

**Theorizing the Evolution of European Migration Systems
(THEMIS)**

**The Evolution of Moroccan
Migration to the UK**

Scoping Study Report



Hein de Haas, Oliver Bakewell, Agnieszka Kubal
(International Migration Institute, University of Oxford)

January 2011

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Sources

Moroccan migration to the UK has been well documented in a number of sources. Therefore for the purpose of this Scoping Study we primarily relied on reports and publications which have already mapped the corridor between Morocco and the UK/ London (cf. the Bibliography).

The quantitative picture was provided by the existing UK census data between 1981 and 2001, and Annual Population Surveys (2004–2008) using the country of birth variable.

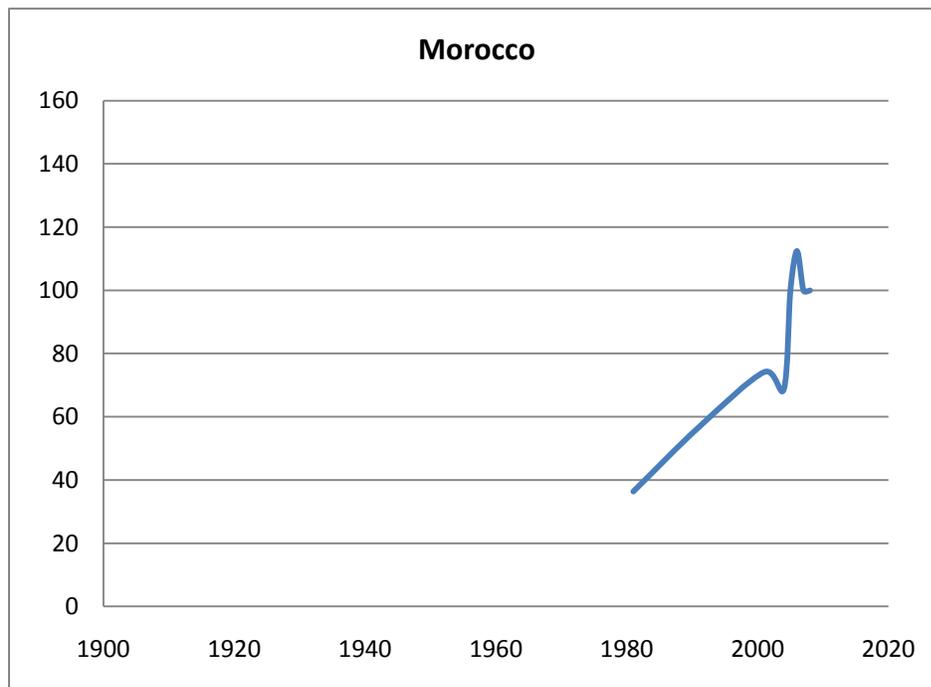
For the qualitative part we interviewed academics (Myriam Cherti, specialist in Moroccan migration to the UK, author of the project: *Moroccan Memories in Britain*) and community workers (Ahmed Bhairien – Moroccan Community Welfare Group, Souad Talsi – Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women Project, and Ali Bahajoub from the British Moroccan Society).

However, in order not to duplicate the work that has already been done, in the interviews we tried to approach the mapping exercise from the perspective of the THEMIS theoretical framework. The theoretical questions that proved particularly interesting with relation to Moroccan migration to the UK focused around the migration dynamics. There is a long history of Moroccan migration to the UK, with different waves of more or less intensified movement. It was interesting to investigate the relationship between the various migration waves, and how they corresponded with the concepts of establishment and decline of a migration system.

1. Theoretical Framework of THEMIS

Moroccans ‘appeared’ on the UK census only in 1981, although they have been present in the UK at least since the large-scale labour migration in the 1960s.

The analysis of the curve tracing the Moroccan-born persons in the UK reveals that migration from Morocco to the UK rose steadily from the 1980s, then declined in the early 2000s, to restart at a much higher speed in the mid 2000s. The differences in figures might however be attributed to the different sources of data – the census (1981–2001) and Annual Population Survey (2004–2008) and their respective methodologies and data collection techniques. After 2006 up to 2008, we can observe a small decline in the population of Moroccan-born persons in the UK, but it does not go as low as the levels before the surge in the 2000s.

Chart 1: Moroccans in the UK. Source: Census Data, Annual Population Survey (Indexed 2008 = 100, 2008= 16,000)

Trends and Types of Migration

Moroccan merchants had established links with Great Britain dating back to the seventeenth century, when Morocco was partially controlled by Britain (1662–1684). During the nineteenth century, as English cotton goods entered Morocco via Gibraltar and Tangier, Farsi merchants began to settle in urban centres such as London, Liverpool and Manchester in England, and Cardiff in Wales (Cherti 2008). Hayes (1905) claims that in the last decade of the nineteenth century over a dozen pioneer Moroccan families lived in Manchester, in a community of about 150 persons at its height. Cherti (2008), who has documented the history of Moroccans in the UK, reveals that the pioneer Moroccan community of Manchester dissipated in the interwar period, when the competition from Japanese goods prevented the export of Lancashire textiles to Morocco. In 1936 the community returned to Morocco and adopted Moroccan citizenship when the country became independent twenty years later (Cherti 2008, p. 75). Those who remained largely anglicised their names and became assimilated into the community (Halliday 1992). The early pioneer community consisted not only of Moroccan Muslims but also of Moroccan Sephardic Jews, who had links with Britain going back to the eighteenth century. The beginning of the migration could be traced to the times when the city of Mogador, now known as Essaouira, came under British influence at the end of the eighteenth century. At that time, English merchants started to trade with Moroccan Jews in Mogador, exchanging Argan oil and Arabic gum for English cloth and silverware (Cherti 2008, p. 76). Most Jewish traders sent their sons at the age of around sixteen to London, Manchester or Birmingham, to work in the textile factories, to learn new skills or to set up a business. The majority of them stayed in England (Cherti 2008, p. 76).

Map 1: Historical map of Morocco with Tangier as an international zone, 1912–1956.



As far as the twentieth century is concerned, the northern region of Morocco (Tangier) – due to its legal status as an international zone (1912–1956) and its proximity to British Gibraltar – started sending migrants to the UK well before Moroccan independence in 1956. One interviewee from the British Moroccan society explained: *‘Tangier was an international city, administered by 14 powers, famous for smuggling, contraband and bohemia. It had a romantic reputation. People were coming and going from Tangier. They were more mobile than in the rest of Morocco.’*

Indeed, as the most recent report on the emigration from Morocco suggests, the increase of immigration in Tangier, from different cities and rural areas of Morocco, has led to a specific urban culture for the city of Tangier heavily influenced by Spanish heritage, which is reflected in the daily lifestyle. In addition to sub-Saharan migrants in transit, and tourists from Europe who settled in the city over a long period of time, the population tends toward a certain palpable cosmopolitanism and cultural diversity (Berriane et al. 2010).

However, in the late 1960s a significant migration started when Moroccan workers, mostly Muslims, came to Britain, hired predominantly by Spanish nationals, to work in the service industries such as hotels and small businesses that prospered during the economic growth during this period (Cherti 2008, p. 77). The Spanish blockade of its border with Gibraltar in 1969 might also have influenced the fact that in Gibraltar itself Moroccan workers replaced Spanish workers in various manual jobs in the British naval base. Via Gibraltar they would then travel to the UK.

Although Cherti demonstrates that this major wave of Moroccan migration to the UK in the 1960s was predominantly an individual initiative based on social networks of friends and families, there is also evidence that it was encouraged by the existence of a **migration industry** (interview 1, 2010). The important link between the Moroccans and the British labour market was constituted by employment agencies established in Gibraltar and run mostly by Spaniards, who responded to the labour skill shortages in the UK, and recruited Moroccan labourers to come and work in the service sector in London (interview 1, 2010). Although at that time Britain had no bilateral migrant workers agreement with Morocco, the bottom-up migration industry in Gibraltar responded to the demands created by the British labour market and largely facilitated the recruitment of migrant labour.

Map 2: Morocco since 1956.



'At that time, the person who wanted to immigrate to England had first to buy an address of a recruiting agency, then one had to go to Melilla to pay a small fee so that a work contract was sent to him' (H.M quoted in Cherti 2008, p. 82):

'In a Spanish newspaper, I saw an advert which said that England was offering jobs as waiters, cooks, and domestic chambermaids for foreign people. That was a great opportunity for me to apply for one of those jobs and travel to England. I did apply through a British Continental Agency in New Bond Street in London. I paid for the work permit in a bank in Ceuta. Once they received the money, they forwarded me the work permit [as a waiter]' (H.A quoted in Cherti 2008, p. 82).

Cherti (2008) also mentions the employment agencies which specialised in the recruitment of Moroccan labourers in London itself: 'Three main agencies – all based at Oxford Circus/Piccadilly – played a key

role in recruiting Moroccan workers. The Mascot Agency recruited workers from Meknes especially to work in Crawley and West London. Guilbert and Castano recruited many workers from the north of Morocco, especially Larache region, to work throughout London' (Cherti 2008, p. 82). They recruited Moroccans to work in the **hotel and catering industries**, for which they were granted work permits.

The main wave of Moroccan **economic migration (migrant workers)** to the UK in the 1960s consisted predominantly of **unskilled and semi-skilled workers**, mostly from northern Morocco – specifically the Jbala region, especially Larache, Tetouan, Tangier and the surrounding areas, with a smaller community from Meknes and Oujda.

The majority of these immigrants settled in cities such as London and Edinburgh, with smaller concentrations in towns such as Slough, St Albans, Crawley and Trowbridge (Cherti 2008, p. 77). Villages such as Beni Garfat, Beni Arouss, Sahel and Smata, from which a large number of Moroccans migrated, are part of the municipality of Larache, therefore most migrants interviewed by Cherti said that they were from Larache (Cherti 2008, p. 78).

The numbers of these early Moroccan migrant workers were not high; Cherti portrays the community as 'relatively small' (Cherti 2008, p. 88). The anecdotal evidence has it that the figure could be estimated at around **12,000** (one interviewee talked specifically about 73–74 *big families*, interview 2, 2010) or **15,000–20,000** (interview with Myriam Cherti). Cherti demonstrates that in contrast to the dominant narratives of labour migration it was not solely men who arrived in the UK from northern Morocco, but this wave of migration had a certain degree of feminisation. Moroccan migrant women in Britain played a major role in the economic life of the family. In many cases, they came first with work permits, and their spouses and children joined them later (Cherti 2008, p. 80).

The profile of the group changed significantly when the process of family reunification started in the 1970s. This wave of Moroccan migrants created the core of the Moroccan community in the UK, the great majority of whom are now British citizens. The family migration continued well into the 1980s, when the generation of Moroccans who arrived in the UK as children (in the first wave of family reunion) reached marriageable age. Souad Talsi is a community worker and chair of the Moroccan women's organisation Al-Hasaniya. She arrived in the UK at the age of seven and recalls how her friends, when they reached the age of sixteen, were married to cousins and 'suitable parties' from Morocco, who then came and joined their spouses in the UK (interview 2010).

The 1980s saw yet another wave of Moroccan migration to the UK. The 'oil boom' in the Gulf and the fortunes of Arab businessmen made the London tourist industry boom in the early 1980s (interviews, 2, 5, 2010). As a result there was a demand for Arabic-speaking workers who could staff numerous restaurants, clubs, bars and hotels where the tourists from the Gulf used to socialise. Quite a significant number of Egyptians and Moroccans came to work in low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs in the city. Cherti observed that this wave of economic migration constitutes some sort of a blank (*'shameful'*) page in the Moroccan shared memory, as some of the women who came to London from Morocco during the 1980s ended up working in the sex industry in the city (interview with Myriam Cherti). As Cherti observes, this wave of semi-skilled workers was accompanied by young professionals and entrepreneurs, mostly from

Casablanca and other larger cities. The regions in Morocco where the migration originated from became more diversified, and were no longer limited to the northern part of Tangier and Larache (Cherti 2008, p. 77). According to Cherti the number of Moroccans who came to the UK in the 1980s was around **10,000** people (interview 3, 2010).

Current Trends – Diversification

The UK imposed visas on Moroccans in the late 1980s, which significantly cut the number of low-skilled and skilled workers and young people travelling to the UK to ‘try their luck’. According to Cherti (2008), the most recent migration wave of Moroccans, which started in the early 1990s, consists mainly of **highly skilled** Moroccan professionals, both from Morocco itself and from France. Many of these recent immigrants currently work in the finance sector in London. They were joined by other highly skilled **students and business persons**. Cherti indicated that this wave of migration is also rather small, with a maximum of **5,000** people (interview with Cherti).

Quantitative Picture

According to the 2001 census there were 10,036 Moroccan-born persons in the UK. The number rose to 18,000 (estimates) in 2006, and then declined to 16,000 throughout 2007 and 2008. However, other official and Moroccan community sources estimate the number of Moroccans in the UK as significantly higher.

Table 1: Moroccan-born persons in the UK. Source: Census Data, Annual Population Survey

Year	Number	Source
1981	5818	Census Data
1991	9073	Census Data
2001	11867	Census Data (OECD)
2004	11000	Annual Population Survey (estimates)
2005	16000	Annual Population Survey (estimates)
2006	18000	Annual Population Survey (estimates)
2007	16000	Annual Population Survey (estimates)
2008	16000	Annual Population Survey (estimates)

There were 30,000 Moroccans registered with the consulate in 2004 but the overall official residence figure cited for the UK by the Migration Information Source is approximately 50,000 (Collyer 2004 in de Haas 2005). According to the Migrant Refugees Communities Forum (MRCF), which in 2009 undertook an oral history project on Moroccans in the UK, there were approximately 35,000 Moroccan migrants living in London (Communities 2009, p. 27). The most generous estimates given by some community

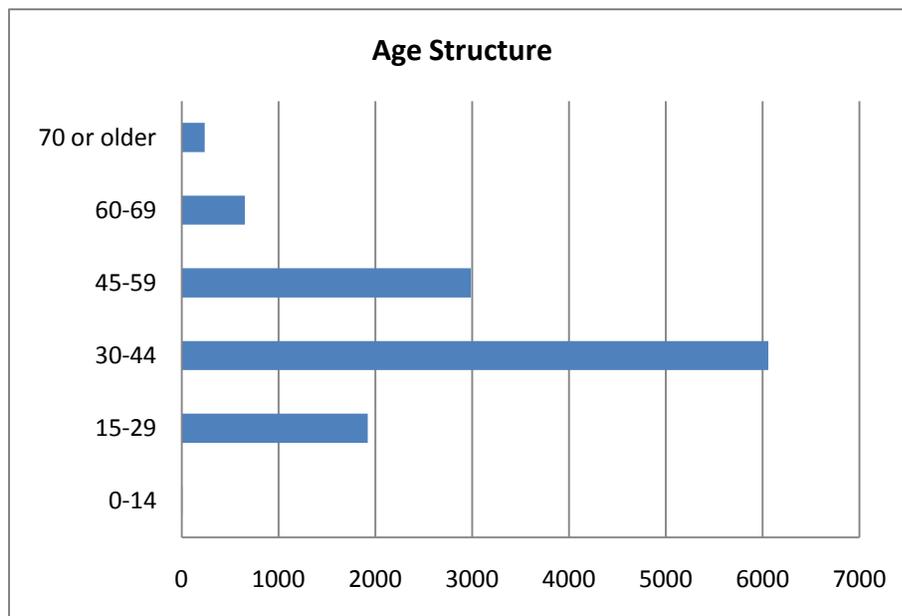
workers and referred to in the Communities (2009) study estimate the number of Moroccan migrants in London as high as 100,000 (Communities 2009, p. 27).

The census 2001 data also gives an indication of the age structure of Moroccans in the UK. Persons aged between 30 and 44 constituted 51 per cent of the Moroccan population in the UK. Their age profile largely corresponds to that of the children of the primary Moroccan migrant workers from the 1960s, who arrived on the wave of family migration in the 1970s, and then married partners also born and brought up in Morocco, who then joined them in the UK. It could also comprise those workers and young professionals who arrived from Morocco in the 1980s, while in their twenties.

Table 2: Age structure of Moroccan-born persons in the UK. Source: Census 2001 (OECD)

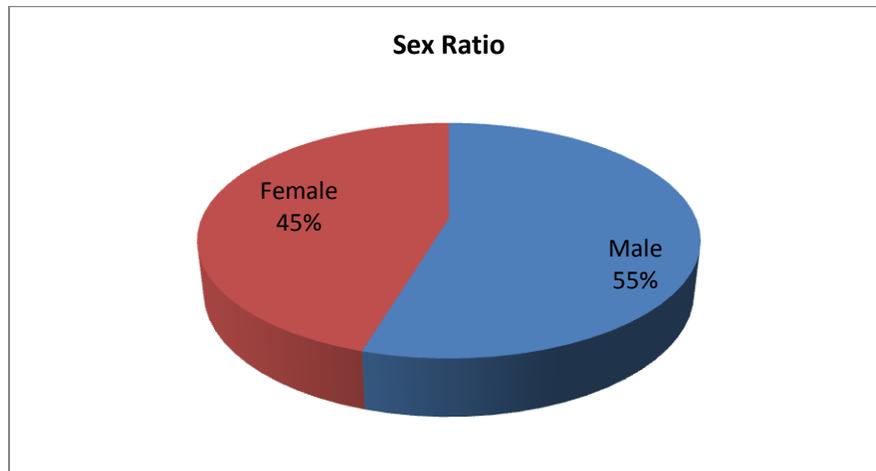
Age	Number
0–14	8
15–29	1922
30–44	6058
45–59	2988
60–69	652
70 or older	239

Chart 2: Age structure of Moroccan-born persons in the UK. Source: Census 2001 (OECD)



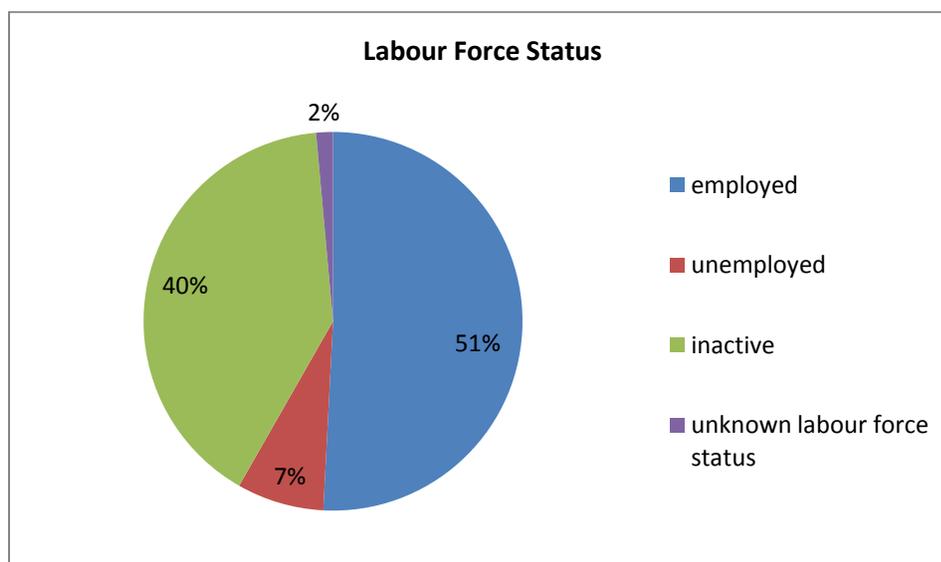
As far as the gender ratio is concerned, Moroccan migration in 2001 tended to be dominated by males. They constituted 55 per cent of the Moroccan-born population in the UK.

Chart 3: Sex ratio of Moroccan-born persons in the UK. Source: Census 2001 (OECD)



As far as labour force status is concerned, the 2001 census revealed that the majority of Moroccans in the UK are employed (51 per cent), with 40 per cent economically inactive. The data again seem to correspond largely with the major wave of economic migration from Morocco, when migrants displayed the rather traditional division of labour in the family. Except for the cases presented by Cherti (2008), the dominant model of the family was that it was the men who provided for the family, with women staying at home and looking after the children (interview 3, 2010).

Chart 4: Labour force status of Moroccan-born persons in the UK. Source: Census 2001 (OECD)

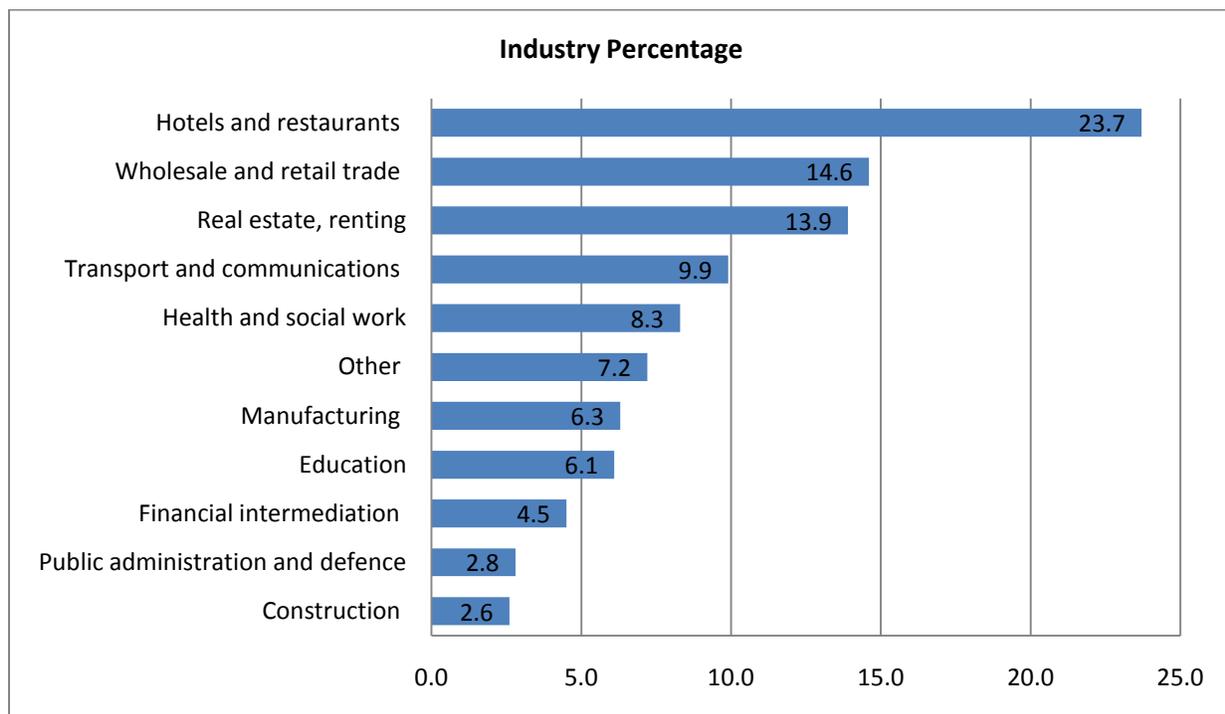


The statistical picture reveals a lower employment rate among Moroccans aged between 16 and 74, as compared to the capital's average (66.6 per cent) (London Authority Data Management and Analysis Group 2005). As Cherti observes, there is however, a slight diversification of the employment sectors

partly due to the entry of the younger generation to the job market, and the subsequent migration of semi-skilled and skilled migrants from the 1980s onwards. The hotel and catering industries are still taking the lead with 23.7 per cent.

Since 1991, the UK Home Office has made 8,525 grants of settlement to Moroccan nationals. These figures have been relatively consistent apart from a small increase between 1998 and 2003 before returning to previous levels. British citizenship acquisition by Moroccans peaked in the second half of the 1980s (at 1500 per year), but has remained relatively stable since 1990, at approximately 600 awards per year (Communities 2009, p. 26).

Chart 5: Industry Percentage. Source: London Authority Data Management and Analysis Group 2005 (based on UK 2001 Census)



With regard to the THEMIS theoretical framework, despite the growing figures suggested by the statistical sources, the feeling given to us by our respondents and community workers is that the **traditional Moroccan community** in the UK is in decline, as ‘nowadays it is very difficult for Moroccans to make it to the UK’ (interview 2, 2010).

One of the interviewees, who came to the UK as a child and then married in Morocco, summarised the situation in the following way: ‘Hardly anybody is coming now. There are these odd students, whom I see on the streets around Portobello Market, who came here to study, but actually to work, and they overstay their visas. Maybe they make up these numbers? We are joined by our families, my mother-in-law came to stay with us for couple of months. But she went back. This is it.’ (interview 3, 2010).

This notable quote suggests that the **different waves of Moroccan migration are quite separate from each other**. This seems to confirm an observation made in other reports that migration as a process is time-bound. Mohamed¹ – representing the major wave of economic migrants and their children from the 1960s to the 1970s, and a prominent member of his community – openly says that the newcomers do not mingle with the ‘old’ people except perhaps occasionally in the mosques. However, it should be pointed out that his organisation (the Moroccan Community Welfare Group), oriented mostly towards the second and third generation of Moroccans in the UK (sporting events, Arabic lessons, an Arabic library and the occasional English lessons for the elderly), does not have much to offer to the newly arrived migrants in terms of practical assistance.

His generation, termed by Cherti as a ‘self-contained community’ (Cherti 2008), also seems not to pay very much attention to the arrival of highly skilled Moroccans and business persons, who started coming to the UK in large numbers in the 1990s. Perhaps the fact that the Moroccan community is internally divided is not all that surprising. The paths of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ Moroccan migrants in London do not necessarily cross with each other. While the latter commute to work to Canary Wharf, or Westminster, the ‘traditional’ Moroccan community does its daily shopping in the Portobello Market, visits the mosque in Ladbroke Grove or drinks coffee in one of the many Moroccan-owned cafes and restaurants in Golborne Road.

It is naïve to believe that any migrant group, once settled in a host country, will intuitively merge with other migrant groups from the same country of origin, overlooking their different class, religious, political, or other divisions. It could be concluded, based on the relatively recent migration history and Moroccan presence in the UK, that the internal dynamics within the community suggest that this is not a homogenous group. Despite the relatively small numbers there are nevertheless **many ‘Moroccan communities’** in London with their own members and distinct organisations. Their presence is an indicator of the existence of a fairly visible community, willing to bring change and yet **separately** to address the distinctive needs of its various groups (Cherti 2008, p. 107).

2. Policy Changes

The pioneer Moroccans arrived in the UK when the **1905 Aliens Act, 1914 Aliens Restriction Act, and 1919 Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act** (which later became Aliens Order 1953) were in place. Moroccans fell under these policies as they were aliens (in contrast to Commonwealth subjects) according to British immigration law of that time. These Acts provided a system of work permits for aliens seeking employment in the UK; registration with the police; and deportation for the public good.

¹ Name Changed.

1960s: Early Years Work Permit Scheme

As a result of the 1905, 1914 and 1919 Acts, individual aliens seeking employment in Britain had to be in possession of a work permit, which was granted by the government to a named employer on a condition that no suitable British person was available to fill the vacancy. This requirement largely explains the operation of the migration industry in the major phase of Moroccan migration to the UK in the 1960s. Moroccans with no personal ties to Britain relied on the agencies to put them in touch with employers, who then – on their behalf – applied to the Home Office for work permits. The work permits were then – via the agency – sent to Moroccans, who could apply to their Ministry of Interior for the passport to be issued.

Moroccans arriving in the UK with a work permit had no right of settlement. They were allowed to settle only after four years of residency and documented employment. Their work permit was valid for one job only, so each time they changed job (within the four years) they employers had to apply for a new permit on their behalf with the Home Office. The Moroccans, as alien workers according to British immigration law, were also subject to the controls after entry; they had to register and report any change of address to the police.

Alien dependent spouses were allowed to enter the UK based on a proof of marriage to the permit holder. They had no right of settlement, and were admitted temporarily for the same period as the primary work-permit holders. As a result they could permanently settle in the UK after four years of residence. They had, however, no right to work. Like the primary work-permit holders they were subject to controls after entry; they had to register and report any change of address to the police.

Alien dependent children were admitted to the UK on the basis of proof of relationship to their parents. If they were under 18 years of age they were admitted for conditional settlement; if they were between 18 and 21 they were granted settlement after four years of conditional residence. They were subject to control after entry on the same conditions as their parents.

Other alien dependants (defined by law as parents over the age of sixty, and other ‘distressed’ relatives) were admitted to the UK on the basis of proof of relationship to the primary work-permit holders. They were allowed to settle if the head of the family was resident in the UK for four years or more. Again, like the head of the family, they were subject to the same controls after entry.

1970s and 1980s: Family Reunification as a Result of the 1971 Immigration Act?

The change in the immigration law in 1971 (1971 Immigration Act) with regard to alien workers did **not bring any significant changes in the legal situation of Moroccan migrants**. They were still only admitted to the UK on the basis of having a work permit which allowed them to work for a named employer (on condition that no suitable British person was available to fill the vacancy). Their work permit was valid for one job only, therefore each time they changed their employment they had to ask their employers to apply for a new work permit on their behalf. They had no right of settlement, but might have been

allowed to settle after four years. The controls after entry stayed the same with regard to primary work-permit holders: they had to register with the police and report any change of address.

Where the 1971 Immigration Act brought significant changes was **with regard to the admission of dependants – spouses, children and other dependants**. The conditions under which alien workers could bring their dependants with them to the UK **became harsher**. Somewhat surprisingly, Cherti (2008) and others observed that a large-scale family reunion took place in the 1970s, with wives, husbands and children joining the primary applicants. An interesting question to ask is why this happened, especially in the light of the **stricter conditions of admission and entry** for dependants which resulted from the 1971 Immigration Act.

In order to be admitted into the UK, alien dependent spouses, children and other dependants had now to be able to prove not only their relationship to the primary work-permit holder, but also that the latter **was able to support them without access to public funds (the welfare benefit system)**.

In addition, alien dependent children had no rights of settlement; conditional residence might have been granted to children up to the age of 18 if they were joining both parents. Those between 18 and 21 were given conditional residence (at the discretion of the Home Office) only in exceptional circumstances. As a result, this rule in practice lowered the age of children who might have been allowed to join their parents from 21 to 18.

The 1971 Act also introduced serious limitations in the admittance of other alien dependants (particularly the parents of the primary work-permit holders). They were not admitted to the UK until the head of the family gained full settlement rights (after four years of residency on the basis of a work permit). The UK government therefore significantly limited the period when the alien worker might have been allowed to be joined by his or her elderly parents. Upon admission, however, the parents were no longer subject to any controls after entry due to the legal status (settlement) of the head of the family.

An in-depth analysis of the British immigration policy that was put in place after 1971 significantly challenges assumptions that family reunification (which became an inseparable part of the trends and patterns of Moroccan migration to the UK in the 1970s and 1980s) was a direct result of this policy. The 1971 Act did not make it easier for the primary work-permit holders to bring dependants with them; if anything it made it more difficult. They now had to prove to the Home Office that they would be able to support their families coming from Morocco without recourse to public funds.

Moreover, the immigration policy towards the alien workers themselves did not change.² Bringing families over, as a response to the tightening of immigration controls for the main category of migrants (migrant workers), is therefore difficult to explain (if the sole focus is on the British immigration policy perspective). An analysis of British immigration policy reveals that it was not more difficult for primary migrant workers to come to work in the UK in the 1970s, nor for a large part of the 1980s.

² This would explain the occurrence of the second major wave of economic migration from Morocco to the UK (London) in the early 1980s (cf. Cherti 2008).

Significant restrictions regarding the admission of migrant workers from Morocco were introduced in the UK only in the late 1980s, when a visa system was put in place (interview 5, 2010). Before this, Moroccans could have entered the UK on the basis of their valid passport. From the mid 1980s they started requiring a visa and entry clearance.

As a result, from the mid 1980s it became more and more difficult for Moroccans to come to work in the UK. As the work-permit conduits became severely limited, it would be reasonable to suggest that more family migration followed. Rational choice theorists and economists would argue that when one channel for migration becomes closed, people tend to turn to other available channels.

This is not however the picture we get from qualitative studies on the trends and patterns of Moroccan migration to the UK. As observed in Section 1, Cherti and others reveal that the limited migration of Moroccans in the 1990s primarily encompassed highly skilled professionals from Morocco and France, joined by students and other business persons.

1990s and 2000s: Managed Migration Approach and Points-Based System

With regard to immigrants from Morocco, the last three immigration acts – the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act and the 2006 Immigration and Nationality Act – present a compilation of different measures, but have at their heart four main themes:

- a) tidying up measures
- b) removing and restricting rights of appeal (in an event of denial of entry)
- c) creating a new system of employer sanctions to stop illegal working by migrants
- d) monitoring, surveillance, and more co-ordinated policing of migrants old and new on the basis of seeking out crime, people smuggling and terrorism, and collecting vast new databases on all third-country nationals (i.e. those who are not British or European Economic Area citizens) (Macdonald 2010).

In practical terms under the Labour Government (1997–2010) the changes in the immigration policy resulted in:

- 1) **tightening of immigration controls**
- 2) **selective admission focused solely on highly skilled migrants and migrants with skills that are in deficit in the UK**
- 3) **severe limitations in legal channels of entry for low-skilled** migrants from outside the European Economic Area (EEA)
- 4) access to the labour market by students limited to 20 hours per week

- 5) **unlimited access** to the labour market by spouses of primary workers (usually admitted under the work permit or Highly Skilled Migrant Programme [HSMP] scheme, since June 2008 – Tier 1 and Tier 2).³

These changes undoubtedly had their impact on the changing character and profile of migration from Morocco to the UK. The tightening of immigration controls resulted in fewer visa applications being accepted for processing (and many migrants in possession of a visa actually being turned back at the airports – anecdotal evidence, interview 2, 2010).

These changes reflected a broader turn in EU migration policy with the decision at the European Council in Tampere, 1999, to develop a common EU migration and asylum policy. In its communication on a Community Immigration Policy (COM (2000) 757) of November 2000, the European Commission explicitly proposed abandoning the zero immigration policies of the past 30 years. Instead, new immigration policies would be devised with which to better regulate migration through orderly and regular channels that were themselves responsive to labour market needs, reflecting the realities of a labour market demand for immigrant workers, continuing migration pressures from the developing world, and demographic trends in European countries, particularly declining birth rates and ageing populations (Pellegrino 2004, p. 8).

The profile of newcomers has changed, from the large pool of low-skilled manual workers – dominant among the Moroccan migrant workers arriving in the UK in the 1960s – towards fewer, ‘carefully selected’ yet highly skilled professionals and students entering in the 1990s and 2000s. Highly skilled migrants continued to bring their spouses with them due to no restrictions in their access to the labour market. Students were allowed to bring their spouses and dependants with them (if they were studying in the UK for more than six months), provided that they were able support themselves financially for the entire length of their stay without needing help from state benefits (also known as public funds) (UKBA 2010).

The limitations in channels of legal entry for low-skilled workers from Morocco resulted in some of them resorting to coming to the UK as students, but then overstaying their visas and finding work in the low-skilled, low-wage labour market sectors in London (services, catering, construction industry). The evidence of these practices stems from the interviews and was not confirmed in any written sources on Moroccan migration to the UK (interviews 4, 5, 2010).

3. Institutions

Despite the relatively long-term presence of Moroccans in the UK (the major wave took place in the 1960s), the most significant community organisations and institutions which we encountered during the

³ A broad overview of those was presented in the THEMIS Scoping Study Report on Ukraine. They are of course also applicable with regard to any future migration from Morocco. Therefore, in order not to duplicate the analysis, this section refers the reader to the respective sections of the Ukrainian report, ‘The Evolution of Ukrainian Migration to the UK’ (2011).

scoping study date from the 1980s, and were established not by Moroccan migrants, but by second-generation Moroccans in the UK. As Ahmed, a community worker from Ladbroke Grove, explains: *'Our parents did not have ideas of establishing organisations. They were too busy providing for their families.'* (interview 2010). When he arrived in the UK during the family reunification phase in the early 1970s there were not many Moroccan organisations which he and his friends could join.

A network of **Widadias** – organisations linked with the Moroccan Consulate – existed before 1982 (they started around 1969 – interview 2, 2010). However, at that time *Widadias* were not particularly active, nor are they remembered as providing much welfare support to the first generation of Moroccan migrants (interviews with community workers, 2010). The *Widadia* was a place where young people socialised once a week, usually on Saturdays. *Widadias* organised sporting activities for Moroccan children: *'We were mostly playing football there.'* (interview 2, 2010).

Although the **British Moroccan Society** has existed since 1975, it was always more of an exclusive association that primarily consisted of diplomats and people connected to the Moroccan Consulate and Embassy. This is how it is still perceived among Moroccans, which makes it difficult to popularise its events among the settled Moroccan community. The organisation could best be described as an international charity. The British Moroccan Society aims to raise awareness and knowledge of Morocco in the UK. In the area of collective remittances and development work it financially supports many Moroccan charities back in Morocco. It aims to establish ten learning centres in various areas of Morocco, in the Toubkal region, Tafraoute, Ait bouguemez and others, with facilities to accommodate a library and a multi-purpose room. The libraries will provide books in Arabic, French and English, as well as computers. The project involves the training and employment of local young people, who would be responsible for the upkeep of the books and equipment and for popularising the educational programmes among the wider population. The first centre was opened in June 2010 in Talatast village (60km from Marrakech) (British Moroccan Society website, www.britishmoroccansociety.org).

The majority of the institutions which are currently important for the London Moroccan community were established throughout the 1980s and 1990s. **Al-Manaar mosque** has been cited as a place where young people, women and men are able to meet and discuss their problems in a supportive environment. The mosque (also known as the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, and opened by Prince Charles) provides the Muslim and wider community with a focal point for a range of spiritual, social, cultural, economic, educational and training activities (Communities 2009, p. 48). It has played a role in enabling the civic engagement of young people.

During the 1980s, there was increasing awareness of issues concerning young people and under-achieving Moroccan children. This awareness led to the establishment of two youth organisations, the **Al Noor Youth Association** and the **Moroccan Community Welfare Group (MCWG)**, which secured funding from various sources and have made a significant impact on the community (Communities 2009, p. 48). MCWG is a user-led voluntary organisation and offers a range of services for the Moroccan and wider Arabic-speaking community in the Kensington and Chelsea area and has a specific focus on Moroccan youth, in particular organising events and trips.

The **MCWG Youth Activity Centre** has been running since January 1995. Its main objective is to provide young Moroccans and Arabic-speakers with a positive environment, various educational activities, and courses and recreational activities for character building. The Centre also provides informal and sports activities to enhance young people’s personal development, and focuses on discouraging anti-social behaviour and providing culturally appropriate and accessible youth work. It provides accredited IT courses for 14–21-year-olds to give them essential skills recognised by employers. In 2002, a purpose-built study library room was set up, consisting of literature relevant to the National Curriculum and academic subjects; Arabic books and religious literature; as well as internet facilities. The MCWG also runs English classes for elderly members of the Moroccan community.

In the reporting year of 2009/2010 the **Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women’s Centre** celebrated its 25th anniversary. It is a grassroots organisation that provides advice and assistance for Moroccan and Arabic-speaking women and their families concerning benefits, housing, homelessness, domestic violence, education, health, and mental health. The organisation also runs social and cultural activities (e.g. lunch club) and offers English and Arabic classes, as well as specialist activities for young people and the elderly (Communities 2009, p. 49). The Centre aims at providing referral advice and information to enable clients to access mainstream services. Most users are residents in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster but the organisation also serves women and families from other areas. The organisation accepts self-referrals and referrals from other voluntary and statutory agencies.

4. Remittances

Table 3: Remittance inflows US \$ (millions). Source: World Bank (2009)

Year	1970	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Morocco					533	547	590	763	948	1,054
Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Morocco	1,014	850	917	874	973	1,400	1,589	1,305	1,337	2,006
Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Morocco	1,990	2,170	1,959	1,827	1,970	2,165	1,893	2,011	1,938	2,161
Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Morocco	3,261	2,877	3,614	4,221	4,590	5,451	6,730	6,895	6,264	

For Morocco the data on remittance inflows exists since 1975. The data gathered by the World Bank only capture remittances sent through *formal* channels such as banks and money transfer operators. Currently, no uniform and authoritative historical data on informal flows exist. Given the widespread use of informal remittance channels in many countries, the remittance data presented should be regarded as underestimates of the total flows.

There was a steady rise in remittances coming to Morocco throughout the 1990s. The most significant rise took place in the early 2000s and continued up to 2008. The most recent dip could be explained by the last World Recession (2008–2009).

It is very difficult to find longitudinal, bilateral information on how much of Morocco's remittance inflows is actually contributed by Moroccan migrants in the UK. The World Bank bilateral remittance estimates (see Table 4) using Migrant Stocks, Host Country Incomes, and Origin Country Incomes⁴ (in millions of US\$) revealed that in 2005 Morocco received from the UK remittances for the amount of \$28m, which would constitute only 0.6 per cent of all the remittance inflows in 2005. This made the UK the tenth largest remittance sender to Morocco in 2005. According to World Bank remittance estimates for 2005, the largest amount of remittances was sent from France (\$1,523m), Spain (\$1,171m), Italy (\$527m), Israel (\$332m), the Netherlands (\$315m), Germany (\$214m), Belgium (\$151m), the USA (\$97m), and Canada (\$53m).

Chart 5: Remittance inflows in US\$ millions. Source: World Bank (2009).

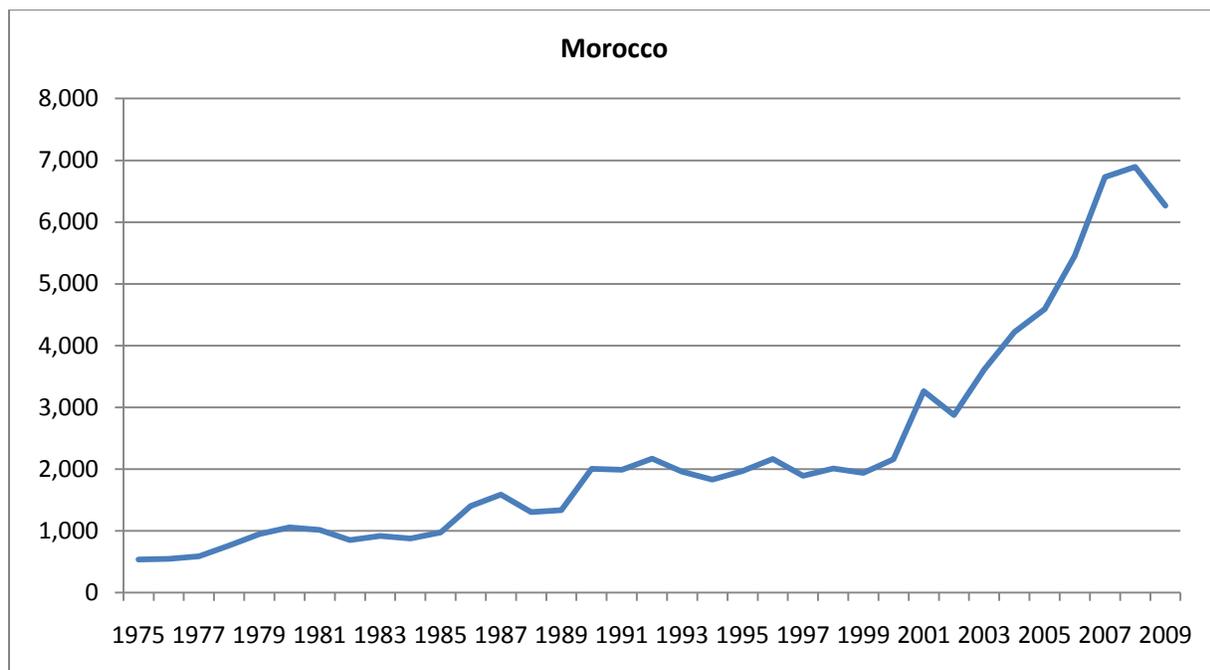


Table 4: Bilateral remittance estimates using Migrant Stocks, Host Country Incomes, and Origin Country Incomes (US\$ millions), Top 10 Remittance Sending Countries. Source: World Bank 2005.

⁴ These data are estimated using assumptions and arguments as explained in Ratha and Shaw (2006) 'South–South Migration and Remittances', Development Prospects Group, World Bank (www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances).

Country Sending Remittances	Country Receiving Remittances – Morocco
France	1,523
Spain	1,171
Italy	527
Israel	332
Netherlands	315
Germany	214
Belgium	151
USA	97
Canada	53
UK	28

5. Individual Migration Histories – Trends and Patterns

Souad Talsi, born in Oujda, Morocco is a founding member of Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women’s Centre, a civil-society activist and member of the London Council on minority groups. She is on the board of the Advisory Council for Ethnic Minorities. In 2010 she was named member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in recognition for her services to the Moroccan community in London.

Souad arrived in the UK as a girl in the late 1960s. Her father came to the UK for work; she and her mother joined him a few years later. Souad grew up in London. When her friends, who like Souad came to the UK to join their parents, reached the age of sixteen, the main priority of their parents was to get them married. Due to subsequent family migration the community grew bigger and the area changed a lot: *‘You have certainly heard about Julia Roberts’ Notting Hill. Well, it is not just a movie, but a place where our Moroccan community have settled for more than four decades. Taza Snack, Bab Marrakech, Casablanca Halal Meat Butchers, L’Etoile de Sousse Patisserie. Such names make you feel you are in one of Casablanca’s neighbourhoods. This is not Morocco but Golborne Road, North Kensington, London W10.’* (interview 2010).

Unlike her friends who got married at a young age, brought their spouses from Morocco and devoted themselves to family life, Souad focused on her education and training. She started working as an immigration adviser at the local Citizens’ Advice Bureau. Due to her fluency in Arabic, she was particularly involved in helping women and men from the Arabic-speaking communities. However, she felt that to a certain extent the structures of the Citizens’ Advice Bureau were not fully meeting the needs of the community.

In response to this gap she founded Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre, which was designed to help the local community in terms of its relations with local authorities, central administration and support services, and in terms of its integration as a minority within the body of London. She claimed in an interview with the *Morocco Times* that the number of success stories is very sporadic and is greatly outnumbered by the failures.

One of the great successes is undoubtedly the documentary produced by Al-Hasaniya detailing the lives of three Moroccan women who migrated to Britain in the 1980s. They came from completely different social backgrounds, yet shared a common history of early Moroccan female migration to the UK. This documentary was produced to '*pay homage to all those women who came before us and ventured into the unknown as the ultimate sacrifice to support their loved ones. It is a true testimony of their courage, unbroken spirit, self denial and utter determination*' (Al-Hasaniya 2010). The documentary is an important addition to this report. It was uploaded on SharePoint for partners to watch.

Where To? – Where From?

It has already been noted that the major wave of Moroccans who came to the UK in the 1960s came from 'Jbala' of northern Morocco, which used to be under Spanish occupation: from Larache, Azilla, Melilla and from the nearby villages. Many of them also came from Tangier, which till 1956 was administered by 14 powers, and was known for its international links: '*The migration to England started because of the proximity of Gibraltar, the British post in the south of Spain. This is the link.*' (interview 3, 2010). According to most recent report on the emigration from Morocco (Berriane et al. 2010), Gibraltar has absorbed the largest flow of workers from the region of Tangier after the withdrawal of Spanish workers in the British colony.

In the 1970s and 1980s the emigration from Morocco was no longer limited to its northern territories, but also included cities like Meknes, Oujuda, Fez and Casablanca (and the nearby villages).

The predominant destination for Moroccans in England has overwhelmingly been London, which has 69 per cent of the total Moroccan-born population. Outside London there are significant communities in Crawley, St Albans, Slough (still in relative proximity to London), but also in Trowbridge (in south-east England) and Edinburgh (Scotland).

The most popular area of settlement in London is North Kensington, especially the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, with Golborne Road (in the vicinity of Ladbroke Grove) known as the 'Little Morocco'. There are also some smaller communities in the boroughs of Westminster, Hammersmith, Lambeth, Barnet and Croydon (Communities 2009, p. 29).

Cherti (2008) observed rather strong settlement patterns: those living in Crawley originate mainly from Meknes, those in Slough primarily came from central and southern Morocco and Moroccans in Trowbridge are known to originate from Oujda in the north-east (quoted in Communities 2009, p. 28).

6. Assessment and Identification of Issues to be explored in Phase 2

The Scoping Study revealed that migration between Morocco and the UK has been studied and the trends and patterns within this particular corridor have been well documented primarily by Cherti (2008) (who has pioneered investigation on the subject of Moroccan migration to the UK), but also in other studies (e.g. Communities 2009).

Theoretically, Cherti (2008) looked at the *Paradoxes of Social Capital* (the title of her book) within the Moroccan community, portraying its strong internal links and self-containment, but also the weaker and less prevalent linkages with the 'outside', wider community. The tendency of Moroccans to be inward-looking, with traditionally rather high levels of **bonding social capital**, could partially explain their relative lack of social mobility: '*why a significant section of first-generation Moroccans remains still very isolated and disengaged from the mainstream society; and secondly, why some of these characteristics persist amongst the younger generation too*' (Cherti 2008, p. 285).

To explain this phenomena, Cherti looked into the nexus between social capital and migrant networks:

'The strong family and friendship networks, along with high solidarity levels amongst the first generation, explain to a large extent how several families who originated from the northern part of Morocco ended up settling in similar parts of London. These same networks continued to provide an unbroken source of mutual support, especially in searching for employment. However, because of the restricted mastery of language and skills, these closed friendship and family networks provided a safety-net for their members, thereby decreasing their likelihood of upward socio-economic mobility. Therefore, given the importance of informal networks, differences in access to social capital between the social classes have operated to reinforce rather than reduce social exclusion and inequalities of opportunity' (Cherti 2008, p. 285).

The issues which we suggest as worth exploring further in relation to Moroccan migration to the UK are as follows:

- Cherti (2008) used social capital to explain the **self-preservation** of the Moroccan community in the UK. The community self-preservation could be related to the **THEMIS conceptual framework, as one of the mechanisms which could help to explain the relative stagnation**, and perhaps even decline of a migration system (as an unintended consequence). The self-preservation mechanism aimed at preventing the second generation from assimilation (through the development of norms to monitor the behaviour of the younger members within the community) in practice contributes to a degree of its exclusion in relation to the host society. In such circumstances the younger generation living within the community experiences subjugation by the group norm; and instead of actively contributing to community development, the more ambitious individuals are forced to break away from the group. As a result the community might find itself in decline despite its initial efforts aimed at its preservation. This

points to the fact that **stagnation (and decline) could be subjectively experienced without reference to (further) migration flows, but also the community's relations within the wider society (assimilation versus breakdown of ties).**

- Cherti's (2008) analysis of the major group of Moroccan migrants to the UK (in the 1960s) particularly focused on close-knit networks of family and friends as responsible for the migration process. However, the Scoping Study revealed that it might well have been the **bottom-up migration industry** of Spanish-run employment agencies which largely facilitated the first wave of Moroccans to the UK (consisting mostly of migrant workers). In looking at the Moroccan migration dynamics it might perhaps be interesting to investigate the relationship between migrant networks and the migration industry?
- As already noted in Section 2 of this report the second major wave of Moroccan migration to the UK was family migration, which took place largely during the 1970s. The existing sources explain it as a response to tightening immigration controls on the side of the UK. **This narrative needs challenging**, as the in-depth insights into the immigration laws and acts of that time actually demonstrate that while the requirements for migrant workers to come to the UK remained largely unchanged (between the 1960s and 1970s) **it was the conditions of entry of spouses and children that became subject to tighter regulations**. If anything it became more difficult to bring spouses and children to the UK after the 1971 Immigration Act. **THEMIS could therefore focus on how migrants' agency, their individual needs and choices** (although the category of choice vastly oversimplifies the matter) **interplay with the state's legal frameworks designed to govern their entry and residence** (for interesting parallels cf. Scoping Study Report on Bangladeshi migration to the UK).
- Moroccans (as well as other groups studied in the UK, e.g. Ukrainians) seem to **complicate the theoretical notion of a migration system**. While we can distinguish different waves of Moroccan migration to the UK, **the newcomers have not necessarily joined the 'established' community but created their own organisations (or not)**. It is also false to assume that the first generation of migrants established the community structures and organisations, while their power *over the community* might be largely symbolic in nature. With respect to Moroccans, it is rather the second and third generations who established and sustain various organisational structures. Not surprisingly therefore, the newcomers, representing different backgrounds (class, education) and motivations for migration do not join the existing structures but start their own.

As a result the **waves are quite disentangled from each other**. The **concept of a system** (in terms of links and linkages?) **does not hold empirically**, and perhaps could be more used as a **heuristic device**? But then the immediate question follows: heuristic device for what? To describe different waves of people coming from a specific locality to a specific locality? To describe different waves of people coming from a specific nation-state, to a specific nation-state? While the first could best be captured with qualitative methods and research techniques, we need to purposefully employ our quantitative techniques – not only in terms of their cost-effectiveness, but their comparative potential with the existing data, (which have largely been gathered at the national level).

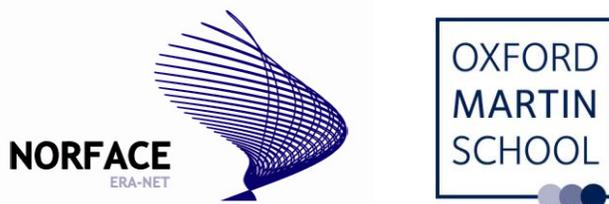
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Theorizing the Evolution of European Migration Systems (THEMIS) is a four-year project looking at the way in which patterns of migration to Europe develop. The project is co-ordinated by the International Migration Institute (Robin Cohen), with project partners at the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) in Norway (Cindy Horst), the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning in Lisbon (Maria Lucinda Fonseca), and the Department of Sociology at Erasmus University in Rotterdam (Godfried Engbersen).

THEMIS is funded by the NORFACE (New Opportunities for Research Funding Agency Co-operation in Europe) research programme on Migration in Europe - Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics. The International Migration Institute is a member of the Oxford Martin School at Oxford University, and recently received additional funding from Dr James Martin (founder of the School) to match the grant from NORFACE.



The views expressed here are those of the author(s). They are not necessarily those of the THEMIS project or NORFACE.

For general enquiries or if you wish to receive updates on the THEMIS project, please contact us:
T: +44 (0)1865 281745 / **E:** themis@qeh.ox.ac.uk / **W:** www.imi.ox.ac.uk/research-projects/themis