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A century of hands : work, communities, and identities among the Ayt Khebbash fossil artisans in a Moroccan Oasis

Tanabe, M.

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Author: Tanabe, Mayuka
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Chapter 5 – Exploring *Reḥla*

> 'The *tawargit* [dreams], there are those which are real. The Prophet said 'you know and you believe that you dream [*innaka taʕlamu wa taḥsabu taḥlum*].[52]' That is to say, you believe that it is a dream but it's "knowledge" [*taʕlīm*], a reality. There are dreams that are real, with time they become a reality.'
> <Daoud, 9 February 2012, Rissani>

5.1 Introduction: The Communities of Power Relations

In this chapter, I shall analyse the ways in which the Ayt Khebbash artisans develop the notions of communities, local values and beliefs in their relations with the outside world. Evidently, they formulate their identifications through participation and non-participation in the communities of practice, which are embedded in wider power relations. For instance, the artisans foster a sense of belonging to their tribal origin through participation in the protest and petition movements for their land ownership in Kudyet Draoua, and this identity includes an internal complexity under multiple political and social pressures. But the Ayt Khebbash artisans' identities are not only internally constructed within the communities, but are also a product of their relations to which they develop with the wider world through labour migration to other parts of Morocco and through commercial exchange in the national and international market.

The identification of acting agents is a process developed through experiences of contradiction, confrontation and resistance against others. As Laclau states, all identities are coincidentally constructed, and power relations are inevitably engraved in the entire process (1990; 2000). These coincidental identities are endangered identities, so that it is only possible to construct the self by suppressing contradiction, confrontation and opposition. In all aspects of everyday practice, people construct their identities through discourse practices and the exercise of power.

In order to discuss the multiplicious identification processes of Ayt Khebbash artisans from the perspective of power relations and discourse practice, I shall first focus on their labour migration to the northern cities and how their identities are constructed in the political and social context away from home. Secondly, I will look at their return

52 He invokes a *hadith* that is not traceable to any canonical collection of texts.

to mining work after spending years working in large cities and then engaging in fossil sculpting back in Ar-Rachidia. Lastly, I will discuss the growing Amazigh activism and the discreet but recurrent political consciousness emerging among the Rissani and Tafraoute artisans, so as to highlight how they create new meanings in everyday life against the discourse power of state and global capitalism.

When asked their place of origin, the Ayt Khebbash artisans often reply '*reḥla*' (open space), followed by the nearest village where they used to live in or around. The word *reḥla* means 'journey' or 'living as a nomad in an open space', which is synonymous to the Ayt Khebbash way of life. Referring to themselves as '*irḥaln*' ('nomads' or 'people of *reḥla*') is an enduring form of identification for the Ayt Khebbash people, even after they sedentarised. For them, being *irḥaln* is primarily related to animal herding, which is a practice they symbolically preserve by keeping small numbers of animals on the rooftops of their houses or in their backyards. Furthermore, the Ayt Khebbash men strongly associate their mining and fossil work to their historical memory of being *irḥaln*, since their extraction work takes place in their own living territory where they used to reside and traverse with animals. For them, the exploration of underground minerals is another form of 'nomadism' in their familiar land, but in a different context of the capitalist economy. Their seasonal construction labour in northern Moroccan cities epitomises the process of national integration wherein the 'nomadic' movement of the Ayt Khebbash men is enlarged to a wider geographical and conceptual space. In other words, the Ayt Khebbash people respond to the encroaching marketisation by sedentarising and finding cash income in various domains, and this process involves renewed and reconstructed nomadism, both in their life cycle and in social identifications. As I shall argue in this chapter, the traditionalisation of the modern socio-economic context is an important process in which the Ayt Khebbash artisans come to make sense of and cope with the contradictions of everyday life.

5.2 On the Road to Home: Ayt Khebbash Artisans and their Life Cycle

> 'First, I was grazing animals. Then I started working in lead mines in 1957 at Tadaout, Tizi n Rsas near Taouz, and Lemrakib. There were already people working there for the French companies … In 1986, I changed to fossil [extraction] in Lemrakib, the goniatite, phacops and trilobites.'
> <Hda, 27 October 2013, Tafraoute>

The Ayt Khebbash artisans often start describing their work by their tools and objects. The way they got into the fossil domain was 'with a hammer and untreated stones'. Later on, when asked how he turned to lead mining, Hda said he followed the footsteps of his father and other people, searching for the veins with a sledgehammer and distaff in his hands. When I asked why he left the fossil work, he mentioned the decrease of demand in Europe as an important reason, and then added, 'because I had a dream that the other domains were promising'. In the case of Hda, an artisan from Tafraoute, when he turned to the fossil domain, there were already a number of people working in the same area where he previously worked in the extraction of lead. He said he quit the work in 2000, leaving the extraction and sculpting work to his two sons, while he turned to small-scale agriculture.

Just like Hda, the Ayt Khebbash people grow up in the desert, passing by the lead and fossil mountains while herding animals, and eventually discover the commercial value of minerals and fossils, which they start to extract for commercial gain. The next common life stage is labour migration, often to Nador and other cities in the north, in order to accumulate cash and to help their extended families. After that, they return to their home region to start their own business in barite mining or tourism, or simply to resume artisanal labour while getting married and establishing themselves in the context of their home-grown social networks. This cycle of travel and work is fairly common for the Ayt Khebbash men in the Ar-Rachidia Province region, and a routinely practiced pattern in their lives.

As already discussed in the previous chapters, their work-based identification consists of a complex range of experiences which defies the assumption that authentic social existence should be centred in a circumscribed space and that artisanal work is likewise a 'rooted' profession. For the domains of artisanal work in the Tafilalet have been constantly invented, remade, and traversed by international influence beyond its borders. Furthermore, work identities are never singular, but multiply constructed across different practices and discourses. They continue to relate to the Ayt Khebbash people's past lifestyle – grazing animals from one pastureland to another, moving across the mineral landscape through a historical process of displacement. As Clifford argues, identities relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself, and are rather about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of change and transformation (1997: 7-11). Furthermore, I contend that only within the sphere of knowledge and experience of everyday life this dynamic

process of 'traditionalisation' embedded in processes of globalisation could have taken place at all. Amidst the increasing economic difficulties the Ayt Khebbash people are facing, they re-invented and manipulated knowledge and practice of daily life in the name of tradition. This traditionalisation takes place in the course of displacement from one job to another, which is constitutive of the Ayt Khebbash people's new trans-local lifestyle, but goes beyond a reaction to European colonial expansion and capitalism. As discussed in chapters two and three, long before the colonial period, the Ayt Khebbash people lived in transit and travel, constantly traversing the geographical and conceptual delimitations imposed on their 'tribal roots' and cultural experiences.

5.3 Migrating and Returning: Seasonal Work in the Riffian Cities

> *Sbʕa snayʕa w l-rzaq dayʕa* ['Seven jobs, and the money lost'].
> <Arabic proverb>

It is a common joke among Rissani men that they specialise in so many professions and acquire substantial skills in various domains and yet find their bank account empty at the end of the day. It is often the harsh reality of their lives that they spend enormous amounts of time and energy on various jobs in different locations, but still turn out to be unable to rise beyond the level of everyday survival.

As stated earlier in chapters two and four, the out-migration from Ar-Rachidia Province region to large cities intensified during the 1970s and early 1980s, when the chronic drought forced the male population to move out and seek wage labour, mainly in Fès, Khemisset, Rabat, Casablanca, Tanger and Nador. From the time I arrived in Rissani, I kept realising that the majority of the local Ayt Khebbash men I encountered had previously engaged in various forms of temporary work in Nador, the Riffian city adjacent to the Spanish territory Mellila. In Nador, massive emigration of the local population took place during the 1960s, due to the need for labourers in post-war Europe. Before this, the locals used to work in the coal mines. The Europeans even waited for the Moroccans to arrive from Nador at the port or train station during the period of high demand. In the 1970s during the construction boom in Nador, half of the local male labour force departed to Europe, and was internally replaced by men from Ar-Rachidia, Ouarzazate, Taza and other places, who either temporarily or permanently emigrated to Nador, attracted by the high level of income. In the suburbs and towns around Nador, many of the locals started to rent out old, uninhabited houses to

the immigrants. The newcomers found cheap housing in the Bouarourou Quarter at the end of Corniche Street, and in Afra Quarter next to the town Segangane.

Another reason for the Ar-Rachidia men for choosing Nador as a destination for labour migration is because they are often connected to the Riffians through intricate social networks of friendship. Therefore, the Riffians prefer to employ men from Ar-Rachidia rather than those from other regions of Morocco. Local employers choose workers from Ar-Rachidia since they are usually considered to be 'hard-working', 'honest' and 'serious'. Seasonal construction workers from the region told me that once the employers hear about their province of origin, they always prefer to hire those from Ar-Rachidia, since 'they keep working hard, even if the directors are not there to survey them', whilst those from Ouarzazate or Taza will stop busying their hands and start chatting or leave for a break.

During the years between 2011 and 2013, I met several Ayt Khebbash men in Rissani who had previously worked in Nador, or habitually returned there for seasonal income. Abdou, for example, was born in 1974 in a small village called Taguerroumt, 30 km away from the road between Alnif and Mecissi. He received some secondary education in Rissani, but left school in 1989 to work in the north. First, he dug wells in Midar, Tafersite, Boukhouch, Driouch, Kassita, and Azar, towns in the region of Nador and Al Hoceima. Soon after that, he came back to Rissani to work on the family-owned barite company 'HACH-MINE' in Chaïb er Ras. Then, since his elder brother Ali was already working in Nador as a *mʕallem*, he decided to follow suit to work in the same construction site. Ali was in the army before and worked in Nador, but later he quit and started working in the domain of construction, following the suggestion of his Nadorian friends. It is common to find a job by means of personal connections, but in the 1990s many of the job-seekers used to stand at a *mawqaf*, one of the meeting points in town where the local employers come to look for suitable candidates. This practice still exists today, but has become less and less important for the experienced job-seekers since they prefer to find a job by telephone networking. Many of the Ar-Rachidia men told me that when they first started working in Nador, they used to stand at a *mawqaf*, but eventually stopped going there after developing their local relationships. 'It was a very humiliating experience', Abdou told me with disgust, as the employers used to inspect them 'like animals', such as checking their hands and body. But nowadays, he does not need to go there anymore, since when he is about to finish his current task, a friend of his boss or client would pass by and ask him to

come to their sites.

In addition, there are common difficulties in construction. The daily routine of construction workers starts at 5.30 in the morning: getting dressed, praying, and then preparing their breakfast. After walking to the construction site, they change their clothes, which is disagreeable during the cold winter months. They start working at 7 am, take a break at noon and eat a sandwich, and then continue working until 5 pm. When they return home, they pray and then prepare dinner. A young *mʕallem* from Ar-Rachidia described his life in Nador as mundane repetition of '*dar – marmit*' (house – cooking pot). Very often, they suffer from respiration and allergy problems caused by dust, as well as from dry, rough and cracking hands. The workers say the best thing in life is the time when they receive their salary on Thursdays. If a *mʕallem* works for a week, he receives 24,000 ryal (1,200 DH), which is about 200 DH per day. It seems like a good salary, but as it is a temporary occupation, they do not find work continuously and can thus not rely on it. One job will usually last for a month or two, and then they have to look for another one, which can take some time. Furthermore, if they work for someone dishonest, there is the possibility that they will not get paid, so they have to waste time in an effort to make the patron give them their salary. Abdou told me the following about his experiences:

> 'Once I worked for someone and when we finished, instead of paying me, he told me he did not have any money! I replied to him that it didn't make any sense, and that I am a wage labourer and his gain or loss matters only to him and so he has to pay me … in the end, he told me to be patient or to complain to the authorities if I wanted, and that when he would get the money, he would donate it to the mosque if he couldn't find me! So I left without receiving any payment … after some time he sent me half the amount, by mediation from a man from my village.'
> <Abdou, 27 January 2013, Rissani>

These payment problems in general are not reported to the authorities such as the Employment Service because the seasonal labourers work informally. The construction boom in Nador began in the 1970s, due to the flourishing of illegal smuggling and its proximity to Europe. There were many businessmen who built a fortune by quickly buying and selling real estate with the intention to boost prices. During this period, job-seekers from other provinces randomly flocked to Nador in search of a better income. As a result, 90 per cent of the construction sector in Nador itself is informal,

and there are only twenty companies who engage in official construction projects, such as building schools and establishments.

Furthermore, several of the houses in Nador are uninhabited, since those illegal smugglers and drug traffickers attempt to guard their fortunes by investing in real estate, in order to avoid police inspections. In 2013, there were 1433 cases of reported conflicts (1645 reclamations) in all sectors of work in the Province of Nador. Among these, 793 involved 'foreigners' (non-locals) and 852 were locals. In the construction sector, there were 262 conflicts among the total of 2645 work-related conflicts reported in Nador Province.[53] This number comes from those engaged by companies who report problems, and thus do not include the large number of seasonal labourers who work informally. The construction companies have a main office in Rabat or Casablanca and usually there is a lot of miscommunication with the local directors, which may lead to a delay of payment to the workers. Those companies or individuals who work informally in the domain do not make claims in order to hide tax evasions, problems of social security with CNSS,[54] etc.

When it comes to the apprenticeship of work itself, according to Abdou, a year or two was enough for him to learn the techniques of construction, since he had his own brother at his side who always helped him to acquire the skills step by step. For those who do not have a relative in the domain it takes more time to reach the level of *mʕallem*. Abdou said the first thing he learnt was brick laying, and then eventually plastering:

> *Abdou*: 'For the construction work, you need to know certain things, such as how to keep the measures for the room, so that it will not be in a wrong angle, how to hold the ropes to measure the angle of the wall, before you construct. Then you should know how to lay the bricks on one another, and to stick them with cement [mixed with water] before you fix them.'
> *Question*: What was the second thing you learnt?
> *Abdou:* 'Smoothing the walls and floors, and then plastering them, since I wanted to learn tile fixing. Smoothing is necessary for tiles, because you have to apply the

53 These data were obtained from the Employment Service (Délégation d'Emploi) in Nador. I wish to thank the director and the staff who have generously given me the information concerning the situation of labour migration and work-related conflicts in Nador.

54 CNSS: Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale (National Insurance for Social Security)

> plaster before the tiles. In summary, that's the stages of work we learn: wall building, plaster application and tile fixing.'
> <27 January 2013, Rissani>

For Abdou, the most difficult part to learn in the stage of plastering was how to manipulate the palette – at first he learnt how to hold it and use its inside and outside faces. He managed to master this technique in a year, and then in the second year he started learning how to lay out and fix the tiles. In construction, they usually start their tasks from the walls, then the stairs, kitchen, bathroom and salon, followed by the floor. In the early 1990s when Abdou started working, he received 35 DH per day as an unskilled labourer. After he reached the level of *mʕallem*, he earned 130 DH per day, and with continuous effort, he reached a level at which he would earn 200 DH per day, since he had mastered the skill of smoothing and plastering.

As in the case of Abdou, learning the skill of construction normally requires substantial time, effort and patience. However, they usually consider their profession as temporary and seek for opportunities in other domains and locations simultaneously. Abdou once quit with construction work in 1997 and went on to work in a brick factory for seven months, before he returned to construction. Since then, however, he has become more engaged in all the different stages of the profession, staying on the site from the beginning until the completion of the building. In 2008 he returned to his home village to get married to a local woman, and built his home in Ar-Rachidia. By the time I met him in 2013, he was already thinking of quitting his work in Nador in order to settle down and work near his home.

This seasonal migration pattern among the Ayt Khebbash men of Ar-Rachidia is a well-established life cycle since the 1990s. In terms of labour migration to the north itself, similar patterns exist among the local Arab men as well, although the majority of them do not work in fossil, barite and lead mining domains back home in Ar-Rachidia. Before the 1990s, those who made a fortune during the construction boom of 1980s or those who got married to Nadorian women chose to settle down in Nador, but in recent years the great majority of Ar-Rachidia men prefer to return home once they have accumulated some money.

We shall look at another example. Abderrazak, born in 1982 and originally from Taguerroumt; his family has now moved to Ar-Rachidia. Abderrazak has never worked in the fossil or mineral domain. He first came to Nador in 1999, with his paternal cousin. He received nine years of primary and secondary education, and he learnt the know-how of construction work from his father while growing up. He got married in 2010 to a woman from Wuchen (a *qṣar* in the Rissani area) who is also from an Ayt Khebbash group. He says he did not think of marrying a woman from Nador because they are like 'foreigners', and that he trusted people at home more. He also thinks 'Riffians are close to Europeans', that 'they do not work well' and 'they are ostentatious'. In Nador he rents a small room, without water tap or shower, but with a broken toilet outside the entrance, where the only available tap is, at 1,000 DH per month. He shares the room with three others: two brothers and a cousin, who also work in construction. According to him, it normally takes one to two years to learn the job, whilst he learnt very quickly thanks to his father. Since he got married in Ar-Rachidia, he spends two months in Nador and then returns home for two months; whereas before he used to divide the year in two parts: six consecutive months in Nador and then six months in Ar-Rachidia.

His life in Nador, however, comes with a cost of life-threatening injuries. Since insurance is non-existent in the domain, when one is injured one has to pay for it. Abderrazak injured his back in 2009, when he accidentally fell to the ground from the second floor. His patron took him to the hospital and paid for the medical expenses, but he himself had to pay 300 DH for the radiography, and then had to rest at home in bed for fifteen days. He took two months off and eventually recovered, but continues to suffer from chronic back pain. In the case of another construction worker, his patron did not even offer help for the medical treatment when he got an accident:

> 'One time when I was working in construction, we were about to put down a panel near the empty space next to the stairs, and there was a little board behind me, I walked backwards to adjust this board of formwork of a pillar, I put my foot on the little board [behind] and I slipped over into the empty space. It was the metal of the pillar that prevented me from falling right downstairs by holding me beneath my shoulder, then another worker pulled me back from there.'
> <Driss, 20 January 2014, Nador>

At first, Driss thought he was not injured, but a few minutes later his co-worker told him that blood was running down so he should seek for treatment. His patron also told him to go to the hospital and that he would cover the expenses, so he went to see a doctor. Driss found out that he could not continue working because he was unable to lift his injured arm for two days, and when he returned to his patron he refused to pay his hospital bill and medicine, but just gave him 50 DH for the taxi ride. Driss argued with the patron, but he insisted that he did not work for days and was therefore not eligible for compensation or salary. In recent years, there have been cases in which the patron paid for the treatment of workers until they recovered, but in general, the workers do not have any right to claim medical expenses, due to their informal working status. This unstable condition also induces the workers to not settle down in Nador,but to return to their home provinces where they can seek for help from their family members on a daily basis.

The three room mates of Abderrazak are in their early twenties and unmarried, but share the same life objectives, planning to return to Ar-Rachidia after their temporary stay in Nador. His younger brother, Yassir (24), who is a university graduate, came to Nador in 2005. Another brother Ali (22) joined them in 2008. Mustapha (23) is the fourth person sharing the room, he is a maternal cousin of them. He came in 2011, from Fezzou (Tafraoute region). He has a long experience working in construction in other cities: in 2004 in Fès, in 2006 for the first time in Nador, in 2007 in Marrakech, in 2008 in Dakhla, and eventually returning to Nador in 2010. He also wishes to go back to Ar-Rachidia after he has accumulated some money in order to get married and settle down.

One of the reasons for this return of labourers to Ar-Rachidia is that the local wage level has gone up in Ar-Rachidia Province itself, as there is now a moderate demand in the construction domain, which did not exist in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, the daily salary for an unskilled worker is now 100 DH and for a *mʕallem* 200 DH, which is not so different from what is paid in Nador. For this reason, it has become more common for men from Ar-Rachidia to intensively work in Nador only during the summer months when there is a high demand, due to the massive return of local expatriates from Europe seeking to build or renovate their vacation homes. And once they have accumulated wealth, they permanently return to Ar-Rachidia, either to invest in barite mining and tourism, or to simply work in the fossil domain.

It is evident that the wage labour economy led the villagers of Ar-Rachidia to establish an out-migration pattern which can result in a change of rural social order, but what we see in their objectives and their desire to establish themselves at home, by observing the traditional patterns of endogamous marriage, indicate the durability of rural social norms and values which stand against the world of state power and global capitalism. As Crawford argues, migration and money do not simply lead to a 'changing culture', but often the rural social order is durable and resistant, although being constantly fragmented, absorbed or undermined by social dynamics at large (2008: 5-14). In other words, the Ayt Khebbash men may often be willing to accept the effects of the powerful devices of domination, but in so doing they reinterpret, remake and traditionalise the situation in their everyday practice. From this perspective, I shall now look at their next common destination, the domain of barite and lead mining in Ar-Rachidia.

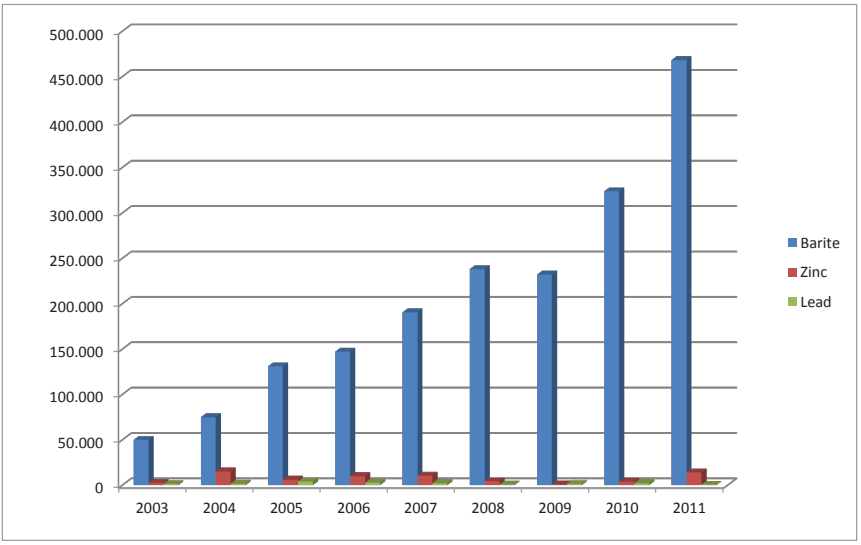
5.4 Moving on to Stay on: The Return to *Mʕadin*

> 'I recall a dream I had in 1974 when we were working in the mines of Bourika [between Taouz and Tafraoute]. At night, I slept … I saw a dromedary standing with its head down, taking the form of our barite veins bent like a dromedary, I said to myself: "this dromedary and the barite, since it's white [the barite], the dromedary is also white." I saw the dromedary next to the vein with its head lowered into the vein, I said this is the barite, the quantity is limited, so I sold my part to my partners, and then they found that it was exhausted. It is like this I believe, there are dreams that are real.'
> <Lahcen Ou Moh, 11 February 2012, Rissani>

Lahcen Ou Moh is the father-in-law of my fieldwork assistant Youssef, who worked in the barite mines during the 1970s. Later in the early 1980s, he chose to become a fossil artisan and emigrated to Rissani with his brothers and nuclear family. Like him, there is a number of Ayt Khebbash men who worked in barite mines before the price of the mineral went up significantly in the 2000s. Since the change of work, for them, is not actually a 'change', but a cyclic continuation of their nomadic past in the form of adaptation to the colonial rule and the global market economy. The domain of mining (*mʕadin*) has been an integral part of life in the Tafilalet since the French colonial period, and has become part of Ayt Khebbash people's identification to their land, history and culture.

Table 5-1: Evolution of mineral production in Ar-Rachidia 2003-2011

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Barite	49.828	74.936	131.003	147.170	190.512	238.130	232.035	323.783	468.263
Zinc	2.536	15.170	6.146	9.997	10.388	4.386	697	4.032	14.027
Lead	1.185	1.593	4.093	2.685	2.188	666	1.307	2.070	520

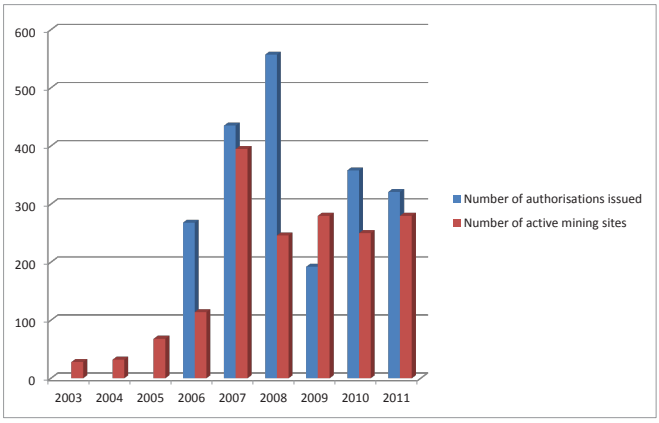


Source: CADETAF

As discussed in chapter two, Ar-Rachidia Province is home to rich mineral deposits such as lead, zinc and barite. The artisanal exploitation of these minerals is permitted by the provincial commission composed of the representatives of 1) the local authorities; 2) the Provincial Management of the Department of Energy and Mines; and 3) the Buying and Development Centre of the Mining Region of Tafilalet and Figuig (Ministère de l'Energie et des Mines, la Centrale d'Achat et de Développement de la Région Minière du Tafilalet et Figuig; CADETAF). The number of authorisations issued for artisanal mineral exploitation in 2010 was 1777. In the world market, the demand for lead, zinc, and barite started to rise in the 2000s. In 2010, for example, the production of these three minerals increased by 41.38 per cent, reaching 329,899 ton, against 234,039 ton in 2009, and the sales also rose by 41.10 per cent. Within this domain, the production of barite occupied 98.14 per cent of the mineral extraction in the CADETAF zone in 2011, especially centred on the area of Taouz in the Ar-Rachidia Province (table 5-1). In terms of individual exploitation, the number of authorisations

Table 5-2 Mining authorisations issued between 2003-2011

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of authorisations issued				268	435	557	192	358	321
Number of active mining sites	28	32	68	114	395	246	280	250	280



Source: CADETAF

issued by CADETAF reached 321, in contrast to zero in 2003 (table 5-2). Furthermore, the authorised extraction sites increased to 320, against 28 in 2003.

The pioneer company specialising in export and exploitation of mines in Ar-Rachidia is HACH-MINE limited, which is owned by the Arab Shorfa family El Abbassi. According to the current president Said El Abbassi, who is based in Rissani, his father was initially an agriculturist while being one of the first in the region to work in the transportation of lead in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1984, his father started to work in the extraction of barite in the Taouz region. In this period, they had great difficulty in selling, for there was not much demand in Europe. In 2003, the family founded the company HACH-MINE for the exploitation and exportation of minerals. They are one of the only two companies in the region, and they call the others working in this domain quite simply 'artisans'. These companies have the exclusive right for direct exportation abroad, whilst the artisans can only sell the minerals to Moroccan companies.

Currently their main site of exploitation is the Taouz region on the Algerian border, after they obtained the authorisation of the army. The company produces forty tons of barite per day, and they roughly pay 100 DH to the non-specialised workers, for eight hours of work per day. They work year round, except for two months during the summer, due to the difficulties of the hot climate in the desert. They transport the barite to Safi for direct exportation to Europe, at the sale price of 350 DH per ton.[55] They also have large client company in Rabat, which buys the barite and transports it to Nador.

At the time of my fieldwork (2012-2013) it was estimated by the Rissani Municipality that there were about 150 people working in the domain of barite in Rissani, who were mostly Imazighen from the Ayt Khebbash group. These artisans can sell their barite to only two companies. El Abbassi considered that most of the artisans are too hurried to see great results, 'They sit in a café in Rissani, expecting the workers to bring them big money without working hard themselves'. In this increasingly competitive domain they need an exploration permit to look for promising mines everywhere, and the companies who have the means and expertise are making a great effort and spend enormous time, money and energy in search of minerals throughout Morocco.

At the beginning there are common difficulties for the artisans in this domain due to the lack of experience, such as that they have no clue about places to exploit. They have to ask a research team to conduct an examination each five or ten metres along the length of the allotted plot (normally four points in total) to determine the potential of the vein, before they decide to set up the site. There are problems for the companies as well, especially when they are disconnected from the local context. For example, there is another company called LASNIM which came from Casablanca to Ar-Rachidia in 2001. However, they were having difficulties in their work since 2007, as the president is far away from the site of exploitation. El Abbassi told me that it is vital for the management to be present all the time, and that they themselves have advantages by being a family company, as one of the brothers can always be at the vein to control and supervise the workers.

In the barite domain apprenticeship is required as well in order to successfully establish one's business. Abderrahmane, an Ayt Khebbash artisan explained his learning process as follows:

55 The price at the time of interview in 2012.

Abderrahmane: 'It is necessary to learn how to prepare the site to avoid risk, you also need to know how to manage your products, in order to avoid losses that may be the result of rejections by client companies … you should learn about the different charges, salaries of the workers, materials …'
Question: How did you learn about them?
Abderrahmane: 'You need to work for the others first, in various exploration sites, at least three to four years. Each of them has their own intelligence, to have information, to distinguish good merchandise from bad … and you acquire experience at other sites from their projects. When we analyse [the veins], when we want to start, we send one sample to the client company which informs the provider [the artisans] about the state of his merchandise … and we start to accumulate the experiences until we know the maximum. The analysis can be unreliable, and in that case we need to send [the sample] to another laboratory.'
<5 October 2013, Rissani>

As implied by Abderrahmane, the artisanal mining – as well as fossil sculpting and various forms of construction work – remains to be a disorganised, informal sector of the economy in Ar-Rachidia. It is vital for the artisans to establish their own social system of learning in order to avoid pitfalls and counteract state control. The companies can betray them, and handling the local politics in a battle to secure a promising vein or acquiring a mining authorisation can be a real challenge. In the words of Abderrahmane, what remains for them after all the complications is 'just one piece of bread in the mouth' (*daghd ittqima im n ughrum*). Baha Ou Ali, a now-retired Ayt Khebbash man in his sixties, has a long history of working in the lead mines, and later in the fossil domain. He struggled with the CADET[56] to sell his merchandise and also to obtain the compensation for an accident he suffered from.

'I used to bring my merchandise to Erfoud [to sell to CADET]. They determined a place and a day at which the buyer would come to collect the lead … the company [CADET] was at Megta Sfa, Lfioun n Temgharine, Chaïb er Ras, and Bou Maïz. They bought the merchandise, if you had a 'trip' [the quantity sufficient to load a lorry], they would send a lorry to transport it to Erfoud. For kilos [a small quantity only], they collect on the spot.'
<Baha Ou Ali, 15 September 2012, Rissani>

56 CADETAF was formerly called CADET (Ministère de l'Energie et des Mines, la Centrale d'Achat et Développement de Région Minière du Tafilalet), before they included Figuig in their territory.

As most of the other artisans, he worked without a permit for exploitation. For this reason a conflict occurred one day when another fellow artisan who worked adjacent to his well proposed him to dig the part of the earth which was in between their territories:

> 'Assou Ou M'hamed, he arrived, he was associated with another person. He proposed this man to dig his well on the part which was a border in between mine and theirs. Then the commission came and verified/measured the distances and warned this man [associated to Assou Ou M'hamed] that he did not have the right to work in this place [in between the two wells].'
> <Baha Ou Ali, 15 September 2012, Rissani>

Territorial disputes such as this are common, since the only way to define each artisan's territory is the ten m distance measured by the commission. And if one leaves the well unexploited for a month and a day, one will lose the (informal) right of extraction. Furthermore, since they work informally, artisans are not legally protected against any accidents that may occur during their work. Baha lost his left eye and index finger due to an accident with explosives, but he did not receive any subsidies for his medication despite his claim to CADET. One day, he set three explosives in the mine, but one did not explode. Unaware of the failed explosive, he kept digging when all of a sudden it exploded in his face:

> 'I sent my dossier to CADET, then there was another accident reported by someone from Tinrheras, and they wanted to replace [my dossier] with that one. To do so, they sent me a 'reliable' person, and he asked me to duplicate my dossier to submit it, and that the [already submitted] dossier was lost. I said to them that I would bring it, but they demanded I should submit on *that* day. He [the 'reliable' person] was also manipulated. When I returned [to CADET], they told me that they did not know me! I went to Ar-Rachidia, but I could not find any doctor; he was on holiday or he quit his work. With time, the problem fell into oblivion.'
> <Baha, 15 September 2012, Rissani>

In the view of my informants, this case shows the corruption of authorities in the mining sector and the disorganised state of the work environment, which is the reason why the informal mining continues to expand. The artisans find their way by participating in the 'game' themselves, for that is the only way to operate in what they

consider to be a society of widespread corruption, stretching from the local to the national government. Mohammed, another fossil artisan-turned barite miner, explained that he suffered both from the dealings with the client companies as well as from administrative bodies such as CADETAF, for he was illiterate and he did not know the content of the *ḍahir* of 1960 which created CADETAF and the mining regulations.

> 'I started working in barite mining by associating with two other friends. There are a lot of difficulties, such as that we suffer from what comes from the [client] companies [buying and export]. There are times when the companies pay a certain price and after a month, [or] fifteen to twenty days, they contact us to say the quality of the merchandise has gone down. But in reality, when they have plenty of stock, they disturb us in this way. When they do not have sufficient stock, the demand is high [even if the quality is inferior]. We have problems at the level of selling.'
> <Mohammed, 22 January 2014, Rissani>

Furthermore, Mohammed talked about problems coming from the administrative side: the content of the *ḍahir* was not applied correctly to their work condition. According to him, there are certain measures adopted in favour of people working at CADETAF, while measures which would benefit the artisans were ignored.

> 'I am illiterate. But I heard people say what is in the *ḍahir*, a lot of things. For example, CADETAF must prepare the route towards the mining site … before, in certain times, I heard that when we found the vein and when we obtained authorisation, CADETAF prepared the route to the site, supplied the necessary materials, and for selling the merchandise, CADETAF issues you another authorisation to sell to the company of your choice. When the merchandise was sold, the rights for CADETAF [one centime per kilogram] were directly paid by the client company to the CADETAF … they were also in charge of workers' insurance and the charges in case of accidents during work. In addition, the material for route preparation [should be paid by the CADETAF].'
> <Mohammed, 22 January 2014, Rissani>

Although corruption and its benefits are not exclusively for the rich and powerful, the artisans often claim that there is a discrimination against the poor when it comes to issuing authorisations and supplying the necessary materials. This claim leads them

to the logic that they see no valid reason to follow the law themselves, when the leadership is trapped in what they call the practice of favouritism, discrimination, and cheating. Addi, an Ayt Khebbash artisan in his mid-forties, who worked 'illegally' in the barite mountains of Tijaght, claimed that he was not afraid of the authorities, since he would ask them what they asked him. 'I am a local and there is no one who has the right to command what I do here. If they ask me where the authorisation is, I will tell them that I am now preparing the papers to obtain it', he asserted. During my visit to Tijaght, he repeatedly said that the Ministry of Mining discriminated against the local Ayt Khebbash artisans when they came to ask for authorisation for exploitation.

> 'They [the authority] accused me working outside the law. I replied: 'No, it is because of you that the majority is working illegally, since you have blocked the authorisation.' Is the authorisation just for the rich? Or are there no lands to rent? The Ministry of Mining replied that around 2005 there was no one who came to ask for an authorisation. But look, in 2005, there was only corruption in the mining sector, which prevented us from applying for an authorisation. Another time, I went to the bureau with my bicycle, but they chose those who are rich. We, *irḥaln* ... there is no one who defends our rights [as a group], but rather, everyone defends just his own interests. You know, we have created an association to defend the rights of the locals, since no one has the right to exploit the earth that belongs to us. Another time [in the past] Ayt Khebbash people did not know how to defend their rights; *iqbliyn*[57] came here to Tijaght with their authorisations, and we did not [did not have an authorisation].'
> <Addi, 6 February 2013, Tijaght>

As we can see in this quote, the Ayt Khebbash artisans understand the practice of informal mining and small offences made against the local non-Imazighen mineral exploiters as made necessary by the crude inequalities they experience in everyday work. Addi, for instance, works several months in the scorching heat of the mountains in the middle of the desert, with only a pickaxe and shovel, until he has gathered a

57 The origin of the term *iqbliyn* is contested, as some claim that it derives from *qabila* ('tribe') and others say it comes from *qibla* (the direction of prayer, i.e. east). In the local understanding of Rissani, *iqbliyn* means 'Easterners' (those from the direction of the *qibla*), referring to the Arabs who originated from Saudi Arabia. In the context of the Tafilalet, when the Imazighen use this term, it can mean the Arabs and/or the dark-skinned people such as the Ḥaratin.

quantity that is big enough to fill a lorry. He lives in a temporary hut of about four square metres that is made of stone bricks, with only minimal everyday necessities, such as an oven for baking bread, a lamp, a small gas stove, cooking pots, and a tea kettle. In the isolated desert, there is neither toilet nor shower, and the workers rely on the four-wheel drives that come from Rissani once a week, loaded with daily provisions. After ten to twenty days of digging, Addi searches for a lorry to rent so he can sell the barite to local companies. He said he was once interrogated by the Mining Delegation for working 'outside the law', but he replied that this was due to the authorities that blocked his authorisation. In short, the local people feel that the official regulations force them to develop excuses for their informal mining. For them, the state law intended to 'resolve the problems of existing conditions' is producing the opposite effect.

Furthermore, from the way Addi describes himself and the Ayt Khebbash people as *irḥaln*, and the local non-Ayt Khebbashis as *iqbliyn* ('strangers'), who are unreasonably preventing them from obtaining authorisations, it becomes clear that they construct the 'unities' in the context of power relations and exclusion. As Stuart Hall forwards, an identification process is often that of naturalised 'closure', hence identities are constructed through difference and are constantly destabilised by what they leave out (1996: 5). We should understand this process in specific historical and institutional sites and within specific discursive formations and practices, since identities emerge within the modalities of power, and are thus a product of marking difference and exclusion.

5.5 Amazigh Activism and Local Identity

5.5.1 *ʕati l-shluḥ ʕalash waqef* (Give to the Berber what he is standing on)

Until the 1990s, this expression used to be common among the butchers in the Rissani *suq*. When the butcher saw that the customer was an Amazigh, he would tell his assistant *ʕati l-shluḥ ʕalash waqef*, presuming that the customer did not understand Moroccan Arabic. The phrase has two senses: firstly, it simply means 'Give him meat', but the underlying second meaning is 'Give the *shluḥ* (Berber) plenty of bones'. Before the proliferation of international Amazigh activism in the 1990s, Arabic speakers used to see Imazighen in the area as culturally inferior to them, and they were often ridiculed when they spoke Tamazight in public. As stated earlier in chapters one and two, it is not the purpose of my thesis to document the history of Amazigh activism

or to look at Amazigh identity from the viewpoint of international activists and intellectuals. Instead, I would like to focus on the influence of such movements on Rissani Ayt Khebbash artisans' everyday practices and identification processes, as observed during my fieldwork years.

Thami, a fossil and barite artisan, told me that he does not participate in Amazigh cultural movements, but does wish that the Tamazight language will become an important part of school education. He is originally from Hassi Labied, a village thirty kilometres south of Rissani. He came to the town in 1987 to work in various construction projects, and eventually started working as a fossil sculptor in 1992, until he briefly turned to tourism and worked as a tour guide in Merzouga in 2011. The following year he switched to barite mining and now spends most of his time on the desert mountain Rask Mouna. Just like him, most of the Rissani artisans are conscious of their elevated rights but do not actively participate in cultural movements, and even less so in Amazigh activism related political protests, which are non-existent in Rissani.[58] This is largely because Rissani is an Arabised town, although nearly 50 per cent of the newly built quarters are inhabited by Imazighen from various clans. Moroccan Arabic remains to be the public language, which is spoken by the entire population, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. The administrative posts, such as those of civil servants, are largely dominated by Arabs, so other ethnic groups feel they need to conform to public norms, as resisting them would inevitably result in being marginalised even further.

> 'We were ashamed to talk [in Tamazight], we were afraid of being mocked. Nowadays we can understand … illiterates can from now on know a lot of things concerning religion, news … Our children, when they go to the countryside, they feel frustrated when they cannot speak their own language [because they always Arabic in Rissani]. They say to themselves, "I am Amazigh, why don't I speak Tamazight?". My son asks me, "Dad, you are Amazigh, why did you not teach me [Tamazight]?" This is why we insist Tamazight should be taught at school, it should be integrated in school [programme] … we wish that it will take its [right] place in society and especially that it will be taught [in schools].'
> <Thami, 20 September 2012, Rissani>

58 I mean here political protest related to Amazigh activism, excluding other protests such as claims for salary increase in front of the municipality, etc.

In 1994 the late King Hassan II approved of the Tamazight language educational programme in all public schools of Morocco (Cf. Crawford and Hoffman 2000; Hoffman and Miller 2010). Thami said that he was interested in the Amazigh cultural movement since the mid-1990s when they were finally 'allowed' to publicly speak their own language without feeling embarrassed. However, as discussed in chapter two, the Tamazight language programme incorporated in primary school education in Rissani did not actually help the children to learn the language, due to the usage of the Tifinagh alphabet in text books and the insufficient number of school teachers who were native speakers of Tamazight.

Despite this actual failure in policy implementation, the Moroccan state has recognised the rights of Imazighen as an important element to sustain the national unity and to consolidate the rule of the current Alaouite Dynasty.[59] The direct cause of this policy development was the international Amazigh cultural movement, that originated from Algerian expatriates in Paris and spread through the internet; it reached as far as the remote desert villages in Ar-Rachidia Province region.[60] A young *fourgonnette* driver from Tafraoute proudly explained to me the meaning behind their tri-coloured flag with a red Amazigh symbol in the middle: the blue symbolises the Mediterranean sea, the green refers to North Africa, and the yellow signifies the Sahara, including Niger and Mali. He went on to show that the Amazigh symbol 'Z' is the shape of a human being who attempts to break the chain with force to liberate himself, which has thus become a symbol of freedom. When asked where he acquired this knowledge, he mentioned internet sources as well as university-educated friends who studied in Ar-Rachidia or Meknès. As such, the book *Al-Khitabat*, which narrates the history of Amazigh people, has become a bible among certain young Imazighen, who are conscious and/or supportive of Amazigh activism.

59 See Silverstein, Paul. 2010. 'The Local Dimensions of Transnational Berberism: Racial Politics, Land Rights, and Cultural Activism', Hoffman, K. E. and Miller, S. G. (eds.), *Berbers and Others: Beyond Tribe and Nation in the Maghrib*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; 2011. 'Masquarade Politics : Race, Islam and the Scale of Amazigh Activism in Southeastern Morocco', *Nations and Nationalism* 17: 1: 65-84; 2013. 'The Activist and Anthropologist', Crawford, D. and Newcomb, R. (eds.), *Encountering Morocco: Fieldwork and Cultural Understanding*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

60 How international migration and the development of global communication changed the lives of Berber speakers is well documented in Crawford, D. and Hoffman, K. 2000. 'Essentially Amazigh: Urban Berbers and the Global Village', in Lacey, K. (ed.), *The Arab-African and Islamic World: Interdisciplinary Studies*. NY: Peter Lang. See also Crawford, David. 2001. *Work and Identity in the Moroccan High Atlas*. PhD thesis. Chapter 5. University of California-Santa Barbara.

> 'The Imazighen were victims of oppression during the time of Hassan II. And what's more, it appeared that you need to speak Arabic to be a good Muslim, [but] there are millions of Arabs who are atheists, Christians … They equally spread the idea that if you speak Tamazight, you are a nomad, backward, old, outdated … and if you speak Arabic you are civilised, so that the Arabs will have to serve nothing [to be superior to us]. The authorities do not accept that we give our children Amazigh names, such as, for example: Sifaou, Anir, Massinissa, Ghouta … the ancient names. They want these names to disappear little by little … it was during the time of Hassan II, [and] now these people [Imazighen] have become conscious [of their cause].'
> <Mehdi, 7 December 2012, Tafraoute>

In the Ar-Rachidia Province region this cultural and political movement was most prominent in Goulmima, Tinejdad, Tinerhir and Alnif, where the majority of the inhabitants are Tamazight language speakers. According to the viewpoint of Amazigh activists, there is a marked difference between Amazigh and Arab culture and language, and the Amazigh tradition should be respected and preserved. For example, many of the activism-conscious people claim the Amazigh New Year must be celebrated on 13 January, and that this day should become a national holiday throughout Morocco. However, I contend that this collective Amazigh consciousness is largely a media fabrication, in which an all-encompassing 'Amazigh-ness' is constantly invented in favour of the dialect, customs and traditions of a certain region/people, often connected to the politics of the Moroccan state. The Amazigh New Year is largely defined by the media and activists as an occasion at which families eat couscous with seven vegetables (*sebʕa khḍar*). They hide a date seed within and the one who finds it is bound to be the most lucky one in the coming New Year. This custom is practiced in the Goulmima-Tinejdad region, but not in the Taouz-Rissani area – my host family in Rissani, for instance, knew about this event but confirmed that they have never celebrated it. In short, the largely illiterate local people in Rissani do not conceptualise their Amazigh-ness in the way prescribed by intellectuals and activists, although many are aware of their claims.

Above all, in the context of Rissani the essentialised notion of the divide between Arab and Amazigh, in existence since the French colonial period, is largely rejected in line with the nationalist claim of unity as Moroccans. The inhabitants acknowledge their linguistic differences, and language is implicated in occupational differentiation

as well as in forming and articulating group boundaries. However, the ideology of an Amazigh culture as separable from the rest of Moroccan culture is in conflict with the reality that both the Tamazight and Moroccan Arabic languages are products of a long history of cultural intermixing, which is a reflection of the identity formation of the inhabitants. The Tamazight language spoken in Rissani area includes a large vocabulary originally borrowed from Arabic, and the same applies to Moroccan Arabic – it is an oral language formulated through centuries of Tamazight, Spanish and French linguistic influences. Although the local Imazighen identify themselves as different from the other ethnic groups in town, which I have already demonstrated in my previous analyses of occupational differentiation and marriage patterns, they do also recognise themselves as Moroccans and Muslims especially when confronting foreigners and foreign entities. Furthermore, it is important to note that work and economic circumstances are also major components in the identification processes of the Ayt Khebbash artisans, and according to their situation in everyday life, they reconstruct, adopt, or discard the prescribed notion of 'Amazigh-ness' and 'Amazigh culture' forwarded either by the activists or the Moroccan central state.

5.5.2 I, You, Workers and the Unemployed intellectuals

The Revolution (Tagrawla)

I, you, workers and the unemployed intellectuals
(*nekk d keyyin d uxddam d wi nna akkʷ ghran, shumren*)
Those in exile, we are tired of the 'good announcements'
(*winna imllan l-bunananz llan g tmizar n mʕaden*)
I, you, the workers, women and those who suffer
(*nekk d keyyin d khufar d tmeṭṭuṭ d wi d ikrefsen*)
The mountain people, all those who are disadvantaged, all those who are humiliated
(*tarwa n udrar d wi nna akkʷ lkamn wi nna akkʷ sbujiden*)
This country will never be in peace, it will never be
(*tamurt a ujjin thenna, tamurt a ur sar thenna*)
There is only suffering, so start the revolution!
(*xas afrya n tmara nekratagh s tagrawla*)
The illiterates, like the donkeys inside them, we know only to applaud…
(*ur neghri, grasn ighyal, aqur dignegh abqqa*)
Always our face and black, the pit viper has bitten and crushed us

(*dima udm negh iga ungal tetsh agh tfighra*)
And no flees are white [no good]
(*awd yan g iwurdan ur igi amllal*[61])
Like the PAM,[62] like the Istiqlal
(*am l-asala am l-ʔistiqlal*)
This country will never be in peace, it will never be…
(*tamurt a ujjin thenna, tamurt a ur sar thenna*)
<Song by Saghru Band>

The young Imazighen in Ar-Rachidia Province region often favour the music of Saghru Band from Mellaab, a town on the route between Touroug and Tinejdad. This band has been active since 1996, and their songs involve strong political messages, such as in the lyrics of *Tagrawla* (Revolution) or 'Moha': 'all the political parties are corrupt; they collaborate with one another to consolidate the power of Istiqlal Party'. They go on to cite the names of the dead combatants of Sarhro who fought against the French and the ancient Imazighen rulers: '(Let's) follow the footsteps of El Habbaz, and the road of Ajou Moh, follow Zaid Ou Hmad[63]….follow the road of Sifaou[64]…they will break, but will fight until death' (*nekat abrid n l Habbaz, nek abrid n Ajou Moh, nek abrid n Zaid Ou Hmad….Nekat abrid n Sifaw … ad teṛṛeẓ wala tekʷna*). Such songs by Saghru Band are extremely popular among the local, young Imazghen and are often played in public transport, such as taxis, or at home, regardless of whether or not they share their political messages or not.

In the summer of 2013, the first Amazigh music festival was held in Rissani, which was organised by the Association Ayt Aṭṭa of fossil artisans. This event symbolised a remarkable change of direction in the history of the fossil association, for the members were indifferent to such Amazigh cultural movements until in 2012 when they elected a new young president who was in his early thirties. Poets, singers and activists from Goulmima, Tinejdad and Mellaab showed up on stage and many local youth also per-

61 A Tamazight proverb.

62 Parti d'Authenticité et Modernité (Authenticity and Modernity Party), which is a political party created by a close friend and advisor of King Mohammed VI in 2008.

63 El Habbaz, Ajou Moh and Zaid Ou Hmad were combatants originating from Sarhro Mountains who resisted the French occupation in the 1930s.

64 Sifaou is the name of an ancient Amazigh king.

formed or agitated the crowd to give support to the detained activists and to promote Amazigh culture and language. With regard to this event, a local student expressed his point of view as follows:

> 'Why is that the Tamazight language is not present enough? It was marginalised by the French colonisation; in all the colonised countries they left power in the hands of Arabs [such as in Morocco and Algeria]. Another thing is that they circulate this idea: if we find a paper in which there is Arabic script, you have to collect it to avoid it being trampled by people, under the pretext that it is a part of the Qur'an, [since] the Qur'an is written in Arabic script. They also circulate the idea such as that [late King] Mohammed V was seen in the moon, which is propaganda. They want us to believe that if the state is not governed by the Arabs, it is not an Islamic state. [But] Islam was brought by Imazighen themselves, and they adopted it themselves….What was the objective of the Arabo-Islamic conquest? They came to steal our resources in North Africa, they did not bring Islam. We had Islam before the arrival of the Arabo-Islamic conquest.'
> <Amir, 28 August 2013, Rissani>

Although the local fossil and barite artisans appreciate the proliferation of Amazigh culture and the increased freedom of expression, it is important to note that they do not share this well-articulated point of view against the central state and the 'Arabo-Islamic conquest'. The young artisans, for example, are 'trend conscious' of the Amazigh cultural movement in a way that is similar to fashion in clothes and music; they wear the Amazigh symbol on sandals or t-shirts and put up the flag in front of their houses, but this is not to be considered as an act of commitment to the ideological cause of the movement. There are very few artisans who went through primary education, and even if they did, they often cannot relate to the standardised or internationalised 'Amazigh-ness' as shown in television broadcasts, nor to the strange Tifinagh characters used to teach Tamazight language in schools. They do indeed acknowledge the boundaries between the young, elite Imazighen in Rabat working behind the screen on Amazigh-related documentaries and themselves who do not share the same cultural experiences. The Amazigh television channel 'Channel 8' typically does not focus on Ar-Rachidia Province, since the two directors responsible for the documentaries are from the Sous and Rif areas. The culture and language promoted on TV are far from their own, and the local Imazighen watch them with curiosity in a way they look at 'foreigners', making fun of the dialects and expressions presented on

the screen. In short, we can see that the identities of Ayt Khebbash artisans in Rissani are strongly bound to localised space and tribal origins, and that they adopt the national or international trend as long as it serves the interests of their everyday life, and more precisely, their work.

Addi, the fossil and barite artisan, for example, is not interested in Amazigh music or festivals but emphasises his rights in terms of 'Amazigh-ness', as somebody who belongs to the original people of the land, defining the Arabs and other dark-skinned people as *iqbliyn* (strangers) in order to claim the right of exploration of what is beneath the earth. Similarly, he is actively participating in forming an association aiming at protecting the Ayt Khebbash people's land rights in Kudyet Draoua. At the same time, he is married to an Arab woman originally from Meknès and is rather disinterested in teaching Tamazight language to his five children at home. I have already argued that it is extremely rare to find marriages among Rissani Ayt Khebbash artisans outside their own clan or tribe, but Addi says he just happened to fall in love with this particular woman, who also happened to be an Arab. Therefore, he does not question his wife's 'Arab-ness' as a contradiction to his various claims based on his own sense of belonging to Ayt Khebbash group and Amazigh category. Apart from his marriage, he has several characteristics which he shares with the other local Ayt Khebbash artisans: they are interested in Amazigh identity issues as far as it is work-related or beneficial in terms of land acquisition. Those who are successful in barite business and have already become affluent are not interested in any sort of Amazigh activism, but are busy advancing their own careers and collaborating with the influential Arab politicians.

Therefore, how the Ayt Khebbash artisans associate their day-to-day problems with being Amazigh is highly contextual, since they do not typically locate themselves in larger geographical terms nor in a longer historical time frame including entire North Africa. In other words, people do accept certain discourses and are being taken in by them, yet simultaneously they resist, hesitate, and do not participate in the communities of power relations when articulating their complex daily experiences. This reality supports my contention that people construct their practice in confrontation with the power relations of the discourse practice, and is also coincidentally involved in the processes of identification.

5.6 Conclusion: Work, Communities and Identities

Judith Butler stated that identification is a process that can never be 'achieved', and that it is never fully and finally made. She contends that it is incessantly reconstituted and is subject to the 'volatile logic of iterability' (1993: 105). Contrary to the claims by Lave and Wenger (1991; Wenger 1998) that an identification process equals a learning process, in which the apprentices participate and synchronise with the masters under the official structure of the community, it is by now evident that the communities of practice include peripherality, marginality and dis-identification processes at the same time. We have seen in the travels and work of Ayt Khebbash artisans in Nador that they neither identify nor assimilate to the structural conditions, but instead hold on to their 'traditional' values and norms as they experience marginality in the cities. In an attempt to establish themselves in barite mining back home, they also experience this striking marginality when interacting with the authorities and client companies. The conflict a person experiences in the space between what they are actually doing and how they find themselves located in the communities can be described as 'non-participation' (Hodges 1998: 273). The process called 'participation' is an experience in constant conflict with their historically situated self - for the Ayt Khebbash artisans, this process rather induces a 'non-participation' within the structural conditions, as well as a sympathy for their own tribal identities.

Furthermore, the identities of Ayt Khebbash artisans are not only reconstructed through participation and non-participation, but also through practice within power relations. The process of exclusion does not merely occur in their day-to-day conflicts of work, but also in relation to the politics of national and international Amazigh activism. Their identities of belonging, which are reconstructed through traditionalisation of modernities, involve concrete internal complexities against the administrative, political and social pressures they confront in their everyday lives. This conflict opens up new identificatory possibilities that constitute the Ayt Khebbash artisans' experience of being in a transforming world of commodified labour markets. Their migrant labour to Nador and elsewhere within the context of exclusion and pressure led them to 'multiply' their identities through ongoing sociality, wherein they invented a new form of nomadism to become an 'Ayt Khebbash artisan' time and again. In other words, they encountered their own 'manipulated and manipulating self' (Hodges 1998: 289) which led them to a historical reconstruction of the self to internalise the social forces in the course of their multiplicious identification processes.

As discussed by Lave and Wenger, learning implies becoming a different person through 'legitimate peripheral participation' in the communities of practice, which involves relations of power (1991: 31-39). I have argued in this chapter that not only the Ayt Khebbash artisans become skilful as acting agents, but there is an infinite possibility of their multiplicious identifications through participation and non-participation. When they identify themselves as *irḥaln*, often against the other category *iqbliyn,* which indicates 'strangers', they reconstruct their 'traditional' sense of belonging to *reḥla* once again as the 'periphery' in the centre of their own world. And precisely because the home (*tamazirt*) of the Ayt Khebbash people stays permanently in *reḥla*, it possesses the capacity to speak to the marginalised, dispossessed and excluded self within the system of world capitalist production. In this respect, the ongoing travels of the Ayt Khebbash artisans is a renewed nomadism, generated by the reality of life, which cannot be conditioned, dictated, or concluded.

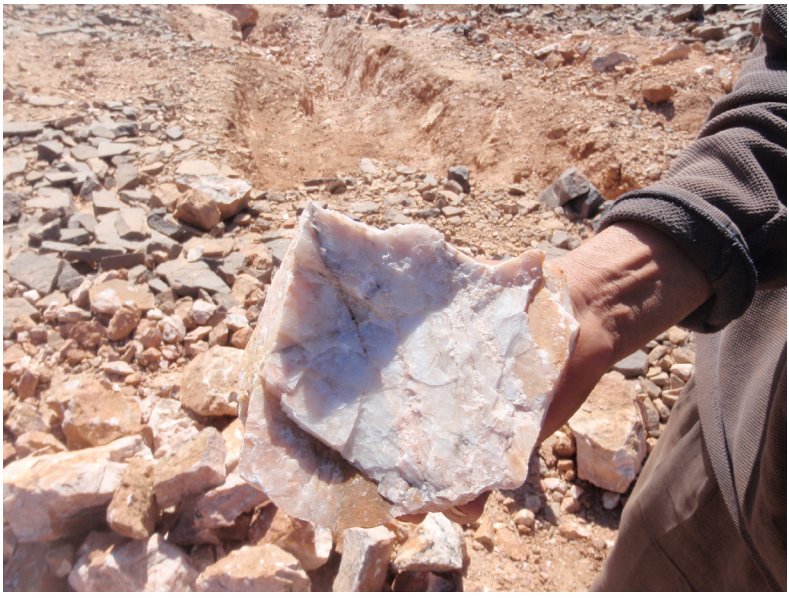
5-1 Ar Rachidia men in Nador

5-2 Construction work in Nador

5-3 Job-seekers at a *mawqaf*

5-4 Barite mines of Tijaght

5-5 Ayt Khebbash miners in Tijaght



5-6 Barite

5-7 Extraction of barite in Tijaght