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Into The Red: A Look into the Reasons Why Refugees Decide to Flee, Settle or Migrate to and from Morocco

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INTO THE RED

By Fadeelah E. Holivay

This research paper explores some of the main reasons why refugees and asylum seekers, particularly from sub-Saharan African countries, embark on a journey and decide to settle, flee or migrate to and from Morocco. Because of this phenomenon, Morocco has seen a 96% increase of refugees migrating to the borders of Morocco each year for the past three years. Many say that this astonishing increase of migrants choosing Morocco is due to such factors as: wars breaking out regionally across central African and Middle Eastern countries causing them to flee; Morocco being a culturally diverse francophone country whose laws and policies are accepting to foreigners and it's economy has become more prosperous as it develops towards liberal views seen in western countries, which makes them want to settle; and due to Morocco's proximity to Europe many refugees and asylum seekers use it as a transit country to cross over into European territories, which ultimately makes them want to migrate from Morocco. This new migration trend, however poses many obstacles for Morocco's still developing refugee laws as well as International migration laws when they look at what actually constitutes as a refugee or an asylum seeker.

*A Look into the
Reasons Why Refugees
Decide to Flee, Settle or
Migrate to and from
Morocco*

Into the RED: A Look into the Reasons why Refugees Decide to Flee, Settle or Migrate to and from Morocco

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Automatically I am categorized when the train conductor chooses to speak to me not in French the preferred language amongst tourist here or even English the worldly language, instead he greets me in Arabic and thanks me by saying “Shukran” for giving him my ticket (billet). So far I am able to get by on my French mixed in with some English words however; English here in Morocco is definitely not preferred. As I make my way through the airport from passport entry to customs I get a sense that the people are not really sure where I am from. With my name and my US passport I get these knowing looks... “She is an Arab-Moroccan girl living the Western dream, or as the passport officer said “very nice origin, you are beautiful” I wonder how this experience will turn out. Will I be considered an insider or outsider and which one will be preferred when collecting my data for my research. Are there perks of being a foreigner in this foreign land comprised of many foreigners? I guess I will find out as this trip progresses...

Fadeelah Holivay
Train Ride to Casablanca

Morocco, “The country that travels within you” boasts a new strapline for an advertisement campaign on www.visitmorocco.com to get tourist from all over the world to come and encounter experiences and memories that will live in them throughout their lives. But one can’t help to think how that whole experience would translate to one that decides to migrate to Morocco in search of better opportunities for the families or to seek asylum from a war. Will it be an experience to remember or one to dread. Over the past decade, Morocco, a francophone country that is part of the Maghreb region and located in Northern Africa has been an unwilling recipient of refugees coming from Sub-Saharan Africa in the past decade.

Within the last three years, that refugee population has seemed to increase for many known and unknown factors such as political and religious wars on the negative side and a growing tourist economy on the positive side. Serving as a transit or final destination for many refugees coming from sub-Saharan Africa, Morocco’s refugee population is currently estimated at over 30,000 of which about 90 percent of the

refugees seeking asylum remains undocumented according to the UNHCR's 2013 report (UNHCR, 2013). Consequently, Morocco has become both an origin and destination country for many migrants and "persons of concern"¹.

Morocco has become one of the most important migration countries in the world. Morocco's migration flows are actually considered to be highly diverse because the migrants who decide to migrate to Morocco belong to various ethnic groups and socio-economic positions, which are found in many different countries all over the world (De Haas, 2007). Accordingly, Moroccan migration occupies an important place in the overall picture of world migration (Sasin, 2008). The country has played an especially major role in labor migration to Europe over the past six decades (De Haas, 2007).

Thus, Morocco provides a perfect picture of the lively trend caused by international migration that has been observed today. Migration is an important socio-economic process and has thus fundamentally influenced the country's development and the livelihoods of the migrants and their families. Considering that, it is forecasted that international migration will continue to be prominent in Morocco. However one must think of the reasons why people from all over Africa and the Middle East would want to migrate to and from Morocco.

An article titled: Refugees living in Morocco must decide whether to settle or flee to Europe by Agence France-Presse, covers many reasons why hundreds of refugees in Sub-Saharan African countries like, The Democratic Republic of Congo, choose whether

¹ According to the definition of the UNHCR "a person of concern includes people that are refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, stateless persons and certain groups of internally displaced persons" (UNHCR 2013b). This definition includes those Refugees that are migrating to Morocco from all parts of Africa and the Middle East, who are returning home, in another country looking for work, or those who are trying to escape political/tribal persecution, torture or even death in their home countries.

to flee voluntarily or involuntarily from their country to avoid tribal/civil wars and look to settle in this “transit country” with scant opportunities, while According to a 2002 report by Channe Lindstrom titled: The Refugees Situation in Morocco states that the problem of illegal immigration into Morocco as a country of transit towards European destinations is one of the major problem facing Morocco today.

The current literature states that Morocco has a long standing Refugee law that is set in place to accommodate refugees, however even with such a law and a recent reform to its refugee law in 2014 (IRIN, 2014), Morocco is still not equipped or accustomed to accommodate the influx of refugees that continue to migrate to Morocco’s major cities in particular Casablanca and Rabat as far as infrastructure, social programs and economic wellbeing. Yet, the refugees continue to migrate there.

The purpose of my research thesis is to find out the reasons why refugees specifically from sub-Saharan African countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, or even the Ivory Coast, choose and continue to migrate and seek asylum in the country of Morocco, despite the many obstacles they face socially as well as economically.

Research Questions

The questions that I hope to address through my research are as follows: What policies and laws are structurally in place (past, present, and future) that accepts/grants refugees and asylum seekers the ability to seek refuge in Morocco? Do these Refugees migrate to Morocco in hopes of settling down permanently then once they get there they find that due to policies, laws and infrastructure it is not possible? Is it Morocco that is

the final destination for these refugees or is Morocco just a transit stop on their way to settling in Europe, which may be able to provide a stable political country, work and housing opportunities?

What is the general reception of refugees in Moroccan cities such as Rabat and Casablanca from the point of view of the migrants themselves as well as the local Moroccan population? Do these refugees choose to migrate to Morocco because it is a stable Islamic country with the same cultural and traditional values as well as colonial ties that they are accustomed to? Is it because it has liberal views connected to the modernity of western influence that is currently developing rapidly in Morocco?

These questions stem mainly from the policies and laws that Morocco has in place for accepting or declining foreigners therefore one can say that without the issues of immigration law and policy nationally as well as internationally, would these questions still be applicable?

Methodology

I wanted to find out the reception of refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco and find ways to visually connect and see the obstacles presented to these immigrants first hand. I decided to go there this summer for two weeks and conduct my field research in as many Moroccan cities that I could travel to which ended up being two. This was my first time in Morocco so culturally and socially it took some time getting used to, however with my time being limited I had to adapt and integrate almost instantly.

Based on my human subjects and the type of responses I anticipated for my research topic, I used a mélange of qualitative and quantitative methods with a strong

emphasis on qualitative techniques. In my short but very productive two-week research trip to the Moroccan cities of Casablanca and Rabat, I got the opportunity to conduct two two-hour meaningful interviews with members within the main migration organizations that creates immigration laws and policies, five ten-minute interviews with refugee/asylum seekers² from the sub-Saharan African region and five one-hour interviews with local Moroccan citizens. I even attempted to administer 10 enquetes³; however there were some limitations to this particular method. I also conducted archival research at institutions such as the Casablanca Library and The Institute for Islamic and Human Studies. This led me to collect data via internet as well as from different sources such as law books and Moroccan authors such as Khadija Elmadmad.

Interviews (Policy Makers and Migrants) and Observation

For the purpose of getting a feel of the real day-to-day life of the refugees living in Morocco I conducted field research consisting of a mixture of ethnographic approaches. I employed mainly a non-interactive approach where I went to major areas in Casablanca and Rabat over a two-week period and watched the interaction of the refugees/asylum seekers with local Moroccans in public areas such as the market, places of worship and places of leisure even the refugee camps to record the mood, and the unspoken stories of these refugees. I tried not to interact with the population and just observed and recorded the social community and the interactions between local Moroccans and refugees.

² There was no way for me to identify the status of my interviewees, therefore when I say refugee and or asylum seeker they mean one in the same.

³ Enquete is a French word meaning survey.

I then conducted five random interviews in kind of a snow ball method with sub-Saharan African women who happened to work in the Kasbah market areas of Casablanca and Rabat in order to get the personal stories and accounts of their journey to Morocco and how life was as a refugee living in Morocco. This type of interaction gave me quantitative insight based on social acceptance, cultural integration and discrimination that is allegedly displayed by local Moroccans towards the sub-Saharan refugees, for which mainly I did not witness. For the interviews I identified participants based on randomization as well. My goal through these interviews was to try to get a sense of the reasons why they chose Morocco as a place to seek asylum and to find out the positive and negative effects now that they were living there.

Since I was only in Morocco for 2 weeks, I relied heavily on the internet and email communication to retrieve follow up information on the in-person interviews I conducted with the Director of The UNESCO Center and The public relations team at UHNCR in order to get a better understanding of the resources and infrastructures put in place to accommodate the current and growing refugee populations in the Casablanca and Rabat.

Surveys

I conducted both qualitative and quantitative surveys to see where refugees were migrating from as well as to see if discrimination was a factor in refugees deciding to integrate into the Moroccan community or look at other options outside of Morocco like Europe in order to settle. My targeted interviewees mainly consisted of merchants, and the refugee and asylum seeker population ages 18-60.

Archival Research

Using the internet, journals, reports and newspaper articles about refugees and refugee law in Morocco, I found that this would be the most effective method as far as collecting data over the course of time for my research. These migration trends for refugees wanting to flee to Morocco is not a new phenomenon, however the circumstances in the last 10 years such as democracy reaching different parts of Africa, the revolt and power struggle of middle eastern countries and the rapid expansion of globalization has made these migration trends increase and zone in on countries in North Africa that are receiving the majority of the influx. I also accessed refugee laws and policies over the past 30 year period in order to analyze and see if the changes in these policies or laws have contributed to the past and current trends in refugee migration to Morocco.

Limitations

There were four limitations that I was faced with while conducting my research in Morocco. The first was time constraint. I was only in Morocco for two weeks due to funding, resources and prior personal commitments, which gave me a small window of opportunity to conduct my needed interviews, ethnographies and cultural integration as well as local data collection from the cities of Casablanca and Rabat. Tangier and Oujda is also two of the major cities that holds a great portion of the refugee and asylum seeker population due to its proximity to the European borders as well as refugee camps, and I would have liked to conduct my research there, however I was unable to make the journey to these cities due to said reasons above.

The second limitation was accessibility to non-profit organizations and refugees willing to participate in research. I had contacted 3 of the major nonprofit organizations that provided services and resources for refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco and not one responded. I ultimately made connections with the UNESCO Center for Law and Migration, which aided me in finding out the needed information about Morocco's past and current refugee laws but gave me no access to actual refugees. It was crucial that I get at least one of these organizations as a contact going in to Morocco so that I readily had access to a segment of the refugee population. However this still made no difference as far as having access to the local refugee population.

The third limitation was limited/no access to all of the cities that has a Sub-Saharan African refugee population. I will only be visiting Casablanca and Rabat due to time restrictions and I know that such cities as Oujda, Fes, Marrakesh and Tangier have major Sub-Saharan African refugee populations as well. So by limiting my research to only two cities I may not be able to uncover the whole perspective of why these refugees choose Morocco to seek asylum.

The fourth and final limitation dealt with access to the local refugee and asylum seeker population while conducting surveys. I found that many of the refugees perceived me in a negative light and felt that I was working with the local Moroccan authorities to try to get them deported or arrested. Since majority of refugee and asylum seekers do not possess a status and are considered undocumented when it came to these local refugees, I understood the reluctance to participate in my surveys. Also I found there to still be a cultural and language barrier when I asked certain questions about human rights, western views and citizenship.

Biography

My father who is an Arab American and my mother, who is an African-Native American, started a non-profit organization while I was growing up in the early 90s. Their shelter was dedicated to helping refugees and other displaced people within the inner city of Cleveland, Ohio who needed a place to stay, food to eat, or simply a place to belong. They always taught me that no matter where our journeys in life may take us, to always remember to help others along the way. Compassion, optimism, and altruism were the attributes my parents instilled in me at a young age, which I continue to possess to this day.

Despite my parents' accomplishments, they were often the recipients of stereotypical ridicule mainly because of their religion and race. This frequently led to misguided people breaking into their shelter, destroying the property, writing racial slurs on the walls, and demolishing my parents' ten years' worth of dedication and investment they put into enhancing the community. These violent, vandalistic, and prejudicial acts ultimately forced me and my family to move to Texas and part with our closest friends, relatives, and the only place we called home.

I knew that what had happened to us was not right. I knew that if only I had been old enough, known what to say or do, or even had the strength and voice to speak up; I could have made them see that we were not that different and that we belonged there just as much as they did. I never wanted anyone to have to go through such an experience my family and I went through. I wanted to find ways to seek justice for those who would be judged in bias for differences they had little or no control over. With that mind set in

place at the age of twelve, a natural zeal to protect those who could not protect themselves arose in me.

With that said, being that there is currently so much coverage on the wars that are taking place in the Middle east like in Syria and the ongoing war and government corruption that is taking place in Sub Saharan countries like the DRC and in Senegal that is rarely talked about and have been deemed the forgotten wars of the world I decided to put my focus into looking at the aftermath of how this is affecting the people of these countries that ultimately leads to the involuntary migration to such places as Morocco as they search for ways to start over and seek better opportunities socially and economically

The title, *Into the Red* has a dual meaning. The first meaning is the more obvious; a red flag with a Green star represents the country of Morocco. The refugees are literally entering the **red** country The second meaning can be considered more interpretive, that by these refugees involuntarily leaving their homes whether it's for war or in search of a better lifestyle by migrating into Morocco they are fleeing into the unknown, a place where they are not sure if they will be accepted into or even granted the right to legally stay, they have fled into a **red** zone.

Broader Significance

The goal of my research is to raise awareness, provide an updated perspective into the lives of refugees migrating and/or fleeing from Morocco, and to address the current gaps in the refugee and migration laws and policies of Morocco. Currently there is limited scholarship about the increasing migration situation to Morocco in the past 10 years and I believe that my research can provide critical data into the patterns of

migration influxes that are a result of such factors as tribal and political wars happening in Sub-Saharan African regions, and the economic hardship experienced in this region that leads to these refugees seeking a more stable and liberal economy (economically, socially, and politically) either in Morocco or in other countries that are influenced by the Western Modernity.

I would also hope that my research potentially be used as a developmental guide for governments, NGOs as well as local organizations dedicated to establishing and finding programs for refugee integration within Morocco. This would allow such entities to develop budgets, set program parameters and set up safeguards to fortify Morocco's social infrastructures and programs dedicated to assisting sub-Saharan refugees and asylum seekers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For my research thesis I consulted the following bodies of literature to frame my analysis: Refugee Law of Morocco: Then, Now and What's to Come, The history of Colonization as a result of Migration to North Africa and The push (war, labor etc..) factors versus the pull (economy, social, cultural) factors of why sub-Saharan Africans choose migrate to Morocco. I selected these bodies of literature because it seems that these are the current issues that refugees are faced with in Morocco, yet there seems to be limited or no current scholarship addressing how these factors affect the actual status of refugees. This includes influential data and how it aides in their decision whether to flee settle or migrate to and from Morocco.

Refugee Law of Morocco: Then, Now and what's to Come

When it comes to Refugee laws and policies, Morocco is listed as being affiliated with some of the best conventions in the world. The country even has a specific domestic legislation that gives rise to the acceptance and status of refugees fleeing to Morocco (Lindstrom, 2002). However, refugees still have problems in regards to being granted certain status and rights as well as protections under these conventions in Morocco. For one, Morocco has not been known to house a lot of refugees in the past but they do have a government system in place to do so, albeit they just have not put much resources and funding into making it functional. Many would think this would send a warning signal to those who thought to flee to this country, yet majority of the refugees who seek asylum in Morocco rarely know their rights as refugees (UHNCR, 2013) let alone have a chance to think about their rights when they are avoiding persecution in their homelands.

Also since Europe has seen a rise in illegal undocumented immigrants coming from Morocco's border over the past 10 years, Lindstrom states that "the European Union is placing the government of Morocco under increasing pressure to set up harsh border controls and deport any illegal aliens on Moroccan territory". Another dilemma that poses a threat to all refugees is an unclear distinction of what separates an economic migrant from a refugee looking for asylum in Morocco, therefore any efforts used to combat illegal or undocumented immigrants coming into Morocco negatively affects all refugees in the country.

Refugee law of Morocco has deep roots in Islam known as "hijrah law". Khadija Elmadmad, an International Lawyer and the Director of the UNESCO Center for The Law and Migration (CUDM) A in her scholarly report titled "Asylum in Islam and Modern Refugee Law" talks about the refugee law of Morocco and how although it is based on an Islamic law that dates back 14 centuries and in theory offers more protection to asylum seekers and refugees known as "mustaminun", modern refugee law applied today in Morocco does little or nothing to uphold or apply such tolerant views (Elmadmad, 2008).

However, even though Morocco's refugee asylum policies stems from Islamic Law and the local African regions customs and traditions of hosting refugees in a time of need, these customs are rarely practiced in the modern day. In the past refugees were seen as favored foreigners of the country and were taken care of as far as housing, documented statuses and an opportunity to find work and make a fresh start. Even the first king of Morocco was a foreigner who fled to Morocco (Interview, Khadija Elmadmad, 2014).

During the years, the different international conventions have been ratified to meet the demands of the growing refugee populations that have been fleeing to Morocco.

Channe Lindstrom, a Masters student at the American University of Cairo in his report on migration to Morocco titled “*Report on the Situation of Refugees in Morocco*”, as well as L. Schuster in his 2005 article titled, *The Realities of a New Asylum Paradigm*, mentions that Morocco acknowledges and participates in the International recognition of refugees fleeing to Morocco under the asylum law like the 1951 Geneva

Convention, 1967 New York Protocol and even the 1969 African Unity Convention, however due to increased illegal crossing of undocumented refugees over European Borders like Spain and Italy, the European Union has put increasing pressure on the Moroccan government to cut down on illegal migration by limiting or excluding certain ethnic groups such as those from Sub-Saharan Africa (Lindstrom, 2002, Schuster, 2005). According to Article 31 of the 1972 Moroccan Constitution of 1972, it requires that “all ratified international conventions become part of the Moroccan legal system and take precedence over other laws”(Lindstrom, 2002). This means that the king has the power to ratify treaties and laws and if it happens to be a Universal or International law, the King will apply it to domestic law. This was the case for the refugee asylum international law.

As recent as December 2013, a 2013 report by released by the UNHCR stated that Article 31 of the Moroccan Constitution pertaining to refugee and asylum seekers was being reformed in order to expedite the UN process for refugees and to also minimize the “undocumented” status of refugees, which pertained to roughly about 90% of the refugees and asylum seekers living and residing in Morocco (UNHCR, 2013).

I argue that while the refugee law seems to be making progressive steps forward to accommodate refugees, the government and local UN authorities are doing little to uphold the practice of the reformed refugee law. This in turn leads to a delay in the documentation process and procedure which results in the chances of these asylum seekers remaining undocumented with no privileges to find work, housing accommodations and to successfully integrate into society.

An article by The Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) titled “Morocco’s new migration policy masks continued abuses”, looks at the current abuses of migrants in Morocco and points out that the migration policy is being used as a cover up to mask such human rights violations. This demonstrates that even though Morocco has a desire to move forward with a more up to date migration policy that accommodates its growing population of undocumented refugees, mainly from the sub-Saharan African region, and makes an attempt to regularize the refugees as residents of Morocco, the local community is not all too accepting of this reform.

This relates to my thesis as far as formulating a precedence for recent migration and refugee laws of Morocco and how it is affecting the lives and statuses of its refugees. This article also connects to the ARB article and shows the different perspectives of how the current migration law affects not only the refugees but also the local Moroccan communities.

most recently in July of 2014, Morocco introduced a reformed refugee asylum law in hopes of setting up a more functional and effective system that would expedite the process of granting more undocumented refugees statuses that would integrate them affectively into the Moroccan society and halt any further deportations of refugees out of

its country and into neighboring countries such as Algeria (IRIN, 2014). This seems to be a step in the right direction for Morocco but unfortunately as the law seems to progress in favor of refugee populations, there has been numerous reports that the refugees specifically the Sub Saharan Africans, continue to be subject to “routine violence” from the local population and authorities (IRIN, 2014). I hope to also use this article to show that systemic violence against refugees in Morocco is one of the reasons why refugees are deciding to leave Morocco in pursuit of a better lifestyle in Europe (IRIN, 2014).

Pull factors of Why Sub-Saharan Africans choose to Migrate to Morocco

In this section, I look at the factors that draw (pull) refugee migration towards Morocco. I will first explore the Government and Political Makeup of Morocco that helps explain why refugees would choose to migrate there which, ultimately leads to a common tie these central and northern African countries share; Colonization by a European Country- France. Followed by the social, economic makeup of Morocco.

Government and Political Makeup

According to *Business Source Completes' 2007 Morocco Country Profile*, Morocco is considered a democratic constitutional monarchy ran by the much popular and liberal-orientated leader Muhammad VI who ascended to the figurative throne in 1999 (Business Source Complete, 2007). In his reign, there has been very positive and

accelerated progress towards a more liberal and democratic way of life for the people of Morocco as well as for the political scene as far as elections in the past years goes. In fact, in 2002 Morocco had one of its most successful elections in History (Business Source Complete, 2007). However, since then has had some setbacks and controversy from both the left and right side wingers in regards to policies, civil liberties and Islamist support, but as the saying goes, “you can’t expect to please them”.

The Prime Minister of Morocco, Driss Jitou, was sworn into office after the historical elections in 2002 and comes from a socialist party known as the Socialist Union of People’s Forces (USFP). In the 2007 election, which was actually recorded as the worst elections in history that Morocco has seen, (Business Source Complete, 2007) the USFP party lost about 25% of the 37 strong seats it held in the electoral party and was replaced by the Istiqlal party and the New Prime Minister became Abbas El Fassi. Although there were these minor setbacks in government, the new Moroccan government remains on track with the current king’s vision to keep Morocco as modern, stable, and as liberal with the new democratic world as possible. Even if the new government had other agendas they were looking to pursue, they would still need to have it approved by the king as he remains the strongest political influence in Morocco still to this day.

A short but very informative book by Theorist Aime Cesaire titled, *Discourse on Colonialism*, mentions a new “European universalism” (Cesaire, 2000) that talks about the struggles of the European colonized countries especially those under French rule and how it has affected the current nation state, culture and way of thinking of the colonized, in this case the Africans. He states that “Discourse calls on the world to move forward as

rapidly as possible, and yet calls for the overthrow of a masters ideology of progress, one built on violence, destruction and genocide” (Cesaire, 2000).

When you think of the ever changing face of African countries like that of developing Morocco, you see that over time colonization of European countries

has shaped the current postcolonial visage many refugees and asylum seekers come to know and seek on their journeys to escape their countries that are currently still oppressed and being ruled by “masters”. This is that visage of the Western ideals that Cesaire points out as being superior and becomes the ideals most colonized people will try to imitate in order to be betrayed as civilized “... The superiority of the West: “That discipline of life which tries to ensure that the human person is sufficiently respected so that it is not considered normal to eliminate the old and the infirm” (Cesaire, 2000).

Cesaire also talks about the “boomerang effect” of colonization that no matter how productive and positive in the end it may seem it dehumanizes even the most of civilized men and practically turns them into savages:

They prove that colonization, I repeat, dehumanizes even the most civilized man; that colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, which based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; that the colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as an animal, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively too transform himself into an animal. It is this result, this boomerang effect of colonization...

*Aime Cesaire
Discourse on Colonialism*

Finally Cesaire expresses that through colonization it has enabled the opportunity for different cultures, races and genders to co-exist in the same realm which otherwise

may not have taken place but he argues that it was not one of the ways of making this happen.

I argue that when I think of Morocco and how this country has been built on the ideal of foreigners mingling, passing through or even deciding to settle and make it their homes, I think that colonization has helped develop Morocco into the booming most attractive country in the North of Africa to all foreigners. But, one cannot help but to think that indeed the ideal of this westernize once colonized Africa country was the main appeal which attracted Sub-Saharan Africans to seek refuge in Morocco as well.

The attraction to Morocco ultimately was not only based on their past history of colonization by the French, but also because of the commonality of the pain, violence and dehumanization that they too faced by being deemed savages by the civilized man. Morocco was supposed to be a guarantee of that prosperous and diverse civilization that arouse from such pain of colonization but unfortunately majority of the sub-Saharan Africans feel that these western notions may have been all a dream:

*I admit that it is a good thing to place different civilizations in contact with each other; that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds; that whatever its own particular genius may be, a civilization that withdraws into itself atrophies; that for civilizations, exchange is oxygen' that the great good fortune of Europe is to have been crossroads, and that because it was the locus of all ideas, the receptacle of all philosophies, the meeting place of all sentiments, it was the best center for the redistribution of Energy... But has colonization really placed civilization in contact? Or if you prefer, of all the ways of establishing contact, was it the best? I answer **NO**.*

Aime Cesaire

I used Cesaire's work to point out the initial pull factors of why refugees and asylum seekers would be more prone to seek refuge in Morocco such as the attraction of having the same language, the same colonial history and similar customs, traditions and

even the religious affiliation. Morocco is a Muslim country and majority of the refugees and asylum seekers fleeing to Morocco are Muslim (Interview, Local Moroccan man, 2014).

Morocco's Economic Makeup

Morocco's economy for many years has been fueled by the agriculture sector followed by the mining and construction sector. However due to a 10 year drought that hit Morocco back in the 90s, it saw a major decrease and slow growth in the export markets (Business Source Complete, 2007). Because of this major hit to the agriculture sector and Morocco's inability to catch up and provide for its rapidly growing population, employment and poverty has increased. However, after Government reforms were put in place and focused more on the macroeconomic sphere, Morocco saw a steady yearly growth from 2007 onward of about 5% (Business Source Complete, 2007).

Tourism is also a well-known sector of the Moroccan economy, however because of it is considered a predominantly Arab-Muslim region, the tourist market after the events of September 11, 2001 and recent events in 2013 involving suicide bombings by Muslim extremists in Casablanca, has left has the tourist industry stagnant and in the midst of recovery. As far as trading goes, Morocco's exports are highly favored towards European markets, therefore making the European Union (EU) one of its major trading partners which accounts for "three-fourths of exports and about 56% of Morocco's imports (Business Source Complete, 2007). Also, Morocco is considered one of the world's largest producers of phosphorus and it is considered one of Morocco's top

income earners. One major problem that Morocco will continue to face in the future is the agriculture sector and this is due to a number of key factors but mainly because it yields such as low production due to the poor weather conditions and climate that currently prevents this sector from being able to recuperate in a timely matter.

Social Makeup

According to the Jewish Library created by the American-Isrealis Cooperative Enterprise, Morocco has an fascinatingly diverse ethnic population consisting of people from Sub Saharan Africa, Europe, the Middle East and its indigenous people known as Berber. It also consists of an array of religions ranging from Islam all the way to Paganism (American-Isrealis Cooperative Enterprise, 2013).

Because of diverse cultures, religions, and ethnicities found in Morocco throughout the history of its civilization, it is no surprise that majority of the local Moroccan population is mixed with various combinations of Arab-Berber, Afro-Arab, Arab of many different regions, Berber-Afro and Niger-Congo. When we break down the ethnicities based on statistics, we see that the Arab and native Berber populations account for 99.1%, which is practically the whole Moroccan population (American-Isrealis Cooperative Enterprise, 2013).

Even though we see this large percentage consisting of both Arab and Berber populations, the indigenous Berber population accounts for the majority of Morocco's population. As far as refugee and foreign residence, there seems to be roughly about 20,000 "documented" refugees living in Morocco from Sub Saharan Africa, while the

other unknown number of refugee populations considered “undocumented” remains unaccounted for. Foreign residents living in Morocco, which is well over 500 million, are mostly Spanish or French, who reside in Morocco for work or who have integrated into the population through marriage and family ties and have permanently made Morocco their home.

Main Cities for Migration

To get a sense of which cities of Morocco host the largest refugee populations and the reasons why they flock to these cities whether it’s resources, accessible borders, or job opportunities. I will look at two major cities in Morocco that receives the most refugee inflow; Rabat and Casablanca. These major and vast cities are popularly known for their diverse refugee population and enclaves. However, they also happen to be top tourist destinations of international visitors coming from all around the world especially Europe.

Rabat

Known as the capital and second largest city in Morocco, Rabat is home to the port of all imports or exports coming in and out of the country. It is also a major hub for such industries as textile, food processing and construction. In addition Rabat is considered one of the most important cities in Morocco due to its high demand in tourism and serving as the home to all foreign embassies. Rabat is also one of two of the largest urban centers that host thousands of economic migrants as well as political asylum-

seekers (Axelrad 2013). It is no surprise then why refugees prefer to migrate to Rabat in search of job opportunities, better living conditions and the opportunity to get a “piece of the pie”. It also seems to refugees would have better access to enclaves, friends and acquaintances that would make it easier for them to “assimilate” to the customs, culture, languages; get aid as well as help one another out in this time of transition.

An interview conducted by Agence France-Presse of a Congolese girl who migrated to Rabat from Congo in order to escape wars back home talks about her and her family’s hopes of rebuilding their lives and hopefully settling in Morocco permanently. Since 2013 Rabat has been the Host city to about 800 plus Congolese refugees mainly consisting of women and children. It is estimated that major urban centers such as Rabat hosted more than 25,000 Sub-Saharan refugees in 2012 (France-Presse, 2013). Most say that of their transition to a place like Rabat At first was not easy as far as the environment, the racist reactions, from proprietors for example. But over time they have learned to integrate ... to avoid problems that is.

Casablanca

Casablanca, the economic and business center in Morocco is the largest city in Morocco and is also ranked as the most important City in Morocco. It serves as the chief port and industrial center and is considered the largest port in North Africa. One of the main reasons why thousands upon thousands of refugees flock to Rabat and Casablanca is because majority of the government institutions, refugee camps and NGO’s are located here as well. The refugees who come here seeking asylum are not granted work permits

or any type of paper work to show their status in Morocco, therefore they go undocumented which makes it hard for them to find work that is not under the table or considered a part of the black market. It also deems it nearly impossible for them to sign leasing agreements and find adequate housing with their non-existent income and barely enough aid to cover their basic necessities.

Another reason why the refugees choose Casablanca as a place to migrate is because there is so much business, commerce and an economic wealth that they feel there will be more opportunities to settle and make a better life that is not filled with poverty unlike where they have migrated from.

Push Factors to flee to Morocco- Refugees Migrating to Morocco

In this section, I examine the factors that drives (push) refugees from their countries of origin, which in turn pushes them to seek refuge in Morocco. I look at the contributing factors of why refugees choose Morocco, the reasons why refugees are forced to migrate, the history of the war in the DRC and why refugees continue to migrate to Morocco and beyond.

Contributing Factors of Why Refugees Choose Morocco

PhD Dissertation by Andrew Galeo Debono titled “Lives in Transition” uses an historical approach to talk about the Countries of North Africa being a route used for trade and migration for centuries and due to the recent changes in events across Africa

and the Middle East in 2010 we have now begun to see an increase in the migration of people looking to migrate and settle down in Morocco.

This relates to my thesis question in how it brings new facts about the many different reasons why migration trends have increased in the past decade to Morocco, specifically the revolutions in the Middle East like the Arab springs and the wars events in Syria. Debono mentions “The Arab Spring had a direct consequence on Morocco, with political changes leading to an increase in raids and expulsions of sub-Saharan migrants from the territory” (Debono, 2013). Debono’s argument connects well with the argument of E.B. Zoomers about the conflict in Sub Saharan Africa and the political reasons why they are fleeing these sub Saharan African countries and seeking Asylum in North African countries such as Morocco.

A well-written article by Hein De Haas takes a look at forced migration due to the Arab Spring and post Arab Spring Revolution that reverberated throughout Northern Africa and Europe. De Haas argues that the events of the Arab Spring did not affect the “migration crisis” that has been attributed to the influx of refugees and migrants fleeing to different parts of the North African countries like Morocco and the Mediterranean: “From the outbreak of the popular uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, European media and politicians were preoccupied with the prospect of ‘tidal waves’ of North Africans reaching Europe. These sensational predictions lacked any scientific basis so it should come as no surprise that they have not come true” (De Haas, 2012). However, Andrew Debono argues in favor of the Arab Spring events having a tremendous effect on the migration trend we see today in areas of North Africa such as Morocco.

I will use this in my thesis to argue that such tribal wars and political revolutions like the Arab Spring could be one of many reasons why Morocco has seen an influx in refugee migration and that it has indeed contributed to the displacement of refugees from their home countries due to such conflict.

Refugees Migrating to Morocco

Like most Arab countries with an exception to a few like the Gulf Coast countries, Morocco has become both an origin and destination country for many refugees and persons of concern. When I reference persons of concern, I am referring to migrants or persons who migrate to Morocco to seek protection from civil wars, persecution, or even genocide in their country or even who may be returning back to their country. The UNHCR's definition of persons of concerns includes people that are "refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, stateless persons and certain groups of internally displaced persons" (UNHCR, 2013b). It seems that refugees are migrating to Morocco from all parts of Africa and the Middle East, especially the neighboring countries such as Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Mali, Ghana, or even from such Sub-Saharan African countries.

According to a refugee migration report by the World Bank in 2010 it showed that an estimate of about 792 Africans in 2010 applied for asylum in Morocco and of that number, only 10 percent was actually legally granted that status (World Bank, 2010). This means that the remaining 90% of African refugees who reside in Morocco are considered undocumented or illegal refugees. Moreover, over the past few decades, Morocco has become one of the unwilling receivers of international migrates especially

African migrates even while their own nationals form a major part of the international migrate workforce somewhere else in the world.

Based on the *UNHCR Global Trends data of 2012*, showing countries that host the most refugees, Morocco listed approximately 744 people which were considered refugees, 2,178 asylum seekers who have pending cases to get approved for asylum in Morocco and a total population of 2,922 refugees of concern for the entire country (UNHCR, 2012). For Morocco to be considered place where refugees are increasingly flocking to, the number of refugee's seem very low compared to say for example the number of refugee population in Egypt which is a total of 126,949 (UNHCR 2012).

This leads me to believe that yes, the statistics above from the world bank are true in saying that majority of the refugee population in Morocco are considered undocumented or could it lead me to arrive at a different assumption: Is the refugee population in Morocco really settling and are just unaccounted for or in fact are the fleeing to Europe? Before I address this very question, I would like to first discuss the cities in Morocco where majority of the refugee's (documented or undocumented) tend to settle in or flock to.

Why Are Refugees Fleeing to Morocco?

In my research of migration and refugee displacement in Morocco, I have come across a couple of reasons why refugees are migrating to Morocco despite their limited resources, aide programs in place to efficiently deal with the mass numbers of refugees being displaced. Although this may have been the case in the early 2000's when Morocco

was not prepared for such arrivals and badly managed, since then it offers migrants stability, and there are some organizations to support them as far as “healthcare, food, temporary aide, housing in refugee center such as the East-West Foundation which receives about 800 visitors annually”(France-Presse, 2013).

Using this, I will focus on two of the main reasons which I believe are the reasons why refugees migrate to Morocco; Refugees are fleeing civil wars, poverty, and even genocide in search of a better way of living and better economic opportunities; and/or refugees especially undocumented and illegal are using Morocco as a transition city so that they can flee to Europe in hopes of becoming citizens but illegally acquiring citizenship nonetheless.

Political and Civil Wars in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the past twenty years and in fact most recently, countries located in Sub-Saharan Africa have been known to be the epicenter for civil and domestic tribal/political wars that has resulted in the fleeing of native African in search of new homes in the Middle East & Northern Africa. This huge sum of wars also includes the high intensity civil wars fought in Angola, Liberia and Mozambique (Zoomers et al., 2008).

To no surprise, political instability, corruption and tribal differences resulting from governmental influence are some of the top determinants of migration in the Sub-Saharan region. The runners up include famine, economic inequality and limited job opportunities. These regions are known to be unstable, volatile even unpredictable at times especially with forms of “western” democracy spreading like a wildfire through the

region giving hope of change and freedom to the people. It makes perfect sense why the people are being targeted and driven out of their country from their dictatorial leaders and militaristic government in hopes of finding protection and a better standard of living in neighboring countries:

The loss of state capacities and the breakdown of states, grounded in the risky democratization process, the delayed effects of structural adjustment programs and above all human insecurity (Zoomers et al., 2008).

This also proves to be the case with the students, NGO representatives and even professionals located in the region. The government often targets them which in turn, commence the migration of the main contributors of the region, leaving little or no help or resources for the remaining population that chooses to stay. The refugees now on the run choose to seek asylum in nearby peaceful and prosperous countries. Usually these countries are Middle Eastern or Northern African (MENA) countries such as Morocco, where they can seek asylum and protection from their government, rebels or their tribal neighbors and have an opportunity to start over.

The Democratic Republic of Congo also referred to as the DRC, is a country located in Sub-Saharan Africa with many natural and extremely wealthy resources such as diamonds, gold, copper and more. While this may make the land wealthy and plentiful, it has also made the people poor, at risk of being exploited, manipulated or even killed. These same resources are exactly what have led to the greed, oppression and continuous war between the Congolese government and people over the past fifteen years. According

to Noah Bernstein in his 2010 piece titled, *A Media Eclipse- Israel-Palestine and the World's Forgotten Conflicts*:

“Within a forty-eight hour period in 2008, the Christian fundamentalist Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) killed, dismembered and burned at least 200 Congolese civilians. Soldiers raped women and girls, twisted the heads off babies, and cut the lips and ears off those they did not kill. They hacked the rest to death using machetes or axes. Child soldiers helped abduct other children”.

Bernstein, 2010

Since the induction of this war, casualties have resulted in over 5 million deaths. That is 5000 times more deaths than the Israeli-Palestine war ever could have experienced (Bernstein, 2010). Yet this is as Bernstein points out one of those wars that has had little or no media coverage and has ultimately been forgotten about in the eyes of our international community. Consequently this war has also led to the forced migration of Millions of refugees or Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) to countries in North Africa such as Morocco and countries all over Europe.

I will use this information in my paper to argue that because of these types of wars currently happening in the DRC it is not limited to just this country but similar countries like Senegal and Syria. since mainly focusing on Sub-Saharan Africans I attribute these circumstances to the push factors of what is making refugees and asylum seekers alike flee North to Morocco and beyond.

Agence France- Presse, in an article called “Refugees Living in Morocco must decide to settle or Flee to Europe”, courageously follows the journeys of sub-Saharan African refugees like the account of a 13 year old Congolese girl named Blessing, who fled to Morocco with her sister to avoid tribal wars in her home country on a quest for a

better life style in the West. Like many of the thousands of sub-Saharan Africans who fled to Morocco to avoid tribal wars, persecution and a better life style that did not involve conflict, many of them had the intention to continue on to Europe. However due to limited UN statuses for documents being granted within Morocco, many of these refugees find themselves making plans to make Morocco their permanent homes (France- Presse, 2013.)

I find that this article relates to my topic based on getting to the heart of the reasons of why refugees are choosing Morocco to flee to but it also raises some unknown factors such as why they are reluctant to settle in Morocco. It begins to bridge a gap in the argument of authors such as Channe Lindstrom who suggest that only after refugees arrive in Morocco only then do they contemplate on fleeing to Europe when in fact it seems that majority of these refugees initially had the intent of using Morocco as a transition country to cross the European borders (Interview: Elmadmad, Rabat, 2014).

Douglas Massey in his book titled, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of International Integration*, uses a Marxist Theoretical approach based on how immigration affects International and U.S. policy in the economic and labor markets. It uses the phrase “neoclassical economics” as the conceptual theory to describe the Mexican/U.S. immigration problem based on geographical differences when it comes to the supply/demand measurer for labor (Massey, 2002). According to this neoclassical economics theory people migrate because of “international differences causing workers from low-wage countries to move to high-wage countries” (Massey, 2002).

I find that due to globalization this is true however; I use this in my research to argue that it does not necessarily apply to the main reasons why refugees and asylum seekers choose to migrate to Morocco, which is still in the developmental phase and where wages still remain fairly low even for the local Moroccans. This actually leads to Local Moroccans migrating out of Morocco in search of better wage opportunities in Europe. According to The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development as well as the World Bank in a report titled, *Refugee Populations By Country or Territory in and from Morocco*, Morocco is a major sender of migrants towards OECD countries and it is estimated that in 2010 about 123,754 Moroccan citizens migrated to these countries (OECD, 2011, World Bank, 2013).

Massey also talks about arbitrary interventions of U.S. policymakers that sought to restrict the flow of migrant workers across the U.S./Mexican border that ultimately did little or nothing to slow down or stop the flow of documented and undocumented migrants coming in from Mexico (Massey, 2002). These policies and interventions however, were successful at creating a “black labor market” (Massey, 2002) and pushing migrants who would normally be seasonal, circular Mexican migrants into permanent settlement migrants in the U.S. (Massey, 2002). I use this in my research to point out the common push factors that cause migrants to seek permanent settlement in Morocco based on policy and laws becoming stricter but in turn making the refugee issue and even bigger mess.

Morocco a “Transit Country” to one of the World’s Top Destinations:

Europe

Many refugees painstakingly hope that once granted some type of UN refugee documented status in Morocco they would be free to venture into Europe and settle there permanently. However, as I discovered earlier, only 10 percent actually are granted such documentation stating their legal status in Morocco (UNHCR, 2013). With 90% refugees remaining undocumented or awaiting documentation and not being able to establish work housing or any other integrated identity of Morocco what do they do? It is believed that they take their chances and attempt to cross the borders that separate Morocco to find refuge in Europe all the while risking being detained, arrested or unfortunately sent back to their countries of origin. Surprisingly (not really), Spain and Italy are the main destinations for irregular migrants and refugees fleeing from Morocco (Zoomers et al, 2008).

Currently these European countries are seeing an “increasingly-undocumented” nature of Moroccan migration. Moroccans were initially attracted by working possibilities in agriculture, construction, and the service sector, and they often obtained a regular status after staying in the destination country for long periods of time (form of naturalization) or through legalization campaigns (de Haas, 2007). But now we are seeing a trend with refugees from countries such as those in the Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, who use Morocco basically as a transition country, to simply pass through to get to their final destination which is Europe. They are in search of what the Moroccan

natives have succeeded in obtaining, stable jobs, adequate living conditions and ultimately citizenship.

Although the Arab uprising as well as the different civil wars that have taken place in Sub-Saharan Africa may account for the migration of different refugees to Northern African regions such as Morocco, de Haas argues that this event does not account for the increased population and flow of Middle Eastern, Northern African and Sub-Saharan African refugees who have begun and continue to migrate to Europe. He believes that recent migration events are not simply a side effect of the revolutions and civil wars. The possible links between declining opportunities for migration from North Africa to the EU (due to the economic crisis and intensified border controls) and the exclusion and discontent of disenfranchised youth on the one hand, and the protests on the streets of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Morocco on the other, may just be the factors de Haas is referring to as being responsible for the reasons why Europe is keeping its border well-guarded and closed to the incoming refugee population of Morocco.

I strongly disagree with de Haas and believe that Europe has closed its borders, but not in response to the protests, riots or discontent of the youth most likely linked to want for western democracy, but as an attempt to crack down and limit the amount of refugees and Africans that could populate and gain citizenship in these countries. I look at this as a form of xenophobia on Europe's part.

Chapter 3: Data & Findings

Interviews

My interviews covered three different groups, policy makers, refugees and Moroccans. Depending on the interviewees' origin and background, the interviews were conducted either in French, English or Arabic; therefore the current findings are subject to my translation and interpretation. Also due to the sensitivity of my research topic and for the safety and security of my subjects, some of their names and identities have been omitted.

My interview questions were semi- structured. When leading questions were asked, I followed up with other questions so that the interviewees could elaborate on their responses. I also did this for clarification and understanding since majority of the interviews were conducted in different languages.

Policy Makers: The UNHCR and the UNESCO Center for Law and

Migration

I noticed that there were three reoccurring issues that the policy and refugee law makers seemed to address frequently throughout the interviews: Refugee/Asylum seeker acknowledgement and status, which constitutes as a Refugee or Asylum Seekers, and Unaccounted for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

I traveled by train to conduct these interviews in Rabat, Morocco, which is the city capital and the location where most refugees inhabit once they arrive to Morocco. It is not by choice however that they choose to stay in this particular city but being that it is the hub for services, aide and resources offered by International organizations such as the

UNHCR and THE UNESCO Center; one must take advantage of what is provided to them by this country. This means for most the first step in seeking refugee or asylum status that ultimately leads to “the legal right to stay in Morocco, obtain work and housing and healthcare benefits” states Iman Moussaoui, Public Relations Intern at the UNHCR in our interview. Even though many apply for this process, there is only about ten percent annually of those refugees who actually are granted that legal status to stay (Interview with Iman Moussaoui, 2014). This in turn means that ninety percent of them have no legal status, therefore have no protection or right to even stay in Morocco. Moussaoui however, has hope for the asylum seeker process and laws. She states that Moroccan Law “02-03”⁴ that was set to protect irregular emigrants and those who decide to settle in Morocco (Interview, Iman Moussaoui, 2014).

From another interview I conducted with Khadija Elmadmad, Professor of Law and the Director of the UNESCO Center for Law and Migration (CUDM) she states that while there is about 16,000 irregular migrants living in Morocco due to forced migration only about 3000 of them actually get regularized which seems to be about 20% (Interview, Khadija Elmadmad, 2014). She stated that this number is not too bad at all for Morocco but by the UN thinking they are granting these refugees a “favor” by giving them this legal status, it is actually not a favor at all, it is these refugees given right according to the Moroccan Constitution (Interview with Khadija Elmadmad, 2014).

Astonishingly, though when I asked Elmadmad of the percentage of Sub-Saharan African refugees who flee to Morocco in hopes of making it their permanent home, she replied that only about 40 percent had intentions of actually settling in Morocco while the

⁴ For explanation of law 02-03, refer to Legal Framework table in Appendix B

other 60 percent had the very intention of passing through Morocco in order to gain entry to Europe (Interview with Khadija Elmadmad, 2014)

With both Moussaoui and Elmadmad commenting on the December 2013 Mobility Partnership that would give African refugees the ability to move between Morocco and the European Union's member states, the Ultimate goal for Morocco is to keep the refugees who flee there within the country's borders. Moussaoui even mentions that "Morocco is in the process of building a wall in order to keep the refugees who come to Morocco in Morocco" (Interview with Iman Moussaoui, 2014).

When the UNHCR seeks to constitute who qualifies as refugees and asylum seekers, they do take into account their background stories and what reasons brought them to Morocco in the first place, however the UHNCR must do their due diligence to make sure that the stories match with what is currently going on in their country of origin. When asked: What are some of the main reasons refugees flee from their countries of origin to Morocco, Moussaoui states that the top reasons are "War like that in Syria or Human Trafficking known to happen in many of the sub-Saharan African regions" (Interview with Iman Moussaoui, 2014). Depending on the corroboration of facts lining up with their individual stories, we then grant individual status, which is 3-phase very long process (Interview with Iman Moussaoui, 2014).

The last common issue from the interviews was the unaccounted for Refugees. Both Moussaoui and Elmadmad pointed out that women and children account for majority of the refugee population who are fleeing to Morocco. "You cannot separate children from their mothers, so how can you grant a child legal status to stay in Morocco and in the same breath deny its mother the right to stay as well?" (Interview, Khadija

Elmadmad, 2014). Elmadmad goes on to say that the UN's mobility of refugees is not the problem, the problem is that they are not taking care of the rights of children and women and protecting them under the constitution. Therefore when it comes to Refugee policy and Law in Morocco, women and children are currently unaccounted for and are considered an unprotected irregular migrant (Interview with Khadija Elmadmad, 2014).

Refugee & Asylum Seekers

I interviewed a total of 5 presumed refugee/asylum seekers. These interviews were spoken in French. I say presumed refugees and or asylum seekers because there was no way for me to know their true status being that 90 percent of the refugees/asylum seekers living in Morocco are undocumented, therefore illegally living within the country. Also because I was an outsider I did not have that established trust with their community so I felt that they were skeptical about my true identity as well.

The interviewees were all women working in the Kasbah markets areas in the cities of Casablanca and Rabat. The women were a result of a snowball method. They all worked in the Kasbahs of these two major cities, worked in the same profession, which was beauty services, and lived in the same community together, which was a refugee resettlement area in the city of Casablanca.

The women were from Senegal and the DRC. They would buy their beauty supplies, consisting of 1 pack of eyelashes and 1 tube of Henna from a vendor within the walls of the Kasbah then they would walk around the interior and exterior of the Kasbah offering their services to tourists and locals alike charging 60 Moroccan Dirham for

eyelashes, which is the equivalent to \$6 US dollars and 30 Dirham per hand/foot for henna tattoos, which is the equivalent of \$3 US Dollars. One who I will call W1 followed me through the Kasbah offering to “make my eyelashes longer”:

It seems that every corner I turned she was there calling out to me “come make yourself more beautiful girl! Let me do fake eyelashes for you”. Three times already I had politely declined her services with a gracious smile and a wave and then continued my slow stroll around the market pretending to look at all of the vendor’s gadgets and gadgets. Little did she know I was actually observing the Sub-Saharan African workers in the market trying to find a way to gain insider access without feeling like an intruder. About an hour later as I made my final walk around the market starting to feel disappointed thinking I missed my opportunity to conduct my interviews, I see a group of African ladies in the distance communing in a circle, sitting on buckets braiding one another’s hair and applying henna tattoos on some tourists’ hands and feet. As I came nearer attempting to pass the group without stopping, I look off to my left and see the same lady running towards me with a smile on her face saying “get your eyelashes done!” I could do nothing but laugh as she approached. When she came close enough and finally recognized it was me again, she started to laugh too and in aspiration gave me a hug and said “you can’t seem to avoid me can you?” We had a good laugh and an instant connection I felt was formed. I told her I would not get my eyelashes done still but she could give me henna tattoos on my hands. Insider access granted!

*Fadeelah Holivay
Casablanca Kasbah Refugee Interviews, 2014*

As I sat with the ladies to get my Henna hand tattoos, I introduced myself and told them that I was an American student in Morocco doing some research about the reasons why people migrate to Morocco and asked them if I could ask them about the reasons they decided to come here and how do they think they have been received by the local Moroccans. I kept the questions very informal and made it seem like conversations you would normally have in a beauty or nail salon. When I asked how they came up with their prices for services one woman stated these eyelash kits cost about 25 dirham. If I charge

any less than 60 dirham, I would only be able to eat one meal a day” one woman stated while another claimed that the materials itself costs “25 dirhams”. When I asked the women if they received any aid from local NGOs or the refugee agencies in Morocco and they all replied with an unfazed demeanor like this question had been asked over a hundred times “We have no papers yet and no papers no rights!” (Translated Refugee Interviews, Kasbahs in Rabat and Casablanca, 2014).

I even asked if they feel they are treated any different from the local Moroccan Kasbah vendors and a woman with a bright yellow dressing holding a bag of hair for braiding replied, “of course we, are, we don’t speak Arabic and good as the local Moroccans and the foreigners who come visit act like they are afraid of us because of our skin color”. She continues her rant with just a hint of disgust “and if that doesn’t stop us from making money, then the Moroccan authorities come to scare us away or accuse us of prostitution, which we all know is *Haraam!*⁵” (Translated Refugee Interviews, Kasbah in Rabat and Casablanca, 2014).

Local Moroccans

My interviews for the local Moroccans were very informal as I did not want to make it too formal for fear that they would not be as willing to talk to me truthfully. I asked questions pertaining to their point of view of the refugee situation and how it affects them.

⁵ Haraam is an Arabic word meaning against the will of god or in most cases forbidden to people who practice Islam and are Muslims

I mainly conducted these interviews in the city center of Casablanca due to the access to numerous local Moroccans of different ages, backgrounds, professions and lifestyles. The interviewees were chosen at random as to limit the bias and perception of the refugees and asylum seekers in the area. I interviewed two students from the Hasan II University in Casablanca, one local Taxi/Private driver, whom I will refer to as “Driver”, one bookstore vendor who I will refer to as “Librarian” and one local restaurant owner, whom I will refer to as “Chef”. In contrary to my interviews conducted with the refugees and asylum seekers that happened to be all female, the local Moroccan interviews were all male subjects. This was not planned, however it is common for the male gender to be more present in public places and working outside of the domestic realm due to Morocco having conservative influences from Islamic traditions as well as being a majority Muslim country (Business Source Complete, 2007).

Based on these interviews, especially by them having such diverse backgrounds, astonishingly they all had similar perceptions on the refugee and asylum seeker situation happening in Morocco. When asked how do you feel about the refugees and asylum seekers seeking refuge in Morocco, The driver stated “We were all some type of foreigner to Morocco at some point”, while the Chef stated “We love foreigners, Morocco has always been open to foreigners, this is our tradition, culture, this is the way of our people” (Translated Local Moroccan Interviews, Casablanca Morocco, 2014).

When asked more specific questions regarding the refugees fleeing to Morocco from Sub-Saharan African countries, the students from the university showed deep worry and sorrow on their faces. One student replied and said “I feel sorry for them and what they are going through. I can’t imagine being forced from my home, family and life. “It is

not their fault” (Translated Local Moroccan Interviews, Casablanca Morocco, 2014). The other student stated, “Although we feel bad for them, we feel that there is nothing we can do. This is a matter for our government to fix and help these people make a new home” (Translated Local Moroccan Interviews, Casablanca Morocco, 2014).

Finally from the Driver’s perspective when asked how should Morocco help these refugees and asylum seekers in this transition to a new life in a new country, he responded by saying “We are but simple men and not that we don’t want to help but we have our own problems to think about. I have to think about feeding my family on less than 200DH⁶/month. I am sad because of their struggle but I have my own struggle I am fighting too.” (Translated Local Moroccan Interviews, Casablanca Morocco, 2014).

Archival Research

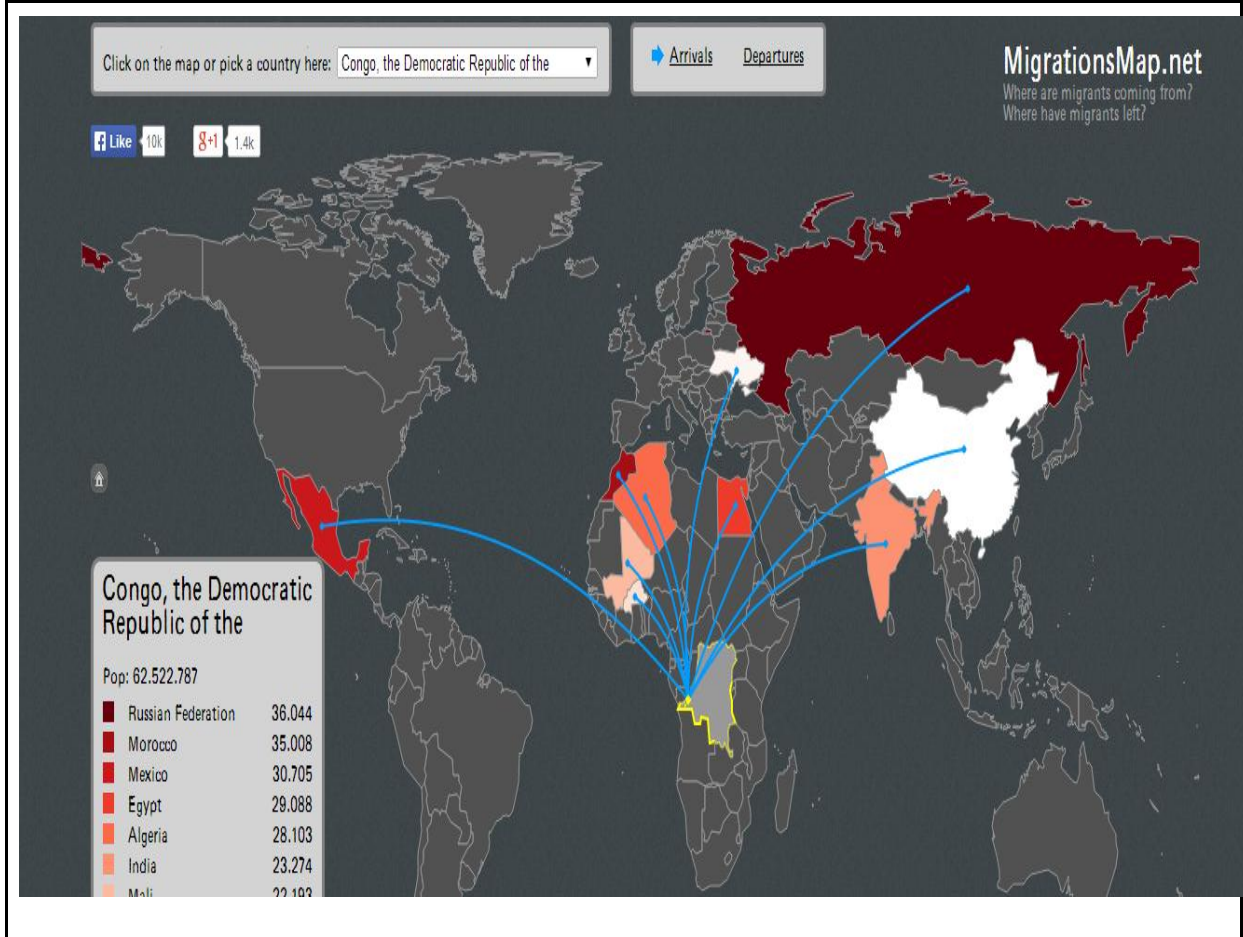
Michael Teitelbaum in his article titled, *Immigration, Refugees and Foreign Policy* demonstrates that international migration on a large scale has increased in the past decade due to foreign policy (Teitelbaum, 2009), but the increase in migration to North Africa is a fairly new phenomenon in refugee migration trends that has taken place within the past 10 years resulting in an increase in refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco particularly (UHNCR, 2012). I speculated that this increase was a result of factors such as political wars and conflicts in The Middle East such as the Post Arab Spring or the tribal wars and genocides like the 15 year war that continues to take place in the Sub-Saharan African countries like The Democratic Republic of Congo. Unfortunately, due to

⁶ DH- Moroccan Dirham

how recent these events are, I was unable to find a lot of scholarship covering these topics. This is where archival research will be very crucial to my thesis.

I used scholarly journals on migration trends and refugee surveys from authors like Channe Lindstrom and Khadijah Elmadmad. There has been current newspaper articles also covering the recent changes to the refugee law pertaining to asylum seekers and undocumented refugees living in Morocco so I also used data from such newspapers as well as personal accounts. The records I mostly focused on covered the past trends of migration to Morocco. I used this to see if there was a correlation between the past and the present flows of refugee migration. I wanted to see if the trends over the past 3 years have increased, decreased or remained the same, provided that such factors as economic, social and political conflicts existed in those times as well. Below is a map of the approximate number of refugees who flee to Morocco from the DRC:

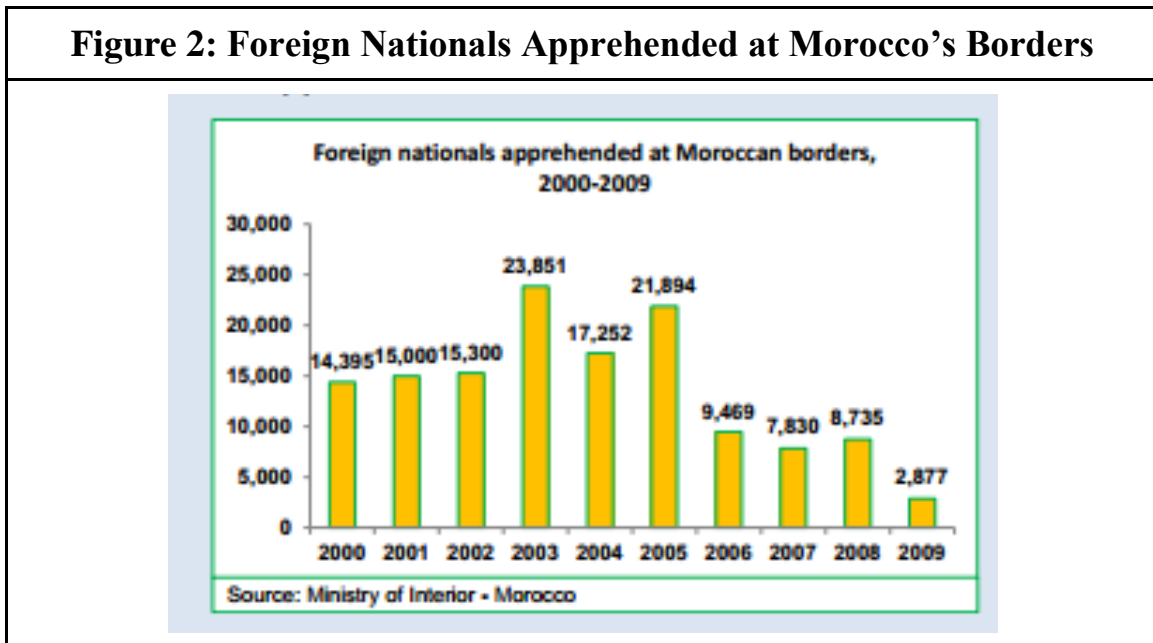
Figure 1: Number of Refugees who flee to Morocco from the DRC



Many refugees have come to Morocco for different reasons such as Morocco's prosperous tourist economy, Morocco's borders that are accessible to Europe as well as the opportunity to have a better way of life because of Morocco's liberal views. However, Anup Shah in his 2010 article titled, *The Democratic Republic of Congo*, points out that as a result of the ongoing war in the DRC, over 90% of the Congolese people are displaced from their country (Shah, 2010) and of these displaced people, about 35,008 have found refuge in Morocco (migrationsmap.net).

I also used archival records provided by bodies of local government and international organizations such as the UHNCR and the Migration Policy Center (MPC).

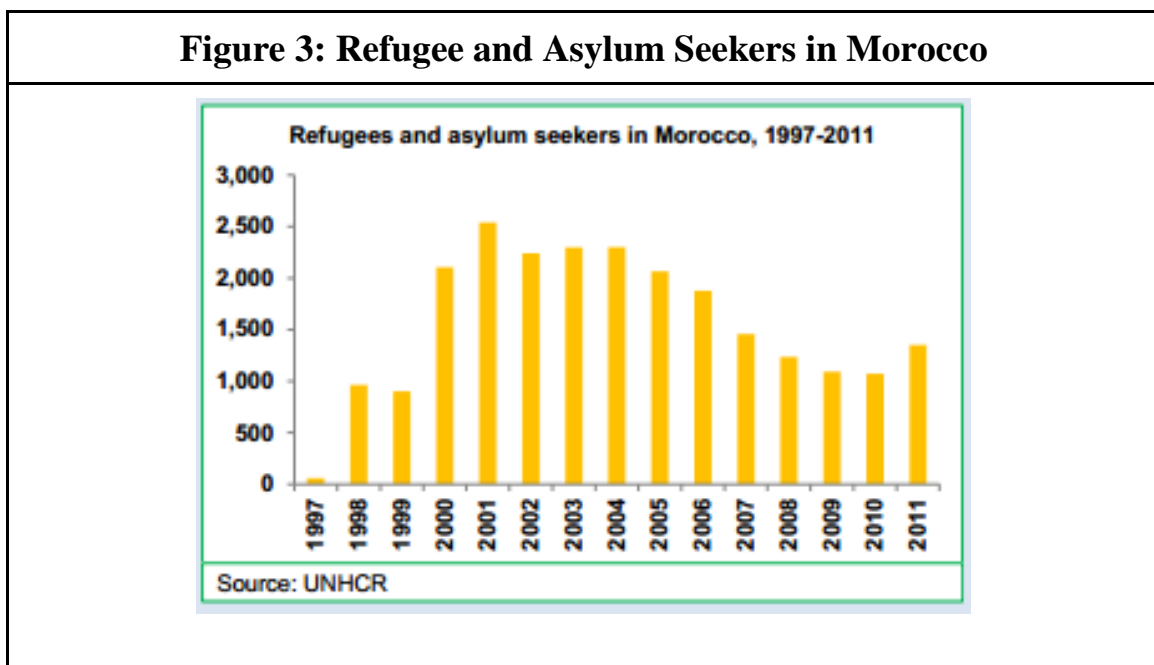
According to a 2013 report by the MPC titled, *Migration Profile of Morocco*, from 2000-2009 Morocco received an irregular migration flow of roughly 136,603 migrants coming from sub-Saharan countries and who were “apprehended” at Morocco’s borders (MPC, 2013). Below **Graph: 1**, provided by the *Ministry of Interior- Morocco*, shows over a 10 year period foreign nationals apprehended at Morocco’s borders:



With 23,851 being the highest number of refugees apprehended at Morocco’s borders in 2003 to only 2,877 being reported in 2009, **Graph 1** shows that over time the number decreased extensively due to the dismantling of illegal human trafficking and increased border patrol (MPC, 2013). A survey conducted by *The Association Marocaine d’Etudes et de Recherches sur les Migrations* showed that of the sub-Saharan migrants

coming in to morocco, about 79% of the migrants were male, had a mid-higher level of education (48.5%), single (82.2%), and were an average age of 27 years old (MPC, 2013).

As stated before, Morocco is known to be a transit and immigration country for refugees and asylum seekers, mainly coming from sub-Saharan and Middle Eastern countries. **Graph 2** below, provided by the *UNHCR*, shows refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco from 1997-2011.



The data from 2011 shows that Morocco hosted 1,351 refugees and asylum seekers total. Of these refugee and asylum seekers represented by this graph, 25% were minors under the age of 18 and 17% were women (MPC, 2013). It also shows that after a huge increase of refugees and asylum seekers in 2001 (2,540), the refugee/asylum seekers decreased almost by half due to heavy border control as well as the extreme difficulty in receiving refugee/asylum seeker status in Morocco (MPC, 2013).

Three years later as of July 2014 and with the help of Iman Moussaoui at the UHNCR, I was able to obtain the most recent statistics in regards to Morocco's current refugee and asylum seeker numbers. **Tables 1 thru Table 3 and Chart A** shows the country of origin and demographics of the asylum seeker profiles in Morocco.

Table 1: Asylum Seeker Population in Morocco - 2014		
Country of Origin	Number of Asylum Seekers	%
Nigeria	380	14.52%
Democratic Republic of Congo	586	22.40%
Mali	334	12.76%
Ivory Coast	465	17.77%
Cameroon	250	9.55%
Guinea	97	3.70%
Congo Brazzaville	78	2.98%
Central African Republic	92	3.51%
Sudan	32	1.22%
Others	308	11.54%
Total	2622	100%

Source: UHNCR

Table 2: Children Asylum Seekers - 2014

Age	Girls	Boys	Total
0 to 4	118	114	232
5 to 11	52	55	107
12 to 17	81	173	254
Total	251	342	593

Source: UHNCR

Table 3: Women Asylum Seekers - 2014

Age	Number
0 to 4	118
5 to 11	52
12 to 17	81
18 to 59	520
60 and more	5
Total	780

Source: UHNCR

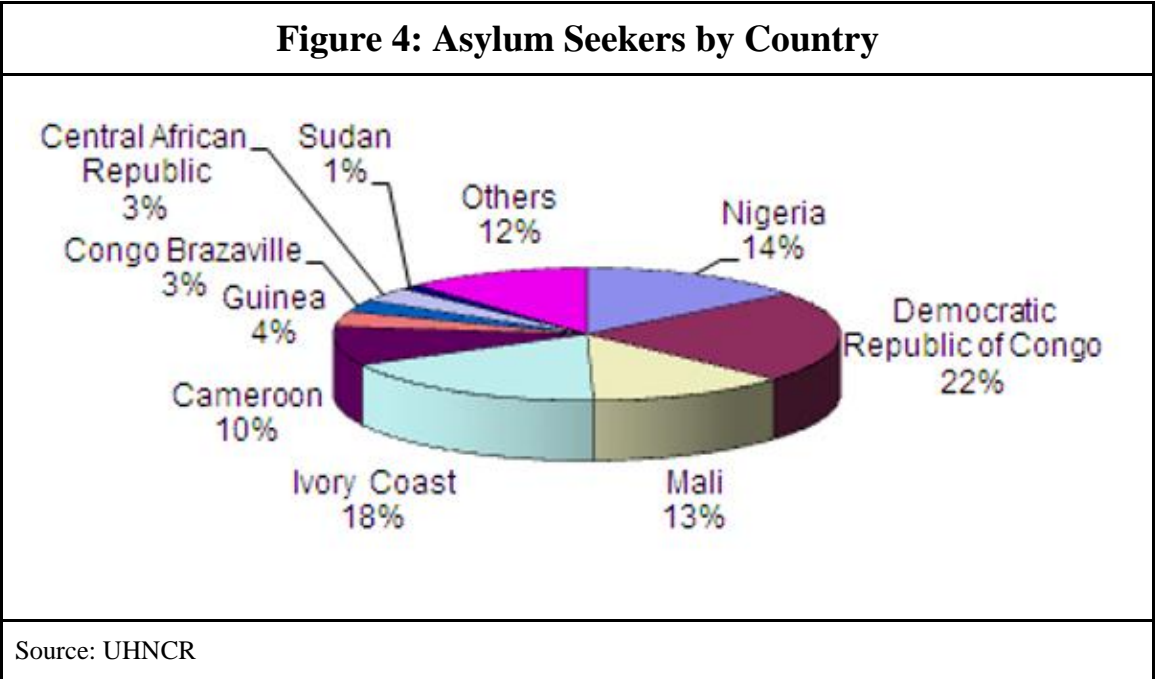


Table 1 and Chart A shows majority of the asylum seekers are originating from sub-Saharan countries and that the highest numbers of asylum seekers (22.40%) are coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). **Table 2 and Table 3** shows that of that percentage of refugees coming from the DRC, 22% are children and 30% of them are women.

Tables 4 thru Table 6 and Chart B show the refugee population by country of origin and demographic profiles in Morocco as of 2014:

Table 4: Refugee Population in Morocco - 2014

Country of Origin	Number of Refugees	%
Ivory Coast	251	15.94%
Democratic Republic of Congo	103	6.54%
Iraq	92	5.84%
Palestine	29	1.84%
Cameroon	10	0.63%
Senegal	7	0.44%
Congo - Brazzaville	4	0.25%
Syria	1049	66.64%
Nigeria	6	0.38%
Others (<5)	23	1.46%
Total	1574	100%

Source: UHNCR

Table 5: Children Refugees - 2014

Age	Girls	Boys	Total
0 to 4	50	59	109
5 to 11	64	49	113
12 to 17	26	43	69
Total	140	151	291

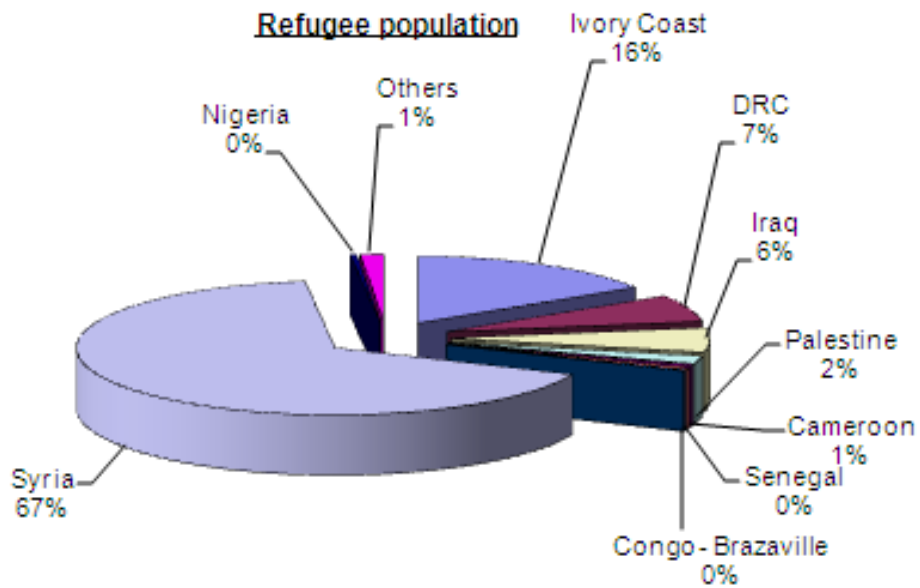
Source: UHNCR

Table 6: Women Refugees - 2014

Age	Number
0 to 4	50
5 to 11	64
12 to 17	26
18 to 59	219
60 and more	11
Total	370

Source: UHNCR

Figure 5: Refugee Population by Country



Source: UHNCR

Table 4 and Chart B shows that of the 1574 refugees granted status in Morocco, of which a total of 661 were women and children (**Table 5 and Table 6**), only 7% were from the DRC, 16% were from the Ivory Coast and an astounding 67% were from Syria. Moussaoui explained that when mass groups of refugees migrate and seek asylum as the result of generalized violence such as the current genocide taking place in Syria, it is not necessary to conduct individual asylum interviews as normal because it is obvious why they fled and are seeking asylum here in Morocco (Interview, Iman Moussaoui, 2014). In this case mass migration groups such as the Syrians are automatically granted *prima facie*⁷ refugee status and are then protected by Morocco. The 1574 refugees in 2014 a total of 661 were women and children as outlined in Table 5 and Table 6.

Surveys

At first I was not sure I was going to use surveys as a part of my methods but I ended up using surveys for refugees and asylum seekers who were specifically from sub-Saharan African countries. I targeted men and women ages 18-60, who either lived and/or worked in the city centers of Casablanca and Rabat and who were classified as refugees or asylum seekers (documented and undocumented).

Based on academic resources, there seemed to be some discrimination towards the sub-Saharan refugees by the local people as well as the local Moroccan authorities that had influenced these types of refugees to either settle in Morocco or flee to other places

⁷ According to the UNHCR during mass movements of refugees (usually as a result of conflicts or generalized violence as opposed to individual persecution), there is not - and never will be - a capacity to conduct individual asylum interviews for everyone who has crossed the border. Nor is it usually necessary, since in such circumstances it is generally evident why they have fled. As a result, such groups are often declared "prima facie" refugees (www.unhcr.org).

across the European border. I conducted both qualitative and quantitative surveys to see if this was a factor in refugees deciding to integrate into the Moroccan community or look at other options outside of Morocco like Europe in order to settle. My targeted interviewees mainly consisted of merchants, and the public.

I tried to randomly pass out surveys the busiest locations of both Casablanca and Rabat city centers that I thought to be frequented by refugees and asylum seekers such as markets, malls, and places of worship. The official language of Morocco is Arabic and the second language most spoken is French. I have an intermediate level of speaking, understanding and reading both languages so I did not anticipate any language barriers, however because I am considered an outsider and from America, I ran into some cultural and dialect issues.

With my surveys I also targeted refugees and asylum seekers who were living in the refugee resettlement facilities in Casablanca. I had no connections upon going there and decided to approach them randomly. I conducted a small panel survey of refugees (5-10) whom shared their experiences with me about life as a refugee/asylum seeker in Morocco. I simply took the initial survey which was in French and just read them the questions and had them answer it out loud. I found that this method was less intimidating and it made them feel more comfortable about sharing their experiences. I also found that while majority of the Sub-Saharan population was French speakers, there was a blatant disparity in actual literacy of French as a written language.

The key findings of my surveys were:

- *10 out of 10 Answered **NO** to receiving aid/assistance from non-profit organizations for refugees*
- *9 out of 10 refugees I surveyed were **WOMEN** between the ages of **18-25***

- 8 out of 10 rated **5 or LESS** for their social experience with local Moroccans
- 7 out of 10 answered **NO** when asked are you familiar with Morocco's Refugee laws

Unfortunately, I found that based on my small sample size of participants for my surveys, they did not provide efficient data about the experiences of all refugees and/or asylum seekers who were from sub-Saharan Africa and who lived in Morocco.

Chapter 4: Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

Discussion Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on my research I have uncovered three major trends in my findings:

- *Flee.* The refugee and asylum seeker population has increased 96% each year over the past three years, which means something is drawing them to this thriving and developing francophone country.
- *Settle.* 40% of refugee and asylum seekers decide to settle in Morocco even though life there is presented with struggles such as discrimination, inability to find appropriate work and housing, and limited or no assistance from the government agencies.
- *Migrate.* Of the refugee and asylum seekers who flee to Morocco, 60% use Morocco as a transit country in order to migrate to Europe, crossing illegally in hopes to find a better conditions than that which they have been exposed to in Morocco.

Refugees Fleeing to Morocco

Based on refugee and asylum seeker data from 2011 compared to data three years later in 2014 it is obvious that no matter if the migrants are legally granted refugee status or not, they continue to migrate to Morocco. **Table 8⁸** below compares the refugee and asylum seeker populations who migrated to Morocco in 2011 and 2014:

Table 7: Comparison of Refugee and Asylum Seeker who Migrated to Morocco 2011 & 2014

2011	Women	Children
Total Refugee and Asylum Seeker Population In Morocco: 1,351		
%	17%	25%

⁸ Numbers in this table are based on refugee/asylum seekers who have been granted status by the UNHCR.

#	230	338
2014	Women	Children
Total Refugee and Asylum Seeker Population In Morocco: 4,196		
%	27%	21%
#	1150	884

Based on these numbers in the table, it is clear to see that the refugee/asylum seeker population has more than tripled to 4,196 refugees fleeing to Morocco in 2014. **Table 8** also shows that the women population increased by 920 and the children population increased by 546 compared to the women and children refugee/asylum seeker population in 2011. While there is evidently still more men migrating to Morocco than women and children, the refugee population has no doubt increased by 96% per year over the last three years.

I conclude that while the obvious reasons why refugees and asylum seekers flee to morocco may be to escape war, political , violence and genocides , this increase in the refugee and asylum seeker population over the last 3 years could a so mean that these migrants, whether voluntary or involuntarily are deciding to flee in search of a stable yet developing country that shares tolerance, a commonality such as language, culture, Islamic and French traditions as well as liberal thinking and westernization. They see this in Morocco and that is why we will continue to see an increase in the migration population in the years to come.

Refugees Settling in Morocco

For the 40% of Refugees who decide to settle in Morocco whether legally or illegally, they face difficult struggles such as discrimination and problems successfully integrating into the Moroccan lifestyle due to language and educational barriers. In my findings there was some evidence of discrimination in the point of view of the refugee and asylum seekers by Moroccan authorities and maybe even some unintentional discrimination by the local Moroccans based on their fear and perception of the sub-Saharan Africans. However, contrary to my prior assumptions, the local Moroccans in fact were very sympathetic towards the refugee and asylum seeker population, as they expressed their disappointment with their plight.

Even though the refugees and asylum seekers are presented with such obstacles and struggles in their attempt to start over, many refugees and asylum seekers would gladly battle these obstacles in order to build a new life in Morocco rather than return back to their countries where they would face persecution, economic instability or even death.

Refugees Migrating from Morocco

Even though 40% of refugees and asylum seekers choose to settle in Morocco, astonishingly, 60% of the sub-Saharan African refugees who seek asylum in Morocco ultimately decide to migrate (illegally) across the borders into Europe thereby confirming the assumption that Morocco is being used as a bridge or transit country. However, the

case remains that due to Morocco's strict asylum seeker procedures, over 90% of refugees remain undocumented therefore, leaving them unable to legally work, obtain reasonable housing as well as services and aid provided by government and NGO organizations. As they face these conditions more than half of the refugees and asylum seekers feel they have no choice but to take the risk of possible deportation back to their countries to migrate to Europe where they hope opportunities will be greater and the people to be more accepting.

Further Research

I imagine that if I had more time, funding and resources granting me access to the local refugee and asylum seeker populations, government and NGO organizations as well as local Moroccans, I would be able to conduct more interviews and build stronger relationships. I would also gain insider access to record deeper accounts and stories of how the migration struggle has affected individuals and families on an economic, social and personal level.

Also if I had more time and funding, I would be able to travel to Moroccan cities such as Oujda and Tangier where I would be able to access and talk to the refugee populations who are actually taking the risk to cross over into European territories in an attempt to seek a better life outside of their refugee camps.

Finally, I imagine that if I had better connections to these refugee populations I would be able to go into the refugee resettlement camps and document first hand struggles they face as they try to start over in Morocco. This would also give me the

opportunity to administer surveys and hold focus groups where I would be able to get accurate results based on a huge sample of my targeted demographic group.

Theory Moving Ahead

Based on my findings and the gaps that still remain after my research, I think that moving forward, the problem that really needs to be addressed when talking about the refugee and asylum seeker laws, policies and procedures and the reason why 90% of refugee and asylum seekers remain illegal and undocumented in Morocco is **Human rights vs. Citizenship.**

By calling attention and evaluating the basic human rights of these refugees and asylum seekers and acknowledging the inherited right to be treated as humans above all and be afforded the common rights and services afforded to those we define as a citizen or having citizenship status, then maybe we can begin really solving this problem of immigration that Morocco as well the global community faces today.

Recommendations

Based on my research, I recommend the following strategies that Morocco's government could implement moving forward for their current and future refugee populations:

1. **Develop a refugee policy and law that is efficient and effective and that works in a timely manner as far as granting asylum through documentation.** Refugees can then develop a sense of security, stability and belonging in order to start living their lives the best way that they can in their host country.
2. **Establish more NGO's or communities programs that provide basic aide to all refugees and asylum seekers.** The government could start to provide funding for programs that offer educational integration programs through local churches, schools or community centers. These educational programs could consist of language classes, job training, and cultural integration and would be available for all refugees and asylum seekers and not just those granted status.
3. **Give refugees who are seeking to settle in Morocco permanently the opportunity to get expedited documentation processing and status approval.** Those who are seeking permanent status, the government should establish some type of standardized system for refugee documentation processing that could categorize refugees based on what type of status they are seeking and give priority to those refugees looking to settle and invest in Morocco permanently.
4. **Establish an integration/assimilation program and Refugee awareness Practices for the local Moroccan community.** This will be aimed at helping discern and prevent racism, discrimination and malicious behavior and actions towards the refugee population by promoting tolerance and acceptance.

Conclusion

In my paper I set out to find the reasons why refugees and asylum seekers chose to flee, settle, or migrate to and from Morocco and based on my research , I proved the following:

What policies and laws are structurally in place (past, present, and future) that accepts/grants refugees and asylum seekers the ability to seek refuge in Morocco?

Do these Refugees migrate to Morocco in hopes of settling down permanently then once they get there they find that due to policies, laws and infrastructure it is not

possible? With continued progress, efforts by refugee advocates such as Khadija

Elmadmad and changes to Moroccan and International Laws like Article 31 and the 2014 new law granting quicker processes for refugees and asylum seekers to be granted status, refugees will continue to migrate there to seek refuge voluntarily or involuntarily. This is evident by the 96% increase in refugees migrating to Morocco each year over the last three years.

In my interviews, I also found that continuous efforts are being made to find laws and policies that better represent the status of refugees that decide to migrate to Morocco. This is shown by the UNHCR's current change in the Moroccan Law, better access to aid & resources and refugee settlement facilities. In order to ensure refugees are heard and their rights are being protected in such cases like, the recognition of women and children refugees in immigration and refugee laws domestically and internationally, advocacy programs and representation provided by refugee and migration attorneys like Khadija Elmadmad are on the rise.

Do these refugees choose to migrate to Morocco because it is a stable Islamic country with the same cultural and traditional values as well as colonial ties that they are accustomed to? Is it because it has liberal views connected to the modernity of western influence that is currently developing rapidly in Morocco? Because of

Morocco's longstanding traditions and roots in Islamic law, foreigners migrate there in hopes of a new start. Also being that Morocco is a francophone country that is developing and westernized and due to its prosperous and booming tourist economy it is no wonder that refugees migrate there.

What is the general reception of refugees in Moroccan cities such as Rabat and Casablanca from the point of view of the migrants themselves as well as the local Moroccan population?

I have found that while most refugees who are currently working in Morocco feel that the local Moroccan community does not accept them and may even discriminate against them, based on the interviews that I conducted with local Moroccans they actually feel empathy and can relate with the struggles of the refugees and asylum seekers who migrate there. The local Moroccan population has a very hospitable demeanor about them that is known to welcome foreigners into their country and although the locals are accepting they also felt that it is up to the government to help and provide for these refugees. Many local Moroccans in fact are living below the poverty line and have little or nothing to provide in excess. It was very fascinating however to see that majority of the refugees found in the kasbahs and work place were women, while majority of the local Moroccans found in kasbahs and work places outside of the home were men. Further research would be required to look into this newly discovered phenomenon. I do

however feel that this is a result of culture norms in Morocco and the Islamic values practiced there as well.


Is it Morocco that is the final destination for these refugees or is Morocco just a transit stop on their way to settling in Europe, which may be able to provide a stable political country, work and housing opportunities?

I found that while 60% of refugees who come to Morocco decide to use it as a transit country in order to migrate to Europe due to policies and laws that prohibits them from obtaining legal status in order to make it their home, 40% still decide or have the intention of settling in Morocco. Even though these refugees may face discrimination, integration difficulty with the local Moroccan population or even difficulty finding work, housing and obtaining services afforded to the citizens of Morocco, they prefer to endure these struggles in an attempt to find a better life rather than return back to their countries of origin, where their future would be bleak and unknown.

Appendices

Appendix A: Descriptions of Government and Non-Government Organizations: The UHPCR and the UNESCO Centre for the Law and Migration

The UNHCR




UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

enter search

ABOUT US | WHAT WE DO | WHO WE HELP | WHERE WE WORK | NEWS AND VIEWS | RESOURCES

Home > What We Do

What We Do



Help the Uprooted and Stateless

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.

In more than six decades, the agency has helped millions of people restart their lives. Today, a staff of more than 7,600 people in over than 125 countries continues to help tens of millions of people.

Source: UNHCR

The UNESCO Centre “The Law and Migration”



Centre UNESCO
Droits et Migrations
CUDM
مركز اليونسكو القانون والهجرة
UNESCO Centre
The Law and Migration

The UNESCO Centre "The Law and Migration" is part of the UNESCO Civil Network. It was created in Rabat on 15 December 2012 by lawyers (scholars and practitioners), specialized in migration law. The objective behind its creation is to promote research, studies and actions in relation with all types of migration (emigration and immigration,, internal and international migration, voluntary and forced, regular and irregular, individual and collective, permanent and temporary etc.) and all branches of the Law (domestic and international, private and public...).

The UNESCO Centre undertakes its activities by reference to the UNESCO ideals, to the Moroccan law and to the legal international instruments (universal and regional) relating to human rights and to the rights of all migrants, such as the instruments concerning human rights law, migrant workers, foreigners, refugees and displaced persons.

The main purposes of The UNESCO Centre “The Law and Migration” consist in promoting practical actions, research, studies and fieldwork relating to all types of migration and to all branches of the Law, as well as enforcing the rights of all migrants and offering legal assistance to them.

The work of the UNESCO Centre "The Law and Migration" is voluntary and a nonprofit work, non-political, based on taking collective decisions, sharing knowledge and information between all its members, in respect of-the diversity of their competences and abilities and the solidarity between them.

The UNESCO Centre "The Law and Migration*" assigns the following goals:

- Promoting an academic and a practical dynamic in the field of national and international migration law;
- Reinforcing links and partnerships with national and international institutions working on migration law in Morocco and abroad;
- Livening up a specialized network of academics, practitioners and members of NGOs undertaking activities in the field of migration law;
- Collaborating with the official institutions, with respect of the Centre's independence;
- Sponsoring migration lawyers.
-

For more information please contact:

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Source: The UNESCO Centre www.cudm.net

Appendix B: Legal Framework of Migration and Refugee Laws and Policies of Morocco's

Legal Framework	Outward migration	Inward migration
General Legal References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 Moroccan Constitution² • 2004 Judgment of the Court of First Instance of Tetouan on the crime of illegal immigration and emigration and encouraging illegal immigration³ • 2003 Law n°02-03 on the entry and stay of foreign nationals into Morocco, emigration and irregular immigration⁴ • 2003 Law n° 65-69 on the Labour Code⁵ • 1958 Code of Moroccan nationality modified in 2007⁶ 	
Entry and Exit	<p style="text-align: center;">Visa</p> <p>Even if not required by law, the authorities expect foreign and national citizens leaving the country to show an entry visa for the country of destination.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Since 1994, the border with Algeria has been officially closed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Visa</p> <p>Foreigners may be asked for means of living, reasons for entering, and repatriation guarantees.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Visa exemption for citizens from Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville, Ivory Coast; the European Union, the United States, Mexico, among others.</p>
Irregular Migration	<p>Law n°02-03 strengthens repression against people who, even without taking advantage of this opportunity, facilitate or organize irregular entry into or exit from the country. It also penalizes irregular immigrants or emigrants, should they be foreign or national citizens.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Retention of foreign nationals waiting for deportation or being readmitted after a transit through the country (15 days, possible extension to 10 more days). Protection of some foreign national categories from deportation (pregnant women or minors).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Agreements regarding irregular migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Readmission agreements (for Moroccan nationals only) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spain (1992, 2003, as well as 2007 agreement on cooperation to prevent the illegal emigration of unaccompanied minors, for their protection and their concerted return). • France (1993, 2001) • Germany (1998) • Italy (1998, 1999) • Portugal (1999) > Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU-Morocco Association Agreement (1996, entering into force in 2000): parties agree to a dialogue on illegal immigration and the conditions governing the return of irregular immigrants. • Palermo Protocols: in 2011, Morocco accepted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. 	

² Kingdom of Morocco General Secretariat of the Government. (2011). *La Constitution Edition 2011*. http://www.sgg.gov.ma/constitution_2011_Fr.pdf

³ CARIM. *Legal Database – Morocco*. Retrieved from <http://www.carim.org/index.php?callContent=400&callCountry=1310>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Source: Migration Policy Centre

Appendix C: Sample Surveys

(French Version)

Bonjour! Je suis un étudiant de l'Université de San Francisco en Amérique. Je mène des recherches pour ma thèse finale sur: Les raisons pour lesquelles les réfugiés migrent au Maroc. Mes intentions de recherche sont d'aider le Maroc à développer de meilleures politiques, des procédures et des lois qui bénéficieront des programmes d'état et d'intégration disponible pour les réfugiés qui migrent ici. S'il vous plaît aidez-moi en prenant cette enquête !!

Cela prendra 5 minutes. S'il vous plaît compléter maintenant et revenez me voir.

***** Aucune compensation ne sera fourni**

****** Cette enquête est volontaire et confidentiel**

***** Cette enquête sera utilisée uniquement à des fins de recherche et d'enseignement pour ma thèse**

***** Si vous souhaitez prendre une photo avec moi de montrer dans mon dernier exposé s'il vous plaît vérifier ici _____**

***** Si vous souhaitez être mis à jour sur mes résultats de recherche définitifs s'il vous plaît vérifier ici _____ et prouvé votre nom et votre adresse email ci-dessous.**

Nom

Email

Merci pour votre participation !!

ENQUÊTE S'il vous plaît répondre honnêtement

1. Quel est votre statut actuel au Maroc? cercle un
 - a. Citoyen marocain
 - b. Réfugié
 - c. Le demandeur d'asile

2. Si vous avez choisi réfugié ou demandeur d'asile êtes-vous? cercle un
 - Documenté
 - Sans papiers
 - Ne s'applique pas

3. Êtes-vous familier avec le droit des réfugiés au Maroc? cercle un
 - Oui
 - Aucun

4. Combien de temps avez-vous vécu au Maroc? cercle un
 - 1 année ou moins
 - 2-5 ans
 - 6-10 ans

5. Quel âge avez-vous? cercle un
 - 18-25
 - 26-40
 - 40-60

6. Êtes-vous de l'Afrique subsaharienne? cercle un
 - Oui
 - Aucun
 - Si oui, quel pays? _____

7. Sur une échelle de 1-10 comment faire évaluer votre expérience sociale avec les Marocains locaux? cercle un (1 = mauvais, 10 = grand)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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8. Est-ce que vous recevez de l'aide d'une organisation à but non lucratif pour les réfugiés? Si oui, quel genre de service? (Soins de santé, le logement, le placement de l'emploi, des cours de langue, etc)

9. Travaillez-vous actuellement? Si oui, que faites-vous?

10. Avez-vous l'intention de s'installer au Maroc? Si non, quels sont les obstacles vous empêchent de faire de votre maison Maroc permanent? (Utiliser l'espace pour écrire votre réponse)

11. Pourquoi avez-vous choisi de vivre au Maroc? Quelle circonstance vous a fait quitter la maison? (Utilisez l'espace pour écrire votre réponse)

(English Version)

Hello there! I am a student at the University of San Francisco in America. I'm conducting research for my final thesis: The Reasons Why Refugees Migrate to Morocco. My research intentions are to help Morocco develop better policies, procedures and laws that will benefit the status and integration programs available for refugees who migrate here. Please help me by taking this survey!!

***** This will take 5 minutes. Please complete now and return to me.**

***** No compensation will be provided**

****** This survey is voluntary and confidential**

***** This survey will be used only for research and educational purposes for my thesis**

***** If you want to take a picture with me to show in my last briefing please check here _____**

***** If you want to be updated on my final research results please check here _____ and provide your name and email address below.**

Name

E-mail

Thank you for your participation!!

Survey- Please Answer Honestly

1. What is your current status in Morocco? circle one
 - a. Moroccan citizen
 - b. Refugee
 - c. Asylum seeker

2. If you chose refugee or asylum seeker are you? circle one
 - a. Documented
 - b. Undocumented
 - c. Does Not Apply

3. Are you familiar with Morocco's refugee law? circle one
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. How long have you lived in Morocco? circle one
 - a. 1 year or less
 - b. 2-5 years
 - c. 6-10 years

5. How old are you? circle one
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-40
 - c. 40-60

6. Are you sub-Saharan African? circle one

a. Yes

b. No

c. If Yes, What Country? _____

7. On a scale of 1-10 how do rate your social experience with the local Moroccans? circle one (1 =bad, 10= great)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Are you receiving assistance from a non-profit organization for refugees? if Yes, what kind of service ? (Health care, Housing, employment placement, language classes, etc)

9. Are you currently employed? If yes, what do you do?

10. Do you plan to settle in Morocco? If no, what obstacles are keeping you from making Morocco your permanent home? (use the space to write your response)

11. Why did you choose to live in Morocco? What circumstance made you leave home?(Use the space to write your response)

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