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R-E-S-P-E-C-T Expectations, Perceptions, and Influences on Moroccan Etiquette

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R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Expectations, Perceptions, and Influences on Moroccan Etiquette

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Morocco: Migration and Transnational Identity
Independent Study Project
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Fall 2011

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ISP Abstract

Why do humans naturally create distinctions? How do we establish these distinctions between ourselves? What marks us as an individual within a particular group? In this project, I consider how etiquette is defined in Morocco and how it relates to the work of certain theorists and sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu. Primarily, this project focuses on expectations of behavior, perceptions of the ‘other,’ and influences on the definition of good behavior in Morocco. In addition to observations in public spaces and more specifically at universities, I interviewed University students from Ibn Tofail in Kenitra and from Mohammed V in Rabat, and held discussions in two University classes about their opinions on etiquette in Morocco. Concerning rural to urban migration, I investigate the variations of etiquette in rural versus urban areas and the corresponding perceptions of the ‘other.’ Etiquette reveals how humans define themselves, embody and defy certain social distinctions, and create social hierarchies and classes.

Introduction: “R-E-S-P-E-C-T, Find out what it means to me”

R-E-S-P-E-C-T, a magnificent remake by Aretha Franklin, played a pretty huge role in the formation of my childhood. However, not until I really considered the lyrics did I pay attention to why exactly she sings, “Find out what it means to me.” Essentially, this represents the major theme of my research, or at least targets on of my main discoveries in this research project. I have talked to a number of Moroccan students, each of whom mentioned the word “respect” at least once during our conversations. In addition, there were quite a number of students who continually prefaced their statements with the fact that there are many variations and differences in behaviors, traditions, and individuals throughout the country and that what they were explaining to me simply could not capture the entirety of Morocco. Thus, when I started to listen to this song recently, I thought that maybe I should incorporate at least this one line that emphasizes the point that, in order to understand someone, you need to “find out what it means to” them. In other words, generalizing about etiquette won’t do much good.

What sparked the idea of studying etiquette? Why do humans naturally create distinctions? How do we establish these deep distinctions between ourselves? What marks us as an individual within a particular group—or even just as a member of a certain group? Does upbringing affect it? Does location of upbringing affect it? Does how we behave affect how others perceive us? How is etiquette defined in Morocco? What are the norms and how are they established? Are they marked by whether Moroccans are from the countryside or from urban areas? It is evident that these norms are marked by gender, but how does an individual embody it? Is this marking affected by one’s level of religiosity? What marks someone as religious? How do individuals defy these norms?

Why did I choose to study etiquette specifically in Morocco? Before I arrived, I was aware of a transnational convergence and flow, this constant mixing of multiple cultures,

languages, traditions, and opinions in Morocco. Upon arrival and after a few months of observation, I have come to realize the extent to which this is beyond true. Here is an entry from one of my first reflections about my experiences in this country:

Since I have been here I have been very aware of how I hold myself. How I eat, how I place my hands on the table, how I sit. I learned that you should not have your foot upward facing anyone when sitting with your legs crossed...it is very rude. I learned how you are supposed to pick up all your food with bread. You share a communal bowl and glass. Silverware is used sparingly. It seems that it is very important how you eat. How you must keep to your zone in the communal bowl. You essentially lick your fingers after every bite. How you make a little ball to eat couscous. Welcoming neighbors constantly in one's home. General welcome—extended greetings. Bad to summon someone on the street with a hand gesture. Not good manners to sit across from someone or next to someone and not have a conversation.

This sparked my thinking to consider the significance and depth of etiquette in Morocco. I wondered how individuals came to consider what was proper and what was ill mannered.

Through an exploration of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Georges Bataille, and Michel de Certeau, I plan to uncover the potential ways that Moroccans organize themselves into distinct groups and how they identify themselves.

Methods:

There is not a lot of literature on this topic specifically in Morocco; therefore this project is mostly driven off of discussions and observations with students. I reflected on these experiences and then applied some sociological theories to these discussions. From the beginning of my experience in Morocco, I have been observing Moroccans, within the home, within the café, within the marketplace, within a university setting, and generally on the street versus in the home. After talking to various professors in Morocco, I decided that the most feasible population to discuss these issues with was university students from Ibn Tofail in Kenitra and from Mohammed V Rabat-Souissi Campus. At first, I visited both campuses and spent time observing in both spaces. In the Mohammed V Rabat-Souissi Campus, I sat and observed students in the “cafeteria” area where there are a few cafeterias situated next to each other. It is important to note that within these universities, I spoke specifically to students from

the Faculty of Letters and who were a part of the English Department. I managed to conduct eleven official interviews with a mixture of male and female students. The students range from ages 19-23 and in different levels of University and English study. The students are from cities and towns throughout Morocco. Unfortunately, I was not able to evenly distribute the population between students from Kenitra and from Rabat, and also I was unable to interview the same number of boys and girls. I interviewed eight girls, seven from Kenitra and one from Rabat, and three boys, one from Kenitra and two from Rabat. I met each of these students individually either at cafés or at their university. We talked for anywhere between thirty and sixty minutes and I asked questions similar to those on the attached “Individual Interview Guide.” I attained the consent of each of my interviewees by having them sign a consent form. Also, I recorded each interview with their consent and wrote out the transcriptions of each interview. All of the names of the participants have been changed in order to protect their identities. In addition to conducting one on one interviews, I was also given the opportunity to hold two class discussions at Ibn Tofail in Kenitra. For one class, I was able to ask questions from the “Class Discussion Guide” attached to lead a discussion. For the other class, we discussed the question, “What affects/influences how we define what is ‘good behavior’ in Morocco?” **Through observations, discussions, individual interviews, and theoretical readings, I plan to elucidate Moroccan etiquette through my perspective, experiences, and interactions.**

Limitations and Problems

I am an American Student studying in Morocco for four months. Thus, first of all, it is hard to say I have even the slightest grasp of this culture. It is important to mention that because there are only four weeks to complete this research project, it is impossible to fully uncover etiquette in Morocco and at this point, I think that I have barely even made a small dent on this

topic. Also, I must be aware of the fact that I did only talk to eleven students, which cannot clearly represent the population of Morocco, but rather show us a few varying opinions and provide us with stories of their individual experiences and opinions rather than a general story of Moroccan students. Among those students, the population of girls versus boys was uneven. This was possibly because of the exams and strikes that arose during our research period and also because there was a larger response to my emails from girls about participating in my research. Because my population was drawn from students who choose to participate, this may affect my information and also is potential reason why I had challenges selecting a perfect population because I only had a small population of students who responded to my emails or approached me after various English classes. I also realize that I am only talking to university students and am limiting my pool to students my age who are attending school and also are focusing in English. I am lucky that the interviewees are currently studying English in school and are very competent in their language skills so I did not need to use a translator. However, at some points, it was difficult for some of the interviewees to determine what they wanted to say and translate from Arabic to English. When they could not think of the word, I asked them write down the Arabic. I will definitely say that one of the difficulties of this research is that I could only get to know each student so well—as I wanted to talk to enough students and get enough of their opinions, but I also wanted to get to know each of them. In addition, I had originally hoped to travel to a rural village in Morocco; however, I realized that I would have trouble synthesizing that multitude of information in the short amount of time that was allotted for research and traveling. I decided that in four weeks that it was not feasible to attempt both sites of observation so I decided to focus on the campuses in Kenitra and Rabat. I would like to emphasize that the goal of this project is to explore the perceptions, influences, and expectations involved with Moroccan

etiquette, but not to assume any generalizations or overarching statements. Essentially, this is my story of exploring etiquette in Morocco through the eyes of Moroccan University students.

A Note on Terminology

I think that terminology in this paper is crucial for understanding my objective. I often find myself having to define what I mean by the word “etiquette.” At first, I was defining it by “manners,” “propriety,” “how someone is supposed to act” and “what is proper and civilized.” However, before starting the interviews, I realized that in Morocco, etiquette did not just encapsulate rules at the dinner table and how you were supposed to greet someone. While those are important aspects of etiquette in Morocco, I think that it encompasses more than those few requirements and each aspect also has many implications. So I reconsidered my definition of etiquette to become “values, behaviors, and manners” and I found myself often using the word “behave”, and asking questions like: “how do you think you hold yourself,” “how do you conduct yourself in public,” “what is suitable,” and “what you think is good behavior”. I would often also discuss “upbringing” and use the Arabic term “terbiya”—تَرْبِيَّةٌ—that essentially means “education.” This term would help me uncover where some of their knowledge came from and unpack educational methods of etiquette. I think my largest discovery was that I needed to broaden the definition of etiquette, as it was more than physical, outward actions of dress and how someone holds themselves, but also how they incorporate certain values into their daily lives and how that was exhibited through their behavior and actions.

Introducing the Students

Mohammed is quite a vibrant 20 year-old boy from Khemisset. He explained to me that now that he lives on his own in an apartment in Kenitra, he has learned to do everything for himself: cleaning, cooking, and washing his clothes. He studies English at Ibn Tofail in Kenitra and is impressive with his language skills. It is impossible to avoid his passion in all that he discusses. During our conversations, I was amazed by his drive towards equality and organization. He laid a strong basis in my mind for the idea of respect in Morocco. I asked him about what he thinks are his most important values, and he responded:

Mohammed: My most important values, to be honest with you, it is to have a sense of humor, I would like to have the smile, I would love to have others to have smiles on their faces, if you didn't have a smile on your face, I wouldn't like to go with you, yeah, really. I love people who have a sense of humor, who laugh, make jokes, and study at the same time who are hardworking and successful people in society.¹

Asila is a 21 year-old girl from Kenitra, but she was born in Casablanca and moved around to cities in Morocco including Rabat and then moved to Kenitra. She lives with her parents in Kenitra and attends the Ibn Tofail University and studies English. Asila is definitely a rebel and does not mind showcasing her opinions. She told me right at the start that she was really excited to do an interview because she loved talking and sharing her opinions. She explained how Islam has not really impacted her life as she has come to her own conclusion not to practice the religion. One key aspect of our conversation surrounded the idea that while she did not personally feel or find a connection with Islam, she did respect those who did. She just wants some sort of peace amongst differences. It is intriguing how much she cherished and appreciated difference; she really loved this whole idea of breaking the norm. When I asked her about her most important values, she responded:

Asila: I think the most important thing about behaving with people is that you have to be very respectful towards people and to work with their different nature. I think people are not really aware that people are different. Everything is different from one person to another. And people sometimes expect you to behave the same way as they do whereas it is impossible because they are different. And I think I respect people's differences. I like it when

¹ Mohammed, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

I meet people that are aware of this. I also I like tolerance. This idea of being okay with whatever people are, I mean even if their values and norms are different. That's what I don't get from here.²

Asila's opinion is definitely a switch from what I often heard from Moroccan women and also from the stereotype often assumed for Moroccan women. She believes that each individual should maintain their weirdness and not have to adjust by situation and follow the norm.

Fatima was welcoming from when I first walked into the university. She was the first student I met at Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra. She is twenty-three years old and she is originally from Kenitra. She is currently studying English and she desires to travel abroad in the near future. She wears the veil, but she explained to me that while she is a Muslim, she has become more open-minded since attending university. She placed a lot of emphasis on the notion of respect:

Fatima: My manner for me, my behavior is I focus a lot on respectful. Very, very the most important, because when you respect someone, he or she respects you as a person, she could not do something inappropriate with you because she knows you and she knows how you think, she knows that you are open-minded, but she also respects you from what you say. She couldn't judge you for something else. I focus a lot on respectful and to be honest. I love honest. That's why, because honesty is make me/us in beliefs.³

After this third interview, I started to notice this trend of the significance of 'respect' as a form of etiquette in Morocco. She talked to me a lot about tradition and how much Moroccan modernity and media are destroying tradition. We talked about limits and how everyone has freedoms, but regardless, there are always limits. I wonder more about what limits she was referring to, because I could only get so much out of her. One of her limits was that she would not live with a man outside of wedlock. She expressed how important her values were to her. She kept apologizing for her English and was hopeful that she was helpful. While we had a few translation problems, I was sincerely impressed by her ability to express herself. Essentially, she is one of many examples where a Moroccan woman has strong values in terms of her religion,

² Asila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

³ Fatima, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

but at the same time, she is willing to accept and respect others and finds it vital to respect that people come from different places.

Laila is a 20 year-old student from Tangier. She is studying English studies specifically linguistic studies. She studies at Ibn Tofail as well and she lives on campus with one of her close friends. One of the first things we discussed was how much she wanted to go back to Tangier:

Laila: Personally I don't like Kenitra too much, I don't like. I don't feel comfortable. I don't because I had problems with my friends a lot and I don't know I just wanted to stay away from them and I just wanted to go home, there is my family there. I knew some really bad people here that made me hate this city. It's not really something I'm getting used to. I'm used to living with my parents, we are a really close family. So that's it. I'm really waiting for this year to end so that I will go there and maybe subscribe in translation school.⁴

I asked her who these 'bad people' were and she explained that she had lived with other girls from all over Morocco and they all had different perspectives on how to live together, which resulted in her switching to a new room with a close friend. It took a little while for Laila to warm up to me; however, once she started talking to me, she realized that I wasn't trying to assume something negative about Morocco and that my research was purely educational. She claimed that she was not talkative and that she did not say a lot. However, she shared with me a wealth of fascinating stories, experiences, and opinions. In fact, in terms of the influence on etiquette, she shed a lot of light on what drives how we think of etiquette. Her own relationships with friends illustrate what she finds important. She elucidates ideas of what respect means in Morocco. She is more conservative than the other girls I talked to. Like Fatima, she put a lot of pressure on herself and hoped that she was helpful. It is amazing how true it is that you cannot generalize: after these first four interviews, the variety in opinions is astounding.

Tahra is in her third year of cultural studies at Mohammed V and she is preparing her preliminary research. She currently lives with her family in Salé, but wants to travel to America

⁴ Laila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

one day “to learn more about their culture and their etiquette too.”⁵ I remember waiting anxiously outside of the professor’s classroom, where I was clearly not a student attending the university. I was not entirely sure that I was outside the correct classroom and Tahra walked up to me, without any hesitation and helped me figure out where to go. Only to be bombarded by some 60 students all attempting to get a good seat in class, she said quickly to me: “You have to avoid sitting in back—you can’t hear a thing.” So, she and I grabbed two chairs in the fourth row. I talked to her more after class, and I ended up meeting her for coffee later on. She impressed me with her enthusiasm, and she really appreciated that I wanted to learn about Morocco. From the start of our conversation, she shared her own observations on Moroccan etiquette, which opened my eyes to a few new ideas and defined a few for me as well.

*Tahra: As you know, the society has its own culture and traditions, so as you know, that Moroccan etiquette plays an important role to build a solid framework between the people, so it acts like a solid framework molding the people and the culture of Morocco together. Moroccan social etiquette – for example, Moroccans greet each other by shaking hands, but it is usually done among people of the same gender and it is more formal way of greeting, and also people that you are friendly with they kiss lightly on the cheeks beginning with the left cheek and shaking hands. I have a question: why do Moroccans kiss the hands of our king and American citizen whoever meets Obama they shake hands like that—this is a kind of social etiquette. [...].*⁶

She admitted that she did not know much about the countryside, so we did not talk very much about that potential difference or her perception of the ‘other.’ However, we did talk extensively about what etiquette was in Morocco. She also both invited me into her home for couscous and she offered to teach me Arabic. It was evident that there was this clear desire to welcome newcomers. Just from these interactions apart from the interview, I learned a significant amount about what role etiquette plays in Morocco.

Fedoua is a 19 year-old student from Tiflet, but she lives on the campus in Kenitra while she is at school. She used to study Science, but switched to studying English at Ibn Tofail.

⁵ Tahra, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 24, 2011.

⁶ Tahra, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 24, 2011.

Fedoua expressed some surprising opinions, as she used to be quite the tomboy. She explores how a significant amount of her behavior now derives from her childhood.

Me: *How were you supposed to behave as a child?*

Fedoua: *You have to respect the older ones of us. Especially for girls they have to be more respectful than boys. When there is a subject turning up, like a personal topic or something, and it turns around in the family, we don't have to say our opinion, because you are young and you don't know about anything, so quiet, or go to do something else. We are older and we talk. I don't like this because we have to share our opinion too, maybe we don't have more experience than they are but even if we don't live in the same generation, we don't live in the same conditions and uh...*

Me: *At what point can you share your opinion?*

F: *From now I can't, because I can't hear my opinion, not 100% I can't, but 50%, it depends on the topic. There's all the problems that we discuss or something because I don't want to say anything just to avoid problems. Avoid this, I don't know...just because I used to act like that I became like that. [...]*

Me: *What are your most important values in terms of behavior?*

F: *I have to be shy, and silent, and quiet, and I have to be nice, and to have special words, every place has special words, in the café, there is some words that you have to use and some words you can't.⁷*

Her silence and shyness from childhood have stayed with her, but she explains that while it is often assumed that shyness and a lack of self confidence are related, it is not that an individual is not self confident, but rather they don't showcase it to the world. She said that it is often perceived that women here have low self-confidence, but this is not always the case, it is just the fact that they are not vocal about it.

Said is a student at Mohammed V University and at Dar El Hadith in Rabat. He is from El Jadida, but he currently lives in an apartment in Rabat. He studies English and is doing research in Islamic Studies at Dar El Hadith. Said had a lot to share in terms of religion and tradition and also the lifestyle in the countryside. When asked about his upbringing, he explained its impact on his behavior.

Said: *When I was ten years old, my grandmother, every night, because there was no light, no electricity, so she would come with a candle, my grandmother would try hard to narrate some old stories, for example, so as to be Muslim. Talk about her past, how it was. There were some great things I learned from her, also my parents because there was no TV. They tried hard to make harmony in the house between the others. They advised us how to talk. For example, when I go there, I cannot kiss my father or shake his hands, I have to kiss his hands, there [points to his hands], the back of his hands, and my mother, I have to kiss her forehead. Also, you have to respect the older people. [...] When we listening to my grandmother, we are all looking at her and listening to her as if she was a TV. What's going to happen after this event! She attracts our attention so as to follow her.⁸*

⁷ Fedoua, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 28, 2011.

⁸ Said, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 29, 2011.

Said reveals how it is crucial to examine the methodologies of guardians in order to teach certain behaviors to children. In addition, he reveals details about various celebrations and how different some of his own family's celebrations are from other celebrations in Morocco in order to express the scope and the depth of Morocco. This was probably my longest interview. It is incredible how much he was excited to share with me all about his country. Countless times, he referenced different parts of the Koran. He stressed that appearance does not necessarily represent one's respectability. He recounted that he has seen some girls wearing modest clothing pretending to play the part of a good Muslim, but then, he will see them with a boy or out at night or disobeying one of the rules of propriety in Morocco. Said emphasized that people do not recognize this enough: proper behavior focuses on both the physical and mental.

Farah is a 19 year-old student at Ibn Tofail. It is her second year as a student in the English Department. She lives on campus, but returns home to Sidi Kacem every weekend, which she explains to me as a "*very small city, people there don't know much in the world. Nice people. You know small cities are always like that.*"⁹ I met Farah in one of the class discussions. She was not afraid to share exactly how she felt—even during the class in front of her colleagues. Farah drew attention to the differences between men and women and expressed her frustrations over this divide. My favorite quote from her was that she hated the fact that girls were seen "as a body, not a mind" and that is exactly what she thought needed changing.¹⁰ She argued that the strong positive foreign influence helps with this change; it does not hinder it. Also, it is the women who are making this change as they start to realize how they want more freedom and change. She explained how while she wanted these changes, she did believe that religion was crucial for propriety and generosity. She described to me that she wanted her future

⁹ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

¹⁰ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

husband to be religious because it generally made a person more polite and kind. In terms of her viewpoint on the countryside: she believed them to be stuck in the past, especially, in their mentality of women. When I asked her about her most important values, she said:

Farah: I don't like shouting or talking in a loud voice. I think that this is most important for a girl.

Me: Why not for a guy?

Farah: It's not like not for a guy. It's just that if her voice was loud, she is just not light enough.¹¹

It seems that this contradicts her prior statements about establishing equality between man and women, however, she does not think about it in that way. Yet, it is interesting to consider how behavior reinforces our societal divisions of gender and our notion of power. Sometimes without us even realizing it.

Aya is a 20 year-old student from Khemisset city. She is in her third year at Ibn Tofail and she is currently studying English literature. She lives on campus in Kenitra. Aya is quiet, but very intellectual. She had a lot to share about religion and black magic in the countryside. She was the first to bring up the term “uncivilized,” which caught me off guard as she was one of my last interviewees and no other students had chosen this term. She, of course, was hesitant to use it at first, but then explained what she meant by it: it wasn't that she did not respect people from the countryside, but that she didn't really agree with their antiquated mentality. She described that she had a rough childhood with her parents splitting up while she was still very young, but she has changed a lot since she found her connection with Islam three years ago and started focusing on praying everyday.

Nouhalia is a 20 year-old student from Kenitra. She lives in Kenitra with her family. She studies English at Ibn Tofail in Kenitra. Because of exams, I could tell that Nouhalia was quite nervous about studying so we had a quick interview. However, even in the few minutes I spoke with her, I heard some different comments from what I had heard from other students. For

¹¹ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

example, the fact that she did not think she had changed at all since beginning university was surprising. It is key to note that she stressed the necessity of following the norm and not being ‘strange.’ She expressed how being different is a negative thing and that she should be herself, but keep her personal thoughts quiet. I asked her about her most important values:

Nouhalia: *I think I should be natural. To be like myself. Not to go far. Not to be considered by society as someone strange.*

Me: *What is being natural for you?*

N: *What is natural for me is to keep my culture and my personal, not do what society thinks is strange.*

Me: *What is strange according to society standards?*

N: *There are differences between girls and boys. We are socialized to behave in a certain way. For example our way of dressing, you may have a family, which is open, but society is quite different, you can't wear short skirts, the response of the society is not good to that. There are some taboo subjects that you cant discuss in public, like love, love affairs and so on. It is natural for boys to say swear words, but not for girls, they may think that you are not well educated. It is also related to religion. You should not say bad words or wear things that are attract attention of other people.¹²*

Ahmed is a 20 year-old student at Mohammed V in Rabat. He was born and raised in Tiflet. He currently studies English and plans to take English Literature next year. He explained how Tiflet is a nice and small city, but he hopes for change there. He expects that there will be an inevitable change because of the change that Morocco has already encouraged. Ahmed really emphasized how much he appreciated difference and not being bound by rules or notions of propriety.

Ahmed: *I'm more spontaneous in my thinking, but not careless. This of course affects the way I communicate with people. Sometimes there are problems. Communication problems. You know people in Morocco, not all people, but the way parents educate their children is different, in the sense that there are a lot of hinders, “don't do that,” “you are supposed to talk like that,” “watch out your tongue,” things like that, and this affects the way—for example, the way my friends behave now. They don't get straight to the point sometimes and if, for example, there is a taboo or something, they find it hard to express their ideas. It happens all the time in class, when it comes to sex, gender, and many times religion. A professor was trying to explain what it is like an argumentative essay, he tried to say, in an argumentative essay you shouldn't give arguments of belief, but some students couldn't even think that such thing is not possible is not possible in an argumentative essay, because some of them would say “in the Koran, God says” or “the prophet says.” This is not acceptable.¹³*

His one rule is not to harm others, but respect others so they will treat you well too. He told me how his parents never told him to “shut up” when he wanted to express himself, but he sometimes had problems, because his friends were taught the opposite. He focused on the fact

¹² Nouhalia, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

¹³ Ahmed, *Personal Interview*, Dec. 1, 2011.

that he likes to voice his opinions, but this often leads to a lot of communication problems, as he does not understand why others do not want to discuss taboos or get into seemingly forbidden discussions. He does not want restrictions and feels that it is better to be open to difference. He kept stressing how much he wants to learn about difference and that he even intends to study English Literature so he can learn more about our culture. He has quite an outward seeking mentality.

Expectations of Etiquette

Etiquette manifests itself throughout our lives, especially as it leads humans to reinforce binaries, social distinctions, and power dynamics. Certain actions have become so ingrained within individuals that they forget that these actions are deeply coated in social distinctions. Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theories on behavior address how social relationships are manifested through our everyday behavior. Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" is defined as behavior learned from everyday social situations starting at an early age. It includes actions such as how we learn to hold ourselves, to eat, to walk, etc.¹⁴ My intention of asking students about their opinions on what good behavior means to them is to show the range of definitions and to reveal the implications of these often overlooked actions. During my interviews, I asked how they would define good behavior in Morocco. I heard a range of responses and I've included a few below.

During one of the class discussions, many of the girls argued that boys do not have 'an etiquette' and that "etiquette is for girls."¹⁵ In the same discussion, a few of the boys described etiquette for males in Morocco: always say "asalaamu alaykum," do not stare at girls, do not gossip, and the importance of hospitality.¹⁶ One boy voiced that "*If you showed up to a home for*

¹⁴ Liukkonen, Petri. "Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)." Books and Writers. 2008. 10 Dec. 2011. <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/bourd.htm>

¹⁵ Participant Observation, Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Nov. 25, 2011.

¹⁶ Participant Observation, Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Nov. 25, 2011.

a meal in Morocco without notice, you would always be welcomed in for a meal. However, in Britain, you are unwelcome without an invitation, and you would be invited back after lunch.”¹⁷

This act of welcoming someone into your home without notice is a norm in Morocco, while it may be strange, unsuitable behavior in other places, such as Britain. This comment emphasizes the distinctiveness of Moroccan etiquette and the implications of having different notions of ‘good behavior.’ It has become a norm to welcome others, or even strangers in some cases, into one’s home. It almost seems as if this notion of welcoming is so natural to them that it is not even recognized as ‘etiquette’; hence, maybe it is why the female students did not recognize these specific behaviors for a man, because maybe they think of these behaviors as assumed, innate actions, not something that has to be taught.

In *Rituals of Gender*, Seymour Parker claims, “Norms, values, and social identities that constitute the self are not only manifested directly in social experience but also internalized in symbolic form. Other authors emphasize how shared symbols are manipulated by individuals to further their ends and interests and to exert control over others.”¹⁸ When a behavior has been reinforced as a norm, with that norm comes certain social implications, which in turn allow individuals to justify superiority over others. Some of the student’s descriptions of expected behavior for women demonstrate the power dynamic between males and females in Morocco. These distinctions of expected etiquette reveal social hierarchies.¹⁹ They are predefined social distinctions that have become the social norm, and thus are ingrained in children starting at an early age. Upbringing prevails as a key factor in how distinctions are reinforced, because they become normalized before an individual starts to make distinctions on their own.

Farah: *My family, its not like they taught me to behave in a certain way, but sometimes, when I do something wrong, like I sit in the wrong way, they say “sit straight, talk in a polite way, don’t talk to much, don’t laugh too much.” These things are always required in a girl here, in Morocco, because they want the girl, when she goes out, to be*

¹⁷ Participant Observation, Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Nov. 25, 2011.

¹⁸ Parker, Seymour. “Rituals of Gender: A Study of Etiquette, Public Symbols, and Cognition.” *American Anthropologist*. 90.2 (1988): 374.

¹⁹ Parker 374.

*liked by people. ... It would be different for a boy. We don't tell a boy what to do, and what not to do, he just go out with his friends and come late home. Because girls always need to behave in a good way for them to find a groom. I think that's why they do all this.*²⁰

Farah's explanation illustrates how these norms and expectations are driven into us since childhood. An example of this reinforcement of norms is how Farah explains that the girl *needs* to "behave in a good way for them to find her groom." This transforms etiquette into a tool for social climbing: a woman will find a better husband the more she practices propriety. When I asked Fedoua about what made her feel as if she had to be "shy, and silent, and quiet," she responded:

Fedoua: Because first off, we are Muslims and we are Arabs and we are women and because there are norms like this in Morocco. You know there is country that separate women from men. Especially for women, there are special places for men. Here in Morocco, there is mixed places, but it has always stayed like this. Even with a call for equality. I don't believe in equality between men and women. I had a friend who once was talking about this subject of equality between, 'you women you call for an equality with men, so when I'm in a bus, and I was holding the tough things [the bars], and you were sitting, so for equality you have to get up and let me sit.' And I said 'what! I don't think so!' then he said 'when I'm sitting, I can leave you stand up.' In Morocco, there is some boys who respect women, when there is a boy sitting, he can stand up, and let me sit. Then he told us 'you are calling for this equality so I don't have to stand up and let [you] sit.' You know, you get my point. I don't believe.

Me: You don't believe that men and women should be equal?

*F: They don't have to be because men has his position and women has her own position, we found here in Morocco that most of women work in man's job and leave man without jobs so where is equality? And here in Morocco they believe in women that she should stay at home, caring children, health wise. For me, I believe in this that the women should ...not stay at home, but she can work, she can work and well she has to do both, take care of the children and having a job.*²¹

Fedoua presents this notion of a behavioral produces and reproduces hierarchical structures. Her opinion reveals how there are quite a range of opinions on the definition of what is expected of women and what Moroccans believe to be right direction for Morocco. While there are distinctions between individuals, it is clear that people interpret them and act upon them in different ways. Fedoua presented the implications of these defined social hierarchies.

Fedoua: Men are not expected to be shy. Men because they talk freely I think. When we talk about the person who is shy, we think of someone who is not self-confident, I mean, if you talk shy to a person, this means you don't have a strong personality, I think. That you don't have your self-confidence and to have your self-confidence, you have to talk freely and you don't have to be afraid of anything.

Me: Are you saying that women aren't seen as self-confident?

²⁰ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

²¹ Fedoua, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 28, 2011.

F: *They are self confident, but they don't show it. ...The stereotypes when somebody share something, and you say this is not self-confident, but you really don't know them, you have to really know, just to say it.*²²

Moroccan women have been continually marked by this shy nature, and in turn submit themselves to the self-confident male. This assumption has been reinforced over time, yet it reveals itself as only perception, rather than truth.

Parker argues that certain daily actions can also be a way to subjugate others. In reverse, Aya addresses how in some cases humans need this control. Certain restrictions and definitions of behavior maintain order—being under control, and thus, being respectful. Aya drew attention to the necessity of keeping people accountable through the authority of a higher power.

*Aya: If we take it from a religious perspective, people who respect their religion and practice it, they are good people. But if you speak broadly, good citizen in morocco is the one who respects the rules and the norms and is responsible, who feels the responsibility about his country. For example, he is supposed to go to vote and be aware about the political events. The norms are the ways that people are expected to behave. Not all of the people respect the norms in Morocco. If someone is driving his car, and he saw the red light and doesn't respect it unless the policeman is there. This isn't for all the people—for most of them. Should always have someone who is watching hem so that they respect. If in exams, if there is no proctor, there will be a lot of cheatings. They need always control—most of them of course.*²³

Essentially, Moroccans could fulfill expectations of respect, if they were kept in check by authority, in this case, the police. Social powers maintain order.

In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Forms*, Durkheim discusses 'the totem' as a form of distinction between clans and also between individuals. In order to establish themselves, humans need to identify themselves in both a collective and an individual sense.²⁴ There is an inherent need to define one's own social group and in this sense, the totem symbolizes collectivity.²⁵ It is a form of organization and distinction. Like the totem, etiquette becomes a natural way to associate with a group. Thus, it also becomes a way to establish a social difference. Essentially, it creates binaries, which relate to the binaries that are created by

²² Fedoua, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 28, 2011.

²³ Aya, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

²⁴ Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. Print. 154.

²⁵ Durkheim 114.

etiquette and notions of what is good behavior as individuals can only determine what is good behavior by determining what is bad behavior.

Laila: *I'll talk about improper things, because proper things are really a lot. To look like an outcast, by doing some strange things, maybe some people think of just showing off or to attract more attention. I don't like this idea to maybe wear some strange clothes, especially in university. I will say it's your business, but not in university, it's a place of education, you cannot just wear strange clothes. I don't like the t-shirts with bad drawn things; it's like, when we talk about trash and heavy metal groups [...].*²⁶

The notion of being 'normal' has become established by society as the proper way to behave. In other words, Laila creates the distinction between being an outcast and being a proper Moroccan by explaining that by drawing attention to one-self or being 'strange' marks oneself as improper. Also, she identifies that it is especially important at the university because 'it's a place of education.' This marks the university as a place of propriety, associated with a higher class and culture. Level of education affects what some perceive as proper, which reinforces Bourdieu's theories about taste. In *Distinction*, Pierre Bourdieu justifies that tastes classify an individual and these tastes are learned through education:

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. And statistical analysis does indeed show that oppositions similar in structure to those found in cultural practices also appear in eating habits ...emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating etc.) [...].²⁷

Education marks individuals, and consequently, constructs social hierarchies.²⁸ For Laila, it is seen as vulgar to wear strange clothes in a place of learning. Her opinion is shaped by her education and her taste. Thus, an individual's gaze, or perception, is produced through education, and inherently, leads to the establishment of distinctions.²⁹ When norms are established and have strengthened with time, they become inculcated into our bodies. Etiquette is a practice and a performance of certain social distinctions, thus, making it into a purely taught set of rules. Etiquette is one example of how it requires a certain taste to appreciate and respect

²⁶ Laila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

²⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984. Print. 5-6.

²⁸ Bourdieu 1-2.

²⁹ Bourdieu 3

the restrictions and specific behaviors. For example, Bourdieu uses knowledge and appreciation of art to show how it requires education to comprehend and appreciate art.³⁰ This acquired sense of appreciation is the cultural code: the individual, who has not acquired the specific knowledge that accompanies a work of art, will lack the appreciation that it requires. They will not have the capacity to understand and to visualize its extent.³¹ Similar to the classifications identified by Durkheim, Bourdieu illustrates that binaries are formed in classification, and in relation to etiquette in Morocco: the respected versus the improper.

Fatima: It depends. There are specific groups of people who I don't like their manner of eating. It depends in how the culture and the environment that you are raised in. For example, I was knowing a boy when I was sitting with him, he was eating by open mouth, I disgust, I feel disgust, I didn't like it, but I could not tell him that I didn't like it because I feel that I would hurt his feeling, I didn't want to tell him because maybe he'd feel hurt, so I started to go away from him when he was eating, he had an open mouth that's why, but it depended on the culture and the environment he was raised in. You know because each individual has different cultural environments, even though we share the same traditions.³²

Fatima's disgust of her friend's eating habits relates to Bourdieu's notion of classification and binaries, as Bourdieu discusses that "tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance ('sick-making') of the tastes of others. ... Aversion to different life-styles is perhaps one of the strongest barriers between the classes."³³ In terms of etiquette, it is interesting to note that when I asked what the individuals thought constituted "good behavior" in Morocco, most of the responses started off with what was described to be 'wrong.' It is easier to define something by its opposite. During my interviews, students tended to talk more about what they considered as bad behavior. They said it was easier to discuss what you should not do. It is interesting, because in old European etiquette manuals, it was the same approach: they taught through the negative. This is an interesting commentary on how the higher social classes regard themselves, as they define what they are not and mark that distinction as

³⁰ Bourdieu 2.

³¹ Bourdieu, Pierre. Introduction from *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Richard Nice. 1984. Electronic. <web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/bourdieu1.pdf>. 2.

³² Fatima, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

³³ Bourdieu 56.

inferior, and considering the concept of the binary, they are marked as superior. Said delineated the relationships between the social classes in Morocco.

Said: *Characteristics of high class: try hard to get rid of our mother tongue, try to speak English, speak French, they try hard not to speak Arabic, I know some persons, for example teachers at the university, who have a good rank in our country they try hard not to teach their children Arabic, especially in private schools. If you go to private schools, you find people are interested in foreign languages more than Arabic and they try hard to imitate the foreigners in their clothes and their way of dealing with the others, the way of thinking and the way of speaking. Especially if you talk to someone who is studying English, he tries hard to imitate foreigners, an Englishman, or an American man.*

Me: *What behaviors are associated with the middle class?*

S: *All the person who are rich consider the middle class as nothing. For example, you are from middle class, he cannot interest in you. If ever you go to the university, especially some establishment, a son of a rich man, or a businessman, or of someone famous, if they are dealing with you a good way. If you come from middle class, they will not have interest in you. [...] They try hard to avoid them and not to speak to them. There is a proverb which say that “everyone has to meet—they say that about the marriage, but we can applicate it to all of behavior—everyone has to meet or to marry a man which has the same class, for example, if you want to marry a girl, you have to marry the girl, related to your class for example, you are from middle class, if you want to marry a woman from a higher class, you will find that all your life you will find difficulties because the way of thinking, the standard of living, which is high, you will impose her to be with you and your traditional family, you will find many obstacles and many difficulties. ...*

Me: *What about behaviors associated with the lower class?*

S: *Same as the high class are not interested in the middle class, the middle class cannot interest in the lower class... You will find this, the relationship between the people, the system, the many steps, the categories. They try hard to imitate the others. When they try hard, they cannot reach the others. In some areas here, in the countryside or in the city, people who are living in the house that is built of...this is lower class. The way of thinking, because they are not learned people.³⁴*

These delineations of class and the disgust between classes emphasize Bourdieu's concept of how education establishes a divide between individuals, but simultaneously, binds together groups of similar backgrounds and education. It seems at this point, humans have created this classification system and are stuck within it, however, this is not universal as some of these Moroccan students referenced these actions of defiance.

When I asked Farah and Ahmed what they think respect means in Morocco, both students discussed notions of superiority and submission:

Farah: *When you respect someone, when he asks you do something, you are not going to say no or raise you voice, you should just say yes or lower your eyes. That's what respect means. Whatever they want you do it for them [when she says 'them,' she is referring to adults and elders].³⁵*

Ahmed: *The word respect it is often related respecting elders or people who are more aged than us. But this idea of respect is very tricky. You know, a Moroccan person would say that “that person is respectful” maybe because that*

³⁴ Said, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 29, 2011.

³⁵ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

*person doesn't talk freely, maybe all the time silence, that means they are respectful, not for all Moroccans, but for a lot of them. If you are sitting with your grandfather and grandmother, with your family etc. if you are a child, if you want to speak, they would say to you "hshim" –it basically means that you need to be respectful and shut up! It's an order. It means, "Shut up!"*³⁶

Respect encompasses a remarkable component of Moroccan etiquette. Behavior seems to be related significantly to the idea that one is respecting those around them by following specific norms. In my interview with Laila, she repeatedly used the word 'respect': *"I think what is expected of a girl in society, our societies welcomes girls who respect themselves. I'm talking a lot about respect, which means, you are good, who does not insult others, and a girl who wears respectable clothes."*³⁷ However, it is incorrect to assume that these few opinions on respect are universal in Morocco: while respect may be a norm, there are many variations in its execution.

Asila proved this to me when she explained how she felt about respect and difference.

*Asila: I like tolerance. This idea of being okay with whatever people are, I mean even if their values and norms are different. That's what I don't get from here. [...] I'd like people to be more tolerating towards different other people. I think that sometimes you have to pretend to be like the normal, you know? To have the common etiquette, so that people would accept you even if you are lying to them, even if you are pretending to be somebody else than you are...to be different. But I think that people should accept you the way you are, even if you are strange, even if you are scary.*³⁸

While the definition of respect for some Moroccans entails following the norm and remaining modest, the definition differs depending on the individual. Asila explained how much she felt the opposite: rather that she is encouraged by difference and wants acceptance of the 'strange.'

Michel de Certeau identifies how it is important to think of agency through the everyday. The way humans are expected to behave relates to how we imagine our agency—how able we are to act in certain manners. "De Certeau's emphasis on individual tactics that insinuate, manipulate, and finally re-appropriate social space is better suited to highlight human agency in response to powerful ideologies. Everyday practices consist of those small, sometimes fragmentary tactics that represent 'the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the

³⁶ Ahmed, *Personal Interview*, Dec. 1, 2011.

³⁷ Laila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

³⁸ Asila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

strong.”³⁹ Essentially, he shows that the act of choosing to embody and defy certain everyday practices, in this case, etiquette, displays an individuals’ agency. It is important to identify the notion of individual initiative. This tendency to break outside of these previously established values and traditions. This idea manifests itself throughout my conversations with students. In one class discussion, they concluded that, due to the influence of education and migration, individuals could start creating their own opinions, which may reject some societal norms.⁴⁰

They explained that this leads to a clash of modernity and traditional and cultural values. When I asked Ahmed about what defines good behavior, he explained:

Ahmed: Maybe young people on the street, they will not respect a girl who is not covering most of her body or not dressing according to religion. But I don’t think this is the case anymore in 2011. There’s a change –people start looking up things differently. I don’t think that 20 years from now that Moroccan people will be judging negatively people or ladies who are dressing in such a way. [...] Young people now, they are trying to be somehow more logical. And for me as a young person, a young Moroccan, I don’t think that respect means not talking freely and not expressing ideas. For example, when I’m in the class discussing whatever, you know, I can express myself freely, not like our fathers or our parents used to be. And to this, I say why didn’t the other generations express themselves in the way that we express ourselves now? What was the problem?⁴¹

Through my discussions with students both in a group and individual format, it is evident that no real conclusions can be made about the definition of ‘good behavior’ in Morocco. However, the notion of ‘respect’ reigns as a key aspect of etiquette. Respect simply manifests in various ways depending on the individual and people’s opinions are constantly changing. While norms and values are constantly being reinforced by everyday behavior, they are also constantly being reinterpreted and redefined. In addition to expectations, perceptions, interpretations, and assumptions execute a crucial role in how behaviors mark individuals and in deepening social hierarchies.

Internal Migration: Perceptions of the Other

³⁹ Newcomb, Rachel (2006). ‘Gendering the City, Gendering the Nation: Contesting Urban Space in Fes, Morocco’, in *City & Society*, Vol.18. Issue 2, 290-291.

⁴⁰ Participant Observation, Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Nov. 25, 2011.

⁴¹ Ahmed, *Personal Interview*, Dec. 1, 2011.

As we continue to unpack the notion of etiquette in Morocco, it is also important to consider the impact of migration on etiquette and the variations of etiquette throughout Morocco especially in terms of the countryside versus the city. This section will speak more generally about rural to urban migration and its history; then it will incorporate various histories from students and the corresponding perceptions and stereotypes about the countryside and the city.

The history of internal migration in Morocco helps to illustrate the relationship between rural and urban areas. In Dr. Tibari Bouasla's lecture on *Internal Migration*, he described the increase of internal migration throughout the 20th century in Morocco.⁴² In the 1890's, a very small percentage of Moroccans lived in the cities and 85% of Moroccans lived in tribal communities in the countryside.⁴³ Cities had not developed yet and there was little movement between the countryside and the urban areas. In 1920, this movement began, in which migrants from the countryside would move to shantytowns outside the big cities on the coast.⁴⁴ At this point, there was a significant increase in internal migration as the colonial powers created a great number of jobs for Moroccans as they started new businesses in the cities. While there was availability of jobs, many rural Moroccans moved to the cities; however, they ended up landless. By the 1960's, the percentage of Moroccans in the cities rose to 56%.⁴⁵ This integration into the cities led to a crucial shift in previous rural conventionalities to an urban mentality.⁴⁶ These migrants, unfamiliar with urban way of life, were marginalized. As rural Moroccans, who no longer worked on farms in the countryside, they no longer needed a large family to take care of the farm. In the cities, there was also the option of schooling, which allowed for individuals to further specialize. Also, women were given more power to make decisions in the cities, which

⁴² Bouasla, Tibari. Guest Lecture. Internal Migration from the Rural Areas to the Big Agglomerations of Casablanca and Rabat. Nimar Institute, Rabat, Morocco. 21 Sept 2011.

⁴³ Bouasla, Guest Lecture, Sept. 21, 2011

⁴⁴ Bouasla, Guest Lecture, Sept. 21, 2011

⁴⁵ Bouasla, Guest Lecture, Sept. 21, 2011

⁴⁶ Bouasla, Guest Lecture, Sept. 21, 2011.

was a significant shift from the countryside, where they were always submissive to the husband.⁴⁷ In Hein de Haas' "The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry," he uses Bourdieu's idea of 'social capital,' which is the collection of resources that is connected "to membership in a group," in order to show how within network migration social capital has the potential to generate inequality.⁴⁸ He elucidates that in terms of migrants, social capital transforms into other forms of capital, such as cultural and economic, and thus establishing migrant networks was a social capital that allowed for migrants to extend their resources.⁴⁹ In addition, it is important to note that there is a larger pool of younger migrants, because "they have a greater expected lifetime return on their human capital and they have invested less in social capital at the origin, and therefore have literally less to lose."⁵⁰ This directly relates to how younger individuals also travel to the cities for an education, because they can extend their potential earlier on in their lives. Haas explores how because of this movement of people, ideas, and products, migrants are influenced by the city and learn about a new way of life. When returning to the countryside, these migrants may maximize the desire of other rural dwellers to participate in this migration flow.⁵¹ It is evident that migration tends to be a significant reason for why traditions and organization of families, lifestyles, and taste, have been interfered with in both rural migrants and their respective countryside.⁵²

The historical background of internal migration helps to underline a general relationship between countryside and urban areas in Morocco. In conversations with several university students, they often discussed the fact that there are variations throughout Morocco, and that a general explanation is impossible. I realize that etiquette is individual to each specific area and

⁴⁷ Bouasla, Guest Lecture, Sept. 21, 2011

⁴⁸ Haas, de H. (2010). The internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (10), 1587-1617. 3-4.

⁴⁹ Haas 4.

⁵⁰ Haas 14.

⁵¹ Haas 9.

⁵² Haas 9.

thus, I do not intend my work to summarize a universal definition for ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ etiquette, but rather to consider possible differences in these areas. Thus, in the following few pages, I will explore some urban perceptions of the countryside and some rural perceptions of the city, the variations in their notions of behavior and etiquette, and the affects of migration on etiquette.

Mohammed: People in the countryside are more nervous. Education, as education has made a change in me to become a calm person to just reject nervousity. People on the countryside are more nervous, you know why; they just don't have the chance to get to school and to study about matters like this [‘this’ refers to etiquette]. The characteristics, I would add to that, people in the countryside are generous, this is the good thing, if they just don't know you and you pass by, by my family especially and you say, oh I'm thirsty and you want just a cup of water, they will give you a cup of water and they will add more to that they will give you cheese and milk and they will ask you even to just enjoy the night with them to the other day and then they will let you go. Yeah, really. There are really so many differences between the countryside and the urban. Also the countryside, something very important I haven't yet mentioned, in the countryside, things are so much calmer, in the urban cities, transportation is an obstacle, to be who are just ill and they want to get some sleep, some rest, but in the countryside things are calmer, transportation does not exist. There are the animals; this is the only means of transportation. I would like to focus on the characteristics of the countryside. There is some kind of scarcity of technology. In the countryside my family they don't have the net and it is till now that they have television. What is the negative side of television, it is that the family gets apart, yeah, just the son when he wakes up he goes directly to the net and he just does not, well you know, where is this kind of family warmth? In the urban states, it is rarely that you can find the parents and the children meet with each other and communicate with each other to know their problems and how long far children are handling their education and like this, but in the countryside is all as a unit. Why? Because they don't have the net and they don't have the television because television is mean by which the family now is detached.⁵³

Mohammed has a very interesting point of view as he lives in Khemisset city, he has family in Jiri in the countryside, and now he goes to school in Kenitra. He addresses many distinctions between the countryside and the city. He perceives that people in the countryside are more nervous because they don't have education, but at the same time they are characterized as generous, welcoming, and personable. Also, from one discussion with Professor Abderrahim Anbi, he commented on a distinction between the countryside and the city: in the rural areas, it is not good to invite a friend to coffee or to spend time with a friend outside of your house, and if a friend visits then they must stay with your family, but in Rabat, after living here for eighteen years, he has noticed that rarely someone invites me into their house.⁵⁴ Mohammed elucidates

⁵³ Mohammed, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

⁵⁴ Professor Abderrahim Anbi, *Personal Interview*, Dec. 6, 2011.

that the notion of the family is reinforced in the countryside because it is assumed that there is more of a focus on the family and less focus on technology or other distractions. He even noticed that in his own behavior when he visited his family in the countryside. He alludes to the push and pull between modernity and tradition in the country versus the city. He describes this notion as modernity destroying tradition.

In comparison to Mohammed, Asila loves the city and the fact that there is so much to do. It's one of the reasons she loves Casablanca so much. She loves the fact that she can encounter difference and also meet others who share her excitement about difference. Asila has never visited the countryside and she shares her perception of the countryside to the best of her knowledge, but she admits that most of what she describes are stereotypes and are by no means completely true.

Asila: Yeah, I think there is a big serious stereotype that I have about the countryside. It's calm and simple, very calm, and whenever you want to rest. I think that whenever you want some rest, you can go to the countryside and you can watch the really simple, old life, but I think it's different from that, I don't know I've never lived there. [I asked her to explain more.] I think living you have this close relationship with animals, with cows, and bulls, and sheep, [she laughs] which you can't find in big cities. Means of transportation you cant find in the countryside, and big buildings. Yeah, there are simple and small houses that people have built themselves, this is what I think is simple about the countryside. It's nice too. I don't know if I'm wrong. [...] But I think, what I hear from people is that people talk louder in the countryside because they are usually far from each other, it is big distances and then each of them is doing something...there are two people and each of them is doing something and they're far from each other and they aren't going to wait until they get closer, they are just gonna keep speaking louder to each other. But it is okay because nobody is around them. And when they come here to the big cities. They just keep speaking louder to each other even if they are close to each other. [...] That's what people say. I don't know. But I think I shouldn't be talking about people say, but I should be talking about what I say. I think that people from the countryside, they cling more to old values and traditions. Yeah I think so. Being in big cities, somehow makes you forget about those—the old traditions and you have to go back to your grandmother and grandfather to talk to them about old things that they used to do and used to believe in.⁵⁵

She found that the city is not as deeply connected with past traditions and how certain values have been lost because urban dwellers no longer give importance to them. She links the countryside with archaism; therefore, characterizing the city with modernity. In addition, it is interesting to note how certain behaviors from the countryside mark individuals as from a rural area, such as how when someone speaks very loudly in the city, they are suspected to be from a

⁵⁵ Asila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

rural area. Her comments about how in the countryside there is a closer connection with animals that you cannot find in cities, relates to Georges Bataille's concept of interpreting humanity versus animality. In *The Accursed Share*, Bataille presents how humans have created distinctions between themselves and animals.⁵⁶ He explains how mankind established a set of prohibitions, which in turn, separates them from animals. Animals live in a world of continuity in which they do not distinguish themselves from another in terms of hierarchies.⁵⁷ Bataille explains humans do not all have the same level of humanity and that one's degree of humanity is determined by how the individual behaves.⁵⁸ Mankind creates these hierarchies, which in turn, are a way to establish ones 'degree of humanity' or distance from animality.⁵⁹ The farther that an individual wants to be from animality, the more prohibitions they will have to follow. Thus, both privilege and one's level of humanity define our social class because unlike the immanent world of animals, humans live within a discontinuous world in which they can transcend, define, and marginalize.⁶⁰ If applied to etiquette, it is clear that the set of norms established by society is also a set of prohibitions, which allows humans to transcend, demarcate, and subjugate. During my conversation with Farah, she directly mentioned many demarcations in behavior, which she explains that she can recognize by simple everyday behaviors like the way people in the countryside talk and wear their clothes.

Farah: *It is very different actually. The way they talk is different. They talk in a more bad way. They don't know how to talk. They wear clothes differently. They don't know more about the world. They know about agriculture and stuff like that but they don't know about education. They are not educated. In this area there are a lot of people that have come from the countryside. Here we can see there are some faces from the countryside. I know some of them. You can really recognize them just by the way they talk, the way they wear their clothes. They are nice, naïve a little bit; they don't study much, because they have a lot to do in their place. Its like when two sides fight, here, there are the severe minded ones, like the girls must wear the veil, and there are the open-minded ones. And they fight.*

Me: *How has the experience been for your friends moving from the countryside to the city?*

⁵⁶ Bataille, Georges. *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*. New York: Zone Books, 1991. Vols: 2 & 3. Print. 339.

⁵⁷ Bataille, Georges. *Theory of Religion*. New York: Zone Books, 1992. Print. 24.

⁵⁸ Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, 333.

⁵⁹ Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, 334.

⁶⁰ Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, 334.

F: *They absolutely change, because they got used to girls here and when they went back and they find the girls there strange.*⁶¹

Farah clearly expresses how they are different and it is easy to determine where individuals are from, yet, she also explains that by coming to the university, they transition and change, and end up finding their homes as ‘strange.’ It is impossible to set one definition for the norm even for an individual, as our definitions of the norm and the strange are malleable to constantly shifting circumstances and influences.

Fatima began addressing the differences in the countryside versus the city by explaining how individuals from the countryside do not live with very much freedom and are naïve and innocent. She explained that they are naïve because they think that “*people are so kind, there is no hostility, there is no evil, that’s why I call them naïve, because they did not live in the much freedom that is in the urban area because we know that all people are not the same, there is good, there is bad.*”⁶² So, when students come to the city to study, they desire these freedoms that the cities have acquired from ‘western’ countries due to media and politics. Then, in order to describe the major behavioral differences, she provided me with an example of a tradition in a rural area:

Fatima: *Their behavior is very strict. They are very traditional. [...] In the countryside when the couples marry, we know the marriage position, the marriage position is that the old ladies take a stick and a white fabric and they put it in the stick and they started walking in the countryside and singing and they came happy because the white fabric is the sign of chaste. Here in the urban area we don’t have it because we find it embarrassed “we couldn’t do this like in the countryside” because they still have their tradition. They still keeping it. But here no I don’t think so it has vanished from the freedom from everything.*⁶³

Fatima discussed how they “still have their tradition” and “we find it embarrassing.” Bourdieu’s theory of distinction relate to Fatima’s comments on the countryside. This sense of being embarrassed by these old traditions suggests a sense of distinction between classes, between the traditional countryside and the modern and free city.

⁶¹ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

⁶² Fatima, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

⁶³ Fatima, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

In separate interviews, Aya and Ahmed discussed black magic and superstition found in the countryside and its connection with lack of education. In addition, it is important to note that Aya expressed that black magic has no connection with Islam at all and Islam even rejects it.

Aya: I think people in the countryside, they live more in “showada”--we can call it black magic maybe—it’s not the right word, but it can be near it. A man who used to be very religious and getting well with god who did good things for people. When he is dead, of course, that kind of people, are very ancient. His town become very appreciated, and people go there not only to visit him, (laughs under her breath a bit), someone people who are very ignorant, illiterate, go and ask him to go an help him, even though that person is dead! For example, if a women cant give birth, she goes there and asks him, “please give me children” rather than to pray and ask god. That’s only for people who are illiterate, never go to school and are uncivilized, if we can say this word.

Me: What do you mean by civilized?

A: People, who never go to the city and never know something that is called urbanism, people who are closed to themselves and have no media, no information about the outside world. That’s why they are stuck to their old stereotypes. [I asked about whether she meant stereotypes or traditions] Actually they are only stereotypes, traditions are something good.⁶⁴

Ahmed: It has to do with education. The more educated a person is, the more they are far away from superstition, and all such things. People in the urban areas are more educated and their way of behaving is different than people living in the countryside. The educational level in the countryside is really very low. People still believe in superstitious stories and fairytales, it has to do with education.⁶⁵

Both of these interviews addressed how the practice of black magic or superstitions marked the individual as uneducated and illiterate. Aya also used the word ‘uncivilized’ to describe someone who uses black magic. When I asked her to describe what she meant by ‘uncivilized’, it was interesting to hear that essentially, she thought of them as disconnected from the world, because this relates to how Bourdieu argues how education and certain cultural codes allows us to understand certain connections.

Tahra described how it would take some adjustment for some individuals from the countryside to integrate into the city because of the “new atmosphere, with new people, new kind of clothing, speaking and eating and so on. He has to learn how to engage himself.”⁶⁶ In addition to Tahra’s comments about this new lifestyle in the city, she explained the challenges in terms of education. This discussion arose many times throughout my conversations with

⁶⁴ Aya, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

⁶⁵ Ahmed, *Personal Interview*, Dec. 1, 2011.

⁶⁶ Tahra, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 24, 2011.

students and seemed to be a dominant factor in distinguishing the city from the countryside. The countryside is marked by its lower education whereas the city is marked by high culture and education. After delineating the differences, Tahra wrote a sentence for me in Arabic: “a person coming from the countryside has changed his life in urban city.”⁶⁷ Ahmed also discussed similar issues for a rural migrant to the city, as they would have to adopt new values. Without directly mentioning the push and pull between modernity and tradition, Tahra alludes to how the city is moving forward and it embraces freedom and leaves tradition behind. Consequently, it presents the countryside as infatuated with the past. In addition, she addresses the fact that, in the countryside, the women suffers, but in the cities, the women is free to do what she wants:

Tahra: In urban areas, they have a boyfriend; they have mixed friends of boys and girls. In rural areas, that is shame. If a girl talked with a boy, he's got to marry her. Say a wise man saw a girl talking with a boy, he would say “I saw your daughter with a boy and so on, and she would get penalized; she has to get married to a person older than her. Boys they behave the same, they have the same behavior in the urban and rural areas.”⁶⁸

This divide of behavior remains the same in the countryside as it does in urban areas. In addition to making distinctions between classes, etiquette also emphasizes distinctions between genders.

Fedoua furthers the notion of gender distinctions that still heavily impact the countryside and also the perception of individuals from urban areas.

Fedoua: When they're watching us wearing stuff like this [points at her clothing: jeans and a long-sleeve shirt], they said that we are not well-dressed and that we have to dress long things like the djellaba or something, and when they see us not putting on scarfs, this notion of scarves, there are a lot of girls wearing scarves, but different dressed. You can watch within the University. I wear a scarf, but there are some girls who wear a scarf but then wearing the same clothes, there is a difference, for the countryside, the girls have to stay at home, they are not believing in that women have to work. They are not believing in that. They still aren't. There are some countrysides that aren't believing in education. You know they leave their children illiterate. But in the city, there is the opposite of things, its normal that you were wearing like that or scarf like that, its normal that women who works, or women drive, or women working in men's position or place. Here in Morocco, there is a movement from there, to try to delete this idea of there's work for men and there is work for women. This is for the city. There is still this [other] idea in the rural.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Tahra, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 24, 2011.

⁶⁸ Tahra, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 24, 2011.

⁶⁹ Fedoua, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 28, 2011.

Through observing behavior such as clothing, education, and work, variations between these two spaces are visible. Once again, these behaviors are embodied and reinforced respectively in these areas and thus seen as ‘right’ and the ‘norm’ in each space, making the other seem wrong. The countryside views the dress of the city as improper behavior, whereas the city views the countryside as antiquated. Fedoua describes how children in the countryside are learning the values from their “*grand grand grand parents*” and notions of good behavior are deriving from their upbringing and grandparents and parents values’ alone.

It seems that there is a connection between holding on to the past and lack of education. Said draws this connection when he talks about traditions in the countryside, which are not related to Islam. He explains how behavior is linked to illiteracy. This sounds scarily similar to Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural code” and the fact that education allows for appreciation of specific lifestyles, whereas otherwise, it—or in this case: etiquette—goes unnoticed or unacknowledged. The following are a description of a few traditions in the countryside where he used to have family:

Said: The day after Eid, the day after sacrifice day, there is this tradition: there are many people who come up early and come to homes and take a bottle of water, and they cannot say to you hello or good morning, just he takes this bottle and pours the bottle on you. In the evening, there are many people, which come here and they try to wear the sheepskin, 2 persons wear their skins and try to imitate, maybe something that can frighten people in the night. They wear 7 skins. There many people which follow him, maybe some of them imitating wearing the clothes of the women, men wearing clothes of the women, the others [wearing] the horns of the sheep, so as to frighten people and to make a joy-able time. We are talking about something that has origin in the past; we don’t know why people are doing such things. We are just imitating such things and we don’t know why, we don’t know where the tradition comes from. [...] In the countryside, there are many people that try to keep this relationship between families [...] but in the city, for example, someone slaughters a sheep and he’s not see anyone, he is alone, eating, and doing everything during the celebration you cannot visit his friends and family.⁷⁰

Then after describing this tradition from the countryside, he explained how in the cities many people celebrate in a modern way. He also mentions the maintenance of family ties in the countryside that Mohammed also discussed. Then, he describes the interaction and potential clash between modernity and tradition:

⁷⁰ Said, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 29, 2011.

Mohammed: *Because there are many people who try to do the modernity and try to be like foreign people. But they cannot. When you talk to him about our traditions, he was say you are old. Some people trying to imitate the foreign people more than our country. And if you ask him why are you behaving in this way, he will say “you are an old man” and you are not following the modernity. [...] When I come to the city, I try to be a citizen man, try to be a normal man, like the others, but when I go to my home, I have to do what the people do. For example, I am coming from the city and I want to applicate my behaviors, which I learned from the city to the countryside. [...] There are many people who judge the others with their society, and with their stereotype, with their parents. For example if you are going, they are not judging people with their mentality; they are judging people with their appearance. For example, if you see a man who is dressed up well, or doing some like kind of cutting hair or shaving hair, maybe you will guess that he is a high-class person. If you see someone who is dressing in something that is normal you would say is middle class or lower class. This image of our mentality is different, the spread of illiteracy, people are not, they consider the others as nothing.*⁷¹

Said seemed torn between wanting modernity and also preserving tradition. He continually told stories from his experiences in the countryside and how much his family wanted to maintain certain traditions. However, he has moved away and now lives on his own in a big city and also desires certain aspects of modernity in terms of progress and connections with the world. This interview revealed how modernity and tradition are far from rigid concepts, but rather they are constantly intersecting and interacting; etiquette in Morocco is a perfect example of this clash of modernity and tradition.

However, in addition to these stereotypes and perceptions of the countryside, it is also crucial to consider the stereotypes of city dwellers from the point of view of people from the countryside. Ahmed elucidated that he does not believe in judging others, but he believes that it is a fact that it is impossible to stop people from making assumptions and judgments. Then, he revealed that:

Ahmed: *The countryside has a lot of stereotypes towards people living in the city. They think they are superior. They may say that the way we are living in the cities is not good, there they have all the things they need: fresh milk, vegetables—the idea is that the city for them is something bad, something that changes people, that changes maybe their faith, maybe affects their religion. And they think that people here in the city are not humble are not hospitable, not even traditional.*⁷²

Through the various opinions, perceptions, and stereotypes of the countryside and the city, it is clear that no real conclusion can be made. However, it is clear that there has been a power

⁷¹ Mohammed, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

⁷² Ahmed, *Personal Interview*, Dec. 1, 2011.

dynamic established because of how certain behaviors are deeply coated in history. It is also interesting how this relationship is manifested in our everyday behaviors and then is transferred on a larger scale to specific actions taken by the government. Professor Anbi identified that there has always been a significant amount of tension between the city and the countryside especially because people are focusing on their own interests in the government, whereas the government should be focusing on poverty and education, especially by allocating more money to the countryside.⁷³ He explained that the problem remains that the political elite want to focus first on the areas where they are from, and consequently, the areas where they are from are large cities, specifically Fez and Rabat. Therefore, there is little focus on rural areas. These tensions and differences manifest on a very small scale in terms of notions of behavior and etiquette, but also on a larger scale in terms of government and development.

What influences how individuals envision ‘good behavior’ in Morocco?

This is a crucial question that was central to my discussions with students. Often, students answered that upbringing impacted an individual’s notion of behavior. Farah explained that good behavior derives from the fact that parents want their daughters to marry the “most amazing guys. So they created this etiquette so they can get married. No boy is going to look at a girl whose voice is loud, and she doesn’t take care of herself.”⁷⁴ When I asked the students to break down what upbringing entailed, it seemed that notions of good behavior in Morocco often derived from religion. When considering what is one of the crucial distinctions of Morocco, it seems that for the most part, most of the students said that religion was one of the primary influences. Fedoua expressed that good behavior derives first from Islam and then from the

⁷³ Professor Abderrahim Anbi, Personal Interview, Dec. 6, 2011.

⁷⁴ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

prophet.⁷⁵ One girl during the class discussion explained to me that, “one system to regulate our life. Through the Surah and the Koran. The perfect one is the one who follows the ways of Mohammad as he is the perfect example of how to behave.”⁷⁶ She told me that I should go on Google and search “Mohammed’s Characteristics” and I would find exact guidelines on how to behave properly according to Islam. To no surprise, I found a myriad of websites that laid out exactly how Mohammed acts with sections such as “Good Morals, Ethics and Companionship” and “Politeness and Good Manners.”⁷⁷ This reveals the significant influence of religion on the notion of behavior. When I asked Farah what she thinks are the biggest distinctions between Moroccans, she thought religion played a huge role:

Farah: When you find someone that is very religious, you find them very kind, polite, behave in a certain way, he is always kind to woman, these things are mentioned in the Koran, he doesn’t lie, but when you find someone who doesn’t have any relationship with the Koran, but he is Muslim, it’s like, he does a lot of bad things, he always sees the girls as a body. Same for girls. The more religious the person was; the more he was better in many ways. I prefer to get married to a religious person, because they are more kind. The same for girls you know? When you find a girl who has a distance between her and the Koran, she is not very polite.⁷⁸

Similarly to Farah, Laila describes how notions of respect were learned behaviors from Islam.

Laila illustrates another aspect of respect in terms of dress.

Laila: I have a friend of mine, she really knows how to choose her clothes...she wears the veil also. I feel that she wears long clothes and I feel I have to wear clothes like her. I don’t have to wear jeans or converse. You know? And sometimes I feel guilty because I’m not wearing the veil, as it must be. I mean I have to wear long clothes to hide some parts of my body [she gestures to show me what she means]. The attractive parts of women must be covered. So its like my clothes wearing only, its not veil 100%, just 80-85% maybe, but inside I believe in what I do. I mean I don’t like what I do, and I’m looking for change. I’ll try it as soon as possible to move on to better, concerning my way of clothing, to respect the rules of the veil that I’m wearing. Because I’m thinking about this too much lately, because I’m 20 years old and that’s enough. This is the deadline. I remember the thing that I really hate to see is a girl who is wearing a veil with skirts that is [she makes a gesture to show a short mini skirt] oh my god, this not a veil. I start wondering why can you just put off that veil from her head. This is really harming the reputation of that veil. The veil has some rules to be respected, I just pray god if she is trying to, like me, if she is trying to improve her way of dressing, I pray god to help her.⁷⁹

A number of the female students I talked to expressed a lot of ideas about how they liked this change in the cities for girls to have more freedom, and while there may be a shift away from

⁷⁵ Fedoua, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 28, 2011.

⁷⁶ Participant Observation, Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Nov. 25, 2011.

⁷⁷ al-Sheha, Abdul-Rahman. “Muhammad The Messenger of God: Some of the Prophet’s Manners & Characteristics.” 10 Dec 2011. <http://www.messengerofgod.info/prophet-muhammad-characteristics.htm>.

⁷⁸ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

⁷⁹ Laila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

reading the Koran and following certain proscriptions, at the same time these students also believe in the ideals of Islam. Essentially, this reveals that while Morocco is changing, Islam still manifests as an important part of some Moroccan youth lifestyles and sense of behavior. In addition, it is important to mention that some of the students felt that religion does not impact their lives or how they personally thought of good behavior:

Ahmed: In my everyday life, I don't behave according to religion. I behave according to logos, logic, in Greek. I'm not the kind of people, don't do that because some people say. First of all, I think of it, then I think of why it was said, what was the intention, to criticize, not taking things for granted. My answer is that I don't behave according to religion.⁸⁰

Asila: Since I was a child and since I was younger, I didn't really know I just believed in what I learned in school and what I used to see from people and yeah I used stick to it. And then I discovered that my father was an atheist and then I started reading about it and I started being interested about those other points of view because I didn't think it existed at all and I didn't think you could just not believe in it, not care about it. And then I started getting interested in it, and I read a lot about it and I think now I don't have any opinion at all. I mean yeah I think I don't have to say whether it has to affect my life or not because ...well actually it doesn't.⁸¹

Ahmed and Asila both asserted that while they do not have a strong connection with Islam themselves, they still respect those who do and they both repeated many times how much they appreciated difference and liked to stray away from the norm. There are a lot of variations on how people envision religion to affect how they think of behavior—especially in terms of level of religiosity.

There are also other potential influences on etiquette such as higher education, foreign influence, and media. The majority of the students revealed how much they had changed after coming to University. It was often expressed in an “of course, I’ve changed” voice, which is interesting in itself as it is evident to the students that education affects one’s behavior and mentality. Also, it seems that there is a similar mentality of learning to be more ‘open-minded’ at the university. Mohammed expressed how significantly his whole mentality had changed when he arrived at school.

⁸⁰ Ahmed, *Personal Interview*, Dec. 1, 2011.

⁸¹ Asila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

Mohammed: When I came here for the first time in this University, I was a closed person, I wasn't an open one, I couldn't speak to others and whenever someone laughs at me I get nervous and get into a fight with him. But now, whatever you do, whatever you laugh at me, or whatever you take a position of mockery on me, I don't care. Since I've become more open, more moderate, and I accept the ideas of others, I respect their views, maybe I don't accept them, but I respect them. Yeah. I'm not a nervous person and this is the good thing in me now today and I thank god for it because I was a nervous person years ago, I am now calm and that's the good thing. And I advise everyone to be calm. There is a proverb it say that if you are a kind of a person that gets nervous, be sure that hair is going to fall so soon or that your hair is going to get gray.

Me: When did you notice this change?

M: the university, I have changed a great deal. [...].⁸²

Mohammed explained later on in his interview how he believed that people in the countryside tended to be a lot more nervous. He associated this nervousness with a lack of education as he had an opportunity to attend university and it was education that made him a calmer person. He noticed this very distinct change himself and it is interesting to consider it in terms of Bourdieu's ideas about 'taste': with education, humans start to develop their taste or behavior. The element of learning more cultural knowledge also extends one's knowledge of taste. Also, because the educational institution is a place of high culture, it also applies to this distinction of acquiring etiquette and distinguishing oneself with a higher level of humanity. It is interesting because when you attend university you acquire this "free and open-mind," but at the same time you acquire more prohibitions as Bataille explains, because as you move farther away from animality, you acquire more specific behaviors.

The last crucial influence on etiquette remains the international influence on Morocco.

Asila: [French person in Morocco] From what I have seen, they are very respectful. Very respectful of Moroccan culture. And when they come here they just want to enjoy the weather and the good people. Yeah, I think it is a very friendly relationship that we have with the French when they come here. Hospitable. Moroccan people really like when people come here, they like tourists. Me, myself I like other cultures and other people when they come here, but I think they [Moroccans] don't like them when they are not here, but when they are here, they are nice to them. It has to do with confidence I think.

Me: Confidence—what do you mean by that?

A: I think Moroccan people think that the French and the Americans whatever, they [Moroccans] think that they [French and Americans] think they are better than them [Moroccans]. Whenever they are here, they talk to them like they [French and Americans] are superior to them and they start being to friendly towards them as if it was the case as if they were inferior. But that's just a small part of it. Because I have seen a lot of things and I'm just telling about one of those things I've seen, because I cant remember all of it.⁸³

⁸² Mohammed, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

⁸³ Asila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

Asila lays out how there is another distinction between the ‘west’ and Moroccans. I put the term ‘west’ in quotes, because it is problematic to generalize Europe, specifically France here, and America. However, for this purpose, it is important to consider how once again Bourdieu’s concept of distinction connects to this power relationship. This is evidence how etiquette and behavior, even in these everyday conversations, exhibit larger scale social hierarchies and power dynamics.

Throughout the discussions about the countryside, there were many students who mentioned how the international influence on larger Moroccan cities impacts the notion of behavior in the cities. This suggests why the countryside is marked by tradition, because there is supposedly little influence on these smaller rural villages. However, it is interesting to consider how now that there is a significant amount of international migration from rural parts of Morocco, migrants abroad will often return to their villages and bring European influence with them. This was not something that was addressed in the discussions with the students, but it is definitely a crucial influence of how lifestyles and mentalities may or may not be changing in the countryside.

The influence of media from abroad also plays a significant role in how people conceive of behavior. Said explained that the youth really “try to imitate the foreign people.”⁸⁴ During one of the discussions, a student mentioned how “we have become puppets of western culture.”⁸⁵ Fedoua explained how it was a very positive influence from abroad. Farah expressed a similar sentiment of positive influence, but through tourism:

*Farah: Nowadays we don’t watch Arabic movies anymore. Even French or American. I watch Korean actually. There is a big influence. This influence has helped to change our culture. We have become more open, open-minded, open in our lives. [...] Because we are near the capital city, Rabat, that’s why people here are little bit more open, because tourists come. Its like they change us.*⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Said, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 29, 2011.

⁸⁵ Participant Observation, Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Nov. 25, 2011.

⁸⁶ Farah, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

I found this very interesting and asked her whether she thought it was a positive influence and she asserted that it definitely was not for parents, but definitely positive for youth. Certain blasphemous behaviors in the past have now become normalized and accepted, like girls and boys holding hands in the city. These behaviors learned since childhood can be challenged and redefined by other influences and it is intriguing to consider how these influences affect the performance of behaviors depending on the generation. Aya, Fatima, and Laila explore how the ‘west’ influences Morocco, but primarily through media and movies.

Aya: Media is the most thing that influences people. Western movies and programs—they always trying to reach perfectness and idealism. If a person has not critical thinking and strong personality, he gets easily influenced, and he may forget about his traditions and religion.⁸⁷

Fatima: Movies...series...also music. In the movies, the new generation they start watching movies and when they watch the movie, they take the idea, that’s lies, and they want to make it real in their reality in their life. [...] In the news, they watch the freedom that the people lead there and they want to practice it here in their country, when I watch a documentary in America or in Britain or anywhere or in German, they want to practice here, to say why they have the freedom to think to speak, to live, so we must practice it here, in our country, its dead ...the media affects us, affects you, a lot of young.⁸⁸

Laila: Sometimes I just hate media for shaping our society. But thanks to god, our religion is really ruling us. You know that our religion is not just a religion: it’s a part of our lives; it’s a system of our lives. We control media, then it controls us. I have a very big family in Tangier and this is what I notice because I already made some research about this, I had a presentation about this, and I notice that more faith helps us to control media. The bad side in media ... some series, a lot of youngsters are following American series, grey’s anatomy, vampire diaries, which is kind of, it’s like they naturalize it.⁸⁹

There are clearly a variety of opinions on whether this influence is positive or not. Each of these female students delineated how media deeply impacts youth even to the point where they are making it their realities. Also, Aya’s distinction that an individual without ‘critical thinking and strong personality’ would be more easily swayed away from their values and religion links to this notion that without education one would not be as easily convinced. Laila made an interesting point that her friends are aware of who controls media and so they can thus overcome its influence. Also, the notion that media is destroying religion suggests a similar theme of the

⁸⁷ Aya, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 30, 2011.

⁸⁸ Fatima, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

⁸⁹ Laila, *Personal Interview*, Nov. 23, 2011.

push and pull of modernity and tradition in Morocco. There is a conflict between these two entities as there is a myriad of flows in an out of Morocco. Therefore, it is ineffective to consider them as clashing, but rather it is productive to consider their points of intersection and how each individual chooses his or her own distinct path amongst these influences.

Conclusion:

*Everyone in Morocco will say the same thing. We all have the same deep down behavior. She explained that someone from a small town will say one thing and someone in the city will say another, however if you get deep, deep down, in the end we are all saying the same thing.*⁹⁰

One of the female students during a class discussion raised her hand and when I called on her, she immediately made this statement. **At first, I was slightly confused, because I had heard so many opinions about how you cannot make generalizations about Moroccan etiquette, I realized that while this was most definitely true, it was also true that Moroccans do share this deep down concept of respect.** Yes, etiquette is malleable and it is constantly evolving, being redefined, and reinterpreted, but this notion of respect remains ingrained in nearly all of their behaviors. Norms and values are produced and reproduced. Social norms and hierarchies are manifested throughout these distinctions of behavior. Classifications and binaries are made. Agency is performed. Education and taste are evaluated. Some question whether modernization and education are erasing Moroccan values, while others believe that education has made them more open-minded and tolerant of difference. However, in the end, at the base of it all, there is this deeply rooted awareness of respect. It became clear to me that, at least for the Moroccan students with whom I spoke, “respect” is something that they value as they strive to “find out what it means” to them.

⁹⁰ Participant Observation, Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Nov. 25, 2011.

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Farah, Personal Interview, Ibn Tofail, Nov. 30, 2011

Aya, Personal Interview, Ibn Tofail, Nov. 30, 2011.

Nouhalia, Personal Interview, Ibn Tofail, Nov. 30, 2011.

Ahmed, Personal Interview, Mohammed V Rabat, Dec. 1, 2011.

Professor Abderrahim Anbi, Personal Interview, Dec. 6, 2011.

Appendix

Class Discussion Guide:

1. Consider the definition of etiquette. What comes to mind when you think of etiquette?
2. What is considered as “proper” in Morocco? What is considered as “improper” in Morocco? (What is the proper way to behave?)
3. Are there differences in what is expected of a woman versus what is expected of a man?
4. What would you say is proper behavior for girls my age?
5. What about for guys my age?
6. What is behavior like in the University setting?

7. Do you think students from rural areas tend to have a different sense of etiquette than students from urban areas?
8. What do you think most influences etiquette (everyday behavior)?
9. What are your opinions on self-help books? Are these books used?
10. Do you think the media or television influences how people think about behavior and etiquette?
11. Do you think that there is a significant French / European influence on etiquette?
12. What influences how individuals consider 'good behavior' in Morocco?

Individual Interview Guide:

1. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself: where you are from originally, what you study, where you live now, etc?
2. Could you talk a little about your current relationship with your hometown? What is it like coming back home (during vacations, etc.) after moving to an urban setting?
3. What are the most important values that you have in terms of etiquette?
4. What do you like about the city? Is there anything in particular about the city that drew you there?
5. What aspects of etiquette do you notice the most on other individuals?
6. Could you talk a little bit about what you think respect means in Morocco?

7. How would you describe the behavior in the University setting? Do you think your behavior has changed since coming to the University? How do you compare your behavior here at University versus at home?
8. What are the characteristics of the kind of person you'd like to marry? Do you prefer if they come from urban areas or the countryside? What sort of values would you want them to have? Is there any religious behavior you'd like them to have?
9. What do you think is the impact of an upbringing in a rural versus urban area?
10. What sort of impact does Islam have on your life? What are 3 ways that religion is important to you? Considering the five pillars of Islam, which are the most important to you? How? Why?
11. Do you think that there is a significant French / European influence on etiquette?
12. What are your opinions on self-help books? Have you ever considered reading self-help books?
13. Do you think the media or television influence how people think about behavior and etiquette?

Statement of Consent

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to learn about the variations and perceptions of etiquette in terms of behavior, manners, and values in Morocco.

Duration and Elements of Study

The study will be conducted over a period of three weeks, from November 14 to December 10, 2011. It will include observations of participants as well as interviews and fieldwork.

Risks

The study has no foreseeable risks for participants. However, if you feel uncomfortable with the observation or interview process at any time, you are free to terminate your involvement.

Compensation

Participation in this study will not be compensated, financially or otherwise. However, your assistance is greatly appreciated by our research team.

Confidentiality

Every effort to keep your personal information confidential will be made in this project. Your names and other identifying information will be changed in the final write-up, and will only be known to the research team.

Participation

I, the undersigned, have read the above statements. I affirm that my participation in this study is voluntary and understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.

Signature

Date

I recognize that this study involves interviews and/or observations that may be audio-recorded and transcribed.

Signature

Date

Research Team:

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0658702470

Researchers may be contacted by e-mail or telephone for any reason.