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Het land van herkomst : perspectieven op verbondenheid met Marokko, 1960-2010

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Summary

This book is about the shifting perspectives on Moroccan migrants' ties with their country of origin between 1960 and 2010. It looks at both Morocco and the Netherlands. The leading question is how and why views on ties with Morocco changed, in the period 1960-2010. In this thesis I analyze the factors that influenced nature and continuity of these ties, as well as those that influenced changes in the perspectives.

The thesis focuses on three levels; in the first panel I look at government policy, both in Morocco and in the Netherlands, in the second I describe organizations and fights between them, and in the third migrants are given a voice. This triple approach is new and adds to theories about transnationalism by emphasizing interaction between the levels of analysis. Until now transnationalism had mainly been studied either by looking at migrants or at the policies of governments in the countries of origin. In this thesis an analysis of, what could be called, bottom-up transnationalism (migrants themselves) is combined with top-down transnationalism (authorities in both countries), while organizations and their activities form the middle tier. Important in this thesis is the interaction between the three levels.

Earlier authors introduced the term transnationalism to emphasize the newness of the phenomenon. The literature comes in two forms. In the literature with a negative connotation, emphasis is on the authorities in the countries of origin, which create and maintain ties with their citizens abroad in an attempt to control and exercise political power. In the literature with a positive connotation, authorities maintain ties with their subjects abroad because the country profits from remittances. In this thesis I show that there is another institutionalized form of transnationalism, in which authorities in the country of settlement play an important role. The Dutch government played a major role in creating, maintaining and institutionalizing ties of Moroccans in the Netherlands with Morocco. The ties resulted from the way recruitment of guest workers was organized. Dutch authorities assumed that guest worker migration was temporary. Therefore, they subsidized immigrant organizations that encouraged the maintenance of ties with Morocco. Dutch employers were obliged to make social arrangements for the workers they recruited. The employers delegated this task to church based organizations. Later they were transferred to organizations, which were sponsored by local and national authorities. Subsidies were mainly given to non-religious left-wing organizations. The Moroccan government in response subsidized right-wing religious organizations. Moroccan authorities feared that the guest workers might threaten the new, and still rather feeble post-colonial Moroccan regime. The beginning of guest worker migration coincided with Moroccan independence from

France. The Moroccan government tried to control potential opposition from Moroccans abroad. After two failed coups (in 1970 and 1972) they clammed down on their citizens abroad. In Morocco and elsewhere opponents were arrested and transported to secret prisons in Morocco. Only much later the political interest of the Moroccan regime, was replaced by an economic interest.

Within the Netherlands a battle ensued between the *Amicales*, right-wing organizations which were supported by the Moroccan state, and the *KMAN*, a left-wing organization which was supported by Dutch activists. The organizations frequently clashed, and their fight was fought to a very large extent in the Dutch public domain. An image that the *KMAN* and its supporters frequently used was that of Morocco's long arm, reaching into the organizations and the private lives of Moroccans living in the Netherlands. The *KMAN* and others presented interference by Moroccan authorities as an obstacle to integration, or a cause for the failed integration. When the *KMAN* and the *Amicales* became less important two new organizations, *NCB* and *UMMON*, continued the fight in the public arena, using the same type of arguments and images, and thus similarly enforcing the assumed connection between ties and integration.

Ties differed according to age, gender, and class. The first, younger Moroccan guest workers were very much oriented towards Dutch society. They partly lived as boarders with Dutch families. They did not have the time, or the money to go to Morocco often. In these early days of guest worker migration, phoning family members in Morocco on a weekly basis was not even doable. The somewhat older, married guest workers sent money to their wives and children, or parents. Contacts changed when wives and children moved to the Netherlands, parents died, and communication and travel became cheaper and easier. There were differences between women according to class, origin (countryside or city), family composition, and skill. Lower skilled women from the countryside, and with children in the Netherlands had less need for maintaining ties with relatives in Morocco. Higher skilled women, from urban areas and without children had more need, and opportunities to keep in touch with relatives. Similarly there were differences between men and women. In 1980s many Moroccan men in the Netherlands lost their jobs, because the kind of work for which they had been recruited disappeared permanently due to technological changes and economic crisis. They tried to compensate status loss and fill free hours by joining Moroccan organizations in the Netherlands. They spent their days in the mosque, while they still tried to live up to demands from family members in Morocco. While the contacts of Moroccan men with Dutch society diminished, those of women increased, among others because they got to know other people via the schools of their children. Furthermore, after the men became unemployed, the labor market participation of women increased. They did maintain ties with country of origin, and did send money and gifts to family members, but sooner than men they drew a line when (distant) family members seemed to sponge on their income. From the 1990s onwards, at family visits to Morocco they started to show off not only their new gained wealth but also emphasized their Dutchness; they dressed differently, brought Dutch food and spote Dutch with their children. The visit became more like a holiday than forebode of return.

Ties with the country of origin cannot be studied by looking at one point in time only. Ties changed because of developments in the country of origin, in the country

of settlement and in other countries, but also because of changes in the lives of migrants. Technological changes affected the ties.

Ties of Moroccans with their country of origin were not problematized at first. Dutch and Moroccan authorities encouraged and institutionalized them because they seemed to guarantee return. Only later they were problematized, and became the centre of political and public debate. There are three reasons for this problematization. They were seen as a political, economic and cultural threat. Because Moroccans cannot denounce Moroccan citizenship, according to Moroccan law, their loyalty to Dutch society is questioned. In the economic realm buying houses in Morocco became the iconic economic threat, quietly ignoring the fact that buying a house in Amsterdam cannot be compared to buying a house in a remote Moroccan village. In the Netherlands, 'their' poverty was presented as 'our' problem, and spending money 'there', rather than 'here', as its main cause. In the cultural realm orientation on the country of origin was presented as the main cause of their presumed failed social and economic integration. Problematization makes it possible to move responsibility for what is labeled failed integration from policy responsibility to a personal choice. The government can do little or had to do nothing, it is argued, when migrants, or their offspring, do not sever their ties with their country of origin. This thesis showed that there is no simple relationship between integration and the maintenance of ties. Those with few ties are not necessarily better integrated (however defined), some people with many ties are not poorly integrated, measured in economic terms: maintaining ties costs time and money. The existing literature on transnationalism focuses on the immigration-integration nexus. A connection between the maintenance of ties and a failed integration, is assumed rather than proven.

This book adds to the academic debate in four ways. First, it uses a long-term perspective, which makes it possible to trace the changes in Moroccan migrants' transnational ties and identify the factors that influence these ties. Secondly, this book focuses on both the country of origin and the country of settlement. The dominant assumption in the literature is that transnational ties are the result of migrants' choices, and not the result of institutional factors, such as the policies in the country of origin and country of settlement. The role of both states in shaping transnational ties is hardly ever combined in one research. This research stresses that a two state perspective is important because the changes in policy in both countries cannot be explained by overlooking developments in one of the two countries. Furthermore, government policies intertwine with immigrant organization activities, a factor which had so far been ignored. Third, this book focuses on differences according to gender, ethnicity and class. Finally, the strong emphasis on the consequences of transnational ties for receiving states disregards the changes in migrants' transnational identity, and shifts responsibility for integration from authorities – who were originally responsible for encouraging ties – to individuals and their choices. The book tries to counter that image.