

Building Bridges:
How NGOs Address Immigration in the Mediterranean Region

Becca Feldman

Mediterranean Migrations
Professors Rose and Borges
May 10, 2013

INTRODUCTION

The World's longest bridge over water, the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, is almost 24 miles long. The distance across the Strait of Gibraltar, which separates Europe from Africa, is 7.7 miles, at the narrowest point. There is no bridge.

It is the role of non-government organizations (NGOs) that work with immigration and cultural awareness to build this bridge. To do so, they don't need engineers, architects, or construction workers. They don't need suspension cables, beams, concrete, or steel. NGOs in the Mediterranean build bridges between continents, nations, groups of people, classes, and cultures. Governments unfortunately tend to address immigration as a problem, neglecting the full significance of these immigrant networks in their nations. Particularly, governments seem to fail to look at issues from the perspective of the small voices: the migrants. Without an infrastructure, these voices go unnoticed. NGOs help fill this gap. In acting as a bridge, they act as a necessary and constructed pathway for helping move toward the assimilation of people and the provision of language, cultural, and legal services. In addition, they help to build up connections among immigrants, communities, and governments to create networks, which offer support.

Over the course of our six weeks abroad, we had the opportunity to interact with ten different NGOs spanning the Mediterranean countries of France, Morocco, and Spain. As a region heavily characterized by migratory movement, these organization all deal either directly or indirectly with immigration issues. This paper aims to understand the foundations of each organization individually: their formation, their goals and principles, and their practices. This information comes from both personal interactions with these organizations as well as their websites and published materials. But beyond the individual case studies of these ten NGOs, it is

just as important to look at them as a whole. What all of these organizations appear to share is their desire to unite different sectors of the world population for the sake of a cause. These causes vary in name and focus, but tolerance, integration, equal rights, education, and unity all represent forms of social justice. As the goal of social justice is not a simple one, it is also important to evaluate the success of these organizations. In looking at scholarly research on NGOS, specifically those of this region and those dealing closely with immigration, the organizations we visited can be seen in the broader context. As one scholar put it, “studying immigrant organizations enables us to make better sense of the complex and dynamic developments that take place within immigrant communities.”¹ In this regard, it is possible to see which organizations are succeeding in building bridges, and which, less productively, seem to be gate-keeping, or restricting mobility, be it physical or social. Bridges can be built between two nations or internally between the government and the people, and series of bridges create networks. These networks lead not just from one population to another, but toward a more unified, just, and mobile world.

THE IMMIGRATION “PROBLEM”

Immigration in the Mediterranean region has often been described as a “problem.” Further, immigration has been seen as a security issue. Governments, on both sides of the Strait, have tended to either try and ignore the problem, or respond harshly and unjustly. Either way, no real solution has been found for addressing the increased globalization and mobility seen in this region, and the world as a whole. Those that have suffered most from these inadequate responses are the migrants. Governments in France, Spain, and Morocco have fallen short. Where these nations and their governments have neglected to fully address the supposed “problem,” NGOs have attempted to pick up the slack.

Because of these issues, Europe as a whole has put pressure on Morocco to take action. In 2003, Morocco enacted a new act on immigration, emigration, and foreigners in the country that attempts to clarify and provide means for enforcement of rules.ⁱⁱ Under these new laws, the Moroccans are now patrolling coasts to stop illegal trips over the Strait and cooperating with the establishment of retention camps.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet, stricter policies do not seem to stem the tide of illegal immigration. As Morocco tries to cooperate with Europe for economic purposes, they must not forget their neighbors in either North or Sub-Saharan Africa. Cooperating with Europe's demands to stop people from emigrating means Morocco must rethink its own policies toward Sub-Saharan immigrants to refrain from acting in a contradictory manner.

Because Morocco has not resolved these complex issues, the Strait of Gibraltar, acting as a small bridge between Spain and Morocco, seems to still be a hot spot for immigration policy. As of 2007, 16.6% of Moroccans living abroad lived in Spain. At this time Spain also registered the highest annual growth rate of flow of Moroccan emigrants to a European nation with a rate of 63.7% and a rise from 10,600 to 71,400 individuals.^{iv} Finally, Spain is home to the most illegal immigration from Morocco because of the relatively easy accessibility. To their north, as of 2005, France still held the largest Moroccan population in Europe, of about one million.^v In 2007, 34.3% of Moroccans abroad lived in France, making them the largest group.^{vi} This data is not fully complete, as it neglects irregular migration, for which, these numbers that are not fully accessible. Further, 2003 data notes that 1.5 million first generation immigrants were living in a handful of European nations, and there were a total of 2.3 million Moroccan citizens in these nations.^{vii}

NGOS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Clearly, the prevalence of both documented and undocumented migrants in Europe, as well as Morocco, remains quite high. As the media continues to highlight these numbers, the issue is increasingly seen as a problem. With both governments and immigrants now each in their own sorts of limbo, NGOs are trying to find ways to address this complicated issue. At the most basic level, these organizations help to provide services: food, shelter, language lessons, legal help, and more. In addition, these organizations also build bridges between the interacting nations, between the government and the people, and finally, these organizations work together to establish networks.

We were very fortunate to meet with NGOs in each of the countries we visited, a number of which address issues of immigration and cultural awareness. We met with organizations that functioned in each of the ways mentioned above. First, in Toulouse, France, some of the group went to the Association Bel'Arc-en-Ciel, a women's association, and others spoke with the founder of the Consultation D'Aide Aux Migrants, a medical clinic. Both work specifically with immigrants. In Rabat, Morocco, we visited or spoke with two organizations that serve Sub-Saharan migrants - La Fondation Orient-Occident and the Collectif de Communautés Subsaharienne au Maroc. In Azrou, Morocco, we worked with the Bridge of Cultures, which helped us to meet with people and tour Morocco as "migrants" ourselves. In Martil, Morocco, we met with Manos Solidarias, who is partnered with Asociación Marroquí, in Málaga, Spain, and both help with immigrant services and integration. Finally, in Málaga we were also in contact with INCIDE, MCI, and CODENAF, all of which also address issues of immigration and cultural diversity in the area.

In visiting and learning about these ten organizations, it is clear that NGOs work in a variety of different ways to address the challenges that immigrants face and promote the

exchange of ideas and cultures in the Mediterranean. They provide services to people who would otherwise be marginalized by the system.

Scholars of immigration, and of social belonging and exclusion more broadly, have demonstrated that the provision of political recognition, benefits, and social services, ranging from medical care to refugee asylum to human rights advocacy, has depended on discourses about what kinds of people constitute humanity worth helping or saving in a given context.^{viii}

Without the assistance of NGOs, there would be many immigrants, who often enter a society at the bottom, without basic services because governments in their host countries are not adequately providing for these individuals. It has been argued that, “If economic decisions are increasingly self-regulated and if governments are now about setting targets and strategic objectives, providing services and administration becomes a responsibility of the citizenry and its organizations.”^{ix} The provision of services is very dependent on NGOs. Yet, according to Nijenhuis and Broekhuis, immigrants differentiate themselves from relatives at home in that they have better access to services.^x Arguably, this is because of the strength and success of immigrant NGOs.

The largest prevalence of NGOs dealing with immigration issues seems to be in Spain. Our experience meeting with and identifying more NGOs dealing with immigration in Spain than in France or Morocco matches the research. Because of the proximity of Spain to Africa, the prevalence of immigrants in the nation in the past few decades, and the sense of multiculturalism, Spain is the ideal location for such organizations. Rogozen-Soltar explains that the emergence of Spanish NGOs occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. This emergence can be seen as occurring in parallel with Spanish democracy, the forming of a welfare state, and the creation of the first concrete immigration law in the country.^{xi} But beyond just the forces inspiring the emergence of NGOs with new social movements, many of them gravitated specifically to issues

revolving around immigration. This specific focus can be explained in that, “many arose in response to new legal restrictions on immigration that systematically pushed immigrants into social, political, and economic marginality, creating a need for specialized social services.”^{xii}

While immigration offers the potential of upward mobility, there are also a large number of immigrants who become marginalized in their host country. Immigrants in Spain, in the entire Mediterranean region, or across the globe, need a form of representation that is larger than themselves as individuals or small groups. NGOs provide a plethora of language, cultural, survival, and legal services to these people. But beyond that, NGOs play an essential role in constructing and expanding connections, paths, and networks among immigrants.

BRIDGES BETWEEN COUNTRIES

One of the primary ways that NGOs function in dealing with issues of immigration is to build bridge between the sending and receiving nations. In the literature, these organizations are referred to as INGOs. The need for such organizations is rooted in the deep political issues in Mediterraneann:

There is a much greater interdependency between the security of the world’s rich and poor in a globalized world. This is leading governments to place much more emphasis on the development purposes of foreign aid and to see INGOs as an important part of the overall response apparatus to transnational threats, to generating global public goods, and to improving human security. Broader awareness of the interdependency may also be helping to promote public interest in and build the domestic constituency for foreign aid.^{xiii}

In this instance, NGOs can be seen as vehicle of international development and increased security in the North. This is an issue that arises for the Europeans, who have a vested interest in capitalizing off of North African development. These European organizations only provide aid in ways that assure minimal threats and maximal benefits for them. Yet, it is not this simple, as Lacomba and Boni argue:

Aid should not be tied to a reduction in emigration, but to eradicating the obstacles that prevent certain groups from participating in the benefits of development, not because these groups are identified as the most likely candidates for emigration, but because the existence of wide internal inequalities is one of the chief factors that make a populace look abroad for a better life.^{xiv}

Successful NGOs are those that look to solve these questions of global inequalities, not just the continuation of European colonial effects, capitalism, and superiority. Because NGOs are designed to help the immigrants, in uniting nations they must look at the issue from the perspective of the immigrants.

For example, **La Fondation Orient-Occident** is a Moroccan organization that was founded in 1994 in Marrakesh. In the twenty years it has been around, the organization has established numerous centers across Morocco. The organization also works with partners across the globe, in the US, Italy, Spain, France, and Portugal, all of which are big receiving nations for Moroccan immigrants. The name of the foundation translates roughly to “The East-West Foundation,” highlighting the ties they attempt to build with the Western World. In fact, the building we visited in Rabat, the Yacoub el Mansour Center, one of their principle centers, was designed and constructed to appear as “a bridge between the two shores of the Mediterranean.”^{xv} This concrete and physical demonstration of their desire to build connections with these western nations demonstrates the core interest of this organization.

According to their website, “the foundation intends to resume the dialogue and contribute to the understanding among civilizations as a bridge between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea, sharing where identities are recognized and prepare their future.”^{xvi} The repetition of this phrase, the idea of this bridge, emphasizes the Moroccan NGO’s desire to work together with similar organizations in Europe. Because NGOs are a more developed concept in Europe, in partnering with other organizations, La Fondation Orient-Occident builds strength.

Specifically, the center in Rabat has a socio-educational center, a listening center and a vocational training structure.^{xvii} Here, immigrants come and go as they please, as they integrate into life in Rabat. There is also a preschool at the center, where we met Sub Saharan children who had been in Morocco for as little as just a few days, demonstrating the need for cooperation with the countries South of Morocco as well.

Similarly, **The Bridge of Cultures** was established to try and, just as the name suggests, establish connections and relationships between people of different cultures. Loft Lamari, who runs the organization, is a passionate and determined individual with whom we worked and traveled for a few days in Morocco. The organization is a member of the larger organization Friendship Force International, with which they can establish much of the groundwork for these connections. The Bridge of Cultures is based out of Azrou, Morocco, where Lotfi spent some of his youth and now lives with his family.

On the organization's website they speak to,

The building of bridges to establish understanding and goodwill between different peoples. Bridges of dialogue for the exchange of cultures and experiences between adults to contribute to human development, and to ensure Peace, Tolerance, and Coexistence for our futures by investing in our children and teaching them to respect and to share their inner love and life with one another.^{xviii}

To work to these means, Lotfi, along with his team, offers cultural tours across Morocco to both student and educator groups. He is a strong advocate for networking, conferences, panel-discussions, and general communication between different groups of individuals for the betterment of all. The cultural center works on these issues with a wide array of people, but also participates in advocacy of their own for causes they chose to support.^{xix} In working with Lotfi, it is clear that he is a man of many connections across Morocco and around the world. He is a strong advocate for the building of alliances and partnerships. Where the organization seems to

be lacking is structure, which they make up for in their drive. In reaching out to our group alone, Lotfi helped us to build many bridges.

La Fondation Orient-Occident and The Bridge of Cultures are two clear examples of Moroccan organizations reaching out across the Strait. From the architecture of the Orient-Occident center in Rabat to the mere naming of The Bridge of Cultures, these organizations are not shy about their desire to build connections with Europe. It is important to realize that their motives are not just to move immigrants to the North, but for a genuine exchange between the cultures. Because of their proximity and complicated relations, there is a lot that can be taken from a better understanding of each other's practices and values. For the sake of immigrant integration, policy, and public perception of others, these organizations work to bridge these divides between neighboring regions considered to be two different worlds.

In Rabat we also met Pierre De la Grange. He is the president of a local organization for Sub Saharans, **Collectif de Communautés Subsaharienne au Maroc** (the Collective of Sub Saharan communities in Morocco). This organization has 17 members in Rabat, as well as others located elsewhere. He focuses on trying to help people who arrive in Morocco and are deported. He looks into these cases and tries to find ways for these people to either stay, go to Europe, or return to their native country. Without his help, he knows that these migrants will just be 'dumped in the desert.' Preventing this from happening can often require looking for contacts and calling government ministries. If there is nothing he can do, he will look to friends to try and find a connection that could help. Pierre finds it to be especially unfair that Moroccans, who complain about the treatment of their emigrants in Europe, treat immigrants so poorly. He created this organization to not only help the migrants, but also raise awareness of this hypocrisy. The organization posted a statement, sharing that:

Today, they are still hunted like wild beasts, without their rights. The Collective of sub-Saharan communities in Morocco (CCSM) strongly condemns the unjust treatment suffered sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco. It calls for an immediate halt to these arbitrary arrests. It calls upon all organizations and support for the causes of migration to unite to stop this machine repressions led by Morocco and dictated by the European Union associations.^{xx}

Here, the organization suggests that much of the maltreatment in Morocco is a result of European pressures. Hence, the organization pushes for more support for these marginalized groups.

CCSM tries to promote friendship between Moroccans and Sub-Saharan Africans and highlights the importance of having allies in a system that devalues these people. Pierre explained that he knows of many Sub Saharans who are in Morocco as students but treated as if they were there irregularly, simply because of the prejudices that people hold. He noted that when someone is black, they are much more likely to be targeted for their irregular status than a European-looking person would be. This is an injustice.

Pierre himself first came to Morocco in 2007 from Cameroon because he was a professional athlete in jiu jitsu. He was alarmed when he noticed that Sub Saharans in Morocco do not form one large community, but rather keep isolated based on their specific country of origin. He built his organization on the principle of uniting all these people because he believes that they can all help each other when they present a more united force. When we spoke with him, he brought two other Sub-Saharanans, who he has helped, Blessy and Seh Picas. Both have faced incredibly tough paths to reach Morocco and are still struggling just to get by. Blessy made her way to Morocco by crossing the desert on foot while pregnant. Pierre has offered what he can to help them find a new life in Morocco, but because the situation is harsh and the organization is young, these two, along with countless others, still have a long way to go.

Now, as Morocco becomes increasingly seen as not just a sending nation, but also a receiving nation, Collectif de Communautés Subsaharienne au Maroc can be seen as the next

link of these bridges. Beyond uniting not just Morocco with Europe, as other organizations are working toward, Pierre is trying to connect Morocco with Sub-Saharan Africa as well. In speaking with Pierre, he explained of the prejudice present in Morocco toward Sub Saharans. He finds great benefits in working to find cooperation among Sub Saharans, but also among all of these groups and Moroccans. When there is open communication and understanding, much more can be accomplished.

It is also significant to note how many of the organizations we encountered that work to build intercultural relations were Moroccan. Morocco seems to have recognized it's middleman position and NGOs there are looking to build positive relations with their neighbors, both North and South. Especially from their northern neighbors, there seems to be less interest to build this bridge, but rather to provide security for the EU. This is not to say the desire for cultural exchange is nonexistent in Europe, but it is matched with an equal and opposing pressure to close off it's doors.

One way that cooperation between nations can be most beneficial is when well-established organizations partner with those still in developing stages. This sort of partnership is often referred to as co-development. Lacomba and Boni argue that European organizations tend to be older and better developed than those of their North African counterparts. Hence, in co-development, they explain that the European, primarily Spanish, organizations can train and aid African, primarily Moroccan organizations, with which they pair. While ideally successful, there are often troubles with inadequate funding and disorganization on the Moroccan side.^{xxi} Broek explains that more trouble can occur when, "donors apply a strict, Western-based blueprint for project identification, formulation and implementation."^{xxii} Because these are not western organizations, these structures do not tend to align with the structures already in place at the

organization, making the cooperation difficult. Co-development seems to be most successful when the organizations can work from a local, rather than an imported, perspective.

Asociación Marroquí, or the Moroccan Association for the Integration of Immigrants, began as a student group at the University of Málaga. The group began under a different name in 2003 led by a Moroccan couple, Karima and Ahmed, who came to Spain to study. In 2006, they changed the name and were recognized as an official association, as it is known today, that no longer is connected to the University. While they work on a variety of issues, the primary goal of the organization is to help the entire immigrant population in Málaga to be better integrated into the community.

According to Ahmed Khalifa, there are nine departments in which the organization works: socio-legal advice, woman, volunteer, children and youth, training and research, awareness, intercultural mediation and language translation, leisure and recreation and development cooperation. The association also works cooperatively with many other social justice organizations. On their website, they explain, “The social activity of the Moroccan Association for the Integration of Immigrants contributed to realizing social integration of many immigrants and facilitates coexistence and understanding of the reality of migration by the Spanish population.”^{xxiii} Participating in conferences, panels, and other discussions of the like, they work to promote positive relations as a whole in the Málaga community. Further, they offer Spanish language, technology, and homework help classes.

Not only does the association offer language, culture, and technology classes, but also they have expanded their horizons to serve as many different groups of people as possible. Because Karima Ouald is passionate about women’s rights, they are in the process of opening a place where battered women, particularly immigrant women, can live. While there are some

other homes in the area, there are none that take immigrant women who are a group that Karima finds to be especially vulnerable and unknowing of their rights or ability to escape such situations. Beyond all this, Karima and Ahmed are constantly helping anyone who approaches them, attending conferences and events, and also pursuing their separate careers, as this is a cause they committed to, but not a job. They also have a full staff of volunteers from the community who help with running the organization and teaching the classes. We sat in on a Spanish class and were amazed by the good spirit of the volunteer teaching, despite the poor language skills, and even illiteracy, of the women he was working with. The organization does receive grants from the local government and have developed good relationships, but with the crisis funding is very minimal. Hence, the volunteers are critical to the success of the organization. Even as they apply to every grant opportunity they find, they only receive about 1000 to 3000 euros a year.

One final project of the Asociación Marroquí is the supporting of the Moroccan organization **Manos Solidarias**. This organization is located outside of Tetouan, in the town of Martil. Martil, which is a tourist town in the summers because of its beaches, is also home to the Diza neighborhood. This neighborhood, which is only recently attached to the rest of the town by a bridge, started to become a destination for migrants from other areas of Morocco in the 1980s. It is the most impoverished neighborhood in the area, for it is unstable ground and prone to flooding, and thus stigmatized.

The NGO was founded to help this community Manos Solidarias means helping hands and they began by acting as such, with the principle of giving to the people what they felt they needed. They began by offering classes and activities for children, opportunities for women to get out of the house to socialize and learn some basic skills, and computer and language classes.

They also have literacy campaigns, particularly for women who come from rural areas and tend to be illiterate. Now, the organization has a large push for improving sanitation in the neighborhood and teaching the health benefits of such a change. They also provide health education for families, particularly about family planning. They have looked into where the neighborhood lacks most, and tried to provide services to improve these conditions and hardships.

All services that the organization offers are free. The funding for this organization comes through the Asociación Marroquí. The government in Málaga has a grant for international development projects that allows for the association to pass along this funding. Just this year, for the first time, Manos Solidarias received a subsidy of 1,000 euros from the local government in Martil. Because funding is still limited, the organization is run by the work of one coordinator and four paid teachers. Since volunteering is not much of a concept in Morocco, there are not many volunteers to help at the center. They have seen an improvement in the quality of life in Martil recently, but there is still a ways to go. People still live in horrible and overcrowded conditions. With the crisis in Spain, more people are also choosing to stay in Martil rather than try to make their way North. The trend of rural migrants coming to this urban area has prevailed. Yet, because of the lack of support from local organizations, it is still crucial for Manos Solidarias to continue their connections in Spain.

The cooperation between Asociación Marroquí and Manos Solidarias illustrates how co-development can work for the sake of improving quality of life. The Asociación Marroquí has been growing and successfully emerging in Málaga over the past 10 years. With the respect they have gained, they have contributed much to the integration of and discussions about immigrants in this region of Spain. When given the resource to invest abroad, they were able to support an

organization in Morocco, Manos Solidarias, that otherwise would not have been able to have the success that they now do. While the organization could use more support locally, which they are starting to get with the first local funding coming in this year, the Spanish aid is also critical.

It is important to remember that part of Asociación Marroquí's strong desire for co-development can be understood to be a result of the organization's Moroccan leadership. Yet, she has predominantly invested her work in Málaga. Organizations that are run by immigrants, demonstrate how an NGO builds connections not just between the two nations, but also between the Moroccan community in Spain and the local community in Spain, for example. Scrover and Vermeulen explain that, "such organizations are not only important for the immigrants themselves, but also for the study of their participation and integration into the host society."^{xxiv} These organizations help to define immigrant identity in a way that organizations run by outsiders cannot. Karima noted that, based on her work in Málaga, she does not accredit the success of an immigrant organization to whether it is run by Spaniards or Moroccans. However, Agustí-Panareda, would argue that she is one of the, "mediators between normative, institutional, and cultural backgrounds."^{xxv} Karima did note that by being Moroccan, she was able to speak the same language as the immigrants she works with. Not only does this help to remove a communication barrier, but also allows her to build a more personal connection with these people, for they share a piece of their identity. Beyond that, because she has been in their position, she has a better understanding, which her clients recognize.

BRIDGES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The second major way in which NGOs function is to provide a bridge with which immigrants, who constitute the small, marginalized voices, can reach governments and the implementation of the policies that affects them. Immigration policies and funding for such

organizations come from the government. Yet, the inspiration for these organizations comes from the unheard voices of the immigrant. Hence, the NGO becomes a mediator between the two. Recently, with hard economic times, there seems to have developed “a growing confidence gap between citizens and governments. High-profile scandals, financial collapses, and other problems have also led to a loss of public trust in corporations.”^{xxvi} With such distrust, the reliance on the NGO to connect these disparate voices, and meet somewhere in the middle, only grows. It can be argued that, “a major concern is to build dialogue across the tensions between the concerns of government and the needs of migrants”^{xxvii} NGOs seem to be poised for mediating this divide and finding ways for cooperation that pleases all participants.

INCIDE, “la Inclusión, la Ciudadanía, la Diversidad y la Educación” (Inclusion, Citizenship, Diversity and Education), has been around for 24 years and is a well-established and respected organization in Málaga. The association works in the fields of childhood, children, employment, training, minorities, youth and family. On staff they have lawyers and other professionals who work to ease difficulties for immigrants and the regularization process. This is a grueling process they try to help with. They also try to help with unemployment, but because so many native Spanish citizens are looking for work, it is especially hard for them to find jobs for immigrants. The aims of this organization, as stated on their website, involve promoting tolerance of others, civic action and education, and equal opportunities. They believe in democratic values and social transformation for the betterment of life quality for all in Spain.^{xxviii}

The organization helps people with whatever social services they can. They act as an intermediary with companies and also advise people about their rights. Much of what they can do depends on government funding. The employment office often refers people to them, but at the same time, the government is saying they have no money to support the organization. So, the

organization has changed their mindset some and can attend to almost 1,000 families using funds they get from banks. While the organization could use the help granted the demand, they only have 2-3 volunteers because it is hard work and really requires professionals.

At INCIDE, their work is to put the law to the advantage of migrants and others who have been marginalized by the system. On the organization's website, one of their aims is stated as: "the removal of obstacles to the free development of the personality of the individual, which preclude their social and/or employment or hinder the real equality of opportunity between citizens."^{xxix} Hence, they make sure that the law is applied to the best of its abilities, in a way where all have equal access to legal resources. They explained that, with the crisis, people are feeling helpless. In many cases, because of the situation, there is little that can be done for these people, be they immigrants or citizens. However, there are also many times that, when paid a phone call or visit, they are able to advocate for the individual, mediating between what the government can offer and what the migrant needs to live.

In mediating resources and helping people to navigate immigration laws, NGOs must be careful in how they act as gatekeepers. Because social injustices are still widespread and funds are not adequate, there is no way that organizations can help every immigrant who reaches out to them. Hence, as they build bridges toward the government and its resources for some, they must act as guards, and prevent others from crossing these same bridges they have built for others. But how must they determine who is entitled to the limited resources? Rogozen-Soltar argues that it is, "through their enforcement of social norms and their gendered and racially inflected interpretations of clients' stories and requests, [that] NGO staff became gatekeepers of social services, determining who should receive the scarce resources available."^{xxx} Her argument goes on to argue that, because racial and gendered lines determine who NGOs reach out to, Moroccan

men become objects of prejudice, due to unjust and stereotyped fears of their character. While there is a general sense of Islamophobia, she argues that it exists especially toward men, for they are seen to be threatening.

Doctor Charpiot started **Consultation D'aide Aux Migrants** (The Consultation for Medical Help) in 1975 in Toulouse, France. The clinic was designed to serve immigrants, particularly single men who were labor workers in the fields. The men he served worked under illegal and terrible conditions and were not seeing doctors. He felt that these men were an unrepresented group who needed his aid, despite the disapproval of other doctors.

The organization was run not for profit, but rather as a volunteer commitment of Dr Charpiot and his colleagues until its closing in 2000. Dr. Charpiot began this NGO by working there in the nighttime, while seeing regular geriatric patients at a clinic during the day. As a young doctor, this was by no means a typical career path, but one that he felt passionate about and dedicated to. He looked at his work with a social approach to medicine. Rather than just curing illness, he would inquire further into the lives of his patients to help to insure that their work and life quality conditions were up to par. The practice had doctors, social workers, translators, and med students volunteering for the sake of the immigrants. The team worked together to provide care to people needing urgent attention, but because of their social approach, would go further to try and improve the situation for these workers in the long run. The clinic was only closed when the team felt that there were other, more permanent and systematic resources present to meet these needs.

The consultation was inspired because of Dr. Charpiot's own immigrant background. A member of the pied-noir, he himself came to France from Algeria in 1962 with his family when he was just fourteen years old. His ancestors were also immigrants from Spain. He did not

struggle much in assimilating to life in France, for many of the largest barriers for immigrants were not relevant to him, but he realizes that he is fortunate in this regard. For many immigrants, the move is much more difficult, and the conditions they meet are unacceptable. As a doctor, but also the founder of an NGO, he wanted to find remedies not only to illnesses, but social injustice as well.

The majority of the men that Dr. Charpiot treated were the group that Rogozen-Soltar refers to as the victims of prejudice: Moroccan men. No other doctors were seeing these men, and thus the Consultation D'aide Aux Migrants was started to make sure they received necessary services. In this regard, Dr. Charpiot fought against gatekeeping affects and tried to assure that everyone, despite their gender or background, received medical attention. Yet, in his practice, he had to be wary, in order to assure he was not discriminating against people who were not male migrant workers but were also in need. Hence, the issues of gatekeeping and divvying resources, when there is much demand, become very complicated ones.

In another argument, Pérez speaks to how gendered approaches to immigration in NGOs relate to women's rights. She explains that, "there are problems in addressing undocumented migration, a structural phenomenon grounded in global inequalities, through a mix of restrictive and exceptional measures."^{xxxii} When women are both the victim of gender violence and illegal status as immigrants, how to deal with them through the law becomes complicated. Like Rogozen-Soltar, she too refers to gatekeeping, saying that the resources drawn for these women and their treatment depends on how the NGO, as the gatekeeper, references them as victim of one force over the other.^{xxxiii} Hence, a challenge is presented in ensuring that the process is just. For example, if a Moroccan woman is mistreated by her husband from a French perspective, her rights as a woman in France may contradict with how she is treated as an immigrant, as she

comes from a country that has different standard for the treatment of women. How the NGO would approach this situation, would depend on how they viewed her and thus how they may pull resources.

The **Association Bel'Arc-en-Ciel** is an organization in Toulouse, France founded by, and open to, migrant women. The phrase for which it is named, Bel'Arc-en-Ciel, translates along the lines of beautiful rainbow. The objective of this organization, as translated from their material, is, "to allow the words of the women to emerge, to support their social and professional integration, independence and development."^{xxxiii} The organization was originally founded in 2001 by a group of women, in response a series of violent uprisings in the community. They felt this violence needed to be stopped, and took it upon themselves to promote this mission. The women, who were not part of the protests, joined together to in support of amity and communal healing of women of different backgrounds.

The association now receives funding from both the local and federal government to support their work. The women working at the association estimate that they serve about twenty women a day. These women who they serve represent all demographic backgrounds; they are single, married, and divorced, aged 18 to 75, and from a variety of nations. The common thread in working with all these women is helping to integrate them into the community. In visiting, our group met a Rwandan woman and a Moroccan woman who work at the center. The Rwandan woman herself came to France when she was 44, fleeing Rwanda for her safety. The Moroccan woman has been in France since she was 17 and spoke to the challenges she faced with her parents and now faces with her own children about how Moroccan children should be raised in France. Both women were very welcoming and open about the challenges not just of their work, but also of their own personal lives.

A frequent issue that the association addresses is the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence in their community. In describing their services offered, they also ‘promote the importance of exercising citizenship and, in doing so, simultaneously overcome social isolation.’ Further, they work to help encourage dialogue among families, but also in the broader networks of one’s neighborhood and social circle.^{xxxiv} They demonstrate the value of women proactively interacting with their community, and doing so peacefully. It is in this way that they believe women become an integrated and respected part of their community.

As it is a gendered immigration organization, Association Bel’Arc-en-Ciel faces the dilemma of how to treat the immigrant women. In their work, they must look to those they serve in terms of their rights and responsibilities as immigrants, but also as women. The organization must teach these women, many of whom are Muslim women in French society, which values secularism, how to fill their roles as both immigrants and women. While these roles should not contradict, because of difficulties in integrating into a new and distinctly different culture, for many immigrant women it can be a big challenge. Bel’Arc tries to establish a peaceful way for women in this position to proceed.

ESTABLISHING NETWORKS

At the Ferney Round Table of 1996, a conference organized by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law and the International Organization for Migration, the importance of not just bridges, but networks, or a web of bridges, was established. In an article *Migration World Magazine* published about the conclusions of the conference, they gave recommendations and commitments for action as to how NGOs can improve their approach to immigration. The conference emphasized the significance of organizations working together, with one key point being that they must, “seek to establish or improve national and international exchanges of

information and “networking” among NGOs, trade unions, migrant groups and others, with IGOs, to foster convergence of efforts in defense of migrant’s rights.”^{xxxv} It is with true cooperation that progress can be made toward the social justices these organizations fight for.

MCI, **Movimiento contra la Intolerancia** (the movement against intolerance), began in 1991 because of a trend of increased racism and xenophobia in Spain and Europe as a whole. At this time, there was a rise in violence and criminal activity directed at marginalized groups such as gypsies, immigrants, people from ethnic minorities, and youth. The real push behind the movement occurred after a 1993 incident after immigrants and youth were murdered due to intolerance. In explaining who they are, MCI shares, “we are a pluralistic movement, independent, open and participatory working against Intolerance, Racism and Violence, in essence, a commitment Solidarity Democratic Coexistence, Tolerance and human rights advocacy.”^{xxxvi}

Intolerance is the key term in the discourse for this organization. MCI argues that intolerance can appear as racism, religious prejudice, violence, and inequality and works to peacefully reject these sorts of behaviors. They discourage violent protest and work to make society a more accepting place through promotion of programs of tolerance and solidarity in Spain. They have campaigns in schools, hold conferences, and work with other organizations towards these goals. Ninety percent of the funding that MCI receives comes from the government. MCI promotes their message by educating youth on tolerance, preventing hate crimes, and providing legal representations to victims of hate crimes. They rely heavily on the media for spreading awareness. At their core, they try to reach out to all people, for we all share in our humanity, and in this we should find unity.

Movimiento contra la Intolerancia is an example of an organization that thrives on supporting, and off of the support of, other organizations. During our travels, we got to sit in on the celebration of the movement's 20th anniversary. Beyond emphasizing the strength of their own movement, in which they repeated the idea that “nunca más,” or “never more” will they accept intolerance, they invited at least a dozen other organizations to speak and celebrate with them.^{xxxvii} One of these organizations was the Asociación Marroqui, who spoke on behalf of immigrants as a marginalized group, but many others spoke to represent other fights for social justice. The cooperation and established network among these organizations was evident throughout the event. Even more obvious was how much they accomplished, and plan to accomplish, working together.

In this light, there is one last precaution that NGOs must be conscious of as they continue to address immigration. In dealing with immigration, NGOs exist first and foremost for the sake of the immigrant. Much of their success is accredited to networking: the building of relationships with the government and other similar organizations. In networking, however, some NGOs forget their purpose of helping immigrants.

“Indeed, these NGOs constitute a booming sector that has been referred to as an ‘industry’ because of the economic dimension involved. With a membership that is almost exclusively autochthonous, this NGO sector has carved out for itself the role of institutional mediator of migrants’ interests when this is often not the case.”^{xxxviii}

When capitalizing on migrants, the trust in NGOs is lost and their role as mediators is not properly fulfilled. Of course advocating for the resources they need is critical to their success, but not when it comes at the cost of providing the services that the advocating was for. The organizations we looked at seemed to understand this principle. While it meant that they weren't all as resourceful as they may have liked, they maintained their dignity and remembered the reason they were working in the cause to begin with.

The organization **CODENAF, “Cooperación y Desarrollo con el Norte de África”** (Cooperation and Development with North Africa), has been around since 1996. As there is a center in Málaga, as well as others across Spain, it seemed appropriate to pay a visit to this organization, to compare it to others like the Asociación Marroqui. Unfortunately they did not seem to be open the couple times we tried to call, and thus visiting wasn't possible. Their website, however, is informative of the practices and goals of the organization. The organization is built on principles of providing aide and encouraging integration for immigrant populations. Along with this, they promote social intervention and intercultural and international awareness. The organization aids immigrants with finding job, legal help, gaining the right to vote, learning Spanish, and understanding women's rights.^{xxxix}

It is important to note that getting in touch with this organization was a challenge, and the hours of this organization seem to have been cut. As their services are similar to other organizations, word of mouth suggested that this organization might have lost its position as a forerunner in the field with the emergence of newer organizations. While we cannot be sure of the exact case for their fading, it is important to recognize what we found, as it demonstrates that this field is a very challenging one and not every organization can be successful.

CONCLUSION

This paper began by saying that no bridge connects Europe and Africa. As it turns out, there has been some discussion as to how a bridge between the two continents could be created, which has led to the Euromed Transport project, sponsored by the EU.^{xl} While nothing concrete exists yet, maybe, in the coming years, a physical bridge will be built by engineers and made of steel, to parallel the work already being done by NGOs.

With or without a physical bridge, immigration in the Mediterranean region is clearly a very complicated phenomenon. Vast arrays of people participate in, or are affected by, this mobility. Because of the presentation of immigration in the media and by governments, too often it becomes viewed as not just a complex reality, but more specifically, a problem. In an increasingly globalized world, immigration can create problems, but it can also offer opportunities. Globalization can bring increasing inequality, divisions, and hierarchies, which cause illegal immigration and questions of security. However, more so, globalization allows for the building of new workforces and new sources of capital, the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, and the circulation of goods, ideas, and people.

In this paper, an understanding of how NGOs act as bridges has been developed. While it may take a boat to cross the Strait of Gibraltar, NGOs build countless connections across the region. These connections allow for more services to reach more people. But beyond this, these bridges exist between nations, between individuals and the government, and as pieces of networks they establish. In a network of bridges, mobility, both physical and social, is possible. In addressing immigration, NGOs in the Mediterranean have begun to demonstrate that issue is much deeper than one of security, but rather pertains to social justice. Further, these NGOs help to make the world a smaller place and help people find the common humanity in all of us.

The 10 organizations we had the opportunity to connect with represent a sampling of those present in this region. Each organization has its own focus, some more similar and others more unique. There are those that are widely successful, and those whose reach is smaller. Their roles are complex and the organizations follow no single strategy or structure. In looking at these organizations, at what has worked well and what has been less effective, how to proceed becomes clearer. Just like any other major global process, immigration patterns in the

Mediterranean are not static, and the work of these NGOs is constantly changing and evolving. Just as physical bridges need to be updated and repaired, NGOs need to stay current and responsive to those they serve. It is this way that these organizations can foster understanding, help immigrants become integrated and productive members of their host nations, and pave way for the success of immigrants and the increased prevalence of social justice.

Notes

-
- ⁱ Dr Marlou Schrover & Floris Vermeulen. "Immigrant Organisations." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 5 (2007): 823
- ⁱⁱ Axel Kreienbrink "Country of Emigration and New Country of Immigration? Challenges for Moroccan Migration Policy between Africa and Europe." (2005): 210
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid*, 213
- ^{iv} Anna Di Bartolomeo, Tamirace Fakhoury, and Delphine Perrin. "Morocco." *CARIM Migration Profile* (2009): 2
- ^v "Morocco." *Focus Migration* 16 (2009): 4
- ^{vi} Anna Di Bartolomeo, Tamirace Fakhoury, and Delphine Perrin. "Morocco." *CARIM Migration Profile* (2009): 1
- ^{vii} "Morocco." *Focus Migration* 16 (2009): 4
- ^{viii} MH Rogozen-Soltar, "Ambivalent Inclusion: Anti-Racism and Racist Gatekeeping in Andalusia's Immigrant NGOs," Vol. 18 (2012): 634
- ^{ix} Davide Però, "Migrants and the Politics of Governance. the Case of Barcelona," *Social Anthropology* 15, no. 3 (2007): 276
- ^x Gery Nijenhuis and Annelet Broekhuis, "Institutionalising Transnational Migrants' Activities: The Impact of Co-Development Programmes," *International Development Planning Review* 32, no 3. (2010): 253
- ^{xi} MH Rogozen-Soltar, "Ambivalent Inclusion: Anti-Racism and Racist Gatekeeping in Andalusia's Immigrant NGOs," Vol. 18 (2012): 637
- ^{xii} *Ibid*.
- ^{xiii} Paul Ronalds, *The Change Imperative The Change Imperative* [Electronic Resource]: Creating the Next Generation NGO (Sterling, Va: Kumarian Press, 2010), 18
- ^{xiv} Joan Lacomba and Alejandra Boni, "The Role of Emigration in Foreign Aid Policies: The Case of Spain and Morocco," *International Migration* 46, no. 1 (2008): 141
- ^{xv} "La Fondation Orient-Occident," 2013, <http://www.fondation.orient-occident.org/index.php?lang=fr>
- ^{xvi} *Ibid*.
- ^{xvii} *Ibid*.
- ^{xviii} "Friendship Force Club of Azrou, Morocco the Bridge of Cultures," 2013, <http://friendshipforceclubofazrou.webs.com/>
- ^{xix} *Ibid*.

-
- ^{xx} “CCSM,” 2013, <http://atmf.org/Communique-du-Collectif-des>
- ^{xxi} Ibid, 129
- ^{xxii} Gery Nijenhuis and Annelet Broekhuis, “Institutionalising Transnational Migrants' Activities: The Impact of Co-Development Programmes,” *International Development Planning Review* 32, no. 3. (2010): 261
- ^{xxiii} “Asociación Marroqui,” 2013, <http://www.asociacionmarroqui.com/>
- ^{xxiv} Dr Marlou Schrover & Floris Vermeulen. "Immigrant Organisations." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 5 (2007): 823
- ^{xxv} Jordi Agustí-Panareda. "Cross-Cultural Brokering in the Legal, Institutional and Normative Domains: Intercultural Mediators Managing Immigration in Catalonia." *Social & Legal Studies* 15, no. 3 (09, 2006): 409
- ^{xxvi} Paul Ronalds, *The Change Imperative The Change Imperative* [Electronic Resource]: Creating the Next Generation NGO (Sterling, Va: Kumarian Press, 2010), 66.
- ^{xxvii} “Effective Respect for the Right and Dignity of Migrants: New Needs and Response,” *Migrant World Magazine* 24, no. 3 (1996): 26
- ^{xxviii} “INCIDE,” 2013, <http://incide.org/index.php/que-es-incide>
- ^{xxix} “INCIDE,” 2013, <http://incide.org/index.php/que-es-incide>
- ^{xxx} MH Rogozen-Soltar, “Ambivalent Inclusion: Anti-Racism and Racist Gatekeeping in Andalusia’s Immigrant NGOs,” Vol. 18 (2012): 643
- ^{xxxi} Marta Perez, “Emergency Frames: Gender Violence and Immigration Status in Spain,” *Feminist Economics* 18, no. 2 (2012): 274
- ^{xxxii} Ibid, 283
- ^{xxxiii} "Association Bel’ Arc-En-Ciel," 2013, <http://www.haute-garonne.fr/upload/B.5.07.Fiche-PDI-BELLARCENCIEL.pdf>
- ^{xxxiv} Ibid.
- ^{xxxv} “Effective Respect for the Right and Dignity of Migrants: New Needs and Response,” *Migrant World Magazine* 24, no. 3 (1996): 27
- ^{xxxvi} “Movimiento contra la Intolerancia,” 2013, <http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com/html/quienes.asp>
- ^{xxxvii} “Movimiento contra la Intolerancia,” 2013, <http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com/html/quienes.asp>
- ^{xxxviii} Davide Però, “Migrants and the Politics of Governance. the Case of Barcelona,” *Social Anthropology* 15, no. 3 (2007): 282
- ³⁹ “CODENAF,” 2013, www.codenaf.org
- ⁴⁰ “Euromed Transport,” 2013, <http://www.euromedtransport.eu/>

Bibliography

- Agustí-Panareda, Jordi. "Cross-Cultural Brokering in the Legal, Institutional and Normative Domains: Intercultural Mediators Managing Immigration in Catalonia." *Social & Legal Studies* 15, no. 3 (09, 2006): 409-433.
- Association Bel'Arc-en-Ciel, Interview, February 2009.
- "Association Bel'Arc-En-Ciel ." <http://www.haute-garonne.fr/upload/B.5.07.Fiche-PDI-BELLARCENCIEL.pdf> (2013).
- "CCSM." <http://atmf.org/Communique-du-Collectif-des> (2013).
- Charpiott, Jean-Paul, Interview, February 2009.
- "Codenaf." www.codenaf.org (2013).
- De la Grange, Pierre, Interview, March 2009.
- Di Bartolomeo, Anna, Tamirace Fakhoury, and Delphine Perrin. "Morocco." *CARIM Migration Profile* (2009): 1-6.
- "Effective Respect for the Rights and Dignity of Migrants: New Needs and Responses." *Migration World Magazine* 24, no. 3 (09, 1996): 24.
- "Euromed Transport." http://www.euromedtransport.eu/En/home_4_46" (2013).
- "Friendship Force Club of Azrou, Morocco the Bridge of Cultures." <http://friendshipforceclubofazrou.webs.com/> (2013).
- González, Valentín, Informal conversation, March 2009.
- "Incede." <http://incide.org/index.php/que-es-incide> (2013).
- INCIDE (Carmen and Javier), Interview, March 2009
- Khalifa, Ahmed, Interview, March 2009.
- Kreienbrink, Axel. "Country of Emigration and New Country of Immigration? Challenges for Moroccan Migration Policy between Africa and Europe." (2005): 193-219.
- La Fondation Orient-Occident in discussion with the author, March 2009.
- "La Fondation Orient-Occident ." <http://www.fondation.orient-occident.org/index.php?lang=fr> (2013).

Lacomba, Joan and Alejandra Boni. "The Role of Emigration in Foreign Aid Policies: The Case of Spain and Morocco." *International Migration* 46, no. 1 (03, 2008): 123-150.

Lamari, Lofti, Informal conversation, March 2009.

"Morocco." *Focus Migration* 16 (2009):1-11. Feb. 2009. Web. 23 Jan. 2013.

"Movimiento Contra La Intolerancia."

<http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com/html/quienes.asp>(2013).

Nijenhuis, Gery and Annelet Broekhuis. "Institutionalising Transnational Migrants' Activities: The Impact of Co-Development Programmes." *International Development Planning Review* 32, no. 3 (01/03, 2010): 245-265.

Nizar Sahraoui. "Asociación Marroqui." <http://www.asociacionmarroqui.com/> (2013).

Ouald, Karima, Interview, March 2009.

Perez, Marta. "Emergency Frames: Gender Violence and Immigration Status in Spain." *Feminist Economics* 18, no. 2 (2012): 265-290.

Però, Davide. "Migrants and the Politics of Governance. the Case of Barcelona." *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 15, no. 3 (10, 2007): 271-286.

Rogozen-Soltar, MH. . *Ambivalent Inclusion: Anti-Racism and Racist Gatekeeping in Andalusia's Immigrant NGOs*. Vol. 18, 2012.

Ronalds, Paul. *The Change Imperative [Electronic Resource] : Creating the Next Generation NGO / Paul Ronalds* Sterling, Va. : Kumarian Press, 2010, 2010.

Schrover, Dr Marlou & Floris Vermeulen. "Immigrant Organisations." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 5 (2007): 823-832.