

TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AS A RESOURCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY: THE CASE OF BASKETRY IN THE WILAYA OF TIZI-OUZOU –ALGERIA-

Dr. CHERIFI Kahina¹, Dr. Benyattou Mebrouk²

¹ University of Mouloud Mammeri Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria, kahina.cherifi15@yahoo.com

² University of Ammar Thildji Laghouat, Algeria, m.benyattou.vac@lagh-univ.dz

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Summary

This article implements an empirical research that allows, through a qualitative socio-economic approach to identify and analyze the territorial dynamics of 57 basket-weavers in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou. The analysis of the results obtained has explained why this territory, long marginalised, is not the subject of real social and solidarity economy projects through the valorisation of local know-how of the basket-weavers. As a result, collective commitment is a form of valorisation par excellence of local craft know-how in order to bring together the local craftsmen and especially those who work at home in order to emerge the social and solidarity economy of the territory studied.

Keywords: Social and solidarity economy, local know-how, traditional crafts, Tizi-Ouzou, basketery.

Introduction

Areas with strong socio-economic and environmental constraints such as marginalised and mountain areas are hampered by the inability to adapt a development process. The researchers have addressed this issue in order to strengthen the capacity of marginalized territories to define better methods and strategies for improving the living conditions of their populations.

The construction of territories appears as a mode of adaptation through reappropriation (Landel, P-A, 2011). Indeed, the question of territorial specificities and their valorization on the basis of local know-how has become important. Public and private actors are increasingly committed to exploiting these assets. However, the strategic thinking on the development and

exploitation of territorial resources in Algeria is still at its beginning, a recent awareness compared to other countries (Morocco, Tunisia).

In a territory such as the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou, culturally rich, with a strong identity, traditions and an artisanal vocation, reflection is turned to the possibility of strengthening its attractiveness. This territory is confronted with problems such as unemployment, the need to build its own model of socio-economic development while wanting to safeguard its identity that makes it unique. In this context, we have oriented ourselves towards a reading of the attractiveness that is territorial development with the search for a differentiation strategy responding to the specificities of territories in difficulty in order to allow a model of development based on the social and solidarity economy.

As for the whole of Algeria, the villages of the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou have their own culture on a land of resistance to successive waves of conquests and which has retained a strong identity still visible today. This identity is reflected in particular by the local craft know-how rooted in the cultural economy. This local craft know-how requires support to allow its true development on solid foundations. Traditional crafts have always played a major economic and social role (Oualikène, S, 2009). In a mountainous area where there were only limited opportunities for agricultural expansion, it was often an indispensable resource for the population. To supplement the resources of a poor land, the inhabitants have therefore perpetuated an ancestral craft. Part of the craft of Kabyle is social and solidarity economy, sometimes seen as a necessity in the face of the demands of everyday life.

As in the rest of the country, and following the decline of the traditional society which it was an expression of, crafts are now threatened. Traditional crafts know-how is difficult to pass on from generation to generation. The transformation of village social structures and the abandonment of cultural landmarks in rural areas are causing profound upheavals. These changes have repercussions on the way of life, production and consumption of families living in mountain areas. Thus, traditional crafts are gradually being perceived as obsolete rather than as a tool for socio-economic development. It is clear that the system must be adapted to changing society by using new ways of doing things.

1. **Problem and hypothesis**

This article focuses on the place given to intangible cultural heritage in the process of development of territories by the social and solidarity economy. This place will be projected

on the promotion of artisanal know-how focusing on the approach of territorial resource by the case of basketry in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou.

Our conception of artisanal know-how overlaps with the approach to territorial development that places the territorial resource at the center of concerns. We borrow the concept of territorial rent from Pecqueur and Campagne (2014:42), which express the idea of belonging of a product or service to a given territory by conferring its specificity. We analyse this approach on basketry in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou, whose local crafts know-how is shared by the villagers.

Our benchmark was to support the recognition and enhancement of their knowledge-based traditional handicraft by local and supra-local actors can be a factor in the development of social and solidarity economy for small communities in difficulty with reference to their living space, that is to say their shared living space and their local identity.

We are aware that projects for the development of social and solidarity economy which adopt a territorial approach, whether they are cooperation projects with international organizations or national strategies, all start from the same diagnosis of the weakness of taking into account territorial specificities: local organizations, specific resources, identity elements etc. It is for us, through our article, to orient the reflection in this direction, because we believe that in territories so marked by ancestral local identity and by attempts to implement new development strategies through actors, whether internal or external, differences in representations, which may hinder the development of these territories, are inevitable.

For several decades, not a day passes without humanity confronting the phenomena of globalization. This upheaval, conveyed by the development of new information technologies such as social networks, leads some to predict the end of the specificities and identity of territories. The opposite effect is occurring. There is not a day that passes without witnessing somewhere in the world a search for identity and recognition of the socio-cultural specificity of different communities to stimulate the social and solidarity economy. The latter is manifested through the return of heritage and its reappropriation by territorial actors. This interest has been reflected in a multitude of asset-building operations. The objective of protection has now been transferred to that of promotion in the context of a sustainable development project. This means that heritage has acquired the status of a resource to become an essential element in the process of construction and development of territories.

The application of the territorial development strategy seems particularly attractive for the kabyle villages, as it opens a way to escape the constraint of devastating global competitiveness, by highlighting the development of differentiated resources: the example of local craft know-how. Although they are latent, scientific research (Donsimoni, M., Kemmar, M., Perret, C, 2010, Berbar, M, 2018) has shown that these resources can also be revealed in the villages of the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou. Thus, they bear the mark of the history and heritage of the villages, therefore that of their singularities and of their competitive social and solidarity economy.

From this context it seemed interesting to study the Algerian experience in terms of development of traditional crafts through the case of basketry in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou.

To achieve our objective, we analyse, more precisely the process of promotion of local artisanal know-how and then determine the role played by local and supra-local actors. We will conduct this analysis from a problem built around this main question: The local crafts know-how of basket weavers in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou, can they be considered as a resource of the social and solidarity economy of this territory?

Our starting point in this article was the following hypothesis, which is the guiding thread of this work: local crafts know-how can be a tool for developing the social and solidarity economy for the villages of the wilaya Tizi-Ouzou to the extent that they are recognized and valued by local actors themselves. In our opinion, local actors gathered around a development project will be able to better orient themselves and define strategies if they refer to their own local crafts know-how by putting them in relation.

2. Methodology adopted and data collection

Our article is part of a comprehensive approach that places local actors at the center of our approach because it is about knowing and understanding the meaning that these actors give to their practices in relation to the promotion of local crafts know-how such as the case of basketry in kabyle villages to enrich the social and solidarity economy of their territory.

Since the objective of our study is to develop a sociological understanding of a process of valorization of local know-how of basket weavers, the bias of the initial approach is to collect purely qualitative data that allows us to understand from within the process that has been investigated. In our study, we varied the sources, not only with regard to scale (village, commune, daïra, wilaya), but also with regard to the category of development actors involved

in the exploitation of local crafts know-how, whether public, civil, local communities, associations and basket weavers. Thus, the tools that allowed us to conduct our investigations were diversified: observation, research or administrative documents, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

In the literature search, we consulted several sources of written data at different stages of our work. The latter are of various kinds and concern literature on our research theme, grey literature and some archives. The theoretical writings served as a basis for our research.

We have been able to collect reports, studies or theses in Algeria and other countries that have already dealt with aspects directly or indirectly affecting our study including public service organizations working on issues of knowledge exploitation local crafts know-how. Documents uploaded to the internet provided us with information from grey literature.

We also met with the leaders working in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sectors supporting and supervising traditional crafts. They have been used as resource persons to explain the value of basketry as a threatened occupation. We discussed with them the constraints and the measures and actions necessary to safeguard this local crafts know-how.

This phase of bibliographical research, preliminary to any study approach, has allowed us to have a broad vision of our research object and at the same time prepare us for carrying out the field work.

Observation allowed us to immerse ourselves, to live the reality of the field in order to collect data necessary for the realization of our research work. We devoted our first days of investigation to making contact with the Directorate of Tourism and Crafts and the Chamber of Crafts and Trades who communicated us the list of registered basket weavers and those written off and we contacted them. This stage allowed us to tour the different villages where the basket weavers are located in the company of friends who know the villages, the various interventions of these people have allowed the respondents to trust us. These visits took place in workshops a few metres from their homes or in their own homes (for women basket weavers who do not leave their homes), to avoid any bias regarding the place of maintenance, and establish a relationship of trust. These interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. In order to analyse the work of the basket weavers, this method was chosen to complement other types of data collection. A direct natural observation method was used, which includes observing behaviour as it normally occurs in the environment.

We even administered our questionnaire by translating it into Kabyle to make the questions accessible to all basket weavers and avoid redundancies. To better conduct our field work, we have been accompanied by friends from the villages where the basket weavers surveyed are located in order to facilitate access to their workshops. Together, we contacted the artisans on the sites surveyed and developed a work schedule.

Together, we contacted the basket weavers on the sites surveyed and developed a work schedule. Our field research spans the period from March 2023 to August 2023. The interviews, which lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, were recorded in digital audio.

Both methods were used in the investigation. The first includes semi-structured interviews with specialists and experts in the field, and questionnaires to basket weavers. The second involves a visual analysis of the habits of basket weavers at the time of making an article or selling their products.

The questionnaires to the basket weavers, we did it in a structured-direct way, that is, the questions are formulated in a direct way and the answers are predetermined. These questions are asked with exactly the same words and in exactly the same sequence. This standardization is designed to control bias in responses, ensuring that respondents answer precisely the same question.

Given the lack of an exhaustive list of basket weavers in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou, it is difficult to reach all members of the population; there is no reliable information on the location of the basket weavers concerned, the available time does not allow to meet the number needed for statistical analyses using a random sample. The sample was drawn up on a non-probability sampling basis, in which the selection of a population element to be part of the sample is largely based on the criteria of the researcher. There is no real opportunity from which a particular element of the population can be chosen. Therefore, the sampling error that may occur cannot be calculated. We preferred to combine typical sampling and snowball sampling. As our theme concerns the basket weavers in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou. Snowball sampling or network sampling is a gradual construction of a sample using references obtained from first responders. The first responders for our case are those who appear on the list obtained at the level of the chamber of crafts of registered or deleted basket weavers ; these first respondents have directed us to their friends, family members and neighbours engaged in the basket trade.

We encountered three types of attitudes that varied according to the social profile of the people sought:

- An attitude of mistrust and a categorical refusal to talk to us.
- A reluctance followed by an agreement to cooperate after several attempts at persuasion.
- Very appreciable willingness to cooperate; warm welcome and encouragement for the success of this study. This was particularly visible when the interview was conducted in Kabyle, in the presence of a representative of the municipality, as some field trips were scheduled in collaboration with the municipality's officials, Because of the remoteness and difficult access to some rural areas.

All data and information collected were reviewed and analyzed according to their nature (quantitative/qualitative) and purpose, as the data are elements that allow conclusions to be drawn.

Raw data has been coded. Coding the data is important because it facilitates data entry and processing. We had two types of questions: closed and open.

Some qualitative data in the form of text (words, phrases, expression of language), images (collages, photos, and video) or symbolic information (gestures, tone of voice, impressions...etc.) were analyzed by the method: content analysis to study interviews or qualitative observations.

We stopped at 57 questionnaires with the basket weavers because we felt that we had reached the saturation stage. Our data collection was stopped when the last units of observations analyzed did not provide new information.

3. Main theoretical findings

This descriptive and analytical study combined the analysis grids in order to transpose them on our object of study to answer our problem. To achieve our goal, it was important for us to start with a reading grid on the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and development of a territory, in order to present how themaking local crafts know-how as a heritage resource can be a lever for the development of the social and solidarity economy of marginal areas.

Our study showed, thanks to the different theoretical contributions that the development of a territory can be assimilated to an organization based on two pillars : identify the resources that could contribute to the development of the social and solidarity economy of the territory concerned, as well as the actors involved and their strategies.

The study of resources has shown us that any object is likely to become a resource for the territory and thus increase its value. In the field of renewal, where heritage is a key resource, any object has thus potentially vocation to become heritage, through a process of patrimonialization (François H., Hirczak M., Senil N., 2006). According to the territorial approach, heritage can be seen as promoter of construction and territorial development. As a resource, the cultural heritage mobilized in the development of the territories will give each one of them a vocation and personality. Seen from this angle, patrimonialization forms a logic of territorial development. The resource resulting from a process of patrimonialization can be perceived as a specific territorial resource insofar as it allows a social group to develop its territory. Once this group reveals its hidden potential, highlights it and/or creates a discourse about itself, the revealed resource in turn allows conferring an image of the territory differentiating it from others. This strongly territorially anchored resource is the fruit of the relationship between Man (through their know-how and their organizations), Territory (natural and social) and Product (specific features). It participates in collective dynamics and strengthens the image and territorial attractiveness (Benachenhou, A., 2016).

The development and integration of heritage resources in a territorial development programme is a rather complex process to implement. The aim is to identify and inventory existing heritage resources, to assess their capacity to be integrated into development projects, but also to identify the public and private actors capable of ensuring the territorial development desired and imagined by the populations of these territories.

In this sense, the notion of heritage resource has provided us with an analysis tool that allows us to understand all the constituent elements of local crafts know-how. The latter is indeed an element of intangible cultural heritage capable of meeting economic development objectives favouring the creation of jobs and incomes, of social development, allowing coordination between the actors and with an identity character that reinforces the roots of a social group in its territory. Moreover, the recognition of local crafts know-how leads to cultural initiatives leading to strengthen the development of the territory in question.

4. Main empirical findings

Analysed from a territorial perspective, basketry gives a completely different interpretation, linked to the specificity of local crafts know-how and its strong territorial anchor. The basketry participates in the territorial offer by entering into a basket of goods and services territorialized, meeting the expectations of consumers increasingly in search of specific

heritage products. The wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou benefits from remarkable natural sites that make it one of the specific territorial offers of quality and participate in strengthening the territorial image (tradition, nature, authenticity,...). Other products such as olives, figs and prickly pears, currently low valued, could eventually enter the composition of the basket, further strengthening the territorial offer of social and solidarity economy.

The local crafts know-how of the basket weavers as a potential resource, contributes to the territorial wealth and can be considered, despite its low production, as an important link in the development of the cultural economy of this territory.

Taking into account specific territorial resources and activating them in a territorial approach opens up original development paths, often better adapted and more effective than sectoral approaches. Local craft know-how, fruit of the relationship between man and product and territory, like Kabyle basketry, allows for recognition and appreciation of people associated with this craft and contributes to strengthening the attractiveness of the territory. Our study found a great diversity of local know-how among the basket weavers surveyed, but it is not sufficiently valued in their home territory.

With regard to the techniques of basketry based on the raw material used, the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou potentially has three groups: willow basket weaving, reed basket weaving and raffia basket weaving. Our survey has shown that the local crafts know-how of these groups is spreading to rural areas. This diffusion is made possible by the process of transmission and expansion of the raw materials market; these are no longer local, except for reed basket weaving.

Our survey results showed that willow basket weaving is a male activity with interest on the part of women in recent years. Whereas, raffia basket weaving is a female affair. As we noticed the absence of women for reed basket weaving. The dominant age groups are between 36 and 45 years, or 31.25% of all respondents. We found that there is some renewal for raffia and willow basket weaving with 12 wove-makers under 35 years of age. However, an average age of reed basket weavers is 70 years old, the vintners surveyed are aging and the succession does not seem assured because during our survey, we did not meet a young craftsman or apprentice.

Our research has shown that the training programmes offered at vocational training centres are standardised and not in line with local characteristics of local crafts know-how. This explains why basketry is not on the list of their trade. We found by analysing the ways in which know-how is valued that the transmission of local crafts know-how from the vats takes

place on the job, in the places of production within the villages. This limits the possibility for territorial actors to define their own principles and organizational rules taking into account their local specificities. This is the case of Ain Meziab renowned for willow basket weaving and Djemâa Saharridj known for raffia basket weaving which house the largest number of basket weavers of the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou. These villages do not benefit from any specific project that would make it possible to value the territorialized quality of the local crafts know-how they perpetuate.

After observing the local people's practices of valuing local know-how, we can say that the circuit linking sellers and buyers to basket weavers is a fragile one not regulated by the state. The product is poorly presented in the local market and does not show its true value. Direct sales at the local market are recommended for craft products. There is no need to use intermediaries for the transaction. Direct sales channels favour contact with the basket weaver who has the local crafts know how. The buyer may have more information and guidance about the item sold. This technique is an opportunity to create a sense of belonging to a village and enhance its attractiveness. The state can intervene to subsidize these agents' mobilizers of the trade circuit to support their social and solidarity economy. Similarly, the value of the craft article defined according to its added value should be given priority. The state can therefore set rational selling prices according to the quality of products. Local production of heritage works will be supported and protected in the long term.

The results also identified certain gaps and weaknesses related to the management and financing of local crafts know-how development operations, as well as the lack of coordination between the different actors. The decision-making system is highly centralized and local actors are reduced to the role of implementers of directives received from central administration. The associative movement is itself emerging and its actions are very punctual and restricted.

Reducing the tax burden on basket weavers in particular and other craftsmen in general could help to promote a more attractive and competitive image through the multiplication of labelling operations. However, it will certainly help to safeguard local craft know-how and structure them more.

In the cases studied, despite the existence of geographical proximity effects, relationships remain family and interpersonal. From this, we infer the absence of organized proximity in the case of basketry in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou. The association has become a mechanism for activating the local crafts know-how of basket weavers because it is called upon to

contribute to the development of an overall strategy for the promotion of this heritage resource and the mobilisation of a maximum number of actors around it.

By comparing the interviews with basket weavers, we have deduced that the few forms of coordination that exist between these actors have not had significant socio-economic and heritage impacts favorable to the development of traditional crafts. This situation is reinforced by the differences in the orientations of the public authorities involved in traditional crafts and legal texts that limit cooperation between craftsmen to collective purchasing and marketing actions.

The results of our study showed that the know-how of the basket weavers of the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou is still in the identification phase. The future of basketry in the wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou depends on the ability to involve local actors to adopt collective initiatives for maintaining the strong link between local crafts know-how and its origin.

Conclusion

At the end of our research, we conclude that collective commitment is a form of appreciation of knowledge and to make local crafts in order to bring together the basket weavers, especially those who work at home, in order to develop the social and solidarity economy of the territory studied. This commitment puts the local society in the middle of the valuation and regulation of ancestral know-how, an appropriation that constitutes a double challenge: the safeguarding of the craft on one hand and its socio-economic development on the other. Indeed, the common commitment of the actors concerned with local crafts know-how allows them to be integrated into an approach based on a relational capital and giving rise to joint actions to enhance the social and solidarity economy.

The study of the ways in which the three groups of basket weavers are valued has led us to conclude that the strategies for the territorial valuation of this traditional craft involve the valuation of all the elements of the knowledge-based ecosystemcraft local, in other words, it is a question of developing the territorial resources (material and immaterial, collective and individual) which are at the origin of local craft know-how. Each component contributes to the enrichment of the territorial resource specification. These approaches can have long-term results provided they are followed up and organized by the territorial governance.

To meet our objective, the proposed approach must support improved management and governance through strengthened public-private partnerships sector, the development of inter-

municipal cooperation and coordination between different sectors and actors. The participation of civil society, as an active player in the decision-making process and the implementation of decision support tools would help to strengthen the commitment of residents to development projects in their territories and ensure the sustainability of the social and solidarity economy.

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