Explorations of an arts-based activism framework: ARTifariti International Art and Human Rights Meeting in Western Sahara

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Abstract

Drawing upon two threads of theory and practice – Community Cultural Development (CCD) and Socially Engaged Art (SEA), a framework is proposed to address a gap in the respective literatures and to develop ideas and tools that help us get closer to understanding the impact of arts-based activism as a tool for community development, resistance, and political activism. Utilizing an ethnographic and practice-based approach, the proposed framework is applied to a specific project, the ARTifariti International Art and Human Rights Meeting in Western Sahara, as a means of understanding the value and efficacy of this tool. The ARTifariti festival is an integral part of the arts and cultural development movement underway in the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) refugee camps located near Tindouf, Algeria. The intent is that the framework will be further honed and applied for further analysis of arts-based activism in the SADR refugee camps as well as other arts-based activism activities and social movements.

Keywords: Arts-based activism; community cultural development, socially engaged art, refugees, Africa, social movements, activism, human rights, Saharawi.

Introduction

> In Tifariti… the Sahrawis launched an admirable offensive in their ongoing struggle to gain independence and the right to self-determination. Armed with paintbrushes and sculptors' tools, they began to explore how art can embody peaceful expression of their history of resistance.
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> Khadijah Hamdi, Polisario Front, Minister of Arts & Culture (as quoted in Hamdi & Peraita, 2013, spelling in original, translated from Spanish to English in original, p. 58).

Drawing on ethnographic and practice-led research, this article examines the use of arts and culture as a tool for community development, resistance, and political activism in the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The SADR is a state-in-exile located near Tindouf, Algeria where the Saharawi live in long-

term refugee camps. The Saharawi resistance, or what some refer to as the Saharawi *Intifada,* has a history of utilizing "nonviolent 'weapons' like symbolic protests, mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, and other forms of nonviolent defiance" (Stephan & Mundy, 2006); however, there is no literature related to the current arts-based approach. Scholarship on the Western Sahara, and Maghreb[1] studies more generally, is limited and this work addresses a gap in the literature regarding the use of art as a strategy of nonviolent resistance in response to the failure of action by the international community in addressing the ongoing colonization and oppression of the Saharawi (Burke, 1998).

An array of creative works take place at the annual ARTifariti International Art and Human Rights Meeting in Western Sahara ("ARTifariti festival"), spanning individual and collaborative work that includes performance art, visual art, and time-based media. The artwork has included sculpture, ceramics, photography, portraits, graffiti art, land art, murals, poetry, calligraphy, screen printing, fashion design, installation, performance art as well as documentary filmmaking. The projects range from solo artist to participatory models of artmaking that can include adults, youth, and children from Camp Boujdour and surrounding camps. While some of the artmaking includes community members from Camp Boujdour, much of it resides within the grounds of the festival itself (since 2013 at the Saharawi Art School) resembling an artist's residency. The ARTifariti festival is included as an example of arts-based activism in Thompson's (2012) Living as form: Socially engaged art from 1991-2011. In this text, considered both an exhibition and compilation of socially engaged art from around the world, views of what constitutes art and the role of art in society are challenged. What makes this festival compelling for research purposes, we find, is its dual focus on arts and culture towards fostering human rights, its broader socio-political aims, and the fact that it takes place in a refugee camp.

First, an overview of the research approach is outlined, followed by the Western Sahara, Saharawi, and arts-based activism context. CCD and SEA are then discussed separately before moving into an analysis of the shared philosophical and practical components. The proposed framework for exploring and assessing arts-based activism in the field, drawing on CCD and SEA, is then used to do an initial analysis of the ARTifariti festival. Lastly, a critical analysis of the framework is presented with the intent that it will be further honed by academics and practitioners to examine the use of arts and culture as a tool for social change and political activism. The framework considers aspects such as inter- and intra- power dynamics, community development, political motivations, and the value of utilizing art as a nonviolent tool.

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[1] Also often spelled *Magrib*.

Research approach

As noted above, our primary goal for this paper is to construct a framework from which it becomes possible to assess arts and cultural development projects underway in the camps. We then apply the framework to one of these projects, the annual ARTifariti festival, as a means of understanding the value and efficacy of this tool. We draw on existing literature from the fields of Community Cultural Development (CCD) and Socially Engaged Art (SEA), relevant materials produced by ARTifariti[2], and ethnographic and practice-led fieldwork. Our interest and commitment to this work arises from our individual research and practice as well as our shared experiences in the Saharawi refugee camps at the ARTifariti festival. While in the camps it became apparent that many of our ideas, questions, and even experiences followed similar trajectories, yet the language and literature of our respective fields, Community Development and Art and Design Education, were not linked. Historically, community practitioners and artists have used the arts as a tool for social change. How might our respective professional literatures and practices work and inform each other? The number of artists and art collectives engaging communities to address social issues continues to grow, and at the same time community development literature increasingly highlights the role of the arts in working towards social transformation (Goldbard 2006, Cleveland & Shifferd 2010). The two approaches associated with arts-based activism we are most interested in exploring and expanding upon are - community cultural development (CCD) arising out of community development and socially engaged art (SEA) from the art world.

Using an interpretive lens, and in line with ethnographic research, fieldwork, participant observation, and interviews were conducted from 2013-2018 utilizing an etic approach. Understanding that "reality is socially constructed" the Saharawi viewpoint grounds this work (Willis et al. 2007, p. 220). The first author conducted informal and semi-structured interviews with Saharawi and international festival participants during the ARTifariti festival (November 2013), during the FiSahara film festival (April 2015) in Camp Dakhla, and with Spanish festival organizers in Spain via online and in-person interviews (June 2015)[3]. Informal conversations and clarifications continued with participants met at these festivals via phone and email (2013-2018). Informal interviews and participant observation were conducted by the second author during the ARTifariti festivals in November 2013 and November 2014. Additionally, the second author gleaned insights through practice-based research, as an artist and practitioner, by conducting three projects with the Camp Boujdour primary school and through the development and implementation of collaborative projects (2013-2014). As such, our multidisciplinary work brings together qualitative research methods commonly found in the social sciences with arts-

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[2] ARTifariti creates a catalogue and web-based material highlighting the work at each annual edition illustrating common themes woven into the intent of the work.

[3] All interviews contained the proper consent procedure approved by the Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) and oral/written consent.

based methods to suggest an initial framework for understanding art aimed at social change (Bradshaw-Heap 2012, Gray & Malins 2004). We then began to see emerging patterns, and outliers, mapped onto the CCD and SEA literature and practices. The ARTifariti festival is the space within which we explore, document, and analyze the arts practices in an attempt to build an initial framework for understanding and assessing arts for social change projects.

The Western Sahara and Saharawi context

The Western Sahara is in the Maghreb region of North Africa; bordered by Morocco to the north, Algeria to the northeast, Mauritania to the east and south, and includes coastline along the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Historically, various tribal groups in the region that spoke this shared dialect and led nomadic and pastoralist lifestyles, came together to become a distinct people known as the Saharawi, meaning "People of the Western Sahara" or "Saharan". Perhaps the best definition of "Saharawi[4]" or "Sahrawi" is Hassaniya Arabic -speaking peoples that claim membership to at least one of the social groupings found in and around the area known as the Western Sahara (Zunes and Mundy, 2010). Many consider the Saharawi to be the indigenous peoples of the Western Sahara. According to Omar (2008), "they developed their own sociopolitical forms of...government [that] were distinctly different from the system of emirates in neighbouring Mauritania and the monarchical dynasties in Morocco"(p. 45).

Through colonization efforts by Spain in the early twentieth century, the historically nomadic population was severely impacted when borderlines were arbitrarily drawn to create what was then known as the Spanish Sahara, now known as the Western Sahara. In response to Spanish colonialism, the Saharawi developed a representative government called the Polisario Front, to first resist Spanish control, then, to resist annexation by Morocco and Mauritania. During this protracted conflict an estimated 165,000 (Mundy, 2007) Saharawi fled to the desert outside of Tindouf, Algeria where refugee camps were eventually established.

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4 The Saharawi people themselves most often utilize "Saharawi" even though "Sahrawi" is utilized most often in English and "Saharaui" in Spanish. Therefore, we utilize the spelling most closely aligned with our understanding of how the people represent themselves.

Figure 1: Map of Western Sahara and surrounding region

Figure 1: As noted on the map above, the Moroccan occupied Western Sahara, located to the left of the Moroccan-built militarized wall, noted in red, encompasses most of the land area of the Western Sahara. The Polisario held territory is to the right of the berm, including the area considered their state-in-exile (the SADR) and refugee camps in SW Algeria. Retrieved from *The Economist*: https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2010/11/04/morocco-v-algeria

The Moroccan and Polisario controlled territories are fractured by a 4,200 km long earthen berm guarded with active land mines and armed Moroccan troops. This Wall is referred to as the "Wall of Shame" by the Saharawi and their allies, with the Moroccan occupied area referred to as the "Occupied Zone" and Polisario held area as the "Liberated[5][6] Zone". Although the international community, including the UN, the African Union, and the International Court of Justice, provides support for the Saharawi people's right to self-determination, two-thirds of the Western Sahara nonetheless remains occupied by Moroccan forces (Farah, 2010). Since the ceasefire the Saharawi people continue to appeal

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[5] Also often called the "Free Zone" by the Saharawi and their allies.

[6] From the Moroccan perspective, operationalization of such terms (i.e. "occupied") creates tensions and ramifications, as witnessed in the "firestorm" aimed at United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-moon when he referred to Western Sahara as "occupied territory". (Human Rights Watch, March 21, 2016, "Dispatches: A Firestorm Over the Word "Occupation" https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/03/21/dispatches-firestorm-over-word-occupation).

to the international political community to take action on human rights and self-determination. It is often referred to as the last colony in Africa.

A ceasefire-agreement was reached between the Polisario Front and Morocco after 16 years of active conflict (1975-1991). This left tens of thousands of Saharawi living in the refugee camps as well as many more who reside in Moroccan occupied Western Sahara. The camps were meant to be temporary, however the continued stalemate regarding a UN brokered call for a referendum to self-determination has resulted in the protracted use of the camps for over 40 years. Akin to the former Berlin Wall, movement between the two geographic areas is restricted and separated by a militarized berm/wall. Due to this, many families have not seen one another in over 40 years. The Saharawi struggle for self-determination crosses geographic spaces of exile, between those in the Moroccan occupied territories, the Liberated Zone including the refugee camps, and the diaspora. Current political circumstances "do not permit the construction of a 'normal' state…[Instead, the SADR is] built more explicitly at the symbolic level" (Pablo San Martin, 2005, p. 574). The Polisario have designed a means by which the entire displaced community envisions, enacts and embodies life of a state-in-exile.

Key to the prolonged occupation is the fact that the Western Sahara is resource-rich, including phosphates, fishing, and potential iron ore and offshore oil reserves (Omar, 2008). Due to the long-term lack of media coverage (and lack of political pressure to see international law upheld and self-determination recognized), the situation of the Saharawi is presented in the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2018 Algeria Factsheet as a "forgotten crisis". Human rights organizations (e.g. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights[7], among others), journalists, and activists continue to document abuses in Moroccan occupied Western Sahara. Saharawi activist Aminatou Haidar states, "the campaign of violence against the Saharawi people…is taking place in total silence" (2007, p. 348). Currently there is an estimated 155,000 refugees distributed amongst five major camps spread over 2,000 square miles (Mundy, 2007; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011a). The five camps are named after the main cities the Saharawi were displaced from in (now Moroccan occupied) Western Sahara - Aaiun, Ausserd, Smara, Dakhla and Camp Boujdour (formerly the 27 February Camp). The strategic naming and geography of these camps were "constructed so that it may play a role in the preservation of a collective memory" (Errazzouki, 2014, n.p.).

Most resources to the camps are provided by UN agencies and international NGOs. NGOs do not play a direct role in "management, implementing projects, or distributing aid" (Mundy, 2007, p. 286), rather outside entities work through the Saharawi Red Crescent (SRC) or a relevant SADR ministry. The hostile environment of the desert prohibits any real self-sufficiency and the camp

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[7] See the *Western Sahara: Reported Human Rights Violations July 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015* (p. 1-2).

communities remain heavily dependent upon foreign aid for survival (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011b). Since 1991 there is an increasing small market/cash economy supplied by the diaspora, 'solidarity tourism', and small businesses including payments to community members by NGOs (Mundy, 2007). Since the ceasefire in 1991, the Saharawi people and their representative government, have engaged in "virtually no violent resistance" (Chikhi 2016), choosing instead to enact various nonviolent strategies. Apart from the arts-based strategy, there have been other examples of nonviolent protest such as a hunger strike by activist and a former Nobel peace prize nominee, Aminatou Haidar, (November 2009) and the Gdeim Izik protest camp (October 2010). Although largely ignored by the media, Noam Chomsky (among others) note the protest camp as the catalyst for the "Arab Spring".

Arts-based activism as a nonviolent strategy

The SADR has strategically built a governance structure, political alliances, and the support of international NGOs. In the last two decades there have been a growing number of international solidarity events and activities, many tied directly into the use of arts and culture. While continuing to effect change via international politics, the Polisario Front has increased its partnerships with arts-based NGOs in order to utilize arts as a nonviolent resistance strategy. The Ministry of Arts & Culture coordinates with local and international NGOs in utilizing nonviolent strategies as a means of highlighting the Saharawi situation and ongoing conflict as well as to share Saharawi culture with the world. Academics, practitioners, NGOs, faith-based organizations, artists, and others work with the Saharawi (people and government) to build upon this arts-based strategy, including the crafting and utilization of Saharawi art, music, oral history, poetry, film, among others. Some of these organizations, with participants from the camps and abroad, include: ARTifariti festival, FiSahara film festival[8], Sandblast Arts[9], Sahara Libre Wear (SLW)[10], Film, Art, and Music Schools for youth and adults, a Saharawi women's ceramic cooperative, and MOTIF Art Studio & Workshop[11]. The two largest annual events, ARTifariti and FiSahara, draw participants from the camps and abroad to artistically show solidarity and, through shared community experiences, visualize a brighter future for the Saharawi people. Camp Boujdour, the site of the ARTifariti festival, is the home of three post-secondary institutions: the Abidin Kaid Saleh Audiovisual School, the Saharawi National Music School, and the Saharawi Art School. The existence of these three schools illustrates the value this community places on the arts. Our focus is ARTifariti, a festival with the stated mission to bring artists together from around the globe, to "promote intercultural relations" via an "interchange of experiences and skills between local and

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[8] http://fisahara.es

[9] http://www.sandblast-arts.org

[10] http://saharalibrewear.blogspot.com

[11] A community arts space in Camp Smara created by Saharawi artist Mohamed Sulaiman Labat.

international artists," garner international support for the Saharawi cause and to "promote the development of the people through their cultural patrimony" (ARTifariti website, About ARTifariti).

Arts-based activism as a nonviolent strategy towards social transformation finds a home in multiple disciplines including art, education, activism, visual anthropology, social work and community development (Thompson 2012, Bishop 2012a, Goldbard 2006, Lacy 1994). As a strategy, arts-based activism enables the exploration of values and culture via the arts, co-constructed and shared across a community. Through this sharing and exploration of symbolic meaning with others, achieving solidarity and praxis within the community and externally for social change, is aimed for, along with the fostering of individual and collective agency and empowerment. A variety of terms are used to describe or name various manifestations of this approach including arts-based activism, community cultural development, socially engaged art, culture-based development, cultural democracy, liberation arts, community arts, participatory arts, and arts-based community development. The strategy has been globally utilized and theorized by practitioners and academics worldwide with varying degrees of success. This work is not without critique and the barriers to fostering social change through the arts are significant. The question then becomes, "how to constitute an active alternative" that thoughtfully takes these challenges into account (Bradey & Esche, 2004, p. 24). Critical to this work is an understanding that we need to move away from the model of "doing things for people and towards doing things in solidarity with them" (Quinn, Ploof, & Hochtritt 2012, p. xxi). In the following section, we first review the literature in CCD and SEA separately in order to understand and situate how our respective disciplines make sense of the role of the arts for social change.

Community cultural development

Many attempts have been made to define and redefine the exact term that is meant to capture the process of exploring the connection between art and social change. According to Crane (2011), the distinguishing factor between all of the terms involved in arts for social change/cultural development realm is assessing whether arts and culture are the means or the end. Therein lays the difference between if the community developer is using the arts or creating the arts (p. 2). The term *community cultural development* ("CCD") was conceptualized and operationalized by Australian arts organizations in the late 1980's, however the term is still ubiquitous. CCD is defined by the Manitoba Arts Council as "the range of activities undertaken by artists in collaboration with other community members to express identity, concerns, and aspirations through the arts, while building the community's capacity for action and change" (Manitoba Arts Council website, accessed August 5, 2016). In *New Creative Community*, Goldbard (2006) describes CCD identically, with the addition of "communications media", and a clarification that the building of community capacity is specifically the building of "cultural capacity" (p. 242). For Goldbard (2006), CCD includes the following meanings: *community* refers to the

participatory collaboration between artists and other community members; *cultural* refers to the broad nature of culture that works across a multitude of expressive tools and forms, inside and outside of traditional notions of art and artmaking, ranging from traditional visual and performing arts to oral history, digital media, and other less formal elements of activism that incorporate the arts; and, lastly, *development* "suggests the dynamic nature of cultural action, with its ambitions of conscientization and empowerment, linking it to other enlightened community development practices, especially those incorporating principles of self-development rather than development imposed from above" (p. 21-22).

In both physical and virtual terms, marginalized communities frequently lack the same space for cultural expression as other more privileged communities (ibid., p. 65). CCD aims to promote equality of opportunity among groups and communities and to expand active and inclusive dialogue. By doing so, CCD supports "the right of excluded communities to assert their place in cultural life, to give expression to their own cultural values and histories" (ibid., p. 51). Opening up public space for diverse dialogue and encouraging a multitude of differing community perspectives has the potential to "to foster a deeper solidarity and mutual understanding amongst individuals and groups" (ibid, p. 52-53). Such engagement with, and critical examination of, what is valuable to preserve and create as a representation of a particular culture is "a kind of reclamation work...[where] participants [are] discovering and claiming their own ethnic, gender, and class identities as a way to recast themselves as makers of history rather than passive objects" (ibid, p. 72). Realities that are too often suppressed, denied or silenced through shame, by more dominant narratives, are surfaced through the work. This reclamation of cultural knowledge through a variety of formats (audio, video, artistic) or through locally inspired and guided programs perpetuates intergenerational knowledge transfer and cultural continuance. The projects are built around learning experiences which are designed to teach art skills hand-in-hand with critical thinking skills, "thought leading to action" (ibid, p. 62).

While there is not a universally accepted framework for CCD, those working in the field have identified general unifying principles that guide their work, a few examples include:

- Culture is an effective crucible for social transformation, one that can be less polarizing and create deeper connections than other social-change arenas.
- Cultural expression is a means of emancipation, not the primary end in itself; the process is as important as the product.
- Artists have roles as agents of transformation that are more socially valuable than mainstream art world roles-and equal in legitimacy.

  (Adapted from Goldbard 2006).

In a 2002 study, Sonn, Drew, & Kasat found that CCD offered a number of individual and community-level outcomes. Individual benefits included: development of personal networks, enhanced feelings of being part of a growing community, opportunities for dialogue to break down barriers, the creation of shared understandings, and a broader understanding of culture and the potential of culture for community building. Perceived benefits for the community included: creation of a shared vision, creation of common goals and purpose (expressed in the cultural plan), enhanced awareness of community resources., and a formation of partnerships to achieve the goals of the plan (Sonn, Drew, & Kasat, p. 4).

Socially engaged art

Like CCD, SEA practices aim "to generate new forms of relations in the space of everyday life" (Schlemmer, 2017, p. 10), moving community to engage, create and use culture as a means of social change. Artists working within these modalities either choose to co-create their work with a specific audience or propose critical interventions within existing social systems that inspire debate or catalyze social exchange (Helguera, 2011). Through the creative facilitation of dialogue and exchange in the art making process, as well as willingness on the artist's part for "active listening and empathetic identification," meaning occurs and is developed "in the exchange between the artist and viewers, ultimately affecting the identities of both" (Garber, 2005, p. 4). It is often assumed that by activating the audience through the arts, the work also operates as "a drive to emancipate [individuals or groups] from a state of alienation induced by the dominant ideological order - be this consumer capitalism, totalitarian socialism, or military dictatorship" (Bishop, 2012a, p. 275). This idea of emancipation is directly linked to CCD, wherein the community, through engagement with the arts, has the opportunity to build capacity for action and change. Building this kind of capacity is referenced directly in Artists Proof Studio's (APS) education program in Johannesburg, South Africa as one example. Through coursework in professional printmaking the program aims to develop "well-rounded artists-as-citizens: professional practitioners, community leaders, and empowered and self-sustaining individuals" via a rigorous artistic program (*Artists Proof Studio mission,* 2017). In organizations such as APS, the "utilitarian or practical aspect" of the artmaking "gives a sense of purpose" (Foster, 2004, p. 172) and there is an intention to consider "the ethical and the everyday" (p. 193), ultimately to make one feel versus only to think (Thompson, 2012) in relation to identified social issues.

Bishop (2012a) describes SEA as working across two axes. The first position, the constructivist gesture, is "based on a humanist ethics" (p. 275). What matters is that the art offers solutions to some posed problem, short-, mid-, or long-term. This is the lens we might find being used in CCD. In the second position, what artists, curators and critics might work with, "judgments are based on a sensible response to the artist's work, both in and beyond its original context" (p. 276). Ethics matter less as "art is understood continually to throw the established

systems of value into question... devising new languages with which to represent and question social contradiction" (p. 276), languages grounded in aesthetics. In SEA artists consciously value the "intertwining aesthetic and social implications of arts practices" (Schelmmer, 2017, p. 16) seeing both as critical to the project. Across both of these approaches is the understanding that the SEA artist's and CCD practitioner's task is to help foster community consciousness by working towards collaboration "oriented toward social change [and] by providing practical tools for activists" (Goldbard, 2006 p. 78). Such practitioners, "singly or in teams, place their artistic and organizing skills at the service of the emancipation and development of an identified community" (ibid, p. 140). Whereas in CCD authenticity is viewed as "reciprocity in the process" and is defined as voluntary participation that is "co-directed by participants and professional practitioners" (ibid, p. 149), in SEA, participants may or may not be involved across the process, from concept to finished product/event. In both approaches, however, artists can span the spectrum from formally trained to community artists, and all should be seen as legitimate and worthy actors within the process.

While there are examples of artists and activists utilizing arts and culture as a resistance and activism strategy, these approaches remain an underutilized opportunity in the community cultural development realm as well as in the area of activism especially in geographic areas of long-term oppression (Shank, 2005; McGrath & Brennan, 2011). Moreover, many artists, curators, critics and cultural workers of CCD and SEA recognize that in spite of this continued growth in practice, there is a lack of a "shared critical language and comprehensive historical documentation" (Bishop, 2012a, p. 8). The tension between the two disciplines - is it art? Is it community development? - is not easily resolved making research and critique of this work a challenge. It is important that we find ways to gain a "critical distance" on the question of the impact of the art practice noting that, to date, much of the work isn't assessed or critiqued fully in either the sociological/community or artistic/aesthetics lenses (Bishop, 2012a). Moreover, much of the literature about SEA and CCD is grounded in a U.S./European/Western perspective. These perspectives do not always take into account the nuances of other ways of knowing, being, and doing especially in Indigenous, marginalized, oppressed, assimilated, and/or refugee populations that may hold differing value systems or community and individual repercussions from historical and ongoing trauma. When working alongside such a community it is paramount to understand the historical context and to continually reflect on positionality and cultural awareness including protocols, taboo or triggering topics, etc.

By bringing together the CCD and SEA lenses, we are able to begin to sketch out the kinds of pedagogical practices and individual and community benefits of an arts-based activism strategy. With an examination of the underlying motivations of the projects we come closer to formulating criteria for critique as well as to better understand the social function of this work (Schlemmer, 2017).

Bringing it together: a proposed framework for understanding arts-based activism

The literature tells us that understanding the impact of arts-based activism, whether under the umbrella of CCD or SEA can be difficult. We are often "dependent upon first-hand experience" (Bishop, 2012a, p. 6) to fully understand it and "very few observers are in a position to take such an overview of long-term participatory projects" (p.6). Any effort that focuses solely on demonstrable outcomes will often fall short due the aforementioned limitations and factors such as the contested terrain of what defines quality in art and the use of positivist approaches to assessment of arts-based activist projects and their impact on individuals and communities. For Bishop (2012b), the most powerful or striking SEA projects "unseat all of the polarities on which this discourse is founded (individual/collective, author/spectator, active/passive, real life/art) but not with the goal of collapsing them" (p. 40). We too see the value and importance of the artistic and social being held in tension. The differences that exist between the two are often due to disciplinary norms, practices, and expectations even as intersections exist. There is something inherently subversive and lively about an art genre and community development practice that resists easy categorization and perhaps reflects our times and the impulse towards dismantling disciplinary silos. Citizens linked by common interests and collective activity can make art, participate in public debate and be agents of social change.

Goldbard (2006) and Thompson (2012) provide us with a framing of important *principles and practices* in the work of CCD and SEA, Sonn et al. (2002) addresses *outcomes and benefits*, while Helguera (2011) focuses on delineating the *pedagogy*. This exploratory framework draws across these principles, outcomes, benefits, and pedagogy, grounded in the literature of CCD and SEA. The framework emerged through the process of literature review, data collection, and analysis, a common practice when utilizing an interpretive research approach (Willis et al. 2007). We look to specific examples and observations drawn from our research and participation in the ARTifariti festival to explicate the criteria and to delve into its usefulness as a tool for understanding the processes and impact of the festival. Rather than a rigid categorical assessment tool, the framework below is meant to inspire additional contextually- appropriate exploration and dialogue in the broad areas noted.

Table 1: Proposed CCD/SEA framework

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK
Intended Goals and Audience ● What are the (stated and unstated) goals of the various groups (organization/collective, community, local government/political influence, external actors)? ● Who is the intended audience? **Pedagogy, Meaning, and Participation** ● What are the intentions and meanings behind the art forms and practices produced? ● What kind of socially engaged pedagogy is enacted? ● Is it community focused? ● Have more community members become engaged? **Collaborative Engagement, Impact, and Action** ● Has community dialogue been expanded? ● Have more external actors become engaged? ● Has international dialogue been expanded? ● Are there collaborative projects between the community and the artists/artwork (e.g. collectives, projects, exhibitions, blogs, films, etc.)? ● Does the artmaking and dialogue translate into desired action? ● What are the salient aspects (and appropriate representations) of culture, lifeways, and traditional ecological knowledge the community wants to preserve and perpetuate? **Power Dynamics** ● Who is included/excluded? ● Who is allowed to speak? ● Who is listened to? ● Is the work vulnerable to cooptation or instrumentalization?

Applying the framework to the ARTifariti festival

Using the framework noted above we will provide our initial analysis of the ARTifariti festival. Additional interviews and fieldwork will provide future work with additional depth.

Intended goals and audience

Consideration of the official/stated, and perhaps unofficial/unstated, intentions and goals is essential to understanding and assessing the impact of arts-based projects. The Spanish NGO, "Association of Friendship and Solidarity with the Sahrawi People of Seville" (AAPSS), headquartered in Seville, Spain, established ARTifariti in 2007. ARTifariti was initially guided by a belief in nonviolent strategies of resistance, the recognition of the power of art and artists to affect change and a desire to address human rights issues, specifically the "Wall of Shame" (in-person communication with organizers, 2013). The festival is seen as an annual direct action that is analogous to "Bienal de La Habana" in Cuba or the "Encuentros de Arte de Genualguacil" in Málaga. The festival operates as a nonviolent challenge to the Moroccan regime and is about artistic encounters for international and local artists. The inspiration for ARTifariti originated from learning about other nonviolent resistance movements, such as the Zapatista in Mexico, and from a core belief in the transformational power of art, such as the *Guernica* by Picasso (In-person interview with festival organizer by first author, translated, June 2014).

As noted on the website, "ARTifariti is an appointment with artistic practices as a tool to vindicate Human Rights; the right of the people to their land, their culture, their roots and their freedom. It is an annual encounter of public art to reflect on creation, and society, and a point of contact for artists interested in the capacity of art to question and transform the reality" (ARTifariti website, About ARTifariti). ARTifariti serves "as a main outlet for promoting visual arts within the camps and beyond with the intent to serve as a mediator between the public and the Sahrawis (spelling in original), providing mechanisms or reciprocal dialogue and expression" (Hamdi & Peraita, 2013, p. 145). During the festival, the Polisario coordinates housing, transportation, and security. They have pledged support to,

> promote ARTifariti, as a collective action against the Moroccan Wall of Shame that fractures Western Sahara in two, separating Saharawi families between occupation and exile. These encounters are a tool to reclaim the rights of individuals and peoples to their land, their culture, their roots and their freedom. (ARTifariti website, Current Edition, accessed November 2013).

Participants from outside the camps have the opportunity to live with a Saharawi family and learn about the Saharawi culture and political situation. A salient overarching goal is to proliferate the Saharawi message to the "outside"

(term used in the camps to describe anyone that is foreign to the camps, i.e. international visitors), using arts as a less polarizing way to communicate to a broader audience the Saharawi situation and to expand solidarity networks internationally. Ultimately, the purpose of arts-based activism in this case, is to capitalize on the intersection between the arts and peace-building through increased awareness, education, and activism by the people that come in contact with the art and are moved to take action on behalf of the Saharawi and the human rights issues of long-term occupation and oppression.

The intended audience is twofold. At the festival, the audience is local and international artists who gather to create individual and collaborative art at the Saharawi Art School in Camp Boujdour. A secondary audience is comprised of individuals and organizations that learn about the work through art exhibitions that highlight the event, catalogues, movies, other various events and performances beyond the boundaries of the camps. Bishop (2012a) notes that an important aspect of successful socially engaged art is its impact on secondary audiences. Viewing this work via a SEA lens, audience is a critical component to understanding impact. Whereas in much socially engaged artwork the audience exists in the moment of the performance or making of the art, ARTifariti excels at bringing their festival to a broader, secondary audience. Artists are chosen based on proposals that have explicit social and political motivations meant to generate discussion and to call attention to the conflict. As artistic materials are scarce in the camps, artists must work with the materials they bring with them from outside or materials located on-site. Many artists use scrap metal from the war, natural landscapes and materials (such as the berm, sun, dirt, sand, rocks, spent artillery), women's melhfa's (traditional women's clothing), and other materials that reflect the current reality of the Saharawi situation.

Photo: Saharawi artist painting mural, a woman in a melhfa in front of the SADR flag, on the inside wall of the newly built Saharawi Art School (2013, taken by first author).

Pedagogy, meaning, and participation

The festival originally was held far from the camps in Tifariti (located in the Polisario controlled territories) where only the Saharawi and visiting artists participated. Since 2013, the festival has taken place at the Saharawi Art School in Camp Boujdour. While the festival is more accessible to the broader community as compared to earlier editions held in Tifariti, the Art School was built on the far edge of Camp Boujdour, which is at a distance from the other camps, homes, and schools making it difficult to integrate a large portion of the population. Referring to Helguera (2011), we see multiple forms of pedagogy being employed. Based on documentary evidence of the festivals over time and our own participation in 2013 and 2014, it appears that a significant number of artists have come to the festival to create stand-alone or artist collective work where there is nominal participation. The work is reflective of the Saharawi situation and then asks the viewer to contemplate the work in a reflective manner. Artists doing work that is less participatory include 'outsiders' and the Saharawi artists themselves. This art often takes the form of sculptures, paintings, installations, and performances. In other pieces, artists ask the visitor to complete a simple task that contributes to the creation of a larger work, conceptualized by the artist or art collective, an example of directed participation. Art education is a strong component of each festival. As an example, a group of Algerian art and design professors that have been involved

in the festival since its inception, provide workshops for artists in the community.

Many projects seek to promote social participation and to reflect the daily-lived reality of the community. Other overarching themes focus on the need for peace and a collective ideal of universal humanity and identity as well as to highlight democratic nations who fail to address unjust policies and violations of international law. Oral histories and poetry are being documented for cultural continuance and artist produced portraits constructed to reflect memories of times, places, and people that were "disappeared"[12] (Hamdi & Peraita, 2013, p. 97; Shared Roots and ArtsAction Group, 2014). Furthermore, artists, academics, and other cultural workers are invited to experience the lived reality of the displaced community in the camps by living with families, and to then share their experiences with a broader audience upon leaving. Many of the international artists involved in the festival consider themselves contemporary artists engaged in work that is both personal and that also addresses pressing social issues. This convergence across approaches is continually being formed, redefined, and enacted in the camps. When we look at the literature it's easy to understand the shifting or fluid position of ARTifariti. It is an arts festival led by a team of artists and civilians that continues to develop and define itself in relation to the context of the camps, which in turn suggests an understanding of international development context as well as the role of the arts in transformation. Most people that attend ARTifariti are international attendees/artists, however the festival also includes a growing number of Saharawi artists. Since the opening of the Saharawi Art School, there are more younger artists, many who are experimenting across the visual arts, music and media. In terms of Saharawi artist engagement, there has been an increase in those interested in attending ARTifariti and the Art School. According to a Saharawi artist,

> ARTifariti has a role in [the increased numbers] and also the local artists because we're not just making art we are also making art and displaying it and sharing it. There is not a very big number [of local artists], it starts gradually, but there are more and more students that want to go to the Art School and have some sort of education in art. I've seen students attending the Art School in Boujdour and I heard the Director saying that all the seats now are occupied, and more young people are interested in learning art....the Art School is not just a place for you to learn but also a place for interaction. You get to meet different

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[12] As noted in the *U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1993 - Western Sahara*, (30 January 1994), "After years of denying that Sahrawis were imprisoned...the Government of Morocco released 300 such prisoners in 1991...Amnesty International expressed concern, however, that hundreds of Sahrawis arrested by Moroccan security forces between 1975 and 1988 remain 'disappeared'." Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6aa313c.html.

people, not just international, on a daily basis you find artists. (In-person interview with Saharawi artist by first author, May 2015)

There has also been an increase in external actor engagement more recently as indicated by the increase in numbers of international artists and academics applying to the festival. Although there is growing participation and engagement, the art making process as currently guided by individual artists (predominantly international artists) can be isolating to community members that are unable to participate in the creation of the artwork and who may not fully understand the perceived "elite/educated" artist's intent (in-person interview with Saharawi artist by first author, May 2015).

Collaborative engagement, impact, and action

Through ARTifariti, more community members and external actors (artists, academics, human rights advocates) become engaged in dialogue during the festival and afterwards through social media and additional solidarity events and projects. As an example of the radiating impacts of festival attendance, this article was made possible through the rich information obtained and connections made with the festival organizers, local artists, and international attendees. These experiences led to knowledge of the collaborative efforts of the Saharawi and internationally-based academics/advocates such as Juan Carlos Gimeno Martin (documenting oral histories), Violeta Ruano Posada (ethnomusicology), Danielle Smith (Sandblast Arts), Pedro Pinto Leite (human rights law), among others, and other events such as the FiSahara Film Festival and the Sahara Marathon. In 2013, faculty and students in an "Arts and Human Rights" course at Adelphi University partnered with educators in Camp Boujdour to design and engage in coursework "around overarching concepts including identity, international humanitarian law, and arts as a tool for resistance" grounded in the Saharawi context (Maguire, 2017, p. 52). As a culminating project a festival was held at Adelphi with a live Skype feed from the film school in Camp Boujdour. A series of arts and cultural experiences were organized, informed by the coursework and ongoing semester-long sessions with the Saharawi students. The Adelphi community was introduced to Saharawi culture, the ongoing political conflict "as well as communicated, via the arts, solidarity with their peers in the film school" (p. 52). Additionally, Shared Roots[13], a social networking site for the sharing of family histories, along with ArtsAction Group[14], filmed a series of interviews with camp residents regarding their family histories in 2014. The resulting documentary, "When the

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[13] http://www.sharedroots.net
[14] https://www.artsaction.org/western-sahara.html

Sun Came for Them", has gone on to be screened at human rights and documentary festivals around the world[15].

There are a multitude of examples of the global connections and projects inspired by ARTifariti participants and they are growing with every annual festival. The international reach and impact is illustrated via multiple avenues including published works distributed outside of the camps and other exhibitions such as: Robin Kahn's work "Dining in Refugee Camps: The Art of Saharawi Cooking" at Documenta (13) in Kassel, Germany and Federico Guzman's "Tuiza: Las Culturas de la Jaima at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia" in Madrid, Spain. Another example of international collaboration is American artist, Mel Chin's work on the Solar Backed Currency. Chin went to the camps as part of his Fundred Project, where he went on to propose the first solar-energy-backed currency to "make a conceptual link between climate change and the inhabitants of Western Sahara...He hopes the project will both improve life for them and show the world the feasibility of renewable energy" (Irwin, 2015). In 2013 both Ahmad Bukhari, the former representative of the UN and Mohamed Yeslem Beisat, the ambassador to the United States for the Western Sahara people, have become advisors and creative collaborators on the project. In 2014, the Mauritanian ambassador confirmed, "that the country would buy any energy offered" (Chin, 2014). As of 2018, the project is still under consideration. Chin's artwork and others like it are co-constructed with the community across concept, process, and final product.

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[15] Perhaps the most well-known film is "Sons of the Clouds: The Last Colony" starring Javier Bardem.

Photo: Sahara Libre Wear (SLW) screen printed design, displayed at the SLW workspace (2013, taken by first author).

Some of the projects extend beyond attendance at a single festival. Built on an initial workshop creating silkscreened graphic designs visualizing the Saharawi situation, Alonso Gil, a founding member of ARTifariti, has gone on to co-create Sahara Libre Wear (SLW) with Camp Boujdour community members. SLW is now a camp-based, women-run printmaking studio and store where clothes and accessories are designed, printed and sold. It is one of the few income generating businesses across the camps. As covered in various sections above, work created in the festival is shared across multiple platforms with the intention of fostering a transformation in the Saharawi situation. In our experience, most people (in the United States especially) are unaware of the refugee camps or the history, therefore subsequent exhibitions and presentations of the work provide a way of informing a broader global audience. The festival organizers (from Spain) note they have seen international growth in the number of art exhibitions, articles, blogs, etc. created as well as increased diversity of attendees at the festival. Some economic benefit is gained through the selling of artwork, clothing, and t-shirts made in the camps to people that visit, such as aid workers and festival attendees. ARTifariti, through the Saharawi School of Art, teaches the young people professional vocational training linked to employment. The same is true for the SLW collective. These modes of creative production combined with the visiting artists who participate in the festival, can be viewed as what Mundy (2007) refers to as "solidarity tourism" (p. 289) and provides an alternative economy not directly linked to outright NGO and United Nations support.

Local community dialogue, however, appears to take a secondary position to the broader international conversations and impact. But this is expected to change

when the administration and curating of the festival is fully handed over to the Saharawi Art School. Even so, the interaction between Saharawi artists and those from outside the camps appears to be beneficial for the local artists. In order to improve their practice, Saharawi artists attend ARTifariti to receive instruction and to develop new techniques and ideas. According to a Saharawi artist,

> I come to ARTifariti to do artwork in a very convenient and suitable atmosphere. I'm surrounded with artists; surrounded with just the kind of atmosphere and the space that would encourage more creativity and development and my vision towards arts. And also through the interaction I get feedback and ideas from the participants, it's a very amazing atmosphere for interaction (In-person interview with Saharawi artist by first author, April 2015, translated).

These artists learn from those coming in from outside the camps and they are able to share their artwork, culture and message to people from around the world. According to a Saharawi artist,

> We would like to use our arts as a message and a medium to communicate with the different cultures. We would like them to have an exchange taking place here, there is much we can learn from these [other] cultures and much that we can share with them. ARTifariti and the different art activities are an opportunity to shed the light on local talents and has brought interest. It also helped us learn more through the exchange and sharing with the international artists. I'm glad this opportunity served the cause, in terms of spreading the word through international artists, but it also provided the opportunity for local artists to exchange, experiment and learn from the international artists and participants. (In-person interview with Saharawi artist by first author, April 2015, translated)

According to another Saharawi artist,

> [ARTifariti and artmaking] is important because I believe many people from the outside came to know about us through art. Some people may not be involved in political activities, but they have a tendency to like art and be involved in it so it's through art we made them know about us. (In-person interview with Saharawi artist by first author, November 2013, translated)

In addition to the artists actively creating works during the festival, the allies that attend can include academics, human rights advocates, lawyers, and others. Academics provide education sessions on various topics related to arts-based activism strategies and engage in scholarly work, which include conference

presentations and publications. There are educational sessions based upon relevant political and legal practices, such as human rights lawyer Pedro Pinto Leite (former Secretary International Platform of Jurists for East Timor), sharing his work on the process through which self-determination was achieved for the peoples of East Timor[16]. ARTifariti provides the opportunity for building, maintaining, and extending networks. Many participants, upon returning home, have found ways of furthering the international political and human rights dialogue; for example, acting as petitioners at the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) at the UN, or supporting Saharawi artist efforts such as the MOTIF Art Studio & Workshop.

Cultural knowledge, based upon a place-based history in the area of the Western Sahara, is being lost as the Saharawi are unable to continue these lifeways within either the liberated or occupied territory[17], and there is a growing diaspora community. First-hand knowledge is passing away the younger generations lose the oral traditions of their forefathers. Many of the younger Saharawi have either left the camps to live abroad or have lived in the camps their entire lives and do not relate to the traditional Saharawi culture as it was prior to the establishment of the camps. This loss of traditional culture, both in real-time as well as in the collective memory of the younger generation is of great concern. Unfortunately, the traumatic experience of dispossession, exile, oppression, assimilation, occupation, and colonization is familiar to many indigenous communities globally. ARTifariti operates as a tool for fostering international solidarity and community building but also serves to help protect the culture of the Saharawi by focusing on the collection and continuation of oral histories using traditional poetry and music. Art projects at ARTifariti reflect the need for remembrance and for preservation working with narratives, objects, and documentable elements of the Saharawi culture to combat the erasure of Saharawi identity. There have been multiple preservation projects, including digitally cataloguing Rabuni's War Museum objects as well as oral stories from the community in order to document tangible and symbolic proof of the lived experience unique to the Saharawi people. Art is utilized to honor traditional knowledge and culture and to connect the generations, as indicated by the quote below,

> Art...engages people on a different level - it helps to keep the Saharawi identity alive - it communicates this message to the world and humanity. We learn from others and share with them. Through arts and culture we have expressed our will, but it has also strengthened our community. (Interview by phone with Saharawi artist by first author, April 2015).

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[16] Arts, K. and Leite, P.P. eds., 2007. *International law and the question of Western Sahara*. International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET).

[17] The "Liberated Zone" is littered with active landmines left over from the war between the Polisario and Moroccan military.

As noted by the quote below, some Saharawi artists use their art as a way to perpetuate and revive Saharawi culture and traditions,

> Politically speaking, Morocco is attacking the roots of the Saharawi culture and the identity, and cutting them, so my art is helping to revive the Saharawi culture and traditions. (In-person interview with Saharawi artist by first author, May 2015).

One example is an artist that uses geographic places described in oral history (in the form of poetry) as the scenes of his paintings to capture nostalgic remembrance to those places. The collection of oral histories, traditional ecological knowledge, and poetry is of pressing concern. Increasingly, Saharawi artists in the camps are engaged in using various artistic methods introduced by the artists from the festival for preserving and creating Saharawi cultural representations. The research and collection of oral histories and poetry between the Saharawi and Spanish academic Juan Carlos Gimeno Martin is one example of current efforts to document and perpetuate traditional cultural knowledge.

We assert that the ARTifariti festival, as well as the other arts-based strategies being utilized (film, music, etc.), are strategically configured within the scope of activism and nationalism. Additionally, these efforts are helping to revive cultural knowledge, as well as exerting influence that intersects, and potentially influences, more 'traditional' expressions of culture. Ruano Posada and Solana Moreno (2015), provide a musico-historical analysis of the strategic utilization of music as activism over the past forty years, noting music has "played a central role in advocating for the vision of an independent Sahrawi nation, both locally and beyond…[whereby] the Sahrawi movement for national liberation has crafted a revolutionary musical style that, based on a symbolic interplay of 'modernity' and 'tradition', became identifiable as uniquely Sahrawi and representative of the Sahrawi nation"(p. 40-41). As noted below, in discussions of state instrumentalization, more analysis would be beneficial to better understand the intersectionality of such elements in the use of arts-based activism in this context.

Power dynamics

There are multiple power dynamics at play. There are obvious postcolonial ties in this situation which includes a Spanish NGO, a former Spanish colony, the utilization of the arts as state instrumentalization by the Polisario, and ongoing repressive assimilation efforts by Morocco. In Aspects of Power in Alliances, Davis (2010) notes the various types of power relationships that can exist when one partner of an alliance has a history tied to colonization. In this case, Spain as the former colonizer and the formerly colonized the Saharawi. In such a scenario it becomes important to examine the factors surrounding how the power dynamics manifest in practice with and between the various

stakeholders. Paternalism is one potential type of relationship where the external partners may "adopt a position of superiority by assuming they know what is best" for the community (p. 5). These types of actions and attitudes can be subtle and take place unknowingly.

When the "Association of Friendship and Solidarity with the Sahrawi People of Seville" (AAPSS) directors first met with the Polisario there was resistance to arts perceived to be rooted in European conceptions which differed from Saharawi traditions (i.e. poetry, oral traditions). At that time, the arts were viewed as a "luxury" they couldn't afford or seen as "entertainment" in the midst of the daily struggle to survive and to realize self-determination (personal communication, 2013). The arts festival has since become a joint effort between the Saharawi and the AAPSS. Prior to 2014, the festival organization, planning, and recruitment of international artists and participants has predominantly been done by the AAPSS. According to the ARTifariti planning committee, the intent had always been to hand over the festival (planning, organization, execution) to the Saharawi (presumably the Ministry of Arts and Culture) once the festival had reached a certain point of development. In line with this stated goal, the 2014 festival was curated for the first time by the Saharawi Art School personnel. A complete handoff was slated to take place for the 2017 festival (personal communication with festival organizer by second author, 2015) and is still in transition (personal communication with festival organizer by first author, 2018). Overall, the question of who is included/excluded is more nuanced and difficult to assess at this point in our research, especially as it relates to the Saharawi community. These findings would need to be supported by conversations with more local community members in order to better understand their views of the festival.

While we can show the benefits of the festival as expressed by Saharawi artists and community members interviewed, there is little doubt that the festival is 'vulnerable' to state instrumentalization. This is in some sense inevitable as the festival, as with all NGO projects, works through the Saharawi Red Crescent (SRC) or a relevant SADR ministry, in this case the Ministry of Arts and Culture. The festival's primary mission of supporting the Saharawi cause is in line with the Polisario vision of utilizing the arts and culture as a tool for nonviolent resistance. This is unlike similar work that might be undertaken by a community resisting or protesting specific state actions. It can be construed that the kind of relationships that exist in the camps might impact the work created, including a kind of self/collective censorship. Further research needs to be done to assess these ideas.

With Spain's withdrawal Morocco became the new 'centre of empire'. The ability for Saharawi artists in the camps to freely express creativity, to feel "heard" by international attendees, and to perpetuate unique cultural knowledge and representations is made all the more important due to the forced assimilation currently occurring in occupied Western Sahara (Deubel 2015). As noted by Murphy & Omar (2013),

> The Moroccan authorities have flooded the territory with thousands of Moroccan settlers, thus converting the indigenous population into a minority in its own country. The Moroccan authorities have also engaged in a policy of "moroccanization," which is aimed at obliterating or supplanting Sahrawi culture and heritage. Moroccan authorities continue to ban the use of hassaniya, the Sahrawi dialect, or any display of Sahrawi distinct culture, while encouraging the use of Moroccan dialects in the education system and public institutions. (p. 354)

The aspect of "who is listened to" usually implies intra- or inter- group power dynamics, however in this case it extends to the international community's collective silence on the ongoing conflict and refugee situation. As noted by Farah (2009), the SADR is "a nation in exile with [n]either peace nor war on the horizon"(p.88). This sentiment of the frustration associated with prolonged waiting was mentioned numerous times during our conversations. The recent increase in access to electronic media (internet, cell phones) in the camps has provided for increased representation and creativity to create content and to connect to a larger audience. As noted by Deubel (2015), these "digital mediascapes have created new nodes of interaction" (p. 7). The feelings of isolation and disconnection, however, are still a real challenge in the daily lives of the Saharawi. The presence of outsiders to the camps provides space for all parties to share, exchange and learn in a multicultural atmosphere. For the Saharawi that live in the camps year-round, this doesn't often happen on the same scale. Indeed, as noted by one Saharawi artist regarding the impact of people coming to the camps during the festival, "At the festival, it isn't like everyone's daily life [in the camps], you actually get someone to listen to you, that doesn't happen often" (informal communication by phone with first author, April 2015). Given the real and virtual distance at which this community lives, the importance of these lived connections and meetings can't be overstated. Art, and arts-based activism, provides a platform for active Saharawi participation that can combat feelings of frustration and powerlessness, as noted by a Saharawi artist below,

> Through music, poetry, music, [oral] history I hope we can change our image of being simply refugee's...looked at as castaways into the desert, disconnected, a passive people that things are "being done to". I am building something, I am creating!...Art can use the little that we have to create something beautiful, and useful; if you just live as a refugee- if you don't have a meaning to your life-It could be very easy to lose hope and get discouraged- it is not easy- it has been 40 years- not days, weeks or months- but 40 years! It's not easy to believe that art can bring the change you want. It's not easy to keep people waiting for a resolution. But still people try to express themselves, to communicate- they still believe in nonviolence and peaceful expression. (Interview by phone with Saharawi artist by first author, April 2015)

Conclusion

Literature from the disciplines of CCD and SEA is presented as a way of articulating the shared interests, ideas, and a critical language regarding arts-based activism. We draw from both to delineate a working framework in which we can explore and better understand the arts-based strategy being employed. The theoretical grounding of the framework grew out of SEA/CCD literature, and was informed by insights gleaned from ethnographic and practice-led research. These contextual insights were used to add (and reframe) certain aspects of SEA/CCD that wouldn't otherwise have been included. The context did inform the framework, and the framework informed how the data was presented. We then applied the framework to ARTifariti in order to better understand its efficacy and value. As noted in this initial analysis, the ARTifariti festival is growing in attendance and number of collaborative projects that promote awareness. Therefore, it appears to be reaching its goal of building external networks to increase the number of people that know about the plight of the Saharawi. How this increased awareness translates into concrete action on behalf of the international community is yet to be seen. Arts-based activism and art aimed at social change is often ephemeral and as Bishop (2012a) notes finding ways of understanding the work and its impact on individuals and communities is a challenge. In fact, the same tensions that exist between the approaches represented and discussed in the CCD and SEA literature, were our tensions as we engaged in the research process. Even with these tensions, however, looking across CCD and SEA provided us with a way of identifying shared principles and practices that in turn informed our conversations and research practice. It helped us to surface the different components of art aimed at social change as well as how to understand how these discrete criteria come together as a form of arts-based activism.

With that said, the authors experienced friction between the context (protracted refugee situation in North Africa with ongoing aspects of oppression and colonization) and the selected theoretical concepts (developed to predominantly describe practices in North America).

Across the literature of CCD and SEA we note two significant gaps:

- A lack of "shared critical language and comprehensive and historical documentation" Bishop, 2012a, p. 8) of the work and;
- Much of the writing is grounded in a U.S./Western perspective.

Although this article provides an initial exploration regarding the use of the framework, future publications will provide additional analysis of the ARTifariti festival as well as other arts-based strategies, such as FiSahara. We put forth this research as a starting point, therefore the theoretical and empirical aspects of our research had limitations, including: the exploratory nature of the work itself, the limitations presented by using CCD and SEA literature which are guided by a "Western" perspective, and

accessibility issues to gathering data (language translation, sociocultural aspects, geographic distance, and political access) that made doing research in the SADR/refugee camps difficult. Having both a history of oppression, exile, and colonization, application of this or similar frameworks in this setting or in other similar types of settings are necessarily flexible and fluid and need to be sensitive and responsive to the "local context" and "historical conflict timelines" (Naidu-Silverman, 2015, p. 5). A critical analysis is presented with the intent of privileging Saharawi perspectives, however further research using participatory and emic approaches would be of immense value. The incorporation of anticolonial theory and the work of non-Western scholars from additional disciplines such as North African/Maghreb Studies, Indigenous Studies, gender studies, postcolonial studies, among others would provide additional depth, relevance, and intersectionality. Bringing in examples of other such resistance approaches would also further deepen the work. Our intent, and hope, is that the framework will be further utilized and honed by academics and practitioners to examine the use of arts and culture as a tool for social movements and political activism.

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