26. Democratic decentralization and local development: insights from Morocco's advanced regionalization process

Sylvia I. Bergh

1 INTRODUCTION TO DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION: DEFINITIONS, DRIVERS, PROMISES AND RISKS

1.1 Chapter Outline

Decentralization reforms have been undertaken around the world for about 45 years now, generating a significant body of literature. In this chapter, I will review a part of this literature and present some findings on the case of recent decentralization reforms at the regional level in Morocco. The chapter will emphasize the political economy drivers of decentralization reforms as the main explanations for the inconclusive evidence when it comes to local development.

The chapter is structured as follows. This first section reviews the main definitions, typologies, drivers, promises and risk. The second section conceptualizes the links between decentralization and local development. The third section introduces the Moroccan case and reviews the main characteristics in terms of governance, finance and regional planning. It also highlights the relationship between decentralization and deconcentration reforms there and argues that the latter significantly constrains the former's potential to make a positive impact in terms of local development. The fourth section concludes.

1.2 Definition and Typology

A short definition of decentralization is provided by Faguet and Pöschl (2015, p. 2; citing Faguet and Sánchez, 2013 and Manor, 1999): 'the devolution by central (i.e. national) government of specific functions – with all of the administrative, political, and economic attributes that these entail – to regional and local (i.e. state/provincial and municipal) governments that are independent of the centre within given geographic and functional domains'.

Devolution is also known as 'political' or 'democratic' decentralization. This is because devolution usually transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities that elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions (Litvack, Junaid and Bird, 1998, p. 6). Traditionally, the literature distinguishes between two additional forms of decentralization: deconcentration and delegation (Parker, 1995, pp. 19ff; Rondinelli, 1999, p. 2). Deconcentration is the process by which the central government disperses responsibilities for certain services to its regional branch offices without involving any transfer of authority to lower levels of government (Litvack et al., 1998, p. 4). This is often considered the weakest form of decentralization (Rondinelli, 1999, p. 2). Delegation refers to a situation in which the central government transfers responsibility for decision making and administration of public functions to local governments or to semi-autonomous organizations that are not wholly controlled by the central government but are ultimately accountable to it (Litvack et al., 1998, pp. 4–6).

Although it could be considered a dimension of 'political decentralization', fiscal decentralization is often mentioned in the literature as a separate form. It refers to 'the set of rules that defines roles and responsibilities among different levels of governments for fiscal functions including planning and budget preparation, budget execution, revenue generation, the intergovernmental allocation of budgetary resources, and public sector borrowing' (Boex and Yilmaz 2010, p. 4).[1] It is clear that if local governments are denied the tax-raising powers and intergovernmental transfers needed to make real use of their political and administrative authority and autonomy, then decentralization is likely to be ineffective (ibid., p. 4).

1.3 Drivers of Decentralization Reforms

When it comes to the drivers for democratic decentralization reforms, we can distinguish two main currents in the literature. Some studies highlight 'good governance' arguments, while others emphasize political motives. A good example of the first current is Faguet (2014, p. 2) who writes:

> At least in their intention, many decentralizations aim to reconstitute government – from a hierarchical, bureaucratic mechanism of top-down management to a system of nested self-governments characterized by participation and cooperation, where transparency is high and accountability to the governed acts as a binding constraint on public servants' behaviour.

Indeed, decentralization reforms constitute a key pillar of the 'good governance' agenda promoted by neo-liberal public choice advocates and international donors such as the World Bank since the late 1980s, following the widespread disillusion with centralized and top-down development planning (Bergh, 2017, pp. 2–3).

However, it is now becoming evident that the lofty ambitions pronounced by national governments in official discourses often hide the underlying political motivations. The country studies in Faguet and Pöschl's (2015) edited volume (including Bolivia, India, Pakistan, Philippines, China, and many more) show that 'decentralization reforms are largely driven by motivations of political survival and consolidation of power' (Faguet and Pöschl, 2015, p. 3). This confirms the earlier findings by several other scholars, including Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006, p. 32). Based on the in-depth study of decentralization reforms in eight countries from three different continents, Bardhan and Mookherjee (ibid.) found that in six out of the eight cases, the dominant motive was the challenge to the incumbent at the national level posed by competing political forces or regional interests. In other words, both in democracies as well as in non-democracies, 'decentralization was a concession to regional interests or an instrument for securing legitimacy of the national government or for quelling separatist tendencies' (ibid.). A secondary reason for decentralization reform was that it accompanied a transition in the national political system, either toward democracy or non-democracy. Bardhan and Mookherjee (ibid.) also found that only in the case of Brazil and South Africa did external crises, pressure from multilateral institutions, or ideological considerations play any role.[2]

The variations in political context, the exact nature of the political challenges faced by government or political leaders in power, as well as the multiple resistances by other stakeholders explain the wide range in the design, nature, and extent of decentralization reforms that could be either ‘comprehensive or piecemeal, uniform or uneven throughout different regions of the country, and gradual evolution or big-bang reform’ (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006, p. 32).

Indeed, the political motives behind decentralization reforms mean that they are often not implemented as promised, or as laid down in the policy and legal framework. Faguet and Pöschl (2015, p. 4) thus argue that ‘partial and “cynical” decentralizations are widespread in which, for instance, spending responsibilities are devolved without decision-making autonomy, or opposition forces are merely divided into various powerless entities to facilitate continued rule by the centre’. The half-hearted decentralization of powers thus often results in structures which may ‘diverge widely from the original plan, let alone any theoretical ideal’ (ibid., p. 8). This insight builds on Rondinelli, Cheema and Nellis (1983) and similar studies (e.g., Devarajan, Khemani and Shah, 2009; Dickovich and Wunsch, 2014) that found that elaborate mechanisms of central supervision and control have largely neutralized decentralization (Faguet, 2014 p. 5; see also Falleti, 2005). Faguet and Pöschl (2015, p. 3) thus conclude that ‘decentralization may fail to enhance development because it never actually happens’.

Here, the idea of ‘decision space’, or local government policy discretion, is a useful tool for researchers to assess whether and to what extent this is the case. First coined by Bossert in a 1998 article, ‘decision space’ refers to the ‘local discretion allowed by central government for functions and sub-functions about financing, service delivery, human resources, and governance’ (Faguet and Pöschl, 2015, p. 8). This means that some decentralized systems will allow more choice (local discretion) over budgets and financing, while others will allow more such choice over hiring and firing (Bossert, 2015, p. 278). The level of discretion might, of course, also change over time. In addition, the actual practice of local officials is often not defined by the formal legal and regulatory rules, but rather reflects their ‘informal decision space’ in which they sometimes do not take advantage of the full range of choice or make more choices than they are ‘allowed’. Measuring this decision space can thus help to give a more nuanced (and dynamic) view of the real extent of decentralization reforms along sectoral and functional parameters, and therefore give a more realistic idea about what developmental impacts to expect from decentralization reforms. For example, for the health sector in three Latin American countries, Bossert finds clear evidence that decentralization has led to increased equity of allocations between richer and poorer municipalities (Bossert, 2015, pp. 280–82; Faguet and Pöschl, 2015, p. 12).

1.4 The Promises of Decentralization Reforms

Despite the considerable evidence that decentralization reforms might not actually be implemented to enhance development, but rather to help political leaders stay in power, let us briefly consider the main promises of such reforms at the theoretical level, as they are often invoked by these same leaders, and international donors promoting them.

As indicated in the quote from Faguet (2014) above, there are several ‘good governance’ outcomes expected to come from decentralization reforms, which are then thought to have a positive impact on socio-economic development as well as more transformative understandings of development, that is, in terms of empowering individuals and communities. First, by bringing government closer to the people, the loop of accountability is tightened between those who produce public goods and services and those who consume them (Faguet, 2014, p. 5). According to Faguet (ibid., p. 11), decentralization reorients accountability incentives downward to voters because more public officials become beholden to more citizens. This includes allowing larger access to decision making for marginalized groups. Other political benefits of decentralization include the idea that elected local governments lead to increased levels of political competition in the country and provide alternative local routes to enter national politics. Finally, giving more autonomy to, for example, ethnic minorities means that political stability and national unity could be strengthened by appeasing fractious groups.

The fiscal federalism literature presents another set of expected benefits of decentralization reforms (see Boadway and Dougherty, 2018, pp. 6ff; World Bank, 2017, pp. 217ff). Since they are supposedly more aware of local conditions, local governments are expected to be more responsive to people's conditions, needs and available assets than central governments, and their interventions can be more flexible and innovative, and better targeted. In general, decentralization reforms are expected to enable the state machinery to reach a larger number of people with services and ensure potentially better fee payment, in turn reducing costs. They might also reduce administrative pressure on central bureaucracies and abuses of power. Last, local government may play an 'enabling' or facilitating role as regards other stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society organizations, to whom it can contract out the delivery of certain public services and who might provide them more efficiently.

Have the reforms delivered on these promises? What emerges from four decades of research is that 'decentralization both improves and worsens all of the promised outcomes, in different countries at different times, leaving us unable to draw broader conclusions' (Faguet, 2014, p. 10; see also Ahmad and Brosio, 2009, pp. 138ff; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006, p. 48; Local Development International, 2013; for a good overview of the existing empirical literature, see Rao, Scott and Alam, 2014).

1.5 The Risks of Decentralization Reforms

Indeed, along with some success stories, there is also a growing literature that points to the risks or negative effects of decentralization reforms (see Bardhan, 2002; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006; Boadway and Dougherty, 2018, p. 6; Crook and Manor, 1998; Faguet, 2014; Grindle, 2007; Rondinelli and Cheema, 2007; Smoke, 2001; Olowu and Wunsch, 2003).

For example, decentralized service provision is not always efficient for standardized, routine, network-based services. This has to do with the loss of economies of scale (e.g., preventing large-scale procurement). Most importantly, weak local capacity (in terms of human resources and institutions) may result in less effective and poor service delivery and/or policy making than under centralized provision. As mentioned above, reforms are often designed in such a way that the local government faces 'unfunded mandates', that is, the expenditure responsibilities of local governments are not matched by revenues devolved.

In federal systems, national coordination might become more complex, leading to increased regional disparity and growing apart. Indeed, decentralization reforms might institutionalize social or ethnic cleavages, and provide power and resource bases for separatist leaders, especially those in larger and wealthier provinces.

Finally, it may be difficult to enforce unpopular local policy such as tax collection (as face-to face contacts prevail in smaller communities), and functions and funds may be captured by local elites. Corruption and political violence may thus also be decentralized and multiply (Fjeldstad, 2004, cited in Clark, 2018, p. 25; Prud'homme, 1995; see also Boko and McNeil, 2010). For example, in Indonesia, decentralization has offered regional elites new opportunities to expand and maintain patrimonial political networks (Hadiz, 2004; Schulte Nordholt, 2004, cited in Harriss, Stokke and Törnquist, 2004, p. 22; see also Murshed, Tadjoeddin and Chowdhury, 2009).

2 CONCEPTUALIZING THE LINKS BETWEEN DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: SKETCHING A RESEARCH AGENDA

Despite these risks, Faguet and Pöschl (2015, p. 4) argue that decentralization can enhance (local) development in four ways, all of which deserve to be researched in more detail. First, decentralization can improve governance, mainly by enabling greater accountability of public officials to citizens, as well as more efficient or more responsive government outputs and outcomes due to being better informed about local needs (ibid., p. 11). Second, decentralization can enhance development by creating competition among subnational governments. By publishing standardized, comparable information on the performance of all local governments, voters can assess and compare their own local government. This increases electoral pressures, which may make local officials responsive to constituents' needs. Faguet and Pöschl (ibid., pp. 14–16) present evidence from China and the Philippines that such competition can indeed have positive effects.

Third, decentralization can enhance development by reducing clientelism. Findings from West Bengal seem at first glance to indicate the opposite – namely, that 'in the short term, clientelistic appeals based on targeted benefits are electorally more effective than universalistic, long-term development investments and policies' (ibid., p. 17). However, there is also evidence that in the long term, improved education and health (which presumably comes about through decentralized service provision) will tend to undermine a clientelistic party's electoral support (ibid.).

Fourth, decentralization may lead to development through strengthening the state and national unity. Decentralization can strengthen the state in various ways: by limiting central leaders' authority and autonomy in the interests of increasing the institutional strength of the state as a whole; through the extension of the state's presence into remote areas (thus improving the perception of state responsiveness and enhancing the legitimacy of national governments); by strengthening political parties and the party system; over the longer term, through 'social learning', that is, the collective acquisition of knowledge, norms and practices, and trust among citizens living in the same place or interested in the same issues through interactions with local government. Decentralization can thus make the state more 'democratically supple' by providing strong incentives for group formation, leading to more state–society interactions and ultimately more state legitimacy (see Faguet and Pöschl, 2015, pp. 19–21 and 26–7 for details).

However, while these pathways may be quite convincing in theory, the evidence is rather sobering. In his review of decentralization reforms in ten African countries along four dimensions, Wunsch (2014, p. 2) concludes that the decentralization of legal authority to subnational governments and deconcentrated offices has been achieved in many cases. However, on the autonomy dimension (i.e., the extent to which subnational governments 'may undertake actions without the permission of other levels of government'; ibid., p. 10), the record is less convincing, as state authorities and dominant political parties exercise considerable control.

Similarly, despite local elections being held everywhere, accountability is mostly still upwards to actors at the centre, and capacity (resources and skills) remains a challenge. Based on these findings, Wunsch (ibid., p. 2) argues that ‘decentralization in many countries in Africa exhibits a paradox: it can actually strengthen or entrench national-level actors, even as it changes little in governance at the local level’. Or in other words, ‘decentralization appears to have changed the *structure of government* more than the *quality of governance*’ (Dickovick and Beatty Riedl, 2014, p. 249; original emphasis).

Aalen and Muriaas (2018, cited in Demmelhuber, Strum and Vollmann, 2020) focused on four African case studies (Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda and South Africa) and found that ruling regimes can actively manipulate decentralization both by institutional design (such as creating overlapping responsibilities; see Ahmad and Brosio, 2009, p. 136) and the management of elites and opposition. It is thus mostly the interests and influences of state-based and state-focused actors that drive decentralization reform pathways, rather than the reform’s effectiveness as a tool for development or democracy. This is also due to the relative weakness of independent private economic actors and civil society in many developing countries (Wunsch, 2014, p. 16).

Methodologically, the literature on decentralization reforms and their impacts has evolved over the last 30 or 40 years from consisting predominantly of country-level qualitative case studies by political scientists and anthropologists to econometric modelling by economists and policy analysts. However, as Faguet and Pöschl (2015, p. 2) argue, this ‘laudable quest for rigor leads technical studies to abstract away from the “details” of how policy reform actually works’. The inability to draw broader conclusions on the causal linkages between decentralization and (local) development also has to do with the lack of analytical studies based on household survey data. As Bardhan (2002, p. 200) concludes, ‘many of the studies are largely descriptive…and often suggest correlations rather than causal processes. Most of them are not based on household survey data, making the comparative impact of centralized versus decentralized programs on different socioeconomic groups of households difficult to assess’. Fortunately, there is also an emerging literature in which a deep knowledge of the institutions, history and culture of a country is brought to bear on both qualitative analyses at the level of a municipality or province combined with large-N econometric methods (Faguet, 2014, p. 9). In what follows, I aim to contribute a qualitative case study on regional decentralization in Morocco.

3 A CASE STUDY ON ‘ADVANCED REGIONALIZATION’ IN MOROCCO[3]

3.1 Introduction

Although Morocco has a long history of decentralization at the municipal (and provincial) level dating back to 1960, I focus here on the current decentralization reform at the regional level (the so-called ‘advanced regionalization’ reform), as it illustrates very well the importance of understanding the political economy of decentralization and its influence on the design of decentralization reforms, before considering its (potential or real) developmental impacts (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006, pp. 10, 14; see also Eaton, Kaiser and Smoke, 2011 and Local Development International, 2013). The 2011 reform reduced the number of regions in Morocco from 16 to 12 and established directly elected regional assemblies to replace the previously indirectly elected ones, thereby creating a new political arena over which the various actors fight for influence. As opposed to the municipalities (whose competencies are limited to 'mundane' municipal services such as garbage collection), the regions now hold vast developmental responsibilities, which makes them a pertinent unit of analysis for this chapter (see Section 3.3 for more details). By choosing the case of Morocco, I also aim to fill a gap in the literature on decentralization that seems to consistently leave out North African countries in studies on decentralization in Africa (see, for example, Dickovick and Wunsch, 2014) despite many similarities, not least a shared colonial history.

The main features of the 'advanced regionalization' reform can be categorized into three areas: governance issues, finance and regional planning (see Bergh, 2016), which will be discussed in the following subsections. The case study will end with a discussion on the relationship between decentralization and deconcentration reforms in Morocco. The latter reform – currently ongoing as well – arguably determines the 'advanced regionalization' reform's potential impact in terms of local development to a great extent. First, however, it is useful to give a short introduction to the background of the reform.

3.2 Background

Despite historically being the most centralized states in the world, debates on decentralization processes took place since the early 1990s in almost all states of the Middle East and North Africa region (Demmelhuber et al., 2020). In the wake of the so-called 'Arab Spring', decentralization reforms have gained momentum in the region (see Harb and Atallah, 2014). For example, based on its 2014 constitution, Tunisia held its first free local elections in May 2018. As Kherigi (2017, p. 5) points out, 'the Arab Spring was partially a desperate cry for help by marginalized groups and regions against highly centralized political and economic systems in which all power is concentrated in a few hands at the centre'.

Like other countries in North Africa, Morocco suffers from marked spatial inequality:[4] According to the OECD (2018a, pp. 5, 22), 60 per cent of its 34 million inhabitants live in urban areas that generate 75 per cent of the national gross domestic product (GDP). The city of Casablanca alone, with 5 million inhabitants, contributes up to 29 per cent to the national GDP. Rural areas, in contrast, tend to suffer from higher poverty levels, weak education and health indicators, lack of basic infrastructure, and continue to remain focused on agriculture, which is the sole job-providing sector in many rural regions (accounting for 80 per cent of rural employment). Under- and unemployment explain the large rural exodus and the growth of slums in urban areas. Social protests for better service delivery in marginalized areas have been occurring for decades, and these protests reached the major cities in February 2011, when young graduates and middle-class activists but also Islamists added political demands to the socio-economic ones (see Bergh and Rossi Doria, 2015).

It was thus no surprise that the king of Morocco (King Mohammed VI), in order to defuse the tensions, framed the 2011 constitutional reform mainly around decentralization reform, called 'advanced regionalization', enshrining the principles of administrative autonomy of local governments (*libre administration des collectivités locales*), and subsidiarity (Chapter 9, Articles 135–146; Royaume du Maroc, 2011). This reform had been on the domestic agenda before Morocco's Arab Spring, as the Consultative Regionalization Committee (Commission Consultative de la Régionalisation – CCR) was appointed by the king in January 2010, but

Table 26.1 The regionalization process in Morocco

Local Development		
Phase I	1971	Creation of region without decision-making power
	1976	Municipal charter, framework for local authorities
	1992	Regions given local government status
Limited Regionalization		
Phase II	1996	Creation of regions with limited powers
	2001	Launch of programmes to promote regional development
	2002	Local authorities become centres for economic growth
	2004	First session of the Higher Council for Spatial Planning
	2006	Specific credit line in the national budget
Advanced Regionalization		
Phase III	2010	Consultative Regionalization Committee
	2011	Regionalization added to the constitution (Article 1) Regional Land Use Planning Schemes added to the constitution
	2015	Election of regional presidents, powers transferred and own budget allocated
	2015	Establishment of the fund for regions and the fund for interregional solidarity
	2016 until today	Adoption of 70 administrative legal texts to implement the reform

Source: Adapted from OECD (2018a, p. 13) by Francesco Colin.

its recommendations came out in early 2011 (CCR, 2011), coinciding with popular protests. Many of the recommendations were integrated into the text of the new constitution. However, it took until July 2015 before the new organic laws on the region, province and commune (municipality) were passed by parliament and published in the *Bulletin Officiel*, and their official French translation was delayed until February 2016 (Hoffmann, 2015, p. 5).

Table 26.1 gives a snapshot of the key milestones in the Moroccan history of decentralization, with a focus on the regional level (for details of municipal decentralization reforms since 1960, see Bergh, 2017 and Clark, 2018).

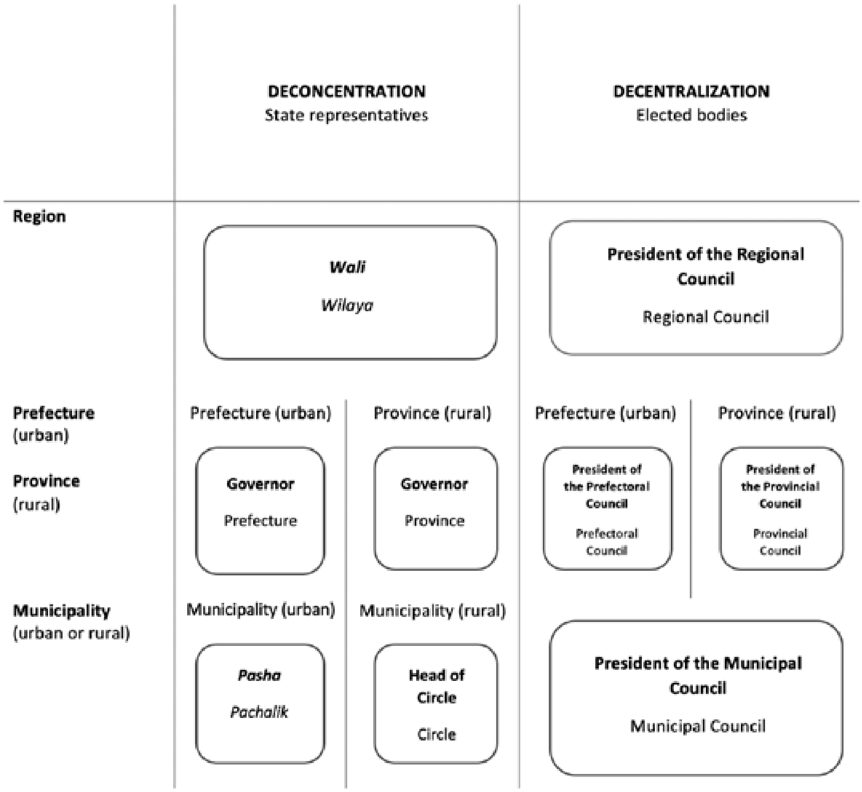
Broadly, the ‘advanced regionalization’ system still retains some of the centralized features of the state that were inherited from the French protectorate but seems to have been inspired also by the Italian, German and Spanish models, and the global trends towards decentralization and participatory local democracy more generally. With regard to the underlying rationale, it is clear the Moroccan reforms did not result from a popular demand for regional autonomy based on regional identity (except perhaps for Berbers in the North), but rather from the need to give the same offer of autonomy to all regions as for the Western Sahara, and also in order to strengthen the Moroccan position in the international negotiations on this issue. Getting external support for the recognition of Morocco’s claim on the territory of the Western Sahara has historically been seen as crucial to regime legitimacy and even survival (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009, p. 19; Bouabid and Iraki 2015; Ojeda García and Suárez Collado, 2015; Ottaway, 2013; Reifeld, 2014, p. 104; Suárez Collado and Ojeda García, 2015; Willis 2009, p. 233; see Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental [CESE], 2016, p. 60 on the development plan for the so-called ‘Southern Provinces’).

3.3 Governance Issues in the 'Advanced Regionalization' Reform

As for the governance features, the reform included the reduction in the number of regions from 16 to 12, with directly elected regional assemblies replacing previously indirectly elected ones. The regions' own competencies were substantially expanded to include economic development, vocational training and employment, non-farming rural development, regional transport, culture, environment, spatial planning and development, and partnerships. Shared and transferable competencies have also been expanded and clarified, although the principle of subsidiarity mentioned in the 2011 constitution has not been applied by the organic laws. The exact transfer of sector-specific competencies is still being discussed between the regional assembly presidents and the Ministry of the Interior and is expected to be implemented from 2019 onwards through contracts with the state (sectoral ministries), enabling differentiation between the regions based on their priorities and capacity (Gattioui, 2018). The regional *wali* (the governors of the administrative divisions [*wilaya*] appointed by the king and representing the Ministry of the Interior) no longer holds budget spending powers as before. These are now held by the (elected) president of the regional assembly. However, many observers believe that the *wali* nevertheless continues to be the focal point for all investment and development policies (Houdret and Harnisch, 2019). Indeed, the Ministry of the Interior (represented by the *wali*) still holds considerable powers of *tutelle*, that is, supervision/approval rights, including on all budget and spending decisions by the regional council (Article 116 in the 2015 Organic Law on the Region), although the regional assembly's decisions can only be contested by the executive on legal grounds before the administrative tribunal (Bergh, 2016, p. 9). The *tutelle* as determined in the 2015 Organic Law is thus tighter than the 2011 constitution had led observers to believe.[5] In practice, the degree of discretion that a regional president will yield over budgetary and planning decisions depends on his or her relationship with the *wali* and the Ministry of the Interior (interview with Ahmed Hadrani, Professor of Law at the University of Meknes, on 13 March 2019).

Figure 26.1 illustrates the parallel nature of the Moroccan administration: the 'deconcentrated' levels of the Ministry of the Interior (called 'state representatives') on the one hand, who are reporting more or less directly to the King, and the devolved, elected bodies on the other. The Moroccan case thus illustrates the argument made earlier – namely, that elaborate mechanisms of central supervision and control can largely neutralize decentralization.

The democratic potential of the reform is further limited by the fact that while regional council members are now directly elected, their presidents and vice-presidents are only indirectly elected by the regional council members (see Tafra, 2017 for a good overview of the regional representatives). As Houdret and Harnisch (2019, p. 950) point out, 'the system of indirect election has led to several negotiations "behind the scenes", with the result that the presidents appointed do not always reflect the majority of the direct electoral votes'. This is especially the case with the moderate Islamist 'Justice and Development Party' (PJD). While it won the 2015 elections, obtaining four times more seats than in 2009, it controls only two regions. The political parties agreed to stick to their national-level alliances when voting for these regional positions, which means that in some cases the presidents represent parties that only have a minority in the council itself, such as the regime-loyal PAM (Authenticity and Modernity Party). This probably illustrates the strong influence of the king and his allies in the democratic 'game' (Wenger, 2015, cited in Houdret and Harnisch, 2019, p. 950). The seat of



Source: Adapted from OECD (2018a, p. 11) by Francesco Colin.

Figure 26.1 New administrative organization of Morocco since 2015

president is also financially lucrative: a regional president earns up to MAD50 000 (Moroccan dirhams), the same salary as a minister (Ismaili, 2016).

Finally, the Organic Law on the Regions (Law 111-14, Articles 119–122) gives citizens the right to launch petitions and to influence the regional council's agenda. The regional councils are obliged to respond to petitioners and to publish the minutes of the council meeting and its decision on the eligible petitions. This is expected to build citizens' trust in their new regional governments and to foster a more participatory local development process, also addressing the demands of the protest movements who mobilized in 2011 (Bergh, 2016, pp. 9–10, based on World Bank, 2015, pp. 25–6; Hoffmann, 2015; interview with World Bank official in Rabat on 19 January 2016; interview with faculty member at INAU in Rabat on 21 January 2016). However, the exact modalities of citizen engagement outside of petitions (through participatory mechanisms and advisory bodies) are not defined in the Organic Law on the Regions, but are left to the regions to define in their internal statutes (Articles 116 and 117; see CESE, 2016, p. 27). This gives discretion to the regional councillors to name whomever they want in these bodies. In practice, this means that on the one hand, the seats in the advisory bodies are occupied by people co-opted by the regional council without taking into account the specificities of the civil society landscape in the region; on the other hand, often the role of chair of these bodies is taken up by the president of the regional assembly himself, further increasing his powers and undermining the participatory effect of these bodies (personal communication with Francesco Colin, PhD researcher at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2 April 2019).

3.4 Regional Finances

In the area of fiscal decentralization, the intergovernmental transfers to the regions were expected to increase ten-fold over ten years to reach MAD10 billion (approximately 900 million euros) by 2021 (Abou El Farah, 2018). According to the OECD (2018a, p. 19), in the 2017 budget, regions were going to get 5 per cent of revenue from VAT and corporate tax and 20 per cent of revenue from tax on insurance contracts, in addition to the other grants from the state budget, amounting to a total of MAD5.2 billion. The regional budgets are subject to the new legal framework for local governments, which enshrines programmatic budgeting, performance management and financial controls, in parallel with the reforms at the national level (World Bank, 2015, pp. 25–6). An 'Inter-regional Solidarity Fund' has been established (though the allocation criteria were only published in December 2015), along with a 'Social Improvement Fund'.

Surprisingly, and contradicting the widespread complaints among civil servants and civil society in general that local governments are poor, the OECD (2018a, p. 19) found that 'funds made available to local government by the Treasury remain largely under-used (a total of around 33 billion MAD at the end of 2016 including 25.5 billion from previous years and almost 7 billion MAD across all subnational government in Morocco according to the latest accounts produced by the Treasury in 2017)'. These concern mostly funds allocated to the public investment budget, whereas operational expenditure (more than half of which is spent on payroll) has been largely spent. The problem is most pronounced at the municipal level: 65 per cent of these available funds belong to the municipalities, 18 per cent to prefectures and provinces and 17 per cent to regions. This is not surprising, as 77 per cent of subnational spending was carried out by (mostly urban) municipalities over the 2009–13 period (OECD, 2018a, pp. 19, 35). This underspending confirms my earlier findings and could be due to a conservative spending mentality that associates running deficits with bad management (interview with Ahmed Hadrani; and see Bergh, 2017, pp. 145–6 for other probable explanations).

Nevertheless, and compared to the amounts allocated by other government institutions (see next section), the regional level faces severe resource constraints. The regions' incomes account for only 16 per cent of all local government income, and the government transfers represent only 5 per cent of government transfers to all local governments. It is thus not surprising that in 2013, the 12 regions only counted a total staff of 378 (CESE, 2016, p. 62, citing the National Court of Audit report for 2013).

The human resource capacity constraints may also explain why the regions seem unable to spend even the little money that they are getting. They had to carry over their 2016 and 2017 budgets as they were not able to spend them. In some cases, this is for political reasons (e.g., in the region Guelmim-Oued Noun, the coalition supporting the president collapsed, and the Ministry of the Interior had to step in). In terms of the implications for political accountability, these delays mean that at the next regional elections scheduled for 2021, citizens will have a hard time measuring the impact of these devolved local governments, which will limit the possibility of real accountability even further (Tafra, 2018).

3.5 Regional Planning

To properly gauge the potential developmental impact of the newly decentralized structures (the regions), it is useful to review the institutional landscape which has emerged over the years and which de facto delimits the regional assemblies' decision space, especially in the area of regional planning and investment decisions.

In terms of regional planning, the regional councils who were for the first time directly elected in the September 2015 elections, decided on their own 2016 budgets and six-year Regional Development Plans (RDPs). To implement these, they were supposed to then agree on programming contracts with the Ministry of the Interior and deconcentrated sectoral ministries (though not all sectoral ministries have regional offices yet). According to Moroccan academic Ahmed Hadrani (interview on 13 March 2019), ten out of the 12 regions had completed their RDPs by this date. They need to be approved by the Ministry of the Interior before they can be implemented (see Article 115 in the Organic Law on the Regions). According to El Aissi (2018), the ten RDPs include investment projects worth almost MAD400 billion over six years. This amount is obviously far beyond the regions' means and the Ministry of the Interior will therefore have to review all the plans to comply with the regions' budgets.

As per the provisions in the 2015 Organic Law, Regional Project Implementation Agencies (AREPs) have been established (in all but the region of Marrakech-Safi) under the leadership of the president of the regional assembly in order to manage the regional projects and to strengthen the implementation capacity of the regional governments. Their budgets are autonomous but funded by subsidies from the regional budgets (Bergh, 2016, pp. 9–10; interview with Ahmed Hadrani). However, as Houdret and Harnisch (2019, pp. 947–8) point out, in three regions, these institutions still compete with the already existing and powerful Regional Development Agencies (Agences de Développement Régional), which are used to channel important sums to strategically relevant border regions under centralized government control. They include the Eastern (Oriental) region (bordering Algeria), the North (including the Rif region) and the South (including the Western Sahara). At the time of writing, there was talk of shutting them down (see also Boumahrou, 2018 and Walter, 2017). Similarly, since 2002, every region has its own Regional Investment Centre (Centres Régionaux d'Investissement – CRI) under the leadership of the regional *wali.* The Court of Audit recently described them as 'empty shells' and their reform is currently being discussed, but it seems that the *wali* will retain a major role in running them and in coordinating regional investment (Hallaoui, 2018; see also the new National Charter on Administrative Deconcentration discussed below).

Another potential source of confusion and overlap are the Regional Spatial Planning Schemes (RSPSs) developed since 2009 by the ministry responsible for spatial planning issues, the environment, city planning and housing, and which cover a 25-year period to ensure the coherence of sectoral strategies (implemented by deconcentrated sectoral ministries' offices; OECD, 2018a, p. 12). Currently, the new regions are responsible for developing and updating their Regional Spatial Planning Schemes. As the OECD (2018a, p. 13) points out, 'the development and updating of the RSPSs by the regions raises the question [of] aligning them with regional development plans and municipal action plans'.

The backdrop to regional planning is the fact that most public investment is still being done by state-owned companies and agencies (Entreprises et Etablissements Publics – EEP), such as the Tangiers-Med port project (completed in 2007) or the Noor solar energy project near Ouarzazate (completed in 2016; OECD, 2018a, p. 15; OECD, 2018b, p. 241). Local authorities (at all three levels) accounted for only 7 per cent of total public investment expenditures in 2016 (CESE, 2016, p. 63–4).

On top of this, several other development programmes exist that target municipalities, provinces and/or regions, such as the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), set up in 2005 and currently in its third phase (with a total investment of over MAD37 billion; for a critical analysis see Bergh, 2012 and Marei et al., 2018). The National Program on Social and Territorial Disparities in Rural Areas is another royal initiative, launched in 2015 and implemented by the Ministry of the Interior, which targets 24 290 villages and rural localities to benefit from 20 800 projects by 2023. Interestingly, regional councils contribute 40 per cent or MAD36 billion (of a total MAD50 billion budget; OECD, 2018a, pp. 23–4). It is likely that this contribution was not decided by the councils themselves, but rather imposed by the Ministry of the Interior. Keeping in mind the figures cited above, this also does not seem to leave much room for additional spending by the regions on their own priorities.

There is also a host of sector-based strategies with a territorial impact – for example, the Green Morocco Plan 2008–2020 (for agricultural development), for which the Ministry of Agriculture has developed regional agricultural plans, mostly in partnership with the regional *walis*, with the presidents of the regions taking a back seat. A similar picture emerges for the Industrial Acceleration Plan, which includes regional hubs, pilot regions in the 2030 Energy Strategy, the Road Strategy 2035, and the National Strategy for Professional Training (see OECD, 2018a, pp. 16–17 for a complete listing). As the OECD (2018a, p. 17) rightly observes, the implementation of sector-based strategies 'in the context of advanced regionalization raises questions about their different time-horizons, their convergence with the different approaches and actions that structure them, the evaluation of their impact on territories and their coordination with regional development plans'. A further complicating dynamic is the involvement of international donors in supporting both the sectoral strategies as well as the 'advanced regionalization' agenda.[6]

Interestingly, the region does not have any authority over the provinces and communes – the three separate organic laws (deliberately?) leave room for confusion, power struggles, ambiguity and interpretation. As I argued elsewhere (Bergh, 2016, p. 10), this may allow the king to play the role of arbiter between various power centres and interests and significantly reduces the scope for accountability between levels and towards the citizen. However, the organic law specifies that the RDPs will determine the development plans at the other levels. In the 2015 Organic Law on the Commune, the former 'Municipal Development Plan' is now called 'Commune Action Plan', which could imply that the commune's role is no longer strategic but only to execute (regional development) plans (Bergh, 2016, p. 10; see Royaume du Maroc, 2016 on Organic Law 113-14, Article 78).

While there is no space here to discuss all the regional planning tools and other government programmes and examine how they affect the 'decision space' of decentralized government structures in detail, we can draw two tentative conclusions. First, there is a plethora of territorial planning approaches at the regional level which are near impossible to coordinate in an effective way so as to reduce overlaps. Moreover, the status of the RDPs is likely to be quite low, compared to the sectoral plans and national programmes. It could also be the case that other priorities not in the RDP become more urgent. For example, in case of drought, the region might want to fund subsidies for affected farmers.[7] In other words, the RDPs are probably only weakly taken into account by government stakeholders, if at all. Second, when it comes to fiscal autonomy, the regional council's budget allocated by the national budget law pales in comparison with the amounts invested into local development by other government bodies, which are only indirectly within the sphere, or even outside of, the democratic control of devolved local governments.[8]

3.6 The Relationship Between Decentralization and Deconcentration Reforms

Apart from serving as a good example of 'partial' or 'cynical' decentralization reforms, the Moroccan case also illustrates another important point that is not often found in the (academic) literature – namely, that without a parallel deconcentration reform, its developmental impacts are likely to be limited. Regional (elected) institutions can arguably only create 'regional hubs', in which public and private investment is channelled in a coordinated way to fund priorities that have been jointly identified by state and society representatives, when they can directly work with their counterparts in deconcentrated regional directorates of line ministries (such as the Ministry of Agriculture, or Public Works). If, on the other hand, every (budgetary) decision in these regional directorates depends on prior approval by central-level civil servants, regional institutions will not be able to play such a coordinating role in an effective way. Houdret and Harnisch (2019, p. 948) observe that this imbalance has led to 'power-struggles, bargaining and often opaque decision-making procedures'. This is why deconcentration is sometimes called 'the corollary of successful decentralization' (OECD, 2018a, p. 40).

A cross-government steering committee was set up in 2014 to set out principles and support measures to gradually embed devolved government by encouraging government departments to delegate as many of their competences as possible to regional directorates. However, these still do not have the necessary autonomy or budgets to make decisions without recourse to central government. The long-awaited National Charter on Administrative Deconcentration was finally approved and published at the end of 2018 (and in the *Bulletin Officiel* in French on 3 January 2019; Royaume du Maroc, 2019). It has the legal standing of a decree, which means that it still needs further implementing laws to apply some of its provisions (interview with Ahmed Hadrani).

Its main innovations are that joint regional sectoral offices will be established that will be shared by two or more ministerial departments (Article 10), and that their directors will have budget-holding powers (as well as hierarchical authority over sectoral offices at the province level; Articles 17 and 12, respectively). They can thus conclude contracts with the regional institutions. However, it is striking that the regional assemblies as well as the PDRs are not mentioned at all in this charter. For example, according to Article 30, the president of the regional assembly will not be a member of the new Regional Coordination Committee (which will meet at least monthly – Article 32), but rather, it is the *wali* who is in charge of regional convergence (and who gets to set the agenda for the committee meetings). For good measure, a new administrative structure called General Secretariat for Regional Affairs will be established, headed by a General Secretary for Regional Affairs, appointed by the Minister of the Interior and working under the *wali*'s authority, seemingly without any formal links to the elected regional assembly (Article 33). Contrary to the Organic Law on the Region, the PDR is not taken as the main reference when it comes to regional planning, but the charter instead refers to 'Schémas directeurs de la déconcentration administrative' to be elaborated by 'government authorities' for each sector (valid for three years), which will define the exact responsibilities, financial and human resources, as well as objectives and performance indicators of the deconcentrated regional offices (see Section II of the charter).

From the Moroccan case study, we can thus conclude that, given the complex legal and institutional backdrop, the developmental impact of the newly created regions and their assemblies is hard to identify. We could even argue that the way in which the advanced regionalization reform is being designed constitutes a trap for elected representatives. The strong central state involvement in regional planning over which the elected representatives do not have much control means that they will most likely not be able to fulfil their electoral promises, as projects will be delayed, or simply not funded (see CESE, 2016, p. 21).

4 CONCLUSIONS

In the first and second sections of this chapter, we reviewed the main promises and risks of decentralization reforms. There is a fair amount of wishful thinking evident here, as many of the conceptual linkages and theories of change are not actually thought through very well. For example, why would devolution be more likely to lead to economic development and stability than deconcentration and delegation, given that the latter two 'may offer greater personnel and institutional capacity, opportunities for coordination, economies of scale, and consistent enforcement of the rule of law'? (Connerley, Eaton and Smoke 2010, cited in Wunsch, 2014, p. 3). Most importantly, we have found substantial evidence for 'partial' decentralization to be the norm, that is, while the legal framework might give local governments significant autonomy and responsibilities, in reality these same local governments are constrained by resource constraints, very limited fiscal autonomy, and are used as bases for clientelism. Furthermore, the case study on Morocco has served to corroborate the finding by Wunsch (2014) based on the in-depth study of ten African countries, that devolution reforms are hardly ever 'the only game in town', and that they are very often mixed up with elements of deconcentration and delegation reforms (Wunsch, 2014, p. 4). I would argue that the precise nature of this mix determines whether decentralization reforms can have a positive developmental impact or not.

In line with my earlier argument (Bergh, 2018, p. 3), it could be said that the 'advanced regionalization' agenda in Morocco represents an exercise in 'upgrading authoritarianism' (Heydemann, 2007), as it provides new spaces for political competition through elections, while at the same time maintaining the power of the *makhzen*, the power structures surrounding the king. This upgrading is achieved through the clever creation and use of legal ambiguities, the launch of a host of competing programmes and planning tools, and the establishment of more powerful parallel (deconcentrated, sectoral) institutions. Morocco is not a unique case in the region, as Harb and Atallah (2014) point out. Concerned about maintaining their power bases, central leaders in many Arab countries at the same time pay lip-service to decentralization policies (as a way of securing donor support and projecting an image of being in a 'democratic transition' phase), while also finding ways to prevent their full implementation. Regime elites can thus benefit politically from undertaking decentralization reforms, knowing that subnational elections and decentralized revenues generate relatively low risks to their power (Dickovick and Beatty Riedl, 2014, p. 254).

It seems that even the World Bank, one of the main proponents of decentralization reforms around the world over the past 30 years, is now recognizing that the main drivers for such reforms are political rather than a desire to bring government closer to the people as part of benevolent 'good governance' reforms. In what I believe reflects a major change in institutional thinking, the *World Development Report 2017* (World Bank, 2017, p. 219) states that 'decisions to decentralize (or recentralize) are primarily politically motivated and involve bargains among multiple stakeholders in which technocratic criteria often take a back seat. Outcomes reflect the relative bargaining powers of competing interests, mediated by the existing political institutions'.

To sum up, this chapter aims to contribute to this *Handbook* by reviewing – at least a part of – the vast literature on decentralization, its definitions, drivers, promises and risks. With regard to the linkages with local development, the chapter explains the dearth of conclusive evidence by referring to the paradox of decentralization, that is, the notion that it often strengthens the position of national-level actors, while not bringing about many changes in local governance.

In terms of a future research agenda, I suggest that while political decentralization (or devolution) reforms provide a fertile ground for researching state–society relations, we are better advised to turn our gaze to deconcentration and delegation reforms (in which much more substantive resources are decentralized to non-elected offices, and which include local public–private partnerships), if we want to understand how local development comes about.

NOTES

1. This definition is based on the ideas of key thinkers in fiscal federalism: Richard Musgrave (Musgrave, 1959; Musgrave and Musgrave, 1973), Mancur Olson (1969), Dennis Rondinelli (1982) and Wallace Oates (1972).
2. However, as Boex and Yilmaz (2010, p. 2) observe, during the 1990s and under the so-called Washington Consensus, 'major decentralization reforms were often pursued (implicitly or explicitly) with the purpose of reducing the size of the (central) public sector'.
3. This section is mostly based on Bergh (2016) and Bergh (2018); see also Ojeda García and Suárez Collado (2015) for an excellent account of the advanced regionalization reform as proposed by the Commission consultative de la régionalisation Royaume du Maroc (CCR) (2011).
4. See Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, Direction des Etudes et des Prévisions Financières (DEPF) (2015) for an innovative study by the Ministry of Finance that mapped these inequalities through the lens of access to human rights.
5. See Article 145 of the 2011 constitution, which only says that the *walis* and provincial governors ensure the application of the law, implement governmental regulations and decisions, and exercise an administrative control, which seems to point to *a posteriori tutelle*, whereas the Organic Law of 2015 includes many more *a priori tutelle* provisions.
6. I thank Daniele Rossi Doria (PhD researcher at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam) for this point, which, however, lies outside the scope of this chapter (but see also Bergh, 2016).
7. I thank Ahmed Hadrani for this point.
8. Even at the national level, not all public expenditures are approved by parliament, and budget transparency is very low. According to the Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018, p. 12), 'the 2015 Open Budget Survey, which provides a score of how transparent public budgets are in various countries, awards Morocco a classification of "minimal" transparency, the second worst classification after "scant or none." Morocco has been continuously in this classification since 2008'.

REFERENCES

Aalen, L. and R. L. Muriaas (2018), *Manipulating Political Decentralization: Africa's Inclusive Autocrats*, New York: Routledge.

Abou El Farah, T. (2018), 'Régionalisation avancée: encore quelques réglages à effectuer', *La Vie Eco*, 28 July, accessed 11 March 2019 at https://www.lavieeco.com/news/politique/regionalisation-avancee-encore-quelques-reglages-a-effectuer.html.

Ahmad, E. and G. Brosio (2009), 'What do we know? Evidence on decentralization and local service provision', in E. Ahmad and G. Brosio (eds), *Does Decentralization Enhance Service Delivery and Poverty Reduction?*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 125–60.

Bardhan, P. (2002), 'Decentralization of governance and development', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 16 (4), 185–205.

Bardhan, P. and D. Mookherjee (2006), 'The rise of local governments: an overview', in P. Bardhan and D. Mookherjee (eds), *Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 1–52.

Bergh, S. I. (2012). '"Inclusive" neoliberalism, local governance reforms and the redeployment of state power: the case of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) in Morocco', *Mediterranean Politics*, 17 (3), 410–26.

Bergh, S. I. (2016), 'Public sector governance reforms and "advanced regionalization" in Morocco: what role for the European Union?', *EUI/RSCAS Working Paper No. 2016/56*, accessed 11 March 2019 at http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/43984.

Bergh, S. I. (2017), *The Politics of Development in Morocco: Local Governance and Participation in North Africa*, London: I.B. Tauris.

Bergh, S. I. (2018), 'The redeployment of state power in the Southern Mediterranean – implications for local governance', *Aula Mediterrània*, No. 71, Barcelona: European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), accessed 11 March 2019 at http://www.iemed.org/recursos-compartits/pdfs/71-Bergh.pdf.

Bergh, S. I. and D. Rossi-Doria (2015). 'Plus ça change? Observing the dynamics of Morocco's "Arab Spring" in the High Atlas', *Mediterranean Politics*, 20 (2), 198–216.

Bertelsmann Stiftung (2009), *BTI 2010 – Morocco Country Report*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018), *BTI 2018 – Morocco Country Report*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Boadway, R. and S. Dougherty (2018), 'Decentralization in a globalised world: consequences and opportunities', *OECD Working Papers on Fiscal Federalism No. 21*, OECD Publishing.

Boex, J. and S. Yilmaz (2010), 'An analytical framework for assessing decentralized local governance and the local public sector', *IDG Working Paper No. 2010-06*, The Urban Institute Center on International Development and Governance.

Boko, S. and McNeil, M. (2010) 'Monitoring resource flows in decentralising African states', in V. Ayer, M. Claasen and C. Alpín-Lardiés (eds), *Social Accountability in Africa: Practitioners' Experiences and Lessons*, Idasa and ANSA-Africa, pp. 197–208.

Bossert, T. J. (2015), 'Empirical studies of an approach to decentralization: "decision space" in decentralised health systems', in J.-P. Faguet and C. Pöschl (eds), *Is Decentralization Good for Development? Perspectives from Academics and Policy Makers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 277–98.

Bouabid, A. and A. Iraki (2015) 'Maroc: tensions centralisatrices', in M. Harb and S. Atallah (eds), *Local Governments and Public Goods: Assessing Decentralization in the Arab World*, Beirut: LCPS-OSF, pp. 48–90.

Boumahrou, L. (2018), 'Liquidation des agences de développement régional: aucune décision prise pour le moment', *Finances News*, 17 January, accessed 11 March 2019 at http://fnh.ma/article/economie/liquidation-des-agences-de-developpement-regional-aucune-decision-prise-pour-le-moment.

Clark, J. A. (2018), *Local Politics in Jordan and Morocco: Strategies of Centralization and Decentralization*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Commission consultative de la régionalisation Royaume du Maroc (CCR) (2011), *Rapport sur la régionalisation avancée: Soumis à la Haute Attention de Sa Majesté Le Roi Mohammed VI*, accessed 11 March 2019 at http://www.regionalisationavancee.ma/PageFR.aspx?id=8.

Connerley, E., K. Eaton and P. Smoke (eds) (2010), *Making Decentralization Work: Democracy, Development, and Stability*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental (CESE) (2016), *Exigences de la régionalisation avancée et défis de l'intégration des politiques sectorielles*, *Auto-Saisine No. 22/2016*. Rabat: CESE.
Crook, R. C. and J. Manor (1998), *Democracy and Decentralization in South Asia and West Africa: Participation*, *Accountability and Performance*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Demmelhuber, T., R. Sturm and E. Vollmann (2020),'Decentralization in the Arab world: conceptualizing the role of neopatrimonial networks', *Mediterranean Politics*, 2(4), 499–521.
Devarajan, S., S. Khemani and S. Shah (2009), 'The politics of partial decentralization', in E. Ahmad and G. Brosio (eds), *Does Decentralization Enhance Service Delivery and Poverty Reduction?*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 102–24.
Dickovick, J. T. and R. Beatty Riedl (2014), 'African decentralization in comparative perspective', in J. T. Dickovick and J. S. Wunsch (eds) (2014), *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, pp. 249–76.
Eaton, K., K. Kaiser and P. J. Smoke (2011), *The Political Economy of Decentralization Reforms: Implications for Aid Effectiveness*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
El Aissi, N. (2018), 'Plan de développement régional: le carton rouge de l'Intérieur', *L'Economiste*, No. 5211 16 February, accessed 11 March 2019 at https://leconomiste.com/article/1024189-plan-de-developpement-regional-le-carton-rouge-de-l-interieur.
Faguet, J.-P. (2014), 'Decentralization and governance', *World Development*, 53, 2–13.
Faguet, J.-P. and C. Pöschl (2015), 'Is decentralization good for development? Perspectives from academics and policy makers', in J.-P. Faguet and C. Pöschl (eds), *Is Decentralization Good for Development? Perspectives from Academics and Policy Makers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–28.
Faguet, J.-P. and F. Sánchez (2013), 'Decentralization and access to social services in Colombia', *Public Choice*, 160 (1–2), 227–49.
Falleti, T. G. (2005), 'A sequential theory of decentralization: Latin American cases in comparative perspective', *The American Political Science Review*, 99 (3), 327–46.
Fjeldstad, O.-H. (2004), 'Decentralization and corruption: a review of the literature', *CMI Working Papers No. 10*, Chr. Michelsen Institute.
Gattioui, J. (2018), 'Régionalisation avancée: pourquoi cela n'avance pas plus vite?', *LesEco.ma*, 20 December, accessed 11 March 2019 at http://www.leseco.ma/maroc/72752-regionalisation-avancee-pourquoi-cela-n-avance-pas-plus-vite.html.
Grindle, M. S. (2007), *Going Local: Decentralization*, *Democratization*, *and the Promise of Good Governance*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Hadiz, V. R. (2004), 'Decentralisation and democracy in Indonesia: a critique of neo-institutionalist perspectives', *Development and Change*, 35 (4), 697–718.
Hallaoui, L. (2018), 'Centres régionaux d'investissement: pourquoi la réforme est-elle urgente?', *HuffPost Maroc*, 2 August, accessed 11 March 2019 at https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/entry/centres-regionaux-dinvestissement-pourquoi-la-reforme-est-elle-urgente_mg_5b61b176e4b0fd5c73d50c30 [website now offline].
Harb, M. and S. Atallah (2014), 'Decentralization in the Arab world must be strengthened to provide better services', *LCPS Policy Brief No. 11*, accessed 14 June 2019 at http://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1401092788-policy_brief_11_lcps.pdf.
Harriss, J., K. Stokke and O. Törnquist (2004), 'Introduction: the new local politics of democratisation', in J. Harriss, K. Stokke and O. Törnquist (eds), *Politicising Democracy: The New Local Politics of Democratisation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–28.
Heydemann, S. (2007), 'Upgrading authoritarianism in the Arab world', *The Saban Center for Middle East Politics Analysis Paper No. 13/2007*, Brookings Institution.
Hoffmann, A. (2015), 'Dezentralisierung in Marokko – hohe Erwartungen', *GIGA Focus No. 8*, Institut für Nahost-Studien.
Houdret, A. and A. Harnisch (2019), 'Decentralization in Morocco: a solution to the "Arab Spring"?', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 24 (6), 935–60.
Ismaili, G. (2016), 'Des présidents de région toucheront les mêmes salaires que les ministres', *HuffPost Maroc*, 5 August, accessed 11 March 2019 at https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/2016/08/05/presidents-region-salaire_n_11352948.html [website now offline].

Kherigi, I. (2017), ‘Devolving power after the Arab Spring: decentralization as a solution’, *Al Sharq Forum Paper Series*, 30 March, Al Sharq Strategic Research.
Litvack, J., A. Junaid and R. Bird (1998), ‘Rethinking decentralization in developing countries’, *Sector Studies Series*, World Bank.
Local Development International LLC (2013), *The Role of Decentralisation/Devolution in Improving Development Outcomes at the Local Level: Review of the Literature and Selected Cases*, report prepared for the UK Department for International Development South Asia Research Hub and Local Development International LLC.
Manor, J. (1999), *The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
Marei, F. G., M. Atia, L. Bhungalia and O. Dewachi (2018), ‘Interventions on the politics of governing the “ungovernable”’, *Political Geography*, 67, 176–86.
Ministère de l’Economie et des Finances, Direction des Etudes et des Prévisions Financières (DEPF) (2015), *Des inégalités régionales sous le prisme de l'accès aux droits humains: de la multiplicité à l’indivisibilité*, accessed 11 March 2019 at https://www.finances.gov.ma/Etude/depf/2015/etude_inegalites_regionales.pdf.
Murshed, S. M., M. Z. Tadjoeddin and A. Chowdhury (2009), ‘Is fiscal decentralization conflict abating? Routine violence and district level government in Java, Indonesia’, *Oxford Development Studies*, 37 (4), 397–421.
Musgrave, R. (1959), *The Theory of Public Finance*, New York: McGraw Hill.
Musgrave, R. and P. B. Musgrave (1973), *Public Finance in Theory and Practice*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
Oates, W. (1972), *Fiscal Federalism*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
OECD (2018a), *Morocco–OECD Dialogue on Territorial Development Policies: Challenges and Recommendations for Coordinated Public Action (Synthesis)*, Morocco Country Programme, Paris: OECD.
OECD (2018b), *Dialogue Maroc–OCDE sur les politiques de développement territorial: enjeux et recommandations pour une action publique coordonnée*, Paris: Editions OCDE.
Ojeda García, R. and A. Suárez Collado (2015), ‘The project of advanced regionalisation in Morocco: analysis of a Lampedusian reform’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42 (1), 46–58.
Olowu, D. and J. S. Wunsch (eds) (2003), *Local Governance in Africa: The Challenge of Democratic Decentralization*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
Olson, M. (1969), ‘The principle of “fiscal equivalence”: the division of responsibilities among different levels of government’, *The American Economic Review*, 59 (2), 479–87.
Ottaway, M. (2013), ‘Morocco: “advanced decentralization” meets the Sahara Autonomy initiative’, *Viewpoints No. 27*, Middle East Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
Parker, A. N. (1995), ‘Decentralization: the way forward for rural development?’, *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 1475*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
Prud’homme, R. (1995), ‘The dangers of decentralization’, *World Bank Research Observer*, 10 (2), 201–20.
Rao, S., Z. Scott and M. Alam (2014), *Decentralization and Local Government: Topic Guide* (3rd edition), Birmingham: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.
Reifeld, H. (2014), ‘Vom machtpolitischen Instrument zum demokratischen Wert: Dezentralisierung in Marokko’, *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) Auslandinformationen No. 8*, pp. 93–116.
Rondinelli, D. (1982), ‘The dilemma of development administration: complexity and uncertainty in control-oriented bureaucracies’, *World Politics*, 35 (1), 43–72.
Rondinelli, D. (1999), ‘What is decentralization?’, in J. Litvack and J. Seddon (eds), *Decentralization Briefing Notes*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
Rondinelli, D. A. and G. S. Cheema (eds) (2007), *Decentralizing Governance: Emerging Concepts and Practices*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
Rondinelli, D. A., G. S. Cheema and J. Nellis (1983), ‘Decentralization in developing countries: a review of recent experience’, *World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 581*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
Royaume du Maroc, Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement (2011), *La Constitution: Edition 2011*, Série Documentation Juridique Marocaine.
Royaume du Maroc, Ministère de l’Intérieur, Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales (2016), ‘Loi organique relative aux régions, Dahir n° 1-15-83 du 20 ramadan 1436 (7 juillet 2015) portant prom-

ulgation de la loi organique n° 111-14 relative aux régions', *Bulletin Officiel*, No. 6440 du 9 Joumada I 1437 (18 février 2016).
Royaume du Maroc (2019), 'Décret no. 2-17-618 du 18 rabii II 1440 (26 décembre 2018) portant charte nationale de la déconcentration administrative', *Bulletin Officiel*, No. 6740-26 rabii II 1440 (3-1-2019).
Schulte Nordholt, H. (2004), 'Decentralization in Indonesia: less state, more democracy?', in J. Harriss, K. Stokke and O. Törnquist (eds), *Politicising Democracy: The New Local Politics of Democratisation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 29–50.
Smoke, P. (2001), 'Fiscal decentralization in developing countries: a review of current concepts and practice', *Democracy*, *Governance and Human Rights Programme Paper 2*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
Suárez Collado, Á. and R. Ojeda García (2015), 'The effects of the Moroccan advanced regionalization process in Western Sahara', *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 5 (3), 76–98.
Tafra (2017), *La responsabilité des élus dans le cadre de la régionalisation avancée*, Rabat: Tafra and TelQuel Media, accessed 11 March 2019 at http://tafra.ma/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/LivretRegionalisation2017.pdf.
Tafra (2018), 'Régionalisation avancée: rapport d'étape', 12 November, accessed 11 March 2019 at http://tafra.ma/regionalisation-avancee-rapport-detape/.
Walter, E. (2017), 'Les agences de développement vont-elles bientôt disparaître?', *TelQuel*, 30 November, accessed 11 March 2019 at https://telquel.ma/2017/11/30/les-agences-developpement-vont-bientot-disparaitre_1570844.
Wenger, S. (2015), 'Au Maroc, une bipolarisation sous contrôle du Palais', *Magazine Orient XXI*, 19 October.
Willis, M. J. (2009), 'Conclusion: the dynamics of reform in Morocco', *Mediterranean Politics*, 14 (2), 229–37.
World Bank (2015), *Report No. 97721-MA: Program Document for a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US$200 Million to the Kingdom of Morocco for a Second Transparency and Accountability Development Policy Loan (Hakama II)*, 22 September, Governance Global Practice, Middle East and North Africa, accessed 10 January 2016 at http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2015/10/01/090224b08311906e/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Morocco000Seco00Policy0Loan0Project.pdf.
World Bank (2017), *World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
Wunsch, J. S. (2014), 'Decentralization: theoretical, conceptual, and analytical issues', in J. T. Dickovick and J. S. Wunsch (eds), *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, pp. 1–23.