

Cotlow Award Application Form 2009

Department of Anthropology

The George Washington University

Washington, DC 20052

1. Personal Information

Applicant's name: Hermon Farahi

Degree sought: MA Anthropology

Expected date of graduation: December 2010

Faculty Advisor(s) (who have served as your mentor or mentors for this proposal):

Dr. Stephen Lubkemann, Dr. Barbara Miller

2. Language Skills

Does the proposed project involve the use of a "field language"?

No

3. Title of the Project and Abstract

Project Title:

"Sub-Saharan African Transit Migration: The Fragmented Path to Europe via Morocco"

Abstract of the Project (provide a summary description of the project's goals, location, methods, and relevance to anthropology) [80 word maximum]:

Morocco has become a point of departure for many Sub-Saharan Africans who seek to migrate to Europe. My goal is to identify the complex experiences and social relations involved in migrants' process of decision-making and negotiation of "risk" while undertaking the "journey". I seek to understand migrants' underlying motivations, social pressures/expectations, and their use of social networks or "social capital". My project will contribute to understanding the emerging concept of "transit" migration through fieldwork in Tangier, Morocco, using ethnographic research methods including participant observation, and informal open-ended and semi-structured interviews.

4. Description of the Project (describe your overall research goals, what the project is generally about, and where you will conduct the research and why) [250 word maximum]:

This project will explore the process of "transit" migration among Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africans, who seek to emigrate to Europe, via land and sea routes in North Africa. I have chosen to conduct fieldwork in the city of Tangier in northern Morocco, due to its proximity to Spain via the Strait of Gibraltar (distance: 14-30km), making it a primary point of departure and highly trafficked migratory route from Africa to Europe (Carling 2007a). Sub-Saharan African migrants can be distinguished within the ethnically Arab and Berber Moroccan population. Although their residences are dispersed around the city, in squatter settlements, and in temporary enclaves in the surrounding forests of Tangier, the migrants

are routinely visible in the city, performing menial jobs, and begging (Collyer 2007; Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008). Due to the difficulties in accessing migrants' residencies, fieldwork will be primarily conducted in public places within the city, including cafes, parks, and markets.

In the course of this study, I will elicit information about “transit” migration from a select number of migrants regarding their understanding and negotiation of “risks” involved in their attempt to migrate to Europe. I will investigate their underlying motivations for migrating, decision-making processes along the journey, and relations between social capital, social networks, and social expectations. My overall goal is to understand transit migration through examining the migrant experience and the coping mechanisms used by transit migrants who pass through Morocco.

5. Significance of the Project to Anthropology (in this literature review describe how the proposed research relates to other anthropological research on the topic, and/or region as relevant; use social science style citation--no footnotes) [400 word maximum]:

This project draws on and will contribute to several related topics of anthropological inquiry including migration studies and the anthropology of Morocco. By examining newly emerging sites of “transit” migration, it will provide much needed ethnographic and qualitative insight into this emerging concept and process.

Migration Studies

Since the 1980s, migration studies have increased in prominence in the anthropological literature (Brettell 2000:5). The emergence of economic and cultural globalization as an analytical concept has fueled the notion of migration as a flexible, transnational, and necessary element in the economies of global capitalism (Massey et al. 2002; Trager 2005). Hence, migration is “inextricably associated with issues of development and underdevelopment” (Kearney 1986:331).

Theories about the causes of migration in anthropology and related disciplines range in terms of level of analysis, from micro to macro. Neo-classical microeconomic theory tends to explain migration as an individual's rational choice based on cost-benefit analyses. Macro-level theories such as world systems theory, dependency theory, and the political economy of dual labor markets, tend to view migration as a result of structural inequalities and exploitative labor practices in late-capitalism. (Brettell 2000, 2003; De Haas 2007; Kearney 1986; Massey 1998, 2002). Meso-levels of analyses focus on network analyses: individuals’ interaction with households and communities, emphasizing personal behavior, experiences, and strategies (Brettell 2003). An orientation towards a “meso” level of analyses allows the synthesis of micro and macrolevels, by relating structure and agency with social networks. My study will accomplish this synthesis by researching how sub-Saharan African migrants, their families and communities, actively address the structural realities of endemic poverty, political and economic instability, and food insecurity (Baro & Deubel 2006).

Many anthropological case studies have focused on migrants' experiences in the

destination area (Margolis 2008; Sargent 2005). The ways transnational migrants maintain connections to diasporic homelands are extensively written about (Glick-Shiller and Fouron 2001; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004). Far fewer look at the migration “process” itself. A notable example in this area is Ming's study of the experiences of illegal migrants from China to New York City (Ming-Jung Ho 2003).

Ethnography in and of Morocco

Morocco has long been a place of ethnographic richness for researchers. Renowned anthropologists, including Geertz and Rabinow, have positioned Morocco as a privileged locus of theoretical innovation, ranging from the interpretive framework of “thick description” (Geertz 1971), to post-modern “reflexive” anthropological discourse (Rabinow 1975). Bourdieu's studies of Algeria also contributed to the understanding of Maghreb regional political economy (Bourdieu 1979).

Research on migration in Morocco has primarily looked at transnational migration between Moroccan nationals and European hosts (McMurray 2001; De Haas 2005). Only a few researchers have conducted ethnographic research on Sub-Saharan African “transit” migration in Morocco (Carling 2007a, 2007b; Collyer 2007).

The Anthropology of “Transit” Migration

No accepted definition of “transit” migration exists, although it can be understood as: the situation between emigration and settlement, characterized by indefinite stay dependant on various structural and individual factors (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, 2008). Migration studies tend to frame concepts within static dichotomies, i.e. emigration/immigration, voluntary/forced, and origin/destination. “Transit” migration forces us to reconsider such static categories and view migration as a “process”. (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, 2008). The Moroccan case of Sub-Saharan migration to Europe is well positioned to serve as a rich locus for developing a more sophisticated understanding of “transit” migration.

6. Methods (clearly outline or list your research questions; describe the data you will collect and how you will collect it; discuss your analytical methods; and show how the data will address the research questions) [300 word maximum]:

The research questions I seek to address are related to: risk negotiation, motivations for migration, social realities in home and transit host lands, social expectations, social networks and the development of transitory social capital. My research questions are as follows:

What motivates the migrant to leave home, in view of the perceived hardships one must face en route?

Why are particular paths of migration chosen?

How does the migrant interact with members of the “transit” state?

What are the social expectations and/or consequences of migration?

How do “transit” migrants use social networks as a coping mechanism/strategy?

I will be engaging in participant observation, and conducting informal, guided, open-ended interviews based on pre-scripted interview questions (see attached: figure 1). Field notes will be compiled, complemented by audio recordings if possible. In all cases, research participants' consent will be asked, names will be coded, and their identities carefully protected.

Interviewing of Migrants:

I plan to conduct informal interviews with 10-12 Anglophone migrants, expected to be mostly males, ages in the range of 20-40 years (based upon demographic information provided by Collyer 2007). Upon familiarizing myself with the local geography, and identifying possible participants, I will recruit migrants to my study by initially engaging in polite conversation. Upon developing rapport, I will explain my research to possible participants, attaining informed oral consent of their willingness to participate. I will then solicit their experiences of migration by conducting guided open-ended interviews, followed by more detailed questioning in two to three follow-up interviews. I will subsequently recruit research participants using the snowball technique. I will focus my field sites in informal contexts, usually in street conversation, or in public cafés. Each interview will last approximately one hour. I will take written notes during (if appropriate) and after each interview and, with permission, tape record the interviews. I will memorize the delivery of pre-scripted questions in situations where notes will not be taken during the interview. Following the interview, I will give each interviewee a modest and culturally appropriate gift, such as foodstuffs, or a small amount of cash, for their participation. All interviewees will be fully informed about my research and its uses, and be guaranteed anonymity. Given the nature of this case study, the migrants included will constitute an opportunistic sample, which will generate qualitative data only.

7. Research Ethics

I have reviewed the American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics as of February 2009, and understand its expectations for ethical fieldwork and my responsibilities to the academic community. I recognize the importance of informing all participants of the goal of my research and how I will use the data. I will follow ethical procedures regarding consent, willingness to participate, and the maintenance of anonymity for the protection of research participants' identities (unless an individual wishes to be identified by name and has clearly consented to do so). Furthermore, I recognize the vulnerability of my research participants, as they represent a transient, and economically insecure population, so I will take utmost precaution in protecting their interests by de-identifying my data, and securing my research materials in a safe place.

In accordance with the guidelines of GW's Institutional Review Board, this research project fits within the "excluded research" category, as it is a case study posing no risk to the participants, in which informed consent will be respected, and individuals' identities will be protected. Furthermore, I will ensure that it involves no harm to the participants in any way.

8. Research Product (discuss how you will use and present your findings including, for

example, a presentation at a professional meeting, a film, a museum exhibit, a publishable paper, a thesis) [150 words maximum]:

I will use my findings in both short-term and long-term research products. Initially, I will present my findings at the annual conference for Cotlow award recipients. I will ensure that results of this project are shared with relevant organizations in Morocco. I will also engage with news media organizations to publish for public audiences, highlighting aspects of the migrants' humanity and agency. This facilitates the representation of migrant perspectives that is often lacking in public discourse.

In the longer-term, I hope to present my findings as a paper presentation in the context of a professional conference. I will also seek to publish in an academic journal, possibly in collaboration with Dr. Jorgen Carling of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO). I also hope to develop this research project into a long-term study.

9. Timetable (provide a brief description of the schedule of your research activities week-by-week o-r as appropriate):

Before departure, I will continue to conduct intensive library research to form a detailed research action plan and extensive bibliography, under the guidance of Dr. Stephen Lubkemann.

May 19, 2009 – Depart for Morocco June 30, 2009 – Return to The United States

Wk 1 – Arrive in Tangier, Morocco. Make contact with Mr. Anwar Ouassini. Establish logistical basis for fieldwork. Familiarize myself with geography and identify potential research participants.

Wk 2 – Begin participant observation. Begin establishing rapport with potential research participants in Tangier.

Wk 3 – Continue participant observation. Begin initial interviews with two to three migrants whom rapport has been established. Use snowball technique to recruit two to three additional migrants identified by research participants.

Wk 4 – Continue participant observation, and begin initial interviews with two to three additional migrants. Begin follow-up interviews with initial two to three migrants. Use snowball technique as above.

Wk 5 – Continue participant observation, and interviews as above.

Wk 6 – Conclude interviews. Compile and organize field-notes and audio recordings. Prepare logistics for departure back to the US.

10. Budget Amount and Projected Expenditures

Total Amount Requested: \$ 1800

Projected Expenditures (list the expenditure categories for your project, for example, transportation--international, domestic, local; room and board; and research supplies). Funds from a Cotlow award cannot be used for tuition, academic fees, or for purchasing equipments *(See 12. outside financial support section)

11. Staff (if others are to participate in the project as researchers or research assistants, please give their name and qualifications):

N/A

12. Outside Financial Support (list any other sources of funding for the project, either obtained or applied for, with amounts and restrictions):

Mr. Anwar Ouassini (PhD Sociology, UNM) will provide me housing, and local travel accommodations in Tangier, Morocco. He is a friend and colleague who will be conducting his dissertation research during my stay at his residence. He is also well connected with local civil society organizations and will provide me access to his contacts and networks in Morocco.

13. References Cited/Select Bibliography (list the sources you have cited in the proposal and/or used as background research. Use the style defined by the American Anthropological Association [see <http://aaanet.org>]; list a minimum of 10 sources to a maximum of one page).

- Adler, Rachel H. 2004. Yucatecans in Dallas, Texas: Breaching the Border, Bridging the Distance. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Baro, Mamadou and Tara F. Deubel. 2006. Persistent Hunger: Perspectives on Vulnerability, Famine, and Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 35:521–38.
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- Brettell, Caroline. 2003. Anthropology and Migration: essays on transnationalism, ethnicity, and identity. Walnut Creek, Calif: Altamira Press.
- Brettell, Caroline and James F. Hollifield. 2000. Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines. Routledge; London.
- Carling, Jorgen. 2007a. Migration control and migrant fatalities at the Spanish-African borders. *International Migration Review*. 41(2):316–343.
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- Collyer, Michael. 2007. In-Between Places: Trans-Saharan Transit Migrants in Morocco and the Fragmented Journey to Europe. *Antipode*. 668-690.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1968. Islam observed; Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- De Haas, Hein. 2007. Morocco's Migration Experience: A Transitional Perspective. *International Migration*. 45(4):39-70.
- Glick-Schiller, N. and G. Fouron. 2001. Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Glick Shiller, Nina; Basch, Linda; and Cristina Szanton Blanc. 1994. Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Post-colonial Predicaments and De-territorialized National-states. Overseas Publishers Association: Amsterdam.
- Klimt, A. and S. Lubkemann. 2002. Arguments Across the Portuguese Diaspora: A

- Discursive Approach to Theorizing Diasporas. *Diaspora* 11(2): 145-162.
- Kearney, Michael. 1986. From the Invisible Hand to Visible Feet: Anthropological Studies of Migration and Development. *Annual Review of Anthropology*.15: 331-61.
- Markowitz, Fran and A.H. Stefansson (eds.) 2004. Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Margolis, Maxine L. 2008. September 11th and Transnationalism: The Case of Brazilian Immigrants in the United States. *Human Organization* 67(1): 1-11.
- Massey, D., J Durand, and N. Malone. 2002. Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Massey, Douglas. 1998. Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium. Clarendon Press: Oxford.
- McMurray, David A. 2001. In and out of Morocco: smuggling and migration in a frontier boomtown. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ming-Jung Ho, 2003. Migratory Journeys and Tuberculosis Risk. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*. 17(4): 442-458 .
- Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou, Aspasia. 2008. Transit migration: the missing link between emigration and settlement. *Migration, minorities, and citizenship*. Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rabinow, Paul. 1977. Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sargent, Carolyn. 2005. Counseling Contraception for Malian Migrants in Paris: Global, State, and Personal Politics. *Human Organization* 64(2): 147-156.
- Trager, Lillian. 2005. Migration and economy: global and local dynamics. *Society for Economic Anthropology monographs*, v. 22. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

14. Permits (demonstrate that you have, or are seeking, any necessary permits such as a research permit, a research visa, an antiquities permit, letter of welcome from an institution, etc. Attach copies to this proposal).

N/A

15. Transcript (submit a copy of your transcript with this proposal; it can be either official or unofficial. Without a transcript, your proposal is incomplete and will not be considered).

See Attached

Figure 1: Interview questions

- 1) Where is your homeland, country of origin?
- 2) Do you have family members who have undertaken the migration journey?
- 3) Did you set out on your journey alone? Who have you met along the way?
- 4) Do you have friends you have met along the way?
- 5) What does your family think of your journey?
- 6) Does your family, friends, and/or community back home have any expectations of you?
- 7) Were you ever afraid of undertaking the journey? If so, how did you overcome your fears?
- 8) Where do you plan to settle?
- 9) How long have you been away from home?
- 10) Do you ever think of going back home?
- 11) Do you think you will ever reach your destination?
- 12) How will you get to your destination?
- 13) Have you found help along the way? From fellow migrants? From people in the countries you have traveled through?
- 14) Where do you ultimately see yourself settling?
- 15) Do you send remittances back home? Do you receive remittances?
- 16) How did you fund the initial expenses of your journey? How do you maintain your journey financially?
- 17) How much would you expect to pay for a trafficker to help you reach your destination?
- 18) Have you heard stories of others' journeys? How has that affected you in your decision to set forth on your journey, and to keep going?
- 19) What set you apart from others who stayed home?
- 20) What possessions are most valuable to you?
- 21) Do you feel like you control your destiny?