

WORKING FOR ANOTHER WORLD:
GEOGRAPHIES OF LABOR, ASPIRATION, AND KINSHIP IN THE NORTHWEST
AFRICAN CORRIDOR

By

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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland

October 2020

Abstract

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of Senegalese migration to and through Morocco. Set against the backdrop of a rapidly transforming legal and political landscape and narrowing prospects for migrants trying to get to Europe, I explore the dynamics of settlement and permanence for migrant Senegalese women who live in low-income neighborhoods in the urban peripheries of Morocco, becoming landlords, lenders, and trade partners for a wider population of transient migrant men. As emplaced nodes in historically constituted networks of Islamic Sufi pilgrimage and trans-Saharan trade, these women's uneven experiences of (im)mobility shed light on the contemporary re-positioning of Morocco within multiple competing globalizing orders — European, African, and Islamic. I examine how these different imaginaries shape women's strategies of residence and livelihood, and how these environments meanwhile become stages for their experimentation on sexuality, kinship, and alliance.

Ethnographically, it centers on a population of older uncoupled women migrants — divorcées, widows, second wives, and unmarried women — who use travel to Morocco to re-negotiate their positions on the fragile margins of the kinship order. I argue that in becoming 'emplaced' in Morocco, as landlords, lenders, and wage earners, they are involved in re-drawing the terms of sexual independence and personal accumulation within new boundaries of respectability. At the same time, as they attempt to concretize openings and gains for themselves as well as the wider population of young migrant men, they are transforming urban life by contributing to an infrastructure that reproduces possibilities for *both* mobility and permanence. Dismantling the dualistic framing of these terms as transparently opposed, this research shows how women's experiences of deferred, suspended, or uncertain mobility creates conditions for the reinvention of space and relatedness.

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Readers: Michael Degani, Deborah Poole Sara Berry, Elizabeth Thornberry

Acknowledgments

This dissertation is a meager representation of the depth of thought, skillfulness of living, and verbal imagination of the women and men who shared their lives with me in Senegal and Morocco (and the long roads in between). My profoundest gratitude goes to them for helping make this research possible, for deeply influencing how I think about myself and my community, and for the delight of their company over the 18 months of fieldwork and beyond. In particular, I stand to thank all the individuals, named and unnamed in this dissertation, in particular Aïsha Ndiaye, Cheikh Ibra Ndiaye, Babacar Mbaye, Taha Mbaye, Ousmane Ndiao, Kène Bëggul, Arame Ndao, Kany Seck, Aïssatou Soow, Astou Soow, and all the members and participants of the DMWM of Casablanca, who offered endless support for my research and welcomed me again and again into their midst, forgiving my every blunder and suffering my every maladroit question. To my first Wolof teachers, Doudou Ndiaye, Pape Laye, and Kiné Mbaye: *Jërëjëf*.

Other individuals and organizations have contributed to the writing, research, and pleasure of this dissertation process in myriad different ways. To my advisors, Naveeda Khan, Jane Guyer, Michael Degani, and Deborah Poole, as well as all of the faculty and fellow graduate students of Johns Hopkins Department of Anthropology, I wish to extend my profound gratitude for their intellectual courage and generosity, and for modeling what it is to relearn the world through the call of anthropological inquiry. Many thanks to Sara Berry and Liz Thornberry for serving as external readers, as well as longstanding and brilliant interlocutors and encouraging mentors in the JHU Africa Seminar, where I first trepidatiously shared some of this work. Anthropology staff members Alexias Stafilatos and Clarissa Costley have assisted at every turn. This research was additionally made possible by the National Science Foundation, the American

Institute for Maghreb Studies, and Max Planck Institute — University of Witswatersrand’s Academy for African Urban Diversity.

To friends and colleagues who have contributed to the organization of teach-ins and collective action on our university campus over the years: thank you for holding up for me the kind of work that makes the ongoingness of the university feel worthy of your brilliance and our power, and for reminding me at so many junctures that the drama of dissertating is its own real struggle too. I wish especially to thank my cohort mates, Paul Kohlbry, Megha Majumdar, Gustavo Valdivia, and Yonatan Glazer-Eytan, who helped me first put to words the ideas that would molt and migrate into this project, and for being stellar examples of imaginative scholarship and fierce comradeship. Another big thanks to my stalwart Greenhouse co-habitants, whose laughter, plant-genius, and ruminous and luminous lunch-break conversation nourished me for many years. Special thanks to writing group members Victor Kumar, Mac Skelton, Tulio Zille, and Önder Çelik, who I have the even greater honor to call friends. For their insight, kindness and compassion in the hardest of times, infinite gratitude goes to Sabine Mohammad, Kara Gionfriddo, Derek Denman, and Chitra Venkataramani.

To my partner, Kate O’Brien, for being a “grumpy” reader, thought-catcher, dream-squeezer, and cheerleader, even when I refused her tackles, and for dowsing me in curiosity for the world when mine has all but dried up. Lastly, to my parents and family members who have cheered discreetly, and patiently put aside the question “are you done yet?” for quite long enough!

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Introduction

It was early into my fieldwork when I first heard mention of the term “Ladies of Las Palmas.” I was standing in the slim shade of the towering billboard post near *Bab Marrakesh*, the easternmost entrance of the old city (*medina*), under which were flocked a small group of Senegalese women hawking their wares and services. One woman, Aissatou, leaned over her neighbor’s shoulder and pointed across the square to the bus stand, where a long queue was forming. The queue was far longer than the others, curling into the adjacent cafés and newspaper stands; it was also almost entirely made up of West African women and men. This bus took passengers to the far southern-most township, Riad al-Oulmès*, where a growing number of Senegalese and other West African migrants have recently taken up residence. The women to whom Aissatou referred as the “Ladies of Las Palmas” were noticeably older, dressed in the loose fitting *mbubb* worn typically by senior women, and were gathered near the front of the line, talking and fanning themselves with the loose ends of their colorful wrappers. The others around Aissatou laughed and one said, “*Bala ngeen fa agsi, dingeen sonn! Ndeysane...*” [Before you (all) get there, you’re going to be tired! Poor dears...!]

The nickname intrigued and confused me. Las Palmas (Canary Islands) holds a prominent place in Senegalese imaginations as the desired destination of migrants who departed from Senegal’s seaside towns by the thousands in the early 2000s and 2010s. For many, Las Palmas stands for “Europe” as one of its extraterritorial extensions, reflecting a remapping of migratory destinations and desires in step with the externalization and proliferation of Europe’s borders (Andersson 2014). Since the mid-2000s, Morocco has become one of the most militarized of those external border-spaces. Given the prominent imagery of West African migrants “stuck”

waiting in Morocco, “Las Palmas” seemed to conjure Europe as a kind of mirage — a lingering yet increasingly remote and duplicitous dream. As the butt of Aissatou’s joke the “Ladies of Las Palmas” appeared as tragi-comically marooned aspirants who had mistaken the low-income townships of Casablanca for the seaside villas of the Canary Islands.

Yet the nickname also seemed to hold an appreciative dimension, linking up the women’s movements and projects with a broader Senegalese cultural imaginary of transnational migration and social entrepreneurship. Migration is part and parcel of what it means to be Senegalese. The nickname itself inscribes the women within a widespread pattern of social typification (examples include the famous “Modou Modou” or “Fatou Fatou”, nicknames for successful transnational traders), an important means by which Senegalese construct themselves as a “nation of migrants.” As Caroline Melly notes, in Senegal, mobility and immobility organize public and private life in myriad ways; as a civic virtue, a widely held and enforced expectation, and an unevenly distributed resource (Melly 2017, 18). Such a nickname seemed to confer a degree of recognition that these women’s ventures abroad were attempts, however unlikely, to participate in this time-honored Senegalese cultural form.

More surprisingly, I later learned that Las Palmas held a more esoteric reference for my Senegalese friends. “Las Palmas” was *also* the nickname given to the once posh, middle-class housing development in Dakar, officially known as Parcelles Assainies,¹ which was among the first places to feel the effects of mass emigration beginning in the 70s, when Senegalese migrants to Europe began investing in housing construction in the then-conurbations of the old city. A key landmark in the vernacular geography of “structurally adjusted Dakar” (Melly 2017), today,

¹ The name translates to “sanitized plots,” referring to city upgrading projects out of which they were zoned in the 1970s. Though these were not social housing plots for the poor, but rather allotments for civil employees, the logic and rhetoric of urban renewal is the same as those that brought Riad al Oulmès and other townships into being 40 years later.

many of these houses remain half-built or unfinished, and, as observed by Buggenhagen (2011), are occupied by the “wrong kind” of social relations — unmarried women and divorcées, as well as young children and old dependents “left behind.” When my friend Cheikh Ibra, a Senegalese trader and street peddler in Casablanca, explained to me the reference, he noted, “*Foofa jigèeen yi rekk ño fa dè*s — only women are left there [in Parcelles Assainies].” The nickname Las Palmas in this more local cultural geography conveyed both a promise of prosperity and status, and the “good life” as something that had failed to come to pass. Perhaps it also evoked the stoic self-sacrifice of mothers and would-be wives “left behind.”

I wondered what all these images had to do with the women lined up at the bus stop, why their conspicuous presence seemed to elicit so loudly to my friends this admixture of admiration and disparagement. Curious, I eventually took that city bus all the way to the end of the line, to Riad al Oulmès, where I stayed for almost 15 months. The “Ladies of Las Palmas,” became many of my closest interlocutors and teachers as I deepened my exploration of livelihood and place-making among the township’s Senegalese residents.

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of mobility and dwelling in the North-West African corridor, through the instance of Senegalese migrant women to Morocco. It is set amidst the rapid transformation of Morocco’s legal and political landscape of migration, increasingly militarized borders and urban policing, and social “de-mobilization” programs, constraints and inducements all aimed re-making Morocco into a “destination” for migrants rather than point of transit to Europe. Amidst these transformations, I explore the dynamics of settlement and permanence for migrant women who live in low-income neighborhoods in the townships of Casablanca, becoming landlords and creditors for a wider population of transient migrant men. Making of themselves nodes in historically constituted networks of Islamic Sufi pilgrimage,

trans-Saharan trade, and racialized service economy, their uneven experiences of (im)mobility shed light on the contemporary re-positioning of Morocco within multiple competing globalizing orders — European, African, and Islamic. I examine how different imaginaries of space shape women’s strategies of residence and livelihood, and how these environments meanwhile become stages for their experimentation on sexuality, kinship, and alliance.

Ethnographically, this research centers on a population of older uncoupled women migrants — divorcées, widows, second wives, and unmarried women — who use travel to Morocco to re-negotiate their positions on the fragile margins of the kinship order. I argue that in becoming ‘emplaced’ in Morocco, as landlords, lenders, and wage earners, they are involved in re-drawing the terms of autonomy and sexuality within new boundaries of respectability. At the same time, as they attempt to concretize openings and gains for themselves as well as the wider population of young migrant men, they are transforming urban life by contributing to an infrastructure that reproduces possibilities for *both* mobility and permanence. Dismantling the dualistic framing of these terms as transparently opposed, this research shows how women’s experiences of deferred, suspended, or uncertain mobility creates conditions for the reinvention of space and relatedness.

Surfacing histories of regional connectivity and mobile interaction that extend far deeper than the current “migration crisis,” as it has been framed by European and American commentators and policy makers, reveals blueprints for mobility and exchange of different kinds. Long-established networks of Sufi pilgrims, traders, and students have lent moral and material thickness to Senegalese community in Morocco. Today, these ties are not only invoked to substantiate Morocco’s claims to spiritual sovereignty and neo-imperial fantasy, but are taken up by Senegalese themselves in constructing themselves as pious, respectable, and exemplary

migrant subjects. Rather than view migration as primarily an experience of hardship, disorientation and the fragmentation of relations (de Genova 2002; Hansen and Stepputat 2005; Malkki 1995), this dissertation explores how mobility serves as a resource for women in reformulating relations, particularly in the aftermath of marital dissolution, family crisis, or amidst projects of securing long-term care for themselves. It takes exception from narratives of young men unable to migrate and thereby achieve the benchmarks of felicitous male adulthood, whose imagined stalled passage emblemizes only too well the imagination of impeded development and “waithood” ascribed to post-colonial African states more broadly. Instead, it focuses on the marginal but modestly successful and inventive efforts of middle-aged women migrants in Casablanca’s urban periphery, as they forge collaborations, make a living, and fulfill spiritual aspirations. Foregrounding the making of Morocco as a “destination,” albeit of a particular kind, the chapters that follow examine everyday attempts to forge livelihoods and domesticities that are stable, discreet and secure, and undertake the rites of pilgrimage, while attending to the many relationships in which their mobile projects are embedded.

I. “Las Palmas?” - Setting the Scene

The experiences of these women frame an exploration of life in a particular moment of urban transformation in Casablanca. Riad al Oulmes* and adjacent townships were the epicenters of massive housing infrastructure projects launched in the mid-2000s, the latest front in the Moroccan state’s modernization campaigns by which it sought to claim a seat at the table amongst international investors from Europe and the Middle East. Aggressive urban infrastructure modernization redoubled in intensity since the so-called Arab Spring uprisings in 2011 and beyond. In attempts to tamp down on protests, the state initiated a slate of urban

‘renewal’ programs, most notably the landmark “*Villes sans bidonvilles*” [VSB, Cities without slums] campaign, through which dispossessed shantytown residents became tenants of the newly constructed social housing lots in the urban periphery. The VSB, along with other social programs and policy measures, were attempts to use technocratic measures to divert pressure on the state for substantive concessions or reforms, and as scholars have noted (Zaki 2005; Toutain and Rachmuhl 2014), they have actually paved the way for more robust forms of authoritarian power and surveillance, particularly as, in more recent years, European Union funding has been lent to enhance military and urban policing and deterrence targeting potential clandestine migrants in the cities (Bogaert 2018; Andersson 2007).

As transit migration for West Africans through Morocco has become more difficult, expensive, and dangerous, young West African migrant men have begun returning with greater frequency from the northern border to cities like Casablanca. There, they search for quick money and alternatives to the rundown squats and expensive migrant hostels in the urban center, which have become sites of intensive surveillance (Bogaert 2018; Pandolfo 2018). From the early 2010s, Senegalese women holding residency or work permits were able to acquire properties in the newly opened-up formal housing market on the periphery.² Townships like Riad al Oulmes quickly acquired reputations as low-cost, secure and respectable alternatives for Senegalese migrant men to find lodging and circulate with minimal intervention from police, or from the oversight of Senegalese religious brotherhoods (Dahiras), who hold monopolies on commercial trade networks in the Medina city center (more on this in Chapter 2). The township residents, who collectively came to be known as the “Ladies of Las Palmas,” distinguished themselves from the young women and men of the Medina. The following chapters trace their

² In housing projects like Riad al Oulmes, the social housing designees were reaching the end of their mandated 8-year residence in the allotments, and many sought to sublet them for extra income.

experimentations with the terms of respectability and autonomy through their self-fashioning as heads of household, landlords, lenders and creditors to young migrant men in the townships.

In the broader public imagination in Morocco, townships like Riad al Oulmes had become zones of lawlessness and disorder. Hurriedly half-built under the VSB campaign in the mid 2000s, with unfinished roads and scant public infrastructure, they were the terrain of poor rural migrants and slum residents forcibly displaced by state authorities. Assimilated with the ‘*banlieues*’ of metropolitan France, where many Moroccans themselves had emigrant relatives or had dwelled themselves, when I mentioned to my few Moroccan friends that I was planning to find an apartment in the township for the duration of my fieldwork, they were distressed, and warned me vociferously that I would be putting myself at risk of the area’s putatively rampant crime and violence. My Senegalese friends from the Medina shared some of these impressions, but drew a more nuanced boundary. For them, subdivisions like the adjacent Al-Azhar and Alliances were no-go zones, ostensibly full of drug dealing, alcohol and vice; but, they assured me, in Riad al Oulmès I would be under the care of a pious, discreet, and watchful “*Yaayu daara ji*” — a Dahira mother, or matriarch to the collective of Sufi disciples.

Between the errance and pioneering of the “Ladies of Las Palmas,” and the nurturing domestication of the “*Yaayu daara ji*,” among numerous other tropes and figures, the residents of the township were projections of the ambivalences and contradictions inherent in Morocco’s contemporary transformations — its alleged modernity and economic potential, its asserted ‘African cosmopolitanism,’ its spiritual prestige as Sufi homeland, a yearned for destination and terrain of erstwhile continued transit. I consider these images, narratives, and the expressive genres through which they circulated, as part of the ensemble of aspirational and disciplinary discourses that shaped my interlocutors’ projects in Morocco, and the forces compelling them to

think of themselves as “sitters” in the township. Before expanding on some of these discourses, let us turn to consider the place of permanence and dwelling in migration studies.

II. Producing Permanence

Travel is integral to the Senegalese national self-concept and indeed, in the minds of many Senegalese, there are few Africans as proficient and committed to transnational travel as they.³ Especially ubiquitous are tales of the so-called “Modou Modou,” men iconically from the rural hinterland who, though lacking in formal education, have become prominent businessmen and entrepreneurs abroad, managing complex operations and assets, and becoming boons to their families and villages. These iconic figures are a point of reference for Senegalese men and women, and reflect what Caroline Melly has described as migration’s status as a “cultural imperative” and universal civic virtue in Senegal (Melly 2017, 23). Migration abroad for most Senegalese is ubiquitously tied to the possibility of earning money, sending one’s parents on Hajj, being a good disciple, and acquiring land or building a home. Given the centrality of travel to survival, prosperity, and solvent (male) adulthood, contemporary restrictions to the right to circulation have been seen, unsurprisingly, as threats to livelihoods and masculinities. As migration to Europe becomes more costly, dangerous, and uncertain, studies have shown how young people “weaned on a culture of migration but unable to secure a Schengen visa, fail to progress along the path to social adulthood” (Gaibazzi 2015, 7). Migrants in spaces of erstwhile “transit” such as Morocco become iconic of this existential suspension, and are depicted as “stuck,” “stalled,” or “trapped” at the gates of Europe.

³ Gaibazzi (2015) makes a similar claim about the Soninke of the Gambia, speaking to a broader regional or Senegambian, sensibility.

Mobility has been at the heart of ethnographic research on Senegalese for decades. As noted in Paolo Gaibazzi's important study of the Soninke and the production of rural permanence, the Senegambian region's major ethnic groups have long been understood as essentially mobile, with centuries-old and enduring traditions of regional and long-distance travel. For instance, early colonial and missionary ethnographers describe the Soninke as "the peddlers of West Africa" (Park 1816, 62, qt in Gaibazzi 2015). Likewise for other ethnic groups; Lébou and Sérère are imagined as a "habitually trading people"; the Halpulaaren are known as semi-nomadic pastoralists whose connection to Islam and long-distance travel for the purpose of learning and trade were vital in connecting Atlantic and trans-Saharan commercial systems during the era of slave trade (cf Lovejoy and Baier 1975; Amselle 1976; Webb 1995). Since Independence, Senegal has constructed an imagination of itself as a "nation of migrants" and seafaring navigators: one of the ostensive roots of the name Senegal, from the Wolof *Sunu-gaal*, or "our ship," figures the Senegalese nation as made up of eager travelers with a flair for long-distance trade. Ethnic groups such as the Soninke of upper Senegal and Mauritania were also among the first and largest Sub-Saharan migrant groups in France, and became some of the most thoroughly researched case studies (Manchuelle 1997; Timera 2001). Earlier historiographical studies of Senegalese showed migrants to be not mere "pawns pushed by poverty and pulled by industrial capitalism but willing subjects building on a century of labor migration" (Gaibazzi 2015, 5-6). Travel abroad afforded not only money to care for families, but also new cultural experiences (Timera 2001). As many have pointed out, these studies established the tight correspondence between migration and male emancipation that would lead scholars to describe it as a "rite of passage" for young men.

Meanwhile, the Senegalese imperative of mobility notwithstanding, Africanist scholars have long recognized that immobility or sedentariness is not necessarily perceived by people themselves to be a ‘natural’ or ‘neutral’ condition (Malkki 1995), and thus, not always an anomaly that calls out for explanation (Hans and Klute 2009). Recognizing the centrality of mobility to African forms of life and livelihoods, past and present, does not preclude critique of the effects of colonial racial capitalism, and resource and labor extraction, that have today made transnational migration integral to many Africans’ basic survival. Scholars have meanwhile challenged the notion that mobility is part of the ontology of modernity, demonstrating that worlds of differentiated mobility have existed long before this became associated with a post-modern condition (Ho 2006; Mintz 1998; Chu 2010). Nevertheless, a consequence of the “mobility turn” has been to bring multiple mobilities — religious, therapeutic, existential — to the center of research, and has rightly complicated the narrow definitions of migration as defined by linear and teleological movement. However, as recent scholars have noted, this “turn” has often come at the expense of ongoing study of people who “stay in their place despite the thrust of contemporary mobility” (Gaibazzi 2015, 10; see also Sheller and Urry 2006; Cresswell 2006), apparently “leaving behind” those who have been “left behind” (Toyota, Yeoh, and Nguhen 2007, quoted in Gaibazzi 2015, 10). Renewed attention to the lives of people under the constraints of impeded, “interrupted,” or “errant” migration⁴ draws attention to the ways that particular forms of mobility are “filtered out” of popular and scholarly attention (Walters 2006),

⁴ The notion of *errance* has arisen lately in anthropology and migration studies to problematize the assumption of migration as characterized by discrete trajectories and endpoints defined by national borders. *Errance* recasts journeys to account for the sense of wandering, interruption, suspension, looping, divergence, and open-ended adventure, while its cognates — to err, errant, error — retain the sense of legal, moral, and existential risk. (The projections and displacements contained in the nickname “Las Palmas” indeed suggest the dual promise and peril of migrants’ wayward ventures into Casablanca’s townships — both refuge and purgatory, source of both respectability and corruption.)

and how differentially distributed access to and attainment of mobility itself generates new social forms (Melly 2017).

The analytic pitting of mobility against stasis does not cover the range of experiences and attitudes of my Senegalese interlocutors in Morocco, for whom not only was travel to Morocco part of a project of mobility that did not *necessarily* include onward travel to Europe (though many harbored such a wish); to be able to stay put in Morocco required participation in particular forms of social life that can neither be assimilated with the idea of “staying home” nor completely with that of “venturing out.” Staying put and continuing on are not definitive accomplishments but constantly renegotiated possibilities. Mooring themselves in Morocco entailed a wide range of activities, affects, and availabilities, all of which sustained, and were sustained by those in transit. As Gaibazzi notes, regarding the efforts of Soninke men to stay put and reinvest in rural agrarian locales, this involved both “consolidated and novel ways of organizing ... life *within* migration” (2015, 8). Furthermore, moving and staying put are not transparent descriptors, but rather social conditions having to do with being *seen* as moving or being still in the right way, toward the right ends, appropriate to one’s age, status, gender, and so forth. Thus, it is critical that we unpack the various ways of “becoming emplaced,” a condition which, for my interlocutors, involved reproducing the possibility of onward movement for others, even as they strove to keep themselves in place.

What does it mean to choose and work to stay in place in Morocco, despite the ongoing channeling of people and resources elsewhere? In conversations about travel (*tukki*), understood as journeys away from the natal home, village, or country, my interlocutors most often used the word *toog* to refer to staying behind or ceasing to travel, such as when one returns from the end of one’s journey and settles in to life at home. The word *toog*, literally “to sit,” has many

metaphorical inflections, ranging from idle sitting, doing nothing, sitting on one's hands ("*toog rekk*") to the esteemed position of "founding" a household or a village (cf Gaibazzi 2015). In a more metaphorical sense, it can convey the process of becoming established in a social position, but in its evocations by my interlocutors, "merely sitting" (*toog rekk*) seemed to render something closer to a process of social unseating or abjection, what Gaibazzi calls "bare sitting" (2015, 48). To sit idly, *faranklaayu*, is to be without social 'cover' or status, to be destitute. To *toog* in the manner of an elder, however, is to delegate the laboring activities and bustle of life to one's subordinates — an expression of authority and stature established through relative degrees of activity and stillness (Irvine 1993).

The semantic polyvalence of sitting and moving or traveling are useful this inquiry for understanding the different stakes of staying put for women in Morocco, because they draw together the meanings of physical movement and processes of becoming socially emplaced. Contemplating "staying put" not as a description of physical immobility, but as a form requiring social acknowledgment, I explore the discursive and embodied dimensions of sitting for women as an "act of positioning oneself in a relational field of (im)mobility" (Gaibazzi 2015, 21) and the diverse efforts taken to inhabit that position. For migrant women in Casablanca, staying put involved tending to relations of different kinds with relations nearby and at home in Senegal, as well as dispersed kin elsewhere abroad. They strove to become relay points for the transaction and redistribution of commercial goods, gifts, and remittances within their kin and local networks. By attracting and effectively managing interchanges of money and commodities, they worked to be socially recognized as ones whose travel to, *and* mooring in, Morocco were viable and legitimate. In chapter 2, an engagement with Sufi discourses of inner and outer experience and spiritual struggle helps to further unpack the 'multiple modalities' and 'valences' of stillness

(Bissell and Fuller 2010, 6-11) out of which women strove to embody permanence in a zone of continual migration and transit. In chapter 4, we draw on feminist geographers' and black feminists theories of surrogacy and assisted reproduction to examine women's active and intensively laboring processes of "holding" and containment. These discussions work to unpack women's labors — recruited as surrogate mothers of the spiritual community — to be comprised equally of aspects of holding and refusing or letting go.

Through these inquiries, we consider stillness to be a densely relational enterprise, one whose social value and productive potential is engendered in relation to emergent senses and meanings of what it is to belong to, move in, and settle in the Northwest African corridor today. In the following sections I attend to some of the imaginative and material constructions of space and relatedness in the corridor— namely, "moving market" and the "family drama" — as key figures by which movement and settlement are imagined and taken up as projects, and the discourses that compel women to think of and produce themselves as "stayers." Looking at the intimate trajectories and complex relations that brought women to Morocco and held them in place there, stillness and emplacement come to appear not as definitive accomplishments, but as a continuous projects, endowed by particular dispositions, capacities for action and reflection, and relational potentials, as well as vulnerabilities. The chapters in this dissertation each examine a different aspect of these efforts across different spheres of life where women's mooring in the townships is variously valued, exploited, admired or disparaged.

III. Moving and Dwelling in the North-West African Corridor

Since at least two decades, the North-West corridor in Africa has been in the process of radical transformation. With the promise of smooth and barrier-free trade and high-speed travel,

the residents of the corridor, a region stretching from Morocco to South of the Senegal River Basin (and by some accounts, as far south as Cote D'Ivoire) are presented with a vision of regional integration, with the economic giant Morocco at the helm.⁵ In this process, Morocco draws on discourses and neo-imperial fantasies of modernization, South-South development, and African Islamic humanitarianism to ground and emphasize its potential as a regional powerhouse, seeking to consolidate Morocco's economic, religious, and cultural dominance throughout the region. Moroccan enterprises vie with Middle Eastern competitors for the largest share of the developing market in Senegal and elsewhere, launching massive infrastructure modernization projects in housing, transportation, and education. In this process, Morocco invokes its "special" relationship with Senegal, forged over centuries of trans-Saharan exchange and Sufi Islamic fraternity, to tighten bonds of African "solidarity" and notions of African self-determination in the present. Breaking with the previous generation's diplomatic "freeze" and policy of cultural 'Arabisation' and authoritarian isolationism, the sitting Moroccan monarch, Mohammad VI, has built his legacy upon the idea of a "(re)turn" to Africa, and to ties once cut by European colonialism and post-colonial political conflict. Not wishing to lose out, Senegal has been eager to capitalize on bi-lateral trade and banking projects, infrastructure building, and agreements that have granted Senegalese citizens privileged access to residency permits and work in Morocco since the 1990s.

A key dimension of this "(re)turn to Africa" has been an effort by Morocco to lead immigration policy reform in the region and on the continent. In fashioning itself in counter-image to Europe's brutal exclusions and weaponized deterrence (de Leon 2009; de Genova 2012;

⁵ <https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/region/north-africa/morocco-continues-its-push-into-africa/> accessed Aug 20, 2019; <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/07/19/why-morocco-is-cosying-up-to-sub-saharan-africa> accessed on Sept 1, 2019

Andersson 2014), Morocco has re-fashioned itself as the new “terminus” of sub-Saharan migration and proposes an “African model” of humane migrant integration policy.⁶ Through its self-promotion Morocco has secured many hundreds of thousands of Euros of defense funds, as well as a privileged position in Mediterranean free-trade negotiations, in exchange for heightened military border defense and agreeing to receive migrants illegally pushed back from the Mediterranean by E.U. coastguards. Thus Morocco has attempted not only to mask the violence of its own border regime but also bolster its position on the continent as a regional political and economic powerhouse. Appealing to past imperial fantasies of “Greater Morocco” (a territorial figure from the 16th century that extends from the Mediterranean to the Senegal River basin), and drawing on a cultural and religious diplomatic campaign as the “*amir al mu’uminiin* of Africa” — the leader of the (Muslim) faithful in Africa — Morocco’s new sphere of influence culls meaning from European, Islamic, and African flows, as it attempts to consolidate power at the crossroads of a potentially lucrative development ‘corridor.’

In their introduction to a special volume on the East African development corridor, Newhouse and Simone (2014) ask, “Is the corridor simply an excuse that allows different factions of investment to see themselves in some larger public interest? Is the corridor a way to exceed existing compartmentalization imposed by imperial and colonial structures? Is the corridor a way of seeing nothing in all of these new infrastructural dispositions, a means of eliding, circumventing the seemingly immanent erasure of a multiplicity of local movements, imaginations, aspirations?” (4). What does it mean to inhabit such a corridor? What kinds of dispositions, practices, and affects are generated by dwelling in it? The trope “Las Palmas” for

⁶ See the speech delivered by the King Mohammed VI upon Morocco’s return to the African Union. <http://www.maroc.ma/fr/discours-royaux/texte-integral-du-discours-prononce-par-sm-le-roi-mohammed-vi-devant-le-28eme-sommet> accessed 2/1/2017

referring to the women's township destination invites a reframing of Newhouse and Simone's questions. Signaling both forgery and promise, extraversion and exodus, mirage and concrete place, what kind of name is "Las Palmas" for a space that is re-imagined in and through movement, a mobile geography whose ground shifts in relation to the figures who move or dwell in it?

The play of nicknames, such as "Ladies of Las Palmas", points to an important aspect of the corridor. As a place of intense contiguity, the corridor entails a need to balance making oneself legible enough to let others know what one is doing, while retaining a degree of anonymity and freedom to maneuver (Newhouse and Simone 2014, 5). The women who took up residence in the township sought to evade public censure and the narrow fixing of their identities; Las Palmas became, for some, a place for attaining prestige as "Big women" and *Dahira* mothers (surrogate carers for the religious community), and for others, ways of being "nothing in particular" — of achieving the kind of anonymity they might have dreamed of a big city in "the north" (or "*presqu'europa*," Almost-Europe, as one of my interlocutors put it). Against a backdrop of enclosure and political capture by government officials and Senegalese religious institutions seeking to capitalize on Senegalese migrant respectability, the reproduction of the city as a place of ongoing fugitive movements and aspirations of other kinds depended on these women's wayward and experimental efforts.⁷ Thus, by exploring the senses of the corridor,

⁷ I draw language here from Saidiya Hartman's *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*, a stunning imaginative history of newly emancipated black women to the north in the early 20th century. I use "waywardness" not only to echo the comments I heard from other Senegalese about the Ladies of Las Palmas, but to underline a connection between my interlocutors' experiments in living otherwise amidst increasing enclosure and carcerality in Morocco, and to link it to a broader discussion about the terms of knowing and representing black life under conditions of global anti-blackness and Islamophobia. Hartman's work, along with black feminist scholars and theorists called upon throughout this text, further help draw attention to the intersectionality of modes of oppression against people of color, against women, and I add, against Muslims, migrants, and sexually nonconforming people and those living outside the bounds of normative domesticity.

I seek to draw attention to the *interrelated* dynamics of mobility and immobility, display and concealment, aspiration and recalibration that dwelling in this zone entailed.

A key impetus of thinking the “corridor,” both as it is political produced and locally taken up, is considering how individuals and groups understand what it means to belong to the places that make it up, and how people in movement see themselves. Anthropologist Nancy Munn (1986) uses the term “spatiotemporal extension” to describe the way that Gawa islanders’ acts and exchanges create relations beyond the physical and temporal milieu of the island, transcending the “here and now.” Both Chu (2010) and Gaibazzi (2017) draw on Munn in describing the spatiotemporal extension of Fuzhou and Sabi migrants, respectively, for whom the desires for international travel, despite its many risks and difficulties, “stems from their desire to inhabit Chinese [or Gambian], rather than foreign, modernity” (Chu 2010, 14). The notion of spatiotemporal extension is particularly salient in Africanist scholarly debates which have long revolved around the question of the “viability” and “worldliness” of African cities. Given the compounded legacies of colonialism and neo-imperialism in producing underdevelopment, ecological devastation, and material and immaterial resource depletion on the continent, some have asked whether the appellation of African cities as “modern” is merely a performance of epistemic freedom from violence, or a romanticism effacing actual violence and “non-theoretical” suffering (see Watts 2005; Mbembe and Nuttall 2005). Taking a stance that is in some ways orthogonal to these debates, urbanist and theorist AbdouMalik Simone deploys a descriptive practice that militates against the presumption of inner city Africa as a space of mere survival, personal and material resource exhaustion, and decay. It strives to reflect African “ways of working” that he argues can “redeem” these cities not only as “worlded” in their own right, but also as terrains of creativity and self-making. Rather than imagination as a boundless act of

human freedom, lacking any material determinations or constraints, Simone's reading of the city highlights the play of possibilities and horizons.⁸

In the sense evoked by Simone and others, I explore Senegalese women's migration and dwelling in Morocco as employing different modes of spatiotemporal creativity and extension, projecting themselves into wider circulation as means of more deeply inhabiting their families and communities. While material scarcity certainly worked to motivate migration, the pressures to redistribute and to turn the spoils of work abroad into durable forms of wealth (Buggenhagen 2011; Melly 2017; Berry 1993), to participate in pilgrimage (Berriane 2018; Eickelman and Piscatori 2009), and to live out scripts proper to senior womanhood, are all well-trod strategies which are "essentially place-bound" (Gaibazzi 2015; 16). These constitute blueprints for organizing diaspora life, the repertoires on which women sought to render their emplacement socially legitimate and recognized. They both offer fertile ground for women's experimentations with value creation and enterprise, and also conscript them into various norms and hierarchies. Returning to the idea of the corridor, the following chapters consider how the imaginative and material production of Morocco accelerates, channels, diverts or suspends women's projects of self-extension, and how these in turn work to renew and extend historical forms of inequality and otherness, as well as affinity.

Within the literature on migrant economies, scholars have focused on remittances as key vectors of development of the national economy of recipient countries, as well as their impacts on local and household dynamics. I seek to bring anthropologists who think external trade routes

⁸ Thus, in Simone's idiom, infrastructure's liveliness does not mean that the material world does not exert itself in the encounter – its materiality influencing and shaping the felt-sense of what can "really" be done and to what uses it can be placed in relation with other actants – but rather that the action always proceeds through the frictional encounter between the underdetermination of material "function" and the overdetermination of (human) exertion and use-value (2011, 355).

and households together (eg Munn 1989), not merely in terms of household economy and remittance (Cohen 2016) but through an expanded understanding of value creation. The chapters of this dissertation do not resolved into discrete or newly bounded notions of household, or moral - or spiritual economy. Rather, they attempt to render women’s pioneering efforts to carve out circuits of value precisely through movements and transactions *across* different domains such as spirituality, hospitality and kinship, romantic desire, as well as waged and unwaged work. Engaging “old” and existing repertoires of exchange, they positioned themselves at nodes of transformation and transvaluation, as “masters of transformative processes” (Guyer 2006). Expanding our inquiry to the question of value creation thus enables us to bring more dimensions of migrant experiences and their intersections with economic life and value into view.

IV. Family Dramas

Along with state-promoted fantasies of an economic development corridor, a regional imagination also materializes in a familial kinship idiom. In national discourses, intermarriage — the exchange in women as wives between elite families — has long been a strategy of political alliance, particularly between heads of religious lineages. These familial alliances are often evoked as a special fraternity between the two nations, to ground Morocco’s essential “Africanité” and with it, claims to being a post-racial liberal African Islamic polity. Carefully occluded from the discourse of co-national fraternity is the entwined history of trans-Saharan slavery in this production of Morocco’s racial and cultural landscape. Morocco is a place where Senegalese and other West African women and men have long been conscripted as domestic servants, slaves, and concubines, a history seldom addressed in public discourse or academic research, yet retained in intimate familial memories (Mernissi 1993; Ben Jelloun 2015; El Hamel 2014). The Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun’s novel, *Un mariage de plaisir* (2015), examines

the oppressive force of this national fantasy built upon historical amnesia, and its implications for a country in the grips of structural racism and xenophobic violence today. His protagonist is a merchant from Fès traveling to St. Louis who marries his Senegalese house slave according to the Islamic convention of ‘temporary marriage,’ and later returns with her to Morocco to make her his second wife and mother of multiple progeny. Through its magical realism (for instance, the Senegalese wife gives birth to twins, one blonde and blue-eyed, the other “coal black”), and multi-generational scope, the novel speculatively links the history of trans-Saharan slavery and contemporary sub-Saharan African migration into and through Morocco. Through the depiction of the grandson’s political and spiritual “awakening,” Ben Jelloun paints the nation’s future as indelibly “African.” Yet although seeking to decry national chauvinism and racism, in the end, the widely read and celebrated novel uncritically reproduces old stereotypes regarding Senegalese as non-Muslim “animists,” and black women’s sexual potency, figuring Morocco’s cultural and spiritual rejuvenation through the depredation of the exotic Other. The novel represents Senegalese as Morocco’s intimate other, a fraternal twin, “exceptional” and yet “*African*,”⁹ and thus sullied by the stigma of slavery and “inauthentic” Islam.¹⁰ Such ambivalent ideas were commonly voiced in taxi cabs and corner shops, from educated university researchers to working class Moroccan neighbors in the township alike.

Meanwhile, amongst my migrant friends in Casablanca, the kinship idiom for Senegalese-Moroccan relations took on a different life. “Family drama” was first and foremost a figure for explaining the erratic and unpredictable nature of official decisions that, as migrants,

⁹ “African” was both a term used by Moroccans to describe dark skinned foreigners, and taken on semi-ironically by migrants themselves, jeeringly protesting Moroccans’ self-contempt and denial of their belonging to the African continent.

¹⁰ For a history of way that blackness and enslaveability were co-produced in the Saharan region, in Islamic jurisprudence and colonial administrative practices, see el Hamel 2016.

they were routinely exposed to. For instance, Senegalese in Morocco were technically entitled to residency and job permits. However, when over 70% of migrant applicants were denied these documents during the first mass migrant regularization campaign of 2014-5, my friends explained to me that this simply “in the way of *histoiix-u familles*,” meaning the vicissitudes of animus and affinity that make up all kinship relations. Rumors about a falling out between the elders of the respective Senegalese and Moroccan Sufi brotherhoods could explain unexpected events, such as the Home Office’s sudden discontinuing of residency exemptions, or the barring of a celebrated Senegalese marabout from entering the kingdom; or, as occurred in the winter of 2017 during my fieldwork, the sudden decision by the Moroccan army to allow hundreds of Europe-bound migrants at the border town of Nador to pass unimpeded into the hands of European coast guardsmen.¹¹ With the invocation of “family drama,” my friends implied that they would bear the indignities of their illegitimate status for the time being, but felt assured that with time, good relations would be restored, and with it, the opportunity to reclaim their rights.

The theme of family drama and occulted kinship circulated at another register, via humorous and entertaining stories about the previous Moroccan King’s “secret” Senegalese second wife, and the illicit children who the king had secreted away to America (where, presumably, racism no longer exists). Upon hearing such stories I often assumed they were told to illustrate something about the racism and hypocrisy of the Moroccan state, or the ongoing stigma they faced as migrants. I was surprised, however, that on most occasions, the teller wished to impart a sense of the monarch’s special “fondness” for Senegalese (ostensible his motivation for securing special rights and privileges for Senegalese in Morocco), even if this

¹¹ <https://www.france24.com/en/20170222-morocco-hundreds-migrants-storm-spain-ceuta-amid-eu-trade-tensions> accessed Mar 03, 2017

‘progressivism’ also set him apart from the rest of the Moroccan population who were thought to be hostile and unwelcoming.

The familial drama as hermeneutic device for making sense of national events was one thing. But “family drama” was also woven in my interlocutors’ most intimate understandings of their projects, desires, and aspirations in Morocco. Their journeys were frequently interlaced in processes of familial conflict, dissolution, and repair: projects of divorce or remarriage, attempts to reconstitute family prosperity and solidarity in the aftermath of crises (which could include crises inaugurated by their own marital breakdowns), attempts to expand family businesses, or to enhance lineage prestige through religious pilgrimage, as well as projects of breaking free of familial pressures and surveillance, to establish independence and personal accumulation.

Tropes in Senegalese popular culture contributed to the emplotment of Morocco as a gendered terrain: women’s travels belonged to the “family drama” in particular ways, and popular figurations of Morocco as *dëkku ñaaréel*, a “home for second wives,” or as a Dahira, a Sufi gathering, served a disciplinary function in channeling women’s earnings and efforts toward particular normative ends. The “home for second wives” rendered more well-off migrant women as “second wives” to wealthy transnational traders abroad, making them subject to regimes of hyper-visibility in their homes, and over their resources and manners of consumption. For divorcées, widows, and unmarried senior women, avoiding shame often meant publicly committing themselves to the reproduction of the Sufi religious fraternity, the Dahira. These women were expected to act as surrogate “mothers” to the Dahira, whose spiritual “homeland” is Morocco, by becoming caretakers for transient migrant men. These were not the only options available to women; but the play of public stereotypes and conventions, and the repertoires of

style and performance they availed, were means by which women inventively navigated daily life in Morocco and renegotiated the terms of their relations with family in Senegal.

Much like the corridor, the idea of Morocco as an interspace of the family drama frames an inquiry into how women's capacities for action and collaboration were understood and evaluated, both in public discourse and in more intimate deliberations and realms of questioning. Looking to constructions of "family drama" in popular jokes, gossip, television and media tropes, and formal and informal religious discourses, I explore how the genre(s) in which family dramas circulate shape the ways in which women found self-expression and acknowledgment within the standing language of respectability, piety and national aspiration. Accordingly, things like telenovelas became elemental parts of my methodology. Rather than seeing these as objects for analysis, they became the media through which I engaged with certain interlocutors, opening up new expressive terrains and affording novel perspectives on the shape of their lives. This led me to consider how the performative, theatrical repertoires of "family drama" operated alongside women's efforts to lay claim to the authorizing traditions of Islam in crafting households, enterprises, and relations that could be deemed acceptable. Women were not the kinds of subjects typically authorized by the state or the brotherhood establishment to chart moral careers as Senegalese cosmopolitans. Yet their pioneering efforts in the townships involved taking up repertoires of respectability and piety, mining not only their legitimating authority, but their expressive capacities, to extend the scope of spiritual exercise into new domains.

An additional note on family dramas. As in much of West Africa, Gaibazzi reminds us (2016), conflict and fission in lineage-based societies have historically caused out-migration and resettlement (Kopytoff 1987; Lentz 2013). For example, Emmanuelle Bouilly's study of Dakar migrant families demonstrates how competition between co-wives in polygamous marriages can

shape women's decisions to sponsor their sons' boat migration. Gaibazzi sensitively observes how prospective migrants may succeed *or fail* in garnering sponsorships from family members because of internal family divisions, and that this may “spur decisions to pursue more stepwise routes, funding their own mobility by stationing and working along the way” (Gaibazzi 2016; see also Pian 2005). In contexts of refugees or political upheaval, scholars have observed how mobility can be instrumental to kinship strategies aimed at securing a sense of futurity for the nation or politically oppressed communities, such as through transnational marriages (Maunaguru 2019; Perdigon 2017). Yet while these studies are useful attending to how emotions — desire, disappointment, jealousy, duty — suffuse and shape migrants' actions, I am less interested in a notion of kinship dynamics as a sociological “push” factor, and more concerned with how kinship itself is reconfigured through mobility. I thus see my interlocutors as moral pioneers, using travel as a resource for the purpose of creating, revising, or restoring viability to domestic relations.

V. Senegalese Exemplarity? An Anthropology of Islam in Africa

Readers familiar with migration studies and West African literatures will have noted that the Senegalese example— particularly case studies centered on the Muridiyya Sufi brotherhood — has been heavily mined as a source of research and theory on mobility and globalization, most notably on diasporic community formation and theories of “vernacular cosmopolitanism” (Diouf & Rendall 2001). Generations of Senegalese scholars, mostly trained in European and North American universities, have contributed to the study of Senegalese Sufi brotherhood organizations in diaspora, bringing with them important “insider” access to primary sources and specialized religious texts (Babou 2007; Diagne 2010, 2011; Kane 2011). As scholar-disciples of

the *tariqas* as well as national public intellectuals, their work has fed back into the internal discourses of the Senegalese brotherhoods themselves, who now commonly describe themselves as “motors of a global moral economy” fueled by transnational migration (Babou 2007; Diouf 2012). Some non-Murid Senegalese scholars and Western academics, have contested the so-called “Muridocentrism” of this episteme, which they accuse of paradigmatically linking the efficacy of Sufi brotherhoods *in general* to a particular form of political economy (Launay 2007; Triaud 2013). This reduction-conflation of heterogeneous tendencies, textual traditions, and practices of Islam in Africa bears the residues of a longer colonial knowledge production which separated “pure” Arab textualist Islam from “syncretic” African belief. This disciplinary bias has blinded scholars from studying other *tariqas*, and the alternative practices of diaspora formation, dispositions of travel, and geographies of mobility and exchange fostered by other Sufi brotherhoods, even within Senegal, such as the Tijaniyya (though see Seeseman 2012; Hill 2007). Though the Tijaniyya is the most populous brotherhood in Senegal, claiming adherence of more than half of the nation’s Muslims, it was long deemed by French colonial authorities as “essentially” Arab (read: more ‘severe’ and resistant to French rule), a threat to Black African Muslims, and was thus subjected to policies of containment and suppression. The legacy of these ideologies is evident in the relative paucity of scholarship about the Tijaniyya today, particularly its linkages across and outside of non-Western spaces. Recentering the Tijaniyya in this study is thus an attempt not only to highlight a particular Islamic worlding outside of the ‘West’, but to shed light on a living, evolving spiritual geography with its own distinct internal debates, tendencies, traditions, and responses to the questions of post-colonial modernity.

Colonial-era epistemological distinctions persist, namely in the form of a “normative secularism” (Mahmood 2006) which describes US imperial pressures to constitute a moderate

global Muslim community, dividing the world into “good” or “bad”, “moderate” or “radical” (Mamdani 2004; cf Ong 2002; Haddad 2004; Morsi 2017).¹² The reanimation of public discourse about the linages of Sufism in Morocco today can be traced to the effects of the Global War on Terror, particularly in the aftermath of the 2003 terror bombings in Casablanca, and Morocco’s own attempts to cultivate an image of “African” Islamic Sufi cosmopolitanism that is peaceful, tolerant, and commensurable with liberal values. In restoring a historical link to the Tijaniyya brotherhood, a conflict of meaning arises between Moroccan officials’ promotion of the liberal “Africanity” of the tariqa,¹³ and many Senegalese devotees, who meanwhile value the Tijaniyya’s conservatism and place emphasis on the “Arab” origins of the Tijaniyya as signal of its “authenticity.” Thus the history and contemporary expressions of the Tijaniyya in Morocco reveal a contested terrain of cultural production, legitimacy, and authenticity in which the blueprints for individual and collective identity construction is far from given.

The Tariqa Tijaniyya emerged in Morocco in the mid 18th century, under the spiritual authority of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani (b. 1735-1815), whose body is buried in his *zawiya* (mausoleum) in Fès. The tariqa quickly spread across West Africa through the work of his disciples and charismatic reformers wielding a message of emancipation against caste oppression, as well as a populist, expedient, and accessible *tarbiyya* (religious instruction) for the masses. This period of jihad resulted in the mass conversion of the populations of the

¹² As Mahmood suggests, the American commitment to secularism does not entail the separation of religion from the political realm but rather calls for a particular kind of subjectivity that secular culture elicits (2006, 328). Accordingly, even when recent historical anthropologies of Islam in Africa put forward Sufi brotherhoods as emancipatory traditions that are “fully Islamic” (rather than syncretic or derivative), they do so within a framework that demands a performance of liberal toleration and amenability to democratic values. In a sense, while the critique of Muridocentrism has been invoked as a call for an appreciation of the “diversity” of Islam in Africa, it should be understood as a means of drawing attention to and decolonizing the racialized and Islamophobic notions at the root of *both* Western and African nationalist and Islamic liberal tendencies within discussions of Sufism (see Marsh 2012; Morsi 2017).

¹³ Some scholars have noted that the “Africanity” of the tariqa is emphasized in places like Turkey, albeit with slightly different connotations. See Dollar 2012

Senegambian region to Islam. The pioneering religious leaders such as El Hajj Malick Sy and Cheikh Amadou Bamba established Sufi brotherhoods (today called Dahiras, or gatherings) as the ubiquitous form of Islam practiced by Senegalese, true up to the present day. Whereas Sufi practices and institutions have waned in importance and become marginal to public devotion in many parts of the Muslim world, including Morocco, brotherhoods remain central to Senegalese religious and political life.

Owing to its status as birthplace of the Tijaniyya, Morocco has remained a site of pilgrimage and a destination for Senegalese students, religious officials, and entrepreneurs for over two centuries (Lanza 2013, Berriane 2015). The management of religious sites and rites of pilgrimage (as well as accompanying commerce and political affairs) have always been contested between Moroccan, Senegalese, and European interests. In recent years, Morocco has also become a terrain of intense competition *between* different Senegalese brotherhood factions and their respective commercial networks, who perceive Morocco as a promising and lucrative frontier for transnational commerce. Such tensions and inter-brotherhood rivalries are customarily downplayed in public discourse in Senegal. But they nevertheless constitute an important backdrop for understanding women's pioneering projects in the townships, which were firstly attempts to move outside of Murid trade monopolies in the city center. When conflicts between different brotherhood factions arose, it was often these women who were scapegoated as having a corrupted influence on their male lodgers, and for turning the brotherhood ethos *away* from social solidarity and support. While many women found moral refuge through public participation in Sufi Dahiras (brotherhood gatherings), their house-holding and commercial projects were often viewed as conflicting with ideals of pious, self-sacrificing motherhood. As will be shown, scandals, stereotypes, and public diatribes centering on these women became a

terrain for debating the legitimacy of brotherhood movements and their expansionist agendas in new locations in Morocco. Chapters 4 and 5 consider how different visualizations of the encompassing moral estate of the brotherhood seemed to be at odds with women's personal strategies of social aggregation, as well as the modes by which they signified their piety through discrete and often precarious acts of care within familial and local networks.

Scholars of Sufi brotherhoods, in Senegal and elsewhere, have typically treated tariqas as homosocial spaces in which women play, at most, marginal or symbolic roles. However, this was not the case among my interlocutors. Women were not only participants in Dahira gatherings and pilgrimage rites; their efforts in the townships worked to reproduce and extend traditions into new terrains. They drew on vocabularies and practices of Sufi Islam in making sense of their emplacement in Morocco, taking up notions of discretion and pious display, using modes of ritual exchange to demonstrate their ongoing value to their families, and cultivating embodied notions of stillness and spiritual transcendence in their everyday lives. Attending to the gendered dimensions Sufi brotherhood turns our attention to geographies of mobility often overlooked in the literature on transnational migration — for instance, geographies of pilgrimage that have always included women. Furthermore, it affords an opportunity to understand how women's everyday practices worked to extend spiritual exercises *into* gendered domains of the household, sexuality, and romantic aspiration.

The stories of middle-aged, uncoupled women migrants also allows us a perspective on the stakes of certain forms of mobility for individuals in a particular phase of life. Pilgrimage (whether *Hajj* to Mecca or *ziyarat* to local saints' shrines) in Islam are ubiquitous to many Muslims' spiritual aspirations. For Senegalese abroad, the sponsorship of parents' journeys funnels cash earned abroad into moral circuits of value, becoming a key means by which the

younger generation reproduces its elders. In the following chapters, we look at the ways in which the desire to perform pilgrimage and participate in the spiritual and social rites productive of elderhood inform my interlocutors' strategies for dwelling in Morocco. As middle aged women, no longer confined to in-laws' homes, but also nearing old age in which one expects to be taken care of, pilgrimage and pious self-fashioning became key to securing the possibility of a future return to Senegal. Rather than taking the approach of studying "a" ritual pilgrimage practice, or "a" brotherhood, examples of which can provide ample empirical detail for the curious reader (Evans-Pritchard 1966; Spadola 2017; Werbner 2003; Eickelman and Piscatori 2001; Triaud 2004; Hammoudi 2006), the questions I put forward around movement, aspiration, and spiritual striving have to do with how different relations to Islamic traditions are sustained within, and themselves sustain, intimate relations, particularly within families.

My rendering of the particular "family dramas" in which my interlocutors are embedded resonate with some of the concepts and methods developed in recent decades of research on the anthropology of Islam, kinship, and the everyday. Writing against the dominant framework of Islam as a "discursive tradition", one which orients Muslims toward virtues that are realized through various techniques of the body and disciplinary procedures within particular institutional structures of power (Asad 1983), some scholars contend that discursive tradition frameworks have placed too much emphasis on manifestations of piety that transpire in the public sphere (Agrama 2014; Bush 2017). By emphasizing pietistic forms that demand effortful self-cultivation and the drive for coherence, they neglect the aspects of experience in which ambivalence, skepticism, or contradiction dwell and are attended to (Schielke 2012; Marsden 2005; Fadil 2009; Bush 2017). For my interlocutors, the fashioning of pious and discrete households for the community of young disciples (*taalibés*) in transit, and the ability to render oneself to Fès to

perform *ziyaar*, were means of lending legitimacy and respectability to tenure in Morocco. But they were also sites of contradiction and questioning, as these women struggled to render visible their ongoing value to their families, and to ensure the viability of relations in Senegal that would eventually be there to receive them upon their return. From their positions on the margins of the kinship order, they demonstrated an attunement to the propensity of different kinds of relations to shift in importance over time, or over the course of one's life.¹⁴ Thus, my interlocutors' engagement with aspects of Islamic tradition reveal forms into which these uncertainties, paradoxes, disappointments and dramas of everyday life are absorbed and re-inhabited.

What does it mean to study the "family drama" as part of the "texture of everyday life"? What sense does this give to the concept of the everyday? By the everyday, I do not mean a notion of "private" or "pre-political" space divorced from, or merely refractions of, the public sphere. Rather, following Das (1996, 2007), the everyday is a space whose particularity rests in its capacity of remaking through repertoires of receptivity and acknowledgment. Describing how the violence of Partition was apprehended and reconfigured, Das shows that it is within the temporality of everyday life that relations are able to find (or lose) a sense of a shared future together, in ways that could fail to line up with expectations generated by larger public discourses. Similar to Schielke's focus on instability and incoherence, Bush (2017) writes that "central to [Das's] notion of the everyday is its capacity to *differ* from more stable or coherent notions of discourse and practice by inhabiting the fissures within them" (22). Bush's study of Sufi poetry within the everyday life of an Iraqi Kurdish family exemplifies how the "capacity to sustain difference" emerges from the material, embodied task of living together, and the

¹⁴ Their awareness of the vulnerability of relations to take on new or unexpected meanings at a later stage in one's life recalls Das's rumination on the notion of life "taken as a whole" and the notion that there are domains of experience that are fenced off from us (Das 2018).

temporality of ongoing relations that suffer (inevitable) injury, separation, and disappointment, “even as they find opportunities to savor the simple pleasures of life” (ibid.).

Khan (2008) likewise offers an account of how, over a period of time, the members of a single family in Pakistan gave voice to very different religious orientations that meanwhile threatened to fracture the broader political landscape of the country. “The ways in which malevolence and generosity rub up against one another within a family suggest how religious differences get worked into the weave of domesticity” (234-5). The ethnographic cases in this dissertation render a notion of the everyday that is distinct from notions of discourse or practice, in that what I seek to describe are efforts to sustain *different* orientations, alternatives to the normative forces described by those concepts. This sense of an “alternative” took spatial forms — for instance, women drew upon the symbolism and networks of the Sufi brotherhood to create township residences that were respectable and secure, yet the dynamics of a shared everyday life with young migrant men engendered an alternative domesticity that could absorb and sustain the tensions arising out of residents’ disparate identities, intentions, and itineraries. Their approaches to Islam evince the effort to open up and sustain other pathways within kinship. The following ethnography renders scenes in which women experimented on Islamic repertoires of pious striving, proximity and distance, movement and stillness, obligation and blessing, in attempts to rehabilitate fraught domestic relations, sustain themselves within spaces of contradiction and disappointment, and secure their eventual reception back into the family home.

Instead of a study of a particular brotherhood’s pilgrimage site or spiritual geography, the following chapters explore the singular trajectories of individuals and families, as they draw on discourses and practices of Sufi Islam to build pathways forward, and strive to have their desires acknowledged. In doing so I build upon recent anthropological studies which have explored how

people in movement imagine and project themselves by remaining attentive to their varied vocabularies and concerns, which may include references not only to physical movement across borders but also existential movements of warding off or acknowledging death or sundered relations (Pandolfo 2007; Hage 2009; Skelton 2018). Tracing the lives of individuals and the relations in which their mobility and efforts to stay put are embedded helps us attend to the complex movements of desire, acknowledgment, and disappointment that suffuse other movements across space. Yet by tracing the different engagements to Sufi Islamic traditions of *ziyaar* in migrant women's everyday lives, and how discourses and performative repertoires of *ziyaar* are deployed, what we get is less a picture of piety as effortful self cultivation, and instead, an attentiveness to the propensity of relations to change in importance over time, and the capacity to think of the self as multiple.

VI. Methods and Chapter Overview

This dissertation is based on ethnographic research conducted between January 2014 and June 2017. It built on relations that emerged from two short periods of preliminary fieldwork (2013, 2014) in which I worked with activists, NGOs and migrant community organizations during the initial roll-out of Morocco's migrant regularization campaign. I was interested in how Morocco's transformation from "transit" to "destination" migration hub was absorbing and re-deploying older histories and figurations of mobility and alterity, namely, the figure of the Sufi pilgrim and the (Black) domestic care worker (*dada*) or house slave (*rqa, a'beeda*). Preliminary research confirmed that the "exceptional" status ostensibly afforded to Senegalese migrants in Morocco was more of an act of P.R. than hard legal fact: though Senegalese were made the privileged recipients of a certain number of small business grants and cultural promotion days,

the regularization measures and legal provisions did little to protect foreign workers of any nationality, let alone the greatest number of female domestic workers from Senegal who worked in Moroccan homes. Despite the initial state campaign's lackluster implementation, my initial fieldwork first cued me into the way that those who were granted the *carte de séjour* in this period, namely women (and children), were using their status to make entrées into the formal housing market in the township, as described above. I thought it interesting to explore how these women wielded the unique bundles of permissions and constraints attending their social locations in this moment to re-animate and extend longstanding networks of pilgrimage, trade and wage labor.

My point of departure thus became the township households that women held as pseudo landlords for transient male lodgers. I undertook a broad neighborhood-wide survey, followed by a comprehensive survey of all the migrant households in a single apartment block in Riad al Oulmes (20 apartments), and a quasi-randomized sample of 35 other apartments throughout the township, as well as a smaller number of households in adjacent townships where many migrants lived. Knowing that most households were made up of a mix of permanent, semi-stable, and occasional or transitory lodgers, these surveys, which had both an intensive and longitudinal component, charted the composition of shared dwellings at a moment in time, and across different intervals of time.¹⁵

¹⁵ There was little consensus on how membership in the household was to be defined. Visitors or guests who happened to be present when I came to do a survey or interview would sometimes be referred to as members ("*waa-kër*," people of the house), occasionally with additional citation of a genealogical relation (real or fictive) or joking kin terms, even if the individual was clearly not considered by others in the house to be a member. Other times, interviewees would count members or co-lodgers who had been absent for many weeks and were not likely to return. How to count membership in the domestic household is a perennially thorny issue — does one count by reference to where one sleeps, or where one eats one's meals? where one pays rent, or simply where others agree one is a 'member'? The issue of membership is made even more complex when we consider that heads of household themselves did not always reside full-time in the apartment, particularly if they worked as live-in nannies in Moroccan homes. I tried to mitigate confusion by asking different kinds of questions — How many people slept here last night, two/three/five nights ago? How many people

Entering into and remaining with the life worlds of migrants raises methodological challenges. In the case of my Senegalese migrant interlocutors, experimenting with permanence: how does the ethnographer insert herself into a field of relations in continuous recomposition, without assuming the stability or continuity of particular frames of analysis such as the household or kinship group? Questions about how to describe and compare household or domestic economies — what households are, or are not— has long been a source of theoretical debate for anthropologists, leading to many demonstrations of the proliferation of household forms that have assumed diverse and changing functions at different times and places (see Guyer 1981). Thus, anthropologists have long recognized that such basic features as terms of membership, or the importance of residence over rights, cannot be easily reconciled into a single framework. Never could this be more obviously important than in migrant households, which represented themselves as extensions of family household configurations spread across national borders, sharing substance and responding to claims made on resources through the continuous circulation of cash remittance and material support (Moya 2011; Cohen 2011). Township households were *also* conceptualized as metaphoric and metonymic extensions of the “Big House” of the Sufi brotherhood, or Dahira. As will be shown, these presented seemingly contradictory and incompatible principles of obligation and investment, which, beyond the atypicality and tension around unmarried female household heads, often styled awkward, mutually confusing, and sometimes untenable modes of domesticity.

Studies of urban dwelling and housing have tended to focus on individuals’ histories of housing and housing-seeking in the city, while others seek to analyze dwellings’ “developmental

were here when you first arrived, etc. For the 8 households I came to know most intimately, I repeated these questions across each of our monthly follow-up interviews. However, greater precision in the questionnaire did not seem to generate clearer answers. I often wondered if there was as much ambiguity about who the rent-paying members of the household were for the tenants themselves as there was for me.

cycles” (See Leeds 1974; Hansen 1997; Goody 1975). In the latter, the anthropologist tries to interpret different moments of household composition in relation to its long-term reproduction. It thus presupposes that the observer forge a stable perspective across members’ continuous residence. Since the households and residents I engaged with had little expectations of a shared future, I sought a more dynamic way of tracing how households were composed and recomposed in time.¹⁶ I approached surveys as prompts for collecting “household biographies” (Hansen 1997), an approach by which the household refers to a site of interaction rather than to any empirically observable entity or conceptual unity. Household members come and go, draw on different resource bases and non-kin networks, interact with different material and personal interests, and often disagree on the terms that should structure their relationships within shared domestic space. Although they were almost exclusively non-kin who shared these spaces, and their tenure could be as short as a week or two, in using the term *household* (“kër”), as my interlocutors did (rather than *hostel*, or *foyer*, the more common figure in migration studies literature in contexts of migration to Europe, to which my findings could be profitably compared) I aim to draw attention to the intensities with which relations within these shared dwellings sought their models in particular idealized forms, both in terms of how members fashioned their relations with one another, and how they conceptualized and practiced domesticity. Following Guyer (1981), who advises us not to dwell on the status of households as units of analysis or typologies of forms, but to “follow their resources” (material, cultural and jural), I tracked how different resources were assembled, circulated, and redistributed within

¹⁶ Initial surveys were conducted when possible in the interviewees’ apartment, but occasionally in a cafe or place of work (most commonly for street vendors), with one resident or a group of residents. Together we took detailed inventory of the apartment’s private and collective resources: moveable and immovable furniture, cookware, electronics, other furnishings of any kind, clothing, cleaning supplies, and so forth, noting what was privately owned and what was shared. I asked each interviewee to list the other inhabitants of the household in as much detail as possible, though often respondents could or would not offer information beyond very superficial details such as approximate age and profession.

households, and what they could tell us about shifting gender roles and relations amidst new possibilities for house-holding and resource accumulation abroad.

My research began from the household, the site into which I, as a young single female anthropologist was most readily absorbed. From there I accompanied the women I came to know to their posts in the nearby market, and was eventually invited to attend other kinds of gatherings and events, including neighborhood Daira meetings, and trips to Fès, the pilgrimage site of the devotees of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani. In all but a few cases, I did not have the opportunity to meet or interview family members in Senegal or elsewhere abroad, though I was often invited to speak with women's family members — parents, cousins, children, spouses in some cases — over WhatsApp or Facebook. Moving across relations that span great physical distances is logistically and energetically taxing, as Hage notes in his study of a Lebanese family with concentrated poles of relations stretched across the globe (2005). However, with four sets of key interlocutors, my travels afforded me occasions to meet various members of the kin group. My host mother Aïsha's aunt Maïmouna and her children hosted me on a trip to Paris, and Arame's mother and father welcomed me during the busy Eid holiday time in Tivaouane, a holy city in Senegal. Interviewing family members lent additional perspectives on women's travels and the bundling of expectations and tensions that went along with them.

While my research spans multiple sites of work and gathering, multiple cities, and multiple networks, with Hage (2005) the approach of my dissertation is to treat these different nodes of activity and geographic locations as a single interconnected field, whose internal contours and movements can be deciphered through the tracing of material and verbal transactions of different kinds. Thus, chapter 1 focuses on circulations between women and their natal and (ex)-conjugal households in Senegal, while chapters 2 and 3 focus on systems of credit

and exchange forged between women and men in the marketplace where they work alongside one another and in households where women act as landlords. Chapters 4 and 5 attend to material transactions mediated by the symbolic and pragmatic frameworks of the Sufi brotherhood, in the construction of migrant households as metonymic extensions of the “Big House” of the brotherhood (Chapter 4) and via the mediation of *ziyaar*, or pilgrimage, and the ritual exchanges of cash, objects, and blessings that accompany it.

The first three chapters examine the imaginative construction of the North-West African corridor and the gendered political economy of migration through two main lenses: “family drama” and “moving market.” Tracing the different meanings, sensibilities and histories associated with these concepts, we place women’s travels to Morocco within a historical perspective of regional and transnational exchange. In **Chapter 1**, I examine travels to Morocco that were woven into processes of marital decomposition or other critical moments of reconfiguration in women’s conjugal and familial lives. Cast in the idiom of “family drama,” women’s strategies of travel and ‘spacing out’ are conceptualized as a means of restoring viability to ruptured relations and household prosperity. This chapter thus shows how women’s emplacement in Morocco is rendered within the logic of familial decomposition and repair. Rather than seeing familial conflicts as sociological “push factors” in migration, however, the cases reveal the singular ways in which travel mobilized old and new forms of economic autonomy and status negotiation for women within their families. Tracing material transactions in gifts, cash, and promises, and circulations of stereotypes and media narratives, I explore the imaginative and material construction of Morocco as an “interspace” of domestic relations, with roots in the history of regional exchange.

Chapter 2 moves from the family to the market, showing how women have worked to constitute themselves as nodes within a globalized network of Senegalese diaspora trade, visualized through the kinesthetic concept of “moving market.” I focus on a single township marketplace where a number of Senegalese migrant women and men have taken up trade, examining the history of the market’s emergence within the context of trans-Saharan trade and regulation over the second half of the 20th century. The Moroccan state’s “(re)turn toward Africa” and futuristic imaginary of infrastructural modernization in the form of the “corridor” fuels an imagination of regional integration, fluid mobility, and economic growth. Yet when seen from the perspective of migrant traders relegated to low-earning trade in Hay Hassani, the market is a site of experiential contradictions. By attending to gendered and religious meanings through which the field of movement/immobility is locally parsed and conceptualized, I aim to develop a more sophisticated concept of “corridor economy” than the unmarked space of transit envisioned by development economists and migration scholars. The chapter outlines various kinesthetic and moral discourses of “sitting” and “hustling,” as different approaches to accumulation, gendered productivity, and presence in Morocco. I suggest that these discourses constitute a framework in which stillness and movement are not simply opposed conditions, but rather seat different moral dispositions, capacities for action, and availabilities, honed within a relational field of (im)mobility.

Chapter 3 in turn asks how these contradictory imperatives of moving and staying put are absorbed into the actual practices of market trade in the periphery. While women are rendered as “sitters” in the marketplace, this masks an array of transformations and techniques for converting resources, across difference spheres, into productive conditions of market exchange. Chapter 3 thus delves into the specific labors by which women made themselves part

of the infrastructure of the market, holding themselves ‘in place’ across different spheres of work, including domestic labor or other service jobs and land-lording. By tracking the strategies by which women prepare for and transition in and out of different forms of work, tie up and untie different forms of credit, and forge collaborations with tenants and trader peers, we consider the often unacknowledged and yet creative labor that go into “staying put” and being recognized as properly “emplaced.”

The last two chapters bring into focus the spiritual geography of Morocco from the perspective of Senegalese travelers, and the particular role of women in re-animating and extending it in the present. **Chapter 4** focuses on the material and semiotic correspondences between migrant households and the Dahira, the central institution of the Senegalese Sufi brotherhood, and their role in shaping social relations in shared migrant dwellings. It asks how women negotiated the contradictory pressures to embody the generosity, hospitality, and discretion of a “Dahira mother,” while also keeping their households intensively open and amenable to men’s ongoing mobility. By linking up migrant households with broader conversations about assisted reproduction and surrogacy, I aim to broaden discussions on political economy of migration through processes of value creation that move across domains of households, spirituality, and politics.

Chapter 5 in turn, considers the ritual practice of *ziyaar*, or pilgrimage visitation to a holy site or person. It examines how women’s uptake of the aspirational frameworks of *ziyaar* in their daily lives works to reanimate and extend this aspect of Islamic Sufi tradition in the present. I consider the history of the management and promotion of Sufi pilgrimage as part of the production of colonial and postcolonial authority, not only a charter for Senegalese travel to Morocco, but an important form through which women attempt to demonstrate legitimacy and

value to their families whilst in protracted stays abroad. Looking at women's itineraries, material exchanges, and discourses around ziyaar, I contend that it is as much a practice of physical travel and displacement as a form of ethical perception through which Senegalese tend to relations of hierarchy and duty within kinship and everyday relations. Building on the idea that the "family drama" organizes and orients women's experiences of travel to Morocco, this chapter traces the physical moments of ziyaar alongside those of kinship to show how ziyaar is folded into and also frames expectations for care taking and receiving across generations.

Ch 1: The Ladies of Las Palmas: Senegalese migrants on the margins of marriage

This chapter introduces the Ladies of Las Palmas, a group of mostly older uncoupled women migrants — divorcées, widows, second wives, and unmarried women — who have used travel to Morocco to re-negotiate their positions on the fragile margins of the kinship order. A thread that connected the lives of my interlocutors, and the three narratives I present here, are that they inhabited what Sarah Pinto has called the “margins of marriage.” Most of these women had been married at least once before, a condition which they asserted was central to their ability to travel independently from other family members. They represented their migratory projects to me as having been inaugurated by such critical moments as divorce or the death of a spouse, and competing interests arising from attempts to secure their re-marriage. With such events came the onslaught of financial burdens, including the care of children and other dependents, as well as the need to repay bride-wealth and other expenses associated with women’s return to their natal homes. Though their stories differed widely, the narratives I encountered all spoke of troubled marriages, contested love, and dispersed configurations of intimacy and kinship — colloquially referred to as “*histoixu-familles*,” family dramas. My interlocutors frequently spoke of divorce and re-marriage, as well as other breaks and stitches in relationships of other kinds, and the social burdens that these generated, often falling particularly on women (cf Pinto 2014). This chapter therefore attends to these narratives, considering how travel and mobility were imbricated in the work of repair and re-imagination of a future life in kinship for these women.

Much of the scholarship and public debate on Senegalese migration has focused on the ostensive insight that familial norms, pressures, and conflicts are to blame for forcing migrants to emigrate (Bouilly 2008). However, the three cases here show a more complex picture. They

reveal how dispersal could be a resource in making and unmaking kin, while also serving women's own complex projects of self-actualization on the margins of normative domesticity. Women's locations, behaviors, and activities in the township were apprehended through the lens of "family drama," and specifically the breaks, hardships, and obligations through which kinship is made and unmade in the age of mass emigration. Lawrence Cohen, writing about the social and medical knowledge of Alzheimers in India, examines the narrative of the "decline of the joint family" as a central narrative in Indian gerontology, and its relation to the language and practices defining the behavior of old people (1998, 7): senility is viewed as the benchmark of the 'tragedy of modernity' through the mediation of the "Bad Family." Cohen's ethnography sensitively explores how narrative constructions of the Bad Family shape not only medical and social knowledge about aging bodies, but also voice, and the "ability to be heard as speaking subjects" (20). The Ladies of Las Palmas, I show, were similarly tied to a social pathology of broken kinship solidarities and marital dissolution connected to mass emigration. Tracing constructions of family drama thus helps us to make sense of motivations and inner dynamics of migration that are often obscured or overlooked by economic analyses. But the family drama was *also* a narrative figure through which women themselves represented their lives, and efforts to understand themselves and to continue seeing their everyday struggles as connected to a project of repair. Cohen's discussion exposes the historically and culturally specific ways that certain subjects are seen as belonging to institutions such as family or religion, but goes further to show how such narratives work to construct contours around expression and intelligibility, the achievement of voice, and the possibility of being heard as a speaking subject (see also Das 2001; Han 2012; Pinto 2014; Buch Segal 2016). Thus, understanding Morocco as a site of family drama entails asking how migration is entangled with an effort to express one's desires and have

them acknowledged. Attending to the singular trajectories of women, I attempt to unpack the historical and cultural understandings that lead women to see themselves within a framework of family drama, as well as how the spatial and relational affordances of travel engendered an interspace or new perspective on the self.

I borrow the phrase “margins of marriage” from Pinto's (2014) account of family, affliction and psychiatric care in India, a phrase she uses to designate the place of divorce and other relational breaks in precipitating women's institutional commitment. For Pinto, divorce offers both a means of demarcating normative conjugality, as well as revealing the “specific ways in which the vulnerabilities of relationships accumulate for women” (12). Vulnerabilities inhere in all relationships; however, various institutional or conventional responses can work to remediate, amplify or exacerbate them. Thus, attending to “points of dissolution” such as divorce can work to expose the “logics of separation and recomposition as intrinsic to kinship” (21). The ethnography that follows offers three accounts of spatial and relational experimentation issuing from “points of dissolution” and recomposition in women's lives. They highlight a particular logic of *separation* that inheres within the patterning and practice of Senegalese kinship, with specific anchors in the history and political economy of trans-Saharan space. The *histoixu-famille* is also redolent with what historically has made Morocco a particular *kind* of “destination” for Senegalese, built up over centuries of circulation and exchange, which has always included women. Aspects of this history, in which Senegalese-Moroccan diplomatic relations are *themselves* characterized as an “*histoixu-famille*,” a family drama, figure throughout women's stories and everyday gossip, rumors, religious sermons and proverbs, and popular media. Morocco was widely imagined as a site for the unfolding of a “family drama”; paying attention to narratives and expressive conventions, and tracing the transactions through

which women managed personal accumulation and redistribution across familial networks, I suggest, can tell us something about what kind of drama it was.

I. The *Dëkku ñaaréel*: home for second wives

Fahma was a stylish, reserved woman of 45, living in the same residential block as my hosts in Riad al Oulmès. She was nearing the end of her third year in Casablanca, having lived for three years prior to that in Fès. Fahma had been married once before, to a mechanic in Dakar who had left her after 7 years of marriage for another life in America. She had gone back to live with her mother and elder sister who suffered from a disability and had never married. While divorce is common in Senegal, the incidence of divorce is obscured by the tendency to remarry quickly. Fahma, however had waited, refusing the proposals of an old widower and two senior brotherhood members, both of whom wanted her as a second wife, an act deemed meritorious among religious men of standing. After a couple of years the proposals tapered off, until in 2009, Fahma was approached by a trader with Italian residency who lived with his first wife in Milan. Though perhaps reluctant to lose a care-taker, her family agreed to the arrangement, impressed by the generous gift of Moroccan djellabas and slippers sent by the man, a demonstration of his international commercial ties, as well as his “*yeermandé*,” his compassion for Fahma's situation. Her travel to Morocco was arranged between her husband and her family, who saw the possibility of expanding their small import business. Fahma welcomed the arrangement, since it meant she would be spared care-taking of her new husband's parents in Senegal.

She talked about her re-marriage as a storybook romance (*histoiix-u mbëgguéel*), and showed me wedding photos which comprised two panels of husband and wife photoshopped together. Since their marriage, which was carried out between their families in Senegal while her

then-fiancé was abroad, her husband had visited her in Morocco only once, a visit she referred to somewhat mischievously, as her “*seeyi*.” *Seeyi* refers to the array of rituals accompanying the bride’s move into her in-laws’ or conjugal home, marked by the ceremonial exchange of gifts and cash; it also refers to the physical consummation of the union. Calling Morocco the locus of her *seeyi* suggested that not only was her travel knitted into the conventional exchanges of gifts that mark the marital transition; it also hinted that Morocco was where she hoped her own reproductive future to begin.

The “*dëkku ñaaréel*” — the home of the second wife — itself denotes the separate residence to which a co-wife should (ideally) be entitled under Islamic precepts of “equal treatments,” as well as modern class norms of private property and intimate exclusivity. More specifically, it speaks to assumptions about what is required in order to maintain domestic harmony in a multi-centered family home, as many Senegalese households are. The toxicity of the relation between co-wives (*wujj*), and the contamination of the conjugal relation through competitive undermining, or men’s lack of equanimity between wives, is a common cultural theme that finds expression in ordinary talk, entertaining stories of secret wives and children, proverbs and religious sermons, popular tv talk shows, and soap operas. Polygynous marriages in Senegal are not thought to be anathema to “modern” companionate marriage — indeed, because of the ways that rights accrue to the second wife, she is more *often* associated with companionate marriage than the first wife, thought to be chosen along more conventional lines of family preference. It is the second wife who is in a position to reclaim a right to a private residence apart from the in-laws, while the latter’s care-taking is typically the responsibility of the “traditionally selected” first wife. The “*dëkku ñaaréel*” indexes a logic of separation intrinsic

to the discourse and practice of polygamy (Diop 1985; Samb 2001, 2008; Bop 2005), braided through with regionally specific histories of political alliance and commercial trade practices.

The rendering of Morocco itself as “*dëkku ñaaréel*” arose often among the co-ed groups of Senegalese traders in the marketplace where I spent many hours during fieldwork. Collective banter often revolved around allusions to men’s bachelorhood, and crescendoed into elaborate, mock marriage propositions. These were usually met with women’s equally theatrical refusals. The repartee would often end in an upbraiding of the suitor, with a list of the many shortcomings that made him unworthy. “I would never marry him, he’s ugly [*ñaw*].” “He’s too stingy [*naay*]” or “He’s too lazy [*dafa pataard*].” Invariably, I too was thrown into the fray: men would make overtures, and one of the women would interject, “Don’t listen to him, that *Modou-Modou*, he already has a wife! You, you’re a *toubab* (a European), everybody knows that *toubabs* are nobody’s co-wife (*toubab du wujju*)!” This oft-rehearsed farce, at the expense of the young men, would elicit uproarious laughter. In actuality, the young “suitors” were seldom married, let alone seeking a second wife which, while common in Senegal, is the reserve of wealthy men. By calling these men ‘Modou-Modous,’ vernacular for successful transnational traders and entrepreneurs, the women mocked the suitors for putting on airs. “*Real*” Modou-Modous, it was agreed, would not be hanging around in township markets, where daily life was confined to inactivity and seemingly endless idle waiting.

In this context, the close association of the *ñaaréel* (second wife) with the “*jabaaru Modou-Modou*” (the wife of the Modou-Modou) is significant. It speaks to a long history by which polygamous marriages have been used to facilitate transnational mobility across the region. Second wives were often placed as stock-keepers and intermediaries (*coaxeurs*) for husbands engaged in circular trade between Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco. Some of these

women were able to build up their own enterprises, and attained notoriety still talked about today. Among earlier generations of Senegalese in Morocco, the celebrated Modou-Modous whose success was associated with their mobility and transnational “range,” had made their fortune and their reputation through networks of trans-Saharan cargo transporters and traders. Their transitory enterprises made them reliant on well-networked local patrons with apartments and storage space close to points of distribution and transfer— namely, the “Marché Senegalais” near the city center. Some of these men invested in property (a shop stall or apartment), while others sought security in social ties — powerful individuals within the local Sufi orders, or wives or girlfriends who “sat” in Morocco to manage holdings and business affairs. Some of the most notorious market traders today are couples like Mère Coumba and her husband “Modou Massage,” who first established themselves in Casablanca in the 1980s. After years assisting her husband in trade, Coumba eventually set up her own specialized hair product shop in a different part of the market.

The eclipse of this ideal of conjugal trade partnership was felt acutely by my female interlocutors in the township, who saw their positions in Morocco as far more precarious than “in the past” [*ci jamaano*.] In joking about their young male peers' impotence as traders and as would-be husbands, the women also drew attention to what *they* struggled to embody — the respectability and prosperity of the “*jabaaru Modou Modou*.” Even those among them who were second wives, many of them married to overseas traders, were often in situations of re-marriage in middle age; many, like Fahma, to spouses who they never saw.

Fahma’s move to Casablanca from Fès had followed upon the death of her mother. Grief stricken, Fahma also sensed that her options for returning to Senegal were closing, and she had to begin doing something “serious” [*am yéene*] with her life. Sitting together in the marketplace

where she peddled plated jewelry, African beauty products and “massage” creams, she could speak volubly about her acquired trade expertise, the prices of different kinds of goods and the best places to find them in the wholesale market, and how to draw in Moroccan customers: “All these women you see here, they are very frigid [*sedd*, ie sexually], it’s because they don’t know about anything, it’s their society that is closed. They all know that in Africa we have all the secrets of seduction, we know how to please men and make ourselves irresistible. Why do you think their king likes Senegalese so much?” With this suggestion, Fahma evoked a common self-description of the sexual prowess of Senegalese women, and a rumor I often encountered about the King’s father, Hassan II, and his covert second wife, a Senegalese woman who was a former servant in the royal household. As my interlocutors would often note, “*Buur bi, dafa bëgg Senegalais yi*. The king *loves* Senegalese.” The figures of the Senegalese surrogate-slave-concubine, or *dada*, continues to animate familial memory (Mernissi 1991), reinforce market systems of racialized domestic labor (Marfain 2004; Choplin 2013), and fuel contemporary debates about enduring racialized hierarchies and forms of gendered extractability in Morocco (Ben Jelloun 2018; El-Hamel 2015; Alioua 2015). Amongst my interlocutors, stories and rumors about covert Senegalese co-wives in elite Moroccan homes were part of how they made sense of and rationalized the putative “privileges” they were afforded as Senegalese — residency permits, work contracts, preferential selection for domestic maid and nanny jobs, and so forth. A distinctly feminized mode for how belonging and inclusion to the nation is imagined and claimed, second-wifery was a key signifier for “discussing, contesting, and enjoying” the range of social and institutional affordances of being Senegalese in Morocco today (Berlant 1991, 7).

While Fahma's trading acumen was undeniable, our talk often drifted to the children she had nannied in Fès, whom she had loved like her own. Weighing heavily on her was the sense of nearing an age beyond which she would no longer be able to bear and raise children of her own. This intuition was closely entwined with her witnessing the departure, one by one, of the members of her natal family compound in Dakar. Without any senior women remaining to take her in, or in whom she could entrust the care of her children while working abroad, the prospect seemed unviable. In her study of fertility and life cycle in West Africa, Caroline Bledsoe has noted how child-bearing age may not correspond to chronologically constructed time, but is rather relationally produced (2002). For Fahma, it was in relation to the dispersal of domestic kin, among whom she ought to undergo the transformation from bride to mother, that she sensed her reproductive potential foreclosed. After a year in Casablanca, she began taking in tenants in the apartment she rented, and placed her extra income into her own small trade enterprise. Meanwhile, Fahma continued to worry that her husband's disinterest in visiting her and giving her a child was the malicious work of her co-wife (*wujj*), a woman who she knew well, as they were from the same neighborhood in Dakar. Thus, while she often framed her travel as a privilege associated with her status as a junior wife, freeing her from the obligation to care for in-laws and allowing her the liberty to "look around" — in other moments, she struggled to suppress the thought that it was a form of curse. Against the horizon of her own desire for a child, Morocco became a place of banishment.

A reserved and pious woman, Fahma was reluctant to speak about herself, and most of my visits to her habitual spot in the market were spent talking about trade and the activities of her local Dahira. However, over many months, she began inviting me to her home and we developed a routine of watching Senegalese soap operas together. The show she was most fond

of, which featured a young couple grappling with the introduction of a second wife into their domestic relations, became both medium for and object of our discussion. It offered a means for working around strong norms of discretion and self-effacement that ordinarily marked our talk. As a research approach, it would be difficult to disentangle women's reflections on their own lives from the genres of self-disclosure and projection made available by the television shows. Yet I was intrigued by how Fahma drew on the shows' narrative topoi and emotional vocabularies, and deliberated with me and her friends in the marketplace on the characters' fates. Like other soaps that deal in 'illicit' themes such as incest, adultery, and illegitimate children, Senegalese *wujj* dramas do not take domestic harmony to be a norm: everything from bitter rivalries to *maraboutage* (malicious sorcery through the work of a marabout) between co-wives are integral to the plot. Watching these programs with Fahma and others generated lively debate about ideas of "modern" and "traditional" marriage norms, generational difference, and ideas about the place of money in contemporary relationships. In their discussion, my interlocutors often framed these questions in terms of the possibilities of "moving out" versus staying home in Senegal, in sight of various kin. Some of the most striking illustrations were around the topic of *maraboutage* and the trope of nefarious magic between co-wives. My interlocutors agreed that whereas their compatriots who were able to migrate to Europe were 'free' of such strife, able to exercise proper control over money and spatial and relational boundaries from a 'safe' distance, the power of nefarious magic was thought to be "still" efficacious in Morocco. As one of my acquaintances put it, "[we] are still in Africa." Evaluating and interpreting these dramas in relation to her own life, *wujj* dramas became a heuristic, fleshing out a cultural and existential space marked *both* by enhanced personal freedoms and the ongoing entanglements and fatal potencies of domestic kinship.

Scholars have shown how the educative pedagogies, stagings and narrative conventions of melodrama and domestic sentimentality have worked to provide ideological anchors through which the intimate sphere comes to bind individuals to the nation (Abu Lughod 2001, Berlant 1991, Das 2008, see also Masquelier 2005). Das, Ellen, and Leonard (2008) provocatively ask, in regards to African American families in the US, whether domesticity can be stated in the affect of “divorce,” by which they discern a particular combination of intimacy and alienation created by the flow of relations between household, prison, social services, and “Drugsville.” Here, I ask, what might it mean for the affective coordinates of conjugal life, spread between Senegal, Morocco, and Europe, to be cast in the modality of “*wujj*” drama—a co-wife drama? What kind of perspective on traditionally masculine spheres of cultural and economic exchange does the *wujj* drama, with its conventional emphasis on feminine ties, bring into view?

The show *Pod et Marichou*, one of Fahma’s favorites, illustrates many classic tropes of *wujj* drama. In the show, the two co-wives, Marichou and Eva, represent apparently opposite ends of the wifely spectrum: one a self-sacrificing and demure housewife, the other an ambitious, self-confident woman who earns an income as a secretary. Further, the central role of the mother-in-law, purveyor of sound albeit often ascerbic moral wisdom, reflects the presence of kin archetypes and tropes about the volatility of multi-centered households in Senegalese society (Diop 1985; Diouf 1999). When Pod cheats on his wives with an officemate, it is the independent Eva who leaves and eventually ventures abroad, while Marichou stays, counseled by her mother-in-law that she endure the disappointments and heartbreaks of marriage, no matter the agony it causes, for it is what is required “for their marriage and children to be blessed.”¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://www.marodi.tv> accessed 5/15/2016

In discussing these developments with me, Fahma was struck by the conundrum it raised. She saw wisdom in the mother-in-law's advice, but questioned whether there could truly be a perspective from which one could know how long waiting makes sense. "*Ba kagn?* Wait until when? A woman cannot wait forever, if she is to have children." [This, she also made a point of instructing me.] She further pointed out that Marichou could scarcely count on her mother-in-law to shelter her indefinitely, especially since, without a child, she had no enduring claim to continued residence in the home.

Rather than the imperative to *muñ* - endure - the story left Fahma with a vague sense that Marichou, like herself, had been unjustly dealt with. Returned to a state of dependency, she had been cut off from the normal means that privilege is arrogated to senior women, namely childbearing and neighborly modes of mutual aid and sponsorship. Yet there were other points of contact as well. Fahma was particularly taken by the character of Adja, Marichou's wily and mischievous friend who contrives to reconcile Eva and Marichou and convince the former to return to the conjugal home. Adja herself was an orphan whose foibles with suitors ostensibly stemmed from the fact that she didn't have a mother to guide her in such matters. From the margins of kinship, she keenly perceived which relations were in need of repair — thus her ability to offer insight and efficacious meddling into Eva's situation, namely, by folding Eva's co-wife's mother and niece into the plot at just the right moment. Adja's manipulations re-frame Eva's decision away from the terms of conjugal contract with Pod, and toward an expanded concept of 'relevant' kin relations as possible sources of support.

In conversation, it seemed that Fahma saw Eva's decision to return as a sign that belonging to a 'household' was more important than the momentary pain of exclusion from conjugal intimacy. This certainly could not have been an easy position for Fahma to take - as a

divorcée, she had been conscripted as caregiver for her mother and afflicted sister for years, and had hoped her re-marriage would offer a departure from that condition of drudgery and loneliness. Resisting the temptation to think of the soap opera as a merely didactic lesson, I wish merely to point out what watching *wujj* dramas with Fahma brought into view for me. Where I had been thinking about Fahma's struggle to embody the prosperity and connectedness of a *jabaaru Modou-Modou*, I had failed to consider how, integral to this was a conflict concerning her effort to have her desires acknowledged. Fahma's modest entrepreneurial success could not substitute for her hope for a child and for intimacy, even while such feelings seemed to threaten public discourse about virtue, decency, and ideals of sacrificial motherhood. Meanwhile her husband's dutiful and routine remittance could not allay her doubts about his affection, nor assure her that he would continue to care for her as she aged. His persistent absence turned the signs of prosperity and security of the "*dëkku ñaaréel*" into a space of humiliation and banishment. Given the way that second-wifery is entangled with re-marriage in Fahma's case, the threat of becoming an unwanted burden to her family continued to shadow her relationship with her husband with skepticism, and seemed to mar the prospect of intimacy for her.

In the *Pursuit of Happiness*, Stanley Cavell poses a question regarding the possibility of human intimacy as figured through the comedy of re-marriage. He asks whether, given the inevitability of ruptures and accumulated disappointments within intimate human relations, two people can remain friends, ie, commit to a life of continued mutual education. From this I understand him to mean whether something like an ordinary fidelity is possible. Reflecting back on the *wujj* dramas I watched with Fahma, I was struck by the ways in which Fahma, within her everyday affairs, was *already* engaged in a practice of "ordinary fidelity," not, as evoked by Cavell, to her spouse, but rather to the project of the wider family group. I recalled, for instance,

how one day I had arrived at the market to see a new face perched next to Fahma's — her co-wife's cousin, who had recently arrived in Casablanca to pursue training at a local trade college. She had invited the young woman to stay with her for the weekend, since her accommodations were far from the city center and Fahma asserted that she would not be able to find any shops open on the weekend. Noting my surprise at seeing her with the kindred of her co-wife whom she had previously disparaged, she had said "Eh, Rama* [the Senegalese name she donned me with], look at the world how small it is! *Ku amul mbokk amul dara* - without people you have nothing."

Scholars have often felt the need to explain the "persistence" of polygamy in Senegal, arguing that it has served as an adaptive "cultural strategy" facilitating transnational mobility, whether in service of acquiring visas or enabling traders to hold commercial properties in multiple cities, allowing men to migrate abroad while retaining ties to land and community (Kringelbach 2016, see also Hannaford 2017). Others have shown, for example, how rivalries in polygynous marriages were a factor behind the decision by Senegalese mothers to sponsor their sons' migration (Bouilly 2008). Here, I wish to resist this impulse to reify *wujj* dramas as a simple sociocultural push factor for migration, let alone one that merely reproduces patriarchal kinship and accumulation. Attending to how *wujj* drama featured in my interlocutors' narratives serves instead to highlight the cultural strategies and individual acts of imagination that worked by continuing to include women who have departed or been excluded from patriarchal kinship, including Fahma's sister, her co-conjugate's niece, and indeed Fahma herself. Whereas the focus has been on how marriage patterns and migration ultimately reinforce a logic of "exchange in women" for the purposes of patriarchal accumulation, I suggest that attending to feminine ties

brings to light a different ethical terrain (Garcia 2010; Buch Segal 2016), and helps us see the ways that mobility offered a resource for women in their work to continue to incorporate others.

For Fahma, in a context in which her right to residence is continuously made vulnerable on multiple fronts: by the sleights of in-laws, competitive undermining by co-wives, a spouse's withdrawn affection, one's aging body, the presence or absence of a child, travel enabled a re-negotiation of the terms of care-taking and receiving. Her story reveals kinship not as a permanent settlement but rather a horizon against which different kinds of relations might wax and wane in importance over time. Attunement to this intrinsic vulnerability of relations, Fahma's response presented in the mode of a minor gestures of incorporation, whose outcome couldn't be known in advance.

II. Managing Margins

Morocco was a setting for family dramas of other kinds, and the next case illustrates how travel could avail women of an "exit" from strained or emotionally burdensome situations, while allowing family ties to continue. Combé was a Diola woman in her late thirties from the rural surrounds of Zinguinshor, in the Casamance region of Senegal. She had married young: at 15, she had been courted by a man who her father refused, but when she became pregnant, the marriage was hastily arranged, with a brideprice that all considered to be generous given the circumstances. They married and moved into her in-laws' home, and within the first two years Combé had given birth to two girls. She described her in-laws' home as cold and severe, and her husband was often physically violent with her. She ran away multiple times, attempting to return to her father's house, but each time she was convinced to reconcile. Her family sought all manner of mediation, but eventually she demanded a divorce. While Combe was involved in her

domestic struggles her father had taken on significant debts, and had borrowed extensively from his uncle to purchase a taxi, with which Combé's elder brother was meant to earn a wage. After her divorce, she returned home where she was quickly re-married to the uncle's son, possibly in attempts to modulate the debt. Because her new husband was working abroad, she remained in her father's home, where her brothers' wives treated her with contempt and made her shoulder the bulk of the domestic chores. She eventually moved into her husband's brother's compound, but after three years of marriage she hadn't had more children and was weary of the neglect she experienced at the hands of her sisters in law. She sought a divorce for a second time. But having experienced hardship at her natal home after the dissolution of her first marriage, she refused to return to it. Further, her family feared repercussions from the uncle whose many loans remained unpaid. Combé's father, brother and a maternal uncle arrived at a solution with her husband's family, proposing that she travel to Morocco, with the expectation that she would earn money to send back home, surely while ensuring that her exit would help smooth over the relations between the families and free her own natal household from the added burden of keeping her.

Marriage, moving out, and having children were all status markers that freed women to travel independently. But for most, it was spousal separation or divorce that inaugurated their travels. Thus Combé remarked: "after a woman is married and moved into her husband's home, her parents, *dootuñu ko wakh dara*, they can't say anything to her anymore. She can move as she pleases. But then, you know, if the marriage goes bad (*sudee marriaas bi bakhul*) what does she do, if she can't support herself and her children, then she goes back to just sit (*toog rekk*) in her parents' home. She'll be a slave (*jamm*), she'll have no rest... I had to go out."

She compared her strained adjustment in her early months in Morocco to the kind of loss of self she experienced when she first returned to her natal home following her first divorce.

“*Kenn du la bayyi khel* — no one pays you any mind, all day long, *tóog rekk*, just sitting, you become sick from boredom.” The threat of idleness was a constant feature of hers and other women’s narratives, creating a spatial and affective bridge between homes and their residences abroad. Getting to Morocco was not enough; the city was full of traps waiting to reduce one to passivity.

In 2015, Combé moved from the city center where she rented a room in a cramped hostel, to the township, and was able to sublet the remaining space to a few young men, *mbëkk-kaats yi* (clandestine migrants) themselves in transit. While she sent regular remittances to her father’s compound, it was to her mother-in-law and sisters in-law that she sent parcels of slippers, fabric and soaps, demonstrations that she was becoming a prosperous trader. Why, if she sought to push for divorce, would she continue to send gifts to her affines? She also plied them with promises to bring them to Morocco on *ziyaar*. Gifts kept her on good terms with her husband’s sister, a schoolteacher at a local Franco-Arabic school, who she was able to enlist in defending Combé’s daughters against her mother-in-law’s demands on them for housework. Thus, through her earning she saw herself as gradually able to exercise some control over her children’s education and futures.

In Senegambian society, divorce, like marriage, is less an event of absolute rupture than a process, entailing a slow disentangling and distancing through diverse material transactions and deferrals (Diop 1985). As Roberts & Comaroff (1981) and Falk-Moore and Nader (1969) discuss in relation to the marriage process, deferred ritual transactions are a strategy for keeping relations open, pluralizing avenues of individual and collective accumulation in the meantime.¹⁸ For

¹⁸ Under French colonization, family relations in Senegal were governed by separate Christian, Islamic, and customary laws, with a civil code governing the “four communes” (Lydon 2015; Diouf 2001). Since 1973, marriage and divorce have been regulated under a unified Family Code, and reforms in 2005-2008 made appearance before a court in family

Combé, travel mitigated the need to sever ties definitively. Her marriage and its dissolution had also exposed a longer conflict within her extended paternal kin group: namely, the domineering influence of her uncle, a successful migrant, over his non-migrant siblings, including her father, the erstwhile elder brother who had never had the opportunity to travel. Burdened with the task of taking care of aging parents in the compound, as well as overseeing the care of his migrant brother's wives and children, Combé's father remained dependent on the latter for loans and services. Speaking of her uncle, she said, "it's as though we are not of the same blood [*bookuñu dara*]. His wives loved to fight, and when it came their turn to cook, each would come to my father and demand their *dépaas* (allowance.) My father had nothing, his brother stopped giving a long time ago, and surely my uncle was giving to his wives already! They would walk away and spit on the ground, right there in front of him."

Such mundane hostilities and indignities reinforced Combé's sense that emigration had contributed to her family's decline, and that her own father and his wives and children had suffered the worst of it. As part of a family in which more than half of the adult members (and two thirds of the male adult members) were abroad, Combé felt that she had to make up for the failures of expatriate relatives, who, since emigrating, had progressively "forgotten" about their duties to care and provide for her father and her immediate kin back in Senegal. Although her own travel abroad had spared her the embarrassment and hardship of a return to her natal home, she also expressed bitterness at having been refused a place elsewhere, such as in her maternal uncles' household, and conveyed a sense of having been pushed out ("*genné*"). Her mother's

law matters compulsory. Still, today a large percentage of marriages and divorces are handled entirely outside of the court system. Accordingly, while brideprice is officially set at a nominal amount, the range of customary and novel courtship and marriage payments between husband/husband's family and bride's family are numerous, and indeed multiplication and inflation of expected payments is a source of polemic. Among all my interlocutors save for one, exchange and repayment were matters handled between families irrespective of whether they registered their divorce in a court.

brothers, upon whom responsibilities of financial maintenance would traditionally fall, were tradesmen, each with multiple wives and large households. Some had contributed a little to her travel expenses, but it was with unconcealed resentment that Combé noted that once she arrived in Casablanca, it was as if they had washed their hands of her. “*Bayyi nañu ma,*” she said, “they have left me.” The Wolof expression for this kind of moral divestment draws on the mobile metaphor of “exiting” the self (“*tase*” or scattering, of which a cognate “*fase*” is used for divorce), expressing a sense of her kinsmen as having “exited” or “abandoned” them. Gaibazzi (2018) refers to a similar concept in the Gambian (Soninke) expression for relational dispersion. “Migrant relatives turning their backs on their ancestral households are thus said to scatter (Soninke: *sanke*), to move physically away *and* relationally apart from one another, when they could instead use their being away from home to generate wealth and distribute it to those at home” (28). Similar to this, generic Wolof terms for relational investment and solidarity (*andale*) evoke moving or streaming together, while dispersion (*tase*, or *xelli*) is likened to water splashed carelessly from a bucket.

Gaibazzi proposes a concept of “restorative migration” to describe young Gambian men’s desires to migrate as a means to redress “blockages” in the moral and economic bonds of kinship. Embedded in the region’s long history of migration, mobile practices give substance to Soninke relatedness — a sense of deep participation in one another’s existence (“mutuality of being” according to Sahlins). Gaibazzi writes that:

“From a Gambian Soninke perspective, mobility occurs in a space that is at once geographical and existential. It is a way of being-with-others, or more accurately, moving-with-others. Migrant relatives turning their backs on their ancestral households and thus said to scatter, to move physically and relationally apart from one another, when they could be instead use their being away from home to generate wealth and distribute it to those at home. Redistribution is here not merely a financial obligation but a way of participating in the living condition of the left-behind, a way of being- or moving with them” (Gaibazzi 2018, 28).

I follow Gaibazzi in understanding the travels of my interlocutors to have a remedial dimension, used to restore viability to a domestic order of relations. Gaibazzi's focus on young men shows how migration, as a deeply held norm and expectation, shapes a moral imaginary of what it means to be a good son or husband and aspire to social majority within Soninke society. For Gaibazzi, cultural expressions of restorative or "intersubjective" mobility reflect a conception of people "circulating within a shared existential terrain" (ibid.), a moral order which young men seek to repair through their own investiture as migrants. In a similar sense, I propose that Morocco might be imagined as a kind of interspace of domestic relations, forged across an intersubjective plane whereby spacing out helps in restoring balance and prosperity.

The family dramas we've been discussing speak to configurations of dispersed domesticity in Senegal in which migration and kinship are so closely entwined that the question of care could not easily be separated from an "exit" or "abandonment." For Combé, they marked the ambivalence between relation-sustaining gestures versus those that signal neglect or corrosion of solidarity. Over nearly five decades of structural adjustment, migration affects nearly all families in some way, having become nearly synonymous with what it takes to make money and have a family. In this scene of dispersed domesticity, the labor of making oneself known to one's relatives makes kinship not something natural and given, but comes to be mediated by the flow of material goods and cash remittances in such a way that it became difficult to distinguish valences of intimacy, impersonality, care, or cold indifference (Das, Ellen and Leonard 2008). Recalling how for Fahma the modality of cash remittances could signify an intimacy grown cold, distant, or formal, in Combé's case, the different temporal dimensions of cash, gifts, and promises reflected her attempt to keep open multiple contingencies for later possible "re-entry."

Combé had always wished that one day she would be able to travel so that she could take care of her family as they ought. By becoming a migrant herself, Combé saw herself as relieving her kin not only of the immediate burden of her maintenance and bride-wealth repayment, but also allaying an anterior domestic imbalance between her father and *his* brother. As she saw it, the small routine remittances she sent were helping to restore some self-direction and dignity to her father's household. The fact that she chose to send to her father's house at all is significant — most people (men and women alike) gave to the family through mothers and maternal uncles. That Combé prioritized her paternal kin in this way perhaps indicates her sense that this was a matter of public rather than private shame, a distinction captured in the Wolof phrase “*gacce bir kër meena koy faj, gacce penc, gennoo koy faj*” — maternal parents mend private shame, while public shame is lifted by paternal kin. Perhaps then we might say that Combé's attempts to adjust the direction of remittance transactions were a way of modulating distress in her private life into a sign of devotion and redress of public shame.

Public diatribes about the “Ladies of Las Palmas,” such as those examined in the introduction, betray the important fact that women like Combé were uncoupled, but not *unattached*. Important insight can be drawn from comparison with another group of women within the local landscape, the “*Aji bis*,” to whom the Ladies of Las Palmas were often self-consciously comparing themselves. The *Aji bis* were the same Medina traders who first pointed out the LLP to me, women who braided hair and peddled false eyelashes near the clocktower in the Medina market, and lived together in collective housing in the city center under the care of a “Mère” or house-mother. The name “*Aji-bi*” refers to the means by which they signal to potential

clients, calling “*aji khti*” (“come here, sister” in Moroccan Darija)¹⁹: they are “the ones who beckon,” a name that points to the centrality of publicity and solicitousness to their identities as workers. Whereas a specter of transgressive sexuality hung over both groups, women like Combé differentiated themselves from the *Aji-bis*, casting their work as vulgar, public, and desperate. Similar to Luise White’s important study on sex work and urban accumulation in colonial era Nairobi (2009 [1990]), the distinctions between these women were local and conceptual, crystallizing around the ways that money flowed through them, circulated, or was held back.²⁰ Likewise, the cleavages between the Ladies of Las Palmas and the *Aji bis* reveal a difference in these women’s kinship arrangements and priorities. Both were seen to have “exited” the marriage plot and occupied problematic locations on the margins of normative domesticity. But whereas the *Aji-bis* were popularly rendered as “daughters” (*khalé yu jigéen yi*) responding to natal kin back home whose needs were urgent and immediate, the Ladies of Las Palmas were understood to be establishing themselves as householders and heads of their own lineages, as expressed through their ability to control accumulation and resource flows via their affines.

Of course the reality was more complex than these ideological mystifications. Positioned ambivalently *between* natal and affinal kin in the process of separation, travel granted Combé a particular perspective on the shape of her life, and the options available to her. She used travel to Morocco not to remedy the effects of divorce but rather to allay them. Moving out, becoming a householder and wage earner indeed allowed her to envision herself as an agent in the work of

¹⁹ “Bi” is an article in Wolof; thus “aji-bi”, functions as a hybrid term. Fiona McLaughlin (2001) has suggested that we view urban, “Dakar Wolof” as a distinct repertoire for borrowing and adapting works and phrases with phonological changes to sounds like Wolof (depending on the speaker’s command of French and Wolof). She argues that this practice developed out of the political tumult of the 1990s, and leaves room therefore for considering how conditions of migration, and the coordinates of social distinction that stem from the individual’s command of French and Arabic, lend different meanings and references within such neologisms as *Aji-bi*.

²⁰ In White’s study, “Haya” prostitutes were seen as repaying their fathers’ debts and reconstructing patrilineages in the aftermath of divorce; this set them apart from “Malaya” prostitutes who conceived of themselves as heads of household.

reconstructing her patriline, and rectifying public shame of her father's household, while simultaneously exercising control over her children's futures. At the same time, that her affinal kin continued to be given certain rights over her productive labor, despite her desire for separation, suggests a story whose end was not known in advance. Divorce was only one possible outcome among others. Gifts and promises were extended as signs of her prosperity and the possibility that she might return to Senegal as a "person of value" (*ku am njërigne*), rather than one relegated to "merely sitting." In addition to illustrating a cultural logic of separation as intrinsic to the making and unmaking of kinship, Combé's positionality affords her a perspective on relations as liable to change in importance over time, and by continuing to think of herself as engaged in the work of repair, she addresses herself to a future in kinship, despite evidence of its present fraying.

III. A (re)marriage story

A final case illustrates another facet of the family drama. Kène was a 43 year old woman of Sèrere background, from the region of Mbour, Senegal. She had been living in Morocco for 4 years when I met her. Kène's mother had been contracted into domestic service for a family of Moroccan expat merchants in Dakar, and when Kène was 12, she began working alongside her mother, and her younger sister, cleaning, doing laundry, and minding the family's children. Eventually she became the personal servant to the eldest daughter of the Moroccan family, who married a Lebanese man, and when they moved together to Beirut, Kène went with them — then aged 27 — to continue as their housemaid and nanny. Their home in Lebanon had other maids as well, most from West Africa. After ten years, the couple bought a large villa in Morocco, and Kène moved with them once again. Such situations of multi-generational domestic service were

not infrequent in my fieldwork, and reflect a long-standing history by which Senegalese and Moroccan families have been involved (albeit under uneven terms) in one another's projects of kin-making and mobility.

Over the years, Kène sent small but regular offerings to her family in Senegal. At 31 she briefly left the family's employ to marry, but the engagement fell through and she returned. Her own family's fortunes improved somewhat, and when she returned home on a short furlough at the age of 37, they assisted in preparations for her engagement as a second wife to a Senegalese trader residing in Spain. Her fiancé, she reported proudly, was "a bit jealous," and didn't like her living with her employer's husband and male relatives coming in and out, and so insisted that she take an apartment of her own which he would help subsidize. However, after four years of engagement, he had not taken concrete steps to finalize the marriage. He sent cash transfers each month, but she complained that it was not enough for her to live alone. Her employers, who she considered "generous" and "*correcte*" (ie not overly severe or abusive as was often the case reported by other domestic workers), were often gifting her hand-me-downs, kitchenware, and used clothing, which, without much use for them personally, she took to hoarding in large canvas sacs in her bedroom. She rented out the second bedroom in her township apartment, but after three decades with the family, she found it difficult to adapt to living with strangers, and struggled to set up her life in a way that she would find befitting for an established soon-to-be married woman. I came to know Kène when a mutual acquaintance proposed that I rent out her second bedroom. She agreed, and we lived together for just over five weeks in the small, drafty rooftop unit in Riad al Oulmes.

Kène dreamed of moving out of domestic work and into commerce as she saw many of her peers doing, but she also spoke ill of the women traders (*Aji bis*) of the Medina who she saw

as wasting their earnings on clothing and jewelry, or the cheap plastic housewares that were on offer in the market. Trade was a “social” affair above all, and she derided the Aji bis’ habits of idling and “wasting time,” trying to “sell their own heads” [*jaay bopp-am*], ie to show off, rather than “do something useful”. Being a domestic worker was indeed a central fact of Kène’s life, one that had allowed her to travel, escape a provincial life, and earn an independent income. Upon arriving in Morocco and establishing her own apartment, the work availed her of the possibility of extrication from the intense pressures of diaspora sociality. Ardently seeking to live as she wanted, Casablanca afforded Kène a previously unimaginable anonymity and freedom, what Saidiyya Hartman, describing the “wayward” itineraries of newly emancipated young Black women in the turn of the century United States, calls “enjoyment in the kind of self-forgetfulness she might have imagined was possible in a modern city” (Hartman 2018, 48).

But under the pall of scrutiny that hung over all uncoupled women in the township, Kène’s refusal of the traditional burdens and pleasures of diaspora community marked her out. Her Senegalese neighbors and acquaintances described her as distrustful and quarrelsome, and above all, deeply private. “*Bëggul nit ñi* - she doesn't like people,” they would say. One of her oldest acquaintances in Casablanca was Mère Astou, a late middle-aged woman who lived nearby and who had come to know Kène when they had worked in the same Moroccan household for a short time, and it turned out was also from the same region in Senegal and knew Kène’s family quite well. Mère Astou informed me that Kène had a sister who had come to Casablanca a few years earlier. A row had transpired over the fact that the sister had apparently advised a mutual acquaintance not to visit Kene unless she phoned her in advance, insinuating that in her seclusion, Kène was indulging in cigarettes or alcohol and that unannounced visitors would risk embarrassment by exposing her vice. When Kene learned about this, she cut off

communication with her sister, and for the last 3 years refused to speak to her. Mère Astou's opinion was that *toubab* ("westerner") habits had "clotted her brain" (*fótt khel-am*), and made her paranoid. She expressed this with a strong Wolof idiom of rebuke: *Dëjj-am dina wéét*. At her funeral, it will be still, ie, no gifts will be exchanged. Kène's social attrition was measured by her (rumored) partaking in illicit activities, but it was her refusal of ordinary sociality, her unwillingness to participate in the modes of interdependence that define life in diaspora, that exposed her to censure.

Unmarried older women, including Mère Astou, could find moral cover for their activities in Morocco through self-fashioning as surrogate "mothers" to the collective of young men— as pious Dahirah mothers or "*yaayu daara ji*." This figuration and role will be considered in greater detail in later chapters, but for now it suffices to say that embodying this role entailed intensively making oneself available for a wide range of collective labors. Modeled after the unmarried women within local neighborhoods in Senegal who embody sacrificial piety by cooking, cleaning, and sheltering the community's *taalibés* (quranic students), these women in the township were expected to come forward to prepare food for religious celebrations and rituals, make monetary contributions, and house the young men who were *de passage* in the township. The intensive sociality of this role was appreciated by all: women like Mère Astou were nodes within the neighborhood, solicited for every kind of service or advice, from where to find lodging to how to cook with Moroccans' strange spices. The religious associations and potential for partaking in pilgrimage (*ziyaar*, see ch 5) for women made the *yaayu daara ji* not only a legitimate script for uncoupled senior womanhood, but also a source of merit. It is in this context that Kène's refusal must be understood.

I too struggled to connect with Kène, and sensed someone who was deeply uneasy with the available narratives for her life. Most of our conversations revolved around her plans for future travel to be with her ‘husband’ (she spoke of her fiancé as if the marriage were already official), and his efforts to cobble together a way for her to get to Europe. She took pains to make her apartment look “*classe*,” and to mask her own financial hardship. Often she told elaborate stories about the furnishings her fiancé had bought her and sent from Spain, although it was clear that they had been gifted to her by her employer. When I asked why she never had any visitors, she explained that her husband was very protective and didn’t care for her mingling with the “*types*” that were to be found in Casablanca. “Anyway, all the women here are *mbindaan yi*, they don’t have time or the right manner. *Seenì esprit yi ubbéguñu* [they aren’t modern/‘open’].” Though a life-long domestic worker herself, she dis-identified with the *mbindaan*, a stigmatized category of bonded domestic worker who she saw as her social juniors. Like the *Aji bis* of the Medina, their desperation seemed to impinge on her projected image of herself as the agent of a modern and successful love marriage (*marriaas bu rafet*) — as a “*jabaaru modou-modou*”.

Whereas we have considered a spectrum of figures — *ñaaréel*, Ladies of Las Palmas, *Aji bis*, Modou Modou — the domestic servant is somewhat resistant to typification. The history of domestic slavery and service in Morocco is beyond the scope of this chapter, and is indeed only beginning to be unearthed (El-Hamel 2016). However I draw attention to it in order to think about Kène, her opacity to me, and the limits of knowledge within our shared everyday. Although much can only be guessed at, following different kinds of transactions in Kène’s domestic gives a kind of contour. We might notice how, for example, her relation to her employers’ household seemed to interrupt the kinds of material flows that would link her normatively to her family, or to her (future) husband. Furnitures and odds and ends came into her

home as gifts from her employer, on the one hand propping up a picture of prosperity and respectability. Yet at the same time, it also created a berm that separated her from the kinds of material interdependencies that might have enabled her to enact other kinds of moves. Domestic objects that should have signaled intimacy and care between husband and wife within the home were shrouded by the lie around their origins, causing them to lose their sense of connectedness to a project of making a future for herself. Her long-term severance from her natal community (while not absolute) and her erstwhile stable employment also apparently alleviated pressure from her fiancé to pursue the consummation of their marriage, while his stockpiled promises failed to materialize. Over time her status as a financially dependent not-quite second wife, lacking the public legitimacy of a formal marriage or the efficacy of a truly independent household, seemed to constitute a permanent rift between Kène and the world.

Conclusions

The aim here has been to show how the imaginative construction of Morocco as an interspace for the working out of “family dramas” is embedded within women’s everyday struggles to make their tenure viable. I suggest that this also includes the struggle to have their desires acknowledged. Faced with having her sexuality denied (through a re-marriage motivated by ‘pity’), Fahma sought re-attachment through immediate (albeit unconventional) feminine ties, as a gesture of commitment to the prosperity of the wider family group. Meanwhile Kène preferred to bear her solitude and the barbs of social reprobation, rather than succumb to the frames of stigmatized or self-sacrificial womanhood available to her. She withdrew into herself, made herself unavailable to me and, so it seemed, to most around her.

Tracing transactions in this chapter is not meant as a strategy for overcoming or bypassing this refusal, to access Kène's inner world. Rather, it prompts me to reflect on what different models of self and world migration produced for these women, and how flows of objects and promises within the everyday could deepen the ruts by which one becomes separated from the world, or work by small increment to produce self and world differently.

In thinking about the struggle for acknowledgment, material transactions could offer propitious alliance — such as Combé's ability to modulate private distress into an act of devotion and filial remediation — or discomfiting alienation, as in Fahma's and Kène's estrangement from their spouses and Fahma's coming to understand Morocco as a place of banishment. Attending to this dual aspect of intimacy and estrangement suggests a situation in which travel might come to appear as abandonment, or exclusion, or impasse, rather than freedom, despite opportunity-expanding changes.

Whereas remittances have been a common site of investigation in migration studies (see Cohen 2016), here we notice how the way that co-wifhood, divorce, and remarriage positions women between various kin shapes the expressive possibilities of money, gifts, and words in constructing dispersed domesticity. (The situation of intergenerational domestic service requires that we look beyond biological and affinal kin to include patron intimacies as well.) Thought through the affects of family dramas of co-wifhood, divorce and remarriage, women's experiences of migration to Morocco lend insight on what it means to inhabit a place to which one's enduring residence is not secure; where one's domestic citizenship is mediated by complex and contentious relations with co-conjugates, as well as affines and natal kin; and thus where words and things have the propensity to change signs from intimacy to malice or indifference. Against the shifting landscape of migration law in Morocco, which affords the provisional right

to residence without the prospect of citizenship for Senegalese, we might wish to ask what modality of belonging the Senegalese-Moroccan “family drama” portends (or precludes).

Meanwhile, offering this reading, my aim is not to advance yet another explanatory framework for Senegalese /African “motivations” for migration. Discussions within migration studies show the risk of such frameworks ossifying and feeding into securitarian paradigms that transform migrants with widely differing motives and trajectories to potential ‘illegal’ immigrants to Europe (Gaibazzi 2017; cf Andersson 2014). As Gaibazzi notes, in Senegal, much of the public debate both among civil society actors and NGOs has centered around the putative insight that familial norms, pressures, and conflicts are to *blame* for forcing migrants to pursue dangerous and often fruitless journeys to Europe or elsewhere (2019; 27). The cases explored here aim to draw attention to family dramas as a crucial, often overlooked dimension within women’s decisions to emigrate and dwell in Morocco. But rather than reifying “family drama” as a sociocultural driver of migration, the cases explored here show the yearnings, desires, and expectations that are entangled with migration, and the conventions through which women sought self-understanding and expression.

Like the image of Las Palmas, and its intrepid Lady pioneers, the “family drama,” a shifting relation of figure and ground, is what gave Morocco its experimental, “in between” character. Thus, writing on Tamil marriages in the shadow of war, Maunaguru writes of the “in-betweenness” of the transnational marriage process: “It is not necessarily a well-mapped journey, comprising an in-built unknowability concerning the future of relationship(s). It foreshadows the desires and anxieties arising in the formation of relatedness as well as the imagination and memories of futures and pasts” (2018, 5-6). I argue that processes of separation (and re-marriage) for my interlocutors were similarly open-ended, “in-between” spaces, entangled with

travel and material transaction in such ways that they confound categories like departure and arrival; intimacy and estrangement; or independence and banishment. As women experimenting with self-actualization through separation, they illustrate the work of sustaining this 'in-betweenness,' as acts of desire as much as a struggle for acknowledgment.

Chapter 2: Moving Market, Merely Sitting

Introduction

No, there is no outside to movement...even stillness is composed of movements. Standing still is a dynamic balance achieved through liminally perceptible micromovements of muscles and attention... As Bergson maintained, there is no such thing as immobility. There are only regimes of movement of qualitatively different kinds whose manners of combining and disjoining compose motional-relational fields... The same could be said of situations and events, and even logics (which always arise from and express themselves through patterns of movement).
— B. Massumi

In both formal and informal discourses, Senegalese traders often describe their work of linking manufacturing, wholesale, and retail sites across densely overlapping geographies of Global North and South with West African market systems in the language of “moving market,” *doxal marsé*.²¹ This idiom conceptualizes markets as not simply sites of commodity exchange, but rather as dynamic interfaces for “marshaling, diverting, negotiating, and controlling channels of profit” (Lu 2018). The concept resonates with other national and ethnicity-based trade diasporas²² observed under conditions of global capitalism. In the case of Senegalese diaspora, made iconic through their felicitous blending of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ trade markets, and religious fraternity and transnational capitalism (Cruise O’Brien 1971; Hill 2011; Babou 2007), *doxal marsé* means not only the movement of commodities and cash remittances, but also other kinds of meanings and values, including “movement” itself. This kinesthetic concept of “market”

²¹ Lu (2018) observes the idiom “moving market” used by her English and Hausophone Nigerian interlocutors as well. Here, I translate the Wolof idiom, *doxal marsé*, borrowing the English euphemism in order to highlight a concept/sensibility with broader regional purchase.

²² The literature has dealt extensively with Nigerian marketcraft and trade diasporas in particular. See especially Lu 2018. See also Cohen 1971

is infused with the language of Sufi brotherhood and the social reform movements primarily composed of young Senegalese men. One example is the Fayda Tijaniyya, or “Tijani flood,” whose adherents envision the social-spiritual movement as transcending national borders in apparently limitless global expansion, both alongside and through traders’ enterprises in their various diasporic locations (Hill 2012). In its ordinary usage by Senegalese traders, “moving market” is both a quotidian evaluation of the state of commerce (answer to the question, how is it going? If it’s a good day: “*Mungi dox*” — it’s going — or a bad day, “*doxul dara*” — nothing is moving), and a compelling visualization of masculine productivity, forged through embodied infrastructures of global trade and migration (Hill 2011; Stoller 2010; Riccio 2003; Kane 2011). It renders quotidian and near the imagery of cosmopolitan self-extension as a constitutive part of Senegalese national identity, and as sign of the spiritual potency and material prosperity of the Sufi brotherhoods that vehiculate it.

But in the marketplace of Hay Hassani, the township market closest to Riad al Oulmès where Senegalese traders have lately come to sell their wares, *sitting* is the primary and often agonizingly persistent activity of most traders. Migrant women and men could spend on average 12 to 14 hours per day during spring and summer months in the marketplace,²³ perched on the narrow edge of the park’s cement wall, or atop cheap plastic stools, doubled up to postpone the moment when one would inevitably crack and send its occupant toppling into the dusty ground. Occasionally, when police vans pulled up along the main market thoroughfare, vendors would somewhat lethargically pack up their merchandise and install their folding tables inside the park walls. In this market where the vast majority of street commerce was unlicensed and untaxed, police presence was a vague, albeit disruptive, threat; it was widely understood to be mostly “for

²³ Information collected through interviews and surveys of 107 traders between 2014-2016

show,” deployed at moments such as when the King’s cortège drove through on their way to the royal summer palace nearby on the city’s edge and the streets had to be cleared of “unseemly” elements. Migrant street peddlers, who occupied the street-side perimeter of the built market, experienced these disruptions more than anyone; each episode of dispersal renewed quarrels with their Moroccan neighbors over who had the right to a particular patch of concrete, and much jostling would ensue. These were two sides of Hay Hassani’s ambivalent appeal, relative indifference of authorities was the upshot of the market’s slow pace of trade.

This chapter pans out from the forgoing narratives of individual migrants, to locate the “Ladies of Las Palmas” and their peers within a relational field of mobility and immobility, culturally rendered as “moving market.” It first considers the emergence of the township market of Hay Hassani in the context of the contemporary re-envisioning of the Northwest African corridor, in whose image the Moroccan state aims to reanimate and harness an imagination of regional integration, futuristic infrastructural modernization and investment, and economic development. The generic concept of a development corridor has been used in various contexts, particularly in Asia and East Africa, to describe a route along which people and goods move, whereby the increased efficiency of that movement itself stimulates economic growth. For development economists, the corridor is above all a space of transit, the cumulative “network effect” of the movement of people and things whose itineraries, usually concentrated around urban hubs, are normalized by legal, economic, and infrastructural provisioning at the national and supra-national levels. Yet not only do such perspectives on the corridor tend to privilege speeds, temporalities, and trajectories of mobility in relation to which women’s migration strategies can only appear as deficient or incomplete; they explicitly discount the ways in which enhanced mobility for some is often accompanied by the force of sedentarization and strategic de-

mobilization of others.²⁴ Thus, women's designation as forces of "domestication" and demobilization, by the state and the religious establishment, has rendered them as "sitters." This chapter considers some of the material and discursive transformations that are reshaping what it means to belong to places like Hay Hassani that make up the corridor, and to take up the imperative of 'sitting', while people and resources continue to be channeled elsewhere.

Rooting migration to Morocco in a longer history of women's participation in stock-keeping and commercial transport networks, we develop an "intra-Saharan" perspective on markets that depend on their belonging to larger entities, periodicities, and scales of movement for their continued viability. Like the corridor, "moving market" is a technology for constituting domains, visualizing collaborative action, and for rendering and visibilizing different dispositions and collaborative potentials across gendered, generational, and religious lines. A cultural patterning of movement and stillness, it is not merely a vernacular description of market trade, but rather, a constitutive part of what makes the market productive, ie propitious for circulation and exchange, and a *place* in its own right. This chapter explores how specific sensory regimes work to shape and channel potentials in the corridor, lending a degree of stability and predictability to market trade, amidst the uncertainty of continuously changing terrains of law, labor, and market volatility.

In Hay Hassani, sitting often seemed synonymous with market work itself — "*Marsé bi, toog rekk la*. Market is just sitting." Pointing to the visibility of certain bodies, namely senior women and non-Senegalese others, sitting "like indigents" (*yelwaankaat* - beggars) in the marketplace was spoken of as symptomatic of a "dry" (*woow*), "clotted" (*fott*) or "unmoving"

²⁴ Indeed, Neferti Tadiar's contribution to the volume, "What is in a Rim? Critical perspectives on the Pacific Region idea" (1998) highlights how the specific gendered and sexualized dimensions of exploitation contributed to the production/imagination of region as defined by gendered (im)mobility.

(*doxul*) market in Morocco. Diagnostic assessments of this nature resonated with the frustration and despondency many felt, expressing lament at the absence of possibilities for “doing something” in Hay Hassani, and in Morocco more broadly, and galvanized desires for renewed migration to Europe. While many agreed that being in Morocco was an improvement over the uselessness and passivity they felt staying home in Senegal (“sitting on one’s hands, doing nothing”), for others, working and earning in Morocco seemed like no improvement at all — that one had to get to Europe or else one might as well return home. (“What did I leave Senegal for, huh? I had a good job, a place to sleep and eat to my fill! Here all I do is sit and wait.”) Unresolved assessments of Morocco’s viability as a place to earn and ‘settle’ were constant features of everyday conversation in the marketplace. But depending on the context, phrases like “the market is sitting” also contained a comment about women’s essential role in the ordinary operations of market trade. Thus, I was often told: “*Marsé bi, mères yi ñoo koy doxalé*” — it’s *mères* (mothers, senior women) who make the market move. As designated “sitters” who could provide vital information on local terrain, help defray skirmishes and quarrels with other non-migrant neighbors, and serve as lenders and managers of credit systems, these women were critical to making the market viable, day in and day out.

As a space where the unstable and the nearly sedentary assumed an intense contiguity, the figure of “moving market” recalls AbdouMaliq Simone’s kinesthetic concept of urban intersection as “not simply a reaction to conditions and forces, nor the instigator of still others, but its own ‘world,’ and a world that need not make sense in order to exert value” (2011, 381). Within a single domain, “there can be those aspects, actors and dimensions that remain almost sedentary, on the verge of atrophy, while also in the presence of those that are incessantly mutating, and in this contiguity, there are then the prospects for dissimulation of all kinds”

(2011, 382). Within such spaces of intensive exchange and intersection, “things and people who seem not to be in motion are actually busy transforming what it is they actually do,” while those who appear to be caught in a frenzy of activity “may be exerting a great deal of effort to stay in place” (ibid.). In Hay Hassani, movement was indeed a world unto itself, and defined the parameters of social interaction in both overt and indirect or intentionally dissimulated ways. The market was where young men hustled for “quick money,” information, and peer support for re-launching their journeys, but just as often they appeared looking for an occasion to slow down, find safe harbor and rest for a beat. Likewise, while the apparent constancy of women’s mooring in the township was central to their ability to attract clients and dependents, they mask the myriad labors required to produce viable emplacement. Nuancing Simone’s position, I argue that the “moving market” entailed more than mutual witnessing and improvisation; understanding the operations of markets like Hay Hassani require attention to the particular regimes of visibility that structure such spaces and constitute their gendered, political, and ethical order.

In the previous chapter, we considered women’s migration to Morocco as opportunities undertaken from their diverse positions at the margins of normative kinship, as producing an imagination of regional coherence forged around the notion of Morocco as an interspace of domestic, or “family drama.” Here, we consider the idea of a regional trade corridor, and its reproduction through the uneven absorption by migrant men and women of locally defined imperatives of “moving market,” which include both moving and staying put. I consider the implications of “moving market” as a technology for constituting domains and articulations between persons, things, and ideas, and explore how its local and conceptual distinctions between ways of working and moving were harnessed by traders themselves.

I situate my observations and analysis for this chapter among the denizens of Hay Hassani, where I conducted surveys, interviews, and observation over 18 months. In this vast multi-purpose market in a low-income township, peripheral to the sites and symbols of the Senegalese diaspora's established centers of trade, women and men both turn to "*la commerce*" as part of a portfolio of earning strategies. Here, migrant men came to "*lijjenti xaalis*," hustle for quick money and "untangle" quick cash, and women attempted to expand earning potential outside of low-wage service work and to "tie up" money (*liggéeyal*) through participation in denser networks of social interdependence and credit. Women's casting as "sitters" and permanent nodes in the market speak to their important role in sustaining commerce and mobility for the wider population of transient men. Like the passage quoted in the epigraph of this chapter, attending to their discourses challenges the notion of stillness as a neutral condition, opposite to motion. "Moving market" reveals itself to be composed of the coordinated action of combining and disjoining different "motional-relational fields" (Massumi 2017, quoted above). Men's and women's discourses reflect culturally and spiritually inflected regimes of visibility, notions of gendered productivity, and imaginaries of social inclusion and futurity — contrasts which rendered the market not only productive, but a site of experimentation and collaboration across gender and generational lines. Nuancing some more celebratory accounts of African urban market-craft as protean invention and sheer kinetic intersection, my ethnography looks at the North-West African corridor as an emergent field in which older forms are being reanimated and extended, and where women's everyday acts of inhabitation are contributing to the polarization of space and relations.

I. In(s) and Out(s) of mobility : The Senegalese-Moroccan corridor

King Hassan II, who ruled Morocco from 1960-1999, famously stated that Morocco was a nation with its ‘roots in Africa and its branches in Europe’; despite a brief period of experimentation in pan-Africanist inspired agendas, across much of the late 20th century, it has been clear that Europe would be Morocco’s focal partner. Since the early 2000s, however, regional dynamics have shifted dramatically, a fact commonly credited to the ascendancy of King Mohammad VI to the throne with a progressive national and regional development agenda. The state’s vanguard “turn toward Africa” has prioritized south-south co-development through private enterprise and investment, and has foregrounded a campaign to re-join the African Union and the Economic Organization of West Africa States (ECOWAS), stoked by regional and bi-national trade and co-investment projects with sub-Saharan African countries, Senegal foremost among them.²⁵ These efforts seek to emphasize and historically root the potential of the region, not only as an economic hub and site of 21st century capitalist innovation (through experiments in green energy and social housing, for example), but as a regional bulwark in the global war on terror.²⁶

As Morocco seeks to consolidate its influence in West Africa, it has been aided by incentives from the European Union in the form of free trade deals, grants and infrastructure

²⁵ According to different estimates, Senegal accounts for between 15-20% of Moroccan exports in Africa. As Morocco’s most consistent and steadfast ally in the region, including supporter of Morocco’s claim to the Western Sahara at issue in Morocco’s original expulsion from continental governing bodies, Senegal has played an especially important role in garnering support for Morocco’s re-entry to the African Union and ECOWAS, and has benefitted for it in the form of trade deals, entitlements for migrants, and the promise of future investment. Senegalese diplomats, religious officials, and businessmen have been appointed to prominent positions within the *Makbzen*, including a specially created cabinet of foreign religious affairs, appointees of which are important members of the Muridiyya Sufi orders as well as prominent businessmen. Since 2003, and increasingly in recent years, Senegal has received large investments in road and rail infrastructure, agriculture, and partnerships from the Moroccan Royal Airline.

²⁶ Thus Morocco’s contracts and investments in Sub-Saharan African countries including Senegal compete openly with Turkey and Gulf states for an upper hand, building mosques and private Franco-Arabic schools, Islamic relief projects such as the construction of wells and public sanitation, and other forms of high visibility charity investment.

funding schemes targeting the “de-mobilization” of Sub-Saharan African migrants, and policies to keep them “in place.” Welfare subsidies and small business grants have been deployed for the most “vulnerable” migrant populations, particularly women and children. The extension of automatic work and residency permits to particular groups has lent some legitimacy to migrant women’s (longstanding) involvement in the mostly informal domestic service sector, even if current legislation does little to protect their rights as workers.²⁷ At the same time, migrant men’s livelihoods have become increasingly criminalized through intensified urban policing, destruction of urban and rural encampments, and “push-backs” at the border which spur men’s repeated sea-crossing attempts, and growing need to spend longer in Morocco trying to earn money to continue their journeys. Given the large percentage of Morocco’s domestic economy which still exists in the so-called informal sector, tensions between West Africans and Morocco’s own urban poor have made the marketplace a frequent site of contestation and xenophobic violence.²⁸ Against this backdrop, the effervescent narratives of co-development, large-scale infrastructure investment, bi-national financialization, and a new African free-market — the signatures of an emergent North West African corridor — increasingly brush up against everyday experiences of “bottleneck” (Melly 2017), market “saturation” [*fott*], and exclusion for the bulk of West African migrants on the ground.

As migration scholars have observed, regional circular migration, and even migration to Europe, often does not follow a clear sequence of movement and permanence; migrants often “straddl[e] different livelihoods and places by crafting flexible, stepwise trajectories of mobility”

²⁷ See HRW report: <https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2018/10/04/maroc-la-nouvelle-loi-relative-au-travail-domestique-entre-en-vigueur>; https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/05/28/au-maroc-le-traffic-lucratif-des-travailleuses-domestiques_5135098_3212.html visited 06/01/2017; See also the “Report on Working conditions of migrant women in Morocco”: <http://www.pnpm.ma/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/rapport-Alecma-denquete-sur-les-femmes-domestiques-1.pdf> visited 05/01/2017

²⁸ https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/07/01/au-maroc-un-camp-de-migrants-ravage-par-un-incendie-fait-beaucoup-de-blesses_5483690_3212.html visited 08/01/2019

(Gaibazzi 2015, 91; see also Pian 2005; Timera 2001; Choplin 2016). Stepwise migration could describe the itineraries of both women and men I interviewed, although for each, Morocco tended to represent a different “moment” in their journeys. However, while such movements could be described in the terminology of ‘migration pattern’ or ‘migratory project,’ the idiom of “moving market” speaks instead to a repertoire of social and spatial navigation that largely belies categorical and teleological renderings. From the perspective of “moving market,” both moving and staying put are envisioned as viable possibilities, and migration is but one element of a repertoire or “portfolio” of tactics for earning (Gaibazzi 2016).²⁹ One’s gradually achieved capacity to *sit* felicitously and “make the market move” [*doxal marché*] in relation to oneself involved processes of converting bodily inertia into substantive social presence. Not to be reduced to economic rationalities alone, these strategies are inflected by “diverse... cultural motives and differential access to material and social resources” (Scoones 1998; see also de Haan 1999). The dynamics of “moving market” make places like Hay Hassani into nodes of articulation between different processes and scales of mobility, unfolding on a terrain of unstable political economy and uncertain legal conditions of continued access. Encompassing potentials for moving and staying, hustling and sitting, “moving market” is a lens through which individual traders with different orientations, objectives, and capacities crafted their open-ended trajectories.

Let us examine some of the routes by which women and men came to “sit” in Hay Hassani. For the male traders in my surveys,³⁰ travel to Morocco was typically a first or second

²⁹ In a similar vein, Gaibazzi has argued that the “quest for money” among his Gambian interlocutors is an exploratory venture which inherently envisages “sitting” in Sabi as one potential outcome. See Gaibazzi (2015)

³⁰ Trajectories collected through interviews and surveys conducted with over one hundred Senegalese traders in Hay Hassani (47 women, 55 men) from 2015-2017. Through them we can discern important differences in where Casablanca, and Hay Hassani in particular, fit within men’s and women’s migratory biographies and career paths.

venture abroad, and which many envisioned as a point of departure to other, more stereotypically desirable destinations (including Europe, Turkey, China, the United States). For men who were from rural communities or smaller cities outside of Dakar, travel to Morocco was usually preceded by short or intermediate relocations to the capital where they received apprenticeship from an older relative or patron. From there, they traveled usually by mini-bus or collective taxi to the northern cities of Tangier or Nador, springboards for Mediterranean crossing. Generally speaking, Casablanca was a city they came to as a point of *return*, only after their savings and morale had run dry, or they were intercepted by Moroccan authorities and forcibly carted to remote southern locales. Some had traveled across middle-Saharan routes (via Mali, Algeria, Niger, and Libya) only to be pushed back toward Morocco either by their guides and handlers, or by state forces. Only in rare cases did these men arrive in Casablanca by way of a third country other than Mauritania or Algeria. Some representative itineraries are described below:

- (a) Tamba — Dakar — Bamako (Mali) — Casablanca
- (b) Kedougou — Dakar — Casablanca
- (c) Dakar — Nouakchott (Mauritania) — Tangier — Casablanca
- (d) Mbour — Dakar — Nador — Casablanca
- (e) Dakar — Bissau (Guinea) — Dakar — Tangier — Casablanca

Though step-wise migration is and remains common, contemporary restrictions of immigration and political economy have “compressed the navigable spaces and prolonged of temporality of mobility” (Gaibazzi 2018, 107). As a consequence, Senegalese migrant men who make it to Morocco are more likely to continue circulating between the market and the border, without accumulating funds to establish a stable mooring in Morocco or “leaping” into trans-continental commercial circuits. By the time of my fieldwork, it was becoming rare to hear of men actually

making it (*duggsi* - penetrate) to Europe. Midway between home and abroad, and the prolonged space and time of this kind of constant circulation between market and border, folded the city and township into a geography of the “*all bi*” or “travel-bush.” As Gaibazzi notes, for “hustlers” like the Sabi youth he worked with, the “quest for money” could potentially take place anywhere, but only international travel holds prestige whereas internal, circular migration is considered a lesser, spurious form of travel (2015, 108).

For women, by contrast, arriving in Casablanca often came at the end of multiple, more proximate moves, generally within the immediate region of their hometowns, but occasionally to neighboring countries (Mali, Gambia, Guinée, Mauritania). On average, women had made 5.3 moves (nearly twice as many as their male peers), but only 14% of those interviewed had previously travelled outside of the greater Senegambian region (in contrast with 43% of men.) Additionally, though often traveling less in absolute distance (total km from home), the women I interviewed had on average crossed national borders 2.2 times more often than their male counterparts. Their journeys described concentric arcs of increasing distance from their natal homes:

- (a) Toubab Diallow - Dakar - Nouackchott (Mauritania)- St. Louis - Rosso - Nouackchott - Agadir (Morocco) - Casablanca (Morocco)
- (b) Keur Massar - Dakar - Mbour - Nouackchott (Mauritania)- Casablanca (Morocco)
- (c) Sokone - Kaolack - Fatick - Kaolack - Dakar - Bamako (Mali)- St. Louis - Nouackchott (Mauritania)- Casablanca (Morocco)
- (d) Pikine - Dakar - Dubaï - Dakar - Rabat (Morocco) - Casablanca (Morocco)
- (e) Mbour - Dakar - Tamba - Fass (Gambia) - Banjul (Gambia) - Kedougou - Bamako (Mali) - Kedougou - Tamba - St. Louis - Nouackchott (Mauritania)- Agadir (Morocco)- Casablanca (Morocco)

The itineraries outlined above suggest both patterned and improvisatory engagement with Saharan space that defy a teleology of migration as comprised of clear points of departure and destination. Methodologically, such sketches do not allow a full account for possible discrepancies in how women and men narrated their travel and what might be omitted from their accounts, such as moves that are premised on joining a conjugal home versus travel for economic pursuits.³¹ However, they invite us to think of the anthropological commitment to “the local” not as a spatial or scalar bounding, but rather as but as a question that pertains to the frames of ethical and political life, and to forms, aptitudes, skills, and proficiencies that are scale-dependent.

Though many women considered themselves experienced travelers with long-term engagements outside the natal home (and, not infrequently, outside the natal region or country), they described Morocco as their first venture “abroad” (*bitim reew*, or *dëkku jammbuur*), and their first experience of *voyage* (French) or *tukki* in Wolof. The conceptual distinction between local or regional work-seeking, *ligeeyi* (to work, with the locative ‘-i’), and *tukki*, or travel for the purposes of “adventure,” exploration and learning, is an important one. Historically, regional short-range labor mobility for women has taken place primarily through bonded domestic service: daughters were sent to work in the households of more affluent kin or community members, occasionally in other villages or regions. In the Sahara-Sahel, this hierarchical relation has historically taken racialized expression with “white” or Arab (*bidaan/ naar*) families

³¹ Thus, whereas men from rural areas or smaller cities tended to pass through the capitol, Dakar, where they often received apprenticeship or joined convoys that would take them Northward, women’s itineraries were not so patterned. As described in the previous chapter, many of my interlocutors had gone into migration upon the dissolution of a marriage: for those from rural origins who had relocated to their husbands’ upon marriage, they may have returned to their natal homes before embarking elsewhere, but many did not. Further, women were more likely to have family members financing their journeys as parts of projects to expand commercial enterprises from European markets into Morocco. Thus though their travels may have taken place step by step, Morocco often stood as an expansion rather than contraction, interruption, or impediment of a mobile project (cf Zuluaga 2015).

engaging “black” (*haratani/ ñuul*) domestic servants (*mbindaan/ janq*). Traveling to Morocco to work in Moroccan homes was different in scale but not in kind from the forms of bonded service widely practiced within the region. Indeed as we saw with Kène, the Serère woman introduced in Chapter 1, it was relatively common for women to come to Morocco as contracted workers in the service of a particular family, most frequently elite families from elsewhere in the Middle East who lived as expats in Morocco or Senegal and were connected to the region through various networks of business or intermarriage. Like Kène, some women’s transnational careers were thus threaded through with their employers’ own migratory projects. Yet travel to Morocco could also recast the low status and stigma of dependency associated with domestic service, through the common idea that “the foreign country ignores the social status” (Diawara 2003, 77, cited in Gaibazzi 2015, 96) and the notion that “in a *dëkku jammbuur* [foreign country, literally where one is slave/subject to a foreign king] one must accept hardship.” For women like Kène, the possibility of combining waged domestic work with other projects, specifically those connected to men’s continued mobility such as trade and house-holding, enhanced the prestige of the work, and though relying on modes that were unpredictable, could nevertheless lead to expanded opportunities for earning.

Cities like Nouackchott (Mauritania), Dakhla (Western Sahara), and Casablanca (Morocco) are not self-evident destinations, and point to the way that different and overlapping flows of people and things have contributed to the emergence of new nodes in the trans-Saharan corridor. Take how Sadio, who I met in Fès while she and some of her fellow traders from Casablanca were on pilgrimage, described her transit through Mali, Mauritania, and Morocco (her itinerary is [b] above):

A cousin of mine in Bamako had told me that *dañu soxla jigéen yi* - they need women over there, since all those African men [ie non-Arab Mauritians and migrant

Senegalese] were there working on the boats and they needed cooks, needed *ay méres ñu leen mëna tooggalé* [some mothers to cook for them.] Anyway I arrived, looked around and realized pffft... there's nothing here! Nothing! Their money is no good. Even though they call us their brothers, *naar yi* [Arabs] are racist, they treat us as their slaves [*jamm*], put us in ghettos... it's like here [in Casablanca], our own area, and you see how it works — I started cooking *fatayer* to sell at the port, where the *xalé yu goor yi* [youngsters, male] got day jobs. Business was ok, you know, steady [*ndank*] for a while. There were a *lot* of blacks at that time, aye! Some of them have lived here for decades; they are also trying to go back home now [*ñibbi*, imp: to Senegal]. But because they were so many young men, they were also stingy [*naay*], they were all just trying to reach home with a bit of money in their pockets. Business was ok, steady.

Sadio's account drew attention to features that different places along her journey shared. She evokes physical and political infrastructures that stratified migrant movements into different kinds of opportunities, densities and speeds, and also opened up other more weakly controlled zones of experimentation. Thus she notes how Nouackchott, long drawing migrants from the north of Senegal to work in industrial manufacture, has in recent years dramatically expanded its coastal fishing operations and has become a frequent way station for return-migrant West Africans as they make their way back to Senegal or elsewhere (Choplin 2012). Sadio notes these "backflows," her narrative conveying a strong awareness of the provisionality of these markets for women such as herself; her narrative demonstrates reflexive self-positioning in relation to the broader logics of men's regional mobility, an attunement to regional flows rather than an orientation toward specific locales or destinations. Women like Sadio rendered themselves available to plans and projects not entirely of their own making, seizing on and concretizing openings, even as the grounds on which those possibilities rested were observably shifting. They took advantage of spaces that had been built up through prior moments of blocked passage or economic "enclaving," even as those impediments were lifted and their memory jettisoned. The kind of wayfaring and sense-making that journeyers like Sadio made of their terrain entailed a diagnostic process that was open-ended (Newhouse and Simone 2017).

Though merely outlines, the itineraries above already suggest a very different picture of regional navigation than what is commonly depicted of West African migrants' trans-Saharan routes. Western media have focused intensively on transit migrants bottlenecked in Morocco or desperate and stranded in the desert. Such accounts recapitulate tropes of the Sahara as a vast and unknowable "void" to be overcome, and young men as "loose molecules" (Kaplan 1994) in their desperate flight. Media representations have relied heavily on evocations of "ancient trans-Saharan trade routes" to explain contemporary smuggling and migration patterns, a comforting explanatory template for migrant connectivity that meanwhile is too often used as shorthand for the putative (re)appearance of slavery and terrorism in the region, both terms speciously associated with "Islam" (A McDougall 2007; Lecocq, Mann et al 2013). Such depictions of the Sahara and its peoples have a long history (J MacDougall 2007; Lydon 2009; Scheele and McDougall 2012). Foundational works like Braudel's thesis (1972), which described the Sahara as the Mediterranean's "second face" (Braudel 1972, 161), have relied on oceanic metaphors of crossing to conceptualize Saharan connectivities, while largely disregarding short- or medium range interactions. Perhaps reflecting a scalar bias appropriate to historians' modes of inquiry, the tendency has been to study *trans*-Saharan mobilities and linkages across its 'shores' (cf Lovejoy and Baier 1998), prioritizing long distance trade over short, high volume movements over low, cross-cultural encounters with the racial or religiously defined 'other' over trans-local exchanges with groups defined by a high degree of mixing.

Long neglected by European historians, scholarship on trans-Saharan trade and mobility has been vital to 20th century Africanist intellectual projects of restoring pre-colonial historical interconnections across the continent. Historians have sought to describe dynamic zones of deep historical interaction and cultural transmission as means of restoring a usable imaginary of

continental political life and world-making prior to European colonization (Mbembe & Rendall 2000). However, the focus on trans-Saharan connections, and attempts to re-envision the Sahara as a “bridge” rather than a “barrier” of cultural transmission (Zartman 1963; Lydon 2009) has tended to wash out local and sub-regional scales of social life. Thus Scheele notes that both bridge and barrier reduce the Sahara to an “empty interior, a gap that must be simply *crossed*” (Scheele 2012, 15). The Sahara has been viewed less as an internally differentiated field of mediations than as a zone of transmission – an interface in and through which the North and Western coasts of Africa are created as complementary and interdependent spaces (Scheele and J. McDougall 2012), and an “open corridor” of the world economy whose logics and forces, meanwhile, derive from *elsewhere*. Post-modernist theoretical recuperations attempt to mobilize the Sahara as “oceanic” and smooth space, lacking in internal logics save those of nomadic itinerancy, in order to re-imagine sovereignty and post-colonial citizenship on the continent (Mbembe 1999; Mbembe & Rendall 2000; Deleuze & Guattari 1998). However, Choplin (2016) dismisses both “Northern point[s] of view” and theoretical recuperations “from the south” for continuing to overlook the intensity of circulations, itineraries, logics and locally derived concepts and meanings that shape everyday life in the region. Indeed they do not go far *enough* in shedding light on the navigational strategies cued to me by my interlocutors.

Judith Scheele’s work on southern Algerian oasis economies (2012; 2017; 2018) offers a useful counterpoint, positing an *intra*-Saharan perspective to help us re-think the distinctive qualities and dynamics of regional exchange. Saharan oasis economies are, from a strictly economic point of view, enigmas. Locales whose internal structures rely heavily and continually on external investment and outside dependencies, oases are spaces that, for various reasons (political, demographic, etc) often “decline long before they have finished reimbursing their

initial outlay” (Scheele 2012, 355). Scheele writes, “If only the economic benefit to which they aspire is taken into account, the optimism and the voluntarism of the founders of oases—or what could be deemed their naivety—might come as a surprise” (ibid.). I was struck by the aptness of this enigma to Sadio’s account, and her sense that opportunity was built as a nexus overtop of shifting and overlapping flows and forces that largely escaped her view. The enigma was equally germane to my first impressions of Hay Hassani. When I first began conducting market surveys, I felt certain that traders could not possibly live off of the scant margins they reported; given the regular, sudden departures of young men from the market, women creditors were routinely short-shrifted, and only seemed able to stay afloat through their skill in coaxing renewed investments from kin abroad. It was only upon delving deeper into women’s lives as “stayers” and the complex and multi-scalar operations in which they were embedded, that the movements of the market began to reveal their contours. In the next section, I present some historical context for the emergence of Hay Hassani, and argue that an intra-Saharan perspective can help turn our attention to its distinctive features, as a nexus of interlocking scales and forms of connectivity.

II. Routes & Destinations: The making of an intra-Saharan market

Hay Hassani is a vast, single-story market complex centered in the peri-urban development of the same name. Just 2km from the city’s southern limits, part of a band of low-income townships that arc around the coastal mega-city, Hay Hassani occupies a crossroads of overlapping processes of retail, resale, and distribution. Under its sprawling steel roofing converge agricultural produce wholesalers from the surrounding countryside and vendors who bring cartfuls of apples or green beans from the distribution yard in nearby Errahma, to be resold by the kilo; cloth merchants, tailors, as well as peddlers of imported pre-made garments from

Chinese distributors on the city's north side and second-hand clothing sellers; cobblers, crafters and other services peddlers. It is also the site of the largest "*d'occasion*" (second-hand) junk-yard complex in the city, known as "Marché Dallas," a sprawling labyrinthine structure where everything from wheelchairs to chandeliers to used carburetors can be found.

Peripheral both to the central "African" market (in the old Medina in the city center) and to the main wholesale and re-distribution centers (Derb Sultan and Derb Omar) in Casablanca, yet integrally linked to both, the market complex of Hay Hassani is a palimpsest of urban development in Casablanca over the last 20 years. Few of the merchants in Hay Hassani are themselves producers, but through their relationships with wholesalers, producers, and commercial creditors they bring into relation almost every corner of the sprawling city. The market's clientele also reflects a distinctive pattern of peri-urbanization of Casablanca, at the crossing of piecemeal and unfinished projects of modernization and urban renewal over the last two decades which draw together a diverse mix of urban residents: recently displaced slum dwellers, middle-class 2nd home buyers, MREs (Moroccans residing abroad) investors, and West African migrants of multiple nationalities. While some scholars have described this kind of forced cohabitation as the seedbed of a "new cosmopolitanism" (Boesen and Marfaing 2007) actual migrants in these milieux are more likely to use terms that emphasize a sense of enclosure, segregation (ghettoization), and frustrated mobility (Scheele 2016; Melly 2017). Actual urban residence in this "densely overlapping matrix of connectivity" (Horden and Purcell 2000, 100) remain in many ways profoundly structured by expectations of mutual independence and segregation by ethnic, national, or sub-regional group. The "ghettos" or ethnically exclusive support institutions that arose were where new arrivals looked to for loans, startup capital, as well as mutual protection.

The physical structure of the Hay Hassani marketplace entailed a constellation of planned and unplanned elements — the city in microcosm. Covered stalls spanned approximately five city blocks, with smaller un-adjoined buildings nearby, as well as a range of mobile carts and stalls and more ephemerally formed trade platforms, such as folding tables, tarps, and ambulant traders themselves, fanning out across an area encompassing almost 12 city blocks. Inside the main market buildings, space in the stalls was rented exclusively to Moroccan nationals, and most were family-run. The most optimally located buildings, those closest to the tram-line on the north end of the market, were more spacious, with wide, clean-swept alleys between the shops and brightly lit commercial space, while in the buildings further southward aisles became progressively narrower and harder to navigate, with the stalls themselves tighter and more induced to spill outward into the passage-way. The perimeter of the built market was made up of outward-facing commercial stalls, and tightly bunched moveable carts and folding tables where traders peddled their wares. Most of the occupants of these stalls were Moroccan as well, with the exception of a few Lebanese and Egyptian entrepreneurs. A small number of West African traders managed to strike up deals with stall-holders to be able to occupy a certain stretch of sidewalk in exchange for “security” or surveillance and client-sharing. To the south-west of the main buildings, tightly packed and then spilling out down the adjacent residential streets, was a clambering daily produce market. This section cleaved to the edge of a bare and dusty but fenced-off public park, the opposite side of which abutted the main vehicle thoroughfare of Hay Hassani township. The area that Senegalese traders have come to occupy was the narrow strip of sidewalk wrapped around the eastern wall of the park, and the north eastern corner where the walkway widened into a broad pedestrian alley.

Little Senegal

Although neighborhood markets like Hay Hassani are closely integrated with the townships into which they were planned, such markets are places of global imagination and laboratories of both planned and informal forms of transnational culture, befitting a city that was a hot zone of colonial modernist urban planning experiments.³² By the time I began my fieldwork, the Senegalese area of Hay Hassani had already acquired the status of landmark for residents across the southern townships. On its surface, “Little Senegal” as it was called resembled many of the Senegalese markets one encounters in major cities around the world (Stoller 2010; Kane 2011; Babou 2007a, 2007b; Riccio 2000). Yet closer examination revealed important differences. Firstly, the rows and clusters of folding tables and red felt tabletop displays were attended in striking numbers by women. Although the central *Marché Sénégalais* in the Medina had a number of women traders, cooks, and *boutiquières*, they mostly worked in tandem with husbands or other male relatives, and were in small minority, whereas in Hay Hassani single women traders were a substantial, if not dominant part. More difficult to perceive at first glance was the fact that most of them were not “career” traders. Many would only trade on their days off from other jobs, and most men would stay only a couple of weeks or months at a time, waiting for an auspicious opportunity to try again their fortunes in a sea crossing. Though some did identify as aspiring *commerçant/es*, trading in Hay Hassani was viewed as an interim solution — an avenue for making quick cash, to be able to renew a migratory project in the case of most young men, and for women, an opportunity to supplement meager wages while avoiding the most onerous periods of domestic service work.

³² The history of modernist urban planning and experimentation in Casablanca is explored in Wright, 1987; Rabinow, 2013; Newsome 2009. For orientation on the neoliberalization of Morocco’s urban planning see Bogaert 2011 and Saffari, Siavash and Akhbari 2017

The Hay Hassani market had begun attracting Senegalese (and some other West African) migrant traders only in the last few years, since around 2011 one cellphone trader estimated. Before then, Senegalese trade had been concentrated in the covered market in the old city center, a space known as the “*Marché Senegalais*” which, it was claimed, perhaps apocryphally, the King himself had bestowed as a “gift” to the Senegalese community in the late 1990s, as sign of the kingdom’s re-commitment to continental ties, and in honor of the “special fraternity” of Senegal and Morocco. Prior to that time, Casablanca was principally a transit hub linking shipping and ground freight networks across the Sahara, over which Senegalese Muridiyya brotherhood and its affiliated traders held the monopoly.³³ These actors had local patrons, clients, middlemen, and ‘*coaxeurs*’ whose role was to safeguard merchandise and provide lodging and storage for itinerant traders. As Marfaing (2013) observes, historically these “coaxeurs” were traders’ wives or other senior female relations who were placed in Morocco to oversee stock and manage storage facilities. The role of managing provisions and cultivating good relations with the locals was a central responsibility for keeping tradeways open.

As transit through Morocco to Europe and elsewhere in North Africa has become more restricted, there are at least two observable transformations to this system of storage and guarantorship. Firstly, as more and more Senegalese have been pushed to “settle” in Morocco, fierce competition has arisen between groups that had previously operated with relative mutual autonomy. Today, the central *Marché Senegalais* is no longer the monopoly of Senegalese traders, and instead faces competition from Ivoirian, Nigerian and Cameroonian tradesmen and

³³ Despite the closer genealogical connection with the Tijaniyya, The post-colonial Moroccan state inherited and prolonged a system of containment and neutralization from the French colonial authorities. Based on the epistemological and distinction made by French authorities between Islam maure and Islam noire, disciples of the Tijaniyya — deemed more “Arabized” and thus more of a menace to French authority — were constricted in their movements, limited to state-controlled pilgrimage and highly surveilled commercial tourism. Thus according to Marfaing’s oral histories, it was primarily Murid traders who made up the port trade in the 50s and 60s, with Tijani merchants operating only through small-scale local networks.

women. Many less established Senegalese shop-holders have been pushed out or their operations absorbed by stronger Senegalese entrepreneurs or patrons. The move from wholesale monopoly to an expanded small-scale migrant trade market in recent years also stems from the overtaking of West African cargo shipping and freight by much larger scale Chinese companies (Marfaign 2007), and expansion of state-backed opportunities for West African students and entrepreneurs in Morocco (Berriane 2015), including the extension of business micro-loans, and bi-national banking. The restriction of mobility of West African entrepreneurs through Morocco to Europe has also fueled the expansion of petty trade as a means for migrants to finance “step-wise” migratory projects (Alioua 2013). Senegalese trade has not only become a highly visible fixture in the urban landscape — as permanent edifices such as the *Marché Sénégalais* in Casablanca attest — but has also rapidly elaborated itself across urban and increasingly peri-urban and rural spaces. Senegalese traders can today be found in townships around major urban centers from Agadir to Tetouane, and enterprising traders also make appearances at seasonal trade fairs in the rural countryside (*moussems*) and rotating weekly markets (*loumas*) in small villages far outside of urban centers, where their iconic red felt-covered tables are now familiar presences. Once deemed to be the monopoly of Muridiyya trader-student-pilgrim networks, other brotherhoods, such as the *thiantacounes*, have begun to compete for market share and establish their own nodes of economic power in different cities across Morocco (more in Chapter 4).

While both Moroccan and Senegalese officials like to harken back to the long history of regional exchange forged through robust cultural ties and familial alliances, for my interlocutors, Morocco still represents a fragile frontier of commercial opportunity. Many contended that the market in the old Medina, historic center of the Senegalese trade, has become “*fott*” — saturated or clotted — by its overly centralized management, as well as the encroachment by other West

African migrant groups, namely Ivoirian and Nigerian wholesalers and retailers. Thus the need for entrepreneurs willing to venture out into peripheral neighborhoods like Hay Hassani, to restore movement to the market, and increasingly, to sustain the ongoing mobility of migrants on their way elsewhere.

The first to move to the townships were women like the “Ladies of Las Palmas.” These were migrants usually with primary employment as domestic workers in the adjacent middle-class neighborhoods of Aïn Diab and Mâarif who, on their days off or in the evenings, would go to Hay Hassani to sell beignets and snacks or Senegalese hair care products, or offer hair braiding, fake nails, or false eyelashes to customers. During this same period there was simultaneously a move to occupy sub-letted low-income apartments in southerly neighborhoods such as Riad al Oulmes, which drew more and more women to live in proximity to the market, and thus a bigger potential clientele of not only Moroccans but also Senegalese seeking easier access to West African foodstuffs and cooking products. Yet as we will see in the next chapter, their work across trade, domestic labor, and house holding entailed exposure to risks and deficits of different kinds, and thus their local navigation relied integrally on the continuous renewal of investment from kin and commercial partners from abroad.

The most lucrative and coveted market locations for Senegalese in Morocco have historically been ‘trans-local,’ that is, nodes that are not self-sufficient but rather depend substantially on resources and infrastructure (capital, commodities, visas, social networks) from the outside for their day-to-day survival; they rely on the dynamics of provisions and provisioning for tying together different resources (Choplin 2016; Scheele 2016). This is equally true of Hay Hassani, where trade goods and investment capital are tied to multiple external sites. The women who were able to exercise the greatest advantage here were those who were

imbricated in multi-lateral channels of remittance and investment: that is, many not only received funds from kin in Europe or elsewhere but were also remitters themselves; they could solicit shipments of Senegalese products for local re-sale, and furnish Moroccan goods to export to trade partners in Europe or back home in Senegal. Many of the Senegalese products (spices and specialty food items, skin and hair care products, etc) that made up the bulk of township traders' retail inventory had to be acquired from Senegalese wholesalers in the Medina. Though many township traders continued to make use of central market stores to supplement their trade wares, what was striking and different about their enterprises in Hay Hassani was that women had access both to trade goods, usually from outside family networks or personal agreements with itinerant traders (Modou-Modous), and to storage space in their township rentals, that enabled them to earn and accumulate more or less independently from the central Medina market. Similarly, the lack of trusted or accessible banking institutions and the non-circulating currency and restrictions on extra-territorial money transfers for non-nationals in Morocco forced traders, workers, and remitters to rely on middle men, most of whom have historically operated through the central market, and brotherhood dominated credit infrastructures. Women's positioning in the township both made possible and was itself sustained by their ability to offer newcomers an array of credit and loan options that could bypass the central market with their hefty rates and high burdens of social obligation vis-à-vis established trade monopolies.

Lastly, the growing demand for cheap, temporary housing for the fast-growing population of migrant men being forcibly returned from the borders and seeking temporary work in Casablanca made women's ventures in the townships doubly advantageous. House-holding, as pseudo landlords for male lodgers, availed women of another key source of cash and a degree of security across slow periods of earning. Some in turn were able to re-invest what they earned as

landlords in expanding and diversifying their trade operations, often while cycling between positions in domestic housework or other service sector jobs. They engaged in a kind of infrastructural speculation, using their access to cash through waged domestic service to build out the kinds of housing and crediting services that rendered men's ongoing mobility possible. The dynamics of their circular labor transitions will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter. For the moment, it suffices to note that for these industrious traders, the provisionality of the terrain was central to the productive opportunity it represented.

Understanding certain spaces like the intra-Saharan oasis, Scheele contends, necessitates a regional perspective, specifically, one that looks to how interlocking scales of short, mid, and long-range interactions get “coordinated through mobile actors' circulations and crossings” (2012, 280). Oases are spaces where power relations are “not based on territorial control, but [are] localized as social networks radiating out from commercial hubs and city-states acting as safe storage spaces” (Scheele 2012, 282). Rather than fixed geographies, they “come to appear as nodes of particular density in overlapping networks of connectivity” (283). Thus, in lieu of thinking of Hay Hassani as a derivative or secondary market, I propose that it merits being understood through the lens of intra-Saharan exchange. Though the Moroccan mega-city of Casablanca should in no way be mistaken for a geographically remote desert-side oasis, the perspective offered by Scheele recenters attention on the dependency of particular markets on continuous substantial outside investment. It further reminds us of the historical precedence of migrant women traders as stock-keepers, and reframes the question of their ability to operate in perpetual deficit through a logic of provisioning, stocking and storage (explored in depth the next chapter). An “intra-Saharan” mode of analysis helps us recast this fragile frontier economy, whose continued existence can only be explained in relation to “belonging to a larger entities,

periodicities, and scales of movement” (Scheele 2012, 355). Rather than seeing Hay Hassani as a place that gives the lie to the state’s fantasy of integration and smooth transit, an *intra*-Saharan perspective attends to local and conceptual distinctions through which productive potential is visualized and harnessed by actors themselves. Though perhaps resistant to being “scaled up,” it nevertheless represents efforts to achieve regularity and predictability in traders’ daily lives.

Confounding any straightforward notion of economic efficacy, “moving market” operated as a “coupling of various agendas, affect, and aspirations” (Simone 2011, 381). Simone writes of African urban intersections, “the modalities of mobilization and organization [of trade] were more based on forms of mutual witnessing, efforts to try and complement what other residents were doing” (ibid., 383). This mutual witness, I argue, generates differential visibilities, which build on and revise ideas of gendered presence and productive personhood. We next turn to how some of those forms of mutual witnessing were formalized in oppositions between “hustling” (*liggenti*) and “sitting” (*toog*), and the gendered, generational, and spiritual value-frames that the terms help organize. Rather than sitting and hustling as simply opposed, or as definitive states or accomplishments, their deployment by my interlocutors suggest contrastive yet complementary dispositions, endowed with particular capacities for action and reflection, and relational potentials, as well as vulnerabilities.

III. Sitting and Hustling

The kinetic concept of “moving market” captures the idea of mobility as central to Senegalese social life and national self-concept as a nation of migrants and traders, and is particularly linked to the role of Islamic Sufi brotherhoods in the organization of transnational mobility. Historically, commercial trade and Islam have been closely associated in Senegal and

the wider West African region. The brotherhoods (*tariqas*) which claim the adherence of most of Senegal's Muslim population today were founded in the middle of the 18th century, and since that time have always provided an economic as well as spiritual and political base for their members. Initially, they were organized into semi-feudal systems of agricultural labor (particularly ground-nut cultivation), though they also flourished in urban commercial trade (especially the Tijani *tariqa*, which was historically concentrated in urban centers). With the economic downturn and drought that drove a rapid decline in cash crops beginning in the 1970s, the brotherhoods' emphasis turned to international trade and they began elaborating their commercial networks in cities around the globe. The power structure by which cheikhs controlled men's labor in the fields, and urban trade networks in Senegalese cities, was preserved; senior traders placed young men strategically at key points in their networks, and migrant earners were expected to remain connected to their spiritual and kin groups through devotional tithes and remittances. Across this transition, the brotherhoods (and the Muridiyya in particular) gained the reputation of pioneers in transnational street trade. Today's migrants refer often to the "pioneer period of their history as a precedent for their conquest of Broadway and the Cote d'Azur" (Ebin 1992, 114). The kinetic metaphors associated with "moving market" thus capture the distinctive "mixture of morals and markets, prophets and profits" (Buggenhagen 2011) that animate and bind brotherhood networks in their ethical circuitry. The market itself comes to serve as an advertisement for the dynamic potential of the religious movement itself (ie the specific *tariqa*) to put persons and things into circulation, "overflow" national borders,³⁴ and circumvent conventional divisions between formal and informal markets (Diouf & Rendall 2001). At the same time, the efficacy of such imagery rests on the idea that the solidarity of

³⁴ The language of the *Fayda Tijaniyya*, the Tijani "flood," relies particularly heavily on such imagery. See Hill 2011

Senegalese trade networks uniquely enable centripetal movement on the physical plane that is met with centrifugal movement of resources and blessings on a moral-spiritual plane. Thus a combination of manifest and invisible movements, “moving market” is a kinesthetic concept for envisioning the global circulation of persons, commodities, and blessings.

The brotherhoods’ emphasis on hard work and physical labor, rooted in their past in rural agriculture, were readily adapted to urban trade and transnational migration. An “agrarian ethos” pervades and actually sustains disciples’ migration, even though many have never experienced a rural livelihood. Candidates for migration are evaluated not on the extent of their socialization into a culture of migration but on how hard they are able to work in the fields (Gaibazzi 2013: 260), as measures of devotion to their cheikh, family, and region of origin. As West African migrants have become integrated into stratified labor markets of Europe and North America, contemporary transnational migration dynamics continue to reproduce this ethos (Soares 2007; Kane 2011; Babou 2011). Hard physical labor and material deprivation associated with an agrarian life, as well as with the rural pedagogies of the cheikh’s farm (Quranic schools known as *daaras*) are thought to instill virtues of self-sufficiency, endurance, and the ability to lead a plain and honest life, thus preparing them for futures *both* in agricultural or commercial work within local networks *and* for migration abroad. Willingness to withstand hardship and suffering arises from commitment to the “straight path” [*lu jubbul*] rather than the path of least resistance — the “zig zag” associated with easy or “fast” money [*taf-taf*] and corruption in business, politics, and personal relationships.

Of course, this ethos and the emphasis on demonstrable effort and physical toil, is not without its problems. From urban Dakar to Casablanca, and amidst galloping unemployment, particularly for young people, the most common idiom for a day’s work is not *liggey* but rather

“*lijjenti*” or hustle. To *lijjenti* is code for the peripatetic and often fruitless daily exploits of the country’s jobless youth. It speaks of the imperative to make a public *show* of “doing something” — to leave the house early, even if it means spending the day going this way and that, paying favors and calling in new ones in hopes of ‘untangling’ a bit of cash to bring home. Thus *lijjenti* stands for restless bodies with little material return, and the perennial struggle of trying to “do something” — to find, accumulate, and (re)distribute money in such a way as to have one’s efforts socially recognized and fulfill expectations of (masculine) value and productivity.

Mobility was one of the experiential paradoxes of Hay Hassani. As articulated to me by a young man, Ibou: “here people are always moving, but our *affaires yi* [merchandise] never does.” A canny inversion of the structuring contradiction global capitalism (capital moves freely but people do not), traders would comment constantly about their own and others’ bodily (im)mobility. For some, the endlessness of sitting in Hay Hassani constituted a strong reminder of frustrated ambitions, and stoked anxieties about the productive potential of the market, the city, and Morocco as a whole. Women told me that Morocco was no place for young men, indicating that the country *itself* produced idleness: “*Dama leen yërēm*. I pity them, there is nothing here for them, nothing to do here. *Toog rekk* — sitting around is all they do. *Toog rekk day doffloo nit*. Sitting drives people crazy.” Dreams of Europe and imposed bodily inertia were thought to produce heaviness [*diisal yaram*] and distressing or confused thoughts [*xalaat yu doywaar*] which drove young men to “madness” and despair. Others paradoxically rebuked the same men not for their idleness but for their frenetic activity. Being too anxious to go to Europe at the first chance they got, they abandoned their capacity for reflexivity, planning, and strategy. “*Dañu mbëkki ba doff*. They ‘attack’ [the border] like wild animals, they drive themselves crazy with it.” Central to traditional Islamic pedagogies in the Senegambian region is a principle that

hard work and material hardship “cools” the blood, while making the student empathetic and wise, catalyzing him toward the proper aims: vigorous devotion to the cheikh and empathy and generosity toward the family depending on him at home. Patience and quietude in the face of suffering are seen as a precondition to later prosperity (Lemarie 2005; Porcelli 2011; Bledsoe 1990). In contrast, men’s harried quest for fast cash [*taf-taf*] through “hustling” was symptomatic of undisciplined desires and “wasted” [*yakku*] or spurious effort. Both their idle sitting and their frenetic hustling and compulsive flights to the border were read as signs of sickness, a condition extended to Morocco as a whole. Thus the rejoinder to the question, how’s the market moving? “*Marsé bi, feebar la*” [the market is affliction.]

Migrants’ evocations of sitting and hustling revealed the complexity of these cultural discourses about mobility, effort, permanence and ethical life, in a moment of constricted opportunity and prolonged, enforced ‘waiting’ in Morocco. Young men seemed to treat their time in Morocco as though it were simply an epicycle in the longer arc of their “adventure.” Their departures were cast with a sense of expected, yet unpredictable, inevitability. One long-term denizen of Hay Hassani told me, “you don’t need a sea report; just look at the market; you know the weather in Tangier just by counting up the *boy yi ca kon ba* (youngsters on the corner). You see now, it’s full up [*fees dell*] with with youngsters, but come August, *takk!* You’ll see, the whole place will dry up [*wóow kong*].” Though their ability to leave Senegal and make it to Morocco might have lifted them off the lowest rungs of migrant candidacy and “waithood,” their presence in the market was not itself treated as a sign of success. In fact, Hay Hassani was often negatively characterized in terms of what it lacked: here the iconic figure of “Little Senegals” the world over, the “Modou-Modou,” was nowhere to be found. People told me again and again: “All we have here are *Guédiawaye boys*.” Pronounced to sound like the English “Get Away”, this

nickname referred to the youth from the disfavored Dakar suburb of Guédiawaye, known for sending high numbers of clandestine migrants via sea routes to the Canary Islands. The young men who engaged in *lijjenti-xaalis* —scraping for money or short-term trading— in Hay Hassani were apprehended under the sign of urgent and spurious mobility, the need “get away”, propelled by economic necessity as much as the errancies of youth. Men’s inability to “sit” — or sit properly — was cast as youthful intemperance. Thus a common refrain: “*Guys yi, dañu wara tóog, muuñ, khaar lu ñu yalla doggal*. These guys, they should learn to sit still, be patient and wait for what God has willed.” Incapable of staying still, men were seen as not only reckless but impertinent, manifesting too great a lust for worldly riches and refusing to accept “God’s time” — *lu Yalla doggal*.

The township women also differentiated themselves from other women “hustlers” in the Medina, namely the younger women in the city center who we recall from chapter 1 were known as the “*Aji-bis*,” and worked as hair braiders and aestheticians in coordinated work syndicates under the control of trade “mothers.” These women, whose name means the “come heres”, were portrayed by senior women in the townships as solicitous and vulgar, often through caricatures and theatrical imitation of their indecorous “hustle” (*seeni taat yi di genn* “with their asses in the air”) and the raucous and animated fights [*khuloo*] in public, both of which aligned them with young men. Assia, a 54-year old *commerçante* in Hay Hassani, told me: “They waste all their time and their money fighting with each other, fighting over men, fighting over clients. Never still! It’s a wonder their *bagaas* (merchandise) doesn’t just walk away on its own (*doxal boppam*). If I had their location, if my hands could still braid [*lettu*], I’d just *sit* and let the money come to me.” The transvaluation of stillness, as relief from the necessity of hustling, recasts senior women’s emplacement in the township as an achievement. In reference to themselves and

their own aging bodies' need for stillness and rest, women sometimes related their market sitting to practices of *dhikr* [spiritual remembrance], transforming onerous conditions of work into a practice of “somatic attention” (Csordas 1993; cited in Gaibazzi 2015). Many used time sitting and waiting in the market to listen to religious sermons or Quran recitation on their cellphones, or quietly click through prayer beads. Still, just as “sitting” was an insecure posture from which men were to embody productive activity, neither was it easily given to the performance of pious senior womanhood. Assia, a trader of more than eight years in Hay Hassani, one day exclaimed to me: “at my age, it is difficult to be in the market and attend to one’s duties [*farata* (ie religious duties)]. I have to be vigilant, I can’t be jumping up and leaving my merchandise here. At my age, when the call to prayer sounds [*su noddu bi jottee*], I should be able to lay out my prayer rug [*taal sijaada bi*], seat myself upon it [*toog*], answer our maker [*uyu sunu boroom.*]”

‘Sitting’ was not a neutral state — the mere opposite of movement — but rather entailed morally valenced concepts of stillness, availability, intentionality, and productive power. Different gendered images of spurious mobility, the *Guediawaye boys* and the *Aji bis*, have both contributed to the valorization of township women as “fixed” and valuable features of the local landscape, and to the polarization of space by which Hay Hassani was becoming an increasingly enticing frontier of opportunity. Critiques of the *Guédiawaye boys* and *Aji bis* emphasize the spurious and undisciplined nature of their movements: they engaged in relentless circulation without exercising the discipline and reflection required for value to accrue. By contrast, senior women put themselves forward as patrons who exercised an inner force, an ability to absorb and “cover over” (*sutural*) the breaches caused by constantly departing men through their own discrete strategies of diverting, tying up, and holding back money (as we will see in the next chapter). Such acts of mutual witnessing undergirded senior women’s efforts to fashion

themselves as “stayers”— anchors or moorings — in a relational field that also critically depended on ongoing mobility and continuous infusions of external resources for its reproduction.

Africanist urban ethnographers have drawn attention to how acts of mutual witnessing such as these become part of the infrastructure of urban circulations and exchange. For AboduMaliq Simone, the urban is a site of dense intersection, in which a plurality of styles, orientations and potentials come into ceaseless relation. What makes the city viable is the way that residents learn to “pay attention to what others are doing” and on the basis of this ecology of perceptions, actually transform what it is possible to do in the city. Residents hook their projects up with others in improvisatory ways to “expand the spaces of economic and cultural operation” (2004, 321). But whereas Simone’s descriptive practice has helped change sensibilities about how African cities are actually productively “working,” his attempts to turn conditions of generalized informality into the predicate of urban creativity and invention fails to account for the gendered regimes of visibility that shape what kinds of conversions and collaborations get seen in the first place.

In his ambitious survey of the notion of value, anthropologist David Graeber takes up John Berger’s theory of gender which draws a distinction between “action” and “reflection” as distinct, gendered modes of social presence. Graeber contends that action is associated with man’s presence in the “promise of power which he embodies” whereas “woman’s presence... expresses her own attitude to herself, and defines what can and cannot be done to her” (Berger 1972, 45-46, cited in Graeber 2001, 96). Whereas male presence is unselfconscious, as the (expressed or concealed) capacity for action, female presence is always mediated through the hegemonic lens of the male standard and the (actual or merely internalized) gaze of the other. To

exercise power, women “must contain and interiorize” how men see them, thus “regulat[ing] what is and is not ‘permissible’ within her presence” (98). Berger’s critique of gender relations is applicable only to Western society, and indeed, the dynamics of concealment and display among Senegalese women raises its own important question. The masking of women’s labors of conversion and collaboration prior to and alongside their arrival as sitters in the market reflects a need for a culturally specific politics of seeing. However, Graeber asserts that Berger’s idea points to a deeper, perhaps intrinsic distinction between action and reflection: “the basic division between a relatively invisible self acting on the outside world and a concrete and visible one relating primarily to itself is... of much wider significance,” possibly even “intrinsic to the dynamics of human thought and action themselves” (Graeber 96). In the market, women’s casting as “sitters” was primarily refracted through public diatribes about men’s spurious, uncontained, or wasteful movements, and the dangers of getting “stuck” in circulation, endlessly circulating between town and border unable to accrue social value. Seeming not to be in motion themselves, women’s representation as “sitters,” by contrast, obfuscated the instability and indeed ceaseless transformations by which they worked to hold themselves “in place.”

In a different mode, Steve Feierman observes, regarding Shambaa (Tanzania) rainmaking and kingship rites, that “the unvarying organizing principle in discourse about these symbols is an opposition between the rhythmized regularity on the one side, and irregular unpredictable random events (and possibly unceasing continuity) on the other” (Feierman 1990, 84). Feierman notes how this gendered opposition between masculine power that is unpredictable and peripatetic and feminine power which is restorative and cyclical, enables the suppression of contingency and conflict that is otherwise constitutive of the public experience of political life. Like the duality that allows a rhythm and regularity to be imposed on the variable durations of

the public sphere for the Shambaa, local and conceptual distinctions between sitting and hustling not only parsed different dispositions and moral capacities for action along gendered lines. They also engendered a sense of order and regularity to the market, and its movements as belonging to a greater whole. Such ordering technologies were what rendered the corridor not simply a neutral conveyor of meaning, but rather a place in itself, whose meanings, while contested, lent the possibility of collaboration and movement at a higher or lower threshold. This becomes clear when we look at the way that ideas and practices of Sufi Islam shape the senses of the corridor, pointing to internal contours and contestations around the idea of regional coherence.

IV. *Lu féeñ ak lu féeñul* : Sufi aesthetics of the visible and the invisible

Discourses of contained and un-contained movement, action and reflection, find expression in the aesthetics of Sufi discipleship, and shape what it means to be Senegalese and a devotee of the Tijaniyya in this space. In particular, migrants' modes of self-fashioning according to different lineages of Sufism conjured, and worked to reproduce, contested geographies of cultural and spiritual affinity, authenticity, and collaborative potential. Discourses of visible and invisible affinity serve to articulate cleavages between different groups of adherents, but also guide migrants' sense of collaborative possibility and potential for transcending the historical legacies of colonial and post-colonial division.

The tariqa Tijaniyya (the Tijani "path"), whose founding Cheikh Tijani's mausoleum is located in Fès, has, since the mid-18th century jihads led by indigenous reformers in the Sahel, become the most populous brotherhood in Senegal, representing more than half of the Muslim population in the country. Under the French, colonial Muslim policy drew racialized distinctions between *Islam noire* and *Islam maure*, seeing the Tijaniyya as an emanation from Arabia, and

therefore intrinsically hostile to French rule and both dangerous and corrupting of the more “docile” and pacific Black Muslims of West Africa. The tariqa was subjected to a policy of containment and surveillance, with only limited scope for state-controlled pilgrimage and commercial activity across the region. Thus while the Senegalese connection to Fès remained vital through this period of constrained access, across the mid 20th century, it was primarily traders and merchants from another Senegalese-originated tariqa, the Muridiyya, deemed more amenable to French rule and given greater liberties of movement, who came to dominate transnational markets in Casablanca and Rabat.

In the Moroccan state’s “(re)turn to Africa,” the revitalization of African markets has been a focal point, with large-scale Senegalese partnerships and enterprises given access to loans, banking, and state contracts. Meanwhile petty traders in the townships, attempting to operate outside of established Murid networks, have calibrated competing imperatives, weighing the need to make themselves visible to lay claim to such material opportunities, against the desire to retain maintain anonymity and the widest possible degree of maneuver (Newhouse and Simone 2017, 05). One way in which this paradox found expression was in discourses from Sufi Islam that render a dynamic relationship between the manifest, contingent reality (Arabic: *zahir*) and the hidden mystical reality (Arabic: *batin*)— in Wolof, *lu féeñ ak lu féeñul*. My interlocutors evoked specific notions of seen and unseen, overtop of more mundane pressure of display and concealment, in addressing the contradictory dispensations of being Tijani in the homeland of the cheikh.

Many Senegalese Tijanis cultivate both a literal and an esoteric connection to Morocco via a regional history that centers memories of colonial and postcolonial suppression, secrecy and dissimulation of brotherhood activity, especially including trade. They see Morocco as the

homeland of the Tijaniyya, but note that Moroccans themselves have largely lost touch with their Sufi spiritual heritage, and have moreover assumed the mantle of the former French colonizers in regulating —and profiting from — a Sufi institution which many believe is the rightful inheritance of *Black* African disciples.³⁵ Discourses of Senegalese exceptionalism and moral exemplarity not only distinguished Senegalese traders from other West African migrants, whose livelihoods they characterized as largely illicit and immoral, but also from Moroccans. Some fashioned themselves as moral guardians of the Tijaniyya and its mandate of urbane civility, learning and virtuous enterprise.

Sitting in a gathering of traders in Hay Hassani who happened to be mostly Tijani disciples of a particular Dahira, the Dahiratul Moustarchidat wal Moustarchidaty³⁶, one of the women received a cryptic text message about some merchandise they were trying to move. This prompted another trader, Ibo, to remark:

It's just like during the Difficulties,³⁷ we couldn't communicate in public, if we wanted to meet [have a Dahira gathering] it had to be discreet. We had no cellphones, one of us used to *walk*, can you imagine, from Point E all the way to Mermoz just to let the *gars yi* [the guys] know, and one of them would walk another leg to Appexi... Here it's the same, it's because we are Black, we aren't recognized that we are Muslim, we are Tijanis, *like them* [Moroccans]. But really, it's their own selves that they don't recognize [*khamuñu seen bopp*]. Our Cheikh [Tijani], he was feared by the French, too; now he's feared by the Arabs [*naar yi*, ie Moroccans], they see how powerful he is when they see our gatherings [*jang yi*] in Tivaouane (Senegalese spiritual capitol of the Tijaniyya)... That's why we have always been discrete; *taalibés-u Cheikh* [Tijani disciples], with us there's no *yëngu yëngu* [to move oneself - convulse in ecstasy], no *kërëp kërëp* [clamor - ie of the market], there's just an inner apparition in us [*lu féeñ ci nun*]. Once the Moroccan people are able to recognize this... *then* Africa can really get moving again.

³⁵ Though recent monarchs have publicly performed fealty to the Tijaniyya's ruling families in Senegal, among Moroccans the tariqa Tijaniyya, and sufism in general, has waned significantly in popularity.

³⁶ A conservative wing of the Tijaniyya Malikiyya, who are known both for their attachment to conventional Arab centers of cultural production, as well as their Wolof-centric nationalist political engagement. This is in contrast to another prominent Tijani branch, the Fayda Tijaniyya, whose center is in Medina Baaye, and professes explicitly Afro-centric cosmopolitan sensibilities

³⁷ A period of contested power transfer between members of the ruling family of the Tijaniyya in Tivaouane (see Kane & Villalon 1998).

In Ibo's comment, he folds in multiple moments of a history of Tijani political suppression in order to lend visibility and significance to the "discrete" nature of Tijani enterprise in Morocco today.³⁸ He draws a line of continuity between French colonial and Moroccan post-colonial states' racist forms of subjugation and exclusion, evoking the Tijaniyya as an inner truth of Moroccan cultural and spiritual inheritance that most have yet to awaken to.

His quote reflects how the aesthetics and ethics of bodily movement are central to the way that different *turuq* defined the sources of authenticity, power, and economic and political potential of their respective spiritual paths. Ibo's mention of "*yëngu yëngu*" and "*kërëp kërëp*" refer to the kinetic "excesses" associated with the Muridiyya, as well as the Fayda movements. Both of these movements, from the standpoint of cultural aesthetics, valorize a pan-African cosmopolitanism that implicitly rejects the "Arab world" as the center of cultural production and religious knowledge. By contrast, the persecuted tariqa Tijaniyya with which Ibo identifies himself in this story is one that expresses, through stylistic sobriety and austerity, an attachment to Arab, and specifically Moroccan, Islamic lineages. In contrast with the florid and gesticulative modes of Murid and Fayda disciples, Malikiyya disciples are said to exhibit martial precision in their gestures, and 'purity' and authenticity in their mastery of Arabic intonations (see Dang 2017; Hill 2016). While theological and devotional differences between different brotherhoods in Senegal are typically downplayed in public discourse, divisions often echo through repertoires of stereotypes, jokes, and insults which not only inscribe brotherhoods within particular cultural geographies ("Arab" or "African," for example) but also stereotyped associations with avarice, work discipline, and material devotion to the cheikh.

³⁸ When I asked about why the Muridiyya had been so dominant in global trade, many Tijani would refute the premise of the question, contending instead that Tijanis were simply "more discrete."

Ibo's association of "yëngu," a form of spiritual practice involving ecstatic movements and 'disorderly' convulsion, with *kërëp* - clamor of the market - echos a critique of Muridiyya disciples' (putative) belief that spiritual transcendence could be achieved through work and material offering alone, whatever its nature, a critique that echoes colonial ethnographers' characterization of Murid disciples seeking "salvation through labor." In contrast I commonly heard Senegalese, both Murid and Tijani alike, describe Tijani disciples as "more *toubab*," more like white people, ie, more rational, orderly, and disciplined, in their approaches.³⁹ Judgments as much aesthetic as moral, Ibo contends that it is the inevitable recognition by the Moroccan people *both* of the esoteric meanings of spiritual fraternity, *and* the intrinsically superior rationality and discipline of Tijani work ethic, that their common destiny — as Africans *and* as Muslims — will restore both countries to proper development and "moving market."

Mariama was a 49 year old woman from Dakar, who saw becoming a trader in Morocco as a means toward cultivating closeness (*sëqqal*) with Cheikh Tijani. Once or twice a year, she took her street trading operation from Casablanca to Fès, where she set up outside the zawiya, and sold Moroccan djellabas and babouches to visiting pilgrims. Over the years, she befriended a Moroccan bookshop keeper who had taken up shop across from the zawiya. Although he was not a Tijani himself (in fact he had quite disparaging views of Sufism), he had become rich selling imported Tijani *adab* manuals, praise poetry, and Tijani-style prayer beads to visiting West African pilgrims. Mariama came to an agreement with him, first by having him look over her table while she prayed or ate her meals, and later, reserving her spot in the alley, handling transactions and storing merchandise for her in her absence. When I remarked out how fortunate

³⁹ Often this was in response to my questioning of why there were fewer Tijani traders, or in any case they seemed less prominent in the market.

she'd been to find such a kind collaborator, given the general hostility and xenophobic racism she'd experienced elsewhere in the neighborhood, Mariama reflected:

“It’s true, there are few here in Morocco who know the wealth of their inheritance [*heritage*, ie the Tijaniyya.] But he [shopowner] saw what shone in me [*lu féeñ si man.*] All Tijanis of good moral fiber have it; it’s hard to see, one has to be very still. But it lets others know that you can be trusted, that you are *juste, ku jubuwul* [righteous, on the straight path.] The people of Fès, it’s in their culture. Cheikh Ahmed Tijani himself was from a family of traders; the way that they operate here [in the *souq*], it’s like back in the times of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani. They know the value of things — none of the *yëngu yëngu* [jostling, convulsions] and *kërup kërup* [clanging] of the streets in Paris.”

For Mariama, belonging to the Tijaniyya Malikiyya (disciples of El Hajj Malick Sy) inscribed her and her Moroccan neighbors in a shared cultural space, whether mutually acknowledged or not. Like Ibo, Mariama saw her particular Tijani Sufi practice as aligning her with Arab-centric sources of cultural production, against the ‘ecstatic’ practices that she associated with her Senegalese peers, and with the “outside” influences of European markets. She engaged concepts of esoteric reality — a hidden [*féeñul*] spiritual kinship — to countenance the contingent external realities of racial stigma and exclusion. This afforded her a minimal framework for collaboration, allowing her to redraw the space of social possibility in the market and see herself as properly emplaced, thereby renewing her resolve. Through her statement, we can recall Scheele’s assertion that intra-Saharan economies are spaces whose continued existence require the cultivation of belonging to larger entities and periodicities. For Mariama, and for many of my interlocutors, their sense of cultivation of closeness to the spiritual center of the Tijaniyya was a source of patience and resolve: “*nu mëna muuñ, khaar lu ñu yalla doggal* — that we may be patient, [and] wait for what God has ordained for us.”

This chapter has shown that “sitting” in Morocco was not a neutral condition — the mere opposite of moving — but rather was an ethically charged concept indexing different moral dispositions and capacities for action, reflection, and collaboration (cf Gaibazzi 2015). The

perception of women as “sitters” in Hay Hassani gave a sense of regularity and predictability to the market, and enabled new possibilities for short-term trade with low bars of entry that made it increasingly attractive to young migrant men. Internal discourses about “legitimate” and “spurious” mobility drew upon gendered notions of productive personhood, Senegalese exemplarity, and Sufi discipleship and moral order, to generate imaginaries of regional coherence and productive potential. I have suggested that the idiom of “moving market” is a technology that brings these different discourses, domains, histories, and things, into articulation. Not merely a neutral description of the market itself, its parsing of availabilities and potentials were part of the infrastructure of possibility for circulation and exchange.

In Hay Hassani, kinetic potential, both for “moving market” and for young men’s ongoing mobility into and out of the city, was undergirded by women’s shrewd navigation of openings and closures across multiple markets of service work, trade, and house-holding. My interlocutors deftly calibrated entries into and exits from the market in a way that enabled them to profit and broaden their field of local and distant relations of support and reciprocity. Moreover, by injecting new diverse sources of cash and credit into market trade, they also lent a degree of regularity to the market for its more transient male denizens. Women strove to become relay points of transaction and redistribution for commercial goods, gifts, and remittances within their kin and local networks; by attracting and effectively managing these conversions, they strove to be socially recognized as ones whose travel to Morocco, and resilient staying put, was both viable and legitimate. It is to this process of “emplacement,” and the busy transformational work that seemed to pass under the threshold of everyday talk and social typification, that the next chapter turns.

Chapter 3: Market women, housework, and the knots of trade

We were sitting in the quiet of the living room. The steel blinds were shuttered, two male lodgers were sleeping on the single mattresses against one wall, and Aïsha and I were gazing at the television which was projecting a Turkish soap opera dubbed in Moroccan darija. Two months into her break from a grueling job as a housekeeper, while she recovered from some mysterious pains in her back and joints, the afternoons were becoming as drawn out and repetitive as the telenovelas rebroadcast thrice daily. Aïsha was in the middle of giving me her own esoteric ‘voice over’ of the unfolding scenario when a woman’s voice rang through the open window of the kitchen. “Aïïïsha, . . . *Doo niew jaayi ma?! Aren’t you gonna come sell to me?*” The familiarity of address, and the caller’s correct identification of our 3rd story window, suggested it was a woman from the immediate neighborhood. Otherwise, the caller would have relied on an intermediary (usually one of the women who sold on the street corner opposite our building) to ring the buzzer, or run up ahead and forge a more proper introduction. This was Safi — Safiatou Mbengue — a petite, vivacious woman in her late 30s who lived at the end of the apartment row, in a shared four-bedroom unit. I knew her because she had come around the previous week with a suitcase full of tailored dresses and handbags to show us. This was her *commerce*, imported women’s apparel sent to her by her cousin, who was a tailor in Senegal, to re-sell in Casablanca. Occasionally she also travelled to Marrakesh or Agadir, and had a large client base. The dresses she had shown to us the previous week were indeed lovely — made with shiny synthetics, silks, and sheer materials that were highly fashionable, rather than the common bloc printed wax fabric that was more readily found in the local market. But at 200 dirhams (~\$20USD), and even at the bargained price of 140 dirhams, they had not been within Aïsha’s

means. Safi sold most of her garments on medium-term credit (3-6 months), and her handbags slightly longer (4-8 months) depending on the degree of intimacy with the client. The majority of women in the neighborhood, who were her main clientele, had very limited disposable income. But their jobs as housekeepers and nannies made them a relatively secure site of lending and credit. (They were not likely to disappear, and their monthly expenses were fixed since room and board was often with their employers.) Safi's entrepreneurship, moreover, benefitted from the backing of her cousin's already well-established *couture* shop in Dakar, and two elder brothers living in France who contributed steadily to her expanding operation.

Aïsha had no such backing. She was a rare example among my interlocutors who had financed her own travel almost entirely. Further, she had lost an entire year's worth of saved wages in an attempt to launch an import-export scheme much like Safi's, but her sisters-in-law at home in Dakar had "eaten" the funds, leaving her to start over. Now, 4 years on and having had to withdraw from domestic work because of physical ailments, she was trying to scrape by selling a small array of Senegalese cooking staples out of her home. Being relatively immobilized, in a third-floor apartment in the middle of a vast apartment block, she was not ideally positioned to "move" her product ("*doxal yëf yi*"), but relied on personal contacts, particularly from the neighborhood Dahira at which she was a regular attendee.

That Safi had called up to her from the street put Aïsha in a huff. Beyond the disrespect it conveyed, it meant that Safi was only looking for a small item or two, and couldn't be bothered to climb the stairs. Plus now Aïsha would be forced to send one of her children running down to collect the money, or else be pressured into accepting to sell to Safi on credit. Spotting her finally in the window, Safi called up to her: "Aïsha, sa *geccax bi ñaata la?* How much is your smoke-dried fish?" "I have bags at 10 dirhams and bags at 20 dirhams" Aïsha replied. Safi

feigned shock and exclaimed “Heuhh! Won’t you sell me at 5 dirhams, Mère? No one around here can buy at those prices! Just halve one of your bundles!” Aïsha’s face dropped, and she began to protest. Safi pleaded some more, and started to walk away, until after a minute Aïsha yelled down, “Ok now, wait a minute, wait a minute.” She turned back into the kitchen, grumbling audibly. She rummaged through her tray and pulled out the 10 dirham sacs of dried fish, looking for one that looked like it could be even slightly smaller than the others. Finally she selected one, and tossed it down to Safi, who thanked her, and said she’d be round later to pay her as she walked away.

I asked Aisha why she hadn’t divided a 10 dirham bag in half, as Safi had proposed, and she replied, heavily:

We, I mean us migrants (*nun, manaam immigrées yi*), we act like because we are in a different country, away from home, like there are no more standards, anything goes. Imagine if I had given her that little bag, hardly a whole piece of *geccaax* in it, all bones and scrappy pieces. You can’t season a *thiéb* [traditional spiced rice dish] with that! Imagine what they would say. In Senegal you don’t even sell those bits, you give them away. Who would I be if I sold them, and for five dirhams! I might as well stick out my hand and beg [*yelwaan*]. *Thieuuppp*. Safi, *dafa may khéep*, she underestimates me. She thinks: that one, she has no self-respect [*ñaq fulla ak fayda*]. She is the one without any self respect [*ñaq fayda*]! Sell her those little scraps... like some kind of scoundrel, like a beggar! Should one lose one’s dignity?! Anyway, *ëllég, Yalla la*. Tomorrow is Allah — it’s in Allah’s hands. We must move our market [*doxal sunu marsé*], sit and trust in God.”

The previous chapter examined the polyvalent meanings of “sitting,” suggesting that rather than a neutral condition, it is one that seats morally valenced ideas about gendered productivity and presence, moral dispositions, and capacities for action in the world. Becoming a “sitter” in Morocco was not simply a matter of relinquishing the pursuit of onward physical migration. It entailed establishing oneself within a field of relative (im)mobility, and to embody the moral attributes and availabilities which rendered one’s sitting legitimate. As constituent nodes of “moving market,” women worked to reproduce conditions that were propitious to exchange,

drawing together different elements, forms of circulation and accumulation, to render themselves as both financially and socially solvent “sitters.” Here, Aïsha’s strong words for Safi highlights the ambivalence and uncertainty in these efforts, and the vulnerability to others’ “underestimation” (*khépp*) of them that continuously threatened to turn one’s dignified resolve into a sign of abject sitting — *toog rekk*.

Sitting entailed a mode of somatic attention and bodily posture requiring fortitude, patience, and “self-respect.” Tied to culturally specific ideas that link restrained mobility to the ability to cultivate dependents and guard moral and physical thresholds (Irvine 1991), dignified “sitting” engenders the powers of spatiotemporal self-extension attributed to Big Women and Men, as agents in “moving market.” Meanwhile Aïsha’s shame at being beckoned from below, of being abased and reduced to a relation of mutual, antagonistic exploitation with a woman she deemed her junior, reveals the material and moral stakes of “sitting.” *Toog rekk*, abject sitting, is not the consequence of simply “staying home” and never traveling, but rather, of failing to draw in sufficient, and sufficiently diversified, lines of support into oneself. This chapter builds on and extends the discussion of “sitting” and “staying put,” understood not as a measure of physical mobility, but as a *form* requiring social acknowledgment, and a *process* of becoming recognized as legitimately emplaced or established. Women’s designation as fixed nodes of trade and credit in Hay Hassani made market trade a viable possibility for men’s short-term accumulation and circular and aleatory mobilities of different kinds. The ethnography that follows thus traces the myriad strategies through which women worked to produce and keep themselves “in place.”

The background work of “moving market” included performing conversions and (dis)connections from other networks and forms labor, including waged domestic work, other service sector jobs, land-lording, and of course the myriad unremunerated forms of household

tasks and obligations that women took on in the apartments that they managed. By injecting new and diverse sources of cash, credit, and commodities, acquired through access to waged work and familial networks, many of these women have been able to make the market a site of modest but regular gains, not just for themselves but for a wide range of other actors. As we will see, these women attempt to exert power through their control over the timings, scales, and ranges of circulations of people and things. These forms of “mastery over transformative processes” at the interstices of different forms of work and accumulation reflect what Guyer (2004, 36) has asserted is fundamental to how people in Africa have historically managed economic volatility. However, while many township women have been able to turn conditions of uncertainty to their productive advantage, for others the imperative of flexibility, improvisation and perpetual re-tooling could easily devolve into situations of perpetual deficit and losses at each interval.

Anthropological studies of market actors and subjectivities and the contingent historical processes of market formation have demonstrated how markets emerge through a process of “framing” (Callon 1998), which “attempts, impossibly, to conceptually disentangle ‘the market’ from non-market ‘externalities’ and certain non-capitalist socialities, while internalizing or naturalizing others” (Lu n.d., 24; cf Ho 2008; Appel 2012; Zaloom 2006). Recent anthropological work, such as the feminist anthropology manifesto “Gens,” contends that under capitalist relations, value is generated by “marshaling and mobilizing non-capitalist social relations and domains, ranging from the non-compensated realms of kin labor to environmental extraction” (Lu n.d., 24). Adding to this, from the important historical and ethnographic work on African urban economies, we know that colonial and post-colonial domination worked through the management of the borders between formal and informal, market and non-market, productive and reproductive space. Anthropologists have often remarked that protagonists of the “informal

economy” confound these conceptual boundaries, evading both sociological classification as well as the predations of the state (Clark 1988). Taking up and complicating the idea of “framing,” “knotting” in Senegalese idiom captures iterative processes of connection and disconnection across culturally marked spheres and scales of activity, particularly linked to the notion of provisioning (Saxer 2019). Picking up threads from the previous chapter’s discussion of intra-Saharan economies, where we noted that stocking, storage, and provisioning were key forms through which remotely connected intra-Saharan markets have historically sustained viability, how might a logic of provisioning help us describe township residents’ strategies for making themselves nodes (or “knots”) of credit, accumulation, multi-lateral remittance, and investment? For my interlocutors, provisioning was a key concern tying together approaches to trade, waged labor, and house-holding, as well as to multi-national networks of kin support. By examining these knots of trade, the work profiles rendered here present a picture of viability — economic, social, existential — as something that might be strengthened [*dëggeral*] or loosened and frayed.

Important conceptual and ethnographic work by urbanist ethnographers such as AbdouMaliq Simone, Filip de Boeck and others has sought to intervene in accounts that render urban African markets either as archaic vestiges of pre-capitalist economies destined to wither away, or as symptoms of underdevelopment. Without pathologizing informality as a devolution of the labor process, Simone’s writing, for example, aims to represent African “ways of working” that can redeem African cities not only as “worlded” in their own right, but also as terrains of creativity and self-making. The relations that compose these urban terrains are the products of long histories of interaction, from colonial era dispossession and labor migration to apartheid-era disciplining of mobility and property ownership; at the same time, they are also the

product of spontaneous and improvisatory collaborations, often without view toward long-term association. The concept of “people as infrastructure” describes collaborative relations that are the outcome of haphazard or logical improvisations demanded by the everyday under conditions of economic volatility, and those classes of temporary, “informal,” “menial” and reproductive work routinely devalued along the axes of labor’s feminization and racialization under global capital. Thus, in a sense, Simone offers a sociology of reproductive labor in a context where these take place in the public sphere, and are to a high degree the activities of young, migrant men.

Yet, the sensitivity of these ethnographies notwithstanding, they have tended to limit their gaze to “provisional intersections” at the point of exchange, ie in the marketplace. In so doing, they can miss the ways in which improvisatory collaborations, connections, conversions and calculated disconnections, arise out of and unfold across fields of ongoing interaction that extend beyond the public sphere into households and domestic spaces. Though cast as dubiously productive “sitters” in the market, women’s often quite busy transformations between different sites, forms, and scales of exchange were vital to maintaining the market as a propitious site for trade for the majority of young men. By attending to the kinds of transformative processes that go into making peripheral market spaces like Hay Hassani viable, I aim to complicate contemporary urban scholarship by demonstrating the work performed by women that recursively links “market” and “non-market” spaces in particular ways, through a calibration of tying into and untying dependencies of different kinds.

Scholars of the political economy of migration, long sharing the bias of migration as a principally male activity, have long viewed the participation and activities of women as indicators of different “stages” of integration in the “migration process” (Werbner 2015). Not

only do such studies ignore the longer historical reality of women's migration across the continent, they rely on masculine modes of migration as the norm from which women's activities either conform or differ. For early scholars of migration and urbanization in African contexts, the presence of women migrants was recognized as both longstanding, and elemental to the "stabilization" of migrant male populations and the reproduction of the most prominent and successful ethnicity-based trade diasporas (Cohen 2013 [1969]; Hill 1966; White 2009 [1991]). Early functionalist analyses, such as Abner Cohen's study of Hausa migrants in a Yoruba town, had the insight of noting that while mobile women contributed to the reproduction of the male migrant population, it was not necessarily as forces of sedentarization and inertia. It was rather the *reversibility* of women's statuses as 'wives' and 'prostitutes' that rendered them valuable to stabilization at the level of the community. This insight resonates with my observations in the townships in Casablanca, where despite being cast as "sitters" and permanent denizens of the local informal trade economy, it was women's ability to move back and forth between different sources of earning and reputation building that made conditions of earning possibility for the Senegalese migrant community at large. "Sitting" largely masked a tremendous effort to stay aloft across multiple unstable and impermanent forms of work. Not only was there no consistent order of "progression" to women's economic projects (such as: domestic labor —> trade —> landlording) but rather, it was their readiness to move back and forth across these different forms of work and accumulation that rendered them as reputable and able to 'hold place' [*toog*] in the market. By describing some of their work biographies and strategies for managing these transitions, I aim to distinguish a distinctly gendered form of labor mobility whose dynamic is not adequately captured through existing sociological "stages" of migration, nor through political frameworks of "sedentarization" and "de-mobilization."

The present ethnography proceeds in three parts, each focusing on a different locus of knotting or conversion. First we examine how women prepared for and executed transitions between market trading, waged domestic work, and house-holding, looking at the central role of provisioning in how women approached accumulation and the imperative of securing outside investment. Second, we look at marketplace credit relations and the framing of credit in topological figures of “tying up” and “untying” money, idioms that served to differentiate gendered and spatial (household versus market) approaches to conversion, dependency, and collaborative action. Thirdly, we examine house-holding itself as an ambivalent site of autonomy and accumulation for women. My interlocutors used house-holding to stabilize their earning potentials across transitions, and to mitigate losses across intervals of joblessness. Yet becoming a householder enfolded women into various expectations, obligations, and regimes of hyper-visibility pertaining to the public role of the “Dahira mother,” which worked to inhibit productivity and accumulation, particularly for new householders. By attending to the competing frames of personal and collective interest that converged within households, and how they might scaffold or undermine women’s projects, sheds light on the spectrum of compositional and accumulative forms that “sitting” in the township could entail. From here, we will be in a position to appreciate the losses to which women were exposed, and the risk, parallel to those of young men, of becoming “stuck in circulation” or relegated to a state of abject sitting, in which value fails to accrue.

I. Market kinesthesia

Let us return to the concept of “moving market” by which we introduced in the previous chapter. The Senegalese Wolof-French hybrid term *marsé* is a mobile one. Like the English

term, it refers to both a physical space and a metaphorical one. It also designates an array of relations that bind people together, as buyers and sellers as well as creditors, wholesalers, lenders, and borrowers. Asking “*naka marsé bi?*” — how’s the market? — is commonly woven into the litany of queries about the state of relations which define Wolof etiquette. The answer might be “*Marsé анги дох,*” the market is moving,⁴⁰ or “*Marsé bi dafa wow kong,*” the market is dried up. “*Marsé*” cannot be reduced to a site of exchange, but rather, as a kinesthetic concept for the sum of productive social relations; it is exchange and its movements together.

Young men turned up in Hay Hassani often after failed attempts at illegal crossings into Europe, and spoke of the market as a stop-gap measure within the quest for money with which to resume their journeys. Most envisioned their time in the market to be limited, and rather than growing a substantive presence in the market and building up a reputation, they were endeavoring to “*lijjenti xaaalis*” — to hustle or “untie” cash from its various social nestings. They described this work as “doing business” and seeking “quick money” [*taf-taf*] which encompassed both short-term work engagements and borrowing from friends, relatives and acquaintances. In contrast with the Senegalese market in the Medina, Hay Hassani offered many advantages, not least of which was the ability to bypass some of the more burdensome social and material costs of affiliation with the established Murid brotherhood networks, such as tithes and job hierarchies. The low cost of entry was another important factor: it was said that an individual trader could feasibly begin trading with a couple cellphones, or a half dozen watches, or even a single box of assorted jewelry, which could be had for between 300-500 dirhams (~30-50 USD). Whereas support networks based on ethnicity, region, or religious affiliation have historically been taken

⁴⁰ This phrase includes a kind of pun, as “marsé” in Wolof is pronounced the same as marcher [to walk], so the phrase sounds like “walking is walking,” similar in affect to the standard response to the question “how/where are you?”, “ñungi fi,” [we are here].

to be the basis of migrant livelihood and market vitality in many urban contexts, the young men who sought out place in peripheral markets like Hay Hassani worked to avoid overly constrictive associations and demands of longterm engagement. As White observed in her study of colonial Nairobi, migrant men's desire to free themselves from dependence on other men for certain types of material resources and information created the chance for township women to carve out niche opportunities for themselves, folding many different kinds of services into their work. Making conditions conducive to men's modes of short-term accumulation and continued circulation was the principle of moving market in the township. Women's ability to foster such an environment depended on the positions they maintained within multi-lateral networks of outside resources, investment, and redistribution, including their ability to straddle different forms of work.

Take Mère Astou, a long-time market denizen of some considerable notoriety, whom we met briefly in chapter 1. She worked for a French-Moroccan family 5 days a week, and on Mondays and Fridays, her days off, tended to a table of Senegalese food products which she alternated between Hay Hassani and the corner of her residential block in the adjacent township. Two of her three adult sons assisted her in her business, as cargo transporters and managers of a Moroccan imports boutique she was trying to launch in Dakar. "Mère" to the many young men in the neighborhood who were acquaintances of her own sons, Astou's motherly and authoritative stature made her a hub of activity in the neighborhood where she became a point of contact for lodgers in need of an apartment, a new job, or used items or services for sale, not to mention a hub of neighborhood gossip. She also received occasional cash remittances from two of the brothers of her deceased husband who resided in France, and her paternal cousin was a trader in Istanbul who occasionally sent her merchandise for resale. When she first traveled to Morocco as a newly widowed woman, she could rely on her late husbands' kinsmen for

assistance and the maintenance to which she was entitled, but over time, this support began to taper as her affines were “no longer moved by [her] suffering.” Launching herself into market trading was a way to show that she was “really trying,” and to coax them into renewed investment in her projects and wellbeing. Her situation was representative of many women in the township, who found themselves in the cross-hairs of multiple, multi-directional channels of material resources and support. Keeping the right channels active and open was an essential component of women’s labor, what Julie Elyachar conceptualizes as the “phatic labor” of social infrastructure and the maintenance of communicative channels (Elyachar 2013). At the same time, changing domains of work — from waged domestic work to trade to land lording (and back) — could *itself* be a means of revitalizing or propping open those channels of affection and support.

Profit in small-scale retail or peddling in market settings across urban Africa is often related to the ability of traders to bring together goods and services into unlikely or uncommon combinations, to “coagulate” diverse marginal sources of earning and potential (Hill 1969; Guyer 2004). What is therefore surprising about trade in Hay Hassani, particularly given the market’s relatively small size and the constant of talk of ‘saturation’ (*marsé bu fott*), is the homogeneity of products and retail suppliers engaged by Senegalese. For traders in Hay Hassani, *marsé* involved primarily small volume retail of a limited range of specialty commodities (skin whitening products, massage creams, inexpensive plated jewelry and sometimes “African”/Rastafarian colored beads, sunglasses) and services, including hair braiding and false eyelash and nail placement, and for men, ambulant cellphone and digital watch repair. Traders furnished their wares either from one of two Chinese wholesale markets on the North-west of the city, or directly from women merchants themselves, who imported and stored Senegal-originating

manufactured goods like wax fabric, food stuffs, and beaded jewelry. Many women used their spare rooms as storage for more these more established merchants (from whom they could glean ‘interest’ in the form of merchandise), while others received parcels of goods for resale from kin in Europe or elsewhere.

Women and men traders worked adjacent to one another, often colluding on the logistics of business while differentiating their wares only in matters of display. But even this was streamlined. Along the strip that made up “Little Senegal,” merchants displayed their merchandise on bright red table cloths which had become the ‘*marque*’ (brand) of the ‘Africans’ in the market. Trade was somewhat specialized by gender, with men peddling used cellphones and thumb drives with bootlegged movies, and women dealing in cheaper goods like jewelry and beauty products. Men were also sometimes able to market their ‘security’ services to local shopkeepers (usually in exchange for access to sidewalk trading space) and some women diversified by selling prepared food or hibiscus juice to other traders. However, commodities for sale did not seem to be chosen with a particular attention to what items were “moving,” and only with rare exception did new products enter the line. Importantly, rather than attempting to expand or monopolize in one marketplace, a trader’s expansion nearly always occurred as an expansion *across* space to new physical trade locations — such as Mère Astou’s satellite enterprise on her apartment block — with each expansion incorporating new business collaborators, clients, or apprentices. The cumulate effect was a market that seemed, on its surface, to be stagnant or “merely sitting” — *toog rekk* — but this masked myriad underlying processes of busy transformation.

By contrast with men’s short-term goals, women viewed the market as a safety valve on overstretched dependence on kin networks, and particularly, the strenuous conditions of

domestic service labor in Moroccan households. Whether bonded, contractual, or informal, domestic service was a typical first point of entry for women into the labor market in Morocco. “It doesn’t matter who you are,” Yasmine, a prepared food vendor, told me, “everyone starts out the same place. A family takes you, you work like a slave [*jamm*] for a year, two years. If you’re lucky you save some money and you can try your hand at other things. It’s how we all started out.” Women turned to trade as offering greater potential for earning than most domestic service jobs, which on average paid between 1200-2000dh (\$100-190USD) per month, sometimes with additional withholdings for lodging, and could entail backbreaking and isolating conditions. Seasoned workers advised newcomers to accept only those domestic service jobs that permitted at least one day off per week, not only for the purposes of rest and recuperation, but also to avoid the most extreme shades of abuse, about which many sobering stories abounded.

The ability to supplement earnings through market trade was considered essential to subsisting as an uncoupled woman in Casablanca. I once sat with Khadija, a Senegalese resident of Riad al Oulmès of 6 years, in the lobby of a placement agency for domestic workers, listening to the seasoned *mbindaan*⁴¹ speak over the Moroccan agency secretary who was addressing the room in French. Khadija spoke loudly in Wolof, coaching the other Senegalese applicants as they walked into their interviews, telling them that they should refuse any position in which they were not offered at least one night off a week: an absolute necessity unless you wanted to be “taken like a slave [*jamm*].” She advised,

Fokk nga am xhel, you must be clever. You must say that you have a husband who needs tending to, needs to be fed, and so you must have this-or-that day off. If they think you have a husband, they will give you time [off], otherwise you will be working every minute. In truth, your *table* is your husband. It’s your table that will be most useful to

⁴¹ The *mbindaan* is a figure of bonded domestic service that indexes the history of trans-Saharan slave trade and exchange in women for political alliance. The word *mbind* [written] refers to the written contract, and more broadly to the history of Arab-Islamic cultural hegemony in West African Sahel (cf Lydon 2009; El Hamel 2015).

you [*am njariñ*] — you’ll drink and eat to your fill on it [by it]. Your table will give you [*jox le*] your *dépaas*.

Khadija’s statement reflects three facets of “provisioning,” and its centrality in how women approached their work. Provisioning, according to Saxer (2019), is tied to a notion of preparedness and circumspection, as well as a notion of stipulation by law. Khadija demonstrates the reflexive self-positioning of migrant women like herself as ostensibly taking advantage of their locations on the margins of normative domesticity to earn an independent income, and the need to safeguard against the exploitation to which that position exposed them. Her entreaty to her fellow work-candidates acknowledges the absence of general legal provisions that would adequately protect their labor, and thus the need to establish protections within the terms of contract. Her evocation of *dépaas*, meanwhile, speaks to a third sense of provision; namely that of supply. Evoking *dépaas*, the daily household allowance usually given by husbands to their wives, in a context of mostly uncoupled women migrants, Khadija’s comment reveals an important distinction in the way that earning, accumulation, and subsistence were locally conceptualized. Market trade is not an uncommon activity for married women in Senegal. Wives’ earnings from market work are kept separate from their husbands, what she earns in trade being used for personal and household expenses. Husbands, meanwhile, are responsible for providing a daily household allowance [*dépaas*]. By calling trade-earnings *dépaas*, not as supplement to but as a precondition of independent accumulation, Khadija re-situates trade from supplementary income to primary means of household reproduction.⁴² While on the one hand a reminder of the absence of formal legal protections that left migrant women exposed to exploitation, Khadija’s insight is to point out that it is not necessarily the nature (place, type,

⁴²Thus when women sometimes decried that they “have not made anything,” even on a day when they have made successful sales, it may be understood that they do not consider income that goes directly back into daily consumption expenses to be “income” (Garcia 1991).

duration, etc) of the work, but how resources are earmarked (Zelizer 1996; 1999) and claimed by different relations that determines, beyond mere economic assessment, the ‘viability’ of livelihood in a given context.

II. Fashioning entries and exits: Mbarka’s Apartment

One day in late May, I was visiting a friend in the apartment she managed on the south side of Riad al Oulmès. Mbarka shared her relatively large 3 bedroom apartment with a rotation of male tenants — up to 10 at a time — so I was well used to the clamor and crowding. But on this particular occasion, the house felt downright suffocating. Invited into Mbarka’s room, which was usually kept orderly and spare, a tower of suitcases nearly bursting at their seams had been stacked one atop the other against the walls and the foot of the mattress, giving the small room the airless feeling of a bunker. I learned that she had three new roommates staying with her — ‘sisters’ who had each been working as live-in housecleaners, but had recently quit in order to try their hands in trade for the summer months. Mbarka and these other women all relied on multiple forms of earning to sustain themselves. Certain times of year, especially the month of Ramadan, were seen as particularly onerous to be in domestic work, and many women strategized about how to leave their positions in advance of the holidays when they would be expected to help host and prepare all day long while fasting. On the other hand, the long rainy winter months were highly importune for trade; not only were fewer people likely to be lingering in the market, but since many construction jobs (on which some men often relied as secondary earning possibilities) had to halt their operations, the market could become even more overcrowded with vendors. Seeking recourse to low-paying but predictable waged work during these months was a common strategy, even though job placement was not always possible immediately and one

could be forced to sit idle for weeks or months before a position could be found. While flexibly straddling different work forms was essentially to becoming properly ‘emplaced’ in the township, transitions themselves required planning, preparation, and no small amount of good luck.

None of the women in Mbarka’s apartment had any prior relationship to one another before coming to Morocco, but by chance came to share lodging during a previous interval of transition between jobs. Their contrasting migration and work backgrounds help to illustrate how individual biographies, family networks, and migration histories shape individuals’ capacities to navigate entries and exits into the market. Looking at women’s recursive efforts to tie in to different familial resource networks, we examine the predicament of connectivity and emplacement through the lens of provisioning.

Aadama (53, Dakar) From a lower-middle class family of taxi drivers in Dakar, she had an aunt married to a trader in Italy who sent Aadama parcels meted off of the bulk shipments of West African foodstuffs she received at her dwelling in Milan. Aadama also received occasional cash remittances from another uncle in France, as well as from an elder brother in Belgium, but most of that money was re-bundled into her own cash remittances sent to Senegal, where her dependent mother was raising two of her four young children. Aadama came to Morocco on a contract of 1 year as housemaid for a wealthy doctor, and traveled across the country staying in hotels as the children’s minder. Since then, she had worked intermittently in different housecleaning jobs, and managed to save a considerable sum, which she used to seed a small export business. During Ramadan and Mawlid she traveled to Fès to trade in proximity to the zawiya of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani, and profit from the steady flow of pilgrims to the shrine. Upon departing she would buy stock of djellabas, babouches, and leather goods which she could send

back to Senegal, and in turn her uncle and brother-in-law who handled the merchandise would send her Senegalese fabrics, jewelry, and skin- and hair-care products to re-sell among the migrant community in Casablanca. Between the holiday markets and the summer uptick, she had managed to do well for herself that year. More important than trade itself, she said, she became a prominent and well-respected creditor in the market by convening multiple rotary credit systems (*nattu yi*). At the time I met her, she was staying with Mbarka in preparation for moving into a bigger apartment where she could take in more lodgers and also store a growing inventory. However, by the time I left Morocco a year later, her family had fallen on hard times and failed to return to her the profits from a large shipment of merchandise she had sent to them. Additionally, a medical concern of her own had forced her to stop working as a housecleaner, and costs of medication and treatment had depleted her savings. She was trying to build up a new venture with some other women in Hay Hassani, but, impeded from going to market regularly, she felt sidelined from the project.

Nafi (49, from Kafoutine, Casamance region) had held a string of domestic jobs, but had trouble keeping them because of what she confessed was her somewhat querulous nature (“*Dama gawa tang*” — hot-tempered). The fourth of seven siblings to emigrate abroad, she had one brother in southern Morocco who was also trying to make it in trade and, being well connected within the *Thiantacoune* Sufi Dahira, routinely handled large volumes of imports, out of which he sometimes supplied her small parcels. She had lived in an apartment with another woman and the woman’s husband, along with four to five other migrant men. Between jobs, she supported herself by nannying other migrants’ children and preparing *bissap* juice and frozen *bouye* which she sold out of a rolling cooler in the market. Nafi tried three years in a row to break into a more established trade in Hay Hassani, working in partnership with another woman

setting false nails and braiding hair extensions. But after two seasons of modest yield she had made a number of missteps. She cited leaving a particularly well paying nannying job over the winter as her “*grosse erreur*” — big mistake — a period in which she suffered severe losses and was then required to take increasingly large loans from neighbors in order to cover basic expenses. The following summer (at the same time that I met her in Mbarka’s apartment) she had been intent to receive a package from her family in Senegal — an array of hair extensions and cloth — and had been hopeful that it would help spur a new business venture. Unfortunately, her transporter had mistakenly handed off her package to another client who was bound for Agadir, in Southern Morocco. The mixup set her back months, and she’d returned to domestic work through Ramadan, doing her best to ignore family members’ insistent demands for repayment until she had saved enough to try again. But her “hardness” toward her relations cost her, and by the next spring, she struggled to secure another shipment of merchandise from them. Her aunts living in Dakar also refused to take on loans on her behalf, and she once again found herself cycling between short-term nannying and housecleaning jobs and abortive stints of hair-braiding, on the occasions when she could find other women to loan her supplies.

Marie (37, Dakar) was from Point E, a middle class neighborhood in central Dakar. She held a high-school diploma, and a certificate in hotel sciences from a trade school in Thiès, Senegal. She had managed to get a position as a maid in a large hotel in Casablanca, but lost that job following on a conflict with the junior manager and the coterie of younger Moroccan maids she’d worked alongside. By subletting space in her apartment to lodgers, she was able to subsist for four months without work, after which time she got another job as a live-out nanny. She continued subletting and had managed to amass enough savings that she could begin trading in Hay Hassani, first in the evenings and on Sunday, her day off. She started out with a small

inventory of jewelry, beauty products, and hair extensions, which she slowly built upon to include watches, sunglasses, and plaited jewelry from the Chinese wholesalers in Derb Sultan, on the north side of the city. As her enterprise grew, she appealed to relatives living in France and Turkey to divert remittances otherwise intended for Senegal into “investments” in her project, with the promise that her increased earnings would enable her in turn to send more to the family. She apparently made a compelling case. At the time I met her, she was receiving cash remittances from four different relatives (three in different locations in Europe), and making regular remittances of her own to three main kin units in Senegal— her mother’s home in Point E, Dakar; the wife of her late paternal uncle living in Touba with her children; and her indigent aunt, for whom she had special fondness, living in Lac Rose. As a node of transnational remittances, Marie’s regular access to cash and specialized commodities made her a sought after connection among other traders in the market. She had backed the ventures of numerous new traders, and through them continued to diversify her merchandise. After the summer months, she returned to a new office-cleaning position, but this time only four days per week. She envisioned continuing in this manner until eventually she could stop domestic work altogether.

Mbarka (55) herself was from a popular neighborhood in Dakar called Grand Yoff. She was one of the few women I knew in the neighborhood who had migrated to Morocco with her husband, an electrician and metallurgist by training who had become a petty trader once in Morocco. One year after their installation in Casablanca, her husband made a successful crossing to Italy by way of Libya, and she remained in charge of their shared apartment as well as his modestly growing trade operations, which she maintained alongside a live-in nannying job in which she had one day off per week. Through her primary role as a householder and landlord to a steady flow of lodgers, she became well-known as a point of contact for new arrivals, and a

reliable “seeder” of men’s short-term market ventures. She used the income generated by selling food staples out of her apartment to support herself and only entered the market in person when she wanted to. Much of the time, she relied on others to sell on her behalf at a small commission. She opened up her own private room in the shared apartment to other women for storing merchandise and short-term residence, for a nominal fee.

These brief sketches illustrate some of the ways women operated by straddling multiple livelihood strategies and modes of earning. Across their career paths, they blend the edges of different forms of accumulation, redistribution, and credit, converting these into new planes of economic possibility. They used their access to a wage, ability to wield credit and dispense other important services (including lodging and storage) to help secure their ongoing access to market space and connections across periods of absence from the market. Being engaged only part-time in trade did not necessarily prevent them from establishing a meaningful presence as market traders. But prolonged absence without the “right” kinds of relations could render it difficult to mobilize resources and tie back into market trade in moments of need.

The above profiles all underline the importance of various factors, including familial involvement and material support, personal charisma and individual dispositions, and an element of good luck, in women’s abilities to draw in provisions that enabled them to weather transitions. For some, routine exposure to losses at each interval could disastrously jeopardize their projects. Operating at a deficit was sustainable only so long as one maintained sufficient and sufficiently diverse portfolios of ties to sources of provisioning. The above profiles all show that even when women *did* have help from family abroad, and were able to generate gains through domestic service and trade, they still had to actively work to advertise themselves as savvy and reliable nodes in a multi-lateral and multi-scalar remittance economy of support and investments. The

importance of the dimension of social recognition to this process, not just locally but from family in Senegal and abroad as well, is underscored most strikingly by Nafi, for whom that recognition is revealed to be fragile and easily withdrawn.

Noteworthy is the place of provisioning in the form of remitted cash and foreign commodities in these women's operations. In Senegal, a significant proportion of the national economy continues to be fed by foreign migrant remittances, a fact which, as other scholars have noted, places a new premium on cash as a measure of social potency (Buggenhagen 2007, 2011; Gaibazzi 2014; Melly 2017; Coe 2017. For another context, Chu 2015). Emigration is widely viewed as a means of exiting (or tempering) dependencies and producing some autonomy as a solvent earner and household head. Through re-investment in things like house construction (Melly 2011) and domestic life-cycle rituals in Senegal (Buggenhagen 2007; Ivy 2010; Kane 2011), migrants establish new modes of presence and claims to (future) inclusion in the family and the nation. As 'permanent' migrants in Morocco, however, many of my informants were not only senders of remittances; they also continued to *rely* on external remittances in cash and commodities sent to them from abroad (of kin in Europe or the US), even as they were themselves relied upon by family members at home. Positioned simultaneously as earners and dependents, investors and 'investments,' the goal was less to amass resources than to ensure that the greatest number of transfers continued to pass through their hands. Their ability to wield many different kinds of external connections and channels (with families and relations in Europe, in Senegal, and locally) was vital not just to their personal subsistence in Morocco — though given the low wages, high rent, and volatility of market trade, this was more often than not the case. Access to outside investment in cash and commodities also set them apart, bolstering the legitimacy of their work and their presence as uncoupled women. New gradations of power and

prestige among them and within the market were tied to the strengths of different foreign currencies and commodities from relatives abroad that they were able to channel into local circulation.

Mobilizing the support of kin abroad meant stirring sympathies and moving affections, or performing proofs that one was “really trying.” Martin Saxer’s etymological and conceptual discussion of “provisioning” again helpfully illustrates the performative nature of provisioning in the making and unmaking of remoteness and connectivity. Like with the “enigma” of the oasis economy, sketched in the previous chapter, the “nexus of remoteness and connectivity” conjured by Saxer speaks to the way that the perennial need for stocking, storage, and provisioning shapes relations and ideas of viability in particular milieux, where the instability of the nexus compels recursive efforts of tying and re-tying connections to various outsides. For instance, in his fieldwork in the remote Pamirs, borderlands between Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan, a newly constructed highway could sever former historical trade networks, inducing remoteness as an experience of disconnection; at the same time, a new influx of goods along the new route serve as a material and symbolic evidence of a “special connection” to a new power (Moscow), which is in turn “rhetorically and morally justified by the region’s continuing remoteness” (Saxer 2019, 193). For my interlocutors, the question of women’s “remoteness” — from better-known centers of Senegalese enterprise, and their distance from domestic kin — worked in ambivalent ways toward supporting their efforts to secure an ongoing supply. Some were able to draw in investments by fashioning themselves as savvy and bold pioneers of a ‘frontier’ market, emphasizing the opportunity it presented for better established migrant kin abroad to expand *their* projects *through* her local expertise and connections. Thus, for women like Marie, and Mère Astou, the very act of launching into a trade venture in Hay Hassani was a

way of showing that she was “really trying,” seizing on a risky opportunity with potentially great rewards. The move itself could be evidence enough to convince outsiders to invest. Women’s remoteness from domestic affairs of the family compound in Senegal could also make them appear compelling, as more neutral and capable re-distributors of remittances. Thus, Marie attempted to produce herself as a competent mediator who would not only judiciously re-distribute remittances that passed through her, but generate interest in the process.

On the other hand, for others, market trade was used as a means of *loosening* family demands for remittance from them, establishing some slack in one area so as to be able to accommodate tying in new dependents in another area. As in Aadama’s case, the sudden end of provisions from one source could restore a feeling of remoteness or abandonment (what was evoked in the first chapter as a sense of moral divestment, of family having “exited the self”). For Saxer, the ‘return of remoteness’ in the aftermath of halted provisions might manifest locally in neglected infrastructure or low supplies. But it did not mean the end of connectivity: the renewed remoteness could also “[become] the context of a further shift in provisions and provisioning” (193). The return of ‘remoteness’ for a trader in Hay Hassani could materialize, for example, in one having to turn to locally sourced products such as plated jewelry and plastic watches purchased from Chinese wholesalers in Derb Sultan, items that were not only less profitable, but also signaled publicly to fellow traders that one lacked outside patrons or that interest in one’s business had been withdrawn. However, the end to one source of provisions from abroad did not mean the end of connectivity; indeed, it could spur a reorientation of one’s enterprise, as in Aadama’s case, where the appearance of overstretched solidarities pushed her to seek other channels to tie into locally.

As a mode of circumspect attention toward the current and future flow of supplies and support, provisioning shaped women's approaches to transitions into and between work forms. Preparing to leave domestic service and break into (*dugg si*) trade required planning and care, but even a gainful experience in market trade did not preclude one from returning to waged domestic work — sometimes even multiple times over the course of a year. Waged work gave women consistent access to cash, which they could draw on to sustain themselves over slow periods of trade. But hasty or impulsive moves and failure to make preparations were risky. One could end up moving back and forth without purpose or meaningful gain between positions, losing [*am perte*] at each stage. In Nafi's words, "*Sudée doo taxawal dangay perte rekk.*" [If you don't make preparations, you'll *lose-lose*.] Lack of provisions could lead one to become "stuck in circulation,"⁴³ moving back and forth between positions without value being able to accrue. This risk mirrored, in a certain way, the very thing for which young men were publicly reproached when they "squandered" their saved resources and returned endlessly to *mbëkk mi*, clandestine migration. Though women's absences from the market were less visible and drew far less public commentary than men's, anxieties about the timing and coordination of their entries and exits suggest a way in which "failed" or improper emplacement hung over their projects as well.

III. The Knots of Trade

Episodic entries and exits were described by women as means of preserving a degree of freedom from the confines of contracted domestic work. But market trade also entailed occasions to tether oneself through participation in denser systems of social interdependence, such as

⁴³ A figure which Gaibazzi (2015) uses to describe young men in the Gambia who move periodically from rural agriculture to the city to find money to finance either migratory projects or invest in rural agriculture.

collective rotating credit systems (*nattu*) and cooperatives (*mboataye*).⁴⁴ Mère Astou was the head of multiple rotating credit schemes, with various contribution levels and payout schedules.⁴⁵ Women described credit systems as effective means of “tying up” (*natt* translates to “tie,” “knot” or “bundling”) cash, as a means to promote savings and to reinforce more intangible claims to market presence. *Nattu yi* were used to generate funds for purchasing more merchandise at wholesale price, or for growing savings to be able to send heftier cash remittances and gifts around holiday times. The asynchronous nature of credit rotations, which varied from daily, to bi-weekly payouts and varying numbers of participants and contribution levels, allowed some women to enhance their positions within the market. In addition, *nattu* also facilitated the asymmetrical incorporation of (male) dependents. Though traditionally gender-segregated systems, men were extended a range of low-cost subsidiary credit options by individual *nattu* members. These subsidiary credits gave women an obvious advantage in sustaining their access to petty cash across slow periods of trade or gaps between waged work. Although a *nattu* owner usually preferred to have credit partners who could take responsibility for an entire share (*doxal khaj* — move a full share), when new traders came to the market in need of quick funds, she might designate one of her female colleagues to “deal” with the newcomer. What was important was that she could keep the *nattu* rotating. Thus, men could ‘buy in’ to a portion of a rotation (*khajju*), along with a female creditor-patron, thus allowing the latter control over more than her normally allotted single share, and the opportunity to collect other kinds of “interest” (in

⁴⁴ These ubiquitous institutions of Senegalese economic life were practiced under modified conditions in Hay Hassani. Firstly, where typically credit systems are gender segregated (and often also age-grade segregated — *Mboataye yi* are typically a women’s cooperative for the purpose of life-cycle rituals, and organized at an inter-household, neighborhood level under the purview of senior, married women), in Hay Hassani they were mixed.

⁴⁵ They entailed different logistical variations, from daily to bi-weekly payouts; each had between 5-12 participants, and culled contributions at each “turn” of between 50 dirhams (\$5 USD) and 1000 dirhams (\$100 USD). Individual payouts could take place from every third day to every week, and one paid out once per month. Most women I interviewed were involved in at least two (and as many as five) different *nattu* of variant payout lengths.

reciprocal services or favors) with her new dependent. The *nattu* owner thereby sticks to the allotted share and lets others work out their own “gain” through diverse kinds of arrangements with newcomers as they “tie in” and break off.

A similar logic seemed to inform cash advances (*al*) and inventory loans (*abal*): loans were generally fixed at the higher levels, but could be taken on by multiple subsidiaries. These fixed yet flexible sums and quantities were but one example of how women traders made themselves masters of transformative processes, structuring credit systems so that many actors could each have the space and means to harness their own portfolio of dependents of varying degrees and types. The most important factor was the continual movement of goods and credits, with small regular gains at each transaction (Guyer 2004), and the effort to ensure that the greatest number of transactions pass through one’s hands.

While credit and loan schemes enabled a low bar of entry that was well suited to the needs of short-term traders, this is not to suggest that such mechanisms were egalitarian or altruistic in their logic. *Nattu yi* were organized through the coercive mobilization of the collective against newcomers or returnees who may have otherwise sought to bypass the system. Ironically, while retreat to the townships was meant to alleviate the burdens of participation in the Sufi Murid brotherhood monopolies of the city’s central market, credit schemes in Hay Hassani were never totally voluntary. Doubts were often raised about how the *nattu* was run, and debates were raised over how to ensure transparency and accountability.⁴⁶ For instance, Mère Astou herself was persistently rumored to have received a large state grant (*concours*) for women entrepreneurs by the Moroccan government, which ostensibly explained her steady and robust

⁴⁶ The rumored existence of state “*concours*” (grants) designated to migrant women entrepreneurs generated intense scrutiny of any commerçante who seemed suddenly or inexplicably flush with cash or merchandise, and many times the public will seemed to turn against *boroom nattu yi* when they became too imperious in their attitude.

supply of merchandise even when other traders were experiencing great hardship. Mère Astou was able to skate through somehow, but I heard stories of other *nattu* owners who had been duly dethroned. Such speculations notwithstanding, little room was left for actors who attempted to enter the market “uncovered” (*bopam*) ie without personal backing. The very impossibility of securing space on the crowded corner meant that anyone who refused these terms would be relegated to ambulant trade.

Mère Astou said she initially set up her stall in the township market to boost liquidity over the month between pay periods at her housekeeping job; having a market stand provided her enough cash to cover daily expenses while also safe-guarding her trade capital from redistributive pressures from family. Recalling Combé’s situation (Ch 1), we saw how market trade could help leverage a change of direction in the flows of familial remittance and support. While concrete earnings from trade might be slim or unpredictable, the mere fact of having a “business” venture in the market was useful to bolster one’s reputation as a head of lineage, and sanctioned individuals in withholding from the pressure to give. Women especially benefitted from the status implications of being at the “head” (*bop*), or “owner”, of the *nattu* [*boroom nattu bi*], which allowed them to project themselves as matriarchs, through the symbolical linking of *nattu* with control over ritual domestic processes. Once, commenting upon a squabble that had just transpired between the members of a *nattu* over the payout order, the *boroom nattu* Mère Astou, who had resolved the dispute, compared her role to that of a co-wife in a multi-centered family compound. She contrasted the imperious justice of the *Awa* (first wife) with the managerial acumen of the subordinate co-wife: whereas the *Awa* displays her power and potency through her control over food preparation, cooking many extra kilos of rice each day to be able to accommodate extra mouths such as unexpected guests, and thus showing off the household’s

affluence, munificence and power, the subordinate co-wife (*ñaaareel*) is, by contrast, implicated in a far greater number of lower-order transactions and flows. “*Mais boo guisée ñaaréel ci kër gu mag*, if you see a second wife in a big family compound, *laaye* [good God!], she must be clever (*am khel*) and have discretion (*am sutura*).” Unlike the senior wife who exercises her authority blatantly through her economic power, the *ñaaréel* must be able to weigh complicated interests and status prerogatives within the household, not rankle or bedevil her co-wives too much as to turn them against her, but not to be passive either. She should be vigilant and sweetly assertive, exercising the powers of flirtation (*doxaan* — to “walk along”, from “dox” or move) and seduction that is culturally attributed to her as the *ñaaréel*. Rather than projecting imperious ‘justice’ and benevolence, she instantiates authority based on her ability to ‘work’ or ‘tie into’ multiple kinds of interests and circuits simultaneously.

Urban ethnographer Filip de Boeck discusses the salience of knots and knotting in Kinshasa as the “material form of an autochthonous conceptual meta-discourse about the specific nature of the rhythm of (urban) life” (53). For Kinois, de Boeck argues, knotting expresses culturally specific ideas of amalgamation and combination, as well as their opposite, disconnection and divestment. He proposes thinking of knots, their “unsteady topology” and inalienable materiality, as a fit description of the city, its particular ‘form of disorder’ and the ‘non-orientable’ lines of people’s lives within it: “Non-orientable because never straight, these lives can indeed for the most part be described as deviations of straightness, always opening up to the unexpected, with all the ‘mathematics’ that living in constant confusion and improvisation entails” (56). The forms of tying (*nattu*) and untying (*ligeenti*) that I have described here as constituting women’s and men’s respective orientations toward market trade in Hay Hassani are not strictly opposed, though they often are made to appear as complementary. *Nattu*, like

knotting, is a polysemic term: it is also close to *natt*, meaning test, trial, or ordeal (as in “*nattu yalla*,” a divine ordeal), *natt* (to measure or determine value) as well as “prosperity” or fortune that is divinely ordained. More materially, it is the term used to describe the tight knots into which especially older women tie wads of cash into the inner layers of their skirts. (Another word used for credit schemes, *mbootaye*, importantly, is related to the piece of cloth used to tie (*mboot*) infants to a mother’s back while she works — suggesting its reserve for married women with ritual seniority, and women’s value tied to their reproductive powers).

Like the divinatory practices De Boeck discusses, the market in Hay Hassani presented men with various therapeutic pathways for “untying” and “unknotting” blockages in their lives. From the need for quick money, rest and respite, information, or simply a reprieve from the pressures of having to try to be anything in particular, men’s arrival at Hay Hassani relied on the enabling environment sustained primarily by women. We might even think of market creditors and money lenders as ritual specialists, folding in *mbëkk mi* (clandestine migration, figured specifically as an ‘attack’ or violent confrontation with the border, what De Boeck might indeed call a “limit experience”) and more generally living on the edge, into something more enduring. Ontological transformations of connectivity and disconnection are thus not simply imposed by the city’s material infrastructure, but by women’s own attempts to harness those rhythms to make their own solidity and permanence appear felicitous. Idioms of tying and untying figure the problem of social emplacement for Senegalese not just as a question of physically staying put, but of establishing oneself in a relational field of (im)mobility, exercised through control over the timing, scale, and frequency of transactions. Women’s ability to exert control over these processes not only yoked their efforts to the production of “moving market.” They also worked

to render their own permanence possible and socially legitimate, not in opposition to but alongside channels for continued mobility.

Yet urban ethnographers have largely attended to markets as spaces of informality-qua-improvisation; their descriptions too often stop short at the threshold of the house, missing the ways in which conversions unfold across the threshold of market and domestic. In the next section, we turn to some of these domestic conversions to see particularly how the circulation of people and things across shared public and domestic spaces shaped and rendered ambiguous the distinction between licit and illicit, intimacy and cold indifference, collective solidarity and its dissolution.

IV. Household conversions

Alongside market credit, house-holding was a domain through which women were able to put their various structural advantages — work permits, residency, personal networks of familial capital and credit — to work. As shown above, the two domains of activity — house holding and trade — were often mutually constituting and enabling, and one could not easily persist in one activity independent of the other. Holding an apartment (*kër*) that could take in lodgers and defray living costs was a critical first step in asserting control over transformative processes and ensuring a minimal amount of personal security across labor transformations. But becoming *boroom kër* (household head) of a township apartment involved new skills and aptitudes, as well as new risks, expectations, and obligations which could freight accumulation. Renters were almost exclusively non-kin, and their tenure could be as short as a week or two. Men's frequent departures often went unannounced and could leave significant economic hardship in their wake if they did not take measures to pay advances on rent and utilities, and

even everyday provisioning of food for communal meals could be a source of strain. As women took responsibilities for these apartments in their own names (as often they were the only ones with residency permits and thus the right to contract formal housing), damages or failure to pay would fall on their shoulders. More, the range of economic expectations and regimes of surveillance that befell them as “surrogate mothers” to the collective could inhibit the productive potential that such a position otherwise promised.

As part of their ability to engage in market trade, women’s continued access to their own labor time had to be carefully protected, not only from the claims of Moroccan employers as Khadija expressed above, but also from the men to whom she rented and resided with as householder. As Gracia Clark notes, “Gendered capital accumulation processes take place as much at home as at work within the context of gendered lineage and marital relations that establish claims for unpaid domestic labor and subsistence support but also generate resources that affect trading patterns profoundly” (1988, 330). We have already considered how access to loans, gifts, and other resources from relatives, parents, and spouses were part of what tethered women’s travels to an expanded notion of the domestic. Even when these resources didn’t get channeled directly into trading enterprises (as in Combé and Mère Astou’s cases), they reduced pressures on living costs and allowed some to establish reputations as small-volume creditors. Calibrating credit relations and reciprocities of different durations, alongside expectations of hospitality and “freely” given labor within the household, involved holding sometimes contradictory principles pertaining to kinship, gender and generational and spousal obligation. Thus, while new householders tended to be indiscriminate in their acquisition of tenants, and often culled from the same networks and associates from which they drew in their market work, countless women described to me the importance of “eventually” disentangling market and

household relations. For most, this remained beyond their immediate possibilities, but the conflict over how women exercised authority as household heads versus as market traders shaped a range of interactions across both spheres.

In most households, where at least one meal was prepared communally, individual contributions would be gathered on a daily basis — typically 10-15dh (~\$1) per day, for rice, oil, spices, and sometimes meat or fish. Some expressed concern that this was closer to a *foyer*-model of residence, a regrettable accommodation to men's transient and unpredictable habits. The protocol for asking for and accepting (or refusing) payments for food provisions could be a site of tension within the household. Cash was scarce, and young men who were endeavoring to make economies in preparation for further migration attempts might prefer to find a cheaper meal by “turning” (*wër*) around the neighborhood for a better (that is, free) invitation to a meal. Women spoke of men's habits of “roving” or “turning” (*wër*) for a free meal with exasperation, as it made their own planning and economizing difficult. This was a consequence of a culture of food-sharing in which men often do not eat where they sleep, and where all self-sufficient, respectable households are expected to prepare a surplus of food each noontime meal for guests, indigents, and *taalibés*. In Senegal, Big Houses (*'grande këru famille'*) display their stature by cooking many extra kilos of rice per day. The spare food is put aside to add to the communal bowl if guests arrive unannounced, and remainders are provided to the *taalibés*, the community's Quranic school children who beg for change and food to pay for their keep in the *daara*. Feeding and food sharing — the ideal that one could show up for lunch anywhere and expect to be fed — render concrete the flows of sustenance and support from wealthier households to the community's most dependent *taalibés*. Thus, more than men's inconsistent attendance, women complained about their inability to uphold norms of hospitality and largesse that could

accommodate unexpected guests. The ideal openness of households came up against practical necessities, not only of feeding lodgers and guests, but feeding them well.

Mbarka's own protocol around meals was rigid. Served promptly at a pre-determined hour, she cooked with efficiency in mind. It was often pointed out to me how unusual this was. In Senegal, the slowness of food preparation was understood as part of how it facilitated the formation of social ties, as an occasion for the exchange of gossip and information between women in the kitchen, and a wide window of opportunity for guests to drop in and by "chance" earn an invitation to stay and eat. Mbarka's punctuality, by contrast, while seen as somewhat antisocial and indecorous, worked to mitigate against the embarrassing situation of being unable to feed a guest. In her apartment, the custom of laying a surplus portion of the meal to the side for a late-returning lodger became imbued with a sense of parsimonious duty, rather than performative abundance and generosity. If a plate of rice saved for a lodger went uneaten, rather than getting turned over to the next hungry party, it would be hawkishly patrolled until it became inedible and had to be tossed away. Though her punctiliousness earned her the grumbles of her lodgers, this erstwhile indecorous manner was buffered by the respect accorded her due to her actual assets and influence.

Collective meals, food preparation and food sharing were occasions where different models and memories of households — from childhood, conjugal households, the *daara*, or other dwellings experienced as migrants in Morocco — co-mingled and came into focus. Young men's habits of transience (eating "wherever the common bowl was put out" — ie "roving" for an invitation) and expectations of thrift and expediency derived from their time as *mbëkk-kaat yi* brushed up against householders' efforts to forge 'proper' domestic atmospheres. Preparing Senegalese dishes with skill, and without scrimping on 'authentic' Senegalese ingredients, were

part of larger moral discourses about how women living independently abroad should spend their autonomously earned money. As modes of conspicuous consumption, food practices were often cited as indications of householders' moral dispositions, and became sites at which uncoupled women were subjected to regimes of hyper-visibility and intensive display. Providing food and drink were essential aspects of hospitality, and how and what one served were crucial markers of social distinctions. Thus men's preferences for eating at a particular house were important not only as evidence of the cook's skill, but also her embodiment of domestic reliability and vigilance, as a proper housewife who could be counted on to be "at home" with food ready whenever one turned up. By contrast, the absence or inconsistent presence of a house matriarch were scourges on a household. The jokes and disparaging tropes that circulated about such households, "*këru clandestins*", focused on the anxiety about young men forced to cook for themselves — "omelettes day and night!"⁴⁷ — quickly slipping into states of uncivilized animality. Such joking conveyed not only the humor of *mbëkk-kaats yi* trying to adopt 'proper' domestic habits, and anxieties about their protracted social minority, but also to the conundrum of women householders expected to be proper housewives without husbands.

Tenants commonly complained that in shopping for household provisions women would "eat" the leftover change, or skimp on ingredients and pocket the difference for their own personal enrichment. More than just private grievance, the language of food collection ("*dépaas*") situated township householders in the middle of a public debate about women's roles in Senegal's domestic economy and national development, particularly in response to *la crise*. Accusations of women driving up demands for household *dépaas* and ritual expenses have

⁴⁷ Eggs were considered a cheap and "uncivilized" source of calories, associated with *la brousse* (the bush). Households lacking in women were often satirically referred to as 'chicken coops' because of men's ostensive habits of eating only eggs.

figured prominently in political speeches by religious and political leaders, reflecting an ideology that held women responsible for the country's economic troubles since the 2000s (Buggenhagen 2007; Ba 2009). In neighborhood Dahira gatherings in Casablanca, the young men who ran the group discussions often returned to this theme in their *waxtaan* (formal pedagogic sermons), couching admonition to women house-holders not to “exaggerate” their expenses and demands on their tenants through parables about wives who overburden their husbands.⁴⁸ Public diatribes reinforced the idea that independently earning female household heads who profited off of their lodgers were undermining and imperiling the solvency of the Senegalese community abroad.

Thus while “just-so” provisioning of the household, where staples for collective meals are purchased daily, was sometimes seen as a source of waste and embarrassment, it was the preferred policy of most households I observed. While staying with Mbarka, I learned quickly the seriousness with which this protocol was upheld. One day, I returned to the apartment with a large tin of instant coffee, a banal offering that I thought would spare everyone the hassle of daily trips for individual packets of Nescafé. I left it atop the counter in the kitchen, and thought nothing more of it. That evening, Mbarka drew me into her bedroom, shut the door, and pulled out a key with which she unlocked her towering armoire. Inside, amidst her clothes, linens, papers, and knick-knacks, she had squirreled away her own small store of provisions — a jar of Nutella, jam, Nescafé packets, biscuits, some suspiciously over-ripened fruit, a few surreptitious cigarettes, and among these, the tin of coffee. She scolded me for having left “my” jar out, and intoned severely, “these boys will take and take and take until it's gone.” Removing such temptations (like a jar of coffee or Nutella) from public display, or upholding rigid, business-like

⁴⁸ These discourses have strong echoes today, particularly in conservative neo-formist Sufi movements like the Dahiratul Mustarchidines wal Mustarchidaty (DMWM), which backs the national PUR party. Quote from Sérigne Moustapha, as re-presented in the DMWM chapter of Casablanca. “*Góor gui, soxnam am na si droit. Soxna yi, am ngeen ci droit, mais bul exaggerer.*” Men, it's true, women have a right over it [what you earn]. Ladies, you have a right, but don't exaggerate!”

protocols of food-serving and sharing, could freight feelings of generosity and commensality within the home, but they were deemed necessary for preserving a smooth and untroubled relationship with tenants. The objects Mbarka hoarded in her armoire were commodities of little commercial value, many of them perishable; indeed they were not values themselves, but rather reflexively reference the condition of possibility of value circulation in general. Their significance to her seemed to reside in the fact that, in keeping certain stores back from this pressure to give, she drew boundaries around her relations with lodgers. It was by enforcing rigid personal terms of contract a home that she could continue to be generous where it counted, in the market. As I later came to understand, such “holding back” also became means of creating levels of intimacy and exchange with other women. The capacity to host female guests, or store their merchandise, within private bedrooms, was a key mode by which householders drew in dependents, especially among newer or less experienced women traders.

At another moment, Mbarka revealed that her wardrobe formerly held a suitcase full of her finest garments, tailored dresses and fabrics. She had brought them with her from Senegal, perhaps to remove the temptation from her female relatives at home; perhaps also it reflects how much she saw Morocco as the site for building her future. In any case, the suitcase and all of its contents were stolen one day by a departing lodger, not long after she moved to the township. Scholars have noted the importance of bodily adornments, and particularly cloth, to Senegambian women’s strategies of long-term value conversion (see Buggenhagen 2011; Irvine 1991; Coe 2009; Hanneford 2017). Things like the exchange in cloth during life-cycle rituals also afford senior women in Senegal opportunities for connection to wider spatio-temporal domains: their domestic exchanges potentiate traditionally male activities of transnational trade, and thus simultaneously *constitute* those wider domains (Munn 1992).

With this in mind, Mbarka's loss of her garments and cloth accumulated over years, and the curio of perishables she kept in her wardrobe in their stead, assumed a particular poignance. Buggenhagen, following Annette Weiner, has remarked that the secondary circulation of cloth during family ceremonies takes place in contrast with the exchange of "hard" objects, like precious metals and coins. The latter, she argues, signify a masculine sphere and submission to cheikhs, whereas "soft things [such as cloth] signify the desire to keep something back from the pressure to give" (Buggenhagen 2011, 23), and constitute channels of longer-term value creation between women. For Mbarka, it was from these small stores of personal delights that gestures of hospitality and offerings to women visitors, those who were familiar enough to be invited to relax in the privacy of the bedroom, could be extended. The unobtrusive flow of portions of home-cooked food, on plates and in Tupperware, traced affective ties and networks of support between women who depended on established householders, like Mbarka, particularly while they were in transition between market trade and domestic work.

In her study *The Fame of Gawa*, Nancy Munn (1986) puts forward a concept "intersubjective spacetime" as a dimension of value that is not pre-given but rather relational and substantive, realized through practices that not only maintain but extend social boundaries. A key focus of Munn's study is food as a source of positive and negative value transformations; operations on food such as giving or withholding, consumption or prohibition, are associated with qualities of the body, and thus exhibit moments within a process of spatio-temporal extension by which persons create pathways of influence beyond the self. Munn points out that it is not exchange or trade itself, but rather "intersubjective transformations" that are sites of value creation, whether positive (facilitating extension) or negative (constriction or destruction). Thus, while Mbarka participated in forms of exchange that sought to amplify her reputation in the

neighborhood, by modulating her position at the interstices of multiple sites of exchange — between market and domestic work, household and “bush”, creditor and friendly lender, female and male networks of dependency — she displays not only her ability to exact small regular gains, but also her appreciation and navigation of the market as a “vague whole” (Degani 2017, 2). Degani, following Guyer’s reading of Verran, calls this “modal reasoning,” by which one may accommodate contingency while appreciating the general logic of the market, ie “not just how [the market] worked but how it could be reconfigured” (ibid.), within limits. This perspective recasts the debates between those who would celebrate the radical innovation and ingenuity of African urban forms, and those who would insist on the intractable endurance of colonial legacies of neglect and material lack, to a more modest and more ethnographically sensitive attunement to not only the labor but the “thoughtfulness” that goes into such acts of reproduction.⁴⁹

In Guyer’s study of Yoruba economy, she notes that the “dynamic stability” of African markets, and the persistence of “marginal gains” across periods of extreme global volatility, can only be appreciated once one suspends value paradigms developed with respect to formal or “stable” economies in the West, and begins to recognize value creation as the result of small but regular profits across intervals. Guyer notes that African economies draw our attention to “replicative forms of coordination and contention, composition rather than accumulation, conceptual forms such as asymmetrical or fractal attributes in monetary transactions” (Guyer 2006, 177), all of which place value production at the site of exchange (see also Berry 1995).

⁴⁹ Thus, while the descriptive practices of African urbanists such as AbdouMaliq Simone and others have lent attention to the contingent intersections and incessant transformations out of which ordinary Africans work to make a living, their descriptions too often stop short of the ways that such interactions carry over the threshold of the household. The above ethnography is thus not only an effort to shed light on a particular gendered dimension of market reproduction that is often overlooked, but, along with Degani and Guyer, to point out not only the “labor but the thoughtfulness” of the work of “ordinary maintenance” (Degani 2017, 3).

While Guyer's concept of "wealth in people" importantly argues against a structural Marxist notion that wealth is simply additive (ie, the more dependents one has, the bigger the Big Man), attending to my interlocutors' efforts to straddle multiple spheres of work and accumulation highlights the deeper insight of Guyer's work, namely the sense of a *relative* distinction between actors positioned to work compositionally versus more accumulatively. Guyer observes that while a Big Man may transact wholesale via a critical volume of followers, subordinate actors (typically youth, women, etc) and striving aspirants must work retail, in other words, work more compositionally. While at the level of livelihood, all of my interlocutors can be said to operate compositionally — working across multiple spheres of labor — a closer look at processes of knotting and conversion reveal relative distinctions. Recall, for instance, Astou's self-description as a market patron as being akin to a *ñaaréel*, a second wife. Her description of the imperious dominion of the first wife (*Awa*) is relatively accumulative, exercising authority as univocal representative of the household (its public reputation) as a whole. For the *ñaaréel*, by contrast, the qualities and details of the transactions she manages matter a great deal; she operates amidst a polyphony of interests to forge propitious yet provisional alignments between parties and to recursively compose a "feeling" of collective interest and solidarity across internal lines of difference. Women like Mbarka, who pursued uniformity in rules for household meals, and personal prohibitions on small favors given to tenants, for instance, attempted to fashion their domesticities along the logic of wholesale, whereas for new householders like Combé (Ch 1), trying to set up a household for the first time required a more granular approach. These relative distinctions left much room for variation and experimentation. However, what is also clear is that for new householders, the compositional strategies that enabled women to blend and combine household and market relationships — such as drawing on market and Dahirra relations to secure

tenants — could also impede accumulation; their modes of domestic credit were impinged upon by the Dahira, and they were pushed into forms of deficit spending in the name of hospitality and devotional contribution. Thus, while householding could raise women up the rungs from bare subsistence, in order to continue accumulating, they sought to progressively disentangle household and market trade relations as best they could.⁵⁰

With Guyer, I suggest that rather than insisting on the radical newness and innovation of women's enterprises, it is more useful and appropriate to attend to the skill and artisanship involved in their ordinary efforts to compose a living, drawing on existing historical channels of service labor, trade and accumulation, seeking to bundle them in new ways that extended their potential (Guyer 2004). At the margins of culturally valorized institutions of trade (outside brotherhood networks), women took up the mandate to “stay put” by navigating access to wage work and housing, and marshaling these resources to instantiate new channels of credit in the market. That many have managed to make a living and establish themselves in these domains speaks to their acumen in drawing these different kinds of relations into themselves, as ‘nodes’ in multi-lateral and multi-scalar economies of support, investment, creditorship and dependence. Fashioning themselves as legitimate “sitters” in Morocco meant becoming masters of transformative processes: encouraging as many transactions as possible to pass through through their hands and making small but regular gains at each interval, while simultaneously demonstrating themselves to be generous hosts, fair and benevolent creditors, and dutiful remitters themselves. Yet these locations were also precarious places from which to do this. For some women, transitioning between service work and trade, or the breakdown of familial channels of remittance or support, could be ruinous. The growing attractiveness of the peripheral

⁵⁰ Ironically, trader-householders seemed to seek to be *Awās* at home and *ṣarāʿels* in the market.

markets like Hay Hassani, including the venturing out of younger women traders to the townships such as Safi, have placed new pressures on seniors women's tenuous advantages. Meanwhile increasing state pressures and border patrolling has meant that township markets have to support more and more migrants, over increasingly prolonged periods of time. Whether or not the sitters of Hay Hassani will continue to exercise their fragile autonomy remains to be seen.

Chapter 4: Dahira Domesticity: Container technologies, Surrogacy, and the House of Baaye

One day I arrived to the apartment where I had lived for the first four months of my fieldwork to find it unusually quiet. Ordinarily in the late afternoons the small two-bedroom was bustling; the householder, Aïsha, receiving customers coming to buy Senegalese spices and dried fish from her stock, all while loudly chastising her daughter, Ndeye, as she cleaned the common room floors or began dinner preparations; Médoune crouched on his prayer mat in the corner, intently performing his *lazim* (mandatory recitations); Dame and Moussa watching Turkish soap operas dubbed into Moroccan *darija*, animatedly commenting on the unfolding drama while others tried to sleep, quilts pulled up over their heads, on the mattress laid out in the common room. In the time that I lived in this apartment, since meeting and being hosted by Aïsha in 2014 and returning for long-term fieldwork in spring of 2015, it had housed, in addition to Aïsha and her children, over a dozen different tenants: mostly young men, and all of them Senegalese. Some of them had lived there on a revolving basis, in between short-term work contracts on construction sites in the hinterland, (in what men called “the bush” — “*ci àll bi*”), or as was the case with most of the female tenants, coming to stay only 1 night every 7 or 15 days when let “off” from their jobs as housecleaners or nannies. A few housemates worked night shifts, such as Médoune who worked managing the ovens at a bakery, and others were unemployed or between jobs, the effect of which was that at any given time someone was trying to sleep and someone else’s comings and goings were making it difficult. All managed somehow to be around when dinner – usually an expertly prepared Senegalese rice – was served at the (for me, agonizingly

late) hour of 11pm. They'd settled on the term "*bajjèn*" for Aïsha, a term denoting the respected (but oft-resented and imperious) place of the paternal aunt.

Asking, as is typical in Senegalese greetings, about the other housemates 'whereabouts, the response I received from Aïsha was equally typical in its vagueness: "*dañu genn*" [they've gone out], with no invitation for follow-up. Aïsha's reluctance to report on others 'comings and goings, I had already discerned, was both an observance of privacy, as well as an aversion to getting caught up in her lodgers' affaires ("*histoix-am dal, duma si duggu*" — I won't get caught up in any of their 'stories'). This would not stop her from loudly grumbling over the uneaten rice that night, expenses taken out of her own pocket that would not likely get repaid. The next day when for the second time the boys were not home for dinner, I inquired again, and this time Aïsha said that she didn't know about the others but that Médoune had "gone to Fès," adding with some irritated hesitation, "at least that's how he saluted me [*taggoo*]." ⁵¹ By that time I knew enough not to push for further information, and it would be through other networks that I would eventually learn that Médoune and his roommates had gone to Tangier to try their luck crossing by boat into Spain. I wouldn't need to wait long in suspense, though, as less than two weeks later I returned home to the apartment for the evening to find Médoune sitting in his usual spot on his prayer mat in the corner; a bit gaunt, I thought, but otherwise looking like himself. The others came back, two or three at a time over the following week, but not a one mentioned Tangier, nor the boats, nor the military vans to the desert, nor the electricity bill that had come and gone in their absence.

Over the three or four warm summer months that followed, these same young men would disappear episodically, usually for about a week at a time. It wasn't just our apartment. Across

⁵¹ specifically, a parting salutation

the dozens of neighborhood residences I visited regularly, and many more that I was introduced to through my surveys and interviews, it became routine for me to inquire about particular housemates only to learn (or, more precisely, be invited to infer) that they had “gone out” [*dañu gènn*] — gone *mbëkki* — often leaving a variety of financial and personal hardships in their wake.

What surprised me most about Médoune’s departure was that, of all the young men I’d met whose ambition was to get to Europe at any cost, “Bëgg Baye,” as he was called,⁵² had by far the thickest array of attachments to Morocco. In addition to a stable and relatively well-paying job, he had found a vibrant community of Senegalese Tijani disciples - a collective known as a Dahira— and through it, became recognized for his skills as both a teacher/lecturer and a *zikarkaat* (singer of Sufi *dhikr* or devotional chanting, often involving repetition of the names of God). On holidays like Leilat al Qadri and Ashura, and on the occasion of the visits of itinerant cheikhs from Senegal, he traveled with fellow *taalibés* to Fès, Rabat, or Marrakesh to perform *ziyaara*, spiritual visitation. He read and spoke classical Arabic from his primary education in a *daara* (Quranic school) in Senegal, and through his Moroccan friends and colleagues had picked up a significant amount of Moroccan darija. In short, he had always expressed to me an appreciation for Morocco that inoculated him from what he called the “sickness” – young mens’ singleminded obsession with Europe.

Nevertheless, over the subsequent months, Bëgg Baaye’s perfunctory *taggoo*, silently paired with an advance on the month’s rent left atop the television in the living room, signaled to Aïsha where he was really headed, and that (if God willed it so) he could not be counted upon to return to Casablanca. Ordinary objects, such as a couple banknotes wedged along with the bill

⁵² His name is a moniker for the disciples (*taalibés*) of the Cheikh Ibrahima (“Baye”) Niasse

under a clock-radio— markers of ordinary commitments to the ongoingness of the household — were modulated into signs of an exit. Their conscientious placement conveyed concern for the relation with his host, and acknowledged the possibility that his plans wouldn't work out and he may wish to be able to return to the house with some dignity, even if with empty pockets. In turn, the phrase “gone to Fès,” uttered in Aïsha's sardonic tones, became her shorthand for informing me about other similar departures in the neighborhood.

Where Bëgg Baaye was fastidious about his obligations to the apartment's expenses and took care to maintain the grounds for his possible return, others were not always so dutiful, and their escapades often left householders in some degree of financial distress. Aïsha herself had nearly been evicted the year before when four of her lodgers evanesced without paying what they owed. I'd heard of more dramatic examples as well; a neighbor's male tenants who'd absconded with the whole month's rent, her passport, and a suitcase of hers to sell on their way to Tangier; another friend's brother left saying he was going to work for a week in Bouskoura (a satellite city construction project near Rabat) and called only 45 days later from Lampedusa, Italy; another friend, whose marriage was arranged and celebrated by the neighborhood Dahira, woke up the morning after her wedding to find that her new husband had left in the night, taking the desert route to Libya in hopes of crossing the eastern Mediterranean to Italy. Some had less happy endings; sometimes disappearances that were just that, disappearances — young men, and some women, never heard from again.⁵³

These sudden absences came to be a recognizable part of the texture of domestic life. Household heads like Aïsha did not typically profit off their lodgers, but rather constructed their shared dwellings as spatial extensions of the Dahira, the institutional form of the Senegalese Sufi

⁵³ An aura of *méfiance*, cautious skepticism, hung over relations between householders and lodgers. As shown in the previous chapter, this made women reluctant to extend credit and material loans for those to whom they rented space.

brotherhoods, and its promise of shelter and respite against the challenges of migrant life abroad. As was often said between disciples, “wherever you go in the world, *foo djëm ci adduna, doo faranklaayu*, you will not sit like an indigent, you will find a home for taalibés (*këru taalbé yi*).” Yet, instances of quiet deflection like Aïsha’s “gone to Fès” belied a strain at the heart of women’s positions as heads of these migrant households, both as bearers of financial responsibility for these apartments, and as symbolic Dahiras mothers invested with the task of “domesticating” young men’s errant ways and producing respectability for the migrant Senegalese community abroad. Though officials of the Dahiras echoed the state in condoning men’s clandestine migration, for most Senegalese, the Dahiras are both a symbolic and material driver of transnational migration. Not only do they help sponsor and support migrants in various ways; different Dahiras (representing spiritual lineages, orders of affiliation, and religious-political movements) also pursue their own expansionist projects through the mobility and enterprise of their disciples abroad (Kane 2011; Quesnot 1988; Babou 2008).

How did the aesthetics of householding in the township mediate between the expansionist grammar of brotherhood movements, and the encompassing logic of the Dahiras as “Big House” for the spiritual community and the nation? How do existing tensions between competing Dahiras movements (contested ways of being Muslim in Senegal and for Senegalese abroad) and legal and moral imperatives (between mobility and staying put, or expansion and domestication) shape the practices and ethics of domesticity? If we think of domesticity as a modality through which such differences are absorbed, contained, and also possibly discharged or re-channeled, how might this alter the way we understand the *labor* of house-holding?

This chapter considers these questions through an exploration of the forms of ephemeral sociality given rise in practices of living together among Senegalese migrant women and men in

Casablanca's townships. Previous chapters considered how material transactions across different kin networks, and the technologies of credit and exchange that allowed resources to circulate between domestic and market space, were sites at which women exercised power in reshaping the terms of their relations and envisioned and concretized new forms of collaborative action. Here, we examine the material and semiotic entanglements, transactions, and conversions between the domestic household and the *Dahira*, the gathering space and symbolic structure of the Senegalese Sufi religious brotherhoods, which is figured as the "Big House" of the disciples and the nation. The chapter presents an analysis of the ways in which this idealized correspondence plays out in shaping relations within shared dwellings; between adherents of different spiritual lineages and movements; between residents' different itineraries, aspirations, and intentions; and between the morally suspect pairing of unmarried senior women and young men that composed these households. In particular, we look at the fashioning of householders as *yaayu daara ji* (*Dahira* mothers) and lodgers as *taalibés* (disciples), and how these embodiments modulated different kinds of tensions as they arose over the course of daily life together.

Amidst continuous, uneven opportunity for mobility, and heightened scrutiny and criminalization of migrant livelihoods and movements in the city, township households were particular technologies that served to enclose inhabitants' activities in respectability and discretion. But this enclosure was only ever temporary, and households had to remain, in certain respects, intensively "open": women householders submitted to regimes of hyper-visibility and surveillance of their domestic lives, and accommodated frequent and unpredictable movements and re-shuffling of relations across daily life. Where the *Dahira* model of domestic household spoke of idealized solidarity and enclosure (encapsulated in the term *sutura* — "to be covered in discretion"), actual households were rather leaky containers, having to be made amenable to

lodgers' ephemeral, unpredictable, and sometimes illicit activities and itineraries. Women householders observed their tenants' errancies and risky, "suicidal" ventures with anything from bemusement to stern disapproval, but for most it was a basic fact of life. The demands of planning for *mbëkk mi* — secrecy and diversion of resources, unannounced departures, and frequently unintended returns — strained household intimacies. But more than this, women's strains to make households that were respectable, durable, *and* traversable point to a core tension within the moral education of Dahira sociality under conditions of migration: disciples abroad ought to be domesticated (*yaar*) and turned away from the seductions of the "bush," but ultimately they needed to be pushed back out into the world to become solvent household heads of their own. Men on their various trajectories between the border and the market had to be enclosed in discretion and care. But ultimately, it was by becoming mobile again that they signified the potency and efficacy of the Dahira as a force that must "spill over" (*fayda*— floods or overflows)⁵⁴ the container of national borders. Likewise, women's efficacy as *yaayu daara ji* was implicitly valued not only for their unobtrusive and discreet labors of house holding, but in their capacity to "make men" by sending them back out into the world. Thus the *yaayu daara ji*, as surrogate mother to the collective, takes up this dual mandate of the Dahira to deter clandestine routes and instill respectability, and also fomenting the possibility for onward movement, the imperative of "men" in the interlocking systems of religious patriarchy and neoliberal globalization. This chapter explores ethnographically how the violence and contradiction of these dual imperatives came to be absorbed and reinhabited within the

⁵⁴ The *Fayda Tijaniyya* is a particularly popular movement within the *Tijaniyya* in Senegal and other parts of West Africa. Though it draws particularly heavily on imagery of abundant spilling over, other Dahira movements draw on similar vocabularies to envision both spiritual dispensation and physical proliferation.

temporality of ongoing everyday relations, and how householders' ordinary labors sustained them by facilitating men's passage in, through, and out again.⁵⁵

I analyze these migrant households as “container technologies” (Sofia 2000), drawing them into a broader discussion about assisted reproduction, surrogacy, and care labor in feminist geography and philosophy. In a remarkable essay, Sofia proposes a bold philosophical intervention into Western philosophy's persistent epistemological distinction that would take containers (vessels, infrastructures) and technologies (tools, machines) as opposed. She defines “container technologies” as “artifacts of containment and supply,” including such things as utensils (baskets, pots) to apparatus (dye vats, kilns) to utilities (reservoirs, electrical grids). These “quietly receptive and transformative” technologies, Sofia argues, are not only readily interpreted as metaphorically feminine; they are also historically associated with women's traditional labors, and have been routinely overlooked in the philosophy and history of technology in the West (2000, 198). Thus, the term “container technologies” seeks to draw attention to the historical association between containers and women's traditional labors, mining a long lineage of feminist theorists and philosophers who have worked to deconstruct the patriarchal and capitalist logics underlying the alignment of women's work with passive, thoughtless, and unproductive/ re-productive processes. A feminist philosophical approach to this historical denial seeks to “unsettle habitual assumptions that space is just an unintelligent container, or containers dumb space” (182). Thus, Sofia draws on Winnicott's psychoanalytic conception of mothering, and Bateson's cybernetic and anthropological theories of intelligence, to put forward a theory of containers not as passive, inert *things*, but as animatedly laboring

⁵⁵ In this sense they can be compared to other studies of hospitality and hosting in the anthropological record, such as Caroline Humphrey's observation that hospitality in rural Mongolia entails the formation of a “holding pattern” that mediates the indeterminate intentions of host and guest, and enables an affective distancing such that guests can “circle in, through the home, *and out again*” without encroaching on the inner world of the household (Humphreys 2012, 67).

activities. Well aligned with the previous chapters' critique of pathologizing accounts of 'informal' economy and urban infrastructure in Africa, I take Sofia's manifesto as a prompt to explore migrant house-holding as an "art of ordinary maintenance."⁵⁶

In a similar vein, Sophie Lewis (2018) writes about "cyborg uterine geographies" as a conceptual tool for drawing together processes that include "not only abortion, miscarriage, menstruation and pregnancy (whose transcorporeal and chimeric character is well documented in medical anthropology)... but also other life-enabling forms of holding and letting go that do not involve anatomical uteri (such as trans-mothering and other alter-familial practices)" (301). Situating herself within a long lineage of writers on care economy and reproductive labor, Lewis critiques feminist geographers and social scientists for romanticizing and/or black boxing the violent, mutually hostile, and even death-enabling dimensions of gestational work. For Lewis, this reframing (in line with the anthropological work of scholars like Emily Martin and others, who critique the gendered constructionism in biological/ scientific discourse) is an avenue toward the recuperation of gestation as a site of worker struggle. She describes these 'uterine relations' as the locus of myriad material processes that are "not only spatial but spatializing: they make and unmake places, borders, kin" (315), thus attempting to draw links between such ostensibly disparate struggles as mothering, indigenous sovereignty and resource management in the case of the Dakota Access Pipeline, and migrant survival in the Mediterranean (all "water body problems," she notes.) Useful for our purposes, container technologies and cyborg uterine geographies both help visualize the labors of house-holding beyond the trope of boundless maternal sacrifice, and even beyond the agency of the individual human subject.

⁵⁶ See Mierle Laderman Ukeles's "Manifesto for Maintenance Art" (1969)

This chapter considers the spatial and spatializing work of households and house-holding as a central albeit occluded part of the reproduction of religious movements and institutions within the Senegalese transnational imaginary. Holding in tension fragmented geographies of opportunity and risk, households transform and are transformed by shifting articulations between the city and the border, the hearth and what Senegalese call “the [travel] bush,” [*dall ba*] or the field of illicit migration. I examine house-holding as a form of ‘intelligent toil’ that is not limited to women’s subjective/agentive labors, although it draws on them in important ways that remain largely unacknowledged (or rendered as sacrifice) in the dominant imaginary of the Dahira’s parthenogenic self-propagation. Thinking about households as evidencing an agency, survivability, receptivity, and intelligence that extends “beyond the skin” (Bateson 1972, quoted in Sofia 2016, 182, and in Ahmed and Spinney 2003) of the laboring householder-subject further challenges the assumption that women’s labors of care are primarily motivated by pious self-sacrifice. This allows a wider range of agencies, affects, and ethics of collective life to come into view. By tracing the biographies of three households I came to know well, I consider how acts of assembling, arranging, and caring for the material requisites for dwelling are embroiled in, and disarticulated from, the reproduction of idealized community. Attending to the labors that go into making households habitable, durable, *and* traversable reveals a labor of reproducing an otherwise, an alternative to the imagery of sacrificial motherhood of the *yaayu daara ji* and the englobing moral estate of the Dahira.

I. The Dahira: between the home and the (travel)-bush

As signaled by the devotional poster overhanging the entryway to Aïsha’s apartment, migrant households often modeled themselves upon the imagery of the Dahira, the

congregational form of Sufi *turuq* (sing. *tariqa*) in Senegal. Adapted from the once rural *daara*, or Quranic school, whereupon male disciples worked in the fields of their marabout,⁵⁷ Dahiras today refer to community-level prayer circles and mutual aid institutions that are specific to Senegalese Islam. The Dahira is commonly described as a “*Grande këru famille*,” “Big House” for the extended family of the spiritual guide, metaphorically extending to the community of disciples (*taalibés*) and the nation as a whole. Cutting across ethnic, regional, and class lines, Senegalese commonly express norms of national solidarity and cooperation by referring to the kinship relations between the country’s main Sufi elders, or “*sunu maam yi* — our [shared] ancestors,” charismatic holy men to whom are attributed the widespread Islamization of Senegal in the 18th-19th centuries (Callaway and Creevey 1994). Over many decades, their followers and disciples established their own local Dahiras with both distinct and overlapping texts, prayer styles, and practices. Different *tariqas* and their respective Dahiras assert exclusive powers to intervene in the worldly affairs of disciples who pledge their allegiance and submission, but it is customary for disciples of other brotherhoods to downplay these differences in public, out of respect of their shared spiritual ancestry. The prestige and material success of particular Dahiras are viewed as signs of that order’s divine election, especially the success of migrants abroad, whose earnings are claimed by the Dahira to finance mosque construction and other public works.

The practice of Islam in Senegal has long been characterized as non-sectarian, tolerant, and “pro-democratic” (Diouf 1999; Diouf and Fredericks 2012). Differences between Sunnis and Shi’a upon which sectarian strife elsewhere in the world is imagined to rest, is somewhat

⁵⁷ For a history of the Dahira’s emergence as an adaptation from the rural *daara*, or Quranic school, see Quesnot 1979. See also Cruise O’Brien 1971; Robinson 1999 for broader histories of development of the brotherhood political economy in Senegal.

peripheral in Senegal (Leichtmann 2009), and the nation's different Sufi brotherhoods are said to be mutually deferential, united, and "stable" owing to their shared genealogical ties and overlapping practices and institutional structures. Meanwhile, such differences as exist between Sunnis and Shi'a as lived out elsewhere in the Muslim world are, to borrow Khan's words about sectarianism in Pakistan, "repeated within divides *among* Sunnis as an archive of stereotypes and slights" (Khan 2006, 264, emphasis mine). Among Senegalese Sufis, differences in how devotion is manifested between disciple and marabout, and the prevalence of Western consumer styles in the self-fashioning of migrant disciples' success, are fodder for the kinds of inter-devotional caricatures and slights that one commonly encounters in the everyday. Such divisions also mirror the language of ethnic and caste-based forms of "joking kinship" (*kàll*), which as scholars have argued (Smith 2006), (sup)press actual historical relations of hierarchy and oppression, of master and slave (*buur — jamm*), into a mode of civil (joking) decorum. I suggest in what follows that the aesthetics of absorbing, suppressing, and reinhabiting difference be thought of as a *domestic* modality, with features and effects that can be observed in shared migrant households.

In Senegalese Sufi idiom, every household is said to *be* a Dahira: a space for the moral education (*yaar*) of children, of inviolable privacy and gendered discretion (*sutura*), and of filial economic obligation (*aqq-u njureel*) that mirrors and reproduces the hierarchical order of the religious patriarchy.⁵⁸ Relations of vertical deference and horizontal solidarity, both between the cheikh and his followers and among disciples themselves, regulate the way the society is

⁵⁸ Apocryphal stories about important moments — when a marabout is first recognized by his family for his spiritual potency for example, or when senior religious guides were said to transmit important lessons to their successors — are told and retold, with emphasis placed in the telling on the *domestic setting* of the transmission. "Scenes" of succession take place in private bedrooms, and socially significant performances of domestic submission (preparing and serving tea, for example) are included as important symbolic details in these retellings to underline the correspondences between domestic order and spiritual salubrity.

organized (Villalòn 2007): the normative balance of authority between domestic household and Dahira, domestic patriarch and spiritual guide, has been understood as the cornerstone of the "Senegalese social contract," upon which the stability and prosperity of the nation is imagined to rest (Diouf 2001; O'Brien 2003; Bava 1999; Quesnot 1979; Babou 2013).⁵⁹ Tangibly, Dahira gatherings, particularly outside of Senegal, are held in disciples' homes, with prestige accruing to the hosts for displays of hospitality. The imagery of the Dahira as a "Big House" (*Grande këru famille*), and of households as "little dahiras" in themselves, underwrite the brotherhoods' role in vehiculating transnational migration, by connecting individual households in Senegal and abroad to the transcendental "*këru Baaye*" ("household of the Father," ie of the saint). This connection depends on the 'glue' of migrant earnings, remittances, and investment. Thus, when men emigrate, it is often said that they have "gone to cultivate the big [household] field" (Fouquet 2008; 249). Dahiras offer sponsorship and support in sending disciples abroad, where individuals work to earn money for the household (both the natal family and the brotherhood's "House," ie the Dahira and ruling families of the brotherhoods). Through their hard work and sacrifice, disciples are rewarded by being made into heads of household of their own, through marriage arrangements, business opportunities, and the allocation of land and property, all orchestrated to some degree by the Dahira.⁶⁰

In Senegal as elsewhere in the Islamicate, Sufi orders are typically viewed as homosocial spaces; women tend to feature only exceptionally as religious experts and specialists, and, more

⁵⁹ Not incidentally, as Robinson (2008) has argued, this contract was enshrined under the capitalist patriarchal order of the colonial state.

⁶⁰ Dahiras help mediate marriage arrangements between families and work out bride payments on behalf of migrants abroad, and act in the place of fathers or uncles in financing disciples' business projects. The parallel between migrants' efforts to contribute to the construction of new houses for their families, and religious offerings used to build mosques and mausoleums, for example, is visually highlighted in disciple- and official-generated propaganda and solicitations on social media (img. 3.1), in which migrants abroad are reminded of their obligations to give and build up "*sunu këru maam y?*" (the household of our ancestors).

commonly, are symbolized as sacralized mother figures (see Babou 2007; Hill 2010, 2014, 2017). Studies by scholars both inside and external to the brotherhood orders have emphasized the “exceptional” presence of women in Senegalese sufism, a fact which is used to ground claims to the “liberal tradition” of African Islam and Senegalese democratic and cosmopolitan values (Marsh 2012; Diagne 2011; Hill 2011). This notwithstanding, both the historiography and hagiography of Senegalese Sufism presents the nascence and propagation of brotherhood movements as parthenogenic self-extension, the work of warrior cheikhs in the 19th century jihads, and of gregarious (male) disciple-entrepreneurs in the 21st century, whose domain is the streets, and whose absolute allegiance to their cheikh keeps resources and people attached to an origin as they expand frictionlessly across global space (Stoller 2010; Riccio 2003).

Discursive and practical correspondences between Dahira and household exemplify and reinforce gendered divisions of labor across households and neighborhoods. For example, in most neighborhoods across Senegal, families continue to send their young children to traditional Quranic schools (*daaras*), constitutive parts of the Dahira, which take on the comprehensive role of feeding, sheltering, and religious and moral instruction (*yaaru*) of children as young as four into their twenties.⁶¹ In addition to the local marabout or religious guide who dispenses this instruction, the daara also enlists the reproductive labors of women from the neighborhood. Usually falling on older divorcées, widows, and unmarried women in the neighborhood, these *yaayu daara ji*, (Dahira mothers) are iconic figures of post-reproductive senior womanhood, individuals who, as an act of devotion, ostensibly sacrifice themselves to the care of the *taalibés*

⁶¹ There has been rampant controversy around *daaras*, namely polemics around the use of corporal punishment and the obligation placed on *taalibés* to beg for alms (*ñian sarax*) to pay for their keep. For a good discussion on this question, see Ware III (2012). I also avoid the question of the growing displacement of *daaras* by Islamic primary school or “écoles Franco-Arabes”, largely funded by Saudi Arabia and Turkey, which have substantially transformed the education landscape in Senegal. For more, see: Leichtman 2009

as an act of piety and devotion (Ware 2014, 241). By taking on the labors of cooking food, washing clothing, and tending to sick children, these women partake of what Ware has called communal “rituals of incorporation” of the Sufi Islamic community (Ware 2014). The sharing of food, drink, and alms between the community and the Quranic school marks them as a “single household,” and the education of children as a communal responsibility (*fard kifaya*). Ware notes that in many parts of West Africa, “communities measure their spiritual fitness by the way that they treat their *taalibés* and the state of their Quranic schools” (ibid.). Thus, when asked how many *daaras* were located in his village near Touba, Omar Ngom, a Qur’an teacher interviewed by Ware, responded: “In a village populated by Muslims they can’t be lacking...In most all the houses, one finds *daaras*. It’s a good village of Muslims” (ibid.).

The migrant households I studied in the township of Riad al Oulmès borrowed from such imagery in attempts at constructing modes of domesticity that could be deemed respectable, durable, discreet, and secure. The framework of Dahira qua “Big House” could help clarify or render visible certain relations within shared households, giving rise to expressions of solidarity and shared interest, and differentiate them from other kinds of apartments in the area called “*këru clandestin*” — houses for ‘clandestins’. For women, fashioning themselves in the image of the *yaayu daara ji* was helpful in envisioning their domestic projects as linked to field of social action beyond the household, indeed one with global reach (Hill 2012; Babou 2011). It could work to diffuse speculations about women’s earnings, expenditures, and relationships with male tenants, and also helped link them to a wider networks of support and collaboration across the neighborhood and the city. By fashioning themselves as *yaayu daara jis*, their young male lodgers living away from their natal kin became “disciples” in their care. Under this framework, waiting time in Morocco could in turn become meaningful social time; time to *jang adduna*

(learn the ways of the world) — receiving moral instruction aligned with the pedagogic functions of the daara as, in the language of Winnicott, a “potential space” of preparation for assuming the moral and fiscal responsibilities of adulthood.

The biographies of three households illustrate the implications of this entanglement between household and Dahira. The first two cases — Aïshe’s and Mbarka’s households — focus attention on the material practices and aesthetics of ephemeral domesticity, exploring how the arrangement and circulation of different kinds of objects in and out of the household, and across different scales, contributes to the reproduction of the form of the Dahira. Material flows, I suggest, constituted different thresholds of space in the household. In the context of these dwellings’ porousness, and in the absence of women’s claims to ownership or economic authority over them, these thresholds worked to anchor women’s positions within the household over time. Where the first two cases consider how certain labors and aesthetics of domesticity work to hold and absorb tensions arising from different ways of being Muslim and being a migrant taalibé abroad, the third case exposes the fragility of the agreement between individual households and the Dahira qua “Big House.”⁶² We trace this household’s composition and the forces involved in its dissolution, which followed from a scandal surrounding one resident’s participation in a controversial local Dahira as it attempted to extend local political influence in the city.

⁶² This chapter draws on residential surveys and interviews conducted over 18 months, primarily within one neighborhood in the south of Casablanca’s sprawling metropolitan area. Additional surveys, interviews, and visits with residents of adjacent development subdivisions within the same township, as well as in another migrant-dense township on the far north side of the city, also informed my analysis. Surveys were conducted in person, by me as well as two research assistants I worked with for three months, in Wolof or French. I started with my own adoptive household, neighbors, and willing members of the neighborhood Dahiras that I was attending, and worked outward from there, reaching a total of 108 apartment dwellings. Of those, I surveyed just under half of them (51) at least twice, and of those, I became much closer and had longterm relationships with members of 8 of them. Three of these households are described in detail in what follows.

II. Naming Kin, Becoming *Waa-Kër*

The household (*kër*) in Senegal is the container for blessing and honor, as well as the organizing trope for flows, windfalls, and diversions of fortune (Gaibazzi and Gardini 2015). The *kër* refers to the entire built enclosure — single or many-storied compounds sheltering multi-centered family groups, typically comprised of three or more generations, wives and children with their separate dwellings. The “*waa-kër*” — literally, people of the house — is an expansive term with fungible criteria for membership, from shared residence to shared substance in the form of food. The *kër* is not a self-consistent or unified skein : the interior of the house is imagined to be fractious, multi-polar, and the site of conflict and overt warfare, as seen in our earlier discussion of Senegalese family drama (Diop 1970; Irvine 1993). At the same time, the blessing and honor of the household is said to derive from its ability to properly “contain” and “cover” (*sutural*, as in, with a shroud) the inevitable frictions and hostilities that beset everyday kinship relations. Tending to thresholds of domestic privacy, and enforcing *sutura*, the sacrosanct privacy of the domestic interior, is a capacity constitutive of a *kilifa*, a titled shared between head of household and head of the religious community.

The township residences women oversaw had arisen as a possibility at a time when rapid changes to Morocco’s migration enforcement were making illicit crossings more dangerous and costly, and many candidates sought refuge away from the city center and informal migrant encampments, where surveillance and forced clearings were becoming more routine. The households made available by women renters in the townships represented a secure and respectable alternative to the squats, encampments, and migrant hostels of the city center. On public platforms, including nationally televised and widely disseminated addresses of the different brotherhoods’ leaders, the Dahira aligned with the state in condoning *mbëkk mi*, and

engaging religious and gendered imagery in the public campaign against it.⁶³ With the Dahira's language of moral exemplarity (*jom*), civility (*fayda*) and discretion (*sutura*), Senegalese were enjoined to exhibit the qualities of good *taalibés* abroad⁶⁴ as a means of distinguishing themselves from the *rab yi* — wild animals and ghouls of the “bush” (in this case, the term was used pejoratively in reference to other African migrants and the poor, rural Moroccan migrants they shared the neighborhood with.)⁶⁵ In the weekly addresses given by Dahira leaders in the township, often the focus was on women's responsibilities for “taming” (*jaar*) and “humanizing” (“*aggalé nittaye*” - to person-ify) young men through the disciplines of pious domesticity. This also entailed directing young men toward proper civic and economic participation, and away from illicit activities, including those associated with *mbëkk mi* such as the use of drugs or alcohol, stealing or selling illegal substances. Men had to be “softened” (*mokkal*) and seduced away from the hard, austere life of the bush and into participation in the forms of conviviality and responsibility that the household induced. In this discourse, the domestic became a bastion against the corrupting and morally degrading outside, and women, the sacred guardians of national virtue. These discourses clashed strikingly with the language of *adventure, risk* and *heroic sacrifice* by which many young men conceived of their travels, and what they perceived as the necessary skills and aptitudes required to withstand every day life as migrants in transit.

In the township, this juxtaposition could style mutually confusing and sometimes untenable modes of domesticity. The codes appropriate to domestic behaviors and expectations

⁶³ See Bouilly (2008) for more on the cooperation of brotherhoods, as well as women's groups and youth associations, with the government campaign to curb young men's migration.

⁶⁴ This was reinforced by the (perceived or actual) alliance of the brotherhoods with the Moroccan state. See Marfaing (2004) and Sambe (2010).

⁶⁵ Elsewhere I discuss how moral discourses of householding, drawn from Sufi vocabularies as well as racialized discourses of Senegalese (Islamic) moral exemplarity, construct a dynamic relationship between the household and the travel-bush, or the scene of migration, combining the two into a single moral estate.

learned in childhood homes, or reinforced in the daaras which many members had grown up in — norms of discretion (*sutura*), respect for elders, divisions of labor, and unqualified hospitality (*terranga*), for instance — conflicted with activities, networks, and styles that individuals adopted in their intervals of *mbëkk mi* and in the modes of survival instilled from experience of living as migrants in Morocco. The frictions that resulted remind us that, as Procupez notes, the domestic “does not refer to a specific space (the home), or to a set of relations (marriage, kinship, household) or even to a kind of relation (of care, sustenance, nurturing), but rather to... a combination of these ensembles that infuse the relations with a domestic quality” (Procupez 2008, 344; quoted in Williams 2013).

Household membership under my first host Aïsha’s hand was subject to rigorous selection. While not all household heads that I interviewed had explicit policies, most of them agreed that “just being Senegalese” wasn’t enough, and that residents should “be family” (*mbokk*) as this prevented “*histoix yu bari*” (too much drama). Previously, Aïsha said, she had been less scrupulous about her tenants’ credentials and references, but one too many incidents had made her more cautious. Furthermore, since her daughter had come to live with her and both of them worked night shifts, she worried about the security of the apartment in her absence. Among her tenants, she had a reputation for being generous (*laabir*) but firm (*dëggër*), understanding and open-minded (*ubbi khel*) but also exacting and intolerant of disorder. Her lodgers appreciated that she did not seek to probe too deeply into their affairs and was tolerant of their comings and goings. Many like Bëgg Baaye had developed personal relationships with her over their episodic travels and returns. Many preferred to call her *bajjèn* (auntie), a term of endearment connoting querulousness and harsh love, rather than the demure self-sacrifice of the mother (*yaaye*).

Aïsha's apartment was fed by a steady stream of new and returning lodgers, many of whom were connected with her via one of the neighborhood Dahiras. In fact, tenants were often bound to each other multiple times over, by shared nationality, kinship, Dahira membership, and/or regional origins, or shared conditions of travel to Morocco. More than mere preference, Aïsha's apartment reflected a pattern common in township householding of counterposing recruitment strategies for housing and trade relations, in efforts of keeping the two spheres distinct. As noted, traders in the townships often sought to avoid the dominant Murid brotherhood networks of the city center when setting up businesses in Hay Hassani: by virtue of its remoteness from the center, it preserved some anonymity and independence. In contrast, Dahira connections were common avenues for recruitment into housing, and householders told me that they preferred tenants who came recommended through a Dahira affiliation, as it lent them an avenue of pressure in the event of conflicts. Thus, while physically distinct from the Dahira, households remained inside the latter's internal circuits of surveillance, economy and discipline, and relations that gained life inside these households always coexisted with the relations and obligations of the Dahira that brought them into being.

Household resources were frequently a site of overt struggle over the terms and conditions of membership. But domestic spaces were also sites of deflections and silences. For instance, the Dahira's explicit condemnation of clandestine migration, and its norms of discretion (*sutura*) around the "affairs of the household," turned men's movements into an open secret. Part of the challenge of my methods was that the nature of lodgers' movements were subject to omission from the majority of my surveys and interviews. Co-residents were reluctant to speak of the (likely or suspected) whereabouts of their fellow lodgers, even if they obviously knew, and even in the event that that individual's departure had caused significant hardship to

themselves personally. Most of my inquiries were met with the same vague responses as Aïsha's: “*Dañu genn*” [they've gone out] or “*Sama yoon nekkul ci*” [It's none of my business — literally, it's not my route to follow.] The only departures that were reliably reported were those, frequent enough, of individuals who absconded with housemates' cash or possessions and thus were unlikely to return. The far more common departures — those which presaged a likely eventual return — were subject to delicate deflections. Learning to listen to these silences and omissions, I had to look for other ways and places where absences were marked, where householders seemed to hold space for probable returnees, or indeed seal off that possibility from their minds.

III. Surrogate Mothers and the House of Baaye

When I returned to Aïsha's apartment in the spring, after a month spent in Fès, a new inscription over the doorframe of the apartment read “*Kër-u Baaye*” (“The House of Baaye,” or literally: house of the Father), and the salon was newly adorned with a giant poster of Cheikh Ibrahima (“Baaye”) Niasse, both of these being the additions of Bëgg Baaye. As his nickname suggested, Bëgg Baaye was a proud “*taalibé* Baye,” adherent to the Niassene Tijaniyya Sufi order, and himself an ardent and accomplished or praise-singer.⁶⁶ His Quranic mastery and recitation skill, austere dress and facial hair, and prayer beads which he carried like his “protective weapon,” were means by which he signaled his place within a cosmopolitan Islamic public, centered around the neo-reformist Sufi movement of the “Fayda Tijaniyya” or Tijani Flood. Aïsha approved of the moral aura that all this lent the apartment. The poster, and the constant *dhikr* emanating from Bëgg Baaye's room, announced publicly that theirs was a household of disciples of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani, a picture of pious domesticity under the moral

⁶⁶ Performer of expressive, sung *dhikr* or “remembrance”, a sufi praise chanting style of which *taalibé* Baye are known to produce particularly beautiful exemplars.

authority of Baaye (“Father”) Niasse. This, even while in her own bedroom, an even larger poster of a different Senegalese Tijani lineage, that of Umarian Tijaniyya founder Elhaji Malick Sy, “*boroom daara ji*”—master of the *daara*—hung above her bed.⁶⁷ It was unclear when one of the tenants painted this moniker over the doorframe, but despite the neighbors’ and building managers’ protestations, there it stayed. The apartment’s occupants were not limited to, or even dominantly, Fayda disciples, but the designation lent a kind of formal clarity to the household vocabulary and etiquette, and became a visual reference point for visitors and guests to the neighborhood.

Owing to her regular attendance and participation in her local Dahira, where she often volunteered in food preparations for celebrations around the neighborhood, Aïsha had gained a reputation as a *yaayu daara ji*. Within twice-weekly Dahira meetings, held in members’ living rooms, the *yaayu daara ji*’s services were on full display. When hosting (“*aaye*” to preside over or convene⁶⁸), she was expected to provide all the elements of hospitality from a cleared and clean gathering space, to refreshments and often, a bountiful meal. These gatherings were seen as occasions to demonstrate one’s culinary skill and mastery over a large kitchen process, and were sites of subtle but serious competition between women, as they could sometimes translate into paid opportunities to cook for official events and celebrations. Thus even though such displays of generosity generated economic strain on the host, they were deemed important.

Aïsha herself was an ardent disciple of the Tijaniyya Malickiyya (followers of the family of Elhaji Malick Sy) who, like others, invested time and personal resources into her Dahira. She

⁶⁷ Elhaji Malick Sy is the spiritual leader of another main Tijani branch in Senegal, based in Tivaouane. The lineage of Baaye Niasse is based in Kaolack.

⁶⁸ linguistically, “*aaye*” forged a formal correspondence between the householder who hosts the physical gathering and the leader/orator who facilitates the prayer and discussion

often cited speeches from her Sërigne, and told stories about him and his family members in the days of his youth, thus replicating the pedagogical environment of the daara.⁶⁹ I was therefore surprised when she informed me that the order and punctiliousness of her housekeeping was not something she believed herself to have acquired from a “traditional” Muslim Sufi household. She located its origins elsewhere. Aïsha grew up in what she called a “typical,” large multi-centered Wolof household; her father had four wives, and married a fifth upon the untimely death of his third wife. In addition, the family compound (“*Grande këru famille*”) was shared by three paternal uncles and their wives and children. She frequently inveighed against the domestic habits of Wolof households (“*aada-u Wolof*”), which she characterized as chaotic and “warlike” (*xéex rekk*). “Wolof houses, they are a free-for-all, *ku nekk sa yoon*, — everyone pulling for their own interest, always fighting and conspiring.” She attributed her strong desire for order and calm to the surrogate family in which she spent much of her youth. For reasons that were never clear to me, Aïsha was sent to live with neighbors, a Catholic family, who fostered her from the age of eight onward. From this pseudo surrogate household were instilled a high benchmark of hygiene, an aversion to “public disputes” (*xeex si bitti*), and a punctiliousness that stood in marked contrast to the (oft parodied) chaos of Wolof social gatherings.⁷⁰ Whenever a lodger would challenge her household regime in the township, she would refer them to the image of her foster father at the dinner table at 6pm sharp; any stragglers simply go hungry. Aïsha’s sanctimonious order elicited eyes rolls and grumbles, but the principled and consistent nature of her approach earned her her lodgers’ respect. It was because, as Bëgg Baaye once put it, “you

⁶⁹ In the convention of stories about the elders of the Dahira, they were always conspicuously set within domestic spaces (bedrooms, inner courtyards) highlighting the intimate, secretive, and personalized nature of the knowledge being transmitted.

⁷⁰ Stereotypes about Catholic families in Senegal resemble tropes about white Anglo-Saxon protestants in the US, emphasis placed on their concern for decorousness/propriety and individualism, versus the emotionality and publicness of Wolof muslim households.

know where you stand with [Aïsha],” alongside her absolute discretion, that men saw her as a trustworthy patron to whom they could return.

Aïshe did not strive for a household that was ‘home-like.’ “This is not Senegal, no one can go around and eat wherever they like, sleep wherever they like, for free. If I kept house like we do back home, why would they [lodgers] ever leave? I ask myself why they ever left Senegal, those boys who only rove around [*wër rekk*] for a free meal.” Rather than permanent settlements, hers, like others, was a self-consciously transitory dwelling, opposed to both the comforts of home and fantasies of *elsewhere*, but also distinct from the clandestine lifestyle of the *bush*, the liminal space of trial and adventure. While women often complained about having to contain men’s “spurious” and fugitive movements, they also sought to avoid the opposite — a prolonged, indefinite stay. As noted in previous chapters, Morocco was not deemed a place where men could find work, and men who idled or “sat” too long in the township were seen as lazy, undisciplined, or “not really trying.” Aïsha recounted past tenants who had fallen into bad habits, using drugs and alcohol, consorting with “bad types” [*ñu bon*]. She saw Morocco as a corrupting place for men, not because of the ostensive loose morals, but because the lack of proper work opportunities for men induced idleness, indolence and despair.

In Sofia’s account of “container technologies,” she draws on Winnicott’s psychoanalytic theories to present a picture of reproduction and care that is multiply agential and divested of the individualism and romanticism of Western ideas of sacrificial femininity. For Winnicott, “mothering” is the active work of sustaining of a “potential space” which, as an imaginative domain between inner and outer world, enable an infant to “explore ... within a context that is powerful enough to contain them” (Bion 1959, 314, qtd in Sofia 184). From Winnicott, Sofia take the idea of infant and mother not as two self-contained entities, but rather, “immanent

within and emerg[ing] from the context of intersubjective containment” (ibid). Similarly, as feminist science scholars have emphasized through their study of the “micro-chimerical” transformations foetal and maternal cells that occur during gestation and its aftermath, “it is not simply a baby that is birthed during a birth, but rather, two unequal beings who are both survivors of their own matrixial sym-poeisis” (Lewis 2018, 302).⁷¹ The “sym-poetic” nature of gestation, in which both mother and child are co-produced, is a useful entry point for thinking about how the *yaayu daara ji* emerges in the context of migrant township householding. For it is not just the Daira mother but the disciple as well, in all their ambiguity, who are produced through the common pursuit of respectable and discreet domesticity.

One place where we can observe this tension is in practices of gathering daily household expenses. Women and their lodgers often described these expenses in idioms of mutual “devouring.” This sense of mutual antagonism and exploitation was reinforced and amplified by Daira discourses which decried the “frivolous” and “excessive” demands of housewives on their husbands, and the ill-gained, quick money of young men which they diverted from their household responsibility toward illicit pursuits such as *mbëkk mi*. Daily solicitations of small change for food, cooking oil, cleaning supplies, furnishings or utilities often triggered furious debate about whether or not the solicitor could be trusted to spend it scrupulously and not “eat” it all herself. In the households in which I spent time, I observed two main strategies for expense collection. Some women favored the mode of pious elder, entreating charitable offering of alms (*sarax*); while others took a different approach which I came to think of as that of solicitous wife, demanding “*dépaas*” or daily cash allowances. I suggest that these oscillating

⁷¹ Important to note is that for Lewis, this is not a idealized symmetric give and take - it consists equally of violent forms of “cutting” “refusing” and “killing or letting die.” Recognizing this is, for Lewis, critically to a politics in which mothering bodies’ rights to *withdraw* their labor is recognized.

performances forged a “potential space,” in Winnicott’s sense, between (past) worlds of the *daara* and the (future) conjugal home, toward which these reluctant young men needed to be coaxed.

Typically, Aïsha embodied the first approach, making requests for lodgers’ contributions in the idiom of *sarax*; in doing so she used formulaic words, phrases and gestures identical to those heard from supplicants on the streets of Dakar. Holding out one’s hands, one entreats the giver with a blessing, and asks for “*sarax ngir Yalla*,” donations in God’s name. Transactions that mimed religious offering (*sarax*) figured these solicitations as extensions of the charitable giving owed to the Dahira, her labors of cooking and cleaning as effort freely given in the service of the brotherhood, and men’s voluntary contributions therefore as *baraka* (blessing). Contiguous with the cash offerings expected of disciples, they functioned metonymically to construct the household as a microcosm of the Dahira itself, as part to whole.

Shared meals could become a time for reflection and reminiscence. Around Aïsha’s dinner bowl, conversation between her lodgers often turned to stories from their lives as young *taalibés* (disciples in the *daara*), where students are required to beg for their keep on the street. Ibrahima, Bëgg Baaye and the others compared that life to their current tenure in the townships, as a frustrating and painful trial (*nattu*⁷²) of patience and discipleship, and their low or inconsistent wages as construction workers, traders, or car guards to the pittance earned begging (*yelwaan*). As previously shown (ch 2), *daaras* are associated with virtues such as a rigorous Islamic education, moral discipline (*yaar*), and the capacity to endure physical and spiritual hardship — all qualities deemed necessary both for the spiritual trials of Sufi apprenticeship (*tarbiya*) and for a successful *mbëkk mi*. Yet they also instantiate material dependency and social

⁷² “Nattu” means both trial and “knot” or bundle, and culturally is the name for domestic credit systems that women managed. In the market, traders might incorporate men into *nattu yi*, but in shared households this was avoided. See Ch 3

minority. In the context of their tenure abroad, such associations clashed with young men's self-concept as adventurers and agents trying to "do something" for themselves. The *daaras* of their youth were unhomely households, spaces largely devoid of physical and emotional comforts, and intended — much like cultural forms of initiatory "men's houses" in other West African traditions— to engender passage from childhood to adulthood. Thus for men to compare migrant households Casablanca in this way only drew attention to what was *lacking* — kin, material comforts, and the status of solvent head of household to which young men aspired. Designed to be transitory, migrant households could serve as uncomfortable reminders of this period of social minority, particularly when residence seemed to be drawn out and disconcertingly indefinite (Williams 2013, 169).

In other contexts, lodger-householder relations could take on the mock conjugal form of husband and wife, epitomized in playful, chiding, and flirtatious theatrical interactions over "*dépaas*," or daily allowance that wives are entitled to for household provisioning.⁷³ "*Dépaas*" requests elicited different kinds of moods and responses. Lodgers might play along by miming the position of a "little husband" (*jëkkër bu ndaw*) — a way of speaking of a child cross-cousin — thus building on the sense of fictive kinship between householders and tenants, while at the same time underscoring a generational distance that would make the relationship morally appropriate. On the other hand, more bawdy or overtly flirtatious solicitations of *dépaas* by women were also common. One might use a coy tone, or pursue the matter with veiled innuendo. For instance, Mbarka once crooned to some of her lodgers sitting around drinking tea in the

⁷³ In Senegal, men's and women's income are general held separately. "*Dépaas*" or allowance is an expected contribution of the husband to things for daily consumption (vegetables and protein; rice and other staples are often purchased by the wife's kin or the husband's brothers); school fees and supplies; and routine household items.

common room, saying that without her *dépaas* for the evening's provisions, the money for *thiuraay* (bedroom incense) would be eaten up.

The sexual tones of these solicitations are not in themselves surprising. In the Senegalese sexual imaginary, according to Gilbert (2019) and Mustafa (2006), the “art of seduction” (known as *mokk pooj*) is embedded in countless mundane household objects and processes. These include cooking, arranging, and serving, and closely entwines notions of “charisma, seduction, submission (docility) and culinary prowess”⁷⁴ (Sow Fall 2002, 79). Mature and previously married women are considered expert in these arts, and thus of an exceptional danger to unmarried men (Mustafa 2006; Foley and Dramé 2013, 126). As far as I observed, flirtatious or tawdry *dépaas* solicitations never extended beyond these contained, semi-public interactions, and would be resolved when men handed over their dues. If a lodger didn't have the money on hand and needed to entreat a mate to lend him the cash, she could push the joke to a breaking point, say, by punning that “now she has *two* husbands” — an insinuation of polyandry considered absurd enough to cause the tension to dissolve into laughter.

Such performances drew upon culturally specific grammars of theatricality, rendering these exchanges “intelligibly unserious” (Weber 2004), yet effective in achieving their particular aims. In the Austinian formulation of performative speech, theatricality (speech uttered onstage) is a category that must be carefully parsed from performative speech acts in general, since the unseriousness of the former risks “voiding” the sense of performative efficacy he is trying to formulate by the latter. By nature of the implicit understanding of their being repeated “lines” from elsewhere, words uttered onstage evoke a context of a “different network of relations from

⁷⁴ *Mokk pooj* is a polysemic concept that combines an allusion to the thigh (*pooj*) as the most erotic part requiring covering by long skirts, and the grinding (*mokk*) of flavorful spices used in cooking. As the “mastery of the thigh” or “art of the thigh,” it is a set of practices of self-presentation and seduction, involving beautifying the body for husbands, preparing a room with incense and clean sheets, and massaging a partner

that which one would expect in ‘ordinary’ language use” (Weber 2004, 9). Thus they constitute a “void” or hollowing out of intentional meaning. Yet rather than accepting this as deficiency, Samuel Weber sees a productive dimension of the spatial figure Austin resorts to in describing the “hollow or void” of theatrical speech. He observes that such speech being located, qua speech act, has to “include spatial relationships that it cannot enclose or integrate” (10). His reformulation of Austin points to the “stage” as a constitutively open and emergent kind of space; performances are constantly culling contextual meanings from elsewhere(s) to stretch intelligibility, even while their collectively acknowledged ‘unseriousness’ (performance in the pejorative sense) mitigates their efficacy.

The “intrusion of spatiality within the process of localization” (ibid.) Weber names is helpful for thinking about the place of theatrical repertoires in women’s everyday exchanges with tenants. Their playful engendering of pious Daira mother and goading housewife drew meaning from public tropes and religious discourses, arrogating respectability to their households and promoting the integrative function of collective meals as “rituals of incorporation” by which the household and the Daira draw on each other for legitimacy (Ware 2011; see also Alexander 2004). However, the scripted, theatrical dimensions of these exchanges— verbal and gestural repertoires belonging both to Senegalese Sufi practices of *sarax* (Arabic: *sadaqa*) and to popular tropes of gendered domestic relations — produced a respatialization, stretched to encompass these unconventional households and householders. The intelligibly unserious mode — both solicitous and sexually evocative — allowed women’s projects of sexual independence and personal accumulation to be rendered within the standing language of piety and respectability.

Householders' ability to seduce or "*mokkal*" their tenants to their will reflects skillful and clever negotiation of Senegal's "sexual imaginary" (Gilbert 2019, 29-30) and theatrical grammars of Senegalese Sufi tradition. I came to appreciate these moments of flirtation and mock seduction as creating a kind of temporary polarization of the household's otherwise unspoken or repressed potentialities. As shown in previous chapters, the specter of illicit or untoward sexuality was always close at hand within shared woman-headed dwellings: householders were constantly suspected of profiting through romantic arrangements with their male trader clientele, and thus had to submit to regimes of hyper-visibility in their consumption and hosting practices. To manage a household, this specter had to be carefully calibrated, harnessed, and dispelled. The oscillations between *sarax* and *dépaas* performances made the intrinsic ambivalence of the female householder's position momentarily visible. As both an untouchable sanctified elder, and at the same time a sexual agent who is still capable of expressing power through her sexuality, these performances put in tension conditions of (im)possible desire — a condition Simmel identifies with flirtation (Simmel 1984, 134).

In addition to achieving the goal of extracting small change from reluctant lodgers, the oscillating performances reflect the contradiction embedded in the work of the surrogate mother. Her moral onus was to "curb" young men's impulses, to deter them from clandestine routes, and to "domesticate" them in to respectable forms of urban citizenship. At the same time, they were implicitly relied upon to facilitate men's ongoing transit, by means of which the Dahira continues to prosper and expand. Though the ostensibly pious, unobtrusive labors of the *yaayu daara ji* stand behind the ability of the Dahira to place men into migration and productive labor abroad, the actual signifying potential of the Dahira to "make men" depended on their being pushed back out into the world, to pursue that which the brotherhood implicitly condoned (dangerous and

illicit clandestine routes), in order to be able to forge a family and household of their own. Thus migrant households were tasked with absorbing and rechanneling the violent demand to “make men,” an imperative produced by the interlocking logics of state, religious patriarchy, and neoliberal racial capitalism; the liminality of householders able to embody both pious mother and sexually experienced elder provided a performative terrain in which such contradictions could be reinhabited, “domesticated.”

Along with Sofia and Lewis, householding is usefully thought of as a kind of social obstetrics, involving the construction of a “potential space” in which men could “explore the world” within a flexible, enabling environment that is nevertheless sturdy enough to contain them. Their labors were also both spatial and spatializing (Lewis 2018), stitching together geographies of risk and opportunity between the home and the border, the hearth and the “bush”. Against representations of the Daira as parthenogenic self-propagation across space, women like Aisha made themselves indispensable parts of its infrastructure, flexibly absorbing new routes and temporalities of mobility. But the point of theorizing container technologies (or “cyborg uterine geographies” in Lewis’s idiom) is not only to make visible the traditionally unremunerated or devalued forms of reproductive labor historically performed by women. Additionally, it means to specifically question the characterization of women’s caring labors, mothering in particular, as “boundlessly generous” gifting, self-sacrificing, and basically positive. Lewis’s critical analysis strives to bridge new materialist feminist science studies and black radical feminist traditions to show how critical accounts of care work have tended to romanticize these labors and leave out moments of “refusing, devouring, and killing” which, she argues, “characterize the bedrock of interpersonal care” (301). As a means of linking up the politics of assisted reproduction with a wider scope of social justice matters, from the afterlives

of slave racial surrogacy, to indigenous natural resource defense, and migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, Lewis conceptualizes these labors as “asymmetric but mutual holding and letting go” (ibid.) This political heuristic feels valuable to my attempts to characterize the aesthetics of migrant householding in the townships. The surrogate labors of women like Aïsha should not simply be read as compulsory performances of pious domesticity as the lot of “surplus” women, as many unfortunate scholarly accounts characterize polygamy. Rather they should be seen as connected to the struggles of women, people of color, and inhabitants of the global south to create and sustain spaces of dignity and freedom in an increasingly carceral world. While *yaayu daara jis* did not completely refuse the rubric of self-sacrifice, householders, —like the surrogate gestators that Lewis asserts we all are⁷⁵ —exhibited a “constan[t] battl[e] to place acceptable limits on [their] own colonization” (303), re-negotiating what they were willing to give, across the intimate interfaces of shared living. We turn to this in the next section.

Whence then the sacrificial casting of the *yaayu daara ji*’s labors? In her exploration of “container technologies,” Sofia turns to Heidegger asking whence the sacred and sacrificial character attributed to the job of ‘holding,’ (and by extension, western frameworks of caring more broadly). In Heidegger’s phenomenology, holding comprises a two-part action of taking and keeping, and this dual activity is only brought to fulfillment through a third element, “the outpouring.” It is in the outpouring that “the jug is fitted as a jug,” that its jugness is “presenced.” Heidegger’s sacralizing account of container technologies as generous outpouring, Sofia argues, is rendered as an “homage to the maternal” (2018, 215). Yet, she asks, what of containers that are not *meant* to be impermeable or permanent? As in the migrant dwellings I studied, what if

⁷⁵ For Lewis, the question is how de-exceptionalizing gestation allows us to sharpen our insights into culturally sacralized labors of all kinds, to see them as work, and therefore as subject to strategic withdrawal. To say, as she does, that “all labor is assisted” is to draw attention to the concrete contradictions on all fronts of intimate and public life that we must face as we “struggle to build something better than capitalism.”

actual practices of house holding depended on routine acts of deliberate failures of containment, and their leakiness was elemental to their “intelligent design”?

IV. Domestic Objections: Visualizing the Dahira

Mbarka’s apartment was located in one of the older segments of the Riad al Oulmès township (though the building was no more than 5 or 6 years old when I first visited), at an intersection that had once been central (adjacent to the newest neighborhood mosque and bus stop) but had been eclipsed by rapid expansion southward. In chapter 3, I introduced Mbarka’s by describing a brief period wherein she had played host to four other women traders as they transitioned between domestic work and a season of market trade. Here I extend that discussion to consider her relations with her male lodgers, and the dispersed processes by which her belonging was anchored in the household. I explore how the semiotic and material aspects of domestic objects work to produce different thresholds of intimacy and publicity within the home, and how these track with and brush against dominant visions of the moral economy and social reproduction of the Dahira. Taking inventory of different container technologies within the home and their identification with and use by women householders reveals a tension in modes of social aggregation and encompassment by which the Dahira projects itself.

Mbarka arrived in Morocco three months after her husband, Ousmane, in 2011. They initially stayed along with 5 other bachelors in a squat in the outskirts of Rabat, adjacent to where her husband worked as a day laborer on various construction sites, and eventually Mbarka got a job as a live-in nanny. When the regularization campaign (2014-6) allowed her to secure a residency permit, she was eventually able to rent an apartment in her own name, first in a satellite of Rabat near to her then-employers, and later, after changing jobs to a “live-out” maid

position, in Riad al Oulmès. She secured the apartment for 5000 dirhams (~\$500), which included the 2500dh deposit and first month's rent, all of which she paid for out of her own savings. Following *her* this time, her husband relocated to Casablanca and worked for a while as a petty trader. One day in the summer of 2014, not long after I met her, her husband disappeared in what she first believed was a short trip to a trade fair (*moussem*) in the countryside. He sent her a facebook message from a border town in Libya three weeks later, and, after an agonizing two months of silence, finally telephoned her from Italy in January 2015.

Mbarka had no problem filling her apartment with lodgers: she took one bedroom for herself and her female friends (see chapter 3), and reserved the other two bedrooms and open *salon* for tenants, who split between themselves a fixed rate for each room. The first tenants were cohort mates of Ousmane's — younger *mbëkk-kaats* who had traveled with him to Morocco, and landed in various jobs from restaurant service, janitorial, petty trade, and construction. Some of them left with Ousmane's convoy; a few were arrested and returned to Casablanca; others organized their own departures a few months later. New tenants followed to replace them. During our 18-month acquaintance, there were on average 10 tenants at any given time, and seldom any fewer than 7. Discounting the occasional female friends and guests that Mbarka hosted in her own room, all the lodgers were male and Senegalese,⁷⁶ and most were single except for two men who were married but unaccompanied.

Mbarka's household was kept orderly and spare, to the point of chilliness. The common room doubled as a sleeping area for 4-6 men, and an oversized mattress that Mbarka furnished for them took up its entire width. Aside from a small television set placed atop a wooden shelf in

⁷⁶ They issued from all of Senegal's major ethnic groups as well — Wolof, Haalpulaar, Soninke, Serer, and Diola. Mbarka herself was Diola, her family being from the Casamance region, and unlike some other apartments I encountered, in which Diola-speakers were grouped together, Mbarka encouraged no such priority/ exclusivity.

the corner, the only other furnishings were a curtain divider and a stack of plastic stools, which belonged to the lodgers who were traders and traveled with them to the market each day. Unlike the descriptions of migrant hostels elsewhere on the continent (Ramphel 1997) or in the classic migrant *foyers* for West and North African migrant workers in France (Barou 1990) Mbarka's and most other apartments lacked almost entirely of visual or material reminders of residents' homes elsewhere. The walls were bare except for a large devotional poster of *Sérigne Touba*, the spiritual guide of one of Senegal's Sufi orders.

Lodgers' means of carving out private space within the household were limited, an inevitable by-product of the high traffic of people into and out of the apartment. Residents were reticent to leave anything out that could get swiped or misplaced easily. Stories about cellphones being snatched out of windowsills (where they were angled to catch otherwise weak reception) and possessions hauled off in broad daylight after a door was left carelessly ajar contributed to perceptions of the porousness and susceptibility of these dwellings to the outside (particularly their Moroccan neighbors, who Senegalese fiercely distrusted, perceiving them to be "*kawkaw yi*" or people of the 'bush' or back-country) and obviated the austere aesthetic. Lodgers kept personal belongings inside duffel bags or suitcases, stacked high against one wall of the inner hallway. Others used their clothing to stuff pillowcases, and one lodger kept his spare change of clothing and sneakers rolled up inside a prayer mat. Most kept important personal items, including passports, residency permits, embassy cards, and cash, on their physical person at all times, even when sleeping or bathing. The lodgers who took up shared private bedrooms faced only a slightly attenuated version of the same dilemma, as the doors — flimsy on their own — had no working bolts. Tenants who developed closer relationships with Mbarka would

sometimes store documents or valuables in Mbarka's bedroom armoire, which was at least minimally secured with a single-tooth lock.

The visual effect of all this was what the lodgers often chidingly referred to as that of a “*këru clandestin*,” a lodge for migrants, conveying the sense of a “bachelor pad” and referring to the bare-bones abodes that many of them had previously experienced in Morocco or en route. Usually such a comment accompanied apologies for being inadequately provisioned to host me in their space — having to sit on a mattress rather than a couch, or drink luke-warm soda rather than a refrigerated drink. Such self-deprecation, though, belied the fact that for many, the habitus of *mbëkk mi* was not easily shed once they returned to the townships from the border. Maintaining few personal possessions and a minimalist lifestyle was deemed requisite to being a *mbëkk-kaat*, individuals who must be “light” (*oyof*), and ready to leave at a moment's notice. Many also claimed this ascetic proclivity as part of their commitment, as Sufi disciples, to a simple and non-materialistic lifestyle.⁷⁷

In contrast with men's “light” and ephemeral presences, the heft and prominence of Mbarka's possessions visually signaled her permanence in the household, as well as the thickness of the social networks in which she staked her position as its head (*boroom kër*), including the many junior women traders who depended on her for temporary lodging. She furnished her own room with a double mattress, heavy quilts, and a bulking plastic armoire that blocked the window and teetered precariously over the bed. Unlike some of her peers, Mbarka chose not to fill her bedroom with the trappings of the established and well-earning woman that she was. Others spent considerably, filling their bedrooms with the decorative objects of the

⁷⁷ This has been deemed particularly true for disciples of the Muridiyya, whose founding saint Cheikh Amadou Bamba, and his first disciple Cheikh Ibrahima Fall, were renowned for their asceticism and simplicity. However, the imagery associated with Murids and Baaye Falls today is equally ambivalent, as they are associated with success in transnational trade and sport luxury European fashions.

aspirant bourgeois the world over: picture frames, doilies, statuettes, knick-knacks, artificial flowers, and various homewares that are found far cheaper in Morocco than in Senegal. Mbarka cited her preference for simplicity and functionality, though I did once see the contents of one of the bulging suitcases she kept in her bedroom, wherein she had accumulated such species of gifts and treasures, presumably to one day bring back to Senegal with her.

Like most householders in the township, Mbarka did not profit financially from having an apartment in her name. Instead, power and status associated with house-holding was primarily an expression of culturally defined capacities that define hierarchy and seniority, namely the ability to contain (*sutural* — to cover) knowledge and guard bodily and spatial thresholds (Irvine 1989). These ideas were concretized in the contrasting arrangement of householders' and lodgers' possessions within the apartments. Beds and other bulky furnishings anchored women's positions and permanence,⁷⁸ both through visual contrast with men's lack of personal possessions and privacy, and through what they expressed: their ability to host dependent women. In often ill-defined collective space, different kinds of enclosures (from the least secure suitcase or prayer mat to the lock box to the armoire inside a private room) carved out different thresholds of personal space. A well-furnished bedroom could convey much about a woman's wealth, age, and status. For married women, especially those with co-wives in Senegal or abroad, the state of a private bedroom could be read as an indicator of her marital relationship, expectations of future visits, and the degree of a husband's involvement in her welfare overall. They could also be sites of feverish speculation about the kinds of relations that women tended

⁷⁸ In Senegal, the bed/ bedroom is a focal point of women's wealth and status; beds/mattresses are important forms of bridewealth, and symbolize the mother-daughter bond (see for comparison Masquelier 2009). Across many African contexts, identification of women's residence with their bed and belongings is a common feature of more mobile societies; in places where polygamy is practiced, a sign of women's expectations to have a private bedroom/apartment separate from co-wives. See Ferme (2001), Masquelier (2005).

with their male lodgers, business partners, and especially transient traders, some of whom rented storage space for merchandise with township apartment holders.⁷⁹ Women suspected of profitable alliance with these “Modou-Modous” made for endless gossip. As a consequence, objects of erstwhile conspicuous consumption were typically withheld from view. In Mbarka’s case, they were stacked high inside her bedroom, in a confusion of different spheres of interior space — the kitchen, salon, and bedroom converged in a precariously towering clutter. Not only was space often cramped, but it also restricted hosts’ ability to modulate intimacy with guests by deciding how deeply guests could penetrate into the house. At the same time some householders used this pretext of limited space as an excuse to decline hospitality, a strategy that yielded its own advantages. When Mbarka’s trade wholesalers paid a visit, occasions which might ordinarily demand the offering of a meal, she could gesture to the lack of seating or privacy, and urge the visitor to allow her to pay them a visit herself in the Medina instead. Viewing the calibration of domestic decorum as an active negotiation of what women were willing to give, how do we understand porousness not as a deficiency but rather a feature of house holding as intersubjective containment?

Building on feminist materialist critique over the last half-century, feminist geographers and scholars in feminist new materialist science studies have proposed thinking geographically ‘with’ the uterus to denaturalize pregnancy and gestation, and map “birth spaces” (McKinnon 2016) that include both human and non-human actants (Fannin and Colls 2013; Boyer and Spinney 2016; Katz, Marston, and Mitchell 2004). Fannin and Colls, for example, propose “placental relations” as a heuristic for the more-than-human and “encounter-based composition”

⁷⁹ Chu (2010) notes that in Longyang, a region of extensive emigration, domestic spaces became pregnant with new meanings as “speculative trails of money, conspicuous consumption, and the perceived bodily disciplines and moral conduct of women” were carefully observed, becoming potent signs of migrant’s absent presence. See Chu (2010).

of motherhood. Multi-actant ethnographies of the material-social-infrastructural assemblages of gestation (wheelchair, scalpel, hormone, midwife, doctor), and the kinds of contingent intra-activity they bring to light, intriguingly argue that the pregnant subject is one that “does not depend on closed edges in order to construct itself” (Fannin and Colls, 2013, 1980). Households like Mbarka’s offer insight to how material and processes of assembling and arranging the material requisites for living could assist in producing a space that was both habitable, durable, and traversable. Yet the consequences of this porousness was not evenly borne between householders and household members; for some women, the very “natural” imbricatedness of household and Daira could make their own positions appear unsupported and vulnerable.

About a year into living in this apartment, Mbarka quit her nannying job and began her own enterprise, cooking Senegalese food that she would distribute for a fee to other migrant households without a female householder to do so.⁸⁰ At some point, she saved up enough to invest in a large aluminum cooking pot (*ciin bu mag*), sufficient for preparing large quantities of rice at one time, as well as two smaller pots (*ciin yu ndaw*) for preparing sauces and smaller batches of rice. In Senegal, such cooking vessels and serving dishes would be the collective property of a women’s cooperative or *mbootaye*, passing between them for use on special occasions. This was by far the most valuable object stored inside the apartment: by owning such a pot herself, other women started coming to Mbarka to borrow her cooking equipment and ask for other loans and services. The pots’ movements (always a comical public production, requiring 2-3 strong-armed men to carry it up and down the 5 flights of stairs and through the neighborhood) concretized relations of dependency between these less established women and

⁸⁰ Many apartments were rented in the name of a woman household head who worked simultaneously in a live-in domestic job and only returned on the weekends or once every fortnight. It was common in these households for the lodgers to recruit a woman from the neighborhood to cook for them for a fee.

herself. They further rendered visible the ideal elasticity of the Dahira-as-household through the vessels' circulation between disciples' residences. Weekly Dahira gatherings were held inside disciples' homes on a rotating basis, and the host's household head was expected to cook for those gathered, often requiring her to solicit cooking pots on loan, as well as serving trays and utensils from other women. Life-cycle celebrations (marriages, baptisms, funerals, etc) were put on by the neighborhood Dahira as well, and women like Mbarka who acquired a reputation for being able to "command" a kitchen (*njitaal wañ wi*) would be recruited for their services, securing reputations as "*yaayu daara ji*." In the context of life-cycle celebrations, the designation '*yaayu daara ji*' also evoked the cook's role as symbolic benefactor of the lineage being celebrated. In this way, large communal cooking vessels powerfully symbolized women's reproductive power, status and influence over a *particular* network of relations, as well as her capacities of social aggregation that exceeded her own kin group and rendered her labors potentially available to all.

Large objects like the big cooking pot and its movements in and out of the home functioned metonymically, relaying the household to the Dahira as part to whole. But to understand the tension involved in women's positions as heads of household, we must also lend attention to 'small things' (cf Ferme 1991) whose circulations, while seemingly trivial or unobtrusive, could have unsettling effects. Certain products used almost daily in Senegalese cuisine, such as bouillon seasoning (*tiir Maggi*), dried hot pepper (*kaani*), or hibiscus flower (*bissap*) were commonly sold by women in the neighborhood out of their homes for convenience, much like in Senegal. In many migrant households in Casablanca, this secondary commerce — what Polly Hill refers to as an "invisible trade"— helped to supplement women's

earnings with minimal investment of time.⁸¹ For women like Mbarka, the Senegalese products they sold were often sent to them by family members in Senegal or residing in Europe. Given that this trade was so low-earning, it seemed that, more important was its role in keeping those ties and lines of potential credit open.

Some months into my fieldwork, the men in one of the neighborhood Dahiras began selling cases of Maggi bouillon cubes and other Senegalese imports as a cooperative fundraiser. In Mbarka's apartment, which had eight tenants at the time, there was one young man involved in this Dahira initiative. She recounted to me that one day he had tried to "pay" his portion of the collective daily food expenses in kind rather than in cash: Maggi, dried pepper, and millet from the Dahira cooperative. He deposited the items on the corner of the kitchen sink, where all the men routinely left their daily expenses. When Mbarka saw this, she recounted, tchirping loudly, "*Dafa ma bétt. I was shocked. Man mii, kenn du ma khepp! Me, no one ought underestimate me!*" Mbarka's anger surprised me. It seemed like an innocent, even well-intentioned gesture, and certainly not a strategy to under-pay his 'dues.' Further, Mbarka was a solvent earner in her own right; unlike Aisha or others, she was not nearly as reliant on men's cash contributions for day to day expenditures. But for Mbarka, the implications seemed profound. Her normally jovial disposition sombered, and a kind of tense awkwardness between Mbarka and the tenant ensued, lasting until the lodger finally departed a month later.

For co-residents living within highly ephemeral configurations, the moral frameworks underlying their individual projects could lose focus or sharpen suddenly, and objects that populate the space of shared living could make the nature of their commitments to one another seem suddenly unconvincing or uncertain. In the case of the bouillon, the routine performance of

⁸¹ Hill argues that this invisible trade was eclipsed but potentially more vital than market trade in some contexts of Hausa economy (1961)

a duty to the life of the collective had suddenly made present the multiple conflicting frameworks traversing the household, and it seemed to have momentarily shadowed the notion of “home” for Mbarka. Importantly, she relied on the relations subtended by her trading, and thus the part of her invested in an idea of herself as a trader was injured (“*dafa may khepp*”). She suddenly appeared vulnerable and unsupported. While women’s credit systems reveal strategies of aggregation and incorporation, they also lay bare the ways in which the lack of edges can simply mean exposure. The lack of acknowledgment of that aspiration, and the kind of material and emotional security it represented for her, held a mirror up to a wider conflict between women’s and men’s networks of support and solidarity in Morocco more generally.

Claims over resources (both money and labor) were ways that the Dahira established a correspondence with the discrete households of its members. In recent years, brotherhoods have sought to harness the techniques of domestic economy pioneered and practiced by women.⁸² Women’s abilities to garner loans and investments for mutual aid credit projects and small businesses has lent credence to their models, which Senegalese Dahiras at home and in diaspora have sought to incorporate into their institutional operations, using them to raise funds for events or offerings given collectively to visiting dignitaries. In one instance I witnessed, a local Dahira in Casablanca began buying bulk quantities of household sundries - bleach, dish soap, detergent - and re-selling these items to members in order to pay for an upcoming event. Women attendees were then compelled to purchase these items until they sold out, despite some grumbling about it being a ‘bad deal’ (the same products could be purchased cheaper elsewhere), and some even borrowing from one another in order to do so. While better established women were able to

⁸² In Senegal as elsewhere, poverty reduction programs for foreign aid and micro-lending have favored women entrepreneurs as targets of investment owing to the belief that women invest in families/childcare and communities while men do not.

display their purchasing power and demonstrate their devotion to the Dahira, less financially solvent women struggled to do so. The furnishing and financing of domestic objects and sundries exposed a conflict between women's efforts to trade and control domestic processes and the Big House logic that their efforts collectively were meant to signify.

In their essay, Das, Ellen, and Leonard (2008) describe the ways in which ordinary objects may announce their non-belonging within the home, becoming disturbing or provoking a sense of alienation within intimacy. Their cases center on the lives of African Americans living in the shadow of mass incarceration, and how in households shaped by mobility across institutions (prisons, foster agencies, welfare offices, etc) various transactions can enact a reversal of notions of inside and outside, privacy and secrecy, intimacy and estrangement. In my own fieldwork, residents' movements between seemingly incommensurable spaces and networks outside the home (from peripatetic *mbëkk mi* ventures at the border, to spheres of licit and illicit earning in the city, to Dahira gatherings) were differentially absorbed into or bracketed from household sociality. The ways in which different kinds of things — suitcases, mattresses, devotional posters, cooking vessels, cash offerings, or Maggi cubes — circulated (or not) within the household instantiated these wider networks. They also disclosed tensions in how men's and women's networks of support, solidarity, and aspiration were symbolized and presented in the home. The contrast in metonymic and metaphoric functioning of these 'small things' (Ferre 1991) points to a question about the gendered tension within women-headed households, in which women's control over domestic processes as a means of social aggregation (becoming "big women" by elaborating and pluralizing social dependencies) is implicitly at odds with the englobing modalities of the brotherhood. The tension lay within the uncertain ability of the household to encompass both modes.

V. Biggie's House

I end with Biggie's household, not for its exemplarity, but for the ways in which it stood out: not only was it lacking in a senior woman at its head, its membership was also more diverse in almost every criterion (age, gender, relationship status, region of origin, length of stay, means of income). It was also the only household I surveyed that completely disbanded over the course of my fieldwork. Whereas the previous two examples attempted to illustrate how aesthetics of domesticity worked to absorb and re-channel differences of different kinds, the last case shows the fragility of the accord between household and Dahira. I devote significant space to a description of Biggie's household because the ways it came together and dissolved were identified by others in the neighborhood as instructive — of the specific challenges and vulnerabilities migrants in the townships faced in securing and keeping housing, and to the particular threats to “Big House” sociality under conditions of migration.

At the time of my fieldwork, the re-mapping of the Senegalese imaginary to include new actors and locations in Morocco was the cause for controversy: new brotherhood orders were moving into Moroccan markets for the first time, upsetting traditional powers, and women were also traveling independently and making inroads through their pioneering enterprises outside of official brotherhood channels. In contrast with depictions of the domestic as a stable, permanent settlement, the estate of the household is integrally linked to the expansionist grammar of brotherhood movements and the logic of the “Big House”. Women played a vital role in reproducing this dynamic, both historically as objects of exchange in marital alliance, and as agents of “domestication” (cf Cohen 1971) for migrants abroad. The trajectory of Biggie's household shows both the efforts of the Dahira to harness and contain women as “stayers” in the

townships, and how women's surrogate labors themselves were seen as destabilizing to the gendered and gerontocratic authority of the Dahira as it expanded into new spheres.

Biggie's apartment was situated on the edge of Riad al Oulmès, on the boulevard that marked the limit of where it was deemed acceptable for Senegalese to live. The neighboring Azhar township was dominated by Congolese, Ivoirian, Cameroonian and Nigerian migrants (what Senegalese often refer to collectively, and pejoratively, as *ñag yi*), stereotyped for their involvement in drug dealing, making and selling alcohol, prostitution, and other illicit activities. One Moroccan acquaintance in Riad al Oulmès described Al-Azhar as a "drug den," and many of my Senegalese interlocutors referred to the area collectively as "*àll ba*" — "*la brousse*" or "the bush" (underscored by its adjacency to the open edge of township construction, cleared empty fields for many kilometers around). Relations between West African migrants and Moroccans were far more tense in Al-Azhar, and there had been many community efforts to push migrant residents out, through rent-hiking, residents' demands for stricter policing, and overtly race-based evictions or refusals to rent to non-Moroccans. For a long time I had avoided venturing too far into Al-Azhar, less out of sense of concern for my safety than out of fear of that it would invite questions from my Senegalese friends, and unwanted scrutiny on my Senegalese relations from our Moroccan neighbors.

I came to know Biggie, a gregarious and energetic 31 year old "homme de bizness" - what others called a "*fixeur*", while he was working a deal with a shopkeeper in the Medina. With a computer technician's license and a few years of university studies in Tunisia under his belt, Biggie had, by his own accounts, tried his hand in just about every money-making scheme Morocco had to offer, and at the time had over a dozen small ventures and projects up in the air, across which he cobbled together a very modest income. In his work, he refused no relation so

long as it had the possibility of being profitable — he had deals and contacts with Moroccans, Cameroonians, Nigerians, and Congolese, women as well as men — but in his living situation he preferred to co-habit exclusively with Senegalese. He had had a spate of bad luck with housing for many years, living in different squats in the city center, with roommates who had stolen from him and framed him, and racist landlords who had tried to extort or groundlessly evicted him. Finally, in the shabby, draft-prone rooftop apartment he shared with between six and eight others, he said he felt “at home.” The apartment’s Moroccan proprietor was a recent migrant from the hinterland, and made a modest living selling vegetables off a push-cart. He had purchased the apartment with the help of his brother living in Spain, but ended up needing to sublet and returned to live with his wife’s family, using the rent to support his handicapped son and aging mother. His relationship with Biggie was one of common (albeit unevenly shared) precarity. Biggie shared the space with one couple, three young bachelors (two intermittent traders and tireless *mbëkk-kaats*, Thié and Ansou, and an aspiring football player, Abdou, who Biggie was helping to secure fake documents to play in Europe) and Aïssatou, a 40 year-old mother of two, working intermittently between different service jobs but mostly struggling to find and keep work.

The apartment was a chaotic place, the most tangibly disjointed of those I visited. The narrow corridor between the three perpetually closed bedrooms were lined with found-furniture and debris, giving the impression of a dormitory, and the apartment was constantly marked by the staccato of raised voices: fights over money, bickering about lack of space and the (non)-performance of chores, accusations of unpaid loans or borrowed and damaged possessions. The evening meal, which for many of the residents was their only meal each day, generated endless arguments. Buying, preparing, and cooking food fell on the ‘loser’ of these arguments — often

enough Biggie himself, who confessed to being the most ‘soft-hearted.’ As such, it was often well past 2am before any food was actually served. There was similarly a lack of consensus about the terms of membership in the household, and a hazily defined code about who was allowed to bring guests (and of what kind). The apartment was in Biggie’s name and it was with him exclusively that the proprietor would negotiate. Yet given that most, if not all of the tenants were in some form of lending arrangement with Biggie, none could claim an unquestionable right to the space, and it was perhaps on this loose ground that they found a tenuous entente.

Like all households, Biggie’s apartment was not a self-contained entity, but was knotted out of relations that extended and anchored themselves in the neighborhood and beyond. Aïssatou’s various employers’ homes constituted one major presence, through the influx of housewares, clothing and food that made their way into the apartment (eliciting the other residents’ appreciation and suspicion.) Boyfriends’ and girlfriends’ lodgings also manifested an outsized presence, as the source of speculation and jealousies. Members’ movement through other extra-domestic spaces, such as the neighborhood Dahira where some members sought meals and a place to spend the night when the apartment grew too asphyxiating, were also integral to the household’s endurance. These other domesticities inhabited and propped up the apartment, materially and emotionally. But they also charged relations between residents in particular ways, generating envies and suspicions, and became flash-points in moments of conflict. It is in this sense that the story of this apartment cannot be told without mentioning Awa Penda, who was for a time their downstairs neighbor. Awa was a statuesque *drianké*, a “big woman” who exuded confidence and commanded attention. Four-times married and divorced, she had two children and boasted receiving remittance money from three continents, out of which she paid for her apartment, her children’s expenses, and her frequent trade missions back

and forth to Senegal and Mauritania. She made little effort to mask the nature of her alliances with other men in the city— mostly successful Modou-Modous — who also helped to support her lifestyle. Awa was a friend of Aïssatou’s through their participation in a local Dahira. She often dropped by in the evenings when in search of a better ambiance and to “get something going.” She and Biggie came to be avid, usually amicable, sparring partners.

One day I ran into Biggie at a bus stop, looking distraught. He relayed to me the bizarre events of the previous week. It appeared that Awa Penda had left suddenly on a trading trip back to Senegal, and decided to leave her two children, 15 and 8 years old, unattended in their apartment in Casablanca. The 15-year old had promptly gone to stay with a boyfriend and the younger child, Néné, had been left alone in the apartment for days. She had been discovered the previous morning by the apartment’s newest lodger, Yacine, a *refoulée* (attempted migrant pushed back from the border), who had arrived to stay at Biggie’s only the day before. Yacine was a Haalpulaar woman of 33 from a poor neighborhood in the periphery of Dakar called Djamaguën, where she had lived with a large extended family. She had traveled to Morocco after the breakup of her first marriage and her family’s precipitous fall into debt. Having secured a low upfront cost contract with a “*porteur*,” she traveled to Tangier with intentions to cross to Europe, making it as far as the open waters before her convoy was intercepted by the Spanish coast guard and turned back. She spent a few months working as a nanny in Rabat, and made the acquaintance of a Modou-Modou in transit from Spain, who proposed marriage. By the time he returned to Spain, Yacine had discovered she was pregnant. She attempted to join him, but was intercepted by the coast guard and returned, penniless, to Casablanca. Having only ever lived in the villas of her employers, she had few contacts in the city except for knowledge of a Dahira, a local chapter of the *Thiantacounes*, which happened to be the seat of the presiding *khalifa*, and

one of the newest and largest Senegalese Dahira congregations in Morocco. She turned to the Dahira for solace, and the assurance of a feast (*berndé*) at the conclusion of every gathering. Knowing that she could not call on her family for money and too ashamed to “put out her hand” [*tàll lokho*] to beg, she spent many nights in the Dahira, until Biggie’s lodger Thié approached her, offering a place to stay in their small overcrowded rooftop apartment in the township. Only a few days later she came across Néné and the two girls had now taken up the apartment’s 3rd bedroom.

This period happened to coincide with the intensification of public scrutiny of the *Thiantacounes*, the Dahira to which Yacine and Aïssatou belonged, after the eruption of a scandal around allegations that the Dahira’s chapter in Casablanca was officiating marriages between its disciples without the authorization of the spouses’ families in Senegal. Dahiras have long been in the business of mediating marital exchange between households, part of the logic of patronage and alliance by which the brotherhoods have secured their power both in Senegal and in diaspora. However, skirting the important requirement of publicity (and parental consent) for marriage, the *Thiantacounes*’ leader in Morocco had enflamed allegations about the Dahira’s overreach of domestic authority and traditional brotherhood hierarchy.⁸³ As mentioned, divisions between difference brotherhood orders in Senegal are expressed in repertoires of stereotypes and slights, which tend especially to revolve around questions of money and consumer styles. Devotees of this particular Dahira, the *Thiantacounes*, were often characterized as brainwashed dupes who eschew the traditional hierarchy of *father* < *husband* < *khalif*, and were said to “steal from their brother to meet the cheikh’s command (*ndigël*).”

⁸³ As a new force, expanding rapidly into Moroccan market spaces, the *thiantacounes* represented a threat to traditional bases of Tijani and Murid establishment in Morocco: an incensed public alleged that the *thiantacounes* had upset the balance of powers between Dahira and lineage authority. https://www.seneweb.com/news/Buzz/les-thiantacounes-mettent-le-feu-a-casab_n_231436.html, accessed 11/20/2017;

Women were depicted as especially vulnerable to the appeals of this esoteric Dahira, and the signs of material wealth and prosperity it promised to devotees. Among many migrant households of mixed Dahira membership, how individuals acquired and spent their money was already a source of constant speculation and often conflict. Even though the ideological language of the Dahira casts Senegal's various brotherhoods as sharing the same symbolic ancestors, sharing one spiritual 'roof,' and thus encourages the downplaying of differences, scrutiny of money and material circulations — particularly in the context of generalized scarcity and hardship in Morocco — sharpened these differences.

In Biggie's house, the unexpected arrival of the child and of Yacine into the apartment seemed to help clarify roles within the household for a time. Yacine put herself forward as the child's caregiver, and came to perform various household duties alongside, including cleaning and cooking regular meals, which afforded the household a consistent routine. Given her difficult situation, staking a claim in the role of caregiver deflected attention from the fact that she herself was a dependent, at the mercy of the other residents' tolerance. Through her gentle insistence that the child have a filling meal (usually *soombi* or *laax*, semolina or other coarse, inexpensive grains with powdered milk and a bit of sugar), Yacine often made a large pot and coaxed the others into partaking. Thus evening meals came to be eaten collectively, they began to pool resources to have a fixed internet connection installed, and once I visited to discover that they had painted the bedroom with a new coat of paint to cover over the yellowing water-damaged walls. They cared for Néné for over 2 months, and it was soon time for school to resume — a new source of argument as the tenants debated what should be done. However, I remember thinking during that time that, though spurring argument, Néné's presence had helped orient the residents collectively toward a future, however tenuously shared.

A number of recent ethnographies have attended to place of children and the forms of knowledge they can either bid or ward off. Khan (2006) for instance, shows how a child's friendship with a family *jinn* mediates truth "from another place," allowing for certain movements of self-difference in a context of sectarian strife. Ethnographies help us think about the cultivation of the pious self, and struggles with different interpretations of correct devotional practice, as sitting alongside and shaped by the dynamics of domestic intimacy. Attending to the worlds of children, ethnographies can tune our attention differently to registers of Islam in everyday life within the fragile balance of domesticity, as aesthetics or gestures through which otherwise inadmissible truths, or uncertainties, may be acknowledged (Khan 2006; see also Bush 2016). As we have seen, the notion of collective responsibility for children's care and moral instruction in Senegalese society charts ideas about the organization of migrant life (Yount 2011). Even though actual children were a conspicuously absent-presence in the township, both the *yaayu daara ji*'s own (missing) children, and the shadow of protracted adolescence that tracks migrant men in their movement toward adulthood, fueled public anxieties about the moral character of the *yaayu daara ji*, and the sexuality of unmarried women in general. Yet in Biggie's household, Néné allowed Yacine to be folded in as a surrogate to the household for a time, softening some of the sharpest edges of contention between the tenants by orienting them toward a shared future, and allowing each of them to see the stakes of their collectivity in a different way.

Yet the eruption of the *Thiantacoune* scandal upset this fragile balance. Yacine did indeed give generously to her Dahira, often what seemed far beyond her means. Sideways remarks from her housemates indicated that they were skeptical of the sources of her earnings. Her participation in the controversial Dahira had not initially been a problem — Aïssatou and

Awa Penda had both occasionally attended the same *Thiantacoune* gatherings, and had at different moments relied on it for their regular meals. Biggie, staunchly unaffiliated with any brotherhood himself, professed his indifference to “how people choose to throw away their money.” But any malaise that Yacine’s housemates may have felt around her involvement with the *Thiantacounes* intensified sharply amidst this media conflagration, fueling other rumors emanating from the neighborhood, such as that Thié was the cause of Yacine’s by now unmistakably pregnant belly.

Then a number of things happened in quick succession that further unsettled things. Firstly, Biggie (who had the most stable income and often carried the other members through difficult months) went away for a 6-week trip to scope out prospects for a business deal. He left two months’ rent with Abdou to deliver in his absence to the landlord. It is not possible for me to know definitively what occurred, but the rent went unpaid, the electricity was cut, and the landlord threatened eviction. The second thing that happened was that Awa Penda returned from Senegal unexpectedly, and was none too pleased to learn that Thié, with whom she’d had a prior romantic relationship, was now rumored to be courting Yacine. Over 3 days, Awa Penda came to the apartment every day and arguments quickly escalated into outright brawls. The neighbors, already poised against their migrant residents, jumped on the opportunity to accuse them of illegal activity, calling the police and threatening them with arrest, and using physical force to intimidate them. After three days, somehow, the tension dissipated and an uneasy calm resumed. Biggie returned in time to appease the landlord and avoid catastrophe, but Yacine was quickly fingered by the other tenants for stealing the rent money and concealing it in her Dahira offering. Other accusations were levied as well (some of which I heard only long after), echoing rumors from the neighborhood whose lack of signature and well-defined object made them all the more

potent. Biggie felt he had no choice but to comply with their demands to kick Yacine out of the house. In a strange turn of events, during the period of neighbor agitation, Yacine had left Thié and gone to stay with Awa Penda, the latter having “discovered” a distant kin relation and thus a pretext for sheltering her. When she came back, pleading to be allowed to return, a fight ensued and Yacine was violently expelled from the apartment, some neighbors reporting she had been dragged down the stairs, others that she had been visibly beaten. I was not able to make contact with her after that and it seems that she had left Casablanca. Biggie tried to keep the rest of the household together, but squabbles became more and more intense and the residents could not manage to resume their previous routine. When the rent went unpaid, Biggie forced Ansoumana and his girlfriend to leave, and then Aïssatou, and a little over a month later the rest of the members had dispersed.

The story of Biggie’s household illustrates the entwining of disparate forms of mobility that make up shared dwellings, and the challenges of households to accommodate circular, transit, and step-wise or uncertain projects of migration while producing a sense of stability and continuity. Its formation and dissolution underscores the ways in which household relations were embroiled in the racial, economic, social and political tensions that characterized contemporary Morocco, and the townships in particular. The forces that pushed Biggie, Yacine, and the others to Al-Azhar, for instance, reflect broader struggles around affordable housing, policing, and growing anti-migrant sentiment across the city. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, demands for affordable housing, infrastructure and social services, and relief from state abuse in poor neighborhoods were rallying points for protesters. Despite no real shortage of housing, the growing West African migrant presence in low-income apartments that were ostensibly intended for Moroccans underscored many citizens’ fears that King Mohamad VI’s “turn toward Africa”

— deemed politically progressive and receiving international praise — was leaving Morocco’s own poor and disenfranchised behind. Precarious partnerships between poor Moroccan homeowners and migrant tenants cut against dominant narratives of overt hostility and xenophobia (Alioua 2016, 2017). But such fragile collaborations often failed to dispel, and sometimes reinforced, longstanding patterns in which rural and poor Moroccans have retained only limited and precarious prospects for claiming rights to urban space.

At the same time, Biggie’s household’s biography also sheds light on the particular importance of the Dahira in mediating domesticity and mobility for Senegalese. Unlike many other fraternal Sufi orders elsewhere, historically understood as homosocial spaces in which women’s participation is formally excluded or specialized, Senegalese Sufi orders model themselves upon and mirror domestic relations, hierarchies, and gender “complementarities,” explicitly drawing on women’s productive and reproductive labors to raise (*yaar*) the spiritual collective. Through this mirroring, the Dahira presents an ideal image of the stability and durability of Senegalese community in diaspora (Diouf 2001; Kane 2012; Melly 2017), soldered through the self-sacrificing generosity of the *yaayu daara ji*. Disciples are reminded that “every household is a Dahira,” and that therefore, “wherever one goes [in the world] one will find other disciples and shelter [*ku lay dalal*] — a Dahira.” The expansionist grammar of the Dahira generates competition between charismatic leaders to establish new zones of influence, fueling anxieties about how the boundaries of moral community are to be policed as these new centers of influence continue to proliferate. Given the centrality of Big House imagery, it is not surprising that the terrain of this conflict should center around marriage and household reproduction.

The ripples of Yacine’s expulsion, and eventually the household’s dissolution, were felt in different ways across the various networks in which I was involved. Within a short amount of

time, almost everyone in the neighborhood had their own version of what had happened. In sharing my own understanding of events with my hosts, they had no trouble formulating their own theories and explanations for the household's collapse. Biggie's apartment admitted members too liberally; their membership was too diverse, too many men and women living together; they were too indiscreet (*ñaq sutura*); they were a *këru clandestins*; with no one to "hold down" the house — *def ménage* — ie cook and clean for them; they were a house "ruled by their appetites" (*bëgg-bëgg ño koy jittaal*). Biggie's reputation as a prolific "*fixeur*" with extensive connections and relations across the city became a strike against him in his competency as household head; his solicitation of non-Senegalese business partners and his willingness to blend business and domestic networks seemed to reflect a lack of moral discernment. More, disparaging the women of the household for being seduced by the "corrupt" solicitations of the *Thiantacounes* Dahira, they reflected a sense that Dahiras, in their aspiration for global extension, were both *reliant on* and *threatened by* women's powers of accumulation. Debates around the legitimacy and appropriateness of women's householding and trade activities in Casablanca crystallized around this tension. The Dahira, as a vehicle of global expansion on its own was *too* compelling, seductive even, and needed the firm guidance of senior patriarch (*boroom kër*) or matriarch (*yaayu daara ji*) to serve as counter-weight within the household. In short, Biggie's household lacked key constituents deemed necessary to hold it in proper relation with the Dahira.

For Lévi-Strauss, the household is defined by its ability to "compound" forces that "seem destined to mutual exclusion because of their contradictory bend" (1982, 183). The house "expressed an effort to transcend, in all spheres of collective life, theoretically incompatible principles" (ibid). But, as Ferme notes, this assertion of a household that transcends difference

presumes that the house will “outlast transformations to composition” in a recognizable and stable form (156). To listen to neighbors’ evaluations, it would seem that Biggie’s household contained contradictions that could not simply be contained or reconciled by the moral cover of the Big House. Within the shared everyday of the residents that I observed, the material embodied tasks of living together, amidst an uncertain and often hostile environment, worked for a time to a certain capacity to sustain their differences and even pursue daily pleasures, yet reached a point beyond which it could no longer hold. The approach I wish to highlight, that of a household biography as the “intersecting articulation” of various institutions, forms, and itineraries, and shaped by the “interplay of permanence and impermanence” (Carsten and Hugh-Jones, quoted in Ferme 2001, 155), sees both holding and letting go as integral to households, and householding.

Recalling feminist geographers Fannin and Colls’s theorization of the gestating subject as one who “does not depend on closed edges in order to construct itself,” (2013, 1080), they contend that the pregnant body should serve as a “model for thinking differently about the presumptions of boundedness, fixity, stasis, and identity that tend to underwrite more familiar geographical spaces of borders, barriers, territories, and boundaries” (ibid. 1098–1099). In sympathetic rejoinder to this proposition, Lewis contends that theorizing ‘placental’ — she proposes “uterine” — relations, indeed helps to challenge capitalist constructions of the bounded individual subject and the forms of power that “naturally” accrue to the neoliberal nuclear family, shedding light on the porosity of bodies and subjects more broadly. However, she notes, this should serve as a lesson in the potential openness of *all* bodies to their environments, yet should not fail to recognize the different nature of bodies’ imbrication in their respective open

environments.⁸⁴ Thus, “for some,” Lewis writes, “to simply be ‘imbricated’ without the mitigating help of boundaries, barricades and weapons, is simply to be unsupported, exposed, and vulnerable” (2016, 311). Indeed, the point is not simply to revalue the domains of care and reproduction by affirming “unpaid love” and “openness” as goods in themselves. The politics of this framing, Lewis argues, rests in its utility for “proliferat[ing] queer and counterintuitive examples of reproductive assistance, which is to say, desirable and utopian praxes of life- and death-enabling holding and letting go that provincialize (without rejecting) the normative biogenetic model of family” (2016, 15). I propose that the migrant households in my research be considered among such counterintuitive examples of assisted reproduction. Though they experienced little by way of conventional gestation, they challenge the Dahir’s imagination of parthenogenic expansion through bounded exclusivity and its naturalized accretions of power, entitlement and hierarchies. Arising in response to the annihilation and endangerment of black and migrant life in border spaces like Morocco, these households worked intelligently to enable surviving and manage letting go in a zone of unevenly distributed mobility.

⁸⁴ Thus she notes, for many, the relational result of gestation is not “motherhood” — as we see in surrogacy, abortion, abandonment and miscarriage” (Lewis 2013, 309) — whose uneven potentials have much to do with the structural inequalities of state and institutional forms of support.

Chapter 5: *Yalla na ñu Yalla nangu ziyaar*: Pilgrimage, piety, and the production of elders

Morocco has long been sutured into the Senegalese cultural imagination, as a destination of pilgrimage (*ziyaar*) for the country's majority Tijaniyya Sufi adherents, and as a desirable destination of trade and learning. "*Dem ziyaaraji*" — going on *ziyaar* or religious visitation to a shrine, tomb, or living spiritual guide — is both a widely practiced form of collectivity and devotion, and a powerful ideational framework for Senegalese disciples' travel to Morocco. As seen in the travels of Mbarka, Combé and others in previous chapters, the presence of the *zawiya* in Fès and Morocco's prestige as the birthplace of the Tijaniyya were important factors in their own and their families' decisions for them to travel to Morocco. But then, during my first extended stay in Casablanca, I was surprised to learn that among my Senegalese housemates and members of the local Tijani Dahira⁸⁵ in the township, none would be going to Fès — only a few hours away from Casablanca by bus — for Mawlid, the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet. In fact, with the exception of a few of the local Dahira's leaders, hardly any of the women had planned to make the trip. Most of the women I knew would be working — many, as housemaids and nannies, which afforded few days off, for employers who objected to the idea of them visiting a shrine which they deemed un-Islamic. Upon further inquiry, all but one of the women admitted that they had *never* been to Fès.

In this chapter, we explore different senses of *ziyaar* that women deployed in order to tend to and make visible the relations in which their mobility to Morocco is embedded, signify their ongoing value to their families, and bring about important status transformations in their lives. It asks how women attend to the expectations and obligations attached to their statuses as

⁸⁵ Sufi religious association organized at the neighborhood level by Senegalese disciples, in Senegal and abroad (see Quesnot [1962])

both pilgrim and migrant — statuses which are often mutually enabling, but not always coterminous. Ethnographic descriptions of ordinary interactions, conventionalized forms of speech and gesture, and shrine visitation showcase the polysemic range of ziyaar and demonstrate its centrality, for Senegalese, in the production of persons and the patterning of relations across transnationally dispersed networks of kinship and Sufi affiliation. While the study of Islam, mobility, and Sufi brotherhood, particularly in the Senegalese case, has been intent to show the instrumental value of Sufi institutions for facilitating transnational migration and moral economy (O'Brien 1971; Samson 1991; Diouf and Rendall 2000), I argue that women's engagement with ziyaar cannot be fully understood as stable reproductions of the moral economy of Sufi brotherhood. Women drew on the polysemic possibilities of ziyaar within their everyday lives, to generate *new* circuits of value within their intimate relations. Tracing women's experiences of pilgrimage and spiritual striving in Morocco shifts attention away from the typical emphasis on physical travel and the homosocial bonds between disciple and Cheikh and onto the ways that the performative grammars of ziyaar are deployed in reshaping feminine ties, particularly between junior and senior women.

Re-situating ziyaar as a mode of ethical perception, with its roots in pre-Islamic social hierarchy and forms of etiquette, we examine how women work within and improvise on the repertoires of ziyaar in their everyday lives as migrants. I suggest that it is through these everyday forms of ethical perception that migrant women contribute to deepening and extending the logics of Sufi pilgrimage into new domains and geographies. Building on the idea that the “family drama” organizes and orients women's experiences of travel to Morocco, here we see how ziyaar is folded into and also frames expectations for care taking and receiving across generations. Whereas anthropologists of Islam have principally concerned themselves with piety

and subjective devotion as matters of textual tradition, this ethnography gives us the opportunity to contemplate Islam as an ethics and aesthetics of kinship and family life (Bush 2017; Khan 2006).

For Senegalese migrant women occupying the fragile edges of the kinship order, as widows, divorcées, or co-wives, striving to maintain attachment to the ideals of pilgrimage while attending to family members' demands could bring conflicting principles to bear. Attending to singular journeys and experiences with *ziyaar* in Morocco shows us that for some, fulfilling the duty of pilgrimage was equally staked to the possibility of demonstrating one's ongoing value to family back home, and securing access to a place in the familial household in Senegal to which they may one day return. Their negotiations are responses to the effects of broader changes to structures of kinship and domestic authority in Senegal, and the hardships and ambiguities of daily life in Morocco, which render uncertain the efficacy of *ziyaar* for bringing about desired transformations in their lives.

I. Ziyaar in Perspective

The Wolof word *ziyaar*, or *siyaare*, taken from the Arabic (زيارة), covers a semantic range that is similar but not identical to the English word "pilgrimage." *Ziyaar* may be translated to mean "visit" or "visitation," or to call on someone, in a modality of respect, submission, and devotion. In both Arabic and Wolof it evokes a religious visit to a shrine, tomb, or holy site, for the purpose of performing *du'a* (supplication), and partaking of the site's *baraka* (blessing, grace). The emphasis of *ziyaar* is on rapprochement, the effort of displacement acting as a sign of piety or devotion. It foregrounds the importance of physical proximity to the source of blessing for the personal transmission of mystical knowledge in Sufism. *Ziyaar* also denotes hierarchy, as

an act of pious submission or adherence to a saint, whether living or dead. Though the term implies physical displacement, *ziyaar* can also refer to visitations in dreams, waking visions, and miraculous transpositions of bodies outside the ordinary working of space and time.

Ziyaar is part of an overlapping field of terms related to different modalities of travel and aspiration, with differing degrees of spiritual significance: from *rihla*, or travel for the pursuit of knowledge and discovery, to *safr*, journey or voyage in a more secular sense, to *Hajj*, the paragon of displacement in the Islamic canon whose urtext is the departure of the prophet from Mecca to Medina, an itinerary repeated by millions of Muslims from around the world each year. To these terms we can add, in the Wolof language spoken by a majority of Senegalese, the term *tukki*, which like *rihla* connotes a voyage into the unknown in pursuit of knowledge and adventure. (In previous chapters, we also discussed the term *mbëkki*, to “attack” ie the border as in efforts of illicit migration to Europe. We might point out that terms like *aventurer* and *mbëkki* connote a violent confrontation with an outside, whereas *ziyaar* implies an aesthetics of reception and welcome from a person or holy site.)

The Arabic loan-word *ziyaar* is used by Wolof speakers to refer to visits to saints’ tombs and their living representatives or deputies.⁸⁶ By approaching (*jéggëlu*) the saint or cheikh, his emissaries, or physical abode, being seen by him and transacting with him, and professing one’s devotion and ‘surrender’ (*jébbëlu*) often signified through a gift or monetary offering, the aspirant endeavors to partake of the cheikh’s blessing and intercessory powers. Between *jéggël* and *jébbël* there is an axial movement, a play of nearness and absolute distance. In Sufi tradition, the saint (*wali*) and his descendants are understood to be exceptionally close to God (*wali* :

⁸⁶ Classically, *ziyaar* refers to a modality of pious visitation, an effortful act of displacement on behalf of the sufi disciple who yearns to bring him/herself into the presence of a spiritual master or guide, in order to receive the guide’s blessing or *baraka*. In Senegalese sufi tradition, *ziyaar* involves performing exclusive attachment through submission to a cheikh (*jébbëlu*), which is consecrated through material offerings of different kinds.

“friend of God”). To come close to and follow a saint, cheikh, or spiritual guide (*mqaddam*) is a means to ensure moral salubrity and access to the guide’s special relationship with the Prophet and with God. The *wali* in turn is assured to stand at the devotee’s side on the day of judgment, to intercede in answering with her the Angel’s queries, and to attest to the devotee’s character and faith.

The importance of personal mediation in the spiritual progress (*tarbiyaa*) of the aspirant cannot be overstated. As in sufi traditions elsewhere, the metaphysics of blessing and the transmission of mystical knowledge require *embodied* transactions between individuals sharing a physical presence (Ware 2014). The desire to partake of the presence or communion (also mystical states or *hal*), and to receive blessing and mystical knowledge through personal encounters and discussion with the cheikh and other disciples, is a central motivation for aspirants in the undertaking of *ziyaar*.

In an increasingly mobile, diasporic population, *ziyaar* indexes a sacred geography that is multi-centered and labile, spanning the globe. Its sacred nodes and itineraries are not fixed, but rather are continuously reshaped by the mobility of disciples and itinerant cheikhs themselves. The network includes Sufi *zawiyas* (mausoleums or shrines) formally consecrated for the purpose of pious retreat, erected through funds gathered by *taalibés* (disciples); it may also include the private homes, event halls, and public spaces in which disciples and their leaders gather. Different Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqa*, pl. *turuq*) in Senegal, which together account for more than 85% of the Muslim population, each have distinct traditions of *ziyaar* — different styles, calendrical rhythms and ritual universes conjured through performance. Each *tariqa* has its own charismatic leaders and venerated figures, just as different *ziyaar* practices and aesthetics— from ostentatious displays of cash, sacrificial feasting and dancing (*bérnde* —

yëngu), to more discreet exchanges and focus on individual textual study — represent different styles of arguing legitimacy and performing submission. In Senegal, open contestation over the legitimacy of different rituals and authority figures are not uncommon. But in that regard, large scale *ziyaarat*, such as at Mawlid (Wolof: *Gammou*), is often the occasion for the different Senegalese brotherhood leaders to perform mutual deference and respect. Public performances of mutual aid, attendance, and investiture in feasts and ceremonies across lines of brotherhood affiliation contribute to the textualization of the nation as an “arena” of shared Islamic values and democratic toleration (Kane 2012). Moreover, the mobilization on a mass scale of people and things across local, regional, and transnational space during periods of *ziyaar*, such as the pilgrimage of over three million people annually to Touba (Babou 2011), presents an important occasion for commerce and transport — a practical framework for hooking in different commercial projects and plans into pre-patterned religious routes (Simone 2011).

As an integral part of Senegalese devotional practice, it is important to see *ziyaar* as inscribed within a tradition (Green 2012; Asad 1989), but one which is not fully encompassed by Islamic idiom and textual tradition. Outside of explicitly religious visitations, *ziyaar* also names formal or informal social visits to elders and religious specialists within one’s family and community. It is often used in ordinary greetings: “*Ñungi lay ziyaar*” [We visit you], the response to which is “*Yalla na yalla nangu ziyaar*” [May God accept your *ziyaar*] or “*Ñungi dellu ziyaar*” [We return the visit.] Practices and patterns of visiting and receiving visitations reproduce schemes of gendered, gerontocratic and timocratic honor, whereby immobility is an index of an elite and refined state, and is opposed to a degraded and dishonorable state of excessive activity and exposure (Irvine 1989). Rooted in the social logics of the caste system, which pre-dates Islamization in Senegal, *ziyaar* expresses the hierarchical construction of the

social through the regulated patterning of contrastive movement, activity, and speech. High activity and free, loud speech is associate with low-status ('spokesperson 'being a caste profession — ie *griot* or *gével*), and immobility, passivity, and limited speech with high-status.⁸⁷ As a ubiquitous feature of ordinary interactions, these patterns give insight into the fundamental role that inequality plays in Senegalese society, where the very form of social greeting requires one party to assume a position of “high status” and the other “low status” (Irvine 1989, 174-5). This is neatly summarized by the Wolof proverb: ‘When two persons greet each other, one has shame, the other has glory’ —“*sawaa ji, sawaa ji, gàcc angi ci, ndam anga ca.*” The assertion of low or high status positions emerge out of a series of associations which “recall cultural stereotypes of noble and griot behavior,” and into which other gendered stereotypes and dyads of religious authority and submission are also inscribed (175). However, far from being fixed or static, these hierarchical roles and positions are highly negotiable and open to manipulation. For Senegalese, explicit and implicit invocations of *ziyaar* entail cultivating distinction through pious self fashioning, but they also entail joking and play (Smith 2006), as well as a highly performative and recursive concept of ‘status.’ *Ziyaar* is a topos of hierarchical obligation and attachment, describing the production of persons via his/her contingent inhabitation of roles of patronage and dependency. As such, it folds in obligations between junior and senior kin, women and men, and guests and householders into its semiotic range, making it a flexible and resilient part of Senegalese cultural economy. Proper performance of these ordinary rituals of communication yield aesthetic pleasure and mutual appreciation, and give participants a ritual framework in which their selves, each other, and collective histories may come into view in new ways. For instance, the proper performance of speech etiquette guided by the topos of *ziyaar*

⁸⁷ Senegalese caste, and Wolof caste in particular, is historically comprised of the endogamous *géer* (non-artisans), *ñeeño* (artisan), and *jamm* (slave) castes. (Irvine 1973; Diop 1985; Tamari 1997; Mbow 2000)

contributes to feelings of pride and distinction among Senegalese migrants, who have come to think of themselves as moral guardians in a debased Moroccan society where Sufi values and the remembrance of saintly origins have been abandoned.⁸⁸

Proposing to take expressions of kinship, filial obligation, and deference toward elders as integral elements of Islamic piety raises difficult historical and epistemological questions. Scripturally, there is “no kinship in Islam” (Sanneh 1997, 23; cf Saul 2006) and early propagators of the faith often believed that blood and patrimony were detrimental to piety and infringed on the singularity of divine authority. The vanquishing of ‘ancestor worship’ was a key trope in reformist Islamic movements in the 18th and 19th centuries, notably in West Africa, where reformers attempted to wipe out so-called “pagan” traditions. However, as Sanneh notes, they could not do away with the centrality of kinship in the African social imagination. The ability to demonstrate kinship or genealogical ties to the traditional Arab centers of Islam has been central to local contestations over groups’ claims to authenticity and ‘correct’ Islamic practice, particularly in regions of West Africa where accusations of being ‘insufficiently’ Muslim have historically served as the grounds for enslavability (El Hamel 2016; Scheele 2017).

Meanwhile, since its emergence as a subfield, the anthropology of Islam has tended to concentrate its attention on regions and cultural contexts predominated by “Salafi” reformism, movements which, in many parts of the world, have characteristically intoned against Sufi devotional practices such as shrine visitation (*ziyaar*), and what Salafis accuse of ancestor worship. The discipline’s focus on reformist movements seems to have caused questions of elder and familial relations to fall outside the frame of Islamic piety. Despite this, texts and accounts of early Islam are rife with familial and tribal dramas; and while scholars and theologians remark

⁸⁸ In Morocco, Tijanis make up a very small minority of sufis today, and participation in sufi brotherhoods on the whole has sharply diminished over the 20th century. (See al Adnani 2007)

that an ideal of friendship replaced the model of ancestor devotion (Shaikh 2018), the affective dynamics and textures of intimate kin ties within the Prophet's family are models and mirrors of ethical life for many Muslims. This occlusion, I contend, is detrimental to our understanding of the specific ways that many women identify with and feel themselves to be kin to the Prophet, finding moral exemplarity, for example, in stories of the Prophet's wives and daughters. Noting simultaneously the ideological over-investment in the figure of the ancestor in Islamic reformist discourse, and the marked absence of matters of kinship, sexuality, and domesticity from contemporary anthropological discussions of Islamic piety, how might we re-mobilize early Islam's interest in the figure of the ancestor and the moral pedagogies of kin relations, not for the purpose of restoring to normative status a model of biological or patriarchal kinship, but as a means of re-approaching women's concerns, desires, and expressions of kinship as modes of ethical striving?

Attending to the multiplicity of meanings of *ziyaar* reveals kinship and the movements of pious deference to be deeply entangled and mutually potentiating. *Ziyaar* is not a single sign but rather an association between signs, a quilting point between heterogeneous motives, styles, and orientations of action. It indexes different modes of attachment, agency and submission, and the interplay of the visible and invisible (manifest and hidden) reality in a Sufi Islamic idiom. As an elastic and flexible concept governing the movement of association between people and things (and flows of people and things of different kinds), *ziyaar* is perhaps best thought of as an economy of perception, a means by which individuals pay attention to what others are doing, envision regularity and order at different thresholds of action, and use ritual forms to explore relations, thereby bringing new relations into being (cf Simone 2001). In chapters 2 and 3, we examined the vocabularies and practices that make up the cultural kinesthesia of "moving

market,” a figure for transnational enterprise by which ordinary migrants and traders envision themselves as part of a movement with global reach. Thus, like “moving market” which hinged on the thresholds of movement and stillness, or action and reflection, *ziyaar* offers another entry point to considering how movement — mutually considered performances of the appropriate genres and styles of action — ‘produces the person,’ and fosters a sensibility whereby enacting “correct” movements, qua etiquette, is tied to the ethical tending to relations and society as a whole (Goffman 1967; Seligman et al 2008). Specifically, the scenes rendered in what follows show the tracking of *ziyaar* alongside the making and maintaining of kinship and family relations. The ethical and aesthetic-performative dimensions of *ziyaar* were terrain on which women’s desires and disappointments about these relations could find voice. Tracking the movements of *ziyaar* alongside those of kinship not only highlight the (often overlooked) roles of pleasure, suffering, and participation in discursive formations in the making of kinship (Trawick 2006; Bush 2017; Goodfellow 2018). They also point to the distinct vulnerabilities of my interlocutors, as uncoupled aging migrants abroad, and kinship as a question of endurance.

II. Spiritual economy, enclosure, and experimentation

In the study of Sufi brotherhoods in Senegal, mobility and the political economy of migration have long taken a central position. Originally, rural communities of disciples attached to a cheikh (also *mqaddam*, *marabout* or *sërigne*) received Quranic instruction in exchange for laboring in the cheikh’s fields — an institution called a *daara*. This was a system instrumentalized by French colonial officials who ruled through the (always partial) collaboration of marabouts. Across the 20th century, as some rural residents were compelled to migrate to the city for work or in response to ecological changes, they reproduced the *daara* in

an adapted form, the *Dahira*, through which part of the disciple's earnings in the city returned to the rural community via obligatory gifts and offerings (*aadiya*) to the cheikh. In this way, migrants maintained moral and spiritual connection to their guides and rural communities, while receiving aid and social solidarity in the city. After the 1970s, when droughts decimated the groundnut economy, and shortly thereafter structural adjustment induced many Senegalese to seek opportunities abroad, the moral and material backing of brotherhood institutions became essential both to financing travel and to organizing social life and livelihoods in diaspora.

Scholars have taken the case of Senegalese brotherhoods as exemplary, if not paradigmatic, of the endurance of religious institutions and practices amidst their widely predicted decline (Soares 2005; Masquelier 2006; Rudnickyj 2008). This has dovetailed with scholarly and political interest in global Islamic reform movements since the 1990s, where anthropologists have sought to link changing notions of selfhood and individualism, modes and media of knowledge transmission, and forms of religious authority to the global spread of neoliberal economic ideology (Rudnickyj 2010; Jones 2010; Turner 2011). Noting that in many West African contexts such as Senegal, exposure to globalized Islamic orthodoxy has generally *not* produced a weakening of Sufi systems of affiliation, Soares characterizes spiritual economy as a condition in which “certain processes of commodification — the exchange of blessings and prayers for commodities, the proliferation of personal and impersonal Islamic religious commodities — have intensified around saints in the neoliberal era” (2004; 81). By trying to show parallels between transformations to subjectivity under neoliberalism and the shifting of spiritual practices like ritual *ziyaarat* to saints, West African Sufi brotherhoods are understood as a kind of indigenous tactical adaptation to the disruptions of globalization, rather than living traditions with their own internal debates, tendencies, textual traditions and moral worlds, This

mode of analysis reinforces a longstanding colonial epistemology in which “Arab” Islam was rendered as orthodox, pure, textual, and rational, and “African” or “Black” Islam as spiritual, embodied, hybrid, and/or a sign for something else.⁸⁹ According to these scholars, the nature of brotherhoods’ economic base, hierarchical structure, and agrarian labor ethos has enabled networks of migrant disciples, cheikhs, and brotherhood institutions to efficaciously “enclose” capital into morally sanctioned circuits of value, insulating them against market volatility. Sufi institutions are depicted as remarkably stable form of signification, part of the “Sufi social contract” through which Senegal has become a democratic “exception” in the region (Babou 2013; Diouf 2013; Sanneh 1997; Masquelier 2012; Soares 1989, 2005; Triaud 2006). By soldering an association between men’s transnational mobility and the production of ethical community, Senegalese Sufi brotherhoods have been made into the protagonists of a new “cosmopolitanism from below” (Diouf and Rendall 2000), a celebratory characterization that has been justly critiqued for its tacit endorsement of the clerical Neo-aristocracy in Senegal, against forces of movements that actually resist neoliberal marginalization (Marsh 2012; 657).

The incorporation of feminist perspectives into the study of “spiritual economy” has generated important investigations into the gendered and spatialized dynamics of social reproduction under transnational conditions (Buggenhagen 2011; Melly 2010; Babou 2007). Engaging protocols of feminist economic anthropology, Buggenhagen (2011) shows that women’s ritual exchanges are an integral (albeit suppressed) moment in the workings of a transnational Murid spiritual economy. Whereas both brotherhood and migrant trade networks

⁸⁹ For an excellent analysis of how the disciplinary division between Islamic studies/ theology and anthropology has shape epistemologies of Islam in Africa, namely via a racist denigration of “African” islam as syncretic, embodied, and instrumental and “Arab” Islam as authentic, textual, and reflexive, (see Triaud 2007; Ware III 2011; Marsh 2012). More recent historical scholarship by academics who are disciples of the tariqa have offered important insights and critique drawing on previously un-examined texts. (See Babou 2007; Kane 2011; Hill 2012)

have been taken as primarily male homosocial spaces, Buggenhagen's research demonstrates the interdependence of migrant men's waged activities abroad and the domestic ritual exchanges controlled by women, the latter being indispensable to the accumulation of credit, capital, and reputation necessary for placing and sustaining men in migration. She thus argues for studying gendered spheres of ritual exchange around life-cycle events in continuity with the (male) world of transnational labor and religious gift-giving, contending that women's domestic economies are what secure and ultimately enable the broader efficacy of transnational brotherhood projects. Women's consumption and exchange practices in domestic life-cycle rituals have been politicized in recent years, named as the cause of flagging national development, and deemed "un-Islamic" by public officials and religious authorities. These public accusations come precisely at a moment when Senegalese society is experiencing a shift toward more female-headed households in the aftermath of mass labor emigration, and thus where men's control over domestic accumulation is seen as jeopardized.

The incorporation of women's practices and perspectives into the picture has been an indispensable contribution to the understanding of Senegalese religious community and the political economy of migration. However, feminist "applications" that seek to simply expand our gaze to gain a more encompassing view of women's roles in the production of a erstwhile "unified" spiritual economy would assume that, when they pursue sponsored religious travel, men and women automatically act with common goals and objectives.⁹⁰ Instead, my research

⁹⁰ Writing on feminist "applications" in anthropology, Strathern (1988) shows that the perspective that proceeds by "demystifying" the sources of devaluation of "women's work" is limited by its reliance on a picture of work derived from wage markets, whereby undisclosed assumptions about particular forms of right and property are smuggled in. For one, they take for granted that a person has some kind of natural right in whatever they produce, and secondly, they "assume that it is *work* which is the subject of value conversion, so that one can speak of the appropriation of labor" (1988, 152, *emph added*). According to Strathern, we don't know what work *is*, from a native perspective, until we know how persons and things are constructed, what is transactable between them, and the different domains or scales that their transactions produce.

highlights the ways that the form of religious travel called *ziyaar* produces women differently from men, and produces older women differently from young. Rather than a sign of efficacious “enclosure” and neat consonance between Islamic values and neoliberal pedagogies, women’s *ziyaarat* show a complex and contradictory entanglements between individual aspirations and the reproduction of ethical community, at different thresholds of life. The engagements with *ziyaar* that I consider here showcase women experimenting with their ability to lay claim to some of the symbolic resources of male-dominated brotherhood economies, at the same time as they attempt to carve out *new* channels in which value could circulate. Their efforts to re-negotiate the terms of their relationships with senior women and other kin at home in Senegal reveal the contours of intimate economies that are often volatile, emotionally burdensome, and uncertain. Amidst realignments of gendered control of wealth and property within households, the dispersion of family units as a consequence of mass emigration, and cultural expectations for women who are unmarried, divorced, or in subordinate positions within polygynous marriages, these women deployed *ziyaar* in surprising ways to leverage new kinds of relationship and futures for themselves. I argue that their struggles to make their performances of *ziyaar* socially efficacious point to a tension in the way pilgrimage — and mobility more broadly — mediates between individual status acquisition and the production of ethical community. The intimate negotiations and disappointments rendered here reflect a growing conflict between the imagined community of transnational brotherhood and transforming modes of social reproduction, household structures, and norms of domestic economy in which migration is embedded. At the same time, women’s experimentations with the grammar of *ziyaar* suggest possible alternatives for the figuration of transnational connectivity and ethical community, beyond the territorializing frames of the nation or brotherhood.

Thus revising the notion of Islamic Sufi devotion as primarily expressed in the relationship between disciple and cheikh (mediated by physical movements of people through pilgrimage, and money through *aadiya* and remittance), I suggest that attention ought to be paid to a dimension of Islam and *ziyaar* as expressing a form of ethical attention to kinship relations in the everyday. Returning to the theme of family drama from chapter 1, this chapter offers a window onto Islam as instantiated in aesthetics and ethics of everyday life shared with friends and kin. Women's travels to Morocco, and their imbrication in *ziyaar*, prove to be not only important to the reproduction of the infrastructure of brotherhood, migration, trade, and pilgrimage; they are also central to upholding responsibilities, and the possibility of acknowledgement, within the intimate spheres of desire, sexuality, and kinship.

III. Permanent pilgrims, permanent migrants: territories of *ziyaar*

A major and often un-remarked upon dimension of pilgrimage, especially in the contemporary era of air travel, is its duration. However, for Africans and other Muslims living far from traditional holy centers, the time and expense of travel and household maintenance during prolonged absence have always been a major consideration. In this regard, Islamic legal interpretations (the *Maliki madhab*) of rites of Hajj to Mecca from the so-called "edges" of the Umma have been uniquely enabling; they have recognize the legitimacy of the many different economic strategies believers employed for financing the Hajj, thus allowing new itineraries and modes of travel to take route.⁹¹ As historians Mann and Lecocq explain, prospective pilgrims

⁹¹ Whereas three of the four Islamic *madbbabs* (schools of jurisprudence) require pilgrims to secure collective transport (caravan, boat, etc) for pilgrimage to Mecca, only the Maliki school, which is most prominent in the Maghreb and West Africa, permits travel by foot. Also, while the other schools require the aspiring pilgrim to secure the funds for round-trip travel, as well as domestic allowances for household members who stay behind, all prior to departure, the Maliki school alone recognizes the legitimacy of working and earning one's passage along the way. (See eg al-Naqar 1972; Birks 1978; Bawa Yamba 1995)

evaluated and shared information about labor markets and legal regimes en route, as factors for completing their pilgrimage; this was key in fostering a sensibility among African Muslims not only of being part of a “global” Umma, but also of important regional and subregional connectivities. West African pilgrims could combine pilgrimage with labor migration, thus “profiting from the fluctuations in the labor market, some taking years, even decades, sometimes even their whole lives to arrive in Mecca and return home” (Lecocq 2012; 314). However, bureaucratic, political, and economic impediments sometimes blocked pilgrims’ passage, and, unable or unwilling to return without having achieved the desired status of *Hajji*, some became “permanent pilgrims.” This term, used by Bawa Yamba (1995), describes communities of migrant laborers in Chad, Sudan, and Ethiopia who formed ethno-religious enclaves within their host societies by drawing on various modes of distinction related to their aspired Hajj, such as asceticism and trade specialization.

Senegalese pilgrimage to Fès, Morocco, has involved a similar braiding of economic, political, and spiritual itineraries. In polemical, theological, and popular texts of the Tijaniyya Sufi order, *ziyaar* to Fès, is considered to be the inauguration or “threshold” of the Hajj. Some have described the rite as the munificent intercession of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani himself: for Africans unable to afford Hajj to Mecca, *ziyaar* to Fès could “stand in” (see, e.g. Triaud, Jean and Robinson, David (eds) 2000; Abun-Nasr 1965). While this claim is contested on doctrinal grounds, at a pragmatic level West African Hajjis were, across much of the colonial period, required to pass through Morocco to secure visas and rejoin steam ships bound for the Hijaz, part of French colonial efforts to govern through local Islamic authorities as a “Muslim power” (Mann and Lecocq 2007). Under French colonial rule and its “*politique musulmane*” in North and West Africa, the distinction was made between “Islam maure” (moorish or Arab islam) and

“Islam noir” (black Islam), the latter which it deemed malleable, superficial, and thus unthreatening. In this paradigm, the Tijaniyya, an emanation of the Maghreb, was viewed as a danger to the colonial order, and the movement of Tijani disciples and notables was both tightly constrained and instrumentalized as a source of diplomatic patronage and control. Since Independence, Morocco’s management and promotion of both spiritual travel and economic migration has played a vital role in post-colonial state-craft, having carried forward many of the colonial era controls and subsidies. The growth of efficient intra-regional transport and commercial *ziyaarat*, have bolstered Morocco’s reputation, becoming an exclusive airline carrier for West Africans to Mecca by way of Moroccan tourist hubs.

Regular flows of Senegalese pilgrims have been a longstanding presence in Fès, but changing legal and economic conditions in both Morocco and Senegal are transforming the nature and duration of travel. Like Bawa Yamba’s “permanent pilgrims,” some Senegalese spend years working in Morocco before making the visit to Fès, even as popular identification with the Tijaniyya and ideals of Sufi devotion are often invoked as grounds for Senegalese “privileged” status in Morocco. For women, the spiritual status of *ziyaar* and the promise of proximity to the *zawiya* of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani was often invoked as a rationale for their families agreeing to support their unaccompanied travels.

Like Hajj, major *ziyaarat* are costly: from travel and accommodation to the cash and gift offered to the cheikh, to the souvenirs (*sēricé*) that pilgrims are expected to return home with, they present a substantial economic burden. Realistically, for most Senegalese families, pilgrimage is a multiply-authored form of travel, tied up in multi-lateral forms of investment, including individual sponsorships, credits, and bride-wealth payments, as well as yoked to family members’ commercial projects. In turn, the returning pilgrim is expected to “re-distribute” across

wide networks through extensive and generous gift-giving. With Hajj to Mecca, ziyaar to Fès, and even with other local ziyaarat such as the Maggal celebration in Touba or Gammou in Tivaouane, the younger generation is expected to fund the rites for their parents and elders, whether those within their immediate family or mediated through community ritual organizations such as the Dahira. In this way ziyaar transactions inscribe the physical movements of pilgrimage into a sequence of normative and aspirational life-stages, articulated through material transactions across generations (O'Brien 1999; Cooper 1999).

Ziyaar does not merely describe the priority and privileges owed to elders, however. Hajj or other major ziyaarat work to *produce* persons as elders and “big” men and women, specifically through the process of return and the redistribution of gifts (*sëricé*) and cash among extensive networks of kin and neighbors. As with the more extensively documented Hajj to Mecca, ziyaar establishes one as “*khilifa*” or “*hajja*,” a person of standing who is demonstrated capable of drawing dependents into herself. Indeed, the term “*hajja*” is frequently used interchangeably to refer to a successful businessperson or transnational trader, irrespective of whether she has been to Mecca. While spiritual visits and *aadiya* (offerings) are means of performing devotion, the pilgrim’s personhood is signified through her return, and specifically by putting wealth invested in her back into circulation. Much in the same way that Strathern (1988) has turned our attention to seeing that persons are the manifestations of relations and not resources held external to them, we might here consider ziyaar as a feature of cultural economy in which mobility — its styles, forms, timings, and range — makes persons and productive and reproductive relations appear, rather than the other way around. In ideal terms, practices of sponsorship and material re-distribution around the individual’s pilgrimage bridge the gap between the ones who move and the ones who stay. In this way, pilgrimage contributes to a

picture of ideal moral community, renewed through both physical mobility and the internally ordered movements of exchange.

Within this system of sponsorship and gift exchange, the place of the Sufi brotherhood institutions and leaders have received the most attention. In the scholarly literature, *ziyaar* is made to stand for the consecration of the relationship between Sufi master and disciple through circuits of cash offerings and gifts. It is taken as shorthand for the networks that have enabled young men to migrate abroad while maintaining spiritually and materially attached to the home community, and to the project of an Islam-centered nation-building (Kane 2011; Babou 2007). Thus it has become a synecdoche for moral economy under global neoliberalism, and a dynamic, spiritually informed “vernacular cosmopolitanism” (Diouf & Rendall 2000; Hill 2011). The brotherhoods’ notoriety for extensive transnational networks of trade has been based in part in their capacity to make available extra-familial sources of credit and financial backing to prospective migrants. From the early 20th century onward, brotherhoods made it possible for young men to acquire capital independently of their fathers, which they used in launching commercial ventures abroad (Copans et al 1972). Subsequently, agricultural degradation and economic stagnation in the 1970s and 80s, combined with the growth of remittance economy and dependence on cash from young migrants abroad, has contributed to the symbolic dispossession of senior men. For those without access to land or for those residing in areas of depleted or unproductive soil, they were further deprived of symbolic control over marital processes and the formation of their son’s households through land bequeathing (Buggenhagen 2011). All of this has resulted in a gradual shift over time of domestic authority from senior men to senior women, who have come to control remittances. This transformation bears important ramifications, as we

shall see over the three following cases, for how women migrants in Morocco view and navigate the expectations and disappointments related to their own *ziyaar vis-à-vis* family at home.

IV. Arame: May God accept our *ziyaar*

Arame is a woman of about thirty-five from Keur Massar, a growing middle-class township in the suburbs of Dakar. Her family holds a large *terrain* where they have been slowly building up an airy and spacious multi-story compound for Arame's mother, two brothers and brothers' wives, and four unmarried younger sisters. Her father and paternal uncles also held a spacious residence in Tivaouane, one of the Tijani spiritual centers of Senegal,⁹² which was built by her grandfather on land granted to him by members of the Tijani Sy family in the 1970s. During holidays, the house accommodated not only Arame's family but a wide range of kin and non-kin relations. Arame's mother also came from a prominent family of Tijanis from the region of Kolda, and had attained a relatively high level of schooling in a *daara* (Quranic school) in St. Louis in the 1960s. Arame was engaged to a close cousin, a man by the name of Tapha, who had already been in Morocco for sixteen months at the time of their marriage. He had financed his own travel with his earnings as a lorry driver, and spent nearly 6 months in the forests outside of Tangier, throwing his bid in with Europe-bound convoys, until his money and morale ran dry and he returned to Casablanca to find work. Eventually a construction company took him on, and he worked 16 hour days, sleeping on-site along with the other Morocco migrants from the countryside. The first payment he sent home included Moroccan *djellabas* and two pairs of sequined slippers, the "first offering" (*may bu jëkke*) for his prospective wife, along with *kuruus* (prayer beads) for his father, and 1000 dirhams (~\$90 USD) given to his mother for household

⁹² The city about 80km from Dakar, Tivaouane is a holy city symbolically overseen by the Sy maraboutic family.

expenses. All of this was reported to me with great precision by his mother herself, years after the fact. Arame's parents were impressed with the gesture, and Arame accepted the gifts as symbols of their engagement (though half was immediately redistributed to her elder sisters). The bride price was agreed on, and wedding arrangements were made. It was Arame's mother who had insisted that her daughter join her new husband in Morocco, thinking that once they established a house in Fès it would enable her to go on *ziyaar* herself. Arame's mother was for her part involved in a domestic retail operation, selling shoes, handbags, and other imported goods through credit made available by her Dakhira, of which she was an officer. She hoped that having her daughter in Fès would allow her to expand her own commercial enterprise. Arame had a diploma from beautician school and had aspirations to open her own salon in the up-and-coming Grand Yoff neighborhood, but her mother, who controlled her bride-wealth, decided that it would be used for Arame's travel and an initial stock of merchandise to sell once she settled in Fès. This would be supplemented by investments from her uncles, both ambitious Dakhira men residing in Italy, each with construction projects of their own underway in Tivaouane.

The burden of this sponsorship seemed to weigh heavily on Arame, even by the time I met her almost a year later in Casablanca, where she lived in a small one-bedroom apartment with her husband and her younger sister who had joined her. The merchandise she'd brought with her was slow to sell, and her husband's meager salary could not support both of them, so she had been forced to find a job as a live-in nanny in a large villa on the posh southern edge of the city. By the time of the first approaching holiday, she had not managed to gather enough funds to send back the stock of fassi *djellaba*-s, *babouches*, and textiles — luxury items which are particularly sought after during the holiday times — that her mother expected. On top of her own mother's rebukes, she sensed her mother-in-law (*goro*)'s growing ill-will toward her.

Arame's inability to send the gifts and food items for Ramadan (the expected "*sukkar ndogou*" or hospitable offering for Ramadan fast breaking [Moyo 2017]) that were expected of her as a new bride were becoming a routine source of conflict: her in-law made clear that she suspected Arame of holding back. Meanwhile Arame too yearned to go to Fès; she had been trying unsuccessfully to have a baby and sought the Cheikh's protective benediction. She lamented the fact that her travels abroad had not garnered her more freedom from these obligations: "I'd always been told," she said, "'get married, go to Spain or Italy, and live like a European, like a queen' [using the french, *comme une reine*.] Just you and your husband. You'll send what you can, simple! But here, we're still too close, we're still in Africa. All that *maraboutage*... it's still at work here." Arame feared that suspicions and jealousies from her in-laws could lead to nefarious interventions (*maraboutage*), possibly contributing to her inability to conceive. The "safe" proximity and spiritual significance of Morocco, which had convinced others to contribute to her travel, turned out to be a source of enclosure. "Still in Africa," both kinship's claims and consequences retained their full force.

In the absence of the ability to meet her family's demands, Arame struggled to gather together ("*liggenti*," untangle or free up) 300 dirhams (about \$25 USD), taking a small loan from a neighbor, which she sent by courier along with another 150 dirhams to her mother in law. When she called each of them by phone (a rare occurrence given the cost of international phone credit and the older women's lack of internet connection), she dramatized the offering through elaborate prayers upon both women and their children. She further presented the cash offering as "*pass*," literally, transportation fare, for the upcoming Gammou ceremony which they would attend in Tivaouane, Senegal. She also dispatched caftans that her employer had given her as hand-me-downs, which she sent to her *goro* [mother-in-law] and eldest sister-in-law, with the

message: “*ngay khan yaa kan* - so that you know who you are for me; everything I have in this world, you are the one who has done it for me.” Invested with the symbolism of *ziyaar*, the offering was a means of palliating (*fajju*) possible ill-feeling, appealing to their sense of honor and status as pious elders. Over the subsequent years, Arame would respond similarly to her family members’ requests, which did not diminish over time, occasionally including in these small transfers a plastic *tasbih* or incense to underline the association between the cash offering and her status as *ziyaar-kaat*, a pilgrim.

And it appeared to be effective. When I visited Arame’s mother and in-laws upon a subsequent trip to Dakar, she had displayed a studio portrait made of her in her tailored robes, with Arame’s wedding picture and an image of the mausoleum of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani photo-shopped into it, on display centrally in her newly finished *salon*. Seated with her in the salon while her younger unmarried sisters served us tea, Arame’s mother returned over and over to exclaim praises upon her daughter (who was still in Morocco). “My daughter, what’s she’s done for me none of my children [literally, no male child] has ever done for me. She sent me on *ziyaar*, by God, yes. I visited the cheikh [Ahmed Tijani], and I prayed for all my children, that they find husbands who will bring them fortune and honor [*khewel ak sutura*].” She sent one of Arame’s sisters to fetch the gifts from Arame, still in their plastic shrink wrap, and passed them to me to admire. “We all hope for it, to have a child like this, one with respect (*yiiw*) and pity for her parents (*yeermandé waayjuur-am*). I thank God, may God accept the *ziyaar* and join us in the grace of Sërigne Babacar (*tasse si barké Sërigne Babacar*).”

Given the multiple sources of financial investment that undergirded her travel, Arame’s efforts to frame small cash payments as “*pass*” can be seen as a kind of counter-gift, or counter-sponsorship. A form of redistribution that stands in for the formal gifts (*sëricé*) that would be

expected upon a pilgrim's return, Arame pre-empted the moment of signifying potential in order to tend to a fraught set of relations with the senior women in her life. Her effort reflects the importance of multi-directional (but not symmetrical) flows of investment in others' mobility as a means by which one's own personhood and value are made to appear.

Arame was far from the only person I encountered for whom "*pass*" acquired an importance in managing family's relentless demands. For both my interlocutors in Morocco and families I interviewed in Senegal, "*pass*" was often evoked as a minimum "claimable" unit of remittance, and a modest offering that could "heal" (*fajju*) a relation, at least temporarily, in the event that a larger expected payment could not be satisfactorily provided. Though small (from Morocco the transfer fees alone would "eat" almost the entire sum), it was agreed that sending a trivial amount was better than cutting off contact or avoiding a relation altogether.⁹³

Moreover, as Arame's mother shows, family members actively worked to derive and extend the value from these payments. In the kinds of social circles that "big women" like Arame's mother cultivated, conversation often involved the meticulous public reporting of gifts, payments, and other transactions for the appreciation — and critical evaluation— of listeners. Public and private accounting of this kind communicated one's ability to mobilize connections, as much as the ability to turn those connections and resources toward appropriate, pious ends. Such modes of sociability could be described as a kind of "phatic labor" (Elyachar 2010) — tending to channels that vehiculate not only language but also all kinds of semiotic meanings and economic values. Critical for migrants like Arame, social infrastructures constituted by such talk were what enabled relatively small transactions to extend their value in space and time (Wiley

⁹³ Moyo (2007) notes that "*pass*" is an important element of *teranga*, hospitality, where the objective is to make pleasing and beautiful (*rafetal*) social intercourse. At the end of a gathering, where food has been offered in abundance and copious salutations have been exchanged, return fare (*pass*) is offered to ease departure and spare the visitor embarrassment.

2016). Thinking of *ziyaar* as an aesthetics of talk further invites us to consider how the performative grammars of a religious tradition such as *ziyaar* can serve to stretch its scope into new or otherwise overlooked domains of activity.

Where the literature on brotherhood economies has emphasized the symbolic enclosure of disciples' offerings into morally prescribed circuits of value, it is worth paying attention to the sources of volatility, ambivalence, and skepticism in the small transactions I observed. Arame's concern about nefarious interventions (*'maraboutage'*), for instance, hints at the moral risks involved in women's various efforts to channel wealth into its "proper" forms and circuits.⁹⁴ Positioned between natal and affinal kin, remittance was not a clearcut duty but rather a field of potential and sometimes cross-cutting claims on women's earnings. Requiring an appreciation of the vague ensemble of relations in which one was embedded, this moral economy was rarely about a literal fulfillment of expectation, but rather the work of discerning the limits of what would be accepted without repercussions or losing face (cf Degani 2016). Transactions like Arame's "pass" need to be thought as aesthetic gestures, rendered efficacious through the performative grammars of *ziyaar*, as much as "economic" acts of remittance or a clearly defined "religious" practice.

The materiality of "*pass*" itself also contributed to this instability. Cash is seen as a risky container for symbolic value because of its propensity to dissipate, both through transaction costs and exchange rates which 'eat' its value, and the potential that it would be casually re-directed into other mundane uses and expenditures within the household. The tensions produced when migrants deemed the demands from family members for "*pass*" to be redundant or excessive, or

□ As we saw in chapter 1 and chapter 4, because of their fragile kinship locations and uncoupled status, women's practices of household and public consumption were intensively scrutinized, and their attempts to display generosity to family through gifts could be interpreted as a sign that their spare cash was perhaps ill-gotten.

out of line with the ritual calendar, threatened to expose the fiction of the offering's designated "religious" use. On the other hand, these small sums and offerings were hardly sufficient to accomplish what they claimed.⁹⁵ Beset by this ambiguity, these transactions required the willing participation of recipients, and the infrastructure of "women's talk," to amplify their value. By encoding transactions in this way, women experimented with their ability to lay claim to some of the symbolic resources of male-dominated brotherhood economies, at the same time as they were carving out new channels in which value could circulate and extend.

V. Aïsha and Sokhna: (Ex)changing perspectives

Arame's deployment of the material dimensions of *ziyaar* in the previous case was a means of tending to familial expectations and the reproduction of a fragile hierarchy between senior and junior women. Others displayed the versatility of *ziyaar* as a form of etiquette within everyday life. One day I came into the living room to find Aïsha, the 55 year-old Senegalese woman from whom I rented a room and who I called *bajjèn* (auntie) but most called *mère*, enraptured by the telephone conversation on which she was eavesdropping. The person making the call, Sokhna, a former housemate of Aïsha's who had lately been out of work and spending her afternoons in the apartment, was talking to a man via a warped Whatsapp connection. Joining into the eavesdropping, I pieced together the details: the man on the other end of the phone was a cousin of Sokhna's living in Italy, a political organizer for the Tijani-affiliated PUR party,⁹⁶ and had been courting Sokhna for weeks to become his (third) wife. The conversation was not

□ Owing to Morocco's non-circulating currency and the exchange rates, a significant cut would be taken in transit, meaning that "pass" payments (averaging between 200-300 dirhams, or \$20-30 — with approximately \$7 paid in fees) would barely cover a sept-places collective taxi from Dakar to Tivaouane.

□ A party founded by the leader of the Dahiratul Mustarchidin wal Mustarchidaty, a Tijani youth dahira of influence in Senegal (see Samson 2005).

progressing well, although it remained in a light and joking mode. At an impasse, Aïsha was given the phone, and she abruptly shifted into a formal, deferential register: “*Sërigne bi, ñungi lay ziyaar.*” [Honorable sir, we render you *ziyaar.*] After many minutes of elevated, formulaic salutations, the talk gradually resumed a more lighthearted pitch, as Aïsha inquired about the party (about which she confessed little knowledge) and offered prayers for their success in the upcoming elections. Only then did she ask about his family name (Ndiaye,* same as hers) and provenance. She then remarked with astonishment that, in classificatory terms, she was his sister-in-law. In the context of the freighted marriage negotiation, Aïsha put herself forward as the “*premieer jëkke.*” The conditions of this substitution are complex, and rest on the performative nature of the assertion itself. Important to note, however, is that the “*premieer jëkke*” is rooted in the rivalrous relationship between a new wife and the groom’s brother’s wives, considered classificatory co-wives and competitors for their husbands’ (or brother-in-law’s) earnings. As “*premieer jëkké,*” Aïsha presented herself as a compelling force of mediation, with real material stakes in the unfolding engagement.

There is a well-known truism that a Wolof’s favorite pass-time is determining how they are related; and indeed such tenacious inquiry about genealogy was common. Only belatedly did Aïsha ask for the man’s first name, which happened to be Babacar. “*Thieeey adduna, xoolal Yalla lu muy def!... sama doomu baye angi nii, Sërigne bi, mootax ma ziyaar la!*” [Oh mercy! look here at what God is capable of! ... you’re my father’s child, a holy man [Sërigne]! It’s no wonder then that I should render you *ziyaar!*] Aïsha had drawn attention to the fact that the man’s namesake, Babacar, is the first Khalif and symbolic figurehead of the Sy family Tijaniyya in Senegal. In noting this, she retroactively elevated the earlier part of their exchange into a religious register (“no wonder I rendered you *ziyaar*”) and implicitly offered her validation of his

spiritual grade, as leader of the PUR party delegation. Babacar then alluded to his family's *terrain* near the home of the Khalif in Dakar, upon which information Aïsha was able to 'place' him by identifying another close affine of hers. In this way, she was eventually able to discern a relation out of which she could assert more compellingly her role as mediator in the engagement negotiations. In putting herself forward as Sokhna's *bajjèn* (paternal aunt) and Babacar's *goro* (in-law), she cajoled them with playful yet forceful insistence. She presented herself as Soxna's "*premieer jëkke*" (classificatory co-wife), and thus her rights to Sokhna's bride-wealth and naming rights over their child. "*Khanaa, sudee goor la, ñu tuddu ko Babacar, bu sobee yalla .*" [Unless, of course, it's a boy, and then we will name him Babacar, if it pleases God.]

This incident is a good illustration of the way that women deployed the mundane ritual etiquette of *ziyaar* in everyday interaction. As a means of expanding their own range and pragmatic space of maneuver, such deployments drew on the relational multiplicity assumed to lie within every social interaction, using the spatial and relational topoï of *ziyaar* to bring the relevant connections to the fore and give the interaction as a whole the force of moral obligation. Aïsha's was not simply a discursive claim, qua genealogical reckoning. Such modes are commonly referenced in studies of Muslim contexts, as means by which ordinary people seek to establish connection to a central historical or saintly figure (Scheele 2017; Lydon 2009; Ho 2006). It was also highly performative, skirting the border of play and seriousness. It relied on a culturally specific aesthetics of speech which encourages the multiplication of routes of moral connection between people, through real, fictive, and 'joking' kin relations. Whereas *ziyaar* in the restrictive sense involves (usually men) selecting and submitting to a particular axis of relation (devotion to a cheikh), this scene showcases it as a mode of speech playing on the ambiguity of relational avenues and contexts. In this case, the provisional "as if" framework of

the ritual address (“as if” Aïsha were speaking to her Sërigne) held open a space in which other more precise relationships could be deciphered, uncovered, and their potential implications seized at the point of greatest leverage. The playful and recursive nature of this kind of talk — a feature of Wolof discourse in general — allowed for a *post-facto* consecration of the kin relation, once it had already been “uncovered” in the course of conversation. Rather than simply reproducing a stable space of interaction defined by a pre-given social hierarchy, it makes available new spatial and relational schemes by which actors can re-envision their own efficacy. Its invocation works to smooth out and clarify [*leeral*] the multiple virtual relations that inhabit a given interaction, enabling them to “advance” [*motteli*] and strengthen [*ba mu dëggër*] to bring about a favorable frame of further action. In Sokhna’s case, its strategic significance becomes evident if we remember that what is at stake in this particular interaction was, ultimately, a nuptial arrangement between two people living in different countries, away from both of their families and traditional mediators, and from the groom’s family compound. Aïsha’s self-positioning as “*premier jëkké*”, an archetypal figure of the task of material redistribution by which a new wife establishes herself in the home of her in-laws (Sommerfelt 2005), suggests the specifically gendered work of this kind of talk in the production of transnational kinship.

Seligman et al (2008) argue that we think of ritual - including quotidian forms of etiquette - as a domain of social action that extends far beyond what is conventionally thought of as religious practices. As a “way of doing” rather than its propositional content, ritual, they argue, operates through the subjunctive mode, creating an “as if” scenario through which actors are invited to envision themselves as part of a provisionally bounded moral community. In the process of collective ritual enactment, they bring that community into being. In contrast with the modernist drive for discursive meanings and autonomous selves, “ritual’s repeated acts and

fragmented worlds are uniquely able to sustain plurality and ambiguity, shaping group and individual boundaries in ways that can generate new modes of empathy and mutually considered action” (7). Within everyday linguistic etiquette, I suggest, *ziyaar* is a “way of doing.” As a topos of hierarchical obligation and attachment, it folds in obligations between junior and senior kin, women and men, and guests and householders into its semiotic range without rendering them fixed or static. All interactions entail a surfeit of relational potentials — whether one is positioned higher or lower is subject to myriad contingencies and opportunities for revision. But unlike public forms of address in which the intrinsic “too-muchness” was suppressed, and speakers performed unilateral alliance (such as in acts of *jebbelu*, devotion to one’s cheikh), intimate performances like Sokhna and Aïsha’s mobilize the intrinsic ambivalence and multiplicity of relative statuses, as well as the ambiguities within Wolof naming and kinship terms, in order to produce their effects. By drawing on the “as if” function of this everyday form of etiquette, Aïsha was not only able to explore a new relation, but also to apply its semiotic dynamism to establish herself as a key mediator in this sensitive situation. Ritualized speech thus propped open a space in which unexpected frames for mutual appreciation could be uncovered, and along with them, new avenues of action or ways forward.

VI. Aïsha: Producing elders

Sutured into so many facets of life, *ziyaar* partially chartered women’s travels, from the itineraries to the forms of credit and enterprise they undertook, to the ways they identified themselves and others. We have considered *ziyaar* in the modalities of material transaction and etiquette, working in different ways to scaffold women’s projects. The previous two examples showed how women used the material and symbolic affordances of *ziyaar* to create new channels

in which value could circulate and re-position themselves within kin-making projects. This suggests that an important dimension to women's emplacement in Morocco was not merely their contributions to the reproduction of brotherhood networks. In addition, women's engagement with *ziyaar* in these different guises was also about tending to the "family drama." Revising the notion of the homosocial exclusivity of Sufi institutions and practices, these examples reveal the presence of key Sufi devotional framework - *ziyaar*- in the everyday work and movements of kinship.

The final case involves an actual *ziyaar* to Fès, the resting place of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani. The case shows what happens when the timelines, itineraries, and norms of sponsorship of *ziyaar* break down. The breakdown itself exposes how shifting domestic authority and household tenure in Senegal has destabilized the prospects of pilgrimage for 'producing elders'. For middle-aged and aging unmarried women, experiences of *ziyaar* are thus important prisms on the contradictions of migration and the ability of *ziyaar* to mediate the reproduction of ethical community.

My host mother, Aïshe, had lived in Morocco for six and a half years before she made her first *ziyaar* to Fès. Actually, she had once accompanied her *patronne*, a wealthy Moroccan architect whose children she minded for three years, to Fès on the employer's work-trip, but she had not been able to leave the hotel they were staying in, and in any case, did not know where she would have gone had she been allowed. In the years since, she had worked night shifts and carefully saved all of her earnings to bring her own children from Senegal, where they were in the care of different relatives, to live with her in Casablanca. In March of that year she fell sick with a mysterious illness that left her with debilitating head- and back-aches and paralysis of her arm. The symptoms lasted for months, despite scans and visits to a private clinic (payed for

charitably by her former employer's son.) Then, in June, she had two dreams, a week apart, in which Cheikh Ahmed Tijani appeared to her and instructed her to bring her eldest child to him. Other women in the Dahira she attended locally also advised her to go *sangu* — bathe in the springs of Moulay Yaacoub in the outskirts of Fès, a site that is identified with the *baraka* (blessing) of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani. Her actual eldest child (*taaw*) was at the time living with Aïshe's older sister in France, and her second child had just been accepted to work in a call center — a windfall opportunity for someone without a residency and work permit in Casablanca — and so could not leave. Thus it was, despite my mild protests and discomfort with usurping her children's place, Aïshe insisted that I, as her "*taaw bu jigéen*" (eldest female child), accompany her in answering the cheikh's call.

We went together at the end of Ramadan, on the occasion of *Lailat al Qadri*, the "night of destiny" or "night of power." Considered to be one of the holiest days in the Muslim calendar, it draws many thousands of pilgrims from across the world, and especially those from West Africa and their various diasporic locations in Europe and the U.S., to the zawiya for a night of prayer and feasting. Aïshe dressed in her finest robes, which she scoured the city to have re-starched until they practically stood upright on their own. She took a significant portion (she would not tell me precisely how much) from her *nattu* credit payout, and I hired a driver for the two of us and three other neighbors to share.

By the time we'd arrived, hundreds of women had already taken up their positions inside the zawiya in preparation for the breaking of fast. The rows inside the zawiya would be re-adjusted many times, each time made narrower, as pilgrims continued to arrive, pushing their way inside to be as close as possible to the cheikh's tomb, stationed beyond gilded lattices in the interior corner of the zawiya. The white marble tomb of Cheikh Ahmed Tijani was the pole,

tugging transversally against the rows of pious bodies oriented in prayer toward Mecca. Eddies of colorful fabric mirrored the cast light through the the stained glass. The meekly whirring ceiling fans offered no relief, and those seated deeper inside the hall squabbled and lurched over each other, legs and arms akimbo, encumbered with purses, suitcases, and canvas bags filled with souvenirs. Aïshe and I chose seats in the open-air courtyard just outside the prayer hall, atop mats laid over the marble floor still scorching from the day's sun. It too was packed. At one side of the courtyard, about two dozen women speaking in quick, bawdy Wolof were preparing food for the visitors. Their fine robes were hoisted and bunched up at their waists in big, action-ready knots, suggesting that many of them had been roped into assisting with the preparations on the spot. Only two women and one man (conspicuous on the women's side of the zawiya), seemed to have a sense of the program, and were frantically moving around the islands of pots and serving dishes, giving orders.

Shortly after everyone had broken fast, Aïshe spotted a woman she recognized, sitting on a stool near the entrance of the prayer hall talking with the other senior women. Despite its opulent and distinctly Moroccan-style interior, the zawiya had taken on the air of the large family compounds I'd so often visited in Senegal. On festival days, courtyards and alleys would be draped with people, always a ubiquitous circle of senior women holding court in watchful proximity to the food preparation as they peeled and chopped vegetables and exchanged gossip. Suddenly, Aïshe leaned over to me: "That is Ndey Ami's *turandoo*," she declared, her eldest daughter's namesake. She was pointing out a woman in a dark blue robe at the far side of the circle. She rose quickly and walked over to greet the woman, a *drianké* (well-dressed 'Big Woman') who was caught in an animated discussion. It took several minutes before the woman fully turned her attention to Aïshe. They exchanged sober greetings, and for a moment I

wondered if I'd misunderstood — was this really her daughter's namesake? Why such a cordial greeting? I gleaned from their conversation, and Aïshe filled me in later, that the woman, Amina, was Aïshe's paternal aunt. She had emigrated to Italy over 10 years earlier, along with her children, when Ndey Ami was a young adolescent. She opened a business in Milan and had achieved considerable success. This was not her first time on ziyaar to Fès; in fact she had visited every year for the last five years, she said, and multiple times before that. She had come on a chartered tour bus along with 40 other Senegalese pilgrims, and would return in five days after making the rounds to Rabat and Casablanca, where there are related Tijani zawiyas and ample occasions for shopping.

Their interaction was brief, and I remained perplexed. We sat back down and prepared for the prayers and *nafla* (superogatory prayers during Ramadan) which would last all night. But sometime before sunrise when weary pilgrims finally took their leave of the zawiya, Aïshe ran into the woman again and Amina pressed into her arms a plastic shopping bag containing a messy helping of couscous and chicken, filched from the platters offered to pilgrims during the night's feast. "For Ndey Ami," Aïshe repeated Amina's words of offering to me dispassionately, contempt searing her voice. Then she said, "How many years she's been in Italy, left us here and no one hears from her. When has she ever given [us] anything? *Thieuup* [sound expressing disbelief], she has no self-respect."

The role of *turandoo* (namesake) holds an important place in Senegalese kinship, and is a strong index of the kind of relations of dependency and obligation forged specifically between women via ritual exchanges around life-cycle ceremonies.⁹⁷ Designating a *turandoo* is an important modality of patronage, in which one places oneself in a position of caste-like

□ Turandoo can be thought of as part of a class of ceremonial credit functions (Kane 2003; Buggenhagen 2007)

dependency to a relation of perceived higher status (Buggenhagen 2007). The obligations that accompany the status of *turandoo* nominally include payments and prestations at different stages of a child's life, but a child's *turandoo* can be solicited for other gifts and loans as well. Emerging out of the Wolof caste system, the role of *turandoo* has grown in importance over the last half-century and the emergence of a middle class in Senegal, as less wealthy free-born families have sought to secure the patronage of wealthier families (Diop 1981; Buggenhagen 2011). In the exchange in the zawiya in Fès, I was made to understand that Amina had not made good on her role as Ndey Ami's *turandoo*, but I did not then understand the extent of it.

Aïshe was uncharacteristically quiet on the ride home, which I took to be fatigue from the long night of activity. When we arrived, she presented her lodgers with bottles of holy water from the font inside the zawiya, which they accepted appreciatively. Then she gave Ndey Ami the plastic bag of couscous, which by this time was looking quite unappetizing. "From your *turandoo*," she said caustically. "It looks like all she'll have *ever* given you is her fat ass!" She later listed off all the gifts she had given Amina at the *ngenté* (baptism) and in the years since, an impressive display of memory which she claimed could be corroborated by the family ledgers, where such transactions are recorded. Though she also said that probably her other aunt, who now managed the family compound in Dakar, had dispensed with them. "Amina has stopped caring about the family, she cares only about herself and her children. She has been coming on *ziyaar* every year and did she even bother to call me once? She thinks she is a big woman, a *hajja*, but have you ever seen a *hajja jongoma*,⁹⁸ who exhibits herself like that? She knows only her own [kin]." The crudeness of her aunt Amina's gesture, a poison gift which reflected the giver's disregard for even the minimal respect for keeping up appearances, was the immediate

□ A term connoting the barely concealed sexuality of modern, upper class dakaroise women

source of Aïshe's opprobrium. The form of her expression of disgust was not unlike other instances I'd heard of women publicly evaluating gifts and offerings as being too stingy or thoughtless. Aïshe indeed encouraged the rest of us to join in with increasing relish. But her acrimony suggested that the exchange in the zawiya had touched on a deeper nerve. For her, it pointed to the breaking down of a whole system, one which she counted on in order to return one day to Senegal as an accomplished "*hajja*" in her own right.

The term *hajj/hajja* has a broad resonance beyond the individual's actual performance of Hajj to Mecca, most often associated with an individual's commercial success. Likewise, the term is also extended to returning pilgrims from Fès, Cairo, or other foreign sites considered sacred or of elevated religious importance. Though Aïshe was proud to have been able to participate in an important moment of ziyaar gathering in Fès, the revelation that her aunt could have been partaking in such honorific social occasions without her knowledge (let alone the opportunity to join her, or benefit) prompted her to see the vulnerability of her own situation in a new light. In other words, it was not just that her aunt had failed to support her individually. Rather, in becoming a successful migrant in Europe, Amina, like others among Aïshe's siblings, had broken with the system of expected reciprocities by which the domestic household could continue to cohere. Ultimately, it was on the endurance of that household that Aïshe relied for the spiritual and symbolic merit of pilgrimage to transform her into an "elder." The collective gathering in Fès had opened up a fault-line in which Aïshe experienced herself as cut off from the domestic relations whereby her journey could reach its felicitous end.

In an essay entitled "Profits and Prophets," Buggenhagen (2001) contends that, as non-migrants, women's ritual exchanges in the domestic sphere are vital to the production of social relations in which migrant men's religious brotherhoods have meaning. As women themselves

move increasingly into fields of transnational migration, pilgrimage, and trade, accelerating already rapid transformations to the structures of domestic households, some like Aïshe envision a weakening of their ability to influence household management and the structures of relations through which their eventual return would be properly secured. Aïshe's status as "successful" pilgrim and migrant depended upon such a return, and thus doubts about the viability of the household and her place in it imperiled the entire enterprise. In the context of household dispersion, the erosion of her relations to senior women within the family network, and her own ailing and aging body, Aïshe's *ziyaar* failed to bring her relief.

A while later, Aïshe shared a story that she had never told me before. She explained that when she first came to Morocco, the rest of her family had left her to fend for herself, refusing to lend her money because they claimed she was to blame for her divorce from a well-earning trader who had made it big in the U.S. Hers was a family of successful migrants in their own right, and she had many aunts and cousins who had traveled abroad. One was even a well-established trader with connections in Dubai, Istanbul, and Stockholm. Aïshe's mother was her father's second of four wives, but had raised all of her own children as well as those of the first wife, and was remembered as the one who kept the "grande famille" functioning. After her mother's death, her father too had emigrated, handing authority over the compound to his sisters, most of whom had in turn sought their fortunes in Europe. Finally, the house was left in the hands of a disjointed array of Aïshe's cousins and their children.

Though they traveled widely, Morocco was a place that her aunts and cousins said they would never bother to go. They told Aïshe that she was wasting her time.

"They told me it was hopeless, a waste, there's no money in it. Just getting out of Africa [*genn Afrique rekk*], that's all they could see. Dubai, Turkey, Italy, China! Wherever you can think of [*fu nekk ñungi fay dem*], they've been. But never Africa, never, never. But I am stubborn [*Dama dëggër bopp*], I thought, here they [Moroccans] are the kin of Mame

Cheikh [Tijani], they must be good. And I didn't have the money for Europe, my legs were too bad for the boats. I was stubborn, I came anyway."

Aïshe, unlike most of the migrants I encountered, had financed her own passage, leaving her four children in the care of different relatives in Dakar, among them her eldest sister and Amina ' mother-in-law. In Casablanca, Aïshe worked for months as a nanny, but dreamed of being a *commerçante* exporting Moroccan fashion [*estyle-u naar*] to Senegal. She saved aggressively for over a year, about \$600, with which she bought a small inventory of Moroccan *babouches*, handbags, and women's apparel. Her cousins in Dakar were recruited to help her sell the merchandise and return the profit to continue her enterprise. Instead, they had poached from the inventory, and had "eaten" the profits gleaned from selling the rest, leaving Aïshe once again with nothing. She was obliged to take a job as a dish-washer, where her rheumatism worsened. In the year in which I was living with her, Aïshe's elder sister, who now controlled the family's compound in Dakar and managed it from abroad, had decided that she would be clearing out the house of its occupants to put it up for rent. There were only a few cousins still in residence, but anyone who still had children hanging around was told that they would have to decamp. Thus Aïshe had to arrange quickly for her sons Samba and Babacar to join her in Casablanca.

Seeing her aunt Amina in Fès, exhibiting her success with apparent disregard for familial obligations and hardship, seemed to underline for Aïshe not only a state of degenerated kinship relations, but more, the foreclosure of her possible return to Senegal. Without a *kër* (compound) to return to, and in the wake of a scattered family in which no senior women remained to anchor her reception, she saw her efforts working abroad extending indefinitely into the future. She thought of herself as someone who worked tirelessly for her children —efforts in which she included her *ziyaar* — and saw their expulsion from the family home as the ultimate act of treason. Accentuated by her recent acute illness, her thoughts turned fatalistic.

“*Jamano fu ñu tolloo... bopp sa bopp*. In these advanced times [end-times], it is each person for him/ herself. If there was a house ... but where is the child who will build me one? Diagga [Aïshe’s eldest] is with *bajjen-am* [his paternal aunt], *ku nekk am na fa kër* [they all have their own homes away (implied: in France.)] No one is left thinking of me. Where would they take my body, back to Senegal? There is no one, who is left there but my aunt and those cousins, *but we don’t even share a mother. Bokkuñu ndeye, bokkuñu dara*. We don’t share a mother, we don’t share anything.”

Aïshe pointed out that the remaining kin in the compound are the children of her mother’s co-wife. She thus repudiated her own previously idealized picture of the “grande famille,” asserting the limits of such ties to ‘hold’ her place in the family home. “But it’s not important, *amul solo... adduna jeex na ba pare*. This world is already over.” Aïshe’s lament — which ran counter to conversations I’d shared with her in which she had affirmed that all of her father’s wives and their children were a “single family unit” — resolved into a common yet profound reference to end-times. The phrase *adduna jeex na ba pare* recalls that we are currently inhabiting the period foretold by Islamic eschatology, in which our earthly selves and relations are soon to disappear.⁹⁹

Anthropologists of religion have often posited pilgrimage as a liminal space in which the everyday experiences of hierarchies and struggles dissolve and are replaced by a social plane in which individuals experience a sense of unity, what Turner (1969) called *communitas*. In the early 1990s this notion faced revision by ethnographers who argued that instead of *communitas*, what they found was consistent themes of strife and disappointment among pilgrims visiting Mecca and other holy sites. Anticipating unity among the Muslim *umma*, these pilgrims encountered the “Muslim other” and were disappointed by the persistence of bickering,

□ An unexpected turn to a remembrance of death in the course of life, I consider Aïshe’s utterance as harboring echoes of the founding ambivalence within the tradition of *ziyaar*, between scripturalists’ claim that “visiting graves” (*ziyaar l- qabr*) should be only for the sake of honoring the dead, and a gnostic practice of *dhikr* (remembrance) through which the living learns to look at the world, and oneself, from the outer temporal standpoint of the grave.

commercialism, quarrels and mundane disputes among fellow travelers (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1990, xv; Hammoudi 2006).

What do we make of Aïshe's disappointment, which is less with a failed expectation of idealized Muslim community than a sense of the foreclosed promise of cultural norms to bring about her transition to senior womanhood, a failure to have her aspirations acknowledged from her kin? Understanding the stakes of these small slights and gestures requires attention to the weaving of expectations and forms of dependency across different kinds of relations. In particular, it necessitates an understanding of the importance of bonds forged through processes of childbearing, naming, and sponsoring between women; and to the effects of multiple generations of dispersal on kinship and household structures. Expressions of disappointment for women such as Aïshe suggest that the stakes of pilgrimage are closely tied to the projecting of a domestic future, and the struggle to continue to think of one's efforts as part of a project of repair. Further, it points to the difficulty of expressing such desires within the standing language of maternal sacrifice, brotherly devotion, and the the national project of migration as a virtue and a duty. The image of the brotherhood movement's global reach produced through collective *ziyaar* seemed to lend a mirror on the precariousness of novel configuration of Senegalese transnational families, even as Aïsha's loss remained hard to name.

Conclusions

Ziyaar is not simply one thing, and its referential and symbolic polysemy is key to the roles it plays in contemporary Senegalese diasporic community. I have argued that women migrants' ordinary engagements with *ziyaar* in their everyday relations may be seen as an ethical form of perception that, rather than being merely reproductive, works to transform new

thresholds of space, maneuver, and functional possibility. By considering *ziyaar* as a flexible field of material flows — negotiated at the margins of canonical relationships such as that between *taalibé* and *cheikh*, while also borrowing from them — women acknowledge and tend to the relations in which their mobility is embedded. These examples point to women's reflexive positions within transnational networks of brotherhood and pilgrimage. Women's experimentations, I suggest, present us a picture of pilgrimage not only as a strenuous form of self-cultivation (Mahmood 2006), but as a frame of aspiration involving the capacity to think of the self as multiple. As a form of travel, it is a multiply-authored enterprise with many sources of sponsorship and obligation. Tending to those obligations reveals itself to be a task mastered through the aesthetics of "just measures." Thus, as ritual etiquette, *ziyaar* presents a framework for exploring relations and seeking advantageous points of leverage and opportunity. Finally, the ritual and performative grammars of *ziyaar* afford women an opportunity to pull their own projects of house holding, pilgrimage, and accumulation into the frame of a global ethical community, reanimating and extending the tradition itself in the process. Within such a malleable tradition some aspirations found expression, while other instances revealed the presence of disappointment and betrayal within the intimate ties in which *ziyaar* was embedded and sustained.

In each of these cases, the ethics and aesthetics of *ziyaar* constituted forms of attention through which women tended to and enacted their responsibilities vis-à-vis family and other close relations. For these women, whose travels are explicitly oriented by the holy site but for whom it also fits within a broader weave of mundane and existential concerns, experimentation on the repertoires of *ziyaar* discloses an interplay of mobility, religious merit and material survival as it unfolds in everyday life.

Ziyaar cannot be rendered as strictly reproducing hierarchy and the “enclosure” of symbolic and material value; here we see its involvement in opening new, provisional channels in which value can circulate and new axes of dependency can be drawn. Rather than a seamless “spiritual economy” (Rudnyckyj 2009; Soares 1996) in which value is insulated against volatility by reference to the stable and legible norms of brotherhood, these women’s efforts disclose a terrain of dislocated kinship relations that may themselves be volatile and fragmented. The ability to tend to these relations through ziyaar, whether through material exchanges, communicative rituals, or actual physical pilgrimage, is not given in advance. In working to carve out and sustain new circuits of value, the signifying potential of these transactions relies upon existing domestic infrastructures of credit and communication over which senior women continue to exercise considerable control. Thus, while for some migrant women these strategies proved efficacious, for others they could be at best palliative, and seemed to refresh old wounds and disappointments. The distended temporalities of travel, their ambiguous positions within trans-local kinship networks, and the material hardship they face in Morocco, all render precarious their possibility of a dignified return to Senegal. Amidst growing family fragmentation and transnational scatter, and the rapid transformation of gender roles and expectations around the control of wealth and households, for women like Aïshe, the dual promise of salvation and prosperity seem recede in importance faced with the increasingly uncertain prospects of a home to receive her.

As a ritual whose signifying and socially transformative potential rests especially on the moment of *return*, the temporality of ziyaar brings into focus my interlocutors’ particular locations as middle-aged and aging migrants abroad. Women’s prolonged stay in Morocco and deferred pilgrimage manifested a sense of stalled or suspended passage to seniority, not unlike

the “waithood” ascribed to young men. However, my interlocutors made use of this intermediate condition, bringing into focus the multiple authors of their travel, and creatively (re)engaging them as *ongoing* sources of support. In so doing, they worked by small increment to recast the terms of their relations with kin and others. In chapter 1, we saw how divorcées and second wives used their locations at the margins of the kinship order to manipulate the flow of material resources across different lines of affinity and affiliation, a work of repairing fragilized relations and restoring channels of prosperity and familial solidarity. Here, similarly what is at stake is a picture of familial solidarity, and attention to the variety of relations that are required to sustain it; the forward temporal pitch of *ziyaar* however makes these works of *readying* and *preparing* for a future in kinship, in spite of evidence of its present fraying. By tracking the movements of *ziyaar* alongside those of family formation and dissolution, this chapter returns to where the dissertation began, with the struggle for acknowledgment, and the capacity of the standing language of a religious tradition, family drama, or the national vocation of migration, to encompass and seat expression to women’s diverse desires, goals, and aspirations.

Looking at *ziyaar* as an mode of ethical perception draws our attention to often overlooked agencies in the work of making kinship and family relations, including pleasure, suffering and participation in discursive formations (Goodfellow 2018; Bush 2017; Asad 2009). The picture of kinship that arises here is not one of a stable and temporal pattern of relatedness, but rather something akin to what Margaret Trawick identifies as the work of desire; “It is possible to see kinship not as a static form upheld by regnant or shared principles, but as a web maintained by unrelieved tension, an architecture of conflicting desire, its symmetry a symmetry of imbalance” (1992, 152). In this sense, women’s diverse pursuits, itineraries, and desires — for independence, for a life with or without children, for proximity to the cheikh and his kin, for a

dignified return to Senegal — can be considered objects on a horizon toward which some are capable of moving, and others not. Women’s questioning and perhaps disappointment in discovering that some relations seem capable of moving, while others are not, do not bring such relations to an end, but rather recasts them. For us, they bring up the question of the “capacity of different types of relations to endure such things as dependency” (Goodfellow 2018, 7; cf Povinelli 2006). My interlocutors’ words suggest that it is the capacity of *ziyaar* to derive and fortify the meaning and existence of kinship, when prolonged physical absence, domestic dispersal, and the materiality of money itself, threatened to render suspect those ties, that distinguishes my uncoupled and aging female interlocutors’ experiences of “waithood” most dramatically from their young male peers. More, their careful experiments and adjustments, and gestures of patience, display an attunement to the propensity of relations of different kinds to wax and wane in importance over time. Within the framework of expectations for care-taking and receiving across generations, a picture of ethics arises in the form of the everyday work of preparing for a future in kinship, in the face of doubts about the very viability of those ties.

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the ordering of mobility and dwelling in Morocco, through the singular trajectories of migrant women living in the periphery of Casablanca. It examined the emergent geography of the North-West African corridor from the conceptual registers of “family drama” and “moving market,” in attempts to appreciate how an idea of regional coherence and possibility are envisioned by migrant women themselves. In chapter 1, we examined travels to Morocco that were woven into processes of marital decomposition or other critical moments in women’s conjugal and familial lives. Tracing material transactions in gifts, cash, and promises, and circulations of stereotypes and narratives of different kinds, we explored the imaginative and material construction of Morocco as an interspace of the domestic family drama, and migration as a resource for women attempting to restore viability to domestic relations in different ways. The cases brought forward in this chapter revealed the singular ways in which travel, or “spacing out,” enabled new forms of economic and sexual independence, and a renegotiation of status within their families alongside separation.

For both scholars and activists alike, demonstrating the “many avenues to divorce” (Khan and Seedat 2017; see also Ali 2007; Tucker 2008; Seedat 2018; Lydon 2007; Moosa, Jeppie and Roberts 2010) in Islam has not only been an important strategy for empowering individuals in making decisions about their own situations; it has also served as a means of theoretically reframing questions of rights (Islamic or otherwise) of individuals toward an ethics of relations, attentive to the many relationships that are entangled with and sustain a conjugal pair (Seedat 2018). Consonant with this insight, my research shows some of the ways that these “many avenues” are opened up and elaborated by women themselves, outside of domains of the law as

they are formally circumscribed. The cases explored here illustrate the ways in which women have laid claim to and inhabit an Islamic tradition through their quotidian practices and experiments, stretching the tradition to encompass their own projects. The expressive and theatrical conventions mobilized by my interlocutors — from the emotional repertoires of television melodramas, to nicknames, to performances of ‘Dahira motherhood’ — were means by which women extended the scope of spiritual exercises into new domains of life. Rather than engaging in formal critique at the level of rights, legal norms, and authorizing discourses, women’s everyday practices and experiments with living themselves worked to stretch and extend the tradition — which has always including a plurality of “pathways” — to include their own desires for kinship as well as projects of sexual independence and personal accumulation. These are ethical projects, entailing forms of striving where the outcome is not given in advance, and relational projects that include the struggle to have one’s desires acknowledged.

Chapters 2 and 3 together panned out to explore the notion of Morocco as a stage for intimate and collective transformations. Evoking the theatrical sense of “stage” as a place that is not reducible to a neutral site — not merely a pathway or passage, but a place in itself — these chapters described the material and imaginative production of the North-West African corridor, asking what kinds of social and economic forces compelled women to think of themselves as part of the corridor’s material and social infrastructure, ie as “stayers” in Morocco. Chapter 2 looked at the market’s emergence within the context of historical and contemporary trans-Saharan economy, and the local and conceptual frameworks through which migrants envisioned and harnessed the potentials of “moving market,” amidst the constant transformations taking place around them.

By fashioning themselves as “sitters” in the market, women rendered themselves as infrastructure that made both permanence and ongoing mobility possible. Chapter 3 delved into the labors of social reproduction by which women took up the role of “sitters,” holding themselves in place across different spheres of work, to make the market propitious for exchange. By attending to the strategies by which women transitioned in and out of different forms of work, produced themselves as nodes in a multi-lateral and multi-scalar remittance economy of support and investments, tied up and untied different forms of credit, and forged collaborations with tenants and trader peers, we considered the unacknowledged labor that go into “staying put” and being recognized as properly emplaced.

These observations aim to contribute to empirical and theoretical conversations on the changing nature of urban African livelihoods. Particularly, they seek to expand recent anthropological renderings of urban economic life which, in focusing on the generative and potentiating spaces of provisional intersection and kinetic sociality in the public sphere, have tended to discount the forms of value generation that unfold into and across thresholds of the domestic. This occlusion not only prolongs a bias toward the productive activities and capacities of mobile young men, at the expense of the tremendously important ways that women’s labors in and outside of domestic spaces have sustained urban life. It also leaves unexamined how the gendered governance of mobility and ordering of urban spaces and relations has and continues to shape urban forms of life, and how a transnational sexual economy, defined by demand for and structural devaluation of certain forms of work along the lines of gender and race, are inscribed and reproduced within local and regional contexts (cf Hochschild 2003; Parreñas 2010; Tadiar 1993, 2012). This dissertation has sought to shed light on how regional histories of trans-national domestic labor and kin-based pilgrimage and trade networks have served as underpinnings for

the contemporary dynamics of “feminized” migration. When geographers have theorized feminized migration as a consequence of globalized racial capitalism to explain the accelerated movement of women from the Global South toward homes the Global North, they frequently fail to account for how such movements intersect with and are shaped by older forms, pathways, and aspirations for mobility which, in trans-Saharan spaces, have long included women. Re-centering this multiplicity of pathways enables us to imagine the way that, for instance, a domestic service contract may serve as a jumping off point for pilgrimage; earnings from petty trade near a holy site may be a means of embodying devotion to the cheikh, as well as reconstituting the substance of familial ties; or an inherited domestic (slave) status in an expat home may provide the material signs for re-envisioning oneself as a modern and properly emplaced subject.

The ethnography rendered throughout this dissertation has sought to demonstrate how different historical imaginaries of regional coherence, forms of affiliation and political and spiritual kinship, and routes, networks, and infrastructures of trans-Saharan trade are being re-animated and recombined, not only through political discourses that seek to capitalize on their symbolic potential, but through migrant women’s everyday activities and desires. While the emphasis on newness and protean self-making in contemporary Africanist scholarship is not without its important political and epistemic commitments, and indeed is a major inspiration for the present study, the emphasis on newness risks obscuring the kind of inventiveness that takes place within long established traditions and pathways. For my interlocutors, participation in trade, or “moving market,” was taken up as a signifier of cultural and communal identity. They derived meaning from the inscription of their practices in longstanding traditions of trade and spiritual striving, and cross-cultural intimacies in the form of kinship, affiliation, and exchange. I

argue that it is *within* these established pathways that the ingenuity, artisanship, and “thoughtfulness” of women’s labors can be made visible.

In rendering the realities of urban livelihood and survival, matters of desire, imagination, and aspiration cannot be separated from matters of economic need. Indeed, the most significant contribution of African urbanist scholars has been to insist that the material, the discursive, and the imaginative are co-creative of urban infrastructures. Residents generate imaginative frameworks for “paying attention to what others are doing,” for envisioning shared interests, however momentary, and project themselves onto higher planes of productive operation. These attempts matter forth in built forms, habits, impressions, and ideas about what is it possible to do within a particular space. My interlocutors took up livelihoods at the interstices of different forms of accumulation and circulation, concretizing openings for themselves and for others within a highly unpredictable, often unyielding, and sometimes dangerous urban environment. Their actions and itineraries drew on various repertoires in attempts to make their work not only materially solvent but socially legitimate. At the same time, they could never fully dispel the skepticism that hung over them; as uncoupled women of advanced age, their activities were often deemed wayward (or worse) and often came under the scrutiny of religious officials, state law enforcement, social workers, and neighbors. Yet by drawing in new dependents and hooking into morally sanctioned frameworks of accumulation and redistribution, they participated actively in the polarization of space and relations, making Morocco into a new site of interest and investment. Thus, the townships in which they dwelled were slowly being transformed into spaces where both dwelling and ongoing mobility were possible.

Taking into account the ways in which travels to Morocco were entangled with ruptures and ambiguities in these women’s personal lives, and sustained through intimate and often

fraught relations abroad, the work of reproducing these geographies of possibility in Morocco was not simply a matter of economics, but of ethics. As solo travelers living on the margins of marriage and normative domesticity, I consider my interlocutors to be engaged in a kind of moral pioneering, acting without a clear view of destinations or outcomes, and often in full view of many risks and disappointments. They sought to craft livelihoods that were dignified and viable, not only for themselves but for a wide host of others. Many found moral refuge in fashioning themselves as idealized maternal care-givers, *yaayu daara jis*, tasked with domesticating and “de-mobilizing” errant youth in their errant and illicit attempts at ongoing clandestine migration. However, through their actual everyday enterprises and relations in the township, and through small acts of containment or deflection, they also worked to sustain an ‘otherwise’ — a space capable of holding different orientations, practices and desires; a terrain of ongoing mobility and circulation of different kinds. By drawing attention to women’s everyday labors of house-holding, I sought to look beyond the ideological and moral construction of maternal sacrifice and devotion (to the spiritual community or nation), and reflect on forms of ethical reflection that take place within everyday forms of reproduction and care (Das 2012). This is not to reproduce deeply gendered tropes about women’s caring as essentially boundless. New materialist discussions of “container technologies” helped us draw together feminist insights about devalued forms of feminized reproductive labor and the epistemic neglect of “holding” machines and “containing” processes *as* laboring. For these theorists, the conjunction of ‘holding’ as actively laboring opens a theoretically and politically vital space for thinking about care labor not simply as boundless sacrifice, but rather, as a condition often characterized by refusal and letting go. By linking migrant households to container technologies, I therefore sought to draw attention to a

picture of house-holding beyond sacrifice and goodness, to contemplate the places and moments where the difference between caring and refusing became hard to distinguish.

More, by attending to the lives of middle-aged women in their protracted stays abroad, the question of care-giving raises an additional question, seldom observed in the migration literature. As migrants who were also attempting to tend to various domestic relations in Senegal, relations upon whom they expected to depend as they aged, everyday betrayals and disappointments that these relations sustained in the course of their lives abroad cast doubts on the ability of those relations to hold long enough to be able to receive them as returnees in their old age. Women's continued efforts to tend to these relations, and gently shift their intensities and directions, speaks to an aspect of care that entails an attunement to the propensity of different kinds of relations to shift in importance over the course of one's life, and the work of readying and preparing a future in kinship, even in the face of present disappointment.

The final two chapters turned to the role of the Sufi brotherhood institution, the Dahira, in the organization of migrant life, livelihood, and mobility in Morocco. Chapter 4 focused on the material and semiotic correspondences between household and Dahira and their role in shaping social relations in shared migrant dwellings, while Chapter 5 focused on Sufi pilgrimage (ziyaara) to Fès as not only a charter for Senegalese travel to Morocco, but an important form through which women attempted to gain recognition and demonstrate their ongoing value to their families. In both chapters, we considered how the historical memory of trans-Saharan Sufi brotherhood is being newly re-animated in a national and regional politics that seeks to promote the liberal values of Sufi Islam, and the potential of these pre-colonial ties to foster new vectors of "south-south" development. We attended to the performative and aesthetic dimensions of house-holding and pilgrimage practices, showing the creative ways in which women laid claim

to the traditions of Sufi Islam in fashioning lives in Morocco that could be deemed respectable and valuable. Tracing discourses of Sufi piety and maternal (surrogate) caregiving, we considered how this standing language configured possibilities for intimacy and acknowledgment for women's desires as migrants in Morocco, with respect to their families and the wider migrant community. While many of the cases rendered here illustrated the possibilities for finding voice within the tropes of popular culture and expressive conventions of Sufi devotion, we also attended to cases in which the norms of moral community seemed to render feelings of betrayal, neglect, or abandonment difficult to express. While illustrating a tension in women's modes of social aggregation and the brotherhoods' discourses of moral encompassment, such moments of disappointment and loss of language point to the existence of regions of ethical life that are lived in the absence of authorizing discourses.

The Anthropology of Islam has been widely fixated on the notion of discursive tradition (Asad 1989), a model that conceives of virtue as strenuous self-cultivation to bring the subject into right relation with the founding Islamic texts and practices of the Prophet. However, discounted from this scholarship is the place of performance and dramaturgy in how people relate to, embody, and reanimate religious tradition into and across different spheres of life, including within kinship. Approaching (Islamic) tradition in terms of expressivity and voice points our attention to the standing possibility of failure; hence the attention given here to breakdown and disappointment, where existing grammars seemed to render certain feelings and desires inexpressible, or hinted at betrayals just below the surface of everyday life. Individual narratives like Fahma's and Aïsha's reflected the difficulties of inhabiting intimacy across situations of prolonged absence, and for finding acknowledgment of desire, grief, and longing — whether desire for a child, for the security of return, or for the renewal of kinship in the aftermath

of separation. In a context where such feelings might threaten public discourse about maternal sacrifice, pious exemplarity, and the national “destiny” of migration, the standing language could not always offer adequate terms for the emotional toll of separation, uncertainty about the future, or other kinds of personal aspirations and longings couched inside women’s projects of migration. I have sought to render these scenes of disappointment and failure, not to lend evidence to the idea of religious traditions as somehow anathema to women’s self-expression; rather, it has been an attempt to understand the struggle for acknowledgment as one that occurs inside any language, and to highlight the enormously inventive ways in which my interlocutors strove to build dignified lives for themselves and with others, with the means available to them.

In early presentations of this material to colleagues, I was often asked whether the affect of disappointment that hangs over many of these chapters was “mine” or “theirs.” It is impossible for me to say with conviction which was which, although I did seek to render with fidelity both aspects of melancholy *and* playfulness, seriousness and frivolity, the tragic and the carnivalesque that pervade my shared everyday with these women. These aspects of light and dark, I should note, not only describe my experiences of daily life with them, but are characteristic of the “drama” by which residents themselves described and interpreted their lives. “Family drama” became one of the key guiding figures of my analysis, and with it, a particular disposition toward the question: whose feeling is it? Or, what is it for a feeling of disappointment to be something that is shareable? I think about the many hot summer days I spent inside the shuttered apartment with Aïsha watching Turkish soap operas on Moroccan tv, as Aïsha and Daame ad-libbed in Wolof over the dubbed Moroccan darija. Amidst the confusion and cacophony of voices (Aïsha’s distinctive blend of translation and outlandish interpretation), trying in vain to reconcile between the written Arabic subtitles, multiple voice overs, and the

gestures and expressions of the Turkish actors on screen, I not only found an adequate picture of 'doing fieldwork' (*pace* Geertz). I discovered a picture of the capacity of *genre* and convention to sustain difference, in and through the temporarily of ongoing intimacies with others, and the combination of confusion, separation, and opportunities for pleasure, that such intimacies afford. To the extent that I remain disappointed in my capacity to render my interlocutors' experiences in ways that do justice, it is their willful, hopeful insistence on the search for language that would make their stories shareable that has pushed me to see this modest act of writing to its end.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

- Present** **The Johns Hopkins University**, Baltimore, MD
PhD Anthropology, to be conferred October, 2020
Dissertation: Working for Another World: Geographies of Labor, Aspiration, and Kinship in the Northwest African Corridor
Advisor committee: Naveeda Khan, Deborah Poole, Mike Degani
- 2015** **The Johns Hopkins University**, Baltimore, MD
MA Anthropology
Examiners: Naveeda Khan (Chair), Jane Guyer, Veena Das
- 2011** **Columbia University**, New York City, NY
BA *Summa cum laude*, Comparative Literature and Society, Anthropology
Thesis (Honors): "Les mots sagaies: violence et representation dans *Le devoir de violence* de Yambo Ouologuem"
Advisor: Souleymane Bachir Diagne (French)
- 2008-09** **University of Minnesota**, Minneapolis, MN
German and Arabic language study

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journals and Edited Books

In preparation "Yalla na yalla nangu ziyaar": Pilgrimage, piety, and the production of elders, *Cultural Anthropology*

In review "Living together, attacking the limit: The ethics of mobility among Senegalese migrants in Morocco," *Africa* special issue on Race and Islam in Africa

In review "Islam, citizenship, and figures of sovereignty in the trans-Sahara," Edited volume, Presses universitaires François Rabelais

Other publications

In preparation Invited blog post for site, Network of Ethnographic Theory, a curated reading list on the topic of "Refusal"

EVENTS ORGANIZED

2019 Teach-in: Private Policing and Baltimore City, Johns Hopkins University and JHU Medical School

2015 Affecting Labor – A workshop with Michael Hardt, Anthropology Graduate student Conference, The Johns Hopkins University

2014 Teach-in for Gaza, The Johns Hopkins University

2012-15 Feminist and Queer theory reading group, collaboration with program for Women Gender and Sexuality studies, The Johns Hopkins University

2010 World in Africa conference and film festival, co-organized with the Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2020 Ladies of Las Palmas: Senegalese Migrants on the Margins of Marriage, Colloquium, JHU Anthropology

2018 Being with others in More-than-human worlds, Johns Hopkins University Graduate Student conference

2018 Academy of African Urban Diversity, Max Planck Institute, Berlin, Germany

2018 Saharan Connectivities, VAD German African Studies, Leipzig Germany

2018 "Pilgrimage, piety, and the production of elders," Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa, Northwestern University

- 2018 Ethnographies of Interconnection in Africa, Cornell University Polson Institute
- 2017 Academy of African Urban Diversity, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2016 Religious citizenship and figures of sovereignty in the trans-Sahara, MigrInter Workshop, University of Agadir, Morocco
- 2016 Intimacy in the Aftermath of Slavery: migrant domestic work in Casablanca, Morocco, American Institute for Maghreb Studies, Tangier, Morocco
- 2016 Dissertation prospectus workshop, JHU African Studies Seminar
- 2014 Possibilities – A Workshop with Jane Guyer, Anthropology Grad student Conference, The Johns Hopkins University
- 2014 Intimacy’s fields: Senegalese Migrant Women in Casablanca, Institute for Women, Gender, and Sexuality, The Johns Hopkins University
- 2014 Revolutionary Intimacy: Family Law in Tunisia’s Post-Revolution Transition, Institute for Women, Gender, and Sexuality, The Johns Hopkins University
- 2013 Intimate Economies Workshop, respondent, The Johns Hopkins University
- 2013 Reclaiming Truth: Obligations, Methodologies, Implications, The Johns Hopkins University

INVITED LECTURES

- 2018 Crisis and Futurity: New African Ethnographies, Africana Studies, JHU
- 2018 Islam Since 1800, Department of Sociology, JHU

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2019 Dean’s Teaching Fellowship, The Johns Hopkins University
- 2016 FLAS Language Training grant, Wolof, Dakar, Senegal
- 2016 American Institute for Maghreb Studies, 9 month research grant, Morocco
- 2013 National Science Foundation GRFP, 3 years training & research grant

- 2013 Krieger School of Arts and Sciences Islamic Studies fellowship, The Johns Hopkins University
- 2013 Institute for Women, Gender, and Sexuality, 3-month Research Fellowship
- 2012 Owen Fellowship, Department of Anthropology, The Johns Hopkins University, 3 years

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Anthropology of the Maghreb and West Africa, Islam and Anthropology of Religion, Islamic philosophy, Post-colonial Literature and Theory, Gender and Sexuality, African Urbanism, Migration and Diaspora Studies

TEACHING

Teaching Assistant, Department of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University

- 2014 Spring Political Anthropology of Africa
- 2013 Fall From Sexual Nature to Sexual Politics
- 2013 Spring Invitation to Anthropology

Instructor, Department of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University

- 2019 Dean’s Teaching Fellowship seminar, “On the Move: Politics and Poetics of Mobility in Africa”
- 2015 “Gender, Sex, and Power in Transnational Perspective, Department of Anthropology

Related Teaching and Mentoring

Instructor, Goucher College Prison Education Partnership, Goucher College

- 2019 Culture and Society — “The Ethnographic Imagination”

Instructor, Department of Anthropology, Towson University

- 2018 Introduction to Anthropology (lecture, 2 sections)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

2019-2020 English Instructor, The Mustard Tree Project, Manchester, UK

Led weekly classes of 7-10 adult English language learners, designed group activities and games in preparation for ESOL language examinations.

2014-2016 Grad Student Liaison, Institute for Women Gender and Sexuality (JHU)

Conference and program planning for the Institute's graduate and undergraduate events; facilitation of Feminist and Queer Studies graduate student reading group; planning of "Law&" workshop, WGS travel grant workshops

2011-2012 Research Assistant, Prof. Dara Strolovitch, Political Science (U of Minnesota)

Research and editorial assistance for book project examining the discursive construction and deployment of "crisis" in 20th century American congressional politics

2009-2011 Columbia University Press, editorial assistant, contracts and permissions assistant

Reviewing new submissions, communicating with editors, processing submissions and maintaining communication and work-flow between authors, reviewers, editors, permissions and marketing. Processing contracts and responding to permissions requests.

2010-2012 Committee on Global Thought, Research Intern (Columbia University)

Research, planning, and organization relation to the "World and Africa" conference, a year-long series of panels, events, and exhibitions centered on globalization in Africa. Assistance with conceptualizing conference themes, composing publicity material, corresponding and collaborating with participants, assisting panelists with research. Principle organizer of the "World and Africa Film Series" in Fall 2010

2006-2009 Minnesota AIDS Project, Intern, Public Policy

Launched youth group "Minnesota Teens for AIDS Prevention," a platform within MN AIDS Project for peer education, mentoring, and advocacy related to HIV prevention and comprehensive sexuality education in Minnesota. Organized youth lobby days, media campaigns, community forums.