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In Morocco, greetings are closer to those that one would find in France, which makes sense given the history of conquest that France and Morocco have. One scene that is distinctly different in the workplace as well as social settings when comparing US norms and Moroccan norms is the greetings that take place every morning and between strangers that I have just met from a connection. In the US, a firm handshake is typical in American workplaces, to the point that many people practice to have a firm handshake for interviews. However, Moroccans more often greeted each other with a small hug and cheek kisses. This was the case in the morning between a female supervisor and all the interns (including opposite genders), which surprised me. It was casual and yet a sincere way to start the day. I had also encountered this when meeting my direct supervisor's relatives. I had exchanged cheek kisses with both the female relatives and their husbands.

This act of hugs and cheek-kissing as a greeting in Moroccan culture involves physical touch and proximity. In this simple way, it symbolizes warmth and hospitality. Compared to handshakes which can be considered very formal and distant, this method of greeting is much closer and shows trust, even if you are not very familiar with the other party. It often starts with a verbal greeting, then the hug, then the cheek kisses. Oftentimes, if you want to make small talk, it is easy to continue to maintain contact and close proximity to speak a bit.

Overall, in the greeting, one's personal space is invaded a bit, but Morocco seems to have very little personal space to begin with between those who are more familiar. By participating in this (compared to extending one's hand for a handshake or waving one's hands from afar as a greeting), participants reinforce a sense of belonging in the community and also uphold the cultural norms of warmth between coworkers.

The act is impacted by a mix of Moroccan and French cultural values, where interpersonal relationships are deep-rooted values. Between those of the same gender, it is common to share personal space without discomfort. This makes sense religiously as well as what we learned during the training. It surprised me that everybody was so comfortable doing this between opposite genders as it was emphasized during the training that there was a strong line between range of contact and comfort was allowed between genders. Despite the emphasis on religious modesty and gender interactions, cheek kissing is a normal practice, which is potentially emphasized in the younger generations. This act embodies the culture of hospitality and community.

This experience helped highlight Moroccan practices which may have gone against what I believed might be the norm. It encouraged me to be more aware of the situation and ensure that I learn from these experience in order to fully immerse myself in the culture.