Abstract

This thesis examines the role of religion in humanitarian aid provision in the context of irregular migration. My research explores one particular instance of how humanitarianism works from a faith-based approach, using a case study of the official Protestant church in Morocco and its work with irregular sub-Saharan African migrants. Religion has become an important, if contested, discourse in politics. Faith-based organisations (FBOs) are important actors in the public sphere, and are themselves shaped by wider global processes such as migration. Although religion has often been discussed as a factor in displacement and migration, there is a distinct lack of studies on how religious beliefs and practices provide the basis for diverse humanitarian responses, including the ways in which local faith communities (LFCs) respond to the arrival of migrants. This research aims to fill this gap by examining a case study that draws on notions of constructions of the sacred and the secular in the public sphere and organisational culture. The research methods included participant observation, in-depth interviews and analysis of documents, in line with an ethnographic approach that highlights everyday practices. The thesis demonstrates how the role of “religion” in humanitarianism is a negotiation marked by contradictions, tension and ambiguity, reflecting the wider ambivalent role of religion and the secular in the public sphere and putting into question the idea of distinct divisions between religion and the secular, and religion and politics. It also considers how such binaries can render invisible “other” actors in the public sphere. Study of a Southern faith-based actor like the Comité d’Entraide Internationale (CEI) contributes to a greater understanding of some of the smaller actors who engage in “other” modes of humanitarian action that often go unrecognised in the literature, and enlarges the definition of humanitarianism. Transnational religious communities in the global South can emerge out of migration to become actors themselves responding to irregular migration in the humanitarian field.
For my parents, and in memory of my brother
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Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their strength, kindness and love. And Soc Duong Ung, for teaching me many things, but especially the meaning of devotion.
Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text.

To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Where the work is based on joint research or publications, this thesis discloses the relative contributions of the respective workers or authors.

My Ngo

2015
Table of contents

Abstract................................................................................................................................................. 3
Acknowledgements............................................................................................................................... 5
Declaration............................................................................................................................................ 6
List of acronyms ................................................................................................................................ . 12

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................... 15
Research question............................................................................................................................... 18
Addressing a gap in the literature................................................................................................ ..... 18
Theoretical framework ...................................................................................................................... 20
Terms and definitions ........................................................................................................................ 21
  What is religion? .............................................................................................................................. 21
  What is the secular? ......................................................................................................................... 23
Outline of thesis................................................................................................................................ .. 25

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY ....................................................................... 27
Literature review: anthropology of humanitarianism and faith-based organisations ................. 27
Conceptions of religion and the secular ........................................................................................... 30
Research frameworks ........................................................................................................................ 33
Religious roots of humanitarianism ................................................................................................ .. 35
  Definitions and varieties of humanitarianism .................................................................................. 37
Local faith communities ..................................................................................................................... 38
Categorising migrants........................................................................................................................ 40
  Survival migration ........................................................................................................................... 40
  The “migration–asylum nexus” ....................................................................................................... 41
  Transit migration ............................................................................................................................. 42
  Irregular migration .......................................................................................................................... 43
A visit to Takadoum........................................................................................................................... 44
CEI drop-ins: a description ................................................................................................................. 49
  Rabat................................................................................................................................................ 49
  Casablanca ...................................................................................................................................... 50
  Oujda ............................................................................................................................................... 51
Conclusion........................................................................................................................................... 52

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................. 53
Epistemological framework: social constructionism........................................................................ 53
Research perspectives ....................................................................................................................... 55
EEAM’s Declaration of Faith as a response to challenges.............................................................. 90
Context: creation of the Declaration of Faith.............................................................................. 91
Emergence of the CEI within the context of sub-Saharan African irregular migration .......... 96
Financing the CEI .......................................................................................................................... 98
Improvisations and inventions: response to necessity ............................................................... 104
Conclusion.................................................................................................................................. 105
CHAPTER 5. EXTERNAL RELATIONS 107
Religion and the secular in the Moroccan State: a brief discussion ........................................... 108
Change and conservatism ............................................................................................................ 113
Expulsions................................................................................................................................... 115
Advocacy work ............................................................................................................................ 120
Civil society in Morocco – the local humanitarian context ......................................................... 121
CEI debates on advocacy work ..................................................................................................... 124
Relations with donors .................................................................................................................. 131
Sanctification processes within representation and supplication ................................................ 136
Presentation to the Germans: “representation” .......................................................................... 136
American donors’ visit: “supplication” ....................................................................................... 139
Lunch at a migrant’s home ......................................................................................................... 141
Conclusion.................................................................................................................................. 145
CHAPTER 6. ORGANISATIONAL MISSION AND IDENTITY 147
Between evangelism and social action: a wider context .............................................................. 148
CEI values, mission, activities and structure ............................................................................... 149
“Enchanted humanitarianism” and vernacular theology............................................................... 151
Holism and lifestyle evangelism .................................................................................................. 153
Some examples.............................................................................................................................. 154
“God’s work” or humanitarian work? A message of (Christian) presence in a Muslim country... 154
Identity of staff: hiring issues ........................................................................................................ 160
Flexibility from rigid criteria: “We are not slaves to criteria!” .................................................... 165
CEI identity: negotiating tensions between evangelism and humanitarianism ......................... 170
Conclusion.................................................................................................................................. 172
**List of figures and tables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure/Table Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1. Map of Morocco</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2. CEI logo</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3. CEI staff structure</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1. CEI’s cultural paradigm under the leadership of President Samuel Amedro</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMDH</td>
<td>Association Morocain du Defense d’Hommes (Moroccan Association for Human Rights)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBF</td>
<td>Cooperative Baptist Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSM</td>
<td>Collectif des Communautés Subsahariennes au Maroc (Collective of sub-Saharan Communities in Morocco)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEEFE</td>
<td>Communauté d’Églises protestantes francophones (Community of Francophone Protestant Churches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEI</td>
<td>Comité d’Entraide Internationale (International Mutual Aid Committee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CETA</td>
<td>Conférence des Églises de Toute l’Afrique (Church Conference of All of Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEVAA</td>
<td>Communauté d’Églises en Mission (Community of Churches on Mission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMER</td>
<td>Communion Mondiale d’Églises Réformées (World Communion of Reformed Churches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMSM</td>
<td>Conseil des Migrants Subsahariens au Maroc (Council of sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNDH</td>
<td>Conseil National des Droits de l’Homme (National Human Rights Council)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEAM</td>
<td>Eglise Evangélique au Maroc (Evangelical Church in Morocco)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>Faith-based organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GADEM</td>
<td>Groupe antiraciste de défense et d’accompagnement des étrangers et migrants (Anti-racist group for the defense and accompaniment of migrants and foreigners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRIC</td>
<td>Groupe de Recherché Islamic–Chrétienne (Islamic–Christian Research Group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GJCM</td>
<td>Groupe des Jeunes Chrétiens au Maroc (Young Christians in Morocco Group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>ICVA</td>
<td>International Council of Voluntary Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
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<td>ISIS</td>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant</td>
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<td>KBF</td>
<td>Kentucky Baptist Fellowship</td>
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<td>LFCs</td>
<td>Local faith communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Mennonite Central Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSF</td>
<td><em>Médecins Sans Frontières</em> (Doctors Without Borders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-government organisation</td>
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<td>NSC</td>
<td>White House National Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODT</td>
<td><em>Organisation Démocratique des Travailleurs Immigrés</em> (Democratic Organisation of Migrant Workers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMDH</td>
<td><em>Organisation Morocain du Defense d’Hommes</em> (Moroccan Organisation for Human Rights)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJD</td>
<td>Justice and Development Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCVA</td>
<td>Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUHREC</td>
<td>Swinburne University Human Research Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK DCLG</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department for Communities and Local Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission on Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency of International Development</td>
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<td>WCC</td>
<td>World Council of Churches</td>
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</tbody>
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-1990s, Morocco has experienced a growing number of undocumented migrants from sub-Saharan Africa attempting to get to Europe (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] 2010a). It reflects the global trend of rapidly increasing numbers of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people, which reached over 50 million in 2013 (UNHCR 2014). This rise has mainly been driven by the war in Syria, but also by major displacement occurring in Africa, particularly in the Central African Republic and South Sudan (UNHCR 2014).

The externalisation of European Union (EU) border policies and tightened border control regimes has seen the responsibility for preventing unwanted migrants from entering the EU shifting towards non-EU countries (Düvell and Vollmer 2009), with policies including blocking financial aid to origin and transit countries who do not combat irregular migration. In this respect Morocco, which receives 20% of the funds from the EU for Mediterranean countries, has a lot to lose (Boukhari 2007). For migrants, tightening border control often means lengthening their stay in Morocco, with some ending up “stuck” for many years. There they live a life of precariousness, with no legal status, access to work or healthcare, and constant exposure to forced expulsions, particularly across the Morocco/Algeria border. In addition to difficult conditions, they are exposed to violence during their journey and when in Morocco, at the hands of authorities, locals and gangs.

In response, a humanitarian field in Morocco has arisen to attend to the needs of these migrants on all levels, including direct aid, advocacy and legal needs. This field includes faith-based actors and is in line with a recognised opening up of a new space for religious actors alongside such migrations, particularly faith-based organisations (FBOs) that can expand or gain a “second wind” by responding to migrant needs (Bava 2011, p. 500). This is particularly the case where the tightening of border controls between Europe and Africa has had a direct impact on the multiplication and length of stay in North Africa of sub-Saharan African migrants attempting to get to Europe (Bava 2011, p. 494). It corresponds with a globalisation of humanitarianism and an increasing growth in the number of humanitarian actors based in the global South, including faith-based actors (Barnett et al. 2009; Clarke 2010; McDuie-Ra & Rees 2010; Rees 2011). Similarly, although religion has often been discussed as a factor in displacement and migration, there is a distinct lack of studies on how religious beliefs and practices provide the basis for diverse humanitarian responses, including the ways in which local faith communities (LFCs) respond to the arrival of migrants (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011).
Furthermore, since the “Global War on Terror” and with current interventions in Iraq by Western countries, led by the United States, to combat ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) (Guardian News and Media Limited 2014), religion has become an important, if contested, topic in the media and in politics. FBOs are important faith-based actors in the public sphere, are themselves shaped by wider processes and must contend with global forces such as foreign policy, neoliberal markets and migration. It has been noted, for example, that the “Global War on Terror” has conditioned religious/secular boundaries in local contexts, as well as constructions of the religious and the secular in transnational and local humanitarian situations (Lynch 2011, p. 207). As a public domain that constellates “sacred” and “secular” values, conceptions and discourses, the humanitarian field is a particularly useful one for analysing what happens when faith-based actors engage in the public sphere. Given the increasing importance and use of religion in political discourse, and the worldwide consequences of this discourse, it is vital to get a better understanding of the variety of and specific ways that religion enters the public domain; what happens when religious claims are used as moral imperatives for action, and how “the power of ‘liberal secularism’ in its Enlightenment, market, and statist manifestations, shape the understandings and actions of contemporary religious humanitarians” (Lynch 2011, p. 213).

By way of introduction, I would like to briefly tell the story of how my research evolved, how I came to the research question, and what assumptions had to be revised as I went along. The initial research question had very little, if anything, to do with religion. Initially I
submitted a thesis proposal to look at the experience of migration of sub-Saharan African women in Morocco. As part of this research, I undertook a month-long exploratory trip to Morocco, and later a one-year stay to conduct fieldwork. It was during my one-month trip that I began to get an inkling of the importance of faith and religion – not only for the migrants and those who worked with them, but also for the wider Moroccan society. It was quite a surprise for me, coming from not only a very “secular” academic world, but also “secular” Australian culture. The contrast was enlightening, and I began to question the framework I was using. Later, during my fieldwork phase, I completed three months of volunteer work with the Comité d’Entraide Internationale (CEI), the social welfare section of the Eglise Evangélique au Maroc (EEAM), as a way of entering the field.

Anthropologists have often immersed themselves in the lifeworlds of their subjects – from Geertz’s (2005) seminal work in Bali on Balinese cockfighting to other prominent examples such as Loïc Wacquant’s (2004) study of boxing through training for three years as a boxer with his subjects (to the point where he considered becoming a professional) – or built affective relationships with them, as in Nancy Scheper-Hughes’s (2001) study of schizophrenia in a rural Irish village, where she lived in the village with her own family for a year. Following the ethnographic tradition, I used my volunteer work as a way into the lifeworlds of migrants. This gave me important embodied insights not only into the running of the organisation, but also into the daily experiences and concerns of the fieldworkers with whom I spent the most time. During this period of volunteer work the focus of my research changed. I became interested in the workers themselves (many of whom were also migrants, whether regular or irregular) as faith-based actors and how they negotiated religion in their work; how they acted within a space with multiple and competing discourses on religion, humanitarianism and migration.

The research aims to contribute to a greater understanding of the role of religion and faith communities in responding to migrants through a case study of the EEAM, the official Protestant church in Morocco that was created during the French protectorate period, and its work with irregular sub-Saharan African migrants. It also seeks to understand how religious humanitarian actors disturb the religious/secular binary by engaging, through their practices and beliefs, with at once global, national and local contexts. Religious actors are actively engaged in the enactment of religion in the public sphere, not only blurring the boundaries of the religious/secular divide, but also further complicating a strict division between monolithic and essentialised religious and secular subjectivities.
**Research question**

The research poses the question of the role of religion in humanitarian aid provision in the context of irregular migration. More specifically, it asks how “religion” impacts on the nature of an FBO’s intervention, and consequently some of the challenges faced in its work.

A year-long fieldwork research project that included interviews with key informants and participant observations was conducted on EEAM, the official Protestant church in Morocco and its social welfare service, the CEI. A case study approach illuminates the complexities, tensions and controversies facing FBOs in their work with vulnerable migrants. EEAM is a church in Morocco that is at the crossroads of religion and migration on the African migration route, in a country where many sub-Saharan African irregular migrants remain in a semi-permanently settled state as they remain blocked on their way to Europe. In its local faith community position, EEAM’s engagement in aid work with migrants is particularly revealing of some of the challenges that small FBOs in the global South face as they negotiate their religious subjectivity within their humanitarian work. Although created during the French protectorate period by Europeans, the congregation now predominantly comprises sub-Saharan Africans, particularly students. In response to the influx of irregular sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, the diaconal arm of EEAM, the CEI, re-orientated its work towards responding to the needs of these migrants. It now works with irregular sub-Saharan African migrants in several cities in Morocco, giving direct aid (such as food, medication, help with housing and accompaniment) and also undertaking more development-based initiatives such as micro-projects and professional training.

**Addressing a gap in the literature**

My research fills an acknowledged gap in the literature on FBOs’ responses to forced migration. Although religion has often been discussed as a factor in displacement and migration, there is a lack of studies on how religious beliefs and practices provide the basis for diverse humanitarian responses, including the ways in which LFCs respond to the arrival of migrants (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011).

This has been partly addressed by a significant special issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, “Faith-based humanitarianism in contexts of forced displacement” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011). In this issue, a range of articles examine the extent to which religion provides the foundation for humanitarian responses to forced displacement. Similarly, *Forced Migration Review*’s special issue “Faith-based organisations and responses to displacement” (Couldrey & Herson 2014) includes empirical case studies of faith-based groups and their work with migrants. My study aims to build on this growing body of work,
which is further discussed in the literature review in the next chapter. There is now also a
recognition in the literature that humanitarian organisations more broadly are increasingly
based in the global South, and that local staff typically comprise a large per cent of the
workforce in humanitarianism (Ager & Ager 2011, p. 465). In a similar vein, researchers at
the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University argue that we should not underestimate the
capacity of Southern stakeholders such as LFCs to exert agency as actors in the humanitarian
sphere, despite the power of the global North’s international regime (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh &
Pacitto 2013). The authors argue that particular attention should be paid to smaller
organisations that often go unnoticed in humanitarianism, and that LFCs in particular play a
large and often unrecognised role in providing care and support for those in need:

Their capacities are largely unmapped and their impact uncharted. They are
inadequately represented at the planning table … as a result, public and
private development actors rarely understand their motivation, contribution,
and this, along with limited models for collaboration, are barriers for
engagement, and limit our collective impact. In short, there is a massive
evidence gap (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013, p. 2).

This study makes a contribution to filling this evidence gap. It demonstrates how the role of
religion in humanitarianism, particularly in the context of an LFC, is not a monolithic or
homogenous phenomenon but rather is marked by contradiction, tension and ambiguity. My
research aims to contribute to making these LFCs and their particular challenges and
contributions more visible. Through being at once a transnational space, religious space and
humanitarian space, the CEI is an example of how transnational faith communities, by
responding to migration, transform themselves into actors on the migration route alongside
other actors in the local humanitarian landscape, particularly in the face of lack of services
by the state and the state’s sometimes active aggression towards migrants. This research
contributes to the growing body of work on FBOs and LFCs through highlighting how
smaller FBOs such as the CEI are important protagonists at the crossroads of religion and
migration and identifying the particular challenges they face in their work. In this way, by
examining “other” actors and “other” modes of action, the definition of humanitarianism can
be enlarged, and as Barnett and Stein (2012) argue, we can begin to speak of
humanitarianisms in the plural.

This thesis does not propose new typologies or evaluation tools. Instead, following on from
Fountain’s (2013) concept of an “anti-mapping or anti-taxonomic exercise”, it is against
trying to categorise FBOs and assuming an essentialised and monolithic notion of “religion”
and its role within them. Instead I adopt an approach of “privileging particularities”
(Fountain 2013 p. 245) and paying attention to the complexity, ambiguity and relationships within an FBO. At the same time, I argue against certain scholars who see a “secularisation” of FBOs, and who remark that there is not much difference between faith-based and secular organisations “on the ground” (see, for example, Furniss & Meier 2012). While this is perhaps true to a certain extent for larger, more established organisations (for example those linked to the Catholic church); it is not always the case with smaller organisations such as the CEI. My thesis will argue that “sanctification” in the form of a particular religion, as it is understood and constructed by the actors themselves, does matter in humanitarianism for organisations like the CEI; from the way workers perceive their work to the way it filters into organisational aspects.

**Theoretical framework**

The role of religion in the public sphere is a pertinent and topical issue and looks to continue to be so. The work of faith-based actors in humanitarianism is one way in which religion engages in the public domain, and therefore is a relevant point of analysis. Furthermore, the modernisation and globalisation of humanitarianism make this domain – where concepts of the sacred and the secular are continually being negotiated by all actors, including the CEI – particularly pertinent for interrogation.

Furthermore, the CEI’s role in migration and migration issues is an excellent lens for examining the religious/secular divide and the need to recognise “other” frameworks for being in the world. As an organisation that works with irregular migrants and as a transnational religious community itself composed of and transformed by migration, the CEI has diversity and multiple perspectives as part of its everyday organisational life. The context of migration provides a fertile ground for studying assumed binaries and categories, where:

… multiple local and culturally specific worldviews meet and intersect with one another, alongside grand overarching narratives and structures related to state power, globalisation and cosmopolitan global civil society. Different “locals” intersect at the same time as different “nationals” and “globals” (Wilson 2014).

As my research demonstrates, this “meeting” is marked by contradiction, tension and ambiguity, as the organisation negotiates at once the local, national and global. Furthermore, the CEI negotiates specific sensibilities and anxieties that arise out of the question that the global modern secular regime constructs as the central concern; that is, where to draw the line between religion and politics, and religion and the secular (Agrama 2012). This is
further complicated by the fact that, as mentioned above, these binaries are often constructed as a prerequisite to having rights and freedoms linked to fundamental liberal values. It is particularly the case in the domain of humanitarianism, where a particular prevailing discourse upholds an unquestioned assumption of liberal materialist values (Ager & Ager 2011, p. 461). This renders invisible actors such as the CEI which may prioritise other values, and may not (be able to) maintain clear binaries of religion and politics, and religion and the secular.

The CEI, like other actors in the humanitarian field, must constantly negotiate and navigate through values espoused by secular liberalism, whether by affirming, denying or working against it, as all actors must in the modern secular regime. This is a process recognisably marked by ambiguity, contradictions and tension. This is not because the CEI is an exceptional or a vastly different actor from others in the field, but because the very logic of secularism itself perpetuates these characteristics, as Agrama comments: “For the peculiar intractability of secularism lies not only in the normativity of its categories, but significantly, in the indeterminacies it provokes” (Agrama 2012, p. 27). At the same time, religious actors actively engage in a diversity of practices that are sometimes problematic for liberal categories, and they enact a range of constructions of the religious and the secular in the midst of their particular geo-political and historical contexts. These often undermine binaries such as private/public, pre-modern/modern, transcendence/immanence and illiberal/liberal, all of which are permutations of the distinction between the religious and the secular (Lynch 2011, p. 205). As a public domain that constellates both “secular” and “sacred” values, conceptions and discourses, the humanitarian field is a useful one for examining and questioning enactments of the religious and the secular.

**Terms and definitions**

This research has also drawn on a particular understanding and scholarly approach to religion and the secular, which I expand on further in this section. These approaches proved fundamental to my analysis.

**What is religion?**

My research is informed by Talal Asad’s (1993) careful attention to the conception of religion. Working against an essentialised or monolithic notion of the term, Asad argues that the way we have come to this category called “religion” and how it has come to be universalised is a product of specific processes and strategies over time:
There cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes (Asad 1993, p. 29).

So the question is focused not on the what of religion, but rather on the how: how has it come to be constructed through processes, strategies and practices by various actors including the state, institutions, communities and individuals? This involves a recognition that any construction is always teleologically orientated (Asad 1993 p. 56); that is, it always serves wider interests and outcomes. Particular attention to the different practical contexts in which religion manifests, and the consequences of how a particular understanding of religion informs individual lives and relationships, is required (Asad 1993, p. 56). This stance is useful for approaching the CEI’s work and its religious subjectivity, including how particular Christian ideas of service are implicated in specific interests and outcomes, as well as intended and unintended consequences.

Through a discursive approach to religion, the tensions and contentions that are inherently part of discourse construction can be revealed. This approach allows us to question what is considered valid knowledge at a certain place and time, how this knowledge arises and is passed on, and importantly, how “discourses are not ‘mere ideology’, they produce subjects and reality” (Wodak & Meyer 2009, p. 888). These include “materialisations” of discourse – that is, the social consequences and implications; real consequences that can be studied. This study analyses how a particular construction of religion in an FBO has consequences for the organisation’s identity and mission, operational issues related to staff, relations with state and donors, and the history of the organisation itself. To do so is not to suggest that discourse and practices have been static and sustained across time and context; indeed, in showing the various effects of religion, my research aims to demonstrate the particularity of consequences and outcomes that largely depend on context. Such analysis does, however, reveal the role that power has in discourse and in organisational structure in general, which is the means by which discourse makes particular statements seem rational and beyond all doubt even though they are only valid at a certain time and place (Wodak & Meyer 2009, p. 866). To this end, my study demonstrates how a sanctified discourse can seem natural and inevitable in certain contexts, but not in others.

This is also not to suggest that discourses within the organisation are uniform and the same overall; as suggested above, discourse construction is often a matter of contention. Instead, my study focuses on how the constant repetition of statements, symbols and strategies forms a discourse and has “sustained effects” on an organisation like the CEI (Wodak & Meyer
This too is related to power – the power of those in leadership positions, and also those within the organisation who are Euro-American and in a position to structure the prevailing discourse. I will further explore this in subsequent chapters. The discursive approach is also further elaborated upon in the methodology section, but here I emphasise the way this approach also puts into question boundaries between the religious and the secular. It not only problematises the distinct categories “religious” and “secular”, but also enables an interrogation into the processes and conditions which have enabled them to be sustained as distinct categories (Asad 2006, p. 298). This is especially pertinent when examining the Moroccan State, which – as I will discuss in subsequent chapters – defies the binary of being either a religious or a secular state.

In the next section I turn my attention to what we mean when we talk about the secular. If, as Asad argues, in analysing religion we also have to look at formations of the secular because the two concepts have been mutually constituted throughout history, and “the secular, legitimised as the secular, itself shifted over time” (Asad 2006, p. 299), then any concept of religion is also informed by its counterpart, the secular.

What is the secular?

Secularism, like religion, can be approached as a discursive tradition composed of practices, concepts and sensibilities organised in a particular historical time and place (Asad 2006, p. 217). This is neither to essentialise secularism nor to fall into a kind of cultural relativism; but rather “to take a necessary step toward explaining the force that a discourse commands” (Mahmood 2005, p. 17). This section gives a brief summary of some of the concepts and theories on secularism that have informed this study.

Agrama (2012) convincingly argues that the preoccupation with determining the divide between the religious and politics is itself a characteristic of the modern secular state. Within secularism, the religious/politics divide is linked to a:

… historical connection with a set of specific stakes, one that has ineluctably shaped the form it now takes, the sensibilities and anxieties it mobilises, the range of answers thought appropriate to it, and the kinds of power it facilitates (Agrama 2012, p. 28).

Agrama (2012) characterises secularism as a “problem space”, where the fundamental liberal values such as equality, tolerance and freedom of belief are seen as being necessarily connected to having a religious/political and religious/secular divide. In other words, maintaining these strict binaries is seen as a prerequisite for cultivating the liberal values. This means, then, that secularism generates “questions whose answers and whose high stakes
are ones to which no one, especially today, can remain indifferent” (Agrama 2012, p. 30). Secularism is a “global discourse”, one in which political modernity was founded (Shakman Hurd 2008, p. 15), a discourse whose reach goes beyond the West where it has its foundations. Its pervasiveness reflects the authority and power of this discourse; it has become the invisible background or “scaffolding of our thoughts” (Shakman Hurd 2008, p. 16).

The question of where to draw the line between religion and politics, religion and the secular, and its positing as a necessary pre-condition for a range of fundamental rights and liberties, is at the heart of the discourse of secularism. Agrama (2012) states that it is particularly by being able to continually provoke this question as the central concern, rather than enforcing any normative categories, that secularism is able to show its power. Another salient feature of secularism is the way that, in defining the spheres of religion and politics and making religion an object of intervention and management, the modern secular state simultaneously masks its own role in the process, “claiming to be exempt from this process of production. This is a formidable exercise of power” (Shakman Hurd 2008, p. 16).

The exercise of defining categories is not simply descriptive, but also normative. It involves an:

… operation of modern secular power through which certain religious subjectivities are authorised and others made the object of reform and subject to the “civility” of secular norms and conventions. Unruly subjects (such as the fundamentalist, the evangelical, the religious extremist) are crucially formed by operations of secular power even as they challenge many aspects of this operation. The “otherness” of these subjectivities is not only a product of their unruly actions but also an effect of how secular power establishes its claim to truth and normativity (Mahmood 2010, p. 294).

This power is at once political, intellectual, cultural and moral (Shakman Hurd 2008) and filters into everyday life, often going unquestioned, including by religious actors themselves, whose religious subjectivity is as much formed by secularism as it is in opposition. Secular liberalism is beyond simply an effect of the state or the law; rather, in its consequences and implications, it is “something of a way of life” (Mahmood 2005, p. 55).

The other relevant aspect of modern secularism is its construction in political and cultural discourse as being opposite to “Islam”. In modern secular discourse, Islam represents the “non-secular” and all that is in opposition to Western values, identities and practices (Shakman Hurd 2008). The prevailing discourse represents Islam as anti-modern, anti-
Christian and anti-democratic, where an “opposition to the concept of Islam is built into secular political authority and embedded within the national identities with which it is associated and through which it is expressed” (Shakman Hurd 2008, p. 7). This binary opposition between the West and Islam, where “secularism is seen as a unique Western achievement” (Shakman Hurd 2008, p. 6), masks the socially constructed nature of secularism. As with the category of religion, secularism is assumed to be a stable category. However, the varieties of secularism that exist in the world and secularism’s continuing contestations and mutations disprove this assumption (Shakman Hurd 2008, p. 12).

The particular nature of secularism in Morocco will be briefly explored in Chapter 5 through an analysis of the Moroccan State. This is fundamental not only for understanding the context in which the CEI works and responds, but also for understanding how the CEI’s practices and Christian subjectivity manifest, transform and respond to a global process of secularisation as it is expressed within the context of the post-colonial, non-Western Islamic society of Morocco.

Outline of thesis

Chapter 2 sets the context of the study. It covers the areas needed for an understanding of where this study is situated, further examining the theories and concepts surrounding religion and the secular and outlining the research frameworks utilised in my thesis. The rest of the chapter includes an overview of the religious roots of humanitarianism, the concept of LFCs, ways of categorising migrants that are relevant to the thesis, and an overview of the situation for migrants in Morocco, as well as a description of the CEI “drop-ins” for migrants, which were the sites for the main empirical basis of my research.

Chapter 3 gives the rationale and justification of my decisions regarding the methodology and research methods of this study. An outline of the epistemological framework of social constructionism is followed by an overview of the research perspectives adopted in this thesis, the discursive approach to religion and sanctification and secularisation processes. I explain the research methods utilised in this research, before moving on to reflections on the research, the position of the researcher and ethics.

Chapter 4 gives a selected and interpreted history of EEAM and the CEI, including an outline of the Protestant presence in Morocco before and after the country’s independence from France, and tracing the emergence of EEAM from this context. It identifies EEAM as a transnational religious community within the context of sub-Saharan African irregular
migration and argues that the main ways EEAM and the CEI have managed their growth and development have been through mobilising a sanctified discourse of the family, and through improvisation and invention.

Chapter 5 explores the relations the CEI has with two of its most significant external actors: the Moroccan State and the organisation’s donors. It analyses the CEI’s relations with the Moroccan state through the issues of expulsions of foreign Christians for proselytisation and advocacy work. The second part of the chapter examines the CEI’s relations with its donors, analysing how sanctification processes occur in the donor relationship through representation and supplication. This chapter argues that the organisation utilises both sanctification and secularisation processes in order to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the state and its donors.

Chapter 6 examines the organisation’s mission and identity. It places the work of the CEI within a wider social context between evangelism and social action, and outlines the official CEI values, mission, activities and structure. My analysis highlights that there is a prevailing enchanted humanitarianism within the CEI’s vernacular theology of holism and lifestyle evangelism. The chapter ends with the argument that there is a fundamental identity ambiguity intrinsic to the organisation as it negotiates tensions between evangelism and humanitarianism.

Chapter 7 examines how an enchanted humanitarianism affects operational issues related to the organisation’s staff. The chapter examines issues of staff precariousness, staff support and management of staff misconduct, and argues that support is given in the form of what I term rendering prayerful, whereby prayer acts as a form of de facto support for staff. The chapter also highlights how the CEI is undergirded by a cultural paradigm of the organisation as a sanctified family in the Biblical sense on the one hand, and the challenges of managing a semi-middle sized operation on the other.

Chapter 8 includes a summary of the findings of my research and the wider implications for scholarship in this area, as well as for policy and practice. It summarises the central argument of my thesis: that is, that the role of religion in humanitarianism involves a negotiation between evangelism and humanitarianism which is a fundamental aporia for an organisation like the CEI, and that FBOs are also spaces of contention and ambiguity. This research demonstrates that by going deeper into a particular case study, we can learn much about the various ways that religion engages in the public sphere. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter presents contextual material relating to the research. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the literature in the anthropology of humanitarianism and FBOs in which this thesis is situated. Secondly, concepts of religion and the secular that are fundamental to the thesis are explored, as well as corresponding research frameworks. These sections provide the wider academic framework and approach taken in the thesis, as well as situating it within a field of knowledge to which the thesis aims to contribute. The chapter then goes on to discuss the religious roots of humanitarianism, placing the research within a historical context of religion in humanitarianism, as well as the diversities of humanitarianism that have occurred with universalisation and globalisation. The chapter also discusses LFCs as an example of diverse actors outside of the mainstream humanitarian framework, and defines the case study organisation as an LFC, but also as an FBO, suggesting that this duality is at the heart of the CEI’s identity ambiguity. The last section of the chapter discusses migrant categories relevant to the thesis and recounts a visit to the migrant neighbourhood of Takadoum, illustrating the situation for sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco. The chapter ends with a description of the CEI’s “drop-ins” for migrants in three different cities. The drop-ins were where most of the fieldwork research was carried out, and form the main empirical basis of my thesis.

Literature review: anthropology of humanitarianism and faith-based organisations

This thesis is situated within recent scholarly work on the anthropology of development and anthropology of humanitarianism, and the role of religious organisations within these. Bornstein and Redfield (2011) define development organisations as entities focusing on the “economic end of political economy”, where “livelihood defines well-being” (p. 5). This is where poverty is defined as material lack within a development framework, and where a discourse of progression dominates, with work towards a future with improved conditions (Bornstein & Redfield 2011, p. 5). The CEI’s work has development aspects over time as the staff realised that the situation of sub-Saharan African migrants living in Morocco was becoming chronic and semi-permanent, and that the problem facing many migrants was an incapacity to legally work and provide for themselves. The CEI instituted a professional training and micro-projects program aimed at providing opportunities for migrants to earn a living within the informal economy, despite the constraints of being in a country where they are not legally allowed to work and where there is a high unemployment rate even for Moroccans.
In humanitarianism there is an emphasis on the physical (and psychological) condition of suffering people, where “the language of aid world humanitarianism is both moral and broadly medical, identifying well-being through species-level needs and health” (Bornstein & Redfield 2011, p. 6). This means responding to urgent basic needs, such as for food, shelter and medical care. This is evident in the CEI’s direct aid work with migrants, distributing food bags and providing medication and housing.

My research sits at an important intersection between development and humanitarianism for two reasons. Firstly, this is because, as mentioned, the CEI is involved in both what could be termed “humanitarian” work and “development” work. Secondly, it is because there can be an overlap between the two categories; for many organisations it is a question of degree rather than a situation of either/or, especially as they may move over time between the two types of work (Bornstein & Redfield 2011, p. 5). While recognising that categorisation of organisations as “humanitarian”, “development” or “advocacy” can be used to “serve instrumental and political ends in given settings” (Redfield & Bornstein 2011, p. 5), here I approach the definition as being fluid and overlapping in the actual practices of my case study, and therefore I situate within and draw from recent research in both the anthropology of humanitarianism and the anthropology of development.

A growing body of academic literature and research focuses specifically on FBOs. For example, a number of special journal issues dedicated to this topic have appeared in recent years, including the Journal of Refugee Studies special issue, “Faith-based humanitarianism in contexts of forced displacement” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011); A Contrario’s special issue, “The secular and the religious in humanitarianism” (Furniss & Meier 2012); Napa Bulletin’s issue, “The anthropology of faith and development: an introduction” (Hefferan & Fogarty 2010); and Forced Migration Review’s special issue, “Faith and responses to displacement” (Couldrey & Herson 2014). The recent special journal issues on faith-based humanitarianism highlight not only the growing scholarly relevance of the topic but also, as demonstrated by the many empirical case studies examined in these special issue journals, its importance in policy and practice. Similarly, a range of books dedicated to the study of FBOs have highlighted the importance and the challenges of these organisations’ role in humanitarianism and development. These include Faith-based organisations: religions and international action (Duriez et al. 2007), The spirit of development: Protestant NGOs, morality, and economics in Zimbabwe (Bornstein 2005) and Sacred aid: faith and humanitarianism (Barnett & Stein 2012). The increase in research interest culminated in the Luce Foundation organising, as part of its project “Religion, humanitarianism and world order”, an important seminar titled “Religion and humanitarianism: floating boundaries in a
globalizing world”, held at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in October 2009. It recognised a “third wave” of humanitarianism which includes a growth in non-Western and religious actors and called for “the vitality, urgency, and necessity of further research and dialogue on the ever-changing relationship between religion and humanitarianism in world affairs”. A summary report of the seminar was published online (Barnett et al. 2009).

In 2010, an ongoing research project was initiated by Oxford University’s Refugee Studies Centre, titled “Faith-based humanitarianism: the response of faith-based communities and faith-based organisations in the context of forced migration”. The research aimed to question the role of FBOs and the particular challenges they face in forced migration humanitarianism. This involved an international workshop at the Refugee Studies Centre with a workshop report published (McElhinney & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2010) as well as a Joint Learning Initiative on “Local faith communities and resilience” involving academics, policymakers, practitioners and faith communities to explore the nature and impacts of initiatives developed by LFCs in humanitarian situations. This resulted in a working paper, “Local faith communities and the promotion of resilience in humanitarian situations: a scoping study” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013), and a policy note, “Local faith communities and resilience in humanitarian situations” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2012). The working paper and policy note suggest that LFCs play a pivotal role in promoting resilience amongst those in humanitarian situations, and that there is a need for further research and support in this area.

In line with this burgeoning interest, more recently in 2014 the Oxford Research Centre in Humanities organised a conference in Oxford (‘Migration, faith and action: shifting the discourse’ 2014) which explored the role of LFCs and FBOs in the landscape of migration, and the discourses that faith traditions provide surrounding migration. Similarly, a British Council-sponsored workshop titled “Addressing the asylum crisis: religious contributions to rethinking protection in global politics” (2014) was held in Brussels which explored potential contributions of religious groups and traditions to addressing the asylum crisis and the development of policy. Lastly, at the Africa Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) biennial conference at the University of Sussex, a panel was organised titled “Sacred spaces: tracing the interface between religion and the secular in development” (2014). In addition, during the writing of this thesis an important policy paper was produced titled “Faith and the asylum crisis: the role of religion in responding to displacement” (Wilson & Mavelli 2014). This policy paper recognises the increasing importance of FBOs’ roles in responding to displacement and argues that an adequate response must incorporate religious actors and the
role of faith, spirituality and religion, involving faith-based actors in discussions with policymakers and politicians to frame the debate around not only migration and protection, but also sensitive and more nuanced approaches to religion and faith within the issue of displacement (Wilson & Mavelli 2014).

These are some of the academic interventions and demonstrations of interest in what is a growing area of research, but interest in the role of FBOs is wider in reach than the academic sphere. This is illustrated by the United Nations’ adoption of a “Dialogue on faith and protection” in 2012 (UNHCR 2012a, UNHCR 2012b), the year of my fieldwork, which involved the gathering of 400 religious leaders and faith experts in Geneva to discuss roles of faith and refugee protection, and how the values of different world religions underpin refugee protection and humanitarian action. Other initiatives include UNAIDS’s “Partnership with faith-based organizations: UNAIDS strategic framework” (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 2009), UNFPA’s “Guidelines for engaging faith-based organisations as agents of change” (United Nations Population Fund 2009) and UNICEF’s “Partnering with religious communities for children” (United Nations Children’s Fund 2012). This activity demonstrates that there is increasing recognition and interest in the role that religious communities can have in protection and development, both on the policy level and through the work of practitioners. It points to the increasing need for a better understanding of what roles and impacts religion has in humanitarianism and development, and some of the challenges that faith-based actors face.

**Conceptions of religion and the secular**

Defining religion, and its counterpart, the secular, is at the heart of the framing of this thesis. Within sociology and anthropology various definitions of “religion” have been put forward. In *The elementary forms of religious life* (2012), Durkheim defines religion as a system of beliefs and practices related to the sacred, which is set apart from the profane and surrounded by prohibitions. The sacred, then, has a moral and collective aspect, whereas the profane is self-regarding and private. In Geertz’s (1973) anthropological classic *The interpretation of cultures*, he defines religion as a system of symbols that “acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (1973, p. 90). Berger (2011), in *The sacred canopy: a sociological theory of religion*, emphasises human process in religion as opposed to divine power, broadening the definition of religion so as not to be dependent on a deity, but having in common a relationship to chaos and as a way to deal with human dread and terror.
Increasingly, much literature emphasises the socially and historically constructed nature of religion as a category (Asad 1993; Mahmood 2005; Fountain 2013). For example, in *Rethinking secularism*, Calhoun et al. (2011) note that the term “religion” was not even frequently used until the Enlightenment period. They also highlight its link to a conception of the secular where, “[i]n its modern usage as an ideological construct of beliefs joined with an institutionalised community unrelated to public life, ‘religion’ only makes sense in juxtaposition to secularism” (Calhoun et al. 2011, p. 206). Snyder’s book *Religion and international relations theory* (2011) explores and outlines several varieties of “secularism”, and indeed says that it is more appropriate to talk about secularisms in the plural. Wilson, in her book *After secularism* (2011), makes the important point that the West’s understanding of religion, conceptualised through a particular prism of secularism, has limited the perception of religion within politics and, indeed, the nature of religion itself.

Monolithic and absolute labels can “obscure more than they reveal” (Fountain 2011, p. 246), in particular obscuring the historical, social and practical nature of defining terms and the political interests involved in constructing and sustaining terms such as “religion” and “the secular”. For example, McCutcheon finds these terms not “innocent descriptions” that refer to empirical qualities in the world, but rather co-dependent terms that have been constructed out of a particular context with vested interests and consequences (McCutcheon 2007, p. 197). Within the anthropology of development, there is a growing interest in questioning the conception of religion and categorisation of religious organisations in development discourse. In his article “The myth of religious NGOs: development studies and the return of religion” (2013), Fountain’s central argument is that development studies have produced a “myth” of religious non-government organisations (NGOs) in order to relegate them to the position of “other”, while imposing “dominant grand secular ideologies as normal, neutral and morally superior” (p. 3). He argues that far from being neutral, the discourse on religion in development studies is profoundly political, and should be analysed from that point of view. Furthermore, secular organisations and ideologies are assumed as being the neutral, normal and universal standard by which others are judged, and the conception of religion becomes entangled with a hidden secular logic. Any research on FBOs therefore needs to be attentive to this “hidden secular logic” by questioning the neutrality of dominant discourses and how “religion” is framed within this (Fountain 2013, p. 6).

This is similar to the critique by Talal Asad on the bias in Clifford Geertz’s famous anthropological definition of religion, where dimensions of power are ignored as well as the social conditions for the production of knowledge. Asad states that Geertz’s definition of religion only resembles a particular modern (Christian) conception, one that is privatised,
with power and knowledge as separate from religious institutions, and a lack of recognition of the historical conditions necessary for particular practices and discourses (Asad 1983). Far from being a homogenous, universal and distinctive entity that has always existed, “religion” as a category appeared at a precise moment in history with its own genealogy as a category in Western tradition (Calhoun et al. 2011, p. 208).

Fountain argues that to counter these prevailing essentialist and universalising assumptions, there needs to be a continued critical approach to what is meant by “religion” through an attention to specific practices and particular traditions (Fountain 2013, p. 1). He cites Talal Asad as an exemplar in his analytic approach to his studies on Christianity, Islam and secularism, where in each case detailed attention is accorded to “internal diversity, to questions of power, to current practices and to the ways in which religion itself is constructed, utilised and modified” (Fountain 2013, p. 43). Similarly, in attempting to answer my research question on the role of religion, I take an ethnographic approach, paying detailed attention to the particular practices, context and discourses that mark my case study to avoid producing essentialist and abstract generalisations of religion and an assumed “secular” norm.

An interesting framework that can aid in avoiding monolithic constructions of the religious and the secular, while instead paying attention to specific processes, is outlined in Barnett and Stein’s book *Sacred aid: faith and humanitarianism* (2012). Instead of positing the religious in opposition to the secular, they argue that reframing them in terms of “sanctification” and “secularisation” can better illuminate the dynamic interrelationship between the two, and how they shape each other in a mutually constitutive process. Instead of opposition, there is “the contradictory and complementary tendencies of the secularisation and sanctification of humanitarianism” (2012, p. 8). They argue that the categories “religious” and “secular” are social constructs and are not essences inherent in themselves; they are social constructs created within and responding to a broader context of political, cultural and economic forces. These wider forces are key to understanding, in particular, the CEI’s relationship with external actors such as the state and the organisation’s donors, who themselves are under the constraints of forces such as neoliberal markets and a modern secular regime (Lynch 2011). The wider forces condition not only how religious actors conceive of their work and its priorities, but also how outside actors conceive of religion and its role. The ambivalent relation to religion that exists in the Moroccan State is explored in Chapter 5.
By “secularisation”, Barnett and Stein mean “earthly matters” such as fundraising, bureaucratisation, professionalisation (that is, an organisation becoming more professionalised), accountability and effectiveness. This is humanitarianism that is “calculable” and is “the process by which elements of the everyday and the profane insinuate themselves and become integrated into humanitarianism, thus challenging its sacred standing” (Barnett & Stein 2012, p. 8). This includes the roles of states and commercial enterprises.

By “sanctification”, they mean “[t]he creation of the sacred, establishment and protection of a space that is viewed as pure and separate from the profane” (Barnett & Stein 2012, p. 8). This can be seen in attempts to create a space “free” from politics, and a humanitarian ethic that makes claims to altruism and innocent motives, where values and ethics reign supreme over utilitarian interests. In this definition, “secular” organisations can also be seen as engaging in processes of sanctification, for example when they call on the inviolableness of human rights.

Barnett and Stein are interested in how the opposition between the religious and the secular is constructed in “the structures, and everyday acts of aid agencies and other actors that create, sustain and dissolve these differences” (Barnett & Stein 2012, p. 9). In a similar vein, my thesis examines some of the structures and “everyday acts” of a particular FBO through in-depth fieldwork, looking particularly at the way constructions of the sacred and the secular are expressed as strategies and processes. This thesis therefore adopts an approach to religion and to the secular that is not based on an essential or monolithic notion of these terms. It is an approach that is reflexive and aware of the power, stakes and interests involved when a term such as “religion” is utilised in discourse by various actors, and aware of the historical specificity of each manifestation of “religion”.

Research frameworks

This thesis does not focus on the impact that the case study has on the beneficiaries, as that would involve very specific feedback from migrants which is outside the scope of my research, on a practical level and also on a research paradigmatic level. Furniss (2012), in his doctoral thesis on Egypt’s zabaleen (garbage collectors), does not interview the zabaleen themselves but instead focuses on the development actors who act upon the zabaleen. He justifies this as a well-established genre within the tradition of development studies, where the object of study places the researcher in the position of a “second order observer” (Furniss 2012, p. 11). Similarly, my study is not on the irregular migrants themselves, but is a case study of an FBO which acts upon irregular migrants. This is in line with Furniss quoting
Laura Nader’s (1972) typology of “studying up”; that is, “to ‘study up’ into the lifeworlds of the outside actors, rather than ‘down’” (Furniss 2012, p. 43). Implicit in this approach is that studying “outside actors” can yield data that is as vital to understanding as is data from the migrant actors themselves.

This study also utilises Didier Fassin’s approach to conducting research with humanitarian organisations through an anthropological aporia (Fassin 2012, p. 50). He argues that within humanitarian organisations there is a certain “untouchability” of some actors and of the values incarnate in humanitarianism; he largely attributes this to the fact that “the humanitarian world is heir to a religious tradition of caring for the other and giving of oneself” (p. 37). This “sacredness” of humanitarianism can sometimes, then, translate to a hesitancy to criticise or to submit it to external evaluation.

To move beyond this, Fassin (2012) argues that the spaces for critique are in the periods of conflict, in the in-between spaces of disagreement, “where it hurts” in an organisation (p. 42). It is in these moments when an organisation is divided or torn apart that “a certain truth gets told that would not be told otherwise” (p. 42). He terms these moments a certain “aporia”, where there are:

… questions that touch on the very foundations of humanitarian action and admit of no solution given the state of the contemporary world. Contrary to contradictions, aporia are not a matter of organisational dysfunction but rather of the dysfunction intrinsic to their very functioning (Fassin 2012, p. 50, my emphasis).

My research uses this anthropological aporia approach as a way to examine how religion influences the dynamics of the CEI. I examine certain moments of aporia within the CEI, and it is precisely at those moments of tensions and conflict that the sanctification and secularisation processes at work are exposed. In addition, Fassin’s approach aims to go beyond the “co-constructionist” mode, where the anthropologist is either on the side of the victims of violence and injustice, or a “denunciation” mode, where the anthropologist “studies the bureaucracies whose tasks are to take charge of the victims, judge offenses, and repairs damage” (Fassin 2012, p. 43). To do this, Fassin argues that we have to go beyond simplistic normative approaches that have no basis in empirical data. Direct experience through an ethnographic approach provides the means in which to encounter nuance and complexity that can counter simplified analyses, because “the truth will only rise towards the surface if we stick as close as possible to the action” (Fassin 2012, p. 43). Similar to the phenomenological approach of “going back to the things themselves”, close attention to the action is needed, otherwise “truths” may evade us, particularly “truths” that exist beyond
usual or official discourses, truths that may be too hard to accept because they lead to an aporia. Consistent with this, an ethnographic approach based on a year-long fieldwork phase was incorporated into the research methods of this thesis.

This study does not evaluate the effectiveness of this particular FBO or make value judgements about the role of religion in humanitarianism. Instead, in line with Mosse (2004), it is interested in how it works: “the ethnographic question is not whether but how development projects work; not whether a project succeeds, but how success is produced” (Mosse 2004, p. 646). I ask how religion and the secular work within humanitarian engagement, not if religion is effective within humanitarianism. Also, I agree with Bornstein (2002), who recognises that faith seems to make a difference in development work, but refrains from classifying it as either “good” or “bad”, instead recognising it is “a far more complicated picture that emerges” (Bornstein 2002, p. 26).

Schein’s (2006) theory on groups distinguishes two main challenges that all groups must manage no matter what their size. Firstly, they have to manage “survival, growth and adaptation in their environment” (Schein 2006, p. 18). Secondly, they need to manage internal processes that enable daily functioning and the ability to learn and grow as an organisation. Schein states that both of these aspects will reflect the larger cultural context of the group, as well as its deeper basic assumptions about the nature of reality, time, space, human nature and relationships (Schein 2006, p. 18). This study explores in different chapters these various facets of the organisation, through an examination of both its external relations (in Chapters 4 and 5) and its internal dynamics (in Chapters 6 and 7). I attempt to trace these two dynamics within the CEI – survival and growth in its environment and the internal processes within the organisation – both of which reflect the wider social, historical and political context the actors are working in, as well as deeply held assumptions related to their faith.

**Religious roots of humanitarianism**

Various constructions of the history of humanitarianism have been proposed in the literature. This includes Barnett’s conception of the three phases of imperial humanitarianism, neo-humanitarianism and liberal humanitarianism since the end of the Cold War (Barnett, 2011, p. 29). Randolph Kent, on the other hand, sees World War II as the critical beginning of contemporary humanitarianism, arguing that it was only during that war when governments began to see the need for international intervention to help disaster-stricken people (Kent 1987). Walker and Maxwell (2009) have focused on the Cold War and the 1990s as important periods for the globalisation of humanitarianism. Similarly, French accounts of the
history of humanitarianism have emphasised the importance of the Cold War period and specifically the Biafran/Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) in promoting emergency relief (Ryfman 2008; Aeberhard 1994). Davey divides the history of humanitarianism into four periods, focusing on the pivotal points of World War I, World War II, the Cold War and the post-Cold War period, and the geopolitical changes around these periods which shaped the terrain of humanitarianism (Davey 2012).

In all of these accounts of the history of humanitarianism, it is undisputed that Christianity and Christian FBOs have had a fundamental influence and impact on the development of humanitarian action. As Barnett and Weiss note, “although the idea of saving lives and relieving suffering is hardly a Western or Christian creation, modern humanitarianism’s origins are located in Western history and Christian thought” (Barnett & Weiss 2008, p. 7). Similarly, Ferris (2005) argues that the origins and development of both religious and secular strains of humanitarian organisations can be traced back to Christian doctrines of social service and the sanctity of human life.

One of the most important developments in the history of humanitarianism was the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1864 by an evangelical Christian, Henry Dunant, whose initial concern for the organisation was the care for those wounded by war (Forsythe 2005). Although Dunant called himself “an instrument in the hands of God” (Forsythe 2005, p. 27), the principles established to guide the work of the Red Cross were impartiality, neutrality and independence. Furthermore, the ICRC was careful to avoid any religious, political or other affiliations in order to enable them to serve people in need (Forsythe 2005, p. 29).

After World War II, along with the development of the language of an international human rights system, the United Nations Charter, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees were formulated. Human Rights scholar John Nurser states that this development was significantly spearheaded by the leadership World Council of Churches (WCC) and its desire for a new “global ethos” that would serve as international principles for justice, translating into objectives such as an international court of justice and a fair global trade system (Nurser 2005, p. 52). Similarly, Ferris highlights that it was predominantly FBOs who took the initiative in building partnerships with other NGOs, establishing such coalitions as the Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCVA) in 1948 and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) in 1962 (Ferris 2005, p. 315). This interagency organising followed a trend of cooperation
between Northern and Southern churches, with Ferris remarking that this included significant amounts of financial aid:

Over the years, Northern church-based organizations channeled millions of dollars to churches and related organizations in the South through what was known as “inter-church aid” in support of local church work with the poor and with victims of wars and other disasters (Ferris 2005, p. 315).

This was particularly the case in the 1950s and 1960s, when it was largely FBOs who were at the forefront of working with refugees in the aftermath of World War II. According to 1953 analysis, 90% of post-war relief was administered by religious groups and organisations (Key 2011). Religious actors have therefore been significant in the establishment of an international framework for shared humanitarian principles in the aftermath of World War II.

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a universalisation and globalisation of the humanitarian system, resulting in its expansion (Barnett 2005, p. 723). Barnett attributes this global mobilisation of humanitarianism to the end of Communism in Europe, the spread of democracy in poorer countries, and globalisation in general (Barnett 2005, p. 723). Within humanitarianism itself, Barnett identifies what he sees as a secularisation and rationalisation of humanitarianism akin to Charles Taylor’s secularisation thesis: “In this respect, the humanitarian world recalls Charles Taylor’s observations regarding the secular world: It might have become ‘detached’ from its theistic anchoring” (Barnett 2009, p. 2). This is upheld by Barnett’s examination of various faith-based and secular organisations, finding that it was often difficult to distinguish differences between the two categories (Barnett 2009, p. 3). This reveals how contemporary humanitarianism has become universally accessible despite its religious roots; with principles and ideals that no longer depend on religious, nationalistic or other basis (Key 2011).

Definitions and varieties of humanitarianism

This universalisation and globalisation of humanitarianism has resulted in a diversity of humanitarian actors and actions. Although the initial definition of the ICRC was based on life-saving and impartial action, it has come to encompass a wider definition to include human rights, development and social justice. Definitions range from “an effort to mitigate the suffering of strangers” (Barnett & Weiss 2008) to “organized and part of governance, connects the immanent to the transcendent, and is directed at those in other countries” (Barnett & Stein 2012, p. 14), and “the impartial, independent, and neutral provision of relief to those in immediate danger of harm” (Barnett 2005, p. 724).
However, there is also a recognition that the term “humanitarianism” came from a particular period in the 19th century, and that “the meaning and practices of humanitarianism have been as historically fluid as the world in which it operates” (Barnett & Weiss 2008). Consequently, Davey (2012) eschews restrictive definitions of humanitarianism, preferring to take an approach that allows for the great variety of forms that humanitarianism has taken over time. This is particularly crucial at what Davey sees as a critical juncture for the international humanitarian system: the increasing importance of Southern humanitarian actors, and the rise of new or non-traditional actors (Davey 2012, p. 1). This demonstrates the “multiple faces of humanitarianism”, where there is no such thing as a homogenous, “pure” or legitimate conception of humanitarian action (Davey 2012, p. 3). Instead, political agendas have also constructed humanitarianism, and a variety of actors, beliefs and divergent forces occupy the humanitarian terrain; “there is no ‘pure’ brand of humanitarianism. If we consider the history of humanitarian action in other regions of the world, yet more understandings and expressions of humanitarianism emerge” (Davey 2012, p. 4). This calls for a need to engage with and understand the values, experiences and histories of those actors whose conception of humanitarian action has developed outside of the Western framework and prevailing international humanitarian system (Davey 2012, p. 4). This study of the CEI is an example of one of these “multiple faces of humanitarianism”. My research situates the CEI in its specific historical and geo-political context, and highlights the CEI as a faith-based actor outside of the standard framework of humanitarianism. It further identifies the CEI as an LFC as explained in the next section.

Local faith communities

One type of actor who is often outside of the international humanitarian system yet who nevertheless plays a role in humanitarian situations is the “local faith community” or LFC. These are defined as “groupings of religious actors bonded through shared allegiance to institutions, beliefs, history or identity” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013). UNICEF defines religious communities as “both female and male religious actors and … systems and structures that institutionalise belief systems within religious traditions at all levels from local to global” (2011, p. 7). Much research has been done on the roles of LFCs in dealing with conflict (United Kingdom Department for Communities and Local Government 2008), disasters (Wisner 2010), refugee resettlement (Eby & Iverson 2011) and child protection situations (UNICEF 2010; 2012). Therefore, there is a growing recognition and acceptance of the vital role that LFCs play in a range of humanitarian and development situations by the mainstream humanitarian community.
Researchers at the Joint Learning Initiative on Local Faith Communities\(^1\) based at the Refugee Studies Centre in Oxford University have identified faith communities as often being central to strengthening resilience and relationships in communities affected by disaster and conflict. Due to their “embeddedness” in local communities, LFCs are often involved in responding to local humanitarian situations and engage in a diverse range of humanitarian actions (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013). This can include providing emergency response by meeting basic needs such as food and shelter, and having pre-existing networks and social capital, human and financial resources and physical resources such as church buildings that enable them to provide for these basic needs (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013, p. 3).

An LFC’s position within its local community and experience in pastoral care also means it can provide a form of psychosocial support – what researchers have termed “psychological first aid” – which provides coping strategies and promotes resilience on both an individual and a community level (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013). The researchers at the Joint Learning Initiative state that evidence suggests LFCs have an important impact in promoting resilience in humanitarian situations through their local networks and resources, as well as their shared identity and vision; however, further research is required into the contribution and processes that LFCs engage in, as well as the barriers to partnership with other humanitarian organisations. The researchers also note that because of the informal way that much work is carried out by LFCs, there is difficulty in measuring the impact and the extent to which LFCs are meeting international standards in delivery (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013).

The case study organisation of this study can be defined as an LFC. EEAM, as the official Protestant church in Morocco, is a church that is embedded in the local congregation of each of the cities across Morocco where its churches are based. Furthermore, the work of the CEI (the diaconal arm of EEAM) means that its actions move beyond the local congregation to include irregular migrants. However, in using the term “LFC” to categorise EEAM and the CEI, this thesis does not exclude them from other categories such as FBO. An FBO can be defined as “any organisation that derives inspiration from and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within a faith” (Jennings & Clarke 2008, p. 6) By this definition, the CEI is also an FBO.

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\(^1\) The Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities comprises practitioners, academics and policymakers in humanitarianism and faith communities who work together to jointly conduct research and produce evidence on the impact of LFCs in a wide range of areas including HIV and maternal health, immunisation, resilience, capacity building and gender-based violence. See <http://jliflc.com>.
More specifically, out of a local faith community (EEAM), a faith-based organisation (CEI) has arisen. However, the close nature of the relationship between EEAM and the CEI (“they are one” says the National Coordinator of the CEI, as reflected in the fact that both organisations have the same President) means in practice that rather than being in distinct categories, EEAM and the CEI can be categorised as both an LFC and an FBO, as the lines between EEAM and the CEI can themselves sometimes be blurred. This is at the heart of their identity ambiguity and a source of much tension for the CEI, affecting the organisation at different levels from organisational identity and objectives to operational issues.

Categorising migrants

There are different ways of categorising migrants within the context of Morocco. An exploration of these categories enables a better understanding of the context the CEI works in, as these migrants are the beneficiaries of the CEI’s program. Understanding who the beneficiaries of the CEI are can better illuminate the particular challenges and dynamics for the CEI staff. The categorising of migrants often uses traditional binaries of permanent/temporary, internal/international, immigration/emigration, regular/irregular and forced/voluntary (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008; Collyer & de Haas 2012). However, this focus on predominantly dichotomous categories has been criticised, with some arguing that certain types of categorisations (for example, “illegal”) can support specific marginalising practices, particularly in the case of an already existing marginalising discourse (O’Doherty & Lecouteur 2007). Bakewell (2008) also highlights that the search for policy relevance encourages researchers to take the categories of policymakers as their frame of reference for conducting research, privileging the worldview of policymakers. This renders certain groups of migrants invisible in research and policy because, as Collyer and de Haas (2012) have noted, a dichotomous categorising of migrants can never adequately address the complex and shifting nature of migration. While aware of the complicated nature and limitations of categorising migrants, I utilise certain categories that are the most applicable to the research and the Moroccan context, with the following section briefly discussing the terms “survival migration”, the “migration–asylum nexus”, “transit migration” and “irregular migration”.

Survival migration

In the aftermath of World War II the modern refugee regime was created to provide protection for those fleeing persecution and violence, with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees being the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. However, Betts (2010) argues that subsequent to this a range of “new drivers of external displacement” have arisen that fall outside of the
refugee/economic migrant dichotomy – drivers such as environmental change, livelihood collapse and state fragility (Betts 2010). This leads Betts to define the concept of “survival migration” of migrants who have to leave their national context in order to survive: “persons outside their country of origin because of an existential threat to which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution” (Betts 2010, p. 362). Survival migrants often do not meet the legal requirements of protection, and so often go unrecognised and unprotected as refugees from current institutions. Betts argues for adopting the term “survival migration” to expand the categories of protection and to enact “regime stretching” so that international regimes, as norms, rules, principles and decision-making processes, are not fixed and static entities, but are adaptable and dynamic at the local and national levels (Betts 2010).

The concept of survival migration can be important, not only in the sense of international protection, but also on a wider level of understanding and conceptualisation of migrants. As a term, it goes beyond the refugee/economic migrant dichotomy particularly widely used in the media. It allows for complexity and is inclusive of a diversity of causes, acknowledging that people move for complex and multiple reasons, and reflecting wider contemporary global processes.

The “migration–asylum nexus”

Migration in and from the global South has particularly blurred the lines of the refugee/economic migrant dichotomy (Castles 2007). To portray the complexity of actual migrations, several scholars have replaced this dichotomy with a more complex notion of mixed migration, also referred to as the “migration–asylum nexus” (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008; Gnisci 2008). There are three elements to this concept. Firstly, a recognition that there is a strong economic link to asylum migration; that political and economic instability are closely related (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008), and therefore economic migration, particularly from the global South, should also be seen in its political dimension. Secondly, a recognition of mixed migration: that “economic migrants” and “refugees” often take the same routes and use the same means of migration. Refugees will use the same smuggling networks as economic migrants and will often have to enter a destination irregularly. Similarly, economic migrants may also use the asylum system in receiving countries to apply for permanent residence. Stricter asylum policies and border politics have increased this mixed method of migration (Papadopoulou 2005; Castles 2007). Thirdly, the migration–asylum nexus is useful in conveying how migrants easily change between static categories, moving from asylum seeker to irregular migrant with time and
depending on the country they are in (Schuster 2005). The migration–asylum nexus recognises the complexity of contemporary migration processes, and draws into question easy distinctions between the categories “economic migrant” and “refugee”.

Transit migration

Since the mid-1990s, Morocco has experienced a growing number of undocumented migrants from Africa, apparently passing through in an attempt to reach Europe. A substantial amount of research has been undertaken in this field (for example, Alioua 2005; Barros et al. 2002; Collyer 2006; de Haas 2007; 2005; Düvell 2006; Lindstrom 2002), with many arguing that the externalisation of EU border policies and tightened border control regimes have resulted in responsibility for preventing unwanted migrants from entering the EU shifting towards non-EU countries. For migrants, this means lengthening their stay in Morocco, with some ending up “stuck” for many years in the country.

The United Nations Economic Commission on Europe (UNECE) gave the first definition of “transit migration” in 1993, describing it as “migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination” (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008 p. 3). Since then, further studies have focused on the concept of transit migration (Collyer et al. 2012; Duvell 2012; Collyer & de Haas 2012; Içduygu 2000; Bredeloup 2012). All definitions highlight the importance of migrant intentions in transit, and the plan to migrate further to another country. But transit migration is also the story of independently travelling migrants, who although they may be travelling in groups, largely plan their own journeys in a step-by-step fashion that is dependent on circumstances, where even the final destination may depend on circumstances or opportunities that arise (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008).

This leads to a journey that has an almost improvised nature, and which through necessity has to be responsive to external situations. For example, the destination may change as new routes open up or routes close due to tightening of border controls. Being dependent on a complex set of factors, the experience is inherently ambivalent and uncertain. But the other side of this ambivalence is possibility: to change directions and to have numerous, unplanned stops in different locations, in what has become “transit space”. Technology has created a new spatiality of migration, as well as increasing the numbers of transit migrants. Infrastructure, telecommunications and transport such as new roads, mobile phones and money transfer have made it easier to coordinate groups of people across borders, allowing information to circulate more widely (Collyer 2006).
The nature of the “in-betweenness” of transit migration has been portrayed in many field studies (for example, Hamood 2006; Brewer and Yükseker 2006; Koser Akcapar 2010; Kastner 2010). However, there has also been criticism of the term, in particular because “transit” implies a passing through, when in actual practice many migrants have no way of knowing beforehand whether a place will be temporary, or will become their permanent settlement. For example, a considerable portion of migrants failing or eventually not venturing to enter Europe prefer to settle in North Africa on a more long-term basis rather than return to their home countries. Furthermore, the emphasis on intention to move on does not recognise the fact that intentions can change depending on circumstances – they do not remain fixed and are not formed independently out of context of macro- and micro-level structures (Collyer & de Haas 2012).

Although useful as a term to partly describe the situation in which many migrants find themselves in Morocco, “transit migration” only partially conveys the nuances of migrant mobility. Transit spaces are designated as places between origin and destination, but in practice the distinction between transit and destination country is not as clear. The term does not take into account that for many migrants there is not a “final” destination, whether intended or actualised, and that they may actually move from place to place over several years.

**Irregular migration**

The category of “irregular migration” emphasises the migrant’s relationship to the state. That is, it is a recognition that a migrant’s visa status determines the possibilities of their migration and residence in a country, particularly a wealthy country (Collyer & de Haas 2012). Irregular migrants are unable to travel in the same way as those who have documents; they “travel by different modes of transport on different routes; they must live in different places and they have different access to basic services; they take up different employment or the same employment for different rates of pay” (Collyer & de Haas 2012). Migrant opportunities in the contemporary global system are significantly determined by their relationship with states, and the term “irregular migration” adequately conveys this. However, there are some limits to the term – in practice it is an extremely fluid category (Düvell 2006). Migrants can move in and out of irregularity, for example in the case of overland migration from West Africa to North Africa, where migrants cross many countries, some of which allow their entry and some of which do not (de Haas 2007). Instead, de Haas argues that, as with other dichotomous categories, the legal/illegal distinction is not a simple binary but rather a continuum (de Haas 2007). However, the term is considered useful for much research on sub-Saharan African migration in Morocco (Barros et al. 2000; Lahlou
2005; Belguendouz 2009; de Haas 2008; Khachani 2010) as it emphasises the impact of the state on migrants in Morocco as well as importantly reflecting the consequences of these terms used by the Moroccan State. For example, in 2003 Law no. 02-03 relative to the entry and stay of foreigners in Morocco and to irregular emigration and immigration was passed by the Moroccan parliament. The law criminalised irregular immigration and emigration, and the state doubled the number of permanent border guards (Natter 2013, p. 2).

This thesis also adopts the term “irregular migration”. Although survival migration, the migration–asylum nexus and transit migration are useful terms in describing the dynamic of sub-Saharan African migration in Morocco, “irregular migration” emphasises the precariousness of the situation for undocumented migrants in Morocco (see, for example, Bachelet 2013). With no legal status or access to formal work or healthcare, and constant exposure to forced expulsions and extreme state violence, their situation in the country is tenuous at best. My research focuses on a particular FBO’s work with migrants, and it is precisely the needs which come out of their situation as irregular migrants that the CEI is aiming to address and which situate these migrants as beneficiaries of the CEI.

The next section recounts a visit I took in the early stages of my fieldwork to the migrant neighbourhood of Takadoum. It further illustrates the situation for irregular sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco and is important for understanding the context in which the CEI works.

A visit to Takadoum

Takadoum is a neighbourhood in Rabat, known as one of the “migrant areas” where many sub-Saharan African migrants move once they arrive in the capital. It is also a quartier populaire (translated in English as “popular neighbourhood”), one of the poorer neighbourhoods. When I first arrived in February 2012 for my fieldwork, I went to visit Takadoum with a couple of other people from GADEM (Groupe antiraciste de défense et d’accompagnement des étrangers et migrants, the Anti-racist Group for the Defense and Accompaniment of Migrants and Foreigners), an advocacy group for migrants. I was told by my guide, a Cameroonian migrant activist, to “be careful” and to hold the bag I was carrying closer to myself, because “there are a lot of robberies, and all foreigners are super visible around here. Although you are probably safer because you’re not black”. He explained that Moroccans were hesitant to attack European foreigners because they knew that the police would come down hard on them; the embassies would become involved and Morocco is extremely careful about its international reputation. Everyone knows that for Black Africans on the other hand, said my guide, the police would barely respond and their embassies were
useless. Although I was not European-looking but Asian, I would still be seen as a privileged foreigner. He told me that attacks by Moroccans – theft, robbery and aggression – were common. “We never move around alone in the area”, he said.

The market streets of Takadoum looked altogether tame to me; although a poor area, it is not a bidonville (slum). Bidonvilles are extremely poor shanty areas where even migrants would not go; the poorest of Moroccans live there in barely put-together tin shacks. Instead, the streets of Takadoum are bustling, especially in the central market area. “Don’t let that fool you”, said my guide as we got onto some of the smaller streets that lead to some of the African foyers (homes). All the sub-Saharan Africans live in foyers, houses completely filled with migrants, most of the time split by nationalities, and sharing with up to 10 people per room as a way to minimise costs. My guide commented with resignation, “The Moroccan landlords charge us three times as much the rent, and there’s nothing we can do about it. We’ve got to live somewhere”.

There are no official statistics on the number of irregular migrants in Morocco. Various organisations from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the European Commission have estimated figures between 10,000 and 20,000 (Natter 2013, p. 2). However, a recent study by the Institute for Public Policy Research in the United Kingdom states that numbers do not exceed 10,000 (Mdidech 2012). This variation in estimated numbers reflects the difficulty of extracting figures on migrants in an irregular situation.

It was in Takadoum later that year, in June 2012, that police raided and arrested 100 sub-Saharan Africans during an operation that targeted the neighbourhood. This was part of an overall operation targeting irregular sub-Saharan African migrants during that summer; raids also occurred in other cities like Oujda, Nador, Casablanca and Fes. The arrests of the migrants were carried out at night, on the instructions of Bouchaib Emil, Director-General of National Security. He claimed that police were acting on reports revealing “unlawful acts” committed by some sub-Saharan Africans. Around the same time, the media was perpetuating fear with articles like Maroc Hebdo’s “Le péril noir” (“The black peril”, Najib 2012), linking the existence of irregular sub-Saharan Africans to acts such as murders, robberies and serious crimes, as well as accusing them of belonging to criminal organisations or extremist groups. A few months later, in September, another 200 migrants around the country were arrested and expelled across the border into Algeria.

Expulsion across the border involves being transferred by bus to Oujda, a town in Northeastern Morocco near the border with Algeria; from Rabat this can take eight to nine
hours. Oujda is about 15 kilometres away from the border with Algeria. When I went to visit
the border, we took a 10-minute bus ride from the town centre before getting off to walk the
rest of the way. It is a surreal place – you can see the rolling hills of Algeria rising up, but
otherwise it is a sparse semi-arid landscape, dusty and hot. As we walked towards the border
the landscape became increasingly devoid of people. The only thing that remained the
same were the Coke bottles filled with brightly coloured liquid displayed on the side of the
road, with a vendor standing by or sitting somewhere in the shade. The bottles were dotted
all along the side of the road and I wondered why there were so many soft drink vendors
near the border, before being told that the vendors were actually selling petrol and those
brightly coloured Coke bottles signalled that they had barrels of petrol stashed somewhere
close by. This is a good illustration of the contradictions that exist at the border. Although
the border is officially closed and the area has been a site of dispute between Morocco and
Algeria in the past, an unusual number of trucks and cars seemed to be going back and forth
across the border.

This border between Morocco and Algeria is not only a site of expulsion by the Moroccan
authorities but is also a site of entry for migrants who have made their way, usually from
West Africa, across the Sahara and into Algeria before finally crossing into Morocco. This
route marks a well-worn journey that is made step by step, and can take from months up to
years to complete. Both entry and expulsions are characterised by violence by authorities
from both sides of the border, as well as by local criminal gangs and smugglers. Médecins
Sans Frontières (MSF) has documented cases where its doctors have had to treat migrants at
the border for wounds and injuries inflicted on them (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2013). A
migrant told me that no one passes through this border without being violated in some way –
financially, physically, sexually or all three.

MSF recorded more than 1,300 people expelled from Morocco in 2011, including 38
women, six of whom were pregnant; six unaccompanied minors; and 24 children (MSF
report 2013). In 2012, expulsions more than quadrupled, with 6,000 people expelled, 18 of
whom were pregnant women, 45 unaccompanied minors and 35 children (MSF report 2013).
This is despite current legislation, in particular Law no. 02-03, on the “entry and stay of
foreigners in Morocco, irregular emigration and immigration”, stating that a pregnant
woman, minor or injured migrant is not to be expelled. There have been no known returns to
country of origin, and all expulsions have been across the border into Algeria. In addition,
the law stipulates that no foreigner can be taken to a country in which it is established that
“his [or her] life or liberty would be threatened or where he [or she] would be exposed to
inhumane, cruel or degrading treatment”. MSF’s interpretation is that the expulsion of migrants with serious wounds or illnesses to the desert constitutes a grave threat to their lives (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2013).

Although MSF estimates the number of expulsions to be high, the actual number is likely to be considerably higher; the estimates are affected by MSF’s limited data collection system and its non-continual presence at the border. However, the MSF figures do give an indication of Morocco’s increased crackdown on irregular migrants in 2012, linked to efforts announced by the Moroccan government in December 2011 and supported by the EU, in particular Spain, to combat “cross-border crime, illegal immigration and the trafficking of drugs and weapons” (Ali 2012). Also in 2012, Spanish and Moroccan authorities celebrated a new departure in their relations, launching on 4 September 2012 a joint police operation to return migrants to Morocco in accordance with a bilateral agreement signed by the two countries in 1992 (Moroccan Press Agency 2012). According to the bilateral agreement, Morocco should proceed with the identification and eventual repatriation of the migrants to their countries of origin or to the countries they left immediately before entering Moroccan territory. Many NGOs have criticised the fact that migrants were not repatriated to their countries of origin and instead were conducted to the border with Algeria, without prior identification or any legal guarantees (Belaza 2012).

The year 2012 also marked another turning point of Moroccan authorities’ focus on sub-Saharan Africans: a crackdown on migrants in Morocco active in migrant-run advocacy groups such as the Collectif des Communautés Subsahariennes au Maroc (CCSM), Conseil des Migrants Subsahariens au Maroc (CMSM) and Organisation Démocratique des Travailleurs Immigrés (ODT). Leaders of these groups were arrested on unrelated accusations (such as unauthorised selling of alcohol and cigarettes), and some were expelled across the border. Laptops were taken away and homes of known migrant activists ransacked by groups of unidentified young people. In response these groups, along with other advocacy groups, organised a range of events including demonstrations in the neighbourhood, sit-ins in front of parliament and demonstrations outside various African embassies protesting their lack of response to the targeting of their own citizens. A migrant activist described the Moroccan authorities’ actions as the “hunt for Blacks” (Slate Afrique 2012).

The action of the authorities towards migrants is in direct contravention to the humanitarian-focused response implied by the new constitution of 2011, put in place after the events of the “Arab Spring”, the wave of anti-government demonstrations and protests that spread in the Arab region in 2010, and the array of international human rights conventions that Morocco has ratified (for example, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, International
Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination). There is an enormous gap between these legal provisions and their application in practice. Furthermore, current migration legislation and the practice of migration control is overwhelmingly focused on security and enforcement. The Bureau des Réfugiés et des Apatrides, which was created in 1957 to deal with the precise modalities of applying the Refugee Convention on refugees, was closed in 2004. Now only the UNHCR delegation in Rabat registers asylum seekers and accords refugee status according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its mandate. Refugee status does not confer a residence card or the legal right to work. It also does not necessarily protect the refugees from expulsions, as can be seen from the number of asylum seekers and refugees who have been moved to the Algerian border. A study by the Institute for Public Policy Research notes that the severity of irregular migrants’ treatment may not be that different from that a lot of other countries, but remarks that “the impact of this approach is worsened in the Moroccan case by the fact that no routes into regularity are available to most migrants, even to very vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors” (Collyer et al. 2012, p. 6).

Following recommendations by the National Human Rights Council (CNDH) in Morocco, King Mohammed VI summoned a governmental meeting in September 2013 with instructions to review current Moroccan law and policy on immigration and bring it into conformity with the new constitution and the international treaties ratified by the country. While this was broadly welcomed by the range of civil associations working with migrants, many still condemned the ongoing expulsions and violence against migrants by the authorities that were still occurring in the country (Denis 2013; Bachelet 2014). This is reflective of the perpetual ambivalence between the law and practices by the Moroccan authorities, which will be further explored in Chapter 5. It is also the context in which many NGOs and humanitarian organisations working with sub-Saharan African irregular migration must negotiate, whether they are international or Moroccan, secular or faith-based, advocacy or direct aid groups. This includes the CEI.

The next section gives a more detailed description of CEI permanences (“drop-ins”); the places where the CEI welcomes migrants and distributes food bags. The main work of the CEI with irregular migrants occurs at the drop-ins, and consideration of them therefore forms the main empirical basis of my research. A description of the drop-ins is helpful in illustrating the way work is structured for the CEI staff in relation to irregular migrants. Understanding this is particularly useful for Chapter 7 (on staff precariousness, staff support
and training and staff misconduct), which highlights some of the challenges and difficulties the CEI fieldworkers face in their work.

**CEI drop-ins: a description**

The CEI teams in each city operate autonomously, with the freedom to organise their drop-ins according to the people involved and in response to the particular situations of their city. However, what they do have in common is the involvement of the local pastors, and attempts to involve the local congregation through recruitment of volunteers in the local congregation. The following section gives an overview of the drop-ins in three of the cities where the CEI operates – Oujda, Rabat and Casablanca – to show the variations that can occur between cities, both in terms of organisation of the drop-ins and the contexts in which the staff are working.

**Rabat**

Rabat is the capital of Morocco and its administrative centre, with Parliament House and its Ministries based there. Rabat has been called the “centre of migration” in Morocco by some scholars (Alioua 2005) because of the presence of the many embassies there, as well as the UNHCR and many NGOs and international organisations that provide services for migrants. The CEI drop-ins take place inside the church, which is not far from the main train station of Rabat. The CEI team here consists of a team leader who is a sub-Saharan African student, and three fieldworkers who are sub-Saharan Africans in various irregular situations, though they have all lived in Morocco for many years. One fieldworker’s role is to be at the door, where he is literally the “gatekeeper”, letting migrants in one by one with a variety of criteria ranging from first in, first served to newcomers and those the CEI had contacted for some reason or other. Because every week there are limited resources, particularly for food bags, this role is critical in keeping the waiting area (usually in the courtyard) under control and having some kind of order to the reception of the migrants. Once inside, the migrants see one of the fieldworkers for what they call in French an écoute (which translates to “listening” in English). This écoute has three main objectives: firstly, to allow migrants the chance to talk freely and be heard; secondly, for workers to gather details on the migrants by filling out a form (recording their names, ages, family details and nationalities); and thirdly, to ask the migrants about their needs. The demands usually centre around three main things: food, housing and work. The CEI is usually able to help out with just one of these, by providing food bags. Indeed, this is the particular niche that the CEI drop-ins occupy in all of the cities they operate in – it is usually the only organisation that regularly gives out food.
Migrants also receive help to pay for their prescription medicines, and this is usually sorted out after the drop-in, when one of the fieldworkers goes to buy all the medication requested at the nearby pharmacy. Migrants can also ask to be accompanied to the hospital, for example, or to the UNHCR. Once they have done an écoute with a fieldworker, the migrants can usually pick some clothes from a rack hanging in a corner of the church, as well as see one of the fieldworkers to receive money for a bus fare home. All food requests are noted on the migrants’ forms, and after each drop-in there is a team meeting to decide who will receive food bags. This is determined according to loose criteria about who is most vulnerable and needy; for example, migrant mothers with children, pregnant women and newcomers to the CEI are prioritised. One of the fieldworkers then calls all the migrants chosen for food bags to come in again the next day to collect them.

When I asked one of the fieldworkers why they did not distribute the food bags the same day so that people did not have to come in twice, she said that they had tried that before, but found that there were too many arguments and too much resentment from the migrants who did not end up getting a food bag. To avoid conflict, the workers now make the actual food distribution the next day. In their team meetings, the team also considers requests for housing support, usually in the form of a few hundred dirhams. Although such requests are frequent, the support given is rare due to budget issues.

Casablanca

Casablanca is a busy industrial port city, and it is perhaps here that migrants have the most chance of finding informal work. In Casablanca, the team I visited was led by a French volunteer with an array of volunteers who were present according to their availability. This included another French volunteer who was a long-time member of the EEAM congregation, and the President of EEAM’s wife. One of the volunteers was an Englishman who, although not often present at the drop-ins, was a tour guide by profession and was able to bring back shampoo and soap from the hotels his tour groups stayed in. He explained to the people on the tours what he did for the church and asked them to donate the free toiletries in their hotel rooms. These were then distributed inside the food bags for migrants. From time to time he also purchased basic medical supplies (such as aspirin and band-aids) for the drop-ins. He was also pivotal to bringing in his friend, a Moroccan doctor, to open up a medical drop-in that ran alongside the food drop-in. This Moroccan doctor invited a friend, another doctor of sub-Saharan African origins, for the medical drop-in, and they alternated the sessions they were on duty. The medical drop-in did not occur every week, as it depended on the availability of the doctors.
The drop-ins at Casablanca take place in the courtyard of the church, surrounded by a big fence. Two fieldworkers of sub-Saharan African backgrounds work at the door. Their role is to make a list of all the migrants who are to be allowed into the drop-in; a list usually of 10 anglophones and 10 francophones. Migrants also let these workers know if they want to see the doctor that day or if they need clothing, with these migrants’ names going on another list. There are often arguments from the migrants about who should be first, but also arguments from those who miss out; migrants are usually not allowed to come to the drop-ins two weeks in a row. The fieldworkers at the door are then supposed to let the approved migrants in one by one, sending them first to see the team leader, who gives out the food bags. There is no écoute at Casablanca; the migrants come to pick up a food bag before moving on to the clothing area to pick up some clothes, or to the doctor’s drop-in to wait if they have requested medical assistance. Sometimes migrants make a request to the team leader for money or support with housing, but this is often met with a negative response: “We don’t have the budget for it.” Sometimes these migrants are helped with a few hundred dirhams, but there does not seem to be clear criteria for deciding on this – it is at the team leader’s discretion. For example, in one case she decided to help a man with two children whose wife had died, paying for a month of his rent before he and his children were to be repatriated by International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Just previously she had told a migrant asking for help with rent that there was no money. The church in Casablanca is relatively large, with a sizeable courtyard, and it was the only CEI drop-in I saw that had its own office area. It was in this courtyard that, during my fieldwork period, a gala fundraiser with dinner and performances was held for the CEI.

**Oujda**

The majority of migrants in Oujda have just recently crossed over into Morocco from Algeria, and stay in the camps in the forest of Oujda before planning their next move. Being so close to the border, irregular migration is a particularly “hot” topic for Oujda and the migrants have a difficult time, being in danger of arrest and expulsion by police. It is much harder for migrants to circulate freely within this city than it is elsewhere. Consequently, the CEI team in Oujda does not have a drop-in but instead delivers food supplies to the camps twice a month. They work in close cooperation with MSF, one of the major NGOs based in Oujda, which coordinates tent and blanket deliveries as well as medical aid. The team in Oujda comprises sub-Saharan African students who get the equivalent of a monthly scholarship (750 Moroccan dirhams) for their work with the CEI. EEAM does not physically have a church in Oujda, so the team operates out of the Catholic church in town. Arguably,
the CEI team in Oujda work in the most challenging context, not only because of the authorities and the particularly difficult situation for migrants in that border town, but also because of the challenges in distributing food bags to the camps.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided context and background to the research, by giving a brief overview of the relevant literature, elaborating on conceptions of religion and the secular, outlining relevant research frameworks, discussing the religious roots of humanitarianism, examining the definition of an LFC, delineating the different ways of categorising migrants that are relevant to the situation in Morocco, describing the social and political situation for migrants in the country, and lastly presenting a brief description of three CEI drop-ins, the places where I conducted most of my fieldwork and the main way in which the CEI intervenes by giving direct aid to migrants. All of these facets illuminate the context of and relevant concepts to the CEI and its work with migrants in Morocco, enabling a better understanding of the following chapters. The next chapter examines the methodology and research methods adopted to respond to the research question about the role of religion in humanitarianism.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the rationale and justification for the methodology and research methods of this study. Firstly, it examines the epistemological framework of social constructionism and why it is an appropriate framework for the research. Next, I discuss the research perspectives used in this thesis: the discursive approach to the study of religion (von Stuckrad 2013; Taira 2013) and sanctification and secularisation processes as outlined by Barnett and Stein (2012). This is followed by a discussion of the research methods used, including ethnography and case study, and their justification as effective methods for answering the research question. The chapter then moves on to reflections on the positionality of the researcher and the limitations and vulnerabilities in the ethnographic encounter, before turning to the question of ethics in the research.

Epistemological framework: social constructionism

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge, and what kinds of knowledge it is possible to have. Therefore, it is not about techniques or matters of fact, but rather about what should be counted as “facts” (Hughes 1990). Every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and to knowing that world (Hughes 1990) and similarly the design of my research has fundamental assumptions about the nature of human beings and society. Throughout this study I have made choices concerning theoretical perspectives, different conceptual positions, and methodological approaches and research techniques in order to answer the research question.

Contrary to positivism and its claims to an objective truth that can be identified, social constructionism posits that meaningful reality is constructed, where meaning cannot exist apart from the operation of any consciousness (Crotty 1998, p. 8). Constructionist approaches understand that our access to reality is socially constructed (Jacobs & Manzi 2000), therefore questioning the assumption that there is a straightforward relationship between knowledge and reality (Hastings 1998). The ontological presupposition of social constructionism is therefore that reality cannot be conceived of or known independently outside of this construction (Hughes 1990). Furthermore, this mediation of meaning occurs within a particular historical and cultural context, denoting that meaning construction is dynamic and can change over time:

It is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (Crotty 1998, p. 42).
Since the Enlightenment period, a number of intellectual traditions and thinkers have advocated the stance that there is no absolute truth outside of this construction of meaningful reality (Travers 2004). Social constructionist perspectives have been particularly underpinned by Michel Foucault and his theories on the connection between language, knowledge and power (Foucault 1980). Foucault advocates that all knowledge is the result of the effect of power struggles and emphasises power as being dispersed through social relations that could restrict or produce possible forms of behaviour, as well as the production of knowledge (Mills 1997).

Constructionist approaches therefore involve a theory of knowledge that acknowledges our understanding of reality as being socially and historically constructed, including what constitutes a “problem” for research (Jacobs & Manzi 2000). There has been some criticism of social constructionism’s focus on agency over structure (Somerville & Bengtsson 2002) and the notion of a lack of an “objective” truth (King 2004). However, Kemeny (2004) argues that it is not necessary to deny the existence of an objective material world to hold a social constructionist epistemology. Instead, it is only necessary to accept that our access to the material world is mediated. Furthermore, unlike in subjectivism, where the object makes no contribution to the generation of meaning, in constructionism “[w]e have something to work with” (Crotty 1998, p. 44). This “something” is the world and its objects/phenomena, with meaning coming into existence only in our relation and engagement with it. Social constructionism and its attention to how meaning is socially mediated is the approach adopted in this thesis.

Social constructionism is an appropriate epistemological framework for the research question of what role “religion” might have on the dynamics of an FBO working in irregular migration in Morocco. A social constructionist framework enables an examination of religion as a concept that has been socially constructed within a specific historical, social and political context. This framework opens up the possibility of questioning what we mean by “religion”, rather than taking for granted the implicit assumptions linked to a general, essentialist and universalising concept of it. Furthermore, once religion as a category is held under scrutiny, our notions of “the secular” and “secularism” must also come to be analysed, because “it is common knowledge that religion and the secular are closely linked, both in our thought and in the way they have emerged historically. Any discipline that seeks to understand ‘religion’ must also try to understand its other” (Asad 2003, p. 22).

To uncover the processes in meaning construction, a theoretical perspective of interpretivism within the phenomenological tradition is taken. Central to phenomenology is direct experience (Crotty 1998, p. 79). This means approaching the phenomenon and getting as
close as possible in order to have an immediate experience of it. And true to the epistemological approach of constructionism, in phenomenology the cultural meaning system is set aside in order to allow for a possible reinterpretation, which “will be as much a construction as the sense we have laid aside” (Crotty 1998, p. 82), except that other meanings – a fuller meaning, or perhaps hidden or suppressed meanings – are allowed to emerge. For my research question, this “getting close” to the phenomenon was crucial to examining “religion” and what influence it may have, in its all dimensions (material, social and personal), on the dynamics of an FBO.

Research perspectives

In my analysis I combine the two research perspectives of social constructionism and phemenology to explore the role of religion in humanitarian aid provision. I utilise a discursive approach to the study of religion (Taira 2013; von Stuckrad 2013) and religion and the secular as sanctification and secularisation processes and strategies (Barnett & Stein 2012).

Discursive approach to religion

In a discursive approach to studying religion, the category “religion” is seen as an “empty signifier” that is socially constructed and negotiated in specific historical and cultural contexts (Taira 2013, p. 27). A key theoretical and methodological assumption within this approach is that “religion” is free of an essential meaning, and that definitions of this term are mediated by power and a range of practical interests, rather than objective reason or as a mere abstract intellectual exercise (Asad 2012).

This approach recognises that what is regarded as legitimate knowledge in any particular context is generated through the practices of institutions, organisations and actors; and analyses this production of knowledge through the concept of “discourse”. A discursive approach is in line with the epistemological perspective assumed in this research around the social construction of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann 1966) and how meaning is constructed through processes of communication, objectification and legitimation (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 9).

Discourse in the discursive approach

There have been many definitions and conceptions of “discourse” dating back to the 19th century, sometimes used in conflicting ways (von Stuckrad 2013). The discursive approach combines ideas about the social construction of reality with Foucault’s understanding of discourse, particularly his interest in the structures that produce shared knowledge in any
given social and historical situation (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 8). Foucault also puts particular emphasis on the power-structures that enable certain knowledges to be produced and others to be prohibited, regulating what can be thought, said and done (Foucault 1980). In this thesis, I follow von Stuckrad’s definition of discourse in his outline of a discursive approach to the study of religion:

Discourses are practices that organize knowledge in a given community; they establish, stabilize, and legitimize systems of meaning and provide collectively shared orders of knowledge in an institutionalized social ensemble. Statements, utterances, and opinions about a specific topic, systematically organized and repeatedly observable, form a discourse (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 15).

Therefore, although language is acknowledged as important, the concept of discourse in the discursive approach moves beyond classical linguistic analysis to include practices as well as institutionalised structures that organise knowledge and mediate meaning. This means that “everything we perceive, experience, and feel, but also the way we act, is structurally intertwined with socially constructed forms of approved and objectified knowledge” (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 8). Consequently, a discursive approach to studying FBOs can uncover how religion as a set of practices, resources, structures and processes is mobilised by various actors within the particular context of humanitarian aid provision. This also means analysing what interests, tactics and practical consequences are involved in the mobilising of religion as a discourse (Taira 2013, p. 484) and includes social, material and economic interests and outcomes (McCutcheon 2007, p. 176). Therefore, the focus is not on defining religion, which from a social constructionist perspective has no stable or inherent existence in itself, but rather on analysing the function of religion; its varying functions for different actors in particular contexts (Taira 2013), or what McCutcheon terms the “making of it” process (McCutcheon 2007, p. 196).

The dispositive

Another important concept in the discursive approach is the concept of the “dispositive”, which although originally conceived by Michel Foucault has a particular meaning in the discursive approach. The dispositive here means the totality of the material, practical, social, cognitive and normative “infrastructure” in which a discourse can develop (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 15). Some of this infrastructure can include, for example, government legislation, media, new technologies and education, as well as the cultural processes and relationships within them. Discourses are in dynamic relationship with dispositives, often developing in
response to or even against them. Dispositives then are fundamental to how a discourse is cultivated and utilised, and in Chapter 5 this thesis will examine the CEI’s relationship with the state and its donors as important dispositives to the organisation.

**Discursive strands**

Many discourses are also linked to other discourses by what some scholars have termed “strands” (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 16). A discourse therefore may also contain strands from other discourses, becoming entangled and forming a “discursive knot” (Jäger & Meier 2010, p. 47). The existence of different strands in a discourse reminds us that discourses are flexible categories, with the boundaries around them being socially constructed themselves; they are not pre-existing but are analytical categories constructed to serve an interpretive goal (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 16). In various chapters of this thesis, an analysis of the role of religion within the CEI will include focusing on the various discursive strands entangled in the organisation’s work, particularly strands from humanitarian discourse (professionalisation, secularisation, universalism and values), strands related to religion (Christian values, proselytisation, missionaries, Christian presence in Muslim countries and freedom of religion in Morocco) and migration (transit migration, the illegal/legal binary and global South/North borders). The notions of discursive strands and dispositives provide a useful analytical framework for this thesis. Taking the discourse on religion within the organisation as the analytical starting point, I will examine the dispositives that serve as the infrastructure for this discourse (the state and donor relations), as well as analysing the entanglement of discourse on religion with strands from other discourses, predominantly humanitarianism and migration. Through this analytical lens, this thesis will demonstrate how religion as a process and strategy is able to produce meaning and knowledge through concrete practices.

**Discursive approach research methods**

The above discussion reveals that the discursive approach refrains from evaluating the legitimacy or otherwise of religion; rather, its main purpose is to analyse the processes, interests, tactics and outcomes involved in the “making” of religion as a discourse (Taira 2013, p. 489). Similarly, in my analysis I refrain from evaluating the role of religion in the CEI or the legitimacy of the organisation’s religious beliefs. Instead, I focus on “how” religion functions within an FBO working in the context of humanitarian aid provision, and ask what practical interests and consequences arise from the mobilisation of certain processes and strategies related to religion by various actors.
The discursive approach is a research perspective, rather than a method. Therefore, a range of possible methods can be utilised in order to answer a research question (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 14). Depending on research constraints and practicalities, it is acceptable for an individual project to consider itself simply as a contribution to an overall analysis of a discourse or as an exemplary study that highlights one aspect of a discourse (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 20). In terms of actual research methods, some appropriate to the discursive approach include content analysis, conversation analysis, participant observation, observation, textual interpretation, surveys and interviews, and historical methods (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 20). This research uncovers strategies and processes involved in the discourse of religion within humanitarianism, through analysing a case study of a particular FBO. I therefore deemed most appropriate an ethnographic approach utilising qualitative methods; the reasons for this are further elaborated later in this chapter.

Lastly, in line with a social constructionist epistemology, the discursive approach acknowledges that research results do not represent the “truth” about an issue, but rather are elements themselves of the discourse under study (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 21). The findings of research should “provide insight into the mechanisms, historical dimensions, and implications of the construction of meaning in a discourse community” (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 21). This is similar to the approach taken in Barnett and Stein’s (2012) focus on sanctification and secularisation processes. It is the second research perspective taken in this thesis.

Sanctification and secularisation processes

The discursive approach to the study of religion is consistent with that adopted by Barnett and Stein in their book *Sacred aid* (2012); they argue that constructions of religion and the secular are processes and strategies which are mobilised for specific purposes and within particular contexts. Similar to the approach taken in the discursive study of religion, analysing religion through the lens of sanctification and secularisation processes, strategies and outcomes help to avoid monolithic constructions of the religious and the secular. In addition, this approach is able to illuminate and bring to the fore the dynamic interrelationship between “religion” and “the secular”, where instead of the usual opposition, there is “the contradictory and complementary tendencies of the secularisation and sanctification of humanitarianism” (Barnett & Stein 2012, p. 8). This approach enables an analysis that highlights the mutual co-dependency in constructions of the religious and the secular (McCutcheon 2007, p. 191).
A reframing of “religion” as sanctification and secularisation processes can highlight the common ground between religion and the secular. Secular organisations can also adhere to elements of the sacred (for example, the inviolability of human rights), and religious organisations must respond to “secular” demands (for example, professionalisation and efficiency). Calhoun et al. (2011) argue that politicising the secular/religious binary can change the interpretive filter used for understanding key events in global politics, but this is also true for the interpretive filter of research where taken-for-granted categories and assumptions can become destabilised and a more complex, nuanced picture emerges. In this way, Barnett and Stein’s (2012) use of “secularisation” and “sanctification” categories can be particularly helpful. Similar to the emphasis on analysing the function of religion in the discursive approach, this perspective requires a close attention to specific practices, avoiding abstract generalisations of what “religion” or “the secular” is or does and instead focusing on practical outcomes, interests and strategies.

By “secularisation”, Barnett and Stein mean “earthly matters” such as fundraising, bureaucratisation, professionalisation, accountability and effectiveness. This is humanitarianism that is “calculable” and is “the process by which elements of the everyday and the profane insinuate themselves and become integrated into humanitarianism, thus challenging its sacred standing” (2012, p. 8). This also includes the roles of states and commercial enterprises. By “sanctification”, they mean “[t]he creation of the sacred, establishment and protection of a space that is viewed as pure and separate from the profane” (2012, p. 8). This can be seen in the attempts at the creation of a space “free” from politics, and a humanitarian ethic that makes claims to altruism and innocent motives, where values and ethics take precedent over utilitarian interests. Under this definition, “secular” organisations can also be seen to engage in processes of sanctification, for example when they call on the inviolableness of human rights.

Sanctification and secularisation research methods

Barnett and Stein are interested in how the opposition between the “religious” and the “secular” is constructed in “the structures, and everyday acts of aid agencies and other actors that create, sustain and dissolve these differences” (2012, p. 9). Similar to the discursive approach, it is a research perspective rather than a research method; however, within this approach is an attention to everyday practices and structures. Therefore, a qualitative method such as an ethnography of a case study is an appropriate research method. Through this method, this thesis examines the structures and “everyday acts” of a particular FBO through in-depth fieldwork, looking particularly at the way these are expressed as strategies and processes.
Combining both research perspectives

Both research perspectives allow an approach where taken-for-granted categories and assumptions are put into question, and a non-essentialised and non-monolithic conception of “religion” is assumed. Combining these two research perspectives together provides a complementary framework that enables a more careful analysis of the role that religion can have in humanitarianism. Through the analytical lens of sanctification and secularisation processes, religion and the secular are shown to be mutually constitutive, highlighting the processes that both create and blur the boundaries between religion and secularism in humanitarianism (Barnett & Stein 2012, p. 23). More than this, it illustrates how “sanctification processes can alter the character of the secular, and secularisation processes can alter the character of the religious” (Barnett & Stein 2012, p. 23).

Therefore, sanctification and secularisation processes provide a useful lens through which to analyse practices in the context of humanitarianism, where actors have to negotiate the tensions, constraints and compromises that arise between notions of the sacred and the secular in their work. Within humanitarianism in particular, where there is much utilisation of “sacred” concepts, from values and ethics to practices, considering sanctification and secularisation processes enables an analysis of one way in which notions such as the sacred and the secular are interpreted and negotiated in the public sphere.

In the discursive approach, a useful framework is provided for ordering the analysis in this thesis, through the notions of dispositives and discursive strands. Taking the discourse on religion within the organisation as the analytical starting point, the thesis examines the dispositives that serve as the infrastructure for this discourse (the state and donor relations). Secondly, it analyses the discourse on religion within the organisation in terms of its entanglement with strands from other discourses, predominantly humanitarianism and migration. Through this analytical lens, the thesis seeks to reveal specific processes, strategies, interests and consequences of religion in a humanitarian context. Furthermore, the ethnographic approach to a case study has been utilised. An elaboration and justification for this research method is further discussed below.

Research methods

Quantitative and qualitative research methods

Quantitative research methods are more closely associated to positivism, as they seek to examine functional or cause/effect relationships, assuming a clear and unmediated relationship between knowledge of the world and reality (Hastings 1998). They therefore
assume that an objective understanding of the world is possible. As such, quantitative research is not an appropriate method given that the epistemological perspective taken in this research is one of social constructionism. Furthermore, the research rejects a definition of religion that is essentialised, instead focusing on specific practices and processes and how these are constructed within a particular social context. Qualitative research tends to move away from positivism, and instead focuses on the perceptions of the world as experienced by those studied, or the discourses that make up a worldview. This research eschews the concept of religion as an object of study separate from its social and political context and instead focuses on complexity and particularity. As such, the qualitative method of an ethnographic approach is the most appropriate method to respond to the research question.

**Ethnography**

Abstract generalisations about what constitutes the religious and the secular are inherently political, and furthermore can be dangerous to scholarly work because they give a false idea of neutrality and impartiality to an invisible secular logic (Fountain 2013). Therefore, an overwhelming number of scholars in the anthropology of humanitarianism and development argue for an ethnographic approach – one that is empirical, detailed, nuanced, historically and socially situated – especially scholars who are studying the role of religion in NGOs (Bornstein 2005; Bornstein & Redfield 2011; Fountain 2013; Barnett & Stein 2012; Hefferan & Fogarty 2010; Pritchard 2010). There are, it should also be noted, numerous non-anthropologists who deploy non-ethnographic methodologies in the study of FBOS. However, Pritchard (2010) argues that to take religion seriously as an object of study means to regard religion as having specific historical, material and bodily consequences in order to avoid a generalising discourse: “Indeed, calls to be open to the ‘other’ or to take seriously the ‘other’ must contend with the question: ‘Which other?’” (p. 1087).

Bornstein and Redfield (2012) propose that anthropology’s unique gift is its “ability to engage ambiguity, to recognise concrete events and forms of action that fall between conceptual divides” (p. 26, my emphasis); this ability to engage with ambiguity by analysing particular practices and discourses is an approach that accords well with Fassin’s call for attention to the anthropological aporias in humanitarian organisations (Fassin 2011). Therefore, my thesis seeks to answer the research question about the role of religion by addressing it in its complexity and nuance through an ethnographic account of actual humanitarian practices, situated within its specific social, political and cultural context. In this way, I am following a particularity of anthropology; that is, its capacity to “fragment grander human narratives with the concrete diversity of action” (Bornstein & Redfield 2012, p. 28).
An empirical case study in the form of an ethnography is vital to uncovering religious values and identity that are embedded in an organisation’s systems and practices; an in-depth study can reveal religion as much more complex than a binary view of its being either completely present or absent, and can show how it can be present in different ways (Hefferan & Fogarty 2010). An ethnographic approach also enables us to uncover the various, potentially conflicting discourses and practices hidden beneath an official discourse – between what is said, especially what is said officially, and what is actually being done in practice and within social relations. These are best uncovered in observations and informal conversations over a longer period of time. As Cowlishaw (2009) contends, “Being an ethnographer means beginning with the complexity of the encounter rather than with categorising, naming and quantifying in terms already known” (p. 36). Built into ethnographies is also the idea of allowing time for the relations and data to emerge between subject and object; hence the preference for long-term or in-depth fieldwork. In line with this, I spent a year conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Morocco with the CEI, a Christian FBO.

Case study

My project also adopts a case study approach. Stake argues that case studies are characterised by patterned behaviour and a bounded system, and that they are invaluable for refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation (Stake 2000, p. 449).

The thesis uses a case study for several reasons. Because of its restricted focus and scope of the research, a case study enables an understanding of complex interrelationships, facilitating detailed, in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). Similarly, because case studies are grounded in the “lived reality” of the experiences of specific individuals and groups, they are able to retain more of the “noise of real life” than other types of research, enabling a more nuanced and richer picture to emerge (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). Case studies can also facilitate the exploration of the unexpected and the unusual, throwing up significant issues that were unexpected when the research commenced. In the case of my research, this included the unexpected change of focus in research direction, as discussed in Chapter 1. This highlights the nature of case study research: its attention to detail and letting the empirical data “lead” the research.

In summary, a case study allows the researcher to “close in” on the phenomena as they unfold in practice and real-life situations (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 19). The learning to be gained from this is rich and complex, resulting in an opening out of theory rather than a reduction (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 21). This highlights the most significant advantage of case study research: that it can facilitate rich conceptual and theoretical development (Hodkinson &
Hodkinson 2001). The richness of the data can help generate new thinking and ideas, while existing theories can be tested against complex realities; case study research moves beyond mere "thick description" and is able to contribute to new or modified thinking (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). In this way, case study research can have a role in taking forward new knowledge.

The limitations of case study research are related to their limited generalisability, validity of findings and objectivity (Darke et al. 1998). Firstly, case study research is not generalisable in the conventional sense (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). It can make no claims to being typical or representative, and empirically cannot be extrapolated to other cases. However, this thesis takes the view of Flyvbjerg (2006), who argues that just because knowledge cannot be formally generalised this does not mean "that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society" (2006, p. 10). Flyvbjerg places the value of the case study on the validity claims which the researcher can argue in their study, and "the status these claims obtain in dialogue with other validity claims in the discourse to which the study is a contribution" (2006, p. 17). Therefore, claims from case study research further knowledge by entering into constructive dialogue with other claims within the discourse, rather than aiming to be generalisable.

The critique of less generalisability is linked to the other supposed limitation of case studies; that is, the validity of their claims and findings. Case study research eschews a simple checklist of criteria against which the validity of a piece of research can be judged (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). Instead, a different set of questions should be asked in relation to a case study research’s findings. Questions such as “Do the stories told ‘ring true’? Do they seem well supported by evidence and argument? Does the study tell us something new and/or different, that is of value in some sort of way?” (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). The focus in case study research, then, is on how the evidence is presented and argued, and whether this leads to new knowledge or thinking, or the development of existing knowledge.

A key factor in the evaluation of a piece of case study research is the quality of the insights and thinking that the particular researcher brings to the case study, and their construction of the data around issues they have deemed to be significant (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). This leads to the third criticism usually levelled against case study research, that of objectivity. Case study research does not make claims to complete objectivity, which it argues is impossible. Instead, it aims to present adequate evidence and data to support any claims made, as well as make transparent all judgements that have been made in the research, while at the same time acknowledging that it is impossible to render easily
transparent all value judgements in a piece of research (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001). An awareness of the limitations of case study research and the claims it can make nevertheless does not detract from the particular rich contributions of case study research, as outlined above.

If the world that we live in and the institutions and organisations that come out of it are complex and nuanced, and if, as Barnett and Stein (2012) contend, religion cannot be reduced to something as simple as “organisational identity”, but is indeed “multi-layered, multi-dimensional and non-linear” (2012, p. 9), then an ethnographic approach to a case study is an excellent research method for answering the research question. This study follows in the tradition of many ethnographies that focus on a case study through fieldwork, as that enables a “privileging of particularities” (Fountain 2012), as well as being able to demonstrate more clearly consequences and strategies of discourse (Taira 2013).

Fieldwork

My preliminary reading of the literature led to an understanding that Morocco was the best field site for research, because it would give a clearer focus on what was the initial focus of my research, the phenomenon of irregular migration towards Europe. Consequently, I undertook a one-month “exploratory” trip to Morocco in June 2011 to see if carrying out research there would be feasible and if I would be able to make contact with local organisations working with migrants. After I established that this would be possible, I then completed one year of fieldwork from February 2012 to February 2013. I also became an associate doctoral student with the Centre Jacques Berque, an established social sciences research centre in Morocco. This included presenting my research in progress during a seminar at the centre. The fieldwork period utilised a number of methods in order to answer my research question, including carrying out a number of interviews with various actors as well as participating in a number of activities and events (see Appendix 2).

Period of volunteer work

In the first three months of my fieldwork I worked as a volunteer, or what the French call stagiare (intern), at the CEI in both Rabat and Casablanca in their permanences for migrants (a drop-in session when migrants could come to the church to seek help). This included preparing food bags, welcoming and listening to migrants, referring them to other services and undertaking occasional medical accompaniment. It also included visits to the CEI drop-ins in other cities such as Fes and Oujda. This was an invaluable period for my research, as I gained a sense of the social, cultural and political context of the CEI’s work, as well as the day-to-day issues involved in running an organisation like the CEI from the ground. All CEI
team members and management staff were aware that I was a PhD research student who was
engaged in a period of volunteer work before going on to a more formal research phase. I
also declared to migrants that I worked with during the drop-ins that I was a student
researcher.

It was crucial that I made a distinction between the two roles that I would be occupying
while in the field. At the end of my volunteer period, I stopped working at the drop-ins, only
occasionally visiting to observe and talk to migrants in my role as a researcher. In having a
clear separation of my time and communicating effectively, I hoped to avoid any confusion
over the two roles I occupied, and avoid any possibility of coercion or expectations. I give
more information about this in the section below on interviews and the consent process.

Change of research direction

It was as a volunteer at the CEI that I came to realise there were other important research
questions that I could try to answer. My initial research question focused on the experiences
of sub-Saharan African irregular migrant women in Morocco. However, during my period of
volunteer work I became intrigued by the church and the workers themselves, and the
challenges they faced in their work with migrants as faith-based actors.

The postmodern turn in ethnography and fieldwork meant that scholars began to question the
ethnographic field as a cultural construct in itself, with the inherent unequal relations that
come from a “disciplinary power that enables the production of a ‘field’ in which a
conceptual framework can produce ‘facts’” (Robben & Sluka 2007, p. 18). Being aware of
the social constructive nature of an ethnographic field rather than seeing it as a pre-existing
entity that is already there to be discovered, I was able to see many more potential “fields”
during fieldwork, including ones that I had not initially thought of before starting out.

I became interested in the church space as a possible field of research. What intrigued me
initially was the physical space of the church with its multiple layers: it is at once a religious
space, a transnational space, and a humanitarian space (all CEI operations occurred in their
churches except for those in Oujda, where there is not a church building). These multiple
layers are intertwined and in dynamic relationships to each other; sometimes they flow
seamlessly with each other, and sometimes they are in great tension. The various actors
within this space are often pulled by diverging demands. In addition, using a physical,
bounded space to frame my research led me to other themes, places and people that are
outside this physical space, but which continue to have a link with it.

In this way, I am following in the footsteps of Elyachar’s (2005) ethnography in her book
Markets of dispossession. She grounds her ethnographic study in a specific geographic space
in Cairo (a neighbourhood of artisans). Through defining her field in terms of an “analytic problem” rather than an actual limited physical space, she was able to investigate other actors in this space that were not physically present, but were present in other ways; for example, in the interventions of international organisations and NGOs (Elyachar 2005, p. 33). Similarly, using as a starting point the physicality of the church space, I was able to trace relationships and themes that go beyond that space – transnational religious networks of funding from churches in the United States, France and Germany; its relationships with the Moroccan State, and of course the practices and beliefs of the church members who, as migrants themselves, are all from “elsewhere”. All of these factors form part of the context as well as having a profound dynamic on the CEI’s work.

Furthermore, in observing these workers, I became interested in how religion was negotiated in their humanitarian work and the tensions and contradictions I observed during my time as a volunteer. I became interested in the role of religion within the context of migrant humanitarian aid provision, consequently amending my research question and submitting a new ethics application. This included receiving formal written consent from the President of EEAM and CEI for approval of the research. A new ethics application was submitted and approval was granted in August 2012, after which my new research focus commenced.

Participant observation

I observed and/or participated in a range of EEAM and CEI related events, meetings and activities (see Appendix 2). These often gave me a good perspective on aspects of the CEI beyond its work on the ground with migrants; for example, the rationale behind a lot of decisions from the side of management, how the CEI collaborated with other actors on the field, the CEI’s relationship with its donors and some of the religious practices that were a part of EEAM and the CEI. These participant observations were crucial for gaining a more holistic picture of the CEI and the varying discourses, tensions and contentions that comprise a group as diverse as the one that makes up the CEI and its religious community. It also allowed opportunities for informal conversations with a variety of actors, which no doubt contributed to a richer understanding.

Interviews and consent process

Participants were chosen for their varying involvement with the CEI, and approached for a formal interview (see Appendix 1).

A total of 30 people were interviewed. A number of these interviews were voice recorded, some were not recorded, and others were conducted by email. The method used depended on
the circumstances of when the interview was taking place and on the individual interviewee; for example, some people did not have time for a face-to-face interview, or only responded to me once they had left the country. Interviews were conducted in a range of places, depending on the interviewees’ preferences. These included the church, cafés and the interviewees’ homes.

The language spoken during the interviews and in the day-to-day interactions with others was mainly French, sometimes switching between English and French for those few interviewees who also spoke English. The interviews with Americans were only in English. Intrepreters were not required, as I am fluent in both languages.

Interviewees were asked to sign a consent form, and those who were not comfortable with signing it were asked to give recorded verbal consent, as per my ethics application. In addition, I handed out an information form on my research project to each interviewee in either English or French. The interviews were semi-structured and the range of interviewees included CEI staff and volunteers, donors, other NGO workers and migrants.

**Documentation**

Documents collected include the Statement of Faith of EEAM, the CEI’s charter and mission statement, the transcript of a presentation given by the President on the work of the CEI to donors, and various meeting notes. Various websites were also accessed (for example, donor church organisations) as well as media reports on the church – particularly on the deportation of its pastor in 2010 and accusations of proselytisation by the state – and media reports on the situation of sub-Saharan Africans in Morocco.

**Data analysis**

In conformity with an ethnography, data collected in the field came in a variety of forms: formal interviews, a fieldwork journal, notes taken during volunteer period, notes taken from different activities and events, emails, news articles and websites. Madison (2005) defines coding and logging data as “the process of grouping together themes and categories that you have accumulated in the field” (p. 43). This involves creating groups or clusters of data in order to better aid in its analysis and final presentation.

As my research utilises the framework of two research perspectives to interrogate the role of religion in humanitarianism, I went through the various data collected and grouped them according to similar discourse strands (external relations, organisational identity, internal dynamics related to staff issues, and the history and development of the organisation), and
analysed these strands for sanctification and secularisation processes, as well as the ways they engaged with strands from other discourses in humanitarianism and migration.

The results formed the various chapters in this thesis, and enabled an uncovering of specific processes, strategies, interests and consequences of religion in a humanitarian context.

**Reflections on the research**

**Ethnography as encounter**

At the heart of an ethnography is fieldwork. Keesing and Strathern (1998) characterise fieldwork as “intimate participation in a community and observation of modes of behavior and the organization of social life” (p. 54). Cowlishaw (2009) characterises it as “the researcher’s insistence on experiencing particular social conditions and specific social relationships” (p. 7). Central to fieldwork are the relationships or “encounters” that come from the fieldwork process. Without these, fieldwork and ethnography would not be possible. Indeed, Cowlishaw (2009) argues that “fieldwork”, “ethnography” and “participant observation” are all technical terms referring to a kind of research that is based on everyday human engagement (p. 10). Furthermore, she argues that because ethnography involves immersion within a particular social context over an extended period of time, destabilisation and loss of identity are inevitable (p. 9), which I discuss later in this chapter.

The relationship of researchers with “informants” is therefore at the heart of ethnographic research. The relationships cultivated in the field to a large extent shape research. These, in turn, are determined by the interest and engagement of those individuals encountered in the field. In fact, Robben and Sluka (2007) point out that the best informants are the ones that becomes friends, and that making a friend “has proven to be one of the main ways that anthropologists have been able to establish rapport during the early part of fieldwork … it is these friends who often become [the anthropologist’s] best informants” (Robben & Sluka 2007, p. 121). This was true in my research. It was people who to some extent responded to my research topic, but primarily responded to me as a person, who gave me the most access to their social world. These friendships unfolded in an unstructured way in varying degrees over time in the fieldwork process, and one person in particular proved to be pivotal for my research focus. Similarly, my research was shaped by those I encountered who were reluctant to engage, as well as those with whom I did not feel I could engage. Both of these aspects are discussed later in this chapter.
Therefore, I frame the fieldwork process as a series of encounters. Tamisari (2006) characterises fieldwork as an “epistemology of personal acquaintance” (p. 21), where we ask about the nature of encountering a person in the field, and the ways these encounters affect the knowledge we produce. Tamisari contends that in encounters we are changed and affected by the experience, and so encounters with others inevitably mean also gaining a knowledge of ourselves. This reciprocal openness of “personal acquaintance” characterises what she terms the “unfolding possibilities” of encounters, and the potentialities of the other in their fullness, beyond a concept or category (p. 22). Indeed, she argues that:

… all knowledge and analyses produced about intercultural interaction, be it for anthropological or bureaucratic purposes, ultimately rest on the specific dynamics of encounters as performances of unfolding possibilities (Tamisari 2006, p. 23).

The social embeddedness of this kind of knowledge is rarely acknowledged in theoretical reflections or ethnographic texts. Instead, the encounters from which ethnographic knowledge is produced are rendered invisible and unrecognised, lost in assumptions about knowledge that favour distance, categories and pre-established criteria (Tamisari 2006, p. 27).

Encounters are also marked by refusals from the other (Tamisari 2006, p. 25), or from ourselves towards others. For a variety of reasons, reciprocal openness can also mean closure to the possibilities of encounter by one or both sides. This is because personal acquaintance involves a getting to know each other that involves ever-deeper levels of affect and sentiments, and a kind of emotional investment that one is not capable of making with all people or at all times. I was conscious of several times where I kept a distance from certain men who could have been closer informants, because I did not feel comfortable around them. I was aware that this would limit or at least skew some of the data I collected, because a couple of the men were members of the organisation. However, I was working in a context where I felt a certain vulnerability as a lone foreign woman, as well as the difficulty of separating life from fieldwork while in the “field”; I had to keep boundaries in order to feel like I could continue. It is true that my deepest encounters in the field were with women, and it was these encounters that would shape not only my access, but also the knowledge that I was able to produce. As Tamisari (2006) contends, it is the everyday life encounters with particular others that inform and determine knowledge gain and production, and a fundamental part of these encounters “include all forms of positive and negative affective engagements – generosity and resentment, respect and insolence, modesty and boastfulness,
love and hatred . . . ” (p. 30). Hence, emotional engagements that are in any case inherent in any individual relationship are also a determining aspect of ethnographic encounters and are therefore crucial, perhaps even necessary, for knowledge production.

However, the narrative of friendship within ethnographic encounters can also mask power relations. It was these power relations, this “asymmetry of power”, between the migrants and me that I found hard to negotiate, and which made the encounters at times particularly painful. I came to the field aware of my privileged position, but what I was not prepared for was my own sense of guilt and the uncertainty about how to deal with it. I was often asked for money by both migrants and the fieldworkers, and this was hard to deal with because it was often couched in a discourse of friendship. I also felt vulnerable as a “rich foreigner”. I discuss this more in the next section on positionality, limitations and vulnerabilities in the ethnographic encounter.

Positionality, limitations and vulnerabilities in the ethnographic encounter

In their introduction to a special journal edition on anthropology and FBOs, editors Hefferan and Fogarty argue for a critical reflection and evaluation of assumptions about and attitudes towards religion, faith and missionary work (2010, p. 1). Though they do not cite a secular bias in the social sciences specifically, they do point out anthropology’s long tradition of contempt for missionary and conservative religious groups (Hefferan & Fogarty 2010, p. 1). They argue that we need to be aware of, amongst other things, our fundamental assumptions about “how much of what we notice about FBO philosophies and practices is rooted in our fundamental assumptions about how societies and groups of people ought to engage with one another” (Hefferan & Fogarty 2010, p. 1), and suggest that being reflective does not mean an uncritical acceptance. Instead, they seem to be calling for a much more honest evaluation of our assumptions, prejudices and positionality in regards to religion in general and to FBOs in particular.

In this spirit, I disclose here my own inclinations and position in regards to religion and spirituality. As can be imagined, while working with an FBO I was often asked about my religion by different actors, and had many general discussions on faith and religion. Most church members assumed that I was Christian, and if they asked about my position it was usually about whether I was Catholic or Protestant, and sometimes whether I was baptised. In response to these questions I would answer that I was neither – that I did not grow up in a Christian family, and indeed my family is culturally Buddhist (but non-believers), but that I was searching spiritually. This is an accurate statement of my religious and spiritual position;
I was indeed and still am searching for “God” and it is not by accident that I have come to finally focus on religion as a subject for my research.

As Crapanzano (2007) states, the methodological strategies of a fieldworker and their epistemological concerns are frequently the result of their anxieties (p. 456). I believe that my position on and approach towards religion – that I had a genuine interest in and openness towards the different actors’ beliefs and practices – personally helped me in my research. I had many conversations on faith and religion, and at times I was questioned about and expressed my reservations. Far from this offending people, I think they appreciated a real engagement. It also gave me a sensitivity about how important their beliefs were for them.

Another aspect of positionality is power. Seghal (2009) defines positionality as “a researcher’s location within existing hierarchies of power and the ways in which the researcher’s identity and affiliations are positioned among and by others” (p. 9). Fieldwork should include an awareness of how positionality affects the researcher’s relationship with others and consequently the data collected. In Morocco, as a researcher in the field of migration I was, like other researchers, to a certain extent “courted” by some migrant activists. This facilitated the research process, but a lack of awareness of positionality and an uncritical acceptance of everything that was being told to us could have meant we were often told what we wanted to hear, or were given the “official migrant discourse”. It also meant that it could be always the same migrant (male) actors that researchers engaged with; that is, actors experienced in approaching researchers. Having an awareness of and being reflective on positionality, and what that meant in terms of how others responded to the research, and indeed how that affected the encounters themselves, was important in making the research process more rigorous and critical.

Such self-reflexivity, however, should not become a narcissistic subjectivity. Madison (2005) argues that this can be as bad as pure objectivity. Instead, she advocates focusing attention on “how our subjectivity in relation to the Other informs and is informed by our engagement and representation of the Other. We are not simply subjects, but we are subjects in dialogue with the Other” (p. 9). Our subjectivity is influenced by our relation with the Other; it is never formed in isolation. This not only points to a fluid subjectivity that is constantly being formed through contact with others, it also demands of us a constant engagement with the Other. Madison argues that we must not only critique the positivism of objectivity, but also the notion of subjectivity, and how that subjectivity in itself reflects “its own power position, choices and effects” (Madison 2005, p. 9).

Being affected by relations with others in this way defined my experience of conducting research in Morocco, in particular in the first three months. I felt disorientated and
destabilised – when things happened I could not rely on familiar cultural cues to make sense of them. With experiences that I did not understand or that perturbed me there was always an exhausting process of having to analyse and second-guess what was going on. When I first arrived in Morocco in particular, I felt a real loss of identity, not only in terms of being unsure about who I was in this particular culture and country, but also because to a certain extent what was being mirrored back by those around me was that I was first of all a woman, and a foreign woman at that. This foregrounding of my gender and cultural background was not something I was used to, and I was very uncomfortable with it. I spent the first three months feeling hyper-visible, and therefore vulnerable. Halfway through the year I moved to an upper-middle-class area, and I then felt less harassed, but I do not know whether this was because of the area I moved to, or because I had become accustomed to my environment and noticed the attention less. In hindsight it was probably a bit of both. This sense of vulnerability also touched my “research life” I was involved in activities where I had to trust others in situations where I felt hyper-visible and vulnerable: going out to visit migrants in their homes in “dangerous” neighbourhoods, going to the Moroccan/Algerian border, contacting and meeting with complete strangers, attempting to build networks outside of the organisation I was working with, and so on.

The politics of positionality encompass how we come to know the Other, as well as how we represent the Other. For researchers, dealing with this requires a certain self-reflexivity on how our own power, privilege and biases come into the research process (Madison 2005, p. 7), including our relationships with those we encounter in the field. Pertinent self-reflexive questions include “how will I be perceived by different Others (such as police, migrants and activists)?” Conversely, “how will contact with Others mould my own subjectivity in the field?” And finally, “how do my position and background influence the research process, from the questions I ask through to how I interpret my experience?” Madison (2005) contends that researchers need to always contextualise their own positionality, thereby “making it accessible, transparent, and vulnerable to judgement and evaluation … we are inviting an ethics of accountability by taking the chance of being proven wrong” (p. 8). These are some of the questions and reflections that informed the approach of my research.

**Ethics**

This research was the subject of an application for ethics clearance from Swinburne University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC). The Committee signalled concerns about informed consent in regards to vulnerable migrant informants and the question of anonymity (which I discuss in the next section). These concerns were effectively
addressed in my application and it received clearance from the Committee on 6 December 2011, before the commencement of fieldwork. A change in the research focus developed during my fieldwork, and consequently I lodged a new ethics application with SUHREC on 23 July 2012. This included getting formal written permission from the CEI and amending consent forms and information sheets. SUHREC provided ethics clearance for the new application in August 2012.

However, having received formal university ethics clearance is perhaps only the first step in addressing ethics in research, which in practice was an ongoing issue for the whole duration of my fieldwork and in the writing phase of the thesis. Particularly in fieldwork, a plethora of ethical issues arose some of which I have previously mentioned in this chapter, including the issue of precariousness, vulnerability and power dynamics in my interaction with informants (in particular with migrants and fieldworkers). Although formal ethics approval can try to mitigate some of these issues (for example, through informed consent, signed forms etc.) they can never completely address all of the ethical issues that can arise in the field.

Therefore, I follow the approach taken by Madison (2005) who states that ethical research follows on from the critical self-reflexivity of the researcher, and how they reflect on their own position, choices and impact during research:

> This “new” or postcritical ethnography is the move to contextualize our own positionality, thereby making it accessible, transparent, and vulnerable to judgment and evaluation…we are inviting an ethics of accountability by taking the chance of being proven wrong” (Madison, 2005, p. 8).

This “ethics of accountability” is something that moves beyond formal university ethics approval and into the domain of the research process itself, from the fieldwork to the writing phase. This includes presenting research in a way that is openly transparent and able to be questioned by others. It is to render the researcher herself ‘vulnerable’, in order to make her work accountable to others. This ethical accountability requires on the part of the researcher a continual process of questioning and reflection in her research and on her interaction with others, in other words, a continual self-evaluation and monitoring (Madison 2005, p.83).

I have attempted to do this throughout my thesis but have been particularly self-reflexive in this chapter under the section ‘Reflections on the research’. This has included reflecting on and being open about some of the dilemmas that I experienced in fieldwork and how that may have shaped my data collection. The section aims to transparently and openly highlight some of the ethical issues that came up during the research and demonstrate an ethical response shaped by fieldwork encounters.
Informants

Migrants are in a vulnerable position materially, emotionally and physically. Therefore, bearing in mind the varieties of different expectations of myself and my research from potential informants, I had to be very clear about the research process and what I was doing in order to make sure that I had informed consent. As per my ethics application, after my period of volunteer work I approached potential informants and discussed the aims of my research project. I also distributed information sheets and consent forms in English and French. It was key that I communicated effectively to separate my role as volunteer and my role as researcher, especially when communicating with migrants, in order to avoid any sense of coercion or implication that participating in my research might mean I could give them something in my role as volunteer. This was less of an issue in relation to CEI staff and management, who were aware of my position as a PhD research student and indeed granted me permission on that agreed basis, and was not an issue at all in relation to other actors I interviewed, such as donors and the staff of other NGOs, who only knew me as a researcher.

Anonymity of sources

As per my ethics application, any data collected from migrants was modified to ensure the complete anonymity of the participants. This included changing the names of migrants in my documentation to prevent the individuals from being identified. For CEI staff, names and positions are stated, as the different positions they occupied were intrinsic to the analysis. On the consent form, CEI staff had the option to tick a box indicating that they preferred to remain anonymous in my research, although no one chose to tick this box.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has elaborated on the epistemological framework of social constructionism adopted in my research, as well as the combined research perspectives of the discursive approach to religion and sanctification and secularisation processes. In addition, the chapter has outlined the research methods utilised, as well as reflections on the research process, including ethnography as encounter, the positionality of the researcher, and the ethics application. The next chapter summarises and interprets the history of EEAM and the CEI, illustrating the organisation’s particular historical and geo-political context in Morocco, and arguing that the organisation’s identity and mission are formed by its responses to the specific challenges that arise out of its particular context.
CHAPTER 4. HISTORY

This chapter summarises and interprets the historical context of EEAM and the CEI, demonstrating how this has been fundamental to shaping the development of the organisations. Any historical account is selective, and the history outlined in this chapter focuses most specifically on what is pertinent to the research question of the role of religion within humanitarianism. The chapter draws on a range of sources, including historical documents and interviews with contemporary actors, to trace the emergence of EEAM and the CEI within a particular historical and geo-political context in Morocco. This research reveals that as explicitly religious organisations they face specific challenges, and the ways they have responded to these challenges have become fundamental to their identity and workings.

The chapter briefly outlines the history of the Protestant presence in Morocco, from which EEAM later emerged. It then constructs a history of EEAM around three main periods (post-Independence in 1956; the 1980s and 1990s, and the current period) of transformation due to post-colonialism and migration, and similarly constructs the history of the CEI in three main periods, where it transitioned essentially from a pastor-led organisation to a medium-sized organisation. In this chapter I also contend that EEAM and the CEI together are an example of a transnational religious community (Faist 2009) which faces particular challenges. I argue that rather than being a separate category, transnational religious communities are a variation of LFCs, and that this is not only reflective of the global religious networks that many LFCs have, but also demonstrates the extent of the effects of global contemporary processes such as migration on local communities. The chapter then analyses how EEAM and the CEI attempt to respond to challenges through a “founding text”: EEAM’s Declaration of Faith.

Religion and religious organisations do not operate or evolve in a social vacuum. This chapter demonstrates that they can be dynamic and responsive to their context; indeed, that this is a prerequisite for their survival in sometimes difficult circumstances. EEAM as a transnational religious organisation faces particular challenges, but the history of EEAM and the CEI shows that religious organisations, rather than being static and unchanging, can out of necessity be dynamic, responsive, strategic and creative in response to such challenges.

Protestant presence in Morocco

This section provides a brief overview of the Protestant presence in Morocco to show the wider historical context from which EEAM and the CEI have emerged. Instead of giving an in-depth history, I have selected and highlighted significant moments of the Protestant
presence in Moroccan history and its relationship to the Moroccan State. The Christian presence is inextricably linked to the European and colonial presence, and so this section examines key moments in its relationship with Europe and the colonial encounter. It will begin with the Madrid Conference in 1880, as an important example of this close link between the Christian presence and the colonial presence, and a brief outline of the first Protestant missionaries in Morocco. The section then examines the Protestant presence during the French protectorate period, highlighting further the relationship between Christian presence and colonial presence, and the church’s close ties with the colonial state. In this period EEAM was given official legal status in its initial form, as the Église Réformée Évangélique Française au Maroc (French Evangelical Reformed Church of Morocco). The section ends with a brief discussion of the period after Moroccan Independence and its consequences on EEAM’s congregations.

The Madrid Conference and first Protestant missionaries in Morocco

The Madrid Conference in 1880 was a gathering of representatives from European countries including Germany, France, England, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Sweden and Norway, as well as the United States. Attendees came together specifically to settle the question of the powers and protection of diplomatic representatives and nationals in Morocco, as well as the acquisition of land by foreigners in Morocco and the installation of European companies (Convention as to Protection in Morocco Between the United States, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Norway and Morocco 1912). To a large extent, the conference was perceived by the sultan at the time, Moulay Hassan I (1873–1894), as an attempt at taking away Muslim sovereignty on Islamic land (Baida et al. 2005, p. 22). Morocco had been ruled by successive Arab dynasties claiming descent from Muhammad, and by 1666 up until French colonisation, the Alaouite Dynasty ruled the country.

The Madrid Conference is an important example of how the situation for Christians in Morocco was often linked to foreign powers and their relations with the Moroccan state. Alongside discussions of European presence in Morocco, questions of freedom of worship for foreigners were also discussed. Spain and Austria-Hungary proposed to write a declaration similar to the Berlin treaty of 1878 between the Ottoman Empire and several European powers to assure freedom of worship and respect for the existing Muslim religious

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2 Sultan means “authority” or “power”. It is used as the title for rulers who claimed full sovereignty in Morocco, and is the equivalent to the term “king”. It was only in 1957, however, that Mohammed V changed the official title to king (malik). This designation has been used for subsequent rulers.
hierarchy in Morocco (Baida et al. 2005, p. 22) Sultan Moulay Hassan consulted the Oulemas, the Muslim clerics of Fes, who responded that the freedom to worship as it was conceived by the Europeans was unthinkable in Morocco, but that it was possible within the context of the *Dhimma* and within the respect of Islamic law (Baida et al. 2005, p. 22). *Dhimma* is an Islamic concept referring to the “people of the book”; that is, the people of the other monotheistic religions of Judaism and Christianity who, because of their common conception of monotheism, were traditionally granted protection and hospitality by Muslims in return for the payment of a tribute and an acknowledgement of Muslim sovereignty (Astren, 2014).

After this response from the sultan, the debate on religious freedom ended and the principle of freedom of worship for foreigners in Morocco was not included in the final act of the conference (Convention as to Protection in Morocco Between the United States, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Norway and Morocco 1912). However, freedoms were often negotiated through various bilateral treaties. For example, article II of the Franco-Moroccan treaty in 1767 included a recognition that Christians in Morocco could follow their own religion, albeit only in private (de Card 1898, p. 114). The Anglo-Moroccan treaty in 1856 stipulated for the first time the freedom of worship for Christians outside of their homes (Matringe 1966, p. 36). The establishment of this latter treaty was likely a consequence of the growing number of Europeans in Morocco – in 1830 there were approximately 250 Europeans, but by 1910 the figure had reached well over 10,000 (Baida et al. 2005, p. 17).

Although several independent Protestant missionaries had previously come to Morocco attempting to spread their gospel, it was only after the Madrid Conference that missionary work took on a greater amplitude around two centres: Essaouira in the South, and Tangier in the North (Blanc 2009, p. 4). In 1875 the first real Protestant missionary effort began in Essaouira, when the Englishman JB Crighton Ginsburg, from the London Society for Promoting Christianity, worked specifically at converting the Jewish communities of Essaouira through medical aid and education (Baida et al. 2005, p. 27). This resulted in the Jewish authorities asking the sultan to intervene, and he expelled three missionaries, including Ginsburg, in 1879 (Attal 1973, p. 96).

Protestants were also the first to practise “freelance” missionary work in Morocco. In 1885, Robert Kerr decided to leave the Presbyterian Mission. Although he had received funds to start a mission among the Jews of Morocco, he refused to create a missionary station, wanting to continue to work in an independent manner (Blanc 2009, p. 6). The presence of “freelancers” – independent missionaries – reflected the fact that the churches did not
consider Morocco a priority for their missions. Independent missionaries were able to flourish in a context where larger missionary organisations found it harder, for political reasons, to implant themselves. The independents were successful in integrating into Moroccan culture, even though the conversion rate was not high, as Miege (1955) points out:

The numbers remained very low: a dozen of Jews at Mogador, four at Casablanca, three at Rabat, a few at Tangier, some Muslims in Fez, Marrakesh and Tangier. In total, hardly more than approximately thirty cases for the whole of Morocco (Miege 1955, p. 185).

However, by 1900 the number of missionary organisations grew to seven in total, comprising 81 missionaries and 17 auxiliaries on 18 mission “stations” (Baida et al. 2005, p. 30). These missionary organisations included the British and Foreign Bible Society, the North Africa Mission and the American Gospel Union from Kansas City (Aubin 1912, p. 352).

Protestants during the French protectorate period (1912–1956) and the birth of EEAM

On 30 March 1912, Morocco became a protectorate of France. Officially the sultan still reigned, but a French colonial administration effectively ruled the country. The missionaries of the 19th century, both Protestant and Catholic, had ambivalent views of colonisation. Although some saw it as a contestable political phenomenon, others saw it as providence enabling them to reach out to people, as was the case in previous centuries of the Roman Empire. In other words, “It was not ‘good’, but God used it!” (Blanc 2009, p. 8). In any case, the close link between missionaries and colonisation was visible in the fact that it was the colonial states who authorised or forbade missions into colonised countries. For example, the Société des Missions de Paris had wanted to send French Protestant missionaries to several countries in the wake of colonisation, but the very strong link that existed between the Catholic church and the French State in the 19th century meant that France only authorised Catholic missionaries to its colonies (Blanc 2009, p. 3). This perhaps explains the existence of Protestant missionary organisations in Morocco that tended to be British and American rather than French in this period.

During this period there was a close relationship between Christianity, nationalism and colonialism—for both Catholics and Protestants. This was perhaps even more the case for Protestants who, due to their complicated relationship to the French State, “had the tendency to want to show that they were ‘good French’ … they repeatedly reminded the Residence General that Protestantism also contributed to the moral prosperity of Morocco and that the principles diffused within it were part of what France wanted diffused” (Blanc 2009, p. 112).
Pastor Jacques Pannier of the Reformed Church of France, a prominent specialist in 16th century French Protestantism (Backus and Benedict 2011), approved of France and the French troops entering into Morocco to bring “order and peace” to what he perceived as the anarchy and fighting among tribes (Blanc 2009, p. 113). This is in line with the views of many other missionaries who saw it necessary to bring, at the same time, “civilisation” and faith to the non-Christian world (Blanc 2009, p. 116). Despite the official “Muslim Policy” of General Lyautey, the Residence General of the Protectorate, where the regime would maintain the practice of the Muslim religion and its religious institutions (Rivet 1988, p. 122):

Moroccan Muslims had a simple perception of the situation: the association between colonial power and spiritual power constituted the foundation even of an expansion in the service not only of foreigners coming to settle in the country, but further, of a proselytism (Baida et al. 2005, p. 39).

Up until the 1920s there was no legal status granted for “Protestant churches” as such; instead they were referred to as “Protestant groupings”. This changed on 19 April 1926 when a Protestant church was granted legal status for the first time as the Église Réformée Évangélique Française au Maroc (French Evangelical Reformed Church of Morocco). This is still the same status it has today, although it now known by a different name, the Église Évangélique au Maroc (Evangelical Church in Morocco, or EEAM) to reflect the change in its congregation from predominantly French to broadly European. After the first Protestant church was built in Casablanca, regular services and churches were established in Rabat, Fes, Kenitra, Marrakesh, Tangier and Meknes up until 1944. Where there was no church building, improvised ad hoc services occurred in various places such as people’s homes, government buildings and even a school (Blanc 2009, p. 228).

The Protestant church maintained good relations with the colonial authorities during the protectorate period. The pastor of Casablanca was regularly invited to official occasions, and was several times received by the Residence General Lyautey; similarly, dignitaries were often invited to church ceremonies. According to Blanc, it was evident that “the Protestants made a lot of effort to remind the authorities that France was not only Catholic and that it should not be different in Morocco” (Blanc 2009, p. 333).
After independence

Morocco gained independence from France in 1956 after more than 40 years of French rule. The day after independence Mohammed V, the Sultan of Morocco at the time, gave homage to certain Christians who supported the Moroccan people's fight for independence. This included the Protestants in Morocco. The sultan declared:

Like the Catholic brothers, you were at the side of the Moroccan people in its fight for the triumph of Justice, Truth and Law. You have stayed faithful to your origins and the ideas of your grand reformers, Calvin and Luther.

You have understood the meaning of the fight of the Moroccan people for its emancipation; because the history of Protestantism is a long fight marked by sacrifices and suffering. Like you, the Moroccan people have never been moved by feelings of hatred or vengeance (Baida et al. 2005, p. 133).

The sultan also promised that the church would keep all the advantages it had during the protectorate period (Blanc 2009, p. 333). This was again underlined by King Hassan II, the successor to Mohammed V, in a press conference on religious freedom a year after his inauguration on 12 December 1962:

It is certain that the Hebraic worship can be practised in complete freedom, that Christian worship can be practiced in complete freedom. These are the religions of the Book, permitted by Islam. And not only permitted! It is recommended to us to believe in their prophets. This does not mean at all that tomorrow, Morocco will accept worship in a public place in the sun. It is not said that cults like the Baha’i or others, who are heretics, will be accepted (Hassan II 1976, p. 82).

With independence, the decline in foreigner numbers began. There were 350,000 French present in Morocco before independence; in 1963 there were only 170,000 (Baida et al. 2005, p. 138). This resulted in a similar decline in church attendance. It would not be until the 1990s, with the wave of sub-Saharan African migration, that the church and more generally the Christian presence in Morocco would be, according to the President of EEAM, “resurrected”.

Mohammed V would later, in 1957, proclaim the title of king for himself and all subsequent rulers, replacing the title of sultan.
History of EEAM: the emergence of the official Protestant church in Morocco

Three main phases to the transformation of EEAM after Morocco’s independence from France can be identified. These phases include the decline in congregation members after independence, the “resurrection” and growth of the congregation with the arrival of sub-Saharan African migrants who were predominantly students, and lastly the re-orientation and response by the CEI to the arrival of irregular sub-Saharan African migrants. These three phases have been the major points of transformation for the church and pivotal to the organisation it is today.

This section predominantly relies on the work of one of the former Presidents of EEAM (2001–2010), Jean-Luc Blanc (2009), who attempted to chronicle the history of EEAM and the Protestant presence in Morocco Chrétiens au Maroc (Christians in Morocco). I have chosen to use this source as an example of a first-hand account within the organisation. The document also includes insightful reflections about Blanc’s time as President of EEAM.

First transformation

Directly after independence there was a decline of foreigners, with many leaving the country. There were 10 pastors from EEAM in Morocco for 2,500 Protestant families, but this number rapidly diminished after independence to less than four pastors (Blanc 2009). The presence of French expatriates further decreased when, in 1964, the Moroccan State recuperated what was once previously colonial land. Blanc documents the arrival of new nationalities such as Germans, Yugoslavs and Dutch, most of whom were Lutherans but some of whom were other Protestant denominations. This led to transformations of the church, including a change of name which is still in place.

The “Eglise Reformée de France au Maroc” stopped being confessionally “Reformed” and less and less “of France”. It’s precisely in envisaging this eventuality that in 1959 it proceeded to its last mutation, becoming simply the “Eglise Evangélique au Maroc” (Blanc 2009, p. 45).

The church’s mission had always been to cater for foreign Protestants living in Morocco; however, as the foreign population continued to decline, congregations also continued to dwindle. In 1986 a small group from the Eglise Reformée de France (Reformed Church of France) came to Morocco to perform an “audit” of EEAM. The conclusion they came to was that the church would have to prepare for its gradual disappearance in Morocco. The sale of church buildings would permit paying for an itinerant pastor to serve those scattered across
the country for at least the next 15 years. During this time, ecumenical work had to be undertaken to prepare for an eventual future where Protestants would be entrusted to the service of the Catholic church. At that point there were only weekly services in Casablanca and Rabat, and an interesting anecdote from Fes during that period illustrates the attempts by congregation members to save their church: to avoid having to give the church building over to Moroccan authorities who wanted the land, two women came regularly to open the church and put on a religious CD so that the neighbours had the impression that the church was still alive and being used. The former President says that it is due to them that the building is still in the hands of the church (Blanc 2009, p. 48).

Second transformation

In the late 1980s, all of this changed with the arrival of young people from sub-Saharan Africa who came to pursue higher studies at the universities in Morocco. They included students of Christian faith. In them, the former President of EEAM Jean-Luc Blanc recognised a resource for Africa, but also a way in which the church could fill a growing need:

These students constitute living forces and are often the elite of tomorrow’s Africa. To help Africa sustainably develop then is to support these students which permits them not only to do their studies well but also to prepare them for a return to their country. Often destabilised by a cultural shock for which they are little prepared they find in the Church, a place of reflection, a place for meeting other students older than them and coming from the same country so susceptible to being able to give them help and support. They find there a place of prayer, but also spiritual and human training, indispensable complement to their university studies (Blanc 2009, p. 33).

But cohabitation was not simple. A church emerging from colonialism was facing for the first time the need to welcome sub-Saharan Africans coming from other former European colonies. Blanc documents some of the division that occurred within the church. For example, some students felt they could not find their place in a church in which all the forms of worship were “European”, including the liturgy and the music played during service. They created their own informal organisation, the Groupe des Jeunes Chrétiens au Maroc (Young Christians in Morocco Group, or GJCM) within EEAM to organise a more culturally African life and a more charismatic and Pentecostal type of worship. This movement is typical of post-colonial contexts that move towards more locally appropriate and contextual forms of worship, and also a global trend of growing Pentecostalism (Bosch 1991; Bevans &
EEAM also engaged with the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal group, which sent two pastors to become chaplains of GICM to help the youth group structure themselves and integrate into the church. Very quickly the pastors admitted that they did not intend to collaborate with EEAM, but had come to start a new Pentecostal group in Morocco, which they did, called *L’Assemblée Chrétienne* (Christian Assembly). This broke up certain congregations within EEAM, with some leaving to join the *L’Assemblée Chrétienne*.

This was a period of extreme tension as the church tried to adapt to its new reality. In an interview, the current President Samuel Amedro told me the story of the arrival of African students in this way:

> The first wave, was the wave of students. We had a church of young people, 17, 18, 19 years old. They come here, they didn’t know anything. At the time, the Church Council was Europeans, and the Youth Group was sub-Saharan, and there was a lot of tension … between the African Youth Group, and the European church, because they really did not have their place; they were Pentecostals, it’s not the same faith, not the same prayer, not the same music, not the same songs. Really, not the same manner of praying. So, there was big, big tension, and Jean-Luc, it was very difficult for him, there were big clashes and conflict, schisms. In Rabat the church was split in two … It was a war (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

The growth in numbers and increasing implications of sub-Saharan African students in the church are illustrated by the example of Jean-Marie Kisango, who was the pastor of Rabat while I was undertaking fieldwork and is now the pastor of Tangiers. He was part of the first wave of students in the late 1980s, coming to Morocco after high school to study journalism in a university in Rabat:

> When I came to Morocco I was already sensitive to my religious life so here in Morocco I continued my Christian life parallel to my studies. I was therefore very involved in church life, I occupied several functions notably with young people. I was in the choir, I came to Morocco in 1989, I sang in the choir until 2002. I had a lot of responsibilities in the church. We are a small church here in Morocco, we do not have a lot of resources. The church did not have a lot of pastors, and decided to take people who were involved in religious life, in their faith and who had a maturity of knowledge (interview with Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, 30 October 2012).
Although they did not have any theological training, the church decided to use some of the students in a pastoral function. Four students besides Jean-Marie were chosen to become assistant pastors. Jean-Marie was an assistant pastor for five years before becoming the pastor for congregation in Rabat.

**Third transformation**

And then, there was a third generation of arrivals, and it was the migrants. Migrants, refugees, “illegals”. So, the church really succeeded thanks to the Africans. It was a resurrection, and everywhere there was growth (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

As highlighted in this quote, the arrival of sub-Saharan African students “resurrected” the church’s congregations, but there was also another challenge: the influx of irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, often passing through Morocco on their way to Europe but who ended up in a semi-permanently settled state in the country. Faced with this, in 2002 EEAM committed itself to working with refugees and migrants in Morocco through its social arm, the CEI. The numbers of migrants coming from all the branches of African Protestantism on their way to Europe and blocked in Morocco also completely changed the image of the church, making it lose its image as the “remains of colonialism” according to former President Jean-Luc Blanc, and making the congregations very different communities from what they used to be – a much more African and less European church.

With this growth in the congregation that included students, migrants and expatriates, EEAM has seen its work develop and grow since 2000 in several cities. In 2004, EEAM joined the *Communauté d’Églises en Mission* (Community of Churches on Mission, or CEVAA), a network of 35 Protestant churches on mission in 24 countries across Africa, Latin America, Europe, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Through this network partner churches are able to engage in training, exchange programs, missionary projects, information-sharing and action around justice and human rights issues. According to former President Blanc, this move signified the positioning of EEAM as a church on mission in Africa and in the world, and that after being a church of colonisers it had become a church of the colonised.

The next section moves on to examine EEAM as a transnational religious community on the border between the global North and South, and the particular challenges this community faces, before analysing how the community has attempted to respond to these challenges through its Declaration of Faith.
Transnational religious community

This section identifies EEAM as a transnational religious community. In doing so, it argues that the category “transnational religious community” is a variation of the LFC, facing particular challenges linked to reconciling the plurality of congregations with finding a common unity in their differences. I examine EEAM’s attempts to address these challenges through its Declaration of Faith, which I analyse as a policy document in line with Mosse’s (2004; 2005) analysis of the role of policy in organisations. This section demonstrates that EEAM has developed out of the particular challenges of being a transnational Christian community in Morocco, and has responded with a policy that can be analysed as being “productively ambiguous” (Mosse 2005). An analysis of EEAM is fundamental to understanding how the CEI emerged and is formed out of this particular context, as well as the consequent challenges the CEI faces in carving out a place for itself in the humanitarian field.

Definition of a transnational religious community

Transnational social spaces are characterised as having “sustained ties of persons, networks and organisations across the borders of multiple nation-states, ranging from weakly to strongly institutionalized forms” (Faist 2000, p. 189). These spaces are places of dynamic social, cultural and political processes that accumulate and mobilise economic, human and social capital (Faist 2000). Faist (2000) identifies a further distinct form of emerging transnational communities with collective identities in “frontier regions” in the global South–North context where, around these borders, regular and sustained cross-border ties are maintained. The transnational communities on the Mexico–United States border are prominent examples of this (Roberts & Lozano-Ascencio 1999; Fitzgerald et al. 2010).

This thesis argues that a faith community such as the EEAM is one of these emerging transnational communities on the “frontier region” between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, and between Africa and Europe. As the main Protestant church officially recognised by the Moroccan State, it welcomes all Protestant denominations. And as a Christian community of people who all come from elsewhere (no one is from “here”; that is, no one is Moroccan), it is composed of a range of sub-Saharan African nationalities as well as, to a lesser extent, Europeans and Americans. Members bring with them their networks from elsewhere, including transnational religious networks of funding for the church’s work with irregular migrants. The church space is a transnational community that reflects and is affected by wider processes of migration and geo-politics. It is an example of how global transformations condition the emergence of transnational social spaces (Faist 2004, p. 17),
where “migrant practices and identities draw upon and contribute significantly to ongoing processes of transformation, largely associated with facets of globalisation, already underway” (Faist 2004, p. 17).

In this vein, transnational religious communities are a variation of LFCs, rather than belonging to a separate category. Many LFCs are similarly affected by global transformations such as migration and similarly have transnational networks and ties, not only on an institutional level but also amongst individual members. As discussed in Chapter 2, LFCs are defined as “groupings of religious actors bonded through shared allegiance to institutions, beliefs, history or identity” (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Ager 2013, p. 2). There is also, however, a growing recognition of the link between religion and migration, and how much religion is at the heart of migration practices, from travelling pastors to FBOs working with migrants (Bava & Picard 2010). This is a testament to the close link between religion and migration in contemporary global processes, and the EEAM community is an example of a community at such a crossroads. It is also a testament to an increasing change from “ethnic groups” to more “transnational communities” (Portes 1996). Many LFCs are also, arguably, at the same time transnational religious communities.

A transnational religious community arises out of a specific historical and geo-political context, reflecting wider contemporary processes of migration and globalisation in the world. Transnational religious spaces therefore typically include a plurality of cultures, religious practices and theology. In the case of EEAM, this plurality is visible in the ways a church service is conducted, from the liturgy to the music performed during service. This plurality also exists on the level of theology, with some congregants decrying the theology espoused in the sermons during service. The plurality of the congregation has resulted in particular divisions that the church has had to endure internally, in addition to the external pressures from negotiating its presence in a Muslim country. From this has come the necessity to attempt to transform itself into what it calls a famille reçue (recreated or recomposed family); that is, to find a common unity in its multiplicity and diversity. The image of the family is an important motif in the Bible, with references in the New Testament to the “family of believers” (Galatians 6:10) and “God’s family” (1 Thessalonians 4:10). The concept of family is particularly important for the many sub-Saharan African migrants of the congregation, who do not see Morocco as their home despite having lived in Morocco for years if not decades, who rarely integrate into local Moroccan culture (many never learn to speak Arabic), and who live in a country where they can experience prejudice, discrimination and sometimes violence. The President of EEAM, Samuel Amedro commented:
It’s complicated because the Africans experience Moroccan society as extremely violent, as extremely racist, 90%, ask any African they will say that Moroccans are racist, two or three times the rent, being called a “slave” … that’s what they live. My job is to purify the need for vengeance in people … so we’ve tried to make the church a place of rest for them, where they don’t have to prove anything, we’re they are at home. A refuge (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

The church therefore can become a home or family, a refuge from hostility where its members can be with other African Christians. This experience can also be explained as a feature of transnational religious migration, where there “is also this consciousness of belonging to two worlds, two cultures, two societies, at the same time” (Capone 2004, p. 241). This sense of belonging in two worlds can translate into a sense of alienation in the new country, as was clearly illustrated to me by my conversations with Maman G, a middle-aged woman whose family of five children lived in a small room behind the church and who acted as caretakers. Despite her family having lived in Morocco for more than decade, she said to me in the middle of one of our conversations, “This will never be home, people here treat us badly” (interview with Maman G, 8 August 2012). One of her daughters, an eight-year-old who was born in Morocco, told me that “Congo is my home”, saying she wanted to return to Congo one day, even though she had never been there. I asked her why, and she said that Congo has more of everything, more “hot chocolate, toys and cars”. Congo, then, is her paradise lost; a place where she has never been but she has undoubtedly been told by her parents that it is the promised land, where there is everything she does not have in Morocco. This is similar to the Biblical image many diaspora Christians use, seeing the place they move to as a place of “exile” (Wan 2014).

As much as the community is affected by wider global processes, it in turn has transformed itself into an actor responding to processes of migration and globalisation, principally through the social arm of EEAM, the CEI. In response to the arrival of irregular sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco alongside the “legal” migration of sub-Saharan African students, the CEI re-orientated its work towards responding to the needs of these irregular migrants. In contrast, it had previously supported several programs on palm tree conservation in the South of the country. With the tightening of border controls by the EU, irregular migrants on their way to Europe end up having more protracted stays in countries like Morocco, opening up a new space for religious actors to appear on the African migration route to respond to this movement (Bava 2011). In this sense, EEAM is one of those
transnational religious actors that has transformed itself, through the CEI, into a resource space for migrants in response to wider global processes of African migration that affect its own community.

Challenges of being a transnational religious community

The transformations undergone by EEAM after independence and the arrival of sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco have changed the church and its very identity. This brings particular challenges, as highlighted by the current President of EEAM:

It’s the reality of our church also, that we are not in agreement about anything. But we do church anyway. That’s what’s surprising. We are never agreement on anything – holy communion, baptism, the role of pastors, the place of prayer, of intelligence. Lots of people are on the Pentecostal side, others find it too noisy. No one is in agreement, and yet we manage to make a church (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

This disagreement is expressed by some Europeans, who feel that they have become the minority within the church. EEAM had been constructed during the protectorate period by Reformed French Protestants and had a mainly European congregation; now it is dominated by sub-Saharan African migrants who bring with them theological differences and different ways of worship. The example of one European member of the congregation illustrates the split within the church along the lines of worship. AM is of Dutch-French nationality, married to a Moroccan, and her father was a pastor, including being a pastor at EEAM from 1985 to 1988. In her interviews with me, AM reproached the church for no longer being the space for people “like her” to worship in the ways they are used to. For her, this is largely along the lines of a Reformed Church, including the singing of traditional hymns, following a traditional liturgy and spaces for silence. Instead, she finds that the way the services are now conducted is “noisy”, full of “American Christian rock songs badly translated into French” and she grieves that the Church has become hijacked by the youth group’s choir. This disagreement is not only over the way service is run, but also reflects theological differences; for example, AM objects to the sermons by the pastors in the church, which she finds “light” and “too simplistic” (interview with AM, conducted over several dates: 5 and 10 August; 27 September 2012).

In my interviews with AM, she argued that there is a lack of leadership within the church to make any changes against the Pentecostal “majority”, and in particular accused the local pastor of never making a decision about making changes to the service, for fear of being
unpopular amongst the congregation. She also accused the President of not wanting to take the lead on creating a space for the “minority” of Reformed Protestants. In my interviews with a couple of other Europeans, they similarly voiced their disenchantment with the church as it is now and spoke about how they no longer attend church service on Sundays (interviews with ML, 3 July 2012, and TF, 12 Nov 2012). I interviewed the President, which included discussing some of the challenges for the church. The President had a different interpretation from AM on the situation, saying that her perspective is unique: “she is very alone; she is very alone in what she thinks”. He analysed the situation of this particular congregation member in terms of her personal history in Morocco:

I see that there are several Europeans who cry over the past, I know them well. In fact, they are people who have the same profile – they are married to Moroccans, have children who are Moroccan, meaning Muslims, and for whom the church can give them the illusion that their life in Morocco is all fine. They arrive at an age where they are retired, so they no longer have the social recognition they once had when they had a professional life. They are really at this key age: the children have left, so they no longer even have the social recognition of having children at home, and they find themselves alone, with their Moroccan, Muslim partner. And they say to themselves, they can’t go back to France, because it’s no longer my home, but here is not my home, so I will look for the church because the church is home, but the church is also no longer my home! So where is my home? And these people are in a state of terrible suffering because they no longer have a home. Totally uprooted. And they reproach the church for not being the home that it was when they were children. [AM’s] father was pastor at Rabat … it was her childhood. Her childhood has been lost. We cannot tell the Africans to stay at home so that [AM] can have the church of her childhood (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

Furthermore, he argued that the situation is also not satisfying for the sub-Saharan Africans, who perhaps feel that the services are not Pentecostal enough. He pointed out that everyone has to make a compromise, except that the Europeans feel they have to make a bigger compromise because it used to be “their” place. In addition, he points out that the Europeans should make the first step in compromising, because “they are more rich, the stronger should make the first step”. According to him, there is “no going back” and the transformations in EEAM are a reflection of what is happening around the world, in terms of migration and also of religion:
The “resurrection” will come from Africa, no longer from Europe. So I say to myself, stay with the essential. Maybe we have to cede on this part, and come back to the essential … The gospels are the essential, are the gospels at stake? Do we betray the gospels in praying loudly, in singing loudly? I don’t think so (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

In the annual Synod meeting in November 2012, where the church’s representative governing body gathered to meet, the President did, however, recognise that certain congregation members, namely the *anciens* – the term used for older Europeans who were part of the church before the arrival of sub-Saharan Africans – feel that their church has changed and that they no longer belong to it. At the Synod, he stated that “the church is a place of suffering for certain of our brothers and sisters”, and encouraged people to “[s]eek out to hold the hands of the *anciens*”. Indeed, during that particular Synod, which assembled representatives from all the EEAM churches across Morocco, participants broke off into smaller working groups to talk about the issues they felt EEAM was facing. During feedback to the larger group, many highlighted the cultural, generational and theological conflicts in their congregations and the challenges in managing them, particularly theological differences and the different preferences on how to run church services.

Many recognised that this internal discord in their congregations was a result of being a “post-denominational” church; that is, welcoming of all Protestant denominations, largely due to necessity – it is the only official Protestant church accepted by the Moroccan State. EEAM’s Declaration of Faith, with its emphasis on being a “recreated family”, is a strategy aimed at bringing the congregation closer together and bridging the gap between differences. It uses a particular sanctified discourse to address some of these challenges, and it is to this Declaration of Faith that my thesis now turns, examining it as an example of official “policy” that attempts to respond to the challenges of being a transnational religious community.

**EEAM’s Declaration of Faith as a response to challenges**

This section examines EEAM’s Declaration of Faith (*Notre déclaration de foi* 2014) as a policy document that aims to respond to the challenges EEAM faces as a transnational religious community. This document was chosen for analysis because it is, in the words of the current President of EEAM and the CEI, a “founding text” created out of and in response to a recent crisis in the organisation’s history and the mark of a new beginning for the church. As such, it is a useful text for understanding the strategies and processes the
organisation uses in response to challenges. This section first discusses the context of the creation of the Declaration of Faith, before analysing the document and its use of “master metaphors” (Mosse 2005). Lastly, it examines how this type of policy response is effective in uniting a diverse constituency in EEAM.

Context: creation of the Declaration of Faith

EEAM’s Declaration of Faith was created in particular circumstances, in the aftermath of and in response to an external crisis that occurred between the Moroccan State and some European and American Christians. In 2010, there were mass expulsions of European and American Christians from Morocco due to a dispute about an orphanage in Morocco, run predominantly by American Evangelicals who, amongst other things, were accused of trying to convert the children in the orphanage (Westerhoff 2010). This is further discussed in Chapter 5. The crisis at the orphanage set off a series of expulsions, including of the American pastor who was in charge of the CEI. This is how the current President remembers the incident and how it affected the church:

And when I arrived, it’s been nearly three years now, it was at a moment totally particular. I came during the crisis due to the expulsions. In 2010 there was a wave of expulsions, 150 people, in the context of our church, the pastor of CEI was expelled. There was a Korean who was expelled, two European families in Oujda … I came at the end of the expulsion in a situation when the church was terrified, whose turn was it next, that we could all be expelled the next day. Petrified by fear, and the CEI no longer existed. There was nothing left, because even the pastor left with the cash box, he left with the money. There was nothing left. And he told our funding partner, the CEI is dead, I’ve been expelled, don’t send any more money (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

With the CEI operations at a complete halt and all churches in a state of crisis, EEAM began to ask itself fundamental questions about its identity and purpose that had become urgent. It was in this period of reflection that EEAM drew up its Declaration of Faith, as the President recounts:

When I was at the Synod, I asked the question: for you what are the most important subjects we need to work on for the church to survive? The director of the CEI was expelled, there was no money, there was nothing left, no team, no work, but the migrants were still there. The first subject that came up, we did five subjects for the five upcoming years, the first that came
up was, “what is our identity? Who are we? And in the name of what are we acting?” So we worked for a whole year, all the congregations in all the cities, all the youth groups, we all wrote together this Declaration of Faith. Here is our identity, and everyone thought we were destroyed, because we are so different – Europeans, Africans, rich, poor, Pentecostals, Reformed. We wrote a text saying, here is our history and here is our identity. And in the name of that, that we talk about the CEI. The CEI is a part of this Statement of Faith, here is why we act in this way. It’s a founding text. And everyone recognises it, the old Europeans and the young Africans (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

This “founding text” was written in response to an external crisis, the state expulsions of European Christians, but also more broadly in response to internal challenges the church community was facing: those of being a transnational religious community of cultural and theological diversity. In the next section, I analyse the text as a form of policy document that attempts to address the challenges facing this particular community. I echo Mosse’s assertion that one of the policy document’s primary functions is to maintain, mobilise and legitimate political support so that, as the President states above, “everyone recognises it”, rather than to orientate practice (Mosse 2004, p. 648).

In his book Cultivating development, Mosse (2005) adopts a broad definition of “policy” that encompasses global policy as well as local strategies, models and designs. Although he is speaking within the context of development, I argue that EEAM’s Declaration of Faith can also be seen as a “policy” document in the broadest sense; that is, it is at once a statement, strategy and approach for the organisation. Its aim is to increase the sense of unity within the congregation and to develop a common sense of purpose. Mosse (2004), in discussing policy in development, argues that “the ethnographic task is also to show how despite such fragmentation and dissent, actors in development are constantly engaged in creating order and unity through political acts of composition” (Mosse 2004, p. 647). Through its Declaration of Faith, EEAM attempts to provide a cohesive framework of its history, its present and future orientations through the “master metaphor” (Mosse 2005, p. 9) of the church community as a “recreated family”. Through this, it is able to enrol and enlist a very diverse group of people, ideas and cultures around a unifying concept.
The Declaration of Faith starts by positing an institutional story of EEAM, situating the organisation within its particular social, theological and geo-political history by stating:

- that it was first established in 1907, “at the crossroads between North and South, East and West”;
- that as “heirs to the great movements of Protestantism, the Reformation of the 16th century and the Revival of the 18th century, we express the ancient Christian faith confessed in the Apostle’s Creed …”;  
- that it is made up of members of a wide range of international network of churches, including the CEEFE (Communauté d’Églises protestantes francophones, Community of Francophone Protestant Churches), CEVA (Communauté d’Églises en Mission, Community of Churches on Mission), CMER (Communion Mondiale d’Églises Réformées, World Communion of Reformed Churches) and CETA (Conférence des Églises de Toute l’Afrique, Church Conference of all of Africa); and
- that it is a “visible piece of the universal Church whose boundaries cannot be delineated”.

The first part of the Declaration refers to its construction and theological lineage, while anchoring its current orientation as part of a transnational community of churches and pointing towards the “universal church” with no boundaries, which can be traced back to the first church in Acts (Acts 1:8 and 2:5–11). At the same time as highlighting EEAM as a church across borders, it emphasises the unity of the congregation that has as its basis God the Father:

We are a family, recreated and reunited: this is the work of God the Father in us.

Though most of us are far from our homelands, God brings us together as one body. This is what establishes us. This is what makes us strong.

We are no longer aliens or sojourners; we are part of the family of God.

A family that is “recreated and reunited”: the image is one of a mixed family, people with different origins yet united and finding a sense of belonging in this family of God – “[w]e are no longer aliens or sojourners”. When I asked the President about what was meant by the term “recreated”, he responded:
Because we say, at bottom, the Church is a family that God has created, it’s not something that we have produced ourselves. And finally, if we are here today, it’s because God has wanted it. To make us a family. A family recreated and reunited – the work of the Father for us … So we use the word “recreated”, which means that we all come from elsewhere and have become a family. And this word is a word that is theologically very important (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

The Declaration of Faith therefore describes a family that has been brought together by the will of God, and the diversity of this family as something ordained by God; something that constitutes a strength rather than a weakness, and indeed is “what makes us strong”. Furthermore, towards the end of the Declaration of Faith, there is a reference to the necessity of the church to engage in service:

The Resurrected Christ then raises us to action:
In solidarity with those in need, we seek to offer hospitality and aid to those who suffer. We rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep, and seek to live in peace with all.

The Son sends us forth in service of love: this is what we believe.

This paragraph explains the purpose of the CEI, the main way that EEAM responds to the Resurrected Christ’s call to action, and the way members can practise the Christian values of solidarity, hospitality and charity (1 Corinthians 12:12–30; Ephesians 2:19; Romans 12:13–18). It is from this foundation of service, and in particular “in service of love”, that the CEI acts.

EEAM’s Declaration of Faith as a whole is a document that positions the church as being at the crossroads of boundaries, transcending borders yet at the same time rooted in a religious identity that gives all its members a sense of belonging. In my interview with the President, he elaborated on the religious identity of EEAM:

What is the religious identity of our church? We are plural, we don’t have a [single] religious identity, or theology or spirituality, nationality or ecclesiality. We believe without belonging [here] … this is our reality, and we don’t have a choice (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).
This not only highlights the plurality of the congregation and its identity, it also underlines the importance of the church in giving a sense of “belonging” to many who do not feel that they belong in Morocco. Instead, they belong to this “family of God”. Although, as previously mentioned, for some Europeans in the congregation their sense of belonging has been supplanted by the arrival of migrants and the transformations that has entailed for the church community, it only further highlights how much the church is a source for belonging, how congregation members look towards it for this and how disappointed they are when they feel they no longer have it. It also highlights the necessity of their situation, that it is in response to challenges they find themselves within a transnational religious community – as the President says, “[w]e don’t have a choice”.

This sense of belonging in plurality, of being in a family of diversity and difference, aims at unifying a wide range of “stakeholders” within the congregation; that is, those from different cultures, theological orientations and beliefs. Mosse (2005) argues:

> The differentiation of practical interests around “unifying” development policies or project designs is a consequence of successful enrolment, and a condition of stability and success. This is possible because of the productive ambiguity that characterises development policy’s “master metaphors” (Mosse 2005, p. 9).

In this case, despite potential different meanings and understandings of “God” and how to worship him, the master metaphor of a “recreated family” brought together by God aims to bring a sense of unity and common ground to believers amidst the differences. Its generality and inclusiveness – its “productive ambiguity” – can potentially enrol anyone who joins the congregation (as perhaps is evidenced by the vast range of activities in the church in Rabat, leading one of the anciens to criticise the seemingly “lack of focus” in the congregation). This is similar to Fountain’s (2011) concept of “theological disarticulation”, which he explored in his research on the FBO Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), where exactly this kind of general and vague theological concept was being used, and was:

> … symptomatic of wider strategies to use ambiguity, opacity and vagueness to enroll a theological diverse constituency. This lack of specificity in theological guidance ensures that ambiguity and diversity in MCC’s field programmes is inevitable (Fountain 2011, p. 127).

Here, Fountain is making a link between the use of theological vagueness to enrol a wide constituency and the impact this had on MCC’s field programs (which include relief, community and development work) in terms of a corresponding ambiguity and diversity.
This thesis argues that a similar link can be drawn between EEAM, its unifying motif of a “recreated family”, the “productive ambiguity” in its Declaration of Faith (at once general, vague and all-encompassing), and consequently the impact it has on CEI’s identity, objectives and operations. The thesis will demonstrate in further chapters how ambiguity marks the CEI, and in particular the position of the CEI in relationship to EEAM (is it a church organisation? Is it an NGO?), expressing itself in the tension between evangelism and humanitarian work. This has an impact on many organisational aspects of the CEI, from hiring to training and issues of professionalisation.

This thesis contends that the conflict within EEAM is largely a result of the necessary position it finds itself in as a transnational religious community welcoming people who come from “everywhere” and who face not only internal challenges but also external pressures. In response to this necessity, EEAM has developed a policy document that is productively ambiguous, enabling the congregation to feel a sense of unity and common purpose amidst plurality and differences. Furthermore, this thesis agrees with Fountain (2011), who talks of a “generative ambiguity” in the pressures an organisation faces (p. 257), arguing that “conflict should not be seen solely as a dissipating force, but rather can also be generative, inspiring senses of ownership and belonging” (Fountain 2011, p. 252). The conflict, tensions and debate within EEAM and the CEI reflect an important sense of, and need for, ownership and belonging; they demonstrate how much its congregation members are emotionally, mentally and physically invested in the church. The fact that the CEI has continued despite being shut down for nine months after the mass expulsions, despite the daily struggles of operating in Morocco and despite being a place of much conflict and disagreement shows to a certain extent the generative force the organisation and the people involved in it have.

Emergence of the CEI within the context of sub-Saharan African irregular migration

This section focuses on the emergence and growth of the CEI in its current form. It identifies three main periods of development within the recent history of the CEI, since the beginning of its focus on working with sub-Saharan African irregular migrants. The history is constructed around the “leaders” or main figures of each period. This is an acknowledgement of the impact and influence a leader has on an organisation, but also as a useful framework for arranging the organisational events in chronological order.

This section is constructed through interviews with different actors in the CEI. It is not meant to be a detailed documentation of CEI history, but rather gives a selected overview of the three main periods to illustrate the way the CEI has organically evolved in response to
external situations and internal dynamics, moving from a pastor-led organisation to a medium-sized organisation. I argue that the main way the CEI has managed its development has been through improvising and inventing. This section is important to understanding the historical and social context of the CEI, and aids in understanding some of the challenges the organisation faces (explored in later chapters).


Jean-Luc Blanc was the President of EEAM (and consequently President of the CEI) for nine years, from 2001 to 2009. From his office in the 14th arrondissement in Paris, where he now lives and works for Défap, the Protestant missionary service for Protestant churches in France, Blanc told me about the beginnings of the CEI and how it was set up to work with sub-Saharan African migrants (interview with Jean-Luc Blanc, 19 November 2012).

Blanc arrived in Morocco in 2001 to take up his role as President of EEAM. Even before he arrived, La Cimade, a nation-wide NGO that works with migrants and asylum seekers in France and in partnership with other organisations in the global South, contacted him about the urgent migrant situation in Morocco. A year later, La Cimade organised a meeting with EEAM and different Moroccan and foreign actors in the migration field to create a “migration platform”; a network of groups and individuals who were working in migration and wanted to address the migration crisis that was occurring in Morocco. This network included organisations such as MSF, Caritas and local Moroccan human rights organisations, as well academic researchers and politicians. The objective of the platform was to provide a way for various actors to work collaboratively on migration issues in Morocco. This platform quickly disintegrated when, according to Blanc, political groups and academics “hijacked” the group, more interested in their own political agendas than in how they could help migrants in a practical way.

Realising that the platform was not going to progress very far because different actors had different agendas and energy levels, in 2003 EEAM decided to re-launch the CEI to re-orientate its work specifically towards migrants, as a way in which the church could take the initiative without having to rely on other organisations. In this newly revised form the CEI began work giving direct aid: food, clothing, medical aid and training. This would later form the basis of the current structure of the CEI and its three main poles of activity, as discussed in Chapter 1.
Financing the CEI

To finance these new activities, the CEI was able to attract funding from the American organisation the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) through an American pastor in Morocco, Karen Smith, who later became a pastor of EEAM. This was later supplemented with funding by CEVAA and several German organisations which Blanc, as President at the time, had connections with, as well as contributions from congregations in the United States and Germany that wanted to support CEI’s work. Gradually, the CEI built up a network of donors and financed its work completely without public funds, a dynamic which it did not want to enter into for fear of some of the constraints involved in government funding.

As already mentioned, the American pastor Karen Smith was a key figure in the early years of the new CEI, especially in relation to funding. I met Smith several times during my time in Morocco, mainly in Rabat and Casablanca where CEI meetings were usually held, and also went to visit her in her home in the mountainous city of Ifrane for an interview (interview with Karen Smith, 17 October 2012). She related how she first got involved with the CEI. Her story illustrates a recurring theme in the history of the CEI, of chance meetings and interpersonal relationships built over a feeling of mutual connection:

[AM] and Jean-Luc came to Ifrane for a conference on terrorism and East/West dynamics at Al Khawayn University, they found out about it through the Interfaith group [Groupe de Recherché Islamic–Chrétienne, or GRIC]. I was already chaplain at the university, I came here with my husband in 1996 with the hopes that they would take me on as chaplain, and they did. Because I knew they were looking for someone. The website said they wanted to be a place of dialogue and encounter between Muslims, Christians and Jews, and that was what I deeply felt called to. I worked with refugees in the United States for nine years before I came here, and had Muslim clients and co-workers … I had lived in sub-Saharan Africa but never thought I would be in North Africa, but out of the experience of the Bosnian refugees in particular and seeing how much they had suffered at the hands of Christians … I mean I had a Bosnian friend who had a cross carved in his chest, and it was in that moment when he showed me that, this was in the context of when we were having a discussion about Interfaith relations, I mean I was crying, he was crying, my other friend there was crying. We were all in pain about the way Christians and Muslims had been set against each other, and how everything had been politicised.
And I had a desire to be a part of something, an alternative way of relating … In June 2002, I met Jean-Luc and [AM] and all three of us clicked. I was amazed to discover, I mean my mentors here were Catholic, I relied on the Franciscans a lot and was involved with the little sisters down the road. I really found my soul brothers and sisters in this area from the Catholic community. So it was to me a gift, to discover Protestants who weren’t fundamentalists, it was really a whole different way of being Protestant. There is just so much of that whole missionary element in the mix; I had walked away from that in the United States, didn’t want to get messed up in that here, so to discover them, to discover what they were doing was just a great grace and great blessing. So when Jean-Luc said, look, would you consider helping us out, and I said yeah, I’d love to get to know you and work with you (interview with Karen Smith, pastor, 17 October 2012).

Smith was officially named pastor of EEAM in 2004 and quickly became involved with various committees and commissions, but in particular with the migrant issue – she had previously worked on refugee settlement in the United States and was passionate about the issue. She recounted the period of the winter of 1999–2000 when the number of migrants from Nigeria and Liberia going to the English-speaking churches “exploded”; congregations were doubling in size. EEAM knew that this was an issue that it had to address somehow, “… [AM] and Jean-Luc really had a vision, that this is not a problem in passing. This is not transit. This represents a reality that Morocco, and churches in Morocco, will have to face in the next 50 years” (interview with Karen Smith, 17 October 2012). This was the beginning of the CEI’s re-orientation towards irregular migrants in Morocco by key actors within the CEI under the leadership of Jean-Luc Blanc.


During this period there was a development of the CEI towards its new orientation; its foundations were built on, people were hired and much outreach work was done. The couple mainly responsible during this period was David and Julie Brown, with Pastor David Brown still spoken of warmly today. Many talked of this as the “golden period” of the CEI. Again, how the Browns came to be recruited to the CEI depended on the relationships, resourcefulness and networks of individual actors.

Once the decision had been made for the CEI to work with migrants, Karen Smith approached the CBF to seek out funding to finance a full-time position for the CEI. She already had someone in mind for this position: Pastor David Brown and his wife Julie were
already in Ifrane, teaching English at the same university as Karen Smith. He had been as a trained music minister and had previously worked in Burkina Faso training people to become music ministers in Protestant ministry. When the famine hit Burkina Faso, David and Julie Brown ended up being involved in humanitarian work, eventually becoming managers for the funds of the United Nations famine relief. After returning to the United States to teach, Karen Smith – who had met them during their time in Burkina Faso – recruited them to teach English at Al Akhawhan University in Ifrane, Morocco. Once funding came from CBF for a full-time position at the CEI, Smith again recruited them for this position and they moved to Casablanca to work for the CEI.

David and Julie Brown would go on to meet and recruit a young Malian student in Morocco, Diachari Poudigo, who would later become the National Coordinator of the CEI. He describes his initial involvement with the CEI through meeting David Brown:

I collected some clothes that I distributed to migrants and it was in this context in 2004 that the church noticed that I was interested in these people. There was a pastor who looked after the CEI called David Brown who proposed that I work with him. So I started at the end of 2004 to work with CEI as a volunteer. Previously, I was already solicited by the Embassy during the big expulsions of October 2005 to register migrants of my nationality. As I knew my culture I could identify who was from where. And it was at the end of 2009 that they asked me to continue work with the CEI as an employee (interview with Diachari Poudigo, National Coordinator of CEI, 8 December 2012).

The CEI at the time was also active in engaging with other local groups, such as Caritas, that were working with migrants, and with the numerous informal “home churches” that exist in the migrant neighbourhoods. These home churches are services run by self-proclaimed pastors (that is, not affiliated to any official church) in their homes or in rented rooms. These services are usually “illegal” because they are not sanctioned by the state, and their “churches” are not recognised by the state as having legal status like EEAM. Talking to a lot of migrants and also the people within EEAM made me aware that several of these unofficial home churches existed in Rabat, though their exact numbers were unknown. Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango of EEAM explained the four main reasons why home churches exist. Firstly, some are breakaway groups that have theological differences with the official Protestant church. Most of these are charismatic or Pentecostal, and have different ways of conducting service and prayers. Secondly, some of the migrants initially felt that they were discriminated against because they were “illegal” in the main church, that they were looked
down upon by the “legal” students. Thirdly, there may be economic reasons for people going
to home churches. EEAM has churches in the centre of each city; in Rabat, for example, the
church is situated opposite the main train station in the centre of town. Many cannot afford to
pay for transport to come into the city, whereas home churches are usually in migrant areas,
and so are in people’s local neighbourhoods. Lastly, migrants may hesitate to travel into the
city because of their irregular situation, making it harder for them to circulate freely.

David Brown actively engaged with these home churches and the self-proclaimed pastors
involved in them. Indeed, that is how he came to meet Juml, who he later recruited to
become a fieldworker for the CEI in Rabat. At the time, Juml was a self-proclaimed migrant
pastor who conducted services out of his own home. He said they prayed together but also
assisted other migrants. David Brown made contact with Juml, telling him to contact the CEI
if they needed help:

And at the time, the UNHCR did not exist, nor was there *Terre des Hommes.*
There were practically no organisations. And with Caritas, they only had a
small room to see people, it was not the Caritas of today. When we had
problems we contacted Pastor David Brown; myself I represented my church
and accompanied certain people to the CEI.

Firstly what the pastor did was support us with a financial contribution.
Financially, but he also orientated us towards the hospitals. At the time it
was complicated, there had to be the pastor to put in a word for you before
they would look after you. And I think outside of that, he also financed
micro-projects. It was David Brown [who did all this,] who worked at the
CEI, he acted in the name of the CEI (interview with Juml, CEI fieldworker,
10 September 2012).

David Brown also organised Biblical studies and activities at the church and invited
representatives of the home churches to participate, developing relationships with these self-
proclaimed pastors as well as their migrant congregations. Later on, Juml was recruited as a
fieldworker for the CEI in Rabat at Brown’s recommendation. David and Julie Brown left
Morocco in 2009 due to health reasons and settled in France. They were replaced by an
American, Pastor Mike Hutchison. Pastor Mike Hutchison’s time at the CEI was short-lived,
as is discussed in the next section.
Samuel Amedro era (2010–present): crisis, reconstruction period

The year of 2010 proved to be a disastrous one for European/American Christian relations with the Moroccan State. As previously mentioned, a wave of expulsions were targeted at foreign Christians accused of proselytising, and this included the new American pastor in charge of the CEI at the time, Mike Hutchison. After his expulsion, the CEI was closed down for nine months. The pastor had left with a cheque that was supposed to be used for the CEI, donors had withdrawn funding due to the crisis and it did not seem as if the CEI could reopen. In the words of one of the fieldworkers, this was how the CEI slowly started to build up again:

Migrants were coming to the church, to the pastor for help, the pastor said we need to start it [the CEI] again because I cannot help them all. We abandoned them for nine months. To give them something is better than giving nothing at all. We restarted again with the lobbying of Karen to the Kentucky congregation. Then the German funders came back (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

This was also the year when new President Samuel Amedro took up his position, though he arrived after the expulsions. He was faced with the task of rebuilding the CEI because of the extreme need of the migrants, who he said were literally knocking at his church door. He had to pick up the pieces left by Pastor Mike Hutchison, who even before his expulsion had had a problematic time at the CEI. According to Samuel Amedro:

It was a bit complicated with Mike, because he had eliminated everything that David put in place, to make his own place. It is difficult to follow in the footsteps of someone as great as David. So he had fired everyone who had worked for David. So he was not loved, Mike. People were happy to see him expelled. He made some big mistakes; he went to Takadoum and gave money to migrants in front of Moroccans, he was implicated in the orphanage affair at Ain Leuh, it was a catastrophe. In the minds of everyone, David and Julie were the ones (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

A re-visioning and rebuilding exercise was initiated after the crisis that hit the church community as a whole. A discussion was started amongst the congregation about the identity and purpose of the CEI and EEAM. The results of this were, eventually, the Internal Rules
document for the CEI and the Declaration of Faith for EEAM. The dialogue included facing some of the challenges of the organisations, and the organisational structure of the CEI was also addressed, with the President adamant that it would no longer depend on “one man”:

The force and the weakness of David and Julie, they were extraordinary, but everything passed through them, it was them who decided this or that, so when they left, there was no longer anything … we said that the CEI was not going to depend on one man, that it was going to be a team, and that we will try to make the projects autonomous. If we break one of the heads, at least the others will continue to function. That’s why we have the different axes, and different people for each axe (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

This quote illustrates the move of the CEI away from a pastor-centred organisation to a more structured, medium-sized organisation. It was through the crisis that they realised more sustainable organisational structure was needed, and that having everything centralised on one person (the pastor) meant that if or when that person left, the organisation would fall apart. Therefore, a decision was made to have more structures in place. Since then, the CEI’s organisational structure as it is now has largely remained the same. Focused around the three main poles of activity, there is the Management Committee of EEAM, which is overall responsible for the CEI; a National Coordinator overseeing the local teams; and in 2012 a new role, Director of the CEI, was created to further support the management team.

Although the CEI has evolved since its period of being centralised around a pastor, there is also resistance by the President against moving too much towards a certain kind of professionalisation that he linked with getting bigger as an organisation:

The big projects that we do ask for a lot of time, energy, checking, lots of professionalism; I’m scared that we will forget the essential, our specificity, which is spiritual accompaniment (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

This quote demonstrates some of the tension within the organisation, between wanting to having a more sustainable organisational structure, and being at the same time fearful of losing the “essential” of the organisation, its spiritual focus. Therefore, this demonstrates a strategic choice: at the same time as moving away from being a pastor-led organisation, the CEI is kept firmly within the church. This choice for structuring the organisation is so that it can achieve outcomes which, according to President, are fundamentally different from an NGO; that is, that fulfil the CEI’s spiritual dimension:
In my eyes, the more the CEI is taken in by each local church, appropriated by them, invested in by them, and taking in all the dimensions – budget, material, spiritual – and that the pastors are involved, and the work is more decentralised, the more we will bring a spiritual dimension (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

As is explored later in this thesis, this is at the heart of the tension within the CEI regarding its identity; the tension between being a church and an organisation or, differently put, the tension between evangelism and humanitarianism. Its spiritual dimension and the negotiations around what is “sacred” and what is “secular” within the organisation are examined in later chapters as a contested aspect of the CEI’s identity and objectives, and I consider the consequences of this on an operational level and in the everyday practices of the organisation.

**Improvishments and inventions: response to necessity**

What is illustrated by this brief overview of recent CEI history is how the organisation has organically grown and adapted in response to external situations, and also to the impact and influence of individual personnel. The central dynamic or change in its structure is a movement from a pastor-led organisation to a medium-sized organisation. There are also the recurring themes of chance meetings that develop into relationships and networks, and the building of the organisation from this kind of interpersonal bricolage. This sense of haphazard piecing together of things as the organisation goes along was highlighted in an interview with Pastor Karen Smith:

> I have a word that I’ve adopted since we’ve been here, and that’s “muddle”. We tend to muddle through most of what we do. I feel very very strongly that we have to keep muddling. We can’t just stop. In Fes, for example, we are the only organisation doing anything with migrants, the only one. So if you stop, they’ve got nowhere to turn (interview with Karen Smith, pastor, 17 October 2012).

This “muddling” is an accurate description of the way the organisation has evolved and responded to situations, and is an important theme in the recent history of the CEI. I argue that it denotes an act of *improvisation*. Hilhorst, in her ethnography of NGOs, asks the question:
How do NGOs’ management and staff members arrive at a certain coherence in practice given the multiple binds and lifeworlds in which they operate? How do managers and staff deal with multiple realities? (Hilhorst 2003, p. 217).

She argues that it is largely by improvising and negotiating. Despite processes and structures in place giving order within an organisation and garnering a certain amount of predictability, “there is never order” (Hilhorst 2003, p. 218). Instead, organisational practices always constantly have to be negotiated in an improvised fashion by various actors:

It is by reshuffling and combining the different “pulls and pushes”, in other words, by improvising, that NGO actors attribute meaning to the organization and arrive at a certain coherence in their everyday practices … Actors continue to have different understandings of, and continue to negotiate, organizational properties (Hilhorst 2003, p. 218).

In the midst of ambiguity and uncertainty, the CEI “muddles through”, or rather, improvises. This is particularly the case when unprecedented things happen – the expulsions, for example, and the rebuilding that had to occur in a context where there was no precedent. To quote the President, “we are inventing as we go along …” This highlights also the necessity of invention, particularly in times of need or in a particular context – which I argue is the case for the CEI – where volatility and instability are part of the conditions the organisation works in. This improvising and inventing is done through relationships, networks and structures, and often in response to external factors of necessity. Chance meetings and connections are taken advantage of, networks and personal relationships are mobilised, lessons are learned and structures put in place after a crisis; all of this amounts to a certain kind of bricolage that has built up the organisation and helped it to evolve. Improvisation and invention, this thesis argues, have been the main ways through which the CEI has attempted to manage transitioning from a pastor-managed operation to a semi-middle sized operation. It is also clearly shown in the example of the CEI that effective improvising depends on the resources and networks that individual actors within an organisation are able to mobilise.

**Conclusion**

EEAM and the CEI have emerged out of a particular historical and political context. They form a transnational religious community at the crossroads of religion and migration, a community at the borders of the global South and North, that has been affected by wider contemporary processes such as post-colonialism and migration. A transnational religious community comes with particular challenges. In response to these, EEAM has created a
“founding text”, the Declaration of Faith, which seeks to find a common unity amidst the congregation’s diversity through mobilising a religious “master metaphor” of a recreated family in God.

Furthermore, in response to the phenomena of irregular sub-Saharan African migration since the 1990s, EEAM through the CEI has transformed into a group of actors on the African migration route, responding to the needs of migrants through direct aid. An overview of the three main periods of the CEI demonstrate that it has transitioned essentially from a pastor-led organisation to a medium-sized organisation, and the main way the CEI has managed this development in often uncertain circumstances has been through improvising and inventing, building up the organisation through an organic bricolage of relationships and networks.

In this chapter I have argued that a link can be drawn between EEAM, its unifying motif of a “recreated family”, the “productive ambiguity” in its Declaration of Faith (at once general, vague and all-encompassing), and consequently the impact it has on CEI’s identity, objectives and operations. Some of the challenges it faces as a transnational religious community have also had an impact on the CEI, as is examined in subsequent chapters. Ambiguity marks the CEI, and in particular the position of the CEI in relationship to EEAM, expressing itself in the tension between evangelism and humanitarian work. This has an impact on many organisational aspects of the CEI, from hiring to training and issues of professionalisation.

In examining the history of EEAM and CEI, this thesis demonstrates that as an explicitly religious organisation in its particular context it faces specific challenges, and the ways it has responded to these challenges have become fundamental to the identity and workings of the organisation. Religion and religious organisations do not operate or evolve in a social vacuum. EEAM and the CEI have a history of necessity, and this chapter demonstrates that they can be dynamic and responsive to their context; indeed, that it has been a prerequisite for their survival in difficult circumstances. EEAM faces particular challenges as a transnational religious organisation, but rather than being static and unchanging, the history of EEAM and the CEI shows that religious organisations can, out of necessity, be dynamic, responsive, strategic and creative in response to such challenges.
CHAPTER 5. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

“If God is for us, who can attack us?” EEAM 2012 Synod

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the diaconal arm of the church, the CEI, and its relationship with two main external actors that have had a significant impact on its discourses and practices: the Moroccan State and the CEI’s donors. Within a discursive approach to religion, a discourse develops within a “dispositive”. A dispositive in this context is understood as the material, practical, social or normative context which serves as the “infrastructure” for the discourse (von Stuckrad 2013, p. 19). This may include new technologies and media, government laws and the funding of organisations. Therefore, as a minority religion in Morocco, the CEI’s relations with the authorities and its laws are vital in constructing the discourse of religion within the organisation. Similarly, sources of funding are an important structural factor affecting its discourse. An analysis of these two relationships is particularly revealing of how constructions of the sacred and secular are variously mobilised for different purposes, not only by the CEI but also by the external actors.

The first section of this chapter situates the CEI in terms of its relationship with the state, where it continually has to assert itself as a legitimate organisation against the backdrop of ambivalent laws and the ambiguity of the Christian Protestant presence in Morocco. This relationship is examined through two main issues: the expulsions of foreign Christians in 2010 and the question of “advocacy” or “political” work in the CEI. In examining these issues, it can be shown how “religion” is constructed and utilised in various ways for specific purposes, as well as illustrating how the CEI, like many other non-Muslim religious organisations, occupies a political space in Morocco that is inherently ambiguous.

The second section of this chapter focuses on the CEI’s relationship with its donors and its capacity to mobilise transnational religious networks of funding. Within this relationship, a particular sanctified discourse is utilised. I illustrate this through two examples of representation and supplication. Representation is important for translating and transmitting a meaningful conception of the organisation to the external world, particularly to donors and potential donors. Similarly, migrants can mobilise a Christian discourse in their relationship to the donors, which I analyse through what Fresia (2006) terms “supplication” and the use of Baumann’s (2004) “grammar of encompassment”, where differences of the Other are subsumed through universal sameness. The chapter argues that in both examples it is through
a shared framework of Christianity that the CEI is able to “translate” the migrant experience in Morocco to donors who live in vastly different worlds geographically (Germany and the United States) as well as culturally and economically.

This chapter contends that it is the CEI’s relationships with outside others that clearly reveal sanctification and secularisation processes used by various actors; and that the existence of an organisation such as the CEI acting in the public sphere can put into question many taken-for-granted binaries between religion and politics, and religion and the secular. An unsettling of these distinct categories has consequences for how the role of religion in humanitarian aid is understood: in actual practice the category of religion is far more blurred and dependent on context and on various actors’ purpose or aims in any given situation. In this way, it is in line with the discursive approach to religion, where processes, desires, interests, tactics and outcomes are studied in order to show how “religion” is at different times being defended, contested and negotiated (Taira 2013, p. 490). This is done for very concrete material, social and political purposes, because “religion works as a tactical tool for making things happen” (Taira 2013, p. 490). This chapter examines how constructions of religion and of the sacred and secular are mobilised to “make things happen” for specific purposes.

**Religion and the secular in the Moroccan State: a brief discussion**

This section gives a brief outline of the dynamics between religion and secularisation in Moroccan politics. It provides an understanding of the wider context in which the CEI works, particularly in its relations to the state as a Christian organisation. It also demonstrates that the Moroccan State itself is both ambivalent and strategic in regards to religion and the secular, and that these categories are also mobilised by state actors for different purposes, interests and motivations. In fact, the line between Islam and politics changes according to the circumstances and relationships of power between different actors (Rachik 2012, p. 18).

Although the law in Morocco cannot contradict *shari’a* (Islamic law) – indeed, a lot of family law is based on it – unlike in some other Islamic countries, Islam in Morocco is not backed up primarily by a reference to *shari’a or fiqh* (jurisprudence). Instead, as a religion of the state it is above all a national reference (Dupret et al. 2012) and centres on the person of the king, who has “two bodies”: as the country’s Head of State and as the “Commander of believers” (Dupret et al. 2012, p. 45). This is a singular feature of Morocco in the Muslim world; no other Islamic country except for Saudi Arabia gives such a central function, at
once both political and religious, to a sovereign (Seniguer 2011, p. 51). As the Commander of believers, the king acts by way of royal decree (*dahir*) and presides over the Superior Council of Ulemas, consisting of Ulemas he has appointed. Ulemas are Muslim legal scholars educated in Islamic jurisprudence and considered arbiters of Islamic law, and the Superior Council of Ulemas is considered the highest religious government institution in Morocco. Although the Council is only able to pronounce an opinion on religious issues, in reality the boundaries of its domain – that is, of the “religious” – are unfixed. There is no list of what comes under the power and regulation of the Council or of the Commander of believers, nor a predetermined definition of these powers. In practice, “[a]ll that is not explicitly exterior to religion is susceptible to being tied to it by the will of the Commander of the Believers” (Dupret et al. 2012, p. 45).

A brief outline of the history of royal power in Morocco demonstrates some of the ambivalence between political legitimation and royal sacrality, and how they follow a specific trajectory. It demonstrates how relations between the monarchy and Islam, and Islam and society, are always being evoked, but for different ends (Seniguer 2011, p. 52). Rachik (2012) traces a pattern of “sacralisation-desacralisation-resacralisation” in the history of the relationship between politics, the monarchy and Islam in Morocco. He argues that there was a “profusion of the sacred” in precolonial Morocco, where the sacred and religious were used as justifications for power, assuring security and peace, and in fighting against disorder (Rachik 2012, p. 4). However, with the advent of the French Protectorate, the sultan was stripped of his political attributes by the colonial power. Furthermore, the rising Moroccan nationalist movement against the colonisers adopted a disenchanted and secularised nationalist discourse, thus “[i]n reenchanting politics, nationalist ideology disenchanted the royalty” (Rachik 2012, p. 4). It was only after the colonial period and under the reign of Hassan II (1961–1999) that there was a resacralisation of the king’s political legitimacy through an ideological reinvestment in the sacred function of the king, in order to justify the monarchical power (Rachik 2012). This reaffirmation of the centrality of the king was particularly needed due to continuing secularist demands by the nationalist movement, and an Islamist contestation that arose in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution in 1979 (Rachik 2012, p. 4).

During the reign of Mohamed VI (1999–present), the sacralisation of royalty changed again to a register of less frequent religious legitimisation of the king. Instead references to religion were reserved for exceptional situations and contained to the religious sphere. Consequently, there is a “heavy tendency” towards a secularisation of monarchical power under Mohamed
VI (Rachik 2012, p. 4). However, even this secularisation and the role of the king is ambiguous rather than definitive and clear; there are diverse, vague and sometimes contradictory usages of religion depending on the context, the stakes and the people involved (Rachik 2012, p. 18).

This is linked to what Seniguer describes as “a political secularising power without being secular” (Seniguer 2011, p. 54) where there is a unanimous reference to Islam yet also a paradoxical secularisation occurring. This can be seen in the example of the ruling party in Morocco, the Justice and Development Party (PJD). The PJD is an Islamist political party which won a majority of seats in the 2011 parliamentary election, with the head of the PJD, Abdelilah Benkirane, becoming the Prime Minister of Morocco. Despite being an Islamist party, the PJD has secularised its discourse: Islam is referenced only as a (national) identity or socio-cultural phenomena, with the President of the National Council of the PJD declaring that “our discussion is political and not at all religious” (Seniguer 2011, p. 56). The party has adopted secularised slogans and political language borne not out of a change in ideology but rather out of political necessity, obeying a field that has its own logic and constraints:

> Political actors must therefore learn a language, a specific know-how, and adapt to mechanisms that they did not invent. The PJD experienced the reality of this implacable logic, notably during the deliberations which preceded the adoption of a new family code in 2004. The party had to cede on certain points, not for religious reasons but for profane ones (Seniguer 2011, p. 57).

The political field in Morocco is shaped by the transnational and globalised processes of secularisation, which cross even the borders of so-called Islamic states (Seniguer 2011, p. 50). Islam has not disappeared from Moroccan politics and continues to play a central role; however, the nature of what is constructed as Islam (identity, culture, nationality) and the line between Islam and politics has changed due to the secularisation of Morocco (Seniguer 2011, p. 60). The new constitution adopted in 2011, for example, restricts Islam to a form of worship and not a source of legislation, where “[t]he legislator perceives religion in its secular dimension, meaning as a form of worship and not as an ensemble of rules governing political power” (Dharif 2006, p. 82). The new constitution therefore puts Islam at the service of and subject to the governance of the state. This shaping of a certain kind of Islam is what Mahmood (2006) suggests as being the central feature of the modern secular order, whereby there is not so much a separation of state and religion or a granting of
religious freedoms, but rather a making of certain kinds of religious subjectivities that are acceptable and subject to liberal political rule, even if this requires the use of violence to render them so (Mahmood 2006). Any manifestation of religion, then, that does not comply with a secular ethos is “made provisional, if not extinct” (Mahmood 2006, p. 328). An example of this is the Muslim World Outreach project, established by the White House National Security Council (NSC) in 2003 with as much as $1.3 billion allocated to it. Most of this money was funnelled to the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) for training and cultural programs in Muslim countries (Mahmood 2006, p. 331). This has included funding for the restoration of Muslim holy sites, antique Islamic manuscripts, the training of mosque leaders on development issues and a range of Islamic media including book translations, radio and TV (Kaplan 2005).

The significance of this project is its aim, which is “to foster what is now broadly called ‘moderate Islam’ as an antidote and prophylactic to fundamentalist interpretations of Islam” (Mahmood 2006, p. 331). Therefore, it has an overt theological agenda of reform, one that is against “literalist” interpretations of the Quran as the actual word of God, but rather considers it a literary text like any other created by humans. That is, the aim is supporting and cultivating a form of Islam that has no socio-political consequences or effect on the level of practices (Mahmood 2006). The other significance of this strategy’s goals is that, unusually for once, there is broad consensus amongst the political left and right that Islam does need to undergo reform, “even if brute US power has to underwrite some of the unsavory aspects of such a campaign” (Mahmood 2006, p. 332). In terms of Morocco, in its Report on international religious freedom – Morocco, the United States Department of State outlined the following funding for programs:

The US government sponsored programs focusing on religious tolerance and freedom using the United States as a model. During Ramadan, the embassy organised several events to promote religious dialogue and emphasise religious tolerance. Embassy-funded speakers promoted moderate Islam and interfaith dialogue (United States Department of State 2013).

As can be seen, a theological agenda of reform on the part of the United States also extends to Morocco. Furthermore, Morocco received a total of $248.4 million in foreign assistance from the United States government in 2013 (Morocco 2013). This included assistance and support for Morocco’s economic reforms for growth (increase in foreign direct investment, financing from various international banks including the World Bank). Of this, $23.8 million dollars was directed to USAID, for various projects related to democracy and governance,
economic development, education and social services, environment, peace and security, and program management (United States Agency of International Development, 2013).

The situation in Morocco reflects a wider trend of secularisation of politics in regional and international politics (Belal et al. 2012) underpinned by wider global forces such as neoliberal market economics, a modern secular order and the formation of an Islam that fully complies with this. The paradox of the Moroccan State’s position is that it defines itself by an Islamic religious belonging, yet remains fully committed to further secularisation; thereby making it a favoured interlocutor between the Muslim world and the West (Belal et al. 2012, p. 49).

EEAM and the CEI as Christian organisations must negotiate this context of ambivalence and paradox in the Moroccan State – its attachment to an Islamic national identity yet, at the same time, the wider economic and global demands for secularisation. It is within this context that the CEI must negotiate its own religious subjectivity and the actions it undertakes in the humanitarian field. In the next section I more directly examine the relations of the CEI with the state, and show how it negotiates the limitations and constraints as a church organisation within this context.

**Relations with the Moroccan State**

An examination of EEAM and the CEI’s relations with the Moroccan State is important to illustrate the context in which the CEI works as a specifically church-based organisation and the external limitations it endures. This study frames the relationship of the church to the Moroccan State as broadly a question of legitimacy; how the CEI as an official Christian organisation has to continually maintain its legitimacy against a backdrop of tolerance, ambiguity and the existence of various other unofficial Christian presences.

Firstly, I examine the ambiguity of the role of religion in Moroccan law and practice. Although EEAM has official status as a church, it is in a continual state of uncertainty and instability in the eyes of some members. This section provides a brief sketch of the nature of Moroccan law, particularly in relation to religion, and shows how, through Ferrié and Dupret’s (2011; 2012) work, it is largely marked by ambivalence. I then move on to examine a particular case study: the expulsions of foreign Christians in 2010, which including a pastor of the CEI.
Exploration of the issue of advocacy work in the CEI raises the question of whether it is doing “religious” work, “charity” work or “political” work, and the implications for this in its relation to the state. I argue for a broader recognition that moves beyond such limited classifications and instead underlines the fluidity of categories that depend on the context and strategies of different actors.

Change and conservatism

The nature of Moroccan law in relation to religious freedom is marked by change and conservatism, and it is within the tension between these opposites that the CEI must negotiate its existence in Morocco. The Preamble to the Moroccan Constitution expressly states that Morocco is “[a]n Islamic and fully sovereign state whose official language is Arabic” (Livingstone 2010, p. 7). However, a clear-cut understanding of Morocco as an “Islamic” state is misleading – instead, it must be understood within a particular context that is marked by ambivalence and contradiction. I illustrate this through the example of the expulsions of foreign Christians in 2010. In practice, the state’s construction of and relation to religion is itself ambiguous and dynamic.

After the “Arab Spring” in several neighbouring Arab countries, a broad alliance of groups in Morocco calling themselves the “20 February movement” (because their first demonstration was on 20 February 2011) took to the streets calling for social justice and an end to corruption and authoritarianism. In response, the king initiated a referendum for a new constitution on 1 July 2012. Rather than the Arab Spring being the catalyst for an impetus towards constitutional reform, Ferrié and Dupret (2011) argue that Morocco had already previously been in a dynamic of reform. As Souaiaia (2007) notes, already in the last years of the reign of Hassan II (the predecessor and father of the current king, Mohammed VI), Morocco gradually moved from authoritarian rule to a more managed democracy. The result of this was the steady liberalisation of political groups, religious as well as secular parties, and the increased presence of human rights and NGOs (Souaiaia 2007). Instead, the changes post-Arab Spring reflected the nature of political reform in Morocco, where there is “the particularity of being sufficient but always destined to preserve the order of things rather than change them” (Ferrié & Dupret 2012, p. 5). For example, in the new constitution, the political independence of the head of government was achieved for the first time. Crucially, though, the position of the king presiding over the Council of the Ministers was maintained, giving him considerable political influence (Ferrié & Dupret 2012, p. 5).
In terms of religious beliefs and freedom of worship, there is the same dynamic of both change and conservatism, as illustrated by the new constitution. An article on freedom of belief had been planned by the Consultative Commission of Revision of the Constitution, which included the freedom to choose one’s religion or to not have one. However, the article was ultimately eliminated (Ferrié & Dupret 2012, p. 5). Another article was introduced in the new constitution which included this freedom, though in a more absolute and at the same time vague manner, stipulating a “guaranteed freedom of thought, of opinion and expression in all their forms” (Ruchti 2011, p. 9). The vague and indirect manner in which freedom of religion is addressed in the new constitution reflects the ambiguous position which the state takes on conversion away from Islam. Dirèche (2011) argues that a Moroccan Islam is constructed by the religious and political authorities as above all the product of a nationalist history of the country and its people, and as being distant from influences of the West (Dirèche 2011, p. 26). This highlights how the defence and promotion of a national Islam can be read as an exercise in political legitimation, through reference to a history of independence and nationalism. Conversion therefore represents a real social threat, as it directly touches national identity and therefore the political body, including laws related to family such as inheritance, divorce and funeral rites (Dirèche 2011, p. 27).

This underlines the ambiguous stance towards freedom of belief as a defining feature of Moroccan politics in general, where “this ambivalence illustrates, one more time, the constant search for a balance between what is open to change and what is not” (Ferrié & Dupret 2012, p. 5). In religious matters, Moroccan law is predicated on the autonomy granted to private life in Moroccan society; in lieu of authorising permission or stating explicitly what people are allowed to do, there is instead a refrain from actively seeking to find out what people do in private (p. 6). Intrusions into the domestic domain are seen as breaching of “private” space which is forbidden in Islamic law, though this may consequently mean stricter control of what is allowable in “public” space (Asad et al. 2013, p. 37). An illustrative example of this distinction between private and public practice is the dé-jeuneurs (fast-breakers) affair in 2009. The dé-jeuneurs disregarded the fast during Ramadan by publicly eating in a forest near the city of Mohammedia and widely publicising this act. Although it was done in the spirit of freedom of conscience guaranteed by the Moroccan Constitution, they were arrested by the police and severely condemned by the religious and political authorities (Dirèche 2011, p. 28).

As demonstrated above, the state’s ambivalent relationship to freedom of religion enables political authorities to enshrine “freedom of thought, of opinion and expression” in the new
constitution and to ratify a number of international treaties⁴, yet at the same time to uphold a construction of Moroccan Islam based on the defence of a national integrity and identity, where in this context religious freedom – and specifically conversion away from Islam – is interpreted as a contestation of the social and political order. Despite the reaffirmation of the monarchical leadership and the king’s centrality as the “Commander of believers” in the new constitution, Ferrié & Dupret (2012) highlight how “the conservatism that is expressed here is not therefore of Islam, but that of a cultural context or of a sociopolitical order…” (p. 6).

That is, instead of attributing references to Islam and a certain social conservatism to “Islam” as an abstract religion, it must be understood within its cultural and political context and how it is applied, or in the Taira’s terms, how the state (or any other actor) may be “doing religion” (Taira 2013). This includes the material and social consequences as well as the political, tactical and ideological advantages for how religion is “done” in a certain way (Taira 2013, p. 490). It demonstrates how a monolithic or essentialised conception of Islam or religion misses the ambiguous and contradictory nature of how religion actually manifests in context and in practice, whether that be in law or in actual social practices.

How religion is “done” is examined in the next section, as I consider the expulsion of foreign Christians in 2010 – how laws, and not just religious ones, were mobilised to accomplish it. Foreign Christians were inhabiting not only a political space between change and conservatism, but also the inherently ambiguous space that is Moroccan law and its relationship to religion in actual practice.

Expulsions

In Morocco’s recent history, there have been numerous incidences of expulsions of foreign missionaries. Several missionaries were expelled in 2004 for distributing Christian materials in a public square in Marrakesh, while other missionaries were questioned and denied temporary residence permits as a result of their proselytising (‘Morocco: situation of Christians in Morocco’ 2005). In 2008, a Swiss national who worked for a disability NGO in Oujda was expelled with his family. In 2009, those that were expelled included four Spanish missionaries, a German missionary, two South Africans, two Swiss and a Guatemalan; and in February 2010 in a city south of Marrakesh, an American missionary was expelled (Dirèche 2011).

⁴ Morocco is a signatory to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18), the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 18) and the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.
This reached a critical point in March 2010, when the Moroccan government expelled at least 33 foreign Christian residents and declared an additional 81 people *persona non grata* for proselytising, effectively meaning that they had to leave the country (United States Department of State 2013). The crisis began with the Village of Hope affair, an orphanage in Ain Leuh in the Middle Atlas. Sixteen Christian educators who worked in the orphanage were deported, accused of trying to convert the children in their care (Dirèche 2011, p. 2). The people in charge of the orphanage argued that they had run it for 10 years with the agreement of the local authorities and in respect for Moroccan law, with every employee or visitor to the orphanage having to sign a form stating that they would not proselytise (Westerhoff 2010). In addition, at the school attached to the orphanage the children learned Arabic and studied the Quran as demanded by Moroccan law. “The children were not baptised. We told them stories from the Bible, but also secular stories and stories from the Koran”, the centre manager insisted. “The authorities know all that, there was no secret about it” (Westerhoff 2010).

In an interview with a newspaper, the President of EEAM at the time, Jean-Luc Blanc, highlighted the fact that the expelled missionaries were known to the local authorities and had the official authorisation demanded, but this was not enough:

> These people, like numerous foreigners, forget that they are in Morocco! And they function as if they are in Europe. Certainly, they received an authorisation on the part of a local authority. They have not hidden from the Caid (local magistrate) what they were doing, but it’s not because a local authority lets them act, that it will be the same with the national authorities. In Morocco, the Ministry of Interior can very well disavow the local Caid (Ohlott 2010).

Blanc added that thinking an agreement from a local magistrate was sufficient showed very bad knowledge of Morocco, and that this was a common mistake by foreigners. This lack of knowledge of the nuances in Moroccan administration and law would leave the orphanage open to accusations of violating the *kafala* (adoption) laws and of proselytisation. In his statement justifying the expulsions, Communications Minister Khalid Naciri said that the expelled missionaries “took advantage of the poverty of some families and targeted their young children, whom they took in hand, in violation of the *kafala* (adoption) procedures for abandoned or orphaned children” (‘Morocco defends expulsion of Christian workers’ 2010).
He said Morocco had “always been and remains a land of openness and tolerance … All churches have their place on the street in Morocco and Christians practise their religion freely”, going on to highlight that these expulsions had nothing to do with a campaign against Christianity, but rather with breaking the law in Morocco (‘Morocco defends expulsion of Christian workers’ 2010). Here, the Minister is denying a persecution of Christianity as a religion, saying rather that these particular Christians have violated Moroccan law.

The Moroccan Kafala Law, or Guardianship of Children Law, states that an abandoned or orphaned child can be only given over to certain guardians, namely a Muslim married couple of legal age, a Muslim woman who fulfils certain conditions or, lastly:

Public establishments charged with child protection or charitable institutions, organizations or associations recognised by public authorities and having adequate material means, resources, and human resources to assure the protection of children and to give them a good education and raise them in accordance with Islam (Livingstone 2010, p. 18).

The Village of Hope orphanage fell under this third category of a public establishment, but the authorities felt that it violated the law through proselytising and trying to convert the children; that is, not raising them in accordance with Islam. The law in relation to proselytisation is Article 220 of the Moroccan penal code. It stipulates that:

Whoever by violence or threats keeps or impedes someone from worshipping or attending worship is punished by imprisonment of six months to three years and a fine of 100 to 500 dirhams. The same punishment is set for whoever employs means of seduction in the purpose of shaking the faith of a Muslim or to convert him to another religion, either by exploiting his weakness or his needs or by using for such a purpose institutions of education, health, shelter or orphanages. In case of conviction, the closure of the institution which served to commit the offense may be closed, either definitively, or for a length which will not exceed three years (Livingstone 2010, p. 18).

As can be seen above, the freedom to worship is protected by punishing those who impede someone from worshipping. Therefore the legal issue is not the person converted or actual conversion, which is not illegal, but rather “employing means of seduction in the purpose of shaking the faith of a Muslim” by engaging in proselytising or converting, which the orphanage was accused of doing with the children.
However, Article 220 in relation to proselytisation was not used to expel them; instead Article 26 of the Law on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in Morocco and Illegal Immigration and Emigration was utilised, which allows the government to expel any resident alien it determines to be a disturbance to the public order or threat to the security of the state, even where other laws require due process first (Dirèche 2011, p. 4). This meant that no legal procedure or ratification by the Minister of Interior was needed for the expulsions (Dirèche 2011, p. 2). Therefore, a law related to foreigners’ residence and entry to Morocco was used, rather than Article 220 which specifically relates to religion. Although “religious” reasons were given for the expulsions (proselytisation), a law unrelated to religion – that is, pertaining to immigration and emigration – was used to execute the expulsions. This shows to some extent the ambivalence of the law’s application and how both “religious” and “secular” law can be mobilised for different purposes. It demonstrates that those who wanted to force the expulsions were pragmatic, and chose the law (protecting public order) to expel the people they saw offending the principle of no proselytisation.

Furthermore, these expulsions in 2010 revealed the sheer range and variety of the Christian presence outside of the official churches recognised by the Moroccan State, including home churches, self-proclaimed pastors and unofficial missionaries. The difficulty in identifying Christian actors and their confessional belonging in Morocco can be illustrated by EEAM’s efforts to distance itself after the expulsions from the activities of those other unofficial groups, showing that the Christian presence in Morocco is not a homogenous or united front. In EEAM’s case, this is partly due to the word “evangelical” in its name, with some outside the church confusing EEAM with American missionaries. Nadia Khrouz, who completed an internship with the CEI for her Masters degree and now works for the organisation GADEM, explained the confusion she met with when representing the CEI in external meetings:

> For example, at the first meeting that I did with other organisations and researchers, they talked about the CEI as if they were American evangelists. And me, I said, “But what are you talking about?” I was supposed to be there to represent the CEI, I am Moroccan, some know my parents, and they associated me with an American evangelist organisation (interview with Nadia Khrouz, GADEM, 23 November 2012).

This local assumption of CEI’s American identity was further exacerbated by the fact that the pastor of the CEI at the time was American. It is a good illustration of some of the confusion and misunderstandings that can surround the Christian presence in Morocco, and the attempts of EEAM to navigate this by staying on the side of legality in a context where there is often ambivalence over what is legal and illegal. Following the expulsions in 2010,
EEAM issued a press release stating that it “reaffirms its respect for the values of its host country” and “EEAM always abstains from doing proselytism, and is opposed to all forms of manipulation that seek to destabilise the faith of Muslims” (Communiqué EEAM, 2010). Furthermore, in an interview after the expulsions, the President of EEAM Jean-Luc Blanc made a clear distinction between EEAM and the missionaries coming from “other” churches:

I have no reason to intervene for these Christians who are not part of our church, who don’t want in any case to be a part of our church (and that is their right!), and who, in addition, have not asked us to do so (Ohlott 2010).

There has been a history of the fear of conversions of Moroccans by Protestants. In 2005, there was a wave of publications in Moroccan magazines about the conversions by Protestants of Moroccans, with stories of an active campaign of conversion by predominantly American Protestant missionaries including the distribution of “conversion kits” (Worldwide Religious News article). In response to this media focus, Jean-Luc Blanc further distanced EEAM from them, stating in an open letter to a newspaper addressing these rumours:

Today, the term evangelical has been recuperated by American fundamentalists. Moroccan Protestantism therefore finds itself with two positions: on one side, the Evangelical Church with its official status, on the other, the position of the most sectarian evangelical missionaries … These missionaries have no contact direct or indirect with EEAM. They are not part of the Ecumenical Council of Churches. And we, we refuse on our side, to proselytise (Bouyahia 2005).

He added that the main role of the Church in Morocco is to help Protestant Christians living in Morocco, among them many sub-Saharan Africans studying in Morocco. Furthermore, there is a general assumption of a connection between what are broadly termed “Evangelicals” and the American state, with some media articles arguing that these missionaries were backed by powerful churches from the American Bible Belt, including that which George W Bush belongs to. Some linked the missionaries to a support of Bush’s foreign policy and of Israel (Filali-Ansary 2005).

American Evangelicals have a complicated relationship to the Moroccan State. According to certain sources, after 9/11 Moroccan authorities closed their eyes to the presence of American Evangelical missionaries in exchange for support from Washington on the issue of Western Sahara, a region of contention in the Saharan desert between Morocco and the Polisario, a separatist movement in the region. In 2005, Morocco invited American
Evangelical Christians – including the American tele-evangelist Josh McDowell – representing the movement Crusade for Christ International to discuss the Polisario and construct an interreligious dialogue with Islam in Rabat (Filali-Ansary 2005). In addition, the United States embassy and senior State Department officials raised religious freedom issues with the Moroccan government after the expulsions in 2010, and, as previously mentioned, the United States government sponsored programs focused on religious tolerance and freedom using the United States as a model (United States Department of State 2013).

This further highlights how framing Morocco as a Muslim state which is against Christians or the West is far too simplistic; in reality the relationship between the Moroccan State, Evangelical Christians and “secular” states such as America is complicated, strategic and dynamic. In addition, there is a variety of Christian, particularly Protestant, presences in Morocco with different agendas and objectives. However, these differences can also become ambiguous and vague. Despite the former President of EEAM making a clear distinction between unofficial churches and EEAM, as discussed in the previous chapter on the history of the CEI, there was an early relationship between the CEI and migrant home churches.

The Moroccan State, in its laws, has a contradictory dynamic of being at the same time reformative and conservative, as well as being ambivalent in the application of those laws. This complicates a picture of Morocco as simply an Islamic state that is non-secular. Furthermore, the Christian presence in Morocco is neither unified nor singular; instead there are a variety of official and unofficial churches, pastors and missionaries with their own agendas and strategies. The consequence is that there is no united front that is “the” Christian presence in Morocco which can be posed in contradistinction to a strictly Islamic state. This ambivalence has been vital for the flourishing of many different Christian (Protestant) presences in Morocco. However, being the official Protestant church, EEAM has to constantly position itself as legitimate and “legal” against this background of ambiguity. The impact of this on the CEI’s work can be seen in the internal debate on whether to do advocacy or “political” work in the organisation, as it struggles to “not only survive, but to survive in good conditions” (interview with Jean-Luc Blanc, former President, 13 November 2012). This particular question is explored further in the next section.

Advocacy work

The relationship between the CEI and the Moroccan State can be further examined through the lens of advocacy work – that is, the question of whether the CEI engages in it or not, a popular debate and source of tension between members within the organisation. “Advocacy work” in this section adopts the meaning that was utilised amongst the workers of the CEI,
who used the French word plaidoyer, which in this context translates to advocacy or lobbying. Within the CEI, this term was usually used to refer to work outside of direct aid (distributing food bags and other necessities) and in relation to anything that could be broadly deemed “political”. This included lobbying government for political reform or making public statements condemning the situation for migrants in Morocco. For example, other organisations such as GADEM, the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH) and the Moroccan Organisation for Human Rights (OMDH) regularly condemn expulsions or raids of migrant areas through press conferences or press releases. During my time doing fieldwork in 2012, over the summer there were a series of violent raids and deportations of sub-Saharan African migrants across the country, particularly in the areas of Tahrirt and Nador, and a number of NGOs condemned these actions through holding a press conference as well talking directly to the media. Telquel, a weekly Moroccan magazine, published these condemnations in its June 23–29 issue (L’essentiel et l’accesoire, “crimes racistes” 2012). EEAM and the CEI refrain from any of these kinds of actions, such as participating in a press conference or being a signatory to a press release, and the reasons for this are further explored in this section. Some within the organisation believe that doing advocacy work is dangerous for a church organisation, making it too visible and vulnerable to accusations of proselytisation. Furthermore, they argue that is not the essential mission of the CEI. Others question whether what the CEI is doing is enough, whether it is just “band-aid” work.

This section firstly gives a brief overview of civil society in Morocco (comprising humanitarian, political and activist organisations), of which the CEI is a part, before going on to explore the issue of advocacy work in the CEI. I argue that the question of advocacy work not only underlines the relationship the CEI has with the state, but also how particular understandings of “religion” are utilised. This section considers how boundaries – not only between religion and the secular, but also between religion and the political – can be blurred in actual practices.

Civil society in Morocco – the local humanitarian context

As a result of King Hassan II’s relaxation of his stance towards alleged subversive organisations in the 1990s, a flourishing of activity by civil society organisations, including NGOs, occurred in Morocco (Sater 2002). Organisations continued to enjoy a freedom of activity after the accession to the throne of his son Mohammed VI in 1999 (Sater 2002), leading to a civil society sector now marked by internationalisation, diversification and professionalism (Dimitrovova 2010). This has led some scholars to define the domestic political milieu in Morocco as “enlightened authoritarianism” or an “authoritarian system in
transition” (Boukars 2010). It has also led to much research into the role and significance of civil society in Morocco (Huber 2004, 2005; Sater 2007). Civil society can be defined as the following:

The sphere of human interaction between the state and the family, in which private citizens act on behalf of public issues, through which they constitute and shape the ever-changing borders of, and discourses within, the public sphere (Sater 2007, p. 10).

For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of civil society in Morocco includes Moroccan and international NGOs, intergovernmental organisations composed of member states, such as the IOM and the UNHCR, migrant-led groups and FBOs such as the CEI. These organisations work in a variety of different avenues, including humanitarian, social, cultural and political, and in this way are complementary, with various actors focusing on different objectives. This is particularly the case with the vast network of actors providing support to sub-Saharan African irregular migrants (Diao & Charlot 2010).

Some organisations that are prominent in the area of migration include a Moroccan NGO that focuses specifically on the rights of migrants and refugees in Morocco, GADEM, the AMDH, the OMDH and sub-Saharan migrant-led groups such as the CMSM and the CCSM. In terms of giving more direct aid or doing “humanitarian work”, the area includes organisations such as Terre des Hommes, MSF and FBOs such as the CEI and Caritas, which is linked to the Catholic church.

The year 2005 was a significant turning point for many civil society actors working in migration, as they responded to the tragic events in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. In September of 2005, thousands of sub-Saharan migrants stormed the fences surrounding the two Spanish enclaves in an attempt to enter the EU, with some shot dead while many others were rounded up into trucks and taken without food or water to the “no-man’s land” along the Moroccan/Algerian border (Pian 2009). This event not only brought international attention to the situation of sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, but also increased political advocacy amongst civil society actors and led to the founding of the migrant-led organisation the CMSM.

One of the ways that civil society actors have tried to address migrant issues is through the migration platform, a network based in Rabat of various NGOs and groups working on sub-Saharan African migration in Morocco. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the original

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5 Ceuta and Melilla are two separate Spanish enclaves situated in the coastal North of Morocco, and are as such territorially part of the EU. The enclaves are surrounded by fences and border control.
migration platform started in 2004, including not only NGOs and associations, but also migrant groups, academics and politicians interested in migration. That consortium quickly dissolved and three years later a second migration platform emerged comprising only NGOs and associations, this time with a focus on more coordinated practical action towards the migrant population through collaboration and exchange of information and resources. The migrant platform holds monthly meetings such as *reunion technique* (“technical meetings”, where the group exchanges information on a practical level, mainly on particular migrant cases to see if another association could help) and *reunion thematique* (“themed meetings”, where the meeting revolves around a particular theme such as health, education or housing, and the issue of migrants’ access to these). However, there was some division and debate within the platform about what kind of action it should be taking, as one of the participants from GADEM recounts:

> Beyond funding and support, it is the question of mode of action to adopt that divides the members of the migrant platform, between humanitarian organisations and activist organisations (Khrouz 2006, p. 63).

Activist organisations such as GADEM also highlight the danger of dependency by migrants on direct aid, and note that FBOs are limited in their action due to attachment to churches. Furthermore, they criticise the complicity that aid and humanitarian organisations have in substituting for what should be the work of the state, as Hicham Rachidi, the President of GADEM, states:

> Organisations are not, in a manner or another, to do the work that the State should be doing, and the role of organisations is a role of advocacy, information, raising awareness, and not a role of accompaniment in substituting for the State (Khrouz 2006, p. 67).

However, other NGOs working in migration have praised the flexibility of criteria of church organisations and their donors. A coordinator from Terre des Hommes, a Spanish NGO in Morocco, said he appreciated the fact that organisations like the CEI existed. With nearly 80 per cent of their funding from the EU he says that it is difficult to be independent, and hard to be flexible with criteria. For example, his project only works with children up to a certain age; outside of this it would not be able to help. He said it was “great” that they could then direct people to church-based organisations which did not have those limitations (interview with Bruno Meric, coordinator at Terres des Hommes, 15 December 2012). The question of advocacy and the limitations and possibilities of the CEI as an FBO is explored in the next section.
CEI debates on advocacy work

It is in this context that there is debate within the CEI regarding advocacy work. A strong argument used by some for not engaging in advocacy work is one of protecting the organisation. The former President of EEAM outlined some of the ambiguity surrounding the work of the CEI and its toleration by the state:

We’ve had many contacts with Moroccan authorities, but very little voluntarily on the migration question, I’ve never tried to have discussions with the authorities on the migration question because I knew that it would bring conflict, so I’ve never really looked to discuss this question with the Moroccan government. Because in Morocco we accept easily enough that you do things that we can’t see as long as you don’t give too much importance to what you do. If you give too much importance to what you do, are too visible, then we create problems for you.

So for the work of the CEI I have never tried too hard to publicise it, or to speak to Moroccan newspapers, never, when I met different Moroccan ministers, never to speak about this. It does happen of course that I end up talking about this question with a minister or the governor of Rabat or Casa, and the discourse was, what you do is not really legal, but we are so content that you’re doing it, so we’ll let you do it. What you do is really good, but not really legal. So do it, but we cannot help you (interview with Jean-Luc Blanc, former President, 13 November 2012).

The former President highlights the constraints on the CEI’s work and how it copes with them. The CEI aims to do its work but not be seen to be doing it; that is, it aims for a “visible invisibility” (interview with Jean-Luc Blanc, former President, 13 November 2012). This is in contrast to the highly publicised advocacy work of a group like GADEM, which engages in actions such as petitions, press releases and awareness-raising about the issues of migrants and refugees. The former EEAM President relates this contrast to the constraints that the CEI face as a church organisation. He illustrates the dynamics involved in church/state relations in Morocco with his narrative about what occurred when EEAM, in collaboration with its German church donors, organised a conference on rights to asylum in Rabat:
I was on holidays in France when I received a telephone call from the Director of Islamic Affairs, whom I know well enough, who told me that the Ministry of Interior Affairs had asked him to ask me to cancel this conference, and I asked him, why couldn’t the Minister call me himself? Why did he come through you? And the Director said yes, because he knows that we know each other, therefore … you see in Morocco, things always work that way: start off with the emotional, the good relationship … [He said] you know, the very good relations the Ministry has with the church suffer from this affair. But that has nothing to do with it. [I asked him] in what way can a conference on rights to asylum affect Christian–Islamic interreligious relations, between the Ministry and the church? And he said, yes, but you understand, it might create problems.

And I said to him, look, speak frankly. What law am I breaking, and what am I risking? Tell me what law am I breaking by holding this conference? … And he responds, but Jean-Luc, the question is not asked that way in Morocco, of course there isn’t a law that forbids it, but it’s a question of relations, you know that the government has very good relations with the church, and it will be such a pity for the church if the relation becomes less good, so we are in this kind of discourse, we negotiate from this point. He did not clearly say, if you do advocacy work as part of your social work then you will have broken this rule and you will have such and such problem. No … (interview with Jean-Luc Blanc, former President, 13 November 2012, my emphasis).

In this case, the church organising a conference on the right to asylum was entering into political terrain, according to the authorities. Furthermore, this “kind of discourse” is one where what is legal and illegal and what the consequences are of “breaking the rules” are ambivalent, and it is not posited in that way. Rather it is a question of maintaining good relationships, and the possibility of severing these relations. The church is made aware that its “political” work can affect its religious status and its relationship with the state. “Politics” then can get turned into a “religious” affair and vice versa. Where the line is between “politics” and “religion” can become blurred, especially when the dominant discourse of the state with the church is one of “relationship” rather than claims and contestation. For Blanc, when it is more than just a question of survival of the CEI, but to “survive in good conditions”, this involves an understanding of how the law works in Morocco:
It’s what the governor of Casablanca told me once, things don’t happen like that, we don’t put people in jail for those kind of things. Say you need a paper from the administration. It could take a long time. It could take a very, very long time. It’s like that. It’s a strategy of power. We will not look for conflict, because we also don’t want bad publicity, but we will for example, deprive you of your residence card, or you ask for a paper to change church offices, a paper that is absolutely necessary, but you don’t have it, they take their time, and if you don’t have it, there’s formalities that you can’t do, and it complicates life in several domains. And at a certain moment, you could even be outside the law because you don’t have this paper, but it’s them who haven’t given you this paper. You become outside the law because you don’t have this paper. It’s like this that things work (interview with Jean-Luc Blanc, former President, 13 November 2012).

The consequences of not maintaining a good relationship with the state, then, can be serious; indeed one can be made to be “outside the law”. The current President of EEAM and the CEI is forceful in his expression of the need for “protecting” the CEI from such consequences, largely by enveloping its work within a religious discourse:

I think that our actions speak, our actions are political actions. To protect the church, when I speak to Moroccans I say, we are doing zakhat, we are doing charity; you cannot forbid charity, it’s an Islamic obligation. It’s a strategy, very conscious strategy. I say that we are doing zakhat, part of our religious obligations, not politics (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

So even though the President argues that the organisation’s actions are “political”, he contends that with outsiders he must use a religious discourse as a “conscious strategy”. By appealing to Moroccan society’s own religious discourse, that of Islam and within it the notion of zakhat, of doing charity work, the President believes that the CEI can be protected from accusations of meddling in “political” affairs. Furthermore, it is out of this fear of being accused of doing “political” work that he believes the CEI should not actually be involved in any form of work that could be construed as political, including advocacy work, and should instead focus on charity or direct aid: distributing food and blankets.

The President highlighted this again during the annual CEI meeting (on 3 November 2012, in Casablanca), which assembled representatives of the CEI from the different cities. The team from Oujda talked about police harassment while distributing food bags in the migrant camps in the forest on the outskirts of the town. The team was being stopped by the police.
and were even mistaken for irregular migrants themselves (nearly all fieldworkers are sub-Saharan African in the CEI). They were afraid for their own safety in relation to the authorities since although they are “legal” (most were students studying in Morocco), in practice even sub-Saharan Africans who are “legal” have in the past been arrested by authorities along with “illegals”, including a case in Rabat involving a congregation member who was arrested and later released.

The fieldworkers in Oujda talked about having badges identifying themselves as being from the CEI, but others in the meeting asked whether these were to be officially authorised by the authorities, or just ones made by the church. The discussion moved on to having fluoro jackets for the workers, but both badges and jackets were finally dismissed as possibilities because, as someone at the meeting pointed out, fieldworkers are usually tolerated by the authorities only to the extent that they are not too obvious about what they are doing, and drawing attention to themselves would only make things worse. This ambiguity mimics to some extent the status of irregular migrants in the eyes of the authorities (sometimes tolerated, sometimes brutally repressed) and highlights that the fieldworkers, who are predominantly sub-Saharan Africans, are also vulnerable themselves.

In response, the President suggested that if they were asked what they were doing, they should say they were doing zakhat. “Like Muslims do zakhat, the church is doing zakhat; in the name of the church we are helping the poor.” He encouraged them to use the religious discourse, to say that they were doing it in the name of their faith – “the Moroccans love that” – presumably in order to de-politicise their work by using a religious discourse that the Muslim authorities might understand, and in that way protect themselves. Their religious presence, then, can sometimes be used as a strategy, but this is limited to specific situations and, as in this case, must be in line with a Muslim discourse.

At the annual 2012 Management Committee meeting (3 November 2012), the “crackdown” on migrants by authorities during that summer, where hundreds were arrested and/or expelled, was discussed. The President stipulated that “we cannot do political action right now, cannot speak”. In terms of not doing “political” work, in an interview the President further justified his stance through his position as a foreigner:

I am a foreigner here, and if I stay here, I stay a foreigner, never a Moroccan. That Moroccans question their politics, they have the right and the obligation. Me, to question the politics of France, I have the right and the obligation. I have the right. But I cannot say that Europeans can give lessons to Africa. The Europeans are champions of human rights, but they pay for others to do their dirty work. The dirty work that Moroccans do here, its
because Europeans pay for it, they pay 800,000 euros per year to do this dirty work. Neocolonialism – me, as French, will tell you, Moroccan, what you should be doing. Who do you think you are? I’m only in passing here. What do I know about Moroccan culture, about the socio-political stakes? *About Moroccan politics, what do I know about it, in the name of what can I judge that?* We must stop thinking in the place of others, and this is something the Europeans and the Americans do too much (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012, my emphasis).

In this particular discourse, the President states that he abstains from politics because of his nationality, framing being able to criticise Moroccan politics as less a religious issue than a national one. After all, he is “only in passing here”, meaning he is someone who has come in and presumably will leave (once he leaves the Presidency of EEAM and the CEI). In addition, he admits that he does not know enough about Moroccan culture or politics, and therefore cannot intervene in a public or political platform in Morocco. But that is exactly what AM, Vice-President of CEI, reproaches him for, arguing that as President it is his “obligation” to do so, particularly in understanding the dynamics of sub-Saharan African migration on the one hand, and Moroccan culture and politics on the other, because these make up the context in which the CEI works (interview with AM, Vice-President of EEAM, 22 October 2012). In the President’s particular framing of the issue, “religion” is decidedly on one side and “politics” on the other, with the CEI emphatically on the side of religion.

The CEI’s approach to the question of advocacy can perhaps be best captured by the phrases “humble advocacy” or “doing it on our level”. This is advocacy through building relationships and awareness of the migrant issue with schools and hospitals, mainly through being involved in the work of the migration platform, but also being involved with more politically involved organisations such as GADEM:

> We do it on our level, so we have worked a lot on that with GADEM, we have always supported advocacy actions. We’ve had someone sent by Déjap, and employed by the church in Morocco, Anne-Sophie Wender, who did advocacy work with GADEM. So, we had David Brown who was in charge of the CEI but did not do advocacy work, and Anne-Sophie Wender who did advocacy work but did not work with the CEI. It was not the same person, we made a separation, so that a problem with one did not affect the other, because we did not have blind trust in the Moroccan authorities, so we preferred to be careful (interview with Jean-Luc Blanc, former President, 13 November 2012).
Another example of this “humble advocacy” in the CEI was given to me by Pastor Karen Smith:

There was a sit-in at the UNHCR, and David Brown invited those at the sit-in to come to church. So they left the UNHCR before the police came to kick them out, they walked down to the church; the police kept coming in and sticking their heads in at the church to see what was going on … but the church was able to calm the situation, to bring Johannes [the Commissioner for UNHCR] in to meet with them to talk about rights and to keep things from exploding. To me that was a tremendous political role we played, allowing their needs to be heard, but ensuring that the balance didn’t break out, which was also good for the Moroccan government, because they wouldn’t want that to happen, because it’s bad PR for Morocco as well (interview with Karen Smith, pastor CEI, 6 August 2012).

A further argument put forward by the President Samuel Amedro against doing advocacy is that he does not see it as the essential role of the church or the CEI. In fact, he argues, there are direct Biblical references exhorting Christians to focus on the individual person rather than condemning institutional structures:

Jesus, it seems to me, stopped before a human being and put them back on their feet. And he said nothing against the Romans, against the geopolitics of the Romans, he said nothing against slavery as a social-political structure, he said nothing against the socio-economic structure of his time. He said that well, the world works like this, and I have not come to save the world, I have come to save people … We are not changing the structure. We, we help people not to die (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

The way that faith is translated into the organisation’s aims and identity on an operational level is examined in subsequent chapters in the thesis. In summary, the main argument given by those within the CEI who oppose doing advocacy work is that being “political” on a sensitive topic such as sub-Saharan African migration in Morocco makes the CEI too visible and vulnerable, not as a humanitarian organisation, but specifically as a church organisation; that is, that it loses its legitimacy as a religious organisation in relation to the Moroccan State if it engages in “politics”. Again, religion and politics are kept separate, even though the reality is that the two are very much interrelated – as can be seen in the example of the Minister interfering with the conference organised by the church, and by the fact that working in the politically sensitive area of migration in Morocco renders most actions
political. As the former National Coordinator astutely told me, “we have a political problem but we don’t have a political role” and “the Church is not a political organisation, but its actions could have political repercussions” (interview with Diachari Poudigo, CEI National Coordinator, 29 November 2012).

People such as the current President want to limit any advocacy work done by the CEI in order to keep the organisation’s legitimacy and ensure its “survival”. Rather than arguing for a separation of the CEI from the church (which in his eyes entails losing inherent Christian values – see the discussion in Chapter 6 on agency mission and identity), the President wants the CEI to be even more “inside the church” to protect it from the state:

The church is the protection of the CEI. The church is a lot stronger than the CEI, internationally. It’s rather easy to touch an NGO, but not to touch a church, the official church whose president was invited to the Fête du Trône, who shook the hand of the king (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

However, Amedro’s argument that refuge in a religious discourse will protect the CEI from accusations of doing politics does not hold when it comes to accusations of proselytisation. The contradiction is that when issues of proselytism arise, the CEI – because of its affiliation with EEAM – once again becomes vulnerable to accusations. When that occurs, as can be seen in the section on the expulsions in 2010, the CEI distances itself from a religious discourse.

Rather than trying to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory positions of religious/political engagement, I argue that this contradiction shows how much what is “religious” and what is “political” (here constructed in a contrast to religion, as non-religious, secular) can be interrelated, fluid, ambiguous and modifiable depending on the context and the need. What becomes evident is that the CEI is in a double bind in its relation to the state. In order to keep the legitimacy of the CEI and its work on the politically sensitive topic of irregular African migration, it needs to be close to the church, which has official status with the authorities, and take refuge in a certain religious discourse that refutes any “political” action. Yet on the other hand, if it is seen to be too related to the church, it can be open to accusations of proselytism, engaging in conversion activities or being confused with other unofficial “illegal” churches.

It is an inherent aporia for the CEI, whose very existence puts into question the religious/secular divide. (Is it doing politics? Is it doing religion?) It is a particular challenge that the CEI alone faces in the humanitarian landscape in Morocco; even its closest
counterpart, Caritas, another FBO of the Catholic church, has a strict demarcation between itself as an FBO and the church it is attached to. Despite receiving funds from the Catholic church, Caritas operates independently from it – on an operational level but also physically, in a separate space from the church – unlike the CEI (interview with Vincent Sibout, Director, Caritas Morocco, 16 December 2012). The closeness of the CEI’s identity with the church, in different circumstances and contexts, can be seen as an advantage (protection, not doing “political” work) or a disadvantage (open to accusations of proselytisation, bias towards Christians). In analysing EEAM and the CEI’s relations with the state, I argue that we need to move beyond binaries of either/or and instead see how fluid and interrelated these categories are, and how they can change depending on the context, strategies and motives of different actors. Instead, an analysis of the CEI’s external relations with the state shows how much it is marked by paradoxes, tensions and ambiguity.

**Relations with donors**

What difference does it make that the CEI and EEAM form not only a transnational community, but also a religious one, particularly in terms of its relationship with donors? Firstly, I argue that it is principally through its ability to mobilise transnational religious networks of funding that the organisation is able to undertake its work with migrants. Through these donors it is able to finance working with migrants, acquiring funding mainly through networks of personal relationships developed through different church groups and organisations. Secondly, similar to the way that the organisation is able to mobilise transnational religious networks of funding, it also mobilises a sanctified discourse in its relationship with these donors. The next section examines two examples – the text of a speech by the President and observations about a visit by American donors – to demonstrate how sanctification strategies can occur through representation and supplication.

**Transnational religious networks of funding**

EEAM can be considered a community that fits into the category Levitt (2004) terms a “negotiated” transnational religious organisation or community. In her typology Levitt identifies three types of transnational religious organisations: extended, negotiated and recreated. A “negotiated” type is marked by negotiations over authority, organisation, financial management, ritual and leadership (Levitt 2004, p. 10). In EEAM, these “negotiations” inevitably lead to ambiguity, tension and contestation, while at the same time enable a certain kind of flexibility within the organisation. Levitt comments that “[n]egotiated transnational churches arise from a set of personal and institutional
relationships that emerge organically, in response to the challenges posed by the context” and consequently, “a more diverse, diluted set of partnerships emerges that are malleable and shift over time” (Levitt 2004, pp. 3, 10).

These dynamic partnerships are reflected in the CEI’s relationship with donors. It is through these relationships that the CEI is able to facilitate and fund its work with irregular migrants to become a “broker” or facilitator of migration. Following on from Faist’s (2009) definition of brokerage as a process of mediation by particular actors, it is a fundamentally relational process:

The mechanism of brokerage is central for understanding transnational dynamics. Transnational, like other social spaces, abound with “structural holes”, that is, absent links between networks, groups and organisations … Brokerage is a mechanism by which particular network actors carry out transactions between actors who are not yet connected. Structurally, brokers may sustain multiple ties across various networks (Faist, 2009, p. 85).

The “structural holes” in this context are the lack of provision of social services for irregular sub-Saharan African migrants by the Moroccan State. It is a country that, although it has signed the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, does not have state-administered procedures in place to process refugees and asylum seekers – instead this is carried out by the UNHCR. Furthermore, the sometimes violent treatment of sub-Saharan Africans by the authorities is well documented in the media (see Chapter 1 for a brief overview).

“Brokers” can become the link between migrant needs and those who have the funds to fulfil these needs, thereby compensating for absences in basic services for migrants by the state – brokers such as NGOs, international organisations and faith-based actors such as the CEI. In addition, individuals within organisations can become brokers on different levels. For example, key individuals with particular networks and resources can engage in brokerage with external actors, in particular in securing donors, while others can become brokers with migrants. These brokers provide outreach and proximity to migrants in need for the organisation, and in the CEI this role is allocated to the fieldworkers or agents de proximité (see Chapter 7 for further discussion of staff roles).

In terms of funding, the brokers of donor relationships play a fundamental role in the organisation. The donor relationships the CEI has were almost entirely built by individuals within the CEI who either had pre-existing relations or were able to cultivate personal relationships with external donors. As a church organisation, the CEI has been able to mobilise church networks of funding, which is reflected in the fact that the majority of its
donors are other church organisations from the global North (Europe and the United States). Furthermore, individuals who are able to broker these types of relationships are those who have the necessary networks and resources, namely those who were of European and American backgrounds themselves. A prominent example of this is Karen Smith, an American pastor at the CEI who also works as a chaplain at an international university in Morocco, and who had previous experience of working in refugee settlement for nine years in the United States.

Through her networks at the CBF, an umbrella Baptist inter-church organisation in the United States which had broken off from the conservative Southern Baptist Fellowship, she was able to arrange for funding by the CBF for a full-time position at the CEI, which was taken up by the American pastor David Brown and his wife Julie (this and the following information on CEI funding by CBF and KBF was provided by Karen Smith via email and interview, 20 December 2012). The CBF also later financed half of the salary of the National Coordinator, as well as managing to get several thousand dollars each year to fund the CEI food donations from several Texan churches affiliated with the CBF. In addition, the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship (KBF), one of the regional organisations affiliated to the CBF, of which there are between 75 and 100 member churches, set up a twinning program with each of the churches in EEAM across various cities. There is one KBF congregation twinned with the CEI that contributes significant amounts of money to the national budget (approximately $15,000 each year) and another congregation that gives at least $2,400 extra to the CEI in Oujda, the town at the border between Morocco and Algeria. KBF also takes offerings periodically for the CEI, especially at Christmas – offerings since 2010 total $24,500 – in addition there are periodic gifts for the work from individual congregations.

Similarly, German donors were brought on board by the previous President, who came to know one of the key donors through a European church network. The former President of EEAM, Jean-Luc Blanc, was formerly based in a church in the South of France, which was twinned with a church in Germany. A friendship developed between himself and the President of the twinning committee, and once Jean-Luc Blanc became President of EEAM in 2001 they decided to work together in Morocco. Through this particular contact, EEAM became officially twinned with the church district *Kirchenkreis Jülich* in Germany, comprising 19 churches with 60,000 church members, as well as having their financial support for various programs in the CEI (this and the following information on German funding was provided by email, 5 December 2012, and in person, 3 November 2012, by Hans-Joachim Schwabe, head of the German Protestant church network *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst*. This includes funding of the scholarship program for students, financing
about one-third of the professional training program of the CEI, funding 50 per cent of the costs of a full-time position in the CEI (Director of the CEI) and supporting various one-off projects around medical aid and staff training.

For example, in the year I was undertaking fieldwork, the German donors financed a one-off three-day training session for all CEI fieldworkers on working with trauma, as the migrants that the fieldworkers come into contact with may be traumatised by their experiences. They identified a particular need in this area (fieldworkers do not receive any kind of training), and flew over a psychologist specialising in refugee trauma from the Psycho-Social Centre for Refugees in Dusseldorf. In addition, they fundraise in Germany in the Protestant church sector for EEAM through their various networks, including the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland area, United Nations Aid for Refugees and Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World), and produce their own fairtrade bottles of cola sold under the name of the church organisation. They sell the bottles for one euro and 35 cents each, with 50 cents from each bottle going to the CEI.

In addition to these relationships with established donors, individuals within the organisation also take the initiative to apply for ad hoc funding. For example, once I had left Morocco I found out that AM, the Vice-President of the CEI at the time, was able to secure funding from the World Communion of Reformed Churches for the training of CEI fieldworkers, as well as a storytelling project with migrant women. AM had previously represented EEAM at their annual meeting in 2010. The issue of training for fieldworkers was becoming an urgent one, largely because it was left unaddressed by the President. The issue of staff training is further discussed in Chapter 7.

The exception to the prevalence of Europeans and Americans as brokers with donors was the case of the National Coordinator of the CEI, who was sub-Saharan African. The nature of the role of the National Coordinator meant that this person had to be at ease with and capable of relating to migrants as well as the European and American donors. For example, during the visit of the American to Morocco, one of the delegation members remarked how much he liked the fact that the National Coordinator was African, as opposed to European, because he felt that it was about empowering migrants rather than “white people coming in to save Africans”. However, the American donors also seemed to appreciate the fact that Diachari was articulate and able to clearly communicate the migrant situation in a way that was understandable for them. The National Coordinator, though not an irregular migrant himself, was a well-educated Malian completing a PhD in international law, having come over from Mali to Morocco eight years ago for university. At the same time, he had good relationships with the migrants the CEI worked with (some of whom were from Mali), as well as the
fieldworkers, who were all sub-Saharan Africans and for the most part also students. In this context he was able to play a particularly efficient mediatory role as an articulate translator back and forth between two vastly different worlds, from the migrant and sub-Saharan African world to the donor world of the Americans. In addition, he was exposed to the donor world through visits to Europe and the United States for the CEI. After I completed my fieldwork, the National Coordinator changed; the new appointment was also a student from a sub-Saharan African background, in the process of completing a PhD.

In contrast to those who were brokers with donors, all of the fieldworkers – that is, those who worked closely with migrants in the distribution of food, clothing and other aid such as accompaniment to medical centres – were sub-Saharan African, except for the occasional European volunteer. Fieldworkers sometimes came from the same countries as the migrants, and sometimes lived in the same neighbourhoods as migrants. Most fieldworkers were students, but some were in precarious irregular positions themselves. It was relatively uncommon to have a European at the drop-ins. Whether fieldworkers from African backgrounds make better “brokers” with migrants than those of European origin is perhaps besides the point; what is interesting is what it highlights: that it does matter who the brokers are.

It matters what brokers can contribute in terms of networks, contacts and resources, but also – as can be seen in the case of the National Coordinator – who they are, their background and identity, can also be seen as an advantage in brokerage. The importance of who the brokers are is particularly magnified in a relatively small organisation. The organisation has to maximise all the networks and resources of its fewer members, and is even more “dependent on the particular personalities, histories, ideas, visions and relationships of these people” (Fountain 2011, p. 248). In some ways, the prevalence in the CEI of Europeans in management roles and donor relations and sub-Saharan Africans as fieldworkers reflect who the CEI thinks can do the brokering for the various different roles, and who it thinks are capable of engaging in effective “transactions, negotiations and engagements between individuals” (Fountain 2011, p. 69). The next section examines in more detail what occurs in this mediation between brokers and donors, and how in an FBO like the CEI, brokers act as translators between vastly different worlds by mobilising a common sanctifying discourse of religion.
Sanctification processes within representation and supplication

The role of the broker is key to the donor relationship. According to Hilhorst (2003), donor relationships rely on brokers being able to provide a “good representation” (p. 223); that is, a representation that works and legitimises the organisation in the eyes of the donors. It is:

… a skilful improvisation that combines fragments of actual experiences and discourses with bits of knowledge about the part for whose sake it is delivered or enacted. For this reason, I have stressed that NGO leaders are brokers of meaning (Hilhorst 2003, p. 223, my emphasis).

The leader has the most responsibility for translating and transmitting a meaningful representation to the external world, particularly to donors and potential donors. What this process actually involves is a kind of negotiation in the relationship, “by convincing the other parties of the meaning of events, processes and needs, and their own roles” (Hilhorst 2003, p. 223). This is what the CEI constantly does in its own relationship with its donors. This section illustrates this using two different examples: one of representation through analysis of the text of a presentation by the President, and one of supplication through analysis of an organised visit by the American donors to a migrant’s home. The latter example demonstrates that it is not only leaders, but also migrants themselves, who can become brokers of meaning with donors. This section analyses the sanctification processes that occur within these two strategies of representation and supplication.

Presentation to the Germans: “representation”

In October 2012, the Protestant Academy of Germany and the Evangelical Church in Rhineland organised a two-day conference in Bonn titled “Unilateral economic relations – reasons for people to flee?” (conference information was provided by Hans-Joachim Schwabe, head of the German Protestant church network Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, via email, 5 December 2012). The conference was open to the public, but was particularly addressed to politicians and church leaders. The speakers included representatives from the Moroccan Department of Foreign Trade, the European Parliament, the Institution of Protestant Churches in Germany, the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe and EEAM. Samuel Amedro, as President, was invited to speak about the “situation of refugees and migrants in Morocco”.

Although I did not attend the conference, the President circulated his presentation for comments. It is from this text that sanctification processes can be seen, in his representation of the situation of migrants, and consequently his representation of EEAM and the CEI. This
process mainly involves framing the narrative in a particular way in order to present the situation to a largely Christian audience at a conference organised by two Christian organisations, one of which was a donor to the CEI. Although this was just one presentation, I use it as an important example of how a leader in EEAM and the CEI can “sanctify” a situation and hence the organisation to outsiders, and in this case, to actual or potential donors.

The President, in his text, provides a brief overview of the current situation for sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, and a description of the work that the CEI does. But perhaps the most striking aspect of his speech is his point that Christian migrants face more difficulties in Morocco because of their religion. The following is an extract:

No one wants them. And as a good number of them are Christians in addition to being Africans, they have to submit to what it is possible to cynically call a “double punishment”. That is why they must put their fate in the hands of the churches, Catholic and Protestant, present on Moroccan territory. In a good number of cases, if we were not there, they will be totally alone, abandoned by all, delivered to the arbitrary and the mistreatment of general indifference (my emphasis).

By “double punishment” he means being doubly punished for being an African migrant and a Christian in Morocco. However, there is no evidence of this kind of persecution or discrimination on the basis of religion, largely because there is no clear way of knowing what a migrant’s religion is. When a migrant comes to the CEI (or to any other organisation as far as I am aware) they are not asked their religious affiliation, so there is no way of knowing whether “a good number of them” are Christians, Muslims or indeed Animists or followers of other religions. Furthermore, when migrants are arrested or expelled, the authorities are usually unaware of their religion because most of the raids by police happen quickly, violently and without warning in migrant camps and lodgings; these are raids to which all must submit, regardless of their religious affiliation. It is well documented in the media that this kind of persecution is related to the migrants’ “illegal” status, the colour of their skin and the fact that they are sub-Saharan African migrants, with no mention of their religion. Examples of disparagement in the media include articles that hold migrants responsible for increasing crime (‘Programme du gouvernement Benkirane : réforme de la justice et renforcement des droits et libertés publics’ 2012) and blaming them for youth unemployment (Jaabouk 2012).
By stating that if the churches were not there migrants would be “totally alone, abandoned by all”, the President ignores the reality and diversity of the humanitarian landscape in Morocco, where outside of the churches (EEAM and the Catholic church) there are a range of NGOs, international organisations, human rights groups, migrant-led groups and academic researchers who are active on the issue of sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco. This grouping is particularly represented by the migration platform discussed earlier in this chapter. In the President’s framing of the situation, the churches – both Protestant and Catholic – represent the only actors on the humanitarian stage helping migrants in need. This kind of framing is both strategic and supplicatory; if donors want to help migrants their only or the main recourse is supporting the churches. Furthermore, this framing is supplicatory, saying “we are the only ones, help us”. It paves the way to a role for potential church donors who can perhaps identify with struggling churches.

The President goes on to say:

> We must not ignore the double barrier of language and religion. But one thing is certain: whoever converts to Islam will see all the doors open before them …

There are no known cases, as far as I am aware, of migrants in Morocco converting to Islam in order to have “all the doors open before them” – the number of any such cases must be miniscule. There is also no evidence of a guarantee that those who convert will get better treatment. As previously stated, it is not obvious whether authorities know (or even care) what religion the migrants are. In fact, there have been accounts of Muslims who were expelled by the authorities to the Algerian border during Ramadan (the holy month of fasting for Muslims), attesting equally to the total lack of respect towards them during this period of fasting and to the non-consideration and minimum respect of Muslims by other Muslims (email communication with AM, 21 August 2012).

The “persecution” trope the President uses is useful in terms of telling a story where not only migrants, but specifically Christian migrants, are being oppressed in a Muslim country. A sanctified account is constructed, in the sense that it is framed as predominantly a (religious) ideological difference between Christians and Muslims, rather than more widely about state violence, geo-political forces and the stigmatisation of sub-Saharan African irregular migration. Although these are mentioned in his presentation, they are relegated to a secondary position. This is in line with Barnett and Stein’s (2012) account of “sanctification”, which is “… the creation of the sacred, establishment and protection of a space that is viewed as pure and separate from the profane” (p. 8). Such efforts can be seen in the President’s attempt to create an analytical space “free” from wider politics in his
representation of the situation of migrants in Morocco, avoiding a more complicated picture of the situation. As Natter (2013) argues, the relatively recent strategic response by the Moroccan authorities to irregular sub-Saharan African migration through tightened border controls and “crackdowns” was more aimed at restoring Morocco as a major political player in the region, while simultaneously concealing the irregular migration of its own nationals to Europe (Natter 2013, p. 1).

What was the President’s framing of the situation in this way meant to achieve? The situation was be represented as one where Christian donors in particular are able to fill a role in supporting not only migrants, but also fellow Christians in need. It does, however, drastically simplify the situation of migrants in Morocco. This is not to say that the President has never used or recognised a geo-political discourse; he mentioned it in my interview with him. What is interesting is the discourse he chose to take up in this presentation, one which arguably is “translated” to attract a particular (Christian) audience. This is in line with what Fountain says about translation: that it is “the process of seducing diverse actors into participating in an activity or organisation” (Fountain 2011, p. 247). Knowing which audience needs which kind of translation can make a leader a particularly effective broker of meaning.

**American donors’ visit: “supplication”**

The second example is the American donors’ visit to Morocco in October 2012. This delegation consisted of approximately 20 people from different congregations affiliated with the KBF, including a wide range of people, both men and women, of different ages (the youngest was 16). Nine KBF churches are in a church-to-church partnership with EEAM congregations, and representatives from each church were present. The week-long visit included each congregation visiting their sister church before all gathering together in Rabat for an école biblique (Bible study/workshop) for migrant women. During this visit I spent time with the Rabat delegation, whose partner church was Lexington Avenue Baptist in Danville, Kentucky. I assisted with organising and accompanying visitors, as well as providing English–French translations, as none of the Americans spoke French or Arabic.

While in Rabat, the Lexington Avenue Baptist delegation participated in the following events: a bilingual worship service on Sunday, a youth group meeting, a women’s group meeting, a Sunday school meeting, lunch with migrants in their homes, and of course the école biblique. The purpose of the events was to enable the visitors to meet their “counterparts” in EEAM’s Rabat church (for example, the youth leader of the Lexington
Avenue church was present and she met with EEAM Rabat’s youth group. Having lunch in migrants’ homes was a way for the visitors to meet some of the beneficiaries of the CEI, and to see what some of the migrants’ lives were like.

What was highlighted to me during the visit was the importance of relationship for the Americans. In my discussion with Josh Speight, Coordinator of CBF, he explained that in order for more church members to get involved in the partnership, they needed to see who the beneficiaries were through photos, stories, videos and visits like these, because “Americans have to see it to make the connection” (interview with Josh Speight, Coordinator of CBF, 5 October 2012). For this reason, the CBF “want to build our relationship on a more personal note”. In terms of funding the work of the CEI, they needed more stories from migrants that they would be able to narrate to congregation members back in the United States in order to encourage them to donate, “because stories are what works”. These personal relationships are built on the shared images and language of Christianity. For example, during the bilingual church service on Sunday in Rabat, co-led by the Lexington Avenue delegation, they read out the following responsive liturgy:

But who is my neighbour?

The stranger who has been abused, deserted, and forgotten.

But who is my neighbour?

The frightened, vulnerable refugee who has lost almost everything, but clings to faith.

But who is my neighbour?

The one who is different from me in every way – language, race, and culture – but who shares God’s call to care for the least of these.

But who is my neighbour?

The African students in Rabat and American church members in Danville who give selflessly, spreading hope throughout Morocco and Kentuck.

(Bilingual church service at EEAM, Rabat, 6 October 2012)

This was followed by a prayer “for those weaker, in difficulties” including refugees, the sick, the churches and “for those who are in financial difficulty, that they will find bread”. From this common shared language of Christianity and the idea of service and solidarity, a personal relationship can be developed between donor and beneficiary. This is exemplified in the example discussed below, where, through a sanctified form of supplication, migrants can draw on a particular common narrative, enabling the Americans to feel a rapport with them. Fresia (2006) says that supplication as an expression of suffering is:
A social construct and narrative, that is forged out of representations, interpretations and diverse social norms, but which always have a relation with reality... expressing always a certain relation with a given objective experience (Fresia 2006, p. 49).

However, despite having a shared narrative of being “united in Christ”, this can sometimes mask unequal power relations or differences and wider questions on how solidarity can be created with those who do not share this common ground. This was particularly highlighted during the organised visit to a migrant’s home by the American donors.

Lunch at a migrant’s home

A visit and lunch at a migrant’s home were scheduled for the American donors. I took a taxi with the five American women who were part of the Rabat delegation to a poorer neighbourhood in the suburbs of Rabat. We arrived in a very different environment from the city centre where the EEAM church is located, in Takadoum, a neighbourhood where a lot of migrants live. The migrants we visited lived on the top floor of an apartment building, consisting of one room which was used as a communal bedroom, and a small uncovered terrace that served as the kitchen and living room. There were three men at home and they sat us down in the terrace while they prepared lunch of food bought with money that the CEI had given them to feed us.

After introductions, the conversation in the group moved from personal stories, to faith, to suffering. The American women did not speak French, so I was translating back and forth between them and the migrant men. What struck me first was how much they could find common ground in talking about their faith and God. The conversation was replete with Biblical references on both sides; they could revert to the same images, words and reference points with ease. For example, the migrants compared their experiences to that of the people of Israel who were able to escape slavery in Egypt “by the grace of God”. And like the parting of the Red Sea by God for Moses, they believed that by God’s grace they too would be delivered from their suffering. When the Americans asked them, “How can you still have faith after everything you’ve been through?” they replied, “When you have nothing, you only have faith”. The American women nodded solemnly in agreement (although arguably they hardly knew the depth of the migrants’ desperation). This led onto talk about the nature of evil – “Why does God give us mineral riches, only for it to cause conflict?” (in reference to Congo) – and the mystery of the will of God. The migrants asked the Americans to pray for them, and to be their advocates in the United States, to “witness our story with fervor”.

141
There were many requests for prayers, and in fact praying seemed to be a part of the “exchange”; that is, not just financial aid but also spiritual aid was seen as a form of currency or help. At the end of the visit, there were many emotional expressions of affection by the Americans towards the migrants, such as, “I love you like my family”, “You have taught me so much” and “God has brought us here to meet you. I love you all”. One of them asked me if they could give money to the migrants directly.

The conversation was shaped by common religious idioms, and this enabled strangers who came from different worlds to feel like they understood each other almost immediately, particularly the Americans, who felt like they understood the migrants’ experiences through familiar reference points. Indeed, during the visit they talked about the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel where humans originally all spoke the same language, but in trying to build a tower to heaven against God’s will were dispersed into different languages and regions (Genesis 11:1). Now the thing that unites everyone is Jesus Christ: “Jesus is at the centre”. Despite not speaking the same language, the Americans felt close to the migrants because in their own eyes, and in a more important sense, they were “united in Christ”. This can be analysed through Baumann’s (2004) concept of the “grammar of encompassment”. Encompassment occurs when the Other is subsumed through emphasising universal sameness or, as in this case, their shared religious worldview. In this way, a certain degree of otherness is accepted and even rendered invisible, or denied.

In contexts like this between the migrants and the Americans, this includes an erasure of power and cultural differences. Is there a danger that actors can too easily assume to understand the Other, without the recognition of unequal power positions; without the sometimes painful recognition of difference? A further question is, what relation can the American donors have with Muslim or non-Christian migrants if their way of understanding the Other is solely based on a shared Christianity? What kind of connection is possible without this common ground? This is particularly interesting in light of what else struck me about the visit: how much the migrants asserted that their mistreatment by the authorities and Moroccan society was due to religion, not just race or xenophobia. Although they did mention the racism they suffered in Morocco, they mainly talked about the discrimination against them as Christians and that they “pray to God that they [Moroccans] will see us as human beings like them, that we are one”.

Did these migrants use religion as a strategy in order to get help from these Americans, who they knew had come because they were attached to a church, EEAM? This is not to deny that
there may be religious discrimination, but what is interesting is that this was the first time I heard about it from a migrant at the CEI. In my three months of volunteer work with the CEI talking to migrants, religious persecution was never brought up. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the Moroccan media would from time to time produce articles attacking sub-Saharan African migrants that bordered on racism, but never mentioned their religion. The most notorious example while I was in Morocco was in the magazine Maroc Hebdo, which headlined its cover page with “Le péril noir” (The black peril 2012).

Similarly as in the President’s presentation to church leaders and politicians in Germany about the situation of migrants in Morocco, the situation was framed during this visit as primarily a religious issue, erasing or dismissing the wider economic and political issues and the global interconnections and impact of the global North, including the United States and its foreign and economic policies on the global South. The discourse sets up an “us” and a “them” based on religion which never requires self-reflexive thinking and indeed can make us feel that we are on the “right” side, while avoiding a more complex picture of the situation. Again, a sanctified sphere is created that is free from the profanity of politics. One of the Americans told me during a conversation when we first met that, “people back at home said, ‘But why would you want to go to Morocco? Muslims hate Christians’”.

Unfortunately, framing the sub-Saharan migrant issue in Morocco primarily in terms of religion (as fundamentally one of Christians versus Muslims) only exacerbates these stereotypes.

To analyse this, I frame the discourse between migrants and the Americans as one of supplication, something that occurs regularly in aid-beneficiary relationships. As a former project manager who worked at the Swiss embassy’s funding program for migrant projects told me, in her work she and her colleagues always had to question whether migrants were telling them what they thought the funding staff wanted to hear about their experiences and their problems, or whether they were telling the “truth” (interview with Fatima Zahrae, 6 January 2013). This is a running motif in the context of supplication, where the person in need has the veracity of their words, experiences and suffering assessed by the person or organisation from whom they are asking for help; this is particularly the case in humanitarian contexts.

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6 Related to this, Cecilia Lynch discusses two main recent global factors impacting on humanitarianism, including neoliberal economic framework and the Global War on Terror (Lynch 2011).
In her fieldwork in a Mauritanian refugee camp in Senegal, Fresia (2006) identified three discursive registers that refugees used to express their suffering and to petition towards the administration which would be able to meet their needs. These three “discourses of suffering” (Fresia 2006, p. 46) are:

1. denunciation: of the political order, an accusatory tone;
2. humanitarian: insistence on a victimisation discourse, insistence on human rights, stereotype of the passive victim; and
3. epic order: discourse of the hero and exaltation, moral categories proper to local culture, oral culture.

I argue for a fourth discourse: a sanctified one. That is what I heard during the migrants’ visit, and that is what the President was using in his presentation, because of course aid organisations also do a form of supplication towards their donors. A sanctified discourse in supplication frames experiences and suffering within a particular narrative that is “sacred”, in the sense that it is apart or separate from the political or social aspects of the context. In the examples discussed, the complexity of the situation is narrowed down to the motif of the persecuted Christian in a Muslim world, something that was perhaps “easier” for the Americans to understand, sympathise and empathise with. This is particularly the case where relationships are fundamental to the American donors who work with the CEI. In terms of the migrants’ visit, this was a particularly effective strategy because it enabled them to build a sense of rapport and connection with the Americans almost immediately.

This is not to say that something that is a strategy has no “truth” involved. Instead, I agree with Fresia (2006), who argues that regardless of which register of suffering is used, they all have the same point: *the need for recognition* (p. 52). This need for recognition is real, and as stated by Fresia, expressions of suffering are social constructs that always have some relation with reality. It is important to recognise these processes in order to avoid falling into the trap of seeing refugees and migrants either as liars trying to take advantage of aid, or else as vulnerable victims who deserve compassion and assistance (Fresia 2006, p. 48). This is something we want to avoid in research as well, Fresia (2006) argues, because having research based on suspicion and/or compassion means that we will interpret all discourse in terms of the “truth” or as simply a strategic lie (p. 53). Avoiding binary categories of true/false enables a better understanding of the rhetoric strategies and identity constructions that are involved in requests for social assistance (Fassin 2000). And as demonstrated in this chapter, within the context of an FBO these strategies and constructions often mobilise sanctification processes.
Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the relationship of the CEI with two external actors that have had a significant impact on its discourses and practices: the Moroccan State and the CEI’s donors. I have argued that the CEI’s relationship with the state is one of a continual assertion of legitimacy on the part of EEAM and the CEI, amidst the ambiguity of the Christian presence in Morocco. An analysis was drawn about how religion is constructed and utilised in various ways for specific purposes, as well as illustrating how the CEI, like many other non-Muslim religious organisations, occupies a political space in Morocco that is inherently ambivalent. The chapter also illustrates how the CEI is in an inherent double bind in its relation to the state. In order to maintain the legitimacy of the CEI and its work on the politically sensitive topic of irregular African migration, it needs to be close to the church, which has official status with the authorities, and take refuge in a certain religious discourse that refutes any “political” action. Yet on the other hand, if it is seen to be too related to the church, the CEI can be open to accusations of proselytism, engaging in conversion activities or being confused with other unofficial “illegal” churches.

Furthermore, the CEI’s relationship with its donors and its capacity to mobilise transnational religious networks of funding involves the utilisation of a sanctified discourse, illustrated through two examples of representation and supplication. In both examples I argue that it is through a shared framework of Christianity that the CEI through various brokers – including migrants themselves – is able to “translate” the migrant experience in Morocco to donors who live in a completely different world geographically, culturally and economically. Brokerage, therefore, is an important mechanism of mediation for the CEI, with brokers able to mediate across a vast cultural and economic divide through mobilising a common discourse of religion. In this way sanctification processes are used in the donor relationship to mark off an analytical space free from the political and social, to focus solely on the religious. The CEI’s primary role in its relationship with donors is to be this kind of “broker of meaning” by mobilising particular sanctification processes.

It is the CEI’s relationships with outside others that clearly demonstrate sanctification processes being used by various actors and that the existence of an organisation such as the CEI acting in the public sphere can put into question many taken-for-granted binaries between religion and politics, and religion and the secular. An unsettling of these distinct categories has consequences for how we understand the role of religion in humanitarian aid, as we come to see how in actual practice, the category of religion is much more blurred and dependent on strategies and processes utilised by different actors. The next chapter examines this in further detail, in terms of how religion affects the organisation’s mission and identity.
CHAPTER 6. ORGANISATIONAL MISSION AND IDENTITY

This chapter examines how certain ideas of Christianity, service and the secular are mobilised and translated into an FBO’s mission and identity. I advance the argument that what I define as a prevailing enchanted humanitarianism permeates the work for the staff at the CEI, through a vernacular theology of “holism” and “lifestyle evangelism” (Bornstein 2005). An analysis of this enchanted humanitarianism reveals that the tension between evangelism and humanitarianism is at the heart of the fundamental identity ambiguity of the organisation.

This study uses “evangelism” to mean activities involved in spreading the gospel, and term “evangelisation” to refer to the process of spreading the gospel (Bosch 1991, p. 419). Spreading the gospel is the verbal communication of the Christian message; that is, it involves “the proclamation of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in him, calling them to repentance and conversion” (Bosch 1991, p. 11). As mentioned in Chapter 2, this thesis uses an approach to religion and to the secular that holds there is no transhistorical or transcultural essence of religion or of the religious/secular distinction; that religion and the secular are constructions in a certain period in time and history and that “what counts as religious or secular in any given context is a function of political configurations of power”. (Cavanaugh 2009, p. 4). This chapter examines the ways in which Christian and secular values are constructed and translated into the organisation’s mission and identity.

I first provide a brief overview on the wider historical debates around evangelism and social action through considering various international conferences and statements issued by church federations. To provide an understanding of the CEI as an organisation, an outline is presented of the organisation’s structure, activities, values and mission. After analysing data gathered through participant observation and formal interviews during fieldwork, this study defines the term “enchanted humanitarianism”, arguing that it permeates the organisation through a vernacular theology of holism and lifestyle evangelism. The way that sanctification and secularisation processes are mobilised within this enchanted humanitarianism is examined through concrete examples of the hiring of staff, issues about flexibility of criteria and the ways the CEI negotiates its Christian presence through its work.
Between evangelism and social action: a wider context

The debate and tension between evangelism and social service is probably the biggest issue in 20th century theology of mission discussions. In his seminal text examining Christian missions and the missionary idea over the past 20 centuries, South Africa missiologist David Bosch (1991) concludes there is no single “theology of mission”, but rather a “pluriverse” and “multi-coloured mosaic” of sometimes complementary and sometimes contending models of missions (p. 8). However, he states that mission includes evangelism as one of its essential dimensions, where evangelism is central to mission but not to be equated with it; rather it is part of a wider range of church activities (Bosch 1991, p. 11). This echoes Moltmann’s statement that “evangelisation is mission, but mission is not merely evangelisation” (Moltmann 1977, p. 10). Bosch argues that evangelism is a call to service, and consequently cannot be separated from the preaching and practice of justice (1991, p. 427). Indeed, this debate on the exact roles of and relationship between evangelism and service has been part of the history of churches on a global level rethinking the idea of mission to incorporate issues of social justice. The term used in this context is “integral mission”, where mission is understood as proclaiming the gospel as well as compassionate service and advocacy for justice, as both word and action.

Latin American theologian and missiologist René Padilla (2003) traces the development of this debate on integral mission through international evangelical conferences. These conversations all aimed at determining this relationship between evangelism and social responsibility in mission, and sometimes had the aim of transcending the traditional dichotomy between the two. Padilla traces a change after the end of World War II, with a proliferation of declarations focused on integral mission, such as the The Wheaton Declaration of 1966 by the Congress on the World Mission of the Church; the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin in 1966 and the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern in 1973. However, the definitive affirmation of integral mission as the mission of the church occurred at the Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne in 1974: the Lausanne Convenant. The Convenant provided a theological basis for Christian involvement in social justice, as can be seen in the following paragraph from it:

Because mankind is made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive … For both are expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour.
and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead (Stott 1986, p. 24).

This evangelical turn towards the implications of social justice in the mission of the Church did not emerge without contention and disagreement. For example, organisers of the next major international conference sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) in Pattaya, Thailand in 1980, made a special effort to ensure that the task of world evangelism was regarded as the primal mission of the church. However, in what was considered the strongest evangelical commitment to integral mission to date, the Wheaton 1983 Statement, which was drawn up at the end of the Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need in Wheaton, Illinois in 1983, the writers concluded that congregations must not limit themselves to traditional ministries, but “must also address issues of evil and social injustice in the local community and the wider society” (‘The Wheaton Declaration’ 1966). The Wheaton Statement unequivocally affirmed integral mission as an essential part of the Christian mission, making Bosch claim that “[f]or the first time in an official statement emanating from an international evangelical conference the perennial dichotomy [between evangelism and social involvement] was overcome” (Bosch 1991, p. 407).

Despite these developments and the affirmation of integral mission, that is, of the need for both evangelism and service/social justice, and a seeming overcoming of the dichotomy between these two elements of mission on the international level, an analysis of the CEI demonstrates that in practice and in particular contexts actors negotiate ambiguities around these two elements of mission.

**CEI values, mission, activities and structure**

The official values, mission, activities and structure of the CEI can be observed in its own document, the CEI Internal Rules. This document states that the CEI was created as an independent organism working with those in need outside of the church, but as the years passed the CEI was confronted with a phenomenon that was affecting the congregation of
the CEI itself as well as its surrounding environment: the growing presence of sub-Saharan African students, migrants and asylum seekers. EEAM wanted to be able to respond to these “desperate and forgotten people”, and in 2004 turned its activities towards the migrant community.

The Internal Rules also state that the CEI has been given an ecclesial mission of assisting people in difficulty, and as part of this spiritual mission, is assimilated as a section of EEAM. Correspondingly, it sees itself as obeying the commandment of love in responding to the realities of the geo-political situation the church find itself in; that is, the context of sub-Saharan African migration. The Internal Rules also state that the CEI’s work is dictated by the lived reality of all Christians – by the presence of the resurrected Christ in their lives, and the way the Christian him or herself becomes an agent of this resurrection in the world. Through this, they participate in the transformation of the world by God. The organisation’s Christian vocation is evident; the CEI staff pray at the beginning of each drop-in “to not just give material aid, but also human warmth” (CEI fieldworker).

The Internal Rules document ties the CEI’s operation to Biblical values of love, compassion and service at the heart of the Christian vocation: “You have received freely, give freely” (Matthew 10:8). The Internal Rules state that the organisation gives aid to all people, outside of all consideration linked to ethnic belonging, colour of skin, origins or religious beliefs – it rejects any discriminatory criteria. This is in line with the parable of the “Good Samaritan” and an example of action without discrimination; indeed, the Good Samaritan story was referenced to me in several interviews in regards to the CEI:

… because Christ demanded us to be at the service of our neighbour. To help people whatever their origin. We share the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. This person helped someone on his way without knowing if she was of Jewish origin or not. For us, it is the Lord who demands that we help everyone without distinction (interview with Diachari Poudigiou, National Coordinator, 4 October 2012).

It is within this context that the CEI’s mission is to provide a range of services to its beneficiaries. Despite the Internal Rules stating that the CEI is also the instrument of EEAM for responding to the needs of its members in difficulty, in practice the direct aid given is particularly targeted at refugees and migrants at the drop-ins. Other services include professional training; financial support for micro-projects with the aim of giving people autonomy; encouragement and support for the learning of Darija (Moroccan Arabic) in order to help with the education of children of refugees (to this end there is a Darija class at the
church on the weekend); a scholarship for sub-Saharan African university students; help with returning to their country of origin for those who have expressed a wish to do so; and spiritual accompaniment in the form of pastoral care, spiritual guidance and prayers.

The structure of the CEI is divided into three main activities:

1. **The assistance and emergency aid program**: This consists of providing food and medical help, clothing and blanket donations, help with housing, psychological accompaniment for those in need of it, and spiritual accompaniment for all Christians who ask for it. This direct aid is usually given during the regular drop-ins held at the church, where migrants can come to request help. The structure and organisation of these drop-ins vary from city to city, depending on the resources available and the enthusiasms and personalities of the local teams at each site, as described in Chapter 2.

2. **The scholarship and help with return program**: This consists of scholarships for students in difficulty, and assistance with returning to their home countries for students and/or migrants and refugees. Recent statistics from the scholarship program show that it assists 67 students from 20 different African countries, who each receive 750 dirhams per month. This program of the CEI is to allow sub-Saharan African students who have financial difficulties to continue their studies.

3. **Professional training and financial support for micro-projects**: The main focus here is to offer short but intensive vocational training to migrants and refugees to allow them to make a living and become financially autonomous. The beneficiaries of the training (trainers and students) are all migrants and refugees. This includes training in hairdressing, sewing, carpentry, mechanics and tapestry.

“Enchanted humanitarianism” and vernacular theology

The assistance and emergency aid program of activities is particularly targeted at irregular migrants. In her ethnography examining a Protestant FBO in Zimbabwe, Bornstein (2003) articulates an idea of “enchanted development”, wherein Christian discourse transforms development into a sacralising act, permeating all aspects of the organisation. In this chapter I argue that the CEI, in its work with migrants, is similarly permeated by a Christian discourse, such that some within the organisation see themselves as practising what I would term an enchanted humanitarianism. Although this depends to a degree on individual actors, there is a prevailing “enchantment” within the organisation’s official and everyday discourse that translates into how some of the workers see their mission and identity:
We are priests of God, not humanitarian workers, we are in the service of God. We are here to limit the Devil’s work until salvation comes. Our energy could push them towards God, prayer does this. Not service to humans only, but to God (Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, CEI prayer day, 5 September 2012).

In this quote, recorded during a prayer day for the CEI team in Rabat, a CEI pastor highlights the purpose of the CEI workers (“the service of God”), their goal (“to limit the Devil’s work until salvation comes”) and their identity (“[w]e are priests of God, not humanitarian workers”). This pastor delineated his work as a pastor’s and not a humanitarian worker’s, although others may see his compassionate ministry as humanitarian in effect, and a more holistic view of mission would describe his mission and ministry – in a holistic or integral framework – as validly humanitarian, as an expression of loving your neighbour. But the pastor’s rhetoric reframes the CEI’s compassionate work (arguably equivalent to humanitarianism) as a priestly service to God and neighbour. In this way, the work is sanctified and becomes an expression of faith. Within an enchanted humanitarianism, faith also provides the motivation and logic of the work. As one fieldworker succinctly put it:

The CEI acts in the name of the church, all of the CEI’s activities are based towards our neighbour. The CEI works for migrants but also for God... the first motivation is that we are in the process of intervening in the suffering of our neighbour. You see, that is a Biblical recommendation … All of this is translated into acts: giving clothes, money, et cetera, and it is here that it becomes social. What is fundamental for the CEI, they intervene with their belief, their conviction for God (interview with Juml, fieldworker, 5 December 2012).

Furthermore, Biblical references and imagery provide the basis for the work specifically with migrants:

It was the Lord who said “Raise yourself and go to the country that I’ve found for you and your family”. Abraham is our ancestor. And we follow Abraham because the earth does not belong to us, she belongs to God. Because when you see that it is difficult, you can go elsewhere to find a better life because the earth belongs to no one except God (interview with Angel, fieldworker, 13 November 2012).
This enchanted humanitarianism can be analysed through its “vernacular theology”, tracing some of the ways in which this discourse informs organisational identity and objectives; as Cannell asks, “What difference does Christianity make?” (Cannell 2006, p. 1). According to Watson, vernacular theology, as opposed to systematic theology, aims to go beyond the clerical to show how theology is lived and expressed in everyday life: “a catchall, which in principle could include any kind of writing, sermon or play that communicates theological information to an audience” (Watson 1995, p. 822) or as Fountain (2013) defines it, “the everyday circulation of religious ideas” (p. 19). I take this to include how religious ideas are infused through the way people talk about their work, hold meetings and make organisational decisions. However, this does not necessarily equal coherence or mean that these religious ideas are uncontested within an organisation, particularly in a context where the church space is a transnational religious one marked by diversity and contestation, as discussed in Chapter 5.

**Holism and lifestyle evangelism**

The vernacular theology within the CEI centres around a discourse of “holism” and “lifestyle evangelism” (Bornstein 2005). “Holism” aims at bridging the gap between the spiritual and material worlds, and combining spiritual and material transformation, “not solely to take care of people’s material needs, but also to feed them spiritually” (Bornstein 2005, p. 48). “Lifestyle evangelism” involves living the example of Christ, in the hope that it will touch non-believers (Bornstein 2005, p. 50). These twin aspects can be seen in the CEI, and indeed are what some actors have highlighted as being the crucial difference between the CEI and other secular organisations. In terms of holism, many of the staff expressed that Jesus was the model for addressing both spiritual and material needs in their work:

> I think that faith is very important, social work is part of our faith. We follow the way of our Lord Jesus who did both at the same time. He helped people but also taught, evangelised. He shared his spiritual life with people at the same time as helping them too. It is impossible to separate things in the life of Jesus. We cannot say: “Here is the moment where he only taught, and here is the moment he helped a person … It’s very simple, to take care of the human being in a global way. To not separate the body from the soul. The spiritual part from the physical part (interview with Carlos Funk, Director and Pastor of CEI, 12 October 2012).
In terms of lifestyle evangelism, this was particularly articulated during the CEI Rabat team’s prayer day. A prayer day was organised for the CEI team after the summer break, as a way to invigorate the staff spiritually for their return to work. This day included a sermon, singing and praying together. In his sermon Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango said that migrants who come to the CEI might see how the workers behaved with compassion and become interested in coming to the church, that the CEI team is “like the bridge between the church and the migrants”. Through their compassionate behaviour, he said, the workers could potentially be leading the migrants towards Christ because “evangelisation is our existence”. But he drew the line at proselytisation – “otherwise one day we will be stopped by the Moroccan authorities” – instead saying that they “give people food and clothing, but we pray that God will touch their souls”. This shows the fine line the church negotiates between not proselytising and still evangelising through behaviour and lifestyle. This chapter demonstrates how this line is the source of much ambiguity and tension in the CEI, even as faith is the source of motivation and meaning for the members’ work.

**Some examples**

Within enchanted humanitarianism and the vernacular theology of holism and lifestyle evangelism, what was deemed as “sacred” and “secular” depended on specific actors, and certain concepts of both terms were utilised both as a justification for certain practices and decisions and a way of interpreting them. In the rest of this chapter I explore how this translated into the approach and motivations of the CEI; that is, the impact on its organisational mission and identity. The next section examines specific examples of the ambivalence of the organisation’s Christian presence and how this ambivalence translates into whether the actors see themselves as doing “God’s work” or humanitarian work; the identity of CEI staff as a reflection of organisational identity; and flexibility from rigid criteria as a way of sanctifying the CEI’s work.

“God’s work” or humanitarian work? A message of (Christian) presence in a Muslim country

In an enchanted humanitarianism, a message of specifically Christian presence is important, particularly within a vernacular theology of lifestyle evangelism where the actors hope to “announce the Gospel” through their actions and behaviour. Therefore, their Christian identity is fundamental to the mission of both the church and the CEI, even despite, or perhaps more so in, a context where their presence is “tolerated” and the threat of no longer being tolerated always looms near:
All action by the CEI is a challenge. Even its existence is a challenge. Already in a Islamic context, in a state that is not secular, to exist like a religious organisation is not easy (interview with Diachari Poudigio, National Coordinator, 5 September 2012).

This message of Christian identity is evident in the CEI logo (see Figure 2). There is a cross, a Christian symbol, but also a blue crescent, an Islamic symbol. As the National Coordinator said to me, it represents a Christian presence in a Muslim world. But, he added, it is a challenge to carry this cross, “[b]ecause the cross scares people. For me it’s not easy to carry this logo. The challenge therefore is to exist like a religious organisation in a Muslim country and amongst other organisations” (interview with Diachar Poudigio, National Coordinator, 5 September 2012). But this cross is important to carry, because the CEI loses its reason for being if it loses its identification with the church – “otherwise we’re just like any other NGO here”. This is in line with church as a sign and a sacrament (Bosch 1991, p. 11). Here, the church works as a sign in terms of being a symbol, an example and a model. It is also a sacrament because it engages in mediation, representation and anticipation. The church is a foretaste of what is to come, “a fragment of the reign of God” (Bosch 1991, p. 11).

![CEI logo image](image)

**Figure 2. CEI logo**

The discourse around the CEI’s identity can also be analysed through Baumann’s (2004) concept of the “grammar of orientalisation”, where the construction of a collective identity is based around a construction of an “us” and an “other” in a process referred to as “selfing” and “othering”. This is particularly illustrated by how some actors conceive of their work as sanctified, in contrast to that of an NGO, humanitarianism and the “secular”. For example, the President pointed out that despite there being similarities between his religious
convictions and secular convictions such as human rights – “human rights had religious roots, God has made us all equal” – there is a fundamental difference between the CEI and an NGO, which he sees as being slowly eroded within:

President: And I fight internally within the CEI, because it’s the natural tendency … we say that we must grow, we must grow, we are in the ideology of growth, we will talk to the Swiss embassy, the French embassy, we will talk to other funders, we will hire Moroccans, and then we will become an NGO. We will hire Moroccans. We will professionalise things. Little by little, the church will become less important.

Researcher: But why is it necessary that if you become more professional, the church will have less of a role?

President: Because it is not their work. Because the work of the church is to announce the Gospel; it cannot do it. [An NGO] is a job, an occupation. You know David Cantero from MSF, that guy is a pro, he’s efficient. He does excellent work where he is. He is a real pro; we, we will never be pros. I am a pro of the church. I want to be a pro of the church.

Researcher: But can the church also be efficient, like David?

President: But is David efficient in announcing the Gospel? There is the real work of the church (interview with Samuel Amedro, President, 8 September 2012).

Here the President equates growth of the CEI with professionalisation, and with this a consequent diminishing role of the church; that is, a secularisation. Professionalisation and efficiency are seen as the CEI’s “other”; it takes away from the real work of the church (announcing the gospel) and its activity is contrasted with how a “pro” of the church should be. The fear is one of losing the (Christian) identity of the CEI, and with this losing what the President sees as the essence and unique contribution of its work:

But I think we can do something very specific, spiritual accompaniment, to pray with people, that is enormous. When I’m in Oujda in the forest, or in Fes in the station carriages, these young people ask me to pray with them. They don’t ask for food or clothing, they ask me “Can we pray together, pastor?” THAT, no one is doing. Because I am conscious that what we bring is unique in terms of NGOs. That’s why I wanted a pastor to be Director of
CEI, that’s why I want the local pastors of each church to be involved, so that we are not only taking care of their health, but that we are also praying with them. The unique thing that we can bring, that others can’t bring because they are not a church (interview with Samuel Amedro, President, 8 September 2012).

This further points to what, in the grammar of orientalisation, is called the process of “negative mirror imaging” (Baumann 2004, p. 121), where a “self” is created by emphasising what is lacking in the other as being present in the self, and vice versa. For example, Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango said in his sermon during the CEI prayer day:

The church is NOT doing humanitarian work. We can be more flexible with the rules, humanitarian organisations like MSF are just doing their job. If they’re finished, they’re finished, we will at least continue to listen to them … We are the instrument for this love of God that is not the goal of secular organisations (Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, 8 August 2012).

The conception is of the CEI as in opposition to humanitarian organisations, who are “just doing their job”. The CEI is what the “other” (humanitarian organisations, NGOs, secular organisations) is not; a sanctified versus secular way of doing things. This also implies that they do their work differently, as expanded upon by a fieldworker:

We save above all first the person, that is really the difference between the CEI and other (secular) associations like MSF and TdH, et cetera. We are different because we are firstly Christians, and the framework in which we work is in the church. So that does not permit us to be hard, to delay things. We have to work according to the recommendations of the Lord, “Help your neighbour, love your neighbour like yourself” (interview with Angel, fieldworker, 25 August 2012).

Humanitarian work is constructed as secular, as something inherently opposed to the sanctified nature of a religious organisation. However, whether staff identified the CEI as primarily a church organisation or a humanitarian one is more complicated than an either/or binary. For example, although at the CEI prayer day Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango preached that they were doing God’s work and not humanitarian work, in my official interview with the pastor he responded differently:

I think that we give humanitarian aid. We are in an activity essentially humanitarian. Now it depends on the way we see it. What pushes us to give this aid, is our Christian values (notably the diaconie). For example, if I see a
secular person, I would not use the term “diaconie” because they will not understand. Perhaps humanitarianism is another way to call diaconie. In a secular society, what we call diaconale we call humanitarian … I said to you that we are a religious organisation but the type of service we offer is of a humanitarian type. It’s like any other organisation, you give help to whoever needs it (interview with Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, 4 October 2012).

This was very much in contrast with the distinction he made between the work of humanitarian organisations and the CEI during the CEI prayer day; as quoted above, he said he saw the CEI as not doing humanitarian work. But during our interview, he described the CEI as “like any other organisation”; that is, like secular humanitarian organisations where there is no question mark over whether religion plays a role in the social aid. The discourse, then, can change depending on the context and the audience. During the prayer day, the pastor was addressing a CEI team made up of believers; during our interview he was addressing a student researcher, and in his response he may have made assumptions about what my stance was, as well as – considering the context – been keen to underline to outsiders that the CEI does not engage in proselytisation.

In our interview, the pastor went on to make a traditionally secular distinction; that of the secular/religious divide, subscribing to a secular definition that frames religion as personal belief which does not enter into the public sphere:

I try to situate myself, in the context I am, in the framework in which I work. Am I in the context of witnessing, or am I in the context of service in the diaconie. I am comfortable everywhere … When I am in witnessing, we are in evangelisation; in the context of the CEI we are there for service, with a lot of dignity, with a lot of love. I limit myself to that. But when I return home, I pray to the Lord to touch the heart of the person so that she can discover his love. That is something personal that I do as Jean-Marie, in my relation with God (interview with Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, 4 October 2012).

This was not what he preached to the CEI team members during its prayer day; he did not advocate putting a barrier or distinction between their faith and their work at the CEI. Indeed, he fully subscribed there to a version of “lifestyle evangelism” where the team members were conceived as being “priests of God”, whose role was to limit evil in the world until their Lord returned.
God’s work is spiritual, God enters into the church, is in the church. Therefore we need to work in a spiritual way to get results. This is contrary to secular NGOs (Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, CEI prayer day, 8 August 2012).

Pastor Kisango’s words show that the line between what is “sacred” and what is “secular” can be blurred and change depending on the context. The CEI’s work can be defined as either sacred and secular depending on who the perceived audience is, and a particular discourse (for example, that of secular humanitarianism) can be mobilised for a specific purpose.

Other staff members held contrary views to those of the President. For example, Pastor Karen Smith argued that the CEI does in fact do humanitarian work:

What’s the definition of humanitarian work? Providing human aid. That’s what we do. It’s not only what we do, we have this other dimension. When I meet with groups, I’m a pastor, most of them are in a faith crisis as well, so I pray with them (interview with Pastor Karen Smith, 5 October 2012).

Smith adopts and articulates a more integral view of mission, without any hesitance to own her identity and ministry as both humanitarian and pastoral. Similarly, when I asked the Vice-President of the CEI (who is a volunteer) if she would be interested in volunteering with an association that was not faith-based, she replied:

That it is not faith-based is not a good enough reason in itself. If it is about “staying amongst ourselves” and not actually making a difference, not actually reaching those in need, then I’m not interested. The CEI is like that, with its refusal to hire Moroccan employees (interview with AM, Vice-President, 21 October 2012).

The importance of being a Christian presence is highlighted by some of the actors, with a particular Christian identity, mission and approach inextricably linked to the CEI. In addition, there is a fear of increasing professionalisation of the CEI and the loss of what is seen as the essence of their work, spiritual accompaniment. This is a discourse largely constructed around a grammar of orientalisation (Baumann 2004), where a sanctified church organisation is situated as being opposite to its “other” – NGOs and humanitarian and secular organisations. This is the creation of an identity based on a binary between “self” and “other”, where the other lacks everything that the self is, and vice versa.
Situating this perspective within a wider context, it can be viewed in regards to a trend of the professionalisation and modernisation of the humanitarian sector since the creation of the international human rights regime, and the growing need for humanitarian organisations since World War II. With the globalisation of humanitarianism, all organisations underwent processes of rationalisation, modernisation, professionalisation and universalisation to fit into standardised frameworks of efficiency, accountability and evaluation (Key 2011, p. 15). In his study of humanitarian organisations Barnett found very little difference between secular organisations and FBOs in this respect:

> Over the last two decades the humanitarian sector has gone from incredible diversity to remarkable similarity, suggesting as if there is not a religious or secular way to run an organisation – instead, there is a modern way that is superior to the pre-modern way of doing things (Barnett 2009, p. 4).

Alongside the global expansion of humanitarianism through modernisation and professionalisation, there was also a corresponding homogenisation of organisational structure and activities between religious and secular organisations. The fears of some within the CEI of increasing professionalisation and secularisation can be regarded within this context of a wider change in humanitarianism, and reflects their desire to maintain what it is that makes the CEI “different”.

**Identity of staff: hiring issues**

The debate within the CEI regarding the hiring of non-Christian staff is particularly revealing of the issue of organisational identity. The decision not to hire Moroccan employees in the CEI (as well as its contestation) hinged on the argument that staff are an important reflection of church identity and presence in the CEI, with the role of CEI staff seen by some as being heralders of the presence of God and of the Christian presence in Morocco. A crucial aspect of lifestyle evangelism is the hiring of “committed Christians” (Bornstein 2005, p. 59) in order to uphold the Christian motivation and meaning of their work. This was also a debated issue within the CEI. During an interview with the President, I asked him about the question of hiring non-Christians:

> Researcher: So you are saying that those who want to get involved with an NGO must go and find that with a real NGO, because that is not the work of the church?
President: Yes. The first goal of the church is to announce the Gospel, through accompanying the whole person - the spiritual, the material, the physical, the mental. A Moroccan Christian (could be hired), if not, he does not share the fundamentals. He is missing half, he is missing the essential (interview with Samuel Amedro, President, 8 September 2012).

Similarly, when I interviewed the Director of the CEI, he had this to say about the employment of non-Christian staff:

If we were an NGO that would be different. But as we are a church, I believe that we must work with a Christian, but if a non-Christian person wants to work as a volunteer, they can work also. But I think it is important that the employees be Christian so that the organisation can continue to work with Christian values. Otherwise the organisation secularises and loses its values. It’s something I observed in France. There are organisations born in the Church and they hired non-Christian people. In the end, the organisation became totally separated from the Church. For me, it is important to continue with Christians so that the CEI continues to have Christian values (interview with Carlos Funk, Director and Pastor of CEI, 12 October 2012, my emphasis).

Funk feared the “secularisation” of the organisation if it resembled too closely an NGO and became too distant from the church. A particular notion of the secular is utilised here. In this context, it is opposite to what they saw as the sanctified essential nature of their work, one that encompasses their values:

In the big projects that we do ask for a lot of time, energy, checking, lots of professionalism, I’m scared that we will forget the essential, our specificity, which is spiritual accompaniment … Because the work of the church is to announce the Gospel; it cannot do it. [An NGO] is a job, an occupation (interview with Samuel Amedro, President, 8 September 2012).

“Secularisation” here is equated with “professionalisation” and a loss of the sanctification of the CEI’s work and values. This is expressed as the fear of the CEI losing its specifically Christian identity. It is presumed that a non-Christian therefore could not practise lifestyle evangelism in the organisation; they would be “missing half … the essential”. In addition, Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango stated that the believer was given something by God that gave them more of a disposition for helping others:
On a theological order, we think that God [has] put something special in the heart of the believer. By his relation with God, God releases things that change, that makes them capable, more disposable for helping others. It’s a little the direction and result of God changing the heart of man, in his attitudes (Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, CEI Prayer day, 8 August 2012).

Juml, a CEI fieldworker in Rabat, expressed a similar sentiment, emphasising the value and practice of compassion that the church especially values:

These feelings of guilt or compassion makes us different from humanitarian organisations. There is more compassion in the CEI than in other organisations. The church preaches compassion (interview with Juml, fieldworker, 28 November 2012).

The pastor and the fieldworker are highlighting that there is a specifically Christian disposition or Christian way of doing things, of relating to others (“more compassion”) due to their relationship with God. It would therefore not make sense to hire a non-Christian, who would be missing this extra dimension. This discernment about who to hire as staff highlights the importance for some within the CEI for staff to act as “witnesses”, to be the living presence of Christianity. As discussed regarding the CEI logo, the staff members’ presence and the way they work becomes both a sign and sacrament; the message “announcing the Gospel” where “‘giving a witness’ (evangelising) was a matter of identity and was integral to who the employees were, and how they behaved” (Bornstein p. 13). The President elaborated further on this:

Who will work in the field? If we have people who are convinced, who can bring a tent as well as a Bible, those who can engage spiritually, have spiritual convictions. They will become naturally witnesses. So we will build tents and afterwards pray to thank God and to ask him to bless the tents … [We] make a bridge between the church and what’s happening in the forest camps or the quartier populaire (interview with Samuel Amedro, President, 8 September 2012).

Included in the argument against hiring non-Christians, in particular Muslims, was the fear of being accused of proselytisation by the Moroccan authorities. This was illustrated during the CEI annual meeting, where a discussion took place about the withdrawal of MSF from Morocco (for reasons internal to MSF), and in particular from Oujda, the border town between Morocco and Algeria where many migrants attempt to cross over and also the place where many migrants are expelled across the border by the authorities. MSF had a much-
needed presence there, giving medical care and distributing blankets and tents to migrants living in the forests around Oujda. There are only a limited number of NGOs and organisations working in Oujda, and the withdrawal of MSF would have a significant impact on services for migrants. The CEI in Oujda distribute food to migrants twice a month, but the local team said they needed more human resources and transport, as well as more financial means. MSF, in departing from Morocco, were leaving behind a car, office furniture and also local staff (sub-Saharan African but Muslim). MSF had approached the CEI with the idea of taking the car and also of taking on some of the local staff as CEI fieldworkers in Oujda.

During the discussion around this, the President put forward his concerns about hiring people who are not part of the church, because “the CEI has to stay part of the church”. He was joined by the Director of the CEI, who said, “If they are Muslim, it’s strange for them to be hired by the church”. “And dangerous”, said the President. “For who?” asked an American donor who was present at the meeting. This donor had previously expressed his desire for the CEI not to be only a “band-aid” solution when the discussion evolved around the CEI only distributing food bags and not undertaking advocacy work, where similarly an argument was put forward that advocacy work was too dangerous for the CEI. The President responded that if Muslims were involved they could be accused of proselytism, referring to the 2010 expulsions of European Christians from Morocco – including the pastor working in the CEI at the time – and that hiring non-Muslims was “too dangerous for the church”. This exchange at the meeting between the President and the American donor demonstrated some of the ambivalence about what was deemed dangerous for the CEI, and how this was to be mitigated.

This is particularly the case because some within the Management Committee disagree with the President about the issue of hiring non-Christian staff. The Vice-President of the CEI stated later in an interview with me that she was open to hiring non-Christians, particularly Moroccans with local knowledge, because “how could it interfere with things getting done?” She was adamant that the CEI should hire people based on the job description, if they fit the criteria. Similarly, Pastor Karen Smith believed that the CEI could both be a church organisation and have non-Christian staff, that the two were not mutually exclusive:

For me, make it clear that it’s a church organisation, there’s a lot of church organisations I know that have Muslims working for them, with them and who share their values, and its very clear it’s a church organisation. You could have field agents who are Muslim who have a specific skill set, and who are willing to work for a church organisation, and to say yeah I work for
a church, we’re not ashamed of that … You just have to be clear who you are when you come in, not oh we have a Muslim here so we can’t pray. No, we can still pray, we’re a church organisation, we can still pray. And they’re cool with that. So, be clear on your identity, and you can certainly have Muslims (interview with Pastor Karen Smith, 3 November 2012).

Smith went on to add that the CEI has had a lot of Muslim volunteers in the past, and that people with skills who can fulfil a certain need of the CEI should be hired regardless of their religious affiliations. Efficiency, being able to “do the job well” was something valued by some in the CEI, and not by others. It is revealing of the tension around the disagreement on the fundamental mission and identity of the CEI. It is also revealing of how efficiency, growth and “professionalisation” become constructed as secular characteristics in contrast to an essentially spiritual mission of the CEI, as contrary to announcing the gospel.

At the crux of the question of hiring non-Christian staff within the CEI are the questions “Who are we?” and “How do we maintain our identity in what is perceived as a hostile environment?” It is revealing of a real struggle about what type of FBO the CEI wants to be. For example, the National Coordinator of the CEI highlighted the CEI’s legal status as being the reason why it has to be close to the church:

Caritas is an NGO with its own legal status. That is not the case of the CEI, the CEI is in the church. We do not have legal status, no charter. We just have internal rules. That’s what makes the difference between the CEI and an NGO like Caritas (interview with Diachari Poudigo, National Coordinator of CEI, 8 December 2012).

Caritas is an organisation that does hire non-Christians (including Muslims), and some within the CEI believe this is an important difference between the CEI and Caritas, despite both being FBOs in Morocco working with migrants. The point I would like to highlight here is that the CEI’s legal status is one that has been chosen, for reasons previously cited in this chapter that are related to CEI identity (keeping close to the church, maintaining Christian values and fearing “secularisation”). Others argue that the CEI should have a separate legal status, as that would enable it to access funding which it currently cannot as a church organisation. For example, Jean-Louis, team leader at CEI Rabat, believes that they are missing out on a lot of funding for the CEI because of this (interview with Jean-Louis, 5 September 2012).
The question of whether to hire non-Christians in the CEI is revealing of the identity question within the organisation. Some fear a secularisation and professionalisation of the organisation, and a consequent loss of the church’s identity and purpose, which would be exemplified by the hiring of non-Christians. This points to the importance for some of a lifestyle evangelism within the CEI, where the presence of Christians acts as a form of “witnessing” of the gospel. The fear of being accused of proselytising is a further argument put forward against hiring non-Christians, specifically Muslims. However, instead of separating the CEI from the church in order to freely hire competent staff regardless of their religion, the church decides not to hire Muslims. This highlights that the question of hiring non-Christians is fundamentally a question of organisational identity and mission, rather than about the dangers of being accused of proselytisation.

Flexibility from rigid criteria: “We are not slaves to criteria!”

Another issue that is revealing of organisational identity and mission is the discourse around the flexibility of criteria within the organisation as a freedom the CEI specifically had because it was a Christian organisation. Positioning themselves against secular organisations, some within the CEI argued that they had a freedom from criteria and rules when giving aid to migrants; criteria in terms of who is eligible for aid, who is the priority, and how to give. In my conversations with various CEI staff, there was a structuring of a kind of “sanctified” freedom from organisational criteria versus “secular” rules and regulations. This was sanctified in the sense that these staff saw their capacity to be flexible with criteria as explicitly coming from their faith and Christian values, in this way marking them as different from secular organisations which supposedly did not have these values.

In this construction, “secular” meant more bureaucracy and procedures, hampering a humane, God-inspired response to the migrants. The CEI’s freedom from strict criteria as opposed to secular aid organisations is a particularly “sanctified” feature of the CEI, linked to its connection with the church. This was articulated by Angel, a fieldworker in Rabat, who highlighted how this flexibility came specifically from Christian values:

As for us, we really function on the love of our neighbour. We work for Christ, it really is more spiritual with us. We see the person, we don’t see the administration. We see the person in front of us and we react immediately. Because we think that in the time of administrative work we can lose the person … We act directly with the heart. Even the money for a taxi, we give first and do the accounting after … It’s really the work of the Lord. The Lord said, “I was naked, you clothed me. I was hungry, you gave food. You gave
me shelter”. It’s really these words that we apply here at the CEI. We act first with the heart, and we do the paperwork after (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

The point is not whether this is actually how the workers in the CEI operate, but rather that they see it as an important attribute of the CEI. In their eyes their Christian faith inspires another way of working, one that requires them to be, at the end, accountable to their God:

Other associations will say that a woman who has given birth can come to their office for an appointment. Me, I could never do that. I must go [there] to help her. The food bag is there, the blanket is there, but you don’t give it to them. If she dies, you must be accountable before the Lord. What will she do with appointments in her precarious situation? (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

The flexibility from rigid criteria and being able to respond spontaneously and compassionately to the human in front of them is constructed as a sanctified aspect of the CEI staff’s work. With this are assumptions about the quality of care and behaviour that workers from the CEI will naturally show in their work – they are considered naturally more compassionate, humane and patient due to their religious values and beliefs:

By our religious values we are obliged to be patient, to show respect to the person. To go further. People say that they are better welcomed by us than by other organisations (interview with Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, 30 October 2012).

Here, Pastor Kisango is implying that those without religious faith will not have those same values, constructing Christian values as fundamentally different from non-Christian ones, and positioned in opposition to the “humanitarian”:

You know for a Christian, he thinks that his heart is made by God for him to give away … For the humanitarian, sometimes it can be an industry (interview with Juml, CEI fieldworker, 10 September 2012).

Similarly, the National Coordinator explained to me the difference that faith can have on the work of the CEI:

Take the case of the International Organisation for Migration, it was not created for medical help and it cannot help at this level for example. But when we work with faith, the heart cannot have the same criteria when we work with the head. There are a lot of organisations that work only with the
head. I think that faith stops us from being 100 per cent head and 100 per cent heart. Faith helps us to have 50 per cent head and 50 per cent heart. In my opinion it is fatal if we function with one or the other. If we work only with the head, we are not really doing social work. If we work with the heart, we are not really doing social work. Both have to be balanced. Faith really puts us into a favourable condition to have this balance (interview with Diachari Poudigo, National Coordinator, 8 December 2012).

At the same time it is exactly this feature within the organisation that created certain problems for the workers. The reframing of flexibility from rigid criteria and avoiding bureaucracy as an advantage of FBOs is convenient for fieldworkers who want to deliver aid intuitively, but it can foster problems and inequity in service delivery. Some practical challenges arise from this “flexibility”, especially for the fieldworkers who interact daily with migrants. As one of the fieldworkers from Rabat, Juml, articulated:

Sometimes we are not objective, we do not clearly say to people that we cannot, for example, respond to their requests. For example, sometimes we feel guilty to not have been able to listen to everyone who have come during the day. We do not accept that we did not have the capacity to do it … Caritas encounters the same problems, but they have more services so they can more easily orientate them. For example, at Caritas those who come for the first time have a specific day they must come. They don’t come on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, et cetera. They have a specific day for new people, they have a specific day for those with health problems, they have a specific day to receive those with psychological problems, et cetera, you see? So people go there with an idea already of what they will do there. We are not like that, people come with a problem that they ask us once here. That’s the problem, we welcome people who come with problems but without a clear idea. They come and tell us everything: their problem with money, with health, with papers, et cetera. They tell us all even their relationship problems! (interview with Juml, CEI fieldworker, 10 September 2012).

Although Caritas is a religious organisation, it is structured differently to the CEI; it separates social aid from the church and has a separate legal status from the Catholic church. But this is exactly something that Angel, a CEI Rabat fieldworker, criticises Caritas for; in her eyes it is too bureaucratic and hierarchical, despite it being a religious organisation like the CEI:
In relation to us [Caritas] are really administrative, in their functioning … They are very hierarchical, even when there is an emergency there is always an order to respect. Even to give you 20 dirhams, it must be signed by the hierarchy. If you come for medical aid, you must see the Health Manager, the doctor, the field agents, et cetera and that takes a lot of time. It’s a long process with them. Even when it’s for social aid you have to see their psychologist. For example just to give you clothing! During this time people are already depressive, they urgently need help. Slowly, slowly, even to get a blanket you must have an appointment with them! (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

So it is not only secular NGOs that can have “secular” traits according to some of the CEI staff; an FBO such as Caritas with links to the Catholic church can also be seen as “secular” in the way that it works. The CEI is seen as not bogged down by procedures and as more responsive and “caring”, and is therefore more true to their faith. However, in practice this can be exhausting for the CEI workers who have to manage the face-to-face interactions with migrants. I saw and experienced this in my time as a volunteer worker at the drop-ins, and during the day-to-day dealing with migrants who were sometimes upset, rude and disrespectful when the CEI was unable to provide aid. For example, during one drop-in, after being told that we could not attend to her that day as we had run out of food bags, a Nigerian woman angrily accused CEI staff of favouring the francophones because the fieldworkers were all francophones themselves. It would not be the first time that I would hear Nigerian migrants accuse the CEI of a francophone bias. There were no clear criteria that could be communicated to migrants to help counter accusations of bias, not only on the basis of their language, but also when someone was refused help. Most of the time migrants were told that we simply did not have the funds, or had only limited funds to help a certain number of people each week.

Another time, after a particularly difficult drop-in, the CEI Rabat team had a discussion about having some kind of criteria for who they would see at the drop-in. It currently worked on a “first in, first served” basis as well as being at the discretion of Dieudonné, the fieldworker whose job it was to man the door. However, this was not considered actually fair, because the older or regular migrant attendees knew how the system worked, whereas newcomers did not and so missed out on being attended to. Furthermore, those who came in first were not necessarily those most in need. Alternative criteria were needed and a few
ideas were tossed around, including prioritising people who had never been there before. However, there seemed to be little agreement on how the workers could determine who was most in need.

Furthermore, although there was recognition that having an objective list of criteria would make it easier for the team as well as making things fairer, there was some resistance to making a definitive decision on the criteria, particularly because some were afraid that it would take away their discretion to decide, in cases where someone turned up in need but was outside the priority list. The difficulties the Rabat team had in trying to establish criteria demonstrated their particular challenges as a religious organisation; they were able to be flexible with their criteria and could define them in practice, but at the same time the practical reality of operating without clearly defined criteria was sometimes exhausting for the fieldworkers. Added to this was the difficulty coming out of the image of the CEI and the church being the same entity, and the physical reality of operating inside a church, which created certain assumptions and expectations on the part of migrants:

> It’s difficult to have criteria in the CEI – for example, in the drop-ins we realise that everyone had different needs that obliges us to be flexible. NGOs would call them *exceptional* measures. We are different, already we are the only organisation that works with a church in Morocco … if the CEI is in the church, it cannot have objective criteria. The fundamental problem is that we think that the church is for everyone. As a church, we cannot put limits on criteria. Even if we put criteria, limits, people will always say “No, I come to a church, etc”. For example, when we tell people “Here is what we can do for you, but that is all”, people will go and see the pastor. And suddenly the pastor is in a very complicated situation, he becomes involved (interview with Juml, CEI fieldworker, 10 September 2012).

This is one of the *aporia*, the unresolvable tensions, of the CEI being both a church and social organisation, causing ambiguity around its identity. It is also a systemic tension in cases where the pastor allows themselves to be drawn into these sorts of discussions. This is not to say that the management did not make attempts to fix criteria in recognition of this challenge.

For example, it was discussed during the annual Management Committee meeting, where it was decided that serious cases that are exceptional and outside the usual remit of direct aid of the CEI (for example, costs for surgery, funerals or longer-term housing) would be decided on a case-by-case basis, but that the CEI would not pay more than a third for serious
cases, finding other organisations to contribute the rest. In the January 2013 CEI monthly newsletter, the CEI Treasurer discussed the need for fixing criteria in order to ensure that aid reached those who needed it most. He compared the CEI with other NGOs, noting the need for transparency and accountability towards donors in terms of showing that funds were being spent in line with donors’ wishes. This demonstrates a different discourse to the sanctified one used by other staff in the CEI. Furthermore, aiming to impose a set of criteria from a top-down approach, that is from management to the fieldworkers, was sometimes interpreted by the fieldworkers as mistrust of their use of discretion. On the one hand would reduce their power and authority, but on the other hand it would give clearer guidelines for generosity.

On the issue of criteria flexibility, it is salient that some of the staff highlighted discernment about when to be flexible and more generous as a practice that came specifically out of their Christian values, but in actual practice this dynamic was more complicated. A sanctified discourse of freedom from rigid criteria did not release the fieldworkers from actually having to set criteria in practice during the drop-ins, which had an exhausting impact on those workers. Problematically, the unstated working criteria then vary between fieldworkers and need to be developed on a case-by-case basis.

However, sanctifying the issue of criteria helped to distinguish the CEI from “other” organisations, in opposition to them. Again, this is a use of Baumann’s “grammar of orientalisation”; the CEI is constructed as everything the “other” is not. This issue of criteria flexibility also reveals the ambivalent boundaries between the CEI and the church on the one hand, and between the CEI and issues of accountability and transparency (linked to ideas of professionalisation and secularisation) on the other. It demonstrates how these can become blurred and ambiguous, contributing to the unresolvable tension that arises from the ambivalence about the CEI’s identity.

CEI identity: negotiating tensions between evangelism and humanitarianism

The debates mentioned above reveal the underlying fissure that is at the heart of the CEI’s aporia; that is, the tensions and ambiguity between the two pillars of evangelism and social service. Fountain, in his thesis on the MCC as a religious NGO (2011), discusses the space between mission and development that the MCC occupies, where “an unequivocal dichotomy between mission and development fails to provide an adequate interpretation of the activities of the MCC” (p. 125). I argue that the CEI is similarly occupying a space between evangelism and humanitarianism, and that making a strict demarcation between the
two would fail to provide an accurate picture of it as an organisation. This is the inevitable consequence of the CEI’s close positioning within the church; “[t]here is more than a close relationship … they are one” (interview with Diachari, National Coordinator, 8 December 2012).

The CEI is structured as the diaconal arm of the EEAM, related to service and social work’s “charity”, and is one of the two pillars of the church. The other pillar is witnessing/evangelising, “announcing the good news” of their faith. As outlined by the pastor of the Rabat congregation, these two pillars of the church are divided between attending to the needs of the soul (managed by the Evangelisation Commission), and the direct physical needs of the body (managed by the diaconal arm, the CEI):

Both pillars work together and are complementary. Before evangelising to people, they need to have enough to eat. [We want] to help man in his totality – soul and body. Evangelising should touch all dimensions of man (interview with Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, 30 October 2012).

These two pillars are in constant tension with each other in the work of the CEI, as it tries to occupy the space between humanitarianism in its social works, and evangelism in its close identity and affinity with the church, for whom evangelism is a central mission. Within this tension, the CEI can be seen as negotiating concepts of the sacred and the secular in its identity and mission. It is out of this very tension that the organisation’s identity is forged. Furthermore, just as a strict demarcation between evangelism and humanitarianism in terms of the CEI’s identity and mission would not provide an accurate picture, it is not an either/or in terms of whether the CEI’s actions (strategies, responses) are a choice, or whether they are constrained to do so by their environment (geo-political context, being Christian in a Muslim context). It is both. The ambivalent nature of the organisation in the CEI’s case is in some part a response to necessity – to the context it finds itself in and the constraints it has to work under. However, as discussed above, it is also a conscious choice, largely by the leadership, that informs certain decisions and choices made within the organisation. We can perhaps speak of a productive tension and ambiguity that engenders a certain flexibility in the organisation. Fountain talks of a “generative ambiguity”, wherein amidst the pressures an organisation faces it is able to adapt and respond to changing politics and context; in his case study this means moving back and forth between mission and development (p. 125) and in my case study, between evangelism and humanitarianism.
Conclusion

This chapter argues that there is an identity ambiguity within the CEI, impacting on its mission, objectives and decisions. At the same time, this ambiguity gives the organisation a certain flexibility, crucial for adapting to its particular context and to the diversity of its constituency. Despite a clear structure, in practice much more ambivalence and contestation arises out of the tension between the two pillars of evangelism and social service, and there is a corresponding blurring of boundaries within the mission and identity of the CEI. This ambivalence enables a wide range of people with diverse opinions to feel like they belong, to affirm it as their organisation. Therefore, far from incongruence being a problem (although it is a source of much tension, contestation and pain within the organisation and congregation), it is a strategy that actually enables the organisation to keep functioning as a diverse group, particularly in a context where it has to respond to a wide constituency in a socio-political context that can be uncertain and unstable.

Various actors in the CEI negotiate this ambiguity between evangelism and humanitarianism in the CEI through “secularisation” and “sanctification” strategies and processes. In particular, there is sanctification by some of the work they do, framing it as being inherently different to the “secular” work of NGOs and humanitarian organisations. These constructions are not always uniform or coherent, nor agreed upon across the organisation. What I hope to highlight is that these strategies and processes are dynamic and always utilised to serve a specific purpose, rather than being a set of rules that mark the organisation. Religion, then (in this case Christianity), is a changing process that occurs under specific circumstances and contexts rather than being a monolithic or coherent worldview.

In the CEI the ambiguity and blurring of boundaries between evangelism and humanitarianism can be seen as having helpful and less helpful effects. The more positive aspects include a greater capacity for the organisation to be flexible and adaptable to specific situations, as well as to be inclusive across a diverse constituency. The more negative outcomes are that this ambiguity can engender confusion about roles, structures and procedures, as well as a lack of direction, with boundaries crossed frequently or in a constant state of flux. This can be seen in the next chapter on staff issues and professionalisation, where I further explore its consequences on concrete organisational practices.

Necessity, ambiguity, contestation – these are some of the repeating tropes woven throughout the narrative of the CEI. There is a tension between what some members see as the essential to their organisation and their response to the necessity of their circumstances.
Out of this the CEI’s identity is formed. It sometimes results in ambiguity and tension; but as I have demonstrated, ambiguity is also a strategy that can hold a disparate and diverse group of people together:

We work with the marginalised and those in ambiguous situations [migrants] while we ourselves are in ambiguity and in marginality [in Morocco in relation to the authorities], and sometimes this crosses the boundary where we become marginalised like migrants [a reference to the expulsions in 2010]. We are working not only with North/South dynamics, but also East/West (interview with Pastor Karen Smith, 3 November 2012).

The specific examples in this chapter show how sanctification and secularisation occur as both strategy and process in specific conditions, practices and relationships which determine the organisation’s mission and identity; and that these can be contested. They have occurred within what I term an “enchanted humanitarianism”, where a sacralising Christian discourse permeates all aspects of the organisation, including its mission and identity. The following chapter demonstrates the ways in which this form of enchanted humanitarianism comes to have tangible, practical effects on issues related to the organisation’s staff.
CHAPTER 7. STAFF ISSUES: STAFF PRECARIOUSNESS, STAFF SUPPORT AND TRAINING, STAFF MISCONDUCT

We are a family in Christ, we are not strangers. Members of the same family. He has given each of us talents to do service, to give in service. In a family we listen to each other. There is a place for God in the CEI team (sermon calling for more CEI volunteers, Carlos Funk, Pastor and Director of CEI, 15 December 2012).

The previous chapter examined how beliefs linked to the CEI’s Christian values affect its mission and identity in different ways, through the utilisation of ideas constructed around the “secular” and the “sacred” by certain staff members. In this chapter I show how this translates on an operational level into particular staff issues.

Through specific examples, this chapter demonstrates that decisions made on practical issues within the CEI come from the dynamics of what is constructed as “sacred” and as “secular” by different people occupying various power positions within the organisation. I use a cultural lens as defined by Schein (2006) to capture some of these dynamics. He states that a cultural lens approach enables us to understand that which is below the surface or invisible, but which is fundamental to a group:

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it points us to phenomena that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but invisible and to a degree unconscious. In that sense, culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual … culture as a concept is thus an abstraction but its behavioural and attitudinal consequences are very concrete indeed (Schein 2006, p. 8).

He goes on to state that a pattern of basic shared assumptions is what makes up the essence of group culture (Schein 2006, p. 36), but recognises that not all groups necessarily have an integrated culture, nor is it always the same across the whole organisation; instead there can be groups and organisations, “in which certain beliefs and values work at cross purposes with other beliefs and values, leading to situations full of conflict and ambiguity” (Schein 2006, p. 17). This is pertinent and true in the case of the CEI. Schein states, consequently, that in place of generalising about a whole organisation, cultural paradigms should be determined on an empirical, case-by-case basis (Schein 2006, p. 59). Following on from this, in this chapter I do not attempt to analyse or make general assumptions about organisational
culture within the CEI, but rather aim to show some of the cultural paradigms that underline specific examples, and through these particular cases to uncover some of the basic assumptions underlying the organisation.

Group or organisational culture can be identified as operating on three levels in an interrelated manner; namely at the level of visible artifacts; espoused beliefs, values and rules; and basic underlying assumptions (Schein 2006, p. 59). Visible artifacts are that which can be seen and observed, for example in practices, behaviour and attitudes. Espoused beliefs, values and rules can also include that which is formally enshrined in official documents. Basic underlying assumptions include fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality, truth, time, space, relationships and what it means to be human. All of an organisation’s mission, goals and primary tasks directly reflect these deeper basic assumptions (Schein 2006, p. 139). To put it another way, these basic assumptions are translated into practical issues which can be observed on the level of visible artifacts and espoused beliefs and values. In this chapter I analyse the “visible artifacts” of certain operational issues to demonstrate how concepts of the sacred and the secular are mobilised to serve underlying basic assumptions of the CEI.

In particular, I examine “artifacts” that are particularly revealing of some of the basic assumptions of the organisation, as well as often being the most problematic internal issues in relation to its staff. These artifacts are staff precariousness, staff support and training, and staff misconduct. I argue that the informal nature in which these issues with staff are regarded are based on constructions of an opposition to “secularised” professionalisation and efficiency, in contrast to a “sanctified” conception of the CEI’s work, some of which was referenced in Chapter 7.

This chapter begins with a description of the staff and volunteer structure in the CEI, before discussing the precariousness of fieldworkers. Their vulnerability is illustrated through some mini-case studies of fieldworkers and the ways this is mediated, through a discourse of Christian goodwill and commitment. The chapter then moves on to discuss the lack of staff support and training, with instead a reliance on informal support. I term this practice rendering prayerful, reflecting the way some within the CEI construct their work as being amenable to prayer. I then go on to examine the issue of how staff misconduct is addressed. Examining these visible artifacts, the operational practices of the CEI, reveals that sanctification and secularisation processes support and enforce basic assumptions that undergird the organisation.
Description of staff and volunteer structure

The CEI is composed of a workforce who are not only from a range of nationalities but who also have a variety of different statuses, including salaried staff, unpaid volunteers and fieldworkers who are paid a nominal “wage”. Each type of staff member has their pay and working conditions structured differently. Figure 3 illustrates the staff structure within the CEI.

Volunteers: Volunteers are unpaid, and perhaps due to the fact that they are giving their time freely, there are fewer expectations or rules around how they organise their time and what they give. Volunteers seem to find a place for themselves within the structure according to their capacities and interests. For example, two volunteer doctors at the CEI in Casablanca sporadically ran a medical drop-in alongside the main CEI drop-in depending on their availabilities. These two doctors were respectively Congolese and Moroccan. For the most
part, however, volunteers were predominantly European and American. One volunteer, an Englishman, was a tour guide who often solicited donations for the CEI from his clients on tour, including asking his clients to donate the complimentary shampoo and soap from their hotels for distribution along with the food bags given to migrants. Another volunteer was a Frenchwoman expatriate whose husband’s employment meant that they had to move to Morocco, and another was a German student, who like myself was doing a thesis on migration in Morocco. Some volunteers occupied official positions on the Management Committee, such as the Vice-President and Treasurer.

**Full salaried staff:** These include the President, the Director, the National Coordinator and a part-time American pastor based in the town of Ifrane. These positions not only entail a full salary, but also often include housing as part of their employment conditions.

**Fieldworkers:** All fieldworkers are from sub-Saharan African backgrounds, and their position is one straddled between full salaried staff and volunteers in terms of pay structure and conditions. Fieldworkers are paid a nominal wage for their work, with the amount dependent on their status. Students (who have legal status) are paid the equivalent of a monthly stipend in the scholarship program (750 dirhams per month, which is approximately 98 Australian dollars), while those who are in an irregular situation themselves are paid approximately 1,000 dirhams per month (approximately 130 Australian dollars) for their work with the CEI. To put their pay into context, the National Secretary is paid 7,500 dirhams per month (approximately 977 Australian dollars), with his accommodation provided for by the church. The position of the National Secretary is in no way commensurate with that of a fieldworker, being much further up in the hierarchy, but it does give a sense of the difference in salaries. Fieldworkers work at the drop-ins for migrants, doing different tasks depending on the structures of the drop-ins in their cities. While the CEI in Fes and Oujda mainly had fieldworkers who were students, this was not the case in Casablanca, and especially in Rabat (see the description in Chapter 2).

**Management Committee:** This committee oversees the workings of the different CEI teams in each city, and although it does not officially have an office, by default the “head office” is in Casablanca, where the President is also pastor of the Casablanca congregation. The CEI Management Committee is made up of volunteers, apart from the President, the Director of the CEI (a new post that was created during my time in Morocco) and the National Coordinator, all of whom receive a salary. The Management Committee predominantly consists of Europeans.
In some ways, the prevalence of Europeans in management and sub-Saharan Africans as fieldworkers reflect who the organisation believes can do the brokering for the various roles. In the section on relations with donors in Chapter 5, I examined the concept of brokerage as a form of mediation, considering the various actors of the CEI as brokers at different levels. Brokering is a fundamentally relational process that occurs through interpersonal relationships: “It is about the transactions, negotiations and engagements between individuals” (Fountain 2011, p. 69). In Chapter 5 I examined how the CEI brokers with donors were predominantly European or American, whereas the brokers with migrants were predominantly sub-Saharan African, reflecting the resources and skills of each different “type” of broker within the CEI. Here I would like to highlight that not all brokers occupy the same power position within the organisation.

A revealing example occurred while I was doing fieldwork, illustrating not only the different levels of brokerage, but also the different power positions that staff occupy. During a migration platform meeting, one of the staff members from Caritas raised the issue of a woman from the Ivory Coast. Upon hearing the story of this woman, the Vice-President, who was present at the meeting, realised that the CEI might be able to help, considering it had an American pastor who had experience with the United States refugee settlement service. Below is the migrant woman’s story, as recounted by Karen Smith, the American pastor in the CEI who attended to her:

Grace [not her real name] came to the United States in 1982 with an Ivoirian passport on a student visa to study ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages]. She stayed in the United States after marrying a US citizen. However, she never regularised her immigration status during the years of the marriage and her husband died in 2003.

During much of that time, they were estranged. In 1991 she was pregnant, though she said the child was probably not her husband’s. So she left the United States and went to the Ivory Coast and got a passport, before going to France to have her baby. She gave birth to a boy and gave him up for adoption to an Ivoirian family there. She came back into the United States via Canada. When the boy was six years old, he came to live with her in the United States. In 2005, she married again, this time to a US permanent resident who became a US citizen later in 2010. In 2012, an Ivoirian woman living in Maryland who was like a mother to her, Juliette, had a heart attack and fell into a coma. Grace was given power of attorney, as if she were Juliette’s daughter, by a court in Upper Marlboro. Grace thought the best
chance for Juliette to recover would be to return to her native country, so she left for Abidjan to try to arrange this with her family. In addition, Grace was ascertaining if the situation was safe; the civil war was officially over, but she had concerns for Juliette as well as for her family members. She did not think at the time that she would not be allowed to return to the US.

Upon arriving in the Ivory Coast in March 2012, Grace discovered that the situation was still very bad. She personally witnessed atrocities. Realising her error, Grace went to the American embassy. She was very afraid of the situation in the Ivory Coast because of political articles she had written and published on the internet. She was afraid that the embassy would deny her the possibility of returning if she told them she had been living in the United States without documents. She did tell them that she had been in the United States on a student visa in 1982, but she didn’t tell them that she had overstayed her visa and married an American. She told them that she was not married out of fear, due to the unstable situation.

She was twice denied a visa; the reason given was that there were not enough financial resources in her bank account to ensure that she would return to the Ivory Coast. She was finally able to get out of the country in September. She got someone to drive her to Ghana where she stayed in a refugee camp briefly (but left out of fear of being recognised), then went to a “prayer camp” run by a church. In October, her husband came with the intention of helping her return to the United States with him. They went to the embassy in Ghana, but they told him that he must return to the United States and apply for Grace to come as his wife from there. She stayed as long as she could at the prayer camp in Ghana, then in December she spent all her money buying a ticket to Morocco with the hope of being able to use the return part of her earlier round trip ticket [Abidjan/United States].

Karen Smith used her knowledge and resources to liaise with Grace’s lawyer in the United States, as well as lobbying the American embassy on Grace’s behalf. In this sense, she was an effective broker with the United States administration, and her efforts would eventually enable Grace to return to the United States on a visa.

However, what I would like to highlight is an incident in the period before this, when Grace had to wait for the outcome and the CEI was faced with where to house her. A decision was made by the Vice-President that Grace would stay in Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango’s house while he and his family were away. She also decided that Angel, a CEI Rabat fieldworker,
would stay with Grace. When Angel was told that she was going to be staying in Kisango’s
house for a few days with Grace, she was not happy. She said that she would have preferred
to stay in her own house and that Grace could come to stay with her there; she felt that she
would be more comfortable in her own home than the pastor’s house. The Vice-President,
however, was insistent, and involved me in the debate by saying that I had told her that
Angel felt unsafe in her neighbourhood after being attacked twice recently near her home
(which I had); besides, the Vice-President said that she had already told Caritas (which had
initially referred Grace to the CEI and with whom they were working in collaboration) that
she would be staying at the pastor’s house, so it was presented as a *fait accompli* to Angel.

In a subsequent conversation I had with Angel, she told me that she did not really have a
choice except to agree. The force of the personality of the Vice-President and the position
she occupied, not only as part of management but also as a broker of different relations in the
CEI, did seem to make it difficult for Angel to refuse, or imply that if she did refuse there
would have been some kind of confrontation. In the end, Angel reconciled her acceptance of
staying at the pastor’s house with Grace as an act of Christian charity, stating that “this is
what you do as a Christian”.

As one of the very few female fieldworkers in the CEI, Angel was depended upon as a
broker with migrant women, building relationships with them in the migrant neighbourhoods
of which she was herself a resident and referring women to the services of the CEI. She was
highly valued for it and in this instance it was because she was a woman that she was asked
to stay with Grace at the pastor’s house.

What this situation highlights is that although Angel was valued as an effective broker with
women migrants, in major decisions that affected her (for example, where she would be
staying over the next few days and with whom), Angel had, or at least felt she had, very little
say. It illustrates how despite a discourse of Christian charity and goodwill, different staff
members occupy – or perceive that they occupy – different positions of power within the
organisation, delineated along the lines between Euro-American and management on the one
hand and sub-Saharan African and fieldworkers on the other. This is a result of and further
exacerbated by the actual precariousness and vulnerability of the sub-Saharan African
fieldworkers’ positions relative to the European staff members’. I explore this further in the
next section.
Precariousness of fieldworkers

During fieldwork, although I visited the CEI teams in the various cities and undertook some volunteer work at the Casablanca and Rabat drop-ins, in my research phase I concentrated on the CEI in Rabat as a way to get closer to and better understand some of the dynamics and issues the staff on the ground faced. I am not suggesting that this study is indicative of all the CEI teams, but rather that firstly it is a portrait of a particular team, and secondly that analysing some of the team’s “artifacts” uncovers some of the CEI’s basic underlying assumptions, along with the ways these are mobilised through certain notions of the sacred and the secular. This section focuses on one of the things that struck me most in my time with the CEI in Rabat: the precarious situation of some of its staff, namely the sub-Saharan African fieldworkers, and the wide gap in position between them and the privileged Euro-American staff, who were predominantly on the Management Committee. In addition, I spent considerable amounts of time with the Management Committee (both with individuals and at meetings), to get a wider perspective on the running of the organisation.

In this section, I present two mini-case studies of fieldworkers in Rabat to illustrate their precariousness. Although there were three fieldworkers in Rabat, only two agreed to be interviewed, with the third refusing. When I approached him about the interview, he asked me why it is that there are always Europeans who come to do research on Africa, but not Africans who go to do research on Europe. He added, “I have a lot to say, so much to say, but why should I give it away?” He told me he had been previously approached by other researchers (see Chapter 3 for discussion on the “research industry” in Morocco), and he asked one of them what she would do with the information he gave her. She told him that she would eventually write a book from it. “So it was for her career. But what do I get out of it?” I told him I understood his point and respected his desire not to give me a formal interview. In any case, his precariousness was clear: he was arrested and taken to Oujda to be expelled across the border shortly after I left Morocco. The President travelled to Oujda, and was successful in bringing him back.

Fieldworkers, because they are sub-Saharan Africans, are in a vulnerable position in relation to the Moroccan authorities, and often struggle materially and financially themselves. Yet, these workers were at the coalface in the CEI’s work with migrants, which at times increased their vulnerability and precariousness. This is illustrated through the following accounts of two fieldworkers in Rabat: Angel and Juml.
Angel

In Angel’s own words, her history of migration is “complicated”. She was born in Cameroon, where she trained as a nurse and interned at a clinic in the country. She decided to leave the profession because of its low pay, which did not enable her to take care of her family. She heard that the nursing profession was very well-paid in Europe, and so decided to go there. Thus began her departure from Cameroon and her journey towards Europe:

That was why I went to Benin by plane, because I had asked for a visa from Cameroon for France and that had not worked. People told me that perhaps in a neighbouring country it will be easier. I stayed 10 months in Benin, but they rejected my demand for a visa. I had passed an exam to go to a hospital in North Marseille, but I don’t know why they refused my request for a visa. My younger brother had left for France when he was still a child. You know it’s not easy to have a visa for France as a Cameroonian. So I was stuck in Benin. Then people told me that there was another way to get to France that I could take. I wanted to go to France legally with a visa, I wanted to do my training there because it’s not the same as in Africa. I wanted to enter legally, I could register in a school to finish my training and find work later. That’s how I arrived in Morocco, here I could again ask for a visa. But here it is difficult (interview with Angel, 28 September 2012).

Angel arrived in Morocco overland via Mali and Mauritania, each time stopping for a few months due to problems at the borders with rebel kidnappings. In the first week after her arrival in Morocco, her bag with her passport was stolen and that was “how my troubles started”. After she lost her passport, she went to the Cameroonian embassy in Morocco to get it replaced. However, she was told that it was not possible, as she did not have the requisite papers, such as her birth certificate, to get a new passport. Instead she was given a consular card on which she would not be able to travel to France and which she still had on this day, three years later. Her feeling of “stuckness” in Morocco, of still waiting to get to Europe, was particularly clear to me during our many discussions together. For example, after a drop-in one day, I took Angel out for lunch. She took me to McDonald’s on the main street, the only one in Rabat, and full of teenagers like it is everywhere else in the world. In the din of the restaurant, she told me about her current situation and how she wanted to return to Cameroon to get her papers in order so that she could apply legally to go to France, where her younger brother is. She has a 10-year-old daughter in Cameroon she has not seen for five years, who is being cared for by Angel’s mother. She said she feels stuck in Morocco – she cannot return home to her family after five years with “empty pockets” and with all these
expectations from her mother and daughter, yet she cannot move forward either because she
does not have the necessary paperwork to apply for a visa for France. When I asked if she
had thought about returning to Cameroon permanently after waiting so long for an
opportunity, she responded, “I’ve left to succeed, so I must keep going ahead”. So I asked
her what she wanted for her future:

In May I will go back to my country, to get my birth certificate. I will redo
my passport and ask for a visa to go to France with the help of my little
sisters; I have to finish my nurse training in France. I have to go to Europe to
bring my daughter there. My daughter must do her studies over there. Back
in our country it is very poor, education is not the same. And I have to earn
enough to look after my family (interview with Angel, 28 September 2012).

Juml

Juml, who is Congolese, cited many factors that lead to him leaving Congo (the Democratic
Republic of Congo). He talked about being unable to undertake university studies there, but
also struggling with the conditions of living under the dictatorship of Mobutu:

I knew the dictatorship of Mobutu, it was horrible. There was a whole
context which made you disgusted with the country. There were really things
that happened that made you question knowledge and if it is really humane.
And then in all of that, there was also the problem of war. We have known
such war, that still today I ask questions about the future, about security. All
of these factors and the context pushed me to leave (interview with Juml, 5
October 2012).

His journey began with crossing the river to go to Congo Brazza. But there too he found
much conflict, as it was the period of war between Kabila (the current President of the
Democratic Republic of the Congo) and the Congo Brazza government. Kabila believed that
the Congo Brazza government was aiding the Congolese rebels against his government with
supplies. In retaliation he cut down a boat bringing petrol to Congo Brazza, which according
to Juml provoked a crisis in the country. Life became expensive, and the Congolese from the
Democratic Republic of the Congo, like Juml, were increasingly targeted as rebel
collaborators. Juml left Congo Brazza, taking two months to cross the country overland,
which included traversing the equatorial forest and having an encounter with the native
Pygmies, who helped him and his fellow travellers with food and water. He arrived in the
Central African Republic, but also found conflict there:
There was Bemba who supported the former President Patassé [Jean-Pierre Bemba, Congolese rebel leader who supported the former President of the Central African Republic, Ange-Felix Patassé, who was ousted and exiled in 2003], and the Congolese were badly viewed. Very badly viewed; I remember sometimes they hunted the Congolese in Central Africa. The habitants did not really understand, so they started to hunt the Congolese. Frankly between Congo Brazza and Central Africa I saw a lot of dead people. In Central Africa it was the same … I had to leave Central Africa for Cameroon (interview with Juml, 5 October 2012).

In Cameroon Juml worked in construction to save some money before moving onto Nigeria, with the idea of going to Morocco and from there reaching Europe, in order to “restore my life, start a new life”. From Nigeria, he crossed overland to Lagos, Benin and Niger with the help of smugglers, sleeping wherever they could, often in churches in the various cities before arriving in Agadez:

Agadez is a city of Niger, it is almost the last city before the desert. It was here that we prepared to cross the desert. If you look on a map, from Agadez to Djanet in Algeria, there is a very, very big desert, the Sahara. We did two weeks on the road in a car. All the provisions were finished, we didn’t even have any more water. The provisions we bought were bread, sugar, things like that. All of the provisions were finished in four days. We did two weeks in conditions like this.

It was very complicated, very complicated … there was a place in the desert that they called “Ten houses”, in fact it was just two or three houses, and it was not really houses. Over there, there was a well that had water. It was like an oasis. We were so thirsty, we would have done anything to drink water. Don’t even talk about hygiene, I lost that notion since the equatorial forest when I saw the Pygmies give me water nearly naked. So we arrived at this well, we were numerous. We had few provisions and took some water. There was also solidarity between voyagers, whether it was between the same community, or other communities who were a little nice. It was that which enabled us to survive (interview with Juml, 5 October 2012).

Needless to say, this crossing was very dangerous, with many dying along the way – nearly 90 corpses, mostly women and children, were discovered in 2013 in the same area (Guardian News and Media Limited 2013; Deutsche Welle 2013). And once he arrived on the Algerian
side of the desert, Juml recounted, the dangers did not stop. The travellers were at the mercy of the local authorities, who occasionally did raids on migrant groups like Juml’s who were passing through on their way to Morocco. Juml eventually arrived in Morocco in the border town of Oujda, a total of four years after he had left his home country of Congo.

Vulnerability of fieldworkers: a discourse of Christian goodwill and commitment

What I wish to highlight in these mini-case studies is the fundamental vulnerability of the fieldworkers, not only because of their backgrounds, but also because of their present situations in Morocco. Even “legal” sub-Saharan African students are at risk of being arrested and expelled by the authorities in their raids of migrant neighbourhoods, but those who are in an irregular situation are particularly affected, as illustrated. Fieldworkers in an irregular situation are unable to work legally and constrained to accepting a nominal “payment” from the CEI. This also has implications for their position within the CEI.

Towards the end of my fieldwork, the National Coordinator had decided to leave the CEI and Jean-Louis, the CEI Rabat team leader, applied for and was successful in getting the position. In a discussion I had with Juml and Angel about who would replace Jean-Louis as Rabat team leader, they both expressed interest in the position because of their significant years of experience in working with the CEI in Rabat, but said that they would not be considered because they do not have legal papers and therefore would not be able to do financial tasks such as dealing with the bank and accounts.

The problem of the vulnerability of some of the CEI’s staff was already an issue in the era of Pastor David Brown. I was told about this by Nadia Khrouz, from the migrant advocacy group GADEM, who did fieldwork with the CEI during that period as part of her Masters research:

And I worked with Aziz and the others and all the people who were there who did not necessarily have experience in project management, who themselves were in difficult situations. So all that implies: how to manage and coordinate a project when you yourself are in difficulty, notably materially, to survive and take care of your family.
And the other difficulty is when David Brown left he left behind him only those people who were in an irregular situation … It’s always delicate, how to remunerate people who work undeclared. How to pay them all while making out as if it is not an employment either, and that it is only to try to make their everyday life less difficult; when they themselves take care of people in difficulty (interview with Nadia Khrouz, GADEM, 23 November 2012).

Her description and analysis of the vulnerability of some of the staff in this period, over six years ago now, is startlingly still relevant to the situation I saw in Rabat in relation to the fieldworkers, and as expressed by the fieldworkers themselves. For example, during one of our conversations Angel complained about her working conditions. She said that the fieldworkers do not receive paid holidays, and do not get paid when the CEI closes for a month during August. She said they cannot live on what the CEI pays them, and that even though the fieldworkers sometimes need food bags, they are not allowed to take any. This puts her in a difficult position:

As a CEI worker, the support the CEI gives me is not satisfying. With what they pay me, I cannot even pay the rent on my house. My house costs 1,200 dirhams, and I only get 1,000 dirhams a month … The work is very intense … Our conditions of life also must improve. When you also have worries, you are not comfortable in front of migrants because you are also vulnerable (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

Indeed, to help her, I knew that one of people on the Management Committee had worked to have her as the coordinator of the micro-projects program, despite doubts on the part of some, including her team leader, about her capacities. As coordinator of the micro-projects, she would be entitled to a higher nominal pay than the other fieldworkers. The overriding problem, though, is that in order for the CEI to pay fieldworkers a real salary, for them to be officially employed, they would first need to be regularised, something that the CEI does not get involved in. Furthermore, those fieldworkers who are legal students could be officially employed, but instead they are not, receiving a nominal salary the equivalent of what a student on the CEI scholarship program would receive (750 dirhams per month). Despite the lower nominal salary they get, the students are still in a far less vulnerable position than the fieldworkers who are in an irregular situation. This is not only due to the students’ “legal” status but also because they are the elite from their home countries and are often supported financially by their families.
It is advantageous for the CEI to have a pool of workers who only have to be nominally paid, especially in a situation where the CEI is constantly underfunded and searching for funds. As a small organisation, it would not be feasible for the CEI to pay all of its workers, hence the reliance on underpaid fieldworkers and volunteers, who make up the bulk of the organisation’s staff. In this way, the CEI perhaps resembles many smaller NGOs and charitable organisations.

However, in order to reconcile this disparity, a discourse of Christian goodwill and commitment prevails which helps to provide the motivation and lens through which staff can interpret their work and accept certain conditions that seem (and which may indeed be) unchangeable, such as their pay and working conditions. In saying this, I do not contend that there was a conscious or even causal relationship between this discourse and an intention to use or exploit the fieldworkers. Rather, I argue that there is often a gap between the intentions of an action and the consciousness which informs that action (the discourse), and the resulting social consequences or materialisations (Jager & Maier 2010).

In this instance, a prevailing discourse of Christian goodwill and commitment forms the consciousness of a subject both individually and collectively as an organisation. And “since consciousness determines action, discourse determines action. This human action creates materialisations” (Jager & Maier 2010, p. 89). This particular discourse created concrete, specific consequences of an organisation able to use a vulnerable workforce (who also accepts it) for a greater or transcendent good. Although not a creator of the situation the CEI finds itself in, the sanctified discourse used by some within the CEI does help to reconcile (a perhaps inherently unavoidable) situation for the fieldworkers and elide what may otherwise be of ethical concern for the organisation.

The prevailing discourse taken up by some in the leadership is one of enrolling church members or believers to do this work, rather than seeing the organisation as employing people for their particular skills, which would be akin to “secularisation” or being an NGO (as discussed regarding the hiring of non-Christian staff in Chapter 6), something that the President in particular does not want. This was further illustrated by the Director of the CEI when, in a sermon during a Sunday service, he called for more volunteers for the CEI from the congregation, stressing the need for more volunteers, “at the service of mercy”, quoting Acts 6: 1–7, and saying that:

Like in Acts, we are choosing people with the right attitude as volunteers, with a Christian attitude and not with “efficiency” (sermon by Carlos Funk, pastor and CEI Director, 23 November 2012).
There is an apparent cringe against “efficiency” in the cultural script of the organisational leadership. This highlights how the primary criterion for the Director is a Christian attitude and belief, rather than a skill set. Fieldworkers occupy a vague and ambiguous position here, not in terms of their roles and duties, but in terms of their status. They are not receiving a full salary, but they are not volunteers either. Because they are receiving some form of payment, there are expectations that they fulfil specific duties; at the same time, their pay is only a nominal one and so the CEI is reliant upon their Christian goodwill and motivation to continue. I discussed the underpayment of the fieldworkers with the President in an interview:

President: Field agents are not hired, we give them a few sous [an informal French term for money].

Researcher: But should you [pay them as hired staff]?

President: To have [paid] personnel, you need a full-time Personnel Director … we don’t have the budget. We are inventing as we go along, without knowing too much just how far we can go (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

Here the President claims that paying fieldworkers as real workers would simply require resources that the CEI does not have. It is interesting he does not say he cannot pay them properly because the organisation does not have the money for the salaries, but instead says it does not have the budget for the supportive human resources structures. During this interview he seemed to be avoiding the question, or not really answering it in terms of whether he saw there was a need or a moral imperative to pay them, hence my question: should the CEI be paying them?

In this case, I have to admit that my reaction may be an “artifact” of my particular assumptions about what constitutes a worker, and what motivates them. I am wary of possibilities for exploitation when boundaries are not clear between the “personal” and the “professional”, but this again betrays my particular understanding of what paid work means and what it involves. This inevitably feeds into my analysis of the situation, which is that the CEI is caught in a “bind” of a Christian discourse of engagement and commitment. There is an expectation of doing the work for altruistic and selfless reasons. While this is not a negative thing in itself, it can come at the cost of not recognising that workers (including Christian ones) do things with a variety of motivations, including for material reasons. That the CEI can make such demands of its workers is because some within the leadership see it as a church organisation, and so it is immersed within a discourse about Christian
goodwill and doing the work of God, rather than about “efficiency” or “professionalisation”. The CEI has had issues in the past with theft by fieldworkers, notably of food bags and clothing, showing that this is an ongoing issue. Certain basic needs are not being met, but the Christian discourse about the selfless motivation of “helping thy neighbour” covers this over.

The President acknowledged the complications of this in our interview:

We have a recurring problem between those who are paid to do the work, and those who are not paid to do the work. There are reproaches between them, and that is always a problem in associations, between the employees and the volunteers, there are always moments of tension. Because the volunteers have the title of power, I am the Vice-President, I decide, I have the political vision, and you, you are my employee. And the employee, he has the training, he is there every day, so it is he who really has the power. He chooses what information to give, how he will present that information. And so structurally, there is a tension between the volunteers and the employees. When in addition, we have “volunteers” who are actually employees, the field agents, who should be helping people but they themselves need help, who should be sensitive to those who they are helping, but who themselves want to take from the cash box … which is normal. So fundamentally there is a problem of structure. The situation with the field agents, it’s very complicated (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

While he recognises that the situation is indeed complicated, this does not erase the fact that fieldworkers are paid a nominal salary while being in a precarious and vulnerable situation themselves (this is true for students as well as irregular migrants), and are still expected to work with others who are also vulnerable. It could be argued that, at best the CEI is not alleviating the difficult material conditions of its fieldworkers and at worst it is exposing them to risks related to working with vulnerable people without formal support or training, as is further explored in the next section. This is in line with a prevailing discourse of sanctification (Christian attitude, values, goodwill) and secularisation (professionalisation, efficiency) within the organisation, which frames these two discourses as opposing and as being incommensurable. The next section demonstrates how this affects the support and training offered to fieldworkers in the CEI.
Staff support and training

“We are not professionals” (CEI Rabat team leader, in despair during a difficult drop-in)

As can be seen in the narratives in the previous section, CEI fieldworkers often have had difficult migration experiences themselves, and are in a precarious situation in Morocco, similar to the beneficiaries of the CEI’s aid. They then take on an emotionally and physically draining role as fieldworkers for the CEI. This section explores the issue of formal support and training for staff, and how this is motivated by or interpreted through beliefs about the “sacred” and the “secular”.

Having worked at the drop-ins in Casablanca and Rabat for three months as a volunteer, I know well how draining this job can be. Working specifically as a fieldworker gave me a true understanding of the demands of the position. I remember sometimes leaving a drop-in feeling completely emptied out and despairing. We heard stories of rape, war and torture, as well as of the current situation for many migrants in Morocco, which involves rough housing, no work, going without food and often also anxiety and fear about relatives either back home or also travelling on the way. For example, during one drop-in I sat with a young woman from Congo who was seven months pregnant. She was always hungry, she said, and sometimes would go without food, “Bread and milk, bread and milk. That is what my life revolves around”. She said that all of her family were killed before she escaped the country, and she pined for the fate of the baby growing inside of her, “What will I tell my baby when he asks who is his family? His grandfather, uncles, aunties?” For me, leaving the CEI each time after a drop-in there was a weight, a feeling of heaviness not only related to the migrants’ suffering, but also their neediness, which sometimes translated into aggression or rudeness. I took it all as part of the “job”, as did my colleagues, the other fieldworkers.

Interviewing Pierre-Marie, Project Manager of Migrant Services in Caritas (11 December 2012) gave me some objectivity about and distance from what we were doing, and really underlined to me how little the CEI fieldworkers were getting in terms of formal support to do their job. Pierre-Marie told me that in view of the kind of work they were doing, Caritas normally has an evaluation or debriefing for its staff every six months, as well as providing ongoing training and support from its resident psychologist. At the CEI, new fieldworkers do not receive any training or induction, nor do current ones get regular ongoing training. There is no formal supervisory process, and although there is a team leader for the drop-ins in each city, the day-to-day reality of the work is that there is rarely enough time and energy to have
anything close to a regular supervision process. However, the need for it was highlighted to me in a conversation with fieldworker Angel, when she talked about the importance of being in a good state when doing the drop-ins at the CEI:

It’s important, because if myself I am not good in my head I could not do my work well. If I have someone who is traumatised and I myself am traumatised, I can’t go very far. I am in a tunnel, in front of the person who needs my aid, my listening, my support, he will be even more depressed. It will affect the work of the CEI, it will not advance … So you yourself have to be stronger to be able to help them (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

She said that she had never received any psychological support or training, except for a time when the German donors, on their own initiative, paid for a psychotherapist to run a three-day trauma training for CEI fieldworkers on how to work with migrants, including how to respond, listen and talk to those who had been traumatised. Angel appreciated the training, which helped her in her work but also personally:

I need these trainings, I learn a lot there … Migrants have known a lot of traumas, they have seen war et cetera. They need to be helped. Me too I need help. I’ve been attacked [in Rabat]. And what will help me to get over it? It’s training with the psychotherapist on traumas. Now I try to do my own therapy … thanks to that [training] it permits me to do my own therapy … We don’t have a psychologist in the team (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

The lack of formal training and support by the CEI is especially surprising given that some of the fieldworkers themselves are in a vulnerable situation, not only financially and materially, but also psychologically. They have been through similar things, as can be seen in the fieldworker mini-case studies in the previous section, and the demands of doing the work of a fieldworker can be a form of re-traumatisation.

The potential danger and vulnerability of fieldworkers was highlighted by an incident that occurred after I had left Morocco. Though not officially a fieldworker, a Nigerian man with whom the CEI was in contact and who acted as a liaison and mediator between the CEI and the migrants in Oujda was brutally murdered. The murderer was rumoured to be a Nigerian gang lord in Oujda. This highlighted the potential danger for all who get involved in what is essentially an underworld that heavily involves smuggling, trafficking and gangs. As the Vice-President, said, “the students, these kids (the fieldworkers), have no idea about the
situation of migrants, are running around not knowing what to do. Especially in Oujda where the situation is really critical”. There had been attempts by various members on the Management Committee to organise some form of training, but apparently their concerns were met with a lukewarm response from the President.

For example, the Treasurer at the time of my fieldwork, Micheline, had written a training proposal for the CEI teams. The proposal recognised that CEI fieldworkers do more than just hand out food bags or give spiritual accompaniment; they also potentially have to deal with local authorities, be a source of information for migrants and respond appropriately to challenging situations in the field. It was a recognition that fieldworkers were currently armed with a lot of faith and goodwill, but not the “tools” necessary to enable them to intervene appropriately as actors in the particular context that the CEI works in (interview with Micheline Bochet-Le Milon, 17 November 2012). As a former lawyer, Micheline expressed interest in giving fieldworkers a general knowledge of the Moroccan political and legal context, as well as the specificities of the phenomenon of sub-Saharan African migration. The training was to focus on practical issues related to working with migrants, such as listening, giving advice and ethics, as well as training in accounting, since team leaders are responsible for managing the drop-in budgets in each city. The proposal aimed to give well-rounded training for on-the-ground CEI staff.

However, Micheline expressed frustration with the way this proposal and other discussions around training had been received, especially by the President. There was a lack of enthusiasm on his part, which she interpreted as unwillingness to make staff training a priority. At the time when I talked to her during my fieldwork, she said that she was now looking to do this kind of training instead for GADEM, a secular advocacy organisation for sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, which had expressed interest. She said that if she couldn’t do it for the CEI, then she could at least do it with another organisation, and that the training would be open to everyone who was working with migrants in Rabat. The Vice-President expressed a similar frustration: “Caritas train their staff, MSF train their staff, I want us to train our staff”. She believed that it does not happen in the CEI because the President does not see it as important.

About 10 months after I left Morocco, I found out from the Vice-President that through her efforts she was able to secure funding from the WCC from Geneva to run a training program for CEI fieldworkers and a project with migrants on storytelling, and to put the new National Coordinator (Jean-Louis, who was the former CEI Rabat team leader) through a Masters in Management process. There was no encouragement or involvement from the President in this, and the application process for the funding took a long time, with uncertainty as to its
success. This highlights the importance of individual “brokers” within the CEI who know how to utilise resources and networks, and also have perseverance in the face of lack of encouragement from the leadership. Without the initiative of individuals within the organisation who take on issues that they think are important, projects such as the training program for fieldworkers would never happen.

Of course, the difference between Caritas and the CEI is linked to the fact that, as a larger organisation, Caritas has more resources than the CEI, but I argue that there is also a persisting view held by some within the CEI that formal training is not as important an issue because it is linked to certain ideas of a “secularised” professionalisation. The “artifact” of lack of formal training and support that I observed in the CEI can be linked to the President’s espousal of belief that the CEI is not an NGO, but rather a church, as explored in Chapter 6. According to the President, and to others such as the Director, the CEI is predominantly a church organisation run by church members, rather than an NGO or part of the “humanitarian industry”, which they connect to values such as professionalisation and secularisation. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the President believes that the staff of the CEI need to be “pros of the church”:

President: You know David Cantero from MSF, that guy is a pro, he’s efficient. He does excellent work where he is. He is a real pro; we, we will never be pros. I am a pro of the church. I want to be a pro of the church.”

Researcher: But can the church also be efficient, like David?

President: But is David efficient in announcing the Gospel? There is the real work of the church (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

This is a narrow definition of the work of the church. According to the President, the CEI’s work is more than just an occupation or job; the workers will never be “pros” in that sense. If the work of the church, and therefore the CEI, is primarily to announce the gospel and to give spiritual aid, but not to do advocacy work (as discussed in Chapter 5), then obviously formal, “professional” staff training is not high on the list compared to other competing priorities. How they can give support in a spiritual way is seen as more important:
I’m scared that we will forget the essential, our specificity, which is spiritual accompaniment … It’s a big difference between a corporation and a church, and that is why I resist the NGO, efficiency route, I don’t want to, I want us to stay a church (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

The “sanctity” of the CEI is its essential work of spiritual accompaniment: spiritual guidance, pastoral care and praying together. Efficiency and professionalisation are constructed as aspects that would “secularise” the CEI, and are opposed to the nature of a church organisation according to the President. Although he does recognise that there is room for professionalisation and structure, this is only within the church:

President: It’s true that professionalisation in the church is good. But it is *inside* the church. We are inventing the system too, after David left and we had no dirhams.

Researcher: Within the church, what is professionalisation?

President: At bottom, professionalisation is a tool not a goal, so we must choose tools that fulfil our needs. At bottom, professionalisation is to be able to ask, what do we really need? Will we pay someone, is that a good tool? Or will we use a volunteer? Adapt the tool for the need, for the objective (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

But it is exactly this “objective” that is under contention, as demonstrated in Chapter 6 on organisational mission and identity. The important point here is that the question “What do we really need?” is always linked to the question “What is our mission or objective?”. As explored in Chapter 6, some within the CEI see the organisation’s identity and mission as having as many *spiritual* as material objectives:

The German funders really are pushing for professionalisation, for them it’s normal to hire Moroccans to do the work … [But we need a] discernment about who we hire, engage with. Who will work in the field? If we have people who are convinced, who can bring a tent as well as a Bible, those who can engage spiritually, have spiritual convictions. They will become naturally witnesses. So we will build tents and afterwards pray to thank God and to ask him to bless the tents. To make a bridge between the church and what’s happening in the forest camps or the *quartier populaire* (poor neighbourhoods) (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).
If this is the case, then “what we really need” is related to what the organisation sees as its primary mission; that is, fieldworkers being able to witness and pray together with migrants. There will therefore be less of an emphasis on legal and practical training of the fieldworkers, which may be seen as focusing on the wrong thing, on the wrong objective. As the President highlighted, “We are a church and we do it as a church”.

Beneath this is a fundamental underlying assumption, in the sense of Schein’s (2006) three levels of culture, as previously discussed, about what “doing church” means; specifically what doing service as a church involves. There is a long tradition in global church networks of the church seeing itself as “servant”, following in the tradition of Jesus as the “suffering servant” who himself drew on inspiration from the suffering servant of Isaiah (Cronshaw 2006; Rees 1980; Dulles 1988; Greenleaf 1977; Messer 1989). For the President, it means that they can bring to their work the unique contribution of a church, that which separates them from NGOs – spiritual accompaniment:

That’s why I wanted a pastor to be Director of CEI, that’s why I want the local pastors of each church to be involved, so that we are not only taking care of their health, but that we are also praying with them. The unique thing that we can bring, that others can’t bring because they are not a church … But WE are a church, and what we can get from the church is unique and of an infinite power. It’s to refuel the internal motor of these people, to give them back their dignity, to remind them that they are unique in the eyes of God (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

Informal support

In lieu of formal training and support, the CEI provides personal and pastoral support for its staff, in line with the underlying assumption of what doing service as a church means and consequently what it means to be a staff member of the CEI. This support is largely informal and on an ad hoc basis dependent on individual need and circumstances; it is based on a family model of an organisation, which is discussed later in this chapter.

A prominent example illustrates this. Angel, a fieldworker in Rabat, went through a particularly difficult period during my fieldwork. Firstly, while she was crossing a street a car door unexpectedly opened, hitting her in the face and cutting her just above her eye. Shortly afterwards she was attacked twice at different times in her neighbourhood without any apparent reason. The first time her attackers took the shopping bag with yoghurt she had in her hands; the second time they did not take anything. All of this happened within a couple of months. She had lived in her neighbourhood for years – a neighbourhood with a
significant migrant community – and had never been attacked before. The attacks each ended in a visit to the hospital, the first time with her face cut by a knife and the second time with a broken arm. In addition to this physical trauma, there was also mental and emotional scarring, with the attacks leaving her depressed and despairing. “God is testing me,” she said, “why would he do this to a child of his?” She told me she was afraid to walk around in her neighbourhood: “I only feel safe once I’m inside my house”. The CEI supported her through her hospital visits and care during this difficult period, and although she was conscious of (and grateful for) the support of the CEI since her attacks, she still believed that it was not doing enough in terms of paying her a livable salary:

Where the CEI really helps me, is since my multiple attacks. They have helped me medically, have paid for prescriptions and scans. So they have helped me medically, but my salary is not really sufficient … Sometimes I’m obliged to be supported by my little brother, he sends me money to complete my rent, he is in Paris … We don’t have the right to a food bag, except when we get donations. I am like the migrants, in a vulnerable situation too (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

In addition to paying her medical bills, the church was able to offer her spiritual support:

Angel: After my two attacks – they had cut my face with a knife – I was depressed. Pastor Camille [Assistant Pastor at Rabat] approached me because I did not have the courage to do it, you know when you are in a position where you are depressed, there are things that you do not think of. Pastor Camille told me, “You need spiritual support because you have been attacked two times in the same place in the same neighbourhood, that’s not normal. This means there is a spiritual problem in your life”.

Researcher: Do you agree with that?

Angel: Yes, I agree with that … Perhaps it can come from parents, perhaps they did bad things in life and it’s this curse that follows you. Even in the Bible it’s like that. It’s like in the Ancient Testament or Genesis. God warns that when parents commit sins He will punish you up to the fourth generation. Perhaps my grandparents did something bad and I am the fourth generation.
Researcher: But what can you do?

Angel: It’s prayer … Since I’ve begun to pray I believe that it will be OK. I had more confidence in myself, the fear that I had even when I walked in the streets began to leave. The Holy Spirit started to give me a little peace in myself (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

Her reference to punishment up to the fourth generation comes from passages in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:5, 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9). Although despairing of her situation, at the same time she still felt hopeful that “God will not leave me like this”. She talked about her belief that everything is up to God; we do not know when it is our time to go and cannot prevent what will happen to us because “it is written”. Her healing through prayer alongside her medical healing reveals an important motif: prayer as an important tool of support for staff. This is further explored in the next section.

“Rendering prayerful”: prayer as support for staff

Prayer has an important, central role in the organisation. I use Li’s idea of “rendering technical”, from her study of development organisations, to analyse this approach. “Rendering technical” is:

[the way in which development actors … construct a domain so as to make it amenable for certain forms of technical intervention (Li 2007, p. 93).

This means that a field is constructed by development actors in order to enable their intervention with their specific expertise, rather than this field already pre-existing. I would like to use this term, but to modify it to argue that the CEI does a form of rendering prayerful. It constructs the way it see its work as being amenable to prayer intervention, not only for the migrants but also, importantly, for its own staff members; prayer is constructed as a form of support and an enabler of the organisation’s work. In this construction, there is a focus on the personal and pastoral support of the fieldworkers, and perhaps that is the positive aspect of rendering prayerful for staff; a recognition and valorisation of their non-material (spiritual) needs in doing this kind of challenging work. It is also a recognition that prayer is an important way for some of the fieldworkers to have the energy to cope with the emotional and psychological demands of their role. In another interview with Angel, she said:
Angel: It’s traumatising to do this work – people will take all they can from you, and they are violent, in their behaviour and in the way they talk to you. They don’t think its violence but it is, the way they talk to us sometimes. I just stay like this [blank face] and not react to anything they say.

Researcher: How do you cope with such difficult work? To support all these people in need?

Angel: It’s God who gives me the energy. I find comfort in my particular relation with God. I talk to him with all my heart and my love. I know that he is there and that he listens to me and when I talk to him I find responses to certain of my problems (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

In a similar way, Juml had a prayer ritual centred around coping with his work:

For example, for me everyday when I return to my house I try to review a little how things went [at the drop-in]. And then I pray about my activities, and that helps me to start a new day or even to do new things. If I don’t do this, you know, we encounter a lot of problems every day. That leaves imprints. It’s also a way to protect yourself. We meet people of all categories, very different, it demands from me personal spiritual work. I pray before coming, during and after my work. I try to see God to have energy, to have the energy to continue. It’s very important, otherwise we risk falling into discouragement (interview with Juml, CEI fieldworker, 10 September 2012).

Prayer was also seen as important in enabling and giving them the capacities to do their work. During the CEI Rabat team’s prayer day, in his “sermon”, Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango went over the three indispensable conditions for work at the CEI. These indispensable conditions were centred around the state of being of the fieldworkers, namely that they must be trustworthy, be filled with the Holy Spirit and have wisdom. He highlighted the direct link between having a relationship with God and having these “conditions”:

In the Old Testament, if you don’t have a relationship with God, you are exposed to evil. You are in the service of God only if you are filled with the Holy Spirit; that gives us the gift of power, and the gift of self-mastery. The patience to break the ego, so we can love our neighbour. That is the ideal (Pastor Jean-Marie Kisango, CEI prayer day, 5 September 2012).
He also emphasised the use of prayer as a “spiritual weapon”, though he was keen to highlight that this was only provisionary until the time that God came back. In addition, through prayer, he said, we were to ask God to make us sensitive to others’ suffering, to enable us to “go further”. He contrasted this to humanitarian organisations, which sometimes do this work for their own gain, for their careers, in what he termed the “humanitarian industry”.

This highlights the power of prayer for the CEI fieldworkers in Rabat, and its capacity to aid in their work in three main ways. Firstly, prayer renders them capable of doing their work in a more compassionate, patient and loving way. Secondly, prayer is a tool of support for staff, capable of giving them physical and emotional energy. Lastly, prayer is a way for God to respond to their requests in a practical manner. Angel gave me an example of this:

I went with a migrant to the UNHCR for her file. I told her that God will make it that you return with victory. And Glory to God, she came back with her papers. It was miraculous. Everything comes from God, when you talk to him, have faith, God gives (interview with Angel, CEI fieldworker, 21 October 2012).

This reliance on God for practical matters was displayed throughout my time with the CEI. It included praying for things to happen; for example, praying when they needed an English translator to help translate the CEI newsletter so it could be sent to their American donors (“pray to God to please send us an anglophone”), or praying for solutions to problems within the organisation and when there was conflict within the team (“pray to God because we are a family”). The role of prayer was taken very seriously. Another example involved me: in the lead-up to an upcoming visit by the American donors, which happens at least once a year, there had been no translator organised for the donors, who spoke neither French nor Arabic. When I heard about this, I volunteered to act as translator; the staff were overjoyed and told me that “God brought you to us for this”. However, there seemed to be a recurring problem of translators into English, whether it was for the newsletter or for donors. The organisation did not seem to be particularly proactive about cultivating an anglophone congregation in Rabat, nor did it mobilise the other two English-speaking people in the congregation to help. Instead, things worked out in this case because I volunteered at the last minute. Does a dependence on God also sometimes equal an over-reliance on “God’s will” and hoping for the best, and a use of this as compensation for lack of initiative or action? A hesitancy to pursue “efficiency” seems to coincide with a kind of “super-spirituality” that expects God to help and deliver the group from situations that good planning and proactive leadership could address.
I would like here to explore the idea of a “prayerful subject”. This follows on from Foucault’s theory of discourse, which analyses when knowledge is valid at a certain place and time, how it arises and how it is passed on (Wodak & Meyer 2009, p. 832); where “[d]iscourses are not ‘mere ideology’, they produce subjects and reality” (Wodak & Meyer 2009, p. 888). In the idea of a “prayerful subject”, knowledge becomes localised and concrete through a discourse that constitutes subjects in terms of their self-understanding, informing actions and having very real social consequences. A “rendering prayerful” discourse creates a prayerful subject or a prayerful subjectivity, for whom prayer becomes crucial for regulating and reinforcing action. In the case of the CEI, prayer is critical for mobilising action in various ways. As already discussed, it becomes crucial for mobilising and motivating a sometimes vulnerable workforce that is engaged in challenging and difficult situations; it is a form of support and renewal for these staff members; and it is a means for requesting help from God on practical matters. In a myriad of manners, then, prayer is crucial for “getting things done” in the CEI.

In the next section, I examine how there is an aspect of rendering prayerful or rendering spiritual in terms of dealing with staff misconduct within the CEI, and how the “informal” and “unstructured” way of treating all of the above issues is linked to certain basic underlying assumptions of the CEI – in other words, to the organisation’s “cultural paradigms” (Schein 2006).

**Staff misconduct**

One of the other major “artifacts” that struck me was how the organisation dealt with serious allegations of staff misconduct. This section explores how the reliance on personal and pastoral support and an emphasis on God transforming and maintaining character and behaviour at work were positioned in opposition to a formal code of conduct and staff discipline procedures. I demonstrate how a consequence of this is a reliance on compassion and prayer as a way of managing staff behaviour, including staff misconduct. And just as an organisation’s mission, tasks and goals reflect basic underlying assumptions of reality, time, space and human relationships, the ways an organisation measures, rewards and punishes certain behaviour reflect deeper assumptions:

> When studying the culture of an organization, one must investigate the reward and punishment system because it reveals fairly quickly some of the important rules and underlying assumptions in that culture (Schein 2004, p. 129).
In other words, by examining practical issues such as how the organisation manages staff misconduct, some of the deeper underlying assumptions within the CEI can be uncovered. The corrective action taken or not taken will reflect the organisation’s assumptions about a wider reality or truth; which in the CEI are based on a sanctified model of the organisation as a “family”. The next section analyses two examples of alleged staff misconduct in the CEI while I was doing fieldwork, and how they were handled by management.

Two cases of alleged staff misconduct

In the first case, a young migrant woman told the resident psychologist at Caritas that Juml, one of the fieldworkers in CEI Rabat, had sexually harassed her in his home. The woman had been temporarily staying at his place, as Caritas paid Juml a stipend to host migrants in his home, including three children whose parents were not in Morocco (the young woman was a separate case). Caritas contacted the CEI about the allegation and the President and the Treasurer had a meeting with Juml about it. Afterwards, I spoke to both the Treasurer and the President about the situation. The Treasurer told me how disappointed she was with the meeting; she felt that it was not handled well by the President, that he did not really confront Juml about the situation. The summary of the conversation according to the Treasurer was that Juml was told “we trust you”, but that no adult women should stay in his house in the future. The woman was not spoken to, and no “investigation” was taken up. I asked the Treasurer if she thought that the President was not taking the sexual harassment seriously; if he would have handled it differently if it had been a case of a physical attack, for example, and she said yes. Of course, in asking her that question I betrayed my own responses to and assumptions about the situation; that is, I thought the President was not taking the allegations seriously. In my interview with the President, when I questioned him about the case, his response was:

President: I’m not really sure about the veracity of the facts.
Researcher: Yes, but what about procedures – if a case like this happens …
President: There is no procedure. The procedure is to call Samuel, come and be the fireman. Contrary to the Catholic church, we are not hierarchical … the system we have is discussion, democracy. We may not agree, we may not be the same, but we talk. And we find a solution in that way. It’s more easy, in a dictatorship, it’s the boss who decides.
Researcher: But procedures don’t necessarily have to be put in place by a dictator. And there is a hierarchy in any organisation.
President: Yes, there is hierarchy, but there is a collegial power. If I decide alone, there will be someone who will stand up and say, “you don’t have a right to do that”. We must talk together. There are committees for that, a national office. The Synod is the real boss. They do not support me making a decision alone. I get yelled back at if I do this (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

Here the President seems to be conflating hierarchy with procedures, while simultaneously denying that within the hierarchy of the organisation he wields real power. My questioning on procedures was to ascertain how allegations of staff misconduct such as sexual harassment would be dealt with by management, but as he said, “the procedure is to call Samuel” (Samuel is the President’s first name). Just as there are no procedures for how to deal with complaints or issues of staff discipline, there is also no code of conduct or behaviour for fieldworkers, who are working with particularly vulnerable people. This was an issue recognised as a problem by some; for example, the Vice-President said that there needed to be better monitoring of the fieldworkers.

A few months later, the mother of the three migrant children that Juml was taking care of in his home came back to Morocco, and because she had nowhere else to stay, she lived with Juml and her children for a month before moving out with her children to new lodgings. Thus, the “rule” that the President had made for Juml regarding no adult women in his home was broken.

Some of the underlying assumptions in the handling of staff misconduct are further illustrated through the case of Diachari, the National Coordinator. The CEI management had ongoing issues with Diachari in relation to his work. There were accusations from some within management that he was not doing his job properly or taking on responsibilities included in his job description. He had a particularly antagonistic relationship with the Vice-President. Diachari was finally given a formal warning after having made what were deemed several serious mistakes. Firstly, he had accidentally sent out an Excel spreadsheet about the scholarship program, with all the students’ personal information, including confidential information about their scholarship details, to all the scholarship applicants. Secondly, he had accepted paid work with another organisation without telling the CEI, even though he was supposed to be working at the CEI full-time, which particularly infuriated the Vice-President because, she said, he was not doing the tasks that he was responsible for in his salaried position at the CEI. Thirdly, he had told the American donors during their visit that he was intending to leave the CEI, without informing the Management Committee first.
In an interview with the President, we discussed the issue of Diachari, of him not doing his job properly or taking on his responsibilities, as I was aware that there had been some difficulties with him in the past. The President said that the issue with Diachari was “an error in casting” and so the fault of management. This led to a general discussion on managing people in the CEI:

Researcher: So how are you managing people; how do you deal with problems with employees as the national office, when employees commit serious mistakes?

President: That’s the problem; the church is not an NGO, and it cannot function like an NGO. I am not the boss of an NGO, I am not the boss of a company. If National Secretary doesn’t do their work, we change. Because we do not throw away people … we are still young, we invent, we are still very young, and in addition the CEI is not my only work, there are lots, lots of other things to do. My manner of managing things is to do all that is possible to get a pastor; to recompense what Diachari doesn’t do, where Diachari can find his place which is his own, where he feels happy.

He’s a great person, and a great spokesperson…but objectively, the job of National Secretary, he has never done. And it’s a real problem, because we spent a lot of money [on him]. So we’ve passed lots of moments of tension. And a real consciousness that it’s not all his fault, we have to take our part too. In the corporate world, even if the employee is right, it’s the boss who will decide. In the world of work, he would’ve been fired. But we are not in the corporate world, we are in a church. Even if I’m angry … I’ve told him hundreds of times, I’ve done his accounting, his reports … but at the same time I am conscious that it’s not all his fault, that I am responsible for him. I am not the boss, I am the under-boss; the real boss is up above … he is aware of the fact that the job is not for him, he has said that … we try to advance, while preserving people. We’ve told him that we are not going to show you the door … that no one is asking you to leave the job, no one will blackmail you over your salary or housing … [but] at some point he will leave, because he is conscious that the job is not for him.

Researcher: And while he doesn’t?
President: We will try to make it up. I have spent nights trying to make it up. I know, it’s not professional. But in a NGO he would be fired. He has done other things that we did not ask him to do, and those things are important. But it’s not because of this that we haven’t fired him. We are human beings, we don’t fire people like that.

Researcher: What procedures do you have for dealing with the conduct of your employees, your fieldworkers?

President: We don’t have procedures for that. There was a case of a field agent in Rabat … many wanted to fire him because he had stolen from the cash box, clearly, from the food, clothes. And he was also in need, so that was normal.

In the church, the field agents are members of the church. They expect the church to be their Mum and Dad. Dad who says, that’s not good, I am not happy, you must not do that. And Mum who forgives, who says, OK, how are we going to get out of this. It’s a big difference between a corporation and a church … The big difference is that it’s not me who chooses the members of the church, it’s God who has chosen. And you have to work with everyone. And for someone to leave the church, the body of Christ is wounded. We are the body of Christ.

Researcher: But to fire someone isn’t necessarily to throw them aside, is it?

President: But it is always understood in that way. Always.

Researcher: but what if they are hurting someone?

President: We forgive them (interview with Samuel Amedro, current President, 8 September 2012).

The President’s attitude towards and way of handling staff discipline is an artifact betraying deeply held beliefs and values. These beliefs and values reflect an underlying basic assumption of how he sees the world, what I have referred to as an “enchanted humanitarianism” that filters into staff issues, including how to manage staff misconduct. In an “enchanted humanitarianism” discourse, the organisation is a family in a very real sense, not only symbolically. The workers of the CEI, according to the President, are chosen by God, not by himself or the Management Committee; accordingly, he has a duty to work with them, to “forgive them” in cases of disciplinary action (in the case of Diachari) and to accord them the benefit of doubt (in the case of Juml). Within this discourse of family and familial
attachments, the organisation makes up for the staff members’ faults instead of “throwing them aside”, which is what the President sees corporations (and presumably NGOs) as doing. The whole person is taken into account, not only his professional role as an employee of the CEI, but the whole person who is part of “the body of Christ”. In a Protestant context, the image of “the body of Christ” draws on Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 12. Jesus lived and ministered on earth, but when he ascended into heaven he left the church to be his “body” and to continue his ministry. Just as a human body has different parts, so too the church has different parts, Paul taught, and the different parts can be celebrated as diverse yet unified.

It is interesting to note that the day after an emergency meeting between Diachari and the Management Committee where a formal warning was issued, there was a CEI Board Meeting at which Diachari gave the opening prayers. In his prayers, he said that he hoped as a family they would be able to forgive each other; that no matter what happens or what problems they have, that they would stay united as a family. As with the issues of staff support and training discussed in the previous section, this demonstrates that conflict and disciplinary issues can be “rendered prayerful”. Diachari used the opportunity of prayer to manipulate and cement his own position, hiding behind the rhetoric of being spiritual and a forgiving community life. This is another case where the cringe against “professionalism” and “efficiency” is costing the organisation and fostering dysfunctional work practices, as well as “enabling” (in the psychological sense of the word) ongoing dysfunctional and sometimes criminal behaviour. How these practices reflect some of aspects of a CEI cultural paradigm and the basic underlying assumptions under the leadership of the President are summarised in Table 1.

As can be seen in the table, being a “family” has consequences on a practical or organisational level, or to use Schein’s terms, on the level of “visible artifacts” and “espoused beliefs and values” (2004, p. 59). The metaphor of a family is often used in other contexts to give a moral dimension to something that might otherwise be simply economic. For example, there have been studies of the use of family inclusion and “fictive family membership” as a strategy to ensure quality of care and commitment from domestic workers (Lan 2003; Pe-Pua 2003), and the use of the family in corporate culture, such as in the case of Walmart and its approach to free enterprise and consumerism (Moreton 2009). Within a Christian context, the Biblical idea of family involves a “family of believers” (1 Peter 2:17; 1 Peter 5:9) who stand firm together in their faith in God (Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 2:11). The idea of family suggests close bonds of trust, relationship and belonging. This central idea of a family in the Biblical sense forms the basis of the underlying assumptions for some in the CEI. This is why references to professionalisation and efficiency in the CEI are problematic
for them: they do not see themselves as being in the same cultural paradigm as secular NGOs. Of course, this central assumption is disputed within the CEI, but it is nevertheless held by some who are in power, as well as some who are not (for example, some fieldworkers). Furthermore, I would emphasise the constructed nature of these binary oppositions, constructed by people such as those in leadership positions themselves. In practice, these dichotomies are much more blurred, as demonstrated in previous chapters on the ambivalence in the organisation between evangelism and humanitarianism, and its fundamental identity ambiguity.

Table 1. CEI’s cultural paradigm under the leadership of President Samuel Amedro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central assumption:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WE ARE A FAMILY in the Biblical sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family is “chosen by God”, not by man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A SANCTIFIED idea of the family related to church as the BODY OF CHRIST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESS of what is constructed as “secular”:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>criteria, structure, procedures, formal training, professionalisation, efficiency, emphasis on pay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MORE of what is constructed as “sacred”:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>informality, taking time, flexibility, relationships, selfless motivations, compassion, patience, love, trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

God provides the motivation and objective. God is the source of all things, hence the central importance of prayer.

A family does not need too much structure, too many rules or procedures. It is built on trust.

Family members do things out of love, they are not “professionals”.

You cannot eject members out of a family, particularly the Body of Christ.

The mission is to be what we are proclaiming: that is, witnessing the good news of Christ!

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to show how notions of the sacred and secular translate on an operational level into particular staff issues. Through using a cultural lens as defined by Schein (2004) to capture some of these dynamics, an underlying basic assumption can be uncovered within the organisation; one that is largely based on a sanctified notion of the family. All of the organisation’s mission, goals and primary tasks directly reflect this deeper basic assumption (Schein 2004, p. 139). Or, to put it another way, these basic assumptions are translated into
practical issues which can be observed on the level of visible artifacts and espoused beliefs and values. In this chapter I analysed the “visible artifacts” of certain operational issues (staff precariousness, staff support and training and staff misconduct) to demonstrate how concepts of the sacred and the secular are mobilised to serve this underlying basic assumption of the organisation. I demonstrated how issues with staff were based on constructions of an opposition between a “secularised” professionalisation and efficiency versus a “sanctified” conception of the organisation’s work, some of which was touched upon in the previous chapter on organisational mission and identity.

The consequences of this were sometimes problematic. I have attempted to trace some of what Jager and Meier (2010) characterise as “materialisations” from this process; that is, the concrete outcomes and social consequences of actions that have been informed by a particular discourse. Some of the materialisations included a feeling of precariousness for some of the staff, a lack of support and training, and an ambivalent procedure and follow-up for staff misconduct. On the other hand, they also included pastoral care for staff, an attitude of forgiveness for mistakes and a sense of a transcendent common purpose.

This common purpose or cultural paradigm of the CEI is negotiated in a humanitarian space which Duriez et al. (2007) have characterised as a “transaction space” (p. 27). This space is founded on a double economy of regulation and compromise. Regulation here is in terms of external rules and constraints, in particular by donors or state actors and the context they are operating in, and compromise in the sense of the disconnect between the organisation’s objectives and the means used (Duriez et al. 2007, p. 27). For example, tensions within regulation might be the increased bureaucratisation of an organisation versus more flexibility and less external accountability; and compromises might be made between a need to professionalise the organisation for better efficiency and productivity versus its self-perceived spiritual vocation. This conception highlights the constraints of humanitarian space, and the ways that the actors have to negotiate these with their particular religious subjectivity. These constraints and compromises could also be conceptualised as the space in which constructions of the “secular” and the “sacred” play out, and where the organisation’s basic underlying assumptions must be negotiated.
CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

The central argument and contribution to knowledge of the thesis is that the role of religion in humanitarianism involves a negotiation between evangelism and humanitarianism that is a fundamental aporia for an organisation like the CEI. This aporia is marked by contradiction, tension and ambiguity. Due to this ambivalence between evangelism and humanitarianism, the CEI does not fit into standard categories of NGOs, even those that have faith-based origins such as Oxfam or the Salvation Army, and because of this its work is rendered invisible within humanitarian discourse. This not only highlights the limitations of existing categories, but also how these are based on a religious/secular divide, which the existence of organisations like the CEI renders into question. My research reveals that “religion” does not operate separately in the CEI’s intervention as an “add-on” separate to the “secular”, but rather that both sanctification and secularisation processes and strategies are mobilised in the organisation’s work. It demonstrates the need for a recognition of the complexity and ambiguity of FBOs, and their engagement in migration and in humanitarianism more generally.

The research question was answered through the analysis of data collected during a year-long fieldwork phase with the official Protestant church in Morocco, the EEAM, and its social welfare section, the CEI. As an LFC, its engagement in aid work with migrants is particularly revealing of some of the challenges that small FBOs in the South face, as they negotiate their religious subjectivity within their humanitarian work. Research methods included participant observation, in-depth interviews and analysis of documents, in line with an ethnographic approach that highlights attention to everyday practices. Furthermore, in my analysis I combined two research perspectives in an original way to explore the role of “religion” in humanitarian aid provision. I utilised a discursive approach to the study of religion (Taira 2013; von Stuckrad 2013) and sanctification and secularisation processes and strategies (Barnett & Stein 2012).

In analysing the production of knowledge through the concept of “discourse”, a discursive approach to studying FBOs can uncover how religion as a set of practices, meanings, knowledges, resources and processes are mobilised by various actors within the particular context of humanitarian aid provision. And similar to the discursive study of religion, analysing religion through the lens of sanctification and secularisation processes, strategies and outcomes helps to avoid monolithic constructions of the religious and the secular. In addition, this approach can illuminate and bring to the fore the dynamic interrelationship between “religion” and “the secular”; highlighting the mutual co-dependency in their construction. Both research perspectives allow an approach where taken-for-granted
categories and assumptions can be destabilised. Combining these two research perspectives provides a complementary framework that enables a more careful analysis of the role that “religion” can have in humanitarianism. Utilising this approach, I have been able to examine the structures and everyday practices of a particular FBO to focus on the ways religion and the secular are expressed as strategies and processes by different actors in the context of humanitarian aid provision. The arguments of the study are drawn together below. First, an analysis of the relationship between the CEI and two external actors that have had the most impact on its discourses and practices (the Moroccan State and donors to the CEI) is particularly revealing of how constructions of the sacred and secular are variously mobilised for different purposes, not only by the CEI but also by the external actors themselves. The existence of an organisation such as the CEI acting in the public sphere can put into question many taken-for-granted binaries between religion and politics, and religion and the secular. An unsettling of these distinct categories has consequences for how we understand the role of “religion” in humanitarian aid, as we come to see that in actual practice, the category of religion is much more blurred and dependent on the particular context.

The research frames the relationship of the Moroccan State with the CEI as a question of legitimacy. The CEI is in a double bind in its relation to the state. In order to keep the legitimacy of the CEI and its work on the politically sensitive topic of irregular African migration, the CEI needs to be close to the church, which has official status with the authorities, and to “de-politicise” its work, in a sense taking refuge in a certain religious discourse. On the other hand, if it is seen to be too related to the church it can be open to accusations of proselytism, engaging in conversion activities or being confused with other unofficial “illegal” churches. It is an inherent aporia for the CEI, which has to negotiate this ambivalence in its work and whose very existence puts into question easy distinctions between the religious and the secular. Similarly, the issue around advocacy work within the CEI demonstrates how much what is “religious” and what is “political” (here constructed in contrast to religion; as non-religious, secular) can be interchangeable, interrelated, fluid, ambiguous and modifiable, depending on the context and the need. In analysing EEAM and the CEI’s relations with the state, there is a need to move beyond binaries of either/or and instead see how fluid and interrelated these categories are and how they can change depending on the context, strategies and motives of different actors. An analysis of the CEI’s external relations with the state shows how much it is marked by contradictions, tensions and ambiguity.
The other important external relationship is with the CEI’s donors. A transnational religious network facilitates funding. Through its international donors it is able to finance working with migrants. This funding is mainly acquired through networks of personal relationships that are developed through different church groups and organisations. Furthermore, different CEI staff act as “brokers” of these donor relationships. It is this combination of a shared religion across different cultures in the relationship between the CEI and its donors (American, European) that is particularly revealing of how sanctification and secularisation discourses are mobilised through processes of representation and supplication. In both representation and supplication, a sanctified discourse of suffering is utilised – a particular narrative that is “sacred” in the sense that it is apart or separate from its political or social context. The complexity of the situation is reduced to the motif of the persecuted Christian in a Muslim world, something that is perhaps “easier” for the donors to understand, sympathise and empathise with.

Second, there is a contested discourse of what I term an enchanted humanitarianism within the CEI. This actually translates into how things are done on an operational level, resulting in particular challenges such as staff precariousness, lack of formal staff support and training, and managing staff misconduct. These issues are an outcome of the organisation trying to interpret and negotiate notions of the “sacred” and “secular” in actual practices, where a certain construction of the sacred (informality, flexibility, relationship-building) is in tension with a certain construction of the secular (professionalisation, efficiency, productivity). Within this enchanted humanitarianism is the practice of rendering prayerful, the practice of making situations amenable to prayer. I argue that rendering prayerful is one way in which the organisation offers informal support to its staff.

Furthermore, beneath the operational issues previously mentioned are basic underlying assumptions, following on from Schein’s (2006) three levels of culture in an organisation (visible artifacts; espoused beliefs, values and rules; and basic underlying assumptions), about what “doing church” means in EEAM; more specifically, what doing service as a church involves for the CEI. Under the leadership of the current President, it is based on the Biblical idea of a family created by God. This is marked by trust, forgiveness and relationships, in contrast to a constructed secularisation of professionalisation, efficiency and formal procedures. This means that staff can bring to their work what they see as the unique contribution of a church: spiritual accompaniment (including pastoral care, spiritual guidance and prayer). Some see this as what separates them from NGOs and from the secular, but it is contested within the CEI.
Lastly, at the heart of the CEI’s aporia is the tension and ambiguity between the two pillars of evangelism and social service. I argue that there is a fundamental *identity ambiguity* within the CEI between evangelism and humanitarianism. It is not a case of either/or, but rather an “unresolvable” ambivalence intrinsic to the organisation due to its own history, the geo-political context it has emerged out of, its response to external situations and the impact of individual personnel. Its identity is fundamentally ambiguous and contested between views on whether and to what extent its work is is evangelism or humanitarianism. And an examination of its practices and discourses shows that in the end, neither can completely define what the CEI is or does.

Constructions of the sacred and the secular are particularly utilised in the construction of its organisational identity, and this puts into question how we categorise humanitarian organisations and what they do. This applies not only to making distinctions between “religious” and “secular” organisations, but also to the very definition of an FBO, countering a simplistic view of the role of religion within these organisations. Furthermore, the ambiguous nature of the organisation is due in large part to necessity — a response to the conditions and the constraints it has to work under. That it, it is largely out of necessity and a question of survival that the organisation must be able to utilise a range of secularisation and sanctification strategies in response to external factors, but also within the organisation, as it tries to respond to these with its particular (and diverse) religious subjectivity. A fundamental identity ambiguity in the CEI has both positive and negative effects for the organisation and its staff. Some positive effects include being able to be more inclusive and adaptable to specific or changing situations and therefore being more flexible. Some negative effects include confusion about its purpose, a sense of a lack of direction, and the feeling that boundaries are frequently crossed.

This research posed a question about the role of religion in humanitarian aid provision in the context of irregular migration. More specifically, it asked how “religion” impacted on the nature of FBO’s intervention, and some of the challenges the organisation faced in its work. The study found that the role of “religion” is more complex than prevailing religious/secular binaries allow.

**Implications of the research**

An analysis of the CEI examined in detail and through concrete practices reveals what happens when constructions of the sacred and the secular enter the public sphere and organisational culture. It demonstrates how these constructions are negotiations marked by contradictions, tension and ambiguity. The sacred and secular are shown to be mutually
constitutive, while at the same time drawing each other into question through a blurring of boundaries in actual practices. This puts into question a homogenous or essentialised concept of how “religion” operates in humanitarianism. This research contributes to humanitarian research, policy and practice in the following ways:

First, the differences, contentions and tension within the CEI itself highlight the need for a recognition of diversity within diversity. FBOs are not a homogenous group or category and there are differences between them; but importantly, there are also differences within a particular FBO, due to the varying manifestations and constructions of “religion”. Contrary to a conception of religion or religious actors as having a monolithic or simplistic impact within an organisation, FBOs are also spaces of contention and ambiguity. Therefore, any engagement with FBOs or religious actors requires an awareness of this complexity and diversity within an organisation.

Second, an analysis of the role of religion in humanitarianism demonstrates that the question of how to measure or evaluate the contribution by specifically religious actors is loaded with underlying value assumptions. If the objectives or measurements are efficiency and productivity, then it is impossible to measure such things as relationships built, time spent or spiritual accompaniment provided, something which some actors in the CEI saw as being essential to their work. Questions about how to evaluate the “added value” of FBOs often have these underlying value assumptions, with “secular” standards being the assumed norm from which organisations are judged and “religion” seen as the varying factor. A shift in thinking is required to incorporate “other” contributions that are rendered invisible and immeasurable if the only objectives are biased towards a certain conception of productivity, efficiency and quantifiable outcomes. Therefore, the discourse on the objectives, motivations and goals of humanitarianism needs to be able to include a range and plurality of voices, including a plurality of religious voices, which actually already exist on the ground but which mostly go unrecognised or invisible in the discourse.

This is linked to the need for policymakers and practitioners in humanitarianism to “take religion seriously” (Pritchard 2010). Not only an instrumentalisation of faith (how it can be used within the prevailing framework to further goals and values that remain unquestioned), but engaging seriously with faith values and how they may put into question prevailing assumptions and values, including how the religious/secular and religion/politics divides are usually conceived. This involves continual self-reflexivity and a recognition of the legitimacy of religious discourse, as well as its diversity.

Lastly, the thesis contributes to discourse on the role of religion in humanitarianism through demonstrating how the organisation, in its identity, motivation and operational capacity, falls
outside of easily definable categories of being either primarily a church or humanitarian organisation. An examination of its practices shows that in the end, neither category can completely define what the CEI is or does. I argue that existing typologies only succeed because there is an assumption of a particular religious/secular divide in the public sphere. In practice, the line between religion and the secular is more blurred and ambiguous. My research demonstrates how sanctification and secularisation processes are utilised by different actors and how these categories can be interchangeable, interrelated, fluid, ambiguous and modifiable depending on the particular context and on various actors’ aims in any given situation. Therefore, the very existence of FBOs like the CEI can put into question easy distinctions between categories such as religion and the secular, and religion and politics.

This study refutes simplistic understandings of the role of “religion” in humanitarianism, and more specifically what Ager & Ager (2011) call the functional secularist humanitarian approach to forced migration and displaced populations. This prevailing discourse does not allow space for discussions linking faith and humanitarianism, nor a questioning of liberal materialist values that are not only assumed in much public discourses on humanitarianism (Ager & Ager 2011, p. 461) but also importantly provide the framework for action. This study shows that a conceptual shift is required if liberal values such as freedom, reason and self-determination are to be seen as not the only motivating values for humanitarian actors. “Religious” and “other” modes of humanitarian action can at the very least question the universalism of liberal materialist values that are implicit in much humanitarian and human rights discourse. This can open up a dialogue on what constitutes humanitarian principles and action, one that considers a diversity of other modes of being, action and values that differ from a Western, secular, global North perspective. In acknowledging plurality and diversity on the humanitarian landscape, a dialogue can be started about values shared within humanitarianism, but also values that are divergent and contested, and what this means in actual practices. Engagement with FBOs by policymakers and other humanitarian actors therefore needs to be flexible and recognise differences – differences between FBOs but also within them.

Furthermore, many organisations like the CEI arise out of, in response to, and work under the constraints of global forces not only of migration, but also neoliberal markets, foreign policy and the prevailing humanitarian discourse, while negotiating this through their particular religious subjectivity. In other words, organisations arise out of specific contexts and social-historical processes. An in-depth understanding of an organisation like the CEI requires an analysis in its social, geographical, historical and organisational context. Without
this proper situating of organisations within their external context and internal dynamics, there is a risk of misunderstanding or oversimplifying the role of organisations such as the CEI in the humanitarian landscape. There is a need, therefore, for more detailed studies of smaller religious actors who do not necessarily fit into neat, simple categories; particularly transnational LFCs who are often working under constraints of global forces themselves and yet who remain largely invisible in humanitarian literature.

**Suggestions for further research**

The analysis revealed in this thesis has identified that this is an important topic worthy of further study, raising several suggestions for future research. Gaps in knowledge are described below.

First, there needs to be more research done on the challenges and contributions of smaller organisations, particularly those based in the global South, including transnational LFCs. Furthermore, this research needs to analyse these organisations in an in-depth, detailed way that also situates each organisation in its social, geographical, historical and organisational context. This avoids oversimplifications or generalisations.

An important issue that the thesis highlights is the need for a conceptual shift in the discourse surrounding religion and the religious/secular framework. Further research could look into how this actually translates into policy relevance in humanitarianism. How can policymakers begin to question the various ways that the religious/secular discourse is used within humanitarian standards/evaluation/assessment?

On a related note, given the plurality and diversity of values and identities, are universal values within humanitarianism possible? Can we speak about best practice, or is that to impose values on some groups who may find it problematic? Or is this to fall victim to a certain kind of relativism? If questions on how to evaluate the “added value” of religion and FBOs often have underlying value assumptions, with “secular” standards being the assumed norm from which organisations are judged and “religion” seen as the varying factor, can there be another way to assess the contribution of those outside the standard frameworks? What kind of shift in thinking is required to incorporate “other” contributions, goals and motivations that are rendered invisible and immeasurable if the only objectives are biased towards a certain conception of productivity, efficiency and quantifiable outcomes? Further research in this area could be fruitful in developing a humanitarian discourse that includes a range and plurality of voices, including a plurality of religious voices.
Final conclusion

The central argument and contribution to knowledge of this thesis is that the role of religion in humanitarianism involves a negotiation between evangelism and humanitarianism that is a fundamental aporia for an organisation like the CEI. The differences, contradictions and tension within the CEI itself highlight not only that FBOs are not a homogenous group or category and that there are differences between them, but importantly that there are also differences within a particular FBO. These differences need to be recognised. Contrary to a conception of religion or religious actors as having a monolithic or simplistic impact within an organisation, FBOs are also spaces of contention and ambiguity. Consequently, an engagement with FBOs or religious actors requires an awareness of this complexity and diversity.

This study has wider implications for policy and practice, as outlined in the previous section, and these findings could only have been obtained from a detailed study. An in-depth study of one particular FBO has been able to uncover the various and multiple ways in which religion manifests within an organisation involved in humanitarian aid provision. The research demonstrates that in going deeper in a particular case study, much can be learned regarding the various ways that religion engages in the public sphere.

Furthermore, a detailed study reveals how a strict binary where the religious and the secular is constructed in opposition to each other cannot represent the scope and identities of many transnational actors, who straddle the range of “relief organisations, terrorists, missionaries, political parties, the Catholic church, human-rights activists, and environmentalist networks” (Calhoun et al. p. 4089). In the field of humanitarianism, faith-based actors are destabilising categories in this area. Studies on the provision of social welfare by mosques show that these do not necessarily fit into distinctions of either “radical” or “moderate” (Clark 2004; Sparre & Petersen 2007). Similarly, a Christian organisation like the CEI defies simplistic categorisation as being primarily engaged in either evangelism or humanitarianism. It further demonstrates the complexity of when the sacred and the secular meet, with FBOs serving as an example of religion’s concrete role, intervention and presence in the modern world order (Gres 2010).

Religion, perhaps more than ever, has become an important, if contested, topic. FBOs are important faith-based actors in the public sphere, and are themselves shaped by wider global processes. Given the increasing importance and use of religion in political discourse, and the worldwide consequences of this discourse, a study of an FBO is one way of gaining a better understanding of the variety and specific ways that “religion” enters the public sphere.
Glossary

*anciens*  older European congregation members before the arrival of sub-Saharan Africans

*permanences*  CEI direct aid (food, clothing) drop-ins for migrants

*agences de proximite*  CEI fieldworkers

*quartier populaire*  poor neighbourhood

*foyer*  migrant house

*shari’a*  Islamic law

*fiqh*  jurisprudence

*bidonville*  slum

*darija*  Moroccan Arabic
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### Appendices

#### Appendix 1. List of formal interviewees

(migrant names have been changed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role/organisation (as of February 2013)</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEI/EEAM personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Amedro</td>
<td>CEI and EEAM President</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Funk</td>
<td>CEI Director</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM Teeuwissen</td>
<td>CEI Vice-President</td>
<td>The Netherlands/France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diachari Poudigiou</td>
<td>CEI National Secretary</td>
<td>Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Luc Blanc</td>
<td>Former CEI and EEAM President, now working for Défap</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Smith</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Marie Kisango</td>
<td>Rabat pastor</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micheline Bochet-Le Milon</td>
<td>CEI former Treasurer</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Louis (email)</td>
<td>CEI Rabat team leader</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Brown</td>
<td>Founder of CEI’s current configuration</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juml</td>
<td>CEI agent de proximité</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>CEI agent de proximité</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Donors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joshua Speight</td>
<td>Co-operative Baptist Fellowship</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Phelps</td>
<td>Co-operative Baptist Fellowship</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans-Joachim Schwabe</td>
<td>Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role/organisation (as of February 2013)</td>
<td>Country of origin</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Migrants</strong></td>
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<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carole</td>
<td></td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other NGOs and FBOs working with migrants</strong></td>
<td>(Note: many of these organisations receive funding from a range of partners – international partners, the UN, government funding such as from the EU or Swiss embassy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chafik Tega</td>
<td>Fondation Occident Orient</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia Khrouz</td>
<td>GADEN and researcher</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehdi Alioua</td>
<td>GADEN and researcher</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camille Denis</td>
<td>GADEN</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Pierre-Marie</td>
<td>Caritas</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent Sibout</td>
<td>Caritas</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruno Meric</td>
<td>Terre des Hommes/Tamkine</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hicham Baraka</td>
<td>ABCDS</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saadia Zineb</td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khadija Aïnani</td>
<td>AMDH</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camara Laye</td>
<td>CMSM</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2. List of activities/events attended 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of event/activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer work with CEI in Rabat and Casablanca</td>
<td>March–May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American donors’ visit</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to Morocco/Algerian border (Oujda) and migrant camps</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEI and SAM fundraiser in Casablanca</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to CEI in Fes, Casablanca and Oujda</td>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEI prayer day</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American and German donors visit</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops for migrant women</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEI management committee 2012 annual meeting</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEI agents de proximité 2012 annual meeting</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEAM annual 2012 Synod</td>
<td>November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday service</td>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday prayer days</td>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabat church council meeting</td>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration platforme meetings</td>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. Ethics clearance and statement of compliance

Dear Prof Neumann,

**SUHREC Project 2011/253 The migration experience of sub-Saharan African women in Morocco**

Prof Klaus Neumann, FLSS/Ms May Ngo

Approved Duration: 01/02/2012 To 01/04/2013

I refer to the ethical review of the above project protocol undertaken by Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) at its meeting 08/2011 held 28 October 2011. Your response to the review, as emailed on 26 and 30 November 2011 was put to a SUHREC delegate for consideration. *Request for information on revised volunteer group placement details as they are received was conveyed by separate e-mail of today's date.*

I am pleased to advise that, as submitted to date, the project has approval to proceed in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions here outlined.

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.

- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.

- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/ clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.

- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project may be undertaken at any time.

Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance, citing the SUHREC project number. Please retain a copy of this clearance email as part of project record-keeping.

Best wishes for the project.

Yours sincerely

Kaye Goldenberg,

for

Keith Wilkins

Secretary, SUHREC

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Appendix 4. List of publications produced by the candidate as a result of the project

