PACES

Making migration and migration policy decisions amidst societal transformations

Theorising Mobility Transitions and Social Transformation

Evidence from Five Case Studies

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Abstract

Mobility transition theory pioneered by Zelinsky (1971) and Skeldon (1990) posits that there are patterned regularities in the transformation of mobility patterns in modernising societies, including a general increase and diversification of all forms of internal and international mobility. Several empirical studies have corroborated the overall validity of this theory at the macro level. However, they mostly focus on international migration and are not able to explain significant variations in mobility transitions within and across societies. To understand such variations and the social mechanisms underpinning them, this paper – based on the MADE (Migration as Development) project – compares long-term mobility transformations in five predominantly rural regions of Brazil, Ethiopia, Italy, Morocco, and the Netherlands over the 20th and early-21st centuries. We propose a social transformation and aspiration-capability ('STAC') framework to explain how national state building and capitalist expansion have reshaped mobility patterns in strikingly similar ways, notably through a decline in circular and nonmigratory mobility associated with preindustrial modes of production and lifestyles and a concomitant rise in rural-urban, urban-urban, and international migration. However, we also identity significant variations in the duration, direction, and composition of mobility shifts that stem from the specific nature, sequencing, and pace of social transformations across different local, national, and international contexts.

Key words

Mobility transition, migration, development, social transformation, aspiration, capability, case study research

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1. Introduction

Since E.G. Ravenstein articulated the first 'laws of migration' in 1885, scholars have endeavoured to uncover universal patterns of human mobility and the forces driving changes in migration. Ravenstein, widely considered the founder of migration studies, famously observed that during Britain's industrialisation, migration often occurred in 'stages' rather than as direct movements from rural areas to large cities. People mainly moved to nearby growing towns, creating a ripple effect where vacancies in rural areas were filled by others from more distant towns and villages. Similarly, Hägerstrand's (1957) research in Sweden uncovered a transition from seasonal or circular mobility, associated with premodern economic systems, to more permanent migrations, often driven by the pursuit of wage labour in urban centres or abroad.

Zelinsky (1971) later posited the theory of the 'mobility transition,' which suggests that societies experience shifts in migration patterns as they undergo a demographic or 'vital' transition – moving from high to low rates of fertility and mortality – associated with broader modernisation and economic transformations. Early modernising societies, he proposed, experience a general increase and diversification of all forms of internal and international migration, followed by a decline in emigration and a rise in immigration in 'advanced societies.' These early studies collectively suggested that changing patterns of migration reflected deeper societal transformations, such as the concentration of economic growth in urban areas and the shift towards wage labour. Contrary to the usual treatment of migration as a problem or a symptom of underdevelopment, they framed migration as an intrinsic part of the development process.

Interestingly, despite these profound insights from early migration studies, contemporary debates often overlook the nuanced relationship between development and migration. In classical migration theory and 'push-pull' models, development policy, the media, underdevelopment, and related problems of poverty and conflict are generally seen as the main causes of migration from poor to wealthy countries (so-called South-North migration) (see de Haas 2007). As a result, it is commonly assumed that human and economic development should diminish migration propensities. This resonates with policy views according to which development is the most effective 'medicine' against migration (de Haas, Castles, and Miller 2019). Yet, as Ravenstein, Hägerstrand, and Zelinsky originally highlighted, development itself tends to stimulate migration by altering the fundamental social and economic characteristics of society.

This study builds upon over a century of research into how patterns of human mobility change as societies transform in the modern period. It particularly revisits and expands upon the theory of the mobility transition, which has regained attention in recent years to explain patterns of international migration from developing country contexts. Equipped with new sources of increasingly reliable data on global migration and development trends, researchers have recently brought added rigor to their investigation of migration-development interactions. Several empirical studies evoke the idea of a 'migration transition' or the 'emigration lifecycle' of a country and confirm that long-term levels of emigration tend to rise as countries move from low- to middle-income levels, and as human development indicators increase (de Haas 2010a; Clemens 2014, Dao et al. 2018; Clemens 2020; de

Haas and Fransen 2018). Only at higher levels of human and economic development do emigration levels tend to fall and countries transition from net-emigration to immigration countries.

These findings appear to confirm the inverted-U or J-shaped relationship between international migration and development that Zelinsky first hypothesised. However, because these studies focus on macrolevel patterns, they fall short in explaining significant variations in how migration transitions occur within and across societies, particularly why we see different rates, trajectories, or gender composition of international migration flows within, from, and towards societies as they go through fundamental social and economic transformations. Furthermore, the focus of recent research remains overwhelmingly on international migration trends. This research misses the link between migration patterns and the broader mobility transition of a given society – that is, how internal, international, and other forms of nonmigratory mobility[1] shift and transform in relation to each other. In other words, how does development change the entire 'mobility complex,' which was a distinctive feature of mobility transition theory as pioneered by Zelinsky and Skeldon (Schewel and Asmamaw 2021). In this paper, we thus return to the idea of the mobility transition, which encompasses transformations in migration trends (i.e., a long-term internal or international change in residence) alongside shifts in nonmigratory mobility patterns (e.g., seasonal or circular movements and commuting) both within and across borders.

To advance understanding into the mobility transition, its underlying mechanisms and variations across time and space, this paper asks: How has modern transformation shaped the geographical orientation, timing, composition, volume, and the very nature of internal and international mobility? We develop a novel theoretical approach, combining the social transformation and aspiration-capability frameworks (a 'STAC' approach) to analyse how societies adapt their aspirations, livelihoods, and migration behaviour to the transformations of modernity. Although we use the term 'development' to situate this research within migration and development scholarship, we prefer the term 'modern transformation' to refer to the deep social changes associated with national state formation, industrial capitalism, mechanisation, a cultural transition towards modernity, and the demographic transition over the last several centuries (see de Haas et al 2020).

Building on separate national-level analyses and based on fieldwork conducted as part of the MADE [Migration as Development] project conducted at the University of Amsterdam (Berriane et al., 2021; de Haas 2022; Schewel and Asmamaw 2021; Vezzoli 2020a), this paper presents findings from five local case studies in Africa, South America, and Europe: Wayisso, Ethiopia; the Todgha Valley, Morocco; Caracaraí, Brazil; Cisternino, Italy; and Bolsward, the Netherlands. Each empirical case study focuses on a 30- to 50-year window in the mid-20th and early-21st centuries in which a rural, relatively peripheral region became integrated into the national state and modern, capitalist economy, introducing profound transformations in mobility patterns. Taken together, the five case studies present a rich and diverse set of migration and development histories that elucidate common trends associated with each country's 'development' (e.g., rising rural-urban migration associated with urbanisation), as well as distinct and important variations across settings (e.g., variations in the

[1] Nonmigratory mobility refers to movement that does not result in a change in residence.

volume, composition, direction, and duration of emigration flows). As Skeldon has argued, 'The macrolevel deterministic transition is dead for all but the most general of statements, such as we are moving towards a more urban world' (2012, 164). And yet, in recent history, there may be patterned regularities in how mobility and migration systems are changing. This research contributes to understanding how the nature and pace of social change impacts societies' varied pathways *through* a mobility transition.

2. Mobility Transition Theory

'There are definite, patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space-time during recent history,' the geographer Wilbur Zelinsky wrote in 1971, 'and these regularities comprise an essential component of the modernisation process' (Zelinsky 1971, 221-22). In his theory of the 'mobility transition', Zelinsky suggested that as societies undergo a 'vital transition' (more commonly known as the demographic transition) – moving from high to low rates of fertility and mortality – a third demographic variable, mobility, shifts. Research on 'demographic' transitions, he argues, should include considerations of population mobility, not only births and deaths (Zelinsky 1971, 227).

In his theory of the mobility transition, Zelinsky posited a general increase and diversification of all forms of internal and international migration in early modernising societies. As illustrated in Figure 1, the vital transition corresponds with rising levels of rural-urban, urban-urban, circulation, and 'frontierward'[2] migration within countries, as well as rising international migration to destinations abroad. In more 'advanced societies,' international, rural-urban, and frontierward migration decline, while circulation, urban-urban, and intraurban mobility remain high. This general pattern of mobility transition, he suggested, is as structured and therefore potentially predictable in similar ways as the better known 'demographic transition,' which describes the universal shift from high birth and morality rates in societies with minimal technology, education, and economic development, to low birth rates and low death rates in societies with advanced technology, education, and economic development (Lee 2003; Bryant 2007).

The hypothesis of the mobility transition provoked considerable debate and interest within the field of population geography (see Woods, Cadwallader, and Zelinsky 1993). While human mobility had been a regular subject of study, not least among population geographers, theoretical generalisations tended to remain 'ad hoc empirical generalisations,' with relatively few attempts to develop more general conceptual frameworks that might give 'meaning and context to these individual observations' (Woods et al 1993, 215). The grand schematic of the mobility transition was a notable exception. Yet many critiqued the model for many of the same reasons that other grand theories of modernisation were increasingly in disrepute: its unilinear and potentially deterministic portrayal of the modernisation process, for example, or its prioritisation of the Western experience as the ground for universal theories.

[2] Zelinsky uses the term "frontierward" migration to describe movement toward settlement frontiers, typically by "rural folk to colonisation frontiers, if land suitable for pioneering is available within country." (Zelinsky 1971, 230).

Ronald Skeldon (1990; 1997) was one of the few to go beyond this vocal debate by trying to empirically verify and refine the hypothesis of the mobility transition. Grounded in research in Peru, Papua New Guinea, preindustrial Europe, and Japan, among other countries, Skeldon (1990) examined preindustrial mobility systems and their transformation in the modern era. His work provided important correctives to Zelinsky's original model. Most notably, he countered what he calls the 'myth of the immobile peasant.' Zelinsky's (1971) original schematic begins from virtually 'zero' mobility; as countries begin to modernise, he describes 'a great shaking loose of migrants from the countryside' (1971, 236). Skeldon showed how, on the contrary, peasant communities around the world showed surprisingly high levels of circulation (Skeldon 1990). Development, he argued, changes the nature and complexity of mobility, rather than the volume as such.

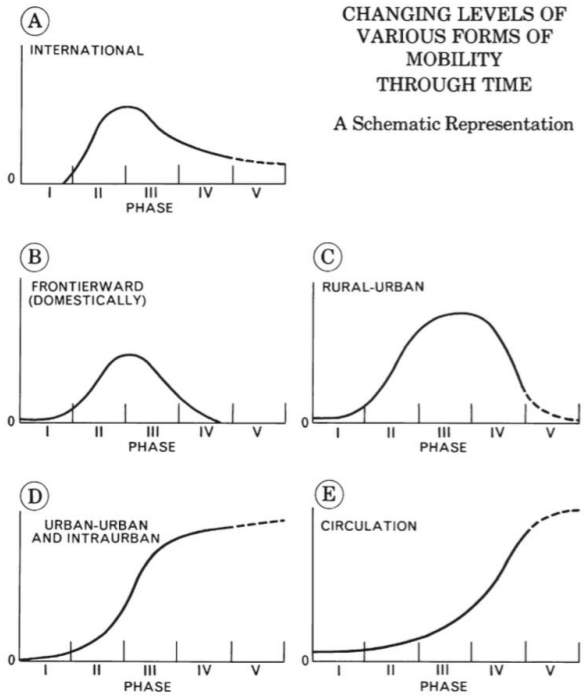

Figure 1. The mobility transition as originally hypothesised by Wilbur Zelinsky (1971, 233).

Skeldon's case studies also added grounded insights into the complex nature of mobility transitions. For example, rural-urban migration in his case studies was initially temporary and short distance, but over time it became permanent, headed to intermediate and smaller towns and gradually led to the depopulation of rural areas. He also found that migrants were almost exclusively male in the initial stages of the mobility transition, while female participation increased in later stages of migration (Skeldon 1990, 112).

Skeldon expanded and refined Zelinsky's model in several additional ways. Unlike Zelinsky, who prioritised demographic and economic explanations of the mobility transition, Skeldon put the state at the very centre of his analysis as, in his view, the state plays a central role in development planning. Economic development is closely associated with state formation and a wide range of state policies

(e.g. infrastructure development, welfare protection) affect migration, directly or indirectly. Skeldon highlighted the fundamental role of state expansion, capitalist penetration, and state-organised movements (e.g., military movements or labour recruitment) in changing migration systems.[3]

Skeldon also introduced the notion of 'development tiers' to explain how different types of economies, from agricultural or extractive sectors to knowledge-based industries, are associated with specific migration patterns, and how the position of countries on the global migration map tends to change over time (Skeldon 1997). In wealthy, developed societies – what he referred to as the 'old' and the 'new core' – an integrated migration system exists, and it consists of global and local movements. In more marginally located and poorer societies – the 'resource niche' – migration systems are not integrated and mainly local (Skeldon 1997, 52).

A key insight was that economic growth tends to be concentrated in specific urban areas within a country, and for this reason, areas of high economic growth within so-called developing countries can show migration dynamics more commonly associated with advanced, industrial countries. In this way, the concept of 'development tiers' went beyond simplistically assessing the national economy and contributed to a new model, one that presents global migration systems linked to geographical development hierarchies that can also cut through national borders.

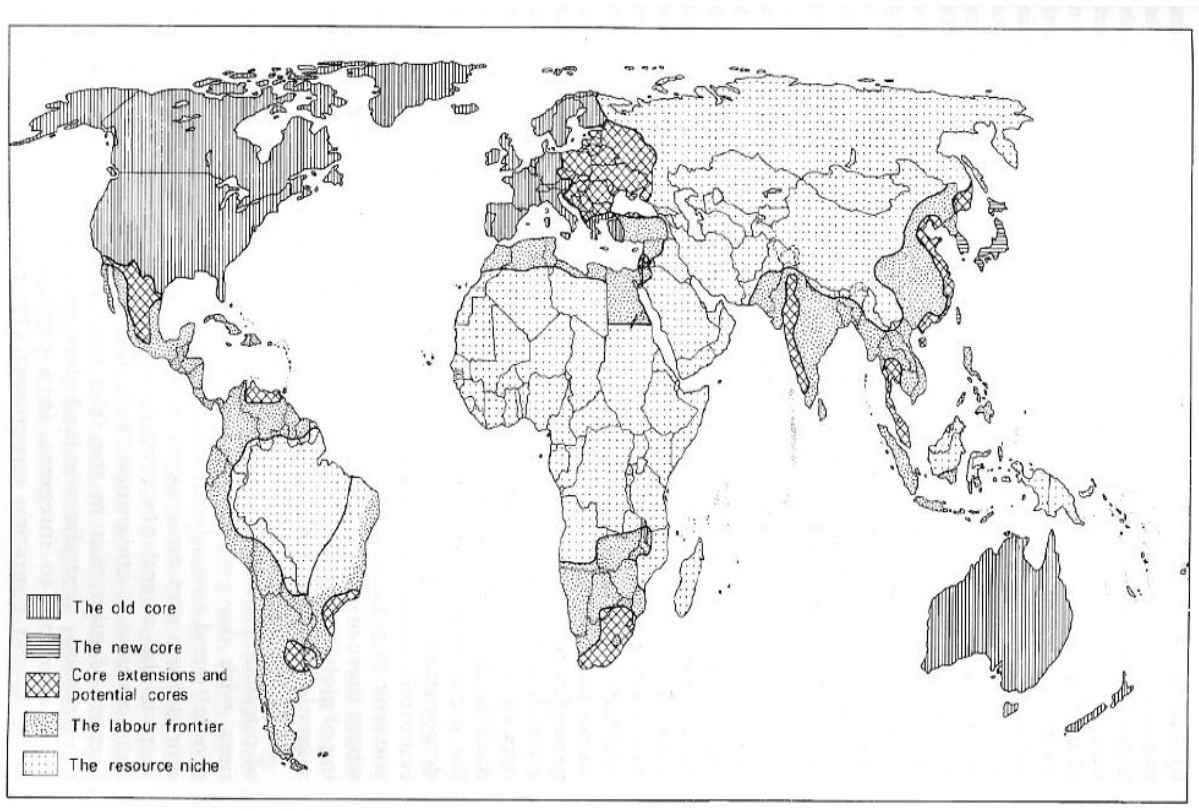

Figure 2. A schematic representation of a system of migration and development tiers by Ronald Skeldon (1997, 51).

[3] More recently, Lucassen and Lucassen (2009) revisit the mobility transition in Europe from 1500-1900 and find that early-modern Europe was far more mobile than classical modernisation theorists acknowledged.

Skeldon's work provided important correctives and nuance to the original mobility transition thesis. He highlighted the overlooked role of planned state-development efforts influenced by geopolitical factors and ideologies, and he showed how these efforts can explain significant variations in how the mobility transition is manifested. Crucially, Skeldon (2012; 2018) has called for much more theoretical and empirical work to better link transformations in mobility systems to wider processes of socioeconomic change. Rather than validating the idea of a mobility transition, this work is necessary to show why we see significant variations in how the mobility transition unfolds across societies (Skeldon 2012). This is the purpose of the present study.

3. The STAC Framework

Processes of fundamental and transformative social change over the past few centuries are usually associated with the formation of modern national states (see Tilly 1992), the growth and spread of modern industrial capitalism, and deep cultural, demographic, and technological changes reflecting societal shifts from rural to urban livelihoods and lifestyles. Researchers, governments, and international organisations have often labelled these processes as 'modernisation' or 'development.' These terms are familiar but also bring a certain fuzziness and discomfort. Their frequent use in research, politics, and the media shows their appeal for describing the complex changes that have made contemporary societies profoundly and unmistakably different from societies just a few centuries ago. Yet a certain vagueness remains when it comes to specifying what development and modernisation actually entail in practice.

Conventional discourses of development and modernisation are often criticised for suggesting a certain inevitable course and direction of change and 'progress,' linked to the (Hegelian) teleological assumption that there is a single, unilinear path towards development and progress. They are also criticised for perpetuating ideologies that justify the injustices of colonialism and hegemonic military intervention, as well as the laissez-faire or 'neoliberal' economic policies that increase inequality. Teleological assumptions about development and modernisation (as well as 'globalisation') suggest they are the 'natural' process to which 'there is no alternative.' This obscures the ideological-political nature of these processes, a problem that has been at the core of later postmodern critiques.

To move beyond the normative and teleological constraints of the terms 'development' and 'modernisation,' the MADE project developed a social transformation framework, a metatheoretical conceptual approach to studying 'big change' while allowing for a structured explanation of diversity in its concrete manifestations. We fully elaborated the social transformation framework in another paper (see de Haas et al. 2020), but we summarise the main points here. We define social transformation as fundamental change in the way societies are organised and resources are distributed, affecting all dimensions of social life. Social transformation goes beyond the continual, incremental, and cyclical processes of social change that are always at work (see Castles 2010; de Haas et al. 2020). We distinguish five key interrelated dimensions that, together, constitute the 'social realm' and offer different vantage points from which to study metaprocesses of social transformation:

- the ***political***, defined as the organised control over people;

- the ***economic***, defined as the accumulation and use of land, labour, and capital in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services;
- the ***technological***, defined as the application of knowledge through the deployment of procedures, skills, and techniques;
- the ***demographic***, defined as the structure and spatial distribution of populations;
- the ***cultural***, defined as the beliefs, values, norms, and customs shared by groups of people.

Studied simultaneously, these five dimensions capture 'big change' in its universal aspects while keeping its diverse manifestations in view (see de Haas et al. 2020). More concretely, within each dimension of the social realm, we can distinguish the main substantive processes of social change linked to the modern transformation:

- ***national state formation*** (the political dimension);
- ***the growth and spread of industrial capitalism*** (the economic dimension);
- ***mechanisation, standardisation, and automation*** (the technological dimension);
- ***demographic transitions and urbanisation*** (the demographic dimension); and
- ***rationalisation, consumerism, and individualisation*** (the cultural dimension).

We advance this framework as a conceptual tool to systematically explore the complex, but structured ways in which the 'modern transformation' – that is, the deep cultural, economic, technological, and demographic changes associated with the growth and spread of national state formation and industrial capitalism over the last several centuries – has reshaped societies, and more specifically human mobility, around the globe. Through distinguishing the core dimensions of social change into substantive processes and subprocesses of change (see Table A1 in the Appendix), the framework enables us to analyse how specific (sub)processes of change and their interactions impact the transformation of mobility systems. We are interested in uncovering and explaining common features of this transformation as well as distinct variations across our case studies.

The aspiration-capability framework helps explain how macrolevel processes of social transformation shape migration decision-making and behaviour at the individual and local levels. Helping to explain the mobility transition from an agentic perspective, this framework conceptualises human migration as a function of aspirations and capabilities to migrate within a given set of spatially ('horizontally') and socially ('vertically') differentiated opportunity structures (de Haas 2014, 2021; see also Schewel 2020a). We define migration aspirations as a function of people's general life aspirations and perceived spatial opportunity structures (de Haas 2021). Migration capabilities refer to the resources, opportunities, and thus 'freedoms' people have to realise a migration project (de Haas 2021). Migration capabilities are enhanced by individual and household resources (such as financial, human, and social capital) as well as changing external circumstances, such as infrastructure development or labour recruitment practices that can lower the cost and constraints of migration. Figure 3 shows how de Haas (2010a) theorised patterned shifts in migration aspirations and capabilities as societies 'develop' to help explain the inverted-U shaped relationship between development and international migration on a microlevel agentic level.

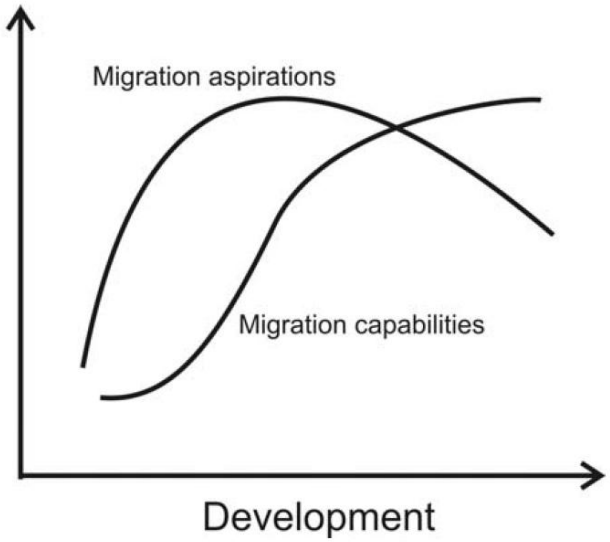

Figure 3. Hypothesised effect of human development on migration aspirations and capabilities (de Haas 2010, 17).

This paper applies a combined social transformation and aspiration capabilities framework (STAC) to examine what the modern transformation has practically entailed at the local level, and how significant differences in the nature, timing, and sequencing of social transformation processes shape people's migration aspirations and capabilities and, at the aggregate level, migration patterns, over time.

As we applied this framework to our case studies, it became apparent that to explain changing patterns of mobility and immobility, it was necessary to also examine the broader life aspirations of individuals and communities, then consider the capabilities they have (or lack) to achieve those aspirations where they are (see Schewel 2021, Vezzoli 2023). This allowed us to better understand why migration aspirations emerge and how they relate to changing opportunity structures. For example, in several of our case studies, the modern transformation introduced changing notions of the 'good life' – most typically from rural-agricultural to urban-modern lifestyles – which could only be fulfilled through migration. As our findings show, the growing disjuncture between expanding life aspirations and local opportunities in rural areas is key in fuelling desires to migrate.

4. Methodology

The data for this paper derives from five in-depth, fieldwork-based case studies tracking the development-mobility trajectories of local, predominantly rural settings in five countries. This fieldwork was part of the MADE (Migration as Development) project carried out at the University of Amsterdam between 2015 and 2021. Each case study focused on a 30- to 50-year period during which local communities experienced significant transformations in their migration and mobility behaviour.

Our methodology was designed to examine
1. how mobility patterns changed over time;
2. the nature and sequencing of social change over this same period; and
3. how social transformations shaped the livelihood strategies and migration decisions of individuals and communities.

We define a migration 'pattern' as the geographical and social structure of migration as it evolves over time. As migration systems theory suggests, migration generally has a clear, spatially clustered structure in which people move in 'geographical bundles' that link particular destinations to particular origins and reflect information feedback and personal networks (Mabogunje 1970). Social patterning refers to the idea that migrants are generally not a representative sample of origin communities but tend to come from particular age, gender, and class groups – also referred to as the 'selectivity' of migration. Such patterns of selectivity tend to change over time as societies transform and migration systems evolve (de Haas 2010b).

To trace patterns of out- and in-migration over time, we followed the proposition of Hägerstrand (1957) to approach each of the case-study sites as a 'migration field,' namely a unit of analysis that involves a single place of origin and all its destinations that emerge and subside over time in response to social change and people's reactions to it. Each case study (Figure 4) consists of a relatively small town and its rural hinterlands. We examined changing patterns of international emigration and immigration as well as various forms of internal mobility, such as frontierward migration, seasonal or circular mobility, and rural-rural, rural-urban, and urban-urban migration.

Our local focus has advantages and disadvantages in relation to our theoretical ambitions. On the one hand, this is not the level at which Zelinsky first posited the mobility transition; his macrolevel theory centres on how mobility patterns across an entire country or society shift over time. Thus, any variations to his theory that we find in our local cases cannot in themselves 'refute' the overarching idea of a mobility transition.

On the other hand, the local level lends itself to understanding how 'big change' shapes people's aspirations and capabilities and, hence, mobility decisions concretely. By focusing on the local level, we were able to investigate the social mechanisms driving a larger mobility transition, as well as understand why we saw variations within and across countries. To place the case studies in a broader context, the MADE project also conducted country-level analyses of migration and development trends (see Vezzoli 2020a on Italy; Schewel and Asmamaw 2021 on Ethiopia; Berriane, Natter, and de Haas 2021 on Morocco; and de Haas 2022 on the Netherlands).

Figure 4. Migration as Development (MADE) case study locations. Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI.

Table 1 summarises the location and time period for each case study. The time frame for each case reflects a specific period of deep social change in each area, during which mobility patterns shifted in significant ways. These cases were purposively selected to capture variation across geographic regions, migration histories, and development trajectories. Because the studied time periods span from the 1940s until the 2010s, these periods of social transformation are still within living memory and could therefore be researched through interviews.

Data collection relied upon (1) a total of 201 semistructured interviews with key informants, migrants, and nonmigrants (see Table 1); (2) quantitative analysis of available (survey and official) data on internal and international migration (including urbanisation); (3) aerial photography, satellite images, and/or historical photographs, and (4) analysis of secondary literature, including academic literature, government documents and reports, maps and atlases, white papers, statistical yearbooks, and grey materials.[4] Photographs from each case study are included in the Appendix.

Table 1. Case study overview

Case Study	Wayisso	Todgha Valley	Caracaraí	Cisternino	Bolsward
Country	Ethiopia	Morocco	Brazil	Italy	Netherlands
Timeframe	1960s-2010s	1960s-2010s	1950s-1990s	1940s-1970s	1940s-1970s
Number of Interviews	84	19	41	31	26

[4] Further details about the methodology for each case study are reported in their respective papers (Wielstra 2020; Vezzoli 2020b, 2022; Rodriguez-Pena 2020; Schewel 2020b; Jolivet 2020).

Note: The study on the Todgha Valley in Morocco further drew on two extensive household surveys and interviews conducted in 1998-2000 and 2010-2011.

5. The Five Case Studies

Wayisso is a small village, home to some 1500 people in 2015, located in the central lowlands of the Ethiopian Rift Valley, in Oromia state. Within just four generations, the population of this village has experienced two fundamental livelihood and mobility shifts. The first was a transition from seminomadic, pastoral ways of life into settled agriculture. Settlement followed the 1974 revolution, when the Marxist 'Derg' regime nationalised land and divided what had once been collective grazing lands into *Peasant Associations*. By the end of the 1980s, almost all households were farming plots of state-allocated land, subsisting on small-scale agriculture and livestock. The second mobility shift came in the form of rural out-migration as young people moved to towns, cities, and abroad to pursue new kinds of education and work. This transition coincided with a self-titled 'Developmental State,' which seized power in the 1990s. Today, the vast majority move within the district to nearby towns (Figures 5 and 6). Since the 2010s, one migration trend has become more prevalent: the labour migration of young women to Middle Eastern countries for domestic work. Many women work abroad for several years and return with enough capital to move to neighbouring towns and open their own shops. Unlike the 'migration by stages' (Zelinsky 1971) from hinterland to small towns taking place in this region, international migrants are 'leapfrogging' directly from the village to international destinations to earn enough capital to finance a long-term, rural-urban move (see Schewel 2021, 2020b).

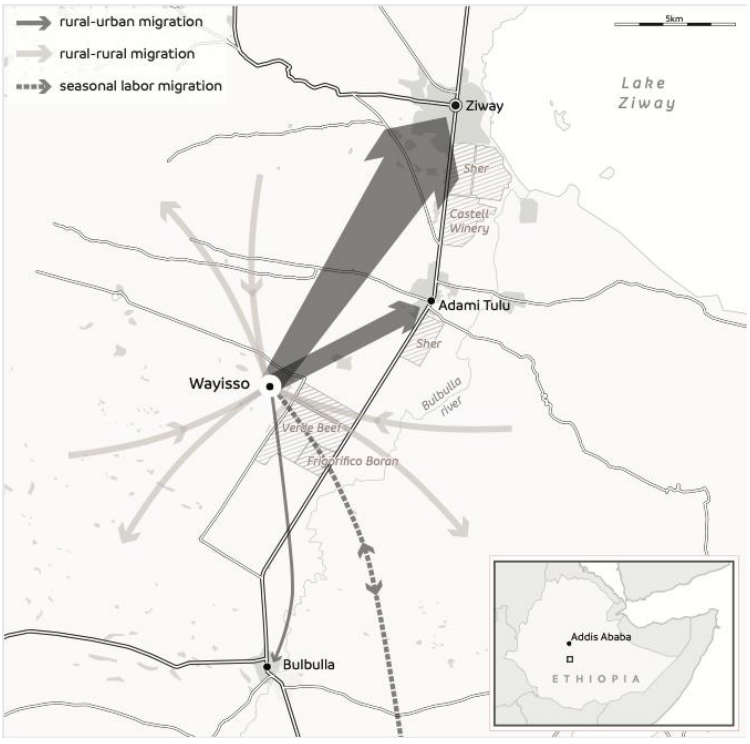

Figure 5. Local mobility trends to/from Wayisso Village in Ethiopia, 2010s.
Note: The town Ziway was officially renamed Batu in 2022 and now encompasses Adami Tulu.

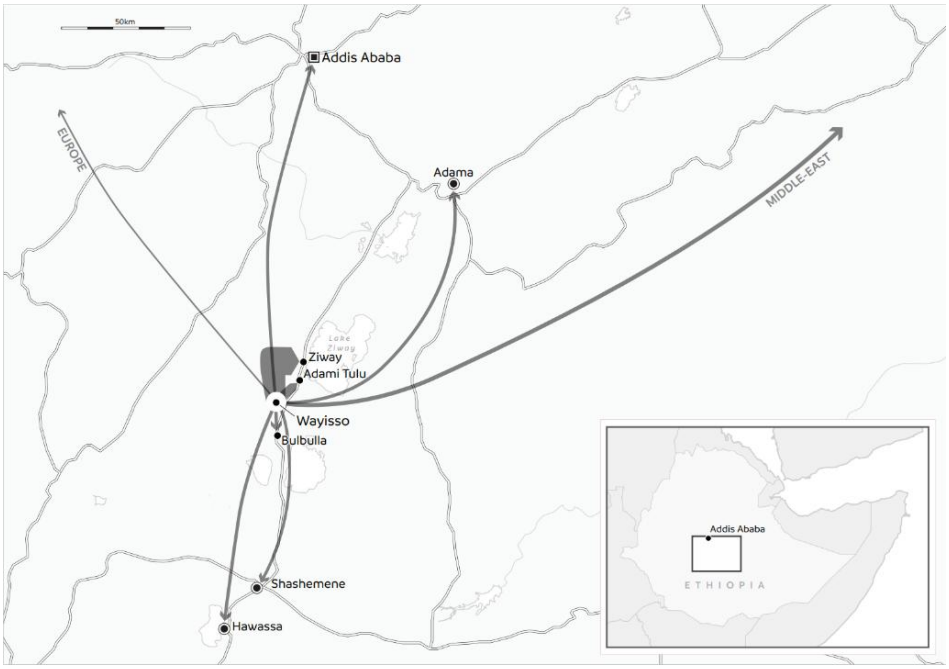

Figure 6. The main destinations from Wayisso are urban areas concentrated along the main roadways, 2010s.

In the **Todgha Valley** of Southern Morocco, which has currently about 87,000 inhabitants, livelihoods among oasis dwellers were largely based on irrigated subsistence agriculture before colonial military conquest in the early 1930s. For groups of the Ait Atta ethnic group living in surrounding mountains, livelihoods were based on seminomadic lifestyles, generally combining livestock grazing with small-scale agriculture. Over the course of the 20th century and linked to French colonisation, older forms of seasonal migration and circular rural-to-urban migration of oasis dwellers morphed into increasing migration and settlement in cities across Morocco, although some seasonal and circular migrations continued (Figure 7). In addition, recruitment of male 'guestworkers' in the 1960s and early 1970s accelerated international labour emigration, and, over the 1980s and 1990s spurred subsequent family reunion from this area, principally to France, the Netherlands, and, more recently, Spain (Figure 8). Europe-bound migration assumed its own self-sustaining dynamics and persists at relatively high levels to this day. Remittance investment in housing and small businesses as well as state investments in infrastructure have significantly improved living conditions and sparked 'microurbanisation' in the form of small, growing urban centres in the valley. A notable example is Tinghir, its fast-growing urban centre, which has attracted internal migrants from isolated villages the surrounding Atlas and Saghro Mountains. At the same time, agriculture has rapidly decreased as an important source of income (see de Haas 2003; Jolivet 2020).

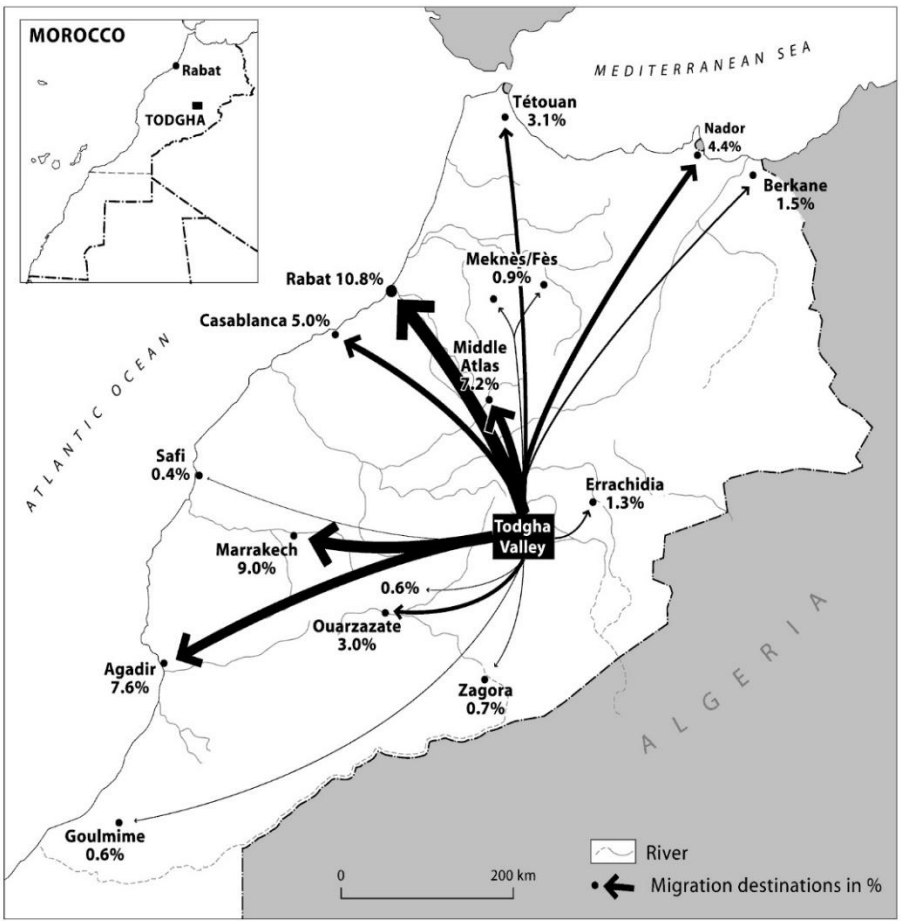

Figure 7. The main internal destinations of migrants from the Todgha Valley, 1960s-2000s.

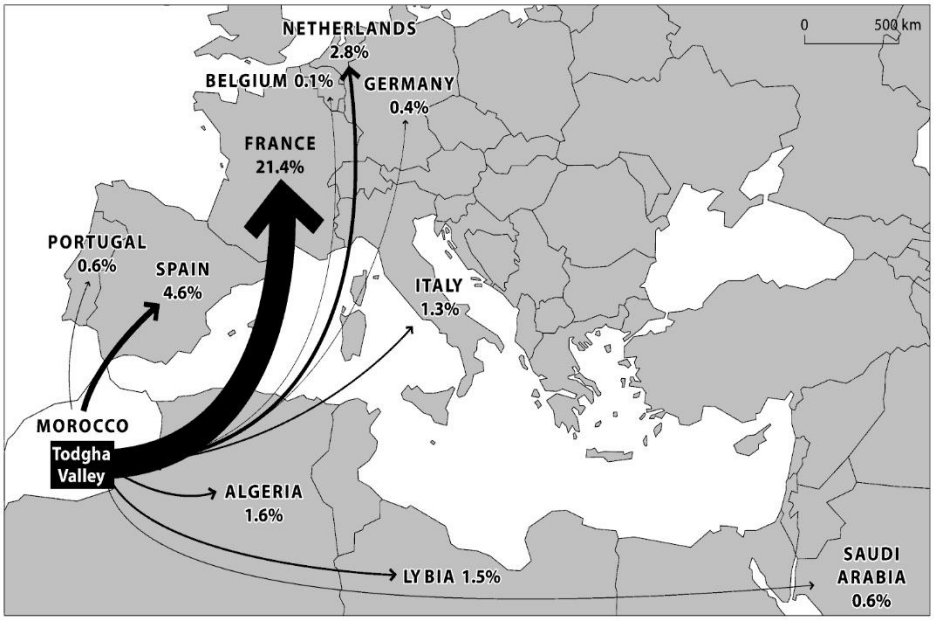

Figure 8. The main international destinations from the Todgha Valley, 1960s-2000s.

Caracaraí is a frontier Brazilian town, home to just under 11,000 urban inhabitants, located on the Rio Branco – a tributary of the Amazon River – in the state of Roraima, on the edge of the Amazon forest. In the 1960s, the port in Caracaraí was crucial for transporting people, cattle, and manufactured goods between Manaus, a large Amazonian city, and Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima state, where cattle farming was a major economic activity.[5] Port activities attracted small numbers of workers from northeastern parts of Brazil, while small, local populations scattered across the forested interior engaged in high levels of nonmigratory, circular mobility tied to microscale extraction of local forest products, such as rubber and Brazil nuts, hunting, and other river-based commerce. At this time, Caracaraí was home to under 500 inhabitants. In the mid-1960s, the government promoted infrastructural development – ranging from urban planning to interstate road construction – which attracted national industries. Frontier migrants arrived from other Brazilian states, primarily from the northeast as well as other areas of Roraima, as new occupations emerged in the construction industry and public sector, leading to more permanent rural-urban migration. As large infrastructural projects ended and local branches of national industries declined in the 1980s, the public sector became the largest employer in town.

Migration trajectories diversified in many ways in the 1990s. Urban-urban migration increased as young people went to Boa Vista to study or went to the expanding city of Rorainópolis for work opportunities. Commuting became common, particularly of public officials living in Boa Vista and working in Caracaraí. Finally, many people stayed put and engaged in commercial activities, in various types of public employment (from public works to administration), or returned to preindustrial forms of nonmigratory circular mobility tied to fishing and extraction of local forest products to support their livelihood (see Rodriguez-Pena 2020; Vezzoli 2022) (Figure 9).

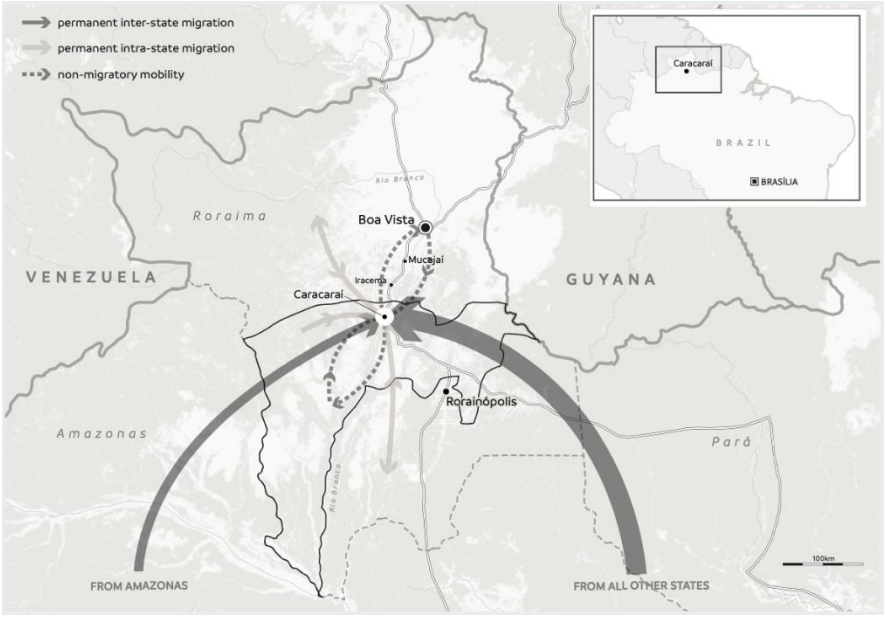

Figure 9. Intra- and inter-state migration trends to and from Caracaraí, Roraima, Brazil, 1990.

[5] While it was possible to travel between Manaus and Boa Vista on land across the Amazon forest during the dry season, during the wet season navigating the Rio Branco was the only viable form of transport.

Cisternino, a southern Italian town of about 11,100 inhabitants (2023), was home to many artisans, small landholders, and farm workers until the 1940s. Landholders produced olives, grapes, fruits, and garden vegetables on their own land, sometimes with the help of local farm workers. Both smallholders and farm workers, including women, migrated seasonally to work on large-scale farms, primarily olive groves, elsewhere in the region. Some artisans were itinerant as they provided services to the population scattered across the countryside (Figure 10). World War II disrupted local livelihoods as many young men left for the war and women were left to tend the fields and care for children and the elderly. After the war, veterans returned to Cisternino, but they were among the first people to leave the town in search of a more modern life in the cities they had seen during the war. In the early 1950s, the traditional seasonal migration and other forms of local mobility gave way to more long-distance internal and international migration for industrial jobs. For example, state-led 'guestworker' recruitment programmes induced migration to Belgium and Switzerland. During the 1960s, young people from Cisternino increasingly migrated to the north of Italy to work in large companies, such as FIAT in Turin, while the expanding public sector allowed some young men to secure jobs with the national railways and the post office service across the peninsula (Figure 11). By the 1970s, this outflow diminished, and both return migration and regional commuting became more common as the quality of life in town improved and job opportunities within the region both in the private and public sectors became available (see Vezzoli 2020b, 2024).

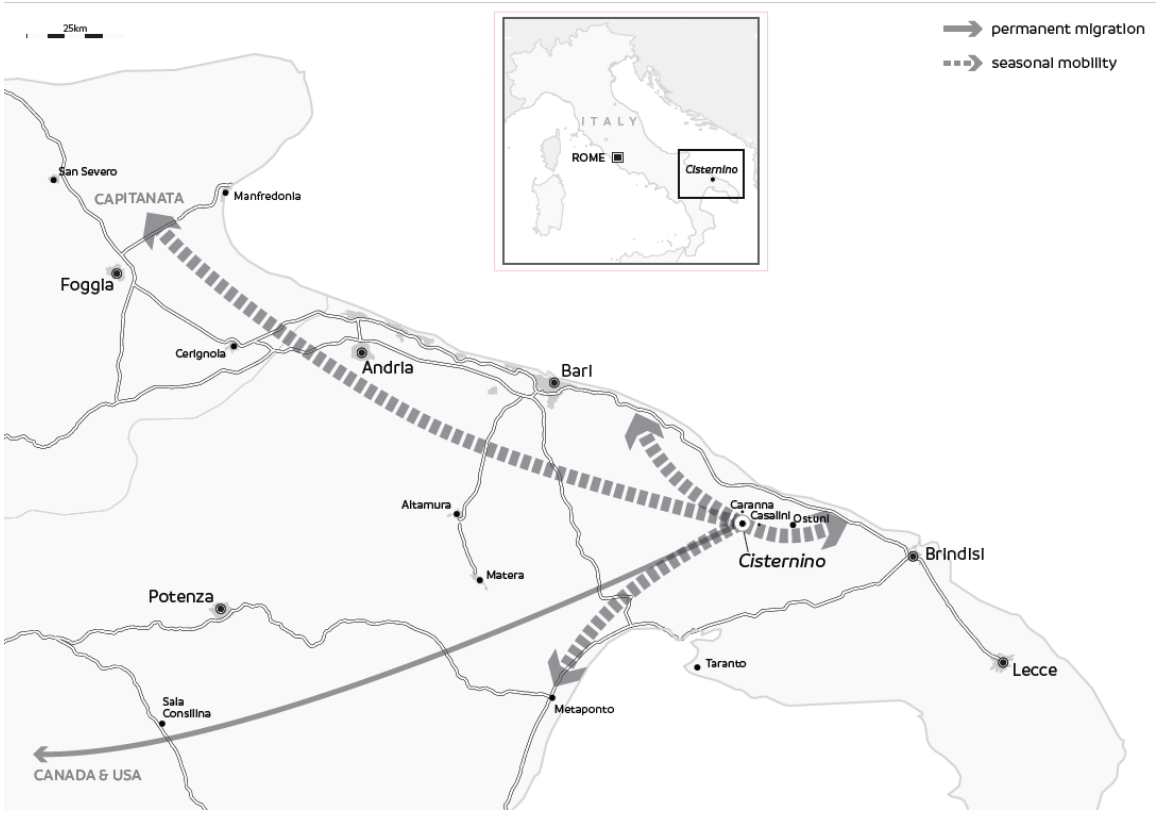

Figure 10. Migration trends from Cisternino, Puglia, Italy, up to the early 1940s.

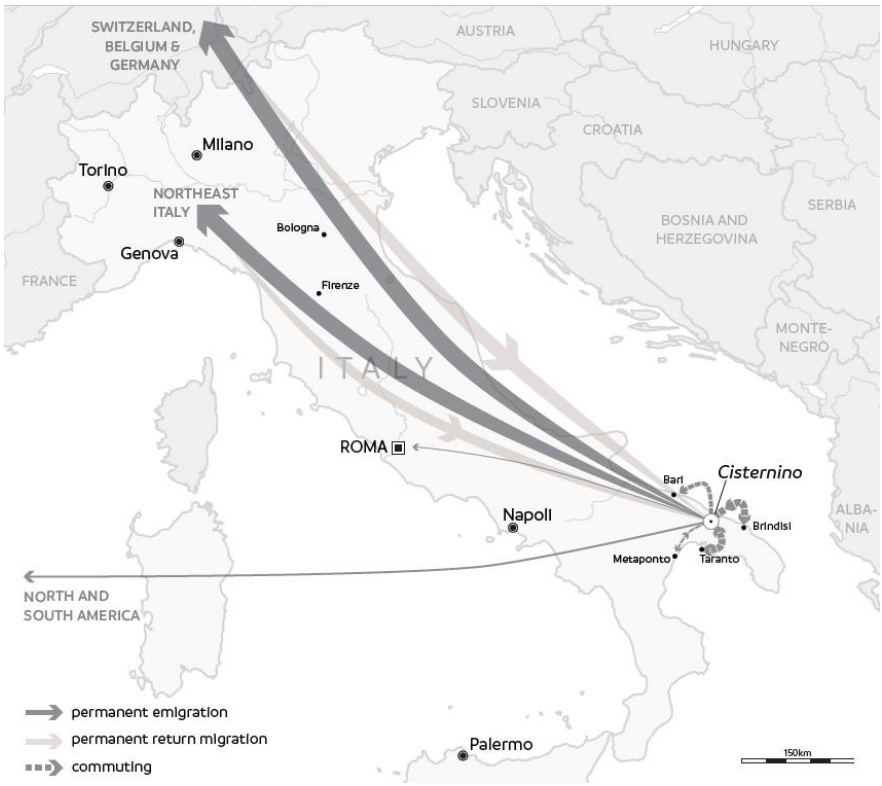

Figure 11. Migration trends from Cisternino, Puglia, Italy, 1950s-1980s.

Bolsward is a town in Fryslân, a province in the northwest of the Netherlands. It has about 10,000 inhabitants, mainly composed of larger and smaller landholders and farm workers, and its surrounding hinterlands were important areas of cattle farming and dairy production before World War II. In the postwar period, this area became more connected to the industrialising national economy, and many workers left Bolsward to pursue industrial jobs elsewhere in the Netherlands. Several farmers and other families around Bolsward emigrated (to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) to continue pursuing their agricultural livelihoods overseas. Agricultural workers made redundant by agrarian mechanization moved from nearby rural areas to Bolsward to fill labour shortages in the emerging agroindustrial sector. When that labour supply became scarce, many dozens of Turkish 'guest workers' were recruited in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition, a new class of professional workers, such as teachers and managers, moved into Bolsward from outside Fryslân to take up new service-sector positions due to a lack of local supply of such workers (Figure 12). These quite distinct flows into and out of Bolsward reveal an important trend of 'replacement migration' and explain the remarkably stable population levels over this period (see Wielstra 2020). Bolsward illustrates how a stable overall population and zero net migration can conceal significant underlying movement in and out of places.

Figure 12. Interprovincial migration trends to and from Bolsward, the Netherlands, 1945-1970.

6. Common Shifts in Mobility Patterns

Despite the highly diverse geographic, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which our case studies are situated, there are several common features of the mobility transitions that unfolded across these regions. First, the case studies illustrate that rural regions located at the 'periphery' of centralised national states had traditional mobility systems mainly limited to local movements, often circumscribed by the geography and microeconomic systems of a particular place and its hinterland.[6] However, and broadly in line with the hypotheses about the mobility transitions pioneered by Zelinsky and elaborated by Skeldon, as these regions became increasingly integrated into the modern state, both politically and economically, their mobility systems grew in geographical scope to encompass destinations across much farther distances. In this process, local and regional nonmigratory mobility, such as seasonal migrations tied to agricultural labour or itinerant-nomadic livelihoods, gradually lost importance, giving way to new forms of rural-urban, urban-urban, and international movement, and in some cases, the rise of commuting.

[6] This should not be mistakenly interpreted to mean that peripheral regions are completely disconnected and that their central governments consider them unimportant. Limited functions, for example, related to simple frontier protection or tax collection, were often in place.

6.1 The 'sedentarisation' of nonmigratory mobility and the rise of migratory mobility

Each case study confirmed that 'premodern' economic systems and patterns of life were generally characterised by a high degree of nonmigratory mobility. Seasonal movement of farm workers in Cisternino, Italy, was tied to agricultural cycles. In the Ethiopian Rift Valley (Wayisso) and the mountain areas surrounding the Todgha Valley in Morocco, seasonal movement was strongly tied to the transhumance of seminomadic pastoralists. People in Caracaraí, Brazil, regularly moved along the river for hunting, fishing, slash and burn agriculture, and commercial activities. As these relatively peripheral rural regions became increasingly integrated – politically, economically, and, at times, infrastructurally – into a centralised national state, all experienced a decline in long-standing forms of nonmigratory mobility.

The decline of nomadic and seminomadic livelihoods in Wayisso and the Todgha Valley provide the most illustrative examples of this process. In Wayisso, settlement took place relatively rapidly as these lowlands were carved into 'peasant associations' (kebeles) under a Marxist regime in the 1970s and 1980s. Peasant associations were designed to be units of some 300 or 400 farmers and their households, within which government directives and services (e.g., land distribution, judicial tribunals, cooperatives, schools, health services, villagisation programmes, etc.) would be established. Through this process, indigenous forms of political organisation under the Gada System, which were harmonious with seminomadic ways of life, gave way to the political logic of the modern bureaucratic state, transforming local relationships to land and livelihood. Although households continued to keep cattle, households' 'centre of gravity' (Hägerstrand 1957) became increasingly based in their respective peasant association and dependent on agriculture, leading to the sedentarisation of the local population.

The seminomadic populations of the Ait Atta living in the villages in the lower Todgha Valley and the Saghro Mountains south of the valley resisted incorporation into the colonial and later Moroccan state for several generations, many of them persisting in agropastoral livelihoods and lifestyles well into the 1960s (see Hart 1981). While the sedentary peasant population of the Todgha Valley were the first to participate in guestworker migration to France and the Netherlands in the 1960s, the Ait Atta showed little inclination to emigrate, particularly those living in the isolated Saghro Mountains. Nevertheless, as agropastoral livelihoods continued to decline – and with the state driving expansion of road and electricity networks plus primary education – more and more Ait Atta began to migrate to urban centres in the Todgha Valley. They also predominated in the new wave of labour emigration to Spain that took off in the 1990s and 2000s. So, as seminomads became migrants, people kept on moving but in radically different ways, in the form of migratory mobility inherently tied to sedentary lifestyles.

Various forms of nonmigratory mobility were also present in the long-established agrarian societies of Bolsward and Cisternino in the Netherlands and Italy, respectively, where permanent residences were the norm for centuries. Seasonal or circular movements associated with seasonal agricultural work, which did not entail a permanent change in residence, were substituted over time by permanent rural-urban or overseas migration. In Cararacaí in Brazil, state expansion also stimulated the in-

migration of permanent settlers. The circular mobility and economic activities associated with hunting, slash and burn agriculture, extraction, and river trading were dwarfed by the establishment of national industries and public-sector work, leading to the permanent in-migration of migrants from other Brazilian states for construction or government work. However, once public-sector work was completed and some national industries closed their local branches, some of the settlers decided to seek better economic opportunities elsewhere in Brazil.

Thus, beneath a common trend of rising rural-urban and international migration in early modernising societies, there is arguably a deeper process of 'sedentarisation' at work. Whether socialist or capitalist, modern states are strongly built upon a sedentary logic that not only assumes people are naturally 'rooted' (see Malkki 1992) but also requires people to have a clearly identifiable residence. The rooting of people to place is considered essential for the government to control populations: to know who is where, collect taxes, impose law and order, and provide services. The policies modern states pursue both assume and enforce this sedentary logic. This seems to be one of the main reasons modern states are intrinsically hostile towards itinerant populations (as is also visible in state attitudes towards Roma, for instance) and have an inherent drive to 'sedentarise' groups without a fixed residence. Common definitions of migration – movement from one place of residence to another, across a state-designated administrative boundary – therefore only make sense within this sedentary frame. Moreover, when sedentarisation becomes the norm, the various forms of migratory mobility that have been an inherent part of the lifestyles of population groups can appear exceptional or even subversive, often prompting states to initiate new interventions to 'keep people in place' (see Bakewell 2009).

6.2 'Microurbanisation' and rural-urban migration

Across all case studies, and consistent with Zelinsky's original model, rural-urban migration increased as part of a broader 'modern transformation.' The greatest share of rural-urban movements most often occurred at the local level, consistent with the classic hypothesis of 'distance-decay' predicting that volumes of migration decrease with distance (Ravenstein 1885). In the Ethiopian, Brazilian, and Moroccan case studies, these small-scale movements were associated with a process coined by Berriane (1996) as 'microurbanisation,' that is, the emergence of small urban centres around crossroads, markets, or administrative areas within rural spaces (see also El Maoula El Iraki 1999; de Haas 2009). Although in the Italian and the Dutch case studies, towns and cities were already well established in earlier periods, industrialisation galvanised new rural-to-urban population movements.

Because rural-urban movements were often across relatively short distances, many rural-urban migrants and their households retained connections to their rural origins. Rural-urban migration at the local level does not necessarily mean an abrupt abandonment of rural areas, but it often reflects a process of households gradually transferring their 'centre of gravity' (Hägerstrand 1957) from rural to urban areas (see also Skeldon 1990, 216), which can take many years or even generations. These findings challenge the popular concept of 'rural exodus' often used to describe rural-urban migration, as most urbanisation does not entail mass movements to major cities but actually happens within

rural areas, as people move relatively short distances to local towns and retain social and economic ties with their land and kin in the village.

6.3 Long-distance rural-urban migration

Rural-urban migration associated with microurbanisation is distinct from long-distance rural-urban migration towards larger cities, such as regional or national capitals, which tends to require much more resources. In our case studies, this long-distance movement was generally smaller in volume than local movements, and the composition of these long-distance migration flows was often more determined by the kinds of work or education migrants could access. Interprovincial migration was most often to work in industrial jobs or factories, achieve higher levels of education, or access public-sector employment. The pursuit of tertiary education and professional work often requires moving longer distances to larger cities.

For this reason, the 'selectivity' of long-distance internal migrants was greater than that experienced in short-distance rural-urban migration, and spatial mobility has close ties with other forms of social and economic mobility. In many instances, those who migrated over longer distances were from more advantaged economic or educational backgrounds than those who migrated shorter distances or did not migrate at all. This is primarily because such long-distance moves require more costs, not only in terms of travel but perhaps even more so in terms of the resources needed to find housing and work, particularly when migrants cannot rely on family members who previously migrated. So, while the volumes of migration tend to decrease, the socioeconomic or 'class' selectivity of migration tends to increase with distance, although the migration-facilitating role of migrant networks may decrease such selectivity over time (see de Haas 2010b).

6.4 Recruitment and 'leapfrogging' international migration

The expansion of regional mobility systems is part and parcel of a larger process of incorporation into the state and its physical and administrative infrastructure. This process often includes spatially discontinuous forms of long-distance and international migration: women moving from Wayisso in Ethiopia straight to the Middle East for domestic work in the 2010s; 'guest-workers' recruited from the Todgha valley in Morocco to work in French and Dutch factories and mines in the 1960s and 1970s; Frisian farmers leaving Bolsward's hinterland to continue farming lifestyles in Canada in the post-World War II decades; or Turkish 'guest-workers' recruited to work in Bolsward's dairy and other industry. Rather than proceeding in a stepwise manner, these examples of 'leapfrogging' migration – from villages and small towns to international destinations – are more often associated with labour recruitment and/or state-organised emigration. Indeed, programmes organised – or even paid for – by governments, recruiters, and other intermediaries enable relatively poor people to embark on long-distance migration.

Each case study area saw an increase in international migration, and in all cases state- or employer-sponsored recruitment played an important role in establishing new international migration corridors.

Military conscription is another way in which states 'sponsored' or unintentionally encouraged international movements. In the Moroccan Todgha Valley, the recruitment of soldiers to fight in the French Army during the \World War II established initial migratory connections with France. For Italian soldiers from Cisternino deployed during World War II and young men from Bolsward drafted to fight in the Indonesian War of Independence between 1945 and 1949, the war experience did more than dramatically change their outlook on life. It also literally broadened their horizons by exposing them to new knowledge of the outside world. Interviewees shared that who had left for military service experienced difficulties with reintegration; having witnessed life in cities in other parts of Italy, they felt the town had little to offer, particularly because their experiences were not easily understood by their home communities. This prompted several of them to emigrate when opportunities arose as they no longer felt at home in their hometowns.

After World War II, state-sponsored emigration and recruitment for development purposes also gained impetus. The Dutch government set up state-sponsored emigration programmes to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to alleviate perceived overpopulation in postwar Netherlands. One decade later, Italian labourers were recruited to work in Belgian coal mines, and the French, Belgian, and Dutch recruited 'guest workers' from Morocco. Today, recruitment from countries like Ethiopia is not state-sponsored, yet the emergence of a network of recruiters and other intermediaries to meet the demand for immigrant labour in Middle Eastern countries functions with similar dynamics (Schewel 2021).

Recruitment practices facilitate long-distance migration and seem particularly important at the early stage of migration system formation. Recruitment introduces the possibility of emigration into people's 'mental maps' (Fuller and Chapman 1974), and, importantly, it makes emigration accessible to relatively poor people who would normally lack the resources to migrate. This concept also helps explain long-distance internal migration, such as the state-supported migration of Brazilians from northeastern states to agricultural projects in the northern state of Roraima, or the recruitment of rural women from Ethiopia's southern regions to work on flower farms and garment factories in new industrial centres like Batu (formerly Ziway) and Hawassa. These examples corroborate the idea that long-distance internal migration often shares many features with international migration.

Over time, long-distance migration that began with formal recruitment can take on self-perpetuating dynamics, as migration leads to social structures – such as networks – that sustain the process (see Massey 1990, de Haas 2010b). Informal migrant networks begin to facilitate migration even in the absence of formal recruitment practices or even explicit bans by the state on international migration. For example, during the ban on labour migration to Middle Eastern countries by the Ethiopian government between 2013 and 2018, women continued to leave Wayisso and its neighbouring towns and villages for Lebanon and Gulf countries. Many relied on cousins or aunts already abroad to find them work and cover the upfront costs of moving. This is how specific 'migration cultures' can emerge within 'migration corridors'7 linking particular origins and destinations. For instance, many Todghawi in France live in the city of Montpellier; in the Netherlands, they live in the town of Alkmaar and the Amsterdam suburb of Diemen. As Piore (1979) originally argued, because networks 'take over' the

[7] See Carling and Jolivet (2016) for a further elaboration of the 'migration corridors' concept.

organisation of migration, it can render recruitment's crucial role in creating migration corridors largely invisible.

6.5 The diversification of migration

The case studies also highlighted that, over time, migration selectivity tends to decrease and migration trajectories diversify. These trends appear because network connections and infrastructure development tend to lower the financial and knowledge thresholds for moving. Also, people get access to more resources and are exposed to ideas that simultaneously increase their aspirations and capabilities to migrate. As more young people in the case studies gained access to formal education, economies diversified, and a bureaucratic state was consolidated, reasons for migration also multiplied beyond earning a higher salary or joining family: further schooling, new factory jobs, business opportunities, government work, or, in some cases, military conscription. Overall, as migration pathways diversify, migration tends to become more common among a wider swath of the population.

We see this diversification most easily in women's participation in migration. Women have historically been highly mobile across our case studies, moving for marriage, seasonal, or domestic work. In Cisternino, women generally migrated as the spouses of male migrants, with the exception of young women who worked as domestics in the urban residences of upper-class families. In Wayisso, earlier generations of women with little to no education were most likely to live in just two places, with their original family and then with their husband's household upon marriage. Once girls began entering formal schooling, their reasons for migration diversified significantly beyond marriage to include further schooling and wage or salaried work. While previous marriage-related moves were predominantly rural-rural, and those moves continue today, these new types of migration for education or work are mostly rural-urban and international. In the Todgha Valley, it was predominantly young men who studied at universities in Marrakech or Rabat. But as girls became educated, young women increasingly participated in this type of educational migration as well. Overall, the modern transformation diversified the nature and type of migration women pursued, contributing to the 'feminisation' of labour and educational migration.

6.6 The rise of commuting

Alongside the modern transformation, various forms of nonmigratory mobility, such as seasonal migrations and circulation for trade, tended to decrease as rural-urban and international migration become more common. However, new forms of nonmigratory mobility, most notably commuting, arose in parallel across our case study areas. In Italy, the Netherlands, and Brazil, for instance, commuting became increasingly common as internal migration and the rural-urban transition slowed down.

In the longer term, internal migration tends to decrease over time, particularly when urbanisation reaches a certain saturation point, as is the case in Italy and the Netherlands; urbanising is also slowing down in Brazil and Morocco. This tends to go along with increasing suburbanisation and a resulting pattern of deconcentrated growth. As economic opportunities increasingly decentralised to smaller

cities and towns where congestion and costs were lower, populations tended to 'suburbanise.' At the same time, improved infrastructure and transport made it easier to travel across longer distances for work or family-related reasons, which lessened the need for a permanent change in residence. These trends are consistent with the concept of 'polarisation reversal' of decentralising growth in urbanisation theory (see Geyer and Kontuly 1993; Richardson 1980). They also align with Zelinsky's prediction that human mobility becomes increasingly nonmigratory, circular, and temporary as the rural-urban transition is largely 'completed' with most of the population already living in urban areas.

In Cisternino, the rise of commuting coincided with a decrease in long-distance internal and international migration. In our Brazilian case study, too, such patterns emerged. As transportation infrastructure developed, more individuals commuted between Caracaraí and the state capital for work. These findings challenge the common assumption that technological progress necessarily leads to more migration. In early phases of the modern transformation, then, technological innovation and (agro-)industrialization drives employment out of agriculture towards industry and services, leading to more rural-urban migration and emigration. However, in the longer term, technological progress can reduce the need to migrate to work or study elsewhere by allowing people to commute or even work and study remotely. Globally, the rise of virtual and hybrid work opportunities, particularly in the service sector, is a testament to this shift, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commuting was not yet common in Wayisso or the Todgha Valley, but other forms of nonmigratory mobility were. The rise in transportation infrastructure led to greater mobility and expanded everyday 'fields of activity' (Hägerstrand 1957). While it once took several hours to walk from Wayisso to the nearest town, it now takes just half an hour with a motorcycle or taxi. These options enable those who live in town to return to Wayisso regularly for family, community, and farm-related engagements. Across the Todgha Valley, the government expanded paved road networks and the electricity grid in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As a result, inhabitants of smaller villages felt less need to relocate to urban centres in order to access jobs and public facilities such as health care, education, and electricity.

6.7 A preference for internal migration

It is important to emphasise that, across our case studies, the vast majority of migratory movements are internal and short distance. This reflects a strong 'home preference' found in research on migration (Debray et al 2023). Although many people lacked the capability to move longer distances or across international borders, our qualitative interviews revealed widespread aspirations to stay in their respective region or country of origin.

Across our case studies, we found many rural-urban movements were motivated by new ideas about the 'good life,' what constitutes 'good work,' and a desire to access the comforts of modern living – whether basic infrastructure like electricity and plumbing or government services like schools and hospitals. Younger generations increasingly aspired to urban lives instead of rural ones, but many preferred to realise these aspirations in a town or city within their home country. The desire to remain within one's family, community networks, and cultural sphere motivated a long-term preference to stay in their home region or country.

Focusing on the aspiration to migrate comes at the risk of underestimating the degree to which most people are 'voluntarily immobile' (see Schewel 2020a) with regards to long-distance migration, particularly to destinations abroad. Even in high-emigration regions like the Todgha Valley, only a minority of out-migration crosses over international borders, a reality that migration constraints like border restrictions cannot solely explain. This exemplifies the importance of including staying aspirations alongside migration aspirations in theorising human mobility. After all, the decision to stay is also an expression of migratory agency or mobility freedoms, defined as the capability to choose where to live, including the option to stay (see de Haas 2021). Conceiving migration as part of broader social transformations helps reveal how expanding state services, infrastructure, and economic opportunity can actually lead to a decline in long-distance and international migration alongside the rise of nonmigratory forms of mobility.

7. Differences in Mobility Transitions

Above we suggest that, as the modern transformation unfolded, how and where people moved is the most important mobility shift, not an increase in the volume of mobility per se. Thus, as Skeldon (1997) originally argued, the most important feature of the mobility transition seems to be the general diversification of mobility trajectories. More specifically, we observed a rise in migratory mobility as more people permanently changed their residence instead of using premodern forms of seasonal or circular non-migratory mobility. Eventually we saw circular forms of nonmigratory mobility resurge, such as commuting to economically dynamic urban areas. Yet a one-sided focus on these general, rather 'universal' patterns risks obscuring significant differences in the way the mobility transition unfolded – its duration, direction of mobility patterns, and the composition of migrant populations across the different case studies. The following describes some of these key divergences.

7.1 The duration of international migration

In our Italian and Dutch case studies, significant overseas migration persisted for only one or two decades, before tapering off as new forms of internal migration and circular mobility increased. It might be tempting to conclude that they passed through the mobility transition within a relatively short time span. However, the two cases show an important difference. For Bolsward, the short peak of international migration after World War II represents the last of several 'waves' of international emigration that spanned the 1880-1960 period. Bolsward's mobility peak was part of a broader mobility transition affecting the Netherlands and other Western European countries over the same period.

For Cisternino, the observed peak in the 1970s was its first significant international emigration wave. The town was relatively late in joining Italy's large international migration trends, which started in the 1880s. The region of Puglia, of which Cisternino is part, only reached its international emigration peak in the 1950s (see Vezzoli 2020a). Although a few people in Cisternino had migrated across the Atlantic in the early-20th century, the self-sustaining microeconomy – along with its valley location and minimal connections to larger urban centres – had made international migration a very limited

phenomenon. Thus, while Cisternino had a relatively short 'emigration transition,' this seemed to reflect that it only entered the emigration stage at the tail-end of Italy's national emigration transition, a time when rapid changes in national development quickly decreased the country's emigration potential.

Other case studies did not fit this pattern. For example, emigration from Morocco's Todgha Valley took off as part of the country's general wave of Europe-bound international migration in the 1960s and 1970s, a trend that was geographically diffuse and has plateaued at relatively high levels for several decades (Berriane et al. 2021). However, we saw that the seminomadic Ait Atta population living in more isolated mountain areas south of the Todgha Valley joined this emigration significantly later than the sedentary peasant populations. These observations show how timing and duration of local international migration 'waves' reflect their embeddedness within the larger regional or national mobility systems.

7.2 Composition of migration flows

Another important difference concerns the composition of migration across our case studies, depending on contextual factors such as culture, labour markets, and development trajectories of specific places. From the Todgha Valley, the first labour emigrants that left in the 1960s were almost exclusively men recruited for 'male' jobs in European industry and in mining. Their spouses and children would often join them later, once they had decided to permanently settle. The first labour emigrants from Wayisso in the 2010s were women responding to demand in Middle Eastern countries for female domestic workers. These instances show how the composition of migration flows is largely determined by recruitment practices and the nature of labour demand in destination countries at specific 'historical junctures' (Castles 2010; Vezzoli 2021) or at a specific 'world time' (Skeldon 1990). Namely, So, the composition of migration reflected how European economies (since the 1960s) and Gulf economies (since the 1970s) have been changing, prompting labour migration from specific geographies and of certain people in terms of skills and gender.

In addition to labour demand at destination, compositional differences in international migration flows are also determined by notions of the 'good life' that motivate the desire to migrate (or stay). In Bolsward, many emigrants were farmers who could no longer pursue their livelihoods and preferred to go to North America to continue their agricultural lifestyles; they did not want to take industrial jobs in town. The emigration of Dutch farmers provides a stark contrast to peasants from Morocco and Wayisso, who migrated to escape agriculture. Further, many Dutch farmers possessed capital and were offered opportunities to invest in new farms in North America. In Cisternino, emigrants were initially war veterans who, in addition to gaining a different view on the world, had become more familiar with opportunities and higher standards of living elsewhere. Soon after, farm workers followed them because they saw industrial work as a desirable step away from the precarious life of subsistence farming.

7.3 Frontier migration

Another important difference across case studies concerns 'frontier migration.' Zelinsky originally hypothesised that in an 'early transitional society' there would be 'significant movement of rural folk to colonisation frontiers, if land suitable for pioneering is available within country' (Zelinsky 1971, 230). In our Brazilian case study, the movement of rural peoples from Northeastern states to Caracaraí is the best instance of Zelinsky's frontier migration hypothesis. Other cases did not neatly fit his definition yet resembled frontier migration in other ways. The emigration of rural farmers from Bolsward's hinterlands to North America, for example, might be considered a kind of frontier migration – not to colonise a frontier of the Dutch state but to 'settle' new foreign territories elsewhere where land was perceived to be relatively abundant or less expensive.

Frontier migration, as Zelinsky defined it, was more common in earlier periods in Ethiopia, when military, religious, or other elites associated with the imperial regime moved the population from the more densely populated highlands to claim territories across the south of Ethiopia (see Schewel and Asmamaw 2021). Today, however, capital-rich foreign investors are the new settlers, leasing cheap land from the government on 99-year contracts and hiring low-cost labour to produce goods for global markets, which is arguably another form of 'frontier migration.' The establishment of new industrial and agro-industrial centres across Ethiopia is shaping the nature and direction of urban growth. Companies often employ thousands of workers, many of whom are internal labour migrants moving from rural to urban areas. In the Todgha Valley, too, oasis dwellers and the formerly seminomadic Ait Atta established new farms in desert areas outside the traditional oasis using mechanised pumping a trend we could interpret as a 'frontier' movement and that is sometimes also linked to migration.

To a certain extent, places like Cisternino and the Todgha Valley have also become destinations of 'lifestyle' migration as residents of high-income countries look for a less hectic and lower-cost lifestyle in warm and sunny climates. From a certain perspective, these destinations are at the margins, the frontier of the 'modern' and the 'traditional,' of the 'rural' with 'urban' elements. While this certainly moves away from Zelinsky's idea of 'frontier migration,' it seems to represent a form of 'frontier' in the sense of relatively capital-rich migrants migrating from the core to the periphery.

7.4 The nature of immobility

One common trend highlighted above is the prevalence of 'voluntary immobility' relative to international migration. Most people aspire to stay in their home region or country, even during periods of relatively high international migration, during which most moves remain internal and relatively short distance. However, at the microlevel, there were important differences in the prevalence, duration, and experiences of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary immobility' (Carling 2002) vis-à-vis different destinations. The latter is an important distinction, as the same person or household could be described as voluntarily immobile relative to international migration, and involuntarily immobile relative to internal migration – or vice versa.

In Wayisso, for example, involuntary immobility was remarkably common in the village; however, most migration aspirations were directed towards regional towns and cities. Further, the experience

of involuntary immobility – and the associated frustration of not being able to migrate – was relatively new, emerging only as rural-urban and international migration became more common. As the exposure to the higher incomes and better lifestyles of migrants increased feelings of relative deprivation and, hence, migration aspirations, the most disadvantaged households were unable to engage in migration as an investment to improve their livelihoods. Many expressed feeling 'stuck' in the village, aspiring but unable to leave. This involuntary immobility is a distinctly 'modern' experience for a community that was historically highly mobile – though in nonmigratory ways – as pastoralists.

In the Todgha Valley, feelings of involuntary immobility are primarily in relation to international migration, with many members of underprivileged youth aspiring but being unable to move to Europe because they lack resources and connections. Unlike Wayisso, this experience of involuntary immobility has persisted for many decades. Two factors have fuelled it: the wealth of migrants, often displayed by the larger, better-quality houses they tend to build and an overall feeling that life aspirations cannot be met locally. Both give rise to persistent migration aspirations and even a 'culture of migration' where migration is seen as the main way to achieve financial success. In Bolsward and Cisternino, on the contrary, desires to emigrate subsided in the postwar decades as local populations gained new opportunities to realise their aspirations within the region.

Aspirations to migrate or stay can show short-term fluctuations in relation to perceived opportunities at home or elsewhere. For example, when the 2008 financial crisis hit European countries and Spain in particular, leading to mass unemployment, many young people in the Todgha Valley who had previously felt involuntarily immobile temporarily lost the aspiration to migrate; they became what Schewel (2020) calls 'acquiescently immobile.' They still lacked the capability to migrate, but they no longer had strong aspirations to leave. When the Spanish economy recovered and labour demand increased in the 2010s, aspirations to migrate returned and Todghawis started emigrating again. These shifts expose the 'rationality' of migration aspirations: more often than not, migration remains a response to changing opportunities in destination countries and at home (see de Haas 2023).

Finally, there were notable instances of voluntary immobility even in the context of unfulfilled aspirations for social and economic mobility. This could only be explained by looking at noneconomic motivations for staying and how local populations perceived local futures. In Caracaraí, young people often acknowledged that progress in their education or economic circumstances would require migration for 'instrumental' reasons. And yet, even during a period of significant economic decline, many aspired to stay because of feeling of what Vezzoli (2022) calls 'relative endowment,' which suggests a sense of satisfaction and a positive assessment of what the current location offers despite social inequalities. Those who aspired to stay generally felt a good life was possible because that 'good life' was described not as what people in the city had, but in terms of noneconomic factors, such as proximity to family, the natural environment, tranquillity, and peacefulness they already enjoyed in their own town.

8. Explaining Variations at the Microlevel

The case studies illustrate many pathways through the mobility transition, reflecting significant variations in the way the modern transformation unfolds in different geographical localities, at different points in time, and for different social groups. All case studies showed two common features of a mobility transition. First is the decline of nonmigratory mobility associated with traditional livelihoods. Second is a rise in rural-urban and international migration resulting from their incorporation within centralised political structures, infrastructure development, and the expansion of a capitalist economies. However, the volume, direction, and duration of these mobility trends varied significantly depending on the *pace* and *sequencing* of different political, economic, demographic, cultural, and technological shifts that form part of broader social transformation processes.

Combined with the social transformation perspective on the macrolevel, the aspiration-capability framework helps explain how these macrolevel changes influence migratory agency and mobility decisions at the microlevel. We observed the following pattern: Migration aspirations generally rise when life aspirations expand more rapidly than local opportunities. Over time, if local opportunities expand, more people gain the capability to realise their aspirations where they are, leading to a decline in the prevalence of migration aspirations. However, in line with valid critiques on the teleological assumptions of conventional thinking about 'development' or 'transitions,' this is not an inevitable outcome. As illustrated in the Todgha Valley, if aspirations continue expanding faster than local opportunities, or if local opportunities stagnate, the result can be intergenerational patterns of high out-migration and then a 'migration plateau' of sustained out-migration.

8.1 The aspiration-opportunity gap

The occurrence and duration of this 'aspiration-opportunity gap' depends on the nature and sequencing of social transformation. In Italy and the Netherlands, the national state's expansion transformed local economic systems and livelihoods. In Cisternino, the postwar introduction of taxes and the formalisation of work undercut livelihoods that had traditionally relied on informal labour, such as informal apprenticeships among artisans. In Bolsward, farm workers became redundant as agricultural work in the postwar decades – stimulated by the Marshall Aid plan and the introduction of tractors and milking machines – rapidly modernised. At the same time, more attractive regular work options in other industries emerged decreasing the supply of farm workers and causing agrarian wages to rise, which further accelerated agrarian mechanisation. However, in both Bolsward and Cisternino, local economic opportunities grew and diversified as agrarian-based economic systems declined, and the state began to provide more public services, jobs, social security, and infrastructure. Because these social changes proceeded in tandem, out-migration levels declined within just a few decades. Indeed, local populations could realise their aspirations by shifting from agricultural to industrial or public sector work available locally.

In Bolsward, living standards and wellbeing increased rapidly after the 1950s, as a result of national economic growth and state-provided social security. Better public transport and the rise of private car

ownership, combined with new neighbourhoods built outside the traditional city walls, made it possible for more people to realise their rapidly changing life aspirations while remaining in Bolsward (Wielstra 2020, 26). State interventions similarly mediated the need for people in Cisternino to migrate over time: economic restructuring and growth, the expanded welfare state, and the reinvention of local livelihoods offered alternatives to migration and also made return attractive for many young families. "Had the state not introduced or delayed a development policy for the south that created regional industrial hubs, Cisternino could have experienced a protracted period of high migration, which would have probably solidified as a proper 'culture of migration'" (Vezzoli 2020b, 28). In both cases, it is notable that the expansion of state-provided social security, as well as public and educational employment, appeared to be just as important as economic growth for supporting higher rates of voluntarily immobility.

However, governments in Ethiopia and Morocco, the sites of two other case studies, have been unable to expand economic opportunity, public services, and social security to rural places as rapidly as European countries did in the mid-20th century. It should be acknowledged that many European countries' rapid development in the mid-20th century was fuelled by colonial and capitalist systems that extracted wealth, resources, and labour from other countries; they also received aid from the United States in the form of the Marshall Plan for postwar reconstruction. Moreover, the Netherlands and Italy held an important place in global geopolitical and economic hierarchies. Today, governments of countries such as Ethiopia and Morocco pursue their development agendas with far fewer resources and much less generous and highly conditional international loan packages. At the same time, their local populations are more connected and aware of lifestyles and opportunities elsewhere because they can see migrants' relative success and have greater media connectivity. As these factors coalesce, societies in countries such as Ethiopia and Morocco are more likely to experience persistent aspiration-opportunity gaps. In places like Wayisso and the Todgha Valley, the persistent mismatch between aspirations and local opportunity continues to drive relatively high or rising out-migration levels.

In Wayisso, aspirations are currently expanding more rapidly than local opportunities. One important driver is that a growing young generation has access to expanded formal education, but work opportunities in rural areas (outside the agricultural sector) have not kept pace. Indeed, the education system is out of sync with the rate of economic growth, diversification, and local job creation (see Schewel and Fransen 2018). We found that public education is an important force of 'socialisation' – instilling a national identity among young generations, stimulating aspirations for national and personal progress, and (in theory) equipping pupils with the skills needed to participate in a diversifying national economy. Because the 'better work' young generations hope to secure through their education is not yet available locally, the resulting aspiration-opportunity gap leads many to consider migration as a means of realising their professional and other life goals (see also Mains 2011). With economic opportunities remaining constrained in Wayisso, few have the capabilities to migrate as they would like, giving rise to feelings of 'involuntary immobility' (see Carling 2002).

In the Todgha Valley, which is much wealthier and more 'developed' compared to Wayisso, emigration aspirations are paradoxically higher, essentially because the mismatch between fast cultural and much slower economic change is even more pronounced. The 'mobility transition' essentially began in the 1950s, and rural-to-urban migration is clearly beyond its peak. But emigration levels in the Todgha and

Morocco in general have plateaued at relatively high levels for several decades (see Berriane et al. 2021). Jolivet (2020) uncovered important shifts in the aspirations and migration motivations of successive generations. Among the 'guestworker' generation of the 1960s and 1970s, migration aspirations were initially motivated by economic concerns and the need to fulfil basic necessities like safe and comfortable housing, education, nutrition, and health care. Today, however, young people are increasingly motivated by aspirations for social security, human rights, urban lifestyles, or corruption-free interaction with the state, all of which remain difficult to obtain in Morocco. This shift also exemplifies how 'exogenous forces' – media, migrant networks, and exposure to tourists – continue expanding the set of local aspirations, with which local opportunities have not been able to 'keep up.' Furthermore, improvements in local opportunities have not been able to keep pace with rapidly rising aspirations for better jobs, higher incomes, and modern lifestyles (see Figure 13).

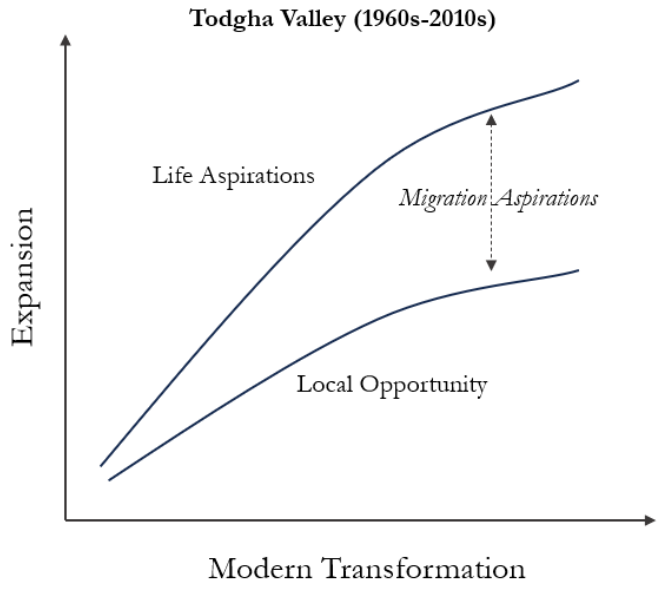

Figure 13. Stylised representation of the changing aspiration-opportunity gap in the Todgha Valley (right).

In Caracaraí, the aspiration-opportunity gap and resulting migration aspirations, were less pronounced than expected. Despite local economic decline, life aspirations were still strongly influenced by emotional and cultural connections to the Amazon rainforest and more modest material life aspirations influenced by a feeling of 'relative endowment' (Vezzoli 2022). Many households had employment in commerce; others continued practices like fishing and forest gathering while simultaneously embracing many aspects of modern life. Further, many remained hopeful about the prospects of Caracaraí despite the economic decline. The economic boom of earlier decades still influenced imaginations about what Caracaraí could be again, especially with more state investment. As a result, economic downturns have not resulted in heightened migration but rather a mix of mobility: some town people practiced river-based mobility associated with fishing, while many others preferred 'voluntary immobility' as they awaited a public exam that could give them a chance at public employment. Although public employment remained fairly limited, people maintained a preference

to stay on the basis that this type of opportunity may fulfil their aspirations for good, stable, and well-remunerated work. Thus, hope for future local employment in Caracaraí influenced migration more strongly than local economic opportunities.

8.2 Social security

Another important determinant of the nature and duration of a community's aspiration-opportunity gap are perceptions of public welfare, social security and how these services are provided. Here, we use 'social' in a broad sense, including but not limited to economic security. National state expansion and capitalist economic development tend to erode traditional socioeconomic systems and their respective safety nets (e.g., commons systems, kinship and tribal support networks), leading communities to become more reliant on the state to provide social security. In recent decades in Ethiopia and Morocco, national development strategies generally animated by the 'Washington Consensus' – a package of economic reforms promoting policies such as trade liberalisation, privatisation, and finance liberalisation – have undermined state-provided safety nets. Despite national or regional economic growth, many (particularly poorer) households feel that their economic conditions are insecure. In these uncertain economic landscapes, migration is a common way households diversify their incomes and minimise risk (see Stark and Bloom 1985).

In Caracaraí, Cisternino, and Bolsward, however, the state has been a stronger 'stabilising factor' (see Vezzoli 2015), investing in social safety nets that seem to enable more people to stay in their respective regions or countries. In Caracaraí, although economic and professional opportunities are limited, modest life aspirations plus basic social security were important drivers of aspirations to stay; this combination made migration, particularly international destinations, appear too risky. Cisternino's rapid turn from emigration to regional commuting is associated with Italy's industrial decentralisation policies of the 1960s. These policies created tens of thousands of industrial jobs in less developed peripheral regions, and stronger social protections underpinned them. Many workers were attracted to low- and medium-level industrial work because of the relative stability and security these jobs provided. In the Netherlands, stable and secure industrial work also drove agricultural workers to move from the hinterland to Bolsward and other Dutch industrial cities.

However, feelings of social and economic security continue to shift. Today in Cisternino, not only is such industrial work rare, but local aspirations have changed as many young people, as in most European towns, aspire to more fulfilling professional jobs in cosmopolitan cities like Milan and London. At our present historical juncture, young people's life aspirations – influenced by the modern education system, social media, and migrant networks – can lead to rising levels of out-migration towards new global destinations.

Overall, our case studies highlight that development strategies that prioritise economic growth and neglect social security can undermine people's capability to stay, particularly in rural places, because they increase economic uncertainty. This finding does not suggest that state investments in social security always can or will stop emigration, but that they can clearly play a positive role by enhancing

people's capability to choose where to live, including the option to stay at home, which de Haas (2021) describes as 'mobility freedom.' Providing better education and health care to family members is what often motivates migrants, suggesting that improving public services and providing basic social security may be the most effective ways of giving people a reasonable option to stay and improve their overall wellbeing.

8.3 Immigration restrictions

The aspiration-opportunity gap gives rise to migration aspirations, but whether, where, and how aspiring migrants leave depends significantly on spatial opportunity structures. In other words, migration flows generally follow real opportunities in known destinations. In instances where internal or international migration faces greater obstacles, more people may find themselves in a state of involuntary immobility (see Carling 2002).

Over time, the immigration policies of destination societies have proven to be important determinants of migration capabilities. In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, for example, waves of European emigrants to the Americas encountered relatively low immigration barriers; upon arriving in the United States, they mainly had to prove good health and sometimes literacy to convince an inspector they were not "idiots, insane persons, paupers or persons likely to become a public charge, and persons suffering from a loathsome or a dangerous, contagious disease" (Yew 1980). Labour migrants seeking to leave countries like Morocco and Ethiopia today face much higher emigration barriers. Citizens of Morocco seeking to enter Europe must invest considerable resources in qualifying for work permits, student visas or, alternatively, to pay smugglers, while their own emigrant predecessors had a comparatively easy path. Until 1991, Moroccan citizens did not need visas for nearby European destinations, and until the early 1970s, emigration was even facilitated by state-sponsored labour recruitment. Today's young adults confront significant financial and legal barriers to migration and thus often rely on personal networks like family or friends to facilitate their migration abroad. It follows that lower-skilled, relatively poor people without such networks find themselves involuntarily immobile in the face of migration restrictions to Europe and the United States.

Our case studies confirm the powerful influence of new 'mobility regimes' that normalise the moves of (mostly) high-skilled migrants while simultaneously trying to 'contain' or control the movement of the world's poor (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013). In establishing significant legal and financial barriers to certain destinations, 'mobility regimes' divert aspiring migrants to alternative destinations that are more accessible, such as Spain and Portugal (instead of France or the Netherlands) for young Todghawis, and the Middle East for young people from Wayisso who might otherwise prefer to migrate to the United States or Europe.

9. Discussion and Conclusion

It is impossible for a society to go through fundamental social transformations without experiencing significant changes in human mobility. Overall, our comparison of five case studies confirms Zelinksy's original assertion that there are 'patterned regularities in the growth of personal mobility through space-time during recent history, and that these regularities comprise an essential component of the modernisation process' (Zelinsky 1971, 221-222). In the most general sense, we find several trends: as peripheral regions are incorporated into a modern national state, rural-urban and international migration tends to initially increase; as migration systems diversify, so too do those participating in it; and the expansion of spatial mobility is often intrinsically tied to an expansion in social and economic mobility as well.

Our cases also support several of Skeldon's propositions (1990, 1997). First, our findings echo Skeldon's critique of the 'myth of the immobile peasant' (Skeldon 1990) and the related assumption that the forces of modernisation have 'uprooted' peasants from once sedentary and stable lives. This assumption masks premodern forms of mobility, and the notion of 'uprooting' may indeed risk romanticising preindustrial living conditions and stark inequalities that were often common; in feudal or slave-holding societies, basic human freedoms were often denied to significant shares of the population, women included. In the Todgha Valley, for instance, former sharecroppers and small peasants were often the first to seize the opportunity to escape from conditions of relative poverty when French labour recruiters visited the valley.

Skeldon also suggested that in more geographically or economically peripheral areas, migration systems are less integrated and more local, while in wealthy industrialised societies, interlocking forms of local and global migratory and nonmigratory mobility tend to predominate. As the modern transformation unfolds, mobility systems diffuse spatially (Skeldon 1977), a trend that seems to be a universal part of the modern transformation. Mobility systems that were previously constrained by geography and revolved around small, regionalised economies expanded in geographical reach to include larger urban centres, and in many cases, international destinations.

However, the spatial diffusion of mobility systems is neither gradual nor uniform. Our case studies also illustrate that recruitment practices of state and non-state actors tapping into faraway labour reservoirs in 'peripheral' regions can lead to new migration systems over long distances. Many of the first major international movements and long-distance internal migrations from our case studies were tied to recruitment practices – whether for labour or military conscription – that diminished intervening obstacles and created long-distance connection allowing migrants to 'leapfrog' to faraway places. Later network effects and the dynamics of cumulative causation (Massey 1990; de Haas 2010b) typically give migration systems their own momentum, eventually rendering invisible the key role states and recruitment tend to play in initially establishing migrant systems (Piore 1979). This trend nuances, traditional models of migration that assume 'distance decay,' the idea that emigration volumes become smaller as destination distances increase (see Ravenstein 1885; Lee 1966).

Similarly, circular and seasonal forms of mobility predated capitalist expansion, with the latter essentially increasing the geographical scope and intensity of already existing forms of circulation (Skeldon 1990, 137; see also De Mas 1990). Indeed, when labour recruiters reached into peripheral rural areas of southern Italy, Morocco, or Ethiopia to tap into new labour reservoirs, they established connections between the supply and demand for labour. They also established social linkages and networks that would give migration its own momentum, leading to the rise of migration systems.

The transition from seasonal and circular mobility to 'labour migration' deserves further reflection. Capitalist expansion appears to have changed the nature of movement and migration decision-making from being an intrinsic part of social life to having stronger economic-utilitarian purposes. Nomadic movements and seasonal migrations following harvest seasons were embedded in communal practices that had a strong social component, but the 'extraction' of the 'labour migrant,' whose only primary purpose is to work and to produce, eradicated the migrant from the social fabric of origin communities; this process eventually and gradually leads to sociocultural distancing and alienation from 'traditional' lifestyles (see Sayad 1977). For example, in the Todgha Valley, Wayisso, and partially in Caracaraí, nomadic ways of life (for which nonmigratory mobility was interwoven with social life) were transformed first into more sedentary lifestyles with permanent residence. Later, mobility increasingly took the form of workers migrating to provide labour elsewhere. This resonates with Polanyi's critique of Market Societies, notably the attempt to 'disembed' the economy from society (Polanyi 1944). In many ways, modern consumerist and capitalist development can be interpreted as a process that attempts to 'disembed' mobility from broader social life and transform it into a primarily economic process, animated by the 'profit motive.'

We also find that each place experienced a *diversification* of migration trajectories, rather than an increase in the volume of migration as such. In this regard, the popular idea of 'rural exodus' that accompanies modernisation and development is simplistic and therefore problematic. The exodus metaphor evokes images of a semicollective uprooting of entire populations, which does not reflect the true nature of rural out-migration. First, many migrants retain strong social, cultural, and economic links with their families living in rural areas, questioning the idea of a rural-urban break in livelihood practices. Second, rather than the imagined massive move from the village to major cities, we observe a process of 'microurbanisation' whereby previous rural spaces become urbanised through the growth of small urban centres. Rather than the depopulation of rural areas, we often observe short-distance movements to small urban centres such as Bolsward, Cisternino, Tinghir, Batu (Ziway), and Caracaraí *within* these 'rural' regions. While urbanised rural areas might not offer the dynamism of 'real' big city life, they appear to provide modern comforts, public services, and quality of living in a familiar atmosphere. These benefits appeal to large segments of the population, who can move and simultaneously retain a strong connection to family members in nearby rural areas.

Relatedly, rather than a simple story of rural depopulation, we find a *reconfiguration* of previously existing mobility patterns within a more complex rural-urban hierarchy: from rural places to small towns, from small towns to bigger cities. Further, the expansion of these small towns leads to the urbanisation of previously rural space. These findings complicate Skeldon's hypothesis that over time, as rural-urban migration becomes longer-distance and permanent, this undermines the local

community and leads to depopulation, unless such community had 'favourable location and physical environment' that sustained its resident population (Skeldon 1997, 196). In none of the regions where rural-urban migration existed for a few decades did we observe signs of depopulation, despite their relatively limited economic resources. While depopulation may occur in some more marginal small villages and towns, this is not necessarily the case if we look at larger regional units. In fact, most of the 'rural exodus' occurs *within* such regions, in the form of movements from smaller villages to smaller and larger towns. Our case studies did not see a massive exodus to capital cities, a common perception of rural-to-urban migration in the 'developing world.'

As the 'urbanisation of rural space' both in terms of livelihoods and cultural change was a core feature of social transformation in many of our case studies, this shift also highlights the conceptual challenge of defining certain migrations as either rural-urban or urban-urban. For instance, is migration from Caracaraí, a sleepy frontier town, to the capital Boa Vista considered rural-urban or urban-urban migration? Or is out-migration from a hamlet just outside of the town of Cisternino to a large city rural-urban or urban-urban migration? While these hamlets were part of the countryside in the 1950s, by the 1960s and 1970s, as infrastructure expanded and made movement between hamlet and town easier, the line between the rural and urban blurred. Is it better then to characterise migration from these hamlets to cities elsewhere as urban-urban? Such questions challenged our comparisons across places, but they also revealed important insights into the concept of the 'mobility transition.' One important insight is that *mobility* or *migration* dynamics, as well as the places themselves, shift over time. The previously 'rural' can become 'urban' as the modern transformation unfolds.

Finally, a comparative focus on local case studies highlights the different positions regions and countries occupy in global geopolitical and economic hierarchies. Local experiences of the mobility transition take place at a unique time in history that in turn reflects how these hierarchies shift. This points to the relevance of the 'historical juncture' (Castles 2010; Vezzoli 2021) or what Skeldon (1990) referred to as 'world time.' The mobility transitions of Cisternino and Bolsward most clearly reflect the stages of the mobility transition as Zelinksy originally hypothesised, primarily because of the nature of their development trajectory at a particular historical juncture and their location in countries that dominated global power structures. Moreover, Italy and the Netherlands received significant financial state support, nationally and internationally through the Marshall Plan and European Union subsidies, for example – money not available in the same form in contemporary Morocco, Ethiopia, and Brazil.

International comparative case studies like this one highlight that 'grand theories' of social change, such as the mobility transition, remain grounded in the European or North American experiences. To a considerable degree, this challenges the 'universality' of these theories, and particularly the implicit assumption that all societies will go down similar mobility trajectories as Western societies have experiences. For instance, contemporary societies like Ethiopia, Morocco, and the Amazon region of Brazil occupy a much more peripheral position in geopolitical structures, and their citizens face restrictive immigration policies that earlier generations of Europeans did not. As a result, we see important differences in the nature and duration of migration, such as the sustained plateauing of emigration in Morocco, and, just as importantly, involuntary immobility.

Thus, although the mobility transition has several universal features across societies in the modern period, explaining its variations across space and time requires a more sophisticated theorisation of the intrinsic interconnections between social transformation and human mobility in the modern period (see de Haas et al 2020). This research agenda would therefore benefit from additional comparative case studies applying a similar 'STAC' framework as we did in this study — particularly covering different regions of Asia, North America, and many others left out of this analysis — to advance theoretical understanding about the nature and drivers of mobility transitions at the local, national, and global levels.

Finally, looking towards the future, social change persists, and mobility systems continue to adapt. While it is impossible to fully predict future configurations of mobility systems, fundamental changes – such as the digital revolution, evolving economic structures, progressive population ageing, higher education levels, and environmental pressures partly caused by climate change – will certainly affect future mobility and immobility in significant and potentially unpredictable ways. Future social transformations will trigger adaptive responses, including various forms of migratory and nonmigratory mobility. In that sense, the mobility transition is never finished. Yet, if history is to be our guide, it does suggest that even the most profound social transformations rarely lead to shock-wise, massive transfers of entire populations over long distances, unless totalitarian or otherwise coercive state power and warfare is involved. Rather, premodern and modern mobility systems resemble complex, hierarchical webs of movement in which short-distance migration predominates and in which immobility is as much the rule as mobility.

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11. Appendix I

Table A1. Framework to study the 'modern transformation'

Universal social dimension (A)	Central meta-concept (B)	Main substantive change process (C)	Important substantive subprocesses (D)
Political *Organised control over people*	**Power**	Nation-state formation	• Bureaucratisation and centralisation • Colonialism and warfare • Rise of modern nationalism • Democratisation • Expansion of state education
Economic *The accumulation and use of land, labour and capital in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services*	**Resources**	The growth and spread of industrial capitalism	• Divisions of labour and class structure • Economic restructuring (agrarian>industrial>service sectors) • Marketisation and commodification • Globalisation (trade, finance, production) • Taxation and redistribution of resources
Technological *The application of knowledge through the deployment of procedures, skills, and techniques*	**Tools**	Mechanisation, standardisation, and automation	• Mechanisation of warfare and transport • Mechanisation of agriculture and manufacturing ('industrial revolution') • Automation • Communication revolutions • The rise of modern medicine
Demographic *The structure and spatial distribution of populations*	**Population**	Demographic transitions	• Mortality decline • Fertility decline • Urbanisation (natural, migration) • Rural-to-urban migration (within and across borders) • Urbanisation of the rural space
Cultural *Beliefs, values, norms, and customs shared by groups of people*	**Ideas**	Rationalisation, individualisation, and consumerism	• Enlightenment and humanitarianism • Evolution of modern sciences • Secularisation of the public sphere • Changing ideas of the 'good life' • Emancipation of women and minorities

Source: de Haas et al 2020, 25.

12. Appendix II

Photo 1. Dairy transport around Bolsward (Wommels) in the late 1960s

Until the 1960s, milk collection was still small-scale, using milk churns. Since then, this have been replaced by large cooled milk tanks along with the introduction of milk machines. This had far-reaching consequences for the dairy industry, where milk transport and milk processing were modernised under the influence of tank milking. by Sjoerd Andringa and courtesy of the Museum It Tsiispakhûs. Retrieved from: https://www.oudezee.nl/nl/locaties/2241402744/museum-it-tsiispakhus-2.

Photo 2. Marktstraat, Bolsward in the 1960s

Bolsward is an old trading city and became member of the Hanseatic league in 1422 – after a long period of relative stagnation since the eighteenth century, in the post-WWII decades it experienced renewed growth as it became a centre for the dairy industry. Between 1882 and 1968, a tramway (on the foreground) linked Bolsward to the larger city of Sneek. Retrieved from http://fotos.serc.nl/friesland/bolsward/bolsward-54015/.

Photo 3. Hollandsche Melk Suiker fabriek ("HMS" factory), Bolsward (around the 1980s)

Bolsward was a centre for dairy-processing industry. In 1949, the lactose-producing HMS factory was opened, drawing in many workers from Bolsward and surrounding villages, as well as from Turkey from the late 1960s when local labour supply became scarce. It closed its doors in 1979. Photograph retrieved (on 22 September 2020) from https://www.stichtingbolswardshistorie.nl/archief/hms-fabriek-2/.

Photo 4. View of Caranna, hamlet of Cisternino, from the bell tower (2018)

Traditional housing (trulli) and modern buildings in one of the hamlets surrounding Cisternino. Photograph by Simona Vezzoli.

Photo 5. Todgha Valley, Morocco, around 2020

As in other Moroccan oases, pre-colonial livelihoods in the Todgha largely depended on intense, irrigated agriculture combined with small-scale animal husbandry as well as barter trade with (semi) nomadic groups. Photograph by Hein de Haas.

Photo 6. Advertisement for a bus company, Tinghir, Morocco, 2000

Migration has connected the Todgha valley with European countries, including direct bus lines. Photograph by Hein de Haas.

Photo 7. Tinghir (Morocco), a migrant boomtown, around 2020

Remittance investments by migrants living in Europe in real estate and small businesses have played a major role in the rapid growth of Tinghir as a regional economic centre and an internal migration destination for population in isolated villages in the surrounding Atlas and Saghro mountains. Photograph by Hein de Haas.

Photo 8. Batu, formerly Ziway (Ethiopia), a regional town, in 2016

New road development in the rapidly expanding Batu (Ziway) town. Photograph by Kerilyn Schewel.

Photo 9. Agriculture in Wayisso (Ethiopia)

Farmers plant corn seeds in Wayisso, Ethiopia. Photograph by Kerilyn Schewel.

Photo 10. One of the primary roads in Caracaraí (2019)

Modern wide roads remain as a witness of Caracaraí's past economic boom. Photograph by Simona Vezzoli.

Photo 11. View over the rapids on the Rio Branco near Caracaraí (2019)

Photograph by Simona Vezzoli.