Chapter 1
Introduction

Research Focus: New Media, New Publics and Situated Scaling

This book is an ethnography of social-technological transformation processes in the High Atlas of Morocco. These processes include various aspects of political-economic, infrastructural, and socio-cultural change. In order to understand these lines of change historically situated and contextualized, the book explores the media-technologically supported processes that restructure social practice. In particular, and as part of a cooperation project with socio-informatics, this means zooming in on media, mediation and mediators as well as the new forms and gradation of publicness they trigger, shape and reflect. Thus, I have set out to analyze the varieties of media practices concerning the organizational work and transnational collaboration that take place there. In this context, the negotiation processes of various actors to increase their scope and forge new cooperative relationships are both an ongoing achievement and promise to successfully navigate the unfolding transformations.

The main questions that drive this work, and to which it seeks to provide answers, therefore revolve around how transnational influences and changing socio-economic conditions are brought to bear locally. More systematically, these are questions about the *scaling work* of the actors themselves within their multiple networks of relationships. Scaling work is my attempt to analytically capture, what these actors are in a very practical sense doing: How do they make ideas and concerns connectable and

compatible, how do they translate and integrate them into the local context of the High Atlas? What are the spaces of possibility and structural shifts involved?

The theoretical appeal of the concept of scale has gained some traction in anthropology in recent years (see among others Strathern 1991; Tsing 2000; Latour 2005b; Carr/Lempert 2016). In the course of this work, I understand scale as a combination of translating, working out, adopting, embedding, and contextualizing circulating imaginaries, discourses, and concerns on different levels—for and in specific situations and arrangements. Consequently, the *global* seems to become *local* as a result of engagement and negotiation. On closer inspection, however, both concepts (global and local) turn out to be incapable of adequately and analytically capturing the processes. Indeed, they seem to dissolve, as ethnographically neither the local nor the global can be grasped—but mereley a situative amalgamation of both. This leads to the question: What are the affordances of scale-making? How do actors make and unmake connections for their various concerns and goals?

This is not so much a matter of making plausible and filling in prefigured models or concepts of *media* and *public sphere* with ethnographic material. Reversely, it is necessary to ask what these concepts actually mean for the context and selected regional case, elaborated on the basis of the empirical circumstances. More precisely, and in particular, the following questions arise from these considerations, that have oriented the present research: Which media practices can be observed? In what way, with what motivation and for what purposes are the various groups or stakeholders involved in producing, enacting and employing them? Which infrastructural arrangements and lines of development become visible? If new forms of cooperation supported by media technology put existing values, views and practices to the test, how is in this process publicness produced or contained for different concerns? Which (new) alliances have been forged, which resources mobilized in order to win new cooperation partners and to make own interests and concerns connectable and compatible for a wider public?

Thus, the main interest lies on the resources actors in the High Atlas draw on to accomplish scale and administer change. These resources

can be social, technical, material and imaginative. In sum, then, this book follows a praxeological approach that considers the affordances that shape local practice at certain locales and the social institutions that enable and confine them as much as they are themselves reconfigured through time. The argumentation of the present book can be unfolded along three terms: In the High Atlas, scale-making—and transformation more general—is *territorialized*, which emphasizes the materialities of place and locality that need to be taken into account in dealing with resources. The actor's scaling work is *socialized*, in the sense that the actors are dependent on dense networks of social relations to draw on, but are also changing them at the same time. Finally, instances of scale-making present themselves as processes of re-infrastructuring, in which rising public concerns are encountered by embedding, standardizing and *institutionalizing* them in particular organizational arrangements or administrative procedures. For the specific region of the High Atlas, development cooperation, NGO work, and especially tourism are areas that have been particularly influenced by these processes of transformation and, in turn, have helped to shape them. In a similar and yet different way, practices of scale-making can be found in all of these contexts, as I will argue in the course of this book.

Figure 1: Panoramic view of the valley in the High Atlas

A Valley in the High Atlas or When is Periphery?

The High Atlas Mountain range covers an area of about 160 000 square kilometers, amounting to 22.8% of Morocco's territory.[1] This region where I did my fieldwork is considered by policy makers and tourists alike to be *remote*. This is both a relational and awkward term, whereby it is not quite clear which concrete information it contains, and yet at the same it time conveys a very clear normative meaning. The follow-up question should therefore always be: From whose point of view is it remote? In comparison to what?

The valley consists of four main villages inhabited by a total of between 11,000 and 12,000 people of the Berber or Amazigh community[2], which is considered the indigenous people of North Africa. A more conclusive number as would be derived from a census, for example, is not available, for no such census are carried out. The administrative buildings and the market (*suq*) are located directly on the river and at the end of the road that leads from Azilal, the main town of the province. The administrative center of the valley is basically a little settlement of official buildings and the Suq between the villages of Agoudim and Amezray. The oldest settlement, Agoudim, can be found just south of the administrative center, Amezray, is located a 20-minute walk away, if one follows the

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1   http://www.tourisme.gov.ma/en/tourism-territories/atlas-vallees (last accessed, 25/07/2018).

2   There is an ongoing discussion about the appropriate use of the term *Berber*. Unlike other languages, the term is not pejoratively connotated in English. I also want to take seriously the emic perspective: what and how my research partners, interlocutors, and friends would use it. They themselves would use Berber, Imazighen, Ishelhin interchangeably. Sometimes *Ishelhin* would convey more the sense of a shared language and specific cultural aspects (as dancing *ahidus*, not *ahwach*...). *Imazighen* sometimes had a more pan-Amazigh political ring to it, as being one North African indigenous people. *Berber* would seem slightly more universal in its applicability. All those slight nuances seemed to not always and strictly apply. I decided to use *Berber*, sometimes alternatingly *Amazigh/Imazighen*, thus following the main thrust of English-speaking scholarly contributions.

river north from the Suq. Both are central villages, both next to the river, and both connected to the access road. The third village, Taghia, is further south along the river, behind a gorge and nested within steep mountain walls. It is about one and a half hours away from the administrative center on foot, and cannot be reached by car. Tighanimin, the fourth village, is a one hour walk from the administrative center and Agoudim to the east, at the foot of the mountain range. It is the furthest southeastern extension of the valley. The dirt road leading there from the administrative center was widened a couple of years ago and can now be used by cars. In addition to these four villages, there are a number of smaller settlements scattered in the side valleys or along the hills beneath the high plateaus that border the valley to the east and west. To the north, the river runs out of the valley with slowly flattening mountain ranges until it finally flows into the Bin el Ouidane reservoir.

Figure 2 & 3: View of central valley, Suq in the front, Agoudim in the back (left) and Amezray (right), with its ighrim, from the riverbank

With reference to ethnographic research in Morocco, Clifford Geertz famously took the position that the "locus of study is not the object of study. Anthropologists don't study villages (tribes, towns, neighbourhoods...); they study *in* villages" (Geertz 1973: 22). Moreover, the following descriptions have not fallen out of time nor should they be read as in any way natural, original or authentic, but always as already part of the changing life in the mountains. The question then becomes: how one can

understand something as spectacular as profound change? Moreover, one should bear in mind that actions in a particular place are typically perceived by those involved as simply living life. My attempt to tackle this conundrum entails giving detailed descriptions that show what it is to live everyday life and make a living in the chosen research area. By doing so, I seek to bring specific aspects of change into view, namely a change that sets itself apart from the conditions that were themselves already in constant change and flux prior to my arrival.

The villages in the valley—like many places in the High Atlas—radiate a graceful beauty. The houses have the same colour as their environment use stones and natural materials from the local area to blend into the mountain slopes that surround them. In some places, especially in Agoudim, the houses are built so close together that at first glance it is not immediately obvious where one house ends and the next begins, if one roof forms the foundation of a house or terrace above, or whether a winding path is a village street or a house entrance. For my own part, I stayed in Amezray, with a married couple and their three children, the husband's parents, his uncle (on his father's side, *3mmi*), aunt, and grandmother, who all lived in the same abode.

In terms of its distance from—and infrastructural connection to—larger cities such as Azilal, Beni Melal or Marrakesh, the valley is rather cut-off. The regional road R302 is the only central access road and reaches Zawiya Ahansal at exactly the point where it leads furthest into the High Atlas. The road leading from the west into the High Atlas from Zawiya comes to a standstill here, offering no means of continuing either east or south. Crossing the High Atlas—as one would, for instance, with the national road (N9) from Marrakesh to Ouarzazate—is not possible here.

The barren and often rugged mountain landscape coheres with an image of seclusion. Generally speaking, mountains are often considered wild and unconquerable. Yet, the mountains are a habitat and have been for hundreds of years. This includes mountain ranges, gorges, and seemingly impassable and fruitless terrain. The remote and barren nature often attributed to the mountain environment can obscure the fact that

many have made it their home, and created the conditions to flourish in it.

Figure 4: Houses in the valley

Transformations

The region is subject to profound transformation. Indeed, local people are often quite aware as to what precisely must change for improvement to occur. In an interview given in Southern Morocco, Thomas Lacroix states the point quite well:

> *Qu'est-ce qu'il faut pour que ça change le village?*
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> Le gens, ils sont sans travail, qu'est-ce qu'ils vont manger? S'il y a une usine ou bien un autobus, ou s'il passe un train ici, c'est mieux. Ca changerait, ben oui. Ici, c'est comme ça, c'est la montagne. (Lacroix 2005: 149).

As this excerpt suggests, wage labour and transportation are particularly desirable constituents of change, both in the High Atlas and else-

where. In the valley that is the focus of this book, infrastructural improvements and development have been occurring for about a decade now. Only in the last five to ten years have houses been connected to water and power lines been installed, while a secondary school was built in Amezray. The school, in particular, has led to the construction of more and more houses and an increase in migration from the surrounding areas to the central villages. Broadcasting towers for mobile internet are equally only a couple of years old. For the whole region, two ambulances and a small medical station have been installed. Infrastructural changes and integration into the expanding global economy provide the backdrop for an increase in touristic activity, and this equally applies to rural areas.

For many aspects of life, however, the trip to Azilal is obligatory. As the main town in the province, it has a hospital, pharmacies, gas stations, a police department and a number of other regional authorities. The journey from the valley to Azilal, a distance of a little more than 80 kilometers, takes about two hours by car. By public transport, a small minibus, it takes between three and three and a half hours. The main access road to the valley was paved with asphalt in 2014. There was previously only a dirt road. The trip, which was only possible with off-road vehicles at that time, could take between six and eight hours.

Newly paved roads and broadened mountain passes now enable more and more regular transportation with minivans and pickup trucks. As a result, there is more passenger transport, while the journey to the district town has become shorter and is offered at more regular intervals. All these developments have accelerated up existing transportation procedures to a certain extent (Wajcman/Dodd 2017; Duclos/Criado/Nguyen 2017). Yet the chosen mode for covering a particular distance is not based solely on punctuality nor in accordance with the clock-time of a particular transportation schedule. Social ties and the maintenance of relationships are crucial. The better the social relations, the better the transportation. Waiting as well as knowing or calling the right person are basic mobility practices. If someone wants to travel from the valley, they call the driver of a minibus or pickup truck. The driver, in turn, gives the person a pick-up time and location, if there is room. Similarly, at the bus station in Azilal for public transport to

the mountains, seats can be reserved with the bus driver. Normally, however, you simply go to the station, buy a ticket, and wait at your seat. Departure occurs when the bus is full or the driver no longer wishes to wait. The same is true for collective taxis (*grands taxis*), where planning mainly entails a spatial dimension, as travelers simply have to be at the right spot. Time, in this instance, plays a subordinate role. As such, one could well claim that space, rather than time, organizes thought and practice as regards transportation in the High Atlas Mountains. The predominance of time over space in discourses on modernization (Rosa 2005) is thus subject to a certain challenge here. However, *forms of modernizing* are becoming increasingly palpable in the rural areas of the High Atlas.[3]

In the context of critical discourse on modernization—and in settings like workshops and colloquia of our Collaborative Research Center—the project I participated in was repeatedly subject to questions on the meaning of scientific intervention and the actual necessity of a transdisciplinary cooperation project between German universities and a Moroccan organization *per se* (see chapter two). There was a clear moral undertone to some of these question: Were we really motivated by a desire to bring technology and the internet to the people in the High Atlas? Were we aware of our responsibility and the very likely negative effects of our research activities? Who would pay for this project? In a number of

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3   Such dynamics extend, of course, beyond this particular area. Transportation is an interesting marker of modernization schemes. Within the three and a half years of my PhD studies and since my first visit to Morocco in summer 2016, I have witnessed: the renewed expansion of the access road from Azilal into the mountains as far as Ait Mhamd from one to two lanes and; the renewal of a nation-wide fleet of grand taxis. While my first trip from to Azilal in a grand taxi was in an E-type Mercedes—very much typical for that time—in September 2018 all such vehicles had been replaced by more recent models with seven seats. Similarly, when the new airport terminal in Marrakech was opened in 2016, a new shuttle bus service introduced, and a public bike rental system implemented. Of course, Morocco's hosting of the United Nations Climate Change conference in November 2016 most certainly had a part to play here.

interdisciplinary academic discussions, many questions arose that revealed dichotomous thinking along the lines of traditional/modern or un(der)developed/developed. This, again, touched on the moral status and political implications of the project: Whose intention was it to bring technology there and in whose interest? Was it not problematic and paternalistic to bring people into contact with technology and to then investigate their behaviour? This almost went so far as to imply a critical laboratory set-up for the proposed project. The problematic aspect of this take on the proposal was the foreclosure of agency for the local people. Furthermore, this assumption holds that locals are unable to exercise their own autonomy. As such, the assumption denies them the pursuit of their own interests, the formulation of their own positions, and the capacity to take action. Similarly, this critique revealed prevalent notions of the physical research area as a secluded and closed authentic cultural arena, and as a harmonious structure, which our initiative from the outside would only serve to disturb. As such, this perspective completely ignored centuries of mobility, exchange, and interconnection.

The analytical shortcomings of these notions concerning relative *underdevelopment* is that they do not adequately account for the contradictions and inconsistencies of recent transformation processes. One such example is the conditions under which mobile phones are used in the economically weak and supposedly *backward* mountain region of Morocco. The speed of mobile data reception, which varies between 3G and LTE, is higher in the High Atlas than in many rural areas of Germany. Of course, it is not a question of proving that people live comparably *modern* lives in Morocco to those in Germany, say, but rather of indicating that these realities are perceived by many as *surprising* or exceptional, or at least remarkable. This is so because the assumed (and implicitly attributed) *state of development of others* would not suggest this. The critique we were confronted with at the beginning of our research project—although a welcome invitation to reflect on our own principles and perceptions—often reproduced even those very dichotomies and notions of progress and development. To explain this with insufficient information fails to grasp the point satisfactorily. Rather, the everyday understanding of a world of different *stages of development*—and

the assumptions that go along with it—seem to express themselves particularly saliently here. In contrast to the actual complexities of Moroccan life, the imagined circumstances here are much more strongly determined by a deep-seated perspective of deficits, precarity, and even hopelessness (Ferguson 2006).

Despite the valley's seeming remoteness, the region has always been connected by passing caravans from the Sahara. Moreover, it has been a center for nomads, who would come with their flock to the nearby summer pastures and for pilgrims, who would visit the sacred tomb of Sidi Said Ahansal. Remarkably, as early as the 1960s, there were even turbines in Agoudim, which generated electricity with river water. This was due to the French army, which had a military and administrative foothold there at the time of the protectorate. Since then, homes belonging to families from the holy lineage—who possessed special political importance for the French—had been supplied with electricity. Later, turbines were used to supply other households in the valley before the national power grid finally arrived in 2012. People also used solar panels together with car batteries to generate and store small amounts of electricity for individual households. Those are the markers of *modernization*, which can be found throughout the High Atlas: roads, electricity and running water as well as refrigerators, televisions, and telephones. For all the critical discourses I had previously perceived, this was the very empirical mélange in which my research took place and which oriented and shaped my perspective and research questions.

Doing Ethnography

Doing fieldwork is a kind of initiation ritual for anthropologists-in-the-making. As such, ethnography—the process of arriving at a description of social practices—is the primary intention of anthropological knowledge production. To achieve this, researchers immerse themselves in a society, in a community, in a context, producing descriptive data, and rendering the collected data intelligible for readers or fellow academics. Ethnography is an artisanal endeavour, which comprehen-

sively challenges the researcher's own body and biography. It takes time and commitment, sometimes even sacrifice. Only with time and shared experiences will it be possible to work out commonalities, build relationships and eventually produce ethnographic insights. As ethnography focuses on human (inter)action and puts it at the basis of knowledge production, it is in itself a proponent of practice theory (Ortner 1984). This is by no means a process of coincidence. Understanding human practices through ethnographic research means continuously working on that understanding and negotiating it. To understand such practices, ethnographers themselves have to enter into practice with an open mindset, awareness, and a receptivity toward both mutuality and commonality. Fundamentally, is the ethnographer's task to forge cooperation.

Ethnography involves different types of data and the use of different media formats and technologies. The central question thereby is how lived social and cultural reality is (re-)produced, maintained and made meaningful. Therefore, ethnographers have to consider everyday situations, practices, and interactions, as well as discourses and standards of valuation (Sanjek 1996; Lüders 2010). Ethnographic fieldwork is not a methodologically fixed approach, but rather method and product simultaneously. As a flexible, processual research strategy, it offers researchers a framework to oscillate between their own immediate fieldwork experience and the analysis. Participant observation is inextricably linked to ethnographic fieldwork. It describes neither *pure* observation nor *pure* participation (Atkinson/Hammersley 1994). The aim is to generate as much proximity as possible to social phenomena and practices, while at the same time maintaining necessary analytical distance from full immersion and distorting biases.

Cooperation and/as Media Ethnography

The status and feasibility of observation and participation, as well as their temporal and spatial limitations are the topic of several ongoing discussions, particularly since the development of digital media technology and global circulation spheres. It would be misleading to

suggest a divide between a somewhat *classical ethnography* and a *(digital) media ethnography* insofar as this divide would suggest several clear-cut methodological implications, and even differences. In my opinion, this would constitute a failure to recognize the necessary open and dynamic character of ethnographic research in general. Nor would such a divide do justice to methodological pluralism-opportunism of ethnographic research, which is oriented both towards the relevancies of the research context and the relationship between people and ethnographer. I am rather inclined to follow scholars who suggest that we not make (digital) media the exclusive focus, but rather perceive such media as part of people's everyday lives and worlds (Pink et al. 2016) and as achieving "holistic contextualizations" (Miller 2017). The emphasis of the ethnographic approach resonates with a pioneering work in the anthropology of media, which postulates that ethnography can "help to see how media are embedded in people's quotidian lives but also how consumers and producers are themselves imbricated in discursive universes, political situations, economic circumstances, national settings, historical moments, and transnational flows, to name only a few relevant contexts" (Ginsburg/Abu-Lughod/Larkin 2002: 2). Practices of engagement may shift, for instance, when engaging in participant observation of digitally mediated communities, whereby the notion of presence must be critically examined. But if content analysis, usage surveys, and macroperspectives are not sufficient to study media in their situated form, ethnography is the approach of choice.

Moreover, studying social practices, human culture, or local worlds inevitably includes media and mediations (Mazzarella 2004). Media and media practices, in turn, become understandable primarily with regard to how they are brought to bear and as something intermediary and mediating. This is why they have to be ethnographically traced *in situ* (Bender/Zillinger 2015). It is in situated practices and engagements that media are realized. In order to arrive at an ethnographic description of media(ted) practices—and an analysis that takes the complex realities of local everyday life seriously—it is important to *follow the mediators*. It is thus preferable to adopt an open concept of media as a basis, rather than thinking of media as a fixed object. It should be considered an interlink-

age and mediating potentiality (or agency) that enables connections and builds relations, especially in ethnographic research settings. As such, media cannot be reduced to either discourse, intermediary, signal, or information. Rather, "[b]etween the social, semiotic and technical (and partly naturalized) agencies involved, a cyclical consideration of the co-production of social, technical and personal variables is at stake. This makes up media and it is from this that corresponding classifications are created" (Schüttpelz 2013: 58, my translation).

Access to the *ethnographic field* should be understood as the design or creation of social contexts that make ethnographic research possible in the first place. Thus, an ethnographer is not just entering ethnographic fieldwork, but continuously and cooperatively producing and establishing the ethnographic research conditions. Ethnographers and their interlocutors, or more precisely the people with whom they will jointly produce their ethnographic knowledge, enter into a "complex process of cooperation" (Breidenstein et al. 2015: 62, my translation). According to Charles Goodwin, cooperation can thereby be understood as "public social practices that human beings pervasively use to construct in concert with each other the actions that make possible, and sustain, their activities and communities" (Goodwin 2018: 7). In this way, "building our own actions with the very same resources used by others *we inhabit each other's actions*" (ibid.: 11, italics in original), which puts cooperation at the very foundation of sociality. Consequently, mutuality and commonality play a central role; they are in constant dialogue. Through the juxtaposition of concepts and by engaging in situated practices, what is relevant and meaningful is mutually made and mutually shown between ethnographer and research partners or interlocutors. This is especially true for the ethnographic research process.

Inversion

Much has been written about the notion of strangeness or radical alterity as an epistemological key feature of anthropological knowledge production. Without wanting to enter this comprehensive discussion fully, I want to use it as a background to argue that the importance of common-

ality—a specific kind of mutuality, so to speak—should not be neglected, in particular when starting fieldwork. In order to illustrate my point, I would like to put greater emphasis on the *other*, so to speak, of partici-pant observation, that is, *being observed* oneself. Observing and being ob-served are a manifestation of mutuality and is essential parts of the foun-dation of both the apprentice-expert relationship and ethnographic re-search in general. As Richard Rottenburg—who draws on Fritz Kramer's *inverse anthropology*—puts it:

> "The basic elementary experience of anthropological fieldwork is that contrary to one's own intention and self-awareness as an observer and learner, one is initially made the object of observation oneself. In the course of this often destabilizing experience, it becomes im-mediately clear that one's own understanding of difference takes place mainly through the passive experience of being observed, rather than through active observation." (Rottenburg 2001: 42, my translation)

After all, I was the *intruder*. Therefore—and unsurprisingly—one is ob-served precisely because there are aspects of oneself that are unfamil-iar or appear strange to those in whose environment one finds oneself. Whether this is the crucial epistemological moment of anthropological fieldwork or not, it is followed by a mutual search for commonalities. It is through this search for commonality that a rapport is established and relationships are formed as well as, eventually, cooperation.

What is more, the relevant objects of ethnographic research and forms of mediation ultimately co-produce themselves. By design, ethnographic research is more than just *information extraction*. It is rather "necessarily done in the company of man". The ethnographer "*needs the active cooperation of the people* if he is to succeed in his work" (Casagrande 1960: X, italics added). Ethnographic research is intrinsi-cally cooperative because the ethnographer is not able to gain insights alone. "Facts are made [...] and the facts we interpret are made and remade", as Paul Rabinow (1977: 150) makes clear. I might also add, in closing, that the mutual co-production of ethnographic facts is the achievement of an—often mediated—process of active cooperation.

Outline of the Book

Following this introduction, chapter two will serve as thematic entry and describe the establishment of a computer club in the High Atlas. To this end, two German universities work together with a Moroccan community-based organization. The chapter traces the beginning of the project, focusing in particular on the opening and the first workshop sessions that took place at the computer club. Motivations for the project as well as some of the implications of the appropriation process will be discussed. This is also a work-in-progress report, as the project is currently in its second term. Another aspect of the chapter is to situate myself and the project in which I was associated, and to make it transparent as a starting point for the research. The project work was ultimately the lens through which I learned about the valley.

After chapter two set the stage, chapter three provides a stocktaking. It will present working and organizational methods of active NGOs in the valley. To some degree, the valley can be understood as a playing field, in which these NGOs are increasingly shaping the conditions for a succeeding everyday life. The NGOs hold crucial intermediary positions and translate ideas, models, and practices from a field of development cooperation to a local setting. Through their successful project activities and individual commitment, they also offer an alternative to the long-standing way of life in the High Atlas.

Chapter four, then, functions as a brief historical and contextualizing insertion. This adds a deeper level to the findings already described by outlining the background against which the multilayered development processes stand out very clearly. This insertion substantiates the still relevant orienting capacity that local kinship ties and concepts of a historically grown relationship to the state have also for the current time. This also allows to derive a tentative argument: Although many parallels to questions of development and modernization are being negotiated in a wide variety of places around the world—and at times seem to take on quasi-universalist characteristics—there are enormous particularities that, in this case here, can be traced back to the social ecology and specific locality of the High Atlas.

Chapters five, six, and seven, then move more in the direction of concrete example cases of how actors use various strategies, techniques and mediations in an attempt to create an outcome that is favorable to them from the transformation processes that are taking place. In all cases, this involves creating connectivity and/or expanding contact zones for strategic goals, collaboration and influence. Chapter five provides the detailed description of the implementation of a new water supply system for the village of Amezray, under the responsibility of the local NGO. Chapter six takes a closer look at the local field of mountain tourism, which is a relatively young but extremely lucrative field of activity. The chapter ties the transformations back to the figures of the guide and the saint, thus carefully sketching the outlines of a tectonic shift in social strata. While dimensions of mediation, different media technologies or the question of publicness resonate in all chapters—and are made explicit in several instances—chapter seven tackles digital media technologies head-on. Here it becomes quite explicit how the actors intend to face the volatility of Moroccan mountain tourism through their skillful weaving of cooperative networks and scaling work, i.e. also by resorting to digital media technology.

Between the individual chapters, there are small additional ethnographic insertions, which serve as a sort of parenthesis to supplement the book's line of argumentation by adding personal, anecdotal accounts. These insertions do not fit directly into the thread of the chapters, but are therefore not incoherent, but complement the ethnographic density of my narratives. At least, I hope that this desired effect will occur with the reader.

One last note is necessary. All names of persons appearing in this book have been changed. The names of the places and also of the organizations described, on the other hand, I have left unchanged. This results in the somewhat peculiar effect that, of course, persons familiar with the area or local people clearly will know for the most part who is being talked about. Nonetheless, I decided to do this because, on the one hand, I wanted to protect the individual persons a little bit and not expose them directly, even if they had given me their consent for it. On the other hand, I wanted to enable a certain multiplicity, because at least in

part, thoughts, actions or statements, even though they were made by exactly one person, may well be understood as a pars pro toto: referring to a shared local body of knowledge and experience, which could also be brought forward by other interlocutors in a similar way.