Coveted Migration in A Borderless Space: Patterns of Displacement of Algerians in The Webspace

Migration convoitée dans un espace sans frontières : modèles de déplacement des Algériens dans l'espace Web

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Abstract

There appears to be an understudied continuity to the phenomenon of migration with the advent of web users and the appearance of new perceptual behavioral changes in Algerians parallel to the proliferation of social media and the mass exodus into its ensnaring terrain. Therefore, the horizon of displacement seems to loom even larger in what has been deemed the "borderless space". This latter shows little resistance to the tendencies of Algerians to escape the socioeconomic conditions of their geographical residency in the context of internet use and provides not only a blank template for identity formation and the fertile ground necessary for a temporary experience with the "Other" but also an opportune chance to leap into its shapeless territory to compensate for their physical immobility. In this paper, we place the notion and patterns of displacement with the broader understanding of migration studies to further a theoretical conceptualization of the notion and nature of migration, to stretch it beyond its limited conception to account for the dynamics it represents, and to clear the way for considerations of its coveted nature and by extension zoom in on the state of refuge of

Algerians in the virtual reality and the implications it wrought. Finally, we stress, in closing, the unmitigated nature of virtual migration to gain a different perspective on the broader term of "migration" in all its complexities.

Keywords:

Migration; displacement; borderless space; virtual reality; Algerians

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Resumé

Les études de la migration en Algérie précisément sont pointées du doigt avec une telle fixité soit reléguée au phénomène de la migration illégale et/ou littéraire, correspondant respectivement à des modes de migration plus forts et plus faibles. Cependant, il semble y avoir une continuité sous-étudiée à ce phénomène avec l'avènement de l'utilisation du Web et l'apparition de nouveaux changements de comportement chez les Algériens parallèlement à la prolifération des réseaux sociaux et à l'exode de masse vers son terrain piégeux. Par conséquent, l'horizon du déplacement semble se profiler encore plus dans ce qui a été qualifié d'« espace sans frontières ». Ce dernier montre peu de résistance aux tendances des Algériens à échapper aux conditions socio-économiques de leur résidence géographique dans le cadre de l'utilisation d'internet, et fournit non seulement un modèle vierge de formation identitaire et le terrain nécessaire à une expérience temporaire avec « l'Autre » mais aussi une occasion opportune de sauter dans son territoire pour récompenser leur immobilité physique. Dans cet article, je place la notion et les modèles de déplacement avec la compréhension plus large des études sur la migration pour approfondir une conceptualisation théorique de la notion et de la nature de la migration, pour l'étendre au-delà de sa conception limitée pour rendre compte de la dynamique qu'elle représente, et pour clarifier la voie à des considérations sur son caractère convoité et par extension un zoom sur l'état de refuge des Algériens dans la réalité virtuelle et les implications qu'elle a engendrées. Enfin, nous soulignons la nature

non atténuée de la migration virtuelle pour obtenir une perspective différente sur le terme de « migration » dans toutes ses complexités.

Mots clés

Migration ; déplacement ; éspace sans frontière ; réalité virtuelle ; algériens

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1. INTRODUCTION

In their policy paper, Hassen Boubakri et al. (2020) asserted that the twentieth-first century sought "deep changes in the patterns of migratory flows" especially with regards to the North African region[i]. Considering the Mediterranean Sea as a transit point, the means to achieve it are readily available. Of course, such an observation is unequivocal. Elsewhere, in the fictional world, migration occupies a niche within the broader scope of postcolonial studies[ii], and in this sense, it is considered as an angle from which to explore the human condition[iii] [iv]. These two forms of migration arguably correspond to primary and secondary forms of migration. The real and the mimical in the Platonian sense. At the intersection between the two and taking the web as our point of departure in this analysis, there lies the phenomenon of virtual migration. However, such a delineation is not watertight, but it could serve a few conceptual functionalities.

And while the issue of illegal migration from North Africa be it factual or fictional has been brewing for many years and is continuing to inspire many research papers, the issue of migration in the borderless space is receiving little attention, much less an accurate definition of the nature of this migration.

The borderlessness of the internet, though seems like a truism, is increasingly refuted on grounds of the constant erection of borders and on the perpetual undemocratization of it by means of centralizing its networks and platforms. Some services and websites are country-specific and accessing them may require a VPN service. One can even go as far as to consider the borderlessness of the internet as a myth, though what concerns us in this paper is not so much the evidential debate about whether it is this or that, but its presence per se in the life of the Algerian individual, considering its relative belated

arrival and its penetration rates in the Algerian household, its effects are tinged by popular parlance across moral and immoral polarization; useful and unserviceable division.

In the evolving landscape of social trends and phenomena, internet use, while heterogeneous by nature, helps uncover shared experiences that have long permeated every aspect of life. Considering the presence of this new trend in Algeria, there is a small margin for us to dismiss its effects on every sphere of the quotidian life. To put this problematic in a larger postcolonial perspective, the spread of new technologies in Algeria exacerbated the complex of inferiority which made the Algerian feel the need to keep up with the advancements on technology use and to adopt it almost instantly and use it without prior questioning just because it is widely accepted in the West**V**. There is hardly any evidence to support this claim, but there is no refuting the claim that the internet is a democratic tool to bridge the historical and socioeconomic divide, and it is an excellent tool to gloss over the lingering effects of the colonial experience which are still persistent and felt on a daily basis. To digress, we should mention only in passing that although we can make a case for the race for globalization here which is correlated with the rise of individualism, it is but a wavering suggestion of sweeping independence from the colonial grip, something which has not been attained in most of the independent states. And this is where the liberatory role of the internet comes into play.

To examine how internet use plays out, it is important to initially open up our discussion to a part of our thematic concern, that is the scope of internet use and the global reach it has today. indisputably, there is hardly anyone who doesn't use the internet in today's world. Internet use in Algeria has more than quadrupled since 2010, where it attained new heights in 2020 with the lockdown and social distancing measures. In the Digital 2021 report for Algeria**vi**, an estimated 26.35 million internet users in January 2021 were recorded with a leap of about +16% between 2020 and 2021, and with 25.00 million social media users as of the same period which translates into a rise of 14% between 2020 and 2021. These numbers not only reflect the pandemic's effect on internet use, but they also point out the readability of Algerians to embrace it as an auxiliary to the individual and collective engagement in globalization, unfettered from a

governmental stance on such a matter. Moreover, it points to an augmentation in the acceptance rate of the internet in the Algerian household among a large segment of the population that transcends class, age, and gender[vii] to the point that it has become an indispensable social capital and one of the leading factors in cultural and social change[viii]. In the theoretical language of migration, this corresponds to and intersects with the relative deprivation theory which gives weight to migration studies that are centered around the push and pull factors in repelling and alluring the user respectively.

These preliminary remarks are an entrance to our discussion about the migratory aspect of this experience and the constant rootlessness of the individual owing to his displacement in virtual reality. If the calculability of concrete migration from North Africa to Europe is measured by visa application (Musette 2021), and if this refers in any straightforward way to approving the commensurability of migration[ix], then the measurement tool for virtual migration is by the accessibility to the internet and the time spent on it[x].

Methodologically, given the nature of the subject matter, the present paper is informed by works in migration against the backdrop of an observed phenomenon branching off tangentially. Therefore, the issue of identity becomes particularly critical and indispensable in the context of this liminal space. because, as my implicit argument runs in this paper, the borderless-ness of the internet, the displacement, and the coveted nature of it for the Algerian point out the porousness and vulnerability of the Algerian individual's identity and their readability to willingly migrate, therefore giving way to a form of hyper-migration evinced in their patterns of displacement across virtual borders defined only by 'domains and their attractive capital.

Literature on migrations finds the phenomenon a complex one, and one that cannot be reduced to the causes and effects that it generates, as one scholar put it, "indeed, one could commit to reading only fiction and poetry about migration and still barely scratch the surface of this critical topic"[xi]. The migration literature abounds in theories that explore the causes of migration and definitions that underpin its conception. However, given the wide-ranging definitions of migration, two aspects seem to stand out the most in relation to our query, that is the spatio-temporal aspect of it: is it inert or movable?

Permanent or temporary? Since the objectives in this paper are both exploratory and descriptive, in what follows, we establish a knowledge base of this kind of migration in the borderless-ness of the internet through background sources. We extend our quest to broach the changes it causes to draw a linkage between migration in its simplest form and migration in the virtual space. Therefore, the theoretical framework that guides this paper is grounded in a few assumptions. First, migration is but an aspect of the human condition. Second, the incipient years of internet use in Algeria and the recent years' usage rates form watershed moments in the transformation of identity second to only the experience of colonization. Next, in this configuration, Algerian internet users find themselves compelled and pressured to redefine their relations of oppressor and oppressed in the territory of power, hence the working of the power relations in what is known as soft imperialism, where the fate of indigenous identity in the modern world is one of subversion and assimilation to the western model which, all in all, is attributable to the demands of modernity. These points are deployed in a variety of ways to the extent that they expand our perception of the phenomenon of virtual migration and provide an explication of the patterns of displacement of Algerians in the webspace.

It is important to caveat that in the way we use the term displacement in the webspace, we are treading a fine line between virtual migration as a distinctive form of migration, its rudimentary conception as well as its intrinsic feature, i.e., displacement. For this reason, displacement and migration are used interchangeably to forge a precarious balance between the phenomenon and its defining aspect. But first, we must consider the origins of migration.

2. Migration: A Narrative of the Human Condition

The narrative of migration has not shifted dramatically during the relatively short history of man on earth. The equation of motion is of simple premises and of a favorable accuracy: peace, opportunities, and progress. Jessica Hagen-Zanker asserts that migration is as old as humanity itself[xii]. One is led to conclude that migration has accompanied homo-sapiens and homo economicus in their search for better conditions for existence. As the historical timeline progressed and outstretched and new-found places were

occupied, migration seemed like a constant factor that links man to the earth, as if it is a stagnant property that feeds on opportunities and on the grinding process of culture. It also shows that man is on a constant lookout for an augmented reality[xiii]. Giovanni Carbone writes, "The central tenet is that migration is essentially "an intrinsic part of broader processes of social change, usually embodied in the concept of 'development'" and unfolds in a non-linear way. As societies develop and transform, increased awareness, aspirations and assets make individuals more likely to decide to migrate."[xiv] The literature on migration provides the most direct demonstration of this tendency through theories causing this phenomenon and suggests the resilience of man as a part and parcel of his DNA, which may fit perfectly with the narrative of natural selection which is certainly comparable to our modern days with the current refugee crisis.

More recently in the postcolonial world, things were no different. As states strategized countermeasures to contain the flow of humans[xv], the issue of migration still signals an ongoing crisis in the Western world as it is demonstrated by the annual reports on migration[xvi]. Paolo Magri asserts that since the 1970s in Europe, migration "has sparked off a crisis throughout the whole continent"[xvii] and it "has turned into a politicised topic"[xviii] The issue of migration is as relevant today as it ever was.

Aude Bernard & Francisco Perales (2021) support the view that migration is a learned behavior touching upon intraregional, interregional and international migration[xix]. Like any transgenerational trait, having a migration past is likely to produce a migration in the future. Similarly, Paul White affirms that "'migrant cultures' exist where migration is accepted as the normal path for life, migration is generally about dislocation and the potential alienation of the individual from both old norms and new contexts. It is about change and … about movement."[xx] This has been known as the 'cumulative causation theory'[xxi] in the literature of migration, and it is of great scholastic importance. It is first and foremost indicative of the fact that the first wave is a propulsive element in the dynamics of migration. If taken seriously, which it should be, it could be a powerful exegetic tool to counter collective amnesia in the cradle, and what I mean by that is to ditch myopic interpretations and to cease to conceptualize migration as a new phenomenon in light of the current context and go instead the other way as to consider

its historical contingency. In this regard, Dohra Ahmad maintains that "migration would be better understood as effect rather than cause."[xxii] Indeed, the conflation in such an understanding is relegated to our readiness to start anew every time we are confronted by an issue with far-reaching effects.

In Algeria, the migratory flows to Europe have erupted in the years leading up to independence. Experiences of exile are no exception. The post-independence era sought a relatively sizable exodus into France, wherein an Algerian workforce was established. Today, Algerians living in France constitute more than 800000 immigrants and a total of well over 270000 all around the globe[xxiii].

Though the social landscape of the Maghreb region underwent significant changes in the last decade with the offshoring of digital global interconnectedness, the stakes of such a mass social proclivity are often understudied at best and unrevised at worst. Undoubtedly, there is ample literature on the topic of migration, its causes, and the approaches that have been devised since its inception as a sub-field, yet the field must be revised in the light of growing evidence of migration in the borderless space: the internet.

3. Conceptualizing Borderless Space Migrations

An often overlooked yet widely recognized topic is digital identity and digital reality. Once we recognize these two, we can easily impart our conception of migration into understanding this phenomenon. Digital reality is the precursor to digital identity, for it provides an outlet within its ornamented numerical walls where the individual's identity is continually edging towards the most radical form of identity per individual[xxiv]. No one would disagree with the statement that there exist far more identities than those we observe in reality, hence the adjective 'digital' that precedes identity. It is a well-documented fact that this is the case because we exhibit different attitudes on the web, and the identity we form online is molded to the ideal self against which our identity dwarfs. This is a move away from the machine to the machine embedded in the human which marks a crucial juncture in the history of humankind.

The notion of virtual mobility has gained a wide currency in the Covid-19 era and has taken center stage in various disciplinary perspectives. Numerous studies have gauged the effects of online mobility on various activities and bordered on the conclusion that it

came to supplant real-life activities with online ones such as e-learning, e-shopping, e-commerce, and e-democracy among other online activities that replaced real-life ones. According to this, a wider and more relevant conception of migration casts a scrutinizing eye on the role of the internet in fueling the desire to migrate not only factually but also liminally, in a state of betweenness which exacerbates the insistent feeling of belonging to a world far better than the one they fled from. This is migration in its most rudimentary conceptual form.

By a further extension, freedom of movement across barriers increases the chances of crossing borders with proximity, a prerogative that real migrants can ill-afford. Understanding this is a prerequisite for identifying the tenor of borderless migration. Once this movement is freed from the conventional strings, it ensures that the individual is far removed from his reality, and he becomes immersed especially when he seeks to be in a constant fraction with "the Other" and the "culture of migration" become established with the recurrence of this behavior and its prolongation over a period of time.

Furthermore, long-distance and short-distance mobility weigh little in the face of the phenomenon when observed in its entirety. What is of great importance are the patterns that emerge out of the use of the new technologies. They may be called technologies of connectedness but that veils the other side of the coin, that they are technologies of disconnectedness and un-connectedness with relation to the requirements of the immediate surrounding; such requirements as placed within their radius of physical existence.

In the confluence between migration and immigration, where one moves and travels where one's digital identity is, there are grounds to consider theoretically the legal status of migrants as refugees in the virtual reality, and as visitors, in the language of the web, where arrival is a prerequisite for departure. There is ample evidence to refute such a view, in the sense that the movement in the internet and internet use is as much circular as it is linear. The actual experience of migration is impregnated by the pull factors which are hibernated once the user gets back to reality. This circulation, as much as it is achieved in a hybrid space, transgresses the linearity. In the process of this experience,

uprootedness happens, creating thus a space for parallelism where the real context and the virtual collide and become one. This is where virtual identity is most conspicuous.

The dominant strand in our thesis is that the internet is, by definition, a borderless space. Nonetheless, we must distinguish between cross-border, borderless, without border, and beyond the border to refine our definition. Though this falls outside the scope of the paper, delineating what the internet is in the context of this paper is vital to avoid any conflation with competing views. A most basic view on the internet in Algeria considers it borderless, that is without and beyond borders. In comparison with other countries, censorship of social media in Algeria is non-existent to a great extent. As such, consider, for example, the internet as an aid kit, that helps the users form links across boundaries that would not be possible to form in the real world which is achieved by way of un-censorship.

An effective definition of borderless space would contain adjectives such as smooth flow, continuity, resumption, and a leap over the divide. It also entails agency, participation, and the lack of passivity (in so far as presence and what it begets are concerned). Here, the notion of the "left behinds" traditionally associated with the colonized recedes to the background and we can go as far as to consider it obsolete in an age of hyper-democratization of information, communication and everything in between and beyond.

Borderless space is a term befitting the landscape of migration in all its forms. Its points of departure and arrival are one and the same by the physical positivistic standards; however, an inter-physical, intra-physical, and metaphysical reading allows for a different interpretation. It reads the internet user as occupying a spatiotemporal vantage point where he is in sync with the current status quo (his occupying space (a space) both in the real and the virtual) but also is attached by historiographical strings which pin him in the present moment.

4. Displacement in the Web Space in Algeria

There is no denying that societies are undergoing rapid change. This is in part a manifestation of globalism and the identarian hybridity that ensues as a result. Indeed, we're coming out of an age of stability, of nationalism, and loyalty to the land which has

been emboldened by idiosyncrasy and racial superiority, as well as by the experience of colonialism to an age of multiculturalism, where travel across time and geographies is the standardized version of being, and of existence.

That we are all virtual nomads is a certainty. We set sail whenever we plug in, and we return offshore wherever we plug out, and in these voyages that we undertake, we grow patterns of association, dissimilarities, and likewise, commonalities, we retain and assert our individuality while merging with the global trends. In short, when we bridge real life and the virtual divide by virtual displacement, we accumulate enough elements of change from within. On this subject, a challenge posed to the modern man is the paradox of alienation and increased connectedness and how it is conducive to even more behavioral changes.

In today's world, the conventional forms of migration, i.e., fictional and factional dwarf in comparison to other forms of migration, that of a borderless state. Although one is to make the claim that they traditionally obfuscate the broader phenomenon, they undoubtedly help in our understanding by the measures to which this phenomenon has grown over the years and what areas have been infiltrated in the process.

To advance our understanding of this form of migration, we must construe it briefly in relation to forced migration. Against the backdrop of forced migration, web migration, I argue, is a desired one. First, the pressure to migrate fades in importance vis-à-vis the proclivity and the readiness to migrate. Second, as opposed to the insurmountable borders of actual migration, virtual migration is borderless and shows no resistance from the traditional forces. These are the more reasons to consider them as 'pull factors' that enable such an experience.

Borderless space reflects a historical moment. Though it is a relatively new phenomenon, the advancement of technology and the internet use accelerated at a high speed, leaving us a small margin to consider the effects it causes. Viewed as such, it transcends time and space. The explanation given to this lies in the congruency of the literary and the real.

The absence of hurdles in this space allows communication to flow, and fractions with the other to be more frequent in a hyperconnected space. It allows participation in

areas deserted in the actual world and links to be forged with homogeneous and heterogeneous communities. To delimit our objectives, the internet is to be regarded as independent from the objective to which it is put to use.

The opening of apps, be they social media related or otherwise, or the many pages on the browser should not be viewed passively as windows through which we peer into the world, but as tools through which we interact actively, through all our senses, and this sort of displacement is a guaranteed recipe for change. We do not remain static by involving the vision. It is a fully-fledged experience. This is displacement and migration at its best. The idea can be reduced to its simple precipice: the internet is a mobility service, and internet use equals migration.

In recent years, social media in Algeria sought a peak in its usage, with over 25 million users flocking towards pages of interest and favorably following, sharing, and liking contents of their own choosing. Zaghlami (2020) asserts that "the availability of network connections and the gradual democratization of smartphone use have increased the popularity of internet communications in recent years "**XXV** This trend is correlated with the coming of the much-contested term of social media influencers who share daily stories and interactive content which in turn lead to an increase in the time spent on the user's digital device. There is a paucity of research in this area, however, the average chat and social media apps on the Algerian's phone would supply a better understanding of the tensity of this flow. What we discern for sure from such an observation underpinning this over-utilization may assist us in understanding that, psychologically, it is a tendency to compensate for the lack of physical mobility.

There is a great deal of scholarly attention on the role the new media plays in the process of socializing which is taken from its conventional setting into the digital space, which, in light of our current analysis, may seem like the visible face of the dynamics of virtual migration. While this remains one facet of the manifestation of the flow of migration to the borderless space, considering the intensity of the process of e-democracy, e-commerce and e-learning to mention a few which are taking place, it nonetheless accounts for the flux of virtual migration.

The specificity of Algeria from 2019 onwards has to do with the Hirak. Zaghlami writes, "With the advent of social media, young people tend to be more interested in social, political and economic topics"**xxvi** While the result of this was manifested on the ground in the year leading up to Covid-19, with the advent of the pandemic, the project of Hirak was relocated to the digital space. This new trend, if we may call it as such, shows how young people flee to the virtual spaces to compensate for the loss of the traditional medium of expression.

Factually, the internet has long been suspected as a source of behavior modification and for a reason. In this regard, lots of esoteric domains have considered the new media as the culprit for disrupting "how society functions". In discussions of metaphysics or the quantum, the sheer presence of objects be they animate or inanimate and of various proportions is sufficient to account for the minimum perceptual in flux. The logical necessity of the effect of cause on the course of the probabilistic paths leading to the elected result, in the Darwinian sense, points to one common denominator: that is modification and variation from the generic stance/form. The ubiquitous presence of the factor of change as the thing in itself and the object of our current focus, which, although perceptual by historic standards, is still something to account for in the Bergsonian account of time. In this regard, fluctuation in quantitative perspective is but an illusion, because the resumption that follows the interval between the use and non-use, between migration in the guise of virtual displacement from say one app or another, or one page and another and constancy carries the residual of the experience it has cascaded into the real world. Undoubtedly, this defies the view that holds the rootlessness of the migrant with which it is presumably upheld as one of the blatant criteria that sustains a comprehensive definition of migration.

The Internet is dubbed "an alternative metageography", a geography within geography. This is where business is carried out, relationships are formed, and democracy is fermented. This is where the traditional and the conventional way of doing things is transgressed and replaced; where the lived experience is completely transformed and where our definition of migration is upgraded.

The transformation occurs at all levels within the radius of the experience of one individual experience, touching upon the structural forces underpinning migration, the peoples involved in the migrant's life, and everything in between and beyond. Paul White maintains, "the role of human agents is a determining one, but only within the structural context in which those agents are located."XXVii

If the recurrent statement mentioned above about how 'the internet is the window through which we peer into the world is anything to go by, then it is missing the adjacency of such a passive outlook with the more pronounced active and retroactive facets of it, since the internet does not exist in a vacuum but it is the conglomeration of the output that it poured in it. In this light, we must distinguish between the architects of this enshrine and the users who populate it. Drawing on Giovanni Carbone's understanding of human migration as contrary to the widespread conception in the literature of migration as "the kind of rational, passive and smooth response to external conditions that both push-pull and historical-structural accounts would posit."XXViii and considering the presupposition embedded in the initial conception of migration, we deduce that migration is a two-way phenomenon: changes are afflicted on the user as much as the users change its façades by sheer usage.

Considering Williams Reymond's three-level classification of the existence of cultureXXiX which cannot be read separately, together with the use of the internet, and more particularly social media, the recorded culture seems to be the dominant one which paints a mosaic portrait of the culture of the period through the process of individuation that springs from internet users. It is a settled topic that, much like the case of actual migration, identity formation starts the moment someone uses the internet to interact with the world (again, without considering the objectives behind its use) and it is picked up when it is left, and resumption ensues momentarily and correlatively. It is a dashed experience, but once of continuity, not of disclosure.

As stated above, the social media landscape in Algeria is now undergoing a leap of change with the emergence of what has been dubbed 'personal branding' and 'social media influencers' which has been established as some kind of normality. Indeed, considering social media platforms as an egalitarian medium where race, gender, social

status melts down and where the entry level is practically non-existent, migration towards it goes without saying especially when taking into account the mobile phones that come installed with such apps, and the seemingly endless personal space in the web the user is promised to occupy, gratuitously.

Consequently, social media engagement provides another impetus for migration, escaping the shrines of the limited and the unfound to the vast oasis of the potentialities the web offers. Algerian netizens**XXX** are increasingly relying on the internet for unconditional friendship and kinship, studying, shopping among other activities. Such instances, indeed, blur the lines between the physical and the digital/virtual since they are indistinguishable and considered to be an extension of relationships and activities in non-closed terrains.

Another incentive to this migration is linked to the effects of Covid-19. COVID-19 sought a "rapid transformation of many activities"**XXXi** as well as a "movement online of essential activities"**XXXii**. Several reports have recently gauged internet penetration rates across the globe. Datareportal reports the following information: "Internet users are currently growing at an annual rate of 5.7 percent, equating to an average of more than 700,000 new users each day."**XXXiii** That is more than enough of an evidence to account for the migratory flow that occurs in the digital space.

A further consideration of migration in the webspace is VPN use particularly when the internet is shut, or the user is inhibited from entering certain websites which are country-specific. VPN is the virtual private network that encrypts the user's online traffic and disguises their online activity**XXXiv**. Since it has been introduced as a customary tradition during the days of the national examination of Baccalaureate, internet blockage and particularly social media shutdown has led Algerians to access social media sites by activating VPN and gaining a momentary measure of freedom.

5. Forms of Migration in the Borderless Space

As far as internet use in Algeria goes, migration can be distinguished as occupying two clusters**XXXV**. The first is consumerist in nature and is hardly reciprocal, that is migrating to content from the West. it corresponds to the early years of using the internet up until a

much later point when digital content started to come out locally and importation of ideas relatively ceased to take place**xxxvi**. This is an encounter that is generative of response, not of a defiant or adversary nature but of assimilation and of integration into the space of globalization where differences melt, and homogeneity is largely sought after. This form of migration deals with the "colonial wound". Joseph. P. Forgas (2019) reports that "affective experience penetrates every aspect of our lives, and influences many of our cognitive and behavioral strategies". It follows that there is every reason to consider that colonized countries are still living with a lingering hangover from the colonial period. This boosts group identity and the feeling of belonging to the same cause. However, as it progresses, it also acquires an additional value once it becomes overshadowed by individual proclivities and post-experiences of assimilation or disintegration.

As it branches off, the thin veneer of collectivism dissipates, and migration becomes tinted with an individualistic experience. This form of migration is productive and emerges as early as the internet user sculpts exit points proportionate with the identity formed at that stage which corresponds to liberation from the clutches of inferiority. Profiting off the egalitarian power of the internet, which ostensibly sees no discrimination in use. Signs of it can be potently observed in trailblazing initiatives, creative projects, or even as simple as playing a dutiful role in blogging or documenting daily life**xxxvii** with an Algerian signature to it. This is an example of the personal representation of the experience: of identity formation in a borderless space.

6. CONCLUSION

Our conception of this form of a borderless migration is better understood as a mode of being in the world, and a leap from a "key geographic phenomenon" to a conscious one. Perhaps we should really take Paul White's opening sentence, "We live in what has recently been termed 'The Age of Migration'"**xxxviii** at face value. Considering the internet as a structural force that drives mobility par excellence, thus causing mostly arbitrary displacement which is fueled by a constant deferment of the 'being' for the sake of becoming, in a constant update of identity in its simplistic philosophical conception.

The history of migration, after all, is the history of humanity. Perhaps when taking the patterns of displacement in the webspace as the human tendency to nomadize momentarily, one can gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon as a whole. It is a mitigated form of migration with wider social, economic, and political reverberations.

I conclude by stressing that digital fossil records could explain the evolvement of meaning in migration studies. Projects carried out in the digital humanities in this regard would prove to be an indispensable asset to drawing a comprehensive picture of the trajectory of migration, and the possible patterns it would take in the future.

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[i] Hassen Boubakri et al. , Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean Policy Paper Migration in North Africa Migration in North Africa between sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, (KONRAD ADENAUER STIFTUNG, May 2021) 1.

[ii] What we mean by migration in literature is not so much the portrayal and the depiction of the theme of migration and its repercussions but the deliberate act of immersing oneself in the fictional world, though the two perspectives overlap at various conjectures.

[iii] Paul White (1995) expands more on this point when he writes, "It is not, therefore, surprising that migration has been used as a topic through which writers have explored the human condition". See King, Russell, et al., Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration (Routledge, 1995) 6.

[iv] And "The insights of literature provide a commentary on these processes." Ibid, 12.

[v] and to approximate what has been termed as "social survival", they jumped into the cyberspace without premonition[v].

[vi] This report sheds essential insights on the digital use in the country under question.

[vii] This is at least the utopian vision of the internet that happened in its early days. See also Lisa Nakamura's "Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity and Identity on The Internet" for a particularly insightful exposition on the topic of identity in the internet

[viii] See also Carla G. Surratt, The Internet and Social Change, (McFarland, 2001)

[ix] Abstract, concrete, or otherwise.

[x] This should cover a vast literature spanning studies in the social as well as in the exact sciences.

[xi] *Dohra Ahmad, The Penguin Book of Migration Literature*, (Penguin Books, 2019) 28.

[xii] *Why do people migrate? A review of the theoretical literature (*Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, *2008)* 4.

[xiii] This term, though it bears resemblance to the recently coined term in ICT, suggests man's tendency to fetch better conditions for not only his survival, but for a well-off life experience.

[xiv] Giovanni Carbone, Out of Africa: Why People Migrate (Milano, Ledizioni LediPublishing, 2017) *17.*

[xv] This is not applicable to the phenomenon of brain-drain, though the intelligentsia too face some hardships prior to their integration in the host country.

[xvi] And asylum seekers

[xvii] Giovanni Carbone, Out of Africa: Why People Migrate (Milano, Ledizioni LediPublishing, 2017) 7.

[xviii] Ibid.

[xix] Aude Bernard, Francisco Perales, *Is Migration a Learned Behavior? Understanding the Impact of Past Migration on Future Migration (*Population and Development Review, 47: 449-474., 2021)

[xx]John Connell et.al, Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration (Routledge, 2003*)* 6.

[xxi] The theory posits that the likelihood of migration increases once a migratory experience has happened in a given community.

[xxii] Dohra Ahmad, The Penguin Book of Migration Literature: Departures, Arrivals, Generations, Returns (Penguin Classics, 2020) 17.

[xxiii] UNICEF, Migrant Profiles: Algeria, (2013)

[xxiv] Depending on the overall characteristics the internet user exhibits

xxv Laeed Zaghlami, Social Media as A New Source of Empowerment in Algeria (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) 131.

xxvi Laeed Zaghlami, Social Media as A New Source of Empowerment in Algeria (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) 119.

xxvii Paul White, *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration (London and New York: Routledge, 2003)* 1.

xxviii Giovanni Carbone, Out of Africa: Why People Migrate (Milano, Ledizioni LediPublishing, 2017) 16.

xxix These are: the culture of the selected tradition, the recorded culture, and the culture of the period.

xxx If nationalities still apply in the web.

xxxi John Lai and Nicole O Widmar, Revisiting the Digital Divide in the COVID-19 Era (*Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, 10.1002/aepp.13104. 12 Oct. 2020, doi:10.1002/aepp.13104)

xxxii Ibid.

xxxiii https://datareportal.com/global-digital-overview, accessed 23-09-2021

xxxiv retrieved from https://www.kaspersky.com/resource-center/definitions/what-is-a-vpn. Accessed 23-09-2021

xxxv There is always room for a third and middle transitory point, but we will dispense of it for the sake of brevity.

xxxvi Albeit this is an observable fact, I retain my reservations concerning this point.

xxxvii This falls into the category of 'documentary records' in Reymond William's account of the levels of culture.

xxxviii Paul White, *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration (London and New York: Routledge, 2003)* 1.

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