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## ***Rationality and Solidarities: The Social Organization of Common Property Resources in the Imdrhas Valley of Morocco***

**Peggy Petrzelka and Michael M. Bell**

Dominant theories of common property resource systems (CPRs) draw principally from the rational choice tradition. While this perspective has contributed to our understanding of common property issues, there are still missing features. The one we believe can both contextualize rationality and CPRs within the larger social system is recognition of the social dynamism between solidarities based on interests and solidarities based on sentiments. We argue that collective action is an interactive process where both interests and sentiments mutually constitute and reconstitute each other through a dialogue of solidarities. Using this approach, we examine two Imazighen communities in southern Morocco and the social organization of their CPRs. While both communities have the same established rules for managing their CPRs, there are distinct differences in what occurs on them. These differences are due to more than individual actors' private calculations of personal gain. They can be equally attributed to the character of social ties in each community as a whole—ties of interests and sentiments seemingly far removed from the particular CPR. We present the dialogue of solidarities as an important point of analytic entry into the dynamics of CPRs.

**Key words:** common property resources, community, Morocco

*On our way back from the fields, Amina<sup>1</sup> and I stopped and sat on a rock overlooking the river valley and village. We talked about tattoos on women's faces and arms. "We no longer do them; the talib (faith healer) says they are bad," she told me. And we discussed circumcisions. "We used to gather everyone and had one big party—now everyone has their own tradition." She pointed out what used to be the communal property, now divided into small private plots. "Nizha," she said to me, "the words of today are not like the words of yesterday, and that which we did early is not that which we do today." The call to prayer sounded. We began our return to the house, along the empty paths.*

M'semrir, Spring 1993

*I went to the fields with Aboosh. Abisha, Tooda, and four others joined us. They sang as we walked to Aboosh's plot, and as they helped her cut alfalfa. While returning home, Mohamed and Jusef met us. We passed the communal property. Jusef told me "In the summer, this will be full of everyone's cows." After the animals were fed and put in for the night, Aboosh and the others took me to Duoar Aqadimt (old village), where a crowd was gathering, and singing had begun for the daily dance held at sunset.*

Tilmi, Fall 1993

### **Introduction**

**D**espite some two centuries of the development and spread of capitalist institutions, much of importance in the world is still not privately owned. Grazing lands, woodlands, hunting grounds, fisheries, irrigation and drinking waters, roads—all these and more frequently remain held in common. Yet social scientists long neglected the importance of common property. And when they did turn their gaze toward common property, it was often with an eyebrow lifted in skepticism and even scorn toward what was seen as a backward impediment to industrial and industrializing societies.

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The dominant theory of what has come to be called common property resources and common property resource systems (CPRs) draws principally from the rational choice tradition—the idea that individuals act in their own self-interest. In addition, probably the two most influential works in what might be termed the classical literature on common property (both of which were written with that lifted eyebrow) were based on rational choice orientations: Mancur Olson's 1965 book, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, and Garrett Hardin's 1968 article in *Science*, "The Tragedy of the Commons." Much of the leading work since that time has retained these orientations, as, for example, when Ostrom (1990, 1992), Stevenson (1991), and Sandler (1992) argue that the functioning and malfunctioning of CPRs can be understood as the aggregate product of the private decision making of individuals acting in the rational pursuit of their particular interests.

There is good reason for impatience with the rational choice perspective, however. First and most fundamentally, CPRs are *social* phenomena, as the word "common" in the acronym's root indicates. Involvement in a CPR is not an isolated activity, despite the rational choice focus on the individual. Second, it is tautological and reductionist to ascribe all human motivation to the self-interested decisions of rational actors—even "broadly rational" ones—as many critics of rational choice have observed (Bell 1998a, 1998b; Sen 1977; Smelser 1992). Humans are moved by considerations of the interests of the self and by considerations of the interests of others, both by what might be termed "interests" proper and by what might be termed "sentiments" (Bell 1998a, 1998b). Third, a rational choice perspective encourages a radical decontextualization of choice and actions, excluding from view many of the factors that define a particular action as "rational" in a CPR. In sum, a CPR is not an entity complete and entire unto itself; it cannot be analyzed apart from the overall social system of which it is necessarily a part.

In this article, we examine two Imazighen (Berber)<sup>2</sup> communities in southern Morocco and the social organization of their CPRs. Based on field research in these two villages, we argue that while both communities have the same established rules for managing their CPRs, there are distinct differences in what has occurred, and continues to occur, on them. These differences are due to more than rational actors' private calculations of personal gain. They can be equally attributed to the character of social ties in each community as a whole. Our point, then, is not to reject rational choice out of hand; our plea is for an understanding of rationality in its *full* social context.

### Where Common Property Literature Has Been

Despite the widespread evidence that CPRs have persisted over the centuries (Goldman 1998) the classical roots of the CPR literature present a rather bleak portrayal of their possibilities. Olson (1965:2) ominously concluded that:

"unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, *rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests*" (emphasis in the original). Likewise Hardin (1968:1244) prophesized that because herders on a commons will seek to increase their herd size as much as possible until overgrazing sets in, and similarly for any public resource managed as a commons, "the inherent logic of the commons remorselessly generates tragedy.... Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons."

Since the 1970s a large literature critical of Hardin and Olson has emerged. Ostrom (1990) perhaps represents the most significant work in what might be termed the second phase of CPR research. Responding to Olson and Hardin, Ostrom (1990) points out that individuals *can* work together collectively and that successful CPRs *do* exist, a point Goldman (1998) amplifies. The question Ostrom (1990:27) directs attention to is "how it is possible that some individuals organize themselves to govern and manage CPRs and others do not?" She then goes on to document a set of design principles on which successful CPRs are based. These principles include an ownership arrangement within which management rules are developed, boundaries are clearly defined and known to all, group size is known and enforced, sanctions work to ensure compliance, and mechanisms exist for resolving conflict.

Ostrom's work represents an important advance in CPR research. However, it remains wholly within the confines of a strict—albeit better informed—rational choice perspective. For Ostrom, the actor is still self-interested and still a "broadly rational actor." But her work complemented the emergence of a third phase of CPR research that finds the traditional rational choice perspective too limiting.

Transitional to this third phase was the work of Bromley and Cernea (1989) and Niamir (1990). Bromley and Cernea argued that the breakdown of many traditional CPRs in the 20th century represented not the remorseless tragedy of self-interested actors on a commons but rather the effects of externally imposed social change due to colonialism, nationalization, marketization, and modernization. They note that colonization brought with it the taking of lands and the implementation of non-CPR management forms, and they identify this exploitative period as the precipitating factor leading to the breakdown of many common property resource systems in poor countries. Following colonialism, state intervention through nationalization and still later through marketization of common property contributed greatly to the breakup of many systems of common property management. This sequence of changes led to increased stratification in CPR communities, lessening the commitment to "follow the rules" of a CPR (Bromley and Cernea 1989; Niamir 1990). Thus, Bromley and Cernea and others brought a previously missing perspective—power—to our understanding of CPRs.

Niamir (1990) noted that changes in a community's demographics and in the local physical environment could also undermine CPRs. Droughts have put a tremendous strain on the productivity of rangeland resources in many regions, reducing their carrying capacity, making them more vulnerable to overuse, and resulting in greater concentration of livestock. Increases in population have brought more demands on the land, resulting in pressures to divide CPRs into private holdings in an attempt to grow more food for household consumption and for the market.

But neither Niamir nor Bromley and Cernea questioned the grounding of a rational choice perspective on CPRs; rather, they argued that other factors, such as environmental change and the legacy of colonialism, were more significant in the recent breakdown of many CPRs. It is to others that we must turn for this foundational critique of rational choice.

### Where Common Property Literature May Be Heading

The third phase's critique of self-interest stems from a new focus on the character of social ties within CPR communities. Granovetter (1985) and Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) argued for examining economic behavior and social institutions in terms of their "embeddedness" within networks of social relations. Other researchers have echoed this with specific reference to CPRs. Fisher (1994:71) was one of the first to stress "the importance of looking at embedded social relationships in understanding the commons."

Other CPR researchers have made much the same point without drawing explicitly on the concept of embeddedness. Ireson (1991) and Wade (1988) noted that CPRs that have persisted typically exhibit strong social bonds, respect for local leadership, repeated social interaction among members, shared cultural norms, and cooperative social institutions. They also note some of the social changes that may lead to the breakdown of these characteristics. For example, in his discussion of CPRs in a Laotian village, Ireson (1991:12) notes difficulties in maintaining collective activity as social and economic differences increase in the village. Degradation of the CPR occurs because wealthier villagers "may become willing to risk village displeasure" as "they no longer need to depend on village assistance."

We should applaud this recognition of the importance of embeddedness of social relationships. But these analyses are still incomplete. The picture we are left with is still of a rational actor, albeit one who has to pay attention to the embeddedness of a CPR. Rationality itself is not yet fully contextualized in this model.

Moreover, neither is a CPR fully contextualized in most of this research. What is needed is a more holistic conception that looks beyond the CPR itself, and beyond those who are directly involved in it, to the overall social system within which a CPR is only a part. To our knowledge, Mearns's (1996) case study of common grazing in Mongolia is the only work to attempt such a conception. In her analysis of herders

and their involvement in other agricultural communal activities, she emphasizes the need to look at commons within the social context of their other activities. We agree.

Just as a CPR is one social structure within a larger social system, so too do the participants in a CPR have multiple forms of involvement in a larger social group—in a word, a wider *community*. And to understand why this social structure is working, or not, we need to examine how it is influenced by this larger system, this wider community. The experience we gain from our involvement in one social setting does not disappear when we are involved in a different one. Therefore, examining a CPR in isolation, as well as only the individuals directly involved in it, will not provide an accurate representation of all the social dynamics at play.

### The Dialogue of Solidarities

There is still something missing from all these analyses: a recognition of the social dynamism between solidarities based on *interests* and solidarities based on *sentiments*. Bell (1998a, 1998b) argues that any collective action that persists over space and time must not only be conceived as a solidarity of interests, it must equally depend upon a solidarity of sentiments—upon the social coordination of reciprocal or complementary concerns for the interests of others and upon the affective and normative ties that lead to such coordination. As Bell (1998a:183) notes,

in reciprocal [and complementary] action, there is almost always a time delay involved. Sometimes I'll have to wait my turn. But how do I know that you, my partner, will come through when it is my turn—when it is your turn to wait? Because of my sense that we also have a solidarity of sentiments. We have affection for each other...and a sense of common commitment to certain norms of behavior.

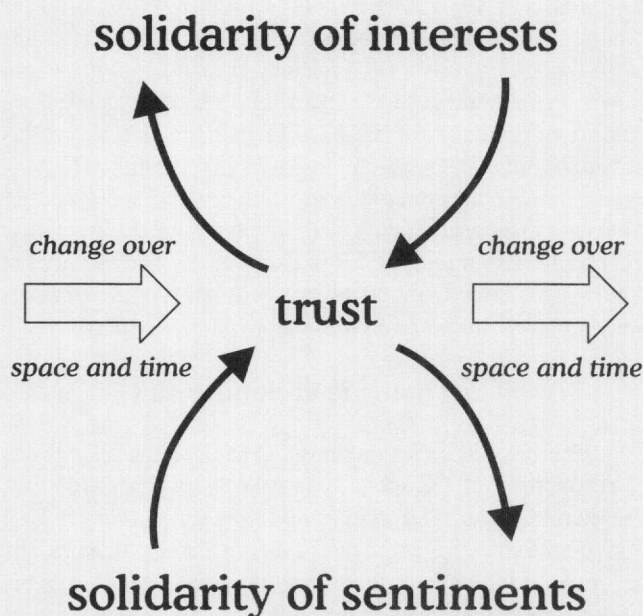
Thus, the existence of a solidarity of sentiments builds the trust necessary to cross the reaches of time and space inherent in a solidarity of interests. Moreover, a solidarity of interests builds the trust necessary to maintain a solidarity of sentiments. As Bell (1998a:183) also notes,

If you do not come through, if you violate my trust or if I violate yours, chances are my affection for you and your affection for me will soon disappear—as well as our sense of a common normative commitment.

Sustained collective action is an interactive process in which solidarities of interests and solidarities of sentiments mutually constitute and reconstitute each other, a process Bell terms a *dialogue of solidarities* (Figure 1).

The cynic's retort to the idea of a dialogue of solidarities is that sentiments are an indefensible theoretical construct. Any affective or normative commitment, says the cynic, is based ultimately on our interests in attracting the affection of others and our need to constrain our activities to fit social norms if we are to achieve our interests. Indeed, in recognition of

Figure 1. The Dialogue of Solidarities



these objectives and needs of interests, a number of rational choice theorists have tried to incorporate a theory of norms within a rational framework (Elster 1989; Ostrom 1990). The result is to reduce sentiments to interests.

It is important to recognize that we often experience norms as a kind of constraint. We often decide not to violate norms because, frankly, we think we might not get away with it. The theory of the dialogue of solidarities does not deny the importance of normative constraint. Rather, we argue that it is necessary to distinguish between *normative constraint* and *normative commitment*, with the former a result of the interaction of interests and norms and the latter a result of the interaction of sentiments and norms. (And here we elaborate the model of the dialogue of solidarities outlined in Bell [1998a, 1998b]). Thus, it is important not to associate the following of norms only with the sentiments' side of the dialogue of solidarities. We often follow norms for which we feel very little sympathy. But nor should following norms be associated only with the interests side of the dialogue. In contrast to normative constraint, normative commitment represents a generalized concern for others that is not experienced as merely an imposition. (The generalized character of this concern, we note, is what distinguishes normative sentiments from the more specific concerns of affective sentiments.)

It is also important to recognize that sentiments are not merely sugar and roses. Hate, anger, and vindictiveness are equally sentimental orientations toward others. Indeed, the common negative affections of some toward others has served

as a basis for a solidarity of sentiments equal in social power to sentimental solidarities built upon positive affections.

In other words, a dialogue of solidarities does not always result in collective action that would generally be described as socially "good" or "useful." But all collective action that persists over time and space is far more likely when people act on both ties of interests *and* ties of sentiments. Therefore, the dialogue of solidarities seems an important point of analytic entry into the dynamics of CPRs.

These dynamics often depend upon the interaction of ties of interests and sentiments seemingly far removed from a particular CPR. Without some preexisting basis in sentimental solidarity, it is difficult to form the basis of trust necessary even to begin to coordinate interests. Moreover, one of the surest signs that social actors commonly look for to verify that sentimental ties really exist is the actions of others in other settings. Our point is that a dialogue of solidarities needs to be understood within the context of a larger social system—within the often chaotic, shifting, and overlapping context of the *dialogues* of solidarities that constitute real social life. We now turn to applying the dialogue of solidarities to the case study.

### Methods and Setting

This case study is based on ethnographic fieldwork from February 1993 to February 1994, conducted by the senior author while living with two Imazighen tribes in southern Morocco. Most of this time was spent in the village of M'semrir with the Ait Atta people and the village of Tilmi with the Ait Hadiddou people, living with families in each.

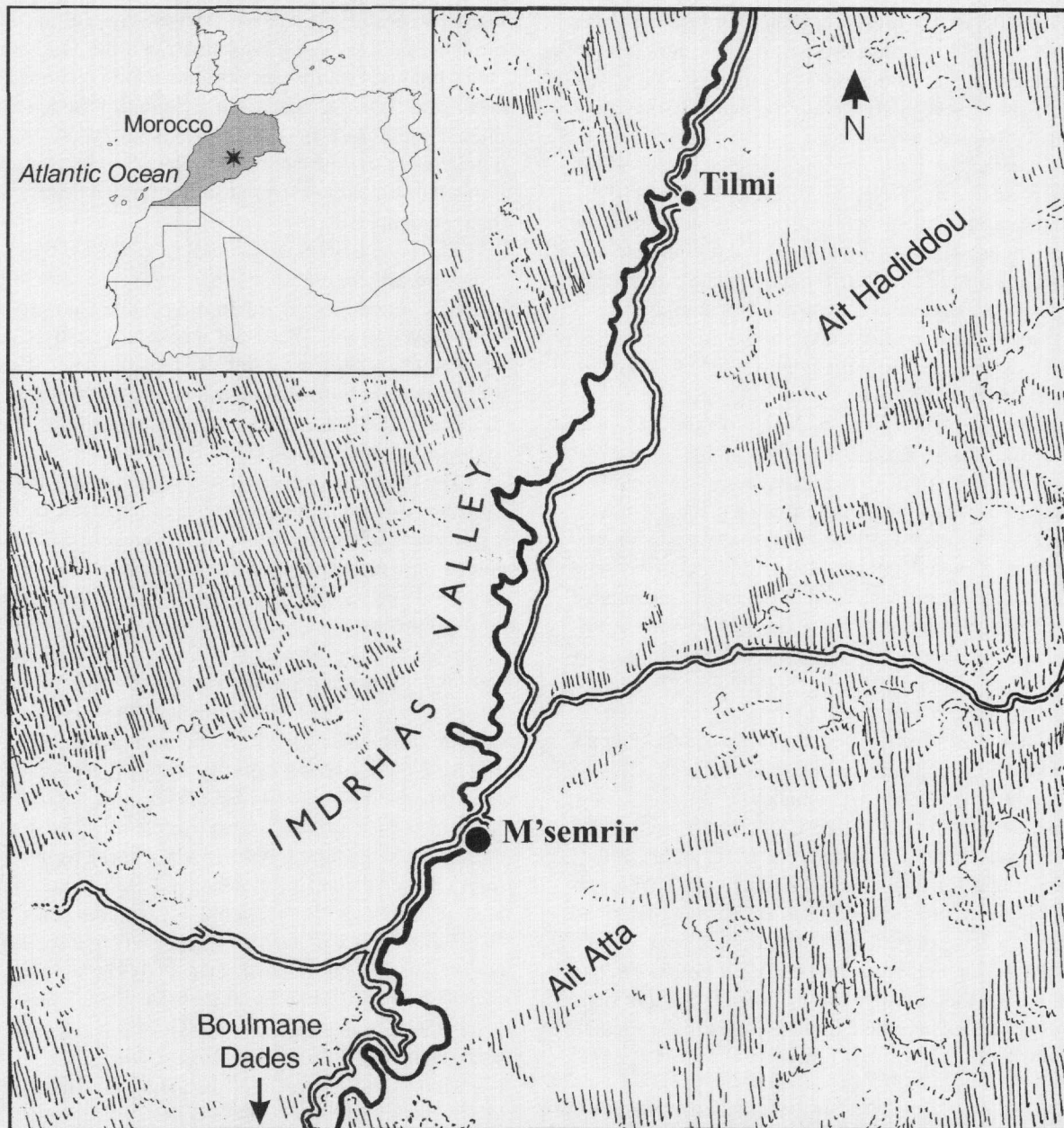
The Imazighen people are the original inhabitants of Morocco. All Imazighen are organized into tribes (*Ait* literally means "people of") and Imazighen villages are usually made up of a single tribe, subdivided into one or several subtribes.<sup>3</sup> The Ait Atta of M'semrir and Ait Hadiddou of Tilmi live 13 kilometers apart in the High Atlas Mountains of southern Morocco, each in their own village along the Imdrhas River Valley (Figure 2).

Data were gathered through informal interviews and participant observation in both villages, in Moroccan Arabic or in Tamazight, the dialect of the area. A Tamazight interpreter facilitated interviews that could not be conducted in Arabic.

The Imazighen of the High Atlas are primarily farming people and therefore directly dependent upon the local natural resource base for their economic survival. The common property in the Imdrhas Valley consists mainly of pastures, rangelands, and almous (spring-fed areas where vegetation grows). Together, these areas provide a source of forage for livestock and are the main source of fuelwood, collected by girls and women. Some common property areas are restricted solely to sheep and goat grazing; others are strictly for fuelwood and forage collection.<sup>4</sup>

To sustain these activities, Imazighen have traditionally managed their common property with an ancient system of pasture and rangeland regulation, called the *agdal* system.

Figure 2. Imdrhas Valley, Morocco



Agdal is Tamazight for “to hold in reserve” (Lefebure 1979:121). The term is used to refer both to the system of common property management and to the actual areas that are under agdal protection.

In Tilmî and M'semrir, agdal use is organized through a representative council, known as the *jemaa*.<sup>5</sup> The jemaa supervises agdal use and establishes schedules for collecting forage and fuelwood. Community members are informed about the dates through word of mouth spread at the local

mosque or at the weekly *suq* (market). The jemaa keeps the common lands closed if too much degradation has occurred, or if there has not been adequate rainfall, to allow regeneration of vegetation.

Borders of the various *igudlan* (the plural of agdal) are generally known to all in an area and members of certain tribal segments have the right to graze livestock and collect fuelwood in specific *igudlan*. The system is guarded by *nuadar*, two men in each village who are selected annually

by the jema'a. The nuadar patrol the collective pasturelands to ensure that the number of livestock is kept in compliance, that girls and women are not in "shepherd's land," that shepherds are not in "women's land," and that those not of the tribal segment (as well as those from neighboring tribes) have not entered the land. Nuadar also patrol the common property to ensure that the opening and closing dates of the collective lands are respected. If violators are caught, they must pay a penalty, referred to as *izmas*.

These characteristics of the igudlan have all the design principles of successful CPRs presented by Ostrom (1990): an ownership arrangement in which management rules are developed, an established structure provides equitable distribution of benefits, distinct territorial boundaries are widely known, group size and rules are also known, and incentives and sanctions exist for co-owners to follow the accepted institutional arrangements. And for centuries the agdal system worked well in the High Atlas.

Yet in the Ait Atta village of M'semrir, the system is disintegrating, while it remains more stable in the Ait Hadiddou village of Tilmi. This disintegration in M'semrir is manifested in overstocking, in the common presence of livestock herds in women's fuelwood collection areas, in specific members of the village not being informed of opening dates of the common property, and in the recent inequitable redivision and privatization of portions of M'semrir's agdal. Some of this breakdown seems easy to ascribe to the socially erosive forces of colonialism and persistent drought that undermined the collective working of the igudlan (Chiche 1992). Colonization by the French in the early 1930s and the region's long periods of drought are in line with the arguments of Bromley and Cernea (1989) and Niamer (1990) concerning the external factors that can impact CPRs. But M'semrir and Tilmi, as closely neighboring villages in the same valley, experienced these forces in much the same way. Yet current conditions of igudlan in the villages are sharply different. Moreover, they have experienced something else in quite a different way—the quality of the social ties within the two communities and the activities that maintain them. It is to the quality of social ties and their implications for the igudlan that we now turn.

### Social Organization in the Imdrhas Valley

M'semrir is the first of the two communities one reaches along the dirt road into the Imdrhas Valley. The *Caid* (mayor-like figure) of the region resides there, as do the *Gendarme* (state police), doctor, and agricultural workers. Some of these officials are Imazighen, and some Arab, but all are from outside of the village. Government bureaus have been established in the village since the 1960s. Therefore, M'semrir in the last 30 years has become more than the village of the Ait Atta alone.

M'semrir is also where the large *suq* for the surrounding villages takes place. And it is the point tourists stop to drink mint tea before either heading back down the valley or con-

tinuing on the loop of a popular gorge trip. As a result of this tourist influx, several cafes and hotels have recently been established in the village.

Introduction of cash crops (apples and potatoes) in the last two decades by the Ministry of Agriculture has also brought changes. Upon returning from the fields one day, Nejla pointed out former communal property that is now privatized. When asked why they split up the land, she replied, "Everyone wanted their own land, so they could grow whatever crops they choose." The introduction of these crops has encouraged the push for further privatization of the communal land.

A greater market orientation in cattle grazing has also promoted privatizing M'semrir's igudlan. Some 90 percent of the imported cows in the Imdrhas Valley are in M'semrir (ORMVAO 1992). The cattle are kept in individual compounds where they are carefully fed so farmers can better recoup their investments. Meanwhile, much of the area of the agdal that was once communal pasturage has been divided into private fields.

The Imazighen notion that "wealth is on the hoof" (Hart 1981:93) still holds true—but with a greater emphasis on the wealth part of the equation than ever before. The money gained from marketing cash crops and selling imported cattle has also been used by many local farmers to increase their herds of sheep—an animal that is regarded as a "bank"—and goats that they graze on the remaining communal lands. One area extension agent estimated stocking rates of sheep and goats in the igudlan of M'semrir are 50 to 100 percent higher than the level established for the area. This, then, directly affects overall carrying capacity and increases pressure and cheating on the lands still held in common.

The prevalence of cheating was made evident one spring morning when walking with Tooda, a local woman, to collect fuelwood high in the mountains. Tooda pointed out sheep manure and noted that it should not be there since this was "women's" land. Upon returning to the village, Tooda pointed out shepherd's huts that had been newly erected on the communal property. "They build these at night," she said, "so that in the morning they can say, 'I have a house here, so this is my land.'"

Moreover, 25 percent of the males have migrated from M'semrir since the 1960s (ORMVAO 1992), sending money back from their work in Holland, France, and larger cities of Morocco. This money has been used to establish cafes, purchase televisions, and buy imported cattle. The flow of money from outmigrants is leading to marked socioeconomic and cultural differences within the community. As one walks around M'semrir, many visual cues to these differences stand out in the landscape and in the passing populace: television antennas, cement houses instead of the indigenous mud and straw types, women and girls donning cotton shawls instead of the indigenous wool shawls—all indicators of new wealth and a changing culture.

The local political structure has also changed in M'semrir. Traditionally, the villagers elected the leader of the jema'a,

the Amghrar. Today, the Amghrar is still elected by the people, but he (it is always a he) is only installed in that position if desired by the Caid. The Caid is now appointed from the ranks of state government—not by the local Imazighen tribal leaders as in the first decades of this century (Bouderbala 1992). And the people can no longer vote the Amghrar out, unless the Caid agrees. Consequently, the actions of the Amghrar have shifted from representing and enacting the wishes of the villagers to legitimating the authority structure of the central state and the king.

Disagreement over M'semrir's current Amghrar has deeply divided the community, and songs have been made up about his actions. One song refers to his ill division of the communal land, where he allegedly gave the land only to those he liked. The villagers laugh as they sing the song, but their bitterness is evident as they discuss the inequitable distribution. The Amghrar has also neglected to inform the entire community of the opening dates for the communal grazing land. For example, in one specific area of the common land, villagers are given one day to collect forage before livestock is taken there to graze. Villagers and government officials alike said the area would not be opened in the summer of 1993, as there had not been enough rain to adequately restore the vegetation. One day in July, while Amina was talking about this area she said, "They didn't open it this year. There's no rain and no irrigation canal there."

Loho, her daughter-in-law who was preparing tea, interrupted, "Abisha told me people are going."

Amina responded, "They'll have to pay izmas if they are caught."

"No," said Loho, "it's open. They just didn't tell everyone."

Apparently, the Amghrar had allowed those who were "on his side" to enter the common property area. Those not "on his side" were told the area was closed. A Ministry of Agriculture official confirmed this, saying, "It is true. And the people cannot do anything, because the Amghrar is a friend of the Caid." Amina echoed this. Thus, collective land in M'semrir is now being used as an instrument of exclusion by the Amghrar. And since the Caid now effectively controls the Amghrar, those villagers who do not like his actions feel helpless, but they are unable to vote him out.

Thirteen kilometers up the mountain valley the people of Ait Hadiddou live in their village of Tilmi. The road becomes increasingly worse as one ascends the valley. The small market in Tilmi does not encourage many merchants into the village, and there are no cafes or hotels to entice the few tourists who do venture this far. The Caid comes to the village once a week (if that) on market day, as does the doctor.

Only 4 percent of males have migrated to larger cities (ORMVAO 1992). Less than 10 percent of the cattle here are imported, and the cash crops grown in M'semrir do not fare as well in the agronomic conditions of Tilmi, where there are many springs and wet conditions do not encourage cultivation of these crops.

Due to the small number of tourists, difficulties in growing cash crops, and the minimal number of men working outside of the village, there are fewer opportunities for capital accumulation in Tilmi. Purchase of new technologies is kept at a minimum, and the status symbols seen in M'semrir are not so prevalent. There are few cement houses, few television antennas, and few women and girls who wear cotton shawls and gold. Consequently, within Tilmi there appears to be little variation in economic status, resulting in less social stratification.

Tilmi has also maintained the more traditional forms of local democracy. Disputes still occur here, but villagers did not appear to have a problem telling the Amghrar when they are not happy with him. One day a fellow villager, Said, came to discuss irrigation issues with the Amghrar. Over tea, Said explained the situation. Unhappy with the Amghrar's response, Said shook his head and said, "The Amghrar is no good." While Said didn't go away happy that day and perhaps is not pleased with the Amghrar's effectiveness as a local leader, he continues to visit the Amghrar, and still considers him somewhat of a friend.

When the Amghrar is away, Abo, his wife, takes over. One day Abo stood in her courtyard, talking with one villager while another waited outside for his turn. It became obvious Abo was resolving a dispute. After the two men left Abo commented, "I'm a *Tamghrart*," making a play on words. *Tamghrart* could mean "female amghrar" (of which there are none) but more commonly means "old woman." The point is that Tilmi is a place where people have less fear of speaking their minds to those in power, where in special circumstances those in power are women, and where women sometimes feel able to contest gender relations in the village, at least relatively empowered women like Abo do.

Traditionally, when work of mutual benefit needed to get done, Imazighen communities practiced *touiza*, volunteer labor that occurs both at the community and the family level. When asked about *touiza* villagers in M'semrir repeatedly said, "How long ago." In M'semrir, each family now harvests its own crop, or helps and is helped by one or two other households, and community work like fixing the road is now done by paid laborers. But the role of *touiza* is still an active one in Tilmi. When the harvesting of cereals begins, groups of approximately 15 girls and women will gather together and work consecutively on each other's fields, singing as they work. *Touiza* also extends into nonagricultural activities, such as clearing the road of snow. When such work needs to be done, the Amghrar's assistant will go through the village, hollering for workers to come help. A group of available males will work together, chanting and singing, in much the same manner as the females when they are in the fields or gathering fuelwood. In Tilmi, generalized reciprocity (exchange without expectation of direct equal return) has remained as *touiza*, while in M'semrir, *touiza* has become direct reciprocity (expectation of equal return) (Sahlins 1972).

In addition to *touiza*, dancing also remains a common feature of everyday life in Tilmi. When a major life event

occurs, such as circumcisions or marriages, the dancing continues for days. Moreover, the Ait Hadiddou organize these events as a community. With circumcision, the Ait Hadiddou perform a community-wide ceremony followed by three days of celebration, with dancing every evening and the talib reading from the Koran during the day. But in M'semrir, only one or two households at a time get together for circumcision ceremonies. And while weddings occur throughout the summer in M'semrir, among the Ait Hadiddou most weddings take place during a single week in October. This is for practical purposes (to prevent conflict with harvest time and so guests traveling a distance do so only once a year), but also to celebrate the event at a community level. Villagers are invited by the throwing of *amzeet* (almonds, dates, and figs) off the roofs of the grooms' homes to the crowd waiting below. On the first day of the ceremony, all the brides proceed into the village together. After dinner, they gather outside, each holding a light or candle, and stand there while the community dances until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. The next day, the dancing begins again in the afternoon.

The Ait Hadiddou of Tilmi appear to *like* each other. And they continually show it, simultaneously demonstrating and rebuilding their social ties. They work together. They celebrate together. They sing together. They dance together.

Perhaps most striking is the fact that when the weather permits, some of the people of Tilmi gather outside for singing and dancing to celebrate the sunset and the end of another day. As much as this activity fits every romantic cliché about traditional life before the age of globalization, marketization, modernization, and rationalization, it is a remarkable empirical reality in Tilmi.

Most significant for our topic here, the Ait Hadiddou still manage their land together. While some former communal land has been converted to private plots, the *igudlan* surrounding Tilmi are for the most part still intact. For example, during the months of June, July, and August, everyone who owns cattle and wishes to participate brings them to a public gathering place. The herd is collected and taken en masse to the communal land, where it is guarded and cared for by each participating family in turn. Rotational grazing is practiced, forage from the mountains and foothills is conserved, and the stocking rates remain closer to sustainable levels (ORMVAO 1992). The issues heard in M'semrir regarding the communal property, such as cheating and inequitable decisions, were not witnessed in Tilmi.

We believe that patterns of interests and sentiments and the solidarities built upon them interact in these two Imazighen communities. In Tilmi, broad-based solidarities of interests are closely associated with equally broad-based solidarities of sentiments. The Ait Hadiddou retain patterns of local political participation, *touiza*, and *igudlan* that take into account the interests of others in the community. As well, they continue to enact patterns of open ritual, open political criticism, and open informal interaction that demonstrate their positive sympathies for each other. In M'semrir, however, there is a conspicuous lack of community-wide solidarities

of interests. The relatively private orientation of ritual and social interaction indicate that suspicion and distrust has riven the web of sentimental ties in M'semrir as well.

To be sure, it is empirically quite difficult to document a direct connection between singing and dancing together in the evening as the sun sets and the collective decision to honor the *jemaa's* proscriptions about where to collect fodder and when to enter the communal land. But that lack of a direct connection is part of the social power of sentimental solidarities. If the connection was immediately clear, it would reduce sentimental acts to mere interest, and if interest is the sole motivating factor there would be no need for sentimental acts to begin with. Local interaction would amount to no more than bargaining, direct exchanges of labor and information, and the assertion of power.

Our point is not that Tilmi is all self-sacrifice for the good of the whole, but here solidarities of interests interweave and overlap with solidarities of sentiments, which seems to be what is now missing in M'semrir. Unfortunately, we have no direct historical evidence on the quality of social ties in M'semrir in the years before the tourists and the imported cows came to the village and before the Caid became the agent of the King. But local people suggest that M'semrir was once far more like Tilmi is today, at least in some aspects.<sup>6</sup>

All of which is not to say that sentimental ties no longer play an important role in M'semrir. Some people in M'semrir *are* told when and where the communal pastures are opened up for forage collection, and likely the families of those people would turn to each other to arrange a circumcision celebration. Ties of interests and sentiments still dialogically interact in M'semrir. What has changed is that those interactions have fractured along zones of exclusion, hierarchy, and hostility.

## Conclusion

The long-term maintenance of the solidarity of interests created by a CPR depends equally upon a corresponding solidarity of sentiments—on an interweaving and interacting system of ties of interest and sentiment. Ties of interest are socially embedded, as others have written. Yet we need to recognize that they are embedded not only in other ties of interest but also sentimental ties of affection and normative commitment.

We have not termed this dialogic embeddedness “social capital,” as some might have expected. While we have high regard for the importance of the aspects of social life that the users of this term seek to describe, we believe, like a number of recent writers (Portes 1998; Schulman and Anderson 1999) that there is cause for caution in its use. First, the phrase “social capital” is often used when a more old-fashioned, and we believe still vibrant, term would do equally well, if not better: community. Second, social capital has an unfortunately rationalistic connotation that comes from its use of economic language. It seems metaphorically contrary to the very point we are trying to establish. Third, most writers in the social



capital tradition have not, in our judgement, sufficiently repudiated the rational choice tradition and its limitations; indeed, one prominent writer specifically identifies social capital as a matter of rational choice (Coleman 1990, 1988). Even when social capital is more broadly defined as “networks, norms, and trust,” as Putnam (1993:35) has done, it still comes across as another matter, like normative constraint, that the socially situated rational actor would do well to be aware of and abide by. Fourth, social capital is almost always conceived as a positive social good that should be encouraged as a solution to collective action problems (Portes 1998). The situations in M’semrir and Tilmi, however, suggest that ties of interests and sentiments can exclude just as they can include.

We also suspect that our paper might be read as romanticizing tradition. Our intent is not to give the world another plaintive lament for the disappearing ways of yesteryear. Nor should scholarship romanticize rationalism and its advocacy of the narrow motives of interest—waving aside the role of sentiment in social life by labeling it as a thing of the traditional, and of the romantic imagination. McCay and Jentoft (1998:24) argue for “thick” description when examining “commons”—one which is “open to a fuller range of possibilities.” We suggest this “fuller range” include sentimental ties, which are real and have real social effects.

Life is not ideal in Tilmi. People are poor. Women have far lower social power and harder lives than men. Moreover, many of the communal rituals of collective sentiment are on the wane. Weddings have begun to take place at other times of the year. Often residents remark that the crowd at the evening dance used to be much larger; at one time, nearly everyone from the village would attend. But when attempting to understand what enables a CPR to retain its vitality, examination of the larger social system and its dialogic ties seems essential. These are the crucial points that the Ait Hadiddou make to an increasingly rationalistic world: that people who like each other generally get along better, that people who get along generally like each other better, and that singing and dancing together after the sun has set and partaking in the collective celebration of important events helps keep the grass green for everyone.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Names of individuals have been changed.

<sup>2</sup>The indigenous people of Morocco. Literally meaning “free man,” the term “Berber,” while commonly used, was imposed on the Imazighen and is not their own term.

<sup>3</sup>Ait Atta and Ait Hadiddou both occupy large areas within Morocco, with Ait Hadiddou primarily in the High Atlas and Ait Atta’s property extending into the Sahara. Generalizations made here refer only to the Ait Atta of M’semrir and the Ait Hadiddou of Tilmi.

<sup>4</sup>Common property can be located within village boundaries, surrounding the village, or in high-altitude pasturelands. Our discussion focuses on that within and surrounding the village.

<sup>5</sup>The *jemaa* is a village council of male elders. After King Hassan II’s ascent to the throne in 1961, a strong effort to change the political and social structure of Morocco began. In an effort to break the political and military power of the Imazighen, the government attempted to disband the *jemaa* and created the Rural Commune, an organization that overlooks a specific region rather than a particular village. M’semrir and Tilmi are in different rural communes, but under the same Caid jurisdiction. While in some areas of Morocco the power of the *jemaa* has been severely weakened, villagers consistently noted it was the *jemaa* that dealt with issues regarding *igudlan* (plural of *agdal*).

<sup>6</sup>There has always been a historical difference between the tribes in religion and related ideas of proper behavior. Islam is less infused among the Ait Hadiddou, while the Ait Atta of M’semrir view the dancing of the Ait Hadiddou as “shameful” and not proper Muslim behavior. As Hart (1984:98) notes, the “devotion and piety of the Ait Atta is beyond question. They also see themselves as very good Muslims.”

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