Black Morocco On the Margins: A Societal Manifestation of Xenophobia, Anti-Blackness in Islam, and the Lasting Impact of Colonialism

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Black Morocco On the Margins:
A Societal Manifestation of Xenophobia, Anti-Blackness in Islam, and the Lasting Impact of Colonialism

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this study is to investigate what factors contribute to the marginalization of and discrimination against black sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. This study includes an examination of the history of Moroccan slavery, the formation of racial and religious dichotomies in the Maghreb, historical and modern-day perceptions of sub-Saharan migrants, and the political and social factors that have influenced changes in migration policy and migration management approaches. The study goes on to analyze the ways in which these components impact how sub-Saharan migrants are contemporarily viewed and actively contribute to the isolation and prejudice experienced by black African migrants in Morocco.

Key Words: sub-Saharan, marginalization, discrimination
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the academic support provided by the School for International Training. I am especially thankful for Dr. Taieb Belghazi, the assistant director of the SIT Morocco: Multiculturalism and Human Rights program. He has been such a vital support these last few months during my learning, and this research project would not have been possible without his academic support and guidance. I am also grateful for my research advisor, Dr. Souad Eddouada, who has been supportive of my research goals and worked actively to provide me with the connections and resources I needed to pursue those goals. Additionally, I’m immensely appreciative of Dr. Kimberly McKinson, my academic advisor at Vanderbilt University, for her advice and assistance.

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INTRODUCTION

As a student studying sociology and anthropology, I am particularly interested in how common social injustices are perpetuated and experienced within different cultures. I have previously studied the African-American diaspora and the interactions between American black people and the social institutions that govern them and dictate their lives. When coming to Morocco, I had an interest in the black experience here, particularly as it relates to the country’s history of slavery, Islam, and migration. Upon my arrival, I became aware that a significant portion of the black population in Morocco consists of migrants and refugees, and I came to learn that migrants experience a multitude of difficulties concerning discrimination, accessing resources, and integrating into Moroccan society.

Black African migrants in Morocco experience significant hardship due to the complex social and political contexts in which Moroccan society is situated. The resulting marginalization and oppressive treatment that sub-Saharan migrants experience in Morocco is an issue of human rights because the severity of the institutional discrimination they deal with has made it extremely difficult for them to make a living in the country. Because of discriminatory migration policies and administrative processes, it is incredibly challenging for migrants to gain legal status, which makes it nearly impossible to find well-paying jobs, gain access to quality healthcare, get good-quality long-term housing, and generally meet the basic needs of themselves and their families. Additionally, the discriminatory migration laws and lack of legal protections make migrants exceedingly vulnerable to abuses committed by both the state and individuals.

I initially hypothesized that sub-Saharan migrant communities are uniquely marginalized within Morocco due to historical contexts concerning slavery, colonialism, religiosity, and public health. White supremacist ideology that was emphasized during slavery and reinforced during
French colonialism persists in Moroccan society and continues to be perpetuated by native Moroccans, the media, and social institutions. However, the influence of Islamic values within Morocco has created a culture of denial when it comes to anti-black racism. While acts of racism and discrimination may be explicit in nature, public perception likely does not recognize the existence of racism.

In this study, I aim to create a holistic view of all the social and political components that influence the contemporary state of the treatment and living conditions of sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. Through a combination of archival research and interviews with sub-Saharan migrants living in Morocco, this study presents a comprehensive understanding of the challenges black African migrants face within the country, the changes to migration policy that have recently been implemented, and the impact of those changes.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewing pre-existing literary works on this topic, I examined several texts that analyzed the racial dynamics in historical and contemporary Morocco and the broader Maghreb. In Chouki El Hamel’s *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam*, the author explored the history of Moroccan slavery, how the institution of slavery and broader Moroccan society became racialized, and how notable Muslim scholars interpreted central Islamic texts to define norms and social status around race. Hamel found that many interpretations of the Qur’an and Hadiths were influenced by pre-existing social attitudes and said many scholars who “legitimized slavery and concubinage rely on exegeses of the Qur’an incorporating pre-Islamic social and cultural practices rather than adhering to what the Qur’an expresses with respect to new ethical tenets for social relations.”1 I agree with this assertion and would further argue that interpretations of Islamic texts were skewed to fit the material interests of the oppressive class in the Maghreb rather than adhering to the true messaging in the text. This is consistent with the pattern of weaponizing religion and bastardizing religious messaging for the purpose of oppressing and enslaving black and indigenous people in the global West.

As a part of the continued social discourse about slavery in Muslim societies, many scholars tried to establish who could legally be enslaved according to Islamic Law. Most scholars agreed that it was illegal to enslave free Muslims, and the continual support and dissemination of this notion established and reinforced the existence of an “enslavable other.”2 Initially, this “enslavable other” was any non-Muslim, black or white. However, the “enslavable other” started to become racialized because a significant portion of enslaved people brought to North Africa

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were black sub-Saharan.\textsuperscript{3} The legality of their enslavement had seriously come into question by the 16th century, though, as many black African ethnic groups had started to embrace Islam prior to their enslavement. I would argue that the “enslavable other” created a morally inferior class within Muslim societies. That class’s existence has persisted past the abolition of slavery, where the non-Muslim outsider group is still marginalized. Both historically and contemporarily, that outsider group in Morocco primarily consists of Sub-Saharan.

Aside from a difference in religion, another factor that contributed to the “othering” of black people was the adoption of the Hamitic myth by early Muslim scholars. The story of Ham has roots in Judaism and has no connection to any messaging in the Qur’an.\textsuperscript{4} It is also important to note that racial or tribal prejudice is condemned in the Qur’an and in the Hadith. The Prophet Muhammad interpreted Islam to be egalitarian, and he advocated against racial prejudice and discrimination.\textsuperscript{5} However, there is evidence of Muslim scholars accepting the Hamitic myth, which has consistently been cited as a justification for racial prejudice against black people in Christian and Jewish societies. In the Babylonian Talmud, Noah cursed Ham’s son Canaan and all of his descendants for a grave offense and said:

Canaan’s children shall be born ugly and black! Moreover, because you twisted your head around to see my nakedness, your grandchildren’s hair shall be twisted into kinks, and their eyes red; again because your lips jested at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated!” \textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{4} Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, Hebrew Myths; the Book of Genesis (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 121.
Hamel claimed that “Arab culture would adopt the racial aspect of the Hamitic curse in a manner that associated race with slavery.” He explains that color prejudice within the Islamic world has historically been embedded in the Hamitic myth and was used throughout the history of Islamic societies as justification for color prejudices in Arab and Amazigh societies.

Despite racial prejudice and the continuation of slavery, many enslaved black people had gradually claimed their freedom and formed settlements all around Morocco by the seventeenth century. These free black people were called the Haratin, meaning “free blacks” or “formerly enslaved people.” However, a lack of central authority and a politically fragmented army pushed the newly minted Sultan Mawlay Isma’il to consider drastic measures to reunite the country under his authority. He decided to restructure his royal army to establish a more organized and loyal body to enforce his will and command, and he was inspired to establish a black army because of their supposed physical superiority, competence, and bravery. At the start of this project, Mawlay Isma’il had gathered enslaved black people for his army who had volunteered for service. However, the project quickly devolved into a violent re-enslavement campaign that forced all black people, even the Haratin, into involuntary military service even though they were free Muslims, which is a blatant violation of Islamic Law. The characteristic of “enslavability” then became inextricably tied to race when Sultan Mawlay Isma’il justified the re-enslavement of the Haratin on the basis that all black people in Morocco were still slaves in his eyes because

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they were either descended from slaves or once slaves themselves. Mawlay Isma’il received vehement criticism and pushback from religious leaders and scholars because of this clear violation of Islamic Law. However, Mawlay Isma’il was unwilling to be deterred from his aims of forming his black army and suppressed any dissent through threats of violence against anyone who challenged him.

In conjunction with *Black Morocco*, Corbin Treacy’s article “Reframing Race In the Maghreb” added a more contemporary perspective on how North Africans perceive blackness and how Maghrebi media represents black Africans. Treacy found that rhetoric around race and sub-Saharan migration continues to contribute to the stigmatization, dehumanization, and marginalization of black African migrants in the Maghreb. The article highlights examples of widely disseminated media that perpetuate anti-black racism. In the article, Treacy recalls a comment made by Farouk Ksentini, who heads the Algerian Commision National Advisory for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, that supports the writer’s argument. Ksentini publicly claimed that black African migrants posed a risk to the country’s security because some of them have supposedly specialized in theft, fraud, and witchcraft. He added that African migrants have also put Algerians at increased risk of contracting various diseases, particularly HIV because he claimed that the disease is common among migrants. Similar sentiments have been echoed by other public officials and media outlets, which have exacerbated public anxieties about the presence of sub-Saharan migrants in North Africa. The article also referenced several creative works by writers like Kamel Daoud and Abdellah Taia, who have used characters in

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their writings to provide commentary on how black African migrants are treated and perceived by non-black North Africans. When discussing his character M’ga, a fictional sub-Saharan migrant whom Kamel Douad centers a series of written works around, Douad writes “In Algeria, M'ga discovered that there is black and black. Shades that decide. He is not local black. Neither American black nor metallic. He is black as it should not be. M'ga discovered that Arabs are racist and that they never say so.”¹⁵ This quote reveals the diversity of blackness in the Maghreb and the fact that different types of black people are considered more socially acceptable and palatable than others. Sub-Saharan migrants are often regarded as undesirable in North Africa.

After establishing a historical and contemporary understanding of race relations in Morocco and the broader Maghreb, I looked into the history of Moroccan migration policy and how it has contributed to the continued marginalization of black sub-Saharan migrants in the country. Anna Jacobs’ article “Morocco’s Migration Policy: Understanding the Contradiction between Policy and Reality” and Imane Bendra’s article “Sub-Saharan Migrants’ Life Conditions in Morocco in Light of Migration Policy Changes” analyze changes in Morocco’s migration policy as a response to shifts in international political interests. Morocco’s historically harsh security approach to controlling migration was influenced by pressure from the European Union, as Morocco is uniquely positioned to control irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa into Europe.¹⁶ When Spain joined the EU in 1986, border security and the prevention of illegal immigration were emphasized¹⁷ because a piece of Spanish territory shares a border with Morocco. Consequently, Morocco’s role in the Mediterranean region changed, and the country

has received generous grants and partnerships as a benefit for preventing sub-Saharan migration into the EU.\textsuperscript{18}

Migration policy in Morocco became even more restrictive following several suicide bombings in Casablanca in 2003, which killed 43 people total in 5 synchronized attacks.\textsuperscript{19} Morocco’s government quickly passed Law 02-03 later that year, and the law was the first piece of legislation to regulate irregular migration.\textsuperscript{20} It criminalized migration and allowed migrants to receive excessive penalties and be imprisoned for illegally entering or leaving the country.\textsuperscript{21} To enforce this law, Morocco has adopted a policing system that promotes racial profiling meant to target irregular sub-Saharan migrants, which has led to the harassment and arbitrary arrest of even documented migrants, all on the basis of race.

A change in Morocco’s approach to migration came in 2013 after the country received significant backlash resulting from negative media coverage that exposed human rights abuses against sub-Saharan migrants, and the news stories were supported by disturbing reports prepared by human rights organizations like the Groupe anti racist d’Accompagnement et de Defense des Etrangers et Migrants (GADEM), Médecins sans frontières (MSF-Spain), and the National Council of Human Rights (CNDH).\textsuperscript{22} On September 9th of that year, King Mohammed VI announced a new National Strategy for Immigration Asylum (NSIA) that would take a more humanitarian approach to migration management and help with integrating migrants into

\textsuperscript{18} Imane Bendra. “Sub-Saharan Migrants’ Life Conditions in Morocco in Light of Migration Policy Changes,” Institute of Development Policy, February 2019, 8.
Moroccan society. This new approach also included the creation of a ministerial department devoted to migrational affairs, a regularization campaign for undocumented migrants (one in 2014 that legalized over 25,000 and a second in 2017 that legalized about 28,000 people), and the distribution of the first round of refugee and asylum seeker cards. While Morocco’s shift to a humanitarian approach was largely influenced by media backlash, the change also worked in favor of foreign policy changes and economic goals geared towards rejoining the African Union (AU) and expanding into African markets. Country officials wanted Morocco to look more open and welcoming to sub-Saharan migrants, but that openness was limited by pressure from the EU to keep migrants from getting to Europe.

While the change in migration management strategy has been successful in some ways, there are significant issues with its implementation and effectiveness. According to Jacobs, the consequent migration policy created in 2014 is all procedural and has no legal framework. There haven’t been any changes to Law 02-03 or new legislation granting migrants rights. Consequently, migrants still have no legal protections within the country and still experience many of the same abuses and challenges that they had to contend with prior to the 2014 changes. Additionally, Morocco seemed to backtrack in their humanitarian efforts after rejoining the AU in 2017 and successfully gaining access to African economic markets. Moroccan officials began a harsh crackdown against sub-Saharan migrants in coordination with Spain and the EU in the summer of 2018, after at least 600 migrants successfully crossed the border from Morocco into Spanish Ceuta. The raids were supposedly meant to target irregular migrants and human

trafficking, but several human rights organizations claim that the raids have resulted in arbitrary arrests, expulsion, and even the detention of minors.

Additionally, Bendra claims that the regularization campaigns did not effectively mitigate the problems migrants were having accessing jobs, housing, and healthcare. It is difficult for documented and undocumented migrants to access regular jobs because employers often refuse to hire them, citing the unavailability of work and the high unemployment rate. Additionally, migrants’ job qualifications, particularly those coming from Anglophone nations, are often considered to be poor and unsuitable for the formal job market. The administrative process for getting job permits is also tedious and challenging to navigate, which presents another barrier for migrants trying to find work.

In terms of housing, access for undocumented migrants is limited because they are excluded from legal forms of rental and because many of them struggle to find well-paying jobs. They often settle for short-term expensive rental spaces. Following the adoption of new migration policy, many settlement camps in cities like Oujda were destroyed, which resulted in migrants becoming less visible, as they began moving to rooms in low-income communities.

As for healthcare, migrant access to medical treatment is minimal. Historically, migrants have not had any healthcare coverage in Morocco. However, partnerships and conventions established in 2015 and 2017 aimed to include regularized migrants and refugees in the Regime d’Assistance Medicale (RAMED)\textsuperscript{26}, which is healthcare financed by the government and available for the most vulnerable populations. However, none of those partnerships were adopted in practice, so migrants still do not have functional healthcare coverage. The lack of healthcare is particularly concerning because deteriorating living conditions, particularly those in camps,

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expose migrants to illnesses, with pregnant women being particularly at risk. Several studies of migrant populations who came to Morocco found that migrant women often get pregnant on their journeys to the country, and these women have significant difficulties getting access to adequate medical treatment. Sometimes, NGOs can access public hospitals for migrants since most Anglophone migrants do not speak Arabic or French. Many migrants say that they would not be able to get any medical care without an NGO representative.

Migrants also are not able to receive much education in Morocco. Sub-Saharan migrants from Anglophone countries have a particularly hard time in Morocco due to the language barrier. However, most do not receive language training to help them better communicate or integrate with the local population. Migrant children are not prohibited from attending school in Morocco, but several barriers keep migrant parents from enrolling their kids. The administrative process to get them enrolled, especially for non-regularized children, discourages many parents from doing so. Also, schools are often far from migrant camps and settlements, which would make it hard for parents to get their kids to school every day. Additionally, the educational curriculums in Moroccan schools are not inclusive of other cultures and emphasize the teaching of Arabic and Islam. Migrants still intent on going to Europe often feel that sending their kids to Moroccan schools would be counterproductive. Instead, many migrant parents prefer informal education provided by NGOs and churches.

METHODOLOGY

When planning how to go about doing my research, I intended to lean heavily upon pre-established literature to get an adequate understanding of the history of changes in migration policy, the complex political and social factors that influenced these changes, racial dynamics in Morocco, and the challenges experienced by sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. I would then supplement that archival research with interviews conducted with sub-Saharan migrants and non-black Moroccans to get a more contemporary humanistic viewpoint. I wanted to get the perspective of contemporary non-black Moroccans on how they view black Moroccans and sub-Saharan migrants. I also wanted to interview some black Moroccans and black African migrants about what their experiences have been like in Morocco. I chose to stay in Rabat because there are several NGOs here serving sub-Saharan migrants, and these organizations would assist in finding people to participate in the study.

Regarding research ethics, I was concerned about preserving the integrity of the experiences shared during interviews due to the language barrier. I wanted people to be able to fully express themselves when responding to questions during interviews. However, I was worried that my lack of proficiency in common sub-Saharan languages would make it difficult for the study participants and me to communicate. To address this concern, I worked with a Moroccan university student who was proficient in English, French, and Moroccan Arabic (Dirija) to help me translate interviews.

Additionally, I got informed consent from all my research participants to do the interviews when doing my fieldwork. I ensured that all interviewees were over 18 and all participants signed consent forms that gave me explicit permission to conduct interviews with them, record the interviews, and use them in my work. I explained my purpose for the interviews
and my overall research goals, and I had an interpreter explain what the consent forms said before having participants sign them.

While reviewing the literary sources for my background research, I reached out to staff at GADEM and Orient-Occident, which are both NGOs in Rabat that are providing services to sub-Saharan migrants and doing advocacy work. I was looking to set up official visits to these organizations to get an understanding of their services and connect with some of the organizations' beneficiaries who would be willing to sit for interviews. At GADEM, I met with Sara Soujar, a migrant rights advocate. She was able to provide much insight into the work that GADEM does, the challenges experienced by the migrants GADEM serves, and the discriminatory policy the GADEM is working to change. At Orient-Occident, I was given permission to talk to the organization's beneficiaries, who were present during my two separate visits. With the help of my translator, a staff member from the organization, and beneficiaries from the organization who spoke English, I was able to conduct several interviews with sub-Saharan migrants who received services from Orient-Occident.

While doing my fieldwork, I encountered several challenges that mainly concerned the language barrier and communication. The person who was initially supposed to assist me with translation during interviews had minimal availability, which made it challenging to schedule NGO visits that worked for everyone's schedule within the limited time I had to conduct field research. I had to get help from several other individuals, most of whom were not trained interpreters and were not completely fluent in English. Additionally, the lack of available interpreters significantly limited the number of interviews I could do, so I was unable to interview non-black Moroccans during my fieldwork period. Instead, I primarily focused on the perspectives of migrants and the individuals who worked at the NGOs I visited.
Aside from the language barrier, I also had difficulty contacting people at NGOs to schedule visits. Several of the correspondences I sent went unanswered. Consequently, I had to visit the one NGO blindly, and I could not get access to another organization I hoped to visit because some NGOs do not have their address online. This limited the number of visits I could do and made some visits a bit more difficult because I had to get proper permission once I was onsite.

Overall, my research methodology was mostly effective, though the time constraints and lack of fieldwork resources limited the scope of my research. The literature review proved exceedingly insightful and comprehensive, and the interviews I conducted affirmed many of the claims made in the literature and provided more depth to my research.
FINDINGS

Both the literature and the fieldwork conducted during this study revealed that the marginalization and discrimination experienced by sub-Saharan Africans is a product of European xenophobia and racism, prejudice against non-Muslims, and the language barrier. Due to Morocco’s geographic position on the African continent and in the Mediterranean region, the country experiences a steady influx of African migrants who are fleeing war and poor economic conditions and are trying to get to Europe. From the EU’s perspective, partnering with Morocco on issues of security and migration management is advantageous because their foreign policy is fueled by xenophobic and racist ideology. Since the EU has historically pressured Morocco to take a security approach against sub-Saharan migration, the country has adopted inhumane and discriminatory migration policies and practices that have resulted in the isolation of sub-Saharan migrant communities, indiscriminate police harassment faced by both documented and undocumented black African migrants, and human rights abuses endorsed by the state.

The overall success of the 2014 change in migration strategy is minimal when considering the persisting institutional discrimination and incoherent migration administrative processes that continue to hinder sub-Saharan migrants from getting access to support services and integrating into Moroccan society. While the regularization campaigns of 2014 and 2017 collectively helped over 53,000 migrants get regularized, there have still been no changes to Law 02-03 or any legislation introduced to replace the law. The lack of a legal framework for the new approach to migration management leaves migrants vulnerable to mistreatment by the state, police, employers, and individuals.

In interviews with several black African migrants at Occident-Orient, I was informed that many of them find it difficult to live in Morocco because of the lack of available jobs and continuous unjust harassment from police. Abal, an older man from Ethiopia, stated that he, along with other beneficiaries at Occident-Orient, receive 800 Moroccan Dirham ($80 USD) from the organization every other month because it is impossible for them to find work.\textsuperscript{31} However, that amount of money is impossible to live off of for several months at a time.

Abal as well as Tarik, a younger man from Ethiopia, explained that they also have issues with the police regularly harassing them and other migrants in their community. Tarik and Abal both claim that the police will stop them, detain them, and drop them off in southern cities like Casablanca no matter their legal status.\textsuperscript{32} \textsuperscript{33} Migrants then have to scramble to find the money and resources to return to their communities. Abdal and Tarik’s claims are consistent with many other documented cases where migrants were taken by police to far off-cities away from the European border and had to find their way back.\textsuperscript{34}

The lack of legal protections also allows migrants to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, which I have found to be a significant contributor to the isolation and mistreatment of sub-Saharan migrants. As previously mentioned, many Islamic societies established a dichotomy between Muslims and non-Muslims, with the latter being the outgroup. Before the twentieth century, this outgroup was considered “enslavable,” which implies that there was a shared sense

\textsuperscript{31} Anonymous older Ethiopian male, interviewed by Sydney Coleman, December 2023, interview 2, notes and recording.

\textsuperscript{32} Anonymous older Ethiopian male, interviewed by Sydney Coleman, December 2023, interview 2, notes and recording.

\textsuperscript{33} Anonymous younger Ethiopian male, interviewed by Sydney Coleman, December 2023, interview 3, notes and recording.

\textsuperscript{34} Anna Jacobs. “Morocco’s Migration Policy: Understanding the Contradiction between Policy and Reality,” \textit{Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis}, November 12, 2023, \url{https://mipa.institute/en/6872}
of moral superiority rooted in religion. This dichotomy has since persisted past the abolition of slavery, and it contemporarily works to marginalize non-Muslim migrants.

In interviews, several migrants claimed that the attitudes of Moroccans they interacted with often changed once Moroccans found out the migrants were not Muslim. Abal and Fikru, a woman who migrated to Morocco from Ethiopia, shared that it has been hard for them as Orthodox Christians in Morocco. They both expressed that people treat them a lot differently when they find out they are not Muslim.35 36 In the experience of many migrants I interviewed, differences in religion played a significant role in their inability to integrate into Moroccan society.

The administrative processes for getting proper documentation are also confusing, especially for migrants who do not speak Arabic or French. When talking to Fikru, she explained that it is hard for many people to get refugee cards because no one at the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) speaks Amharic, the common language spoken by Ethiopian migrants. Without these refugee cards, migrants have extremely limited access to healthcare, even though they have documentation proving that they are regularized migrants.

Abal explained that many migrants like him choose to stay in Rabat because UNHCR is there, and he, along with other migrants in his community, go there every week trying to get refugee cards. Inefficient administrative processes and the lack of translation assistance at migration agencies like the UNHCR present an added challenge to migrants getting properly documented and getting access to vital support and services. Tarik, said that he severely injured his back but cannot go to a hospital because he is not able to get his refugee card from the

35 Anonymous young Ethiopian female, interviewed by Sydney Coleman, December 2023, interview 1, notes and recording.
36 Anonymous older Ethiopian male, interviewed by Sydney Coleman, December 2023, interview 2, notes and recording.
UNHCR. Even though he is documented, Tarik said he cannot get medical treatment for his back without the refugee card. 37

37 Anonymous younger Ethiopian male, interviewed by Sydney Coleman, December 2023, interview 3, notes and recording.
CONCLUSION

My initial hypothesis proved to be partially correct but did not quite encompass all the factors that contribute to the marginalization and discrimination experienced by sub-Saharan migrants. As expected, the history of Moroccan slavery was crucial in the establishment of a racial dichotomy. However, the interaction between Islam and Judaism and the adoption of the Hamitic myth by early Muslim scholars also played a significant role in the inclusion of racial prejudice within that dichotomy.

In analyzing the significance of different social and political factors on the ill-treatment of sub-Saharan migrants, I found that concerns around public health are not as prominent of a factor as initially theorized. While there have been several documented instances of harmful and misleading rhetoric around the negative impact of sub-Saharan migrants on public health, there is no evidence that this rhetoric has had a significant impact on the overall treatment of black African migrants or immigration policy. Instead, the study revealed that pressure from foreign countries, particularly members of the EU, was to blame for the discriminatory migration policies and harsh migration management practices. While Moroccan officials did pledge to take a more humane approach to migration control, there still have not been any changes to immigration law. Regularization procedures are difficult for migrants to navigate and even regularized migrants still have an incredibly hard time getting jobs, affordable long-term housing, and quality healthcare.

Additionally, the impact of Islam on anti-immigrant sentiments was different than I expected. While I would still argue that many non-black Moroccans deny the presence of racism in Moroccan society, I found that issue to be much less problematic than the explicit and widespread discrimination against non-Muslims (at least in terms of the pressing issue of migrant
rights). While this was not included in my original theory, this study also shows that the language barrier has both contributed to the isolation of sub-Saharan migrant communities and acted as an obstacle to getting access to vital resources and documentation.

Overall, this study lays out the most prominent factors contributing to the poor treatment and isolation of sub-Saharan migrants. These factors are both social and political in nature, and addressing them would require a mixed approach involving legislative changes and a shift in the public narrative surrounding sub-Saharan migration. Moroccan officials would have to earnestly commit to the humanitarian approach they pledged to pursue because the immigration policy changes that have been implemented in the past decade have proved themselves to be cosmetic and insufficient in addressing the challenges and human rights abuses that sub-Saharan migrants face in Morocco.
LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Due to limited resources and time, I could not get a complete picture of how migrants are treated in Morocco as a whole. While the literature reviewed during the study was relatively comprehensive, information gathered from primary sources during this study was limited to the city of Rabat. Thus, the experiences documented in the interviews referenced in this study cannot be generalized and applied to all sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco.

Additionally, I could only gather limited information from Moroccan civilians on their perceptions of sub-Saharan migrants. While I was able to glimpse some of the commonly held views concerning race and migration through passing interactions with Moroccan civilians during this study, those interactions were insufficient for establishing any grand conclusions about their perspective on sub-Saharan migration. The arguments presented in this study are primarily based on the experiences of sub-Saharan migrants and evidence documented in the cited literature.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

I would suggest that further research be done to analyze the difference in sub-Saharan migrant experiences on the basis of gender. There are several health concerns, such as feminine health and pregnancy, that only affect migrant women (or gender queer individuals with uteruses) that likely impact their experience in Morocco. Additionally, there is documentation of sexual and domestic abuse and human trafficking, which suggests that migrant women are at increased risk of experiencing violence and exploitation. Lastly, gender roles in Morocco have established societal norms concerning the types of jobs men and women can have. Considering that sub-Saharan migrants already have immense difficulty finding employment, it would be interesting to examine how gender impacts their ability to find well-paying jobs.

Aside from gender distinctions, I would also recommend that more research be done on contemporary Moroccan perspectives on migration. As previously mentioned, that perspective is lacking in this study and may serve to provide a more holistic understanding of the sub-Saharan migrant experience. While gathering such viewpoints may result in the confirmation of pre-established claims, it is still worth exploring.
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APPENDIX

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the Study: Black Morocco On the Margins: A Societal Manifestation of Xenophobia, Anti-Blackness in Islam, and the Lasting Impact of Colonialism

Researcher Name: Sydney Coleman

My name is Sydney, and I am a student with the SIT Morocco: Multiculturalism and Human Rights program. I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting (as part of the SIT Study Abroad program in Morocco). Your participation is voluntary. Please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy of this form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to the anti-immigrant sentiments in Morocco, and how are these sentiments manifested in the overall black experience for sub-saharan migrants and black Moroccans

STUDY PROCEDURES

Your participation will consist of interviews and will require approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. The interviews will be recorded and documented.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate; participation is voluntary. During the interview (focus group) you have the right not to answer any questions or to discontinue participation at any time. You may be asked questions that bring up uncomfortable or painful memories or experiences.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There will be no financial or material benefits to this study, but participants will be given a chance to share their experiences and may personally benefit from feeling seen and heard.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There is no payment or compensation for participation in this study

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. I will not be including any of the participants’ full names, information about where participants live, or the names or personal details of family members or close friends.
When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no identifiable information will be used.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

“I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.”

Participant’s signature ___________________________ Date __________

Researcher’s signature ___________________________ Date __________

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to participate in the interview

_____ (initial) I do not agree to participate in the interview

Consent to Audio-Record Interview

“I give my consent to be recorded and to allow the recording to be used in conference (classroom) presentation.”

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

_____ (initial) I agree to be recorded and to allow that the recording be used in conference (classroom) presentation

_____ (initial) I do not agree to be recorded and to allow that recording to be used in conference (classroom) presentation.”

RESEARCHER’S CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at sydney.l.coleman@vanderbilt.edu or my advisor at taieb.belghazi@sit.edu
RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by an SIT Study Abroad Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or the research in general and are unable to contact the researcher please contact the Institutional Review Board at:

School for International Training
Institutional Review Board
1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676
Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA
irb@sit.edu
802-258-3132
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your first and last name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where did you migrate from?
4. Why did you leave?
5. How long have you been here?
6. Since arriving in Morocco, what has your experience been like?
7. How have you been treated by people?
8. How has it been trying to get access to resources, jobs, and housing?
9. What has your racial experience been like?
10. Do you feel accepted here or isolated because of your identity?