants.

A specific French factor needs to be reminded : it is the constant co-operation between Moroccan and French governments, as far as political control of migrants is concerned. Until 1981, French laws were very restrictive for migrants organizations, which have to be authorized by the Ministry of interior. In 1977 for instance, the AMF president was given notice by the police about the fact that he 'must observe a complete political neutrality and should not pursue any activity which would not fit with the objectives written in its official status'.[7]

In car factories, Friendships members inclined Moroccan workers to become members of the local union, controlled by factories' managers. When a Moroccan entered into an autonomous union, like the CGT (General Labour Confederation), it was interpreted by Friendships as a serious lack of allegience to the Moroccan King. Insults, threats upon

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their relatives in Morocco and sometimes violence were used against these workers.

Much data is available on that period but very few studies have been published on these Moroccan Friendships in the EU (Bousetta 2001, pp. 276-81). Collecting and analysing these data is a central issue for current transnational studies, as the underlying questions are quite similar today in other cases. The Friendships collapsed in the mid-nineties, due to scandals, internal tensions and the new Moroccan state's policy towards it expatriates. It confirms that, in a long-term perspective, 'sending states have few means to counter exile dissidence' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, p. 19).

But the sending state's political control on migrants could be undirect, more diffuse. As a matter of fact, during that period (1973-1993), long-distance nationalism was shared by many Moroccan migrants ; not only inside Friendhips but also among AMF's members. Things went pretty far after 1975, when Hassan II launched the 'Green Walk', which was a procession of thousands of civilians through the Western Sahara, after Spain colonists left it. The Green Walk provoked a major split inside the Moroccan left and the AMF. It gave birth to a new trend, opposed to it and willing to be autonomous from Moroccan domestic stakes. In 1981, this trend was established as an organization, the ATMF (Association of Moroccan Workers of France).

34. The Association of Moroccan Workers of France (1981-2000)

Firstly based around Paris in Argenteuil, Gennevilliers, Boulogne-Billancourt and Mantes-la-Jolie, the ATMF offices turned out to be places where exiles and migrant workers could meet. These two types of migrants shared common features, such as under-waged situation, housing problems or xenophobia. In 1979-1980, the core activity

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of the ATMF was to organize a duty office in Gennevilliers, where Moroccan workers came to solve their problems. Abdel was a militant in charge of this office :

'There were many students, exiles and workers. Each brought a little something. The student brought laws, he explained them to the others ; the exiles had political insight ; the worker brought his friends along, friends who had problems. And it started like that.'[8]

In 1981, the ATMF started to be very active inside some factories, by encouraging Moroccan workers to join the French democratic trade unions. The main new activity was to gather Moroccan migrants as workers and as Moroccans. Practically speaking, these goals were reached by an active involvement of the militants in strikes and demonstrations. Main factories affected by these strikes were Renault in Boulogne Billancourt, Citroën in Aulnay, Chausson in Gennevilliers and Talbot in Poissy, where violent confrontations with riot police took place.

During these strikes, specific claims were sustained, such as equal wages between foreigners and French workers, the right to return free in Morocco for holidays or the right to have a prayer room inside factories. This last claim was put aside by the socialist French Prime Minister, who denounced 'manipulation of migrants by groups and movements which have nothing to do with the French reality.' On the contrary, the ATMF encouraged Moroccans to join French unions and become assimilated within the host society, even if the idea of returning home was still in most migrants' minds.

To conclude on these autonomous organizations and their will to represent all Moroccan migrants, I would like to stress a paradox. On the one hand, they claimed to represent

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migrants as Moroccan temporary workers. On the other hand, their relationship with French trade unions became stronger than those existing with Moroccan parties, conducting them to represent Moroccans as permanent workers or even, in the nineties, as 'transnational citizens' (see the fifth section).

From the late eighties to the mid-nineties, both leftist federations (AMF and ATMF) had started to lose their weight and, consequently, any capability to gather more Moroccan migrants.[9] Simultaneously, other basis for mobilization appeared, like development of places of origin (Lacroix 2005) or muslim worship, which became more visible in the French public sphere.

4. Representing Moroccan migrants as Muslims

'If both sending and receiving country share an interest in retaining migrants' ties to their homelands, the activities of sending-country organizations in the country of settlement may be institutionally sponsored by both' (Koopmans and Statham 2001, p. 72). The case of the French Islam confirms that statement : the Moroccan state controls a national muslim organization and some local mosques (paragraph 41), while the French state creates a national council in which Algerian and Moroccan states confront (paragraph 42).

41. The National Federation of Muslims of France (1985)

Moroccan migrants are estimated to be some of the most practising muslims in France and, according to the French Ministry of Interior, 40 % of imams practising in French mosques had the Moroccan nationality in 2000. Islam remains central in the national

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identity of Morocco, as the official religion and because of the religious status of the King. This 'combining of faith, nation and political sovereignty into a same person' (Zeghal 2005, p. 9) was transposed in France through the Friendship societies and, now, through the FNMF (National Federation of Muslims of France).

In 1985, this federation was only partly composed of Moroccans, who were members of Frienship societies and of the Moroccan mosque of Evry. At this time, the FNMF was a vague project launched by individuals, who were contesting the legitimacy of the biggest Islamic organization, the Paris Grande Mosquée, controlled by the Algerian state. Quite inactive until 1993, the FNMF was then affected by a major change, as its director, a French convert, was taken over by a Moroccan, Mohamed Bechari, an ancient Moroccan state officer. He had the support of the Moroccan leaders of the parisian office of the World Islamic League and from the Moroccan state, who tried to find, at that time, a way to replace the discredited Friendship societies.

Today, observers consider that the FNMF is gathering about 500 local mosques and its director admits the financial support of the Moroccan State. However, many Moroccan muslims are organized outside the FNMF, for instance within the UOIF (Union of Islamic Organizations in France), whose directorship was also taken over by Moroccans in 1995. Opposed to the FNMF, the UOIF does not promote a malekite ritual and develops more transnational ties with islamic organizations than bilateral ties with countries of origin like Morocco. But numerous local associations, based on a muslim and urban sense of belonging, seem to be much more autonomous than the UOIF, whose financial links with Saudi Arabia are quite strong.

42. The French Council of Muslim Faith (2003)

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The CFCM (French Council of Muslim Faith) results from long talks started in the early nineties about the way of organizing a national council which would be representative of all muslims in France, in order to organize imams' training, halal meat market or chaplaincy in jails. This project emerged in a context of the return of a dogmatic discourse on 'laïcité' and secularism, as new restrictions on the Islamic headscarf have recently shown it (Thomas 2006).

In 2003, about fifty regional councillors were elected by members of local mosques, but main leaders of the CFCM were nevertheless appointed by the French government. During these elections, political influence of the states of origin became quite official : while Algeria acted through the GMP (Paris Grande Mosque), Morocco used the FNMF and consulates to control voters and councillors. Some remote-controlled mosques could be carefully compared to the Friendships societies in the seventies and eighties, as both states' surveillance is no longer exerced on leftists, but on islamists.

In June 2005, the FNMF won the second CFCM's elections (eighteen seats), against the UOIF (sixteen seats) and the GMP (five seats). Internal conflicts between these three organizations are still on their highest climax in 2007. For instance, on April 2006, both FNMF and GMP announce that they suspended their presence in the CFCM, in order to protest against UOIF. One year before, on 18 June 2005, when two leaders of the FNMF took part in a demonstration in Paris, asking for freedom for Moroccan prisoners in Tindouf (an Algerian town in Western Sahara), Abdallah Zekri (GMP) announced 'a war between Moroccans and Algerians' in the CFCM, while Khallil Meroun (FNMF) replied : 'being a member of the CFCM does not mean that I give up my citizenship.' Was he thinking about his French citizenship and his Moroccan one ?

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In conclusion, I want to stress two ambiguities of the CFCM, as far as Moroccan migrants' citizenship is concerned. Firstly, being muslim seems to be the only way for them to be represented inside the French public sphere. It counter-balances the French republican rhetoric, as ethnicity is undirectly promoted by the French state inside the CFCM. Secondly, homeland and international conflicts are imported in the French public sphere by actors who are normally dedicated to represent migrants' concerns and not diplomatic views. So the transnationalism of the FNMF and the CFCM seems to reinforce national belongings of migrants, confirming my introductive remark about the maintaining of nation-state's role in transnational spaces.

5. Representing Moroccan migrants as transnational or 'French-Moroccan' citizens. The National Council of Moroccans in France (2003)

As the declining leftist organizations could no longer claim to represent all Moroccans migrants, this goal is taken up again by other actors, notably the CNMF (National Council of Moroccans in France), which is grounded on election and a new conception of citizenship, a 'French-Moroccan' one, that could be called transnational. The idea came up in 2002 from Friends of Morocco, a cultural association in Versailles, and its charismatic leader, Abdelkader Temsamani. This fifty-year-old Moroccan, a well-known figure at city level, was getting angry with organizations and individuals pretending to represent Moroccan migrants without having been appointed by them. For him, representation should be grounded on democratic elections within Moroccan migrants. As a member of the CNMF said :

'What we want is to spread the culture of elections inside people's mind. We do not

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want to promote division. We want to say to Moroccans in France : you do exist. For that, there is no other means than elections.'[10]

The other objective was to express migrants claimings about migratory circulation and socio-economic difficulties. In 2003, around 350 Moroccan migrants organizations were contacted across France by Friends of Morocco and dozens of them, including AMF and ATMF, took part in preparatory meetings. Finally, only fifty local associations were integrated to the project in 2004. Meanwhile, the AMF, the ATMF and others decided to quit the process, because of a lack of political discourse against the Moroccan state and some suspicions on individual strategies. The lack of resources, internal tensions and legitimacy conflicts have weakened the CNMF-to-be. Although the CNMF echoed Nouzha Chekrouni's invitation to migrants to organize themselves (see paragraph 21), the Moroccan state refused to publish information on forthcoming elections in embassies, consulates and airports. Furthermore, very few medias have spread the information.

Elections took place on 21 November 2004 in 18 polling stations, mostly located in associations' offices. Anyone who could prove its Moroccan nationality could vote for candidates selected by a national committee. Only 2,500 Moroccans voted that day, electing nearly seventy-five representatives at local level, mostly in the Parisian area, Normandy and southern France. Despite this disappointing turnout, a meeting was held in Paris on 18 December 2004, to create a national executive board. There, regions where no elections had been organized were represented by voluntary individuals or not represented at all. Then, some representatives decided to quit the CNMF. The central issue was the lack of confidence among participants and the prominent role of few individuals. People who had been active since 2003 said they were entitled to be

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representatives without having to be elected. The new president, who was elected with more than 80 per cent of voices, insisted on the autonomy of the CNMF, but admitted a 'partnership with the Moroccan embassy'.

In fact, the CNMF is not a new Friendship society. It tries to promote a transnational citizenship and its claims are oriented towards both states. For instance, about ten spokespersons of the future CNMF made a trip to Morocco on October 2004, to meet Moroccan officials and a King's councillor. But conversely, in the same month, some of them attended the reception organized by the French Prime Minister for the Ramadan. In other words, CNMF members seem to be politically active on both French and Moroccan public spheres. It became a sort of diasporic lobby rather than a voluntary association, as migrants' participation is still at a low level. Furthermore, the fact that some members of the CNMF, including its president, are also members of local mosques, sometimes controlled by the FNMF, has made its transnational identity closer to a Moroccan muslim identity than to a French-Moroccan one, despite its logo, which represents both French and Moroccan flags inside the French territory.

Conclusion

Moroccan political transnationalism is not a new phenomenon in France, as some Moroccan migrants began to transnationally organize themselves in the early sixties. Particular places have embodied this political transnationalism since that time. Factories, mosques, shops, consulates, universities and deprived urban districts are some of these places, not necessary located where Moroccan migrants are concentrated. Moroccan militants meet other people, migrants or not, who could participate in their transnational activities. The transnational nature of these places make it clear that not all

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migrants are transnational and, reciprocally, 'increasing numbers of people participate in transnational space, irrespective of their own migrant histories or 'ethnic' identities' (Jackson and Crang and Dwyer 2003, p. 2).

I showed here that different identities have been claimed by migrants organizations, based on national, class or religious belongings, but none of them has managed to politically represent Moroccan migrants in the public sphere. Furthermore, migrants organizations did not manage to express, in a long term perspective, a diasporic or French-Maroccan identity, which is yet felt by many Moroccan migrants. Instead, they have tried to integrate the national political systems, by renewing national citizenship regimes. In this way, the Moroccan case confirms that political transnationalism 'is not a sign of resistance against the receiving nation-states' efforts at integration and assimilation, but something that confronts those nation-states who themselves resist making migrants into citizens' (Koopmans and Statham 2001, pp. 94-95). Considering the democratic process engaged in Morocco, one could wonder about the decline or the strengthening of this political transnationalism in a near future.

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Notes

[1] INSEE, General Population Census, 1999.

[2] Interview realized on 5 April 2004.

[3] Interview realized on 3 May 2004.

[4] This Ministry disappeared in 1997 and reappeared at the end of 2003.

[5] Personal translation.

[6] Extract from a meeting's report on 27 October 2004.

[7] Police report on 6 April 1977, Judicial Police Office, Parisian Police Headquarters.

[8] Interview realized on 24 February 2004.

[9] This evolution has been translated by a new name for the ATMF since 2000, within the letter M means Maghrebian.

[10] Interview realized on 8 November 2004.

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