A Racism Without Race: A Moroccan Case Study of Race Denial

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A Racism Without Race: A Moroccan Case Study of Race Denial

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**Location of Primary Study:** Rabat, Morocco, Africa

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for “Multiculturalism and Human Rights” by the School for International Training abroad, Spring 2016.
Abstract: This article aims to articulate the ways in which race and race relations are conceptualized in Morocco. Using the concept of racialized discourse as the preconceptual theoretical field for race and racist expressions, the author analyzes the different converging factors which influence the performance of “Moroccan-ness” and how subjectivity can be influenced by a State-driven communal linguistic episteme. Through its insistent hyper-nationalist campaigns, the Moroccan State has deployed racist expressions as a means of face-keeping and sociopolitical management, which have become naturalized through its reproduction in individual subjectivity and interpellation. However, from the independent research conducted by the author, the result of the State’s manifestation of racialized discourse in which Moroccans lack the linguistic tools to conceptualize race, unless devoid of its preconceptual elements of domination and exploitation, and thus they reduce racism to mere (racial) differentiation.

Key words: Linguistics, Philosophy, Anthropology, Regional Studies: Africa

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I. Introduction

*Everything is Great: We are all Moroccan* - كل شيء لباس: كننا مغاربة

In this paper, I aim to investigate the implications of the Moroccan State’s rhetoric of what it means to be “Moroccan” within the discourse of race and racism. The State’s delineation of “Moroccan-ness” has intentionally attempted to mold the communal linguistic episteme in Morocco to the beat of “We are all Moroccan” through State-sponsored nationalist music and the absence of racialized discourse in the political sphere. This message, especially in relation to immigrants and the Western Sahara, requires an erasure of certain identities in order to fit the mold of “Moroccan,” including the insistence of the (un)official Moroccan colloquialism “Everything is great” throughout the country in which critics of the State are demonized.1

As the basis of my independent research, I stumbled upon the sociodiscursive inconsistencies of racialized discourse in Morocco – which I will expand upon in this paper through a literature review and a presentation of my own field research – due to a research module facilitated by the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL) in Rabat, Morocco. Attempting to gain a better understanding of the racial discourse between Moroccans, a group of students studying in the CCCL’s “Multiculturalism and Human Rights” program analyzed the responses from two interviews in a café within the old medina and a group discussion we previously participated in with Moroccan college students in Fes. Most notably, we found that, linguistically, there is a contradiction in this performance of Moroccan-ness in relation to racism. Our interviewees were adamant that there was no race in Morocco and, upon being asked, self-identified their race as “Moroccan” – a blatant difference from the colorism and ethnic model used in the United States. Furthermore, the Moroccan students, who in a Western lens of race

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would be categorized as Arab, referred to “people of color” as if they were not included in that group as people of Arab or Amazigh descent. Instead, the interviewees explained that “racism” did not exist in Morocco, even between Arabs and Amazighs, but that there is racism between Muslims of different nationalities within the Middle East due to political frictions between the countries.

However, according to the International Organization for Migration, Sub-Saharan migrants face racial based hate crimes: physically violent crimes, racial remarks related to events in news headlines such as Ebola or AIDS, and denial of services or up-charging for goods. Furthermore, the Moroccan Association of Migrant Students and Research published a study which concluded that 40% of those surveyed did not relate to Sub-Saharan peoples as their neighbors: 70% would refuse to share housing with someone from Sub-Saharan Africa and 60% would not marry someone from this region. There was an obvious disconnect between the interviewees understanding of racism and research done on the relations between Moroccans and Sub-Saharan, or African, peoples. The official discourse of a racially constructed African “Other” dates back to the 1930’s when nationalists decreed that Moroccans were of Arab descent, which, through the denial of Morocco’s Amazigh heritage, resulted in the disappearance of a country that was originally African--effectively rejecting not only Sub-Saharan migrants from the Moroccan identity, but also the Amazigh community.

Juxtaposing our academic research to our interviewees responses, our research team ultimately concluded that although these initial interviewees did not claim there was racism in Morocco, there is ample evidence that indicates a huge problem with anti-blackness and racism

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3 Ibid.
in Morocco. As the translator for the interviews, I noted word usage as the main barrier to our questions: the word for Arabic word for “race” was not understood by Arabic speakers, who instead equated the Arabic word for *racism* to the Arabic word for *ethnicity*—two different concepts which seem to be conflated as the same issue in Moroccan discourse. The chart below shows our initial findings from these initial interviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Word:</th>
<th>Formal Meaning:</th>
<th>Meaning through Usage:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“3raq / aaraq” – عرق</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Not used outside of academia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;jinsia&quot; - جنسية</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Nationality/Ethnicity/Race/Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;eunsuria&quot; - عنصرية</td>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Racism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This small class project was my first introduction to the complex relationship between Moroccan identity, linguistics, and the discourse of race and racism in Morocco. Based on these initial interviews with people born in Morocco, there seems to be a consensus that “there is no racism in Morocco” – which closely mimics the State’s insistence of hyper-nationalism that claims “We are all Moroccan” and that the divisive categories, such as race, simply serve to undermine the society’s homogeneity and, thus, create tensions among citizens of Morocco. However, as I continued my research, I have found that this “colorblindness” and non-existence of race is not shared by all people living in Morocco, specifically the Sub-Saharan migrants.

Anecdotally, Sub-Saharan migrants point to instances in which they were not allowed to enter certain public spaces, physically attacked, or otherwise discriminated against based on the color of their skin alone – “How would they know that I was not born here? They do not know me, they do not know that I am a migrant from another country. They see my skin and the act

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based on this alone.” Furthermore, in Darija, the Moroccan dialect of Arabic, there are racial slurs for people with darker skin tones, but no words for race or racism: *eunsuria* literally translates to individual or element, with no roots to race, and *3raq*, which literally means race, is not used by Moroccans, who instead opt for *jinsia*, which is used for categories ranging from nationality to gender in Darija and FusHa (i.e., Modern Standard Arabic). From these initial observations, I postulate that this State-directed performance of colorblindness creates a linguistic episteme in which “race” as an identity category does not exist, while racism/colorism is still a pervasive problem faced by Moroccan people and migrants/refugees in Morocco.

Partially blinded by the State’s denial of racism and, thus without a commonly used vernacular to articulate racial biases as racism and not nationality politics, Moroccans cannot be engaged in a fruitful discussion about existing racial problems within their community. Prompted by my own observations of the erasure of racial identity in favor of hyper-nationals by State controlled media and strategic political evasion of racialized issues at the international level merely serves to extinguish the much-needed discussion of race in Morocco. Ultimately, this means that people of color who suffer from micro-aggressions based on colorism and not nationality (although they are not mutually exclusive and in fact are inextricably intertwined) do not have a language to demand rights, protection from the state, or even articulate the ways in which they are discriminated against based on skin color. By mimicking the State’s reduction of racism to issues of nationality, Moroccans who do not suffer from racism remove themselves from the reality in which they live in; furthermore, through their selective use of racialized language, Moroccans create a post-independence society which is still plagued by racist

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5 Interview with anonymous Sub-Saharan man. Rabat. 2016.
ideologies not (only) because of ethnicity or nationality but also due to the color of their skin.

The following is my expansion of these initial observations.

**Research questions:** What is the impact of performing “Moroccan-ness” on the racial discourse of Morocco? Does the State-directed communal linguistic episteme hinder Moroccans from conceptualizing themselves or “Others” as racialized? Consequently, does the State’s nationalist rhetoric create different linguistic realities for Moroccan-born citizens versus Sub-Saharan migrants who learn this “Moroccan-ness” as a second or third culture?

II. Literature Review

“It is a troublesome affair-the defining of a people-but it also serves as a starting point for renewal.”

**Racialized Discourse, Race, and Racism**

The theoretical framework for the concepts of race and racism in this paper come from David Theo Goldberg’s book, “Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning.” Goldberg delineates racism as a discourse made up of racialized expressions. This discursive field, *racialized discourse*, is a compilation of various interrelated expressions: beliefs and verbal outbursts, acts and their consequences, and the principles upon which racialized institutions are based. In order to account for the historical alterations and discontinuities of racial formation, and their consequent racialized expressions, racialized discourse opposes the misconception that racism is a singular, transhistorical expression, but, rather, it is an open-ended theoretical space which the discursive field is created from and, also, transforms through its varied expressions.

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These expressions of racialized discourse cannot be analyzed as an ahistorical phenomenon, but as a resistant manifestation of racism in relation to significant changes in fields of discourse related to how the body is perceived and valued.9

Racialized discourse, race, and racism cannot be used interchangeably. Racialized discourse, as stated above, is a theoretical space constituted by the expressions from which it both emerges from and is transformed through. Racism, however, is merely one of the expressive objects of racialized discourse. The foundation of racism and racist expressions are a series of belief systems, such as supposed justification of differences, advantages, claims of superiority, and so on; however, these belief systems are formulated around the man-made concept of race. Race is a discursive object of racialized discourse that differs from racism in that it creates the conceptual conditions of possibility for racist expression to be formulated.10 Historically, the concept of race was deemed as a biologically based categorization of differences based on varying climates, which was then expounded upon to encompass one’s physical and behavioral characteristics. From its inception, the classificatory label of race was Eurocentric – casting the Europeans as the “genuine color of mankind.”11 From its initial conceptualization, racialized discourse, as well as its conceptions of race and racism, developed with modernity by utilizing the forces of the state to promote domination and violence internally within the colonizing societies12 by the confluence of the modes of economic and aesthetic valorization and appropriation.13 At the heart of racialized discourse, these modes converged to superimpose a

10 Ibid.
13 Ibid. p. 45.
system to determine which bodies are ascribed with value and how such subjectivity is formed and internalized.

Racialized discourse is generally circulated as truth-claims and representations; however, racialized discourse has evolved into a categorization indicative of more than descriptive representations of others. Racialized discourse includes:

1) A set of hypothetical premises about human kinds (e.g., classificatory hierarchies) and about the differences between them (both mental and physical);
2) A class of ethical choices (e.g., domination and subjugation, entitlement and restriction, disrespect and abuse);
3) A set of institutional regulations, directions, and pedagogic models (e.g. separate development, educational institutions, choice of educational and bureaucratic language, etc.).

Thus, racialized discourse, generally, is the culmination and interdependence of these praxis manifested as norms or prescriptions for behavior that, specifically, are contextually circumscribed by specific hypotheses, ethical choices, regulations and models.\textsuperscript{14} The norms or prescriptions for behavior within racialized discourse create themes and objects which can only emerge \textit{in} discourse, i.e. determined by the discursive field itself.\textsuperscript{15} However, racialized discourse itself is a product of underlying factors, \textit{preconceptual elements}, which directly generate the field of discourse. The preconceptual elements exist in primitive terms: manifestations of power relations vested in and between historically located subjects—they are \textit{effects} of a determinate history, while simultaneously creating the concepts and categories in which a contemporary racism is \textit{expressed} and \textit{comprehended}.\textsuperscript{16} Generally, in racialized discourse, the preconceptual elements are embedded in the formative social discourses and

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. p. 48.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p. 49.
sciences central to and legitimized by practices and relations constitutive of modernity. Thus, these preconceptual elements serve to define the ways an agent can speak and act in terms of racialized discourse (racist expressions) and define the power these expressions hold, e.g. classification, order, value, hierarchy via modes of differentiation and identity, exclusion, domination and subjugation, or entitlement and restriction. These preconceptual elements allow for racialized discourse to reinvent itself through different expressions in a contextually salient manner, while still maintaining the core of subjugation and domination.

In practice, the scientific project of racial classification was based on the assumption of objective ordering according to the ‘principle of gradation,’ formulated initially as Aristotle’s ‘hierarchy of being.’ Reducing human subjects to abstract bodies under the falsely presumed “objective” gaze of scientists enabled the subjection of the bodies to the preconceived notions of Eurocentrism. The falsity in the researchers’ objectivity is clearly shown in the hierarchal putative racial order which served to perpetuate established relations of the time: ranking whites as superior to “Negroes” who were lower ranking and thus deserving of conditions akin to livestock. The application of the principle of gradation in racial classification was purported to accurately delineate the realm of possibilities for each raced subject at each level of existence – from moral to physical to mental capacity – and implied that the higher beings were imbued with greater worth than the lower ones. These racial classifications are the foundation of the racialized discourse today.

However, Goldberg argues that concept of racial hierarchy is now widely considered obsolete or, more so, that the concepts of inferiority and superiority implicit in racial hierarchy


18 Ibid. p. 51.
are concepts which were not inherited from earlier social contexts or scientific paradigms; that is, the expressions of the discourses’ preconceptual elements have evolved into the denial of racial hierarchy through the deployment of racialized difference.\textsuperscript{19} Either ‘the theory of racism’ elaborated above is dismissed as a crude, unused rationalization for the domination and subjugation of others, or there is a general denial of the preconditional elements of racial classification. Thus, in abandoning the ‘natural’ hierarchy inherited from the principle of gradation, racial difference makes no claim to the concept of racial superiority authorizing differential distributions based on race classification as it functions today: racial differentiation, thus, is not conceived as ‘racist.’ These denials of racism, or, rather, the denials of racial classification’s historicity, allows racist expression and those who defend racial differentiation to not be committed to the founding, ‘racist’ notions’ irrationality and rationalizations nor to the extinction of racial classification and its ‘racist’ implicatures. In this expression, racialized discourse transforms into a discursive formation of difference and identity in order to legitimize racial classifications.\textsuperscript{20}

Drawing from Michael Foucault, Goldberg argues that the racial difference discourse exemplifies the nature of discursive power and truth production expressed in this transformed episteme. Ideally, a discourse’s episteme is built in and from the collection of ‘objective’ truths that is discovered and affirmed in the ‘general politics of truth’: an economy of epistemological ‘truth’ and ‘falsity.’ However, as with all sociodiscursive concepts, there are always competing notions of truth, assertion, and representation, in which the ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’ are rendered ultimately by their relation to power: the ‘truth’ is the expression of power, not an objective

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. p. 52.
truth. For instance, as a self-preservation tactic, the drive to exercise power typically clothes itself in the theoretical fashions of rationality in order to maintain a legitimate authority.

According to Foucault, this legitimation of authority, however, cannot be established and exercised unless vested with the force of discrimination, exclusion, and enforcement. Therefore, in order for racialized difference to maintain an authoritative positionality of value and taste, then it must be established accordingly: exclusion and inclusion, discrimination and privilege, and enforcement and punishments. Racialized difference, thus, reincorporates the hierarchy of value is claims to deny in racial classifications; therefore, this racial difference rhetoric is a manifestation of ‘the theory of race’ constitutive of racialized discourse. Although clothed in slightly different semantics and rationale, racial difference has dominated definition of otherness (difference) throughout modernity through the use of racist expression as the material power for the forceful exclusion of the different. Appeals to racial difference which attempt to evade the underlying racialized discourse and racist expressions are in vain. The racial difference argumentation is another manifestation of racialized discourse which produces racist expressions and acts, but has been influenced by the sociodiscursive field’s shift away from the initial, blatantly hierarchal racial classifications by avoiding being a ‘racist subject.’ The denial of racism in racial difference argumentation, however, does not eradicate its racist origins, nor its racist expressions, as it continues to deploy the same classifications with different, discursively formed justifications.

When this authority of racial exclusion (even under the guise of racial difference) assumes state power, racialized discourse and its modes of exclusion become embedded in state

\[\text{\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.}\]
institutions and, consequently, normalized in the common business of everyday institutional life. Through the utilization of the state apparatuses, racialized discourse’s modes of exclusion maintain authority and power, literally and symbolically, in bodily terms: human bodies are classified, ordered, valorized, and devalued, forced to work, alienated from their labor product, disenfranchised, or restricted to their right of social entry and mobility. Furthermore, these expressions of power and authority through the state are used as the metaphorical media for distinguishing the pure from the impure, the included from the excluded, based on differences and a value of purity in terms of biological differences and culturally in terms of language signifying the evolution of thought patterns and rational capacity. Subconsciously, the “impurity” is viewed as a transgression of classificatory patterns, as well as a threat to the breakdown of order within the state, which requires order and control to operate. Thus, to insure the “success” of racialized discourse and the codetermined epistemic authority of the state which deploys it, racialized discourse must either be manifest in or predicated upon establishment of authority (institutional or personal) in the body or the person(s) of whom group members at least partially recognize themselves – here nationalism comes to aid the classificatory concept of pure or impure racial identity. For this rhetoric to “succeed” in affecting materiality of differential exclusions, racialized discourse from the state must be grounded in the relations of social subjects to each other in ways of seeing, of relating to, (other) subjects, i.e. subject formation, which will be discussed below. Thus, the state and racialized discourse codefine each other’s respective epistemological authority and power by successfully conditioning the populace.

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24 Ibid. p. 54.
25 Ibid. p. 53.
The metaphorical media of a state’s racialized discourse shapes social discourse through the molding of communal episteme and gives the state’s populace a vernacular and narrative from which subject formation and interpersonal relations are established. Racist expression manifests as ways of ‘seeing’ particular bodies through its tools of exclusion. These tools of exclusion are also used to ‘justify’ what the excluded, the disenfranchised, and the restricted are entitled to and properly expect. As for subjectivity, generally, Goldberg claims that the primary factor in the formation of social groups is the self-recognition of (potential) group members in the image of an authority (whether institutional or personal). Through interpellation, or the process of individuals called to subjectivity by others, the formation of one’s subjectivity is an inherently social process. Individuals, thus, are interpellated subjects in and by means of language formed by the convergence or bodily intersection of multiple sociodiscourses. In regards to racial subjectivity of the ‘racist subject,’ specifically, Goldberg claims that this converging of multiple discourses interiorized by the individual mobilizes the underlying racialized discourse to codefine not only subjectivity but otherness as well. Through raced bodies and the rejection of otherness, ‘racist subjects’ are born as one of the means for racialized discourse to reproduce, redefine, and act in a manner that reconstitutes the relations of power that produced them. In order to maintain power and authority, the metaphorical media of the state delineates a limited narrative and expression of subjectivity curated through the convergence of state-influenced sociodiscursive identity politics regarding the body in ways which legitimate state narratives of domination and exploitation.

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27 Ibid. p. 58.
The subject formation and interpellation within racialized discourse is conducted through expressions of power relations. Language, Goldberg claims, is the key to becoming conscious of oneself in the world and, thus, social discourses provide the means for individuals’ self-definition. Each level of subjection, from names to races, is established by way of sociolinguistic symbols. Through discursive bodies of law, such as nation, class, gender, religion, capitalism, democracy, race, etc., a social definition is given to the subject’s self-identity. Discourses provide the medium for thought and articulation of desires for individuals’ intentions, whether conscious and explicit or unconscious slips and statements which reveal repression and wish-fulfillment. Racialized discourse, Goldberg argues, not only articulates and thereby gives definition to subjects’ intentions, dispositions, reasons, and goals, but is also expressed as racist exclusion. The ‘racist subject’ may offer the goals of racist exclusion explicitly or appeal to other categories of reason such as scapegoating (conspiracy theory), rationalization (inferiority), or rational stereotyping (normative judgement appealing to factual evidence); similarly, the ‘racist subject’ may be explicit in their motivation of racist exclusion or appeal other factors such as fear (whether brought on by the threat of physical force or psychologically induced) or conformism (behavioral disposition, imposed or merely encouraged, to conform with the norms of society). From a macrosocial perspective, these other, non-explicit, categories of rationale or motivation are typically prompted by racialized discourse or racist expression in the process of reinforcing or reinventing its authority and power through the creation of seemingly innocent rationalizations which allow its continuation under the guise of something more benign. Racisms, then, become permissible expressions through these pseudo-rationales and, consequently, internalized by individuals through the interpellation and their individual desires to

maintain authority and power. Disguised by these pseudo-rationales, racialized discourse and racist expressions become normalized through modernity’s discursive technologies of subject formation and acquire a self-ascribed ‘naturalism’ in the creation of modern moral selves and social subjects.\(^{29}\) The consequence of this naturalization is the obscuring of racialized discourse’s preconceptual elements of exclusion and domination, thus the internalization of its prescriptions and norms through interpellation and subject formation become disconnected from their inherently racist roots, as I will argue is happening in Morocco today.

**Linguistics, Subject Formation, and the Moroccan State**

The Moroccan identity is the culmination of multiple sociodiscursive identities, not to be reduced to the constant struggle between “a false dichotomy between the conservative past and progressive current or future,” as one Moroccan college student phrased it.\(^{30}\) In reality, there are a multiplicity of false dichotomies embedded in these overgeneralizations: liberalism versus religiosity, conservativism versus secularity, authoritarianism versus secularity, and democracy versus religiosity.\(^{31}\) However, the evidence of increasing individuation in Moroccan society demands that we look employ a nuanced lens of these two easily over-generalized groups. To avoid a reductionist view of Moroccans’ individuation, one must acknowledge the fallacy of these dichotomies when analyzing today’s Moroccans constitution of subjectivity and

\(^{30}\) Interviews with Moroccan university students. Fes. 2016.
interpallation through new, seemingly contradictory, combinations of political views, religiosity, gender, sexual orientation, work, possessions, and other markers of differentiation.32

For example, whether I was speaking with a fiercely loyal member of the conservative Party of Justice and Development33 or a self-proclaimed atheist, radical, queer, feminist Moroccan34 who detests the State and the altahakum’s empty promises of democracy35 present in Moroccan politics, all of my Moroccan interviewees responded using a similar linguistic code: inshallah is frequently appealed to when one does not truly want to commit to something in the future or if they wish something will happen, salaam alikum is muttered to all strangers, friends, and family upon greeting them, and alhumduhlillah is one of the many words sprinkled around positive experiences. Of course, upon speaking with these different Moroccans about their other individuating markers, this affiliation to religion and conservativism is merely a circumstance of their socialization in a semi-authoritarian, Islamic State—that is, a performance of their socialization.36 As an American, my introduction to this specific linguistic socialization first occurred during my summer in Morocco as an Arabic student and again, in almost the same theatrical fashion, during SIT’s orientation during our first week in-country. All of the SIT students were briefed on the exaggerated ordeal of greetings in Morocco, a necessary crash course in Moroccan etiquette. Having already lived in this country previously, I laughed as our Academic Director, Taieb, tried to explain with a straight face how many times one should kiss a friend on their cheeks (order: left, right, right) and the overlapping greetings of "Labaas?
"Labaas! Alhumdulillah--kul shae mizean? Labaas." on a seemingly endless loop and how women and men greet each other differently. Holding back laughter, I watched him demonstrate what I knew from my previous introduction must have seemed like a ridiculous and exaggerated ordeal for those new to Morocco; however, I paused at his comment that "Greetings are defined by the making of nice noises at infinitum--the enjoying and relishing in the presence of someone we like." Beyond being completely shocked by the strangeness of Arabic words, I noticed that my classmates thought he was joking. In a way, I suppose he was – the hyperbolic nature of Moroccan greetings can seem, even to a native, ridiculous in its length and repetition.

As a speech act, I’ve come to understand that these gestures, as Taieb described them, extend far beyond the mere locutions of the speaker and, when the positionality of the various speakers are taken into account, point to a saturation of Moroccan culture across different strata of differentiation: the *illocution* of the speaker is not merely that of a greeting but also, and seemingly compulsively, a performance of Moroccan socialization. Strictly focusing on language, for instance, the code-switching which occurs in these greetings combines both FusHa and Darija in their greetings—with the occasional *ca va!* in French or a splash of Spanish in the Northern regions—is a verbal representation and manifestation of the unique linguistic diversity of Morocco’s history of colonialism, Arabization post-independence, and the influence of the speaker’s positionality within an Islamic State. Beyond just their locutions, it is important to note that these greetings are characteristically hyperbolic and animated in nature; furthermore, the usage of these greetings and phrases between Moroccans has remained so consistent that there is now a “standard” Moroccan greeting script, which, thus, serves to increase the

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theatricality in its repetition and performative qualities—as if every greeting is a reenactment of a Moroccan parody. Despite the increased levels of individuation that have progressively taken root in the newer Moroccan generations, I have yet to meet a Moroccan who does not greet me in this fashion—wishing me peace and thanking Allah for my well-being in a flurry of Moroccan Arabic.

This scripted, repetitive performance characteristic of the standard Moroccan greetings brings a new dimension to their illocutionary intent and uptake: if the performance is compulsory, a reflex, do the speakers endorse the connotations of the words in their locution? Without a critical lens, the locutions of a Moroccan greeting or the frequented religious imperative could be reduced simply to an endorsement of religiosity and a constant state of labaas. To respond differently—perhaps, truthfully, that one is not doing well or to ask what inshallah could possibly help in a given situation—is to break away from the performance of a staple Moroccan social norm.\(^39\) Based on my interactions with a variety of Moroccans, especially focusing on those of a self-proclaimed counter-culture who reject the State-mandated Islamism of its citizens and its constant attempt to maintain a façade of equality, democracy, and generally mashi mushkil, the performance of these greetings appear to be more of an act of respectability politics which spans across Moroccans of widely varying political, religious, and otherwise individuating features. As if mimicking the State’s attempt to maintain its image in the international community,\(^40\) these Moroccans’ locutions reflexively perform their socialization in order to abide by the norms, their socialization as Moroccans, despite what those locutions may imply they do or do not endorse.

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Despite its origins, these compulsory greeting scripts and religious exclamations are indicative of a unchanging, State-led linguistic continuity amongst Moroccans which spans generations, political affiliations, and, oddly, the increasing individuation throughout the youth; furthermore, the seemingly all-encompassing nature of this continuity does not imply a social norm which was born of happenstance but, instead, seems to be born from a deeply ingrained group consciousness and understanding in Moroccans which demands this kind of performance, mimicking the State’s performance on the international stage at the interpersonal level.\textsuperscript{41} Taking into account the seemingly mandatory performance of Moroccan-ness in the context its history of colonialism and authoritarian regimes which have consistently violated human rights while simultaneously presenting a neutral, if not self-proclaimed progressive, face to the international stage, the existence of such an unchanging continuity within Morocco’s linguistic landscape indicates that other reflexive socializations could also exist at the expense of some Moroccans’ subjectivity and interpellation. Granted, the linguistic phenomenon cited above is not indicative of the entire linguistic landscape of Morocco, but the hyperbolic performativity of Moroccan-ness exhibited through the scripted standard Moroccan greeting and frequent usage of religious idioms indicates the capacity for all Moroccans, despite their increased individuation, to become stuck in certain aspects of their socialization as Moroccans, both in response to the history of their State’s failure to protect them, their State’s mandated religiosity and nationalism, and perhaps even as an imitation of their State apparatuses’ performance as a religious, progressive state of \textit{mashi mushkil} as an appeal to the international community.

However, the Moroccan State’s mandated hyper-nationalism has been cited as a powerful tool, since post-independence, used to unite all Moroccans under the State and, thus, reaffirm its

\textsuperscript{41} Bounahai, Najib. \textit{A Performing Arts Perspective Module}. SIT: Multiculturalism and Human Rights. Fall, 2016. Lecture Notes.
authority. Nations, just as individuals, "are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role."\(^{42}\) This discourse both constructs the State, as well as its rhetoric it interjects into communal linguistic episteme. The State, especially one like Morocco’s Islamic semi-authoritarian regime, has more influence over the communal linguistic episteme through its powerful role as the ultimate legislator, judge, and authority of moral permissibility. Thus, the official statements of the State’s repeated declaration that “We are all Moroccan” should not be taken as a mere locution among many but a constructivist locution, through its authoritative weight, with heavy influence on the citizens’ subjectivity: there are consequences for disagreeing with the State, whereas there are not for disagreeing with another citizen. The State and the citizens do not have equal power in the construction of communal linguistic episteme. Thus, Moroccans who are socialized and education in-country have been subjected to what Edward Said refers to as a “lineage of absolutism” throughout State facilitated discourse such as the media, campaigns, and the education system which constitutes a single, incorporating, and homogenizing historical scheme that “will assimilate non-synchronous development, histories, cultures, and peoples to it.” i.e. the bottom line of all discussions of subjectivity lies in the State’s constructivist declaration that “We are all Moroccan.”\(^{43}\)

“**We are all Moroccan:** Nationalism and Arabization

In post-independence Morocco, French, as a symbol of colonialism and power, became more of a cultural system that continued to determine subjectivity itself and creating an

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understanding of the social world. In the post-colonial elites’ use of French, they symbolically established themselves as part of a linguistically constituted “imagined community” which was not of the native Amazigh heritage nor the Arabs, but one with a greater social value in the Western world. “Imagined communities” and their consequent “imagined identities” extend far beyond linguistic preference: they framed relationships with interlocutors, thereby changing their access to practices and resources, and altered subject formation through the linguistic establishment of Eurocentric desired community. Power negotiation in the Maghreb, thus, became a neo-imperial linguistic hierarchy which differentiated those legitimate speakers from the illegitimate who lacked the ‘rights to speech’ or their ‘power to impose reception.’ As Pierre Bourdieu illustrates in his depiction of language and power, those whose utterances lacked value, the illegitimate, through their language usage lacked the important power of structuring discourse. Most blatantly is the lack of access to the political discourse; however, the importance of a group or individual identity positions is ascribed in part to the extent to which their language practices are valued. The implications of this linguistic inequality, formally enforced by the new post-colonial leaders, extend into the subjectivity and identity formation of the illegitimate, as it is in language that the individual constructs her sense of herself and her ways of understanding the world.

Identity, however, is not merely an essence, but a positioning in a particular historical and cultural environment. Identity politics or the politics of difference refer to this coalescence of identity and power relations. Racially, the discourses of the dominant group, which assume an

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imagined community of homogeneity, racialized and stigmatized practices of the “Other” or illegitimate speakers, associate negative linguistic connotations to speakers who utilize their native language or practices. Noting that ‘race parallels the nation as imagined community,’ several studies have problematized the concept of race by investigating the ways in which race has been historically constructed and how the discourse of race has affected language teaching and learning. Linguistic and cultural practices naturalize certain identities, in Morocco’s case a classist identity of Eurocentric fantasy, while “Other”-ing and devaluing others: the Arab and Amazigh linguistic and cultural practices.\footnote{Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning, and social change. \textit{Lang. Teach}, 44(4), 412-446. doi:10.1017/S0261444811000309}

Thus, in speaking of “African-ness” in Morocco is far more imposing when studying Morocco’s linguistic space.\footnote{Moroccan Survey: African, But Not Completely. (n.d.). Retrieved December 1, 2016, from http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2013/02/morocco-survey-african-heritage.html#ixzz4RANQ3rab} Considering the post-independence elites’ “imagined community” of Morocco as a nation of French apologists or even the celebration of Eurocentrism in the new nation, the notion of identity as a sociodiscursively derived concept understood and deployed through language must account for the history of colonial knowledge and power, continued by the post-colonial elite, and how it has shaped the current communal linguistic episteme.\footnote{Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning, and social change. \textit{Lang. Teach}, 44(4), 412-446. doi:10.1017/S0261444811000309} During colonial times, the ruling French versus the native “others” created a blatantly racist hierarchy of power which manifested in the macro-level of groups, social formations, institutions, and government entities.\footnote{van Dijk, Teun A. (1992). \textit{Discourse and the denial of racism}. London, Newbury, and New Delhi: SAGE. p. 88.} The elites, who aligned themselves with the French conceptions of modernity, reproduced these racist entities, if in slightly transformed ways, as they were the key players in shaping public discourse, had the largest at stake in dismantling the colonial power
structures they had championed, and through their positions of power were most proficient in persuasively formulated their ethnic opinions. In post-colonial Morocco, the racialized discourse inherited from the French rulers was reproduced by the state through “face-keeping” and the denial of racial tension in the region through campaigns of Arabization and hyper-nationalism – a double-strategy of positive self-representation as the New Morocco and subtle forms of negative other-presentation in order to establish a feeling of in-group solidarity as “Moroccans.” In the performance of nation-hood, the new Moroccan government was expected to adhere to the dominant attitudes and ideologies of democratic and humanitarian norms and ideals, which meant it must protect against accusations of intolerance and racism from the international community, as well as accusations which contested the pre-colonial notion that the region could not attain nationhood, homogeneity, or cohesion. Through embracing the Arabization of the nation, the elite attempted to establish Morocco as Arab – thus denying its Amazigh roots and history as a colonized African nation.

However, the denial of Amazigh and African roots began long before the post-independence elites– they merely transformed the racialized discourse in order to maintain their positions of power and to establish Morocco as a ‘modern’ nation-state. If the colonial period in Morocco can only be apprehended as culture, it can only be understood as a culture of racism: Europeans versus the barbaric “Other” Arab and Amazigh natives. Throughout the transition of

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50 Ibid. p. 88.
52 Ibid. p. 116
power from the French colonizers to the Moroccan elite in post-independence, the new State inherited and, consequently, reproduced the culture of racism inherited from colonial times by not interrogating the influences of Eurocentrism or the identity of “Moroccan-ness” outside of pan-Arab ideology. Instead, the post-independence elites utilized French as a means to re-affirm their authority and, consequently, Morocco’s validity as a ‘modern’ State,\(^{55}\) while simultaneously employing authenticating their Arab-ness metadiscursively through their ahistorical claim of solely Arab roots to position themselves and the new country within pan-Arab nationalism.\(^{56}\) According to Sarah Hassan, the contemporary racialization of Arabs’ can occurred in the 1960s.\(^{57}\) In postcolonial Morocco, this coincided with their declaration of independence from France and Spain in 1956, creating a wave of Arabization as one of its initial sociodiscursive national agendas\(^{58}\) as a means of further distancing the new nation-state from the racially derived barbarity of “African-ness” and the denial of its Amazigh heritage and identity which began in the 1930s.\(^{59}\) The efforts to reject Morocco’s Amazigh heritage resulted in “the disappearance of a country that was, first and foremost, African.”\(^{60}\) For Amazigh activists, the battle against Arabization has manifested in their reclaimed African identity as a means to protecting their Berber identity, which posed a threat to the Moroccan state’s claim of a cohesive, unifying “Arab-ness” of their citizens or of Morocco as an Arab nation.\(^{61}\) The post-independence elites, 

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\(^{60}\) Ibid.

thus, intentionally reproduced and transformed the pre-existing racialized discourse of the region
in order to maintain authority and legitimacy by defining “Moroccan-ness” as explicitly non-
African and racially Arab.

According to Abdelmajid Hannoum, Morocco’s post-independence political shift from
colonial power and knowledge to post-colonial power and knowledge must be contextualized
within a historical critique of both colonialism and nationalism, where one finds that the colonial
ideology continues to be used in new ways in the contemporary Maghreb. In “colonial
modernity,” discursive strategies of racial “Other”-ing were put in place to comprehend and
control the population and were initially and mostly racial in character: Europeans as the superior
and the Arab and Amazigh as inferior in all capacities of utility and intellect. Beginning in 1871,
the Arab versus Amazigh dichotomy served as the main discursive device of colonial discourse
throughout the Maghreb region, focusing on the constructed narrative of inherent opposition and
violence between the two groups to demonstrate an “impossibility” of nationhood in the
Maghreb. Placing Europeans on a pedestal, a hierarchy of beauty, grace, and strength establish
from ancient times, the colonizers manipulated the modern ideology of nationhood to justify
their presence in the barbaric African lands as a means of civilizing them and bringing them into
the New World. Colonial modernity, defined by nationhood, introduced a new form of
belonging; as, in 1947, Ernest Renan states, “A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. There are
two things, which in reality are only one, that constitute this spiritual principle. One is in the
past; the other in the present. One is a possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the
other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to assert the undivided heritage we
have received.” This prevailing conception of nationhood was the mark of modernity, civility,
and, ultimately, rational progress, which the colonizers juxtaposed with the Arab and Berber’s
inability to conceive of existence beyond the tribe – a hallmark of primitiveness and backwardness. The “colonial knowledge” was produced with the intent to understand and control colonial reality.\textsuperscript{62} However, the post-independence elites reworked and reconstituted this narrative, an expression of contemporary racialized discourse, of nationhood \textit{qu	extsuperscript{a}a} modernity to justify their anti-African, pro-Arab, and Francophone nationalist rhetoric.

\textbf{Denial: The New and Improved Racialized Discourse}

These vestiges of power cannot be reduced to an anti-racist manifestation of the colonial racialized discourse – as seen in the failed attempt to distinguish \textit{racialized difference} from racism. The sociodiscursive implications of this anti-African, pro-Arab, and Francophone nationalism constructed an exclusive patriotism which pervades the conception of “Moroccan-ness” today. The consequences of such exclusive hyper-nationalism socializes Moroccans to divide the country into two codetermining groups: the patriots who work to develop the country and bring it a bright future through optimism and minimal critique and the enemy, i.e. those critical voices willing to divide and destroy the country’s unity.\textsuperscript{63} One instance where the State’s use of this divisive strategy is the sponsorship of nationalist rap groups who reproduce the dominant State narratives to both the national and international media that Morocco is on the road to democracy and liberalism under the new king Mohammed VI.\textsuperscript{64} This State-sponsored media constructs the enemy of Morocco as a demonized, oppositional voice – anyone who does not share the State’s dominant narratives in development, territorial integrity, or politics\textsuperscript{65} – as a

\textsuperscript{63} Moreno, Cristina. 2016. “Imagining the Enemy: The Role of Patriotic Rap Songs in Curbing Critical Voices in Morocco.” In Mokhtari (ed), \textit{Otherness Unbound: Spaces of Identity in the Postcolonial MENA Region}. p. 188.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid. p. 192.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid. p. 196.
means to of sociopolitical management through its influence on the communal episteme. As a self-defense mechanism, the State uses nationalist rhetoric to influence the populace’s attitudes toward the State by demonizing any and all opposition to its epistemological authority.

Thus, when grassroots campaigns such as “My Name is Not Azzi” – the first organized attempt to sensitize people on the tolerance and fighting racism in Morocco – were launched in November of 2014, there were many negative reactions from both State officials and Moroccan citizens alike. For instance, in the article “Are Moroccans Racist Towards Sub-Saharan Immigrants?” published by Moroccan World News, the author boasts that Morocco is famous for its “host of racial groups, who, most of the time, colive without confrontation” and that Moroccans themselves are famous for their hospitality and open-mindedness. However, they note, such campaigns would never have been launched “if there weren’t a large number of people who feel offended by others’ racist comments and stares.” Furthermore, an anti-racism activist from the March of 2014 campaign “I am Moroccan, I am African,” went so far as to say that “Moroccans firmly condemn these irresponsible acts [of hate speech and racism],” which according to him are “isolated and not deeply rooted in the Moroccan culture.” Both of these comments delineate a common theme in Morocco’s racialized discourse: a denial that racism is institutional in the country, but the expression of racist individuals, and the claims that Morocco, even in the face of such campaigns, is still an open-minded, tolerant society. Aiming for tolerance education and unlearning of ignorance as means to combat racist expression, both

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campaigns cited multiple reasons why racism may exist in Morocco: Sub-Saharan or black skin is equated with undocumented,\(^{69}\) lack of representation in the media to counteract the dominant narrative of Sub-Saharan Africans as an unknown threat, Africans “grouping in isolating clans” and not trying to integrate into Moroccan society, political backlash from the influx of refugees,\(^{70}\) and “earned stereotypes” such as they “smell not only physically but mentally.”\(^{71}\) Meanwhile, Sub-Saharan migrants claim that integration is not possible through a one-way street – Moroccans must “come to us and try to understand our culture, values, and way of thinking in order for us to find together a common ground for co-existence”\(^{72}\) at best, or, as one interviewee put it, Moroccans must simply understand that “We are human beings like them [Moroccans]. They shouldn’t treat us like dogs or like slaves.”\(^{73}\) Moroccans, on the one hand, seem to still be grappling with whether or not racism exists in their society; meanwhile, Sub-Saharan migrants are asking for the bare minimum: to be treated and respected as human beings. Just from the responses to these campaigns, one can conclude that the conceptualization of race and racism in Morocco widely varies based on the speaker: Moroccans cannot seem to figure out how racism could occur in their country, while Sub-Saharan immigrants express a degree of degradation and abuse which would warrant protesting and campaigns for basic humanity from the Moroccans.

The Moroccans, it seems, are mimicking their State’s response to racism: disputing the concept

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\(^{72}\) Ibid.

and providing justifications for why the problem is not *us* but *them*. The hesitation comes from the discontinuity with the dominant narrative of the State. The latter campaign directly violates the implicit nationalist rhetoric of the State, which denies its African origins. Consequently, the responses of interviewees to these movements are similar to those of the State: a racialized discourse which invokes justifications for racist expression such as victim blaming and excuses, denial of the implicit accusation that these incidents are not isolated instances of bigotry, and the reaffirmation that Morocco is a welcoming, humanitarian nation.

The explanations or justifications of racism’s existence in Morocco from the above interviewees echoes the declarations and, I argue, denial of racism from the State. For instance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Youssef Amrani, reacted to “allegations of violent treatment and police brutality against Sub-Saharan immigrants in Morocco” by claiming that Morocco is the “victim” of the Sub-Saharan migratory pressure.” Although the report of violence is from the Moroccan State onto Sub-Saharan immigrants, Amrani reverses the narrative to make it a *them* problem, not a Moroccan problem. However, he finishes his statement by adding that Morocco is “firmly committed to managing its borders and readmission procedures in full compliance with the multiple dimensions of migrations: development and respect for human rights.”

Accusations of racism at the international level, such as the report Amrani is responding to, may be easily heard as a moral indictment of the nation as a whole and, furthermore, threaten to disrupt ingroup solidarity and smooth ingroup encounters. Thus, he repaints the racialized discourse through three different shades of denial: 1) as an alleged provocation by the Sub-

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76 Ibid. p. 90.
Saharan immigrants, thus as excuse for racist expression, 2) as blaming the victims of violence for the violence itself, and 3) ultimately, reversing the claims of racism back to the victims’ fault, not the Moroccans.77 Furthermore, he affectively refutes the implication of regression from Western modernity by reaffirming Morocco’s tolerance through its commitment to development and human rights78 and defending the ingroup, Moroccans, from the accusation of racism.79 Elites, such as Amrani, play an important role in determining public discourse and employ denial tactics strategically to maintain in-group favoritism, such as nationalism, and social face-keeping against explicit or implicit threats of racism as a pre-emptive or defensive measure to mitigate and down-play expressions which contradict the dominant State narratives of unity and patriotism.80 The denial of racism by the elite influences the communal episteme of the nation to react similarly: mitigating, justifying, and blaming the victims of such racially motivated violence.

Denial of racism, for the political elite, is a very powerful element in its reproduction, especially since accusations or opposition to the State narrative require public attention, media coverage, and at least a partial acknowledgement of grievances in order to be successful in enacting change.81 For instance, in the article “Are Moroccans Racist Against Sub-Saharan Immigrants?” mentioned above, an interviewee, in juxtaposing Morocco to the United States, claims the difference between the two countries’ racialized discourse lies in denial: “we can never admit that we have racism, which is even more dangerous, since we can’t work on solving

78 Ibid. p. 97.
79 Ibid. p. 89.
80 Ibid. p. 91.
81 Ibid. p. 96.
a problem that doesn’t exist in our minds.” 82 Indeed, if leading politicians and the media refuse to acknowledge racism, there will be no public debate, no changing of public opinion, and, thus, no substantive change in the system of power relations.83 One activist commented that, “At a time when the Moroccan king toured African countries, trying to build strong economic ties with other African nations, it seemed like the country had no other choice but to attempt to polish its international image.” 84 In order to insure political success with other African countries and continue to be perceived as a tolerant, modern society by the Western world, the denial of racism plays a prominent role in the reproduction of racialized discourse. Thus, campaigns like “My Name is Not Azzi” and “I am Moroccan, I am African,” directly contradicted the State’s narrative of tolerance and unity by explicitly calling out the widespread use of the slur *azzi* – equivalent of the n-word in the United States – and the State’s intentional distancing of Morocco as African. Through the official denial of racism at the State level, and its consequent effects on subjectivity and interpellation devoid of a true understanding of the race relations in Morocco, the dominant discourse that there is no racism in Morocco renders accusations of racist expression or racist violences as only conceivable as a figment of the victim’s imagination: the conceptualization of racism in Morocco is outside of the State-directed communal episteme.


III. Field Work: How do Moroccans conceptualize race?

To further investigate the ways in which Moroccans conceptualize racialized discourse in Morocco, I conducted a survey-based study based on the usage of racist expressions in Morocco. Working within a limited two week time frame, I tried to gather responses from as many people as possible by making the survey available online. Fortunately, I was able to interview forty-six people living in Morocco, mostly students in their early 20s and professors in their early 50s, through both in-person interviews and the online survey which consisted of the same questions (see Appendix I); however, as the majority of the surveys were completed online, I was unable to ask for clarifications or follow-ups questions about the interviewees’ responses. The online version of the survey was written in Arabic (FusHa), French, and English in order to make it more accessible to my target population and consisted of questions ranging from personal and demographic questions, defining Arabic words, word usage, race self-identification, how their race affected their daily lives in Morocco, and, finally, “Do you think there is a race problem in Morocco?”

Through the expansive network of my academic advisors, I was put directly in contact with Moroccan students willing to take the survey, as well as reaching out on my own to my old Arabic professors who then passed the survey along to their students. My target population was younger Moroccans – those who will be the future of Morocco and, presumably, exposed to a wider variety of views from the rise of technology. I chose this demographic based on the assumption that the younger generation will be more involved politically and exposed to a wider variety of discourse through their consumption of social media. Drawbacks to such the demographic I was able to reach are that they do not accurately represent older generations’ mentalities and, as a small sample size, cannot be used to make assumptions about all
Moroccans. Furthermore, the majority of my participants were restricted to my location in Rabat or connections to other universities, so the majority of my interviewees live in an urban environment and/or attend university in Morocco. With these limitations in mind, my interviews largely represent the elite Moroccans who are able to access information on the internet, afford living in an urban setting such as Rabat, and/or able to attend university in Morocco.

The survey itself received more responses than I had originally anticipated; however, many interviewees commented on the quality and accuracy of the French translations which did not word the research as about a “race problem” but specifically “racism” in Morocco. As I am only fluent in English, advanced in Arabic, and illiterate in French, this means the survey may not be translated with the accuracy and phrasing of my English questions. Furthermore, many interviewees became defensive in answering questions which had to do with race and claimed I was asking leading questions. However, the questions were intentionally written to guide the interviewee from thinking about themselves generally, the words in Arabic which represent a small fraction of the racialized discourse, then their personal association with race in order to prime them for the final question about whether or not there was a race problem in Morocco. Another response I frequently received was why I was researching race in Morocco and between whom this presumed racism was occurring. This, coupled by the various responses denying the importance of race as a feature of one’s identity, led me to conclude that there was a very limited explicit race discourse happening in Morocco, leaving the majority of the racialized discourse to manifest as assumptions and cultural norms.

My assumptions before gathering primary information were 1) that the majority of my interviewees would deny that there is a race problem in Morocco, 2) that I would be able to fully understand the linguistic intricacies of Darija or FusHa Arabic and the social realities they
produced, 3) that I would be able to find many non-governmental organizations working on racism, specifically in Morocco, and 4) that a younger demographic would be more inclined to discuss and be actively engaged in politics. On all accounts, I was wrong in my assumptions; however, for all assumptions excluding the second, this led to a more nuanced understanding of the racialized discourse in Morocco and how Moroccans perceive the degree of racism as an issue. As for the second assumption based on language, I was lucky to have my Arabic professors aid in translation and making sense of the linguistic manifestations of racialized discourse in Morocco – I cannot say this fully eliminated the barrier, but it mitigated it to the best degree an outsider of a linguistic community can hope for.

**Survey Results: Defining Words and Hearing Frequency**

In order to analyze the results of my survey, I originally divided the responses as follows: 1) Moroccan-born and doesn’t believe there is a race problem in Morocco, 2) Moroccan- and does believe there is a race problem in Morocco, 3) Not Moroccan-born and doesn’t believe there is a race problem in Morocco, and 4) Not Moroccan-born and does believe there is a race problem in Morocco. I intended to divide the surveys into these four categories based on the assumption that socialization as a Moroccan would play a determining role in their views on race, as they were socialized under a State which denies racism as a Moroccan problem.

Unfortunately, only two of the forty-six interviewees were not born in Morocco, so I decided instead to compare my survey responses based on the four words interviewees were asked to define (Appendix I, Defining Arabic Words, 1-4) and report the frequency of usage in Morocco (Appendix 1, Word Usage Questions, 1). The following analysis compares responses to the open-ended questions asking for definitions of the words race, nationality, racism, and azzī – a
slur used in Morocco targeting black people – and the frequency in which the interviewees the usage of these words in Morocco: ranging from never, sometimes, at least once a month (monthly), frequently, at least once a day (daily), and not applicable (N/A) for the one interviewee who did not speak Arabic.

**Race: “3raq / aaraq” – عرق**

The following are the responses given when asked what the meaning of “race” is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where you are from – origins/roots</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic, racial belonging that categorizes a person</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The human race</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin color</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of similar human beings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazigh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad smell</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who we are</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can’t change it</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above, the answers for this question varied, with the most frequent responses being: race, where you are from (roots or origins), and ethnicity. The next two, interestingly, are the human race generally and the concept of skin tones, which both vaguely point to features constitutive of the concept of race, but not interchangeable with race. However, some interviewees answered with their own races (Amazigh, Berber), while the majority of the remaining responses implied that they had a vague concept of the classificatory nature of race and identity. The most interesting response, however, was the interviewee who answered “bad smell” – perhaps because they simply do not know the meaning of the word or because of the
negative connotations the word race can hold. The majority, however, do not articulate a clear distinction between the concepts of race, ethnicity, and group-belonging, which is a reoccurring theme throughout the responses to all questions. For instance, in the longer versions of one of the interviewees answers, one of the answers identified that the word in English mean race and that is “implies the way by which people are given their identity in a multi-ethnic nation.” While they accurately defined the word as race, they elaborated the classificatory nature of race as something born of a “multi-ethnic” nation. Similarly, the longer versions of another interviewee’s answer recognized the word race as a classificatory system of human beings “based on their common and similar traits, history, and social endeavors,” which invokes the concept of racialized difference beyond just physicality, but also incorporates aspects of ethnicity such as shared history and social behaviors. The line between race and ethnicity is, at best, blurred.

These vague descriptions and lack of specificity may be related to the usage of the word “race” in everyday life (see Appendix II). Few people reported that the word “race” was used on a regular basis – the majority reporting to sometimes or have never having heard it used in daily life. The most frequently made responses split between hearing the word less than once a month (sometimes) or never having heard it at all, with the graph skewed to the right indicating that it is less likely to be used in every day Moroccan life. Based on this information and the varied definitions provided in the survey, the interviewees indicate that overall there is not a frequent accurate usage of this word in the racialized discourse of Morocco they have been exposed to.
Nationality: "jinsia" - الجنسية

The following are the responses given when asked what the meaning of “nationality” is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where you come from</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make nations of us</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells who we are</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You're not supposed to accept it</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to the first table, the responses for nationality have much less deviation from the actual meaning of the word. The majority responded with nationality, while the second closest, citizenship, is a closely related concept. However, there were individuals who responded with presumably their own nationality (Moroccan) or vague conceptions such as where you come from, make nations of us, or belonging. The more striking responses were: country, sexual, tells who we are, and you’re not supposed to accept it. Defining nationality as country shows some connection to the term’s origins, but not an understanding of the term itself: country and nationality, though related, cannot be used interchangeably. However, the definitions of “tells us who we are” or “You’re not supposed to accept it” are an eerily authoritative phrasing for the word nationality, which perhaps indicates to the lack of choice in one’s nationality, however fails to make the specific connection. Alternately, I had actually expected more people to respond with something along the lines of sexual, due to the usage of jins in Arabic to mean gender or sex – the two who responded with sexual were technically not wrong in their Arabic to English translation, though out of context.
Comparing the definitions to the frequency of usage (see Appendix III), the majority had reported sometimes hearing nationality used, while the majority of the other half of respondents are split between hearing it monthly or frequently. The correlation between a higher number of participants who indicated hearing the word used more often than not and the high accuracy in definitions indicates that there is a general understanding of nationality within Moroccan discourse. Furthermore, more interviewees knew the definition for nationality than the definition of race, which indicates that the nationalist discourse is more frequently deployed and heard than a racialized discourse.

**Racism: "Eunsuria" - عنصرية**

The following are the responses given when asked what the meaning of “racism” is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racism</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To not accept different people</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Don't know</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inequality between skin color, religion, or economy state</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credulity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injustice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A struggle we see a lot in our street</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference between people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everywhere ?!</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignores</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oddly enough, interviewees gave the same number of different responses for the definition of racism (12) as they did for the definition of race (12). Although racism as a definition got the highest correct answers, there is a wide variety in the rest of the responses. The top three answers after racism – to not accept different people, discrimination, and I don’t know – show that the
second most likely answer to this question was either some vague derivation of discrimination generally to not knowing at all what the term was referring to. Thus, while the most frequent response was the accurate definition of racism, the next most consistent answers were either vaguely referring to discrimination without any racial implications or simply not knowing what the word meant. Beyond those top four answers, the majority of the given definitions were not racism – some vaguely demonstrating a connection to discrimination in referring to inequality which could occur “between” skin color, religion, or economy and some referring to struggle, differences between people, or injustice. Meanwhile the rest of the answers indicate that they, too, do not know what the word if referring to: ignores, everywhere ?!, credulity, and ignorance. Of the least accurate assortment of words, ignorance may be viewed as a euphemism and justification for racism, however the interviewee did not explicitly make a connection to race or discrimination. The variance in these answers and the inaccuracy of a majority of them indicates that this term is not used frequently in racialized discourse in Morocco.

As for the frequency of usage (see Appendix IV), those who did not believe there is a race problem in Morocco had more interviewees indicating that they never hear this word or who hear it daily than the group who believes there is a race problem in Morocco – an odd phenomenon to have larger numbers of people in the group who claim there is no race problem in Morocco hearing the word racism daily as opposed to the group who does think there is a race problem. Although the largest number of interviewees reported to only sometimes hearing this word being used, it ought to be noted that the frequency of usage chart for racism is the first of the three charts analyzed to have interviewees report hearing a word daily. Considering the weight of each measure, that is that hearing a word daily means more utterances than if only heard less than once a month, this indicates that this word may be used more frequently in racialized Moroccan
discourse. While all chart of usage show that sometimes is the most frequently picked option for the words, the frequency of racism being heard has been noted to also occur daily for two interviewees, unlike in the first two charts. Perhaps, then, racism is being used more than nationality or race.

Azzi: "azzi" - عزى

The following are the responses given when asked what the meaning of “azzi” is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black, no qualifiers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (stigmatized): to differentiate Moroccans from blacks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigger/Nigga</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Racist Term</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (nickname for friend)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slur for POC – “moreno” in Spanish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (or dark skinned Africans)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullshit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sub-Saharan and nonsense theory of Afrocentrism</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light skin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skin tone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above table, there are many different understandings of azzi represented. Although there are four which define the word as black, this word also came with the more contextualizing than any of the other definition questions. For instance, a total of twenty-seven interviewees defined the word azzi as some variation of black: black without any qualifiers, black but stigmatized as a means to differentiates Moroccans from blacks, black as a nickname for a friend, and black related African-ness specifically. As far as its connections to racism, four interviewees defined it simply as a racist term without any elaboration as to who the targeted community was, while two specifically mentioned it was a slur targeting people of color, and
then there were the six interviewees who defined *azzi* with the American slur for African Americans (nigger/nigga) without elaborating as to how this Americanized version of racism was applicable in Morocco or whether or not they were using it with the intention to derogate or not. The responses which don’t seem to fit the general theme of weaponized racialized discourse are human, light skin (especially considering that all other responses indicate the opposite definition), and skin tone generally. These three responses do not seem to grasp the connection of the word *azzi* to a history of racism and anti-blackness, but still understand that the world indicates an embodied experience. Lastly, the responses of a Sub-Saharan and nonsense theory of Afrocentrism and bullshit are difficult to decipher. Does the interviewee mean bullshit as in literal shit, thus the word *azzi* meaning a derogatory exclamation, or bullshit as in the word itself represents an ideology the interviewee means to derogate? Meanwhile, the interviewee who addresses Sub-Saharan identities seems to comprehend the racial aspect of the word *azzi*, but by contextualizing it as “nonsense theory of Afrocentrism” implies that the target of the word *azzi* may be attempting to reclaim their African roots, while the interviewee finds the notion of reclaiming African roots to be without merit. The most interesting part of these responses is the degree of contextualization for similar terms that the interviewees included in their responses – these answers were overall the longest out of all of the definition questions.

The lack of consensus on the meaning of the word *azzi* is inversely proportionate to the frequency of usage correlation that has been noted in the previous words’ analyses (see Appendix V). This is the only instance in which sometimes is not the most frequently chosen answer, but instead the most interviewees chose “frequently:” more than once a month but less than once a day. Furthermore, the word *azzi* had the highest response of daily of all four words. Again, taking into account the weight of each measure, it can be concluded that the word *azzi* is
the most used of the four surveyed words in Morocco. However, as the most used word of the four, it has the greatest deviation in consensus of what exactly the word *azzi* refers to. Furthermore, the people who reported they do believe there is a race problem in Morocco had more interviewees in the daily, frequently, and monthly categories than interviewees from the group who do not believe there is a race problem in Morocco. Perhaps, then, there is a correlation between exposure to the racial slur *azzi*, even if unsure of exactly what it is referring to, and the awareness of racial tensions in Morocco.

**Conclusion**

Throughout all the definitions, the interviewees presented a widely varying, and sometimes contradictory, sample of the Moroccan conception of race, ethnicity, and racism. Overwhelmingly, the interviewees presented Morocco’s racialized discourse by deploying denial tactics such as euphemisms and justification, as well as the contradictory usage and intentionality of racist expressions. From the above research, I argue that the Moroccan State’s insistence in a hyper-nationalist citizen who denounces their African roots in order to pander to pan-Arab nationalism and Western notions of modernity has shaped the sociodiscursive landscape of race which leaves the citizens well-equipped to claim their nationality, but lacking a narrative with which to grapple with their racial identities. As a byproduct of this internalized State rhetoric, Moroccans today have contesting and contradictory notions of race, racism, and their positionality as an Arab country with African roots.

First, there is the conflation of race and ethnicity in which the interviewees who explained concepts of racialized discourse would use them interchangeably. By doing this, the interviewees are ascribing sociological concepts including national, linguistic, religious, or cultural heritage
onto the concept of race, while racializing the conception of ethnicity.\textsuperscript{85} From this research, it seems as though a definite word for the concept of race is not established in a way that allows for the conceptualization of racism beyond that of “racial” difference where the conflation of race and ethnicity has rendered the category of race as an unspecified, floating signifier. As one interviewee described it, the “race issue” in Morocco is not a significant one because “the fact that we call someone ‘black’ (be they family members or strangers) shows that we all adopt that the idea of racial difference and discrimination even if we’re not doing it to bully someone to make them feel inferior to us.” Thus, the conception of racist expression or even racial discrimination is not equated with the racialized discourse’s hierarchy of inferiority and superiority. However, the conflation of ethnicity and race further problematizes the concept of racial difference, as the word race is used as signifier for a multitude of identity features. For instance, when asked “What is your race?” the interviewees responded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Feature</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazigh</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifi</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saharan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My origin is Berber</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Skin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Thailand</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A White Arab</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, North African, or Arab</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This compilation of physical, racial, ethnic, national, regional, and religious identities indicates an unclear or unspecified conception of race. Without a clear conception of race, the interpretation of a race problem in Morocco is difficult, if not conceptually possible, to articulate without using race as a synonym for difference.

If race is conceptualized as merely difference, then the discursive expression of racism consequently transforms to a vague, watered-down form of discrimination or differential treatment devoid of institutionalized bias or the specific history of racialized discourse. For example, take these definitions of racism from different interviewees:

- “To make difference with black and white people. When we say that, it is that they are poor or they are rich. It’s no good. I think is hashouma [shameful] to make racism.”
- “To see other people who does not share with you the same language, culture, or skin color as inferior to you.”
- “A tendency to have certain feelings towards a specific person basing on their skin color, nationality, race, among others.”
- “Not accepting people who are different from us.”

The first definition considers race, albeit only black and white, as a part of racism, but also includes classism as a form of racist expression in Morocco. Similarly, the second definition mentions skin color as one of many racist expressions, including linguistic and cultural differences. However, the third and fourth definitions seem to embody the essence of how race and racism is perceived in Morocco: any exclusionary practices based on difference – skin color, nationality, race, among others – from “us,” Moroccans. For instance, one interviewee commented that the race problem is “very common in Morocco,” especially for Africans who reside here permanently because “they are different, so they are treated differently.”
Differentiation from “Moroccan-ness” warrants differential treatment, not because they are of a certain race or nationality but because they are different from Moroccans. With race as a floating signifier for a multitude of identities, racist expression and racism are not conceptualized as racialized phenomena or as components of racialized discourse, reducing the racism to racial difference.

Therefore, as the majority of my interviewees claimed, I would argue that there is a race problem in Morocco; however, due to a State’s selective deployment of racialized language only to further its hyper-nationalist agenda, the concept of race has been politically manipulated into a disfigured identifier with no resemblance to race or racialized discourse. Thus, the root of the problem, in Morocco’s case, may simply be the lack of linguistic tools to express racialized discourse as its own entity. If one is unable to conceptual race as its own, distinct classificatory system of embodied power relations, then there can be no understanding of racism. Disconnected from its inherently racist roots, racialized discourse’s preconceptual elements of exclusion and domination become obscured, as well as its vernacular and narrative of subjectivity and interpellation.
Appendix I: Consent Form and Survey Questionnaire, pg. 25-27

Project Title: Performance of Moroccan-ness: A Question of Race

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Leila Chreiteh (lchreiteh@agnesscott.edu) from the School for International Training. The purpose of this study is to understand race in Morocco. This study will contribute to my completion of my Independent Study Project. All responses will be kept anonymous.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any individual question without consequences.

By continuing with the following survey, you agree to the following: "I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age."

Je vous demande de participer dans une étude de recherche menée par Leila Chreiteh (lchreiteh@agnesscott.edu) de la School for International Training. Le but de cette étude est de comprendre le racisme au Maroc. Cette étude contribuera à mon projet d'étude indépendant. Toutes les réponses ont anonymes.

Votre participation est volontaire. Vous êtes libre de choisir de ne pas participer. Si vous choisissez de participer, vous pouvez retirer à tout moment sans aucune conséquence. Vous ne devrez pas de répondre à toute question individuelle sans conséquences.

En poursuivant l'enquête suivante, vous acceptez les conditions suivantes: "Je l'ai lu ce formulaire de consentement et je comprends ce qui est demandé de moi en tant que participant à cette étude. Je consens à participer. Des réponses satisfaisantes me ont été données à mes questions. Je certifie que je suis 18 ans ou plus âgées."
Personal and Demographic Questions

1. What is your name? / ما اسمك؟ / Comment vous appelez-vous?
2. How old are you? / كم عمرك؟ / Quel âge avez-vous?
3. Were you born in Morocco? / ولدت في المغرب؟ / Êtes-vous né au Maroc?
4. Where were you born? / أين ولدت؟ / Où êtes-vous né?
5. Where do you live now? / أين تعيش الآن؟ / Ou habites tu maintenant?
6. How long have you lived in Morocco? / متى سنوات عديدة كنت تعيش في المغرب؟ / Depuis combien de temps vivez-vous au Maroc?
7. Did you grow up in Morocco? / لم تكبر في المغرب؟ / Avez-vous grandi au Maroc?
8. Are you a Moroccan citizen? / هل أنت مواطن المغربي؟ / Êtes-vous un citoyen marocain?

Defining Arabic Words

What do the following words mean? / ماذا تعني هذه الكلمات؟ / Que veulent dire ces mots?

1. “3raq / aaraq” / عرق – 1
2. "jinsia" / جنسية – 2
3. "eunsuria" / عنصرية – 3
4. "azzi" / عزي – 4

Word Usage Questions

1. In Morocco, how often are these words used? / في المغرب، كيف غالبا ما هذه الكلمات المستخدمة؟ / Au Maroc, à quelle fréquence ces mots sont-ils utilisés?
   a. Rows 1-4 show words from previous section
   b. Columns range from:
      i. Never / ابدا / Jamais
      ii. Sometimes / احيانا / Parfois
      iii. I hear this word at least once a month. / أسمع هذه الكلمة مرة واحدة على الأقل في الشهر. / J'entends ce mot au moins une fois par mois.
      iv. Frequently / كثيرا / Fréquemment
      v. I hear this word at least once a day. / أسمع هذه الكلمة مرة واحدة على الأقل يوميا / J'entends ce mot au moins une fois par jour.
2. How often do you use these words? / كيف وغالبا ما تستخدم هذه الكلمات؟ / À quelle fréquence utilisez-vous ces mots?
   a. Rows 1-4 show words from previous section
   b. Columns range from:
      i. Never / ابدا / Jamais
      ii. Sometimes / احيانا / Parfois
      iii. Frequently / كثيرا / Fréquemment

Self-Identification Questions

1. What is your race? / ما هو جنسيتك؟ / Quelle est ta race?
2. How does your race affect your daily life? / كيف عرقك تؤثر على حياتك اليومية؟ / Comment votre race affecte-t-elle votre vie quotidienne?
3. Are you proud of your race? / هل أنت فخور جنسك؟ / Êtes-vous fier de votre course?

Visual Identification Questions

1. Which color is your skin color? / أي لون هو لون بشرتك؟ / Quelle est la couleur de votre peau?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How does the color of your skin affect your daily life? / كيف لون بشرتك تؤثر على حياتك اليومية؟ / Comment la couleur de votre peau affecte-t-elle votre vie quotidienne?
3. In Morocco, do people treat you differently because of the color of your skin? / في المغرب، يفعل الناس يعاملك بطريقة مختلفة بسبب لون بشرتك؟ / Au Maroc, est-ce que les gens vous traitent différemment à cause de la couleur de votre peau?
4. Do you think there is a race problem in Morocco? / هل تعتقد أن هناك مشكلة العرق في المغرب؟ / Pensez-vous qu'il y ait un problème de course au Maroc?

Thank you! / شكراً / Je vous remercie!

If you have any questions or additional comments, please write them below or e-mail me at lchreiteh@agnesscott.edu.

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إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو تعليقات إضافية، يرجى الكتابة لها أدناه أو البريد الإلكتروني لي في lchreiteh@agnesscott.edu.

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If you have any questions or additional comments, please write them below or e-mail me at lchreiteh@agnesscott.edu.
Appendix II: Frequency of “Race” Heard by Interviewee

Figure 1: All Participants versus Frequency of Hearing “Race”

Figure 2: Frequency of Hearing “Race” versus Belief of Race Problem in Morocco
Appendix III: Frequency of “Nationality” Heard by Interviewee

Figure 1: All Participants versus Frequency of Hearing “Nationality”

Figure 2: Frequency of Hearing “Nationality” versus Belief of Race Problem in Morocco
Appendix IV: Frequency of “Racism” Heard by Interviewee

Figure 1: All Participants versus Frequency of Hearing “Racism”

Figure 2: Frequency of Hearing “Racism” versus Belief of Race Problem in Morocco
Appendix V: Frequency of “Azzi” Heard by Interviewee

Figure 1: All Participants versus Frequency of Hearing “Azzi”

Figure 2: Frequency of Hearing “Azzi” versus Belief of Race Problem in Morocco
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sub-saharan-immigrants/


