

Conclusions

11.1. Evolution and causes of migration from the Todgha

11.1.1. Development breeds migration

Until French colonization of the Maghreb, the livelihoods of oasis dwellers in the Todgha valley used to be primarily based on subsistence agriculture. Barter with nomadic tribes, long-distance trade, and traditional forms of seasonal and circular migration formed sources of additional income. The Todgha valley belonged to the so-called *bled es-siba*, the hinterland of present-day Morocco that was largely controlled by autonomous tribes and where the state had only a marginal influence.

Colonization radically changed the development context of the Todgha valley. On the one hand, it entailed the end of tribal autonomy and the demise of traditional economic systems, trans-Saharan trade, and nomad-peasant trade relations. State formation and border demarcation further led to the disintegration of ancient trade networks and undermined nomadic lifestyles. On the other hand, these political-economic transformations created new livelihood opportunities within, but in particular outside, the valley through labor migration. Colonization and the concomitant incorporation of the politically largely autonomous Todgha valley into the context of the modern state and the capitalist economy as well as improved transport links and banking systems dramatically increased the scope for modern forms of remittance-based labor migration. This process radically reshaped the social, cultural, economic, and political context in which traditional migration took place, and triggered what we might—reminiscent of Zelinsky (1971)—call the “mobility transition” of the Todgha.

Besides a consequence of changes in the macro-context which have increasingly enabled people to earn an additional income elsewhere, migration has also played an independent role in intensifying links with the outside world and further embedding the valley in wider political, economic, and social structures. Whereas infrastructural development and increased opportunities of wage labor in other parts of the country and abroad increased the opportunities for labor migration, socio-cultural changes—triggered by the exposure to migrants’ wealth, increased schooling, and media exposure—“mobilized” the mindsets of Todghawi, increasing their aspirations and their actual propensity to migrate. This refutes the popular view that poverty and underdevelopment are the root causes of labor migration. This seems in line with the premises of transitional migration theory, which predict that development, in its initial stages, tends to lead to an increase of out-migration instead of the reverse.

The analysis also showed the need to extend views on migration and development beyond strictly material dimensions, which have been the usual focus of transitional models.

Increased access to education and information are constituent components of development, since they, besides increased wealth, also tend to increase the capabilities of people. Besides their capabilities-enhancing role, such types of development (better education, knowledge of other societies) also tend to increase the aspirations of people, leading them to migrate in order to fulfill these aspirations. This aspirations dimension should be analytically distinguished from the migration-enabling role of infrastructural improvements, better knowledge, and increased incomes. The fundamental point is that processes of social and economic development tend to be correlated, and both seem to reinforce processes of out-migration.

11.1.2. Evolution, clustering, and persistence of migration

The “mobility transition” of the Todgha started at the end of the nineteenth century, when increasing number of Todghawis started to migrate to neighboring Algeria—a French colony since 1830—where they worked as wage laborers for French *colons*. To a certain extent, this early form of “modern” migration associated with capitalist development and colonization was an extension of earlier forms of seasonal and circular migration within Morocco. In the colonial era (1912-1956), internal migration was largely oriented towards the swelling cities on Morocco’s Atlantic coast (notably Rabat-Salé), whereas most international migrants continued to go to Algeria.

In the post-colonial era, opportunities for both internal and international migration further expanded. After Algerian independence in 1963, international migration flows shifted to France. It was in the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, that the great Moroccan migration boom took place. For the Todgha valley this was the “Golden Age” of migration. Rapid economic growth in France—but also in other northwestern European countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany—attracted an increasing number of “guestworkers”, either through direct labor recruitment, or, increasingly, through spontaneous settlement. This sudden migration boom marked the definitive incorporation of the Todgha valley into the Mediterranean-European migration system, and the foundations were laid for the permanent establishment of Todghawi communities in Europe.

The 1980s and 1990s were characterized by a diversification of migration strategies as well as destinations. The recruitment freeze and increasingly restrictive immigration policies following the 1973 Oil Crisis and the economic downturn in Europe did not have the intended result of stopping migration. The recruitment freeze had the “perverse” effect of stimulating permanent settlement of migrants in Europe and subsequent family migration. Since 1973, family reunification and, in the 1990s, family formation have become the dominant forms of migration to northwestern Europe. Family migration often serves as a form of labor migration “in disguise”, through which households maintain their stakes in the international migration market over the generations.

This exemplifies the importance of migrant networks (a form of social capital) in explaining why once-started migration movements tend to gain their own momentum over time. The expatriate networks of Todghawis clearly played a facilitating role in perpetuating migration from the valley between 1975 and 2000. The increasing reliance on family migration—either through family reunification, family formation, or relay migration—has been one of the strategies through which migration to Europe has continued. This coincides with a growing awareness in the literature on “transnationalism” that links between migrants and “stay-behinds” may be far more persistent (over time and generations) than was assumed in the 1970s and 1980s.

Another consequence of restrictive European immigration policies has been a significant increase in undocumented migration. Another development was an increasing diversification of migration destinations in the period 1980-2000, in which Italy and particularly Spain emerged as new destination countries for both legal and undocumented migrants.

Rural-to-urban migration further increased in the post-colonial era to the detriment of the historically-rooted seasonal migration of harvest workers, for instance to the Middle Atlas. Since then, internal migration has continued and is becoming increasingly generalized. In the 1990s, this internal migration seems increasingly oriented towards the medium-sized towns instead of the large cities, whose growth seems to be slowing. An increasing number of rural-to-urban migrants end up settling permanently in the cities, thereby breaking with traditional patterns of predominantly circular migration.

The fact that half of the surveyed active male population has been, or is involved in either internal or international migration indicates the pervasive character of this phenomenon in the Todgha. Current international labor migrants accounted for 6 percent of the total population of the Todgha in 1998, a percentage that largely remained stable between 1970 and 2000. This exemplifies the unforeseen persistence of international migration.

There has been a remarkable degree of stability in the activity patterns of migrants over the past decades. Besides a minority of civil servants and professional private sector workers, a large majority of internal and international migrants are working in unskilled jobs in the construction and service sector. Over the 1980s and 1990s, student migration became an increasingly important form of migration, which is closely interwoven with and functionally related to internal as well as international labor migration.

In line with migration systems theory, migration flows tended to be spatially clustered. There are significant differences between the research villages in spatial orientation of migration. Migrants originating from the same village often predominantly live in one or two specific cities (or even quarters) in Morocco or in Europe. Within Morocco, large cities such as Rabat/Salé, but recently also Marrakech, Agadir, and the boomtowns in the Rif area (in particular Nador) have attracted many Todghawi. In Europe, the urban areas around Montpellier, Nice, Paris (France), and, to a lesser extent, Amsterdam (the Netherlands) have typically attracted many Todghawi.

11.1.3. Flows, counterflows, and the weaknesses of “push-pull”

It is a key observation of this study that internal and international migration tend to be positively correlated “communicating vessels”. Especially in the longer term, they are complementary, mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive or negatively correlated phenomena. Internal and international migration tend to occupy distinct places in the household life cycle. Internal migration, which involves less risks and opportunity costs, tends to function as a precursor to international migration. Internal migration tends to shape the mental, social, and material conditions for international migration. International migration may lead to internal migration through its effects on family relocation, student migration, and urban-based investments. Both internal and international migration are reciprocally related as constituent parts of the same general development process leading—in its social, cultural, and economic dimensions—to a general increase in mobility. This further corroborates the validity of transitional migration theory.

Regarding the high population growth over the second half of the twentieth century, permanent out-migration (e.g., through family reunification at the destination) from the valley

has been largely counterbalanced by natural population growth, return migration, and immigration. People are not only leaving the valley, but the Todgha, and its urban center of Tinghir in particular, has also become an increasingly important destination for migrants from other regions in southern Morocco. Furthermore, there are distinct patterns of intra-valley migration explained by spatially differentiated economic and infrastructural development across the valley. In net terms, migration has not creamed off the valley's population, due to the countervailing effects of migration to the valley. Thus, out-migration has not put an absolute "labor drain" on the Todgha.

In the Todgha, internal and international out-migration and immigration occur simultaneously, and seem to be part of the same process. Therefore, theoretical perspectives that divide regions and countries into (peripheral) sending and (central) destination areas do not necessarily reflect the complex, multi-layered spatial reality of migration systems. In fact, it is not possible to classify a region like the Todgha as either an "emigration" or an "immigration" region. It is both. Apparently, there are forces at work that simultaneously "push" some people to leave the valley as much as "pull" other people to move to the valley. The simultaneous occurrence of migration from and towards the Todgha can be explained by regional differences in relative access to social, human, and material resources or "capitals" enabling people to migrate, as well as spatial differences in aspiration levels.

It therefore seems to make little sense to explain migration between particular areas by a set of static "pushes" and "pulls". This is not only because push and pull factors are generally mirrored in each other, but also because such explanations tend to ignore that needs are not constant, but determined by people's perceptions and aspirations. Push-pull models typically fail to explain how a region can both send and receive migrants, and why migrants return.

11.1.4. Migration selectivity and the "downside" of social capital

Transitional migration theory is linked to the notion of the selectivity of migration: a certain threshold of "development" is necessary for people to have the aspirations and be able to assume the costs and risks of migrating. The fact that the more isolated and poorer Aït 'Atta villages of the lower Todgha started to massively participate in processes of internal and international migration far later than the Aït Todoght—who were incorporated into modern migration systems at an earlier stage—seems to confirm this hypothesis.

It has also been commonly hypothesized that migrants tend to be the relatively wealthy and better-educated members of a community. In line with these predictions, international Todgha migrants generally do not come from the poorest (i.e., landless) households. Nevertheless, the association between land possession and international migration participation is weak and only significant for the difference between international and internal migrants. Furthermore, the fact that international migrants from the Todgha are generally not better educated than nonmigrants of the same age refutes the second part of this hypothesis. Although the mean level of education among migrants has significantly increased in the past decades, this seems primarily the result of a general increase in education, not of a change in selectivity. Unexpectedly, the study revealed that internal labor migration from the Todgha is *positively* selective for education, due to its relationship with student migration and the fact that most job opportunities for higher educated people are found in the large towns and cities.

The non-selective character of international migration with regards to education is probably related to the fact that international labor migrants work in unskilled jobs, have been

recruited directly and that, in the past, a certain level of education was even ground for recruiters to reject prospective migrants. European employers generally preferred illiterate, docile, and hard workers. However, this cannot explain why recent and young international migrants are not significantly better educated than nonmigrants. What might play a role here is that the likelihood of international migration seems to be increasingly determined by the largely kinship-based access to migration networks and a certain level of material wealth, and that education only plays a secondary role in determining an individual's ability to migrate abroad.

Network theory predicts that the costs and risks of migration will fall over time due to the facilitating role established migrant communities play in the migration of other community members. In this way, migration becomes less selective over time and migration experience is diffused throughout communities. However, the hypothesis that migration tends to become less selective over time due to the growing importance of network effects is not sustained by the survey data. Over the past decades, selectivity has remained largely constant. This is related to the limited extent to which migration has spread through communities beyond the boundaries of families and lineages (*ighsan*) involved in international migration.

Due to the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of European countries, access to international migration resources is increasingly based on kinship. Positive network effects therefore remain largely limited to the boundaries of the individual's own family and lineage. This phenomenon is reinforced by the traditional preference for consanguineous marriage, through which "migration capital" is monopolized within the same kinship groups. Therefore, in the Todgha, migration networks can be to the advantage of people belonging to the same family or *ighs*, but seem to be exclusionary for people not belonging to such groups, clearly representing a dimension of the so-called "downside of social capital" (cf. Portes and Landolt 1996). Thus, kinship-based access to migrant networks also coincides with structural inequality in access to such networks.

Thus, although our general hypothesis that development initially tends to boost migration seems to hold in general, it is, however, important to bear in mind that the migration-enabling impact of "development" is disparate across communities because the latter are internally stratified.

The analysis also revealed the inherently dynamic nature of migration systems. Due to economic-geographical and political changes at the macro-level, there has been a partial shift in spatial orientation of migration from the Todgha. Nor does migration automatically tend to lead to increased geographical clustering, as is predicted by migration systems theory. For instance, the recent and unexpected migration of many Aït 'Atta to Spain illustrates the other, more volatile and unpredictable side of migration.

This all points to the limitations of the circular logic of migration systems and network theories, in which migration seems to go on *ad infinitum*. Such theories do not specify what external, structural factors as well as internal processes counteract the alleged self-reinforcing tendencies leading to falling costs and risks, decreasing selectivity, increasing migration, and increasing spatial clustering of migration flows.

11.2. Migration as a strategy to diversify and improve livelihoods

Chapter 7 demonstrated that internal and international migration should be seen as an integral part of the general process of the integration of the Todgha into the Moroccan state and the capitalist economy, which have enabled livelihood diversification among oasis households. Through the expanding opportunities to earn a monetary income elsewhere, and the new

possibility to remit part of the money back via banking systems, many oasis households have been increasingly able to pursue multi-local livelihoods and diversify their income portfolio. Nowadays, most Todghawi households have been in some way affected by international and internal migration. Many households count two or three generations of migrants. More than 40 percent of all the surveyed households are involved in international migration and 25 percent in internal migration, and several households are involved in both types simultaneously. Only one third of all households have not been directly affected by some kind of migration.

Increasing labor migration has coincided with the increasing multi-activity and multi-locality of contemporary oasis livelihoods, in which we can witness a general diversification and partial de-agrarization of activity patterns, especially among young men. Although agriculture remains important as a source of cash and in-kind income, its role has changed from being the pillar of the oasis economy to now being just one of the many sources of income. Nowadays, there are only very few oasis households that base their livelihoods on agricultural resources only. This corroborates the general point raised by Bebbington (1999:2021) that we should cease to “crunch rural livelihoods into the category of agricultural and natural resource-based strategies”.

The increasingly restrictive European immigration policies interrupted the traditionally circular character of migration from the Todgha. Family reunification heralded this shift from circular to more or less permanent migration, turning the intended *partir pour rester* (cf. Heinemeijer *et al.* 1977) into *partir pour quitter* (cf. De Mas 1990; Kagermeier 1997) for many migrants and their households.

However, maintaining strong social and financial links with “home”, these transnationally operating “permanent” migrants still play a crucial role in sustaining the Todgha economy and in general development in migrant sending areas. This manifests itself in remittance transfers to family members, the existence of “indirect” migrant households, and the high incidence of transnational marriages with second and third generation migrants’ children. Therefore, family reunification does not imply that linkages with the Todgha are cut, as classical models of “migrant integration” predicted. On the contrary, there is an unexpectedly high degree of “transnational” and intergenerational commitment.

This study has shown that international migration has greatly contributed to improving many people’s standard of living in the Todgha valley. Largely due to the effect of remittances, current, indirect, and returned international migrant households tend to earn far higher and more stable incomes than nonmigrant and internal migrant households. They also tend to live in significantly better conditions in regard to housing and basic luxuries. This corroborates the hypothesis of the new economics of labor migration that migration is a household livelihood strategy to not only diversify and spread income risks, but also to increase income, which enables households to improve living conditions and well-being. This is the first way in which (international) migration has contributed to development in the Todgha.

International migration has enabled many Todgha households to durably improve the “material” dimension of their livelihoods. This direct impact of migration on people’s living conditions should not be dismissed as “non-developmental”, as has been the case in much of the migration and development literature. From a capabilities perspective, consumption and so-called “non-productive investments” that enable people to be better housed, well fed, healthier, and decently clothed all endow people with a greater sense of well-being and increased freedom to take their fate into their own hands. They should therefore be considered as developmental. Although international migrant households are the prime beneficiaries of remittances, other households seem to have benefited in an indirect way through employment creation and income multiplier effects set in motion by migrants’ consumption and

investments. It is difficult to imagine what the Todgha would have been like without migration, but most households would probably be far worse off than they are today.

Cumulative causation theory and structuralist theoretical perspectives on migration and development tend to see dependency on the outside world as a negative phenomenon that undermines the local economy and leads migrant households to retreat from local economic activities. Nevertheless, such an “impressionist” image of the Todgha as a region more or less passively relying on migrant remittances is unmistakably erroneous. Firstly, although remittances constitute an important source of cash income, they represent “only” one third of total income of the surveyed households. Secondly, and more importantly, international migrant households tend not to rely solely on remittances and subsequently withdraw from other, local economic activities, but instead tend to continue or even extend the number of economic sectors in which they are active. They also tend to have higher non-migratory incomes than other households. Thus, labor migration from the Todgha should not be interpreted as an “under-developing” flight from misery, but rather as an investment in a potentially better future.

It would also be erroneous to depict migration as the one and only cause of livelihood changes as such. Rather than the independent cause of livelihood diversification, migration seems to be part of a broader strategy of oasis households to diversify and improve their livelihoods. Migration is an integral part of a broader process of political, infrastructural, economic, and social integration of the Todgha valley into a changing national and international context, and the concomitant increasing flows of products (e.g., trade), money (e.g., remittances), people (migration), and information (e.g. education, the media revolution) between the Todgha and the outside world. However, it is in particular through migration that these mutually reinforcing processes associated with “globalization” have materialized and become tangible for the average oasis dweller. In many respects, migration has literally brought the Todghawis into the modern world and the modern world to the Todgha.

11.3. Migration and investments

11.3.1. Migration, remittances, and the propensity to invest

The most important conclusion of this thesis is that households with access to international migration resources (remittances) exhibit a significantly higher propensity to invest in the Todgha than other households. This corroborates the central hypothesis of NELM that migration is a livelihood strategy not only serving to diversify the household’s income portfolio and increase income and general well-being, but also to overcome local (economic, social, cultural, and institutional) constraints. This enables households to invest in local economic activities and the education of their children, and, hence, to further improve and secure their livelihoods. Although this is true for any investment category, international migrants tend to invest particularly in housing, education, and agriculture. The research revealed that international migrant households do not generally “waste” excessive amounts of disposable income on “conspicuous” consumption, but are, instead, very prudent in deciding how to invest their money.

There is only a small difference in the investment priorities of indirect, current, and return migrant households. Thus, the main dividing line is between households with and without access to international migration resources. The fact that current (i.e., absent) migrants exhibit a relatively high propensity to invest refutes common hypotheses that

returned migrants are the prime investors. This indicates that migration impact studies should not only focus on return migrants, as has generally been the case. The physical absence of the migrants does not have to prevent households from investing locally. This highlights the fact that household livelihoods have become increasingly multi-local and that migrants are increasingly operating (living, traveling, loving, communicating, thinking, consuming, and investing) on a “transnational” basis. Households do not have to concentrate their livelihood activities either at the origin or at the destination. It can well be both.

The explicit intention of most migrants is to eventually return in order to build a future for themselves and their families in the Todgha. Although international migrants in particular often end up settling at their destination, this more or less permanent character of migration does not necessarily imply that social and economic ties with the Todgha are cut. Among the first generation especially, the orientation towards the community of origin tends to remain strong. Even if they do not return, many current international migrants tend to invest, either directly or indirectly, by financially assisting kin living in “indirect” international migrant households.

Another key observation is that international migrant households exhibit a higher propensity to invest even when controlling for income. This means that the higher propensity of international migrant households to invest cannot exclusively be explained by their substantially higher incomes. Nor do the supposedly more entrepreneurial attitudes of international migrants form a major explanation, as indirect international migrants—who have never been abroad—exhibit an equal propensity to invest as current and returned migrants. We can therefore hypothesize that the main factor explaining this “above-income effect” of migration is that their incomes are not only higher, but also tend to be more stable and secure than is the case for laborers in Morocco. Many international migrants have access to European social security systems and have generally insured their future income through pension rights. This seems to make them more prone and less hesitant to take investment risks.

Within a capabilities perspective on development, we can say that access to international migration resources has expanded the freedoms and capabilities of household members by enhancing the substantive choices they have in life. Most oasis households have been able to free themselves from the imperative to be agriculturally self-sufficient. International migration has liberated numerous Todghawis from the obligation to “slave away” from dawn till dusk in agriculture and household activities. This decrease in workload and increase in free time are valuable in themselves, as long as this does not imply frustrating, unintentional inactivity. Moreover, this gives people the freedom to concentrate on more valuable or productive work and to better educate their children. Constituting a high and stable and secure source of income, international remittances have greatly increased the “degrees of freedom” households have in shaping their own (future) livelihood through opting for particular activities and investments according to their own preferences.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that these direct positive developmental effects have remained largely limited to households with access to international migration resources. As the incomes of internal migrants are generally low and insecure, migration generally does not allow them to make significant capital investments. Their investment behavior therefore does not significantly deviate from nonmigrant households, with the notable exception of investment in education. Internal migrants’ spouses, who generally become the *de facto* household heads, tend to live emotionally and physically arduous and materially insecure lives. Among internal migrant households, education of their children (e.g., the second oldest son becoming a school teacher while his older brother works in town) is the main (human capital) investment strategy through which they attempt to secure and stabilize future livelihoods.

Therefore, from a NELM perspective, the main rationale behind internal migration seems to be the diversification of the household's income portfolio. Moreover, settlement in cities increases the chance of finding better paid jobs and obtaining financial, social, and informational means to eventually "leapfrog" to Europe. Although some manage to find good jobs or migrate abroad, migration remains a "survival strategy" for most internal migrants. Trying to keep their head above water, many are not able to durably improve their livelihoods, as their (informal) jobs are too insecure and their salaries too low.

11.3.2. Sectoral allocation of investments and temporal dimensions

The analysis of the temporal allocation of investments confirmed the hypothesis that sectoral investment preferences tend to change over time, and that the full developmental effects of migration take decades to fully materialize. Investments in housing construction occur relatively early in the "migration cycle" (reaching their peak 5-15 years after departure) as do those in basic luxury and education. Major agricultural investments, such as land and pump purchase, mostly occur 15-25 years after migration. Investments in private businesses follow a more irregular pattern, but tend to reach a peak 25-30 years after migration.

This empirical evidence largely reflects the hypothesized sequence depicted in table 2.1 in chapter 2. In the first years after migration, migrant households tend to concentrate on fulfilling primary needs such as nutrition, health, debt repayment, and investments in education. We have also argued that these initial expenditure preferences are perfectly logical from a capabilities point of view. People's primary aim is to live in decent conditions, to be well fed, healthy, and to educate their children. In material terms, education is the most accessible investment strategy for households to improve future livelihoods. Besides housing, investments in children's "human capital" tend to be considered as a household "life insurance" by the respondents.

When the immediate needs are fulfilled, possible debts have been paid off, and a certain level of job and income security has been assured, most migrant households tend to invest in the construction of a new house and purchase items such as basic consumer durables and household appliances. Investments in more risky and costly commercial enterprises (agriculture, large-scale housing, commerce, and so on), generally occur only in the longer term, after the most basic necessities have been fulfilled. Only, that is, if migrants do not decide to depart once and for all, an event which is usually heralded by family reunification at the destination. The extent to which investments occur, and *where* and in which sector they are allocated, however, depends on household income and the specific local development context.

The short-term impact of migration might in some cases indeed be a temporary retreat from economic activities at the origin. However, in the longer term migrant households tend to be economically more active and invest more in local economic sectors than nonmigrants, even when controlling for income. This corroborates other empirical evidence that over time there tends to be a pattern first of negative and then of positive effects of migration on non-remittance income in migrant sending households (Taylor *et al.* 1996:405).

This all adds to the idea that it is mainly in communities with a relatively long-standing, rather "mature" tradition of international migration, that migration pays off in terms of investments. This "lagged investment response" to migration seems to apply even more to business enterprises, as these are mainly concentrated in the hands of return migrants. Consequently, also the indirect positive (employment and income multiplier) effects of international migration on households without direct access to international migration (i.e.,

indirect international migrant, nonmigrant and internal migrant households) only tends to fully materialize after at least three decades, when the “household migration cycle” reaches its end.

This implies that the developmental impact of migration can only be fully assessed when migration matures, that is, after several decades of sustained out-migration. This suggests that the rather pessimistic conclusion by prior research into migrant sending areas in Morocco can partly be explained by the fact that most of these studies were conducted relatively early after the onset of large-scale migration to Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since then, attention has largely shifted to “integration” issues at the destination, thereby largely losing sight of the positive long-term impact of international migration on development in many migrant sending areas.

11.4. Migration and economic-geographical transformations

11.4.1. The pioneering role of migrants in agricultural transformations

The analysis has demonstrated that the growing importance of remittances and local non-agricultural income as well as the “culture of migration” has not led to a retreat from oasis agriculture—as is generally assumed in the literature—but that international migration has instead contributed to the increasing productivity of agriculture. Instead of draining the Todgha of its productive forces, migration has played a developmental role by enabling agricultural investments, such as the purchase of motorpumps, land, cattle, as well as the increase and intensification of production through the use of fertilizers, pesticides, HYV seeds, and the partial mechanization of ploughing and threshing. This clearly contradicts the pessimistic cumulative causation theory and structuralist visions of migration and development.

International migration households not only tend to invest more, but have also played a pioneering role in the intensification of agriculture in the ancient oasis and the creation of new agricultural extensions in the lower Todgha. This process has been primarily enabled by the installation of motor pumps. The irony is that while the socio-cultural and emancipatory effects of migration have contributed to the breakdown of traditional village institutions regulating the maintenance of traditional, collective irrigation systems (e.g., *khettaras*), the same migration process and the concomitant remittance inflows have enabled peasants to switch to pump-based agriculture and to create a new green frontier in the desert.

Agriculture in the lower Todgha increasingly relies on water pumps. This development has been provoked by the decline of *khettaras* on the one hand, and the creation of recent agricultural extensions on the other, and has been facilitated by the influx of international remittances to a great extent. Nevertheless, the increasing reliance on capital-intensive pumping in the lower Todgha has contributed to the partial or entire exclusion of poor households from access to traditional *khettara* water resources and, thus, to increasing agricultural inequality. The transition towards more capital-intensive, pump-based agriculture coincides with increasingly selective access to water, and may in the future lead to a concentration of “water power” in a decreasing number of hands. Thus, the poorest households emerge as losers from this water game.

The major drawback of the boom in motor pumping is the threat it constitutes for the sustainability of oasis agriculture. Increasing pumping competition and falling water tables might—in the absence of government intervention, failing law enforcement, and the general

legal vacuum characterizing land and water management—endanger the ecological and economic sustainability of oasis agriculture. The anarchic, largely uncontrolled growth of motor pumping threatens to lead to the depletion of vital water resources.

The incidence of fallow land is highest among nonmigrant households, which seems to contradict the pessimistic “lost labor” hypothesis. It is poverty rather than migration *per se* that forces some internal migrant and nonmigrant households to withdraw partly or entirely from agriculture in villages where water is nowadays only accessible through pumping. The counterflow of remittances enables current international migrant households to compensate for the so-called “lost labor effect” by hiring paid agricultural laborers during agricultural peak seasons and for typically “male” agricultural tasks (e.g., tillage, irrigation), maintenance work, and well-digging. After family reunification and the factual disappearance of the household from the valley, land and other assets are normally entrusted to *ikhmmesen* (sharecroppers) or family members.

The fundamental weakness of the “lost labor” hypothesis, as formulated by cumulative causation and structuralist migration theory, seems to be its static nature, as it implicitly assumes a fixed labor supply, and does not take into account the possibility of hiring “external” labor. It ignores that (1) other household members may take over agricultural tasks; (2) land can be entrusted to *ikhmmesen* or family members; (3) the counterflow of remittances potentially enables households to hire paid laborers; and (4) agriculture can become more capital intensive through which similar or higher production levels can be achieved by using less labor.

The impact of migration on agricultural transformations exhibits a high degree of spatial differentiation. This is mainly due to the fact that land and water resources are unequally distributed between the upstream and downstream parts of the valley. Land is relatively abundant in the plains of the lower Todgha compared to the upper Todgha, where the narrow valley is hemmed in between steep mountains and all arable land has already been cultivated. Yet, however, surface water is extremely abundant and perennial in the upper valley while relatively scarce in the lower valley. These opposite gradients in relative water and land scarcity are crucial in explaining spatial differences in the patterns of agricultural change in a rather unexpected manner: most agricultural development is taking place in those parts of the valley where water is most scarce.

Although water is relatively scarce in the lower Todgha, this constraint can now be overcome through the advent of the water pumping technique, provided that enough investment capital and groundwater is available. This has enabled the intensification (in the traditional oasis) and spatial extension (in recent extensions) of agriculture in the lower Todgha, traditionally the most “marginal” part of the oasis. In the upper Todgha, moreover, plot sizes tend to be extremely small. To a great extent, this “agricultural involution” is an obstacle for people wishing to invest in agriculture on an individual basis. Although this lush part of the valley looks prosperous on first sight, this impression is deceiving, as opportunities for agricultural development are actually very limited. The absolute lack of new farmland in the upper Todgha has led to investment in other economic sectors or in agriculture in the lower Todgha or elsewhere in Morocco.

It is striking that many peasants prefer to invest in new, until recently barren, areas located *outside* the traditional oasis. In the traditional oasis, plots are generally small and scattered, and the collective, community-level organization pertaining to water distribution is increasingly considered as an obstacle to individual agricultural entrepreneurship. This explains why peasants often seem to prefer to localize investments in areas outside the traditional oases where constraints such as the inflexible collective regulations concerning water allocation, fragmented land property, and collective maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure do not play a role. Moreover, on such new land, the possibilities for

intensifying agriculture are better than in the ancient oasis, since plots are larger, which allows for some degree of mechanization and a relatively “modern” farming system. This reflects evidence from other rural regions and oases in Morocco (cf. Bencherifa 1991; 1993)

Although cropping patterns differ little across the household migration categories, international migrant households tend to grow a somewhat larger variety of annual crops. Returned migrants, in particular, tend to grow a larger variety of vegetables, and tend to cling to traditional forms of oasis agriculture, whereas *indirect* migrant households in particular tend to invest in relatively modern forms of agriculture. All the empirical evidence points to the fact that current and indirect migrant households in particular—and not returnees—play important roles in “innovative” agricultural development.

11.4.2. Migration, non-agricultural investments, and de-agrarization

Migration is not only a part of the general process of integration of the Todgha into wider economic and political networks and the concomitant diversification of oasis livelihoods. It is also a factor contributing to the further diversification and partial de-agrarization of the regional economy through its enabling effect on households to invest in local housing, business enterprises, and education. Households with access to international migration resources exhibit a higher propensity to invest in such non-agricultural sectors than other households, even when controlling for income. Through its recursive developmental effects on the Todgha, migration has the tendency to recursively strengthen and intensify the general process of livelihood diversification.

International migration has visibly contributed to the accelerated development of real estate in the valley. Although the construction of new houses is a general development, households involved in international migration tend to build faster and nicer houses and often own several. Housing is the highest priority on the list of capital investments for many, and the vast majority of international migrant households invest in real estate. However, it would be erroneous to explain the construction fever uniquely or mainly by the migrants’ quest for more status within their own community, as has often been done in the migration and development literature. Decent housing is a basic necessity of life. The importance attached to housing should primarily be explained by a logical quest for basic luxury, space, and privacy, less conflicts, and better health. Besides such obvious well-being and health aspects, women often gain significantly in personal liberty through the establishment of new independent houses for their nuclear family.

Much of the literature has tended to strongly disapprove of so-called “non-productive” and “unnecessary” investments in housing. However, by implicitly suggesting that oasis dwellers should stay in their “mud brick houses”, wealthy and urban-based social scientists apply different standards to others than they would probably do to themselves. The quest for space, hygiene, and some degree of privacy seems to be almost universal. Reasoning from a capabilities-based concept of development, improved well-being and standards of living are to be considered as constituent parts of development. Dismissing such well-being aspects as “non-developmental” typically reflects a narrow view of development.

Moreover, housing is *also* a logical and relatively secure investment in a rather insecure investment environment, through which households are able to generate additional income through various lease arrangements and provide “life insurance” for the migrants’ households. In case of the death of the breadwinner, family members are at least guaranteed shelter and will often gain rental income. This is particularly important in a society where most households do not have access to social security systems. Considering the population

increase and urban growth in Tinghir, real estate investments have turned out to be a highly rewarding investment strategy, which has enabled many migrant households to stabilize and increase their income.

It is through these investments that international migrant households have simultaneously capitalized on, and actively contributed to, the urban growth and concentration of non-agricultural economic activities in Tinghir and the semi-urbanization of the rural space around places like “New Taghzout” and Aït Aïssa Ou Brahim. The construction boom and investments in enterprises have also created considerable local employment in sectors that are closely related to the construction business, such as Tinghir’s thriving crafts industry (e.g., carpenters, welders), hardware stores, retail trade in household utensils and building material. Furthermore, it has offered employment to various electricians, plumbers, tilers, and people working in the service sector.

The many international migrant households that have built more than one house have mostly done so in Tinghir. This applies even more to the investments in private business enterprises that are overwhelmingly located in the valley’s capital. Migration has played an independent, accelerating role in the economic-geographical transformation of the Todgha valley, which have led to an increasing demand for non-agricultural labor.

The livelihoods of oasis households are increasingly oriented towards Tinghir and, to a lesser extent, towards the semi-urban centers of Aït Aïssa Ou Brahim and Taghzout. This also explains why the proximity to paved roads and access to (semi-public) transport have become so crucial in, for example, deciding where to locate a new house. Migrants’ investments in transport play an important role in the development of *transit* transport networks within the Todgha. The increasing orientation towards (semi-) urban centers is not only employment-related, but also related to changing consumption styles and the increasing importance of markets in general.

International migration has contributed to the economic development of the Todgha valley in the sense that migrants’ investments not only function to diversify, increase, and secure their own future income, but also to create a certain level of employment for nonmigrants. Moreover, there has been only limited “leakage” of non-agricultural investments to other regions. Although intra-valley spatial inequality has been reinforced by the concentration of investments in Tinghir, migration has contributed to mitigating the development gap between the Todgha as a whole and more wealthy regions in Morocco. In comparison with surrounding areas (e.g., High Atlas, Saghro, Tafilalt, Drâa), the Todgha valley has become relatively prosperous. This is not only visible in the construction boom and the expansion of Tinghir’s commercial function, but also in internal labor migration from other areas of Morocco to the Todgha valley. In other words, the recursive developmental effects of international migration have created a counterflow of internal migrants.

11.4.3. The reversed “cumulative causation” hypothesis

However, the recursive developmental effect of migration has not led to a lower inclination among Todghawis to migrate. On the contrary, migration seems to have stimulated subsequent out-migration. This effect is not only achieved through the important facilitating (i.e., risk and cost lowering) role of migrant networks. The exposure to media and the relatively high wealth of international migrant households, general improvements in wealth and education—which are partially the effect of migration itself—have all increased aspirations, feelings of relative deprivation, and the personal capabilities of young people to migrate. This corroborates the central assumption of transitional migration theory that

development initially tends to shape and enhance the material and mental conditions for migration. Thus, paradoxically, through its recursive effects on regional development, migration may subsequently trigger more migration.

Another way in which the recursive developmental effects of migration tend to increase people's propensity to migrate is manifested in the effect of migration on the education of younger household members. Whereas international migration itself was not selective for education, younger members of household with access to international migration resources are significantly better educated than children within nonmigrant and internal migrant households. With regards to education, internal migrant households are in a better position than nonmigrant households, since the presence of labor migrants in town decreases the costs and risks associated with the education of a younger sibling. Since higher education implies migrating to the cities, and the higher educated tend to stay working in cities, educational investments tend to further reinforce the propensity to migrate among younger generations.

As such, the whole idea that the recursive effects of migration shape the developmental conditions for subsequent and even intensified migration is not new. It was already postulated by Myrdal's cumulative causation theory (see chapter 2). However, in the core of its argument, our analysis—which corroborates transitional migration theory—is diametrically opposed to cumulative causation theory and structuralist perspectives in explaining how the recursive developmental feedbacks of out-migration stimulate subsequent out-migration. The fundamental difference is that cumulative causation and structuralist theories see migration as the consequence of social and economic decline (or “development of underdevelopment”—cf. Frank 1966) which are further stimulated by the negative “backwash effects” of migration, rather than, as we have hypothesized, the very result of development in the form of increased capabilities, freedoms, and aspirations of people to migrate. Whereas cumulative causation and dependency theories argue that migration stimulates further migration through its negative developmental effects, we can hypothesize that migration tends to stimulate further migration through its potentially positive developmental effects.

11.5. Migration and socio-cultural change

11.5.1. Migration and new forms of inequality

The study of the spatial allocation of migrants' investments corroborates the point made by Taylor *et al.* (1996) and Jones (1998) that differences in the scale of analysis may fundamentally affect the assessment of the impacts of migration on development. When exclusively focusing the analysis on the village level, one might conclude that many investments tend to “leak away” to urban areas. This seems to fit in with “pessimistic” center-periphery models and cumulative causation theory, which state that migration leads to increasing disparities in rural and urban development. However, when analyzing the impact at the regional level (e.g., the Todgha valley), the conclusion is that most investments remain within the valley, and that, moreover, the direct and indirect positive spin-off of these investments is considerable.

With regards to inequality at the inter-household level, it is difficult to give an unambiguous answer to the question of whether the impact of migration has been positive. International migration has certainly given rise to a new socio-economic divide between households with and without access to international migration resources.

Inequality and poverty are important features of the studied communities, and many nonmigrant and internal migrant households face meager and highly unstable livelihoods. From a capabilities perspective on development, such inequality is clearly *not* developmental. However, besides the fact that it is not possible to “scientifically” define an optimum between distributional (“equity”) and mean (“efficiency”) income objectives (Sen 1999; Stark 1988:309), there are two reasons not to jump to any conclusion that the impacts of migration have “thus” been negative, or that inequality has increased over the past half century.

Firstly, we should avoid romanticizing the past by acknowledging that traditional oasis society has been inherently unequal, with its caste-like socio-ethnic stratification, in which most oasis dwellers lived in grinding poverty and “inferior” ethnic groups were condemned to serfdom or slavery. Today, new forms of inequality based on access to monetary resources, which are to a considerable extent defined along lines of access to international migration resources, have been largely superimposed upon the traditional forms of structural, “hereditary” inequality based on ethnic affiliation, complexion, and land possession.

There are no objective, scientific standards to determine, like a *deus ex machina*, which form of inequality (“pre-modern” or “capitalist”) was worse. Nevertheless, traditional oasis society in its very essence was based on the “unfreedom” of large sections of the population. In the literature on migration and development in Morocco, we sometimes find a romantic discourse on traditional “community solidarity” or so-called “tribal democracy” in the form of the *taqbilt*. However, traditional oasis society used to deny basic human freedoms to large sections of the oasis population (women, slaves, serfs, landless *ikhmmesen*) and therefore seems—reasoning from the axioms of the capabilities perspective—inherently less developed than contemporary oasis society.

Secondly, to a certain extent, nonmigrant and internal migrant households have profited indirectly from consumption and investments by international migrants. International migration seems to have contributed to a general, community and valley-wide improvement of livelihoods and the reduction of absolute poverty through the employment and income multiplier effects of migrant households’ consumption and investments. Furthermore, 7.5 percent of all the surveyed households do not have migrated members, but receive international remittances on a regular basis from family members. Although inequality remains an important feature of oasis society, the vast majority of (migrant and nonmigrant) oasis households are better off than half a century ago, and this can, to a significant extent, be attributed to the direct and indirect effects of international migration.

The socio-ethnic emancipation of former subordinate smallholding and landless groups, such as the *haratin*, has contributed to the partial breakdown and malfunctioning of traditional village institutions for land and water management whose functioning was largely based on the inferior status of these people and their role as a cheap “oasis labor reserve”. Due to the decreasing legitimacy of the power of the *taqbilt* and *amghar* (chief), it has become increasingly difficult to enforce customary law. In this sense, migration has contributed to the above-mentioned process of exclusion of the poorest from access to “collective” water resources and, thus, to increasing agricultural inequality.

11.5.2. Visions of El Dorado: mirage or reality?

Within the complex process of transformations the Todgha has undergone over the past half century, migration stands out prominently not only because of its magnitude, but also because of its profound impact on the daily life of most oasis families, on social relations within oasis

society, and on the perceptions, tastes, and aspirations of its inhabitants. It is particularly through the experience of migration that general processes—which scholars tend to indicate as “integration in the modern state and market economy”, “modernization” or “globalization”—are concretely manifested for oasis dwellers.

It would be erroneous to depict migration only as an economic phenomenon. To a large extent, migration is also a social and cultural event both in its causes and consequences. The social and economic dimensions of migration can hardly be separated. The fact alone that migrants send remittances back is an expression of the intensive social bonds they tend to maintain with kin and friends back home. Social and ethnic bonds also affect the selectivity of future migration—we have seen that the chances of migrating are far higher for people with access to “social migration capital” in the form of already-migrated relatives. Moreover, migration is not “only” an attempt to secure better livelihoods, but has also been an avenue of upwards social mobility for traditionally inferior groups such as the landless or smallholding *ikhmmesen*, among which can be counted many *haratin*.

Migration has had an important influence on life rhythm and “seasonality”, as, instead of the harvest seasons, the July-August holiday season is now the yearly economic and cultural peak season, when international migrants return temporarily from Europe. During the hot summer season, markets are at their busiest. The summer holiday has also become the peak season for marriages between (second or third generation) Todghawis living in Europe and family or acquaintances in their region of origin. This continues to propel chain migration through family formation.

The hopes of many nonmigrant youth as well as their parents are focused on marriage with a second or third generation European migrant. A marriage with a migrant is generally considered as *the* ultimate ideal, being the most secure way to material stability and success as well as upward social mobility. For them, this makes the summer holiday a thrilling event, when they can meet and talk to their “European” peers.

Together with improved education and increasing access to modern media, sustained out-migration has given rise to an outward looking “culture of migration”, in which migration is associated with success and most young men and women aspire to migrate. This influence is not only manifested through the exposure of migrants to other tastes, preferences, economic opportunities, and lifestyles, but also through the exposure of nonmigrants to the relative wealth of international migrants and their relatives. This has clearly increased feelings of relative deprivation and, subsequently, raised the social and material aspirations of oasis dwellers. Confronted with the wealth of migrants, oasis dwellers tend to perceive Europe as “paradise”, an El Dorado of almost unlimited economic opportunities. In the eyes of most young men and women—who are confronted with high unemployment, poverty, corruption, and a general lack of opportunity in Morocco—their high aspirations can only be fulfilled through migration to Europe.

The importance of rising aspirations in explaining the mounting desire to emigrate is paramount. The fundamental weakness of common push-pull and neo-Malthusian explanations of migration—explaining migration in terms of high population growth and a limited agricultural “carrying capacity” which have “pushed” people out of their native areas—is that they assume that the needs and aspirations of people are stable. Even if the agricultural carrying capacity of the Todgha were sufficient to feed the entire population—which is not the case (cf. Büchner 1986)—most people would simply no longer be content with such a basic livelihood, as they have become exposed to other ways of life as well as increasing wealth and luxury, both outside (in cities or abroad) and inside the valley.

In the literature, it has often been stated that migrants tend to hide their problems and exaggerate their wealth, thereby creating an unrealistic perception that Europe’s streets are paved with gold. This might indeed be true to a certain extent. However, the simple fact that

salaries in Europe easily exceed Moroccan salaries by five to ten times and often more, and the access to public health care, schooling, and social security all seem to justify the strong desire to migrate among those who do not have much to lose in their own eyes. Todghawis do not tend to migrate “blindly”.

The allegedly materialistic attitudes and unrealistic expectations of migrants tend to raise worries among policy makers and some researchers. Migrants, they say, would do better to stay in their region of origin to “help” the development of their region or should be better informed about the great opportunities in their country of origin and the difficult situation of migrants in Europe. However, such views on migration and development seem somehow naïve if we bear in mind the high unemployment and the lack of resources available to most oasis dwellers. This very lack of certain capabilities largely disables them from “developing themselves”, and it is indeed particularly through (international) migration that these capabilities can be acquired.

There has been a tendency in the literature to view the “culture of migration” in an overly negative way. Even if impressions of Europe as some kind of paradise were too rosy, the image that there are more opportunities overseas does reflect reality. Confronted with the many developmental constraints in Morocco, it can be a highly rational choice to migrate, because it is elsewhere that ambitious, young women and men are more likely to develop and capitalize on their capabilities through education, work, or both. Despite all the economic, social, and cultural problems migrants may face, the perception that international migration is the most secure way towards more social and economic freedom is more than a mirage.

However, those who leave generally have a strong desire to eventually return. The typical ideal of migrants is still to invest the money they have earned and saved abroad in a commercial enterprise in the Todgha, from which their families can live. The intention of most migrants remains “partir pour revenir”. The extent to which these intentions are eventually fulfilled is quite a different matter. What primarily matters for the migrants and their households is to improve their own livelihoods and well-being. To most of them, the preferable way of doing this would be to realize their aspirations in the Todgha. If circumstances do not allow this, they will realize them in another place, region, or country.

11.5.3. Migration and gender relations

Although international migration has contributed to the well-being and freedoms that households enjoy, it is a different question of how the benefits of migration are distributed within the households, and in particular between men and women. Whereas international migration seems to decrease the workload and livelihood certainty of women living in migrant households, the reverse seems true for internal migration. Migration has clearly had a positive impact on the improvement in living conditions (e.g., better housing and sanitation), general well-being (e.g., through better access to health care), and decreasing workloads of international migrant women. Poor, nonmigrant “clients” often help them in domestic work, while they often hire laborers for certain typically “male” agricultural tasks.

However, women in internal migrant households, while facing the same poverty and relatively low standards of living as nonmigrants, are not or are less able to compensate for the “lost male labor effect” by hiring personnel. Although both internal and international migrant wives and their households tend to suffer from the absence of and dependency on their men, international migrant wives have far greater wealth, a certain degree of financial stability, and lighter workloads. Internal migrant wives tend to live more arduous and uncertain lives.

The present study has refuted the hypothesis that international migration contributes to the emancipation of women through the influence of modern values transferred by migrants. Women in migrant households tend to have more control over the use of their husbands' earnings than nonmigrant wives, whereby migrant wives living in extended households have less decision making power than those living in nuclear families. They also have more influence on the schooling of their children, including that of their daughters.

However, contrary to common hypotheses, migration has not led to fundamental, permanent changes in gender roles. Notwithstanding the contribution of international migration to general standards of living and material well-being, the lives of migrant wives remain largely confined to housekeeping, childrearing, and agricultural work. It is striking that the vast majority of migrants' women see the increase in responsibilities and decision making power as an unwelcome burden. Such a radical deviation from traditional gender roles is generally not appreciated by the women themselves, as it forces them into "male" roles which they are not used to playing and for which they are criticized by other villagers. Furthermore, their gain in authority is mainly *temporary*, as migrants once more take over their position as "patriarchs" as soon as they return. Gender inequality is sustained by national law, and migrant wives often fear repudiation or a marriage with a second wife by their husbands.

There has undoubtedly been an improvement in the position of oasis women over the past few decades. For instance, they tend to marry at a later age and have better access to health care and family planning. Young women also tend to have fewer children. Women's workloads have decreased due to the advent of gas stoves, electricity, water pumps, and various household appliances. However, such changes rather seem to be the effect of a general improvement in the position of women in Moroccan society than of a particular effect of international migration, which seems only limited.

The only clear exception seems education. The youngest generation of women is far better educated than the generation before, and the huge gender gap in (primary) education started to decrease rapidly over the 1990s. Although this is a general development, we have also seen that girls in international migrant households are generally better educated, and that migration has played an accelerating role in closing the gender gap in primary education. We have hypothesized that this can be explained by the greater say in household affairs that women tend to have during the long absence of their husbands living abroad.

An increasing number of young women aspire to migrate, either by marrying a migrant, or independently in order to study or work elsewhere, and often preferably on the other side of the Strait of Gibraltar. The exposure to better-educated, working, and more independent female migrants makes them not only more aware of other life styles, but also makes them realize that their aspirations can potentially be fulfilled, and that another, and in their eyes better, life is in fact possible. Indeed, the culture of migration has clearly pervaded women's lives too.

11.6. Structural constraints to migration and development

Although the propensity to invest is higher among international migrant households and migration has undoubtedly contributed to development in the Todgha, this is not to say that the Todgha in particular, and Morocco in general, are ideal investment environments. Instead, this study identified several structural constraints, which lead us to conclude that the developmental potential of migration is certainly not being fully realized. These structural constraints explain why many migrants do not realize their intention of returning, invest less

than intended, or do not invest at all. This is not only related to general factors such as macro-economic and political circumstances¹, but also to more specific problems related to failing governmental and non-governmental institutions, legal insecurity, the structure of “inherited” agricultural systems, gender inequality, structural unemployment, and the nature of migration policies. In many of these cases, the issue of trust is central.

Corruption, red tape, and the general lack of trust vis-à-vis the state apparatus (*makhzen*) tend to complicate and slow down administrative procedures like, for example, obtaining business permits or title deeds on land and other property. This often means such property cannot be used as collateral for loans, reducing land, real estate, and other property to so-called “dead capital” (cf. De Soto 2000). These factors form clear obstacles to investments, especially for relatively poor households lacking good connections and political “shortcuts”.

The confrontation with rent seeking officials not only increases investment costs, but also perpetuates people’s low trust in the state’s administrative and legal institutions. Needless to say, the issue of trust is crucial to investment decisions. The perceived unreliability of the state manifests itself in a general feeling of legal insecurity (with regards to property) and a fear of rent seeking civil servants. Inhabitants of the Todgha tend to have a profound distrust of “the *makhzen*”, the central state, its institutions, and its local representatives. This distrust is possibly reinforced by the fact that the Todgha and its Berber inhabitants were largely independent of central state power until colonization. Therefore, the *makhzen* and its local representatives are often seen as untrustworthy “outsiders”.

In sum, these circumstances seem to make potential investors hesitant, especially those whose financial resources are limited and who lack good connections and informal access to local rulers and the state bureaucracy. We can equally hypothesize that this unfavorable institutional environment and the concomitant lack of trust partly explain why so many migrants have decided not to return and to reunify their households and why the bulk of local investments are made in the relatively secure housing sector.

In the agricultural domain, the general lack of technical assistance by the government and agricultural extensions offices (ORMVA, CMV) leaves the potential for agricultural development partially unexploited. Oriented as they are towards “modern” agriculture, agricultural officials seem barely interested in small-scale oasis agriculture, and also seem to lack both the will and means to assist or advise peasants wishing to invest in agriculture. For example, peasants neither have access to information on water tables, nor receive advice on the optimal location of wells. This lack of assistance increases the risk of failure of pumping investments.

Due to excessive red tape, many peasants do not have the title deeds to their land. This is especially true for former collective pastureland in the lower Todgha (notably the Ghallil plain) that has been divided between individuals based on mutual but frequently informal agreements. This is an obstacle for obtaining agricultural credit, as banks require title deeds as collateral on loans. This legal insecurity of property rights is another dimension of the *general* lack of trust in government institutions.

Other types of obstacles are rooted in the inherited structure of “involved”, oasis agriculture, the collective nature of irrigation, and structural inequalities in intra-valley water distribution. Extremely fragmented land tenure, the scattered location of plots, and the complex and collective character of regulations on water allocation hinder agricultural innovation, mechanization, and individual investments in the traditional oasis, particularly in

¹ It goes without saying that economic and political conditions at the macro-level, such as political stability, international trade relations, and economic growth, play a crucial role too. However, an analysis of such factors was beyond the scope of this study.

the upper Todgha. Peasants willing to invest are therefore forced to buy land elsewhere, requiring considerable extra investment. Secondly, due to the historical outcome of a political struggle favoring the upstream and central *igherman*, the relatively abundant and perennial river water is disproportionately allocated to the upper parts of the Todgha valley—where water is spoiled (cf. El Harradji 2001)—depriving the lower parts of the valley of this cheap and renewable water resource.

The state does not play an active role in solving the crisis in the collective management of the declining *khettaras* and other agro-hydrological infrastructure. The anarchic, largely uncontrolled boom in motor pumping constitutes a clear danger for the future ecological and economic sustainability of oasis agriculture. Increasing pumping competition and falling water tables are one of the causes behind the desiccation of the *khettaras* and wells. This threatens to destroy investments in pumping done by over 1,100 peasants. Despite laws prohibiting unauthorized pumping, local authorities and the legislative powers do not seem willing or able to control the expansion of motor pumps through law enforcement or to settle conflicts between water users. This perpetuates feelings of legal insecurity. Furthermore, this development will exacerbate agricultural inequality between rich and poor households, as only the relatively wealthy can afford to dig deeper wells and install heavier pumps if water tables fall.

Patriarchal value systems are a clear constraint on women's freedom in schooling, work, family planning, partner choice, and, last but not least, mobility. Although the position of women has improved over the past few decades, women who stay behind remain structurally disadvantaged compared to men, and also benefit less from the new livelihood opportunities created by international migration. However, women can expect to gain more from their own migration to Europe in the context of family reunification and family formation. For women, migration to Europe not only implies an important improvement in their economic situation, but also in their legal and social position. To a certain extent, this may explain why migrant women seem less willing to return to Morocco than men. It can therefore be hypothesized that (legal and social) gender inequality decreases the propensity to return (and invest) among migrants and increases the tendency towards family reunification.

Many international migrants from the Todgha who decided not to reunify their families in the 1970s and 1980s did so because they assumed it would be a better strategy to invest in the education of their children (i.e., sons) in Morocco. However, this strategy has often failed since, in the meantime, it has become increasingly difficult for university graduates (*licenciés*) to find a job due to severe IMF-instigated budget cuts in the public domain, the general economic downturn, misguided educational policies, and the surge in the number of young people holding higher education degrees. Moreover, alleged nepotism when handing high-skilled jobs in the government sector might also partially remove the meritocratic incentives of people to put much money and effort into higher education. In combination with mass unemployment among higher educated youngsters, this reduces people's trust in Morocco as a country in which personal development goals can be realized. It only reinforces their tendency to revert to international migration as the prime vehicle of upwards socio-economic mobility.

Besides distrust towards the Moroccan *makhzen*, there is a general lack of trust among international migrants in the institutions of the destination countries. Confronted with a political discourse that has become progressively hostile towards immigration and with increasingly restrictive immigration policies and laws, potential migrant investors fear that by resettling in Morocco they will give up their acquired rights in Europe. This fear of not having the option to return to Europe in case of failure in social (adaptation) or economic terms seems to decrease their propensity to invest and return.

Paradoxically, the rather “volatile” (i.e., unreliable) European immigration policies have probably also played a role in decreasing the tendency among migrants to return and invest. Increasingly restrictive immigration policies have not only had the “perverse” effect of interrupting circular migration patterns and actually decreased people’s tendency to return (cf. Entzinger 1985). They have also added to the feeling that immigration policies will become even more restrictive in the future, and that today’s guarantees—for example the right to return in case of return migration—will only have limited and temporary value. This lack of trust might explain why many migrants cling to their acquired European residency rights.

From the Moroccan perspective, a European residence permit is a key asset, a “gold mine” giving access to the European labor market and social security systems. This asset is therefore fostered and preferably passed on to following generations. For female migrants, an additional reason not to return is that they enjoy better rights in Europe. For migrants’ children, it gives them access to European education systems.

In general, migrants are operating in institutional environments that they perceive as untrustworthy or even hostile on either side of the Mediterranean. This makes them extremely risk-averse and prudent about giving up their hard-won rights in Europe.

11.7. Synthesis and discussion

The main conclusion of this study is that international migration has substantially contributed to social and economic development in the Todgha valley over the second half of the twentieth century. The study seems to support the NELM-hypothesis that migration has not only been a livelihood strategy serving to diversify households’ income portfolio, substantially increasing and securing income, as well as improving living conditions, but has also been a means to overcome capital constraints on investments in the economy of the Todgha. The relatively high, stable, and secure nature of international remittance income enables households to make various investments in housing, agriculture, private enterprises, and education, allowing them to further improve and secure their livelihoods.

In addition, through indirect (multiplier) effects, investments and consumption by migrants seem to have had an indirect positive effect on the economy of the whole valley. The increased investments and consumption by international migrant households have significantly contributed to the growth, diversification, partial de-agrarization, and urbanization of the regional economy and the creation of employment, from which “stay-behinds” profit in indirect ways and which attract immigrant households settling in Tinghir and elsewhere in the Todgha.

Although this generally appears to be in line with the premises of the NELM, there seems to be room for comment. First, NELM has a one-sided focus on market constraints. The analysis has shown that migration has also been a livelihood strategy to overcome socio-cultural constraints on development. Migration has been a means to break away from inferior socio-ethnic positions for traditionally subordinate groups such as *haratin*, smallholding peasants, and *ikhmmesen*, for whom migration has been the main avenue for upwards socio-economic and cultural mobility. Nevertheless, patriarchal value systems have not been substantially altered by migration, and women remain in a disadvantaged position, although in the longer term migration has had a certain positive effect on the education of young women in migrant households.

Second, it should be noted that these positive developmental effects have remained largely limited to international migration. Internal migrants often lead a difficult life, struggling to survive and leaving their households (mostly women and children) financially

insecure. Unlike international migrants, the income of internal migrants is generally low and instable with the exception of a minority of civil servants and professional workers. Therefore, migration generally does not allow them to durably improve their households' livelihoods by investing money in the local economy. The main rationale behind internal migration therefore seems to be income diversification and the chance to gain access to international migration. For internal migrant households, education is the main investment strategy through which they attempt to secure and stabilize their future livelihoods, although this latter strategy has not been particularly successful in the light of present mass-unemployment.

Third, incorporation of the Todgha into international migration systems has given rise to a new socio-economic divide between households with and without access to international migration resources, which has largely been superimposed upon traditional forms of inequality based on ethnic affiliation, land possession, and complexion. Nevertheless, through its indirect positive effects on the regional economy, migration has almost certainly contributed to a decrease in absolute poverty. However, feelings of relative deprivation and generally rising aspirations caused by better education, the influence of the media, exposure to migrants' wealth, and the general "culture of migration" seem to have further increased many people's aspirations and propensity to migrate.

This study seems to suggest that it is possible to combine the insights derived from transitional migration theory, the new economics of labor migration (NELM), livelihood approaches, and the capabilities approach towards development. This allows us to integrate the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of migration and development interactions. This synergy can be established on the basis of the fundamental argument that they all see (1) labor migration as an outgrowth of development processes, which (2) potentially endows people and households with the (a) capabilities as well as the (b) aspirations to migrate, as (3) part of a more general livelihood strategy to (a) diversify (i.e., stabilize), (b) secure, and (c) increase income. In its potential income-increasing, stabilizing, and securing capacity, migration again can have a positive developmental impact on migrant sending areas by (4) potentially enabling households to increase consumption and investments and thereby (5) increase their capabilities to lead lives they have reason to value.

However, the extent to which this potential is realized crucially depends on the two following factors: (1) The level, stability and security of remittance income—In the Todgha, we have seen that there is a huge divide between internal and international migrant households in this respect; (2) The general development context at both the origin and the destination, which determines households' propensity to return as well as the level and spatial allocation of consumption and investments. Acknowledging its fundamental role in the process of development is not to say that migration thus automatically leads to more development, as its impact is far from uniform (i.e., disparate) across locales, social categories and over time. We have also seen that particular forms of migration (i.e., child labor in large towns) can increase "unfreedom", or have even their origins in coercion.

The many feedback mechanisms through which the impacts of migration have affected development in the Todgha valley have again influenced patterns of out- and in-migration. This leads us to conclude that migration is not only a factor explaining change, but is an integral part of changes itself in the same degree as it may enable further change. It therefore seems more accurate to refer to the *recursive* relationship between migration and development instead of the *impact* of migration on development.

The diversification and improvement of oasis livelihoods through migration has been enabled by structural changes in the macro-context that have impinged upon the Todgha. On the other hand, actors such as migrants and households are not only passive pawns or victims reacting to circumstances shaped by shifting macro-forces. Migration is not so much a flight

from misery, but rather a deliberate attempt to overcome local obstacles to social and economic development.

To a certain extent, households and individuals have the capacity to take their fate into their own hands, and attempt to reshape, diversify and durably improve their livelihoods, for instance through migration. Through this agency, they also alter structures, thereby reshaping the local context in which migration and development occurs. For instance, through remittance transfers, consumption and investments, migration has significantly expanded local markets for goods and labor, attracted banks to Tinghir and indirectly increased wealth among many nonmigrants. Such partly migration-triggered regional development has even given rise to new forms of “reversed” internal migration towards the Todgha. It is important to emphasize that this recursive impact of migration is not necessarily positive. For instance, migration has contributed to the demise of *khattara* irrigation systems and increasing agricultural inequality.

This illustrates that, in line with structuration theory and the “new regional geography”, agents or actors such as migrants and households have the ability to modify the structures of the local development context to a certain extent. However, it would be overly optimistic to suppose such actors are able to tackle more general constraints on development. Their scope for agency only exists within a certain latitude set by structural constraints.

Migration and development interactions do not operate in a cultural, social, political, and institutional void. Although “pessimistic” structuralists certainly overstated their point, NELM and livelihood approaches have perhaps been too fixated on agency, thereby losing sight of structural constraints and the crucial role of institutions. People might not be passive pawns, but their freedom is limited. Structural constraints do exist and hinder the free movement of capital, goods, and labor. Markets are far from perfect—especially in the developing world—and there are high intra-community inequalities in the degree to which people have access to various resources.

Bad or unequal access to public amenities—such as basic health care, education and credit facilities, corrupt or malfunctioning government and judiciary systems, authoritarianism, economic monopolism by influential politicians, lack of guaranteed property rights, and so on—all mean that large parts of the population have virtually no access to the social, human, economic, and political resources underlying development (De Soto 2000; Sen 1999).

From this perspective, the structural exclusion of large sections of the population from social facilities (education, health, housing) as well as credit, labor, insurance, and product markets are the core problems of development. Structural inequalities deprive people of the freedoms they need to improve their own lives. It restricts the space for individual agency. In short, inequality breeds underdevelopment. Migration has indeed the potential to alleviate at least some of these constraints, such as failing capital and insurance markets, and it can significantly contribute to the education, health, and well-being of family and community members, but it does not have the capacity to alter the more general development and investment conditions prevailing in a region and a country.

This explains why stimulating (international) migration alone, without having the accompanying measures to create a fertile ground for development in general, cannot be a credible development strategy for governments. This explains why policies to stimulate migrants’ investments and return migration have so often failed. Therefore, public policies aiming to improve the functioning of social, legal, and political institutions, restoring trust in government, and increasing the access of populations to basic amenities is crucial not only for creating a fertile ground for development in general, but also for stimulating migrants to return and/or invest in their countries of origin.

Although the basic NELM-hypothesis that international migration contributes to development in sending areas seems to be supported by this study, it is important to emphasize that what is involved is a potential, rather than a more or less predetermined impact. In line with what Keely and Tran (1989:524) concluded earlier, the lesson from this analysis is not that the optimistic (neo-classical and developmentalist) viewpoint is correct because the pessimistic (structuralist) framework predictions were incorrect—as NELM scholars sometimes have the tendency to do. In fact, neither the rigor of the “developmentalist” nor that of the structuralist perspectives seems justified.

In the Todgha we have seen that, notwithstanding its positive impacts, there is also reason to believe that the development potential of migration is not being fully realized due to the existence of various structural obstacles to investments. These obstacles have prevented many international migrants from investing and have stimulated them to settle permanently at the destination.

Thus, the degree to which the development potential of migration is realized depends on the specific development context. Depending on this specific development context, migration may enable people to retreat from, just as much as to invest in, local economic activities. This is a key observation. Remittances, just like any other source of additional, external income, may give households greater freedom and the capability to concentrate their activities and allocate investment to those economic sectors and locales that they perceive as the most stable and profitable. It is this capabilities-enhancing potential of (international) migration that also increases the freedom of households to settle elsewhere.

Structural factors at the micro and macro level play a key role in determining to what extent, and in what economic sector migrant and nonmigrant households are inclined to invest. These so-called contextual variables form the enabling conditions for investments. Jointly, they constitute the “field” on which the “seeds” of migration (e.g., remittances) are potentially sown. It is the general institutional and environmental context which largely determines this “fertility”. If the field is not fertile enough in the eyes of the potential investors, the seeds might not be sown at all, or in another sector, place, region, or country. In other words, migration impacts are highly context-sensitive. Therefore, migration cannot be classified as either positive or negative for development. Moreover, its impact differs across socio-economic domains, levels of aggregation, and over time.

Migration researchers should move beyond the negative-versus-positive debate. There is a clear need to shift from a determinist to a more pluralist view, recognizing that various development responses to migration are possible. I therefore agree with Taylor (1999) that the fundamental question for researchers in this discipline is not whether migration leads to certain types of development or not. Instead, we should examine which factors explain why migration has positive development outcomes in some migrant sending areas and negative outcomes in others.

Analogous to what Stiglitz (2002:20) argued on the issue of “globalization”, migration—a constituent part of that general process—is neither good nor bad for development. It has the *potential* to do enormous good and significantly contribute to development in migrant sending areas in the developing world. However, the extent to which this potential is realized crucially depends on the broader development context in such areas and the countries of which they are part, a context which cannot be fundamentally altered by individual migrants.

There is no automatic mechanism through which migration leads to development (cf. Papademetriou and Martin 1991), and, as Taylor (1999) aptly stated, migration is no panacea for development. Bad infrastructure, corruption, a lack of trust in government institutions, dysfunctioning judiciary, the absence of appropriate public policies (schooling, health care, land reform, and so on), market failures, and bad access to international markets due to trade

barriers—factors which are influenced by national politics and international institutions—may prevent migrant households from taking the risk to invest their money in their regions and countries of origin and lower their incentive to return.

Under such unfavorable conditions, migration may also give households the capability and freedom to effectively retreat from local and regional economies. This often coincides with family reunification and permanent settlement at the destination. In that case, they vote with their feet.

If favorable conditions for development and economic growth prevail, it is likely that migrants will send remittances home for local investment and that they themselves will return. If structural obstacles remain, however, migrants are unlikely to invest large amounts of money in risky private enterprises. Although (international) migration tends to generally have a clearly positive impact on wealth and living conditions, it alone cannot guarantee sustained economic development. Only if migration is accompanied by improvements in the general development context of the sending region or a country, can its high potential be fully realized.