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Mobile Phones and the Making and Unmaking of Gender and Place on the Fly in Morocco

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Abstract: In this article, I examine how Moroccans use mobile phones as a way of reframing issues of gender, honor and shame, and placemaking. I argue that mobile communication enables distance, becoming an invaluable vehicle for inverting and suspending ordinary gender roles and placemaking practices. Precisely, I claim that mobile phones do not only allow users to switch their gender identities to quickly "fill in" the person on the end of the call when they are caught in the wrong place and situational context, but they also allow them to make sure that the domestic space remains a one-dimensional patriarchal domain. I also argue that mobile phones are not just objects. Rather they are "things" and constitute multi-vectored places. Illuminating mobility, place porousness and gender reversals, this article furthers recent analyses of mobile technology, gender, presence, and place.

Keywords: Mobile Phones, Gender, Place, Morocco.

Introduction

"Since 1990 to now, shame (*al-'ayb*) has consisted of the use of the mobile phone and [its use by] women who lack certainty in their hearts (*yaqīn*) for God. One man I know divorced his wife because he caught her chatting on the mobile phone with someone. Loose morals and corrupting ways (*mafāsid*) of the mobile are greater than its benefits (*maṣāliḥ*). It must be banned. Jews deceived us and keep us busy and involved in empty, trivial things on the phone, and they [Jews] push ahead, progressing forward and leaving us behind (…). You must know that, as we say, there are 70 Satans between a man and a woman and the mobile is number 71 [the man could not stop laughing while repeating the mobile is number 71] (…). And before the coming of the mobile, and some people now have two or three of them, everyone has a mobile. Before this time, do you know who Satan is? It is the thread (*al-khiṭ*, [meaning cable]) of satellite television dishes that sneaks from the roof into the hearth of people's houses. The cable is Satan and it brings *mafāsid* that only God could know and no one can control that. These days, people don't pay attention. Men, women, and even children are bewitched by mobile phones and satellite television dishes."[1]

1. Hsain Ilahiane, "Fieldwork notes," 2012.

The above ethnographic vignette reveals the intricate and unsettled ways that gender, morality, and place mean in relation to mobile phones and satellite television dishes. This is hardly surprising in light of the profound social transformations that mobile technologies have generated inside and outside the domestic home. In nearly two decades of their commercial viability, mobile phones have become essential parts of everyday lives of millions of Moroccans. As the manifestation of the "digital age" for billions of people in the developing world, mobile phones have set in motion meaningful changes in how we think about our identity, our being in place or places in the world, and our relationships to one another and to our environments. A rapidly changing social milieu has been developing and growing, one that is sustained by the intersectionality of mobile phone use, liquefied places that are always in a state of becoming, and the ever-changing social categories that have governed everyday life interactions

There is a significant body of literature on the effects and impacts of mobile technologies on time and space.[2] In a mobile world, Ling and Campbell argue that mobile communications have fundamentally changed how people experience distance and how they experience place or location, stating that "mobile communication has meant that we call specific individuals, not general places."[3] Ito et al. describe mobile phones as a form of 'cocooning' technology because they allow users to experience personalized media ecology that is carried around by the person rather than being hitched to a particular physical place.[4] At home, mobile phone users are co-present with intimate friends, as are train passengers who are potentially connected with others who are not geographically present if they are using a mobile phone. Similarly, Light argues that call recipients on the move lose themselves in phone conversations and create various mental spaces based on the context of

2. Hsain Ilahiane and Marcie L. Venter, "Introduction: Technologies and the Transformation of Economies," *Economic Anthropology* 3, 2 (2016): 191-202; Rowan Wilken and Gerard Goggin, eds., *Mobile Technologies and Place* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Hsain Ilahiane and John W. Sherry, "The Problematics of the "Bottom of the Pyramid" Approach to International Development: The Case of Micro-entrepreneurs' Use of Mobile Phones in Morocco," *International Technologies and International Development* 8, 1 (2012): 13-26; Rowan Wilken, *Teletechnologies, Place, and Community* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Rich Ling and Scott W. Campbell, eds., "Introduction: The Reconstruction of Space and Time through Mobile Communication Practices," in *The Reconstruction of Space and Time*, (London: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 1-15; Mizuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe, and Misa Matsuda, eds. *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Heather Horst and Daniel Miller, *The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication* (New York: Berg, 2006).

3. Ling and Campbell, "Introduction," 2.

4. Ito et al. *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian*, 10.

their telephone use.[5] Since phone users are not in specific physical locations, the suggestion is that interlocutors caught in the wrong place tend to "fill in" the image of the location and activities of the person on the other end of the call.[6] Hjort and Arnold argue that "place in its complexity has always mattered to mobile media. And through mobile media we see the ways place is shaped, and is shaping practices of mobility, intimacy, and a sense of belonging […]. Mobile technology has eroded the importance and centrality of distance and location, and has eased our detachment from places as complementing physical mobility."[7] While Özkul suggests that mobile technologies free us "from fixed lines and cables, and therefore from places […] and they have the potential to influence what a place represents and embodies for its inhabitants."[8] Within the context of Morocco, Maroon[9] and Bowen et al.[10] describe how the mobile phone has radically transformed the dynamics of communications in Morocco. They both argue that its use in the Muslim-majority country has not only recalibrated the gender dynamics of communication in and outside the home, but also equipped users with new ways to evade the religious and cultural taboos associated with sexual behavior without explicitly breaking them.

And, yet, amid this literature, there is less work on how mobile communications re-engage such core cultural constructions as gender, the code of honor and shame, presence and placemaking in a Muslim setting. This article examines how Moroccans use mobile phones as a way of reframing issues of gender, honor and shame, and placemaking. It argues that mobile communication enables distance, becoming a means for creating new forms of gender switching. Explicitly, it claims that mobile phones allow users to switch their gender identities to quickly "fill in" the person on the other end of the call when they are caught in the wrong location, and that users deploy gender switching to maintain social order. It also claims that mobile phones

5. Ann Light, "Negotiations in Space: The Impact of Receiving Phone Calls on the Move," in *The Reconstruction of Time and Space*, eds. Rich Ling and Scott W. Campbell (London: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 191-213.

6. Ling and Campbell, "Introduction," 11.

7. Larissa Hjort and Michael Arnold, *Online@AsiaPacific: Mobile, Social and Locative in the Asia-Pacific Region* (London: Routledge, 2013), 19.

8. Didem Özkul, "Placing Mobile Ethnography: Mobile Communication as a Practice of Placemaking," in *The Routledge Companion of Digital Ethnography*, eds. Larissa Hjort, Heather Horst, Anne Galloway, and Genevieve Bell (New York: Routledge, 2017), 6.

9. B. Maroon, "Mobile Sociality in Urban Morocco," in *The Cell Phone Reader: Essays in Social Transformation*, eds. Anandam Kavoori and Noah Arceneaux (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 189-203.

10. Donna Lee Bowen, Alexa Green, and Christiaan James, "Globalization, Mobile Phones and Forbidden Romance in Morocco," *The Journal of North African Studies* 13, 2 (2008): 227-41.

are not just objects. Rather they are "things" and constitute multi-vectored places or crossroads of intense activity.

This article draws on ethnographic research carried out between 2003 and 2012 on mobile phone use among skilled and semi-skilled urban micro-entrepreneurs, centered in a shantytown in the city of Mohammadia near Casablanca. This study examined the way in which the mobile is put to economic use to create and augment business opportunities and social networks. It also investigated daily calling practices of users by analyzing incoming and outgoing logs of voice calls, the proportion of personal and business voice calls, and trends of landline phone usage. In addition to the ethnographic practice of participant observation, I conducted in the summer of 2003 structured interviews using a questionnaire format with 32 informal micro-entrepreneurs that include plumbers, carpenters, electricians, tile laying masters, maids, and skilled construction workers.

This article begins by focusing upon mobile phone usage as it is structured through the Islamic principle of *khalwa* and the associated code of honor and shame. Revisiting Bourdieu's seminal analysis of the Berber Kabyle house, it seeks to situate the use of mobile phones within the domestic practices of gender switching. I revisit Bourdieu's classic structural analysis of the Berber Kabyle house to argue that mobile phone users are not only switching their gender identities to quickly "fill in" the person on the end of the call of their location when they are caught in the wrong location but they are also having to go to great lengths to make sure that the domestic space remains a one-dimensional patriarchical domain.

The Mobile Phone in the Context of the Islamic Doctrine of *Khalwa*, the Code of Honor and Shame, and Domestic Space

The telephone occupies an intriguing place in Muslim societies. In 2015, the number of mobile phone subscribers in Morocco reached 44.45 million with a penetration rate of 131 percent, while the number of landline users stood at 2.07 million with a penetration rate of 6.12 percent.[11] People distinguish two types of telephony: mobile phones called *hātif jawal* or *hātif naqqāl* (Arabic terms that literally mean roaming, moving, or traveling around telephones in the masculine); and fixed land lines called *hātif thābit* (an Arabic term that literally means a fixed telephone). In Arabic, the word *hātif* means telephone and it is also used for mobile phones. In the Middle East, mobile phones are referred to simply by the Arabized English term

11. Sarah Gyé-Jacquot, "44,45 millions d'abonnés mobile au Maroc en 2015," *TelQuel* (Rabat, Morocco), December 22, (2015): https://telquel.ma/2015/12/22/secteur-telecoms-poursuit-lancee_1475173.

al-moobile, and in North Africa, by the Arabized French term *al-portable*. The word *hatif* carries several meanings, for instance, "calling loudly from afar" but also "unseen man whose voice is heard," "a voice coming from an idol," "an audible voice without possessing a visible body," "an invisible caller," and a "mysterious voice."[12] According to Arab and Islamic traditions, Iblīs (the devil) disguised as the *hātif*, tempted Ali, Prophet Mohammad's son-in-law, ineffectively trying to stop him from ritually washing Prophet Mohammad's dead body.

In a Sunni Muslim context that spares no effort to erect strict boundaries between the sexes, the mobile phone is viewed as a menacing technology because it enables users to come into contact with the opposite sex and to break the established norms of gendered spaces. With the availability of mobile phones, it has become easier to connect and socialize with individuals with whom one has no kinship relationship. Thus, the use of the mobile phone has challenged, if not eroded, the effectiveness of the legal doctrine of *khalwa*. In Islamic theology, the legal doctrine of *khalwa* demands that individuals outside a *maḥram* relationship, meaning people one is not related to by marriage or blood ties, whether in private or in public, should have no contact with each other. This doctrine is significant in Islamic debates on gender and sex roles on- and off-line.

With the rapid uptake of mobile technologies throughout the Islamic world such as the mobile phone and other internet platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype; chat rooms, etc.), the doctrine of *khalwa* is also applied to containing contact with the opposite sex in cyberspace. Al-Qarradawi, a prominent Sunni Muslim scholar, who had a show on the Qatari-funded Al-Jazeera Network, argues that the justification behind gender separation and the banning of contact with the opposite sex can be explained as follows:

> "[It] is not a lack of trust in one or both of them; it is rather to protect them from wrong thoughts and sexual feelings which naturally arise within a man and a woman when they are alone together without the fear or intrusion by a third party person."[13]

In this view, the doctrine of *khalwa* covers mobile phone calls and texts, and, for that matter, any other technology-mediated communications, should be limited to necessary and emergency contacts, and should exclude non-

12. Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), 1193; Göran Larsson, *Muslims and the New Media: Historical and Contemporary Debates* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 128.

13. Quoted in Larsson, *Muslims and the New Media*, 30.

maḥram contacts. The ability of mobile phone users to connect and establish *invisible* contact with strangers, anywhere anytime, has elevated concerns about the old and traditional stability of gendered spaces. The presence of the mobile phone has made it hard to support the rules of *khalwa* and the code of honor and shame, and, at the same time, it has made it much easier for users to get involved in "veiled" romantic relationships and adventures, and to flirt or even date outside the edicts of the code of honor and shame, and without the approval of patriarchical authority.

In addition to the Islamic legal doctrine of *khalwa*, other ideological conventions of gender and sex are framed and reinforced within the code of honor and shame. The code of honor and shame denotes a feeling, a state of consciousness and a set of individualistic and collective behaviors or practices rooted in a repertoire of patriarchical and religious beliefs. Delaney notes that the code of honor and shame "covers a variety of terms, meanings, and practices" that can be thought of as "kind of genetic code – a structure of relations – generative of possibilities."[14] Abu-Lughod[15] refers to honor, known in Arabic as *al-sharaf*, as a "network of honor-linked values" which include freedom from domination, self-reliance and autonomy, self-control, loyalty to kin and friends, keeping one's word, tough manliness, fearlessness, pride, and generosity. *Ḥshūma* (or *'ayb*) in Arabic means shame, but it also means to show respect (*waqār*), honorable modesty, subdued feminity, and deference to one's elders and social superiors. A family becomes ashamed when a member is involved in improper conduct. Much of the improper comportment is understood as being of a sexual nature. A dishonorable man is one whose lifestyle suggests loose morality. A woman who goes out alone at night without the company of her relatives and carries out face-to-face, or phone conversations, with strangers can be seen as disreputable. Female modesty marks the boundary between honor and shame, and in public spaces women behave in a reserved manner. Dating, as practiced in the West, does not exist in most North African societies, although young men and women go to great lengths to meet in out-of-the-way places. Premarital sexuality is firmly controlled and legally sanctioned. Unlike women (for whom virginity is required at the time of their weddings), men tend to have greater sexual freedom, and it is not usually required of them to be virgin during their wedding ceremonies. Flueher-Lobban writes, "'[w]hat is honor?' is a question raised

14. Carol Delany, "Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame," in *Honor and Shame and Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed. David Gilmore (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 35.

15. Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

by Egyptian journalist Abeer Allam recalling how a high school biology teacher, sketching the female reproductive system and pointing to the vagina and said, 'This is where the family honor lies.'"[16]

Writing on the Kabyle Berbers of Algeria, Bourdieu locates the issue of gender and sexuality dynamics within wider social and spatial relations, and in the context of rules, customs, and taboos, associated with the code of honor and shame. Honor, Bourdieu writes,

> "Is the basis of the moral code of an individual who sees himself always through the eyes of others, who has need of others for his existence, because the image he has of himself is indistinguishable from that presented to him by other people."[17]

Hence, the dynamics of social honor take place within a setting invested with social exchanges consisting of a series of challenges and ripostes. Kabyles identify two reinforcing forms of honor: *nif,* or the male point of honor, and female *ḥurma* (that is sacred and off-limits to non-family members). *Ḥurma* defines roles and spatial positions of women within Berber society. *Nif*, "the sacred of the right hand," deals with masculinity, and activities involving public life, political exchanges, and religion, while *ḥurma*, "the sacred of the left hand," deals with femininity and sexuality, privacy, magic, and food.[18] For Bourdieu, proper female behavior and the privacy of the family are crucial structural elements in the shaping of gender and sex roles.

Elsewhere, Bourdieu provides a structuralist analysis of the Berber house. In this analysis, he explores issues related to how gendered spaces reflect status and power differentials between men and women, and he suggests that the code of honor and shame is inscribed into the built environment. He also makes the claim that architecture shapes and maintains private and public social relations as spatial ideologies. Bourdieu notes, "A vision of the world is the division of the world."[19] He argues that each division of the house is associated with rights according to a set of a series of balanced binary oppositions: "high/low, light/dark, day/night, male/female, *nif*/*ḥurma*, fertilizing/able to be fertilized.[20] This spatial division reflects a division of the

16. Carolyn Flueher-Lobban, *Islamic Societies in Practices* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 71.

17. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society," in *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, eds. John George Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 211.

18. Ibid., 222.

19. Pierre Bourdieu, The The Logic of Practice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990a), 210.

20. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Berber House or the World Reversed," in *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990b), 275.

world into male and female spaces. In contrast to the male public sphere and farm labor, the domestic space of women "is *ḥarām*, that is to say, both sacred and illicit for any man who is not part of it."[21] Bourdieu goes on to write:

> "The house, a microcosm organized by the same oppositions and homologies that order the whole universe, stands in a relation of homology to the rest of the universe. But, from another standpoint, the world of the house, taken as a whole, stands in a relation of opposition to the rest of the world, an opposition whose principles ar none other those that organize both the internal space of the house and the rest of the world and, more generally, all areas of existence."[22]

Bourdieu accepts the importance of binary oppositions that order the world of female life and the public world of men and claims that these opposing spatial areas ensure the social and economic viability of patriarchy. Hence, built environments are places of intense dialectical relationships between materiality and things in the context of such ideological conventions as honor and shame. As Bourdieu writes, "the most successful ideological effects are those which have no need of words and ask no more than complicitous silence."[23] Placemaking constitutes one of the most effective ideological effects. It seems that Bourdieu, while he was obviously writing within the structuralist tradition and, before the advent of the mobile phone, was predisposed to the view that categories of honor and shame imposed on the notion of placemaking in Algeria a sense of containment and enclosure. This, however, does not account for the long presence of French colonialism and the introduction of other "old" technologies such as radios, bicycles, mopeds, and cars, etc... Bourdieu's approach to the Berber house assumed place – and therefore placemaking – was bounded and fixed by norms of patriarchy, and by extension, by Islamic doctrines. But, what if the Berber house is leaking and involves invisible mobile phone callers whose ideas and interests clash with the restrictions of the code of honor and shame and the doctrine of *khalwa*? How do we make sense of the present-day patriarchal domestic home?

The Mobile Phone and Gender Switching

The mobile phone is "a lot of places and a lot of people" and, because of its networked capabilities, is not unlike Wi-Fi hot spots, in that it allows the mingling along, through, and around other places. The mobile empowered

21. Ibid., 275.
22. Bourdieu, "The Berber House or the World Reversed," 277.
23. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 188.

users to come in and out of different places with ease, and sometimes with calculated discretion, smuggling themselves and their places in and out, so to speak. This is not to suggest that the mobile is the first technology to do this. For example, before the arrival of the mobile phone, there was the sneaking in of the satellite dish cable into the Berber house. In the ethnographic vignette that opened this article, the thread or cable running from the satellite dish was referred to as Satan because of what it brought into the house. The house that everyone thought was a sealed and sacred abode has now been under siege from global satellite programming, and especially the featuring of *ḥarām* films, whose provenance was mysterious and strange. Respondents recalled memories of watching films on television at home, and, when kissing scenes or intimate moments flashed across the screen, everyone had to scramble for cover, as it were, and look for something else to do. To contain the effects of shameful and improper ideas associated with un-Islamic material on television, the patriarch would, in most cases, turn off the television, ask family members to close their eyes or look away until the scene passed or to leave the television area altogether, or pretend to be doing something else. In this context, non-roaming technologies, such as old satellite dishes could be manipulated and made to restore patriarchal morality and honor and shame order, even when it was clearly breached, and everyone involved felt ashamed and vulnerable to external leakages and forces.

However, with the mobile phone, something drastically different occurs. Mobile phones are full of places and people, roam invisibly, and get into and out of places with ease. In other words, the mobile phone stalks places and their inhabitants. When asked about the use of the mobile phone for developing or maintaining romantic relationships, one electrician, surprised by the question about sexual relations and, at first, embarrassed by such a direct question about sexual relations. Much later, he would admit that much of the use of new technologies deals with romantic and sexual pursuits. After he felt comfortable discussing romantic relationships, he said:

> "The mobile phone is the best manner for developing a romantic adventure. The people of the house or the neighborhood do not know who you are talking to or involved with. You use it for meeting the person you are interested in and nobody knows. The mobile makes it easier. All you need is a phone number and the mobile does the rest."

He went on to say:

> "If you were looking for a romantic partner […] the mobile makes it easy to initiate and manage the relationship, but, at the same time, you

have to be on guard all the time, and you have to know where your mobile is. You see, I cannot just leave it anywhere or trust anyone with it."

I asked, "why worry this much?" He responded, "the mobile is like hauling a thread with you all the time." I responded, "that allows you to stay on top of your relationships and movement at home, in the neighborhood, and in the city and wherever work might take you." He said, "all you said is correct but, look, the mobile is a trap too?" "A trap! What does trap mean?"

I inquired. He responded:

> "You see, during prayer time at home, you have to set it aside and you have to make sure that the people of the house do not know where it is or put it in silence because girlfriends might call on it. I should tell you that if you give your number to a girl and she calls you when you are at home, it is the essence of shame and awkwardness in front of the parents, my brothers and sisters. Last week, no, last month, a girl friend called me and I was at home. As you know, everyone can hear your conversation in our house so I turned the girl into a man and kept talking. I did not want my father and my mother to know that I was talking to a girl. Several workers do the same, and women involved in premarital relations do the same and turn men into women when they call them in their houses."[24]

Various authors have explored gender dynamics and moral panics generated by mobile phone use in the Global South. Archambault found, in Mozambique, that the mobile phone is as likely to become a tool for controlling women as it is for empowering them by redrawing gender and power dynamics.[25] Anderson found that "phone friendship" enable women in Papua New Guinea to expand their social networks and to escape traditional cross-gender relations. Similarly, Doron found that a woman's usage of the mobile phone in north India is "highly regulated by her husband and in-laws, but one that she is bound to have increasing access to as she rises in the household hierarchy over her life course."[26] Tacchi et al. warns against the over-emphasis on the economic effects of mobile phones in India and call for an account of the gender, class, and caste contexts in which technology operates.[27] They contend that while technology expands possibilities, it also

24. Ilahiane, "Fieldwork notes," 2012.

25. Julie Soleil Archambault, "Mobile phones and the "Commercialization" of Relationships: Expressions of Masculinity in Southern Mozambique," in *Gender and Modernity in Global Youth Cultures,* edited by Susan Dewey and Karen Bison (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 47-71.

26. Assa Doron, "Mobile Persons: Cell Phones, Gender and the Self in North India," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 13, 5 (2012): 430.

27. Jo Tacchi, Kathi Kitner, and Kate Crawford. "Meaningful Mobility: Gender, Development, and Mobile Phones," *Feminist Media Studies* 12, 4 (2012): 528-37.

exacerbates underlying gender, class, and caste inequalities. What remains largely unconsidered in the literature on mobile communication and the transgression of gender boundaries, however, are the ways in which mobile phones allow users, as revealed in the passage above, to temporarily switch their gender identities to quickly "fill in" the person on the end of the call when they are caught in the wrong place and situational context.

Gender switching allows individuals to restore the status quo between the sexes and to shield patriarchal morality from leakage threats. At the same time, however, mobile phone users know that to safeguard the foundations of patriarchy and honor, to preserve their "creative sociability," to avoid antagonizing them with a spatial and social reality they find limiting, it remains necessary for everyone involved to preserve appearances. The deployment of gender switching is an instance of a productive drive towards order within a social reality fraught with mutually exclusive and incommensurable cultural forms and spatial practices, or what Whitaker calls "amiable incoherence."[28] The pressures of "amiable incoherence" produce the deployment of momentary gender switching and *déplacement* into a networked oasis of conversation. It is there that the dichotomization of social and spatial forms is temporarily suspended and phone users carve up a sort of a conversational oasis (or hot spot), without actually exiting the spatial confines of the domestic home. This oasis (hot spot) is the site where opposed social and spatial forms of life are given a quick and transitory fix, and it is a crossroad of intimate, private, and public spaces, defined by creative sociability, it is the place where the world is leaked.[29]

This is important as one of the laborers kept referring to the mobile as Satan number 71. The description of the mobile phone as Satan number 71 is pertinent. In many ways, this description captures the angst over its invisible force, its ability to penetrate fixed places and to challenge and "revise" social and spatial boundaries. In a Muslim context, the word Satan conveys the idea of rebellion and enmity. Satan is of the *Jinn*, a species of living beings, meaning a spirit, or an invisible or hidden force possessing a certain amount of free will. It also denotes the idea of evil from all sides tempting men and women to commit improper behavior. In Islamic theology, Satan deceived Adam and Eve and made them eat from the forbidden tree. Adam and Eve felt shame and God removed them from Paradise and made them dwell on earth.[30]

28. Mark Whitaker, "Amiable and Agonistic Incoherence in Sri Lanka and the Tamil Diaspora," Paper presented at the American Ethnological Society Meetings. Washington, DC. April 1, 2016.

29. Bourdieu, "The Berber House or the World Reversed."

30. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an: Tarjamat ma'ānī al-Qur'ān al-karīm bi al-injliziyyah* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1999).

In our case, however, it seems that the mobile phone was put into a mode of creative sociability that took the form of fleeting moments of gender switching and *déplacement* while still in place – a place hemmed in by religious and social restrictions. The mobile phone users did not feel completely ashamed and were not removed from their networked oasis (or hot spot, so to speak). So, what then is place?

Conclusion by Way of Discussion: A Place is Like a Knot

Many scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds have researched the notions of space and place. Lefebvre[31] argues that spaces are not always containers of social and cultural production, but rather they are organized by cultural codes and symbolic meanings. He contends that space is always in a state of becoming. Similarly, Ingold,[32] whose writings and theorizing on place are derived from Lefebvre[33] and Heidegger,[34] argues against the binary opposition categories of culture versus nature, which suggests a clear-cut separation between the built and non-built environments. Ingold also takes issue with the notion that people have produced their cultural milieus from an empty natural space. Ingold writes, "something (…) must be wrong somewhere if the only way to understand our creative involvement in the world is by taking ourselves out of it." Rather he states that people are part and parcel of nature, and they are also "in the world."[35] He puts forward Heidegger's notion of dwelling, which refers to "the forms people build, whether in the imagination or on the ground, [and] arise within the current of their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagement with their surroundings."[36] He suggests that people are involved in their environments, not as outsiders, but as constituents of them. Furthermore, Ingold argues against the containment and enclosure that social scientists attach to the concept of place,[37] as in the case of Bourdieu, above. Ingold writes, "a place is a meshwork (…). Lives are not led inside places but through, around, to and from them, from and to places elsewhere […]. Human experience unfolds not in places but along paths […]. Places, then are like knots."[38] In other words, any given place is dependent on its mutually

31. H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

32. Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000).

33. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

34. Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

35. Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, 173.

36. Ibid., 186.

37. Tim Ingold, Bringing Things to Life: Creative Entanglements in a World of Materials," Working Paper #15 (2010): http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1306/1/0510_creative_entanglements.pdf.

38. Ibid., 13.

constituent parts and is dependent on its connectedness with other places. This also articulates the point that places are susceptible to leakage and discharge which may bring about their dissolution or trigger their evolution.

From this perspective, places mingle with each other and are understood as bounded but open and engaged in dialectics of power, freedom, and control. Ingold posits that places are caught up in multiple entanglements through which "the built environment is more archi-textural" than architectural."[39] Similarly, Massey refers to these social and spatial dynamics as "the thrown togetherness" of place, the "event" of place.[40] In this context, my ethnographic analysis of the domestic home demonstrates the entanglement of mobile phones, cultural and religious codes, and domestic and public places, both on the ground and on the mobile phone, are never circumscribed places but are always is a state of flux and movement. The mobile phone "gathers everything," is "a lot of places and a lot of people," and in the words of Ingold, it embodies the notion of it being a "thing" rather than an object: it is "a place laborers go to," "a place that brings work," "a saint, a shrine, a mosque," "a café," "a soccer pitch on the beach," "a watching and surveillance area," "a reputation," "a *qibla* (direction Muslims turn to at prayer)," "an invisible agent or *jinn*," "a feeling, an emotion," and a short-lived romantic parking spot. It is where places meet and crisscross each other, and move on to other things. These "lots of places and lots of people" leak and discharge into other places they happen to come into contact with, and, in the process, they shape and are shaped by these places, too. The mobile phone meddling, while emanating from a powerful and invisible origin, has the capability to run through, around, and along spatial and social checkpoints with ease, yet it has to yield to the prescriptions of the code of honor and shame and religious injunctions. This caving in, which takes the form of gender switching tele-cocooning, however, allows for the stretching of time, and, at the same time, gives a new lease of life to the ideological conventions governing patriarchy and the doctrine of *khalwa*. With the mobile phone, there are no far-reaching ruptures of the social and the spatial; there are only slits that can be quickly stitched. In this context, my findings confirm to a certain extent the insight of Ito et al.,[41] which states that mobile phones stitch various places and cover a heterogeneous set of social, geographical, and spatial contexts, leading to the formation of what they call tele-cocooning. In my case, cocooning occurs,

39. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 117-8; Tim Ingold, "Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge," in *Boundless Worlds: An Anthropological Approach to Movement*, ed., P. W. Kirby, 29-44 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 34.

40. Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 181.

41. Ito et al., *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian*.

but it takes the form of gender switching in the context of a conversation oasis that call receivers perceive as a danger to the logic of patriarchy and the code of honor. Call makers as well as call receivers deploy gender switching to shield the status quo from further and deeper leakage and discharge instigated by the continuous mingling, the movement of places and people, and the challenges to traditional boundaries that these things permit.

Finally, in a Heideggerian sense, mobile technology, like other technologies before it, has *revealed* other aspects of the domestic home, and has shown that the Moroccan house is not impervious to technologically mediated influences. This demonstrates, once again, that our dwellings, whether imagined or on the ground, represent unpredictable physical and social locations. Mobile phones reveal how distance shapes location and gender roles on the fly in fundamental ways. In using mobile phones, while Moroccans cannot free themselves from conflict and antagonism in predictable locations, they are empowered to quickly reverse their gender roles on the phone, which, in turn, transforms the phone itself into a shielded location of an otherwise shared domestic space. Additionally, in revealing fleeting moments of gender reversal and place malleability, mobile phones not only succeed in affirming ordinary social and spatial relations, but also in exposing place and its moral demarcations as fundamentally unpredictable, volatile sites.

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الهواتف المحمولة وعلاقتها بصناعة الجنس والمكان في المغرب

ملخص: أتفحص في هذا المقال، كيفية استخدام المغاربة للهواتف المحمولة كطريقة لإعادة صياغة قضايا النوع الاجتماعي والشرف والعار وصناعة المكان. وفي اعتقادي أن وسائل الاتصال المتنقلة تتيح إمكانية وجود المسافة، فتصبح وسيلة لا تقدر بثمن لعكس وتعليق الأدوار العادية للجنسين ولممارسات صناعة المكان. وأذهب إلى القول على وجه التحديد، أن الهواتف المحمولة لا تسمح للمستخدمين فقط بتبديل هوياتهم الجنسية من أجل "تقمص" الشخصية بسرعة في نهاية المكالمة عندما يتم ضبطهم في المكان أو في السياقات الظرفية الخطأ، ولكنها تسمح لهم أيضًا بالتأكد من أن الفضاء الداخلي يظل مجالًا أبويًا أحادي البعد بامتياز. وفي رأيي أيضًا أن الهواتف المحمولة ليست مجرد أدوات؛ بل بالأحرى عبارة عن "أشياء،" تشكل في الوقت ذاته أماكن متعددة الاتجاهات. ومن خلال محاولتها إلقاء الضوء على التنقل، وإمكانية اختراق المكان، وانعكاسات النوع الاجتماعي، تعزز هذه المقالة خلاصات التحليلات الحديثة لتكنولوجيا الهاتف المحمول في علاقاته مع الجنس ومختلف أشكال الحضور في الزمان والمكان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهواتف المحمولة، الجنس، المكان، المغرب.

Téléphones portables, création/suppression du genre et place à la volée au Maroc

Résumé: Dans cet article, j’examine comment les Marocains utilisent les téléphones portables pour recadrer les questions de genre, d’honneur de la honte, et de la création de lieux. Je soutiens que la communication mobile d’avoir permet la distance, devenant un véhicule inestimable pour inverser et suspendre les rôles de genre ordinaires et les pratiques de création de lieux. Précisément, j’assume que les téléphones mobiles ne permettent pas seulement aux utilisateurs de changer d’identité de genre pour “s’approprier” rapidement le personnage à la fin de l’appel lorsqu’ils sont pris au mauvais endroit et dans le mauvais contexte, mais ils leur permettent également de s’assurer que l’espace domestique reste un domaine patriarcal unidimensionnel. Je soutiens également que les téléphones portables ne sont pas que des objets. Ce sont plutôt des “choses” et qui constituent aussi des lieux multi-vectoriels. En jetant des lumières sur la mobilité, la porosité des lieux et les inversions de genre, cet article a pour objet d’approfondir les analyses récentes de la technologie mobile, du genre, de la présence et du lieu.

Mots-clés: Téléphones portables, genre, lieu, Maroc.