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Morocco: The Intersection Between Intercultural Mediation and Migration

Arianna Diaz
SIT Study Abroad

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FALL 2019

MOROCCO: THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION AND MIGRATION

ARIANNA DIAZ
INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT
SIT Morocco: Migration and Transnational Identities



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Abstract

My research seeks to understand the intersection between migration and intercultural mediation through a Moroccan context. The increase of undocumented and documented Sub-Saharanans flowing into Morocco through the Western Mediterranean route creates an increase in intercultural spaces within Moroccan society. By analyzing Sub-Saharan livelihoods and discrimination in Morocco I address how ineffective intercultural communication creates tensions between Moroccan nationals and Sub-Saharan Migrants. By applying intercultural mediation theory I come to understand how intercultural mediation can be applied between these two cultural groups. I specifically analyze the capacity of Moroccan civil organizations to act as intercultural mediators between Moroccan communities and Sub-Saharan migrant groups (both undocumented migrants or migrants with refugee status). This research was carried out by conducting three case studies of civil organizations in Morocco who utilize unique methodologies to facilitate intercultural mediation efforts between Moroccan citizens and Sub-Saharan migrants. These case studies concentrated on Foundation Orient-Occident's intercultural language courses, Manos Solidarias' intercultural sensitivity workshops, and the Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc's intercultural football tournament. Through an analysis of secondary and primary sources, interviews with these organizations' staff members, as well as supplemental interviews with Sub-Saharan migrants, I have come to analyze the methodologies, capacity, and limitations that civil organizations in Morocco face when conducting intercultural mediation in Morocco.

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Definitions

*Mediation*¹: is a process in which the parties to a dispute, with the assistance of a dispute resolution practitioner (the mediator), identify the disputed issues, develop options, consider alternatives and endeavor to reach an agreement. The mediator has no advisory or determinative role in regard to the content of the dispute or the outcome of its resolution, but may advise on or determine the process of mediation whereby resolution is attempted. (National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council)

Intercultural mediator: a social agent who designs and puts in place devices that make it possible to restore meaning where meaning has broken off, namely, he or she provides the one who does not understand with the means to understand” (Rubinfeld, Clement, 2012)

Intercultural communication: Individuals or groups from different cultures who are interacting together. (El haj, B. (2016). When Home and Host Cultures Meet: The Maghbrebis of Europe Between Emigration and Immigration Policies)

Co-Cultures: social communities that are significantly different enough to distinguish them from other groups and from the dominant group.² (El haj, B. (2016). When Home and Host Cultures Meet: The Maghbrebis of Europe Between Emigration and Immigration Policies)

Intercultural competence: Competent communication is interaction that is perceived as effect in fulfilling certain rewarding objectives in a way that is also appropriate to the context in which the

¹ For the purpose of this study we will not focus on mediation as legal practice, but rather on intercultural mediation as an intercultural communication tool to bridge the gap between Sub-Saharan populations and Moroccans

² The co-culture I will focus on is Sub-Saharan migrants (both irregular or with refugee status) temporarily or permanently setting in Morocco.

interaction occurs³. (El haj, B. (2016). When Home and Host Cultures Meet: The Maghbrebis of Europe Between Emigration and Immigration Policies)

Asylum Seeker: A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In case of a negative decision, the person must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any non-national in an irregular or unlawful situation, unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds.⁴ (IOM Glossary on Migration, 2nd edition)

Refugee: A person who “owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (Art. 1 (A)(2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol)

Irregular migrant: A person who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The definition covers inter alia those persons who have entered a transit or host country lawfully but have stayed for a longer period than authorized or subsequently taken up unauthorized employment (also called clandestine/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation.)⁵ (IOM Glossary on Migration, 2nd edition)

³ In this regard, competence is the ability to perform effectively and appropriately when communicating with people who are linguistically and culturally different (El haj, 2016)

⁴ While my research focuses on refugee and irregular Sub-Saharan migrant populations, it is important to understand Sub-Saharan asylum trends when providing a context of migration flows within Morocco.

⁵ The term “irregular” is preferable to “illegal” because the latter carries a criminal connotation and is seen as denying migrants’ humanity.

Introduction

My interest in the intersection between intercultural mediation and migration developed when interning at the Croatian Mediation Association (Hrvatska Udruga Za Mirenje) in Zagreb, Croatia during the Summer of 2018. Within this time period, I worked with lawyers, judges, professionals, and NGOs to normalize mediation as a peaceful, alternative dispute resolution practice within Croatia's emerging democracy and civil society. This work exposed me to how third-party mediators' use of negotiation can unite conflicting parties, confront the initial conflict with a detachment of individual bias and negative emotion, and create harmonious reconciliation founded upon mutual respect and compromise. Through my visits to international refugee conferences during World Refugee Week, asylum legal clinics, and Croatian civil organizations, I observed how mediation was being applied within Croatia's intercultural spaces. I was particularly interested in the Forum for Freedom in Education's collaboration with primary schools, in which NGO staff trained teachers on how to incorporate peer mediation within their curriculum in order to facilitate mutual exchange and empathy building between Croatian students and recently resettled Middle Eastern refugees. This internship was incredibly influential in shaping my desire to further pursue intercultural mediation's applicability to migration matters.

In line with the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Council, mediation within this paper relates to the "process in which the parties to a dispute, with the assistance of a dispute resolution practitioner (the mediator), identify the disputed issues, develop options, consider alternatives and endeavor to reach an agreement. The mediator has no advisory or determinative role in regard to the content of the dispute or the outcome of its resolution but may advise on or determine the process of mediation whereby resolution is attempted" (National Alternative

Dispute Resolution Advisory Council). Within intercultural spaces, mediation can be used to identify disputed issues, develop options, considered alternatives, and endeavor to reach an agreement between cultural groups to manage the communication issues that arise from diverse cultural differences, identities, traditions, and communication behaviors for the sake of creating harmonious coexistence between culturally diverse groups (Kinast, Schroll-Machl, Thomas, 2010).

Morocco, a North African country bordering the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, provides a multifaceted opportunity to explore the intrinsic relationship between intercultural mediation and migration due to its unique positionality between Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. Morocco's geographic importance inspires the mixed migration⁶ of individuals from diverse countries of origins seeking to cross into Europe, or increasingly settle within Morocco. Within this paper I focus on two migration types:

1. *Refugee*: A person who “owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (Art. 1 (A)(2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol)
2. *Irregular migrant*: A person who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The

⁶ Mixed complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, and other migrants (IOM)

definition cover inter alia those persons who have entered a transit or host country lawfully but have stay for a longer period than authorized or subsequently taken up unauthorized employment (also called clandestine/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation.)⁷ (IOM Glossary on Migration, 2nd edition)

While the main countries of origin that constitute these migrant flows to Morocco have traditionally been Senegal, Cameroon, Guinea, and Niger, since 2012 this has expanded to include migrants from other countries of concern such as Eritrea and Syria. Within this paper I narrow my focus to irregular and forced migration flows of Sub-Saharan migrants who choose to temporarily stay or permanently setting within Moroccan borders. Although statistics regarding the exact numbers of Sub Saharan Africans staying in Morocco on a temporary or permanent residency are limited, the growing presence of these migrants has lasting effects on the economy, demographics, legal, and cultural system within Morocco. The creation and strengthening of intercultural spaces within Moroccan society as response to the increasing presence of Sub-Saharan migrants reveals the necessity of intercultural mediation between Sub-Saharan migrant groups and Moroccan host nationals in order to develop social cohesion and decrease intergroup tensions.

To understand how mediation between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan host nationals occur within Moroccan society, I am motivated by my guiding question: *To what extent do civil organizations in Morocco have the capacity to act as intercultural mediators between Moroccan communities and Sub-Saharan migrant groups?* Gohard-Radenkovik, Lussier, Penz,

⁷ The term “irregular” is preferable to “illegal” because the latter carrier a criminal connotation and is seen as denying migrants’ humanity.

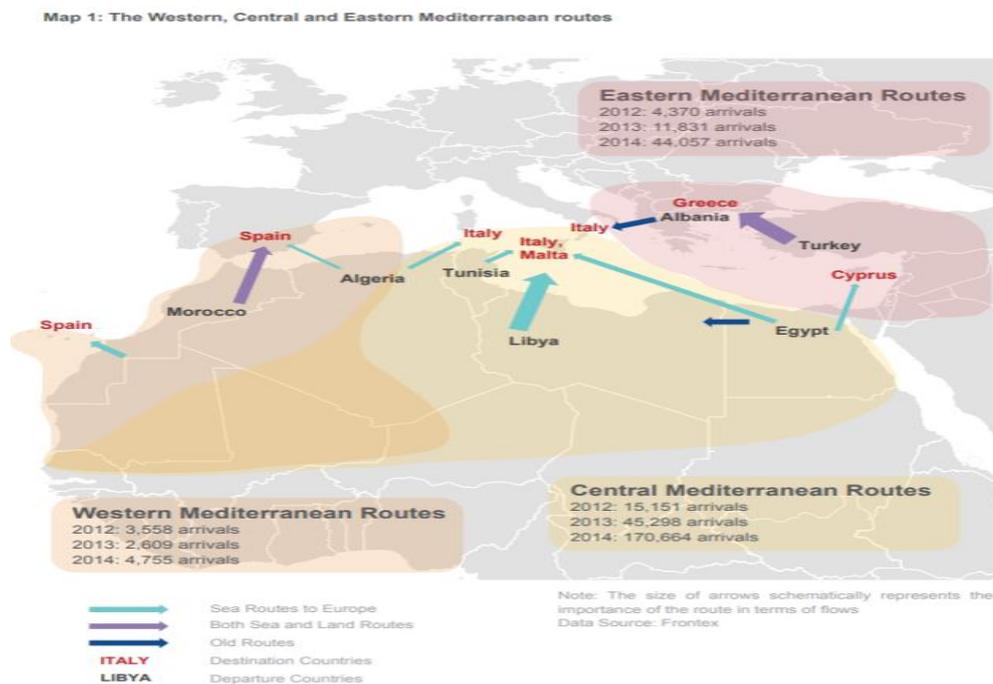
and Zaraf's provides an definition for understanding the specific role civil organizations embody as intercultural mediators:

"The cultural mediator is a social agent who designs and puts in place devices that make it possible to restore meaning where meaning has broken off, namely, he or she provides the one who does not understand with the means to understand" (Rubinfeld, Clement, 2012).

Through a synthesis of literature review, primary source research, my findings developed through interviews with staff members belonging to the three civil organization in Morocco, and supplemental interviews with Sub-Saharan migrants, I come to understand that Morocco's unique location within the Western Mediterranean route makes the facilitation of intercultural mediation between Sub Saharan migrants and Moroccan nationals absolutely necessary to reconciling the cultural misconceptions and promotion of social cohesion between cultural groups Within this context, the unique methodologies presented in my cases studies: Fondation Orient-Occident's intercultural language courses, Manos Solidarias' intercultural sensitivity training, and Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc's intercultural football tournament, demonstrates that civil organizations in Morocco can be understood as social agents facilitate cooperation between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan nationals within intercultural contexts by introducing or restoring cultural understandings where it is lacking or broken.

Literature Review

For several decades Morocco established itself as a country of emigration, yet in recent times, Morocco has also become a destination country for mixed migration flows⁸ of irregular and regular migrants, unaccompanied minors, seasonal migrants, and asylum seekers that often move from one country to another alongside one another. Morocco's geographic location facilitates the popular Western Mediterranean route for migration flows from North Africa to Spain. The Western Mediterranean route grants migrants access to a sea route from North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula, a land route through the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, as well as a sea passage to the Canary Islands in Spain (Malakooti, Davin, 2015).



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⁸ Mixed complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, and other migrants (IOM)

⁹ (Malakooti, Davin, 2015).

These migration flows were initially catalyzed by negative push factors such as political turmoil and civil war affecting Sub-Saharan countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire. However, irregular and forced migration has also expanded to include countries such as Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Ghana, Niger, and the Central African Republic (Hass, 2007).

As I seek to understand the how intercultural mediation can be applied between Moroccan nationals and Sub-Saharan migrants of refugee or irregular backgrounds, it is important to point out the main countries of origin that follow the Western Mediterranean route includes from Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Niger, and Congo (Malakooti, Davin, 2015). The migrants from these diverse countries are motivated by different push factors. Malians are escaping ongoing conflict in their country; yet Morocco only grants specific attention to the unrest located within the north of the country and does not grant all Malians international protection. The Second Ivorian Civil War catalyzed Ivorians to qualify for Asylum, yet those who arrive from Cote d'Ivoire today typically do not qualify for this protection. Cameroonians that experience forced migration to Morocco tend to be members of the LGBTI community who flee from the criminal persecution of homosexual acts. Nigerians who seek international protection come from the North of Nigeria where violence has been ongoing for the past 30 years, and has been amplified by the militant insurgent group, Boko Haram. Lastly, Congolese flee from the violent conflict located in the east point of their country, and have become the largest Sub-Saharan forced migrant group in Morocco.

Many Sub-Saharan migrants arrive with the intention to move on to Europe, yet when they first arrive in Morocco, they end up staying longer than anticipated because of difficulties

they experience while crossing into Spain¹⁰. There is also a small proportion of the Western Mediterranean flow that arrives with little to no objective and are open towards developing livelihoods in Morocco. Morocco can thus be understood as a stopover country where migrants can settle through choice, providing a space in they can “through no necessity or will of their own, for as long as it takes to get their bearings or reorganize themselves and sometimes to redefine their migratory project¹¹ (Alioua, 2014).

Despite regular encounters with racism, discrimination, and violence, an increasing number of documented and undocumented migrants settle permanently within Moroccan society. For these Sub-Saharan migrants, many are believed to settle in cities such as Tangiers, Casablanca, and Rabat for temporary and permanent stays that include developing livelihoods though employment in petty trade, construction, informal services, domestic help, and even academic studies (Malakooti, Davin, 2015). For the Sub-Saharan migrants who have lack a visa, transnational migration is unpredictable and can extend over several years. During this time, irregular or refugee status migrants must regroup and create spaces and links for themselves over the course of their journey.

By labeling Morocco as a stop-over country, as opposed to a transit country, scholars can better convey the complexity and autonomy of migrants in transit, in which migrants’ lifestyles are not “reduced during the waiting process into a ‘non-place’ with a minimum of interaction before moving on to another (Alioua, 2012). Instead, transit into Morocco forces Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan nationals together within intercultural spaces bound by interaction.

¹⁰ An increasing number of migrants who fail to enter Europe due to a lack of legal access or strict border enforcement prefer to settle in Mroocco as a “second best” option, rather than returning to their dangerous, politically unstable, poorer home countries (Haas, 2007)

¹¹ As stated above, once migrants reach Morocco they may decide to settle in the Maghreb countries for a longer period, without in any way abandoning their European dream (Alioua 2005).

When these two diverse cultural groups are forced to cohabitate, cohesion between the two becomes a requirement for the survival and enrichment of Sub-Saharan migrants.

There are many barriers towards the social cohesion which results in alienation of migrants and intergroup conflict. First, Many Sub-Saharan migrants are rarely socialized into Moroccan society. While Sub-Saharan migrants may interact with their landlords, come into regular contact with host nationals at work, and interact with Moroccans within the public sector, such as in the medinas or local markets, relationships with Moroccans do not typically extend into a Sub-Saharan's private life¹² (Cherti, Collyer, 2015). Another ongoing challenge that is amplified by their limited social interaction with Moroccans is frequent exposure to discrimination, prejudice, and exploitation.

While not all Sub-Saharan migrants are refugees in need of international protection, all are exposed to the same risks that arise from intercultural conflicts amidst transit and settlement. Within Chertier and Collyer's interviews with Sub-Saharan migrants, their respondents stated that their most direct contact with Moroccans was primarily negative, citing exploitative landlords or aggressive street gangs (Cherti, Collyer, 2015). This was asserted within my personal interview with a Cameroonian refugee who stated "not all Moroccans are angels as you know, there is a minority of people that are not good to all of us at all. They are so racist and extremely impulsive, and they can be harmful too; I personally got attacked many times and received aggressive behaviors from many Moroccans, and sometimes I feel insecure when I am out of my home" (2018, Nov 17, Personal interview). Furthermore, negative intercultural experiences with Moroccans is fueled by the damaging perceptions that some Moroccans hold

¹² This is reflected by the trend in which Sub-Saharans share accommodations with other Sub-Saharans rather than Moroccans, although the properties themselves are owned and managed by locals. This leads to even less exposure towards opportunities to socialize with Moroccan host nationals. (Cherti, Collyer, 2015).

towards Sub-Saharan migrants. Particularly, associating these migrants with social issues such as terrorism, AIDS, criminality, trafficking, and prostitution (Cherti, Collyer, 2015).

As the number of settled Sub-Saharan migrants grow in Morocco, these two cultural groups come to live closer in proximity. As written in Aliou Mehdi's essay *Transnational Migration: A Staged Migration. The Example of Sub-Saharan transmigrants Stopping over in Morocco*, Sub-Saharan migrants have fully integrated themselves into the urban fabric of Moroccan towns¹³, "particularly the area on the margins of the so-called legitimate town, transforming them by their presence. Somewhere, Moroccans have made room for them in spite of themselves" (Alioua, 2012). Within the migrants' negotiation of space during the stop-over period, new intercultural spaces are created through the interaction between dissimilar others.

Exposure to new cultures is brought upon by the intermingling and cohabitation of Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan host nationals. Yet, when people belonging to different cultural groups meet, a refusal to acknowledge each other's differences and cultural legitimacy can lead to misunderstanding and conflict. Therefore, it is important to treat intercultural communication as a method to explore cultural differences and communication patterns, as well as means for establishing mutual understanding and harmonious coexistence between intergroups (El haj, 2016). The intercultural spaces that are inevitably formed by the introduction of Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco cannot be ignored. Therefore, intercultural communication is necessary to develop mutual understanding and peaceful intergroup relations.

¹³ Speaking of working-class districts within Moroccan urban areas. (Alioua, 2012)

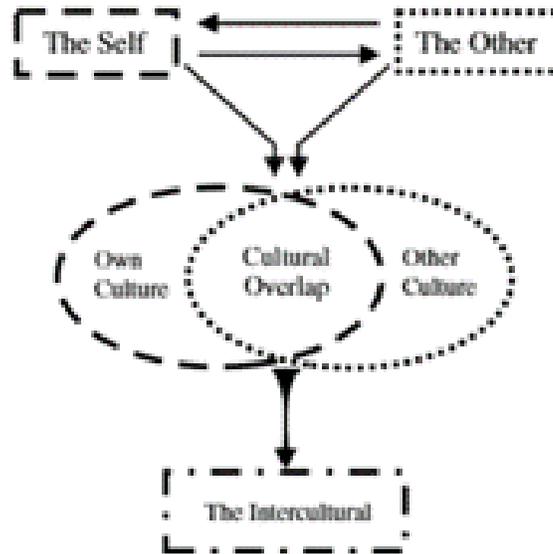


Figure 4: The dynamic in situations where cultural overlap occurs

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The figure above demonstrates how intercultural communication spaces creates a unique cultural overlap based on diverging cultural norms and practices between Moroccans and Sub-Saharanans. Within this overlap, ineffective intercultural communication has the potential to facilitate ambiguity, vagueness, and insecurity, traits that can be perceived as threatening by host nationals (Kinast, Schroll-Machl, Thomas, 2010). Overcoming this conflict can be difficult when different cultural systems are involved because the conflict itself can be perceived and experienced differently based upon one's cultural backgrounds. As the number of Sub-Saharanans in Moroccan communities increases, the potential for intergroup conflict has also grown. To prevent, resolve, and reconcile these intercultural conflicts, the intervention of a third party, neutral mediator is necessary. Mediators have the unique ability to reduce conflicts by uniting conflicting parties to reach attainable resolutions. However, intercultural mediators have the

¹⁴ (Kinast, Schroll-Machl, Thomas, 2010).

unique ability to facilitate mutual understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds.

Intercultural mediators are important as they act as bridge between cultural groups by effectively linking cultural differences, misunderstandings, and disagreements with communication-based conflict resolution models. By creating connections based in shared understandings of cultural differences, intercultural mediators solve issues related to communication barriers that derive from a lack of knowledge of the language and culture of the interlocutor (Sani, 2015). Between Moroccans and Sub-Saharanans, intercultural mediators can utilize processes of understandings, explaining, commenting, interpreting, and negotiation to analyze the fundamental values and behaviors of each cultural group. Mediators then transfer their cultural competency onto both Moroccan and Sub-Saharan populations by providing each group, who do not share the same cultural framework, with the means to understand the other cultural group's diversity. As ineffective interpersonal communication can derive from both parties (both Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan nationals), intercultural mediators must motivate both cultural groups to modify their perspectives of the other to facilitate intercultural competence.¹⁵

When Sub-Saharan migrants mobilize into Morocco, their very survival lies in their ability to be accepted by the local population. This includes cooperating with their Moroccan neighbors and reorganizing their diversity to adapt to Morocco social values and behaviors. The migratory experience requires considerable changes in the lives of Sub-Saharan migrants which stimulate feelings of dissociation and alienation— feelings intercultural mediation can alleviate.

¹⁵ For detailed definition of intercultural competence, refer to definitions page.

As migrants leave their countries of origin, willingly or forced, they must integrate into societies by embracing new ways of life, values, attitudes, and traditions. The psychological unease that develops within migrants upon the introduction of Moroccan society originates from “not knowing what to do in the new culture, and also the slow trend in which your once familiar lifestyle is gradually altered by new leaned ones” (El haj, 2016).

One solution a migrant may take to ease the constant relinquishing of their identification with their known culture to progress their identification with their new host culture is to distance themselves by limiting their socialization with host nationals. This is particularly true for lower skilled Sub-Saharan migrants who find it more difficult to effectively partake within intercultural spaces within society (El haj, 2016). However, this becomes a negative coping strategy as it limit’s one’s integration and well-being within society.

Another negative coping strategy when faced with routine discrimination is the “ensuing retaliation toward the perpetrating group” (Rubinfeld, Clement, 2012). However, this notion of revenge only has the capacity to further feelings of alienation and increase tensions with Moroccans. To remedy this, the responsibility of an intercultural mediator is to culturally orient migrants into their new society by equipping Sub-Saharan migrants with the tools and education needed to acquire culturally relevant social knowledge and skills to adapt to their new society. In addition, by facilitating the cultural orientation of Sub-Saharan values, behaviors, and norms onto Moroccan communities, intercultural mediators can also defend and preserve migrant identities from complete assimilation.

The participation of host nationals within mediation efforts is incredibly important because, like migrants, they too need to actively learn Sub-Saharan culture. In effect, intercultural mediation’s impact on host nationals does not simply only resolve their experiences

with intercultural miscommunication, but also inspires the development of shared understandings with the other (Liddicoat, 2015). In relation to the stereotypes Moroccans have towards Sub-Saharanans, the intercultural mediator has the capacity to correct false beliefs that prevent and limit one's willingness to coexist with Sub-Saharanans.

Intercultural mediators within civil organizations are very important as they bring together Moroccans and Sub-Saharanans into the same physical spaces. This process of space making includes exposing Moroccans to the cultural standards and heritage of Sub-Saharanans with the intent to equip host nationals with the background information necessary to engage in effective intercultural communication. This cultural orientation alters Moroccan perceptions towards treating Sub-Saharanans as strangers and prepares Moroccans for routine cooperation with Sub-Saharan migrants founded upon mutual respect and acknowledgement of the co-cultural group's legitimacy and identity.

For host nationals, intercultural mediation increases not only their understanding of the co-culture, but also their awareness of their own cultural identity. This aspect of mediation is crucial as it has the potential to prevent host nationals from exhibiting ethnocentric, prejudiced, and discriminative behavior. It is the exposure to diverse ways of life that make people aware of the uniqueness of one's own cultural norms and practices. For host nationals who belong to the majority group, characterized by high demographic representation, social status, and institutional support,¹⁶ their daily communication routines are often restricted to interaction with other members of the majority group. This routine interaction with those who share the same cultural

¹⁶ Rubinfeld, S., & Clément, R. (2012). Intercultural Conflict and Mediation: An Intergroup Perspective. *Language Learning*, 62(4), 1205-1230. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00723.x

norms spares host nationals from exposure to conflicting cultural norms and the misunderstandings that can arise.

Furthermore, human interaction is plagued by the habit of interpreting the cultural behaviors of co-cultural groups as if they belonged to your own culture (Radulescu, Mitrut). When faced with the diverging cultural identities of Sub-Saharanans, Moroccans may feel a sense of shock or increased otherness towards these migrants when it becomes evident they do not share the same cultural or social cues as Moroccans. Feelings of discomfort can arise within host nationals when exposure to Sub-Saharan migrants forces a break in their routine of constantly being surrounded by other culturally similar Moroccans. Intercultural mediation plays a significant role in penetrating these own-culture conditions of perspective, thought, and behaviors in order to facilitate awareness and respect towards other cultures. Breaching own-cultural conditions of acceptable and meaningful behavior allows cultural groups to accept another's cultural identity and behavior as equally sensible and legitimate.

Conducting interpersonal communication with a mindset corrupted by own-culture conditions also leads to the destructive development of ethnocentrism within host national perspectives. Operating under the assumption that manner in which your cultural framework orients behavior and values is the only way, the right way, undermines intercultural cooperation. Instead, the exposure to other cultures via intercultural mediation can decrease feelings of cultural superiority, dispel one's predisposed bias towards one's own culture, and teaches both host nationals and migrants how to be open minded towards other cultures, while being proud of one's own culture (El haj, 2016).

Methodology

To answer the question, understand to what extent civil organizations in Morocco have the capacity to act as intercultural mediators between Moroccan communities and Sub-Saharan migrant groups I used a variety of methodologies. I first conducted secondary research to formulate a literature review of Morocco's Sub-Saharan migration context and intercultural theory. Then to properly analyze intercultural mediation efforts within Morocco I conducted three separate case studies of civil organizations in Morocco that are involved in intercultural mediation. Specifically, Fondation Orient-Occident's intercultural language courses, Manos Solidarias' intercultural sensitivity workshops, and Association de La Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc's intercultural football tournament. To conduct these case studies I developed a literature review of secondary sources, then conducted a literature review of primary sources such as each civil organization's website and media, then interviewed staff members at each organization, and lastly, supplemented these staff member interviews with Sub-Saharan migrants when available.

Secondary Research/Literature Review

It was necessary to begin my research by conducting secondary research to formulate an intensive literature review that could come to address the intrinsic aspects of Morocco that have the potential to facilitate intercultural mediation between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans. This included analyzing how Morocco's unique positionality between Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East enables an increasing number of Sub-Saharans, with irregular or refugee status, to temporarily and permanently reside in Morocco. This was important to recognize as it granted me an understanding of how Sub-Saharan migrants negotiate space amidst mobility within intercultural spaces.

My literature review also included theory regarding how migration triggers intercultural communication, which I later connected to having the potential to create intercultural conflict on the bases of misunderstanding and prejudice. I also conducted a study of intercultural theory to demonstrate how intercultural mediation can be used to resolve the conflicts that derive from ineffective intercultural communication. Lastly, I applied this intercultural mediation theory direct to a Moroccan context to identify the specific ways intercultural mediation can benefit Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan nationals.

Primary Research/Literature Review

After identifying the three civil organizations I wanted to conduct case studies on, Fondation Orient-Occident, Manos Soldiarias, and Association de La Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc, I conducted primary research to gain a background understanding of each organization. By researching each organizations' websites and media I was able to understand the organizations' histories and methodologies for implementing intercultural mediation between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans.

Interviews with Civil Organization Staff Members

After establishing how intercultural mediation can be applied to the intercultural discourse that arises between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan nationals, it was necessary to revert to my guiding question of how civil organizations in Morocco can specifically act as intercultural mediators. After identifying the three organizations I wanted to do case studies on, I then came to identify one unique method each organization uses to facilitate intercultural mediation. This is how I came to focus on Fondation Orient Occident's intercultural language

courses, Manos Solidarias' intercultural sensitivity workshops, and Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc (DICOMA) intercultural football tournament.

Before my research began, I had already established previous contact with my first two case studies. I had previously toured their facilities and had in depth talks with staff members at Fondation Orient Occident in Rabat and Manos Solidarias in Tetouan during the months of September and October. However, I was fortunate to encounter the Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc during a conference of theirs that was located in Fondation Orient Occident's library on November 17th, 2018.

Due to time constraints and language barriers my interviews targeted any staff members within these three civil organizations that were available to speak with me during my visit to each organization. These interviews sought to understand the strategies and limitations of each organization's intercultural mediation efforts when attempting to bridge the gap between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccan nationals. All interviews were anonymous and conducted with verbal consent prior to the start of interview and was steered causally in order to allow interviewees to speak with ease and not feel limited by my interview questions.

I recorded each interview on a password protected recording application on my phone and stored each transcription within my google drive located in my password protected laptop. For interviews in which language was a barrier, I received the help of Raja Boursheg, a language student from Mohammed the Fifth university who spoke French, Arabic (Darija and Fus'ha), and English. Throughout these interviews I would request consent and ask my questions in English, and she would then translate in the appropriate language. For interviews where she translated, these interviews were recorded on her password protected recording application on her phone.

She would then transcribe the interviewee's answers in a Word document on her password protected laptop, which she would later send to me via email.

Following questions for civil organization staff members:

- Interview questions for What migrant group does your organization target?
- What strategies or programs does your civil organization use to act as a bridge between Moroccan communities and Migrant groups?ⁱ¹⁷
- How does your civil organization facilitate communication and cooperation between Moroccan nationals and Sub-Saharan migrants?
- How has your intercultural mediation efforts impacted Moroccan host community and migrant relationships, perceptions, and interactions?
 - a. How has your intercultural communication efforts impacted Moroccan community perceptions and interactions with Sub-Saharan migrants?
 - b. How has your intercultural mediation efforts impacted Sub-Saharan perceptions and interactions with Moroccan citizens?
- What is the importance of space when facilitating intercultural communication and cooperation between Moroccans and Sub-Saharans?
- How does intercultural communication dispel misconceptions and xenophobia?
- What limitation does your organization face when conducting intercultural mediation?
- What would you like to see improvement on in the future in regards to facilitating intercultural communication and mediation between cultural groups?
- *Specifically, for Association de la Diaspora Congolaise Au Maroc:*
 - a. What unique insights, methodologies, or limitations does your organization experience due to your unique position as migrant in Morocco?

Fondation Orient Occident

The findings from my Fondation Orient Occident case study comprised of a literature review, primary research on their website, and three separate interviews. I kept all interviews anonymous yet identified each staff member by their position title and gender. Over the course of multiple visits, I was able to secure three interviews. The first was with an English teacher that

¹⁷ Due to language barriers and the fact the Fondation Orient Occident and Association de la Diaspora Congolaise Au Maroc did not use the term intercultural mediation to describe their actions, I substituted the term intercultural mediator with the description of intercultural mediators as being "a bridge between Moroccan communities and Migrant groups"

taught the organizations advanced English class that consisted of mostly Sub-Saharan and Moroccan students. This woman was an American undergraduate student, so I was able to conduct and transcribe her interview in English. The second staff member I spoke to was a Orientation Administrator. She was Moroccan, yet I was able to conduct and transcribe my interview in English. Lastly, my third interview was with a receptionist who filled in the gaps wherever attention was needed throughout departments. He spoke French, therefore the interview needed to be translated and transcribed by my translator into English.

Manos Soldiarias

The findings from my Manos Soldiarias case study comprised of a literature review, two interviews, and one presentation I received during my first visit to Manos Solidarias. I kept all interviews anonymous yet identified each staff member by their position title and gender. I was only able to visit Tetouan twice to interview staff members. The first interview was with a Probono Lawyer on November 27th. This man was Moroccan and spoke in both French and Arabic throughout my interview. My translator's presence during this interview was fundamental to translating my interview questions into Arabic and transcribing the interviewee's responses into English. The second interview was with a Program Assistant and took place on December 3rd. He was Moroccan, yet I was able to conduct and transcribe my interview in English. Lastly, my final source came from a presentation I received from the President of Manos Solidarias during a September visit. The president spoke in Arabic and my Professor served as a translator during this presentation.

Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc

The findings from my Association de La Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc (DICOMA) case study comprised of a literature review, two interviews, one forum, and a video about their football tournament. I kept all interviews anonymous yet identified each staff member by their position title and gender. As DICOMA does not have a physical building, these interviews occurred at Fondation Orient Occident. My first source came from a DICOMA facilitated forum entitled *Forum Participatif sur la Citoyennete* on November 17th, 2018. Their speakers spoke French, so my translator was able to take notes on the Forum in Arabic and later transcribed them into English for me. Upon completion of this forum I had the opportunity to interview the President of DICOMA. This man was Congolese and spoke French. My translator's presence during this interview was fundamental to translating my interview questions into French and transcribing the interviewee's responses into English. The second interview was with DICOMA's Secetaire General took place on December 7th. He was Congolese, yet I was able to conduct my interview in English. Finally, I was able to acquire video footage of an interview with the DICOMA president that discussed the tournament they were holding between Moroccans and Sub-Saharanans. This video was in French, so my translator transcribed it into English.

Interviews with Sub-Saharan Migrants

After interviewing civil organizations' staff members, I was open to the possibility of conducting supplemental interviews with Sub-Saharan migrants who partake in these organizations' intercultural mediation efforts. However, due to time and language constraints I was only able to complete one at Fondation Orient Occident in Rabat on the November 18th, 2018. This interview was kept anonymous, yet I identified the interviewee by their country of origin and gender. As this Cameroonian man spoke French, my translator's presence during this

interview was fundamental to translating my request for consent and interview questions into French and transcribing the interviewee's responses into English. This interview was recorded on her password protected recording application on her phone. She then transcribed this interviewee's answers in a Word document on her password protected laptop, which she would then send me via email.

Following questions for civil organization staff members:

- How long have you been in Morocco?
- Where do you originate from?
- What is your relationship with Moroccan citizens like?
- What is your relationship with (Civil Organization Title)
- How has your participation in their intercultural mediation efforts impacted your relationships and interactions with Moroccan citizens and communities?
- What would you like to see improvement on in the future?

Findings

Fondation Orient-Occident

Fondation Orient-Occident is a Moroccan non-profit organization founded in 1994. While initially this organization sought to create a space for young underprivileged Moroccans, the large influx of migrants and refugees motivated the organization to expand its efforts through humanitarian programming for non-Moroccans. The organization places special emphasis on the integration of migrants and refugees into Moroccan society by providing “disadvantaged Moroccans, Sub-Saharan migrants, and refugees with the vocational training course, social and psychological support, but also a wide range of intercultural activities” (Interculturality, Fondation Orient-Occident).

Within the intercultural realm, Fondation Orient-Occident works to “consolidate a social and cultural connection between the Western and Eastern realities of the Mediterranean region, and thus aims at mediating and promoting a point of encounter between them (Interculturality, Fondation Orient-Occident). Regarding the specific intercultural relationship between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans, the Orientation Administrator stated, “we try to integrate Sub-Saharan migrants to facilitate communication between both Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans and try to present Sub-Saharans with the first encounter with Moroccan cultures, and Moroccans with the first encounter of Sub-Saharan cultures” (2018, December 7, Personal interview). The mutual exchange of cultural orientation creates a point of encounter between these two groups, and places mutual responsibility on both cultural groups to develop intercultural competency.

Within Fondation Orient-Occident's intercultural mission, they emphasize the link between social communication and cultural competency when facilitating mediation and creating intercultural spaces. On site, the organization's library becomes a neutral point of encounter between these two groups as it provides a space for the "sharing, learning, and enjoying of others. Maybe if people don't know each other, they can use the Arabic language, maybe French, maybe English, or maybe even gestures as a form of communication between one another and they can make friendship, meet here at the Fondation, and maybe even meet outside the Fondation" (2018, December 7, Personal interview). This statement expresses the Fondation's mentality that communication is the key to intercultural mediation. This also acknowledges that Fondation Orient-Occident is often a point of first encounters between different cultural groups. Their library provides a neutral intercultural space to facilitate intercultural connection, with the hope to expand out of Fondation Orient-Occident onto larger Moroccan society.

In considering the importance of language within intercultural encounters, linguistic differences hold a large impact on intergroup relations. Within verbal communication there is first a phonetic barrier that restricts people from engaging in intercultural communication with someone of a different native language. However, even amongst cultural groups who hold proficiency in the same language, such as some Sub-Saharanans who speak French like Moroccans, selecting the appropriate words and incorporating correct non-verbal communication can consciously and unconsciously hinder intercultural communication. This is due to the culturally specific significance of language in that "no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality" (Kinast, Schroll-Machl, Thomas, 2010). Therefore, how one perceives an encounter with another cultural group is heavily subjective to one's cultural disposition to the specific language. Within this context we can understand how

tensions between cultural groups occur in Morocco based on the misinterpretation that arises when Sub-Saharan migrants enter Morocco. Both with migrants who do not have competency in Arabic or French, or those who do but struggle to adhere to the local dialect of a their shared language with Moroccans.

Fondation Orient-Occident's intercultural language courses attempt to address the discourse that is brought upon by language. Within my interviews I learned that the biggest barrier Fondation Orient-Occident faces when facilitating intercultural dialogue is language. In order to remedy this, they provide language training for Sub-Saharans and Moroccans in which the organization tries to give "Sub-Saharans Arabic classes, Darija especially, to integrate in Morocco. While with Moroccans, we try to give them classes in French" (2018, December 7, Personal interview). Therefore, Fondation Orient-Occident not only treats language as a tool of thought and communication, but as a cultural aspect crucial to developing intercultural cooperation.

Fondation Orient Occident acts in accordance with the definition of an intercultural mediator as "a social agent who designs and puts in place devices that make it possible to restore meaning where meaning has broken off, namely, he or she provides the one who does not understand with the means to understand" (Rubenfeld, Clement, 2012). The Receptionist at Fondation Orient-Occident stated that they facilitate the integration of Sub-Saharans through "communication as it creates a main bridge to collect the both cultures, and as our means are simple, we were giving courses on foreign languages and inviting both parts (Moroccans and sub Saharan migrants) to join the sessions. (2018, December 7, Personal interview). Therefore, this organization treats intercultural mediation as a mutual effort between cultural groups.

The teacher of the Advanced English course describes her class as focusing “on the linguistic gaps between the different groups of people coming in” (2018, November 19, Personal interview). While an important aspect of these class is equipping students with the necessary English skills to communicate effectively between themselves and other English speakers, a more important outcome is that it brings both Sub-Saharan and Moroccans into a safe space to communicate with one another. While it is the shared goal of acquiring language proficiency that brings these two cultural groups together, simply occupying the same space becomes incredibly important as there aren’t many spaces outside of Fondation Orient-Occident to intimately communicate with one another.

The English teacher I spoke to suggested that in regard to facilitating intercultural cooperation, the language classes have a bigger impact on Moroccan populations because they experience a different reality to the one outside the Fondation Orient-Occident. Specifically, they become a minority within classroom settings predominantly occupied by Sub-Saharan migrants. Within group activities where students practice communication, the teacher notes that Sub-Saharan students utilize verbs to intrinsically talk about their experience in mobility and in Morocco. Therefore, “it is a learning experience for those Moroccans walking into an experience where things are switched and learning the stories of Sub-Saharan Moroccans and realizing there’s social issues that they haven’t been told or talked about directly, and they are surprised” (2018, November 19, Personal interview). In this sense, the English teachers at Fondation-Orient Occident act as intercultural mediators by facilitating neutral spaces for Sub-Saharan and Moroccan students to interact and learn from one another, both through linguistical acquisition and the exchange of narratives.

However, despite Fondation Orient-Occident's "ability to understand, explain, comment, interpret, and negotiate various phenomena in the target language culture" (Rubinfeld, Clément, R. (2012), they still experience limitations that restrict their capacity to act as intercultural mediators. An important barrier the reception noted was that there is a "negligence at that part and a sort of indifference, because the majority of Moroccan students had stopped carrying on the courses" (2018, December 7, Personal interview). This lack of participation in classes occurred because the organization recently added fees to these course in order to receive for funding for Fondation Orient-Occident's initiatives. The consequence of these language courses not being free anymore expands further than Moroccans not being able to encounter Sub-Saharan within a classroom setting, but also reinforces intercultural tensions as they feel they are being discriminated against for being Moroccans, while "refugees and migrants have the courses for free" (2018, December 7, Personal interview).

While Fondation Orient Occident is attempting to find a solution for this, they too experience a limitation from the lack of Moroccans willing to volunteer at the organization. This is reflected in the teacher's statement regarding how intercultural mediation at the organization would be improved if they had "more Moroccan volunteers here instead of having so many Americans and Germans, and people from other countries. This lack of Moroccan volunteers creates a cycle of instability and unsustainable intercultural mediation efforts in that these class need to be taught by people who live in Moroccan and can be here consistently and be a safe, stable person in these peoples' [Sub-Saharan and Moroccan students} lives" (2018, November 19, Personal interview).

Manos Solidarias is a Moroccan Non Governmental Organization founded on March 1st, 2010, as a social development association. Working out of the northern area of Morocco, their

main objective of the association is to improve the conditions of vulnerable and socially excluded people, and integrate them into the social, educational and economic fabric” (Présentation, Manos Solidarias. Socail issues between Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans based in a lack of cultural knowledge has detrimental effects on the harmonious coexistence among these cultural groups. As mentioned in my literature review, the lack of exposure to diversity creates xenophobia, prejudice, and ethnocentrism that reinforces the superiority of the dominant Moroccan national groups. By promoting Morocco’s intercultural sphere as enriching, as well as dispelling the treatment of Sub-Saharan migrants as strangers, Manos Solidarias “act as a bridge between migrants and Moroccans” (2018, December 3, Personal interview).

Because cultures differ radically from each other, human interaction develops along the lines of entirely different rules of conduct and regulations ((Kinast, Schroll-Machl, Thomas, 2010).). A lack of awareness towards these rules of conduct, as well as how to apply them, leads to inercultural miscommunications. Furthermore, when humans don’t know something, they don’t approach it, contributing to the development of fear of the other, prejudism, and ethnocentrism based in the own-cultural perceptions described in my literature review. However, mediators, by understanding the dynamic involved in mutually satisfying both cultural groups, have the ability to reduce these intercultural miscommunications that give way to tensions by developing a shared understanding among different cultural groups.

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Manos Solidarias acts as an intercultural mediator within their intercultural sensitivity training in Moroccan primary schools. These workshops facilitate open dialogues between migrants and young Moroccans students on migration and cultural diversity. Within this setting, a migrant is chosen by Manos Solidarias to facilitate open dialogue in which “migrants tell students about their journey, why they departed from their country, what was the problem, what are the causes of migration cycles, how did they cross the Sahara and different countries, what

are their aspirations, and if they feel Moroccan society has welcomed them or not” (2018, December 3, Personal interview). These dialogues seek to delegitimize the stereotypes and false images these student may have regarding Sub-Saharans, while also legitimizing the need for Moroccans to welcome them. Manos particularly hopes these workshops reinforce the notion within student perspectives “that migrants are a source of richness to country in terms of culture, economy, everything” (2018, December 3, Personal interview).

Beyond exposing Moroccan primary students to the push and pull factors that provide a context for understand the presence of Sub-Saharans in their communities, the mediation process in schools also includes exposing Moroccans to the cultural standards and heritage of Sub-Saharan migrants. For the Sub-Saharan dialogue facilitators, they become active participants in teaching Moroccans their culture. This facilitates a balanced negotiation of identity in which Sub-Saharans can building identifications with Moroccans, while not at the expense of their feelings of belonging and pride to their home culture. Alternatively, this cultural competency training can provide a background for when Moroccan students engage in intercultural communication with Sub-Saharans. Within Manos Solidarias intercultural mediation efforts, facilitating intercultural dialogue “prepares individuals for cooperation with dissimilar others, and creates opportunities to develop mutual respect and acknowledgment towards Sub-Saharan migrants (2018, December 3, Personal interview).

After each sensitizing workshop students are invited to draw their perceptions of migrants and how Moroccans should treat migrants. As a lack of direct exposure to Sub-Saharans leads susceptible children’s minds to have false images about strangers in generals, these workshops can change the way Moroccan students view Sub-Saharan migrants. This is incredibly important as Sub-Saharan migrants, in relation to being a minority group within Moroccan society, “are

often burdened by the diverse forms of accusations based on false assumptions and stereotypes that shock them affect their psychological state” (El haj, 2016).

As Intercultural mediators, Manos facilitates the creation of interpersonal space by treating “the pupil today, as the man of tomorrow” (2018, December 3, Personal interview). By focusing on the children, Manos Solidarias’ creates a generation of interculturally competent Moroccans that will “occupy space in society and be responsible for welcoming strangers into society” (2018, December 3, Personal interview). These workshops make Moroccan students see the shared humanity between peoples, despite differences in culture and citizenship. Yet it has the potential to surpass classroom settings as Moroccan students can pass on these empathetic new perspectives onto other members of society such as their friends, family, and neighbors. They in turn are creating a future group of mediators who can act as a bridge between their Moroccan peers and Sub-Saharan neighbors.

Manos Solidarias’ unique application of intercultural education in primary schools as means of encouraging intercultural competencies within Moroccan student populations confirms their role as a social agent¹⁸ of mediation. By designing sensitization workshops with primary students in mind, Manos Solidarias can restore cultural acceptance in situations where there is a lack of direct exposure to Sub-Saharan migrants. However, as part of Moroccan civil society they are dependent on government funding. This makes the sustainability of these workshops unpredictable in which Manos Solidarias can work on a “project that lasts one to two years, and one day the funding and the programs end.” The instability and even unsustainable aspects of

¹⁸ Reference to the intercultural mediation definition I use, a social agent who designs and puts in place devices that make it possible to restore meaning where meaning has broken off, namely, he or she provides the one who does not understand with the means to understand” (Rubenfeld, Clement, 2012)

these much-needed intercultural mediation workshops are inherently compromised by a lack of government funding.

Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc

In 2014, the Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc (DICOMA) launched its self on Facebook to help migrants after King Mohammed 6th sanctioned the government to extend equal rights onto Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. Compared to Fondation Orient-Occident and Manos Solidarias, this organization is unique as it is composed of Congolese migrants and seeks to facilitate effective intercultural encounters through a migrant perspective. The networking of Congolese migrants into a cohesive organizational unit demonstrates Sub-Saharan migrants' ability to negotiate space by forming a "collective to cope with adversity, organising themselves to work together because of the complementarity of their migratory projects (Alioua, 2012). Therefore, DICOMA acts as an intercultural mediator by their active participation within society in passing on cultural and administrative knowledge to both Sub-Saharan and Moroccans populations as a means to mobilize solidarity.

As a stopover country, Migrants are guaranteed to find other transmigrants that will help them negotiate space within Moroccan society. As migrant led organization, DICOMA utilizes their experience acquired knowledge, developed during each member's own experience in transit, to informally connect other Sub-Saharan migrants to Moroccan services and organizations. However, this also includes imparting the competency they developed regarding Moroccan culture onto newly arrived Sub-Saharan migrants, such as how to "to assimilate the way of moving from one place in the town to another and how to behave in these places by avoiding social control" (Alioua, 2012). In this sense, DICOMA provides trusted cultural

orientation onto Sub-Saharan migrants who have not yet learned to negotiate space within Moroccan society.

Their cultural orientation efforts also extend to when migrants begin to engage in intercultural encounters, in which DICOMA comes to identify itself as a “bridge between the Moroccan community and the Congolese people. By facilitating intercultural encounters through enjoyable activities such as organizing sports and arts competitions, DICOMA utilizes intercultural mediation as a “active engagement in diversity as a meaning making activity” (Alioua, 2012). DICOMA’s 2017 African cup was the organizations first effort to use sport to integrate young Moroccan football players with Sub-Saharan refugee football players. By setting up a football tournament where Sub-Saharan teams played Moroccan team’s healthy competition and a shared love of the sports allowed the two cultural groups to establish first encounters with one another and engage in intercultural cooperation with one another.

Within this framework DICOMA, as an intercultural mediator, caters to peoples’ passions and attractions, in this case football, to initiate initial intercultural contact with Moroccans in order to talk about deeper issues and values such as migrant rights and duties towards migrant populations” (2018, December 3, Personal interview). In this vein, the football tournament as an intercultural mediation tool provides DICOMA with a way to “create new connections, which did not exist before, between people or groups, from which both parties benefit” (Sani, 2015).

Furthermore, it also provides an opportunity for the preservation of migrant identity that is routinely relinquished in order to develop identification within Moroccan society. As the president of the organization states DICOMA is “showing off African people abilities and skills in this game, because we are having today some players who used to play with local teams in

their hometowns.” Therefore, by creating a space in which Sub-Saharan players can once again engage in an activity that was once routine and unique to their identity, these migrants will feel less alienated and disoriented within their new Moroccan society. Additionally, the focus on showing off African talent also acts to legitimize Sub-Saharan groups and talent within the eyes of Moroccans and ignite pride within Sub-Saharan populations.

DICOMA’s promotion of shared understanding between participants by building off shared interests creates empathy building within Sub-Saharan and Moroccan peoples. However, as a relatively new migrant organization, DICOMA is attempting to identify how to facilitate further intercultural encounters and mediation when there is a lack of cultural competency between the two groups. Especially as a migrant run organization, their work is hindered by the conflicting stereotypes both Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans hold towards one another. Language is identified as barrier as it “embodies the basic way people communicate, so our goal of integration gets much harder, and can give Africans culture shock” (2018, December 3, Personal interview). However, the most important barrier is that their source of funding comes from other organizations. Therefore, with limited funding they cannot progress their project to address these limitations.

Conclusion

By conducting concentrated case studies of Fondation Orient-Occident, Manos Solidarias, and Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc, I have come to understand that intercultural mediation in Morocco can occur in diverse and creative ways. As intercultural mediators with unique abilities to create intercultural encounters, civil organizations in Moroccan can take a transversal approach to facilitating intercultural competency and cooperation between these two cultural groups using a diverse range of activities projects, interventions, and initiatives.

As ineffective interpersonal communication demonstrates a lack of intercultural competency between cultural groups, both Sub-Saharan and Moroccan nationals need the help of intercultural mediators to modify their perspective of the other. Fondation Orient-Occident did this through facilitating classroom settings for both Moroccans and Sub-Saharan to acquire both language acquisition and an exchange of personal narratives. Manos Solidarias did this by working with local primary schools to facilitate open dialogue between Moroccan students and migrants through Sub-Saharan led discussion. Finally, Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc used a shared love of football to facilitate an intercultural soccer tournament to provide an opportunity for initial encounters and develop intercultural cooperation based in talent recognition and shared passion. Within these contexts, I learned that the capacity of Moroccan civil organizations to act as intercultural mediators is dependent on space making, equal participation by Moroccans and Sub-Saharan within mediation efforts, and funding.

Intercultural mediators provide a neutral setting in which they can facilitate first encounters between cultural groups, as well as ensuring that through social cohesion building,

migrant minority groups will obtain a safe space within their new society. At Fondation Orient-Occident the library in which classrooms are held provides a safe space for Moroccans and Sub-Saharanans to act and engage in intercultural cooperation, while obtaining the same goal of gaining language proficiency. In obtaining this goal, Moroccan and Sub-Saharanans can exchange narratives that decrease the notion of migrants as the other and build empathy and solidarity between the two groups. At Manos Solidarias, staff members collaborate with primary schools to treat local classrooms as mediation spaces. In doing so, they are able to create a neutral setting for students to receive their first intimate encounter with migrants, and for Sub-Saharanans to guide open dialogue between the two cultural groups. Lastly, despite Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc not having a physical office, they are able to utilize Fondation Orient-Occident's space and create spaces on the football field to facilitate a football tournament that brings cultural groups together. By catering to the cultural groups' shared love of football, they can facilitate first encounters between these two cultural groups, develop Sub-Saharan pride, and provide a platform for future meaningful dialogue on the treatment of migrants in Morocco.

Within these contexts it's interesting to note that the spaces these civil organizations facilitate within Moroccan society are not forced. Moroccans and Sub-Saharanans are not forced to unite into one space to facilitate cohesion. Instead, skills training, education, and entertaining activities provide opportunities for cultural groups to organically come together to communicate, learn, and cohabitate peacefully together. Furthermore, once mediators facilitate these spaces for future encounters, they do so with the intent to expand intercultural spaces within society. At Fondation Orient-Occident, staff members work to spread intercultural communication outside of their library. Manos Solidarias appeals to students as an attempt to create a culturally competent Moroccan generation who will one day come to change how Moroccan society

welcomes migrants. While DICOMA seeks to use football to create initial contact so that the two cultural groups can later engage in meaningful conversations about migrants' rights. Within this context, mediator space making begins as method to develop immediate contact between the two cultural groups, but can breach these initial contact zones to spread intercultural cohesion into larger Moroccan society.

Intercultural Mediators act as a neutral third party to facilitate encounters between different cultural groups, so that each group can develop the cultural competency and skills needed to peacefully live alongside each other. However, an unequal effort between cultural groups to facilitate social cohesion will undermine the success of these intercultural mediation efforts. At Fondation Orient-Occident a lack of Moroccan enrollment in language courses and a lack of Moroccan volunteers hinders the organization's ability to provide effective, sustainable mediation efforts. At Manos Solidarias, if primary schools did not agree to collaborate, and Sub-Saharanans did not agree to facilitate intercultural dialogue, then students would not be able to develop intercultural competencies. While at Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc, the willingness of both Moroccans and Sub-Saharanans to engage with one another within a football tournament is the only way Sub-Saharanans could develop positive relationships with many Moroccans.

Within the power dynamics of society, Sub-Saharan migrant groups are the culturally diverging minority group. However, Moroccans belong to the dominant group in that due to high demographics and cultural similarities, are routinely in contact with other Moroccans and don't necessarily need to go out of their way to develop encounters with Sub-Saharanans; let alone go out of their way to develop cultural competency towards this co-culture. Therefore, based on these case studies and my own analysis, out of the two cultural groups, Moroccan participation holds

the more influential role in facilitating social cohesion between the two. Without exposure to Sub-Saharan, Moroccans are more likely to engage in own-culture perspectives, hold false stereotypes towards Moroccans, and increase the alienation of already disoriented migrants. Therefore, as my case studies and other Moroccan civil organizations continue to expand their intercultural mediation efforts in the future, it is incredibly important that they keep these societal power dynamics in mind and attempt to develop innovative strategies that compel Moroccans to step out of their everyday routine and engage in effective, meaningful intercultural communications.

Lastly, civil organizations receive funding from the government and other donor organizations. However, this makes them susceptible to limited funding; usually at the detrimental sacrifice of important intercultural mediation opportunities. At Fondation-Orient Occident, a lack of funding forced the organization to begin making Moroccans pay for their language courses. This decreased Moroccan enrollment in the program and developed intercultural tensions in which Moroccans felt they were being discriminated against as Sub-Saharan migrants did not have to pay. At Manos Solidarias, programs are heavily dependent on funding. Therefore, the government's decrease or complete halt in funding will result in intercultural mediation efforts, such as sensitivity workshops, to end despite positive social impact on communities. While at Association de la Diaspora Congolaise au Maroc, limited funding has resulted in them not being able to develop the mediation programs necessary to fulfilling cultural competency through a migrant perspective. This indicates that as mediation in Morocco moves forward, the government and other international donors need to place a lot more importance on the role of intercultural mediation in facilitating social cohesion between

Moroccan nationals and Sub-Saharan. Without increased government attention and budget dedications, then intercultural mediation within civil sectors will continue to be limited.

Limitations of Study

My research was limited by a language barrier that impacted the interviews I conducted and determined who I could even interview. During my interview at each organization, my translator was incredibly important. However, as my questions and my interviewee's answers underwent many levels of translation, the quotations I cite in this essay may be vulnerable to translation bias leading to slight differentiations from what my interviewees said exactly. As for the interviews where my questions were translated into the appropriate language of my interviewee, I did not immediately know my interviewee's response until my translator emailed me the transcribed document. Therefore, during my interviews I could not ask the necessary follow up questions needed to further investigate like I would if I conducted the interview in English.

My interviews were also inevitably impacted by the fact that I am an American and an outsider to each organization. Numerous times It was expressed to me that they had allowed me to interview them because I was a student researcher and repeatedly spent time within each organization. However, it is possible that staff members were reluctant at times to grant me the full picture or answer some of my questions directly. The limited time I had to conduct these interviews, compounded by language barriers, also impacted the number of interviews I could receive. For a more comprehensive study of the capacity of civil organizations in Morocco to act as intercultural mediators, I would need to obtain many more interviews from staff members at each organization, as well as more interviews with the Sub-Saharan migrants and Moroccans that partake in these mediation efforts.

Recommendations for Further Study

To create a more comprehensive study that answers the question *to what extent do civil organizations in Morocco have the capacity to act as intercultural mediators between Moroccan communities and Sub-Saharan migrant group*, I would attempt to develop a single definition of intercultural mediation based on how civil organizations conceptualize intercultural mediation. While conducting my research, initially only Manos Solidarias used the specific word intercultural mediation to define their actions, while my other case studies described how their actions bridged the two communities. Therefore, I believe a shortcoming of this research is the very limited information on how civil organizations even come to personally conceptualize intercultural mediation within their organizational context, and how it relates to intercultural conflict in Morocco as a whole.

I would also conduct research on the administrative side of intercultural mediation within a Moroccan setting. I would like to understand the specific role the government and international organizations play as policy makers and donors in creating a climate in Morocco for intercultural mediation to exist and prosper. As explained to me by advisers and the organizations in my case studies, there is very limited research and information on intercultural mediation in Morocco. As it is very new, it is important to conduct further research on how state and international interests can limit or facilitate intercultural mediation in Morocco.

Lastly, my treatment of Sub-Saharan migrants as a collective unit is inherently problematic as Sub-Saharan Africa is occupied by incredibly culturally diverse countries. To treat them as a collective unit ignores how migrants from different Sub-Saharan countries communicate interculturally with Moroccans. A Muslim migrant engages in intercultural

communication differently than a Christian migrant would, same goes for the disparity in experience between French and English-speaking migrants. Therefore, its necessary that I conduct future study on the specific cultural behavior and norms found within different Sub-Saharan countries, how that might create intercultural tensions, and how mediation can specifically work to resolve this .

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Appendices

A. Interviews Questionnaire for NGO Staff

- What migrant group does your organization target?
- What strategies or programs does your NGO use to act as a bridge between Moroccan communities and Migrant groups?ⁱⁱ¹⁹
- How does your NGO facilitate communication and cooperation between Moroccan nationals and Sub-Saharan migrants?
- How has your intercultural mediation efforts impacted Moroccan host community and migrant relationships, perceptions, and interactions?
 - a. How has your intercultural communication efforts impacted Moroccan community perceptions and interactions with Sub-Saharan migrants?
 - b. How has your intercultural mediation efforts impacted Sub-Saharan perceptions and interactions with Moroccan citizens?
- What is the importance of space when facilitating intercultural communication and cooperation between Moroccans and Sub-Saharans?
- How does intercultural communication dispel misconceptions and xenophobia?
- What limitation does your organization face when conducting intercultural mediation?
- What would you like to see improvement on in the future in regards to facilitating intercultural communication and mediation between cultural groups?
- *Specifically, for Association de la Diaspora Congolaise Au Maroc:*

¹⁹ Due to language barriers and the fact the Manos Solidarias and Association de la Diaspora Congolaise Au Maroc did not use the term intercultural mediation to describe their actions, I substituted the term intercultural mediation with the description of intercultural mediators within a Moroccan context as “a bridge between Moroccan communities and Migrant groups”

- a. What unique insights, methodologies, or limitations does your organization experience due to your unique position as migrant in Morocco?

A. Interview Questionnaire for Sub-Saharan Migrants

- How long have you been in Morocco? What is your country of origin?
- What is your relationship with Moroccan citizens like?
- What is your relationship with (NGO TITLE)?
- What services to you receive from them?
- How has your participation in their intercultural mediation efforts impacted your relationships and interactions with Moroccan citizens and communities?
- What would you like to see improvement on in the future?

A. Ethics Statement for NGO Staff Members²⁰

Name of Study: *Morocco: The Intersections Between Intercultural Mediation and Migration*

Principal Investigator: Arianna Diaz

Hello,

You are invited to participate in my research project. I am a Latina American student from the University of Connecticut in my final semester of my Undergraduate studies. I double major in Global Studies and English, as well as double minor in Human Rights and Middle Eastern Studies. I am currently in Morocco studying Arabic and Migration with the American School of International Training (SIT). I am conducting this study and compiling the results into

²⁰ I received Oral consent to conduct and record interviews.

a research paper as part of my Independent Research Project within SIT's Morocco: Migration and Transnational Identities Fall 2018 semester program.

The purpose of this study is to understand *to what extent do Moroccan civil organizations have the capacity to act as intercultural mediators between Moroccan communities and migrant groups?* This requires that I address NGO's intercultural mediation efforts as it pertains to the three different types of migrant flows within Morocco: refugee, unaccompanied Moroccan minors to Europe, and undocumented. Your participation in this research will grant me a better understanding of how NGOs act as a bridge between Moroccan host communities and migrant groups. It is important that you understand what topics this research will focus on, and that you should feel comfortable to ask the interviewer any questions throughout the study at any time.

Participation in the study is voluntary, you may refuse to participate, refuse to answer my questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no consequence. Any information collected about you or from you during this study will be kept confidential and will not be repeated. If the results of this study are published, your name will not be used and no information that identifies you will be released. Your research records will be secured in my password locked laptop and cellphone within a password locked file. Upon request I will give you a copy of the interview and research publication.

Best,

Arianna Diaz

A. Ethics Statement for Migrants²¹

²¹ I received oral consent to conduct and record interviews with Sub-Saharan migrants.

Name of Study: *Morocco: The Intersections Between Intercultural Mediation and Migration*

Principal Investigator: Arianna Diaz

Hello,

You are invited to participate in my research project. I am a Latina American student from the University of Connecticut in my final semester of my Undergraduate studies. I double major in Global Studies and English, as well as double minor in Human Rights and Middle Eastern Studies. I am currently in Morocco studying Arabic and Migration with the American School of International Training (SIT). I am conducting this study and compiling the results into a research paper as part of my Independent Research Project within SIT's Morocco: Migration and Transnational Identities Fall 2018 semester program.

The purpose of this study is to understand: *To what extent do Moroccan civil organizations have the capacity to act as intercultural mediators between Moroccan communities and migrant groups?* This requires that I address NGO's intercultural mediation efforts as it pertains to the three different types of migrant flows within Morocco: refugee, unaccompanied Moroccan minors to Europe, and undocumented. Granted your involvement and experience within **(insert NGO's title)** intercultural mediation efforts, your participation in this research will grant me a better understanding of how NGOs act as a bridge between Moroccan host communities and migrant groups. It is important that you understand what topics this research will focus on, and that you should feel comfortable to ask the interviewer any questions throughout the study at any time.

Participation in the study is voluntary, you may refuse to participate, refuse to answer my questions, or withdraw from the study at any time with no consequence. Any information

collected about you or from you during this study will be kept confidential and will not be repeated. If the results of this study are published, your name will not be used and no information that identifies you will be released. Your research records will be secured in my password locked laptop and cellphone within a password locked file. Upon request I will give you a copy of the interview and research publication.

Best,

Arianna Diaz
