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BETWEEN *HARSHA* AND *HARIRA*: MOROCCAN WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIPS TO FOOD
AND KITCHENSPACE

By

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B.A, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT 2007

Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts
in Geography

The University of Montana
Missoula, MT

May 2012

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Abstract: Between *Harsha* and *Harira*: Moroccan Women's Relationships with Food and Kitchenspace

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The research presented in this thesis grapples with questions concerning the gendered and spatial aspects of food culture and “kitchenspace” in Fez, Morocco. The everyday geographies of urban women in Fez, Morocco are closely connected to local food systems and food spaces. Food spaces like the kitchen are where women's complex relationships to food and gender identity are revealed. Kitchens are spaces where women negotiate gender identity and where specialized knowledge (concerning food and gender) is applied, shared, and transferred from one generation to the next. Critical knowledge concerning gender and identity is communicated through food and food systems.

This thesis explores key questions concerning the relationships the women of Fez have with food and kitchenspaces as well as the methodological approach needed to capture and convey women's interactions within this space. How are food relationships and kitchenspaces in Morocco gendered, and what are the implications for broader gender relationships? How are these relationships affected by outside influences of globalization and social change? How does a researcher gain access to kitchenspaces in Morocco and what is the academic/outsider's role and relationship with this space? And finally, what methods are best utilized for capturing the inner-workings of kitchenspace?

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge the Fulbright Program and the Moroccan-American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange (MACECE) for granting me the opportunity to live and conduct research in Morocco. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. James Miller the director of MACECE, who provided guidance and support throughout the research process in Morocco.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Sarah Halvorson for guiding and motivating me through this project with interest and endless enthusiasm. Without her guidance I would never have received the Fulbright and made it to Morocco. I would also like to thank my committee, Dr. Jeffrey Gritzner for his advice and literature suggestions, Dr. Thomas Sullivan for his encouragement in pursuing kitchenspace and feminism, and Dr. Laurie Yung for methodological motivation. A special thanks to Kevin McManigal for creating for me a beautiful map of the Fez Medina.

Shukran B'zef to the women at the Sabul Assalam Arabic Language center in Fez and the Benjelloun and Alami families in Fez. Their friendships, patience and laughter made this project possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their continued support and commitment to my success, and Ryan Lucas for his patience, support and love, both in Morocco and in Montana.

Note on the title

Harsha and *harira* are two common Moroccan dishes. *Harsha* is a round semolina flatbread that tends to be eaten in the morning with butter and honey or jam. *Harira* is a traditional vegetable and meat soup that is eaten in the evenings, typically alongside dates, and on holidays. I have chosen to use these two dishes as they represent the temporal aspect of women's lives in the kitchen. Moroccan women often spend all day in the kitchen preparing meals for the family from *harsha* in the morning to *harira* in the evening and lots of couscous in between. Recipes for both *harsha* and *harira*, along with a few others, can be found in Appendix D.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Sitting with good friends around a table under the open air in an exquisitely tiled courtyard, I revel in the array of dishes that have been placed before me. Freshly marinated olives in shades of green, purple and brown mingle with slivers of preserved lemons, chilies and garlic. Dark pink sweet tomato jam, studded with blanched and salted almonds, begs to be spread on fresh round loaves of wheat bread. Other salads, roasted eggplant, carrot and cauliflower take up all the extra space on the table. We are dining at Riad Fez, one of the most distinguished hotels and restaurants in the city. It is the most formal and expensive meal I have eaten in my 9 months in Morocco. I look up at the server as he refills our glasses.

“Who is cooking in the kitchen? Is it a woman or a man?” I ask out of curiosity.

“A woman! Of course a woman, here in Morocco women are the cooks, the best cooks, they do all the cooking!” He replies enthusiastically.

I had anticipated this answer. I had been in Fez for nearly ten months and recognized that women, both in restaurants and within the home, were responsible for nearly 100% of all food preparation. Whenever I ate out I would make an effort to peek my head into the kitchen and greet the two or three women that were inevitably cooking my meal. Visiting someone’s home, for lunch or tea, I am immediately seated in the formal salon while women bustle to and from the kitchen bringing tea or setting the table and then finally emerging triumphant from the kitchen with a platter mounded with fresh steamed couscous and a rich savory stew. Sometimes women spend hours, even days, in the kitchen preparing an elaborate meal for a guest or celebration. At times several generations are found at work in the kitchen as when I ate couscous with my local shopkeeper and his family. When I arrived, his mother, wife, aunt and niece were all crammed in the small narrow kitchen. All of them together chopping vegetables and stacking plates, somehow managed to squeeze me in and offer me a taste of the sauce. It still seems a miracle that from such small kitchens such beautiful food can be produced, such as the turkey, pumpkin and raisin couscous, served with buttermilk on the side, that we had for lunch that day.

-Field notes from Fez, May 2011.

As the above passage suggests, Moroccan food and Moroccan women’s lives are intimately connected. Moroccan women have complex relationships to food and the spaces of food preparation, specifically the kitchen where they spend a significant amount of working with food. The ways in which women interact with food are influenced by cultural assumptions and

expectations, local history and tradition, and global culture and politics. Women learn to negotiate their gender identity through food relationships. They learn that to be what is socially considered a “good” wife they are expected to be a “good” cook. Women also learn as young girls to perform gender through interactions and relationships with food. They learn that they are expected to help with making bread, preparing food for the family and helping out around the home. Moroccan women are also negotiating the social changes that influence how they relate to food on both an individual and community scale; whether this be managing their relationships around a work schedule that takes them outside of the home and away from the kitchen or struggling to make do with the increased cost of food and the cultural pressure to buy more “modern.” These food relationships are dynamic and are constantly being influenced by the economy-local and global-as well as popular media which introduces women to a more global food culture.

In this project food is used as the lens to investigate women’s lives and gain insight into the broader socio-structural processes that affects gender relationships and dynamics. Using food as lens brings one into the home and domestic spaces of food production like the kitchens which have, until recently, been ignored by geographers as mundane or banal spaces (Johnson 2006 and others). Not only does food provide a certain recognition of women’s lives in the domestic realm, but it also offers insight into how women interact with and react to global food culture. Food, itself and our relationships with it, is affected by multiple scales of influence from the global to the local. It becomes apparent that aspects of the environment, such as physical landscape, climate and topography, factor into food behaviors and relationships. Perhaps less obvious, but equally as important, are other factors such as economic and public policies, local socio-cultural values and global cultural forces, that all come together to influence food

behaviors in different ways. In Morocco, cultural values around gender are closely related to food as women tend to be responsible for food preparation as evident from the passage quoted earlier. This project assumes that food behavior, gender roles and a variety of other social, economic and cultural factors are deeply interconnected throughout multiple scales of influence.

Research Questions and Approach

Recognizing that Moroccan women have complex and interesting relationships to food, and that those relationships exist on multiple scales and are affected by a variety of outside and internal forces, I propose a set of research questions that my thesis aims to answer. These questions are:

- How are food and gender relationships changing in reaction to societal change and global cultural influence?
- How are women negotiating these changes? What are the tensions between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern in regard to food and gender roles?
- And finally, what factors shape these relationships? Where do they take place? Specifically, what role does kitchenspace play in these relationships?

To answer these questions, I spent eleven months in the field, conducting research in Fez, Morocco (see the map in Appendix A). Part of the research process involved intensive language study with the goal of completing at least ten semi-structured in-depth interviews in Moroccan Colloquial Arabic or *Derija*. Participant observation was also a critical method for this project, as I spent hours in Moroccan kitchens and markets, interacting with women in their respective kitchenspaces. Methodologically, feminist theory informed my approach and provided me with opportunities to interact with Moroccan women on a personal level based on mutual respect and equality.

Organization of Thesis

Following this introductory chapter, I offer an overview of the literature, both theoretical and conceptual, in Chapter 2. The literature focuses on three specific areas: food, Muslim women and globalization. I examine each of these areas more generally as well as with a narrower focus on the Moroccan context and attempt to show how the literature demonstrates that these three areas are interconnected. This includes a look at relevant research in food studies, followed by research into food in Morocco and Moroccan women's relationships with food. Then I briefly cover issues concerning women and globalization and specifically women and development in Morocco. The chapter concludes with a section on the relationships between food and globalization.

Chapter 3 covers the methodological approach taken with this project. Feminist theory informed my methodological approach. As a woman working with women to explore domestic kitchens paces, it was critical to approach the research from a perspective of equality, cooperation and mutual benefit. Feminist methodological theory also contributed to my selection of methods. This project used participant observation and semi-structured interviews as core research methods supplemented by urban walks and media awareness. The chapter ends with a discussion of some of the methodological dilemmas encountered during the research process covering issues such as positionality and power relationships, self-representation and language barriers.

The research for this project was conducted in various kitchens and living rooms in Fez, Morocco, and Chapter 4 introduces the research sites as well as the landscapes and communities of Morocco more generally and Fez more specifically. Included in this chapter is a section on gender and space in Morocco. This section addresses how space in Morocco, and Fez in

particular, has traditionally been negotiated and defined around gender norms and ideology resulting in a gender segregated society.

The data chapters for this project are organized according to scale. Chapter 5 examines Moroccan women's food relationships on the household scale. This chapter, entitled "The Kitchen: *al-Cusina*" looks more specifically into the spaces of food relationships from the field to the kitchen. It begins with an examination of the historical context of agriculture and food systems in Morocco from the pre-occupation period, to the French occupation, to the contemporary post- independence structural adjustment era and the lives of women within these systems. Through the example of bread and the endangered institution of the public oven, the *furan*, I present an analysis of how the broader issues of economic restructuring and globalization are affecting women's lives and their relationships with food. The chapter concludes with a more focused study on how the physical design of kitchenspaces, and the contrast between "traditional" and "modern" kitchen design, can have an effect on how women and family members interact with food and geographical space at the household scale.

Chapter 6, "The Cook: *al-Tabakha*", narrows the scope of the research to focus on the micro-scale of the individual. This chapter analyzes women's personal relationships with food and how those relationships are changing relative to outside environmental and societal influences. This chapter begins with an overview of women's traditional roles in Moroccan society and how women's lives have been changing since the French occupation and independence. This background information is then connected more specifically to women's interactions with food and kitchenspace. These sections offer an overview of the social expectations that women experience surrounding food; how women's food relationships can be

both oppressive and empowering and finally, addresses how Moroccan women are contesting these traditional food relationships.

Exploring the relationships that Moroccan women have with food through the dual scaled approach of examining women and food on the scale of the household, specifically the kitchen, and then on the micro-scale of the individual reveals not only that Moroccan woman are intimately related to food and food spaces, but also that these relationships are being contested and transformed.

Chapter 2

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Women, food and globalization are all topics which have been the focus of research in geography and the allied social sciences. However, there seems to be relatively little research which brings them all together with a particular focus on Moroccan women. In this chapter I will provide an overview and description of the scholarly literature covering these various topics with the aim of providing theoretical and conceptual ground for this study. I begin with an introduction to women and food in Morocco and the cultural traditions that tie Moroccan women to food. I move on to discuss the tradition of using food as a lens to analyze gender relationships and dynamics. This is followed by an overview of gender and space in Moroccan society and concludes with a discussion of the significance of food spaces, specifically kitchenspace. This section will cover the existing research concerning Moroccan women and society as well as some existing development indicators. After this discussion, this chapter turns to the topic of globalization and the current theories and research on women and globalization and the effects of globalization on Moroccan women in particular.

Women and Food in Morocco

Though there is extensive research on women's lives in Moroccan society, very little of it relates to women's relationship with food; rather, the research mostly focuses on women's roles in society, both traditional and contemporary (S. Davis 1983; Fernea 1988; Sadiqi 2003; Newcomb 2009) and political issues surrounding women's rights, Islam and gender equality (Mernissi 1975; Sadiqi 2006; 2010). The realm of Moroccan food and cuisine has been limited to

non-academic world of travelogues and cookbooks. However, as non-academic as these resources may be, they are often the best sources for information on Moroccan food culture and heritage. Cookbooks by Paula Wolfert (1987, 2011), such as *Couscous and Other Good Food from Morocco*, and *The Food of Morocco*, as well as *Traditional Moroccan Cookery: Recipes from Fez* by Madame Guinaudeau (1964) and *Moroccan Cooking* by Latifa Bennani-Smires (2006) offer insight into Morocco's rich culinary heritage and the intimate relationships that exist between Moroccan women and food not only through their extensive recipes but also through the attention to detail in every recipe and anecdote. Interestingly, Morocco scholars and other social scientists, view food as another mundane aspect of Moroccan women's everyday lives, another "banal housework duty" (Mernissi 1994: 67).

Many of the cultural traditions and expectations that delineate gender roles in Morocco have their roots in Islam. Islam came to Morocco in the 8th century with the expansion of the Arab Empire (Burkhardt 1992). These new Arab settlers brought with them their religion and cultural values. Since their arrival Islam has been integrated into Moroccan culture to an extent that "Islam as culture is perceived as part and parcel of Moroccans overall identity whether they practice Islam or not" (Sadiqi 2003:41). The inevitable result is that Islam has influenced Moroccan gender roles on every imaginable level and extensive research has been devoted to the matter of women and gender roles in Islam (Mernissi 1975; Sadawi 1982; Ahmed 1992; Mernissi 2002). Four major factors influence gender roles in Muslim societies like Morocco. First, the *Qur'an* itself (being the direct word of God) stipulates certain gender behaviors and expectations, such as the value of heterosexual marriage and reproduction, the invocation for women to dress modestly and the expectation that men support and provide for women. However, the *Qur'an* does not explicitly address all issues relating to gender, and in many case Muslims turn to the

Sunna, or the recorded actions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammad as set down in the *Hadith*. The actions of the Prophet and how he related to his wives, family and community members inform gender behavior. Thirdly, source material from both the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* inform *Shariah*, Islamic schools of jurisprudence, of which there are four. It is from the use and implementation of *Shariah* law that communities and nations implement and enforce gender roles and behavior. These three influences i.e., the written word of the *Qur'an*, the spoken history of the *Hadith*, and the legal traditional of *Shariah*, are found in Muslim societies across the globe and are somewhat responsible for the similarities found in regards to gender roles. However, a fourth factor is universally present, that of historical and cultural history which greatly influences how Islam is interpreted and practiced within a society.

In Morocco two scholars in particular have examined gender roles and Islam in the Moroccan context. Fatima Merinissi (1975, 1982, 2002) and Fatima Sadiqi (2003, 2006, 2008), both seek to gain a critical understanding of Moroccan women's lives, and how women's lives are changing relative to Islamic cultural values and social change. In 1975 Fatima Mernissi, a prominent Moroccan feminist and academic, published *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* and though the book focuses on the nature of gender relationships in Islamic societies in general, it uses the Moroccan example as a case study. Mernissi (1986, 1994) has written extensively on Moroccan culture, focusing on the lives of Moroccan women as well as on her own childhood growing up in a harem in Fez. Mernissi focuses her research on gender relations and sexuality in Islam. Her findings suggest that male perceptions of women's volatile and potent sexuality are a threat to moral and social order. Therefore, men construct a perceived need to control and restrain women and their potent sexual energy. This fear of women's sexuality has led to the spatial dichotomy that exists in Moroccan society that keeps women in

the home and in the kitchen and clearly delineates gender roles and responsibilities (Mernissi 1975). The traditional gender roles of Moroccan women were spatially dictated. Women were not to leave the home unless forced to and were then also expected to take care of all domestic duties. A large percentage of this daily domestic labor revolved around the preparation and preservation of food (Mernissi 1984, 1994).

Along the same vein Fatima Sadiqi (2003, 2006, 2008), a Moroccan feminist and linguist, writes about Moroccan Arabic and its impacts on gender relationships as well as the politics of gender in Moroccan society, particularly the impacts of legal reforms and globalization. Sadiqi (2006) discusses the impacts of Moroccan women leaving the home and entering the “male” space of the formal workplace and the city streets. The roots of this change can be traced back to the political and philosophical movements of Moroccan independence from France. Intellectuals were the first to educate their daughters; however, these educated women were not the first women to leave the home for work. Rather, women received higher levels of education because it was assumed that it would inevitably lead to a better marriage match (Sadiqi 2006). With the tough economic times just after independence (Skalli 2001; D. Davis 2006) the first women to leave the home to work did so out of economic necessity. These economic changes inevitably affected gender roles as women could no longer stay in the home but were still equally burdened with the tasks of domestic labor like cooking and cleaning (Sadiqi 2006). The pressure of being a good housewife, and likewise a good cook, remains strong in Moroccan society and modern Moroccan women continue to struggle with the pressures of these gender expectations (Newcomb 2009). The traditional roles of women (with a focus on how they pertain to food) as well as the political and environmental changes that Moroccan women have faced and how these have impacted their home lives is the topic of focus in Chapter 6.

Women and Food

Using food as a lens to examine different societies and culture is a well-accepted tradition within the social sciences. Analyzing food, and the politics of food, offers insight to understanding the complexities of cultures and communities. Gendered relationships of power and hierarchy are often revealed in how a community distributes or controls food (Counihan 1998, 2008).

The body of literature suggests that the work of food preparation and transformation (and also the spaces in which this work is done) is gendered. In many cultures and communities masculine work and feminine work is separated along lines of production and reproduction (though of course communities are dynamic and these labor divisions are rarely fixed). Productive work (typically masculine work) is generally considered any work that is performed for commercial benefit, hard currency and work done outside the home. In relation to food systems this work produces cash crops that are then shipped away or taken to the market to sell. It may also involve the more intensive physical agricultural labor or labor that involves heavy machinery, like plowing or milling grain by machine (Robson 2006). Reproductive work, feminine work, is usually work that is performed for direct family benefit or consumption. Activities like sustenance agriculture (gardening), cooking and preparing food for the family and in some cases purchasing food for the family is usually designated as women's work. However, these rules are generalizations that may or may not apply to a community, for example though heavy agricultural work is considered productive, women throughout the world work long days in family, community and commercial agricultural fields, plowing, planting and harvesting (Sachs 1996).

Moroccan Women and Development

Many Moroccan women work and contribute to their families economically, either from outside the home or from within (Skalli 2001). Traditionally, women have also been less educated, often not going to school past the primary level. However, this is changing as more and more women continue on through secondary school and even university. Nonetheless, a huge issue facing both women and men in Morocco is unemployment and with high levels of unemployment both men and women struggle to find work. Today women have more rights and opportunities. This is due in part because of changes made to the *Mudawana*, or family legal code, which dramatically improved women's legal status throughout the country (Sadiqi 2009). Previous to 2004 the legal rights of Moroccan women, such as rights to divorce, child custody, inheritance, were severely limited. However, after a lengthy struggle Moroccan women through politics and influence instigated social and legal reform that raised women's status in Moroccan society and represents the first step toward broader social change. Yet, Moroccan women still struggle with traditional social norms and expectations that make life significantly more difficult for Moroccan women than Moroccan men. These challenges can be seen in the popular media in Morocco recently when a young woman, Amina Filali, committed suicide after a judge ruled she should marry her rapist (McTighe, 2012).

A number of economic and social changes have been occurring in Morocco over the past couple decades that are relevant to this study. The tables and charts in Figures 2-4 help illustrate how Moroccan women's lives are changing. Per capita income has nearly doubled since 1990 and the literacy rate has steadily increased for both men and women, and part of that increase is due to more adolescent women completing secondary levels of education. Population of urban

areas is increasing at a rate of 2.1% suggesting that more women are living in urban areas rather than rural. Finally, maternal mortality rates have decreased as well as infant mortality rates which reflect improvements in the quality of life for Moroccan women.

Table 1. Economic and Social Statistics for Morocco

Indicators	% of Population
Urban population/ rate of change (Rural to Urban)	58%, 2.1%
Literacy Rate: Male/Female	65.7%/39.5%*
Unemployment (youth 15-24)	21.9%
Unemployment (Adult)	9.2%
Population below Poverty Line	15%

*Data from 2004

Data Source: CIA World Factbook, 2012

Table 2. Development Indicators

<u>Indicators</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2010/11</u>
Per Capita GDP (2005 international \$)	\$2,684	\$4,081
Labor Force (Ratio of Female to Male Shares)	.30	.32
Participation in Parliament (Ratio)	.007*	.072
Maternal Mortality (per 100,000)	270	110
Gender Inequality index	.7 **	.5
Secondary Education Ratio (female to male)	.42	.55

*Data from 2000

**Data from 1995

Data Source: Human Development Index 1990-2010/11

Table 3. Gender Equality Indicators

<u>Indicators</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>2009</u>
Literacy Rate (both sexes)	42% *	56%
Unemployment	16%	10%
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000)	78.6	35.5
Adolescent Fertility Rate (15-19)	27**	13

*Data for 1994

**Data for 1997

Data Source: The World Bank, 1992-2009

Gender and Globalization:

Women have been disproportionately affected by globalization. Globalization can be defined as global economic restructuring and for years has been interpreted by theorists and economists as a masculine process, concerned primarily with the formal, public economic sphere. In the past decades global capitalism has taken root and trade liberalization policies have become commonplace in both developed and developing nations. These economic policies have influenced many other aspects of global culture and affected different groups of people in various ways. Women have typically been ignored by policy makers interested in economic restructuring for women were not, until recently, seen to play role in global economic processes. This restructuring has led to policies that disproportionately affect women and it is in this sense that globalization can be considered a distinctly gendered process (Gundewardena 2007; Nagar et al. 2002).

Feminists are calling for a new perspective on globalization, claiming that because women are disproportionately affected it is time to look at globalization with a new lens. There must be more work done looking into women and globalization involving the examination of the marginalized and informal spaces, scales and places where women's work and life exists.

Informal and formal economic processes are connected through gender and in order to have a fully developed understanding of globalization these connections must be explored (Nagar et al. 2002).

However, globalization is not only an economic process, it is also a cultural, informational, and an educational process. Information and communication technologies are quickly increasing awareness of all peoples. Information (political and cultural) travels faster and further now than ever before, and this information brings goods and services as well as change.

Globalization and Food in Morocco:

Globalization has opened up new markets in Morocco that have broader social and cultural affects. Now products from all over the world are available to Moroccans, Coca-Cola can be purchased at any neighborhood shop, and fast food chains have been established in the major urban areas. The single McDonalds in Fez is constantly bustling with activity and western-style grocery stores like Marjane and Acima can be found throughout Moroccan cities. Suburban mothers can now shop for all their goods in one place rather than going to the traditional open-air markets. Within these stores new types of foods are available, foods from France, India, America and China, introducing Moroccan women to diverse cuisines and providing access to goods that before were nearly impossible to find (Codron Et al. 2004).

As a result of this market integration and diversification popular media has reacted to the growing interests of the Moroccan middle class. It has responded with popular home re-decorating shows like *Dar wa Décor* and cooking personalities like *Choumicha* (more on these two later on in Chapter 5). These shows are helping re-define the cultural associations and

assumptions of Moroccan women, rarely do popular media portray traditional life in a positive light, rather it focuses on the modern, the western and the global.

Figure 1 reveals how all these separate factors, from economic policy to agriculture and traditional Islamic values to popular media, come together to influence gender roles and food behaviors.

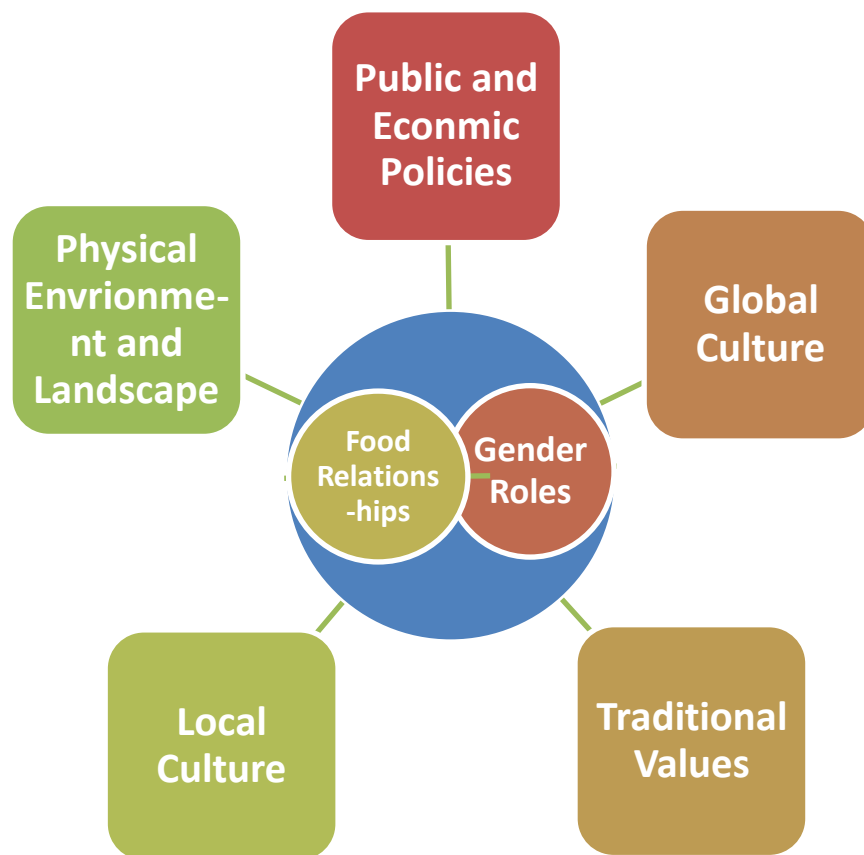


Figure 1. Food Relationships Model (Author 2010)

In this model one can see how both gender roles and food relationships are interconnected, one directly influencing the other. Both of these factors are additionally influenced by outside forces

like local and global culture, traditional values and beliefs, the physical landscape and governmental policies.

The complexity of the relationships between food and gender, illustrated by Figure 1, is particularly relevant in the Moroccan context. In Morocco the relationships that women have with food are directly connected to their roles in society. Women are associated with the home and have been historically confined to the spaces within the home like kitchenspaces. This is in part due to traditional Islamic values which place women below men in a social hierarchy; however this is also due to uniquely Moroccan factors relating to local tribal culture and home design. Economic and public policy decisions influence gender roles and food relationships through not only loss of livelihood, rural-urban migration pattern, increasing levels of poverty but also increased levels of education and literacy resulting in an increased number of women entering the workforce. Finally, global culture in the form of popular media, advertising and industry is growing ever more pervasive and influential helping to shape Moroccan women's food relationships and gender roles. In order to investigate these complex and changing relationships I needed a methodology that would allow me to become personally involved with Moroccan women's lives. In the next chapter I discuss the methods and methodological approach used to open up kitchenspaces to research and illustrate how women's gender roles and food relationships are complexly connected.

Gender and Space in Moroccan Society

Social space in Morocco is spatially gendered and segregated. There are spaces which are considered men's space and spaces that are considered women's space. Though both men and women interact within these spaces and travel through them, they are nonetheless distinct and

gendered spaces. Scholars have noted this spatial dichotomy and reference a Greek legend which claims that all human interaction takes place within two spheres: the hermean (male and public) and the hestian (female and private) (Sadiqi 2004). These two spheres make up the social universe, and though they are distinct from one another, they are also interconnected and dependent on each other; there could not be one without the other. In Morocco, this social gender division has a long cultural history segregating the sexes and labeling space. According to Sadiqi (2004, 85), “public space is the street and the market place where men evolve and private space is the home where women live.”

The *zunqa*, meaning street or alley in *Derija*, represents more than just the street. It represents all space outside the home where there are men. This outside space includes cafes and restaurants, *madrassas* or schools, and at times even the mosque. Private spaces are essentially limited to the home, though could be expanded to include the *hamam* (public bath) and perhaps a religious shrine frequented by women. If women must exit the home to the *zunqa*, it was expected that she would wear a veil and a *djellaba* (long hooded robe) to shield herself from the gaze of strange men. Sadiqi (2003: 180) states, “the *djellaba* and the veil express both a desire on the part of the woman to be anonymous and protected from the male gaze and trespassing [into male space], and a way of controlling women and keeping them silent.” The patriarchal structure of Moroccan society is revealed in this spatial dichotomy. Sadiqi (Ibid: 179) also argues that the very architecture of the Moroccan Medina reinforces both Islamic ideas and values of the patriarchal social structure as well as the gender segregation. She notes:

Protecting patriarchal power also meant protecting the most valuable assets of men, among which women constituted an important part [as inheritors of wealth and protectors of patrilineal descent]. Women were both a source of pleasure and a means of keeping the descent ‘clean’. In this respect, the architecture of the medina, like that of most Arab-Muslim cities, was first designed to ensure gender segregation.

The idea of homes as fortresses can be seen in the high windowless walls, tortuous entryways and latticed peepholes which prevent anyone from glimpsing the internal, private home world.

Gender segregation and separation in Morocco has its roots in Islam and the fear and concern over women's self-determination and sexuality both of which are seen as inevitably leading to the phenomenon of *fitna* or chaos (Mernissi 1975). In effect, Islam perceives women and their sexuality as a threat to the moral order of things and it falls to men to keep this sexuality under control. Ultimately this happens in two ways: through marriage and through sexual segregation. In traditional Moroccan society women were expected to interact only with their male relatives and their husbands. Ideally, a Moroccan woman would have no contact with an unrelated man and this sort of mixing of the sexes was considered extremely taboo (Ibid). These social religious prohibitions about the mixing of the sexes has resulted in the public/private spatial dichotomy that still exists (though somewhat changed) in Morocco today. In fact, Mernissi (Ibid: 99) states in her publication *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics and Modern Muslim Society*, "interaction between the sexes, though increasing, is still an unusual phenomenon in Moroccan society. Traditional, absolute segregation between the sexes continues to pervade many parts of the country."

With modernity, space in Morocco is changing and the boundaries of that traditional dichotomy are shifting (Mernissi 1975; Sadiqi 2004). Today men and women mix much more freely and openly. Rarely, if at all, are women confined to the home space and forbidden to go out into the street. Both Sadiqi (2004) and Mernissi (1975, 1989) associate this re-organization of space with the political movements following independence that encouraged women's education and ultimately lead to women working outside the home. Other key factors in shifting gendered spatial dynamics include increased poverty as well as rural to urban migration. Poor women were

forced to *khajarat alKhadam* or “go out to work” in order to help support their families. As these women started to go to school and to work they were forced out into society and into interactions with male colleagues and co-workers and this has forced Moroccan society as a whole to re-examine the traditional spatial dichotomies (Sadiqi 2004). In Morocco social structures around work and marriage are changing, yet the spatial division still remains. It remains to an extent that even a researcher (myself) spending a limited time living in Morocco society becomes acutely aware of it. Increasingly, these boundaries are being crossed and questioned in Morocco yet still the lines are clear.

Because of the gender associations of certain spaces many of these spaces are unwelcoming to members of the opposite sex. For example, although today one will find many Moroccan women in the streets, in the office and in cafes, these are not necessarily friendly places for women. Women are more or less encouraged to pass through, rather than linger (ibid). In fact, the street is often viewed as a dangerous place for women, a place where they are vulnerable, particularly to the advances of strange men and thieves. A refrain I heard over and over was *andak al douna khawia* or “beware of the empty world.” Initially I was skeptical, as I was generally relieved to have a street to myself, rather than the hustle and crowding that is so typical in the Medina. However, after time I began to dread those lonely walks out of fear that I would come across a group of young men or pass by a stranger. I was vulnerable alone in the street for it meant potential (almost inevitable) sexual harassment from men in the form of cat calls, groping and other unwanted attention. I soon learned that this is a fact of life for most Moroccan women. The street is an unwelcoming male space, and it is best for women to travel quickly and in groups. In the same vein men are not generally encouraged to spend time in the kitchen, and many were raised to think that a man in the kitchen or doing housework was

hshuma or “shameful.” However, the consequences of a man crossing the gender space boundary are not nearly as dire or threatening. Today there are many women who would appreciate a man who crossed the boundary into the kitchen (many of the women I interviewed expressed this sentiment); however, I also observed that there are fewer men who desire that their wives, girlfriends, or sisters spend any amount of time out in the street or drinking in cafes.

Food and Space

As previously mentioned, the spaces of food, food production and food consumption are also gendered. Across cultures, the home kitchen, where food is prepared and/or served to families or to individuals is typically understood to be a feminine space. It is a key space where reproductive gendered food work takes place. Kitchen spaces can take many forms, from western-style spaces with modern and high tech appliances to outdoor or dirt floor areas around a fire or stove. Women throughout the world are constantly interacting with and within these kitchenspaces. Through interactions with and within this space women negotiate and perform gender (McDowell 1992; Rose 1993; Johnson 2006 and others).

Kitchens are simultaneously sites of oppression that reproduce dominate patriarchal discourses as well as sites of empowerment where those same discourses are subverted in that they can never fully embody the social rules and regulations that they espouse (Bennet 2006). This means that although kitchens, at least in patriarchal social systems like Morocco, exist in a world defined by men, they are also spaces in which change is possible and inevitable and in which women have power. Bennet (2006) pursues these concepts in her research concerning the gender dynamics within an English farm kitchen. Her research highlights that kitchens are

complex spaces where gender identity and cultural expectations are both contested and reinforced.

Within the kitchen individuals or groups of women act out their food relationships by physically manipulating food into meals and the distinct meals they prepare reflect something about their identity either culturally, spiritually or physically. The kitchen can also be a place where knowledge is transferred from one generation to the next and where grandmothers and mothers teach young girls what it means to be a woman in a specific community. In this sense kitchens can be viewed as sites of women's power and spaces where women are in control. Often kitchens are the domain of women, where men are specifically or implicitly forbidden and women are in charge of how food is prepared, when it is served and who gets to learn what and when about food (Christie 2006; Robson 2006).

In South Africa, Joan Wardrop (2006) looks at the dynamic nature of kitchenspace as experienced by women street vendors in Durban. Wardrop discovers all sorts of women serving food in "public" spaces (out on the streets) to working businessmen. Mostly, these women are preparing their food at home in their private kitchenspaces and then transferring the food, and incidentally the actual space of the kitchen, to the street. While situated in public space these mobile kitchens remain private and associated with women. This article highlights the fluidity and complexity of space; for although in some ways this mobility empowers women as they earn money to support their families they still express frustration, fear and intimidation while working in public, male space.

As Wardrop's research shows, the physical space, location and design of a kitchen have meaning and impacts how women interact with food, men and culture. Though Wardrop's research was concerned with semi-commercial and outdoor kitchens, Saarkingas (2012) studies

how the architectural design of kitchenspaces affects the gender relationships of families within the home. Her research concerns how changes in kitchen design in Finland between the 1930's and 1950's affected the visibility of domestic (kitchen) work. The design changes from "laboratory kitchens" (small kitchens which were distinctly separate from the rest of the house) to more open and integrated floor plan "emphasized the visibility of housework and brought housework into the modern living room" which in turn created the possibility of "new tempos and routines" of family life (2012: 168-169). She shows that not only the actions that take place within kitchenspaces but also the physical space itself have serious implications for the construction of gender roles and the potential for change.

Chapter 3

Methodology, Methods, and Data Sources

This chapter begins with an introduction of the methodological approach and offers a brief overview of feminist research methodology and the concepts that framed this research project. This is followed by a section on methods and data, outlining how participant observation, semi-structured interviews, a study of popular media and extensive urban walks were the methods used for this project. This section discusses my experience in Fez and introduces the wonderful women who were willing to help me in my research. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of some methodological dilemmas and questions that developed throughout the research process concerning issues of positionality, representation, and language.

Methodology

Feminist geographers have expanded the field of inquiry to include everyday spaces such as the home and kitchen. Researchers have shown that feminism as a methodology opens up these spaces of analysis and interpretation in new and interesting ways (Nast 1994; Oberhauser 1997; Christie 2006; Johnson 2006; Robson 2006). Feminism as a methodology calls into question the researcher/participant relationship and aims to create a research environment based on equality, compassion, and mutual understanding in the hope that it will “allow for ‘others’ [non-researchers] to be heard” (Nast 1994, 58). Though it may be that in many cases, especially research conducted in the Global South total equality between the researcher and participant cannot be achieved, it is nonetheless a worthy goal. Feminist methodologies, in the very least, attempt to reconcile differences through the acknowledgment of social difference in race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and so forth.

The nature of this research project was particularly suited for a feminist methodological approach. The research project was officially conducted over a nine month period, unofficially over eleven months as two months were spent in intensive language training. However, the research for this project was continuous throughout that entire time and in fact a few of my language instructors became research participants. I had the opportunity to spend approximately four months living with a host family who also became vital participants in this research. After the homestay, I moved into an apartment in another neighborhood for approximately seven months in which time I was able to develop cherished relationships with my neighbors who also formed a crucial participant base for this project. It is clear that without the time and energy devoted to developing relationships with my teachers, friends and neighbors this project would have been impossible.

Kitchenspace

Past research has identified kitchenspace as a unique and valuable space “where women proclaim their visibility, as economic food producers and transformers (Johnson 647, 2006).” Kitchens are spaces where women’s complex relationships to food and food transformation are revealed. These are spaces where women negotiate their gender identity and specialized knowledge (concerning food and gender) is applied, shared, and transferred from one generation to the next. Critical knowledge concerning gender and identity is communicated through food and food spaces (Johnson 2006; Christie 2006; Robson 2006; Bennett 2006). In particular, kitchenspace is a crucial site for inquiry into the everyday, and this research explores how an everyday space like kitchenspace can highlight complex and gendered relationships in Moroccan society. Kitchenspaces can simultaneously be seen as sites of women’s power and oppression as

well as spaces which embody the cultural tensions between tradition, modernity and change which many Moroccan women are currently negotiating. In the lives of modern Moroccan women food, gender, and space are connected in complex and dynamic ways. Spaces of food production, most notably kitchenspaces, are spaces in which the relationships between food, space, and gender are identified and negotiated.

The home, and more specifically for this project the kitchen, is a space which in the last couple decades has become of particular interest to feminist geographers (Johnson 2006 and others). Feminist methodologies are particularly useful for accessing these spaces as spaces of research. Home spaces tend to be private spaces. This is especially true in Morocco where traditionally the worlds of the home and the street were, at least in ideology, strictly divided. In Fez, traditional homes are thickly walled fortresses with limited access to the outside world. There are very few windows that look out onto the street and those that do are small and shaded, allowing a person to see out but preventing anyone from looking into the home. Even the front doors block any glimpse of the inner world for once opened they reveal nothing but a dark and narrow hall. In order to enter a Moroccan's home one must be invited in as a guest or welcomed as family. Though Moroccans are warm and hospitable and will undoubtedly invite one into their home to offer you tea, cookies and conversation a personal interaction and commitment is required. Home spaces are spaces where people live and the intimate relationships that exist between people their space is not something that can be discovered through a survey or questionnaire.

This is especially true of the kitchen and of women's space in Morocco for in order to access a Moroccan kitchen one needs more than to be invited in as a guest. Guests are shown into the nicest salon and seated on the nicest couch and served, most likely, by a woman bringing

tea and sweets out of a room hidden from view. The guest does not belong in kitchenspace; kitchenspace is messy, unglamorous and inappropriate. To get involved with kitchenspaces more of a relationship is required, an active pursuit of the space itself and of the actions and lives that take place within. Feminism, as a methodology, offers a way to access these spaces because it promotes developing relationships and rapport with research subjects through mutual understanding and respect. A methodological approach such as this requires time, energy and commitment. Research methods often utilized are personal narratives, in-depth interviews and participant observation because these methods not only allow the participant to speak for herself but encourage the researcher to become actively involved in the lives of the participants.

Methods and Data

This study is a qualitative project and my selected research methods were participant observation and semi-structure interviews. Schensul, Schensul and LaCompte (1999: 91) define participant observation as “a data collection technique that requires the researcher to be present at, involved in, and recording the routine daily activities with people in the field setting.” This total insertion into the community was crucial in helping me to determine which study sites were ideal as well as building the relationships with individuals and the community as a whole that were crucial to the success of my research project. This aspect of the research process began immediately when I arrived in Fez. As part of the Fulbright grant orientation we spent two days in Rabat before leaving for our respective research locations. From Rabat I traveled to Fez to begin an intensive language course in Moroccan Colloquial Arabic, or *Derija*, at the Arabic Language Institute in Fez (ALIF).

Language acquisition was a critical aspect of my methodology as I planned on, and succeeded in, conducting my interviews in *Derija*. I arrived in Morocco with an intermediate level of proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) from studying the language at The University of Montana as well as at the Bourgiba Institute of Modern Languages in Tunis, Tunisia. However, MSA and *Derija* are significantly different. Arabic is not universalized across the Arab world and nearly every region from Iraq to Morocco has a unique dialect. Because of Morocco's geographic isolation from the rest of the Arab world its dialect is significantly different from other Arabic dialects. In general, *Derija*, MSA and other dialects are not mutually intelligible. This is significant as my target research population primarily consisted of women of all ages and the illiteracy rate for women in Morocco was around 60% (CIA 2010). It was therefore necessary to study *Derija* in order to conduct my research, for I would need this language skill to not only conduct my interviews but also to interact with Moroccans on a daily basis. I feel that it is also important to note here that I do not speak French. French is often used in Morocco and it is considered the "unofficial" language of business, the economy and often academia and it is a second language for many educated Moroccans. French was introduced to Morocco via the French protectorate that presided over Morocco from 1912 to 1957 and has had a significant influence over local language and culture. However, I did not attempt to learn French because it was unlikely that all of my target population would speak French. Some of my respondents were either illiterate or had limited levels of formal education but all spoke *Derija* as their native language.

Upon beginning the intensive *Derija* courses at ALIF I was placed with a host family for the duration of my classes. I went on to spend four months living closely with a host family. There was no greater opportunity for me to begin participant observations than while living with

this host family and the family members were an immeasurable help in regards to my language study. I began to investigate the gendered spaces and relationships that exist in Morocco around food with the help of my host family. I was given the opportunity to get to know their extended family and participated in religious holidays and celebrations. These experiences were highly informative and integral to my research.

Participant Observations

My observations and research included time spent in the kitchen with my host sister preparing meals, baking bread and cleaning up. I would also often travel to the local market to buy food, run errands, and even purchase a live ram to slaughter for *Eid al-Adha* (the biggest holiday in the Muslim calendar). Visits to and from extended family, who lived in the apartment building next door, were common as were visits to aunts and uncles throughout the city either for lunch or tea or for an overnight stay. My host family had relatives in the old city as well as in newer neighborhoods in the Ville Nouvelle. These visits opened up new sites of inquiry, introducing me to the geographical, cultural, and architectural differences between the old and new cities.

In mid-December, I moved from my host families' apartment in to an apartment about one mile away, located in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Fez. I lived on the second floor of a renovated traditional home with stunning views over the Fez *Medina* (old Islamic city). I remained in this apartment for the remainder of my stay in Morocco (approximately seven months). I slowly integrated into the neighborhood, developing warm relationships with not only my neighbors but with the local shopkeepers and *hamam* (bathhouse) operators. Through these relationships I was able to continue my research and observations. Additionally, I was able to

begin a new thread of inquiry for I began to shop for myself and prepare food on my own. Local markets opened themselves up to me, and I would spend hours wandering through the *souq* (market) seeing what was available, purchasing new and interesting vegetables or fruits, asking questions and chatting with the merchants, butchers and other shoppers. It was through these interactions that I learned about the Moroccan concept of *bildi* (organic) and *roumi* (conventional), the significance of seasonality to Moroccan cuisine, and the myriad of herbs and spices that go toward not only food but also healing and magic.

These observations and interactions, along with continued language study, helped me hone my language skills and expand my vocabulary to the point that I was able to prepare and conduct interviews. After two months at ALIF, I decided to switch to a more affordable language school called Subul Assalam Centre for the Arabic Language. It was at this language school that I was able to continue my studies with a private tutor and where I met a group of remarkable Moroccan women who were integral to the development of my research. The director, teachers, and administrators at Subul were all intelligent, educated, and confident women, a few of whom I would go on to interview for this project.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to participant observation, I also conducted ten semi-structured interviews with different women throughout the city. Through my observations I identified potential key informants that would be ideal interview subjects. Schensul, Schensul and LaCompte (1991, 122) define key informants as “people identified by researchers or community members as knowledgeable about the topics targeted for exploration.” In my case, I identified key informants as being home cooks (of all ages) and individuals responsible for purchasing food for the family

or selling food in the market, as well as those individuals who were highly respected and acknowledged in the community for their culinary skills and knowledge. However, I was interested in interviewing a wide range of women for this project, not just women who were home cooks but also women who worked outside the home or were not particularly interested in cooking. A copy of my interview guide (in *Derija* as well as in English) can be found in Appendix B. The guide includes about 25 questions covering a wide range of food-related topics. Beginning with basic questions about age, educational background and family history it goes on to inquire about gender relationships with food such as who cooks and for whom. It also includes questions about food/culinary education, bread baking, shopping and opinions on gender roles in marriage and in Moroccan society as a whole.

The interviews themselves lasted from twenty minutes to an hour and a half (the later interview was conducted with two people at once). Most of the interviews were recorded using a hand held tape recorder. Three of the interviews were unrecorded, one where I did not have the recorder with me, another because it was conducted in the market while shopping for a meal. The third interview was interrupted five minutes in because the respondent's husband entered the room and the respondent requested that the recorder be shut off. However, we continued the interview with her husband still in the room watching TV and oblivious to the interview.

I took detailed notes of all the unrecorded interviews conducted as well as detailed debriefings of all the recorded interviews. As often as possible I submitted entries to a field journal documenting the successes and struggles I encountered while in the field. This is also discussed more in the section on methodological dilemmas. Upon returning to the United States I revisited these interviews and transcribed and translated the interview data. All but one interview was conducted in *Derija*; the other was conducted in English.

The research respondents were all women. Although I developed close relationships with a few men, I chose not to officially interview them for the sake of consistency in the research. The women I interviewed came from a variety of social and educational backgrounds and ranged in age from twenty four to approximately sixty. These were women that I got to know either through my host family, the language school, and my neighborhood or through volunteer work I did at a local women's shelter tutoring English. Nearly all of the women grew up in Fez and all grew up in urban areas speaking Moroccan Arabic as their native language. Many of the respondents identified themselves as having ancestral heritage in Fez. Some even claimed their family lineage extended all the way back to the Muslim expulsion from Spain, starting around the 11th century CE. Many Muslims fleeing Spain resettled in what is now known as the Andalusian quarter of the old Medina. The name Andalusian comes from the Arabic word for the Iberian Peninsula "al-Andalus" (Burkhardt 1992). All my research subject identify themselves as distinctly urban, Arab and *Fessi*. *Fessi* is the adjective used to describe things or people from Fez and later on a participant is referred to as a *Fessia*, this simply means "a woman from Fez."

Participants

I have included a brief overview of the characteristics of the respondent group as well as a short introduction to each individual (respondent's names have been changed). I had a total of 11 respondents and ten interviews; one interview was conducted simultaneously with a mother and daughter. In the group, four women were over forty and the rest were between the ages of 24 and 40 with 5 respondents still in their twenties. Five of the women had adult children either living at home, married and living with their husbands or living abroad. One respondent, Jamilla, had a young three year old daughter at the time of the interview and now has a small 4 month old

son. Seven of the women currently work outside of the home and the rest work inside the home either because they are retired, have chosen to remain at home, or remain at home because their husbands have asked them to. Of the working women all three were unmarried at the time of the interview but one has since gotten married and moved to the US. She is unsure whether she will work outside the home. Of the respondents, six received a university education, two finished high school and at least two others finished elementary school.

Fetiha is a 27 year old university graduate and language teacher at a local language school. She is married with no children and lives with her husband in the Fez medina just a few houses down from her mother. She does not cook for herself; instead, her husband prepares meals or they eat with her mother. She works outside the home teaching and helping to manage the language school. She speaks English, French and Arabic.

Loubna was just recently married in Fez and has moved to Birmingham Alabama with her husband. She is 24 and recently graduated with an M.A. in linguistics. She worked as a language teacher at a local language school but is unsure whether she will continue to work outside the home in the US. She grew up in a wealthier neighborhood of Fez. She speaks English, French, and Modern Standard Arabic.

Besma is from a poor neighborhood in the Fez Medina. She has a university education as well as certificates in computer science and maintenance. She is 28 years old, single and lives at home with her family. She works as a receptionist and IT specialist at the same local language school. She speaks French, Arabic and is learning English

Marwa is 26 years old and is the director of a local language school. She is currently working on her Doctorate in religious studies and linguistics. She grew up in a modern neighborhood of Fez and is from a wealthy family that owns land outside the city. She is single and would like to marry if she finds a man who will respect her decision to work outside the home. She speaks excellent English, and my interview with her was the only interview conducted in English.

Noura is a 56 year old woman from the Fez Medina. She is married, has six children and works sometimes as a wedding attendant. She went to school only to the fourth or fifth grade and was married at 15. Of her children, two are married, one lives abroad in France, and another in Fez, and the rest still live at home. She speaks Moroccan Arabic and some French.

Nazha grew up in Tangier but moved to Fez when she married. She is 40 years old and works as a cook at a local women's shelter. She has a degree in geology but cannot find work. She has four children (3 boys and 1 girl) and lives with them in the Medina. She speaks Arabic, French and some English.

Zahira is about 45 years old and works as a domestic servant and cook. She is widowed with one son who is married and lives in the U.S. She lives alone in the Medina in a small two room apartment and has had limited education. She speaks Moroccan Arabic.

Mouna and her mother are part of a wealthy Fessi family. They live in the Modern city in a large home. Mouna is single and works as a manager for a food distribution company. She went

to school in Switzerland, and her parents often travel to Europe. She speaks Arabic, French, Spanish and is learning English. Her mother speaks French and Arabic.

Imane lives in the Medina with her husband and children. She is 50 years old and her daughter just married and moved out of the house. She stays at home because she has hip problems, and though she worked outside the home in her youth, she quit when she married. She speaks French and Moroccan Arabic.

Jamilla lives with her husband, daughter, and infant son in an apartment in the Fez Medina. She is 28 years old and has a high school education. Though her family is from Fez, she grew up in Oujda and moved back to Fez when she married. She works at home because she has small children and her husband wants her to stay home. She speaks Arabic.

Urban Walks and Media Analysis

In addition to interviews and participant observation I also engaged in extensive urban walks, exploring and observing the streets and alleys of the Medina, the wide boulevards of the Ville Nouvelle (the French established new city, more on this in the chapter on research setting), and as many markets and grocery stores that I could. In reality, I utilized this method most of all because (as I will explain further later in the research setting chapter) the area of Fez in which I lived was car free. I lived off a small alley that was no wider than six feet across (at its widest) and which would permit only people on foot or on motorbike. Alleys such as this make up most of the Medina and in order to reach automobile traffic I had to walk fifteen minutes to the nearest road. Therefore, I spent a lot of time walking to the market and wandering throughout the city.

Lastly, I also conducted research on popular media through TV programs, radio shows and advertisements. Initially, I conducted this research by accident, watching TV with my host family in the evenings before and after dinner. My host family enjoyed television, as most Moroccans do. This is evident in the view over the rooftops of Fez, every rooftop, no matter how shabby was decorated with its very own satellite dish (more if there were multiple families living in the same building). There were many nights we ate dinner in front of the TV, watching a soap opera, or a talk or variety show. It was only after a while, and only once my *Derija* improved did I begin to recognize the significance of these shows to my research. Shows like *Ana wa Yak* (a short sitcom), *Dar wa Décor* (a home decorating show), and *Choumicha* (a popular cooking show) became subjects of research as well as entertainment. I will discuss these programs and their implications later on in Chapter 5.

Questions and Dilemmas in Methodology

Feminist methods and methodologies raise some important questions and force the researcher to contend with some serious research dilemmas (Wolf 1994; Jones et al. 1997). Questions surrounding issues of representation, positionality, and exploitation emerge throughout the research process and can be difficult for both the researcher and the participants (Ibid). Many of these issues arose during my own research as I struggled to come to terms with issues of power, class and culture.

Over the course of the eleven months I spent in Fez and continuing on now that I have returned home from the field and have begun to analyze and record my findings, I have worried over and grappled with questions that surround feminist methodologies and the everyday in the field. I had to continually ask myself questions concerning my own positionality and

representation in the field and needed to contend with concerns over language acquisition, comprehension, and translation.

With feminist methodologies it has become accepted that “the personal is political”; however, in regards to my experiences in the field researching women and the “everyday” spaces of food production I would also argue that the “the professional is also personal.” In the eleven months that I spent in Morocco, whether it be living with my host family or in my apartment, attending language classes, interviewing women, or doing my daily shopping, I never stopped conducting research. This perceived need to “do” research was something I struggled with, but eventually I realized that in living the everyday and thinking about and recording my interactions, I was “doing” research. For me there was never a clear line that divided the personal and the academic. Though I think this can be said for all research in the field it is particularly true for research in everyday spaces for we are inherently concerned with and involved in these spaces. To some extent , they are or they become our everyday spaces as well.

Positionality

If it is the case that these everyday research spaces are also everyday life spaces, then questions concerning positionality and self-representation are increasingly important (Wold 1994). Who we are while conducting research in the field is also who we are while living in the field and, in many cases, who we are when returning from the field. In the case of this research in Morocco I was/am a young female American graduate student working in the field for the first time. With many of my research participants, neighbors and friends there was a substantial class and cultural division. By Moroccan standards my grant’s monthly stipend made me wealthy, and I was able to afford many luxuries that my neighbors could not. In many cases this caused

tensions between me and my participants when it came to spending money on food or gifts. For example, I was in the habit of bringing over fruit or pastries whenever I visited my neighbour Noura. One day she asked me quite pointedly why I was doing this. I said it was common, in America, for a guest to bring food or drink when visiting friends. She criticized this habit in her response asking, “What if that same guest when visiting you cannot afford to bring something to your house?” In Morocco it is the host’s responsibilities to provide, not the guest. Her reaction highlighted a divide between us. I was bringing over relatively expensive pastries and fruit, and it was not something she would be able to afford when visiting me. Until that moment, I had not thought twice about power dynamic created by this interaction.

In Morocco my basic identity gave me power over my participants and it could not be assumed that the “commonality of womanhood” would equalize the relationship (Wolf 1996). In fact, on a very basic level researchers in the field have power over their respondents for they have the privilege of one day leaving the field (Wolf 1996). In Morocco there is a great desire to emigrate to either Europe or American where it is perceived that individuals lead lives of wealthy and prosperity. Therefore, Americans carry a sense of privilege not typically awarded to the average Moroccan. My level of education also set me apart from many of my neighbors and respondents. In Morocco the literacy rate is just about 40% for women and many of my participants were either illiterate or had not received an education past elementary school (CIA 2010).

Representation

Another issue that feminist scholars have had to contend with in the field concerns personal representation, and how a researcher is perceived by participants, friends, neighbors and

society (Wolf 1996). Morocco is a Muslim society which highly values marriage and attempts to strictly regulate female sexuality. Because of this most Moroccan women live with their families until they marry when they move in with either their husband or with their husband and his family. Moroccan men and women rarely have platonic friendships before marriage and spend little time together. The practice of men and women living together outside of marriage is culturally unacceptable.

While in Morocco my partner (to whom I am not married but in a significant relationship) came to visit for four months. I was aware before traveling to Fez that because of cultural differences regarding the importance of marriage and relationships, his visiting and our living together could be a contentious issue with my Moroccan friends and neighbors. Therefore, I decided to present myself as married to the community. This was a difficult decision to make because at times I felt that I was deceiving my participants and I found that frustrating. Diane Wolf (1996: 12) puts it best stating that:

In most of these cases, the harm is minimal, but the guilt for those deceiving their respondents with whom they are attempting to create a bond of empathy may cause considerable anguish. Although many non-feminist fieldworkers may deceive their subjects and feel bad about it, feminists have expressed considerable distress over this dilemma, because lying directly contradicts attempts at a more feminist approach to fieldwork, which includes attempts to equalize a relationship and create more of a friendship.

I chose to misrepresent my status as married for several reasons. First, as a married woman I would be able to better relate with many of my participants; it would be understood that I lived with a man and prepared the meals and shared, to some extent, their kitchen experiences. Secondly, I chose to live alone in an apartment in my neighborhood, and being married ensured that I had the respect of the community. In Morocco young single women generally do not live alone; rather, they live with their families or other women. Unfortunately, the assumption is that

a woman living alone is likely a prostitute. If this was the assumptions people had about me in my neighborhood it would have made forming relationships with my neighbors significantly more difficult. Finally, I said I was married for reasons of personal safety. Living alone as a single woman could have been dangerous. In my neighborhood, everyone knew where I lived and who I was; as a married woman I had respect in the neighborhood and therefore my neighbors looked out for me. In many ways, in many instances, my status as a married woman staved off sexual harassment and threats to my person.

Language Barriers

The issue of language is especially relevant in a multilingual country like Morocco. Four languages are used on a regular basis but in varying circumstances throughout the country. Morocco's two national languages are Standard Arabic and Amazigh (or Berber). However, Moroccan Colloquial Arabic (or *Derija*) is the mother tongue of most Moroccans (especially urban Moroccans), and French is still used as the language of business and economics as well as in the upper social strata of society. Often, in different social situations it will be considered more or less appropriate to use a certain language. For example, the language of academia is often either French or Standard Arabic because those are considered educated languages (Sadiqi 2003). In a university setting or with an academic those languages convey respect and intelligence. *Derija* on the other hand is the language of the street and that language of the home (Sadiqi 2003).

Certain questions and concerns arise when conducting research in Morocco with Moroccan women particularly for a native English speaker working in the country. Is one expected to be fluent or conversational in both *Derija* and Arabic (or French)? If that is not the

case what language is best utilized and how does one then navigate this language culture? For this project one thing was clear, *Derija* would be the language of the project. I chose *Derija* out of necessity. When conducting research on women in Morocco it is important to revisit the statistic that approximately 60% of Moroccan women are illiterate and have had little to no formal education. This means that a large portion of Moroccan women can speak only their mother tongue. Within my target population this would be *Derija*. The core methods of the research project were participant observation and interviews so it was only natural that *Derija* be the primary language utilized. Another concern is the possibility of ostracizing, or creating distance, between the researcher and the participant through the use of French (the language of the colonizer and wealthy elite) or Modern Standard Arabic (the language of Academia and the religious elite). One of my interviews was conducted in English because the respondent was fluent and since her English was better than my *Derija* it made more sense for us to communicate in English.

Conducting research in a second language raises questions and concerns surrounding comprehension, transcription and translation. Though I was able to study *Derija* intensively throughout my stay in Morocco, and ultimately felt comfortable conducting the interviews and communicating with my friends and neighbors. I do not consider myself fluent in Moroccan Arabic. Miscommunication, confusion and translation errors are inevitable. Translation is an art form, one that not even the most fluent language speakers are unable to perform accurately. As a disclaimer, some of the quotations sound clunky and perhaps awkward. This awkwardness is do to the fact that I have translated them all myself and lack the ability to give full representation and acknowledgement to the women I quote. I have tried to the best of my ability to preserve the intention and meaning behind the words.

The combination of using feminism as a methodology and the methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, urban walks and media analysis opened up the possibilities of this research. Framing my methodological approach within feminism helps create a rapport with the research participants and ideal sets the stage for an equal, beneficial and productive interaction. I got to know my participants personally as friends and neighbours and this relationship greatly aided me in my research. However, this methodological approach raised some serious questions about the nature of the participant/researcher relationship revolving around representation, positionality and language. An understanding of the methodological approach used is critical for conducting research in the field but equally as critical is a solid understand of the geography and context of the field. In Chapter 4, I provide that context, with and introduction to the research setting.

Chapter 4

Research Setting

The goal of this chapter is to provide a contextual backdrop for the research. It begins with a more general geographical and historical description of Morocco including how the landscape, agriculture, and cultural history of the Maghreb (Morocco) have influenced its food traditions. Then the chapter moves into a discussion of the city and landscape of Fez, where a majority of this research was conducted. This section covers the geography, history and food traditions of Fez in an attempt to provide the reader with a feel for the city. The chapter ends with a discussion of the gendered landscape of Morocco and in particular Fez, addressing how space was historically divided along gender lines.

Morocco

Located in the Maghreb, Morocco is bordered by two oceans, a vast desert and is split in two by the Atlas Mountains. These four geographical features influence Morocco's relationships to agriculture and food. The Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the north give coastal and inland Morocco a temperate Mediterranean climate. These regions have long been fertile agricultural lands, supplying Morocco with wheat, olives and a multitude of fruits and vegetables and agricultural production counts for 14.7% of Morocco's gross domestic product (USDA, 2010). East of the Atlas the climate tells a different story. The rain shadow created by the mountain range prevents moisture from reaching the eastern border. This arid region, inhabited mostly by nomadic pastoralists, fades into the sands of the Sahara Desert. There is limited agriculture in this part of the country, predominantly date palm orchards found in oasis villages and towns. Climate and agriculture are only part of the story. The Amazigh, the

indigenous inhabitants of Morocco, were first colonized during the Arab expansion around 800 CE. The Arabs brought Islam to Morocco, and after centuries Islam and Arab culture blended with Amazigh culture to produce a society unique to the Arab world (Burkhardt 1992). This ethnic and cultural blending impacted not only agricultural practices but also the food systems, culture and traditions of the area.

Both agriculture and gender roles are dynamic systems that are influenced and molded by one another. Over the past 100 years there has been significant change to both gender roles (more specifically the roles of women in Moroccan society) and the traditional agricultural systems of Morocco (Swearingen 1985; Mernissi 1989; D. Davis 2006; Sadiqi 2006). The introduction of international trade, the influence of the French protectorate and globalization have all played their part in shaping Morocco's contemporary agricultural systems and socio-cultural politics. Scholars have shown that women, agriculture and food systems are closely linked (Griffiths 1996; Sachs 1996). Women are intimately involved with food systems and spaces. These food systems encompass all spaces where food is produced, purchased, prepared and transformed. Within these spaces women learn about culture, gender roles and identity (Johnson 2006). Scholars have also shown that women are disproportionately affected by globalization and changes to agricultural policies (Nagar et al. 2002). In Morocco changes to policy often directly and negatively affect women's lives (Griffiths 1995; Skalli 2001). Women in Morocco are culturally connected to food, in part because Moroccan women are responsible for food preparation. Women are often taught at a young age to cook and manage meals. This food knowledge is transferred between women and between generations within the nuclear and extended family and is as robust and complex as the flavors of Moroccan dishes (Wolfert 1987).

This rich culture and history has influenced Moroccan food ways as well, through trade and conquest Moroccan food culture has been transformed into one of the richest in the world. Spices like cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg from India and Indonesia travelled across Arabia and the Sahara to become integral to Moroccan cuisine. The Mediterranean climate influences an agriculture rich in cereals, fruits and nuts and the mountains and desert supports vibrant pastoralist communities that raise sheep, goats and camels for both milk and meat. The combination of all these cultural elements produces a rich and complex cuisine which often incorporates fruits and spices into savory meat stews which in turn are served over the light grain-like pasta couscous (which can be made from a variety of grains, from wheat to barley).

Fez

A majority of this research was conducted in the city of Fez, Morocco. A map of Fez can be found in Appendix A. Fez is a city with a long and rich political and cultural history. Founded in the 9th century by *Moulay* (saint) Idris, Fez grew to become an important imperial city and the seat of several Moroccan dynasties. The original city was built straddling the Fez River in the fertile valley of the Sabu River plain and in the shadow of the Middle Atlas Mountains (Burkhardt 1992). Shortly after the establishment of the city, the Qarawiyyne Mosque and university was founded, purported by many in Morocco to be the oldest still functioning university in the world (Burkhardt 1992). Qarawiyyne and the shrine of Moulay Idris form the center of what is now referred to as the “Old City” of Fez or “*lmedina lqadima*”. The Royal Palace and the neighborhoods of the *mellah* (the old Jewish quarter) and *Fez al-Jdid* (new Fez) overlook the *medina* of Fez from a nearby hillside. Then further up, past the palace lays the *Ville*

Nouvelle, or new city. All three sections of the city are distinct and quite separate, architecturally, historically and culturally.

Geography

The Medina (or Old City) is, as the name would imply, the oldest part of Fez. The Fez Medina sits in a valley straddling the Fez River which flows down to nourish the city from the Middle Atlas Mountains just to the south. The Fez River, was originally diverted from an upper plain to flow through and feed the city. Burkhardt (1992: 67) states that this diversion, along with the numerous springs throughout the valley, gave Fez a bounty of water which “gives to the city its riches and its health, and decorates it in the garland of its numerous gardens.” Burkhardt (Ibid: 67) goes on to quote a stanza of Arabic poetry which says of Fez: “Its rivers are of purest wine, and the courtyard of each house is a wine-glass.” In all likelihood the poet is referring to the beautiful gardens of flowers, fountains and fruit trees which filled the courtyards of the larger houses in Fez. A traditional Fessi home is built around an open-aired tiled courtyard with rooms and salons branching out from all sides and up to four stories tall. The poet could also be referring to the complex water system that for hundreds of years ran beneath the streets of Fez, providing fresh water to every house through a system of underground rivers. I was even told once that it used to be that some families could catch fish from the river in their kitchens!

The medina of Fez is structured like most traditional Islamic cities (Sadiqi 2003). The grand Quarawwyne Mosque and University sits at its center, and radiating out from the mosque are *souqs* (markets) selling specific goods such as books, cloth, spices, bronze or leather. The markets expand out from the mosque with the more respected craftsmen working nearest to the mosque, for example, book sellers and calligraphers about the mosque doors while leatherworkers

and dyers are found further out. Past the various *souqs*, residential neighborhoods begin with tall, thick walled houses built next to and upon each other in a complex mosaic of tile, stone and wood. Further out still, the neighborhoods were homes to orchards and gardens. Though most of these gardens are gone, their spirits live on in the names of neighborhoods and districts. For example, in the southwestern corner of the Medina lie two neighborhoods: *Rghabat Zbib* and *Ziat*. These two neighborhoods, now nothing but homes and businesses used to produce raisins and olives for the city. The word *zbib* in Moroccan Arabic means raisin whereas *Ziat* comes from the word *zeitoun* for olive. Just outside the walls of the city the agriculture persisted. Until the colonial French occupation most of the land just outside the walls was owned and operated by local Fessi merchant families; French agricultural policy encouraged French émigrés to purchase land from locals and by the time the French left in 1956 nearly all the land had been sold (Swearingen 1985; Holden 2009). Some orchards can still be seen climbing the sides of Mount Zalagh (the mountain that rises just outside the walls north of the city) but mostly urban sprawl and development has replaced the rich agricultural land. I will discuss Moroccan and French agricultural history in more detail in Chapter 5.

Established in the 10th century CE it would seem that the Medina of Fez has changed little. Of course this is an exaggeration but underneath there is some truth. Fez does not feel like a modern city. Rather Fez, with its stone alleyways and looming architecture feels like an anachronism. Donkeys rather than trucks bring goods to the shops through the narrow and twisting city; aside from a few motorcycles swerving around the corners nearly everyone is on foot. Many people still use the public fountains (those that still work) as sources of water and shop in the open air markets that line the wider streets. But the ubiquitous motorcycles are a constant reminder that Fez is dynamic and has not always looked this way. The older folks will

reminisce of the old days when “the streets smelled of bread baking” rather than of bags of trash and when the children stayed at home rather than running amok in the streets. Many of my participants claimed that the trash and the children were a result of the “newer” inhabitants of the city who are perceived as “country folk” moving to the Medina where rent is cheapest. This trend of rural-urban migration in Morocco is well-established (Skalli 2001; Davis 2004; Sadiqi 2008). However, a wider concern is that the city is falling into disrepair, a fact that UNESCO has attempted to halt by declaring Fez a World Heritage Site in 1981 (UNESCO 2012).

Above the Medina, outside its walls to the southwest, is the Royal Palace, Fez *al-Jdid* (new Fez) and the Mellah which were constructed during the rule of the Merinid Dynasty in the 13th century. In this instance the name “new Fez” is somewhat misleading as the neighborhood is still centuries old, yet “new” relative to the Medina. The Mellah, or Jewish quarter, housed a vibrant Jewish community up until recently (the 1950’s) when most Moroccan Jews emigrated to Israel or abroad. The Mellah was a gated community that functioned separate from the rest of the city with its own town council, city ordinances and religious organizations. Given that usury is forbidden to Muslims, the Jewish population in the Mellah served as bankers, money changers and gold and silver smiths. In general the Muslim and Jewish populations lived in tolerance, the relationship was often nonetheless tense in times of political upheaval (Burkhardt 1992).

In 1912 the French established a protectorate over Morocco and took political and administrative control over the country. This moment marks the beginning of a dramatic change for Moroccan society for though Moroccans have always had some sort of limited contact with Europe not since the Arab invasion in the 8th century had a foreign power been directly inserted into Moroccan life. The French began to settle throughout Morocco, first as wheat farmers in the countryside and then as bureaucrats in the larger cities. During this time the French built the *Ville*

Nouvelle (or New City). With its wide tree lined boulevards and European architecture the *Ville* is in stark contrast to the Medina. Keeping the two parts of the city separate was a deliberate decision of the French who not only saw the Medina as a fascinating study in Moroccan culture but also wanted to avoid the social/spatial integration and conflict that they were experiencing in neighboring Algeria (Swearingen 1987). Therefore, the *Ville Nouvelle* was built strictly for French citizens and it was forbidden for Moroccans to take up residence there, though Moroccans worked in the city as laborers or domestic servants.

The Food of Fez

Insects, leaves, flowers, petals, seeds, roots and galls. China, India, Java, Egypt, black Africa, the gardens of Morocco, blending perfumes foreign to our European senses. Spices violent with all the wildness of the countries where they have ripened, sweet from the loving culture of the gardens where they have flowered, here is all the fascinations of your dark kitchens, the odour of your streets. Spices are the soul of Fez.

-Madame Guinaudeau (1964:39), *Traditional Moroccan Cooking: Recipes from Fez*

Fez has been an imperial city in Morocco for hundreds of year and through the dynastic rule of the Idrisids, Almoravids, Almmohads, Merinids, Saadians and finally the Alaouites (the current ruling dynasty). Though Fez has not always been the capital under these various rulers, it has always had religious and cultural significance (Burkhardt 1992). Part of this cultural significance is rooted in Fez's culinary tradition. The food of Fez gets its unique character from the long and rich history of the city (Guinaudeau 1964). The original inhabitants of the region were the indigenous Amazigh (also known as Berbers) of the middle Atlas Mountains, who established the tradition of couscous (a finely composed granule of semolina pasta that is found throughout North Africa). The city was subsequently settled and established by Arab Bedouins who not only

brought Islam but also the rich spices and traditions of the Arab world. Then, with the reconquest of Spain by the Catholics in the 15th century Jews and Muslims fled the Iberian Peninsula and many settled in Fez, with the Jews in the *Mellah* just east of the city and the Arabs on the West bank of the Fez River in a neighborhood that has subsequently become known as the *Andalusian* quarter after *Al-Andalus*, the Arab word for Iberia. Both cultures brought with them the culinary tradition of Spain and Spanish Cuisine. In addition to these diverse cultural influences the fact that Fez was an imperial city meant that the food of Fez was renowned for its richness and extravagance. The wealthy elite of Fez were known for throwing lavish banquets with dozens of courses and elaborate dishes (Guinaudeau 1964). Fez's location also contributed to its cuisine. Fez sits in a fertile valley between the Atlas and the Rif and has an ideal climate for growing citrus, olives and seasonal vegetables. This dynamic culinary history, along with Fez's importance as a religious and spiritual center has led many to consider Fez the cultural and culinary capital of Morocco (Burkhardt 1992).

Wandering the streets of Fez it is clear to the casual observer that food is important to this city. Just down the street from my apartment, in the neighborhood of *Guerniz*, Hassan and his son ran a small fruit and vegetable stand. Fresh and seasonal produce was always available, strawberries and peaches arrive in April and May and huge watermelons in June and July. His produce was always fresh but not always the best price, however that was never a problem because less than a quarter of a mile away was the *jotya* market where vendors sold piles of carrots, onions and peppers fresh off the truck, the dirt still clinging to their skins. Here the price was always right and the crowds were evidence of that. Continue another quarter of a mile back towards the center of the city and follow the sweet scent through the *Ashabyyne* (herb market) and *Attaryyne* (spice market) where piles of herbs and spices (fresh mint, sage, absinthe and

saffron, cinnamon and ginger) surround you from countless shops and street vendors. The spices found here are not only for seasoning tagines and couscous but also for healing illness and summoning luck or love. The abundance of fresh food and spice markets reveal that Fez is a community that values food and that food is an integral part of Fessi culture. In turn the prominent role food plays in the culture of the city is reinforced through socio-cultural gender roles. These roles prescribe that women are those responsible for nearly all food preparation. The women of Fez are considered to be excellent cooks, the best in Morocco, and through this perception they perform gender in kitchenspace through relationships with food, culture and tradition. All this will be discussed further in the following chapters.

Chapter 5

The Kitchen: *al-Cusina*

In this chapter I discuss how the environment and spaces of food production have affected Moroccan women's relationships to food and food production and also how these spaces themselves have been affected by the economic and social forces of globalization. How do the processes of globalization affect the spaces of food production in Morocco (and Fez) and what are the ways in which Globalization affects Fessi women's lives? I begin with an overview of traditional agricultural systems in Morocco to provide some background understanding for Moroccan food systems today. Then I move on to an explanation of the example of bread and the public oven and how the changes that are affecting this one staple food in Morocco are representative of changes that are affecting Moroccan food systems as a whole. Following this section, a discussion of how globalization, in terms of "global culture" has influenced these changes and what implications these forces have had on traditional food knowledge. Finally, I will end with a discussion of my observations of the physical design of Moroccan kitchen spaces and how the physical environment of the kitchen influences gender relationships.

A History of Moroccan Food Systems

Farming has been an integral aspect of many Moroccan's livelihoods for centuries. Throughout most of history, a large number of Moroccans lived in rural areas and were involved in agricultural production (Holden 2009). Farms varied dramatically in size, from a smallholder's property utilized primarily for subsistence farming, to large family owned commercial operations (Mernissi 1989; Holden 2009). Farms grew a wide variety of crops and produced goods for sale at the market or for home use. For example, wheat and other cereals were grown, as well as

vegetable crops, olives, and hay to feed the animals. Dairy products were also produced (milk, butter, buttermilk and cheese) for either home use or to be sold at a weekly market (Mernissi 1989). Typically land was claimed through inheritance or tribal affiliations under a complex system of property and water rights law. These laws were often “phrased in terms of individual rights, not collective necessities, as contractual, not civic, responsibilities” (Geertz 1972, 34). Individual property rights were very important but land tended to be collectively owned and managed through the tribe (Swearingen 1987). This emphasis on individual rights and personal property highlights Morocco’s long history of a capitalist and merchant economy (Geertz 1972; Holden 2009).

International trade has always been important to Morocco, and in the middle of the 19th century trade began to expand as wealthy Moroccan merchants began settling in European trade ports (Holden 2009). Initially, these merchants traded mostly in tea and sugar. But after drought and famine struck Morocco in the 1820’s these merchants, under the advice of the sultan, began importing wheat to feed the starving masses. Holden (2009: 25) states: “Elite merchants participated in the grain trade with Europe when local crops failed. When the sultan purchased wheat in Europe in 1826, he sold it at the ports to Moroccan merchants. Once purchased, they took responsibility for its transport to urban markets, selling it for a profit.” It was during these times of drought and starvation that wealthy merchants would acquire land from poorer small-holders who couldn’t pay back a debt or needed money and would be forced to sell the farm. These poor families were forced to move to urban areas or remain impoverished in the countryside. Fez was the capital of Morocco at this time, and it is estimated that by the time of the French occupation wealthy Fessi merchants owned 50% to 95% of the countryside surrounding Fez (ibid).

Agriculture under the French and after Independence

By 1850 France had already established a colony in Algeria and dreams of expansion throughout the Mediterranean drew France's eye toward Morocco. Swearingen (1985: 356-348) states that for the French government, "Morocco was considered part of the bountiful granary of ancient Rome" and "the extensive Atlantic coastal plains were claimed by many to be among the richest in the world. Moreover, they were relatively sparsely populated, and offered a promising area for French settlement." Once the French protectorate over Morocco was officially established in 1912 French settlers began to arrive in the Moroccan countryside to implement colonial French wheat policy. Unlike in Algeria, there was not to be the "wholesale dispossession of native farmers" but rather a sizable French presence in the countryside that would function much like "a landed gentry" (Swearingen 1985: 348). These settlers promptly began to purchase large tracts of land and put that land into wheat cultivation with the ultimate goal of exporting that wheat to France, which had experienced a massive wheat shortage following World War One. In terms of numbers, this policy was wildly successful for "the total area planted in cereals increased from approximately 1.9 million hectares in 1918 to nearly 3 million in 1926". As French settlers expanded their wheat production local farmers soon realized that wheat cultivation was profitable. Soon after the number of locals (Moroccans) farming cereals increased significantly (Swearingen 1985).

France's wheat policy was based on ill-conceived ideas about Morocco's production capacity. Nearly all wheat cultivation was non-irrigated dry-land farming, and Morocco is prone to dramatic fluctuations in precipitation. In fact Geertz (1972: 25) states that "in Morocco, to be [a weatherman] you need to be able to penetrate the mind of God." The wheat policy was based

on a quota system that required France to purchase a quantity of wheat from Morocco yearly and because of unreliable weather and poor growing conditions Moroccan wheat quickly became more expensive than grain grown in France. By 1929 French farmers began to protest. In addition to the protests a drought struck Moroccan crops. This drought was followed by a plague of locust. These factors lead to a shortage of wheat for local consumption. Nevertheless, Moroccan wheat continued to be sent to France while Moroccans starved (Swearingen 1985). Ultimately, it is clear that France's wheat policy in Morocco was a failure, but Swearingen (1985: 360) notes that "from the ashes of Morocco's wheat policy, a new agricultural policy gradually emerged during the 1930's. Based on irrigation, it was oriented toward the export of citrus and early vegetables. This policy has essentially continued intact to the present."

Upon regaining independence Morocco continued with the French irrigation policies to promote fruit and vegetable crops for export. Many small farmers lost their land during the colonial period. The best agricultural land had been bought either by French settlers or by the wealthy Moroccan elite who had aligned themselves with the French. Small holders had either been forced either to marginal, less productive land, or to forgo agriculture all together for a new life in the city (Swearingen 1987). With the opening up of land after independence the Moroccan government attempted land reform in order to put land back in Moroccan hands. However, the land reform failed to bring land to the landless. Instead, corruption and traditional power structures ensured that a majority of the best agricultural lands would remain in the hands of the elite (Swearingen 1987; Davis 2006). In 1964 Morocco received its first loan from the World Bank to help industrialize, and modernize the agricultural and economic sector. This loan resulted in increased privatization and wealth disparity so that by the 1970's 40% of the citrus orchards and 80% of the vineyards were owned by only two companies (Swearingen 1987).

Globalization and its Effects: Structural Adjustment and Reform

The first World Bank loan in 1964 reflected the beginning of economic restructuring in Morocco. In 1983 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) entered into structural adjustment agreements with the Kingdom of Morocco. This led to widespread economic and policy change such as reduction of state subsidies and price controls, the lowering of tariffs and reduction of restrictions that the IMF felt were limiting growth and development (D. Davis 2006). This liberalization of trade also led to a program of privatization, putting more land into the hands of the elite as well as into the hands of private companies owned by the royal family (Swearingen 1987; D. Davis 2006). Between 1983 and 2004 Morocco and the IMF entered into nine more structural adjustment agreements paving the way for a 2004 free trade agreement with the United States.

As the Moroccan government continues this policy of trade liberalization and “modernization” economic and social inequities have emerged. According to Davis (2006: 89), when structural adjustment policies are initialized “state subsidies for staple foods such as flour and cooking oil are reduced or eliminated, spending on health care and education is rolled back, and lowered tariffs encourage cheap imports [and] frequently undercut local production resulting in job losses.” This is precisely what occurred in Morocco. D. Davis (ibid) goes on to state that “this project has not been a resounding success at the economic level and it has failed at the social level for...large segments of the population remain socially and economically marginalized.” Today, 40% of Moroccans live in poverty and there is a 20% rate of unemployment. These numbers are higher in rural areas. The result is that any fluctuation in food

costs is significant to the average Moroccan. The cost of food is rising as subsidies for staple foods are cut.

These price changes were keenly noted by all of my research participants. In response to a question about how the local food markets (or *souqs*) have changed in the past 10 to 15 years all of my participants commented that across the board prices were higher, especially the cost of wheat. Because of the value that wheat holds in Moroccan culture, access to affordable wheat is imperative. A neighbor and close friend, Noura, told me, "...wheat, oil, sugar, tea, these things are the necessary things, if you have these, thanks be to God, you will not be hungry or poor." The significance of wheat and bread will be addressed later on in Chapter 5. In addition agricultural reforms have led to human displacement and increases in rural-urban migration and also out-migration (legal and illegal) predominantly to Europe. These migration trends often negatively affect Moroccan women as they are forced to live in urban slums or are left behind to work and raise their families in the absence of their husbands (Sadiqi 2008).

In Morocco women tend to work in the "informal" sector more often than men; they are often considered "family aides" and participate in unpaid labor, either in the fields or in the home. This "traditional" and "informal" labor consists of things like farming, housework and craftwork. This type work is increasingly depended upon when social services are cut (Griffiths 1996; Skalli 2001). Because of these added responsibilities at home, women often have less access to education. As a result, a disparity in literacy rates between men and women is apparent. As of 2004 the illiteracy rate for women was 61% compared to 35% for men (CIA 2010; Skalli 2001). Once again these numbers increase in rural areas, jumping to 87% illiteracy for women.

What affect do these changes have on food systems? First, women have been affected in numerous ways as discussed above and all of this has a direct or indirect effect on food. Women,

whether working in paid or unpaid labor, are still responsible for feeding their families (Skalli 2001). Increased rural to urban migration takes women off of the land and away from the roots of production. Typically, women and their families move to urban suburbs or slums where they are forced to purchase everything they consume rather than growing it themselves. In addition, men are often absent from homes as they attempt to emigrate to Europe for work. As a result, the number of female headed households is on the rise (Skalli 2001; Sadiqi 2008). Another change has been that as Morocco becomes more modernized and more and more people are living an urban lifestyle and there has been a movement away from the traditional marketplace economy and an increase in so-called Western- style grocery stores (Codron Et al. 2004). How women purchase food is changing; rather than making daily trips to the *souq* (market), where individual sellers sell fruits, vegetables, grains, meat, and dairy all at individually owned and operated stalls, they are purchasing food at corporate (often European owned) grocery stores where everything is available under one roof (Codron Et al. 2004). Not only are women purchasing their whole foods differently (at a grocery store rather than a *souq*) but “fast food” style restaurants and street stalls can be found throughout the city. This includes but is not limited to, global chains like McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Many local restaurants serve a variety of fast food items from whole roasted rotisserie chickens to pizza and hamburgers to a popular Moroccan sandwich the *ma'kouda* (a sandwich of spiced and fried mashed potato fitters, hot sauce, olives and a fried egg). As Moroccans economic status increase they are eating more foods higher in fats and sugars, and this trend has led to increased levels of obesity throughout the country (Benjelloun 2002). The social and environmental effects of globalization in Morocco are affecting food relationships, from how women purchase food, to what they purchase to what they feed their families. To further illustrate these issues I turn to the example of bread.

Bread and the *Furan*

Manage with bread and butter, and God will send the honey.

--Moroccan Proverb

Arguably, bread is the single most important food stuff in Moroccan culture. Bread, in some form, is typically eaten at every meal. Yesterday's bread is eaten in the morning with butter, jam or olive oil alongside a hardboiled egg, some oil cured olives and a cup of coffee or sweet mint tea. A standard lunch includes a slow cooked stew or tagine of meat or chicken and vegetables in a hearty broth alongside an array of fresh and cooked salads. Utensils are rarely used; instead chunks are torn from round Moroccan loaves of bread and used to soak up the broth and pick up bite-sized morsels of meat, vegetable and salad. In the evening, the bread leftover from lunch accompanies a lighter meal of *harrira* (a Moroccan tomato –lentil soup) or *shorba* (soup). Bread is considered near sacred, and it is considered shameful to throw it away. Many people will save up their stale bread to give to the poor who sometimes go knocking door to door asking for leftover bread. It is tradition in Morocco, to pick up bread that has been thrown on the ground, kiss it lightly out of respect, and leave it in a high visible location for someone to find if they are in need.

Traditionally, round loaves of bread were made daily by the women of the house. After breakfast the simple dough (flour, water, and yeast) was kneaded and left to rest for 15 minutes before a young boy or girl of the household was summoned to take the raised loaves to the *furan*, or public bakery. Here the bread would rest some more near the heat of the massive wood ovens before the *mul furan*, or public baker, would slide it in near the coals.

Peeking into the oven's mouth reveals a mosaic of bread. There are loaves of all shapes, shades, thicknesses and textures. Every home prepares its own bread from their own mixture of

flours; some use purely whole wheat, while others mix wheat and white, still others use golden semolina flour and stud their dough with fennel seeds. The diversity of dough represents the diversity of the community and reveals that every household has a unique and separate culinary tradition and bread lies at its heart.

In Morocco, flour is cheap (about 50 cents a kilo for plain white flour) because it is subsidized by the government and has been throughout Moroccan history (Holden 2009). Everyone eats bread, rich and poor alike. Some families, that have a larger expendable income, buy whole wheat grains in bulk and grind it at a mill. Families with connections to the countryside bring fresh wheat to the city and clean and dry it on the roof. My neighbor would dry wheat on her roof once or twice a year. She would bring wheat in from the countryside, wash it and spread it out on woven mats on the roof to dry. She refused to buy wheat in the city. She felt this way she had more control over the quality of the wheat. Those who cannot manage to buy wheat in such large quantities (i.e. in 16 or 33 kilo batches) buy flour from the local shops. Nearly all neighborhood stores sell bulk flour as it is considered a staple food. The importance of flour is also revealed linguistically as one of the words used for whole wheat flour is *baraka*. *Baraka* is a word often used in Morocco and it roughly translates into “blessings” from God. In Morocco, one can both be bestowed with *baraka* as well as consume it.

Young women all over Morocco learn to knead or bake bread at a young age even if they no longer bake at home. Traditionally, preparing quality bread was a valuable skill for a young woman to have. This skill increased her marriage prospects and represented that she was *hedga* and could be expected to be a hard working wife. Upon one of my first visits to the *furán* I learned of a Moroccan tradition, now a relic of the past. It was said that a mother looking for a wife for her son would often pay a visit to the local oven to inquire after whose daughters made

the best bread and if they were ready to be married. The local baker knew everyone's bread by sight and touch and always knew who did not use enough yeast or who was not patient enough to let the dough rise. The local baker was also a nexus for neighborhood gossip as it was a hub of social activity where women and children lingered while picking up or dropping off their bread.

Traditional urban Moroccan homes did not have ovens; this is still true for many traditional homes in the Fez Medina. Ovens are bulky, hot and expensive. It is usually more convenient to use the public oven than to have an oven hooked up at home. Imane, one of my respondents, even admitted that though she has an oven she still sends her bread to the public oven because the baker bakes it best, he is the expert. "I tried once or twice" she admitted "but I always burned it!" It turns out that though she had become an expert at kneading dough, she had never learned to actually bake the dough.

Despite Imane's experience and reliance on the *furan*, the public oven is quickly disappearing from Moroccan streets. Functioning ovens still exist in the streets and alleys of the Fez Medina but beyond the city's walls they are few and far between. There are no more ovens in the more modern neighborhoods as more and more modern kitchens also contain modern ovens. The *furan* is becoming obsolete. This was made clear to me in my interview with Loubna, a young woman who lives in a newer "modern" neighborhood of Fez, when I asked whether or not her mother took bread to be baked at the public oven. She said:

[we bake] at the house, because there isn't a public oven close. In the old city, those who live in the old city, or live in an old neighborhood, they use the public ovens. But now, here there are few, there aren't many ovens, this neighborhood is modern and there aren't many ovens, therefore the people, they have ovens in their homes, or they buy their bread from the store.

The above quotation reveals that public ovens are not present in the new housing developments across Morocco. It is assumed that either a family will bake bread in their private oven at home

in the kitchen or they will buy bread from the store, and therefore, public ovens are not even being constructed.

Are neighborhoods losing their ovens and why are developers not including them in neighborhood design? One explanation can be found in changes to kitchen design, which I discuss in more detail at the end of this chapter. Newly built apartments come with newly built kitchens, all of which have conventional ovens. But clearly, as Imane's example from above reveals, just because there is an oven present does not mean that it is used to bake bread. The larger, overall contribution to this phenomenon is that fewer women are baking bread and as a result fewer women are visiting the *furán*. Though my sample size is small I nonetheless find it revealing that only three of the ten women I interviewed still baked their own bread on a daily basis and two of these women were over 50. Besma is an excellent example of this trend amongst younger Moroccan women. She put it this way:

No I don't bake...ever! Maybe I will make something small, some *mlawi*, or something, but bread, making [kneading] bread frustrates me! Maybe I will make it if I have to but I am not interested in it all. Making bread is hard and maybe I am interested in making something, like *mlawi*, if I have the time but to have to do it, but every day! Oh my poor mother....she is always kneading. [Though] really....we mostly eat store bought bread...it is not possible for my mother to bake all the time.

The above quotation illustrates aspects of three main factors that prevent women from baking and patronizing the public oven: convenience, economy and availability. First, buying bread at the store is far more convenient. As Besma stated baking bread is not only hard, it is also time consuming and fewer women have the time. Besma works and goes to school so as she states earlier in the interview, "maybe I will make something, on the weekend, if I can." As more Moroccan women leave the home to work or attend school there is less time for baking bread. The typical Moroccan work day starts at eight or nine in the morning, goes till noon or one when

there is an approximately two hour lunch break and then continues again into the early evening. There is little, if any time for baking bread in this schedule.

In a way, the fate of the *furan*, as well as homemade bread, highlights the broader social change occurring across Morocco. The public oven is disappearing as Moroccan women have emerged into the workforce, either out of choice or out of necessity. Starting in the 1980's women left the home to pursue higher levels of education or to find work that would give them economic independence (Sadiqi 2008). Some of these women came from elite, upper class backgrounds who in an embrace of modernity decided to educate their daughters and embrace the ways of the West. Never mind that initially this was mostly for show for they assumed that their educated daughters would bring a better marriage match and none were expected to ever actually work outside the home (Sadiqi 2008). Ultimately, these educated women increased in numbers and began promoting women's liberation and economic freedom, forming the first waves of Moroccan secular and Islamic feminisms (Mernissi 1984; Sadiqi 2008). Other women, who had not been given the opportunity of education, entered the workforce out of economic necessity. In the 1970's and 1980's many of these women came from the countryside where new economic policies drove them off the land, into the cities and into a world of urban poverty (D. Davis 2006, Sadiqi 2006). Women are disproportionately affected by urban poverty; with 54% of working women working for below the minimum wage and many of these in the food and textile industries which are un-unionized and poorly organized (Skalli 2001). These new working women are all women who were at one time full-time homeworkers and already had full time jobs, as mothers and homemakers. However, with modernity they began to take on more and more and soon were responsible for not only the housework, child rearing and food preparations

but also the economic support of their families (Sadiqi 2006). This double shift phenomenon is exacerbated if they are widowed or divorced, or if their husband is unemployed.

The second factor influencing the demise of the public oven is economy. Bread is extremely cheap in Morocco. It costs 1 dirham, about US \$0.10, for a loaf of bread. There is little cost difference between purchasing bread at a shop and preparing it at home. A dirham of flour could make three loaves of bread but this does not factor in the 1 dirham of yeast it requires or the cost of the baker. What this means is that buying bread tends to be within the economic capabilities of a majority of Moroccan families. The calculations made above are based on the cost of white flour. Wheat flour is more expensive as is semolina flour (the other most common bread flour). As many of the Moroccans I spoke with were concerned with health the availability of whole wheat bread can be a deciding factor.

The third factor leading to the demise of the *furan* is the availability of store bought bread, particularly whole wheat bread. Store bought bread is on the rise across Morocco. Stacks of the round loaves surround shopkeepers in their shops. I discussed this in my interview with Fetiha, the young married Arabic teacher whose husband does all the cooking. She recalled that growing up her mother always prepared bread at home and sent it to the *furan*. Baked bread was available at the local stores. However, it was made from white flour and her mother insisted on them eating bread made from whole wheat because it was healthier and of better quality. However, in the past ten years or so whole wheat bread has become available and her mother has stopped utilizing the *furan*. These three factors combined- the convenience, the cost and the

availability of bread (particularly whole wheat bread) -have contributed to the diminished practice of home baked bread and by association the *furan*¹.

Globalization and Social Change: Tensions Over the Loss of Tradition

The disappearance of the public oven has mirrored these social changes, as the Moroccan economy modernizes traditional ways of life get left behind. Questions concerning the tensions between tradition and modernity emerged throughout my research during the in interview, in casual conversation and in numerous observations. The most pronounced of these observations being the changes affecting the public oven. This once critical neighborhood institution is fading into obscurity as modern Morocco expands to encompass everyone, not just the wealthy and elite. As the Moroccan economy modernizes (Skalli 2001) more people have the opportunity to embrace modern foodways in the shape of the fast food restaurants and Western style grocery stores which are found throughout the city(Codron Et. al 2004). Modern conveniences (ovens, microwaves, televisions and laptops) can be bought at the local superstores such as Marjane or Acima. These changes along with new developments and opportunities for women to work outside the home and pursue higher levels of education means there are fewer people frequenting once sacred institutions like the public oven.

The *furan* is only one example of how modernization and globalization are affecting Moroccan food culture. Global food culture is saturating Morocco not only through grocery stores but also through popular media and advertising. Coca-Cola is ubiquitous across Morocco, as it is across most of the world, and it is also desired. Coke has worked its way into Moroccan

¹ In an interesting but somewhat unrelated note, the commercially available bread is baked in a *furan* that has been converted to perform the entire operation from kneading to baking. These ovens will still bake dough that is brought to them in the traditional manner. Another note is that, at least in the instance of the *furan* in my neighborhood, the oven could not financially support itself off of bread alone. Rather they also prepared sweets, cookies and pastries, which were then sold commercially from carts in the street.

culture as the photo in Figure 2 (below) suggests. It was taken in a rural bus stop high in the Atlas Mountains and in the image is a woven basket (a representation of a typical Moroccan market bag) filled with fresh vegetables and fruits. The Coca-Cola label is in written in Arabic across the glass bottles nestled in the bag alongside the fruit.



Figure 2. Coca-Cola Advertisement found at a bus stop in a village between Ouarzazate and Marrakech in the High Atlas. (Photo by Lillie Greiman 2011)

The text in Arabic below the logo says “feeding the people.” This example highlights how international products have infiltrated the Moroccan market and are using traditional images to sell their “modern” products. Advertising like this can be found throughout Morocco on television, radio and billboards. Today, not only are Moroccans now purchasing and consuming Coca-Cola products, but they are also purchasing and consuming American style fast food.

In Fez fast food restaurants and stands are ubiquitous. As I mentioned earlier one can purchase a wide range of dishes from a stand to either eat in or bring home for a meal. Though there were countless Moroccan ventures the only American fast food restaurant was the

McDonalds located at *Place de la Revolution*, a large round-a-bout that separated the Medina from the *Ville Nouvelle*. This McDonalds was two stories high with a large patio for outdoor eating and a kid's play area. The McDonalds in Fez looks exactly like a McDonalds in the U.S. While in the U.S., McDonalds is a populist venture, feeding everyone and anyone high fat, high sugar cheap food, the McDonalds in Fez served middle to upper class patrons who were distinctly Western in fashion and behavior. Rarely would one see a *jelleba*, the traditional Moroccan robe, in the McDonalds lobby. Rather women are wearing high fashion jeans and designer sunglasses while their kids eat happy meals and a Toblerone McFreeze. This difference in demographics is mostly due to the fact the in Fez McDonalds is the same price as it is in the US, or approximately US \$6 for a combo meal, about 60 Moroccan Dirhams. This is an expensive meal taking into account that the average Moroccan makes about 130 Dirhams a day (CIA 2010), and many much less, and that the average cost of a kilo of vegetables and a loaf of bread can easily be below 10 Dirhams (or \$1).

The McDonalds in Fez is an extreme example, but as families have a larger expendable income, reliance on fast and prepared food is inevitable. However, these changes spark some interesting questions for in this transition, what kind of traditional food knowledge is lost? These changes mark a transformation of gender roles in Morocco. The more women work, the less time they have for baking, cooking and food preparation. Moroccan men do cook, but not like women, and though more and more Moroccan men are seeing cooking as a potential career choice (a local man runs a cooking school in Fez and there are increasing numbers of male culinary students) there are still many more who see cooking as women's responsibility within the family as well as within the culture. There were clear tensions between what my respondents saw as a loss of traditional values and the development of modern Morocco. In my interview

with Jamilla we discussed women who work outside the home and how this affects the way they prepare meals for their families and their guests:

Jamilla: Now, women leave the house in the morning and they don't have a maid. They return at 12, they don't have time. They get kefta and make it fast, get bread from the hanout and buy other prepared food at the store and put it on the table. There isn't the time. In the past it was just the house, that's all. Now, no. Now, if there is a guest, they will buy a chicken from the store and maybe some fries and put it out, the guest might think that she prepared it herself! But she bought it all at the store. Everything is different today.

Me: Is this a good thing?

Jamilla: No. I don't like a life like this, children miss their mothers also husbands. They [the mothers] are always all tired.

Jamilla is concerned not only about what families are eating within the home but also the amount of time that children get to spend with their parents. To her there is value in a home-cooked meal, particularly one served to a guest. Later in the interview we discussed how she believes that women should be able to go out and work and have some economic independence from their husbands, but she does approve of the way that this is done today. In her view if a woman is working both the husband and the wife need to work together to support the family and feed the family in the home. However, Jamilla believes that this is still best done the traditional way, when the wife is at home with the kids and the husband works to financially support the family.

In another interview, conducted with both Maryam and her mother over lunch at her large modern home in an upper class neighborhood of the *Ville Nouvelle*, Maryam had much to say about Fessi women's relationships with tradition and food. She felt that Fez was different than the rest of Morocco as the women, though they worked and were living more modern lives, were still concerned about preserving tradition:

Especially the women, the people, from Fez have [a] very, very strong tradition. Even the women who work it is important to them, traditional foods, traditional clothes, traditional furnishings, Moroccan furnishings.

Particularly with food, Maryam emphasized that it is women who are integral in preserving and possibly changing food tradition:

Yes, now [prepared food] is more popular. The people want to imitate Western society; they want to be more Western. And yes, it's nice to take fast food and prepared food and it's not just easy but it's modern but it's not...but some people in the western society want to come back to traditional food. A lot of Moroccan women, and I say women because women can change this, not men. Men can't change the traditional society. But women can.

In response to my question on whether or not Moroccan men are starting to cook in the home:

Yes of course, Moroccan men cook. But I am talking about the traditions at home. Women can preserve the traditional, the traditional food. When it's Eid they prepare special foods, not men. The men know cooking and know something but not like women at home. I know some couples, the man is from a strong traditional Fessi [family] and the woman didn't know anything and he did, he couldn't do it because he works, and she works too, but he can't provide the family with the proper education and influence...and in the past when men married women from a lower class and she didn't know anything [about traditional food culture] she moved in with him and his whole family, and there were other women that knew things and they taught her and she learned [about traditional foods etc...] but now when a couple marries they live alone, just the two the nobody teaches them [knowledge is lost].²

Maryam believes that Moroccan women of all socio-economic classes bare responsibility for the preservation of traditional Moroccan foods. It was also clear that this was a value shared in her household. Maryam was single, and although she did not live at home she was still very close with her parents in Fez. Her mother and father were both from wealthy Fessi families and grew up in Fez. Her mother went to school but stayed at home once she was married and her father was an agricultural engineer for the government. Maryam's mother's food is some of the best Moroccan food I've eaten during my fieldwork and part of this is that she is devoted to tradition

² Note on the translation: Maryam was learning English while we conducted this interview. As a result the interview was half in English and half in *Derija* so the translation is uneven.

and refuses to buy prepared food or any street food of any kind. She bakes a large batch of bread (with the help of her maids) over the weekends and freezes it for use throughout the week. She also makes her own paprika, tomato paste and dries and freezes her own plums. Maryam's family is an exceptional example but nonetheless represents how important food and tradition are to some families in Fez and how they are frustrated with the changes modernity and globalization bring to food culture in Fez.

Cusina Taqlidia and Cusina 'Asria: the Effects of Design in Moroccan Kitchenspace

On going into the kitchen in a house of Fez you are struck by the austerity of the room, far removed from the brilliant arsenal and laboratory atmosphere of the modern kitchen. In the semi-darkness, so cool in summer, so mortally damp with the rain in winter...

-Madame Guinaudeau, from *Traditional Moroccan Cooking: Recipes from Fez*.

Globalization is not only affecting agriculture and consumption, it is also affecting the physical spaces of food preparation, including the kitchens of Morocco. Kitchens are important because the physical space of the kitchen has a significant effect on the performances that take place within. As Saarikangas (2006) demonstrates in her analysis of the design changes in Finnish kitchens between 1930 and 1950 and the effect these changes has on gender identity and relationships. Saarikangas (ibid: 169) states:

“through their daily activities, women infused multiple levels of meaning into their homes, producing meaningful spaces. For them, homes and kitchens were centers of numerous acts, which they constantly shaped and reshaped as their own through their corporeal habits, actions and routines, and were shaped in turn by their arrangements.”

The women of Fez control many aspects of the space and organization of the kitchen; however, their actions and experiences are also influenced by the space itself.

In many ways the kitchens of Fez reflect the design of the city and can be essentially divided into two classifications: modern and traditional. The traditional kitchen is most likely to be found in an older traditional *dar* (home) or in an older apartment building. Traditional kitchens are found throughout the Medina (in both *dars* and apartments) as well as in lower income neighborhoods with shoddy subsidized housing. These neighborhoods are characterized by high population densities, *shaabi* (popular) cafes and restaurants and open air markets or *souqs*.

Completely separated from the rest of the house, traditional kitchens are located away from the living room. In a *dar* in the Medina, the kitchen would typically be located on the lowest level of the house next to the bathroom. These kitchens are dark and musty with the only light entering the space from a skylight located two to three stories above. Often water was available through a fountain or well that connected to an underground river or water source. There is a small gas range that is hooked up to a butane gas tank that must be replaced every month or so. Because these gas tanks are rather heavy they are replaced by either a husband or son or even a shopkeeper. In some homes, this will be the only time a husband or a son enters the kitchen. It is also important to note that in larger home the traditional kitchen can be quite large, but there is still nonetheless practically zero storage space. However, in an average Medina home the kitchen is small, comfortably fitting only one or two people. The relatively small size of the kitchens also limits kitchen appliances. As noted earlier, many Medina home do not have ovens, and if they do have an oven they are located not within the kitchen but rather in a small room near the roof. Another kitchen, belonging to one of my neighbors, was so small that there was only room for a sink and gas range; the refrigerator remained in the parlor.

The size and design of the traditional kitchen support the idea that the kitchen is not a social space and is not a space that is meant to be seen. The traditional home is made up of a series of elaborately furnished salons surrounding a pristine central courtyard with the kitchen and bathroom hidden off to the side or down a flight of stairs. The physical structure of the home and the placement of the rooms reinforces the cultural assumption that women and (and their work) are not to be seen (Sadiqi 2003). Though women are expected to provide the guest with elaborate sweets and snacks the guest is not to be involved with food's production or preparation. The traditional kitchen then, by nature of its spatial characteristics, encourages traditional gendered food relationships in Fez.

The second style of kitchen in Fez is the modern kitchen. These kitchens are found in the *Ville Nouvelle* as well as in the new high rise apartment buildings and subdivisions that are popping up all throughout the city. These neighborhoods tend to be in higher income “trendy” neighborhoods. The neighborhoods also contain the newest shopping centers, coffee shops and enclosed western-style grocery stores. Correspondingly, *Ville Nouvelle* and its surrounding modern neighborhoods and developments symbolize modernity, social opportunity, and social mobility (Sadiqi 2003), as people aim to leave their traditional homes in the Media behind for a new modern apartment in the *Ville*. This idea of social mobility through geography is reinforced by Moroccan popular media. Two shows in particular emphasize the values associated with a modern kitchens and apartment. *Choumicha*, is a popular cooking show that airs daily on 2M, the national Moroccan television station (view her show online:

http://www.2m.ma/Programmes/node_1370/node_1372/12)³. It features *Choumicha*, in a very clean

³A new program has recently aired that features Choumicha traveling throughout Morocco learning from women in different cities and town about traditional regional cuisine. This is a great show that reveals that Moroccan women are interested in learning about and preserving traditional foods. View a recent show here: http://www.2m.ma/Programmes/node_1370.

and modern kitchen taking viewers step by step through various dishes. She specializes in sweets (cookies and cakes) but also features savory Moroccan and European recipes. Nearly everyone in the Medina has a television hooked up to a satellite dish (see Figure 3.) and every television at least picks up 2M.



Figure 3. Satellite dishes perched on the roof tops across Fez as seen from the author's balcony.
(Photo by Lillie Greiman 2011)

Choumicha is a very popular show and all of my respondents, and many more women with whom I had casual conversations, knew of and enjoyed *Choumicha*. Her kitchen is nearly the exact opposite of nearly every traditional kitchen in the Medina. It is big and open with plenty of counter and storage space. In another popular program, *Dar Wa Décor*, Moroccans from across the country write into the 2M studio and petition for a room remodel. The studio then goes to the home of the selected family or individual and remodels whichever room was requested, on many occasions this room has been the kitchen and the kitchen has always entailed a modern style and convenience in mind. Of the women I interviewed that had traditional style kitchens all desired

an upgrade and all desired a larger space that was perceived as more modern. When I asked Besma to describe the kitchen she has at home she said:

Very traditional, not like this [the kitchen of the language school where we conducted the interview, a very new and modern kitchen]. The sink is old, very old, and the oven too... We have an oven but it is very small. We have normal things in the kitchen, nothing fancy because we just bought them at the normal market [the neighborhood market].

Later she describes that when she has a house of her own she wants a modern kitchen that has more space and is more comfortable because she will have to spend a lot of time in the kitchen, cooking and cleaning. A modern kitchen also has more storage and always looks nice.

Modern kitchens are designed in a “western” style, meaning that the kitchen is open and connected to the rest of the house or apartment. No longer are there clear and solid boundaries separating the kitchen from the rest of the living space. Modern kitchens are also significantly larger than traditional kitchens leaving room for a dining table, breakfast bar and modern kitchen appliances. As opposed to the traditional kitchen most modern Moroccan kitchens have an oven since there are no public ovens in these new hip neighborhoods; as noted earlier, the *furan* is becoming a relic in modern Morocco and is found almost exclusively in the Medina of Fez.

One kitchen I spent time in was large enough for a dining room table, a breakfast bar and two refrigerators. It was while spending time in this kitchen that I became aware of an interesting phenomenon. This kitchen belongs to Amal and her family who live in the nice and relatively secluded neighborhood of Sukayna. The family lived in a house or villa of two stories with three bedrooms and three salons. My host family and I had visited and planned to stay the night. When we arrived Amal was preparing lunch in her large modern style kitchen. Rather than immediately being shown to the salon to sit, have tea and socialize, we all ended up in the kitchen. This had never occurred to me before in Morocco for in a traditional kitchen there is no room to sit and socialize but also because there is little to show off in the kitchen, in my observations, it was

better to sit in the salon on the long couches covered in fancy embroidered fabrics. However, Amal's kitchen had nice granite countertops, a new stove, a window looking into the garden and plenty of room for the family to sit and help prepare lunch. This later part is what I found interesting for though Mohammad, Jamilla's husband and my host brother, would often help set the table and clear the table before and after a meal he very rarely helped prepare food (the one thing he did without fail however was to clean the fish brought home fresh from the market). However, in this modern kitchenspace it was only natural that we all should sit down at the table and pick a task. Mohammad and Si Mohammad (Amal's husband) immediately began shelling and peeling broad beans and chopping olives. Ziad (Ilham's son) and I began mixing salad and stuffing rolls and Jamilla helped with the sauce. The rest of the family sat at the breakfast bar or wandered in and out of the kitchen to socialize and steal olives. Only when the meal was ready did we move to the big round table in the salon later to return to the kitchen for tea and gossip.

Saarikangas (2006: 168) addresses this phenomenon as well stating that in Finland,

Open kitchens put housework on show. This 'making show' of the everyday signified a radical change in terms of domestic labor...Indeed, open kitchens emphasized the visibility of housework and brought housework into the modern living room, which in turn was regarded as a heterogeneous meeting place for household members of different ages and genders.

By design the "modern" Moroccan kitchen creates an open and welcoming atmosphere which encourages the integration of the household with what was traditionally considered "women's work" and "women's space." Though this is not necessarily true for all Moroccan families (and this particular family was fairly liberal in their worldview) the physical space of the kitchen seems to play a significant role in the gender performances of this family, revealing that though gender identity is constituted through gendered action (in these examples food preparation) it can also be subverted through spatial relationships.

Summary of Chapter 5

Both global and local forces are at work to shape Moroccan women's relationships to food. Historical agricultural practices as well as contemporary structural adjustment policies directly affect women's lives and in turn how they interact with food. The example of bread highlights how Moroccan women's lives are changing and the influences these changes have on food relationships and gender roles. Finally, a look at the effects of globalization on a cultural level (through the influence of popular media) and how the physical design of private kitchens impacts the interactions both women and men have with food. From this chapter it is clear that these outside influences are affecting women's behaviour. However, this is only half the story. Moroccan women have individual and personal interactions with food on a daily level. What are women's individual relationships with food like? How do these relationships influence Moroccan women's gender identity? And, significantly how are these relationships changing in regard to the outside influences addressed above? These questions are addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

The Cook: *al-Tabakha*

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight how the women who participated in my study interact with food on an individual and personal level and to explore the ways in which these women are contesting and reinforcing socially constructed gender roles around food and kitchenspace. The chapter begins with an overview of women's historical food relationships and personal lives to provide a cultural context for the analysis. Then I move into a three part analysis of contemporary women's interactions and relationships with food and kitchenspace. First, I examine how kitchenspaces are locations where women learn to perform socially accepted gender roles through interactions with food. It is within these spaces that my participants learned what it means to be a contemporary Moroccan and Fessi woman. Then, I explore how Moroccan kitchenspaces are also potential sites of women's power and control. Women in Morocco are seen as having a certain power over men and within Moroccan society as a whole through their relationships with food, through both economic and supernatural means. Finally, the analysis concludes with a look into how modern women are contesting these socially assigned gender roles and pushing back against cultural expectations of food relationships.

A History of Moroccan Women's Roles in the Home and in the Kitchen

Traditional Roles

Traditional women's roles in Morocco revolve around traditional Muslim geographies. These geographies are defined around a strict "public/private space dichotomy [where] the public space is the street and marketplace, where men evolve, and the private space is the home where

women live” (Sadiqi 2006, 87-88). Traditionally, and still today, Moroccan women are expected to be *hedga* (more on this term later), generally defined as hardworking or a good housewife (Sadiqi 2004). However the amount of freedom a woman was allowed was highly dependent on a woman’s geographical location and social status.

In rural areas, women were actively and fundamentally involved in the farm and in the farm labor and therefore to some extent visible in public space (Mernisi 1989). Women had specific duties on the farm and in the home. They were often responsible for haying the fields, milking animals, harvesting the garden and winnowing grain. Women were also responsible for all the housework and food preparation. Fatima Mernissi (1989: 147), in a collection of interviews with Moroccan women, records a woman remembering her childhood on a traditional farm: “...my aunt took care of the house with my grandmother. The two women fed the animals, sowed the grain and did all the chores.” Women in rural areas were visible in the community, sometimes visiting the market or simply seen out in the fields. It was considered improper for a woman to go and work on another person’s farm (for it potentially brought her in contact with strange men) but she was very active and involved on her family’s farm/s (ibid). Though women still had very few acknowledged rights, to property, inheritance, and marriage, they were allowed a degree of physical freedom.

Life was very different for urban Moroccan women. Their geographies were much more restricted, though this was somewhat class dependent. Wealthier women were much more restricted in their movements than poorer women because poorer women were often active income earners for their families and were sometimes forced to go out into the male public space. However, the ideal Moroccan woman is one who leaves the safety of the domestic space only when absolutely necessary (Sadiqi 2006, Mernissi 1989). In fact, there is a Moroccan

proverb that states: a woman should leave the house only twice in her life, once on the day of her marriage and again upon her funeral. Though this is an extreme example, many women were subject to such seclusion. However, these women were not alone. Extended families of up to twenty members often lived in the same house or complex of connected houses with the women occupying a specific section and the men another. The only men that women were allowed to come into contact with were men within the family

Women's education was also severely limited. Up until recently (and unfortunately in some areas today) a majority of women were illiterate and were afforded very little in terms of formal education (Mernissi 1989; Griffiths 1996; Skalli 2001). Daughters were sometimes sent to a *mu'alima* in order to learn traditional crafts. However, most education was informal and in the home. From a young age girls learned about domestic work, and spent time in the kitchen learning to cook so that they would become good housewives (Mernissi 1989; Sadiqi 2006).

The French and Times of Change

The French occupation of Morocco significantly affected Moroccan society and culture. There was increased cultural awareness throughout Morocco of European life and culture. Moroccan women, for the first time, saw French women walking unveiled in the street while simultaneously feeling outrage over the existence of the Protectorate. A character from Fatima Mernissi's memoir *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (1994: 45) reveals this new social and political awareness:

A French king is now ruling in our part of the world...and he has, oh surprise, only one wife! No harem in sight. And that single wife spends her time running in the streets, with a short skirt, and low neckline. Everybody can stare at her ass and bosom, but no one doubts for a moment that the president of the French republic is the most powerful man in this country. Men's power is no longer measured by the number of women they can imprison.

Through this new awareness women were slowly afforded more freedoms. More and more women (of a certain class) were becoming educated, some in French schools and others in Islamic ones (Sadiqi 2006; Mernissi 1989). Women were also involved in politics and the fight for independence (Baker 1998; Sadiqi, Nowaira, Kholy and Ennaji 2009). Women like Malika el-Fessi fought publicly and politically for women and girls education by claiming that “being educated enables a person to be an active and useful citizen. Men must ensure women’s training, ignoring reactionary arguments that discourage their education” (Sadiqi et al. 2009: 161-162). Education and political awareness also affected women’s expectations for home life, they were no longer interested in cooking, cleaning and domestic chores; they wanted to talk about politics and take action. A Moroccan woman, Rabi’a, explains to Fatima Mernissi (1984: 46) in an interview: “the best years, 1950-54, the moment when everyone was seeking something, wanting to achieve something. And at such a moment someone comes and asks you if you know how to cook and make beds! You want to send him on his way rather than marry him.” This new enthusiasm for education did not necessarily translate into more women moving in the workforce for upper class families still “considered the work of women, and hence their money, as a dishonor to the family. Women’s education aimed at producing good housekeepers and childrearers, not money earners” (Sadiqi 2006: 89). Some women did enter the workforce but these tended to be poorer, maybe divorced or widowed, women from rural areas and slums (ibid).

Independence and the Moudawana

Morocco regained independence from France in 1956. Since independence, Moroccan women have steadily moved more and more into the public space. Women began to work outside

the home and began to pursue higher degrees of education. Yet women were unprotected and vulnerable in the public space for the state granted them few political and social rights (Sadiqi 2010, 2004). After independence the Moroccan government passed the first *Moudawana*, or personal status code. This first code greatly limited women's rights. It gave women the right to vote and a right to free education but still regarded women as minors under the law, dependent on their fathers and husbands (Sadiqi 2010). It also delineated that a woman or wife's primary role was that of subservience to her husband in exchange for financial support and retained the right of the husband to unilaterally divorce his wife by simply repeating "I divorce you" three times (ibid 2010).

In 2004 a revised version of the *Moudawana* was adopted which guaranteed women new rights under the law. This revised version gave women the right to self-guardianship, the right to divorce, the right to child custody as well as raising the age of marriage (from 15 to 18) and restricting polygyny (ibid 2010). Though the law has been met with some resistance throughout Morocco and there are some implementation issues, it marks an important moment for Moroccan women. Women are still marginalized and vulnerable citizens in Moroccan society and the public space is still unwelcoming (Sadiqi 2004).

Marriage and Contemporary Women's Lives

Marriage plays a significant role in a Moroccan's life. Marriage is considered a sacred duty and a religious obligation, one that everyone who is able should fulfill in order to ensure to preserve the social order and perpetuate familial lineage and tradition (Mernissi 1975; Newcomb 2009). Marriage is a way to prevent social chaos by containing sexuality within a defined social construct (Mernissi 1975). Women are told from when they are young girls that their greatest

goal in life is the procurement of a husband and the creation of her own family (S. Davis 198). Traditionally, Moroccan women would marry young (sometimes as young as 13 or with the onset of puberty). Today, Moroccan law stipulates that the legal age of marriage is 18 although in rural areas and among poorer populations girls still marry as young as 15 (Newcomb 2009). Of the women I interviewed, two were married at 15 or 16, but these women were in their 50's and in urban areas there is a distinct shift in marital expectations with girls waiting longer to marry, pushing the average age of marriage into the mid to late 20's (Desrues and Nieto 2009). Another change that is occurring is the increase in age difference between husband and wife. It is generally assumed that for a man to marry he must have a job and some savings (ideally, to buy and furnish a home or apartment for the couple). This expectation is becoming more difficult for young Moroccan men to fulfill as the unemployment rate in Morocco reaches 20% (CIA 2010) and continues to be a persistent problem (Skalli 2001; Newcomb 2009; Sadiqi 2009). Therefore men are often forced to wait and are typically unable to marry women their same age. Increasingly women are marrying men 5 to 15 year older than them (Newcomb 2009).

In the past, women would marry young and move from their family's home to the home of their in laws to whom they were often strangers (unless the marriage was with a relative such as a maternal or paternal cousin, a practice which is still relatively common). Today this is less common, as couples decide to move into an apartment of their own, apart from their extended families (ibid). However, regardless of how a couple lives a woman still has particular expectations within the home. It is assumed that the woman has an obligation to the home and that even if she is employed outside the home she is still responsible for all things domestic. This includes food preparation and childrearing and there was a common sentiment among the women I interviewed that balancing the two (work and home) was a tiresome and nearly impossible

prospect. This assumption was reinforced by a phenomenon I encountered frequently. Many Moroccan women go to school, maybe even university and have no problem working when they are still single, but once they marry they either choose or are encouraged by the husbands to stay at home. Jamilla, my host sister, personally related to this. At one time she was interested in going out to work to perhaps be a preschool teacher or work somehow children however her husband was adamant that he was interested in having a traditional family (this was established prior to the wedding) and wanted Jamilla to stay at home. She explains: “[I don’t work] not because of me but Si Mohammad [her husband] doesn’t want that, he says the work is in the home... I will work and you stay home...you and our daughter that’s it!”

Women in the Kitchen: A Life-Long Affair

The women of Fez are reputed to be the nation’s best cooks and the vessels and preservers of Moroccan culinary tradition. Perhaps it is no surprise then to learn that Fessi women (as women of Fez are called) spend a significant amount of time in kitchenspaces. A majority of the women I interviewed recalled learning to bake at a young age. They begin to cook traditional tagines (meat stews) and couscous and they began to prepare sweets (cookies, cakes and pastries) and bake bread at an early age. Nazha, a 40 year old woman who works outside the home as a cook at a women’s shelter, emphasized this point in our interview when I asked about how her daughter helped her around then house and when she began to learn to cook. She put it this way:

Here in Morocco...you start to teach your daughters about cooking early, 11, 12 13 you start to teach them and they learn how to knead bread, to prepare tagine and salads, to do everything...over time they learn. And there are people who are interested in working and cooking for their work. Those people they go to school and get a degree in food preparation. Men and women, either together or separately go to school and then work in kitchens.

Nazha is clear in her statement that girls do not really have a choice when it comes to food preparation. Later on, girls and boys can choose to make cooking a career but girls and women will be cooking in the home no matter what. It is in this way that women's relationships with food are an integral feature of Moroccan women's gender identity. It matters little whether a girl wants to learn or not, the connection between gender and food is well established early on. This connection between gender and food was established early with my host family. My host sister's daughter, Fatima, was only three when I was living with them in their apartment but she would often spend time in the kitchen with her mother rolling cookie dough and "helping" to knead the dough. Every day she watches her mother bake bread, prepare lunch and bake endless sheets of cookies, and everyday her mother puts her on a stool and has her play with the dough and watch. It is in this way that girls in Morocco learn the cultural expectations of them around food and begin to perform gender within kitchenspace.

These gender expectations continue throughout a young woman's life. Nazha, relies heavily on her 18 year old daughter to maintain the house and prepare the meals while she is at work. Though she also has three sons and a husband, they are not expected to do any housework. In this way household division of labor is clearly outlined. Boys are left to their own devices and though they are expected to try and find work to add to the household income they have little to no responsibilities at home. Girls are expected to manage the home and help their mothers because one day they will marry, have a home of their own, and cannot expect that their husband will help.

As noted earlier in this chapter marriage is highly valued in Moroccan society and gender roles within marriage are clearly delineated.. Food preparation then becomes an

important issue in the context of marriage. Jamilla, my host sister, explained this to me when I asked how she learned to cook.

When I was about seventeen or eighteen my mother said to me: you are going to leave and go to the house of your husband and you don't know how to cook anything! So I began to watch her in the kitchen. At first I had to write everything down, the amounts and the spices. But then, once I came here (her apartment with her husband). I just learned and remembered.

The quote illustrates how the connection between food and marriage is established early on in a woman's life. Not only is she expected to marry and leave her mother's home but she is also expected to know how to cook and prepare meals for her husband. Jamilla was taught to cook explicitly because she was going to marry, not because she wanted to or because she had a particular skill (though she did...she is an excellent cook as is her mother).

The expectation that a wife needed to be at home to cook for her husband was reinforced further in my interview with Imane. Imane worked as a secretary for a dentist before she was married. However once she was married she quit her job to stay at home and take care of the house and raise children. She explained that she was obligated to stay at home because she needed to cook a large meal to feed her husband who worked as a carpenter stating:

when a man returns from work he needs to eat well...because here [in Fez] there are people working in crafts and it's hard work, therefore when he comes home from work for lunch he needs to eat a good big lunch...he needs a good breakfast and a good dinner too...

In the quote, Imane implies that it is a woman who is at home doing the cooking, supporting her husband so that he can support her and his family. Later on in the interview it is explicitly stated that having time at home to cook meals was part of the reason she quit working once she married and began to have children. Imane quit her job so that she could better fulfil the gendered food

roles she was taught to perform from a young age. She quit her job to be a better wife and mother, she quit so that she could be *hedga*.

Being Hedga

Hedga is a term I heard quite a bit while in Morocco because people often used it to describe me. When I would mention that I was interested in traditional food and cooking and that I liked to cook and was in fact a good cook people often responded with the phrase “*mezzian, inti hedga!*” (*That’s great your hedga!*). Initially, I determined *hedga* to mean a good cook but soon, after asking and interpreting, it became clear that *hedga* meant much more. Essentially, it means productive, with its antonym *magaza* meaning lazy. But *hedga* refers only to domestic productivity. It means someone who not only cooks good, traditional food but also keeps a clean house, is a good hostess, raises intelligent and polite children, essentially, is a good woman. *Hedga* can be a difficult word to define but essentially can be thought of as hard-working or productive and is exclusively used in reference to women. If a woman keeps a clean house and is a good cook she is often described as *hedga* and it is considered a compliment.

There is intense pressure within Moroccan society for women to be good homemakers. Being a good housewife, being *hedga*, is something to take pride in, it signifies that you were fulfilling your religious and cultural duty. Sadiqi (2006, 91) claims that “housework also valorizes them [women] inside the house, that is in the eyes of their husbands and children...housework also valorizes a woman in her larger family as well as in society.” The traditional role of a woman as homemaker is still strong in Moroccan society and women who work or employ domestic servants still work hard to retain this as part of their identity (Sadiqi 2006).

Kitchenspaces are sites where Moroccan women learn, throughout their lives, to negotiate gender identity. The women I interviewed explained that women and girls are expected to cook in order to fulfil the cultural expectations around women as wives, mothers and daughters. Kitchenspace is a site where gender roles are reproduced and reinforced and can therefore be seen as a site of Moroccan women's oppression. Women's food interactions are dictated by cultural assumptions about gender and gender roles. However, gender roles are not static and Moroccan women are not powerless. Though it seems that kitchenspaces are predominantly sites of women's oppression within Moroccan society there is room for women's power too.

The Power of Pastry: Women, Food and Power

Dar al-Fessia: home economics

...an enormous *pastilla*, the most delicious of all Allah's varied foods. At once a pastry and a meal, *pastilla* is sweet and salty, made of pigeon meat and nut, sugar, and cinnamon. Oh! *Pastilla*...[it]takes days to prepare because it's made with layers of sheer, almost transparent crust, stuffed with roasted and slightly crushed almonds, along with a lot of other surprizes. Yasmina always said that if women were smart, they would sell the treat and make some money, instead of serving it as part of their banal housework duty.

-Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales from a Harem Girlhood* (1994:67)

In some instances kitchens can be sites of women's empowerment. Cooking is a skill that almost all Moroccan women have, because they were taught it as children or teenagers. Women have a wealth of knowledge when it comes to traditional recipes, ingredients and methods and sometimes this knowledge is transformed into power within the home. My host sister's mother, Khadija, grew up in Fez with four sisters. Her father died while they were still young and therefore they were held back from school to help their mother in earning a living. She is about

55 years old and illiterate. She married young and moved to Oujda, an eastern city on the border with Algeria. There she had two children and stayed at home to raise them. Her daughter Jamilla told me the following story in an interview:

Jamilla: She knows everything [all traditional foods] because in Oujda she prepared traditional dishes and sweets for people. Not in the street, out of her house. People would come to her house and ‘I want chicken *maqali* for a party.’ For example, there is a wedding and they would go to her house and order say, twelve roast chickens and five *bastillas*. She makes, *halaweyat*, *cap ghazella*, *fakas*...

Me: If she worked out of her home, how did people know about her?

Jamilla: At first, it was her neighbor that prepared the food. One day a woman came to her (ghizlane’s mother) door because the neighbor wasn’t home and said I need *briouwat dyal kefat* for this wedding. My mother told her she (the neighbor) is traveling and isn’t home. The woman replied, but I need them, it’s urgent. My mother said, ok, if you need them I will make them. The woman agreed...no problem. My mother made the *brouwats* and gave them to the woman. And when the woman returned to her house and ate them she found them better than the neighbors. Then, little by little, one by one a lot of people began to visit my mother...she is very famous in Oujda. People always say “did you go to the *fessia*’s house?” In Oujda she is known as the *fessia* [the woman from fez].

In this instance Khadija’s kitchen was transformed from a domestic space where she prepared food for her family to a commercial space where she prepared food for others. She became an economic contributor to her household via *kitchenspace*. In fact, Jamilla mentions how there were many times when her mother was too busy preparing food for weddings and parties that her father would often cook the family meals. This shift in gender roles can be directly linked to Khadija’s economic contribution to the family through food. She became a provider alongside her husband and this raised her social status within the home and within the family.

Savory Superstitions: Women, Food, and Magic

There once was a young girl married to an angry man who would never let her leave the house. She cried to her mother because she desperately wanted to be able to leave to attend her cousin’s marriage. Her mother visited her one day and told her: ‘make a *rghaif* (thin Moroccan pastry) and then before you fry it place it on the back of a donkey and command it to move forward, back, left and right. Then when you fry up the *rghaif* feed

it to your husband. Then he will do anything you say.' The next day, after following her mother's instructions, the young girl left home to attend her cousin's wedding.

-- A Moroccan Folktale, *How to get your husband to obey you*

In Morocco women also have the ability, or at least the perceived ability, to control men through food. Moroccan women are perceived by traditional Moroccan culture as unruly beings whose actions and behaviors must be kept in control by men and society. Rather than accessing power through "conventional" means such as religion or politics women are assumed to access power through less dignified pathways such as sex, cunning and magic (Sadiqi 2005). Belief in magic has a long standing history in Moroccan culture and it is predominately practiced by women. This can take the form of a *shuwafa*, or fortune teller, or even a *Sahura*, a sorceress. Women who practice magic exist on the periphery of society yet are routinely incorporated into folklore, proverbs and even modern television shows.

Food is considered to be one of the main carriers for magic spells. Because women have such and intimate relationship with food and retain so much control over the production and preparation of food it is seen as risky and potentially dangerous by Moroccan men. Food can be tainted by witchcraft and is one route in which a woman can seek to gain control over her husband or any male. Men are often wary of food prepared for them by a strange woman as a friend of mine discovered when he was invited to a woman's home for a meal. His male Moroccan friends all warned him not to eat any food she gives him unless she eats it first because there was a chance that she would put a spell on him. The spell was to make him fall in love with her and get married (as my friend was Australian and single he was considered quite a catch for any Moroccan woman). Another story that I ran across in my studies was a classic Moroccan folktale incorporating magic into food preparation in order to have control over a husband. In this tale a young wife is frustrated because her husband will not let her leave the

house even to go to a cousin's wedding. She complains to her mother who gives her some magical advice involving a magic spell, *rghaif* (a thin, flaky Moroccan pastry that is often eaten for breakfast) and a donkey. After she feeds the magical *rghaif* to her husband he suddenly becomes much more lenient and allows her to go to the wedding. It is through stories like this that Moroccans learn about the potential power women have over men through food.

Beyond *Hedga*: Contesting Gender Roles

It has been shown that though kitchenspace and food relationships Moroccan women learn to negotiate cultural gender expectations within Moroccan society. The expectations are reinforced by mothers who teach their daughters to cook at an early age and husbands who refuse to help out in the kitchen. Bessma, a single 28 year old professional woman who lives at home with her mother, father and brother, explains how these expectations are perpetuated stating:

Food is especially important to men because a woman has to be *hedga*. There are men, a few, who will see a woman who doesn't cook and they won't say anything to her [...it's not a problem]. But most men don't like it if a woman doesn't' cook, they would get upset and it would become a problem. This is because many men grew up in homes where their mothers did everything (cooked and cleaned) and the want someone like their mothers... they liked to cook and prepare the home, they did everything. Then, they had sons and their sons grew up in a household like this, they were raised like this, so for a woman not to know about these things [cooking and keeping house] it is considered a flaw, because in the old days a girl was born, grew up got married and was expected to stay at home.

Bessma expressed the above sentiments with frustration over how women were expected to conform to these gender roles. She is uninterested in cooking, though she knows how and often does her response when I asked if she enjoyed cooking was a straightforward "not really, I cook to eat." What I find interesting about the above quote is not what it says outwardly about how gender roles are reinforced but rather how it hints at the possibility of change. She claims that

older women taught their sons about traditional gender roles and this has informed men's relationships to women and gender, but what about the next generation of mothers? What about the men who are growing up with working mother who are tired of these traditional expectations? Though my study was not large enough to generalize about the younger generation of Moroccan women, it was clear with the women I interviewed that women's relationships to food and gender are changing as more and more women express frustration with these expectations around marriage, gender and food.

Marwa is one of my respondents who is actively contesting gender expectations around food and kitchenspace, particularly around the notion of *hedga*. Marwa is a 26 year old single woman pursuing a doctorate degree in religious studies and runs and manages a local Arabic language school for students, tourists and travelers. By American standards she is a very accomplished young woman, and by Moroccan standards she is too, however, there is one glaring fact; she is single and actively rejects many of the cultural assumptions about Moroccan women and marriage. For example, she plans on continuing her education and working rather than staying home and she has no interest in cooking. To many Moroccans it would seem that Marwa is the very opposite of *hedga*. In fact, she struggles with her family's perception of her as this stating:

I don't cook...the idea of spending two or three hours in the kitchen kills me. I can't imagine it and now everyone has this idea about me that I am not *hedga* at all, that I don't know how to cook and I am no longer offended by it. [They say] you're not going to be a good wife [because] you're not *hedga* at all...I get all these comments from my family...like 'you can't even boil an egg you can't do anything'

Marwa's family associates being *hedga* and getting married with food and food preparation. The statement that she "can't even boil an egg" is significant because eggs are

generally referred to as the easiest food to prepare. When I asked women if their husbands/brothers/sons could cook sometimes they said yes and listed dishes they prepared but often their response was more along the lines of “not really...maybe he can prepare or boil an egg.” The interesting fact about Marwa is that this is not true, she can boil an egg and in fact she can do much more. She says though she has forgotten some she remembers learning to cook from her mother and she is able to prepare dishes for herself. The issue is not necessarily that she cannot cook but rather that she chooses not to. She is consciously setting aside this traditional convention and expectation in favor of something new.

Marwa expresses her frustration with gendered food roles and expectations and in many ways has actively dismissed them. She is able to do this in part because she is from a privileged background and has achieved a high level of education. A majority of Moroccan women do not share Marwa’s privilege and therefore have fewer options when it comes to contesting gender roles. However, many women I talked to were frustrated with these gender roles and expressed an explicit need for change.

The clearest example of this frustration came through in my interview with Nazha. I first met Nazha through the women’s center where I volunteered as an English tutor. The center was a refuge for women escaping dangerous or threatening home situations. The women, and their children, lived at the center and learned skills that would help them become economically independent. The center also employs many women to help with the center’s maintenance. Nazha worked at the center as a cook, preparing meals for the twenty some women who lived there as well as their children. Nazha spoke some English and it was clear upon meeting her that she had a higher level of education. Once we began the interview I learned that she had a university degree in geology but that there were no jobs in her field and so she was forced to

work at the center in a job she clearly felt was beneath her skill and education level. She was after all, as she put it, “just a cook.” She married relatively young, at 20 years old, and moved to Fez from Tangier with her husband. She is a busy woman with three children (two boys and one girl). She seemed frustrated with her life and she seemed tired.

When we began talking about gender roles in the context of food and the home she articulated clearly that both men and women should work inside the home, they are equally responsible for meal preparation and household maintenance. In response to a question I asked about who is responsible for food preparation in the home she replied:

It depends on who is working. If they both work outside the home then the both have to work together inside the home. However, if the husband goes out to work and the woman stays at home she cooks. The children too, if they have the time/opportunity they do the house work too.

Yet, when I inquired as to whom in the home was responsible for these same duties she stated she is, but that she has considerable help from her daughter (her daughter is 18 years old). If Nazha is working through lunch her daughter will prepare the main meal and will clean up. When I asked if her sons help at home at all she responded that they were too busy with school. Finally, when I wondered if her husband helps her out in the kitchen, or in the home the answer was simple, “No...no.” I didn’t push the issue but it stuck with me. Though Nazha clearly believes that men and women should help each other with the housework, the reality of her marriage represents something different.

All of the women I interviewed shared Nazha’s opinion that men should (and maybe have an obligation to) help women if both of the couples work outside the home. A marriage is a partnership and this arrangement will make life easier for all. However, over the months I spent getting to know various young and single Moroccan women there was a relatively common sentiment; a desire to marry but a frustration over the lack of eligible Moroccan men.

This tension around marriage is significant. As more women have access to increasing levels of education there is the possibility of a cultural shift. Three of the women I interviewed (and many more I spoke to in casual conversation) were only interested in marriages based on equality in which cultural gender expectations could be outwardly contested. One of my respondents, Fetiha, was already in a marriage where she and her husband rejected traditional gender roles around food preparation for her husband was the one who did all the cooking, while she did the washing up. Not only does this go against the convention that women should be doing all the cooking but also against the shame associated with a man who cooks. While examples like Fetiha's are rare, the fact that examples like her exist, signifies that change is possible and that women, and men, are contesting gender roles through their relationships with food and kitchenspace.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to return to my research questions. These questions, proposed in the introduction, motivated me throughout the research:

- How are food and gender relationships changing in reaction to societal change and global cultural influence?
- How are women negotiating these changes? What are the tensions between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern in regard to food and gender roles?
- And finally, what factors shape these relationships? Where do they take place? Specifically, what role does kitchenspace play in these relationships?

First, in chapters 2, 3, and 4 I provide background information on the existing literature that informed this research, an overview of the methodological approach and methods utilized in the project as well as an introduction of the study site of Morocco and more specifically Fez. In chapters 5 I address the research questions through a focus on how Moroccan community and society is changing through processes of globalization and development and the affects this is having on food and gender roles and the resulting tensions that emerge surrounding the simultaneous pressures of change and tradition. In chapter 6 the thesis moves on to how these changes influence individual women's lives and the ways in which they interact with food and kitchenspaces on an individual scale.

The research shows that the relationships Moroccan women have with food and within food spaces, like kitchenspace, provide a useful lens for analyzing and interpreting women's lives. The domestic spaces of the home and the kitchen have recently caught the attention of geographers. Feminist geographers specifically have focused their work on home and kitchen spaces because these spaces have historically been disregarded as mundane and trivial. However,

in order to more fully understand how women interact with domestic space and in particular food space like kitchenspace feminist geographers must work in the field using appropriate methodologies and methods. The methods used in this research proved vital for accessing and interacting within kitchenspaces. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews in particular allowed me to record and analyze the lives of the women of Fez and their relationships with food.

As the data and field observations suggest, Moroccan women's lives are changing and so is the way they interact with food and within food space. The global economy has reached Morocco and affected Moroccan culture in a dynamic way. Structural adjustment policies have influenced national agricultural and land ownership, driving rural populations into the cities and producing an upward trend in rural-urban migration and out-migration to Europe. The same policies have resulted in spending-cuts leading to increased prices of food and decreased social services for Moroccan women in particular.

Despite these apparent setbacks more and more women are leaving the home to work and increasing numbers of young Moroccan women and girls are pursuing higher levels of education. These women and girls not only deal with the effects of globalization in an economic way, as noted above, but in a cultural way as well. The global culture is fed to Moroccans and Fessis specifically, via the satellite dish and popular media. Television shows featuring Western-style women, in western-style kitchens have given Moroccan women a new vision of gender-food relationships.

As Moroccan women, armed with higher levels of education and awareness of a new global culture, move out into what was traditionally the male/public world of the workplace and the street they inevitably encounter tensions between the old ways and the new. These socio-

spatial changes have allowed women to question women's traditional food roles, claiming that in today's world (where women work as well as men) men and women should share the burden of food preparation equally.

As the above research illustrates, Moroccan women are intimately connected to food. Moroccan food culture is rich, complex and significant. How people interact with food can provide insight into how cultures and individuals relate to each other and the broader universe. In Morocco, and in Fez, women hold a special place in food culture for they spend a great deal of time interacting with food.

The interactions and relationships women have with food are varied and complex. These food relationships exist on multiple scales, from personal to public, and are influenced from a multitude of outside sources, from the local to the global. In Chapter 2 I introduced a model (see Figure 1.) to highlight how these various sources of influence come together to affect both gender roles and food relationships. The model reveals that both food relationships and gender roles are inter-connected, simultaneously influencing each other while being influenced by outside sources like global and local culture, physical landscape and environment, and governmental policy. The interconnectedness of these relationships is further revealed by returning to this model and placing it within the Moroccan context which is evident in Figure 5 below.

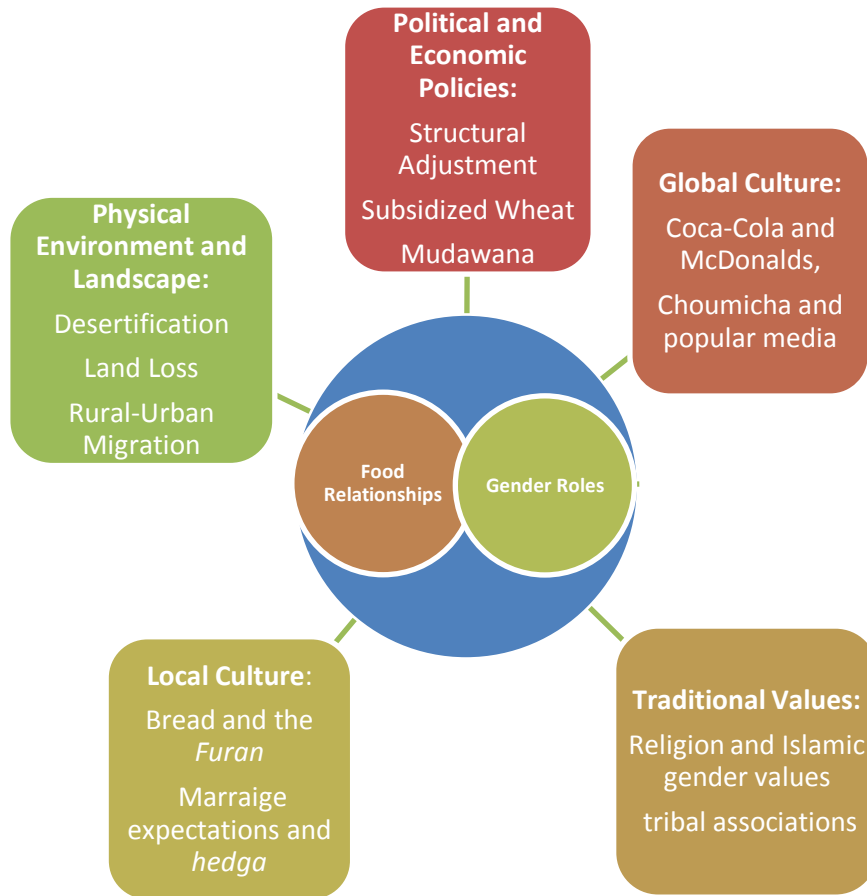


Figure 5. Food Relationship Model: The Moroccan Example.

Limitations and Potential for Further Research

Through methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, urban walks and media analysis and with a feminist methodological approach I was able to access kitchenspaces and build personal relationships with my research participants. These personal relationships allowed for an equal exchange of ideas, and deepened the potential for analysis. However, this study was limited in three key aspects. First, the study size was small with only ten interviews conducted. Second, the study was geographically limited to women living in Fez. Third, in

speaking only *Derija*, I was unable to access or comprehend data sources, on Morocco and Fez, available only in French. These three limitations limit the degree to which I can generalize my results. Though through additional research I feel confident that the issues facing the women of Fez are relevant to women throughout Morocco, which is why I have chosen to refer to “Moroccan women” throughout the thesis, it is important to recognize that the stories told through the data are the stories of women from Fez. With this project there is potential for further research into the relationships the women of Fez have with food. A potential project would be to develop this project further with a quantitative analysis of kitchenspace in Fez analyzing development plans and demographic data, which is only available in Morocco and in French. Further research could also include a larger respondent base with more structured interview questions to further analyze gender dynamics and connections with food roles and relationships.

Further research is needed to more fully understand the relationships that Moroccan women have with food and kitchenspace. As a start, the research presented in this thesis reveals that Moroccan women’s relationships with food and kitchenspace are both complex and dynamic. Women’s food relationships are influenced by local food tradition and history, as well as the outside forces of globalization in the form of public and economic policy, and global culture through popular media. Additionally, food and gender relationships are reinforced through the organization of food space, particularly kitchenspaces. Moroccan women learn to negotiate socially constructed gender roles through interactions with food, in kitchenspace, which begin at a young age and continue through adulthood. However, these spaces and relationships are dynamic and Moroccan women are constantly contesting and redefining gender roles through food.

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Appendix A: Map of Fez and Morocco



Appendix B: Interview Guide in English and Moroccan Arabic

Interview Guide:

A. Administrative Information

- Respondent Number:
- Date of Interview
- Location of Interview

B. Demographic Information: “First I would like to ask some general questions about your background...”

1. Gender of Respondent
2. How old are you?
3. Where did you grow up?
4. How would you describe your ethnic background (Arab, Amazigh...)?
5. Who do you live with?
6. Do you work?
7. Are you married? How long?
8. Do you have children? How many? What are their ages?
9. What is your educational background? Till what level in school, when did you finish/stop school and why?
10. What is the education background of your family/parents?
11. Could you describe your family and how you grew up?

C. Food Preparation

1. In your family who does the cooking?
 - a. If the respondent cooks: For whom do you cook?
 - b. What do you cook?
 - c. Where do you cook? Could you describe this space?
 - d. How did you learn to cook? (probe: Mother, choumicha, cookbooks)
 - e. Do you enjoy it?
2. If not the respondent:
 - a. Who cooks? And Why?
 - b. Do you know how to cook? Do you sometimes cook?

D. Food Purchasing

1. Who purchases the food you eat? Why?
2. Where/how do they/you purchase food? (probe: Marjane vs. Souk, Ville Nouvelle vs. Medina, beldi vs. romei)
 - a. Why here?
 - b. What do you purchase? And from who?
 - c. How do you learn what’s good to buy and when?
 - d. Where do you think the food you are purchasing comes from?
 - e. If money weren’t an issue what foods would you buy and from where?

E. Significance, Opinions and Change

1. In your opinion what is the significance of Food in Morocco? Is there a connection between food and culture in Morocco (probe: connection to family/marriage, religion, holidays, health...)
 - a. Do you think there is a connection between women and food?
2. Do you think that it is important to learn how to cook? Why?
 - a. Have you, will you teach your children to cook?
3. What foods are better?
4. How has food culture in Morocco changed in your lifetime, how do you feel about these changes (probe: Marjane, different foods, more food romei...)?
 - a. How is your food different from that of your mothers? Your grandmothers?
 - b. How does your kitchen differ from that of your mother, grandmother?
 - c. Has the souk changed? (probe: how, why do you think?)
5. How do you feel about these changes and what do you think they mean for the future? (probe: good, bad? actions taken to combat change?)

F. Closing Questions

“Thanks for participating in this research, I have just a couple more questions.”

1. Do you have any questions for me about this research?
2. Are there any questions you think I should have asked? Or topics that you think I should address in regards to food and food culture in Morocco?

Interview Guide:
Moroccan Arabic Translation
Lillie Greiman
02/02/2011

* المقدمة

اسلام عليكم، لاياس؟ الحمد لللة
جامية منتانا ف جوغرافية ديال ماسترس من امر عكة سميتي ليلي و انا طالبة
ندرس المكلة مغربية والعيلات مغربيات و حتى العلاقات بينتهم دبا انا ف المغرب باش ندير بحث عل
واش هدا مكلة تبدلات و لالا متلا، انا مهتمة بالمكلة المغربية تقليدية و كيفاش هدا مكلة تبدلات عبر الوقت
كندير هدا بحث باش نفاهم أكثر الأهمية ديال مكلة ف الحياة ديال العيلات مغربيات و حتى باش نتعلم منهم
خصني نحضر مع الناس العيلات بحالك باش ندير هدا بحث خصني ندير الإستجواب

واش يمكن لك تحضري معيا
إلا لا..شكرا و برك اللة فيك-

إلا نعم-شكرا بزاف واش ممكن ينحضرو دبا و لا ف شي وقت آخر؟

إلا من بعد
وخا فوقاش بغيتي نتلاقو؟
واش في دار و لا ف شي قهوة؟....؟فين غادي نتلاقو
وخا...نشوفك

إلا دبا

وذا إذن قبل ما نبدو بغيت نصول ليك واش يمكن نستعمل المُسجلة باش نفاهم جواب ديالك اسحن
علقاش دريجة دياالي ماشي مزيان بزاف و كنبغي نسمع هذا إستجواب مرة اخرة
غير بوحدني غادي نسمع لالتسجيل و غير باش نفاهم المعلومات الحضري

إلا ماسجلتش الحضري دياالك غيخصني نكتب ملي تكون كتحضري
إذن، غير بشوية علينا
صافي

هذه الترجمة ترجمة بطريقة احترمت فيها الثقافة المغربية و لذلك قد غيرت قليلا طريقة ترجمة المقدمة.
الإستجواب

وذا في اللول بغيت نصول لك شي اصالة بسيطة
شحال ف عمرك

فينكبرتي؟ فين كتسكني دبا؟ فين ف فاس
معمن كتسكني

واش كيخدمني على برة

واش نتي مزوجة؟ شحال هدي و بني مزوجة

واش عندك دراري، شحال عندك؟ واش هم كبار ولا سغار

واش عمرك قريتي؟ و ولادين دياالك؟ حداش قريتي؟ حداش قراو؟

المكلة

واش نتي كتطبيبي ف دار و كتسخري ف زنقة؟ بجوجهم؟ علايش، علايش لا، شكون

لمن كتطبيبي؟ فين؟ شنو؟

واش كتعجن الخبز ولاكتشريه؟ واش عندك الفران ف دار؟ واش كتسعملي الفران من الزنق

Appendix C: Glossary of Moroccan Arabic Terms:

Al-Cusina-The kitchen

Al-Tbakha-The cook

Andalusian- The term used to refer to the neighborhoods east of the Fez river in Fez's old city. The term comes from the influx of Arabs from the Iberian peninsula (*al-Andalus*) during the "re-conquest" of Spain in the 15th century.

Asria'-Modern (adj.)

Dar- A traditional Moroccan home. A series of rooms or salons built around an open central courtyard. The homes were traditionally very elaborate and decorative inside but rather shabby and austere in outer appearance. Is the Moroccan Arabic word for "home".

Derija-Moroccan Colloquial Arabic.

Fessi- A term used to describe things and people from the city of Fez, Morocco. *Fessia* is the feminine conjugation of *Fessi*.

Furan-Moroccan Arabic for oven but also refers to a traditional community public oven that were once common throughout Morocco but today are only found in old Islamic cities like Fez. Women would knead the bread dough at home and then send it out to be baked at a communal oven for a small fee.

Hedga- Hard working (adj.). A term usually reserved for women who are considered good, hardworking and productive home makers. It implies that you are not only a good cook but also that you maintain a clean house and raise well-behaved children.

Hshuma-Shameful, from the verb *hshama*, to have shame. This term is used across Morocco as a proprietary admonition.

Jellaba-The traditional hooded robe worn by both men and women in Morocco. It is long and loose fitting and sometimes elaborately embroidered.

Khubz Dyal Dar-Bread made at home and either baked at home or sent to the public oven.

Khubz Dyal Zunqa-Bread bought in the street from a vendor.

Medina- An Islamic city. Medina is the Arabic word for city but can refer to the older, historical sections of many Arab cities. Medinas are circular in design with a Mosque at the center with markets and streets radiating outward from the center. Many Moroccan cities have medinas, however in this paper you should assume that the *Medina* refers to the old city of Fez. Fez's medina is the largest in Morocco and is a UNESCO world heritage site. The city is home to approximately 150,000 people in less than 2 square miles.

Mudawana-The Moroccan family code. The code covers all aspects of family law from Marriage and divorce to child custody and inheritance. It is heavily influenced by Islamic law or *Shariah*. The code was significantly reformed in 2004 and expanded women's rights under Moroccan law.

Rghaif-A thin crepe like Moroccan pastry. Rghaif is very popular in Morocco and comes in many forms (also referred to as *mlawi*, *m'ssmen*, *trid*).

Taqlidia-Traditional (adj.)

Zunqa- Street or alleyway, also used in Moroccan Arabic to refer to any place outside the home, meaning “out there”.

Appendix D: Selected Recipes

Harira: Moroccan Beef and Vegetable Soup

Ingredients

½ lb, meat (lamb or beef) diced	1 tsp paprika
¼ cup flour	½ cup chopped parsley and cilantro (mix)
1 tbsp olive oil	¼ cup green lentils
1 large onion, finely chopped	1 can chickpeas, rinsed and cooked
celery 1 stalk, finely chopped	separately in water for 15 minutes (with
tomatoes 3 large, seeded and diced	skins removed if so desired)
Saffron pinch (10 threads)	¼ to ½ cup small pasta, vermicelli, orzo
½ tsp black pepper	etc..
½ tbsp. salt	1 beaten egg (optional)
1 tsp ground ginger	

Method:

Heat the oil over medium high heat in heavy bottom soup pot.

Coat diced meat in flour. Brown the meat in the oil, and then add the onion. Saute the onion a couple minutes then add the celery. Once celery is softened, add tomatoes.

Cook for about five minutes and add the herbs, spices and lentils. Add enough water to cover all the ingredients by about 2 inches. Cover pot with lid and simmer for about 45 minutes to an hour, until lentils are fully cooked, stirring occasionally.

Add the chickpeas and simmer for 10-15 more minutes. Add small pasta and simmer 10-15 minutes more.

Stirring constantly, add the beaten eggs and keep stirring till the egg is completely cooked. The soup should be thickened by the flour but not too thick. Feel free to add more water to thin it out. Salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with garnish of additional fresh cilantro, lemon wedges or even a dab of *smen* (Moroccan aged butter).

Harsha: Moroccan semolina flatbread

Ingredients

2 cups fine semolina flour (or 1 cup coarse semolina and 1 cup semolina flour)	¼ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons sugar	1/3 cup (125 g) melted butter or olive oil
2 teaspoons baking powder	1/2 to 3/4 cup (120 to 180 ml) milk or water

Method

Mix together the flours, baking powder, sugar and salt. Make a well in the flour and add the water (or milk) and oil (or butter). Mix gently with your hands until the dough just sticks together. The dough should be wet and somewhat sticky/oily.

Shape into balls, the size is up to you. Let rest 5 minutes. Flatten balls into disks about ½ inch thick.

Cook on a medium hot skillet (cast iron works best) that has been dusted with semolina. Cook on each side for about 5 minutes or until golden brown on each side and cooked all the way through.

Harsha has the texture of cornbread (and could probably be made with cornmeal). It is best fresh off the stove with butter, cream cheese, jam or honey.

Marinated Moroccan Olives: *Zeitoun Mshermel*

Ingredients:

2 cups green Moroccan olives	½ tbsp each finely chopped cilantro and parsley
3 cloves of garlic, smashed	Juice of 1 small lemon
1 hot chili chopped (optional), or a small spoonful of harissa or ½ tsp hot chili flakes	½ cup Olive oil
1 ½ tsp. chopped preserved lemon	½ tsp paprika
	½ tsp ground cumin (optional)

Mix all the ingredients together. Let marinate though can be eaten immediately. This just gets better the longer it marinates.

