Part I

Prelude

Et nous osons espérer que si nous nous sommes éloignés du vrai,
nous sommes tout au moins resté dans le vraisemblable.
We dare to hope that if we have strayed from the truth,
we have at least remained in the plausible.
– Officier Interprète Rabia (1935),
"La coutume Ait Tayia"

iġ ilkum yan imi n tmazirt imiyys iqqiys
anna d salan ayt tmazirt lhun d isn
If you arrive at the edge of a land, watch discreetly
Whatever the people of that land do, follow their lead
– Anti-Atlas tazrrart

Chapter 1

Introduction: Staying Put

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold
– W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming" (1921)

When rain falls in the winter in the Anti-Atlas mountains of southwestern Morocco, almond and wild pistachio trees bloom in the spring, their foliage dusted with dirt as the heat increases in summer. Juniper bushes dot the mountainside. In the summer the heat obscures the height of Adrar Tisfane (Mount Tisfane) to the west and Adrar Toubqal to the north. In the dead of winter, the peaks punctuate the bright blue sky, and the late afternoon light tinges the walls and earth a deep salmon. Most years, in both the Anti-Atlas mountains and the Sous Valley, rain is scarce or absent altogether, heat is dense, and dust covers everything. Brushing off the dust – from floors, tea glasses, clothes – is constant and instinctual, like waving at a fly on your lip, but just as futile. Some areas of the mountains are blessed with scattered almond or argan trees, and when it rains, fields of barley sprout bright green in the spring. Most years, however, drought prevents even a modest harvest, and everything in sight is the color of parched earth. Resident women curse global warming, believing what they have heard on the radio about the earth getting hotter as evidence of their wretched lot and fuel for their desire to leave for the city.

You scan the dry landscape for flora, and notice the telephone and electricity poles that pass through the countryside without servicing it, en route to the towns. You notice the pink and yellow-painted cinder block houses, the half-constructed villas that encircle the stone villages. Then you wonder where the men are. Boys leave for the cities by the time they reach adolescence, joining the men who did the same in their youth. Women are alone with each other, their daughters, their young sons, and their daughters-in-law in these dry mountains. In the mornings, they collect fodder and wood, dressed in ankle-length navy wraps (*tamlḥaft*-s) over layers of colorful dresses, skirts, and pants, their heads wrapped in more color or in

the traditional black. In the late afternoon sun, they perch like multicolored birds on the door stoops, chatting in the long shadows of their stone houses. Children scamper about or cling to their mothers' backs if they are too young to play.

The omnipresent mountain woman at the end of the twentieth century was iconic of the Ashelhi Berber ethnolinguistic group, an entity for whom both language and land have become contested terrain in this post-nationalist phase of the post-Independence period following the French Protectorate (1912–56). For both emigrant men in the cities and the broader Moroccan citizenry, the Berber woman came to personify the rugged, stoic, yet vulnerable homeland and its inseparable twin: the persistent, ancient, hearty, yet threatened language. In this set of associations, women effectively acted not only for themselves and their families, but also for the whole of the ethnolinguistic group. Women bore both the material and symbolic responsibilities for maintaining the land and the Tashelhit Berber language so closely associated with it. Emigrant men leaving the mountains for the cities, in particular, demonstrated to me that they considered the Tashelhit language as key to a moral universe whose values were expressed in talk, song, and non-verbal behavior, attesting to men's continued relevance despite their infrequent presence in the *tamazirt* (homeland, countryside or rural place; pl. *timizar*). Through their native language, emigrant men maintained authority over family and community affairs, marked group boundaries, and delimited a geographical space in which the social and linguistic hierarchies favored them, a sharp contrast with the cities where Arabic held symbolic capital. This order of things entailed both responsibilities and privileges for women, as it became apparent to me during three and a half years of residence in Morocco (1995–9), three of them based in the market town of Taroudant from which I moved into the Anti-Atlas mountains and Sous plains for research and participated in national and religious rituals, agricultural cycles, school years, and life-cycle events such as engagements, weddings, circumcisions, and funerals.

This book aims to understand how expressive culture mediated constructions of place, personhood, and community among a marginalized yet fetishized indigenous group of Berber language speakers in the late twentieth century, and where the effects of these practices took hold in people's lives. For outsiders to these communities, there was a taken-for-granted association between rurality, Tashelhit language, and the cultural distinctiveness that set Ishelhin apart from urban residents and others generally called Arabs. Within these rural communities, in contrast, the link between language and land was frequently debated and actively nurtured. A gendered vigilance, both in terms of practices and boundary maintenance, countered an imagined atrophy that was believed, if left unchecked, to turn Ishelhin into Arabs, dissolve the Tashelhit language, and erase their as-yet

mostly unwritten histories. Things fall apart. The center must constantly be renewed if it is to hold. Efforts to prevent the Ashelhi tamazirt and the Tashelhit language from "falling apart" – by repairing a pocked asphalt road, adorning one's head with silver for a wedding, or purging one's Tashelhit speech of Arabic and French borrowings – instantiated intentional, deliberate efforts at rejuvenation, not a mere maintenance of the status quo.

With massive rural–urban migration throughout the twentieth century, these marginalized yet fetishized indigenous people were intimately familiar with the discourses of authenticity, linguistic purity, and morality that made their homelands a distinctive material and symbolic core for the Ashelhi ethnolinguistic group. I propose that we conceive of mobility and movement not as indicative of the decay of the community, culture, or language, but as constitutive of its growth, in this case building the homeland, thereby maintaining a location and a nexus of social relations in which other practices consolidate Ashelhi identity as idiosyncratic, stigmatized, or defiant. Such an approach requires that we strive to understand the homeland and Tashelhit language from its residents' contested and situated perspectives, rather than relying on judgmental or romantic urban perspectives of their Other.

Outsiders presume that Moroccan mountains are Berber spaces in Lefebvre's (1991) sense of spaces as pre-modern, natural terrains distinct from places that, in contrast, are shaped by historical and global forces. Yet from the inside looking out, rural places are as much historically shaped as are towns and cities. For their inhabitants, the presumed association between rurality and ethnolinguistic identity is passionately and constantly negotiated. How are bundles of associations – like the central one considered in this book, linking Tashelhit language, rural lands, and women – consolidated and reproduced, and under which conditions and by whom are they negotiated and contested? Such matters are by no means taken for granted in rural areas, as attested by rich discourses of both contestation and affirmation. Material and discursive practices together make Berber places meaningful and Berber language appropriate. Both practices and discourses are gendered, and plains and mountain communities operate in relation to different political economies.

We Share Walls

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L1

a yan a nga nkki dun yan nšrk
nšrk didk iwtta d lɛyun nswa ukan
ula targ^{w}a nġ nsswa nssu winnun
We are one, you (pl.) and me, we share walls
Our fields share boundaries and springs
and from our channels we water yours
– Eastern Anti-Atlas tazrrart, Ida ou Zeddout

Hajja, a grandmother who produced this sung poem (*tazrrart*, pl. *tizrrarin*), married into Ida ou Zeddout, where I worked, from her native Ida ou Naḍif near Igherm. She sang this song at a wedding I attended with her and her children. In the verse, being "one" means sharing land and water, the most basic elements, even though in practice the community relies heavily on remittances and external goods to survive. The symbolic importance of tending the land emerges in this verse in no small part because of the community that people forge through the land. But the verse suggests as well that "being one" means sharing boundaries, markers that divide. "We are one" not because we are from the same lineage, village, tribe, or ethnic group, or because we are fond of each other, but because our plots share demarcations. I gloss these borders here as "walls" to evoke the simultaneously material and symbolic facets of such divisions. Moreover, the phrase "we share walls" metaphorically evokes the barriers many Berber women told me they sensed in terms of their access to linguistic and material resources. Taken in the context of the mountain wedding in which Hajja sang the verse, "we" are self-sufficient yet interdependent in maintaining connectedness and delineation by, for instance, assuring that the stones dividing field plots remain as they were. Instead of naming the entity entailed in "we," the verse describes conditions of attachment. "Being one" requires vigilance and maintenance; it is active, not a natural or inherent state of affairs, and thus vulnerable to shifts in a neighbor's good will.

At this wedding, female guests from the bride's village and their children sat in one section of the courtyard, and those from the groom's village sat in a different section of the courtyard. Each group sang a series of tizrrarin, alternating between vocalists while stringing them together. When the women from one village tired, those from the other took over, ensuring a smooth succession of verse production during the hours waiting for the evening meal, and later in the evening, for the collective dance entertainment. Given the context, Hajja addressed the women of the other village. Their fields literally shared neither borders nor water sources. Instead, the interdependence to which Hajja referred was more symbolic than material, an attempt to nurture good relations with female guests who were largely strangers brought together through the families of the bride and groom.

L1

Hajja's song contains an ambiguous referent that is suggestive of the marginalization these women experienced. When rural Ishelhin in the 1990s talked about group solidarity, they rarely did so according to urban intellectual concepts like identity (Ar. huwiyya) or ethnicity (Fr. *ethnie*). There are Tashelhit terms for "our talk" (*awal nġ*) and "our people" (*ait darnġ*), as well as gender- and number-specific derivations of the latter (*ult darnġ*, "our sister" and *gu darnġ*, "our brother") for a female or male from one's own community. Ishelhin from the Anti-Atlas spoke also of the tribe (*taqbilt*, Ar. qbila), and in town people referred to *aqbayl*, "dear ones," meaning biological or fictional kin.

Yet in the midst of these generalities, Ishelhin were attentive to the "pleasures of microdifferentiation" (Tsing 1993:61), among individuals and between groups. Differentiating practices emerged when women gathered in public festivities and inquired into each others' laboring and cultural practices: "Who plows in your lands, men or women?" "What grows in your fields?" "Who is your saint?" "Where is your market?" Women were the tradition-bearers; once married, women perpetuated their husbands' traditions rather than their patriline's traditions. For an older generation of Sous plains Arab women, this could even mean learning Tashelhit. Yet by the late 1990s, Arab women rarely married into Tashelhit-speaking families; Arabic speakers generally viewed Tashelhit as hindering economic and social opportunities. Berber cultural heritage has often been written about as though it were singular, or unified within a geographical mountain range (the Rif, the Eastern High Atlas/Middle Atlas, and the Western High Atlas/Anti-Atlas) by its dialectal variety. From the perspective of Ishelhin I knew, however, verbal expressive practices were highly variegated by subgroup in ways that were openly discussed, debated, yet agreed to be "just the way things are" (*lqaɛida*). It made little sense to village women to talk about "preserving" cultural practices, including language. Intentionality came up short against God's will.

Language as Knowledge, Knowledge as Capital: Ideologies of Language

The value of language in encoding sets of knowledge was apparent in my interactions with Ishelhin in which my presence provided a counterpoint for people to reflect on their own subjectivities. A particularly illustrative encounter took place during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, in January–February 1997. I spent most of it among the Ida ou Zeddout people and in the town of Igherm in the Eastern Anti-Atlas. Whereas in town there was electric heat and gas-powered hot water heaters, in the

mountains no comforts mediated the winter chill. Without the distraction of the harvest cycle, village women warded off hunger and thirst by sleeping late in the morning. They greeted each other outside their homes with the question "Ramadan's not too much for you?" (*izd ur am iḥawl Rmdan?*). Women bundled in layers of colorful, floral and striped polyester blouses and skirts, acrylic and wool leggings and socks. Their days were full of domestic chores and visiting, unlike years in which Ramadan fell during the busy plowing, planting, or harvesting seasons. Eager to make the time pass convivially, Hajja and her teenaged daughter Ftuma offered to make me a rug. Hajja's high school-aged daughter Mina and I set off to buy weaving supplies in Igherm, now a market town but built as a fortress by the French in 1927 and named accordingly. With its elevation and vantage point, Igherm stood at the French Protectorate frontier between the *tribus soumis* ("pacified tribes") in the general direction of Taroudant and the *tribus dissidents* ("dissident tribes") due south and southeast. Igherm remained a harsh frontier town where women left their homes to walk the dry dirt paths only when absolutely necessary. Men crowded the public squares where buses departed for towns and cities, and buses and collective taxis forged deeper into the mountains. Purveyors of household staples stocked up in Igherm at unmarked warehouses; the town center boasted a public phone shop, stationary store, and a few tea houses that also sold hard-boiled eggs and packaged cakes to men in transit. There were no cell phones yet, so news from family and friends in distant cities was infrequent, and their visits anxiously anticipated yet infrequently materialized.

It was the wrong time of year to buy weaving supplies, since women spun and dyed their wool in the warmer months, and the vegetable-dyed spools had sold quickly. All that remained was *ṣuf ɣɣumi*, "Christian wool:" chemically dyed, soft synthetic yarn in bright colors like yellow and green. Mina and I chose more subdued navy, burgundy, and royal blue yarn, as well as some white for accent; these were far from the earthy, vegetable-dyed tans, rusts, sages, dusty roses, salmons, and mustards of the rugs that lined mountain sitting rooms. Upon our return, Hajja barely concealed her disgust at our color selection, but she promised to do her best. With the help of the other village grandmothers, she set up the loom, passing onion over it to ward off the evil eye (Figure 1.1). Soon after she started into the first *ifassn* ("hands") or stripes, neighbors came to inspect the progress, took turns weaving, and added to the chorus of dismay at the color scheme. Some set off to find brightly colored yarn from their own storerooms, and soon enlivened the rug with a hand of grass green next to one that was fire-engine red. The women were clearly delighted with their resourcefulness and the vibrant colors. My own aesthetic sense was appalled: these were tacky Christmas colors. I tried to temper my disappointment, given their generosity, and acclimated to their good humor in carrying on despite

Figure 1.1 Ida ou Zeddout women prepare loom and pass onion over it before weaving

the substandard materials with which I had furnished them. Village women took turns weaving in pairs. The young women with whom I socialized most were conspicuously absent. Later I learned that few young women knew spindle weaving techniques, although a few made rag rugs from scraps of fabric on their mothers' looms. The elaborate rugs on which young women slept had been passed down for generations, but not the skills to replace the rugs when they wore thin.

As the older women whiled away the Ramadan hours at the loom, they talked. They talked about talk. They talked about silence too, especially my periodic silence as I sulked guiltily over the colors, and about their incomprehension of my silence. One glanced at me and uttered, "God gave us so much to talk about!" suggesting that my silence was intentional and strategic, perhaps "an expression of power, a refusal to enter into the intercourse that a social inferior is demanding" (Harvey 1994:52). Surely the women did not consider themselves inferior given that they repeatedly alluded to the inferiority of non-Muslims and to my bizarre status as an unmarried woman in her late twenties of unknown *laṣl* (Ar. *laṣl*, roots or origins). Yet my silence was roundly interpreted not as the resistance I was experiencing, but as a failure to show solidarity, the preferred mode of interaction between Tashelhit women that reinforced the density of their social networks (Milroy 1987). In contrast, I experienced my own silence as submission and awkwardness, denoting what Quechua-speaking women of Ocongate, Bolivia see as "recognition of another's superiority and a simultaneous sense of shame (*verguenza*) in one's own inferior position. An extreme of this meaning is silence as stupidity, silence as indication that a

potential speaker can think of nothing to say" (Harvey 1994:53). I would learn over the years of working with the Ida ou Zeddout and other Tashelhit-speaking women that speaking wisely and appropriately – but amply – when among women ensured a woman's status, her perceived intelligence, and her commitment to solidarity. The silence of respect was reserved for mixed-sex settings. Despite my silence during the rug-weaving, women caught up on news of their sons and husbands in the cities and expressed their desires for men's return for the *Id Imẓẓin* or Little Feast (Ar. ʿId Al Fiṭr) soon to mark the end of Ramadan.

Unavoidably, conversation periodically turned to the Westerner in their midst. Fadma, one of the village mothers who had not spent time with me before, looked my way and remarked to the others, "Ah, she speaks Tashelhit." From behind the loom, Hajja's daughter Ftuma elaborated: "She knows Tashelhit, she knows Arabic, she knows French." To this, Fadma retorted, "Well, I know *tafullust* (chicken), I know *taġyult* (donkey), I know *tagant* (forest). These are my Arabic, my French, my English." By equating chickens, donkeys, and forests with Arabic, French, and English, Fadma suggested that each comprised a body of knowledge – and thus wielded power. Languages, in this view, are skill sets, what a person "knows," resources to attain one's livelihood – a view that is shared equally often by advocates of both multilingualism and monolingualism worldwide. In the mountains, chickens provide eggs and meat; a donkey is only good when it eases labors such as hauling water and carrying wood from the forest, but is otherwise scorned as stupid and stubborn, its name a common insult. In Fadma's view, languages were useful only when they achieved some end; languages were (as the villagers believed) what students learned in schools. Knowledge, then, did not include rural women's material and expressive skills, because "their knowledge is not codified: it is oral, practical, and experiential" and thus outside of "the only sanctioned process of knowing in contemporary mainstream epistemology" (Sadiqi 2003:257). "Languages," not including what was then called the Tashelhit lahja (Ar. "dialect" or Tash. *awal*, "talk"), were forms of codified knowledge that were sanctioned and promoted by schools and powerful outsiders. Village children entered school as monolingual Tashelhit speakers, but became conversant in Moroccan Arabic (MA; darija) within a few years, since this was the language their teachers – usually Arabs from northern cities – used with them, rather than the Classical Arabic (CA, fuṣḥa) mandated by the curriculum. It was thus unsurprising that unschooled villagers believed schools taught "the [Arabic] language" (al luġa) and "writing" (*tiġri*) rather than subjects like history or arithmetic. Perhaps it also should not have been surprising to hear school-aged children in the mountains who had never stepped foot in town nonetheless speaking in halting MA to the outsider in their midst.

L1

Planting, harvesting, gathering wood, and food preparation all involved bodies of knowledge that the village women shared and valued for their life-sustaining character – but they were well aware that individuals with authority did not need that knowledge. Outsiders and emigrant men relied on markets to provide them with consumables and material goods, or on women to process wool and homegrown barley into household goods and consumables. Moreover, powerful outsiders used Arabic, French, and increasingly English – not the contracting (so-called "endangered") Tashelhit language. For monolingual Tashelhit-speaking village women, languages were powerful resources they lacked. This was in part because it was God's will, they often told me, but in part because many husbands, fathers, and sons saw women's monolingualism – and their presence in the village – as critical to the socialization of children, the maintenance of patrimony, and the upholding of reputations. Women maintained the cultivatable land, practiced local religious and secular traditions, and socialized children into the Tashelhit language that linked the countryside's population. They did this despite the national and global processes that increasingly rendered their land, heritage, and language unprofitable, untenable, and undervalued.

My presence among monolingual Tashelhit women commonly enough elicited similar metaphors to indicate that these language ideologies were not altogether idiosyncratic. Following Schieffelin and Woolard (1994), Woolard (1998b), and Silverstein (1979, 1998), I use "ideologies" here rather than "attitudes" to draw attention to the social and power dynamics involved in language use. As Schieffelin and Woolard state, ideologies of languages "are not only about language. Rather, such ideologies envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology" (1994:55–6). They are "representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (Woolard 1998b:3). While mountain women understood their monolingualism as further impeding them from joining the march towards prosperity that they thought everyone but them enjoyed, they were paradoxically crucial agents in the maintenance of Tashelhit, a role that most educated, urbanized, and polyglot Amazigh activists could not. Many women I knew in the Anti-Atlas told me that their monolingualism trapped them in the mountains. Yet to men, this further increased women's purity and value, especially for those men familiar with linguistic discrimination who found solace in Tashelhit-dominant mountain spaces. That solace came at a price for the women who maintained the language, the homelands, and the moral economy.

Instead of approaching language as a unitary whole, then, we might approach it as comprising sets of simultaneously communicative and identificatory practices that map onto genres, contexts, and historical moments (Friedrich 1989; Hill and Hill 1986; Irvine 1989; Irvine and Gal 2000), as

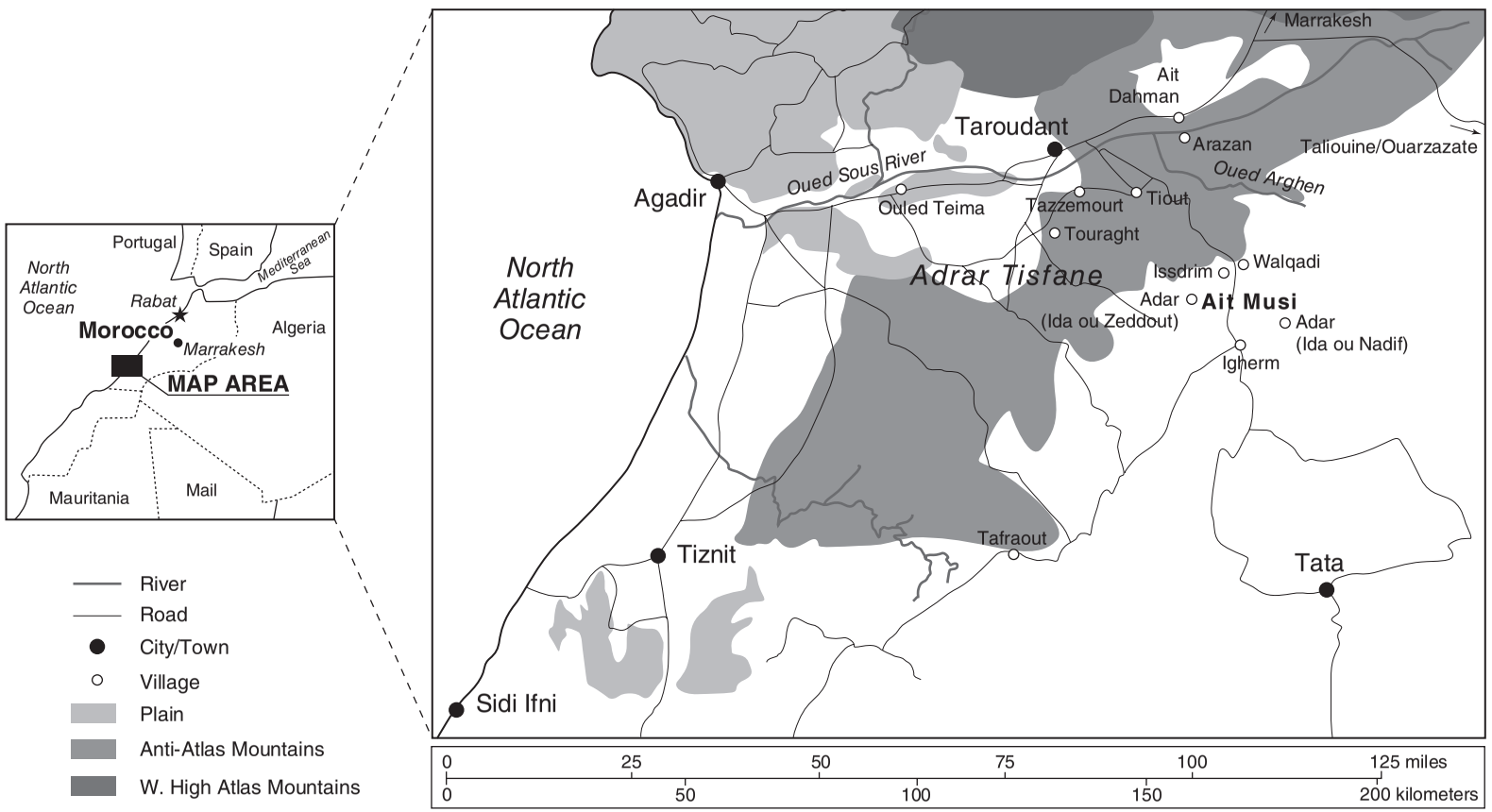

Figure 1.2 Sous Valley and Anti-Atlas mountains, southwestern Morocco

a prism that refracts, reflects, and propels changing understandings of individual and collective subjectivities. I focus in this book on a range of Ashelhi expressive practices, and map their diversity onto political economic histories and structures. Land tenure systems and the spread of commercial agriculture in formerly subsistence communities have led to language shifts and an overall decline in the use of the marginalized Berber vernaculars. The post-nationalist moment requires that we transcend the flawed dichotomies of nationalist rhetoric that developed in contradistinction to colonial concerns.[1] What the French colonizers called *les indigènes* – a category including all "natives" – distilled in the post-Independence period into a perceived unified Arabo-Islamic population. Yet the persistence of the autochtone (indigenous) person disrupts the homogeneity implied by the nationalist model.

Language and Ethnicity in Morocco

Please keep the following original and the translation together on one page

> sukkan al maġreb al aqdamun huma al barabera abnahu maziġ jaw min al yemen abra al habaša wa miṣr
>
> The first inhabitants of Morocco were the Berbers. The Amazigh people came from Yemen via the Horn of Africa and Egypt.
>
> – Moroccan primary school history textbook

As in other contemporary nation-states undergoing social change, language in Morocco reflects and in part shapes its social context. Most everyday speech takes place in the vernacular MA or one of the geolects (regional vernaculars) of Tamazight, the umbrella term for the Berber language. Tashelhit is the geolect spoken in the southwest; Tarifit is spoken in the northern Rif region on the Mediterranean; and the variety locally (and confusingly) called Tamazight is spoken in the Middle and Eastern High Atlas regions.[2] About 80 percent of Moroccans speak MA, although only about half are native speakers. Standard Arabic (SA) is the language of the televised and print media, and is based on CA, the language of literature, and the Quran. French is the other literacy language. Spanish is better known than French in the former Spanish zones of the Rif and pockets of the south (including Sidi Ifni). English is making inroads in business and education sectors. Western languages do not have a presence in the rural Sous outside of the restricted contexts of the tourist industry – most notably hotels, restaurants, and guided tours – and aside from assimilated borrowings

L1

into MA and Tashelhit. In Morocco, speaking competence in SA and French is generally acquired through the educational system, although unschooled individuals often understand some SA and even Egyptian Arabic from televised films and soap operas. As in other Arabic-speaking countries, the Arabic of the home and streets is mutually unintelligible with the SA/CA of radio, television, and texts.

Contrary to the depiction of Imazighen as emigrants from Yemen, as the nationalistic history lessons taught Moroccan children from 1966 to 1975, it is now generally accepted that Imazighen or Berbers, and including them the Ishelhin of southwestern Morocco, are among North Africa's indigenous people. For contemporary Ishelhin, both Imazighen and Berber constitute what Baumann calls "alien summary label[s]" (1987:9). I generally refer to this umbrella group as Berber, to the Berber language in general as Tamazight, and to the language of Ishelhin specifically as Tashelhit. As Goodman (2005) has argued persuasively, the term "Imazighen" is more appropriately reserved for references to Berber *militants*, the activists whose concept of a united Amazigh nation in northern and western Africa (Tamazgha) is politically charged, although I would qualify that the terms "Imazighen" and "Tamazight" are increasingly used by Moroccan laypeople, not just activists and diasporic members. By no means should my use of the term Berber in this book be construed as perpetuating an essentializing, nineteenth-century French idea of a non-Arab North African *race berbère* with phenotypical, cultural, legal, and religious qualities proximate to those of Europeans (cf. Lorcin 1999).

In the nationalist and post-Independence periods, Berbers were tagged by intellectual and political elites as the Other in their midst, worthy of tolerance and assimilation – but not accommodation. In a sense, "Berber" identity has long been formulated from the outside, and has usually been derogatory (Brett and Fentress 1996). The recent redintegrative (Baumann 1987) Amazigh movement has reclaimed collective identity and has striven to put a positive valence on Amazigh identity and heritage (Crawford and Hoffman 2000; Goodman 1996; Lafuente 1999; El Aissati 1993). The term Berber itself at its origin means "babble" or "nonsense," and was used by Romans to refer to non-Romans whose speech was unintelligible. The root b-r-b-r in MA means to boil up, to come up, like heated water or the sun on a scorching day. For the Romans, a *barbarus* was a barbarian – one unlike and thus inferior to them. The early sociologist, historian, and historiographer Ibn Khaldoun, in his fourteenth-century work on Berber empires (1968), identified three regional Berber subgroups (Ibn Khaldoun in B. Hoffman 1967:20). Beyond these, the tribe, tribal fraction and village are the most common classifications. The question remains open whether speakers of the varieties of spoken Berber felt what Ibn Khaldoun called ɛaṣabiyya or social solidarity.

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Today Berbers comprise a heterogeneous ethnolinguistic group that stretches from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya down to Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Almost all Moroccan Berbers today, including Ishelhin, are Muslim.[3] Ishelhin are one of the three main subgroups of Berbers in Morocco who together comprise a sociocultural and linguistic group whose members refer to themselves with a variety of ethnolinguistic, tribal, and regional names (Hart 2000; Hoffman 2000b). Collectively, Tamazight speakers and their (in many cases) Arabic-speaking children make up less than half of the Moroccan population, although there are no official statistics. Scholarly estimates for Berbers in Morocco have ranged from 30 to 60 percent; massive urbanization (and resultant linguistic Arabicization) of the 1970s leads me to put the number on the lower end. It remains unclear whether such numbers reflect Berber ancestry or familiarity with Tamazight language. My attempts to gather language statistics from the 1996–7 census – in which household language was a line item – were dismissed by provincial and national officials, even subject to hostility and suspicion. Unlike data from the other census questions, even the aggregate numbers were not made public. One Taroudant province official, responding to my query about province-level numbers of Arabic and Tashelhit speakers, tartly remarked that linguistic differences were superficial since it was the French who made a false distinction between Arabs and Berbers. When I clarified that my question concerned home language and not ethnic group, he instructed me to simply add the populations of mountain villages to arrive at the number of Tashelhit speakers, and to combine the populations of the plains and towns for the number of Arabic speakers. Participant observation discredited this oversimplification: this ethnography is full of Ashelhi voices from plains and towns. In this and countless other interactions with officials and laypeople clearly annoyed by non-Arabic speakers in their midst, it was clear that Tashelhit language itself, and Tamazight more generally, had become iconic of rurality *tout court*.

The ancestors of today's rural Arabs in southwestern Morocco arrived with the Beni Hillal mercenaries hired from Egypt in the eleventh century for military support for the Sultan. As early as the seventh century, Arabs from the Arabian peninsula had settled and built cities in the northern areas of the empire with the early westward military expansion of Islam. During the second wave of invasions into Morocco, Arabs displaced Berbers from the plains and towns. In most mountain villages, Arabic is not a native vernacular – but even this has been changing since the dramatic Arabicization that began in the 1970s with massive rural–urban emigration, especially in the low-lying mountains and plains around market centers-turned-cities such as Marrakesh (Fernea 1976; Peets 1988), Beni Mellal (Kapchan 1996), and Taroudant (D. Dwyer 1978; K. Dwyer 1982; Hoffman 2006). Other Moroccan Arabs, especially in the Imperial cities of Fes, Marrakesh, Rabat

and Tangier, claim descent from Andalusia, the southern region of Spain ruled by the Moroccan Almoravid and Almohad empires from the late seventh to the late fifteenth century. The expansion of Islam from urban Morocco to the hinterlands in the eighth century had little effect on the language spoken in rural areas until the Beni Hillal Bedouin invaders from Egypt in the mid-eleventh century brought about extensive linguistic Arabization. The argument placing Amazigh roots in the Arabian peninsula dates to Ibn Khaldun's fourteenth-century writings, but this genealogy reflects a desire to legitimate Berber membership either in the international *umma* of Muslim believers via proximity to the Prophet Mohammed and the early Islamic community (Shatzmiller 2000), or relative to Arab nobility (McDougall 2004). Another origin myth places Amazigh ancestry on the European continent, mapping as evidence apparent phonological and morphological similarities between Tamazight, Celtic, and Breton languages. Dark-skinned Moroccans, found throughout Morocco today and including many Berber communities from Marrakesh south to the Sahara, trace their roots to Senegal and Guinea in particular, whose ancestors arrived as slaves or as students of Islamic sciences and law in Fes's prestigious Al Quarawayn University.

Given the population's heritage, displacement, and intermarriage, since Independence Moroccan and Western scholars have tended to characterize Morocco as "mixed": part Arab, part Mediterranean, part African, part Amazigh. Leaving the matter there suggests that ethnolinguistic mixing is politically unproblematic and regionally undifferentiated, simply a colorful mélange of historical, cultural, and linguistic traditions to be celebrated at an historical moment when attention to "ethnicity" smacks of folklorization at best and racism at worst. The melting pot claim is akin to characterizing Americans as an unvariegated jumble of Native American, Latino, Anglo, African, and Asian heritage, disregarding the historically situated struggles around ethnicity, language, and economic difference, and the political economic factors that shape them. This raises the question of what "mixed" and "pure" mean on the ground, in people's everyday lives. Dominant discourse around mixing and hybridity in Morocco largely holds that ethnicity is temporally grounded in a distant past, and its only vestiges are shared by all Moroccans in an undifferentiated amalgam of cultural practices. Yet this shared Moroccan-ness has, until recently, required that Berbers assimilate culturally and linguistically. Beginning with the Protectorate period but accelerating in the post-Independence years, Berbers essentially were encouraged to leave their quaint customs and language in the countryside in order to integrate into the national public through a process that "is intrinsically biased towards the whole which it presupposes" (Baumann 1987:1). That whole – the contemporary nation-state – remains static in this discursive construction. In Morocco, with the rise in awareness of Berber matters since

the 1990s, Amazigh activists and scholars proposed an alternative to integration that more closely matches what Baumann terms redintegration. Local redintegration, as he uses the term in reference to the Nuba people of Sudan, refers to "the processes that aim at restoring and renewing a local community to a state of wholeness as its members perceive it," processes oriented towards "preserving, restoring or renewing that community's sense of wholeness, however it is locally defined" (Baumann 1987:3). Such redintegration actually precludes integration or assimilation, Baumann posits; it is "the converse of national integration" for it prevents focus on the national "whole." While seemingly inclusive, the nation-state "whole" more commonly permeates minority communities in ways that are ideologically discordant with local moral economies, supplanting minority cultural practices and social organizational principles. Many Moroccans, however, especially in the towns and cities, remark that they are neither Arab nor Berber/Amazigh/Ashelhi/Arrifi, but instead are a mixture of both. In the view of yet other Moroccans, particularly the urbanized, Arabic-speaking elite, an Arab-Berber distinction is irrelevant at best, spurious at worst. For those whose urbanity is predominant to their personal and collective subjectivities, this dismissal is understandable. Comments about the insignificance of ethnic heritage are prevalent in part because until recently, claiming Amazigh ancestry was the marked position, seen by governmental officials and by nationalists as a threat to a unified Moroccan nation and, by a deeply engrained and naturalized leap of logic, the legitimacy of the monarchy. An Arab emphasis in state rhetoric was long justified by the centuries-old genealogy linking the Alawi dynasty to the Prophet Mohammed, a primary source of the monarchy's political legitimacy (Combs-Schilling 1989).

At the broadest level, the Tashelhit language itself, as a variety of the Tamazight language, has long been iconic of rurality, grounded in a social history in which "Berbers" and "Arabs" were geographically distinct populations in the countryside and cities, respectively. The persistence of this essentialized topographical dichotomy is striking, given massive urbanization since the 1970s, the sizable presence of Berber speakers in the cities since as early as the 1920s, and the Eastern Arab roots of many rural communities. The icon (Tamazight = rurality) obfuscates more subtle distinctions between rural dwellers themselves – since both Arabic and Tashelhit speakers live in rural areas, and given the differences in verbal expressive culture between plains and mountains Ishelhin. Rurality can be invested with either positive or negative moral valence. While its complement, urbanity, is similarly multivalent, the Arabic language that Moroccans associate with urbanity suggests piety, knowledge, worldliness. Many Moroccans I knew did not conceive of Islam as antithetical to the Tashelhit language or Ashelhi identity, although among unschooled Ishelhin, there was significant conflation of classical and colloquial Arabic varieties. In Muslim societies

with no indigenous Arabic vernacular-speaking population (e.g. Afghanistan, Indonesia, India), spoken Arabic vernaculars are not invested with piety. More often, the written Arabic word is considered sacred, and this belief underlies a range of practices involving the ingestion or dissolution of paper containing Arabic writing. Moroccan Arabs tended to regard spoken Tashelhit indifferently at best or negatively at worst, as a heritage language for those with Ashelhi roots, but almost quaint and unnecessary for the country as a whole, if not an impediment to national unity. In the late 1990s, given the associations of these Tashelhit and Arabic icons, and in an environment of government-sponsored hostility towards the Berber vernaculars, many Moroccans had difficulty endowing Berber with positive, forward-oriented qualities that might have raised the esteem and profile of native Tamazight speakers within Moroccan society.

Ishelhin among whom I lived engaged in ethnic and linguistic differentiating practices that drew on the cultural, expressive, and economic practices they encountered in their immediate surroundings, and that shaped their choice of spouse, their expectations of themselves and their neighbors, the places they lived, the labor they performed, the language they used to communicate with children and neighbors, and their collective ritual practices. Their choices were influenced by convention and socialization, to be sure, but also by new messages about morality and modernity that arrived via the radio, audio cassettes, television, school teachers, political leaders, human rights groups, migrant workers, and even resident social scientists.

A southwestern Moroccan's self-classification as Ashelhi or Arab may shift over the course of a lifetime, or from one generation to the next, and an individual can claim to "be" Arab and Ashelhi simultaneously or alternately between interactions (Rosen 1984) just as patron-client or master and disciple roles can be occupied by the same person in different contexts (Hammoudi 1997). Ishelhin shared a sense of Moroccan nationhood with those they called Arabs (Crawford and Hoffman 2000). With the concurrent urbanization and Arabization trends of the 1970s and 1980s, Moroccan towns increasingly became places where Tashelhit speakers metamorphosed into bilinguals or monolingual Arabic speakers. The countryside increased in value in many male migrants' eyes for it lacked the stigma associated with Ishelhin in the ethnically mixed (*xlḍn*) cities.

Any variant of Berber identity – whether forwarded by urban male pan-Amazigh rights activists, or practiced by unschooled rural women themselves – challenges the Arabo-Islamic narrative of innocuously colorful, regionally variegated Morocco. During both fieldwork and archival research, I found it impossible to overlook linguistic, cultural, and agricultural practices that seemed "mixed" to my informants: a village with a Berber name whose residents spoke Arabic; a wedding where the bride self-consciously chose "traditional" or "modern" practices and ornaments (Hoffman 2006);

a holiday in the mountains where young emigrant men spoke Arabic to each other while monolingual young women urged them to speak Tashelhit; young women's revitalization of *tiwizi* (Ar. twiza), collective work projects, fallen out of favor.[4]

There was a concerted effort from the rise of the nationalist movement in the 1920s until the early twenty-first century to relegate the Berber component of Moroccan heritage to a footnote in the evolution of the modern nation. Recent scholarship is recovering the histories of marginalized communities largely absent from the scholarly record (e.g. Aouchar 2002). To counter stereotypes of Ishelhin as provincial, some of the Imazighen who wrote, spoke, and sang in mass mediated formats attempted to imbue previously denigrated places and cultural practices with positive content. Teachers, poets, traditional musicians, and historians of local history and lore formed the core of Tashelhit radio programming, for instance, and became local celebrities as a result, further bolstering their authority and increasing the sale of their essays, proverbs, and verbal art printed in Casablanca, Marrakesh, and Agadir, sold in small bookstores at affordable prices. These purveyors of Berber culture, language, and history found a receptive audience among literate rural agriculturalists as well as high school boys boarding in the market towns of Taroudant and Igherm.

Talk accompanied almost every aspect of life in the Sous, and the level of sociability there ensured that talk was not peripheral to activities but rather part and parcel of social action. Talk preceded, organized, and followed manual laboring. Talk distinguished between different kinds of work, whether manual labor – *tawwuri* for cyclical manual labor and *tammara* for physically stressful labor – or the "clean" work of offices and schools (*lxdmt*; Ar. xedma). Talk provided pleasure in everyday activities, and everyday interactions were recounted in dramatic he-said-she-said (Goodwin 1990) reenactments. In these rural lands where little seemed to happen during lulls in ritual and agricultural cycles, Tashelhit women's performative flair transformed mundane activities into discrete events. Arguably, Berber women have long been depicted as powerful relative to their Arab counterparts. Given the recent public visibility for the Tamazight language, however, methods of language maintenance are increasingly scrutinized. Here, too, the mountain village and its women residents would seem to have heightened social value. They have been, after all, almost single-handedly responsible for socializing children into the Tashelhit language. Despite the emergence of scholarly and policy-oriented language and cultural institutes like IRCAM (Institut Royal de la Culture Amazigh) in the nation's capital, Rabat – a significant victory for advocates of Amazigh inclusion – the rural homelands remain the core language institutes. There, native speakers transmitted, debated, reformed, and fashioned expressive culture both intentionally and inadvertently in ways that accommodated changing

social desires, a massive influx of market goods, and shifting aspirations and self-images. The Ishelhin among whom I worked, in the Eastern Anti-Atlas mountains and Sous Valley, granted an importance to language not only as a medium of communication, but also as an index of commitment to a geographically dispersed subjectivity – marginalized from the outside as insufficiently Islamic, yet sometimes celebrated from within as adaptive and resistant.

Language is a crucial component of Berber identity today in the view of many Berbers themselves – although what this "language" is, precisely, is not always immediately apparent. Equally importantly, native language has been crucial to teachers, intellectuals, activists, and those laypeople in regular contact with native speakers of other languages. Language professionals have gained visibility in their efforts to encourage state recognition of Berber language and heritage in Moroccan public domains, and more modestly, to open public discussion about the challenges native language poses for national development, especially in terms of education and training. Yet "language" is not just code choice and does not just concern the polyglot and the urbane. Even monoglot rural women hold language ideologies about the relationships that pertain between individuals and communities and their expressive cultures. Language ideologies shape their understandings of the inherent properties of various languages, their aesthetic qualities, and their appropriate uses. Here is where participant observation is crucial; the field-worker must speak and understand the field languages well enough to grasp what people say to each other and how speech operates as social performance as well as a referential tool to relay information. For all the rhetoric about language's role in Moroccan individual and collective identities, we still have few empirical qualitative data grounded in recordings of actual instances of verbal expression *in situ*, particularly for Berberophone groups. Kapchan's beautifully detailed account of Arab women's genres in and around the Moroccan marketplace is an inspiring model for future work (1996). More commonly, however, we have composites from memory, just-so generalizations, and elicited genres like poetry, narrative, and proverbs. In contrast, this book situates some aspects of language use among minority Berber speakers in one part of one region at the end of the twentieth century, complementing recent Anglophone publications on the circulation of culture and identity among Kabyle Berbers in both Algeria and the diaspora in France (Goodman 2005; Silverstein 2004). By expanding our familiarity with Berbers, we can better understand the complexities and richness of language, culture, and society in North Africa, and begin to work against the Arabocentric bias in Anglophone scholarship on the region.

Rhetorically, advocates for Tamazight linguistic and cultural rights increasingly compare their lot to that of other endangered and minority

groups worldwide, simultaneously emphasizing their indigeneity and rightful occupation of the land. Like other indigenous rights movements increasing in visibility since the mid-1980s, the Amazigh rights movement "involves reinvigoration of the comfort and color of local traditions with the safety-in-numbers effect of a global movement" (Niezen 2003:13). Yet as recently as ten years ago, maintenance programs for endangered languages did not appear to serve as viable models for sustaining Moroccan Tamazight and its regional varieties. It would be folly to compare Tamazight speakers' predicament to that of Native American groups with only a few hundred or a few dozen speakers, or a single speaker (Nettle and Romaine 2000). Despite a lack of official statistics on the number of Tamazight, Tashelhit, and Tarifit speakers, we can estimate that they number around 10 million of the over 30 million Moroccans. The proportion of speakers and legal status of Tamazight are more comparable to indigenous languages of South America, notably Quechua in Peru and Ecuador (Harvey 1994; King 2001; Rindstedt and Aronsson 2001; Saroli 2004).

Despite rhetorical references to international discourses, and even the occasional international involvement on behalf of the Moroccan Amazigh rights movement, this – like other minority and indigenous rights movements – remains first and foremost a struggle *within* the nation and *with* the state. Its implications are international, and its outcome still uncertain – most particularly whether the fate of Tamazight will follow that of significant minority languages such as Catalon or Basque, or the linguicide of Australian Aboriginals. There are two facets to this struggle. One is with the majority of Moroccans, now native Arabic speakers, who do not necessarily value Berber language and heritage. A second is with government institutions. *De jure* political acceptance of Tamazight does not imply *de facto* practice. The Amazigh movement has been more concerned with governmental recognition and policies than with popular support, motivated by an underlying conviction that the masses, especially in a tightly controlled police state, follow authorities' cues. Of particular interest are King Mohamed VI's efforts at inserting the Tamazight language into public spheres, a move initiated by his father Hassan II's 1994 call for Tamazight in primary schools. A pilot program began with the 2003–4 academic year, and by spring 2004 manuals were available for distribution and teachers were being trained, albeit for a short two-week period, particularly in light of the already inadequate pedagogical and language training of the newly pedigreed Moroccan teachers usually assigned to the countryside for their introduction to teaching.

Future research will have to assess the success or failure of recent language policy reforms that have brought Tamazight into national public domains. My goal in the pages that follow is to sketch the parameters of rural Tashelhit verbal expressive practices and language ideologies that preceded the

significant early twenty-first century shifts in governmental policy, particularly the gendered forms they took, and trace their relationships to the different political economies operating in southwestern Morocco's plains and mountains. I use the phrase "verbal expressive" rather than "linguistic" in many instances to highlight how the matter goes beyond formal linguistic characteristics of colloquial speech, such as lexicon, syntax, phonetics, and prosody, to expressive genres like song, religious chant, proverbial speech, and oratory. Competing hegemonies come together in these collective displays, and through them plains Ishelhin both challenge and reproduce their marginal structural position vis-à-vis the state and its presumed Arab citizenry with regard to privileged access to political, cultural, and economic capital.

A gap is likely to widen between assimilationist Ishelhin and those attempting to establish Tamazight's place in Moroccan public domains along the lines of Catalan in Spain, but without an insistence on territorial and political autonomy from the state. Already in Morocco, an Amazigh intellectual group has emerged whose tone differs markedly from that of the late 1990s (Silverstein and Crawford 2004). Most striking is the current leaders' insistence on secularism (personal communication, Silverstein 2004), a continuity with certain strains of the Amazigh movement, but in notable contrast to that of the religious or moderate Swasa (Sous residents, sing. Soussi) figuring centrally in the 1990s. Given political Islam's increased visibility since 2001, the Moroccan Amazigh cultural elite look closer to their Kabyle counterparts in Algeria than the historically religious moderates of the Moroccan south.

Shifting Language Hierarchies

Historically, linguistic influence appears to have gone both from Berber to Arabic and from Arabic to Berber. Colloquial MA displays grammatical, lexical, and syntactic features shaped by the Tamazight language, and each variety of Tamazight contains Arabic borrowings in the form of lexical items and phrases. As Chtatou has noted (1997), MA contains lexical and grammatical features of CA that originated in Eastern Arabic but fell into disuse long ago and are unknown to Eastern Arabs, so that today these Eastern Arabs consider the elements as resulting from Tamazight influence when they were instead archaic Arab Peninsula characteristics. Plains MA contains Tashelhit borrowings and phonetic influences, and plains Tashelhit borrows extensively from colloquial Arabic. The speech of those Arabic speakers who did not speak Tashelhit was distinguishable as "Soussi" by northerners for its distinctive phonetic and lexical features. Individuals who were raised speaking Arabic used to marry into Tashelhit-speaking families

L1

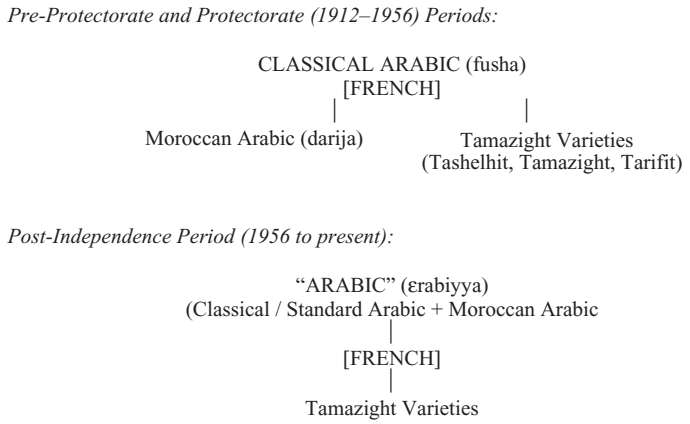

Figure 1.3 Language hierarchies in Morocco

and become Tashelhit-dominant just as the opposite was true. Yet by the late 1990s, it was rare to find a native Arabic speaker who became Tashelhit dominant in adulthood. The symbolic capital associated with Arabic greatly exceeded that associated with Tashelhit. In sum, language shift in the Sous largely went from Tashelhit to Arabic in the post-Independence period.

Over the twentieth century, the symbolic importance of Arabic increased to the point where many Moroccans associated Arabic language, even in its vernacular form, with religious piety. MA and the Berber varieties were once hierarchically equal and inferior to CA and, under the Protectorate, to French. Prior to Independence in 1956, before the generalization of schooling and the expansion of the French-initiated state bureaucracy, rural communities and tribes in many respects shared the same structural position vis-à-vis the state. In the Sous, any given community had a predominantly MA- or Tashelhit-speaking population, with male ṯâlib-s (religiously trained scholars) and *imɣarn* (elected village leaders) serving as language brokers when necessary with makhzen (governmental) officials and trading partners. A negligible number of Moroccans had basic literacy skills prior to Independence. The rural religious schools (*timzgida*; "mosque") taught the Arabic alphabet and some Quranic verses to boys who developed rudimentary literacy skills (Spratt et al. 1991; Wagner 1993). Lay people had few pretensions to literacy; specialists handled reading and writing.

From the French Protectorate through Independence, two concurrent processes were responsible for shifts in the language hierarchy. First, the expansion of infrastructure and road-building under the French stimulated the development of a market economy that encouraged male migration to the urban centers. Second, the independent state generalized education; non-specialists (and non-elites) had access to literacy training. Yet as Bourdieu

L1

and Passeron (1970) found for France, Moroccan schools favored the existing social class structure and helped to reproduce it as well by consolidating material and symbolic capital among the urban, Arabic-speaking elite. In more intimate spheres, Tashelhit speakers continued to anchor their origins (laṣl) in a rural homeland (tamazirt) where Tashelhit remained the *lingua franca* and MA was associated with outsider bureaucrats.

Yet increasingly, lay people accorded higher status to MA, the vernacular of the Moroccan elites (but also many non-elites), than to the Tamazight vernaculars. Non-elite MA speakers and Berber speakers found themselves jockeying for economic, political, and social symbolic resources under the newly independent Moroccan state. The ideological elision between SA and MA meant, and continues to mean, tolerance for MA in the media and institutions like schools, either with or at the expense of SA. In classrooms, for instance, where oral communication was supposed to take place in the official SA that few mastered, MA became an accessible proxy. Despite an ideological preference for SA in the media, Moroccan television and radio interviews that open in SA eventually shift to MA, at least until a ritualized formula initiates a resumption of SA particularly by the program's close.[5] In urban contexts, MA was the unmarked vernacular; the Berber vernaculars were marked. An eventual elision in the popular imagination between vernacular MA and formalized SA (cf. Boukous 1995) meant that the linguistic hierarchy came to favor MA relative to Berber, at least in shared, urban, public domains, and MA now occupies domains once exclusively reserved for SA or CA (Boukous 1995) (Figure 1.3). Standard/classical Arabic has cultural capital not only because of its links to Islam and the sacred (Haeri 2003), but also because of its aesthetic, political, and cultural links to the Eastern Arab world that serve as more of a metropole to many Moroccans than does Europe, especially for popular cultural productions such as music, film, and television (Ossman 1994, 2002), as well as religious philosophy, politics, and literary aesthetics.

The Tamazight language varieties became increasingly viewed as undesirable relics of an internally fractious past. With the generalization of education in an Arab nationalist period came an unfavorable political climate that discouraged overt references to Amazigh identification. In the plains, Arabicization of the everyday vernacular resulted from subtle, non-coercive forces as well as economic and land tenure transformations. Once an arid grazing land, the Sous Valley became one of the most fertile commercial agricultural regions in Morocco. Massive farms brought together Arabic and Tashelhit-speaking laborers whose families intermarried and increasingly saw their fates as intertwined.

After years of resisting homogenization, Ishelhin and other Berbers are now facing the state's different strategy: inclusion. As late as the late 1990s, Ishelhin resisted state efforts to literally track their numbers through the

agricultural census and the identity card registration campaign, although many women in particular weighed the costs and benefits before participating (Hoffman 2000b). Under Mohamed VI, neighboring Algeria's domestic politics, particularly in the Kabylia Berber region, have led the Moroccan government to watch its own Amazigh activists more closely. In conversations with educated young people in the Anti-Atlas in August 2001, young men and women demonstrated their awareness of police abuses and the Kabyle demonstrations that had been taking place in the previous four months in Kabylia, Algeria. In hushed whispers, youths told me that Kabylia was the real reason Mohamed VI was creating an Amazigh institute. The popular pan-Mediterranean, bilingual (French-Arabic) radio station out of Tangier and other North African hubs, Médi 1, offered updates on Kabylia beyond the state-controlled media that could previously control this flow of information more closely. Moreover, inexpensive public Internet access became widespread in towns and cities from 1995 as entrepreneurs modeled their services after the téléboutiques that offered telephones and faxes for hire and served as meeting places for youths.

Emplacement and Mobility

Land has been as central as language to Berber understandings of subjectivity. Co-presence, like talk, renders geographical space meaningful. Place-making, like talk, engages negotiations over morality, community, social change, and human nature. The designation of in-between places, languages, and cultural forms seldom arises from within. "Mixed" cultures hint at movements; it is analytically difficult to ground heterogeneity in a single place when its composite elements are more easily locatable here or there. Culture, Malkki explains, is "a profoundly territorialized (quasi-ecological) concept in many settings":

> Violated, broken roots signal an ailing cultural identity and a damaged nationality . . . And in uprooting, a metamorphosis occurs: The territorializing metaphors of identity – roots, soils, trees, seeds – are washed away in human floodtides, waves, flows, streams, and rivers. These liquid names of the uprooted reflect the sedentarist bias in dominant modes of imaging homes and homelands, identities and nationalities. (Malkki 1995:15–16)

The "sedantarist bias" pertains both to internal and external characterizations. People render rural cultural practices meaningful in contrast to perceived urban practices. The city becomes the antithesis of the homeland, its own antidote (Williams 1973). In Protectorate discourse, Berbers tended to appear entrenched in their deeply loved lands as "France's sequoias"

(Berque 1967:219) – yet they and their social networks spread far and wide, attaching like ivy to stones in their paths, their roots digging down into the ground beneath the rivers that pass over them, as Fatima Tabaamrant (1998) sings. Contemporary popular depictions, too, portray Berbers as heroic autochthonous peoples. Malkki argues that such depictions of indigenous groups justify efforts to preserve indigenous life ways (Malkki 1995). Contemporary state rhetoric represents Moroccan identity in terms of a colorful quilt of discrete, codifiable regional traditions, essentialized in reenactments for folklore festivals.

Yet the rooted sequoia was only one half of contemporary identity formation among Ishelhin among whom I worked. For Anti-Atlas Ishelhin, in particular, at the end of the twentieth century, migration complemented rootedness. Together, male moving and female dwelling created and sustained the tamazirt. Indeed, a fundamental characteristic of being an Ashelhi or Tashelhit person was an active relationship with a tamazirt. Such places were arguably the core of the Ashelhi social group, albeit the periphery of Moroccan society. This alternative core was a material one for residents who worked the land and a discursive one for emigrants who did not. Its perceived proximity to the "intermediate zone" of the Sous plains was in constant flux.

Ashelhi identity in the late 1990s, and for at least the previous three-quarters of a century, was anchored neither exclusively in rural lands, nor in migration to the cities, but instead in the tension between mobility and emplacement, between moving and dwelling. This anchoring might suggest instability, as Tsing suggests for the Meratus of Indonesia:

> Instability might be interpreted, for example, as the inevitable product of "assimilation" and "change" as "tradition" is threatened. This view presupposes a site of intact tradition somewhere up in the hills or, at least, somewhere in the recent past. But, what if tradition itself is always negotiated in relation to state demands and local concerns about regional and ethnic status? (1993:105)

Instability and mobility, that is, may be integral to stability; tradition is never inherent, but relative. For the Meratus, relegated discursively, materially, and politically to the periphery of the modern state, Tsing writes that "Mobility over a diversified landscape fosters a proliferating appreciation of differences; Meratus note minute distinctions of taste, language, and style between themselves and their neighbors, even between housemates." From their perspective, Tsing argues, "mobility and microdifferentiation offer the pleasures of autonomy as well as the stigma of disorder" (1993: 61).

While scholars have documented Soussi merchants in Casablanca and their social networks (Adam 1972; Waterbury 1972a and 1972b), I focus here instead on those who stayed in the Anti-Atlas and Sous plains to

examine what it meant to be Ashelhi for those whose lives were shaped, in part, by the comings and goings of loved ones and neighbors. A deeply gendered spatial distinction among Ishelhin in the Anti-Atlas – with emigrant men working in cities most of the year, and mountain-dwelling women working the land – had led men to associate the countryside with longing, experienced through nostalgia, whereas women associated it with hard labor. Both agreed that a close relationship with the land was crucial to maintaining the language, yet emigrant men remained the strongest supporters of Tashelhit language maintenance, although they were least able to participate in it.

Men's presence was constant despite their absence, however, due to women's pervasive uncertainty about men's movements and their impending return, as well as the uncertainty around men's financial contributions to the household. Before the arrival of cell phones in 2000, women rarely heard from their husbands, fathers, and sons in the cities. They did, however, receive periodic shipments of goods: household staples like tea, sugar, and soap, and clothes like socks and navy nylon wraps (tamlḥafts). The wraps served both practical and indexical functions: they marked women's ethnicity and local affiliation, they protected women from the elements, they doubled as storage for fodder, and the excess material in the front formed a pouch in which, like the pouches of Pakistani Kalashi women's dress, "all manner of good and useful things can be carried and hidden" (Maggi 2001:98). Thus even before she spoke, a Tashelhit woman was readily distinguishable from an Arab and from Tashelhit women in other tribes and tribal sections. She could not pass as Arab due to her language and dress, beautiful according to internal standards but provincial, backward, and defiant in the view of many urbanites (Durham 1999; Maggi 2001). An entrenched moral code circumscribed women's emplacement in their husbands' homes, the immediately surrounding villages, and occasionally further afield for a visit to female relatives. Women expressed this anxiety as entrapment by their Tashelhit monolingualism, as well. The linguistic and pragmatic modifications advocated by language activists were inconceivable to women who could not imagine Tashelhit written, orthography standardized, or lexicon enhanced to suit modern purposes. How could Tashelhit be the language of schools and state institutions when it wasn't written, they asked me; *taʕrabt* (Arabic) already served that purpose. How could Tashelhit possibly become the language of the street, when only mountain folk spoke it, and Arabs scoffed at it? How could Tashelhit become the language of upward mobility, they asked rhetorically, when the world's wealthy people spoke French? Such language ideologies encouraged language shift, for Ishelhin were particularly resistant to the idea of using Tashelhit outside of intimate circles. Few Arabs bothered to learn to speak it, and there was seemingly little reason for them to do so. Linguistic accommodation consequently went one way, and many emigrant Ishelhin who accommodated

Arabs end up abandoning Tashelhit altogether. It is unclear how such patterns of accommodation and resistance may shift among the next generation given that, as people increasingly remark, Berber is no longer taboo.[6]

Organization of the Book

Language and gender are always emplaced. This ethnography is organized around two zones that are less topographical locations and more indexes of political-economic systems. Political economies have shaped not only different Amazigh groups' economic capital and access to it, but also cultural and symbolic capital that similarly are produced, circulated, consumed, and discarded. What I am calling the tamazirt would conventionally be conceived as a satellite of the cities, supplying the metropole with foodstuffs and labor and ensuring the functioning and well-being of its inhabitants. An alternative analysis, however, takes seriously the symbolic aspect of political economies, especially the quasi-mythical yet utterly unromantic rural mountain village and its residents, especially women. This homeland differs in important respects from the villages of Tamazight-speaking Kabylia, Algeria (Goodman 2005). In a reversal of world systems theory and historical revisionists' rightful identification of the "people without history" (Wolf 1982), my ethnography positions the Ashelhi (Tashelhit "Berber" or Amazigh) homeland in the Anti-Atlas mountains as the civilizational pole around which Ashelhi identity is oriented, and rural residents as central to the moral and symbolic economy of the indigenous Tamazight language group. The mountains emerge as central every time a Moroccan or an outsider claims that authentic Amazigh language and people are only found there. By calling the mountain homeland the civilizational pole for Ishelhin, and thus their inhabitants as central to the moral and symbolic economy of the language and ethnic group, I am evoking an alternative hegemony and organization, a pride of place that both rural and town dwellers found distinct from the "mixed" towns and plains. The mountain homeland's "periphery" then becomes the Sous Valley, or at least its Tashelhit-speaking villages, as well as the towns and cities to which Ishelhin emigrate, Taroudant and Casablanca among them. This periphery was characterized not by an economic dependence on the homeland but instead by its symbolic and discursive dependence on it. Women's and men's contemporary experiences of land and language disrupt fantasies of a pristine rural homeland, suggesting instead a more complex set of processes linking people, places, and cultural practices.

After a short Chapter 2 on methods, Part II (Chapter 3) brings together mountains, plains, and towns to consider gender in late twentieth-century

expressive cultural mediations of Ashelhi land and language through the production and consumption of metaculture (Urban 2001). The very women who have ensured the maintenance of Tashelhit language, despite decades of official disdain for the vernacular and the histories of their speakers, now compete with national narratives about the role of what used to be called the Tamazight dialects – and are now called languages – of Moroccan cultural heritage. Pervasive images of an idealized Tamazight woman iconize the ethnic group, but only as long as her self-presentation (through dress, body adornment, and speech) distinguishes her from Arabs. An authentic homeland affords spectacular views and is difficult to access, emigrant men told me. According to this and other such criteria, Amazigh people, places, and practices were constantly ranked according to their authenticity or deviation from the ideal model, embodied in the mountain village. This fetish was encapsulated in the idea that one should go to the mountains to "get" the "real" Tashelhit, and that the "real" tamazirt was rugged and mountainous, far from roads and towns. Despite the almost mythical aura of the countryside in the view of many male emigrants, there was nothing ideal about it for the year-round resident women who worked their husbands' barren, rocky land and raised their children.

Chapters 4–7 are the ethnographic heart of the book. Two chapters treat each of the topographical regions, the Eastern Anti-Atlas mountains (Part III) and the Sous Valley plains (Part IV). Each part contains one chapter on labor and the material construction of place, and a second on the discursive construction of those places and the social groups associated with them. The first chapter of each part (Chapters 4 and 6) examines the local political economic histories and practices that have shaped ethnolinguistic differentiating practices and, by extension, ethnogenesis. Each provides a framework within which to understand intra-group differentiation in language practices and ideologies that are the subject of Chapters 5 and 7. These two chapters consider how community and marginality are created, maintained, and reproduced through language practices, not merely reflected in these practices (Friedrich 1989; Guneratne 2002; Hensel 1996; Kroskrity 1993). Chapters 4 and 5 position the Eastern Anti-Atlas mountain region of Ida ou Zeddout and surrounding *tiqbilin* ("tribes," sing. taqbilt) as the Ashelhi "homeland." Chapters 6 and 7 explore the Sous Valley plains region of Arazan of the Arghen tribe and the Guettiaoua lands and surroundings as a "periphery" (see Figure 1.2). Chapter 5, on the mountains, argues that the talk and song allow for different expressions of the collective experiences of home and away, and that these are gendered due to the sharply gendered pattern of emigration. In Chapter 7 on discourse in the plains whose population is not heavily marked by emigration, I instead focus on the patterning of languages (Tashelhit and Arabic), across the modalities of speech and song and through a multi-sited engagement party.

Here, too, language mediates political economy, and the central issue that gets negotiated in the plains is code choice (rather than gender) in discursive constructions of place and community.

Part V opens with Chapter 8 that examines reverberations of the political economy of Tashelhit language in the sometimes masterful, *bricoleur* discourse of Tashelhit radio. Radio discourse reflected a moment of Moroccan history in which political repression was fresh on the minds of Amazigh language professionals, yet an international receptiveness to indigenous demands and an impulse to self-expression encouraged broadcasting in the "dialects." The chapter analyses the form and substance of an increasingly objectified and standardized Tashelhit language in media collected in the years directly following the introduction of television news in the Tamazight varieties in 1994. Part V closes with a conclusion, Chapter 9.

The ethnographic material here is peppered with material from Protectorate archival documents with no attempt to cover a systematic chronology across the last century. I have written elsewhere on shifts away from tribal names (for places and people) and towards post-Independence administrative and market centers and loci of allegiance, discussing more extensively the period mostly glossed over here, between the mid-1950s and the mid-1990s (Hoffman 2000b). A fuller elaboration of French native policy (*politique indigène*) in the Sous and its implications will have to await a future manuscript (cf. Hoffman under review), although some of the seeds are here. Moroccan administrators after Independence continued the projects oriented towards the metropole (Wright 1991), ultimately, allegedly to dissimilar ends – although control and appropriation of the rural areas and local powerful rulers arguably continued in new forms after 1956. This is not a cynical suggestion that a conspiracy linked the nationalist elites to their former French "protectors," but rather a nod to the abiding practicality of Moroccans who, in many respects, are more likely to use the colonizers' tools for their own ends than reject them on principle. The *bricoleur* spirit that spurred a young Razani man to build a *rbab* stringed musical instrument from a rusted oil can, Bic plastic razor safety guard, bicycle wire, and nails has its parallel in infrastructural planning. This was true in agricultural development after Independence, as Swearingen (1987) has painstakingly documented. For all of these reasons, the narratives in this book move between chronological periods in a sort of "dumbbell structure" (di Leonardo 1998:151), using colonial voices to illuminate late twentieth-century ethnographic concerns. I emphasize the centrality of colonial constructions of space and community, albeit resolutely *not* to fetishize colonial fantasies of Berbers and their cultural practices as seemingly distinct from those of Arabs (cf. Hammoudi 1993; Hannoum 2001).

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