

# Behind the Veil of Agricultural Modernization: Gendered Dynamics of Rural Change in the Saïss, Morocco

Lisa Bossenbroek



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# Behind the Veil of Agricultural Modernization: Gendered Dynamics of Rural Change in the Saïss, Morocco

Lisa Bossenbroek

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# CHAPTER 1

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## General Introduction



### 1.1. New Ways of Being and Becoming Through the Messy Human Encounters of Agrarian Change

The above images of Houccin<sup>1</sup> (left), Fouzia (middle), and Donia (right) provide a good entry point for starting to make sense of *how* gender and social differences matter in agrarian change for the case of the region of the Saïss in the center of Morocco. The pictures represent their heterogeneous experiences of agrarian change. Houccin, just like some other young men I encountered when doing fieldwork, enthusiastically embraced the new technological changes (such as drip irrigation) which the government of Morocco is promoting in its attempt to modernize agriculture. These young men were keen to work with drip irrigation, as it held the simultaneous promise of new, more modern, ways of farming and new forms of manhood. They pictured their future selves as being clean-shaven and fashionably dressed, distinguishing themselves from the traditional peasant identities of their fathers. Rather than having to toil the land themselves, they dreamt of running their farms as entrepreneurial businesses, with them as managers. They would operate their drip systems from under the comfortable shade of a tree while negotiating affairs with their clients on their phone. These dreams and aspirations transpire in the picture of Houccin. Unlike his father, he is neatly shaven with straight and pointed sideburns. He also distinguishes himself from his father in the way he dresses. Rather than wearing a customary *djellaba*, he prefers, once when the work is done, to wear a pair of clean jeans, a shirt and a sporty jacket. This costume is not very different from that of young people in the city.

The rapidly changing agrarian realities unfolding in the agricultural plain of the Saïss thus offer exciting new possibilities for being and becoming to (some) young men. For young women, however, they have a different connotation. Referring to drip irrigation as one of

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<sup>1</sup> All the names of interviewees throughout this book have been changed and are pseudonyms.

the symptoms and manifestations of change, Fouzia, for instance, explained how nothing much changed for her: *"It is nice for our brothers. They only have to open the vans and they can take a nap or go the city in the meantime. For us nothing changes. The workload might only increase."* Rather than talking about drip irrigation and other technological farming novelties, Fouzia was more eager to share with me her wedding plans. She was especially thrilled to show me the hidden contents of the suitcase that contained the pajama's, the nightgowns, the lingerie and the perfume that she had chosen as wedding present. Neatly arranged in the suitcase, these choices perhaps revealed what her dreams of progress consisted of. In contrast to the 'ordinary wedding suitcases' which other young women had shown me, and which contained long decent pajamas - some with hello kitty illustrations - soap, and simple bra's and underwear, Fouzia's contained black shiny nightgowns with lacework, refined lingerie underwear with sequins, and bras of different colors and designs. What were the new possibilities for and images of her future self that accompanied the contents of this suitcase? Were these only realizable in the privacy of her home, or did they also indicate a desire for a different public identity as a woman? Did she still picture herself as farmer or farm wife, or was she instead taking inspiration from other feminine models that had little to do with farming, such as the Turkish actresses featuring in the television soap series that she liked to watch?

The picture of Donia provides yet another illustration of a possible experience of agrarian change. Donia worked as agricultural waged worker. For her, as for other female waged workers whom I interviewed, the current changes offered a possibility to earn an independent income, *"meet other women"* while going to work, and exchange experiences and ideas with them. Especially for younger female waged workers, the work often provides an opportunity to leave the confined spaces of their homes. At the same time, Donia referred to the wage work as physically demanding. She explained that the work conditions are poor and harassments are common. Instead of working as laborer, she would rather live in the city and get married and perhaps open a sewing workshop. Donia's experience perhaps illustrates best that the everyday experiences of agrarian change are not straightforward; they come with new opportunities of being and becoming, while closing off existing ones. They are accompanied by feelings of happiness and satisfaction, along with feelings of distress and confusion.

Upon my initial field visits I was tempted to interpret the current transformations as either good, or bad and exploitative. Accordingly, I wanted to categorize the actors as winners or losers. In the course of my fieldwork, and after becoming more acquainted with the young men and women I interviewed, I had to revise these frames of interpretation. I came to understand that the current lived experiences are difficult to frame as inherently good, or intrinsically bad. One and the same person could have positive feelings about new opportunities or hopes, while simultaneously expressing sadness about the gradual disappearance of the old countryside or of existing ways of

living and relating. What were these mixes of feelings of joys and of sorrow and of new possibilities of being and becoming telling, and how were they related to current agrarian transformations? Likewise, the often subtle indications and expressions of changes in gendered social relations were difficult to grasp and make sense of, nor were such changes unilaterally attributable to current processes of agrarian change.

This dissertation takes the messy human dealings with processes of agrarian change as the starting point to examine how agrarian change intimately shapes and is shaped by gendered experiences and identities. It starts from the premise that the contemporary process of agricultural intensification in the agricultural plain of the Saïss is not a logical, self-evident or evolutionary transition to a higher stage of development or modernity. Instead, I theorize it as a specific form of globalizing capitalist development, characterized by economic liberalization; the expansion of free trade and the opening up of world economies; the increasing commodification of goods; and the expansion of capital accumulation. In my analysis, I take inspiration from characterizations of capitalist development as messy (Tsing 2005) and as full of contradictions (Ramamurthy 2011). Yet, I also think that there are larger patterns to this messiness, in that it is importantly marked by existing social hierarchies and institutions (Hartsock 2006). Gender is one such institution and an all-prevailing one (Harriss-White 2004).

The aims of the dissertation are both empirical as well as conceptual. It seeks 1) to put the experiences that often 'fall away' (Tadiar 2009) in descriptions and interpretations of agrarian change at the heart of the analysis, as a conscious attempt to show how gender matters in rural processes of transformation; 2) to unravel how current agrarian transformations re-arrange and are shaped by social material re-configurations, that offer or impose new cultural ways of being, relating and identifying (cf. Ramamurthy 2010). In doing so, I aim to show *how* gender and social differences matter in current processes of agrarian change and vice-versa: I seek to contribute to ways of understanding such processes that take account of gendered social differences and hierarchies.

In this first chapter, I present the outline of my dissertation and introduce the rest of the book. I begin with presenting various manifestations of the current agrarian changes in the region of the Saïss. I proceed with presenting the rationale of my dissertation to show how the current agrarian developments happening in Morocco are underpinned by a discourse of 'progress' and 'modernity', embedded in an evolutionary and linear vision of development. This vision of modernity gives a central role to new farming 'entrepreneurs' who are encouraged to settle in the region to introduce new, technologically advanced and intensive ways of practicing agriculture. In the second section of this introduction, I introduce alternative ideas and ideals of agrarian change, with the aim to open up the discussion of ways to make sense of, understand and intervene in gendered processes of rural transformation. I begin by bringing together and discussing different readings and

understandings of agrarian change. I then pursue exploring various strands of feminist scholarly work to explore the constitutive relations between experiences, gendered identities, and larger processes of transformation. This section is followed by the research questions. I conclude this chapter by providing an overview of the rest of the book.

## 1.2. Manifestations of Agrarian Change in the Agricultural Plain of the Saïss

When I arrived in the *douar*<sup>2</sup> *Ait Ali* in April 2012, situated in the agricultural plain of the Saïss, I found myself at the heart of a rapidly changing agrarian environment. The transformations were strongly marked by the dissolution of state cooperatives and the emergence of new *tenure arrangements*, which forced some farming families to sell their land while prompting others to set up new farming projects. New projects often comprised the *drilling of new deep tube-wells*, the installation of *drip irrigation* and the plantation of *high value crops* (grapes and fruit trees). The dynamic *mouquéfs* – places where *wageworkers* gather in order to find a job for the day – were another manifestation of the agrarian dynamics. When driving in the early morning through the region, I passed many trucks, vans and pickups packed with female laborers whose faces were invisible because of the particular way they wore their headscarves, only revealing their eyes.

These changes are partly the intended outcome of '*Le Plan Maroc Vert*'<sup>3</sup> (The Green Moroccan Plan – hereafter PMV), a modernization plan launched in 2008 by the Moroccan government. Through targeted efforts to increase its productivity and efficiency, the plan puts the agricultural sector at the heart of the national economy. It comprises various incentives to new farming 'entrepreneurs', making it attractive for them to settle in the region. These include tax exemptions and different kinds of subsidies to help finance their new farming projects. Partly, the changes also occur through overall improvements in transport facilities and wider access to information through mobile phones, internet and television. Together, contemporary processes of transformation have the effect of increasingly connecting the *douar* to an ever-expanding world.

It was perhaps only upon my second visit to the *douar* *Ait Ali* in May 2012 that I realized how fast and drastic the changes were. In the eight months of my absence, the landscape in the village had changed considerably: New farms had been set up that stood out in the landscape because they were clearly demarcated with fences; new deep tube wells were drilled; new types of high value crops were planted; new drip irrigation systems were installed; and electricity poles were set up to extend electricity to the *douar*.

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<sup>2</sup> The *douar* can officially be defined as an "assemblage of households linked by real or fictitious kinship relations, and correspond to a territorial unit, which may include community modes of (farming) work, and is managed as far as possible by a *Moqaddem* (local representative of the ministry of interior)" (Ministry of Interior 1964).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.agriculture.gov.ma/en/pages/strategy>

### *Agrarian Change in the Saïss: A Modern Man's World?*

Through my conversations about the current transformations with government officials, it became clear that they perceived them as modernity and progress. For many of them, the changes represented in the *PMV*, offer institutional and technological measures to rapidly speed up the development of Morocco. This vision of modernity mainly revolves around the new farming 'entrepreneurs' who buy and invest in land in the region. Government officials would for instance refer to these new 'entrepreneurs' as individuals "*who contribute to the real development and who bring investments to the agricultural sector*". Existing farmers also play a potentially important role in bringing about modernity and thus in creating brighter and happier futures for all, provided if they adopt new technologies and increase their productivity. These two main protagonists of the current transformations - farming entrepreneurs and modernizing farmers - are clearly cast as men. Upon an interview with a government official of the ministry of agriculture I asked him if there were also female farmers, or female new entrepreneurs. He replied: "*Yes, I know one, but she is more man than a man. She has about 2000 hectares and everything is equipped with drip irrigation.*"

Indeed, these discussions, and the documents in which *PMV* is laid out, make it seem as if the current transformations were mainly happening because of the state-supported initiatives and investments of some audacious men, and as if farming was an exclusive affair of some change-minded masculine individuals. This image is difficult to reconcile with the family character of many existing farms in the Saïss; it does not do justice to the lives and struggles of rural women and young people; and it makes invisible those farming families who are forced to sell their land, or the work that female and male laborers do to turn farming enterprises into a success. Such a development vision overlooks how processes of agrarian transformations may mean different things to different kind of people and how they play a central role in the current processes of change. It may also exacerbate social and gender inequities.



Picture 1: Two new ‘entrepreneurs’ who have recently settled in the region

### 1.3. Rethinking Processes of Agrarian Transformations

In order to advance the argument that the unfolding processes of agrarian change should be re-understood as processes that are significantly marked by gender differences, I first wish to explore how processes of agrarian change have been understood from an agrarian political economy perspective. This approach attempts to grapple with the changing inter-relationship of people and natural resources as part of processes of globalizing capitalist expansion. It is a body of work that helped me understand larger processes of change, showing how the re-patterning of social relations of access, use and control over productive resources form their heart.

Agrarian political economy has a long historical tradition and evolved around the classical works of Marx, Engels, Kautsky and Lenin. An important question that cuts through these different works – also referred to as the agrarian question – is defined by Kautsky as *“whether, and how capital is seizing hold of agriculture, revolutionizing it, making old forms of production and property untenable and creating the necessity for new ones”* (Kautsky 1988; p. 12 [originally 1899]). Karl Marx analyses of the industrialization in England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century have been particularly insightful in this regard. He illustrated in the first volume of *Capital* (Marx 1976, orig. 1867) how capital develops through the primitive accumulation of resources. He explained how common lands were gradually enclosed and how landlords chased the peasantry from the communal lands: *“Primitive accumulation in England used dispossessory enclosures by predatory feudal landlords, later supported by the state, to reconfigure the relations of production in order to physically expel a prosperous yeomanry from the land and create a propertyless class of rural waged labor that faced a class of capitalist tenant-farmers, beneath the dominant landlords class”* (Tribe 1981; Byres 2009 cited in: Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010a). From



Marx's point of view *"the expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil is the basis of the whole process"* (Marx 1976; p. 876). This left individuals who were expropriated with no other means than to sell their labor power.

Over the last couple of decades, the debate on agrarian political economy is reviving. This renewed interest can be partly explained by the rapid transformations as well as the new features of contemporary agrarian dynamics. Whereas the 1960s and the 1970s were marked by agrarian reforms with high state intervention to boost the national markets in response to growing pressure of peasant movements, the last 40 years have been marked by the growing promotion of agrarian export models. National markets and rural societies were integrated in an ever-expanding global economy. International development institutions set new policy conditions as a means of boosting access to foreign exchange, facilitating debt repayments, increasing funds of investment, promoting technological change and boosting rural productivity and profits (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010b). The neo-liberals regarded the increasing and intensifying integration into the global economy *"as the most effective means of enhancing rates of accumulation, in the rural economy and more generally"* (Akram-Lodhi and Kay 2010b; p. 263). These changes reconfigure and re-pattern tenure relations – that govern the use and distribution of water and land resources – as well as labor relations to align them to new commodity chains. Building on and extending theories of primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession, several scholars provide insightful analyses of how redistributions of water and land resources happen (Mies 1998; Harvey 2003; Hartsock 2006; Zwarteveen 2015). David Harvey for example, inspired by the work of Marx, states that the *"features of primitive accumulation that Marx mentions have remained powerfully present [...] up until now"* (Harvey 2003; p. 145). He argues that processes of primitive accumulation are enduring and ongoing and explains how this happens through new mechanisms: the enclosure of global common goods become increasingly concentrated into the hands of a few commercial producers and incorporated into the capitalist system while rural populations who rely upon the resources are progressively being dispossessed (Harvey 2003).

The growing body of literature on new forms of water and land accumulation has been a source of inspiration for this dissertation, as it not only helps understand how these processes happen through new sophisticated mechanisms, but also illustrates how they are enacted through the involvement of new actors. Major studies in the field show how processes of accumulation may at times be subtle, yet are at other moments violent. They also show how the repatterning of agricultural land-and waterscapes partly happens through the formation of new subjects. Nancy Lee Peluso and Christian Lund (2011) for example, illustrate how new frontiers of land control are importantly made possible by new legal and practical instruments for possessing, expropriating, or challenging previous forms of land control, which bring into being new forms of being and relating (p. 668). They illustrate how particular land authorities may at times fulfill a dual role: they are

both regulators and rent seekers. Their analysis also sharply brings out how accumulation, enclosure and privatization play out at different scales; from an urban investor buying a new piece of 'agricultural land' and fencing it, to governments or logging companies buying up thousands of hectares in some foreign country. New forms of land control thus form part of new practices of governmentality – new ways of exerting the power to govern a territory – and create new kinds of environmental subjects, who produce, accept or contest the new sorts of common sense (Peluso and Lund 2011).

For this dissertation, I have taken inspiration from these old and new debates of agrarian political economy; they helped me understand the rural transformations unfolding in the Saiss as being part of larger processes of capitalist development. This body of literature also usefully drew my attention to the complex mechanisms through which such changes are enacted. The work clearly reveals the processes of creative disruption and destruction that capitalist development provokes, illuminates how changes in access to and control over resources re-pattern social relations and are accompanied by new exclusions and inequities. At the same time, I am critical about agrarian political economy with regard to 1) how it understands change; 2) how it often reduces the rich diversity of rural populations and identities to pre-fixed social categories; and 3) how it prioritizes global capitalist relations as the most important or only system of domination. Below I explain these three different points in greater detail.

First, change in agrarian political economy is often perceived as linear; as following some broadly determined development paths signposted by the succession of dominant modes of production (Long and van der Ploeg 1994). This social change tends to be seen as predominantly emanating from the state or as driven by international interests and policies. These external forces then come to dominate the lives and experiences of rural populations, leaving them with little other option than to follow the development path that governs them. Yet, as Norman Long and Jan Douwe van der Ploeg have pointed out, all forms of external intervention enter the live worlds of subjects and are mediated and transformed by them (1994; p. 64). Alternatively, as James Scott expressed it: *"Only by capturing the experiences in something like its fullness will we be able to say anything meaningful about how a given economic system influences those who constitute it and maintain or supersede it"* (1985; p. 64). In short, what change means to different kind of people and what people do to deal with or influence change cannot be simply 'read' from larger structures, but instead is actively processed and steered by them.

Second, agrarian political economy tends often to reduce the rich heterogeneous character of the rural countryside to pre-fixed categories: those of peasant farmers, capitalist farmers, and laborers. Such pre-fixed social categories fail to consider the complex and hierarchical gender relations that mark the family farm, but also gloss over the rich varieties and complexities of farming modes, practices and identities. For

example, new modes of producing food are often identified as belonging to entrepreneurial farmers and large capitalist farming companies. Yet, also many small family based farms take up 'commercial' farming methods out of aspiration or pressure (see for example Ména-Vásconez et al. 2016). Van der Ploeg's work precisely lies in the recognition of the empirical diversity in farming modes of organizing production and the refusal to reduce this rich heterogeneity to the neat categories and teleologies of Marxist analysis. Acknowledging the rich heterogeneous character of the countryside, reveals "*the extremely differentiated nature of present day development processes in agriculture*" (1993; p. 245). On this basis, he argues that "*the direction, rhythm, scope and mechanisms, driving forces and results vary so much that macro-outcomes can only be considered as the complex, often contradictory aggregation of many micro-processes – and not as the direct reflex of a set of uniform macro-conditions*" (van der Ploeg 1993; p. 245).

Arguing in a similar vein, the famous Morocco scholar Paul Pascon suggested that the heterogeneous social realities that marked the Moroccan rural society could not be reduced to or 'fit' Marxist social categories and theories. He therefore rejected a framing of Moroccan rural society as transitory or as a feudal society. From his point of view, the Moroccan society "*is not purely this or that, but instead it is governed by several modes of production that participate to its social formation [...]: patriarchy, tribalism, feudalism, and capitalism*" (1983; p. 591). He regarded the pre-fixed ideas of change (underlying agrarian political economy) as inappropriate for the understanding of social change in Moroccan rural areas (Tozy 2013).

Third, agrarian political economy has for a long time failed to consider gender as a crucial constitutive dimension of rural society, partly because it prioritized class relations as the main system of domination. Yet, as many feminist scholars have pointed out, processes of primitive accumulation and capitalist development are significantly marked by social differences and hierarchies other than class (see Razavi 2009; Hartsock 2006; Mies 1982). Gender is an all-prevailing one (see Hartsock 2011; 2006; Harriss-White 2004; Mies 1998). Nancy Hartsock, for example, illustrates how new mechanisms of accumulation are significantly marked by gender: they have different consequences for men and women and offer different possibilities for both economic and political participation by women and men (p. 170). She illustrates how contemporary processes of primitive accumulation rely on gender ideologies to be able to expand further. She does so by extending the idea of Maria Mies who argued that the definition of women as 'housewives' and not as workers allows their work to be remunerated much less than male labor since it was not regarded as income generating (Hartsock 2011; p. 26). She reformulates Mies' notion of housewifization by using the term virtualization, which she explains as "*covering a series of processes which includes housewifization, flexibilization, casualization, devolarization, and feminization and most profoundly the denigration of labor in general*" (Ibidem; p. 27).

She argues that virtualization, and thus the making of workers into not real workers, is a necessary prerequisite to the continuous development of global capital.

I take Hartsock's consideration of the globalization of capital as a gendered moment of primitive accumulation as an invitation to further think about how current processes of agrarian transformation are both marked by, and constitutive of, gender and social differences. In doing so, I accept capitalism as an important structuring force in shaping modes of farm production; yet I do not consider it as an all-encompassing order. Here, I build further on the insight that processes of change are heterogeneous. I am agnostic about the outcomes and meanings of changes induced by capitalism, as I believe that it is impossible to understand what such changes mean to the various people living them *ex ante*: what people do and why cannot just be 'read' from structural forces. This is one important reason I choose to put the lived experiences and gendered identities at the heart of my attempt to understand how gender and other social differences matter in the current processes of agrarian change. In the section that follows, I review the various feminist scholarly work which has inspired me to do so.

#### **1.4. Agrarian Change as if Gender Mattered**

There is a long tradition of feminist scholarship in unraveling how processes of agrarian/rural change<sup>4</sup> alter and are interwoven with gender (see for example Mies 1982; Carney 1993; Bee 2000; Brandth 2002; Ramamurthy 2003; Harris 2006; Razavi 2009; Behrman et al. 2012). In what follows I present and comment on some of the key works that have shaped and inspired my own project. In doing so, I wish to make two points. First, whereas the focus of early feminist scholars centered on assessing the gendered impact of processes of agrarian change and capitalist expansion, they have shifted their attention today to the question of how gendered subjects and relations (and meanings of gender) are themselves shaping as well as shaped by processes of change. Debates within feminist analyses of agrarian and rural change revolve around how to work across 'macro' and 'micro' levels of analyses, attending to both the prevalence of gender in shaping the manifold processes of agrarian/rural change and to the different ways in which subjects experience and understand these processes (Bair 2010; p. 205). Second, how to think about the interlinkages between subjects, gender and processes of agrarian change depends on how gender is understood as an organizing principle in society.

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<sup>4</sup> The various feminist scholarly work I engage with in this dissertation focus on different processes of change related amongst others to global production arrangements, rurality and agriculture.

### *Thinking Through the 'Micro' and the 'Macro'*

The groundbreaking work of Mies, *The lace makers of Narsapur* (1982) is an important first source of intellectual wisdom for grappling with the relationship between subjects, their experiences, gender and processes of agrarian transformations. In the book, Mies tells the story of how the growing export oriented lace industry in Andhra Pradesh, India, strongly relied on the hierarchical organization of production and the homework of women situated at the lowest strata. The lace industry expanded in the 1970s due to growing overseas demand for laces, in combination with the contradictory effects of the Green Revolution. Capital was increasingly drained from rural areas to industries and cities, in particular to the lucrative lace industry. The pauperization of farming families provided the lace exporters in Narsapur “with an almost unlimited reservoir of very cheap female labor” (Mies 1982; p. 173). These women increasingly relied on the lace trade to sustain their impoverished families. Mies’ illustrates in her detailed ethnographic study how the lace industry was possible and could become profitable through the intersection of different dominant modes of social organization - the caste system and the patriarchal ideology - which together created an opportunity structure for the exploitation of female labor (Bair 2002). Through the active maintenance and the reproduction of the patriarchal ideology, men were portrayed as the ‘breadwinners’ and obtained all the productive jobs. By contrast, women of a particular caste were represented as ‘housewives’ whose reproductive and productive work, crocheting laces in the house, was rendered invisible.

In Mies’ analysis, women working for laces are fully subjugated to the capitalist, patriarchal and the caste system. She states that most women “knew about the importance of their work for the subsistence of their family, but they considered their work only as supplementary to their husbands’ work” (1982; p. 156). Women regarded their work as a leisure activity and perceived themselves as housewives. Although Mies acknowledges that women were aware of their pauperization and exploitation, she interprets their lack of resistance as signaling their lack of consciousness: women have not been able to summarize and synthesize their experiences and draw conclusions from them (Ibidem; p. 159).

Mies’ analysis is important for various reasons. First, it reveals how the growth of the lace industry was built on the complex symbioses between patriarchal and caste ideologies in combination with capital accumulation. This justified and naturalized the categorization of low-caste women as lesser human beings, which in turn allowed the mobilization of their labor for a very low remuneration to fuel capitalist expansion. Second, the chapter “The Lace Workers’ Consciousness” provides rich accounts of the experiences of female lace workers. In it, she highlights some of the contradictions that mark the everyday experiences of the lace workers; although they are subjugated to the dominant orders, they do have some awareness of their impoverished situation. Some women realized for

example, that men were no longer really able to live up to their role as breadwinners. Other women had successfully established their own businesses as independent lace makers. As Mies points out, “*this raised certain questions in their minds about the ideology of the dependent housewife*” (Ibidem; p. 156). She identified these tensions as ‘cracks’ in the ideological order, identifying them as potential spaces in which gender norms and orders could be re-negotiated. However, Mies does not elaborate on these ‘cracks’ and concludes instead that women are exploited and have become “*losers at all fronts*” (Mies 1981).

This project aims to follow up on Mies’ notions of ‘cracks’ as marking the tensions and contradictions that characterize systems of domination. Yet, I reverse the point of departure for understanding the different experiences of women and men and their ‘role’ in processes of capitalist expansion. Instead of defining the systems of oppression *ex ante*, I choose to use the experiences of men and women as the entry-point in an attempt to understand larger patterns of change. To do this, the work of Priti Ramamurthy has been particularly inspiring. She begins where the work of Mies ends; tracing, documenting and analyzing the contradictory experiences of female workers (2003) and smallholders (2011) in Andhra Pradesh, India, form the starting points to grapple with larger processes of change. Ramamurthy mobilizes the concept of perplexity to indicate the tension between the multiple overlapping, opposing and asymmetric force fields of power that mark the puzzlement of people as they experience both the joys and aches of the global everyday, often simultaneously (2003; p. 525). Perplexity expresses contradictory experiences of capitalism through a structure of feeling. These experiences include on-going struggles against existing socio-cultural norms and existing socio-economic structures (2011; p. 1054). Her study on women workers working in the cotton fields in Andhra Pradesh beautifully illustrates how through the consumption of *poonams*, as material and discursive products, women’s subjectivities are altered and their social worlds are redefined. They transgress social class and caste boundaries and articulate new desires, new femininities - as modern and sexy subjects - and create new cultural repertoires.

Ramamurthy’s analysis is a lucid attempt to challenge the singular notion of the subject and recognize experiences, feelings and desires as important elements of social orders. Moreover, her notion of perplexity does not only provide an new reading of contradictions and cracks in overlapping social orders of domination and power, but also reveals how these social orders are congealed by ‘micrologies’ of subject formation (2003; p. 542). Whereas Mies illustrates that women were hailed by capitalism and patriarchy to be turned into exploited housewives, Ramamurthy shows how subjects are interpellated by various discourses at the same time, which offers them the possibility to simultaneously conform to as to deviate from the social norm through their consumption practices and desires.

There are a number of other feminist rural scholars who have yielded important insights about how often incongruous experiences of change form an important source for analyzing how gendered subjectivities co-constitute larger hierarchical orders and processes of change (see for example O'Hara 1998; Brandth 2002). Their interest emerged from a growing unease with conventional scholarly representations of people living in the countryside, representations which often failed to do justice to people's own stories and explanations by reducing their behaviors to mono-categorical subject positions. They also aspired to better understand the workings of organizing structures such as patriarchy, as in many analyses such structures appeared as rather monolithic and static making it difficult to understand change, variations and social action (Brandth 2002). In their studies, these scholars showed that although women are subjugated to the patriarchal system and to their husbands, they often do create a margin of maneuvering in which they are able to challenge and renegotiate their subordinated position. Patricia O'Hara's work (1998) is particularly insightful in this regard. Whilst recognizing the importance of 'macro-phenomena', she stressed the importance to study the everyday life experiences of farmwomen in order to understand rural change and continuity. She argued how the subordinated position of women was not a simple result of structural forces, but instead had to be regarded as the outcome of complex processes of negotiation (1998; p. 37). Based on her extensive work in the countryside in Ireland, she illustrated how many young women did not aspire to replicate the arduous duties of a farmer's wife, fulfilling the same peasant identities as their mothers. Driven by their desires for a better life and to avoid getting married, they moved to the city in search for new occupational possibilities and lifestyles not available in the countryside. The ones who stayed and became farmwomen actively renegotiated their position in different ways. With the limited space to become farmers in their own right and not just farmers' wives, they redefined "*new ideologies of privacy, sharing, and financial independence for their children which were unavailable to themselves*" (Ibidem; p. 157).

O'Hara's analysis of the lived experiences of various kinds of rural women, well illustrates how subject positions are actively negotiated. She illustrates how discourses and culturally prescribed roles may be resisted through various strategies. First, young women may decide to leave the countryside, which has important repercussions on the future of the countryside and the social, economic and political reproduction of family farms. Second, she also illustrates how discourses may gradually alter to include new ideas of marriage and independence.

### *Gender and Subjectivities*

Gender as organizing principle in society has been defined in different ways in the works previously discussed. These different understandings result in different ways of

understanding the linkages between gender and processes of agrarian change. As explained above, Mies employs a rather static understanding of gender relations and identities. In her analysis, women fulfilled the role of caretakers and housewives, they were active with the reproductive activities carried out in the confined space of the family and the home. Men were instead presented as active in the public and productive sphere, something that underpinned the masculinization of 'all-productive jobs'. Mies' analysis thus portrays changes in production and gender as developing in binaries which are always in opposition to each other. Such a portrayal is both rather rigid and static in how it considers gender identities as exclusionary and uniform. It fails to recognize how subjects may inhabit multiple subject positions and makes it difficult to see how they may negotiate and reinterpret their subjugated positions.

To be able to take into consideration multiple subject positions and identities, feminist rural scholars have developed understandings and definitions of gender that move beyond seeing it as a fixed and distinctive social category. These definitions propose considering women and men, and their relations, as socially constructed and as constituted through meanings and practices (Brandth 2002; Bock 2006). Meanings are produced by, and embedded in discourses. Discourses have formative power and designate norms, codes, behavioral conventions and structure social relations. They provide meaning to social relations and define social categories of women and men, femininity and masculinity in farming (Brandth 2002). This understanding opened up room to questioning subject positions and offered the possibility of accounting for multiple forms of identity. It also allowed providing people with the option to resist particular subject positions. As the discursive field is heterogeneous, it includes various discourses and discursive practices which may be contradictory and conflicting, they always also carry the potential for new forms of meanings and practices (Weedon 2003). Understanding meaning as not fixed but continuously contested thus provides the analytical possibility to understand how subjects may negotiate dominant orders; it allows to recognize subjects as agents, and as having agency.

This dissertation partly relies on the foregoing. Nevertheless, it takes a slightly different stand with regard to the understanding of subjects, their activities and larger dominant social orders. This comes from my growing unease with the term agency and the normativity it contains. Within feminist scholarship, there is an important debate about the universalizing liberal emancipatory assumptions of the concept of agency (see for example the work of Mahmood 2001; Pham 2013). For example, Saba Mahmood argues that the concept of agency rests upon a desire of freedom understood as the *"the capacity to realize an autonomous will, one generally fashioned in accord with the dictates of "universal reason" of "self-interest", and hence unencumbered by the weight of custom, transcendental will, and tradition"* (2001; p. 207). This idea of individual freedom is based



on a particular political ideal, one that is relatively new in modern history. Many societies and individuals have lived and live with other aspirations than this one (Ibidem; p. 208). As also Sarah Bracke maintains (2008), far too often this particular doctrine of agency has become the defining feature of humanity, as that what characterizes someone as human. Moreover, such a frame of analysis tends to yet again portray rural women either as liberating themselves from patriarchy and as able to resist their subordinate position, or as passive accomplices to their subordinate situation who “*seem to have accepted patriarchy*” (Brandth 2002; p. 186). This leaves very little room for doing justice to people’s desires, motivations and other forms of creativity and self-expression.

This dissertation therefore aims to explore understandings of the subject that recognize practices, aspirations and motivations. Here, I partly rely on the work of Judith Butler and her understanding of gender as socially constructed as well as performative (Butler 1990; 1994). Inspired by Michel Foucault, Butler does not regard gender as an intrinsic personality trait, as something one *is*. Instead, Butler suggests that gender is something one ‘*does*’. Like all social structures, gender must be repeatedly ‘performed’ in order to continue to exist (Crossely 2005; p. 208). The performance of particular gender identities is based on “*the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce and sustain discrete and polar gender as cultural fictions*” (Butler 1990; p. 138). For gender to appear as something inherently true, it needs the *repetition* of acts, of gestures, the way one walks, dresses, etc. Her idea of performativity does not allow for either fully autonomous subjectivity or for a space beyond power from which to act. If the subject becomes through the repetition of acts, ‘agency’ is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition (Butler 1990).

Butler is inspiring in her approach, as it allows approaching gender identities as never complete but as a process; fragmented, provisional and wrought through the interplay of various fields of power and regulatory frameworks like culture, agrarian change, gender, and other social differences (see also Resurreccion and Elmhirst 2008). As Butler argues, the coexistence or convergence of such discursive injunctions produces the possibility of a complex reconfiguration and redeployment (Butler 1990). It inscribes the everyday social practices that constitute gender relations, identities and difference and processes of change in a spiral in which the two move together and constantly redefine each other.

In this dissertation, I thus consider experiences as socially and discursively constructed. I understand them in their broader socio-cultural context and as never just individual: one’s experiences are in accord with certain sanctions and proscriptions, and are therefore clearly not a fully individual matter (Butler 1988; p. 525). Finally, throughout this dissertation I use the terms subjectivities and identities interchangeably. Whereas identities are often regarded as expressions of something deeper, I consider both gender

identities and subjectivities as “*the very doing of that which they “express”*” (Crossely 2005; p. 208).

### **1.5. Objectives and Research Questions**

Agrarian processes in the Saïss are not a logical, self-evident or smooth transition to a higher stage of development or modernity. They are a form of globalizing capitalist development which is messy and contradictory. Yet, I aim to illustrate that there is a larger pattern to this messiness, in so far as current processes of agrarian change are marked by and re-produce existing gendered social hierarchies. By putting the experiences that often ‘fall away’ in descriptions and interpretations of agrarian change at the center of my analysis, I explore how agrarian transformations re-arrange and are re-shaped by socio-material reconfigurations that offer or impose new cultural ways of being, relating and identifying. I set out to carefully analyze the emergence of new desires and aspirations, tracing how subjects skillfully navigate through various structures of domination, seeking to fulfill their new becomings. In doing so, they give shape to processes of agrarian and rural change in highly gendered ways. I invoke new ways of feminist thinking about the messy human encounters of agrarian change in an attempt to make those people struggling and pushed to the margins in research, policies, and in the rural society appear central to the analysis. In addition to the foregoing I also hope that my work will help revive the field of rural gender studies in Morocco and the debate on agrarian change. Finally, I also hope that the dissertation contributes to questioning the agrarian modernization path chosen by the Moroccan government, a path that centers on and privileges some audacious men.

This is the research question this dissertation aims to answer:

***How to understand the differentiated lived experiences, and altering gendered identities and relations as (co-)constitutive with processes of agrarian change?***

To operationalize this question, I developed three sub-questions along the three lines of inquiry discussed in the previous paragraphs.

- 1) How and through which processes are gender relations, identities and social differences (re-)articulated?***
- 2) How are lived experiences shaping and reshaping processes of agrarian change?***
- 3) How do the lived experiences of agrarian change and the linked confusions index the contradictions of processes of agrarian change?***

## 1.6. The Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of six other chapters. In **Chapter 2**, I present my methodology '*To Learn One has to Unlearn*', in which I provide a brief outline of the Morocco's Saïss region and the description of the case study, a dissolving state cooperative, on which most of this research is based. I elaborate on the various manifestations of agrarian transformations, which consist of changes in tenure relations, access and control over groundwater, labor organization, and the active presence of female wagedworkers and young people, which formed the building blocks of this dissertation. I conclude Chapter 2 with a brief outline of the various methods used for this research. In **Chapter 3** '*One Doesn't Sell One's Parents': Gendered Experiences of Shifting Tenure Regimes*' I discuss how the recent wave of land privatization of the formers socialist inspired state cooperatives, happens in tandem with and through a renegotiation of gender relations and identities. I illustrate how land, farms and families were deeply intertwined and how - due to the current wave of land privatization - this mutually constitutive relationship is gradually eroding, also altering the value of land. Today, farming is increasingly becoming a professional activity and identity, which is premised on a growing division between a private family domain associated with women and a public professional domain associated with men. This offers new ways of being and becoming for young men, but confines women to a new homebound traditionalism.

In **Chapter 4** '*Sour Grapes: Multiple Groundwater Enclosures*', I explore how the current agrarian transformations are accompanied by various enclosures of groundwater. I illustrate how these enclosures are accompanied by, and enacted through, changes in tenure relations and a growing number of land transactions, the use of new technologies, as well as by the modernization discourse that underpins Morocco's agricultural plans. I further explain how groundwater enclosures are enacted by the gradual dissociation of groundwater from its socio-cultural and territorial context; growing social inequities; and violent expropriations. While groundwater is increasingly flowing away from peasant families who relied on water for sustaining their livelihood, water is now flowing to new 'entrepreneurs', who produce 'sour grapes'. I illustrate how at the heart of the enclosure process a strange paradox emerges: whilst the Moroccan state has the ambition to create entrepreneurs, water flows are diverted from family farms to support absentee 'investors' who all produce the same products and face problems selling them.

**Chapter 5** '*Agrarian Change and Gendered Wage Work*', I explain how the agricultural boom unfolding in the Saïss is premised on a process of labor hierarchisation. This process is shaped along gender lines, and intersects with technicity, knowledge and wages. Whereas many male workers take up the 'good' jobs, which positively contribute to their personal and professional identity, female wagedworkers find themselves at the lowest strata of the newly emerging labor hierarchy and can take little pride in their work. On top

of that, due to existing gender socio-cultural norms and values their work is difficult to combine with good womanhood. A 'misstep' therefore easily sparks off normative and harsh judgments. I illustrate how in such a context, women deploy different strategies to reconcile ideals of womanhood with their everyday experiences of wage work. In doing so, I show how women re-create socio-cultural repertoires and move boundaries in subtle efforts to expand their room of maneuver and re-imagine what it means to be and behave as a woman in the countryside.

In **Chapter 6** '*Broken Dreams? Youth Experiences of Agrarian Change*', I discuss how rural young men and women are key players in current processes of agrarian change. I illustrate how young people are inspired by the current transformations that they observe around them; these awaken particular aspirations and fuel dreams of new ways of being and becoming. I show how young people skillfully and cautiously create space to realize their aspirations. They carve out new and more modern farming identities, creatively merging rurality with modernity in the process. Yet, gender ideologies and hierarchical power relations hamper the fulfillment of these aspirations and dreams. This forces some to postpone their dreams and find alternative futures, which in turn strongly influences the current as well as the future agrarian transformations.

Finally, in **Chapter 7** I reflect on the various chapters and attempt to answer the main research question as formulated in this chapter. I also use the final chapter to point out the contributions of this dissertation to new ways of thinking about gendered processes of agrarian change.



## CHAPTER 2

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### Methodology “To Learn One Has to Unlearn”

## **2.1. Introduction**

Where to start when doing research on gender and agrarian change? What are manifestations of change? How to go about the investigation of ‘gendered agrarian change’ and not fall in the trap of pre-fitting field observations into the categories and conceptual repertoires of existing theoretical debates? The fieldwork on which this dissertation is based was conducted during a period of one year stretching between 2011 and 2013, with various recurring visits of several weeks over 2014 and 2015. In this chapter I elaborate on the various methodological choices and fieldwork processes, which form the foundation for this dissertation. I begin with presenting the regional characteristics and the fieldwork site, as its particularities informed my methodological choices in important ways. In the section that follows, I discuss the various fieldwork processes and critically reflect on them. I end with presenting the particular methods used for the various chapters in this dissertation.

## **2.2. The Agricultural Plain of the Saïss**

This research was conducted in the agricultural plain of the Saïss. It has a total of 220,000 hectares of land of which 49,677 hectares are irrigated, mainly with groundwater (Ministry of Agriculture 2012). Agriculture is the main activity in the region. I selected this region because of the following reasons: 1) its agrarian history; 2) the recent agrarian dynamics; and 3) its ‘openness’ and the rich heterogeneity between farming families and their way of farming.



Figure 1: The agricultural plain of the Saïss (pointed out by the red arrow)  
 Source: Mapsof.net

### Agrarian History

The particular locality of the agricultural plain of the Saïss formed its agrarian history. It is situated between the imperial cities of Fes and Meknes (see Figure 1), which along with the richness of its natural conditions (land, water, rainfall, moderate climate) made this area into a particularly interesting agricultural plain for different groups of people (e.g. *Makhzen*<sup>5</sup>, French settlers, different farmers. Etc.). As I will elaborate more in depth in the third chapter, the agrarian history of the Saïss can roughly be divided into three phases<sup>6</sup>: the pre-colonial situation before 1912; the colonial period from 1912–56, when Morocco was a French protectorate; and the post-colonial period with the land reforms that followed in the 1970s. As part of the land reforms in the 70s, 93 state cooperatives were

<sup>5</sup> Until the end of the protectorate, the *Makhzen* refers to the apparatus of state domination and power. Until the protectorate the *Makhzen* used to denote a bureaucratic establishment founded on the court surrounding the Sultan, his administration and his local representatives. The term is still used today and refers to a mode of governance that determines the relationship between the ruler and those who are ruled (Tozy 1991).

<sup>6</sup> As presented in chapter three, these changes are not regarded as radical ruptures, but rather as gradual transitions.



created, representing roughly 12% of the total number of cooperatives in the country (Mahdi and Allali 2001). The lands that were redistributed had been confiscated by the foreign settlers during the French protectorate and were gradually retrieved by the Moroccan state after independence. The logic behind these land reforms was to create a class of peasant farmers who would contribute to agricultural development. These peasant farmers were organized in two different state cooperatives: 1) state cooperatives (*cooperatives de service* or *cooperatives mixtes*) in which farmers received an individual land plot with land use rights; 2) state cooperatives (*cooperatives de production*) where land was held in co-property and the peasants worked as laborers and were remunerated on a yearly basis. In the Saïss three such cooperatives were created, each of c. 3,000 hectares. In the early 1990s the three *cooperatives de production* were divided into smaller entities and became either *cooperatives de service* or *cooperatives mixtes*, wherein members received an individual land plot.

### *Recent Agrarian Dynamics*

From the 1980s onwards, a new series of changes seemed to alter farming lives and economies even more rapidly and fundamentally. These developments were a result of liberalization policies, the increased access of individual farmers to groundwater and resulting changes in crop patterns, the integration into new markets, and the use of new technologies (such as deep tube-wells and drip irrigation). Since 2006, these dynamics have received a new impetus because of the privatization of land in 93 state cooperatives, forcing some peasant families to sell their land. This, together with recently established (2004) private public partnerships, attracts new urban investors and ‘entrepreneurs’ to the region (Mahdi 2014). The new owners, often from the city, do not live on the property and only come once in a while to visit their farming project (see also Mahdi 2005). A manager is in charge of the daily management of the farming project. What clearly marks these new farms as different from existing ones is that most newcomers, immediately after having bought the land, undertake the building of high-wired fences. Their lands also stand out because they are planted with mono-culture high value crops, including grapes and fruit trees and are equipped with new, deep tube-wells and drip irrigation systems, often subsidized by the state.

The various land policies, the increasing access to water, changing crop patterns and the use of new technologies have also altered labor relations. When one drives in the early morning through the region, while most people are still asleep, another world awakens: the world of agricultural wage laborers, of which the majority are women. They gather at the *mouquéf*, situated at the outskirts of the various small agricultural centers in the Saïss, in order to find a job and are then transported in open vehicles to the fields to work for the day.

All the above describes changes taking place in the context of the *PMV*. This plan stands on two pillars. The first pillar consists of the development of a modern, intensive and competitive agricultural sector, based on high-value crops, new technologies and intensive inputs and based on investors and entrepreneurial farmers. The second pillar - solidary support - is aimed at assisting the small and medium scale farmers in their farming projects. The first critical analyses of this policy reveal that the first pillar is strongly favored and reinforces a dualist agrarian sector (Akesbi 2012; Errahj 2013).

### *Openness of the Agricultural Plain*

Finally, the plain can be characterized by its openness. As mentioned before, it is situated between the cities of Meknes and Fes and includes many agricultural centers throughout the region. The plain can further be characterized by many hardened roads and transport services (taxis and buses). The plain is connected to various markets at the regional, national, and international level. Moreover, various demographic fluxes further contribute to the open character of the region. Laborers from other regions of Morocco come and work at peak moments of the year in the agricultural sector. Also, during the low seasons, the out-going labor mobility to other regions of Morocco is high. Finally, the Saïss can be characterized by a rich heterogeneity of farming families and identities as well as farming practices. This is important for the various stories presented in this dissertation, as young men, in particular, actively carve out their own current and future status by alternating between different types of farms and styles of farming.

### **2.3. The Case Study: The Douar Ait Ali**

After obtaining a general understanding of the history and the various dynamics of the region, I selected a case study the *douar* Ait Ali to determine the various manifestations of agrarian change and understand the various lived-experiences of agrarian change, and how gender relations and identities are altered.

The *douar* Ait Ali consists of approximately 80 extended households. It is located about 15 kilometers from two important agricultural centers: El Hajeb and Boufkrane. In the *douar* there is a primary school, a small hospital, a grocery shop and a mosque. In 2003 and 2005, an electrification project and drinking water system was installed. Most of the families living in Ait Ali are Berber and belong to the tribe Ait Ali. In the *douar*, the state cooperative Ait Ali is situated, which was founded as part of the land reforms of the 1970's, described previously (see Picture 2).



Picture 2: Aerial view of the *douar* Ait Ali (Source: Google Earth)

The oval yellow shape roughly delimitates the *douar*. The bleu circle delimitates the area where the state cooperative is situated.

The agrarian history and the various dynamics that are happening in the Saïss mark the *douar* Ait Ali, resulting today in a rich empirical diversity between farming families and their way of farming. At the level of the cooperative (the blue circle in the above picture) land plots range from seven to 13 hectares, depending on the quality of the land. Various plots are irrigated from groundwater sources, and a mix of rain fed and irrigated crops are cultivated. The lands that are situated in the other part of the *douar* are inferior to five hectares and are irrigated predominantly by surface irrigation through canals. Here, the various families cultivate fodder crops, tobacco and vegetables. Additionally, some families do not own any land and sell their labor force to neighboring farming families, whereas other families have been able, over the course of history, to buy up land in the region and have become large landowners. Moreover, the dismantling of the state cooperatives in 2006 triggered many land transactions and forced families to sell their land, as they were in debt or had inheritance problems. Some of these families became laborers on the lands that had fed them. In the state cooperative Ait Ali, eight out of 36 members sold their land and 18 bought their individual land rights (situation in 2014). The peasant families who still live in the cooperative engage in mixed cropping systems and irrigate only 30 to 40% of their land. They typically have wells of 30 to 50 meters, which

generally can be used only part of the day due to a relatively low yield. Few of them started to dig deeper tube-wells, which guarantee a bigger discharge and a more continuous supply, or a second well. Seven families engage only in rain-fed agricultural and either do not have wells, or their wells have dried up. In contrast, the newly arrived investors, subsidized by the *PMV*, have drilled new deep tube-wells (120-200 m) and installed drip irrigation to irrigate their recently planted fruit orchards.

This research is anchored in the *douar* Ait Ali. Additionally I visited various other state cooperatives, *douars*, and *mouquéfs* throughout the Saïss, as well as other agrarian regions in Morocco to better contextualize and understand the dynamics of gendered agrarian change in Ait Ali.

## 2.4. Fieldwork Processes

When I arrived in the agricultural plain of the Saïss, in April 2012, I found myself at the heart of a drastically changing agrarian environment. The theoretical debate on agrarian change offered little methodological guidance and the topics at the heart of this debate were remote from the issues that were stirring the community. Additionally, I wanted to avoid falling into the ideological traps and in the particular assumptions underpinning agrarian political economy. Without going into depth, some of the assumptions inherent in these strands of thinking are related to how change is understood, as emanating from outside forces; as happening through pre-fixed stages of development; and how capitalist developments push women (often presented with fixed identities and as a homogeneous group) into the subsistence sector. I wanted to avoid falling in such traps, but how was I going to proceed? And where was I going to start?

### *Obtaining Trust and Building Social Relationships*

Upon on my first visit, together with Mostafa Errahj, my Moroccan supervisor, and Najoua, who initially helped me with translating from *Darija*<sup>7</sup> to French, but gradually became my friend and sparring partner, we met the *Rais*<sup>8</sup> – the director – of the state cooperative. After our first contact with the *Rais*, Najoua and I went back to the field and politely informed the *Rais* about our visit and the other visits that would follow. We started to approach and talk to other people in the state cooperative Ait Ali. Yet obtaining additional contacts proved to be much more difficult than we thought. People were reluctant to talk to us and were actively avoiding us.

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<sup>7</sup> Moroccan dialect of Arabic.

<sup>8</sup> The president of the cooperative.

Bit by bit Najoua and I discovered that many families in Ait Ali had lived a painful history and were vigilant towards the state. As I discuss in the next chapter, the tenure history of Ait Ali has been marked by expropriations and by hopes and struggles of the different peasant families to become independent peasants. Yet, after Morocco's independence, the state had full control over the countryside and organized it in a hierarchical and centralized way; to the frustration of various peasant families. An independent technician, engineer or researcher coming to the *douar* would therefore often be associated with the state (see Pascon 1980). This was especially the case in the *douar* Ait Ali, where the state had played a central role through the presence of the state cooperative, which had fallen under the direct control of the Ministry of Interior. Moreover, the current land transactions were extremely delicate topics and many people were reluctant at first to share their often intimate – and sometimes grief-ridden – stories related to their land with Najoua and me.

It was therefore essential to gain trust. We therefore spent much time simply visiting people on short courtesy visits and participating in social events. We attended weddings and birth celebrations and would go for a drink in the city or come along to the market. Additionally, during Ramadan, we often shared the *Iftar*<sup>9</sup> with some of the families.

### *“To Learn One has to Unlearn”*

My second stay in the field, from April to November 2013, went smoother, and gradually a change in my relationship with the *douar* took place; people seemed to get used to Najoua and me, and the initial strangeness of being an outsider was somewhat wearing off. Gradually, I started to retrieve various experiences and stories of agrarian transformations. Yet at times the stories, the particular silences evoked during interviews or ‘informal’ visits, and the changing subjectivities left me puzzled. Why were families for example hiding the fact that they had sold their land? Or even ‘lied’ about it? Why was a young woman changing her headscarf style after attending Quran classes? Or was the headscarf an expression of something else that I was not aware of? Initially I did not understand these, and various other field encounters. This prompted me to reflect on my framework of interpretation or the ‘glasses through which I observe the world’. My ‘glasses’ were colored by Dutch socio-cultural norms and values, with a French touch and Iranian/Tajik flavor based on previous experiences I had in that particular part of the world. My academic baggage acquired over the years and my interests in political economy and feminist studies further shaded my ‘glasses’. Yet this framework of understanding the world composed of bits and pieces provided me with little guidance to understand the new socio-cultural situation I found myself in. I had to start to learn all

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<sup>9</sup> *Iftar* literally means breakfast and refers to the first meal after sunset.

over again, or as Priti Ramamurthy also mentioned during her course – Feminist Research and Methods of Inquiry – at the University of Washington, Seattle – “to learn, one has to unlearn”.

Field data are not *Dinge an sich* but are constructs of the process by which we acquire them (Bellah 2007; p. xxxi). Both the people I was working with as well as myself live in a culturally mediated world, caught up in ‘webs of signification’ that they and I have spun (Rabinow 2007). The first step to give meaning and sense to the webs of signification consists of creating a common ground between the researcher and the interlocutor. As Paul Rabinow highlights, this quest of finding a way to communicate and to understand another “creates the beginning of a hybrid, cross cultural product” (p. 153). Rabinow characterizes the process of building a common ground as intersubjective and partial. Upon finding a common ground both the researchers and the interlocutors have to figure out how to present information. In this interaction the interlocutor gives external form to her/his experiences, by presenting them to meet particular inquiries and questions. In doing so, the interlocutor herself/himself already interprets the information which is presented. What is said or observed is then filtered through the researcher’s subjectivity.

To build this common ground, a common language is essential. The help of Najoua together with the ability to follow the conversation in *Darija* were essential in creating a common ground and in understanding particular subtleties in the expressions of the various interlocutors. But mainly I had to learn everything all over again and questioned everything; What did it mean to be a young farmer in Ait Ali?; What did it mean to be a young woman?; What kind of notions of injustice and unfairness were prevalent?; etc. In this process I made a virtue out of necessity and used my ‘strangeness’ to ask particular questions that Najoua, for example, could not ask, as we would sometimes hear, “you know you are Moroccan”. I asked these questions to better understand the discursive socio-cultural orders organizing the lives of people living with whom I was working with and to understand the various issues that were stirring the community and understand the topics that were contested. I took into consideration the rich social and gender diversity (in terms of the particular histories of the farming families, access to productive resources, the social differences as identified by various subjects; etc.) that exists among the various families and within the families.

My friendship with Najoua has helped me a great deal in deconstructing my judgments, in becoming closer with my interlocutors and in understanding particular events and existing notions of fairness and unfairness that were linked to changes related to the current agrarian dynamics. I began to understand why there were silences induced during interviews and progressively was able to make better sense of told and untold stories. I had, for example, initially qualified the various informative deviations of my interlocutors

who sold their land as 'lies', as some of them told me that they still had their land. Nevertheless, while reconsidering my statement of qualifying these untold stories as 'lies', I became aware that the stories actually revealed what was not supposed to be told or known by the community, out of shame and pride, revealing the various socio-historical meanings linked to land. As such, my own subjectivities always remained a point of contention, and I continued questioning and challenging my socio-cultural inquiries so as to not take them for granted.

### *Defining the Building Blocks of the Dissertation*

It is through this reflexive process of *unlearning*, *questioning* and *relearning* that I let myself be guided by the issues that were discussed and contested by the community and determined the building blocks of this dissertation. Land sales, and the newly set-up fences; access to groundwater and the increasing number of wells and the use of drip irrigation; changes in cropping patterns; and trends in labor competition and proletarianization were recurrent, and highly debated themes. Moreover, throughout my fieldwork I was struck by the active presence and engagement of various young people. I observed young men and women working on the land, young women taking care of the cows, young men chatting in small groups under an olive tree while waiting for a taxi ride to go to the city, or overlooking the drip irrigation system. Their activities and presence could not fail to draw the attention. During our initial conversations, their dreams were closely linked to the current changes and evoked new rural futures. As they will be the farmers (or will not) of tomorrow their aspirations and life-choices have a profound impact on the processes of agrarian change. Finally, considering myself and Najoua as 'young', we easily related to young people and shared some of similar concerns and dreams. This subjective connection further aroused my curiosity to question how young people experienced current processes of agrarian change.

As such, land, water and labor and the dreams and aspirations of young people constitute the building blocks of this dissertation.

### *Social Categories and Understanding Identities*

To distinguish various social categories I foremost relied on how my interlocutors gave meaning and experienced social differences. For example, when I was working with the younger men and women in the *douar* I selected them based on a snowball sampling, whereby I asked the interviewed young people to put me in contact with other younger men and women. Towards the end of the interviews, Najoua and I asked our interlocutors whether they identified themselves as being 'young' and what it actually meant for

them.<sup>10</sup> Rather than relying on my own categorization, therefore, the selection of the young people was based on peer- and self- identification. This allowed me to probe into what being young actually meant for young people themselves and to gain a better understanding of the subject position. For example, we encountered a young man aged 40, who was married and had a child. He identified himself as young because he worked together with his father on his father's land, under his father's responsibility. In another interview with a young woman of 19 years who just got married, she identified herself as being a "suwya" young – quite young. At seeing my puzzled face, she explained, "now that I am married, I have to take care of my husband and I am not completely free anymore". Moreover, upon interviewing various men and women, I carefully took into consideration how they told their stories, and how identities were articulated, expressed and negotiated and possibly changed from one context to another. For example, upon interviewing female waged workers, the place, both "conceived in terms of embodied practices and process of production that are simultaneously material and discursive" (Hart 2006, p. 994), played an important role in our interviews and illustrated their complex subject positions. Whether interviewing a female worker, for example, in the field while taking a break, or in the car after a day of work, or in the confined space of her house after a working day, or on her day off, or meeting her in the small urban centers throughout the region illustrated how different embodied subjectivities were enacted in various contexts.

### *Dilemmas*

Being implicated in such a way with the 'field' and with the people whose stories and experiences I was trying to understand also revealed particular limitations. While Najoua and I were gaining more trust among families or people who were in the beginning reluctant to talk to us, some of them started to tell their stories about how their land had been sold 'overnight', about sexual harassment, or painful divorces, etc. As the following example illustrates, some of these stories were very rich, but of greater importance, they were emotional and painful, which confronted me with two dilemmas; how far was I supposed to go to retrieve particular stories, and what was I going to do with them?

During the first months of my fieldwork, I collected various stories about a certain 'red house' in the *douar*. The rumors flying about the house concerned quarrels about land inheritance after the initial male owner had passed away. We were told that his wife, a lady in her sixties with two daughters already in their forties and with each three children, obtained the land rights and had decided to sell it to solve the conflicts. But the large amounts of money obtained with the land sale only sparked further quarrels, which rapidly escalated. One of the lady's grandsons killed her other grandson, his cousin. He

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<sup>10</sup> Translated in Darija : *Wash ket hass be-rassek shab?*



was jailed, and the elderly lady decided to move to the city, together with her daughters, their husbands and their children. After approximately two years, all the money had been squandered, and they were forced to move back to their house in the *douar*. The elderly lady and her daughters and granddaughters started to work as daily wagger on the land of their neighbors. Najoua and I tried to meet this family, but during the first months of the fieldwork we did not succeed. When we visited their house and asked if anyone was there, although we heard people talking in the house, nobody would open the door. We did not insist. It was only after several months that we succeeded in meeting the elderly lady. She had heard through a neighbor about our work. Najoua and I were excited that she finally agreed to talk to us. But once sitting in front of her, she seemed such a frail and wizened woman, and when I met her sad eyes, I did not know what to ask anymore. As I carefully tried to address the land issue she burst out in tears. The past was embedded in painful memories and I felt that I should not rub salt in the wound. Although we visited her a couple of times, I never brought up the land issue again and never asked what had happened. Perhaps I should have and perhaps I was not courageous enough, but what preoccupied me more was that I did not want to hurt this lady's dignity. It was one of the worst and most painful interviews that I conducted.

## **2.5. Commitments, Disappointments and Future Engagements**

I engaged in this research as a professional, as a human being with feelings and emotions, as a citizen and as a feminist. Similar to the research objective of Paul Pascon, I wanted my research to contribute to change and could mean something for the people with whom I had worked. As my fieldwork unfolded, a sense of discomfort grew, and I was often overwhelmed and saddened by a feeling that I just took the information that I wanted, but gave nothing in return. Especially when I interviewed young men and women, I felt that I had let them down. Young women were eager to do something in their *douar*; however, the opportunities to do so were missing. My work had hardly any resonance in the actual environment where it could matter. I was writing in English, and the articles that I was writing would end up in scientific journals, for which a (expensive) subscription is required and which is not accessible to anyone.

In Morocco the scientific language is predominantly French with a revival of Arabic/*Darija* and Berber. When writing up my research I often told Najoua, for example, that I wrote about her, her qualities and our fieldwork encounters. She replied to me in a teasing way, "*Lisa, please write in French so that everyone can read it and I will become famous*". She definitely had a point.

As part of our research project, my PhD colleagues and myself, organized a valorization activity as a way to share the findings of our research. As part of this valorization activity, I

wanted to create a space where both policy makers and young people could meet, and where young people could discuss their perceptions and their experiences. Najoua and I set up two discussion groups, one with young women and one with young men. My own research findings, which I had translated into five posters on which I had drawn out the history of Ait Ali and the current dynamics, served as ground for debate and reflection. The first problem that I encountered was who to invite? I wanted to invite representatives of the regional office of the ministry of agriculture and associations who might be interested in this topic. I was, however, disappointed by the lack of interest given to rural young people and gender issues in rural areas, and the few people I approached were ‘too busy’ or had other appointments. I ended up discussing the research findings with the young people themselves, which was very enriching, though its outreach was unfortunately limited.

Overall, in conducting a PhD research, too little time is reserved in the PhD research project to think about activities that engage with contemporary realities in meaningful ways to subjects and readers (McClancy and McDonough 1996; p. 46). Moreover, in the academic world of today where foremost-published articles are valorized there is little recognition for such activities. Teaching became one of the activities in which I could engage with, and learn from students and colleagues in an attempt to critically discuss agrarian development processes and how gender and other social differences come to matter. I did this in Rabat and in Meknes as well as in Wageningen. Moreover, I joined a group of researchers in Morocco working with young people in a project funded by the European Union. Together with a colleague, we focused on young agricultural wagedworkers (which is partly based on the fifth chapter in this dissertation). Our findings, together with the research findings in four other countries, are disseminated to policy-makers at national and EU levels, and various dissemination events are organized in Brussels, Marseille and Cairo to reach out to policy-makers and practitioners. Additionally, I wrote for a scientific Moroccan-French blog in French, which is accessible for a broad public. These various activities are modest. Through the research experiences obtained, I think it is important to think in creative and new ways about how to valorize research findings beyond the academia in ways that matter also for the people who are at the heart of anthropologic research.

## **2.6. Sequence of Methods Used**

The foregoing reflects my positioning in the field and how I approached my fieldwork. In the section that follows I elaborate on the various methods used.

### *Individual Interviews*

I conducted various individual interviews with a wide range of different actors; policymakers, practitioners, different members of farming households, farm managers, people who had recently bought land, families who had sold their land, different kinds of agricultural laborers, various young men, young women and male and female laborers. When conducting individual interviews, besides paying attention to the content of the story of the interviewee, I also considered the tone of the voice, the silences induced, the imaginaries mobilized and the conduct of the interviewee. Moreover, I carefully paid attention to self-representation, both orally and physically. I also considered the space where I conducted the interview.

### *Life-trajectories*

I further conducted various life-trajectories – or *“the journeys people take through milieus to pursue needs, desires, and curiosities or to simply try to find room to breathe beneath social constraints”* (Biehl and Locke 2010; p. 323). I did this with various young men and women, farming women and men, and male and female laborers. As explained by João Biehl and Peter Locke, trajectories are a helpful method to understand experiences and changing subjectivities. This exercise consisted of multiple interviews in which I mapped the interlocutor’s movements through space, time, and social fields and their dreams, escapes, struggles and obstacles (see also Biehl and Locke 2010). Some of the conducted life-trajectories cover a period of four years. These life trajectories allowed me to capture the experiences of the interviewees and provided a space for understanding identity formation. To contextualize the various experiences and life-events of young men and young women, I also interviewed their parents, sometimes grandparents, spouses, brothers and sisters.

### *Group Discussions*

I mainly conducted group discussions with young men and young women. Considering the collective character of the rural Moroccan society, the opinion of young people is strongly influenced by his/her peers (see Pascon and Benthar 1969; p. 149). The aim of the group discussions was to oppose and discuss different opinions, which contributed to the construction of different general opinions.

### *Observations*

Observing social activities and ‘reading’ the landscape have formed important methodological tools for this dissertation. Observing for example work activities on the land provided information about the hierarchical labor division and the gendered division

of particular tasks. Engaging in different activities with young women, e.g. going to the weekly market, having a coffee in the city, attending weddings, or going to the *hammam* together was important to better understand the lived experiences, desires and multiple subjectivities. Moreover, as my fieldwork research extended over a period of four years, 'reading' the landscape over such a time lapse revealed how agrarian/rural changes happen rapidly and at times violently.

### *Photography*

I have relied on photography to capture images of change: a bare piece of land gradually changed into a new farming project with the installation of the fences, the presence of a Syrian tube well digger, the installation of drip lines and the construction of a packing station. Clifford Geertz, who extensively worked in Sefrou, a small city situated at the foothills of the Middle-Atlas mountains refers to photography in anthropological work as a method *to say something*: "*They are a view and a comment, visual notations of Sefroui life... This is what to a mindful eye Sefrou looks like*" (Geertz et al. 1979). Especially for my second chapter on groundwater enclosure, I use this method to capture and illustrate new forms of enclosures.

	Land & Water	Labor	Young people
Methods used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview with 28 of the 36 families who became members of the state cooperative Ait Ali</li> <li>• Historical trajectory of 20 families and their farming practices</li> <li>• Multiple interviews with different members of the extended family</li> <li>• Multiple interviews with 35 families who did not benefit from the land reforms</li> <li>• Interviews with 12 new 'entrepreneurs' who recently bought land or their managers</li> <li>• Transect walk with young people living in the dissolving state cooperative as well as in the rest of the <i>douar</i></li> <li>• Photography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview with 32 female and 28 male laborers thereby taking into account differences in age; matrimonial status; origin; type of work; and where the work is carried out</li> <li>• Interviews focused on work experiences; daily activities thereby paying attention to the spaces where the activities were carried out and the mobility surrounding the activities; problems faced; future ambitions, dreams and role model</li> <li>• Two group discussions with young laborers</li> <li>• Four life histories</li> <li>• Multiple interviews with 20 different farmers hiring wage workers both in Ait Ali as well as in surrounding large farm enterprises</li> <li>• Observations (from 5.30 in the morning to 9 o'clock) at three different <i>mouquéfs</i> situated in the Saïss (Ain Toujdate; Bouderbala; El Hajeb) and farmers' fields observations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38 Interviews with 20 young men and 18 young women aimed at obtaining a general understanding of how young people experience and make sense of current rural dynamics &amp; agrarian change; and how they picture their futures and future selves in the changing countryside</li> <li>• Two group discussions (one with young women, and one with young men)</li> <li>• Four life trajectories covering a period of four years with two young men and two young women</li> <li>• To verify and contextualize the experiences and life histories, we also interviewed parents, sometimes grandparents, brothers and sisters</li> </ul>

Table 1: Overview of the particular methods used for each chapter

## 2.7. Writing Up: An Ongoing Reflection

Finally, the process of writing up has been marked by various detours, from Ait Ali, to Wageningen to Seattle, to Rabat, to return to Ait Ali. During my fieldwork I carefully documented each day of fieldwork. After each field stay of several months I established a field report. These field reports consisted of the storylines about the gendered process of agrarian change happening in Ait Ali. I followed the various storylines and began to

critically engage with existing theoretical debates to begin to better understand the unfolding processes of change. Understanding and making sense of the collected stories took time and various detours. My discussions with Mostafa Errahj, Marcel Kuper, Zakaria Kadiri and Mohammed Mahdi, my various travels to Holland to meet Margreet Zwarteveen and Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, my visit to Carolina Domínguez Guzmán in Peru to visit her 'field', my participation in a colloquium in the North of Algeria, and my journey to Seattle for a period of nearly two months where I worked together with Priti Ramamurthy and met inspiring feminist scholars, were some of the detours that helped me to make sense of the gendered processes of agrarian change in the Saïss. By the time that I was writing my dissertation I had the chance to live in Morocco. I went often back to the 'field' to cross check my observations and interpretations, discuss them with Najoua El Alime and the young people as well as the various peasant families with whom I had built a strong relationship.



# 'One Doesn't Sell One's Parents': Gendered Experiences of Shifting Tenure Regimes<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> A previous and shorter version of this chapter was published as: Lisa Bossenbroek and Margreet Zwarteveen (2015) "'One doesn't sell one's parents' Gendered experiences of shifting tenure regimes in the agricultural plain of the Saïss in Morocco', In: Caroline S. Archambault and Annelies Zoomers (Eds.) *Global Trends in Land Tenure: Gender Impacts*, London and New York: Routledge: 152 – 169.



### 3.1. Introduction

In 2006, the government of Morocco decided to privatize the land of the former socialist-inspired collective state cooperatives, because the restrictions on their transferability were seen as hampering their profitability. The resulting shift in land control is happening alongside, but also provoking, wider processes of agrarian change, which are manifested among others things in the introduction of new high-value crops, the use of new technologies (such as tube wells and drip irrigation) and alterations in labor relations. In this chapter, we seek to explore what the shift from a collective to a private tenure system means for gender relations. We base our analysis on one year of in-depth ethnographic fieldwork done in 2011–13 in the former cooperative of Ait Ali, which is situated in the agricultural plain of the Saïss in Morocco.

Our findings suggest that the privatization of land results in the disarticulation of land rights from wider kinship-based relations of dependency and reciprocity and erodes the historical, territorial and family values land used to embody. The disarticulation of land rights from wider kinship-based relations happens in tandem with and through a renegotiation of gender relations and identities. By tracing the history of the state cooperative, we show how land-use rights used to epitomize post-colonial collective struggles against the colonial regime and later against the Moroccan state. In the state cooperative, land was used through gendered family, kinship, and community relations based on the institutions of inheritance and marriage, with farms and families being deeply intertwined through labor arrangements and how land was used. Conversely, gendered identities and institutions importantly manifested themselves, and became enacted, through how land was used and managed. Today, farming increasingly is becoming a professional activity and identity, premised on a growing division between a private family domain associated with women and a public professional domain associated with men. This opens up new possibilities for becoming a modern farmer to some rural young men, but makes it increasingly difficult for many women to negotiate and justify their farming activities and identities. Changes in the monetary value of land, as well as changes in the inheritance system, are symptomatic of the changing meanings of land; something which may provoke protracted intra-family negotiations over land in which the position of women is particularly weak. In sum, our analysis shows how the current privatization of land in the region of the Saïss is shaped and in turn shapes existing identities and institutions, transforming the gendered spaces and subjectivities in often constraining ways for women.

### 3.2. The Co-constitution of Land and Social Gender Relations

To illustrate what the current privatization of the lands that used to belong to former state cooperatives means for existing gender relations, we draw on scholarly contributions in the field of anthropology. Various scholars in this domain look beyond the legal private-collective land tenure dichotomy and regard land rights as being embedded, social and relational. The term embeddedness, introduced by Karl Polanyi (1944) is central in this body of work, and refers to the idea that institutions such as property are basically social institutions, reflecting a complex alchemy of politics, culture, economics and ideology (Hann 1998; McCay and Jentoft 1998; Krippner 2001). Drawing on this definition of property, different scholars illustrate how land rights in peasant societies are often expressions of wider social relationships and interpersonal relations, including class, generation, ethnicity and gender. Theodor Shanin (drawing on Bohannan), for instance illustrates how in peasant societies there is a strong and interwoven relationship between land and farming households: *“Peasant political economy closely links the network of social relations with land tenure, a crucial determinant of the peasant’s wellbeing and the family’s social standing. The peasant land tenure represents a map of human relations rather than of impersonal slices of real estate along ‘Western’ lines. This map of social relations is structured by diverse hierarchies of societal control.”* (1990; p. 112-113; cf. p. 24 - 25). Similarly, the study of Chris Hann (1993) on land privatization in a peasant society in post-Soviet Hungary illustrates how land rights are shaped by and are shaping intra household family relations determined by age, gender ideologies, occupation and class. He argues that this co-shaping of land and family relations will ultimately determine the future of the family farming activities, almost independently from the legal status of the land.

Different feminist scholars (see for example Thelen 2003 and Harris 2006) added an important element to the foregoing debate. They point out how changes in the management and use of land and other natural resources happen through, and go accompanied by, the renegotiation of gender identities. Through changes in the use and management of natural resources identities are (re-)affirmed, (re-)negotiated and contested, which in turn shapes ecological conditions. As such, gender identities and land tenure relations are closely connected and co-constitute each other. This co-evolution of gender with meanings and practices of land use, ownership and management happens most visibly through the production of gendered spaces, through everyday practice that are simultaneously material and meaningful (Hart 2006; p. 980).

Engaging with these debates, we propose an in-depth qualitative analysis of the land privatization of the former state cooperatives in the region of the Saïss in Morocco. Our analysis explicitly acknowledges the historical and contextual specificity of the land reform process, focusing on how it shapes and is shaped by gender relations and gender

identities. Taking a historical perspective usefully allows to trace and to reconstitute the histories of the different family farms. It reveals how a particular land tenure regime became interwoven with a specific social organization of 'class' and gender difference in post-colonial Morocco; an era in which the ownership of land was an important icon of revolutionary resistance. A closer look at the organization of livelihoods within the state cooperative reveals how land was embedded and gave meaning to a web of gendered kinship- and community-based institutions of marriage, labor and inheritance. By tracing the effects of the processes of land privatization, we illustrate how land rights and the wider gendered relations in which these used to be embedded are progressively being delinked, with land increasingly becoming a commodity. Farming becomes more and more a professional masculine activity and identity, one that is enacted in an increasingly public domain, which makes it more difficult for women to engage in and identify with farming activities.

### **3.3. Political History of Land-tenure Relations in Morocco: Land Privatization as a Historical Process**

The land issue and the formation of property rights in Morocco are central to the political agrarian history of the country. This is partly due to the fact that Morocco is considered an agrarian country, where 44% (2000)<sup>12</sup> of its habitants live in the countryside and agriculture contributes 15–20% to the country's GDP (Jouve 2002). The political economy of land privatization in Morocco is a process that has been marked by roughly three phases: the pre-colonial situation before 1912; the colonial period from 1912–56, when Morocco was a French protectorate; and the post-colonial period. Rather than signifying radical ruptures, experiences of change by those living them are often marked by continuity and a gradual transition from one land-tenure regime to another (see also Bernstein 2010).

Land tenure relations in pre-colonial Morocco were characterized by four predominant categories of land (Bouderbala 1999; Raki 1980):

- 1 Collective lands that were collectively held by tribal groups and used for cultivation and grazing;
- 2 *Guich* lands, which were military lands that had been given out by the *Makhzen* to tribal groups;
- 3 *Habous* lands, religious landed property often used to build mosques or schools;
- 4 *Melk* lands, which were individually owned.

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<sup>12</sup> In 1960, 71% of the Moroccan population was living in the countryside (Haut Commissariat au Plan 1960).

In 1912, the French introduced the notion of privately registered land ownership to legitimize and facilitate foreign land acquisitions. This created important inequalities in land ownership. Towards the end of the French protectorate, the total area of agricultural lands was  $\pm 7,8$  million hectares, of which  $\pm 13\%$ <sup>13</sup> was in the hands of 5,900 Europeans and  $\pm 4\%$  belonged to 1,700 Moroccans, who owned the best lands with an average farm size of 170 hectares. This group of landowners engaged predominantly in lucrative, mechanized farming (Swearingen 1987). In contrast, the remaining 83% of agricultural lands, considered as 'traditional land', belonged to 1,4 million Moroccan families. These numbers hide the 500,000 families who owned less than 0.5 hectares or no land at all, as well as the landless farmers who often worked as laborers on the colonial farms.

Morocco obtained its independence in 1956, which coincided with the independence of other former colonies. Independence struggles sparked off a national debate during the decades that followed, in which agriculture, land reforms and the future of the  $\pm 13\%$  of colonized land figured prominently.

The majority of the left-wing parties agreed that a *real* land reform was what was needed. This entailed the dismantling of large farms and estates and the redistribution of the colonized land among small and landless farmers, thereby altering the existing agrarian structures and the established political power (Ben Barka 1963; Bouami 1980). The government, whose power rested among others on the wealthy Moroccans who had acquired large land holdings during the French protectorate, was reluctant to engage in such reforms. Hence, barely anything changed with regard to the existing land ownership inequalities in the countryside. Most of the lands that were part of the official colonization became state enterprises, and the lands that once belonged privately to foreign settlers were gradually sold to Moroccan nationals. In the early 1970s, because of the growing political unrest caused by, inter alia, a worsening economic crisis, increasing socio-economic inequalities in the country side, land reclamations by peasants (see also El Yazami and Wallon 1991) and the threat of a rural exodus that endangered the existing power structures, the government embarked on a limited land-reform program. Because of private land sales and the establishment of state enterprises on land formerly owned by foreign settlers, only 30% of the initial 1 million hectares remained to be distributed to small and landless farmers (Bouderbala 2001; Pascon 1977). The reform consisted of redistributing these lands to state cooperatives, which fell under the responsibility of the ministry of interior. Cooperative members – who had to either be former laborers of a French colonial farm, landless or own a small parcel of land – were often recruited from different parts of the country and were forced to work together, without having any

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<sup>13</sup> The colonization of land during the French protectorate consisted of 56% private colonization, 22 % state colonization, and 22% acquisition by Moroccan notables.

cropping freedom.<sup>14</sup> Cooperative members thus became clients coerced by the government (Pascon 1977; p. 185) in an apparently socialist structure. Land remained state property and the members of state cooperatives simply received use rights and remained officially unable to rent or sell the land. The land reforms were an isolated act that did not challenge the existing political power or change the dominant modes of production (Pascon 1977).

From the 1980s onwards, the government of Morocco chose a path of economic liberation, which was considered necessary to alleviate the country's financial deficits. It adopted two structural adjustments programs, which resulted in a repositioning of the state and the opening up of the agricultural sector to the market. These policies favored a productive and competitive agricultural sector over the reduction of existing inequalities (Jouve 2002). The existing patchwork of different co-existing property regimes was considered to stand in the way of the full development of the agrarian sector and restrict investments (Ibidem; Akesbi et al. 2007).

In addition, the lands of the state cooperatives were considered to be 'frozen', as they could not be exchanged in markets and thus remained outside the economy. This in turn was seen to limit the productivity and efficiency with which they were used. State cooperatives also faced many other problems that lead to low production figures. Although the government financially supported the state cooperatives, the development of the cooperatives depended on how well members worked together. In practice however, some members preferred farming individually and chose to sell their produce outside the structures of the cooperatives (see also Mahdi and Allali 2001). This, together with reductions in the financial support received by the government after the structural adjustments of the 1980s, explains why cooperatives were no longer able to cover their expenses – such as acquiring machinery – with the proceeds generated by produce sales, which plunged them into a financial crisis. The government thus decided in 2006 to 'liberalize the sector'<sup>15</sup>, or as stated in a statement of the Ministry of Agriculture to 'remove all barriers that can hamper investments' (2007). On the condition that they paid off their debts, members of state cooperatives could now become owners of the land they used to work on in return for a fee of approximately 70,000 Dirham (approximately €6,250), depending on the size of the land and the quality of the soil. Former members of the cooperative could thus become private landowners, with the land becoming private property.

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<sup>14</sup> The members of the cooperatives initially did not have a free choice regarding cropping. Although this rule did not change in theory, in practice we have observed how, from the mid-80s onwards, this rule was applied only loosely and members gradually started to cultivate what they wanted.

<sup>15</sup> The decree in which the new land status is laid down was promulgated in the official bulletin n°5282 on the 13th of January 2005 and n°5446 on 10th of August 2006.

### 3.4. Land as Symbol of Resistance and Struggle Against the Foreign Settlers and the Moroccan State

Tracing the history of the cooperative Ait Ali – which used to be part of the large *cooperative de production Ait Naamen* (comprising 3,000 hectares and with 178 members) – reveals much about the value that land used to embody. Historically land has symbolized the post-colonial struggle, as well as the resistance to the Moroccan state and the collective character of the cooperative. During our interviews with former members, they recalled bitterly how members of other cooperatives received an individual land plot with land-use rights on which they could work with their families, whereas they had become laborers, working under the government's control and being remunerated on a yearly basis or in kind. They used to be picked up in cars, sometimes with their family members, from their *douars* and brought to the cooperative to work for the day. They remembered their despair about still not owning any land and recalled how they had been workers on the farms of foreign settlers, managed with a heavy hand and had been left disappointed with how little had changed since the French left. They regarded this as the continuation of state repression, something that prevented them from being independent peasants. Some vividly recalled the distrust that existed between them and the state.

These *cooperatives de production* functioned poorly and members were increasingly dissatisfied with their situation. Many feared that they would receive little or no remuneration for their work because of the cooperative's increasing debts, which is why they kept back parts of the harvest so that they could sell it themselves as a means of guaranteeing at least some income. As a result, however, large swathes of harvested produce disappeared, further reducing the income of the cooperative. Also, conflicts among the different tribes who had been forced to work together under the same structure of the state cooperative were common. Some members withdrew altogether, while others started to organize sit-ins in Rabat, Morocco's capital, demanding the division of the state cooperatives and individual land plots. Being the only time in Moroccans' land tenure history that farmers went to Rabat to protest, this was a clear sign of dissatisfaction with the existing model. Eventually, this led to the division (in 1991–92) of the *cooperative de production Ait Naamen* into five smaller state cooperatives each of approximately 350 hectares and with 30 to 40 members. One of them was the Ait Ali cooperative.

Within this cooperative, each member received an individual land plot of between seven and 13 hectares, depending on the quality of the soil. The plots were distributed through a lottery system: “It was like a lottery, you pick a number and get a plot assigned. You could not choose which plot you wanted. Some were closer to the *douar*, others a bit further away.”

The plots were not irrigated initially, but each member eventually received another 0.5 hectares that could be irrigated with water from a canal, and where vegetables were grown. All members also received a plot of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> intended for housing, which prompted many to move from the *douar* where they were living to the state cooperative.

### **3.5. The Family Farm as the Cornerstone of the State Cooperative: Membership Criteria and Inheritance Practices**

During the initial period, the reconstitution of the family farm formed the cornerstone of the functioning and the continuity of the state cooperative, with land assuring both the material as well as the ideological 'reproduction' of farms and families. The intimate relations between the family and the land were, for instance, expressed in the formal obligations and rights of the members of the state cooperative. These were codified in the *Dahir de la Réforme Agraire*, the law of the land reform, dated 29 December 1972. To be eligible as a member, not only must one be a landowner, farmer or a salaried agricultural worker (Article 5, *Dahir de la Réforme Agraire* 1972), we were told that in practice people's personal circumstances were also taken into account. Being a father was viewed as being a positive qualifier for potential membership. Women could also become members of a state cooperative in theory. In practice, however, and if they did apply, they were selected only if their husbands were not eligible. In our case study, only three of the 36 initial members were women. For example, we encountered a woman who had applied for a plot of land because her husband had migrated to France. Other female members had obtained membership when their husband passed away as a result of the specific requirements of the inheritance system that we discuss in detail below. Today, the number of registered female members has increased to nine. The actual number of female members may even be higher, as land transfers were not always registered or communicated to the *Rais*, the president of the state cooperative. At the time we completed our research, most initial members were between 50 and 70 years old. In addition to the general membership rules, there were also certain rules regarding the organization of the work on the individual parcels of land, which again underscored the family-based character of farming. The members were, for instance, supposed to work on their individual plots with the help of family members "living under the same roof" (Article 22, *Dahir de la Réforme Agraire* 1972).

The particular inheritance practices that existed in the state cooperatives, and which differ from Sharia law, are another clear expression of how land contributed to and assured the social reproduction of families. When land-use titles were registered with the male head of the household, the land use right was often transferred to his wife upon his death. When discussing the reasons for this, many people referred to the particular role of the mother in the family and in the Moroccan (rural) society. As the backbone of the

family, she is greatly honored, revered and perceived as strong and responsible (see also Rassam 1980). Registering the land in her name was a peacekeeping strategy; as it prevented the land being divided up into smaller parcels. This arrangement avoided conflicts between siblings and generations: *"...the woman is the one who controls everything. If the son takes over the land, he will force his mother and other brothers to leave the land, because he will marry and his spouse will say that she does not want to live with your brothers and with your mother."*

In order to ensure the social reproduction of the family, as is the case when a mother was not eligible to inherit the land,<sup>16</sup> the land use right would instead often be transferred to an unmarried son who still lived in the parental house. This would mean that the use and ownership of the land remained within the family. If the rights were transferred to a married male sibling, the family would run the risk of losing it upon his death, since the land would then be transferred to his wife (the daughter-in-law). The main objective of keeping the family together was thus partly achieved through the careful crafting of particular land inheritance practices, with land serving as the 'glue' in family ties.

### *The Enactment of Land Use Rights through Marriage and Gendered Labor Relations: The Reaffirmation of Gendered Identities*

The historical trajectories of the different family farms in the state cooperative reveal that as soon as the members received their individual land plot, land-tenure relations became embedded in wider household-, kinship- and community-based gendered relations. In addition to the membership rules and inheritance practices, marriage and labor arrangements mediated and expressed the gendered social relations and dependencies around land, simultaneously carving out gendered subjectivities and spaces. Although most land-use rights were registered in men's names, the intimate connections between families and farms worked to acknowledge the centrality and importance of women. At the same time, the fuzziness of the boundaries between farm and family allowed women to extend and negotiate their mobility and agency by constructing farm work as an extension of their domestic activities.

Although marriage practices in rural Morocco are currently changing, marriage used to be an important strategy to forge alliances, as well as a central institution that safeguarded and controlled the chastity of women. Upon marriage, the newly wed wife usually leaves her parents' home and land, and moves to her in-laws' house. If the wife bears children, and while her offspring grow up, she will gradually become more involved in farm activities, usually on the land owned by her husband or in-laws. Through her everyday

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<sup>16</sup> According to the rules of the cooperative, she was not allowed to be older than 55 years. This rule was abolished in 2006 upon the privatization of the land of the cooperatives. From that point on, mothers and/or wives older than 55 could also inherit the land.



domestic work, and by helping with the collective work on the land, she confirms her commitment to her marriage and becomes part of the reproduction of the family farm; thus simultaneously enacting her identity as a wife, mother and farmer. The work on the farm is an almost logical extension of the work in the house, with the boundaries between the house and the farm being fluid and permeable. The case of Rabha, 50 years old, illustrates this. Rabha married Hassan, whose brother – at that time unmarried – had inherited the land-use title upon the death of their father in 1983. Their nine-hectare plot is situated about one kilometer from their house. Rabha is originally from another state cooperative 40 kilometers away. She tried maintaining her claim to her native land by sending her son to work on that land, and explained to us that she had done so to be able to pass it on to her children. She was responsible for all the household chores, such as cooking the meals for her five children (ranging at that time between 11 and 20 years of age) and sometimes also for the individuals who were working on the land, as well as baking bread, doing laundry and cleaning the house (with the help of her two daughters). She also took care of their three cows. Initially and like everyone else in the early days of the cooperative, Rabha's family cultivated cereals, barley and peas. The growing and harvesting of these crops is considered a man's job, and was normally carried out by the brothers who were sometimes helped by their sons or other male relatives. Rabha, together with other female family members and sometimes female neighbors, would help with the sorting and cleaning of the wheat, barley and peas once they had been harvested. After a couple of years, the brothers collectively invested in the digging of a well and started to cultivate different irrigated crops – such as onions, potatoes, carrots and tomatoes – on c. three hectares of the plot. Rabha started to help more frequently on the land from this point, sometimes with her sisters-in-law or other relatives. She worked alongside her husband, her brothers-in-law and sons. The cultivation and preparation of the soil, and the irrigation of the onions and potatoes, were considered male tasks, while the women were responsible for the planting (and later weeding) of the carrots, tomatoes and sometimes also of the onions; at harvest time, men and women, at points assisted by laborers (mostly family members, neighbors and individuals living in the *douar* Ait Ali), worked together to bring the crops in safely.

The example of Molud further reflects how gendered identities are partly enacted and affirmed through a gendered division of farm activities. He is 65 years old and received a land plot of 8.5 hectares. He has two sons and one daughter, who are now in their late twenties. They initially cultivated rain-fed crops, which was done with the help of hired laborers living in the surrounding *douars*. A few years later, they dug a well. Soon after, Molud and his family moved to the plot, which was situated two kilometers away from the 1,000m<sup>2</sup> that they received for building their house upon the division of the large cooperative. As soon as they moved, Molud's two oldest sons left school and actively began to farm. They planted onions on three hectares, tomatoes on 1.5 hectares and

wheat on the rest of the plot. They divided the activities: the oldest son was responsible for irrigation and organizing the laborers. He also monitored the farming activities on the land. His younger brother drove the tractor on the family's plot and also those of their neighbors. During an interview, the brothers explained that they discussed everything with their father and that their mother, who was in poor health, hardly worked on the land. One of the sons is married and his wife was responsible for the household chores, and also looked after a couple of cows. Their sister was living with an aunt in a nearby town and was going to school.

The above examples illustrate how the use of the land is embedded in wider household-, kinship- and community relations, serving the reproduction of the family farm by means of activities through which gendered subjectivities are enacted and reproduced. Rabha explained that keeping the ties to her native land was important for her; she regarded it as a way to secure the future of her children. Holding on to the land also contributed to her personal autonomy and bargaining power within her own family. Simultaneously, her activities on her brother-in-law's land are important in affirming her social position in the family; through her labor investments, she invests in her reputation and her identity as a good wife and mother. The fact that farm work is (seen as) an extension of domestic work and because most farm activities are done with family members, women like Rabha are able to stretch the boundaries of the private sphere – the space to which women are culturally and traditionally confined in rural Morocco – thus extending their mobility without losing their credibility as women, mothers and wives. Moreover, these collective activities were also important moments of interactions and exchange about personal events and village concerns. For men, as the case of Molud demonstrates, subjectivities are much more clearly tied to land ownership, their occupational position as farmer and their work on the farm. Whereas women's subjectivities were more tied to the marital contract and associated with the private sphere of the house, men's subjectivities were defined by their position as head of the family and or the farm (see also Brandth 2002).

### **3.6. Land Privatization and Dynamics in Ait Ali: Changing Meaning of Land and the Gradual Disarticulation of Land Rights and Family Relations**

During the final years of the state cooperative, the family farm – as an amalgam of gendered activities and identities formed around the fluid boundaries between the house, the farm and the land – gradually changed. Land became ever more disarticulated and dis-embedded from family and kinship relations, and dis-associated from memories of struggle and territory. Our evidence suggests that this process has accelerated since the land privatization of 2006. The stories of the people who sold their land provide particularly vivid witness to this; their regret and sorrow about the separation from their

land illustrate both that land used to signify much more than just a resource, and also that the land's meanings are changing. Many were reluctant to openly discuss their decision to sell their land. They often tried to hide this information from us, diverting the conversation to their future plans in agriculture whenever we brought up the topic. When invited to visit their fields to see the crops planted or the drip-irrigation systems installed, we often found ourselves waiting in vain for anyone to arrive at the agreed time. Such appointments were also often postponed, or turned out very differently than expected – we ended up visiting another *douar*, for example, or another farmer, or even went to the city for a coffee. Deeply puzzled at first, we gradually came to understand that the reluctance of our interlocutors to share experiences of selling their land reflected the social importance attached to land and the shame many people feel in admitting to having disposed of it. For them, as for many of the first members of the cooperatives, land ownership is much more than property; it is the result of years of struggle by parents and grandparents to obtain the right to own the land many of them used to work on as laborers under an authoritative foreign ruler. Owned land is also a repository of years of labor and other investments. When we were asking our friends in the state cooperative why so many people were unwilling to admit that they sold their land, they replied, *“selling land is like selling your parents, or your mother – you do not do that”*.

In comparison to ten years ago, the value of land is now increasingly determined by its market price, which has drastically increased since 2006. The price today (2013) of a hectare of land is between 500,000 Dirham (c. €45,000) and 600,000 Dirham (c. €55,000). In 2006, at the beginning of the land-privatization process, the same lands were worth around 120,000 Dirham (€11,000) per hectare. Depending on the location of the land (close to the city or close to a hard road) and the water availability (the presence of wells), the price per hectare can be even higher. We were told by our interviewees, both by families who sold the land as well as by recent buyers, that only the rich can afford to pay such prices. Or, as a female former landowner indicated, *“people who can buy the land did not earn their money through working”*, which refers to some land transactions that are used to launder drug money, as is carried out mostly by individuals from the North Moroccan Rif region.

The land market is far from a 'neutral space', where intermediaries connect willing buyers and sellers and help them negotiate the best price for all parties involved. Instead, this institution is highly gendered: the negotiations and transactions are predominantly conducted between men and take place in cafes, spaces that are typically not accessible to rural women. That this effectively works to limit women's opportunities to buy or sell land became apparent during our fieldwork: women sometimes approached us to ask if we knew anyone who was interested in buying their land, or they requested our help in finding potential buyers. In addition, although forming part of a policy of economic liberalization that entails the withdrawal of the state, the Moroccan government is deeply

involved in land-transfer dynamics. By offering tax exemptions and subsidies to support new investments, it actively steers the privatization outcome in a specific direction: that of supposedly efficient, productive and competitive agricultural production that can be realized by a very specific type of entrepreneurial farmer. This in turn leads to the increase of 'entrepreneurial' farming, which can be characterized among other things by investing heavily in the land, the introduction of mechanization (e.g. drip irrigation) and the cultivation of high-value crops (mainly fruit trees and grapes).

### *The Professionalization and Masculinization of Farming Activities*

The gradual dis-articulation of the family from the farm and the associated land further manifests itself through the gradual professionalization and masculinization of farming. For some young men, this offers attractive new opportunities to demonstrate their masculinity, as the activity of farming is redefined from something associated with backwardness and tradition to something associated with modernity and progress. In our case study these newly emerging masculinities are epitomized by the new farming projects undertaken by the investors and entrepreneurs who buy up the land. Their farming style often starkly contrasts with that seen on the lands that are not sold. In our case study, eight members of the cooperative sold their land and 18 obtained their individual land rights by paying the land fee. Approximately ten members continue as members of the state cooperative.<sup>17</sup> Many of the buyers come from other regions in Morocco; they do not settle in the area but live either abroad or in the city. In our case, six of the eight buyers made large investments in their land that visibly altered the landscape (see picture 3): they demarcated their newly acquired property with high fences; planted semi-permanent high-value crops, as noted above; started producing for the national market. The other two buyers continued with a mix of irrigated agriculture and rain-fed agriculture. We were told that these were 'pending projects': the buyer waits until he has sufficient money to pursue his potential project.

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<sup>17</sup> These numbers are based on the land sales up to September 2013. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, when the cooperative has less than seven members, it is officially dissolved.



Picture 3: The rapidly altering landscape since the process of land privatization

The land on the left side has not been sold and belongs to a former member of the state cooperative. The land on the right side has recently been bought. The land is demarcated with fences and new high value crops (in this case grapes) have been planted.

There are differences in how members of families who did not sell their lands appreciate these changes, and these vary in line with generation and socio-economic background. The older generation, many of whom were the original members of the state farm, perceive the new land buyers as *barrani*, which literally means ‘outsiders’: statements such as “they are different”, “they think differently”, “he does not come to you, so why should you go to him?” were used to express the social distance they perceived as existing between themselves and these newcomers. Many specifically referred to the new enclosures of the land with fences, seeing these as clear markers of how society is changing for the worse. To them, the replacement of the old rows of olive trees – often the result of a joint investment of neighboring farmers – with cement poles and barbed wire, guards and sometimes dogs to mark and forcefully delineate plot boundaries is a stark expression of changing property relations. The younger generations, who are between the age of 18 and 35, have a slightly more positive perception of the new buyers. During group discussions with young women and young men, both groups mentioned that instead of using the negative word *barrani* they would prefer to use the more neutral term *mostatmir*, which means investor. Many young people, although noting how the arrival of newcomers was accompanied by land sales arising from financial distress, and while regretting that new fences make the free grazing of animals more difficult, positively appreciate the economic opportunities that new foreign investors are creating, including modern technologies and different opportunities for employment and development (see also Bossenbroek et al. 2014). Likewise, the agricultural projects undertaken by newcomers serve as a source of inspiration to some former cooperative members, even if they do not have any direct contacts with them. For instance, many of

those who managed to obtain their private land title have now started digging new wells to expand irrigation across their plot and cultivate more vegetables. Many have plans for, or are installing, drip irrigation and some are also starting to fence their lands and are thinking of planting a couple of hectares of fruit trees in the near future.

Taken together, these new initiatives can be characterized as a gradual 'professionalization' of farming, with farming identities increasingly becoming reserved for, and actively taken up by, some ambitious young male farmers whose fathers or mothers used to be members of the state cooperative. Their positive appreciation of the opportunities offered by mechanization, higher value crops and drip irrigation is based on a labeling of these changes as 'new' and 'modern'. They mark a new era, and allow young rural men to positively distinguish themselves from their old-fashioned 'peasant' parents, and to become new, clean and entrepreneurial farmers. Their idea of farming, for which hard physical labor is required while becoming dirty in the mud, is giving way to a more technical, less physical demanding way of farming that requires more managerial skills. This change also marks a clear masculinization of the profession.

### *The Eroding Fluidity of the Boundaries between Private and Public Spheres*

The dis-articulation of the family from the farm and the land also occurs partly via a gradual erosion of the social relations in which women's activities used to be embedded. This is accompanied with a clearer distinction – and a more marked symbolic boundary – between the private home domain and the public professional domain. This is first and foremost due to the changing labor relations that are part and parcel of the process of agricultural intensification, as well as the transformation in cropping patterns that has drastically increased the demand for agricultural labor. Ever more farmers are seeking these laborers from the wider community, and outside kinship and community relations. The presence of 'outside' laborers, especially when they are male, makes female family members reluctant to continue working on the land, as indicated by the following quote: *"We used to work on the land and help out when it was needed; for example, during the harvest of the onions I used to fill the boxes with onions. Today we hardly do it any more because male workers do the harvest. We do not work together with them."*

Moreover, as a result of fencing, land is increasingly becoming individual property – a personal business and space – in which it is difficult for women to find a place. This also affects community interactions. When talking to different cooperative members, all of them felt that *"there is no cooperative any more; it is now every man for himself"*. Intra-community relations are now being replaced with new property demarcations, with male managers who oversee the projects of the absentee investors or entrepreneurs and young male farmers. New farming styles and fences thus also seem to solidify new frontiers, which besides regulating certain forms of mobility, also affect the social

exchanges among the people living in the state cooperative; face-to-face meetings and informal chats are reduced.

### *Changing Inheritance Practices*

Gradual changes in inheritance practices further reflect and illustrate how land becomes increasingly disconnected from families, histories and identities. Following the changes in land privatization, inheritance practices shifted in the direction of Sharia law and its linked customs. In theory, this means that instead of appointing one single heir, sons now receive two-thirds of an inheritance, daughters one-third and the wife or mother one-sixth. We witnessed several cases in which families had not yet obtained the private land title before the initial cooperative member passed away. Such situations provoked sometimes heated and protracted quarrels between siblings about how to divide the land. In cases where the individual land title was issued in the name of the youngest son, often all brothers (their sisters usually move out of the house upon marriage and cease work on their parents' land) used to work on it. Rather than collectively managing the land, or allowing the one heir to do so, families instead often choose to sell the land so as to avoid conflicts between brothers and generations. Yet the decision about whether or not to sell also itself sometimes was a cause of intense disagreement.

In these contentious intra-family negotiations about land inheritance issues, women have a particularly weak bargaining position. Although theoretically (according to the Sharia) they are entitled to a share of the inheritance, it is customary practice that they leave their part to their brothers. This is first of all related to the fact that often one or several brothers are in charge of farming and in order to keep the peace, and to keep the land (and the family) together, sisters used to renounce their land share. Also, as land did not have the same monetary value as it has today, the stakes were lower. That women do not receive any share of the family land is often justified by the fact that they will be moving out of the parents' home – and leaving the family – upon marriage. Aziza's story serves as an example here. She married a member of the state farm and moved out of her parent's house. We were told that her husband was the first person in the cooperative who sold his land. Aziza's father used to be a member of the state cooperative but had recently (in 2012) passed away. We talked briefly to Aziza and asked her how her father's land was going to be divided. She explained that it would be done according to the Sharia: she would get one or 1.5 hectares and her brothers three or slightly more. She was thinking of installing drip irrigation on the land that she would inherit, seeing the land as insurance for the future of herself and her children. A couple of months later we talked to her brother, Aziz. We asked if the division had already been done. He said that they would not divide the land and would continue working on it with all the seven brothers, as they had always done. When asked *“what about your sisters?”*, Aziz answered *“they all have their own houses, we [will] just give them something in memory of our father”*. When we dug

deeper and asked specifically about Aziza, who was still living in the state cooperative, Aziz explained that he did not see the point of giving her land, since her husband had sold his land only to squander all his money. He added that if Aziza claimed her part of the inheritance, he would buy her out. Knowing the price per hectare, we thought that this would be better than nothing; the money would still allow her to provide for her children's future. However, when we asked Aziz how much he was thinking to give his sister, he answered *"the price per hectare is 380,000 [Dirham] (€3,800), but since we are family, we will see"*. We frequently heard stories like this, where sisters were excluded from their rightful inheritance in order to maintain peace among their brothers.

An interview with a notary in the region suggested that there are many women, like Aziza, who aspire to claim their inheritance rights. Apparently, the increasing monetary value and meaning of land is also leading to a re-appreciation of customary inheritance practices.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

Our analysis shows how changes in land-tenure regimes in the region of the Saïss are co-shaped by changing gender relations and subjectivities. Situating our analysis in the land-tenure history of the region reveals how the value of land once symbolized resistance as well as a collective struggle for independence and freedom in which kinship relations were important resources. For as long as state cooperatives existed, the organization of farming was closely interwoven with land tenure and family relations. Complementary gendered labor divisions and farming identities muddled the boundaries between families and farms, with the latter being a logical extension of the former and the two shaping each other in intimate ways. Today, however, as part of the privatization process, there is a gradual disarticulation of farms and wider kinship and community relations. We have identified and described three processes that manifest and mark this uncoupling of the meaning of land from the livelihoods and meaning of farming families. The first is a professionalization and masculinization of farming identities; processes which offer new and exciting opportunities for some young men to combine the activity of farming with modern ideals of manhood. The second is the gradual emergence of stronger symbolic and spatial gendered distinctions. Women are increasingly confined to the domestic sphere (sometimes encompassing the newly fenced land) and removed from the public, professional one. For male farmers, newly fenced land becomes an important space for enacting their new identity as 'professionals'. The third way in which the separation of land from families and territories occurs is through changes in inheritance: from inheritance practices in the state cooperative that honored and reinforced the centrality of mothers in both farms and families, to the customs surrounding the Sharia that allow women (at least in principle) to claim a share of the land as inheritance. Within the



ideological context of rural Morocco, characterized by the strict control of female chastity, these processes together work to reconfigure female mobility and subjectivity. Within the shifting meanings of place and subjectivities, some women are confined to a new homebound traditionalism, while increasing their dependence on men as income earners and employers. Others, especially the younger generations attempt to negotiate the changing order of meaning and seek new activities in farming and sometimes in the city. These attempts remain scattered and emerge at the margins of the increasing masculinization of the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, these aspirations need to be followed neatly as they might be indicators of changing and new femininities.

## CHAPTER 4

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### Sour Grapes: Multiple Groundwater Enclosures<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> A shorter version of this chapter will be published as: Lisa Bossenbroek, Marcel Kuper, and Margreet Zwarteveen (Forthcoming 2016) "Sour Grapes: Multiple groundwater enclosures in Morocco's Saiss region", I In: JP. Venot, M. Kuper, MZ. Zwarteveen (Eds.) *Untold Stories of Efficiency, Innovation & Development*. Earthscan.

## 4.1. Introduction

While driving to the *douar* Ait Ali in the agricultural plain of the Saïss in Morocco, we always passed by a fallow land plot of approximately ten hectares. We passed this plot without noticing much, until the day we spotted a Syrian tube-well digger with a checked red scarf on his head and his drilling rig on the land. He attracted our attention and his presence, as well as the newly erected fence surrounding the plot, triggered many questions: Was this land recently bought? Who bought it? Why had the land been fenced? What would the Syrian tube-well digger do if he did not find any water? What if he would find water? We decided to pull over and to interview him. His name was Wahid. He told us that someone living in the nearby city of Meknes had recently bought the land. He showed us a little device with threads of different colors, which had helped him to locate the exact spot with the highest probability of finding water. When we asked him what would happen if he did not find any water he answered, *“the owner will resell this plot, and he will most likely buy another one and will give it another chance. But if there is water he will probably plant fruit trees and build a packing station”*. Indeed, over the two years that followed we observed how the recently enclosed land gradually changed. Fruit trees were planted, a drip irrigation system was installed, and a packing station was erected at the back of the plot (Picture 4).



Picture 4: Groundwater as a lever of agrarian transformations

The left picture, taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, presents the drilling rig of a Syrian tube-well digger who is drilling a tube-well. The right picture is the same plot, nine months later. At the back of the land plot rises a newly constructed packing station.

This story is emblematic of the changing realities of access to and use of groundwater and of land tenure relationships, and more generally, of agrarian transformations in the Saïss. The landscape is gradually changing as more and more fences are being built, and new investors are increasingly drilling deep tube-wells reaching up to 200 meters, planting high

value crops, and using new irrigation technologies, in particular, drip irrigation. These changes are promoted and subsidized by the *PMV*, Morocco's ambitious agricultural policy, which goes hand-in hand with land tenure changes. Through processes of privatization of formerly state owned farms and other land policies, land are made available to various kinds of private individuals. Yet, the buyers who are able to access land are mostly urban dwellers, as they can afford to pay the rising land prices.<sup>19</sup> What singles out these new farms is that most newcomers enclose the land with high-wired fences, often immediately after having bought the land. Their farms also stand out because only high value crops, such as grapes or fruit trees, are planted. The fencing of the land and changing agricultural practices are further accompanied by changes in water flows. 'Modern' farming projects rely on use of substantially larger water flows. Newcomers drill new deep tube-wells and use drip irrigation. Meanwhile, farmers who engage in a more peasant<sup>20</sup> way of farming, and who rely on shallow wells notice how over the past 30 years the groundwater level is dropping and how their wells are running dry during the hot summer months.

In this chapter, we seek to understand *how* and through *what* processes these water flows are altered. Considering that in the Saïss the enclosure of land with fences goes hand in hand with water re-allocation, we both draw from the concept of enclosure as well as from the critical water literature to analyze how these processes happen. Combining the two helps illustrate how changing groundwater access and use happens through, and is accompanied by, changing tenure relations; the use of new technologies; and a discourse of modernity. This is described in the first part of this chapter. We then illustrate how the groundwater enclosures are enacted by the gradual dissociation of groundwater from its socio-cultural and territorial context; growing social inequities; and violent expropriations. While groundwater is increasingly flowing away from peasant families who relied on water for sustaining their livelihood, water is now flowing towards new 'entrepreneurs' who produce 'sour grapes'. This brings us to a strange paradox that is at the heart of the unfolding enclosure process: whilst the *PMV* has the ambition to create entrepreneurs water flows are diverted to absentee 'investors' who all produce the same products and face problems selling them.

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<sup>19</sup> Since the land privatization process the land prices have drastically increased. Land prices went up from c. 120,000 Dirham (c. € 11,000) in 2006 to c. 600,000 Dirham (c. € 55,000) in 2013 (see Bossenbroek and Zwarteveen 2015).

<sup>20</sup> As will be illustrated further in the chapter, this mode of farming is usually based on a sustained use of ecological capital and oriented towards defending and improving peasant livelihoods (van der Ploeg 2008).

## 4.2. Linking the Concept of 'Enclosure' to Water Politics

We consider 'enclosure' as a useful concept to rethink agrarian capitalist expansion. Enclosure offers critical insights to expose disruptive ecological and socio-cultural dynamics. It is a concept, rooted in the process of communal land enclosure in England, which happened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as described by Thomas More in his work *Utopia* (first published in 1516). The enclosure of communal land excluded the community from their access to land by fences and by redefining the use of the land: from providing the daily livelihood for peasants, the lands were instead appointed to serve England's industrialization. Since then, the concept of enclosure has gained much attention, especially by Marxist scholars. The debate flared up again in the 1980s notably. This is related to the "*industrial agro-food energy complexes, which has made land and water, key resources in the global capitalist system again, fueling in turn a huge renewed process of enclosure*" (Borras and Franco 2012; p. 1). Examples of such agro-food energy complexes are the re-appearance of the agro-export model (see van der Ploeg 2008) and the growth of extractive industries (e.g. mining companies). Different scholars illustrate how this results in various processes of land and water grabbing, and of land and water privatization (for instance, White et al. 2012; Borras and Franco 2012; Peluso and Lund 2011). This body of work highlights that processes of enclosure are inherent to the current neo-liberal era. Nevertheless, such processes have mostly been explained as emanating from outside forces, driven by the state and/or international private companies. Such a structural perspective focuses on the material consequences of processes of enclosure, yet reveals little about *how* enclosures take form and are set in motion. Moreover, such a view hampers the possibility to see the role and actions of subjects involved in, or concerned by, enclosures.

To understand *what* is happening and *how*, we therefore want to tell a slightly different enclosure story, which looks beyond structural explanations and material consequences. The work of various critical water scholars who shed light on how water distribution and access are altered inspired us to do so. For example, Margreet Zwarteveen illustrates how new water re-distribution in irrigation "*happen through a combination of land transfers, new technologies, and the re-negotiation of farmers' relations with each other and with the government and private sector actors*" (2015; p. 15). She states that where the water is flowing from, or to whom, cannot be simply read from policies and legislations. Instead, water (re-)distribution occurs through often messy, multi-layered and multiple negotiations, in which power, identity and politics are important (p. 15). Meera Mehta et al. (2012) further illustrate how particular narratives are deployed (by states, private actors, bureaucrats, etc.) to justify processes of water (and land) grabbing. For example, an integral part of the modernization narrative is that existing uses of land and water resources (by farmers) are often portrayed as being 'inefficient', 'underutilized' and

'below potential'. Once, this image is portrayed, it automatically follows that there is a place for 'modern' interventions. Mehta et al. further highlight an essential point related to the characteristics of water, which mark the dynamics of new water distributions: it is fluid, it flows and has various manifestations, which makes it difficult to characterize the precise nature of the grabbing, appropriation and reallocation and their varied impacts across multiple scales and time frames (Ibidem; p. 194). Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw (2000) add an important point that marks the complexity of new water distributions. In their work on the commodification of urban water, Kaika and Swyngedouw illustrate how, through the application of new technologies, water flows 'disappear' underground, locked in pipes, cables, conduits, tubes, passages and electronic waves. The locking up of water and its technological framing hides from certain subjects how water is re-allocated and *"renders occult the social relations and power dynamics that are scripted and enacted through these flows"* (2000; p. 121). Finally, the work of Rhodante Ahlers (2010) adds an important aspect to the different scholarly literature cited above, by looking beyond the material consequences of contemporary enclosures. She illustrates, based on a case study on water privatization in a Mexican irrigation district, how water forges collective identities of communities who struggle to sustain their irrigated livelihoods and harbors knowledge about irrigation practices and soil management. She demonstrates how processes of water commodification disrupt these linkages and how collective identities become fragmented and knowledge is detached from its material and socio-cultural environment.

### **4.3. The Multiple Groundwater Enclosures in the Saïss Region**

By combining the concept of enclosure with the critical water studies outlined above we have been able to untangle the different processes and mechanisms through which groundwater is enclosed (see Figure 2). We identify and study 'enclosures' from three different angles: fenced water – physical enclosure through changes in tenure relation and new property demarcations ('enclosure 1'); hidden flows – enclosure through technology ('enclosure 2'); modern water - discursive enclosure of groundwater ('enclosure 3'). The enclosures are intrinsically connected and interrelated and difficult to disentangle.

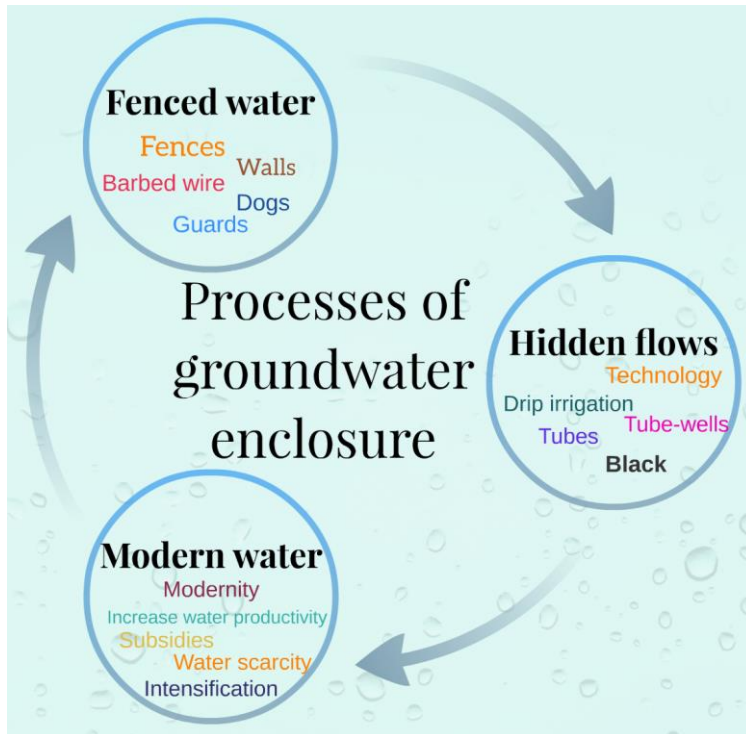


Figure 2: Processes of groundwater enclosure (Bossenbroek 2016)

*Enclosure 1 – Fenced Water: Physical Enclosure through Changes in Tenure Relation and New Property Demarcations*

Groundwater enclosures happen in tandem with changing tenure relations and new property demarcations, like fences, cement poles with barbed wire, sometimes walls, guards and dogs. Tenure relations alter through the various land policies, which contribute to a sharp increase in land sales. These transactions are about land, and about the groundwater below it. The importance of the access to groundwater is well reflected in land prices. As a *semsar*, an intermediary on the land market told us, the prices of the lands with wells are higher: “Lands where there is water are the most expensive, because the agricultural project will succeed. Lands with wells are around 550,000 Dirhams (c. €50,000). The lands next to the road of Azrou and Ifrane are not sold because there is no water and the land plots are not expensive. One hectare is around 50,000 Dirhams (c. €5,000).”

The lands situated in the Saiss region are thus ten times the price of lands situated outside of the region. This is due to the presence of the rich aquifer system and the relative high chances of having access to groundwater. To materialize and make ownership visible,

newcomers who recently bought a piece of land delineate the boundaries of their plot. These land demarcations are in stark contrast with the majority of the lands that have not been sold, which are usually not delimited with fences. The following testimony of a new manager of a recently set up 'modern' farming project illustrates well how, as soon as the fences are installed, tube-wells are drilled: *"We started in 2010, ploughed the land and then installed the fences and the concrete poles [needed to grow the grapes]. There was only one well of 50 meters, which was used for drinking water. We dug a tube-well of 190 meters."*

The fencing of the land and the groundwater below it, sometimes gathered in large water basins, serve communicative functions, signaling the creation of a 'close', that is, a space of exclusive use and entitlement (Blomley 2007; p. 8). The owner owns the land and is eligible to dig tube-wells on his land. Consequently, through the fencing of the land, water is symbolically also fenced, but with less clear frontier delineations than for the land.

### *Enclosure 2 – Hidden Flows: Enclosure through Technology*

Groundwater is further enclosed through technology. Whereas water used to flow freely on the land, today it is hidden in drip lines and tubes. The water is pumped up by a submerged pump inside the tube-well and transported to the surface. It is then further transported through tubes and brought to a technological assembly of a drip irrigation system consisting of valves, filters and pressure regulators.<sup>21</sup> The water is then transported to the crops through drip irrigation lines, keeping the water hidden and eliminating any sound of running water. Through the use of drip irrigation and deep tube-wells, water disappears in black, blue or red plastic materials literally enclosing water. The following anecdote is emblematic for the technological enclosure of water. An elderly woman of 68 years, after coming back home from a trip, noticed that her son had installed drip irrigation on their plot. *"Where has the water gone?"* she asked her son. Her son replied that the water was now brought through tubes to the plants. *"How will insects, birds and frogs benefit from the water now that it is not flowing anymore? How will they survive?"* When observing the newly installed projects and their irrigation systems, the confusion of the elderly lady who wonders where the water has gone is comprehensible. Her statement also reflects how in the 'old' days, water was used with care, in balance with the environment and living beings.

Drip irrigation is increasingly being installed and used by various types of farmers. Although drip irrigation potentially provides the possibility to fulfill the exact crop water requirements, in practice farmers do not necessarily irrigate 'perfectly' in the sense hoped

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<sup>21</sup> There are many variations within this technological drip irrigation assembly.



by engineers (see Benouniche et al. 2014; p. 419). Some farmers explained that they would only close the valves once they would see that there is sufficient water at the roots of the crop. They would not always attend to the precise quantities or worry about wasting water (through leakages), as long as their high value crops were irrigated and would not suffer from water stress. Moreover, farmers would also often extend the irrigated area once they would install drip irrigation. They would argue that since they “*save water*”, they can irrigate more land with the same amount of water. They often end up using the same water quantities, if not more.

The potential benefits of drip irrigation in combination with the growing number of deep tube-wells that connect generally both to the phreatic aquifer and to the less-recharged confined aquifer, obscure how water flows are being altered and the dynamics of water reallocations. As mentioned by a peasant farmer “*for the deep tube-well you need a powerful motor, not everyone can afford that*”. Indeed, whoever has the most wealth, the social capital to obtain the authorization for installing a tube-well, and the deepest and strongest pumps can access water, which happens at the expense of others: farmers are not equal in front of technologies. Various peasant families of the former state cooperatives often encounter difficulties to dig new tube-wells, while their shallow wells are running dry in a context of declining water tables. In a recent study close to the *douar* of Ait Ali, it was found that half of the wells (96 out of 193) of that area were no longer functional (Kuper et al. 2016).

### *Enclosure 3 – Modern Water: Discursive Enclosure of Groundwater*

In our case we observe how through a discursive regime of modernity, and the institutions, practices and procedures that are linked to it, groundwater is further enclosed. As mentioned by Michel Foucault (2001), the functioning of a discursive regime involves forms of social constraint and is accompanied by the exclusion of others. In what follows we explain how the discursive regime functions and illustrate its various exclusionary mechanisms.

The modernity discourse is partly derived from, and constructed around the *PMV*. The *PMV* was drawn in 2008, upon request of the Moroccan government, by the international consultancy agency McKinsey in only three months with little interaction with national research institutes and researchers (Akesbi 2009). The main objective of the *PMV* is to develop a ‘modern’ agricultural sector, which is professional, productive, intensive, and competitive through the rational and efficient use of water (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 2014). The plan has two main components, called ‘pillars’. The first pillar aims at developing a modern, intensive and competitive agricultural sector, based on high-value crops, new technologies and intensive use of inputs. This pillar has received the most

attention and funding to date (for a critical analysis see Kadiri and El Farah 2013; Akesbi 2011) and is premised on the emergence and strengthening of private investors and entrepreneurial farmers. Although this pillar is based on the emergence of private entrepreneurs, there are many subsidies for irrigation technology, plantations etc. The second pillar, with less financial commitments, aims at supporting 'solidarity agriculture'. More precisely, it assists small and medium scale farmers in marginal regions. Although the plan states that it includes all farmers and takes into account their diversity and socio-economic constraints (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 2014), it contains countless silences and ambiguities (Benataya 2008; Aloui 2009). For instance, key terms, like 'investor' and 'entrepreneur', remain undefined. This attracts a wide range of actors who benefit from state subsidy programs, but do not have any background in farming and rather invest in the sector to avoid taxes and to launder money or to obtain a farmhouse for the weekend.

Through the *PMV*, new imaginaries of how farming should be, and how water should be used, are invoked. Existing farming and irrigation practices are portrayed as 'unproductive', 'inefficient' and 'wasteful'. New technologies and farm practices, like drip irrigation systems and entrepreneurial farming projects, are legitimized through the use of a terminology highlighting they are 'efficient', 'rational' and 'productive'. Drip irrigation notably plays an important role within this and is widely promoted within the *PMV*, as the 'promises' of this technology enhance the rational and efficient use of water, the increase of the water productivity and the intensification of agriculture (Venot et al. 2014). Government officials working at the regional and provincial department of agriculture would talk about drip irrigation, in terms of "*increasing yields*", "*water use efficiency*", "*the percentage of water saved*", "*less manpower needed*", "*perfect control*", sometimes together with formulas to explain how to calculate the irrigation efficiency and/or the crop water requirements. Consequently, the fully irrigated, 'intensive' and 'productive' vocation of recently bought lands where drip irrigation systems are installed, which used to be rain-fed or which were only partially irrigated, are highly praised. They are presented as new projects that contribute to the *real development* of the country. According to a director of the regional office of the ministry of agriculture: "*There are many new investments, especially on the lands that have been sold, which were used for rain fed agriculture. Now grapes and fruit trees are planted, developing the region.*"

Discursive regimes and their linked practices both contribute to subject formation and have exclusionary effects. Subjects are formed through the interplay of various technologies of power and domination as well as practices of self (Foucault 2001). Modern imaginaries, the *PMV* and its various subsidy systems contribute to the creation of new 'entrepreneurs'. They are discursively but also materially formed through the new farming projects, the drip irrigation technology, and the large four-wheel drive vehicles

they use to visit their farming projects. Yet, the materially and discursively heralded entrepreneurs and their 'modern farms' are accompanied by the exclusion of existing farming identities, which do not conform to the dominant discourse. Managers of new farming projects and government officials generally refer to the peasant families as those "*who do not have the means to make real investments*" and "*who are wasting water*" and their farming practices as "*traditional*", "*backward*" and "*old-fashioned*". This framing draws a clear line of who contributes to the current (and desired) developments, and whose activities are therefore considered as legitimate, and those who do not contribute, delegitimizing and devaluating their activities.

#### **4.4. The Enactment of the Multiple Enclosures**

Through the deployment of the concept of enclosure and our ethnographic work, we illustrated in the previous section *how* groundwater is enclosed through three distinctive yet closely entangled processes. The first enclosure refers to 'fencing off', 'closing' and the demarcation of a clear land, but more fuzzy water frontier. The second enclosure involves making invisible – through technology (tube-wells driven by powerful engines, drip irrigation) - the water reallocations that happen through groundwater enclosure. Finally, the third enclosure involves modernity and 'making modern', which is highly exclusionary. In what follows we illustrate *what* is happening and *how* the groundwater enclosures come together and are enacted by the gradual dissociation of groundwater from its socio-cultural and territorial context; by growing social inequities; and finally by violent expropriations. This finally brings us to meet the newly created subjects; the new 'entrepreneurs'.

##### *The Gradual Dissociation of Groundwater from its Socio-Cultural and Territorial Context*

In the state cooperative Ait Ali, groundwater had an important symbolic meaning in the past. After the end of the French protectorate, many of the cooperative members had the dream to become independent peasants. Instead, when the state cooperative was created in 1972 they fell under the responsibility of the ministry of agriculture, and all land was held in co-property: they became laborers coerced by the government (Pascon 1977; p. 185; see also Bossenbroek and Zwarteveen 2015). In the early 1990's, the state cooperative was split up into smaller state cooperatives, and the members received an individual plot of land with land use rights. From that moment onwards, the first wells were dug and peasant families moved to the land and started to gradually realize their dream. By accessing groundwater, they could start to farm independently. Water became a symbol of liberating oneself from the state, engaging in more profitable crops, and of becoming an independent peasant farmer (see Kuper et al. 2009). Today, for young male

farmers, whose parents were members of the state cooperative, the access to groundwater opens up new horizons and possibilities to modernize the family farm (install drip irrigation for example). They wish to do so in continuity of the farming practices and values of their parents, whilst slightly adapting them (see Bossenbroek and Kadiri 2016).

During the period of the state cooperative, a particular awareness of water scarcity existed. This became apparent through the well construction method and irrigation practices. The wells built during that time may reach a depth up to 50 – 80 meters and have several galleries, called *Kifan*, which allow storing water. The peasants who have such wells explained that they irrigate according to the water availability in the well: *“If there is a lot of water we irrigate three to three and a half hectares. If there is less water available we irrigate two hectares. It depends on how much water there is in the well”*. Peasant families in the dissolving state cooperative thus adapt their irrigation practices to the availability of water; none of the families irrigate the entire farm (between seven and 13 hectares, depending on land quality). Their awareness of water scarcity, reflected in their irrigation practices, is related to the difficulty to access groundwater and the limited availability of groundwater. Aquifer dynamics are complex (Kuper et al. 2016), and as stated by Ben Aicha, a former well digger, *“one can dig a well and easily not find any water, or find salty water.”* To find the right spot to dig a well, ‘gifted knowledge’ is needed. Ben Aicha, for example, precisely knows where to dig a well and to find water. Farmers recruited him as a water diviner.

Ben Aicha continued to explain that, when he used to dig a well, the peasant family would organize a small celebration: *“Before people were happy when I dug a well. The women would do the joujou, and would distribute water to neighbors and invite them over to celebrate.”* Digging a well took several months and up to a year (depending on the depth) of hard physical work as the wells were dug by hand. This hard physical labor needed to actually dig a well further contributed to farmers’ awareness of water scarcity. But today, the tide turned and Ben Aicha is a clandestine taxi driver in his old Renault 4: *“Before 2000, I used to dig four wells a year. From 2000 onwards it became one or two wells a year. Since 2008 I completely stopped.”* When we asked him if he deliberately chose to stop he replied; *“No, today people prefer the tube-wells”*.

The reason that people do not want ‘traditional’ wells anymore is due to the lower capacity of wells and the time it takes to dig them. Today, new investors and farming families who have sufficient financial means want quick results and drill new deep tube-wells of approximately 150 – 200 meters deep. With their deep tube-wells they pump directly from the confined aquifer and, in case they have the financial means to cover the pumping costs, they can irrigate their entire farm 24 hours a day. At that depth, water is in abundance, at least in the short term, and consequently, the sense of scarcity and the

awareness of water availability vanish and are replaced by an impression of water abundance. Also the traditional 'gifted know-how' of finding water with the help of the olive branches is, according to Ben Aicha, substituted by "*a little machine* [a geo-electric device], *which looks like a pacemaker. It is a little box with threads in different colors*". Indeed, when talking to the manager of a newly installed farming project, we were told that today experts rely on technical expertise to figure out where to dig the tube-well, and that the method with the olive tree twigs is not used anymore. The patience, the know-how and the hard work needed to obtain water are being replaced by the wish to obtain rapid results and finish the job quickly, further affecting notions of groundwater access, and even the way people 'see' water.

### *Growing Social Inequities in Access to Groundwater*

The increase of the number of tube-wells contributes to growing social inequities, affecting livelihoods and farming identities. The wells that had been dug by the peasant families in the early 1990s and symbolized triumph and independence are now gradually falling dry, which forces some peasant families to dig deeper or to dig a new well. Not everyone has the financial means to do so or can provide for the pumping costs, which become higher as the depth of the well increases. The case of Aziza and Sliman, who own a plot of 10 hectares, illustrates well how water access is altered and how it affects livelihoods. The land is registered in the name of Sliman. He had worked as a laborer in the state cooperative and recalled how he felt disappointed during that period, since little was different from time of the French protectorate. He still did not own any land and was working under the auspices of the state. In the early 1990s, when the large state cooperative was divided into smaller cooperatives and the members received an individual land plot, he was delighted and constructed a house close to the land and dug a well as soon as he had sufficient means to do so. But today his well is dry, and his feeling of euphoria and pride turned into worries with little perspective for the near future: "*We do not have any future plans. When we have a little bit of money we will deepen the well. Otherwise we will continue to cultivate rain-fed crops.*" A couple of months after our first visit, we visited Aziza again. She explained that her husband was on the land with his herd and that she told him that they should think about selling the land. "*The land is in his name, we have our land title. He is restless and I think it would be better to sell the land. But he does not want to think of selling the land. The land title is in his name; he decides.*" As the case of Aziza and Sliman suggests, in the near future the lack of water may become a reason why peasant families might be forced to sell their entire land or part of it. Having the possibility to dig deep and multiple tube wells, as well as having the ability to pay for the pumping costs contribute to growing disparities between different actors in terms of access and use of groundwater.

## *Violent Expropriations*

The enclosure of water eventually forcefully and violently expels people from their land and from their water. The following case of Mona and Mohammed's family (seven members), who live in a barrack that used to be part of the state cooperative, shows well how this happens. The grandfather of Mona (aged 24) and Mohammed (aged 19) owned a plot in the cooperative. Yet, due to family quarrels, Mohammed's family does not live with the extended family members. They rather wish to live in the barrack, which is state property. They have been living there for 25 years. In 2012, a new Moroccan entrepreneur living in France bought the land surrounding the barrack. A couple of months later, the president of the cooperative 'informally' sold the barrack to the new entrepreneur, although officially he was in no position to do so.

Upon one of our visits, we ran into Mohammed. He was distressed. His brother had been arrested and was in jail: *"He did not want to leave the barrack. So the manager of the new farming project accused him of stealing some farm equipment and pesticides. He is in jail for a period of three months."* Since these events, Mohammed's mother had fallen ill and suffered from nerves and from stomach issues and headaches. She stated that she did not know who exactly was expelling them. The family had never met the person who purchased the land, and the barrack and the former president of the state cooperative acted as intermediary between them and the manager of the new farming project. The problem remained unresolved. In the year that followed, his father was arrested because, according to Mohammed, *"he refused to leave as we do not have any other place to go to"*.

After Mohammed's father had been arrested, we visited the barrack again. This time, we could not access it, as the last passageway had been fenced off, and barking dogs deterred us from approaching. A worker came to the fence and called the manager, Hichem. We asked him if we could visit the new farming project, and he gave us a tour while the family from the barrack watched us. Hichem explained that as soon as the new owner bought the land he fenced it *"to demarcate the property and to be quiet"*. He went on to explain that once fenced, the owner deepened the first well with a tube-well 170 meters deep and dug a second tube-well. The new owner now had two tube-wells and sufficient means to develop his project. He installed a drip irrigation system and planted four varieties of grapes (*Pergola, Muscat, Gretgrap, and Victoria*) on five out of the seven hectares and peach trees on 0,5 hectares. The drip irrigation system, the poles used to grow the grapes, and the netting to protect the latter from being eaten by birds, were subsidized from 60 up to 100 %. Hichem told us that the owner wanted to convert the barrack into a packing station. We stopped into the room where once we had taken a picture of Mona and her son showing us the wheat they had harvested from her

grandfather's land. The room was now filled with soluble pesticides and fertilizers, to be applied through the drip irrigation system (Picture 5). Despite having lived for over 25 years in the barrack and transformed it into a cozy house, the development of the new farming project by a new entrepreneur turned the family of Mohammed and Mona into 'illegal' squatters who were eventually forced to move out.



Picture 5: Violent expropriations

The left picture of Mona was taken on the 6th of November 2012.

The right picture, taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, presents the same room eight months later.

#### 4.5. New 'Entrepreneurs'

To understand *how* and through *what* processes water flows change, it was indispensable to actually talk to new entrepreneurs. It was difficult to meet them, as most of them do not live where the farming projects are located. The imagery that surrounds these entrepreneurs is one of efficiency, modernity and productivity. However, our various interviews with some of them revealed a slightly different image. The case of Driss and his wife, Hind, illustrates this clearly. We met him on a Sunday afternoon, while he was parking his Mercedes on the road close to his farming project planted with peaches and nectarines. Driss is an engineer, working in a public institution and lives with his wife, Hind, and two young children in Meknes. He started his farming project of 11 hectares three years ago. During our various interviews he explained how, after having bought the

land, he first dug two tube-wells and planted eight hectares of peaches and nectarines. On the rest of the land, he plans to build a packing station and a house with a swimming pool. He hired a consultancy company to make the study to design the drip irrigation system, which was subsidized up to 80 %.

While giving us a tour on the farming project he explained how it developed. He stopped close to the house where he has a small vegetable garden, and while picking the tomatoes he said, *“This is why I love farming, the nature is so generous – Hamdullilah (thank God)”*. He continued to explain that his father used to be a farmer and that, as a child, he always dreamed of becoming a farmer one day. He sees himself as *“amateur”* when compared to the new investors who recently settled in the region and whom he describes as *“profitable”, “productive”* and *“having money and making large investments”*. After finishing the tour on the farm we drank a cup of mint tea and chatted with his wife Hind, who works at the Chamber of Agriculture. When Driss got up to check something with one of the laborers, Hind began to lament: *“Yes the farming project is great, but since Driss started it, he is hardly at home anymore. I have to take care of the children now, bring them to school and to the doctor when they are sick. In the weekends I have to think of activities that they can do and keep them busy. I would also like to start my own project and to set up a children’s farm and organize cooking classes. Kids living in the city can come and see how rural life is like and how everything grows. They could pick their own vegetables and fruits, with which they will prepare a season dish. Besides I also want a swimming pool and to rebuild the house and redecorate the interior.”* While staying in touch with her on *Whatsapp*, six months after our last interview, she sent us a picture of their newly built pool with the following text: *“Our new pool 😊! I hope you can come visit us soon”*.

Whilst talking to Driss, we expected to meet an entrepreneur who was ‘productive’, ‘efficient’, and ‘rational’ and did not imagine meeting an entrepreneur who presented himself as a hobby farmer or ‘amateur’. The other interviewed entrepreneurs performed similar hybrid entrepreneurial activities. They all have similar agricultural projects (grapes, fruit trees) and do not live on site. Some of them used to be laborers working on French farms during the protectorate and left afterwards with their employers to France. Today, they wish to retire *“au bled”* (in their home area). With the money they earned in France and the various subsidies obtained, they bought a plot and installed a new modern farming project with fruit trees or grapes, which they visit during the weekends. Others, in the meantime, used new farming projects to launder money obtained in other activities.

The discrepancy that emerges between how new ‘entrepreneurial farmers’ are portrayed and their actual practices and self-presentation is interesting for two reasons. First, as the example of Driss and Hind illustrates, performing an entrepreneurial identity helps to



access and secure water. In doing so, new 'entrepreneurs' actively contribute and enforce new enclosures. Second, it also reveals a strange paradox that is at the heart of the enclosure processes that are today unfolding in the Saïss. As most of the new entrepreneurs engaged in standardized highly subsidized modern farming projects consisting of grapes and fruit trees, they find difficulties in selling their products on the national market. As a manager of a new farming project mentions, "*The market is saturated, everyone is producing the same. I'm not sure we can make any benefits this year*". At the end of our interview, the manager gave us a bunch of grapes. They tasted sour, and once out of the view of the manager, we threw them away. In a way this incident illustrates the power of modernity and its disruptiveness and its contradictions. While the *PMV* has the ambition to create entrepreneurs, water flows are diverted to absentee 'investors' who all invest in the same normalized projects and face problems selling their products.

#### **4.6. Conclusion: Sour Grapes**

The modernity pathway chosen and promoted by the *PMV* encloses groundwater. We distinguished how this happens through three interrelated processes: (1) Fenced water – physical enclosure through changes in tenure relations and new property demarcations; (2) Hidden flows – enclosure through technology, notably drip irrigation; (3) Modern water – discursive enclosure. We have illustrated how this development pathway is accompanied by the transition from a place-based culture-economy of water of sharing and living with what is available to a place-less culture of greed that, instead of promoting water conversation, is encouraging further extraction, leading to the depletion of aquifers and violently expropriating people.

New 'entrepreneurs' play an important role within the unfolding enclosure processes by performing an entrepreneurial identity through which they can claim and secure access to water. At the same time, they inhabit multiple subject positions, ranging from investing in a tax-free economic sector to hobby-farming or retirement plans. Some of these actors walk unfamiliar paths and may get into trouble due to the complexity of farming (marketing of products, diseases, etc.). This divergence reflects on the one hand the power of the modernization discourse and its disruptiveness. It also illustrates that at the heart of the unfolding groundwater enclosure process lays an odd paradox. Whereas the *PMV* aims to create entrepreneurs, water flows are diverted to subsidized investors who all invest in the same normalized projects and face problems selling their products because similar projects pop up like mushrooms in the countryside. On the other hand, we would like to read these divergences as 'cracks' in the modernization discourse. The enclosure is not closed and it contains instabilities, which provide some space to probe and see alternative development trends that might be less disruptive.

When observing the farming practices of the peasant families who stayed, we might actually be able to observe such alternative development processes. Some peasant families reject the drilling of deeper tube-wells along with the fruit trees and grapes. They do not discredit the tube-wells and grapes, as the story of the fox goes (see *Les Fables de la Fontaine: The Fox and The Grapes*)<sup>22</sup>, because they cannot get it, but rather wish to continue with their existing farming practices. Especially, the elder generations of peasant farmers uphold an image of farming consisting of mixed-cropping patterns and live with the notion of water scarcity. It is part of who they are, and of what works. Moreover, they also see the risks associated with intensive groundwater-based agriculture and have negative experiences with strongly fluctuating markets (Lejars and Courilleau 2015). But for the younger generation of male farmers, the grapes are sour, and they slightly envy the new entrepreneurs who settle in their *douar*. As a young woman once told us, “When he [young man] sees a newcomer exhibiting his car and his clothes, he does not appreciate it at all. He wonders and asks himself: what does he have that I do not have, to be able to own all this”. Indeed young men are confronted with the new farming projects and the new images that come along with the recently drilled deep tube-wells. They grow up in a situation where water abundance is for others, enclosed in a discourse of progress and development. They also want to attain this abundance, but in their own way. They wish to modernize the family farming project, but, at the same time, hold on to the same farming values as their parents; “Farming is what feeds us”, “it allows us to work, its our life”. They see themselves as *fellah* (farmer) and *rajal âmal* (businessman) at the same time (see Bossenbroek et al. 2015). The emergence of these young farmers suggests hybrid forms of future entrepreneurs, who perhaps can combine modernity with tradition and have less disruptive farming practices. These hybrids need to be further looked into and brought to light to voice the possibilities and potentials of developing different visions of the future, to counter the grim future appearing on the horizon.

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<sup>22</sup> XI. — The Fox and the Grapes  
A fox, almost with hunger dying,  
Some grapes upon a trellis spying,  
To all appearance ripe, clad in  
Their tempting russet skin,  
Most gladly would have eat them;  
But since he could not get them,  
So far above his reach the vine —  
'They're sour,' he said; 'such grapes as these,  
The dogs may eat them if they please!'  
Did he not better than to whine? (La Fontaine translated from French by Elizur Wright 1987).



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## Agrarian Change and Gendered Wage Work<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> A previous and shorter version of this chapter was published as: Lisa Bossenbroek, Mostafa Errahj and Najoua El Alime (2016) 'Les nouvelles modalités du travail agricole dans le Saïss au Maroc. L'émergence des inégalités identitaires entre l'ouvrier et l'ouvrière?', In: B. Dupret, Z. Rhani, A. Boutaleb, J-N. Ferrié (Eds.) *Le Maroc au Présent. D'une époque à l'autre, une société en mutation*. Rabat: Edition Centre Jacques-Berque & Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz: 365-374.

## 5.1. Introduction

While driving through the agricultural plain of the Saïss in the early morning, the roads are crowded with vans and pick-ups that are packed with workers, the majority of whom are women. The way in which these women are dressed has earned them the nickname of *Ninjas*: they have wrapped thick scarves around their faces, just barely disclosing their eyes (see Picture 6). This all-covering outfit is symptomatic of their paradoxical situation: although they are indispensable for realizing Morocco's ambitious agricultural modernization plans, their contributions tend to go or are made invisible, also by themselves. Female laborers may say that their dress is meant to protect themselves from the sun - "*because we do not want to become black*"- as well as from dust and pesticides. Yet, in addition to these practical considerations, many also admitted that their scarves conveniently serve the purpose of hiding their faces, allowing them to remain invisible and "*anonymous*".

Female laborers are reluctant to identify with their work as laborers and rather prefer to use other sources of identification to fashion their public selves. This contradiction in women's subjectivities proved to be a source of inner struggle and sometimes frustration, while also clearly marking a distinct gender difference in how contemporary agrarian change is experienced. Most male laborers whom we interviewed took pride in their work, and could use it to model and perform a particular modern rural masculine identity. The difficulty of female laborers to reconcile their ideals of womanhood with their everyday experiences of wage work is particularly painful in view of the crucial importance of female labor in the agricultural boom that is unfolding in the agricultural plain of the Saïss in Morocco.

In this chapter, we use the contradiction between the importance of female laborers on the one hand and their invisibility on the other as the starting point for exploring how contemporary processes of agrarian change are experienced by female wagedworkers. In the first section of this chapter, we explore different feminist theoretical proposals for making sense of the interplay between gender, labor and processes of capitalist development. The second section outlines the different processes through which labor relations have been reshaped over the last couple of decades and illustrates their implications for women. Emphasis is placed on how a new gendered labor order emerged, which is marked by new hierarchies and in which female wagedworkers find themselves at the lowest strata. We discuss how this gendered labor hierarchy is (re-)produced by particular definitions of male and female roles, which are grounded in and justified by 'traditional' norms of rural femininity and masculinity, but also lead to sometimes-subtle changes in these very norms. The third section examines the experiences and daily practices of female wagedworkers and illustrates how women negotiate the contradictions of in-visibility, cautiously carving out new subjectivities and employing various tactics to

re-negotiate socio-cultural gendered norms and values. By doing this, we hope to show that women subtly re-create, socio-cultural repertoires and move boundaries in conscious efforts to expand their room of maneuver and re-imagine what it means to be and behave as a woman.



Picture 6: Female workers waiting in the *mouquéf* to find a job for the day.

## 5.2. Gender, Labor and Processes of Capitalist Development: Exploring Different Theoretical Venues

To make sense of the lived experiences of female waged workers, and in an attempt to distill what these reveal about larger processes of gendered agrarian change, we reviewed various feminist bodies of scholarly work which deal with gender, processes of capitalist development and labor. Perhaps one of the most influential theorists here is Maria Mies. In her seminal study about the lacemakers of Narsapur, she traced the various connections between an increasingly feminized workforce and broader processes of global capitalist expansion. Based on rich empirical materials, and inspired by Marxist frames of analysis, she argued that capitalist agricultural development in West Godavari, India, contributed to the pauperization of peasants. This provided the emerging lace export industry in Narsapur with an almost unlimited reservoir of very cheap female labor (Mies 1982; p. 173). Extending and enriching Marxist analytical repertoires with feminist insights, Mies' study convincingly explains how the intersection of existing social

institutions (in particular the caste system) and a set of patriarchal ideologies and practices together created a particular opportunity structure that allowed and normatively legitimized the exploitation of female labor (Bair 2010; p. 209). Effectively making use of women's material and ideological positioning in societal divisions of labor as dependent 'housewives' (and their husbands as the 'breadwinners') in the process of capital accumulation made it possible to frame and reward their lacework as a leisure activity rather than as a productive activity. Wages of female waged worker could thus remain low; they were considered as supplemental income rather than as main earnings (Bair 2010). It is a testimony of the strength of her analysis that Mies also illustrates how this system of domination is not all encompassing: there are contradictions between the everyday experiences of the lacemakers and existing ideologies: *"In several cases, however, the contradiction between the all-pervasiveness of the housewife ideology and their own real conditions became manifest. This was the case when they realized that the men were no longer really able to live up to their "role" as breadwinners. Many of the women were the main supporter of their families and this fact raised certain questions in their minds about the ideology of the dependent housewife."* (p. 156)

Mies considers these contradictions as 'cracks' in intersecting systems of domination. She argues that these cracks form a potentially useful starting point for change and resistance. However, she also shows how difficult it is for the majority of the 'housewives' to make use of this potential. Few reflect on the contradictions or draw conclusions from them. For this to happen, she argues, a change in women's consciousness is needed that can only be realized through the socialization and collectivization of their experiences (p. 159). We want to follow Mies' lead in tracing the cracks and contradictions that arise because people are necessarily always living in more worlds than one, always living in multiple worlds. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) states, *"it is only by understanding the contradictions inherent in women's location within various structures that effective political action and challenges can be devised"* (p. 346). However, we are less sure that it is possible or desirable to identify structures of domination before the empirical analysis. As a consequence, we are also much more agnostic about how the gendered experiences of wage work can be socialized and collectivized.

We have looked for more recent feminist theoretical attempts to move beyond overtly structural analyses, in search for ways of better acknowledging (and eventually perhaps building on) women's own creativity and agency - experiences, actions and self-perceptions. There is an emerging stream of feminist scholarship that is interesting here, which proposes grasping and understanding subjects and their acts as themselves constitutive of, and partly able to alter and modify, processes of capitalist development. The study of Katherine Gibson and al. (2001) is an interesting example. It focuses on the actions and life-trajectories of female migrant workers in the Philippines, illustrating the multi-faceted experiences of these women. To make sense of these experiences, the

authors move beyond existing neo-liberal and Marxist frames of analysis, which tend to respectively frame female migrant workers as either 'heroes' of national development and modernization, or as 'victims' of capitalist growth and exploitation. Their attempts to do more justice to migrant workers' own stories illustrate that although female migrant workers face hardship and exploitation, their work also allows them to obtain particular assets (monetary and non-economic) and capacities which provide them with possibilities to move upward socially. In their careful analysis of changing gender subjectivities, they thus illustrate how female workers may help identifying and realizing new economic and cultural possibilities for the migrant's home community and for themselves in their host community. Another important source of intellectual inspiration is the work of Priti Ramamurthy. Particularly her attempts to grasp the ambiguous experiences and subjectivities of female workers (2003) and smallholders (2011) in south India in a context of capitalist growth are insightful. She mobilizes the concept of perplexity to mark the tension between overlapping, opposing and asymmetric forces of fields of power, the puzzlement of people as they experience both the joys and aches of the global everyday, often simultaneously (2003; p. 525). She argues that their perplexity encapsulates their experiences of the contradictions of capitalism through a structure of feeling, which includes on-going struggles against existing socio-cultural norms and existing socio-economic structures (2011; p. 1054). Ramamurthy's notion of perplexity provides yet another metaphor to speak of contradictions and cracks in overlapping systems of dominations and power. It helps grasping the complex re-articulations of subject formation and self-perceptions, and how these congeal larger processes of agrarian change.

As illustrated by various feminist scholars, to further disentangle and understand the interplay between subject formation, self-perceptions and larger processes of agrarian change it is important to also take into consideration how the gendered construction of spaces co-shapes subjectivities (see for example Mies 1982; Mernissi 1982 and 1983; Radel et al. 2012). Maria Mies and Fatima Mernissi are among a number of scholars who conceptualize the spatial gender segregation in a dichotomous way, with women's activities being confined to the private spatial sphere in and around the house and men's activities happening outside the house in the 'public' sphere. Mernissi, whose work is of particular interest as it focuses on agrarian transformations and women in the region of the Gharb in Morocco, illustrates how this binary spatial separation into either an economic space (public and male) or a domestic space (private and female) shapes and structures perceptions and valuations of the work that women do for wages outside of the domestic domain: *"As she violates the separation of the social fields and transgresses the sexual limits of the division of labor by moving into the economic, public space, she can therefore only sell that which she administers as a commodity in the domestic space, in private intimacy – sex"* (1982; p. 73).



More recent feminist readings of the public-private spheres, also appearing in social theory more generally, have nuanced these dichotomies, showing how (notions of) space and subjectivity often are co-evolving and therefore more dynamic than the private-public dichotomy may suggest. Scholars for instance illustrate how subjects (especially women) actively re-interpret the meanings of space, altering gender subjectivities in the process (see Newcomb 2006). Rachel Newcomb, focusing on urban spaces in Morocco, argues that over the past forty years the range of movement of women has changed, with Moroccan women increasingly occupying previously public 'male' spaces; *"a breach in territorial distribution and domination opens up, limits are crossed, and the separation between "male" and "female" space is called into question"* (Newcomb; p. 296). This breaching of space, with each space having complex rules of occupation and engagement, requires cautiously balancing appearance with action and means constantly facing the threat of being perceived as sexually promiscuous as the punishment for transgression (Newcomb 2006). Newcomb illustrates how Fassi women<sup>24</sup> develop different tactics, like *"imbuing public spaces with aspects of the domestic sphere"* through which they make their presence in urban public spaces more acceptable (p. 305). They do this by creating - new mixes of different available rules (bricolage) for conduct and by improvising.

This chapter builds on these rich insights to describe and make sense of the various lived experiences of female waged workers, focusing on their multiple subjectivities and creativity to (re-)negotiate different structures of domination, in an attempt to explain what it means to simultaneously be woman and waged worker in a context of rapid agrarian transformations.

### **5.3. Processes of Agrarian Change and the Emergence of a New Gendered Labor Order**

To better understand and situate the various lived experiences of female waged workers it is first of all important to unravel the different processes of agrarian change that directly impinge on the organization of agricultural work. The demand and supply of labor have altered in the regions of the Saïss through three distinctive yet overlapping processes of agrarian change. First, over the last couple of decades the demand for labor has drastically increased due to expanding irrigation frontiers. From the 80s onwards, more and more farmers started to dig wells and tube-wells, bringing gradually more land under irrigation. This went accompanied by changing cropping patterns which also increased labor demand, as the following testimony of a farmer illustrates: *"Before, when I was planting wheat I only needed two to three laborers during the entire year. We did not need many workers. Today, since we are growing vegetables I rely on eight to nine laborers whom I*

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<sup>24</sup> Women who live in the city of Fez.

*employ almost during the entire year. Next year I would like to plant a couple of hectares of fruit trees. I will then probably need 15 permanent laborers”.*

Second, over the last years the number of new, ‘modern’ and intensive farming projects have increased, which provoked a growing demand for specialized workers. The growing number of ‘modern’ farming projects is partly linked to various land policies embarked on by the Moroccan government. In an attempt to modernize the agricultural sector, the Moroccan government promotes since 2004 public private partnerships (PPP) on former state lands, through which private persons can rent the land for a maximum of a 99-year period. In addition, the government decided (in 2006) to privatize the lands of the former socialist inspired collective state cooperatives. According to the government, the land under both tenure types was not used to its full potential as it was mostly used for rain fed agriculture. Today the new tenure contracts attract new entrepreneurial ‘farmers’ who, immediately after having bought or rented the land, set up new farming projects. These projects usually replace rain-fed, or partly irrigated land, with fully irrigated mono-cropped farming systems, characterized by high value crops (grapes and fruit trees). This has contributed to a growing demand for specialized and qualified laborers like managers, overseers, guards, technicians, irrigation specialists and machine-operators.

Third, tendencies of proletarianization also alter the demand and supply of labor. Since the Moroccan government decided to privatize the land of former state cooperatives, different peasant families, who used to be members of these cooperatives, are now selling their land. In one state cooperative where we conducted extensive fieldwork, eight of the 36<sup>25</sup> peasant families sold their land. Of the eight who sold, three have become laborers on the land that had previously nourished them. Additionally, and as part of the land privatization dynamics, less agricultural land is available for lease, and the costs of leasing increased. Some peasant families who used to lease land are therefore forced to become full time waged workers.

These three processes of agrarian transformation together drastically changed the labor demand and supply, reconstituting farm labor relations and arrangements. In the following, we illustrate how this change happens in a deeply hierarchical and gendered way, with supposedly gender-specific competences co-shaping both how jobs are distributed to either men or women, as well as how they are remunerated (see Figure 3). Women do not only find themselves at the lowest strata of this new labor order, but also do not have any possibility to climb up in the hierarchy.

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<sup>25</sup> These numbers were collected in 2013 and might today be even higher.

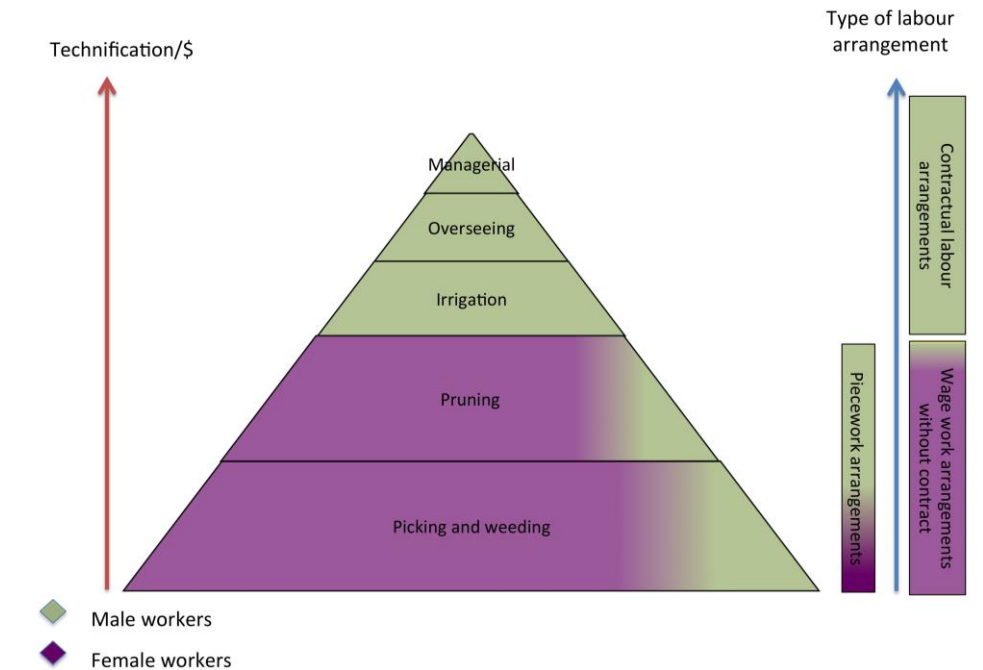


Figure 3: Overview of the newly emerging labor arrangements organized along gender lines, technicity and remuneration (Bossenbroek 2016)

### *Increasing Contractual and Permanent Labor Arrangements for a Small Privileged Number of Qualified Male Workers*

The majority of the new technical jobs that emerged as a result of the growing number of new farming projects are reserved for men. According to the farm managers and new entrepreneurial farmers who recently settled in the region, this is because these jobs require certain competences and know-how – such as literacy, having technical skills, or physical force to carry out heavy tasks – that are attributed more to men than to women (see also Belarbi 1995). The technical laborers hired for these jobs in large farms usually get a formal employment contract and a health insurance. For a small minority of young men, employment opportunities have thus diversified and improved as compared to a decade ago. They now have the chance to obtain a permanent position with what they consider a reasonable salary, while also gaining chances to professionally develop and acquire new technical professional skills.

The recently established farming project *Livia*, which was set up by a large landowner and entrepreneur from the Saïss, neatly illustrate this. The entrepreneur engaged in a PPP contract with a duration of 99 years. As soon as he concluded the contract, he began an

olive tree project of 500 hectares. The project involved the digging of five extra wells (bringing the total to 10 wells); the construction of three large basins to store the water; connecting these to an automatized drip irrigation system; planting three different types of olive trees (from Spain and Greece); and the installation of a packing station<sup>26</sup>. The investor aimed to export the olives to the United States. The farm employed 100 permanent waged workers, of which 90 were men and 10 women; 30 guards (men); two gardeners (men); eight tractor drivers (men); six foremen<sup>27</sup> (men); four basin technicians (men); and finally four drip irrigation technicians (men). All the workers have social security benefits. Because the project is relatively young, the first harvest will be carried out this year (2016), for which 200 waged workers will be hired. The manager explained that they will probably hire 60% women and 40% men, but that it will depend on the availability of the workers: *"We prefer female workers because they work with more precision and delicacy."*

### *Piecework Arrangements for Young and Strong Male Workers*

A second labor arrangement that is recently gaining in popularity consists of group-based piecework arrangements. This kind of work emerged alongside the shift to onion and potato cultivation. Group-based piecework is used for a variety of agricultural tasks, like transplanting, harvesting, and sometimes weeding. A group of workers, usually consisting of six to eight young men, organize themselves among friends to jointly carry out a distinct task within a time frame that is agreed upon with the farmer or the manager of the farm. For instance, the workers themselves determine the rules of participation within their group by attributing to the group and to each other particular competences: being young and fit, being able to work rapidly, being strong and honest. The following testimony of a young male worker illustrates this: *"We only work with young people; elderly people and women do not have the same strength. For example, when we have to transplant the onions in the field we usually work much faster than the elder and female workers. They are lagging behind and you have to help them. If you do not do that they will blame you."* This type of labor arrangement requires a good understanding among the different members of the group. Women, in particular young single women, rarely participate in piece rate activities and never form their own groups. As the following statement of a young male worker shows, in the eyes of male workers, women do not have the required competences: *"There are some mixed groups for the onion plantation. But you will never find a group that is only constituted by women. For the onion plantation you need men. They are responsible for controlling the water on the field while the onions are planted. Women only know how to plant."* Young men thus regard women as not

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<sup>26</sup> The olive trees, the digging of the wells, the construction of the water basins, and the drip irrigation systems have all been subsidized through the subsidies made available in the context of Le Plan Maroc Vert.

<sup>27</sup> The foreman is in charge to overlook the work of small group of approximately 15 workers.

having the required strength to use the hoe, and as not having the knowledge and experience to control the water on the field. Within their work groups, young men also develop a particular masculine culture of interacting and behaving that, they feel, is not suited for women. Mohamed, who works as piece-rate laborer during the peak periods of the year and is a musician the rest of the time for instance explains: *“We only work with young men, because we are not very well mannered, and we often swear and talk in a bad way”*.

Young male workers’ choice for piece-rate work stems from the relatively higher remuneration in comparison to daily wage work for identical tasks; with 20 to 50 dirhams a day (two to five euros a day). Young male workers who engage in such kind of work also explain that they like it because it gives them more flexibility to determine their working hours, while also giving them more autonomy and independence as compared to other types of wage work. For example, when they agree with the farmer to finish a particular activity within five days, they themselves can decide when to start and when to finish. Usually no-one will control their precise working hours as long as the task is finished within the agreed-upon time frame. Another advantage they mentioned is that no one oversees or controls the work that is carried out, making them feel relatively independent. This helps them build an identity of someone who is self-made and makes his own choices. It also nurtures an empowering feeling of co-dependence with farmers: *“As soon as a farmer has a task to be carried out, he calls me and I call my friends”*; or *“People themselves come to my house if they need us”*; *“When a farmer calls us we negotiate the price with him”*. Nevertheless, this activity is organized around specific moments during the crop cycle, and therefore it is only possible to do piece-rate work during two to three months of the year. Moreover, workers never get a contract and are not insured either.

### *Different Wage Work Arrangements; the “Fineness” of the Female Wageworker and the Organization Skills and Experiences of the Foreman*

The permanent workers and the piece rate workers, even though they work under precarious conditions, represent a privileged minority in the world of the agricultural workers in the region of the Saïss (see also Pascon and Ennaji 1985). Their social position and status is higher than that of the daily wageworkers, the majority of whom are women. Only a minority has a contract and most work without contract and without rights to social security benefits. These daily wageworkers either work on the fields of neighboring farms or gather in the *mouquéfs*, situated at the outskirts of the various small agricultural centers in the Saïss. In comparison to two to three decades ago, the number of female wageworkers has drastically increased as the following testimony of a foreman illustrates: *“Before there were very few women at the mouquéf. Today women by far outnumber*

*men. In the early 1990s we found 50 male and 10 female workers. Whereas today the opposite may be true; you find 50 men and 800 women”.*

Depending on the season, the workers come to the *mouquéf* around four o’clock in the morning where they wait until a farmer or foreman picks them up. The *mouquéf* is a world in itself; it is characterized by specific behavioral codes and social and gender hierarchies. Women workers veil their heads and faces in such a way that only their eyes are disclosed, which makes them hard to recognize for outsiders who do not belong to the world of the laborers.

The foreman plays an important role in the *mouquéf*. He is the person who works as intermediary between farmers and laborers. Men always fill this position. Foremen often used to be laborers, but through their experience, know-how and the network they have created along the years they have succeeded to upgrade their professional status and become foreman. The farmers hire them for a specific activity for a determined period. The foreman is responsible for organizing the laborers, picking them up and bringing them to the field, following up their work at field level, and paying them. They explain that they earn more than wagedworkers because of their responsibilities. At field level, the various activities carried out by wagedworkers depend on the crop cycle and season and are usually carried out according to a gendered labor division.

Although the wagedworkers often come seven days a week to the labor market, they may find work for only a couple of days, especially when they are ‘old’ as the following testimony of a widowed female worker of 55 illustrates: *“I come seven days a week to the mouquéf, but this week I only worked for two days. I work to keep my daughter of 15 from the streets, but how can I survive with two days of work a week. They [the farmers and foremen] prefer younger workers who are strong. I do anything but they do not want to work with the older ones.”* During our observations at different *mouquéfs* we indeed noticed around nine to ten o’clock how workers (especially the elderly ones, and to a lesser extend also younger women and some elder man) would still be waiting in vain to find work for the day.

When asking farmers why they prefer to hire female workers, they explained that women make patient and fine workers. Moreover, they perceive women as more docile, and as showing more delicacy and precision in their work than men. Their remuneration is often 20% to 40% less than their male counterparts. This is justified by the particular activities which they carry out, for which supposedly ‘less strength is required’. In addition to their salary or to compensate for the lower wage, they often get some fruits and vegetables from the farmer. A foreman overlooks the workers at field level and checks if the work is carried out well and in a ‘serious’ way. As mentioned before, not all wagedworkers go the *mouquéf* to find work. Some, for practical reasons as well as for reasons of social control,

which we will further elaborate below, prefer to work in the fields located in their *douar* or in surrounding *douars*.

In sum, the various new labor modalities that are emerging are highly gendered, with competencies and remunerations being further differentiated by knowledge, technical skills, experiences and age. In general, male laborers obtain the relatively 'good' jobs. They take pride in their work, as it positively contributes to their professional and personal identity; *"I'm a technician"; "I'm in charge of the irrigation at the farm"; "We work in groups of friends and have our own network of farmers"; etc.* In contrast, women find themselves in the overpopulated lowest strata of the emerging labor hierarchy, with little to no possibility to climb the socio-professional ladder. They often refer to their work as *"tamara"* – chore – and frequently complain about it. In contrast to male workers, they rarely identify with or take pride in their work. Sometimes we explicitly had to ask if they were engaging in wage work, and at times we felt almost embarrassed to do so. Why is this the case? Why are there such significant differences between male and female experiences of wage work? How to interpret the unease and discomfort that we encountered among female workers, as well as their reluctance to identify with their agricultural work? And what is this discomfort telling us?

#### **5.4. Gendered Socio-cultural Norms and the Difficulty to Combine Wage Work and Womanhood**

This newly emerging gendered labor hierarchy is grounded in, reproduces, but also slightly alters prevailing normative notions of femininity and masculinity in the study area. These prevailing norms divide various activities between the genders, while also narrowly circumscribing what is appropriate behavior for men and women. In combination, they make it difficult to combine rural womanhood with wage work activities. In general men are considered and have to be physically strong and technically savvy. Moreover, the activities they engage in are often qualified they require *"specific knowledge and knowhow that only men have"*. Men are expected to be or become the breadwinner of the household, responsible for maintaining their families. A father, or husband, who falls short of financially supporting his wife or family is not well perceived in the society. In this regards, a woman working for wages automatically raises questions about her husband's (if she has one) ability to provide. During various interviews, women stated for example that *"a husband who accepts to let his wife work outside, is not a real man and can expect trouble"*, or as a young unmarried female waged worker once stipulated when asking about her future husband: *"It does not matter what kind of work he does. It is more important that he actually has a job."* As noted, new labor and farm opportunities are importantly defined and organized on the basis of these gendered norms, but also reproduce and slightly change them. The more specialized managerial and technical skills that new

farming jobs require tend to be associated with men, thereby expanding the range of professional identities open to them, and increasing their options for gaining masculine prestige.

Women's activities are usually defined in relation to the work that men carry out. For example, when asking a farmer why the trimming of trees is done by men, he explained that women *"do not know how to do it, they do not have any experiences working with the pruning shear"*. The (supposed) lack of knowledge and competences often also justifies the lower payment that women receive. On various occasions and for particular tasks (e.g. harvesting, stocking of onions, weeding, etc.) women workers were preferred for their (presumed) dexterity and docility. A farmer thus explains: *"Men cause trouble. They want to smoke or are not satisfied with their payment. Female laborers work harder and are more serious and precise"; "Women have fine fingers and smaller hands, and therefore do not bruise the fruits"*.

Prevailing feminine socio-cultural gendered norms further circumscribe the various activities and identities of female waged workers. This makes it difficult for rural women who engage in wage work to combine their remunerative activities with the identity of being a virtuous rural woman. Although women often engage in farm work, they take little pride in their activities as rural female identities rather rest on domestic tasks; they are responsible for the good functioning of the household within the so-called private sphere. Their mobility is restricted and closely watched and controlled (see also Belarbi 1995; El Harras 1996). Women proudly take up domestic work, and actively engage in tasks close to the house such as animal husbandry activities, as these are or can be considered as an extension of their domestic chores. By engaging in these activities they also re-affirm their rural womanhood and obtain social prestige; these earn them merit as *"hard working women, who are not lazy"*. In contrast, various rural women depicted 'outside' activities in negative terms, considering these as not acceptable. The following testimony of a married woman in her forties illustrates this, but also gives an interesting twist to it: *"He [husband] will never accept to let her [his wife] work on neighboring lands. He might agree to let her work in the strawberry sector in Spain<sup>28</sup>. But not on neighboring fields, it is shameful. Spain is far away"*. The quote shows how the meanings attributed to work in the domestic sphere and to work carried out 'outside' are deeply entangled with notions of honor and shame. These notions guide interactions in certain social contexts, specifically in public interactions between non-intimates (Abou-Lughod 1985; p. 247). Yet, as the foregoing statement suggests, such notions of honor do not seem to apply to social contexts where the 'eye' of the community does not reach.

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<sup>28</sup> The tendency of female workers who travel to Spain to work in the strawberry sector has become common in Morocco's rural regions.



The category of 'rural women' crosscuts with other social differences such as age and matrimonial status to define what is 'appropriate' behavior. Different norms and codes of conduct thus apply to unmarried, married, divorced and single mothers. Married women in early marriage are usually responsible for the household tasks and do not engage in any other employment outside the house (see also Belarbi 1995). Young married women explained that, if their family in law owns land, they usually do not engage in any work on the land and their activities are limited to cooking, washing, cleaning and taking care of the children. Unmarried women are submitted to slightly different codes of conduct. Their behavior is narrowly framed and policed so as to avoid gossip about their behavior being seen or interpreted as that of an 'easy girl' or as 'someone who has many boyfriends'. They thus have to actively perform an image of a serious and respectable woman - good future bride, wife and mother - if they want to stand a chance of becoming married. Young unmarried women would often complain about their limited freedom of movement and some felt being continuously watched by their father or brothers. This was similar for divorced women. Yet, since they already lost their virginity their status was often even lower than that of single women, even more if they have a child (Naamane-Guessous 1988). Also the identity of a widowed woman is frequently reduced to that of 'a single woman' by society. Her neighbors continuously keep an eye on her gestures and activities. According to Naamane-Guessous this can lead, especially in the case of elderly widowed women, to a certain kind of paranoia: they condemn themselves to self-censorship by conforming to the harsh social norms (p. 157). In case women deviate from the dominant rural feminine ideal, they risk being questioned. In such a context, a misstep easily sparks off normative, harsh judgments and gossip.

Such normative gender identities and norms are importantly (re-)produced and reinforced by gossip and rumors that circulate. There are for instance many negative stories about women working for wages in the agricultural sector. Male farmers and foremen may refer to female waged workers as single young women with illicit behavior. A foreman explains: *"When a girl is pregnant she goes to the mouquéf to find a job to support her child, as she cannot return to her parental house. Some of the girls may become dependent on the work in the mouquéf, they marry six months and divorce afterwards but remain living in the agricultural centers. They either work in the farming sector or start working as prostitute - tatltajaâ l-chari3 [literally – she turns towards the street]"*. On other occasions female waged workers were referred to as *"women who made the farmers lose their minds"*, or again as women who are *"free"*, a word that has a strong sexual connotation. This was in particular the case for women from other regions of Morocco, who were often referred to as *haribet* – the ones who are fleeing their situation, their origins. But *haribet* has also another connotation and it implies an easy prey. It refers to women who have a reputation for *"stealing the husbands"* of the workers, as the following testimony of a male worker illustrates: *"They run away to find work and to be free – haribet. For*

*example, a young woman leaves her house while wearing a scarf and a djellaba. As soon as she is far away enough she swaps them for a pair of trousers. Like that she can do whatever she wants – she lives in freedom [a word with a sexual connotation]”. Such stories particularly applied to those female workers who found their work through the mouquéfs.*

These negative stories stand in stark contrast with our own observations and experiences, which suggest that although there may be some ‘illicit’ women, there are multiple other stories and social situations, and there are a range of reasons that push women to engage in wage work. There are the hardworking-married women, whose husbands are ill and cannot sustain their household. There are the widowed mothers, who work in order to keep their daughter ‘from the street’. There are the divorced women who rent a room in the small agricultural centers to earn a living in order to be able to sustain their children and provide them with a better future. Also young unmarried women frequently engage in wage work to sustain their families or financially support their divorced mother and buy personal consumption goods. Yet, whatever the specific situation and different reasons that push women to engage in wage work, and almost irrespective of how they actually behave, rumors and tales clearly mark women working for wages as less decent and call into question their virtues as women as well as their (sexual) mores. Or as stated by Mernissi, *“it is enough if there is one woman who misbehaves for them [men and women] to say that all women behave badly”* (1982; p. 75).

Combining a respectful life as a woman with female wage work is thus difficult; it requires skillful tactics and juggling. We use the following section to describe and analyze how female wageworker renegotiate behaviors, spaces and meanings in attempts to earn some additional income without losing their integrity as women.

### *Hiding One’s Activities from the Outsiders’ Gaze*

A first strategy used by various women was to altogether hide the fact that they engaged in wage work. They would disguise their work, or emphasize the performance of another more appropriately feminine identity instead. The story of Hadda, who is 45 years old and got married when she was only 15 years old, serves to illustrate this. She conceals her wage work activities by actively performing an image of a woman who is in charge of her household. Upon initial interviews, Hadda explained to us, when asked about her daily activities, that she stayed home and took care of the domestic tasks, and that she *“had never worked after getting married”*. She stated that her husband and son worked in the agricultural sector and *“worked on the land”*, without specifying what they precisely did. It was a couple of weeks later around 5 o’clock in the afternoon that we walked near her house and accidentally ran into her. Her face was veiled, revealing only her eyes. She wore a cap, a bubbly jacket, an apron and short rubber boots, while carrying two plastic bags

filled with onions. Her appearance was typical for that of a female worker in the region of the Saïss, who comes home after a day of work with some vegetables that the farmer had given her. Hadda greeted us and quickly explained that her husband was ill and was not able to work. In the course of our follow-up interviews with Hadda, however, her husband was never at home. After several visits Hadda confided to us that although her husband was also a worker, he was spending all his money on buying cigarettes and in cafés. This explained why he was not able to sustain his family financially, forcing Hadda to work. Her son of 22 years also worked as a laborer and contributed to the household expenses. Her daughter, 16 years old, was going to school. Hadda's prefers to construct her self image around her domestic activities, and by doing so she also upholds a particular respectful image of her husband and her family. Being a 'housewife' and being supported by her husband is the culturally desirable situation, one for which Hadda is likely to receive some degree of social credit (see also Kabeer et al. 2013). In foregrounding her identity as a housewife and mother, she moreover, hides the fact that her husband is squandering all his money and is not able to take care of his family. She thus also safeguards his pride and honor, which are intimately linked to her own.

### *Performing Altruism: 'Work' as Logical Extension of Motherhood and Daughterhood*

The example of Aziza, 45 years old, and widowed for 10 years is another illustration of how female wagedworkers re-invent and negotiate what it means to be and behave as a respectful woman. Aziza strategically uses her subjectivity of a good and caring mother to negotiate both her matrimonial status and her social position as female worker. When her husband passed away, her five children were too young to work. To make ends meet, she was, therefore, forced to find a job. She started to work as a laborer on the large farms in the *douar* where she lives. She explained that through the agricultural work, she is able to generate an income and to support her children. She added that her work also provides a welcome escape from the malicious gossip of neighbors, and allows her to prove that she does not earn her money in a dishonorable way: *"Widowed women are different from married women. People say "hadi berajel" or "hadi hajjela". If a widowed woman stays at home, they will start to think bad things about her. Even I, being a widowed woman, if I do not work they will start to talk about me, even if I have a son who attained the marriageable age, and say that I earn my money in another way. It is the Moroccan mentality. Even if there is nothing, people consider me as a divorced woman"*.

The testimony of Aziza shows well how the matrimonial status intersects with gender and work to co-shape a woman's social standing. Aziza could not fail to notice how, at her work, a clear distinction is made between married women, who are referred to as *"Hadi berajel"* - which literarily means 'the one (feminine sense) who has a husband' - and

women like herself who are divorced or widowed, who are referred to as “*Hadi hajjela*”, which literally means ‘the one (feminine sense) without any family attachment’, ‘or the one without husband’. The latter term, “*Hadi hajjela*”, has a negative connotation and can also be used as an insult. To get rid of this negative image, Aziza actively tries to negotiate her identity by emphasizing that her son has a marriageable age, something that underscores that she is a childbearing woman of a respectable age who deserves dignity. Moreover, when Aziza talks about herself and her daily activities, she rarely talks about her work. Instead, she prefers to talk about her children, their future, her wish to marry her daughter, her passion for cooking. She also relishes the idea of making her house cozy at the end of her working day, or on her days off. Instead of identifying with her work as a laborer, Aziza actively engages in constructing an image of a respected widowed mother. She portrays her wage work as an extension of her motherhood role; it forms part of the care for her children as it helps saving them from the harsh conditions she experienced and paves the way for a better future for them: “*I do not want that they suffer the same fate as mine. I want them to find a respectable job*”.

Many divorced female workers also used the strategy of presenting and regarding the wage work they engaged in as an extension of motherhood. Divorced women would present their work as a necessity to sustain their families, elderly parents, who were not able to work anymore, and their children. Mona, 26 years old, for example was forced to return to her parental house when she divorced. She brought along her son, and thus one extra mouth to feed. When asking why she started to work, she stated “*my parents are too old. I have to work in order to feed my family and son*”. She continued explaining that her ex-husband did have sufficient money, but that he did not spend any of it on sustaining their son. She had to provide for everything; food, the maintenance of the house, clothing and education. She moreover stressed the fact that her brothers, who also both engage in wage work, rather spend their money on personal goods, and emphasized the importance of her income by stating that she was the main provider of the household. As such, Mona not only negotiates her workers identity, but her work also, like that of Aziza, offers an opportunity to negotiate her matrimonial status and get rid of her stigmatizing experience of being a divorced woman.

Yet, actively framing work as the logical extension of motherhood is clearly not an option for young unmarried women who do not have children. Instead, young women tend to perform the role of a responsible daughter whose work is indispensable for sustaining their parents, single mother, brothers and sisters. They would usually cite the need to support their parents as the first reason for engaging in wage work. After altruistic reasons, some of them also admitted to having more individual reasons to engage in wage work. Zoubida, aged 28, explained how she spends most of her income on sustaining her household. Her father is a shepherd and works in addition on neighboring farm plots. He, nevertheless, did not earn sufficient money to provide for his six children and his wife.

Being the oldest of a family of four, Zoubida works together with her younger sister, as her brothers are aged 12 and six and too young to work. At the age of 13, she started to work *“to help my parents and to assure the household consumption needs”*. She went on to explain that last year she took a micro-credit and bought a cow. The cow had given birth to a calf, which she sold. She used the money to buy a small land plot of 360 m<sup>2</sup> on which she plans to build a house for her family. Similar altruistic arguments were also mentioned by Fatima Zohra, another young female worker, in her early twenties; *“I started working together with my two sisters, to provide my father, who has been in jail for 15 years, with a little bit of pocket money to buy cigarettes and other things that he needs. I give the rest of my money to my mother who divorced my father and only works sporadically as laborer. With the remaining money I buy myself make-up or clothes.”*

Fathers were often reluctant to accept the wages of their daughters, as it would imply that they were not capable of sustaining their family and thus also reflect negatively on their manhood. Yet, mothers living on the brink of poverty had usually little to bequeath their working daughters, as their income would significantly contribute to the household well being. As explained in the section that follows, women would often use multiple strategies. They would for example perform an altruistic identity while simultaneously actively engaging in (re)defining social spaces.

### *Reinventing Space: Blending the Private into the Public*

All female workers would actively negotiate their workers identity by blending the private into the public sphere. In doing so they created, as it were, a symbolic private, domestic, realm around them which allowed them to continue adhering to, but also slightly reinterpret, dominant notions of rural womanhood. To do so women deployed different methods. First, they extended the private sphere by working together with male and female neighbors and/or family members. They walked for example together to the *mouquéf*, and once they arrived they would sit together while waiting to find a job for the day without mingling with other workers (male or female). On the farmers' field they continued to keep a watchful eye on each other. Besides being important moments of exchange and socialization, forming such social groups based on family and kinship relationships thus also was a tactic to extend the village and family relations beyond the house and 'domestic' sphere, thereby stretching the scope of social control over women. Doing this provided them with the possibility to trespass the 'public sphere' without causing their parents' eyebrows to frown, or causing villagers or neighbors to engage in malevolent whispers about them. As pointed out by a young female worker aged 28; *“my father initially did not want me to work. I started to work secretly, without letting him know. After a week he found out. Yet, since he knows that I'm working along with my aunts on the lands that are surrounding our house he did not oppose my decision”*.

Women can thus also extend the social protection and control of the private sphere by only working on neighboring fields belonging to family or community members, rather than going to the *mouquéf*. Fatima for example, who is 28 years, works on the field of a distant cousin, situated 20 kilometers from where she is living. In describing her work activities and the farm where she is working she states that *“it is a respectable farm, there is no nonsense, no trouble. I feel at ease when I work there”*. Her female neighbors who work at the same farm also stated that *“they [her neighbors on whose field she is working] consider us as their sisters. I only work there. On other farms women are often harassed. But here I never experienced such things. It does not happen”*.

A second method which women used to re-negotiate public space, is the veiling of the face in a particular way. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, waged workers wear thick opaque veils, revealing only their eyes. They explain this by saying that it protects them from the sun, dust as well as from pesticides. Yet, and in addition, many women also stated that it serves *“to remain anonymous”*. By veiling their face in such a way they also disguise their other subjectivities such as who, and what kind of woman she is, from the collective eye of the rural Moroccan society. The practice of veiling among women has often been interpreted as extending the private space into the public, or as signaling the wearers' intentions not to engage in the public (Newcomb 2006, p. 299; see also Hesseni 2000; Bossenbroek et al. 2015). Through this particular veiling practice, female waged workers can cross public spaces (the street; the *mouquéf*) and extend their mobility without being questioned or gossiped about.

### *Controlling One's Own Chastity*

Although sexual abuses, verbal and physical harassments of co-workers, farmers, and/or caporals are common, when asked for specific examples women would often answer that they never had experienced something like that, or avoid the question altogether. Women working on lands belonging to family or community members would state that *“only women working in the mouquéf face such problems”*. Whilst women working in the *mouquéf* would say that they never faced such things as they behave 'correctly', being 'respectful' and 'serious'. Asserting their proper conduct was important to clearly distance themselves from any immoral conduct.

Through multiple visits and by creating a relationship of trust and intimacy, we were able to record various experiences and testimonies that are illustrative of the general atmosphere in which female workers are operating. Zohra for example, who started to work as laborer when her husband fell ill, at first adamantly stated that she was never sexually harassed; nor had she faced any other kind of violence. Nevertheless, when we asked her if she would allow her 17-year-old daughter to work as laborer, she replied that

she wouldn't and said: *"Young women get sexually harassed by male-workers, by managers, as well as by foremen. They do not make formal complaints as their reputation is at stake. In order to not run the risk, they do not go to work"*. Zohra emphasized that she herself never experienced something like that as *"I behave correctly and do not laugh with men"*. Other women would explain that the girls who face sexual harassments are gullible, naïve or seek to earn a little bit more money. Against this picture they would qualify their own behavior as 'serious', 'respectful' and 'not fooling around' as the following testimony further illustrates; *"I never experienced any problems, neither with the male workers, nor with the farmers. But I do not talk to them, do not joke around with them and do not exceed the stage of respect. You shouldn't get familiar with them"*. Another female worker explained: *"Nobody bothers us. Generally, when the woman respects herself, the people will respect her"*. These testimonies illustrate how important it is for women to actively re-assert and construct their own chastity and moral integrity. This is so important that few, if any, would ever admit to having experiences any kind of physical abuse or violence, as this would call into question their virtues as women. Zohra's reluctance to let her daughter engage in wage work does nevertheless reveal that sexual harassment does occur. When it happens, it is difficult if not impossible for women to share their story for fear of being judged by her family and wider society.

### *Creating Dreamy Spaces of Relative Freedom*

The last strategy used by women, in particular the younger ones, is the production of spaces of relative freedom in which they can 'detach' themselves from their daily routines and can become someone else. Women shape these spaces according to their own socio-cultural representations. The following example of Donia illustrates how such spaces provide imageries of new rural feminine identities and constitute a transgression of dominant socio-cultural gendered norms and values. Donia is 21 years and works since four years. She explains that once she gets back home after a long day of work, the household chores still need to be done. Yet, at 19.20 her favorite television series is broadcasted, which she never misses; *"there are two TV channels that I love, which broadcast Indian and Turkish series. Farida is a very good one, even if I'm busy at 19.20 when it starts I turn the TV on. I love the way she talks and how Farida, the heroine of the story, is dressed. It is a beautiful love story"*. While taking a small break and drinking some tea after the first part of our interview, she showed us two beautiful pictures of herself. In both the pictures she looked identical: unveiled, her beautiful dark black hair brushed to the left side of her face, a little bit of gloss on her cheeks and lightly made-up eyes. She was posing in a colorful dress, a green and pink one. She explained that she had requested her cousin to make these pictures for her with Photoshop. She continued by stating how she modeled herself after 'Farida' on the pictures. She somewhat disappointedly added how in reality *"we can never be like Farida, how much make up do we have to wear to be*

*able to have the same white color of skin as she has*". It is interesting to note even though this TV-series is immensely popular in Morocco, it has been criticized extensively because of the actors' immoral behaviors (kissing), their nighttime outings, their non-marital relationships and the scantily clad female actors wearing short and tight dresses.

Intrigued by different socio-cultural gendered worlds, Donia likes to connect in the evening on "*face*" (Facebook) and *Whatsapp* and sends messages to her cousins, friends and male acquaintances who she meets during her work. Yet, Donia explains that when she goes to work she only works with her female and at times male neighbors "*who are like my brothers*". When working together, under the watchful eye of society she "*behaves seriously*" and does not laugh with them. Yet, once sheltered from the collective gaze she takes up her phone and chats with 'nice guys', or 'boyfriends', as a friend of her qualified her male acquaintances. New communication means are actively taken up by young women like Donia, who uses it as an individual tactic to disconnect from daily routines or to seek relief from "*the drudgery work*", in the process transform herself into an imaginary 'Farida'. In addition Donia creates a cyber space in which she enjoys chatting with male and female friends. It is interesting to note that although work activities on the farm are usually strictly gender segregated, it has become common practice for Donia to use new communication means to engage in mixed interactions. She can chat with her 'boyfriends' without losing her face.

## 5.5. Conclusion

By drawing on the work of Mies in combination with more recent literature that put greater emphasis on women's experiences, complex subject formation and creativity, and the social constructed character of the 'private' and the 'public' domain to grasp how subjects and their acts, this chapter has endeavored to shed light on the complex relationship between processes of agrarian change, gender and agricultural labor. It illustrated how the agricultural boom unfolding in the plan of the Saïss in Morocco is premised on a process of labor hierarchisation, in which gender intersects with technicity, knowledge and wages. Whereas many male workers take up the 'good' jobs, which positively contribute to their personal and professional identity, female wageworkers find themselves at the lowest strata of the newly emerging labor hierarchy and take little pride in their work. They do not have any possibility to climb up the social and professional ladder, they face hardship and sexual abuses are common. On top of that, due to existing gender socio-cultural norms and values they are easily negatively perceived; a misstep easily sparks off normative and harsh judgments.

Contrary to what Mies argued regarding the lacemakers in Narsapur, that "*although women are faced with the contradiction between ideology and their actual everyday*



*experience, they have not been able to summarize and synthesize these experiences or draw conclusions from them”* (p. 159), we argue that the various tactics used by female wagedworkers illustrate that they are conscious about their multiple positionalities. They actively and creatively navigate between various structures of dominations. Female wagedworkers thus broaden the possibilities for being and becoming and in particular younger women challenge existing socio-cultural gender norms. In doing so they make their presence in the ‘public sphere’ a fact, and combine womanhood and daughterhood with financial autonomy.

We therefore conclude that it is precisely in the daily practices of combining different gender identities that the scope for change may lay. Through their hybrid and multiple gender identities, new gender roles become imaginable. In the new socio-cultural repertoires that they create, binary gender identities are combined and rearticulated and boundaries are moved.

## CHAPTER 6

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### Broken Dreams? Youth Experiences of Agrarian Change<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> A previous and shorter version of this chapter was published as: Lisa Bossenbroek, Jan Douwe van der Ploeg and Margreet Zwarteveen (2015) 'Broken dreams? Youth experiences of agrarian change in Morocco's Saïss region', *Cahiers Agricultures* 24 (6): 342-348.

## 6.1. Introduction

Rural young men and women in the agricultural plain of the Saïss, characterized by rapidly changing agrarian and social realities, are key players in co-shaping the nature and direction of current change processes. When visiting the area, their dynamism and energy cannot fail to attract attention and, during initial conversations, we quickly came to realize the importance of their aspirations, dreams and know-how in fueling new imaginings of rural futures, and in producing modern rural realities. Their enthusiasm stands in contrast to most popular and academic writings on rural youth, which tend to associate young people's ambitions to become modern with their migration to cities (Gidakou 1999; Leavy and Smith 2010). In the minds of young people in the Saïss, aspirations of modernity are not incompatible with a life in the countryside. Taking inspiration from current dynamics, they believe that a different, more decent, bearable or enjoyable future than that of their parents is possible in the countryside; a future which allows them to creatively combine modernity with rurality. In this chapter, we use the experiences, aspirations and dreams of rural young people in the Saïss to describe and discuss current agrarian dynamics to 1) illustrate how agrarian transformations are intimately linked to the aspirations, dreams and know-how of young people; 2) demonstrate how rural futures and identities are deeply gendered; and finally 3) provide nuance to more structural analyses of agrarian change with detailed ethnographic accounts of how changes are experienced.

Already in 1969, Paul Pascon and Mekki Bentahar (1969), concluded a study of rural young men in Morocco, with a warning about the consequences of not giving enough space to the aspirations of rural young people. Although agrarian futures importantly depend on the willingness and ability of young people to take on careers in farming, the literature on agricultural modernization and agrarian change generally fails to consider them as important actors of and in these transformations. Only a few authors (see for example White 2012; Leavy and Smith 2010; Juma 2007; Gidakou 1999; Pascon and Bentahar 1969) explicitly reflect on rural young people when discussing agrarian questions. Yet, the overall image these analyses convey of young people in the countryside is that of a threat to the future of farming: the studies often draw attention to young people's lack of rural ambitions. Ben White (2012; p. 1), for instance, critically questions "*claims about future small-scale farming alternatives*" since it rests on an assumption that there is a generation of rural youth who want to become small farmers. He deconstructs this assumption and illustrates, with different examples from around the world, that rural young people are increasingly uninterested in farming or in rural futures. Isabella Gidakou (1999) similarly illustrates how young women in different rural communities in Southern Greece are not very interested in farming and farm employment and instead prefer to emigrate to urban areas. This, Gidakou argues, will endanger the social, economic and cultural

reproduction of the family farm. Likewise the article of Jennifer Leavy and Sally Smith (2010; p. 3) starts from the observation that “*young people are choosing not to pursue livelihoods in the agriculture sector, especially as farmers*”. Against this background the authors highlight the importance of understanding the formation of aspirations and dreams and their outcomes, as these will influence farming practices and so are crucial to take into consideration when developing agricultural policies.

This lack of attention to young people is worrisome because the current era of neoliberal globalization is lending a new sense of urgency to old debates on agrarian change. The reduction of rural farm land, new enclosures and dispossessions, and the commodification of natural resources are prompting a revival of old agrarian questions. We argue that only by capturing the experiences, it becomes possible to understand what agrarian transformations mean to those who constitute it and maintain or supersede it (see Scott 1985; p. 42). What people do and why cannot just be 'read' from structural forces, but needs to be captured by carefully situating behaviors and change in the context of lived experiences and meanings. Here experience itself need to be considered as discursively constructed rather than to impute to it an incontestable authority (Scott 1992).

Our argument importantly builds on the work of a growing number of critical scholars who, each in their own way, bring nuance and detail to the current agrarian debate by calling attention to how seemingly similar patterns of global change produce (and are produced by) a large diversity of farming lives and experiences, and are importantly marked by existing social hierarchies and institutions, including those based on gender. Shahra Razavi (2009) for instance proposes a ‘finer reading’ within the debate of agrarian change, not simply by adding gender but by “*rethinking core assumptions*” within this field. She suggests reconsidering the peasant household, by making visible uncommodified work, and rethinking land tenure and labor market institutions as being highly gendered and permeated by relations of power and inequality. Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, in a different vein, contributes to better understanding the agency of rural actors in processes of agrarian change by putting their lives and strategies at the center of the analysis. He emphasizes that agricultural development is multifaceted, complex and often contradictory in nature. The interplay of various social forces, originating from international, national, regional and local arenas, and the agency and polyvalence of the actors involved “*generates specific forms, directions and rhythms of agricultural change*” (Long and van der Ploeg, 1988; p. 37). Priti Ramamurthy (2003) sheds further light on the agrarian change debate and emphasizes in her work the importance of ethnographic research as a way to understand how people experience capitalist expansion. At the heart of her analyses are the experiential contradictions, and puzzlements of the individuals living the multiple encounters of agrarian change (2003). Finally the work of Mostafa Errahj (2013), which focuses on agrarian change in the region of the Gharb in Morocco,

highlights the importance of embedding research in its historical context in order to understand processes of contemporary agrarian transformations specific to Morocco.

## 6.2. Young People, Agrarian Change and Emerging Aspirations

Our interviews and focus group discussions revealed that young people have mixed feelings about what is happening in their region. Observing the many changes with critical curiosity, the positive side is that young men and women take inspiration from these dynamics to develop new identities and futures, and use them to distinguish themselves from their parents. In this sense, the current changes work to evoke new aspirations and dreams. They encourage young men and women to set future goals and to actively seek for and pursue possibilities in the present to carve out and realize these.

Young people deplore the land sales arising from financial distress. They also are critical of how the fences enclosing new properties reduce land available for grazing animals. Yet many positively appreciate the (potential) economic opportunities that new investors are creating, including different opportunities for employment and development and the introduction of new technologies. Indicative of their moderate enthusiasm is their reluctance to refer to the new buyers of land as *barrani*, a word meaning 'outsider' which is often used by their parents. Young people instead prefer to use the more neutral term *mostatmir*, meaning investor (see also Bossenbroek and Zwarteveen 2015). To the young men, the agricultural projects of the newcomers serve as a source of inspiration. The new farmer-entrepreneurs serve as exciting role models, depicting new and different ways of doing agriculture and of being a farmer. Young men for instance refer to these newcomers when articulating dreams of becoming organic farmers, rent extra land to realize their own farming project, or start a fruit tree firm (see Table 2). Those who do not have access to land appreciate the new labor possibilities that the agricultural initiatives of newcomers help create. Furthermore, the more qualified jobs offer challenging and more rewarding employment perspectives, often associated with more masculine professional identities; 'technical laborer', 'specialized laborer', 'permanent laborer', 'guard', etc.

Young women are slightly more negative regarding the newcomers. Their opinions also suggest that the formation of new identities that young men dream of is a more complex process than it seems when just talking to the young men. The young women expressed concerns about how the arrival of the *mostatmir* is affecting and will affect the "*wled l-blad*", the sons of the land; the young men living in their village. The newcomers are well dressed and arrive in the village in their big cars, creating new social differences and hierarchies and breeding feelings of discomfort, envy and frustration among the young men: *"Especially the boys, who neither have the means to finalize their studies nor to start a farming project. So when they see a newcomer showing off his car and his clothes, they do not appreciate it at all. They wonder and ask themselves: what does he have that I do*

*not have, to be able to own all of this? After all, the girl stays home and if she wants to earn a little bit of money she can start to sew... but the man, he has to earn the money and has to sustain his family”* (Female participant of the focus group discussion).

The above testimony reveals that alongside the joy of new prospects, there are simultaneous feelings of unpleasantness and discomfort. The discomfort partly stems from how the novelties that accompany the arrival of the *mostatmir* are framed and seen as modern and progressive. This sheds a negative light on existing farming practices and the young people engaged in them as less modern and old-fashioned. The paradox is that although young people are attracted to the glamour of the modern and dream of escaping the traditions and lifestyles dictated by their parents and grandparents, they also do not want to entirely dismiss or negate their origins as these are an important ingredient of their identity and sense of self. Their discomfort further stems from the fact that, in practice, the *mostatmir* often hires laborers from other regions; which leads to rising frustrations amongst the group of young male laborers.

Young women see how their brothers and cousins actively try to take up new opportunities in farming and construct dreams of new and better futures. This makes some of them lament their own lack of opportunities for personal and professional development. Just as their brothers aim to distinguish themselves from their fathers, they also aspire to distinguish themselves from their mothers by crafting a new and more 'modern' identity. The female characters in the popular Turkish and Egyptian television soap series that they watch are an important source of inspiration here. Additionally their female Quran and literacy teachers, who live in the city and combine work with looking after their domestic household duties, serve as role models to young women. Like these modern women, rural girls in the Saïss aspire to earn their own incomes by professionalizing and extending the household activities that they currently engage in. They for instance dream of establishing a bakery, or a dairy cow business in order to sell the milk. Yet, such farm related businesses are rare in the region. Other young women instead dream of marrying a wealthy husband, someone who lives in the city and has a second house in the village, or someone with a certain level of education and preferably with a good job. They see a good marriage as a way out of their unsatisfactory daily lives, a means to upgrade their social status or to establish a household independent from that of their parents (see Table 2).

Interestingly, and unlike what most studies on rural young people report, our focus group discussions revealed that most (20 out of 25 who participated) young men see their future in the farming sector. Four young men also pictured their future selves in farming, but did not own any land. Only one boy did not see himself in farming and wanted to pursue studies instead. As for the young women, all of them first expressed a strong interest in pursuing their primary and secondary education. Contrary to many young men, young women often drop out of school before finalizing their studies. This is firstly due to an absence of safe

and regular transport facilities, In a cultural environment in which safeguarding a girls' chastity is as important as it is in the Saïss, making sure that young women are not harassed and removing all suspicions of harassment are crucial. Many of the prevailing gender norms and ideologies in fact are about protecting young women's (sexual) reputation and consist of rules that confine women to particular spaces or restrict their movements. For instance, some mothers explained that they did not want their daughters to travel alone, or do not want their daughters to work in the fields alongside 'strange men'; workers from the city. Additionally, the lack of financial means in the family, or changes in the family composition (marriage; death; sickness) may prompt families to keep their daughters home where their work force is needed. But when we asked young women about their future aspirations and dreams many saw their futures beyond these 'confined' spaces.

In sum, many young people aspire to continue working and living in the countryside. The many changes that they are witnessing broaden the gamut of possible livelihood options open to them and especially inspire young men to dream of better futures and more modern selves. Young women, even though for them farming is not an occupational possibility because of socio-cultural gender norms, also have ambitions of progress and dream of assuming an economic role and earning an income (outside of the traditional household) in the rural economy. Their enthusiasm and ambitions shed a refreshing and different light on contemporary rural dynamics in terms of how it (re-)shapes social institutions and hierarchies and (re-)creates opportunities for life and work. This triggered us to further trace where the dreams of the young people come from, and to explore whether and how they can be realized.

<i><b>Aspirations of young men</b></i>	<i><b>Aspirations of young women</b></i>
Organic farm	Bakery business
Fruit tree farming project	Managing a business enterprise
Rent extra land	Marriage and living in the city while having an extra house in the village
Export production	Sewing workshop

Table 2: Overview of young people's aspirations

### 6.3. Untangling Aspirations: Drafting Desirable Futures and New Images of the Self

Shedding light on the different aspirations helps explain the different factors shaping them, and better connect them to emerging ideas of selfhood. Through our intimate relationships with several young people, we came to appreciate how their aspirations and dreams constitute a 'life-project'; a draft of a desirable future (Du Bois-Reymond 1998). This draft does not appear out of the blue, but is importantly shaped by gendered and family histories and cultures. In the following section, we use the stories of Driss, Anas, Samira and Mona to illustrate how gender, past experiences, and the history of the family help shape the different life projects and wished for identities.

#### *Driss (29): "I Plan to Create a Fruit Tree Firm"*

Driss likes to see his future self as an independent farmer, responsible for his own farming project and up-to-date with the newest crops and technologies. This image diverges from his current day-to-day engagements; he farms together with his three brothers on the land of his father, under the authority of his father. They cultivate a mix of crops on 13 hectares; three are irrigated and ten are rain fed. The aspiration of developing his own fruit tree firm partly grew out of the different internships that he completed after quitting school at the age of 15. He undertook these internships in, according to Driss, "*farms which are at the forefront of progress with regard to drip irrigation*" and accomplished different practical trainings in the domain of farming. This period seemed crucial in the definition of Driss' life-project. He became acquainted with and gained the knowhow of new technologies, like drip irrigation and 'new' high value crops.

The particular history of the family of Driss, and their access and ownership to resources also importantly shapes the formation of his aspirations and project. Driss' family is originally from a small village 60 kilometers from Ait Ali and used to own less than two hectares of land. The father of Driss has two wives and 15 children. In the early 90s, his father obtained a land plot of 13 hectares. He obtained the land use rights, as part of the land reforms described above. Since 2006 the lands of the cooperatives are privatized and the father of Driss paid a fee to maintain his individual private land title.

Since privatization, land prices have dramatically increased. This makes it impossible for Driss to buy land; neither can he rent land because many farmers who used to rent out their land prefer to sell it. Consequently less land is available for rent and the costs for renting have increased. With the increasing 'valorization' of land, due to high land prices and high value crops that are planted in the region, Driss sees great potential in the land of his father. This further nourishes his aspirations.



*Anas (26): "I Want to Create a Packing Station and Build a Cooling Plant"*

The story of Anas similarly illustrates how past experiences, the history of the family and the wish to distinguish oneself, shape the formation of aspirations and life projects. Anas dreamt to farm by himself and to start his own, independent farming project. Like Driss, Anas undertook practical trainings in the domain of plant breeding and fruit trees after quitting school. He pursued his education with two internships in large farm enterprises in the region; a dairy farm and an olive tree farm. Being exposed to the newest innovations in the aforementioned domains, Anas explained how he started to develop his idea of starting his own project.

The possible access to land, obtained and controlled by the previous generation, further nourished Anas aspirations and helped him to concretize his project. His grandfather used to work as a laborer on the farms of the settlers during the French protectorate. At that time, he owned a small parcel of land, although not large enough to build a respectable livelihood. At the end of the protectorate, he migrated with his wife to France where he started working as a laborer. With the money he earned he bought additional plots of land situated approximately 20 kilometers from the *douar* Ait Ali. Today, the grandfather of Anas owns 45 hectares of land and his family is considered in the *douar* as wealthy. His property mirrors his success; from a laborer during the French protectorate to a landowner today. The farm combines animal husbandry with several hectares of wheat and vegetables (onions and potatoes). The grandfather of Anas manages the farm business together with his four sons and Anas, who is the oldest grandson in the extended family. Each week they meet and talk through the different activities. Anas' father, who is a civil servant, together with his grandfather, takes all major farm decisions.

Anas' aspirations of creating his own farming project are accompanied by new images of farming and a desire to distinguish himself from past generations. Unlike his grandfather, who used to work as laborer on the farm of foreigners, getting dirty and sweating while gradually building his heritage, Anas' dream is to be a clean and well-dressed farmer-manager, running his farming business from the shade of his office or car.

*Samira (30): "I Want to Get Married and Have Two Houses: One House in the City and One in the Village"*

As compared to Driss and Anas, the following stories of Samira and Mona provide markedly different aspirations and dreams, and illustrate that futures and identities in the Saiss are deeply gendered. This is related to existing gender divisions of labor and gendered patterns of inheritance and kinship and inscribed in rural gender ideologies which favor distinctive personality traits in rural men as compared to those appreciated in women. Such differences yield in markedly different life experiences, creating different

opportunities for personal and professional learning for women compared to men. Samira and Mona both failed to complete their studies. In the *douar*, the activities of women are often restricted to the household and women's mobility is limited. Literacy and Quran classes have only recently been introduced. In addition to gender, the lack of their family's access to land importantly co-shapes their outlook on their chances and opportunities in life.

Samira is eager to establish her own household, and to live independently of her parents. The first time we met Samira, and asked her about her dreams she replied with a twinkle in her eyes: *"I want to get married and have two houses: one house in the city and one in the village"*. During our subsequent meetings, marriage was a recurring topic in the conversation, reflecting Samira's preoccupation. When we asked her what the ideal woman looked like, she replied: *"The ideal woman for me, takes care of her husband and gives him children"*. Her ideal is *"a marriage that lasts an eternity, until death do us part"*. For Samira, marriage represents: *"house", "stability, independence", and "a way to get children who can take care of me when I'm old"*. An important part of this projection is inspired by her desire to distinguish herself from her mother. Although she admires and cherishes her mother for her strength, proudly referring to her as *"a woman who is capable, competent and not lazy"*, she herself does not aspire to become so involved in farming activities and distances herself from her mother's professional farming identity: *"She is in charge of the cows and the garden. But I do not want to be like my mother, there is too much work."* Her mother works together with her father on his land. He has a small parcel of almost three hectares on which they plant onions, potatoes, and carrots and have a couple of cows. Samira often helps on the land, as she is the only child who still resides at home. Her sister is married and lives in the city and her two brothers live in France.

### *Mona (28): "I Want to Have a Respectable Life and Pursue my Studies"*

Mona works as a female laborer on the project of her cousin, Anas (see the story above). She dreams of living in the city and to get rid of her work as laborer. Instead, she wants to have a respectable life and continue her study. She is divorced and lives together with her son, five-year-old Adam, and her family in a shelter built on a little piece of land belonging to the state. Similar to Samira, Mona has another idea of herself in mind than that of repeating the fate and identities of her parents. She wants to get rid of her unsatisfactory daily life and to upgrade her social status.

The father of Mona is 70 years old and is originally from Ait Ali. He used to be a laborer working on the farms of the colons during the French protectorate. He explained that during that period he worked on different farms throughout the region. Upon the departure of the French, he wanted to go to France. However his request was never accepted because he was not a permanent worker on any of the farms. He then applied to

obtain a piece of land in the state cooperative, but again was not selected. He continued, alongside his wife, to be a laborer; *“my father did not own anything, and I follow him in his footsteps”*. They have six children in total, three daughters and three sons. Mona, together with her two brothers, continues living in the parental house and they all work as laborers. Their remaining siblings are married.

#### **6.4. Negotiating One’s Space: Developing Strategies to Realize One’s Aspirations**

By following these and other young people for a period of almost four years, we gradually came to understand that realizing one's projects and distinguishing oneself from one's parents and from more conventional farming lives and identities is easier said than done. Driss, Anas, Samira and Mona are caught in webs of hierarchical power relations (kinship, family) on which they depend importantly for their livelihood and for a sense of who they are. However, these subsist alongside conflicts and generational tension; *“the family, the household, is their refuge against the hardship of the external world, but is also often a world of difficulties and quarrels, of learning from the tyranny of the elderly”* (Pascon and Bentahar 1969; p. 240). Pursuing their aspirations requires modifying these relationships, and thus also entails challenging the gendered socio-cultural identities, values and traditions that help keep them in place. This is not just difficult and sometimes painful, but it also meets with the active objections and resistance of those who represent tradition, routine and the established order; mainly parents and grandparents. Young people want and need to realize their projects without causing too much conflict or provoking damaging disputes as they cannot afford and do not want to upset relations with their parents and kin. Doing this requires cautious maneuvers to re-negotiate existing socio-cultural and political spaces and re-invent gendered identities.

In the section that follows we illustrate this with the experiences of Driss, Anas, Samira and Mona of realizing their aspirations and dealing with the problems that they encounter on their ways. Their stories show that in the process of wielding consent and tactically circumventing opposition to create the space needed to realize their dreams, they also re-shape and form their own identities.

##### *Driss on the Way of Becoming a Fruit Tree Farmer with His Own Tree Firm*

During our various interviews, Driss spoke sometimes directly, at other times indirectly about his father. He complained about him and described how he himself, together with his three brothers, always had to comply with his father’s will, wish and authority; *“if my father says that we have to cultivate four hectares of onions, I can’t refuse or contradict him”*. Driss' references to his father resembles those of the other young male farmers

whom we interviewed, providing a clear testimony of the operation of patriarchal power relations by highlighting the important role of the father in the farm and in the decision making process: *"I help my father on the land"*, *"At the end it is always my father who decides"*, *"We work as laborers on the land of my father"*, or again *"My mother does not accept to sell the land, it is the money of her children... but at the end the father is the one who decides"*. The central position of the father on the farm and in the farm work further becomes manifested in, and is justified through, prevailing ideologies and discourses that portray the father as the breadwinner of the household and as the one responsible for maintaining the family (see also Pascon and Bentahar 1969). Land control, ownership and inheritance practices<sup>30</sup> further reinforce (and are based on) the central position of the father-cum-provider and importantly shape both his own present as well as his son's future farming identity (see also Little 2002). Patriarchal power relations and discourses also determine that the son works under the authority and auspices of his father unless and until he owns his own land.

Driss' aspiration to create a fruit tree firm entails a break with the farming as currently practiced, and in this sense may also be interpreted as a critique of tradition and the authority of his father. To gain support for what he aspires to do Driss must devise creative strategies to gain his father's approval and support.

Driss explained that it was his own decision to study at the horticulture school in Meknes and do the different internships on various farms throughout the region in order to learn about farming and to further develop his technical skills. He explained how, during that period, he came home each weekend to help his father; *"these moments were occasions to share and exchange about what I had observed and learned on these farms"*. Whilst assisting his father on the farm, he demonstrated his knowhow and experiences in an active attempt to convince his father of his own technical abilities and to acquaint his father to all kinds of new developments. At the same time he started putting aside the money he earned in order to save for his own project.

In 2009, he made an important first step towards fulfilling his dream when he (together with his brothers) succeeded in convincing his father to install drip irrigation on the land. When we asked how he convinced his father, he replied *"The Berbers are hard to convince. For the drip irrigation we had to present the different benefits, like the reduction of labor force and time, as well as the water that we would save, and so on"*. One year later Driss presented his project to his father by explaining how he expected to achieve it, and by presenting the costs and the benefits. Though not fully convinced, his father

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<sup>30</sup> Although women have the right to inherit land, in practice they often not claim their part. This is because farming practices are usually controlled by her brother(s), and for the sake of keeping the land together she often renounce to her part. Moreover, upon marriage she moves out of the parental house, negatively affecting her bargaining position to claim her land share.

agreed to rent out one hectare of land to his son; something Driss was able to pay for with the money he had saved. “I rented one hectare from my father and also paid him for the water to irrigate my tree seedlings. I received 9,000 tree seedlings for free from acquaintances whom I had met during my internships. With the money that I had saved I could hire some laborers and pay for the stocks in which the scion is inserted”. His professional acquaintances also provided him with old drip irrigation lines, which he installed to irrigate his seedlings.

The story of Driss illustrates that the fulfillment of his project depended crucially upon the careful and patient persuasion of his father. Driss skillfully mobilizes different elements to achieve this (see Figure 4) including knowledge; social relations; technology; money; and time. Every change needed to be negotiated and planned for. Through this process Driss gradually succeeded in distinguishing himself from his father, slowly carving out a new and more modern farming identity for himself in the process. Each of his actions was a small stepping-stone towards the realization of his dream and towards his becoming an independent fruit tree farmer with his own project.

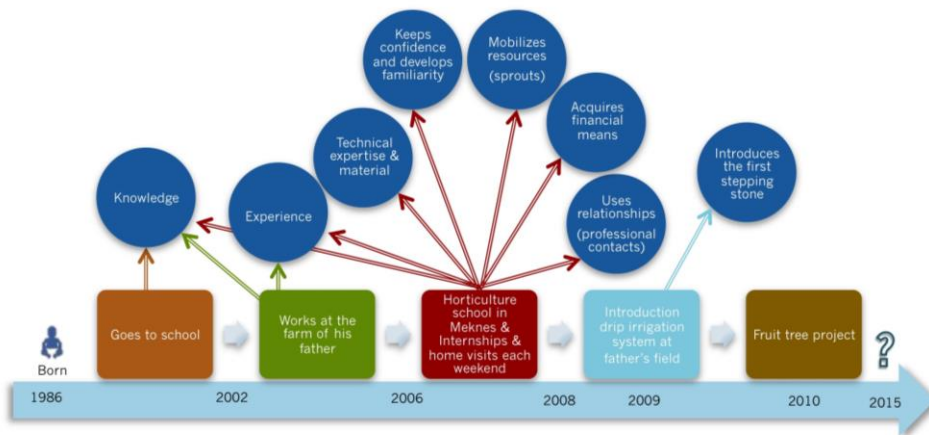


Figure 4: Negotiating space through the mobilization of acquired competences and resources: the case of Driss (Bossenbroek 2016)

### *Anas Between Fellaḥ and Rajal Aâmal*<sup>31</sup>

The story of Anas is another case that illustrates how young people actively and creatively negotiate their own room for maneuver. Like Driss, Anas acquired the ideas and knowhow for his own project while doing internships. Moreover, during one of his internship periods, Anas became friends with one the managers on the farm. They decided to start

<sup>31</sup> *Fellaḥ* means farmer and *Rajal Aâmal* means businessman.

an association to develop their own olive tree nursery project. To convince his grandfather, father and uncles of this plan, Anas developed a business plan in which he laid out the costs and benefits of the proposed project; *“I convinced them little by little. First my father, [who is the oldest] and later I convinced the group. Not everyone was persuaded and to obtain the confidence of my uncle we went to a friend of mine who is a technician. He explained the technical components of my project to finally convince my uncle”*. Like Driss, Anas received the tree seedlings from his contacts acquired during his internship. Anas’ father financed the project and his associate was in charge of the marketing. After two years, building on the knowledge and on the financial benefit of his olive tree project, Anas decided start his individual project: *“Today [2014] I have 120.000 fruit tree seedlings and 100.000 olive tree cuttings. Now the deal with my father is 50%-50%, both regarding the costs as well as the benefits”*. The olive trees are irrigated with sprinkler and drip irrigation. The roots of the fruit trees are inserted in a hormone mix to increase the growth and strength of the roots, something that is rarely done in the region. In 2012, together with an old friend whom he knew from his studies, Anas started another association and undertook a lettuce project: 17 different types of lettuce, equipped with drip irrigation. The drip irrigation system is, according to Anas *“easy to install and if something is broken we can easily fix it. Once you open the vans you can do some other things”*. While irrigating, he for example oversees the laborers working on his land, or calls his potential clients. They planned to sell their lettuce to large hotels in Ifrane, to a luxury ski resort at approximately 40 kilometers, and to supermarkets in Meknes. His friend had worked for a couple of years in Agadir in a similar lettuce project where he had obtained the knowhow. Anas contributed with his and his family’s resources (money, land and water). For the lettuce project they had to convince the grandfather, father and uncles. Finally in 2013, together with a cousin, Anas started with his most recent project, the construction of the concrete poles that new investors use to fence their lands: *“Since I have the tree nursery, the buyers usually want to set up a farm and are therefore also interested in buying concrete polls. We might also start with constructing poles for the pergola<sup>32</sup>”*.

We were impressed by the many projects of Anas, which seemed to be clear signs of his entrepreneurial spirit and enthusiasm. Almost every time we visited him there were new developments. The resources of his family, and the fact that he is the oldest son of the family, clearly make it relatively easier for him to realize his own projects. However Anas also needs to work hard and plan well to realize his aspirations. He needs to convince his uncles, mobilize past experiences (internship and studies) and invest in a professional network. Anas' experiences also show how he accumulates knowledge and learns by doing. His different associations serve as a launching pad to obtain more knowhow, which

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<sup>32</sup> Pergola is a table grape type, which was previously hardly grown in the region. Today more and more ‘farmers’, especially the new entrepreneurs, are growing them.

he also mobilizes to gain the approval and confidence of his grandfather, father and uncles. Finally the technology also plays an important role in helping create the room to fulfill his aspirations. The sprinkler irrigation, drip irrigation and hormone mix provide his projects with an aura of technical professionalism and sophistication, which are important in winning over his male family elders.

Through developing his projects, and by gradually creating the room to manoeuvre and realize his aspirations, Anas is also constructing a new and more modern farming image. By simultaneously identifying as a *fellah* (farmer) and a *rajel aâmal* (businessman), Anas is consciously combining tradition with modernity. On the one hand, he proudly admits his strong connections to farming, partly by acknowledging his family ties; *"I took farming as my profession. My grandfather was fellah and he lived 100 years. Farming is Rah'a diali"<sup>33</sup>. We all work in it, it feeds us"*. However, when asked if he would farm the same way as the previous generations, he is keen to emphasize that what he is doing is new and different; *"no, with the time, it changes, it develops, mechanizes, and more technologies are used"*. That his idea of what it means to be a farmer is different from that of his elders also shows in the types of activities he engages in. Unlike his father, grandfather and uncles, he rarely undertakes physical labor in the fields. Instead he prefers supervising the laborers who work on his lands, contacting his clients, or checking on his crops and the drip irrigation system. In general he was very mobile, moving around in his car to manage his businesses. When trying to arrange a meeting with him we always had to call an hour ahead of time to check where he was. During weekends he would wear a fashionable leather jacket and would sometimes go out with his friend to have a coffee in the city. Judging by how he dresses, acts and talks, Anas thus performs the role of a new type of modern farmer; someone who confidently and successfully combines the attachment to and knowledge of, the land of the old *fellah* with the mobility and managerial skills of the new entrepreneur.

### *Samira Creating Space to Become a Respectable Woman*

When looking at the daily farm experiences of Samira and Mona, it appears as if routines of everyday life overshadowed their aspirations. Samira explained how she often helps on the land; *"I helped in the harvest of maize and also planted onions. My father irrigated. It is heavy and I always have to help, even if it is late in the evening"*. Samira - like some of the other young women we talked to who *help* on the land - does not label her activities as farm work. She, like the others, prefers referring to her work on the fields as *"help"*, as *"doing everything"*, or as *"I replace my brother when he is not there"*. This demonstrates that their contributions are invisible, even in their own eyes (see also de Rooij 1992).

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<sup>33</sup> *Rah'a diali* means in this context, that he is at ease with farming, and finds himself in farming.

Similarly, during our interviews, when young women had finished explaining their daily household activities, we had to explicitly ask them if they also worked on the land. For her, as for other, activities on the land are not a source of pride; they are attached to it by virtue of their labor but do not incorporate it as part of their identity (O'Hara 1998; p. 106). For some it is even a burden, an extra workload. They refer to it as “*unpleasant*”, “*tiring*”, and “*hard*” work. Their social environment reinforces the lack of appreciation for the farm work they do. Though their labor is indispensable they are seldom explicitly rewarded for it in the form of payment.

In Ait Ali, strong gender ideologies work to reinforce rather strict spatial and role segregations between men and women. Domestic activities carried out close to the house are seen as the responsibility of younger women. Until women are married, they fall under the authority and responsibility of their parents. Parents strictly control and police their behavior, generally leaving them little space for self-development (Naamane-Guessous 1988). In this set-up marriage often becomes a way for young women to escape such authority and control of the parents (Ibidem). Marriage is also one of the few ways women are able to climb the social ladder and earn some social recognition and status. The reverse side of the coin is that the rural society shows little tolerance to unmarried women, especially once they have passed the ‘socially desirable’ age of getting married; around 30 for women. During social events frequented by the researcher, women did not miss the chance of reminding her of her marital status, using this to re-affirm and reproduce the socio-cultural norms and values. “*so any news?*”, “*did you get married yet*”, “*No? Meskina*<sup>34</sup>” were common questions and comments. Finally, motherhood and care, together with domestic duties form a strong part of rural gender ideologies, existing both in the family and reinforced by the community.

The daily activities of Samira, as explained above, are difficult to reconcile with her aspirations of getting married associated with her dream of having one house in the city and one in the *douar*. As noted, for Samira marriage would “*bring a new life*”. However the reality is that at the age of 30, Samira is still single. The social pressure to get married is a heavy weight on her shoulders, with people surrounding her beginning to refer to her as “*a lost pearl*”<sup>35</sup>. Samira attempts to deal with these social expectations without letting go of her dreams and ambitions. She does this by strategically navigating gender ideologies to create room of relative independence that allow her to re-negotiate her identity.

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<sup>34</sup> Meskina can be translated as ‘*poor one*’ or ‘*my poor*’.

<sup>35</sup> During one of our interviews with an elderly man, he used ‘*une perle perdue*’ to refer to women who are not married and passed the social cultural age of getting married.



Samira's ingenuity and ambitions clearly showed in the fact that each time we met, she had taken up another activity. For instance, she started attending Quran and literacy courses, held in the school and in the mosque of Ait Ali (see Picture 7). She explained how the classes helped her to further develop her reading and writing skills. However, perhaps more important to Samira, was that the courses provided an occasion to meet other 'respectable' women: *"I met about 15 women, good women, respectable women"*. When we asked her what the courses had brought her she replied: *"I learned how to dress properly. We have to go to the mosque with clean clothes: long dresses, agharas, agharas."*<sup>36</sup> *I learned to respect myself - Kan-h'taram Rassi"*



Picture 7: Samira during Quran classes.

Since starting going to the mosque, Samira had started to wear her headscarf in a different way. Two years before, when we met her the first time whilst she was washing carpets in the village, she was wearing a loose, slightly transparent veil. Her ears, decorated with big shiny silver earrings, were uncovered. Her female peers were wearing

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<sup>36</sup> *Agharas* means in Berber right, correct.

headscarves which hid their ears and consisted of a thicker fabric which revealed little of what was underneath. When walking through the *douar*, we never came across any young women who did not wear the headscarf. Once in the house, or in the garden close to the house, the headscarf would be untied, sometimes removed or loosely worn.<sup>37</sup> When we asked Samira why she had changed the way she was wearing her headscarf, she replied: *“To better respect myself. Since I’m wearing the headscarf like this, I noticed that people in the douar respect me more”*. We noticed that the different way of wearing her headscarf also coincided with an increase in her mobility. To attend her courses at the mosque and at the school she had to walk 10 minutes from her house. The walk involved trespassing ‘public’ space, a space codified as masculine. Changing the style of her headscarf allowed Samira to navigate this space without raising eyebrows or inviting critical comments as the tightly wrapped scarf serve as a private impenetrable bubble, constructing a symbolic private domain. This allows her to walk through the ‘public’ domain without losing her honor or being ridiculed or criticized for being 30 and unmarried (see also Hessini 2000).

When the Quran and literacy courses were suspended, Samira started to work on the land of her uncle, located in the *douar* at 20-minute walk from her house. She requested the permission of her father to do so. As the land belonged to her uncle and, as she would be working together with her cousins under the auspices of her uncle and aunt, this space could still be argued to form an extension of the ‘private’, female sphere. She explained her desire to do this by her reluctance to stay at home; she wanted to meet other people. She recalled that period as pleasant and as a moment of interesting encounters: *“I met other girls from the village with more life experience and while working we discussed about everything. Problems that they face at home with their husband or family-in-law, or with raising up their children. We also talked about sexual issues and how to satisfy your husband”*. She explained how she put her money aside in order to buy perfume or clothes. This was also the time that she started to think about developing her own businesses; a dairy cow business in the village, or a pastry shop in the city.

As the story of Samira illustrates, prevailing gender ideologies that define women's destiny and identity in terms of marriage and limit their roles to that of mothers, carers and domestic housekeepers set the parameters for how young women like Samira envisage their own development. Women like Samira creatively negotiate these parameters in attempts to expand and re-define the spaces within the family and within the community to realize their life project and re-invent their identities (see Figure 5). Samira actively searches for activities and spaces that are socially and culturally acceptable, in attempts to gain life experiences and to develop. These include literacy and Quran courses in the mosque and work as a family member on the land of her uncle in Ait Ali. It is in such spaces that different women meet and exchange, obtain life experiences

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<sup>37</sup> This is also strongly connected to her matrimonial status and life cycle stage.

and construct friendships. Young women like Samira teach each other how to continue being respectable as women whilst also enjoying (at least some of) the pleasures of modern life. In the process, they continuously re-define what womanhood means, carving out new futures for themselves without upsetting existing gender orders.

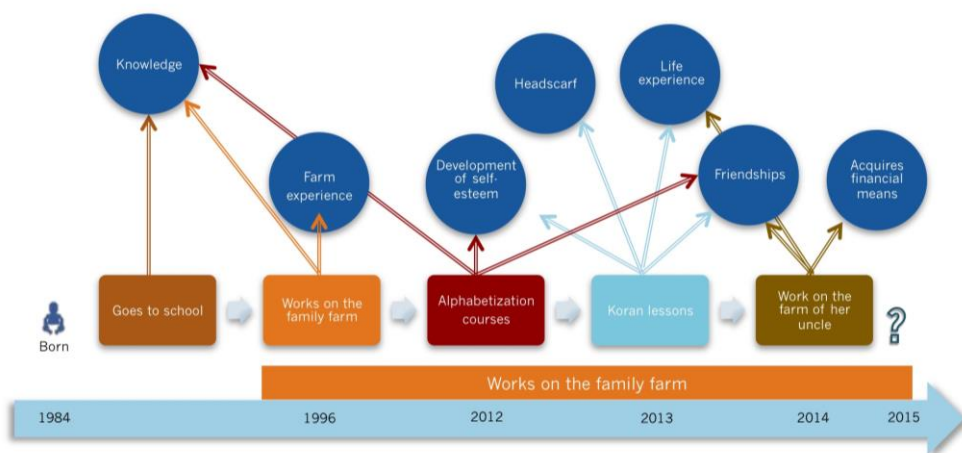


Figure 5: Negotiating space through the mobilization of acquired competences and resources: the case of Samira (Bossenbroek 2016)

### *Mona's Journey for Autonomy and Self-development*

Mona's story forms another illustration of how young rural women negotiate new identities and carve out new futures for themselves whilst remaining within the narrow ideological spaces reserved for them in existing gender orders. Upon her divorce, Mona had no option other than to return to her parental home. Rural society is harsh towards divorced women and even more so if they have a child. Society considers divorced women as single but, as they have lost their virginity, their status is even lower than that of single women (Naamane-Guessous 1988; p. 145). As was the case with Samira, they again fall under the guardianship, control and authority of their parents. What made things even worse for Mona is that she brought along an extra mouth to feed. She thus finds herself back to square one, and a million miles away from her aspirations; *"I wanted to have a respectable life and pursue my studies"*.

Although her situation looks desperate, when listening to how Mona talks about her activities, we found that she has not lost her resilience and ability to dream of a better future. In fact, she is slowly but actively trying to work towards such a future. For instance, she has started to work in Anas' olive tree project. This job will secure some independent income and develop her identity as a single mother who earns money to ensure a better

future for her son by sending him to school. Since Anas is a family member, and because she works with her female neighbors, she is able to construct this work as falling within the still respectable ‘private’ sphere whilst also using it to learn how to navigate a ‘public’ identity. Although her work environment is physically and socially harsh (see Bossenbroek et al. 2014), she explained that as her income contributes to the household expenses, it also strengthens her autonomy and bargaining position in the family. Moreover, she explained how she used to keep a part of her money aside to realize her life-project; migrating with her son to Europe, via Tunisia and Libya, to work and pursue her studies (Picture 8). With money she had thus saved, she had purchased two passports, each of 300 Dirham (c. € 28), and paid 4000 Dirham (c. € 370) for the plane tickets to Tunis. Her cousin had bought new clothes for herself and her son. Finally she paid 50,000 Dirham (c. € 4650) to the human traffickers. She was exhilarated once she arrived in Tunisia: *“I loved Tunisia. I saw the sea and I was another Mona. I wanted to work, get my driving license and pursue my studies”*.



Picture 8: Mona and Adam’s experiences in Tunisia

The left picture features a passport photo of Mona. Under the picture we vaguely can observe a picture of Mona and Adam in the airplane, which she proudly showed us. On the right picture: Adam. He proudly holds a picture in his hand of himself, in according to his mother ‘nice clothes’, whilst in Tunis.

Similar to the story of Samira, Mona is skillfully navigating gendered expectations and ideologies, and tries to soften the negative labels attached to her as a divorced, single mother. Through the work with female neighbors on the project of her cousin, she managed to seize a chance to realize her dream; the prospect of a new future across the

Mediterranean Sea and a different Mona. She sought a Mona who studies and works and this is what kept her hopeful and alive.

### 6.5. Dreams on Hold and Changing Aspirations

To what extent do Driss, Anas, Samira and Mona succeed in their attempts to create the necessary space for their aspirations and dreams, and the new images of the self, within the socio-cultural gender norms, ideologies, and traditions that exist in the *douar*? In the section that follows, we illustrate to what extent these four young people accomplish their efforts to circumvent the webs of hierarchical power relations described in the previous section. Our analysis shows that parents and the community have firm control over the young people, making it very difficult for them to realize their dreams and often forcing them to put their aspirations and dreams on hold.

#### *Driss: "Farming Is the Future but Not in This Place"*

On a cold winter day we received a phone call from Driss: *"I'm in the city and I'm looking for a job, can you help me"*. Shortly after we met him, he had returned to the village because he couldn't find any work. The first thing he said when we asked him what had happened; *"Farming is the future but not in this place"*. He wore jeans covered with earth and mud, a jacket with a hood tightly tied around his head to keep himself warm, and was unshaven with dirty hands. He was plowing the borders of the land with a horse, quite a contrasting image from the tractors that many of his peers use to plow the land. His wish had been to transplant the 9000 tree seedlings, which he had grown on the one hectare of land he had rented from this father, to the rest of the land. However, he had not succeeded convincing his father of his project. Driss was forced to sell the fruit tree seedlings and for which he encountered difficulties identifying buyers. In his efforts to realize his project and affirm himself as an independent fruit tree farmer, he ran up against the will and authority of his father, who owns the land and is the head of the family. Without his consent and resources (land), Driss can do little or nothing. This situation deeply frustrates him: *"I want to go to another region. (...) I'm so fed up with this situation. I only want something of myself, something on which I can rely on. My own project, my own money"*.

Driss does not reject farming as an activity and a way of living but wants to leave to another place to pursue his life-project, far away from the eyes and control of his father, family and the community. After trying to fulfill his own project, he does not want and cannot make a step back and fulfill another internship or work on neighboring farms to *"be reminded again by the owner that you work on his land"* and face his own defeat.

*Anas: "I Wish to Farm One Day Independently From My Father"*

In the case of Anas, there is a growing discrepancy between his aspirations and his day-to-day experiences and activities. He 'succeeded' in his olive tree project, but his wish *"to farm one day independently from my father"* partly reveals some of the difficulties he faces.

His olive tree nursery and concrete poll project are ongoing, but his lettuce project failed. According to Anas *"I was not fully into it, and I was more busy with the tree nursery. My friend did not have sufficient experience"*. Although Anas does not explicitly mention it, it is clear his success also crucially depends upon the approval and support of his grandfather and father. These two men closely monitor his different activities and maintain control over the means of production. For instance, Anas' father decided to take over responsibility for marketing his production when Anas had some difficulties with defaulters. Anas' father displays little confidence in his son and is also reluctant to hand over farm decision-making powers to him. There is also a clear generational difference between Anas and his (grand-) father in what they see as a good farmer. The older generation upholds an old stereotype of rural manhood by defining a successful farmer as someone who is strong, dirty and present in the fields from dust to dawn. That Anas does not conform to this stereotype is a source of dismay to his grandfather: *"He works like a pig and it is worth nothing... They go out strolling, their shirt and pants always clean. They do not want to get their hands dirty"*.

*Samira: "Our Hope Was Carried Away by the River, and We Stay Behind with the Good People"*

Samira took up different activities to redefine herself in a socio-cultural environment that is harsh towards 'old' unmarried women. In the winter of 2015, Samira still dreamed of getting married and living in the city while also having a house in the countryside. After an unsuccessful encounter with a potential bridegroom of 40 who was a manager of a phone company, she explained that she was gradually losing hope. Instead of marrying a wealthy and pleasant man who would take her to the city, she started dreaming of migrating to France, hoping to elicit the help of her brother to arrange a contract for her. During one of the last interviews we had with her she concluded *"Our hope was carried away by the river, and we stay behind with the good people"*.

*Mona: "Now Everything Is Lost..."*

In the case of Mona, once she arrived in Tunisia and paid the human traffickers, she was left standing by the sea. At this point she realized neither she nor her son could swim and became so scared of the boat crossing that she abandoned her plan. She had to pay

another 4000 Dirham (c. 380 euro) for the flight back to Casablanca; *“I worked for five years and sold my golden necklace and wanted to change my life, but now everything is lost”*. Once back, she stopped working and explained that she suffers from nervousness and heart problems: *“It is the bad eye. People say bad things about me”*. Like Samira, she started thinking of leaving to France and was hoping to arrange a working contract or a marriage to achieve this.

After Mona returned to the village, it became even more difficult to navigate the thick social and cultural webs. In addition to being negatively marked and treated as a divorced single mother and a wage laborer, she had become someone who had squandered all her money. For Mona, rural life started to feel like prison. As with Samira, migration had become the only way out - migration to a place far away that would allow her to start anew and become *“like another Mona”*.

## 6.6. Conclusion

In this chapter we focused on the experiences, stories and dreams of rural young people in the Saïss to illustrate how in current agrarian dynamics many aspire to continue working and living in the countryside. The changes that they witness around them broaden the scope of possible livelihood options, inspiring young men and women to dream of better futures and more modern selves. Many young men see new possibilities in farming, whereas young women have the ambition to pursue their studies, to assume an economic role and earn an income in the rural economy.

Through the life-stories of Driss, Anas, Samira and Mona we have demonstrated how socio-cultural gender norms, past experiences and the history of the family in acquiring access to production resources importantly shape aspirations, life-projects and wished for identities. Access to land acquired through particular family histories is particularly important for realizing the new farming projects that Driss and Anas envisage. The availability of (irrigated) land, together with what they learned during their past work experiences, fuels their dreams of new horizons for realizing one’s life-project. Samira and Mona have clearly different options. Their limited access to land, the existing socio-cultural gender norms and the lack of work and educational experience, illustrate how futures and identities in the Saïss are deeply gendered.

Turning to the question how Driss, Anas, Samira and Mona are able to combine a modern life-style with the identities, livelihoods and socio-cultural gender norms existing in the *douar* generates new insights about agrarian change. Their stories and experiences illustrate that realizing their dreams is difficult because of existing family and kinship hierarchies that attribute a lot of power and control to elder men (fathers, grandfathers and uncles) and, to a lesser extent, to elder women. This hierarchical order is partly

anchored in the control and ownership over the resources of production and is actively held in place through strict monitoring of traditions by parents and the wider community. Powers of control also reside in the economic dependence of children on their parents and families and are reinforced by their dependence for their livelihoods and sense of self on their families. The stories of the four young people illustrate how they tactically navigate these hierarchies and dependencies to carve out the space they need to realize their aspirations and life-projects. Many new ideas and plans clearly originate in these young people, who therefore are important actors in the current agrarian dynamics. They are eager to join in, and even co-shape, the agrarian transformations. Driss and Anas have learnt and taken inspiration from surrounding large farm enterprises by identifying new technologies and 'new' crops. They also made skillful use of newly acquired professional acquaintances to partly escape from traditional networks of dependencies. Samira and Mona, in turn, creatively created new spaces for themselves by blurring the boundaries between the private female and the public male domain and by extending meanings of motherhood beyond caring roles. In the process they subtly altered gender identities and re-negotiated dependencies. By incorporating self-development and learning in definitions of good womanhood, they both preserved old ideas but also extended these to allow for new possibilities and identifications.

But in spite of this, however cautiously they navigate, realizing their aspirations clearly does imply modifying existing hierarchical power relations, and thus also entails challenging the gendered socio-cultural identities, values and traditions that help keep them in place. As the stories show, this is not just difficult and sometimes painful, but may also meet with the active objections and resistance of those who represent tradition, routine and the established order; mainly parents and grandparents. Young people want and need to realize their projects without causing too much conflict or provoking damaging disputes as they cannot afford and do not want to upset the relations with their parents and kin. In this process they may become disappointed or discouraged and their dreams may need to be (temporarily) put on hold.

Against the background of structural analysis, showing how globalizing capitalism reconfigures and re-patterns tenure and labor relations to align them to new commodity chains and finance flows to understand the structural forces behind these contemporary transformations, we show how the lived experiences of young people of the current changes is indispensable to understand and theorize agrarian change. Indeed, their strivings show that the countryside is *"a fluid malleable space, one compromising heterogeneous flows and complexities"* (Murdoch and Pratt 1997; p. 63) in which identities are neither exclusive nor static, but (for instance) combine the *fellah* with the *rajal aâmal* or motherhood with some financial autonomy. We would like to end with a plea for more and better recognition of, and support to, the creative ideas and energies of these young people. We contend that the (future) livability and development of the



countryside importantly depends on enabling young people to realize their dreams and ambitions. Current planned efforts to promote agriculture and rural development - which in Morocco for instance happens in the context of The *PMV* and the *Initiative Nationale de Développement Humain* (INDH)<sup>38</sup> - seldom make mention of or consider rural young people. This is a mistake. Without the enthusiasm and creativity of young rural women and men, and without support to help them navigate and negotiate existing power hierarchies the countryside risks becoming the stereotypical site of tradition and stagnation. Although acknowledging the resistance from older 'peasants' to modernity may be part of a long survival strategy, it should nevertheless not suffocate the energies of young people who today find limited support outside of the family. Such support could for instance take the forms of programs to facilitate their access to credit and land, the organization of training courses and workshops or the improvement of educational facilities. Targeted support should clearly distinguish between young men and young women and accommodate differences in wealth and access to land. Rural young men and women are full of energy, ideas, willingness and curiosity, and it is now up to the Moroccan government and policy makers to valorize their spirit and vigor.

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.indh.gov.ma/index.php/en/>

# CHAPTER 7

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## Conclusion and General Discussion

## 7.1. Introduction

The agricultural plain of the Saïss is characterized by rapidly changing rural realities. The Moroccan government frames and promotes the current transformations as modernity and progress for all. The main and most visible protagonists of current changes, at least according to those promoting and celebrating them, are two types of audacious men; ‘entrepreneurs’ and ‘modernizing farmers’. The research results I have presented in the foregoing chapters show that attributing too much powers to these two types of actors in shaping current rural dynamics is misleading; it makes the experiences of rural young people, of female and male wagedworkers, of families who are forced to sell their land and of rural women ‘fall away’, making it seem as if they are marginal or unimportant. Indeed, an important objective of my study has been to show that those who tend to be less visible and audible are important actors in contemporary agrarian dynamics.

The project of the dissertation is built on the premise that the unfolding process of agrarian intensification in the Saïss is not a logical, self-evident and a smooth transition to a higher stage of development and modernity. Rather, I theorize the current changes as a specific form of globalizing capitalist development, which is messy and full of contradictions. By anchoring my study in the experiences of the less visible actors in rural dynamics, I hoped to both acknowledge this messiness and avoid a too structural explanation. Yet, labeling the changes as a form of capitalist development does capture my intention to remain attentive to the larger patterns in the mess, and also indicates my skepticism about the modern promise that all will (eventually) benefit from economic growth. My starting point thus was that agrarian intensification benefits in particular those with the capacity to invest, but is much less beneficial for many others. I hypothesized that the distribution of the benefits and burdens is importantly marked by existing social hierarchies and institutions, of which gender is an all-prevailing one.

This hypothesis is importantly informed by feminist efforts to bring gender into the analysis of agrarian change. Feminist scholars have thought through, and proposed ways of understanding how, processes of change are marked by and interact with gender relations. Drawing on this body of work, the aim of this dissertation consists of a critical analysis of how processes of agrarian change and gender relations are interwoven. I wanted to explore how gender and social difference come to matter in current processes of agrarian change and vice-versa. As noted, my particular contribution to this body of scholarship stems from my emphasis on the experiences that often ‘fall away’ from agrarian analyses; the voices and stories of those actors that seldom figure in formal accounts of change, yet without whom nothing at all would have ever happened. I insisted on placing the messy human encounters that processes of agrarian change provoke and engender at the heart of the analysis. In what follows, the concluding chapter, I make use of and summarize the findings of the previous chapters to further reflect on the intimate

relationships between gender and agrarian change and to develop possible answers to the main question of this dissertation: *“How to understand the differentiated lived experiences, and altering gendered identities and relations as (co-)constitutive with processes of agrarian change?”*

My definition and understanding of gender has importantly shaped the different venues I explored to answer the above question: I consider gender as something unfixed and never definitive. Gender, in my definition, is the result of processes in which identities and relations are continuously contested, redefined and re-interpreted. As Butler suggests, gender is not an intrinsic personality trait, something one *is*, but rather it is something one *does*. This definition of gender as performative allows recognition of gender identities as fragmented, provisional and wrought through the interplay of culture, class, the environment and other fields of power and regulatory frameworks (see also Resurreccion and Elmhirst 2008). The social practices and meanings that constitute gender relations, identities and difference are recursively linked to processes of change, with the two being entwined in a spiral, moving together and constantly (re-)defining each other.

I use this final chapter to reflect on this spiraling relationship. To do so I have organized this chapter in three sections, which are closely interrelated. They follow the sub-questions presented in the first chapter of this dissertation. The first part illustrates how agrarian transformations re-pattern and is shaped by social-material re-configurations, offering or imposing new cultural ways of relating and becoming. The second part discusses how experiences (re-)shape processes of change. It shows how different social subjects actively take up new ways of being and becoming, in the process (re-)shaping how agrarian change unfolds in deeply gendered ways. In the third part, I discuss how current agricultural dynamics are contradictory and paradoxical, and explain how a focus on the messy human encounters that form the heart of agrarian change yields insightful insights about the how's and why's of this change. In the last part of this chapter I outline some of the contributions of this research and draw some lessons for future research and action.

## **7.2. Socio-material Reconfigurations: New Social and Gender Differences that Matter**

Emerging social and gender differences are not a logical or linearly causal result of current agrarian transformations. Instead, they are better understood as the outcome of contestations and competitions over resources, meanings and values. Gender and other social differences form important axes shaping these struggles, not just providing the social discourses and norms through and in which they are articulated, but also co-determining the bargaining position and power of individuals. This research shows how historical, social and cultural meanings in which land and water used to be embedded

change and are today contested, in the process also altering gender identities and social relations. Throughout the different chapters I have illustrated how the current transformations offer new possibilities for being and becoming, but close off old ones. Which possibilities are open to whom is importantly shaped by prevailing social (including wealth or class) and gender hierarchies, with some – wealthy men in particular – being better positioned to actively take up new identities than others. New forms of using and accessing resources and emerging farming practices coalesce into new tenure and labor relations, which in turn (re-)produce but also alter social and gender divisions and differences.

I have illustrated how, during the period of the state cooperative, land-use rights used to epitomize post-colonial collective struggles against the colonial regime and later against the Moroccan state. In the state cooperative, land was embedded in and used through gendered family, kinship, and community relations based on the institutions of inheritance and marriage, with farms and families being deeply intertwined through labor arrangements and how land was used. Conversely, gendered identities and institutions importantly manifested themselves, and became enacted through, how land was used and managed. In a similar vein, water was regarded as a precious resource: for the farmers in the cooperative it symbolized freedom and independence. This manifested itself through their endeavors to access water as well as through particular rituals and irrigation practices.

Today, through the new farming practices, new technologies, the arrival of new ‘farmers’ and the promotion of new farming models, the meanings of land and water are gradually altering. The current policies favor and produce a ‘modern’ development model and new ‘entrepreneurs’. The new farming projects of these new ‘entrepreneurs’ are clearly marked by the fences demarcating the fields; high value crops; deep tube-wells; and drip irrigation. As soon as a plot is bought, new investors start digging new deep-tube wells – which can reach up to 180 – 200 meters. At this depth, water is abundant which means that they can irrigate their entire plot. Former members of the state cooperative perceive the arrival of the new ‘entrepreneurs’ with mistrust, considering them as different and as ‘outsiders’. Younger generations are a bit more positive, as the new way of farming that the *barranis* bring along inspires them.

Indeed, these farming styles and livelihood that new farming projects represent starkly contrast with those of the peasant families living in the state cooperative, who have finally been able to liberate themselves from the state. Some of them have succeeded to pay off their debts and the land fee to become landowners themselves. They mostly engage in mixed cropping patterns and irrigate only 30 to 40% of their land, while a few engage only in rain fed agriculture. They typically have wells of 40 to 80 meters of depth, which can generally only be used part of the day, and irrigate according to the groundwater

availability in the well. For these families farming is a way of live, of making a living. To them, farming –much more than most occupational identities - has a social and cultural significance and goes accompanied with a deep sense of place (see also Pannell and Vanclay 2011). Some of these peasant families - those who have access to groundwater and who have the financial means - do seek to dig deeper tube-wells with the wish to progressively modernize their farm exploitation. They install drip irrigation and are thinking of planting a couple of hectares of high value crops.

Other families (forcefully) sold their land and are now perceived as ‘squanderers’ as they have ‘squandered’ all the money they obtained by selling their land in the city. Some are glad to have started a new life in the city, whereas others have been forced to return to the countryside and sell their labor power to survive.

The different chapters of this dissertation thus illustrate how the current agrarian transformations reconfigure socio-material relations. New ‘entrepreneurs’ and their farming practices, in combination with changing land tenure relations and control over water, are accompanied by new socio-cultural values and meanings. New possibilities of being and becoming (re-)shape social relations in hierarchical ways, resource access and farming practices. As I explained in this dissertation, these transformations are marked by and (re-)produce gender differences. Gender not only becomes an indicator of difference between men and women, but also among men and among women.

In chapter six I explained out how the current farming projects serve as a source of inspiration for various young men as it comes with new possibilities to combine modern ideals of manhood with farming identities. These young men picture their future selves as white-collar clean-shaven entrepreneurs, who operate their drip system from the shade of their office or car. They actively take up new farming activities and proudly perform new young masculine farmer identities on the land of their parents. This, together with the growing number of ‘modern’ farming projects and the new ‘entrepreneurs’, further alters the meaning of farming, which is increasingly becoming a professional masculine domain. The professionalization and masculinization of farming is premised on the growing division between the private family domain associated with women and the public professional domain associated with men. New possibilities for becoming a modern farmer are reserved to some rural young men, while new farming projects also create new opportunities for professional specialization to male laborers. In contrast, for many women it becomes increasingly difficult to negotiate and justify their farming activities and identities. Some women living in the dissolving state cooperative, who obtained their private land title, or whose husband obtained the private land title, seek new forms of identification and social status in the private sphere, as this is where it is easiest to realize emerging ideals of womanhood. These families now hire wage-laborers to work on the land. Especially the middle-aged women are glad to be relieved from the work in the fields

and actively take up the private sphere to shape a new identity of 'active housewife' and fulfill a new *raison d'être*. Or, as a farmwomen once proclaimed, the private sphere is the "engine of the farm" – "I work in the house, cook, wash, raise the children. It is what keeps the farm going". In contrast, young women who see how their male peers actively take up new identities also nurture the desire to somehow professionalize and create their own project. They aspire to dissociate themselves from the 'traditional femininity' of their mothers to become modern in their own way. They don't want to "just sit at home" and actively seek to extend and professionalize their domestic activities. They search and actively create spaces to do so. Some for instance participate in Quran and literacy classes, while others think of developing their personal business.

Processes of masculinization and professionalization of farming in combination with how some women actively take up new 'home' and 'domestic' feminine identities further recast social and gender differences. As explained in chapter five, although female laborers qualify their work as providing them with a possibility to earn an independent income, and meet other women instead of just staying at home, they find little pride in their work. Through the re-articulation of gendered spatial distinctions, their wage work activities tend to be perceived as un-prestigious and even as shameful. They are therefore hesitant to talk about their work and literally try to prevent others from seeing them by covering and hiding their faces in opaque veils. Their experiences stand in stark contrast with those of some young male laborers who often proudly take up new jobs in new farming projects as it positively contributes to their professional and personal identity. Other young male laborers, although working under more precarious situations, may find ways to organize themselves in independent groups and create a professional workers' identity with an important professional network of farmers who rely on their labor force.

### **7.3. Paradoxes and Messy Human Encounters of Agrarian Change**

Processes of agrarian change are not univocal and do not follow a predictable path of change or pre-fixed stages of development. Instead, I illustrate throughout my dissertation how processes of agrarian change are complex and contradictory and are marked by paradoxical experiences and messy human encounters. This messiness and these paradoxical experiences importantly manifest themselves in the tensions between aspirations, dreams, desires, dominant social orders and every day practices. But what do they tell? What do they illustrate?

Chapter four *The Sour Grapes* well illustrates some of the strange contradictions that are today part of agrarian transformations. The particular modern development model that is promoted by the Moroccan government through promotional campaigns, a complex policy system and regulatory strategies have helped create a new type of 'entrepreneur',

whose farming activities are supposed to be 'modern', 'efficient', and 'productive' and who is supposed to contribute to the increase of water productivity. These entrepreneurs are the protagonists of new processes of enclosing water, since their performance as entrepreneurs allows to claim and to secure access to water. There is not one type of entrepreneur, however. There are those who are urban investors, who seek to invest in the countryside in order to be able to avoid tax payment, or who buy land to launder drug money. Other 'entrepreneurs' wish to create a small weekend cottage and farm for their hobby. Yet another group of new 'entrepreneurs' consists of individuals who did not benefit from the land reforms in the 1970s and who migrated instead to France upon the end of the French protectorate. Today, they buy up new land parcels throughout the region and plan to retire in the countryside.

The divergence between the entrepreneurial identity as idealized and promoted by the Moroccan state and the self-perceptions of actually existing new farmers reflect both the power of the modernization discourse and its disruptiveness. At the same time, the myth of the productive entrepreneur justifies the diversion of groundwater away from peasant families who relied on water for sustaining their livelihoods to this new emerging group of modern farmers. This also illustrates that at the heart of the unfolding groundwater enclosure lays an odd paradox. Whereas the *PMV* aims to create competitive entrepreneurs, water is flowing to heavily subsidized investors who all tap into the same aquifer for producing the same products, which consequently become difficult to sell.

I read such divergences as 'cracks' in the process of modernization: the enclosure of groundwater is not closed as it contains instabilities, which provide some space to search for and experiment with alternative development trends that might be less disruptive. When observing the farming practices of the peasant families who stayed, one might actually be able to already witness the unfolding of such alternative development processes. Some peasant families reject the drilling of deeper tube-wells, and refuse to grow fruit trees and grapes. Especially the elder generation of peasant farmers hold onto an image of farming as consisting of mixed-cropping patterns and reconcile themselves to a life and a form of farming in which water is scarce. It is part of who they are, and of what works. In contrast, the younger generations of male farmers slightly envy the new entrepreneurs who settle in their *douar*. Although they would also wish to modernize the family farming project, they also hold on to the same farming values as their parents; "*Farming is what feeds us*", "*it allows us to work, and it is our live*". They see themselves as *fellah* (farmer) and *rajel aâmal* (businessman) at the same time. The practices and beliefs of these young farmers may suggest the emergence of new hybrid forms of entrepreneurial farming, which are less ecologically and socially disruptive and in which perhaps elements of modernity are combined with traditions.



I thus take the existence of these paradoxes and contradictions as demonstrating that the relationship between discourses and social realities is not straightforward. There is not a one-to-one consistency between actual practices and how individuals are discursively positioned as subjects (Brandth 2002). As I discuss in the following section, besides offering room for imagining alternative development paths, such divergences also illustrate how subjects' aspirations and dreams actively co-shape processes of agrarian change.

#### **7.4. Gendered Subjects and Dreams Stirring Processes of Agrarian Change**

The lived experiences of young rural people and female wagedworkers further illustrate how processes of agrarian change offer new opportunities of being and becoming and evoke new aspirations and dreams. These lived experiences and subjectivities also illustrate the co-existence or convergence of several social orders, the co-existence of which produces possibilities for reconfigurations and redeployments (Butler 1990; p. 145). Becoming connected and exposed to other worlds, cultures, and people that are differently gendered, opens up different and new possibilities for being and acting as man and women. The experiences and changing subjectivities that I described in this dissertation indeed often reflect the coming together of different worlds. This does not happen smoothly; it requires adjustment, which is often difficult and carefully negotiated.

As I show in chapter six, many young people are inspired by the current changes. They instill in young men the wish to develop their own farming projects, with fruit trees and perhaps a packing station. Young women aspire to extend and professionalize their household activities for instance by creating a sewing workshop or setting up a dairy cow business. Rather than simply reproducing the more 'traditional' farming identities of their parents, the exposure to new ideas and people inspires in them the wish to farm, and live in the countryside, in their own way and on their own terms. In fulfilling their aspirations, young people are nevertheless confronted to and hampered by the existing socio-cultural gender order and existing social hierarchies. As they cannot afford to upset the relations with their parents and their kin, they need to carefully strategize and maneuver to get what they want. At the margins of the family plot, some young men are able to set up their farm business, equipped with drip irrigation and cultivated with 'modern' crops. As the example of Anas illustrated, they engage in new farming and management practices. Unlike his father and grandfather, Anas rarely performs physical labor in the fields. Anas prefers to supervise the laborers, while in the meantime contacting his clients, or checking on his crops and the drip system. He is, like many young rural men, very mobile and enjoys to go out in the city on weekends. By how he dresses, acts and talks, Anas performs and invents a new type of modern farmer; someone who successfully combines

the attachment to the land of the old *fellah* with the mobility and managerial skills of the new entrepreneur.

In a similar vein, I illustrated how young rural women also actively engage in creating new spaces to fulfill their aspirations. For instance, Mona carefully negotiates her social environment by the way she dresses and by performing the identity of a 'respectable' woman and mother who works to sustain her son. In doing so, she is able create new spaces of social interactions and obtains financial autonomy.

New possibilities of being and becoming are actively taken up by young people and in doing so they also re-enact, re-negotiate and re-perform their gender. They do so by how they act, by the space that they negotiate to fulfill their aspirations, and by taking up new activities. By fulfilling their aspirations and dreams they also actively co-shape the nature and rhythms of agrarian transformations. For example, when young men perform new ways of farming they further contribute to the masculinization and professionalization of the farming sector.

Throughout this dissertation, in particular in chapter five and six, I thus also illustrate how subjects not simply reproduce existing rural gender identities, and follow existing social gendered orders, but instead carefully reinvent them. The experiences of female laborers discussed in chapter five also illustrate how new gender identities are negotiated. The hierarchical labor organizations, in which women find themselves at the lowest strata, in combination with the re-production of socio-cultural gender norms and values, make it difficult for women to combine rural womanhood with wage work activities. To uphold a respectable image of womanhood they cautiously carve out new subjectivities and employ various tactics to re-negotiate socio-cultural gendered orders. In doing this, women subtly re-create socio-cultural repertoires and move boundaries in an effort to expand their room of maneuver and re-imagine what it means to be and behave as a woman. They do this by creating - new mixes of different available rules (bricolage) for conduct and by improvising. In doing so they blend the 'private' and the 'public' domain and become the female breadwinner and the housewife.

These various experiences of young rural people and female laborers picture the countryside as "*a fluid malleable space, one compromising heterogeneous flows of complexities*" (Murdoch and Pratt 1997; p. 63) in which identities are neither exclusive nor static. By reinventing new futures and identities subjects challenge hierarchical power relations and socio-cultural identities, values and traditions. In doing so new socio-cultural repertoires and spaces are formed providing new possibilities for gendered subjects that contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms (Butler 1990).

## 7.5. Reflections, Possible New Contributions and Recommendations

With this research I hope to have provided some modest insights about ways of describing and making sense of processes of agrarian change that acknowledge the centrality of gender relations. One important meta-reflection here is that one's appreciation of how gender matters in processes of agrarian change always depends on one's definition of gender as an organizing principle in society. As I illustrated in my introductory chapter, the work of Maria Mies has inspired me in various ways to think about the interrelationships between gender and agrarian change. She understands the various interlinkages between changes in production and gender as necessarily developing in binaries that are always in opposition to each other. This results in seeing and understanding the world as consisting of powerful dichotomies, such as those between – men/women; breadwinner/housewife; productive/reproductive; work/home; public/private – all of them having strong gender connotations. The various dichotomies presented in her work appear as rather rigid and fixed. It is a way of thinking that is premised upon the existence of the dual oppositions of male and female prior to the analysis. As I have argued and shown in the presentation of my empirical material, I prefer seeing gender differences as socially and historically specific constructions. I show in this dissertation that gendered subjects are continuously formed and reformed, and themselves constitutive of agrarian change. They do not exist prior to changes, but become as part of changes. Agrarian dynamics and gender dynamics are co-constitutive, with gender identities altering and continuously subject to (re-)negotiations and contestations.

Lived experiences have received much attention in my dissertation. They provided further valid evidence to James Scott's statement that only by capturing experiences it becomes possible to understand what agrarian transformations mean to those who constitute it and maintain or supersede it (Scott, 1985; p. 42). Inspired by Ramamurthy's notion of perplexity I have illustrated in this research how experiences, aspirations and desires importantly shape rural dynamics and processes of agrarian change. To stress the importance of taking into consideration experiences in studying processes of rural and agrarian change, I wish to extend the concept of perplexity by using Willem Wertheim's (1977) idea of 'counterpoint'. Wertheim refers to counterpoints as supplements to any dominant social organization, which contain a source of social dynamics and bear in them seeds of change. Counterpoints embody elements of disharmony, of agreements and dissonances with regard to the dominant social-cultural order in place. Counterpoints offer the possibility to think and to appreciate how subjects actively pursue and invent new socio-cultural gender repertoires and alternative futures. The experiences of young rural people as well as the experiences of female waged workers both illustrate how they *reinvent life-conditions* and *propel and shape alternative directions of agrarian change*. As such experiences bear seeds of change, form the heterogeneous pathways of agrarian

change, and provide the possibility to think of alternative futures that might be more sustainable and more equitable in terms of gender.

I have shown the importance of acknowledging experiences in all their complexity, and use the complexity and puzzlement of subjects as the starting point to grapple and unravel the multiple encounters between divergent worlds and social-cultural repertoires. To understand the 'nettle of emerging complexities' (Arce and Long 2000; p. 159) it is important to think beyond dichotomies to appreciate new fusions and confusions. The (re-)production for example of particular 'traditional' gender roles, are not necessarily a simple copy of the past, but may be creative reinventions adopted to changing socio-cultural contexts.

I wish to end this book with suggesting how the findings of my dissertation can inform efforts to make the Moroccan countryside into a more live-able and agreeable place for both old and young, men and women, and for those with less capacity to invest. This is needed, as the development path embarked on by the Moroccan state risks turning out to be ecologically and socially disruptive. As such, listening to and learning from 'alternative' voices and visions may perhaps provide ingredients for more sustainable development paths. Moreover, although many young women picture their future self in the countryside, the lack of options for self-development and the at times suffocating socio-cultural environment, fuels in them desires to leave the countryside. This will have drastic repercussions for its future livability and becoming. Supporting and developing alternative trajectories could take various forms and could be done in different ways.

First, this could be done by advancing a picture that stresses the variety of farmwomen's positions, providing alternatives to the current image of 'the wife who helps her husband', or 'help'. At this moment alternative rural feminine ideals in the Saïss are non-existent. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that besides young women's aspirations to engage in new activities, young rural 'modern' men also develop new ideals of wifeness. Some young men stated for example that their future wife should be "*someone who joins me in developing my farming project*"; or has "*an entrepreneurial spirit and develops her own projects*".

In accordance with women self-image, alternative images could consist of portraying women as women farmers, farmwomen who engage in paid work and develop off-farm activities. Such images could for example be diffused in policy documents, on television, during the important International Agriculture Fair<sup>39</sup> held once a year in Meknes, and on the internet. For instance, on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries a

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<sup>39</sup> SIAM – Salon International de agriculture au Maroc : <http://www.salon-agriculture.ma/>

short video is displayed to announce the agricultural census, which will be conducted this year (2016). It features the following images (Picture 9).



Picture 9: Shots of a peasant family featured in a short video to announce the agricultural census on the website of Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (2014).

In the shots the elderly man in the yellow *djellaba* clearly plays a central role. His central position, in the middle, and in front of the group, as well as his bright colored yellow *djellaba* (in contrast to the more matte colored clothing of the other individuals) inform us about his central role in the group of individuals. He, together with the elderly man wearing a hat, seem to be the main actors and receive the civil servant. Young people (only men!) and women play a secondary role. They figure at the back of the group as well as on the sides. Similar images also feature in various agricultural policy documents. These images could be combined with other images like the following one in which a woman is portrayed who identifies as ‘female farm entrepreneur’ and proudly poses next to her groundwater pump (Picture 10).



Picture 10: A picture of Fatima, who identifies herself as 'female farmer entrepreneur', posing next to her water pump.

Second, extension services and training programs require to be extended. Young men were often well informed about how to obtain subsidies for drip irrigation for example, but often lacked the knowhow to form an association. Also young women, often eager to establish a cooperative or an association did not know how to proceed and found difficulties to obtain information. Moreover, few were the ones who had benefited of training programs, which most of the time target farmers' sons. Moreover, the in the region existing vocational programs often focused on dairy farm activities, for which access to land is required. Training programs have to be carefully rethought, cover a wider range of activities, be inclusive and integrate the specific needs and desires of young rural women. Additionally, educational facilities should be improved. The school dropout, and lack of access to education facilities remains, in particular among young rural women high. Total rates of non-attendance in school in rural areas is 21,5% (age between 15 – 21), of which 14,9 % are men and 26,8 % are women; and 42,2 % (age between 22 – 29 years), of which 23% are men, and 60,3% are women (World Bank Morocco 2012). The improvement of education facilities could consist of better transport services, setting up colleges in the countryside (at this moment they are foremost located in small urban

centers or in the city), and better sanitation facilities.<sup>40</sup> Yet, it remains difficult, in particular for poorer families who rely on their children's' labor force, to avoid school dropout. As also illustrated in this research, in light of impoverished situation of some families, young people are sometimes pushed to quite school to sustain their parents. Third, the current impetus that the agricultural sector is receiving attracts many young engineers working in governmental agencies and consultancy agencies. In various governmental agencies and development projects the gender approach begins to be promoted, which often figures as a condition by the grant giving organizations. In this context gender trainings are organized for staff members and decisions makers. Nevertheless, in such trainings, a gender approach is often reduced to a technical tool to include women. It does usually not address how development programs may (re-)pattern power relations along gender lines, or how structural inequities in terms of access, use and management over resources may be transformed. Moreover, such trainings are often only temporary and practitioners are often skeptical of such gender mainstreaming efforts, seeing them as an imported liberalizing approach that does not match local specific situations.

I would like to suggest providing gender sensitive trainings not only to development practitioners but start already offering gender sensitive courses at engineering schools throughout the country. Courses in social domains are uncommon, and one of the rare 'social' course that is offered is 'rural sociology'. In this course, the complex power relations that mark the countryside are discussed, as well as the role of rural young people, and various development models are critically addressed. Such courses are indispensable in the curricula of engineering schools, and need to be extended with courses on gender and development. Besides providing students with analytical tools to approach complex rural social realities, field trips could be organized, practitioners could be invited to share experiences and discuss the constraints and difficulties that they face to mainstream gender in various development domains. As with regard to professionals, gender trainings should be ongoing, consistently refreshed, be followed up on, and culturally sensitive.

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<sup>40</sup> The lack of toilet facilities, or no separate toilet facilities for boys and girls raises issues for young women. Moreover, mothers would complain that young men peek at their daughters and that they get bothered.

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## Summary

The agricultural plain of the Saïss is characterized by rapidly changing rural realities. The Moroccan government frames and promotes the current transformations as a linear development towards modernity and progress for all. The main and most visible protagonists of current changes, at least according to those promoting and celebrating them, are two types of audacious men; 'entrepreneurs' and 'modernizing farmers'. Attributing too much power to these two types of actors in shaping current dynamics is misleading; it makes the experiences of rural young people, of female and male wagedworkers, of families who are forced to sell their land and of rural women 'fall away', making it seem as if they are marginal or unimportant.

This study aims to unveil Morocco's agricultural modernization plan by illustrating how agrarian processes in the Saïss are not a logical, self-evident or smooth transition to a higher stage of development or modernity. They are a form of globalizing capitalist development which is messy and contradictory, and which is marked by, and re-produces existing gendered social hierarchies. In this dissertation I want to explore how gender and social difference come to matter in current processes of agrarian change and vice-versa. I do so by putting the experiences that often 'fall away' from agrarian analyses at the heart of my analysis: the voices and stories of those subjects that seldom figure in formal accounts of change, yet without whom nothing at all would have happened. In doing so, I explore how agrarian transformations re-arrange and are re-shaped by socio-material reconfigurations that offer or impose new cultural ways of being, relating and identifying. I aim to carefully analyze the emergence of new desires and aspirations, tracing how subjects skillfully navigate through various structures of domination, seeking to fulfill their new becomings.

This dissertation is structured in seven chapters. **Chapter 1** starts by recalling the different messy human encounters of processes of agrarian change. It presents the various theories that have inspired me to rethink current processes of agrarian change and how they are significantly marked by gender differences. I discuss old and new debates of agrarian political economy and illustrate to which extent they are useful to understand how larger processes of agrarian change re-pattern social relations of access, use and control over productive resources. I then elaborate on various feminist scholarly literature to further think about how processes of agrarian change are both marked by, and constitutive of, gender and social differences. My understanding of gender has importantly shaped the different venues I explored to think about the relationship between gender and processes of agrarian change. Throughout this dissertation gender is regarded as something unfixed, never definitive and as performative.

**Chapter 2**, presents my methodology, in which I provide a brief outline of the Morocco's Saïss region and describe the case study, a dissolving state cooperative, on which most of this research is based. I conducted the field research over a period of one year stretching between 2011 and 2013, which various recurring visits of several weeks over 2014 and 2015. I elaborate on the various manifestations of agrarian transformations, which consist of changes in tenure relations, access and control over groundwater, labor organization, and the active presence of female wagedworkers and young people, which formed the building blocks of this dissertation. I conclude this chapter by explaining the various methodological choices and fieldwork processes.

The empirical analysis and findings are presented in the subsequent chapters (3 – 6). In **Chapter 3**, I discuss how the recent wave of land privatization of the former socialist-inspired state cooperatives, initiated by the Moroccan state in 2006, happens in tandem with and through a renegotiation of gender relations and identities. I illustrate how land, farms and families were deeply intertwined and how - due to the current wave of land privatization - this mutually constitutive relationship is gradually eroding, also altering the value of land. Today, farming is increasingly becoming a professional activity and identity, which is premised on a growing division between a private family domain associated with women and a public professional domain associated with men. This offers new ways of being and becoming for young men, but confines women to a new home-bound traditionalism.

In **Chapter 4**, I explore how the current agrarian transformations are accompanied by various enclosures of groundwater. I illustrate how these enclosures are accompanied by, and enacted through, changes in tenure relations and a growing number of land transactions, the use of new technologies, as well as by the modernization discourse that underpins Morocco's agricultural plans. I further explain how groundwater enclosures are enacted by the gradual dissociation of groundwater from its socio-cultural and territorial context; growing social inequities; and violent expropriations. While groundwater is increasingly flowing away from peasant families who relied on water for sustaining their livelihood, water is now flowing to new 'entrepreneurs', who produce 'sour grapes'. I illustrate how at the heart of the enclosure process a strange paradox emerges: whilst the Moroccan state has the ambition to create entrepreneurs, water flows are diverted from family farms to support absentee 'investors' who all produce the same products and face problems selling them.

**Chapter 5** explains how the agricultural boom unfolding in the Saïss is premised on a process of labor hierarchisation. This process is shaped along gender lines, and intersects with technicity, knowledge and wages. Whereas many male workers take up the 'good' jobs, which positively contribute to their personal and professional identity, female wagedworkers find themselves at the lowest strata of the newly emerging labor hierarchy

and take little pride in their work. On top of that, due to existing gender socio-cultural norms and values their work is difficult to combine with 'good' womanhood. A 'misstep' therefore easily sparks off normative and harsh judgments. I illustrate how in such a context, women deploy different strategies to reconcile ideals of womanhood with their everyday experiences of wage work. In doing so, I show how women re-create socio-cultural repertoires and move boundaries in subtle efforts to expand their room of maneuver and re-imagine what it means to be and behave as a woman in the countryside.

Finally, in **Chapter 6** I discuss how rural young men and women are key players in current processes of agrarian change. I illustrate how young people are inspired by the current transformations that they observe around them; these awaken particular aspirations and fuel dreams of new ways of being and becoming. I show how young people skillfully and cautiously create space to realize their aspirations. They carve out new and more modern farming identities, creatively merging rurality with modernity in the process. Yet, gender ideologies and hierarchical power relations hamper the fulfillment of these aspirations and dreams. This forces some to postpone their dreams and find alternative futures, which in turn strongly influences the current as well as the future agrarian transformations.

In the concluding **Chapter 7** I make use and summarize the findings of the dissertation to reflect on the intimate relationship between gender and agrarian change and develop possible answers to the main question of this dissertation. I conclude by stating that one's appreciation of how gender matters in processes of agrarian change always depends on one's definition of gender as an organizing principle in society. Adopting the idea that gender is unfixed and continuously contested, redefined and re-interpreted allowed me to explore how gendered identities and relations do not exist prior to changes, but are continuously becoming as an intrinsic part of these changes. Agrarian dynamics and gender dynamics are thus co-constitutive, with gender identities altering and continuously being subject to (re-)negotiations and contestations. By placing the messy human encounters of processes of agrarian change at the heart of the analysis I have been able to illustrate how gendered experiences, aspirations and dreams form the heterogeneous pathways and rhythms of agrarian change. I suggest that the contradictions and perplexities that characterize this process may bear seeds of change to think of possible alternative futures that might be more sustainable and more equitable in terms of gender relations.



# WASS Training Certificate

## Completed Training and Supervision Plan Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)



Wageningen School  
of Social Sciences

Name of the learning activity	Department/ Institute	Year	ECTS *
<b>Project related competences</b>			
Develop research proposal	WUR	2011	6
Thinking about Technology and Ethics	DRiP workshop, WUR	2012	1
Research and Reorientation of DRiP Topics	DRiP Workshop, WUR	2013	1
Presenting at IWE lunch seminars	WUR	2014	0.5
Drip irrigation in Morocco	DRiP Workshop, Morocco	2014	1
<b>General research related competences</b>			
Introduction course	WASS	2011	1
Basis cursus Arabisch	Radboud University Nijmegen	2011	3
How to make a documentary	CREA – UVA	2013	1
Visit University Abroad	University of Washington Seattle	2014	6
<b>Career related competences/personal development</b>			
Teaching: Gender & Natural Resources	WUR	2011/ 12	4
Scientific Writing	In'to language	2012	1.8
<b>Conferences</b>			
<i>“Le goutte-à-goutte dans la Saïss au Maroc: un nouvel élan pour la jeunesse?”</i>	DAIMA, Cread, Algeria	2012	1
<i>“Gendered Agrarian Change in Morocco”</i>	Gender and Land conference, Utrecht University	2013	1

<i>“Youngsters and Agrarian Dynamics in Rural Morocco: The Appearance of New Collective Practices”</i>	Neoliberal (Re-) Structurings of the Rural in Egypt, Morocco and Turkey, Workshop, Berlin	2013	1
<i>“How land privatization and agrarian change in the Saïss in Morocco produces new gendered social hierarchies along with new gendered subjectivities”</i>	Gendered Global Political Economy of Development, EISA, Warsaw	2013	1
(Re-)Engaging with Agrarian Transformation: The rural, a battlefield of new social hierarchies?	WASS Thematic activity	2013	2
International Workshop on Women’s rights after the arab spring	ISIS centre for women and development, Fez, Morocco	2014	1
<i>“Social reproduction of family framing and farming identities: voices and future aspirations of rural youngsters in the region of the Saïss, Morocco”</i>	Colloque international, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre	2014	0.5
<i>“The white-collar board farmer: drip irrigation as a vector of new rural masculinities in the region of the Saïss in Morocco”</i>	Workshop on Professional Masculinities in Water Management, WUR	2014	0.5
Questioning Social Inequality and Difference in the Arab Region	ACSS – Arab Council for the Social Sciences	2015	1
<i>“Agriculture Familiale et genre dans la Sud de la méditerranée (cas du Maroc)”</i>	Workshop on Agriculture Familiale en Méditerranée : mythes et réalités, FAO Tunis	2014	1
<i>“Broken dreams? The gendered youth experiences of agrarian change in the Saïss, Morocco”</i>	Gender Studies Seminars, WUR	2015	0.5
<b>Total</b>			<b>37.8</b>

\*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load

# Publications and Other Professional Activities

## Published papers

- **Bossenbroek, L.** et F. Ait Mouss (2016) 'Défis des jeunes ouvriers agricoles', *Economia* 27; 35 – 39.
- **Bossenbroek, L.** et Z. Kadiri (2016) 'Quête identitaire des jeunes et avenir du monde rural', *Economia* 27; p. 46 – 50.
- **Bossenbroek, L.**, J.D. van der Ploeg and M. Zwarteveen (2015) 'Broken dreams? Youth experiences of agrarian change in Morocco's Saïss region', *Cahiers Agricultures* 24 (6): 342-348.
- Ftouhi, H., Z. Kadiri, E.H. Abdellaoui, and **L. Bossenbroek** (2015) 'Partir et revenir au village Mobilité non permanente des jeunes ruraux dans la région du Saïss (Maroc)', *Cahiers Agricultures* 24 (6): 372-378.
- **Bossenbroek, L.** and M. Zwarteveen (2015) 'One doesn't sell one's parents: Gendered experiences of land privatization in the Saïss, Morocco' in: C. Archambault and A. Zoomers (Eds.) *Global Trends in Land Tenure Reform: Gender Impacts*, London and New York: Routledge: 152-168.
- **Bossenbroek, L.** and M. Zwarteveen, (2014) 'Irrigation management in the Pamirs in Tajikistan: A man's domain?', *Mountain Research and Development*: 34 (3): 266-275.
- **Bossenbroek, L.**, M. Errahj and N. El Alime (2016) 'Les nouvelles modalités du travail agricole dans le Saïss au Maroc. L'émergence des inégalités identitaires entre l'ouvrier et l'ouvrière ?', In: B. Dupret, Z. Rhani, A. Boutaleb, J-N. Ferrié (Eds.) *Le Maroc au Présent. D'une époque à l'autre, une société en mutation*, Rabat: Edition Centre Jacques-Berque & Fondation du Roi Abdul-Aziz: 365-374.
- Venot, J.P., M. Zwarteveen, M. Kuper, H. Boesveld, **L. Bossenbroek**, S. van der Kooij, J. Wanvoeke, M. Benouniche, M. Errahj, C. de Fraiture, S. Verma (2014) 'Beyond the promises of technology: a review of the discourses and actors who make drip irrigation', *Irrigation and Drainage* 63: 186 – 194.
- Kadiri, Z., and **L. Bossenbroek** (2013) 'Les jeunes ruraux et les dynamiques agraires: Emergence de nouvelles formes d'action collective dans le Moyen Sebou et le Saïss au Maroc', In : M. Kuper, S. Bouarfa, T. Hartani (Eds) *Actes du séminaire sur la gouvernance des eaux souterraines au Maghreb, projet Groundwater Arena*, Biskra, Algérie.

## Submitted papers and chapters

- **Bossenbroek, L.**, M. Zwarteveen and M. Errahj. 'Agrarian change and gendered wage-work in the Saïss, Morocco' (submitted July 2016 to *Gender Place and Culture*).



- Bossenbroek, L. M. Kuper and M. Zwarteveen. 'Sour grapes: Multiple enclosures of ground water in the region of the Saïss in Morocco' In: J.P. Venot, M. Kuper and M. Zwarteveen (Eds.) *Drip Irrigation: Untold Stories of Efficiency, Innovation & Development*. Earthscan (forthcoming 2016).

## Communications

- **Wageningen University (The Netherlands): PE-3C Political Ecologies of Conflict, Capitalism and Contestation, July 2016**  
Presentation title: Multiple groundwater enclosures in Morocco's Saïss region
- **Centre Jacques Berque pour les études en sciences humaines et sociales (Morocco): recontres anthropologiques, April 2016**  
Presentation title: La complexité identitaire des journalières féminines agricoles
- **Groupe de recherché petites paysanneries, Meknès (Morocco): Les (petites) paysanneries et le marché, quels rapports ?, October 2015**  
Presentation title: L'accaparement multiple de l'eau souterraine dans la région du Saïss
- **Wageningen University (The Netherlands): Gender Studies Seminar, June 2015**  
Presentation title: Broken dreams? The gendered youth experiences of agrarian change in the Saïss, Morocco
- **ACSS – Arab Council for the Social Sciences: Questioning social inequality and difference in the Arab Region, March 2015**  
Presentation title: "One doesn't sell one's parents" - Gendered experiences of land privatization in the Saïss, Morocco
- **Wageningen University (The Netherlands): Workshop on Professional Masculinities in Water Management, December 2014**  
Presentation title: The white-collar board farmer: drip irrigation as a vector of new rural masculinities in the region of the Saïss in Morocco
- **Groupe de recherche petites paysanneries, Paris Nanterre (France): Colloque international "Les petites paysanneries dans un contexte mondial incertain", November 2014**  
Presentation title : La paysannerie à travers les aspirations des jeunes ruraux au Maroc
- **FAO Tunis (Tunisia): Workshop on family farming in the Mediterranean region: myth or reality? November 2014**  
Presentation title: Quel est le devenir de la terre et des familles paysannes des cooperatives de la réforme agraire dans la region du Saïss au Maroc
- **Isis Centre For Women and Development, Fez (Morocco): International Workshop on Women's Rights After the Arab Spring, June 2014**

Presentation title: New gendered agricultural labour modalities in the region of the Saïss, Morocco: Bargaining with gender ideologies and changing subjectivities

- **Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Lima (Peru): Workshop Water Battles, November 2013**  
Presentation title: Seeking for water and labour in the Saïss Morocco
- **Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) and Leipzig University, Berlin (Germany): Workshop “Dispossession and Collective Action: Neoliberal (Re-) Structurings of the Rural in Egypt, Morocco and Turkey”, November 2013**  
Presentation title: Youngsters and Agrarian Dynamics in Rural Morocco: The Appearance of New Collective Practices
- **European International Studies Association, Warsaw (Poland): Gendered Political Economy of Development, September 2013**  
Presentation title: How land privatization and agrarian change in the Saïss in Morocco produces new gendered social hierarchies along with new gendered subjectivities
- **Gender and Land conference, Utrecht University, Utrecht (The Netherlands), January 2013**  
Presentation title: Gendered agrarian change in the Saïss Morocco
- **DAIMA: Dynamiques agricoles irriguées au Maghreb, Institut National Agronomique, Alger (Algeria), November 2012**  
Presentation title : Le goutte-à-goutte dans le SAÏSS au Maroc: un nouvel élan pour la jeunesse?
- **Wageningen School of Social Sciences, Wageningen (The Netherlands), October 2012**  
Poster presentation : Gender, Irrigation and Agrarian Change: two case studies in Peru and Morocco.

## Teaching activities

University of Wageningen (The Netherlands), 2010 – 2016

- Teaching MSc. course together with Margreet Zwarteveen named: Gender and Natural Resources
- Organization and coordination of the excursion of the Bachelor program land and water management

École de Gouvernance et d'Économie de Rabat (EGE) – Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (Morocco), 2014 – 2016

- Teaching MSc. course: Gender and Natural Resources and Rural Gender Studies
- Teaching Bachelor courses: Rural development
- Teaching MSc. Course: Research Methodologies in the Social Sciences

#### NIMAR Rabat (Morocco)

- Guest lecture in the minor course in social sciences presentation title: Broken dreams? Youth experiences of agrarian change in Morocco's Saïss region', January 2016
- Guest lecture in the minor course in social sciences presentation title: Gender and Islam: the case of rural youngsters in the region of the Saïss in Morocco, October 2014
- Guest lecture in the summer course "From Tradition to Modernity" presentation title: Coping with transition in daily life: the story of 4 rural youngsters in the Saïss, Morocco, September 2014
- Guest lecture in the Minor Program "Social Studies in Morocco", on research methodologies, November 2012

#### *Guest lectures*

#### Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, Rabat (Morocco)

- Guest lecture MSc study program rural development on gender and development, May 2016

#### Universtiy Hassan II Ain Chock

- Guest lecture MSc study program gender and development on youth gendered experiences of agrarian change in the Saïss, Morocco, April 2016

#### IHP programme - Climate Change: The Politics of Food, Water, and Energy, Rabat (Morocco) – October 201

- Presentation title: Broken dreams? The gendered youth experiences of agrarian change in the Saïss, Morocco

#### L'Ecole Nationale d'Agriculture, Meknès (Morocco)

- Guest lecture on agrarian dynamics and youngsters in the region of the Saïss, March 2014
- Guest lecture on group dynamics in rural Morocco, June 2013

#### UNESCO – IHE Delft (The Netherlands)

- Guest lecture MSc study program on every day politics on water and gendered water interactions, December 2012

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