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(Picture: Taken from the Northern Moroccan city, Tangier. The continent of Europe is just around 15 km away across the sea.)

Title:

**Young Moroccan People's Motivation to Migrate to Europe for the future
Achievement**

~Based on the Qualitative Research Conducted in July & August, 2016~

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Abstract

In this paper, I would like to present some small stories of Moroccan young people who aspire to go to Europe (and abroad in general) for their future achievement. I attempt to look into the basic reasons that these young Moroccans aspire to go to Europe and their perceptions on the immigrant integration issues of both mass level and personal level across the Europe. Does it affect their motivation to leave Morocco and go to Europe? This research is based on the interviews conducted during July and August in 2016.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The Historical Review of Moroccan Emigration	7
3. In Morocco – Method of the Research	13
4. ‘Why do you want to go to Europe?’	18
5. ‘What do you think of “the image” of the Moroccans in Europe?’	32
6. ‘Does it affect your aspiration to go there?’	36
7. Conclusion	42
Bibliography	44

1. Introduction

In the Hague, the Netherlands: My initial interest for this research started when I moved to Den Hague, the Netherlands in the summer, 2015. A short while after settling down in the city, I noticed that many ‘Moroccans’ living in the country, and other parts of Europe. In the beginning of my stay in Europe, personally, I felt very glad about this since I spent a year of my undergraduate years in Morocco, and had a very good impression about the country. In certain districts of Den Hague, I could find many stores named after the name of Moroccan cities and even people walking with the typical Moroccan clothe *Djellaba*. I used to go to the butcher owned by a Moroccan family selling the Halal meat. Later, I found out that one of the people there has been in the Netherlands for more than 20 years. I started to converse with them in my poor *Darija* (Moroccan dialect Arabic), and I was happy to see them being happy to see me trying to communicate in *Darija*. After a several shopping and conversation at the store, he offered me a scope of olives for free, which reminded me of the very warm Moroccan way of the kindness. So this was one of my first encounters with Moroccans living in Europe. After a few months living in Den Hague, it did not take me long to discover the on-going debates on the immigrant integration issues, especially including the Moroccan communities, in the Netherlands, and over the Europe.

According to De Haas (2014), the large emigration of the Moroccans to Europe started in 1960s as the result of the *guest labour agreement* between Morocco and the main receiving countries such as France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Belgium. These countries stopped inviting the Moroccan labours in 1970s due to the shrinking demand for the unskilled labours in their economy. In stead, the Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain became the major receiving countries in the late 1980s to 1990s. In the beginning of the guest labour immigration, the number of Moroccans living in the Western European countries was approximately 137,000 (De Haas, 2014). Although the guest labour programs ended, the flows of Moroccans to Europe continued through the family reunification, and after about a half

century, the number of Moroccan descendants living in Europe increased up to 3,094,000 in 2012 due to the continuation of the migration. The World Bank data (2015) shows that the total population of Morocco is around 34 million today, and this means that roughly 10% of the total population of Morocco is living in Western and Southern Europe. In these countries, it is not too difficult to find a neighbourhood inhabited by Moroccans, and some local ethnic stores in their communities.

Ennaji (2014) researched on the Muslim Moroccan communities in Europe and wrote that these groups are more complex by the factors such as their duration of stay, their socioeconomic status, and their qualification and immigration background. Probably, their individual experiences in the host society also differ depend on the generation of the Moroccans, their connection to other people, accessibility to educations and occupations as well. Thus, it seems that the situation of Moroccan community differs in each receiving countries, each family and each individual person. However, many scholars have revealed the 'integration' issues of the Moroccan communities across the main European receiving countries. For instances, a number of scholars have emphasized the socio-economic disadvantages and the absence of belongingness that some of the Moroccan communities face in Europe (Ennaji, 2014; Silliee, 2010; Kunonen, 2005; Gracia et al, 2015; Crul et al, 2003; Abboud, 2009). In the majority of Academic researches, the Moroccan populations are often associated with problems such as the low educational and occupational achievement, the criminal rate, and the other issues of integration.

Hamid (2015:1) said that this population in the Western and Southern European host societies tends to be identified as the 'ethnic minority' or 'others' according to their ethnicity and county of origin (of their parents) no matter if they are borne and brought up in the host society. Although many members of the host society accept the population, yet some members of the native population also refused to accept them or even openly discriminated against them (Entzinger, 2007:4). Especially, the responses to the integration issues became more intense with the current terrorist

attacks happened in Europe. The media reports on the incidences have made the negative perceptions toward Muslim (including Moroccan) communities in Europe more severe. Since then and before, there have been controversial reports for Muslims on the media and by the some political leaders such as the debates emerged from the ban on *brukini* once in France (Kobayashi, 2016). At the same time, not much of their successes are highlighted in both academic literatures and medias despite of the hardship the Moroccans in Europe may have been through. One of the interviewee once expressed “*When Moroccans are involved in a bad incidents, s/he is emphasized as ‘a Moroccan origin French (e.g.).’ While when they achieve something good, they are referred as ‘a French.’ It’s always like that.*”¹ Such reports have been influencing on the public perceptions toward Muslim communities in Europe. Ennaji (2014) said that Moroccans in Europe in general, including members who are citizens of the host societies, who are (il)legal migrants for temporary, have been the focus of the unprecedented attention in Europe.

Apart from the discourses and debates on the academic and political level, or the media level, individual perception toward Moroccan community is an important factor that I paid attention in my research. After living a few months in the Netherlands, I started to witness the personal-level of the negative perception that some of the ‘native’ local Dutch/European people tend to have toward Moroccan (or Moroccan origin) residences in Europe. One day, I was talking to a man from my school and he gave me an example of how Moroccan men are attached to an ‘image’ of gangs, aggressiveness, violence and so on in general in the society. On the other day, during an informal chat, another Dutch person told me *‘I would feel scared if I see a group of Moroccan men gathering on the street at night.’* While I was doing field research in Morocco as well, I met a number of travelers and students from Europe; France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands and so on. Some of them have told me a sort of a negative ‘image’ that the people in the host society tend to have toward Moroccan communities in Europe. Although I have to admit here that it is naïve to generalize a few individual’s

¹ An interview with a female, 20-25 years old, senior student, planning to go abroad for MA after working a while in Morocco

perception to all the public opinions; however, such an unwelcoming atmosphere of the host society toward Muslim community can be an anxiety for Moroccan immigrants living there and hoping to go there.

Thus, to me it looked that the Moroccans in Europe have been perceived in somehow a negative way in the host society. However, back in Morocco, many Moroccan young people living there tend to aspire to go to Europe for their better opportunities in the future. Similar to what De Haas (2007:32-34) stated, '*for many young people in Morocco, the question is not so much whether to migrate, as when and how to migrate,*' I met a lot of young students aspiring their dream in Europe and abroad 3 years ago and this year during my field work as well. Capello (2012) also explained this preference of young Moroccans in subaltern classes in a district in Casablanca, saying '*Migration is part of everyday life and the decision to leave was socially approved and rooted in the local system of meaning* (2012:1).' Despite of the negative 'image' that people in the host society tends to have toward 'Moroccans,' Europe is romanticized and the most possible destination where the young Moroccans in Morocco tend to project their 'better future.' Yet, the reputation and space for the immigrants are becoming strict for Moroccans in Europe.

Then, I began to wonder if the situation around the migrant community in the host society affects the aspiration of those who want to migrate to Europe. Are the young Moroccans who aspire to go to Europe aware or afraid of the integration issues? Does it affect their motivation? Thus, this research aimed to know better how the young Moroccans in Morocco perceive the migrant issue in Europe, and how it affects their aspiration to migrate to Europe. Therefore, the questions I attempt to answer in this essay are:

- *First of all, what are the basic reasons that drive the young Moroccan people to aspire to go to Europe?*
- *Then, what do these young Moroccans say about the negative 'image' of the Moroccans living in Europe?*
- *Does it affect the young people's motivation to go to Europe?*

To begin with this research, I would like to present a brief historical review of the Moroccan emigration to Europe.

2. The History of Emigration from Morocco to Europe

In this section, I would like to share the original background of the Moroccan immigrants in Europe, based on the literatures review on the Moroccan emigration (De haas 2005;2007;2012, Bilgili et al 2009, Collyer et al 2009).

To understand the earlier emigration of Moroccans to Europe, Castle (et al, 2014) explained historical-structural theory of migration. It can be applied to describe the larger scale recruitments caused by such as colonialism, wars and international inequalities. It emphasizes the role of structure such as state, multinational corporations, and employment agencies as the key drivers of migration. The beginning of emigration of Moroccans to Europe has a root in the similar structure. I will briefly review the historical move of Moroccans between Morocco and Europe.

The early migration: was already seen in 1830s when France started to colonize Algeria. At that time, many Moroccans were recruited to the costal cities and farms in Algeria to serve for French colonial administration, which demanded a number of seasonal migrant labors for 'reconstructing' Algeria (Bilgili and Weyel, 2009:13). In the 1930s, around 85,000 Moroccan labors were estimated to have migrated to Algeria per year (De Haas, 2005)

From the colonial era of 1912, the French- Spanish protectorate was established in Morocco. French occupied the most central part of Morocco and Spanish gained control over the southern Western Sahara and the Northern Rif mountain region in Morocco. The colonial administrators undertook the construction of the road, other infrastructures and rapid development of the coastal cities in Morocco. This impacted on migration between rural and urban Atlantic cost area within Morocco (Bilgili and

Weyel, 2009:13).

During the occupation period, many autonomous tribes, mainly from the Berber regions, were forced to integrate to the protectorate (De Haas, 2005). Thus, the labors were mainly brought from the former autonomous regions, which had resisted to the French/Spanish occupation. The workers were devoted to work in mines, construction of roads and other infrastructures. The particular geographical selection of the labors was strategically done in order to prevent any political unrest from the former autonomous tribes.

The colonial era (1912-1956) was also the beginning of the large migration to France. During the World Wars, the crucial lack of labor force in France led to the large recruitment of Moroccans. Tens of thousands of Moroccan men were deployed to serve for the French masters in the factories, mines and the Army. In the Army, Moroccan soldiers fought in the frontlines. Approximately 40,000 Moroccan men were dispatched during WWI and about 126,000 were recruited in WWII, the War in Korea and Indochina (Bilgili & Weyel, 2009 13; De Haas, 2005).

The Post-colonial era: After the end of the WWII, Algeria stood up for the independence from France. During the Algerian independence war (1954-1962), French stopped recruiting Algerians. Hence, the demand for Moroccan migrant workers was boosted. Furthermore, with the withdraw of France from Algeria, French stopped recruiting Moroccans in Algeria, and many Moroccans followed their French employers and migrated to work in the mines and factories overseas. Thus, during 1949 and 1962, Moroccan people living in France steeply increased from 20,000 to 53,000 (Bilgili & Weyel, 2009:14, De haas, 2005).

Moroccan guest labors export to Europe in 1960s: In 1956, Morocco gained independence from France. Thereafter, the outmigration has been stimulated to not only France but also other Western European countries mainly due to the 'guest labor' program. With the end of the WWII, the Western European countries demanded for the cheap labors in order to accelerate the reconciliation and the strong economic development in Europe. At the same time, Moroccan government also intended to outlet the

unemployed population of the post independence period. It was also aimed to outlet the population from the politically and socially marginalized region in order to mitigate the risk of insurgences (Collyer & Cherti & van Heelsum, 2009:1557). In addition to this, Moroccan government aimed to increase the emigration in order to gain the foreign exchanges through the remittances from the migrant labors. The demand and supply matched between the European receiving states and Moroccan as the sending state. As a result, Morocco signed labor migration agreements with France (1963), Germany (1963), Belgium (1964) and the Netherlands (1969) (Bilgili & Weyel, 2009:14). Hence, in this period, the emigration was planned selectively for many unskilled and unemployed male labors from economically isolated region, particularly Souss, Rif-region and the High Atlas region of Morocco. In this period, Moroccan labors basically devoted themselves in the work that people in the host society were no longer willing to do, such as constructions, building ships and other heavy labors (Kuronen, 2005:25).

The historical structure theory argues that structural forces such as states or colonialism enforces the decision-making of migration, and the key point of the theory is that individuals do not have a complete free choice because they are fundamentally constrained by the structural forces (Castle et al, 2014). In the period of the guest labor program, although migrants had a choice, but people were promoted to go to work in Europe for the both domestic and international interests of the both states of receiving and sending sides. Between 1965 and 1975, Moroccan people living in Europe escalated by tenfold from 30,000 to 400,000. Gradually, between the mid 1980s and 1990s, the destinations of emigration diversified to Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain as they faced the lack of labor forces for their economic development. Thus, the emigration pattern was shifted to these latter receiving countries in 1990s.

Geographical patterns of Moroccan emigration: De Haas (2007:4) and Bilgili and Weyel (2009:15) described the geographical patterns of emigration from the particular regions of Morocco to Europe. The Moroccan government stimulated migration from mostly Berber-speaking regions that

were former autonomous regions. The reasons are, firstly, the regions conducted several political protests against the integration to Morocco. Secondly, these regions had in common already established the seasonal migration activity to Algeria under the French occupation.

The image below shows the earlier origins of the emigration and the destination to the respective European receiving countries. The first emigration to the Western European countries is indicated in the blue in the map (De Haas, 2007:4). Yellow circles indicate the latter emigration patterns of origins to the Southern European countries.



Blue1: The North of Morocco, the eastern part of the Rif mountain region
 The Northern region in Morocco used to belong to the Spanish protectorate. Thus, the population did not speak French; therefore, the Moroccan government directed them to migrate to the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium rather than to France (Bilgili & Weyel, 2009:16).

Blue2: The South of Morocco, west of the Sous region near Agadir

France colonized the Southern part of Morocco above the Sahara desert. The Berber-speaking population used to inhabit in this region. Many people from the region had been subjected to migrate to Algeria earlier and then mainly to France (Bilgili & Weyel, 2009:15).

Blue3: The middle of Morocco, river oasis area, the Southeast of the high Atlas region

The inhabitants migrated mostly to France, yet small population moved to the Netherlands and Belgium. Moreover, the main destination from this region was within Morocco, especially to the cities on the Atlantic cost side (Bilgili & Weyel, 2009:15).

As in mid 1980s, the destinations diversified to Italy and Spain, and the other regions in Morocco became a source of emigrants as well. The latter emigration pattern is indicated in the yellow in the map above (De Haas, 2007:4). First, the migrants from Kenitra, the middle Atlas region (**Yellow1**) mainly went to Italy. Second, people from Laarache area near Tangier, the Northern Morocco (**Yellow2**) migrated to Spain and the UK. Third, the people from the Tadla plain, south of Khouribga, middle of Morocco (**Yellow3**) were likely to migrate to Italy. Thus, during the guest labor outmigration, the destinations and origins of the migrants were influenced by the colonial legacy and its linguistic consequences.

Family reunification of Moroccans in Europe: The European countries initially planned to invite the ‘guest workers’ from Morocco only for the temporally period. Moroccan government as well insisted that the migration was only for temporary since the government hoped to profit from the return of skilled and motivated labors when they come back to Morocco from Europe (Kuronen, 2005).

In 1973, oil crisis occurred and this led to the decline of the demand for unskilled labors in the Western European countries. Therefore, the large scale of the recruitment came to the end between Morocco and the

western European countries. The former receiving countries then introduced visa requirements to Moroccans in order to stop the inflow of these migrants to Europe (Entzinger, 2007:1). During 1980s, in order to restructure European economies, the unskilled jobs were relocated to low wage countries or computerization (Entzinger, 2007:3). As a result, many of the first generation of Moroccan migrant labors was the first ones who got fired and faced unemployment.

At the same time, the economic and political instability in Morocco was deteriorating following two coups d'état in 1971 and 1972. Consequently many of the male first generation workers decided to stay in Europe. Also, the Western Europe receiving countries tightened immigration policies, and the Moroccan migrants feared that they could not come back to Europe after returning to Morocco. Thus, it decreased the incentives of Moroccan migrants to go back to Morocco as well. In a few years, the migrants were allowed to bring their wife and children and settled down in Europe (Collyer et al, 2009:1558).

The Moroccan government supported this follow-up migration as to ensure that the inflow of remittance would keep coming into Morocco (Collyer et al, 2009:1558). Through the family reunification, Moroccan descents living in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany increased from 400,000 in 1975 to 1,000,000 in 1992. Although some migrants returned to Morocco during 1980s and early 1990s; however, the returning migration of Moroccans has been among the lowest of all immigrants groups in Europe (De Haas, 2005).

During 1990s, as new destination of Moroccan migrant labor, Italy and Spain became the boosting countries. In addition to this, there was another flow of migration from Morocco to Europe. The children of the first generation Moroccan guest labors in Europe married to people from Morocco, and brought their spouse to Europe as well. In this process, Moroccans living in the Europe kept expanding. By 1998, the number of Moroccan descent living in the European countries reached to 1.6 million. The descendants of the Moroccan migrant workers are now becoming third to fourth generation.

Including this population and other Moroccan migrants coming recently, the Moroccans living in Europe reached 3 million in 2012 (de Haas, 2014).

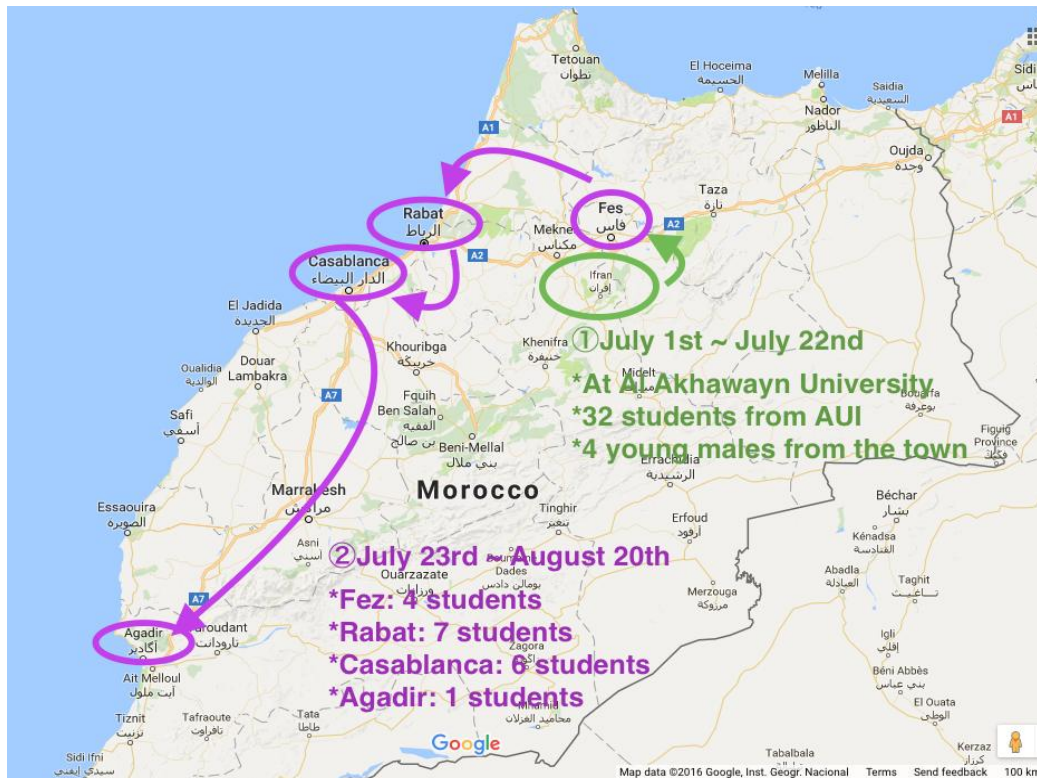
In these countries, it is quite easy to find the Moroccan/Arab neighbourhoods, and the Moroccan grocery stores, bakeries and pastry stores, or the traditional clothes stores owned by 'Moroccans.' In Den Hague, in the Netherlands, Antwerp and Brussels in Belgium and other cities in Europe as well, I heard people speaking *Darija*, the Moroccan Arabic several times on the streets. It can be easily seen from the sceneries of these cities and the process of continuous migration, when the both states signed on the guest labour agreements in 1960s, they brought not labour as commodity but the people. The first generation of migrants invited their families to come to Europe, and with the network of people, migration continued even after the end of the guest labour agreement. The certain number of them established their community. Their ethnic locality and the ethnic local business within the communities are part of outcome of the first migration and 'European-ness' of today.

3. In Morocco: The Method of the Research

After reviewing the historical origins of 'Moroccans' in Europe, I chose to do a fieldwork in Morocco and conduct qualitative interviews in order to go into the questions I raised up. I conducted my fieldwork from July 1st 2016 to August 20th, and I was able to interview approximately 50 young Moroccans at the end of the fieldwork. I carried each interview in a very simple way. I called for interview participants on my Facebook account and I met them individually in a café or student common space. We generally had a casual chat on the research topic, and it lasted normally 30-45 minutes, but sometimes it went off topic and ended up after 4 hours.

This field research period was divided into two phases. In the first phase, July 1st~22nd, I conducted interviews with 36 persons at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. In the second phase, July 23rd ~ August 20th,

since the summer school period ended in the University and students went back to their home towns, I visited them in Fez (4 people), Rabat (7 people),



Casablanca (6 people) and Agadir (1 person).

(Map1: Route and locations of the fieldwork)

The First phase:



The first period of the interviews started at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane² (AUI) in Morocco where I did my one-year-study-abroad about three years ago. The reason I picked this university as a starting site is that the students can speak fluent English. Unfortunately, I was not able to speak *Darija* (Moroccan Arabic) up to the interview level at that time.

² The photo of the campus is on the right. (Taken by author in 2013)

Therefore, I decided to conduct interviews mainly with the students from the university who were able to speak English.

The university is recognized as one of the privileged educational institutions in Morocco. It is a tuition-based public university and the tuition is known for the most expensiveness in Morocco. Therefore, the students there relatively come from upper-middle class or high-class social background. In terms of their skills level, there are students from both undergraduates and graduate majoring in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Engineering, and Business Administration. The university has a good reputation in these fields of studies and the infrastructure (for especially, the high technology sectors). It is said to have one of the best quality of education in Morocco.

It also has the international atmosphere offering exchange programs to the U.S., Europe and Asia, and inviting international students to AUI from abroad. In addition, the medium of instruction is English. Except for some students who went through their previous education in Arabic, many of the students have studied in French in their elementary and high school. Therefore, in addition to Arabic and fluent French, they become eligible to speak English in AUI. This kind of environment makes the university's characteristics distinct from the other parts of Morocco.

During the interviews, some students mentioned '*the university is not like Morocco at all. The students are from rich family and some of the things here are totally different from outside of the campus where most of the people are conservative.*'³ I totally agreed to this opinion since I felt the same when I was studying abroad there three years ago. As far as I observed as well, the students enjoy the international environment of the university. They tend to have more open mind for example in what to wear, and daily behaviors such as drinking, relationships and smoking etc. I could somehow distinguish AUI students from other people by their outfits and belongings as well at the local train station. Every time I traveled to other cities in Morocco and came back to the university, I felt the gap between conservative

³ Opinions from several students, mix of females and males, freshman to senior students

Islamic culture outside of the campus and openness of the university environment.

In terms of my interviewees' profile, most of them were from the Al Akhawayn University except for 8-9 other young Moroccans. The ages are roughly between 19 years old to 29 years old. Although most of them were still in their undergraduate, there were some MA students and graduates of the university working either in Morocco or abroad. Around 30 of my interviewees were male and 20 were female. They specialize mainly in Computer Science (18 people), Engineering (7 people), International relations (7 people), Business administration, Marketing and Financing (7 people), Islamic studies (4 people), and Computer Graphics (1 person), unknown (6 people).

Among the around 50 interviewees, the stage of their aspiration for going abroad was diverse as well. It was a group of mixtures. Most of them showed a will to go Europe and abroad for their future except for about 6 people who were not interested in going abroad. Among those who have aspiration to go abroad, some have been to Europe, the North America and Asia for 3 months to 1 year. Some were at the stage of considering; some were at the stage of planning and working to save the money to go abroad; some have already applied and waiting for the result or departure. One was in France doing her MA. One migrated to Canada for her marriage. Some already have experienced their study and work opportunities abroad and came back to Morocco.

After all, I would like to emphasize that the most of the people I interviewed are from the certain social class that is higher than the average Moroccans. Concerning the family background and educational level, I would like to mention my interviewees as '*highly-skilled*' and '*university-educated*' or '*highly qualified*' young Moroccans. Thus, the findings I am presenting later in this paper can apply the best to this research with under this certain conditions I conducted. Nor the findings can be generalized to all young Moroccans. If the interviewees and the situations were different, there would have been different results as well.

The Second Phase:

After interviewing around 35 people in Al Akhawayn University and in Ifrane, I continued to visit other interviewees in their hometowns from Fez, Rabat, Casablanca and Agadir. During this period, I interviewed almost 17 individuals from Al Akhawayn University. However, I want to note that I could meet many other Moroccan people apart from the students during the second phase. Conversing and exchanging ideas with them helped me a lot to deepen the thoughts in this research. About 5 families kindly welcomed me as one of their members to stay at their homes during the second phase of my research, and it gave me opportunity to see how the meta structure, such as family is an important factor for the migration decision. In addition, it was a very nice moment to be in a family in a foreign country as well. I also met young European people from Belgium, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Spain where Moroccan communities have been established for quite a while. The young people from Europe were mainly travellers and students studying Arabic in Morocco. Exchanging a conversation with them was helpful to think about the tensions between the host society and Moroccan communities abroad. In additions, I am thankful to all the people I met in Morocco during the field research such as the cleaning ladies in the hostels I stayed, the taxi drivers in different places, people who I shared the train compartments, people I happened to chat on the streets, the waiter men in my favorite cafes and etc. The Moroccan culture that people easily talk to the strangers friendly was very helpful in this period. The small conversations and dialogues with all these people have influenced my research and enlightened it.

4. Why do you want to go to Europe?

In this first section of my findings, I want to focus on the reasons why many young ‘highly-skilled’ and ‘university-educated’ Moroccans aspire to go to Europe based on the fieldwork I conducted. Repeating what De Haas (2007:32-34) said, *‘for many young people in Morocco, the question is not so much whether to migrate, as when and how to migrate,’* it is true that approximately 35/50 persons among those I interviewed answered that they are interested in/planning to go abroad for their future development. In addition to them, a quit number of young people I met and talked on the streets, trains, and cafés told me their interest for migrating to Europe as well.

In terms of the destination, before starting the research, I imagined that the destination would concentrate on Europe. In deed, the most popular destination by number was Western European countries such as Germany and France. However, I was surprised because the rest was more diverse than I thought. Many of the young people mentioned other destinations such as Dubai, Qatar, China, Scandinavian regions and Eastern Europe as well. It seems that this is because of the impact of globalization and increased amount of information they can access for more options other than just previous common destinations in Europe. Here, I would like to look into the major reasons of their aspiration for leaving Morocco and going to abroad.

1. Lack of Opportunities and Freedom in Morocco

Zipin (2015:109) explained that aspiration is an intangible sense of human agency that allows individuals to desire, imagine and pursue the future potentials. The aspiration tends to rise especially in difficult times of pessimism about individual’s future. While I was doing interviews with the young Moroccans, many of them expressed the feelings of deprivation for their future opportunities in Morocco.

First factor was the **lack of opportunities in education in Morocco**. More

than half of them voiced that they are willing to go abroad for their Master degrees in what they want to study further. Many of the interviewees majored mainly in the advanced fields such as International Relations, Computer Science, Engineering, Renewable Energy, Business Marketing, Financing, and etc. According to them, these fields of studies are underdeveloped in Morocco and nearly most of them spoke their minds saying “*The quality of education in Morocco is not good, it is better in Europe*”⁴ The high technology fields are new in Morocco, and the infrastructure, systems and professors of such education are still not established and the courses are not provided in Morocco. Many computer science students told me that they aim to go to France and Germany; similarly, the engineering students were attracted to go to Germany.

While I was travelling through Morocco, I found that this type of migration has been quite prominent in Morocco. There are many preparatory schools in the major cities aside from universities, where students study focusing on mathematics and sciences. These schools are established for those Moroccan students who want to enter universities of advanced technology abroad, mainly in France. In order to pass the entrance examinations of the universities abroad, students normally go to the preparatory schools for a few years. Thus, these middle agencies such as the preparatory school are making the path to abroad more realistic. It helps and stimulates the young students to go to Europe in order to attain the ‘better education’.

Then, some other young people tend to aspire for migration when they think their study is not valued in Morocco. With the globalization and Morocco is swallowed up by the waves of capitalism, the one of the ideal education that is considered as ‘valuable’ is mainly advanced technology field that can generate capitals in the future. Thus, if what the young person wants to pursue does not comply with the domestic interest, political system and the social norms, one faces another problem finding their further

⁴ A male, 25-30 years old, working after studying computer science, planning to go abroad for MA

educational path in Morocco. For instances, one interviewee I met, he is going to the Netherlands in order to study Art management. He said

“There is no interesting degree in Art in Morocco. Art is not considered as a serious matter in Morocco. I want to do something like creating a platform for artists in the future. Thus, the Netherlands seems to give me better programs in this field”

In the other interview, the other person who wants to go abroad to study communication spoke

“The communication field is not very good in Morocco, while in Europe and the U.S, they have more creative opportunities in the media studies. The communication sector, such as TV programs, is controlled by the government here, so the contents you can make are very limited. Thus, I’m thinking to study in communication major overseas.”

According to some of the informants, Moroccan government holds a monarchy system, and the authority on the economic activities, religion and politics is concentrated on the King. There are so called four lines that people should avoid criticizing, the King and the Royal family, Islamic religion, the Western Sahara and the military.

I talked to another interviewee who is going to study Islamic philosophy in another Middle Eastern country. He wants to research about ontology of Islamic culture, how knowledge is accepted as legitimate knowledge in Islamic culture. In Morocco, where teaching of Islam is strongly accepted and present in people’s ordinary life, I found out that some young generation is not any more for the every aspect of the religious customs. Some feel that it is not compatible with today’s society which some of the young people imagine. Therefore, when someone wants to question some aspects of the social norm that is justified by the religious customs, and wants to study the Islamic culture critically, it does not seem always easy to pursue it in Morocco. People ask him ‘*What can you do after studying it?*’

When the studies are not valued or accepted in the country, the students seek better place to pursue their educational desire.

Thus, I heard a lot of disappointments and hopes for their future planning in education from my interviewees. For many of them, the path is more hopeful in abroad than in Morocco. This factor strongly influences their decision to go to abroad rather than staying in Morocco.

The second factor was their dissatisfactions with the **‘working environment in Morocco.’** According to Espinoza (2011:7), university-graduates of Moroccan young people constitute the large number of unemployment in Morocco. Similar to her insight, many of my interviewees expressed their frustration that comes from the difficulty of getting a job in Morocco. There are issues such as low salary and poor infrastructure in the working space in Morocco as well; though the persistent unemployment rate seems to be the most serious concern especially among the youth. Here, I will try to depict some small aspects of frustration that the interviewees felt from their daily life experiences in seeking careers in Morocco.

To begin with, those young people who seek to work in ‘highly-skilled’ area find it difficult to get a job in Morocco, and the lack of the job prospect in the ‘highly-skilled’ area is one of the determinations that many of my interviewees said why they want to go to Europe and abroad. Cohen (2012) reported that Morocco is short of a supportive infrastructure for the work that particularly ‘high-skilled’ motivated young people. In addition, Moroccan political system and its monopolistic industrial domination leave very little space for people to flourish their own business in the private sector, which remains as an obstacle for employment creation (Espinoza, 2011:7). These factors make it difficult for the young ‘highly-qualified’ and ‘highly-skilled’ people to pursue their career for example in making a new business, using technological innovation, doing a scientific research, launching social projects, practicing law and etc. One of the interviewees, who studied computer science, and wants to start his own business, told me

“If you stay as a computer scientist in Moroccan firm, your skill will die. Your task will be repetitive task of old-fashioned technology. So you don not get to do much of the development of new software or practice your skill. Your work is only a supportive and manual job. Thus, you don not get to exercise your skills, knowledge and freedom to create something new from the scratch. 70 % of people I know from young computer scientist left Morocco.”⁵

In his case, it seems that most of the Moroccan IT related companies are the subcontracting companies of the bigger international companies. Thus, the positions available for the young computer scientists tend to be repeating manual work that comes from above. The ‘highly-skilled’ young individuals feel that they do not have chance to improve or utilize their skills in their career in Morocco. Thus, although they have studied hard to get the degree and skills, the jobs that can hold the interest of the ‘highly-skilled’ young people in Morocco are limited. As a result, they consider leaving the country to find better place for them to get a job that they think deserving.

Secondly, while I was talking to the interviewees, there was other aspect that I heard from them again and again. Corruption, they mentioned that it is very difficult to get a descent job or to reach high position without having a connection. *Bribery practices and officials not abiding by laws is one of the main problems in the Moroccan government* (Espinoza, 2011:8). It is necessary to know a key person or to pay extra money under the table in order to get a job. The job-seeking environment is corrupted, and many expressed their frustration to the unfairness they feel.

“We cannot work the way we want. I want to do something good for Morocco, but the corrupted system is not allowing me to do so.”⁶

“In Morocco, you cannot climb the corporate ladder unless someone gets you to there. Otherwise what you do is a routine of the same job.”⁷

⁵ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer science major

⁶ A female, 20-25 years old, Business administration major

⁷ A male, 25-30 years old, working in a foreign organization

In this first stage of job seeking, some young people face the absolute unfairness. They do not feel that their skills and potentials are valued fairly in the job market. Thereby, they start to think that there is more fairness in abroad for them to be able to start their future career without such constraints as in Morocco. One interviewee, who works in Germany as computer scientist, he said, *“I feel that my effort is recognized and they value my skills.”*⁸ Some young people seem to find a better career development path that they thought missing in Morocco in abroad in stead.

In addition, the working culture in Morocco is one of the aspects some young people raised up. Many of the interviewees thought some people in Morocco are not ‘hard workers.’ It is probably a ‘cultural thing,’ but some expressed that the working style in Morocco is very relaxing and less competent. Some young people who had an internship opportunity in Morocco told me that other workers tend to procrastinate things easily and they did not like the working style. Also according to some informants, the working condition is not well provided in Morocco. One of the interviewees who works in German development agency in Morocco, he said *“For example, when I have a chance to lead a project, my boss trusts me and you can do your project flexibly as long as you do it on time in foreign companies. While in Morocco, there will be a lot of paper work and administrative things to be done to get started it. It gives us so many controls to go through and the working culture is very inefficient.”*

Thus, some interviewees thought that they could learn the efficiency from working in foreign culture; therefore, they imagine better working environment and working opportunities in the overseas.

In addition, although it seems difficult for young people in Morocco to find jobs if they do not know any connections, their studying and working experiences from abroad give them advantage in finding jobs in Morocco. There is an unspoken agreement in the job market in Morocco that the

⁸ A male, 25-30 years old, a computer scientist in Germany

degrees and working experiences from abroad are more preferred and appreciated than that of Morocco. The interviewees believe that the Moroccan diploma is underestimated in the job market in Morocco; hence, many young people intend to go to get some experiences in Europe or abroad in order to get a better job opportunity back in Morocco when they return. It was unexpected to hear from some of them that their actual plan is to come back and settle in Morocco. In the case (for some of them), their aspiration for migration is also to have a better life in Morocco, not in the destination countries.

Third factor was **'freedom: constrained in Morocco and open in abroad.'** At this point, I do not know how to define 'freedom' and neither could I grasp a single unified meaning from the limited time of the research. However, I found out that the interviewees tend to associate 'freedom' with the life in the West, Europe, the North America and abroad. One male informant said *"Morocco is a conservative country compared to Europe, and some Moroccan people may feel released in Europe. In Morocco, there are some virtues that you follow to do for the social conformity."*⁹

As I see from the eyes of an outsider, the society is very collective and people oriented. Majority of the people in the country are Muslim, and the religion plays an important role in every aspect of people's belief and behavior. Family is a very important thing in people's life like every part of the world. Toward strangers, sharing tea and food to someone you do not know is one of the typical ways people welcome others to their members. Including such customs, Morocco preserves a lot of traditional, conservative, warm cultural norms. At the same time, the society absorbs new trends, ways of thinking, and culture from outside with the rapid globalization. The young people I interviewed live in the age when many norms are different from that of their parents. The young people I interviewee wish for the 'freedom' that they feel missing in Morocco.

⁹ A male, 20-25 years old, Engineering major

Fistly, *Islam* has a great influence on most of the people's life style, ideas and behaviors in Morocco. While I was in Morocco, the common question I was asked was "*what is you religion?*" mainly from older and middle age people but also from young people as well. When I say "*I'm not a Muslim,*" a very few people just asked me if I want to be a Muslim in the future, but most of the time, people were very open to the foreigners having other religion or none. However, among Moroccans, in a community level (not in a family or individual level), having a belief in Islam seems somewhat between a must and preferred or at least an expected thing. It is individual choice to decide, and s/he does not have to declare his/her belief; however, at the same time they cannot deny it openly. Most of the people I interviewed recognized themselves as a Muslim. Yet, some of them have their point of views differently. One young female interviewee said

*"Many things are not allowed to do here by the religion. Drinking, having a boyfriend or a girl friend is almost 'illegal.' For example, by kissing on the street, police can arrest you for it. I feel a sort of oppression that people want to impose how they live on you too. More young people in Morocco are feeling this. In Europe, you can do these things without any fear."*¹⁰

The other male also said

*"Some of the aspects of the religious teaching is not functional anymore, but it is blindly accepted by majority. You are exposed to conversations around the religion in your daily life with surrounding people, and all the systems here insists you on showing that you follow the Islam."*¹¹

The religion preaches people that they should avoid doing some behaviors, *haram* (forbidden). For example, having relationship before marriage or drinking is one of them. Today, these are not forced, and people have their own will whether or not to follow, but it does not mean they feel pleased to do these behaviors everywhere. Contrary to their own will of what to do or not,

¹⁰ A female, 20-25 years old, Business major

¹¹ A male, 20-25 years old, International Studies

some young people seem to feel some peer-pressure to follow the custom in the society.

Secondly, when it comes to young women's life in Morocco, I found that they have some different experiences than the male informants. In Moroccan society, there is a clear division of space and ideal role between the men and women. The places where men and women hang out are different. In the mosques, men and women pray in the separate rooms. In a family, men normally should be a breadwinner in the house and feed the family. In one of the Islamic feast, Eid Al-Adha, when Muslims sacrifice the sheep for the celebration, men are the ones who slaughter the sheep and women take care the cooking part. Such divisions of men and women are clearer than Europe perhaps and there seems to be a lot of things the society expects for women to follow the assigned role.

In terms of what to wear, it is approved to wear short pants or skirts which people can see the exposure of the skin. At the same time, there are many women wearing *Djellaba* (the long daily dress for women), which covers the skin from being exposed. Most of the young females I interviewed do not wear it and they follow the fashion that they like. However, many of them said they struggle with the harassment when they wear short things. Some people do not leave them alone, and harass them by calling them out on the street. Thus, some young women feel that they do not feel comfortable walking on the streets alone especially at night in some of the cities in Morocco. One of the female interviewees told me that she was very surprised that she could walk alone after mid night and take subways to home without being harassed when she studied abroad in Korea. This kind of daily encounters and stress coming from the experience influences on their preference of living abroad over Morocco.

Also, there are some social roles that women are expected to follow. Getting married in their early age is one of them. It is more adequate to say that it is absolutely changing with the times, but also the preference is that young women are expected to marry in their 20s, according to my

interviewees. When I meet Moroccan women in the public places, the frequent question I was asked was whether or not I am married, and they continued, “How old are you?” The marriage is a bigger deal than developing their professional career for women. However, the ideal is different for the younger generation, and especially the young females I interviewed. Many of them were actively participating in the internship during the summer, and tended to say that they are more interested in seeking their career development. However, the principle of the existing social norm and what the society asks for the young female make it difficult for them to pursue the career as a woman. According to an interviewee, she said *“I want to be in an environment where I can seek for my career development freely.”*¹² Thus, such common experiences that young females tend to face can also stimulate their aspiration to go abroad for their better future opportunities.

2. Networks and Aspiration

In addition to the lack of opportunities and the freedom that young people feel missing in Morocco, there was another aspect that may increase their aspiration to go to Europe and abroad; the culture of migration in Moroccan society. While I was in Morocco, I have witnessed the deep connection of Morocco and Europe in a lot of aspects of people’s everyday life in Morocco. For examples, when I walked in the cities, I have seen a quite few cars with European number plates. One day, I was walking on the street and a friend pointed at one of the cars and joked at me *‘You see, these Moroccans do not know how to drive in Morocco.’* In one city, I saw more cars with French number plates while in the other city, I saw more Spanish number plates depends on what kind of migration history to Europe the regions have gone through. According to the interviewees, it is somehow considered as a way of showing off the wealth that the person gained from abroad.

Apart from this scene, I met French-Moroccans who were studying Arabic at the Moroccan language centre, an old man who was half Belgian

¹² A female, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major

and Moroccan came back to spend his summer in Morocco, and so on. These scenes made me realise how the connection between Morocco and abroad, especially Europe is embedded in people's daily life in Morocco. The flow of segments of Europe coming to Morocco can be seen in many aspects of the life.

Zipin (2015:109) explained that the aspiration is not only an outcome of individual agency to imagine better future. It is also constituted from socio-cultural resources that the individual has and inherits. It is a biographic-historical legacies embodied as habitus in the community that individuals belong to. In short, *aspiration* is an individual agency but at the same time it is also a habituated 'culture' from family and community history. His explanation of *aspiration* corresponds to the migration network theory. The approach paid more attention to the meso-level social structure of the continuation of the migration. It emphasized on the importance of the family, relatives and community networks between the sending country and receiving country (Castles et al, 2014:39). It explains that the interaction and the exchange of information, ideas, money and goods between them influence on individuals' decision-making process of migration (2014:39).

The migration network theory also explains that individuals make choices not by the individual decision but families and household (2014:37). In Morocco, there is a consensus that 'living in Europe' is a privilege and considered as symbolic success to the wealth. Sending a family member abroad can be a part of the family success and also a strategy to minimize the risk of the income scarce. One of the interviewee said, "*In Morocco, going to Europe is a social status that shows you are privileged. It's 'La mode (=main stream)' to be cool, and show off you are rich and successful. You can make your family proud of you with the degree from abroad.*"¹³ Thus, the migration is valued positively by the parents and the community members in Morocco (Capello, 2011).

¹³ A male, 25-30 years old, working in Morocco after getting MA and working experiences in Canada

On the other hand, the member who comes back from abroad can increase the feeling of less-well off for the other members in the community. Thus, the feeling of the comparative lack can increase the incentives of others to migrate as well (Haas, 2007:31; Empez, 2007:15). One informant said, *“We have many friends enjoying the foreign culture, somehow associated with more freedom, new experience, new discovery and etc... It makes me feel I want to go there as well.”*¹⁴ Also in terms of the practical side, the relatives and family members abroad can be a great bridge to bring the people to migrate. They reduce the risks and costs in migration by giving information and assistances. Thus, this kind of social capitals such as family and community connection can facilitate people’s aspiration and capability to migrate as well (Castles et al, 2014:40).

3. Conclusion: *‘Why do you want to go to Europe?’*

Thus, the young people I interviewed including males and females have diverse and clear educational interest and a certain career goal that they want to keep pursuing in their future. Some of them have different ideas of ‘freedom’ from the social norm as well. As de Haas (2007:34) described, the lack of certain capability available in their own country disables them from ‘developing themselves’, and it is particularly through the international migration that these capabilities can be attained. When they do not find such social and economic opportunities and freedom in Morocco, they find it better to pursue it in abroad. Moreover, the aspiration to migrate is more and more strengthened by the networks of family and friends who bring them more information and sometimes assistance. Thus, compared to the past when the major emigration was for the labor supplies for the European countries, there are a number of young people now who want to pursue their self-development in educational and career opportunity and freedom open in abroad. For them, migration is a possible way to achieve it.

¹⁴ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major

In addition to this, I want to make a small important note here. It was almost a fact and reality that many young Moroccans perceive that the European, Western and foreign education, career, experience and opportunities are better than those of in Morocco. Concerning this, I was quite surprised that some of the interviewees mentioned that they are willing and planning to come back to Morocco after they gain some studies and experiences from Europe and abroad. During an interview, one student said to me,

*“I'm coming back to Morocco. It has a great culture and people. I want to contribute for improving the country. There is a saying, ‘with every drop, the river becomes full.’ If everyone learns from abroad and apply it to our country, it makes a change.”*¹⁵

The other said,

*“Although most of the people may stay in Europe, I like Morocco and I want to do something for Morocco. Despite of the inconvenience and disadvantage existing in Morocco, I would value the hospitality and human side of Morocco.”*¹⁶

Many of the interviewees that have already been to abroad for short period of stay have told me they missed the *warmth* and *proximity* of people in Morocco. One who studies abroad a year in Japan told me *‘I missed Darija (Moroccan Arabic), kissing-greetings, sharing culture and the close relationship of people. It's my country after all.’*¹⁷

Moreover, during the fieldwork, it was quite a minority, yet several interviewees actually mentioned that they have no aspiration to go to Europe and abroad. The 3 of them were computer science major, and the reasons behind their desire to stay in Morocco were diverse. It is family and friends,

¹⁵ A female, 20-25 years old, studying Marketing

¹⁶ A female, 20-25 years old, International relation major

¹⁷ A female, 20-25 years old, Business major

the culture, and language that they have in Morocco. *“I feel this is my community. I want to be in this community. In Morocco, I feel I can know everyone. In Canada, you can know people but some. It is like there are your uncle's house and your home. Your uncle's place is may be materially better (with good food, bigger, organized etc). But still your home is better because there are your friends, family and people etc....”*¹⁸

Or opportunities vice versa. Two of the computer science students told me

*‘Europe is not ideal anymore. Because of the social environment for Moroccans, you can see the Moroccans living together, establishing their own community. EU has own problem. Because Morocco is a virginal market, I'm thinking to settle down in Morocco and start on my own business through the computer science.’*¹⁹

*‘Although there are no leading or notable community/network of computer scientists in Morocco; however, I believe there should be... and I want to find it. People say it is bad quality or underdeveloped in Morocco but I cannot decide without trying.’*²⁰

Although Moroccan young people are represented with the high desire of emigration in many of the literatures for the fore-mentioned reasons, yet it is not always true. As Espinoza (2011:16) wrote *‘It is ultimately this interplay of loyalty that determines the behaviour choice of flight or flight,’* many of the interviewees were attached to their *home* country and that belongingness also influence on their decision making of migration.

¹⁸ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major

¹⁹ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major

²⁰ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major

5. *What do you think about the 'image' of Moroccans in Europe?*

Up to here I tried to understand the motives of young Moroccan people behind their aspiration to migrate to Europe and abroad. Before moving on to the second question, I explained my opinions to my interviewees on how 'Moroccan' people are perceived and depicted in Europe. For example, I informed them that researches are conducted on the employment and educational disadvantages of 'Moroccan' population in Europe, and raised up the issue of Islamophobia in Europe. Once I started to talk about the negative representations of 'Moroccans' in Europe, I slightly noticed that some of them gave me a cloudy look. They continued with their own opinions. I found out that most of the interviewees were aware of these reputations that Moroccan people in Europe tend to receive by hearing from other people who have been there. When I asked my interviewees about their opinions on the 'image' of Moroccans in Europe, they came up with different perspectives.

1. *Who are the 'bad Moroccans'?* : Most of the interviewees differentiated themselves from the representatives of the 'bad image.' The term repeatedly used to refer to the 'bad image' by some of the interviewees were '*They were uneducated people.*' The first generation of the Moroccan migrants who went to Europe was mostly from the former autonomous Berber regions, which had been marginalized by Morocco. They were the ones who migrated under the guest labor program, engaged in the heavy labor in Europe. However, because the first generation people were considered to be 'low-skilled,' or without any modern '*education,*' the students have perception that these people were *uneducated* and had caused the negative image in Europe under the integration process.

However, despite of the perception that the 'highly-skilled' and 'university-educated' young Moroccan people perceive about the first generation of Moroccan migrants, the grandmother of one of my interviewees described to me about the Berber people from Rif region (who were the first

population that migrated to Europe); the majority of the Berber migrant were known as hard working people. Therefore, she said she does not understand why these people present 'bad image' of Moroccans in Europe.

Then, some other students differentiated them self from the representatives of 'bad image' by defining '*Moroccans who were borne there in Europe.*' The second, the third and the latter generation of the Moroccan migrants, those who were borne and brought up in Europe, were considered as different from Moroccans in Morocco. According to some interviewees, they can distinguish those Moroccans who came back from Europe by their appearance and the behavior. Some of the interviewees said, "*These people have been isolated from the host country's community and show a bad behavior.*"²¹ "*The absence of acceptance in the European community or sense of belongingness may push them to show an attitude like that, and it makes a bad image of the migrants.*"²² "*They are products of Europe, not us.*"

23

When it comes to the negative reputation of 'Moroccans,' the interviewees did not associate themselves to the negative 'image.' Most of the interviewees were 'university-educated' young people, and these young people aspire to migrate for their academic and professional reasons; therefore, consider themselves different from the negative 'image.' While in Europe, the negative 'image' and stereotypes are applied to 'all the Moroccans' in general, the interviewees, who are arguably the country's brightest, identify themselves apart from the subject of the negative 'image' of Moroccans in Europe. One said "*No one complains about profiles that are going to Europe for studies.*"²⁴ Most of the interviewees seemed that they feel they are different from 'Moroccans' of the 'bad image' of migrants.

²¹ A female, 20-25 years old

²² A female, 20-25 years old

²³ A male, 20-25 years old, Engineering major

²⁴ A male, 20-25 years old, working as a computer scientist

2. Why do people have a negative 'image' for Moroccans in Europe?

Concerning the cause of the negative 'image' of Moroccans in Europe, the opinions of the interviewees tended to be the mixture of two aspects. On one hand, they argued that some Moroccan migrants abroad do not respect the customs and rules of the host society; thus, causing the negative 'image' by themselves. One said, "*I know some Moroccan people behave in a disrespectful way in Europe. For example, cheating on the small rules, like not paying on the train, throwing away garbages on the street, and etc.*"

²⁵The other also said, "*They established their own community, and sometimes opened something like Souk (Moroccan traditional open-air market). They sell things on the street like a souk back home, and it looks disorganized, messy and chaotic. Some European people may not like it.*"²⁶

Thus, some of the interviewees recognize the reason why some particular Moroccan communities in Europe have a negative reputation as some of the Moroccans fail to put themselves in the host society's shoes.

However, at the same time, many of the interviewees perceived the root of the negative 'image' of Moroccans in Europe as due to the isolation, exclusion, racism and xenophobia existing in the host society. Moroccans who migrated in 1960s as the temporary worker devoted themselves in the heavy industries, and contributed to the development of the host societies. One interviewee said '*Their (host countries') development would not have been done if not Moroccan labors. France is not what it is now without the Moroccan labor migrants.*' However, the host countries marginalized the migrant communities and did not let them integrate. The second and the latter generation of the Moroccans borne in Europe have faced difficulty in getting integrated, according to the some literatures and interviews. The other interviewee said '*It is the host society that pushes them to act like what they do as if that is the only way left for them.*' and '*Europe is complaining on what they have caused and created.*'

²⁵ A male, 25-30 years old, working in Europe after graduating from the university

²⁶ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major

Most of the interviewees agreed on that it is unfair that whenever a small number of Moroccans do something bad in the host society, the negative image is screened to all the Moroccan communities living in Europe. One interviewee said *“For example, when the perpetrator of the terrorist attack was Moroccan origin, the information spread in a second, and people suddenly start worrying about their Moroccan neighbors.”*²⁷ When media and anti-Muslim political figures speak negative things about Moroccan migrants, public opinions who had never talked to their Moroccan neighbors can be influenced by what is reported in the media. The interviewees, ‘highly skilled’ or ‘university-educated’ young people expressed their reaction to the unfair generalization.

3. Conclusion: ‘What do you think about the ‘image’ of Moroccans in Europe?’ When I asked my interviewees *‘what do you think of the negative image of Moroccans in Europe?’*, most of them tried to differentiate themselves from the subject of being the negative ‘image’ of Moroccans. To their perception, it somehow does not have anything to do with them. The negative image the people in the host society tend to have is the generalization of the image of a small number of Moroccans to all the Moroccan communities in Europe. The ‘educated’ young Moroccans I interviewed have strong goal and will to perform well in Europe and the negative ‘image’ of Moroccans that the host societies tend to have is not related to the identity of the young people I interviewed.

²⁷ A female, 20-25 year old, business major, considering to go abroad for MA after working a few years in Morocco

6. *Does it affect your aspiration to go to Europe?*

Finally, after discussing about their opinions on the negative ‘image’ of Moroccans in Europe with each interviewee, I asked if the ‘image’ that people in the host society tend to have about Moroccans affects their aspiration to go to Europe.

I found out that they were aware of the stereotypes and struggles that the Moroccan migrants in Europe are used to face since they hear stories from their friends and relatives living abroad. Though, their motivation to once leave Morocco and seek better opportunity in abroad is solid, and it seems that the specific objective that they want to pursue in abroad is so clear that it will not be affected. Thus, almost 80% of the interviewees answered me that such negative ‘image’ of Moroccans in Europe does not change their aspiration to leave Morocco and go abroad. However, a few of the female informants who dress with *Hijab* (veil) said that they feel more fear of being in the center of the attention depends on the destination. Also, some of the interviewees indicated that the negative ‘image’ of Moroccans in Europe would affect their choice of destination and where to go within Europe and other part of the world. I would like to explain more in detail below.

1. No, it does not affect my aspiration: When I asked this third question, *‘Does the negative representation of Moroccans affect your motivation?’* majority of the interviewees replied to me without a pause *‘No.’*

First of all, being ‘university-educated’ and ‘highly-killed’ was kind of a key among those who said ‘No’ to the question. According to Castles (2014:28), the younger the person and the higher the educational level is, the higher is the propensity to intend to migrate. The young ‘highly skilled’ Moroccans acknowledge that they have certain skills and educational attainment that makes them feel different from those of being negative ‘image’ of Moroccans.

One interviewee said *'I believe that there are less racial prejudice in the jobs and education of high technology field. You will be judged based on your skills and performance, and not on your nationality. In this sense, I don't feel much afraid of the bad reputation of Moroccans in Europe.'*²⁸As he described, being a talented individual who attracts the host society gives them guarantee that they will not be unwelcomed by the host society. Therefore, it does not affect their motivation it self.

Second of all, some of them admitted that they are concerned of whether being accepted in the host society; however, some said they are ready to face the issue. The reason is that many of them believe that they can change the negative perception that people in Europe tend to have toward 'Moroccans'. Some of the interviewees, who aspire to go to Europe, have willingness to show a good example of Moroccans and try to change the misperception that people in the host society tend to have toward Moroccans. Many of them expressed their ambition.

"I would like to go and change the prevalent negative impression of Moroccans."²⁹

"I want to prove that it is a wrong image, and it makes me feel more that I want to succeed there."³⁰

These answers were a little bit surprising to me because I expected their motivation to leave Morocco and go to Europe would decrease, concerning the situation and Islamophobia in Europe. However, such negative representation of Moroccan people in Europe, and issues around integration do not diminish the young people's motivation, rather it accelerates their motivation to succeed in the new environment.

²⁸ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major, has studied and done internship in Canada before

²⁹ A female, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major

³⁰ A male, 20-25 years old, Communication major

2. Yes, a little, because I wear Hijab: The stable aspiration to leave Morocco is the same to most of the interviewees who seek better opportunities abroad, and it seems that their aspiration of migration will not be affected by the problems such as discrimination that migrants may face abroad (de Haas, 2007:32-34). However, a few of female informants rose up a small anxiety. There was a female interviewee from a growing country town in the center of Morocco. She majors in computer science, and this summer she was doing an internship in the biggest city, Casablanca. She let me stay for a few days at her apartment with her and her cousins who were visiting her from Marrakesh for their vacation.

The interviewee is seeking to apply for MA program abroad after graduation, since she cannot find any good programs offered in English in Morocco. I interviewed her on the last day while we were on the tram, and she talked to me what she is considering to do in the future. One concern she mentioned after telling me her motivation for abroad is *“I’m a bit worried because I wearing Hijab. I’m afraid I may receive more eyes on me.”*³¹ It seems that the fear of being a ‘visible’ Muslim woman in where there is a concern of rejection does not change her motivation, but certainly affects and gives them extra concerns.

3. Yes, I would choose different destination options: Also, although the aspiration to leave Morocco for the future opportunity does not change, some interviewees said it influences on their choice of where to go within Europe and outside of Europe. First of all, according to the interviewees, they are aware of how Moroccan people are perceived in Europe, because they have heard about the life in Europe from others who migrated there. The transnational theory of migration explained that the globalization enhanced the facility for migrants to maintain the bond over long distances (Castles et al, 2014:41). Similar to the connectedness of the migrants and non-migrants based on kinship, friendship and community network, rapid improvement of technology such as transportation and telecommunication back home and

³¹ A female, 20-25 years old, Engineering management major

destinations boosted the exchange of information about the destination countries. Thus, when the people chose where to go for their better opportunity, integration issues that they hear from their peers play an important role to make decisions of where to migrate. One of the interviewees who majors in Master of European studies in Morocco told me,

“I have a friend who have lived in France since he was a child. He went to the Moroccan school in the beginning and switched to a French school. He told me that he never felt being treated as the same to other French children. Also, I have seen an article that says ‘70% of the locals do not welcome Arabs in France.’ Many of my friends living there told me they are not living in ease.

Hearing these stories, I am frightened to go there. I study European studies and I want to go there, but I feel fear of not being welcomed. When I applied for an internship in Europe, I started to wonder, ‘Should I take off my Hijab?’ I wonder if I am not accepted Is it because I’m Arab?”³²

Also, the ‘highly-skilled’ and ‘highly-qualified’ young people relatively tend to have better options to choose destination than other migrants. Therefore, if they have more options to choose, they tend to lean toward destinations where they do not face extra obstacles to make success there.

She continued, *“I’m more interested in going to Eastern Europe where seem to have less racism, and I can have more internal security there.”*³³

Some other interviewees also said,

“My cousin went to France and she came back because she could not stand with the racism there anymore.”³⁴

“I feel that France will be the last choice, it is a planet of racism. The UK seems better in terms of the tolerance.”³⁵

³² A female, 20-25 years old, A MA student in European Studies

³³ The same as above

³⁴ A female, 20-25 years old, Major in Finance and Marketing

“I prefer to go to the U.S., Canada, or U.K. where Moroccans have better reputation.”³⁶

As these interviewees expressed, they hear how the Moroccan migrants are perceived and treated in Europe, and the negative ‘image’ of migration does not affect their motivation to leave Morocco and find better opportunities in Europe. However, as the result of globalization, young generation in Morocco have faster access to information from the Internet and peers who have been already there abroad. Thus, the network helps the ‘highly-skilled’ young Moroccans to imagine their migration, and the current situation in Europe such as the integration issues certainly affects their ‘image’ of Europe. With the better information availability, they are aware of different lifestyles and opportunities in different destinations apart from Europe. Thus, negative ‘image’ of Moroccans people in Europe tend to have, or negative aspect of migration such as discrimination and integration issue, these things do not help decreasing their aspiration to leave Morocco and find better opportunities elsewhere. However, contrarily to the past when Europe was perhaps the best and the most accessible destination for Moroccans, it is not necessarily the same for some ‘highly-skilled’ and ‘highly-qualified’ young Moroccans today.

4. Conclusion: ‘Does it affect your aspiration to go to Europe?’ First of all, I observed that their aspiration to go to Europe or abroad for their future opportunity would not disappear by such negative ‘image’ that people in host society tend to have about ‘Moroccans.’ It is because the ‘highly-skilled’ status of the interviewees gives them a sort of guarantees. Also, for some young people, more stereotypes they face, more ambition to counter such misperceptions. On the other hands, some female informants showed their fear of being the subject of the misperception. In addition, some informants also explained that such misperception would affect their choice of the destination. Thus, the misperception that people tend to have for ‘Moroccans’

³⁵ A male, 20-25 years old, Computer Science major, has studied abroad before

³⁶ A female, 20-25 years old, Business major

in Europe and the integration issues caused by that does not affect the 'highly-skilled' young Moroccans' aspiration to go abroad it self; however, it raises their second thought to consider which destination would provide them internal security as well.

7. At the end

To conclude this essay, I tried to depict how the young ‘highly-skilled’ or ‘university-educated’ Moroccan people have come to aspire to imagine their future opportunities in Europe and other parts of the abroad. Also, I tried to discover how the on-going debates and negative ‘image’ about Moroccan immigrants in Europe on the mass-level and individual level affect their perception and aspiration to come to Europe.

The young Moroccan people aspire to go to Europe as outcomes of every different factor that are correlating each other. For instances, it is a part of the historical legacy, the lack of education and job prospects in Morocco, the gap between their ideal freedom and religious/cultural constrains, the frustration they feel in the job hunting process in Morocco, the frustration the young woman get from the harassment, the interaction between friends and families, their own individual dreams and goals and etc. Their aspiration is made of the every such little aspects that they experience in their everyday life.

I found out their aspiration to go to Europe or abroad will not disappear despite of the negative perception toward ‘Moroccans’ in Europe. Though, some young people indicated that they would change their destination to places where they can feel more internal security. Some young women with *Hijab* were more afraid of being prejudiced than the other informants. Thus, the integration issues being debated over Europe are affecting some of these young Moroccans decision-making process of where to go.

After all, I felt that theoretical analysis, which I was supposed to categorize the *data*; cutting their non-separable everyday life experiences into fractionation of different aspects, did not help me understand these aspects better, since it is composed from every different aspects that are correlating each other. More analysis I had to do with the *data* from the

fieldwork, more distanced I felt from being able to *understand* them. Thus, I tried to value the most of the just stories, talks, opinions and expressions that I grasped from my interviewees by sitting with and talking to them face to face. To me, these conversations were more reasonable to realize their opinions.

Therefore, in this essay, I intended to present the *data* as raw materials or the ingredients. I would be glad if it just helps to depict some of the reasons that the interviewees, the young Moroccan 'highly-qualified' and 'highly-skilled' people aspire to go to Europe and abroad, how these people perceive the integration issues around the Moroccan communities in Europe, and how it affects to their aspiration.

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