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Matthieu Brun

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Methodological Challenges for Policy Elites Analysis

**When development projects create new forms of transversal
leadership for policy making :**
*methodological and theoretical insights from a quali/quantitative approach in
Morocco*

Author(s)

Matthieu Brun

*SciencesPo Bordeaux – Les Afriques dans le monde, France,
matthieubrun2@gmail.com*

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Abstract

Based on a case study in Morocco, this communication intends to discuss the rise of new types of transversal leadership are using their “memory” of development projects to weigh on policy-making processes. This paper will revisit the methodology used to identify these local development experts and will analyse how they operate and their possible structuring into an elite. The objective is to discuss, from a “southern” perspective the literature on elite and examine the sociology of public action in light of the emergence and dominant position of these experts in the interplay among actors and power configurations at different levels.

Keywords: aid, development, elite, expert, memory, Morocco

Development aid is a recurring phenomenon in African landscapes. In the wake of Moroccan independence in 1956, primary bilateral or multilateral donors as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) intervened in multiple sectors that changed with shifting international relations and major aid paradigms. These interventions, which occur at many levels and in a variety of public sectors, over time create new configurations of actors, institutions, negotiations and power struggles (Eboko, 2015). This paper intends to discuss the transformation and effects of this ‘developmentalist configuration’ (Olivier de Sardan, 1995 ; Allal, 2010) on the spaces that produce public policies at several levels, by examining local development experts. This project is ongoing and is part of a political science PhD analysing the memory of development interventions – in all sectors combined – in two regions: the former region of Souss Massa Drâa in Morocco, and Itasy, Madagascar. This paper in particular, however discusses only the Moroccan case study and the three rural *communes*¹ where we conducted our research (see map).

In studying the superimposition and both the tangible and intangible traces of development interventions, we quickly established that a limited number of actors in the territory had been identified as resources or experts who are “custodians” of local development memory. They form a local elite that holds development history and memory. We chose to analyse these individuals’ expertise from the perspective of their memory of development interventions. First of all, with respect to time and temporality, development approaches focus on the present and the future, and very rarely on the past (Ahearne, 2014). Development here is understood as [translation] “all social processes resulting from voluntarist operations to transform a social environment

¹ A *commune* (Jamâa in Arabic) is the the smallest administrative level in Morocco, it is formed of *douars* (villages) and headed by an elected *Président de commune*. We have chosen in our communication to keep the French term instead of using a translation.

² The reasons for this absence of memory must especially be sought out in terms of the procedures and

undertaken through institutions or actors outside this environment but seeking to mobilise this environment, and based on an attempt to graft resources and/or techniques and/or knowledge” (Olivier de Sardan, 1995, 7). Although some actors in the field of development consider that no such development memory exists², the idea does, however, seem to be quite alive among the beneficiaries of these projects (Olivier de Sardan, 1995, 57). Development memory is to be differentiated from development history insofar as to equate the two is to disregard the first characteristic of memory, that of being “a constructed representation of the past, not the past itself”. Development memory, therefore, refers to knowledge of development interventions and of the context and actors that led to their implementation, and at the same time remains a constructed representation of these memories in light of a given context and configuration of actors. As will be discussed later on, a territory’s development memory is a considerable material and symbolic resource that can be mobilised into action, both within and outside the developmentalist configuration.

During our first round of field work in September 2015 in the Moroccan capital of Rabat and in the administrative centre of the region Agadir and several communes of the Souss Massa Drâa region, the name of one person kept coming up in a number of interviews with stakeholders, donors and civil servants – that of Abdellatif Kacem. Abdellatif Kacem is known not only for his work with irrigation canal users in the Drâa Valley, for his role in fighting water-borne diseases and for his ties to the NGO Helen Keller International, but also his position as a historic political opponent who was imprisoned and then later appointed to the National Human Rights Council. There is no room in this introduction to list Abdellatif Kacem’s numerous achievements and contributions, but mention must be made of three elements that helped to refine our research

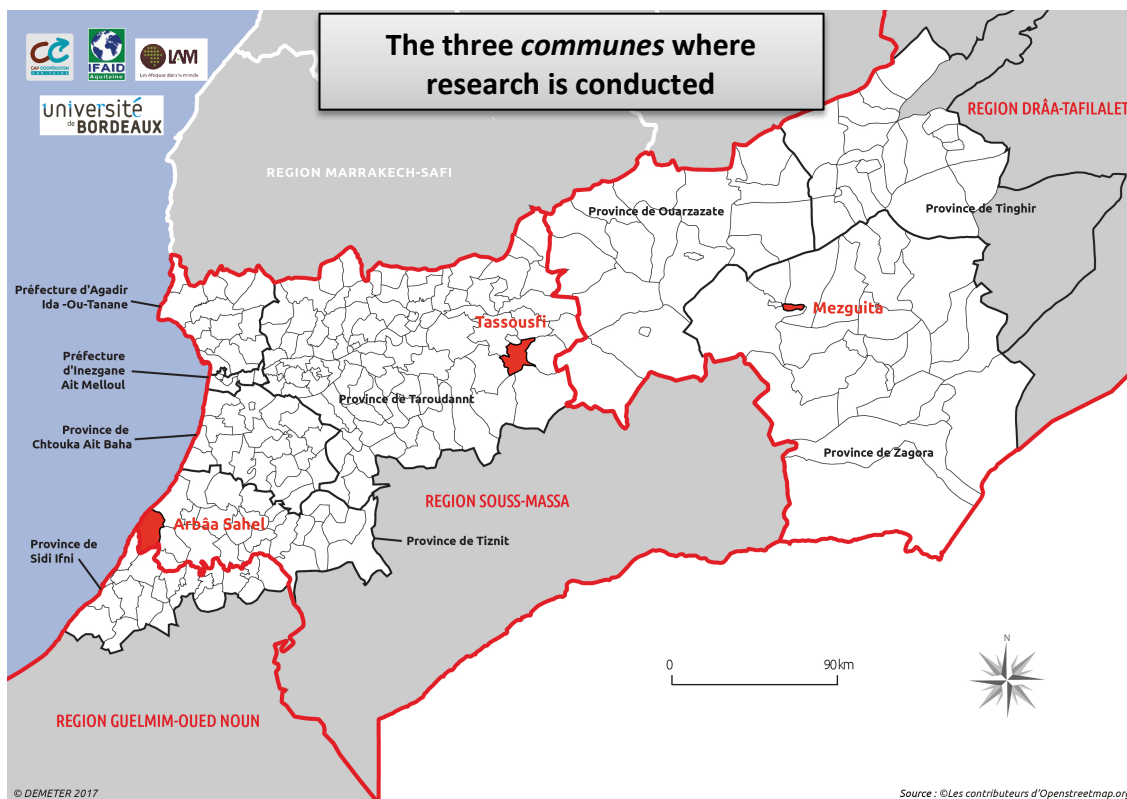
² The reasons for this absence of memory must especially be sought out in terms of the procedures and operation of development aid. See Garnaud and Rochette (2012).

question for this paper: the recognition by my interviewees of A. Kacem as a quasi exclusive figure or sole expert of development interventions in the Drâa Valley; his multiple positions and his movement through the various local, regional and national levels of public policies over the years, and finally his multi-sector identity (agriculture, health, culture, governance, environment, etc.). Without consciously seeking to, our interviewees always referred me to this development expert who was bearer of the territory's memory. The literature on political science and the socio-anthropology of development contains a wealth of profiles of development "mediators" or "brokers" who form networks of national intermediaries located in different territorial arena who drain off external resources and control the development aid discourse (Olivier de Sardan and Bierschenk, 1993; Bierschenk, Chauveau and Sardan, 2000). The perspective that this paper seeks to develop differs from the literature in that it focuses more on the local level, particularly on how to identify these experts and measure the utilisation of their expertise in everyday public action. Furthermore, the actors we are attempting to characterise do not have solely mediator and negotiator roles, like the intermediaries described by Nay and Smith (2002). They hold decision-making positions, as will be discussed in greater detail later on.

The aforementioned example, that of A. Kacem, came to us "from the top", i.e. from donors, large organisations or national and regional civil servants; this paper seeks to adopt an "ascending" methodological perspective, i.e. working from the representations of the beneficiaries of development aid projects. The objective is to see whether, on a micro-scale, the number of experts is also limited, and to describe the group formed by these experts, in particular how they are structured (through schools and universities, traditional legitimacies, social capital, etc.). Based on our study of three communes in the former administrative region of Souss Massa Drâa, we will illustrate the methodology used to identify these local aid experts and see how

these individuals are the custodians of cross-sector expertise mobilised in public policies processes.

This paper will revisit the methodology used to identify these local development experts and will analyse how they operate and their possible structuring into an elite. The objective is to discuss, from a “southern” perspective, the definition of the notion of elite put forward by Genieys and Hassenteufel whereby the concept of elite applies only the appearance of a highly structured group exercising power over public action over time (Genieys and Hassenteufel, 2001). We will also examine the sociology of public action in light of the emergence and dominant position of these experts in the interplay among actors and power configurations at different levels.



1. Development intervention and public policies: a history of aid in Morocco

Morocco is characterized by very wide regional disparities in terms of access to basic services such as education, water and electricity. The former Souss Massa Drâa region, located in the South of the Kingdom, is an area particularly marked by these disparities. Regional differences are related to the contrasting nature of the territory's physical geography and to multiple dysfunctions inherited from the past (Adidi, 2013). French colonization divided the kingdom into a "useful Morocco" (*Maroc utile*) located in a triangle formed by Fez, Casablanca, Marrakech and a "useless Morocco" (*Maroc inutile*) characterized by non-capitalist modes of production. This dichotomy continued after the independence of the country in 1956. The main economic activities, wealth and population were then concentrated on a 130-km-long coastal strip. Economic problems (drop in capital inflows, declining investment, fiscal crisis) and the difficulties of moving from a colonial economy to a national economy led the kingdom to cooperate with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and to sign an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1964. The Kingdom of Morocco supported by international organizations set a direction for its economic development focused on agriculture and tourism. The former Souss Massa Drâa region, where the *communes* of our research are located, is an emblematic example of the deployment of development interventions and their concentration in limited areas. The western part around the Bay of Agadir for touristic purpose and both the Souss and the Massa Valley for export-oriented agriculture attracted a lot of public investments with credits from the World Bank. Due to geopolitical (The Green March and the Western Sahara War in 1975), climate (repeated droughts) and economic (falling

phosphate prices, rising of oil prices, debt crisis) events, the uneven spatial development continued during the 1970s and 1980s. It took the rural areas of the former Souss Massa Drâa region away from access to water, electricity and essential needs or services.

Despite the intentions of both the Moroccan monarchy and international donors to launch integrated rural development projects, the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) from 1983 onwards led to a significant reduction in public investment. The SAP has directly impacted social and economic sectors further marginalizing rural areas. Although the Moroccan administration is far from being absent from these territories, in particular the administration of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence³. Entire social sectors have gradually become largely autonomous, apart from the control of the State, as it is the case in several countries of the African continent (Darbon, 2004). It is with the support of Moroccan migrants, who have gone to Europe or big cities in Morocco for work that development communities started to get organized at the end of the 1980s in order to bring water and electricity to the villages. This is the case for a group of Moroccan migrants who founded the association “*Migration et Développement*” in 1986 (Bourron and Ould Aoudia, 2011) to help their community of origin and undertake the construction of infrastructures in isolated villages (Lacroix, 2005). The association has been very active in the administrative circle (cerlce) of Talouine in the province of Taroudant where is located Tassousfi. Their action will radiate over the whole of southeastern Morocco (Mernissi, 2003). Although the effects of SAPs on the social sectors in Morocco have been mitigated, it should be noted that they contributed to the political

³ In the city of Agdz located in the Drâa Valley a couple of kilometres way from Mezgita, there has long been a secret prison used during the « Years of Lead »

openness of the country in the early 1990s (Rollinde, 2011)⁴. Such political openness has resulted in the expansion and structuring of the Moroccan civil society more and more able to limit the power of the Monarchy (Clément, 1995). Major programs will also be set up in order to catch up with territorial imbalances between urban and rural areas in terms of access to water and electricity but also rural roads and tracks⁵.

The operationalization of development operations (roads, access to electricity and drinking water) will be formally entrusted to associations after being handled for a long time by tribal structures (*Jmâa*). The King Hassan II acknowledged the role of the Moroccan civil society in a speech delivered in 1997 where he invited the Moroccan people to organize themselves in associations in order to trigger development dynamics on the territory. With the accession to the throne of King Mohamed VI in July 1999, the emphasis of development policies and programs will be put on human development. A flagship program, called the National Human Development Initiative (INDH) will be set up in 2005, supported by international donors such as the World Bank. INDH, from 2005 to the present days, has been a major financing window for both local development associations (*ADL, associations de développement local*) and *communes*. From the mid-1990s onwards, numerous international governmental and non-governmental organizations will directly intervene in the Moroccan rural areas, reinforcing the actions put in place by local development associations (ADLs).

⁴ A political openness that culminated with the constitution of the first government of « *alternance* » in Morocco in 1998 headed by the socialist Abderrahmane Youssoufi

⁵ National Rural Roads Program (PNR) in 1995, the Rural Drinking Water Supply Program (PAGER) in 1995 and the 1996 Comprehensive Rural Electrification Program (PERG).

From this rapid landscape of Moroccan aid and public policies since the independence, 4 elements of understanding are key for the continuation of our communication namely the unbalanced territorial development combined with the Moroccan monarchy weak developmentist capacity, the empowerment of social sectors outside the control of the administration and the operationalization of the development actions transferred to associations or grassroots development structures with a very important role of foreign donors and the Moroccan diaspora.

2. Identifying the elite that holds the development memory

During our research we encountered a major methodological and empirical difficulty: our thesis deals with two countries (Morocco and Madagascar) and a historical outlook of several decades, as well as a wide variety of sectors and development interventions. We opted to identify development experts at the local level based on the symbolic aspect of their position as local development experts or elites. We chose to identify them based on their reputation as custodians of memory and expertise. To draw up a reliable list of people based on scientific criteria, we could not rely solely on "cascading" interviews insofar as it would be impossible to weigh the reputational influence of these individuals. Of the methodological innovations in the sociology of elites, we drew inspiration from the "reputational method" developed by Floyd Hunter (1953) to identify local leaders and aid experts. Given the purpose of our research, there is no pre-existing biographical data in our survey areas such as local newspapers or a who's who of development, making it impossible to adopt the positional method (Mills, 1999). As noted above, the project does not focus on a single sector of public policy, as is the case in many studies on expertise or elites. Therefore, we cannot analyse the process that leads to decision-making or even accurately

determine which actors are involved in this process, as R. Dahl did in the study of local government in the city of New Haven (2005).

Like F. Hunter, who sought to illustrate the power of the economic elite's influence on political life by seeking out its leaders, we compiled a parent population, a panel of individuals who could indicate who has the role of expert in development interventions. To ensure the results were not dependent on the structure and makeup of our panel, we administered a questionnaire survey to a statistically representative sample of the population in the three communes surveyed (see below), asking the question: "In your opinion, who in your commune can give us the most information about development interventions?". Respondents were also asked to indicate the function they believed this person had.

Questionnaire survey methodology and protocol in Morocco

Following the interview and exploratory research phase, three communes in Morocco were selected using several criteria (administrative division, economic activities and types of agricultural production, population density, density of development interventions, security and accessibility). Population data for Morocco are recent, and the September 2014 census is the most reliable and complete source of data. In order to obtain standardised information for the entire survey population, the survey was conducted during one week (March 6-12, 2017), thereby limiting the risk and effects of unforeseeable events and making it possible to rebalance enumerators' travel during the week (for example, because of weekly markets). University graduates from the Department of Geography at Agadir University were recruited and trained as enumerators. During the survey week, the 34 students were divided among the three communes and administered the survey to individuals over 18 years of age, who were surveyed in their

homes using a random sampling method. A total of 1,943 questionnaires were used to create the database for Morocco.

From the questionnaire surveys, three or four names stood out in each commune in terms of the number of responses. For this paper we selected several names based on the number of times they were referenced. In the different communes, the number of names selected ranged from one to three names depending on the commune, indicating the degree of monopoly or oligopoly of this category of development expert.

We were thus able to create a list of individuals considered *a priori* to be the people who “know the most” about development interventions.

Experts and custodians of local development memory

Commune of Mezgita:

- Moulay Hassan al Alaoui, cited 47 times as a farmer, former commune president, unemployed, tour guide, member of the association, member of a women’s group, president of the Tamnougalt association, president of the commune, teacher.
- Mohamed Ait Lmaalem, cited 47 times as vice president of the commune, president of the association, president of the commune, teacher, employee, school principal, and community volunteer
- Ahmed Ait Abi, cited 45 times as president of the commune, teacher, president of the association, president of the Kasbah, community volunteer

Commune of Arbaa Sahel:

- Brahim Safini, cited 56 times as president of the commune

Commune of Tassousfi:

- Abhri Mohamed, cited 46 times as sheikh, i.e. local authority auxiliary

Semi-structured individual and group interviews⁶ were then conducted to analyse the extent to which the individuals cited possess development memory and how they use this memory as a resource to exert program-based influence over policy making. The objective of these interviews was to examine three elements: the system of representations created by the residents of the communes where these actors live, trajectories for understanding the accumulation of resources and, finally, the degree of intervention in policy making processes. In operational terms, this meant collecting sociographic data (socioprofessional trajectories, education, social networks, political affiliation, migration, etc.); measuring the interactions among these actors; collecting legitimising discourses and describing the symbolic aspect of this elite; identifying concrete influence on policy making processes and aid configurations, i.e. at what level and through what means are they involved in the construction of problems, and finally, highlighting their role in local configurations of power.

Note, however, that not all of the individuals will be profiled here. For example, one person named in the commune of Tassousfi was El Hajj Id Ali Mohamed, cited 28 times as an entrepreneur, sheikh and member of the association. After verification through interviews, it appears that the aforementioned individual's profile is that of a "generous entrepreneur" and "great man" whose social status is determined not by inheritance but by ostentation, and who enjoys prestige and not positions of institutional or inherited power (Clastres, 2012). An analogy can be made to the anthropological Big Man of Sahlins or Médard, as this is "an elite inrepresentation that deliberately projects an image to the population" (Médard, 1992). El Hajj Id Ali Mohamed, a rich entrepreneur and benefactor in the villages around where he was born and where his family owns land and property, was not cited for his knowledge of development

⁶ These interviews were conducted in the three communes surveyed in Morocco between March and May 2017.

interventions but because he is an important and generous man. He was, however, president of the first local development association for the group of villages. Although he owns a large house in the village, he is very rarely there, as he lives in Casablanca where he runs his business and construction company. Tassousfi is an unusual commune in that there has been a limited number of development interventions and a weaker presence of donors from outside the commune. Although it is not the subject of this paper, it is interesting to note the differences between communes in their representations of development, and especially from those who remember it.

3. Homogenisation and differentiation factors of the local development elite

Before going deeper into the profiles of these elites, we wish to emphasise four both differentiating and homogenising elements of this group of individuals. These are criteria that either unite or differentiate the paths and careers of the individuals we will be discussing. The first of these criteria differentiates those whose status is prescribed, that is to say, assigned by birth and inheritance, from those whose status is acquired through merit or the use of natural dispositions. The second distinguishing criterion is that of the relationship to authority⁷. Although these individuals were identified through the population's representations, they may or may not be recognised by the authorities. In our case, although the degree of recognition by the authorities may have changed over time, none of the persons identified sees his social role as being delegitimised by the authorities. The next criterion is the command of development knowledge, i.e. its codes, language and tools. Finally, as Leferme-Falguières and Van

⁷ The term "authorities" is used here deliberately in that it is both an operational category for speaking about the Moroccan authorities, the *Makhzen*, and a term used by our respondents. The term *MMakhzen* is used by the average Moroccan to designate the State and its agents. The *Makhzen* is an overlaying authority imposing allegiance on communities.

Renterghem have argued, the social changes resulting in a shift from a closed society to an open one bring to light two basic distinguishing criteria: “fortune and culture” (2001). These four differentiation/homogenisation criteria, as well as a population’s representation of its elites—including development elite – reflect the state of Moroccan society today and the ongoing changes between a so-called “unequal and closed” society based on birth to an “open” society based on merit and success.

Using the results, we were able to establish a definition of three development expert profiles.

The first profile is that of the rural figure, a *notable*, with a prescribed status (El Maoula El Iraki, 2003), supported by the population and the authorities and whose status rests on his genealogy and land holdings. In our case study, this is Moulay Hassan el Alaoui. He was born in 1948 in the Kasbah of Tamnougalt, today the commune of Mezgita. His family is described as a “big family” in the region that is socially conservative and noble. His father was a member of the resistance, and after fighting alongside King Mohamed V, was appointed delegate of the *Chorfa*⁸ of Mezgita. This status was conferred on a man who, through a lineage of glorious ancestors, can aim for a dominant position. After serving four years in the army (1967 - 1971), Moulay Hassan el Alaoui returned to help his father with the tasks of local representation and conflict resolution, but also in maintaining the family’s land. He got into politics in 1976 during the first elections held in his commune, and was elected first vice president of the commune of Agdz, which until 1992 included the commune today known as Mezgita. Moulay Hassan el Alaoui made several attempts to win the Independents Party’s nomination for the National Assembly, in legislative elections, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Elected president of the commune of Mezgita following the new administrative divisions in 1992, he remained in that position until the 2015

⁸ The root of the word "Charif" (plur. Chorfa) expresses the idea of rising up, getting ahead.

elections⁹. He describes himself as illiterate and uneducated compared to the commune's teachers. In development matters, he was the president of a local development association (ADL) that was founded, according to our interviewees, to compete with the other association in his native village. In terms of programs of action and cognitive representation of development, Moulay Hassan belongs to what we call the first generation of development, that is to say, a generation for which the answer to development-related problems is infrastructure (fences around schools, concrete irrigation canals, a health centre, etc.).

The second profile is that of agent of authority with a civil society involvement. This is Mohamed Abhri, a sheikh, i.e., an auxiliary to authority¹⁰. These individuals, although they are not civil servants, receive a service allowance. In rural areas, the shiouxh (plural of sheikh) are usually farmers or ranchers and are chosen by the Caïd (the upper level of commune groups which liaises between the Moroccan political-administrative system and its outskirts). Mohamed Abhri was born in 1948 in the village of Timqit. He is a farmer who went to school for 5 years, until the age of 12. His work selling agricultural products took him to Casabalanca and Tangiers. He then worked as a cook in the village group's school. A local agent of authority since 2001, first as village chief (Moqaddem) appointed by the Caïd (leader), after seven years of service he was chosen by the people and the council of elders to be sheikh. While holding positions of representation of authority, he became involved in the association sector¹¹, first in the school's parents association and then in 2004 as vice president of the ADL of Aoudoust, the group of

⁹ He was unable to run following a new legislative provision prohibiting individuals in charge of traditional land management from running in elections. He pushed his son to run who is now in the opposition party in the commune.

¹⁰ On Makzen today see (Claisse, 2013)

¹¹ There is nothing that *a priori* seems to prohibit an agent of authority from holding decision-making positions in development associations.

villages. In the various ADLs of which he was a member, he handled the road infrastructure, access to drinking water, construction, health centre equipment and irrigation canals repair files.

The third and final profile is that of the teacher-activist. Three people in the communes of Mezgita and Arbaa Sahel fit this profile. These are Brahim Safini in Arbaa Sahel, and Ahmed Ait Abi and Mohamed Ait Lmaalem in Mezgita. Ait Lmaalem and Brahim Safini are from the same generation, both of whom were born in the early 1960s. Ait Lmaalem was born in a small village in the Drâa Valley, and was the first person in his village to earn a high school diploma and baccalaureate. After two years at the University of Rabat, he left the capital to return to the village of Tafergalt. Although Ait Lmaalem has taken administrative exams for positions as an agricultural engineer, mining engineer and specialized drinking water assistant, he returned to his village to become a teacher. Brahim Safini has a similar path, as does Ahmed Ait Abi, although he was born in 1971. All three had educational experiences that drove them to get involved in politics or trade union activism. Ait Lmaalem and Safini were members of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), a party that embodied the opposition to the reign of Hassan II, and as a youth Ait Abi was active in extreme left movements on university campuses before joining the socialist party. In their native communities, they constituted a form of opposition to the social hierarchy inherited from the pre-colonial period, the protectorate and independence. In this relative fragmentation of the elite, new profiles of civil servants-activists participated in their village's development while diminishing the rural component of local elite. Ait Lmaalem and Safini report that in 1985, they established an illegal organisation with a group of civil servants and teachers to implement development interventions in their native communities. Such interventions included academic support, buying generators or developing water sources. They formed development committees in the late 1980s and early 1990s at a time when the

establishment of associations, while legal, was not tolerated by local authorities. In Arbaa Sahel, the "Tamount Sahel" association ("together" in Amazigh), chaired by Brahim Safini, was legally established in 1992 in agreement with local representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and the commune, at least initially. The association represented all the villages in the commune, unlike the association chaired by Ait Lmaalem. In the commune of Mezgita, Ait Lmaalem created a local association, that is to say only for his village, Tafergalt, in quasi-opposition to the commune presided by Moulay Hassan el Alaoui. The association "*Tafergalt pour le développement et la coopération*" (Tafergalt for development and cooperation) was established just four days after a royal speech given by Hassan II on March 3, 1997 in which he encouraged Moroccans to organize in associations to accelerate rural development. These associations are different from the associations created in the 1990s, which were either linked to the public sector, administrative or bureaucratic associations or to the private sector with a commercial objective. They operate *a priori* autonomously from the State, and the principle of general interest and common good is the heart of their discourse. The paths of these three teachers-community activists have led them to hold elected positions in the provinces (provincial councillor) or administrative positions in the provincial education delegations. These positions have enabled them to build working and political networks with other community activists participating in a type of construction of this development elite/expert, but also to build a solid network of technicians, bureaucrats and senior civil servants who then took on positions in central government, and not just in the education sector. Let us look at the example of Ait Lmaalem, who worked for the provincial education delegation. His ties to the provincial administration allowed him to advocate for the establishment of programs to fight a serious disease affecting the Drâa Valley causing blindness: trachoma. His ADL was a pioneer in the

fight against this disease, and Ait Lmaalem acquired solid skills in this area thanks to his contacts with a medical student who came to do an internship in his village in 1998. The student was the daughter of the representative in Morocco of an American NGO, Helen Keller International, which specializes in fighting trachoma. With the help of the province – he was working in the provincial education delegation in 1998 – and a network of activists who had formed a federation to support the advocacy, Ait Lmaalem created kits to help fight the disease, kits that were eventually distributed throughout the province with the support of the administration and this American NGO. Ait Lmaalem also represented the association at the World Health Organisation's Third World Congress in 1998 in Ouarzazate. Immediately thereafter, accompanied by professors and doctors, Ait Lmaalem went all the way to the Ministry of Health in Rabat to present the association's work and the procedures put in place to eradicate this disease. During this meeting he met with bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental aid donors. Elected from the opposition in the commune of Mezgita when the commune was established in 1993, and again in 1997, he was elected again in 2009 from the opposition. After a redistribution of the constituencies and an alliance with other villages, he and Ahmed Ait Abi and other elected officials managed to win the majority of the seats in the commune in 2015. Today he is the vice president of the Mezgita commune, and Ahmed Ait Abi is the president. Brahim Safini has been president of the commune of Arbaa Sahel since the September 2003 elections. They all belong to parties to the left of government, namely the USFP and the PPS.

4. Memory and expertise: resources used by this new form of leadership

These three development expert profiles, designated as such by the population through a questionnaire survey, constitute a form of elite with varying degrees of power and resources in action. Both an expert elite and ideological elite, these individuals participate because of the power they hold or the influence they exert over “the historical action of a community” (Rocher, 1992). Because of their simultaneous or successive roles as community activists, civil servants or elected officials, these profiles manage to maintain favourable local political order, and drive changes in public policy areas such as education (introduction of pre-school classes managed locally by the associations¹²), health (construction and maintenance of health centres) and also in everyday life such as access to water or electricity. These two elements are fundamental in Morocco because they are basic services. The ADLs in Arbaa Sahel Tassousfi and Mezgita have taken on general interest missions by negotiating directly with decentralized technical services, or the national water or power company (*Office national de l'eau potable et de l'électricité*), and also with the relevant ministries in the capital. In one village in the commune of Mezgita, the ADL chaired by Ait Lmaalem is in charge of drinking water management, and residents pay the association for their consumption, at the price determined by the association¹³. The association then pays the water bill for the entire village. We also mentioned Ait Lmaalem's actions in his village of Tafergalt to fight trachoma. The action taken to fight this disease required profound

¹² Preschool in Morocco corresponds to kindergarten classes but is not instituted and managed by the ministry of education. In medium and large centres, it is a private service, but in rural areas, organisation of this essential service is most often handled by the communal authorities or, in our case, most often by the ADLs. ADLs provide this service because the communes do not have the material means to open preschool structures in every village or group of villages.

¹³ This price is not the same as the price paid to the Office national de l'eau potable (ONEP); it is higher as it includes system management and maintenance fees as well as a contribution to the association's other projects such as the cultural centre, support courses, donations of staples during the holy month of Ramadan...

changes (drinking water treatment, construction of community bath/shower houses with priority to women and children, separation of areas for animals from living quarters in traditional homes, burying of animal waste to limit the proliferation of flies, which carry the disease). Use of the trachoma kits and measures to combat flies were included in regional public policy through the formation of a network of associations in the Drâa Valley and its advocacy activities within the provincial health department.

These figures are recognised and perceived as the bearers of development knowledge and as having power over the configuration of public policies, yet it raises the question about the origin of this recognition and expertise, and its long-lasting nature. We chose to analyse their expertise with respect to their development memory, and particularly the material and symbolic resources they are able to mobilise based on their knowledge of development interventions over time. There are many of these interdependent resources, and based on our field interviews we can identify five:

- Knowledge resources: these actors have a wealth of information and knowledge about development interventions, i.e. the processes, language and norms of donors. These actors have their own mapping of aid stakeholders (the State and its major programs funded by donors but managed by the administration, calls for projects from bilateral and multilateral aid donors, foreign NGO programs, etc.).

- Positional resources: owing to their position as association presidents and main contacts for donors, these actors have access to the processes that produce projects, programs and public policy in the provincial departments, donor forums, members of the Moroccan parliament and ministries. They have access to a group of stakeholders who hold important

positions in the political, economic and social spheres. Because of their position, they also participate in the allocation of funding and are stakeholders in local and regional development mechanisms. Development memory is analysed at different territorial levels, and this interplay among levels and the connections between the decision-making and implementation of development interventions is known to the actors we have listed. They are aware of the complexity of the development arena at its many levels of action, and play with the associated constraints.

- Material resources, i.e. operational means (association offices, documentation, budgetary means, etc.).

- Social and temporal resources: these individuals are recognised socially, and this recognition is long-lasting.

- Representation resources: They represent general interests and speak for the community because of their symbolic status (association president, elected official, prominent member of the home community, village representative to local authorities, etc.).

These resources and recognition by the population as development experts give these individuals dominant decision-making positions in their communities. They are at once in the public and private spheres, and are not institutional community actors (administration, government) or organized interest groups. Subject to multiple constraints that restrict their behaviour while multiplying opportunities for the interventions required to develop their communities, they manage to overcome those constraints, at least partially, and enjoy a form of autonomy that is based on their capacity to mine those resources. Hence, based on a local political clientelism, they can prevent certain development interventions from being implemented in a given village

or, on the contrary, use the weight of their influence to get a sanitation project or health centre construction off the ground in their own field of action. Therefore, they have a dominant role in policy making process, although they are less organized and less visible than interest groups or internal or non-government community actors. Their main characteristic is indeed playing against the constraints and rules of the game, thereby stepping outside the developmentalist configuration (Soriat, 2015), becoming mediators of public action in vastly different institutional universes, whether with bilateral foreign donors, international NGOs or government agencies. The blurring of Morocco's borders between political clientelism, private interests and the presence of transnational actors benefits them directly since they intervene and understand the codes of these spaces for reflection, production and implementation of public policies. Like the African elite described by Daloz, the local aid experts that we have identified above cultivate the pre-eminence of informal logic that is always negotiable if using a lexicon and façade likely to please donors (1999). If we take the example of Brahim Safini from the commune of Arbaa Sahel, an external observer (a donor, for example) may come to the finding that democratic life in the commune is full and complete, and that the Tamount development association is not run by the commune president, who directs the commune's projects in apparent consultation with the various associations. However, under the guise of efficiency of action in the commune and association, this division of labour is but an illusion, "on paper" only. In actual fact, the commune's president plays off his multiple positions of power even though he is not the real president of the development association, which allows him to mobilise funding, circumvent certain administrative procedures and increase the number of project partners. According to most of our interviewees, this is a democratic and participative façade that is an effective weapon for the commune's development.

These expert profiles are able to flourish in a fragmented and transitioning Moroccan political context where State governance is subject to arrangements negotiated through informal and collusive transactions.

5. An elite “between sectors and territories”¹⁴

In this last section, we propose to discuss the literature on public policies designed for Europe or North America from a “southern” perspective. On reading the individual or collective careers, biographies and modes of action, one might indeed question not only the literature on the sociology of elites but also on the sociology of public action. Three elements will successively be discussed to determine the cross-sectional nature of this expertise, the leading position they occupy in the territorialisation of public policies, and finally, the structure of this elite group.

The actors previously presented exercise a “representation monopoly” in the dual sense of cognitive representations and spokesperson, as stated by Halpern and Jacquot (2015). In other words, they are the ones who represent the community either through their position as association president, commune president, provincial council representative or local authority representative, and the population gives them a key role in territorial development. They have both the “ideas” and “know what needs to be done for the territory”. An analysis of the interviews conducted with these various actors confirms that they have *frameworks for interpreting the world*, a shared world-view, a *vision du monde* of what the change in their territory must be. They also assert exclusive expertise in multiple fields of public policies. In

¹⁴ Reference is made here to the work of Pierre Muller and his 1990 article published in *Politique et management public* in which he discusses the French political-administrative system and the production of public policies by local French communities.

echoing the analysis of Pierre Muller (2013) on sectors and public policies, one might question the effects these actors/experts have on the structuring of public action, i.e. on the determination of borders of sectors, problem identification and resolution and the legitimization of the actors to handle them. We have tried to show that these development elites/experts are active in many fields (installation and management of drinking water systems, electricity, public health, access to education, economic governance of local production structures through the creation of cooperatives, etc.). These fields of action are also made governable thanks to these local actors¹⁵. In the so-called “northern” literature, the notion of sector is presented as “a vertical organisation of social roles that defines the rules of functioning, selection of elites, development of specific norms and values, establishment of borders, etc.” (Muller, 2013). The existence of these multipositioned individuals, the custodians of development expertise and memory, who alternately claim political, administrative or professional legitimacy in various contexts, leads us to question the logic of how public action works in the south. Applying the notion of sector is crucial in research on public policies and policy-making processes in the north in order to identify the borders, actors and characteristics of public policy. In a context of multi-level governance and a monopoly of cross-sector expertise, one might rethink the analysis of the modes of coordination and governance from a cross-sectional perspective. In other words, our hypothesis is that the existence of this elite seems to confirm a de-sectorised vision of State action.

Morocco has been through a long period where the collective issues and the methods for dealing with them have been defined at the central level. These programs, defined at different political

¹⁵ Our field surveys in Morocco led us to the hypothesis and conclusion that there are gaps in terms of access to basic services (water, power), education (presence of colleges and high schools, school bus service) and economic, social and human development, based on the presence of these actors in the governance structures at various levels.

levels in conjunction with donors – such as the program for drinking water supply for rural populations (PAGER in French) launched in 1995 and the program for universal rural electrification (PERG in French) in 1996 – were then taken over and translated locally by the decentralized administrative universe. The late 1990s and particularly the early 2000s saw a change in the limits of vertical consideration of problems. This change was reflected in the appearance of new modes of coordination between local, regional and national actors. We are witnessing a movement to localize the identification of public problems and their solutions. In this paper we hypothesize that aid experts, the custodians of development memory, are dominant actors in the territorialisation of public policy-making. They have a firm grasp of the territorial scales of development memory. Brahim Safini, the current president of the commune of Arbaa Sahel, is acutely aware of the complexity of the development arena, from the village up to the offices of large NGOs in Paris, Marseille or Brussels. Brahim Safini, Ait Lmaalem and Ahmed Ait Abi are at the centre of the territorialisation of public policies to the extent that, being the sole spokespersons, they are the vital intermediaries with donors and the Moroccan administration (ministries and decentralized administration). Therefore, they have not only earned flexibility in the governance and management of local problems, but are also key actors of this territorialisation that seeks local representatives.

We have emphasized the effect of these experts – who constitute the development elite in our area of study – on the structuring of public action and the policy making process. We would now like to discuss the notion of elite based on our work in Morocco, and more specifically the elements of how this elite is structured based on the Genieys and Hassenteufel definition. They state that “only the establishment of a highly structured group exercising power over public action in the long term legitimates the use of the notion of elite” (2001). There are two elements

that define a group of people as an elite, namely, the power of these groups and the consistency of that power based on structuring elements. We have highlighted the existence of recurring elements such as political engagement in government parties to the left of the political spectrum, but also similar professional careers and shared developmentalist values. However, some profiles are different, such as the former president of the commune of Mezgita, a rural figure who claims to be uneducated, or even the local representative of authority in Tassousfi. During our interviews with these individuals, we tried to find out whether they knew each other and if they frequented the same socializing places. The custodians of Mezgita and Arbaa Sahel, all teachers and left-leaning activists, reported that they had never met, but that they knew of each other's work. The members of this elite run into each other very little, or not at all. This could of course be due to the fact that they are separated by several hundred kilometres, and are located in different provinces (Zagora and Tiznit, in our case) Up until the last administrative divisions in 2015, the two communes belonged to the same region, but the jurisdictions and the means of the regions remain weak, and there is no regional forum or meeting space for association or commune presidents. Another hypothesis could be based on the shaping of this group. As we have shown above, this is a transversal elite, and whereas the division of public policies in European or North American countries permits the construction of an elite, in our context this could very well be hindered by the cross-sectional nature of these development experts.

In the province of Zagora, where Mezgita is located, we can nonetheless make a hypothesis for a broader structuring of this development elite. Although we worked only with one commune, during the interviews conducted, we observed that the group of “teachers–community activists” born before the 1980s was relatively well structured throughout the province and was very active in multiple public policies areas. Although we did not conduct any surveys to find out for sure

the names of the development elites in other communes, cross-referenced information reveals profiles identical to those of Mohamed Ait Lmaalem and Ahmed Ait Abi. This group shares similar social origins, and professional and activist careers. Moreover, there are spaces for this elite to socialize; starting in the early 2000s, they attended the same education training in the provincial delegation and human rights training with the European Union. We met six different people who share these criteria. They know each other personally, meet often and have organized their group around networks of associations and federations (e.g., the UDRAA, the Union of Development Associations of the Drâa founded in 2004 in Agdz near Mezgita by Ait Lmaalem, Ahmed Ait Abi, Abdelatif Kassem – mentioned in the introduction, and Lhassan Khalouki, a school principal and president of an ADL). These networks and federations were united in a network of associations for the development and democracy of Zagora, called RAZDED, created in 2007. The group was structured thus out of a desire to include human rights and the notion of community reparations following years of police repression (during the '70s, '80s and '90s) in Moroccan national public policy.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to illustrate the use of a research methodology based on a questionnaire survey, interviews and observations in our study of a local form of experts who comprise a development elite. This elite, the custodians of development memory, influences the fabric of the political agenda and decision-making from the positions they occupy within the political-administrative system, and especially because of their knowledge of development interventions. This elite has remained an elite despite the passage of time, political and

administrative reforms and political changes. Although they are on the fringes of Moroccan political-administrative institutions and the development arena, they understand its codes, customs and complexity and have the ability to move from one cognitive universe to another while creating accepted representations of development at the local level. We have highlighted relatively heterogeneous profiles, from the rural figure to the agent of authority, including the teacher-community activist. These teacher-activists appear as a group formed by similar paths, and with shared values and political opinions. They have created particularly consolidated associative networks and regularly deal with the administration and donors working to implement social services in the communes we researched. This study shows how the local production of elites in Morocco is marked by the dynamics of a hybridization between the traditional dual streams of producing elites which until then characterised the kingdom: the technobureaucratic stream and the political stream. We have also tried to show how these local experts and elites, the custodians of development memory, encourage us to discuss the sectoral and territorial aspect of policy-making processes in Morocco. Several hypotheses have been put forward from this Moroccan study and merit further exploration. The existence of this political elite seems to confirm a de-sectorized vision of public action in Morocco. It could be useful to rethink the analysis of coordination and governance mechanisms from a cross-cutting perspective. Local representatives and the privileged contacts of donors, these experts leverage their multiple positions in the technical and administrative spheres, ranging from the commune, association to the provincial council or network of local authorities. Our hypothesis, therefore, is that they are key actors in the movement to territorialise the policy-making processes. A territorialisation necessitated by a new vision of territory and by the crisis in the vertical approach to collective problems and issues. Finally, we hypothesized that the development elite

would be less structured in Morocco than in Europe and North America. The transversality of public action and localisation of public policies would not allow the shaping of this local development elite.

Finally, we find that two elements have not been sufficiently explored for this paper and deserve more attention. The first relates to the degree of politicisation of this development expertise, and the second to their role during major reforms. Indeed, our research purpose did not allow us to focus on reforms and analyse the involvement of these actors at different levels in the planning, implementation or evaluation of specific reforms.

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