Shifting Relations: How Spain and Morocco’s Bilateral Relationship Affects Violence at the Border

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Shifting Relations: How Spain and Morocco’s Bilateral Relationship Affects Violence at the Border

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisors, Dr. Et-tibari Bouasla and Dr. Souad Eddouada, for their guidance throughout my project. Dr. Bouasla was central in focusing my interest, and Dr. Eddouada was of great help in guiding me through the research process. Also, I would like to thank the School for International Learning (SIT), if not for its experiential learning curriculum, I would have never discovered my interest in border relations and migrant rights. Lastly, I would like to thank my Colgate University Advisors, Professor Valerie Morkevicius and Professor Megan Abbas, for encouraging me to study abroad in Morocco.

Abstract

Morocco is a key transit country for many migrants trying to reach Europe, due to its shared land border with Spain, and Spain’s initiation into the European Union in 1986. Through informal interviews, current literature, Moroccan and Spanish news articles, and migrants’ stories, it can be seen that the changing bilateral relationship between Spain and Morocco creates violence at the border. Spain and Morocco’s unequal relationship is built upon economic dependency and colonialization. Spain wants to control Ceuta and Melilla border, the physical representation of “othering,” to cling to its “superior” identity, while Morocco hopes to further develop its economy and fight colonialism, using migration as a political leverage against Spain. When there is a cooperation between the two states, uncontrolled violence occurs at the border. The connection between this bilateral relationship and migrant suffering can be analyzed with game theory, specifically the Stag Hunt. While Morocco is challenging Western hegemony in this supposedly post-colonial world, it is doing so in an unethical way.
Introduction

The word “migrant” is an umbrella term; it reflects the common understanding of a person who moves away from their original residence for a variety of reasons. Although irregular migration, or undocumented migration, does not have a universal definition, it is commonly thought of as migration that exists outside of the law. There are currently 281 million migrants in the world, which is 3.6% of the world's population.\(^1\) Morocco has a long history of migration and is considered a key transit and destination country for many sub-Saharan migrants today. Morocco’s economy relies heavily on its citizens abroad as well as migrants residing in Morocco with hopes of crossing to Europe.\(^2\) On the other hand, Europe, specifically Spain, relies on migrant labor and Moroccan border security\(^3\). Although Spain and Morocco are dependent on migration, both Moroccan and sub-Saharan migrants face exploitation and violence from these states, thus raising the question of how migrants are regarded as political and economic pawns, rather than human beings.

Through my research, I will attempt to better understand how the bilateral relationship between Spain and Morocco creates violence at their shared border. Specifically, I want to explore the question: how do Spain and Morocco’s bilateral relationship, past and present experiences with colonization, and political strategy create uncontrolled violence at their shared border?\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Salma Samri (October 18, 2022).


border? While migration is not a new global issue, I am curious if there is a shift in how migration is used by states on the world stage. I believe that by focusing on Spain and Morocco’s multidimensional relationship and connecting it to game theory, I am able to better analyze the existence of a possible shift in this post-colonial world. In addition, because Morocco and Spain share a land border, their relationship can be seen in the chaos of the border. In other words, the border can be understood as the physical structure that represents the complexities of their relationship. My initial hypothesis argues that the bilateral relationship between Spain and Morocco has remnants of a colonial power structure; however, Morocco is gaining power in the relationship through its use of migration as a bargaining tool. While at the same time, Spain is also using migration to gain funding from the European Union, creating little incentive to stop the violence at the border. I believe this topic is important because migrant suffering will continue until people recognize how state relations can cause violence and exploitation of migrants. In addition, this issue raises the question of how a post-colonial state’s strategy in increasing its power and autonomy is important for the county’s development yet can be unethical.

My topic aligns with SIT’s mission to “[educate] future scholars and professionals in diverse settings to address the most critical global issues in pursuit of a more sustainable, peaceful, and just world.” Migration is one of the most critical global issues of the 21st century, and I am researching the violence state relations cause in the hopes that it will provide some justice for migrants who have suffered from Spain or Morocco. In addition, I am a part of the SIT Migration and Transnational Identity program, and my topic examines how both migration and transnational identity are key parts of this bilateral relationship.

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As an undergraduate student majoring in International Relations, with a double minor in Economics, and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, I believe this research topic will be of great relevance to my studies. Because I study multiple fields and receive a liberal arts education at Colgate University, I believe I have the skills needed to research this multidimensional topic, and my varied interests align well with this specific topic. Also, due to the site visits and lectures with SIT prior to the research period, I feel I am well prepared to examine information on this subject. While I did not have a vast interest in migration prior to SIT, I am now fascinated by how this issue transcends multiple fields of study.

My research and findings on this topic will rely on academic journals, policy briefs, news articles, and previous discussions with irregular migrants and NGOs in Morocco. There have been many studies regarding the relationship between the European Union and North Africa and the reasons why sub-Saharan migrants leave their countries of origin. Also, there are some claims that there is a shift in King Mohammed VI's migration stance, but they do not connect this change to the bilateral relationship between Spain and Morocco and colonialism. Lastly, there is limited literature on how bilateral state relations affect vulnerable groups at the individual level. It is important to look at how political strategy waged by states affects groups that do not have a platform to create positive change.

I was inspired to write about this research topic due to my interaction with an undocumented migrant from Nigeria, “P”, with the Manos Solidarias NGO in Tetuan. During my small group meeting with her, she was clearly not feeling well, but she was determined to be there and share her story. She was the first person to give me insight into how migration is used as political leverage. She talked about how when she went to primary school in Nigeria, she would make copies of her notes or stories by hand to share with other kids, who did not have the
same opportunity to go to school. At the end of our meeting, I asked if there was anything I
could do for her. She asked that I do my research, make copies of my work, and share it with
others so that people can learn about the struggles she and other migrants face at the hands of
international politics.

**Literature Review**

To understand the subject matter of my research question, it is imperative to consider
relevant literature pertaining to “othering.” The notion of othering, as Frances Berenson explains
in *Hegel on Others and the Self*, is known to be rooted in Hegel’s thinking, specifically in his
work *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Hegel explains that self-knowledge is not possible solely
through introspection of the “single self.”\(^5\) Hegel finds that the mind is determined to define the
“I” or self, and this self-consciousness is what makes the mind absolute. In *The Phenomenology
of Mind*, Hegel states, “It is known that what is thought, is, and what is, only is in so far as it is a
thought.”\(^6\) In other words, what is thought about the Other, the Other then becomes. Hegel
illustrates his theory with a discussion of the Master-Slave relationship. First, each person tries to
assert their own consciousness at the risk of destroying the other person’s consciousness and
their own existence. Hegel expresses that self-consciousness is more easily sustained in a strict
Master-Slave relationship. The Master fights for his self-consciousness, by denying the Slave’s
self-consciousness, making the Slave less than a person, but rather an Other.\(^7\) Lajos L. Brons
adds to this dialogue about the Other, in *Othering, an Analysis*. He defines othering as “the
construction and identification of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual,

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\(^6\) ibid
\(^7\) ibid
unequal opposition by attributing relative inferiority… to the other.”

He finds that there are two kinds of othering, “crude” and “sophisticated.”

“Crude” othering “is merely self-other distantiating,”

while “sophisticated” othering is closer to Hegel’s theory, and “partially depends on self-other identification.”

Brons stresses that “sophisticated” othering attributes relative inferiority, and is not like a “mirror” as Hegel's theory states. Throughout my paper, when I am discussing othering, I am often using the “crude” othering defined by Brons. Lastly, it is important to recognize the relationship between othering and exclusion. In Othering: Toward an Understanding of Difference, Mary Canales explains that othering can be seen as two processes: exclusionary and inclusionary. Although this article’s research is focused on the teaching practices of doctorally prepared Latina nursing faculty, it brings a more broad and more realistic idea of exclusion and othering. Exclusionary othering is the use of power within a relationship “for domination and subordination,”

while inclusionary othering is the use of power within a relationship for transformation and coalition building.

Throughout my paper, when discussing othering and exclusion, I am using Canales's idea of exclusionary othering.

The notion of othering is important in that it is a key pillar of European identity. In The external constitution of European identity: Russia and Turkey as Europe-makers, the authors, Morozov and Rumelili, express that the Other plays a role in identity politics, and the European identity depends on the Other. The authors also recognize that in the “interactive process of negotiation between the European Self and its external Others…” [the] agency of the Other is

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9 ibid
10 ibid
11 ibid
13 ibid
revealed.” In other words, European identity is constructed by its interaction with the Other, but in this interaction, the Other’s autonomy must also be acknowledged in how it challenges European authority. The authors use the interaction of Turkey and Russia and the EU to demonstrate this\textsuperscript{15}. In a similar manner, Gul Pinar Erkem focuses on EU-Turkey relations to demonstrate the idea of the Other and European identity in \textit{Identity Construction of Europe by Othering: A Case Study of Turkey and the EU Relations from a Cultural Perspective}. He states that “The other is created by the self to help and strengthen the construction and acceptance of the new identity of the self,”\textsuperscript{16} following Bron and Hegel’s idea of othering. However, he adds that “the self and the other are abstract concepts of construct,” thus they “are open to change,” usually by “ideology, power structures and religion.”\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, while European identity relies on othering, this inequality in the relationship between the “self,” Europe, and the Other can be challenged and changed.

Another key aspect of my research question is colonialism. In “A Definition of Colonialism,” Ronald J. Horvath defines colonialism as a “form of intergroup domination in which settlers in significant number migrate permanently to the colony from the colonizing power.”\textsuperscript{18} On the other hand, Martin and Cohen, in “Late Capitalism” and Race and Neo-colonial Domination: Discontinuities in Marxist Theory find that “Colonialism denotes a relationship of domination and, like other forms of oppression, it is a structural system of

\textsuperscript{15} ibid
\textsuperscript{17} ibid
hierarchically ordered and ranked relationships between at least two parties,” focusing on the relationship between states, rather than the physical act of colonization. Lastly, Ocheni and Nwankwo, in *Analysis of Colonialism and Its Impact in Africa*, define colonialism as “the direct and overall domination of one country by another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power.” They go on to say that the “first objective of colonialism is political domination [and the] second objective is to make possible the exploitation of the colonized country.” Ocheni and Nwankwo explain how the industrial revolution and with it “the need for raw materials led to the colonization of Africa,” and the impact of colonization on Africa. They cite colonialism as the cause for the “under-development of African territories,” and the “disarticulation of their economy.” They conclude that colonialism made Africa’s economy and political structures dependent on its colonizers, Europe. Although Ocheni and Nwankwo often generalize Africa, their work is key in understanding the effects of colonialism on Morocco.

Throughout my project, I refer to the dynamic between Spain and Morocco like a chess game, with migrants as the pawns, thus I thought it crucial to connect my research question to international relations game theory. Anatol Rapoport discusses, in *Game Theory*, one of the most commonly known games, Prisoner’s Dilemma. The game is often illustrated with the anecdote of two men caught for burglary and not allowed to talk with one another. Rapoport explains that “If both confess, both will be convicted of burglary and sentenced to two years in prison. If neither confesses, they will be convicted of possession of stolen goods and given a six-month prison

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21 ibid

22 ibid

23 ibid
Matrix I
Prisoner B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confess</th>
<th>Don’t Confess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2years,-2years</td>
<td>0years,-5years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-5years,0years</td>
<td>-6months,-6months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, if only one confesses, he will be let go, while the other will be given a five-year sentence. Therefore, the dominant strategy is to confess. Matrix I illustrates the Prisoner’s Dilemma. If there are more than two “players,” the game then becomes the Tragedy of Commons. It is explained that each farmer wants to add a cow to his herd to then graze on the collective pasture. Nevertheless, if each farmer adds a cow, the land will be overgrazed, and everyone will be put at a disadvantage. Lastly, there is the Stag Hunt. In *The Stag Hunt and the Evolution of Social Structure*, Brian Skyrms explains that this game came from a story told by Rousseau in *A discourse on Inequality*: “If it was a matter of hunting a deer, everyone well realized that he must remain faithful to his post; but if a hare happened to pass within reach of one of them, we cannot doubt that he would have gone off in pursuit of it without scruple.” The hunters have the choice of hunting only a hare or a stag. A hunter can get a hare without the help of others, but to get a stag the hunters must work together. Skyrms discusses how the Stag Hunt is different from the Prisoner's Dilemma. In the Prisoner's Dilemma, “each is choosing less rather than more,” whereas in the Stag Hunt, “what is rational for one player to choose depends on his beliefs about

25 ibid
27 ibid
what the other will choose.” There is a need for trust in the Stag Hunt. Matrix II demonstrates the worth of the stag and hare, and how the game can play out. Skyrms then analyzes the theory when there are repeated games, as Hume and Hobbes have deciphered it. In this, the “Foole has the strategy of always defecting,” hunting a hare, and the other player will retaliate, known as the “Trigger strategy,” by not cooperating again. These three games, as described above, are variable sum games, not zero-sum games because the players can collectively gain or lose something depending on the other player’s decision. These games can be used to help simplify the relationship between Spain and Morocco and their political strategies.

**Methodology**

Originally, I had hoped for my project to consist of observational research, interviews, and research into existing literature and policy reports. While my project was always going to be more literature-focused, I wanted to provide more current knowledge with interviews with undocumented migrants. I lived in Tangier throughout the research period with the intention of easily traveling to Tetaun or closer to the Ceuta enclave. Nevertheless, I realized, before the beginning of the research period, that interviews with undocumented migrants were unfeasible.
due to a possible language barrier and their vulnerable position as undocumented. I believe I did not have enough time to provide safe and ethical interviews that would not risk their safety. However, thanks to SIT’s experiential learning curriculum, prior to starting my project, I, fortunately, had the privilege of visiting NGOs working with irregular migrants, such as Manos Solidarias. Until meeting with my SIT academic advisor, Dr. Bouasla, I did not realize that during these visits I conducted informal interviews and observational research. While these interviews have become a key piece in developing my research question and my project, I did not know my topic at the time of these interviews. Therefore, I was unable to obtain more specific information in regards to my project.

These informal interviews were conducted in small groups, in the form of a two-hour conversation between SIT students and undocumented migrants with Manos Solidarias, in Tetuan. I was first taught about the struggles of these sub-Saharan migrants at the border by MB’s hour lecture prior to the small group conversation. My small group consisted of about ten SIT students, including myself, and three undocumented sub-Saharan migrants, two spoke English and one spoke French. At the beginning of the conversation, everyone introduced themselves to create a more relaxed environment. I did not have prepared questions, but I asked follow-up questions as they explained their experiences coming to Morocco, living in Morocco, and attempting to cross the border to Spain. My questions were broad.
and allowed the interviewees to talk freely, allowing me to ask more follow-up questions. Also, I used a range of probes and other techniques to achieve a depth of answers in terms of exploration and explanation, such as asking “why” follow-up questions. Lastly, I often asked discussion mapping questions, to obtain better clarification, either when there was confusion due to language translation or when a complex idea arose. Although my classmates and I continually asked if they were comfortable with answering our questions, they exclaimed that they came to the meeting so that we could learn, and they were willing to answer every question. I was able to listen to “Z”, a nineteen-year-old, and “P”, a Nigerian woman, both undocumented migrants living in Morocco. These informal interviews were instrumental in my project because they discussed how Morocco actually benefits from migrants. Also, “Z”’s stories of trying to cross the border provided me with a personal perspective of the violence at the border today. Lastly, these informal interviews showcased these migrants’ resiliency which can not be seen in academic literature. Also, thanks to SIT, the day following these discussions, I was able to walk to the Ceuta border, where I was able to personally witness the border security, the daunting fence, and the border security trucks all along the mountain range. During this trip to the border, I was merely observing, but my classmate, “DM”, was able to talk with a Moroccan border officer in French. During the research period, I talked with “DM” about this encounter, and she was able to provide me with a summary of what he said along with direct quotes.

During the research period, I spent most of my days reading any relevant literature I could find. I started researching the foundation of Spain and Morocco’s relationship, such as Moroccan migrants in Spain and colonization. From there I examined how their relationship operates today, looking at money transfers, EU policy regarding Morocco, current academic literature, government officials’ speeches, and news reports. After I had formed the context of
my project, I began to focus on the micro-level, or the individual level, to understand how this relationship affects people. I found migrants’ stories, ranging from farmers to sex workers in Spain, and sub-Saharan migrants living in the forest near the Ceuta waiting to cross the border. Lastly, I analyzed the Moroccan and Spanish media to see how they interact with one another through media. While I was reading news articles, I realized I could easily match dates of border atrocities with meetings of Spain and Moroccan officials and other important political events. I continued to see how changes in the permeability of the borders, seen through an increase or decrease of violence, directly related to the politics at the time between Spain and Morocco.

Limitations

As previously stated, one limitation was the lack of formal interviews. Also, because I am just a student and only had one month for research, I was unable to witness how undocumented migrants are being arrested in Tetuan and sent to Casablanca by Moroccan Police, as “P” had explained to me briefly. Therefore, I did not put as much focus on how Morocco treats migrants within its borders as I had intended to.

Though abstract, I have realized one limitation I faced was my inability to fully comprehend the struggles of migrants. Due to my privilege as an American citizen, I have great mobility with my passport. Throughout my interaction with the Moroccan family I lived with, and meeting sub-Saharan migrants at local NGOs, I began to understand the constraint on their mobility due to their nationality and status. Therefore, while I write about migration, I must state that my work comes from a privileged perspective.

As an International Relations major at an American university, most of my studies have centered around American foreign policy; therefore a bulk of my research time was spent filling
in the gaps in my education about European and Northern African policy and relations, limiting my time researching my specific topic.

**Body**

A foundational piece in the relationship between Spain and Morocco is their economic reliance on one another, partially fulfilled by Moroccan migrants in Spain, demonstrating how these countries' economies and people are intertwined. The bilateral relationship between Spain and Morocco is partly an economically forced relationship.

Since approximately 1985, Spain has witnessed “[r]ising prosperity, an aging population, and growing labor shortages,” thus “[triggering] a demand for foreign labor.”\[^{31}\] Also, native workers' unwillingness to perform “menial tasks” or “accept low wages and poor working conditions” has added to this demand for foreign labor, specifically in construction and domestic services.\[^{32}\] Corkill, in *Economic Migrants and the Labour Market in Spain and Portugal*, notes that for Spain to maintain its economy, at the time of 2001, “some 300,000 immigrants would be required annually, bringing the accumulated total to some 15 million immigrants during the next half-century.”\[^{33}\] Spain is reliant on foreign labor, and Morocco is there to provide. In October 1999, an agreement was made, allowing “imported Moroccan labor to be employed on temporary contracts.”\[^{34}\] From this agreement, not only did Morocco obtain development aid, but also the possibility of receiving remittances from its citizens abroad, demonstrating how Morocco also gained economically from its citizens' labor in Spain. In 2000, Moroccans were the largest non-EU contingent in Spain; 194,000 Moroccans lived in Spain, not including illegal


\[^{32}\] ibid

\[^{33}\] ibid

\[^{34}\] ibid
residences. To put it into perspective, the second largest contingent was the Chinese, with 30,958 legal residents. Although Spain relies on Moroccan labor, “Moroccan migrants suffer from the negative image of centuries old fears of ‘the moors’ and the cultural, linguistic, and religious differentiation.” Also, Latin American migrants are more favored in the regularization process than Moroccans. For example, for the regularization process in 2000, 80% of Latin Americans’ requests were approved, while only 52% were approved for Moroccans.

Morocco has a long tradition of migration and reliance on remittances. Spain was not the original destination country for many Moroccans. However, Spain's rising prosperity and its “traditionally liberal immigration regimes” were pull factors for many migrants. More importantly, the influx of Moroccan migrants during the 1990s was sparked by France expelling Moroccan workers. With France no longer an option, Spain became the destination for many. In addition, Spain was a destination for many due to its “historical and economic bonds” with Morocco. In 2004, 3 million, out of a population of 30 million, Moroccan citizens lived abroad, in Spain 424,000. In 2006, “Moroccans living in Spain represent 20.4% of the total of Moroccan immigrants in the EU.” Also in 2004, Morocco received $4.2 billion in official remittances; 6.4% of its GNP over the 1990s on average, and 20.1% of all imports in the goods and services were remittances. In 2001, it was estimated that 1.17 million Moroccans would fall

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35 ibid
36 ibid
37 ibid
38 ibid
39 ibid
into “absolute poverty without remittances.” In other words, the poverty line would rise from 19% to 23.2% without remittances. In 2000, migrants from Spain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Italy sent an average of 10,740 Moroccan dirhams per year to Morocco. These households receiving remittances “do not indulge in conspicuous consumption,” but instead, they often invest in the local economy. Migration and remittances have “improved living conditions, income, education and spurred economic activity through agricultural, real estate and business investment, from which non-migrants indirectly profit.” Migrant-sending regions and Morocco as a whole have been transformed due to its migrants and citizens abroad. One can easily see that Morocco’s economy relies on its migrants and citizens abroad, and thus it also relies on the economies, or labor markets, of the destination countries, such as Spain. Also, these remittances are more stable than most think. In other words, migrants continue to send remittances even if they are 2nd or 3rd generation, demonstrating the strong connection Moroccan citizens abroad continue to have with Morocco. These Moroccan migrants and citizens abroad living in Spain are the personal embodiment of the interconnectedness of Spain and Morocco.

Another pillar of the bilateral relationship is past and present colonization and how the remnants today affect the equality in this relationship. While the economic relationship between Spain and Morocco was out of mutual economic necessity, its colonial past expresses how Morocco throughout most of the relationship has been oppressed and forced to be subservient. Spain’s colonial power in Northern Morocco, from 1912 to 1956, continues to affect their relationship, the physical state of the border, and the symbolism of the border. Until 1956, Spain

44 ibid
45 ibid
46 ibid
occupied Northern Morocco. During this time the border between the two states, “though existing, was blurred,” unlike the manned fence today. Also, during this time, despite the “blurred” and “fully permeable” borders, “the perimeters of Ceuta and Melilla divided the North-African territories under Spanish sovereignty from the Northern Moroccan territories under Spanish ‘protection.’” In other words, Spain saw Ceuta and Melilla as fully Spanish territories, while Northern Morocco was a colonial territory. Therefore, after the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco, Ceuta and Melilla still remained Spanish territories, making them important in Morocco’s effort in establishing its postcolonial identity. Most Moroccans believe Ceuta and Melilla are Moroccan territories yet to be “decolonized.” Therefore, the border still preserves the “clear difference between the ‘protector’ and the ‘protected.’” Colonialism is still prevalent physically and makes their relationship still tied to colonial relations: “The relationship even without the dispute over Ceuta and Melilla was destined to be an uneasy one.”

It is important to acknowledge the shift in the symbolism of the border with the 1986 addition of Spain to the European Union. After the end of the Spanish Protectorate, in 1956, there was less interaction between Spain and Morocco because of “the weight of economic protectionism both in Franco’s Spain and post-colonial Morocco.” However, in 1986, the Iberian EU enlargement sparked interaction once again, due to the EU’s interest in the Mediterranean, and the gradual establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. It is

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48 ibid
49 ibid
52 ibid
important to note that this is not economical integration. Also, the EU aims to increase
“economic and institutional links with its Mediterranean partners,”53 with the European
Neighborhood Policy, established in 2003. The European Neighborhood Policy aims to “[build]
on common interests and on values — democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and
social cohesion.”54 This desire to extend democracy and European values contains a “certain
mode of colonial governmentality.”55 Spain, now in the EU, takes part in this “colonial
governmentality.” This can be seen with the exclusionary policy of requiring visas for Moroccan
citizens to cross the borders to Ceuta and Melilla, since 1991.56 In addition, while immigration is
one of the top-ranking issues in Spain, it is more focused on immigration control rather than
integration.57

Not only is their relationship built upon colonialism, but Spanish identity relies on its
border with Morocco. After the collapse of the Spanish empire in the Americas and the Pacific,
in 1898, Spain refocused its interest on Morocco, in order to “[recover] a colonial space… to
ensure Spain’s independence and prestige.”58 Spain's claim on Northern Morocco was a way to
maintain its “already vanishing imperialism,”59 and the country's identity. Spain oppressed
Morocco by colonizing the territory. Also, Spain uses Morocco as the “Other” to maintain its
“superior” “imperialist” identity: “the Spanish-Moroccan border could be interpreted as a past

53 ibid
54 “European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),” Diversity of Cultural Expressions, January 26, 2021,
56 ibid
57 Ricard Zapata-Barrero, “Perceptions and Realities of Moroccan Immigration Flows and Spanish Policies,” Journal
of Immigrant &amp; Refugee Studies 6, no. 3 (2008): pp. 382-396,
https://doi.org/10.1080/15362940802371697.
58 Xavier Ferrer-Gallardo, “The Spanish–Moroccan Border Complex: Processes of Geopolitical, Functional and
59 ibid
Moroccan migrants and citizens abroad in Spain and colonial remnants create the foundation for their relationship. Today, Morocco is still seen as unequal to Spain, due to its poor economy and past colonization. However, Morocco seems to be trying to make the relationship equal, using migrants as a bargaining chip. Many believe Morocco is managing to “punch above its weight.” At the 2010 Morocco-EU Summit in Grenada, King Mohammed VI discussed Morocco’s vision for its relationship with the EU, “[pleading] for greater European support to development.” King Mohammed VI stated that “Morocco pleads to go beyond the simple establishment of a free trade area,” and that this new partnership with the Lisbon Treaty would “allow Morocco an even closer proximity with the European Union.” The language he used, such as “plead” and “allow,” gives the connotation of submission, following the precedent of their unequal relationship. On the other hand, in 2019 at the EU-Arab League Summit, King Mohammed VI did not “plead” but rather demanded that the summit create a “solid platform for effective cooperation, based on a clear vision and realistic action plans.”

60 ibid
61 ibid
63 ibid
65 ibid
First: the security of the Arab Nation must remain a strictly Arab affair, kept free from all interference and outside interference. However, insofar as the attack on the security of our region would inevitably constitute an attack on the security of Europe, even of the whole world, it is necessary to underline the international effort which reliable partners can bring. On this occasion, I would like to emphasize that the security and stability of the Arab world are threatened by the perilous challenges sometimes generated by the policies and behavior of some of its countries towards others. In this regard, We insistently recall that adhering to the principles of good neighborliness, respect for the national sovereignty of States and their territorial integrity, refraining from any interference in their internal affairs and, where appropriate, putting term, will eliminate this threat.67

In 2010, Morocco was hoping for a closer relationship with Europe, but in 2019 King Mohammed VI warned the Western world to not interfere with Morocco's affairs and territorial sovereignty. He went as far as blaming the interference, or “policing,” of other countries for threatening the stability of Arab countries. Also, he implied that if Morocco’s security comes under attack, Morocco has a right to retaliate. Also, instead of “pleading,” he used words such as “must,” demonstrating a more emboldened Morocco. He then made another demand in his speech:

Second: promote the renewal of the Arab world. It is up to Europe to help its Arab neighbors achieve the economic, scientific and technological development necessary to reduce the economic and social disparities which separate the two partners. To this end, it is necessary to promote concrete development projects that redefine the channels for the circulation of investments and people and to establish productive balances that respond to common security, economic and social concerns. Indeed, the European Union is the second economic partner of the Arab countries. However, trade between the two parties, although important and dense, remains below our expectations. In addition, these exchanges are characterized by their asymmetry: the rate of Arab imports from the EU amounts to 27% of the overall volume, while that of Arab exports to Europe is 11%.68

67 ibid
68 ibid
Instead of asking and begging for better negotiations, partnerships, and trade agreements, King Mohammed VI deemed it necessary and Europe's job to help its countries of partnership, like Morocco, to decrease the economic gap between countries. He expressed his disappointment with the current trade with Europe. He then made a third demand:

Third: configure future partnerships in such a way as to create an intellectual, cultural and media environment conducive to coexistence and cooperation between the peoples of the two regions. This action will allow the integration of the rising generations and the entrenchment of the values of tolerance and acceptance of the Other, beyond worn-out stereotypes, far from any form of exclusion and rejection which irremediably generates a logic of confrontation and antagonism. In this regard, We aspire to build a healthy relationship between the Arab world and Europe; a relationship free from all prejudice and not subject to the repercussions of ephemeral events. In Morocco, we believe that, henceforth, a common management of immigration issues and the fight against terrorism, in their multiple aspects, can be envisaged according to an integrated and global approach associating the notion of shared responsibility with the imperative of development.  

King Mohammed VI recognized that Morocco is still considered the Other by Europe, but explained that the issue of migration and the cooperation of all nations would help build a healthy relationship between the Arab world and Europe. While some believe Morocco’s “deepening relations with other regional and global powers, such as China and Russia”  is the key reason for Morocco’s change in dialogue, in actuality, the realization of gained political power from sub-Saharan migrants may have also caused this change, due to immigration dominating the European agenda. In other words, Europe’s increasing concern about immigration, and Morocco having control of sub-Saharan migrants within its borders, have given it “leverage in negotiating greater development support.” This can be seen in the Joint

69 ibid
71 ibid
Statement by the European Union and Morocco for the fourteenth meeting of the Association Council. The Joint Statement states that Morocco and the EU strive for “sustainable development, justice, security.” Also, this “Euro-Moroccan partnership for shared prosperity” will be founded on four structural areas: “an area of convergence of values, an area of economic convergence and social cohesion, an area of shared knowledge… and of enhanced cooperation on security…and cooperation in the field of mobility and migration; these actions will reinforce each other.” Throughout the Joint Statement, there are constant references to economic development and migration control, demonstrating how migration is being used as leverage for economic development by Morocco, as explained prior. In addition, the Joint Statement promises “a partnership of equals.” This may be analyzed as Morocco trying to place itself as a state worthy of equal partnership and no longer a subservient post-colonial state.

While Morocco’s strategy with the EU has tremendous existing literature, there is a lack of existing literature on Morocco’s strategy with Spain, and how it attempts to tip the scales of its unequal relationship. Nevertheless, Morocco’s strategy of using migrants to wield power can be seen by connecting political relations with incidents at the border. On June 24th, 2022, between 1,500 to 2,000 migrants attempted to cross the Melilla border, and approximately 37 migrants died. Video footage shows “several dozen migrants packed together on the ground near the border, with bodies piled on top of each other…Many of the migrants appeared injured while

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many others showed no signs of movement.”

Two days prior, June 21st to 22nd, 2022, Dakhla hosted a Morocco-Spain Investment Forum, in which Spain expressed its interest in investing in Western Sahara. It is reported that “Spanish investors…announced their plans to construct an international clinic and two hotel units in Dakhla.”

On October 18th, 2022, Moroccan News reported that “Moroccan police arrested 25 African migrants near the Spanish enclave Melilla.” The report goes on to say that these “arrests are the latest after courts already handed heavy prison sentences to several dozen people… on charges including entering Morocco illegally and violence against security personnel.”

On the very same day, the Spanish government approved €30 million for migration control in Morocco. Since 2019, Morocco has received a total of €123 million from Spain for migration control. While these two events fall on the same day, clearly illustrating how cooperation between the two states leads to greater struggles for migrants,

Martin, in a Publico article, expresses how Morocco used political blackmail. He cites that Morocco got this €30 million because it sent a letter to the UN Human Rights Council arguing that the country has no land borders with Spain because it does not recognize Spanish sovereignty over Melilla.

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79 ibid
Spain’s rights of the enclaves, fighting colonialism. The week prior to this, at the meeting of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council, Grande-Marlaska stated that “the relations between Morocco and Spain are exceptional and extraordinary.”\textsuperscript{82} Just 10 days later, Moroccan News reports on a meeting between Frontex’s (a security company Spain utilizes)\textsuperscript{83} Executive Director Aija Kalnaja and Director of Migration and Border Surveillance at Morocco’s Ministry of Interior Khalid Zerouali in Poland’s capital on October 26th to 28th. The report illustrates how “Kalnaja applauded Morocco’s role as a partner which is ‘reliable and credible to meet common challenges,’ notably in migration.”\textsuperscript{84} On November 11th, Morocco’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita, and his Spanish counterpart, Jose Manuel Albares, met in Madrid for bilateral talks.\textsuperscript{85} Just 48 hours prior, local Moroccan news reported the arrest of 300 migrants trying to cross the border to Spain.\textsuperscript{86} It can be seen that when the two countries are working with one another, migrants suffer. On the other hand, when the countries are not cooperating, more migrants are able to cross. For example, on April 22th 2021, Gonzalez admitted that Spain was


hosting Brahim Ghali for medical treatment.\textsuperscript{87} Ghali is a Western Sahara independence leader; Morocco claims the Western Sahara territory, a once Spanish colonial territory.\textsuperscript{88} About three weeks later, from May 17th to May 18th, 2021, there was a “sudden influx of migrants swimming into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta.”\textsuperscript{89} Following this, the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez “[vowed] to re-establish order promptly amid heightened diplomatic tensions with Morocco.”\textsuperscript{90} It was reported that after approximately 8,000 migrants, most from sub-Saharan Africa, entered Ceuta, Spain deployed troops to the enclave. The regional leader of Ceuta blamed “Morocco’s passivity,” during the “surge.” Some experts believe that this sudden influx was a way of creating pressure on Spain for hosting Brahim Ghali.\textsuperscript{91} Ghali can be seen as a threat to Moroccan sovereignty as a post-colonial country, thus Morocco used migration as means of demonstrating its power. While cooperation between the two countries creates a stronger border, thus increasing the suffering of migrants, tensions in the bilateral relationship allow migrants to cross the border easily.

Due to the political game between Spain and Morocco, there is uncontrolled violence that many migrants face. Human Rights Watch, in 2014, published their interviews with sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco, illustrating the violence at the border. FD, a 17-year-old Cameroon man, stated that “[he] ran [to the Melilla border] with 85 others. [He] got hurt on the first fence, on the barbed wire, and fell back into the Moroccan side. One Alit [a member of the Moroccan


\textsuperscript{90} ibid

\textsuperscript{91} ibid
Auxiliary Forces] stopped [him] and tried to take out the barbed wire that was attached to [him]. Others hit [him] with a baseball-bat-like [stick] on [his] knee and shins.”

JM, a 12-year-old Cameroon boy discussed similar violence with Human Rights Watch. When JM tried to climb the Melilla fence, “the [Moroccan] military threw rocks at [his] head… there were eight people, hitting [him] with a baseball bat… [he] couldn’t see because of the blood.”

FF, a 28-year-old Cameroon man, stated that when he made it across to Melilla, “the Guardia Civil hit three guys with sticks and told [them] not to come back,” and returned him to Morocco.

While these interviews took place between 2012 and 2014, this violence is still current today at the border, and possibly worse. As previously explained, in June 2022, approximately 37 migrants died trying to cross the Melilla border. Z, a 19-year-old migrant, with Manos Solidarias in Tetuan, left his home when he was 14, has been in Morocco for approximately 5 years, and has tried to cross the border about five times. However, each time, as he explained, the Moroccan border patrol would club him till he could barely walk. A border patrolman, whom a classmate conversed with in French during the SIT excursion to the Ceuta border, expressed no sympathy for these migrants. He was making jokes about how the sub-Saharan migrants do not know how to swim: “Africans come across the border through the mountainous side, while Moroccans and white [notioning to my white classmate] folks swim around the border.” When my classmate asked “On tue des gens ici?” (do you kill people), he immediately responded, “oui” (yes). He went on to say that he often finds dead migrants in the forest, from hunger, thirst, exposure, or exhaustion. My classmate expressed that when saying this he had a tone of annoyance, recounting chasing migrants, and sending them “back.”

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93 Ibid
94 Ibid
Findings

While Morocco and Spain’s economies rely on one another, Spain’s economic needs stem from prosperity. Also, it was not until 1956 that Morocco became a mostly sovereign state. Morocco still finds that it is being colonized with the existence of the Spanish enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla. Spain keeps these enclaves to preserve its identity by creating a more visual Other that can be excluded. It can be seen that the foundation of this bilateral relationship is uneven. However, with migrants in Morocco, Morocco is questioning Spain’s power in this supposedly post-colonial world. When Spain questions Morocco’s sovereignty, migrants pass through to Spain, not allowing Spain to hold on to its “superior,” and exclusive identity. Nevertheless, when Spain and Morocco meet, or Spain gives Morocco money, the border is impermeable. Morocco then gets money to improve its economy while Spain can enforce its exclusionary policies. Morocco is demonstrating that they can be partners of equals and that it is not subservient.

To simplify this relationship, one could compare it to game theory, specifically the Stag Hunt. When Spain and Morocco cooperate to control the border, to hunt the “stag,” Spain gets to continue exclusion and othering, which creates its “superior” identity. On the other hand, Morocco is given money for its cooperation to possibly further develop its economy. Spain can not cooperate with Morocco, by not giving money or challenging Morocco’s sovereignty, but then Morocco could retaliate, using the “Trigger Strategy,” by allowing migrants to cross the border, due to the political tension and mistrust. Spain may have been able to “hunt for the hare,” in the past due to Morocco’s inability to retaliate; however, today, Morocco shows that it can play the political game and retaliate by utilizing migrants. While it is interesting to see a formerly colonized country attempt to reposition itself on the world stage, questioning Western hegemony, it must be acknowledged that in this political game, or Stag Hunt, the Stag that they
are killing, due to cooperation, are migrants. Great violence has come from the cooperation, as previously expressed with migrants’ stories. The border patrol had no sympathy for these migrants because they are made to be pawns, or “stags,” in the political game between Spain and Morocco.

While migrants can be considered the pawns or “stags” in this political game, their resiliency must be acknowledged.” Z” and “P,” due to their lack of documentation, risked their safety to share their stories. Many migrants shared their stories with Human Rights Watch in a similar vein. While they endure great violence migrants continue trying to cross borders to find a better life. As previously explained, “Z” has tried to cross the Melilla border five times. While their lives are being played with at the state level, migrants are not passive actors.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

Although my research topic is multifaceted, there are more aspects of Spanish-Moroccan relations and migration that should be explored. If I were to continue my research, I would focus on how Morocco benefits from the informal economy regarding migration both in Morocco and Spain. Throughout my research, I found that Moroccan migrants who cannot obtain documentation that allows them to live or work in Spain, work in the informal economy, causing greater exploitation. Nevertheless, at the same time, if these migrants obtain an informal job, they are more likely to send remittances back to Morocco. Also, in Morocco, people can profit from migrants by transporting them to Spain. I hope to further investigate how their bilateral relationship affects the informal economy and creates more exploitation.

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If I were granted more research time, I would examine how migrants are exploited for money at the individual level. There are reports of migrants being robbed by border patrol or being forced to pay money to avoid being arrested.\textsuperscript{98} In addition, “P” mentioned that sub-Saharan migrants are sent to Casablanca if caught in Tetuan. I believe if this transportation of migrants is investigated, it could further be seen how Morocco benefits from migrants independent of Spain. Although I discuss the violence at the border, I did find that the violence created by the cooperation between Spain and Morocco transcends past the physical border, such as sexual violence.\textsuperscript{99} I wish to further study how violence can be defined differently than physical violence and how their relationship affects the different kinds of violence present in both states.

\textbf{Conclusion}

I began my research by asking the question: how do Spain and Morocco’s bilateral relationship, past and present experiences with colonization, and political strategy create uncontrolled violence at their shared border? I discovered the economic dependence of these two states and how it is tied to migration. I learned how Spain attempts to continue its imperialistic legacy by controlling the border, while Morocco continually fights for its sovereignty. Also, I examined how Morocco uses migration to fight for this sovereignty, develop its country, and demonstrate its power, illustrating a possible shift in the post-colonial and Western-dominated world. Lastly, I recognized the violence at the border stemming from this bilateral relationship.

Migrants are seen as an “abundant natural resource” for Morocco today, to be used for the political and economic development of the state. My research begs the question of if there is an ethical way in which Morocco can develop its economy, gain greater sovereignty, and a more equal position on the world stage in an ethical way, without violence. Lastly, my research question if by helping control the border, Morocco is reinforcing Spain’s othering.
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