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Rural Youth Outmigration Choices in Light of Government Development Policies in Algeria

The Case of Batna Province in the Aures Region

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Abstract

Rural unemployment and underemployment in developing countries are one of the most salient factors driving youth outmigration. In Algeria, as in many countries in the Global South, while migration to Europe remains a far-fetched dream for the majority of young people (due to the increasing restrictiveness), internal migratory flows become more and more intense. The ramifications of this human mobility are overemphasized in the migration literature, including the loss of significant manpower in rural areas, in combination with congested cities that grapple with meeting the social services of the newcomers. Conventional wisdom is that more development will lead to less migration. However, the debate on the nexus between migration and development is still ongoing, especially with migration becoming a priority in the agenda of policy makers and development practice. This qualitative study adopts the system theory on migration embedded in an analysis of social transformation processes to address the migration choices of the rural youth in the province of Batna in the Aures region in northeastern Algeria. In-depth interviews with rural migrants and non-migrants, expert interviews, and informal discussions were employed. In order to serve the purpose of triangulating some key aspects, self-completed questionnaires were also distributed. Findings suggest that potential migrants use their social networks to seek informal employment in the city or elsewhere in an ad hoc fashion. Furthermore, the main development initiatives by the government namely Ansej, agricultural support, and rural housing subsidies are laden with structures. Coupled with an ingrained tradition of buying social peace, such interventions are preordained to have a limited scope. In addition to a largely marginalized rural youth, the development policy inadvertently brings about a sense of relative deprivation among non-beneficiaries, which could in turn affect the traditional rural organization for both the family and the village. Not only do these inaccurate development policy prescriptions culminate in the continuation of a system of migration ad infinitum, but also other structural and institutional factors play a significant role. For both migrants and non-migrants, several “thinning” factors affect the human agency in rural areas in Batna, including landlessness, inadequate education, and gerontocracy.

Keywords: Migration, development, rural youth, systems approach, Ansej, agricultural support, rural housing, Algeria.

Zusammenfassung

Die ländliche Arbeitslosigkeit und die Unterbeschäftigung in Entwicklungsländern gehören zu den wichtigsten Faktoren, welche die Abwanderung der jungen Menschen aus ländlichen Gebieten vorantreiben. In Algerien, wie in vielen Ländern des Globalen Südens, bleibt die Migration nach Europa für die Mehrheit der jungen Menschen (aufgrund der zunehmenden Restriktion) ein weit hergeholter Traum. Gleichzeitig verstärken sich die internen Migrationsströme in zunehmendem Maße. Zu den Auswirkungen dieser menschlichen Mobilität, die in der Migrationsliteratur oftmals betont werden, gehören der Verlust einer beträchtlichen Anzahl von Arbeitskräften in ländlichen Gebieten in Kombination mit überlasteten Städten, die damit kämpfen, den Neuankömmlingen adäquate Sozialdiensten zur Verfügung zu stellen. Konventioneller Weisheit zufolge wird mehr Entwicklung zu weniger Migration führen. Allerdings ist die Debatte über den Nexus zwischen Migration und Entwicklungspraxis noch im Gange, insbesondere da sich das Thema Migration in der Agenda der politischen Entscheidungsträger und der Entwicklungspraxis zur obersten Priorität entwickelt hat. Diese qualitative Studie übernimmt die Systemtheorie zur Migration und bettet sie in eine Analyse sozialer Transformationsprozesse ein, um die Migrationsentscheidungen der ländlichen Jugend in der Provinz Batna der Aures Region im Nordosten Algeriens anzusprechen. Es wurden hierzu Tiefeninterviews mit ländlichen Migranten und Einheimischen sowie Experteninterviews und informelle Gespräche geführt. Zwecks einer Triangulierung einiger Schlüsselaspekte wurden auch selbst ausgefüllte Fragebögen verteilt. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass viele potenzielle Migranten ihre sozialen Netzwerke nutzen, um sich eine informelle Beschäftigung in der Stadt oder andernorts nach dem ad hoc-Prinzip zu suchen. Darüber hinaus sind erstens die wichtigste Entwicklungsinitiative der Regierung, nämlich ANSEJ, zweitens die landwirtschaftliche Unterstützung und drittens die Subventionen für den ländlichen Wohnungsbau mit Strukturfunktionalismus beladen. Gepaart mit einer verwurzelten Tradition des Erkaufens von sozialen Frieden ist die begrenzte Reichweite solcher Interventionen vorherbestimmt. Zusätzlich zu einer weitgehenden marginalisierten ländlichen Jugend löst dieser entwicklungspolitische Ansatz bei Nichtbegünstigten irrtümlich ein Gefühl relativer Benachteiligung aus, was wiederum den sozialen Zusammenhalt beeinträchtigen könnte. Aber nicht nur gipfeln diese ungenauen Verschreibungen der Entwicklungspolitik in die Fortführung eines Migrationssystems ad infinitum. Auch andere strukturelle und institutionelle Faktoren

spielen eine wichtige Rolle. Sowohl für Migranten als auch für Einheimische wirken sich verschiedene “Ausdünnungsfaktoren” auf das menschliche Handeln in ländlichen Gebieten Batnas aus, wozu Landlosigkeit, eine unzureichende Ausbildung und Gerontokratie zählen.

Schlüsselwörter: Migration, Entwicklung, ländliche Jugend, Systemansatz, Ansej, landwirtschaftliche Unterstützung, ländlicher Wohnungsbau, Algerien.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Acronyms

ANSEJ: National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment
CASNOS: National Social Security Fund for Non-Salaried
CNAS: National Social Security Fund for Salaried
DLEP: Directory of Housing and Public Equipment
DSA: Directory of Agricultural services
FIS: National Salvation Front
FLN: National Liberation Front
FNRDA: National Fund for Regulation and Agricultural Development
GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council
IOM: International Organization of Migration
ONS: National Office of Statistics
MADR: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MENA: Middle East and North Africa
MHUV: Ministry of Housing, Town Planning, and the City
NELM: New Economics of Labor Migration
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
PNDAR: National Agricultural and Rural Development Program
RRP: Rural Renewal Program
SOE: State Owned Enterprise

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Dedication

To the soul of my father Prof. Dr. Salah Fellahi, the intellectual, the academician, the author, and the freedom fighter against the French colonization. He passed away only a few weeks before the day of my defense, and ever since I could only see him in my dreams. I could only picture the look in his eyes smiling to me. He will live forever in my heart, and his words of wisdom will forever lighten my path and the path of the people who knew him and appreciated him. He has taught me the value in seeking knowledge from cradle to grave, and without him I would not have made it this far and be the man I am today. He always wanted to see me with the doctoral regalia, but death came sooner, alas. May Allah bless your soul, dad.

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To my aunt Hayat.

To my nephews Younes and Idris.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In Majority World countries[1] (mainly Africa, Asia, and Latin America), rural development interventions are often regarded as a panacea for improving the living conditions in rural areas, boosting agricultural output, and achieving a balanced distribution of the population. Rural development interventions here refer to the "actions taken by national or international agencies which are explicitly designed to increase production or improve the quality of life in rural areas" (Rhoda, 1983: p. 35). The notion that enhancing living standards through rural development would somehow bring about a happy and sedentary rural population has been challenged by researchers like Rhoda (1983) and De Haan (2006). The latter ones' argument is based on a myriad of evidence from around the world, which debunks the idea that rural development could in fact lead to lower rural exodus. Regardless of whether governments' repeated same old ways are like beating a dead horse, the real indisputable problem today lies in the disproportionate representation of unemployment and prevalence of poverty in rural regions (White, 2012).

Rural exodus is the most obvious symptom of rural poverty and unemployment, especially youth unemployment. Globalization has in fact precipitated inevitable social transformations that have ultimately led to the intensification of this situation worldwide. Such social transformation processes include the changing social relations in the rural world as well as the destruction of traditional rural organization and livelihoods (Castles, 2009). The extent to which governments or development actors could reverse the phenomenon is still debated in policy and academia. Douglas Massey argues that not much can be done because economic development is disruptive by nature and the transformation of societies, including through migration, is inevitable (Massey, 1988). In Algeria, different forms of migratory flows have taken place in recent decades (Ennaji, 2010; Gettali, 2016; Kateb, 2012). Rural exodus is the most prominent form, and has been largely a byproduct of inefficient and inaccurate top-down policy prescriptions (Lowi, 2009). This boils down essentially to people's quest for better socioeconomic prospects and employment opportunities often found outside of their rural communities. Coupled with rapid population

[1] Majority World is a relatively new term used to replace older inaccurate terms such as Third World, developing world, or the Global South. Majority World is very broad since it encompasses any country other than the West. However, Rhoda (1983) tests the hypothesis of rural development reducing rural-to-urban migration using examples only from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

growth, as in much of the developing world, the implications of rural exodus become increasingly beyond the control of the Algerian government (Gettali, 2016).

For the sake of the study in hand, selecting the province of Batna in the Aures region has to do with my positionality[2] as a researcher who has experienced rural life at an early age in this province. Batna is one of the most populated provinces in Algeria, but underdevelopment and joblessness have galvanized frequent tensions in many rural communities over the past few years (Liberte, 2016). Research findings offer clues to policy makers, both at the local and national level, as to what lies behind these social uprisings. Further, for practical reasons, it was feasible to conduct a fieldwork there over a 9-month period. My familiarity with the context has helped me get straight to the "cream of the crop" in terms of data gathering. My already-established connections at some local administrations have paved the way for me to conduct expert interviews, which could have otherwise been impossible in another province. In addition, my local knowledge has helped me navigate my way from one village to another, and has made it possible to build rapport with young migrants and non-migrants before interviewing them.

1.1. Rural Exodus and the Response of Successive Governments of Algeria

Algeria was under the French rule for over 130 years, a time during which several forms of migrations took place. The most pervasive was the forced displacement of natives out of their fertile lands, at the same time when the colonial administration sought to use the movement of peasants to serve its economic interests and those of the metropole. The roots of the current socioeconomic conditions, which spur rural exodus in Algeria date back to the mid and late nineteenth century i.e., the early decades under French rule. That was the beginning of the systematic impoverishment of rural regions and their eternal economic and social disintegration (Ruedy, 2005). It took Algerians seven years of tenacious resistance in one of the most violent gruesome wars of liberation the world has ever seen in order to gain their independence. However, the new sovereign country as of 1962 has struggled to deliver its promises of economic development through rapid industrialization. At the same time, the agricultural sector faltered and the rural flight to the biggest cities exploded. Millions of villagers became city dwellers overnight, because of what they had perceived as an opportunity awaiting for them in the city. Even today,

[2] More details about my researcher's positionality are mentioned in Chapter Four.

the socioeconomic ramifications of rural exodus are felt in the cities in different forms ranging from a widespread of urban poverty, inadequacy of social services, acute shortage of housing, the mushrooming of slums, and a chaotic urban sprawl. In the meantime, rural regions are faced with situations of underutilized agricultural land, an aging population, and a perpetuation of poverty cycles (Gettali, 2016).

Since gaining independence in 1962, successive governments of Algeria have unsuccessfully sought to mobilize institutions and resources in order to indirectly curb the phenomenon of rural exodus or at least slow it down (Lowi, 2009). Towards that end, policy makers at the top government level routinely pick up where their predecessors left off in terms of what to do. Slightly adjusting a previous program or introducing a derivative one has been the norm for decades. In the current study, I identify three programs, through which the current government tries to reshape rural Algeria whether directly or indirectly. Different ministries are in charge of overseeing the implementation of these programs, but the common denominator is to, inter alia, bring about a stable rural population. These programs came as it became crystal clear that the socialist orientation[3] of rural development taken in the early years after independence have proven to be ineffective. Today, there are hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries of government programs in Algeria including microcredit loans for new enterprises (Ansej), grants for agricultural projects known as the agricultural support, and rural housing subsidies.

1.2. The Achilles' Heel: Rural Youth Unemployment

Lack of employment is considered to be the primary source of social and political instability in the Maghreb, and the Arab Spring protests were a manifestation of that reality. Algeria managed to weather this wave of social uprising for two reasons: Firstly, for many Algerians the turmoil in other countries following the Arab Spring was reminiscent to the violence and state of fear which they experienced first-hand during the 1990s. Secondly, the politics of distribution amid a relatively healthy macroeconomic situation at the time of the Arab Spring were sufficient to maintain the social peace in Algeria (Musette, 2014). Nevertheless, addressing youth

[3] State socialism was the ideological doctrine, which the new Algerian government embraced as a development path to run the economy and the society as a whole. At that time, this seemed the only alternative to a market economy, which was a no go, partly because it was adopted by the former colonizing power. More details pertaining to this point are discussed in the next chapter.

unemployment as a priority in the government's development approach has always been a challenge. From the perspective of the government, raising the labor force participation rate[4] of this group can be the only antidote against any potential social uprising similar to that one of October 1988, and to the Arab Spring revolutions in neighboring Arab states. The reality in Algeria today, however, is that labor force participation rate remains lower than the world average (IMF, 2016), which only reflects the chronic inability of a significant portion of the youth cohort to obtain jobs in the formal sector.

Youth unemployment remains the Achilles' heel of government intervention programs in Algeria, particularly in rural areas. Austerity measures starting as of 2016 (World Bank, 2017), coupled with an existing youth bulge (Achy, 2013) make it even harder to assuage this marginalized group. The lack of job opportunities engenders marginalization of youth in rural areas but also the inaccessibility of many members of this cohort to government development programs. Apart from the illusive job opportunities in the public sector that are accessible and secured only by a minority of job seekers, the private sector remains underdeveloped and fettered with government regulations hence rendering it unattractive for the masses of unemployed or underemployed youth. Unemployment and underemployment, therefore, remain by far the main push factors spearheading the mass outmigration. This affects predominantly the rural youth population, and it can take the form of a domestic migration mainly towards urban centers or an irregular international migration (International Organization for Migration, 2013). The gist of the study in hand are the perceptions of the rural youth in Batna from government interventions as opposed to their migration choices.

1.3. Youth Outmigration as a System

The research in hand employs the systems theory on migration in its state-of-the-art version. This theoretical approach offers a comprehensive explanation of different kinds of migration at different levels of analysis. Proponents of this approach view migration as a system, which is made up of different interacting elements. It is up to the researcher to identify these elements and the way they interact with each other and with their environment. The system elements can be identified only

[4] Labor force participation rate indicates the percentage of the population within the working age, who are either employed or are actively seeking employment.

once a system has become perpetuated over time and space. This theory is more favorable than other theoretical orientations because it is more of a holistic approach, which could contain as many elements as necessary and could even borrow from other theories. Identifying the elements entails addressing the complex dynamics involving the migration decision making, including all the salient social forces at the micro and meso levels. Based on their nature, the system elements can be broken down into institutions, structures, strategies and flows (Bakewell, 2014). Institutions include the family, migration culture, marriage practices, and government development actors. Structures include land distribution, rural infrastructure, and the labor market. Strategies indicate migrant strategies to secure employment in the destination as well as the livelihood strategies employed by the family back in the village. Flows or feedback mechanisms (direct and indirect) are responsible for the perpetuation of migration. Examples include the role of migrant networks as well as the transfer of social and financial remittances (Bakewell, 2014).

Furthermore, using the systems theory on migration in its refined version involves addressing the human agency of migrants under investigation. This is an important aspect of the approach since migrants are not as passive or merely reactive to their environment. Migrants (and non-migrants) should be treated as social actors who exert full autonomy in their decision-making, including their migration decision-making. Operationalizing agency is based on a three-dimensional conceptual categorization, namely iterative agency, practical agency, and projective agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). This categorization highlights the motivations and aspirations of migrants i.e., are they triggered more by their experiences in the past or by their outlook for the future. Human agency of rural youth is, nevertheless, often times restrained by inherent "thinning" agency factors (Klocker, 2007), which exist at either the local community or national level. It is indispensable to identify these thinning agency forces to appreciate the way they come into play when it comes to the migration decision making. Thus, seeking a comprehensive analysis of migration would entail examining these agency thinners and the way they contribute to the decision to migrate and to the continuation of rural outmigration in Batna ad infinitum.

In retrospect to the above paragraphs, I formulate the main question of the research as to why does the outmigration of rural youth remain such a viable livelihood option despite government employment and rural development policies in Algeria? This question is broken down into four main questions with their sub-questions as follows:

1. How do rural youth in Batna choose a migration channel?

- How do rural youth end up choosing among the different migratory routes out of their rural community, and what constitutes the success of their migration?
- How do migrants negotiate their new surroundings and what adjustment mechanisms occur following their migration?
- To what extent can migrants become detached from their home communities depending on which migration channel they choose?

2. How does rural youth migration become perpetual due to feedback mechanisms?

- What are the direct and indirect feedback mechanisms, which sustain the system of migration?
- What are the structural push and pull factors of rural youth outmigration?
- Are migrant social networks always conducive to further migration or are there situations under which such assumption does not hold true?

3. How do government development institutions influence rural youth migration decisions?

- How do rural migrants and local officials perceive the National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment (Ansej), Agricultural Support Program and the Rural Housing Program?
- How do Ansej, agricultural support, and rural housing affect beneficiaries, whether migrants or non-migrants?
- To what extent could these programs dissuade beneficiaries from outmigration?

4. What is the role of human agency in the decision-making of rural migrants?

- What is the role of iterational, projective, and practical agency in the migrant decision-making?

- How does the agency of rural youth shape their own perceptions of government programs in Batna, namely Ansej, agricultural support and rural housing?

- What are the thin-agency factors restraining the human agency of rural youth?

The overarching objective from conducting this research endeavor is to grasp the nature of the relationship between migrations originating from rural areas in Batna with the development programs initiated by Algeria's government. This objective is broken down into the following objectives as follows:

- Capture the narratives of the experiences, the everyday-life, and the decision-making of migrants and their families amid the development intervention programs of the Algerian government.

- The links between migration and development are context-dependent and involve many entangled aspects making purely quantitative or economic approaches of analysis problematic and misleading (De Haan, 2006). This study seeks to bridge this interdisciplinary gap[5].

- Contribute to the body of knowledge by analyzing migration as a normal contemporary social transformation process, rather than an abnormality (Castles, 2009).

- Catch up with advances in social theory by treating rural migrants not as passive objects who are mere recipients of government intervention programs, but rather as research subjects who exert full human agency[6].

- Account for the perspective of non-migrants in order to shed light on the often-overlooked question of why some choose to migrate while others choose to stay.

[5] It is beyond the scope of this work, however, to explore the effect of migration on development in destination areas. The focus instead is on the interaction between migration and development primarily in sending areas.
[6] This would make up for the previous pitfalls of the systems theory on migration, whose original form was discredited as being structurally functionalist i.e., the disregard of the agency of social actors (Bakewell, 2012).

- Provide policy makers, development practitioners, and future researchers with micro and meso-level qualitative analysis of the multifaceted issue of rural exodus in Algeria and the mechanisms that result in its self-perpetuation.

- Elucidate the different kinds of the dynamic interactions of migration and development, including agricultural development. This is particularly important since the existing literature shows little or no consensus in this regard.

- Offer a more comprehensive framework of analysis to the migration and development research since most existing approaches are fragmented and have hampered an accumulation of knowledge (Castles, 2009). This, however, does not imply that the goal here is to generate an overarching framework that could explain all kinds of migration across space and time. Such attempt is illusory and conceptually reductionist (King & Skeldon, 2010). Instead, the systems' approach employed in this study will only be a testing ground in that direction at least at the micro and meso levels of analysis.

- Contribute to bridging the knowledge gap about Algeria in the Anglo-Saxon as well as the German-speaking academic community.

1.4. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured in a way that allows the main points of each chapter to be addressed at the right time, not too early and not too late. There are seven chapters in total, an introduction, background, theory and literature review, research design and methodology, two empirical chapters, and a conclusion. I introduce the topic of migration in Chapter One with a focus on rural exodus in Algeria being triggered primarily by youth unemployment despite of the government's attempts to rectify the situation time and again. I point out why viewing migration as a system is important and from there I formulate the research questions which touch upon the different system elements i.e., institutions, structures, exchanges, and strategies. Chapter Two is intended to uncover the historical, socioeconomic and ideological circumstances, which have contributed to the gradual disintegration of rural Algeria and with it the continuous rural outmigration. The problems associated with this rural transformation have always been dealt with through top-level policy prescriptions ever since the country became independent in 1962. I argue here that

development intervention programs today, namely Ansej, the agricultural support, and the rural housing programs are under the umbrella of the politics of distribution whose ultimate goal is to buy social peace rather than to bring about real change. The chapter ends with contextual information about the province of Batna, including information about the outmigration of rural youth.

The nexus between migration and development is described in Chapter Three, notably the political and academic debates over the course of the past few decades. The question of whether the relationship between migration and development could lead to a vicious or a virtuous circle has dominated both the political discourse and the theoretical discussions. A relevant state-of-the-art literature review is included in this chapter as well. It demonstrates the most recurring themes in migration scholarship from developing countries, such as the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of migrants and their families, the impact on agricultural development, the role of remittances, and the role of governments, and others. In Algeria, however, studies of migration conform to a methodological approach, which only permits a macro-level descriptive analysis. In this chapter also, using the systems theory on migration as a basis for the study is justified, particularly in its refined version. This holistic theoretical approach transcends the confines of push-and-pull explanations, since it embeds all the relevant system elements and even other theoretical underpinnings from elsewhere. Accordingly, the theoretical framework is presented at the end of this chapter after providing an explanation to each type of its constituents.

Chapter Four outlines the methodology of the qualitative study, namely the ethnographic design, data collection tools, and data analysis. The study adopts a multi-sited ethnographic approach taking Batna province as a case study. Towards that end, snowball sampling was followed to gather primary data in rural locations as well as in the city of Banta. The main data collection methods were in-depth interviews, expert interviews, a focus group discussion, and recorded informal discussions. Other data sources were official statistical documents, records of a local radio show, and questionnaires. Qualitative content analysis involves the transcribing of narratives and then following an inductive and deductive coding process. After coding using Atlas Ti, comes the interpretation from low-level abstract texts into high levels of abstraction in order to come up with the most relevant themes to be presented in the empirical chapters, and which answer the four

research questions. The chapter ends with an overview of all the data generated as well as the settings in which they were gathered.

The findings and discussions presented in Chapter Five answer the first and second research questions. The chapter begins with presenting some general patterns of migration in Batna based on the data, which was obtained from local government offices. This is followed by a characterization of migrants and the different migration channels they choose and why. Concerning rural-to-urban migration, structural push and pull factors are proved to be critical. The new economics of labor migration helps to explain the push factors while the dual labor market theory explains the pull factors. In the case of other migration channels, however, a variety of other factors come into play for the rural youth. In this chapter also I identify the direct and indirect feedback mechanisms which are responsible for the perpetuation of migration. Respondents reveal, from their own experiences and perspectives, precisely how social networks, remittances, relative deprivation, poverty, and a changing culture of migration shape their social realities over time and keep rural outmigration infinitely ongoing.

The third and fourth research questions are answered in Chapter Six, in order to specifically accentuate the seemingly antithetical relationship between government rural development programs on one hand and the human agency of the rural youth on the other hand. The main argument is that these government programs still cling to structural functionalism, which turns a blind eye on the human agency of the target groups and hence precluding any possibility of real change. The chapter presents the findings about Ansej, agricultural support, and rural housing by incorporating perceptions from both the rural youth as well as local government officials and other experts. Herein, the evidence in the findings shows the different ways and the varying levels of influence each program has on the decision making of rural youth, as far as the tradeoff between staying to engage in either program or embark on migration is concerned. I also argue in this chapter that besides the structural functionalism affecting the implementation of the aforementioned government programs, rural infrastructure plays an important role. An underdeveloped rural infrastructure (including social services' infrastructure) not only undermines beneficiaries of government programs, but they also shackle those who seek to invest in agricultural activities on their own. This could in fact provide an impetus for further migration outflows. The final part of this chapter breaks down the conceptual dimensions of migrants'

agencies, proving indeed the role of human agency in shaping social realities, irrespective of the government intervention programs in place. There are, however, several inherited factors limiting the extent to which migrants and rural youth could exercise their agency in their environment. These factors are identified and explained at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Seven is the conclusion chapter, which starts with a summary of the key findings and discussion points from the two previous empirical chapters. I explicate the central conclusion of why migration is (and will be) an attractive livelihood option, with or without government intervention programs, at least in the near future. Part of the reason behind that, the chapter argues, is the path-dependent developmental orientation inherited from the early days of country's independence. Herein, I elucidate based on the findings how the three programs (Ansej, the agricultural support and rural housing) could potentially have more impact if the agency of the rural youth is embedded in the core of policy prescriptions. I then highlight the contribution of the research and offer recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with remarks on the current *Hirak* movement, which has been sweeping all over Algeria since February 22nd, 2019 and is still ongoing as of this writing. The implications of this overwhelming uprising could transform the rules of the game in rural Batna (and Algeria) for good.

To sum up the content of Chapter One, rural exodus is an old phenomenon in Algeria, beginning with the gradual disintegration of the traditional rural organization under the French colonization. Other forces emerged later on after Algeria's independence in 1962, stimulating further outmigration. Over the past two decades or so, the government has sought to alleviate the effects of underdevelopment and youth unemployment in rural areas through programs such as Ansej, the agricultural support, and rural housing. However, rural outmigration remains ubiquitous, at least in the province of Batna where the fieldwork took place. A comprehensive theoretical approach has to be employed in order to incorporate all the elements that sustain rural youth outmigration, rather than an approach that could only explicate the root causes. Hence, the systems theory on migration is deemed appropriate especially since it also addresses the question of human agency of migrants. Lastly, answering the research questions would serve the main objectives of the study including the contribution to the migration and development body of research. The chapter ends with an overview of the entire dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Before delving into the literature about migration and development nexus in Chapter Three, I begin this chapter by elucidating the macro-level forces in Algeria, which have directly and indirectly, culminated in rural areas becoming undesirable places to live in today. The focus is on the youth population as they make up the lion's share of internal and international migration movements and are the group, which is more affected by rife unemployment in rural areas (Gettali, 2016). The study adopts the systems approach to explain migration first used by Nigerian geographer Akin Mabogunji, and then later on was theoretically refined by Hein De Haas and Oliver Bakewell and others. The approach asserts viewing migration as an open system composed of different elements (institutions, structures, strategies, and feedback mechanisms) which interact with their wider environment (Mabogunje, 1970). In retrospect, it is indispensable to look into the different political, historical, socioeconomic, and ideological factors that have generated a system of rural youth outmigration, which has never ceased to occur for many decades. The approach emphasizes that a system does not exist in void, and that addressing questions about migration requires taking a step back and looking at the different forces, even the seemingly remote forces, which culminate not just in the emergence but also the perpetuation of migration.

2.1. An Overview of the Political Economy of Algeria

The socioeconomic and political circumstances in Algeria have always formed the basis upon which successive governments made policy decisions. This included which course of action to take concerning development orientations. The hydrocarbon sector has shaped most of the macro-economic policy in postcolonial Algeria. Since the nationalization of the oil industry in 1972, military elites and the intelligence apparatus, both known in Algeria as those who make the big decisions "*les décideurs*"[7], supported successive governments to expand sources of revenue from the exportation of natural resources (Lowi, 2009). Unsurprisingly, the country has become among the top three oil producing countries in Africa, and among the top fifteen worldwide (Jbir & Zouari-Ghorbel, 2011).

[7] The term was first used by former president Mohammed Boudiaf, who was assassinated in 1992, to refer to the real decision makers behind the scenes in Algeria.

The State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) Sonatrach[8] is the main instrument of wealth creation, giving the regime a great deal of leverage in containing public discontent and ensuring relative political stability in the long term. The capacity to hold onto power and to placate the mostly-young population, however, is fragile and can change in accordance with the fluctuations of oil revenues (Fakir & Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2016). This largely explains the economic crises, political instability, and popular uprisings the country underwent at times of low energy prices in international markets. Most importantly as far as the current study is concerned, these fluctuations explain the varying levels of public expenditures, including programs aimed at reducing rampant youth unemployment, and the preclusion of youth outmigration.

Rentier state and Dutch disease

The windfall wealth of some oil-exporting Arab countries in the 1970s introduced the concept of a rentier state, which refers to an economy that is predominantly dependent on unearned income generated from an external source. The centrality of unearned income in steering development policy is an "original sin" in rentier states in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) due to the so-called resource curse effect based on the Rentier State Theory (Malik, 2017). The role of the central government in rentier states is to trickle down the accrued income to the population. In such a resource-abundant economy, the vast majority of the population is not engaged in the generation and selling of the wealth (oil and natural gas in Algeria) but rather is only a participant in the use of that wealth (Beblawi, 1987). Oil rents, or more broadly natural resource rents, are sufficient for governments in countries that are less labor-abundant such as the Gulf countries. However, in labor-abundant countries like Algeria, the government complements oil rents with economic protectionism and restrictive trade policies that maintain oligarchic interests (Malik, 2017).

Gas and oil fields are scattered across different parts of the Algerian Sahara Desert employing less than 5 percent of the workforce (Achy, 2010). Despite the small fraction of job creation in the economy, between 2002 and 2014, the hydrocarbon sector made up on average 98 percent of the

[8] The oil and gas state-run company Sonatrach was founded in 1963, and ever since has played a major role in shaping the political economic decisions of the Algerian state. The fact that the senior directors of this SOE are appointed by the president of Algeria in person speaks to the intimate strategic bonds between the government and Sonatrach (Entelis, 2011).

country's total exports, 36 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), and 69 percent of government fiscal revenues (IMF, 2016). These macroeconomic values reflect the deep-seated dependency of the Algerian government on royalties from the hydrocarbon sector, which corroborates the argument pertaining to the rentier quality of the Algerian economy (Fuller, 1996).

In order to elucidate how strikingly peculiar is the case of rentier states, Lowi (2009) provides a synthesis of the different characteristics which distinguish an allocative distributive rentier state, like Algeria, from conventional productive states which rely on levied taxes upon the people. First, the country's oil wealth is generated from an outside source, thus, the government is less likely to impose taxes on its population. The result is a government that is not only autonomous in decision-making, but also detached and less accountable to the general public. Second, rentier states lack information about their own extractive capacities, hence impeding the process of formulating clear development strategies. Third, the public sector in a rentier state grows in size at the expense of efficiency, while human capital and entrepreneurship are stifled. Fourth, at the political level, governments in rentier states tend to use rents for the purpose of cooptation, repression, and neutralization of opposition representing different political or social factions. Fifth, corruption and patrimonialism thrive in a rentier state, affecting the transparency in the allocation of oil wealth among the populace (Lowi, 2009).

The "obsession" with hydrocarbons and the allocation of rents in Algeria has gradually overshadowed other sectors, which were once very essential. At the dawn of Algeria's independence, agriculture was the main pillar of economic activity for a predominantly rural society. The economy was self-sufficient in terms of food back then, yet in 1990 i.e., about three decades after independence and two decades after the nationalization of the oil industry, 75 percent of food was imported to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population. This structural economic change is one of the syndromes of the Dutch disease[9], which affects countries with natural resource endowment. Specifically, it galvanizes a shift in the concentration of factors of production away from sectors like agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing towards the booming

[9] Dutch disease was first used to describe the impact of natural gas discoveries in the North Sea on the economy of the Netherlands during the 1970s, then the concept had been extrapolated to describe the effect on other economies which have experienced sudden natural resource discoveries (Lowi, 2009).

natural resource sector. This leads to the rising production costs of the former sectors, rendering them less attractive and less competitive (Lowi, 2009).

The interpretation of the ramifications of Dutch disease on oil-producing countries has been the subject of debate among scholars, and the arguments range within a spectrum whose two extreme points. a) the resource curse view which implies that an oil economy's development model is temporary as it focuses on a finite resource, while it ignores the most productive and timeless sectors. b) the view that Dutch disease simply reflects a shift in the comparative advantage of a country and the corresponding shift of capital and labor into this booming sector (Lowi, 2009). Pinpointing exactly where the Algerian economy stands within this spectrum lies beyond the scope of this research. What is unmistakably evident, however, is that Dutch disease has undermined the rural agrarian organization in Algeria and has had a detrimental effect on job creation for the rural population in the agricultural sector, hence the long-term impoverishment of these regions.

Post-independence socialist legacy

Following a long and brutal struggle against the French colonization, Algerians gained their independence in 1962. The scale of the war of liberation is a symbol of tenacious anticolonial resistance, one that took epic proportions (Ruedy, 2005). Shortly after gaining independence in 1962, over 70 percent of the Algerian population was poor (Belkacem, 2001), and more than two-thirds of the labor force was unemployed (Becket, 1964). Socioeconomic development became the main challenge for the provisional government and the people alike (Hashemi, 2014). And due to the memory of colonialism being recent and fresh, the ruling military junta (composed mainly of FLN members in the government) assumed power with xenophobic sentiments towards France and all Western imperialist powers at the time. The strong anti-imperialist convictions dictated state socialism (rather than capitalism) as a development model, Islam as a core element of national identity, as well as the support of Third World movements in countries like South Africa, Vietnam, and Cuba. Nevertheless, the rentier quality of post-independent Algeria has also entrenched socialist ideologies and absolute state control over all sectors. This has been the case because citizens living under such a system are less burdened by taxes, hence gradually become less likely to demand political and social representation (Fuller, 1996).

The newly-formed constitution of the nation regarded state socialism as an irrevocable commitment because it was perceived as a legacy of the revolution which culminated in the country's liberation (Landes, 1998). Consequently, ideologically charged socialist programs were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s with the ultimate goal of achieving economic development, social progress and equality. An important implication of this orientation was the fact that the industrial sector dominated the budget at 51.95 percent compared to only 17.65 percent for agriculture and rural development in 1967, for instance (Hashemi, 2014). Economic experts then warned about the unrealistic ambitions of an overnight-industrialized Algeria at the expense of agriculture even though about two-thirds of the people were dependent on their agricultural lands (Sheehan, 1972). Pursuing the mirage of a strong industrial economy was the case, however, because the doctrine of state socialism entailed the promotion of heavy industries as the main vehicle for development (Landes, 1998). Little attention was paid to other vital sectors, and even though there had been numerous socialist programs implemented in the period between independence up until the 1980s, the most preeminent were the Social Self-governance (management) and the Agrarian Revolution Program. Coupled with the misguided and costly investment in complexes and factories near urban centers, the effect of these two programs has been particularly evident on the internal migratory movements of the population as the following paragraphs elucidate.

Social self-governance in 1963

Out of the one million Europeans who settled in Algeria during French rule, about 900 thousand migrated back to Europe by the end of 1962, leaving behind abandoned colonial properties in what came to be known as "*les biens vacants"* or the abandoned properties (Becket, 1964). A huge gap in Algeria's economy emerged as a by-product of this massive emigration of the European settlers. This newly born Algeria had lower production rates, lower tax revenues, and hundreds of companies filing for bankruptcy. Also, there were about 1.4 million hectares of abandoned agricultural land for which the provisional government had to find ways to redistribute back to the landless rural people (Khiri, 1983).

In order to redistribute abandoned agricultural lands previously owned and ran by European settlers, "*pieds-noirs*[10]", the first Algerian president Ahmed Ben Bella introduced the Socialist Self-governance Program or workers' self-management (*autogestion*) (Lowi, 2009). The program replicated a Soviet economic model implemented previously in Yugoslavia (Aghrout & Bougherira, 2004). The fundamental premise was to redistribute abandoned colonial property (mainly land and factories) among Algerians and shift the economic model from colonial private property and production, towards social property under workers' management and state supervision (Becket, 1964).

The social self-governance program had stifled growth in the rural regions within only few years after independence, that by the year 1969 the agricultural sector contributed only 16.4 percent to GDP compared to 41.9 percent for industry (Hashemi, 2014). Furthermore, agricultural exports fell from 86 percent of total exports in 1959 to only 10 percent in 1969 (Bahloul, 1985); food imports skyrocketed by the late 1960s; and total agricultural land surface shrank, due to urban sprawl and population boom (Cherif, 2007). This dramatic decline in the performance of the agricultural sector was attributed to the centralized decision-making and red tape, which characterized the implementation of the social self-governance program (Hashemi, 2014). It was also an unavoidable result of turning a blind eye to the comparative advantages[11] of the country in relation to other countries. But for the proponents of the adopted socialist ideological approaches then, comparative advantage was considered as an unnecessary bourgeois capitalist concept (Landes, 1998).

Agrarian revolution and land reform in 1971

The agrarian revolution refers to the comprehensive land reform introduced in 1971 at a time when it became unequivocal that previous rural development policies had been inefficient in meeting local food demand and improving the socioeconomic conditions of rural communities (Bahloul, 1985). The rationale for these reforms was not purely socioeconomic but also ideological because

[10] *Pieds-noirs*, literally means black feet, is a term that refers to people of French and European descent who either were born or lived in North Africa (especially Algeria) during the French colonization. Usually they were poor that some arrived barefoot and dirty, hence the name presumably. Following Algeria's independence in 1962, virtually all *pieds-noirs* returned to Europe.

[11] A comparative advantage refers not only to the ability to produce something at lower costs compared to others, but also to the activities that generate more income, regardless of their cost.

their principal notion was to create an egalitarian society with no form of social strata, in accordance with the socialist approach; hence, the equal redistribution of confiscated lands among rural farmers through their farmers' cooperatives (Hashemi, 2014). Over 1.3 million hectares representing 19 percent of the arable land was expropriated in addition to other private holdings being redistributed among peasants (Aghrout & Bougherira, 2004).

The agricultural production, however, did not meet the food demand of a fast-growing population and food imports kept rising in the years following the implementation of the land reform (Khiri, 1983). The agrarian revolution was unsuccessful partly because the system suffered from red tape, as well as from many loopholes that allowed for the proliferation of acts like bribery, embezzlement, and neglect. The biggest landowners also managed to find ways to get around the new laws in order to keep their lands (Hashemi, 2014). Overall, the system failed to achieve an equal redistribution of land among the peasantry (70 percent of the population then) and to increase production, because peasants lacked incentives and sense of responsibility while being part of cooperatives. This led to the further deterioration of living standards, giving rise to rural exodus during the 1970s (Lowi, 2009).

Politics of distribution

Two decades before the Arab Spring[12] had its domino effect on a number of MENA countries, Algeria had in fact experienced the first mass public revolt demanding democratic change and economic opportunity (Entelis, 2011). Protests in major Algerian cities took place in October 1988 and were cracked down by security forces, killing hundreds of unarmed protesters. The regime eventually succumbed to public pressure for political openness and agreed to initiate the first multiparty democratic elections ever to take place in Algeria and the entire MENA region. This democratic experience, however, lived only until early 1992, as the army decided to cancel the results of the legislative elections won fair and square by the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS). The elites in power "*le pouvoir"*[13] forced the president then to resign,

[12] The Arab Spring was a wave of demonstrations across several countries in the Arab world primarily calling for democratization and political freedom. It had started in December 2010 in Tunisia and quickly spread to other countries, but the degree of violence used and success of these revolutions differed substantially from one country to another.

[13] *Le pouvoir* or *les decideurs* are used interchangeably to denote those few in power who have the final say in major political or economic decisions, including appointing presidents following rubber stamp presidential elections.

and incarcerated thousands of FIS members and sympathizers in detention centers in the Sahara desert. These events slipped the country into a bloodbath during the 1990s which is the decade known as the "Black Decade[14]" among Algerians during which an estimated 200,000 people were killed (Lowi, 2009).

The political conditions during this time were comparable to those that existed in other MENA countries hit by the Arab Spring two decades later. Nonetheless, unlike regimes, which had failed to appease the populace and were ousted shortly after the Arab Spring began, the Algerian regime managed not only to weather the storm but also to maintain the status-quo as of this writing. Needless to say, the Algerian regime has successfully adopted an effective rhetoric of an egalitarian society, which resonated, well with significant segments of the society. Especially during times of high energy prices, the government ensured the implementation of relatively generous politics of distribution of oil rents (Lowi, 2009). The main mechanisms through which the state trickles down oil rent wealth in the economy are public expenditures on infrastructural projects as well as on the public sector (Entelis, 2011). This includes free education, free healthcare, and even free housing for many Algerians (Lowi, 2009).

It was indisputable that the Algerian regime was on the verge of collapse during the 1990s, yet the gradual increase in the prices of crude oil in international markets by the 2000s paved the way for regaining political stability. Indeed, by 2008, the Algerian regime had accumulated more than 100 billion US dollars of foreign currency reserves, which facilitated reconciliation efforts across the country following the widespread insurgency in the preceding decade (Lowi, 2009). The increasing oil rents also accentuated the nexus between the government, the military apparatus and Sonatrach, while at the same time maintaining the politics of distribution in buying social peace. The National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment (*Agence nationale de soutien à l'emploi des jeunes, Ansej)* is the archetype in this regard. As of this writing, it is the most prominent employment institution being implemented in Algeria specifically as a means to reduce youth unemployment. The Ansej program is considered the main vehicle of job creation outside

[14] Black Decade refers to the civil war which broke out in Algeria in the 1990s following the government's decision to cancel the second round of parliamentary elections to thwart an eminent win of the Islamist party Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut, FIS*) over the traditional ruling party National Liberation Front (*Front de Libération Nationale, FLN)* in 1991.

the public sector[15], and it tackles youth unemployment in both rural and urban areas in an indiscriminate way. The program was launched in 1996 but has become known among the youth only by the late 2000s and early 2010s. The Ministry of Employment oversees the implementation of Ansej, with one branch in each of the 48 provinces in the country, including the Ansej headquarter in Algiers. However, in some large provinces there are more than one office, as is the case in Batna province where a second office has been recently set up in the city of Barika.

Ansej is designed to provide youth (aged 19-35) with access to microcredit loans to run their new enterprises (Musette, 2014). Introducing Ansej was a reaction to the great number of laid off workers in the public sector during the 1990s as part of the structural adjustment and privatization of SOEs the country underwent with the direction of the International Monetary Fund (Barbier, 2006). The Ansej fund along with few other microcredits for other age and status groups are meant to, inter alia, restrain the brain drain of young people (Middle East Institute, 2014). Ansej acts under the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security. The general functions of Ansej rest upon the following main pillars:

- The financial support, consulting, and follow-up of young entrepreneurs in their process of starting their small enterprises.
- The provision of young entrepreneurs with economic, technical, and legal information related to their chosen economic activity.
- The coordination between the different parties involved in the provision of the fund such as the banks, the tax administration, and insurance (CNAS and CASNOS[16]).
- The development of interdisciplinary partnership between different sectors in order to identify investment opportunities and job creation.
- The provision of Ansej beneficiaries with management techniques to help them run their businesses.
- The encouragement of all forms of initiatives and actions which are meant to generate new employment for the youth population (Ansej, 2016).

[15] During an interview with the Director of Ansej in Batna in 2017, the interviewee also referred to similar institutions like Anem, yet their budgets and scopes are insignificant compared to Ansej.
[16] State insurance agencies whereby CNAS covers salaried functionaries in the public sector, and CASNOS covers self-employed individuals, including farmers.

The total number of Ansej-funded projects varies from one year to another but overall it peaked in 2012. In 2018, there were 13 thousand funded projects nationwide with an average of 45 funded projects per day according to government sources (Echourouk, 2019). In order to have a picture about Ansej in monetary terms, the value of Ansej-funded projects in the year 2015 was estimated at 29.4 billion Algerian Dinars (about 188 million Euros) to fund about 24 thousand enterprises (Ansej, 2016). Further details about the program and its implications will be discussed in Chapter Six, which is the second empirical chapter.

Nevertheless, Ansej is not the only entitlement accessible to rural youth in Algeria as part of the politics of distribution followed by the government. Another vehicle used for the trickle down of petrodollars is the agricultural support provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) as part of the Rural and Agricultural Renewal Program (PNDAR) initiated in the early 2000s. Unlike Ansej, the Agricultural Support Program offers grants for agricultural projects as well as land concessions to qualifying farmers (MADR, 2012). Financing agricultural and farming projects under this program is based on two main criteria: proving that the applicant is a farmer and that his activity falls under one of the categories designated by the ministry (Chaabna, 2017). Cereal grains and dairy farming have been particularly important because the government seeks to reduce the food import bills out of which billions of US dollars go to the importation of these two basic foods (Assafir Al-Arabi, 2019).

In order to complement the aforementioned agricultural support schemes, the government initiated the Rural Housing Program under which individuals living in designated rural localities are entitled to access a fund to build a house not far from their farms or not far from their workplace (in case of on-farm or off-farm labor). The program's main objective is to develop rural regions and incentivize local communities to settle down by providing them with decent housing (Elmouwatin, 2015). The main criterion to access the fund is to demonstrate at least a five-year-long stay in a rural zone or alternatively an economic activity there exercised by the applicant (Mellah, 2016). The program is part of the government's overall housing policy, which has dominated the agenda after the rural flight of the 1990s and the mushrooming of shantytowns in the peripheries of major cities (Mellah, 2016).

The politics of distribution and their corresponding generous packages reflect the government's commitment to maintain the implicit social contract with the population in exchange for political disenfranchisement. This ideological[17] approach has long been adopted throughout different periods of Algeria's state building since independence, and in fact has become a defining element of Algerian national identity (Werenfelds, 2007). It is unequivocal, however, that the generous provision of entitlement credit and funds has not been effective in alleviating the repercussions of youth unemployment and outmigration from rural areas, never mind their reversal. Such short-term economic rewards are meant to neutralize dissatisfied groups in society and preclude any social unrest, mainly among the socially excluded unemployed youth. The degree to which young people can be placated via Ansej and other similar development interventions by the government is debatable given the regime's lethargic attitude towards genuine socioeconomic advancement and political freedoms.

According to a study conducted by a government national research center, 60 percent of Algerian youth lament the uncertainty of their future while one third dream of migrating overseas (Entelis, 2011). Therefore, despite the colossal oil rents distributed in order to numb the "pain", the youth seem to grow more implacable and resistant to the regime's "painkillers". This sheds light on the question of whether it is the dream of migration, which is responsible for precluding an effective implementation of youth employment policy? or do young people simply become compelled to migrate only after realizing that programs like Ansej do not fulfil their aspirations? The remainder of the chapter explores historical migratory flows in Algeria with a more focus on rural regions and the youth employment policy there. As far as I know, no study in the Algerian context has ever attempted to address the nexus between rural outmigration and the government's development interventions. The studies that tackle rural exodus have not sought to depict the phenomenon against a background of the role of the government. They also have not gone beyond analyzing the aggregate macro-level values to explain a social phenomenon, which is so complex and multifaceted. Few exceptions to the latter point I will discuss in the next chapter.

[17] Rooted in state socialism, an ideology that has long been embraced by Algeria ever since its independence. In addition to state ownership of factors of production and the prohibition of private ownership, the government has adopted a discourse of social equality through generous welfare programs.

2.2. Trends of Migration in Algeria

The contemporary mosaic of Algeria's demography has been formed by diverse interwoven migrations that have taken place over centuries. It remains contested, however, the question of when Algeria really became a homogenous nation with its own identity. Some, especially colonialist apologetics, contend that it was only the French colonization starting in 1830 that unified the segmented society to form the attributes of a nation state. Others, like the Algerian Islamic reformist Abd al Hamid Ben Badis, assert that attributes of a nationhood such as a political entity with a sense of unity have existed long before the French invasion (Ruedy, 2005). In order not to be too absorbed in history, I limit the next sections to discuss only the migratory movements during and after the French colonization.

Migration during the French colonization

For over three centuries, the Regency of Algiers preceded the French colonization of Algeria. Few years before the French conquest in 1830, Franco-Algerian relations deteriorated following an unsettled French debt owed to the Algerian state. The tipping point was a quarrel between the French consul at Algiers with the Hussein Dey[18] when the latter asked about why his correspondences with the King of France regarding the outstanding debt were not answered. Trying to catch up with Great Britain in its global presence at that time, France treated the incident as a pretext to quench its imperialist and expansionist desires south of the Mediterranean (Ruedy, 2005).

When the French set foot on Algerian soil for the first time, the society was predominantly rural (95 percent) and was comprised of ethnically and religiously diverse groups; mainly Arabs, Berbers[19], Black Africans, Jews, and Turks (Lowi, 2009). For the invaders, all these groups and their subgroups were the natives, though each group was treated differently to some degree, and hence had a different perception of the new reality under colonialism. The French put in place a legal and fiscal system under which all heterogeneous native groups were trapped in a permanent

[18] Hussein Dey was a the last Ottoman leader of the Regency of Algiers, famous for the Fly Whisk Incident on April 29th, 1827 during which he scolded the long-time French consul at Algiers Pierre Deval and struck him with a fly whisk which gave the French a pretext to invade Algeria (Ruedy, 2005).

[19] Berbers are the eldest ethnic group known to have inhabited Algeria (and North Africa) thousands of years BC. All other groups arrived later on at some point in history.

state of inferiority. However, even though everyone was affected by colonialism, a control strategy based on divide and conquer *"divide et impera"* dictated slightly favoring one native group over another. The Kabyles (a subgroup of the Berbers) for example were thought of as less "barbarous" and more assimilable into the French culture. The Kabylia region was prioritized when it came to tax reductions, establishment of French schools, and evangelization efforts. Furthermore, the Algerian Jews were granted an easy access to naturalization and acquisition of French citizenship, which was considered as a treasonous act by the majority of other native groups (Ruedy, 2005). It is noteworthy to bring to the attention of the reader that the term "native" holds so much variety and heterogeneity in its meaning. However, the use of the term throughout this chapter and beyond is primarily concerned with lowland rural inhabitants, regardless of their heterogeneity. This concerns mainly Algerians who were severely affected by colonial practices of pauperization by squeezing local communities and tribes out of the most fertile lands through legislation (mainly Senatus Consulte in 1865 and Loi Warnier in 1873). On top of these legal colonial institutions aimed at dispossessing rural people, there was the "*code de l'indigénat"* or the Natives Law which governed all non-Europeans indiscriminately and insured their subordination and dispossession (Ruedy, 2005). One should keep in mind, however, that most Kabyles were mountaineers and most Jews and other minorities were urban dwellers. Arabs and other Berber groups (including Chawiya) occupied much of the lowland as landholders, peasants, or nomads. Therefore, the term "native" throughout this dissertation refers mostly (but not exclusively) to these latter groups which made up the vast majority of the rural population and the Algerian population as a whole.

The initial restricted occupation strategy adopted by the French and the subsequent total war had both drawn a tenacious resistance organized by leaders like the Amir Abd al Qadir in the west and Ahmed Bey in the east. Abd al Qadir managed to unite the heterogonous society and segmented brotherhoods, and for several years hindered French expansion. The resistance continued, though sporadically until the 1870s, yet gradually retreating from the plains to more inaccessible areas in the mountains (Ruedy, 2005). Meanwhile, European migration continued with the encouragement of the government in Paris seeking more labor in the colony, so by the early twentieth century the number of colons[20] constituted 15 percent of the total population of Algeria (Kateb, 2012). By the

[20] Colons or colonists referred originally to European agricultural settlers and landowners (McDougall, 2017), but over time, the term denoted the entire European population that occupied Algeria under the French colonization, including those who were born in Algeria.

mid-twentieth century, their numbers reached almost one million, the majority of which were from Italy, Spain, and southern France (Ruedy, 2005). Most of them worked in the export-oriented agricultural sector, mainly to satisfy food demands of the French market (Hashemi, 2014).

On the other side of the spectrum, during the early decades of the colonization there were forced relocations by native nomads and peasants to drier and less productive areas, while the demographic numbers of these natives were decreasing before they bounced back as of the 1880s, as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Growth of the Native and European Population in Algeria (million)

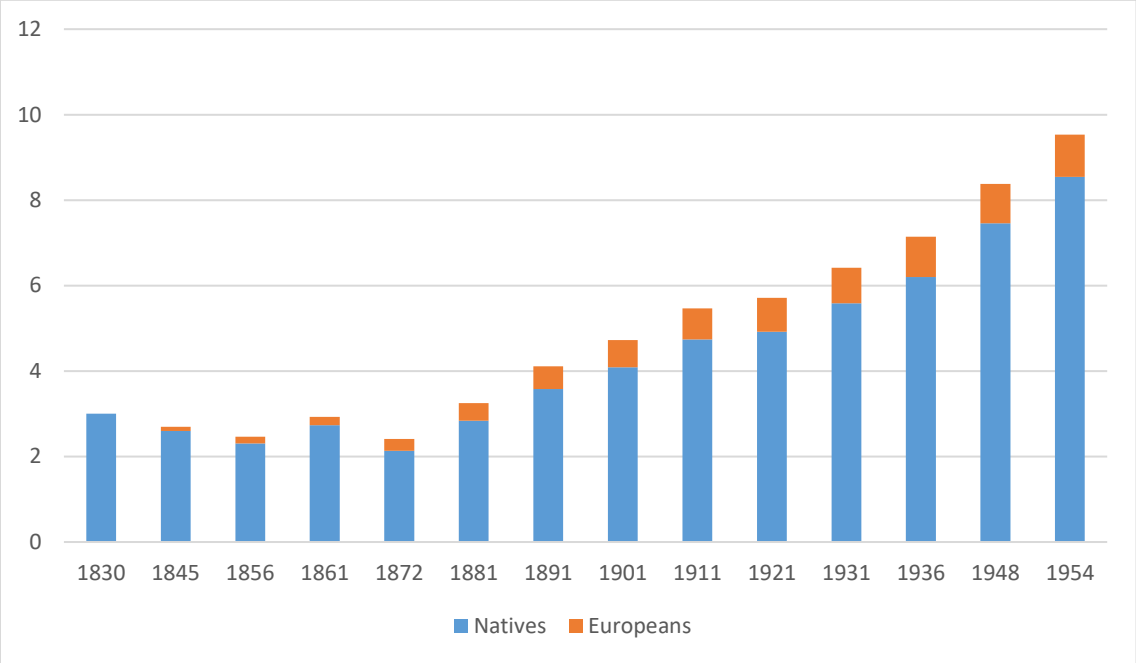

Figure 1. A diagram showing the change in and composition of the Algerian population from 1830 to 1954. Adapted from *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (p. 94), by J. Ruedy, 2005, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press.

The overall decrease of the non-European (native) population up until the 1870s was due to the fact that it was a period of bloody violence and insurrection. Coupled with an institutionalized political, legal, and fiscal colonial system put in place by the government in Paris and the colons' parliamentary representatives, the upper hand was granted to a minority of settlers while the non-European natives were perpetually positioned as inferior.

The *cantonnement* policies, to restrict native Algerians to smaller lands, practiced by the colonial administration, played an important role at the time in squeezing out locals away from the best fertile land in the northern plains in order to make them accessible for the European newcomers. These cantonnement operations came after the colons thought that the natives[21] had more landholdings than they could ever use, and that they should only retain what they need in order not to be "wasteful". Having been deprived of their lands or restricted to inadequate or uncultivable lands, many native Algerians became wage laborers in farms that belonged to the colons (McDougall, 2017). The cantonnement was facilitated and prompted by laws like "Senatus Consulte" in 1863 (Brett, 1988) and "Loi Warnier"[22] in 1873. These laws were enacted by the colonizer to provide European settlers with legal rights within Algeria and guaranteed preferential treatment over native Algerians (Hashemi, 2014). As a consequence, many of these natives were marginalized and impoverished, i.e., an estimated 650 thousand households lost 45 percent of the lands. This mainly affected fertile land, located in vast plains along the coastline with an estimated size of 2.7 million hectares, which ended up in the hands of colons. Many of the affected households were pushed towards regions which were considerably drier, less fertile and less productive (Suwaidi, 1986). Therefore, the systematic impoverishment of rural regions of Algeria dates back to over a century ago, when those millions of hectares of cultivable lands were made a public domain by the French colonial authority. When first introduced, Senatus Consulte , was met with a backlash and resistance among the mostly radical colonial settlers[23] who considered it not good enough and rather an impediment to their domination and colonization of rural Algeria. Their efforts paid eventually off with the introduction of the Warnier Law of 1873 and of 1887 (Ruedy, 2005). In general, the rural colonization and the colonial policy to expropriate lands from pastoralists and peasants through cantonnement culminated in a total dismantling of the rural economy with consequences that still reverberate today. Through cantonment under the Warnier

[21] The term seems to be neutral in historical accounts and is based on the perspective of the French colonialists who considered everyone else they encountered in Algeria as natives regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Other common terms used were *les indigènes musulmans* (indigenous Muslims) or the Arabs, but colonialists often used these inaccurate labels in a degrading manner full of disgust.

[22] Loi Warnier named after the French politician Auguste Hubert Warnier who wrote the law. The aim was ostensibly to end indigenous collectivistic agrarian ownership and to reorganize land tenures, but the real objective was to engender European settlers' control of lands and push away the natives (Hashemi, 2014).

[23] Colons held the most radical views towards the natives and consistently pushed for their subjugation, persecution, and socioeconomic marginalization (Ruedy, 2005).

Law which came to appease the extremist colons, hundreds of thousands of hectares were confiscated to be part of the public domain then to be passed to beneficiary colons (Ruedy, 2005).

The policies of the colonizer paved the way for the social mobility of European settlers who viewed Algeria and North Africa as a haven, compared to other world regions that were under Western colonialism (Brown, 1973). The transformation for those settlers happened overnight from being either wage laborers or small-scale farmers in Europe to becoming large agricultural landowners in Algeria (Lowi, 2009). Dispossessing Algerians of resources also led to the emergence of castes in the mostly rural society, with a stark income disparity between the settlers and the native ethnic groups. The latter also witnessed skyrocketing illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, malnutrition, and the spread of diseases (Hashemi, 2014). Overall, laws and policies imposed by the colonizer during this period culminated in two distinguishing features of rural life in Algeria, which seem to be on two extremes of the spectrum. On the one hand, there was a marginalized native community which depend on primitive subsistence farming on small parcels of land (no more than 10 hectares), often located in mountainous and dry areas (Mesli, 1996). On the other hand, there was a privileged minority of pieds-noirs who owned and ran massive farmlands (up to 5 thousand hectares), and 50 percent of pieds-noirs had no less than 100 hectares plots of land. These large landholders employed the best technologically and mechanically advanced agricultural equipment available at that time (Suwaidi, 1986). The disintegration of the rural society and economy, however, made it nearly impossible for independent Algeria to achieve agricultural readjustment. This is partly attributed to the substantial dependence of the colon-dominated rural economy on vineyards and the export of wine, something independent Algeria would never follow (Ruedy, 2005).

While the social inequality under the colonial rule fostered European inflows into Algeria, it also triggered a wave of migration outflows of the natives. The latter was: a) voluntary migration by groups of Algerians who refused to live under the rule of a government, whose religion was different than their own. The main destinations for these Algerian émigrés were Morocco, Tunisia, and Syria; or b) involuntary migration by thousands of Algerians, who were deported to New Caledonia in 1870s because of their rebellion against French rule (Kateb, 2012). Later in the early 20th century, the first wave of Algerian emigration to Europe occurred modestly during World War

I, but more significantly afterwards. This migration current, stemmed from Algerians who served in the French army during the war and decided to permanently settle in France (Kateb, 2012).

Migration during the postcolonial era

In the aftermath of the war of liberation by 1962, there were 1.5 million Algerians dead; massive desolation of farmlands; steep fall in livestock to three million compared to seven million prior to the revolution; as well as massive destruction of infrastructure. The immense devastation included 800 villages, which were leveled to the ground with their hospitals, schools, and other public facilities. Given these conditions, there were about three million displaced people, including 731 thousand who were subject to rural-urban migration (Hashemi, 2014).

Demographic movements in the newborn Algeria were not limited to internal migration, however, rather under the Evian Accords[24], half-million Algerians were guaranteed employment in France (Khiri, 1983). In addition, by the end of 1962, virtually all European settlers living in Algeria, emigrated back to Europe and abandoned their colonial properties in what came to be known as the vacant goods "*les biens vacants"* (Becket, 1964). The abrupt and mass outmigration of the Black Feet "*pieds-noirs"* exacerbated the state of the economy even further, i.e., resulting in lower production rates, lower tax revenues, and hundreds of companies being closed down. But more conducive to rural exodus were the 1.4 million hectares of abandoned agricultural land for which the first government had inefficiently distributed among the landless rural people (Khiri, 1983).

The Social Self-governance approach in Algeria proved to be a catastrophe over the years following independence, i.e. despite its social justice rhetoric about being a peasant revolution and building an egalitarian society. The program never really benefited the poor peasants. Inefficiency of this program implementation and also the following agrarian revolution program had contributed to massive migration to the cities which not only offered peasants with the *biens vacants* to occupy free of charge, but also provided them with social services and employment (Lowi, 2009).

[24] Evian Accords was a treaty signed by the provisional government of Algeria and France on March 18th, 1962 in Evian-les-Bains, France, in order to end colonization and grant Algeria its independence. It covered a wide range of issues like French military presence in Algeria, Saharan oil reserves, and the situation of the *pieds-noirs*.

The rural flight of the Black Decade

Inflated oil rents until the early 1980s allowed for the continuation of the politics of distribution, which allowed for the employment of two-thirds of the labor force in the public sector at the time (Achy, 2010). This resulted in overstaffed public institutions suffering from bad governance, inefficient capacity utilization, and technical obsoleteness (IMF, 2003). The government's ability to carry on this precarious economic path came to an end with the plunging price of oil from 40 US dollars a barrel in 1979 to under 10 US dollars in 1986 (Entelis, 2011). The impact on the Algerian economy was severe, particularly with accumulated foreign debt (Achy, 2010). Amid this dire economic situation, the Algerian government then had no choice but to embark on "stand-by" structural adjustment with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This entailed lifting all subsidies on staple foodstuffs, except for milk (Bessaud, 2013). It also included the restructuring and downsizing of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and the layoff of hundreds of thousands of employees (Achy, 2010). Structural reforms precipitated a deterioration of living standards and increased poverty incidence, affecting especially large segments of rural communities. An estimated 1.8 million rural households became poor, a fifth of them lived under extreme poverty. Also, unemployment jumped to 30 percent in the years following the structural adjustment, and inflation recorded an average 30 percent increase between 1990 and 1999 (Bessaud, 2013).

Yet the economic upheaval during the 1990s was not the only factor, which galvanized the rural exodus. Rather, it concurrently occurred with a political turmoil starting with the "explosion" of October 1988, and the military coup by the top army generals in January 1992 in order to thwart the only real attempt of democratic change (Entelis, 2011). The country slipped into a bloody civil war during the 1990s, which is the period Algerians refer to as the Black Decade. It was particularly this state of violence, which engendered fear and had led to a massive wave of migration towards urban centers. As inhabitants of rural villages became an easy prey for militants, cities became the sanctuary everyone had to move to (Hashemi, 2014). Nevertheless, when faced with overcrowded urban peripheries and social exclusion, many migrant young men were radicalized, which exacerbated security conditions in the cities themselves (Lowi, 2009). International migration also spiked during this decade, with many elites and intellectuals fleeing the country, mainly for Europe (Kateb, 2012).

Rampant youth unemployment spearheading migration

By early 2016, the total size of the population of Algeria was estimated to be around 40.4 million (Berrah, 2014). Roughly 30 percent of which were youth aged between 15 and 29 years (Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2015). In 2014, the age group between 15 and 59 years old represented 63.1 percent of the total population (Berrah, 2014). This undisputed large youth bulge contributes to increasing the proportion of the active population and continuously places more pressure on the labor market which is already characterized by inefficiency and rigidity. The World Bank defines youth unemployment as "the share of labor force ages 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment" (World Bank, 2014: p.1). As of September 2016, the overall national unemployment rate was 10.5 percent, however, the rate of youth unemployment stood at roughly 26.7 percent. University graduates and women are also over-represented among the unemployed (World Bank, 2017).

Economic factors such as unemployment and underemployment have been overemphasized in the push-pull literature, to explain the motivations behind migration (Rhoda, 1983). In general, internal or regional territorial migration movements, such as rural to urban migration, are very common in Algeria and the Maghreb, and this is especially true for young people who do not have sufficient education or skills to navigate international migration routes (African Development Bank, 2011). Nevertheless, it should be noted that several other non-economic factors culminate in the dissatisfaction of young people with their living conditions, which in turn increase their propensity to choose migration as a last-resort livelihood option. In 2016, the National Economic and Social Council (CNES), which is a government research body in Algeria, conducted a study to measure Algerian youth satisfaction levels. More than half of respondents reported a dissatisfaction with their living conditions, and more than a third expressed a desire to emigrate (Elbilad, 2016). While internal migration is an easier and more common pathway for the "discontent" youth, their international immigration has traditionally been concentrated in Europe as **Figure 2** shows:

Figure 2: Main International Destinations for Algerian Immigrants in 2015

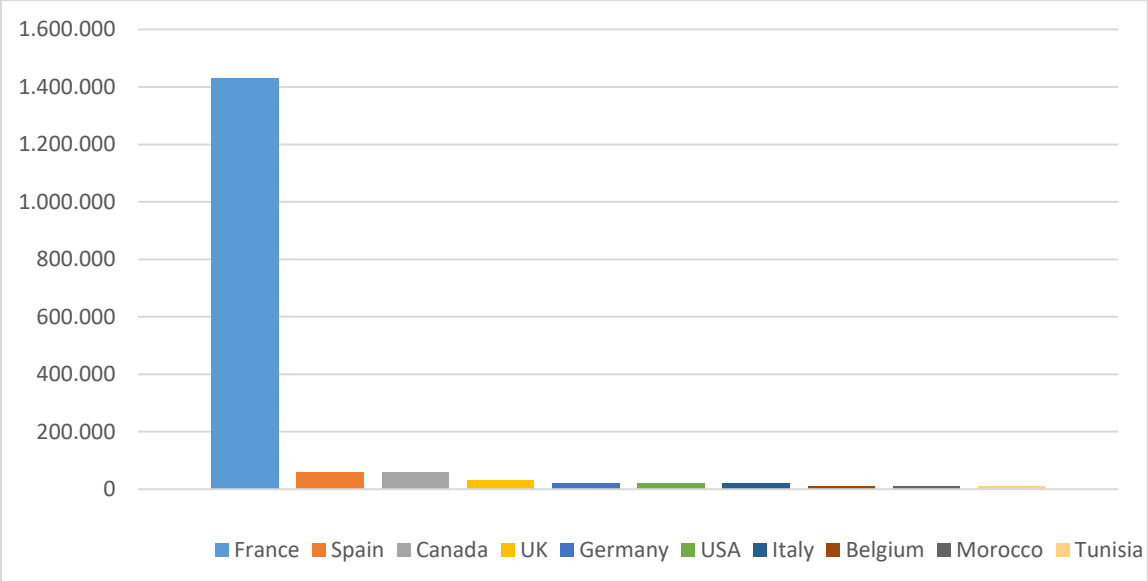

Figure 2. Geographical concentration of Algerian immigrants worldwide. Adapted from: *Top Destination Countries for Emigrants Born in Algeria*, by Pew Research Center, 2015, Retrieved March 27, 2016, from https: //www.pewresearch.org/global/interactives/global-migrant-stocks-map/

European countries remain by far the most favorite destinations for emigrants out of Algeria, and while France traditionally hosted the *immigrés*[25], its proportion in comparison with other international destinations has been steadily shrinking over the past two to three decades. It was during the 1990s that social unrest jumpstarted a slight diversification of international migration of Algerians seeking refugee status mainly in Spain, Italy, and Germany (De Haas, 2007). Yet today, the idealized images of affluent life in Western countries, and particularly Europe, are the main forces spearheading the outmigration of the mostly jobless young people, who may consider even illegal channels to reach the other side of the Mediterranean (Souiah, Salzbrunn, & Mastrangelo, 2018). Indeed, the cultural and aspirational factors can play a role that is comparable or even greater than the often-overemphasized economic factors in the migration literature.

The ability to extend the systems theory approach on international migration of rural young people is particularly important when it comes to explaining the cultural aspect of migration, as will be

[25] The legacy of French colonialism lingered long after Algeria's independence, and so has the word *immigrés,* used in Algerian dialect, which became de facto indicative of the Algerian immigrants in France exclusively.

shown in Chapter Four. The remainder of this chapter, however, provides contextual information about the province of Batna where the field research took place as well as the government employment policies targeting the youth in the rural regions of this province.

2.3. Context of the Fieldwork: Province of Batna

The field research took place in the Province of Batna (*Wilaya* of Batna), located in northeastern Algeria in the Aures region at a convergence of two mountain ranges; namely the Tellian and Saharan Atlas. High plains and steppes make up 55 percent of the total area of the province, while 45 percent is mountainous (Batna Province, 2016). About 65 percent of the population is concentrated in the plains, 20 percent in mountainous areas and the steppe, and only about 15 percent in dry semi desert areas in the southwestern part of the province (Messoudan, 2009). The climate ranges from hot semiarid and desert-like to a cold semiarid Mediterranean weather across different regions and altitudes across the province. From the administrative standpoint, the province is divided into 21 *dairas* (districts) and 61 *communes* (municipalities), as shown in **Figure 3** below.

Figure 3: Administrative Division of Batna Province

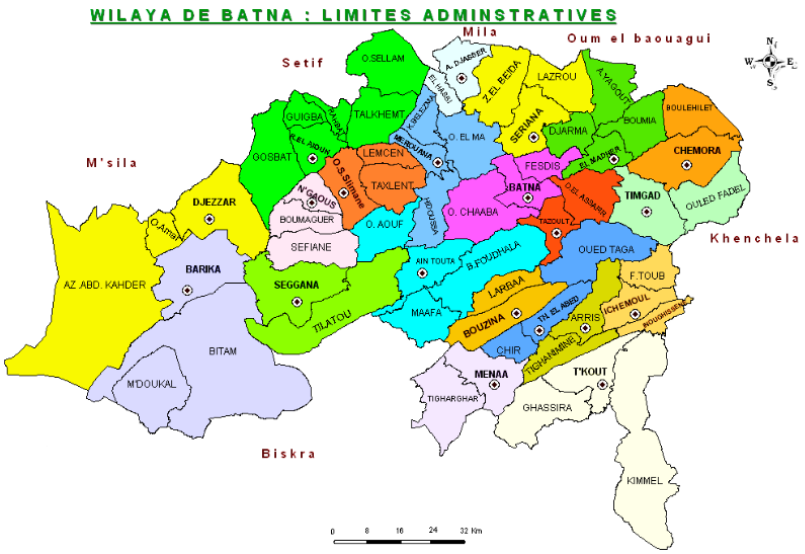

Figure 3. A map showing districts and municipalities in the province of Batna. Adapted from *Economic and Social Directory of Batna* (p. 21), by Batna Province, 2013, Batna.

Municipalities in a common color next to each other belong to the same district, so for example the district of Ngaous is comprised of the municipality of Ngaous as well as Boumaguer and Sefiane. Overall, the population of the province stood at 1,245,030 by the end of 2014, of which 325,178 live in the city of Batna which is the capital of the province (Batna Province, 2016). Economic activity in the city of Batna, as well as the disproportionate presence of main government and administrative institutions there have all made the city a magnet for migrants from other municipalities (Messoudan, 2009). Furthermore, the age group makeup of the population of Batna province is depicted in **Figure 4**, which shows the demographic composition by age and sex. The main observation from **Figure 4** pertains to the existence of a youth bulge, whereby people aged between 15 and 29 make up the largest demographic age group in the society. A large youth bulge should not be considered a definite cause of youth unemployment per se. It can, however, be a major contributing factor when there is a mismatch or an incongruence between the investment in the human capital and the needs of the labor market, which is the case in Algeria and the Maghreb in general (African Development Bank, 2011).

Figure 4: Demographic Pyramid of Batna Province by End of 2014

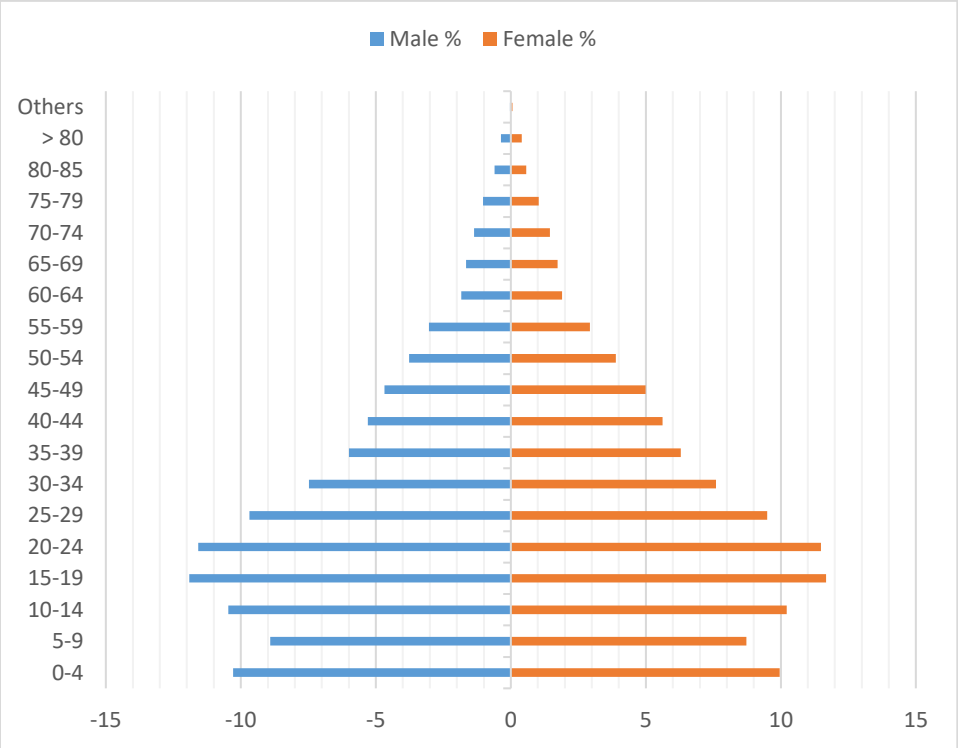

Figure 4. A demographic pyramid showing age and sex composition of the population in the province of Batna province. Adapted from *Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna* (p. 59), by Batna Province, 2016, Batna.

Migration of rural youth in Batna

Algeria has witnessed a rapid urbanization, one of the fastest in the MENA region. The rapidity of the urbanization process varies from one city to another, nevertheless. For example, the city of Constantine had a moderate urbanization rate of 35 percent in the period between the days of independence up until the late 1970s, whereas the capital Algiers had a rapid urbanization estimated at 69 percent. The most rapid of all, however, was the city of Batna with a 133 percent expansion rate for the same period (Gettali, 2016). Rural migration to the city of Batna started before Algeria's independence and continued afterwards, though in an unsteady fashion. The construction of an industrial pole in 1971 in the outskirts of the city, for example, precipitated a significant wave of migration (Messoudan, 2009). As previously mentioned, youth today are overrepresented among the unemployed in Batna, leading to the emergence of self-perpetuating cycles of youth migration into urban centers of the province. **Figure 5** shows the inflow of migrants from rural municipalities into the city of Batna.

Figure 5: Influx of Rural Migrants into the City of Batna in 1998

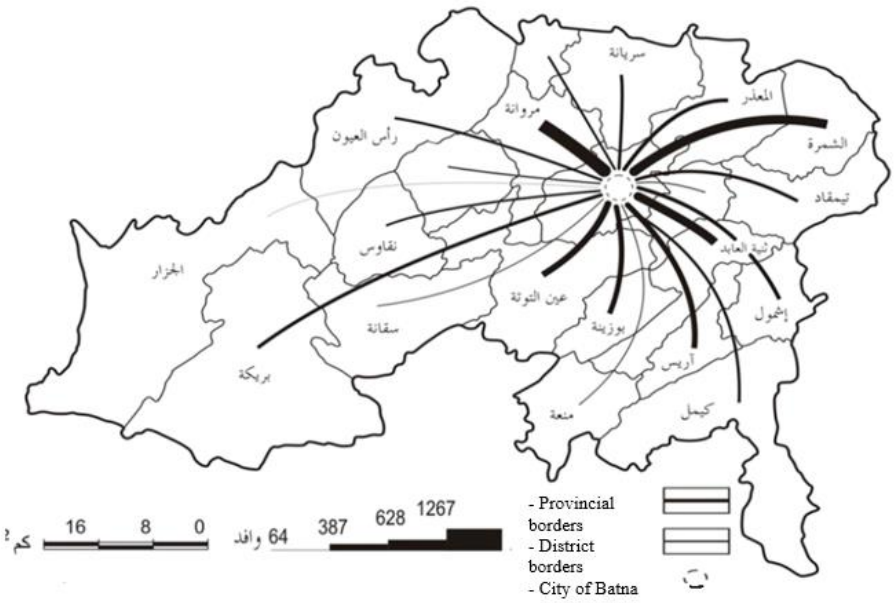

Figure 5. Rural migrant movements into the city of Batna show that major inflows are from Merouana, Chemora, and Theniat Elaabed. Adapted from: *Province of Batna: Study of the Population Geography* (p. 158), by B. Messoudan, 2009, University of Constantine, Algeria.

To the best of my knowledge the map on **Figure 5**, which dates back to 1998, represents the only empirical attempt to quantify rural to urban migration in Batna based on official sources made by the National Office of Statistics (ONS). Nonetheless, given the rapid population growth, which outpaced economic growth since then, the magnitude of migration today may in fact be more intense. Perhaps the share of each municipality in the migrant stock in Batna city may not have changed significantly ever since. Most migrants whom I met and interviewed in the city of Batna were indeed from rural municipalities in the districts of Merouana, Chemora, and Theniat Elaabed[26]. It is also noteworthy, however, that the continuous influx of migrants into the city of Batna creates major problems such as housing shortages, haphazard urban planning, and inadequate social services (Messoudan, 2009).

The state of ubiquitous unemployment and underemployment among youth in rural Batna has frequently galvanized social uprising and protests against the deteriorated socioeconomic conditions in recent years (Fakir & Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2016). On January 16th, 2016, violent clashes erupted between local youth and security forces in the rural municipality of Oued Elma in the district of Merouana (Liberte, 2016). Similar protests have also taken place in other municipalities like Ras El-Ayoun and El-Gessar (Liberte, 2016). Such sporadic incidents reflect the discontent of youth with the limited employment opportunities in their communities. These conditions are a breeding ground for youth outmigration, with the city of Batna attracting the lion's share of rural migrant inflows (Messoudan, 2009). According to the cumulative causation theory on migration, with the passage of time rural regions lose more and more human capital, leading to the long-term impoverishment of sending regions (Massey et al., 1993).

To sum up what has been discussed in this chapter, the wider environment of the system of migration in rural Algeria is shaped by interwoven historical, socioeconomic, and ideological factors. Rural outmigration is not a new social phenomenon as relocations of rural communities started shortly following the enforcement of colonial laws in the second half of the nineteenth century. The socioeconomic transformations of the rural society were detrimental to the efforts aimed at curbing rural exodus after independence. Meanwhile, the abundance in oil wealth

[26] Traditionally construction workers in the city of Batna come from these municipalities, and especially from Merouana. The selective nature of migration and the network effect explain much of the clustering of migrants in both origin and receiving areas alike. Further theoretical underpinnings about this are discussed in Chapter Three.

inadvertently led to the negligence of other sectors of the economy, especially the agricultural sector and rural development, adding more pressure to the already impoverished rural communities and resulting in more outmigration. Finally, despite the politics of distribution and the generous packages associated with it mainly in the form of Ansej microcredit loans, rural youth unemployment is still high and migration remains the dominant choice to maintain a livelihood for rural families, including those in the province of Batna where the field research took place.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS AND THE SYSTEMS THEORY ON MIGRATION

This chapter begins with addressing the bone of contention within the migration scholarship about the interaction between migration and development. In particular, the calls to shift away from the already fragmented approaches which tend to depict migration in a negative way towards a holistic analytical approach that sees human mobility as a normal social process. Viewing migration as a normal and necessary part of social phenomenon entails the analysis of migration given the new national and global power relations or in light of what is referred to as the neo-liberal restructuring or rescaling processes that have been taking place over the course of the past few decades (Schiller, 2009). The second part of the chapter describes the theoretical framework of the study i.e., the systems theory on migration and why it is deemed the most suitable and comprehensive framework to tackle the issue of youth migration in Algeria in a backdrop of government development interventions. Other migration theories that complement and deepen the understanding of some aspects have also been addressed. The third part of the chapter provides a synthesis of state-of-the-art literature review on topics related to migration, rural exodus, and development in the Maghreb region and Algeria. In this section I only describe the studies which revolve around the migration development nexus and are fully or partially concerned with one of the research questions of the study in hand.

By the year 2009, there were at least 740 million internal migrants worldwide, compared to about 214 million international migrants (United Nations, 2012). Theorizing migration in light of the increasing numbers of migrants in developed countries in the twentieth century was slow and fragmented (Massey et al., 1993). Paradoxically, the focus of theorists, academics, and policy makers has been biased towards international cross border migrations, while somehow ignoring the bigger chunk of human mobility which occurs internally within country borders (Oltmer, 2015). Internal migration is less restricted with mobility barriers and cultural adaptation problems compared to international migration, which explains the striking disparity in aggregate numbers (Arango, 2000). Overall, the increasing volume of migration (both internal and international) especially during the second half of the twentieth century has generated a rich yet fragmented discussion on the theories that seek to explain these demographic movements. And since these theories were developed independent from each other, no one overarching migration theory has

ever emerged (Massey et al., 1993). Different disciplines and epistemological origins generated different levels of analysis, units of analysis, and levels of optimism or pessimism in migration theorization. This wide range of explanations reflects emerging political, socioeconomic, and ideological conditions around the world. The role of global, supranational, and governmental institutions should not be underestimated in influencing migration (internal and international) and the agency of migrants in specific contexts in order to serve their goals and interests (Oltmer, 2015).

This study derives its theoretical underpinnings from the systems theory on migration. The similarity between its name and the world systems theory causes confusion sometimes. However, the latter seeks to explain the macro-level transnational South-to-North movements by linking that to colonialism. The systems theory on migration, on the other hand, was introduced originally to explicate the dynamics of rural urban migration in developing countries (Hagen-zanker, 2008). Mabogunje (1970) depicted migration as a system comprised of structures, flows, and institutions in both sending and host communities. Institutions in both rural and urban areas are the control subsystems which affect the flow of migration using the analogy of a thermostat:

> "A control sub-system is one which oversees the operation of the general system and determines when and how to increase or decrease the amount of flow in the system. A simple example is provided by the thermostat which controls the amount of heat that flows within a given area" (p. 5).

The main underlying argument of the systems approach is that the institutional, cultural, and socioeconomic transformations that happen as a result of migration become its own self-producing force across space and time (De Haas, 2007; Bakewell, 2012). This fundamental notion rests on viewing migration as an open system, which is based on the equifinality concept rooted in social theory (Mabogunje, 1970). The concept has been used by Ludwig von Bertalanffy[27] to distinguish between a closed and an open system. Equifinality denotes an open system where the end result is determined by variety of factors or conditions in contrast to a closed system where the same result is unequivocally defined by the exact same initial conditions (Bertalanffy, 1968). Further re-conceptualizations of social systems were carried out afterwards, including the concept of autopoietics introduced by Niklas Luhmann. Similar to his predecessors, Luhmann emphasized

[27] The founder of the general systems theory, and is considered one of the most preeminent social theorists of the twentieth century.

that an element exists as part of a system only if it contributes to the reproduction of this system (Bakewell, 2012).

Advancing the systems approach on migration has followed the advances in social systems theory and social theory only to some extent. Bakewell (2012) integrates much of these theoretical underpinnings for what he considers a relaunch of the systems approach in migration research. However, since the systems theory on migration is still far from being comprehensive, and since there is no theory of migration as such, I borrow in this study from other migration theories. Namely, the dual labor market theory and the new economics of labor migration theory (NELM). These theories provide invaluable theoretical basis that could be incorporated into the research framework, and ultimately enrich the discussion and findings. This will be further elaborated later in this chapter.

3.1. The Migration and Development Nexus

Until as recent as the dawn of the century, migration has been only marginally addressed in development research and policy, but this has started to change ever since migration became important in the eyes of policy makers (Bakewell, 2007). The concept of "diaspora", for example, has scarcely been addressed in development studies (including those specific to Africa) and just until very recently it was exclusively a part of cultural studies (Mohan & Zack-Williams, 2002). This recentness in embedding migration as an integral aspect in development policy and research may explain why the evidence which pertains to the links between migration and development to be far from being solid (Newland, 2007). It seems today that the only existing evidence about the nature of the interaction between migration and development is that it is a very complex and ambivalent one (Bakewell, 2007). The discussion about this interaction can be divided into a political and an academic one. The former revolves around governments' actions based on interests, while the latter's core debate lies on the question of whether the migration and development interaction leads to a virtuous circle or a vicious cycle (Castles, 2009). It is noteworthy that the academic debate has been framed primarily by two mainstream opposing intellectual views. The pessimistic view was rooted in dependency theory in the 1960s and in Marxism in general, while the optimistic view was based on neoclassical theory and rational choice paradigms (Castles, 2009). Before I delve into more details about this academic debate, I begin

with the political debate which reflects mostly national and regional interests from both sending and receiving countries.

The political debates on the nexus between migration and development

There has been a remarkable increase in the volume of migration stocks from the Global South to industrial countries following the financial crisis of 2007 and 2008 which hit global markets and economies, whether it is a migration of labor, cyclical migration, refugee and asylum seeking, family reunions, as well as environment-induced migrations, etc. These migration movements have engendered concerns and even xenophobic sentiments in countries in the Global North (Youkhana, 2017). Political debates differ from one region to another, nonetheless, but in receiving countries, the focus has invariably been primarily on appeasing the (sometimes hostile) general public in the backdrop of regional or global events. Put it differently, European policy makers are constantly faced with the dilemma of fulfilling future labor needs due to changing demographics and declining populations, on one hand, or enforcing stricter immigration policies to gain more popular support, on the other (Castles, 2009; Youkhana, 2017). In recent years, ad hoc policies to control migration have become very common in Europe following debates in the international arenas about the nexus between migration and development (Oltmer, 2015). Migration policy in host countries remains predominantly defined by nation states of the EU since it is still regarded as a theme of national sovereignty. For example, in the case of the North African and Turkish immigration to Europe[28], the requirements for entry, stay, and employment have been often formulated by policies of each nation state, and even the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 has laid down only common policies on asylum and integration (Castles, 2009).

In this same thread also, the increasing tendency of illegal migration destined for the main industrial EU countries has intensified the debates about migration and development. Particularly has the idea of treating the root causes of the problem flourished i.e., facilitating stay-at-home development in sending countries[29] (Bakewell, 2007). However, it is questionable as to what extent alleviating the effects of underdevelopment in many parts of Africa, Asia, and South America

[28] This refers to modern European Union, which comprises of 28 member states at the time of writing, as well as the European Economic Community (EEC) prior to 1993.
[29] The German government has recently initiated programs to engage those whose asylum applications were turned down in development projects in their home countries through the support of small businesses (Youkhana, 2017).

could be effective. Such attempts are especially more challenging in places stricken by the pernicious effects of extreme poverty, violence, and the collapse of social services (Oltmer, 2015). Indeed the thousands of drowned people, fleeing Africa to reach European shores across the Mediterranean Sea, has shocked policy makers and the public in Europe[30] (Oltmer, 2015). Images of arriving fishing boats carrying desperate and poor young Africans at islands in the Mediterranean See or at the Canary Islands has become symbolic of the failure of development in their home countries (Bakewell, 2007). Only in the year 2018, almost 4,000 attempts[31] of illicit migration to Europe were thwarted by Algerian marine forces in different locations along Algeria's coastline (The Washington Institute, 2019). Even though the Algerian law criminalizes the act, the waves of this illicit form of migration still seem undeterred, yet very sporadic. Meanwhile the political discussion at the highest level in receiving ends seeks to mitigate the phenomenon, including through means of deportation of those who have already made it to Europe. In September 2018, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel negotiated in Algiers the terms of repatriation of thousands of Algerian nationals whose asylum applications were rejected in Germany (Deutsche Welle, 2018). Overall, these kinds of political debates about illegal migration from Africa to Europe are comparable to the discussions about illegal migrations elsewhere in the world, especially that of Mexicans to the United States (Bakewell, 2007).

The general policy approach towards migration has been relatively positive as of the 1990s, especially with the increasing role of international remittances in reducing poverty and exceeding official development aid in many countries (De Haan, 2006). Even though there has been an inclination towards a migration that brings about win-win-win scenarios for sending regions, host regions, and migrants themselves, yet there is still much skepticism around it. Skeptics argue that the Global North is attempting to reposition itself within the Global South so that only the brightest and most productive individuals are allowed in. Meanwhile, increasing restrictiveness prevents any kind of migration deemed compromising to the social cohesion and long-term prosperity of Western countries (Oltmer, 2015).

[30] On October 2013, about 400 Africans drowned and lost their lives off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa, marking one of the worst tragedies to ever occur right near Europe's doors.

[31] Not all attempts are initiated by Algerian nationals. For many migrants coming from Sub-Saharan Africa, Algeria and Libya are the main transit zones for their springboard attempt to reach Europe (De Haas, 2008).

From the perspective of governments in much of the Global South, the interplay between migration and development has generated several questions about the effects of the two on each other at both origin and destination ends, yet there is no consensus about the nature of this effect (De Haan, 1999). Rural exodus is often perceived as an out-of-control form of migration, and the by-default policy prescriptions often dictate that governments should attempt to discourage it through development interventions which make rural regions more attractive for people to stay (Bakewell, 2007; Rhoda, 1983). De Haan (1999) concludes that the direct or indirect encouragement of a more static or sedentary population as a "quick fix" solution to development problems has wrongly been the norm in development policies, while migration has been regarded as an abnormal phenomenon. This policy has its roots in the European colonial administration to control human mobility of the native populations (especially through circular migration) in a way that serves the interests of the colonial powers at the time (Bakewell, 2007). It was important for the colonialists to know exactly where native groups settled in order to collect taxes and impose colonial laws for instance, and that is why for them permanent migration was puzzling and undesired (Bakewell, 2007). However, circular migration differed from one country to another across Africa. In Zambia, for example, the colonial system sought to control mobility and favor stable villages in fixed locations, all with the endorsement and direction of structurally-functionalist anthropologists (Bakewell, 2011). In Algeria, members of the native communities could only work as wage laborers at the farm in a circular fashion. The goal was to serve the economic interests of the colonial power by increasing the agricultural production which was destined for export to Europe (Gettali, 2016). This circular migration of the working class did not only include those working in colon farms but also those who moved to the cities to work in businesses, small factories, workshops, and docks (Ruedy, 2005). In Zimbabwe too, circular rural urban migrations were common since the early days of its colonial history (Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005).

The colonial tradition in approaching rural outmigration has also affected the work of NGOs and organizations involved in development practice especially in Africa. What has been particularly passed down is the clear sedentary bias i.e., the natural tendency to favor rural people to stay put in their rural communities. This assumption makes it more likely for international development agents to view migration as one of the problems of development rather than a normal part of people’s lives (Bakewell, 2007). This is part of the legacy of the development project implemented

by the colonial systems in Africa, which sought to control mobility as pointed out earlier. At least the early development practitioners in the second half of the twentieth century were products of the colonial system who transferred notions of trusteeship from colonialism to development practice (Kothari, 2005). Depicting migration as a problem (rooted in colonialism) in the work of mainstream development actors has manifested itself over the past few decades in the fact that migration pops up only with respect to the possible negative implications it could bring about. For example, the websites of ActionAid, Oxfam International, and Concern Worldwide mainly associate migration with a shortage of labor in sending areas, deterioration of health services, and the negative effect on agricultural production (Bakewell, 2007). Not only colonial ideas of controlling mobility still shapes such negative rhetoric of migration in development practice, but also perhaps the fact that these organizations are more exposed to migration and internal displacement in parts of Africa, which are under the most extreme conditions which tend to bring about the most extreme results.

Other development actors may see migration as a problem simply due to the assumption that people migrate only to escape poverty and desperation. The African Development Bank, for example, has granted Ethiopia tens of millions of dollars to combat what the Ethiopian government considers as an explosive form of rural urban migration taken by mostly poor people (De Haan, 2006). The bank also considers economic transformation of rural Africa through investing in young entrepreneurs in the agro-industrial business as a prerequisite to curb migration, both rural-urban and cross-border or international (African Development Bank, 2017). What these organizations tend to ignore are the other factors which prompt people to migrate apart from the obvious socioeconomic factors. The changing aspirations of people, for example, are almost never incorporated in setting the goals of such development initiatives. Here, the mismatch arises when all what many young people simply want is to escape their rural existence and way of life there at any cost (Bakewell, 2007).

Despite all of the negative rhetoric linked to migration and the emphasis on development to be the "antidote" to migration, findings from previous research conducted in developing countries have shown a consensus in debunking the notion that rural development inherently and by definition

decreases rural outmigration (De Haan, 1999; Rhoda, 1983). During the 1980s in China[32], the government started encouraging the creation of new rural enterprises through tax privileges, provision of loans, and help with technical expertise in order to absorb rural surplus labor. This strategy of stimulating rural enterprises, however, was effective only in keeping the relatively more educated farmers from migrating, while impetus to migrate among the less educated peasants was unfazed. Even more unexpected was that outmigration was more pervasive in provinces with the most developed rural enterprises (Liang & White, 1997). At first, rural farm enterprises may employ little agricultural mechanization, however, once the enterprise matures and uses more advanced agricultural techniques, only few workers are being kept while unneeded surplus labor is released. This is in combination with the fact that development is disruptive in general, and the increase in outmigration as a result of this disruption is inevitable (Liang & White, 1997).

In Mexico, the impact of the land reform on slowing or diverting migration away from the most congested metropolitan areas was very limited, if not perverse (Cole & Sanders, 1983). Using an economic model to evaluate the effect of different independent variables on agricultural poverty and urban-bound migration in Mexico, Cole & Sanders (1983) found that extensive land reforms taken by the Mexican government were not sufficient in curbing rural outmigration. The relationship between land ownership and poverty was surprisingly positive, against conventional wisdom. The reason behind is that land reform was limited only to granting ownership titles of small land plots to the formerly landless, while other forms of rural development (provision of credit, irrigation, and social services) largely served the large landholders. Further, rural-to-urban migration was found to be more a function of the probability of employment (mainly manufacturing) rather than land reform.

The green revolution in India during the 1960s and 1970s concurrently took place at a time of rising migration outflows not only from the poorest regions but also from regions with a long tradition of outmigration such as the Punjab (De Haan, 1999). In the Punjab, a state situated in the center of the green revolution belt in northern India, the rates of outmigration exceeded the rates of in-migration and return migration combined (Oberai & Singh, 1980). Surplus in rural labor in

[32] More recently in China, as shown in chapter two, there have been mixed results of rural development efforts and specifically with rural enterprises. Despite some pitfalls, there have been success stories especially in animal husbandry in parts of rural china.

the Punjab was attributed to the net negative difference i.e., the labor surplus was more a result of outmigration rather than new agricultural methods. Out-migrants were mostly young (and relatively educated) who sought either urban jobs or were cultivators or wage laborers in other rural areas (Oberai & Singh, 1980). Overall, the green revolution seems to have not been able to bring about a convergence of incomes since underemployment at home combined with the prospects of improving the economic conditions of migrants have both continued to provide an impetus for young Indians to migrate. The examples above show that the long held assumptions that rural development reduces outmigration by definition are unfounded, which vindicates the skepticism raised by authors like Rhoda (1983), and later on by Bakewell (2007) and (Castles, 2009) .

Besides government rural development initiatives at the local level, there has been an increasing emphasis on the role of remittances in stimulating development in sending countries. Still at the political debate on the nexus between migration and development in some sending countries, the focus has been on the effect of remittances, with a gradual shift from the vicious cycle of migration caused by the brain drain to a more positive discussion emphasizing a virtuous circle (Bakewell, 2007). The positive role of remittances[33] on development in sending countries[34] was based on the potential to improve national accounts, as well as alleviate the local pressure caused by rising population, unemployment, and poverty (Castles, 2009). The extent to which remittances could ultimately contribute to the elevation of living standards in origin countries depends largely on the form of utilizing them. The limited long-term effect even in countries with a long history of emigration may have to do a lot with the "conspicuous" or "ostentatious" consumption[35] as opposed to their investment and positive contribution to the development of their origin areas (Bakewell, 2007). Within the migration and development literature, the concept of conspicuous consumption insinuates that migrants and their families are at least partially responsible for the lack of development in their countries, due to their spending habits. Rather than a productive long-

[33] Remittances in the MENA region and Africa have been steadily increasing with Egypt and Morocco having a significant proportion in absolute terms (Bakewell, 2007).
[34] As early as the 1960s countries with a long tradition of sending migrants such as Turkey, the Philippines, and Morocco encouraged further emigration of their citizens to Western Europe, North America, and later on to the Middle East. The governments of these countries thought that migration reduces labor surplus and increases capital inflows through remittances, hence raising incomes and productivity at home (Castles, 2009).
[35] The term was first introduced in the 1970s to refer to the *nouveau riche* who bought products and properties to demonstrate their new socioeconomic status (De Haas, 2010).

term investment, migrants and their families often end up buying imported manufactured goods, or other everyday consumption such as housing, weddings, feasts, etc. (De Haas, 2010).

The academic debates on the nexus between migration and development

Political and academic debates are inextricably linked, but it is possible to view them separately for the sake of analysis. So did Oltmer (2015) as well as Faist, Fauser, & Kivisto (2011) who chronologically divided the academic debates on migration and development into three phases starting in the mid-twentieth century. The beginning was with optimistic neoclassical approaches, and then a pessimistic view in the 1970s and 1980s emphasizing the notions of brain drain and a vicious cycle. As of the 1990s, there was a return of optimism with transitional theories, which stressed a virtuous circle, albeit only if it takes a form of circular migration. The late optimism, however, is more or less consistent with the policy, which emphasizes a sedentary population with minimal temporary human mobility, as previously indicated in the political debate.

Neo-classical approaches

The academic debates started in the 1950s with neoclassical approaches by development economists whose optimistic explanations stressed rational choice and a "virtuous circle" between migration and development (Castles, 2009). Neoclassical approaches can be divided based on their level of analysis into macro and micro level approaches. They both have their basic tenants built on economic concepts such as rational choice and utility maximization (Arango, 2000). The macro level theory explains both internal and international migratory flows, and its basic premise relies on the geographic disparities in terms of the demand and supply of labor and the resulting wage differentials (Massey et al., 1993). Renowned for launching the approach, Harris & Todaro (1970) used the economic model to explain rural urban migration. Their main proposition is that migration is induced primarily by the labor market and that the only way for governments to control migration is through regulating the labor market. Also, in tandem with the migration of unskilled labor from labor-abundant to capital-abundant regions there is a positive counter flow of human capital towards labor-abundant capital-scarce regions of highly skilled workers (Massey et al., 1993).

The micro neo-classical approaches, on the other hand, have been adopted later on by scholars such as Todaro & Maruszko (1987) and Borjas (1990). According to this micro level of theoretical analysis, migration occurs following an individual's cost-benefit calculation involving primarily pecuniary and psychological elements (Massey et al., 1993). Potential rational actors choose to migrate to destinations where the expected net return of their migration is positive and maximized over a period of a time into the future (Borjas, 1990). The main propositions of this theory depend heavily on the individual human capital characteristics which can increase the expected returns (remuneration, the chances of employment, and the odds of not being deported in case of illegal migration) and with it the probability to migrate (Massey et al., 1993). Massey et al. (1993) also contend that within this line of reasoning, policies that influence either earnings and/or costs of migration can help governments control the flow of people between origin and destination countries or areas.

The Brain Drain

Transitional theories emerged and gained recognition mainly during the 1970s and 1980s, with the discussion shifting to a more pessimist of migration stressing the vicious cycle and brain drain effects of migration. These were suggested by political economists and sociologists advocating historical-institutional theories like dependency theory and world systems theory (De Haas, 2008). The world systems theory, for example, has its roots in dependency theory from the 1960s, and it suggests that migration is another form of hegemony of core states over peripheries (Arango, 2000). Proponents of this theoretical reasoning include Portes & Walton (1981), Morawska (1990), and Sassen (1988). They all build their arguments on the contributions of Wallerstein (1974), with the central thesis being that migration is an inevitable and natural side effect of capitalist development (Massey et al., 1993). According to Massey et al. (1993) as more periphery states abide by the new rules of the global market economy, their factors of production (raw materials, land, and labor) undergo changes in order to conform to the new emerging conditions. To clarify this point, Massey et al. (1993) explain how competing in the global commodity sector requires significant consolidation of landholdings, agricultural mechanization, and introduction of high-yielding seeds and cash crops. As a consequence, traditional manual farming laborers become landless and deskilled, while their old subsistence-related social

structures languish over time. Ultimately, these changes lead to "the creation of a population that is socially and economically uprooted and prone to migration" (p. 76).

The Brain Gain

From the 1990s and up until today, the debate on the nexus between migration and development has turned its back away from the preceding pessimist views into a more optimistic view. Optimism here, however, is relative since only temporary migration followed by an eventual return migration are perceived as bringing about brain gain or a positive outcome for both sending and host countries or regions (Oltmer, 2015). This is referred to earlier with policy debate as the path-dependent notion of circular migration which is inherited from the colonial administration (Bakewell, 2007). Unlike the motive from temporary forms of migration during the colonial times, the brain gain today, therefore, is achieved only when migrant communities benefit from the experiences, ideas, qualifications, and remittances of the diaspora (Oltmer, 2015). The rising enthusiasm in migration and development scholarship is attributed to the fact that migrants are increasingly perceived as agents of development and can benefit both emigration and immigration countries (Faist et al., 2011). Different concepts and approaches have emerged along the way to capture the complexity of migration from different angles particularly the question of agency. An example would be using the concept of new materialism in giving a voice of agency not only to migrants but also to material things such as a container transported from migrants from their host country Germany back to Ghana as part of a development project (Schwertl, 2017).

Overall, the paradigm shift away from the neoclassical and transitional views of migration were fragmented and isolated from advancements in social theory, preventing any accumulation of knowledge and making the need for an embedment of migration studies in an analysis of social transformation processes today more relevant than ever (Castles, 2009). In this study, the social transformation processes, including the role of migrant human agency and social remittances are embedded in the systems theory on migration analysis, as the next section elaborates. Also, a normal social transformation process would entail the integration of internal and transnational migration into one framework since migrants' trajectories have become more complex and diverse. Most research address one without any reference to the other which results in partial empirical and

theoretical reasoning, hence the dismissal of this artificial disentanglement here (King & Skeldon, 2010).

3.2. Previous Studies on Migration and Development

Demographers and social scientists began addressing the question of rural urban migration and urbanization since the days of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, especially with the debate on the push or pull factors causing rapid urbanization in British cities like Manchester (Williamson, 1988). In the Global South, the amount of contemporary literature is enormous, although the emphasis in development studies has been clearly focused on migration under dire situations and often as a last resort for the impoverished rural farmers rather than simply another livelihood option (De Haan, 1999). Again, as pointed out previously elsewhere in other developing countries, rural urban migration has been treated as antithetical with development i.e., as an undesired abnormal social phenomenon or simply an indicator or a consequence of failed development interventions. In this section of this chapter, I highlight the mainstream themes and recurring patterns in the existing literature concerning migration in developing countries whether it is internal migration movements or transnational.

Migration studies in the Global South

Most contemporary migration studies in developing countries conform to a tradition of demographically and contextually characterizing migrants, such as on the age group i.e., the fact that labor migrants often happen to be young adult men (De Haan, 1999). In China, a study about rural migrants reaffirmed this pattern, and showed that these young male adults had slightly higher educational levels compared to the general population, albeit not due to the migration selectivity, rather to the disproportionate representation of illiteracy among other groups of non-migrants such as women and the elderly (Mallee, 1995). In some other accounts, the focus in characterizing migrants was the social status, an example here would be the disproportionate occurrence of circular migration among lower castes and Harijans in India (Breman, 1996). In India also, international outmigration from the Punjab state is prevalent among lower castes that depend on established migrant networks to reduce the financial cost of migration (Pettigrew, 1977). In West Africa, Oltmer (2015) explores the implications of migration of young men and also children from Burkina Faso to work in coffee and cocoa plantations in Ghana and Ivory Coast. He demonstrates

how this migration benefits migrants and their families in the short term, yet hinders their long-term development since many of these migrants leave school early in order to migrate then wind up having very few opportunities in the job market afterwards. However, a prerequisite for a sustainable investment in West Africa is the government's facilitation of the process as is the case in Senegal and Mali where migrants are expected to play the role of development agents and receive state support (Oltmer, 2015).

Perhaps one of the most discussed country cases of migration originating from the global South is the case of the Philippines whose government has a long tradition in leveraging on the transnational migration of its citizens in the development process back at home (Oltmer, 2015). Remittances transferred back account for roughly one tenth of the GDP, a value far exceeding development aid the country receives and even more than foreign direct investment (FDI) (Abrigo, 2014). There is no doubt that transferred remittances improve the living standards of the families of migrants who remain in the Philippines through direct investment in healthcare, schooling, and necessary goods. At the macro level, they also help in the appreciation of the national currency. However, the downside of this migration at the macro level is the acute shortage of skilled labor particularly in the healthcare sector in rural areas as well as the appreciation of the national currency, which makes export-driven business activity less attractive. Oltmer (2015) also points out that the increasing allocation of remittances in enhancing social infrastructure may have led to a growing lethargic attitude of the Philippines government in assuming its role in that regard. The drawbacks at the micro level are reflected in the rising incidences of cases of torn families, since migration is often a family project involving an ongoing process and a long-term strategy, rather than a temporary livelihood solution. This is particularly the case because the skills and experience acquired overseas are not compatible with the local job market, that returnees find it difficult to reintegrate (Oltmer, 2015).

Compared to the case of Algeria, at least at the macro level, the government is a far cry from engaging migration into the development process. Throughout my study period working on the research in hand, I have not come across any initiative in place by the government in this regard. This includes neither initiatives to facilitate the transfer of remittances from migrants (whether rural or transnational), nor to promote migrants' engagement in improving the social infrastructure in their home communities. The rentier state development approach, described in the previous

chapter, seems to be antithetical with the notion of empowering migrants to become autonomous development agents since the former approach dictates that the government should be the sole actor in the distribution of wealth and not in the promotion of productive activities (Lowi, 2009).

Another common theme addressed when tackling migration and development in the context of developing countries is landholding, which is also related to the aforementioned criterion having been frequently perceived as a factor in its own right in characterizing migrants. Nonetheless, findings have shown striking contradictions even within the same country (Mallee, 1995). In one study in India, landlessness and migration were found to have a negative relationship i.e., the landless were less likely to migrate. This was probably due to the fact that landholding families are in a relatively better socio-economic position, hence more likely to afford migration of one or more family members (Connell, Dasgupta, Laishley, & Lipton, 1976). Yet a survey in Bihar, India showed the exact opposite i.e., the landless and the poor were slightly more likely to migrate, and similarly in Uttar Pradesh the propensity to migrate was lower only among the largest owners of cultivated land (Oberai, Prasad, & Sardana, 1989). Likewise in Burkina Faso, the relationship between land ownership and migration was inverse i.e., the more landholding the less likelihood to migrate (Singh & Aneyetei, 1997). In China also, the most pauperized farmers were found to be overrepresented among migrants (De Haan, 1999).

The segmented nature of migration and the geographical clustering of migrants have also been frequently discussed as migrants often tend to come from specific sending areas (De Haan, 1999). Hatton & Willamson (1994), for example, tracked and stressed the segmented patterns in international migration movements in the period between 1850 and 1939. Such cases underscore the role of migrant networks in the reinforcement of migration over time (De Haan, 1999). This, however, does not mean that social networks always work in the same fashion across the board. Mark Granovetter's seminal work on social networks clearly suggests the power of weaker social ties over strong ties[36] for social actors. He argues that strong ties are confined to small groups which have access to similar information, hence a weaker tie (through an acquaintance for

[36] The strength of a social tie (between two individuals for example) is measured by a combination of time spent together, reciprocal services, affinity, and emotional connection (Granovetter, 1973).

instance) has the potential to offer access to more diverse information (Granovetter, 1973). The study in hand shows evidence on how this concept applies to migrant social networks.

Last but not least as one of the most common themes would be the interaction between migration and agricultural development yielding two opposing main points of view according to the literature. First is that migration leads to an absence of the most productive agricultural labor (particularly in Africa), hence a detrimental effect on development. The second view emphasizes the contribution of migrants' remittances and ideas to agriculture and rural development (De Haan, 1999). The results of a study in four Chinese provinces show that lack of land and the unaffordability of means of agriculture lead to outmigration, which in turn cause an occasional shortage of agricultural labor and the deskilling of individuals in terms of agricultural knowhow (Croll & Ping, 1997). In parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, women were found to be allocating more time and energy doing agricultural work due to the absence of physically-abled men (David, 1995; Findley, 1997). In Asia, however, the main hindrance to agricultural development seems to be related more to the lack of land than to the shortage of labor (De Haan, 1999). In Bangladesh for instance, labor migration to the Gulf countries precipitated a polarization in land ownership in favor of migrants and their families who become less likely to engage in agricultural activity, hence impeding the development of rural areas (Islam, 1991).

Not all studies suggest a negative effect of migration on agricultural development, however. As previously pointed out the second view pertains to the role of remittances and ideas of migrants. According to Lakshmansamy (1990), this role is evident in the employment of new technological solutions to increase agricultural production. It is important, however, not to make sweeping generalizations, as the process may significantly be context dependent. For example, the outcome of seasonal migration in Sudan differs substantially from that of long-term migration in Burkina Faso (David, 1995). Overall, it can be inferred based on the existing literature that the general pattern seems to be more in line with the first assumption that asserts a negative impact. Nevertheless, few cases show that outmigration and agricultural development are not inherently mutually exclusive, rather the former may complement the latter given the right incentives for migrants and their families to rationally do so (De Haan, 1999).

Migration studies in the Maghreb

The migration literature, which considers the geographic context of the Maghreb region as a whole, is predominantly working papers or reports by development policy think tanks or international organizations. These reports provide descriptive analysis of the international movement of emigrants from the three Maghreb countries: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia primarily towards Europe. Ennaji (2010) provides a snapshot of the contemporary state of affairs in relation to the international migration of Maghrebians to Europe, including the role of remittances, the role of the state, and gender patterns. The World Migration Report prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) describes Europe as the main receiver of Maghrebi migrants with 88 percent of migrants choosing five countries, namely France, Spain, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom. The report also stresses the role of unemployment in driving waves of migration, particularly of young university graduates to Europe and elsewhere (Serageldin, Vigier, Larsen, Summers, & Gobar, 2015).

In their book about migrations originating from the MENA, Bommes, Fassmann, & Sievers, (2014) underscore the importance of looking at migrations in relation to their historical trends in order to spot continuities or discontinuities, in addition to the importance of transcending the push and pull frameworks because they simplistically assume that development decreases migration. In the same book also, De Haas compares Morocco's migration to North-Western Europe with that of Turks, noting the initial waves of migration as guest workers in the 1960s then family reunifications in the following decades. He attributes the steadfast migration from Morocco (compared to the faltering intensity of Turkish migration first observed in the 1990s) to the stagnant income differentials coupled with limited political freedom, which all prompt new generations of Moroccans to emigrate.

Migration studies in Algeria

In Algeria, the migration literature is mostly at the macro level, covering both internal and international migration, albeit only from the perspective of the society and economy as a whole. Kateb (2012) provides a descriptive historical analysis of international migration trends of Algerian citizens, and he particularly notes the feeble diversification of countries of destination

(compared to other Maghreb countries), with France hosting most immigrants. Gettali (2010) adopts qualitative tools like participant observation and interviews combined with surveys in order to pinpoint the pull and push forces as well as the implications of rural exodus in Khenchela province in Algeria. He concludes with painting a gloomy picture about the ramifications of rural exodus, which he describes as countless in comparison to the advantages it brings about.

There have been few exceptions, however, where the researcher tries to address migration at the micro and/or meso level. Through a mixed approach, Zouzou (2008) provides a demographic, and socioeconomic snapshot of rural migration into the city of Biskra in the Aures based on a sample of 120 structured-interview participants as well as expert interviews and observation. The main takeaways from his analysis are:

a) Historical factors have largely shaped the current state of affairs of rural urban migration. This includes colonial legacy, post-independence socialist programs by the Algerian government, as well as the deteriorated security conditions of the 1990s.

b) Migration is preeminently comprised of young males originating from rural municipalities of Biskra and the surrounding provinces, but educated females may also be prone to migration to the city.

c) Lack of economic opportunity in the rural surroundings in combination with pull factors in the city trigger most migrations, and ultimately lead to the overcrowding of cities and the surplus in rural labor.

d) Migration is context-dependent and any attempt of generalization is constrained by the specific conditions prevalent within each region.

Gettali (2016) investigates the relationship between rural exodus and problems of urbanization, hypothesizing that increasing numbers of rural migrants exacerbates the social, economic, and demographic problems in the city. He used a mixed method combining interviews, observation and basic statistics to analyze results from 113 questionnaires distributed within a rural municipality in the province of khenchela (Aures region). His findings vindicated almost all of his

hypotheses based on both the descriptive analysis as well as the basic statistical analysis of the surveys. The main findings and takeaways of his include:

a) Youth unemployment is one of the main push factors for rural outmigration, and even beneficiaries of Ansej loans consider themselves underemployed or unemployed. The parents of Ansej beneficiaries also shared this view because they would rather see their sons or daughters in a position of permanent employment instead.

b) The overwhelming majority of respondents prefer life in the city compared to their rural villages for a plethora of reasons including housing, education, transportation and health. And many of the respondents expressed their content with living standards after having moved to the city.

c) Increase in population and rural exodus lead to an uncontrollable rapid urbanization and "ruralization" of the city, coupled with the proliferation of social problems and the mushrooming of pockets of poverty in the outskirts. Ruralization here means is the process by which parts of a city become more rural than urban, usually due to the practices which rural migrants bring and apply in the city[37].

Despite the extensive descriptive analysis provided by most of the aforementioned studies, their approaches rendered research participants passive and almost voiceless because their motivations and human agency were not addressed. In similar fashion to the general trend in the literature, migration has been associated with a brain drain, shortage of agricultural labor, and impoverishment of rural regions, etc. Important factors have been ignored, particularly as far as the perpetuation of migration at both the direct and indirect levels of analysis is concerned. This includes (but not limited to) remittances, social networks, and the culture of migration. Additionally, the role of the government with its employment policies to control migration has also been dismissed by virtually every study, to the best of my knowledge.

[37] Practices which are often associated with ruralization include the chaotic construction of houses without proper documentation, and grazing of livestock in the city.

3.3. Systems Theory on Migration

Drawing on the general social systems theory of the 1950s and 1960s, Mabogunje (1970) was the first to apply the concept to analyze the multiple feedback mechanisms that self-sustain rural-urban migratory movements in Africa and to understand how and why a rural migrant becomes an urban dweller (Bakewell, 2014). By the mid twentieth century, there were attempts to analogically explain social phenomena by borrowing concepts from the natural sciences. It was Ludwig von Bertalanffy, however, who laid out the foundations of the general systems theory in a time when there was a pressure on new social concepts to conform to natural law in order to be considered as scientific (Bakewell, De Haas, & Kubal, 2011). This rendered the general social systems theory (out of which the systems theory on migration is rooted) structurally functionalist (Bakewell, 2014). Having this structural functionalist tradition inherited in social theory at the time, Mabogunje (1970) defined a system as a "complex of interacting elements together with their attributes and relationships. One of the major tasks in conceptualizing a phenomenon as a system, therefore, is to identify the basic interacting elements, their attributes, and their relationships" (p. 3). The feedback mechanisms of a migration system operate in a way that connects people and families in different geographical locations in what is sometimes referred to as translocal or transnational communities (Bakewell, 2014). Mabogunje (1970) refers to these established communities as "identifiable geographical structure that persists across space and time" (p. 12).

Rationale for employing the systems approach

The rationale for choosing this theory as a basis for the study in hand is due to its ability to incorporate not just other theories of migration into the framework of analysis, but also other (often overlooked) relevant actors involved in the process of migration such as the role of the state (Arango, 2000; Kritz, Lim, & Zlotnik, 1992). Furthermore, the framework was initially used for a rural-urban context in Africa, which makes it more suitable for the context of this study given the fact that most migrants who participated in this study have become city dwellers and not immigrants. Nevertheless, the framework is flexible and may also be extended to include analysis of transnational migration movements (Fawcett, 1989). Even though rural-urban migration is more accessible to people within the same nation state compared to cross-border migration, yet from an analytical standpoint they both belong to the social transformation processes, which ought to form

the basis of analysis regardless of nation borders (Castles, 2009; Schiller, 2011). This is particularly relevant since rural urban migration may often be a steppingstone towards international migration with many research subjects revealing their intentions to carry on their migration to a better city or a better country, as will be shown in the empirical chapters.

Migration systems are defined as "identifiable flows of migration that link particular regions or countries to multiple specific destinations over time" (Borges, 2000: p. 175). A more specific definition is that it is "a set of places linked by flows and counter-flows of people, goods, services, and information, which tend to facilitate further exchange, including migration, between the places" (De Haas, 2009: p. 8).

According to the above definitions, the systems approach goes beyond the usual direct explanations by highlighting the alterations in the social, economic, and cultural structures and institutions which triggered initial migrations from sending to receiving areas (De Haas, 2009; Bommes et al., 2014). The migration systems approach does not underestimate the role of push and pull factors as well as adjustment mechanisms in shaping the transformation of migrants. Such forces shape the decision to migrate, which in turn generate adjustment mechanisms at both the rural village and the city (Mabogunje, 1970). Nevertheless, the systems approach goes beyond these push and pull models of migration since it focuses not only on the conditions in both ends of migration but also the dynamics, decisions, and flows (Bakewell, 2014).

In order to enrich the discussion and debate about the migration and development nexus as elucidated in the paragraphs that preceded, the systems theory on migration (and the conceptual framework I develop based on it) offers a comprehensive analysis of rural outmigration in Algeria based on the perspectives of migrants in the province of Batna. The systems approach sheds light on the most contentious points of discussion in the current debates in academia and development policy. This includes the question of whether rural development initiatives actually work in curbing migration outflows, and to what extent the negative depiction of migration in development hold true in the form of a brain drain or a vicious cycle and so on. Nevertheless, the study in hand goes beyond what is conventional in the migration and development nexus scholarship and policy, which traditionally tend to purposefully pinpoint the potential negative side effects of migration. Migration in fact is ought to be regarded as a normal social process, which involves neo liberal

structural changes affecting all societies (Schiller, 2011). The normative social nature of migration is embedded in the systems theory on migration since it introduces concepts like adjustment mechanisms and feedback mechanisms, which will be explained later in this chapter.

Criticism on the systems approach to migration

Arango (2000) argues that the systems approach has never been able to fulfill its potential beyond the descriptive level of migration, and that more empirical evidence is needed to bridge the gap. Most notably here is the negligence of the indirect exogenous factors that contribute to the perpetuation of migration compared to the direct endogenous ones[38] (Bakewell et al., 2011). De Haas (2009) asserts that analyzing feedback mechanisms have to take into consideration second-order factors such as the changing labor market conditions and the role of inequality or relative deprivation, and not just the role of networks and remittances, for example. According to the aforementioned theorists, these elements signify the changing social structures that help to explain the self-sustaining mechanisms of a system of migration over space and time.

Another major shortcoming, however, is part of a critique of the social systems theory in general, and more specifically the theorization of migration systems, and that is the fact that the approach has not evolved enough to account for the role of human agency in shaping migration (Bakewell et al., 2011). The approach recognizes the role of agency, but its structural functionalist roots may have prevented a real conceptualization of what constitutes the agency of migrants (Bakewell, 2014). Within social science, structural functionalism started in the mid twentieth century particularly with anthropologists using the analogies to other physical and natural science disciplines. The issue arises, however, when social phenomena involve a high level of complexity and many intertwined social relations, which is usually the case. This is why such structural functionalist analogies have been criticized for being too reductionist since they assume that individuals' behavior is determined solely by the set of structures or rules which already exist in a society (Bakewell et al., 2011). With regards to the social systems theory and its application in the

[38] The conceptual framework at the end of this chapter shows the different types of feedback mechanisms, which sustain migration directly and indirectly.

initial system's approach on migration introduced by Mabogunje the critic was on overlooking the role of individual agencies in shaping the development and reproduction of migration.

Embedding human agency into the framework

The agency of migration stakeholders, including migrants themselves, in the Global South have been often overlooked and have been projected to the agency of those in the Global North, resulting in an imbalanced conceptualization of migration and development (Oltmer, 2015). People exert human agency when they migrate to seek more opportunity, and achieve an improvement in their socioeconomic conditions and livelihoods (Castles, 2009). To be an agent, in the words of (Sewell, 1992), dictates being able of "exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which, in turn, implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree" (p. 20). In the context of migration research, it is argued that the agency of migrants is no less important than the commonly studied variables including those focusing on the role of networks (Bakewell et al., 2011).

Emirbayer & Mische (1998) contend that distinguishing between the different dimensions of human agency is analytically useful because it allows for consideration of the "variability and change in actors' capacities for imaginative and critical intervention in the diverse contexts within which they act" (p. 970). They identify three analytically useful dimensions of the concept of agency, which they refer to as the temporal orientations of agency. These categories are iterational (habitual), projective (imaginative), and practical (evaluative) levels. Bakewell et al., (2011) adopt this analysis of agency on pioneer migrants throughout Europe after World War II.

3.4. Conceptual Framework

The majority of studies on migration focus only on people who migrate, thus fail to explain why the remaining majority does not (Arango, 2000). In order to overcome this methodological gap and scientific bias, both mobility and immobility are incorporated into one single framework i.e., outmigration of the rural youth in Batna, on one hand, and the rural youth non-migrants, on the other.

The conceptual framework builds on the revisions and advancements made to the systems approach on migration by Bakewell (2014), De Haas (2009), as well as Bakewell et al., (2011). **Table 1** gives an idea about the different possibilities in conceptualizing a migration framework, from the most simplistic to the most comprehensive.

Table 1: Different Levels of Conceptual Frameworks

Conceptual framework based on:	***Structural level***	***Complexity***
Push and pull models or neo-classical rational choice approaches	Structurally functional	Reductionist
Structural push and pull factors explained by neo-economics of labor migration and dual labor market theories, respectively	Structurally functional	Reductionist
System approach's direct feedback mechanisms (eg. remittances, migrant network)	Semi-structurally functional	Holistic
System approach's indirect feedback mechanisms (eg. relative deprivation and changing culture of migration)	Semi-structurally functional	Holistic
Human agency of migrants	Non-structurally functional	Holistic

Note. Adapted from "Relaunching Migration Systems, by O. Bakewell, 2014" *Migration Studies,* Volume. 2, Issue 3. And "Migration Systems, Pioneers and the Role of Agency, by O. Bakewell, H. De Haas, and A. Kubal, 2011" *Norface Migration, London.*

The theoretical refinements to the systems approach, as proposed by the aforementioned authors, do recognize the role of structures in shaping migration systems, but urge departing away from the most reductionist and structurally functionalist models to a more holistic framework. The latter should encompass underlying self-reproducing factors. The constituents of the conceptual framework of the current study, therefore, have to address the interaction between structural factors and social realities of research subjects. Identifying the constituents of the conceptual framework started with adopting a tentative list of elements proposed by Bakewell (2014) of a migration system in both origin and destination locations. However, some other embedded elements are context-specific such as Ansej loans, rural housing, and the agricultural support program. Further,

the agency has to be an integral part in the systems approach, and the concept is operationalized based on the analytical levels previously discussed i.e., iterational, practical, and projective. Also, the concept of "thin" or "thick" agency provides a tool to further understand what limits or empowers the exertion of migrants' agencies (Klocker, 2007). In the next sections, I provide a brief description of what each element or institution refer to in the system. It is important, however, to clearly draw the borderlines of the system, and therefore it is crucial to be mindful of the historical, cultural, political, and ideological factors which indirectly formulate this system of migration and which are part of the wider environment and not the system (Bakewell, 2014). Since the systems approach focuses more on the mechanisms of perpetuation rather than initiation of migration, only the current elements of the system (depicted in the conceptual framework at the end of this chapter) will be explained in the next sections. Other elements of the wider environment have already been fairly addressed in the background chapter, hence the parsimony in choosing what constitutes the elements of the system in hand in this chapter.

Feedback mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms shape migration systems through the transmission and flow of information, ideas, goods, services, perceptions and remittances to their rural communities, with favorable feedback encouraging more migrations (Fawcett, 1989). In the words of Mabogunje (1970), favorable information transferred back to origin communities lead to further migration and result in:

> "… almost organized migratory flows from particular villages to particular cities. In other words, the existence of information in the system encourages greater deviation from the 'most probable or random state'... The state of a system at any given time is not determined so much by its initial conditions as by the nature of the process, or the system parameters... since open systems are basically independent of their initial conditions" (p. 13; 14).

It is clear that the systems approach is less concerned with the initial causes of migration and is more concerned with the exchange mechanisms between different geographical locations. Nevertheless, there has been a clear bias in the literature towards using a systems theory to explain migration on the grounds of endogenous (direct) feedback mechanisms over the exogenous (contextual or indirect) ones (De Haas, 2009). The former explain migration through exchanges

that occur directly through migrant social networks whereas the latter happen as a gradual alteration of social, economic and cultural conditions, in a way that the new conditions in their own right generate new waves of migrations (De Haas, 2009).

Direct endogenous feedback mechanisms

They refer to the feedback that operates directly through migrant social networks or migration networks (De Haas, 2009), and which have become widely adopted and an indispensable element in the analysis of migration (Arango, 2000). These social networks are defined as "sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin" (Massey et al., 1993: p. 79). Social network theory has substituted chain migration theory in the migration scholarship in the 1960s, and similar to the systems theory, it also addresses the question of how migration is perpetuated rather than how it happens in the first place (Collyer, 2005). The old concept of chain migration was defined by MacDonald & MacDonald (1964) based on their analysis of Italian migration movements to the United States as: “that movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants” (p. 82). De Haas (2009) refers to the new concept of migrant networks as the social capital, which migrants utilize in order to reduce migration, information and psychic costs, as well as to secure access to other resources. Therefore, migration networks are sometimes referred to as social capital since they pave the way to obtain other forms of concrete economic value (Massey & Espana, 1987). What makes the theory distinctively important is its explanation of how migration becomes a self-perpetuating social phenomenon observed when migrants move only after other migrants in their milieu had moved before them (Arango, 2000). According to Massey et al. (1993), the effect of social networks is cumulative and happens exponentially beyond a certain threshold during which the costs and risks of migration are reduced enough to attract new migrants.

Overall, migrant social networks especially through close family and kinship ties reduce the costs of migration, but there is an emerging evidence of migrants using weaker ties or no ties at all in choosing their migration destinations given the conditions of stricter migration vetting and control.

A good example here is the migration diversification of Algerians as of the 1990s away from France where many of these migrants traditionally have direct family members, or at least relatives or friends (Collyer, 2005).

Perhaps the most emphasized form of exchange through migrant social networks in development policy and academia so far has been the role of remittances, as discussed previously. Indeed, the role of remittances in driving development in origin areas is by all means an important factor in the study of migration, and the shift away from the interpretations of the "conspicuous consumption" patterns of migrants and their families started only as of the 1970s (De Haan, 1999). Ever since, some studies focused on the amount of remittances being transferred from both urban and international destinations and the share of these remittances from the total non-farm income of sending households. Williamson (1988) estimated that roughly 10 to 13 percent of incomes in urban parts of Africa are remittances destined for the rural economy, and the same can be said about Asia. Reardon (1997) compared the contribution of urban remittances to all non-farm earnings between different rural regions in Africa based on their geographical proximity to major urban centers, and found that remittances made up a 75 percent of the income in villages near the city, while the percentage falls to 20 percent in farther villages. David (1995) concluded that even though the volume of remittances was not high, its crucial role in diversifying risk was unquestionable.

In terms of the use of remittances, findings overwhelmingly suggest that very little is being allocated towards increasing productivity. Roberts (1997) suggests that remittances of Mexican international migrants are mostly spent on basic necessities, housing improvement and marriage-related costs, while very little is devoted to agricultural activity, and the same observation applies to internal migrants in China. Islam (1991) studied the spending behavior of Bangladeshi migrants in the Gulf countries, and found that apart from necessities, remittances are used to buy luxuries and the acquisition of lands. The picture looks different in Egypt with rural families having a more propensity to use remittances in improving agricultural productivity (Adams, 1991). In a nutshell, both estimates of the volumes of remittances and their allocations vary substantially from one region to another and they both depend largely on context-specific factors such as the kind of migration, characteristics of migrants and their families, location of their home communities, and how difficult or easy it is for migrants to remit (De Haan, 1999).

Indirect exogenous feedback mechanisms

As pointed out earlier, second-order type of feedbacks operate in a contextual or indirect manner (De Haas, 2009). Perhaps most importantly here is inequality in general, which induces propels migration movements over time. This is the case because better-off migrants are pulled by the attractive prospects of employment and education elsewhere while the poorest get pushed away by the unbearable conditions in their rural surroundings. This dichotomy further instills inequality among families within the same rural village and may add up to the intra-rural disparities alike (De Haan, 1999).

Relative deprivation has pushed many households in Mexico to engage in international migration especially to the USA, but the selective nature of migration prevents achieving a convergence of rural household incomes through remittances (Stark, 1991). In Kenya, research indicated that remittances of urban migrants led to a concentration of land holdings among the better-off migrants (McDowell & De Haan, 1997), while migrants of the lowest socioeconomic status are less likely to significantly improve (Breman, 1996). Despite the general consensus about the role of migration in increasing inequality, its effect on alleviating poverty for most groups is evident, as is the case in India for example (De Haan, 1999). Also in India, the contribution of migration to the convergence of per capita incomes in sending areas was not significant (Cashin & Sahay, 1996). According to Lipton (1980), this convergence of income in the context of rural urban migration is restrained by: a) the selective nature of migration which gives a socioeconomic advantage to some but not all rural households; b) the costs of migration which tends to deny access of many rural households to the available opportunities leading to upward mobility; c) the "socially maladaptive" process of losing labour from rural areas especially the most productive one; d) the often low contribution of remittances out of which only a small proportion is allocated for production; and e) return migration, if it occurs in the first place, is often carried out by the least productive members i.e., the elderly or the sick whose return adds little or no value to the rural economy and hence the persistent disparities in incomes. Overall, other indirect feedback mechanisms may include cultural transformations, poverty cycles, emerging migration industries, and entrepreneurship (De Haas, 2009).

Control sub-systems

Control subsystems are the formal and informal institutions, which exist in both sending and receiving ends of migration, and could encourage or discourage migration. Identification of an institution follows one criterion i.e., whether or not it contributes to reinforcing migration. In describing how control subsystems affect migration flows, Mabogunje (1970) writes:

> "…formal and informal subsystems operate to perpetuate and reinforce the systematic nature of international flows by encouraging migration along certain pathways and discouraging it along others. The end result is a set of relatively stable exchanges… yielding an identifiable geographical structure that persists across space and time" (p. 12).

He also stresses the importance of some rural control sub-systems such as the family (both nuclear and extended), and land distribution. The way in which land distribution and other control subsystems affect and interact with migration is still debated and offer very little congruence[39]. In the rural zones as depicted in the conceptual framework, Ansej, rural housing, and marriage practices and other elements are all rural control subsystems within the overall migration system. Urban control sub-systems, on the other side of the spectrum, would be the attraction of the labor market and housing sectors (Bakewell, 2014). This applies to both internal and cross-border movements, even though the latter ones offer far more differentials compared to local conditions particularly in terms of the labor market. Other internal urban control sub-systems, are context-dependent dictated by the migration channel taken. Besides urban centers, other migration destinations have their own control subsystems where the labor market is different from that in major cities in Algeria. Oil and gas companies attract migrants in the Sahara desert, but housing and social services' infrastructure are also important control subsystems there. The military institution has control subsystems that enable or disable the migration of the rural youth outside of Batna. These include the financial compensation, degree of perceived personal freedom, and distance from home. If the destination is another rural locality, however, the control subsystems are similar to the ones at origin, yet the local labor market in the new destination could be slightly different.

[39] The literature review in this chapter provided examples showing how land distribution and other control subsystems have been found to interact with migration in different regions.

Rural livelihood strategies under rural structures

In the rural context, Ellis (1998) defines a livelihood diversification as the "process by which rural families construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in their struggle for survival and in order to improve their standards of living" (p. 4). Rural livelihood strategies are often shaped by the diversification strategies of households in terms of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, as well as migrating to urban areas (Jacobs & Makaudze, 2012). While the focus is on migrants, understanding the rural survival strategies of non-migrants will contribute to answering the research questions as well, since they too navigate the same rural surroundings out of which some of their peers chose to leave behind. In social science research, there has been an overlap in addressing rural livelihoods from different angles in the developing world with different concepts like rural poverty, non-farm activities, risk and coping strategies, and (most importantly) rural urban migration or migration in general (Ellis, 1998). Diversification strategies are set voluntarily by rural families (Stark, 1991) or they may be adopted only as a last resort in reaction to emerging crises (Davies, 1996). It is important to point out that diversification may not necessarily suggest a diversification of income sources per se; instead there are other channels of social diversification such as schooling, healthcare, water supplies, and the provision of transportation infrastructure by the government (Ellis, 1998).

The new economics of labor migration theory (NELM) by Stark & Bloom (1985) offers some theoretical underpinnings of what constitutes a rural livelihood strategy for migrant families. The theory has been introduced in order to challenge the long-held neoclassical economic explanations of migration (Massey et al., 1993). Firstly, it suggests that migration is not an individual decision, rather a decision made by a meso-level unit, either the family or the household under an implicit mutually beneficial contractual arrangement between migrants and their families (Stark & Bloom, 1985). Unlike the neoclassical view of utility maximization being the sole rationale for migration, the new economics of labor migration (NELM) underscores the need of families to diversify risk as a survival strategy, reduce relative deprivation within a reference group, and cushion the impacts of potential market failures (Stark & Taylor, 1991).

Secondly, Massey et al. (1993) assert that much of the developing world, including the rural part of it, is characterized by market conditions that are imperfect, inaccessible, or simply absent.

Market conditions related to crop insurance, unemployment insurance, capital and futures all play a pivotal role in providing incentives for families to send one or more members to some migration destination(s). Accordingly, governments can control migration through policies that affect these markets and also policies that reshape income distribution. This proposition goes beyond the neoclassical economic theories, which suggest that regulations of the labor market is the only way for governments in that respect (Massey et al., 1993).

Urban livelihood strategies under urban structures

The existing labor market in the urban locality is a control subsystem that may enable or disable migration inflows, and often migrants seek to fit in within their new urban environment through niche businesses secured through their networks, including restaurants for example (Bakewell, 2014). The structure of the labor market in destination ends may play a crucial role in controlling the volume of migration, and the Dual Labor Market Theory explains how this happens. It basically postulates an understanding of migration dynamics at a macro level i.e., migration emanates from a chronic structural labor demand (Massey et al., 1993). The underlying assumption is that migration occurs as a result of four main characteristics of labor markets which in turn function as pulling factors for migrant labor from sending regions (Piore, 1979). These characteristics were made in relation to international migration, however, it would be safe to argue that they hold true in a rural urban context, at varying degrees. These main characteristics according to Piore (1979) are briefly described below:

a) Structural inflation: wages in developed countries differ according to the occupational hierarchy and social expectations. This suggests that any increase in wages of low skilled labor may be very costly and disruptive for employers leading to a structural inflation; hence attracting international labor migrants at the same levels of compensation makes more sense for employers.

b) Motivational problems: native workers in developed countries look for jobs with the possibility of upward social mobility, whereas immigrant workers are solely concerned with pecuniary matters, especially at the early stage of their migration. This is true because the main goal for migrant workers is not to enhance their socio-economic status and that of their families within their reference group back home. All this puts migrant workers at an advantageous position

vis-a-vis the local labor in the eyes of employers at the lowest layer of the job hierarchy, creating an incessant demand.

c) Economic dualism: the labor market in developed economies is bifurcated into a primary capital-intensive sector and a secondary labor-intensive sector. The latter sector is unstable and offers minimal social protection if any, hence making it less difficult and less costly for employers to hire and fire compared to the primary sector. Therefore, while native job seekers gravitate towards more stable, highly skilled, and high-prospect jobs in the primary sector, employers depend on immigrant workers to make up for the shortage of labour within the secondary sector.

d) Demography of labor supply: The supply of labor for entry-level jobs in receiving countries has traditionally had two main sources: women and teenagers. This supply, however, has dwindled in tandem with socio-demographic changes such as the increasing female participation rates, the rise in divorce rates, and extended formal education. In order to fil up the emerging shortage of labor, employers have become more reliant on migrant labor.

Overall, the dual labor market theory postulates that governments cannot do much in order to control migration because the demand for migrant labor is structurally inherent (Massey et al., 1993). Nevertheless, the mere focus on pull-related factors in receiving areas while ignoring the other side of the aisle renders the implications of this theory insufficient in explaining the bigger picture of migration (Arango, 2000). Its role in the study in hand, however, is to supplement the systems approach to address the structural factors in the migrant destinations, along with the new economics of labor migration (NELM) to address the structural factors in sending rural areas. **Figure 6** illustrates the conceptual framework, which depicts the different migration system elements as discussed previously.

In general, the conceptual framework in **Figure 6** provides an overarching depiction of what the elements of the migration system are and where they operate. The principal idea is that rural outmigration is a normal social process resulting from an established system of interacting elements. Human agency of migrants propels the occurrence of this migration over space and time beyond the effect of push and pull forces. The task behind the conceptual framework in hand was to identify the different institutions, structures, strategies and feedback mechanisms and put them

Figure 6: General Conceptual Framework

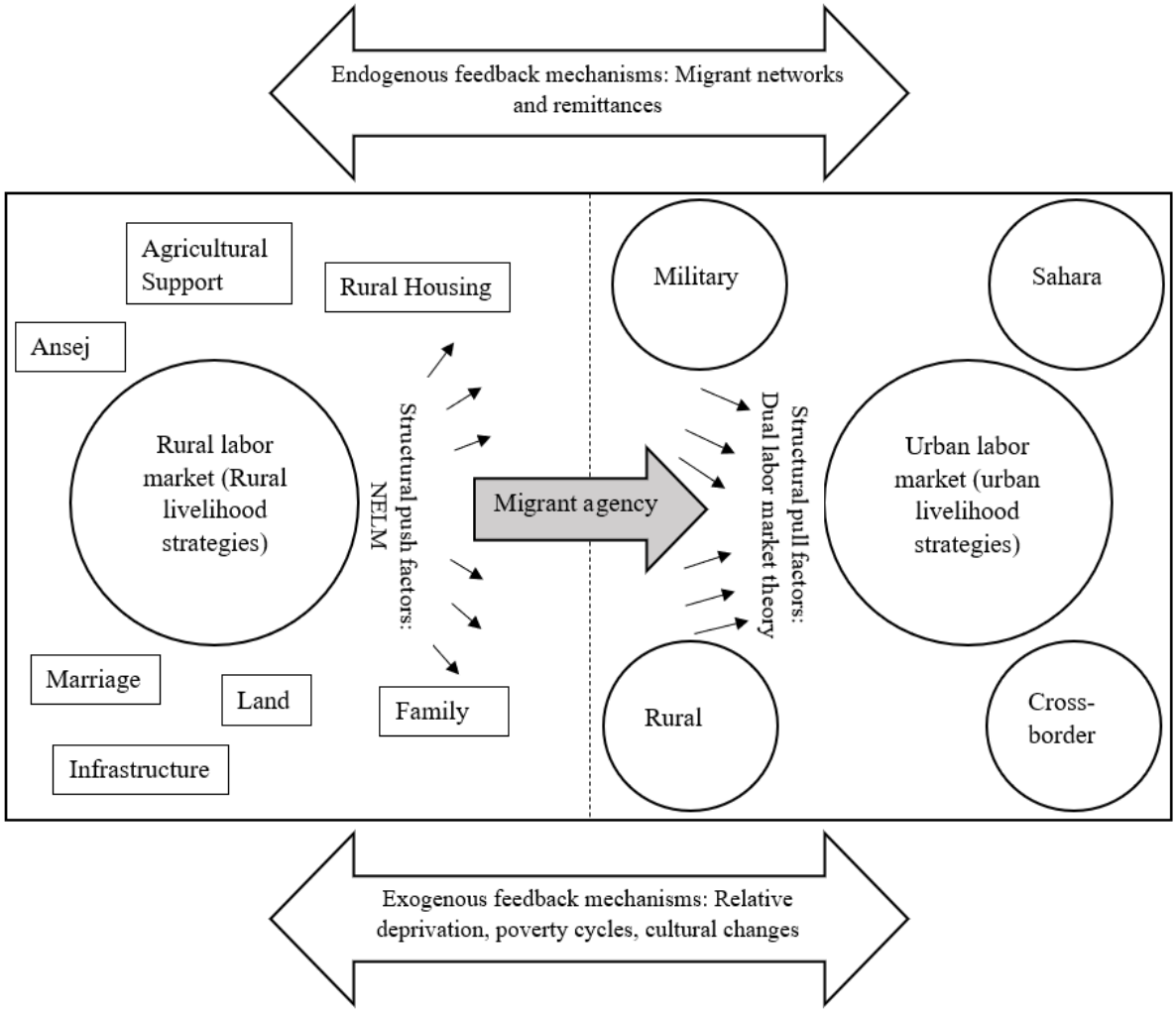

Figure 6. Migration as a System of Interacting Elements and Self-reinforcing Mechanisms. A combination of the researcher's own work and adaption from "Relaunching Migration Systems" by O. Bakewell, 2014, *Migration Studies*, Volume. 2, Issue 3. And "Migration System Formation and Decline: A Theoretical Inquiry into the Self-perpetuating and Self-Undermining Dynamics of Migration Processes" by H. de Haas, 2009, University of Oxford.

together in one holistic framework. Each of these elements contributes to form the migratory outflows taking place in the context of the study. Institutions are the control subsystems that control the flow of migrants between rural areas and the destination. Structures in rural areas are defined by the NELM theory, in contrast to the structures in urban areas, which are defined by the dual labor market theory. Urban structures share some characteristics with other migration channels, even though each migration channel has its unique defining structures, which will be pinned down

in the empirical chapters. Livelihood strategies of migrants and their families are contingent upon the structures, whether rural, urban, or otherwise. The feedback mechanisms are the direct and indirect exchanges that connect sending and receiving ends and sustain migration indefinitely.

Employing the conceptual framework in the province of Batna

The current conceptual framework is a byproduct of the systems approach after accounting for both the latest theoretical refinements on the one hand and the context-specific elements on the other hand. The resulting comprehensiveness of the framework allowed for an empirical evidence on the employability of the systems approach to migration, but most importantly, it offered a blueprint to conducting data collection and answering the research questions. Firstly, the framework incorporates the role of government programs into the analysis of migration. The rural exodus in Batna (and Algeria) has been undeterred in spite of all the efforts to slow it down made by the government. The conceptual framework allowed for an examination of the intertwined relationship between the agency of young migrants with development interventions, namely Ansej, the agricultural support, and the rural housing programs. Unlike other theoretical frameworks, this framework captures the continuous process (rather than a snapshot) behind the migration of youths in Batna whether they are beneficiaries of government programs or not.

Secondly, the agency of young migrants (and non-migrants) is at the core of the framework, making their interviews and the generated narratives the backbone of the findings of the study in hand. Thirdly, the framework recognizes the indistinguishability of the reasons behind migration, hence incorporates all relevant migration channels whether internal or cross-border movements. This answers the question of why and under which circumstances do youths in rural Batna choose a certain migration pathway over another. For example, choosing the Sahara as a migration destination rather than nearby urban centers. Fourthly, it is inconceivable to analyze migration and development in rural Batna without properly addressing institutions like land, marriage, rural infrastructure, and the role of the family. The framework in hand offered an opportunity to take a "deep dive" into each of these entangled matters whose interference with the migration decision-making should not and could not be underestimated. Fifthly, it is unequivocal the existence of employment and wage differentials between rural Batna and the migration destinations. Rural unemployment and underemployment as well as other push and pull elements come up only within

the narratives of the research participants but not in the framework. That is because the current framework escapes the simplistic push and pull models of migration in two ways: a) by stressing the structural (rather than the straightforward) push and pull forces. An example of the structural push factor is the lack of farmers' insurance coverage in rural Batna, while an example of a structural pull factor is the complacency of migrant construction workers in Batna city. b) by going beyond the direct feedback mechanisms to include the indirect ones such as the perceived sense of relative deprivation in rural areas.

To recap what has been discussed in this chapter, the increasing volume of migration over the past decade or so, combined with the considerable increases in remittances, has generated a lot of discussion about the nexus between migration and development. Most scholars who address the question of migration and development still cling to some old and problematic notions. This includes the methodological nationalism and the presumption of a negative relationship between migration and development especially in rural areas. Such approaches suggest a path-dependency in viewing migration and they can be theoretically as well as empirically partial and distorted. Scholars of migration in Algeria were no exception since they too begin with a preordained judgement on the relationship between rural exodus and development. This is not denying or downplaying the negative implications of rural exodus in Algeria ever since it has gained independence. Rather it is to emphasize the ambivalent nature of the relationship and that it is not migration per se which may lead to those negative outcomes.

Withstanding the recent emergence of few calls to shift away from this analytical paradigm, there is still a lack of empirical studies that treat migration as a normal social transformation process i.e., a natural state of affairs in people's lives in light of the structural and socioeconomic transformations or the neo-liberal rescaling (Schiller, 2011). In order to overcome these methodological flaws, I use the systems theory on migration in its theoretically refined form, which incorporates the different elements of a system, which reinforce migration over space and time to connect communities between sending and receiving ends. Unlike reviewed studies of migration in Algeria, the conceptual framework allows for analyzing data at the micro and meso levels i.e., the emphasis on young migrants and their families. Additionally, borrowing theoretical underpinnings from two other theories is aimed at explaining the structural push and pull forces. All interacting elements of the migration system are illustrated in the conceptual framework.

Building on this, in the next chapter, I discuss the different aspects related to the research design, including data collection tools and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The use of qualitative research has increased exponentially in the past two or three decades beyond the traditional confines of anthropology and sociology. Today, a plethora of social science disciplines have become closely associated with qualitative inquiry, including cultural studies, cultural geography, and others (Atkinson, 2005). The current study on migration is primarily cultural, developmental, and youth-related which calls for an employment of qualitative approach and tools. In this chapter, I discuss and justify the chosen methodological approach including the rationale behind the qualitative choice, ethnographic design, data collection tools employed during the fieldwork, and the approach to data analysis. Regarding the data analysis method, I employ qualitative content analysis in order to serve the purpose of identifying conceptual categories from the data and to form a basis for answering the research questions thematically. Furthermore, the process of data collection is described as thoroughly as possible in order to address classic prerequisites of qualitative research such as the aspect of rigor (Holliday, 2007), a thick description (Atkinson, 2005), and other factors deemed essential with respect to ensuring the quality of the outcome of any qualitative research endeavor (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

4.1. Qualitative Approach

The shortcomings of quantitative research have often formed the starting point for scholars to build arguments calling for the use of qualitative approaches in order to ultimately do more justice to the research subjects (Flick, 2009). The purpose in the current study is not to count occurrences or to quantify cases or incidences in order to conclude with generalizable findings about the entire rural youth population in Batna or Algeria. In fact, primary and secondary sources already provide enough data to capture the general state of affairs, as well as the context in which the research subjects exist; hence, a qualitative approach is deemed more appropriate in correspondence with the purpose of the research in hand, as well as the research questions, as the following sections elucidate.

Rationale behind the qualitative approach

In the current study, the research question of why migration remains a viable livelihood option for the rural youth in Algeria (given the current government intervention programs) requires following

a qualitative approach. Specifically, aiming at capturing the narrative accounts of migrants, their experiences, their everyday-lives, and their decision-making process, is a social science task. Therefore, using quantitative methods such as survey data, or experiments, and statistics to address such social phenomena would be inappropriate (Silverman, 2000). Qualitative research, on the other hand, is the key to uncover the underlying factors behind social behavior in order to understand a social phenomenon. In the words of Mason (2002):

> "Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings they generate". (P. 1)

The quote above suggests that qualitative research is more about the depth of social life in contrast to quantitative research which is more about calculating occurrences that exist in a large population (Holliday, 2007). In addition to this main distinction, the element of "surprise" is present when conducting qualitative research, and decisions about which research instruments to utilize might be adjusted according to the emerging conditions. This kind of flexibility makes every qualitative research design unique and distinct from any other (Holliday, 2007). In a similar vein, the field research conducted for this study was an iterative process in which the instruments used were constantly altered and adjusted, at different stages, given the unexpected developments. These unexpected developments on the field will be highlight throughout the chapter and the empirical chapters that proceed. Overall, being open to a certain degree of flexibility was crucial in collecting data until reaching a point of data saturation.

Despite the uniqueness of each qualitative research study, it remains important to stick to some common distinguishing features which represent the central guiding ideas of qualitative research (Flick, 2009). As previously mentioned, one criterion of validity in qualitative research is to be relatively flexible in terms of employing methods on the field, instead of relying on a rigid set of concepts and themes derived from prior literature for the mere objective of testing them. This implies that research subjects in qualitative research should determine the methodological approach for the inquirer to follow and not the other way around. In other words, methods are molded in such a way as to answer questions related to the knowledge of participants, their social interactions and day-to-day practices (Flick, 2009). This is significantly different from the type of questions typically posed in quantitative research. Taking this study as example, a qualitative

research question would be: How do migrants choose their migration destination? Whereas a quantitative research question would be: How frequent it is for people in rural Algeria to migrate?

Besides the abovementioned essential features of qualitative research, there is a researcher's reflexivity as part of the research process that in turn opens up many avenues for applying a myriad of methodologies and approaches. While a quantitative approach neutralizes this kind of subjectivity, it should form a source of data in its own right in qualitative research. Overall, the validity of qualitative research is contingent upon the appropriateness of methods applied, the researcher's reflexivity, and the relevance of the empirical-based findings generated (Flick, 2009). In this study, as pointed out earlier the research method applied is qualitative content analysis. The rationale behind is to identify conceptual categories of similar meanings from the data using consistent coding process and data analysis approach (Cho & Lee, 2014).

Researcher's reflexivity and positionality: An insider position

Nowicka & Cieslik (2014) discuss the positionality of those who study migration while being migrants themselves, or in other words, those who take an insider position in migration scholarship. They argue that migration researchers are by default drawn towards embracing methodological nationalism, and that these scholars could go beyond this tradition by dismissing the categories of commonality shared among research subjects and the researchers themselves. In this line of argument, they stress that the inherent conflation between society and a nation state breeds the misleading assumption that social reality of individuals is largely shaped by their common origin. In reality, however, a common origin in a territorially organized nation state would not necessarily produce common social traits.

Despite the common background I share with my research subjects, I reject the categorical consonance dictated by methodological nationalism explained above. Instead, I take a more transnational stance and with it a more categorical dissonance vis-à-vis my research subjects. In doing so, one way to capture the diversity of social reality and the fluidity of migratory circuits is to follow a multi-sited ethnography in data collection (Nowicka & Cieslik, 2014). The multi-sited ethnographic approach will be explained over the next sections of this chapter. Overall, in this research, I do not start from the assumption or the prejudice that the shared ethnic background of my research subjects and myself (i.e., being Chawiya from the Aures region or Batna) would

explain much of their social realities. In fact, the unit of analysis are the individual and the family rather than the ethnic community or national background or any other category of commonality.

Being a migrant who shares a common origin with the research subjects, I take the insider position as a researcher. According to Merton (1972), an insider position implies that a researcher shares the knowledge of the targeted group because of the common cultural, ethnic, linguistic, national or religious factors. This is in sharp contrast to the outsider researcher who does not have such a common heritage with their research subjects. My life as a migrant started as a child when my family migrated from a small village to the city of Batna in the early 1990s, and so did hundreds of thousands of families at the time lest be an easy target for insurgents. A few years later, deteriorating security conditions had forced us to move to neighboring Libya for two years. Like migrants who seek to adapt in their new surroundings, I had to adapt at a very young age, whether it is acquiring a new dialect, adjusting my dress code, or assimilating in a different educational system. Subsequently I had the chance to study overseas for a few years before ending up in Germany. My insider position is, therefore, influenced by the rural background that I share with my research subjects as well as the fact that I am currently a migrant myself. In a nutshell, my positionality helped me steer the research without being invasive.

4.2. Multi-sited Ethnographic Design

Rural youth outmigration in Algeria has been viewed and treated primarily as a constituent of a decades-long process of urbanization, by scholars such as Gettali (2016) and Zouzou (2008). Their research designs and data collection tools often involved using a survey method, while interviews were used only to support their quantitative approaches. The complete opposite is true in the study in hand i.e., I supplement my qualitative approach with some quantitative data. Concerning the data collection tools employed by other scholars, four issues arise from their approaches. Firstly, they overlook the special and unique socioeconomic and cultural aspects of youth in comparison to other groups in the society. Secondly, there is still debate about the roots of the problem of rural-urban migration, which raises questions about the validity of the prepared set of survey questions in addressing the real root causes and generating valid research results. Thirdly, their approaches seldom, if ever, seek to understand the perpetual nature of rural outmigration. Fourthly, a

methodological drawback in previous research literature is that they completely ignore or at least downplay the role of policy and intervention programs in the migration of young people.

In retrospect, the current study employs a multi-sited ethnographic design in order to bridge the methodological gaps with regards to migration literature about Algeria. The approach to data collection aims at constructing a case of youth rural outmigration as well as its potential triggers, circumstances, and implications, something that have not yet been resolved in the literature. A multi-sited ethnographic design is deemed appropriate as it offers answers to questions about the nature of a social problem, the system in which it takes place, and the stakeholders who have perspectives and may provide answers and solutions (Lecompte & Schensul, 2010).

A rigorous ethnographic endeavor is useful in this regard especially when the researcher seeks to document what is going on among the participants of a program, while complementing quantitative results already available from previous research (Lecompte & Schensul, 2010). Indeed, the interviewing of my research participants revealed from the onset that government programs like the Rural Housing Program, Ansej, and Agricultural Support Program all have something to do with the decisions of the rural youth to either migrate or stay. Only an ethnographic approach could unearth such underlying factors after building rapport to gain access to informants and an extensive interaction during the fieldwork. A multi-sited ethnographic approach entailed visiting different locations within the province of Banta.

The total number of municipalities visited during the fieldwork is 26, including the city of Batna. It is important, however, to point out that some municipalities were visited more than once, or even several times. Those were usually the cases when I had to schedule new appointments for another day. Examples here include Ouyoun El Assafer, Taghit, and Boumaguer. There were, however, municipalities that I visited but with no luck to schedule interviews, hence those municipalities were not highlighted on the map below. That is to say that the map of the province of Batna in **Figure 7** indicates only the 26 locations out of which all the data used in this study was gathered.

The snowball sampling to identify research participants has culminated in the markers being where they are on the map. The locations (except for Batna city) indicate either the center of the municipality, which I visited or a village within that municipality. Very small villages within the

Figure 7: Fieldwork Locations

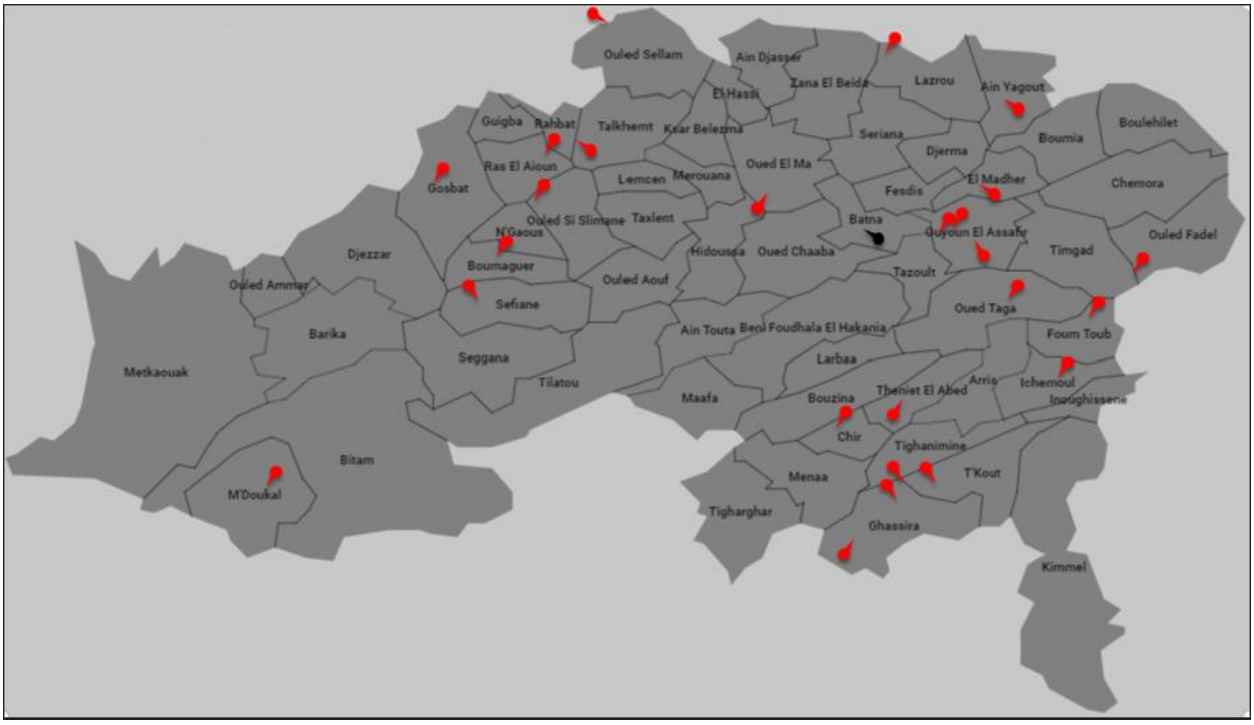

Figure 7. Prepared by the researcher.

municipalities are called "*Meshta*" in Algerian dialect and they are settlements comprising a dozen households or a little more.

Data collection process

Gathering data involved the identification of research subjects in multiple locations either in the place where migrants originate or in their receiving or host communities. Snowball sampling started in the city of Batna to identify rural migrants, which has then allowed for further identification of other research subjects in other municipalities within the confines of the province of Batna. It was not possible to visit all 61 municipalities, nor was that the goal during the fieldwork. Following a snowball sampling method in a multi-sited ethnographic study meant that I conduct interviews with research subjects in different locations until grasping the deep meaning of social reality and eventually reaching data saturation. I started this approach while bearing in mind that representation and generalization of research findings, including geographic representation is by no means the goal in a qualitative study. In Batna city, the first challenge was to know where migrants live, work, and/or hang out during their spare time. From that point

onwards, I was able to trace them back to where they originated from, in order to serve the purpose of having more interaction with them and the people in their social milieus. The different data collection instruments will be explained separately over the next sections.

Interviews with migrants and non-migrants

In this study, selecting young migrants was based on the primary criterion of whether a migrant's narrative generated from a qualitative interview would add value to the analysis or not i.e., would it contribute to answering the four research questions or not. Over time, it turned out that migrant workers would be the focus more than other demographic groups of migrants, such as university students or attendants of vocational trainings. Even though I did not initially deliberately exclude students from the interviewing process, yet after few trials it has become clear that students coming from a rural village to the city were simply conforming to the prevalent social expectations in the Algerian society. The most obvious of which is that a family is proud of their offspring only if the latter finishes their undergraduate study at the university. That is why the general answer I heard from my initial attempts to conduct interviews with migrant students was simply something along the line of "I came here because my family wanted me to". In sharp contrast to that, migrant workers expressed more interest in sharing stories about their lives and the lives of their families, and they were by far more passionate about disclosing what has been lying behind in their decision making over the past few years. Needless to say, the narratives from the interviews with migrant workers were richer and produced more substance. Unlike migrant groups who simply "go with the flow" when attending university, it is the sense of responsibility of most migrant workers towards their families which makes their qualitative accounts worthy of scrutiny. The agency of migrant workers emanates from them being breadwinners who support their families often starting even at a relatively young age. This in turn pushes them to go great lengths to be initiative and to take the risk to provide for their families. In following that quest, these people go through uncertainties, struggles, and hardships in their destinations all across Algeria and beyond. It is very probable that their traveling and experiences have made them more open-minded to share their stories with me. Identifying migrant workers in the city of Batna was the first challenge, so it became necessary for me to gain access to them through gatekeepers. Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) suggest that in order to find gatekeepers, one has to spend a considerable time working through leads in order to get to the right gatekeepers or key personalities.

Many migrant works in the city of Batna are construction workers. They gather every morning in one particular location (not far from the city center) in order to negotiate potential deals with private persons or with construction subcontractors. They simply stand there against a wall and wait until an interested client shows up to negotiate a deal with them. It was clear that morning time was not the best time to approach them for the obvious reason that it was the time of seeking a work deal and nothing else. I noticed, however, that some of them frequented a nearby internet cafe and kiosk, both of which I entered to explain to the cashiers that I am a researcher from a German university who is looking for some participants in my research. My explanation to them was brief, general, and using easy-to-understand terms. For instance, I explained that my research is about the migration of youth from rural towns to the city regardless of whether they are beneficiaries of a government program or not. I explained that the research participants that I was looking for had to be migrants working in Batna or any other province outside of Batna, but they must not be over the age of 40[40]. I also emphasized that it does not matter whether a migrant is permanently settled in Batna or temporarily residing there or commuting every day. One of the cashiers referred me to a relative of his residing in Kchida (the outskirt of Batna), and he promised that he could help in introducing me to some migrants.

Having spoken with that person in Kchida over the phone, I immediately realized that he was a potential gatekeeper so I scheduled to meet him first thing in the following morning. He too owned a kiosk and many of his customers were migrants living in the vicinity. Our meeting was fruitful as I quickly realized that he was indeed a gatekeeper since he hosted two migrants in the ground floor of his family's house and that he would not mind introducing me to them. He seemed to be knowledgeable about the life of migrants in Kchida where most of these migrants stayed due to the affordability of housing there, whether renting or buying. It turned out that two of those migrants were his relatives who stayed in his family's second (unfinished) house in Kchida. He said that they did not have to pay rent because they are "poor but good people", and that they would not mind being interviewed if he asked them to. Even though I managed to start my snowball sampling with these two arranged interviews, it was also important to build rapport by spending time with them, even meeting spontaneously several times to talk about random topics. As much

[40] Setting this age limit is because my study focuses on the rural youth migrants who are defined under several government development programs to be the target groups to alleviate rural youth unemployment.

as I asked questions, in exchange I had to respond to their questions about life in Germany and its immigration pathways, etc.

Non-migrants were also an essential component in the interviewing process, mainly because their social behavior and decision to stay rather than to migrate helps to understand why their migrant peers chose a different path. In a similar fashion to the migrants, snowball sampling was also helpful in identifying potential non-migrant interviewees. Initially, few migrants whom I interviewed in the city of Batna referred me to their siblings or friends in their home villages to which I traveled.

Expert interviews

The purpose for interviewing experts may differ from one study to another depending on the objectives, research questions and hypotheses. Bogner, Littig, & Menz (2002) assert that expert interviews might be used to explore and construct thematic lines and hypotheses in an unknown field. This includes, to complement contextual insights obtained from other data collection instruments, and/or to produce theory by compiling the inputs of various experts. In the current study, the perspective of experts on the dynamics of rural outmigration and its relation with development interventions complements other data sources with other research participants.

Unlike other research participants in other forms of qualitative data gathering, interviewees falling in this category of experts are important due to their capacity as experts about the researched topic and not for who they are as persons (Flick, 2009). Here, one may ask a question about what criteria to watch for in order to tell if a potential interviewee is in fact an expert or not. According to Bogner et al., (2002), an expert is someone who has expert knowledge, but expert knowledge here does not refer exclusively to specialist knowledge per se, as it could also encompass practical knowledge. In my fieldwork, I identified experts having both forms of knowledge, albeit those with practical knowledge were overrepresented.

Three groups of experts were identified as potential interviewees, namely local government officials, academicians, and practitioners. Local government officials were affiliated with local government institutions including the Ansej office in Batna, the Agricultural Chamber, and the Directory of Agricultural Services (DSA). Academicians were from the Department of Social Sciences and the Department of Economics at the University of Batna. Practitioners were private

business owners whose work involved any form of interaction with migrants within the migration industry[41]. These groups of experts were all deemed capable of providing process knowledge, context knowledge, or both. Process knowledge refers to information related to how specific institutions proceed, whereas context knowledge indicates the occurrences within or outside (Flick, 2009).

The initial phase of the fieldwork took place during early summer of 2016, a time when many top local officials were on their annual leave. In order to avoid waiting until they are back, I started interviewing the authority figures temporarily substituting them, such as vice presidents or deputy mayors. Luckily, this allowed for a better familiarization with the context and the most relevant thorny issues, before interviewing the main authority figures once they were back in their offices.

Focus group discussion

The kind of information I expected to generate from conducting at least one focus group discussion is related to the degree of agreement or disagreement among migrants and non-migrants as well as local officials. To clarify this, at some points during the in-depth interviews I had the impression that some interviewees exaggerated a lot when describing how the government is "maltreating" them. There was definitely a great deal of truth in what they shared with me, yet in some instances, it was as if they were playing the victimhood card[42]. That is why I insisted on bringing some of the "complainers" in the same circle of discussion with the participation of one local official from the Agricultural Chamber.

Conducting a focus group discussion was probably the most challenging data collection instrument during my fieldwork. The difficulty in organizing it emanated primarily from the multi-sited ethnographic approach that I adopted, which involved tracing research participants dispersed over a large geographic area. Generally, a group discussion has advantages as compared to isolated individual interviews or other forms of data collection in qualitative research. One thing is that it

[41] Snowball sampling led me to meet a manager and owner of a consulting firm, which provides advice related to immigration to Europe. Many of his clients and language school attendees were young people from the countryside who first came to the city of Batna for work or studying, and then decided to leave the country.

[42] In Algeria, playing victim could bring about fortunes, thanks to the relatively generous government public spending on housing, health care, education, etc. The only prerequisite for a person is that she or he has not benefited yet. With the passage of time, this has fostered a culture of dependence on the government, a side effect of a rentier state and the politics of distribution, as I explained in the second chapter.

"stimulates a discussion and uses its dynamic of developing conversation in the discussion as the central source of knowledge" (Flick, 2009: p. 196).

I managed to conduct one focus group discussion with six participants, four siblings (two rural migrants and two non-migrants), their father, and the Deputy Director of the Agricultural Chamber in Batna. Luckily, I befriended the Deputy Director following our first interview. What probably helped build this friendship was the small age gap between us, at least as compared to other officials I came across during the fieldwork. It turned out that this Deputy Director was not only influential at the Agricultural Chamber, but he also had connections at the Directory of Agricultural Services (DSA) and other government agencies responsible for development programs in rural zones. This advantage paved the way for conducting interviews with officials at those institutions. Having become friends, it was also possible to drive around some rural municipalities with him a few times, which made the focus group discussion with his participation feasible.

Questionnaires

The distinctions between qualitative research and quantitative research are often made clear and emphasized in academia but it is undeniable that both approaches borrow and use elements from each other (Holliday, 2007). The questionnaires distributed to the research participants are by no means intended to provide a quantitative dimension to the study in hand, rather a strategic tool to complement the qualitative approach. In other words, the use of the survey questionnaires contributes to the qualitative methodology, and the necessity to use them emerged only when it became clear that reaching potential interviewees without gaining significant access to many gate keepers was in fact a daunting task. Needless to say, the vast majority of rural youth (whether migrants or non-migrants) were willing to fill up a questionnaire for a few minutes, but not to sit for at least one hour to be interviewed. The best way to go around this was to distribute questionnaires to break the ice with potential interviewees on one hand and to help identify new candidates for in-depth interviewing i.e., those who were intrigued by the questions of the questionnaire and expressed interest in further discussing the contents. The questions posed in the questionnaires were carefully framed to capture the recurring themes from the few initial in-depth interviews that I previously conducted.

The questions cover themes ranging from demographic information, migration pathways, motivations, government rural employment programs, thin agency factors, and family roles. I distributed a version of the questionnaire in the Arabic language, but for the reader's reference, I include the English translation along with the Arabic version in the appendix. I traveled to rural villages (municipalities) in Batna almost every other day and asked young people sitting in coffee shops to fill up the questionnaires, with an average of 10 to 15 completed questionnaires from each municipality. The results of the completed questionnaires can also be supplemental in triangulation of findings from the qualitative data. This approach of triangulation can be helpful in confirming the accuracy of other sources of data in ethnographic endeavors (Lecompte & Schensul, 2010). Finally, the questionnaires will lead to no generalizable findings and nor will that be the objective in the first place. In fact, the expected information from the questionnaires could only serve to triangulate some general findings from the qualitative data.

4.3. Employing Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to analyze the generated data, I use qualitative content analysis as a research method, in order to analyze the qualitative data systematically. Two qualitative research methods share a lot in common, namely qualitative content analysis and grounded theory. The shared similarities make the distinction between the two blurry for many scholars employing either method. However, the main difference lies in the fact that grounded theory aims at building new theory or contributing to an existing one by capturing relationships between conceptual categories. Content analysis, on the other hand, aims at identifying these concepts and categories from the data. Also, qualitative content analysis method involves dealing with questions of what, how and why, in addition to figuring out the most recurring patterns (Cho & Lee, 2014). Following the general rules to conduct qualitative research is consistent with ensuring the quality of the content analysis. For example, applying triangulation and providing a thick description for the sake of validity (or trustworthiness or credibility) would both serve the quality of the content analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Prior to that, a thorough description of the context and background of where the fieldwork took place would allow for more transferability (Cho & Lee, 2014).

The objective in qualitative content analysis is to transform qualitative materials or texts into key results through a systematic process (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). A challenge in

implementing qualitative content analysis is the researcher's reflexivity and subjectivity, which play an important role in this process, as pointed out early on in this chapter. The difficulty emanates from the need to sufficiently address the researcher's own presuppositions, actions, choices and experiences which may go against the demands for objectivity and neutrality stressed especially in quantitative methodology (Mruck & Breuer, 2003). Even though I am familiar with the research context and have already had my own presuppositions about my research participants, it was still imperative to acknowledge the fine line which exists between, first, letting my pre-understanding be invasive and drive the entire analysis, and second, using this reflective pre-understanding only to deepen my understanding. The latter scenario is ideal in qualitative content analysis because it is about achieving a balance point where the researcher is able to prevent personal beliefs, assumptions, and opinions from affecting the analysis and results while at the same time allowing this previous knowledge to lead to further understanding of the substance from the data (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

Accordingly, I relied on my reflective pre-understanding to steer the process of data collection while on the field in a reasonable manner. For instance, when interviewing some experts, I already had an assumption of the detachment of many officials with the target populations of their programs in rural areas. However, I held a firm grip on this notion, and would not have let it affect, neither my interviews nor the data analysis. Throughout the remainder of the dissertation, I explain occasionally what my reflexivity entailed in certain situations either while on the field or when analyzing data. For the remainder of this chapter, however, content analysis as a research method is broken down in terms of how approaching transcription, coding, and interpretation were conducted in a way that is distinguishable from other data analysis methods in qualitative inquiry.

Transcription

The first step in the qualitative content analysis is transcription of audio recordings which is a necessary step leading to interpretation (Flick, 2009). The degree of exactness in transcribing varies depending on factors mainly to do with the research question and which domain in social science, but as a rule of thumb, it is reasonable to transcribe as much and as exactly as required by the research question (Strauss, 1987). The general criteria taken into consideration when transcribing includes readability, interpretability, and learnability from the perspective of both the analyst and the computer (Flick, 2009). After obtaining consent from research participants

(migrants, non-migrants, and experts), interviews were recorded using an audio-recording device to ensure high sound quality and to avoid unnecessary mishearing or misunderstanding. Transcription of the texts started in tandem with the interviewing, and for the most part, it took place simultaneously with other research activities during the field work, as well as after.

Coding process

Coding in content analysis method allows for the combination of both inductive and deductive coding strategies (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Inductive category development is based on the generated qualitative data, whereas deductive category development is based on existing theory (Mayring, 2000). In the inductive thematic coding, the researcher relies on a process of encoding important moments with codes that capture the qualitative contents out of which themes are to be developed (Boyatzis, 1998). The deductive thematic coding process, on the other hand, involves a priori preparation of a template of codes based on the research framework and question (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Accordingly, conceptual categories were generated inductively from the data, but other conceptual categories were derived from the existing theoretical framework i.e., the systems theory on migration and its related literature. An example of the inductively generated conceptual categories would be ‘rural housing’ and ‘Ansej loans’ whereas an example of the deductively generated categories would be ‘migration culture’, and ‘migrant networks’.

After the completion of the transcription of all of the audio content, transcripts were entered into the computer data management program Atlas TI in order to assign codes and identify categories and themes. It is important to note, however, that even though describing the process of coding may appear to be linear, in actuality it was far from being so as it involved extensive reading and rereading of data in order to deduce and refine the codes in a way that captured the most relevant meanings. Overall, **Table 2** shows few examples of codes, and how each code was given specific characterizations to help with the interpretation that follows. The appendix at the end of the dissertation contains the complete table with all the codes generated, their definitions, and their characteristics.

Deductive coding involved keeping the exact code labels without any change when taken from their original source, whereas code labels generated through inductive coding were derived from

the data to capture as much meaning as possible. Each generated code refers to an element in the migration system and falls under one of broad category of the system i.e., flows, institutions, structures, and strategies (Bakewell, 2012). The domain suggests whether a code label denotes a social, economic, cultural, or even political or ideological element within the system.

While the domain helps to understand the type of effect whether economic or cultural, the two other dimensions help to understand at what level such effects take place. First, the level of influence could be felt at either the micro level (the migrant or non-migrant alone), or the meso level (when the family is involved). This is particularly important since the unit of analysis in this

Table 2: Examples of the Coding Process

Code label	*Social remittances*	*Rural housing*	*Niche businesses*
Type of code	Flow Contextual (indirect)	Institution	Strategy
Definition	Refers to ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital moving from receiving to sending contexts (Levitt, 1998).	A government program aims at fixing the rural population through a fund dedicated for qualifying individuals living in designated rural localities to build a house.	Businesses employing mainly migrants in the receiving communities, which tend to increase the demand for new migrants (Bakewell, 2012).
Source of data	Deductive	Inductive	Deductive
Domain	Sociocultural	Socioeconomic	Economic
Level of influence	Meso	Meso	Micro
System element	Feedback mechanism (direct)	Rural housing	Urban labor market

Note. Adapted from "Migration System Formation and Decline: A Theoretical Inquiry into the Self-perpetuating and Self-undermining Dynamics of Migration Processes" by H. De Haas, 2009, *University of Oxford,* p. 9.

research inquiry is the family, and not the migrant or non-migrant per se. The last dimension denotes under which system element (as illustrated in the conceptual framework) would each code fall. For example, social remittances fall under remittances, which in turn belongs to the direct feedback mechanisms.

Interpretation and presentation of findings

Results of any academic research are facts that have to be interpreted and given meaning by the researcher in order to respond to the questions like "so what?" and "why is this important?" (Lecompte & Schensul, 2010). One objective of employing qualitative content analysis is to convert raw qualitative texts systematically (using a process of condensing) into a summary of understandable results covering different levels of abstraction. The higher levels of abstraction indicate more latent meaning of the texts, whereas the lower levels of abstraction suggest close to the text and manifest content (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017) as the example shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Text Interpretation by Transforming Literal Content into Latent Content

Less abstraction

"I have been working at this family shop for the past 15 years and until now I couldn't save to buy a car… I am 30 years old… I have no insurance coverage, and I am not married"	*Literal text*
Helping my family does not earn me enough to get married, buy a car, and have insurance	*Compressed meaning*
Family-related work	*Code*
Working unemployed	*Category*
Rural unemployment	*Theme*

More abstraction

Note. Adapted from "A hands-on Guide to Doing Content Analysis, by C. Erlingsson and P. Brysiewicz, 2017" *African Journal of Emergency Medicine,* Volume. 7, Issue. 3, p. 94, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.afjem.2017.08.001

The initial transition from literal texts into condensed meaning units involves shortening the texts while preserving the core meaning. Then using no more than two or three words, condensed meanings are assigned specific codes or labels to make them distinguishable from one another. I grouped the codes, which refer to similar aspects and meanings together to form a category or a subcategory, depending on whether many or few codes are generated. Categories and subcategories are latent content that reflect the content of manifest text in the most succinct way possible. Meanwhile, themes express the highest latent level using metaphoric or poetic words or expressions to communicate with the reader at both the intellectual and emotional level while offering hints into the underlying meaning (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

Overall, the process of interpretation involved assigning codes using Atlas ti, and from that point it was possible to heighten the level of abstraction and include categories, themes, and all relevant conceptual categories. The empirical chapters are broken down thematically, so headlines often refer to either themes or conceptual categories. In the text that comes underneath each headline, I explain the themes and categories using the generated codes from Atlas ti, or condensed meaning units. Meaning units come between quotation marks denoting the literal wordings of my research participants, in the exact way I translated and transcribed them into English. For the sake of keeping privacy of those who participated in the in-depth interviews, I use pseudonyms instead of the real names. This is not the case, however, with experts whose real names and positions are stated with precision, after having read to them some critical terms stated in a consent form[43].

Finally, it is also noteworthy to mention that findings in the next two empirical chapters also delineate how the themes or the conceptual categories relate and interact with each other. All themes and categories fit into the conceptual framework. Within this holistic framework, I borrow some theoretical underpinnings from two other theories of migration in order to explain few specific aspects of rural urban migration, namely the structural push and pull factors.

[43] Expert interviewees did not show any objection to the terms stated in the consent form, and in fact most of them granted me the green light to share whatever information they provided me with, including their names and the titles of their positions. However, with migrants and non-migrants it varied from one respondent to another, but in general the consent form did not make them feel at ease, so I decided to make it verbally clear that their identities will not be disclosed in any way, shape, or form.

4.4. Description of the Data and the Settings

All data generated throughout the fieldwork is summarized in **Table 4**, which also connects the dots as to what data collection method is used to answer which research question. For example, expert interviews were meant to partially address the third research question, particularly in regards to how local government officials view the efficacy and viability of the three development programs and their implications on rural youth in Batna.

Table 4: Summary of the Data

Data collection tool	*General description*	*Research question/s addressed*	*Sample size / constituents*	*Location/s*
In-depth interviews	1-2 hours interviews with migrants and non-migrants in 20 municipalities.	1, 2, 3, and 4	30 (22 migrants and 8 non-migrants)	Ain Yagout, Boumager, Chir, Foum Toub, Ghosbat, Ghoufi, Ichemoul, Merial, Mssil, Oued Elma, Ouled Fadhel, Ouled Si Sliman, Oued Taga, Ouyoun El Assafer, Ras Layoun, Sefiane, Sidi Manser, Taghit, Thniet Laabed, Tkout.
Expert interviews	1-2 hours interviews with experts	3	16 (13 local officials and 3 academicians)	Batna city, Ichemoul, Ghassira, Lazrou, Sefiane.
Focus group discussion	A 1,5-hour group discussion about the agricultural support	3	1 (6 participants)	Merial.
Informal discussions	20-30 minute discussions held informally	1, 2, 3, and 4	10 (rural non-migrants)	Amdoukal, Boumaguer, Elmaader, Lazrou, Oued Elma, Talkhemt, Tkout.
Primary sources	Official documents from the Province of Batna, Ansej, Agricultural Chamber, and DLEP	1 and 3	4 (official documents and statistics)	Batna city.
Secondary sources	Doctoral dissertations obtained from the library of the University of Batna	1 and 2	3	Batna city.
Secondary sources	Recordings of a local radio program about rural development in Batna	3	8	Batna city.
Questionnaires	Questionnaires distributed to complement the qualitative output	1, 2, 3, and 4	204 (migrants and non-migrants)	Ain Yagout, Boumager, Chir, Foum Toub, Ghosbat, Ghoufi, Ichemoul, Merial, Mssil, Oued Elma, Ouled Fadhel, Ouled Si Sliman, Oued Taga, Ouyoun El Assafer, Ras Layoun, Sefiane, Sidi Manser, Taghit, Thniet Laabed, Tkout.

Note. Prepared by the researcher.

The table also offers a general overview of the size and kind of samples under each data collection tool, as well as the location or locations where it took place. Overall, the general settings in each marked location on the map are summarized in **Table 5** below, which is also included in the appendix of the dissertation in order to make it convenient for the reader to refer to when reading through the next chapters.

Table 5: General Characteristics of the Settings

Location	*Population*	*Population density (people per Km2)*	*Average household size*	*Marriage rate (‰)*	*Total land mass (Km2)*	*Agricultural land size (Km2)*	*Used irrigated agricultural land (Km2)*	*Share of irrigated land (% of agricultural land)*
Batna city	325,178	2,793	5.5	11.7	116.0	40.0	0.6	1.5
Ain Yagout	12,305	80	5.3	7.1	154.0	120.0	5.9	4.9
Amdoukal	10,483	42	6.0	7.4	252.0	227.0	5.1	2.2
Boumaguer	9,236	83	7.1	7.0	111.0	60.0	4.5	7.5
Chir	5,610	72	5.9	11.9	78.0	27.4	0.6	2.2
Elmaader	20,836	208	5.4	9.1	99.0	64.4	3.1	4.8
Foum Toub	6,146	57	5.5	12.3	108.0	86.0	9.0	10.5
Ghassira	7,933	34	6.1	11.7	234.0	150.6	2.4	1.6
Ghosbat	18,005	64	5.7	10.0	281.0	190.0	1.8	0.9
Ghoufi*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Ichemoul	10,516	85	5.8	10.9	123.0	70.0	9.4	13.4
Lazrou	5,532	34	6.9	9.7	160.4	160.2	23.4	14.6
Meriel*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Mssil*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Oued Elma	22,998	117	6.3	8.7	196.0	64.0	7.9	12.3
Ouled Fadhel	11,604	56	5.8	10.8	206.0	163.2	6.1	3.7
Ouled Si Sliman	13,240	85	6.6	9.8	156.0	69.0	10.3	14.9
Oued Taga	19,615	78	6.1	9.8	249.0	123.7	6.5	5.3
Ouyoun El Assafer	13,659	85	5.2	6.1	160.0	100.0	4.5	4.5
Ras Layoun	25,563	220	6.1	10.6	115.0	75.0	7.6	10.1
Sefiane	16,240	90	6.9	11.8	181.0	146.3	12.4	8.5
Sidi Manser*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Taghit*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Talkhemt	21,624	123	6.3	9.9	176.0	110.0	4.3	3.9
Thniet Laabed	12,089	112	6.1	12.8	107.0	52.0	2.9	5.6
Tkout	11,536	62	5.4	10.3	185.0	93.6	3.5	3.7

* A village (*Meshta*), part of a municipality, for which no data is available.

Note. Adapted from "Monograph of the wilaya of Batna, by Batna Province, 2016", p. 58; 71; 101; 102.

The table shows demographic and socioeconomic data in each rural municipality that I visited during the fieldwork. Few indicators deserve some clarification. Firstly, population figures on the first column should be treated with caution, and the reason being the fact that each municipality has several adjacent settlements, so the actual number for the center of the municipality may actually be lower. For example, in the municipality of Bomaguer, several small settlements are situated a few kilometers apart. This means that the population of 9,236 on the table indicates not just the center of Boumaguer but also its adjacent "*Meshtas*" as well. Additionally, it is not clear whether the household average size includes sent migrants or not. Therefore, what is specifically missing here is the average number of migrants per household in each municipality. Moreover, the share of used agricultural land is generally low, with some disparities that have to do with the relatively higher precipitation levels in the northern regions of the province of Batna. Another plausible explanation is the longstanding tradition of keeping certain agricultural activities in some municipalities. For example, Sefiane and Boumeguer, even though has a semi-desert climate, yet have always been a hub of cultivating olives and apricots. This could explain the relatively moderate share of used agricultural land in comparison to other municipalities despite having the same climatic conditions.

Data pertaining to the research participants for migrants and non-migrants is presented in **Table 6**, which is also included in the appendix to serve the purpose of a more reader-friendly dissertation. With regards to migration, the table shows whether the participant is a migrant or a non-migrant, their destination in case they are migrants, and their home village in rural Batna. The table also shows the age, gender, marital status, occupation and the highest educational level achieved by participants. The column before the last reveals whether a participant is a beneficiary of a government program until the time of conducting the interview or not. The last column shows the date when the interview was conducted. Overall, the table gives only a snapshot, which sets the stage for a "deep dive" throughout the next two chapters. Some other participants from other informal discussions are not included in the table, but a brief description precedes their quotes in the chapters to come. For expert interviewees, it is their capacity and the different kinds of knowledge they possess about the local context that makes them valuable in this research. The real names and positions of participating experts are mentioned in the next two empirical chapters, hence their exclusion from the table below.

Table 6: Research Participants (Migrants and Non-migrants)

Participant pseudonym	*Migrant / destination, or non-migrant*	*Home village*	*Age*	*Gender*	*Marital status*	*Occupation*	*Educational level*	*Beneficiary of a government program*	*Date of interview*
Bilal	Migrant / Batna city	Mssil	30	Male	Married	Construction	Middle school	/	05.08.2016
Jamal	Migrant / Batna city	Mssil	23	Male	Single	Construction	High school	/	07.08.2016
Noureddine	Migrant / Batna city	Sefiane	27	Male	Single	Works at a plant nursery	High school	/	10.08.2016
Mourad	Migrant / Batna city	Merial	33	Male	Married	Bus conductor	High school	Rrural housing	17.08.2016
Mohamed	Migrant / Algiers	Merial	32	Male	Single	Clothing shop	University	Rrural housing	19.08.2016
Ahmed	Non-migrant	Merial	30	Male	Single	Family shop	High school	Rrural housing	22.08.2016
Masinissa	Migrant / Batna city	Merial	35	Male	Married	Shop owner	University	/	25.08.2016
Issam	Non-migrant	Merial	39	Male	Married	Farmer	Primary school	Rrural housing	26.09.2016
Ali	Migrant / Algiers	Sefiane	28	Male	Single	Trainee in the oil and gas industry	University	/	28.09.2016
Sliman	Non-migrant	Sidi Manser	30	Male	Single	Family coffee shop	High school	/	02.10.2016
Adel	Migrant / Setif	Tkout	22	Male	Single	Construction	Middle school	/	05.10.2016
Zakaria	Migrant / Setif	Ouled Fadhel	36	Male	Single	Security agent for a private company	Primary school	/	09.10.2016
Toufik	Non-migrant	Taghit	31	Male	Single	Construction	University	/	23.10.2016
Rashid	Non-migrant	Taghit	29	Male	Married	Construction	Middle school	Rrural housing	24.10.2016
Anwar	Migrant / Biskra	Chir	22	Male	Single	Farmer	Middle school	/	30.11.2016
Said	Migrant / Ghosbat	Sefiane	27	Male	Single	Dentist	University	/	16.12.2016
Hamid	Non-migrant	Ichemoul	25	Male	Married	Clandestine taxi driver	High school	/	31.12.2016
Tarek	Migrant / Batna city	Oued Taga	27	Male	Single	Student / works part time in a supermarket	University	/	04.01.2017
Brahim	Migrant / Oran	Foum Toub	34	Male	Single	Goldsmith	University	/	13.01.2017
Aissa	Migrant / Batna city	Ras El-Ayoun	28	Male	Single	Construction	University	/	15.01.2017
Radwan	Migrant / Batna city	Ain Yagout	26	Male	Single	Student	University	Agricultural support	21.01.2017
Hasni	Non-migrant	Ouyoun El Assafer	33	Male	Married	Runs own pizzeria	High school	Ansej; Rrural housing	02.02.2017
Mustafa	Migrant / military	Thniet Laabed	34	Male	Married	Enlisted in the military	High school	Rrural housing	07.02.2017
Hamza	Migrant / Sahara	Boumaguer	27	Male	Single	Electrician for a construction company	Middle school	/	16.02.2017
Najla	Migrant / Batna city	Boumaguer	24	Female	Single	Student	University	/	25.02.2017
Farida	Migrant / Batna city	Oued Elma	23	Female	Single	Student	University	/	27.02.2017
Jalil	Non-migrant	Ouled Si Sliman	31	Male	Single	Works at a juice production plant	High school		01.03.2017
Riad	Migrant / Batna city	Ghoufi	27	Male	Single	Goldsmith	Middle school	Rrural housing	02.03.2017
Sami	Migrant / Sahara	Sefiane	29	Male	Single	Works at a gas field	University	/	04.03.2017
Ammar	Migrant / Batna city	Oued Elma	40	Male	Married	Construction	Middle school	/	06.03.2017

Note. Prepared by the researcher.

To sum up the content of this chapter, I first made the case for the chosen qualitative approach, including the multi-sited ethnographic design in Batna province as a case study, which is the most suitable approach to answer the research questions. Next, I explained my insider position as a migrant who studies a topic in migration and shares the background of the research participants. Then I provided insights into the different data collection methods employed, namely in-depth interviews, expert interviews, focus group discussion, and questionnaires. After that, I explained how I analyzed the data following the process of qualitative content analysis, which involved following certain rules in the transcription, coding, and interpretation. Lastly, I presented a description of all the data gathered, the settings where the fieldwork took place, and participating migrant and non-migrants in the in-depth interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE: CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRATION IN THE PROVINCE OF BATNA AND THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

This chapter is the first out of two empirical chapters of the dissertation in which the first two research questions are answered. The first question is concerned with how rural youth become migrants and which migration channels appeal to them. The second research question addressed in this chapter is concerned with the role of feedback mechanisms in the perpetuation of migration. The chapter begins with some general contextual findings related to the migratory movements currently taking place in Batna province. This is followed by a characterization of the different groups of migrants and non-migrants originating from rural Batna. I argue here that there could be more than the "working unemployed" group in rural Batna, and that different groups demonstrate different priorities vis-a-vis their migration or livelihood in general. Then I proceed with two sections to specifically answer the first two research questions. For the first question, I highlight each migration pathway separately. In answering the second question, I highlight the role of direct feedback mechanisms (social networks and remittances) as well as the indirect feedback mechanisms (relative deprivation, poverty cycles, and changing culture of migration).

5.1. General Patterns of Migration in the Province of Batna

Data collected from primary sources give a snapshot on the patterns of internal migratory movements in the province of Batna, which may also reflect the general state of affairs of demographic changes in other Algerian provinces. **Figure 8** shows the demographic changes that have occurred in the 61 districts of the province of Batna during the year 2014, which is the latest data I got my hands on from the *Wilaya* (provincial office). **Figure 8** shows the imbalanced distribution of the population between the six main urban centers in the province, which recorded a positive net natural growth rate on one hand, and the sending rural municipalities that had a negative value. Migration from rural regions adds up to the organic population growth in urban centers. Messoudan (2009) notes the contribution of migration to the imbalanced distribution of the population as well as the variation in population growth rates from one municipality to another. The net natural growth indicates the difference between registered births and deaths, so in the city of Batna whose population was 325,178 in 2014, the difference was a positive 15,952, which is the highest of all major urban centers. The other blue-colored districts on the map have also had

Figure 8: Net Natural Population Growth Rate in Batna Province in 2014

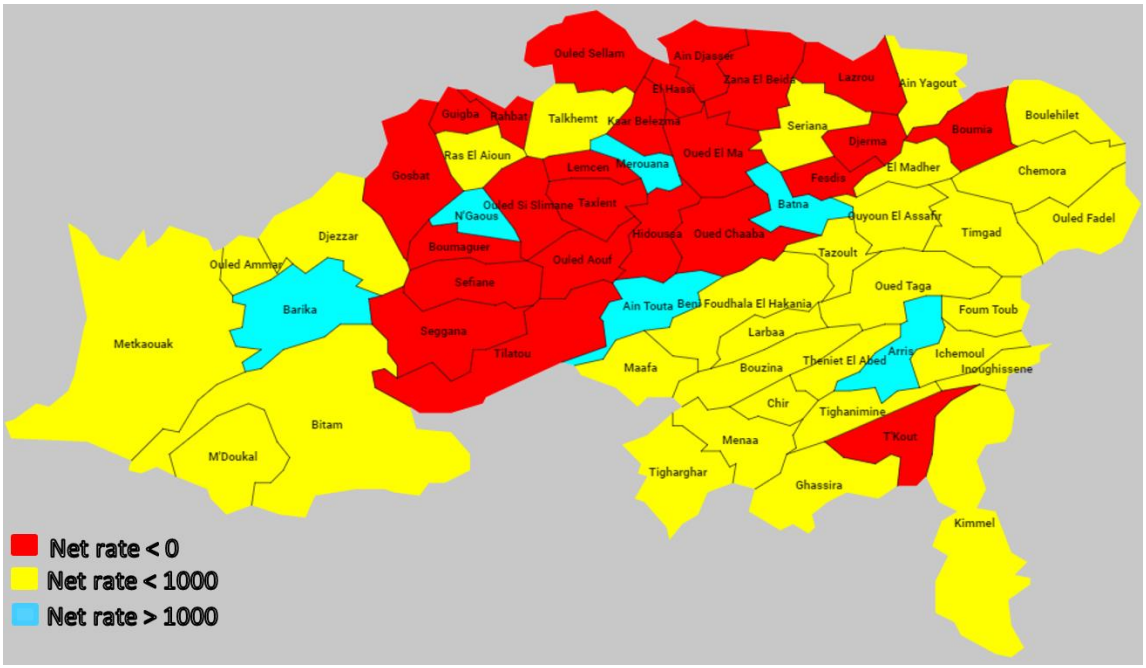

Figure 8: A map showing the variation among Batna's municipalities in terms of the net population growth rate. Adapted from *Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna* (p. 68), by Batna Province, 2016, Batna.

relatively significant net population growth of over a thousand each, namely the districts of Barika, Arris, Ain Touta, Ngaous and Merouana. Meanwhile districts highlighted in yellow had a positive difference in population growth of less than a thousand each. The main observation here, however, are the mostly-rural districts in red, which have had a negative net population growth during the same period. The shrinking size of the population in these areas may be attributed to outmigration flows. However, it could also be possible that many newborns are registered in the city due to lack of health centers and especially birth centers in the most secluded rural areas[44].

Overall, there are no statistics available on the proportion of migration leading to this demographic changes and leading to a dichotomy between urban and rural villages over space and time, as shown in **Figure 8**. On one side of the spectrum, urban centers which clearly have a positive population growth out of which migration plays a role. On the side, there are rural regions with a negative population growth, out of which migration also plays a role. Oued Elma and Ouled Sellam

[44] Some research participants reported the struggle of pregnant women who have to be transported to the city to receive necessary care for a safe delivery.

are examples of rural districts with a tradition of outmigration to the city of Batna and other urban centers. Many of the interviewed migrants who work in construction in the city of Batna come from these two districts, while others choose to work in other rural districts for a variety of reasons. It seems that even though the process of urbanization is taking place in a chaotic manner, the overall increasing rural urban integration have made it easier for these people to discover the opportunities which exist elsewhere. Understanding the different complex routes can be complicated, and for that reason, King and Skeldon (2010) provide a simplified way to depict the different migration pathways. **Figure 9** builds on their work to show all the different migration pathways originating from rural Batna.

Figure 9: Migration Pathways for the Rural Youth in Batna Province

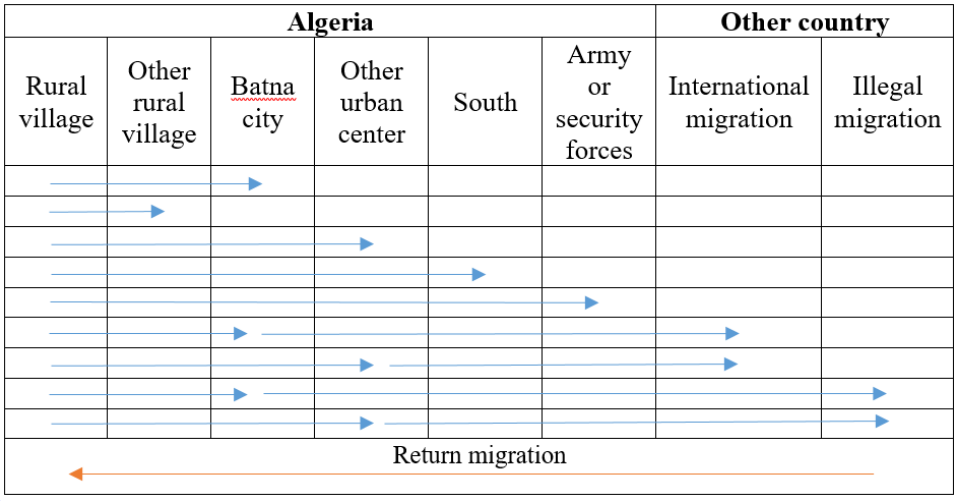

Figure 9: The different pathways of migration originating from rural Batna. Adapted from "Mind the Gap! Integrating Approaches to Internal and International Migration" by R. King & R. Skeldon, 2010, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Volume. 36, Issue 10, p. 1622.

The graph reflects how migration choices can be complex, even when not counting for those pathways that may involve some form of return migration. Also in the graph, the way in which migration channels are ordered does not necessarily reflect the volume of migration since no quantification in data collection was involved. It appears, however, that many migrants gravitate more towards the largest urban centers, or at least that is how it usually begins. This rural-urban migration may precede a cross-border migration, in order to form the transition, which may help migrants adjust to the urban lifestyle in their own country before moving abroad (King & Skeldon, 2010).

The remaining two pathways, namely the south of Algeria and engagement with the army or security forces seem to be largely context specific. This is the case since the former applies only to a setting with rentier-state characteristics as previously demonstrated in the background chapter, while the latter emerged to be a significant context-specific migration channel only during the fieldwork. These two migration choices do not allow for a staged transition towards international migration, for reasons I elaborate respectively later in the chapter. When adding return migration to the picture, however, it is often a temporary one for the returnees until they find another migration opportunity that is worth the venture. In the words of Hasni, a returnee migrant whom I interviewed in his pizzeria in Ouyoun El Assafir[45]:

> "I would travel to wherever I could find work. I was working in Algiers with a group of friends not long ago. We stayed there for one month then we came back after we had finished our job. It's always like that; sometimes we stay for a month somewhere, then for several months elsewhere then we come back home to be jobless for two months and so on". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Return migration from the city to the home village is, therefore, only temporary and is part of the irregular migration patterns demonstrated by research subjects. There is no consensus in academia and migration scholarship as of what constitutes irregular migration since it has been used in migration scholarship to refer to different kinds of migration. Probably the most common meaning in international migration movements refers to the migration flows outside the legal or regular channels, which involve either entering a country without necessary documents or entering legally then overstaying without valid papers. Here in this study, however, it refers to the general meaning i.e., the kind of intermittent migration movements which occur in an ad hoc fashion, lasts for an undetermined period of time between different destinations, and may involve periods of return migrations to the origin communities.

However, one should not confuse return migration with migrant visitations to their villages over the weekends or during national or religious public holidays. The migrant visitations and their frequency can be incorporated within the concept of migration intensity i.e., the extent to which

[45] A rural village of 13,659 inhabitants (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), about 20 KM away to the east of the city of Batna.

do migrants shift their attachment from their place of origin to their destination[46] (Kaufman, 2007). A high intensity of migration means that migrants cut their ties with their families and old friends. In contrast, a low intensity of migration indicates that a migrant prefers to maintain his old connections and for that, he would travel back to his origin community as often as possible. During my interview with Riad, a rural migrant from Ghoufi[47] and works as a goldsmith in Batna city, he vents his discontent with social life in his destination by saying: "My only solace is being home with my family during the weekends". (Riad, personal communication, Ghoufi, 02.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author). Bilal, a 30-year old from Mssil[48] says: "My village is about 150 KM away from Batna but I have to travel back as often as possible because I support all of my family members". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). Migration for Riad and Bilal is a family endeavor, and their existence in the destination is unavoidable and a means to an end, which is supporting their families, rather than an end in itself.

5.2. The Inhomogeneity of Migrants from Rural Batna

In his study about the challenges facing rural youth in Africa, White (2012) used the term "working-unemployed" to describe those who stay behind while waiting for an opportunity to emerge. I leverage on the narratives obtained from the qualitative data as well as the migration questionnaires[49] to demonstrate that describing all rural youth as "working-unemployed" is like painting them all with a broad brush. Looking at the socioeconomic background of respondents on one hand and migration on the other highlights significant disparities. It is important to discuss the differences that exist in the social behavior and decision-making of young migrants and non-migrants alike. In addition to the precision in describing my research subjects, distinguishing between those who are more prone to migration and those who are more likely to be sedentary serves another purpose. It helps to come up with conclusions as to which and how development

[46] While migration intensity is concerned with the degree to which migrants retain or discard their attachment to their place of origin, extensive migration is a distinct concept that indicates how likely it is for a non-migrant to become a migrant (Kaufmann, 2007).
[47] Ghoufi is a small village in the commune of Ghassira in the south east of the province of Batna. The region used to be touristy back in the 1970s and 1980s, thanks to the Berber ruins, known as the ancient Berber village.
[48] A small rural village in the commune of Ouled Sellam in the north of the province of Batna bordering the province of Setif.
[49] A total of 204 questionnaires were completed. A sample of which can be found in the appendix at the end of the dissertation.

programs could better target these inhomogeneous groups in a way that accommodates their aspirations, inner thoughts, and feelings. In the next few paragraphs, I highlight few examples of the existing discrepancy among these different groups.

There are indeed non-migrants (or returnees) in rural Banta who match the working-unemployed characterization given by White (2012). At the age of 30, Sliman earns very little from working at a family coffee shop in Sidi Manser[50], but he says that it is enough for a pocket money. He admits that he does not know how to search for jobs and unless one of his brothers help him, he would keep his job as a waiter. Sliman expresses lethargy towards change since there is a high degree of dependency on his older brothers and family either for financial support or to secure an actual job. He had worked previously for a public company in Batna city, thanks to his elder brother's intermediation, but then quit after an accident. Today, however, he spends his free time socializing at the same coffee shop where he works with his peers playing dominoes or watching local or European football matches. According to White (2012), this "waithood" period until a "proper" job comes along may take months or even years. In fact, when there is a lack of education, as in the case of Sliman who dropped out of his first year of high school, and with a rigid local labor market, then the waithood period could take a lifetime.

There are, however, those who refuse to succumb to what their rural village has to offer them, so they search for work opportunities all over the country and are constantly active in searching for migration opportunities. Jalil works for a juice factory in Ngaous[51] but he is from a nearby municipality called Ouled Si Slimane[52] where we scheduled to meet at a coffee shop for an interview. Jalil has engaged in different jobs in different locations in the country. However, he does not wish to move beyond national borders because of what he perceives as educational, language, and cultural barriers, which seem problematic and even insurmountable to him. In Algeria, however, he has many friends who represent an invaluable social capital for him to find jobs or to travel in groups in order to reduce the cost of migration. Due to the limited educational background, he has only been employed in the informal sector. Jalil is relatively independent and

[50] Sidi Manser is a hamlet, which belongs to the municipality of Ouyoun El Assafer.
[51] A small city of 32,367 residents (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), situated about 95 KM to the west from Batna city. It is famous for its apricot production, Ngaous juice factory, and a sports' shoe factory that used to operate under a license from the German company Adidas.
[52] Ouled Si Slimane is located about 95 KM to the west of Batna city, and has a population of 13,240 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). Virtually all of its residents are Chawiya who belong to the Ouled Sultan tribe.

even supports his family financially. Migration, according to Jalil, is sort of a "necessary evil" but his mantra is: "I would go to wherever I could earn bread and butter". (Jalil, personal communication, Ouled Si Sliman, 01.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author). However, the absence of job security puts Jalil in a disadvantageous and precarious situation and may lead him to a state of unemployment for several weeks or months. In the long term, Jalil thinks that marriage would dictate his return back to the village. By this time, he hopes to be able to finish building a house to settle down, while possibly launching a small business such as a restaurant, a pizzeria or a coffee shop.

There are migrants who moved only internally (within country borders) but are not satisfied with the perks in the city they go to or any other destination, urban or otherwise. Anwar, a 22-year old migrant, used his temporary stay for work in the coastal city of Oran[53] to obtain information about illicit migration channels to Spain. He says that he took the risk because he was fed-up with the status-quo and because he had little or nothing to lose. In other words, no opportunity cost incurred in his decision to try clandestine cross-border migration. Even though his attempt has failed and he got deported by the Spanish authorities, yet his momentum and desire to try anew is unfazed. The hopelessness that he associates with staying combined with the idealized (even unrealistic) images about life in Europe (and particularly Germany) dwarf any chance for him to stay. Anwar is financially dependent on his family, so he does not feel burdened with any responsibility towards other family members in case of his absence. In fact, he feels that he is the burden on his family and a quick-fix action can be the solution. Not only does "*Haragga*" (illegal migration) represents an affordable quick-fix option, but other illegal means to earn a living can also become attractive. Indeed, Anwar and a few other respondents admitted taking part in delinquency as well as the trading of illegal substances and smuggling in some cases.

Furthermore, there are those students who return to the village after they have finished their education and spend a period of quiescence during which they seek to reconcile with the reality on the ground. I met Toufik in the home village of Taghit[54] to which he returned after he had spent four years studying in Batna. It took him a long time to come to terms with the fact that he actually returned to a local labor market that offers anything but jobs to university graduates. He found that

[53] Coastal city in the north west of Algeria, about 800 KM away from Batna. It is the second largest city in Algeria.
[54] A small village in the commune of Tkout in the southwestern part of the province of Batna. The village is famous for being the site where the war of liberation in 1954 was launched against the French colonizer.

his law degree was useless and he describes his frustration experienced at the beginning of his return:

> "When I first came back, I was completely devastated and my morale was down all the time, but over time I got over it and got used to it. Now I am okay doing construction work here and there. I try not to think about it too much". (Toufik, personal communication, Taghit, 23.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

With the passage of time, Toufik became complacent with his situation and became sedentary getting by only with what the local informal labor market has to offer him. He also expressed little motivation in seeking better employment prospects in the city or elsewhere because he feels jaded. Many interviewees like Toufik feel betrayed by the educational and labor system they once believed in, so they cease to try to be part of it. They are also less likely to have (or even care to build) extensive social networks which could pave the way for a possible migration in the future.

Unlike Toufik, however, there are migrants who have completed their university studies and then managed to secure a relatively stable job in the formal sector (public or private), including those working in the Sahara and those who engage with the army. These internal migrants show ambivalent views regarding further migration, especially abroad. Said, a 27-year old migrant from Sefiane[55], has been working at a public health facility in Ghosbat[56] after he had finished his study. He expresses mixed feelings about the possibility to move to Germany. He plans his visa application and papers to a country he describes as the ideal place for studying health-related fields, yet at the same time he expresses a hesitation to give up his current job. He seemed extremely careful about the next move, but his moderate openness towards international migration could turn into a real project given the right conditions through regular channels.

There are, however, those university graduates who would do anything it takes to make it to Europe or America. University graduates are overrepresented among the unemployed population in Batna

[55] Sefiane is situated in the west of the province of Batna in the district of Ngaous, about 75 KM away from Batna city. It had a population of 16,240 in 2016 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It is inhabited by two ethnic groups: an Arab ethnic group known as (*Khoudran*) who are mostly concentrated in the center and own businesses along the main road, and a Berber Chawiya ethnic group known as (*Ouled Sultan*) mostly concentrated in the hinterland and live off farming and migration. The commune is known locally for the cultivation of olives and its high quality olive oil.

[56] Ghosbat is one of the municipalities of Ras El-Ayoun, located about 110 KM to the west of Batna city, and has a population of 18,005 residents (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). The vast majority of the population are chawiya.

and Algeria in general, but that could only partly explain their desire to migrate at any cost. After spending four years at the University of Batna, Radwan (a 26-year old migrant from Ain Yagout[57]) works part time in Batna while engages in temporary agricultural work in his village. He says that some people in his village are affluent despite their limited education. He mocks their "uncultured" behavior and refuses to follow the path they have taken to become wealthy. Instead, he says: "I am currently working on my student visa application to go to Germany, and meanwhile I am attending a German language course in Batna city five times a week to prepare for that". (Radwan, personal communication, Ain Yagout, 21.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author). From a purely financial standpoint, Radwan realizes that he is lagging behind his peers who dropped out many years ago and have since engaged in trade, a family business, farming, or some activities in the informal sector. Today he considers his university education as a key to an international migration destination with a significant opportunity and wage differentials. Radwan rejects his rural existence, and therefore would try to emigrate, in order to catch up with or "leapfrog" his fellow uneducated (yet better-off) villagers.

The above characterization shows just how disparate are the priorities for the rural youth in Batna, including their perceptions of migration as a livelihood option for them and their families. Some prefer internal migration because they are better off keeping a relatively good job in the formal sector, but others would go to great lengths to arrive to the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. In contrast, there are also the most sedentary who make ends meet with the little demand for their labor in the local rural market. In the sixth chapter, the reader will explore how the development programs implemented by the government ignore such differences and treat all youth with a one-size-fits-all kind of approach. In the next section of this chapter, I walk the reader through the different migration channels, starting with the most common one i.e., rural-to-urban migration.

5.3. Different Migration Channels

Migrants choose among six migration pathways, namely rural-urban, rural-rural, the Sahara, army engagement, international migration, and *Harraga* (illegal migration). The following sections

[57] Inhabited by 12,305 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), about 35 KM north of Batna city. Ain Yagout is a semi-rural village or a small city which is becoming an industrial hub in the region with mega projects taking place, including a partnership between Sonelgaz (the national power company) and General Electric which is expected to reduce unemployment among the local youth.

highlight the implications as well as the adjustment mechanisms taken by migrants and their families, which may vary depending on the migration channel. It is noteworthy here to mention that the systems theory on migration emphasizes the role of institutions, flows, and structures in forming migration as a self-reinforced system over time. The findings pertaining to the rural-urban migration are broken down in accordance with two theories of migration. The dual labor market theory explains the structural pulling factors, whereas the new economics of labor migration theory (NELM) explains the structural push factors.

Rural-urban migration: Structural pull and push forces

Structures, even when imposed artificially by governments, can significantly affect migration movements (King & Skeldon, 2010). However, governments may not necessarily shape structures per se, instead they can emanate simply from demographic and socioeconomic factors and transformations. The bifurcated labor market in the city of Batna is one outcome of such transformations where government policies play no role, at least not directly. The local conditions of the job market are conducive for migrants to work in market niches where there is little or no competition with the natives. In fact, entrepreneurial niches of migrants have been overemphasized in international migration scholarship but they are by no means less relevant in internal movements (King & Skeldon, 2010).

Outside the formal sector, two groups of migrants represent the lion's share of the migrant stock in Batna city, namely construction workers and goldsmiths. Construction workers take advantage of the structural bifurcation of the labor market and take the jobs that are associated with lower social status by the native urban population. Meanwhile goldsmiths choose a niche sector, which requires a technical know-how that is difficult to master, hence keeping potential market entrants at bay. Construction workers originate mainly from rural municipalities located north of the province of Batna, such as Oued Elma and Mssil. Goldsmiths originate primarily from the mountainous areas in the southeastern corner of the province of Batna, such as Thniet Laabed and Ichemoul. The next paragraphs breaks down the structural pull and push factors that contribute to the migration out of the countryside in Batna, including that of construction workers and goldsmiths. The structural pull factors are broken down in accordance with the dual labor market theory embedded into the conceptual framework, whereas the structural push factors are in line with the theoretical underpinnings of the new economics of labor migration theory (NELM). It is

noteworthy here that other (often overemphasized in the literature) push and pull factors that could be classified as institutions are described within other sections of this chapter and the next chapter, each under its relevant corresponding theme.

Structural Pull factors

For both groups, the main reason behind choosing this migration channel is the existing wage differential. Jamal, 23-years old, is a migrant from Mssil. He works in construction in Kchida (the outskirts of the city of Batna). I interviewed him at a coffee shop in Kchida in one evening after he has finished work. He explains how the wage differential can decide where to go next:

> "On average I earn 60,000 DA (450 Euros) per month, but it depends a lot on how much work is demanded here. In Algiers I used to earn much more compared to Batna, so I may return back there after the Eid holiday". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Jamal stresses the differences in wages as a primary incentive for his migration not only by comparing wages between his rural village and the city but also between the city and another (often larger) city like Algiers or Oran. He and his peers are rational actors who conduct this kind of a cost-benefit analysis in order to maximize their returns from their migration regardless of which destination.

Goldsmiths also face a similar situation in the informal sector in Batna since they work in illicit workshops across the city. Workshops are set up in garages scattered across different parts of the city of Batna in order to keep a low profile and remain undetected, lest facing punitive measures by the local authorities. When asked about what makes the informal sector so attractive for these goldsmiths, Riad, a 27-year old migrant who works at his uncle's illicit workshop said:

> "Because otherwise we would have to pay high taxes if we report truthfully how much we are earning. It's a dilemma because on one hand we try to evade taxes but on the other hand the law does not protect us if something goes wrong, say if we get robbed for example. We can be a favorite target and an easy prey for robbers here in the city". (Riad, personal communication, Ghoufi, 02.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The dual labor market theory explains the structural pulling forces in the destination, namely the bifurcation of the labor market in the city of Batna and other major cities, which creates a chronic structural demand for migrant labor from adjacent rural villages. Firstly, construction

subcontractors in the city are under pressure emanating from the structural inflation in the hierarchy of the job market, which sets a ceiling for maximum wages. Under such conditions, hiring migrants who are less likely to negotiate high wages and social protection benefits becomes favorable for employers, and with a seamless supply of migrant labor, it creates a long-term dependency. Migrants express hesitation to work for contractors, nevertheless, and prefer to work independently for private clients. They attribute this to the fact that contractors pay them less since they are obliged to provide employment insurance. Quoting Bilal, a 30-year old construction worker from Mssil and works in Batna:

> "I don't trust contractors anymore from my past experience working for them. They may cover my insurance because they are obligated by law, but they may delay the payment of my salary, or pay me less than what we agreed upon at the beginning. I could only work for contractors that I know and trust, but in general I would rather work for people". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

When choosing between having a decent salary and getting social insurance, Amin prioritizes a higher salary or wage. Being the breadwinner of his family in Mssil puts a lot of pressure on him to provide for his family in the short-term. This in turn dwarfs, in his view, the perks that could come from receiving social insurance in the long-term (including retirement and health insurance coverage). Jamal, the other construction worker in Batna (also from Mssil), describes this dilemma from his own perspective:

> "It's a dilemma because contractors may provide me with insurance but pay me little, whereas with people I get no insurance but get paid higher wages. For example, if I work for someone to have a house cement rendered, a contractor may offer 170 DA (1,4 EUR) per meter square, whereas a private house owner would offer 400 DA (3,25 EUR) per meter square. You see the difference? So, it makes no sense to work for a contractor. I left my village because my family depends on me to provide for them. I am the maestro". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Secondly, the dual labor market theory also stresses the motivational factor i.e., most migrants take the unskilled jobs that shun away natives especially in construction and the services sector not minding the stigma associated with their jobs in their destinations because their reference group is the community back home. Quoting Toufik from Taghit, a 31-year-old university graduate who works as a construction worker:

> "I work only for private clients who request any kind of construction work, and I have no problem doing it no matter how difficult. I am glad that at least I do not engage in the stone cutting work which many people in my village do despite its fatal effects". (Toufik, personal communication, Taghit, 23.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Here Toufik compares what he does for a living only to the hundreds or may be thousands of young men from his home village and nearby villages who work in cutting marble stones used to decorate facades of private houses even when they risk losing their lives[58].

Thirdly, the economic dualism or the bifurcated labor market in Batna gives employers more flexibility in hiring or firing migrant workers. It is not uncommon for migrant workers to shift between low-paid unskilled jobs in the city. Jalil, the 31-year old from Ouled Si Sliman, says the following:

> "Currently I am working for the juice processing plant in Ngaous, but before that I was working for a company in Tlemcen in the west of Algeria for about two years. I have also been to many places to make a living, apart from Tlemcen, I have worked in Batna, Oran, Bordj Bouaririj, and even in the south of the country in Tindouf, Tamanrasset, and Djanet. I have worked mostly in restaurants owned by people from our region, but it doesn't work out well all the time. Like in Batna I moved there with a friend just for a few days, because we didn't like the way the owner of the restaurant was treating us. He did not like us either so he fired us immediately". (Jalil, personal communication, Ouled Si Sliman, 01.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

It is noteworthy that the flexibility and ease with which employers can hire and fire workers in the informal sector can indirectly create a long-term dependency on migrant labor exclusively, since migrants have no legal rights and no bargaining power vis-à-vis employers.

Fourth, informal discussions reveal that there is an increasing general impression that many jobs in the public sector are taken by women. Statistically this is an unfounded claim and is far from the truth[59], yet women are becoming more visible especially as salaried functionaries in public administrations. This in turn breeds a sense of discontent among unemployed men or men who

[58] Silicosis is an incurable lung occupational disease that has affected hundreds of young men in the province of Batna over the past few years. According to interviewees, inhaling fine dust particles when using no dust mask is believed to be the reason behind over 130 death cases affecting mostly migrant workers from villages like Tkout, Taghit, and Ghassira.

[59] The size of the active female population in Algeria is no more than 2 million compared to about 9 million males. The public sector employs 37 percent of the labor force, however, there is an overrepresentation of females in this sector with three quarters of working women being salaried employees in the public sector.

engage only in low-paid unskilled jobs in the informal sector. Traditionally women and children were the ones who took jobs in the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, particularly those in the informal sector. In recent years, however, rising educational levels of women and extended years of schooling for children have squeezed these two groups out of the informal sector (with women becoming more active in the formal sector). This societal transformation has created a gap for employers in the informal sector and jobs in the lower occupational hierarchy in general. Faced with a shortage in the supply of these jobs, the last resort for employers becomes the supply of migrant labor.

Structural Push factors

The new economics of labor migration theory (NELM) suggests that structural market conditions related to crop insurance, unemployment insurance, capital and futures all provide incentives for families to diversify risk in their livelihood strategies. Research participants indirectly referred to such imperfect market conditions, which according to them add more pressure on them and their families to consider migration as a livelihood option. Rashid is a 29-year-old returnee in Taghit. He is married and has two children. He had been a migrant for several years in Batna city before returning to his village when he got married. He says:

> "Our small farm, just like all farms in our village are situated on the valley and could not recover from the flood in 2010 which had caused so much devastation. It happened at night and I remember waking up the following morning to see the damage. People were shocked. Ever since, my father has been gradually trying to replant trees like figs, apricots, and pomegranates, and few palms without any help from the government". (Rashid, personal communication, Taghit, 24.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Failure of the harvest to reach expected levels, due to natural events such as flooding[60] or man-made events such as fires, is not compensated by Algeria's Ministry of Agriculture. The absence of a crop insurance discourages Rashid from engaging in agricultural activity on his family's small farm. He says that he earns decent cash doing construction work in his village and nearby hamlets.

[60] Informal discussions with older farmers in Taghit and nearby municipalities along the valley reveal that the flood is a recent phenomenon, which they have not experienced growing up in the region. They suspect climate change to be responsible for the high frequency and severity of the recent floods.

However, even when Rashid's family is lucky enough to harvest crops or fruits and vegetables, there is still an eminent risk of falling prices below breakeven levels. Rashid says that this happens a lot, and when there is an oversupply in the market he and other farmers give away their fruits to people for free to avoid keeping it until it spoils. Similarly, Ahmed is a 30-year-old non-migrant from Merial[61], and he thought about investing in an agricultural activity so that he could escape the family shop, which he has been keeping for many years. He describes his experience as follows:

> "I don't earn much from this family shop. I tried agricultural work here last year, I tried to grow lettuce but the whole thing went bankrupt, because by the time I harvested it the market price plunged to 10 DA (0,08 EUR) per Kilogram. That is ridiculous. It was disastrous for me because I invested all my saved money and now it's all gone, and now I am still stuck in this shop". (Ahmed, personal communication, Merial, 22.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Ahmed says that he would not engage in agriculture again unless if there were guarantees by the government. He describes agricultural work as a risky business, even more risky than gambling. In addition to the lack of a future insurance, which could have otherwise saved Ahmed's agricultural enterprise there is also no unemployment insurance. This could pose the biggest source of vulnerability for Ahmed and likewise the unemployed rural youth who could fall through the cracks as a result. Similar to Ahmed, Sliman (the 30-year-old returnee who works at a relative's coffee shop in Sidi Manser) used to be a migrant working at Cosider, which is a state-owned company near Batna city. He had a work accident and never returned to that company ever again. When I asked him about the reason behind, he said this:

> "What I do now at my relative's coffee shop is a temporary work, because if I find another job with employment insurance of course I would quit this job in a heartbeat. The problem with my previous job at Cosider is that when I had an accident, the company had to pay my salary for six months only because that's what the 2-year work contract I had with them stipulated". (Sliman, personal communication, Sidi Manser, 02.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Sliman was unable to renew his contract with his employer and has by default become unemployed (or under-employed in the informal sector). What adds insult to injury for people like Sliman is that there is no unemployment insurance provided by the government. And finding another job in the formal sector requires connections and pulling strings especially when educational levels are

[61] Meriel is one of the rural settlements in the commune of Ouyoun El Assafer, about 25 KM to the east of Batna, famous for apple production.

rudimentary as is the case with Sliman who dropped out of his first year of high school. In fact, when I asked him whether he is looking for a new job or not, he said that he is not actively looking because he does not know how to do it, and had it not for his older brother's intervention he would not have gotten the first job at Cosider.

The last structural push factor in developing societies according to the NELM is the underdeveloped capital markets, which is precisely the case in Algeria. A well-developed banking system would make it possible for the rural population and farm families to save their money or to access loans to be invest in the farm. Bilal (the construction worker from Mssil working in Batna city) barely sees any value in banking, as he put it: "I give the money I earn to my mother so that she keeps it for me. I have never had a bank account so she is like my bank". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). Jamal (Bilal's friend) also shares this point of view:

> "Whenever I get paid from my work, I buy myself some clothes like a shirt and pants, then give the cash to my mother when I go home. She keeps the money for me at home, and whenever I need to buy or invest in something, I would have to request it from her. She first asks questions on what I need the money for, so if she thinks that it is not worth it then my request is declined. But often times she accepts". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Saving cash in the traditional way, with all the downsides and risks inherent in it, still remains the modus operandi for Jamal and Bilal and their families. This "old school" way in the local capital market system also prevents the acquisition of loans or funds for agricultural purposes. As the next chapter will show, government programs that seek to support the launch of a project (especially an agricultural project) often target those few who are already better off. Under such underdeveloped or even non-existent capital market structures, it becomes difficult if not impossible for those who are "behind in the race" to escape poverty through a bank loan or a grant. In fact, loans specifically dedicated towards farming and agriculture in Algeria exclude the vast majority. Not surprising was the fact that not a single interviewee knew about the "Challenge Loan" offered by the Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (BADR) which specifically targets applicants aspiring to invest in a big project in farming or agriculture. The limited outreach of capital markets, except for the well-off may have contributed to the decision made by Bilal and Jamal to leave their families' lands in Mssil, in order to work in construction in Batna city.

Integration of migrants in the city

An often-emphasized issue in the international migration scholarship is the question of integration or assimilation or acculturation, but this should not downplay its relevance in the internal rural-to-urban migration by assuming that they are more homogenous compared to international migrants. Rural migrants who become urban dwellers whether temporarily or permanently face comparable challenges of integration due to cultural, social, linguistic, and even ethnic and racial differences (King & Skeldon, 2010). Integration here can be classified under the adjustment mechanisms of the systems approach. Heckmann, Wunderlich, Worbs, & Lederer (2000) suggest a number of dimensional spheres in breaking down this concept, namely structural, cultural, interactive, and identificational.

Structural integration: refers to the degree to which migrants are capable of acquiring rights in main institutions of the host society, including the labor market, housing, and healthcare (Heckmann et al., 2000). In terms of the job market in Batna, as pointed out earlier, migrants wind up engaging in the peripheral sector of the job market by taking jobs accessible only through their networks, whether in the construction sector or jewelry business or restaurants. The formal sector in the city is accessible to those who have completed their university education or technical diploma, or to those who can leverage on their *Wasta*[62] or know-who to obtain a secure employment at a public institution or a local administration. For migrants who lack sufficient education it is extremely difficult for them to navigate the bureaucracy in the public sector. They also lack connections in the city, which renders them in the mercy of the informal sector with all the manipulation, risk, and precariousness associated with it. Hamid is a 25-year-old man who works as an illicit cab driver between Batna and his home village of Ichemoul[63], but he is fed up with his work so he starts searching for a job in the public sector in Batna:

> "I work as an irregular taxi driver, and I have been doing this since I got fired from the army about a year ago... I am not happy with this work since it's informal and it involves a lot of risk because you never know who would ride the car especially at night... Now I would like to work in the public sector.

[62] *Wasta* is the Arabic word for nepotism or cronyism, but in Algeria the common expression for this is know-who pronounced in Algerian dialect as "*maarifa*".

[63] Ichemoul is located about 55 KM to the southwest of Batna city and has a population of 10,5016 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). With an altitude of over 2,300 meters, the village is situated in one of the highest peaks of the Aures mountain ranges. At such a high altitude, heavy snow usually covers the village and surrounding hamlets, and roads get blocked sometimes for days.

> I have been trying to join the firefighters' department in Batna city, using my father's contacts there. If it works out then I would settle in Batna with my wife. I think it would be worth it because it's a full-time formal job with employment insurance and benefits". (Hamid, personal communication, Ichemoul, 31.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

It follows that Hamid may acquire a stable job in the city of Batna only if his father's acquaintances help him get in. This speaks to the rigidity of the labor market, which prevents a smooth structural integration of potential new migrants like Hamid.

Cultural integration: often referred to as acculturation[64], and it suggests a behavioral change which precipitates a cognitive change for immigrants in a way that is consistent with the host society's culture, without necessarily having to give up the origin culture (Heckmann et al., 2000). Migrants in the city of Batna are raised in traditional rural contexts with conservative upbringing and modest lifestyles. The fact that these migrations are concentrated in Kchida in the western corner of Batna city makes their cultural integration very difficult, if not impossible. The rural cultures are transformed afterwards into actions in the city at least in the early phase of their migration. This is what Gettali (2016) refers to as the "ruralization" rather than urbanization of the city in his study about rural migration in the province of Kenchla. He notes that the existence of rural migrants in the city does not necessarily mean their integration since migrants often retain their old ways of doing things, including a "culture of poverty" which may be antithetical to any possible development in the city (Gettali, 2016). **Figure 10** shows a picture I took in Kchida where many migrants settle in their half-finished houses.

One example of how the cultural background of migrants contributes to the "ruralization" of the city is what Jamal says about his experience constructing a house in Kchida. The house is on a plot of land his father had bought many years ago, and Jamal had issues with the cadastral office and the bureaucracy associated with it. In describing that, he says: "Back home, all land is a communal land so we don't have to go through the district office and wait for weeks or months just so that I could set up the sewage canals of the house". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). During the fieldwork, I heard about cases where

[64] Early introduction and usage of the term by the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1930s has been criticized because it emphasized that the racial and national backgrounds of minorities determine their rate of assimilation in a society. This assumption is a form of the deep-seated methodological nationalism gaining ground in social sciences over the course of many decades (Wimmer & Schiller, 2003).

Figure 10: Chaotic Urban Sprawl in the Outskirts of Batna

Figure 10: Chaotic urban sprawl in Kchida, the northern part of Batna city where many rural migrants live demonstrating, what many authors in Algeria call the 'ruralization' of the city. Photographed by the researcher on 02.04.2017.

the district office in Batna ordered the demolition of several houses in Kchida since owners (mostly migrants) did not comply with the legal procedure and the paperwork needed prior to starting the construction of a house. Indeed, I saw the remains of what was supposed to be a new house that belongs to a migrant family, but I had the impression that the chaotic urban sprawl is still ongoing, and with it the 'ruralization' of parts in Batna, mainly Kchida. Cultural integration can also be impeded by the urban life style, which for example Masinissa (the migrant from Merial who owns a shop in Batna city), rejects completely for his children. He expressed to me his concerns about his kids acquiring bad habits and become out of control if left grown up there. He rationalizes his urban existence, however, only out of dire necessity, and that it is only temporary.

Interactive integration: refers to the ability of migrants to establish social networks in their host society such as friendships, acquaintances, marriages, and other formal and informal connections (Heckmann et al., 2000). Since cultural integration is limited for migrants in Batna, it follows that the potential to establish deep and meaningful social networks is also limited. Riad is a 27-year old migrant from Ghoufi. He has been working as a blacksmith in Batna for years. He explicitly describes the degree of his interactive integration:

> "I am tired of staying in Batna, because people here are arrogant and look down at us people of the village. I barely go out of the workshop when I am in Batna. I don't have any friends here except for the coworker from my village. I go out only to have dinner or grab a cup of tea then get back to my work. I stay at the workshop so when I finish my work at night, I watch TV while drinking some tea, then I lay down and sleep. My days are identical but I have no choice". (Riad, personal communication, Ghoufi, 02.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Riad seems steadfast about his perception, and this has prevented his integration in a city that he considers nothing more than a place where he earns cash to provide for his family. There are other factors, which may further hinder the interactive integration of migrants, nevertheless, Arranged marriages, for instance, are still very common in rural Batna, so a migrant like Jamal would prefer a partner chosen by his mother from the same village. Jamal says in this regard:

> "I am getting married in two months *inshallah*. My mother arranged my marriage to my cousin who lives in a village about 20 Kilometers away from our village. The girl's family used to come visit us occasionally and I remember seeing her twice. I invite you to come to my wedding by the way". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Jamal's commitment to the idea of an arranged marriage is a side effect of a limited interactive integration. Like Riad, the city is a place to make money, and not to socialize, make friends, or seek a life partner. Jamal travels back to his family once every fortnight on average and he wishes he could travel back even more often. This is the low intensity of migration, which keeps Jamal (and also Riad) from participating in social events in the city during public holidays or over the weekends, which in turn impedes a fruitful and long-lasting interactive integration.

Rural-rural migration: "Your plight lies within your kinship"

For some interviewed migrants, I raised the question of why choosing to be in another rural village even though they could do the same work in their home villages and earn more or less the same. Jamal answers:

> "I could work in my village if I wanted to, but the problem is that if I wanted to work there, I would end up being most likely working for people whom I know, and these people would be very demanding and they would negotiate the payment. At the end of the day, I would end up doing favors for relatives, friends, and acquaintances. That's why I prefer to work at a stranger's place as opposed to my brother's, and that's a major reason why I left home for work. I also wanted to keep away from old friends from school because they may put me in unnecessary social problems". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The discard of social capital is a pragmatic approach for Jamal to maximize financial rewards from his migration. He also resents the never-ending problems with his relatives in the home village and chooses to go away and leave all that behind. A common source of familial and kinship problems is property inheritance (especially land inheritance) and division or partition among heirs. I interviewed Mohamed who is a 32-year old migrant from Merial. He works at a clothing shop in Algiers and comes back to his small home village every now and then. He says the following:

> "There is this piece of land up there commonly inherited by my father, my two uncles, and grandfather, and two aunts of my father. It has a size of 800 meters square. We figured we could settle once and for all by offering the richest of us, my uncle, to have it and compensate the rest of us for their share of the land in cash. He and his family refused. They think we are trying to rip them off, and that caused a feud between us. Now it's a barren land with no benefit to anyone whatsoever. You get the picture now of why I just go anywhere for work. Sometimes I wonder if my children would have to suffer and deal with this kind of kinship problems in the future". (Mohamed, personal communication, Merial, 19.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The common lands characterizing much of rural Algeria cause deep problems that can undermine social capital for migrants and perhaps even social cohesion in the long term. In the destination, however, discarding social capital may have to do with the unwillingness of migrants to be a burden. This is very similar to the case of Algerian immigrants increasingly relinquishing their ties with their relatives in France (Collyer, 2005).

The Sahara: The elusive job at Sonatrach

Respondents refer to heading south as "going to the Sahara", where oil and gas companies operate. As pointed out previously, the hydrocarbon sector contributes very minimally to the participation rate despite being the main driver of the economy[65], making it extremely difficult for people to join the bandwagon. The national hydrocarbon company Sonatrach is the traditional employer in this sector, and this has not changed since its inception in the dawn of the country's independence. For Jalil, joining Sonatrach or one of its subsidiaries would be a luxury, and given the chance, he would do it without any second thought. Jalil compares a job offer he received from a company based in the Sahara to working for Sonatrach:

[65] This is one characteristic of a rentier state covered in the second chapter.

> "I have been sending my resume all over the place and I got a positive response from one company which offered me a good salary but only under a 6-month contract. That is something I can't accept. Ideally it would be a stable position with Sonatrach in one of its oil or gas fields where I could make at least 20,000 DA (1620 EURO) per month, but for that I need to pull strings and I am still waiting to hear from one acquaintance from my village who is the only person I know who could let me in". (Jalil, personal communication, Ouled Si Sliman, 01.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

In Jalil's eyes, working for Sonatrach would guarantee a decent stable income and with it a stable life, and that is why Sonatrach remains one of the most attractive migration channels, even preferred to other international oil and gas companies. In addition to the permanent employment contracts the state-owned enterprise (SOE) offers, the generous employee benefits and relaxed workload make it an irresistible pull factor for Jalil. Some rural migrants choose to take up some temporary jobs in southern cities near oil and gas refineries especially Hassi Mesoud while trying their luck with Sonatrach, just like Sami, a 29-year-old man from the village of Sefiane. He works for a small subsidiary of Sonatrach in Hassi Messoud, but he says that he is trying to join the parent company:

> "I wish I could get a position at the main Sonatrach which is the parent company, but it is very competitive. Sonatrach jobs are more stable and secure, and they offer many perks such as longer holidays and paid trainings overseas. Last year there was an exam taken by about 4,000 to 5,000 candidates from all over the country, out of which only about 400 new employees were selected to work for Sonatrach. It didn't work out for me unfortunately". (Sami, personal communication, Sefiane, 04.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Another migrant, with whom I conducted an informal discussion in his home village of Boumaguer[66] says that he moved to Hassi Messoud to work as a tailor temporarily while knocking the door of Sonatrach. After several years, he is still a tailor, to his dismay. He says that he came to the realization that pulling strings is a man's best way to make it there, irrespective of qualifications. Hamid says that he would stop working as an illegal cab driver between Ichemoul and Batna in a heartbeat if his the husband of his aunt could keep his word to intervene and influence Sonatrach to have him hired in any position whatsoever.

[66] Boumaguer is situated in the west of the province (85 KM from Batna) in the district of Ngaous with a population of 9,236 in 2016 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). The ethnic Chawiya group *Ouled Sultan* mostly inhabits it. This is the birthplace of my father, and many of our relatives still reside there.

Engagement with the army or security forces: A tradition of the Chawiya

According to the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Algeria is ranked 15 among the most militarized countries in the world, making it the most heavily militarized country in Africa (Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2018). The military institution along with the police force represent a significant employer within the public sector in Algeria, and the defense budget accounts for about a quarter of the operating budget of the Algerian government. Enlisting with the army under long-term employment contracts becomes attractive for rural youth and their families when little opportunity cost is involved in their livelihood options. Riad (the migrant working as a blacksmith in a workshop in Batna) once thought about engaging with the army, just like many of his old friends did. In his words:

> "When I travel back to my village, I get to meet my old friends only once in a blue moon, because most of them have enlisted in the army and others are scattered all over the place ... Unfortunately I was not accepted because I have some chronic health issues". (Riad, personal communication, Ghoufi, 02.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The Chawiya people have long been at the center stage when it comes to defending the country during the French colonization. The seven-year long revolution or the war of liberation was launched in the heart of the Aures mountains in Batna province near the city of Arris[67], and specifically in Taghit in 1954. Several famous freedom fighters and martyrs originate from this region, including the revered Mostefa Ben Boulaid who is considered a national hero. Traditionally the decision to engage with the army could be attributed to patriotism and honor to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives to emancipate Algerians who were second-class citizens during the colonization era. This has been the typical line of rationalization any person would hear from those who engage with the army as well as from their families. However, the bloodshed of the 1990s, brought about havoc and tragedies, which affected almost every family in the country, and communities that had sent more members to engage with the army clearly suffered the most. The Chawiya were in the forefront of sending their children to combat the so-called "terrorism" under the different institutions of the military, but the price was very high to bear with scenes of returning

[67] With 34,692 residents (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), Arris is the largest city in the mountainous region in the southeastern side of the province of Batna. Mostefa Ben Boulaid was from Arris and he was one of the top leaders of the National Liberation Front (FLN) during the war of liberation against the French colonization between 1954 and 1962.

dead bodies in coffins becoming very common[68]. The line of rationalization for engaging with the army has since been changing for the rural youth. Today they simply join because they are left with little or no livelihood alternatives in their surroundings. Mohamed (the migrant from Merial and works in Algiers) says that he considered joining the army but he is thankful that he did not:

> "People in the Aures region have been brought up to believe they are more patriotic than other Algerians, and that it is okay to sacrifice for good and noble principles, but at the end of the day we have lost fair and square. They have been lying to us the whole time. You know people here, especially older generations talk a lot about the days of the Algerian revolution, and are so proud of the sacrifices they made and for being more conservative, timid, and patriotic compared to other Algerians. That sort of mindset led to a situation where most young people in eastern Algeria are jobless, hence forced to enlist in the army. Many of them were killed by the terrorists in the 1990s, and many of those who survived got diabetes and hypertension. In Algiers, they cared more about their children, and they made sure that they don't follow that self-destructive and suicidal path our parents took. In the worst-case scenario, a man would set up a small shop for his son to dissuade him from joining the army and warns him of the dangers associated with it. Then within a couple of years of working in that shop, the young man would have saved enough money to afford his migration to France. That's how a young man over there can live a good life whereas here they all rush to the army and many end up either dead or spending the rest of their lives living with diabetes and hypertension". (Mohamed, personal communication, Merial, 19.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Other migrants and non-migrants share Mohamed's analysis, which reflects the changing cultural perceptions vis-a-vis the military institution, especially with an increasing openness to explore other migration options by rural families. Riad had a health problem, which prevented him from joining the army, but he says that he was also reluctant to make such a long-term commitment:

> "The people that I know who have joined the army aren't so happy and they complain a lot. They say that it took away their freedom, and that they are restrained by the long-term contract they have signed. However, I think they have no choice because if they stay in Ghoufi they would be just sitting in the coffee shop playing dominos. That's what's happening to those who chose to stay, just like my younger brother". (Riad, personal communication, Ghoufi, 02.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

What Riad insinuated by "freedom" was the cost of lost opportunity a person would incur once in the army, and this includes primarily other migration options which are mutually exclusive for the

[68] In 1995, a cousin of mine who enlisted in the army at the time was brought back dead to my uncle's house, and those who carried him made sure no one could open the coffin to see him (especially not his mother) because presumably his body had major disfigurements when a mine exploded under his feet.

most part. In other words, joining the military for him meant that he could no longer consider moving to the city or elsewhere. Mustafa did in fact join the army but he is hoping for a semi-retirement plan before the end of his contract, in order to pursue other migration plans. He joined the army when he was still very young and now at the age of 34, he does not want to carry on:

> "I am tired of being away from my family all the time. I feel bad every time my wife calls me on the phone when I am away. Also, the salary is not sufficient for anyone to raise a family. But essentially, I am planning to immigrate to Europe. My two children can go to school there, and my wife is in her early pregnancy so we figured she could deliver there". (Mustafa, personal communication, Thniet Laabed, 07.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

There is no doubt that the military institution remains a strong pulling force of youth in rural areas in Batna, but its appeal seems to be gradually waning with people spending many more years in schools (and to a lesser extent in universities), while improving rural urban integration creates new and better avenues for livelihoods. All this happens simultaneously with clear signs of an intergenerational cultural dissonance characterized by a gradual shift from viewing the military institution as a source of pride and love of the nation for the Chawiya people to a more rational and pragmatic view based on a cost-benefit analysis by the rural youth population.

Cross-border migration: Selectivity and diversification

Migration selectivity is more obvious in an international migration context compared to an internal one. The financial cost associated with visa application at a foreign embassy in the capital Algiers may deter the vast majority from seriously considering emigration. Quoting Bilal, the 30-year old migrant from the village of Mssil:

> "Some people I know from our village have recently emigrated, and they are in France, but I am reluctant to follow suit. Obtaining a visa to France costs roughly 700,000 or 800,000 DA (3700 Euros to 4250 Euros). If I had that amount of money, I would use it here instead because I don't see the point in moving to France. What would be the goal? Stay as an illegal immigrant there? I don't need that". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Bilal is married and has three children to provide for, so he also feels too shackled by the institution of marriage to consider moving beyond Batna, never mind beyond Algeria. Nevertheless, the psychic and cultural factors can also add up to the selectivity of migration for those who are still single. Jamal says that he was contacted once by a recruiting company in Algiers to work either in

Italy or in one of the Gulf States, but he says that he prefers the latter option because of language and cultural compatibility.

In a sharp contrast to the above two examples, Aissa (a 28-year old migrant from Ras El-Ayoun[69]) is deeply convinced of the "superior" quality of life in the West and would go to great lengths in order to overcome the pecuniary, psychic, and cultural barriers associated with moving abroad. Aissa works part time as a construction worker with his father in Batna city, while finishing his studies in architecture at the University of Batna. He says that he had sold a pick-up truck owned by his family in order to afford his migration to Germany to further his education there. He told me about other migrants who sold even houses or apartments in order to cover the costs of emigration.

Since the main university campus in Batna is located within the confines of the city, students coming from rural regions like Aissa are more exposed to urban life and the emerging migration industry that encourages international migration. This includes language schools, immigration offices, and agencies specializing in providing clients with consulting and advice to study abroad especially at universities in Europe and North America. The mushrooming of these institutions in the city in recent years has been remarkable, and it mirrors the transition some rural migrants go through before they emigrate overseas, in what is referred to as a stage migration.

In addition, a trend in international migration is consistent with the findings of Collyer (2005) who notes the diversification of the destinations of Algerian immigrants. The idea that France is the "by-default" choice does not resonate with Aissa. He expresses this clearly:

> "My aunt has been living in France for decades, and her children have grown up there. She comes to visit us almost every summer, but her children rarely accompany her. They barely speak any Arabic ... She offered to help me if I go there but I don't want to be a burden on her, especially that her children are not doing well financially in my view". (Aissa, personal communication, Ras El-Ayoun, 15.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Collyer (2005) emphasizes the reluctance of migrants to be a burden on their relatives with whom they have had scant contact and a widening cultural and identificational gap over time. Aissa also

[69] Ras El-Ayoun is a municipality with a popluation of 25,742 residents (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), and it is situated about 100 KM to the west of Batna city.

hears stories from those who are either in France or have returned, and he made up his mind not to go there. Quoting Aissa:

> "France does not lure me anymore. I hear many stories about Algerians having a hard time there. One friend of mine from university moved to France to further his study, but after some time he quit studying even though he was brilliant, and now he is working at a pizzeria there. I think he is struggling financially a lot. I think France is not a good place for Algerians anymore". (Aissa, personal communication, Ras El-Ayoun, 15.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Bilal also shares a similar opinion:

> "I know someone who has spent a few years in France but then finally decided to come back and settle in Mssil. He told me that there is no better place than Algeria. He told me that it was so boring for him to be in France and that the only place he could go to was the mosque. He had no family and no friends. Another one lives in Germany but he comes back once in a blue moon, especially after the passing of his father. I guess that unless a job is guaranteed and pays well, then Europe is not a good choice. Suppose that I am in France right now; I don't speak French, I don't understand it, so I am sure there would be no job for me there". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Employability, but more generally "opportunity" is the main criteria for migrants like Bilal, based on stories of friends or acquaintances who have already made the move to any potential destination. It seems probable that the negative feedback of new Algerian immigrants in France coupled with a positive one coming from countries like the UK, Canada, and Germany has prompted new patterns of emigration diversification and new international migratory circuits.

Illegal migration of the "*Harraga*": A perilous journey to the unknown

Clandestine migration has baffled politicians and academicians in Algeria because it has affected virtually every demographic and social group in the society, including women and children. Particularly for the poorly educated working-unemployed youth in rural villages, engaging in illegal migration can be very attractive even if it involves a great risk of losing one's life while attempting to across the Mediterranean Sea. Anwar is a 22-year old migrant from a hamlet called Chir[70] who works in farming in the province of Biskra. who attempted illegal migration once to

[70] A small municipality in the south of the province of Batna with a total population of 5,610 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It is located about 72 KM away from Batna city.

reach Spain's southern shores, describes how he found himself in a small rickety skiff using one engine in the middle of the sea heading for the unknown:

> "I was working in Oran, and meanwhile asking people about how to migrate to Spain, so they led me to one gentleman who illicitly organizes trips for people who are serious about this, but we all had to keep a low profile. I didn't even tell my family about my plan … I got there and I was surprised to see how small the boat was, just about 4 meters long, but I was ecstatic that I left my municipality and this country. Despite the perils involved, I was not scared at all, because I wanted to leave this place so badly. There is nothing here, and I can't do anything ... We sailed at 2 a.m. to avoid people and the gendarmerie particularly. It took us several hours, and the helmsman used only a compass to navigate our way to Spain but after some time he realized that we sailed a little off track, so he used the GPS to correct our direction but only once because he feared using it too often would send signals that could be detected by the Spanish coastal guard … Once we arrived in Spain, the only person I called was my mother, but then she didn't have a clue what Spain is. Anyway, we were taken to a detention center for one month, and then they deported me and few others back to Algeria. There were other lucky Harragas who were allowed to enter Spain and now they are in France. I don't know why". (Anwar, personal communication, Chir, 30.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Anwar also told me stories of young men who had attempted to reach Europe's southern shores either via the city of Annaba in eastern Algeria to reach Sardinia in Italy or via the city of Oran in western Algeria to reach Almeria in Spain. There are those who made it, but there are also those who either drowned, or got caught by Algeria's gendarmerie teams or European coastal guards. For Anwar, having been a migrant in Biskra and Algiers for a few years was the transition period (a stage migration), which let him attempt to "springboard" i.e., trying to go farther and make it to Europe. Anwar knows very well that the cost and complex visa process are insurmountable for him especially given his limited education and difficult financial situation. It boils down to reducing the cost of his migration, and that is why illegal migration was his first choice because it is disproportionately more affordable compared to applying for or "buying" a visa. Anwar says that his *Harraga* attempt had cost him 100,000 Dinars (550 Euros) which is by no means a small amount, and yet he still insists that he would save again and try a second time. He says that he does not intend to stay in Spain but rather to move further to Germany because according to him:

> "It's more advanced and the people there are civilized and because I believe I can study there and learn new things and advance my life... I can't wait for the day that I could play a soccer game with a professional team in Germany. If I stay here, I would downgrade more and more with every passing day". (Anwar, personal communication, Chir, 30.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

What the above quote denotes is the culture of migration on one hand, and the hopelessness on the other. Anwar lacks formal education and vocational training and has no "*Wasta*" or connections to get into the public sector even as a security personnel doing night shifts. When asked about why not participating in a vocational training that could probably improve his chances of employment, he says that such trainings are unpaid and that he has to work every day just to make ends meet and send money to his mother back in the village. In answering the last question of the questionnaire about whether a respondent thinks about engaging in illegal migration or not, 68 out of the 204 responses said yes (over a third of all responses). This is to say that Anwar is not the outlier in rural Batna, and that there are in fact many others just like him trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty in rural communities which offer nothing but indolence and boredom. With idealized, even utopic images of life in Europe and the West, those rural areas become a breeding ground for the "export" of illegal migration.

5.4. Perpetuation of Migration

As pointed out in the theoretical chapter, the equifinality concept upon which the systems approach is based, underscores the need to view the current state of affairs of a system and how it reproduces itself, irrespective of the initial conditions that have led to its inception. Migrants and non-migrants refer to both direct endogenous and indirect exogenous factors involved in the self-reinforcement of migration, as the following sections illustrate.

Direct or first-order feedback mechanisms (endogenous)

Consistent with the existing migration literature, migrant social networks and remittances play a substantial role in sustaining migration over time, even though the way these networks actually take place is context-specific. In addition, the distinction between social networks and remittances is only to serve the purpose of analysis because in reality the two are inextricably linked.

Migrant social networks: "Who would hand me the hammer when I climb the ladder?"

A great deal of cooperation is involved in the work of construction workers in Batna, which requires sticking in groups. Jamal says: "We often stay together because the kind of work we do requires a lot of help and coordination. Who would hand me the hammer when I climb the ladder?". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Adel is another young migrant who works in marble stone cutting and he describes how he coordinates his work with a group of migrants from his home village of Tkout[71]:

> "We work only for private clients who need to decorate the front sides of their houses. We have a group business card that we distribute at shops in the city of Setif. Usually we get a call every 10 or 15 days from someone who is interested. Sometimes they want to see a demonstration of the work beforehand so we invite them to any house that we had decorated. That the potential client could make a decision based on what he sees, and if he likes it, then we make a deal as a group". (Adel, personal communication, Tkout, 05.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Adel and his fellow migrant workers share the same community and they travel together, work together and keep each other company at the destination. At the time when I interviewed him, he and his team were working in the province of Setif, but he said that they have worked in many other provinces. Sami, however, acquired his job at Sonatrach through his father's past connections working in the Sahara, and only after he has started working that he has befriended migrants from the same home village or surrounding rural hamlets:

> "I have met some migrants from my village only after I started working and we became friends. I mean I used to see them every now and then in Sefiane but never spoken to them until we met in these work sites in the Sahara. We eat together most of the time, and we talk about random things. We live in temporary portable camps in extremely remote areas where oil and gas fields are located. We need to keep each other company, so we drop by each other almost every evening when the work is done. Being with them makes life less boring there especially that we lack the necessary amenities". (Sami, personal communication, Sefiane, 04.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

For Sami, it is more about reducing the psychic, rather than the financial cost of migration, which makes it worthwhile for him to maintain these networks, and that in turn would reduce the psychic costs of migration for new migrants from the same village in the future.

Remittances: Mothers as a substitute to banks

Due to the inefficient banking system in Algeria, dealing in cash is still dominant in every facet of the economy. Migrants are accustomed to the old-fashioned way of sending remittances to their

[71] The village is located in the southeastern part of the province of Batna with 11,536 inhabitants (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). The village is about 105 KM away from Batna city. In recent years, the village has become infamous for the many casualties of migrants working in marble stone cutting.

families through their social networks. Jamal describes how he and his fellow migrants arrange this together:

> "Algiers is far away so we could travel less frequently back and forth, that's why we forged an agreement among us that only one person travels back every two months so that we could send money to our families with him. The one who travels stays for about one week and then returns to Algiers, and after two months another person does the same, and so on and so forth". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Despite the practicality of this approach in reducing costs of sending remittances, Jamal admits that there is an inherent risk in carrying big sums of cash while traveling. This goes without saying, one accident can have a devastating effect on the livelihoods of the dependent families. Jamal did not bring up the risk of inflation and the resulting effect on the purchasing power, especially if the cash is kept for a long period of time. Perhaps this is an unlikely scenario since he and his family barely maintain a decent livelihood. Hence, saving the hard-earned cash for a "rainy day" or for a potential investment opportunity in the future might be a luxury that does not even cross Jamal's mind.

Jamal hands the cash to his mother or sends it with one of his fellow migrants to be delivered to her in person. Jamal says: "Whenever I get paid, I only buy myself a shirt or a pair of pants, then give the cash to my mother". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). Bilal also does the same: "I give the money to my mother who keeps it for me and for the entire family in case we need to spend it for necessities. I have never had a bank account so she is like my bank". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). It seems intuitive for Jamal and Bilal to keep their hard-earned money with their mothers, as it is part of their implicit contractual agreement between them and their families, whereby a mother acts as a budget manager of the household. Jamal explained that this is normal because his mother is more familiar with the needs of the household, and is more capable of wisely prioritizing the allocation of money expenditure.

Giving the cash to the mother gives Bilal and Jamal a sense of pride for the responsibility they assume to support their families, even if that meant undermining their control over the use of that cash, since the last say goes to the mother. Jamal says:

> "My mother keeps the money for me at home and whenever I needed to buy something; I would need to request from her. She first asks questions like what do I need the money for and whether it is urgent or not. If she concludes that it is not worth it then my request is declined. But she often accepts, depending on how important it is what I want to spend the money on. For example, last time I wanted to start building a house on a plot of land we own here in Batna, so I asked her for some cash to buy some construction materials so she said yes. The land is about 105 square meters, and I have already finished building the first floor. The first floor I should start with right after Eid". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Jamal's family does not engage in buying luxuries whatsoever, which refutes the overemphasized "conspicuous consumption" in migration scholarship. However, this is not to claim that Jamal's family invests in the most productive income-generating activities. As the quote above indicates, remittances go to the necessities and house construction. Bilal's family shows similar spending habits, as captured in the following quote:

> "I buy necessary stuff like wheat, oil, vegetables, and so on. But my family also gets foodstuffs they need from a small local grocery shop in the village on credit so I make the payment at a later time when I am back there. One day before I travel back to my town, I call my wife to ask her if she needs food items that do not exist at the local shop. I often buy meat or fish, and once I get to the shop there, I buy wheat flour sack, sugar, cooking oil, and coffee. I must maintain a good relationship with the shop owner and that is why I can only buy these items from him". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Bilal also indicated that his family's house is being refurbished and extended a little bit to create more space. Refurbishing, renovating, or expanding dilapidated tiled-roof houses or constructing new ones help to plan weddings of migrants themselves or their siblings. Mustafa (who enlisted in the army many years ago) captures that in his answer:

> "I helped my brother to cover the costs of his wedding. I also helped my sister financially for her marriage. I helped my father recover from the losses he incurred after his cash crops failed. I helped a second brother in buying necessary equipment for his carpentry workshop". (Mustafa, personal communication, Thniet Laabed, 07.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Besides financing wedding feasts, investing in productive activities (both on and off-farm) is the exception rather than the rule for Mustafa's family. Agricultural investment is paltry, and a carpentry workshop is an example of an off-farm investment, which is prone to failure in a small

rural village like Thniet Laabed[72]. The reasons for which will be elaborated in the next empirical chapter.

Indirect or second-order feedback mechanisms (exogenous)

The most salient indirect feedback mechanisms discerned from the interviews are relative deprivation, a vicious cycle of poverty, as well as the cultural changes. All these affect migrants and their families at the micro and meso level.

Relative deprivation: Marriage, a house, and a car

Comparing one's socioeconomic status within a particular village reference group can infinitely fuel rural outmigration flows in Batna. The criteria for making such comparison set the benchmark of success. This includes building a decent house, buying a car, getting married and having children. Any deviation from these norms, within a reasonable timeframe, is seen as an abnormality or worse a failure. Ahmed vents his frustration on this matter:

> "I have been working at this family shop for the past 15 years and so far, I couldn't get myself an ordinary Volkswagen car, and meanwhile others I know here in Merial work only for one year and lo and behold you see them drive a luxury car. You see? It's unfair. I am 30-years old, with no insurance, no marriage, and no car. I am afraid if I get married, I would spend all my savings on the wedding ceremony and wind up having nothing left for me and my future wife to survive after that". (Ahmed, personal communication, Merial, 22.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The oftentimes exorbitant wedding costs, and especially the Mahr[73] (dower) paid from the groom to the bride on their wedding day deter Ahmed from tying the knot, and it adds to his sense of relative deprivation vis-a-vis those few in his village who managed somehow with the support of their families. The average cost of Mahr in Batna and the Aures region is 200 thousand Algerian Dinars which is equivalent to approximately a thousand Euros, but it may vary considerably from one region to another. Brahim (the 34-year-old migrant in Oran) grapples with the same predicament, namely a sense of relative deprivation fueled by his inability to afford marriage. I

[72] The total population of the municipality of Thniet Laabed is 12,089 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). The figure includes all residents of the hamlets within the municipality, so the actual figure for only the center of Thniet Laabed where Mustafa's family lives could be lower than that.
[73] The Mahr follows the Islamic tradition that stipulates a mandatory payment from the groom to his pride in the form of cash or any other agreed-upon goods.

interviewed Brahim while he was visiting his village of Foum Toub[74] to attend a wedding of one of his relatives. He says:

> "I am tired of marginalization in this country. I am tired of this kind of precariousness in my life. You see I am 34 years old, and I am still unmarried. No house, no car, no future, and no hope that things might change soon if I stay here. I have been dependent on my siblings but they couldn't keep helping me forever. I had to do something because I didn't want to be a burden on them anymore and that's why I left my village for Oran, all the way to the west of Algeria. Now I am moving further inshalah. I hope this French visa thing works out for me because I want to leave as soon as possible". (Brahim, personal communication, Foum Toub, 13.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The feeling of relative deprivation provides Ahmed with a reason to leave, and Brahim with a reason to move farther away. Brahim here compares his situation to his relative who just got married and other old friends in his village who managed somehow to settle down and have started their own families. This sense of relative deprivation may occur even among members of the nuclear family, as is the case with Toufik (the returnee in Taghit who works in construction). He expresses his discontent when he compares his situation to his brother's:

> "I feel like I have studied many years at the university for no reason. My brother is two years younger than me and he dropped out of middle school, but look at his situation now: he has a house, and he is married and has two kids. He is doing just fine. I, on the other hand, have literally nothing". (Toufik, personal communication, Taghit, 23.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

I befriended Toufik and his brother Rashid and had spent a few nights at their family house in Taghit. Had it not for the trust that I built with them, Toufik would not have genuinely opened up and shared his inner thoughts and feelings with me, especially that he seemed to be a very shy person when I first met him.

Bilal (the migrant from Mssil), however, pointed out to what could trigger a strong sense of relative deprivation within the same village. Bilal says the following:

> "My father decided to come down to our village in 1986, the year I was born. He sought better living conditions for us in the village, but other families have been here long before us. So today they still treat us as the newcomers who do not belong here, and they have the upper hand when it comes to government programs including housing. Even though we are all Chawiya but there are tribal feuds, and the mayor

[74] A small rural village about 50 KM to the east of Batna city, with a population of 6,146 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016).

> is from the other tribe, so he serves his own people, and we get nothing". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Tribal feuds are still common in rural Batna and may "pour oil on the flames" as is the case with Bilal's family, which already lives under extreme poverty and exclusion (even before tribal feuds came into play). This perspective is also shared by Mourad who retired from the army after he had an accident. Today Mourad works as a minibus attendant (conductor) in Batna city. He showed me a few missing fingers from his hand while describing the accident he had at the army. He expressed bitterness because the insurance money is very little, and because he feels marginalized compared to other ethnic groups in his own community:

> "Our village has been dominated by Jbaylias[75] and they could afford to buy real estate here and elsewhere. Even in Batna they are the ones in control. I am Chawi but not Jbayli, and I think that we are marginalized in our own village because we are not Jbaylias". (Mourad, personal communication, Merial, 17.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

In this same line of reasoning, Jalil also argues:

> "The people at the municipality office don't like us and they don't want any businesses to thrive in our region. They apply a strategy of divide-and-rule which is inherited from the French colonization. We are mostly Chawiya here but still this tribalism between people makes no sense. It's unspoken but you feel it and you live it. And it's even worse when you get the impression that Arabs oppress us in our own land. This is the land of the Amazigh (Berbers), and our history and culture dates back thousands of years right on this land. Even in the west of Algeria, which is mostly inhabited by Arabs, cities and villages there are called after Berber names". (Jalil, personal communication, Ouled Si Sliman, 01.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Jalil attributes his past migrations partly to the sense of relative deprivation in relation to his peers who belong to other tribes or ethnic groups. Even though tribalism is not that intense in Batna compared to some other provinces, yet it clearly feeds in the sense of relative deprivation among those who are lagging behind, hence giving them an incentive to migrate to where their tribal affiliation plays no role in determining their livelihoods.

[75] Jbaylia is the term in Algerian dialect which refers to the Chawiya inhabitants of mountainous municipalities in the southeastern side of the province of Batna where most goldsmiths come from. The term literally means the people of the mountains, but is sometimes used in a derogatory manner.

Vicious cycle of poverty: A chronic gap between the haves and the have-nots

An emerging vicious cycle of poverty makes it extremely difficult to climb up the social mobility ladder for migrants and their families. This in turn perpetuates the perception of deprivation and with it the necessity to send one or more members to a labor market, which has little or no correlation with the conditions at origin. Indeed, the selectivity of migration allows only the already well off to "reap the fruits" of migration. This is possible through sending members either to further higher education or use connections to acquire a stable job in the public sector. In contrast to the few privileged ones, Bilal for example, had to drop out of his second year of middle school, he migrated out of dire need, and he has no valuable social capital neither at home nor at the destination. Even worse, his family barely makes ends meet with his remittances, never mind investing in productive income-generating activities, especially in farming. Bilal tells how he first decided to migrate in the hope to escape extreme poverty:

> "During my childhood I was hungry most of the time. One day during my 8th year of schooling I fell in the school court and badly injured my knee. Doctors were close to having it amputated, and it took me a long time to recover. That had negatively affected my performance in the school, which got me thinking about dropping out especially because my father also had a serious accident at work during that same time. My grades started to fall gradually and I lost motivation to study. I go home every evening to see my parents and sisters suffering from hunger. When my father fell gravely sick it was the last straw. It was a dilemma actually, because I knew that leaving school early would sabotage my future, but did I have a choice? I left school for good and started working in small farms in the vicinity of our village, and then when I turned 17, I moved to the city of Batna to work in construction which paid relatively higher". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Bilal knows very well that dropping out of school has killed any chance of future employment in a stable high-paying position in the public sector, so he feels complacent about how much he earns now as a construction worker especially during heydays. What adds insult to injury, however, is the traditional view that the wife must not work. This notion is so entrenched in Bilal's thinking, and few other migrants whom I interviewed that even posing a question about it seemed ludicrous to them. It is indisputable, however, that such traditionalistic convictions add more financial strains on the breadwinner, and trap the household in a perpetual state of poverty.

Furthermore, migration can be socially maladaptive since the adjustment mechanisms to compensate for the absence of the most productive and physically abled elements from the household are rather non-existent. When I asked Bilal, Jamal, and other migrants about what measures were taken by their families in order to make up for their absence back at home the answer was simply "nothing". This means that the more outmigration happens the higher the loss of potential agricultural labor, the more negligence of agricultural lands, the more dependence on incoming remittances, and the more the outmigration. Therefore, this maladaptive nature of rural outmigration contributes to the vicious cycle of poverty in which Bilal's family is trapped. Under such conditions, it is inconceivable that a convergence of incomes could happen in the long term in a way that benefits remittance-dependent families like Bilal's family.

Cultural changes affecting migration: New urban tastes

Developing new tastes and preferences after having spent a considerable period of time in a migration destination creates a new set of cultural convictions, which are transferred back to rural Batna over time. For many years, Said has studied and worked in several locations across the country, and even though he has settled in another rural community for work, yet he does not wish that his children would grow up in a rural setting. He says:

> "I don't want to start a family in my village. I want my kids to grow up in a big city. My children will learn nothing if they grow up here. I want my children to experience life in the city from day one". (Said, personal communication, Sefiane, 16.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Similarly, Hamza, a 27-year-old from Boumaguer also passionately talks about the life he has had while working near Oran, and how that has changed his perspective of life in his home community. He says:

> "It was in fact in the small town of Sigg which is about 40 KM from Oran, and I loved that place; the beach, the seaside, the night life, and the olive trees. It was amazing and you never get tired of it, unlike boring Boumaguer and Ngaous. The only reason I haven't stayed there is because the salary was relatively low. The monthly salary was only 37,000 DA per month (195 Euros) and the social security insurance was not good either. I loved that place and my family missed me a lot during that time because I used to come back to visit only once every four or five months". (Hamza, personal communication, Boumaguer, 16.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Hamza says that there is a very slim chance for him to return and settle back in Boumaguer, and the fact that there are no job opportunities there whatsoever does not help him change his mind at all. These new preferences are the social remittances, which Hamza and Said transfer back during their brief visitations of their families, which in turn induce over time new migrations of other family members, friends, and relatives. That is when migration becomes a rite of passage, but here I only refer to the cultural exchanges that are communicated between migrants and non-migrants, and which indirectly induce outmigration with the passage of time. In fact, this form of cultural exchange is only part of the deep-seated culture of migration, which will be further addressed in the next chapter.

To sum up the findings discussed in this chapter, many rural municipalities witness a negative natural population growth due to continuous outmigration flows. In addition, characterizing the research participants shows that a variety of social actions and livelihood priorities are demonstrated in rural Batna, including those taken by the working unemployed. Then the first two research questions have been answered, namely the different migration pathways as well as the perpetuation of migration. First, migration selectivity dictates the different migration choices youth migrants from rural Batna take. Rural-urban migration is a prominent pathway due to the structural push and pull factors, for which findings are related to the new economics of labor migration (NELM) and the dual labor market theories, respectively. Other forces come into play when it comes to other migration choices, such as the discard of social capital in rural-rural movements or know-who in the Sahara choice. Secondly, the feedback mechanisms make migration a self-reinforcing system beyond a certain threshold. Social networks and remittances are the direct exchanges between sending and host communities, whereas the indirect exchanges are mainly the relative deprivation, an emerging vicious cycle of poverty, as well as the changing culture of migrants in tandem with the transfer of social remittances. In the next chapter, I present the findings related to how research subjects perceive or deal with government development programs aimed to keep them put. I then highlight some agentic elements, which drive their actions either to stay and engage with one of the programs or to migrate.

CHAPTER SIX: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND HUMAN AGENCY

In this chapter, the third and fourth questions of the research are answered. The third question is about the role of government development institutions in influencing the migration decision making of the rural youth in Batna. The fourth question is concerned with the extent to which the human agency of rural youth shape their migration decision making against a backdrop of government's rural development interventions. The first section of the chapter explores the perspectives of both rural youth and local officials, with regards to development programs in creating employment opportunities and ultimately bringing the rural exodus under control. Development programs concerned are Ansej, Agricultural Support Program, and Rural Housing Program. The rural infrastructure is also addressed here since it complements the implementation of the three government programs. In the second part of the chapter, I operationalize the concept of human agency by giving examples from the narratives of the migrants to show how different agentic dimensions come into play in the decision-making of migrants and non-migrants. Specifically, this helps to understand how migrants and non-migrants wind up choosing whether to become a beneficiary of a development program or to migrate or to stay behind. This would serve the purpose of uncovering the underlying possible matching or mismatching between such programs on the one hand, and the aspirations and expectations of the youth in rural Batna, on the other hand. This could, in turn, give some clues as to how these development programs could better accommodate both migrants and non-migrants based on the disparate characteristics and social behaviors these groups demonstrate.

It is important to regard development policies by Algeria's successive governments against a background of rentier state politics, as suggested in the background chapter. Under such conditions, the goal of buying social peace may overshadow the socioeconomic outcome desired from implementing these programs such as creating jobs, stabilizing the rural population or simply improving the living standards of the targeted groups. In the words of the Head of Department of Social Sciences at Batna University:

> "When you look at all these employment programs targeting the youth, the government does not care much about improving the well-being of the targeted groups, but rather on buying social peace. When your goal is to buy social peace instead of creating genuine employment then you get exactly the picture

> that you see in Algeria today ... A good medical doctor may treat an illness with a surgery, but a bad doctor would only prescribe medications for temporary relief. That is exactly what has been happening in our country. The government sees public spending as a panacea to all problems, but the truth is that it only gives a temporary relief while the problem is still there". (Prof. M. Genfoud, personal communication, Batna city, 30.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

While these programs are an integral part in the system of migration in rural areas in Batna, the wider environment is characterized by path-dependent rentier state politics. This is not to carve in stone the idea that there is a tradeoff between buying social peace and a genuine sustainable development. However, often than not, the politics of distribution and social peace have a crippling effect on the long-term success of development programs at the micro level, as shown in the sections to come.

6.1. Ansej: The Epitome of the Government's Social Peace

After more than 20 years since the inception of the National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment (Ansej), 366,129 small enterprises were supported to create about one million employment positions (as of 2016). However, according to the program's head office in Algiers, 100,000 enterprises went bankrupt, 53,000 beneficiaries are being prosecuted, while a total of 200,000 enterprises are subject to having their assets seized in favor of the creditors i.e., Ansej and the partnering banks (Echourouk, 2016). Ansej stipulates that an applicant has to be aged between 19 to 40 years old, and has to demonstrate professional or educational competencies related to the desired project. The maximum value of an Ansej microcredit is 10 million Algerian Dinars (about 75,500 Euros), out of which 70 percent is a public bank's contribution, 28 to 29 percent is a direct contribution from the Ansej fund, and 1 to 2 percent is a personal contribution by the beneficiary. However, an applicant may also choose to disregard the contribution of the bank so that he or she would have to contribute 71 to 72 percent while the Ansej fund provides 28 to 29 percent (Ansej, 2016). The latter option has been introduced as a reaction to the many complaints made by potential beneficiaries regarding the interest rates applied by public banks. Interest rates are rejected since they do not go hand in hand with the rules of finances in Islam. In spite of introducing this second option, many young people are still skeptical, and in fact not many applicants are willing nor are they able to contribute two-thirds of the value of the microcredit under the second option, to begin with.

Different sectors of economic activity are targeted by Ansej as long as an applicant proves an economic value added through his new or extended project. When the program first started, applicants were able to choose what economic sector they would like to engage in, but in recent years, Ansej officials has imposed some criteria to prioritize sectors deemed as viable and restrict those with little or no economic added value. These recent measures are aimed at encouraging young people to take part in the most promising economic activities, including five sectors deemed productive according to the general director of Ansej. These sectors are: agriculture, industry, public construction projects, tourism and handicrafts, and information technology (Ansej, 2016). Batna is one of the leading provinces in terms of the total number of funded projects according to the provincial Ansej director. Primary data obtained from the Ansej office in Batna suggest that by the end of 2016 the total number of Ansej projects was 8,332. More than half of which were projects in the services sector, while farming and agriculture accounted for only 15 percent of the share, as shown in **Figure 11.**

Figure 11: Ansej-Funded Projects in Batna as of the End of 2016

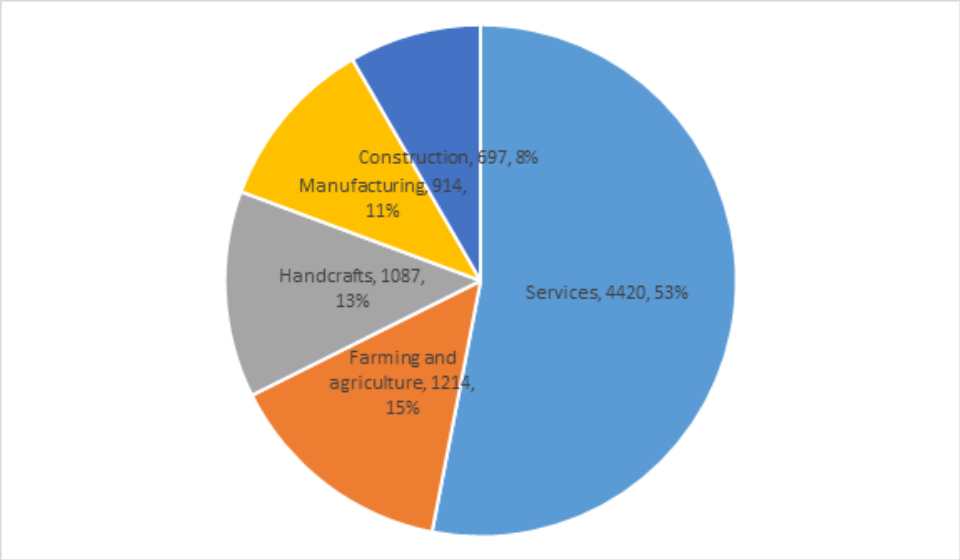

Figure 11: Sector composition of Ansej loans in Batna province. Prepared by the researcher based on primary data obtained from Ansej Office in Batna.

The services sector accounts for the lion's share in this includes primarily mini trucks for the transportation of merchandize or equipment to launch restaurants, coffee shops, bakeries, etc. However, in a rural area with a limited market potential and economic activity, such ventures may prove to be futile for Ansej beneficiaries. Hasni has been a migrant for several years, until the day

he made up his mind to get married and settle down in his home village Ouyoun El Assafer. He opened a pizzeria, through an Ansej loan, which became the only source of income for him and his family. He explains why it does not earn him enough to pay the salaries of two workers and support his family:

> "It has been a struggle for survival for us and still is, I tell you. Sometimes we open the pizzeria for hours and hours, and we still don't earn a single dinar, because no one comes by. It's a very secluded rural area we live in". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The Director of the Agricultural Chamber in Batna told me that such projects were relatively more rewarding during the years when the number of Ansej beneficiaries peaked i.e., between 2011 and 2014. Those early beneficiaries have been able to take advantage of an acute shortage in the services sector in the local market during that time. However, once demand has been met with an oversupply, projects in the services sector became less and less lucrative and thus less alluring for potential Ansej applicants. When asked about why Ansej does not provide direction to new applicants into more productive sectors, the Director of the Agricultural Chamber in Batna says:

> "A pizzeria, and the like, in those areas is a project which is predestined to fail I tell you for sure. People often blame the government for everything bad including when their projects fail, but look at these people who lack the motivation and the leadership to work in agriculture and produce what the city needs from agricultural produce. And again, the government can't impose on people what they want to do because rural zones need a variety of products and services and also because social peace is paramount for the government. I totally agree with this policy". (L. Messoudi, personal communication, Batna city, 25.07.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The Director of the Agricultural Chamber admits that not directing applicants towards more productive economic activities especially in agriculture and farming may prove to be counterproductive. Yet he believes that it is and should always be the modus operandi as long as it preserves the implicit social contract between the government and the people. The Director of Ansej put it this way:

> "We reached a peak in 2011 when we processed 18,000 applications in a two-month period. That was the time of the Arab Spring, and during that period, there were days when we received 500 applications. Today due to the shift away from the services sector we get about 20 to 25 applications per month only". (A. Djemali, personal communication, Batna city, 25.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The same interviewee also admitted that during the time of the Arab Spring, there were not only beneficiaries of Ansej who were unqualified, had no experience, and proved no added economic value from their intended projects. According to him, Ansej has also approved the microcredit for some beneficiaries who were even suffering from mental health issues.

Perception of Ansej

For over two decades since the implementation of Ansej, official government sources admit that almost a third of all projects have failed nationwide, as pointed out earlier based on the numbers provided. The government's criterion to measure the success rate of the program is filing for bankruptcy after failing to pay back the loan within the stipulated time schedule. According to the Director of Ansej Batna: filing for bankruptcy indicates the percentage of failed projects, while counting those who managed to repay the loan on time indicates successful projects. This measurement, however, gives a distorted picture on what is really happening on the ground, particularly with the second criterion since repayment of the loan does not necessarily mean that the project is a success. Hasni, who returned to his village after getting Ansej, is an example of a beneficiary who is compliant with the payback obligations, yet is not content with Ansej and wishes to sell the equipment and pay the loan. He says:

> "I wish I could go back in time and cancel it. I am thinking about selling the equipment now, pay the loan, and get rid of the entire project once and for all. Since I started this pizzeria with the Ansej equipment I haven't felt any blessings from God". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Hasni could sell the equipment and pay the loan just to avoid facing any legal actions. Clearly, a gap in policy emerges when the Ansej Director assumes that Hasni's project is a success simply because he managed to pay back the loan.

Word-of-mouth plays an important role for the youth in Batna to learn about Ansej, whether it is about the application process, the kind of projects and domains, as well as the stories of success or failure experienced by former beneficiaries. Apart from some fliers and leaflets introducing basic information about the program distributed by the Ansej office in Batna, interested applicants obtain information exclusively from their peers. This may have to do with the fact that Ansej does not normally or regularly organize open days for the public to learn about the program. In addition, perhaps youths would naturally trust their friends a lot more than they would trust a functionary at

a government agency. The quotes below from the informal discussions reflect how young people learn about Ansej. During an informal discussion in Lazrou[76] with a few young men sitting at a sidewalk near a coffee shop, one migrant said the following to me:

> "I didn't want to apply for Ansej because I see and hear from other people who got mini trucks and are hardly earning any income. They drive the trucks around aimlessly, but they tell me that in five years they have to have paid the entire sum of the loan regardless of how profitable their work is, and by that time their trucks get depreciated". (Informal discussion, personal communication, Lazrou, 14.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Another young man also justifies his reluctance to apply for Ansej by saying:

> "A friend of mine got equipment to launch a workshop to manufacture leather products. The project was a total failure so he sold his equipment shortly after. Now he is in a big trouble because he got himself into serious debt with the government and people as well. The value of his fund was about 8,000,000 DA (42,200 Euro). When I think about it, I can't believe his application got accepted in the first place because I know him very well". (Informal discussion, personal communication, Lazrou, 14.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

A third respondent in that same gathering simply says that he has never met an Ansej beneficiary who has succeeded or is satisfied with his project. Migrants and non-migrants alike provide similar reasons on why Ansej beneficiaries tend to fail, mainly the lack of experience and the limited market potential. Local officials, and some experts, blame the applicants themselves. The Director of Ansej says:

> "There are people who simply can't lead, because their personal profiles dictate so. We gave these people a chance but they couldn't handle it, and they blew it. We have to find ways to evaluate a person's personality and ability to become a leader before granting the Ansej loan. Unfortunately, we do not have such a mechanism in place as of yet … I believe that the failed cases can be attributed mainly to personality traits, but also the lack of experience of the applicants and sometimes the technical problems related to the quality and maintenance of the equipment they obtain". (A. Djemali, personal communication, Batna city, 25.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Another Ansej official blames the lack of capacity building and culture of entrepreneurship among applicants:

[76] Lazrou has a population of 5,532 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), bordering the province of Oum el Baouagui to the north east of Batna.

> "Capacity building and culture of entrepreneurship are almost absent and are the main obstacle facing the implementation of Ansej today. Capacity building issues related to the teaching of the GERME[77] program to young people for example. But young people have no sense or culture of entrepreneurship and no motivation to achieve a successful and sustainable business project to begin with". (N. Benaziza, personal communication, Batna city, 08.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Stories of success under Ansej exist, nonetheless, but are very rare to hear. The few times such cases came up throughout the interviewing there has often been association with the experience a beneficiary already has had prior to proceeding with Ansej. Hasni says:

> "I know an Ansej beneficiary who got a tractor to work in agriculture and he is doing well but he has always been a farmer even before getting Ansej. I think successful ones are those who already have the experience in what they do. But a lot of Ansej applicants don't have that experience. Many of them just obtain falsified certificates from their friends or relatives in order to qualify for Ansej. Say for example, an assistant construction worker can get a certificate from his supervisor even if the former does not have any experience in construction. How could Ansej accept these certificates which prove nothing of the applicant's ability and qualification for the work not only theoretically but also in practice?". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Other success stories I came across during the fieldwork were dairy farmers whose Ansej loans were used to acquire new trucks and milk cooling tanks. They are certainly better off than those who see Ansej as a windfall and launch their project from scratch once their applications get approved.

Main barriers to Ansej

In addition to the high incidence of struggling projects, which people see and hear about, the youth in rural Batna also attribute their reluctance to engage with an Ansej project to what they consider as "red flags". Firstly, there is the interest rate applied by local banks under an Ansej loan, and many people consider that as usury. This may turn away many potential applicants because it infringes on their religious beliefs. The Director of Ansej recognizes the problem:

> "People shun away from Ansej mainly because of religious reasons related to the interest rate, and this is still the case even though we have eliminated it since 2013. Since then, it is the National Treasury which pays the interest rate instead of the beneficiaries, but I guess a lot of people still don't buy it and

[77] A program designed to teach the basics of running a new enterprise through simulation of real business problems that normally face new applicants once they launch their projects.

> are skeptical". (A. Djemali, personal communication, Batna city, 25.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The Sheikh, who is the religious figure in the village is regularly consulted by locals on life matters, and sometimes he has the final say on whether Ansej is *Halal* (permissible) or *Haram* (forbidden). Sliman says: "I thought about it but I changed my mind when I heard that the interest rate applied is forbidden in Islam. My brothers also skipped the idea of Ansej because of the same reason". (Sliman, personal communication, Sidi Manser, 02.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). Sami also shares a similar thought:

> "I thought about Ansej during the last few months of my study at the university. I knew that I would end up being unemployed so I tried to preclude that by applying for Ansej. My idea was to open a workshop for mechanical parts. I also thought about funding a poultry farm with the help of my uncle in Tifran (near Sefian). I consulted the Sheikh on whether I should proceed with it, so he said that I should forget about it because it involves usury, which is haram. Ansej became off the table for me because I feared starting a project which would not be blessed by God". (Sami, personal communication, Sefiane, 02.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Hasni, the former migrant who opened a pizzeria with Ansej, believes that his business is struggling because "one would have no blessings from God if one commits the sin of usury". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author). Hasni is not an outlier, as results of the distributed questionnaires show that many migrants and non-migrants (80 out of 204 responses) are reluctant or at least skeptical about Ansej because of the interest rate[78]. Other top reasons for turning down Ansej based on the responses from the questionnaire were migration, red tape, and the high risk associated with the failure to pay back the loan.

Secondly, Ansej is perceived sometimes as a trap set by the government. Adding to this perception is the general sense of resentment and mistrust towards authority. Brahim shares his own conviction about Ansej:

> "I have never been convinced of the advantages they claim. I never buy into their lies. I never swallow the bait. I think they are trapping the population with that. They lull them into a false sense of financial

[78] A ten-multiple-choice question for respondents to indicate which is the most likely reason behind their disregard of Ansej, in case they were non-beneficiaries.

> security, but in reality, it is temporary and volatile, I assure you". (Brahim, personal communication, Foum Toub, 13.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Hasni is also very skeptical and expresses a real discontent with the intentions of the government from implementing Ansej:

> "The whole Ansej idea is to find pretexts to legally imprison young people. Does it make sense that the government squanders billions of dinars by giving them to people? Wouldn't it be better off if they establish factories and employ the youth? Say in every province they construct 3 or 4 factories to manufacture the things which are lacking in the market, even biscuits, and then they could even export overseas. I would rather work in a factory or any company even if the salary is commission-based. That would be a more organized and more stable position with insurance coverage (CASNOS) which I don't currently have ... The vast majority of young people in Algeria are empty-headed including me because there are no job opportunities so people learn nothing. Then comes this tantalizing effect of Ansej on a young man's head by giving him the illusion that he can be a successful businessman overnight. It's all lies". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Similarly, Aissa, the migrant in Batna city who plans to study in Germany, thinks of Ansej as part of the government's agenda to manipulate the population, especially young people:

> "Our government wants to patronize, control, and manipulate the population and they want us to just rely on their public sector and Ansej loans. They want to impose on us what and where we work. I don't want to be part of their agenda". (Aissa, personal communication, Ras El-Ayoun, 15.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The sense of resentment towards authority is ubiquitous and make it extremely difficult for the government to persuade certain groups to take part in its development programs. A non-migrant with whom I had an informal discussion in the village of Oued Elma says: "The government instilled a sense of desperation in young people in this country. It closed all doors in their faces and prevented them from any progress". (Informal discussion, personal communication, Oued Elma, 12.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Thirdly, Ansej application process is rife with red tape[79], whether it is the long list of documents an applicant has to provide initially, or the lengthy processing times of applications which could

[79] Red tape here means the excessive bureaucracy in terms of quantity of documents and the long waiting time. I could also add here what I heard during the fieldwork about the confusing directions of the functionaries who work

take up to two years some times. Red tape can be overwhelming for the vast majority of applicants because navigating the paperwork can be a daunting task especially for those who have not made it beyond high school education. During an informal discussion in Tkout a non-migrant explains: "I didn't want to apply for Ansej because I knew that the paper work and process in general takes at least one year to finish". (Informal discussion, personal communication, Tkout, 14.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). Similarly, some research participants whom I encountered during the fieldwork were semi-illiterate and even illiterate, so it is unthinkable that they could go through the Ansej process with the Ansej Office in Batna, the bank, the tax administration, and other local administrations for at least one year. Red tape goes beyond the point of when Ansej approves a certain project, because later on new beneficiaries grapple with a sea of bureaucracy. This finding is based on my observation from participating in the 3-day workshop Ansej Batna holds regularly for new beneficiaries.

The idea to take part in the workshop came up during the fieldwork as I was conducting expert interviews with Ansej officials. I learned about this workshop while interviewing the facilitator who welcomed my presence for the next round to be held once a minimum of 15 participants is accomplished. The workshop is held once or twice a month depending on the number of approved projects. I exchanged phone numbers with the workshop facilitator and within a few days he called to invite me to participate in the next workshop from the 17th to the 20th of October, 2016. The gender composition of the group was predominantly male, with 3 women and 12 men, a ratio that is more or less reflective of the national average of Ansej beneficiaries. The workshop was supposed to last four days but the facilitator thought it was okay to wrap it up by the end of the third day instead. We all convened for three consecutive days at a spacious room inside the Ansej main office in Batna city. I agreed with the facilitator that I would be conducting a participant observation as part of my research, and that it may involve occasional mingling with the participants especially those of a rural background to conduct informal discussions with them. In the next few paragraphs, I summarize the gist of the takeaways from my participant observation.

Firstly, a significant amount of time was allocated to explain the complicated bureaucracy of Ansej. The instructor begins with an overall description of the program, and then proceeds to

at the Ansej office. This may be either because they lack experience or because they do it deliberately in order to extend the waiting time of applications.

explaining the fiscal advantages that beneficiaries could obtain during the first five years of their project. Participants were disappointed to know that as of the year 2015, beneficiaries are no longer exempt from paying the value-added tax (VAT) on the equipment they get. The instructor justifies this by the austerity measures that the government has taken as a reaction to falling oil revenues. When the instructor explains other fiscal advantages and the necessary documents that beneficiaries had to have, I noticed that most, if not all participants, seemed lost especially when he used the jargon and acronyms to call certain fiscal documents that were supposed to be issued by the tax administration.

Secondly, the instructor moved on to explain some basic techniques in financial management and accounting of a business firm. The business simulation exercise was canceled due to some technical issues, according to the instructor. In order to compensate for that, only examples were given to the participants as exercises. This includes how to do bookkeeping, how to forecast revenue, and how to record inventory. It was not surprising to see the participants struggle with the exercises because they have not had any prior management education or business background. Given my familiarity with some of the tasks, I felt the need to help some participants understand what the exercise was all about. Even though the instructor said that the material is suitable to those with no business background yet my observation suggests completely otherwise.

Thirdly, it turned out that the workshop is a one-size-fits-all which brings new beneficiaries from all walks of life together i.e., different educational backgrounds and levels, different project types, different economic sectors, and different business markets. One participant I talked with said that he was opening a carpentry workshop in his home village, a second one was starting a poultry farm, and a third was opening a dental prosthesis laboratory in the city. The facilitator of the workshop explains but also admits that it is not an ideal situation to indiscriminately bring all beneficiaries together to the same workshop:

> "We adopt a standard approach with everybody regardless of their backgrounds and regardless of their disparate levels in business management. Once we get a sufficient number of participants, we simply launch the workshop. I am a professional trainer and I would love if I were able to tailor these programs to the needs of different groups of participants, but we are directed and restricted from above so it is out of my hands, and that's why I just follow orders". (N. Benaziza, personal communication, Batna city, 08.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Overall, participants with whom I spoke told me that the bureaucracy, especially related to the tax and fiscal regulations, was incomprehensible or at least not easy to fathom. In addition, the paperwork, the multiple government stakeholders involved, and the lack of business or management experience all confuse new beneficiaries who are starting an Ansej project.

Ansej as a windfall?

According to the director of Ansej Batna, his institution is the most important vehicle of employment in rural areas after the private sector. He also believes that many people develop a sense of unhealthy reliance on government programs. When this "sense of entitlement" proliferates, it becomes normal to view Ansej as a potential windfall rather than a useful help to become self-employed. He explains this by saying:

> "There are beneficiaries who don't see any distinction between their pocket money and the company's profits or a business' bank account. After one year of his Ansej project he buys a car for his personal use and gets married. Then he files for bankruptcy and starts complaining about how bad the government and Ansej are. I would say that perhaps 99 percent of Ansej beneficiaries got married but there is a difference between someone getting married in the first year following the launch of a project, and another one who does that after 4 or 5 years. The former exhausted all the resources and capital of his enterprise to get married, whereas the latter of is likely to have reaped the fruits of a successful project". (A. Djemali, personal communication, Batna city, 25.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The vice-director at Ansej Batna also shares the same idea:

> "Many of these young people successfully start their businesses and indeed earn revenues in the first phase, but all of a sudden they file for bankruptcy. When you scrutinize, you would find out that the money they earned was not used for their project (hiring employees, maintenance of equipment, etc.) but rather for personal matters like building a house and getting married. Ansej often does not attract people who already have a business idea with the skills and knowledge necessary to have it materialized, instead it mostly attracts those who have the impression that there is a huge sum of money offered by the government and waiting for them to come and snatch it. It's part of the social peace in this country. Ansej should not target everyone, rather should only target people who really want to launch a promising business project … Most people come to us and expect us to tell them exactly what kind of project they should do. A real entrepreneur knows this from the onset, and knows exactly what it takes to achieve it, but most Ansej applicants are not. They simply see Ansej as an opportunity for easy money". (B. Fouzi, personal communication, Batna city, 18.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

In an interview with the deputy mayor of Sefiane, he argues that Ansej is indulging the youth:

> "Common sense is that you invest in the human capital first then comes the funding. But what we see with Ansej is that young people are given the money first, and that creates a sense of dependency and lack of self-reliance in them. They squander the money because they didn't work hard for it. Do not give them the fish, rather teach me how to fish. Germany was completely devastated after WW2, but people there thought about how to rebuild their country so they started by investing in human capital and they succeeded. That's what Ansej is lacking". (H. Nhili, personal communication, Sefiane, 20.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Other interviews with local officials also suggest similar arguments on Ansej, and this consensus in itself proves not only the limitation of the program, but also the partial view these local officials have. Evaluating beneficiaries only, and disregarding non-beneficiaries, does not give a full picture on what is working in the program and what is not. Non-beneficiaries in rural areas are still the vast majority, and their refusal to engage in Ansej despite the "perks" baffles local officials sometimes. The question which is worthy to pose now is why non-beneficiaries in a village like Tkout would rather migrate to engage in risky (potentially deadly) stone cutting work all over Algeria than go for the "pennies from heaven"[80] under Ansej. The director of Ansej notes:

> "We encouraged the young people in those regions to apply for Ansej so they don't have to leave their villages and engage in such risky occupations, and we also assured them that we would make it easy for them to go through the process. We signed an agreement with a nearby vocational center to offer them training in the construction work, which culminates in them getting certificates they could use for their Ansej applications if they wanted to. Eventually there were only a handful of Ansej beneficiaries from that region. It seems that no incentives seem to be enough for these people". (A. Djemali, personal communication, Batna, 25.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

There is a detachment of local officials from the reality on the ground, and the director himself admitted to me that he spends most of the time in his office and that he was not well informed about the intricacies on the ground where the target groups of young people happen to exist. I traveled to the municipality of Tkout, about 100 KM away from Batna city, in order to meet these marble-stone workers in person. The narrow road was mostly mountainous and I was surprised to learn that it was the only road that takes to, and out of, Tkout. I arrived there after about two hours on the road in an uncomfortable Toyota minibus full of passengers. For its sheer size, it is surprising how isolated the village was from the outside world. I conducted one in-depth interview

[80] A similar expression in Arabic literally translates a gift from the sky or a gift from heaven. I heard the expression often used, especially by those who ridicule unsuccessful Ansej beneficiaries for not handling this huge unexpected sum of money that fell in their hands all of a sudden.

with Adel who is a marble-stone worker and migrant. I also managed to meet other workers in a coffee shop and conducted informal discussions with them. One explained why he refrained from applying for Ansej:

> "I have been working in the marble stone cutting for over 2 years now. My elder brother has been doing this for many years and he is fine. I hear about people getting ill because of it but I always try to protect myself with a mask, but if it's destined that I contract the disease then there is no way to escape, right? … I thought about Ansej at some point but I did not pay it much attention. I thank Allah for whatever I am earning, and pray that I don't fall ill". (Informal discussion, personal communication, Tkout, 14.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

A non-migrant works at a pastry but he still does not want to apply for Ansej, because there is no market in Tkout, according to him:

> "There are barely any Ansej beneficiaries in Tkout. They would rather use the loan to finance a project where there is a market, not here. Many Ansej beneficiaries chose to start their businesses in Batna city and not here. That's how people think here. For example, I had a shop in Tkout before, and believe me I barely made 100 or 200 DA a day sometimes (0,75 to 1,5 Euros). I also had a coffee shop, but it was not worth it. Now I opened a pastry and it's alright". (Informal discussion, personal communication, Tkout, 14.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Interviewed young migrants and non-migrants in Tkout show an unenthusiastic behavior towards Ansej, which debunks the "windfall" argument that all young people are tempted by the perks they could gain from Ansej. Stone cutting for many migrant workers from Tkout remains their bread and butter even if they watch their friends and brothers slowly dying of silicosis. Ansej does not allure them because they view it as a Pandora's box that they refuse to open lest they risk a failed project and even imprisonment.

6.2. Agricultural Support: Crippling Effects of Gerontocracy

The Agricultural Support Program is part of the National Agricultural and Rural Development Program (PNDAR) launched in the year 2000 and the follow-up program known as the Rural Renewal Program (RRP) in 2008 (Chaabna, 2017). The PNDAR was meant to be a comprehensive program that would jump-start the agricultural and rural development sector after several decades of stagnation. The program has since consumed about 30 billion US dollars, and yet the agricultural sector, which employs 25 percent of the labor force, is still in a chaotic situation and the national

self-sufficiency from the basic agricultural foodstuffs is still so elusive (Assafir Al-Arabi, 2019). The agricultural support came primarily to solve a problem of financing which has long had a debilitating effect on farmers in Algeria. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development created a fund called the National Fund for Regulation and Agricultural Development (FNRDA) to be the source of financing for all approved projects under the agricultural support Program (Chaabna, 2017). The FNRDA can finance projects (up to 60 percent) before, during, and after a farm enterprise is fully materialized by a beneficiary. This includes land restoration, soil analysis, irrigation, storage of produce, and all kinds of agribusiness (Houhou & Houhou, 2011).

Experts on the matter have a different point of view compared to what the government tries to convey to the masses regarding the effectiveness of its rural development policy and programs, including the agricultural support schemes. One of the experts whom I had on my list of potential participants in the expert interviews was the Head of Department of Social Sciences at Batna University. I went to his office a few times but he was not available, but luckily enough he turned out to be a colleague of my father who is also a senior professor at the University of Batna. My father was able to get hold of him and schedule an appointment for me to meet him at his office on October 13, 2016. His views were a little pessimistic about the extent to which the government could bring about change in rural Algeria. He explains that the agricultural support and the rural development policy followed by the Algerian government are desperate attempts to recover from the socialist programs after independence. According to him, the Self-Management Program in the 1960s and the Agrarian Revolution in 1970s have severely disabled the rural and agricultural sectors:

> "The rural population has always been the most impoverished and the rural exodus since independence is caused primarily by rural poverty, failed Agrarian Revolution, and the mismanagement of the government of the vacant properties in the city by the dawn of independence. The Agrarian Revolution stripped the land from its lawful owners, nationalized these lands to become in the public domain, and organized peasants to work in them and live in social villages in rural areas. This kind of organization destroyed the entrepreneurial spirit of peasants and their sense of responsibility because no one was held responsible for the degradation of the output. That's when the agricultural sector was brought to its knees, and that in turn has precipitated massive rural flight which still reverberates today. What you see today in rural areas are chaotic and desperate bricolage efforts to reverse the situation". (Prof. M. Genfoud, personal communication, Batna city, 30.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

He also adds that part of why the effect of such programs is very limited is because of their failure to properly engage the youth population. Even though the Agricultural Support Program is more tailored to the rural context, yet it remains inaccessible by most young people there. According to the Director of the Agricultural Chamber whom I interviewed in his office in Batna city, the program targets farmers equally regardless of their age:

> "We identify farmers and try to help them regardless of their age. If a person qualifies, he or she can get the grant to fund anything from drilling an artesian well, acquiring beehive cells, livestock, cereals, tractors, and trees, etc.". (L. Messoudi, personal communication, Batna city, 25.07.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The director believes that disregarding the age of the applicants is meant to be a non-discriminatory approach that would ensure equality. However, in reality equality does not guarantee a fair treatment of the targeted groups because most young migrants and non-migrants alike are not farmers to begin with, or at least do not consider themselves as such. Even those who obtain the farmer's card, issued by the Agricultural Chamber, do it simply because they would like to benefit from the program or to get insurance coverage, and not because they are real farmers. Radwan, is neither a farmer nor has a land, so he found a way to circumvent this condition by applying for Agricultural Support through his father's farmer card. I interviewed Radwan in his father's farm and this is some of what he had to share with me:

> "I have applied for Agricultural Support to fund drilling a borehole for water using my father's card. I graduated from University of Batna with a law degree, and found myself unemployed. Faced with that situation I thought about investing in my father's land ... I consulted my father to drill a deep water well, and he gave me the green light. The problem here is with the mountains of red tape you need to climb and bureaucratic procedures in local administrations: the DSA, the hydraulics, and so forth ... it took us almost two years just to get done with the paperwork to get the permit and the funding … Finally, we got funds to cover 60 percent of the project costs which means 1,200,000 DA (6,600 Euros). We also got funding to set up an irrigation system, a water basin, and a water pump". (Radwan, personal communication, Ain Yagout, 21.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Radwan and his father are lucky to have sufficient land area (over 8 hectares) to qualify them for the fund. Most farmers have much less than the minimum size of land stipulated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, never mind the masses of the youth who are landless and therefore automatically excluded. Masinissa, a migrant from the small village of Merial says:

> "Very few people have benefited from the Agricultural Support in our village because the vast majority own small lands which are not sufficient, and don't even qualify them for the grant. The government is helping only those who already have something. The government doesn't want to invest in those who don't already have too much". (Masinissa, personal communication, Merial, 23.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Like Radwan, Jalil is landless, and he was a former migrant all over the country but he asserts his willingness to return and settle down if his application for the agricultural support is approved. He had tried to apply using his farmer's card in the hope to invest in his father's land, but he was turned down. He explains how he gave up on his dream to invest in his father's land:

> "I tried but in vain because the land is less than 5 hectares ... If only I could get funding for a water basin, I would quit my job at the juice processing plant in Ngaous immediately. Over time I could buy a small tractor for about 700,000 DA (5,690 EUR). This would encourage me to live in the Rural House. If this happens, I could stay there and work only in agriculture. I could plant more trees than the olives, which my father already has. I would invest in cultivating other agricultural products but only if I had the means. Agriculture can be very lucrative here, and I have no problem staying here and becoming a full-time farmer … I wish I could invest more in agriculture and become a full-time farmer on our land, but I lack the means at this stage and I gave up on the government to help me". (Jalil, personal communication, Ouled Si Sliman, 01.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

There is no gainsaying the systematic exclusion of the Agricultural Support Program of the rural youth even if they are willing to put an end to their migration, settle down in their communities, and fully work on the farm. The vice director of the Agricultural Chamber admits:

> "The vast majority of the youth seek Ansej instead because they do not qualify for agricultural support. In reality, most agricultural support grantees (who are mostly old farmers or their offspring) didn't really need the grant in the first place because they are better off compared to their peers in the village. Most likely they could do their projects with or without the grant but they applied anyway because they knew they would qualify". (F. Benabid, personal communication, Batna city, 20.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

I interviewed the director of the institution directly responsible for approving applications under the agricultural support, which is the Directory of Agricultural Services (DSA). It was difficult to schedule an appointment with him, but thanks to my friendship with the vice director of the Agricultural Chamber, it was possible for me to meet him and interview him in his office. I asked him if his institution or the government has done or is doing anything to make up for the youth for

their (deliberate or inadvertent) exclusion from the agricultural support funds, he pointed out to the derivative program called Land Concessions' Program:

> "Since the year 2000 we implemented the land concessions program in order to engage unemployed young people in the agricultural sector. The problem is that most beneficiaries live too far away from the used lands so they could hardly check on the land on a regular basis. In addition, they lack the basic knowledge in ploughing, using fertilizers, restoring the land, planting trees, or installing an irrigation system and so on and so forth. The ones that have succeeded in this agricultural land concession scheme are those whose families are already rich and are able to support them financially ... Assume an unemployed young person gets a 10-hectare land to use for a 40-year lease. Say that the first year he managed somehow to cultivate barley or wheat. Eventually he may not even be able to harvest the crops because he does not have a source of income to keep him going. That is the main problem facing the agricultural land concession schemes i.e., unemployed young people getting the land but lack the funding and experience to run the day-to-day agricultural work. Frankly there are not many young people who have succeeded … Younger generations avoid agriculture. They want to have fun and enjoy their time, and they know that once they engage in agricultural work, the fun time is over and there is no turning back. Algeria suffers from an acute shortage of qualified workers in agriculture". (K. Ben Sghir, personal communication, Batna city, 28.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Data obtained directly from the Agricultural Chamber in Batna, however, shows that only 7 percent of beneficiaries of land concessions are younger than 40 years old, as shown in **Figure 12.**

Figure 12: Beneficiaries of Land Concessions in Batna Based on Age

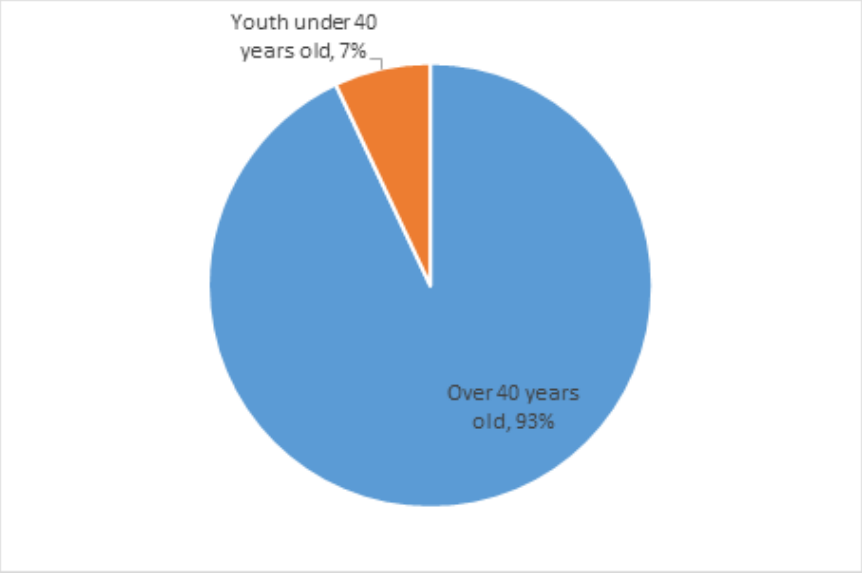

Figure 12: A pie chart showing the age groups among beneficiaries of Land Concessions in Batna as of the end of 2016. Prepared by the researcher based on data obtained from the Agricultural Chamber Office in Batna.

The land leasehold is overwhelmingly taken by older applicants as the graph shows which contradicts the DSA Director's claim that Land Concessions are the affirmative action taken by the government to engage the youth population and compensate for their exclusion in the agricultural support. However, the DSA Director was right about the inaccessibility of the lands under concession (public domain) to the youth since they are mostly located in hard-to-reach areas. A young man like Jalil would rather invest in his family's small land rather than invest in a far-away land situated in an isolated arid area somewhere in the southwestern part of the province of Batna. In fact, this is a dry region with less population density and very few migrants originate from there. Therefore, it becomes apparent that land concessions could do very little to stimulate return migration of migrants or to provide employment to non-migrants.

6.3. Rural Housing: A Glimpse of Hope Albeit the Limitations

Rural housing is a component of the government's colossal public investment in the housing programs. The Ministry of Housing, Town Planning, and the City (MHUV) overseas the implementation of the program, and aims at developing rural areas and stabilize the local population by helping them build a proper house. Beneficiaries receive a financial aid of 700,000 Algerian dinars (about 5,200 Euro) in northern provinces, and 1000,000 DA (about 7,500 Euro) in southern provinces (MHUV, 2019). Since its inception, the program has helped an estimated 1,4 million households to return to their rural communities which they have previously abandoned (The Washington Post, 2017). Batna is one of the leading provinces in terms of rural housing subsidies considering both its population and the relatively large number of rural villages and small settlements. In the year 2018 alone, there were 2,200 approved rural housing grants, and in the past ten years, the number was 47,496 across the province's 21 districts (Ech-Chaab, 2018).

Overall, irrespective of the age groups of the targeted population, rural housing has proved to be relatively more effective in pursuing the goal of bringing about a stable rural population, at least compared to other programs. The Directory of Housing and Public Equipment (DLEP) is the provincial institution representing the Ministry of Housing, Town Planning, and the City (MHUV) responsible for the implementation of the rural housing program in Batna. I met with the Director of DLEP at his office in Batna, and he seemed very welcoming and opened for an interview. First, he shared with me some pictures of completed rural houses across the province, in **Figure 13**.

Figure 13: Rural Houses across the Province of Batna

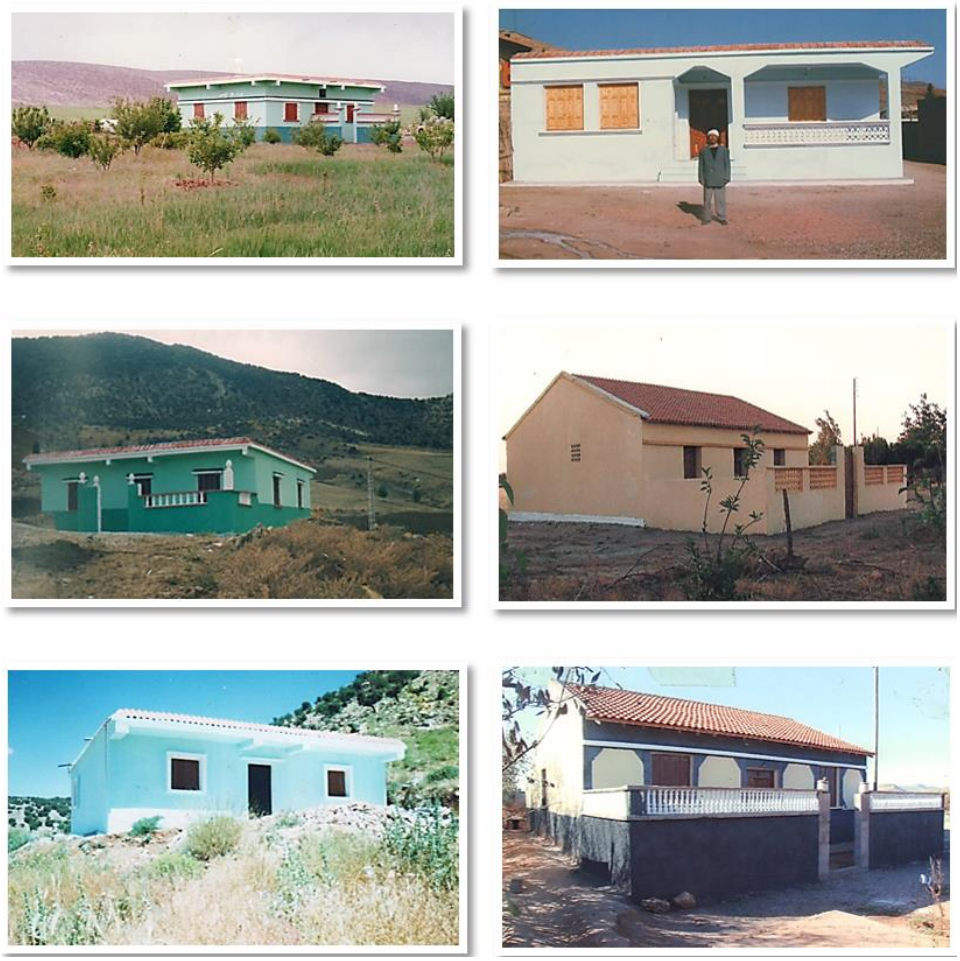

***Figure 13*:** Photographs showing Rural Houses in different parts of the Province of Batna. Obtained from the Directory of Housing and Public Equipment (DLEP) in Batna.

He then shared his point of view about the overall performance of the program and how it compares to other programs as far as stabilizing the rural population is concerned. Even though he represented both his institution and the ministry, yet he sounded objective and reasonable by showing no sign of bias, which is something I had slightly felt with some other local officials I had interviewed before him:

> "I think that there were cases of reverse migration from urban to rural areas but not so many. For example, the number of inhabitants in the municipality of Larbaa in 1998 was zero, but today there are around 900 people who are settled back there permanently. Militants heavily threatened the area in the 1990s so it was more susceptible to the rural exodus of people who fled to nearby semi-rural areas but mainly to Batna city. Now with safety and peace reigning in the region, people have more incentives to

return especially with government's rural infrastructure projects like roads, schools, health centers, and school buses ... There is no question that housing remains a huge problem in the quest to redistribute the population. The province of Batna has had a total of about 43,000 houses confirmed by the government since 2005, which comprises rural houses and social rural housing units, but frankly speaking there is still an acute shortage in the housing supply … Our main objective is to redistribute the population, stop the rural exodus, and galvanize a reverse migration of those who have come to the city during the Black Decade of the 1990s. I think that the rural flight, which took place back then, was catastrophic on rural development in Algeria. This is why the government is trying to encourage inhabitants to go back to their abandoned properties and lands. This is also complemented with the agricultural support. The good thing about Rural Housing in general is that, at least, one of the requirements is that an applicant's salary must not exceed the national minimum wage, which is 18,000 DA a month (95 Euros). The rationale behind it is to ensure that even people from the lowest socioeconomic hierarchy in the society have access to housing". (W. Ben Sghir, personal communication, Batna city, 28.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The DLEP Director indicates that the implementation of the Rural Housing Program happens in tandem with other rural development programs but he admits that there is no coordination whatsoever with other government institutions such as the DSA and Agricultural Chamber (which are responsible for the agricultural support) or Ansej. He also insinuated that the lack of coordination with other stakeholders might breed an environment rife with loopholes, as demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

Loopholes in the implementation of rural housing

Despite the slightly positive outcomes from the implementation of the program, yet it is still possible to pinpoint some loopholes, which could be a hindering factor to achieve a best-case scenario in terms of a balanced distribution of the rural population. An academician, from the Department of Economics and Management Sciences, whom I interviewed in his office at the University of Batna captures some of these loopholes:

"Rural Housing is relatively more successful than any other program in rural Algeria. Nevertheless, there is so much disparity in terms of its implementation and outcomes from one region to another. In some municipalities people managed to use the Rural Housing fund in addition to their own personal contributions to finish building nice houses which are separate from one another, and which are scattered all over the municipality. In contrast to this, in many other municipalities, houses have been constructed next to each other often close to the main road crossing the villages. That is not where agricultural activity is likely to take place. In addition, in some communes like Sefiane, beneficiaries get the funding

> gradually depending on the progress of the construction of the house, whereas in municipalities like Boumaguer beneficiaries get a lump sum in advance. When people receive a lump sum, they become less incentivized to even begin the construction, let alone finish it. Many have simply taken the money and spent it and never built a house". (Prof. S. Fellahi, personal communication, Batna city, 19.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The inconsistency in the implementation of the rural housing from one region to another and even within one municipality causes ambiguity among potential beneficiaries. The absence of clear criteria on who benefits (and who does not) instills skepticism towards the mayors who are the ones responsible for preparing the final list of beneficiaries from their respective municipalities. Tarek, a 27-year old migrant from Oued Taga[81], works and studies at the University of Batna. He is responsible for providing for his family. He reports attempting to apply for the rural housing, but blames the lack of transparency in the preparation of the lists of beneficiaries: "The distribution of the rural housing quota involves a lot of secrecy and deals signed under the table. Corrupt local officials deliberately make the process of distribution notoriously opaque and unjust for the vast majority". (Tarek, personal communication, Oued Taga, 04.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The director of DLEP specifically says his institution is not responsible for selecting beneficiaries and that only mayors have the final say because they know the local conditions better, and are in a position, which allows them to decide who is in more need of help compared to the others:

> "DLEP has no authority to intervene. We only organize and play as a mediator between the municipalities on one hand and the governor and the Ministry of Housing, on the other hand. I think there are cases of people who have been unfairly denied the rural housing, but unfortunately we can do nothing about it". (W. Ben Sghir, personal communication, Batna city, 28.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Mayors and deputy mayors, on the other hand, deny any lack of transparency claiming that a committee representing all people performs the process of distributing quotas. I visited Ghassira[82]

[81] Oued Taga is about 30 KM towards the southeast of Batna city, with a population approximating 19,615 in 2016 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It is mostly inhabited by the ethnic Chawiya group known as Jbaylia, and is known for its apple production.

[82] Located in the southeastern part of the province of Batna, the commune of Ghassira borders the province of Biskra to the south. It had a population of 7,933 in 2016 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It is inhabited by the ethnic Chawiya group of Jbaylia. It also is one of the communes where most farming takes place on the valley, which is vulnerable to flooding.

to meet with the mayor at his office after hearing his interventions during one episode of the local radio program. In answering my question about the lack of transparency in preparing lists of beneficiaries, he says:

> "I make sure that all residents in my municipality get the same chance to benefit from rural housing. For example, each residential area gets a number of beneficiaries according to its total population. This happens with the presence of all members of our municipality council, so I don't see any lack of transparency here. To the contrary". (H. Belkacemi, personal communication, Ghassira, 17.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

However, during my interview with the professor from the University of Batna, he assured me that the presence of members of the municipality council during the selection process of beneficiaries is by no means a shield against manipulation.

Further, another major loophole prohibiting the development of the rural housing program is its mutual exclusivity with social housing offered by the government in urban centers. Non-migrants, but especially migrants, see an opportunity cost in choosing Rural Housing over social housing. Masinissa runs a shop in Batna city, his application for a social house there was approved even though he is technically still living in Merial with his family. He says: "I have already gotten a social house in Batna city so I can't benefit from a rural house which I did not want anyway". (Masinissa, personal communication, Merial, 23.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author). Mourad also shares a similar thought:

> "I applied for rural housing but then I changed my mind because I wanted to get social housing in the city. Ideally, I know I would prefer living in my village in my own house on my own land, but an apartment in the city brings many perks and might be useful for me and my family in any case". (Mourad, personal communication, Merial, 17.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Zakaria is a 36-year old migrant from the village Ouled Fadhel[83]. He says that he is not married yet because he does not have a house: "I applied for both rural housing and social housing, and I am still waiting whichever comes first I would take because I know I couldn't get both". (Zakaria, personal communication, Ouled Fadhel, 09.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

[83] Ouled Fadhel is located about 60 KM away from Batna city, bordering Kenchla province in the east, with a population of 11,604 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It was probably the most secluded and poorest village I have been to during the fieldwork. A visitor gets the impression that it is a forgotten place.

Radwan, who benefited from agricultural support (with his father) refuses to apply for rural housing:

> "I didn't want to get the 700,000 DA (3700 Euros) for the rural housing fund and then exhaust my other options like a piece of land or a social house in the center of Ain Yagout. You know Ain Yagout is becoming an industrial hub in the province of Batna so the value of real-estate in the town is exploding, so I would rather be close to the center than live in this isolated farm". (Radwan, personal communication, Ain Yagout, 21.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Accounting for the cost of lost opportunity when deciding between the two forms of housing programs clearly favors the urban choice among the rural youth. However, the increasing pressure on social housing and the inability of the government to meet the demand leaves many with the choice of rural housing. Under such cases, as with Ansej, rural housing becomes a windfall even when the applicant is convinced that he would gain no value from obtaining the grant and building the house. Masinissa reports the case of his brothers-in-law who are all beneficiaries of rural housing:

> "I have three brothers-in-law who live in Merial and they are young and single. They all got the fund and finished building their rural houses. However, none of them is living in it. That's not what they needed in the first place. For them the fund was a windfall they felt they just need to take advantage of even with no real need. I know people who are keeping their livestock inside their rural houses. Alternatively, most of them could have utilized the 700,000 DA (3,700 Euros) of the rural housing fund in another activity if they were given the freedom to do so, but in reality, the fund must be used only to build a house, which may not be needed in the first place. What is even worse is the fact that beneficiaries are required to build their houses separately and no more than one ground floor. This leads to a significant loss of agricultural land. If it was a little flexible, siblings for instance could live in two floors in the same house, and this can save precious agricultural land". (Masinissa, personal communication, Merial, 23.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

An unequivocal gap in needs assessment exists in the formulation and implementation of the Rural Housing Program when the finished houses are left vacant at the same time when many others complain about the lack of funds to build a house. During the fieldwork, I have encountered several cases where the beneficiary lives in the city even though he has already finished the construction of the house. In retrospect, the question becomes to what extent could the Rural Housing help the rural youth in Batna or is it really offering any tangible help in its current form?

How indispensable is rural housing for the rural youth?

As the DLEP pointed out, a reverse migration has been slowly taking place but the pace of distributing rural housing does not measure up to a level that could meet the housing needs of neither those who wish to return nor those who wish to stay. The youth, however, are underrepresented in either group because they are more inclined to engage in migration. According to the Deputy Mayor of Sefiane: "Most young people don't stay here even if they finish the construction of their rural houses. They work elsewhere and come back only to visit their families". (H. Nhili, personal communication, Sefiane, 20.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author). The Mayor of Ghassira refers to the dislike of agriculture by the youth as a detrimental factor for the Rural Housing Program among this group:

> "So far there have been 355 applicants for rural housing in my municipality, and only 19 have been approved, so we are dealing with an acute shortage I must admit. I believe it is unfair for our municipality and I reported this predicament to the governor. What you see today is that many people come only in the morning to work on their land then return in the late evening. Sometimes they come with their families but they can't settle down in this way. The biggest problem, however, is about prioritizing who gets the fund and who does not. I have noticed that many young men who apply are either hesitant or change their minds and cancel at some point later. Their hesitance stems not only from the fact that they are least interested in farming or agriculture, but also because the land on which they would construct a house does not belong to them. Some of them told me that they fear that once the house is finished their siblings could claim their share from the house since the land belongs to the father, the grandfather, or if it's a communal land or if it belongs to the public domain or a forestry land. That is why they go for the social housing in larger villages like Elmaader or in cities". (H. Belkacemi, personal communication, Ghassira, 17.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Similar to the agricultural support, the rural housing also marginalizes the youth, though to a lesser extent. The DLEP Director suggests that there is no affirmative action in place to increase the share of beneficiaries among the youth:

> "Elder men get the lion's share of Rural Housing grants compared to young people and women because most lands on which the Rural House is to be constructed are owned by elder men. They are the ones who could use a land ownership title and qualify immediately. This of course places younger people at a disadvantageous position ... Selection of beneficiaries is done by the municipalities independently. They should account for the youth and women but they are not restrained by any quota system to ensure fairness. Sometimes it's the governor who intervenes personally to suggest that younger people should have better chances at getting rural housing lest they place more pressure on social housing applications

in the city". (W. Ben Sghir, personal communication, Batna city, 28.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The DLEP Director emphasizes the patriarchal system, which inherently marginalizes the youth, but what he and all other interviewed local officials ignore to address is the amount of the fund under the Rural Housing Program, which can be perceived as small. Riad, the blacksmith in Batna is building a house in his home village with the help of the rural housing fund, but he says:

> "I applied and I got it, but 700,000 DA (3,700 Euro) doesn't cover much, especially in my case because the land is situated in a mountainous area. Even though the land plot is only 80 square meters yet all the money was barely sufficient to cover the costs of straightening the ground and build the foundations. It was pointless and I regret it. I think that the government is using that fund just to encourage people to start doing it, but then they get stuck at some point because building a house costs a lot more than what is being granted". (Riad, personal communication, Ghoufi, 02.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Issam, a 39-year old non-migrant farmer in Merial, is also a beneficiary of rural housing but also believes the amount of the fund is insufficient:

> "I am still constructing the house but the fund is insufficient, not even for a 100-meter square plot of land. They don't have many restrictions on how to construct the house or how many floors for instance, but the value of the fund wouldn't cover half the work necessary to finish one floor". (Issam, personal communication, Merial, 26.09.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Both Issam and Riad admitted that their houses are unlikely to be used in the foreseeable future because for them it boils down eventually to the question of whether a house is urgently needed but most importantly to the question of job availability. That is perhaps why non-beneficiaries remain skeptical vis-a-vis the Rural Housing Program since it does not come with the "whole package". Ammar is a 40-year old migrant from Oued Elma[84] and has been working as a construction worker in Batna for many years. I scheduled an interview with him in a late evening after he is done with work. He says the following:

> "I never wanted to apply, because I don't need it; we have no problem of housing back in my home village. Not that I have land to construct a house anyway. I could stay in my family's house, but I can't

[84] Oued Elma is a relatively big semi-rural community of 22,998 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), about 50 KM to the north of Batna city. Many construction workers in Batna come from this village. The commune is also known for its forested areas, which belong to the Belezma National Park (one of the most important national parks in Algeria).

stay there because there is no work for me there". (Ammar, personal communication, Batna city, 06.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Masinissa, who runs a shop in Batna city, also shares a similar thought about his house in his home village:

"I am building my own house with my own money in Merial. I don't understand the purpose from giving people the Rural Housing funds in the first place because most people in rural areas don't have a problem of where they live, but rather a problem of what they do to earn a living". (Masinissa, personal communication, Merial, 23.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Mohamed, the migrant in Algiers, is a beneficiary but he explains the rationale behind building a rural house without any real need for him:

"The amount I got is not sufficient of course. It's only 700,000 DA, but it helps to start. I wanted to at least finish the ceiling, paint the walls, and have the doors and windows in place. I did that only to placate my father who has been pushing me to build a house and get married. He wanted to see something concrete I accomplished after all the years I have spent in Algiers. He keeps saying: "son you have spent all these years working in Algiers and you still have no house and no wife". So even though I know that I am not going to live in this house, I have spent a lot of money to build it just so that my father stops blaming me … Frankly I don't want to spend a penny in this place anymore. I was talking to Malik (his brother) earlier and told him that he and other brothers should take over this house from me because I want to settle down in Algiers". (Mohamed, personal communication, Merial, 19.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Mohamed and his brothers use the finished rural house to store their apples as shown in **Figure 14** below. When asked about the many cases of unused rural houses, and whether there is a misallocation of the funds, the Director of DLEP says:

"Some beneficiaries don't need the Rural Housing but they apply for it anyway just because it's available for them. Last year I bought a sheep for Eid al-Adha[85] from someone who took me to his rural house in Ouled Ouf where he kept all of his cattle. When I asked him about it, he said he had all the right to build that house because he was eligible even though he actually lives in the city of Ain Touta. But we have nothing to do with the selection process as it's the municipality's job. There is this mentality in people that they want to benefit from any government program as long as they qualify even if they have zero benefit from it, hence depriving someone else who may have been in dire need for it. There are certainly many loopholes in the government programs from both the legal perspective and the implementation.

[85] Literally translates "feast of the sacrifice", meaning the Muslim celebration marked by prayers and feasts.

Figure 14: The Use of a Rural House by a Migrant

Figure 14: A case of a vacant rural house owned by a migrant, but which turned into a place to keep agricultural products, under relatively cool temperatures. Photographed by the researcher on 19.08.2016.

> When you consider rural housing, there have been many great examples, but there were also many examples of misusing the fund. I think the government should look at those good examples and try to extrapolate the conditions which made it successful to all other cases, and here I am talking about both laws and implementation". (W. Ben Sghir, personal communication, Batna city, 28.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Given the existing loopholes in the regulations as well as the implementation of the program, it is not surprising to encounter cases on two extremes. On the one hand, there are those who have no housing problems yet they become beneficiaries to build houses, which they abandon later on or occasionally use to keep their fruits, crops, or even cattle. On the other hand, there are those who fall through the cracks despite their dire need for housing. Anwar, who attempted illegal migration to Spain, and his family are an example of those who are left behind by the system:

> "My siblings applied for rural housing but we didn't get it. My father tried several times before but they didn't accept his application because according to them he was working for the customs and his salary was good, but in reality, he used to earn only 20,000 DA (about 150 Euros). I don't know how some people get that fund while others don't. But I need to leave the country anyway, and if my first attempt was successful, I would not return back here. I would sleep under the bridge or in a carton over there rather than stay here. We all live in our grandfather's small house and you won't believe how cramped it is if you see it". (Anwar, personal communication, Chir, 30.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Anwar immediately associated the cramped living space and the misery faced by his family with his desire to escape to a better place because there is no way to improve the situation. A rural house could be of great benefit to Anwar's family but unluckily for them it all depends on their connections and their ability to influence the selection of beneficiaries at the mayor's office. Overall, despite some of the positive outcomes that the Rural Housing Program has brought about at the macro-level, there is ample evidence suggesting that many rural families are still excluded. From the perspective of DLEP and the mayors, landlessness, joblessness, and the proclivity of migration among young males in rural Batna can all be detrimental to achieving desired outcomes at full-scale.

6.4. Rural Infrastructure: Partial Recovery and Partial Outcomes

During the data collection phase, what has turned out to be an important element in enabling or disabling outmigration flows is the rural infrastructure in Batna. The literature that tackles the dynamic relationship between migration and development has surprisingly seldom sought to account for the conditions of the rural infrastructure. This, in fact is the reason why I have not initially incorporated rural infrastructure as one of the rural institutions in the conceptual framework. However, speaking about the rural infrastructure per se has occurred frequently during the in-depth interviews, expert interviews, as well as the local radio program. There is no doubt that a reliable infrastructure could be crucial for the success of all aforementioned government programs. For example, one cannot simply engage in a business project under Ansej in a rural community that lacks paved roads or electric grid, or drinking water. By the same token, it is inconceivable that a young person could take part in or be successful in the agricultural support or the rural housing without a proper rural infrastructure in place.

There is no gainsaying that the the rural infrastructure in Batna has partially recovered from the massive destruction of the 1990s, the period during which many villages had been transformed into "ghost towns". Mustafa describes the transformation in his village:

> "Things got better for the local people in recent years. The municipality has recently been connected with natural gas and rural electricity. Drinking water is not an issue today. We also have a health center, and even a high school. I remember back in the 1990s how this place was repelling people because it's mountainous and constantly threatened by the militants. Many people have left and settled in Batna, but

things have changed a lot since then". (Mustafa, personal communication, Thniet Laabed, 07.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Indeed, things have changed a lot since then, but the rural infrastructure remains rudimentary in many municipalities and their adjacent hamlets. Some of the migrants in Batna whom I interviewed were attending German language classes at a private school. I visited the school and it turned out to be a consulting firm rather than a school. The director informed me that their main activity was providing consulting services for individuals and companies, and that many of his clients were young people from rural areas. Having spoken with him shortly I realized that he was another potential participant in my expert interviews. He agreed to be interviewed for my research, so we scheduled an appointment at a coffee shop right in front of his office. The first thing he stressed during the interview is how important is the rural infrastructure, more than anything else:

> "Unlike city dwellers, people in rural areas often have demands which are very specific. Those in the city have ambiguous demands such as calling for more job creation. In contrast, rural people are more likely to be unemployed yet they often don't ask for job creation, but rather for the specific basic infrastructure. Much of the infrastructure projects in rural areas are burdened with regulation, red tape and corruption … We have been to remote areas and you wouldn't believe how detached those communities are from the outside world. They live on subsistence farming, they have no clean water, no accessible health facilities, and their children do not attend school. Therefore, when we talk about rural development, we should talk about a stable population, which stays in rural areas, and primarily work in agriculture and see no benefit in migrating. The government is not taking care of them, and instead is focusing on development in semi-rural areas, which are close to the city and have relatively higher levels of urban integration and no farming activities whatsoever. The government institutions confuse between these rural and semi-rural areas, hence the imbalanced development between the two zones. In semirural areas much of the land is expected to be part of the future urban planning, and the government is pouring too much funding here when it should instead be pouring it to the development of rural areas. Much of the funding allocated by the government in these areas is encouraging people to move from rural areas to semirural areas or to the city. And even the funding that goes to the rural areas such as the agricultural support is not efficient and is going to the wrong people". (T. Bouakaz, personal communication, Batna city, 10.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Any visitor to many rural communities could readily tell that not much has been changed in terms of infrastructure for a long time. Lack of paved roads and rundown houses and buildings is typical in places like Ouled Fadhel, Tkout, and Talkhemt. This is in sharp contrast to what semi-rural areas look like, such as Ain Yagout, Djarma, or Ain Djasser. What is remarkable is the imbalanced

development between these semi-rural and rural areas. I met Zakaria in his home village of Ouled Fadhel, which is a very secluded small village in the east of the province of Batna. Zakaria works in the province of Setif and comes back at least once a month to visit and check on his mother and his incapacitated brother to offer them financial support. He complains about the unbearable conditions of infrastructure there, which made him leave:

> "Just look at the rundown houses, that even a walking cat may cause a damage on the roof tiles. We have no natural gas for heating and cooking. It gets freezing during winter here so we still buy butane gas bottles, and that is not economic and can be so risky ... This place is like a hotel for young people here because most of them work somewhere else and come back only to spend the night. If it were not for my mother and brother I would never ever come back here. I can never understand how some people stay here all year long". (Zakaria, personal communication, Ouled Fadhel, 09.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Natural gas infrastructure in rural Batna remains one of the biggest challenges for local authorities at least compared to the rural electrical grid infrastructure. However, connecting secluded villages situated in mountainous areas with natural gas pipes can be technically and financially infeasible. As shown in **Figure 15**, it was common during the field work to hear complains about the lack of natural gas network and the reliance on butane gas bottles instead.

Figure 15: Butane Gas Supply in Parts of Rural Batna

Figure 15: The supply of butane gas bottles to the locals in the village of Ouled Fadhel reflects the inaccessibility of some rural villages to the government's natural gas network. Photographed by the researcher on 09.10.2016.

Participants of the program "Between the Citizen and the Official[86]" broadcasted on the local Aures Radio repeatedly emphasized their need of providing natural gas used for heating and cooking. However, rural electricity is more critical for them since there is no temporary solution as with the natural gas. One participant from Boulhilet[87] points out:

> "There is an acute shortage of rural electrification in our municipality, and even the old electric grid cables cause frequent power outages. We stay in total darkness for hours some times, and this is happening despite the fact that we requested renovation of the electric grid. We currently use electric generators but they are very unreliable due to frequent technical breakdowns. I find it strange that the government has allocated this much funding for rural development and the Agricultural Support in recent years without any attention to solar energy. In my case for example, I would be very satisfied if I could use a reliable source of electricity such as solar power for my house and to pump water from the borehole for my small farm. If I could get this one day, I wouldn't ask for anything more". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Boulhilet, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 16.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

In another episode of the radio show a farmer from Hidousa[88] responded to the mayor who stated that his municipality is, 99 percent covered with electricity: "I completely disagree with the mayor's claims that the village is 99 percent covered with rural electricity. I dare anyone to drive around to find out that the percentage is perhaps 5 percent instead". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Hidousa, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 18.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author). The above quotes speak to the frustration with rural electrification and with it the national power company Sonelgaz, which is the sole distributor of electricity and natural gas in Algeria. Forty or fifty families without gas or electricity in one village and its adjacent settlements should come as no surprise to the listeners of that radio show. The favorite scapegoats by local officials in these situations are the responsible contractors being either too slow or simply inefficient in the implementation of such infrastructure projects. Sometimes, mayors also attribute it to budgetary constraints at the municipal level. Here, they attribute the delay to the high costs of

[86] In every episode of the weekly (sometimes biweekly) radio show, the host invites one mayor and other local officials from one rural municipality with the presence of few representatives of the local community. The latter ones are sometimes farmers representing farmers' cooperatives, and sometimes are independent farmers or ordinary citizens. Heated debates over rural development projects often take place.

[87] A rural municipality with a total population of 7,618 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), located about 62 KM to the east of Batna city.

[88] Hidousa is a rural municipality in a mountainous region (one of the four municipalities in Merouana district). It is located about 40 KM away from Batna 2,417 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). Hidousa is famous for its natural springs, and also for the cultivation of apples.

bringing electrical grid to the most secluded hamlets; hence, further support from the governor of the province is crucial according to them. Mayors often do realize that renewable energy can be the only sustainable solution to meet local demand whether for household use or for farming. Notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence in favor of alternative energy sources in the long term, there seems to be a huge knowledge and technological gap, which hinders any development in this respect.

Social services: Acute shortage in the provision of health services

The availability of formal education and health services is a decisive factor for people to decide whether to stay or leave. The director of the Agricultural Chamber pointed out that improvements in social services in recent years have persuaded many families to return or to stay:

> "There has been a reverse rural exodus taking place in recent years, thanks to the Agricultural Support (irrigation systems, seeds, trees, etc.) as well as rural development (schools, health centers, and public transportation). In the district of Barika[89], for instance, school buses have persuaded many families to move back to their rural villages". (L. Messoudi, personal communication, Batna city, 25.07.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

However, even after the remarkable recovery from the 1990s, the lack of social services remains a significant push and pull factor for those who grapple with health and schooling services. It seems, nevertheless to be a pattern that the provision of formal education (mainly primary schools) as well as school buses is felt more among the locals compared to the provision of health services, relatively. The mayor of Boumia captures this point:

> "We have a primary school which is provided with central heating and has enough teachers. The pupils regularly get warm food at the canteen. I am very strict about that. School buses are not sufficient for those who attend middle and high schools in Elmaader[90]. We requested from the governor to establish a middle school here. In addition to that, we requested the construction of a health center as well, which we do not currently have". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Boumia, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 23.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

[89] Barika is the largest district in Batna province with 143,562 inhabitants (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It contains three municipalities, including Barika city, which is about 100 KM from Batna city.
[90] A semi-rural village of 20.836 residents (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), about 25 KM to the north east of Batna city not far from Boumia. Mostly known for its dairy farming.

One farmer in Boumia[91] reports:

> "School buses are lacking, and the few that exist are often overcrowded with school children, which poses a great risk in case of an accident, God forbid. There is a small health center and the doctor comes once a week only. Other days only a nurse is available. Those who are in an emergency have to drive to Elmaader if they have a car because there is no ambulance. There is of course no birthing center, so pregnant women have to be quickly transferred to Elmaader or Batna to deliver. There is a high risk they could lose their lives and the lives of the unborn babies on the way. We have no real health center, no permanent shifts, no birthing center, no dentist, no MRI, and no ambulance". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Boumia, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 23.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Similarly, one non-migrant from Gosbat[92] reports:

> "We lack health services here, and as a result many people move to Setif since it is closer compared to Batna. But we are putting a lot of pressure on the health facilities in Setif and they are starting to reject us, so what can we do? And even Setif is a long distance, and there were many cases of people dying while being transferred in a car, including pregnant women". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Gosbat, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 15.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

In response to the frequent complains about the lack of birthing centers, the mayor of Tkout argues:

> "We lack resources for that, and I can't gamble on the lives and health of pregnant women. We need qualified staff, sufficient number of midwives, equipment, and an ambulance. All these conditions have to be provided beforehand, otherwise there is no chance I could open a rudimentary birthing center that could jeopardize the health and lives of pregnant women". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Tkout, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 08.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

For this mayor, not having a rudimentary birthing center at all is a less risky option than transporting pregnant women to the city to receive necessary health care and give birth. This tendency to maintain the status quo by some local officials accentuates the imbalanced provision of health services between rural regions and the city. In fact, the negative natural population growth[93] reported in several municipalities could be attributed largely to the absence or at least lack of birthing centers. This in turn, forces many to move to the city to give birth and register the

[91] A small commune of about 937 residents (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016), about 35 KM to the north east of Batna city.
[92] Gosbat has a population of 18,005 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016) and borders the province of Setif to the north west of Batna.
[93] Figure 8 in Chapter Five shows the natural population growth in each of the 61 municipalities.

newborns there. One of the municipalities that reports a negative population growth is Tkout where health facilities hardly exist. Not do pregnant women suffer but also migrants and non-migrants who engage in the marble and stone cutting work, as one non-migrant explains:

> "We are still waiting for the hospital which the local officials have been promising to realize. People who work in the marble cutting and molding are still dying of silicosis because they get no health care. The work of this hospital has been on hold for the past 2 years. The polyclinic here does not open all the time and the services are very limited. There is no birthing center, so pregnant women are taken far away to deliver, and some of them die. People go to Batna or Biskra to receive treatment, and that's not practical because Batna is more than 100 KM away and Biskra is also far away, about one-hour-and-half drive. There have been many emergency situations when the patient passed on the way to either city. In winter the road to Batna is often closed. These silicosis patients are suffering a lot, and they have no other source of income except stone cutting." (Between the Citizen and the Official: Tkout, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 08.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

My question to some of the migrant workers is whether the awaited hospital in Tkout could treat silicosis which is an untreatable degenerative disease and most likely fatal. They say that it would only serve the purpose of alleviating the pain from the patients and their families, because currently patients stay in their homes until they die. The better off in Tkout, however, choose not to be part of this life-threatening line of work, so they often choose to move to Batna or other cities.

Alleviating isolation in remote areas: A problem of forward linkages

Participants of the local radio show frequently use the expression "rural isolation" to refer to the lack of paved roads or bad public transportation. In fact, the listener of the show may have the impression that rural development is reduced to just that. Much of the infrastructure work by the municipalities has been dedicated to paving both agricultural roads as well as asphalt roads. Some main roads have been closed for decades since the bloodbath of the 1990s, as a way to confine militants and keep them at bay. Ammar, the migrant construction worker in Batna reports:

> "The main direct road connecting Oued Elma to Batna is still closed since the 1990s. We still have to go through Seriana and that's about 54 KM as opposed to the 30 KM with the closed road, which is being repaved, I heard. I wish they could finish with it soon so that I could move back and resettle in Oued Elma and be able to commute to Batna every day. I can't afford the rent here in Batna". (Ammar, personal communication, Batna city, 06.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The more a village is connected to other villages or urban centers the easier the commute and the higher the chances that people like Ammar would return to their home village. It is also possible that the cost of food items is relatively higher in isolated villages since the costs of the transportation of the merchandize could be higher. That is what I heard from conducting the informal discussions in Tkout for instance. Above all, an isolated village offers very limited market potential for the youth to sell their products or services. One non-migrant from Tkout says:

> "We are still very isolated and the roads to other cities are almost non-existent. We hear about a project to directly connect Tkout with the city of Biskra, but I guess it's just a rumor … The problem in this region is that it is very isolated and any project would be predestined to fail. Whatever people do here, it would not earn them enough revenue because there is simply no market". (Informal discussion, personal communication, Tkout, 14.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Issues of forward linkages are what this non-migrant refers to, whether it is in agriculture or any other sector. One farmer points out:

> "I can't sell my products because there is no market here. I reap the fruits and vegetables and watch them spoil with the passage of time. We would like to have a space where we could sell our products and prevent them from rotting at the farm. We could rent a space and pay the municipality, no problem. It affects us both financially and psychologically". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Gosbat, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 15.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author, translated from Arabic by the author).

Rural isolation, coupled with the lack of local markets or food processing units, traps farmers and even entrepreneurs in the services sector in a situation where choosing a lesser of two evils often means selling their products at very low prices. The mayor of Chir[94] proposes a solution to this:

> "The marketing of agricultural products has always been a problem, because there is no local agribusiness and food processing business. I encourage private investors to initiate projects in this regard. Also, we are currently working on paving 7 kilometers of agricultural roads that could ease the way farmers transport their produce from their farms to wherever they would sell it". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Chir, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 04.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

[94] A small rural village in the south of the province of Batna with a population of 5,610 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It is located about 72 KM away from Batna city. Like Ghassira, much of the agricultural activity here also takes place within the valley, in spite of risks of floods as the one in 2010.

Therefore, alleviating rural isolation could culminate in several benefits on the livelihoods of rural families. On one hand, migrants could commute and save more of their hard-earned money, which could otherwise go to cover rent costs in Batna city. On the other hand, non-migrants who engage in any kind of business (on and off-farm) could expand their market beyond the confines of their small villages, which would encourage more investment and entrepreneurship in productive sectors, including through the help of Ansej and other government programs.

Diminishing water resources

Water is scarce especially in the municipalities situated towards the south of the province, and everyone agrees that the amount of precipitation has remarkably fallen in the past two decades, making droughts the rule rather than the exception. As one farmer put it: "If droughts continue to be the norm, in two or three years there will not be a single farmer left here". For many farmers and those who wish to engage in agricultural work, obtaining agricultural water often means drilling a borehole. The main problem with that according to the interviewees is obtaining a permit from the local authorities. Mohamed from Merial points this out:

> "Even if the Director of DSA or whatever comes over here in person and sees our place and the 400 apple trees that we have here, I bet he wouldn't grant us an authorization to drill a borehole ... They require a minimum of 5 hectares of land area in order to qualify for a permit but that is nonsensical and unfair. People, like us, who live in rural areas, are mostly farmers or at least their parents were, so they have a natural attachment to their lands. How could these officials allow the 'son of the countryside' to migrate to the city and work at a pizzeria while his land is abandoned? How is that logical? The land area requirement for authorizing the drilling of a well is just a pretext used by the officials not to help the vast majority of the farmers. If they support me here then I would stay here and would never go to the city". (Mohamed, personal communication, Merial, 19.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The land, which belongs to Mohamed and his family, is less than the stipulated requirement so they are automatically disqualified from drilling a borehole. Since small-scale agriculture is dominant in rural Batna, and most of the lands are less than 5 hectares, it becomes tempting for some farmers to drill a borehole in a discreet way. Radwan is one of the few who managed to get a permit:

> "It's getting more and more difficult and bureaucratic to get permits because water resources are being depleted everywhere. I heard people are doing it secretly but they are risking a lot if they get caught. Even after I got the permit and while we were busy drilling the borehole, the gendarmerie came by several times. I got unnerved because every time I had to deal with them and show them the documents and the exact coordinates of the borehole for them to confirm before they left". (Radwan, personal communication, Ain Yagout, 21.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

One non-migrant complains about the procedure of applying for the permit:

> "It takes a long time to obtain a permit to dig a borehole. A farmer who has to wait for a permit to dig a well would also have to put his work on hold until the permit is granted. This is very demotivating for farmers and many of them refuse to wait for 2 or 3 years just to obtain the permit. We realize that underground water resources have been depleting by years of droughts, but prolonging the permit issuance does not solve our problem". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Boumia, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 23.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Local officials and especially DSA Representatives blame the Hydraulics Directory for the lengthy processing of the applications, but this blame game serves no one, least of all Mohamed who wishes to cease his migration and go back home to work in agriculture. The Mayor of Ghassira calls for the reconstruction of old dams, which have been neglected for decades:

> "In the past there was only a small dam in Ghassira which was enough to cover the needs of the entire population. Today, there is not even one dam in the whole area. Few lucky people were able to drill their own water wells, while many others had their gardens dried out and their trees died. Now you can only see thorns. I remember the days when Ghassira used to produce garlic, lemons, and oranges of the best quality. The agricultural activity is concentrated along the valley, and I wish the governor would initiate a project to reconstruct the dams, and new water canals and water barriers along the valley". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Ghassira, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 09.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Overall, the insufficient water resources do not encourage any farming activity to take place, especially among the youth who already have many reasons to shy away from agricultural work. Several respondents reported their reluctance to engage in Ansej or the agricultural support simply because there is no water. Therefore, water availability remains crucial and without a robust water infrastructure, rural exodus could continue to happen in Batna and with it the shortage in agricultural labor.

Leisure and sports: Playing dominos to kill time

The working-unemployed youth spend most of their time at a coffee shop either to play domino or to watch football with friends. They are looked at down in the society and the mere expression "he plays domino at the coffee shop" holds more than the literal meaning of the words. When used, the expression pejoratively signifies that the person is unemployed, not attending school, and is simply killing time playing dominos because he has nothing better to do. Zakaria, the 36-year old migrant from Ouled Fadhel, describes the life of his peers who stay behind:

> "I can never understand how some people stay here all year long. You saw those young men in the coffee shop playing dominos or Ludo. That's their life. They do nothing and their only place to go to when they wake up in the morning is the coffee shop. Many of them are addicted to drugs and weed smoking because it gives them a temporary and easy way out". (Zakaria, personal communication, Ouled Fadhel, 09.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

When local officials talk about the youth and their chronic unemployment in their respective municipalities, they often talk about youth centers and football stadiums. In fact, some local officials seem to confuse between youth unemployment and "youth boredom" which results from the lack of leisure, culture, and sports facilities. For example, mayors sometimes convey the idea that building a youth center or a football stadium would somehow solve the problem of youth unemployment. In my interpretation, this speaks to the deep-seated gerontocratic practices where real jobs are presumed to be reserved exclusively for the elderly while the youth are only expected to play football and join martial arts' clubs until they turn 45. Even sports' facilities and cultural centers barely exist in rural Batna, and often times youth centers remain closed yearlong or, as the picture in **Figure 16** shows, they become internet cafes that are hardly visited by anyone.

One non-migrant explains:

> "Our region lacks sports infrastructure facilities but young people love and breathe sports. We have one stadium that gets very muddy when it rains, and the martial arts club has neither trainers nor equipment. There is also a cultural center which is literally empty and does not add any value to the youth". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Boulhilet, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 16.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Few mayors attribute the lack of sports infrastructure to the insufficient land in the public domain, since much of the land is mostly communal and to a less extent private. It is conceivable that

Figure 16: A Youth Center in a Rural Village in Batna

Figure 16: A youth center in the village of Lazrou, Batna, which is hardly used or visited by the local youth. Photographed by the researcher on 14.03.2017.

leisure, sports, and cultural activities may improve the quality of life for the non-migrants and other migrant groups who may return for occasional stays or for permanent resettlement. However, this has to be entirely disentangled from the longstanding predicament of youth unemployment, which ought to be handled separately following completely different strategies.

6.5. The Role of Human Agency: Iterational, Practical, and Projective

The narratives of the migrants provide some clues about how the dimensions of the human agency come into play when making decisions. The three dimensions, namely iterational, practical, and projective equally contribute to the social behavior demonstrated towards migration and development programs as suggested in the paragraphs that follow.

Iterational agency: Lessons from the past

Iterational or habitual agency is defined as "the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time"

(Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: p. 971). Iterative agency is evident when a migrant learns from his past experiences and tries to act accordingly. This has frequently been captured especially among migrants who express reluctance to return to their home villages. For example, Said does not want his children to experience a similar childhood as his:

> "I am reluctant to get married because I don't want to start a family in my village. I want my kids to grow up in a big city. There is nothing in my village, and my children would learn nothing if they stay there. I want my children to experience urban life from the beginning". (Said, personal communication, Sefiane, 16.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Mohamed also does not want to return and settle back in his village:

> "We have been dealing with land conflicts among relatives for many years, and now it's a barren land with no benefit to anyone whatsoever. That is why I am not coming back here. I don't want my children to be born here and suffer and deal with this kind of kinship problems. At least in Algiers they could have better education and they could navigate their way overseas too if they wanted to". (Mohamed, personal communication, Merial, 19.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

It is conventional in the migration scholarship to highlight only how migrants act in a way that maximizes their overall benefit and diversifies the risk for themselves and their families. However, as the above quotations suggest, the decision-making of migrants may involve an assessment of a memory, which would rather not repeat. In other words, they would act to avoid a "deja-vu" scenario, if not for themselves and their families then it is for their children when they are born in the future.

Practical agency: Survival mechanisms

The practical agency indicates "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: p. 971). Migrants can be very resourceful in finding the best possible livelihood option given the conditions of the local job market. Here, their practical-evaluative agency towards the present plays an important role as a survival technique for them and their families. This agency is especially evident among those who manage to find work despite the limited opportunities. Bilal reflects on this evaluative calculus:

> "If I were to stay in my home village, I could only do some work temporarily but then what? There is no stable demand for my work there, and that's why I have been traveling to Batna, Setif, Biskra, etc., and I still do so. I have been running after jobs wherever they exist because I must feed my family". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The social actions of migrants are not static, but rather develop temporally and spatially given the new emerging conditions at a corresponding present moment. Mustafa has been a migrant for many years, but his evaluative agency has also changed. He says:

> "Now my challenge is to make enough money to afford the migration costs overseas. I need to engage in extra trading activities in order to earn more money, and only money can open the migration door for me and my family". (Mustafa, personal communication, Thniet Laabed, 07.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

An evaluative agency does not always mean further migration; for some migrants it means reverse migration. Sami, for example, saves money to start a project in his home village:

> "My current job in the Sahara is very stressful and I tend to get unnerved the longer I stay there. I don't want that to last for so long. I want to start a business in my village and live off it, so I am saving money to start a fruit-processing unit. My uncle has experience doing that so he could offer me some help and guidance". (Sami, personal communication, Sefiane, 04.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Therefore, several ways in which this agentic dimension manifests among migrants, but the common denominator is that it is mainly concerned with how migrants evaluate the livelihood options given the emerging situations over time.

Projective agency: The culture of migration eats development strategy for breakfast

Projective agency refers to the "imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: p. 971). Migrants hold on to a better future, and their capacity to imagine a different possibility drives much of their social engagement. The culture of migration seems to constantly feed into this agentic orientation by perpetually forming idealized images in the minds of migrants through their social networks. Anwar, for example, is convinced that there is no future neither in his home village nor in Algeria, and that Germany is the perfect place for him:

> "In Germany I believe I can study and learn new things and advance my life, and the people are helpful and cultured. I have a couple of friends from Germany that I chat with sometimes on Facebook. I could only use few English words I know to communicate with them … I can't wait for the day that I could play a soccer game with a club in Germany … I need to leave the country anyway, and if my first attempt was successful, I would not return back here. I would sleep under the bridge or in a carton over there rather than stay here. I could study there and play football. Here I can do neither, and if I stay here for too long, I may turn into a drug addict or an alcoholic just like everybody else in my village". (Anwar, personal communication, Chir, 30.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

No government program could dissuade Anwar from engaging in migration, as he asserted that he would try a second, a third, and even a fourth attempt to hop on a boat in order to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Anwar's projective imaginative agency, fueled with a culture of migration, would trump Ansej, agricultural support, rural housing, and all other derivative programs. Radwan has received the agricultural support with his father, and yet that could not hold him back from applying for a German visa:

> "The reality is, I hope that if I get the visa, I would be able to study and settle down in Germany for some time. Ideally, I could earn enough money and transfer back to my father who could in turn invest in the land and the agricultural enterprise that we started". (Radwan, personal communication, Ain Yagout, 21.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Aissa also has no desire whatsoever to remain in Algeria, suggesting that his decision has a lot to do with cultural rather than pecuniary factors:

> "Even if I get a stable job in the public sector or the private sector that could pay me 100,000 DA (550 Euros) I would still not stay in the country. I don't want to just exist here. I don't want to just get married, have kids, and survive. I have a long term goal; So even 200,000 DA a month (1060 Euros) wouldn't dissuade me from leaving … Few years ago I was a little hesitant so I applied for Ansej to get a van to be used for transportation of goods, but then I backed off in the last minute because I learned that there is an interest rate involved, but mainly because I was thinking about migrating to Europe. I have always been in a state of mind that is completely disconnected from the local context here. I thought about a poultry farm via Ansej as well, but again I couldn't force myself to give it total devotion because of my dream to migrate". (Aissa, personal communication, Ras El-Ayoun, 15.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Said also reflects on his migration dream, and he too is a good example of how the culture of migration could stimulate projective agentic orientations:

> "Money can't buy happiness. I want to live, really live. I want to live in a place where people smile at you and say good morning to you. I want to be in a place where people are cultured and cheerful. I have many alternatives to earn a lot of money here but that is not my goal. Many people here are rich but you look at them and you feel disgusted at the way they look, dress, talk, and behave in general. They own the biggest houses and the fanciest cars but they are so retarded. I don't want to be like that. I think this is the ideal age for me to experience that good life overseas. I know that if I wait for one or two more years then it would be too late for me". (Said, personal communication, Sefiane, 16.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

At the age of 34, Brahim seems oblivious of the ticking clock, which Said refers to, in the sake of fulfilling his dream to migrate to Europe:

> "I've always wanted to migrate, so at this stage if I apply and get an Ansej loan it would be as though I get myself locked in a prison cell with a key thrown out of the window of the cell … France has the best social security system in the world. The language is also important because I can communicate easily when I get there compared to if I were to go to England or Germany". (Brahim, personal communication, Foum Toub, 13.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Pioneer migrants tell stories, show an example, and play as a role model for younger migrants and non-migrants alike through social networks. Over time, migration becomes a rite of passage and the "hypnotizing" effect of the culture of migration can be indelible. The imagined possibility of an existing utopia where citizens enjoy the perfect life is so powerful that many would not see any opportunity that could pass them by in their local context, including the opportunity to engage in a government development program.

6.6. Thin Agency: Entangled Cultural and Institutional Factors

Thin agency (as opposed to thick agency) signifies the "decisions and everyday actions that are carried out within highly restrictive contexts, characterized by few viable alternatives" (Klocker, 2007: p. 85). The youth in rural Batna are exposed to thinning factors of the human agency that are inherent in the wider environment of the system of migration. These factors undermine the capacity to exert human agency in its aforementioned dimensions and limit the social engagement of migrants and non-migrants, as the following paragraphs will highlight**.**

Gerontocracy: An intergenerational gap

Findings indicate that the oligarchical system of hierarchy excludes the youth groups both within the family and in the public sector. Older men hold a tight grip over factors of production such as land and capital within the family or household. Tarek, the migrant from Oued Taga, complained about his grandfather being resistant to any change and reluctant to engage him in important decisions:

> "The land belongs to my grandfather, and sometimes these old people act in strange ways. His land has two plots, one on the main road and the other slightly inside. I suggested to him that we sell the interior part and invest the money to develop the part in front of the road, be it a shop or a restaurant or any kind of business that can generate income for all of us. He refused because he is very stubborn, and he is leaving the land lying fallow. He rejects any new ideas, and whatever he does is simply aimed to maintain the status-quo … He often tells us: 'The land is mine and only I decide what to do with it'. I even applied for the Agricultural Support to drill a borehole in order to water the apple trees and grapes that we have there, and also to plant more trees. My grandfather still did not accept the whole idea. You know we sell our apples to wholesalers who come from Algiers, but we could sell them a lot more if we increased the production". (Tarek, personal communication, Oued Taga, 04.01.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The Head of the Department of Social Sciences at Batna University, whom I interviewed, describes these emerging issues and common misunderstandings characterizing the intergenerational power relationships today as an intergenerational gap that is a byproduct of deeply ingrained forces:

> "Young people in Algeria are disconnected from their past, so they do not realize what their parents and grandparents have been through during the French colonization and the early years after independence. This makes them unable to feel grateful for whatever they have today, even if it is indeed very little. I do realize that unemployment rates are high, but this intergenerational gap that exists prevents young people to learn lessons from people of my generation. Such detachment exists when there is little communication going on between different age groups in the society in different ways. A good way to transfer this knowledge is through literature, art, cinema, music, TV, etc. However, this domain is stifled in Algeria so not much knowledge and culture are passed down from one generation to another. We end up in a situation where a young man is resentful and ungrateful because he fails to see and appreciate what he has today, which my generation had been deprived from 40 or 50 years ago. This creates a lot of misunderstandings because the older generation has a different, oftentimes opposing, perspective on life compared to younger generations". (Prof. M. Genfoud, personal communication, Batna city, 30.10.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Land tenure: Red tape stifling the youth

There is a heavy cost of lost opportunity incurred by migrants when they leave behind a barren land, which belongs to their families to end up working in a precarious informal sector far away from home. Hasni expresses this point clearly, as he had migrated for years before returning with an Ansej-funded project, which he later regretted:

> "My grandfather has 20 hectares of land. It's a barren land, and we can't use it because we need to show a property title which we don't have. It used to be agricultural in the past but not anymore, because no one wants to invest in it. The inheritors can't agree on how to divide it or use it, but they managed to agree on just leaving it barren and degraded over time. The partition of the land by the court has taken years and hasn't been settled yet between the inheritors; these are my uncles and my father's cousins. If I had that land or just a tiny portion of it, I would work in farming and rather than do this Ansej project which I am trapped in. I would be better off launching a poultry farm on the land for instance. Why not?". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Except for some types of projects within Ansej, like the pizzeria Hasni has opened, virtually all other projects under other government programs require a land ownership title. For example, any Ansej project in agriculture requires a land property title. The director of the consulting group whom I interviewed in Batna city points this out:

> "In order to qualify for an Ansej project in agriculture you have to show an ownership title which most people in rural areas don't have, and the lengthy procedure for people to obtain the legal contract of ownership is unbelievable … National Agency for Cadaster is responsible for issuing this document. One day I spoke with one of their staff about the location of our land, and he said that I should check with him again after two years. I told him that in two years governments come and go and aliens may come and wipe us all off the face of earth. This cadaster office is probably the most bureaucratic government institution hindering rural development in Algeria. I have seen many genuine farmers who really want to invest in their lands a give it a 100 percent but are incapable of coping with the red tape and the insurmountable requirements set by the ANC and hence many of them just give up the land. If the ANC only issues the ownership title for these genuine farmers, I assure you that there would be a true agricultural revolution in Algeria, there would be self-sufficiency in food production, and the rural exodus would stop". (T. Bouakaz, personal communication, Batna city, 10.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The cadaster takes a long time to register land plots in order to issue property titles, and this is especially the case when the land is communal, according to interviewees. One farmer describes the situation in the municipality of Amdoukal[95]:

> "Land ownership titles remain a huge obstacle for young men to fully engage in farming activities. Land is abundant here but the problem is that the unemployed youth can't get ownership titles because the land is communal". (Informl discussion, personal communication, Amdoukal, 07.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Said also says the same thing about his municipality:

> "Our land is a communal land. Almost all land plots here are communal and ownership titles are very difficult if not impossible to obtain. There is no cadastral registration of lands here, so when people sell and buy their land, they only need to have two witnesses signing a contract at the town hall". (Said, personal communication, Sefiane, 16.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

In southern municipalities, land is abundant, but the excessive bureaucracy involved in the issuance of ownership titles prevents any investment or youth employment. In Tkout, the mayor describes how a 30-thousand-hectare land has been neglected for decades because of red tape:

> "There is about 30 thousand hectares of land which is still contested between different tribes, and these conflicts date back to the colonial times. There is a special committee working to solve this problem, which is purely bureaucratic since much of this land is situated within the neighboring province of Biskra. However, we believe that this should not be a problem and it is only a matter of time until young men could go back to that land and use it. As a matter of fact, the land has more than 20 boreholes, so there is a great potential for agriculture and permanent employment for the youth there". (Between the Citizen and the Official: Tkout, Aures Radio, Radio Broadcast, Batna, 08.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

There have been cases when desperate unemployed young men sought to invest in a land without going through the cadaster and the ownership title. The recent of which involved a group of young men who ended up getting themselves arrested, their equipment seized, and were facing a lawsuit filed by the mayor of their municipality at the time the public radio was being recorded.

[95] One of the three municipalities in the district of Barika in the southwest of Batna province with a population of 10,483 (Monograph of the Wilaya of Batna, 2016). It is located about 123 KM from Batna city. Agricultural activity is mainly based on the cultivation of dates.

Land partition issues: Partible inheritance practices

In sharp contrast to primogeniture[96], the partible inheritance system being implemented in Algeria apportions the land among all heirs. As egalitarian as it may sound, findings suggest otherwise, since it creates problems among family members and relatives, which could drag on for decades in courts. Sami for example told me how the contested land of his family has taken so long and is one of the main reasons he does not want to return and settle down: "Our land is contested between heirs. It has been like this since the 1980s and the issue has not been resolved yet in court. That's why I would rather find another place to settle in". (Sami, personal communication, Sefiane, 04.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author). The director of the Directory of Agricultural Services (DSA) describes the implications of the land partition issues:

> "We have this thing in Algeria that a barren land grows only thorns for years and years. Then comes a day when one of the heirs decides to restore it and plant trees on it, and lo and behold all other siblings want to claim their share for the restored land and planted trees, and they would create obstacles. I think this is a cultural thing and is far more problematic than the mere inheritance laws which are based on Islam". (K. Ben Sghir, personal communication, Batna city, 28.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The director of the consulting group in Batna also confirms this view:

> "Significant portions of agricultural lands have been abandoned because of problems arising from land partition among inheritors. The contested lands are often neglected by the inheritors because no one would be happy to invest in a land on his own so that his siblings come and reap the fruits afterwards". (T. Bouakaz, personal communication, Batna city, 10.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Even given the scenario that a land is subdivided among heirs, it becomes smaller and smaller from one generation to another. With the passage of time, the unsustainable subdivision of the land leads to a situation where people are less interested and less committed to the land, as the director of the Agricultural Chamber explains:

> "I think that a big problem occurs when an old farmer dies and leaves his farm to his sons and daughters who can't agree on how to use the farm so they end up dividing it into small parts, hence making it less likely to thrive. For the budget of the Agricultural Chamber it is good news because we get more people having farmers' cards and paying their yearly contributions of 1,000 DA (5.4 Euros). But it represents

[96] The exclusive right of inheritance for the firstborn child, especially the eldest son.

> a loss for the income of that family and a loss for the farm and the local economy as a whole". (L. Messoudi, personal communication, Batna city, 25.07.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Overall, issues related to land partition practices can be a thinning agency factor for the youth when they are forced to migrate simply because they could not stay and live off the land. Land registration by the cadastral office in Batna may still take many years into the future, if not several decades. Until the day when this problem is solved, it would remain one of the thinning agency factors for the rural youth in Batna.

Conscription: Avoidance at any cost

Another major thinning agency factor is the national service, which lasts 18 months. Both migrants and non-migrants tell stories about how they missed job opportunities because all jobs offered in the public sector (and even in the private sector) require a proof of either exemption from or fulfillment of the national service. Hamid is one of those who could have found a stable job, had it not for the conscription:

> "My aunt's husband promised to get me a job at Sonatrach in the Sahara so I am waiting. He actually found me a job at Sonatrach a few years ago but back then I didn't have an exemption card from the national service yet, so I missed that opportunity. In fact, I missed many other opportunities to get a stable job in the formal sector. Now I have the exemption card, but such opportunities don't come along every day. It was very difficult to get the exemption card even with a pretext of a head of a household. I missed two real permanent jobs offered to me in the Sahara one at Sonatrach and the other at ENTP which is a subsidiary of Sonatrach. The minimum salary there is no less than 60,000 DA (487 Euros). I am still counting on my aunt's husband and waiting because he promised to help me". (Hamid, personal communication, Ichemoul, 31.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Surprisingly, sometimes avoiding conscription becomes the main reason for people to migrate. Most interviewees associate negative images with conscription and try to avoid it by all means necessary. Bilal tells his story:

> "I joined a professional training course in Batna simply to avoid national military service. The gendarmeries were looking for me because I got a third notification to enlist in the army, which is the last one. I had to figure out something so that I could at least postpone it because I had to support my family. I am the only son in the family, and I have seven sisters. Thankfully I joined the course right before the deadline so I was able to use a study certificate in order to get a deferment". (Bilal, personal communication, Batna city, 05.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Ignoring the third notification to go to the barrack in order to enlist in the army means that a person is officially considered unruly by the military institution. Grappling with the conscription does not make Bilal the outlier. In fact, over a quarter of respondents of the distributed questionnaire reported that they are either unruly or their status vis-à-vis the national service is unclear. The rest have managed to either obtain a legal deferment (usually using the pretext of education), or have already completed their national service, or are simply exempt for a medical reason for example. Generally, a warrant is issued against the unruly, which would subject him to apprehension by the gendarmerie and potentially face a military trial[97]. Many migrants escape or apply for deferment on the pretext of studying or supporting their families, even though it does not always work. Aissa admitted using the pretext of studying overseas in order to register himself at Algeria's consulate and qualify for an exemption card, known as the "yellow card"[98].

Capacity building: The deskilling of rural youth

It has become a conventional wisdom among the youth in rural Batna that formal education and higher education do not add value to them in the job market. They assert that the system favors those with a "know-who" rather than a "know-what". Furthermore, local officials consider vocational training to be more essential for the employment of youth in rural areas. However, these local officials stand still while watching the youth being unfazed by all the attempts of persuasion to join vocational training courses, never mind courses addressing specific specialties in agriculture or farming. In the words of the director of DSA:

> "Vocational training centers offer free training for young people whose parents are farmers or were farmers, but people are not interested. There are regional institutes that exist only in some provinces but there are vocational training centers in most municipalities to make it accessible to all rural youth. The Ministry of Agriculture forged an agreement with these centers to provide vocational training in agriculture but only as long as there is sufficient demand from the locals. Unfortunately, out of the 60 or so vocational training centers in all of the province of Batna, probably only 2 or 3 are currently providing such trainings with a minimal number of participants". (K. Ben Sghir, personal communication, Batna city, 28.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

[97] Unlike a civilian trial, a military trial involves severe retribution against the unruly.

[98] The rationale behind exempting Algerian students overseas from conscription is to curb the brain drain i.e., encourage their return after they have finished their studies. However, an uncalculated side effect of this regulation is the fact that it encourages the emigration of local students. For these students, emigration "kills two birds with one stone", since it helps them avoid "wasting" 18 months of their lives in a barrack, and at the same time, it fulfills their dream of migration to Europe or North America.

Jamal, the migrant construction worker in Batna, would rather sit in a formal classroom to prepare for the baccalaureate exam and pursue higher education at the university rather than participate in a course to learn about olive tree cultivation or beekeeping techniques, nevertheless. Jamal has failed the baccalaureate exam several times, yet he insists that it is worthy of trying again as opposed to taking part in a vocational training course. He admits that the university degree will not guarantee employment but he says: "One who is knowledgeable is always better even if they are not rich". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

A shortage in agricultural labor emerges when those who dropped out of schools shun away from vocational training, while university graduates are not trained to do that type of work. Some local officials argue that university graduates are simply reluctant, as the mayor of Ghassira explains:

> "University graduates are too demanding and they refuse to engage in low-skilled jobs because they think they are overqualified, which is true, but the problem is that they end up being unemployed. They should take whatever is available and be patient until they get something better. Being unemployed can be demoralizing and they shouldn't fall for it. They should take the responsibility to become financially independent from their families. They should strive for that and never give up". (H. Belkacemi, personal communication, Ghassira, 17.11.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

One thing certain is that regardless of the educational level, the systematic deskilling of the youth in terms of farming and agriculture thins their agency vis-a-vis the local labor market conditions.

Family: A Double-edged sword

The family can enable or disable the agency of the migrants and non-migrants alike. The child-parent relationship dictates the social actions of research subjects. Jalil expresses how his father plays an important role in the decisions he makes:

> "My father warned me not to squander my money on unimportant things and he often says: 'If you can't save money and bring it back home then don't even stay there'. He meant that I should spend the money on the house that I am building with my brother. My father was right and I thought I was wasting my time there so I came back here to the village ... I also need to stay near my aging parents because all my siblings are married and live somewhere else. They have their own families and are busy with their own problems. My father's health has been deteriorating so I need to stay close just in case". (Jalil, personal communication, Ouled Si Sliman, 01.03.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

The mother could also play a bigger role in influencing the agency of the migrant, as is the case with Jamal:

> "Few years ago, my family was a bit reluctant to allow me to travel because I was very young, but I insisted on that because I wanted to help them. Even now when I stay away for too long, my mother calls me and asks me to pay a visit. I have to obey her orders. I call her almost every day to check on her ... I had to leave Mssil because my family depended on me to provide for them. I am the maestro". (Jamal, personal communication, Batna city, 07.08.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

Najla studies in Batna and she hopes to find a job after she graduates but a green light from her family would be crucial:

> "I hope to find a job, preferably in Boumaguer or Ngaous or the surrounding areas, but if it's necessary that I stay in Batna for a good job then I'll try to convince my family. I wish I could teach in the future, but I know I have to participate in a public sector contest in order to secure a position as a teacher anyway". (Najla, personal communication, Batna city, 25.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

On the one hand, since the migration (and non-migration) is a family decision, the rural youth could leverage on the support of their families to exert their agency whether to migrate or to stay behind. On the other hand, the family, and especially the parents, could fetter the agency of their sons and daughters when making those same decisions, i.e., to migrate or to stay.

Marriage: The end of migration

The social expectations put a great deal of pressure on migrants to conform, and one of the major indicators of conformity is marriage. However, getting married and settling down could limit and restrain the mobility of migrants, because the commitments dictated by the marriage institution often bring the migration adventure to an end. Hasni was a former migrant for many years and now he expresses regret over his decision to get married because it has killed any possibility of migrating again for work elsewhere:

> "My marriage has killed every opportunity of migration. My marriage was a mistake. It got me restrained and now I can't even move to other provinces. I turned down many job opportunities in other provinces in Telemcen, Ouergla, Oran, Algiers, and Biskra. It's hard to move when you have a wife and two children. The problem is that even those work opportunities don't guarantee more money than what I earn from my pizzeria now but I would have taken my chances if I were not married. It's conventional wisdom that a man always finds employment in a foreign land among foreign people, but not in his

land". (Hasni, personal communication, Ouyoun El Assafer, 02.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

Hamid also shares the same feelings of regret:

> "After getting married things turned out to be much different than what I was expecting. Now I am shackled with so many obligations and responsibilities and I can't do much. I am trapped. Once you get married the woman is in control, and you become wrapped around her finger so she plays with you the way she pleases. This is exactly what happened to my friends who got married". (Hamid, personal communication, Ichemoul, 31.12.2016, translated from Arabic by the author).

The marriage institution seems to be antithetical with migration to a large degree, and that explains why some migrants are so reluctant to do it. Said says: "I am at a crossroad point in my life so I don't want to get married because I don't know what could happen if I get the German visa". (Said, personal communication, Sefiane, 16.12.2016). Hamza is also reluctant:

> "I can't settle down in my village in case I get married. It's not an ideal situation to leave my wife in Boumaguer and be away from her for prolonged periods of time because of my work. That would be tough on both of us". (Hamza, personal communication, Boumaguer, 16.02.2017, translated from Arabic by the author).

It can be inferred based on the above that marriage thins the agency of migrants since it shackles them and makes them less mobile, and when it causes indecision and hesitation about the next move to make.

Overall, this chapter has tackled the second two questions of the research. Firstly, there is no gainsaying the limited reach of all three government programs, and that the majority of the rural youth have not taken part in any program. Ansej has a standard approach that limits its reach to the youth and limits the chances of successful projects. As a result, it attracts primarily those who perceive it as a windfall, while non-beneficiaries hold so much skepticism about it. This mainly has to do with the general distrust of the government, but also some other downsides such as the interest rate, the bureaucracy, and the fear of imprisonment in case of failure to pay back the loan. The agricultural support is rife with gerontocracy because its prerequisites can only be met by those who are already well off. In addition, the land ownership title excludes the vast majority of the youth because they are landless. That is why the few beneficiaries have used their fathers' farmer cards in order to qualify, or else there is no chance. Thousands of households in Batna have returned to their

rural villages, which they abandoned during the 1990s, thanks to the rural housing. However, the youth still feel marginalized because there is a lack of transparency in the selection process of beneficiaries, among other reasons.

Furthermore, the rural infrastructure is rudimentary in parts of Batna at varying degrees, inhibiting the successful implementation of the three government programs. Last but not least, the agency of migrants as well as non-migrants is demonstrated by their ability to learn from the past, to survive, and to fuel their migration aspirations with a culture of migration. This agency, however, is thinned by several factors, which are inherent and exist in the wider environment. This includes a ubiquitous gerontocracy in the society, the family, and conscription. In the next chapter, I briefly highlight the gist of the findings and discussion points reported in the two empirical chapters, and then finish with some concluding remarks.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I first summarize the key findings along with the key discussion points. Then I highlight the contribution of my research to the body of knowledge within migration and development, youth, and culture studies. Next, I suggest some directions for further research on what I see as promising areas of focus in the migration and development research in Algeria and in developing countries in general. My recommendations for further research are also based on some insurmountable limitations I encountered in the current research, which I will also mention. I end the chapter and the dissertation with concluding remarks about the current uprising, which has been taking place all over Algeria this year, and how could that have implications on the government's policy vis-à-vis rural development, and especially rural youth unemployment.

7.1. Key Findings and Key Discussion Points

In answering the main question of the research in hand, I argue that the ongoing youth outmigration is a byproduct of many intertwined factors, and that the politics of distribution followed by the government are undermining rural development and youth employment programs, hence the inability to curb the phenomenon. Historically, the colonial authority has forcibly moved Algerians away from their fertile lands. Ever since the country gained independence in 1962, rural exodus jump-started and continued ad infinitum. During the early years of independence, poor peasants had fled to the cities in order to occupy the vacant properties left behind by the *"pieds-noirs"* or European settlers. The new sovereign government's approach to rural development had failed to encourage peasants to stay and work in the farm. Rather it has been catastrophic on the development of rural Algeria. Whether it was the Social Self-management (Self-governance) Program in the 1960s or the Agrarian Revolution in the 1970s, millions of peasants became city dwellers overnight. Many of them settled in shantytowns in the outskirts of the largest urban centers of Algeria. During the so-called bloody decade or the black decade of the 1990s, rural Algeria was on the brink of total collapse, until reconciliation efforts has brought peace back and with it a glimpse of hope to revive the rural life.

As of the year 2000, successive governments embarked on development programs to stabilize the populations in rural areas, and to create employment for the youth. I have shown that the Algerian

economy has been plagued with a Dutch Disease, which has strangled sectors other than the hydrocarbon sector. That is why such efforts to galvanize the rural development sector have been very modest, leading to the continuous outmigration of young people. Even local officials, whom I interviewed during the fieldwork, acknowledge this reality. The main objective from conducting this research endeavor was to explore the nature of the relationship between migrations originating from rural areas with how the Algerian government has been reacting with its development programs. Dealing with this complex case of a nexus between migration and development required employing a comprehensive and novel approach. The theoretical approaches that explain migration, which have emerged since the second half of the twentieth century, are epistemologically fragmented. The systems theory on migration introduced by Mabogunje (1970), however, has been the subject of theoretical refinement in recent years by scholars such as Bakwell (2012), and De Haas (2009). As a theoretical foundation, I employ the state-of-the-art version of the systems theory on migration out of which I developed a conceptual framework with all the relevant elements, which form the building blocks of the theory. The elements of the system of migration were composed of institutions, structures, strategies, and flows connecting the sending and destination areas. Specific to the ubiquitous rural-urban migration choice, I borrowed from two other theories that provide specific theoretical underpinnings on the structural push and pull factors of migration. I followed a multi-sited ethnographic approach to collect data during the fieldwork. This involved snowball sampling to identify migrants and non-migrants for in-depth interviews, as well as experts for expert interviews in different locations across the province. In the next few sections, I summarize the key findings based on the data analysis and interpretation, as well as the gist of the corresponding discussions.

All roads lead to migration

Results show that migration is like a rite of passage for the youth and their families in rural Batna. Some mayors used the hotel analogy to describe their municipalities, in the sense that the youth return only over weekends or during public holidays. Even the non-migrants whom I have encountered during the fieldwork were in fact returnees who have had a migration experience before. Alternatively, they were simply staying while waiting for another opportunity to migrate. The decision to migrate or to stay is often times a family decision aimed at diversification of resources as well as averting the inherent risks in an ill-functioning or non-existent local market. Families tend to send at least one member to a market, which is uncorrelated with their local

market, especially in terms of employment chances and the wage differential. Risks revolve primarily around the absence of social safety nets, which could cushion the impact of stressors or shocks such as losing one's job or a sudden illness or death of the breadwinner. Such incidences force especially young males to drop out of school in order to migrate and provide for their families. There is a variation, however, in terms of the overall social behavior as far as migration is concerned. This ranges from the more sedentary working-unemployed to those who demonstrate a high propensity to migrate. The former engage in temporary work in the village until a "proper" job comes along, which is in line with the findings of White (2012). Meanwhile the latter go to great lengths for better opportunities elsewhere, even abroad. Several factors come into play here, including the educational level, migrant networks, as well as the general selective nature of migration. Migration selectivity manifests itself mainly in migration being more of a male activity than a female one, as well as the fact that the better-off select more fruitful migration pathways in the long term compared to the poor rural families, which slip further into poverty cycles even after migration. What is also noteworthy here is that within all migration choices discussed below, young males coming from specific areas in rural Batna make up a significant chunk of the migrant stock in Batna. This corroborates the findings of Zouzou (2008) in the Algerian context, and De Haan (1999) also notes this in his literature review of migration studies in the developing world.

Concerning rural urban migration, the migrant stock in the city of Batna is mostly comprised of low-skilled workers, mainly construction workers originating from northern municipalities and goldsmiths from southeastern municipalities. Structural push and pull forces are, by all means, crucial in triggering outmigration flows. The dual labor market theory explains the structural pulling forces that exist in the destination. I argued that the labor market in the city of Batna is structurally bifurcated in a number of ways. This includes the structural inflation, which makes it impossible for employers in the city to pay higher wages to migrant workers, which in turn creates a long-term dependency on the supply of migrant labor. On the other side of the aisle, the new economics of labor migration theory (NELM) delineates the structural push factors in rural Batna. Market conditions characterized by the non-existence of crop insurance, unemployment insurance, as well as capital and futures have all been shown to play a role in repelling the rural youth from staying, never mind engaging in farming or agricultural activities. Furthermore, there is evidence from the data that the integration of migrants in the city is very limited, whether it is cultural,

structural, or interactive integration. This is in line with the findings of Gettali (2016) concerning the ruralization of Algerian cities as a result of the continuous rural exodus.

Further, Rural-rural migration can also be attractive to many migrants, yet the reasons behind are different from those of the rural-urban choice. Often than not, it is the discard of social capital which leads to this kind of migration. Collyer (2005) noted the same pattern concerning new waves of Algerian immigration in Europe. Migrant workers, such as those in construction, would rather work and even stay in another village in order to avoid contact with relatives and acquaintances in their home village. This has a lot to do with the familial issues especially those rooted in land inheritance, but also the fact that migrant workers try to avoid the bargaining of those whom they know (for a work deal) as opposed to strangers elsewhere. The other favorable migration choice is the Sahara desert where the national oil company Sonatrach generates the rents, which keep the Algerian economy running. For the government and the elites, Sonatrach is the goose that lays the golden eggs, but just like any rentier state, it employs a fraction of the labor force. Statistics, however, do not matter so much for the rural migrants who dream and actively seek to work for Sonatrach. The "survivorship bias" is exemplary, I found, since the chances of being hired there are negligible for the rural youth especially in the absence of connections and no possibility to pull strings.

Another migration alternative, which seem to be overrepresented by rural youth from Batna and the Chawiya in general, is the engagement with the army. This reality emanates from the fact that the Aures region was the birthplace of Algeria's war of liberation against the French colonialism. Hence, many families still hold dear the military institution and given the little opportunity costs, they send their sons to join the army without any shred of hesitation. Interviewed migrants, however, are growing increasingly doubtful about the gains they could reap from instilling in the army under a long-term contract. What fuels this emerging pragmatism in viewing the military institution among the youth is their increasing awareness of other available migration options, which at least do not restrain their freedom. International migration tempts even those who engage with the army, but also many other internal migrants. However, migration selectivity keeps many of the "dreamers" at bay. Costly and complicated visa applications, as well as educational levels and cultural and language factors could all enable or disable emigration originating from rural Batna. A staged migration in the city of Batna takes place when rural migrants learn the ins and outs about immigration to Europe mainly in language schools and consulting offices. Some rural

migrants, however, prefer to stay and work inside Algeria despite the inherent disadvantages, attributing that to their poor education and low employability. Finally yet importantly, the *Haragga* (clandestine migration) still haunts the two coastal cities Annaba in the east and Oran in the west mainly. Youth unemployment and desperation coupled with the relatively low costs associated with illegal migration can be the perfect "recipe" to consider this life-threatening choice of migration. Even though the total number of cases may be disproportionately small, yet it speaks to the hopelessness in many parts of rural Batna. A jobless young man from a remote rural village voluntarily choosing to hop on a rickety boat with one engine in order to attempt crossing the Mediterranean Sea should be a wakeup call for policy makers responsible for rural development interventions.

Exchanges that keep the wheels of migration turning

The systems theory on migration emphasizes the mechanisms, which sustain a system of migration over space and time. These forces can be broken down into direct (endogenous) and indirect (contextual) forces. The former forces refer to the direct exchanges between migrants and their families, namely the migrant social networks and remittances. The latter forces refer to the relative deprivation, vicious cycle of poverty, and cultural changes. Firstly, research participants unequivocally demonstrate their reliance on their social networks to find work and help each other in the destination areas, as well as to reduce the financial and psychic costs associated with migration. The underdeveloped banking system in Algeria makes it indispensable for migrants to transfer remittances in the form of cash through their social networks to reach the hands of their mothers. Investment in productive activities, whether in the farm or off-farm, in home communities is unlikely to occur since priority is given to the construction (or expansion) of a family house, wedding expenses, and the like.

Findings show that migrants in Batna hardly play any role in the development of their villages and communities. Even though no evidence suggests any conspicuous consumption of migrants, yet remittances seem to benefit only families in terms of housing, marriages, and basic needs. This is in line with the findings of Croll & Ping (1997) about the degree to which migrant remittances contribute to the development of rural regions in China. It is possible that migrant remittances could play a greater role in improving services in rural villages and contribute to agricultural development, even more than that of government programs. In transnational migration contexts, it

has already been established that increasing remittances has placed migrants as potential development agents and that their remittances could be more effective than, say development aid or bureaucratic development programs (De Haas, 2010). Overall, first-order direct feedback mechanisms are important drivers of migration in Batna. This vindicates the existing evidence from previous studies, including De Haan (2006) who emphasizes the role of migrant networks and how they mature with the passage of time to create continuous streams of flows.

With regards to the indirect feedback mechanisms which sustain migration, findings validate what Otlmer (2015) postulates on how leaving school early to engage in migration could help families in the short term yet may trap them in a vicious cycle of poverty in the long term. This in turn makes the livelihoods of affected families continuously dependent on migration. In addition, similar to what Lucas (2015) notes in his review of internal migration in developing countries, a non-convergence of incomes is persistent in Batna. It is unlikely that continuous migration between rural areas on one hand and urban or even semi-rural areas on the other hand could bridge that gap, hence further reliance on migration. This may have to do with the maladaptive effect of migration on families in terms of losing the most productive elements and having barely any adjustment mechanisms in place. It also has to do with the fact that investing in the most potentially productive activities by these families back in their rural communities is scarce. Last indirect form of exchange in the migration system is what De Haan (1999) calls the urban bias. Findings suggest that despite the low intensity of migration exhibited by most research participants, cultural changes do happen over time. Rural-urban migrants originating from rural Batna go through such changes and develop new tastes and preferences which make them more prone to favor urban life and reject the rural existence, particularly for their children.

Development programs that treat symptoms, not the cause

The implicit contract in rentier states dictates that the government guarantees social peace in exchange for political disenfranchisement of the populace. In Algeria, Lowi (2009) describes the regime's approach to neutralize all forms of opposition as the tools of cooptation and manipulation. From the very early years of independence, Algeria's governments have adopted rhetoric of social justice, which resonated well when there was a bonanza of petrodollars. Current development programs that target or affect the rural population depict this approach to trickle down the oil rents. In this study, I incorporate these development programs into the conceptual framework as

institutions that can stimulate or curtail the volume of migration outflows from rural villages in Batna. Findings suggest that the perceptions of research participants about these development programs show a great deal of consensus with some very small variations.

Firstly, with Ansej microcredit loans the government seeks to encourage beneficiaries to become self-employed. Ansej is in fact an example of policy shifts away from genuine employment generation to an increasing emphasis on the promotion of entrepreneurial skills. According to White (2012), this is the kind of policy discourse found in World Bank and International Labor Organization policy discourse as well as national youth policies. However, there is little evidence supporting the efficacy of this do-it-yourself kind of employment approach. Indeed, findings suggest that stories of success among beneficiaries are rare, and word-of-mouth is the only trusted way Ansej-related information could be disseminated. The few beneficiaries in rural areas lament the futility and fruitlessness of their projects, while non-beneficiaries are very skeptical and would rather migrate. The services sector dominates Ansej-funded projects even among rural beneficiaries whose surroundings are not particularly conducive to a lucrative business in that sector, including restaurants, coffee shops, and transportation. Despite the modest measures taken to prioritize productive sectors, especially agriculture and farming in rural areas, local officials still express a lot of indecision and hesitance. Centralized decision-making practiced at the Ansej national office in Algiers greatly restrains the freedom with which local offices could operate, despite the latter ones having more knowledge of the prevailing conditions at the local level. Therefore, it is fair to say that granting Ansej provincial offices more autonomy could bring about a lot of improvement in terms of setting the selection criteria, preparing new beneficiaries, as well as prioritizing the most promising economic activities and sectors based on the specific needs of the local market.

Ansej program is criticized, by some experts whom I interviewed, for instilling a culture of dependency among young people who often perceive the program as a windfall. Critics argue that it gives people the fish when it should rather be teaching them how to fish. For example, the workshop that Ansej organizes for new beneficiaries does not take into account the heterogeneity of participants. This one-size-fits-all workshop barely covers rudimentary information related to running a business. There is also no follow-up process in place for beneficiaries, except to verify that the acquired equipment still exists and that it has not been sold. Overall, the lack of capacity

building efforts throughout the Ansej process significantly undermines the chances for a beneficiary to thrive in his new enterprise.

There is potential, however, that Ansej reaches its desired outcomes of reducing youth unemployment, particularly in rural areas. In addition to designing workshops tailored to the needs of specific homogenous groups, having some previous beneficiaries on board could provide invaluable direction to the new beneficiaries by sharing their own experiences. Furthermore, Ansej could also expand its long-term vocational training initiatives, similar to the one in the village of Tkout, which is meant to teach young participants the tricks of the trade related to decorating houses. However, what might be crucial here is to provide financial assistance no matter how small for the mostly impoverished rural participants during this time of vocational training. Migrant workers express their reluctance to sit in classrooms to hone their skills because they need to send remittances on a regular basis with no interruptions in order to support their families. Therefore, a small portion of the colossal amounts of funds being allocated to the Ansej loan could be devoted to a monthly stipend in favor of those attending vocational training as a prerequisite to qualify for an Ansej loan. This is a common procedure in China for instance, where the central and provincial governments share the costs of subsidizing and providing financial assistance to millions of rural migrants while they receive training.

Findings also show how other major drawbacks have been keeping at bay potential applicants, including the interest rate applied by public banks, which partner with Ansej as well as the red tape and lengthy processing times of applications. Eradicating these barriers would persuade many non-migrants in rural Batna to apply for Ansej rather than abandoning their rural communities and migrate out of dire necessity and despair.

While Ansej targets youth irrespective of their economic activity, the agricultural support targets farmers in rural areas irrespective of their age group. Findings suggest that gerontocracy is excluding the youth in rural Batna from receiving the grant to finance their farming or agricultural projects. The vast majority of rural youth are not able to access the fund because they are either landless or because they do not have a farmer's card which proves that they are indeed farmers. There is no gainsaying the program, in its current form, enriches the haves and impoverishes the have nots in rural Batna. Through the agricultural support, old established farmers restored farmlands, drilled boreholes, obtained cold storage rooms, etc. Meanwhile youths and small-scale

farmers are being left to fall through the cracks, despite the official rhetoric that claims otherwise. It is true that at the end of the day, the mission of the Directory of Agricultural Services (DSA) in Batna is to help the farmer. In so doing, however, it is worthwhile to encourage young people to become farmers instead of overlooking them for the mere reason that they are landless. An affirmative action is needed in a situation when a coffee shop in a rural village is packed with jobless able-bodied young men while the fertile land is lying fallow because there is no one to farm it. In order to encourage this group to become farmers, the DSA could coordinate with the Agricultural Chamber in Batna to facilitate the process of obtaining a farmer's card, and with it, the access to the agricultural support funds. For those who are landless, agricultural land concessions on the public domain could be expanded to include lands not far from the place of residence of potential beneficiaries. Further, a quota system that guarantees a minimum number of beneficiaries under the age of 40, for example, could dissuade many from engaging in precarious informal employment in the city. Lastly, centralized decision-making exercised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development limits the DSA's room for maneuvering, even though the latter is more familiar with the conditions in the local context. Therefore, a more flexibility about how the agricultural support budget is being allocated could have far better results as opposed to religiously following the list of instructions and ministerial decrees, which have been faxed from Algiers.

Unlike Ansej and the agricultural support, the rural housing subsidies have brought about a relatively more tangible change in rural Batna and rural Algeria as a whole. Hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries have returned to their houses, which they had abandoned during the 1990s. There is, however, a lot of inconsistency in the implementation of the program even among neighboring municipalities, which are only few kilometers apart. This has led to a variation in outcomes i.e., in some municipalities, for example, houses were constructed next to each other along the main road crossing the village while in others they were dispersed exactly where farmlands are located. The latter scenario paves the way for agricultural activity to flourish, while the former may only be limited to stimulating non-farm economic activity in the center of the village. Further, findings show that the extent to which rural housing could dissuade the youth from engaging in migration is very contingent upon two crucial factors, namely employment and marriage. Very few, if any at all, are willing to stay in a finished rural house without having at least one of the two. There are loopholes, nevertheless, which lead to scenarios where a large family of more than ten members

living in a small house and yet could not qualify for a rural housing subsidy. Conversely, the loopholes also lead to scenarios where the opposite is true i.e., several unmarried siblings each has his own (vacant) rural house.

Firstly, in order to ensure transparency in the selection process of beneficiaries at the municipality, the presence of a representative from the Directory of Housing and Public Equipment (DLEP) in Batna could thwart any attempts of manipulation. Secondly, coordinating the work of DLEP with that of other government stakeholders in rural Batna, such as Ansej and the DSA is a fundamental prerequisite to achieve a comprehensive overview of the needs of the rural population. Granting a rural housing subsidy per se would not keep an unemployed young person in his rural community. Likewise, a farmer who benefits from agricultural support per se may abandon his farm and move to the city at some point for better housing options. Thirdly, the mutual exclusivity between applying for rural housing in rural areas on one hand, and the social housing in the city or semi-rural areas on the other, often leads to rural residents opting for the latter option. One way to solve this problem is through imposing restrictions on those whose residence is in a rural village and wish to benefit from social housing in the city. Alternatively, increasing the amount of the rural housing subsidy to make it more attractive could encourage many individuals and families to opt for a rural house.

It is also noteworthy to point out that the performance of development programs in creating employment opportunities for the youth and stabilizing the rural population may have to do a lot with the rural infrastructure. I argue in this study that improving the social services and the conditions of basic rural infrastructure would complement the successful implementation of the aforementioned programs. Specific to the agricultural infrastructure, young farmers could benefit tremendously from government or private sector investment in both backward linkages (in terms of agricultural inputs and services) as well as forward linkages (through agro-processing and distribution of produce).

Overall, the perception of the youth about the development programs in their current forms shows a great deal of skepticism. There is certainly a mismatch between the making of government development policy on one hand, and the aspirations of the youth. Findings show that for the rural youth in Batna, migration is like a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, while some would stay under some reasonably-favorable conditions, others reject the rural existence completely and would

migrate even if they were to be guaranteed all benefits of the above-mentioned programs. It is pivotal for decision makers in rural Batna to make the distinction and target only the relevant group of potential beneficiaries with the relevant form of intervention. Scientifically characterizing potential applicants based on a number of social criteria, including the proclivity to migrate, may prove to be worthwhile in that regard.

Seeking inclusion in a system that breeds exclusion

The youth in rural Batna do not passively react to whatever the government has to offer them, and are certainly not mere recipients of development programs. Rather they exert full agency over their decision-making despite the systematic exclusion they grapple with both in their local communities and in the labor market in general. Three dimensions of human agency drive the social engagement and decision-making of migrants and non-migrants as well. Their iterational agency comes into play when past memories dictate the course of action in the future. The evaluative practical agency develops and changes over time depending on the new emerging conditions and it is reflected more in the survival strategies taken by migrants and non-migrants. The projective imaginative agency seems to manifest itself the most when research subjects describe their ideal destination to which they would like to migrate. In this latter agentic dimension, the culture of migration blinds the youth from seeing any possibility to stay, including the opportunity to be a beneficiary of a development program.

The agency of the rural youth in Batna, however, is thinned by several institutional and cultural factors, which seem unavoidable for the vast majority. Gerontocracy is ubiquitous whether at the family or community level, with older men keeping a firm grip on factors of production. The land is mostly communal, which makes the issuance of land ownership titles such a nightmare that prevents desperate unemployed youth from lawfully using the land. The partible inheritance practices also limits the agency of youth since it causes feuds and even legal actions among family members that could take decades for a final settlement in courtrooms. Conscription is inevitable and without it or a proof of exemption from it, there is no chance of a stable employment in the formal sector. Capacity building constraints limit the potential of youth to work in farming or agriculture, especially with the current rudimentary vocational training in all districts. Family can pull young migrants and non-migrants in opposite directions i.e., it could support their migration, but it could also shackle them and limit the potential rewards from their migration. Lastly, marriage

often means the return and settling back in the village, and perhaps missing out job opportunities that would come along outside the village.

7.2. Contribution of the Research

This study differs from previous research in that it is a comprehensive case study about the nexus between youth migration and development in a Global-South country. It is comprehensive from a disciplinary and a methodological standpoint. From a disciplinary point of view, the research transcends disciplinary boundaries. The literature review covers mainly, but not only, studies of migration, development, youth, culture, and urbanization. The complexity of migration as a social phenomenon requires following an interdisciplinary approach. Attempts to analyze migration in this way are non-existent, or seldom at best especially in the Algerian and North African context. This is true because studies about migration tend to focus on one aspect, which gives only an incomplete or distorted picture of the reality on the ground where migrants exist.

From a methodological standpoint, methodological nationalism has affected much of the migration scholarship, and has imposed a somehow artificial understanding of migration. This is the outcome of conflating nation state and society, which in turn leads to an overemphasis on artificial dichotomies such as migrants versus natives, international migration versus internal one, and forced versus voluntary migration, etc. The contribution of the study in hand lies in the fact that it incorporates all relevant forms of migration in the conceptual framework without emphasizing the dichotomies as a basis of analysis. To put it differently, research participants were both migrants and non-migrants, and migratory movements were both internal and cross-border or international. The systems approach allows for the inclusion of interwoven flows, institutions, strategies, and structures, which all harmoniously form a system of migration over space and time. As far as I know, this is the first operationalization of the systems approach after the theoretical refinements made by Bakewell (2012) and De Haas (2009). Specifically here, the addition of this study concerns with the inclusion of the aforementioned elements into the system of migration in a complementary rather than a negating manner, but equally important was the inclusion of the role of human agency to the conceptual framework.

Furthermore, the context of the study being either Batna province or Algeria a whole are little known in the English and the German-speaking worlds, particularly in the academic spheres. Leveraging on my insider position, I hope that this humble work in hand would bridge the gap to some extent and provide a new perspective on migration and development from one of Europe's largest neighbors south the Mediterranean. The work in hand could also provide policy makers and development practitioners in Europe, and particularly Germany, with valuable insights as far as rural development in developing countries and migration are concerned. The contribution of the current research from a European point of view encompasses not just the analysis of Europe-bound illegal migration, which dominates the political debates in Europe, but also the regular migration originating from rural areas where development interventions have little efficacy.

7.3. Recommendations for Future Research

The current research endeavor has sought to be comprehensive in explaining youth migration by employing a conceptual framework, which views migration as a system while being flexible enough to borrow from other theoretical underpinnings. By the same token, however, there seems to be a potential in incorporating other micro or macro-level theoretical explanations that could enrich the analysis about the processes of migration within the systems approach. In addition, there is a need for migration scholarship to catch up with advancements in social theory; hence, accounting for the role of human agency is just one step in that direction, hence further research should follow suit.

Concerning the possible future research directions in the Algerian context, it would be worthwhile to investigate the relationship between rural youth outmigration and government development programs to come up with generalizable findings whether in a specific province or the country as whole. The research questionnaire in the appendix could provide a starting point for a research that uses quantitative methods, and it could establish correlations and even causations between the different government programs on one hand, and rural youth outmigration on the other hand. Ansej, rural housing, and agricultural support would be the independent variables, while migration would be the dependent variable. These surveys could be distributed among rural migrants in order to assess how likely it is for them to return given the right development program. Likewise, surveys

could be distributed among non-migrant beneficiaries of development programs in rural areas to assess the extent to which they could stay engaged in their projects in their home communities.

Further, there is also potential to address the question of local governance as far as the implementation of development programs in rural areas are concerned. Few research participants in this study were either mayors or deputy mayors as expert interviewees. However, future qualitative researchers interested in topics related to governance could direct their work exclusively on the way these local officials oversee the implementation of such government programs at the local level. Such work could be very challenging given the sensitive nature of the topic, but it would certainly be worthwhile, as it would open the black box of the intricacies of local governance in rural Algeria and provide answers to questions related specifically to the transparency and selection process of beneficiaries.

Last but not least, due to cultural barriers it was not possible for me being a male to identify female migrant workers in Batna, let alone conducting in-depth interviews with them. By the end of the fieldwork, I pulled off only two interviews with female migrants but they were students at the university. Zouzou (2008) notes the fact that the number of female migrant workers has been steadily increasing in recent years, spearheaded mainly by those with relatively higher education and work in the formal sector. However, the perspectives of these female migrants are still underrepresented (if not absent) in migration scholarship in Algeria and the Maghreb. Therefore, future qualitative research should elucidate how female migrants originating from rural areas navigate their way to their host communities or societies. Interested researchers should also address the agency of these female migrants amid societal constraints and the role of government development programs to engage them, if any.

7.4. Concluding Remarks

The year 2019 has come with the *Hirak* Movement or Revolution of Smiles, which has swept across Algerian cities, towns, and villages and is still ongoing as of this writing. The former president who ruled for almost 20 years has been overthrown, yet the people are still calling for a radical uprooting of the political, economic, and development system, which has thrived ever since the country gained its independence in 1962. The relentless peaceful protests speak to the failure of the government to appease the population despite the longstanding politics of distribution aimed

at buying social peace. Demanding political change is only the tip of the iceberg, nonetheless, because what lies beneath is a deterioration of socioeconomic conditions that have affected large segments of the society. This wind of change may have implications on the way future governments view rural development, employment of the rural youth, and overall strategies to stabilize the rural population.

With the new political scene still yet to be unfolded in Algeria, the old school ways will have no place. In fact, the pessimist view of migration as an abnormal phenomenon or as being antithetical to real development in rural areas is a path-dependent fallacy inherited from colonial times. Academicians and policy makers should break free from such longstanding assumptions in the new Algeria post 2019. There are possible scenarios in which viewing migration as a normal process of social transformation could serve the purpose of developing rural areas. For example, it would only take a political will to advance the banking system so that it would encourage migrants to transfer remittances back to their home communities, hence potential for investment. The government could play a very conducive role to leverage migration in a sustainable way by encouraging migrants to use their remittances in improving social infrastructure for instance, which is a win-win scenario for everyone (Oltmer, 2015). Local-level private initiatives may be engaged in improving the social services and making rural regions more attractive. One way to achieve this is to encourage social entrepreneurship at the grass-roots level in education, health care, and environment. Ansej, for example, may give facilitations to applicants who are serious about investing in such projects.

Finally, it is noteworthy that this work elucidates how different migration choices become a rite of passage when development programs have a limited scope among the most vulnerable communities in peripheral rural regions. Such limited scope is not due to lack of funds, rather is due to the inaccurate policy prescriptions, which decision makers pre-formulate in a paternalistic way that turns a blind eye on the agency of the target subjects. In retrospect, I hope that this work has not only enriched our understanding of youth outmigration in Algeria but also potentially contributed to changing the way rural youth development programs could be formulated in the first place. The days of structurally functionalist approaches to development are long gone, and this work demonstrates that the rural youth in Batna are far more than simply mere recipients of government programs. It is, therefore, clear that a radical paradigm shift has to take place i.e., the

one-size-fits-all development programs coming from the standard prescriptions designed in a patronizing way in Algiers should become a thing of the past. Instead, what seems more relevant and urgent than ever today is to place the targeted rural youth right at the center of policy formulation since they are the development agents who could bring about real change in rural Algeria.

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APPENDIX

Annex 1: Code Labels and their Characteristics

Code label / source of data	*Definition or meaning within the context of the study*	*Type of code / domain*	*Level of influence*	*System element*
Accommodation at destination / deductive	Migrants settle temporarily under rudimentary living conditions in the city of Batna, or alternatively settle permanently in Kchida (the northern periphery of the city).	Institution / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Urban control subsystem
Adjustment mechanism in origin / deductive	The migration of one or more family members precipitates adjustments, which are taken in order to cushion the possible negative impact of the absence of that or those members (Mabogunje, 1970).	Strategy / socioeconomic	Meso	Rural adjustment mechanism
Agency (iterative) / deductive	"The selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: p. 971).	Institution / social	Micro	Migrant agency
Agency (practical) / deductive	"Entails the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: p. 971).	Institution / social	Micro	Migrant agency
Agency (projective) / deductive	"Projectivity encompasses the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: p. 971).	Institution / social	Micro	Migrant agency
Agricultural support / inductive	One of the main vehicles of government interventions in rural Algeria today. Qualifying farmers receive a financial aid of up to 60 percent of the total cost of their project in farming or agriculture.	Institution / economic	Micro and meso	Agricultural support (rural control sub-system)
Ansej / inductive	National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment (Ansej) is a government program aimed at helping youth to become self-employed (through loans and other forms of support) by launching new enterprises in any economic sector.	Institution / economic	Micro and meso	Ansej (rural control sub-system)

Army / inductive	The Chawiya people of the Aures and especially of Batna have a tradition of sending their young males to join the army, hence one of the most important institutions, which has a pulling force of youth away from their rural communities.	Institution / socioeconomic	Meso	Migration choice
Austerity / inductive	The public expenditure on government program, particularly Ansej and the agricultural support, have been severely affected by the austerity measures taken by the government as of the year 2016 in reaction to shrinking oil rents.	Structure / economic	Macro	Ansej and agricultural support
Backward linkages of agriculture / inductive	Inputs of agricultural production such as fertilizers, trees, equipment and technical know-how, etc.	Structure / economic	Mirco and meso	Agricultural support
Buying social peace / inductive	The government's approach to maintain political stability through public expenditure, which affects the implementation of development interventions and limit their ability to bring about socioeconomic change.	Structure / political and ideological	Micro and meso	Ansej, agricultural support, and rural housing
Centralized decision making / inductive	Decision making at the local governance level is heavily burdened by ministerial decrees faxed from Algiers, which may be counterproductive in implementing development programs.	Structure / political and ideological	Macro	Ansej, agricultural support, and rural housing
Conscription / inductive	A thin-agency element since all young males are required to take part in the national service for 18 months. Formal sector jobs, both public and private, require either an exemption from this or a proof of completion.	Institution / economic	Micro and meso	Military, and migrant agency
Culture of migration / deductive	"At the community level, migration becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behaviors, and values associated with migration become part of the community's values" (Massey et. al., 1993: p. 452; 453).	Structure / cultural	Micro and meso	Migrant agency
Discard of social capital / deductive	Social capital may lose its value, hence migrants or potential migrants become less likely to rely on it, and may even avoid it.	Structure / sociocultural	Micro and meso	Feedback mechanism (direct)
Dominoes / inductive	One of the most favorite activity to kill time in rural areas is playing dominoes in coffee shops. Often than not, it is used pejoratively to indicate that a person is unemployed.	Structure / sociocultural	Mirco and meso	Unemployment (rural control sub-system)
Education / inductive	Education is undervalued in the eyes of many migrants and non-migrants because of the structural mismatch between local labor market and the knowledge and skills learned in public institutions.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system

Family/ deductive	The family, mainly the parents, play a big role in the migration decision making of their offspring.	Institution / sociocultural	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Forward linkages of agriculture / inductive	Insufficient storage capacity and inefficient marketing channels of agricultural output repels many youths from staying in rural areas.	Structure / economic	Micro and meso	Agricultural support
Gerontocracy / inductive	The cultural norm ingrained in the Algerian society, which gives the upper hand to the elder males to control of factors of production (property, capital, land, etc.)	Structure / cultural	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Housing at origin / inductive	On the weekends or during public holidays, migrants return to their families' houses, which are often times occupied by extended family members.	Structure / social	Meso	Rural housing
Identity / deductive	Migrants grapple with two forces, which affect them in opposite directions: The need to preserve one's cultural background on one hand, and a new urban identity, which is antithetical to rural existence on the other hand.	Strategy / sociocultural	Micro	Urban control subsystem
Illegal migration / deductive	Unemployment, underemployment, and desperation are the main drivers of illegal migration of rural youth in Batna via two coastal cities, Annaba in the east and Oran in the west.	Institution / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro	Migration choice
Imperfect market conditions / deductive	Structural market conditions in the sending rural areas explain why families engage in migration to diversify risk or simply to add income.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Structural push factor
Informal sector / deductive	Structural labor market conditions in the destinations, particularly the bifurcated labor market leaves work at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy reserved for migrant labor.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Structural pull factor
Insufficient land / deductive	Small agricultural land plots often situated in mountainous areas do not sustain the livelihoods of rural families anymore, never mind yearlong work for the youth.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Land (rural control sub-system)
Insufficient water resources / inductive	Depleting underground water, due to increasing population and excessive drilling of boreholes, is repelling youth from engaging in agricultural work.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Agricultural support
Integration / deductive	The degree to which migrants are capable of assimilating in their new surroundings in terms of structural, cultural, interactive, and identificational integration.	Strategy / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro	Urban control subsystem
Intergenerational gap / inductive	Inability of younger generations to appreciate the little they have at their disposal is partially attributed to the lack of knowledge about the hardship and deprivation, which the previous generations had to go through to survive	Structure / sociocultural	Micro	Rural control sub-system

	during colonization times and during the difficult decades after independence.			
International migration / deductive	Rural youth who attend university in the city, often learn about the possibilities to emigrate (to Europe mainly) whether to further their studies or to find a job.	Institution / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro	Migration choice
Irregular and intermittent migration / deductive	Urban bound migration of rural youth (whether to Batna or other large urban centers throughout Algeria) is characterized by irregularity and frequent intervals of unemployment or underemployment.	Institution / socioeconomic	Micro	Migration choice
Know who / inductive	Rural migrants and non-migrants realize that it is often know-who, rather than know-how, which is crucial in securing a stable job in the formal sector.	Strategy / socioeconomic	Micro	Urban labor market
Lack of agricultural labor / deductive	Relentless rural outmigration of the most physically abled members has left much of the arable land in rural Batna lying either fallow or barren.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Agricultural support
Land matters / deductive	Obtaining land ownership titles to qualify for agricultural support, for example, is problematic since most lands are communal. Cadastral registration of lands is a lengthy and bureaucratic process that most youth find it daunting and unnecessary.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Land (rural control sub-system)
Marriage / deductive	More often than not, marriage is what dictates the return and resettling of migrants back in their rural communities. It substantially fetters further mobility even when job opportunities arise elsewhere.	Institution / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Marriage (rural control sub-system)
Migrant networks / deductive	Migrants use their social networks in order to have access to information about work opportunities. They also stick together in groups in order to reduce the pecuniary and psychic cost of migration, as well as to reduce the cost of sending remittances to their families.	Flow / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Feedback mechanism (direct)
Migration as a necessary evil / inductive	Migrants voice that separation from family can be unbearable, and that their migration is out of necessity.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Structural push factor
Migration industry / deductive	A self-sustaining structure of migration, which includes translation services, travel agencies, lawyers, and even human smugglers or traffickers (De Haas, 2009).	Structure / economic	Micro	Structural pull factor
Migration intensity / deductive	The degree to which migrants are distanced or detached from their origin communities. A low migration intensity is prevalent in Batna.	Strategy / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro and meso	Urban control subsystem

Migration selectivity / deductive	Manifested in the clustering of migrants from specific rural municipalities as well as their clustering in the destination.	Structure / socioeconomic and cultural	Meso	Urban labor market
Mismatch between policy and target groups / inductive	Inaccurate policy prescriptions result from the detachment of policy makers in charge of development institutions from the reality on the ground.	Structure / socioeconomic	Macro	Rural control sub-system
New lifestyle and preferences / deductive	Migrants acquire new tastes, lifestyles, and consumption behaviors, which they transfer back to origin communities.	Flow / sociocultural	Micro and meso	Feedback mechanism (indirect)
Niche business / deductive	Businesses employing mainly migrants in the receiving communities, which tend to increase the demand for new migrants (Bakewell, 2012).	Strategy / economic	Micro	Urban labor market
Public sector / inductive	Being a salaried functionary in the public sector, even as a security agent working night shifts, is a dream for many migrants and non-migrants.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro	Urban control subsystem
Pull and push factors / deductive	Primarily rural-urban differentials in terms of economic opportunity and social services.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Rural and urban control subsystems
Relative deprivation / deductive	Social stratification enforces migration among the have-nots, especially the more affected by a sense of relative deprivation within their reference group. Migrant-sending families may become better off over time through the transfer or remittances, but that in turn triggers further migration from other families. Development interventions, especially agricultural support and rural housing seem to inadvertently sharpen the sense of relative deprivation in rural Batna.	Flow / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Feedback mechanism (indirect)
Reluctance to agriculture / inductive	The neo-liberal restructuring has affected traditional rural organization. As a result, rural youth are deskilled in terms of agriculture and farming, and have little or no interest to invest in what they see as a fruitless activity.	Strategy / economic	Micro	Rural control sub-system
Remittances / deductive	Migrants send the cash to their mothers, who in turn set the budget and oversee family expenses. Remittances may be used to support further migration, but priority is given to renovating or expanding family houses and covering wedding costs of migrants themselves or their siblings.	Flow / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Feedback mechanism (direct)
Resentment of authority / inductive	A sense of mistrust of the government limits the potential of government programs to have a greater scope in rural areas.	Structure / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Rural housing / inductive	A government program aims at stabilizing the rural population through a fund dedicated for qualifying individuals living	Institution / socioeconomic	Meso	Rural housing

	in designated rural localities to build a house.			
Rural infrastructure / inductive	The government's development policy seem to prioritize semi-rural and urban areas over rural areas. Many communities in rural Batna still suffer from the lack or total absence of rural electricity, drinking water, paved roads, health centers, and natural gas, etc.	Structure / socioeconomic	Macro	Rural control sub-system
Rural isolation / inductive	Rural-urban integration is least felt in hard-to-reach, secluded, and marginalized rural areas in Batna. Problems related to forward linkages arise in the market when local products (mainly agricultural) cannot find their way to the market, due to the rudimentary transportation options outside of the village.	Structure / socioeconomic	Macro	Rural control sub-system
Sahara / inductive	Stable jobs in the hydrocarbon sector, particularly at the national oil company Sonatrach, remain elusive for most youth in rural Batna and pulling strings for that is crucial.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Migration choice
Seasonal agriculture / inductive	Much of agricultural work is seasonal, such as apple harvesting at the end of the summer. This discourages migrants from considering permanent return migration, and incentivizes non-migrants to leave.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Sheikh / inductive	The religious leader in the village whom rural youth consult to know whether a livelihood choice is aligned with the teachings of Islam or not. Government programs, especially Ansej, could have a broader scope should policy makers account for this.	Institution / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Shocks and emergencies / deductive	Migration may happen as a reaction to sudden events such as sickness or death of a breadwinner, as well as natural disasters such as the flooding in villages located in the southeastern part of the province of Batna where much of the agricultural work is concentrated along a valley.	Strategy / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Social remittances / deductive	Refers to ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital moving from receiving to sending contexts (Levitt, 1998).	Flow / sociocultural	Meso	Feedback mechanism (direct)
The hotel analogy / inductive	Migrants visit their families back in the village only for the weekend or during public holidays, hence the hotel analogy used by research respondents to express the high incidence of youth unemployment.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system

Tribalism / inductive	Power relations in rural Batna are largely influenced by ethnic and tribal affiliation. Belonging to the "wrong" ethnicity may sabotage a young person's chances to qualify for a rural housing subsidy, for instance. The question of "Where do your parents exactly come from?" I heard too often during the fieldwork.	Structure / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Unemployment / deductive	A catalyst for rural outmigration is youth unemployment and underemployment. However, there is a common erroneous conflation among local officials between youth employment and keeping youth busy doing sports. This reflects the ubiquity of gerontocratic practices.	Structure / socioeconomic and cultural	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Urbanization in outskirts (mainly Kchida) / inductive	Some scholars consider rapid urbanization in the periphery of Algerian cities as a "ruralization" of the city, yet for migrants it is a matter of where their networks are established.	Structure / economic	Micro and meso	Urban labor market
Vicious cycle of poverty / inductive	Remittances provide migrants and their families with a short-term solution to sustain their livelihoods. However, migrants do realize that the absence of job security and social protection could trap them in perpetual pauperization over the long term.	Flow / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Feedback mechanism (indirect)
Vocational training / inductive	Vocational training centers could hold the key to solving the problem of endemic rural youth unemployment. However, vocational training programs are not tailored to the requirements of the local job market.	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Rural control sub-system
Wage differential / deductive	When there is no employment insurance and no social safety net to benefit migrants in the informal sector anyway, then other criteria become naturally more essential for migrant workers, out of which the expected earned income comes on top.	Structure / economic	Micro and meso	Structural pull factor
Wheat and barley / inductive	Shortage in agricultural labor, in combination with droughts and depletion of groundwater, has turned many farmers into "part-time" cash-crop farmers relying on rainfall to grow wheat and barley. The offspring, therefore, are encouraged to migrate in order to diversify family income.	Strategy / economic	Micro and meso	Rural labor market
Working conditions / inductive	Informal jobs are generally dangerous, and even life threatening. In recent years, hundreds of migrant workers from the municipality of Tkout and its surrounding hamlets have died of silicosis (an incurable condition, which affects the lung).	Structure / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Urban labor market

Working unemployed and waithood / deductive	Non-migrants engage in temporary work until a “proper” job opportunity comes along in one of the migration destinations.	Strategy / socioeconomic	Micro and meso	Rural labor market

Annex 2: Migration Questionnaire Distributed among Migrants and Non-migrants (Arabic and English versions included)

استبيان لشباب البلديات الريفية لولاية باتنة

هذا الاستبيان يندرج ضمن دراسة حول التنمية الريفية في الجزائر وتشغيل الشباب والهجرة. الاستبيان لا يحتاج ذكر أسماء المشاركين, والأجوبة سوف تستخدم فقط لأهداف أكاديمية علمية بحتة. يرجى اجابة أواختيار الاجابة التي تتوافق الى درجة كبيرة مع وضعيتك الخاصة. ملأ الاستبيان يستغرق بضع دقائق فقط. ومشاركتك قيمة جدا ونقدرها كثيرا. شكرا جزيلا.

العمر: ..... **الجنس:** ذكر ☐ أنثى ☐

أين تسكن حاليا؟ يرجى كتابة اسم البلدية أو الدائرة: .....

ماهي وضعية عملك؟

مازلت أدرس ☐

عاطل عن العمل ☐

أشتغل في بلديتي ☐ أذكر طبيعة العمل: .....

أشتغل في منطقة أخرى ☐ أذكر طبيعة العمل واسم المكان: .....

ماهي حالتك الاجتماعية؟ أعزب ☐ متزوج ☐ مطلق ☐ أخطط للزواج عن قريب ☐

ماهو مستوى تعليمك؟ ابتدائي ☐ متوسط ☐ ثانوي ☐ تكوين مهني ☐ جامعي ☐ ماستر ☐ دكتورة ☐

ماهي طبيعة السكن الخاص بك؟

سكن خاص مع العائلة ☐ سكن مع العائلة في حين أقوم ببناء سكن خاص بي ☐ شقة مأجورة ☐

سكن ريفي ☐ سكن اجتماعي ☐

من هو الشخص صاحب المدخول الأساسي من أجل مصاريف العائلة؟ يمكن اختيار عدة أشخاص

أنا ☐ الأب ☐ الأخ ☐ الوالدة ☐ شخص اخر ☐

ماهي نسبة مساهمتك الشخصية في مصاريف عائلتك بالتقريب؟

صفر بالمئة ☐ أقل من 30 بالمئة ☐ بين 30 الى 60 بالمئة ☐ أكثر من 60 بالمئة ☐ 100 بالمئة ☐

هل سبق وأن استفدت من أي من البرامج التالية؟

قرض أونساج ☐ دعم فلاحي ☐ سكن ريفي ☐ سكن اجتماعي ☐ لم أستفد من أي برنامج ☐

هل حاولت الاستفادة من أي واحد منها من قبل؟ نعم ☐ لا ☐

اذا كانت الاجابة السابقة نعم, ماهو البرنامج والنشاط الذي قدمت طلب الاستفادة منه؟ .....

في حالة عدم قبول طلب استفادتك من أي برنامج ماهو سبب الرفض؟ .....

هل تخطط للاستفادة من أي برنامج من تلك البرامج حاليا؟ نعم ☐ لا ☐

اذا كانت الاجابة السابقة نعم, ماهو البرنامج والنشاط الذي تحاول الاستفادة منه حاليا؟ .....

في حالة أنك لم تقدم طلب الاستفادة من قرض أونساج أبدا, ما هو السبب؟

لأن الفوائد في قروض أونساج محرمة في الاسلام ☐

لأني أود أن أشتغل في مهنة تلائم تعليمي أو تكويني ☐

بسبب العراقيل الادارية والأوراق المطلوبة الكثيرة ☐

لأنني أود أن أتنقل لمدينة أخرى ☐

لأنني أود الهجرة للخارج ☐

لأنني مرتاح ماديا ولا أحتاج قرض أونساج ☐

لأنني أفضل الحصول على منصب مستقر في الوظيف العمومي مثل معلم أو مساعد اداري ☐

لأنني أريد الانضمام للجيش أو الشرطة أو الدرك الوطني ☐

لأنني لا أريد أن المخاطرة بمشروع قد يفشل وأعجز عن تسديد قيمة القرض ☐

لأنني لا أملك فكرة مشروع جيد ☐

لسبب اخر ☐ ما هو؟ .....

في حالة أنك لم تقدم طلب الاستفادة من دعم فلاحي أبدا, ما هو السبب؟

لأن شروطه صعبة ☐ لأنني لا أملك أرض فلاحية كافية ☐ لأن الأرض متنازع عليها بين الورثة أو أنها غير موثقة ☐

لأنني لست فلاح ولا أريد أن أكون فلاحا ☐ لسبب اخر ☐ ماهو؟ .....

ماهي وضعيتك اتجاه الخدمة الوطنية؟

معفي ☐ حصلت على تأجيل ☐ أتممت الخدمة الوطنية ☐ عاصي ☐ غير واضحة ☐

ماهو حلمك ورؤيتك للمستقبل باختصار؟ .....

هل توجد ظروف معينة اذا توفرت في بلديتك فلن تفكر في مغادرتها أبدا؟ .....

.....

يرجى اختيار درجة موافقتك مع العبارات التالية:

	أوافق جدا	أوافق	لست متأكد	لا أوافق	لا أوافق اطلاقا
أنا جد سعيد بوضعيتي الحالية وحياتي عموما في بلديتي					
أقوم حاليا بالبحث عن عمل أو عمل أفضل					
اشتغلت خارج بلديتي من قبل					
اشتغلت في مدينة باتنة من قبل					
اشتغلت خارج ولاية باتنة من قبل					
اشتغلت في مدن كبرى من قبل مثل قسنطينة, العاصمة, وهران					
زرت مدن كبرى من قبل مثل قسنطينة, العاصمة, وهران					
لدي أفراد عائلة أو أقارب في المدن الكبرى التي زرتها					
زرت على الأقل دولة عربية واحدة أخرى من قبل					
زرت على الأقل دولة غربية واحدة من قبل					
لدي أفراد عائلة أو أقارب في الدول التي زرتها					
أنتظر أول فرصة مناسبة لكي أغادر بلديتي لمكان اخر من أجل العمل					
لدي التزام كبير حاليا لكي أوفر المال الكافي لأفراد عائلتي خصوصا الوالدين					
أفراد عائلتي وخصوصا الوالدين لديهم دور كبير في اتخاذ قرارات حياتي لحد الان					
هدفي الأساسي هو توفير المال الكافي لكي أحسن شروط حياة أفراد عائلتي					
هدفي الأساسي هو تحقيق استقلالية مالية عن باقي أفراد عائلتي					
حاليا أعتمد بشكل كبير على والدي أو والدتي أو شخص اخر في العائلة من أجل الحصول على المصروف.					
عموما البقاء في بلديتي يعني البطالة والفشل بالنسبة لي					
أفكر حاليا في تقديم طلب الحصول على قرض أنساج					
أفكر حاليا في تقديم طلب الحصول على دعم فلاحي					
أفكر حاليا في تقديم طلب الحصول على سكن ريفي أو اجتماعي					
سوف أبقى في بلديتي حتى وان تحصلت على وظيفة في مدينة باتنة أو مدينة كبرى أخرى					
سوف أبقى في بلديتي حتى وان تحصلت على وظيفة مع احدى الشركات البترولية في الصحراء, مثلا سوناطراك					
سوف أبقى في بلديتي حتى وان تحصلت على فرصة للهجرة لأروبا أو أمريكا					
سوف أبقى في بلديتي حتى وان تحصلت على فرصة للهجرة لدول الخليج العربي, مثلا قطر أو الامارات					
سوف أبقى في بلديتي حتى وان تحصلت على فرصة الانضمام للجيش أو الشرطة أو الدرك الوطني					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون باقيا في بلديتي أقوم بما أقوم به حاليا					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد تحصلت على منصب في الوظيف العمومي في بلديتي, مثلا معلم أو مساعد اداري					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد تحصلت على عمل في مدينة باتنة أو مدينة أخرى					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد تحصلت على عمل مع احدى الشركات البترولية في الصحراء					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد هاجرت من أجل العيش والعمل في أروبا أو أمريكا					

أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد هاجرت من أجل الدراسة في أروبا أو أمريكا					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد هاجرت من أجل العيش والعمل في دول الخليج					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد انضممت للجيش أو الشرطة أو الدرك					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون قد بقيت في بلديتي واستثمرت في الأرض الفلاحية					
أتوقع أنه بعد خمس سنوات سأكون عاملا في القطاع الغير رسمي, مثلا في حانوت أو عامل بناء أو في التجارة					
أحيانا أفكر في الهجرة غير الشرعية, أي الحرقة					

هل يوجد أي شئ اخر تعتقد بأنه مهم وتود اضافته هنا؟ لك الحرية في الكتابة في المساحة المتبقية لطرح أي فكرة أو انشغال.

Questionnaire for the Youth in Rural Municipalities in Batna Province

This questionnaire is part of a research study about rural development and employment policy, and youth migration. The responses are anonymous and will only be used for academic and scientific purposes. Please answer or check the answer choice which most likely corresponds to you and your situation. Filling up the questionnaire takes only few minutes to finish. Your participation is highly appreciated. Thank you.

Age: …… **Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐

Where do you live now? Please write the name of commune or district?.....

What is your employment status?

Still studying ☐

Unemployed ☐

I work in my municipality ☐ Mention the kind of work: …….

I work elsewhere ☐ Mention the kind of work and place: ……

What is your marital status? Single ☐ married ☐ divorced ☐ to be married soon ☐

What's your level of education? Primary school ☐ middle school ☐ high school ☐
professional diploma ☐ university ☐ master ☐ doctoral ☐

What is the type of your dwelling?

Sharing house with family ☐ Sharing house with family while building my own ☐

Rented apartment ☐ Rural house ☐ Social house ☐

Who is the breadwinner of your family? you may select several persons

Me ☐ father ☐ brother ☐ mother ☐ another person ☐

Approximately what is the percentage of your personal contribution to your family's income?

Zero percent ☐ less than 30 percent ☐ between 30 and 60 percent ☐

more than 60 percent ☐ 100 percent ☐

Have you ever benefited from the following programs?

Ansej loan ☐ agricultural support ☐ rural housing ☐ social housing ☐ none ☐

Have you ever tried to apply for any of those programs? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, then which program and activity have you applied to? ……

In case your application to any program has been declined, what is the reason? …….

Are you currently planning to apply to any of the programs? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, then which program and activity you would like to benefit from?.....

In case you have never applied for an Ansej loan, what is the reason?

Because of the interest rate which is forbidden in Islam ☐

Because I want to work in a field which matches my educational background ☐

Because of the administrative complications and cumbersome paperwork ☐

Because I want to move to another city ☐

Because I want to migrate overseas ☐

Because I am financially stable and I don't need it ☐

Because I prefer a stable job in the public sector, such as a teacher or administrative assistant ☐

Because I want to join the army or the police or the gendarmerie ☐

Because I don't want to risk starting a project which may go bankrupt and I would be unable to pay the loan back ☐

Because I don't have an idea for a good project ☐

Because of another reason ☐ please clarify ……

In case you have never applied for an agricultural support, what is the reason?

Because of its hard requirements ☐ Because I don't have sufficient agricultural land ☐

Because the land is contested among family heirs or unclear land tenure ☐

Because I am not a farmer and I refuse to be one ☐

Because of another reason ☐ please clarify: …….

What is your status vis-à-vis the military service?

Exempted ☐ postponed ☐ completed ☐ defiant ☐ unclear ☐

Briefly state your dream and vision for the future?.....

Are there any specific conditions, if existed in your municipality, you would never think of leaving?……
……..

Choose your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am very content with my current situation and life in my commune in general.					
I am currently looking for a job, or a better job.					
I have worked outside of my commune before.					
I have worked in Batna city before.					
I have previously worked outside of Batna province.					
I have previously worked in major cities like Constantine, Algiers, and Oran.					
I have visited major cities before such as Constantine, Algiers, and Oran.					
I have family members or relatives in the major cities that I have been to.					
I have been to at least another Arab country.					
I have been to at least one Western country.					
I have family members or relatives in the countries that I have been to.					
I am waiting for the first opportunity to leave my commune to somewhere else for work.					
I have a great obligation to provide for my family members especially my parents.					
My family members and especially my parents still play an important role in my making my own life decisions.					
My main objective is to provide enough money to improve the living standards of my family.					
My main objective is to provide enough money to achieve financial independency away from my family members.					
Currently I depend on my father or my mother or another family member to get pocket money.					
Generally staying in my commune means unemployment and failure for me.					
I am currently thinking about applying for Ansej loan.					
I am currently thinking about applying for agricultural support.					
I am thinking about applying for rural housing or social housing.					
I would stay in my commune even if I got a job in Batna city or another major city.					
I would stay in my commune even if I got a job at one of the oil companies in the Sahara, such as Sonatrach.					
I would stay in my commune even if I got an opportunity to migrate to Europe or America.					
I would stay in my commune even if I got an opportunity to migrate to Gulf states, like Qatar or UAE.					
I would stay in my commune even if I got an opportunity to join the army or the police or the gendarmerie.					
I expect that in five years I would still be in my commune doing what I do now.					
I expect that in five years I would be working in the public sector in my commune, like a teacher or administrative assistant.					
I expect that in five years I would be working in Batna city or another big city.					
I expect that in five years I would be working with one of the oil companies in the Sahara.					

I expect that in five years I would be living and working in Europe or America.					
I expect that in five years I would be studying in Europe or America.					
I expect that in five years I would be living and working in one of the Gulf states.					
I expect that in five years I would be in the army, the police, or the gendarmerie.					
I expect that in five years I would still be in my commune to invest in my family's agricultural land.					
I expect that in five years I would be working in the informal sector, like a shop keeper, construction worker, or commerce.					
Sometimes I think about illegal migration "Harraga".					

Is there anything else important to you that you would like to refer to here? Feel free to write in the space below.

Annex 3: General Characteristics of the Settings

Location	*Population*	*Population density (people per Km2)*	*Average household size*	*Marriage rate (‰)*	*Total land mass (Km2)*	*Agricultural land size (Km2)*	*Used irrigated agricultural land (Km2)*	*Share of irrigated land (% of agricultural land)*
Batna city	325,178	2,793	5.5	11.7	116.0	40.0	0.6	1.5
Ain Yagout	12,305	80	5.3	7.1	154.0	120.0	5.9	4.9
Amdoukal	10,483	42	6.0	7.4	252.0	227.0	5.1	2.2
Boumaguer	9,236	83	7.1	7.0	111.0	60.0	4.5	7.5
Chir	5,610	72	5.9	11.9	78.0	27.4	0.6	2.2
Elmaader	20,836	208	5.4	9.1	99.0	64.4	3.1	4.8
Foum Toub	6,146	57	5.5	12.3	108.0	86.0	9.0	10.5
Ghassira	7,933	34	6.1	11.7	234.0	150.6	2.4	1.6
Ghosbat	18,005	64	5.7	10.0	281.0	190.0	1.8	0.9
Ghoufi*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Ichemoul	10,516	85	5.8	10.9	123.0	70.0	9.4	13.4
Lazrou	5,532	34	6.9	9.7	160.4	160.2	23.4	14.6
Meriel*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Mssil*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Oued Elma	22,998	117	6.3	8.7	196.0	64.0	7.9	12.3
Ouled Fadhel	11,604	56	5.8	10.8	206.0	163.2	6.1	3.7
Ouled Si Sliman	13,240	85	6.6	9.8	156.0	69.0	10.3	14.9
Oued Taga	19,615	78	6.1	9.8	249.0	123.7	6.5	5.3
Ouyoun El Assafer	13,659	85	5.2	6.1	160.0	100.0	4.5	4.5
Ras Layoun	25,563	220	6.1	10.6	115.0	75.0	7.6	10.1
Sefiane	16,240	90	6.9	11.8	181.0	146.3	12.4	8.5
Sidi Manser*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Taghit*	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Talkhemt	21,624	123	6.3	9.9	176.0	110.0	4.3	3.9
Thniet Laabed	12,089	112	6.1	12.8	107.0	52.0	2.9	5.6
Tkout	11,536	62	5.4	10.3	185.0	93.6	3.5	3.7

Annex 4: Research Participants (Migrants and Non-migrants)

Participant pseudonym	*Migrant / destination, or non-migrant*	*Home village*	*Age*	*Gender*	*Marital status*	*Occupation*	*Educational level*	*Beneficiary of a government program*	*Date of interview*
Bilal	Migrant / Batna city	Mssil	30	Male	Married	Construction	Middle school	/	05.08.2016
Jamal	Migrant / Batna city	Mssil	23	Male	Single	Construction	High school	/	07.08.2016
Noureddine	Migrant / Batna city	Sefiane	27	Male	Single	Works at a plant nursery	High school	/	10.08.2016
Mourad	Migrant / Batna city	Merial	33	Male	Married	Bus conductor	High school	Rrural housing	17.08.2016
Mohamed	Migrant / Algiers	Merial	32	Male	Single	Clothing shop	University	Rrural housing	19.08.2016
Ahmed	Non-migrant	Merial	30	Male	Single	Family shop	High school	Rrural housing	22.08.2016
Masinissa	Migrant / Batna city	Merial	35	Male	Married	Shop owner	University	/	25.08.2016
Issam	Non-migrant	Merial	39	Male	Married	Farmer	Primary school	Rrural housing	26.09.2016
Ali	Migrant / Algiers	Sefiane	28	Male	Single	Trainee in the oil and gas industry	University	/	28.09.2016
Sliman	Non-migrant	Sidi Manser	30	Male	Single	Family coffee shop	High school	/	02.10.2016
Adel	Migrant / Setif	Tkout	22	Male	Single	Construction	Middle school	/	05.10.2016
Zakaria	Migrant / Setif	Ouled Fadhel	36	Male	Single	Security agent for a private company	Primary school	/	09.10.2016
Toufik	Non-migrant	Taghit	31	Male	Single	Construction	University	/	23.10.2016
Rashid	Non-migrant	Taghit	29	Male	Married	Construction	Middle school	Rrural housing	24.10.2016
Anwar	Migrant / Biskra	Chir	22	Male	Single	Farmer	Middle school	/	30.11.2016
Said	Migrant / Ghosbat	Sefiane	27	Male	Single	Dentist	University	/	16.12.2016
Hamid	Non-migrant	Ichemoul	25	Male	Married	Clandestine taxi driver	High school	/	31.12.2016
Tarek	Migrant / Batna city	Oued Taga	27	Male	Single	Student / works part time in a supermarket	University	/	04.01.2017
Brahim	Migrant / Oran	Foum Toub	34	Male	Single	Goldsmith	University	/	13.01.2017
Aissa	Migrant / Batna city	Ras El-Ayoun	28	Male	Single	Construction	University	/	15.01.2017
Radwan	Migrant / Batna city	Ain Yagout	26	Male	Single	Student	University	Agricultural support	21.01.2017
Hasni	Non-migrant	Ouyoun El Assafer	33	Male	Married	Runs own pizzeria	High school	Ansej; Rrural housing	02.02.2017
Mustafa	Migrant / military	Thniet Laabed	34	Male	Married	Enlisted in the military	High school	Rrural housing	07.02.2017
Hamza	Migrant / Sahara	Boumaguer	27	Male	Single	Electrician for a construction company	Middle school	/	16.02.2017
Najla	Migrant / Batna city	Boumaguer	24	Female	Single	Student	University	/	25.02.2017
Farida	Migrant / Batna city	Oued Elma	23	Female	Single	Student	University	/	27.02.2017
Jalil	Non-migrant	Ouled Si Sliman	31	Male	Single	Works at a juice production plant	High school		01.03.2017
Riad	Migrant / Batna city	Ghoufi	27	Male	Single	Goldsmith	Middle school	Rrural housing	02.03.2017
Sami	Migrant / Sahara	Sefiane	29	Male	Single	Works at a gas field	University	/	04.03.2017
Ammar	Migrant / Batna city	Oued Elma	40	Male	Married	Construction	Middle school	/	06.03.2017