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### Administering identities: state decentralisation and local identification in Morocco

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# Administering Identities: State Decentralisation and Local Identification in Morocco

KATHERINE E. HOFFMAN

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In Morocco, the contemporary emphasis on regionalisation and increased tolerance for ethnolinguistic diversity belie state attempts to dissipate pre-Independence 'tribal' allegiances among citizens for whom they hold sway. Ever-refined rural administrative boundaries and the new place names that accompany them suggest new models for group organisation – challenging indigenous understandings about the links between different locations, and about links between people and places. This article argues that Tashelhit speakers of the Souss region engage in information management by selectively revealing and concealing personal information, thus challenging state attempts to eliminate family and 'tribe' from place and personal names. Civil registries, school records, and national identity cards document the discrepancies between indigenous and state naming practices, raising difficulties for citizens who must increasingly rely on documents over oral testimony to pursue legal and administrative ends.

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Mohamed VI's visit to the Rif region shortly after his assumption to the Moroccan monarchy in 1999 was notable in that it tacitly acknowledged the abiding regionalism in the north that, at times, has superseded allegiance to the Kingdom. The last royal visit to the predominantly Berber Rif was four decades earlier, before a rebellion quelled by Mohamed V's troops. To observers inside and outside the Rif, Mohamed VI's visit signalled a new era of relations with citizens in the north and a nod to the idea that diverse regional identities can be incorporated into a unified national identity.<sup>1</sup>

For another group of Berbers, the Ishelhin (Tashelhit speakers) of the Souss Valley and Anti-Atlas mountain region of the Moroccan Southwest, overt political dissent is rare despite strong regional allegiances. Rural Ishelhin, whether harvesting their lands or working in their shops in the northern cities, largely leave national politics aside. As one young emigrant to Casablanca from the Igherm area told me during his annual return to his village, 'Let the Fassis have their politics – we'll stick to our commerce'.

The *makhzen* (central government) is present, nevertheless, in the Souss, and it permeates one of the most intimate domains of political and social

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life: the naming and tracking of people and places. New administrative lines, state priorities and place names implicitly propose new models for group organisation – challenging longstanding understandings about the links between different places, and about inherent relationships between people and those places. In particular, state policies that have de-emphasised *taqbilt* (Arabic *qabila*, 'tribe') affiliations since Independence, central to local naming practices in the Souss, have become more systematised. Yet no matter how official state guidelines attempt to reclassify individuals and groups away from local regional affiliations towards revised administrative boundaries, 'people categorize back'.<sup>2</sup> The *makhzen* may have a clear agenda, but it is not entirely in control.

### **In the Shadow of the State: Rural Administrative Boundaries Meet Pre-Independence Divisions**

A Moroccan's identity, as recorded on official papers and in popular memory, at times follows recent state administrative divisions and at other times follows longstanding social organisational topographies. In the Souss and Anti-Atlas, we are speaking particularly about categories of patrilineage and of *taqbilt* (Arabic *qabila*; French *tribu*). Take the example of Lahsen, an Anti-Atlas father born in 1954 who until recently operated a village store from which he supplied resident women and girls with tea, sugar, gum, cooking gas and warm sodas. Before opening the store, Lahsen worked for a French mining company, then for a Moroccan contractor responsible for road construction throughout the south. One late afternoon, we stood on either side of his store window and chatted as children clustered around begging us for the bright red and blue gum balls they knew Lahsen kept in a cardboard box inside. Lahsen brought out three laminated cards from a hand-sized white plastic pharmacy bag to show me: his current national identity card, his expired national identity card and the identity card for the mining company. His address was noted differently on each card, marked in both Arabic (*anwan*) and French (*adresse*). The expired national identity card had a hand-written address of his tribal and village identification: 'Ida ou Zeddut, Douar [x]'. His current type-printed national card listed his address by village and *cercle* (French 'commune'): 'Douar [x], Igherm', omitting the tribal name altogether in favour of the commune of Igherm, an administrative unit one notch down from province. Lahsen's mining card simply listed his name with 'Ida ou Zeddout' as his address.

Lahsen's different addresses on these cards were due in part to shifts in administrative jurisdiction over the last few decades. Igherm's importance under the French Protectorate, when its high elevation made it an ideal administrative and military post in 1928, was overshadowed by other market

towns until the late 1980s, after the province of Taroudant was carved from the former Agadir province, leading to an expansion of infrastructure in rural areas. A modest hospital and junior high school attracted larger numbers of residents from the surrounding countryside to Igherm, an alternative to the overcrowded and geographically more distant market hub of Taroudant.

Yet the change on Lahsen's national identity card also reflected a subtle shift in *makhzen* control over the heterogeneous populations of regions such as the Souss. Such regions experienced intertribal fighting up to the 1930s, where pockets stood among the latest holdouts of resistance to French colonial rule. Subsequent French policies encouraged the codification of otherwise more fluid tribal boundaries and leadership personalities to counter the budding nationalist movement. After Independence, the nationalists charged with designing administrative policies formally abolished the tribal designation in administrative matters, which reflected their hostility to the French use of rural tribal notables against nationalist efforts.<sup>3</sup> Today, national identity cards and civil registry booklets (*hala madania*) rarely mark place of birth or residence with a *taqbilt* name, as they did as recently as the 1980s, decades after the 1951 *jmaa'* dahir under the Protectorate that effectively 'detribalised' the administrative boundaries and their populations in official parlance.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in administrative paperwork and in public representations of the Moroccan citizenry, there are no more 'tribes' in Morocco. Instead, there are administrative regions and individual citizens attached to places through the *nisba* names operating in both Arabic and Tashelhit to designate the Fassi, the Soussi, the Arubi.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of 'tribe' has long been a heavily disputed one not only among scholars of North Africa and the Middle East but also among Moroccan laypersons and politicians.<sup>6</sup> The debate might be resolved by recognising the significant regional variability in the understanding and use of the concept. In the rural Souss, the *taqbilt* remains an important taxonomic category.<sup>7</sup> The ways in which the Ishelhin in the Souss use the term conflate the concept of 'tribe' as a geographical territory and that of 'tribe' as a group of people, a "native" ethno-political ideology'.<sup>8</sup>

Because 'tribe' is a common label of identification in the rural Souss, Lahsen's residence was noted as Ida ou Zeddout on not only his mining card but also his first national identity card. For contemporary government administrative purposes, as witnessed on Lahsen's present card, the *taqbilt* distinction explicitly lacks official recognition as a social or geographic marker.

The shift towards the commune designation on identity cards is more recent than might be expected – Lahsen's expired national identity card marking his tribal affiliation was made within the last 15 years – but the contours of the shift towards new administrative units has been

idiosyncratic, varying according to local officials' interpretations of state policies. In contrast to the current national identity card, Lahsen's mining card reflected more closely the social identity that its holder would offer in situations in which he found himself working manual labour alongside other men from the south: he is a *gu Ida ou Zeddout*, an Ida ou Zeddout 'brother', as a man from Fes might call himself *wld Fes*.

It is not only in self-identification that *taqbilt* affiliation remains salient; it also remains relevant for practical purposes such as the operation of a boarding school.<sup>9</sup> Boarding at the middle and high school in Igherm is difficult for students: the dorms are overcrowded, winters are cold and wet, and there is no hot water. Classroom competition is fierce and physical punishment is frequent. Like the rocky dry mountains surrounding this Wild West-feeling town, the students are tough and accustomed to hardship. Few finish their baccalaureate; most eventually leave to work in trade in the northern cities, like their fathers. The alliances between youths that emerge from such rough circumstances potentially challenge administrators' attempts to erase tribal ideology from the school environment and instead treat students simply as Moroccan citizens in training. In the classroom, friends from the same village sit together; a boy with no village-mates rarely stays in school long. For meals, administrators intentionally separate boys from the same tribe or village. One administrator explained, 'If there's a bad banana at a table, or it looks like the table didn't get enough meat, if the boys are grouped by tribe or village they're more likely to get upset about it and cause trouble. This way we prevent trouble'. Boarding applicants outnumber spaces, so acceptance is distributed among the regional tribes and even by tribal section (*fariqa*). A potential student's birth certificate (*aqd az-ziyad*) notes his village of birth and his tribe. This information may also be noted on the father's civil registry – but it may also have to be obtained through word-of-mouth. The father's national identity card is more likely to be marked with the commune names of Oulqadi (for the Ida ou Zeddout), Adar (for the Ida ou Nadif) or Igherm (for the Ida ou Zekri and Ida ou Knsus). But local alliances and animosities break down across *taqbilt* and *fariqa* lines and, for this reason, the latter taxonomic categories remain important to school officials regardless of official policies.

For both of these purposes – the smooth operation of a high school boarding facility and the management of a construction project – the affiliations marked on national identity cards or on official maps are not the operative taxonomic units. While *taqbilt* affiliation remains salient in some employment and educational contexts, an enforced shift in the recording tasks for the civil registry suggests a state attempt to de-emphasise traditional lines of allegiance and belonging. In the 1970s and 1980s, the pertinent personal information for the male head of household included the

following four pieces of information: 1) *douar* (French *village*); 2) *fariqa* (French *section tribal*); 3) *qbila* (French *tribu*); and 4) *da'ira* (French *cercle*). With the reshuffling of the 'administrative divisions' (*al aqşam al idariya*) in the late 1990s, the information requested by local bureaucrats included: 1) *douar* (French *village*); 2) *jmaa'* (French *commune*); 3) *qiyada* (French *annexe*); and 4) *da'ira* (French *cercle*). The *qbila* ('tribe') and *fariqa* ('tribal section') distinctions have dropped out entirely.

How did this shift take place? And what is its significance for state-society relations under the new monarch and the *makhzen* in the twenty-first century?

### From Taqbilt to Commune and Annexe

In the post-Independence period, state administrative policies have increasingly partitioned rural lands into smaller areas of oversight and control. Rural communes (*jmaa'*-s) are the most immediate level of government administration, and serve to record births and deaths in civil registries, to record selected surnames to those heads of household without them, to orchestrate the local implementation of state campaigns such as the agricultural census each decade and to organise occasional meetings for commune citizens. The *jmaa'* as it exists today scarcely plays the variable governing role it played in pre-Protectorate days in rural Morocco.<sup>10</sup> The French Protectorate administration maintained the *jmaa'* as a local governing structure but changed the composition of its members and its jurisdiction.<sup>11</sup> It was not until the post-Independence period that the council was no longer headed by an *amghar* agreed upon in annual elections.<sup>12</sup> Today, the *jmaa'* has become largely a local organ of the *makhzen* expected to implement state policy and stimulate local revenue. Since the national identity card registration drive in the late 1990s facilitated the application process, the *jmaa'* also administers identity cards that previously required a trip to the more distant *qiyada* office. But while the *jmaa'* is the closest administrative unit to rural villages in the Anti-Atlas, the boundaries of its jurisdiction follow a state-ordained logic slightly askew from local geographic and demographic boundaries, in particular that of the *taqbilt*.

When a *jmaa'* is formed, an immediate task is generating revenue, which can be jumpstarted by, for example, establishing a local *suq*. Reconfigurations of market connections mean that those merchants and rural customers who rely on the services and products available at market shift their social networks as well, further discouraging the auto-determination of communities who previously organised social and economic life according to local needs. The links of communication and flows of people between places in the region have shifted with the paving of roads, the spread of state

administration into rural areas and the civil servants who staff the posts, and with changing economic and educational opportunities. New market centres typically become new state administrative centres, for they become the places where people regularly gather. With attention focused on market-administrative centres, people become increasingly oriented towards these places linked through improved infrastructure.

This shift in orientation is reflected in place naming practices, as the communal administrative unit of Adar demonstrates. Adar is located 15 km north of Igherm on the newly paved road to Teliouine, in Ida ou Nadif territory. Prior to completion of the road, Adar was neither a local administrative centre nor a market town, but rather one hamlet among others. With the coming of the road, the roadside village was named an *annexe* and a police point established. Cement-walled market grounds were quickly established, and soon Adar became a new locus of weekly contact between men in the region, similar to Oulqadi in Ida ou Zeddout territory. When rural people describe where they or others are from, it is increasingly the case that they say they are from Oulqadi or Adar, using the names of the Igherm-area *jmaa'* seats, whereas they used to self-identify according to tribal section names or the more encompassing tribal names of Ida ou Zeddout or Ida ou Nadif.

Yet the *tagbilt* appellations still hold in personal appellations such as 'Tawzzeddut' ('woman from Ida ou Zeddout'), 'Tazddawit' ('woman from Ida ou Nadif') or 'Tanihit' ('woman from the Ida ou Zeddout section of Ait Nihit'). The name Tanihit, for instance, does not follow the woman back to her home village, where she will continue to be known by her personal and father's name. If a second woman from Nihit marries into the same village, women may refer to the second one as Tanihit as well, but only in restricted circumstances lest she be confused with the first Tanihit, which would prompt the question, 'Which Tanihit?'. In such a case, village women may add a qualifier, perhaps the husband's honorific, and call the woman for example Tanihit Lhaj or, alternatively, they may use her first name-u-father's name. Where a person literally is standing, and with whom she is speaking, influences the name by which she is called. An individual's name marks a point in time, a place on the landscape. These points and places fluctuate throughout the life cycle and according to shifts in the surrounding social network. Yet despite such informal practices, in official records, the *tagbilt* names are replaced with the names of the *jmaa'* and *cercle* that represent the state in governing the local population.

With such discrepancies between official and informal naming practices for people and places, which system prevails in the Soussi popular imagination? The question is tricky to explore, because administrative repartitioning is an ongoing process. The periodic reconfigurations of administrative jurisdiction under which groups of rural residents fall weaken

*taqbilt*-based allegiances that some pro-democracy advocates find threaten the modernisation of the political process. Moreover, because administrative boundaries have been redrawn multiple times, the shifting units by which statistics are collected and recorded make it difficult to track demographic changes in specific places with much precision. An example is the town of Teliouine, east of Taroudant on the road to Ouarzazate. Teliouine has come under the jurisdiction of Agadir Province to its west, then Ouarzazate Province to its east, and finally Taroudant Province, all within the course of a few decades.

### Shifting Demographic Categories and Contemporary Sociopolitical Concerns

By the end of the 1990s, concurrent with the increasing penetration of the Moroccan state into rural lands, there was resistance on the part of state officials to acknowledge the existence of the *qbila*, similar to officials' reluctance to identify particular citizens or communities as 'Arab' or 'Amazigh'/'Ashelhi'/'Berber', despite the abiding centrality of these taxonomic categories for many Moroccans such as those from the Souss. In 1998, the Cartography Division in Rabat denied the request of this academic researcher to buy the once-official Carte des Tribus, which as recently as the previous year had been available for purchase from the same office that sells national and regional topographical, geological and demographic maps. An employee explained that the map contained 'errors' and had been discontinued. Perhaps the errors concerned the sensitive issue of the official demographic borders of tribes eligible to vote in the stalled Western Sahara referendum for integration into Morocco or independence. Or perhaps the errors more simply reflected the state's attempts to move away from *les tribus* as geographic or social organisational categories. To place a map of tribal boundaries and another of administrative boundaries side by side, it is clear that the boundaries of the *qbila* and the *fariqa* rarely coincide with those of the *jmaa'*, *qiyada* and *da'ira*.

### An Identity Card for Every Citizen

I want to move now to the matter of individual naming practices in the Souss in order to examine the increasing involvement of the state in tracking individual identities. The following excerpt from my 1997 field notes tells how one family acquired a surname.

Bags in hand, I was locking the front door to my house in Taroudant and reached over to knock on my neighbors' door to say goodbye,



promising to send them a postcard from New York where I planned to stay for a month or so. 'You have the address here, right?' Fatima Mohammed asked me. 'Yes,' I said, and repeated it back to her. It was a reasonable question; mail arrived at their house only a few times a year, and usually got rerouted, for the neighborhood name locals used for the address ('the big mosque, Bab Zorgan') differed from the official street name ('Avenue Mansour Eddahbi'), which no one used outside the state administration. I realized, though, that I did not have her last name; people called her by the common formula personal name + father's name. 'What name should I put?' I asked. She said, 'Just write 'El Maleh' on the envelope.' I had never heard them use the name, so I asked, 'El Maleh? As in Arabic for 'salty'?' She laughed and said, 'We never went by that name. Hmed, God rest his soul, when he went to enrol our son in school [in the late 1970s], he went to the town hall. They asked him his name and he told them what everyone knew them by, 'Nga'. The man working there told Hmed, 'Too many people have that name. You have to have another'. He showed Hmed a list of names and Hmed said if he couldn't have his family name, he didn't care what they put. They wrote down El Maleh. Now all the guys in the neighborhood know the boys as 'El Maleh', but we don't use it. My father goes by Bu Sfenj ['the donut maker']. That's just what everyone called him, 'Bu Sfenj are you delivering your clay dishes to Mnebha on market day, Bu Sfenj's daughter lives in Taroudant'. That's how they know us back in [her native village of] Arazan. When Musa [her younger brother] applied for a passport to go work in Tunisia, they asked him his name and he didn't want to say Bu Sfenj so he said 'Laroui'. They put that on his passport and off he went. But now, when you send your postcard from your mother's house, write 'El Maleh' on it because that's what they know us by now'.

In the Souss, as in other parts of Morocco where surnames have a short history, stories like Fatima Mohammed's are commonplace. Most urban dwellers registered for a family name in the 1970s, around the time that her deceased husband Hmed registered their son for school; rural-dwelling men followed over the next decade. Fatima herself only registered for her national identity card in winter 1999, however, although she has lived in Taroudant since her wedding over 20 years earlier. Despite her urban residence, Fatima and other women in Taroudant, as well as small towns around the Souss, continue the naming practices of earlier generations. Although some urban dwellers are more densely wired into state tracking apparatus, many of them, despite being well known around town, have managed to keep out of the books and statistics all together.

State administrative systems give individuals a single family name and personal name, and their changing classificatory systems for rural places have shifted according to the reconfigurations in administrative territories over the last half-century. Rural Swasa, for their part, locate individuals within networks of patriarchs and homelands. Anthropologists have noted the ways in which the Arabic *nisba* is appropriated for naming people (so that a person from Sefrou would be called a Sefrawi(a).<sup>13</sup> My interest here is in the concurrent but contrasting naming systems among Ishelhin in which parentage is repeatedly recalled in people's personal names.

While naming practices differ at times and overlap at others, equally important are the circumstances and means of conveying biographical information and concealing it. Anti-Atlas mountains residents consider biographical details and social identities privileged insider information. Secrecy is a recurring theme through Ida ou Zeddout cultural and discursive conventions. It echoes through the precarious histories of fragile, largely unaligned mountain hamlets in which both emigrant men and resident women fiercely guard their right to determine the means and extent of their participation in state institutional structures. The inherent variability of naming throws into question the concept of single essential identities that individuals possess from birth to death. The high value placed on possessing this information stands in mountain communities as an alternative system of knowledge that operates in the realm of orality. What one knows is implicated in who one is and who others are and, as knowledge (including biographical knowledge) constantly circulates, power shifts. Such revealing and concealing practices correlate with a broader social practice of managing information, and the understandings that are drawn of what people do and say based on who people are in a lineage. In some instances, over time, official divisions of peoples and places enter into the popular imagination. Whether they do or whether indigenous means of naming and labelling people and places on the landscape follow older systems that pre-date the post-Independence Moroccan state is as much a struggle over the power to assert local allegiances as it is a terminological question.

A moped's whir broke through the chilly winter air in an Ida ou Zeddout village. As women and children came out of their houses to check out the rare visitor, a man in his early 30s stood on a threshing platform with one foot planted on a knee-high pile of rocks. He yelled into a megaphone in Tashelhit, 'Come get your picture taken! The photographer is here to take your picture for your identity card'. He handed the megaphone to the local representative of the central government, the *moqaddem*, in front of whose house the photographer had stopped. 'All citizens over the age of 18 must register for *la carte*.

Come get your papers in order. Photos will be taken inside the house of Ait Lhussein', he said, referring to one of the *moqaddem*'s relatives who has a large cinder block house with a spacious central courtyard, ideal for lining up and photographing the resident village women whose husbands were off working in Casablanca. (Field notes 2/97)

National identity cards have long been required in Morocco for adults applying for employment, requesting official documents or picking up mail or money orders from the post office. Whole segments of the Moroccan population have never crossed such bureaucracies, however. Teams of commune-level bureaucrats aimed to change that on the national registration campaign in 1996–97, sweeping into the most remote mountain villages to complete the necessary paperwork and take photographs of women who had never recorded their age, village of birth or residence, or image. In Anti-Atlas communities, where naming of people and places is highly local and surnames have only been created for administrative purposes over the past few decades, this mandatory registry of the Moroccan population marked a turning point in the state codification of relative naming practices. Village women who hitherto placed a high value on obscuring names and village affiliation, just as some intentionally misrepresented their land holdings to agricultural census takers earlier in that year, now faced a situation where any stranger could verify their identities. Registering for the identity card represented for some women proof of their willingness to join with national norms determined by urban bureaucracies. For other women, declining the photographer's offer constituted an act of resistance to the state. Registering rural women's presence with state authorities challenged indigenous management strategies of revealing and concealing, and forced local people to fix identities on a piece of laminated pink paper, identities that otherwise are contextually articulated.

The national identity card is an individual-level extension of the registration of individual citizens in state dockets. The process of registering births and deaths in Morocco started under the French Protectorate, which governed the country until 1956. In 1950, the French instituted the *hala madania*, the palm-sized paperback civil registry booklet issued to all heads of family 'soumis au regime civil'. While indeed the French did not 'pacify' parts of the Anti-Atlas mountains until the 1930s, certainly by 1950 the branches of colonial rule were pervasive. According to one communal employee in the Igherm region with whom I spoke, the *hala madania* was instituted because the French wanted to send Moroccans to France to work, back when Moroccans had no identity papers. The first Moroccans to register for a family name (*al-ism al-a'ili*), then, tended to be men leaving to work in France. Most registration did not take place until the 1970s,

however, when state education boomed and registration became mandatory for children to enrol. For this reason, many family registries only noted sons until the 1980s, when rural families began sending their girls to newly built rural primary schools. Until recently, many fathers registered unschooled girls only as they prepared their weddings.

The family names selected for inclusion in the *hala madania* and on *la carte* are often inconsistent with the names people use in verbal interactions, as Fatima Mohammed's case above illustrates. The inconsistency of family names in official records has significant repercussions in people's lives as they increasingly rely on written administrative documents to prove their identity and land ownership. These documents have largely replaced oral testimony in court. For example, one Ida ou Zeddout woman told me her father's sister was registered under their lineage name, Ait Ali. The father's family name was registered under a nickname local people used for him meaning 'the bearded one'. As a result, this woman's aunt had trouble proving she was her brother's sister when their father died and she wanted to claim her inheritance. The woman brought witnesses to build her legal case. Official documents, however, suggested that the woman belonged to a different lineage. Her brother was resistant to give up the considerable portion of the land he was poised to inherit if she lost her case. She eventually resigned herself to letting her brother assume ownership of the land. Islamic inheritance, on which Moroccan inheritance law is based, stipulates that daughters receive one-half of the inheritance that goes to brothers. In practice, however, few Soussi women assume ownership of land, unlike women in some other parts of Morocco. As one woman told me, generally daughters get a portion of the land 'if they want it'. To 'want it', however, may require them to break ties with unwilling brothers. As a result, women tend to cede land to their brothers.

The *hala madania* booklets open with biographical information about the male booklet holder, his first and last names, and his place and date of birth. The subsequent pages are empty for recording the names of his offspring, as well as the name of each child's mother. Females' births and deaths are recorded in their fathers' booklets, not that of their husbands. Errors, by which I mean misrecordings of information, are rampant in these civil registry booklets. One thinks of the oral histories of Chinese migrants to the USA passing through port authorities and having their first name recorded as their last, and last as first, because of the Chinese practice of uttering one's surname first. In Morocco, these errors can only with difficulty be rectified afterwards, as what gets written down becomes official, permanent, the endpoint of an otherwise constantly negotiated and context-contingent process.

In rural areas, the *hala madania* documents provide a window to changes in naming practices for both people and places over the last half-

century. Those without a surname in the 1970s could insert 'selected surname' at a later point. As I noted above, naming practices in rural Morocco, as in much of the Middle East and other parts of the world, consisted historically and continue to consist in informal conversation of a first name 'of' father's name, for example, Fatima u Musa. Fatima's father Musa may have been known as Musa u Moh ('Moha' or 'Moh' being the Tashelhit and Tamazight version of Mohammed). In the contemporary state, some of these appellations have been made into surnames and passed down to progeny in the French spelling *ou* so that the name 'Oumusa' (u + Musa) becomes one word instead of two, a surname rather than a reference to a living, single father, a nod to an ancestral patriarch disembodied with time.

In the Ida ou Zeddout region today, residents continue to call each other and themselves by the naming formula of personal name-u-father's name. Collectively, local residents may refer to the offspring of a patriarch as 'Ait Musa', literally 'the people of Musa'. Only in restricted cases of identification will Musa's wife be classified as part of the Ait Musa, although her home may be. Instead, she is for example Kiltum 'Ali, a conventional shortening of 'Kiltum u 'Ali' gliding together the two juxtaposed vowels. An alternative configuration prevalent among women marrying into a village in Ida ou Zeddout is the formula t + father's personal name + t, as in 'Tabenalit', or 'daughter of Ben Ali', himself literally the 'son of Ali'. In this way, a woman's placement in a lineage through her father's name is retained and the patriarch recalled even in his absence.

The arrival of the national identity card in the Anti-Atlas posed a dilemma for women, then, both in terms of which so-called 'family name' to register and, more symbolically, in terms of what being recorded signified to mountain dwellers. I turn my focus now to the ways that identity registration fits into a broader social practice of revealing and withholding information.

Registering for the identity card announces that the cardholder is linking him or herself into the wider state network in which his or her identity will be known and fixed. Many women resist. One woman of around 45 years old told me, 'What do I need a card for? I'm not going anywhere. If I go on the pilgrimage to Mecca, I'll get a card made'. Several old women told me they had never had their picture taken, and did not want to have it taken now. One mother of six in her thirties told me that her husband said he did not want the men in the photo laboratory looking at her picture, and he forbade her to register. It was to quell such fears that a local man had been selected as photographer for the village, and introduced by the local big man. For scores of other women, however, the identity card was an urban concoction, irrelevant to their lives. They were befuddled as to why the state wanted to quantify and qualify female bodies, those who kept the

countryside populated, but who women considered irrelevant to the urban administrative concerns that motivated the registration campaign.

It is worth passing note that national identity card registration and registration in the civil regime booklets are mandatory under Moroccan law. A person found without an identity card may be hassled or fined by the police, as can a man found not registering a birth or death in his household. Still, there are deeply rooted local logics that govern the ways rural people have understood and responded to this national imperative. Aside from a general suspicion of outsiders, *Ida ou Zeddout* people fit national policies such as mandatory registration into their own ways of labelling and placing people. They make sense of *la carte* in terms of the identity-monitoring and concealing strategies they use to maintain their grasp of the human landscape in an arid mountain region increasingly brought into the fold of an expanding state bureaucracy.

Rural development and the spread of state administration into the far reaches of the Moroccan countryside affect the lives of rural Moroccans in ways that reach beyond the scope of my analysis here. The state has an interest in accounting for all of its subjects through the process of registering them – whether in the *hala madania*, on national identity cards, in agricultural surveys or for parliamentary elections. The process of registering bodies over 18 years of age for the national identity card turns the *Ida ou Zeddout*, *Roudanis*, *Ishelhin*, ‘children of Moha’ and ‘Lahs’ people’ into Moroccan citizens, subjects of the state with the rights and responsibilities that status affords. I have suggested in this article that claiming individual rights – such as inheritance and property rights – requires that rural dwellers play by rules established by the state. One crucial difficulty with claiming such rights is that contemporary recourse to legal and state systems relies on paperwork that is itself inconsistent and arbitrary. These inconsistencies encapsulate the jagged shift in official naming practices, highlighting the discrepancy between state policies and indigenous practices for naming people and places. State naming policies since the 1970s encourage individuals to break from long-standing links to particular locations. Bureaucracies record individuals with a single surname and personal name. Surnames often have been indiscriminately selected by local officials, and certain Berber surnames continue to be rejected altogether; or, alternatively, surnames codify a nickname reflecting a personal characteristic of the man who first formally registered with the state. In state administrative records, as well, place names are increasingly stripped of their tribal and ‘faction’ identities. Both processes – renaming people and renaming places – contribute to the dissociation of individuals from social ties grounded in geographical locations and tribal histories. The system seems designed to encourage people to conceive of themselves and others as individual Moroccan citizens with a sole allegiance to the state.

## Conclusion: Citizens Above All

Why does it matter whether rural people and the state officials governing them use one name or the other for particular places and individuals? The ways in which the state conceptually and administratively organises rural Morocco have important implications for where children study, where men go to market, to whom one complains when a neighbour picks one's almonds, who is eligible for health care and what boundaries demarcate electoral districts. The 1996 administrative redistribution of provinces into 16 *régions* followed two decades of shuffling the borders of electoral and economic jurisdiction. Administrative boundaries are significant as well because people must increasingly rely on delegations and courts to promote their interests, matters that used to be handled more comprehensively through groups of elders familiar with local residents and their lands. Paper declarations now hold more water in legal matters than oral declarations and handwritten land deeds penned on flat wooden sticks passed down through the generations.<sup>14</sup> Indigenous naming practices continue to resonate in the popular imagination, offering familiarity and continuity in changing times.

For any state, documentation is an efficient technique for fixing and objectifying people and, in the process, rendering them visible as objects of knowledge and control.<sup>15</sup> The Moroccan national identity card registration drive demonstrated this understanding in the last few years of the twentieth century. Registration efforts met with partial success for reasons that engaged a broader tension in contemporary Morocco over the role of the government in rural communities. The tension is sure to increase in coming years as villages and communes jockey for state resources for health clinics and schools, the kinds of services the new 'king of the poor', as he has frequently been called, seems intent on expanding. As the state expands, not only through social services but also through the restructuring of markets, transportation infrastructure and the agricultural sector, more personal information is demanded of private citizens.

Decentralisation was designed to spark the development of infrastructure and the expansion of social services in 'a new stage of deepening local democracy' at a level closer to citizens' homes – but also to dissolve further the pre-Independence tribal and tribal section allegiances in places where these sentiments still hold sway.<sup>16</sup> Within these regions themselves, however, administrative boundaries have been reshuffled into local administrative units corresponding to state objectives rather than the geographic contours of individuals' identities.

It is against state interests to promote individuals' allegiance to the *taqbilt*, for such interests historically clashed with those of the state and monarchical legitimacy. It is, perhaps paradoxically, in the interest of the

state to promote regional loyalty through decentralisation, for it encourages citizens' participation in rural development projects as a way of participating in an emerging civil society and democratisation more generally. Grassroots development projects are easiest to promote among rural communities when the benefits are visible to the eye. State rhetoric emphasises regional particularities as local colour, even as 'folklore', as it is often called in public representations, but denies the practical and symbolic meanings of linguistic, ethnic and class differences among Moroccans.

Without recognising such distinctions, through regionalisation, state policies emphasise association with particular towns and places outside of collective memory and competing socio-political affiliations. The creation of new communes, annexes, *cercles*, provinces and now 'regions' encourages individuals to imagine themselves as independent citizens served by the independent representatives they elect, outside the purview of more longstanding sources of collective identity. By designing the boundaries of the new 'regions' like that of provinces, by mixing plains, mountains and commercial hubs, trade rather than production is encouraged, assuring markets for agricultural production within the regions and a distribution of natural resources to stimulate growth.<sup>17</sup>

Nonetheless, the state ignores regional allegiances, whether to a *qbila* or to a group of other compatriots who share a cultural, linguistic or political history, at its own peril. In this moment of political opening, King Mohammed VI seems poised to acknowledge the richness of the country's diversity. As the state expands into further corners of the rural world, it should ensure that it upholds the local 'webs of significance'<sup>18</sup> in which Ishelhin and many other Moroccans consider themselves suspended.

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#### NOTES

1. See 'Morocco's Brave New King', *The Economist* (30 Oct. 1999) pp.47–8. The influence of tribal allegiances in local and parliamentary elections in the 1990s was noted by Abdellatif El Azizi, 'Au nom de la tribu', *Maroc-Hebdo International* 275 (24–31 May 1997).
2. Lisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press 1995) p.8.



3. Dale Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*. 3rd edn. (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall 1998) p.126. For a more detailed discussion of the political manoeuvrings leading to the establishment of rural communes, see David M. Hart, 'Tribalism: The Backbone of the Moroccan Nation' in idem., *Tribe and Society in Rural Morocco* (London: Frank Cass 1999), pp.17–19.
4. See Rémy Leveau, *Le Fellah Marocain: Défenseur du Trône* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques 1985) pp.18–37.
5. On the nisba construction in Moroccan Arabic, see Lawrence Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press 1984) and Clifford Geertz, 'Suq: The Bazaar Economy in Sefrou' in Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz and Lawrence Rosen (eds.), *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1979) pp.128–313. A representative image of the 'Arab, Fassi Chleuh (Vous Avez Dit Régionalisme)' was featured on the cover of the Moroccan magazine *L'Evenement* 13 (January 1996).
6. For two excellent overviews of 'tribe' and how it functions in Middle Eastern societies, see Richard Tapper, 'Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East' in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press 1973) pp.48–73; and Eickelman (note 3) pp.123–46.
7. A fuller treatment of the concept of *taqbilt* in the contemporary Souss the topic of an article in preparation, also discussed in Katherine E. Hoffman, 'The Place of Language: Talk, Song, and Land in Southwestern Morocco', unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University 2000) pp.175–83. On 'tribe' in Soussi commerce in Casablanca, see John Waterbury, *North for the Trade: The Life and Times of a Berber Merchant* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press 1974).
8. Eickelman (note 3) p.134.
9. Religious schools in Morocco (*madrasa*-s) during the Protectorate period were *de facto* divided by regions. Even today, at the prestigious Qarawiyyin University, el-Seffarine houses small-town students from the Fes region, whereas Bab el-Guisa houses mainly Soussi students (Geoffrey Porter, personal communication, August 2000).
10. See John P. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912–1944* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 1967).
11. See, for example, the 'tribal reports' conducted by French colonial officers for each tribal area, such as Cap. Clement, *Etude sur la Tribu des Ida ou Zeddout, Cercle de Taroudannt, Annexe d'Irherm* (unpublished report, Bureau des Affaires Indigènes 1949).
12. See Robin Bidwell, *Morocco under Colonial Rule: French Administration of Tribal Areas 1912–1956* (London: Frank Cass 1973) p.52.
13. See citations in note 5.
14. David M. Hart, *Tribe and Society in Rural Morocco* (London: Frank Cass 2000) pp.213–15.
15. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books 1979); and Joan Wallach Scott, 'A Statistical Representation of Work: La Statistique de l'industrie à Paris, 1847–1848' in Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press 1988) pp.113–38.
16. The phrase 'une nouvelle étape d'approfondissement de la démocratie locale' is from Seddik Mouaffak, 'Un territoire à inventer: les communes, instruments de développement économique', *Maroc-Hebdo International* 275 (24–31 May 1997). The Moroccan weekly press details regional development and political projects, especially *Maroc-Hebdo International* (<http://www.maroc-hebdo.press.ma>) and the recently founded, sometimes scathing *Le Journal*. On regionalisation and elections, see Hachimi Idrissi, 'Le Maroc s'éclate', *Maroc-Hebdo International* 245 (26 Oct.–1 Nov. 1996) p.14. On regionalisation and development, see Abdellah Chankou, 'Une province-pilote', *Maroc-Hebdo International* 245 (26 Oct.–1 Nov. 1996) p.14. On tribal allegiances and elections, see Nouredine Jouhari, 'La démocratie tribale', *Maroc-Hebdo International* 245 (26 Oct.–1 Nov. 1996) p.20, and Abdellatif El Azizi (note 1). The decentralisation of administration signals for some a willingness to decentralise cultural programmes and even ideologies, as reflected in such editorials as 'De la décentralisation de la culture', *Libération* (21 Feb. 1997) p.6.
17. Gregory White contends that the state views a federal system as more appealing to foreign investment. See 'The Advent of Electoral Democracy in Morocco? The Referendum of 1996', *Middle East Journal* 51/3 (Summer 1997) p.394.
18. Clifford Geertz, "'From the Native's Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding' in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books 1983) pp.55–70.