

Mobility and Parole

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Migrants share a wide array of perspectives and experiences through their personal stories. The attempts of identifying specific trends in such a large heterogeneity of experiences are often characterized by a common finding: subjectivity plays a fundamental role in the interpretation of personal experiences, and it has to be taken into account.

In a context like the African one, where social interconnections are characterized by tight and complex networks, mobility is not only a social phenomenon, but also a subjective one, from different points of view. The motivations for leaving are mostly personal, tied to individual expectations and projects; most of all, what changes across the different ways of migrating is the intimate background of the migrant, which is shaped by personal experiences, social experiences, cultural background, as well as the socio-political environment. In this paper relates to the methodological and theoretical approach of MiPriMo project (Paris), which investigates migrations across and from the West Africa, through the analysis of narrations - (auto)biographical narration and, generally, linguistic productions about migration - of those who are directly or indirectly involved into a mobility process. Such an idea is based on a suggestion that the subjectivity of storytellers travels along their *Parole*, a concept that refers to “language in a large sense”, as linguistic anthropology suggest (Duranti 2001; 2003). Given this concept I consider the stories of migrants more than just their own narrations; they represent migrants’ *linguaging* (Mignolo 1996; Jørgensen 2008). Their linguistic productions, from the performance point of view, help to understand their migratory trajectory - full of imaginaries, symbolisms, myths - and can be examined in the context where they are produced and they circulate (Blommaert 2001). Thus, it is the *Parole* of a number of migrants moving *towards* Italy and returning to Senegal that I intend to examine further. The perspective proposed here ‘claims to contribute to un understanding of society [in this case social, identity and subjective dynamics of some individuals involved into a mobility process] through an understanding of language’ (Blommaert 2003). The analysis will be based on linguistic data such as free speech and (auto)biographic narratives.

The observation of the personal migrants’ trajectories sheds lights on social background dynamics where they are contextualised. It can also contribute to call into question concepts such as mobility, identity, culture, and belonging: how are they popularly conceived? How are they scientifically utilised (Malkki 1992)?