CAN SOCIALIZATION CHANGE STATES IN GLOBAL POLITICS?

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Abstract: In a world that is becoming more globalized and connected, the management of immigration is not just a matter of internal affairs anymore. This phenomenon is starting to raise questions on race and multiculturalism in addition to creating communitarianism occurrences which can be problematic in a united Europe. In addition, these migration fluxes can generate diplomatic tensions and even go so far as lead to terrorism. In order to explain this from an International Relations perspective this study is going to analyze migration flows and foreign policy in the context of the social constructivist and neorealist paradigms and compare the two approaches. Social constructivism states that International Relations are shaped by social interactions and ideas rather than material things, while neorealism relies on the principle of anarchy that determines the relations between countries and as a consequence the primary goal of States is to gain power in order to ensure their survival in the International arena. In our case, the first paradigm implies that socialization is the main catalyst in the question of immigration and foreign policy, whereas the second would define immigration related policies as a way to gain and maintain power. Therefore, this essay is going to study these theories and determine the nature of the link that connects them by analyzing the social representations, political culture and instrumentalization of foreign policy relating to North African immigrants in both their home and host countries.

The heterogeneous essence of North African societies makes studying them very complex and multidimensional as they are composed of different ethnic, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. In order to simplify the analysis, this study is going to focus exclusively on people who are neither part of the privileged nor middle class which generally constitute a different type of immigrants. Furthermore, as history and cultures differ from country to country the first part of this essay focuses on Morocco for a more comprehensive analysis of its political socialization processes and foreign policy.
Résumé : Dans un monde de plus en plus globalisé et connecté, la gestion de l'immigration n'est plus seulement une question d'affaires intérieures. Ce phénomène commence à soulever des problématiques sur le multiculturalisme en plus de créer des instances de communautarisme qui peuvent poser problème dans une Europe unie. De plus, ces flux migratoires peuvent générer des tensions diplomatiques et même aller jusqu'au terrorisme. Afin d'expliquer cela du point de vue des relations internationales, cette étude va analyser les flux migratoires et la politique étrangère dans le contexte des paradigmes sociaux constructivistes et néoréalistes et comparer les deux approches. Le constructivisme social affirme que les relations internationales sont façonnées par des interactions sociales et des idées plutôt que par des choses matérielles, tandis que le néoréalisme s'appuie sur le principe d'anarchie qui détermine les relations entre les pays, par conséquent, l'objectif principal des États est de gagner du pouvoir afin d'assurer leur survie sur la scène internationale. Dans notre cas, le premier paradigme implique que la socialisation est le principal catalyseur de la question de l'immigration et de la politique étrangère, alors que le second définirait les politiques liées à l'immigration comme un moyen d'acquérir et de conserver le pouvoir. Cet essai va donc étudier ces théories et déterminer la nature du lien qui les relie en analysant les représentations sociales, la culture politique et l'instrumentalisation de la politique étrangère relative aux immigrés maghrébins tant dans leur pays d'origine que d'accueil.

L'essence hétérogène des sociétés maghrébines rend leur étude très complexe et multidimensionnelle car elles sont composées d’origines ethniques, socio-économiques et éducatives différentes. Afin de simplifier l'analyse, cette étude va se concentrer exclusivement sur les personnes qui ne font pas partie des classes privilégiées ou moyennes qui constituent généralement un type différent d'immigrés. De plus, comme l'histoire et les cultures diffèrent d'un pays à l'autre, la première partie de cet essai se concentre sur le Maroc pour une analyse plus complète de ses processus de socialisation politique et de sa politique étrangère.
I- Social representations of Europe among Moroccan citizens

Socialization can be defined as the internalization process of societal norms and values\(^1\), which can be formal or informal, meaning either explicitly taught, like at school, or implicitly by imitating family members or interacting with peers. In this context, we are going to, on the one hand, point out the social representations Moroccan people have on Europe and its inhabitants; and on the other hand, address their political socialization which focuses on the crystallization of political identities\(^2\), how citizens perceive power and how they should behave in their respective political and economic institutions\(^3\).

The main pull factor European countries have on Moroccan citizens is their image and the emotions they arouse in them: these are social representations, which are socio-psychological constructs that represent Europe in their minds\(^4\). For most of our targeted demographic, Europe is an ideal place, where people live freely, in opulence and respect. Multiple agents are the cause of such ideas: first, people who already live or have lived in a European country give the locals selective information about their experience. This tendency to embellish reality and to idealize it is said to stem from their own disappointment that they must hide when they come back to their home country in order to maintain the myth, give an image of success and keep up with their peers’ and family’s expectations. This idealization of Europe has consequently become the norm and is perpetuated by the entire society. The second factor is tourists and the image they give when visiting the country. As they are coming for leisure and tend to spend more money than they usually would, they give the impression of having a much higher quality of life. The media enhances this image of financial abundance

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by showing examples of famous maghrebian people who have completed a successful social ascension in Europe such as the footballer Zineddine Zidane or the comedian Jamel Debbouze⁵.

Nevertheless, in order to make the concrete and heavy decision to leave their home country, there need to be enough push factors that make immigrants give up the support of their family and convince them to face the unknown. The reasons are very broad, encompassing psychological, socioeconomic and political factors and may differ from one person to another, however, some generalities persist when it comes to the objective realities of the people.

Morocco is a country with a very high rate of inequality with a Gini index of 46.4, and this is manifested on multiple levels. First, it is relevant to state that the richest 20% of the population holds 53.3% of the total national household income, against 5.6% for the bottom 20% (Annex 1)⁶. Coupled with a crippling lack of equal opportunity and access to education and employment, social climbing is extremely difficult. Furthermore, there is a tremendous regional disparity in the distribution of resources as the regions of Casablanca-Settat and Rabat Salé-Kenitra, the respective economic and political capitals, contribute to half of the gross domestic product of the country (Annex 2)⁷.

When these conditions are added to a general distrust of the government which is believed to be hoarding resources and jobs in favor of the elites, the people find themselves in a position of hopelessness. Of course, change is out of the question, as the global political culture in Morocco is punctuated by a deeply rooted fear of criticizing or opposing the regime. The result of this way of thinking is political passivity: most people never see themselves as political actors, or even as a part of the political arena, thus allowing all sorts of abuse in parties and leadership positions.


The combination of poor quality of life and feelings of helplessness leads to a social phenomenon of mass immigration or at least the intention of it, with an estimated 82% of high schoolers and 52% of university students who are willing to emigrate. In order to prevent a large inflow of people and preserve its internal security, the European Union had to implement a visa program, which carefully selects who can go in and out of their territory based on their socioeconomic situation and the motives of their stay. Furthermore, Morocco, among many other African countries, receives grants from the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa in order to promote stability in the region and better manage migration flows.

However, in May 2021, an estimated 8000 illegal immigrants crossed the official border that is situated in Spanish enclave Ceuta. It is suspected that Moroccan authorities suspended their border control to apply pressure on Spain for diplomatic reasons, even though it has not been officially confirmed. Back in April 2021, Brahim Ghali, leader of the Polisario Front for the independence of Western Sahara, was welcomed in Spain for humanitarian reasons as he was hospitalized in the country. This event caused diplomatic tensions between the host country and Morocco as the latter claims the desert as part of its territory. This is a good example of the instrumentalization of immigration policies for the sake of gaining power, in this case for Morocco to fully acquire the Sahara.

II- The situation of North African immigrants in host countries

The subject of analysis in the following part of this study is going to be Maghrebians as a whole in French society as it is the country that has the most North African immigrants. Shedding light on their living conditions and their place in the host community is going to help understand the migration phenomenon from the West’s perspective. First, we are going to study the social representations of « ethnic French people », in this case those who do not generally have other immediate origins, particularly Eastern. When it comes to their general opinions about immigrants, the French people are somewhat divided. However, we can draw two


conclusions from studies conducted by two entities, Ipsos and the CNDH: discrimination based solely on race has seen a strong decline in the past years, but it has been replaced by a cultural clash, the refusal of different practices and values, and a large part of French people think that Islam is a threat to French identity11 12.

After World War II, France was in urgent need of a workforce in order to rebuild the country as the population was drastically reduced after the conflict and while the French’s standard of living rose, the demand for menial jobs decreased. Therefore, the State appealed to Mediterranean countries, especially to North Africa which was freshly decolonized and whose economic situation was deteriorating, and opened the borders to welcome the workers13. These first-generation immigrants were afterwards joined by their families and with time, the number of North African immigrants increased adding illegal immigration to the mix.

However, despite their number and the decades these Maghrebians have spent in France, multiple factors have slowed down their integration. In fact, a 2018 study showed that many ethnic French people thought immigrants were not well-integrated in their society and according to public opinion, the prevalent reasons are related to economic difficulties, cultural differences, geographical and regional grouping when it comes to housing and education and the practice of religion among other things. Nevertheless, what most believe is the biggest reason is the refusal of said immigrants to integrate into French society (Annex 3)14.

While it is important to recognize that the context factors play an important role in the lack of integration, we need to reflect on the question of whether North African immigrants


refuse to integrate into French society. The key concept here is identity and a lot of the social dynamics between French Maghrebians and ethnic French people rely on it.

When asked about what it means to be French, most French ethnic people evoke the values of the republic as a core part of their identity. However, this poses a problem for immigrants in two ways. On the one hand, for religious and ethnic reasons, people of North African descent might find it hard to assimilate French culture as they could view it as clashing with their values and traditions. The universality of French values does not give a substantial importance to multiculturalism in policymaking; therefore, not enough efforts are made from both sides to acknowledge their differences and compromise. On the other hand, even when immigrants assimilate Republican values and try to integrate in French society, they report that their non-whiteness is an obstacle to being considered as fully French. As identity is relational, self-identification does not seem to be enough for North African immigrants’ integration\textsuperscript{15}. Therefore, there is a mismatch between their legal citizenship and their cultural identity that creates individual and societal discomfort and may even lead to conflict.

The recent rise in national and global terrorism has only enhanced the divide between the French people. First, it has created divergences in opinion between them, secondly, it has sparked fear of the religion of Islam and its manifestations among non-Muslims as many of them see things like the hijab, mosques or halal meat as a threat to laicity and to the French Republican values. This situation creates an atmosphere of fear and lack of trust that right-winged parties exploit in order to gain power on the national as well as on the international level. Indeed, the Front National party, led by Marine Lepen who is well-known for her controversial words, formed a coalition with other right-winged parties and used the anger of the French people in order to win the European elections of 2019 which aimed to designate representatives of France in the European Parliament\textsuperscript{16}.


Finally, if we take social dynamics as one of the factors that lead to terrorism, we could say socialization has a substantial impact on Anti-terrorism foreign policy in France which consists in reducing the influence of terrorist groups, preventing radicalization, fighting propaganda networks and “protecting French interests and nationals abroad”\(^{17}\). This last point shows that in addition to preserving the security of its territory, the established policy also aims at maintaining foreign diplomatic, commercial, cultural, economic and military interests which are all components of the State’s power.

In conclusion, we have seen that socialization plays an important role in motivating North Africans to immigrate whether it is in the way they view Western societies, or their stance on politics and power in their own country; and when they cross the border in legal or illegal ways, they are faced with a cultural gap and most of them are never truly assimilated as European citizens. Many political decisions are made as a result and some of them instrumentalize immigrants’ social situations for their own interests, therefore, we could say that socialization is the starting point of the realist approach, then in turn, policies and politics influence the social representations to a certain extent. We can deduce that these two approaches are codependent. However, it would seem that the social paradigm is dominant in the question of immigration as it directly involves humans which are very complex and this theory is more multidimensional than the realist one. For instance, the fact that North African immigrants would rather throw themselves in the sea and risk their lives to reach Europe than engage in political reforms in their home country might go against the realist principle that human nature drives people to do whatever necessary in order to survive. Nevertheless, the realist approach does apply in cases such as Ceuta’s and although it might be efficient for applying pressure on other States, this procedure has a human cost. This raises the question of ethics in International Relations and the importance they should have in policy and decision making. Is it really viable to theorize and act in a discipline that governs human lives without establishing fair ethical norms, even in cases that are not punishable by International Law?

References


Appendix

Annex 1: Evolution of the share of average household expenditure top 10% vs bottom 10% in Morocco

Annex 3: Ranking of the reasons why immigrants are not well-integrated within the society according to French people in 2018