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# THE INFLUENCE OF MIGRANTS' NETWORKS ON MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS

HOW MIGRANTS CAN  
UNDERMINE FURTHER  
MIGRATION FLOWS

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## INTRODUCTION

Recently, issues relating to the theme of migration dominated the headlines of newspapers and determined governments' agendas worldwide. The theme of migration has been influencing legislation, creating new political forces and completely changing the economic, social and cultural scene at a global level. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of migration has always characterised human beings, also in preindustrial societies. In fact, people used to move for the most different reasons, to escape from invaders, to satisfy their desire to conquer, to flee from environmental disasters, or to escape religious persecutions. Yet, in the past, migratory movements had a seasonal and local character; whereas nowadays, migratory flows can last decades and involve an extremely high number of people. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century migration's natural tendencies were affected by the economic and the industrial revolutions that deeply affected migratory movements on a global scale. The industrial development in certain areas of the world and the concomitant exploitation of land, resources and workforce in other areas, resulted in important inequalities between societies worldwide; thus, provoking an unnatural flow of people from more to less developed regions of the globe.

Even if each migration flow is different from the others, research demonstrates that there are some aspects that repeat themselves over space and time. An important finding of studies on International Migration focuses on the crucial role of migrants' connections with other migrants and with their relatives that remained in the origin country, in the initiation and continuation of migratory movements from a sending to a receiving region of migration. The process of migration boosting additional migration and the migration-facilitating role of migrants' networks is almost always taken for granted; yet under certain conditions, social ties among migrants and potential migrants do not contribute to make further migration likely. In fact, latest studies demonstrate that under specific conditions migrants' networks may curb further migratory movements.

In the first chapter, the phenomenon of migration towards history will be presented. Specifically, the three major migration flows that have characterised history until recent times will be described and their development will be illustrated. Subsequently, the two-years period between 2015 and 2017 will be analysed. It is in fact during this biennium that governments all around the world began to perceive migration flows as a crisis and acting accordingly. The aim of the analysis provided is clarifying the course of events and demonstrating how the extreme politicization of the migration phenomenon affected people's perceptions of the latter, and lead to the implementation of radical policies on the part of governments as far as the theme of immigration is concerned. Then, a pillar of studies on

International Migration will be presented, namely, push and pull models. Such models seek to provide a basic explanation of the reasons why the migration phenomenon takes place. Even though push and pull factors may be considered simplistic, they offer a useful elementary overview of the complex phenomenon of international migration. Finally, a detailed description of the various categories of migrants will be provided.

In the second chapter, the Migration Network Theory will be described. The theory is based on the assumption that social ties among migrants and potential migrants enhance further migration, and that initial migratory movements contribute to the creation of a social and economic structure that makes additional migration less risky and costly; thus, becoming more attractive and affordable for prospective migrants. The key concept of migrants' networks will be illustrated, together with other relevant concepts, such as feedback, culture of migration, chain migration and cumulative causation. Thereafter, two real-life examples corroborating the Migration Network Theory will be illustrated. The first example concerns the migration flow from Southern Italy to Northern America that characterized the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this migration corridor an essential role was played by migrants themselves, who contributed to facilitate further migratory movements. Likewise, in the second example provided, Mexican migrants who first moved to Northern America in recent times, contributed to lower migration risks and costs; thereby, allowing an ever-growing number of Mexican compatriots to embark on their journey to American cities.

Ultimately, in the third chapter, theories on declining migration will be illustrated. Large part of the studies on International Migration focuses on the migration-facilitating role of migrants' networks and on the self-reinforcing character of the migration phenomenon; not taking into account the cases in which initial migration does not lead to further migratory movements, also due to the fact that, under specific conditions, migrants appear not to be willing to emotionally and materially support newcomers. Firstly, the drawbacks of the theories presented in the second chapter will be described; secondly, the concept of diminutive causation – opposed to the concept of cumulative causation – will be presented. The phenomenon of declining migration will be illustrated through a real-life example of a recent migration flow, the one from Morocco to the Netherlands. Finally, the four contexts of reception theorised by the experts Portes and Rumbaut will be described and employed in order to explain the reasons why migratory movements from Morocco to the Netherlands began to decline.

# 1. MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS

In this first chapter an overview regarding the topic of migration will be provided. The phenomenon of migration across time will be presented (1.1); then, the two-years-period between 2015 and 2017, when media and politicians worldwide started to talk about “migration crisis” will be analysed (1.2); subsequently, push and pull factors, that seem to be at the root of the migration phenomenon, will be described (1.3); finally, the categorization of migrants will be illustrated (1.4).

## 1.1 MIGRATION TOWARDS HISTORY

After the Global Economic Crisis – GEC –, migration became a heated topic in most Western countries<sup>1</sup>; nevertheless, the phenomenon of migration has characterised human beings from the very beginning. «*Notre nature est dans le mouvement, le repos entier est la mort*»<sup>2</sup> wrote Blaise Pascal in his *Pensées*, published in 1670<sup>3</sup>. Human beings have always migrated in order to find a better place to live; where the land was more arable, where there was more food, where the water was drinkable. Migration can thus be considered as a human prerogative. Mobility, plurality and *mixité*<sup>4</sup> are the three fundamental changes brought by migration fluxes. They in fact have changed and are still changing societies and the corresponding economic and social relationships<sup>5</sup>.

Throughout history, we can identify three major migration flows. The first one was registered during the Colonial Age, from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. In that period, the colonial powers, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Portugal and Spain, started an unprecedented slave trade from Africa to the New World – America –, as the image below shows.

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<sup>1</sup> CASTLES STEPHEN, DE HAAS HEIN, MILLER MARK J, *The age of migration*, 2014, London: Palgrave. Macmillan, p. 1.

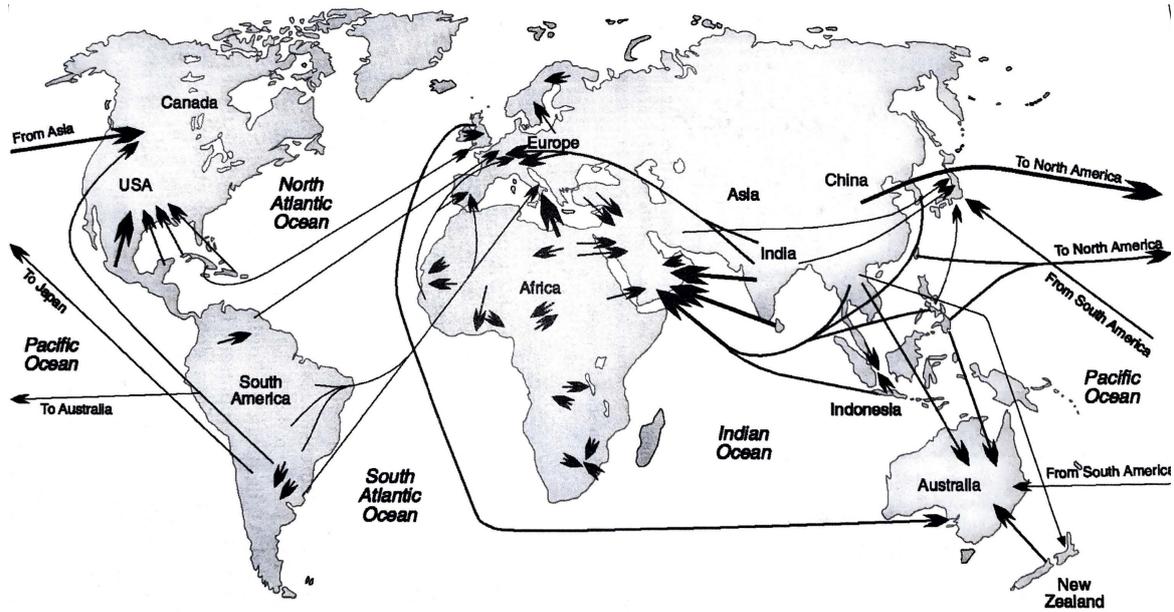
<sup>2</sup> Translated: “Our nature consists in motion, complete rest is death”.

<sup>3</sup> ALLIEVI STEFANO, *Immigrazione. Cambiare tutto.*, 2018, Roma: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> The French term refers to social mixture and heterogeneity.

<sup>5</sup> ALLIEVI, *Immigrazione. Cambiare tutto.*, 2018, pp. 124-125.

Figure 1 - Migration flows in the Colonial Era<sup>6</sup>



Note: the size of arrowheads gives an approximate indication of the volume of flows. Exact figures are often unavailable.

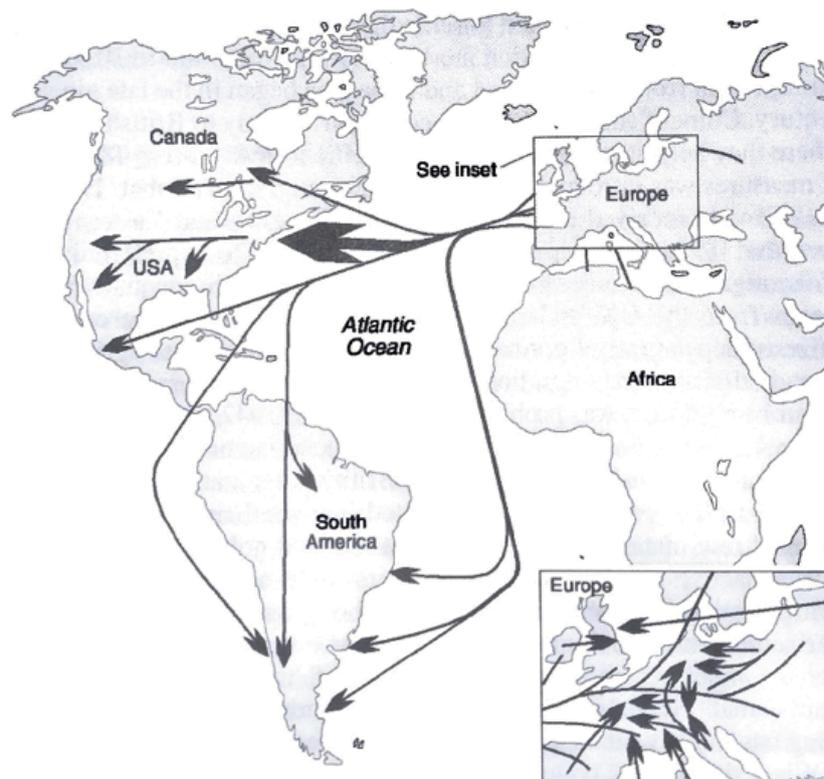
The second important migration flow was recorded after the First World War. In the 1920s, migration flows were registered inside Europe, from Europe and to Europe. The situation of extreme poverty in fact, stimulated emigration towards countries that were not involved in the global conflict, such as Switzerland, Canada, America and Australia. In the 1960s, labour migration fluxes departed from European periphery to Western Europe. In addition, as a result of the Colonial Era, Europe became a country of destination, receiving guest workers<sup>7</sup> from Asia – above all from India and Pakistan<sup>8</sup> –.

<sup>6</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> “A person living and working in a foreign country for a limited period of time”, Cambridge Dictionary.

<sup>8</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 84-196.

Figure 2 - Migration flows in the 1920s<sup>9</sup>



Note: the size of arrowheads gives an approximate indication of the volume of flows. Exact figures are often unavailable.

Finally, the third major migration flow started in the 1980s, in the Era of Globalization, when interactions between people and between nations increased; due to the increasing facilitation of communication. Globalization had a massive impact on migration patterns. The most important effect is the globalization of migration, i.e. almost all countries in the world are touched by international migration<sup>10</sup>. According to IMO<sup>11</sup> 2018 World Migration Report, International migration is a complex phenomenon that involves various aspects affecting our daily life, such as economy and security. Moreover, with globalization, migration patterns acquired new directions. Countries, like the European ones, that for centuries moved outward to conquer and colonise, started becoming major global migration destination<sup>12</sup>. Globalization contributed to the creation of new categories of migrants; in fact, the number of refugees and undocumented migrants grew enormously. Strong attention nowadays is being given to undocumented migrants, who, according a considerable number of politicians and citizens, constitute a real threat for European and American societies.

<sup>9</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> International Migration is defined as “the act of moving across international boundaries from a country of origin to take up residence in a country of destination”. CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> IMO is the United Nations’ migration agency, that since 2000 has been producing World’s Migration Reports.

<sup>12</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 55-82.

**Undocumented migrants** are people who live in a country without residence permit. Popular usage tends to refer to this kind of migrants as “illegal migrants”; however, it is important to clarify that only an action can be defined as illegal, not a person<sup>13</sup>. Globalization contributed to the **migration transition phenomenon**; that is to say, traditional sending countries, such as Italy, became receiving countries of migration. Furthermore, from the 1980s, an increasing number of women migrate. 2018 World Migration Report shows data proving that in 2015 on 244 million international migrants, 48% of them were female. This phenomenon is known as **feminization of migration**<sup>14</sup>. Lastly, globalization contributed to the growth of migration’s political salience<sup>15</sup>. In the last few years in fact, migration has emerged as a critical political challenge as far as integration, displacement and board management are concerned<sup>16</sup>. Over the past fifty years, migration on a global scale remained quite stable; what dramatically changed is its political salience, that reached peaks never seen before<sup>17</sup>. In fact, in Europe, the rise of far right-wing and anti-immigrant parties, produced the move to the right of the entire political spectrum on reception and diversity issues<sup>18</sup>. Migration is nowadays seen as a high-priority policy issue by politicians but also by the large majority of citizens around the world<sup>19</sup>.

## 1.2 MIGRATION “CRISIS”

Migration should not be considered as an emergency anymore but as a structural feature of the present days globalized world<sup>20</sup>. In the last 15-20 years, an increase in international migration and displacement was registered, due to an elevated lack in human security caused by conflict, persecution and environmental change<sup>21</sup>. Recently, migration, one of the most natural phenomena that characterise human beings, is being framed as a crisis. Weekly news describes the situation with alarming headlines such as “The migration crisis threatens to destroy the European Union. We must

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<sup>13</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, p. 222.

<sup>14</sup> INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), *World Migration Report 2018*, 2018, p. 17. Retrieved from: [https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/china/r5\\_world\\_migration\\_report\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/china/r5_world_migration_report_2018_en.pdf) (July 6<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>15</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 55-82.

<sup>16</sup> IOM, *World Migration Report 2018*, 2018, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> DAVIS AMBER, *The Impact of Anti-Immigration Parties on Mainstream Parties' Immigration Positions in the Netherlands, Flanders and the UK 1987-2010: Divided electorates, left-right politics and the pull towards restrictionism*, 2012, EUI PhD theses; Department of Political and Social Sciences. Retrieved from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/21719> (July 8<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>19</sup> IOM, *World Migration Report 2018*, 2018, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> ALLIEVI, *Immigrazione. Cambiare tutto.*, 2018, p. 88.

<sup>21</sup> IOM, *World Migration Report 2018*, 2018, p. 1.

not let it.”, Antonio Tajani<sup>22</sup>. The process of framing<sup>23</sup> leads members of societies all around the world to perceive migration as a problem, instead of considering it as an activity that has always been taking place. Since migration phenomenon was framed as a crisis, migration has become one of the major concerns of governments around the world, which are trying to control, and to some extent, curb, these migratory flows<sup>24</sup>.

In this paragraph the two-years-period from 2015 to 2017, when European governments started to talk about “migratory crisis”, will be analysed. In 2015 a peak of migration to Europe was registered. In that year, Greece was the country which received the highest number of migrants – almost 1 million –<sup>25</sup>. In the following years, 2016 and 2017, migration to Europe strongly decreased; yet a shift in the migration route was registered. As a result of the EU-Turkey deal<sup>26</sup>, instead of choosing the Eastern route (Turkey-Greece), migrants started taking the Mediterranean route (Libya-Italy), which is longer and more dangerous than the Eastern route. In fact, since 2016, death tolls in Mediterranean migration routes increased like never before, as data reported by the Missing Migrants Project show. The Central Mediterranean route registered in 2016 4,581 deaths, as opposed to 434 deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean route and 128 deaths in the Western Mediterranean route<sup>27</sup>. Similar data are reported by IMO’s Missing Migrants Project, whereby, the percentage of deaths and missing migrants recorded in the Mediterranean Sea increased by 36 per cent in 2016, from 3,785 in 2015 to 5,143 in 2016, as the image below demonstrates.

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<sup>22</sup> Article titled “*The migration crisis threatens to destroy the EU. We must not let it.* Retrieved from THE GUARDIAN, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/27/migration-crisis-destroy-eu-collapse-schengen> (July 8<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>23</sup> Maps found on the media, for example, are deceiving, as they do not take into account all international migration patterns, they focus instead on migration to Europe. Moreover, arrows on maps emphasize the danger of migration for Europe.

<sup>24</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 1-23.

<sup>25</sup> European Council, Council of the European Union Internet site, *Infographic - Migration flows: Eastern, Central, and Western Mediterranean routes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/infographics/eastern-and-central-mediterranean-routes-09-2017/> (23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019).

<sup>26</sup> In March 2016 a deal was made between Turkey and Europe, according to which “for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU”. COUNCIL OF THE EU, EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Press Release 144/16. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/pdf> (July 10<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>27</sup> MISSING MIGRANT PROJECT, *Deaths by route*. Retrieved from: <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean> (July 10<sup>th</sup> 2019).

Figure 3 - Recorded migrant deaths and missing migrants worldwide, 2016<sup>28</sup>



Note: Figure corresponds to deaths that occurred during the process of migration. All numbers reflect only those incidents about which IOM is aware. An unknown number of deaths remain unreported and therefore, these data comprise minimum estimates. Figures include both bodies found and migrants who are missing and presumed dead. Names and boundaries indicated on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

This shift in route contributed to an increase in the number of migrants arriving in south-European nations, such as Italy, Greece and Spain. Even if migration to Europe decreased, south-European governments started perceiving the situation as a crisis, since they had never dealt before with so many migrant's arrivals. Furthermore, the reception process of migrants is established by the Dublin Law<sup>29</sup>, which seems to disadvantage European Member States bordering with the Mediterranean Sea. Indeed, geographically analysing ongoing migration corridors, it is evident that they are proceeding from lower to higher latitudes. Thus, southern European Member States, that border with the Mediterranean Sea, are in charge of rescuing migrants and dealing with their safety, and the economic and social accommodation<sup>30</sup>. All things considered; migrants compose a small percentage of the world population: 3.4% in 2017<sup>31</sup>, that is to say 258 million migrants in 7 billion world population. In addition, the percentage of refugee in Europe is even lower, making up only the 0,2%<sup>32</sup> of Europe's population. Doubtlessly a crisis is taking place, and it is of humanitarian nature. Death tolls in the

<sup>28</sup> IOM, *World Migration Report 2018*, 2018, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> REGULATION (EU) No 604/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, June 26<sup>th</sup> 2013. Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R0604&from=IT> (July 12<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>30</sup> LIMES, *Chi bussava alla nostra porta*, June 2015, Roma: GEDI Gruppo Editoriale S.p.A. pp. 26-29.

<sup>31</sup> INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), *World Migration Report 2017*, 2017. Retrieved from:

[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017\\_Highlights.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf) (July 13<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, pp. 55-82.

<sup>32</sup> Data reported are absolutely approximate, as it is impossible to register the exact number of people crossing national and international borders.

Mediterranean are shocking and so are the conditions in which migrants embark on the journey from northern Africa to Europe. Analysing the situation, it is clear that migration flows to Europe do not generate a crisis. European citizens perceived – and are still perceiving – migration as a threat due to the extreme politicization of the phenomenon.

Another important migration flow is the one sweeping the USA. During the last 25 years, the number of migrants in Northern America has almost doubled in size, reaching a peak of 50 million migrants in 2015<sup>33</sup>. The largest migrant group in 2015 was composed by Latinos<sup>34</sup> and by people coming from the Caribbean, followed by Asians and Europeans. What has been driving migration from lower to higher American latitudes is population growth in Latin America, and economic and political stability in Northern America<sup>35</sup>. According to Massey and Espinosa<sup>36</sup>, three main factors have been driving migration from Mexico to the USA, namely: (1) **social capital** formation, (2) **human capital** formation and (3) **market consolidation**<sup>37</sup>. The creation of the social capital (1), stems from the relationships between settled migrants<sup>38</sup> and potential migrants<sup>39</sup>; human capital (2) depends on the so-called “US-experience”, i.e. the personal experience an individual makes in crossing the American border and settling in the US; finally, the consolidation of the market (3) refers to the existing link between Mexican and American economies, that, as a consequence of globalization, became interdependent<sup>40</sup>. North American governments and media, as the European ones, started perceiving and framing migration flows as a “crisis” and begun acting accordingly, reinforcing border control<sup>41</sup>. Northern American States are in fact been designing more restrictive immigration policies, which include border closing, as an attempt to control and manage the situation<sup>42</sup>. One of the largest mass migrations in modern history is the Mexico-US migration corridor. From 1965 to 2015, more than 16 million Mexicans migrated to the USA. Yet, over the past decade, Mexican migration to the U.S. has

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<sup>33</sup> IOM, *World Migration Report 2018*, 2018, p. 82.

<sup>34</sup> “A person [...] who comes from, or whose family comes from, Latin America”, Cambridge Dictionary.

<sup>35</sup> IOM, *World Migration Report 2018*, 2018, p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> The two authors of *What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration? A Theoretical, Empirical, and Policy Analysis*, who conducted a research concerning the Mexico-US migration in the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>37</sup> The factors can be considered as valid also in the present situation, as migration from Mexico towards the United States of America is still occurring.

<sup>38</sup> Migrants who already find an employment and an accommodation in the country of destination – the USA in this case –.

<sup>39</sup> People – Mexicans in this case – who aspire to leave their country of origin and move to a country which they believe will give them a better livelihood – the USA in the case under question.

<sup>40</sup> MASSEY DUGLAS S., ESPINOSA KRISTIN E., *What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration? A Theoretical, Empirical, and Policy Analysis*. American Journal of Sociology, 102(4), 1997, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 939-999.

<sup>41</sup> CRAWLEY HEAVEN, SKLEPARIS DIMITRIS, *Refugees, migrants, neither, both: categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's 'migration crisis'*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 2017, pp. 1-17.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 1-17.

definitely decreased; nowadays, Mexico serves as a bridge land for central American immigrants leaving their country of origin to reach their country of destination, the U.S.<sup>43</sup>. Even if migration from Mexico to the United States declined, the situation is still perceived as an emergency that needs to be stopped, as it threatens USA citizens, according to the media and the US presidency. Once again, the strong politicization of the migration phenomenon is leading to the rise of far right-wing and anti-immigrant parties, as the 2016 American election demonstrated, with the election of the republican Donald Trump.

### 1.3 PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push and pull models fall under International Migration's theories, specifically, under the functionalist social theories, that see society as a system composed by independent parts. Such theories perceive migration as a positive phenomenon, that serves the interests of the vast majority of the world's population and contribute to greater equality within and between societies<sup>44</sup>. According to push and pull models, migration fluxes stem from two different and opposed necessities. On one hand, in certain areas of the world, for various reasons, there is a lack of resources that allow human beings to satisfy their primary needs - those linked to survival - and realise their desires for pleasure and personal fulfilment. On the other hand, in a different area, opportunities are overabundant by comparison with the number of people. In world's less developed countries, economic, environmental and demographic factors, such as insecure living conditions, lack of economic opportunities, environmental hazards, insecure incomes and political repression "push" people to migrate outwards, to countries that seem to be more stable and offer better opportunities. At the same time, certain factors, "pull" migrants into the destination countries. Some examples of factors "pulling" migrants into destination countries can be employment opportunities, respect of human rights, higher wages and economic stability, absence of environmental hazards, land availability and political freedom<sup>45</sup>. Moreover, migration from less to more developed countries meets mutual demands. In fact, less developed countries register a high number of young, low-skilled workers, a number that exceeds the workforce demand. For this reason, less developed countries deepened the "need" to export the overabundant workforce. On the contrary, more developed countries have on average an older

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<sup>43</sup> KROGSTAD JENS MANUEL, *5 Facts About Mexico and Immigration to the U.S.*, Pew Research Center, February 11<sup>th</sup> 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/11/mexico-and-immigration-to-us/> (July 13<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>44</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 25-31.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 25-31.

population, and developed the demand for young, low-skilled workforce – doubtlessly cheaper than the high-skilled, native employees –. Such needs, or better, demands<sup>46</sup>, are socially constructed and depend on the degree of development of a city or a nation<sup>47</sup>. This so-called push and pull factors, can almost always explain why people migrate from a specific sending region to a specific receiving region. Nonetheless, it is necessary to point out that push and pull models have numerous downsides which make them unreliable. They are in fact purely descriptive and are not based on real facts. In addition, they are deterministic as they do not take into account a broader variety of factors on which the decision to migrate is based<sup>48</sup>.

#### 1.4 MIGRANTS' CATEGORIES

A **migrant** is by definition someone who lives in another country than where he or she was born<sup>49</sup>. Globally speaking, a migrant is a person who lives outside his or her country of origin for more than a year, regardless of the causes and the means he or she adopted to migrate. Furthermore, in the European and EFTA<sup>50</sup> contexts, a person is defined as migrant when he or she establishes his or her residence in an EU or EFTA Member State for at least 12 months, after having previously resided in another EU/EFTA Member State<sup>51</sup>. Nonetheless, people decide to move for the most different reasons; therefore, there are different migrant categories.

Foremost, there is a basic differentiation between voluntary and forced migrants. **Voluntary migrants** are people who decide to migrate for economic reasons; in fact, they are known as **economic migrants**, i.e. people who leave the origin country in order to seek material improvements in their livelihood<sup>52</sup>. By contrast, **forced migrants** are people who flee their homes to escape extreme situations, such as persecution or conflict<sup>53</sup>. There are different sub-categories of forced migrants. Even if in recent times, the term **refugee** is commonly used to refer to all of forced migrants, the majority of forced migrants move for purposes that are not recognized by the International Refugee

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<sup>46</sup> Needs, wants and demands are marketing concepts. A need is described as a requirement concerning human primary necessities – such as food and water –; a want is associated with a desire; finally, a demand stems from the willingness and ability to obtain a certain object or result.

<sup>47</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 28-31.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, 28-31.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, 28-31.

<sup>50</sup> European Free Trade Association.

<sup>51</sup> Definitions provided by the European Commission Internet site *Migration and Home Affairs*. Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/migrant-0\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/migrant-0_en) (July 9<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>53</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 215-239.

Law<sup>54</sup>, that defines who can be considered as refugee and who cannot. The sub-categories of forced migrants are (1) refugees, (2) Internally Displaced People (IDPs), (3) asylum seekers, (4) development displacees, (5) environmental and disaster displacees. According to the Article 1(A)(2) of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee, a refugee (1) is a person who «owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it»<sup>55</sup>. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee provides the universal definition of a refugee and is aimed at protecting all refugees in the world in emergency and non-emergency situations. Similar to refugees, **Internally Displaced People (IDPs)** (2) are persons who have been forced to flee their homes because of a situation of danger and violation of human rights, that was threatening their lives; yet IDPs flee their homes without crossing and International border<sup>56</sup>. **Asylum seekers** (3) are people who tried to escape from an extreme situation and crossed an international border searching for protection, but whose claims for refugee status have not been assessed yet<sup>57</sup>. **Development displacees** (4) are individuals who were obliged to move by reason of large-scale development projects, such as airports or motorways<sup>58</sup>. Analogously, **environmental and disaster displacees** (5) were compelled to move because of environmental change or disasters, for example tsunami or earthquake<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>55</sup> Official definition provided by the UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) *Emergency Handbook*. Retrieved from: <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/250585/refugee-definition> (July 11<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>56</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 215-239.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem.

## 2. MIGRATION NETWORK THEORY AND ITS CASES OF STUDY

In this second chapter one of the most corroborated theories in International Migration will be presented, the Migration Network Theory. The concept of migrants' networks, central in the theory under question will be illustrated (2.1); the explanation of the concepts of feedback, culture of migration and migration system will follow (2.1.1); then, the idea of chain migration theorised by MacDonald and MacDonald in 1964 will be described and its role will be illustrated through a real-life example, the migration flow from Southern Italy to Northern American cities in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (2.2); finally, the concept of cumulative causation theorised by Massey will be presented and illustrated with the use of a concrete example of an ongoing important migration flow, Mexican migration to the USA (2.3).

### 2.1 MIGRATION NETWORK THEORY

All literature concerning the topic of International Migration agree in saying that migration has both an economic and a social basis<sup>60</sup>. In level-terms, it could be said that there are two levels influencing migration decisions and flows, namely: macro- and meso-level. Macro-level refers to exogenous factors, such as the political situation, the economic development, the structure of the labour market and the interstate relationships affecting the migration process. On the other hand, meso-level focuses on people: migrants themselves and the relationships they maintain with their compatriots. It thus indicates the social support and the flow of information between sending and receiving regions of migration<sup>61</sup>. According to the Migration Network Theory – one of the most known and corroborated theories in International Migration – the informal support within migrants' networks plays a fundamental role both in the initiation and in the continuation of the migration flow. Networks influence migration both directly, reducing costs and risks of migration; and indirectly, affecting potential migrants' aspirations and perceptions of migration, through visits and transnational communications. Strong attention is in recent times being given to the meso-level and to the role that migrant themselves play in influencing the migration processes.

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<sup>60</sup> VANDERERF BOB, HEERING LIESBETH, *Causes of International Migration: Proceedings of a Workshop*, 1996, Pennsylvania: DIANE Publishing, pp. 154-155.

<sup>61</sup> DE HAAS HEIN, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, pp. 1590-1592.

The key concept of the Migration Network Theory is **migrants' networks**; that is to say: a system of social ties that connect migrants, former migrants and potential migrants<sup>62</sup> in sending and receiving regions of migration<sup>63</sup>. These social ties root in bonds of kinship and shared community origins<sup>64</sup>; thus, they are extremely strong. Migrants' networks are meso-level social structures<sup>65</sup> that tend to reduce migration's risks and economic, social and psychology costs; hence, they facilitate further migratory movements.

### 2.1.1 FEEDBACKS, CULTURE OF MIGRATION AND MIGRATION SYSTEM

Feedbacks, culture of migration and migration system are crucial concepts in the Migration Network Theory. Migration's costs are reduced through **feedbacks**, described as «flows of information sent to the area of origin about the success, or failure, of specific migration projects»<sup>66</sup>. Feedbacks are social mechanisms that shape migratory movements<sup>67</sup>. According to Oliver Bakewell and Dominique Jolivet<sup>68</sup> there are five different types of feedbacks: (1) personal network feedback – direct individual communication between a migrant and a potential migrant –, (2) narrowcast feedback – a feedback in an impersonal form, such as through a blog or a newsletter –, (3) induced broadcast feedback – the feedback a potential migrant discovers by finding information given by a migrant he or she doesn't know directly –, (4) general broadcast feedback – provided by television, radio or Internet sites that the large majority of the population have access to – (5) embedded broadcast feedback – feedback made of tangible and intangible evidence of migration, such as experiences (told to potential migrants by former migrants), houses and/or business that migrants built during or after their migration<sup>69</sup>. Feedbacks characterize migrants' networks and reduce risks that potential migrants may encounter. In fact, newcomers<sup>70</sup> are supplied with practical information about the country they are migrating to.

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<sup>62</sup> A potential migrant is a person who resides in his or her country of origin but wishes to migrate elsewhere.

<sup>63</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 39-40; MASSEY DOUGLAS S., ARANGO J., HUGO G., KOUAOUCCI A., PELLEGRINO A., TAYLOR J.E., *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*, 1998, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>64</sup> VANDERERF and HEERING, *Causes of International Migration: Proceedings of a Workshop*, 1996, pp. 154-155.

<sup>65</sup> DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, p. 1589.

<sup>66</sup> MABOGUNJE, AKIN L., *Systems Approach to a Theory of Rural-urban Migration*, 1970, *Geographical Analysis*, 2(1), pp. 1-18.

<sup>67</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> Who wrote the ninth chapter intitled *Broadcasting Migration Outcomes* (pages 183-204) of *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration* published by Palgrave Macmillan (Basingstoke) in 2015.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, pp. 187-188.

<sup>70</sup> The term “newcomers” is intended to refer to potential migrants from the same country of already settled migrants.

Moreover, feedbacks promote newcomers' settlement and adjustment in the country of destination as migrants are provided with useful information and access to local resources<sup>71</sup>. Whereas **migrant pioneers**<sup>72</sup> had to find their way in the new country and face difficulties such as language misunderstanding and socio-cultural differences from their origin country; newcomers are facilitated and tend to follow the "beaten track". Apart from the material costs, psychologic ones have not to be underestimated. Knowing someone who is already settled in the country of destination is psychologically comforting.

DiMaggio and Garip<sup>73</sup> propose their view on feedbacks. According to the authors, migrants' networks affect migration patterns through three feedbacks' sources; namely, (1) social learning, (2) normative pressure and (3) network externalities. Feedbacks enhance migratory movements as migrants provide their relatives and friends with useful information. Hence, feedbacks constitute a form of **social learning** (1) that contribute to lower migration costs and risks. Moreover, feedbacks may result in **normative pressure** (2), in such a way that the flow of information – feedbacks – shape people's view and aspirations on migration, enhancing or undermining further migratory movements. Finally, feedbacks affect migration patterns as they influence **network externalities** (3), that is to say, the context in which migration occurs. The social, political and economic context in which migration takes place may be influenced both by feedbacks and by migration movements themselves<sup>74</sup>. Besides lowering migration costs and risks, feedbacks result in increased capabilities to migrate. In fact, feedbacks and **economic remittances**<sup>75</sup> result in a facilitated financing of other community members' migration. Apart from economic remittances, a key role is also played by **social remittances**<sup>76</sup>, that, if positive – i.e., when they are associated with material and social success of the person who migrate – can have a profound influence in the sending country's community members, on their identity formation and on their behaviour.

If migration is strongly associated with success, the so-called **culture of migration** may arise. In the case of culture of migration, remaining in the origin country is considered by community members as a failure, whereas migrating becomes the norm and the most natural and successful path to follow.

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<sup>71</sup> DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, p. 1608.

<sup>72</sup> First migrants who arrived in the country of destination.

<sup>73</sup> Two experts who wrote *How Network Externalities Can Exacerbate Intergroup Inequality*, published in 2011 by the *American Journal of Sociology*.

<sup>74</sup> DIMAGGIO P. and GARIP F., *How Network Externalities Can Exacerbate Intergroup Inequality*, 2011, *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(6), pp. 1887–1933.

<sup>75</sup> "An amount of money sent to someone", Cambridge Dictionary. When talking about migration, remittances are usually the sum of money that a migrant sends to his relatives who remained in the origin country in order to economically help them.

<sup>76</sup> "Ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital flowing from receiving to sending communities", DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, p. 1595.

Hence, social remittances enhance the prestige attached to migration; consequently, increasing the aspirations to migrate.

The aforementioned social ties that link migrants and non-migrants in a network, constitute a **migration system**, i.e. a series of places connected by flow and counter-flow of ideas, goods and people<sup>77</sup>. Once a system is created, it tends to promote further exchange – migration –. Along with financial and human capitals – stemming from economic and social remittances – **social capital** strongly affects people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate. In fact, migrants who settle in the region of destination create their own social and economic infrastructure, made of shops, social services and cult places. Consequently, a migrant community in the country of destination arises, making the arrival of more migrants from the same sending region more likely<sup>78</sup>. Furthermore, social and economic infrastructures, stemming from migrants' clustering in the country of destination, leads to a change in the pre-existing social and economic context of the area in which migrants settle. Such change is likely to enhance further migratory movements, making them easier and more convenient for potential migrants<sup>79</sup>.

According to the Migration Network Theory, further migration is stimulated by migrants' networks and by the system of feedbacks that characterises such networks. A great role is played migrants who already settled in the country of destination, who act as **bridgeheads**, facilitating further migration to the country of destination.

## 2.2 CHAIN MIGRATION: ITALY – USA MIGRATION

The idea of migration stimulating further migration is rooted in International Migration studies. As reported by MacDonald and MacDonald<sup>80</sup>, the migration process is originated by complex factors rather than by a simple push-pull mechanism, and it can be strongly influenced by migrants and by the social relationships they maintain among themselves. The two authors make a distinction between impersonally organized migration and chain migration, two possible ways in which migration may occur. **Impersonally organized migration** is an organized flow of people. The flow may be coordinated by organizations – such as the International Refugee Organization – or by countries' governments. The example given is the organized migration flow from the United Kingdom to its

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<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, p. 1593.

<sup>78</sup> CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 39-40.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, p. 41.

<sup>80</sup> The two authors published in 1964 a study concerning Italy-USA migration. They analysed the formation and influence of chain migration in the migration flux under question.

colonies during the Colonial Era<sup>81</sup>. On the other hand, **chain migration** stems from the relationships between settled and potential migrants, and the resulting help and support in terms of transportation, initial accommodation and recruiting<sup>82</sup>. The case of study employed is migration from Southern Italy to Northern American cities in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before the First World War, chain migration was the only possible and effective way for Italians to settle in the USA. In fact, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the vast majority of Italians wishing to emigrate to the New World did not know English and was totally unprepared to enter the American territory. For these reasons, having a relative or a friend who was already settled in America was the only way in order to migrate successfully. Southern Italian earlier immigrants provided newcomers from the same hometowns with support, money and initial employment and accommodation<sup>83</sup>. We can identify two important migration flows from Southern Italy to the USA. The first one concerned working males; the second one interested family reunification – spouses and children of the emigrated working males joined them in the American territory –. Southern Italians settled in American cities that are now known as “Little Italies”. Authors describe three **chain relationships** that were found analysing migration from Southern Italy to Northern America. (1) *Padroni*-immigrants, this relationship was built between *padroni* – Italian bosses settled in the USA. For the most part, they were among the first ones to arrive and settle in the New World – and newcomers. *Padroni* offered newcomers an employment, usually newcomers ended up being exploited. (2) The relationship between two lone-working-males, who helped each other before being joined by their families; (3) the social connection between one lone-working-male and his family<sup>84</sup>. It is clear how these three types of relationships contributed to make further migration less risky and psychologically and financially less costly; hence, more likely. Migration flow from Southern Italy to Northern America cannot be understood without taking into account the clustering of members from the same hometown in America and the help and support they gave each other. Feedbacks and assistance stemming from migrants’ social ties were fundamental in making migration flow to the U.S. possible. Above all if considering the historical period preceding the First World War. In fact, in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the world was not as globalized – connected – as it is now, and people were not as alphabetized and educated as they are now. To conclude, chain migration in the presented study case has to be considered as positive, in such a way that it facilitated migration from the origin to the destination country.

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<sup>81</sup> MACDONALD JOHN S., MACDONALD LEATRICE D., *Chain Migration Ethnic Neighborhood Formation and Social Networks*, January 1964, The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 1, p. 83.

<sup>82</sup> Ibidem, p. 82.

<sup>83</sup> Ibidem, p. 84.

<sup>84</sup> Ibidem pp. 84-85.

MacDonald and MacDonald research validates the Migration Network Theory: social ties among former, settled and potential migrants appear to play a crucial role in enhancing migration movements.

### 2.3 CUMULATIVE CAUSATION: MEXICO – USA MIGRATION

**Cumulative causation** is a concept that for the first time was used by Gunnar Myrdal in 1957, in his book intitled *Lands and Poor*<sup>85</sup>; the concept was afterwards employed by Massey in his numerous studies and publications that dates back to the 1990s. According to Massey, in migration flows, causation is cumulative as every act of migration alters the social context in which subsequent migration decisions are made, in such a way that further migration decisions are more likely. The author explains how each movement of migration creates the social and economic structures needed to maintain it; as a result, every new migrant reduces the costs of migration (described in paragraph 2.1 and. 2.1.1) for consequent migrants<sup>86</sup>. In Massey's optic, migration is a self-reinforcing and self-perpetuating process. Social scientists, as Massey and his colleagues explain, found six potential socioeconomic factors that positively affect cumulative causation of migration, they are: (1) income distribution, (2) land distribution, (3) organization of agrarian production (when dealing with rural areas as migration's zone of departure), (4) culture of migration, (5) human capital's regional distribution, and (6) social labelling. Income distribution (1) positively affects cumulative causation as economic remittances sent by migrants to their relatives and friends who remained in the origin country greatly increase the income of potential migrants, who, thanks to remittances, become financially capable of handling economic costs of migration. Land distribution (2) appears to influence cumulative causation in the way that migrants appear to be likely to invest their earnings in purchasing farmland in the origin region, even if they usually do not cultivate it. Such land use lowers the demand for local agricultural labour; thus, increasing the need to outmigrate. Organization of agrarian production (3) refers to the methods employed in farming land. Authors argue that when migrants' households themselves farm the land, they tend to utilise capital-intensive methods, such as fertilization or use of farm machines. They can afford more expensive and effective methods thanks to migrants' economic remittances, that make a household in the origin country richer. The use of capital-intensive methods lowers the demand for local agricultural workforce and, consequently,

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<sup>85</sup> Published by New York: Harper and Row in 1957.

<sup>86</sup> MASSEY DOUGLAS S., ARANGO J., HUGO G., KOUAOUCCI A., PELLEGRINO A., TAYLOR J.E., *Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal* ,1993, Population and Development Review, 19(3), p. 451.

augment the pressures for outmigration. As explained in paragraph 2.2.1, culture of migration (4) arises in a country when great prestige is attached to migration. As a consequence, not migrating is considered as failure, and migrating becomes a sort of *rite de passage*. The culture of migration increases the mechanism of cumulative causation, making further migration more likely. Regional distribution of human capital (5)<sup>87</sup> seems to positively affect cumulative causation as outgoing migration, results in a brain drain<sup>88</sup> in sending areas of migration; thus, aggravating the loss of human capital. Such loss leads to a decreased productivity in the origin country, that increases the need of outmigration; hence, regional distribution of human capital fosters cumulative causation and further migratory movements. Finally, social labelling (6) refers to the process of cultural labelling occurring in some occupations in the receiving country of migration. Such process changes the cultural perceptions of certain employments. In Europe, for example, in the post-war period, occupations in the automobile factoring sector began to be perceived as “immigrant jobs”. The stigmatization of certain occupations results in an increased demand for migrant workforce in the receiving country; consequently, making further migration to the receiving country more likely; hence, positively affecting cumulative causation.

The logic underlying these socioeconomic factors influencing cumulative causation is that, in broad terms, migration results in a brain drain and increased inequalities in the sending countries, as opposite to a brain gain and an economic growth in receiving countries of migration. These disparities are believed to lead to more migration<sup>89</sup>. Cumulative causation is fundamental in the initiation of migratory movements from a sending to a receiving country, but above all it allows its continuation and stabilisation over time. A fundamental role is played once again by migrants’ networks, at the root of cumulative causation. As the migration flow expands, simultaneously, the migrants’ network grows, becoming stable and acquiring a fixed structure that assures its duration over time. Once the network is stable, migration becomes self-sustaining and is no more subject to exogenous influences and structural conditions that generated the migration flow at its beginning<sup>90</sup>. Furthermore, when a certain threshold of migration from a sending to a receiving country is reached, migration is believed to become self-perpetuating. Migration tends to expand continuously, until network connections in

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<sup>87</sup> Massey’s concept of cumulative causation – as points 1, 2, and 5 demonstrates – appears to have strong conceptual linkages with Marxist and neo-Marxist theories on migration and development. Marxist theories argue that outmigration undermines the economy of sending regions by depriving them of their human and material resources; thus, increasing their dependence on the outside world and, consequently, making further outmigration more likely. DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, p. 1594.

<sup>88</sup> The situation that arises when a great number of educated and skilled people leave their country of origin to live and work in another one where wages and social conditions are better.

<sup>89</sup> MASSEY et al., *Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal*, 1993, pp. 451-454.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 454.

the sending country of migration have spread so broadly that all the people who wish to migrate can do so without obstacles<sup>91</sup>.

The case of study is Mexican migration to the USA. Mexico – USA migration corridor is the most important in recent times. In 2015 a peak of 11.635.995 Mexican refugees crossing the American border was registered<sup>92</sup>. In Mexican migration flow to the USA, social ties that migrants maintain between themselves, and the information – feedbacks – they exchange, contribute to the social and human capital formation, crucial, together with market consolidation, in the initiation and continuation of the migration flow under question, as previously illustrated in paragraph 1.2. In the Mexico-U.S. migration case, migrants are joined by friends, relatives, spouses and children; thus, increasing the social capital and reaching the aforementioned threshold that makes migration flow self-sustaining and self-perpetuating. This case corroborates the Migration Network Theory as it proves that social capital stemming from migrants' networks facilitates and enhances migration movements. Once again, as showed in this case of study, migrants play the role of **bridgeheads**, lowering migration costs and risks; hence, making further migration far more likely.

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<sup>91</sup> MASSEY DOUGLAS S., ARANGO J., HUGO G., KOUAOUCI A., PELLEGRINO A., TAYLOR J.E., *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*, 2005, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 45.

<sup>92</sup> Data reported by LIMES, *Chi bussa alla nostra porta*, June 2015, p. 56.

### 3. THEORIES ON DECLINING MIGRATION AND THE CASE OF STUDY

In this third and last chapter, a new perspective on migrants' networks will be presented. Recent studies and research argue that social networks and feedback mechanism do not always promote further migration. Indeed, under certain conditions they may also impede additional migratory movements. Firstly, recent theories regarding declining migration will be presented (3.1); secondly, the downsides of the theories presented in chapter 2 will be analysed (3.2). Specifically, the concept of diminutive causation will be described (3.2.1). Then, an example of declining migration will be presented: the migration corridor from Morocco to the Netherlands (3.3). In the last paragraph the causes of declining migration will be analysed; in order to do so, the four contexts of reception for immigrants theorised by Portes and Rumbaut, and their influence on migratory movements will be described (3.3.1).

#### 3.1 THEORISING DECLINING MIGRATION

The idea of migration encouraging further migration, is often taken for granted. There is little research concerning how initial migration may not result in chain migration or cumulative causation and, contrarily, hinder additional migration. Research on the migration-facilitating role of feedbacks in migration processes principally focuses on migrants' social networks. However, little attention is paid to other influencing factors, such as the **migratory industry**<sup>93</sup>, class relations, and other factors that are constantly shaping migration patterns<sup>94</sup>. Migration is in fact part of an everchanging social, political and economic context. Origin and decay of migrants' networks and systems are commonly attributed to the exogenous factors at the macro-level, such as inequalities – in wages and opportunities –, political differences between sending and receiving countries of migration, and governments' policies towards migration. Exogenous changes may also undermine migratory movements. For example, if income differentials between sending and receiving region of migration fall below a critical threshold level, psychological and financial costs of migration appear not to be

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<sup>93</sup> Migratory industry develops whenever a migratory movement arises. It includes a vast variety of people and institutions who have different interests in migration. Some examples may be human smugglers, travel agents, labour recruiters, and so on. Migratory industry arises as migration flows give origin to various needs and demands; the industry stems from the exigence to provide such services. Migration industry may become the primary driving force in a migratory movement, as subjective economic and political interests come into play. In that case, migratory movements become extremely difficult to control. CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 235-239.

<sup>94</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, p. 1.

worthy, if compared with the advantages of staying in the native region<sup>95</sup>; thus, a decline in outmigration is expected. Apart from the exogenous changes, also internal changes at the meso-level may undermine migratory movements. International Migration's theories largely focus on internal feedback mechanism and their migration-facilitating role. Nonetheless, migration-undermining internal feedback mechanisms arise from changes in the context in which migratory movements take place. Such mechanisms exist and counteract the migration-facilitating dynamics, weakening migration's networks and systems<sup>96</sup>.

### 3.2 CUMULATIVE CAUSATION'S AND MIGRATION NETWORK THEORY'S DOWNSIDES

De Haas, an expert who largely contributed to the theorisation of the declining migration phenomenon, illustrates the drawbacks of Migration Network Theory and Massey's cumulative causation. De Haas affirms that these two theories do not consider the cases in which migration flows do not set in movement a structure that allows the reinforcement and perpetuation of migration. In fact, not all migration movements give origin to migrants' networks and migration systems. The theories described in the second chapter fail to explain the reasons why migrant flows stop or even revert, and why despite the existence of networks, these movements can start to decline<sup>97</sup>.

De Haas states that it is unrealistic that no counter-mechanisms, levelling off the nature of the migration process, come into action over time. Furthermore, both cumulative causation and Migration Network Theory follow a circular logic<sup>98</sup> that unveils their inability to conceptualise migration-undermining mechanisms<sup>99</sup>. Cumulative causation and the self-reinforcing mechanism stemming from it, cannot be taken for granted. Massey in particular, only focuses on the cases in which migration positively influences the sending region and its inhabitants (as explained in paragraph 2.3). Yet, exogenous factors – at the macro-level – affecting migratory movements can be at a time positive or negative to varying degree. In the event that contextual conditions are favourable – for example if the economic situation in the region of origin is ameliorated by migratory movements – migrants' networks may reinforce the positive trend, by investing in local businesses, for instance. On the other

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<sup>95</sup> DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, p. 1598.

<sup>96</sup> Ibidem, pp. 1591-1592.

<sup>97</sup> Ibidem, p. 1587.

<sup>98</sup> In a circular logic the reasoner begins with what he or she is trying to end with. Circular reasoning is a logical fallacy.

<sup>99</sup> DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, pp. 1596-1597.

hand, if the economic and political conditions are unfavourable, migration and migrants' networks may undermine further migratory movements<sup>100</sup>.

Cumulative Causation and Migration Network Theory focus on the positive role played by **social capital** in fostering migratory flows. In the case of cumulative causation, the growth of social capital contributes to the self-reinforcing character acquired by migration patterns, and in the Migration Network Theory social capital stems from the relationships between settled and potential migrants in migrants' networks and positively affects aspirations on migration. However, De Haas describes four potential negative implications of social capital. The first negative implication is what De Haas defines **exclusionary dynamics** of migrants' networks (1). Social relationships that connect migrants are based on ties of kinship and ethnicity; they are so strong that they may exclude outsiders<sup>101</sup>. This exclusionary character may result in a restriction of the social network. Hence, social network's exclusive aspect may work contra-productively, undermining further migratory movements. Moreover, (2) social ties may result in **social obligations** for successful migrants who are expected to support relatives and community members. Such social obligations may be perceived as restrictions by migrants, who, as a consequence, may develop the desire to abandon the social network. As group memberships arise the demand for **conformity** (3), the network may be perceived as an asphyxiating environment, that restricts personal freedom. Finally, if a network is cohesive (4), **downward levelling norms** may emerge. Such norms stem from the willingness to keep the network close-knit; hence, they are expected to keep all group members at the same level, preventing the most ambitious ones to flee from it<sup>102</sup>. These negative implications may result in a weakening of the network and of the social ties that keep migrants connected. If the network of migrants is weakened, its migration-facilitating role may be undermined. Furthermore, in order to have a positive effect – i.e. promote migration flows –, migrants need to be able to deploy material resources to make migration less costly and risky for prospective migrants; moreover, in order to be helpful, migrants have to be predisposed to support those who wish to migrate, because of emphatic or self-interest reasons. Therefore, if already settled migrants are not willing to help potential migrants, or if they lack the necessary material resources to do so, chain migration and cumulative causation effects are not likely to be unleashed<sup>103</sup>. De Haas provides us with a critical approach that brings out the drawbacks of the theories arguing that migrants' networks tend to enhance further migratory movements.

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<sup>100</sup> DE HAAS HEIN, *Mobility and Human Development*, 2009, New York: Human Development Report Office.

<sup>101</sup> In this case "outsiders" are people who are not directly linked to migrants by ethnic or kinship ties.

<sup>102</sup> DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, p. 1602.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1603.

### 3.2.1 DIMINUTIVE CAUSATION

According to the logic of Migration Networks Theory and cumulative causation, when social capital reaches a certain threshold, migration becomes a self-sustaining and self-perpetuating process. As a consequence, a whole community should migrate to the receiving country of migration. It is evident that the previous assumption is completely unrealistic. Empirical evidence demonstrates that only a small percentage of community members migrate. This phenomenon is theorized by the New Economics of Labour Migration Theory (NELM). According to NELM, the decision to migrate is not taken by an individual, but by a household. NELM considers migration as a tool to spread risks – of an economic nature –; hence, migration becomes a strategy to diversify income resources<sup>104</sup>. Following this optic, only a few members of a household migrate, while the rest of the family remains in the native region. In order to explain cumulative causation's logic fallacy, Massey conceptualises the phenomenon of **saturation**. The author explains how, when the majority of households in the sending country of migration have a close connection to someone with migrant experience, migrants' network reaches a **level of saturation**. At the time when this level of development is attained, the costs of migration arrest their decline. As a consequence, with each new migrant the process of migration loses its dynamism<sup>105</sup>. The continuous flow of migrants is thus expected to provoke a saturation, that results in a weakening of the network<sup>106</sup>. Once migrants' network is depleted, its migration-facilitating dynamics cease to continue.

The concept of diminutive causation seeks to explain the mechanism that leads to downward spirals of migration. Three social mechanism appear to originate the phenomenon of diminutive causation, namely, (1) macro-level factors, such as scarce employment opportunities or strict immigration policies; (2) meso-level factors, as when settled migrants are unwilling to provide support to potential migrants; and (3) changes in the migration cultures caused by negative feedbacks that undermine potential migrants' aspirations. The phenomenon of diminutive causation results in a causal process leading to a decline in new migration movements<sup>107</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> Diversification is an economic concept theorizing the process of giving variety to funds with the expectation that the positive performance of some will offset negative performance of others.

<sup>105</sup> MASSEY, DOUGLAS S., *Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration*, 1990, Population Index 56 (1), p. 8.

<sup>106</sup> DE HAAS, *The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry*, 2010, pp. 1598-1601.

<sup>107</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, pp. 210-211.

### 3.3 MOROCCO – NETHERLANDS MIGRATION CORRIDOR

In order to illustrate the phenomenon of declining migration and its potential causes, Erik Snel, Godfried Engbersen and Marije Faber<sup>108</sup> employ a key case of study, migration from Morocco to the Netherlands<sup>109</sup>. In the description of the case of study, the migration-undermining role of migrants' networks will be illustrated. Surveys and qualitative interviews were conducted on former, current and potential Morocco-born migrants. Former migrants were asked about their migration history; specifically, about the support they received by already settled migrants from their home country during their migration. Current migrants were questioned about their willingness to support potential migrants on their migration nowadays. Finally, potential migrants were asked about their perceptions and aspirations on migration. Such surveys and interviews were directed by THEMIS – Theorising the Evolution of European Migration Systems –, a four-years project aimed at understanding the evolution of migration patterns in Europe. The focus of the project is on migrants themselves; above all on pioneer migrants and their initial moves, that are held responsible for the establishment of migration systems<sup>110</sup>. 420 respondents were involved in the THEMIS survey in Rotterdam (Netherlands). All of them spent on average more than 20 years in the Netherlands, women constitute a majority with respect to men, respondents were aged between 40 and 60 years old, the general background can be considered low<sup>111</sup>. As far as THEMIS' qualitative interviews are concerned, 30 Moroccan migrants settled in the area of Rotterdam were interviewed; in addition, 44 Moroccans were interviewed in their country of origin, in the areas of Rabat and Nador<sup>112</sup>. Of these 44 Moroccans, 24 were migrants who came back to the native country after a period spent in the Netherlands; the remaining 20 were relatives and friends of current migrants in the Netherlands. Respondents in the Netherlands were questioned about their migration experience and their perceptions of the migration flow from Morocco to Holland. Meanwhile, those interviewed in Morocco were questioned about their aspirations and opinion on migration from Morocco to the Netherlands<sup>113</sup>.

Nowadays, Moroccans are the fourth-largest migrant group in Holland, after Turks, Germans and Indonesians. The majority of them lead their lives in the four Dutch biggest cities: Amsterdam,

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<sup>108</sup> Who wrote *From Bridgeheads to Gate Closers: How Migrant Networks Contribute to Declining Migration from Morocco to the Netherlands*, that constitutes chapter 7 (pages 134-155) in *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, published by Palgrave Macmillan (Basingstoke) in 2015.

<sup>109</sup> Ibidem, p. 134.

<sup>110</sup> Explanation provided by the International Migration Institute – IMI –. Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationinstitute.org/data/themis-data/themis-data> (2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019).

<sup>111</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, pp. 141-143.

<sup>112</sup> It is important to point out that these two regions are not representative for all Morocco.

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem, p. 143.

Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht<sup>114</sup>. The migration corridor from Morocco to Holland began in the post-war period and completely changed across time.

Moroccan migration to the Netherlands, began in the period that followed the second world war. During the second global conflict, a large number of Dutch cities were damaged; Rotterdam, for example, was razed to the ground. As a consequence, workforce in industries such as mines, ports, construction, textile metal industries – the so-called heavy industries<sup>115</sup> – was hugely needed in order to reconstruct the damaged cities<sup>116</sup>. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as many others West-European countries, the Netherlands started welcoming a great number of guest workers. Not only guest workers were recruited by individual employers, the arrival of external workforce was also encouraged by the Dutch government, that stipulated recruitment treaties with different Mediterranean countries, from where migrants departed. Some examples of recruitment treaties are Netherlands-Italy in 1960, Netherlands-Turkey in 1964 and Netherlands-Morocco in 1969<sup>117</sup>. As a result, between 1960s and 1970s, almost two hundred fifty thousand labour migrants arrived in the Netherlands, 40.000 of them were born in Morocco. In that period, migrants were warmly welcomed by Dutch citizens, as Youssef, a 70 years old Moroccan migrant settled in the Netherland witness demonstrates: «When I arrived in Utrecht [...] everyone was waving to me and telling me «come to us, come to us». I went to a company that was fixing streets [...] They gave me a chair and put all kind of stuff in front of me to choose from. Different kinds of cigarettes and cigars, cookies. In those days they were really happy with us»<sup>118</sup>. It is important to underline that the Dutch societal reception of migrants was rather friendly as immigrants and Dutch workers did not competed for the same kind of employment<sup>119</sup>.

In 1973, the oil crisis resulted in a decline of employment opportunities in the Netherlands; consequently, the Dutch government quitted on recruiting guest workers. Nevertheless, migration flow from Morocco to the Netherlands did not declined; quite the contrary, it strongly increased. In fact, the process of family reunification started: in the second half of the 1970s guest workers started to be joined by their families. In the same years, the phenomenon of family formation<sup>120</sup> started<sup>121</sup>. It is between the late 1970s and the first decades of the 1980s that a note-worthy irregular migration was

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<sup>114</sup> ENGBERSEN GODFRIED, SNEL ERIK, VAN MEETEREN MASJA, JØRGEN CARLING, *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, September 2013, Working Papers - Paper 73, Oxford: University of Oxford, International Migration Institute (IMI), p.10.

<sup>115</sup> The term “heavy industries” is commonly used to refer to jobs that involve a labour-intensive work.

<sup>116</sup> ENGBERSEN et al., *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, 2013, p. 11.

<sup>117</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, p. 135.

<sup>118</sup> Ibidem, p. 138.

<sup>119</sup> ENGBERSEN et al., *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, 2013, p. 11.

<sup>120</sup> Young migrants found their spouses and formed a family in the Netherlands.

<sup>121</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, pp. 134-135.

registered. In this period, the Dutch government had a tolerant response: regulation programmes started: in 1975, more than 10.000 undocumented migrants were regularised – a large majority was composed by Turkish and Moroccan migrants –<sup>122</sup>.

Starting from the 1980s the situation dramatically changed. In these years, the economic crisis hit many European countries; Netherlands included. The economic recession provoked a restriction in the labour market. Despite this fact, Moroccan migrants continued to arrive in the Dutch country. In the same years, precisely in 1985, the Schengen Agreement was adopted. In order to facilitate the movement of people and transport of goods between European nations, the agreement foresaw the gradual abolition of checks at the border of the signing nations, namely, Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands<sup>123</sup>. After the Schengen agreement, the problem of irregular migration flows to the Netherlands was framed in socioeconomic terms; as a consequence, with the aim of protecting the Dutch welfare state, the government adopted stricter policies on immigration, that strongly focused on assimilation<sup>124</sup>.

During the second half of the 1990s, labour opportunities increased; nevertheless, Dutch societal reception of immigrants dramatically changed, becoming more hostile. It is in these years that populist right-wing, anti-Muslimism parties started their ascent. With the implementation of the *Koppelingswet*, in 1998, undocumented migrants were banned from a considerable number of public services<sup>125</sup>. This is only an example of the anti-multicultural turn taken by the Dutch government. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the social reception of immigrants became even more unfriendly; as Zohra, a 41-year-old housewife living in Rotterdam testifies: «The Dutch people have changed a lot, they are more hostile towards migrants and towards people with a different ethnic background. So no, I would not advise them to migrate. [...] It's not like the old days. It's really not»<sup>126</sup>.

2002 is considered to be a key year in the political history of the Netherlands, because of the surprising rise of the populist, anti-multiculturalism and anti-Muslim politician named Pim Fortuyn, who was

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<sup>122</sup> LUCASSEN, L. and LUCASSEN, J., *Winnaars en verliezers. Een nuchtere balans van vijfhonderd jaar immigratie*, 2011, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, p. 133.

<sup>123</sup> CONVENTION IMPLEMENTING THE SCHENGEN AGREEMENT of 14<sup>th</sup> June 1985, Official Journal of the European Communities. Retrieved from: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42000A0922\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42000A0922(02)&from=EN) (5<sup>th</sup> August 2019).

<sup>124</sup> Assimilation and integration are two approaches of social inclusion of immigrants adopted by governments. On the one hand, integration focuses on multiculturalism, and respect of different cultures. Governments that adopt the integration approach, consider immigrants' social inclusion as a gradual process. Moreover, immigrants are not forced to give up on their tradition, religion and language. On the other hand, the final goal of the assimilation approach is the total absorption of immigrants in the dominant culture (the one of the receiving country of migration). As a consequence, immigrants are asked to renounce to their traditions and religious beliefs in order to be "accepted" by the receiving country and its inhabitants. CASTLES et al., *The age of migration*, 2014, pp. 264-271.

<sup>125</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, pp. 148.

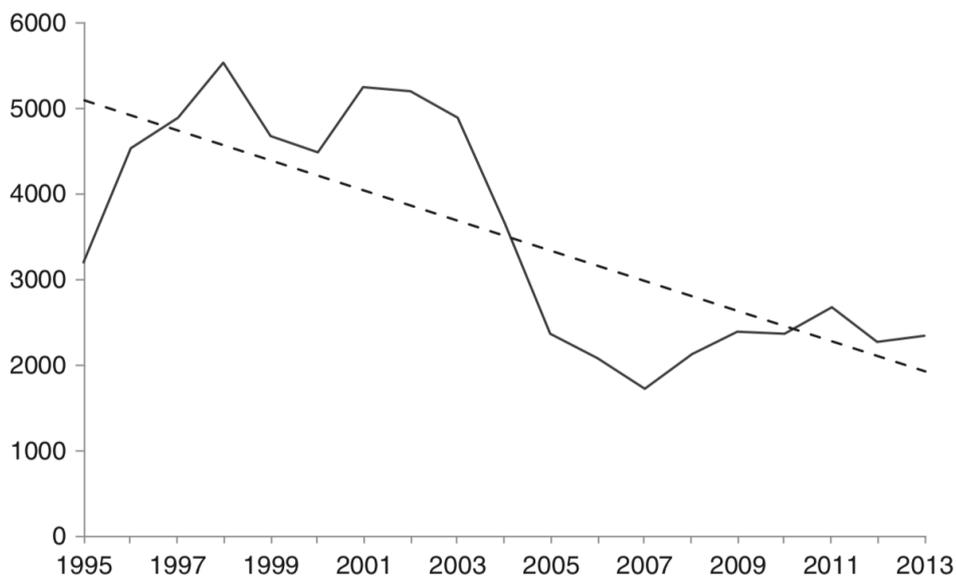
<sup>126</sup> *Ibidem*, pp.150-151.

assassinated in the same year. After Fortuyn, and until 2006, Holland had conservative governments, one after the other. The conservative governments explicitly indicate a dramatic change in the Dutch public opinion as far as the theme of immigration is concerned. Surveys demonstrate the diffusion of anti-immigrant and anti-Islam sentiments shared by a vast majority of the Dutch population. In a national survey conducted in 2002, the majority of respondents agreed in saying that in the Netherlands immigrants were “too many”<sup>127</sup>.

It is in the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after the 2003 economic recession, and the ever-growing unfriendly societal reception, that the migration flow from Morocco to the Netherlands started declining. Nowadays migratory movements reverted: there are more Moroccans that from the Netherlands go back to their origin country than Moroccans leaving their native country to go to the Netherlands.

The graphic below shows the decline in migratory movements form Morocco to the Netherlands, from 1995 to 2013.

*Figure 4 - Inflow of Morocco-born immigrants in the Netherlands<sup>128</sup>*



Through surveys and in-depth interviews, researchers aimed at finding the factors that contributed to make the migration flow decline and revert. From qualitative interviews in Rotterdam (NL), Rabat and Nador (MA) it resulted that even if the large majority of respondents received support from earlier migrants during their migration, the minority of them is willing to support newcomers. Specifically, only one settled migrant out of four (1/4) would help newcomers with employment and housing, and only one migrant out of ten (1/10) would help potential migrants with travel costs and residence

<sup>127</sup> ENGBERSEN et al., *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, 2013, p. 12.

<sup>128</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, pp. 136.

permits. On 420 respondents, 69% of them would not provide support to newcomers. In addition, 79% of Morocco-born migrants living in Holland would not recommend their compatriots to come to the Netherlands<sup>129</sup>.

In order to understand the reason why settled migrants changed their attitude towards potential migrants – refusing to provide them with help and support – it is necessary to consider three changes at the macro-level, and by extension, developments at the meso-level. Developments involve four contexts, namely: government's policies towards migration, labour market opportunities, societal reception of immigrants and, finally, the willingness of settled migrants to support newcomers (this last context is known as ethnic communities). These four frameworks were theorised by Portes and Rumbaudt; they will be explained in the subsequent paragraph together with the influence they had on migratory movements from Morocco to the Netherlands.

### 3.3.1 PORTES' AND RUMBAUDT'S FOUR CONTEXTS OF RECEPTION

Portes and Rumbaudt<sup>130</sup> consider four different contexts – or modes of incorporation – in which immigrants are received. Such contexts are held responsible for variations in migratory movements. They are: (1) policies in the field of immigration that the government of the receiving country adopts; (2) labour market opportunities in the receiving country – i.e. possibilities of finding an employment –; (3) degree of reception and acceptance of the receiving country's society towards migrants; (4) ethnic communities, that is to say, the emotional and instrumental support that already settled migrants give (or are willing to give) to newcomers. These four frameworks of reception constitute the way in which a group of migrants<sup>131</sup> is incorporated in the receiving country. The first three contexts are found at the macro-level; whereas the fourth context relates to the meso-level – i.e. to the behaviour of migrants themselves within their social networks –<sup>132</sup>.

Across time, the four contexts of reception dramatically changed for the worse. From 1960s – when Moroccan migration to Holland began – to the early 2000s – when migratory movement under question started declining –, there have been substantial institutional developments that influenced the first three contexts of reception. By extension, such institutional developments affected the behaviour of settled migrants and their willingness to provide support to newcomers. The migration-

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<sup>129</sup> Ibidem, pp. 144-145.

<sup>130</sup> Alejandro Portes together with Rumbaudt, R.G. published *Immigrant America: A Portrait*, in 1990, where the authors theorized the four contexts of reception for immigrants.

<sup>131</sup> A migrant's group is composed by migrants from the same origin region.

<sup>132</sup> ENGBERSEN et al., *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, 2013, p. 12.

undermining developments at the macro-level were proved with surveys and interviews conducted by THEMIS (data and methodology are explained in the first passage of paragraph 3.3). Interviews show how settled Morocco-born migrants in the Netherlands perceive institutional changes at the macro-level.

As a consequence of the irregular migration flows framed in socioeconomic terms after the implementation of the Schengen agreement, the Dutch government adopted stricter policies as far as immigration and social integration of immigrants are concerned (1). The witness of Fatima, a 33-year-old housewife living in Rotterdam demonstrates the way in which settled Morocco-born migrants perceive the developments of policies concerning immigration and social inclusion of migrants: «The immigration policies are also stricter than before. Migrants have to do a lot of tests and have to learn a lot about Dutch culture». Furthermore, in consequence of the economic crisis, employment opportunities in the Netherlands strongly decreased (2), as the statement of Ilham, an 84-year-old Moroccan man who worked as miner demonstrates: «There is no work here. [...] In the past there was enough work, but not anymore». And finally, over the years, the societal reception became more hostile and unfriendly (3). Anti-immigrants and anti-Islam sentiments arose, bringing into disrepute mainly Muslim immigrants, such as Moroccans. Tarik, a 33-year-old tram driver claims «There is one thing that I think is very dangerous: the fact that politicians like Geert Wilders<sup>133</sup> are becoming very popular. For Muslims this means that their rights to practice their religion are in danger. I think a lot of European countries – including the Netherlands – are very afraid of Islam [...]. Muslims are not welcome anymore. That is why I would be cautious with giving Moroccans the advice to come here»<sup>134</sup>.

Such institutional developments influenced migration flows both directly and indirectly. They directly affected potential migrants' perceptions of the country where they wish to migrate, undermining their aspirations to leave their home country. Furthermore, potential migrants were indirectly influenced by migrants who were already settled in the Netherlands. Macro-developments, in fact, affected already settled migrants' intentions to welcome newcomers. Not only settled Morocco-born migrants appeared to be unwilling to support newcomers, they also provided them with negative feedbacks on the country of reception; thus, dampening their aspiration to migrate and discouraging them to undertake the migratory trip<sup>135</sup>. According to Engbersen, Snel and Van

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<sup>133</sup> Geert Wilders is the founder and leader of *Partij voor de Vrijheid* – PVV (Party for Freedom). Wilders is best known for his anti-Islam political campaigns. To cite an example, his campaign aimed at stopping the “Islamisation of the Netherlands”, during which he tried to ban the Quran from Holland, comparing Muslims sacred book to Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.

<sup>134</sup> ENGBERSEN et al., *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, 2013, p. 14.

<sup>135</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, pp. 137-140.

Meeteren, the institutional developments indirectly affected the meso-level context named ethnic communities in three ways: (i) changing already settled migrants' willingness to support newcomers; (ii) starting a flow of migration-undermining feedback; (iii) affecting the culture of migration in sending area of migration. Through these changes, the context of immigration in the Netherlands was totally reshaped<sup>136</sup>. THEMIS' interviews demonstrate how the changed perceptions of settled migrants affected their behaviour and willingness to support newcomers (i) as the two following witnesses demonstrate. Meryem, a 76-year-old Moroccan woman affirms: «If they find papers to come here, I'm willing to help them but I can't help them to come here. That's just not an option». Ahmed, a 28-year-old metal worker argues: «I say, you can try, as long as you do it in a legal way. If that is possible, no problem. But do not try the illegal way»<sup>137</sup>, proving his unwillingness to directly support prospective migrants. Furthermore, interviews show how settled migrants provide prospective migrant is the origin region with negative advice; hence, promoting the flow of migration-undermining feedbacks (ii). Yassir, a retired Moroccan labour migrant, when asked about his intentions to advise prospective Moroccan migrants to come to the Netherlands, he answers: «No! What would they do here? Without work, without papers? ». The answer of Asma, a 57-year-old housewife, is similar: «No, I would advise them to stay in Morocco. Holland has changed. Moroccans who live in Holland are now dreaming about a life in Morocco»<sup>138</sup>. Finally, interviewed respondents both in Morocco and in Rotterdam testify a weakened form of migration culture in the country of origin (iii). Soumai, a 19-year-old housewife living in Tawrirt affirms: «At the beginning of 2000s, everyone talked about migration. Every day I heard about someone from my family or neighbours who had migrated. But people are no longer interested in migration, only a few youths dream of going abroad. [...] The others do not think about migration anymore, since they hear about a lot of people who went abroad and came back to Morocco after a failed experience». Hassan, a skilled-worked of 41-year-old living in Rotterdam declares that when he goes back to Morocco many people ask him about his life in Europe; nevertheless «almost every one of them assures me that they have no interest in migrating to Europe. There is nothing left to do in Europe, they say. The mentality has changed»<sup>139</sup>. Negative feedbacks and the direct perception of the changed situation in the Netherlands – that prospective Moroccan migrants have thanks to social media – result in a change in the migration culture. Moroccans are not interested anymore in emigrating to Europe; firstly, because the social and economic situation in Morocco seems to have ameliorated over time, as Hadda's witness, a 57-year-old bank employee, proves: «Nowadays, people are no longer interested in going abroad since

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<sup>136</sup> Ibidem, p. 13.

<sup>137</sup> Ibidem, p.17.

<sup>138</sup> ENGBERSEN et al., *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, 2013, p. 15.

<sup>139</sup> Ibidem, p. 17.

all the conditions of a good living standard exist in Morocco. There are jobs, internet, freedom»<sup>140</sup>. Secondly, for the reason that the preferred destinations of migration changed; recently, Moroccans skilled-workers are willing to migrate to Canada or to the USA; on the other hand, low-skilled Moroccans wish to migrate to Spain or Italy<sup>141</sup>. The negative feedbacks induced changes in migration aspiration of potential migrants; hence, affecting migration cultures in the origin country.

Snel, Engbersen and Faber, argue that the migration-undermining effect of the changes in the three contexts of reception at the macro-level are amplified by migrants' networks, as settled migrants are less willing to support newcomers, even when they belong to their network, being them relatives, friends or compatriots<sup>142</sup>. This assumption contrasts the Migration Network Theory, which underlines the crucial role played by migrants themselves in facilitating further migratory movements. Macro-, and meso-level factors are intertwined to some extent and can influence one another; by the same token that they can enhance further migratory movements, they can also undermine them. Through negative feedbacks based on negative experiences in the host country, settled migrants can undermine prospective migrants' aspiration on migration, and subvert additional migratory movements. Across time, a diminutive causal process has risen in the Morocco-Netherlands migration corridor; thus, migration decisions tend to make further migration less likely, resulting in a decline migration<sup>143</sup>. The example of Morocco-Netherlands migration corridor demonstrates how, under specific conditions, settled migrants do not act as bridgeheads for newcomers; quite the contrary, they act more as **gate closers**<sup>144</sup> for potential migrants, discouraging them to come to the destination country of migration, the Netherlands, in this case.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibidem, p. 19.

<sup>141</sup> Ibidem, p. 20.

<sup>142</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, p.137.

<sup>143</sup> ENGBERSEN et al., *Migrant Networks and the Diminutive Causation of Migration*, 2013, p. 14.

<sup>144</sup> BAKEWELL et al., *Beyond Networks Feedback in International Migration*, 2015, p. 140.

## CONCLUSION

Migration is a complex phenomenon that requires not only economic but also psychological and emotional investments. In this dissertation the influence that migrants' networks can have on migratory movements was analysed. The social capital constituted by migrants' networks undoubtedly plays a crucial role in the latest migratory flows that the world has been experiencing. It has been showed how migrants' networks influence migratory movements both directly and indirectly. In fact, they can directly affect prospective migrants' capabilities to migrate. Through the support they provide to newcomers, migrations' risks and costs are lowered; hence, migration becomes more affordable for prospective migrants. At the same time, through the medium of feedbacks, they indirectly affect potential migrants' aspiration to migrate and their perception of the country of destination. It has been demonstrated how the flow of positive feedbacks concerning successful migration plays a crucial role in the rise of the migration culture in migrants' region of origin. In communities in which there is a strong culture of migration, the act of moving to another region or country becomes a sort of *rite de passage*, i.e. a norm; whereas remaining in the origin region is considered as a failure.

It has been illustrated how, in certain cases, under specific conditions, networks constituted by migrants play a migration-facilitating role, as emotional and financial support provided by migrants that already settled in the country of destination contribute to lower migration's costs and risks; thus, allowing a great percentage of prospective migrants to leave the country of origin and start a new life in the country of destination. In the presented case of study, the ongoing migration flow from Mexico to the USA, pioneer Mexican migrants provided newcomers with useful information and financial support; as a result, the dimension of the migration flux increased, becoming the most important migration corridor in contemporary history. As argued by Massey and by MacDonald and MacDonald – and as proved by the cases of study (Italy – USA migration and Mexico – USA migration corridors) – each act of migration contributes to reinforce the social and economic structure needed to support further migratory movements; unshing a self-perpetuating mechanism, conceptualised as cumulative causation or as chain migration.

Notwithstanding, recent International Migration's research illustrates that migrants' networks play a migration-facilitating role only if contextual conditions are favourable, i.e. if the economic, political and social situation in the country or region of origin is stable. Contrarily, if boundary conditions are instable, migratory movements are likely to worsen the situation. Moreover, recent studies brought to light the downsides of the well-established Migration Network Theory, that tend to focus on

expanding migration flows; outshining the phenomenon of declining migration. Furthermore, well-established theories of International Migration emphasise the migration-facilitating role of migrants' networks on the initiation and continuation of migratory movements; nevertheless, recent studies shed light on the negative impact that social ties among migrants can have on prospective migrants' perceptions, and consequently, on their decisions to migrate. It has been the case in the migration corridor from Morocco to the Netherlands. As analysed in chapter 3.3, migration-undermining developments of macro-level factors (namely, policies concerning migration, employment opportunities, and societal reception), have been amplified by migrants' networks, as settled migrants proved to be less willing to support newcomers, as demonstrated by surveys and interviews.

This thesis' argument is that social networks undoubtedly matter for migration; nevertheless, under certain conditions, they can have a negative impact, resulting in migration-undermining effects. Further research is definitely needed in order to fully understand the effects that migrants' networks have on migratory movements. Moreover, and most importantly, there is the need to embrace a more nuanced view, in order to be able, in the future, to take into account the large variety of aspects that influence people's perceptions and aspirations on migration.

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