

**EXTENDED REGIONALIZATION  
WITHIN THE CONSTITUTION<sup>306</sup>****Hakim Chebbaa**Coordinador de la Comisión Científica de la Insancia  
de los Marroquíes expatriados  
para la reforma de la Constitución y  
Consejero Internacional en las políticas y estrategias en  
materia de salud

It all began with H.M King Mohamed 6's speech on the 3rd of January 2010 titled, *"Today, I am setting up the Advisory Committee on Regionalization. This is a watershed moment, the start of a structural project which, hopefully, will mark a turning point in territorial governance.....Viewed from this angle, the extensive regionalization we want to achieve is not a mere technical or administrative procedure, but rather a major initiative for the overhaul and modernization of state structures and for the achievement of integrated development..."* this speech shared a new vision, a new era of the democracy and lit a candle of hope for the country. This was then re-confirmed during his speech on the 9th of March, *"My address to you today will concern the launching of the next phase of the advanced regionalization process, the impact such a development can have in terms of strengthening our democratic development model and the substantial revision of the Constitution.....However, considering our accomplishments in the area of promoting democracy, I personally consider that Morocco is in a position today to start embracing advanced regionalization into the Constitution..."*. In these speeches King Mohammed VI has called for creation of a draft paper focusing on the introduction of extended regionalization / advance regionalization – the core pillars and roots should be based on a democracy serving a sustainable development by integrating socio-economic, environment and culture.

---

306 Ponencia impartida en el Congreso: "La reforma de la Constitución Marroquíes vista por sus jóvenes" de los días 15 y 16 de junio de 2011

The understanding of the decentralization first got the attention of the late King Hassan II, and according to his futuristic vision of regionalization, the most important focus was the security approach, so later the territorial division was based on it. Now, the new concept for the decentralization has the objectives and goals to modernize the state structure by the implementation of decentralization and allowing the regions to competently self-manage. There is a need to set clear strategy, structure and legal resources by our core government to support the changes required.

We know that King Mohammed VI has set up an Advisory committee on the advanced or extended regionalization; this committee shall understand that there are some constants that cannot be compromised and they are considered sacred. Under the leadership of the King, the sovereign representative of the nation, there is a need to emphasize the unity of the people of Morocco, the unity of the Moroccan territory, and that Islam is the religion of all Moroccans whilst recognizing that there is coexistence with other religions. Recognizing these factors takes into consideration the richness of diversity and cultures and binds the political, legislative and legal unity of the state of Morocco. If the above are fixed and therefore constant, this will give a starting point to enable any advisory committees or analysts (of different creeds and orientations) to focus on what is really required for the advanced/extended regionalization.

We have to be open and learn from the best practices available in other modern countries that are already united in the regionalization concept; either from the British, Italian, Swiss and German models. In 1984 the late King Hassan II mentioned he wished to see Morocco follow the German federal model – referring to key learnings from other countries will enable us to customize according to the Moroccan political, economic, social and cultural environment. Introducing any model takes time and must have a detailed timeline and purpose. We should learn from our recent mistakes such as the change to the driving codes that were a direct copy of a foreign model. It is pointless to introduce something without clear directive and understanding that it is really required or is it change for change sake. (Never prepare a Moroccan tea in a coffee maker, it won't work and will be tasteless).

The vision of the advanced or extended regionalization shall not only be limited to the re-

defining of the region and borders by incorporating some areas and dividing others, but more than that it has to enable them to contribute actively into the socio-economic development of the country of Morocco. This will open the door to creative energies, either individuals or collective entities to develop the regions, will wisely use human and material resources (static, changeable or transformed) and will actively mobilize people to raise/drive the levels of the economic, social and culture of their regions. We have to take the Moroccan diversity and use it as source to derive the development.

The first step that must be established for extended regionalization is the constitutionalization of setting the legal texts and regulatory bodies to state/record the new concept. This will ensure that we do not deviate from the core objectives and we can only add flexible laws whenever necessary to improve the overall experience and achieve the optimum levels to best serve the interests of our people, regions and state.

Certainly and without doubt there are many people with goodwill and full of the desire to serve the nation through the development of the region through the group to which they belong to ... And no doubt that there are disincentives and inhibitors that prevent the development; these may be bureaucratic, existing laws, political or environmental. However, the potential challenge lies in the spirit of solidarity and practice of participatory and democratic essence which is referred to in the King's speech. There is a need to reduce state intervention or ultimate power to allow the regions to self-regulate and fully participate in the country's decision making process. Currently, regional breakdown can be determined by 3 key factors:

1. Functional regionalization: the region is rich in economic resources such as agriculture, industry, etc. but is not ultimately in control of its cash flow.
2. Administrative regionalization: it is decentralized administration which Morocco has used for many years and has respectful experience.
3. Political regionalization: Morocco's experience in this field, has been institutionalized since the year 1971 while passing the law of dividing Morocco to economic regions, then later amended to administrative since the year 1997, (the law of April 2). As a result of these laws, Morocco recognizes that advanced regionalization is the way to

go forward. It is important to point out if any division of the territory does not take into account the socio-economic balance, or take into account the specific components of the region, then this will inevitably hamper the achievement of the aimed hope from advanced regionalization in the economic, political and cultural development. The core focus for Political Regionalization must be the citizens and Human element; the new coming era must be focused on protecting the Moroccan citizens' dignity, seeking to make them happy, and engaging them in understanding and accepting the new concept of regionalization. There must be clearly defined and constitutionalized basic rights before setting the criteria for the citizenship duties. In this concept, the deal with the citizen must be according to a participatory approach as the population must be an active player in regionalization politics and involved in the focus and goals of regional development & design.

The King has emphasized in 2008 and in 2011, the key focus should be on establishing and consolidating good local governance and the promotion of the citizen's proximity by the activation of the integrated development of economic, social and culture. These can only be achieved with the following conditions:

- Administratively:
  - We need to Gradually Phase-out centralized government and public decision-making centers (Rabat). Timelines need to be set over a clear 6-12 months period.
- Socially:
  - We need to be Devoted to the values of solidarity between Regions and between the constituent elements of the Region :Individual, community & civil society groups.
- Politically:
  - We need to appoint new political representatives who embrace the need for change and will best serve the interests of the citizens and needs of each individual region, therefore creating a healthy climate of democracy.

Any new vision of the extended regionalization must work to re-consider the territorial division of the current proposal. The current proposed territorial divisions does not and will not respond to the requirements of development; there are areas that are experiencing

marginalization and communities in the Atlas Mountains and beyond that are completely isolated, without electricity and without water, far from any proper health facility and no access to healthcare or education. It is not clear how the current proposal will help such areas, as some communities continue to live life as it was centuries before – they do not know much about our Morocco of the twenty-first century. It is unbelievable that in this century we still have areas of unquantifiable poorness or lack of sustenance.

The existing Regional system that has worked for the last five decades is not properly functional in all aspects so how can we expect more from the new approach. Whatever we implement as a new regionalization has to identify and recognize all the ‘mistakes’ of the past in order to proactively improve future sustainability and regional integration.

The new concept of extended regionalization should take enough time, conduct deep proper study and not rush into designing the territorial division without planning wisely based on accuracy and objectivity in the diagnosis of human, financial and natural resources. These factors in all regions need to be re-defined according to the principles of wider integration through a combination of developed and marginal regions to give greater dynamics to the development. Hence, there is a need to take into account the economic data such as the proportion of active population, existing investment and infrastructure such as eligible ports, airports, dams, road network and wealth of natural resources ...etc

Otherwise, we will have a huge territorial immigration to the most boosted economical regions, a completely new mobile society will be condensed in areas/communities and create newly deserted parts of regions which will inevitably lead to some racial issues. There will be no equality in investment which will mean that there will be greater evidence of poor and rich regions, therefore creating a class society.

Furthermore, where are the Moroccan immigrants from this concept?. We know, in Morocco, between the most exported item is, sadly, the country’s own people - the most within brain drain; their remittances constitute an important income to the country and as we know, most of those remittances are mainly used for consumption rather than for investment. Will the regionalization help by introducing laws to attract those funds and provide an attractive and encouraging environment for investment? Will there be any laws passed to enable highly

qualified Moroccans who reside abroad to be actively involved in all regionalization aspects, especially with the decision making process?

For a proper governance, it is necessary that the government and its institution has to control and follow the work of the region through an advisory board which reserves the right to accountability by approving or rejecting any decisions or investments inconsistent with the principles of the State. In return, the board must be careful to ensure the equitable distribution of strategic projects for economic development between the regions. This Advisory Board will have the power to decide in any disputes or conflict between regions and define clear wealth-sharing, especially in the direction of the sprawling multiple destinations.

In the implementation of the new concept of the advanced regionalization and decentralization and to give proper credence, there will be a need for qualified professionals able to manage the change required and fulfill specific roles in the regions. The governing body or the centralized institution will allow redeployment of its current team of professionals to accommodate the new roles in the regional offices. If this does not happen then there will be a need to create a new law enabling regions to recruit the levels of roles required by all means available (with priority being placed on hiring within the local community) or subcontracting for periods of time until the new law is in place. There will inevitably be a shortage of professionals ready to fulfill the management needs for each region so there will an opportunity to merge and integrate certain bodies ie. Education – Primary, Secondary & Higher with the Professional Institute of Education or merge Land department with Forestry rather than maintain 2 bodies. These changes have to be clearly defined in written laws either in the constitution or the laws regulating the partnership between the regional councils and state.

The question that has to be raised regarding the salaries and benefits of the public servants is will they continue to be provided as per the existing laws (by central government) or will this responsibility be factored into each Region/Council and therefore they will be part of their budgetary resources. In other words, will each Region have a set amount of funds per annum to deploy for resources as required by the needs of the specific region?

During the establishment of the new regionalization some of the divided regions will need a

lot of support especially in collateral and cash flow in order to set the standards required. In these situations, we need to understand who will provide the support – will it be the State who will initially loan the Regions with the ‘start-up’ capital required or will it be region to region (if applicable). It is fair to make the assumption that there will undoubtedly be certain regions that will not be able to sustain break-even or profitability in the immediate future – what will be the accountability and who will be the guarantor of any shortfalls. In other words, what will be the strategy of the new government to fully support the capital needs of each different region going forward?

Currently the governing bodies of each region is appointed by the King’s office and going forward we need to understand how these positions will integrate with the councils in each region to eliminate any duplication and this must be defined by constitutional law. There must be clear consensus in the decision making process in each region to best serve the needs of the economy. There can be no dissention between the governor and the council that will prevent/delay any actions being taken. A majority vote must be used as the deciding factor when both parties do not agree. A clear procedure for this must be established from the outset. There must be clearly defined, transparent and public records of how the regions were divided in order to prevent any disagreements or uncertainty over borders and natural resources between regions. If there are any disputes between bodies in regions, or region to region, it needs to be clear who they should turn to for clarity and resolution.

The existing committee for regionalization have submitted and published the recent recommendation to appoint an agency to implement all projects across the regions as a special authority linked to the region concerned at the time. There is a current Regional Investment Office that approves all investment opportunities and best matches the proposals according to the regions requirements. So going forward what will be their role? Will all regions need to continue submitting their needs to this centralized body or will potential investors be able to come direct to the councils with their proposals. Whichever way is decided has positives and negatives as we can assume that investors are likely to solicit regions where there will be faster returns on their investment and greater flexibility. This would mean that perhaps some of the regions in more remote and under-developed areas may not attract the same level of

investment interest. In these cases having one centralized office for projects will be an advantage to ensure parity/opportunity between all regions.

Going forward, constitutional law needs to define who will appoint the head of the investment agencies – will it be the King or Prime Minister and would the local regions have any input to the appointments. Guidelines and criteria need to be submitted to decide what will be covered by the Regional Laws and to ensure that the Constitutional Laws oversee all regions, providing proper governance and preventing anomalies/inconsistencies.

This is an exciting time for the country of Morocco and we have an opportunity to build something sustainable for our future growth and economy. This is a time when we can come together to design, implement and embrace change and create something that each and everyone will be proud of. Our basic needs are the same as every other country and we want to be proud of our entrepreneurial spirit and democracy that can be put in place. This regionalization project, if it is properly implemented, will revolutionalise the way we do business and create a sustainable future for Morocco. To ensure success, we need to have people who respect discipline as this will lead to disciplined thought and therefore ultimately disciplined action. And I believe Yes WE Can!

Becoming a force of nature doesn't mean that all of our aspirations must be "grand". First steps are often small and initial vision that focus energy effectively often address immediate problems. What matters is engagement in the service of larger purpose rather than lofty aspirations that paralyze action. Indeed, it is dangerous trap to believe that we can pursue only "great visions".<sup>307</sup>

---

307Peter Michael Senge (born 1947) is an American scientist and director of the Center for Organizational Learning at the MIT Sloan School of Management