

The Dark Nobodies: Social Defeat or Why There's No Strength in Suffering for Sub-Saharan Survival Migrants in the Maghreb.

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Abstract

Sub-Saharan irregular migration into the Maghreb region has in the past been primarily investigated through restrictive political models that while beneficial to a political understanding of human movement, have indirectly undervalued the social experience of migration. Therefore, the objective of this paper was a rejuvenation of previous models with primacy on the social experience of different sub-Saharan groups' during their migration process to Northern Africa, and more specifically Morocco. Relying on primary and secondary narratives, this study evaluates the role of violent exploitation as a catalyst for conditions of 'social defeat' amongst irregular migrants in transit and in residence in the Maghreb. By scrutinizing migrant narratives on death, sexual assault, theft, kidnapping, and other forms of violent exploitation, this paper analyzes the role of sustained exposure to violence in creating a vicious social cycle of subjugation, exploitation and defeat for irregular migrants within this region.

Key Words: Survival Migration, Irregular migrant status, social defeat, violence.

1.1 Methods

This study primarily relied on primary and secondary narratives collected from publications by The United Nations High Commission on Refugees, the medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders, Migration Europe, and the International Organization for Migration. Primary narratives were collected through the aid of various non-governmental organizations tasked with aiding sub-Saharan migrants living within Moroccan borders. These organizations included: The Association of Sub-Saharan Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum seekers, Refugees without borders, The council of Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco, and The Rabat French Protestant Church. Interviews were conducted within a limited structure that allowed for minimal interviewer interference or interjection. The interview questionnaire consisted of ten questions directed at eliciting individual life stories. Participants were informed that this was an academic study aimed at understanding sub-Saharan migration within the region but were instructed to provide as much individual background information preceding their entry to Morocco as possible. Once the interviews started, I the investigator rarely interjected and only interfered to seek clarity on comments made by the participants. Ultimately, six primary interviews were conducted, but only three were included in this study due to length constraints. Due to the sensitivity of this topic, informant privacy was maintained throughout the paper through the use of pseudonyms for participants' whose testimonies are contained herein.

2.0 Restructuring Sub-Saharan Migration In A Social Context.

Despite current sensationalized views of irregular sub-Saharan migrants invading the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea in hopes of crossing over to Europe, the Maghreb (North Africa) region carries a rather extensive migratory history dating back to post-colonialism. In effect, current portrayals of sub-Saharans risking human and monetary resources for better lives on the European continent were previously associated with North Africans seeking similar goals. Moreover, with consideration to the difficulties associated with such perilous journeys, the relative success of sub-Saharan in the past is somewhat owed to networks created and sustained by North Africans during their period of dominance as irregular trans-Mediterranean migrants.

From such precedence, it's worth careful note that irregular migration into the European continent exists and persists as a result of historical foundations that are consistently refined by each new migrant group passing through the Maghreb on route to Europe. However, the latter viewpoint has slowly faded and in its place, a new age of increased politicization has transformed the way sub-Saharan migration is viewed and treated in this region. Through proliferation of media fallacy, their presence is currently constructed as a sustained foreign invasion whose repression necessitates a militarized response constituting barbed wires, guard dogs, holding camps, high walls, and increased technological and human surveillance. With border protection taking the forefront as the number one tool in repelling irregular migrant presence at the European backdoors, the state of sub-Saharan migrants has seriously deteriorated in the past few years. Furthermore, with heightened European pressure backed by numerous financial aid packages and incentives, Maghreb nations have in response stepped up their efforts in not only border protection but also the active search, seizure and deportation of suspected illegals inside their borders. To the migrant's detriment, the success of the latter policies and others belonging to the same vein has seen a sharp depreciation in the humanitarian situation for those suspected and caught in violation.

It's from this backdrop of simmering tensions between migrants, Europe, and the Maghreb nations that this study hopes to revitalize the examination of sub-Saharan migration with respect to the social experience of human transit. By discarding previous viewpoints that have transformed individuals into pure mathematical computations, the objective here is to re-introduce the humanity component previously ignored in other precursory studies. As such, the successful navigation of this new approach must begin with the destruction of pre-existing myths and in their place, a substitutive concept that places paramount focus on the individual migrant and more specifically, the plight of being in irregular residency. Ultimately, an appreciative understanding on the predicament and degree of violent persecution endured by irregular sub-Saharans is better conducted at a smaller and more specific scale. For the latter reason, this study is specifically focused on the Maghreb nation of Morocco but also includes transit nations such as Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Niger and Mali.

2.2 Demystifying Irregular Sub-Saharan Migration.

In the case of Morocco, and by large nations of the Maghreb region, the primary basis for increased monitoring and restrictions on irregular migration are based on the following assumptions: First, it's somewhat assumed that the large majority of sub-Saharans entering the region intend on settling in Europe permanently and their presence in the Maghreb remains of a passing nature. Secondly it is also assumed that the number of sub-Saharans entering the European Union through the Maghreb currently stands at a dangerously elevated level and thus necessitates a level of constant diligence in order to diminish these 'alarming' rates of irregular intrusion. Finally, as earlier alluded to, irregular sub-Saharan migration in and out of the Maghreb is also mistakenly assumed to be a new phenomenon separate from past migratory trends.

But as investigated by Hein De Haas, Co-Director for the International Migration Institute at the University of Oxford, several fundamental errors exist in the above mentioned viewpoints. On the first assumption, De Haas argues that the number of sub-Saharan Africans living in the Maghreb in fact exceeds the number of the same group currently residing in Europe. He later adds that, "an estimated 65,000 to 120,000 sub-Saharan Africans enter the Maghreb yearly overland, and of which only 20 to 38 percent are estimated to enter Europe" (De Haas 2008:9). As such, while permanent settlement in Europe appears preferable to some migrants, the decision to remain in North Africa also carries a quite significant following. Secondly, irregular immigration from the Maghreb region into the European continent remains a rather old practice that owes its origins to the introduction of visa requirements by southern European nations in the 1990's. The major difference, De Haas argues, is that "since 2000 sub-Saharans have started to join and have now overtaken North Africans as the largest group of irregular trans-Mediterranean migrants" (De Haas 2008:9).

Nevertheless, when evaluated in parallel comparison, the estimated number of western African immigrants currently residing in Europe stands at 800,000 while the number of North Africans stands at 2,600,000, with Moroccan immigrants independently outnumbering the entire west African immigrant population on the whole European continent (De Haas 2008:9). With the above elements considered, it is worth noting that while sub-Saharan migration into the Maghreb has increased since the year 2000, this number remains relatively low and therefore discredits mainstream media's portrayal of invading black Africans caught in indecisive limbo on North African soil after failed exodus to Europe.

2.3 Border Controls and the New Euro-Mediterranean Relationship.

Though the numbers of irregular sub-Saharanans currently living in the Maghreb region might not be as staggering as normally depicted, their presence has nonetheless been met with stiff resistance from both Maghreb and European sides. As such, a discussion on the intricate relationship between Europe, and its Maghreb neighbors becomes beneficial to an understanding of the precarious state that the irregular migrant currently occupies. Owing to the already established history of irregular immigration into European nations, the European Union from the early 1990's responded to this persistent issue through the creation of incentive based aid programs that encouraged Maghreb nations to control their borders in exchange for foreign aid. Consequently, nations like Morocco systematically updated and reinforced their nations' most vulnerable points of crossings from border to border. From the erection of high fortified walls equipped with razor barbed wire, to increases in both human and video surveillance, and the addition of police checkpoints on highways and trains, Morocco and other nations alike thoroughly militarized their border regions in hopes of stemming potential flows of irregular migrants.

Likewise, European states also revitalized their border security through several waves of upgrades that involved: deployment of semi-military and military forces on Spanish and Italian coasts, erection of high fences on the

Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, (located on the North Eastern Moroccan coasts), and the installation of early warning radar systems (SIVE or Integrated System of External Vigilance) at the strait of Gibraltar and the Canary Islands located on the south eastern coast of Morocco (Lahlou 2005: 37). In addition, European states also signed readmission agreements with their Maghreb counterparts that allowed transfer of irregular migrants captured on European soil back across the sea for further deportation. In Morocco's case, agreements with Spain, Italy and Libya in 2003 ushered in a new era of not only joint naval patrols on coastal waters, but also the creation of a capture, incarceration, readmission and deportation pipeline that would undoubtedly change the state of trans-Saharan migration from this point on.

2.4 Survival Migration

The complete overhaul of border relations in the new era of revamped Euro-Maghreb cooperation was initially promoted as the final solution to addressing the growing sub-Saharan problem in the region. But while the purported gains in this containment campaign satisfied European and Maghreb political and economic objectives, the implementation of the agreed upon policies marked the first major step towards complete repudiation of migrant humanitarian rights. First, the new Euro-Mediterranean relationships were based on economic incentives and as such, the primary concern for Border States such as Morocco was fulfillment of treaty mandates through a show of increasing diligence in the fight against irregular migration. The latter meant that for the sustenance of foreign aid, Maghreb nations needed to significantly increase their operations on not only blocking entry into Europe, but also a sustained effort in the active search and capture of illegals within each country's borders. As such, night raids and street arrests in major interior cities became a frequent occurrence as leniency was replaced by intolerance.

Secondly, Europe's exportation of deportation responsibilities to the Maghreb states meant that the execution of all procedures contained therein was left to the discretion of each individual nation. This way, European states extricated themselves from all responsibilities on the protection of migrant rights while simultaneously creating a buffer zone between themselves and potential irregular immigrants. Lastly, incentive based production generally blurred the boundaries usually adhered to in the treatment of migrants as prescribed by their individual transit status. The above indicates that while not explicated in national policy, provisions created by the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention, (agreements that provide protection for people living outside their nations of origin as asylum seekers or refugees), could be somewhat bypassed under façades of border protection.

Furthermore, the brunt of this new offensive would notably affect those people falling outside the strict refugee or asylum seeker constructs in what Dr. Alexander Betts, Director of Global Migration Governance Project, refers to as survival migrants (Betts 2010:364). Unlike refugees whose protection falls under the jurisdiction of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), survival migrants as Dr. Betts explains, are "persons who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution," yet they unfortunately fall outside the limits of existing international protection agreements (Betts 2010:365).

For this category of migrants, the presence of existential threats in their origin countries, (threats to basic human rights such as basic liberty, basic security and basic subsistence), does not provide them protection under existing protection mandates; thus rendering their presence across international borders illegal. This illegal status when compounded with the increasing crackdown on irregular migration makes them the most victimized group of people in transit ahead of both refugees and asylum seekers. (It's due to the latter reasons that all subsequent discussion of irregular migration from this point is considered of a survival nature).

Within a context of survival migration, nations' responses to this rather marginalized group is best categorized within a continuum model whereby some nations respond to these migrants with benevolence and accommodation while others opt for more stringent and often oppressive approaches. In what Betts describes as 'regime stretching' different nations' responses to survival migrants inside their territories is best classified through the following categories:

- *Violation*: Systematic and state led crimes against humanity
- *Paradox*: De-facto protection of long stay survival migrants, but exclusion of new arrivals
- *Ad Hoc*: Absence of formal status, lack of economic and social rights
- *Dichotomy*: Refugees-voluntary economic migrants distinction
- *Prima Facie*: Recognition alongside refugees, but limited rights to all
- *Triage*: Shift from prima facie towards growing exclusion. (Betts 2010:367)

Within this framework, Morocco's treatment of both survival migrants and refugees was in the past somewhat applicable to the prima facie classification. Yet due to the deterioration in rights for both refugees and irregular migrants, current policies have slowly shifted the country's standing away from a prima facie label and closer towards a triage classification.

This evolution is best exemplified by the degree of ambivalence and ignorance that the Moroccan state and public has utilized when addressing matters relating to both refugees and irregular migrants. Even though the country has ratified major international treaties concerning migrants and refugee protection,(including the 1952 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol), an evaluative report conducted by the UNHCR reported that, "amongst the Moroccan population there is generally little knowledge of the special situation and protection needs of asylum seekers and refugees. In some instances, politicians, interest groups . . . have failed to differentiate between those who are and who are not in need for protection (Li Rosi 2010:11). In addition, given the irregular nature of survival migration, most of these individuals enter and reside within the country's boundaries in a clandestine nature and as such accurate computations on their actual population size are often impossible to acquire. Nevertheless, Moroccan government estimates place the number of irregular migrants at 10,000 of which only 750 to 800 (less than 1 percent of the total) have been recognized as refugees (Li Rosi 2010:11).

Therefore a large majority of these survival migrants whose official numbers remain undetermined exist in a precarious state whereby neither the Moroccan state nor the UNHCR can assure their protection. Furthermore, within existing structures, the UNHCR scope of influence is restricted to the nation's capital, Rabat, where its functional capabilities are severely limited. Considering the increased police presence in big Moroccan cities, most of these migrants opt for harsher living conditions where the risk of arrest is significantly mitigated. Even for potential refugees, the UNHCR emphasizes that, "these individuals stranded in border areas or who chose to live in other locations and towns need direct access to UNHCR in order to register with the organization, apply for refugee status, be provided with documentation, report on any protection problems they experience, and request support in relation to assistance and durable solutions" yet all the above faculties of assistance remain structurally restricted to a limited few (Li Rosi 2010:17). From this backdrop, it's worth mention that an existence under refugee classification while not optimum, at least secures some level of security; for the irregular migrant, the problems associated with illegality are much more acute.

2.5 Social Defeat

The state of survival migration has thus far has been developed with the intent of exhibiting human movement's external structure, which is undoubtedly governed and regulated within a specific political framework. This form of analysis has consequently facilitated an understanding of the political dynamics that form and transform human mobility beyond national boundaries. Nevertheless, a pivotal omission has been intentionally made to accentuate the results of using limited scopes of examination on an issue that transcends simple political structure.

When thoroughly reconsidered, migration within this context is not defined as just translocation of matter from one point to another, but instead, *human* movement from one location to the next. Equally important is the fact that human movement entails interaction with not only other people in transit but also those political structures described earlier. Therefore with emphasis to the interactive aspect of human movement, the prior mode of examination must be amended to include a *social* understanding of migration. This new form of analysis is thus geared towards a social perspective that emphasizes both migrant to migrant interactions, and migrant- structure relations. Since present day human movement rarely exists outside political structures, the interactive or social dimension of migration is thus inseparable from the political constructs that engulf and control it.

This social interaction model when applied to irregular migration reveals a rather terrifying atmosphere for the migrant in this region. As alluded to earlier, political agreements between Europe and its Maghreb neighbors have created an environment that's openly hostile to the irregular migrant. Withstanding all mentioned difficulties, entry to a Maghreb nation's boundaries with irregular status marks the beginning of a completely new regimen of obstacles aimed at extricating the migrant from the territory with as much force and authority as possible. Within this construct, the irregular migrant's social experience becomes one of subjugation, exploitation, violation, humiliation and ultimate defeat. Considering that the instigating factor in survival migration is the presence of existential threats, (which not only include threats to life but also threats to basic dignity), irregular entry into the Maghreb territory only exacerbates those fears that originally force migrants away from their homelands. The social experience here then becomes one of constant strife: denied basic liberty, they live under fear of capture and deportation; denied basic security, they exist on the fringes of society in fear of recognition, denied basic subsistence they scavenge for survival without assurances for tomorrow; they live lives of defeat, social defeat. This concept of social defeat has in the past been utilized within the psychological discipline to characterize chronic anti-social behavior between small scale rat populations.

It involves the introduction of an unfamiliar rat into the home cage of another rat after which interactions between both rats are monitored and analyzed. As performed by psychologists Jean Paul Selten and Elizabeth Cantor Graae, this resident-intruder experiment often yielded the following results: once introduced into the new environment, the resident rat consistently attacked the intruder rat, physically defeating the intruder and forcing him to show submissive behavior (Selten 2005: 101). But while the latter model has not been extensively utilized in migration studies, the resident-intruder paradigm provides an excellent basis for deep introspection into the dynamics of migrants' receptions and treatments outside their countries of origin. In such context, this model proves highly applicable to the examination of social interaction between irregular migrants and their host countries. In the case of Maghreb nations such as Morocco, the resident-intruder paradigm becomes a perfect platform for an analysis on how systematic subjugation of sub-Saharan irregular migrants perpetuates conditions of social defeat.

3.0 The Migratory Experience.

Despite common misconceptions by popular media that digest motivations for migration to a limited set of factors, each migration decision when stripped to its bare minimum usually varies from one individual to the next. This way, two people might leave the same nation due to general economic strife but upon further interrogation, one individual's primary motivation might be the result of disinheritance from family fortune, while the other a result of increasing familial expenses upon which his current means cannot satisfy. Though the latter might appear trivial, these highly specific differences in motivation form the core basis for the degree of resiliency with which one migrant approaches the migration process as distinguished from the next man. Therefore when investigating the migratory experiences of irregular sub-Saharan migrants, specificity becomes of paramount importance to the understanding of how each migrant's individual motivations shape not only his/her understanding of migrant life, but also the roots and degree of his/her resiliency during periods of incredible difficulty.

From this background, this study investigates the possible existence of social defeat amongst irregular sub-Saharan migrants living in the Maghreb region through the use of migrant narratives on their experiences during migration. Furthermore it utilizes the occurrence of violence during the migratory process as the primary catalyst for defeat in social interaction. Through narratives of murder, kidnapping, physical assault, starvation, rape, kidnapping coercion, and other forms of violent exploitation, it creates an ethnography of traumatic social defeat within a context of irregular migration in the Maghreb region.

3.1 The Pre-Migratory Phase.

As earlier noted, the number of sub-Saharan migrants of non-specified status currently residing in the Maghreb region lies between 65,000 to 120,000; with most originating from various sub-Saharan nations including but not limited to: Senegal, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Bukina Faso, Nigeria, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. While trans-Saharan migration routes have increased and evolved over the years, transit routes from west and central Africa into the Maghreb region and onwards typically follow two major progressions: the first being from the Sebha oasis in Libya traveling to Tripoli then onwards to Malta and the Italian Islands of Lampedusa, Pantalleria and Sicily. The second route starts from Tamanrasset in southern Algeria then goes through Oujda in the north eastern edge of Morocco, and onwards to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (De Haas 19). Yet due to increased border controls, a new third route both difficult in length and terrain travels through both eastern Moroccan and Algerian coasts then southwards into the highly contested Western Sahara region, then finally into the canary islands and onwards into Europe (De Haas 2008: 19). Considering the length and expenses of these journeys, it is a common occurrence for migrants to stop in major cities along the transit route for a couple weeks or months as they work to finance the next portion of their journey.

Furthermore, upon arriving to the Mediterranean coasts, most migrants' monetary resources are often depleted and as such they must acquire menial jobs to finance the risky Mediterranean Sea crossing. With boat transports from Morocco to the Canary Islands costing an average of USD\$880, and a similar crossing from the Moroccan coast to the Spanish coast an average of USD\$800 to USD\$1200, a sizeable number of migrants remain on the border regions for multiple months trying to accumulate enough savings for the next part of the travel (De Haas 2008:18). Yet even for the successful few, perseverance and determination are often not enough. After months of squalid living dodging security forces and constant battery by various weather elements, the actual sea crossing often proves tougher than most migrants expect. As estimated by human rights organizations monitoring casualties of failed crossings, 3,285 people perished between 1997-2001 at the strait of Gibraltar with the actual number possibly proving higher since a majority of the corpses are never recovered (De Haas 2008:19). Furthermore, with the intensification of border and sea patrols as a result of the heightened Euro-Maghreb effort towards tougher crackdowns on irregular trans-Mediterranean crossings, the rates of those captured or killed as a consequence of failed crossings have undoubtedly risen. Yet despite mounting difficulties, potential migrants persist through cycles of failed crossings, arrests, incarceration, release, and deportation with hopes of eventually sneaking through the layers of security and finally realizing their aspirations of a life in Europe.

From earlier indications, pre-migratory motivations rarely fit a single mold and usually vary from one potential migrant to the next. Furthermore, these differences in motivation usually form a basis for the degree of hardship that each migrant allows him/herself to endure during their migratory experience. In addition, the decision to leaving one's nation is rarely abrupt or unevaluated; instead, a sizeable expenditure in time, energy, and both physical and monetary resources is made during this consideration. But despite the degree of planning, most migrants consistently confess to a lack of adequate preparation for their journeys, in fact, it's common stipulation that 'no level of prior planning can prepare a migrant for the difficulties of trans-Saharan transit; it's in the middle crossing that one is revealed to the true hellish nature of the Sahara.

3.2 The Hell of the Middle Crossing

In the same ways that Euro-Maghreb agreements on border controls have transformed the state of trans-Mediterranean transit, similar incentive based accords with Sahel-Saharan countries have slowly changed these nations from pure transit points, and into Europe's newest sentries on its assault on irregular migration. Through similar economic collaboration incentives, transit nations such as Mauritania, Libya and Niger have now been mobilized into the European agenda of enlarging its migration buffer zones past the borders of the Maghreb. But in the same way that incentivized border controls contributed to significant deterioration in irregular migrants' humanitarian rights, the conditions of transit through these countries have also depreciated. Through the effort "to reinforce and make the fight against irregular migration more effective in countries of origin and transit", control initiatives in the transit region have manifested into arrests, deportations, and forced readmissions of migrants in conditions of wanton disregard for human life or dignity (Jacquelot et al 2009/2010:17). Furthermore due to the lack of protective status for irregular migrants, infractions on their rights as human beings remains a limited concern since exploitation in their case is a non-prosecutable violation. Their only facets of assistance are limited to non-governmental agencies and international assistance organizations whose scope of influence is highly restricted from one country to the next.

As far as retributive action for violations that often include rape, murder, kidnapping, extortion, and other forms of violent exploitation, (often perpetrated by security forces), the irregular migrant possesses no rights or recourses to corrective resolution.

3.3 The Case of Mauritania.

Though Mauritania has a long and extensive history as a transit nation for migrants traveling from western Africa towards either Algeria, or Morocco, the strengthening of border controls has forced a diversification of migratory routes and as a result, new transit towns have sprung up within the country's interior to support the new migratory networks. The most prominent of these cities, Nouadhibu, has become a major transit zone for migrants opting to bypass the Western Sahara route, (to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla), and instead choosing the closer yet equally risky boat routes to the Spanish Canary Islands. But with Nouadhibu's ascension to prominence as migrant transit point, joint cooperative agreements between Mauritania and Spain have been enacted to restrict the use of 'cayucos' (large fishing boats used for human transport) between the two nation's territorial waters. Additional bi-lateral agreements in 2003 and 2005 between Mauritania and the Canary Islands established re-admission accords that provided for the deportation of "national and non-nationals who were in an irregular situation in Spain, in cases whereby they were 'assumed' to have traveled through Mauritania" (Jacquelot et al 2010:18). The latter provision, allowed for the re-admission of both 'failed' migrants and those arrested in both continental Spain and its various territories and enclaves.

As a result of the rising number of detained migrants, Mauritania, through Spanish monetary and military sponsorship, established a detention center in 2006 by converting a former school into a reception facility for the purposes of holding arrested migrants as they awaited deportation to their countries of origin. But while Mauritanian authorities maintain that the facilities main purpose is the temporary holding of migrants awaiting deportation, the conditions of arrest and incarceration suggest the contrary. According to reports from a Mauritanian human rights organization, Association Mauritanienne Des Droits De L' Homme (AMDH), the actual holding conditions severely contradict the government's official position. As AMDH observations showcase,

"This center that the authorities refer to as a 'reception' resembles a real prison because migrants are locked in closed cells there, on bunk beds, with up to 30 people in them, without adequate ventilation nor daylight entering. They cannot leave. Those who wish to go to the toilet must wait several hours and sometimes have to relieve themselves in buckets that are placed inside. The police officers who provide surveillance often refuse to open doors for them using the pretext of protecting against potential escape. The center is not subject to any regulation that sets the length of detention, the reasons for removal and the possibility for NGO's to have access to them" (Jacquelot et al 2009/2010:24).

In addition, while Mauritanian law allows for the arrest and detention of irregular migrants, recent trends illustrate a rise in unwarranted arrests that deviate from existing protocol and jurisprudence. Treatment during incarceration is often devoid of basic considerations for migrant rights as seen in the following testaments:

"When I was arrested by the Mauritanian police officers in Nouadhibu, I was handcuffed like a criminal; I was taken to the police station's prison and then to the center. . . I stayed there for two days, and I was expelled on the third day. . . In the center, one can only leave to piss and you can only do it with a police officer, you piss and then you return. . ." (Jacquelot et al 2009/2010:23).

"Down there, the Mauritanian police officers, they beat people to death. In the detention center, the Mauritanian police mistreated us. You had to pay even to go to piss" (Jacquelot et al 2009/2010: 23).

In Mauritania's case, not only are the squalid incarceration conditions violations of basic human rights, but the tactics and methods utilized in the identification and consequent arrest of suspected irregular migrants highly unscrupulous. When considered within a context of incentive based performance, it becomes rather apparent that such a model condones, in fact encourages, the sacrifice of both legal and humanitarian protocol for the achievement of prescribed goals. Furthermore, when these incentives are backed through European foreign aid, it's of minimal surprise that the huge mismanagement of due process in arrest procedures has become common place in cities such as Nouadhibu. This disregard is best exemplified in the following informant testimony:

“The people arrested by Mauritanian security forces have been sent back by Spain or Morocco, intercepted at sea, or suspected of seeking to leave Mauritanian territory to head towards Europe. On the basis of this reason, operations to check identity based on physical traits and collective arrests that target sub-Saharan people are organized in dormitory-homes and in the port, where many foreigners work” (Jacquetot et al 2009/2010:21).

Considering the severity of injustices committed against those arrested, Non-Governmental organizations and other independent assistance groups are often the only avenues of aid and assistance. Unfortunately for those condemned to deportation, their welfare and security while in transit is purely left at the mercy of the officers overseeing and executing the deportation. As a matter of regular occurrence, individuals that expire during the long transport to either the Mauritania/Senegal or Mauritania/Mali border, (located at least 1200km from Nouadhibu), are discarded into the desert as the convoy proceeds on. But even more heartbreaking than the deportation conditions is the constant reminder of the thousands of miles traveled before arrival to Nouadhibu; a distance that those turned away must again travel through if they intend on reaching the Mediterranean coasts. But for most deportees, the latter choice while difficult is often answered with the affirmative; they resiliently recover and re-start the journey for the 2nd, 3rd, 9th or the next umpteenth attempt.

3.4 Tinzaouaten (*The City Of Madness*).

The physical and psychological effects of repeated failed migration when compounded with constant exposure to violent exploitation possess a potentially devastating effect that’s often ignored in popular discourse. But in one transit area located on the Algeria/ Mali border, the effects of repeated arrests, incarcerations, and violent deportations have produced a migrant town whose population lives an existence of depressive defeat. For the latter reasons, the city of Tinzaouaten, colloquially referred to as the city of madness, has become a quintessential example of the physical and psychological effects of repeated failed migration. As a precursor to the Tamanrasset, Algeria checkpoint on the transit route that leads to Oujda, Morocco, *The City of Madness* marks the exit point for migrants leaving Western Africa through Mali and entering the Sahel region through Algeria. It’s due to its position at a major crossroads between two extremely difficult stretches of Saharan terrain that locals mark Tinzaouaten as a choking point for those without adequate resolve for continued persistence. Given the large number of migrants trapped in this city, the risk of becoming psychologically disturbed increases as migrants find themselves caught in a net without the ability to either advance or turn back (Migreurop 2009/2010:34). Yet the risks of psychological defeat seem minimal when compared to the physical atrocities performed by security forces on both Algerian and Mali borders.

Located between two nations that are sizeable benefactors of the European initiative on curbing irregular migration, Tinzaouaten serves a pivotal role as an important security checkpoint for potential irregular migrants crossing between the Algeria and Mali. As such, arrest, incarcerations, and deportations occur on a revolving basis without any level of humanitarian oversight. Furthermore, unlike Mauritania’s agreement with Spain that allows for the return of arrested irregular migrants to Mauritania’s territory, both Algeria and Mali do not have such established accords with any European nations yet re-admission deportations continue without obstruction (Migreurop 2009/2010:30).

Similar to other transit towns, increased policing, restrictions and expenses, have forced migrants to temporarily settle in Tinzaouaten while working menial jobs in hopes of saving enough money to continue their journeys. As such, temporary makeshift housing in addition to increasing numbers of stranded migrants makes this city one of the most dangerous areas of transit. The lack of definitive laws on deportation means that different yet sustained waves of deportees are left in this desert region to survive on their own and as such habitation becomes primarily based on individual nationality. As an observer from Migreurop describes,

“... this border town is divided in two: one part is Algerian, and has houses that are inhabited; the other part is Malian and is desert, with many abandoned houses. After undergoing the process of detention and deportation, once they arrive in Tinzaouaten, the migrants are left in the Algerian part of the town, and they walk to the Malian side where houses have been turned into ghettos. There is a ghetto for every nationality: that of Nigerians, who form a majority of the population in this region, those of the Congolese, the Liberians and that of people from Bukina Faso. It is difficult to feed oneself or even to have access to medical care.” (Migreurop 2009/2010:32).

Unfortunately, as is common in such transit towns, security for women and unaccompanied minors is often guaranteed at the price of sexual exploitation.

Even within networks of similar nationalities, women and unaccompanied minors often bear the brunt of both physical and sexual assault. Within these circles, “they are often used as an exchange currency to barter with the local military to obtain what some of them term as tranquility of the ghetto” (Migreurop 2013:32). Rendered victims to a system they cannot individually control, the only recourse of action is to continue towards a future of uncertainty with the hopes that their suffering will eventually prove worthwhile.

3.5 The Niger-Libya Transit Route.

While prior examples have portrayed a rather grim exposition into the peri-migratory phase, the dire humanitarian situations depicted in Tinzaouaten and Nouadhibu seem somewhat minimal when compared to the state of transit migration on the Libya-Niger Borderland. Though equally influenced by European pressures on border controls, Libya’s reaction to the above influences has been distinctly different from that of Algeria or Mauritania. Unlike the two other nations, Libya plays a conniving role whereby it utilizes foreign funds to crack down on irregular migration while simultaneously supporting clandestine migration by allowing irregular crossings to support Libya’s immense labor market. For instance, for the 2012-2013 time period Libya was allocated a national indicative program worth 60 million Euros in order to enable it to “offer great assistance in the fields of health care and to fight irregular immigration (Migreurop 2009/2010:34) Nonetheless, due to the country’s need for foreign labor, it continually encourages migrant labor from sub-Saharan nations to support its main economic sectors. Unfortunately, the effects of this reciprocal exploitation are mostly manifested in the treatment of migrants passing through Libyan territory on their way to the Mediterranean coast.

As indicated earlier, the major transit route through Libyan territory runs from Agadez in Niger then onwards into the Libyan desert and is primarily utilized by migrants from Niger, Bukina Faso, Mali and Chad. But unlike other routes discussed earlier, Libya imposes a mandatory tax on all human traffic as prescribed by regional movement accords, ECOWAS and CENSAD which mandate drivers to record all their passengers after which a 1.50 Euro (1000 Central or west African francs) per person tax is executed on all drivers (Migreurop 2009/2010: 35). But due to notoriety as a major irregular migrant route, both Libya’s and Niger’s security forces impose a transit tax on all suspected irregular migrants who are then faced with the choice of either paying the tax or being remanded into custody and subsequently deported. Veritably, this racketeering takes place on most major checkpoints from Niger to the Libyan coasts as seen in the example of a Dirkou, a transit town on the North Eastern edge of Niger:

“The example of Dirkou, at the exit point of the Tenere Desert (Niger), is significant. Upon arrival in this oasis, armed soldiers make the migrants get out of their vehicles and demand that they hand over a sum that must be paid collectively. Then they are escorted to the gendarmerie (police) post where they are then taxed again, sometimes violently, and where their documents are seized. . . and must be retrieved from the police station in exchange for a few thousand francs” (Migreurop 2009/2010:37)

“They will have to pay again to leave Dirkou, and then again every time they cross a military post. If they refuse or unable to pay, the soldiers do not hesitate to use force. Many people tell of how they were lined up standing under the sun in the hot season, or assembled in a group at night in the wind, and sprayed with water in the cold season, and left like this until the group collected a sum that was deemed sufficient. The migrants, who travel with over 30 of them crammed in the back of a pick-up truck or with 150 in the rear of large all-surface lorries, are thus controlled and taxed around ten times between Agadez and the Libyan border, that is at each checkpoint” (Migreurop 2009/2010:37).

Within the Libyan context, survival is not guaranteed, but purchased one security checkpoint at a time. For the unfortunate, the expiration of monetary resource means a return to the absolute beginning. As confirmed by a Malian informant caught within this cycle of misery:

“There is a lot of desert to get through to reach Libya . . . me when I reach Dirkou, they didn’t even ask me for my card, just for money. There’s no need for the card. It’s the same in Agadez. Someone may pay 2000 francs, someone else might pay 5000 francs, it depends. But English speakers, they might pay 10,000 francs. . . and if you’re lucky you will pay 2000. When you leave agadez you will pay 5000. . . As for me, I got to the Libyan border, up to Madama. There my money finished. The soldiers put me in a vehicle that returned to Dirkou. Off you go. You don’t pay you go back to Dirkou” (Migreurop 2009/2010:37)

Considering the expenses spent on other sections of the journey, the constant taxation for even the best financially prepared migrants undoubtedly depletes their monetary sources and thus necessitates more delays as they seek extra funds for their journey. Yet with each temporary delay, chances for exploitation increase as they are forced to not only seek employment in areas that are often hostile to their presence, but they must also remain invisible evading potential capture and arrest on a daily basis.

While inside Libyan borders, vigilance becomes not only a necessity but an absolute requirement; if one's luck expires, arrest and incarceration within this framework unlocks an unimaginable level of migratory hell. Once arrested, the difference between freedom and deportation is always determined by a migrant's monetary resources. The following is a commentary on irregular migrants' options after arrest:

"Once they are arrested, illegals have four options. Those who have some money, they bribe the police and get themselves released. It is often the police itself which puts them in touch with smugglers who lead them back to Tripoli. Those who don't have money are returned back to their home countries by plane, or loaded into military lorries, with 70-80 people crammed in them and taken towards the southern border: to Kufra, in the southeast or Quatran, in the southwest. From here, after a number months detention, the Lorries carrying migrants leave towards the border, which is completely desert. Those who don't have money are abandoned in the middle of the desert, those who can pay 100 or 200 dollars are brought back illegally, to the police. The fourth possibility is kidnapping, which is practiced mainly in Kufra. Some Libyan citizens buy the freedom of detained migrants by paying the police, and then keep them hostage in their own homes until they receive a ransom payment from their own pockets, or through western union payments by their relatives abroad" (Migreurop 2009/2010: 40).

In addition, release is sometimes not guaranteed after relinquishing the demanded funds, instead, security forces the right to deport despite multiple rounds of bribery. Furthermore, without the possibility of due process, irregular migrants undergo numerous instances of violent assault before transfer to holding facilities where the cycle of assault persists as they await deportation.

Similar to the prison conditions depicted in Nouadhibu, Mauritania, holding facilities in Libya are likewise devoid of the most basic amenities of life support. From overcrowded cells, food deprivation and prisoner assault, surviving incarceration is often a monumental achievement often followed by immediate deportation to the Niger border. Arrested and held without the possibility of legal recourse, the Libyan state is undoubtedly complicit in the absolute subjugation of this severely maligned group of people. As a 2009-2010 MigrEurope report explains:

"Those whose rights have been violated have no possibility of seeking protection or remedy through the justice system. . . None of the detained has seen a judge or a lawyer. Their detention is not validated by a court, and it is not possible either to appeal or to request political asylum. . . There are accounts of detentions that have lasted months, and in some cases years, without trial, in unbearable conditions with up to 60 or 70 people in cells measuring six meters by eight, with a single toilet" (Migreroup 2009/2010: 40).

Using sexual assault as a weapon of intimidation against both men and women, detainees are forced to either endure, or witness the physical violation of women and young girls without the ability to help or intervene. As an informant from a Kufra detention center chronicles:

"There were 78 of us in a cell measuring six meters by eight... We were so hungry, a plate of rice could be shared between eight people . . . There were lice and fleas everywhere, in the mattress, in the clothes, in your hair. . . sometimes, the police came into the room, they picked up a woman and raped her in front of us" (Migreroup 2009/2010:43)

The survivors of these holding facilities must then endure long deportation journeys where they're abandoned to nature's elements without food or water in the Libyan Desert. Notwithstanding the exhaustion, abuse and pain endured during incarceration, the deportation process is often the final crushing blow. As past deportee recalls:

"We were crammed like animals inside the lorry, with no air and no space to move. I wondered how a child could be put in these conditions. Inside the container it was very hot. The journey lasted 21 hours, from 4pm to 1pm on the following day. We did not have anything to eat. People urinate in front of each other. When the drivers stopped to eat or pray we placed the child near the container's narrow window. His name was Adam. We finally arrived in Kufra. When I got out, I stole some bread that was hanging outside the container. We had not eaten since the previous day. There were 110 of us including Adam, who was four years old and his mother" (Migreurop 2009/2010: 43).

Ultimately, despite multiple condemnations from human rights groups such as Amnesty international and Fortress Europe, Libyan authorities continue the deportation and abandonment of migrants in desert areas without water or other means for sustenance. As it currently appears the Libyan framework on curbing irregular migration, places primary importance on bribery and racketeering with minimal accommodation or concern for the assurance of basic human rights.

3.5 The Moroccan/ Spanish Border Land (Ceuta & Melilla).

The Moroccan-Spanish borderland when compared to others previously discussed garners more prominent media attention for the following reasons: first, the existence of two Spanish enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, in such close proximity to Moroccan territory makes this region one of the most illegally trafficked areas in the Maghreb region. Secondly the 2005 shooting deaths of six migrants by Spanish and Moroccan forces on the fences of Melilla awakened worldwide attention to the plight of migrants residing in this volatile region. Lastly, due to the presence of various prominent Non-governmental agencies such as Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders), injustices committed against migrants in this region have been well documented and consequently diffused throughout national and international media facets. Therefore while prosecution for these crimes remains realistically impossible, victims to the atrocities described herein possess higher opportunities for assistance than in the prior discussed transit zones.

For the migrants that eventually arrive at the Moroccan-Spanish borderland, the primary mode of frustration is usually owed to the proximity between one land of misery (the African continent) and another of promise (Europe). Separated at some points by a difference of 14 kilometers of sea water, these migrants can often visualize their intended destinations but actualization of their dreams comes at a rather expensive monetary and physical cost. As huge benefactors to European Union aid, the Moroccan state not only upgraded its border security systems, but also increased both the frequency and intensity of searches and patrols intended on catching potential irregular migrants. As a result, most migrants with hopes of crossing over to either the Spanish mainland or the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla are forced to live in forested outskirts of border cities such as Oujda (located close to the Algerian Border) and Nador ; thus evading potential arrest while remaining in close proximity to the borders they hope to someday cross. But due to the long history of clandestine migration in the region, security forces have become soundly knowledgeable to the networks through which these migrants live, work, and survive and thus remain in constant vigilance of all migrant activity in the region.

This familiarity with the migrant situation in areas such as Oujda allows security forces to mount highly successful raids and searches that often manifest in thousands of deportations a year. But while Morocco has “either ratified or adheres to the main international human rights treaties, such as the international convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their families; the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Punishment or Treatment. . . and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the tactics employed by security forces during search, capture and arrest of suspected illegals transpire in derelict neglect of the above agreements.

As observed by multiple Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders), Moroccan security forces employ in-discretionary violence with little to no regard for human life during their capture and arrest operations within the region. Described in a 2005 pathology analysis of medical consultations with migrants in Oujda, Nador and the forest areas of Younech and Gourougou, (near Ceuta and Melilla respectively), observations between April 2003 and May 2005 showed that of the 9,350 medical treatments conducted, 2,193 (23.5%), were attributed to violence (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2005:6). Furthermore, interviewee accounts indicated Spanish and Moroccan security forces as perpetrators in 67 percent of all violent assault cases during that period (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2005:8). Those interviewed not only confessed to mistreatment by security forces, but also indicated a level of cooperation between police and local gangs during apprehension raids. As depicted in the following commentary, security forces often utilize criminal networks as facets of intelligence, intimidation and at times, participants during arrest.

Nador, Mount Gourougou. (Jan 12-14 2005): “JJJ, a 24 year old Cameroonian is abruptly woken by the cries of his fellow migrants. He has just enough time to take his blanket and look for a place to hide from the police and soldiers pursuing him. A group of vagrants working with the soldiers find him and start throwing stones at him while the others alert the soldiers. He tries to escape but is hit on the knee by a stone and falls to the ground. He tries to get up and run but cannot.

The soldiers take him to the police station, from where he will be returned to the Moroccan-Algerian border a few hours later. (Medecins sans Frontieres 2005:11).

Also as seen in other transit areas, the situation for women in this region is similarly desperate; from a 2010 analysis on victims of sexual violence, Medecins Sans Frontieres reports that:

“Women and girls are vulnerable to being subjected to sexual violence and exploitation with devastating consequences. Among the 63 victims of sexual violence who provided testimony of their experience to MSF, 23% reported falling pregnant as a result of being raped. 35% presented with pathologies related to sexual violence; infections and reproductive tract problems. 33% presented with psychological complaints related to sexual violence including : insomnia, anorexia, nightmares, anxiety, depression, emotional passivity, strong feelings of guilt, shame and suicidal thoughts. (Medecins sans Frontieres 2010:9)

In addition to the sexual exploitation of women and unaccompanied minors, arrest and deportation proceedings of suspected illegals are performed in complete contradiction of established laws. As prescribed by the nation’s legal code, (02-03), that sets standards on the treatment of irregular foreigners entering and staying in Morocco:

“When an irregular immigrant is found by the police or other authorities responsible for domestic security, they are charged with breach of immigration law and must appear before the judicial authority who will determine whether or not they are sent back. Under this law, two administrative measures are possible: being returned to the border or being expelled. If neither of these steps can be taken within 24 hours of arrest, the authorities are legally obliged to establish a domicile for the detainee or remand him/her in a non-penitentiary center for the time that is strictly necessary only” (Medecins sans Frontieres 2005: 13).

Yet in complete contradiction to the above statutes, most captured migrants are detained for extended periods of time only to be deported to the Algerian border without sanctioned judicial action. Returned to the forests of Oujda, Younech or Gourougou, they must then re-enter the all too familiar cycle of survival: scavenging for food and money while fending against theft and assault and at all times vigilant to the possibility of arrest. It’s due to this never ending cycle of disappointment that recent trends have seen a sizeable percentage of sub-Saharan migrants opting for a complete abandon of the European dream and instead pursuing permanent settlement within Moroccan territory in cities such as Rabat and Casablanca. But while a livelihood in such cities provides an increased level of tolerance and access to aid organizations, their statuses remain nonetheless unchanged. Though somewhat hidden within a larger population, they remain vulnerable to exploitation by both local citizens and police; a single lapse in diligence might mean an overcrowded truck ride back to the destitute livelihood of the border.

4.0 The Theory of Social Defeat

When Selten and Graae derived their model on social defeat through the resident-intruder paradigm, they understood this concept within limited boundaries of outsider status and subordination (Selten 2005: 101). As utilized within this study, social defeat has been stretched to include social interaction whereby one individual is constantly humiliated, subjugated, subordinated and as a result experiences social defeat. But before proceeding, an important modification must be made: within this study, social defeat is not an idea that an individual hold’s; it is specifically not an internalized construction. As prominent psychologist T.M. Luhrmann contends, “Social defeat is not so much an idea that someone holds but a human encounter”, an important distinction. . . because to alter individuals’ ideas you can use psychotherapy but to alter their encounters you must change their social world” (Luhrmann 2007: 18). And within this construct, the neighborhood of Yacoub Mansour located on the outskirts of the Moroccan capital city of Rabat, stands as the perfect testament of the effects of such social decay. Home to a large majority of both legal and illegal sub-Saharan migrants, Yacoub Mansour has in the past and presently exists as one of the capital city’s most dangerous neighborhoods. Yet with deeper introspection on the livelihoods of these migrants, it becomes rather apparent that this area has slowly become transformed into a melting pot of social decay; upon which its inhabitants endure in dire suffering.

4.1 Yacoub Mansour

The first time I visited the Yacoub Mansour area, (pejoratively referred to as the ‘Dark part of the city) was out of last minute necessity. Having conducted my research within a five mile radius of my residence, I saw limited need to venture outside my comfort zone since everything I needed from research material to informants/interviewees had always come to me.

But on the last day of my interviews, an informant posed a simple challenge that summarily changed my outlook on not only my research methods, but my complete understanding of the topic investigated. In a soft spoken tone, my primary informant Pastore requested, “come see how we live . . . we have talked to you about our lives but to understand, we want you to come see how we live” (Pastore 2011), and considering the amount of assistance they had provided, declining such a request would have not only been extremely impolite, but also serious detriment to my research. Therefore, we set a meeting date and after several postponements, a colleague and I took a short taxi ride outside the downtown area, reconvened with our two informants (Obama and Pastore), and walked into the heart of Yacoub Mansour.

Spatially, this neighborhood looked similar to all other areas I had visited, the construction rarely deviated from ordinary Moroccan style; the streets were abundant with nighttime commerce, and human traffic spilled out of the cafes, into the sidewalks and unto the busy town streets. It summarily surprised me that the area was even considered dominantly sub-Saharan since the racial composition of the people observed in the streets seemed like a blend between both Moroccans and other nationalities. But the deeper we got into the neighborhood, away from the street commerce and the busy streets, the atmosphere slowly evolved; the responses from Moroccan bystanders were no longer mere glances but mean focused stares.

Our first visit was to Pastore’s house which was a bottom floor apartment of a typical Moroccan style storied building. Yet in the phrasing ‘apartment’ it must be stipulated that this domicile was far away from any modern conceptions of the word. In a space that amounted to two small bedchambers, four people including my informant called it home. Without a living room area, 3 occupants utilized the bigger of the two rooms as both sleeping an entertainment space. Directly adjacent, Pastore occupied an even smaller room that could only support one individual. All occupants in the house slept on mattresses laid out on the floor with very limited movement space from one mattress to the next. In fact, Pastore’s room was so small that there lacked any movement space between the wall, his mattress and a wooden structure utilized as a cabinet. Outside the two rooms, Pastore and his housemates utilized a small hallway as kitchen space. Using one gas operated stove, they prepared meals which I later learned were usually consumed in one’s respective room due to the lack of community space. After this very short visit, Pastore suggested that we visit Obama’s house since he lacked any chairs or space to entertain any guests.

Obama’s residence while relatively bigger was similarly decrepit in quality. His room, also rented from a Moroccan landlord, was shared between three other inhabitants. Without any separating walls, three of the inhabitants shared one mattress on the room’s far side while the last man occupied a small couch on the opposing wall. Apart from the sleeping area, all other free space was occupied by small cabinets on the room’s different corners. With two of the roommates ceding their couch positions for my colleague and I, we settled down to learn that the two men of Senegalese descent had just arrived on Moroccan territory less than five days after traveling through Mauritania. They later informed as that due to visa agreements between Senegal and Morocco they were able to enter the country legally though they intended on overstaying their visas and attempting a Mediterranean crossing into European territory

Compared to the obviously exhausted mannerisms of our two informants, the new arrivals seemed to be brimming with refreshing anticipation for their future prospects. (Without depreciating their difficulties thus far, it must be noted that they were nevertheless benefactor’s to visa agreements not typical of all sub-Saharan nations and as such stood at a vantage point when compared to other migrants forced to endure the overland middle passage). Nonetheless, they appeared aware of the difficulties in their upcoming prospects and were therefore looking for temporary employment as they researched routes, methods, and costs for the next part of their journey. It is at this point, sitting in Obama’s small couch that I began contemplating everything I had learned and experienced throughout my research process. I began evaluating all my interactions with different sub-Saharan migrants that I had come into contact with, searching for a single unifying factor in their shared life stories. Then suddenly it became easily visible that from my two primary informants to their friends and acquaintances, each individual’s life story prominently revolved around an almost religious adherence to constant vigilance. Consider the testaments from my two informants Pastore and Obama and their mutual acquaintance Helene, a sub-Saharan NGO worker in Rabat.

Helene

A benefactor of visa relationships between Chad and Morocco, Helene came to Morocco 23 years ago as a student and has lived in Rabat ever since.

Prior to her arrival in Morocco, her only knowledge of the country was its location in North Africa and its predominantly Arab population, (knowledge she gained through Arabic films she had enjoyed while in Chad). Attributing her naiveté to youth, she admitted to not having any concretely formed expectations about Morocco before migrating.

But upon arrival, life in Rabat proved much more problematic than she had previously expected. Unable to integrate, she often found herself isolated within the company of Moroccan citizens who seemed hostile and non-welcoming. Describing her interactions with Moroccan citizens: “the first question they ask is whether you are Christian or Muslim? If you’re Christian, it is never good”. This feeling of isolation and inability to integrate never subsided and she later claimed that her young daughter presently undergoes the same struggles she endures as a student.

Later depicting her interactions with Moroccan citizens and police, she recalled an instance whereby Moroccan youths had attacked her on the streets with rocks but she was reluctant to report the crime since she had become accustomed to authorities ambivalence with crimes against sub-Saharan. As she explained, “If you go to the police for help, they will first verify your residency, then maybe they will help you. So illegals, most of them, won’t go to the police”. According to her evaluation, most migrants live in fear of being arrested by police when they report crimes committed against them. They therefore feel helpless and opt to remain quiet about the crimes. At the end of our conversation, her only life satisfaction was her NGO work where she assisted irregular migrant women find employment, in addition to lobbying for the education of their children. (Yamta 2011.)

Pestore

Born in Cameroon, Pastore arrived in Morocco illegally in 2006 having travelled through Ghana, Benin (where he worked for 3 months), Bukina Faso, Mali, and Mauritania. While in Rabat, he met an individual that promised him verifiable documents that would grant him entry into Spain. (An offer to which he ceded a sizeable payment for a passport, visa, and airplane flight that later proved counterfeit). He was then arrested by authorities at the Casablanca airport and remanded in jail for sixteen days before seeing a judge. During his incarceration, he admitted to fighting inmates multiple times a day to secure food for himself and an ailing sub-Saharan immigrant also held in the same jail. After arraignment, the judge ordered his immediate deportation to the Algerian border though he had pleaded for deportation back to his home country Cameroon. Later through networks in Oujda, he was able to purchase re-entry documents that granted him access back into Morocco. Upon return, he decided to return to Cameroon on his own accord and this time attempt a legal entry into Morocco.

Since he was an adept jujitsu athlete, he returned home where he trained back into shape and entered an international competition held in Morocco. This time he was granted a visa to attend the competition and after participating, he remained in the country, utilized his legal visa to gain a resident permit that allowed him to remain in Morocco for at least a year legally. He now resides in Rabat, legally, but he must re-apply for a resident permit annually for 500 Euros; a price that he admits he can barely afford. (Pastore 2011)

Obama

Obama who’s originally from Senegal came to Morocco in 2008 as a result of Visa relationships between his country and Morocco that allowed him the opportunity to study at a school in the northern city of Tangier. Being the only black person in his class, (when compounded with his time of arrival which was during the 2008 American presidential election), his classmates nicknamed him Obama.

During his tenure at the school in Tangier, he experienced rampant discrimination from not only students, but professors and the general faculty as well. It’s in the Moroccan school setting that he was introduced to term “munami” which people commonly referred to while addressing him. Used as a pejorative term for black males, he found himself constantly referred to as Munami despite his expressed dissatisfaction with the term. As he later confessed, “I would meet someone and introduce myself to them, but even after several interactions, they would still refer to me as ‘Munami’. It’s at this point that I learned that they called my ‘munami’ out of racist ignorance and also because they did not want to recognize me as an individual”.

As an immigrant with only a student permit, he was not allowed to work and was therefore forced to work in the black market for survival. He described an incident where he worked at a call center for a couple of weeks but never got any monetary compensation, when he inquired about the matter, the employer threatened to have him arrested.

He later admitted to the latter practice being a frequent Moroccan tactic to acquire cheap labor without proper compensation. As he later explained, "I know some people (illegals) who will work construction for a whole day and at the end of the day not get paid and there's nothing they can do. If they insist on getting paid, their bosses will threaten to inform on them to the police and have them deported".

After completing his studies he moved to Rabat where he claimed life remained as difficult as in Tangier. After moving to Rabat he was able to maintain his residency for a couple of years through an annual renewal a process that requires fees, evidence of permanent residence, proof of financial stability, letters from schools attended amongst other documents. Yet since he was unemployed at the time, he could no longer afford those fees, and thus fell out of status. Therefore at the time of our meeting, he survived primarily through the support of family and friends residing in Europe.

He then discussed the housing situation for sub-Saharan in Rabat; a topic that ignited a huge degree of anger throughout the conversation. From his experience, Moroccan landlords sometimes overcharged black tenants 2 or 3 times over normal rate in comparison to other tenants. Furthermore, as related to status of residence, he claimed that landlords assault their tenants without fear of retribution. As he further explained, "For instance a few nights ago, my landlord's son slashed my face while he was drunk and I can do absolutely nothing. I can't go to the police since I don't have a renewed residency permit. If I report this, they either do nothing or I get deported to Oujda".

Ultimately he expressed frustration with the fact that Moroccans could marry African women yet African males can never court Moroccan women. As he lamented, "You see Moroccans, they can have black women but us we can't talk to their women, we live with them and but if a problem happens the Africans are always at fault; we try to live with them in peace, but they just inform on us to the police . . . life here in Morocco is not good for Africans like us" (Obama 2011)

From these testaments, it became rather evident that for the average sub-Saharan migrant, security was an aspect of life that one could not afford to disregard. Whether on the street, or at home, these individuals lived under a constant cloud of constant worry; worry from the lack of basic liberty, freedom and sustenance, because at any point, they could fall victim to assault, and theft, amongst other violations and for all these infractions, one could not seek punitive retribution. Yet the latter testaments are only minimal scratches on a system that perpetuates these cycles of subjugation for sub-Saharan living in this locality. In fact, as seen the first two examples, legal status at times did not mitigate the instances of exploitation; based on racial composition and purported regional background, legal sub-Saharan vulnerability towards violence was at times at even-Kiel with their irregular counterparts. Regardless of time spent in residence, a sub-Saharan in Morocco remained an intruder at all times and as such, his livelihood was limited to constant worry and vigilance. Man or woman alike, his or her tenure, (temporary or permanent), within this nation's boundaries would always consist of attack, humiliation, subjugation, and ultimate defeat because as earlier amended, these are not ideas that are individually derived, but socially constructed and perpetuated. Ultimately, such livelihood becomes the quintessential example of ultimate defeat in social encounter, devoid and impervious to change. As T.M. Luhrmann defends, "To alter an individual's encounters you must change his/her social world", but when the social world is impervious to change, this is Social Defeat at its gruesome worst.

4.2 Conclusion

Social defeat as earlier defined is social interaction whereby one party is systematically humiliated, subjugated and ultimately defeated. But though previously limited to the psychological study of anti-social behavior, the social defeat model's application to migration study has thus proven valuable to a social understanding of the hardships associated with irregular transit within the Maghreb region. As illustrated above, the violent exploitation of irregular sub-Saharan migrants in all phases of migration creates an environment whereby the migrant remains in a constant state of fear and vigilance against institutions that persistently seeks his/her destruction. As such, it is with high hopes that this new scope of examination ultimately returns an aspect of humanity to a topic often viewed in limited political and economic terms. The testaments contained herein must then become catalysts towards a rejuvenated effort at understanding the actual hardships endured by this highly maligned group of humans in transit. And with further development, the social defeat model hopefully utilized as an instrument for the restoration of basic human rights so long denied. For those sub-Saharan migrants in transit, their struggles, humiliations, and defeats, must then be understood as not only individual persecutions, but also as collective representations of a severely dilapidated social system.

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