

Mediterranean Rural Territories¹

OMAR BESSAOUD*, MICHEL PETIT**

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Introduction

The Mediterranean region is full of contrasts, sometimes even fractures, in particular between the North and South and also the East. Nevertheless, beyond these differences, common characteristics can be observed regarding the climate as well as many other aspects. As regards rural areas, differences are striking: in the North, the main concerns have long been represented by rural exodus, the aging of the remaining population, the low birth rate and desertification. On the other hand, in the South, the rural population continues to grow in absolute terms, with an increasing pressure on the limited natural resources, first of all, the arable land. As a result, rural populations are often very poor and the implementation of rural development policy is particularly difficult.

Given these conditions, it is paradoxical that strong points of convergence could emerge in public policy concerning rural areas. However, this has been the case for several years with the emergence of a territorial approach to development paradigms. The introduction of territories has led to similar conceptual developments in the North and in the South. The aim of the present article is mainly to describe

Abstract

Despite the radical differences – related to different demographic, economic and social dynamics – between the north and the south of the Mediterranean region as regards the evolution of rural areas, in recent years a strong convergence has paradoxically appeared concerning the need for a territorial approach to rural development policies in the whole region. There is extensive literature, reviewed briefly in this article, on the scientific grounds legitimising this territorial approach. Recent experiences, both in the North and in the South, show that local community organisations have a key role to play in the effective promotion of rural development for the benefit of the poorest and weakest. However, many obstacles need to be overcome for that role to be effective, both in the North and in the South. Possible failures would greatly jeopardise the current and desirable future efforts that should be undertaken to face the difficult conditions of the poorest populations in the Southern and Eastern countries of the region.

Keywords: rural development, territorial policy, Mediterranean countries.

Résumé

Malgré de profondes différences entre le nord et le sud de la région méditerranéenne quant à l'évolution des zones rurales- différences liées d'abord à des dynamiques démographiques, économiques et sociales contrastées, il est paradoxal qu'une forte convergence se soit dégagée au cours des années récentes sur la nécessité d'une approche territoriale des politiques de développement rural dans toute la région. Un ensemble important de travaux scientifiques, brièvement évoqués dans cet article, légitiment cette approche territoriale. Les expériences récentes, au Nord et au Sud, montrent que les organisations communautaires au niveau local ont un rôle clé à jouer dans la promotion d'un développement rural au bénéfice des plus pauvres et des plus faibles. Mais de nombreux obstacles doivent être surmontés, tant au Nord qu'au Sud, pour que ce rôle potentiel puisse être effectif. Ne pas le faire mettrait en péril les efforts actuels ou à venir pour améliorer la situation des plus pauvres dans les pays du Sud et de l'Est de la région.

Mots clés: développement rural, politique territoriale, Pays Méditerranéens.

this paradox and to try and explain it. Firstly, we shall discuss the emergence of a territorial approach to development paradigms before questioning the scientific grounds upon which these are based; then we shall suggest that probably a single territorial development model can be proposed.

This will then allow us to examine and compare territorial dynamics operating in the North and the South. And finally, as regards the future prospects for rural territories, we shall underline the most serious concerns, especially about the poorest populations in the southern and eastern areas of the region.

1. The emergence of a territorial approach to development

1.1 The origins of the notion of territory

The notion of territory was elaborated at the end of the 1980s, when development policies for southern areas were failing and economic policies, often inspired by Keynes and promoting productivism, were running out of steam in the North. Numerous economic and social factors, linked to the limits of State agricultural policies, lead us to question the place held and the role played by territories in this development process.

Indeed, the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries (SEMC) often proved to be, «unable to generalise the

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² Teacher – research scientist, CIHEAM-IAM-Montpellier. UMR MOISA

³ Emeritus Professor, CIHEAM-IAM Montpellier

productivist, intensive model» put in place in Europe⁴, given their limited natural resources (water and land) and techniques, on the one hand, and the fact that farming is largely dominated by small and medium farms on the other. The modern model inspired by the European experience could not be developed in the SEMCs, except for the most fertile lands and the areas which were irrigated, which exported, which applied the most advanced techniques, and which benefited from public and private investment, both domestic and foreign.

Therefore, the productivist system brought about, territorial inequalities in terms of population distribution (abandonment of farming) and wealth (specialisation and concentration of agricultural production, companies and services). Furthermore, new demands were generated linked to health risks and the protection of the environment. In the SEMCs it was impossible to solve the problem of employing a big share of the active population that was under-employed, especially in the zones more or less at the limits of dry farming, where the development of large-scale irrigation would be, at best, complicated.

The second factor was driven by globalisation and the new productive and technical paradigm (ICTs) which accompanied it. If the 20th century was marked by «the end of local regions» (Weber, E; 2005) and the wiping out of local identities, the new millennium seems to have inaugurated a return to what is local, to rustic cultures, tradition and know-how. The paradox was that economic and trade globalisation would not bring about the disappearance, but rather the re-birth and/or reconstruction of local and regional identities. It would reactivate an inverse movement which would propel the actors in rural and farming life to reinforce their attachment to what is local, to their region and to a *reinvented tradition* (Hobsbawn; 1983). Modern life as well as regional structures (Europe, for example) led to the so-called «*spatial over-abundance*», caused by new ways of accelerating the flow of people and goods. Today, they have generated «*the proliferation of particularities of all types, in keeping with the speed of relocation*» (Augé, 1992). The world-wide crisis of the 1960s and 1970s called into question economic organisational systems where the firm was at the centre of the activity, the World Economy having moved its limits by incorporating new zones which were, formerly, outside its influence. Firms, especially the biggest ones, had to develop

global strategies. In addition, networks of actors were formed, based on local relationships and common frames of reference favourable to cooperation and to novel forms of knowledge and know-how. Territories were transformed into «*meta-organisers*», places where collective action could take form, intermediate spaces where strategies developed by local actors could be put into force, centres where activities and economic exchange could take place. External factors were locked onto and there was a subsequent liberation of new productive forces. These new dimensions involved institutional changes leading the State to open out and transfer its powers to communities. This decentralisation entailed a new relationship between the political and administrative powers and the citizens, between the public sector and the private sector, between community decisions and individual initiatives (Greffé, 2002).

1.2 Scientific legitimacy of the territorial approach

The broad economic facts illustrated earlier represent the basis of the scientific legitimacy of a territorial approach. Hence, numerous disciplines within the branch of social sciences (economics, sociology, geography ...) would take into account local specificities and pave the way to a development process based on the territory.

Theories elaborated so far underline questions linked to the shortcomings of the market, asymmetric information, as well as inter- and intra-regional inequalities in the allocation of resources engendered by Fordism. If in classical and neo-classical economics, space was considered to be a neutral matrix generating simple economic costs and the construction of resources by local actors, Marshall district theory and the «third Italy» experience (interest in cluster territorial organisation) now serve as common references.

Economists brought to light the influence played by space on the rules of the game through the assimilation of social, moral and ethical values (Hirschman, 1984 and Sen, 2003) as well as by culture and the system of beliefs whose impact on economic changes is underlined by the neo-institutional movement (North, 1990). The concentration of skills and specialist knowledge in the local fabric will be identified as an economic factor of competitiveness (Porter, 1993). Interaction between the actors from the same territory, who contribute to the reduction of transaction costs, is thought to exert a decisive influence on innovation (Aydalot, 1974). Last but not least, a positive relationship is established on exchanges which results from the geographic proximity of the actors. (Krugman, 1995).

1.3 The new rural paradigm: towards the definition of a Mediterranean territorial model

It is paradoxical that the notion of territory should be enlisted in agricultural and rural policy at a time when the rise of networks, ICTs and the globalisation of trade tend to erase borders⁵.

In the north of the Mediterranean region, the specificity of the «European agricultural model» put forward by the

⁴ In Morocco, in 1996-97, a census indicated that there were nearly 1.5 million farms, with an average of 5.8 hectares each. Two-thirds of the private farms, that is to say family-run, had less than 5 hectares. In Tunisia a census of 1996 showed that 53% of the farms had less than 5 hectares and represented 9% of the surface area. In Algeria, 70% of all the farms counted in 2000 had less than 5 hectares. The census carried out in Egypt in 1997 showed that small farms of less than 3 *feddans* dominated the agrarian countryside (42% of the farms and 26.3% of the land). Nearly all are independent, family-run farms (99% of the farms and 91% of the surface area). In Turkey, the last agricultural census showed that 85% of the farms had less than 10 hectares.

⁵ «Territory», indeed, suggests the fencing in of space, the erection of borders, the creation of closed social networks through a feeling of belonging to a shared culture.

European Commission in a world-wide free-trade context has placed the theme of the new functions of rural areas and territories in the foreground. The formalisation of the second pillar of the CAP – rural development – has resulted in major changes observed in rural areas. The nature of rural areas in the North of the Mediterranean region has been characterised by demographic changes, a reduction in the role played by farming and by farmers as well as by the new functions carried out by rural areas (production, residential and leisure)⁶. If we take France, for instance, we note that after a very long period of demographic decline, the level of migration into isolated rural areas has become positive again (+0,29%) over the last decade and the countryside has become more populated. Between 1970 and 2000, the number of working adults employed in farming was reduced by a half (whilst in the same period productivity had multiplied by four) and the potential for non-agricultural employment rose thanks to the tertiary sector. A surge in industrial employment was recorded also in rural areas which, on average, is twice as high as agricultural employment (agricultural employment represents on average 9.43%) plus employment in *IAA*, the farming and food industries. Employment linked to home-help services represents 50% of all jobs. In other terms, these trends generate the economic diversification currently recorded in rural territories.

The new nature of rural life is also characterised by the rise in environmental concern which mainly reflects a new relationship between the global society and Nature. Farming is now viewed through a multifunctional prism and in relation with the concern for sustainability of the development process. Thus, rural development policies define the territory as a means of rebuilding the relationship between the town and the country, on the one hand, and on the other, as a place

where resources can be enhanced by a certain number of actors working together to solve common problems (Gumuchian and Pecqueur, 2007). The centralised State allocates powers and resources to the interested parties (stakeholders) who represent the civil society, from both the private and association sectors, closely tied to local elected officials and to local authorities. Furthermore, agricultural production has been re-oriented towards quality (Callois, 2006); in this context, identifiable signs of quality and origin make up the essential tools of public policy which favour territories and the environment. The territory has finally managed to establish a strong link between its socio-cultural heritage and the economic sphere⁷.

In the Southern Mediterranean countries the rhythm of the historic evolution described earlier, the transition patterns and the process of transformation of rural areas are different. Indeed, we have observed a rural exodus which, for the first time in the history of those societies, except Egypt, has modified the spread of the population towards the urban centres over several decades (1970/1980). In 1960, rural inhabitants represented the majority of Morocco's population (71%). According to the last general census (2004), the rural population represented only 45% of the total population in 2004, whereas the total number of rural inhabitants had not decreased⁸. Unlike Europe, rural areas in North Africa have retained great demographic vitality and the rural and urban borders have been preserved. The disparity between human and economic development has remained significant and has sometimes even become greater in this part of the Mediterranean⁹.

In economic terms, the share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) represented by agriculture is on average seven times higher in North African countries than in the European Union. The share of the working population employed in agriculture, which is below 5% in most EU countries, represents 1/5 of the work force in North African countries: 23.85% in Algeria, 23.9% in Tunisia and 35.0% in Morocco¹⁰. Large social disparities also separate rural and urban life. Basic infrastructure is insufficient in the countryside and the levels of food consumption are clearly lower¹¹. Poverty affects a greater percentage of the population. In Morocco, more than 2/3 of the poor continue to live in rural areas on farming as the main source of revenue. Illiteracy is a major obstacle to rural development and rural women, who play an important role in the economic activity, are still the category most affected by underdevelopment and social inequalities¹². This short description of the current state of affairs explains the emergence of rural development policies in Southern Mediterranean countries. The goals of these policies are the following: i) improvement of living conditions through the development of basic infrastructure, ii) linking farming activities and non-farming activities; diversification of activities to develop rural employment, iii) protection of natural resources which are seriously threatened, and iv) reinforcement of the role of rural organisations in the preparation and implementation of development projects.

⁶ In France, if in 1962 farming represented more than a half the Value Added in Agriculture (VAA), in 1990, it represented only 17% and farmers who then made up more than a half of the rural population, represent less than 10% today. They have become a minority. French agriculture now involves only 3% of the work force.

⁷ Visits to the country by urban populations for several days or several weeks are a factor which contributes to rural dynamics today. Rural zones have become more attractive and offer more environmental amenities which over the last ten years have allowed rural tourism to become an important source of rural economic diversification, well assimilated in the existing agricultural activities. In 2004, tourism expenditure in rural areas was estimated at 20 billion euros.

⁸ The rural population has shifted from 8 236,857 in 1969 to 13,428,074 in 2004

⁹ Rural zones in North African countries have experienced demographic dynamism and constant population growth. The natural growth rate is falling but is still positive. During the period 1965-2002, it reached 1.5 in Algeria, 0.97% in Morocco and 0.39% in Tunisia.

¹⁰ According to a report on human development (the United Nations Program for Development, UNDP, 2007), employment in the agricultural sector in Morocco represented, on average, 44% between 1996 and 2005.

¹¹ Today, 40% of the rural population in Morocco has not access to drinking water. Furthermore, farming's heavy dependency on climatic risks heightens the vulnerability of rural populations during periods of drought, particularly in arid and semi-arid areas of the country.

¹² In Morocco, the illiteracy rate is higher in rural areas and it is nearly 67% as opposed to 33% in urban areas. For women over the age of 60, this rate reaches 95.43%.

To achieve these fundamental goals, the strategies have been based on a territorial approach involving new actors (communities, associations, public and private companies, co-operatives and professional organisations) in the management and /or implementation of these new policies. The rural development strategy (Horizon 2020) in Morocco, the implementation of integrated rural development, a new generation of rural development programme, in Tunisia (IRDP) and the policy of rural renewal (RRP) in Algeria reflect this new orientation.

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2. Territorial dynamics promoted by public authorities and donors

Based on what illustrated before, several public actions have been taken aimed at promoting the renewal of territorial dynamics in the North as well as in the South. These public actions will be reviewed in the present section, before focussing on the role played by citizens-based organisations in governing rural territories and their future.

2.2. Strategies in Northern Mediterranean Countries

Actions carried out in the north of the Mediterranean region reflect the growing role played by territories in economic projects supported by public policies. Apart from actions relating to policies for territorial development, regional policies e.g. the E.U. social cohesion and the reform of structural funds (1988) have allowed funding LEADER programmes in France, Italy, Spain and Greece. The institutional and organisational setting has therefore been deeply modified.

In France, a large number of actions ranging from the national mountain policy to the «area contracts» drawn up more than 30 years ago, the implementation of agro-environmental measures, the establishment of natural parks, the LEADER projects, the agricultural orientation law (a territorial contract) and the Chevènement and Voynet laws (1999) which defined the «area» projects, contributed to territorial construction. Territorial actions mushroomed from 1990 to 2000, thus confirming an «*over-territorialisation*» which, however, tends today to boil down to the creation of regions. These regions, which include populated «*inhabited territories*», are today at the heart of the strategies developed to construct new rural territories. An attempt to create an entity is made by joining together pieces of the relatively complex territorial puzzle (LEADER territories, poles of activity and employment, inter-community organisations and groups of communities). The *Council for 'Regional' Development* brings together all the actors in local development, now linked by a *Charter soldering their cooperation based on socio-economic, cultural and environmental actions*. These «areas» supplement the already existing inter-community structures (regional natural parks, poles of employment, inter-community groups). These

«areas», whether in the process of emerging or already established, are the seat of local power which generates a new territorial map, often straddling former administrative divisions (administrative departments, regions, groups of communities). Finally, the «areas» get involved in this reorganisation on a larger scale between urban and rural spaces, driven by the same need for promoting a debate and supporting social mobilization.

In Italy there are 18 million rural inhabitants out of a total population of 58m (i.e. 31%). The political history and the history of state organisation, giving great autonomy to the regions, have significantly contributed to the territorial construction. Besides the LEADER projects (132 GAL) which are widely developed, the «*contratti d'area*» have led to a proliferation of territorial employment agreements. If Central and Northern Italy are still marked by a rural/urban continuum (based on quality-labelled local products, agri-food companies, and small and medium sized industrial businesses), in the South where the organisational and economic fabric is less dense, less robust territorial dynamics are visible.

In Spain, 17 autonomous regions and 50 provinces make up the administrative organisational base of the country. The LEADER approach has been applied to regional rural development programmes and PRODER programmes have been put in place in rural zones outside the LEADER. «*Comarcas*», units which represent neither political nor administrative interests, have been formed between community and provincial levels. They are privileged territorial bases for rural development projects where dialogue is supported and co-ordinated actions by local actors are undertaken.

Greece also uses the LEADER instrument and a decentralisation reform was accomplished in 1997 with the creation of *dèmes* (one thousand), *nomes* (54) and regions (13) to ensure the dynamics of the creation of viable and competitive territories. At present development agencies are the instruments commonly used to promote territorial projects.

Everywhere in Mediterranean Europe, the process for qualifying agricultural products has played a role in rural territory construction. The same holds true for local development of tourism and heritage protection (natural, cultural, architectural, historic). The qualification process has been one of the major levers in territorial development and/or a means of resistance to the economic decline of numerous rural Mediterranean zones. This process has been reinforced by programmes aimed at maintaining mountain zones and other less favoured areas which suffer from several handicaps and could be abandoned due to the lack of competitive agricultural production. By developing synergies throughout a territory between products and services to meet the consumer needs, several rural regions on the North shore of the Mediterranean, which are faced with difficult conditions, have developed a territorial quality thereby ensuring the recognition of their resources. By linking the quality of specific local products to the quality of the ecological environment and of the landscape, therefore selling their territory in the form of food and culture,

these areas have progressively discovered the value of the synergy between these two aspects of quality (Béranger, 1999; Callois, 2006).

2.2 Strategies in Southern Mediterranean Countries

In Southern Mediterranean countries, territorial dynamics result more from investment projects and/or development initiated by foreign aid institutions or by the State. Nowadays, rural development strategies tend to take up the great challenges of fighting poverty and under-employment, social and territorial inequalities and the deterioration of rare resources which have become more and more fragile due to demographic pressure and inappropriate production systems. Global initiatives, introduced in the framework of regional organisational plans, aim first of all to construct «*political and administrative territories*» in the poorest regions. The major role exerted by agriculture and by farming households have allowed for the emergence of *agro-territorial models* («*water territories*» in irrigated schemes, «*pastoral territories*», «*mountain territories*» and «*ocean territories*»). The territory as an entity «*made up of actors*», implying a means of coordination and cooperation between economic and social partners, mobilising non-agricultural resources and diversifying economic activities, is still a notion which is far from real conditions.

After a trial and error period, Tunisia opted for an integrated rural development programme (IRDP) during the 1990s. The integrated rural development programme is essentially based on carrying out projects having a social (improvement of living conditions) and agricultural component, most often designed to promote farming, preserve natural resources and create employment in a regional environment¹³. Two generations of IRDP succeeded each other¹⁴. The regions which have benefited the most from IRDP are the North-West and the Centre-West where the deterioration of natural resources and the poverty of the rural populations were the greatest. The projects benefiting non-agricultural production activities were of minor importance and they were affected only small budgets (6.8 million *di-*

nars out of 200 million DT, i.e. scarcely 3.4%). The theoretical principles for management and administration rely on decentralisation in order to cover all the regions. The GCRD¹⁵ and RCAD¹⁶ cells are responsible for mobilising the beneficiary organisations (ACI¹⁷, CAWL¹⁸ and FACI¹⁹, regional, rural and village councils...), and for linking them to the relevant projects.

The different IRDP generations, coordinated at central level by the Ministry for Development and International Cooperation through the General Commission for Regional Development (GCRD), were characterised by the introduction, under the pressure from both international organisations and donors, of a participatory approach. If the participatory approach was interpreted as being a means and/or method of financial contribution from farmers involved in different activities within the project, one can cite, conversely, the experiment by the Office for Forester-pastoral Development of the North-West (OSPDNW) supported by GTZ Germany and the World Bank which truly aimed to link the population to the construction of development projects defined by them.

In Algeria, a strategy has been gradually worked out and rural development was firstly viewed as an enlargement of the national agricultural development plan (NADP). The Rural Renewal Policy (RRP) adopted in July 2006 was clearly defined as a territorial policy. The RRP aims to bring together local, rural development projects (LRDP) and local development actions (bring electricity to rural areas, opening up and modernising the road network, supplying drinking water, health, education ...) which often fall entirely within the public budget and are the result of programming actions at administrative territory level (communes, *daira*, *wilaya*...) ²⁰. It targets rural households, particularly people living in enclaves or isolated zones. It is built on large-scale programmes (the improvement of rural living conditions, diversification of economic activities, the protection and the promotion of natural resources and rural heritage, both physical and abstract). These three programmes, which are in their infancy, must be carried out in a participatory framework and must be formalized using the «local project for integrated rural development» (LPIRD) tool. The first pieces of information available show that the development projects offered today resemble the community development plans adopted previously, which is an indicator of the dominant role still played by local administrations.

In Morocco, as a priority, a number of programmes at national level are aimed at raising farmers' income, preserving and promoting natural resources in rural regions, improving rural living conditions and reducing the disparity between regions. The rural development strategy adopts integrated, territorial approaches and encourages the development of public-private partnerships. Emphasis is laid on the multiple actors and the new roles they will play in rural development. Besides projects on a national scale (undertaken, in particular, in the framework of the recent National human development initiative) numerous regional projects have been implement-

¹³ Farming households represent 2/3 of the rural population and agriculture remains the main source of employment.

¹⁴ All the data have been taken from results of the IXth Plan and from the official document of the Xth Plan (2002-2006)

¹⁵ GCRD: General Commission for Regional Development.

¹⁶ RCAD: Regional Commission for Agricultural Development.

¹⁷ ACI: Association for Collective Interest.

¹⁸ CAWL : Collective Association for Water and Land.

¹⁹ FACI : Forest Association for Collective Interest.

²⁰ Besides what is accomplished in terms of agriculture as a result of personal commitment, 2000 local promotion projects at the level of the 48 country's *wilayas*, the validation of 480 projects by *wilaya* technical committees, of which 80 projects were approved by the *walis* among which 35 projects benefited from partial financing from rural development funds and from land development by concession (FDRMVCT), have been identified and recorded. In terms of impact on the population, projects were identified at the end of 2002, involving 130,000 households, that is to say some 7000,000 people, spread over the whole national territory. *Daira* is the equivalent of an administrative district and *wilaya* of a department.

ed: MEDA programmes, including European financing of rural projects in the framework of Association Agreements, natural resources conservation and protection programmes, participatory development, promotion of «*bour*»²¹ zones, agro-pastoral, forester-pastoral, water and agricultural development, and rural development projects in mountain areas. Support is given to territorial networks for human development (ART-Morocco) favouring the mobilization of actors to carry out territorial diagnosis, by the organisation of workshops for participatory project administration etc...

3. What are the prospects for the future role of community organisations in rural territory governance?

Given the above sustainable rural and agricultural strategies, of utmost importance are the principle of local governance, through strong rural organisations, representatives of the farming sector and rural population, and the effective involvement in rural development projects. To what extent is this hypothesis realistic and what can be said about the future of these organisations in the community?

The organisational dynamism observed with regard to these activities has been the source of regional aspirations and territorial actions promoted by the population and local groups. The development of the association movement and the creation of co-operatives and rural development groups have contributed to the emergence of rural civil society and to encouraging the involvement of population in these rural zones in the process of learning how to manage projects. Styles of local governance which have included and involved a new elite (women and young people living in the country) have also relied on and/or revived traditional forms of rural society organisation (village meetings, family networks, emigrants, professional networks ...).

In Northern Mediterranean countries, local actors and deciders have benefited from the decentralisation processes and the transfer of power to local communities and the application of the principles of subsidiarity and partnerships which have favoured social training. Indeed, the process of territorial construction has been based on the following actions:

- i) bringing together local actors and co-operation between regions and territories (with the development of complementary activities and transfer of knowledge);
- ii) the development of projects in fragile territories
- iii) the development of activities and their diversification (new equipment, tourism, local heritage and services provided to individuals);
- iv) the organisational innovation and the development of project culture.

In southern countries, the emergence and/or rapid expansion of a network with many organisational branches created by or reinforced by these new rural development policies have

strengthened the opportunities for autonomous action by the social actors in local life.

In most cases, however, all forms of agricultural and rural organisations had to face, on the one hand, the conflict with the State rising from an incomplete process of decentralisation, and on the other hand, problems concerning the availability of resources (financial, material or human) which have limited their ability to promote the development of their territory.

Numerous *rural organisations still depend* on the administration or territorial communities. Often created upon the initiative of an international donor, they are merely services facilities set up to administer or exploit a project instead of the State or its decentralised institutions. We should, however, point out the existence of «*institutionalised rural organisations*» bringing together associations or NGOs (local and national), benefiting from external financing, from extensive expertise in managing development projects and enjoying recognition as a full partner by other actors. If some of them are still under public power control, others have tried to open up, through the way they operate and through their activities, to targeted populations or groups (women in the countryside, young unemployed people ...). The «*autonomous rural organisations*» described in our studies (Bessaoud, 2004) are based on confidence and geographic or social proximity (Village *djemâa* or *douars*)²². Since they enjoy little recognition, they are not involved in public intervention or development projects unless in a marginal and occasional manner. But, these organisations, which «*arise independently of institutional impetus*», are the expression of what civil society wants and they reflect a desire to take on the development of their territory. They represent, without a doubt, a major source of hope for the future of rural development which is much more participatory nowadays than in the past.

In order to appreciate the difficulties encountered in social mobilization capable of promoting rural territory development in North Africa, one needs only to recall that the decentralisation process is not accomplished in these countries yet, and indeed it remains far from the principles governing true local government. On the administrative organisational level, district councils in Morocco are led by the president of the district council elected by the population but also by the *Caïd*, who is the executive agent designated to that circumscription by the State. The trusteeship applied by the State limits district council management autonomy and, in fact, the responsibility for the management of local affairs is put into the hands of State representatives. In Tunisia, there is no local government, but the «*rural councils*» to which the representatives are assigned by the State, serve as a liaison.

4. Future challenges in the construction of rural Mediterranean territories

The questions and challenges vary according to the country.

4.1 Research in the South for an identity and for a style of rural territory governance

The obstacles faced by territorial construction in the south of the Mediterranean region result from:

²¹ In rain-fed agriculture.

²² A «*djemâa*» – or assembly – is a customary institution which brings together all the village representatives.

the delays recorded in territorial development and inequalities in human development; ii) the recognition required by traditional rural community territories (inhabited territories) which compete with administrative territories and; iii) the fragmentation which characterises territorial actions and approaches to rural development.

The existing material conditions and the basic infrastructure in several rural regions do not represent a critical mass able to give visibility to the territory. Illiteracy and poverty check awareness and social mobilization necessary for territorial construction and numerous rural regions are still isolated and marginalized.

A territory needs borders so that it can be organised by social mediation. It is within its borders that a community recognises its territory and identifies itself as a community. The procedures and actions implemented in North Africa often omit rural community territories and customary organisations which could, however, provide the framework for real social mobilization, are often maintained informally (in the legal sense of the term). North African national state training procedures (outlining territorial administrative limits) and the modernisation of society (the invention of communal assemblies, provinces, governor-run administrations, co-operative organisations and rural associations (based on the model of the French Law of 1901) have tried to erase the traditional forms of organisation of a rural society (tribes, «*arch*»²³ and «*djamâa*» *douars*²⁴ assemblies, *mechtas*²⁵ and village identity. The failure of territorial constructions, which have been implemented, have often been ascribed to this «strategy» by the modern State. We should, however, point out that these rural communities have been taken into account to a limited extent in some projects relating to rural regions in North Africa. In this respect, mention should be made of the *Douar* Development Plan (DDP) implemented in the framework of a MEDA project in Northern Morocco and the ethno-lineage co-operatives created in Morocco on pastoral territories in the East. We can also mention the creation of the Territorial Social Units (TSU) in the pastoral areas of Southern Tunisia, which identify with the rural communities linked by quasi-tribal relationships, as well as the example of the *Douar* Development Plans (DDP) worked out in the rural zones of the North-eastern Tunisia by ODESYPANO. These D-

DPs included the female component of the population to analyse the status of the *douar* and plan its development.

Basically, emphasis is laid on the issue of the relationship between the State and the Community and consequently, on the question of how important rural territorial governance is. The difficulties of territorial construction lead to the fragmentation of rural development actions since many institutions take part in these operations (NGOs, international organisations, the State). A segmentation of the implemented actions can be pointed out since each organisation gives its own contribution by its philosophy and approach²⁶. These operations raise the question of the project sustainability once the financial aid comes to an end.

4.2 The borders or multiple territorial configurations in France

France can be cited as an example which shows that the question of relationships between public actions and territorial dynamics, based on real social mobilization of local populations, is not limited to southern countries. In France, the multiplication of territorial projects and of regional strategies in terms of rural development sometimes makes their co-ordination difficult. If we observe a convergence between LAGs (territories where projects are carried out) which, in the framework of the 2007 – 2013 programme, are encouraged to work in cooperation with territorial units (parks, areas, poles of employment), certain areas face some difficulties due to political tensions or conflicts of interest which overtake participatory action²⁷. The question of funding projects and of competition over the control of resources is crucial. It raises the subsidiary question of the regulatory constraints which govern the relationships between territorial communities and the State, as illustrated in the Lambert December 2007, for example.

Agriculture will still exert a great influence on the construction of rural territories for a long time in the future. Family farming facilities in Italy and in Greece, for instance, which are removed from the systems based on a merely productivist logic, are its trump card to promote quality products having a deep-rooted identity in the area. Yet, France foresees (DATAR 2020 and INRA's «agriculture 2030») a scenario of urban domination which is not very favourable to the re-composition of the city/countryside relationship or to territorial development. The projections made by the Ministry of Agriculture for 2013 show an evolution towards professional farms where agricultural activity and specialisation are dominant²⁸ on the one hand and, on the other, the entrance into a post-family agricultural production organisation era. Regarding professional farming, it is through a firm-like set-up with growing reliance on salaried staff (which will represent 25% of farm employees) that growth will occur. This evolution is in contradiction with territorial development characterised generally by self-regulation of work with a re-focus on trade. The territory bases its development on quality, origin-labelled products which become the source of a new form of farming, establishing a relationship with nature, thereby creating a special agricultural and food industry activity through origin-labelled products. Can the territory re-

²³ The «*arch*» is a community, linked by parental ties, which stems from the traditional tribe in North Africa.

²⁴ See above note 22

²⁵ A «*mechta*» is a traditional dwelling, gathering together a part of the community belonging to the «*arch*».

²⁶ Morocco seems to be the perfect illustration of this segmentation of actions. Among others we can cite the World Bank DRI projects. The Natural Resources Management Projects (NRMP), the Rural Electrification Programme (REF) and other actions resulting from the "National initiative for Human Development" (NIHD), the Programmes for Development of *Bour* Zones (PMVZB), IFAD and UNDP actions and MEDA programmes.

²⁷ In the Mid-Pyrenees region, in Aveyron, in particular, where some areas refuse, for political reasons, to accept that areas in a project go beyond the limits of the administrative department. Instead, the partnership of future areas is formed through competition.

²⁸ There are three types of farms in France: professional farms with a dominant agricultural activity accounting for 52% of the total (284,817 farms), 75% of the SAU and 74 of the standard gross margin, residential farms (respectively 34%, 9.8% and 8.7%) made up of retirees who continue a farming activity (188,411 farms) and multi-activity professional farms (13.2%, 16% and 17%).

turn to being rural without people to develop it? Can quality production rely on 150,000 micro farms and on an aging agricultural population (17.3% of those in charge of farms will be over 60 in 2013)? Moreover, how can such an evolution fulfil the objectives of an «ecologically sustainable agriculture» that the national sustainable development strategy (June 2005) and the European sustainable development strategy (2007) are pinning their hopes on?

These questions are legitimate only if one recalls that the visible signs of quality and origin- identity make up the essential tools of public policy which favour territories and the environment. Faced with the risk of the removal of the second pillar of the CAP or of an imbalance between its two pillars, these questions call for a debate on the promotion of a European territorial model.

Conclusion

Despite the significant differences between the north and the south of the Mediterranean region, the future of rural territories and especially, public actions promoting the dynamics of these territories, are influenced by converging concerns about territorial approaches in which community organisations play a crucial role in the North and in the South, even if the social dynamics and living conditions in rural areas are different. These converging concerns must not be underestimated, given that, they are very serious, especially for the poorest populations in the Southern and Eastern countries of the region.

Summary of territorial constructions in the north and south of the Mediterranean region.

North	South
Space functions: productive, residential, leisure, landscape Disappearance of farmers, welcome to residents, choice of mobility	Productive functions. Major role of farming and farmers, rural exodus and natural growth of the population, subsequent mobility. Growth of production targeted.
Dense, diversified and decentralised institutional fabric, partnerships, charter and contractual relationships	Weak social mesh, delay in de-concentration, incomplete decentralisation, weight of non-legally recognised informal organisations and social utilities.
Competitors, clients, markets, area of diffuse industrialization, local investment and public project funding, activity diversification	Narrow market and weak competition, limited tourism (in the case of Morocco). Investment by foreign institutions and emigrants.
Concentration of skills, economy based on know-how and innovation, support to activities and technology in projects, <i>start-up</i> firms which present an economic dimension. Willingness to transform farms into firms.	Limited elite, appreciable adult illiteracy and weak supervision of projects. Marginal community structures competing with modern State institutions.
An economy of services, tourism, small and medium industrial businesses, agro-business. Vertical diversification.	Primary sector and craft industry and weak industrial environment.
Concern for the environment. A better supply of basic services - Cluster for public services (post-office, EDF, SNCF in France in 2006). Improved quality of life. Critical threshold: communication infrastructure (TV), human skills, an industrial base, services for industry, international visibility of the territory.	Deterioration of resources and heavy pressure. National territorial development schemes and regional schemes underway to improve provision. National initiative for Human Development in Morocco. Programmes focused on living conditions. No real territory visibility, large inequalities and polarisation of populations and wealth in prosperous zones.
Collective action, integration into the local fabric.	Territorial approach via local development projects initiated by the State.

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