

“Unequal Times: Rural Berber Households in the Global Economy”
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This paper examines the social and economic dynamics that underpin migration from a High Atlas community. Rural Moroccan Berbers have long been involved in both internal and international migration, but here I focus on a village where migration has increased dramatically due to the installation of a new road and expanding social networks that villagers use to find jobs outside of the mountains. Using family histories, interviews, and census data collected over the past eight years, I will suggest how and why households send members out of the village for wage labor, why some migrants remain attached to their rural households and others choose to strike out on their own. Finally, I discuss the impact of these diverse dynamics on the fabric of the rural community.

Key to this analysis is the contention that High Atlas communities are constituted through *households*. Until recently these High Atlas households exchanged labor with other villagers over the span of generations, primarily within the conceptual framework of lineage relatedness. Now, however, with expanding opportunities for wage labor outside the mountains, and improved infrastructure that facilitates access to these opportunities, some households are choosing to utilize their surplus labor in ways that benefit the household directly and immediately. At the household level this increases the power of patriarchs (who control the wage labor of their children), but over time it can also allow children to access wage labor on their own behalf, and thus escape the patriarchal household. For patriarchs, then, sending children for wage labor is playing with fire: sometimes it pays off handsomely, especially in the short term, but it also sabotages the very basis of the patriarchal order by removing the able young from intra-village labor exchange.

At the communal level we see that households with “surplus” labor (especially surplus male labor) are no longer contributing it to relatives at vulnerable points in the domestic cycle. This decreases the salience of lineage ties, as well as the ability of the village to accomplish communal tasks, and this in turn undermines the power of the older men who control village affairs. Young migrants who return to the village with exogenous resources further erode the power of older, non-migrant men. In sum, I will argue that migration solidifies and even amplifies patriarchal power in the short term, while in a longer view we see that patriarchal power, and the village order it controls, is undermined.

This paper concerns a single small village in the mountains south of Marrakech, Tadrar, an idiosyncratic place in some ways, but in others representative of widespread dynamics in rural Morocco. My focus will be the most important contemporary interchange between Tadrar and the broader political and social world: migration for wage labor. The ability to access wage paying jobs in the plains and cities is becoming a crucial means by which the community of Tadrar is constituted. While the mountains have long been integrated into the larger political and

economic landscape, contemporary forms of integration are arguably unprecedented in both form and scale. In the mountains production (and reproduction) remain organized by households, and so this paper concentrates on the local dynamics of household organization and how these articulate with the wage labor economy.

At the outset it is important to note that Tadrar is not a blank canvas, a laboratory for the arrival of capitalism on virgin territory. Even if local production remains mostly for local consumption, and even if the main way labor is organized is still through households and lineages rather than contracted wage labor, Tadrar has long been in contact with the outside world. In other work I have noted interactions from the 12th century to the 19th, and on this basis we can say that the village as it exists today has come into being along with the larger state and global economy. There may now be relatively little a capitalist would want in these high, rugged mountains, but in the middle of the 20th century, for instance, Europeans identified valuable lumber and mineral resources in the mountains -- and set about its removal and sale. Today the mines are closed and the hillsides deforested. This unfortunate situation has nevertheless allowed villagers to again be left more or less alone for the latter part of the 20th century. This brief example is meant to illustrate that Tadrar and the capitalist economy of the plains have been mutually constituted, exist as the same point in history, and have come into their present relationship after cycles of contact and retrenchment. This long term engagement does not mean that Tadrar's economy, culture, or social order is identical to anything outside the mountains.

Tadrar remains substantively distinct from the city. Here I agree with Jonathon Friedman that "The fact that people occupying a particular place and living and constructing a particular world are in their entirety integrated into a larger system of relationships does not contradict the fact that they make their world where they are and with the people that are part of their local lives" (2002:31). Social entities can exist "within" or "in relation to" larger entities or processes without being subsumed to them. The current scholarly emphasis on globalization can obscure local distinctiveness, and can cause us to overvalue large processes and ignore the particularities of local engagement with them. After all, "most people in the world --if we are speaking in absolute numbers-- do still live in what they see as recognizable communities, believe themselves to be individuals, and think of their values and way of life as relatively coherent" (Moore 1999:16). In Tadrar, local distinction has been notably resilient over a very long period (which is to say it has been doggedly reproduced over a very long period) despite a diversity of types and intensities of exchanges with the world beyond the valley.

The issue today is that people in Tadrar appear to be *choosing* to participate in the capitalist economy --and in record numbers-- suggesting a very different dynamic than simple domination or resistance. Villagers in Tadrar do not appear like James Scott's peasants, with Capitalist landlords taking over the land. Instead, villagers leave the village to come to the city, and not at gunpoint. Villagers have some agency, to use the current term, but this is obviously circumscribed and conceptualized in terms that are themselves limiting.

My argument will be that different villagers in Tadrar are using the potential of the larger economy at cross purposes --some to escape the rural patriarchal order, some to evade particular restrictions of that order, but with an eye to returning to it, and some to solidify their positions in, and the reconstitution of, the traditional village. The upshot of using the capitalist system for various and contradictory purposes, some of which seem thoroughly traditional, may yet be the destruction of the village political economy. Time will tell. For now I will focus on how the

people in Tadrar extract money from the larger economy, and what this might portend for the organization and survival of smallholder agriculture in the High Atlas.

Significantly for this argument, and any theory about villagers' "own" purposes in seeking wage labor, life in Tadrar is organized through households. It is not possible to understand the decisions villagers make without reference to the social organization of the households in which they live, without contending with the dynamics of authority within them, and without accounting for villagers' deep faith in the importance of family, the emotionally charged ties through which households are formed and by which they are linked together. It is not possible to greet anyone in Tadrar without asking them about the health and well being of their family, and they never greeted me after any absence at all without inquiring into the status of a whole string of my relatives that I have to admit I rarely think of at all. People in Tadrar were more concerned about my family than I am, in other words, and this says something about the importance they ascribe to their own family networks.

We should not confuse households and families, however. Households are *economic* units –the people who pool their labor and share in its rewards, the primary units of production and reproduction. Still, household-based production in Tadrar is wed to a deeply resonant ideology of the importance of family. Men serve their fathers until the death of the patriarch; women serve their own households until marriage, when they move to work for their mothers-in-law. The faith that this makes sense, that children should provide for parents rather than the other way around, is what allows the household economy to operate. There is a rich anthropological literature on the household, but somehow this social unit has never received due emphasis in Morocco, where it is all-important.¹

For the purposes of analyzing migration from Tadrar, I divide it into two main categories: "en masse" and "articulated." En masse migration is when an entire functioning household (or *takat*, pl. *tikatin*) leaves the village. Between 1999 and 2004 three households --more than 10% of the total households in Tadrar-- abandoned the village for the city. This does not include the many inchoate households that left --newly independent *tikatin* produced when a patriarch and his wife die and heirs divide the family property. These wholesale departures are one way that the village serves as a demographic pump, producing bodies that flow out of the mountains and provide the (very cheap) labor that supports the larger Moroccan economy. These bodies flow in organized social units, however, in households.

The other form of migration I discuss are "articulated" households, where majority of the members remain based in the village and send some members out to work for wages, usually for relatively short periods of time. Sometimes called "circular migration," the important factor here is that the wages of the migrant are claimed by the household, not the migrant herself or himself. Remittances are picked up by the patriarch, in other words, not voluntarily remitted by the migrant. The articulation of households with the larger economy is, I argue, the primary engine of social change in the mountains. Below I outline some of the relative conditions of the different households I will discuss, and the larger lineage politics in which they are embedded. I then detail the conditions of three "en masse" migrations and three households that remain "articulated." After the specific cases I forward some broader conclusions.

To understand the migrations of households we need digress momentarily to the topic of lineages. Lineages are not corporate units in Tadrar, by which I mean they do not tend to

assemble for agricultural tasks or act as a political unit. Still, *ideas* of lineage relatedness are used to form communal labor groups (Combs-Schilling 1985; Crawford 2001, 2003, forthcoming), and because property devolution closely follows patrilineal relatedness, lineages are useful for understanding relative wealth. The following examples all involve a single lineage, the Ait Ben Ouchen. All Ait Ben Ouchen are descended from a single man, Mohammed, who was the local *amghar*, or political authority, under the Goundafi *caid* three generations ago. Mohammed had four sons who survived long enough to produce heirs, and these four sons represent the four contemporary branches of the contemporary Ait Ben Ouchen.

The first son was Ouahman, who inherited some of his father's political capital, but not enough to retain the job of *amghar*. Ouahman did go with the Goundafi *caid* on the pilgrimage to Mecca, however, and thus his descendents are now called the Ait l'Haj. The Ait l'Haj have been the most fecund of the Ait Ben Ouchen sublineages, which at some point probably meant considerable political clout within the village. Now, however, the large number of Ait l'Haj means that they are on a per capita basis amongst the poorest people in the village; they have split their share of the Ben Ouchen land the most ways. The Ait l'Haj were the most powerful lineage in the village only three generations ago, but this has changed dramatically over this short time.

The second son was Bil Qas. There is only one surviving male member of the Bil Qas sublineage today, but he has two sisters who have been unusually successful at claiming their prescribed portion of their ancestor's inheritance. Still, Mohammed Ben Salah, the last Bil Qas household in the Tadrar, is clearly amongst the wealthiest men in the village. He controls approximately the same amount of land as seven Ait l'Haj households combined. The Ait l'Haj and the Ait Bil Qas are often lumped together for village labor schemes since one has an abundance of land and the other an abundance of labor.

The third and fourth sons are Hussein and Ali. The Ait Hussein and Ait Ali are also grouped together for many communal labor tasks, but do not cooperate easily. The Ait Ali have done much better over time than their cousins. Partly this is because Ali was the son of the original Ouchen's fourth and final wife, the only one who survived him. Thus, the mother of Ali received an eighth of the family property before the four sons got their share. When Ali's mother died, he inherited her eighth of the total Ben Ouchen stake. Also, the Ait Ali have managed to arrange fortuitous marriages, bringing propertied women from other lineages to their households. Since the head of the household nominally controls all of the household property, this too has allowed them to do much better than their Ait Hussein counterparts. This comparative wealth is matched by fortuitous demographics: The Ait Ali have more sons than the Ait Hussein, sons that their property allows them to support when they are small, and thus to send out for wage labor when they are older. The overall point is that a general lineage "fairness" much remarked in the tribal literature is compromised by significant differences in wealth and labor. Neither households within lineages, nor sublineages of larger lineage groups are "equal" in anything other than a formal political sense. This is important to bear in mind when trying to understand the conditions that give rise to migration.

En Masse Departures #1: Mohammed "Azoomzoom" Ait l'Haj's Household

Mohammed Ait l'Haj is a kind man, smart, engaging, and, as near as I can tell, well trusted. He is also unlucky. From my calculations he is amongst the poorest landowners in the village. His wife is from a village in another valley, and brought no land with her to the

marriage, and there have been multiple boys in each generation of Mohammed's patrilineage since the original Ouchen. Mohammed ranks 18th (of 26) in the village in terms of the number of fields he owns, but is dead last in the all-important category of total irrigation time. His father Omar is still alive, but many years ago Omar had an accident that left him unable to speak (*azoomzoom* means "mute," so "Mohammed Azoomzoom" is "Mohammed son of the mute"). Omar has for a long time been both mentally and physically disabled, and his son Mohammed and his wife take care of Omar and their own seven children. If they had more land, these seven children would be a useful labor force. Without land, it is difficult to find ways to put them to work in the mountains.

One solution has been to send the older boys to the city. One left for Essaouira around the time I first arrived in the village in 1998. He tried to make a living working in cafes, while another tried to find agricultural work in the Sous Valley. One of them was eventually imprisoned for allegedly stealing clothes from another worker, and he came home after his sentence was served. Mohammed himself also took jobs such as *amshardo*, guardian of the walnut and almond harvest in the village, less to protect his own crop than to acquire the small wage that came with it. In 1999 Mohammed and his wife Fatima had two babies below school age, one beginning to go to the mosque to learn his prayers, and two more who were still not full-fledged workers. As these five dependents grew into workers, there was no work for them to do; the children thus grew burdensome rather than useful for a family with few fields. They needed work. Inevitably, perhaps, by 2004 Mohammed and his family left their house and settled in a village on the plain outside of Taroudant. From there they can more easily access the shifting opportunities available on the big, wage-paying farms of the valley.

This is a classic case that reveals the "push" out of the mountains and the "pull" of wage labor. Young men and women lead, searching out wage labor opportunities and making contacts, and eventually the rest of family follows. In terms of the impact on Tadarar, Mohammed did not sell his meager lands. Instead, he kept the trees for himself and sharecropped the land. He can do this because his trees are planted amongst the fields, and whoever irrigates the fields will necessarily water the trees. All Mohammed needs to do is return at harvest time to collect his walnuts and almonds, and then return again to get his portion of the barley from his fields. Mohammed is thus simultaneously an absentee owner of trees in Tadarar, a partner in sharecropped land, and an employee on the big capitalist farms on the plains.² Wage labor, sharecropping, and smallholder agriculture are productively combined by departing villagers suggesting that the transformation of rural life is not a singular, unidirectional phenomenon.

En Masse Departures #2: Hussein Ait l'Haj's Household

Hussein's case is somewhat different. Although Hussein Ait l'Haj was about my age, his late 30s at the time I lived in the village in 1998-99, his father remains alive and so the only way Hussein could start his own household was by moving to the city to work. He chose an unusual destination: Sidi Kacem, in the north of the country near Fes. Evidently he chose this because his brother, who had abandoned his father's household much earlier, had contacts there. Hussein's brother was considered to be a bit disreputable, and was rumored to have been in prison for selling drugs. This brother seems to have broken with his father long ago. While I only met him once, I found this long lost brother engaging enough; his only local indiscretion was smoking cigarettes in the village. The old men, especially the pious ones, do not like this.

Hussein married a woman from Tadrar, Yemna, who remained in the village as the couple produced three children in a row, all of whom were still small in 1999. Despite the new, well-appointed house that Hussein built for his family, Yemna spent most of her time in her natal family's house –with her mother Aisha, and her brothers' wives Fatime and Kiltoum. I spent much of my time with the Lukstaf family also, and so I saw Yemna quite often. I saw Hussein only occasionally, in late summer when he would return to the village to help his father with harvesting, and during brief periods at other times of the year when he came to spend precious moments with his wife and babies.

Hussein is smart, ambitious, and much worldlier than most villagers. He asked pointed questions about methods of illegal migration to Spain or moving legally to the United States, about the economic conditions in Belgium and France, and the linguistic skills needed to labor in these places. Hussein was one of the few people to ask directly what I planned to do with the profits of my “book” (my Ph.D. dissertation), how it was likely to benefit him or Tadrar. Hussein had a grasp of a wider range of religious concepts than most villagers, too, pointing out to me that the traditional village dances were, according to “correct” Islam, shameful. Presumably for him “correct” Islam is the strident type available on sermons for sale on cassettes in the city .

By 2002 Hussein found work in Marrakech and moved his family there, abandoning his village house to swarms of mice and slow disintegration. (I know because I attempted to rent it in the summer of 2004.) The move to Marrakech isolated Yemna from her natal household, and the various sorts of reciprocity and mutual aid available through her mother, sisters in-law, and nieces. However, in Marrakech Yemna joins a growing Lukstaf community. Two Lukstaf sisters had already married there, and from 2002 to 2004 Yemna's unmarried younger brothers Mohammed and Omar both came to live with these sisters for periods of time. The role of women in their lineages articulation with the city is the topic of another article (Crawford forthcoming).

I do not know if Hussein will bring his family back to Tadrar upon the death of his father, or return one or more of his boys to take care of his land. His social world seems to have far more to do with his wife's patrilineal Lukstaf relatives than his own Ait l'Haj lineage. If Hussein does return upon the death of his father, it will be with much, tough-won knowledge about how the larger world works. Hussein's departure removes a capable political actor from village affairs, as well as labor from his father's household and the Ait l'Haj lineage; Hussein's possible return as a household head would inject a new sort of perspective into the village council, new religious ideas, fresh understandings of proper relations with the state, as well as new sorts of linguistic capacities.

En Masse Departures #3: Hassan Ait l'Haj's Household

The situations of Mohammed and Hussein represent two of the standard forms of migration: poor families with too little land to sustain their growing members, in the first instance, and in the second the situation of sons who strike out alone and labor in the city to support a rural household, eventually bringing their household to the city. Both of these dynamics extend the range of the village community, in the first case by maintaining property in Tadrar along with an urban wage-labor household, in the second through expanding the network of kin that village households use to access the city.

Hassan's story complicates this picture of poor men being driven from the village to take their households to the city. To start, he is not especially poor. Hassan is ranked 10th in terms of total fields, 15th in terms of irrigation time. While this hardly puts him in position to be a political powerhouse, neither is he amongst those who receive *l'ashour* charity, people who benefit from the communal generosity prescribed by the Qur'an. Hassan is the paternal uncle of Hussein discussed above, the only brother of Hussein's father. The Ait l'Haj are in ideal terms amongst the poorest lineages in the village, as noted above. They have had more children, especially male children, and thus over the past three generations have divided their land into smaller pieces than other, less blessed families. Empirically, however, by my calculations Hassan is approximately "middle class" for Tadrar. It is the unusual way Hassan got to be middle class that makes his departure revealing.

Hassan was a grown man by 1999, married to his second wife. His first wife was Khadija Ait Bil Qas, one of the daughters of the original four Ouchen boys, and one of the only sisters in her generation to receive her Islamically just portion of her inheritance. Hassan was Khadija's second husband; she originally married a patrilineal parallel cousin—one of her father's brothers' sons. In this case it was her uncle Ouahman (the Haj) Ben Ouchen's son Hejmi. The marriage of Khadija (Ait Bil Qas) and Hejmi (Ait l'Haj) thus linked two of the four Ben Ouchen sublineages. They had a daughter named Fatima who married to the new center of power in the Agoundis, the village of Tijrisht where the *amghar* lives.

When Hejmi died, Khadija married Hassan, bringing to her new household the portion of the Ait Bil Qas land she got from her father, as well as the Ait l'Haj lands of her late husband Hejmi Ait l'Haj. Hassan, her new husband, is himself Ait l'Haj, but at this point he had inherited no land, as his father was still alive. In fact, Hassan's father is Khadija's late husband Hejmi's brother. Young Hassan married his aunt. While not seen as specifically forbidden (or *haram*) in local understandings of Islamic propriety, this evidently did not please Hassan's father, and the boy was disinherited from what would have been his Ait l'Haj patrimony. If this hurt his relations with his lineal kin, it seems to have benefited Hassan economically, especially as Khadija died and left her new husband the lands of Hassan's late patrilineal uncle in addition to her own (more significant) Bil Qas land. Thus Hassan got his share of Ait l'Haj land—but through his uncle rather than his father—and he picked up a significant portion of Ait Bil Qas land. In interviews some villagers considered him to be "really" Ait Bil Qas because that's where the bulk of his land came from. Most of his irrigation cooperation was undertaken with the one remaining Ait Bil Qas household (as the inherited lands are often contiguous), thus it is the Ait Bil Qas and not his native Ait l'Haj lineage with which Hassan mostly cooperated.

It does not seem like this cooperation went very well, though I could get little direct information because I did not tend to press questions that seemed to make people uncomfortable. What I know is that by 1999 Hassan—Ait l'Haj or Ait Bil Qas depending on who you ask—had remarried again to Zaina, a woman from a neighboring valley; they had two small sons together. Zaina brought with her a daughter from a previous marriage and by 2002 they added yet another daughter to the family. With one younger girl and three very young children, by 2004 Zaina and Hassan chose to move to the city, presumably sharecropping their mountain land with the one remaining Ait Bil Qas household.

Hassan's story illustrates several things, not least the mutability of households in time, and the limits of accepting the "ideal type" of lineage relatedness as political or economic reality. Hassan seems to have built himself a better position than some of his other Ait l'Haj lineage mates through a fortuitous marriage he arranged himself, apparently in defiance of his father.

However, if the difficulty of getting people to discuss the matter counts as evidence, Hassan seems to have isolated himself, first from his father and then from his extended lineage. In Tadrar the means of exercising one's ambition are limited; these limits can be material (lack of productive property) but also social (lack of cooperation). While Hassan acquired property, the process of acquiring it cost him respect, or social capital. It takes both luck and political skill to prosper in Tadrar in ways that are acceptable to village mores. The absence left by the departure of Hassan's household, and the possibilities it might engender for other villagers, are as enigmatic as the means by which Hassan first made himself a life in Tadrar.

There is far more to the story of migration in Tadrar than households lacking the land or social resources to make their lives farming. Migration from *within* households is also significant, perhaps more so to the future constitution of the village social order. Departing households free up land for others to use, often in a sharecropping arrangement, but sending migrants from within households both removes labor from the general pool (for projects like canal maintenance) and injects money into some privileged households. In my 2007 census there were 19 migrants, or absent household members, among the 203 people counted as villagers. Ten percent of "the village" is not in the village at all. These migrants came from 11 of the 29 households, which means that more than a third of all households had at least one member working outside the village for wages, and some had as many as three. This is the main way village households are becoming integrated with the wage labor economy, and it is this process which is transforming how households interact and cooperate within the village. I call these "articulated" households after Enrique Meyer (2002).

Articulated Households #1: The Daughters of Mohammed Omar Ait Hussein

Mohammed Omar Ait Hussein has established an independent household in Tadrar despite the fact that his father is still alive by sending his daughters to work in the city --he has only one young son-- and by working periodically in the city himself. Mohammed's oldest daughter, Fatime, works in Casablanca as a domestic servant, and previously worked in Agadir. The next oldest, Naima, remains in the village to assist her mother with the younger children in the household. The third oldest daughter, Mina, worked in Marrakech as a maid as of 1999, and her younger sister Fatima began working in Marrakech in 2002. I discuss the phenomenon of girls' migration in more depth elsewhere (forthcoming).

It was very difficult for me as a male and an outsider to interview these or any other daughters. The fact that I was single during the bulk of my research, and understood to be wealthy, made me a frequent object of marriage proposals, and made interviews with unmarried women awkward. Compounding the difficulty further is the sensitive nature of sending young girls to the city. It is widely known that conditions for young rural girls working in the cities can be quite awful.³ In the best of circumstances they girls very hard, very long hours; in the worst situations they suffer physical and sexual abuse, isolation, and are in some cases no better off than slaves. The problem is recognized in Morocco, but there is little agreement over what to do about it. Village life is very difficult, too, and many village girls actually want to move to the city despite the hardships and danger. Most girls I spoke to wanted to move through marriage

rather than for wage labor, and they wanted to move where they have relatives, but young women realistically appraise rural and urban life, and neither option is rosy.

Whatever they want, girls migrating for work in the homes of urban families are not making their own independent contracts. It is not the case of “choosing” the wage labor economy, of entering into an exchange that (like any exchange in classical economics) benefits both parties. Girls are *sent* to work; whether they desire that work is immaterial, and even the question of desire is complicated by the valuation of household needs over one’s individual wants. Girls have no control over the wages produced by their labor; wages are repatriated to the rural patriarchal household.

This does *not* mean that these girls hate their fathers for sending them away or that they resent having to support their natal households. They may, of course, and some surely do. They would be unlikely to tell me (as an older, exotic male), but in casual conversations while they were visiting the village it seemed perfectly reasonable to most girls that they should be supporting their households. Most wished to be married and work for their own households, of course, and most definitely wished to have their own children, but serving their fathers and by extension their households seemed to make much cultural sense. I do not know of any cases of sexual abuse, but the normally grueling conditions of urban labor did not shock the girls for the simple reason that rural conditions are no easier. There are horror stories of life for girls in the city, but to put them into context we need to understand the rural world the girls themselves use as a basis of comparison.⁴

Articulated Households #2: The Daughters of Mohammed Ben Salah Ait Bil Qas

The culturally valued fidelity to a household does not prevent girls from breaking away. Young women do not typically pursue independence like young men, however, by heading off to work to make money to establish a household. Instead, girls seek to arrange marriages, to link themselves to a male wage laborer and thereby establish a household where they can raise children of their own; young women seek to accomplish this with the help of other (usually female) relatives in the city.

The case of Mohammed Ben Salah’s household is illustrative. Mohammed has one of the largest families in the village—nine girls and five boys in my 1999 census—because he has more land than almost anyone. As the sole heir of the Bil Qas quarter of the Ait Ben Ouchen lands, Mohammed ben Salah is, on paper at least, one of the wealthiest men in the village. He is ranked second in the village in irrigation time, behind only Abdurrahman Ait Ali, who we will meet next.

Ben Salah has not been blessed with Abdurrahman’s demographics, however. Ben Salah’s five oldest children are all girls, and cannot be legitimately used for male agricultural work. While it is a good household in which to be a woman (i.e. there are many women to share the labor), it is hard for Mohammed to find a way to put his girls to work in the village context, even with a surfeit of agricultural land. By 1999 Mohammed had sent three of the girls to work in the city, Fatima to Casablanca, Kebira and Zahra to Marrakech. All of their wages were returned to their rural household.

However, by 2004 all three sisters were married in the city, depriving their natal households of income even as they extended its social resources out in space. Ben Salah thus sent another daughter to the city to work, Zaina, and sent his oldest son to study in the city, living with his oldest sister and her new husband in Marrakech. Mohammed Ben Salah is thus

depriving himself of his only male agricultural laborer in order to better prepare this son –and the rest of the household-- for the future. Five of Ben Salah’s children now live in Marrakech, forming a kind of urban network of rural offspring, and providing some support for one another.

Articulated Households #3: The Sons of Abdurrahman Ait Ali

Abdurrahman is in his own words “a little big” in the village of Tadrar. Abdurrahman’s political trajectory is related to having land, manipulating his fortunate position in the lineage based labor allocation system, and using development contacts and other state based resources for his own benefit. The wages remitted by his sons have allowed Abdurrahman to leverage these preexisting advantages. Not everyone has the excess labor to send migrants out, and it is the synthesis of his different forms of luck, acuity, and action that have allowed Abdurrahman to prosper by using urban wages for rural political and economic gains.

Abdurrahman’s oldest son Mohammed was sent first, many years ago. He did not do well in the city, had a hard time learning Arabic, but eventually found some work moving around the countryside helping to build rural schools. His brother Lahcen migrated next, working on a dairy farm near the Middle Atlas town of Demnat. By 2002 Mohammed had returned to the village, but Abdurrahman had found Lahcen work in relatively nearby Marrakech. In 2006 Lahcen worked in a commercial bakery. Hussein, Lahcen’s next younger brother, also worked in Marrakech by 2006. Hussein was rarely able to return to the village, though Lahcen’s boss has been more flexible and allowed him to spend some time in his natal household with his new wife, Zahra. All of the money ever made by these boys was handled by Abdurrahman, who paid the boys’ rent in the city, left them an allowance for food, and collected their paychecks.

While Abdurrahman had two daughters also, they both married long ago. To replace the female labor lost to marriages, Abdurrahman found wives for his sons Mohammed and Lahcen. Mohammed had never seen his wife Fatime before they were married; Lahcen did know Zahra, as she is from Tadrar also. Because their husbands had no independent means of support, both Fatime and Zahra came to work for Khadija, Abdurrahman’s wife. Both were ultimately dependent on Abdurrahman for all their needs, from food to clothing to the question of if and when they could visit their relatives. Fatime accepted this stoically; Zahra emphatically did not.

In summer of 2004 Zahra made it clear that she planned to leave for the city. Lahcen was visiting his family while I was there and I asked him whether he preferred the city or the country. Speaking with a friend of his father, but with sideways glances at his spirited young wife, Lahcen equivocated. “Both,” he told me. He suggested he could live in the mountains in the summer, when there was agricultural work, and work in the bakery in the winter. It was not to be. In 2007 Zahra got her way. She arranged for her sister to marry Lahcen’s urban based brother Hussein and the four of them abandoned Abdurrahman’s rural household and set up a household in Marrakech. By late 2007 Zahra and Lahcen had given birth to a baby boy and Lahcen had risen to manage the bakery in which he worked.

Discussion

Each of these household histories reveals different aspects of how and why people move, and suggest some of the dynamics that underpin the expansion of the wage labor economy –the lynchpin of globalization—that I explore in my forthcoming book. Here, however, I am more concerned with the impact on the village. The causes and consequences of different types of

migration stand to impact the village in profound ways, including, perhaps, the transformation of the household economy itself.

What I have called “en masse” migrations are relatively straightforward. The removal of households means that the village labor scheme must be adjusted. There is not space here to explain how this happens (see Crawford 2003), but in essence the people of Tadrar use the valuation of lineage fairness to assemble five labor groups for village wide projects. When a household leaves, one of the groups is deprived of members. Because all three of the en masse migrations came from within the Ait l’Haj branch of the Ait Ben Ouchen, that labor group has been deprived of a significant portion of its male laborers. The Ait l’Haj are paired with the Ait Bil Qas for the purposes of communal labor, and since the one Ait Bil Qas household has also decided to send one of its only two male members to the city (though to study, not to work) we can expect the remaining members to be especially strapped. It is not only paucity of land that causes households to relocate. As we saw with Hussein Ait l’Haj, a failure to gain cooperation of fellow villagers can be as debilitating as a lack of land.

I do not think any of this is particularly new. In the mountains there has long been a powerful cultural injunction to have children, and very strong practical reasons to do so, also. Children are the labor force that runs the village, and the willingness of children to work for their elders is crucial to the operation of the household economy. Loyal children are a vital necessity for any person who expects to grow old with some dignity, though this is not to suggest that cultural valuation can be reduced to the practical utility of children. Still, it is safe to say that the combined practical and cultural motivation for children means that absent serious outbreaks of disease or political violence the population is constantly growing. A growing population with a finite land base ensures constant emigration. The death of patriarchs with many sons has always meant a sober assessment of the remaining resources. If the inherited land cannot support households for all of the children, or at least all of the boys, survival for some means that others must leave. This is why rural Morocco has long supplied the plains and cities with a constant stream of very cheap labor.

Articulated households are a somewhat different phenomenon. Before 1999 it was difficult to get in to the upper Agoundis Valley. When I first visited in 1995 there was no road, only a mule track, and the 17 kilometer hike to a paved road meant that trips in and out of the valley were only taken when necessary. By 2007 it was possible to catch a truck ride up the valley on most days, and on the day of the local market as many as ten trucks a day passed up and down the valley. All of a sudden it was much easier to get produce to market, and much easier to get people in and out of the valley. Fathers could get down to Marrakech and back in the same day, migrants could visit on their days off. While sons and daughters were long sent out of the valley, it used to be that they were absent for very long periods of time. It was hard to keep track of them, hard to maintain control over them and their wages.

However, the newly created proximity of opportunities for wage labor caused many patriarchs to reevaluate how they would dispense of the extra labor of their children. Sometimes this reevaluation was spurred by simple survival. Mohammed Azoomzoom had few options. With little land and many boys, he could have tried to “loan” his boys to his lineage fellows or other villagers, and he did try to sharecrop land, but clearly it made more sense to him to try and inject some cash into his household via jobs in the plains. For Abdurrahman Ait Ali the decision was different. Abdurrahman is the wealthiest person in the village. For him sending children out was not a matter of survival, but opportunity. He had what labor he needed for his land (he had five sons in total, plus other male relatives acting as part of his household), so in his case the

decision was whether to “spend” his extra labor in the village, in the traditional long term labor exchange between households, or to send it outside. He chose the outside. As we saw this generated some important short term gains, but ultimately it cost him the labor of two sons.

In this sense Mohammed Ben Salah Ait Bil Qas needs exactly what Abdurrahman has: labor. Ben Salah only has one son, whom he has sent to study in the city. Since his cousin Abdurrahman will not “loan” him the labor of “extra” sons, Ben Salah has to either do the labor himself (and there is more than he can do alone) or pay somebody to do it. To pay, he needs cash. Since Ben Salah has a surfeit of daughters, he has found it sensible to send daughters out to work and use the money to pay cash for male labor in the village. The short term benefits of the wage labor economy encourage a dependence on money, and erode the long term exchange of labor and the durable loyalty of kin. This is why I suggest that the articulation of households will ultimately spell the end of the village social order as it has been constituted.

Conclusion

A central aspect of rural Moroccan self-consciousness today is an understanding that villagers are *miskin*, poor. Rural people understand that they lack many things at least some urban people have, and more importantly they lack things people *should* have, like medical care. In contemporary Tadrar the main way of dealing with being poor is working very, very hard, and more commonly now, working for wage labor. During my time in Tadrar I was concerned with toilets, bathing facilities, and the romantic *communitas* of living amongst people who had known one another since birth, but the men and women of Tadrar were emphatic that they needed money. With money they could solve their other problems, keep their families together, begin new families, eat better, buy medicine, afford clothes, have easier, healthier, happier lives. Money –*floos*, *iqaridin*-- comes from employers, and employers mostly dwell down the hill, in the plains and cities. The only practical way to maintain a household and tap the resources of the larger economy is to send migrants down to work.

Migration involves a cultural ideal that is not necessarily in retreat, however, a shared sense that fathers have a legitimate right to children’s labor, and that everyone owes fealty their household. The ideal does not always hold. Some sons do abandon their natal households, and many girls sent to the city manage to get themselves married, thus moving from serving their rural natal household, to serving a new, urban one. This does not mean these young people are adopting a new, individualistic set of values, however, or at least not wholly. Young men and women may abandon their particular households, *but they do not abandon the ideal of household life*. Migrants almost always intend their efforts at wage labor to support a household, either their rural, natal household or a new household with themselves at the center, either in the mountains or in the city. The valuation of family and its instantiation in households endures. What is changing is the institutional structures that bind households together. Lineages, or the ideology of lineage loyalty, is clearly weakening, releasing atomized households able to do the work of reproduction for the urban economy. Nuclear or even extended households cannot support a rural order without some means of organizing collective labor, and some means of dampening the vicissitudes of the domestic cycle. This used to be accomplished by grouping households together, by transferring the labor of the vibrant young to where it was needed within the village. The labor of the young is now sold in the market, improving village life in many ways but also, probably, sealing its doom as a distinct way of life.

¹ There are terrific accounts of household life in the region, such as Singerman (1995), Hoodfar (1997), Mernissi (1997). However, these focus on urban, not agricultural households, and the differences are significant. The main, outstanding exception is Martha Mundy's work linking households, kinship, and politics in Yemen (1995).

² See Robertson (1987) for a detailed analytical discussion of how farmers integrate different economic arrangements like sharecropping and wage labor.

³ On July 1, 2000 the BBC reported, "Parents are raising their children for sale," says Bashir Nzaggi, news editor with the respected Moroccan newspaper, *Liberation*. "They send them to work in the towns, and never see them except to collect their pay-packets." According to a recent government survey, 2.5 million children aged under 15 drop out of school, and more than half a million work. Many pursue the tradition of toil in the fields. But in exchange of \$30 a month, tens of thousands of parents are now contracting their children to urban families to work as domestic servants in conditions of near slavery. Dealers earn up to \$200 per child. It's so institutionalized that kitchens are designed with low counters for child-maids to wash and cut vegetables.

"<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/highlights/streetlife.shtml> by Nick Pelham, accessed October 18, 2005.

⁴ There is a growing literature on the global phenomenon of migration and domestic servants. See Chang 2000, Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, and Parreñas 2001.