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Broken dreams?

Youth experiences of agrarian change in Morocco's Saïss region

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Abstract

Important social and agrarian changes are taking place on the agricultural plain of the Saïss in Morocco. Rural young men and women are key players in this process. In this article, 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 these are intimately linked to agrarian transformation; 2) demonstrate how futures and identities are deeply gendered; and 3) provide nuance to structural analyses of agrarian change with ethnographic accounts of how changes are perceived by the people experiencing them. Our analysis shows how young people skillfully and cautiously negotiate space to realize their aspirations. In doing so they carve out new and more modern farming identities and are able to combine rurality with modernity. Nevertheless, they are situated in web of power relations hampering the fulfillment of their aspirations and dreams. This forces some to put their dreams on hold and find alternative futures, a result that will strongly influence and determine the future of the countryside.

Key words: agrarian change; aspirations; gender; rural youth.

Subjects: farming systems; economy and rural development.

Résumé

Rêves brisés?

Les jeunes et les changements agraires dans la région du Saïss au Maroc

La plaine du Saïss au Maroc connaît des transformations agraires et sociales importantes. Les jeunes ruraux sont des acteurs primordiaux de ces changements. Dans cet article, nous nous appuyons sur les expériences, aspirations et rêves des jeunes ruraux du Saïss pour décrire et analyser les changements agraires actuels afin 1) d'illustrer comment ces changements agraires sont intimement liés aux expériences, aspirations et rêves des jeunes ; 2) de démontrer que les nouvelles identités et avenir sont marqués par des relations de genre ; et 3) de compléter les analyses structurelles des changements agraires au moyen de récits ethnographiques illustrant les transformations vécues par les jeunes ruraux. Notre analyse montre que les jeunes négocient habilement et prudemment des marges de manœuvre pour réaliser leurs rêves. Ainsi, ils se forment progressivement de nouvelles identités plus modernes et sont capables de conjuguer ruralité et modernité. Cependant, les jeunes sont aussi confrontés à un environnement socio-culturel où les rapports de force restreignent la réalisation de leurs aspirations et de leurs rêves, ce qui oblige certains à explorer d'autres futurs ; ce qui, en retour, influencera le devenir des zones rurales.

Mots clés : aspirations ; changements agraires ; genre ; jeunesse rurale.

Thèmes : systèmes agraires ; économie et développement rural.

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Upon visiting the Saïss in Morocco, the dynamism and energy of young people cannot fail to attract attention. They can be seen working on the land, operating drip irrigation systems, baking bread or washing carpets in irrigation canals. Their enthusiasm stands in stark contrast to most writings on rural youth, which associate their aspirations for a modern future with loss of interest in farming, and a desire to migrate to cities (Gidarakou, 1999; Leavy and Smith, 2010). Instead, young people in the Saïss believe that a different, more decent and enjoyable future than that of their parents is possible in the countryside, that modernity is compatible with rurality.

In this article we use our discussions with and observations of rural young men and women in the Saïss to:

- illustrate how agrarian transformations are closely linked to their experiences, aspirations and dreams;
- demonstrate how rural futures and identities are deeply gendered;
- provide nuance to more structural analyses of agrarian change with detailed ethnographic accounts of how changes are experienced.

We argue that only by capturing the experiences of those who live these changes does it become possible to understand what agrarian transformations mean to “those who constitute it and maintain or supersede it” (Scott, 1985). Our specific attention to young people stems from the realization that rural futures depend strongly on their aspirations. As long ago as 1969, Pascon and Bentahar pleaded for more attention to young people in planning and understanding agrarian change processes. Although agrarian futures depend on the willingness and ability of young people to take on careers in farming (White, 2012), the literature on agrarian change generally does not consider them as important actors. Only a few authors (Pascon and Bentahar, 1969; Gidarakou, 1999; White, 2012) explicitly reflect on rural young people, often to identify their lack of rural ambitions as a threat to the future of farming and food security.

Method

The field research for this study was conducted in the village of Aït Ali. We

selected Aït Ali because of the dissolution then underway of a state cooperative, situated in a part of the village; which further triggered rural and agrarian dynamics (land sales, the settlement of new types of farmers and of new farming projects). The fieldwork consisted of recurring visits stretching from May 2012 through February 2015. We relied on a mix of qualitative methods: 38 in-depth interviews (20 young men and 18 young women), collective interviews, group discussions and life histories. Interviewees were selected by peer- and self-identification. When interviewing young people we asked them to put us in contact with other young people and asked them if they identified as being young. To verify and contextualize the experiences and life histories we also interviewed parents, grandparents and siblings. Finally, we participated in different activities (weddings, visiting family members) to experience the daily events in context, bridge cultural differences and build a relationship of trust with the interviewees. The material was analyzed through a process of coding. The interpretations were corroborated in conversations with some of the young people interviewed.

The plain of the Saïss and its current agrarian dynamics

The village of Aït Ali is situated on the plain of the Saïss, which has a total area of 220,000 hectares of which 49,677 are irrigated (Ministry of Agriculture, 2012). Agriculture is the main activity in the region with a rich heterogeneity of farming styles. Over the last century the region has seen much agrarian transformations. The last three decades have been particularly turbulent because of a combination of liberalization policies, the increased use of groundwater and resulting changes in cropping patterns, integration into new markets, and the use of new technologies. Additionally, the privatization of the land of the state cooperatives in 2006 and other land policies, along with the *Plan Maroc Vert* of 2008 (to promote the

modernization of agriculture) further fueled the current dynamics. This has forced some people to sell their land and attracted investors and new types of farmers to the area. What clearly distinguishes the new farms from existing ones is that they are enclosed with fences, planted with monoculture high value crops (grapes and fruit trees) and equipped with deep tube-wells and drip irrigation systems.

Young people, agrarian change and emerging aspirations

Young people in general deplore the land sales arising from financial distress and are critical of the reduction of land available for grazing caused by the fences enclosing new properties. Yet many positively appreciate the (potential) new economic and livelihood opportunities that new investors create, including different options for employment. To many young men, the new farmer-entrepreneurs serve as role models, demonstrating new and different ways of doing agriculture and being a farmer. They also serve as a reference when they articulate their dreams of, for example, becoming an organic farmer or starting a fruit tree firm. Young women likewise cherish dreams of becoming modern. Yet their role models are the female characters of the popular Turkish and Egyptian television soap series, or their female *Quran* and literacy teachers. Like these modern women, they aspire to earn their own incomes by professionalizing and extending the household activities that they currently engage in. Besides their wish to pursue their education, they dream for instance of establishing a bakery, or a dairy cow business to sell the milk. Yet such businesses are rare in the region. Others dream instead of marrying a wealthy man, someone who lives in the city and has a second house in the village, or who is educated and has a good job.

In what follows, we use some in-depth case studies to trace where their aspirations and dreams come from and to explore whether and how they can be achieved.

Untangling aspirations: drafting desirable futures and new self-images

The different aspirations and dreams of young people can be considered as 'life-projects': drafts of a desired future (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998). Below we present four different life-projects that are representative of the experiences and aspirations of young people experiencing agrarian change in the Saïss. These life-stories illustrate how strongly they are marked and shaped by gender, family histories, access to resources and past experiences.

Driss: “I plan to create a fruit tree firm”

Driss, a young man of 29, sees 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 differs considerably from his current situation; he farms with his brothers on his father's land and under his authority. They cultivate three hectares of irrigated onions and potatoes, and the remaining ten hectares are cropped with rainfed cereals.

Driss's aspirations largely grew out of the different internships and practical training that he completed after quitting school at the age of 15. He did these internships on “farms which are at the forefront of progress with regard to drip irrigation”. By acquiring new skills and knowledge and becoming acquainted with new technologies, Driss collected the ingredients for imagining his life-project, which was also shaped by the particular history of Driss's family. In 1992, Driss's father obtained a plot of 13 hectares when the region's state cooperatives were restructured. Since the land privatization, land prices have increased. This makes it impossible for Driss to buy or rent land, since many farmers who used to rent out their land now prefer to sell it. At the same time, his father's land has become a much more valuable possession. This further fueled Driss's aspirations.

Anas: “I want to build a packing station and a cooling plant”

The story of Anas, a young man aged 26, similarly illustrates how past experiences and family history shape the formation of aspirations and life-projects. Like Driss, Anas did a variety of practical training programs and internships in large farm enterprises in the region. Exposure to the newest innovations inspired him to start developing his own project.

The fact that he has access to land, obtained and controlled by the previous generation, further nourished his aspirations. His grandfather, once a laborer under the French protectorate and later working in France, bought 45 hectares of land with the money earned during this period. Today he manages the farm business together with his four sons and Anas, who is his oldest grandson. The farm combines animal husbandry with several hectares of wheat and vegetables. All major farm decisions are taken by Anas's father, a civil servant, and grandfather.

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

Samira: “I want to get married and have two houses: one in the city and one in the village”

Samira, a young woman aged 30, is eager to establish her own household and to live independently from her parents. The first time we asked about her dreams she replied with a twinkle in her eyes: “I want to get married and have two houses: one in the city and one in the village”. During our subsequent meetings, marriage was a recurring topic reflecting Samira's preoccupation. For Samira, marriage represents: “a house”, “stability, independence”, and “a way to get children who can take care of me when I'm old”. 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 distances herself from her mother's professional farming identity and aspires to a different future for herself: “She is in charge of the cows and the garden. But I don't want to be like my mother, there is too much work.” As it is, Samira often helps on two hectares of land owned by her father, as she is the only child still living at home.

Mona: “I want to have a respectable life and pursue my education”

Mona, aged 28, works as a female laborer on the project of her cousin, Anas (see above). She dreams of living in the city and quitting her job as a laborer. She is divorced and lives with her five-year-old son, Adam, her parents and two brothers (both workers) in a shelter built on a piece of state-owned land. Like Samira, Mona hopes to escape from the fate of her parents, to have a respectable life, upgrade her social status and resume her education. Mona's 70-year old father used to be a laborer on the farms of colonists during the French protectorate. After the French left, his attempt to obtain land in one of the state cooperatives was unsuccessful, and he continued to work as a laborer, with his wife. They have six children, three still living with them.

The life-projects of Samira and Mona contrast with those of Anas and Driss and illustrate how futures and identities in the Saïss are shaped by gendered labor divisions rooted in rural gender ideologies. Farming remains a masculine occupational identity and women's work is often restricted to the household and to husbandry. Moreover, both their families' lack of access to land and their failure to complete their education further shape their life-projects and options.

Negotiating space: developing strategies to achieve one's aspirations

By following these and other young people for almost three years, we

came to understand how they have to deal with various forms of oppression consisting of gender ideologies, patriarchal kinship relations, sociocultural norms and tradition, all of which structure rural life in important ways. Moreover, young people are strongly dependent on family and community relations for their livelihoods and for a sense of who they are (Pascon and Bentahar, 1969). Pursuing their aspirations is difficult, as it requires modifying these relationships, thereby challenging the identities, values and traditions that help keep them in place. This necessarily meets with resistance, especially because many of them depend on their parents for access to land and cannot afford and do not want to upset relations with their parents and kin. Hence, to realize their projects, they need to cautiously maneuver and re-negotiate existing sociocultural and political spaces and re-invent identities in ways that do not provoke damaging disputes.

Driss on the way of becoming a fruit tree farmer

During our interviews, Driss often complained about how he always had to comply with his father's wishes and authority: *"If my father says that we have to cultivate four hectares of onions, I cannot refuse or contradict*

him." The way Driss refers to his father resembles that of many other young male farmers and both highlights the dominance of the father in farm decision making processes and illustrates patriarchal power struggles. These are further manifested and justified in prevailing gender ideologies, which portray the father as the breadwinner, and in the organization of land control, ownership and inheritance. According to the law, daughters inherit one third and sons two thirds of the parental wealth. However, customary practices often deprive women of their rights.

Driss's aspiration to create a fruit tree farm entails a break with farming as currently practiced. To gain support for his project, Driss used a variety of elements to gain his father's approval (figure 1). During his various internships he came home each weekend to help his father: *"These moments were occasions to share and discuss what I had observed and learned on these farms."* Whilst assisting his father on the farm, he demonstrated his ability and experience in an attempt to convince his father of his technical skills and to acquaint him with new developments. He also put aside the money he earned to save for his own project. In 2009, he succeeded in convincing his father to install drip irrigation on the land. One year later, Driss explained to

his father how he expected to achieve his farm project, and presented an overview of the costs and benefits. Though not fully convinced, his father agreed to rent out one hectare of land to his son: *"I rented one hectare from my father and also paid him for the water to irrigate the tree seedlings. I received 9,000 seedlings for free from acquaintances whom I had met during my internships. With the money that I had saved I was able to hire some laborers."* His professional acquaintances also provided him with old drip irrigation lines, which he installed to irrigate his seedlings.

Anas between *fellah* (farmer) and *rajel amal* (businessman)

Anas's story provides another illustration of how young people actively negotiate their room for maneuver. Like Driss, Anas acquired the knowhow for his project while doing different internships. During this period, Anas became friends with one of the farm managers. They decided to start an association to develop an olive tree nursery project. To convince his grandfather, father and uncles of this project, Anas developed a business plan; *"I convinced them little by little. First my father, [who is the oldest] and later I convinced the group. Not everyone was persuaded. To obtain my uncle's*

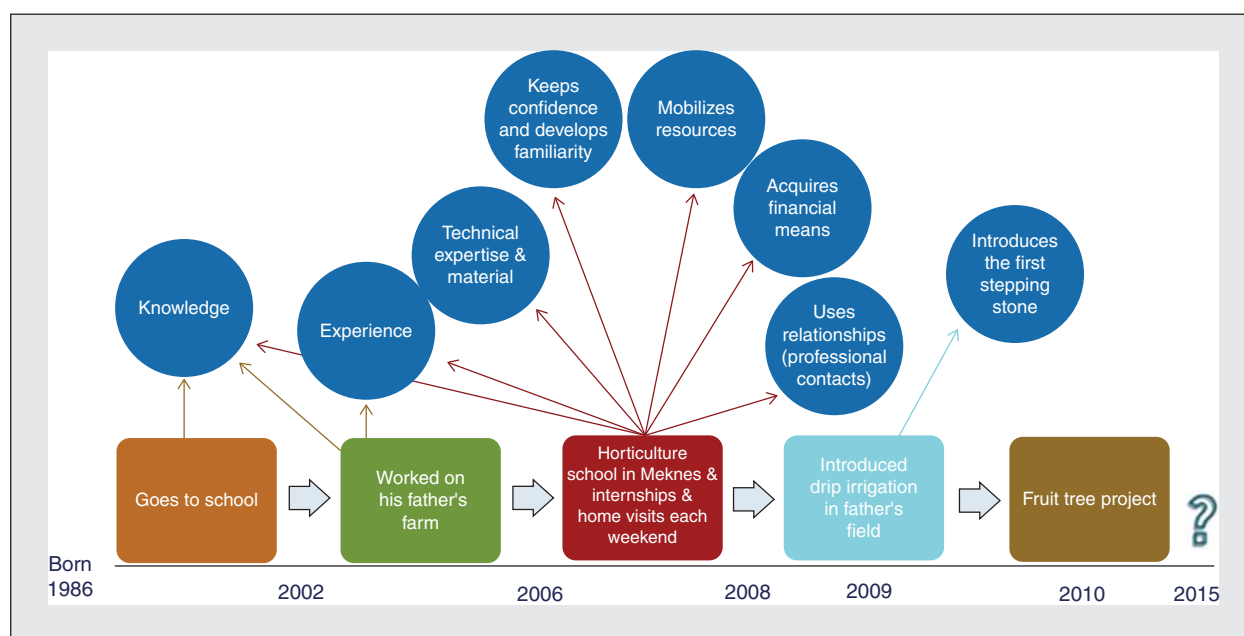


Figure 1. Negotiating space through the mobilization of acquired competences and resources: Driss.

Figure 1. Négocier de l'espace grâce à la mobilisation des compétences et des ressources acquises: Driss.

confidence 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 seedlings from his contacts acquired during his internship. Anas's father financed the project, while his associate was in charge of the marketing. After two years, Anas decided to start up his own business. Today, his trees are irrigated with sprinkler and drip irrigation and a hormone mix is applied to their roots to increase their growth and strength. In 2013, with a cousin, Anas started with his most recent project, the construction of the cement poles that new investors use to fence their lands: "Those who come to me for young trees usually want to set up a farm and are interested in buying cement poles." Anas's different projects are a clear sign of his entrepreneurial spirit. His family's resources, and the fact that he is the oldest son, help. However, Anas also needs to spend energy and time convincing his uncles by mobilizing past experiences and investing in a professional network. His technological innovations play an important role by conferring an aura of technical sophistication on his projects. Through his projects, Anas simultaneously identifies as a *fellah* and a *rajel amal*, combining tradition with modern means. He proudly admits his strong connections to farming by acknowledging his family ties: "I took farming as my profession. My great grandfather was *fellah* and he lived 100 years. Farming is my way of life. We all work in it, it feeds us." However he also emphasized that what he is doing is new and different: "With time, it develops, and more machines and technologies are used". Unlike his father, grandfather and uncles, Anas rarely performs physical labor in the fields. Although his grandfather also relied on wage laborers with whom he worked on the land, Anas prefers to supervise the laborers, while in the meantime contacting his clients, or checking on his crops and the drip system. Moreover, Anas often drives around in his car to manage his businesses. On weekends, he wears a fashionable leather jacket and sometimes goes out with his friend to have a coffee in the city. By how he dresses, acts and talks, Anas performs the role of 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.

Samira creating space to become a respectable woman

When looking at the daily farm experiences of Samira and Mona, routines of everyday life overshadow their aspirations. Samira, like some of the other young women we talked to, refers to her work in the fields as "*help*", as "*doing everything*", or as "*replacing my brother when he is not there*". Samira does not label her activities as farm work. For her, as for the others, 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 (see also O'Hara, 1998). Rural gender ideologies reinforce spatial segregations between men and women and prescribe motherhood and care, together with domestic duties, as forming the core of adult female identities. Until women are married, they fall under the authority and responsibility of their parents, who police their behavior, often leaving little space for self-development. In this environment, marriage becomes a way for young women to escape parental control (Naamane-Guessous, 1988). It is also one of the few ways women are able to climb the social ladder. The reverse side of the coin is that rural society shows little tolerance for unmarried women, especially once they passed the socially desirable age for getting married, which is around 30. Samira's daily activities are difficult to reconcile with her aspirations of marrying and having one house in the city and one in the village. The harsh reality is that, at the age of 30, Samira is still single. The social pressure to get married weighs heavily on her; some people around her refer to her as "*a lost pearl*". Samira attempts to deal with these social expectations without letting go of her dreams by navigating gender ideologies to create spaces of relative independence. For instance, she started attending *Quran* and literacy courses, held in the mosque in Ait Ali. This helped her to develop her reading and writing skills, but also provided an occasion to meet

other 'respectable women': "*I learned how to dress properly. We have to go to the mosque with clean clothes: long dresses worn correctly. I learned to respect myself.*"

The first time we met Samira, whilst she was washing carpets in the village, she was wearing a loose, slightly transparent veil revealing her ears. Her female peers wore headscarves, which hid their ears and consisted of a thicker fabric which revealed little of what was underneath. After attending the *Quran* classes, Samira started to wear her headscarf in a different way. She explained that this was "*to better respect myself. Since I've been wearing the headscarf like this, I noticed that people in Ait Ali respect me more.*" The different way of wearing her headscarf also coincided with an increase in her mobility. To attend her courses at the mosque she had to walk ten minutes from her house, trespassing a 'public' space codified as masculine. Changing the style of her headscarf allowed her to navigate this space without raising eyebrows or inviting critical comments; it constructed a private impenetrable bubble, a symbolic private domain. This allowed her to walk through the 'public' domain without losing her honor or being ridiculed for being 30 and unmarried.

When the *Quran* and literacy courses were suspended, Samira started to work on her uncle's land, a 20-minute walk from her house. As she would be working with her cousins under the authority of her uncle and aunt, this space could be argued to form an extension of the 'private', female sphere. She explained her reluctance to stay at home and her desire to meet other people: "*I met other girls from the village with more life experience and while working we discussed everything; problems that they face at home with their husband or in-laws, or with raising their children, and about sexual issues and how to satisfy your husband.*" She used her money to buy perfume or clothes and started to think about developing businesses: a dairy project in the village, or a pastry shop in the city. As Samira's story illustrates, prevailing gendered ideologies set the parameters for how young women envisage their own development. It is within such parameters that young women like Samira search for ways and spaces to

gain life experiences that are socially and culturally acceptable (figure 2). In meeting with other women, they teach others how to continue being respectable as women while also enjoying (at least some of) the pleasures of modern life. In the process, they slightly re-define what womanhood means, carving out new futures and identities for themselves without upsetting existing gender orders.

Mona's journey for autonomy and self-development

Mona's story forms another illustration of how young rural women negotiate new identities. After her divorce, Mona was forced to return to her parental home. Moroccan rural society is harsh towards divorced women, considering them as single. If they have a child and thus have lost their virginity their status is even lower than that of single women (Naamane-Guessous, 1988). They once again fall under the guardianship and control of their parents. What made things even worse for Mona was that she brought along an extra mouth to feed. She found herself back in square one and very far from her project of having a respectable life and pursuing her education.

Although her situation looked desperate, Mona did not lose her resilience. To gain some independent income, she started working in Anas's project. This also allowed her to develop an identity as a single mother, someone who earns money to secure 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 see this work as falling within the respectable 'private' sphere whilst also using it to negotiate a 'public' identity. Because her income contributes to the household expenses, it strengthens her autonomy and bargaining position in the family. Moreover, she saved part of her income to migrate with her son to Europe, via Tunisia and Libya, to work and continue her education. She bought two passports, two plane tickets to Tunis and paid 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 continue my education."*

Like Samira, Mona navigates gendered expectations and ideologies, and tries to moderate the negative labels attached to her as a divorced single mother. Yet she also dreamed of a future elsewhere to escape the harsh and restricting social order of the village. The prospect of a new future

across the Mediterranean and of a different Mona – one who studies and works – is what gave her hope and kept her alive.

Putting dreams on hold and changing aspirations

To what extent have Driss, Anas, Samira and Mona succeeded in creating the necessary space for their aspirations and dreams, within the socio-cultural gender norms, ideologies, and traditions that exist in the village? Will these four young people manage to circumvent the webs of hierarchical power struggles in which they are caught?

Driss had hoped to transplant the 9,000 tree seedlings, which he had grown on the one hectare of land that he rented from his father, to the rest of the land. He was not, however, able to convince his father of this and was forced to sell the seedlings. He had thus run up against the will and authority of his father. Without his consent and resources, 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 just*

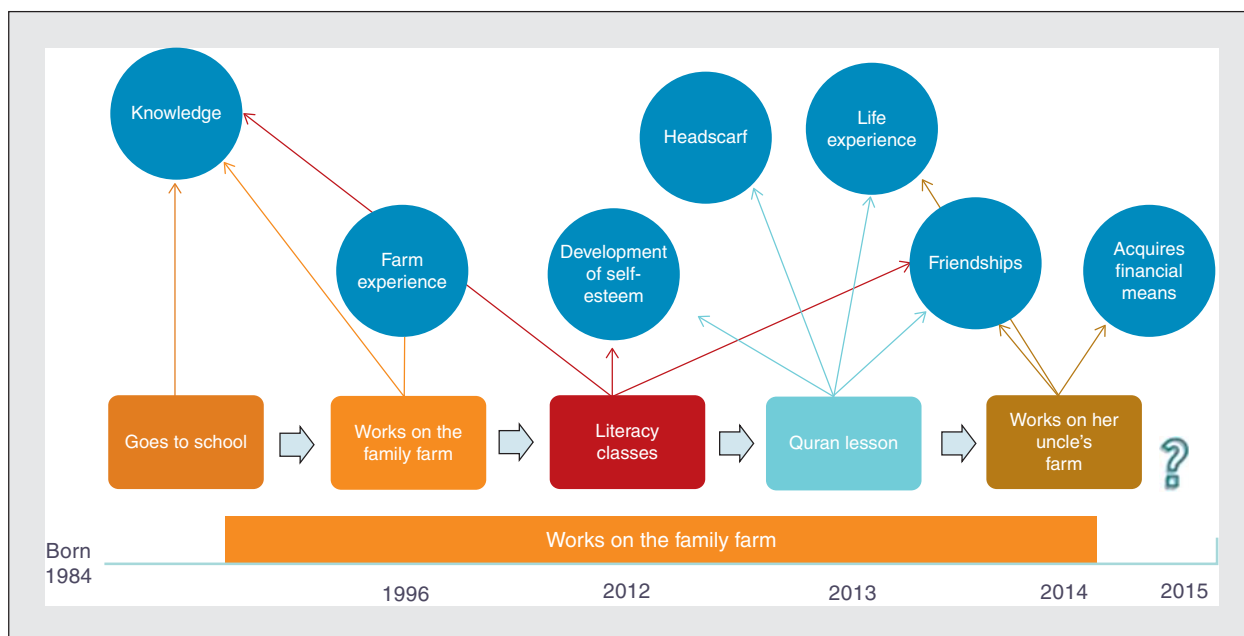


Figure 2. Negotiating space through the mobilization of acquired competences and resources: Samira.

Figure 2. Négocier de l'espace grâce à la mobilisation des compétences et des ressources acquises: Samira.

want something for myself, something I can rely on. My own project, my own money.” Driss doesn’t reject farming, but wants to go elsewhere to pursue his life-project, far away from the eyes and the control of his father and family and the community.

Anas’s projects are ongoing but his wish “to farm one day independently from my father” reveals the difficulties he faces. His ‘success’ depends upon the approval and support of his grandfather and father. They monitor his different activities and maintain control over the means of production. For instance, Anas’s father decided to take over responsibility for marketing the produce when Anas had some problems with defaulters. Anas’s father shows little confidence in his son and is also reluctant to hand over farm decision-making powers to him. There is also a generational difference in how Anas and his father or grandfather define being a good farmer. For the older generation rural manhood is defined as strength, hard work and getting dirty. That Anas does not conform to this stereotype is a source of dismay to his grandfather: “They go out strolling, their shirt and pants always clean. They don’t want to get their hands dirty.”

Samira took up different activities to redefine herself in a sociocultural 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, but was gradually losing hope. She instead started dreaming of migrating to France, hoping to elicit her brother’s help to arrange a contract for her. During one of the last interviews we had with her she concluded: “Our hope was washed away by the river, and we stay behind with the good people [her parents].”

In the case of Mona, once she arrived in Tunisia and was standing by the sea, she realized that neither she nor her son could swim. She became so scared of the (illegal) boat crossing that she abandoned her plan and instead bought two tickets to fly back to Casablanca. “I worked for five years and sold my gold necklace and wanted to change my life, but now everything is lost.” Once back, she stopped working and explained that she suffered from nervousness and heart problems: “It’s

the evil eye. People say bad things about me.” Like Samira, she started thinking of escaping to France and was hoping to arrange a work contract or a marriage to achieve this.

As Mona’s example illustrates, when she returned to the village it became even more difficult to navigate the thick social and cultural webs. In addition to being negatively marked out 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 “another Mona”.

Conclusion

Our analysis shows that many young people in the Saïss are inspired by the current rural dynamics that fuel their dreams of better futures through creative combinations of modern and rural life, by blending, for example, the identity of the farmer with that of businessman or motherhood with some financial autonomy. But it is not easy to fulfill these dreams. It entails modifying patriarchal family and kinship hierarchies and challenging the gender ideologies that help keep these in place. In the process of bending the rules and challenging power, young people may become disappointed or discouraged, and some give up altogether. Young women especially experience constraints that hamper the fulfillment of their aspirations and dreams.

Our analysis suggests that the (future) livability of the countryside may depend on enabling young people to fulfill their dreams. We therefore end with a plea for better recognition and support for their ideas and ambitions. Without the enthusiasm and creativity of young rural women and men, and without support to help them negotiate existing power hierarchies, the countryside risks becoming a stereotypical site of tradition and stagnation. Support could for instance take the form of programs to facilitate their access to loans and land, training courses, workshops or the improvement of educational facilities with a minimum quota

of young women. It should distinguish between the various interests of young men and young women, and accommodate differences in wealth and access to land. Rural young people are full of energy, ideas, willingness and curiosity, and it is now up to the Moroccan government and policy makers to acknowledge and promote their spirit and enthusiasm. ■

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