<u>**Public administration capacity to implement 'participatory' development policy – Case studies from Morocco**</u>

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Sylvia I. Bergh
D.Phil. student in Development Studies, University of Oxford
E-mail: Sylvia.bergh@worc.ox.ac.uk

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1. *<u>Introduction</u>*

This paper combines a historical and institutional perspective to consider the case of the Moroccan public administration’s capacity to implement ‘participatory’ development policy. It does so by drawing on several fieldwork-based case studies of ‘participatory’ rural development and natural resource management projects. The main argument it puts forward is that while limited human and material resources can partly explain the limited capacity, the main constraint can be found in the purely technical and depoliticized view of participation that dominates the attitudes of Moroccan civil servants involved in such projects. The deeper origin of such attitudes lie in the central government’s reluctance to open up the spaces that are necessary for a more political sense of agency to develop. The latter would in turn allow participation to unfold as a truly transformative power for rural development.

In order to make this argument as clearly and concisely as possible, this paper is structured as follows. First, it presents a conceptual framework on participatory approaches. Second, it reviews the origins of the notion of ‘participation’ in official discourse in Morocco (particularly in the “2020 Rural Development Strategy” announced in 1999). The main part of the paper then draws on evaluations of recent ‘participatory’ projects and programs implemented by the Moroccan public administration. It tries to attribute the shortcomings to constraints in human and material resources and incentives, personal attitudes, and the underlying view of participation. Furthermore, the analysis tries to bring out the lack of linkages between participation in the village associations that were created as part of these projects, and more political participation in local government institutions. This lack of linkages between ‘project’ participation and ‘political’ participation explains the observed elite capture over these projects by a small minority of politically well-connected agents and more importantly, the absence of truly ‘transformative’ participation that would durably alter the local power relations in favor of the poor.

In short, this paper aims to contribute to the panel’s discussion on the ‘real’ workings of African states by focusing on the human, material, attitudinal, and political constraints to the Moroccan administration’s capacity to implement ‘participatory’ projects in a way that would make a real difference for rural development.

2. *<u>A conceptual framework on participatory approaches</u>*

It is important to note from the outset that there are two distinct approaches to participatory rural development that have evolved over time. The instrumental or functional view holds that

participation is a means to an end, a methodology, which will result in more effective projects. A transformative view, in contrast, holds that strengthening people's ability to determine how to improve the economic and social conditions of their lives is the true essence of development (Long, C.M. 2001: 5; Nelson and Wright 1995:1; Cleaver 2001: 37).

I would agree with Drydyk (2005) that the question ultimately is whether participation makes development more democratic, or in Williams' words (2004: 568), 'what longer-term political value do participatory processes have for the poor?' This overarching question includes others such as, 'to what degree do participatory programmes reshape political networks? How are existing roles of brokers and patrons challenged or reinforced?', bearing in mind that they are not always and everywhere a negative force. Most importantly, do new spaces of participation ultimately challenge existing power relationships, and 'equalize' social and economic inequalities? (Williams 2004 and Gaventa 2006) Or in Sen's terms (1999), do they contribute to development as freedom? As Moore and Putzel (1999; cited in Williams 2004: 567) argue, important criteria for the success of development projects are the degree to which they contribute to the mobilisation and sustained political action of the poor. This discussion is thus strongly linked to democratic decentralisation and the question to what extent participatory approaches can interact with in ways that would strengthen it.[1]

In terms of their methodology, participatory approaches to rural development channel project funding or capacity building investments directly to communities. Mansuri and Rao (2004: 10-11) define 'participation' in this context as the active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation (see table 1 below for a typology of different degrees of participation). While participation can occur at many levels, a key objective is the incorporation of local knowledge into the project's decision-making processes. To this end, participatory methodologies were developed from the late 1970s onwards. Robert Chambers has been a leader in defining and popularizing rapid research techniques, especially Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA; Chambers 1994 and 1995). In line with his wider views on participatory approaches to development, during the last decade, Chambers has advocated making the process participatory (Participatory Rural Appraisal, PRA) and shifting the focus away from rapid to "relaxed". Nowadays, PRA has become a standard tool for many development agencies that promote participatory development.

Another aspect of participatory methodologies is the promotion of more formal "community" organizations so as to transform the "participants" into more institutionalized "partners" or "stakeholders" in the project. Such organizations are commonly referred to as Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Where they did not evolve internally, i.e. independently from the arrival of a development project, the formation of such CBOs has either been induced (as part of the conditions that communities must fulfill in order to participate in projects, without any form of assistance) or constructed by outside actors (such as project staff). They can vary in their degree of formality, depending on their legal status, formally stated rights and responsibilities, and a legally binding governance structure for recruiting members, selecting leaders, and conducting affairs (Krishna 2004: 15-16).

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[1] The impact of participatory approaches on individual agency is a further important element, i.e. 'to what extent can social participation enhance peoples' political participation?' This includes asking 'to what extent do participatory development programmes contribute to processes of political learning among the poor?' Political learning includes knowledge of formal political rights and increased awareness of the de facto local rules of the game. This is closely related to the concept of political capabilities. According to Williams (2004: 567), political capabilities 'provide the set of navigational skills needed to move through political space, and the tools to re-shape these spaces where this is possible'.

The potential advantages of participatory or community support approaches can be summarized as increased empowerment, improved responsiveness to citizen demands and priorities, more cost-effective and timely service delivery, and better targeting of benefits leading to more equitably distributed project benefits with less corruption and other rent-seeking activity. In addition, control of decisions and resources can enable communities to build social capital by extending the depth, range, and effectiveness of their social networks. In short, under ideal circumstances, community participation can help to achieve all five central development objectives of increased efficiency, sustainability, accountability, equity, and democracy (Helling et al 2005: 36-38, 69; Krishna 2004: 2; Mansuri and Rao 2004: 11).

The potential shortcomings include capture of power and resources by elites, entrenchment of barriers to transparency and accountability by rent-seeking community leaders, and appropriation of benefits by majorities in ways that perpetuate inequality and imperil responsiveness to the needs of marginalized groups (Helling et al 2005: 38, 71; Hildyard et.al. 2001: 70). Furthermore, local experimentation by national governments and donors has resulted in the proliferation of CDD projects, each employing different methods and procedures. This exacerbates coordination and coherency problems. However, addressing these problems by introducing larger scale community support programs carries the risk of excessive standardization and bureaucratization, and the resulting loss in demand responsiveness (Helling et al. 2005: 72).

Other difficulties of the participatory approach include achieving economies of scale, resolving problems of territorial scope, and lack of strategic perspective on local development, particularly related to economic opportunities and upstream linkages (Helling et al 2005: 38, 71). A further fundamental caveat is that the current emphasis of linking CDD approaches to development plans and funding may lead to a disincentive for communities to undertake collective action to resolve local problems independent of (donor or government) funding (Helling et al. 2005: 72). In other words, CDD may result in the same shortcomings as the earlier top-down strategies, namely the increased dependency of poor people on outside actors (what is called '*assistanat*' in French).

The main underlying reasons for why many of the aforementioned shortcomings often become a reality in CDD projects is that they are based on the functional view of participation, which means that 'participatory' projects are conducted in a 'de-politicizing' manner, precluding any possibility of social transformation.[2]
For example, participating can be more costly for certain supposed beneficiaries than for others. A poor farmer is likely to be more constrained by the time commitments and transportation costs required for adequate participation than a rich one. Many if not most projects do not take these constraints into account, thus facilitating elite capture of the participatory process. In addition, participation may lead to psychological or physical duress for the most socially and economically disadvantaged, since genuine participation may require taking positions that are contrary to the interests of powerful groups. Related to this is what Cooke and Kothari (2001: 8) call the 'tyranny of the group', where group-dynamics lead to participatory decisions that reinforce the interests of the already powerful.

These observations illustrate the argument that mainstreaming participation has made it an instrument for promoting pragmatic policy interests, such as cost-effective delivery or low-cost maintenance, rather than a vehicle for radical social transformation. For example, under the guise of participation, some of the costs of service delivery can be shifted to potential beneficiaries, and

[2] A further problem is the use of the notion of "community" (see Mansuri and Rao 2004: 13; Williams 2004: 561; and Cleaver 2001: 79).

can lead to situations where participation is effectively a form of forced or *corvée* labor, with the poor pressured into making far more substantial contributions than the rich (Mansuri and Rao 2004: 11, citing Bowen 1986 and Ribot 1995).

Other examples include instances where 'participation' was used to refer to participatory methods (such as PRAs), which were employed simply to gather information rather than to engage stakeholders in deliberative processes within the arena of policy making (Cornwall 2000: 62). Indeed, participation without a change in power relations may simply add a more 'democratic' face to the *status quo*. The illusion of inclusion also means that the decisions made are treated as if they represent what 'the people' really want, and gain a moral authority that becomes hard to challenge (Gaventa and Cornwall 2006: 126). This is linked to the argument that the notion of 'local knowledge' in participatory approaches is highly problematic. Mosse (2001) argues that what is taken as 'people's knowledge' is itself constructed in the context of planning and reflects the social and power relationships that planning systems entail. Similarly, Pottier (1997: 208) points to the need to 'lift the veil on the politics of participatory workshops'.

In terms of public administration capacity to implement participatory approaches, we first need to examine which view of participation is actually being proposed. I return here to the fundamental distinction running through this chapter, namely between the functional view of participation, and a transformative view. A typology of the different grades of participation based on this distinction is useful as an initial rough categorization that can be applied to the case studies.

Table 1: A typology of participation

Type	***Description***	***Based on…***
1	**Passive** participation: being told what is going to happen	Functional view
2	Participation in **information giving**	Functional view
3	Participation by **consultation,** but which does not concede any share in decision-making	Functional view
4	Participation **for material incentives:** for example labour in exchange for food, cash, or other material incentives	Functional view
5	**Functional participation** to meet predetermined objectives after major decisions have been made, or 'participatory implementation'	Functional view
6	**Interactive participation**: joint analysis, such as Participatory Action Research, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices. Also referred to as 'deliberative participation'	Transformative view
7	**Self-mobilization**: taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. This can entail receiving resources and technical advice but retaining control of how resources are used, and may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power. Also called 'transformative participation', or 'effective participation'	Transformative view

Source: Drydyk (2005: 259-260) citing Gaventa 1998 and Pretty 1994, and Crocker (2006b: 2-3)

This paper argues that in the case of Morocco, participatory projects are based on the functional view (types 1-5).

With regard to (the lack of) linkages with political forms of participation, there is a growing literature presenting evidence that participatory methods often obstruct the potential benefits of democratic decentralization when they are used to establish a plethora of local institutions such as CBOs, village development or user committees (Baviskar 2004; Manor 2004; Larson and Ribot 2004; Meynen and Dornboos 2003, Porter and Oynach-Olaa 1999). For example, Manor (2004: 208) argues that the creation of user committees (as part of participatory approaches) fragments popular political participation. Another well-known example in this literature is World Bank support to CBOs in the form of Social Funds and other programs that frequently result in the creation of structures outside of local government. These then have limited (or negative) influence on the capacity of local government to support sustainable service delivery in the future (Kuper 2004: 2).

The underlying reasons for such lack of synergies, or "negative interaction effects", can be found in differing professional and organizational perspectives and ideologies, institutional rigidity, and inadequate coordination among the actors involved (World Bank 2004: i). Issues of sequencing have also rarely been explicitly addressed, e.g. with regard to whether to first strengthen communities, and then local governments, or both simultaneously (McLean et al 2005: 7, 42).

3. *Participation in Moroccan rural development programs*

It is useful to briefly review the history of participation in rural development in Morocco. During and after the French Protectorate (1912-1956), the government administration became increasingly involved in every sphere of public policy in rural areas: land and water property regimes, justice, forests, roads, local police, and then later also agriculture, health, education, etc. Paul Pascon (1980) argues[3] that the two main consequences of this extension of government presence into the countryside were the irreversible destruction of the peasantry's initiative, and the establishment of imported procedures and frameworks, which were foreign to local habits. Similarly, the monarchy's concern to hinder the emergence of any politically autonomous force resulted in reducing the farmers to the level of subordinates; consequently, farmers came to feel relieved of any responsibility and initiative, and referred all their problems and needs to the government administration. In addition, having fragmented the decision-making centers in order to ensure the traditional balance of power, the administration made the coordination of activities, their planning and especially their adaptation to the local reality almost impossible.

A further major obstacle to rural development in Morocco was and still is land reform, which was never fully addressed.[4] In 1980, one million hectares were taken from the French settlers and 'moroccanized'. One third was given to the rural elite, one third was redistributed, and one third was managed by the state. In other words, the distribution of land was used as a tool to establish the monarchy's clientelist system (Lacroix 2005: 141). King Hassan II's occasional references to 'agrarian reform' allowed him to maintain his alliance with the farming elite, make concessions to the left, and to raise peasants' expectations regarding social justice in the near future (Swearingen 1987: 155ff). Hence, I would agree with Desrues (2005: 61, footnote 2) that the threat (or promise) of land reform formed part of the King's strategy of governability. [5]

[3] See also El Alaoui 1994
[4] A comprehensive collection of draft laws, royal speeches, political party statements, and academic articles on land reform can be found in Bouderbala et al (1974).
[5] See Desrues (2005: 60) for a convincing argument that the reform discourse on agricultural policy illustrates the government's lack of political will to introduce structural changes in Moroccan agriculture that might challenge the King's alliance with the agrarian world.

Participatory approaches to rural development should be seen against a background of highly inequitable land distribution. According to the agricultural census data from 1996 (MADPRM 1996), 70 percent of farmers own less than 5ha each, and together only a quarter of the total useable agricultural land, whereas 4 percent of farmers own more than 20ha each and together dispose of a third of the total agricultural area.

Rather than land reform, the dominant thrust of national development policy in post-protectorate Morocco was a major irrigation program. Officially launched in 1968, this was seen as the path to the country's Green Revolution (Swearingen 1987: 164). The objective was to accelerate the extension of agricultural land, with the goal of attaining 1 million hectares of irrigated farmland by the year 2000 through massive state investment.[6] It was hoped that this would stimulate the private initiative of the farmers. Hence, the first generation of 'participatory' programs was in the area of agricultural irrigation as promoted by the 1969 Agricultural Investment Code. Participation in this context was based on a contractual policy of an obligatory nature, considering the populations as 'beneficiaries'. The state committed itself to a vast program of dam construction, implementing large-scale irrigation schemes, managing the irrigation networks, and providing grants, subsidies and services for agricultural production. In return, the farmers were obliged to plant their fields according to precise technical norms and economic considerations at the local, regional and national level. In case of non-compliance, they would be sanctioned with expropriation. While the state contributed 60 percent of total costs, the farmers contributed the remaining 40 percent in the form of 'direct (financial) participation' to be paid over 20 years, and an open-ended fee for irrigation water to cover the investment and operating costs of the irrigation networks. Hence this contractual partnership was not entered into by the partners' free consent, but was decreed by law based on national interests. The target of 1 million irrigated hectares was achieved in 1998, but the private initiative in increasing yields remained limited. Indeed, the primary effect of Morocco's irrigation policy arguably was to further enrich the wealthy and neglect, if not further impoverish, most of Morocco's peasants. In short, participation in this first experience was not based on dialogue and consultation but imposed (Herzenni 2006: 228-9 and Swearingen 1987:164ff., 182).

Starting in 1975, thirteen Integrated Rural Development projects were implemented (covering 350,000 ha) to remedy the imbalance between the irrigated and rainfed areas. Their main innovation was the multi-sectoral nature, including drinking water provision, roads, health and education. However, despite good intentions, there were coordination problems, also due to the inflexible nature of the budget procedures. Most importantly, the needs of the populations were identified without taking into account specific needs nor a ranking of local priorities, due to a lack of consultation with the population. This also led to problems when closing off areas to grazing animals in the context of pastoral improvement projects) (Herzenni 2006: 231-232 and UNDP Maroc 2003: 70). However, since the mid-1980s, as in most developing countries, several factors contributed to increasing the appeal of 'participatory' development programs in the eyes of the Moroccan government.

However, an exception was the Central Middle Atlas project launched in 1983. This project aimed at improving grazing grounds and conserving the sylvo-pastoral system, but as opposed to other projects, it sought to do this by restoring the role of tribal fractions. Herzenni (2006: 234) attributes the success story to the inclusion of rural sociologists and other academics in the project team who managed to develop a participatory development plan (1985-1988). A cooperative was

[6] Swearingen (1987) traces the evolution of this 'policy of one million hectares' or 'the dam policy' from colonial times to the mid-1980s.

created to collect water fees and the closing off of pasture areas was respected without the need for guardians or barbed wire.

With the adoption of structural adjustment policies in 1983, economic liberalization and the withdrawal of the state was followed by the government's increasingly explicit calling on the associations to take over some of its tasks in order to stem the rise in poverty and fall in human development indicators.[7] Indeed, the poverty rate fell from 21 percent in 1985 to 14 percent in 2004 (although it is still at 22 percent in rural areas). As for the Human Development Index, it was 0.631 in 2003, placing the country in the 124th position (after Gabon and before Namibia, and behind the other Maghreb countries; UNDP Maroc 2006).

This situation as well as the international context (e.g. the Copenhagen Summit in 1995 and the Millennium Development Goals) explain the ascent of social development as a government priority in the 1990s, as expressed in the Social Development Strategy formulated in 1993, the chapter on the promotion of "*l'économie solidaire*" in the 2000-2004 Five Year Plan, and various Royal Speeches, which all emphasized the role of civil society participation development (see Herzenni 2006: 235, 246; Zouiten 2006; Ministère de la Prévision économique et du plan, undated; UNDP Maroc 2003: 28-29). Furthermore, as in most developing countries, international organizations started to insist that NGOs be associated with their projects or even implement them (Ayee et al. 2004: 121; Chadli 2001: 48ff.).

In order to implement the Social Development Strategy, a series of national rural infrastructure programs was launched in the 1990s, aimed at the provision of electricity (PERG), drinking water (PAGER), and roads (PNRR). For the first time, such programs were based on the notion of partnership between government administration, local authorities, and beneficiaries. However, cost-sharing dominated the rationale for such partnerships, and participatory techniques were used as a means to gain the adherence of the population rather than as a *modus operandi* (Zirari 2006: 4; MADRPM et al 2005: 55).

At the same time, more localized projects, especially those implemented by the Water and Forest authorities in the area of watershed management, sought to achieve community-driven development. At the core of these projects was the formulation and implementation of community development plans, mostly focused on a village or *douar* (hence the ubiquitous use of *Plan de développement de douar*, or PDD; Zirari 2006: 4-5). A pioneering 'participatory' project was the Central Middle Atlas project launched in 1983 (see Herzenni 2006: 234). The first projects launched in the 1990s (Tassaout, Msoun, and GEFRIF) were implemented by autonomous structures (such as international donors or NGOs) outside of the government administration. This facilitated quick disbursement of funds to the local level. The Oued Lakhdar project by the World Bank (1999-2004) was the first to attempt to integrate the participatory mechanisms with the government administration (Zirari 2006: 6-7).

Building on these experiences, a plan to eliminate rural poverty by 2020, the "2020 Rural Development Strategy", was adopted in 1999 (MADRPM 1999). In the Strategy, broad based rural development, including agriculture and off-farm employment, as well as infrastructure, is identified as the key to sustainable rural poverty alleviation. The Strategy adopts three guiding principles for implementation: (a) decentralization *("déconcentration"* of responsibilities to the Ministry of Agriculture's provincial and local representations); (b) multi-sectoral integration; and (c) participation of all development stakeholders. The strategy defines participation as giving more responsibility to development actors by way of mechanisms that allow them to make

[7] FEMISE (2004: 191-192), Ben Ali (2005: 17), Ayee et al (2004: 113), Pérez Beltrán (undated)

programmatic choices, and subsequently to exercise control over the use of the allocated resources. It also noted that a particular role is often devolved to NGOs, which are asked to take on the function of 'intermediaries' between the participants, the development agencies, the financial institutions and the public administration. However, it pointed out that in the past, there was a lack of linkage ('*articulation*' in French) between such participatory structures and local governments. Most importantly for this paper, it recognized the need for institutional support for civil servants to prepare them for carrying out the tasks of identifying long-term strategies, program formulation, choosing funding mechanisms, elaborating partnership agreements, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation. The strategy identified the managers and technicians of the provincial directorates for agriculture (*Directions provinciales d'agriculture* - DPAs) and their extension centers (*Centres de Travaux* – CTs) as first targets of such redeployment and HR 'recycling' (MADRPM 1999: 181-183, 210-214).

In order to apply the 2020 Strategy, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Water and Forest authorities have begun to implement a series of integrated and participatory rural development programs targeted at disadvantaged areas and supported by the World Bank, IFAD, EU, UNDP, FAO, and others donors. The next section points to some common issues emerging from these programs. It argues that they are gradually opening up to input from decentralized local governments, but that the transformative impact of the different types of participation that they promote is still limited.

4. *Issues related to public administration capacity to implement participatory projects*

The 1999 Strategy document (MADRPM 1999: 267) admitted that the administration did not in fact have the necessary experience to implement the strategy, but it warned about repeating the mistakes of 'pilot projects', which had not given any sustainable results. The World Bank's 'Irrigation-based Community Development Project' (*Projet de Développement Rural Intégré centré sur la PMH: DRI- PMH*) was designed as the first program to implement the 2020 Strategy, and is quite ambitious, covering three provinces.[8] Apart from a poverty reduction objective, two expected social benefits of the project are of particular relevance to the theme of this paper. These are improved participation and access of beneficiaries to decision-making processes and investment opportunities, thus enhancing ownership for project investments and their sustainability; and increased organizational capacity for the user groups involved, contributing to the formation of social capital (World Bank 2001: 3, 7). To achieve these benefits, the project requires the creation of Water User Associations (WUAs) around the irrigation perimeters where irrigation canals will be improved (mainly by cementing the existing earthen ones).[9]

The International Fund for Agricultural Development's (IFAD) "Rural Development Project in the Mountain Zones of Al Haouz Province" includes most of the *rural communes* of Al Haouz province that are not covered by the World Bank project. It promotes a contractual approach with

[8] The following is based on the author's research in two rural municipalities (called '*commune rurale*') in Al Haouz province. One is part of the World Bank project, the other of the IFAD project. It should be noted that the World Bank project was still in its early stages at the time of the fieldwork.

[9] In the Moroccan traditional small and medium-scale irrigation schemes, canals are made of earth and customary water rights determine access to water. It is estimated that only 10 per cent of the irrigation networks (which are 25,000km long) function well. This is why the government plans to improve the networks on 195.000ha between 2000 and 2020 – though the total potential area that could be improved is double this size. Between 1990 and 2000, more than 1032 WUAs were created (Elbouari 2004: 4).

local village associations (some of which were created as part of the project by the population in anticipation of project benefits). Both projects are implemented by the DPA in Marrakech. Drawing on fieldwork observations, project documents and interviews with donor agencies, consultants, civil servants, and project beneficiaries with regard to how the notion of 'participation', the common issues emerging from the case studies are addressed here.

a. A functional view of participation prevails

As the 2020 strategy draft evaluation shows (MADRPM et al 2005: 56), there are numerous examples of 'participatory' rural development projects where 'participation' was reduced to the beneficiaries' contribution of manual labor and to collecting beneficiaries' requests without any guarantee that they would be integrated into the planning process which had begun much earlier. On the part of the beneficiaries, this functional view leads them to believe that the constitution of user committees (such as water user associations) is a purely administrative formality to start project implementation. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture seems to be afraid of encroaching on the turf of the powerful Ministry of the Interior, thus leaving anything 'political', such as the selection of the members of WUAs, to the local representative of the Ministry of the Interior. This facilitates the capture of project benefits by the local elite.

These points are well illustrated by the World Bank project. The Ministry of Agriculture imposed the creation of WUAs on the selected tribal fractions as a condition for the project going ahead. Accounts of how the local committees were elected or appointed diverge, but it seems that the local representative of the Ministry of the Interior had a significant role in appointing his clients. The result was that in one WUA, four out of six committee members are councillors, and in the other, all are political party members. The first WUA is presided by the brother of the municipal council's president and is in fact a businessman rather than a full-time farmer; indeed, most committee members work as shopkeepers or businessmen.[10] It could therefore well be the case that many of the members in the WUA committees have a business interest in cementing the irrigation canals and might think that being on the committee will help them get the procurement contracts for these works.

The geographical coverage of the WUAs also has important implications for their inclusiveness. One WUA in our study area includes 17 'associated villages' along the irrigated perimeter but the WUAs are by law only allowed to have six committee members. Hence some farmers do not consider the WUA to be competent to know or address their needs, and do not feel represented in it. Yet others consider it only to be responsible for the village where its premises are based. However, in the other WUA, it seems that an agreement was reached that one committee member would represent several villages so as to cover all villages associated with the irrigated area among them. In addition, the law requires that an extension officer (i.e. a technician from the local agricultural extension centre) occupies the function of the 'seventh member' on the WUA board; while his task is to support the WUA members in technical matters, his permanent membership prevents the participation of younger educated persons in the WUA.

As for the type of participation that this project promotes, it could be said to lie between 'functional' and 'interactive' participation, as the major project objectives were already decided

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[10] Given that most of the committee members mainly reside in urban areas rather that on the irrigation perimeters themselves, a parallel can be drawn between this case study and that presented in Bastiaensen *et al*. (2005). In both cases, the project agency (the Ministry of Agriculture in our case study, an NGO in that by Bastiaensen *et al*.) is predominantly in contact with those members of the elite that can be characterized as "brokers", operating at the rural-urban interface.

much earlier, but new local structures were created which certain people have an interest to maintain. Indeed, the WUAs are supposed to be involved in the preparation of the technical studies, in particular concerning the choice of the course of the canals that should be cemented. Other roles include first, to participate (financially or by providing labour) in the improvement of the irrigation infrastructure; second, to manage and maintain the infrastructure on a given perimeter; third, to distribute the water to its users; fourth, to define and apply the internal rules of the association; and fifth, the committee is in charge of the administrative and financial management of the WUA (Benomar 2004, p. 102).

A national training course was developed from 1994 onwards to ensure that the WUAs would be able to take on their intended roles (Elbouari 2004: 6). Hence, the committee members from our case study WUAs were invited to attend several training sessions organized by the Ministry of Agriculture at a plush venue in Marrakech. Participant observation at these training sessions shows that they were on the whole not interested in the training content regarding more efficient irrigation techniques (and unable to remember much of it at the end of the sessions) but rather in obtaining information about when construction would start. The content of the training sessions was then supposed to be 'de-multiplied' by this same elite out in the fields. However, it is likely that this remained limited to a one-day outing with the training consultants, rather than taking on the form of an on-going exercise whereby more powerful members gradually 'capacitate' members of less powerful groups and generate the kind of solidarity that Sen and Drèze have in mind. Drèze and Sen (2002, cited in Deneulin 2005: 80) propose to enhance the political power of the underprivileged by creating a sense of solidarity between the most privileged and the underprivileged so that the elite defend the interests of the non-elite.

Overall therefore, this case study can be seen as an example of a participatory scheme whose potential to challenge existing power relations and inequalities is rather limited due to its 'functional' view of participation.

b. Flawed 'participatory' project planning

In terms of the project planning methodology, it seems that as part of each new project, a (expensive) consultant's report is commissioned to develop a participatory planning methodology for use by project staff (which could be either civil servants or consultants), although the main principles are essentially the same. This shows a lack of information sharing within the administration. With regard to the planning phase at the local level, this lack of information sharing can lead to situations where project staff are unaware that a similar project has already been implemented earlier in the same geographical area. For example, the IFAD project includes a few villages that had already been part of the participatory "Management and Conservation of Natural Resources Project in the Toubkal National Park" supported by the German Technical Cooperation's (GTZ) and implemented by the regional Water and Forest services, but the civil servant in charge of coordinating the PDDs was unaware of this.

However, the main constraint to participatory project planning is time: the normal project cycles of four to five years are not enough to ensure the necessary amount of interaction, trust, and knowledge of the local communities to plan and implement sustainable projects.

In the case of the DRI-PMH project, since they had to identify the project perimeters in 11 rural municipalities in a short period, the project consultants only spent a few days in each to determine (according to technical criteria) which tribal fractions should be included in the project. In the end, the provincial governor intervened to choose the perimeters that would be developed,

thereby overruling the consultants and siding with one faction within the commune council. The resulting exclusion of one tribal fraction in favor of another very likely contributes to the loss of credibility of the participatory approach in the eyes of the local population, given that their councilors had promised them that they would be included. The 'Irrigated Perimeter Development Plans'[11] were developed by the technical assistance consultants (rather than the originally planned 'Participatory Planning Team') and they were apparently not widely discussed nor shared with the councilors or the local population. Most importantly, the consultants did not seek out municipal technical staff or members of the political opposition in the municipal council, even though they included some of the most knowledgeable persons in terms of experience with previous (participatory) local development projects (the same is true in the IFAD project). In short, important opportunities were missed to improve the quality of participation and debate at this initial stage of the project by ensuring a transparent and fair process.

As for the IFAD project, the PDDs developed by DPA staff contained numerous examples of 'copy-and-paste' (e.g. the same geographical details were given for two different villages), which point to a very rapid, if not to say careless, approach to participatory planning.

Moreover, since the 'participants' find out which small-scale projects can be implemented as part of the project (e.g. fruit tree-planting, drinking water provision, dirt track construction), the consultations are likely to have taken the form of selecting from a pre-determined 'menu' (à la carte) rather than a genuine needs appraisal. This leads to long lists of projects for the same village, without any consideration for the capacity of the local association (as well as the administration) to implement them all in a sequentially logical and timely manner. Indeed, a civil servant on the IFAD project admitted that the agreements signed between the administration and the local associations had been too ambitious and could not be adhered to by the DPA.

In addition, in both case studies, there are considerable delays between the 'participatory' planning phase and project implementation, due to the very slow and complicated public procurement procedures (which are complicated further by donor procedures). This has a negative effect on the mobilization of local participants and on the credibility and trust of the administration. In both the World Bank and IFAD projects, it took over one year for project implementation to start. This can also make some of the information in the PDDs obsolete.

c. Problems with 'participatory' project implementation

A particular problem for participation in project implementation is the fact that the projects often resort to contractors. This makes it difficult to integrate the 'participants', and the contracting companies feel obliged to take on the works that were supposed to be carried out by the population in order to avoid problems of quality and time delays. Contracting out also means giving less responsibility to the populations, and results in a lack of 'ownership' of the project on their part, with all the negative implications in terms of sustainability. Possible solutions to this problem are to work in *régie directe* (employing local paid labor) and to use incentive measures such as subsidies. However, the finance ministry does not encourage the use of *régie directe* as it becomes much more difficult to exercise accounting controls. The problem of lengthy procurement procedures has already been highlighted – they stem partly from the fact that the complex tender procedures encourage the procurement in 'big contracts', rather than in small lots, which would allow different elements of the project to go ahead more rapidly. Procurement delays are also due to the incompatibility of the existing budget nomenclature with the project

[11] The Development Plans were then aggregated into a 'Municipal Investment Plan', which is supposed to constitute a partnership agreement between the provincial administrations and the rural municipality.

activities. For example, in the Lakhdar Watershed project, the women's bee-keeping activity was suspended for long periods as the provincial representative of the Ministry of Finance refused to consider bees as 'animals', arguing that they were 'insects' and that no such budget line existed. In short, the financing mechanisms are not adapted to participatory projects (MADRPM et al 2005: 120-122).

Apart from the issue of over-ambitious development plans mentioned earlier, the contractual approach also presents a legal problem. The 1999 Strategy emphasizes negotiation as a key aspect of participatory development, leading to contracts between the administration and the citizens. However, it also notes that while the administration can suspend a contract in case the village beneficiaries do not fulfill their obligations, the villagers have not obvious means to force the administration to fulfill its obligations. This is linked to the fact that the village committees have no legal status and no legal claim to the land or the natural resources, which are being 'developed' (MADRPM 1999: 187, 249).

d. Shortcomings in human and material resources

In 2002, the Ministry of Agriculture had 8720 staff. These were divided into 41 DPAs and 122 CTs in the rain-fed areas, and 9 *Offices régionales de mise en valeur agricoles* (ORMVAs) and 179 *Centres de mise en valeur* (CMVs) in the areas with large-scale irrigation infrastructure. The staff is relatively decentralized, as only one quarter is based in the central administration. However, while two-thirds of the staff work in the DPAs and the ORMVAs, their respective extension services (the CTs and CVMs) are not very well staffed (UNDP Maroc 2003: 64). Indeed, they are also geographically concentrated in certain places (the CTs in the areas of seven DPAs employ one-third of all CT staff). Moreover, only 8 percent of all CT staff are agronomists (*ingénieurs*), and they are mostly in charge as directors of the CTs, and burdened with administrative tasks. There is also an acute need for training in economic and social sciences, marketing, information and knowledge management, and administrative and financial management. In terms of material resources, the offices are run-down and insufficiently maintained, and there is on average only one functioning car per CT, which leaves little freedom of movement for the extension staff, apart from the director (MADRPM et al 2005: 21-22, 109-111). A further constraint to the extension services seems to be that they require the prior permission of the Ministry of the Interior to go on field visits to farmers.

The IFAD project has placed a heavy emphasis on strengthening the skills of the DPA and CT staff in terms of participatory planning and technical aspects. However, while this is much appreciated by the staff themselves (who get to travel to other countries in the Middle East to attend seminars and conferences), the population who is supposed to benefit from the project has become disillusioned, arguing that the project was only designed to benefit the staff, not the farmers. This shows the difficulty of trying to combine staff training and poverty alleviation in one project without preparing a very careful explanation to the rural beneficiaries of its overarching rationale.

The Public Administration Reform program (implemented by the World Bank and the EU) also had a negative effect on human resources, as it encouraged the most experienced staff to take an early retirement package. Ironically, this led to serious staffing constraints in the World Bank DRI-PMH project as the 'best' DPA staff left in the summer of 2005.

e. The need for a change in attitudes and incentive structures

Having been involved in both the Lakhdar Watershed project as well as having researched the main case studies here, it is clear that the Moroccan administration is still very fragmented in terms of hierarchies and physical office locations. In one extreme case, the financial management unit was writing official letters to the team of 'animateurs' working on the same project to remind them of disbursement rules, although both units were working only a few meters apart from each other within the same DPA. This illustrates the need for training in communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills, i.e. team-working skills. The function of animateur does not enjoy a high standing, and they are often isolated within the administration as well as criticized by the regular technicians for lacking the required skills. This prevents their skills from being fully utilized, for example in capacity building of local associations.

The implementation of the 2020 strategy requires certain fundamental changes in the internal governance of the Moroccan administration, which all point to the need for a change in attitudes in order to promote: a culture of merit based on skills, a culture of taking responsibility, a culture of contracting (with beneficiaries), and a culture of accountability and evaluation. The draft evaluation of the 2020 strategy concludes that no significant advances have been made in these areas (MADRPM et al 2005: 111).

f. Lack of linkage with local governments

Finally, there is little evidence that the administration is making a concerted effort to link their participatory projects to the existing institutions of political participation such as local governments. The draft evaluation of the 2020 strategy notes that the participatory approaches have created the illusion of local democracy by putting mechanisms in place that replace institutional solutions such as support to local planning (in the form of local Five Year Plans that become part of the National Five Year Plan), or local partnerships between local government and the administration (MADRPM et al 2005: 73).

While some DPAs have taken promising initiatives to adapt their programming to the areas of rural communes, these approaches are not mainstreamed yet. This means that different projects continue to produce PDDs, others Municipal Development Plans (*plan de développement communal* - PDC), and others, such as the World Bank, Municipal Investment Plans (*Plan d'investissement communal*- PIC), or Socio-economic municipal development plan (*Plan de développement économique et social de commune* - PDESC).

In the case of the DRI-PMH project, the arrival of the World Bank project was surrounded by various rumours and was not extensively debated in public. Indeed, there are no official records of the relevant council meeting. We already noted earlier that the 'Irrigated Perimeter Development Plans'[12] were apparently not widely discussed nor shared with the councilors (at least those who were not selected to be on the WUA committees) or the local population.

To conclude, this paper has drawn attention to the underlying factors that help to explain the difficulties encountered by the Moroccan administration (and in particular, the provincial delegations of its Agriculture Ministry) to implement 'participatory' projects. It is hoped that these elements will stimulate a debate that compares the Moroccan experience with those of other African countries.

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[12] The Development Plans were then aggregated into a 'Municipal Investment Plan', which is supposed to constitute a partnership agreement between the provincial administrations and the rural municipality.

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