Unveiling Adaptation Modes In Migrants’ Careers:  
A Spotlight On Sub-Saharan Transitions In Morocco

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of exploratory research on the careers of sub-Saharan migrants in the Moroccan context. It contributes to the theoretical corpus on career choice by focusing on adaptive career mechanisms in a South-South migration context. Using an exploratory qualitative approach, we collected and analyzed data on the strategies mobilized by migrants to adapt their careers to the labor market imperatives of the host country. Our results suggest that the adaptive strategies of our informants fell into four paths: engaging in a process of active socialization, maintaining a professional project in spite of uncertainty, constantly cultivating a sense of mastery, and cobbling together rewarding approaches to linguistic adaptation. The individual coping patterns of the participants in our study are much more akin to survival strategies than to career strategies. By highlighting the representational complexity of career choice, this study adds to the domain of application of career choice theory by addressing a migration context with a grounded logic that takes into consideration sociocultural parameters.

Keywords: Career construction, career change, labor migration, career adaptation.
JEL classification: J6 Mobility, Unemployment, Vacancies, and Immigrant Workers

RESUME

Ce papier présente les résultats d'une recherche exploratoire sur la carrière des migrants subsahariens dans le contexte marocain. Il contribue au corpus théorique sur le choix de carrière en mettant l'accent sur les mécanismes adaptatifs de carrière en contexte de migration sud-sud. Avec une approche qualitative à visée exploratoire, nous avons collecté et analysé des données sur les stratégies mobilisées par les migrants pour adapter leurs carrières aux impératifs du marché du travail du pays hôte. Nos résultats suggèrent que les stratégies adaptatives de nos informants se sont déclinées en quatre cheminement : s'engager dans un processus de socialisation active, entretenir un projet professionnel en dépit de l'incertitude, cultiver constamment le sentiment de maîtrise et bricoler des approches d'adaptation linguistique valorisante. Les modes individuels d'adaptation des participants à notre étude s'assimilent beaucoup plus à des stratégies de survie qu'à des stratégies de carrière. En faisant ressortir la complexité représentationnelle du choix de carrière, cette étude enrichit le domaine d'application de la théorie du choix de carrière en se penchant sur un contexte migratoire selon une logique enracinée qui prend en considération des paramètres socioculturels.

Keywords: Construction de carrière, changement de carrière, migration de travail, adaptation de carrière.
JEL classification: J6 Mobility, Unemployment, Vacancies, and Immigrant Workers
1 Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of the modern professional world, there is a growing academic curiosity that seeks to unravel the intricate patterns underlying human work processes. Simultaneously, HR practices within contemporary organizations have undergone profound transformations, most notably with the rapid digitalization of HR functions [1]. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated these changes, prompting discussions about the lasting transformation of management in response to external shocks [2]. This transformation necessitates a reevaluation of HR management strategies to effectively address the new challenges posed by an increasingly dynamic environment.

Within this dynamic environment, the field of career management has also witnessed significant shifts. While many employees in large organizations benefit from meticulously planned career paths within a supportive framework [3, 4], a substantial number of workers find themselves navigating self-directed careers, often amidst ambiguity and uncertainty. Among these individuals are approximately 84 million migrants who have departed from their countries of origin for a multitude of reasons [5]. The journey of a migrant is fraught with new environments, challenges, and opportunities [6]. Upon entering the workforce of their host country, migrants must grapple with language barriers, cultural disparities, and the imperative to establish connections within local networks to advance their professional ambitions [7]. These factors significantly influence their job-seeking efforts, employability, and the effectiveness of integration initiatives in the new labor market [8], often leading career trajectories to deviate significantly from initial expectations [6]. It is under this illuminating backdrop that we embark on a comprehensive exploration of the career trajectories of Sub-Saharan migrants.

In the African context, the migration patterns within Sub-Saharan Africa have gradually shifted toward Morocco in recent years [9]. Some scholars argue that the majority of Sub-Saharan migrants now choose the Kingdom of Morocco as their destination [10]. Surprisingly, despite the significance of this phenomenon, there is a notable scarcity of academic studies, particularly when it comes to understanding its organizational dimensions [11]. Our research interest is centered on unraveling the intricate tapestry of representations associated with adaptive career mechanisms among Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco, drawing upon the rich framework provided by the Career Construction Theory developed by Savickas [12, 13].

To illuminate the factors influencing the enactment of adaptive career strategies among Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco, we have adopted a qualitative exploratory approach. Our research seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature on the Career Construction Theory by delving into the adaptive responses that define the careers of Sub-Saharan migrants residing in Morocco. This exploration aims to uncover the unique challenges, strategies, and adaptations that these migrants employ as they navigate their career paths in a distinct and multifaceted context. One of the pivotal aspects of our research involves gaining a deeper understanding of the various factors that shape career decisions and adaptations among Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. Recognizing that migration is a complex process driven by a myriad of factors including economic opportunities, political instability, and personal aspirations, our study aims to elucidate the intricate interplay between these factors and their influence on career choices and adaptations in an unfamiliar land. Cultural factors also play a critical role in the careers of Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. Cultural differences can pose significant challenges as migrants strive to integrate into the local workforce. Language barriers, disparities in work norms, and unfamiliar cultural practices can all impact an individual's career progression. Therefore, our research endeavors to explore how Sub-Saharan migrants navigate and adapt to these cultural differences in their pursuit of meaningful and successful careers.
Economic considerations form another vital dimension of our research. Sub-Saharan migrants often face unique economic challenges, including limited access to formal employment opportunities and financial resources. These economic constraints can significantly influence career decisions and adaptations. Our study aims to uncover the innovative strategies employed by Sub-Saharan migrants to overcome these economic barriers and achieve their career goals in the Moroccan context. Furthermore, we recognize the pivotal role of social networks and support systems in shaping career trajectories. Sub-Saharan migrants frequently rely on their social networks to access job opportunities, obtain valuable information, and navigate the complexities of the local job market. Our research delves into the role of social networks in the careers of migrants, examining how they leverage these connections to advance professionally and overcome the challenges they encounter.

As we embark on this research journey, we remain acutely aware of the potential policy implications of our findings. Understanding the intricacies of career experiences among Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco can inform the development of more effective integration and employment policies tailored to address the unique challenges faced by this diverse population. By shedding light on the adaptive strategies employed by migrants, our research aims to contribute to the creation of supportive environments that facilitate their career success and overall well-being. The evolving landscape of HR practices and the complex challenges faced by Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco provide a captivating backdrop for our research. By delving into the career trajectories of Sub-Saharan migrants and the adaptive strategies that define their journeys, we aim to contribute valuable insights to the field of career management. Our research offers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted factors that shape career decisions and adaptations in diverse contexts, ultimately contributing to the development of policies and practices that promote the career success and integration of Sub-Saharan migrants into the workforce.

2 Theoretical overview

An overview of academic works that focused on career management reveals a consensus among researchers about the profound changes occurring in the field of HR [14]. An increasing number of studies seek to deepen the understanding of the implications of structural changes in modern economies on workers’ career choices. Nowadays, individuals tend to perceive career success by considering various aspects of their lives [15]. These fundamental changes are characterized by a focus on life roles (roles assumed in work, family, community, etc.) and their impact on careers. In this context, qualitatively studying adaptive career modes in transitional contexts represents a promising avenue that has not been sufficiently explored [16, 17].

Moreover, careers are now approached with self-management and individual responsibility, moving away from traditional frameworks where organizations take charge of career planning through HRP (Human Resources Planning). Hall [18] explains that starting from the 1990s, resource scarcity and changes in society and organizational cultures have limited the time horizon in which workers envision their careers. Theoretically, the focus has gradually shifted towards a loss of boundaries in careers, as movement between organizations has become not only natural but also necessary in an economic landscape characterized by underemployment and increasing precarity in professional relationships [4]. In response to these new economic configurations, non-traditional theories began to emerge in the late 1980s, as described by Arthur et al. [19], providing conceptual support for career studies. These included the Chicago school, psychology, and social sciences. The Chicago school shifted the focus of studies from bureaucratic/organizational ideals during the training phase towards more dynamic and flexible situational ideals, considering the individual’s personal, social, and family life spaces [20]. From a psychological perspective, Bell and Staw [21] describe individuals as shapers of their own careers, creating personal meaning in their work. The social sciences
perspective emphasizes the importance of considering a career as a system composed of interdependent elements contributing to the individual’s adaptation to the environment in pursuit of a more or less conscious professional project. Thus, a career is not approached as a simple cause-and-effect relationship in a person’s trajectory [19]. The protean career and boundaryless career theories are two ways of making sense of the socio-economic and organizational changes that have led to the necessity for professionals to manage their own careers [22]. According to Kostal and Wiernik [23], these conceptions have dominated the theoretical landscape over the past two decades and are currently referred to as the new careers, a concept stemming from a globalized economy that implies a significant shift in psychological contracts between employees and employers. Hall [4] suggests that the protean career framework allows for the study of careers in a socio-economic configuration where job security has become scarce. The protean career represents the process in which individuals individually manage their careers to achieve professional success [4, 18]. The boundaryless career, as revealed by Arthur et al. [19], serves as a counterpoint to traditional theories. For these authors, careers transcend organizational boundaries and are characterized by professional mobility supported by professional networks, labor market information, and voluntary efforts for continuous updating of knowledge and skills [24]. Arthur [25] lists several meanings associated with this type of career, reflecting movements between organizations beyond the boundaries of a single entity, complex and less stable employee-employer relationships, reliance on external networks or information, and the breakdown of traditional hierarchical and subordination relations. Gunz et al. [26] explain that boundaryless careers, which they describe as "smart careers," emerged in response to waves of workforce reductions that hit economies in the 1990s, exposing people to a threatening and insecure world. This conceptual framework is based on competencies aligned with the cognitive economy that has developed in recent years. Khapova et al. [27] explain that the term "smart career" is derived from Quinn's [28] work on intelligent organizations, where knowledge guides the organization, necessitating the development of skills related to culture, expertise, and the integration of social networks. In an unstable world with no promise of stability, individuals must develop transferable skills and pay increasing attention to their employability. Arthur et al. [29] propose the accumulation of skills that should not be tied solely to the needs of one employer but should be transferable and applicable in different professional settings. Veloso et al. [22] identified the skills proposed by these authors as the "Know Why," reflecting individual identity and motivation, personal meaning, and identification with one's work; the "Know How," representing specialized individual abilities relevant to their field of work; and the "Know Whom," reflecting the presence in relational networks that can bring professional value.

Academic works on the new careers emphasize that modern organizations increasingly value cross-functional skills as they encourage employees to work on group projects and adapt more easily to technological advances [22]. Regarding employability, job seekers must possess strong relational resources and negotiation skills. This observation is particularly true for new generations of employees, whose professional projects are characterized by inter-organizational careers that go beyond the boundaries of a single organization. For example, Generation Y professionals change employers more frequently than Generation X and Baby Boomers and are in constant pursuit of a sense of identity that lies between the professional and extra-professional domains [30, 31]. These new professionals seek companies whose organizational cultures align with the values they hold. The new behavioral orientations can be categorized into three types [32]: identity orientations, favoring a coherent sense-making throughout a career marked by changing statuses, roles, and companies; evolutionary orientations, responding to the adaptive imperative for survival in a changing organizational environment, leading to the acquisition of certain competencies;
and teleological orientations, referring to the ability to steer one's own career according to dynamic representations of professional projects.

The business world has evolved along with the aspirations of the new generations of employees. Fundamentally, this represents a systemic change that places a renewed focus on the search for meaning in work, the redefinition of professional ethics, the rediscovery of life projects, and the resurgence of spirituality in the workplace [33, 34, 35].

Savickas' career theory [12, 13] delves into the complex dimensions of employees' professional behavior throughout their careers. It is grounded in the mechanisms of employees' adaptation in pursuing their career ambitions, highlighting the variety of resources and competencies that contribute to career success. In this paper, we focus on the adaptive mechanisms in the careers of Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco, shedding light on their competencies, attitudes, beliefs, and actions in response to the professional demands of the Moroccan job market, transitions, and uncontrollable external events [13]. In doing so, our study contributes to Savickas' career choice theory [12, 13] by examining it in the context of career transitions [15]. Despite Savickas [13] highlighting that de-normalized career trajectories consist of more frequent and less predictable career transitions, field studies on the construction of such careers are relatively scarce. The career choice theory is based on the assumptions of voluntarism and elements of differential psychology, explaining the uneven adaptive capacities of individuals. It also posits that individuals' career adaptation is "conditioned by historical era, dependent on local situations, and varies according to social roles" [12]. Therefore, understanding the socio-cultural environment of individuals' career adaptation would be interesting. Such an approach allows for gathering insights into career behaviors. As a result, this contribution responds to the calls for further studies on the experiences of job seekers in general [36] and migrants seeking employment specifically [37], providing valuable insights into career practices in a migratory context.

3 Method

Understanding the representative worlds of the participants in our study requires a qualitative approach to grasp their perceptions, sense-making processes, motivations, and fears. It is essential not to confine the respondents within rigid frameworks predetermined by the researcher. Therefore, we drew inspiration from the empirical-inductive qualitative methodology of Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton [38] to design our research. This methodology originates from the Grounded Theory, developed by two American sociologists, Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, and introduced to the social science research community in their book titled "The Discovery Of Grounded Theory; Strategies for Qualitative Research," published in Chicago in 1967 [39]. Unlike hypothetico-deductive approaches, which rely on predetermined hypotheses, the empirical-inductive approach aims to construct theories based on data and empirical situations. A study employing Grounded Theory typically starts with a question or even a collection of qualitative data. As the researcher analyzes the collected data, they observe ideas, concepts, and elements that repeat. The researcher then codes these repetitions, and through subsequent analyses, groups the codes into concepts and eventually into categories. These categories can form the basis of a new theory.
Our interview guide was designed following the broad orientations of the career construction theory while also considering the main objective of our study: to explore the adaptive modes of the career of Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. The interview questions focused on the professional experiences of the Sub-Saharan migrants. The interview guide included a set of fundamental questions covering the following topics: participants’ biographies, their past and present work experiences, their professional skills, their adaptive responses during the transition to the Moroccan job market, the obstacles and facilitators in their environment, and their perspectives on future careers. The interviews were conducted in bilingual format (French or English, depending on the language preference of the participant) and had an average duration of 56 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The semi-structured nature of our interviews allowed ample space for our informants to express themselves, enabling the emergence of the specificities of their individual stories. We prepared predetermined questions while also providing opportunities for respondents to express themselves openly [40, 41]. This approach helped us recognize the impact of specific contextual events on the adaptive behavior of Sub-Saharan migrants and understand how they adapt their careers in host countries. We emphasized confidentiality rules to ensure anonymity throughout the data processing and result dissemination processes and obtained informed consent from the participants to participate in our study.

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1 Studies stopped in high school before obtaining any diploma.
Table 2 : Data encoding structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Order Codes</th>
<th>Second Order Codes</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Manque de connaissances de ce qu’il faut faire et ce qu’il faut éviter dans des situations données ;</td>
<td>→ Barrières au décryptage des codes implicites</td>
<td>→ Facteurs contextuels de socialisation</td>
<td>→ Engage in a process of active socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rencontres avec des locaux ;</td>
<td>→ Opportunités de décryptage des codes implicites</td>
<td>→ Facteurs individuels de socialisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Situations professionnelles révélatrices ;</td>
<td>→ Stratégie de déchiffrage des codes</td>
<td>→ Facteurs contextuels liés à la gestion de carrière</td>
<td>Maintaining a professional project despite uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Double référentiels : anciennes carrière et nouvelle carrière ;</td>
<td>→ Tactique de déchiffrage des codes</td>
<td>→ Facteurs individuels de gestion de carrière</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accès à des réseaux locaux ;</td>
<td>→ Barrières à la gestion de carrière</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Compréhension des significations associées à certains comportements ;</td>
<td>→ Opportunités à la gestion de carrière</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Chocs liés à la transition de ma carrière ;</td>
<td>→ Stratégie de gestion de carrière</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Discontinuité dans mon projet de vie ;</td>
<td>→ Tactique de gestion de carrière</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Affiliation au réseau Alumni de mon école au Maroc ;</td>
<td>→ Barrières à l'accès au sentiment de maîtrise</td>
<td>→ Facteurs contextuels liés au sentiment de maîtrise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Régularisation de ma situation légale (résidence et travail).</td>
<td>→ Opportunités à l'accès au sentiment de maîtrise</td>
<td>→ Facteurs contextuels liés au sentiment de maîtrani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elaboration d'un projet professionnel ouvert sur le changement et opportuniste ;</td>
<td>→ Activation du discernement émotionnel</td>
<td>→ Facteurs individuels liés au sentiment de maîtrance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bâtir un projet de carrière sur le domaine d'expertise ;</td>
<td>→ Décision émotionnellement intelligente</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Se focaliser sur le verre à moitié plein ;</td>
<td>→ Barrières à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td>→ Facteurs contextuels liés à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td>Tinkering with rewarding linguistic adaptation approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mettre en place une action concrète chaque jour ;</td>
<td>→ Opportunités à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- L'accumulation des incertitudes pèse sur la probabilité de réalisations des objectifs ;</td>
<td>→ Stratégie d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- La perte de temps et des processus qui n'aboutissent pas ;</td>
<td>→ Tactique d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- L'intégration de communauté professionnelles ;</td>
<td>→ Barrières au sentiment de maîtrise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Des gens bienveillants et une culture accueillante ;</td>
<td>→ Opportunités au sentiment de maîtrise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Se rappeler que l'échec est un ingrédient de la réussite et non pas son contraire ;</td>
<td>→ Activation du discernement émotionnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Comprendre que les émotions peuvent être limitantes ou facilitatrices ;</td>
<td>→ Décision émotionnellement intelligente</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- S’auto-motiver ;</td>
<td>→ Barrières à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td>→ Facteurs contextuels liés à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Persister dans la direction souhaitée même en l'absence de validation externe ;</td>
<td>→ Opportunités à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td>→ Facteurs contextuels liés à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Difficulté d'apprendre la langue locale ;</td>
<td>→ Stratégie d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td>→ Facteurs individuels d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Une langue arabe différente même de l’arabe classique ;</td>
<td>→ Tactique d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td>→ Facteurs individuels d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Beaucoup d'entreprises travaillent en français et dans d'autres langues étrangères ;</td>
<td>→ Barrières à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Des secteurs d'activités recrutent des profils anglophones ;</td>
<td>→ Opportunités à l'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Classes de darija payantes et même gratuites</td>
<td>→ Stratégie d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identifier des secteurs qui travaillent dans des langues étrangères ;</td>
<td>→ Tactique d'adaptation linguistique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Viser des entreprises qui valorisent des locuteurs natifs (français et anglais) ;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
During the data processing phase, we followed the methodological orientations of Gioia et al. [38]. According to them, qualitative data are structured by creating clusters of responses. Based on semi-structured interviews, Gioia's method inductively generates the development of concepts and involves three phases to obtain structured data [38]. The first phase involves constructing first-order categories by finding redundancies and similarities in the responses given by the interviewees. This step creates a more manageable quantity of categories with labels and descriptions [38]. In the second phase, these categories are given a deeper structure by linking them to theoretical themes. During the last phase, second-order themes are developed into aggregated second-order dimensions. To be as faithful as possible to the respondents' discourses, we opted for open coding in line with the first phase of Gioia's method, resulting in primary coding followed by secondary coding, forming a reference for reconstructing the personal theories guiding respondents' career choices. Finally, we used second-order categories to abstract concepts while aggregating theoretical dimensions. Table 2 provides the structure of the coding for the data collected in our study.

The analysis of the collected material took into account the contingencies related to the socio-economic context anchoring our research question. Specifically, whenever a contextual theme emerged from an interview and seemed to explain the representations of other respondents in our sample, we revisited the other respondents and revised their interview analyses in light of the emerging concepts. To better ensure internal validity, we invited fellow researchers in human resources management, after the coding process, to provide us with their comments on our coding based on the transcriptions of various interviews. Some disagreements emerged and facilitated the consideration of dimensions that had been overlooked.

4 Findings

In this section, we will examine the results of our study that demonstrate adaptive work, which enabled our respondents to cope with their career transitions, leading to adjustments in their representations and behaviors in the Moroccan job market. Broadly speaking, the adaptive strategies of our participants can be categorized into four paths: engaging in an active socialization process (1), maintaining a professional project despite uncertainty (2), consistently cultivating a sense of mastery (3), and tinkering rewarding linguistic adaptation approaches (4).

(1) Engaging in a process of active socialization

Firstly, effective socialization appears to predict, from the perspective of our respondents, successful career transitions. Socialization refers to the processes through which individuals acquire and internalize the norms, values, and roles that govern social life, thus constructing their psychological and social identity [42]. While every migrant is curious about the local job market and its opportunities, they often lack the necessary knowledge. In fact, both culturally and institutionally, Morocco is very different from the migrants' countries of origin. Knowing what to explore is the first step for migrants to understand new career possibilities. The second step is to seek avenues of socialization and develop a means to navigate the context. Certain aspects may remain elusive without an appropriate learning strategy. Networking can create a solid foundation of contacts to better comprehend implicit codes and unofficial rules of the job market. As Moïse said:

"...If you want to know the way to a market opportunity, you need to meet people... it’s an immersion. I meet you over a coffee or a drink... We talk about current events, football, anything and everything... it gives me an idea of things related to the concept of the world... it allows me to gather your suggestions on certain approaches or actions to undertake... I learn a lot from meeting local people."
At times, socialization leads to friendships that provide not only relational support but also access to unexpected resources. Many migrants state that knowing locals and forming relationships with former employers significantly boosted their careers. Thus, social connections serve as an effective resilience tool in a competitive and challenging job market in various respects. Furthermore, whenever contact with the local population was challenging due to language or cultural barriers, the participants in our study relied on the advice of others from the same ethnic background and with similar experiences to learn more about opportunities and threats in the job market. Some of our respondents draw upon their work networks to prepare for future career opportunities.

(2) Maintaining a professional project despite uncertainty

Worry about the future is a recurring theme in the statements shared by our participants. Constrained by various uncertainties, some of the interviewed Sub-Saharan migrants feel unable to predict the future and maintain continuous career plans in the host country. The difficulty in establishing a stable career not only affects their sense of control but also their ability to envision the future, as they are unsure of what will happen tomorrow: whether to stay in Morocco, return to their country of origin, or transit to a North Mediterranean country. Faced with this situation, many migrants set short-term goals. Although setting short-term career goals comes at the expense of long-term career planning, it has the advantage of fostering immediate job opportunities. Some migrants proactively anticipate the labor market needs for specific jobs and invest time, energy, and money to meet those demands. This approach ensures that they possess the necessary skills to enter the job market. Yacouba, for instance, states:

"I also applied for a position in the finance department in Casablanca... I had previously trained myself in the accounting software used by Moroccan companies, including Sahih and Ciel. I knew that mastering these programs was crucial to securing the job. In the end, that's what really helped me land the job."

While anticipating the prerequisites of the job market, some migrants consider accepting positions even under less favorable conditions to gain local experience and interact with Moroccans on a daily basis to better decipher the implicit codes of the Moroccan work environment and make the most of it. Consequently, Laura believes that accepting internships at different times helped her better understand the market and underlying norms, which facilitated her job search. This allows them to have a relative advantage in a competitive market, especially when it offers maximum learning opportunities.

(3) Constantly cultivating a sense of mastery

Our research reveals the fundamental role of the sense of mastery as a cornerstone of the career adaptation process. Most participants in our survey stated that they felt they were losing control over their career plans and life projects in general. These migrants have lost control because they often find themselves confronted with uncertainty, lack of certain necessary skills, and difficulties caused by limited social capital. For some of the participants in our study, the lack of academic and professional training weakens their ability to build career plans.

"Since my arrival, I have been looking for a permanent job... It is very difficult to find a professional opportunity in Morocco because almost all job offers always require a diploma and work experience. I did not complete my studies, and I do not have any documents proving my experience in Mali." - Salif

Thus, in a job market characterized by scarce opportunities, the lack of academic and professional training poses a real obstacle to accessing a stable career, especially as the number of school and university graduates increases. Some of our respondents stated that they wasted a lot of time waiting for their job search efforts to bear fruit. The waiting period is distressing.

Success in the career selection process depends on self-esteem. In an adaptive context, fear weighs differently on individuals depending on the challenges they face. This fear is reinforced by feelings of
loneliness, negative attitudes, and a low sense of belonging. Additionally, most migrants have fallen behind the usual timeline of their professional trajectory. Contrasting the stage of her career where she would have been in Senegal with her current status in Morocco, Odette, who sought to return to university, said:

"When I think of my friends in Senegal who are in their final years at university, and I haven't even started my studies [in Morocco], it makes me sad. [...] What am I doing here now in Morocco? I mean, where [in life] am I?"

Nevertheless, participants who succeed in their careers confront this fear by maintaining a confident posture supported by sustained and concerted action. With Morocco's latest geo-economic orientation characterized by some openness to Africa and the royal action towards certain Sub-Saharan communities living in Morocco, some participants in our study felt that Morocco is moving towards their inclusion, and this fosters confidence and initiative. Adaptation in the career of the participants in our study was linked to emotional intelligence, which involves consciously distinguishing between resourceful emotions and limiting emotions. Aïssata tries not to worry too much about everything because she believes that such worries limit her ability to think calmly about her life projects. This sometimes involves diverting her focus from negative aspects; sometimes, it means consciously accepting the loss of control concerning the current life stage.

(4) Tinkering rewarding linguistic adaptation approaches

Our respondents encountered obstacles related to varying degrees of proficiency in Moroccan Arabic, known as Darija. Although French is the primary language in the professional environment in Morocco, and English is gaining importance in certain sectors, mastering Arabic can still help build a career. Abdoulaye, for instance, mentioned,

"Arabic is difficult to learn, but I can manage in small exchanges... I've noticed that when I speak Darija to a Moroccan, I increase my chances of achieving my goals."

The majority of our respondents showed a genuine willingness to overcome uncertainty and take control of their career paths. For example, Barthélémy tried to learn Darija and stayed in touch with Moroccan graduates from his study program to understand the implicit codes that help navigate Moroccan society. He believes that developing a local network of relationships and the ability to keep moving forward despite difficulties are the most reliable defense mechanisms to avoid being overwhelmed by environmental obstacles. The participants rejected the position of being a victim, even when it might have been understandable to others.

Furthermore, some participants successfully transformed the language constraint into a real opportunity by identifying sectors that operate in foreign languages and, more importantly, by targeting companies that value native speakers of French and English. In this context, unlike in other job markets where mastery of the national language is a prerequisite for employment, the formal job market in Morocco does not always demand fluency in Darija, as many private sector organizations function in French (industrial companies, commerce, banks, private schools, private universities, communication agencies, etc.) or other languages such as English, Spanish, German, Italian, and Dutch (transport and logistics, industry, call centers, hospitality, restaurants, etc.). Various free zones established in different regions of the kingdom recruit English-speaking profiles (e.g., Tanger Exportation Free Zone, the industrial acceleration zones of Tanger Med Ksar el Majaz Mellousa 1 and 2, Dakhla and Laâyoune Free Zones, Kebdana and Nado hydrocarbon storage free zones, Kénitra Exportation Free Zone). Additionally, the energy, automotive, and aerospace sectors recruit English-speaking profiles. The same trend applies to the newer Moroccan universities, which are increasingly interested in English-speaking profiles, whether they are private or publicly managed with private management. The tech sector also follows this trend, with recruitment increasingly conducted in English. According to the Moroccan Federation of Information Technology, Telecommunications,
5 Discussion / Conclusion

According to Career Construction Theory, adaptation to a job is based on dimensions rooted in individual differences in personality, resources, and abilities [43]. While personalities, and therefore, attitudes, behaviors, and skills naturally vary from person to person, our results suggest that understanding adaptation processes necessarily involves considering the migration environment, which varies from one country to another and can lead to career disruptions. Overcoming such disruptions depends on how individuals react to contextual parameters. In this regard, three factors seem to be recurrent. Firstly, respondents faced sociocultural uncertainty that seemed to make them lose control. Secondly, the lack of certain personal resources, such as mastering Darija, limits their fields of exploration, making certain opportunities not visible. Ultimately, migrants feel like they are losing a lot of time because they cannot benefit from education and previous work experience. The time it takes to master conversational Darija, understand the Moroccan job market with its implicit rules and strategies, can undermine their sense of control and confidence. At this point, it is essential to contextualize the mastery of Darija to better understand its consideration in our study. This would require a brief historical overview.

During the French protectorate period, French was the official language in administrations and modern education in schools, institutes, and universities, replacing traditional education in Msids, Quranic schools [44]. After Morocco gained independence, classical Arabic replaced French in work and education, but partially. French schooling persisted among affluent segments of society, while Arabic education developed. As a result, classical Arabic is the administrative and territorial language, French is the language of formal professional communication, especially in the private sector (e.g., banks and insurance companies often require French proficiency in their recruitment processes), and Darija, and to a lesser extent, Amazigh, are languages of informal communication [44]. Additionally, tourism and globalization in industry, commerce, and technology have led to a remarkable development of multilingualism.

Formally, some participants in our study were able to access employment, but informally, they were disadvantaged due to their lack of proficiency in Moroccan Arabic, which allows understanding of the implicit aspects of the professional environment. On the other hand, the host environment is also characterized by enabling factors that support migrants' adaptability. Networking contributes to enriching their ability to develop a sense of control, solidify their confidence, and build a circle of social support. These are "meeting spaces" that facilitate contacts between migrants and locals [11]. Adaptation modes are generally supported by unyielding determination and emotional self-regulation abilities. This conclusion echoes research published by Savickas in 2020 [13]. Additionally, the importance of resilience and social skills in developing a facilitating relational network should be emphasized. Our paper highlights how protagonists produce adaptive reactions and build careers. In continuity with the conclusions of the career choice theory [13], adaptive reactions refer to self-regulation that practically translates into goal orientation, emotional management, and the development of behaviors that enable individuals to produce and maintain a consistent sequence of actions despite obstacles in the action environment [45, 46]. A recurrence was observed in the interviewees' statements around the theme of emotional regulation—a mechanism that channels perceptions toward positive and reinforcing interpretations, facilitating the takeover, optimal decision-making, and higher levels of self-esteem. Behaviorally, individuals continued to progress, demonstrate resilience in adversity, and relativize judgments regarding objective constraints and uncertainty.
about the consequences of their career choices. Their self-regulation is also evident in their consistent commitment to predetermined career goals [47, 48] and the cultivation of a curious and exploratory mindset [49, 50].

Our exploration focused on the adaptive modes related to the career of Sub-Saharan migrants in the context of Morocco. For several decades, this country was at the heart of migratory dynamics as an exporter of migrants. Today, Morocco has become a host country for immigration, particularly from Sub-Saharan Africa [9]. By highlighting the opportunities and risks of our sample's careers, as well as the adaptation modes, we also showcased the importance of considering the sociocultural environment in which their careers unfold. The results from our survey resonate with the findings of Haynie & Shepherd [51], which focused on adaptation modes in discontinuous careers in transitional contexts. Conceptually, this study extends the application of the career choice theory by testing it in a migration context. The study also enriches the career choice theory by examining the opportunities and risks of careers with a rooted logic that takes sociocultural parameters into account. By highlighting the representational complexity of career choice, we emphasized the composition of the adaptive reaction-building process in migrants' careers in the host country.

In conclusion, we can say that the individual modes of adaptation of the participants in our study are much more akin to survival strategies than career strategies. This population is characterized more by vulnerability. This reality is even more true as some Sub-Saharan migrants are more seriously considering either returning to their home countries or continuing their migratory trajectories to seek more favorable environments for pursuing their projects. Of course, this observation is only characteristic of the sample we studied and cannot be generalized to all Sub-Saharan migrants. Some migrants have successfully entered the job market and taken advantage of opportunities offered by Moroccan organizations. We could study their cases in future studies. Moreover, with the development of information technologies, some highly qualified Sub-Saharan professionals may not even need to relocate to work in Morocco, thanks to collaborative and distance work approaches.

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