

IMPROVING RURAL GOVERNANCE

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The general matrix of agricultural and rural policies in the Mediterranean countries defined in the 1990s bears the mark of the promises of liberalisation sealed by the Marrakesh Accords (1994) and untouched by the global food crisis of 1995. Over twenty years after the adoption of the Green Paper by the European Union in 1988, the launch of the McSharry reforms and the agro-environmental reforms which proclaimed the second Pillar of the CAP (2002), the European Community, faced with the challenges of globalisation and the demands of sustainable development, embarked on a revitalisation of its rural areas by developing a multi-functional agriculture. The sustainability of development processes reflected both a new rurality and society's growing environmental concerns. It flagged up its will to see the emergence of a local society run by stakeholders and/or private and public partners and associations as the chief actors tasked with managing the resources and activities of the rural area in a renewed living context.

During the same decade, the announcement of sustainable rural development strategies by the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries was an endeavour to respond to the poverty, the wilting of the economic fabric and the degradation of natural resources, a result in particular of the implementation of structural adjustment programmes. These programmes plunged rural societies into situations of extreme material vulnerability and, without solving the problem of feeding the inhabitants of the poorest rural areas, exposed the most modern part of their agricultural economies to global trade. The new strategies of foreign donors often advocated the principle of decentralisation of powers to rural communities which were asked to assume greater responsibility for the management of the land on which they depended for a living. A flurry of reforms faced with the challenges of globalisation.

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The new challenges of sustainable rural development and globalisation of rural societies and economies led public authorities to adopt far-reaching reforms of public policies and the institutions of rural governance. For their part, the rural development strategies drawn up by the European Union were centred around three major axes:

- competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sector through measures aimed at the structures and factors of agricultural production;

- improvement of quality of life by strengthening services in the rural environment and diversification of economic activities;
- protection of natural resources (water, soils, forests, biodiversity) and promotion of environmental amenities and the countryside.

The Leader approach,¹ which was first piloted in 1990, was what came to be known as a cross-cutting axis. The rural world was to promote modes of governance involving the mobilisation and organisation of local actors exercising their responsibilities in decentralised structures and providing coordination at local, regional and/or national level.

In the SEMCs, rural development strategies accompanied and/or extended existing agricultural policies. The new strategies were organised around productive actions aimed at agriculture, basic infrastructure programmes to improve people's standards of living and national action plans to combat desertification and the degradation of natural resources. Strengthening of institutions and representative organisations of rural communities and local actors was another priority of rural development policies.

Alongside its major objectives, there were also unifying themes which were region-specific. For example, Egypt emphasised settlement and development of desert land to improve its productive potential and ease demographic pressure on resources located in the "old lands" of the Nile Valley. Turkey embarked on a policy of major works to mobilise the waters of the major basins (Tigris and Euphrates), regional development and strengthening of its rural infrastructure. The GAP programme or the South-East Anatolia Project are emblematic of the new rural development outlook in Turkey.

After nigh on two decades of local development programmes in the North and South of the basin, it is time to take stock. How should the objectives be regarded today? What has been achieved and what lessons can be learned from the first evaluations? The objectives of rural policies must be interpreted, if they are to be validly evaluated, in terms of the specific characteristics of each rural society and its history, stage of development, the functions assigned to rural areas by society as a whole and, finally, the nature of the political and administrative institutions which provide a framework through which local actors can express themselves. It is essential to take into account the time-frame specific to each society and rural economy, since beyond the similarities observed in the formulation of rural development policies, the orientations and strategic axes do not have the same content and/or the same meaning on the different sides of the Mediterranean.² To be convinced of this, it is enough to recall in outline the reversals and major transformations that have occurred in the rural societies and economies of the Mediterranean.

The emergence of new forms of rurality in the North of the Mediterranean

The demographic and economic upheavals which marked rural areas in the North Mediterranean countries in the latter half of the 20th century explain the differences in

1 - *Liaisons entre les activités du développement rural* (Links between rural development activities).

2 - Organised around the same paradigms: enhanced competitiveness of agriculture, sustainable management of natural resources, quality of life and diversification of activities, better rural governance.

functions assigned today to these areas and also form the basis of rural development strategies. Even if in countries like France, Greece, Italy or Spain, there is a new trend towards re-population, from 1950 up to the late 1980s the North Mediterranean countries experienced an accelerating rural and agricultural exodus which left deep marks on the countryside. The “rural renaissance” which marked the disappearance and/or demise of country people was fed solely by immigration of people originating from conurbations, towns or abroad. It occurs primarily against a background of an agricultural exodus of young people and women which accentuates the ageing of rural populations.

In Greece, the population living in rural areas (85% of the national territory) now represents only one quarter of the total population. Without a massive influx of foreigners, whose number has increased five-fold in ten years, rural areas would have faced a net population loss of some 4%, and even more accentuated ageing.³ Agriculture and livestock farming represented only about 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2007, and it is residential functions and flourishing leisure activities which play a crucial role in the socio-economic fabric of these areas.⁴

In Spain, rural areas celebrated in his time by Ibn Khaldûn⁵ as the home and workplace of a powerful farming society, have turned a historic corner in the last thirty years. The modernisation of agriculture has accelerated their depopulation. The rural population fell by almost half (47%) between 1960 and 1996, declining from 57% of the total population to just 23%. The “rural renaissance” only involves areas close to the provincial capitals and tourist areas.⁶ In remote rural areas, the decline continued at a rate of 5.4% between 1995 and 2005.⁷ This population has also aged considerably. Old people represent over one quarter of the population in many rural communities (higher than the European average). There, as elsewhere in Europe, rising migrant flows of foreign populations are contributing to this latest reconfiguration of Spanish rural society. During the last five years, the foreign population increased fourfold, an increase of some three million new inhabitants.⁸ According to the 2006 census, some 9% of Spanish residents were of foreign nationality, and it was estimated that a quarter of the immigrants arriving in Spain were settling in rural areas.⁹ Foreign labour is now almost essential in agriculture and livestock farming: 15% of the labour employed in the agricultural sector is of foreign origin compared with an average of 11% in other sectors of the economy. The rural population employed

3 - The new populations are settling in small towns in rural areas, bringing about new types of housing and new ways in which households function. These demographic changes introduce new spatial and organisational relationships between families of farmers who have stayed in the villages and the diaspora. Forms of absentee management of farms are evolving, supported by the presence of local wage labour, in part made up of economic immigrants and drawing on a system of family mutual aid.

4 - New actors are involved in these new dynamics of rural areas (local private or foreign entrepreneurs, municipalities, government development agencies, associations, cooperatives) implementing integrated development programmes, introducing innovation (organisational and economic methods) and encouraging the development of new activities.

5 - In his “*Al-Muquaddima*. Discourse on the Universal History”, Ibn Khaldûn emphasises the considerable heritage handed down by the Iberian peninsula to the farmers of the Maghreb. The Spanish were described by Ibn Khaldûn as “the best farmers of all the civilised countries”.

6 - These areas saw their populations increase (by 14% and 0.7% respectively) between 1991 and 2006. Agglomerations of less than 10,000 have lost population and the so-called “urban” agglomerations (over 10,000 inhabitants) have gained.

7 - Over 12 million hectares of UAA, belonging to 2,880 communes, are in areas affected by depopulation (DGDR-MAPA). The rural heritage has not disappeared, as of the 61,197 population units in Spain, 59,041 (or 96.6% of the total) consist of villages or hamlets which have a clearly rural morphology and functionality.

8 - Since 2000, Spain has been the second highest country of immigration behind the United States.

9 - These populations initially settle in regional capitals but also in small villages where they can find work and housing.

in the primary sector has been declining since 1995, falling from 8.84% of total employment in 1995 to only 4.78% in 2006. The loss of the economic importance of agriculture is not confined to employment alone, but can also be seen in national wealth creation where the agricultural sector accounted for only 3.32% of GDP in 2007. Finally, the new residential strategies of families are clearly an important component of social change. Second homes now account for 50% of all rural homes, compared with 32% in 1992.

Rural areas in Italy have also been affected by profound economic and social change. Even in rural areas with intensive and specialised agriculture (which concentrates some 24% of UAA, 38% of agricultural added value and 29% of farm workers), the active population in agriculture is now only 6% of the total active population. In other rural areas, the ageing of the population is ever more pronounced, and the crisis indicators in agriculture in some regions are mounting up (rate of loss of land, for example).

Although they offer a great variety of configurations (a highly attractive “town countryside” with great economic potential, a “new countryside”, “a countryside in search of balance” and “the most fragile countrysides”, marked by economic and demographic decline), rural areas in France are not, in the main, exodus lands. Since 1975, rural France has gained two million people thanks to new residential patterns made possible by the transport revolution, the development of second homes, shorter working hours and increased life expectancy. Rural demographics in France are still marked by two phenomena: on the one hand, the accentuated trend to peri-urban living (between 1990 and 1999, the population living in peri-urban areas rose from 8.8 to 12.25 million people); on the other, the rising residential function of rural areas (in 1999, 18% of the population of metropolitan France lived in mainly rural areas). While the choice of an alternative lifestyle has some weight, the settlement mostly involves retired people, self-employed, often old, some of whom come from northern Europe. These phenomena explain the ageing of populations in predominantly rural areas. France is also recording a decline in agriculture in its rural areas. Between 1970 and 2000, the number of agricultural workers halved and rural areas became more industrial. Industrial employment in basins of rural life today is twice as great as agricultural and agro-food employment combined. Labour is essentially family labour, although there is a growing share of permanent wage workers in agriculture (rising from 10% to 16% of permanent labour between 1988 and 2000) as well as an increase in seasonal workers. A powerful trend to tertiary employment is another feature of the rural economy which is likely to be confirmed in the years ahead. Jobs and activities directly related to populations (services to individuals, education and health services, retail trade) already provide over 50% of all rural jobs and most of the new jobs in those areas. The rural area plays an essential role in the recreational and tourist economy. Even though the contribution of farmers to tourist provision (farm camping sites, *gîtes* and B & B) is still very marginal, the countryside is the second biggest tourist area for the French (35% to 40% of tourist destinations). This enjoyment of the countryside reflects a specific social demand for the scenery, nature, the quest for identity and authenticity.

In a nutshell, the North Mediterranean countrysides have been profoundly transformed by the mass exodus of country people and their extinction as a majority social group, the disconnection between home and workplace, and the demand of urban-dwellers for nature and rural traditions and culture. All are turning points which “mark the end of

traditional rural societies [...] and raise the problem of the place of agriculture in these [rural] areas” (Hervieu, 2008).

Agriculture, smallholdings and the importance of the rural population in the South and East

For their part, the SEMCs have recorded a rural and agricultural exodus during the last decades which radically upset the distribution of the population between urban and rural, as all the countries, with the exception of Egypt and Albania, have an urbanisation rate of over 50%. Nevertheless, the population in rural areas is rising with natural growth rates sometimes approaching 1%. This population is still mainly young (unlike the populations of the North) and it is natural growth (not the migratory balance seen in Europe) which feeds this sustained demographic growth.

The traditional peasant societies which dominated rural areas in Turkey are being transformed by profound changes, a mark of an ongoing transition. Highly modern socio-economic relationships are developing, with the emergence of commercial enterprises, transforming industries and new production methods promoted in large farms producing for local and international markets and managed by an educated and ambitious class of agricultural entrepreneurs. The crisis experienced by rural smallholdings during the last three decades was the consequence of this historic change. The rural population which, at 25 million people, was still in the majority (over 56% of the population) in 1980, represented only 41% of the total population by 1990. The trend towards urbanisation was clearly confirmed at the turn of the millennium with a rural population of less than one third of the total and an age structure which showed significant ageing following a rapid pace of migration of young country people to the town looking for a better life.¹⁰ The process of modernising society and the Turkish economy was reflected, as in the developed countries, by a decline in the relative share of agriculture. Its share of GDP halved (from 26.1% to 13.3%) in the period 1980-2000. Moreover, this modernisation also created big regional disparities, and eliminating these is today seen as one of the priorities of rural development and integrated in the objectives of various projects currently in progress.

The situation in the Maghreb countries is still specific with regard to the natural handicap affecting rural areas and regions (aridity of the climate, mountainous relief, growing human pressure on water and soil resources) and in terms of their history, since urbanisation on the scale we are familiar with today has only emerged there in the last three decades.

The various censuses in Algeria confirm a downward trend in the rural population: 68.6% in 1966, 60% in 1977, 50.3% in 1987 and 39% in 2005. It is a young population, but one whose prospects of employment and earnings remain poor.¹¹ Accessibility to basic services for so-called sparse populations and the uncertain functioning of the infrastructure in recent years have compounded the poverty and exclusion of populations

¹⁰ - The poverty level in rural areas was significantly higher than in urban areas. According to one study (SPO-2005), 14.7 million people were living below the poverty line in 2005, of whom 9 million were country dwellers.

¹¹ - The average rate of unemployment in rural areas, estimated at 25.1%, mainly affects the young, especially the 20-29 age group which alone accounts for over half (51.4%) of all job-seekers.

from the factors of progress.¹² The rural population, which in the past was predominantly agricultural, is now shared equally between the primary and tertiary sectors (39.5% and 39% respectively). With some 25% of the active rural population, the secondary sector also takes a growing share.¹³ The trend to multiple activities of rural households is also on the rise.¹⁴

In Tunisia, urbanisation is well advanced, with two persons in three today living in an urban environment. The demographic trend shows a strong rural exodus, especially from the North-West and Centre-West. As in all the Maghreb countries, these migratory flows are indicators of a crisis of traditional agriculture which is powerless to procure sufficient employment and income for farming households. The relationship between the country and the town is still subject to employment needs, and the daily travel of village populations to urban centres is far from a freely chosen residential strategy. It is not the return of townspeople to the country, but the impossibility of finding somewhere to live in the towns, due to high property prices or rents which forces this pendular movement of populations whose lifestyle (housing and daily consumption) is still essentially rural. Agriculture no longer exerts its hegemony over the other sectors of activity. The decline in its relative weight has been to the benefit of commercial activities and services. In Tunisia, the active population employed in agriculture fell from almost 22% in 1994 to 16% in 2004. Its contribution to GDP also fell to some 13% in 1994-1995, compared with 22% in 1960.

It is in the decade from 2000 that Morocco began a historic swing in the distribution of the population. The urban population was only in a majority at the last census in 2004 with a rate of over 55% compared with less than 30% in 1960.¹⁵ The rural population, however continues to increase under the effect of a natural positive growth rate (0.6% between 1994 and 2004). Despite all the efforts and social projects, the rural world at the start of the decade of 2000 remains characterised by poverty and precarity: over two thirds of the poor continued to live in rural areas with agriculture as the main source of income. The human development indicators lag alarmingly: an illiteracy rate of 45%, access to electricity for 44% of households, drinking water for only 18% and isolation affecting some 50% of rural households. Agriculture continues to have an important place in the rural economy, with agricultural households representing almost two thirds of rural households. At national level, the agricultural sector employs over 40% of the active population,¹⁶ and represents on average 15% of total GDP.¹⁷

12 - According to the study on "Human development and poverty in the rural environment", poor communes are generally situated in rural steppe areas, mountain areas or mountain forelands. They are small, have very little income of their own, have low levels of child education and the highest rates of adult illiteracy. Cf. *La Revue du Ceneap*, "Développement humain et pauvreté en milieu rural", 34, 2004

13 - The rural populations employed in industry still accounts for 8.8% and 12.6% in buildings and public works (National Office of Statistics, 2006).

14 - Multiple activities occurs in agricultural families which in 15.9% of cases can obtain income from outside the farm through work in other sectors. This figure does not include work in the informal sector which is sometimes a more important source of income.

15 - According to the last UNDP Human Development Report (2007-2008), this process is bound to continue. The rural population would then represent no more than 35% of the total population by 2015.

16 - However, employment in the agriculture sector fell 13 points in 18 years (1987-2005). The highest level was recorded in 1987 with 54% of total employment

17 - In 2002, of an active rural population of 5 million, agricultural activities, forestry and fishing remained the chief providers of employment in rural areas in Morocco. They alone provided employment for 79.1% of the active population in these areas.

In 2000, the rural population of Egypt, at 42 million, was still the largest in the Mediterranean.¹⁸ In 2004, it represented 57.8% of the population. As in many countries of the South, this population is young, with 40.8% under the age of 15 years (1996 population census). The poverty ratio is estimated at 26.5% of the total population, or 15.7 million people in 1997 (Datt and Jolliffe, 1999). A very clear difference can be seen, too, between urban and rural areas, with the latter home to some 63% of the poor population (Datt *et al.*, 1998). Egyptian agriculture is an important activity in rural areas, and the agricultural population represents over half (53%) of the rural population. The most significant change was that initiated in the early 1980s by the programmes to settle uninhabited areas. The demands of regional development through mobilisation of the waters of the Nile was at the root of a new rurality based intensively on a competitive agriculture driven by a new class of rural entrepreneurs which has little to do with the traditional peasant system of the Nile Valley.

Albania, together with Egypt, is a country where the rural population is still in the majority (55% of the population). The predominance of small and very small farms¹⁹ resulting from the 1991 Land Act, their lack of market access, economic underdevelopment and the conditions in the mountain regions, all of which make subsistence of the population difficult, gave rise to powerful emigration flows (to Greece and Italy) or, within the country, to the regions of the Centre-West, the coasts or the major cities, especially Tirana. These migratory movements which essentially concern the youngest groups²⁰ can be seen in particular in the growth of fallow land.²¹ They also contribute to a social reconfiguration of rural areas.²² Albania has retained from its communist past the priority attached to education. Almost all the rural population is literate (over half have attended school for eight years). The mountain regions are the least developed. Poverty is more in evidence there and more serious than elsewhere (2 in the coastal areas). Agriculture occupies an essential place in the rural economy in terms of wealth creation or employment. It still contributes almost one quarter of national GDP, concerns 90% of rural households and employs over half of the active population.

One cannot understand the nature of rurality in the SEMCs without taking into account the economic and social importance of agriculture. Rural societies are societies structured around agricultural workers and households. The importance of the rural population is measured essentially against the yardstick of the smallholding. The demographic vitality of rural areas is directly related to the importance of the smallholding. Turkey has 3 million farms of which three quarters are less than 5 hectares. In 1991, Albania counted over 450,000 private production units with an average area of 1.3 hectares. Morocco in 1996 had some 2 million farmers of whom 70% owned less than 5 hectares. In Tunisia, in 2004-2005, there were 516,000 farms of which smallholdings of less than

18 - In Egypt, areas and agglomerations are classified into "rural" and "urban" by administrative decision. As this classification has important implications in terms of infrastructure and collective structures, in practice decisions in this area are based, not surprisingly, on different criteria (the relative strength, power of local elected representatives, etc.).

19 - Of the order of 1.2-1.7 hectares in the plains and hills and 0.2 - 1 hectare on average in the mountain areas.

20 - Almost half (48.6%) of heads of farms are now over 55 years of age.

21 - Fallow land affects 42.9% of farms in Albania and 14% of total UAA.

22 - Currently, three types of rural areas with their own characteristics are emerging: a rural area with intensive urbanisation (around the major cities in the western part of the country), a rural area in balance (in the areas with favourable natural and economic conditions such as Myzeqe, Fusha and Korçes, etc.) and, lastly, a rural area in demographic decline and economic recession (chiefly in the North and North-East of the country).

5 hectares accounted for 53%. In 2001, Algeria recorded over 1.2 million private farms with an average area of some 4.7 hectares. Egypt, for its part, had 3.7 million farms in 2000, plus some 800,000 “landless” farmers and employed 5.5 million workers. Any transformation of rural areas, rural economies and forms of expression of rurality will be observable in changes in small farming. Its vitality will express rural vitality. Conversely, a crisis in farming will be a crisis of the rural world as a whole.

European policies tested by rural realities

Rural policies in the North Mediterranean countries assign the hosting new populations, involving residential, leisure and environmental functions to rural areas. The economic functions are essentially devoted to non-agricultural activities, services to communities and support for agricultural structures. The strategic objectives of rural development in the EU Mediterranean countries clearly incorporate the dimension of sustainability. Three fundamental axes are identified:

- the first concerns modernisation and the pursuit of competitiveness of agricultural production to strengthen their anchorage in the area, occupation and use of rural areas being a recurrent theme;
- the second concerns protection and promotion of the environment and natural resources of rural areas;
- the third concerns improvement of the quality of life of communities and diversification of activities.

Added to these three axes is a cross-cutting axis based on experience acquired through Leader initiatives, which offers the possibility of implementing local (bottom-up) approaches to rural development. The modalities for the implementation of this rural development policy involved the participation of local actors in the conception and elaboration of local development actions, which would be included in the priorities discussed at national and EU level.

Assessment of the policies in the North

To achieve the objectives defined above, rural development policies in the North Mediterranean countries combine three types of instrument: the traditional instruments of classical agricultural structural policies (investment in farms, training, setting up young farmers, farm income support in disadvantaged areas, etc.) introduced in the early 1970s by the European Community; instruments stemming from the McSharry reform (1992), notably agro-environmental measures; the most recent instruments adopted by the EU devoted to support for rural areas and diversification (support for investment in irrigation, services to farmers and the rural population, craft industries, tourism in rural areas, etc.). These latter measures reflect a new vision of rural development in the European Union which includes, for example, the multiple functions performed by agriculture. The principal measures which accompany these axes can be broken down into the following categories:

- modernisation of agricultural structures (axis 1);

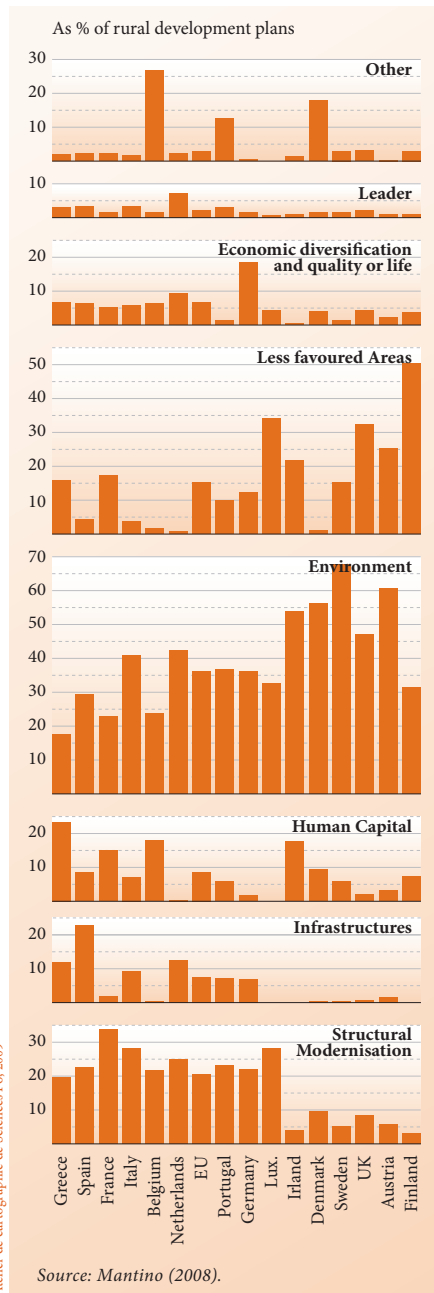
- strengthening of agricultural infrastructure (axis 1);
- development of human capital (axis 1);
- improvement of the environment (axis 2);
- income support in the least developed regions (axis 2);
- economic diversification and quality of life of the rural population (axis 3);
- development of the Leader approach (axis 4);
- other measures (axis 4).

Chart 1 shows the distribution of public resources (EU co-financing, national and regional) by category for the period 2000-2006.

An examination of public expenditure shows that support measures and the implementation of good environmental practices took up over one third of the total public resources. If these are added to compensatory aid allocated to the least developed regions, this means that over 50% of public resources are allocated to axis 2. Meanwhile, modernisation of structures (aid to farms and agro-industrial enterprises, investment in equipment and infrastructure) represents just over one fifth of public resources. Strengthening local infrastructure and services in rural areas and improving human capital within the structure of farms absorbed 7.5% and 8.6% respectively of public expenditure. Analysis of the allocation of public resources to axis 1 shows that EU strategies are still primarily focused on the physical capital of farming to the detriment of human capital on the one hand and rural infrastructure and public services in rural areas, on the other. Lastly, the axis relating to economic diversification and quality of life of the rural population, which is essentially an axis linked to rural development, absorbed only 6.8% of public resources, although the resources allocated to the Leader programme (2.3%) should be added to this. Thus, with just over 9% of the total resources, real efforts at rural development were highly marginal in the EU-15 over the period 2000-2006.

A simplified classification based on the pattern of expenditure shows that rural development in the North Mediterranean countries is still linked to the modernisation of agricultural structures. Expenditure varies from country to country and the structure by axis of rural development programmes in 2000-2006 (CNASEA, 2003; Dwyer *et al.*, 2004) indicates several strategies. While environmental approaches are dominant in approaches to rural development in the countries of northern Europe (Luxembourg, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Ireland, United Kingdom, Austria) the Mediterranean countries (southern Italy, Greece, Spain and France, too), due to the existence in their territories of regions whose development is lagging behind, pursue an objective of modernisation of the agricultural and forestry sector. Public resources devoted to this modernisation strategy are a response to the imperative need to restructure farms, bearing in mind the weight that small family farms still have, as shown in the following chart (cf. Chart 2). Expenditure on irrigation equipment and infrastructure essential to countries like Spain or Greece should be included in this.

Chart 1 - Percentage of public expenditure by category in EU-15, 2000-2006



Atelier de cartographie de Sciences Po, 2009

Trends in new rural development policies

During the new planning period (2007-2013), the EU's rural development policy is contained in three documents: 1) the Community strategic guidelines governed by Regulation 1698/2005 (EC) which defines the legal framework of the second pillar of the CAP and details the actions eligible for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (Feader); 2) national strategic rural development plans; 3) operational strategic development plans.²³

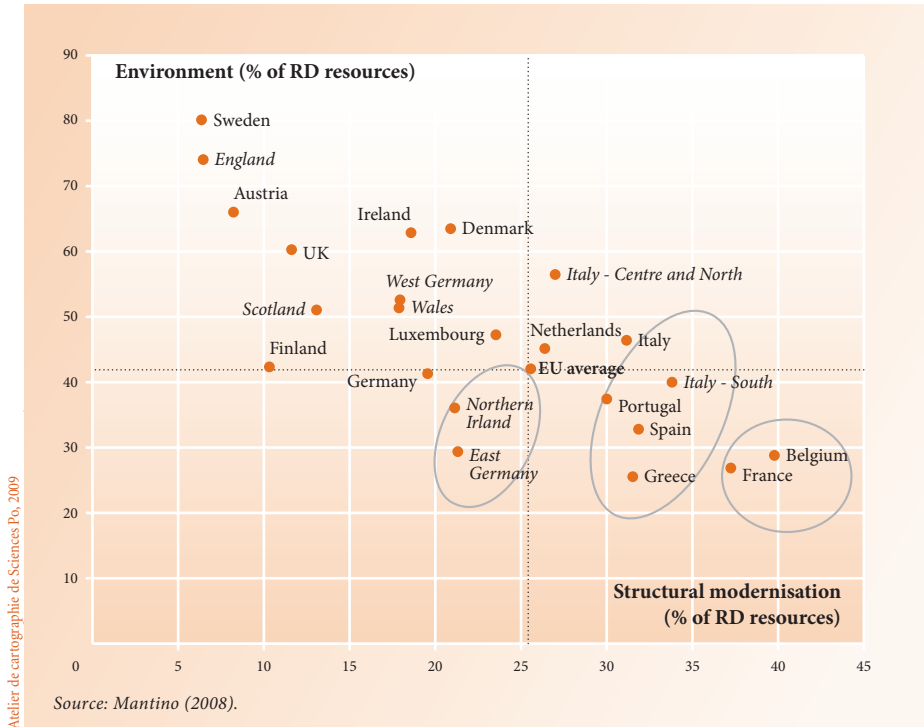
The system put in place in the framework of the programming period 2002-2013 creates a single fund, Feader, with national and regional co-financing and invites development of European Union regulations through appropriate national strategies and regional rural development programmes:

- axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector (25% minimum envelope);
- axis 2: Improving the environment and the countryside (25% minimum envelope);
- axis 3: Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy (10% minimum envelope);
- axis 4: Leader, methodological axis for the application of the measures of the other three axes (5% minimum envelope).

What are the new rural development strategies in the European Union and especially the Mediterranean countries on the northern shore? A comparison based on the chief expenditure on intervention in the period 2007-2013 shows changes in the

²³ - Council Decision of 20 February 2006 on Community strategic guidelines for rural development (programming period 2007 to 2013) (2006/144/EC).

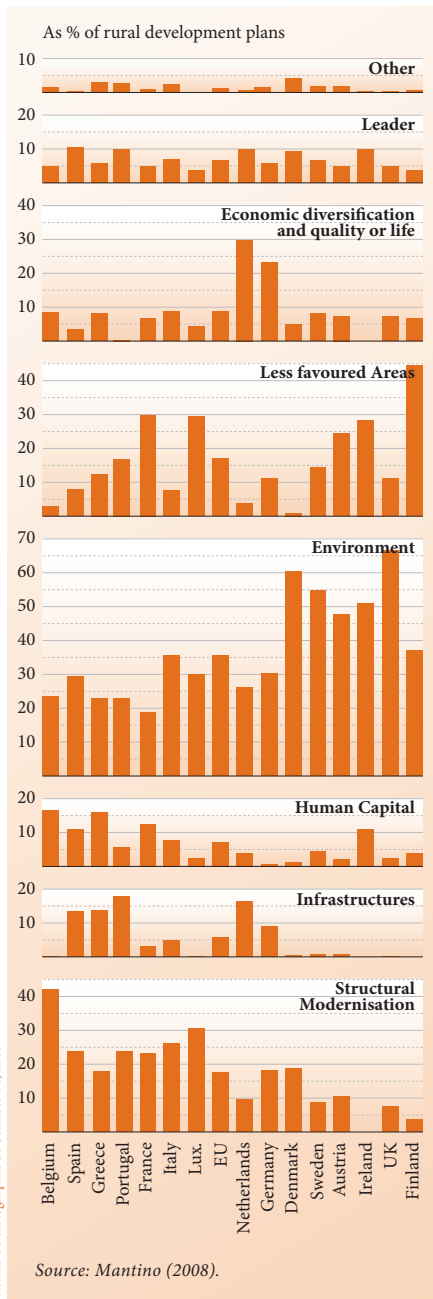
Chart 2 - Modernisation of structures versus environment in the rural development strategies of the EU-15, 2000-2006



priorities of rural development. For the EU-15, chart 3 shows that while axis 2, “environment and least developed regions” continues to figure among the chief priorities in the majority of European countries (these two objectives concentrate 53% of public resources), there has been a redistribution of public resources towards other axes. Public resources devoted to “modernisation of agricultural structures” (18%), infrastructure (6%) and human capital (7%) decline while those allocated to the “Leader programme” (7%) show an increase. The instruments used in the framework of EU regulations, especially the identification, in many countries, of the Leader approach to promote economic diversification and improve the quality of life in rural areas and the fixing of the minimum threshold for the Leader approach at 5%, have exerted a powerful influence on this redistribution of resources.

While during the period 2000-2006, the priorities in the Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece and Italy) were polarised on improvement of the competitiveness of agriculture, due to the weight represented by rural development programmes for disadvantaged regions, the strategy which prevails in the period 2007-2013 now combines the two axes of “environment” and “agricultural competitiveness” in a more balanced way in the programmes. In Greece, the implementation of the national strategic rural development plan integrated the concept of sustainability as a cross-cutting theme in the competitiveness

Chart 3 - Share of public expenditure by type of investment in EU-15, 2007-2013



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axis (for example, through actions to promote quality products or rationalisation of the production of small enterprises). In Spain, the national strategic rural development plan, 2007-2013, increased the number of environmental measures. The presence of an environmental strategic axis in the majority of Leader + programmes, particular attention to protection of biodiversity in regional programmes and the new Sustainable Development Act (December 2007) bear witness to the interest attached to the environmental question. While attaching special importance to increasing the competitiveness of agriculture, livestock farming and forestry, regarded as the economic and social base of rural areas, the strategic plan supports measures to maintain the population of rural areas and improve their quality of life as a key element in the Spanish rural development strategy.

France, for its part, has radically changed its policies compared with the previous programming period (2000-2006). Environment and the least developed areas now represent 50% of public resources. This change of priorities was essentially influenced by two factors: firstly, reduction in agricultural subsidies following the reform of the CAP which provides for transfers of resources from the first to the second pillar by compulsory modulation and, secondly, the EU's budgetary constraints, where arbitrages are made more in favour of agro-environmental measures or compensatory aid to the least developed regions than structural investment in farms. The Hexagonal Rural Development Programme (PDRH) covers the whole of metropolitan France apart from Corsica which has its own rural development programme, the Corsican PDR. Half the new commitments will be managed locally in the period 2007-2013 through the

regional components of the PDRH and regional programmes. The envelope allocated to Feader for France over 7 years is 6.37 billion euros of which 5.27 billion are for the PDRH. Some 1.8 billion euros from this sum was allocated to regional components. The distribution of the Feader credits between axes differs significantly from region to region.²⁴

The case of Italy is more emblematic of the changing strategies. Priority in rural development at national level was clearly given in 2007-2013 to improving the environment and the countryside. Economic diversification and improvement of the quality of life of rural areas saw their budgets doubled. An examination of Italy's rural development strategies shows marked differences between regions. At region level, three types of rural development strategy emerged in the programming phase 2007-2013:

a strategy resolutely directed towards the environment and the countryside which is dominant in the North and the mountain regions – Piedmont, Lombardy, Aosta Valley, Trento and Bolzano – and two regions in the South, Basilicata and Sardinia;

a strategy which strikes a balance between competitiveness of the agricultural sector and the environmental axis, represented by 8 regions, distributed geographically half in the North and half in the South (Emilia, Tuscany, Umbria, Marches, Campania, Calabria, Sicily and Apulia);

a strategy resolutely turned towards competitiveness of agriculture and forestry in all the geographical regions: in the North (Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Liguria), in the Centre (Lazio) and in the South (Abruzzi and Molise).

In Turkey, rural development policies stem from the Strategy 2001-2023 which fixes the objective of modernisation of the economy and society in the framework of joining the EU. By increasing income levels and the quality of life in the rural sector, they seek to reduce regional disparities and to protect and promote the environment and the cultural heritage. For rural communes under an urban influence, the measures involve the processing and marketing of agricultural products, diversification of economic activities and strengthening the capacity of local development. The Kemalist legacy of agricultural modernisation appears to set the framework for approaches to rural development. The development of infrastructure and basic services (education, health, transport, electricity, drinking water) in “focal villages”, introduction of industry and organisation of rural producers (cooperatives, associations) which began in the 1930s, all of which still inspire the policies implemented in 2000. In this country, rural development programmes have a particular regional dimension. Among the regional plans, mention should be made of the South-East Anatolia development project (“Güneydoglu Anadolu Projesi” or GAP), the Zonguldak-Bartın-Karabük regional development project (ZBK), the East Anatolia project (DAP), the Eastern Black Sea regional development project (DOKAP) and the Yesilirmak basin development project (YHGP). However, the disparities in development between the regions are still considerable, and Turkey's objective remains reduction of rural poverty.²⁵

24 - The regions allocated on average 42% of their Feader envelope to axis 1. Six regions allocated more than half their envelope to this axis. The major part allocated to axis one by some regions reflects a highly significant action in favour of modernisation of farms and/or development of IAA.

25 - The objective is to reduce by half, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the population whose income is less than one dollar a day. In Turkey, the poverty level in rural zones is significantly higher than in urban areas. According to one study, of 14.7 million people living in 2005 below the poverty line, 9 million were living in rural areas (SPO-2005).

In Albania, the principle of restoring freedom of movement of populations and the application of the Land Act were fundamental measures which influenced the rural world. The collapse of the rural economy after the withdrawal of the State and the reform of agrarian structures destabilised rural society. Rural development projects were then financed by international funds (World Bank, EBRD, Albanian Development Fund, etc.) during those ten years. The priority objectives of the 2006–2009 Programme concern several aspects of development: strengthening the productive potential of the agriculture sector, improvement of farm structures and rehabilitation of irrigation systems, development of basic infrastructure to provide an adequate standard of living for rural populations and combating the degradation of natural resources. In short, Albania is seeking an agricultural development model (agro-export model or agriculture producing for local needs) but has not yet found an answer to the issues of the strategic development of the mountain regions which cover a large part of its territory. The economic and social shocks resulting from the structural adjustment programme and the post-communist transition undermined the old standards, values and forms of cooperation and solidarity between the actors of rural development. The “destructuring” of the actors, economic instability and the uncertainty related to it are a barrier to forms of self-organisation and coordination of the local actors.

Rural development strategies in the countries of the South: the central place of agriculture and poverty reduction

The SEMCs are endeavouring to stem the rural and agricultural exodus by encouraging country areas to contain their population growth for lack of controlled urbanisation policies. They assign productive functions which generate jobs and incomes to their rural areas. Agriculture being the chief sector of activity, many projects seek to improve its productivity and economic competitiveness. However, rural development programmes all grant poverty reduction and basic social infrastructure a prime place. The projects and plans implemented also aspire to conserving scarce and fragile natural resources seriously endangered by human pressure and the perceptible climate change which affects these regions.

Rural development strategies in the SEMCs today seek to resolve the great challenges of poverty reduction and under-employment, social and geographical inequalities and the degradation of scarce resources weakened by demographic pressure and inappropriate systems of production. Apart from these strategic axes, they have set themselves a cross-cutting objective of strengthening agricultural and rural institutions and organisations. The rural development strategy 2020 in Morocco, the new integrated rural development programmes in Tunisia (2004) and the rural renewal policy in Algeria (2005) illustrate these new directions. Since the 1980s, Egypt has been pursuing development of agricultural potential and consolidating the settlement of new areas in the framework of reconstruction of its agricultural lands through expansion into uninhabited areas.

In Tunisia, the year 2004 saw the effective launch of improved integrated rural development projects which seek to conserve natural resources and make better use of them,

increase agricultural production of small and medium-sized farms, improve living conditions and incomes of rural populations and promote rural women.²⁶ Interventions in the fields of mobilisation and exploitation of water resources, forests and grazing land, water and soil conservation and promotion of difficult zones is part of the national programme to combat desertification. A national adult education programme which mobilises many teachers (employing “unemployed” graduates) was decreed to combat the illiteracy which afflicted 1 adult in 3 in 2004, especially rural women.

Meanwhile, the integrated rural development programmes combined two main types of action: productive actions and others aimed at improving living conditions and basic infrastructure in the most disadvantaged rural areas. The actions were focussed on improving infrastructure: building roads and highways, provision of drinking water (which rose from 82% to 92% between 2001 and 2006), general electrification in rural areas (98% in 2006), reduction in precarious housing and increased number of health centres. The general improvement in living conditions and access to the various services in rural areas was accompanied by a decline in poverty. The poverty rate was estimated to have halved between 1990 and 2005, despite a few pockets of extreme poverty which still exist in remote rural areas.²⁷ The programmes to improve general living standards in rural areas were financed by both state and national solidarity funds (National Solidarity Fund 26-26, the National Employment Fund 21-21 and the Tunisian Solidarity Bank) as well as international solidarity funds. Simultaneously, a regional development programme was implemented in the rural areas of the North-West, coordinated by the Sylvo-Pastoral Office of the North-West (Odesypano). This shows that efforts are being made to include the new generations of integrated rural development programmes in regional development programmes, allocating more resources to the protection of natural resources (conservation of water and soils, combating sand encroachment and managing common grazing land...).

In Algeria, the agricultural and rural policy reforms could not be implemented in the decade 1990-2000 because of the particularly difficult political climate. Rural areas had been especially exposed to the effects of a terrorist movement that was devastating in human and material terms. It was only in July 2000 that a national agricultural development programme was adopted, endowed with considerable budgetary resources in the framework of the establishment of the National Fund for the Regulation and Development of Agriculture (FNRDA).²⁸ The findings after a few years of operation of the national agricultural development plan, in 2003, showed that the actions taken, individual agricultural investment projects, had excluded households in small rural agglomerations who were the socially and economically most vulnerable groups, and scattered or isolated farms (a rural population of some 10 million people). These findings led to the adoption of a national agricultural and rural development plan chiefly based on improving the living standards of communities. Local rural development projects, regarded as key tools of rural development, thus came to reinforce local development actions (rural

26 - The projects should achieve a global supply of rural drinking water of 80% in all the governorships and improve the rate of connection of households to some 95.5% by the end of 2004. As regards the development of difficult regions of the interior, the 10th Plan (2002-2006) envisaged the implementation of 11 integrated agricultural development projects, with investment estimated at 216 million dinars).

27 - World Bank (2006).

28 - Of the order of 40 billion Algerian dinars in 2000, over 500 million dollars, representing unprecedented growth (tenfold) of public agricultural budgets allocated in the 1990s.

electrification, opening and modernisation of the road network, drinking water systems, health, schools...). Collective projects financed by various funds were combined with projects to strengthen the local economy (mobilisation of water resources, development of land and farm improvement, planting of plantations, safeguarding and developing grazing land, creation of livestock farm units and smallholdings...).²⁹

The rural renewal policy adopted in 2006, which targets rural households in landlocked or remote areas, in particular, is structured around four main programmes. The first concerns improvement of rural living standards. The second, diversification of economic activities, is designed to encourage development of alternative sources of income by rural populations. The third concerns protection and promotion of natural resources and the rural heritage, both tangible and intangible. These three programmes will be implemented in the framework of a participatory and local rural development process, formalised by the tool called the integrated local rural development project. This axis benefits from a programme of human capacity building and technical assistance for those involved in rural development. Various evaluations and studies show that the integrated local rural development projects adopted are essentially collective projects defined by local communities with the objective of strengthening social facilities and collective infrastructure of rural communes. They reflect the real aspirations of rural communities to improve their standards of living.

In the 1990s, approaches to rural development in Morocco involved the implementation of sectoral programmes with the objective of eliminating the deficit in infrastructure and basic social services (drinking water, electrification, rural roads, etc.). The productive actions are carried out in the framework of agricultural development projects in *Bour* areas.³⁰ The spread of poverty in the rural world, the growing social disparities between the urban and rural milieu, low labour productivity on small farms and the degradation of natural resources are core objectives of Morocco's Rural Development Strategy 2020 adopted at the end of the 1990s. This strategy involves projects of a social, economic and environmental character and both national resources and those of international cooperation and public development aid. It was strengthened in May 2005 by the National Human Development Initiative which again sets itself the objectives of alleviating infrastructure deficits in the poorest rural communes and promoting income and employment generating economic activities. In Morocco, rural policy has an undoubtedly social dimension. It is a policy of compensating for the social and economic inequalities which mark areas, regions and the agriculture sector as a whole. The question is whether the "Green Plan" adopted in the Spring of 2008 which charges the modern private sector of Moroccan agriculture (Pillar 1) with training and "accrediting" the small rural economy sector (Pillar 2) will succeed in bringing about more social change in the Moroccan countryside than Strategy 2020 sought to achieve.

Egypt is a model of a rural development policy which gives a central role to private sector investors. Public rural policies are backed up by hydro-agricultural improvement policies and intensification of the agricultural sector entrusted to the private sector.

²⁹ - The Fund for rural development fund and development of land by concession (FDRMVTTC), the Fund for combating desertification, development of grazing land and steppe (FLDPPS), the National Fund for Aid to Housing (Fonal), etc.

³⁰ - *Bour* agriculture corresponds to the notion of pluvial agriculture.

Private investment in the development, equipment and production represents on average between two thirds and over 80% of agricultural investment (84% in 2006). They led to the emergence on the new lands of large capitalist estates, a far cry from the family model of the “old lands”.³¹ These irrigated and mechanised farms (20 to 25% of the total agricultural area) target their crop systems towards export products and concentrate social infrastructure, services and economic activities.

The objective set by Strategy 2017 is to increase the area of land under cultivation by 3 million *feddans*, or 1.2 million hectares compared with today. Six major projects concentrate the bulk of public and international financing, the most important of them being the Toshka and Elsalam canal projects.³² While in the land reclamation zones, a class of agricultural entrepreneurs, technicians and local managers dominate the local economy, the rural population in Upper Egypt (Nile Valley), made up of small farmers, wage workers and landless peasants, is very largely poor and state controlled. Studies show that there is a close correlation between access to land and poverty in the rural world (Croppenstedt, 2006; Ellaithy, 2007). The amount of public investment in rural development (Shorouk national programme) is too small to fill the gap between rural and urban areas. Thus, in the period 1982-2002, per capita investment in urban areas was 9 times higher than in rural areas. It was still 7 times higher in the period 2002-2005 (*Egypt Human Development Report*, 2005). Collective infrastructure is cruelly lacking. More than half the population of Upper Egypt is still illiterate, 59% of men and 50% of women, and rural populations suffer seriously from lack of access to drinking water.³³ For decades, public policies have disadvantaged the rural areas of Upper Egypt (80%-85% of the total agricultural area with 90% of the rural population). Current agricultural and rural development policy benefits the agriculture of the new lands. Bearing in mind that this agriculture occupies only 20% of the agricultural area, is home to only 8% of the population and accounts for only 2% of farms, it is legitimate to question the sustainability of a development strategy marked by such an imbalance.

From “constructed” areas in the North to “lived areas” in the South

The spatial dimension is now regarded as a productive force in the strategies of economic actors. Faced with globalisation and the need to promote economic competitiveness, many rural areas have embarked on a process of developing their local resources. They mobilise their historic heritage or know-how, respond to a demand for typical products with a strong identity, maintain their countryside and their culture and revive their culinary traditions. As a complex space comprising multiple functions involving numerous actors, the area becomes the organiser which captures external forces, a place of

31 - The term “old lands” is used to designate the agricultural lands of the valley and the Delta, as opposed to the “new lands” reclaimed from the desert.

32 - The Toshka project seeks to create a new “Nile Delta” in the South of the Western desert. It involves cultivating 540,000 feddans (226,890 hectares) using the water from Lake Nasser by means of a canal 150 kilometres long. The Elsalam canal project is intended to reclaim 620,000 feddans (260,504 hectares).

33 - During the summer of 2007, Egypt experienced what the national press called “the revolt of the thirsty”, i.e. the demonstrations by people in several rural regions following the lack of drinking water for several days, despite a Nile flood regarded as particularly strong.

intermediation, the centre of economic activities and trade. The modes of organisation and coordination of the actors call for many kinds of innovation. Actors organise themselves into networks. They absorb all the modalities inherent in geographical, relational, institutional and economic proximity. They develop partnerships and cooperation and rely on institutions to channel projects and the funds to implement them. The area is permanently constructed on a given historical territorial base. Constructed areas are the product of organised actors who seek to resolve identified problems. The foundation on which they build is formed by an economic and social base and a value system shared by members of the local community.

The construction of new rural areas in the North

In the North Mediterranean, the adaptation of agriculture to European integration and global trade brought the theme of the new functions of the rural space and rural areas to the fore. The area is seen as a foundation of social relations providing a strong bond between the socio-cultural heritage and the economic sphere. Farmers and their organisations are no longer the only actors in the development of rural areas. The central State transfers powers and resources to a society of private stakeholders, involving representatives of civil society, local elected representatives, enterprises and administrations. Agricultural production is redirected towards quality. Quality marks and labels of origin, in this context, are the essential tools of public policies in favour of local areas and the environment. The burgeoning institutional and organisational structure driven in the North Mediterranean by the EU rural development policies is at the very core of multiple and varied local area structures, even, in some eyes, to the point of excess. Apart from actions related to national regional development policies, the EU's so-called social cohesion regional policy, the reform of the structural funds (1988), provided for the financing of project areas through the Leader programmes in France, Italy, Spain and Greece. Other geographical configurations have been superimposed since the 1990s.

In France, the national highland policy, "pays" contracts, the implementation of agro-environmental measures, the creation of natural parks, the Leader project, the Agricultural Orientation Act (area contracts) and the Chevènement and Voinet Acts (1999) defining "pays" projects, were all methods of construction of local areas. The Leader programmes were deployed in 2000-2006 in 140 areas of France and involved development strategies aimed at experimenting with new ways of exploiting local resources and potential (heritage, culture, agriculture, environment...), strengthening the economic environment and enhancing the organisational capacity of the actors (dialogue, local networks, monitoring and management of projects, decision making...). Feader axis 4 (strategic orientations of rural development 2007-2013) takes up many of the characteristics of the Leader + programme which is a localised programme. Only selected rural project areas (some 200 in France for 140 areas at present) are eligible for European co-financing. The beneficiaries must be formed of local action groups (LAG) composed of public and private partners (the latter at least 50%) responsible for monitoring projects included in an integrated local development strategy.

Parallel to these area projects, another 379 projects were labelled poles of rural excellence in 2006, following a call for projects issued by the Government in December 2005. Based on a public-private partnership, these innovative projects in rural areas were intended

to create or maintain some 40,000 jobs in the long term. The breakdown of projects in the poles of excellence is as follows: 41% of projects for the promotion of the natural, cultural and tourist attractions, 21% concern the development and management of bio resources, 16% are aimed at agricultural production, craft industries and local services, 14% target the provision of services and reception of new populations and the remainder, some 8%, cover a variety of subjects.

In addition, “*pays*” projects are now the cornerstone of construction of rural areas. The measure involves advice on the development of “*pays*” (involving all the local development actors) which provide the framework for negotiations and multiple partnerships to establish joint projects to meet the expectations of the people living in these areas. The project promoters are bound by a charter which formalises the partnerships of actors (social, cultural and environmental). Serving as a complement to structures already existing in the framework of intercommunality (natural parks, basins of employment, tourism and rural development offices, etc.) the “*pays*”, whether embryonic or already institutionalised, are a focus of local power which gives birth to a new area map, often overlapping previous administrative divisions (departments, regions, communities of communes). Lastly, the “*pays*” are more broadly involved in the realignment of urban and rural areas, as shown by “agglomeration contracts”, which are similar to “*pays*” contracts, also intended to spark debate. They encourage a learning process among the actors in the management of collective actions and planning the future of their areas taking into account sustainability.

In Italy, political history and the organisation of the State which allowed considerable autonomy to the regions have influenced local structures. Apart from the Leader projects (132 local action groups in 2000-2006) which were widely used, the “*contratti d’area*”, which promoted the establishment of area employment pacts, integrated area projects and rural districts, were all ways of implementing local rural development. The third generation Leader projects (Leader +) benefited from the lessons of the previous Leader programmes. Area employment pacts are specific to Italy, both in terms of financial resources and methodology. Integrated area projects were put in place during the programming phase 2000-2006 in the least developed regions and those targeted for restructuring. Lastly, rural districts are a very recent creation of Italian policy. Implemented as a pilot in Tuscany, their scale is still modest in terms of resources. These various methods of area construction have common characteristics which can be summarised as follows:

- the projects focus on innovation;
- the geographical limits are generally neither too large nor too small to ensure satisfactory public funding of communal needs;
- they include various sectors but are based on agriculture and concentrate on rural areas rather than agricultural households;
- they involve local actors on a formal basis but also call on informal partnerships. Decisions are taken by local partnerships rather than central (national or regional) administrations.

It is the degree to which these characteristics are actually enshrined in policies which explain the differences between Leader, area employment pacts, integrated area pacts and rural districts. While Central and Northern Italy are marked by a rural-urban continuum where labelled local products, IAA and industrial SME are structured on a local area basis, these geographical dynamics are weaker in the South where the organisational fabric is less dense and economically less robust. In these regions of the South, the quality of the countryside and environmental assets are the principal local resources.

In Spain, 17 autonomous regions and 50 provinces form the basis of the country's administrative organisation. Up to the 1980s, rural areas were essentially regarded as agricultural areas where the rural was subsumed into the agricultural. After joining the European Union in 1986, with a State already decentralised into autonomous communities, Spain began to introduce the CAP, followed in 1991 by the Leader I initiative aimed at rural development which would contribute to the emergence of areas. Between the municipal and provincial level, "comarcas" were formed. These were neither political constituencies nor administrative divisions, but a geographical base for rural development projects and a place of negotiation and coordinated action by local actors. It was only in the mid-1990s, with the development of the "bottom-up" approach, that the area would be considered as a key element in rural development strategies. The favourable reception given to Leader by the central Government and regional and local government is linked largely to the considerable decentralisation of the Spanish State and the obligations arising from the country's accession to the EU.³⁴

The execution of these rural development programmes required new community and Spanish institutions and new "ground rules". These new institutions, in turn, created new forms of participation, collaboration, supervision, etc., and new actors and areas appeared. The decentralisation of the State and the application of the European Union rural development policy also implemented the principles of "subsidiarity and co-management", encouraging rural areas to take on decision making and management powers which hitherto had belonged exclusively to the National Administration. This helped to reinforce the structuring and creation of the socio-economic fabric in areas which had previously been somewhat fragmented. Other factors contributed to this "upsurge", notably the revaluation of the "local" and the new opportunities of a globalised market which offered opportunities for certain rural activities (ecological products, local products, quality products, tourist services, environmental services, etc.). Ultimately, the process of construction of areas enabled the rural actors to forge a common culture, exercise new responsibilities authorising the appropriation of institutional measures and master the essentials of local development.

For its part, Greece experienced a major upheaval in its administrative system. In 1997, it embarked on a reform of decentralisation with the creation of 1,000 *demes* (the basic administrative unit), 52 *nomes* (departments) and 13 regions in order to create a viable and competitive system of areas.³⁵ The national improvement and sustainable development

34 - The Ministry of Agriculture, which surrendered its powers to the EU and the autonomous communities, regarded the new rural development policy as an opportunity to regain some purpose. Certain governments of the autonomous communities saw rural development policy as an opportunity to consolidate their legitimacy in relation to rural areas, stem the rural exodus and stimulate local economies.

35 - The Decentralisation Act organised the transfer of powers from central level to a reduced number of enlarged

plan proposes in the next four years to introduce a new administrative reform reducing the number of administrative divisions by two thirds. This means reducing the number of departments from 52 to 17 and regions from 13 to 5. Although still without all the necessary financial, institutional and technical means to assume its role, the rural area has become a partner of the State in planning at all levels. Greece has used the Leader scheme and development agencies were the preferred instrument for promoting area projects. At the core of these projects leading to some degree of localisation, the process of qualification of agricultural products, tourism and protection of the natural, cultural, architectural and historic heritage have played a major role. Greece has tried new and original forms of constructing areas. In particular, network areas have been founded on the basis of common values and representation shared by actors from the diaspora. Drawing on their relational proximity, these actors of the diaspora have constructed a network of relationships which mobilise physical, social and financial capital and the new information and communication technologies for the benefit of the area of origin. These areas have taken shape with the development of multiple projects which generate economic activities, redeployment of services to the public and rapid demographic expansion.

Excessive localisation and institutional overheating in the North

The new modes of governance coincide with environmental, national and regional development policies which are directed towards greater openness to opportunities of initiatives and actions of rural areas (regional parks, national development act, environment...). The proliferation of area projects and regional strategies on the subject of rural development sometimes makes them difficult to coordinate.

In France, while we can see a convergence of the LAG (project areas) which are invited in the framework of the programme for 2007-2013 towards cohesion with existing local entities (natural parks, *pays*, basins of employment), some *pays* are proving difficult to establish because of political tensions or conflicts of interest which stand in the way of the participatory approach.³⁶ The question of project financing and competition for control of resources is crucial. It raises the subsidiary question of the legislative constraints which govern relations between local authorities and the State addressed in the Lambert report of December 2007.³⁷

In Greece, the organisational weakness of the demes, added to the weakness of the intermediate local and regional bodies, means that rural society and its actors are unable to participate effectively in the organisation and functioning of the new institutions which are supposed to govern the new areas (catchment areas, Natura 2000 zones, natural parks, etc.). Nor are they able to participate in the elaboration and implementation of diagnostics and local development actions. Although development agencies have

communes, 1,000 demes instead of 6,000 communes. These reforms are quite recent and have so far not led to an organisation or improvement in the functioning of these authorities sufficient to make them fully effective in practical terms.

³⁶ - This is especially the case in Aveyron, where some people refuse to see the proposed *pays* overstep the borders of the department for political reasons. The partnership of future *pays* is rather on the basis of competition.

³⁷ - *Révision générale des politiques publiques. Les relations entre l'État et les collectivités locales*, report of the committee chaired by D. Lambert, December 2007.

a key role in the economic development of rural areas, they tend rather to aid and support projects of collective interest rather than fulfilling the function of a personalised information service and support for individual initiatives. In short, the organisational weakness of local institutions accentuates the difficulty of linking the two levels of intervention (rural area and new management areas), and it does not allow the introduction of the support and information mechanisms necessary for sustainable development of rural areas by local society.

In Spain, it cannot be said that the process of construction of areas has been successful in all rural areas, given the diversity of situations and the existence of certain negative aspects of the emergence of democracy in rural areas.³⁸ To combat these disparities between areas, monitor cross-cutting measures and ensure that rural development programmes of the autonomous communities are consistent with the national strategic plan and the national framework, new administrative structures were created (National Monitoring Committee, Interministerial Committee for the Rural Environment, Council for the Rural Environment, Office of Rural Development Associations). In addition, the persistent disparities between areas led to the adoption of the Local Sustainable Development Act, 2007.

Los Alcornocales park: the key to mastering decentralised development

The park is a natural park in Andalusia measuring 170,000 hectares and with 95,000 inhabitants. Natural parks are protected and they are managed at national level (not autonomously). While this example is not representative of Spain, it has been chosen for its special characteristics: the priority given to clean energy, combating desertification, biodiversity and governance.

The Spanish regions have powers relating to agriculture not possessed by the State, and sustainable development has been a means of legitimisation for the region of Andalusia. Until then, there had been a proliferation of institutions in the park area with 4 associations of communes, the natural park and management agency (AMA), 4 Leader projects, 1 Proder project, 5 OCAS, etc. It was the Rural development committee of the Leader II project in the park area which was tasked by national declaration to draw up the sustainable development plan (SDP). The SDP organised the coordination of programmes and actors. It created the conditions for dialogue and institutional cooperation in the management of resources, control, monitoring of socio-economic aspects, and dynamics of functioning which, following discussions and negotiations between the various actors, promoted a fair distribution of missions. A collective learning process, taking heed of the needs of the population, listening to the private sector and coordinating with administrative structures is the basis which allows the park to function properly. Other similar processes have been followed in the natural park, such as the "European charter for sustainable tourism" (ECST) or the New Rural Strategy for Andalusia (NERA).

In Italy, the deficit of the local dimension of projects is considered as one of the principal gaps in rural development plans adopted up to 2006. A localised approach would have avoided the extreme fragmentation of measures. This shortcoming was particularly

38 - F. Ceña, R. Gallardo and D. Ortiz, *Rapport final portant sur l'étude institutions et organisations du développement rural en Espagne*, projet PAR-PAA, champ III: Développement rural et politiques agricoles dans le contexte de la mondialisation, Montpellier, IAMM, 2005.

marked in the case of agro-environmental measures. To be effective, the concentration and proximity of farms receiving environmental aid required localised actions.

Do local policies settle the question of geographical inequalities (Auvergne, South of France, Northern Italy, Southern Italy, Spanish regions)? How can distance be overcome by reducing access to public services, efficient transport, reliable energy supplies and high-speed Internet which is still distributed unequally between remote areas where 40% or more of the population lives on average more than half-an-hour by car from a hospital and 43% more than an hour away from a university. In 2007, the percentage of homes with high-speed Internet access was less than 15%, on average, of that in the towns. The management of environmental problems in a context of climate change and increased risks of flooding, loss of biodiversity or movement demands an organisation of actors based on a cooperation which does not stop at the borders of an area or region. While the policy of cohesion encourages forms of cooperation through the Interreg programmes, the Green Paper on territorial cohesion emphasises that much remains to be done.³⁹

From “lived areas” to “illusions of participation” in the countries of the South

The obstacles placed in the path of local structures in the South of the Mediterranean derive from delays in the process of regional development and inequalities in human development. They are related to non-recognition of areas of traditional rural communities (lived areas) and, lastly, they emanate from the fragmentation of localised actions and approaches to rural development largely due to the weaknesses of modes of coordination and governance.

In the first place, the material conditions and basic infrastructure in many rural regions do not form a sufficient critical mass to give visibility to the area. Furthermore, illiteracy and poverty hold back local development and many rural regions are landlocked and isolated. In addition, areas lack real borders, necessary for social intermediation to organise them. It is within borders that a community recognises its territory and identifies itself as a community. Yet the actions taken in the Maghreb often ignore the territories of rural communities and traditional rural organisations are maintained, in legal terms, on an informal basis. The process of formation of national states in the Maghreb (administrative boundaries of territories) and modernisation of society (communal assemblies, provinces, governorships, cooperative organisations and rural associations cemented in the Act of 1901) sought to extinguish traditional forms of organisation of rural societies (tribes or *arch* and *djamâa* or assemblies of douars and villages). The setbacks to local development have often been attributed to this “strategy” of the modern State.

The geo-administrative structure introduced on the back of state regional development projects is thus in competition with forms of “lived areas” experienced by village and/or rural communities whose traditional bonds have not been undone. Thus, the territories of the South are in search of an identity and a mode of governance which takes account of the wishes and specific characteristics of rural communities. It should be noted that

³⁹ - Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee, *Green paper on territorial cohesion: Turning territorial diversity into strength*, SEC (2008) 2550, 6 October 2008.

timid attempts to taken these communities into account were made through a number of projects concerning rural regions of the Maghreb. One can point here to the Douar Development Plan (PDD) implemented at local level by Odesypano to involve populations more in various choices and thereby to take ownership of them. One can also mention the experiment involving ethno-lineage cooperation in the pastoral areas of Eastern Morocco (financed by IFAD) or, in the grazing lands of Southern Tunisia, the creation of socio-territorial units (UST)⁴⁰ which are identified with rural communities tied by quasi tribal relations. This question arises against the background of the problem of the relationship between State and civil society and, consequently, the degree of relevance of governance of rural areas.

Douar development plan in North-West Tunisia

The experience of the Office of Sylvo-Pastoral Development of the North-West (Odesypano) which benefited from the support and expertise of the GTZ is an example of good practice. It was decided to the *douar* as a socio-territorial unit. The *Douar* Development Plan sought to take a participatory approach by closely associating the population with the conception of its own development. A research-action-training operation was conducted with Odesypano staff and technicians, agricultural researchers and experts and representatives of each socio-spatial entity or *douar*. This operation was conducted in four phases: 1) ad hoc promotion and training, identification of needs of the population and concrete participation; 2) contribution of technicians; 3) planning; 4) feedback to populations and negotiation with the administration. These *Douar* Development Plans took the decision to involve rural women. The latter participated directly in the analysis of the situation in the *douar* and planning of development actions. This approach was not replicated in other projects.

The difficulties of territorial structures also stems from the fragmentation of rural development actions due to the existence of multiple institutions involved in operations (NGOs, international organisations, State). Not only are the actions implemented segmented, but each of the institutions or organisations stamps its own ideas, approaches and methods. These interventions raise the question of sustainability of projects when the financial aid dries up.

Lastly, the failure of territorial construction stems from a problem of coordination and governance. The principles of participation in the management of projects and decentralisation of powers are set out in all the texts which define the doctrine governing modes of territorial governance. All the rural development strategies in the countries of the South have proclaimed their desire to adopt integrated and localised approaches and laid stress on the plurality of actors and their role in rural development. It is true that there has been a development of the associative movement, creation of cooperatives or rural development groups and involvement of new elites which support each other and/or revived traditional forms of organisation of rural societies (village assemblies, family networks, emigrants, professional relations...). It is equally true that it was the external impetus (from government or foreign donors) which encouraged the blossoming of rural organisations and that the role of these organisations remains largely consultative. At the same time,

⁴⁰ - The Prodesud project started in 2002 was based on socio-territorial units (UST, a euphemism to avoid using the term ethnic community or tribal group) organised around pastoral areas to discuss with the populations concerned how to manage the agro-pastoral space in an openly participatory framework.

the decentralising movement is still unfinished if not non-existent in the SEMCs. In Egypt and Tunisia, for example, the organisation of local authorities is under state control. In Egypt, each territorial level has a “people’s council”. However, the governors and other key posts, including the mayors, are appointed by central government. In Tunisia, the heads of rural communes are also appointed by the central authority. When they are elected, as in Morocco or Algeria, they are duplicated by a representative of the Makhzen (the royal authority in Morocco) or under the umbrella of the public authority (*wali* in Algeria).

The “alibi” of sustainable development and talking about “participation” have often masked issues of unfinished or, indeed, absence of decentralisation in the modalities of rural governance. Moreover, in not one of the countries of the South do farmers or country people have trade unions or professional organisations independent from the local authorities which can share in management of the agricultural sector or share responsibility for management of local affairs. The liberal policies have very clearly favoured monopoly of representation in associations of rural entrepreneurs and farmers or agrarian capitalist groups well established in local and/or international markets. In short, local governance in the countries of the South of the Mediterranean today is characterised by a concentration of powers and/or an asymmetry of powers in favour of the public administration or organisations which are “institutionalised” or “dependent” on state structures. These situations, which are political in nature, firstly explain the lack of participation by country people in local associations and, secondly, their failure to make their mark on the local landscape. They express the weaknesses in the process of accumulation of social capital and the degree of mastery of collective action by rural actors.

Table 1 - Summary table of territorial constructions in the North and South of the Mediterranean

North	South
<i>Functions of rural spaces</i>	
Productive, residential, leisure, landscape functions Extinction of farmers, reception of residents, mobility by choice 4 strategic axes: 1) competitiveness of agriculture and sylviculture, 2) protection of the environment, 3) quality of life and diversification of activities, and 4) promotion of the Leader approach.	Productive functions Important role of agriculture and farmers, rural exodus and natural population increase, enforced mobility. 4 objectives: 1) development of agricultural potential, 2) improvement of living standards, 3) combating degradation of resources, and 4) participatory and integrated approach.
<i>Institutions and organisation of actors</i>	
Dense, diversified and centralised institutional fabric, partnership, charter and contractual relationship. Collective action, integration in the local fabric.	Thinly meshed, lagging process of localisation, unfinished decentralisation, weight of informal organisations without recognised legal status. Territorial approach through development projects.

Table 1 - (contd.)

North	South
<i>Rural economy</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economy of services, tourism, industrial SME, agro-food industry. Vertical diversification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competitors, customers, market, diffused area of industrialisation, local investment and public project financing, diversification of activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dominant primary sector, declining crafts, weak industrial fabric, limited tourism. Horizontal diversification (emigration) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restricted market with little competition, foreign investment by foreign institutions and emigrants.
<i>Basic infrastructure and human capital</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visibility of the territory with a better provision of basic services. - Existence of a charter of public services (France 2005), improved living environment, services to enterprises in progress. - Existence of human skills, innovation, support for project promotion and engineering, society of stakeholders, actors better and better organised who introduce an economic dimension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National development schemes and regional schemes in progress to improve infrastructure. The critical infrastructure threshold has not been reached in many rural communes. No visibility of the rural area. - Limited rural elites or elites in formation with contributions of young people and rural women, widespread adult illiteracy and weak technical staffing of projects.
<i>Forms of areas</i>	
“Excessive localisation” <p><i>France:</i> Leader areas, natural parks, communities of communes, basins of life, intercommoned unions.</p> <p><i>Italy:</i> <i>contratti d’area</i> and area employment pacts (PT), integrated area projects (ITPS), rural districts (RDS) Leader projects.</p> <p><i>Spain:</i> <i>comarcas</i>, Leader, Proder, Natura 2000 parks, etc.</p> <p><i>Greece:</i> Leader, Pider, “network territories”, Natura 2000 zones, natural parks, catchment areas, etc.</p>	“Lived areas” <p>Administrative territories in competition with the lived territories of rural communities.</p> <p>The territories of the South are in search of an identity and a mode of governance which takes account of the wishes and specifics of rural communities</p> <p>Territorial dynamics today are the result more of investment and/or development projects initiated by development aid institutions or the State.</p>

The future of Mediterranean rurality

Agriculture will continue to influence the structure of rural areas for a long time. Family agricultural structures in Italy and Greece which diverge from the systems based on a purely productivist logic are an advantage in promoting locally based quality products. They allow the maintenance of populations and the development of a social and economic fabric favourable to the rural area. Other forms, dominated by specialised professional farms can be a barrier to a re-defining of the town-country relationship and local development. The scenarios for France (Datar 2020 and Agriculture 2030 of

the Commissariat for Planning) envisage a scenario of urban dominance and the advent of a post-family era of organisation of agricultural production affecting a delicate social fabric.⁴¹ The projections prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture show a trend towards professional farms dominated by agricultural activity and specialisation. Certain areas are likely to see a concentration of the largest farms while others will suffer the effects of rural desertification.⁴² Among these professional farms, it is the corporate farms relying increasingly on wage workers (which will account for 25% of agricultural workers) which will increase.

This trend is in contradiction with a process of local development generally characterised by self-regulation of labour with a focus on trades. The local area bases its development on quality products and products of local origin. It is a place for the renaissance of a “new breed of country folk” establishing an empathy with nature, defining agricultural activity and food by the product of local origin. The question then arises whether production of quality products can be sustainable in the face of the threatened disappearance of 150,000 micro-farms or the social disqualification related to ageing of the agricultural population (17.3% of farm owners will be over 60 years of age in 2013.)

Furthermore, how can this trend towards specialisation be reconciled with the objectives of an “ecologically sustainable agriculture” or the preservation of biodiversity urged by the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (June 2003) or the European Strategy for Sustainable Development (2006). These are legitimate questions if one recalls that quality marks and appellations of origin are the essential tools of public policies in favour of local areas and the environment.

Moreover, faced with the ageing of rural populations and the difficulties of generation renewal, it is surely vital to have more effective policies for attracting and settling young people and women in “local areas” promoted by intercommunalities, Leader groups and regional natural parks. The obstacles currently encountered by promoters of settlement projects, mostly related to financing, acquisition of land, the absence of a structure suited to their project or their vocational skills, must be removed. Given the risks of disconnection of the second pillar of the CAP, these problems call for a debate on the promotion of a European local agricultural model. Indeed, there will be no agricultural development without local dynamism just as there will be no local vitality without the development of an agriculture diversified in all its social forms.

How can rural populations of the South be made to participate genuinely and effectively in the management of their territory when a majority of them, especially women, are still illiterate, trapped in poverty and sometimes live in conditions of isolation and material discomfort unfit for humans? Many rural regions are also characterised by precarity of employment, inequalities of income, poor conditions of work, a lack of regulation of

41 - In France there are three types of farm: professional operations with a dominant agricultural activity which concentrate 52% of workers (284,817 farms), 75% of UAA and 74% of the standard gross margin, residential farms, (respectively 34%, 9.8% and 8.7%) made up of retired people who pursue an agricultural activity (188,411 farms) and multiple-activity professional farms (13.2%, 16%, 17%).

42 - The trends towards concentration observed in professional farms are the result of a variety of situations. On the one hand, farmers who retire without heirs (either in the family or outside) must sell their land. On the other, as young people are becoming fewer and fewer, farms are mainly bought by local farmers who constantly increase the size of their farms. There is a danger that this pattern of agricultural structures could increase economic, human and regional imbalances.

labour relations, a lack of a system of social security, training and professional representation. Whether in Egypt, the Maghreb, Albania or Turkey, improving the economic and social conditions of rural populations and areas is more than ever the key to changing the current situation and heading towards sustainable development.⁴³ It inevitably requires stronger public policies in the field of infrastructure, services, especially health and education, and institutional reform policies and support for actors in mastering collective action.

In the context of the current food crisis, agriculture plays a vital role in terms of employment, living standards and food security of rural households, and its productive base must be strengthened. To be sustainable, agricultural development must also include agricultural reforms which rehabilitate family farms and reduce inequalities in the material and budgetary allocations in relation to the modern agricultural sector. Today's reference model must be revised and reconstructed since, in the face of current demographic trends, in which populations will continue to increase, the current dual model will not be able to meet the challenges of climate change, protection of widely degraded natural resources, food security and combating rural poverty. The process of globalisation will ultimately marginalise or even exclude rural areas from the development process. This prospect, which is unacceptable, therefore demands a revision of rural policies, a social and political mobilisation of all the societies concerned to define horizons that match their aspirations and expectations.

43 - Rural women are particularly affected by poverty and exclusion, and the level of "capacities" of populations, in terms of the national education system, is very low. In these circumstances, how can this agriculture be sustainable?

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