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## Declining migration from Morocco to the Netherlands and the diminutive causation of migration

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- analyse migration as part of broader global change
- contribute to new theoretical approaches
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## Abstract

Migration research offers abundant research and theories to describe and explain why migration flows, once started, appear to have an inherent tendency to grow, but offers few insights into why established migration corridors may also decline. This paper focuses on an empirical example of declining migration: migration from Morocco to the Netherlands. Although the Netherlands accommodates a large Moroccan immigrant community, formed by former guest workers who arrived from the mid-1960s onwards and their offspring, immigration from Morocco to the Netherlands has been diminishing steadily since the mid-1990s. This paper explains this declining migration with the concept of diminutive causation, the counterpart of the concept of cumulative causation (Massey, 1990). Diminutive causation also entails a longitudinal multi-level explanation with interconnected macro, meso and micro-factors. We analyse in particular the strategic role played by individual migrants and their networks in reducing immigration. Three aspects are examined: first, changing beliefs of migrants in the Netherlands; second, migration-undermining feedback provided by migrants to prospective migrants; and third, the changing nature of migration cultures and migratory aspirations in Morocco due to the migration-undermining feedback by migrants.

**Keywords:** migration, Morocco, the Netherlands, diminutive causation,

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This paper draws on the theoretical research and empirical work undertaken within the project ‘Theorizing the Evolution of European Migration Systems’ (THEMIS). In this research, the department of Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) in the Netherlands is cooperating with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in Norway, the International Migration Institute (IMI) at the University of Oxford in the UK, and the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning at the University of Lisbon (IGOT-UL) in Portugal. The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the THEMIS project, but only those of the joint authors. The author would like to thank the members of THEMIS for their constructive criticism, and especially Oliver Bakewell for drawing our attention to the ‘Coleman boat’. We also thank Sanne van der Pol, Marije Faber en Joost Jansen for their help with the coding and for their editorial comments.

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Diminutive causation .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Data and methodology .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1	Rotterdam respondents .....	8
3.2	Respondents from Nador and Rabat.....	8
<b>4</b>	<b>Declining immigration from Morocco to the Netherlands .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Changing institutional contexts of immigration .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Migration-undermining feedback mechanisms .....</b>	<b>13</b>
6.1	Changing beliefs and desires of settled migrants to support prospective migrants – the situational mechanism .....	13
6.2	Declining inclination to support new migrants – the action-formation mechanism.....	15
6.3	Migration cultures in transition – the transformational mechanism.....	18
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion and discussion .....</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>Appendix: .....</b>	<b>26</b>

# 1 Introduction

Migration research offers abundant explanation and theories why migration flows, once started, appear to have an inherent tendency to grow, but offers less insights why migration may also decline (de Haas 2010). This paper focuses on an empirical example of declining migration: migration from Morocco to the Netherlands. Although the Netherlands accommodates a large Moroccan immigrant community, formed by guest workers who arrived from the mid-1960s onwards and their offspring, immigration from Morocco to the Netherlands has been diminishing steadily since the mid-1990s. This paper explains this declining migration with the concept of diminutive causation. This notion may be viewed as the counterpart of the concept of cumulative causation formulated by Massey (1990). As in Massey, diminutive causation entails a longitudinal multi-level explanation in which macro-, meso- and micro-factors interconnect. In this paper, we analyse the strategic role played by individual migrants and their networks in reducing immigration in particular. Three aspects are examined: (i) changing beliefs and motivations of migrants in the Netherlands to support prospective migrants; (ii) migration-undermining feedback provided by migrants to prospective migrants; and (iii) the changing nature of migration cultures and migratory aspirations in Morocco due to the migration-undermining feedback from settled migrants in the Netherlands.

The aim of the paper is to explain the declining migration from Morocco to the Netherlands not by focussing on various macro-level factors that influence the extent of migration, but by showing how macro-level factors change the motivations and behaviour of migrants in the Netherlands, family members of migrants in Morocco, and those who are near to them (including return migrants from the Netherlands). We draw on data from in-depth interviews with 30 first-generation Moroccan migrants in the Dutch city of Rotterdam and 44 respondents from the Rabat and Nador areas in Morocco. This article is organised as follows. In the next section we formulate the central dimensions of the concept of diminutive causation. Next we describe our data and methodology. We then examine the dominant institutional changes that occurred in the contexts of reception of Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands between 1960 and today. This is followed by a section in which the three mechanisms responsible for the process of diminutive causation are presented empirically. We conclude by discussing the main findings and by addressing some of the limitations of the study design.

## 2 Diminutive causation

Migration research offers many insights on how migration flows arise and develop, but relatively few on declining migration flows. The implicit assumption seems to be that once migration has started and a critical number of migrants have settled at the destination, migration becomes a self-perpetuating process (Massey et al., 2009: 280; de Haas, 2010: 1588).

Very influential in this respect has been the theory of cumulative causation as developed by Massey and colleagues (Massey, 1990; Massey et al., 1993). Central to this theory is that migration induces changes in social and economic structures (especially in the origin country) to sustain the process of migration. The theory of cumulative causation is one of the most ambitious and developed theories in the migration literature, offering an explanation for self-reinforcing processes of international migration. It not only incorporates multiple levels (micro, meso, and macro), but also includes a longitudinal perspective. Massey's model is an attempt to interrelate individual behaviour, migrant networks, community structures and macro-level political and economic factors. Massey particularly identifies powerful feedback mechanisms that lead to the cumulative causation of

migration. Furthermore, he (1990: 5) argues that migrant networks – ‘sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas by ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin’ – are decisive in determining migration decisions and thus contribute to the perpetuation of migration. Contact with migrants increases the likelihood of migration, as it reduces the costs and boosts the anticipated benefit. The first migrants need to find their way as pioneers in the destination country, and for them the costs are high. They can then help out new arrivals with jobs, housing and relevant documents, making it easier and cheaper for them. Migration is also stimulated through various migration-facilitation feedback mechanisms in the origin area. As an example, remittances by migrants create greater inequality in the sending region. This gives rise to feelings of relative deprivation among non-migrant households, which is further intensified by the forms of ‘conspicuous consumption’ by migrants when they visit their home region. This perceived deprivation reinforces the desire of non-migrants to migrate as well (Massey et al., 1993). This is particularly so if the origin region offers little opportunities of earning a stable income and if the access to the destination countries and their labour markets is relatively easy and the opportunities to make money there are ample (see also de Haas, 2010; Goldin et al., 2011).

In the study *Worlds in Motion*, Massey et al. (2009) list eight ways through which migration acquires a self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing character.<sup>1</sup> One important mechanism is the expansion of migrant networks; another concerns the establishment of a migration culture. As migration becomes increasingly common in a community, the values and cultural perceptions of that community evolve in a way that increases the likelihood of future migration. Migration is increasingly seen as a valuable and normal ambition. Migration becomes deeply embedded in the repertoire of people’s behaviour, and the values associated with migration become part of the community’s values (Massey et al., 2009; Heering et al., 2004). However, Massey et al. (2009: 48) also acknowledge possible ‘limits to cumulative causation’. At a certain point, the process reaches ‘network saturation where virtually all households have a close connection to someone with migrant experience [...] When networks reach this level of development, the costs of migration stop falling with each new entrant and the process of migration loses its dynamism’ (Massey 1990: 8). Economic developments (labour shortages and rising local wages) in the sending regions may also reduce the out-movement of migrants (Massey, 1990: 8, Massey et al., 2009: 48-49).

The theory of cumulative causation provides a valuable tool to explain this migration from Morocco to the Netherlands: the recruitment of so-called guest workers since the mid-1960s and the subsequent arrival of their partners and children since the mid-1970s (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2011; de Haas, 2007). This process of cumulative causation begins to stagnate however, after twenty years, resulting in a steadily declining migration from Morocco to the Netherlands since.

In this paper, we argue that this stagnation is not so much due to network saturation, but a consequence of a process we coin ‘diminutive causation’. This notion of diminutive causation is already visible in Myrdal’s (1957) original formulations of cumulative or circular causation that has been reintroduced and developed further by Massey. In his analysis of world poverty, Myrdal showed that the dynamics of cumulative causation may cause upward spirals of increasing wealth but also downward spirals of increasing poverty. Often, these two processes are interrelated: the upward spiral of an economy may be an important contributor to another’s downward spiral (see also Myrdal, 1970;

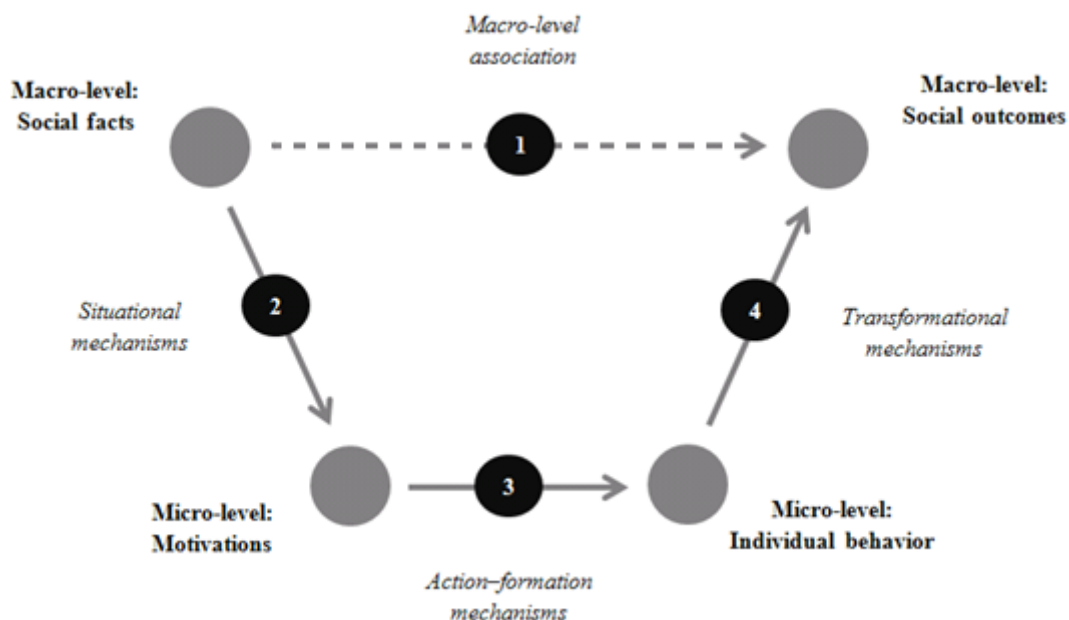
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<sup>1</sup> Massey et al. (2009: 46-48) mention the expansion of migrant networks, the distribution of income, the distribution of land, the organisation of agriculture, cultural factors, the regional distribution of human capital, the social meaning of work, and the structure of production.

Rigney, 2010). The theory of cumulative causation describes several mechanisms that lead to *upwards spirals of migration*, while the concept of diminutive causation tries to specify mechanisms that lead to *downward spirals of migration*. In both causes however, positive feedback loops are at work, which contribute to self-amplifying processes of increasing or decreasing migration. In this paper, we will focus in particular on the ‘agentic role’ of individual migrants in influencing migration practices and migration culture (Paul 2011: 1844, Bakewell et. al. 2013).

Coleman (1986; 1990) and Hedström and Swedberg’s work (1998) on ‘social mechanisms’ offers a model for specifying the generative mechanisms of the diminutive causation process (see also Hedström & Ylikowski 2011). Their ‘macro-micro-macro’ model is based on the assumption that a macro-phenomenon (such as declining migration from Morocco to the Netherlands) is the result of the actions of a large number of individuals in micro-situations. Figure 1– also known as the ‘Coleman boat’ – visualises their approach. A relationship is assumed to exist between certain social facts, social structures or institutions and certain social phenomena.<sup>2</sup> Hedström and Ylikoski (2011) use the term ‘macro-level associations’. In line with Coleman they argue that scientific explanations that are restricted to macro-level relations are unsatisfactory, as they do not specify the causal mechanisms by which macro properties are related to each other (Coleman 1990: 6-7; Hedström & Ylikoski 2011:59). To explain macro-level associations, three analytical steps are required: (i) identify the ‘situational mechanism’ by which specific macro-factors shape and constrain individuals’ desires, beliefs and motivations (macro-to-micro arrow 1); (ii) establish a relationship between individuals’ desires, beliefs and motivations and their individual actions. This is known as the ‘action-formation mechanism’ (micro-to-micro arrow 2); and (iii) analyse how individual actions interact and interfere with one another, leading to intended and unintended macro-outcomes. This is the ‘transformational mechanism’ (micro-to-macro arrow 3).

**Figure 1: A typology of social mechanisms**

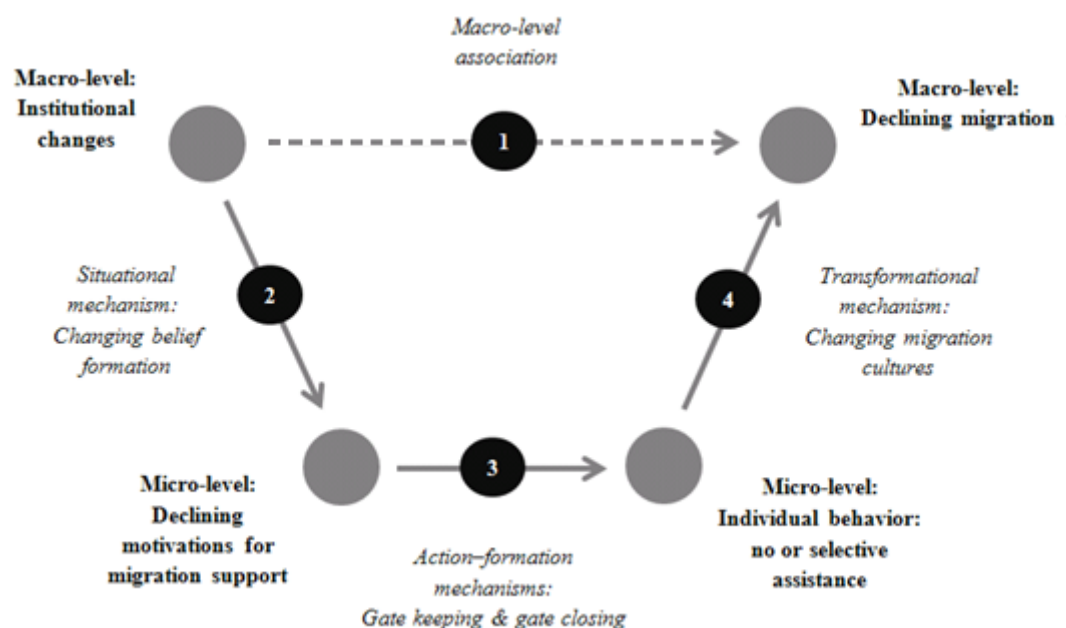


Source: Hedström & Swedberg 1998; Hedström & Ylikoski 2010

<sup>2</sup> Coleman’s well-known example based on Max Weber is the relationship or *Wahlverwandtschaft* between religious values of Protestantism and the economic organization of a society (capitalism) (see Coleman 1986: 1321-1323; 1990: 6-10).

This conceptual model is helpful for specifying the three social mechanisms that generate the process of diminutive causation. Firstly, as we will argue in this paper, three institutional macro-level phenomena (the restrictive Dutch migration regime, limited job opportunities, and rising anti-immigration sentiments in the Netherlands) negatively influenced the beliefs, desires and motivations of settled migrants to support and stimulate potential migrants to come to the Netherlands (*situational mechanism*). Secondly, this negative ‘belief formation’ (Hedstrom & Swedberg 1998: 23) of settled migrants regarding migration from Morocco to the Netherlands resulted in deliberate actions not to assist potential migrants, or to provide assistance only very selectively (*action-formation mechanism*). Thirdly, this migration-undermining feedback towards prospective migrants lead to changes in migration cultures in Morocco in which the potential migrants are embedded (de Haas, 2010). As a result of these three mechanisms, a diminutive causal process arose that resulted in a decline in new migration from Morocco to the Netherlands.

**Figure 2: Declining Moroccan immigration as a result of diminutive causation**



In this paper, we analyse how the three social mechanisms described above work. After describing our data and the methodology in the next section, we provide a short overview of the history of immigration from Morocco to the Netherlands, demonstrating the current decline.

### 3 Data and methodology

To answer the research questions, we analysed 30 in-depth interviews with Moroccan migrants residing in the Rotterdam area in the Netherlands (see appendix: Overview 1) and 44 Moroccan respondents in the regions of Rabat and Nador in Morocco (see appendix: Overview 2 and 3). This data collection was undertaken within the NORFACE-project ‘Theorizing the Evolution of European Migration Systems’ (THEMIS), which studies migration flows from Brazil, Morocco and Ukraine to England, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. In this paper we focus specifically on migration from Morocco to the Netherlands.

### 3.1 Rotterdam respondents

The Rotterdam respondents were selected through Moroccan organisations, mosques, and the networks of researchers and interviewers. We interviewed them between January 2011 and May 2011. We used snowball sampling to locate our respondents, while aiming for diversity among them. It was essential to use snowball sampling as we wanted to interview both regular and irregular migrants (Black 2003). We were able to contact and win the trust of irregular migrants through key persons within different Moroccan communities and organisations in Rotterdam.

Our sample of respondents is not representative for the Moroccan population in the Netherlands, or even for the population in Rotterdam. However, by using purposive sampling methods we sought to capture a varied set of immigrants in terms of length of stay, residence status, age and gender. This was crucial to document changes on migration-facilitating feedback. Of the 30 immigrants we interviewed, 6 respondents arrived in the period 1960-1973, 14 respondents in the period 1974-1991, 6 respondents in the period 1992-2003, and 4 respondents in the period 2004 and later. Further, we interviewed 16 male and 14 female respondents who also varied considerably in age (between 27 and 84 years old), and migrated between the ages of 15 and 43. We also tried to find respondents who had an irregular status, 3 respondents still had an irregular status, and 2 used to have an irregular status but were able to legalise their residence through a regularisation programme or through marriage.

The respondents originated from different regions in Morocco, although most came from the Rif area in the north of Morocco. The respondents were asked about their migration history, their migration networks and the support they received from or provided to others. We also asked them about motives for not providing help. Furthermore, we asked how they inform prospective Moroccans migrants about the opportunities to settle in the Netherlands.

Interviews lasted between an hour and three hours and were held at people's homes or in cafés. The interviews were held in the language preferred by the respondents, being Dutch, French, Moroccan Arabic or Berber. Research assistants with interview experience conducted the interviews, which they recorded and transcribed in English.

### 3.2 Respondents from Nador and Rabat

We conducted 44 interviews between August 2011 and April 2011 in the urban areas of Rabat and Nador with its rural surroundings. These two regions were chosen to portray the diversified migration flow from Morocco to the Netherlands. Between both regions and the Netherlands, significant migratory links exist. Interviews were conducted with return migrants, people who had resided in the Netherlands for at least three months, and family members of current migrants in the Netherlands such as parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. We made sure to interview respondents with a relatively close bond to their migrant family member, as part of the interview dealt with their knowledge of the current migrant.

Respondents were selected via key informants, informants from the Dutch Institute in Morocco (NIMAR), community organisations, schools, mosques and the networks of the interviewers. We used snowball sampling to locate our respondents while aiming for diversity among them. Again, it was essential to use snowball sampling since no sampling frame of these respondents exists. Our sample of respondents is not representative for the population of return migrants or family members of migrants. However, by using purposive sampling methods we sought to capture a varied



set of respondents in terms of length of stay, time period of stay, type of family member in the Netherlands, age, and gender.

We interviewed 24 return migrants. Of these respondents, only one returned in the 1960-1973 period; 5 respondents returned in the 1974-1991 period; 8 in the period 1992-2003; and 10 respondents returned in the period 2004-present. The age of the respondents at the time of the interview ranged from 25 to 71. Eight respondents were female and 16 male. The respondents were asked questions about their migration history, the reason for returning, their migration networks and the actual support they received or provided to co-ethnics and/or family members. We also questioned respondents about the current situation in Morocco. Furthermore, we asked how they were informed of opportunities to settle in the Netherlands, and about the contexts of reception in the Netherlands (in the past and in the present).

Twenty interviews were conducted with family members of migrants (who never left Morocco). They were asked about the migration history of their family member and the rest of the family, their possible aspirations on migration, their knowledge of possibilities of settlement in the Netherlands. The respondents could have multiple family members abroad or in the Netherlands, but usually the interview focused on one family member in particular. The type of family member ranged from close relatives such as parents, siblings and children to uncles, aunts and cousins. The time period in which their migrant family members left Morocco varied greatly, ranging from the 1960s to the 2000s. The education level of the respondents also differed, and 9 respondents were female, 11 were male. Our youngest respondent was aged 19 and the oldest 68.

Interviews lasted around one hour and were held at people's homes or in cafés. The interviews were held in the language preferred by the respondents, Moroccan Arabic or Berber. We appointed a fieldwork coordinator in Morocco from the National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (INSEA) and trained the Moroccan team that conducted the interviews. All of them were graduated scholars with interview experience. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in English.

All the respondents have been assigned fictitious Moroccan names for reasons of readability and to demonstrate that different respondents are quoted (see also Van Meeteren et al., 2007; Paul 2011, 2013). Any religious associations or cultural meanings attached to these names are entirely unintentional. All quotations were translated into English by the interviewers and edited by authors.

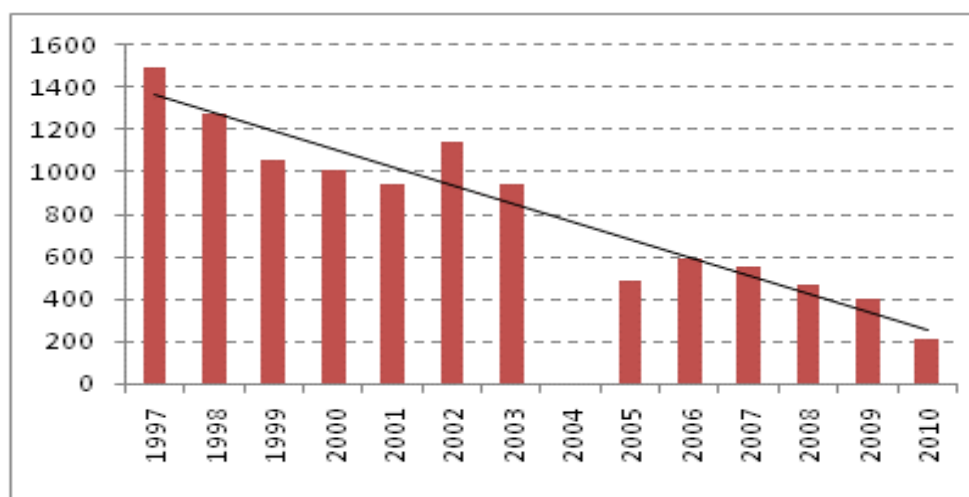
## **4 Declining immigration from Morocco to the Netherlands**

Like many other West-European countries, the Netherlands recruited labour migrants ('guest workers') from the Mediterranean. Initially, in the early 1960s, Spain, Italy and Portugal were the main sending countries of guest workers to the Netherlands. Later, large numbers of guest workers arrived from Turkey and Morocco. Although the formal recruitment of guest workers ended with the oil crisis in 1973, many Turkish and Moroccan labour migrants did not return to their home countries but decided to stay (Entzinger 1984). Through the process of family reunion and later family formation, migration from Turkey and Morocco continued after the recruitment stop in 1974. Furthermore, in the 1980s and the 1990s there was a substantial irregular migration flow from Morocco to the Netherlands (Burgers & Engbersen, 1996). As a result of this progressive migration,

Moroccans now form the fourth-largest migrant category in the Netherlands. In 2012, there were almost 363,000 first and second-generation migrants from Morocco resident in the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

Since the second half of the 1990s however, migration from Morocco to the Netherlands has been declining. In the early 1990s, about 9,000 Moroccan migrants arrived in the Netherlands annually. After 2004, the figure was less than 3,000. The years 2006 and 2007 even saw a negative migration surplus: more Moroccan-born immigrants left the Netherlands than arrived. This data is derived from Dutch population registers. This means that they represent officially registered migrants with a Moroccan background, but there is also a declining trend in the irregular migration of Moroccans to the Netherlands. Figure 3 shows data on police apprehensions of undocumented Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands over the years 1997-2010. Particularly after 2004, there is a declining trend in the number of irregular Moroccan migrants apprehended by the Dutch police. Although there are no reliable apprehension figures available for the years before 1997 (De Boom et al., 2012), there are serious indications that substantial numbers of irregular immigrants came to the Netherlands in the 1980s and early 1990s. Many of them were employed in horticulture, manufacturing and construction, cleaning, restaurant, catering, retail and trade, dock work and transport and other personal services (Engbersen, 1996; Van der Leun & Kloosterman, 2006).

**Figure 3: Unique apprehensions of irregular Moroccans (1997-2010)**



Source: The Aliens Administration System (VAS) (Own Computation).<sup>4</sup>

## 5 Changing institutional contexts of immigration

Portes and Rumbaut (1990) distinguish four ‘contexts of reception’ or ‘modes of incorporation’ that explain fluctuations in migration flows: the migration policies of the receiving country, the opportunities of the host labour market, societal reception and public opinion, and the support potential of migrant networks. The combination of these four levels of reception constitute the overall mode of incorporation of a particular immigrant group (see also Portes, 1995: 23-26). The first three

<sup>3</sup> Moroccans are the fourth-largest migrant group in the Netherlands, after the Turks, Germans and Indonesians: 168,214 are born in Morocco and 194,740 are born in the Netherlands with at least one parent born in Morocco (<http://statline.cbs.nl/statweb/>). The majority lives in the Randstad area (the urban conglomeration consisting of the four biggest cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht).

<sup>4</sup> The Aliens Administration System (VAS) is a police database in which the apprehensions involving unauthorised migrants are documented. The database was renamed PSH-V in 2004.

factors relate to macro-level institutional developments in the receiving country (in our case: the Netherlands), constituting the macro-context in which migration occurs. The fourth factor relates to the way migrant networks react to these changing contexts by facilitating new migrations to the country of destination or by refusing support to potential new migrants. In this section, we will first outline the changing institutional contexts of immigration from Morocco to the Netherlands.

Like other Western-European countries, the Netherlands faced serious labour shortages in the late 1950s, early 1960s. There was an urgent need for employees in heavy industries like the mines, ports, construction, and textile and metal industries. Initially, Dutch employers recruited guest workers from South European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and the then-Yugoslavia), and later from Turkey and Morocco (Jennissen 2012). In the period 1964-1972, almost a quarter of a million guest workers from these countries came to the Netherlands (Nicolaas et al., 2012; Nicolaas & Spangers, 2007). Aside from individual employers recruiting guest workers from the Mediterranean countries, the Dutch government also assumed a direct role by concluding recruitment treaties with various sending countries: Italy (1960), Spain (1961), Turkey (1964) and Morocco (1969). Furthermore, many labour migrants from Morocco arrived in the Netherlands by their own initiative. They arrived as 'spontaneous guest workers' or 'tourists' and were able to apply for resident papers after finding employment (Engbersen & Van der Leun, 2001; Staring, 2004). For many Dutch employers, this offered a cheaper and easier method than doing the recruitment work on their own. Furthermore, the societal reception of guest workers was rather friendly. Their arrival was not generally perceived as a threat in the old urban districts where migrants settled in dwellings and pensions, at least in part because guest workers did not compete with Dutch workers for the same jobs (Bovenkerk et al., 1985).

Following the first oil crisis (1973), the Netherlands faced rising unemployment for the first time in decades. In the same year, the Dutch government reacted by formally suspending the recruitment of labour migrants. Despite this, migration from Morocco to the Netherlands increased strongly. In fact there were two distinct migration flows: family reunification and illegal labour migration. Although labour migrants were no longer formally admitted, they kept coming. The Dutch government reacted with considerable tolerance. In 1975, about 15,000 mainly Turkish and Moroccan undocumented migrants were regularised (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2011: 133). A further limited regularisation of mainly Moroccan irregular migrants occurred in 1980.

In the early 1990s, Dutch migration and integration policies became both more restrictive and more focused on assimilation than they had been in previous decades. The multicultural 'ethnic minority' policies of the 1980s were replaced by an approach stipulating more obligations and less specific provisions for immigrants (Entzinger 2003). Additionally, more restrictive admission policies – especially applied to family formation or partner immigration – were introduced for new immigrants. The restrictive policy was motivated by the high unemployment numbers and benefit-dependency especially among Turkish and Moroccan migrants, the former guest labourers. Starting in 1991, the allocation of a social security and fiscal number required a regular residence permit. This served to block irregular migrants from having access to the regular labour market and social security (Van der Leun, 2003). In 1998, mandatory language and civic integration courses for newcomers were introduced. That year also saw the enactment of the 'Koppelingswet' (Linking Act), which effectively barred irregular immigrants from a wide array of public services, including welfare, public housing, education, and (most) health care. Since then it has been obligatory for government and semi-government services, such as welfare departments and housing associations, to check whether their clients are lawful residents and hence are entitled to certain services or benefits (Broeders &

Engbersen, 2007; Leerkes et al., 2012). During the second half of the 1990s, the labour market opportunities for migrant workers improved – partly thanks to the steady economic growth in these years – and unemployment among Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands dropped from around 30 per cent to around 10 per cent. Meanwhile, the societal reception of immigrants became more hostile and prejudiced. In the large cities and poor neighbourhoods, there was a growing though mostly hidden discontent about multicultural society (Scheffer 2003).

The year 2002 is often considered a turning point in Dutch politics. It saw the unexpected rise and subsequent assassination of the populist politician Pim Fortuyn, who came to prominence through his sharp criticism of the Dutch multicultural society and on-going immigration. His arguments in favour of closed borders ('the Netherlands is full') and against Islam ('a backward culture') found resonance in Dutch public opinion. Shortly after his death, Fortuyn's political party became the second largest party in the national parliament, and in the following years (until 2006) the Netherlands had several conservative governments (Van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003; Koopmans & Muis, 2009). Selective immigration policies were a key focus of these cabinets, as evident through the policies introduced from 2004-2006. In this period, Geert Wilders established his populist Freedom Party, becoming a powerful and vocal actor in the Dutch national parliament and public debate. Wilders is best known – like Pim Fortuyn – for his anti-Muslim and anti-immigration statements.

In 2004, the requirements for partner immigration were tightened. The minimum age for marital migration was raised from 18 to 21 years (for both partners). Moreover, the partner already living in the Netherlands was required to have a stable income (an employment contract valid for at least one year) and to earn at least 120% of the official fulltime minimum wage for adults (in 2010, this was reduced to 100%). The new income requirement had a negative impact on partner immigration of Moroccans to the Netherlands (Leerkes & Kulu-Glasgow, 2011). The Civic Integration Abroad Act, introduced in 2006, required partner immigrants to pass an elementary language test before coming to the Netherlands. As a result of these policies, family formation migration from Morocco to the Netherlands declined substantially in the following years.

In the same period, job opportunities for Moroccans and other immigrant categories once again declined. As many migrant workers got temporary jobs in the late 1990s, they were the first to be dismissed in the economic recession of the early 2000s. Moreover, following the EU-enlargement of 2004, large numbers of labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe travelled to the Netherlands (Black et al., 2010). By 2008, an estimated 260,000–305,000 Central and Eastern Europeans were residing in the Netherlands (Van der Heijden et al., 2011). Many of them work in low-skilled jobs, particularly in the Dutch horticulture and in construction work, where they compete with irregular and regular migrants from non-EU countries.

Finally, Dutch public opinion increasingly adopted anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism sentiments in this period. For instance, in a 2002 national survey a majority of the respondents (strongly) agreed with statements such as 'there are too many immigrants in the Netherlands' or 'immigrants abuse social security' (SCP 2003: 370). Moreover, the murder of the film-maker Theo van Gogh in 2004 reinforced latent and manifest anti-Muslim sentiments in Dutch society. In a national survey in 2006, a substantial minority of native Dutch respondents – including respondents with an ethnic minority background – agreed with the statement that there are too many immigrants in the Netherlands (SCP 2007: 291).

All in all, the societal contexts of immigration in the Netherlands changed dramatically in the 1990s and in particular after 2002: (i) the Dutch migration regime became more selective over the years, (ii) the reduced labour market opportunities for Moroccan migrants, partly due to the influx of competing labour migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, and (iii) the more hostile societal reception of immigrants in general, but particularly those coming from Muslim countries like Morocco. In the following section, we examine how these macro developments affect the motivations and behaviour of migrants living in the Netherlands and of prospective migrants in Morocco.

## 6 Migration-undermining feedback mechanisms

In this section we examine how settled Moroccan migrants in Rotterdam and prospective migrants in Nador and Rabat, Morocco react to institutional changes. We do this in three successive steps. First, we analyse the changing willingness of settled migrants to support prospective migrants. Second, we show that settled migrants predominantly act as ‘gate keepers’ and ‘gate closers’ towards prospective migrants. Thirdly, we argue that these migration-undermining acts affect migration cultures in Morocco.

### 6.1 Changing beliefs and desires of settled migrants to support prospective migrants – the situational mechanism

As described above, three important institutional changes have reshaped the context of immigration in the Netherlands: (i) the Dutch migration regime has become increasingly restrictive; (ii) job opportunities for migrants have decreased; and (iii) an anti-immigration discourse – particularly anti-Muslim – is on the rise in the Netherlands. Together, these changes have negatively affected the beliefs and desires of settled migrants in Rotterdam to assist prospective migrants in Morocco. These changes become clear in the accounts of two elderly respondents who compare the current situation with the welcoming social and economic climate for immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s:

When I arrived in Utrecht (1965, eds.), I stayed there for one day. The next day I went to the industrial area in Utrecht. And when I arrived there, everyone was waving to me (...) In that time you could find work everywhere. There was more than enough work in the 60s. Everyone was waving to me and telling me ‘come to us, come to us’. I went to a company that was fixing streets. They make tiles and bridges. I went there; they welcomed me and accepted me as employee. They gave me a chair, and put all kind of stuff in front of me to choose from. Different kinds of cigarettes and cigars, cookies... In those days they were really happy with us. They immediately gave me a place to stay in a caravan. And I started to work there. (Youssef, 70-year-old, retired pioneer migrant)

My husband always talked with great respect about Dutch people, because in his first months here (before 1975, eds.) the people were very helpful and friendly towards him (...) with everything (...), like going to the doctor, finding the shopping mall, getting to know Dutch institutions and organisations like the police station, the public health centre (GGD) or work agencies. The migrants were very helpful towards each other, but the Dutch people also really helped the migrants to find their way here. In both neighbourhoods in Rotterdam that I lived in (...) there was a very good atmosphere between migrants but also between migrants and Dutch people. (Nadia, 55-year-old, housewife)

Respondents were less positive however, about migration from Morocco to the Netherlands today. Many settled migrants mention that it has become very difficult for Moroccans to migrate to the Netherlands due to the very selective migration policies. Bouchra, a 48-year-old domestic worker states:

My daughter married a man from Morocco, and I was amazed by the number of criteria that my daughter and her partner had to meet. Not only income criteria, housing criteria, but also criteria on mastering the Dutch language.

Fatima, a 33-year-old house wife, elaborates:

Today it is difficult to obtain a visa. Also for the request you must have a job and a large income. The immigration policies are also stricter than before. Migrants have to do a lot of tests and have to learn a lot about Dutch culture.

Apart from the growing restrictions on immigration, respondents also explicitly mention that economic opportunities are not as attractive as they used to be. Ilham, an 84-year-old former miner, says: 'There is no work here. If they come to Holland they will only get into trouble. In the past there was enough work, but not anymore.' Other settled migrants also mention that changing economic circumstances in the Netherlands are making life more difficult and less attractive for Moroccan immigrants. Souhaila, a 64-year-old housewife who spent nearly 40 years in the Netherlands, mentions that: 'There is no money to make here. There are no jobs anymore. It's better to stay over there.'

Settled migrants furthermore feel that the societal reception in the Netherlands has changed and that immigrants are now treated with prejudice. Many respondents elaborated on their actual negative experiences with native Dutch people and how bad such experiences made them feel. El Ghazi, a young post processor, says: 'Eighty per cent are racists. One day I entered a café in Rotterdam to support the Dutch soccer team and they didn't want me to enter. Things like that upset me.' Hassan, a 41-year-old skilled worker, says: 'Sometimes you get the feeling that people hate you. They hate you for who you are and they hate your presence.' Like El Ghazi and Hassan, many respondents indicate that the attitudes of Dutch people towards them have changed over the years. Tarik, a 33-year-old tram driver, says:

I really like this country in many respects, but there is one thing that I think is very dangerous: the fact that politicians like Geert Wilders are becoming very popular. For Muslims this means that their rights to practice their religion are in danger. I think a lot of European countries – including the Netherlands – are very afraid of Islam, and they are trying to keep this religion outside their borders (...) Muslims are not welcome anymore. That is why I would be cautious with giving Moroccans the advice to come here.

Bouchra elaborates:

I really liked the national mood during those days. There were no interferences of Dutch people or the Dutch government. You could live your life the way you wanted without people telling you what to do, how to do it and when to do it. I also notice that Dutch people were more friendly ten years ago than they are now. Today, when I try my best to ask a shopkeeper the price of a piece of bread, he will say 'if you had learned the language you could read it yourself'. I think that is very rude.

For some settled migrants, these changing societal conditions in the Netherlands have formed an important reason to return to Morocco. Sellam, a medium-skilled worker who returned to Nador in 2007, says:

I returned to Morocco because I could not bear life in [the Netherlands] any longer. I felt that I was treated as a foreigner because I am not Dutch. I hate racism and wanted to have some peace of mind.

The testimonies of recently returned migrants thus echo those of settled Moroccan migrants in Rotterdam. Together they show that the opinions among migrants and former migrants about migration from Morocco to the Netherlands have changed in a negative way. This contributes to migration-discouraging feedback to prospective migrants in Morocco.

## 6.2 Declining inclination to support new migrants – the action-formation mechanism

In the literature one can find abundant evidence of how settled migrants do not always accurately portray life in the receiving society (Mahler 1995). Even though they have often obtained positions in the lower strata of the receiving society, they often send positive images of obtained wealth to the origin country, sometimes even increasing their debts in order to do so. While we have indications that this was the case for Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands in the past, this has certainly changed. Settled migrants now usually paint negative pictures of life in the Netherlands for a Moroccan migrant. In other words, positive migration-facilitating feedback is turning into migration-undermining feedback (de Haas 2010).

First, migrants try to explain to prospective migrants in Morocco that it is complicated to get into the Netherlands, due to the increasing restrictions on immigration. As Aicha, a 30-year-old domestic worker says: ‘When Moroccans want to migrate to the Netherlands, I tell them it is more difficult now because of government rules.’ Respondents such as Ilham try to warn potential migrants that it is difficult to get the correct papers and that if they do not manage to, they will be illegal in the Netherlands, which can be very difficult: ‘In the past I didn’t tell them to stay in Morocco, but now I do. Holland doesn’t let them stay without a reason. Do they want to become an illegal? Do they want to get chased by police? It isn’t an option!’

Second, settled Moroccan migrants give prospective migrants realistic information regarding the worsening economic climate in the Netherlands and the scarcity of regular jobs for Moroccan migrants compared to the past. When Yassir, a retired labour migrant, is asked if he advises people in Morocco to come to the Netherlands, he answers: ‘No! What would he do here? Without work, without papers? What would he do here?’ Asma, a 57-year-old housewife, reacts in the same way: ‘No, I would advise them to stay in Morocco. Holland has changed. Moroccans who live in Holland are now dreaming about a life in Morocco.’ Settled migrants foresee economic hardship in the lives of future migrants. Many respondents indicate that they want to be honest and therefore tell prospective migrants about the restrictive policies on residence, work and study in order to prevent future problems and hardships.

Every time I go on a holiday to Morocco they ask me to help them. But I tell them that I can’t help them. (...) they think that I deny them happiness or a better life. They don’t call us anymore. One time they told me that I was able to help them, but that I don’t want to help. I told them that Holland wasn’t mine. I can’t tell the government what to do. I can’t open the borders for them.

I don't want to get into trouble with police. (Meryem, 76-year-old, house wife)

I have been asked information. How, what, the procedures, about studying. I have been approached by several people. They asked me how the studies were going. I am very honest and would just tell them how things were going. What one should do, the steps, obstacles, barriers. I never heard that some decided to come after that. (Najib, 47-year-old, labour union manager)

And when we asked Hamza, a 33-year-old carpenter, whether he advises prospective migrants to come to Holland, he tells us that he regrets that he did not stay in Morocco because of the current opportunities in his home country:

No of course not. Like I told you, life in Holland is hard for Moroccans. (...) Since I am here in Holland nothing has changed for me. My life in Holland is the same as my life in Morocco. I dreamed of making a lot of money and going back to Morocco to start something for myself. A restaurant or something like that. But in reality, every month I hope that I can pay the bills. I even can say that my life in Morocco was better. I was among my people and family. I paid my bills and survived in Morocco like I do in Holland. The only thing that changed is my age. When I go on vacation to Morocco, I see my childhood friends and they are better off in Morocco. They have a job, a family near to them and they are no outcast. If I could turn back time I would have stayed in Morocco.

Besides providing information on the unfavourable economic climate and migration policies, they also tell potential migrants about the negative social climate towards immigrants. Kamar, a 41-year-old return migrant, is for example disappointed in the current Dutch social climate and therefore does not even want her daughter – who has the Dutch nationality – to move to the Netherlands:

I do not like her to live there although she has a Dutch nationality, because the Netherlands of today is not the Netherlands of the past, that beautiful tolerant country; now it is getting cruel and bad. I do not like my daughter to always be or to have 'second choice'

The same is true for Zohra, a 41-year-old house wife in Rotterdam, who advises prospective migrants not to come to the Netherlands:

The Dutch people have changed a lot; they are more hostile towards migrants and towards people with a different ethnic background. So no, I would not advise them to migrate [to the Netherlands]. I mean life is also hard in Morocco, but at least in Morocco people don't discriminate you or look down on you. (...) Life is hard; people should be aware of that. It's not like the old days. It's really not.

Many of the 'return migrants' (like Kamar) – some of whom returned to Morocco already a long time ago – are less explicit in either positive or negative migration advice than settled migrants in the Netherlands. One returned migrant even offers positive advice. Nonetheless, five respondents offer clear negative advice to (young) Moroccans wishing to emigrate to the Netherlands, and another five respondents offer more moderate negative advice, such as Fatima, a 25-year-old return migrant, who was born in the Netherlands:



In Morocco, you just need a job and everything is available. I explained to them: what are you going to do in the Netherlands? There are a lot of restrictions; you have to pay a lot of money, visa constraints. Even marriage is made very difficult on the Dutch part.

In addition, some respondents differentiate between people in the type of advice they give. While they generally advise Moroccans to stay in Morocco, they do stimulate highly educated Moroccans to move to the Netherlands:

When I came to Morocco, many people asked me about my life abroad, particularly the ones who wanted to leave Morocco. I answered their questions and I often advised them to stay in Morocco if they were not well educated. Everyone who dreams about going to the Netherlands has to continue his or her studies and get high grades. It is true that they used to accept anybody in the past, but this is because they needed simple workers to build their country. Now all of this has changed and if a new migrant has no education or skill, he will be rejected. (Nordin, 59-year-old return migrant who owns two bakeries in Nador)

The accounts of our respondents show a change in the inclination of migrants to support potential new migrants. Until the mid-1980s, migrant networks primarily functioned as ‘bridgeheads’ for new migrants (Böcker, 1994; Staring, 2004).<sup>5</sup> Immigrants were offered assistance. Newcomers – including irregular immigrants – were able to build an independent life in Dutch society. Nowadays, Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands function more and more as ‘gate closers’ who refuse any support to potential new migrants (Engbersen et al., 2006). The declining inclination to support potential new migrants is very clear in our interviews with settled Moroccan migrants who live in Rotterdam. While practically all of them (29 out of 30 respondents) received support through migrant networks when they moved to and settled in the Netherlands themselves, only three respondents said they would offer assistance to newcomers today. Most respondents have become ‘gate closers’ who are unwilling and unable to effectively support prospective migrants in their move to the Netherlands.

A small group still functions as selective ‘gate keepers’, only willing to help under specific conditions (Böcker, 1994; see also Paul, 2013). While Moroccans previously helped newcomers to migrate illegally, nowadays respondents indicate that they are only willing to assist close relatives that are able to migrate in a regular way. Ahmed, a 28-year-old metal worker, explains why he is not willing to help newcomers who come unauthorised:

I say, you can try, as long as you do it in a legal way. Is that is possible, no problem. But do not try the illegal way. Maybe you won’t get caught by the police but you will run into difficulties anyway. You won’t be free, you cannot go anywhere you want.

Likewise, Meryem, a 76-year-old grandmother, indicates that she is only willing to help Moroccans who migrate to the Netherlands via regular channels:

If they find papers to come here I’m willing to help them but I can’t help them to come here. That’s just not an option. If they find a wife to marry it’s no

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<sup>5</sup> The migration literature argues strongly that individual migrants are embedded in migrant networks that stimulate and organise international migration (Massey, 1987; Boyd, 1988; Tilly, 1990, 2005; Faist, 1997; De Haas, 2010).

problem. But if they come as an illegal they will end up on the streets and in barns.

All in all, respondents indicate that for a small group of people, migration from Morocco to the Netherlands may still be worthwhile. These are higher skilled migrants and migrants who migrate in a legal manner such as through marriage, for education purposes or through the special programme for the highly skilled.

### 6.3 Migration cultures in transition – the transformational mechanism

The third mechanism involves the aggregation of migration-undermining feedback acts by individuals, which leads to changes in migration cultures. Our analysis reveals that this transformation is indeed taking place. First, we notice a general decline in the motivation to leave Morocco. This decline is to a certain extent the result of the failed migration project of Moroccan migrants and the current obstacles to migration. As a consequence the migration discourse in Morocco has become less widespread, according to the 19-year-old housewife Soumai who lives in Tawrirt, and whose father and uncle left for the Netherlands in the early 1980s.

I think that most migrants from Tawrirt left Morocco 10 years ago. At the beginning of 2001, everyone talked about migration. Every day I heard about someone from my family or neighbours who had migrated. But people are no longer interested in migration, only a few youths dream of going abroad, especially to Spain or France. They dream of making a lot of money, owning beautiful cars, houses and getting married. The obstacle that stops them is that it is so complicated to get the official documents in order to leave Morocco. The others do not think about migration any more, since they hear about a lot of people who went abroad and came back to Morocco after a failed experience. There are no more jobs available, so then they found themselves without the money they borrowed to migrate, and without work in Europe. Most emigrants travelled 10 years ago. These were the golden years of emigration.

These changed migration aspirations and preferences are also observed in the interviews of the Rotterdam migrants. When they go on a holiday to Morocco or speak to friends or relatives on the phone, they are not asked about their migration experiences or possible assistance as much as in the past. When asked, in the interview, about his experiences during holidays in Morocco, and whether he gets a lot of questions about life in Europe, Hassan, a 41-year-old skilled worker, responds:

Of course, I know a lot of people, and it always comes up one way or the other. How's life in Holland, how's life in exile, as they call it? But almost every one of them assures me that they have no interest in migrating to Europe. There is nothing left to do in Europe, they say. The mentality has changed. People find something to do and put their thoughts of migration to rest. Years ago everybody was talking about leaving the country. (...) The kids nowadays ask about Europe out of general interest, but not to actually live there. (...) You used to hear talk of migration all the time, all the time young people scheming in the street, telling each other their plans or giving each other tips on how you could easiest leave the country. Now when you meet someone you have a casual conversation and a coffee together and then they are on their way again, going about their business.

Return migrants make the same point. They mention the increasing opportunities and prosperity in Morocco, in contrast to the declining economic and legal opportunities in Europe.

Nowadays, people are no longer interested in going abroad since all the conditions of a good living standard exist in Morocco. There are jobs, internet, McDonald's, freedom. Compared to the past, Morocco has become a prosperous place where people can lead a better life. (Hadda, 57-year-old return migrant, bank clerk)

Migrants used to come with large sums of money and help others, buy houses, land, etc. Now people from Nador see for themselves that migrants have become very mean and unwilling to spend more money in Morocco. Now when migrants come to my restaurant, they congratulate me for having decided to go back to Morocco for good. (Aziz, 55-year-old, return migrant, restaurant owner)

Nevertheless, one third of the family members we interviewed still intend to migrate to Europe, most of them for work and two respondents for marriage reasons. The majority, however, consider it unwise to migrate to the Netherlands today (or to Europe in general). These negative perceptions are influenced by the migration-undermining feedback received from settled or returned migrants:

I know that the economic situation in the Netherlands is not that good. Even my cousin who has been in the Netherlands for quite some time said that it is more and more difficult to find a job. He has not even saved up any money to invest in projects here in Morocco. If my cousin who has been in the Netherlands for a long time did not make it, how could a newcomer like me ever achieve something there? (Miro, 26-year-old, taxi driver)

The only means through which I know about Holland is from what my cousins tell me. My cousins also told me how they were victims of ethnic profiling. If people there know that you are a Muslim or an Arab they automatically label you as dangerous at best, and as a terrorist at worst. My cousins were victims of this stereotyping. So are veiled women, who are also viewed with suspicion. (Lahcen, 27-year-old student)

The interviews with family members of migrants indicate that migration aspirations and the preferred destinations are subject to change. Stricter migration policies, lack of jobs and the anti-Muslim climate are given as reasons why migration to the Netherlands is not a popular option.

The European authorities are doing this on purpose in order to dissuade and prevent people from immigrating. Even illegal immigration has become very controlled and many Moroccans prefer to stay here rather than risk their lives just to find nothing but unemployment and bad living conditions abroad. (Zaro, 49-year-old teacher of Arabic)

Nowadays it is really rare to hear of somebody migrating to the Netherlands, because of visa obstacles and the difficulty of getting a job there. I can only think of a few cases of family reunification and of women joining their husbands. Apart from this it is really impossible. (Abdelaziz, 26-year-old, teacher)

Aside from the critical feedback that people in Morocco receive about migration to the Netherlands, there are also general negative messages about migration to the Netherlands or to Europe as a whole, which Moroccans receive through the (social) media.

Since the late 90s, Moroccans, thanks to the internet and satellite channels, are more exposed to the outside world and are very aware that the economic situation in Europe is not good and their chances of finding good jobs are not big. (Myriam, 58-year old return migrant, civil servant)

Most people do not want to come nowadays and on TV on Al Jazeera they heard about (...) Wilders. The Netherlands is not a country of flowers and tolerance anymore. That is in the past. (Karim, 44-year old, living illegally in Rotterdam)

In other words, closed systems of migration-undermining feedback through migrant networks are interacting with more open systems of critical and realistic feedback through (social) media (Dekker & Engbersen, forthcoming). The outcome is a changing migration culture. There is less interest in migration to the Netherlands and to other parts of Europe. For those who still want to migrate, the preferred destinations seem to have changed. Preferred destinations differ for low skilled and highly skilled migrants. For highly skilled migrants, countries like Canada, Australia or the United States are high on the list because of the economic opportunities and the presumed tolerant social climate there:

Well, not so many people want to travel to Holland and as I told you nowadays the most favourite destination for most Moroccans is Canada because it is an open and tolerant country, unlike Europe where the economic situation and the xenophobia are making life very hard for migrants. (Jamal, 49-year-old businessman)

These days people are interested in emigrating to Canada or Australia. (...) especially highly educated people are more and more interested in emigrating to these countries because Canadian and Australian people are intelligent and are convinced that only very well-educated people like doctors or managers are capable of bringing economic prosperity to their country. (Miro, 26-year-old, taxi driver)

Yes, people, especially students, are still interested in going to countries like Canada, the United States or France. (...) I think that more and more students are migrating abroad. Immigration relating to education is on the rise. This brain drain is becoming more important than migration for economic reasons. (Zahra, 52-year-old, teacher of Arabic)

For low-skilled labourers, countries like Spain and Italy were still mentioned in the interviews despite the economic crisis, since these countries still need workers and have less restrictive rules with respect to family migration. These countries also offer – despite all the restrictions – more opportunities for forms of circular, entrepreneurial migration. Zaro, a 49-year-old Arabic teacher in Rabat, explains:

Yes, people are still interested in going to Europe and abroad in general but mainly to Spain and Italy because work contracts are still available and migration is still new there, compared to France or the Netherlands. But it has become very difficult because the documentation to collect to do so has become so demanding (...) Many migrants to Spain or Italy have turned into traders in furniture, bicycles or clothes that they bring from Europe into

Morocco. They spend the whole year back and forth between Morocco and Europe because they cannot have a stable situation with a permanent job.

In sum, migration cultures in the Rabat and Nador areas of Morocco are in a process of change. There seems to be less interest in migration to the Netherlands or to other European countries. This is partly due to the steady stream of negative images Moroccans receive about migration to the Netherlands through the media and through critical feedback from family members who have settled in the Netherlands, or from migrants who have returned. People are also less interested in migration because the opportunities in Morocco have improved. Those who are still interested in migration are usually not interested in going to the Netherlands. They can be divided into two groups: highly skilled migrants preferring to go to countries like Canada or Australia, and low skilled migrants wanting to go to countries like Spain or Italy.

## 7 Conclusion and discussion

In this paper, we have argued that three mechanisms have resulted in a decline in migration from Morocco to the Netherlands. These are: (i) the changing opinions about migrating to the Netherlands among settled migrants due to a combination of macro factors, (ii) the migration-undermining feedback of settled migrants to potential migrants, and (iii) the changing migration cultures in the sending regions in Morocco (Rabat and Nador). In other words, as a result of these three mechanisms, a diminutive causal process has arisen in which – to paraphrase Massey – migration decisions are taken that make additional movement less likely, resulting in a decline in new migration from Morocco to the Netherlands.

First, we postulated that institutional changes at macro level (migration policies, labour market opportunities and social reception) have consequences for the motivations of individual migrants to offer support. This was validated by the research findings. The restrictive Dutch migration policy, the declining job opportunities and the hostile social reception of Muslims have reduced the motivation of individual settled migrants to assist potential migrants. These changes have also induced strategies of gate keeping and gate closing (migration-undermining feedback). Moreover, we have demonstrated that the critical feedback provided by settled migrants to potential migrants induces changes in migration aspirations and migration cultures.

It is interesting to note the correspondence between our findings with those of a large-scale research project, 'Imagine Europe from the Outside' (EUMAGINE), which also examined Morocco-Europe relations. The latter results show that perceptions and migration aspirations are changing due to the economic crisis and the perceived unfavourable treatment of Moroccans living in Europe (unequal treatments before the law, racism, racial profiling). The results also show that younger generations increasingly seek opportunities in Morocco rather than opt for emigration, and that differences in terms of human rights and democracy have declined between Morocco and Europe (Aderghal & Berriane, 2012).

The model presented in this paper obviously has limitations and therefore requires improvement and augmentation. Firstly, regions around Nador and Rabat have a strong immigration history, but now have become areas with a lower emigration rate. They are not representative for all Morocco. Secondly, the mechanisms on which our model focuses operate at the level of migrants and their networks. The effects of macro-economic and political factors in the sending and receiving country are analysed through the effects they have on migrants. Economic and political changes

within the origin country have not systematically been taken into account. However, migration has also altered the context in origin countries, for example through investments with remittances. Most of the mechanisms Massey mentions in his theory of cumulative causation involve processes in the origin country and do not necessarily involve migrant networks.

The mechanisms that we elaborate in this paper are therefore unlikely to be the only instigators of the process of diminutive causation and hence responsible for the drop in migration from Morocco to the Netherlands. Moreover, while we have shown that institutional changes in the Netherlands have consequences for the motivation of individual migrants; this is also the case in Morocco. Morocco's current economic development adds an important explanation for the declining interest in migration among certain population groups (cf. Aderghal & Berriane, 2012). In spite of these limitations, the model of the process of diminutive causation nevertheless offers relevant insights. Future research will have to determine to what extent our model can be used as a more general paradigm for understanding other declining migration flows, such as the declining migration from Turkey to Western Europe.

Furthermore, it is important to further investigate the feedback mechanisms that ensue from declining migration. The results indicate that, as a result of the restrictive migration policy and decreasing employment opportunities for low-skilled workers, a much more selectively composed group is capable of moving to the Netherlands, namely the higher skilled and those that can meet the strict demands imposed on partner immigration. These groups exhibit a more individualistic lifestyle and feel less loyalty towards established migrant networks. It is also a group that is more sensitive to discrimination and anti-Muslim sentiments. A number of educated respondents refer to this. They are very critical of what is happening in the Netherlands. In this way, processes of migration-undermining feedback can gain traction.

The increasingly selective migration to the Netherlands might prompt the conclusion that the current migration policy is successful. The 'unwanted' are filtered out increasingly effectively. It should however be noted that the current policy is ultimately the result of a permanent adjustment of policies over the past four decades concerning labour migration, family migration, illegal migration and migrant integration. A second comment is that the Netherlands may indeed have succeeded in influencing the composition of the migration flow from Morocco to the Netherlands, but at a price. The Netherlands has become a country that many migrants choose to steer clear of, including the wanted highly skilled.

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## Appendix:

**Overview 1: Settled migrants who migrated to the Netherlands (Rotterdam area) (N=30)**

Respondent	Fictitious name	Year of arrival in NL	Residence status:	Age	Gender	Education
NL_MOR01	Mohamed	1988	Regular	45	M	High
NL_MOR02	Hassan	2005	Regular	41	M	Medium
NL_MOR03	Insaf	1988	Regular	45	F	Low
NL_MOR04	Meryem	1973	Regular	76	F	Low
NL_MOR05	Najib	1986	Regular	47	M	High
NL_MOR06	Asma	1976	Regular	57	F	Low
NL_MOR07	Ahmed	1998	Regular	28	M	Low
NL_MOR08	Fatima	2003	Regular	33	F	Low
NL_MOR09	Anass	1991	Irregular*	43	M	High
NL_MOR10	Zohra	1984	Regular	41	F	Low
NL_MOR11	Fouad	1993	Regular	40	M	High
NL_MOR12	Mehdi	1970	Regular	73	M	Low
NL_MOR13	Hakim	1992	Irregular	50	M	High
NL_MOR14	Karim	1991	Irregular*	44	M	Low
NL_MOR15	Mustapha	1968	Regular	80	M	Medium
NL_MOR16	Rabia	1997	Regular	56	F	Low
NL_MOR17	Samira	1988	Regular	43	F	Low
NL_MOR18	Yassir	1975	Regular	66	M	Medium
NL_MOR19	Hind	1990	Regular	39	F	Medium
NL_MOR20	Ilham	1970	Regular	84	F	Low
NL_MOR21	Bouchra	1984	Regular	48	F	Low
NL_MOR22	Youssouf	1965	Regular	70	M	Low
NL_MOR23	Aicha	2004	Regular	30	F	Low
NL_MOR24	Hamza	2001	Regular	34	M	Medium
NL_MOR25	Souhaila	1973	Regular	63	F	Low
NL_MOR26	Tarik	2008	Regular	34	M	Medium
NL_MOR27	Yasmine	1989	Regular	47	F	Low
NL_MOR28	Saïd	1975	Regular	56	M	Unknown
NL_MOR29	Nadia	1977	Regular	55	F	Low
NL_MOR30	El Ghazi	2009	Regular	27	M	Medium

\* Irregular migrant but not expellable due to on-going procedures since 1998.

## Overview 2: Migrants who returned from the Netherlands to Morocco (N=24)

Respondent	Fictitious name	Migration period	Age	Gender	Current occupation	Home region (place of birth)
MOR_NL01	Khalid	1981-1984	56	Male	Medium skilled	Fès-Boulemane
MOR_NL02	Farid	2001-2006	34	Male	Medium skilled	Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate
MOR_NL03	Jamal	1989-2000	49	Male	Medium skilled	Oriental
MOR_NL04	Fatiha	1990-2008	38	Female	High skilled	Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate
MOR_NL05	Myriam	1989-1994	58	Female	Medium skilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL07	Fatima	birth-2009	25	Female	High skilled	N/A
MOR_NL13	Houda	1997-2002*	50	Female	Unskilled	Fès-Boulemane
MOR_NL15	Ahmed	1976-2008**	58	Male	Medium skilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL18	Karim	1991-1994	41	Male	Medium skilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL19	Jalil	1972-1973	51	Male	Unskilled	Oriental
MOR_NL21	Hassan	1973-2002	55	Male	High skilled	Missing
MOR_NL23	Abderahim	1980-2002	58	Male	Unskilled	Oriental
MOR_NL24	Kamar	1992-1999	41	Female	High skilled	Meknès-Tafilalet
MOR_NL25	Moulay	1966-80s	67	Male	Low skilled	Oriental
MOR_NL26	Houssam	1983-2008	28	Male	Low skilled	Oriental
MOR_NL31	Nordin	1981-2011	59	Male	Medium skilled	Oriental
MOR_NL32	Haj	1964-1981	70	Male	Low skilled	Oriental
MOR_NL34	Ghobri	1970-1977	71	Male	Unskilled	Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate
MOR_NL35	Farida	2001-2011	25	Female	Missing	Oriental
MOR_NL36	Hadda	1987-1992	57	Female	Unskilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL39	Aziz	1980-2010	55	Male	Low skilled	Oriental
MOR_NL40	Hamid	1990-1991	62	Male	Unskilled	Oriental
MOR_NL41	Bahija	2008-2010	29	Female	Missing	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL44	Sellam	1980-2006	43	Male	Medium skilled	Oriental

\* Intermittent visits

\*\* Lived in Morocco between 1979 and 1981

**Overview 3: Family members from migrants who migrated from Morocco to the Netherlands (N=20)**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Fictitious name</b>	<b>Migration period family member</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Current occupation</b>	<b>Home region (place of birth)</b>
MOR_NL06	Miro	1997 -	26	Male	Low skilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL08	Zahra	2004 -	52	Female	High skilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL09	Ali	70s -	24	Male	Student	Oriental
MOR_NL10	Zaro	1992 -	49	Male	High skilled	Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate
MOR_NL11	Hmad	2004 -	56	Male	High skilled	Souss-Massa-Draâ
MOR_NL12	Ibrahim	1975 -	40	Male	High skilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL14	Amine	born in Netherlands	32	Female	Student	Oriental
MOR_NL16	Khouloul	born in Netherlands	32	Female	Unskilled	Oriental
MOR_NL17	Imad	1977 -	27	Male	Student	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL20	Cherif	1996 -	68	Male	Unskilled	Oriental
MOR_NL22	Abdelaziz	early 80s -	26	Male	Missing	Oriental
MOR_NL27	Layla	2002 -	52	Female	High skilled	Oriental
MOR_NL28	Moha	60s -	50	Female	Missing	Oriental
MOR_NL29	Khalil	early 70s -	50	Male	Missing	Oriental
MOR_NL30	Bouchra	2000 -	42	Female	Unskilled	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL33	Asmae	2000 -	19	Female	Student	Oriental
MOR_NL37	Mouna	2005 -	23	Female	Student	Oriental
MOR_NL38	Lahcen	60s -	27	Male	Student	Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer
MOR_NL42	Brahim	late 80s -	55	Male	Missing	Oriental
MOR_NL43	Soumia	1980 -	19	Female	Unskilled	Oriental