

## Research Article

# FROM REGIONAL TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: A HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF STRUCTURING THE TOGOLESE SPACE

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### ABSTRACT

The challenge of regional development has always been a concern for Togo's public policies. A reading of the historical trajectory of the evolution of this concept through the literature review as well as the data collected by interview since 2014, showed that the successive development plans of the country have always mentioned this concept. As early as 1965, the State created regions and Regional Land Planning and Development Societies with specific skills. These competences were consolidated in the second five-year plan and continued with the third and then in the fourth plan. After a period of lack of development planning, the 4th pillar of the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Accelerated Growth Strategy for Full Employment, aimed at correcting regional imbalances to help reduce poverty. Today, the effect 10 of the third axis of the National Development Plan focuses on the issue of local development. In order to contribute to the improvement of its implementation, it was important to revisit the old plans to highlight the main results as well as the theoretical and conceptual approaches that guided them. At the conceptual level, strategies based on the export-base model and growth-pole theory are noted.

**Keywords:** planning - local development - territory-Togo.

### INTRODUCTION

The failures of numerous structural plans and public development policies have proved to be catastrophic for developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Far from their initial objectives, these programs have instead contributed to a gradual impoverishment of the majority of the beneficiary populations and an increase in the indebtedness of the targeted states. The main theory of regional development experimented in many of these countries is the growth poles theory, which has known limits and results (Jean, 1988). Policies based on this theory have been highly harmful to the rural areas of developed countries, especially their peripheral regions (Joanis et al., 2004). It is therefore obvious that planners in developing countries who have drawn heavily on these models are experiencing the same results. The expected economic outreach from urban centers to the rural peripheries has not been effective in many countries on the continent. The rural fact has become synonymous with poverty and misery (Ela, 1982). The countryside has gradually been progressively depleted of its productive forces to the benefit of the cities. The returns expected from neo-citizens have not systematically followed in the expected proportions (Croquey-Vidrovitch et al., 1996). Today, with the arrival of decentralization policies coupled with local development programs, many governments in developing countries are eager for greater responsibility and empowerment of rural communities. This is also the case of the Togolese government which, by organizing local elections, is banking on this strategy to improve the well-being of these populations through its new development plan (Togolese Republic, 2018). However, the tools needed to achieve these noble objectives do not necessarily support the process. It also appears that the issue of local or regional development is not new to the planning field in Togo. What is this really about? What were the theoretical approaches that supported past processes? These are the focus questions of this analysis. It involved revisiting the available bibliography on socio-economic development in Togo and conducting semi-structured interviews with 45 key actors who have been the

focus of development and their implementation. Focus groups were also conducted in 15 local authorities that are beneficiaries of these interventions. The results obtained are presented in the following paragraphs. The first step was to proceed to a conceptual clarification and then to present the results obtained as well as the main lessons learned.

### Concept and theoretical foundations of local development

Grasping the challenges related to local development in Togo requires a clearer understanding of the concept in order to avoid the multiple interpretations assigned to it. Pecqueur (2008) once stated that :

« Nowadays, local development has become a key subject in public policies speeches in the " South " countries. It is often twinned with a decentralization process, desired and often deferred. A close look at the achievements made in its name on the ground reveals the need to clarify the basic principles of its functioning. » (Pecqueur, 2008; in Diop, 2008 :11)

In order to clear up all possible ambiguities, he means

« ..Local development is the political will of some actors to change the situation of the territory they live on, by initiating a process and actions in order to build, through their joint efforts with the rest of the population, a project for the future of the territory, integrating the different economic, social and cultural components, in constant agreement with the other levels of decision making.. (Centers Concept de Dakar et Djoliba de Bamako, 2001; Houée, 2001 :107)

Local development is above all a process involving political and administrative reforms and engaging actors living in an infra-national geographical space but linked by a common desire to change their living environment. It is a multi-stage process of change that takes a territory with its own economic, social and institutional realities from a given level to another (Teisserenc, 1994). It involves short, medium and long term structural effects. Poverty reduction is also addressed through strategic frameworks for poverty reduction and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The purpose is to address the perverse effects of the market, to provide a response to certain local emergencies, and to restrain recurrent crises (Tremblay and Fortran, 1994). The challenges therefore become greater and more huge for

new sub-Saharan communities. They are related to productivity improvement in highly rural environments. They are about the ability to stimulate innovation in a context where research is not funded. They are based on capturing the financial flows generated by the informal or social economy. They must address the new dynamics of the North-South and urban-rural relationships without falling into new forms of institutionalized dependency. Local development is about autonomy and empowerment. Based on these elements, it is important to define the issue of local development in the Togolese context in order to understand its main attributions and manifestations.

## METHODOLOGY

Understanding the dynamics of local development in Togo required the use of an inductive approach to ensure the best possible understanding of this poorly documented strategy at the national level. Several data collection tools were used to guarantee the reliability of the information through triangulation. The literature review was an opportunity to revisit Togo's programmatic documents since the 1960s and to extract most of the structuring information on local development. The focus groups held in October 2014 during the national forum on national planning system reconstruction and in December 2016 during the national workshop on decentralization provided an opportunity to gather the opinions of ministers, senior managers and experts from the Togolese civil service. More than 200 people took part in these national meetings. Post test practices were computed through Spearman's rho method and it was obtained as 0.273. It shows that there is a positive significant relationship between post test knowledge and post test practices among adolescent girls.

Finally, the semi-structured interviews carried out with the following categories of actors helped to fill out this information. They are as follows:

- 15 community leaders involved in local management between 2017 and 2018;
- 6 prefects representing the decentralized territorial administration in 2018;
- 6 former senior executives from the ministries in charge of planning, territorial administration, economy and finance;
- 8 civil servants from the ministry in charge of planning.

the implementation of these plans. In December 1965, the Government created Regions and Regional Planning and Development Corporations. They were in charge of implementing the 1966-1970 Economic and Social Development Plan at the regional level with the following main responsibilities :

« to raise living standards of the rural population, and to promote the economic and social development of the Region, therefore to ensure»:

- Rural animation, in order to train professional organizations (mutuals, cooperatives) managers.
- studies and drafts of development projects
- Work and interventions designed to develop the regions and the possible management of public amenities (dams, canals, soil conservation work)" (PDES, 1969:18 bis). »

They acted as a catalyst for development by promoting the creation of economic and social conditions at the local level with an economy 80% based on the agricultural sector. The introduction of new farming techniques, fertilizers, insecticides, ploughs and tractors were among the innovations of this period. Such measures were continued in the 1971-1975 Economic and Social Development Plan, which also strengthened the rural character of development at the local level. The 1976-1980 Economic and Social Development Plan, while acknowledging a regional unbalance resulting from the colonial legacy, has consecrated the reorganization of the territory and has based its implementation on the promotion of regional but also local development at district level as well as rural and urban communes. The measures promoted included the promotion of savings and credit as well as the simulation and orientation of private investment through incentives (tax relief or simplification of administrative procedures.) The issue of local development is no longer a rural fact but rather perceived as an imperative to correct regional imbalances arising from the territorial structuring induced by the protective powers. The unimplemented 4th Economic and Social Development Plan 1981-1985, planned the continuation of State supervision of local authorities and control of local finances at the regional level, while accelerating the process of decentralization and deconcentration in order to promote qualitative development based on endogenous production. In 2008, through the fourth pillar of the comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Togolese government aimed to correct regional imbalances by creating the right conditions for better implementation of the poverty reduction strategy at the local level. To that end, the grassroots development paradigm was introduced to ensure "effective participation of grassroots organizations in the poverty reduction process.

Table 1. Distribution of Number of Questionnaires per Region

Area of Togo	Savanes	Kara	Centrale	Plateaux	Maritime	District autonome of grand lomé	Total
Number of communes covered	16	22	15	32	19	13	117
Number of questionnaires conducted	169	198	127	230	168	133	1023

Data collected from these different sources using the three techniques mentioned above, enabled us to extract the relevant and reliable information for writing this document. This information were subject to verbatim and cross-referencing to confirm their reliability. The results are presented in the lines below.

## RESULTS

### FROM REGIONAL TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The issue of local development has always been a concern of the various Togolese public authorities. A reading of the historical trend of the evolution of this concept in the framework of the national development plans shows that it has always been mentioned in the several successive documents and that it has had certain premises in

The State also intended to "develop regional and local potentialities with a view to promote local development and thus prevent the aggravation of inter- and intra-regional imbalances. "(DSRP-C, 2009:75).). In 2013, through the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Employment Promotion, the Government still intended "to develop regional and local potentialities in order to promote local development and thereby avoid the worsening of inter- and intra-regional imbalances. "(SCAPE, 2013:113). It stated that the Government intended to pursue the actions undertaken in the following areas :

- « (i) provide local authorities, especially at the district level, with the instruments necessary to make decentralization operational by promoting a local dynamic; (ii) encourage communities to set up a system of planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of development actions by promoting appropriate local development management tools; (iii) strengthen the mobilization of resources for

the financing of local development through the establishment of mechanisms for the accreditation of local organizations and the promotion of access to inclusive finance, accessible to the poorest communities and individuals.. » (SCAPE, 2013 : 113)

Local development was mentioned in at least 3 of the 5 axes of this plan. Finally, at the 10 effect level of the 3rd axis of the National Development Plan focused on SDOs adopted in August 2018, the Togolese Government intends to "support local authorities in developing tools for leading local development and set up the national observatory for spatial analysis". » (PND, 2018 : 103). The historical reading shows that local and regional development, in its various forms, has always been at the heart of national concerns without becoming effective. National planning documents drawn up at central or local level most often suffer from a lack of participation by the target populations but also a lack of funding. The concerns raised in the 1960s and 1970s are still relevant for the implementation of the new national development plan. It is therefore a historical issue that has never been effectively addressed.

### The legal and institutional framework

In Togo, local development draws its essence from Article 142 of the Togolese Constitution, which stipulates that "The State shall ensure the harmonious development of all local authorities on the basis of national solidarity, regional potential and inter-regional balance. "The Constitution recognizes 3 levels of territorial structure, namely the commune, the prefecture and the region. Articles 82, 168, 233 of Law No. 2018-003 of January 31, 2018 amending Law No. 2007-011 of March 13, 2007 on decentralization and local liberties respectively specify the powers of communes, prefectures and regions with respect to local development. For the communes, it is a matter of elaborating and executing the commune's development program, issuing advisory opinions on land use planning operations concerning the commune, managing the communal land estate, creating and managing communal public services. For the prefectures, it is a question of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the development programs of the communes making up the prefecture, issuing advisory opinions on the spatial planning operations concerning the prefecture, creating and managing the prefectural public services, issuing advisory opinions on the orientations, programs and projects of the national and regional development plans having an impact on the territory of the prefecture. Finally, at the regional level, its main prerogatives are the planning and adoption of the region's development program in line with the national plan, the coordination of development actions between the prefectures of the territorial jurisdiction and/or other regions, and the creation and management of regional areas. The laws and ministerial decrees relating to the territorial jurisdiction of the communes, the statutes of communal agents and other legal provisions of the executive branch complete these texts. The administrative directorates that support local authorities also exist, at least at the level of the ministries in charge of territorial administration, development, economy and finance and many others. Togo therefore has a real legal and institutional framework that could make it possible to implement real development policies or plans at the local level.

### Local governance at the core of the effectiveness of public action

The issue of local governance is fundamental to the success of Government interventions at the local level. As a polysemic concept, it has been the subject of several debates in the social sciences, as it involves economic, legal, political and sociological knowledge. It is also at the heart of the concerns of development practitioners. Towards the end of the 1980s, it received media attention because of

its recurrent use by political actors and international institutions. The Brandt Commission (1980), the World Bank (1999), the OECD (2001), the UNDP (2010) and CIDA (2010) place it at the heart of the success of their interventions. In economic science, Williamson (1985) in his theory of contracts defined governance at the territorial level as a contractual structure between different actors called upon to be coordinated within the framework of their economic interactions. With the theory of regulation, it appears as a political entity, regulating the process of local development. In the latter case, the aim is to facilitate the coordination of non-economic agents and economic agents within the same geographical space. At the legal level, it is the process by which local elected officials manage the complexities of a local authority, endowed with legal personality. In political science, it is the process of participation in public life, and of directing the affairs of the community or the State. Vachon (1993) emphasizes the need for self-administration by local authorities for a better valorization of local resources, hitherto ignored by the centralized management of the State.

For Theys (2002),

"Governance is only a set of mechanisms, procedures and instruments that can only work if they are appropriate, mobilized by actors with equitable access to decision-making, sharing a minimum of common interest and having sufficient room for movement." (Theys, 2002:6)

Local governance also makes use of a freedom of choice, a freedom of decision in collective action. The notions of free participation, responsibility, regulation and common interest are also central to this definition. However, regardless of the scientific paradigm, certain key elements, namely decentralization of institutional powers, accountability and participation, are most often found in the different approaches to define local governance.

- The complexity of taking into account the different types of state and non-state actors and institutions;
- The difficulties of specifying the roles and responsibilities of these actors and institutions;
- The integration of different groups and networks of autonomous actors;
- The possibility of acting outside the central administration.

Carrier and Jean (2000), based on Stocker's work, introduce five postulates that are indispensable for understanding the notion of governance at the local level: These are the elements that were at the heart of the analyses induced by this research. In Togo, the orientation of actions within local authorities is based on Law No. 2018-003 of January 31, 2018 on decentralization and local liberties. These actions do not escape the above-mentioned postulates either. In order to address them and to make the social needs of the population sustainable, the Government has felt, since 2008, the need to implement an intermediate approach to grassroots development. This grassroots development approach instituted by Decree No. 2012-005/PR of February 29, 2012, on Grassroots Development Committees (CDBs), is designed to support, through a collaborative approach, grassroots communities (particularly DSFs, QDCs and other grassroots organizations) in their initiatives and projects to combat poverty. It should enable them to familiarize themselves with the notions of participation and co-responsibility in the management of local affairs while conferring the legitimacy necessary for effective public interventions. According to the government definition,

«Grassroots development is defined as a process by which a grassroots community, at some point in its history, organizes itself for a better mobilization and use of the resources and forces at its

disposal, with a view of achieving a state deemed better by itself in compliance with its aspirations and cultural standards. Grassroots development is therefore a necessary condition for the development of the country, as it is development centered on the basic needs of the people and on their own organizational capacity and based on a participative approach. » (MDBAJEJ, 2012 :16)

The grassroots development option has enabled Togo to implement several programs focusing on four areas: grassroots capacity building, development of local productive potential, improvement of basic infrastructure and promotion of social safety nets. The mixed results of these interventions have shown the need to ensure better coordination and complementarity in the implementation of policies related to decentralization and local development with grassroots development policies. This applies to both approaches and proposed funding mechanisms. Such approach would also make possible to take into account the achievements made in terms of systematic networking of the territory by the DSFs and QDCs, and the methodological and operational achievements in terms of capacity building of these structures. The fact that these structures are sometimes taken over by members of the same family, for various reasons, illustrates the need for a better articulation of these different policies. The involvement of the targeted populations in the management of public affairs, their empowerment through accountability mechanisms and the legitimacy of their representatives are fundamental to the effectiveness of any public policy or strategy. The persistence of a high rate of poverty in several regions of the country underscores the urgent need to improve public interventions at the local level.

### The historical structuring of the local economy

Local economic dynamics have been less analyzed in Togo. The local economy is undoubtedly one of the fundamental issues of development and underdevelopment.

model, has influenced economic approaches in the country. This model stipulates that territories with a small spatial dimension cannot develop a territorial dynamic likely to stimulate their development. They are dependent on exogenous factors that stimulate demand at their level and lead through different mechanisms to the creation of wealth within them. They are economies dependent on the primary sector. Ayadlot (1985) and Polèse (1994) specify that they are economies adapted to small regions. Although abandoned in several regions of the world, they are nonetheless the source of logic for intervention at the level of several Togolese communities. After independence, Government intervention was guided by Perroux's (1955) theory of growth poles. This theory, inspired by Keynesian thought, relies on state interventionism to facilitate the structuring of local economies and thus reduce poverty. For Perroux, certain regions, because of their location or resources, are favourable to industrial investment. The role of the State is therefore to concentrate investments in these regions and to promote access to them by developing access roads between this central region and the other so-called peripheral regions.

The peripheral regions provide the central industrialized region with natural resources and the latter proceeds to their transformation and commercialization. It is this dynamic that supported the establishment of the industrial fabric of Togo with the examples of the phosphate factory of Kpémé and the peripheral sites of Hahotoé and Kpogamé, the textile factory of Datcha and the cotton producers of the communities of the Savannah, Kara, the Central region and the Plateaux. Equalization systems should allow the State to grant subsidies to communities while controlling their actions in order to "modernize" them, make them more competitive on the markets and thus reduce poverty. This approach has allowed the opening of several secondary channels in the country and has been supported by international multilateral organizations. However, the results were very mitigated and far from structural expectations.

Table 2. Economic profile of Togo's regions

Business sector	District autonome du grand lomé	Maritime	Plateaux	Centrale	Kara	Savanes	Moyenne nationale
Primary	38%	89%	95%	86%	94%	98%	83%
Secondary	2%	2%	0%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Tertiary	59%	10%	4%	13%	4%	1%	15%

Source: Survey Data - 2020

In the framework of this research, it encompasses local production systems, entrepreneurship as well as the aspects of income generation necessary for local authorities to move towards a better future. The question of structuring it has been influenced by a wealth of thought throughout the history of economic thinking related to planning and land use mechanisms. In the context of sub-Saharan Africa and particularly Togo, classical and neoclassical approaches have been at the heart of these interventions. An initial approach promoted by the international financial institutions highlights the need to establish at the local level a real economic liberalism, free of any hindrance, and to facilitate the expansion of the private sector. This approach, based on the founding thoughts of Adam Smith (1776), starts from the principle that each individual or nation seeks only its own interest, and that consequently, it has the necessary aptitudes to conform to the law of supply and demand in the market. As a result of this behavior, he better contributes to the collective well-being through the summation of individual interests. The role of the State is to ensure that it facilitates access to the various markets while limiting these regulatory mechanisms. It is a question of developing a secure and attractive framework for foreign investment, in order to guarantee collective prosperity through the free market. This thinking, taken up by Hyot (1950) and North Douglass (1955) through the export base

The economic challenges faced by local authorities concern the absence of formal businesses, especially in rural communities, the lack of institutionalized entrepreneurial initiatives, citizen in civism, the obligation to maintain basic administrative and social services, and the financing of planning and development of the community's economic potential. The problem of the local economy therefore remains the financing of legal obligations and developmental investments. Aguey (2015) specifies that the sources of financing for local community spending, the consumption habits of the local population, the dynamism of local trade, the scale of local investment and the vitality of commercial and production centers enable wealth to be created and redistributed. This determines their character of autonomy or structural dependence of the community.

### The Agropoles' strategy: A territorial innovation for local development?

Previous approaches and strategies have not enabled Togolese local authorities, especially those in rural areas, to meet the development challenge. With persistently high poverty rates (53.4%), challenges related to the modernization and competitiveness of public enterprises, and rampant neoliberalism, other approaches that have

been successful elsewhere are being considered. This is the cluster strategy, which according to the area under consideration, can take the form of a techno pole, an agro pole or other. This strategy is based on Ricardo's (1817) founding work through the theory of comparative advantages. For Ricardo, there is always a gain for any economy that opens up to free trade by focusing on the production of goods and services with low or reduced production costs, compared to their production by other actors or national or supranational authorities. The development strategy based on clusters and inspired by this theory was conceptualized by Porter (2003) who defines it as :

« a geographic concentration of inter-connected companies and institutions in a particular field. Clusters encompass an array of linked industries and other entities important to competition. They include, for example, suppliers of specialized inputs such as components, machinery, and services, and providers of specialized infrastructure. Clusters also often extend downstream to channels and customers and laterally to manufacturers of complementary products and to companies in industries related by skills, technologies or common inputs. Finally, many clusters include governmental and other institutions - such as universities, standard-setting agencies, think tanks, vocational training providers, and trade associations - that provide specialized training, education, information, research, and technical support.» (Porter dans Doloreux, 2003:368).

This strategy, conceptualized by Porter (1993), is based on the analysis of the economic dynamics of the Silicon Valley and highlights four assumptions:

- The existence of local customers and suppliers, key players in the local economy, stimulating local dynamism through their exchanges and the creation of local skilled jobs;
- The interdependence between local production units despite a certain competition between them leading to production cost reductions;
- The proximity of the geographical area is favorable to the exchange of information, human resources and complementarities and allows the competitiveness of the sector at the international level;
- Support for innovation through research and training institutions capable of providing the private sector with appropriate training, technical support and research products.

This strategy does not rule out Keynesian-type interventions by the Government, but rather tends to strengthen the local economic fabric in order to improve the competitiveness of the local sector at the global level. In the case of Togo, the agro pole is defined as : "a set of enterprises located in a given geographical area, which maintain functional relations in their activities of production, processing, support services and marketing of a given plant, animal, fish or forest product". It is also "a zone of activities with an agricultural or agro-industrial and logistical vocation, which brings together several players of varying size and of varying technical and technological levels, operating in one or more targeted agricultural sectors". The agro pole consists in gathering actors in the same place to promote the development of the transformation of agricultural, fishing and breeding harvests into consumable products, and to strengthen the relations between the production, transformation and marketing activities of these products. This approach will be carried out in such a way as to guarantee social inclusion with a view of improving the living conditions of rural populations. "(MAEH, 2017:4).

As in the generic definition of a cluster, the strategy of the agro pole is based on:

- The geographical proximity of the actors of the agricultural sector mobilized around the chain of values;
- The important role of research and development, training, study and demonstration centers;;

- The importance of ensuring social inclusion given the context of poverty.

In the case of agro poles in Togo, and specifically the pilot one in the Kara region, twelve categories of stakeholders were selected to be included, including farmers, professional farmers' organizations, local authorities, technical services including research and training institutions, which must play a leading role in the success of this strategy. The Strategic Plan 2018-2030 of the Togolese Agro processing Development Program developed by the Government in this regard specifies :

« The objective of implementing the agro poles is to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty through better coordination of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. It is essentially a matter of capitalizing on the comparative advantages of the national economy to create remunerative jobs in the regions in order to better settle the rural population. It also involves operationalizing the country's new agricultural policy in a concerted and decentralized approach with a view to achieving strong and inclusive economic growth, and contributing to the transformation of the Togolese economy into a modern, dynamic, competitive economy that is highly integrated into the regional economy by 2030. » (MAEH, 2017 :8)

In a more targeted way, the implementation of agro poles should allow, among other things, "the promotion and development of quality and research infrastructure", "the promotion of small and medium enterprises, agri-business through the boost of chains of value and the emergence of partnerships between stakeholders" and, "the promotion of training, research and development, laboratories, experimental centers. "The Togolese Government, in view of the previous results obtained, is therefore in the development of a new experience at the local level. The implementation principles adopted are the valuation of local products, social inclusion, land security, gender and the environment.

## CONCLUSION

All in all, it should be noted that local or regional development has always been a major issue in Togo's various strategic documents. The institutional and legal framework, with the adoption and revision of texts on decentralization, is generally favorable to it despite some challenges. The objective of these texts and strategic documents is to help reduce regional disparities and poverty, but also to increase the participation and accountability of the population in the management of public affairs. The legitimacy of their representatives at the local level should contribute to the greater effectiveness of any public policy or strategy. The grassroots development approach should prepare them to meet these challenges, but the results of its implementation remain mixed. However, it should be noted that past experiences in structuring the local economy inspired by the export base model of Douglass (1955) then Per roux (1955, 1982) have failed and led to the impoverishment of the population. In order to reverse the dynamics, the Government is now relying on the strategy of agro poles, resulting from Porter's (1993) cluster approach, which is based on the geographical focus of several categories of actors for greater productivity through innovation and the development of their comparative advantages.

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