

The core subject of this thesis deals with a theme of sociocultural change among the Ait Mizane, a small Berber community in the Moroccan High Atlas mountains. Living in a remote region with typical harsh climate they were throughout history known as free people who were never subordinated to any kind of central rule irrespective of them being Romans, Spaniards or Arabs. This long period of considerable isolation slowly ended with the advent of French rule, who took over the country proclaiming it as their colony and fitting the local reality within the frame of colonial administration. But more dramatic shifts were yet to come. Silk-like fibres of globalization are nowadays entering this area forming a firm web that spreads all around. Ait Mizane people, Berber speaking farmers and herders occupy an environment they have shaped for centuries; There is a strong sense of identity which is very much linked to the cultural environment mastered by generations of their predecessors. The relationships they maintained with other mountain tribes as well as with city dwellers surpassed the test of time and fit the context of Muslim cultural milieu. Ancient strategies and traditions are still dominant ones and still determine the peoples' live with great power, but at the same time innovation occurs with an intensity no one could predict a few years ago. Inhabitants of innumerable settlements whose homeland is situated just at the gate to the Atlas' highest peak – Jebel Toubkal – are exposed to this challenge of modern time predominantly via the increasing numbers of tourists who come in order to accomplish the mission of climbing the sharp mountain peaks. Side effects of such occurrences are hardly to be denied and examining their impact is a goal of this paper. Another important factor that contributes to the gradual social transformation is the phenomenon of out-migration.