

# **Le Positionnement de l'action coopérative féminine à la Province d'Essaouira**

## **Positioning of Women's cooperative action in Province of Essaouira**

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**Abstract:**

The entrepreneurial labor of feminine agricultural cooperatives, like the one in question here, in the province of Essaouira, Morocco, has apparently somewhat departed from its territorial objective. What leads us to write this article is our wish to understand the reasons behind this deviation. The overall goal of this study is to follow the setting up of a cooperative action venture for a well-positioned business governance and cooperative action. The feminine cooperatives in Essaouira have yet to position themselves as the market dictates because their marketing presence is not adequately developed. As a consequence, their social economy is lacking and cooperative action in the province requires a truly rational revision. Field work was carried out to gather qualitative data according to a precise systemic analysis from a sample of one hundred agricultural cooperatives established in the province of Essaouira. At the end of the article we will offer suggestions as to an effective support for members of the cooperatives and entrepreneurs so that their labor may follow a sound business ethic.

**Key words:** Essaouira; Governance; Positioning; Cooperative action; Local actors.

**Résumé**

L'œuvre entrepreneuriale, celle agricole féminine en l'occurrence, dans la province d'Essaouira a apparemment dévié quelque part de sa cible territoriale. Ce qui nous a poussés à écrire cet article est notre désir de vouloir comprendre les éléments responsables de cette déviation.

L'objet global de cette recherche est de suivre la mise en œuvre de l'action coopérative pour un entrepreneuriat de gouvernance et une action coopérative bien positionnée. Les coopératives féminines à Essaouira ne sont pas arrivées à se positionner, comme l'exige le marché. Leur persona, au sens marketing, n'est pas travaillée comme il a fallu l'être ; en conséquence, l'économie sociale fait défaut et l'action coopérative dans la province d'Essaouira nécessite une révision vraiment rationnelle. Un travail de terrain a été mené pour recueillir des données qualitatives et quantitatives selon une analyse systémique précise d'un échantillon de cent coopératives agricoles installées au niveau de la province d'Essaouira. Au terme de cet article, nous suggérons un accompagnement effectif des coopérantes, entrepreneures, pour que l'œuvre soit orientée vers l'éthique entrepreneuriale.

**Mots clés :** Essaouira ; Gouvernance ; Positionnement ; Action Coopératif ; Acteurs locaux.

## Introduction

Since 2011, Morocco has not been an exception to the reality of social upheaval in the Arab World. In 2016, it ranked 123<sup>rd</sup> out of 188<sup>1</sup> countries in the Human Development Index which is based on three elements: literacy rate, Gross National Product and Life Expectancy from birth. Even this figure hides a high social and geographical disparity. In particular, rural areas, 38% of the population in 2017<sup>2</sup> appear to be much less developed than urban areas.

To illustrate this, around 80% of the people under the poverty level, live in rural areas<sup>3</sup>. The average monthly household income in urban areas is one-and-a-half times higher than that of rural households: 87,276 and 55,548 *dirhams*, around 8,700 and 5,500 €, respectively<sup>4</sup>.

The illiteracy rate in rural areas is double that of urban zones: 47, 7% and 22, 2% of the la population, respectively<sup>5</sup>. In this sense, all around the world, the current tendency of the Economy swings toward local knowledge and innovation.

Cooperatives operate in various domains under the Law n° 112-12<sup>6</sup> relating to cooperatives in Morocco, whose stated objectives are to insure the economic and social development of their members, improve and develop the quality of their products or services and sell or distribute these to third parties under the best conditions possible (Bensghir N, 2020).

It should be noted that the eastern region of the country has the highest number of cooperatives with 5517, followed by the Marrakech-Safi region with 4,364. According to the latest statistics from the ODCO (the Office of Development and Cooperation) in 2020, 63% of cooperatives in Morocco carry out agricultural activities followed by handicrafts with around 19% (Rechidi S. & Ait Heda A. 2023:42).

The number of agricultural cooperatives, mainly located in rural areas, has tripled in the last ten years, rising from 3,272 in 2006 to 10,542 in 2016<sup>7</sup>. Cooperatives are also regarded by the public powers as a vector of social emancipation and local development in rural areas as well as a means to technological innovation.

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<sup>1</sup> Report on the evolution of the Human Development Index; published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); on Thursday September 8; 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Work Bank staff estimates using the United Nations Urbanization Outlook of the world population.

<sup>3</sup> Summary note on social and territorial inequalities in light of the results of the 2014 National Survey on Household Consumption and Expenditure, by High Commission for Planning HCP -Moroccan Government-.

<sup>4</sup> Results of the National Survey on Household Consumption and Expenditure -2013/2014- High Commission for Planning-Moroccan Government-.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.maroc.ma/fr/actualites/hcp-le-taux-danalphabetisme-de-la-population-marocaine-baisse-de-deux-tiers-sur-un-demi-> . Internet portal of the Moroccan government.

<sup>6</sup> Law 112-12, this is the law relating to cooperatives in Morocco.

<sup>7</sup> ODCO: Office of Development and Cooperation 2016.

You might even say that there has been an overvaluing of technological innovations in relationship to social innovations since diverse studies state that the success of technological innovations often depends on social innovations and that the Japanese model rests less on technological intensity than on the capacity to mobilize human resources permitted by their institutions.

Besides, social innovation is often the fruit of citizen initiatives or initiated by public powers. Those coming from the political class are usually in the form of services while technological innovations come mainly from industry, often initiated by the private sector for commercial profit.

Around the world, socially responsible actors have implemented innovative business models to solve social problems neglected by institutions, businesses, governmental and non-governmental organizations (Boudi, 2021).

The interest in this study is not in the originality of the subject matter but rather in its pertinence and its utility. Its novelty is due, first of all, to the fact that the subject of cooperative action is examined under a territorial prism. Also, the lack of scientific studies over cooperative action in the province of Essaouira<sup>8</sup> enables us to carry out an in-depth investigation. Finally, an empirical study demands more time to undertake and also requires access to different towns and villages which is difficult to do in a limited amount of time.

On the other hand, the scientific importance of the subject represents a considerable contribution for the actors in the province of Essaouira. This province is in open expansion with work underway in different sectors potentially rich in human and natural resources which will allow the development of new strategies for enacting territorial programs by using efficient and effective programming tools and thus ensure the durability of mid- and long-term cooperative action.

Note that most cooperatives in the province of Essaouira are specialized in *Argan*<sup>9</sup> *manufacturing*, they product different products based on Argan (soap, cream, facial oil, hair oil, anti-age products, and products to eat such as edible oil and *Amlou* which is the finished product of a mixture of amonds, honey and Argan oil). And all the more so since today, Argan oil is renowned throughout the world as a luxury product. In addition, the province of

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<sup>8</sup> The province of Essaouira is a predominantly rural subdivision of the Moroccan region of Marrakech-Safi. Its capital is Essaouira. The province of Essaouira is located in the southwest of the Marrakech-Safi region. It covers an area of 6,335 km<sup>2</sup> (Regional Investment Center of Marrakech, Province of Essaouira)

<sup>9</sup> The Argan tree is an emblematic tree of Morocco. It produces fruits whose seeds are used to extract the highly prized Argan oil.

Essaouira is very renowned for the quality and abundance of Argan production. Since the importance of the Argan tree was recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1998, cooperatives then exploit this natural advantage and profit from it. Indeed, the first women's cooperative for the production of Argan oil in Morocco was created in 1996 in Essaouira thanks to the support of the British embassy, the Research center for international development (Ottawa, Quebec) and the committee of International Mutual Aid (Azenfar A. & Mahfoudi M, 2015).

The objective of this article is to present the original results of the field investigation carried out over social entrepreneurship. The action of the Argan cooperative was the center of analysis. Social entrepreneurs in the province of Essaouira were asked for their feedback, through a semi directive guide interview (attached is the model used in appendix). These actors are the different stakeholders who participate in the creation and support of cooperatives, namely administrations, national agencies, national offices, territorial communes, and the cooperatives themselves.

The National Initiative for Human Development (INDH)<sup>10</sup>, a government program directed by the Interior Ministry, participated in the financing of partnerships aimed at the promotion and development of agricultural cooperatives. Nevertheless, the development of cooperatives and the support received from the State seems to reflect little upon the socio-economic statistics in rural areas. *How can that be accounted for? What are the reasons for this?*

In the following sections, after an essay of contextualization, we will explain the methodology and the issues to be analyzed, the objective and the hypothesis of the study. An analysis and discussion of the study will follow as well as a brief conclusion.

## 1- Literature Review

To understand cooperative action in Morocco, it's necessary to see the state of the places where they operate, their dynamics as well as their limitations and opportunities. There's no need to go too far back and examine the most relevant facts. The historical analysis of cooperatives in Morocco is marked by several phases strongly influenced by circumstances and changes in the social, economic and political order. Practices of solidarity that have existed in Morocco since ancient times have evolved over time to give rise to the modern

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<sup>10</sup> The National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) is a Moroccan project of national scope aimed at raising the level of society and the population. The project was launched by King Mohammed VI on May 18, 2005.

cooperatives we see nowadays which surely have been previously deployed in the rural world, characterized by the predominance of agricultural activities.

The colonial period represents a remarkable point of inflection in the history of Moroccan cooperatives, dating back to 1922. Then, the first text relative to the organization of cooperatives in Morocco was issued in Dahir<sup>11</sup> authorizing consumption cooperatives for foreign colonizers in order to facilitate their installation into the country. This was followed by a second Dahir, relative to a mutual credit union and an agricultural cooperation for the constitution of agricultural cooperatives in benefit of the community, appearing in 1935. Two years later, a legislative reform allowed the autochthonous population to participate in cereal cooperatives for political reasons in order to better regulate economic activity in benefit of foreign colonists. A Dahir proclaimed in 1938 permitted the setting up of cooperatives exclusively for Moroccans in the agricultural and handicraft sectors (Mekkaoui Alaoui Y. & Zouiten M, 2022). On the eve of Independence, only 62 cooperatives were in operation, the majority of which are agricultural and crafts cooperatives, dairy and cereal cooperatives several of which still exist.

In order to better organize the sector and enable it to play a more relevant role, the State established the Bureau of Development of Cooperation (BDCO) in 1962 which was made up of an administrative structure in charge of supporting cooperatives in the fields of formation, information and judicial assistance (Ahrouch S, 2011). Since then, the country has had a series of Laws and decrees authorizing and regulating the creation of cooperatives:

- The Retail Trade act of 1963;
- Artisan fishing and fishing areas in 1968 and the land reform of 1972 (Bouchafra M, 2012);

All these texts suffer from great ambiguity as to the relationship between cooperatives and institutional actors. The setting up of a vigorous cooperative movement depends on various reglamentary factors. In the decades of the 70's and 80's, the sector entered into a relatively modern phase characterized by two major events: the transformation of the BDCO in Office in 1975 and the passing of Law n° 24-83 in 1984. Also, the new agency was assigned the mission of support to small and medium producers to organize into cooperatives, the promotion of their role in the cooperative fabric in the creation of independent jobs along with the establishment of appropriate mechanisms, notably in the subject of governance and

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<sup>11</sup> The Dahir is a decree or decision issued by a sovereign authority. In Moroccan legislation, this term designates the seal of the king affixed to the texts of laws voted in parliament.

administration as well as enforcing respect for cooperative rights (Mekkaoui Alaoui Y. & Zouiten M, 2022).

Nowadays, the Moroccan economy in general and that of the province of Essaouira in particular is in constant evolution yet the question of inclusion social remains a major challenge. Morocco, with Essaouira as a case in point, has seen a sustained economic growth in recent years, mainly thanks to economic reforms and a steady opening to world markets. However, this growth has not equally reached all citizens since a large part of the population remains on the margins of the formal economy, suffering from high youth unemployment and persistent inequalities.

The emergence of social elements in the Moroccan economy is a response to these challenges. More and more frequently, actors, among these the government, businesses and organizations within the civil society, recognize the importance of social inclusion for the growth of a viable economy. This translates into diverse initiatives such as social protection programs, calling for social entrepreneurship and investments in education and vocational training.

In Morocco, cooperatives play a significant role in economic and social development. Essaouira in particular is known for its arts and crafts tradition, among which is the production of argan oil, carpets, rugs and local craftwork. Numerous cooperatives have been created in the region to promote employment, sustain local artisans and to preserve skills in traditional craftwork.

## **2- Methodology**

The province of Essaouira is among the provinces of the Kingdom with greater social and economic potential. The State undertakes efforts for the creation, support and follow-up of social projects by attempting to develop social actions for development (social enterprises) while encouraging capitalist enterprises as well. Despite financing said social enterprises through budget grants, the support and accompaniment of cooperatives through several official organisms. However, nowadays, in Essaouira as elsewhere, it is evident that the results obtained remain far from those to be desired for an inclusive economy for the populations involved.

### **2-1- General objective**

The overall objective of this article is to follow the starting up of cooperative action in the province of Essaouira for a successful social entrepreneurship and inclusive economy which responds to the needs of the populations as well as to market demands. To achieve this double

objective of one, fulfilling provincial and local expectations and two, accounting for and rectifying the slow, almost nonexistent changes brought about by cooperative action in many of the population of one hundred agricultural cooperatives groups in question, the first question that was posed to local actors who are closely involved with cooperative action in the province was: *What is your perception of the notion of agricultural cooperatives?* The next question was: *Have the entrepreneurial actions related to cooperatives public and/or private in Essaouira, represented a social change in rural and urban populations?*

Can be found below the list of local actors arrested and interviewed in one day for actor:

Local Actor	Affiliation	Department
D.A.S	Division of Social Affairs	Ministry of the Interior, province of Essaouira
D.P.A	Provincial Directorate of Agriculture	Ministry of agriculture, fisheries, rural development, water and forests, department of agriculture.
O.N.D.Z.O.A	The National Agency for the Development of Oasis Areas and the Argan Tree	Ministry of agriculture, fisheries, rural development, water and forests, department of agriculture.
O.N.C.A	National Office of the Agricultural Council	Ministry of agriculture, fisheries, rural development, water and forests, department of agriculture.
A.D.S	Social Development Agency	Ministry of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family
Ageurd	Territorial commune of Ageurd	Ministry of the Interior, province of Essaouira
Sidi kaoui	Territorial commune of Sidi Kaouki	Ministry of the Interior, province of Essaouira
Assays Ouzika	Cooperative Assays Ouzika	Office of Development and Cooperation
Tilila	Cooperative Tilila	Office of Development and Cooperation
Ajeddig	Coopetaive Ajeddig	Office of Development and Cooperation
G.I.E VITARGAN	Group of Economic Interest VITARGAN	Office of Development and Cooperation

## 2-2- Hypothesis

Insofar as the slow changes in the cooperative system in the province of Essaouira, this was a

chance to point out several aspects which incite not only to frame and accompany those who set up cooperative projects but also and especially to work with these people in the sense of local governance and training. Therefore, our hypothesis is: ***“the desired social change in the province of Essaouira supposes that it would be beneficial not only to support those who manage cooperative projects but also and especially to work towards a suitable position and positive brand image in cooperative action.”***

Capacity does not come by decree but is constructed. Those who set up and manage cooperative projects in Essaouira are obliged to enter into market conditions and to learn how to face its aggressiveness. Local governance can be summarized in notions such as communication, participation, consultation, consensus, innovation, performance, strategic vision, etc., and especially a well-positioned brand image in the market.

This deals fundamentally with commercial communication which is why our choice of a qualitative interpretation approach constrains us to this dimension which, on the other hand, is sufficient enough to validate and confirm our hypothesis which can be clarified as ***“sound conditions of social entrepreneurship would not necessarily be impacted by financing and public support nor would they necessarily serve to improve cooperative statutes nor comparative action nor would they necessarily lead to economically inclusive action.”***

### **2-3- Methodology**

In the field, we carried out a methodologically qualitative approach. We preceded with a semi-directive interview for which we used the program *IRaMuTeQ*<sup>12</sup> (Alceste application) a statistical tool with which the texts were analyzed and the results interpreted. We then proceeded at first with descending hierarchical classifications (CHD) later with an analysis of factorial correspondence (AFC) finally followed by positioning charts. The verbatim was determined by active forms detailed in the body of the analysis.

### **3- Results and discussion**

During the interviews with local actors, particular attention was placed on verbatim statements, giving a high importance to literal, word-by-word transcriptions of their interventions. The frequency with which some words were used was very useful in drawing up a thematic classification of this analysis as was effectively confirmed by the table of active

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<sup>12</sup> IRaMuTeQ: Interface of R for the Analysis of Multidimensional Texts and Questionnaires. is free and open source software for textual data analysis or textual statistics that interfaces with the R language.

forms (FA), the figures in the descending hierarchical classification (CHD) and those of the factorial analysis of correspondences (AFC).

### 3-1- Active forms (FA)

**Figure 1: Active forms:**

Cooperative	29	Allow	7	Development	5
women	19	Common	7	Develop	5
Agricultural	14	Rural	6	Task	4
Work	13	Product	6	Reenter	4
Cooperative	13	Local	6	Organiz	4
Economic	12	Farmer	6	Essaouira	4
Production	11	Statute	5	Create	4
Activity	11	Organization	5	Cooperant	4
Member	10	Occupy	5	Setting	4
Employment	9	Means	5	Need	4
social	7	form	5	Argan	4

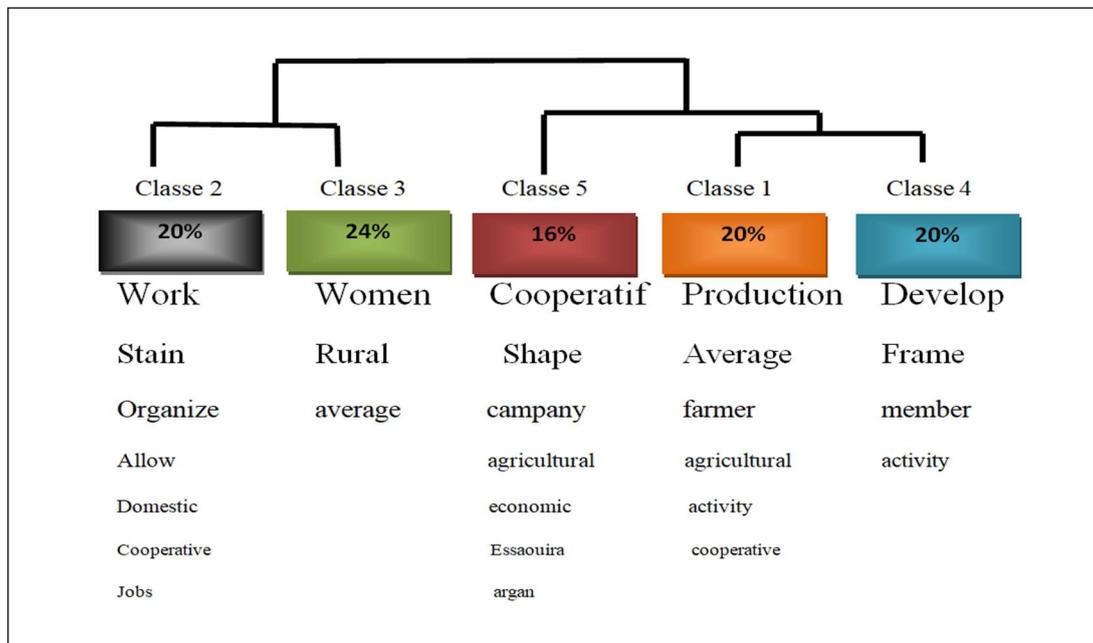
**Source: IRAMUTEQ**

It becomes clear from these active forms that the cooperative occupies a preponderant place among agricultural labor in the province of Essaouira as well as the fact that sustained economic production by the members of said cooperatives pivots around women who direct activities by sharing the value of the terrains and lead the way by creating jobs and social opportunities.

From this fact, several questions arise along these lines. However, what we're more concerned with in this article is cooperative action in itself on one hand and seeing if the actors of Social and Solidary Economy in general at the level of the province confirm the importance of this action in local development.

### 3-2- Descending hierarchical classification

Figure 2: Descending Hierarchical Classification (CHD) :



**Source IRAMUTEQ**

According to the descending hierarchical classification (CHD), we can see that the perception of cooperative action by local actors can be divided into two large categories:

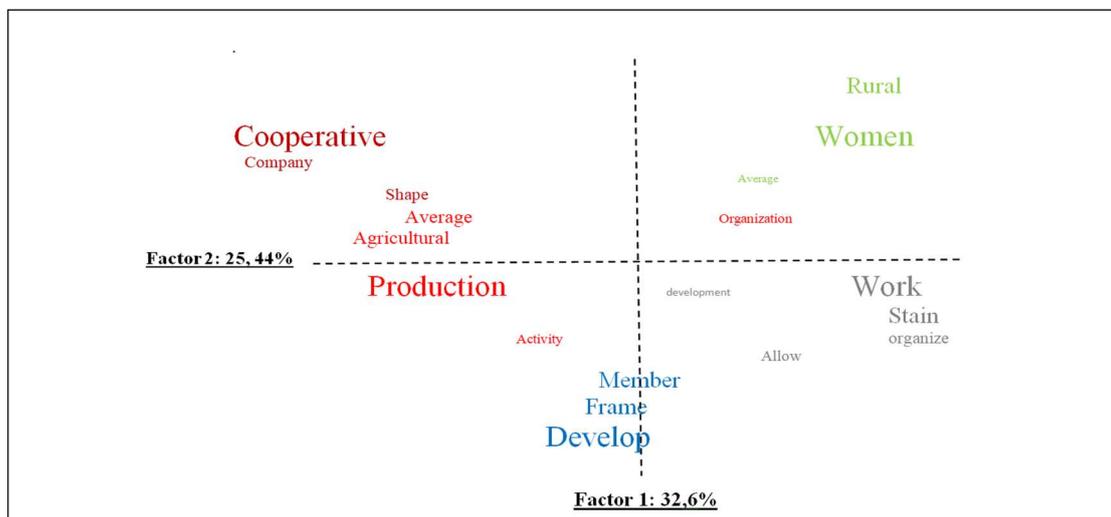
The first classification (class 2 and 3) is centered on two concepts: *work* and *women* meaning that 20% of local actors in the province consider the cooperative as a unit of job creation and of carrying out tasks thus allowing a higher level of organization within a group of people. 24% summarize cooperative action in the importance of rural women, observing that it's impossible to imagine a cooperative without the active participation of the rural woman, especially in the case of the Argan cooperatives. This first classification effectively shows that cooperative action in the province of Essaouira reflects the labor and the undertaking of tasks by rural women as having the primordial role in the continuity of the cooperative.

The second classification (class 1, 4 and 5) is focused on three concepts: *Cooperative*, *Production* and *Development*. According to 20% of local actors, the cooperative spirit demands production through the means and machines under grants to farmers to ensure the quality of the products of the Argan cooperative and to guarantee the continuity of the cooperative's activity. Besides, 20% of actors consider cooperative action to be an effective tool for development be it through the cooperative itself or through the organization of the

members of the group into teams of motivating labor or be it in the territorial commune through the promotion of the economic and social circuit. Finally, 16% of actors define the cooperative as a form of agricultural business with the goal of mobilizing a group of individuals towards the production of products in their terrains. This second classification shows the qualitative aspect of the perception of the cooperative since it involves the quality of the products and the development of the activity whereas the first classification focuses on the quantitative aspect based on the labor and the carrying out of tasks by rural women without stressing manner or quality.

### 3-3- Factorial Analysis of Correspondences (AFC)

**Figure 3: Factorial analysis of correspondences (AFC):**



**Source IRAMUTEQ**

The factorial analysis of correspondences (AFC) can be seen in the following four quadrants:

- The upper right-hand quadrant is the zone of positive ordinates and abscissas where class 3 is grouped in relationship to the conception that links cooperative action with the labor of rural women. This supports the fact that rural women assume the work and ensure jobs. All actors in cooperative action in Essaouira witness the heavy burden that women have to shoulder at the cooperative level and thus clearly perceive their overall importance.
- The upper left-hand quadrant is the zone of negative abscissas and positive ordinates

where classes 1 and 5, relative to data about production and cooperation, are grouped. This shows that there is still a negative and opposite aspect even though it remains at the level of forms. It's a type of social resistance and demonstrates that individual action which encourages feminine initiative is counteracted by another collective action related to social perception.

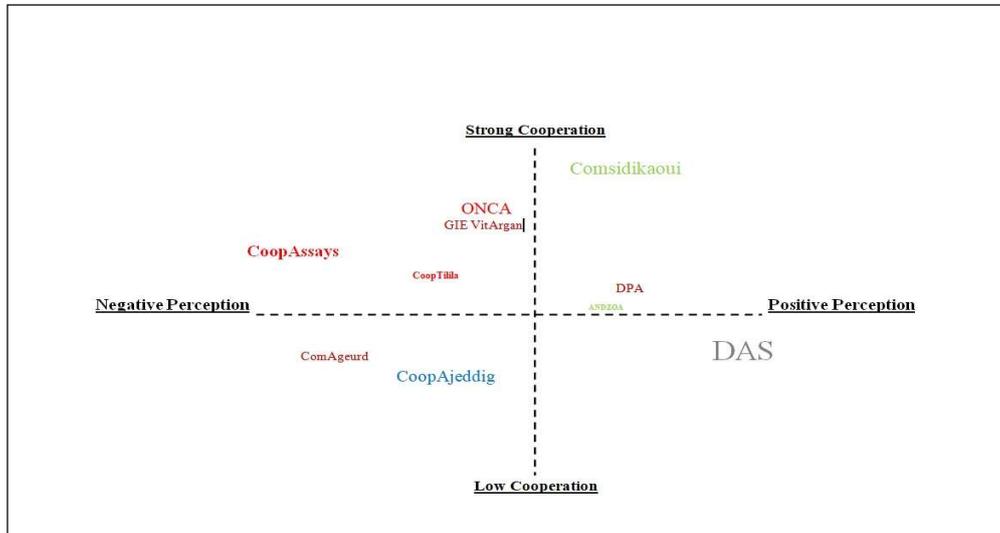
- The lower right-hand quadrant is a zone of negative ordinates and positive abscissas where class 2, relative to labor and the carrying out of tasks, is grouped. Women's labor is preponderant and needless to say, work is promoted and organized by them thus permitting them to ensure the continuity of jobs.
- The lower left-hand quadrant is the zone of negative abscissas and ordinates where classes 1 to 4, relative to concepts of development and production are located. These are in opposition to the notion of “work” and point out the weakness of production and the lack of development.

The factors representing the opinions and attitudes of local actors are seen in classes 2 and 3 and correlate positively with the axis of abscissas. It is clear then that the perceptions given by said actors in cooperative action can be summarized by the work carried out by the rural woman or at least it might be stated, work that would otherwise not be undertaken if the women's cooperative did not exist. This therefore stresses the importance of cooperatives in the economic process in the locality through the creation of jobs and thus contributing to the social-economic autonomy of rural women.

On the other hand, factors like perceptions, opinions and attitudes represented in classes 4 and 5 go in the opposite direction and correlate negatively with the axis of abscissas, meaning that the cooperative is a social enterprise which promotes development without taking into account the entrepreneurial value of rural woman. Besides, the term “cooperative” high in the chart demonstrates the empty space present in the form, the organization and outcome of cooperative action in the province.

### 3-4- Positioning of actors

**Figure 4: Actors positioning**



**Source IRAMUTEQ**

Under this logic, we note from the point of view of positioning<sup>13</sup> of various actors in Essaouira, that, overall, the latter are far from enjoying a positive correlation with the perception of cooperative action at the local level as far as Argan and its industry is concerned. Indeed, one finds that the Division of Social Affairs (DAS) in the province is very positively correlated to the idea of cooperative action within socio-economic dimensions and this actor is seen as having a highly positive perception although its activity cannot be classified as strictly cooperative. On the other hand, the town of Sidi Kaouki is very cooperative yet its activity is not perceived as being sufficiently positive. The National Agency for the Development of Oasis and Argan Zones (ANDZOA) and the Provincial Direction of Agriculture (DPA) hold positive perceptions as to the production of Argan as well as in relationship to cooperative action yet remain passive as in the case of remaining actors.

It stands out from the analysis over positioning of actors as to their perceptions that the cooperatives themselves which were interviewed hold very negative opinions about social institutions. The Group of Economic Interest (GIE)<sup>14</sup> and the National Office of the

<sup>13</sup> Generally, positioning understood as the place/ value occupied by a product or a brand in the eyes of customers in relationship to similar products and/or competitors. The price of the product, its characteristics, the brand image often influence its position, the product in question here being cooperative action seen as an economic activity

<sup>14</sup> The Economic Interest Group (EIG) allows cooperatives to combine their efforts where they have common interests, while maintaining their independence. In other words, the GIE allows them to come together to

Agricultural Council (ONCA) contribute to cooperative action and hold themselves to be supporters of cooperatives although their perceptions of cooperative action tend to be negative.

Since the strategic position of a business is a useful tool when setting a strategy and so, seeks to offer a more credible, attractive and diversified position than the one it currently occupies in the market, it would be worth noting that in Essaouira, local authorities which are backed by the Interior Ministry are the most willing and qualified actors for research over the positioning for cooperative action. The Ministry becomes involved in the strengthening of cooperatives by standing behind strategies which give credibility, pertinence and performance to the offer of local products to meet the needs of the population and of potential customers in general.

We remark as well, as shown in the above chart, that the cooperatives themselves do not engage in efforts which attract the attention of their target groups by not working efficiently enough towards the improvement of their image. By dedicating themselves to the use of highly ineffective tactics, they become invisible, having a vague, bland, tepid and unclear market position. They fail to understand the pricing mechanism of their products and the concept of extra added value and are thereby exposed to risks when they face competition and market negotiations which, all in all, can make cooperatives not very recommendable from a commercial standpoint.

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facilitate or develop their economic activity by pooling resources and skills.

## Conclusion

We conclude by saying that it is interesting to remember that the product in question in this study is “Argan cooperative action” in itself. Local actors in the province of Essaouira are active defenders of the brand and work to stimulate customers to consume the product. The study over the perceptions these actors may have in relation to this action give us an idea as to the positioning of this product in the market. It is also worth noting that the cooperative action under study here is not synonymous with social action in the sense where all human behavior is guided towards another as in the sense set forth by Max Weber. (Mien Edouard, 2018).

If we recognize the simple definition of social action as being structured around aid and assistance to the underprivileged as a right to national or local solidarity and if we take the term “social action” to mean collective action in the framework of a social movement, we find in our case that to amalgamate these two concepts is the key. Finally, we return to our starting hypothesis which stipulates that the desired social change in the province of Essaouira assumes that it would be beneficial to support the organizers of cooperative projects and work towards a more suitable positioning and positive brand image of cooperative action.

Our study opens the perspectives to further research into general territorial prospects for cooperative action directly linked to the success of these territorial programs which may open the door to the development of new tools of actions especially adapted to the province of Essaouira which will enable actors to perfect and diversify their mode of management and to develop more effective investment strategies and skills and thereby become further implicated in local actions. There are, however, theoretical and practical limitations.

We anticipate that our results could serve as a starting point towards other reflections based on a territorial approach in the broader scope of cooperatives and social entrepreneurship which could be carried out within the framework of territorial strategies. To anticipate evolutions and involutions in territorial management over the middle and long term would represent the definition and elaboration of means and working methods to overcome these limitations. In this sense, the mobilization of public and non-public actors of the territories in the province of Essaouira calls for the creation of a greater consciousness and of more rigorous and effective territorial exchanges. (Ait Lhou D. & Cherkaoui A, 2020). We feel that this is the most operational, pragmatic as well as the most efficient way to balance the territorial equation where local economic development, sustainable exchange and development play a role as an accelerating factor.

If any recommendations are to be made, first of all, it would be the necessary adoption of good conditions of social entrepreneurship since these are impacted by financing and public support. Also, adequate managerial and communicational measures would be useful as a way of improving the statutes of cooperatives since cooperative action, at least currently, does not lead to real socio-economic action. Finally, as shown in the study, support and training in feminine agricultural cooperatives in the province of Essaouira are primordial among entrepreneurs and farmers so that the ends and goals of sustainable development and governance are intermingled instead of being solely interested in means such as financial and material support.

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## Appendix

### Semi directive interview guide addressed to local actors

M. OULAHCEN Zakaria

Semi-directive interview guide

(Please provide responses of 5 to 10 lines)

**Preamble:**

Social entrepreneurship is a set of tendencies which stimulate change in a given territory. It is also an arsenal of creative innovations which have the power to alter all types of static situations in a society as well as the capacity to inject greater dynamism, growth and development.

The social entrepreneurship we are dealing with here is linked to cooperative social enterprises in the case of agricultural cooperatives in the Essaouira province in Morocco whose actors are involved in social mission projects. This vocation often is confronted by specific challenges so any definition of social entrepreneurship should reflect this idea since the actors in question must carry out roles in bringing about changes in the social sector through:

- accepting this mission in order to create and safeguard their social and not only private value
- recognizing new opportunities to further this mission ;
- establishing processes of continuous innovation, training and formation;
- setting these up with the necessary energy without being constrained by limited resources;
- acting with a growing consciousness of responsibility and accountability.

Social entrepreneurship consists of actors having specific ways, means and behaviors since it implies a style of leadership which should be recognized as such.

The province of Essaouira is among the provinces of the Kingdom with a greater economic and social potential through the efforts of the State to encourage the creation of projects to develop ideas in the social domain; nevertheless, due to the lack of financing, official support and backing of said agricultural cooperatives, we find that nowadays in Essaouira, the results obtained are far from responding adequately to the wishes for a more inclusive economy of the population.

- *Overall objective:* to evaluate the action of agricultural cooperatives in the province towards an inclusive economy which responds to the demands of the market?
- *The target group:* this semi-directive interview is directed towards actors of the Solidary Social Economy in the province of Essaouira.
- *Identification of the actor:* the Organism they belong to.

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1 - Introductory Phase:

GENERAL QUESTION OVER THE STATE OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN ESSAOUIRA

*Specific objective:* To focus on provincial and local perceptions of entrepreneurial action in Essaouira.

- The definition of this call for input
- The relationship with everyday problems linked to performance

**Question1:** Perception of the notion of the agricultural cooperative?  
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*Specific objective:* to describe the slow, almost absent changes in the populations.

**Question2:** Has public and/or private business action in Essaouira represented a social change in rural and urban populations?  
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2- Phase of centering of the subject:

THE IMPACT OF FINANCING OF E.S.S

*Specific objective:* to measure the impact of financing over said cooperatives (socio-economic, socio-professional impact, etc.);

**Question3:** Do you feel that the financing and official support given to agricultural cooperatives is scarcely effective or completely ineffective?  
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**Question 4:** What do you think of this support at the socio-economic level?  
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**Question 5:** What do you think of this support at the socio-professional level?  
.....

*Specific Objective:* to encourage local populations to improve the status of their projects (their conversion into Very Small Enterprises, for example).

**Question 6:** Do you believe that cooperatives in the province have the potential to upgrade into SME or some other form? Why or why not?

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**Question 7:** Are there organizational or legal constraints to this evolution?

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Phase 3: In-depth Phase

GOOD GOVERNANCE, EMPOWERMENT, CAPABILITY AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS.

*Specific Objective: to demonstrate how good business practices lead to an inclusive economy.*

**Question 8 :** Sound governance (participation, concertation, consensus, innovation, performance, strategic vision, etc.) mark entrepreneurial action in Essaouira province ?

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**Question 9:** Do you believe that those who lead agricultural cooperative projects are really free in their professional and organizational decisions?

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**Question 10:** If a rigorous evaluation of agricultural cooperatives in Essaouira province were carried out, what would your overall opinion of their competitiveness and brand image be?

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Phase 4: Closing Phase

Add any other commentaries or responses.

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...Our most sincere thanks...