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Welfare and Migration: Unfulfilled Aspirations to “Have Rights” in the South- Moroccan Todgha Valley

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Abstract

This paper examines how migration is influenced by changing ideas about welfare provisions and how communities envision the role of the state as welfare provider. It does so through a case study of the Todgha Valley, an oasis in South Morocco where, after 60 years of migration history, a culture of migration emerged. The paper explores the meso- and macrolevel political and cultural transformations that shaped the valley's welfare-related cultural repertoires and explain the changing ways in which welfare provisions drive migration over time in a particular place. To probe such transformations, the paper combines three theoretical components: Inglehart's postmaterialism theory, the social transformations framework, and Zelinsky's mobility transition theory. The paper draws on a literature review, empirical qualitative and quantitative data collected over 22 years, and secondary data. It shows that the meaning of migration has changed over time and is currently understood as a possible remedy to persistently unfulfilled aspirations to have rights. The paper contributes to debates on the links between welfare and migration in two ways. First, it broadens the scope of analysis of welfare as a driver of migration. Second, it highlights how migration feedbacks and changes in welfare policies shape perceptions and expectations of how much the state should provide. Migration tends to be a more individualistic and longer-term project than in the past, and intrinsic aspirations to access social rights have become more explicit. The paper also shows that once cultures of migration emerge, they are not fixed even if they persist; the underlying forces sustaining migration aspirations might shift with other social transformations and more cyclical changes.

Keywords: Welfare magnet, culture of migration, migration drivers, social transformations, Morocco

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1. Introduction

This paper studies how, as society transforms, changing ideas about welfare provision influence migration. Welfare provision refers to the resources provided not only by the state but also the private sector, the non-profit sector and individuals to protect and promote people's welfare. It asks to what extent social transformations in the south-Moroccan Todgha Valley change the ways in which people understand welfare provision and how rising expectations of the state as welfare provider drive migration over time. Hereby, the paper contributes to a recent, burgeoning research agenda that explores the relationship between migration and social transformation, and how fundamental social changes affect people's livelihoods (Castles 2010; Castles, Ozkul, and Cubas 2015; de Haas, Fransen, Natter, Schewel, and Vezzoli 2020).

Since the 1970s, studies on the role of welfare in migration processes often have focused predominantly on the hypothesised effect of state-provided social benefits and social policies on geographical mobility and migration. Such studies of the so-called *welfare magnet* hypothesis use quantitative methods to test the attracting effect of welfare policies in cities, states, or countries of destination (e.g. Borjas 1999; De Jong and Donnelly 1973; Martinsen and Werner 2019). Recent qualitative and quantitative research on the links between welfare and migration in noneconomic social science disciplines has greatly enriched and nuanced this debate, bringing new perspectives on the effect of migrants' administrative status, different welfare providers (formal and informal), multisited practices, policies at different geographical scales, including the country of origin, as well as the role of life course and cultural factors. For instance, some studies have highlighted the barriers that migrants face in accessing state-provided welfare resources (social insurance and assistance), especially in the place of destination (Sabates-Wheeler and Macauslan 2007), or the ways in which labour market conditions and informal networks shape the type of public, private, and informal welfare resources accessible to migrants and their family members (Sabates-Wheeler and Feldman 2011).

Some authors have broadened the geographical perspective of the welfare magnet, emphasizing the possible retaining effects of state-provided welfare resources in origin countries (Kureková 2013; Mahendra 2014). Others have highlighted its transnational character when migrants and their family members spread their practices of formal and informal social protection across geographies with different national and supranational regulations (Faist, Bilecen, Barglowski, and Sienkiewicz 2015; Levitt, Viterna, Mueller, and Lloyd 2016). Studies that focused on cultural aspects of welfare provision have pointed to the differentiated needs, interests, and priorities in welfare provision that individuals and households consider in their migration practices according to their life stage and position within the household (de Jong, Adserà, and de Valk 2020; Jolivet 2020; Serra Mingot and Mazzucato 2019). These studies also look at the role of cultural repertoires in migrants' welfare practices. For instance, research on Mexican migrants in the United States suggested that the cultural value given to work in their migration projects affected migrants' patterns of welfare behaviour. Compared to other social and migrant groups, Mexican migrants were less likely to receive social assistance for families with dependent children, and the rate of those who exited the social assistance system for employment was higher (Van Hook and Bean 2009).

Most research on welfare and migration from a cultural perspective focuses on how culture and migration shape individual ideas and behaviours around welfare provision, and studies in cultural sociology and social psychology show that in the long term, migration is likely to shift cultural values at the individual level (Berry 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2012). Yet, less is known about the way political, technological, or cultural changes at the meso- and macrolevels affect understandings, aspirations, and expectations around welfare provision and subsequently migration processes. More specifically, do social transformations change

people's ideas in a particular place about the type of welfare resources (from the state, the market, NGOs, or informal networks) that need to be prioritised? Do they change expectations and norms about which actors should provide for the welfare of individuals and households? Finally, how do shifts in expectations about welfare provision drive migration?

This paper aims to fill the gap in the literature through a case study focusing on the social transformations that take place in a sending community over time. In particular, the paper explores policy shifts and transformations in the cultural repertoire around welfare provision in a community. Drawing on Van Hook and Bean (2009), in this paper, I define *welfare-related cultural repertoires* as ideas, customs, and orientations on welfare provision that emerge from collective practices, including migration, that, in combination with other contextual factors, shape the way people establish priorities, cope with life necessities, and take action in their everyday life. Welfare-related cultural repertoires are part of broader welfare regimes. This paper defines welfare regime as the interactions between the public sector, the private sector, and households in producing livelihoods and contributing to people's material and subjective well-being. Such interactions are shaped by structures of power and social reproduction (Gough 2004, 26) and norms and values (Davis 2001), which lead to particular outcomes of well-being and ill-being, security and insecurity (Gough 2004, 36). The paper also uses the concept of welfare state to refer to the role of the state as welfare provider through its social welfare policies but also how it intervenes in the organisation of the economy and influences employment, income, and social stratification (Esping-Andersen 1990).

The paper draws on primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data collected over 22 years in Morocco's Todgha Valley, an oasis located south of the High Atlas. Despite its relative geographical remoteness in an area considered at the "gates of the Sahara," the Todgha Valley is strongly connected to Western Europe through its 60-year history of migration, mainly to France and more recently to Spain (de Haas 2003). The Todgha Valley's status as part of the third-largest outmigration area of Morocco (Berriane, Aderghal, Amzil, and Oussi 2010), its long-standing migration history, and its strong links with Europe through migrant networks make it an interesting case study for exploring transformations and continuities in the factors driving international migration over time.

To explore transformations in welfare-related cultural repertoires, the paper takes a social transformation perspective (Castles 2010; de Haas et al. 2020), according to which migration is an intrinsic part of broader processes of development, social transformation, and globalisation (de Haas, Castles, and Miller 2020). In order to analyse how welfare-related cultural repertoires have changed and impacted migration, the paper also builds on research on migration-feedback mechanisms that look at how the circulation of people, goods, and ideas between places of migration origin and destination likely affect subsequent migration (Massey 1990). The study also considers how Morocco has transformed politically since its independence in 1956 and how these changes shaped its welfare regime. More concretely, it analyses the gap between the welfare regime people aspire to – aspirations that migrants exposed to European welfare regimes help to mould – and realities on the ground paying particular attention to gender-based differences. This paper shows how such political and cultural transformations reinforce the perception that migration is a key way to cope with the Moroccan welfare regime's perceived weaknesses.

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper brings together three theoretical frameworks to explore transformations in the Todgha Valley's welfare-related cultural repertoires and how those changes impacted migration. Together, these frameworks help explain the changing ways in which welfare provisions drive migration over time in a particular place, shedding light on the causes and

effects of shifting welfare-related values in life and migration aspirations. The three approaches are Inglehart's postmaterialism theory, the social transformations framework, and Zelinsky's mobility transition theory.

According to Inglehart, when societies reach higher levels of material and physical security, structural changes at economic, social, and political levels are likely to gradually shift people's values and beliefs. From survival values, such as feeling safe and having enough to eat, societies shift towards values linked to the quality of life (Inglehart 1977). This cultural transformation towards so-called postmaterialist values is attributed to the development of welfare states, the absence of war, and economic growth. The shift is not universal. Instead, what shapes societies are their historical-cultural heritage and economic development; these are visible, for example, in a higher GNP per capita and in the labour force's composition shifting towards a service economy (Inglehart and Baker 2000). Evidence also shows that intergenerational cultural shifts are observed in high-income societies when younger generations have spent their formative years in conditions of higher socioeconomic development than previous generations (Inglehart 2007).

Building on Inglehart, this study's first hypothesis is that postmaterialist values in the welfare-related cultural repertoires can develop in lower-income countries even though people have not reached high levels of material security and the society has not completely shifted towards a service economy. In addition, migration has possibly contributed to this cultural shift. The second hypothesis is that the Todgha Valley's culture of migration has changed over time. After 60 years of its people moving to Europe, migration has become deeply embedded in everyday life. Social remittances, — defined as the cultural diffusion of ideas, behaviours, and identities between the community of origin and the country of destination that take place at a local level through migrants (Levitt 1998) — interact with demographic, economic, political, technological, and cultural transformations and contribute to changing values. Through direct interaction with migrants and impersonal channels of information, images, and ideas (Bakewell and Jolivet 2016), international migration has generated positive and negative migration feedbacks that have also transformed aspirations, patterns, and drivers of migration.

The paper uses the social transformation framework to understand some of the mechanisms of these hypothesised transformations. This framework is an analytical tool to systematically study social transformations, that is, processes of long-term and fundamental change in the deep structures and organisation of society that affect all dimensions of social life (de Haas et al. 2020, 16-7). It distinguishes social transformations from social changes and events. Social changes are everyday (cyclical) changes, such as the changes in welfare provision needs over the life course or due to an economic crisis. Events can reflect social transformations, as in the case of the Arab Spring demonstrations that illustrated major transformations in communications and their power to mobilise people through the Internet and social media (Allagui and Kuebler 2011). Events can also trigger transformations. The COVID-19 pandemic could possibly spark global transformations to sustainability (Oldekop, Horner, Hulme, Adhikari, Agarwal, Alford, Bakewell, Banks, Barrientos, and Bastia 2020). The paper draws on these distinctions to consider how the 2008 global economic crisis and social unrest in Morocco affected Todghawis' ideas about migration and welfare provisions.

The social transformation framework studies social change through five interrelated dimensions in which human relations take place: political, economic, technological, demographic, and cultural (de Haas et al. 2020, 18). Social changes occur in each dimension and are part of the same process of social transformation. Even so, changes in each dimension unfold at different speeds and times. Furthermore, change is not constant. Periods of transformation alternate with phases of stagnation. Also, transformations and development are unequal across societies and regions, and therefore they shape migration trends and patterns in various ways (de Haas et al. 2020; Skeldon 1997; 2012). Prior research has highlighted the

state's importance in shaping migration systems, either considering the state and its policies as a whole or by focusing on specific policies, such as economic and labour policies and migration regimes (Rodriguez-Pena 2020; Skeldon 1997; Vezzoli 2015; 2020). The paper focuses on changes in Morocco's social and economic policies that affected its welfare regime in the 60-plus years since independence.

To better capture transformations over time, the social transformation framework pays particular attention to three concepts: juncture, speed, and sequencing of the interrelated changes that constitute social transformation. The concept of historical juncture (Castles 2010) refers to the points in history in which transformation processes take place and should be contextualised. For this paper, it is relevant to place transformations in Morocco's welfare regime in the context of the first 15 years after independence (1956 to 1971), followed by a stage in the 1970 to 1980s when Morocco embraced state-led developmentalist policies, and finally in a period where neoliberal ideology increasingly predominated (from the early 1980s until today). This third period is linked to structural adjustments under the auspices of the IMF and the World Bank (between 1983 and 1992) and to the free-trade agreements with the European Union (1996) and the United States (2003). Another highly significant historical dimension is Morocco's 60 years of outmigration to Europe, movement that has impacted the economic, cultural, and political aspects of Moroccan society. Speed refers to the pace of change, and sequencing refers to the timing of transitions in a particular dimension (for instance economic, political, cultural, demographic, or technological) in relation to the others (de Haas et al. 2020). The social transformation framework helps to disentangle the profound social changes taking place in the Todgha Valley over the last six decades, and it illustrates how these social changes relate to shifting aspirations and migration trends over the same period.

The third theoretical component of the paper is what Zelinsky called *the mobilities of the mind* to refer to the transformation and intensification of people's perceptions and thoughts at several levels, including the geographical, temporal, psychological, aesthetic, and scientific. This happens through flows of information that are increasingly available through broadcast media, education, cultural venues, and technological devices such as cameras, phones, and computers – something already observed by Zelinsky in the early 1970s and even more true today. According to Zelinsky, the mobilities of the mind and geographical mobility are “closely interrelated: increasing freedom of spatial movement is both cause and effect of other forms of enhanced mobility,” such as socioeconomic mobility. He also noted that an increase in spatial and intellectual mobility decreases place attachment and causes loss of family and social ties in a particular place (Zelinsky 1971, 225). While Zelinsky left this thought largely undeveloped, his insights call for scholars to examine how the interplay between migration and information in a particular location affect culture. This idea bears similarities to Mabogunje's (1970) concept of feedback processes of migration, according to which information circulating between places brings behaviour changes. The paper uses the idea of the mobilities of the mind to explore how the flows of information brought by education, tourism, migration, the Internet and social media have shaped people's life aspirations and ideas on migration.

At a cultural level, migration is an avenue for encounters with different norms, practices, opportunities, and lifestyles that can generate deep transformations in identities, norms, and behaviours in migrant-sending communities (de Haas 2010; Levitt 1998). Such transformations might differ for men and women due to gender-based differences. A possible significant cultural transformation is when a culture of migration emerges, a culture that tends to perpetuate migration, when people, especially the youth, admire migrant's lifestyles, their material success, and their ability to buy goods and property. Working abroad becomes embedded in the community's values, and international migration becomes part of the expected life course (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Taylor 1998, 105). Nevertheless, prior research indicates that a culture of migration is not a static or homogenous

phenomenon across social groups (Ali 2007; Scheele 2007; Wilson 2010). This study focuses on the interrelated political and cultural transformations in the welfare regime. It then looks at how such transformations shaped cultures of migration in the Todgha Valley over time.

3. Data, Methods, and Context

This case study draws on primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative empirical data collected in the Todgha Valley over 22 years – from 1998 to 2020. On the one hand, the primary data consists of 19 unstructured, face-to-face interviews with men and women plus field notes. This dataset was collected in January and March 2020 for the Migration as Development (MADE) project¹. The people interviewed face-to-face cover a wide age range (between 20 and 70 years old) and diverse villages along the Todgha Valley (urban centre and rural areas). The length of each interview varied between one and three hours. The 2020 fieldwork aimed to capture perceptions of changes over time in Todghawis' everyday lives and the drivers of such transformations. The interviews also detected how life aspirations (including migration) in the Todgha Valley have changed over the last 30 years. While women were included among interviewees, a note of caution is necessary. Some women shared their migration or mobility aspirations in a low voice or based their answers on their husband's plans. As such, women's expressed migration attitudes might not represent fully their migration perceptions and aspirations. The interviews reflect the views of the respondents before the outbreak of the global COVID-19 crisis. The interviews were conducted in Tamazight (Berber) with the assistance of a male translator, and notes were taken in English after each interview.

On the other hand, to analyse changes over time, the study combines the empirical data of the 2020 fieldwork with primary data from two other studies of the same oasis. The first study is from de Haas (2003; 2006) on the socioeconomic impacts of migration in the Todgha Valley, conducted between 1998 and 2000. De Haas based his work on historical secondary data, a household survey among 507 households, open interviews, and participant observation during two years of fieldwork. The second study involves qualitative and survey data collected between 2010 and 2011 for the EUMAGINE project, in which the author of this paper was centrally involved (Berriane, Aderghal, Jolivet, and Amzil 2012; De Clerck, de Haas, Hemmerechts, Jolivet, Timmerman, and Willems 2012; Jolivet 2015). The EUMAGINE project² studied how perceptions of human rights and democracy affect migration aspirations and decisions. This paper explores three of the criteria used to operationalise perceptions of human rights: perceptions of access to and quality of education, health care, and state-provided social protection. The interviews covered participant's views on three scales: in the Todgha Valley, Morocco, and Europe. More specifically, this paper draws on the project's 20 semistructured interviews and 500 surveys collected in the Todgha Valley among men and women between 18 and 39. The EUMAGINE project surveyed people in the Todgha Valley in March 2011, four weeks after the beginning of periodic social protests linked to the February 20 movement, the Moroccan extension of the Arab Spring revolutions. These protests resulted in a new constitution in July 2011, parliamentary elections in November and the first government led by an Islamic party in Morocco. The qualitative interviews were collected in November and December 2011.

The present study integrates the findings of the three studies to capture cultural transformations in welfare-related cultural repertoires and ideas on migration. Through a

¹ The *Migration as Development* project examined how processes of development and social transformation shape patterns of human migration and mobility over time.

² Funded by the European Commission, Directorate General for Research, 7th Framework Programme for Research – Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities – grant number 244703.

literature review and analysis of data from the World Development Indicators and the World Values Survey, the study examines political transformations in state-provided welfare provisions and how the population experienced them. The qualitative data was explored using Nvivo 12, combining deductive and inductive coding, and the quantitative datasets were analysed with Stata 15.

4. Political Transformations in the Welfare Regime of Morocco

With a public expenditure on social protection at 6.6 percent of the GDP, the same percentage as in Libya, Morocco is one of the smallest spenders on social protection in North Africa compared to Algeria (8.5 percent), Tunisia (10.4 percent), and Egypt (11.2 percent)³ (ILO 2017). The welfare regime in Morocco can be described as an *informal security system* (Wood 2004; Wood and Gough 2006), where community, family, and clientelism, that is, the exchange of favours and political or financial support, are usual practices to access social protection. By contrast, the role of the state as welfare provider, for instance through social benefits, is less widespread and rather limited to civil servants and a minority formally working in the private sector. This explains the (unfulfilled) aspirations of many to be employed in the public sector, in order to access job security and formal social protection. Nonetheless, the intervention of the state in the welfare regime has not remained static since the independence of Morocco. We can distinguish three main periods in its transformation.

The first period encompasses the post-independence period (1956 to the end of the 1970s), characterised by a controlled liberal economic system and the growth of the public sector (Bogaert and Emperador 2011; Catusse 2010). During these two decades, the state increasingly intervened in the economy by controlling prices and investing in irrigation plans and in domestic industry (Bogaert and Emperador 2011, 244; Cohen 2004; HCP 2006). Also, the state took measures in the areas of social insurance and social assistance, but these were fragmented and insufficiently developed (Catusse 2010; 2011). Morocco redistributed wealth and provided job security through employing people in the public sector rather than by making formal social protection more accessible overall (Bogaert and Emperador 2011; Catusse 2011). Although poverty decreased with an average rate of 4 percent per year from 1969 to 1984 (HCP 2006), schools, dispensaries, and hospitals had limited capacity and remained inaccessible for many (Catusse 2011).

During the second period, which started by the early 1980s, the state reduced its public spending and started to liberalise the economy to overcome a period of crisis in the agricultural sector, a decrease in export revenues, and the increasing costs of the conflict in the Western Sahara (Bogaert and Emperador 2011). Opportunities for qualified employment and improvements in living standards decreased, while the public deficit increased (HCP 2006). This situation led the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to intervene and the state to initiate a period of market reforms that resulted in the 1983 Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), through which the state aimed to liberalise the economy. In terms of welfare, the priorities were to reduce poverty and illiteracy as well as increase flexibility in the labour market. Budget cuts were paired with privatisation in education, pension funds, public services, and industry (Bogaert and Emperador 2011; Cohen 2004). Due to austerity-driven cutbacks in public expenditure, public employment became more difficult. Social mobility achieved through education and a subsequent job as a civil servant also became less straightforward. Furthermore, salaries in the public sector and in qualified positions in the private sector decreased (Cogneau and Tapinos 1995). These reforms contributed to increased

³ Percentage of GDP including health protection. Date from 2010 (Libya and Morocco), 2011 (Tunisia and Algeria), and 2015 (Egypt).

economic insecurity, unemployment, temporary employment, informal jobs, inequality, precarity, and social unrest (Bogaert 2015; Bogaert and Emperador 2011; Catusse 2010; 2011; Cohen 2004; HCP 2006). By the end of the 1990s, a period of economic growth increased living standards and reduced poverty although unemployment remained high (Jaidi 2016). In 1998, only one-sixth of the Moroccan population had health insurance and one-fifth of workers a pension scheme (Catusse 2011).

The accession to the throne of Mohamed VI, also known as “the king of the poor,” in 1999 represents the third juncture in the political transformations of Morocco’s welfare regime. An intensification of neoliberal reforms – through the privatisation of social policy interventions under the auspices of the state and the marketization of the activities of non-profit organisations (Bono 2010) – paired with an increase in social unrest in urban and rural contexts across Morocco, characterise this period from 1999 to early 2020s (Bogaert 2015; Catusse 2011; El Kahlaoui and Bogaert 2019). This period is marked by the creation in 2005 of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) to tackle poverty through collaborations between local state and non-state actors – under the supervision of the Prime Minister. In terms of social policy, three types of state intervention make this period distinct from the previous one. First, the state began to specialise and localise welfare provision by creating partnerships with private institutions, ranging from the World Bank or private corporate groups to neighbourhood associations (Bogaert 2015; Bogaert and Emperador 2011; Catusse 2011). For instance, the state cooperated with the multinational corporation Suez to provide water and electricity in the slums of Casablanca (Bogaert and Emperador 2011) instead of relying on public municipal organisations. Subsequent tariff increases by Suez in 2006 triggered social unrest (Bogaert 2015). Another example is how the state tackled lack of access to the housing market. Those with low and irregular incomes were marketed bank loans guaranteed by a public fund (FOGARIM) (Bogaert and Emperador 2011), with higher average interest rates than bank loans offered to better-off groups – people working in the public sector, the formal private sector, or international migrants (CCG 2016). Second, the state promoted entrepreneurship through microfinance projects, especially in urban areas (FNAM 2020)⁴, as a source of employment and social mobility (Catusse 2010; 2011; Cohen 2004). Aside from individual microcredits, the state fostered income generating activities through non-profit organisations – activities of production or transformation of goods and services for sale. In practice, the microcredit market is stagnating – Moroccans are not keen in contracting debts and banks incentives to reimburse the credits are limited. Subsequently banks prefer to increase the microcredits to what they consider reliable customers instead of taking risks with new ones (Fouillet, Guérin, Morvant-Roux, and Servet 2016). Regarding collective initiatives through non-profit organisations, they tend to marginalize not market-oriented development activities. Moreover, existing policies favour particular impoverished territories without considering individual socio-economic characteristics such as being or not unemployed or having dependent family members. Consequently, income generating projects often exclude the more deprived individuals as well as initiatives in non-priority areas (Bono 2010, 30). Third, the state sought to strengthen the formal social protection system through reforms, such as a new labour code to better protect employees and social policies on health insurance, occupational accidents, and pensions (Catusse 2005). Catusse (2010, 220) described state actions across the board as providing for the poor without giving them access to social rights: Regulations are poorly implemented, and the number of beneficiaries is limited. Morocco’s current formal contributory⁵ social protection system excludes, directly or indirectly, those working in agriculture and forestry, artisans, and temporary, occasional, and independent workers. Also

⁴ In 2019, microfinance customers in rural areas represented half of those in urban areas.

⁵ Contributions made by the beneficiaries or the employers.

excluded are subcontractors, those working in individual and family businesses, home-based workers (mainly women), as well as those in the informal economy (Catusse 2010). For this majority of people excluded from state-provided social protection, reforms during this third period encouraged them to seek private insurance in some sectors of activity; private insurance schemes exist, for instance, for artisans or small shopkeepers (Catusse 2010). For the more deprived, aside from self-employment and self-financing, reforms strengthened assistance through private, nongovernmental charities (Catusse 2005; 2010) rather than state-provided social assistance.

In sum, formal social provisions — including pensions, health insurance, and social insurance for workers in the public sector — are weak. Coverage is patchy and the system is fragmented at financial, sectorial, and administrative levels, with manifold public and private actors involved (Catusse 2010; MAGG 2018). The formal social protection system's weaknesses contrast with Mohamed VI's discourses that, since his coronation, have supported human rights and development for all social classes. The majority of the working population is not insured for work-related accidents and occupational diseases, and the country lacks a social protection system for children, the unemployed, and people with disabilities. Furthermore, 60 percent of the active population lack a pension scheme and 46 percent have no health insurance (CESE 2018). Although all Moroccans are nominally entitled to public health care, public hospitals are overcrowded and, because of their negative reputation, many Moroccans rely on the private medical sector if they can afford it.

5. The Cultural Repertoire around Welfare Provision in Morocco

In the first 15 years after independence, the government's decisions to intervene in the economy and increase employment in the public sector shaped people's ideas and beliefs about welfare provision in Morocco. Whereas policies on welfare provision changed from the 1980s onwards to favour private providers of social protection and self-sufficiency through self-employment, people kept expecting the state to maintain or even increase its role as welfare provider.

In 2018, Morocco's Human Development Index (HDI) value was 0.676, an increase of 47.7 percent since 1990. Over those 28 years, the Gross National Income per capita⁶ increased by more than 93 percent to reach USD 7,480 (UNDP 2019). Nevertheless, the 2007 World Values Survey revealed that poverty (74.6 percent) and inadequate education (42.2 percent) were the first and second most important problems the Moroccan population identified. The contrast between the state's increasing role as welfare provider in the postindependence period and the economy's subsequent liberalisation, combined with the people's precarious working and living conditions and their persistent exclusion from formal social protection, have led Moroccans to perceive that the development of a welfare state has stagnated. This perception is reflected in the enduring waves of social protests in urban and rural contexts across the country (Bogaert 2015; Bogaert and Emperador 2011). Cohen (2004) described the existential crisis the educated, urban middle-class youth experienced. They lacked opportunities for social mobility, material security, and self-fulfilment that the public sector used to facilitate. Although Cohen focused on the educated middle class that she qualified as the "detached middle," her work also described the resentment and dissatisfaction felt by less educated social groups, such as farmers or factory workers, who faced low wages, informal work, and exploitative working conditions (Cohen 2004, 172, 182).

Aside from the population's growing expectations of and frustrations with the state as welfare provider, the welfare regime's political transformations brought significant changes to its cultural aspects. Diminished spending power and reduced opportunities for public

⁶ GNI per capita (2011 PPP\$).

employment – a source of secure income and protection against risks – increased the need to diversify household incomes. As a result, women increasingly participated in paid work and adapted to their new role as providers of (additional) household income. Scholars have also related the drop in birth rates to decreased income security (Courbage and Todd 2007).

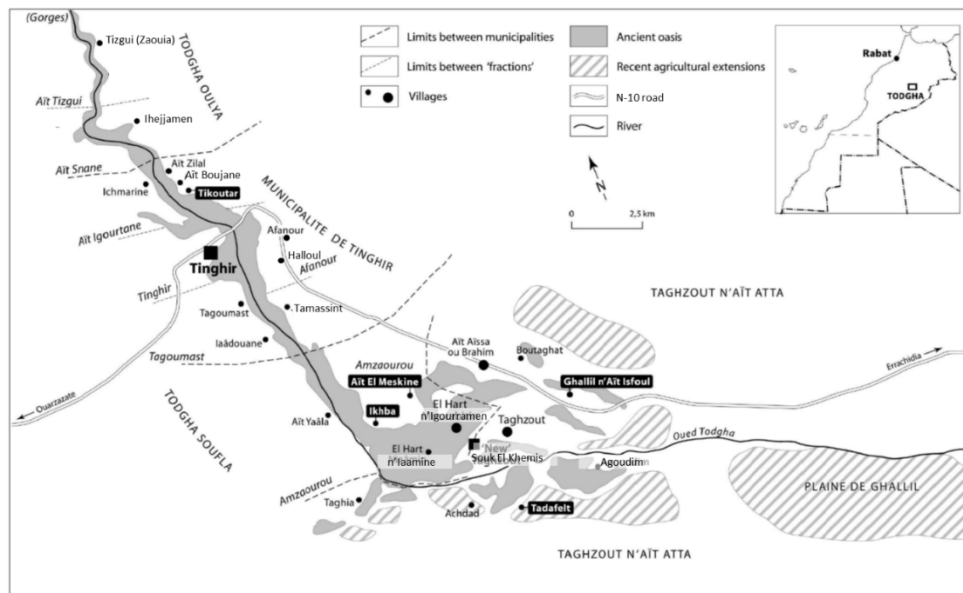
In this context where great proportions of the population lack protection and face material insecurity, migration can also be understood as a response to the formal social protection system's weaknesses (Sabates-Wheeler and Waite 2003; Stark and Bloom 1985). This is especially true in rural areas, where people have limited job opportunities and ways to increase their income; such opportunities can make families less vulnerable and, hence, increase their sense of security.

6. The Todgha Valley

The Todgha Valley is an oasis located in the southern Moroccan province of Tinghir. With 322,412 inhabitants, most of the province's population live in small villages classified as rural. About 23 percent of its population live in an urban environment, mainly in the capital Tinghir (over 42,000 inhabitants) and the smaller semiurban centre of Taghzout, with more than 14,500 residents (HCP 2019). Tinghir is situated along what was once an important caravan trading route. It remains one of the most important markets (suq) in the central pre-Sahara, a semiarid to arid transition zone between the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara located south of the Saghro mountains, home to several oases (de Haas 2003, 143 and 148).

As in other oases, the Todgha Valley has a long history of migration, with groups from different ethnic origins attracted to its agricultural and commercial character (de Haas 2003, 158). The valley's population consists of two distinct ethnic groups that live in different areas, although members of both groups have moved and settled in Tinghir in recent decades. The Aït Todoght (which means "people/those of the Todgha" in Tamazight), who live in the water-rich upstream and central parts of the valley, are a heterogeneous, sedentary, and multiethnic group in which members of the darker skinned lineages traditionally had a lower status in the community. The group used to include a sizeable Jewish community, most of whose members migrated to Israel after 1948 (de Haas 2003, 159). The monoethnic Aït 'Atta used to adhere to seminomadic (*transhumance*) lifestyles, but the vast majority has now become sedentary. The Aït 'Atta are probably the last ethnic group to have settled in the valley, specifically in its peripheric areas in the lower, downstream part. This area faces more restricted access to water resources, and its people used to live more marginalised geographically and politically (de Haas 2003, 133-8). The data in this study was collected among men and women from both ethnic origins in the upper, central, and lower parts of the valley (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of the Todgha Valley



Source: Adapted from de Haas (2003, 130).

International migration from the Todgha Valley started in the early 20th century or even earlier (Büchner 1986, 113), when predominantly Aït Todoght men migrated to Algeria and worked as agricultural labourers for the French until Algerian independence in 1962 (de Haas 2003, 159). This migration was mainly circular or seasonal. In the 1960s, migration to Europe started to increase, initially to France and mainly through “guest worker” recruitment programmes in which they initially had limited rights to stay permanently (de Haas 2003, 161). By the late 1970s, international migration became more permanent, and migrants’ profiles diversified due to family reunification. Spouses and children joined the male breadwinners who pioneered the migration process. Migration destinations also diversified, first to the Netherlands and then to Italy, Portugal, and, in particular, Spain (de Haas 2003, 164-5). While the Aït ‘Atta were underrepresented among the first set of international migrants, their migration increased progressively, especially to Spain, in the 1990s. By this time, several European countries had implemented more restrictive migration policies. In Spain, jobs were available and migration policies were less restrictive. Subsequently, the Aït ‘Atta often migrated irregularly due to their lack of networks that could facilitate their migration through official channels (de Haas 2003, 165). Later on, most of them gained a residence permit in Spain through a series of regularisation campaigns. In a partial repeat of the “guest worker” experience, these regularisations triggered family reunification, resulting in permanent settlement and sizeable Todgha communities in Spain. Tortosa, Tarragona, Barcelona, and Bilbao are the most frequently mentioned destinations.

Migration from the Todgha Valley has traditionally been masculine. Female migration is mainly linked to family formation, reunification, or disintegration. Although some women migrate independently to work, often seasonally as agricultural labourers in Agadir or Huelva (Spain), most women migrate internally or internationally once they marry, in order to live with their husbands. If they divorce, they tend to return to the family house. This traditional, more “passive role” expected of Todgha Valley women might explain the tendency we observed of women to avoid openly sharing their individual migration aspirations, particularly if these are not driven by family or education motivations.

Over the past 70 years, the Todgha Valley's living conditions, standard of living, and access to public health care have improved. At the same time, a decrease in poverty levels, the diversification of economic resources, and better access to education and public facilities triggered higher life aspirations. Several factors have contributed to this cultural transformation, including higher levels of education, more access to media (through television, satellite dishes, and more recently the internet), and contact with migrants and international tourists visiting the oasis. Together, these factors have broadened people's perspectives and expanded the mobilities of the mind in the Todgha Valley (de Haas 2003, 353).

7. Continuities and Discontinuities in the Todgha Valley's Culture of Migration

This section analyses chronologically the results of the three research projects included in this study. For each period, it highlights select migration feedback mechanisms, people's perceptions of migration, and changing drivers of migration aspirations. The analysis points to a shift from temporary to longer-term migration patterns, which are due to people's increased aspirations "to have rights."

7.1. Material and Lifestyle Aspirations at the Turn of the Millennium

The study by de Haas (de Haas 2003) was conducted at the turn of the millennium (1998 to 2000). At that time, after four decades of international outmigration, 41 percent of the surveyed households had direct or indirect access to international migration resources (de Haas 2003, 344). The social stratification structures of the Todgha Valley had partially shifted with migration. Although traditional distinctions between ethnic groups remained important, international migration had provided migrants' families with social and economic mobility through their incomes and remittances at a time when Morocco's welfare policy privileged self-reliance as the main source of social mobility.

Material outcomes of migration — such as the construction of new concrete houses in lieu of the old adobe ones, the purchase of land and consumer goods, the gifts brought by migrants, their cars, and their family celebrations — were the most visible effects of migration on improved general wellbeing and social position of migrants' families. De Haas also described the increased relative deprivation Todghawis felt in terms of individual, social, and material success as a consequence of migration (de Haas 2003, 351).

Migrants were the welfare providers in the family. Additionally, the welfare-related cultural repertoire of the Todgha Valley shifted to include the expectation that migrants should contribute to the wider community's welfare by giving gifts, providing for employment, helping others to migrate, or contributing to the construction of a new mosque in the village. Despite the generally positive perceptions of migration, in the late 1990s, Todghawis tended to compare the "good" older migrants who returned (either during holidays or more permanently) and shared their wealth with those who stayed, and the "bad" younger migrants who were still abroad (de Haas 2003, 345-346). The latter were considered more individualistic and rather stingy.

Migration aspirations linked to welfare provision, including access to state-provided healthcare, education, and social security, were observed, but in the late 1990s, the desire to migrate was mainly driven by aspirations of increased income and a more modern and liberal lifestyle than people could achieve if they stayed in the Todgha Valley. Despite Morocco's underdeveloped welfare state, people's aspirations combined material security and self-expression values.

Traditionally, the male breadwinner of the household was the one who migrated to provide for the family. Over time, most migrants reunified with other members of the

household. In line with the traditional values of a patriarchal model, the household head had the formal authority to decide if and who migrates (de Haas and Fokkema 2010). Nevertheless, a mother’s influence on her children’s migration decisions shouldn’t be underestimated. In his 2020 interview, Said, a single man in his late 30s, shared that his mother suspected what he was trying to do when he travelled in 2004 to Tangier, intending to migrate to Spain irregularly:

She called me every day telling me that she knew that I wanted to leave because she had a dream where I was at sea. After a week, I realised that what I was doing was crazy and this was not the way I should migrate.

Influenced by his mother, Said went back to the Todgha Valley and kept trying to migrate. He finally left regularly to Canada 16 years later through an official hiring programme.

In this period, Todghawis perceived migration as the norm rather than the exception. Most men and women, especially the younger ones, aspired to leave the oasis temporarily to improve their material and social position. Those with secondary or higher education, the detached middle of the oasis, were particularly driven to achieve this latter aspect (de Haas 2003, 351-2). Even the most deprived saw migrating without the necessary permits as an opportunity for material improvement and to access a more developed welfare state in terms of health care, education, and social security. The prospect of getting legal status once in Europe encouraged these aspirations (de Haas 2003, 354).

7.2. *Fluctuations in the Desirability of Migration with the 2008 Economic Crisis*

The data of the EUMAGINE project was collected during the global economic recession that started in 2007 in the United States. Spain was particularly hit by the crisis, where the unemployment rate almost doubled between 2000 and 2011 (OECD 2020) – see Table 1.

Table 1. Unemployment rate in Spain and France between 2000 and 2019

	2000	2011	2019
Spain	11.92	21.41	14.1
France	9.56	9.18	8.5

Source: OECD Employment Outlook 2020 (OECD 2020)

In 2011, with only slight differences across localities in the valley, an average of 56 percent of Todghawis considered their parents’ standard of living worse or much worse than theirs. This confirms formal data showing huge improvements in living standards achieved over just one to two generations. However, it is important to take into account that a significant share of the youth⁷ surveyed felt a stagnation (27.6 percent) or even worsening of the situation compared to their parents (16.4 percent). This seems particularly related to the youth perceiving that the state’s ability to provide work and protection had deteriorated, stagnated, or failed. A 29-year-old male entrepreneur interviewed in Tinghir reflected on the perceived status quo in living and working conditions:

⁷ ‘Youth’ refers to people aged 18-39, as defined in the EUMAGINE project.

Nobody in Tinghir will tell you about any advancements at the institutional level. Underemployment is one main characteristic of Tinghir, because we lack the industries that provide employment. Graduated young people are unemployed. Employment is a serious problem. Furthermore, roads are in a poor state, there is a lack of administration and of other basic infrastructures.

Todghawis' strong negative opinions on access to and quality of social protection, health care, and education also reveal the weaknesses of formal welfare provisions. On average, more than three-quarters of the population (77.8 percent) considered that state-provided social protection for the poor was bad or very bad.⁸ The majority also assessed negatively (bad or very bad) the provision of health care (86 percent) and quality of the schools (73 percent). Among the Aït Atta of the relatively isolated rural centre of Taghzout, perceptions of health care and state-provided social protection were particularly negative. Furthermore, women were more negative than men regarding health care and education, whereas men were more pessimistic about social protection. Finally, the youngest group (under age 20) was more negative about education, whereas those 30 to 39 were slightly more negative about social protection. These minor differences may indicate that domains relevant at specific life stages or within particular gender roles tend to be perceived more negatively.

Interviews also provided evidence that decades of intensive emigration to Europe had shaped people's ideas and expectations of the state's role. Evidence of such cultural migration-feedback mechanisms were visible in people's ideas on the welfare state. According to this 18-year-old female secondary school student from Tinghir:

Abroad, laws are implemented in all areas. Here laws exist but they are not implemented. There [in Europe], there are allowances in case of unemployment or illness. Also, people receive pension benefits as soon as they reach the retirement age. People benefit from holidays entitlements, here you are paid according to the actual work; if you do not work you do not get anything. There, you get allowances abroad, they know about human rights and they implement them. Here, they do not give rights to people, even if you are poor you do not get anything.

The recession, as well as the experiences of returned migrants to the Todgha Valley, informed and shaped how Todghawis viewed European welfare states. Some returned documented migrants from the Todgha Valley were eligible for unemployment benefits and family allowances for long-term unemployment; in Spain the latter were relatively low and temporary, around EUR 400 per month at that time for up to six months⁹. Migration affected knowledge of state-provided welfare benefits across Europe, as shown in the detailed description and even caricaturing of perceived welfare differentials from a 35-year-old man:

There are huge differences, for instance between Germany and France; they say that Germany is better than France. They also say that Switzerland is a good country (...). [Differences are] at all levels; wages, insurance, pension. For instance, they say that in France your life is secured, you benefit from an insurance and a pension. However, in Spain and Portugal such rights are nonexistent.

In 2011, the unemployment rate among migrants from Morocco in Spain reached 50 percent (Colectivo IOE 2012). These social and economic changes in Europe affected the culture of

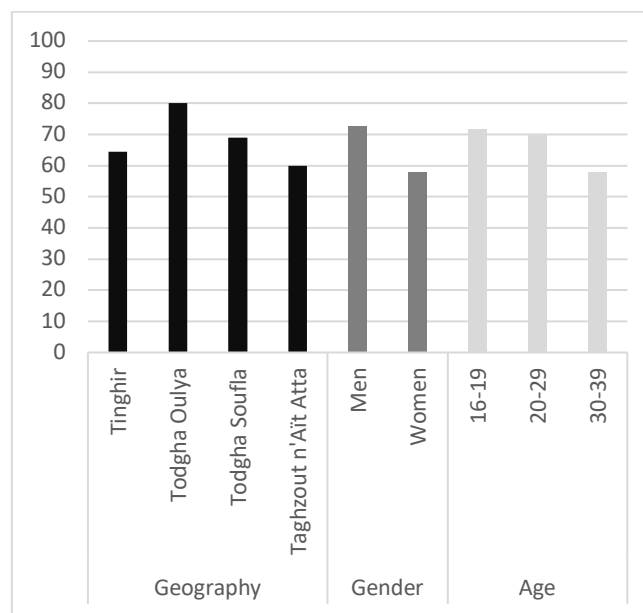
⁸ Perceptions of state-provided social protection are based on the variable that measured with a five-point Likert scale the perception of "help from the government for poor people who need it in Morocco."

⁹ Source: Real Decreto Ley 1/2011

migration of the Todgha Valley, for example strengthening Todghawis’ views that migration also has a dark side. They perceived migration as more challenging than in the past and especially difficult for irregular migrants. At the time of the survey, many Todghawis tended to believe it was better to stay put in the oasis than to migrate irregularly to Europe (Jolivet 2015). Furthermore, they perceived that migration without the ability to rely on migration networks and to get the necessary permits once in Europe had become harder.

Nevertheless, the survey revealed that the desirability of migration remained high – see Figure 2. The majority of people between ages 18 and 39 kept aspiring to migrate if they were given the necessary papers for living and working in Europe – 65 percent on average. This was especially true for young men. The lowest rates of migration aspirations appeared in the Aït Atta-dominated lower Todgha (60 percent), where migrants have mainly migrated to Spain.

Figure 2. Geographic, gender and age differences in the Todgha Valley in the percentage of people aspiring to migrate to Europe in 2011¹⁰.



Source: EUMAGINE (2012).

Independent of their migration aspirations, respondents were asked about the best country for a Moroccan to migrate to. Throughout the valley, only 3.2 percent of respondents indicated that Spain would be the best destination while 83 percent named France. Only 5 percent of respondents cited less common destinations, such as Canada, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Consistent with interviews in 1999, many Todghawis in 2011 perceived younger migrants as more selfish than earlier generations of migrants. Furthermore, Todghawis made a distinction between older and younger migrants based on the success of their migration project. Older migrants were “winners” and younger ones “losers” who faced unemployment and hardship in Europe during the great economic crisis (Jolivet 2015, 567). Furthermore, 50.6 percent of Todghawis agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that migrants from Morocco in Europe were treated badly. Although this may have contributed to diminishing the social prestige of recent migrants, many youngsters still wished to migrate. The highest rate was

¹⁰ Percentages of those who answered “go to Europe” to the question “if somebody were to give you the necessary papers for going to live or work in Europe, what would you do”.

observed among young men under 20 living in the urban centre of Tinghir – twelve of the fifteen surveyed aspired to migrate.

7.3. Explicit Migration Aspirations “To Have Rights” in 2020

The fieldwork conducted between January and March 2020 revealed that the disjuncture between the welfare regime in which people aspire to live and its actual development remained unchanged over time despite Morocco’s improvements in life expectancy, access to knowledge, and standard of living (UNDP 2019). This gap can partially explain the observed persistence of migration aspirations among younger generations, especially men, even as work availability in the valley improved. Older generations also perceived the welfare state in Europe as better than Morocco’s lack of formal social protections. To illustrate the point, this is the response from an old manager of a coffeehouse when I simply asked, “How is life?”:

As long as we are healthy we are fine, we have everything (...). Here you need to work to live. If you become sick, you cannot work and you are not protected. It is not like in Europe.

While the two previous studies conducted in 1998 to 2000 and 2011 observed that migration had a direct and profound impact on cultural change in the valley, the 2020 fieldwork revealed that younger generations could less clearly identify the impacts of migration on cultural transformation. When asked about factors that had brought about cultural change in the Todgha Valley, young people mentioned mainly education and new technologies, such as television and the Internet. This could reflect the important role of education, smartphones, and the Internet in the cultural transformations of the valley. It could also illustrate the extent to which migration has become the norm, so ordinary in the oasis that it remains unmarked (Zerubavel 2018) and no longer worth mentioning. In 2020, only the older generations (those in their 50s or older) explicitly cited the impact of migration. This contrasts with previous decades, when many people could compare their lives with pre-migration times and when the lifestyles and ideas migrants brought were strikingly different from the situation of nonmigrants. The shift in perception of cultural change may also be tied to Tinghir’s rapid expansion in education, access to media, and urban growth. New lifestyles and ideas already started to change local culture and ideas of the “good life” to such an extent that the contrast with social remittances and migrants’ cultural changes became less striking and identifiable.

Furthermore, in 2020, those over 60 observed with criticism the luxurious lifestyle that younger generations aspired to, independently of whether they were migrants or not, in contrast to the more austere and simpler lifestyle of older generations. These observations that young people “do not want to work hard” and aspire to a life with less deprivation than their elders are not totally new. However, it’s worth noting the striking shift in how younger people describe the aspired-to lifestyle. They do not seek only material security, as the first migrants who left in the 1960s did, or a higher income to afford conspicuous consumption to buy a car or a smartphone – something for which older generations also criticise them. Increasingly they seek social rights to improve their material security, social status, and quality of life. For example, this young man, born in a family of potters, is opposed to the idea of following in his father’s footsteps:

I want to work in a company that provides a contract and insurance. It does not matter what kind of occupation. What matters is having a contract and insurance. Even when we were young, we were not interested in becoming potters because we saw that our

fathers were poor and were always living in the same house. If you look around, the owners of the big houses are those who are in Europe.

Over the last 20 years, Todghawis have increased their consciousness of and expectations for human rights. This is especially true for people aged under 40. This awareness might have resulted from the king's promising official discourses on good governance, human rights, and eradication of poverty. The stories migrants brought back about the exploitation and exclusion of Moroccan migrants in Europe, especially those without legal status, might also explain this shift in life aspirations, characterised by higher expectations of social security and higher demands of the state. As in previous decades, migration in 2020 was still considered a main source of material and social mobility, with the desire to increase one's income a major driver of migration. But this aspiration to use migration to Europe as a means to access "rights" became much more explicit and reflects the mobilities of the mind in the valley.

The testimonies of two young men in their 20s, Adel and Rafiq, illustrate the mutually reinforcing links between aspirations of material security and access to social rights. Adel is the eldest son in a low-income family that lives in a village in the lower Todgha's southern end. He dropped out of school in the sixth grade, when he was 12, because his family could not afford his move to the centre of Tinghir, where he would have continued his studies. In other words, his family's poverty constrained his mobility (Schewel 2020) and, as a consequence, his access to education. In his 20s, Adel became a circular, internal migrant, working odd jobs in the construction sector in northern Morocco to provide for his family's basic needs. Nevertheless, Adel still aspires to migrate "abroad" in order to send remittances that would pay for his younger siblings' education costs and prevent them from dropping out of school. In contrast to Adel, Rafiq's family seems to be doing economically better. Rafiq lives in the big and recently refurbished family house, except when he "travels" periodically as a circular migrant to work for some days or weeks in other parts of Morocco. He is also a construction worker although he would prefer to work as an electrician – around 50 percent of men in Tinghir province worked in the construction sector in 2014 (HCP 2019). He said he considered that his employers pay poorly and late and that his income barely covers his basic food and accommodation needs:

Also, you are not paid an hourly rate, you get between 50 and 100 MAD¹¹ per day and working hours are unlimited. You can work from sunrise to sunset, ten hours. And if you fall, they will take you home and nobody will care about it. This is different abroad. They have more rights. I know some people in Spain who are covered by insurance; they are paid well and get paid holiday periods. You have two months of holidays if you include weekends.

The first generation of migrants from the 1960s and 1970s generally intended to return to the Todgha Valley after they had earned enough money. However, many ended up staying, partly because immigration restrictions made them fearful of giving up their right to circulate between Morocco and Europe (de Haas 2003, 103). In contrast, young migrants' and aspiring migrants' intentions in 2020 are often to *stay abroad* and settle permanently in order to access the perceived material and subjective wellbeing typical of a welfare regime that they consider out of reach in Morocco. This shift suggests that increased welfare aspirations and unlikely access to such formal social protections in Morocco have become increasingly important drivers of long-term migration and have reduced the aspiration to return. The main goal is no longer limited to earning extra money to establish a family, build a house, start a small enterprise back

¹¹ Ten dirhams (MAD) is the equivalent of approximately one euro.

home, or enable their children or siblings to study at universities in order to access civil service jobs. Rather, the aim is to improve their long-term wellbeing and social security. Importantly, this reflects a more general process of cultural transformation in Morocco and the Todgha Valley, as well as the concomitant changing ideas of the “good life” and expectations of livelihood security. Also, the goal of long-term migration reflects the sentiment that pursuing a higher education degree no longer guarantees a well-paid and secure (government) job in Morocco.

In 2020, some segments of the population see more opportunities in irregular migration than in 2011. Low-educated young and middle-aged single men, especially main providers of the household, are the most willing to pursue irregular channels. Additionally, it’s become increasingly common to see teenagers and young men under 20 migrate to Spain. Their migration appears to be a more individual project compared to previous generations who migrated as part of a strategy to spread resources for the household, as described in the new economics of labour migration framework (Stark 1984; Stark and Bloom 1985). According to their family members, the young migrants live in residences of minors and have access to education and subsequently an occupation. At age 18, they obtain Spanish citizenship, which gives them access to the social rights they lack in Morocco. According to interviewees, these young men live in Barcelona and Bilbao, although it is unclear if this was part of their migration imaginaries or the actual place of residence. Existing studies in Spain confirm the growing number of minors and young migrants in Spain since 2015, but their parents’ perception of their level of protection in Spain contrasts with negative recent reports in the media and from NGOs (Perazzo Aragonese and Zuppiroli 2018; Vargas 2018; 2019).

According to newspaper articles, these young men migrate to Spain irregularly, doing so dangerously and unaccompanied (Vargas 2018; 2019). Although our fieldwork confirmed that this is true in some cases, many of these young migrants in fact travelled securely on a tourist visa, highlighting that this is generally a rather well-planned, deliberate migration strategy. Our fieldwork revealed that while some migrate without informing their parents, we also collected the experiences of several fathers and mothers who were drawn into their sons’ migration projects despite initially being against such plans. This is the case of a mother of four, whose two eldest male children live in Spain. Her testimony of her children’s migration aspirations reflect young men’s lack of hope for a life with rights, opportunities, and self-fulfilment in Morocco, as well as a general lack of trust in the state.

They did not leave because they were in need, they needed food or shelter. The reason is that we educated them with a sense of dignity and to take care of themselves. But when they were outside, at school, in the street, they faced difficulties and met people who said that Morocco is useless and even if you study you will not get anything in return. (...) That’s what pushed them to look for dignity abroad (...) Even if you have studies or a good job, when you go to a public administration or a hospital, you will be treated like rubbish. (...) People are suffering, I met a woman yesterday who is trying to sell a plot of land to ensure a safe migration for her son, who otherwise will die in the sea. (...) [My children] were smart, good kids, but we did not have the luck to be in a Morocco that would provide opportunities for them. That’s what I wish for my children.

The 2020 fieldwork reveals that couples and single parents with different socioeconomic conditions finally agreed to help their sons migrate to avoid the perceived risks of irregular, unaccompanied migration trajectories. I did not observe such migration practices in young daughters. Spain is not always the preferred destination. YouTube videos shape their ideas about better living conditions in countries such as Sweden and Germany and about the

opportunities to migrate irregularly to Spain. Social media has become an indirect feedback mechanism that influences the migration aspirations of these young men. We observed that the parents' level of involvement depends on their capacity to cover migration costs or to obtain the necessary visa to travel with them to Spain. Challenging the traditional patriarchal model of informal welfare provision, these young men have taken from their fathers the role of deciding and providing for their own welfare. As such, in these households, the teenagers' and under-20 young men's feelings of paralysis and their long-standing lack of hope for improvements to Morocco's welfare regime have transformed the norms and roles about their migration decisions.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

Through a case study drawing on primary and secondary data collected over 22 years at three points in time (1998 to 2000, 2011, and 2020) in the south-Moroccan Todgha Valley, this paper explored the effects of meso- and macrolevel changes on understandings, aspirations, and expectations around welfare provision and how people's migration aspirations changed as a result. The paper focused on the political and cultural transformations in the welfare regime of Morocco. It then explored how such transformations and international emigration contributed to this region's changing cultures of migration, that is, the normalisation of migration as part of community values and the expected life course. Literature on the culture of migration tends to focus on its emergence and describes it as a rather fixed phenomenon. This paper demonstrated that cultures of migration are instead multifaceted, gendered and generational. They are influenced by and they shape other social changes, for instance, at the cultural, political, or technological level.

This paper showed how, during Morocco's postcolonial period, increased access to formal social protection through public employment quickly raised people's expectations of the state's role as welfare provider. However, Morocco's increasingly neoliberal welfare policies resulted in a gap between rapid cultural shifts in welfare-related cultural repertoires and Todghawis' negative perceptions of political changes in the welfare regime. People's ideas and expectations about the state's role as welfare provider remained high and even increased over time, whereas social policy shifted to favour the privatisation and individualisation of welfare provision. As a consequence, welfare-related cultural repertoires increasingly incorporated migration to Europe as a way to cope with — and overcome — the weaknesses of the political welfare regime.

Simultaneously, migration also shaped Todghawis' ideas about welfare provision and expectations of the state. In particular, the experiences of Todgha Valley migrants living in or having come back from Europe sharpened their awareness and opinions of the Moroccan state's weaknesses as a welfare provider. Migration feedbacks included success stories of migrants but also their negative experiences of unemployment or irregular status in Europe. The study revealed that factors that helped shape life aspirations in the Todgha Valley include migration feedbacks, better access to education, and better living conditions. In addition, events and trends beyond the oasis have influenced life aspirations. These include official welfare reforms to give the population more rights, widespread social unrest in rural and urban contexts to demand more opportunities and rights, and the development of and access to media and the Internet. Lastly, while Todghawis viewed migration as a way to cope with the lack of state-provided social protection, emigration also increasingly shaped their expectations about migrants as welfare providers. Migrants were expected to redistribute their wealth to family members and the community by helping those who had stayed in the oasis, giving them presents, or building a mosque in the village.

Over time, migration remained a desirable way to fulfil such life aspirations. Nevertheless, periodic fluctuations and more structural changes in both Morocco and main European destination countries caused temporary changes in migration aspirations. For instance, most Todghawis temporarily lost interest in irregular migration during the 2010s recession in Europe that started with the 2008 financial crisis. But other, deeper shifts in the Todgha Valley's cultures of migration are visible when we compare the migration perceptions and aspirations of different generations. First, we see a shift towards more individualistic migration aspirations in the younger generation. While migration generally remains a household project, male youngsters and minors, instead of adult males, have increasingly taken the initiative in the families' migration practices. They draw their parents into it, persuading them to organise their migration. Also, impatience and lack of faith that the Moroccan state will improve education, health care, and social protection, as well as Europe's restrictive migration policies, have changed norms regarding who decides to migrate. Second, we see the shift from temporary to long-term migration aspirations is linked to younger generations' higher expectations of the state as welfare provider and their lack of hope that they can live in Morocco with more social rights. Finally, we observe that the pace of transformations in the culture of migration in the valley is different between men and women – despite an increase in female migration, women's migration aspirations are still less explicitly expressed.

Overall, intrinsic aspirations linked to desiring more rights have become more explicit, reflecting the expanding mobilities of the mind in the Todgha Valley. At the turn of the 21st century, perceptions of material and social success — but also aspirations of freedom and self-fulfilment — characterised the Todgha Valley's culture of migration. This confirms that postmaterialist values, such as self-expression, freedom, and quality of life, coexist with materialist values in lower-income countries with insufficiently developed welfare states, incomplete transitions in the labour market structure and where people live with material insecurity and lack trust in the state.

Furthermore, the persistent or even increasing gap between the politically driven transformation of Morocco's welfare system — more fitting with neoliberal models — and cultural transformations that increased people's expectations of the state illustrate why it's important to consider the welfare regime's different dimensions and its changes over time when we aim to understand welfare as a driver of migration. Along with a sense of stagnation and lack of real reform, this gap likely explains why Todghawis aspire to leave permanently despite considerable improvements to the standard of living since the 1950s. More generally, these findings exemplify why researchers need to fully integrate issues of social security, inequality, and welfare provision — as well as the central role of the state — when analysing the various ways social transformation in origin and destination countries shape migration processes.

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