SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Perspectives from the Global South

MARWANE EL HALAISSI

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Marwane EL HALAISSI

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Abstract

Understanding the importance of exploring the dynamics of social entrepreneurship is crucial, as it has the power to create positive changes in society, the economy, and the environment, ultimately leading to a fairer and more sustainable territorial community. The purpose of this book is to explore and elucidate social entrepreneurship's multifaceted contribution to the sustainable development of the territory, and to propose territory itself, read as a heuristic horizon, as the mechanism through which that contribution occurs. Data was gathered over a multi-year period through field research comprising interviews, direct observation, and secondary sources, including internal documents and financial reports. A multiple comparative case study was used, spanning five organizations of different legal form active in the Marrakech-Safi region. This perspective allows the book to emphasize the role of social entrepreneurship in the activities related to implementing sustainable development, and the considerable contribution of its action to the objectives that the Moroccan state has set itself in addressing the social, economic, and environmental challenges affecting the territory. The data collected illustrate social entrepreneurship's contribution to the sustainable development of the territory through the creation of multiple added value at the local level. Furthermore, by adopting a territorial view centered on the many processes carried out by the organizations studied, this book provides an alternate reading of the results of social-entrepreneurship action, connecting them to the concerns of sustainable development and to a Global South epistemological framing. The book further extends the comparative case material to sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world, and proposes an endogenous model of territorially cognitive social entrepreneurship for further testing on other terrains.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship; Territory; Heuristic Horizon; Sustainable Development; Global South Epistemology.

Editor's Note

Social Entrepreneurship and Territorial Development: Perspectives from the Global South presents a renewed and expanded examination of research originally developed by Marwane El Halaissi in his doctoral thesis, *Contribution de l'entrepreneuriat social au développement durable du territoire, cas de la région Marrakech-Safi,* defended in June 2022 at the Faculté des Sciences Juridiques, Économiques et Sociales de Salé, Université Mohammed V de Rabat, Morocco.

Rather than offering a direct translation of the original thesis, the present volume revisits its empirical foundations and develops a broader theoretical perspective on the relationship between social entrepreneurship, territorial knowledge, and sustainable development. Drawing on fieldwork conducted over several years in the Marrakech-Safi region, the book examines five organizations representing different institutional structures and areas of activity, exploring how their engagement with local communities contributes to social, economic, and environmental transformation.

At the center of the work is the concept of territory as a *heuristic horizon*. From this perspective, territory is understood not merely as the geographical setting in which entrepreneurial initiatives take place, but as a dynamic environment shaped by accumulated knowledge, social relationships, collective memory, and locally embedded practices. These elements influence how social entrepreneurs identify needs, recognize opportunities, mobilize resources, and develop responses to the challenges faced by their communities.

The book builds on established contributions from territorial economics, proximity studies, and social entrepreneurship research while seeking to extend these discussions through empirical evidence from Morocco. Its approach also engages with broader debates concerning the production of knowledge in the Global South, emphasizing the importance of theoretical perspectives developed from local experiences and institutional realities.

The significance of the territorial context

The Marrakech-Safi region provides a particularly relevant setting for examining these questions. Its geographical, economic, and social diversity encompasses urban centers, rural communities, agricultural territories, and areas facing persistent challenges related to infrastructure, access to services, and economic opportunities.

The organizations examined in the book operate within this diverse environment, illustrating different approaches to community development, social inclusion, cooperative activity, and environmental sustainability. Their experiences offer insights into the relationships between institutional arrangements, territorial knowledge, and the capacity of local initiatives to respond to specific social and economic needs.

The volume also considers developments beyond the original doctoral research, including the author's continuing investigations in the post-mining territories of Youssoufia and Benguerir and in communities affected by the September 2023 earthquake in Al Haouz Province. These perspectives broaden the discussion of territorial resilience and the role of locally embedded organizations in processes of adaptation and reconstruction.

Scope and readership

This publication is intended for researchers, academics, postgraduate students, policymakers, and practitioners interested in social entrepreneurship, territorial development, sustainability, and the social and solidarity economy.

For the academic community, it offers a conceptual framework supported by qualitative fieldwork and comparative organizational analysis. For professionals and institutions involved in territorial development, it provides documented experiences that may contribute to reflection on governance, resource mobilization, community participation, and sustainable development strategies.

By connecting theoretical discussion with empirical research, the book contributes to ongoing academic debates about the relationship between entrepreneurship and territory, while encouraging further investigation into the applicability of its conceptual propositions across different geographical and institutional contexts.

Editora Artemis is pleased to present this work as a contribution to the dissemination of academic research and to the exchange of perspectives on sustainable and inclusive territorial development.

Editora Artemis

Preface

The relationship between territory and economic development has occupied an important place in academic inquiry, evolving through successive theoretical approaches that have sought to explain how geographical, institutional, and social conditions influence economic activity. From Alfred Marshall's studies of industrial districts to the contributions of Philippe Aydalot and the development of proximity economics, the concept of territory has progressively moved beyond its traditional understanding as a geographical space to encompass the complex relationships, knowledge systems, and collective practices that shape local development.

Social Entrepreneurship and Territorial Development: Perspectives from the Global South contributes to this discussion by examining territory as a heuristic horizon: a framework of situated knowledge, accumulated experience, social relationships, and collective memory through which individuals and organizations identify opportunities, interpret challenges, and mobilize resources.

This perspective offers an additional dimension to the study of social entrepreneurship. Rather than considering territorial characteristics exclusively as external conditions influencing entrepreneurial activity, the book explores how knowledge generated through sustained engagement with a particular environment can become an essential component of organizational action and sustainable development.

The theoretical discussion is supported by empirical research involving five organizations operating in Morocco's Marrakech-Safi region. Representing different institutional structures and fields of activity, these organizations illustrate diverse approaches to addressing social needs, promoting economic inclusion, strengthening community participation, and supporting environmental sustainability.

Through these case studies, the work examines how territorial knowledge interacts with organizational governance, resource mobilization, institutional partnerships, and the identification of opportunities for social innovation. The diversity of the experiences presented provides a basis for reflecting on the possibilities and limitations of territorially embedded entrepreneurship.

An important dimension of the book is its engagement with research perspectives from the Global South. By examining experiences grounded in Moroccan social, economic, and institutional realities, the study contributes to broader discussions about the relevance of locally developed knowledge in the construction and refinement of theoretical frameworks.

The work also recognizes that territorial embeddedness does not automatically guarantee successful or sustainable outcomes. Local knowledge may facilitate the identification of opportunities and strengthen relationships of trust, but its effectiveness depends on organizational capacities, institutional arrangements, access to resources, and the ability to adapt to changing

circumstances. This recognition provides a balanced foundation for examining both the potential and the limitations of social entrepreneurship as an instrument of territorial development.

Beyond its contribution to academic debate, the book offers perspectives of interest to policymakers, development practitioners, cooperative organizations, and institutions engaged in promoting sustainable and inclusive development. Its discussion encourages consideration of how locally grounded initiatives can interact with public policies, international cooperation, and broader development strategies without losing their connection to the communities and territories in which they operate.

By bringing together theoretical reflection, empirical investigation, and comparative perspectives, this volume invites readers to reconsider the role of territory in social entrepreneurship and to explore the ways in which situated knowledge may contribute to more responsive and sustainable approaches to development.

It is our hope that this publication will encourage further research, critical dialogue, and comparative investigation into the relationships between social entrepreneurship, territorial knowledge, and sustainable development, particularly across the diverse contexts of the Global South.

Editora Artemis

Author's Foreword

This research did not begin with a theory. It began with a question I kept encountering during field visits across the Marrakech-Safi region while completing earlier graduate work in project engineering for the social and solidarity economy: why did some small organizations, working with almost nothing, manage to durably improve the conditions of the people around them, while others with comparable funding and comparable good intentions did not take root? The difference, I eventually came to believe, was rarely about money. It was about how deeply an organization had learned to read its own territory — its deficits, its latent assets, its networks of trust — before acting on it.

The doctoral fieldwork that produced this book's empirical core ran across several years, combining semi-structured interviews with founders, directors, and frontline employees; direct observation of production sites, cooperative meetings, and general assemblies; and the systematic collection of internal documents — statutes, financial reports, partnership agreements — that organizations rarely show to outsiders but which reveal, more honestly than any interview, how a territorial actor actually functions. I chose five organizations deliberately spanning different legal forms — a mutual society, an agricultural cooperative, a private social enterprise, a village association, and an internationally registered nonprofit — precisely because the diversity of legal form let me test whether territorial cognition operated the same way regardless of institutional structure. It did, though not identically.

I want to be honest about the limits of this work before the reader encounters its claims. Five cases cannot establish a general law; they can establish a plausible mechanism, richly documented, that other researchers can then test elsewhere. My own positionality — a Moroccan researcher trained partly in France, working in a region I know well but do not inhabit as the interviewees do — shaped what I could see and what I likely missed. And the earthquake of September 2023, which struck several of the communes discussed in Part III after the original thesis was defended, has already begun to test some of this book's claims in ways I could not have anticipated when the fieldwork was designed. I have chosen to note where the post-2023 evidence extends or complicates the argument rather than pretend the book was written after the fact.

A word, too, on why this reconstruction took the specific theoretical direction it did. The original thesis defended in 2022 already contained, buried in a literature review most readers would have skimmed, a citation to

Plumecocq's work on the cognitive resources of territorial development. At the time, it functioned as one citation among dozens, supporting a broader point about proximity economics rather than organizing the thesis's own argument. Rereading the fieldwork years later, preparing this book, I kept returning to that citation, because it was the only piece of the theoretical apparatus that actually explained the specific decisions my interviewees described — not the fact that a gap existed, but why a particular organization saw that particular gap when others, operating in the same physical space, did not. Pulling that thread forward into the book's title and structure is, in a sense, this book's own act of territorial cognition: rereading familiar material with newly sharpened eyes, made possible only by the years of continuing fieldwork that separated the original defense from this reconstruction.

This book is dedicated to my late father, Professor Ahmed El Halaissi, and to my mother, whose support carried the original doctoral project to its defense. It owes an enduring debt to my thesis director, Professor Loubna Barmaki, whose guidance shaped every chapter that follows, and to the directors, employees, and beneficiaries of the five organizations studied here, who opened their books, their meetings, and often their homes to a researcher with a recorder and too many questions. Any errors of interpretation in what follows are mine alone.

How to Read This Book

Readers with different priorities can move through this book in different orders without losing the argument's thread. A reader chiefly interested in the theoretical proposition should read the General Introduction, all of Part I, and Chapter 6's discussion sections before turning to whichever case portraits interest them most. A reader chiefly interested in practical organizational lessons — a cooperative director, a foundation officer, a territorial development official — can move directly to Chapter 5's five case portraits and Chapter 9's recommendations by actor type, returning to Part I only where a specific claim needs its theoretical grounding. A reader chiefly interested in the Global South comparative dimension should read the General Introduction, then jump directly to Part III, using Chapter 5's case portraits as reference material when a specific comparison requires it.

Each chapter in Parts I through III opens with a short indication of what it argues and closes with an explicit link forward to where that argument is picked up again, so that reading out of strict sequence does not require guessing where a given thread continues. The Glossary, positioned after the General Conclusion, is designed to be consulted independently of sequential reading; readers encountering an unfamiliar term at any point in the text are encouraged to turn to it directly rather than waiting for a first, in-text definition that may appear chapters later.

General Introduction

Four and a half million people live in the Marrakech-Safi region. Poverty in this territory is not abstract; it has an address. Roughly 46 percent of the region's rural population lived below precarity thresholds as of the mid-2010s. The hinterland and the urban centres outside the region's capital show a deficit in terms of basic infrastructure. This deficit results in local communities' inaccessibility to care. It results in a lack of waste recycling. It exacerbates poverty and insecurity. Health, precariousness, poverty, and pollution represent significant challenges that substantially affect the living conditions of local communities.

Social entrepreneurship has established itself in this gap as a proximity partner of public action at the local level. The market does not reach the douars of the High Atlas foothills on its own; margins are too thin and populations too dispersed. The state, despite a sustained public effort since the launch of Morocco's National Initiative for Human Development in 2005, cannot fully cover the distance either. Since the 1990s, Moroccan public policy has focused on developing a legal and institutional framework for pro-social entrepreneurship in order to translate the state's commitments to sustainable development objectives to the local level. This institutional drive has manifested itself in the creation of small-scale enterprises that focus on social, economic, and environmental challenges. These organizations offer goods and services to local communities that the value network of the dominant system cannot reach.

A different way of asking the question

Most of the literature on social entrepreneurship asks what these organizations do. This book asks a different question: how do they know what to do. Social entrepreneurs operating in a given territory do not simply perceive opportunities the way an outside observer would present them. They perceive opportunities through a heuristic horizon built from years, sometimes generations, of presence in a place. This heuristic horizon consists of situated knowledge: knowledge of which families trust which neighbors, which plot of land floods in October, which official will answer the phone, which artisanal technique has quietly survived three generations of rural exodus. Territory, in this reading, is not a container of resources waiting for an entrepreneur to notice them. It is itself a heuristic structure. It both enables and limits what can be seen, imagined, and acted upon.

This is a strong claim. The book does not ask the reader to accept it on faith. It builds the claim in three steps. Part I assembles the theoretical materials that, read together, support treating territory as heuristic rather than merely spatial. Part II tests the claim against five real organizations operating in the Marrakech-Safi region. Part III widens the lens to sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world, asking what of this Moroccan experience travels and what does not.

The central research question

The question that organizes the whole book can be stated plainly. How does social entrepreneurship contribute to the sustainable development of a territory. What role does territorial knowledge play in shaping that contribution. Three subsidiary questions follow from it. What does social entrepreneurship in the Marrakech-Safi region actually look like, across different legal forms and different social missions. Through what concrete mechanisms does it generate social, economic, and environmental value at the territorial scale. Can the resulting model be transported to other regions of the Global South, or is it bound to the specific institutional configuration of Morocco.

Three working hypotheses

- Social entrepreneurship in the Marrakech-Safi region functions as a response to a joint failure of market and state coverage. The form that response takes is shaped less by the size of the funding gap than by the depth of territorial knowledge available to the organization filling it.
- The value social entrepreneurship creates at the territorial scale is multidimensional. It is social, economic, environmental, and in several of the cases studied here, political. The different dimensions reinforce one another through the same mechanism of territorial embeddedness.
- Territorial cognition, once built by an organization, becomes a transferable asset. It can be passed to new staff. It can be extended to new activities. In some cases it can be exported to other territories facing comparable challenges.

What the book found, in brief

Social entrepreneurship in this territory does not choose between social, economic, and environmental value. It produces them together, through the same organizational routines. It does not treat the territory as a passive backdrop.

The strongest of the five organizations studied here read the territory the way a skilled clinician reads a patient, attentive to symptoms invisible to a first-time visitor. Its institutional dynamism is itself evidence that the heuristic-horizon mechanism is doing real work. Organizations that know their territory well enough attract precisely the kind of institutional cooperation that organizations parachuted in from outside rarely can.

Objectives

Three registers of objective run through the book. Theoretically, it aims to extend the proximity-economics and territorial-construction literature into the specific terrain of social entrepreneurship (Pecqueur, 2004; Plumecocq, 2012). It argues that the concept of cognitive resources, borrowed from territorial development economics, deserves a central place in how social entrepreneurship theory understands opportunity recognition. Methodologically, it aims to demonstrate that a multiple case-study design can generate transferable propositions even from a small, geographically bounded sample (Yin, 2003; Gentles et al., 2015). Practically, it aims to give territorial development officials, cooperative federations, and international donors a documented account of what actually works on this terrain.

How the book is organized

Part I lays the theoretical foundations. It moves from social entrepreneurship as a concept, through territory reconceived as heuristic horizon, to the triptych that binds social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and territory into a single analytical frame. Part II turns to the field. It profiles the Marrakech-Safi region and Al Haouz Province, presents five detailed case portraits, then compares them systematically. Part III steps back to ask what the Moroccan material contributes to, and borrows from, comparable experiences in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world, before proposing an endogenous model of territorially cognitive social entrepreneurship. A concluding chapter, a glossary, a bibliography, and a set of annexes close the volume.

A note on scope and terminology

This book uses the term Global South throughout. The term is used here not as a precise economic category but as an epistemological stance. It is an insistence that theory built from Southern fieldwork deserves standing as theory in its own right, not merely as a data source for frameworks built elsewhere.

PART I

Theoretical Foundations

Social entrepreneurship, territory, and the case for a cognitive reading

Chapter 1

Social Entrepreneurship: What Are We Talking About?

1.0 Historical origins: three distinct lineages

Social entrepreneurship's contemporary vocabulary crystallized in the United States and Western Europe during the 1980s and 1990s, but its underlying practice has at least three distinct historical lineages, and mistaking the vocabulary's recent origin for the practice's recent origin is a common and consequential error. The Anglo-American lineage grew out of the nonprofit sector's search for earned-income strategies as government and foundation funding tightened from the 1980s onward, producing the market-oriented, earned-revenue emphasis that still marks much American writing on the field. The Western European lineage, particularly strong in France, Italy, and Belgium, grew instead out of the older social and solidarity economy tradition — mutual societies dating to the nineteenth century, cooperative movements tied to labor organizing — and retains, as a result, a stronger emphasis on democratic governance and limited profit distribution than its American counterpart.

A third lineage, too often treated in the literature as derivative of the first two, runs through the Global South itself, including Morocco's own mutual and cooperative traditions predating the 1963 mutuality statute discussed later in this chapter. This book's position, developed at length across its empirical chapters, is that this third lineage is not a delayed import of Northern models but an independent development shaped by conditions — dispersed rural populations, thin state coverage, strong kinship-based trust networks — that produced comparable institutional solutions through comparable, but locally derived, reasoning. Recognizing this independent lineage is a precondition for taking seriously the Global South epistemological framing this book adopts throughout.

The practice's earliest documented modern instance is often traced to relief initiatives during the Crimean War, though the vocabulary of "social entrepreneurship" would not exist for another century. Comparable initiatives multiplied across the twentieth century in every world region — the Kashf Foundation's 1996 microcredit program for women in Pakistan is a frequently cited later example — before the field's contemporary globalization, driven

substantially by philanthropic foundations. Ashoka's promotion of socially minded entrepreneurs from the 1980s onward, followed by the field's growing visibility at the World Economic Forum from 2009 and at the Clinton Global Initiative, drew the attention of a new generation of philanthropists, including the Kauffman Foundation in 1998 and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2009. This elite attention accelerated the field's diffusion worldwide, formalizing in the United States through Harvard Business School's Social Enterprise Initiative in 1993, and in Europe through Italy's 1991 legal creation of the social cooperative, the continent's first dedicated legal form for the sector.

1.1 A contested field with a common root

Social entrepreneurship has no single accepted definition. Three decades of scholarship have not converged on one. Social entrepreneurship is presented as action by individuals or private organizations addressing different opportunities in the market, that is, social needs (Korosec & Berman, 2006). Various authors argue that it is a response to market failures, the inability of the market and the state to provide for the social needs of citizens (Shepherd et al., 2010; Omrane & Fayolle, 2010; Mair, 2010). It combines the opportunity-seeking logic of classical entrepreneurship, in the tradition of Schumpeter and Kirzner, with a mission to create social rather than purely private value (Omrane & Fayolle, 2010; Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

Bacq and Janssen (2011) describe social entrepreneurship as a panoply of steps from identification and evaluation to exploitation. This converges with the classical conception of entrepreneurship by Schumpeter and Kirzner and the theory of market failure. These theorists argue that the objective of social entrepreneurship is to create, through market activities, social value by mobilizing different resources. Social entrepreneurship, by exploiting opportunities in the market that the active system has not addressed, responds to the social needs of citizens and creates social value (Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

Martin and Osberg (2007) offer one of the more operational definitions in the field. Social entrepreneurship consists of three components. First, the identification of a stable but unjust equilibrium that excludes or marginalizes a group lacking the means to change it. Second, the identification of an opportunity to develop new social value that challenges that equilibrium. Third, the construction of a new, more inclusive equilibrium that reduces the suffering of the target population. This three-step structure recurs, in slightly different

language, across most of the field's foundational texts, from Mair and Martí (2006) to Zahra et al. (2008).

Mair (2010) equates social entrepreneurship with a process of meeting the basic needs of local people that conventional organizations still need to meet. Local context does not simply provide the raw material social entrepreneurship works with. It actively shapes the strategies and tactics available to the entrepreneur. An opportunity that is visible and actionable in one territory may be neither visible nor actionable in another, even if the underlying social need is identical. This observation, buried in Mair's text as an aside, is an early statement of the heuristic-horizon thesis this book develops at length in Chapter 2.

1.2 Innovation as the field's defining engine

If social entrepreneurship has a single defining engine, it is innovation. Not innovation in the narrow technological sense, but innovation in how resources are combined to meet needs the existing system has left unmet (Zahra et al., 2008; Janssen et al., 2012). Leadbeater (1997) equates social entrepreneurship with entrepreneurial behavior for social purposes, mobilizing market activities to meet the needs of disadvantaged social groups. Sulphey and AlKahtani (2017) argue that social entrepreneurship tackles problems that traditional organizations, market and state, cannot solve. It takes on a palliative role (Nicholls & Cho, 2006), one that nonetheless produces durable structural change when it succeeds.

The five organizations studied in Part II of this book illustrate this innovation mechanism with unusual clarity. They operate at different scales and in different sectors: health coverage, dairy production, craft manufacturing, rural education, and agroforestry. What unites them is not sector or scale but a shared pattern. Each identified a need the market or state left unaddressed in its own territory. Each innovated a resource combination, often modest, sometimes improvised, that neither actor would have assembled on its own.

1.3 Legal forms in the Moroccan landscape

Morocco's legal architecture for social entrepreneurship is more varied than most single-country studies acknowledge. Mutual societies operate under the 1963 Dahir governing mutuality, later supplemented by the 2002 law establishing basic medical coverage. Agricultural and non-agricultural cooperatives fall under Law 112-12 of 2014, which replaced an older, more restrictive framework and substantially eased the conditions for cooperative formation. Associations

register under the 1958 law on the right of association, amended in 2002. Private companies pursuing a social mission — the legal form chosen by one of this book's five cases — register as ordinary commercial entities but adopt statutes and practices that function, in substance, as a social enterprise even without a dedicated legal status. Internationally registered nonprofits, finally, operate under a dual regime, incorporated abroad and authorized to act in Morocco through bilateral cooperation agreements.

Legal form	Governing framework
Mutual society (mutuelle)	Dahir of 12 November 1963 + Law 65-00 (2002)
Agricultural cooperative	Law 112-12 (2014)
Association	Dahir of 1958, amended 2002
Social enterprise (SARL/SA)	Ordinary commercial code, social statutes
International NGO	Bilateral cooperation agreement

This diversity of legal form matters for the argument this book develops, because it lets the empirical chapters test whether territorial cognition operates independently of legal structure. If a mutual society, a cooperative, a private enterprise, an association, and an international NGO all display the same reliance on situated territorial knowledge to identify and act on opportunity, the mechanism is unlikely to be an artifact of any one legal regime. Part II shows that this is, with variations of degree, exactly what the data reveal.

1.4 Social entrepreneurship versus the social and solidarity economy

Morocco's social and solidarity economy (SSE) sector — cooperatives, mutual societies, and associations bound by principles of limited profit distribution and democratic governance — long predates the more recent vocabulary of social entrepreneurship. The two overlap substantially but are not identical. The SSE is defined by legal and governance criteria: one member, one vote; capped or absent profit distribution; democratic assemblies. Social entrepreneurship is defined by a mission criterion: the deliberate pursuit of social value through entrepreneurial, opportunity-seeking means, regardless of legal form. An SSE cooperative can fail to behave entrepreneurially, remaining a purely defensive mutual-aid structure; a commercial company can behave as

a social entrepreneur without adopting SSE governance at all. This book treats social entrepreneurship as the broader, mission-defined category and the SSE as one — historically important, but not exclusive — institutional vehicle through which it is pursued in Morocco.

Democratic governance as the SSE's defining mechanism

Where social entrepreneurship's defining mechanism is opportunity-driven innovation, the SSE's defining mechanism, in the francophone tradition this book draws on, is democratic governance. Laville (2010) argues that the SSE democratizes economic activity by tying decision-making authority not to capital ownership but to active participation and shared responsibility toward the organization and its membership; capital ownership, profit allocation, and decision-making power are formally decoupled from one another. This decoupling operationalizes as a specific governance rule — one member, one vote — that gives every member equal decision-making weight regardless of financial contribution, a principle each of this book's cooperative and mutual-society cases (Cases A and B) implements formally through its statutes and, according to interview testimony, substantively through its actual meeting practice.

Governance in this tradition becomes, in Petrella and Richez-Battesti's (2010) phrasing, a process of co-construction involving a plurality of actors across decision-making, the nature of decisions taken, and the objectives pursued — a dynamic Richez-Battesti and Oswald (2014) describe as inherently complex, marked by an ongoing interaction between an organization's political or strategic administrators and its operational managers. Procedural equity, in this reading, depends on balancing incentives and contributions, maintaining internal communication, and preserving transparency (Maisonnasse et al., 2010) — criteria against which Chapter 5's governance descriptions for Cases A, B, and D can be read directly.

Social utility as the SSE's normative target

Where classical social-entrepreneurship theory targets social value broadly defined, the SSE tradition specifically targets social utility (utilité sociale): initiatives serving people in situations of need, particularly those excluded from formal labor markets, and contributing to the reduction of socio-economic inequality through solidarity mechanisms operating at national, regional, and territorial scales (Gadrey, 2004). This normative emphasis on inequality reduction, rather

than innovation or opportunity recognition per se, distinguishes the SSE lineage from the more market-oriented American school discussed in section 1.8, and helps explain why Morocco's own SSE sector — including three of this book's five cases — places such consistent emphasis on redistributive practice: Case A's benefits extending beyond core health coverage, Case B's in-kind capital-contribution flexibility for members lacking cash, and Case D's fee waivers for the most vulnerable families it serves.

1.5 Critiques and limits of the concept

The field has not escaped serious critique, and this book does not pretend otherwise. Critics point to the risk of "quiet statization", where social enterprises absorb responsibilities the state should fund directly, allowing public retrenchment to proceed under cover of civil society vitality. Others point to the risk of commodification, where social missions are gradually subordinated to the market logic needed to sustain them financially. A third critique, most relevant to this book's argument, concerns dependency: organizations built around deep territorial knowledge can become so specific to their founding context that they struggle to scale, to survive leadership transitions, or to transfer their model elsewhere — precisely the risk this book's cognitive-horizon framework predicts, since a horizon that took years to build cannot be handed over in a training manual.

None of these critiques invalidates the field; they discipline it. This book takes the position that territorial embeddedness is a genuine resource, not merely an unavoidable constraint, but insists — following the honesty the original doctoral fieldwork demanded — that the same embeddedness that makes an organization effective locally is also what makes it fragile when conditions change, as the September 2023 earthquake would later demonstrate for several organizations discussed in Part III.

1.6 Definitions compared

Because the field's definitional plurality can frustrate readers new to it, this section lays several influential definitions side by side, showing both their overlap and their points of emphasis, before this book commits to the working definition it uses throughout the empirical chapters.

Source	Core emphasis
Dees (1998)	Mission-driven pursuit of social value using business-like discipline, innovation, and resourcefulness
Martin & Osberg (2007)	Identification of a stable but unjust equilibrium, an opportunity to disrupt it, and construction of a new, more inclusive equilibrium
Mair & Martí (2006)	A process of creating value by combining resources in new ways, primarily to explore and exploit opportunities to create social value
Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern (2006)	Innovative, social-value-creating activity that can occur within or across the nonprofit, business, and government sectors
This book	Entrepreneurial action whose opportunity recognition is mediated by an actor's territorial heuristic horizon, and whose value creation is therefore inseparable from the depth of that horizon

Reading these definitions together clarifies what this book adds rather than what it discards. It retains Dees's emphasis on mission and business-like discipline, Martin and Osberg's equilibrium-shifting structure, and Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern's sector-agnostic scope. What it adds — the claim developed across Chapter 2 — is that none of these definitions specifies the mechanism by which an entrepreneur actually recognizes the opportunity each of them assumes as a starting point. This book's working definition supplies that missing mechanism: territorial heuristic horizon.

1.7 Financing mechanisms: a typology

Social entrepreneurship organizations in Morocco, as elsewhere, draw on a hybrid financing base that rarely fits neatly into either the pure-grant model associated with traditional nonprofits or the pure-equity model associated with commercial startups. Five financing mechanisms recur across the literature and, as Chapter 5 will show, across this book's five cases: earned revenue from the direct sale of goods or services; membership contributions, particularly relevant to cooperative and mutual forms; grants and subsidies from public programs, chiefly the INDH; international cooperation financing, whether bilateral (as with German cooperation in Cases B and C) or multilateral (as with UN carbon-finance mechanisms in Case E); and in-kind contributions — donated

land, volunteer labor, discounted professional services — that rarely appear in formal accounts but which several interviewees described as decisive in their organization's early survival.

Mechanism	Description
Earned revenue	Product or service sales directly to end customers or intermediaries
Membership contributions	Dues and capital contributions from cooperative or mutual-society members
Public grants and subsidies	INDH and other government co-financing of specific projects
International cooperation	Bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, technical or financial
In-kind contributions	Donated land, volunteer labor, pro bono professional services

No case studied in this book relies on a single mechanism; each blends at least three of the five, and the specific blend an organization settles on is, this book argues, itself a signal of its heuristic horizon's depth — organizations that have accurately read their territory tend to identify a wider and better-matched set of financing partners than organizations working from a shallower or more generic reading of the same funding landscape.

1.8 Four schools of thought

Comparative scholarship on social entrepreneurship, notably Hoogendoorn et al. (2010) and Defourny and Nyssens (2010), converges on a four-school taxonomy that this book adopts to situate its own Moroccan material. The EMES school, developed by the European Research Network of the same name, emphasizes economic risk-taking, limited profit distribution, and participatory governance involving multiple stakeholders, treating social capital as one of the sector's defining and original characteristics. The earned-income school, dominant in American scholarship, treats social entrepreneurship chiefly as a financing innovation for nonprofit organizations facing funding constraints, with less emphasis on governance form than on revenue diversification. The British school, similar to EMES but distinguished by its explicit emphasis on public-private-third-sector partnership, does not require that services delivered be directly tied to an organization's stated social mission. And a fourth, social-

innovation school treats social entrepreneurship primarily as a process of social change — new products, services, or models addressing social needs more effectively than existing alternatives — with comparatively less attention to organizational form or governance.

This book's five cases, read against this taxonomy, resist clean assignment to any single school, which is itself an instructive finding. Case A and Case B display strong EMES characteristics — participatory governance, limited profit distribution, multi-stakeholder involvement. Case C combines EMES-style participatory elements with an earned-income school's revenue-diversification logic, given its explicit skimming pricing strategy targeting an ethical consumer market. Case E displays British-school characteristics most clearly, given its extensive public-private-third-sector partnership structure spanning Moroccan and American state actors, UN carbon finance, and a corporate partnership with Siemens Gamesa. This resistance to clean categorization is, this book suggests, itself evidence for the cognitive-horizon thesis: organizations that build their strategy from territorial reading rather than from a pre-selected theoretical school naturally draw eclectically on whichever governance and financing elements best fit what their specific territory's heuristic horizon reveals, rather than conforming neatly to any single imported theoretical model.

1.9 Religion, moral economy, and the local legitimacy of social entrepreneurship

A dimension often underplayed in Anglo-American social-entrepreneurship scholarship, but impossible to ignore in the Moroccan cases studied here, concerns the role religious and moral vocabulary plays in legitimizing an organization's activity to the community it serves. Case A's pilgrimage-support benefit, Case B's Aid El Kabir assistance to needy families, and Case C's employees' own retelling of communication training as a formalization of values "already present in our culture and religion" — quoted in Chapter 5 — all point to the same pattern: social entrepreneurship in this territory does not present itself as a foreign import requiring translation into local moral terms after the fact. It presents itself, and is received, as continuous with an existing moral economy of mutual obligation that long predates the vocabulary of social entrepreneurship itself.

This continuity matters analytically because it complicates a common assumption in the institutional-void literature discussed in Chapter 6: that social entrepreneurship fills a gap left by absent formal institutions. In the Moroccan

cases studied here, social entrepreneurship also draws on, and partially formalizes, an informal moral-economy infrastructure — networks of religiously inflected mutual obligation — that was never absent, only informal. The organizations studied in this book did not so much fill an institutional void as give durable organizational form to obligations their communities already recognized, a distinction this book's cognitive-horizon framework is well positioned to capture precisely because it treats territorial knowledge as inclusive of moral and cultural, not only economic, information.

1.10 Classical entrepreneurship theory and process models

Social-entrepreneurship theory did not build its account of opportunity recognition from nothing; it borrowed heavily, if often loosely, from classical entrepreneurship theory's two founding figures, Schumpeter and Kirzner. Schumpeter's entrepreneur is an agent of creative destruction, introducing genuinely new combinations of resources that displace existing arrangements; Kirzner's entrepreneur is instead alert to disequilibria already latent in a market, discovering rather than creating opportunity. Several influential social-entrepreneurship accounts read as attempts to reconcile these two lineages: Young (1983) treats nonprofit entrepreneurship as opportunistic discernment paired with product development, closer to Kirzner's alertness; Weerawardena and Mort (2006) instead foreground proactivity as one of social entrepreneurship's three defining dimensions, closer to Schumpeter's disruptive agency. This book's cognitive-horizon thesis sits closer to the Kirznerian pole without fully abandoning the Schumpeterian one: territorial cognition primarily explains alertness — why a specific actor notices a specific latent opportunity others miss — but the five cases studied in Part II also show genuine Schumpeterian innovation once that opportunity is noticed, particularly in Case B's novel combination of dairy production and direct tourist retailing.

A related strand, Leibenstein's (1966) X-efficiency theory, supplies a third lens: rather than treating market imperfection as a static gap, it treats the deviation from an idealized state of pure and perfect competition as itself correlated with the scope for entrepreneurial action and the externalities that action generates — the wider the deviation, the larger the space for entrepreneurial opportunity. Kirzner's (1973) related concept of entrepreneurial alertness names the specific capacity this book's cognitive-horizon construct is built to explain mechanistically: an opportunity, on Kirzner's reading, is a socio-economic imperfection or

disequilibrium existing in the market and overlooked by other actors, but identifiable by an alert entrepreneur possessing sufficiently deep knowledge of their own society to recognize it. Bacq and Janssen (2011) formalize social entrepreneurship as a sequence moving from opportunity identification through evaluation to exploitation, explicitly converging Schumpeterian and Kirznerian entrepreneurship theory with market-failure theory; Mair and Martí (2007), read closely, organize the field's definitional plurality into three temporal moments — value creation through novel resource combination, opportunity exploration and exploitation targeting social value and social change, and the provision of goods, services, or new organizations as the eventual output — a sequence this book's five case portraits in Chapter 5 each traverse, in each instance beginning from the same starting point this book has argued throughout: a territorially specific reading of where socio-economic imperfection was sharpest and most tractable.

Two process models worth adapting

Two formal process models from the entrepreneurship literature, though developed independently of any territorial or cognitive concern, map unexpectedly well onto this book's empirical material. Gartner's (1988) model of firm creation identifies four elements — the characteristics of the founding individual or individuals, the process of creating the new venture, the characteristics of the resulting organization, and the environment surrounding the new entity — later adapted by Mair and Martí (2007) as a comparative tool for studying social-entrepreneurship processes rather than social entrepreneurs as individuals, a shift in emphasis this book's own case-study method, organized around organizational process rather than founder biography, follows directly. Swedberg (2009), working from a Schumpeterian frame, proposes a seven-step sequence: conceiving a mode of action, financing the venture, choosing a legal form, organizing it, acquiring production resources, choosing production methods, and securing social acceptance. Chapter 5's five case portraits, read against this sequence, show each organization moving through recognizably similar steps — but with the crucial difference, this book has argued throughout, that the specific choices made at each step (which legal form, which resources, which production method) were shaped at every turn by the organization's accumulated territorial heuristic horizon rather than by a generic entrepreneurial playbook.

Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern's (2006) adaptation of Sahlman's (1996) People-Context-Deal-Opportunity framework offers a third useful lens, explicitly territorial in one of its four elements: context. Austin et al. argue that

social opportunity identification operates fundamentally at the territorial scale, and that social-entrepreneurship actors must be embedded within their territory to recognize and act on the opportunities that scale presents. This book's contribution to that observation is to specify the mechanism Austin et al. leave largely implicit: embeddedness matters not simply because it grants proximity or access, but because it builds, over time, the specific heuristic horizon — the situated knowledge of people, resources, and relationships — through which opportunity actually becomes visible as opportunity in the first place.

Chapter 2

Territory: From Space to Heuristic Horizon

2.0 Territory's return: from the crisis of Fordism to identity retrenchment

Territory's re-entry into economic and social analysis during the 1970s was not a purely intellectual event; it followed directly from the visible exhaustion of the Fordist development model that had dominated the postwar decades — a model built on productivity gains, cost- and price-based competition, and product standardization, whose perverse effect, critics increasingly argued, was widening inequality between major cities and regions as public investment concentrated in designated "growth poles" at the expense of everywhere else. The second half of the 1970s brought a genuine paradigm shift in how territory and territorial intervention were conceived, driven partly by early globalization pressures and partly by Alain Touraine's actionalist paradigm, which reintroduced the social actor as a central unit of analysis across the social sciences. Development studies rediscovered place itself, giving rise to renewed attention to collective action, local and regional specificity, and social uniqueness — a rediscovery that let researchers study, through the local scale, how societies were adapting to globalization's supranational pressures.

The state's own centralization came under parallel scrutiny during this period, criticized for constraining local actors' capacity for autonomous action. Alternative development formulas emerging through the 1980s — "self-development," "endogenous development," "self-centered development" — shared a common critique of the dominant model's statist, centralizing character. The runaway globalization of the 1980s then produced a genuinely paradoxical territorial effect: as states became increasingly subject to supranational rules and institutions, economic globalization simultaneously drove a continuous territorialization of behavior, visible in the sedentary concentration of specific economic activities in specific places. Globalization's tendency to homogenize national cultures, eroding national identity, appears to have triggered a countervailing reinforcement of felt difference — a retrenchment of identity into itself that strengthened regionalism and elevated the value placed on local products, giving territory its contemporary return to prominence. Local and regional territories saw the emergence of genuinely participatory actor systems,

reinforcing social ties at the local level and setting the stage for the proximity-economics literature this chapter now turns to.

2.0.1 Territory across the social sciences

Territory's etymological root, the Latin territorium, originally designated the space over which an authority or jurisdiction was exercised. Socio-economic geography analyzes territory across three scales — micro, meso, macro — requiring, per Massicotte et al. (2006), an objective definition of development, a theoretically constructed model of interpretation, and an operational classification of inventory data. From the 1980s onward, geographers substantially widened the concept's semantic field: territory came to be read, following Raffestin, as a reordering of space aimed at uncovering the informational systems available to a human being by virtue of belonging to a culture — a reading that distinguishes territory's material dimension, its geographic space, from its immaterial dimension, the social systems of representation instituting a human group's relationship with its environment. Di Méo (1998) argues the immaterial dimension is in fact the more dominant of the two, with the material component secondary.

Political science offers a third reading, defining territory as the bounded, controlled space of the nineteenth-century state — a conception in which territorial construction is treated as externally imposed. A power-relations variant of this reading treats territory as the outcome of a dynamic orchestrated by actors seeking to influence or govern people, phenomena, or relationships through the delimitation or control of a geographic area, with political science generally focused on the formal and informal rules and norms shaping resource distribution and institutional representation within a given territory. Economic sociology, finally, treats territory as simultaneously a source of constraint and a site of contestation around which social norms, rules, and laws are defined; drawing on Polanyi's linkage of territory, physical and cultural habitation, and institutionalization, this tradition holds that territory possesses a dual, continuously mutating nature — at once instituting and instituted — that changes how populations construct their relationship to it over time. This book's cognitive-horizon construct, developed across the remainder of this chapter, draws most directly on this sociological and immaterial reading, while retaining the economic-geography literature's attention to scale and the political-science literature's attention to power and institutional rule-setting.

2.1 A concept that keeps returning

Territory entered economic analysis, left it, and returned — more than once. Marshall first used it, at the end of the nineteenth century, to explain the clustering of small and medium enterprises in England's industrial districts. Economic analysis then set territory aside for most of the twentieth century, preferring frictionless, placeless models of factor mobility. It returned in the 1970s and 1980s, when structuralist and neoclassical theory alike failed to explain why some regions weathered deindustrialization while others collapsed (Requier-Desjardins, 2009; Benko & Pecqueur, 2001). Aydalot's work on the concept of milieu was decisive here: he reintroduced the spatial dimension of development by treating a region's internal dynamism, not merely its position relative to external markets, as the object of analysis.

Two academic traditions have read this returning concept differently. Geography emphasized territory's spatial component — boundaries, distance, physical resource endowment. Sociology emphasized something else: territory's social and cognitive component, the shared codes, memory, and tacit knowledge that bind a population to a place and shape how that population interprets its own situation. This book sides, deliberately, with the second reading, while showing in the chapters that follow why the economic literature on proximity gives that sociological insight unexpected analytical teeth.

2.1.1 The institutionalist lineage: districts, milieux, and economic geography

Marshall's original work on territory found a second life through an institutionalist lineage running from Coase through Williamson and North, each extending Marshallian insight with an increasingly explicit theory of institutions, and continued by evolutionary economists of technical change such as Nelson and Winter. Empirically, this lineage was carried forward by two parallel European research programs: Italian scholars — Becattini, Bagnasco, Triglia — studying the industrial districts of central Italy, and Aydalot's French-language research on innovative milieux, both published from the late 1970s onward. A third strand, the Californian school of economic geography associated with Scott, Storper, and Walker, extended comparable analysis to metropolitan production systems in the United States. Together these three research programs established territory as a genuine economic concept — a territorialized organization of productive processes, and a natural scale for sustainable-development policy —

precisely because the structuralist and neoclassical theories dominant through the 1970s and 1980s had failed to explain the uneven regional dynamics those decades produced.

The Italian industrial-district literature treats territory as a social construct emerging from a coordination process among actors responding to a shared, previously unsolved production problem — and from the ongoing construction of territorial resources whose activation depends on the territory's continued dynamism. Becattini and colleagues, studying central Italy's rapid emergence in specific global industries, coined "industrial district" to describe this new form of territorial industrial organization, later generalized into the broader concept of the localized productive system (système productif localisé), a form of territorial production organization giving weight to non-strictly-economic factors in explaining these systems' emergence — precisely the kind of factor this book's cognitive-horizon construct is built to capture. The 1990s further saw the emergence of the "new economic geography" associated with Benko and Pecqueur, itself a response to a world reshaped by globalization, free-trade-zone formation, and the accelerating articulation of global and local scales — a period during which territory again returned decisively to economic analysis, understood now as a reservoir of specific, atypical resources that diversify economic space and stabilize economic activity.

2.2 Proximity economics and the construction of territory

The proximity-economics school, developing through the 1990s work of Gilly and Pecqueur, Benko, and later Campagne and Pecqueur, breaks decisively with the classical view of space as a passive container of production factors. Space, in this account, is a site of resource creation, not merely resource endowment. Pecqueur (2004) proposes that territory results from the dialectic between local and global forces: it is not simply given by geography but is appropriated by its actors, becoming the product of collective processes — negotiation, compromise, opposition, and, crucially, collective learning.

This is the pivot point of the chapter. A territory, on this reading, is a socio-historical construct populated by a system of actors — firms, associations, organizations — linked by several distinct forms of proximity: geographic proximity, the simple fact of physical closeness, and organizational proximity, the fact of belonging to shared networks, professional codes, or institutional routines even across distance (Gilly & Pecqueur, 1995; Klein & Fontan, 2004).

Territory, in short, is not where an organization happens to be located. It is what an organization has learned to see, through years of embedded presence, that an outsider located in the same physical space could not yet see.

Gilly and Torre's (2000) formulation, an important refinement this book draws on directly, further divides proximity into two logics: a similarity logic, producing social proximity between actors who resemble one another in outlook or practice, and a belonging logic, producing institutional proximity between actors who share membership in a common formal or informal structure. Territory, on this reading, is a construct resulting from a collective-action logic that mobilizes both forms simultaneously; where proximity is absent, coordination among actors fails to emerge, and with it, the territory itself fails to take the specific, actor-constituted form this book's argument depends on. Proximity functions, in this framing, as both a constraint and a potential: it limits an actor's field of action to a given community and space, while simultaneously facilitating — sporadically, regularly, or continuously — the coordination that generates the positive externalities on which territorial construction ultimately rests. This double character is, this book suggests, precisely why territorial heuristic horizons are asymmetric across otherwise co-located actors: two organizations can occupy the same geographic proximity while differing sharply in the social and institutional proximity each has actually built, producing exactly the differential opportunity recognition Chapter 5's case portraits document.

A finer-grained typology of proximity

Later work in the proximity-economics tradition, particularly Boschma's (2005) widely cited taxonomy, distinguishes five forms of proximity relevant to how actors coordinate and learn together: geographic (physical distance), cognitive (shared knowledge bases and interpretive frameworks), organizational (shared control structures or routines), social (trust built through repeated interpersonal relationships), and institutional (shared formal and informal rules). This book's cognitive-horizon construct draws most heavily on Boschma's cognitive and social proximity categories, while treating geographic proximity as a necessary but insufficient condition: physical presence in a territory is what makes the accumulation of cognitive and social proximity possible over time, but presence alone, without the years needed to build shared interpretive frameworks and interpersonal trust, does not by itself constitute a heuristic horizon. This is precisely why several of this book's case organizations — Case C's Swiss founder, Case E's American-Moroccan leadership — took years, not

months, to move from geographic presence to the fuller cognitive and social proximity their later effectiveness depended on.

Territorial governance as an emergent property

A further implication of treating territory as socially constructed concerns governance. Where classical regional economics treats territorial governance as a top-down administrative function — a governorate, a communal council, a ministry — the proximity-economics tradition this book draws on treats governance as something that also emerges bottom-up, from the accumulated coordination routines that repeated interaction among territorial actors produces. The stakeholder map presented in Chapter 4 should be read with this in mind: the public institutions listed there set formal rules, but the informal coordination that actually determines whether a project succeeds — which official picks up the phone, which technical partner trusts which local organization enough to co-design rather than simply fund a project — is itself a product of accumulated territorial relationships that no administrative chart fully captures.

2.3 Cognitive resources: the concept this book puts to work

The theoretical move that gives this book its title comes from a narrower strand of the proximity-economics literature: work on the cognitive resources of territorial development (Plumecocq, 2012). This literature treats knowledge itself — specifically, situated, collectively held, often tacit knowledge about a territory's specificities — as a resource in the same analytical sense that capital or labor are resources: something that can be accumulated, transmitted, depleted, and, crucially, mobilized to create value that would not otherwise exist.

Territory as heuristic horizon — a working definition

A heuristic horizon is the bounded field of situated knowledge — of people, resources, risks, and relationships — that territorial presence makes visible to an actor and that absence renders invisible or illegible.

It is built cumulatively, through years of interaction, and it is asymmetric: two organizations located in the same physical space can hold radically different heuristic horizons depending on how long, and how deeply, each has been embedded there.

It functions simultaneously as an enabling resource — it lets an actor perceive opportunities others miss — and as a limiting structure — it can also foreclose possibilities that lie just beyond its edge.

This reframing does real analytical work, and it is worth being precise about what it changes relative to the standard resource-based reading of territorial development. In the standard reading, a territory possesses specific resources — a lake, a craft tradition, a network of retired civil servants willing to volunteer — and organizations located there simply draw on them, the way a firm draws on a mineral deposit. In the cognitive-horizon reading, those same resources do not exist as resources until an actor's territorial knowledge renders them visible as such. The lake near Lalla Takerkoust was, for decades, simply a lake; it became a distribution channel for a women's cooperative's cheese only once the cooperative's leadership had accumulated enough territorial knowledge — of seasonal tourist flows, of which hotels would take a small unbranded producer seriously, of which intermediary would not skim an unreasonable margin — to see it as one. Chapter 5 documents this mechanism in detail.

A note on measurement and its difficulties

Treating knowledge as a resource invites an obvious methodological objection: resources that can be counted, priced, and audited are more tractable, analytically, than resources that live in the accumulated judgment of a handful of founders and long-serving staff. This book does not resolve that difficulty; it names it honestly. What the empirical chapters can offer is not a monetary valuation of territorial cognition but a documented account of its behavioral signatures — the specific decisions, verifiable against interview and document evidence, that a deep heuristic horizon made possible and that a shallower one would not have. Chapter 6 proposes a four-register checklist that operationalizes this signature-based approach without pretending to a precision the underlying construct does not yet support.

2.4 The systems-of-innovation reading

A parallel literature on local systems of social innovation reinforces the cognitive reading from a different angle. Lan et al. (2014) argue that social entrepreneurship changes social norms by constructing new social codes and triggering new forms of collective action among territorial actors, and that this normative change amplifies social interaction within the territory, which in turn generates new social networks and — the phrase is theirs — "cognitive structures". Knowledge diffusion and social-network formation, on this account, are not separate outputs of social entrepreneurship; they are the same process

viewed from two angles. An organization that succeeds in building new local networks is, by the same act, expanding the territory's collective heuristic horizon, which then becomes available to the next organization that tries to act there.

2.5 Territorial resources and the pitfalls of an inherited term

It is worth pausing on a terminological choice. Much of the francophone literature this book draws on uses the phrase "ressources spécifiques du territoire" — specific territorial resources — a formulation that risks smuggling back in the passive, container-like view of territory this chapter has just argued against. Benko and Pecqueur (2001) themselves anticipate the risk: territories, they write, are less a stock of resources than a "reservoir" of resources of a specific, non-transferable kind, precisely because their value depends on the local system of actors that recognizes and mobilizes them. This book retains the vocabulary of territorial resources where convenient, but treats it throughout as shorthand for cognitively mediated resources — resources that are resources only within a given heuristic horizon, and that dissolve into invisibility outside it.

2.6 From Sen's capabilities to territorial capabilities

Amartya Sen's capability approach offers this book its final theoretical building block, and connects Chapter 2 to Chapter 3's discussion of sustainable development. Sen argues that development should be measured not by income or resource endowment alone, but by the real freedoms — capabilities — that people have to live lives they have reason to value. Territorial cognition, this book argues, functions as a collective capability in Sen's sense: a territory whose population and organizations have accumulated a rich, well-transmitted heuristic horizon has, other things equal, a wider capability set than an identical territory whose population has been displaced, whose institutions are new, or whose accumulated knowledge has not been passed between generations. This is not a metaphorical extension of Sen's individual-level concept; it is the same logic applied to a collective unit, and it gives the book's central claim a normative dimension that a purely descriptive resource-mobilization account would lack.

Sen's related distinction between functionings — what a person actually does or is — and capabilities — what a person could do or be, given real opportunity — maps cleanly onto the difference this book draws between a territory's inherited resource endowment and its heuristic horizon. A territory can possess a functioning (an existing craft tradition, a lake, a stand of argan

trees) without that functioning translating into a capability (the real freedom of a local population to convert that functioning into income, dignity, or security) unless some actor's heuristic horizon is wide enough to see the conversion pathway and organized enough to build it. Case C's disability-employment enterprise illustrates this precisely: physical disability did not disappear when the enterprise was founded, but the capability to convert existing needlework skill into stable income and social standing did not exist until the founder's territorial and cultural heuristic horizon made that conversion visible and buildable.

2.7 Limits of the cognitive-horizon concept

No analytical concept escapes its own limits, and this book's central category is no exception. Three deserve explicit statement before the empirical chapters put the concept to work. First, heuristic horizons are not directly observable; they must be inferred from behavior, decisions, and testimony, which introduces an unavoidable interpretive layer between the construct and the evidence for it — a limit this book manages through triangulation, described in the methodological annex, rather than through false claims of direct measurement. Second, the concept risks a subtle romanticization of local knowledge, implying that deeper territorial embeddedness is always and unambiguously beneficial; Chapter 6's honest accounting of the five cases' limits pushes back against this risk directly, showing that the same embeddedness that enables opportunity recognition can also entrench blind spots, parochialism, or resistance to outside expertise that would genuinely help. Third, and most importantly for Part III's comparative ambitions, a concept built from five Moroccan cases requires deliberate testing before it can be assumed to travel — a task this book begins but does not complete.

2.8 How heuristic horizons are transmitted

If a heuristic horizon is genuinely a resource, the question of how it is transmitted — from founder to successor, from long-serving staff to new hires, from one generation of a community to the next — becomes as important as the question of how it is built in the first place. This book's fieldwork identified four transmission channels operating, with varying degrees of deliberateness, across the five cases: apprenticeship-style pairing of experienced and new staff, observed most clearly in Case B's production workshop; documented procedure, the least common channel but present in Case A's claims-processing protocols; oral narrative, the dominant channel across all five cases, in which founders and

long-serving staff recount specific past decisions as a way of transmitting the reasoning behind them rather than only the outcome; and structural embedding, in which an organization's governance rules themselves encode accumulated territorial knowledge — Case D's requirement that board proposals originate from community members rather than staff is a structural mechanism of exactly this kind.

Of these four channels, oral narrative is simultaneously the most pervasive and the most fragile. It requires sustained proximity between the knowledge-holder and the knowledge-receiver, and it does not survive well-documented institutional shocks — staff turnover, a founder's departure, a governance crisis — that separate the two before transmission is complete. This fragility is, this book argues, an underappreciated risk in social-entrepreneurship scholarship, which has tended to study organizational founding and organizational outcomes far more than it has studied the intervening, undocumented process of knowledge transfer between one organizational generation and the next.

Chapter 3

Sustainable Development and Territory: Building the Triptych

3.1 A concept with a short but crowded genealogy

Sustainable development's genealogy is well documented and need not be repeated at length here. The 1972 Stockholm Conference first placed environment and development on the same international agenda. The 1987 Brundtland Report gave the concept its canonical, still-cited definition: development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit operationalized the concept through Agenda 21, and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals extended it into a detailed, measurable global framework running through 2030. What this genealogy shares, across four decades and several institutional reinventions, is a persistent difficulty translating global principle into local practice — a difficulty this book argues territorial cognition helps resolve.

Earlier roots and a two-decade eclipse

The concept's roots reach further back than 1972. Several historians of the idea trace its earliest stirrings to the decolonization movements of the 1950s and 1960s across Asia and Africa, a period during which industrialized countries also began registering the environmental question as a matter of policy concern. A wave of international conferences through the 1960s culminated in the 1972 Stockholm Conference, sustainable development's first formal appearance on a global agenda — before the concept was largely eclipsed for nearly two decades by Cold War geopolitics and the developing-world debt crisis, resurfacing only as environmental and ecological concerns regained prominence through the 1980s. The term itself first appeared in the 1980 World Conservation Strategy, institutionalizing fully only with the Brundtland Report's 1987 publication. Through the 1990s, the concept moved from associations and professional groups into formal state and multilateral policy, with the OECD's 1996 definition explicitly folding in equity and social cohesion alongside environmental concern — a broadening this book's own triptych, developed later in this chapter, directly inherits.

Justice across two dimensions

A reading of the UN framework attentive to its justice content, following Hahn's (2005) influential formulation, identifies two distinct justice dimensions bundled within the Brundtland definition: intragenerational justice, concerned with meeting the needs of the world's poorest populations in the present, and intergenerational justice, concerned with preserving a base level of resources for future generations comparable to what previous generations inherited. Sustainable development, on this reading, requires poverty reduction that does not degrade the environmental base future generations will depend on — a formulation this book's five cases largely satisfy by construction, given their consistent combination of livelihood generation with resource-conscious production practice, documented case by case in Chapter 5.

Productivist and precautionary positions

The sustainability-strength debate developed further below has a companion debate concerning how sustainable development should be pursued in practice. Productivist positions hold that natural capital can, within limits, be substituted through technical progress — more efficient production systems, targeted innovation. Precautionary or ecologist positions counsel a more cautious use of natural resources and resist deploying still-experimental techniques at scale before their consequences are well understood. Haughton (1999) frames the resulting divide as a choice between two possible visions of sustainable development: one centered on human welfare and equity, treating environmental protection as instrumental to human flourishing, and one centered more directly on environmental protection itself, treating human welfare as one consideration among several rather than the organizing objective. This book's five cases lean, on balance and without exception, toward the human-welfare-centered vision — environmental practice is consistently framed by interviewees as serving livelihood and community wellbeing rather than as an independent objective pursued for its own sake — a leaning this book treats as an empirical finding about this specific territory rather than a normative endorsement of one vision over the other.

A brief economic genealogy: environmentalism, the lost decade, and four ecological-economics schools

Sustainable development's economic genealogy runs through a specific sequence of shocks. The Meadows Report of 1972 first demonstrated, using early computer modeling, that natural resources were finite and that continued population and economic growth on the postwar model would eventually exceed the planet's carrying capacity — a warning that helped produce the same year's Stockholm Conference and the UN Environment Programme's founding concept of ecodevelopment. The 1980s then became what development economists still call the "lost decade": debt crisis, financial liberalization, structural adjustment programs across the Global South, and a run of high-visibility industrial disasters — Chernobyl, Bhopal — that together pushed environmental and developmental crisis onto the same agenda for the first time. African GDP fell by roughly 0.39 percent across 1981–1990 even as Asian GDP grew 0.57 percent over the same period, a divergence that gave the sustainable-development concept much of its early urgency in Global South policy circles specifically, well before the term's more familiar Northern environmental-movement associations solidified.

Economic theory's engagement with sustainability subsequently split into what this book, following the literature it draws on, treats as four distinguishable schools. The neoclassical school treats sustainable development as consistent with strong capital substitutability, generating market-based instruments — environmental taxes, tradeable natural-capital valuations — to price environmental cost into ordinary economic decision-making (Pearce et al., 1989). This school's associated natural-capital typology, developed by Roseland (2000), distinguishes critical natural capital, whose loss would compromise the continuity of life itself (the ozone layer, species essential to medical care), from constant natural capital, which should be maintained in some form but could in principle be substituted, and tradeable natural capital, whose value is comparatively low and substitutable without serious consequence — with strong sustainability requiring specifically that critical natural capital be protected from market exchange altogether, while weak sustainability permits even critical capital to be priced and traded like any other.

Ecological economics, by contrast, rejects strong substitutability outright and works instead to reconcile ecological and economic systems more fundamentally (Hull, 2008), dividing further into three sub-schools this book's own environmental-practice reading in Chapter 6 draws on implicitly.

The London School holds that only weak substitution is possible, given the irreducibly critical character of certain natural capital such as biodiversity, and calls for public intervention grounded in monetary valuation of that capital. The industrial-ecology school argues that institutional change — provided it emerges spontaneously from economic actors' own dynamics rather than through state imposition — can generate a genuinely sustainable, continuously renewing economic ecosystem (Destais, 2017). And the American school denies capital substitutability altogether, holding that strong sustainability requires natural capital to remain constant rather than merely protected at the margin. A fourth position, sometimes called conventionalist analysis, treats sustainable development as the emergent outcome of an ongoing, irreducibly plural negotiation among firms, experts, and public officials, favoring democratic debate over any single doctrine's final resolution — a position this book's own account of Morocco's evolving, still-negotiated regulatory environment for social entrepreneurship, discussed in Chapter 4, implicitly endorses.

3.2 Strong versus weak sustainability

The distinction between weak and strong sustainability, though technical, matters for how this book reads its five cases. Weak sustainability treats natural, human, and financial capital as substitutable: a loss of natural capital is acceptable if compensated by a gain in produced or human capital. Strong sustainability denies that substitutability beyond a certain threshold, insisting some natural capital — a functioning aquifer, a biodiversity reserve, an ecosystem's absorptive capacity — has no adequate substitute. The organizations studied in Part II mostly operate, whether or not they use this vocabulary themselves, on a strong-sustainability logic: the exploitation rate of a resource must remain below its regeneration capacity, and emission rates must remain below assimilation and recycling capacity, or the entire model collapses within a generation.

Gender as a cross-cutting dimension

A pattern worth naming before Part II's case portraits make it concrete: three of this book's five organizations — Cases B, C, and D — were founded explicitly around women's economic autonomy, and a fourth, Case A, extends benefits structured to support women members' specific needs, including pilgrimage assistance historically underused by male members traveling alone. This concentration is not incidental to the region's social-entrepreneurship

landscape; it reflects a broader pattern, documented across Moroccan rural-development literature since at least the mid-2000s, in which women's cooperative and associative organizing has served as a primary vehicle through which rural households diversify income beyond agriculture. Reading this pattern through the cognitive-horizon lens developed in Chapter 2 suggests a specific mechanism: women's sustained, daily presence within the household and neighborhood economy of a given territory often generates a particularly fine-grained heuristic horizon regarding local need, trust networks, and latent skill — precisely the kind of situated knowledge this book argues is the foundation of effective territorial social entrepreneurship.

3.3 The fourth, cultural pillar

Alongside the conventional social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development, a fourth pillar — cultural — has gained increasing recognition, particularly in Global South scholarship attentive to the risk that imported sustainability frameworks erase local knowledge systems in the name of protecting them. This book treats the fourth pillar as inseparable from its central thesis: territorial cognition is, in substantial part, cultural knowledge — craft techniques transmitted across generations, governance customs, seasonal calendars, systems of mutual obligation — and a sustainable-development model that ignores this pillar will, by construction, also fail to register the cognitive-horizon mechanism this book is built around.

3.4 Territory as a social construction

Chapter 2 argued that territory functions as a heuristic horizon; this section extends the point to argue that territory is, more fundamentally, a social construction rather than a natural given. A territory's boundaries, its identity, and its perceived resources are produced through the accumulated practices, negotiations, and shared narratives of the people who inhabit and act within it — not simply inherited from administrative maps or physical geography. This is why two adjacent provinces with near-identical physical endowments can develop entirely different social-entrepreneurship ecosystems: the difference lies not in the land but in the accumulated social construction of what that land means to the people who work it.

3.5 Territorial resources revisited: specificity and non-transferability

Territorial resources — in the cognitively mediated sense developed in Chapter 2 — share two properties economists consider unusual. They are specific, meaning their value depends on the particular configuration of actors and relationships that recognizes and mobilizes them, and they are, at least in the short run, non-transferable: relocate the organization to a different territory and the resource often ceases to function as one, even if the physical inputs remain identical. A craft technique that generates income in Marrakech's old medina because a specific network of European buyers has learned to trust that specific workshop's provenance story does not automatically generate the same income if the workshop relocates fifty kilometers away, even though the artisans, the tools, and the raw materials travel with it.

3.6 Local systems of social innovation

The chapters that follow return repeatedly to a structural pattern this section names explicitly: local systems of social innovation. These are not single organizations acting alone but networks — an organization, its public partners, its international cooperation partners, its beneficiaries, and often its competitors turned occasional collaborators — that jointly produce, test, and diffuse innovations addressing a territory's specific development challenges. The five cases in Part II are best read not as isolated success stories but as nodes within such systems, a point the cross-case analysis in Chapter 6 develops at length.

3.6.1 Sustainable development as a stated mission of social entrepreneurship

A substantial strand of the literature treats sustainable development not as an incidental outcome of social entrepreneurship but as its explicit, ultimate objective. Seelos and Mair (2005) argue that social entrepreneurs' overriding aim is to achieve sustainable-development outcomes; Boutillier (2008) goes further, describing social entrepreneurs as, in effect, sustainable-development entrepreneurs, promoting sustainability by resolving a broad range of human, social, economic, and cultural problems and converting them into viable organizations. Entrepreneurs pursuing this dual or triple mission — social, and often also environmental — treat economic activity instrumentally, as the means

through which the mission is accomplished (Venkataraman, 1997), frequently absorbing higher costs from more expensive, environmentally responsible materials as a direct consequence (Choi & Gray, 2008). Sustainability for social entrepreneurship, on Shukla's (2018) account, unfolds as a specific process: identifying a specific problem, designing a specific and durable solution, assessing both the targeted problem and its potential social impact, and building a business model capable of sustaining the enterprise and its double- or triple-bottom-line value-creation process over time — a sequence this book's five cases, read individually in Chapter 5, each satisfy with only minor variation in ordering.

3.6.2 Social entrepreneurship's territorial embedding

A parallel strand of literature addresses social entrepreneurship's relationship to territory directly, and supplies several of the citations this book's cognitive-horizon thesis extends. Social entrepreneurship's territorial embeddedness, Boutillier (2008) argues, is precisely what allows it to observe local socio-economic context closely enough to design responses genuinely adapted to specific social and economic problems. Social enterprises anchored at the local level embody a form of sustainability made visible through their activities, products, and services, each designed around the specific needs of the local population (Akhabbar & Swaton, 2011); social entrepreneurship can additionally serve as a tool for the economic revitalization of disadvantaged territories, with the social enterprise participating directly in the co-construction of what the territory itself has to offer. The social innovations social enterprises carry forward strengthen territorial development by improving human-resource quality of life and a territory's own developmental and regenerative capacity (Dardour, 2012); work-integration initiatives pursued under the social-entrepreneurship banner develop specifically at the territorial scale, organized around sectoral logics of complementarity with existing territorial resources, operating — in Richez-Battesti's (2016) phrase — at a distinctly "mesoeconomic" scale between the individual organization and the national economy.

Social entrepreneurship's local orientation is, on this reading, not incidental but definitional. Seelos and Mair (2005) describe the field as a population of small-scale initiatives whose principal object is meeting human need at the territorial level, contributing to sustainable development by confronting social and economic problems — poverty, social exclusion — while simultaneously protecting the environment and generating the stable revenue streams that sustain

natural-resource perpetuity, all through collectively organized local-development initiatives. Bilan et al. (2017) frame social entrepreneurship as a search process for solutions to locally specific problems that traditional organizations have failed to address, aimed at social change through the modification of local politico-economic realities — with local context itself forming both the source of opportunity and the determinant of the specific tactics and strategies a social-entrepreneurship approach must employ, a formulation Mair (2010) echoes directly and which this book's cognitive-horizon construct, developed across Chapter 2, is built specifically to explain rather than merely restate.

3.7 The triptych: social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, territory

This chapter closes by binding its three concepts into the analytical triptych that organizes the rest of the book. Social entrepreneurship supplies the entrepreneurial mechanism — opportunity recognition and resource mobilization directed at unmet social need. Sustainable development supplies the normative target — value creation that does not compromise the capacity of future generations, understood across social, economic, environmental, and cultural registers. Territory, read as heuristic horizon rather than passive backdrop, supplies the medium through which the first mechanism reaches the second target: it is because social entrepreneurs accumulate and mobilize situated knowledge of their territory that their activity translates into sustainable, rather than merely temporary or externally imposed, development outcomes.

Component	Function in the triptych
Social entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial mechanism: opportunity recognition, resource mobilization
Sustainable development	Normative target: durable value across social, economic, environmental, cultural registers
Territory	Cognitive medium: situated knowledge that connects mechanism to target

Part II puts this triptych to the test. Five organizations, five legal forms, one region: the question is whether the mechanism this chapter has assembled theoretically actually operates on the ground, and if so, what it looks like in practice.

3.8 Reading the triptych against the 2030 Agenda

The 2015 Sustainable Development Goals give the abstract triptych developed in this chapter a concrete institutional yardstick. Seventeen goals, 169 targets, and a monitoring architecture running through 2030 now shape how governments, donors, and increasingly territorial development officials in Morocco itself define success. This book does not treat the SDG framework as a substitute for the theoretical apparatus built across Chapters 1 through 3; a target-by-target compliance exercise would flatten exactly the multidimensional, territorially specific value creation this book is designed to recover. It treats the SDGs instead as a common vocabulary that lets the triptych's abstract claims connect to a global policy conversation without losing their territorial specificity — a connection Chapter 6 makes explicit through a direct case-by-goal mapping.

This closing move matters for the book's audience as much as for its argument. A researcher steeped in proximity economics may find the SDG vocabulary reductive; a development practitioner steeped in SDG reporting may find the proximity-economics vocabulary abstract. Holding both together — territory as heuristic horizon, translated into the register of internationally legible development goals — is precisely the kind of bridging work this book's three intended readerships, named in the Editor's Note, need from a single volume.

3.9 Territorial resilience: a concept sharpened by crisis

The September 2023 earthquake, discussed at several points across this book and treated at length in Part III, has given the concept of territorial resilience — long present in the sustainable-development literature but rarely operationalized with precision — an unusually concrete test case. Resilience, in the general literature, is typically defined as a system's capacity to absorb disturbance and reorganize while retaining essentially the same function, structure, and identity. Applied to the Marrakech-Safi region's social-entrepreneurship ecosystem, this book's evidence suggests a specific, testable refinement: territorial resilience correlates closely with the density and depth of pre-existing heuristic horizons within a territory, because organizations that already possess granular, trusted local knowledge can redirect that knowledge toward crisis response far faster than organizations — however well-resourced — that must build territorial knowledge from zero under the time pressure a crisis imposes.

This refinement carries a policy implication worth stating before Part III develops it further: disaster-preparedness planning that treats territorial social-

entrepreneurship organizations primarily as beneficiaries of post-disaster aid, rather than as pre-positioned assets whose accumulated heuristic horizons can accelerate response, may be leaving a genuine resilience capacity underused. Case E's rapid redirection toward earthquake response, discussed in Chapter 5 and revisited in Chapter 9, is this book's clearest illustration of what activating that capacity looks like in practice.

3.10 Measurement frameworks: what exists and what is missing

International measurement frameworks for social value creation have proliferated over the past two decades — the Global Reporting Initiative's sustainability standards, B Lab's B Impact Assessment underlying B Corporation certification, the Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology, and various donor-specific logframe and results-based-management systems. Each brings real rigor to specific dimensions of organizational performance, and none of the five cases studied in this book uses any of them formally, for a reason worth stating plainly: these frameworks were built primarily for organizations operating in institutional contexts — reliable financial audit trails, stable staff able to complete lengthy reporting templates, donor relationships structured around formal logframes — that most of Morocco's territorially embedded social entrepreneurship organizations do not yet possess, and building toward which would, several interviewees suggested, consume resources better spent on the organization's core mission.

This is not a criticism of the frameworks themselves so much as an observation about fit. The four-register checklist this book proposes in Chapter 6 is offered explicitly as a lighter-weight complement rather than a replacement: something a small cooperative's board can apply in an afternoon of guided reflection, capturing the same social-economic-environmental-political breadth the heavier frameworks pursue, without requiring the audit infrastructure those frameworks assume. Whether this lighter instrument can eventually be validated with the same rigor as its heavier counterparts is, as Chapter 9 notes, a task for future research rather than a claim this book makes for itself.

PART II

The Empirical Terrain

Five organizations, one region, and the heuristic horizons that connect them

Chapter 4

Portrait of a Territory: Marrakech-Safi and the High Atlas

4.0 Research design and methodological choices

The empirical chapters that follow rest on an inductive, qualitative research design chosen deliberately over a hypothesis-testing quantitative alternative. Territorial cognition, as Chapter 2 defined it, is by nature tacit and situated; it resists the kind of standardized survey instrument that quantitative designs require, and it is more likely to surface through open-ended interviews, extended observation, and close reading of internal documents than through closed-ended questionnaires administered at a single point in time. The research therefore followed a case-study logic in Yin's sense: an empirical inquiry investigating a contemporary phenomenon — territorially embedded social entrepreneurship — within its real-life context, using multiple sources of evidence to compensate for the limits any single source would carry alone.

The choice of five cases, rather than a single deep case or a much larger sample, reflects a specific methodological trade-off. A single case would have offered greater depth but no basis for the cross-case comparison Chapter 6 builds its argument on. A much larger sample, drawing on survey instruments rather than interviews, would have sacrificed exactly the granularity — the verbatim testimony, the internal-document triangulation — that lets this book distinguish territorial cognition from a generic, resource-based account of organizational success. Five cases, deliberately varied by legal form, offered what the methodology literature calls literal and theoretical replication: each additional case either confirms the emerging pattern (literal replication) or extends it into a new institutional configuration (theoretical replication), and this book's five cases do both.

Sample: description and selection logic

Case selection followed three criteria applied jointly. First, each organization had to be recognized locally as a genuine success — not a struggling pilot project, but an organization whose durability and impact were independently attested by public officials, cooperative federation staff, or peer organizations before fieldwork began. Second, the five cases together had to span the region's

principal legal forms for social-mission organizations, to test whether the mechanism this book documents operates independently of legal structure. Third, each case had to grant the researcher sustained access — repeat visits, document access, and interviews across multiple levels of the organization — rather than a single gatekept encounter, since the cognitive-horizon construct cannot be assessed from a single interview with a single spokesperson.

Tools of data collection

Three instruments were used in combination. Semi-structured interviews, following the abbreviated protocol reproduced in Annex 2, were conducted with founders, directors, and, wherever access allowed, frontline employees and volunteer board members, in Moroccan Arabic or French depending on interviewee preference. Direct observation extended across production sites, general assemblies, and management meetings, generating field notes later coded alongside the interview corpus. Internal-document analysis covered statutes, financial reports, partnership agreements, and — where organizations retained them — historical correspondence documenting the founding period, offering a check against the retrospective reconstruction interview accounts inevitably involve.

Reliability, validity, and generalizability

Reliability was pursued through triangulation across the three data sources described above, following Yin's (2003) recommendation to document each procedural step of a case study in detail. Interview transcripts were checked against recordings to guard against transcription error, and coding definitions were monitored for drift across the analysis period through continuous comparison between data and codes, following Gibbs's (2007) qualitative-reliability procedures. Internal validity drew on several of Hlady-Rispal's (2002) recommended strategies: triangulating multiple sources of evidence, establishing a documented evidence chain from interview transcripts and field notes, returning draft case summaries to organizational contacts for verification before finalizing the portraits presented in Chapter 5, and conducting systematic cross-case comparison rather than treating each case in isolation.

External validity — the degree to which findings generalize beyond the immediate cases studied — followed Yin's (2003) logic of analytic rather than statistical generalization: case-study findings are generalized to theoretical

propositions, not to a wider population in the survey-research sense. Creswell's (2009) related concept of naturalistic generalization — readers judging transferability against their own prior experience of comparable settings — is the standard this book implicitly invites its practitioner and policy readers to apply when assessing whether the Marrakech-Safi findings speak to their own territories. Whether findings from five Marrakech-Safi organizations generalize beyond that specific territory is treated throughout this book as an open empirical question rather than a settled conclusion; Part III's comparative material with sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world is this book's own first attempt at testing that generalizability empirically, using the logical-replication design Yin recommends for multiple-case research, and the concluding chapter proposes further replication as a priority for future work.

4.1 Geography and demography

The Marrakech-Safi region stretches from the Atlantic coast at Safi to the High Atlas peaks bordering Ouarzazate, encompassing roughly 4.5 million people across a mix of urban, peri-urban, and rural settlement patterns. Marrakech itself, the regional capital, concentrates population, investment, and international visibility; the surrounding provinces — Al Haouz, El Kelaa des Sraghna, Rehamna, Chichaoua, Essaouira, and Safi — carry a very different profile, marked by dispersed rural settlement, thinner infrastructure, and, in the mountain communes of Al Haouz, genuine physical isolation during winter months.

This asymmetry between capital and hinterland is not incidental to the book's argument; it is the precondition for it. A heuristic horizon, as Chapter 2 defined it, is built through sustained territorial presence, and the organizations studied in Chapter 5 are, without exception, organizations whose founders or directors either grew up in the specific communes they now serve or spent years building relationships there before launching any formal activity. None of the five cases is a fly-in intervention; all five are long-presence organizations, and the region's own geography of neglect is what made that long presence necessary in the first place.

4.2 Economic profile: the sectors that carry the territory

Agriculture remains the dominant livelihood across the region's rural communes, organized around olive cultivation, argan production in the western provinces, and increasingly diversified crops supported by the national Plan Maroc Vert. Tourism, concentrated in and around Marrakech but extending

into the High Atlas foothills through trekking and community-based tourism circuits, forms the second major sector, and — as Chapter 5 shows — supplies an unexpected distribution channel for at least two of this book's five cases. Handicraft production, particularly textiles, leather, and ceramics, persists as a third pillar, sustained by both domestic demand and an export market increasingly attentive to ethical sourcing claims.

4.3 Inequality: mapping the pockets of poverty

National statistics place roughly 46 percent of the region's rural population below precarity thresholds as of the mid-2010s, a figure that masks considerable internal variation: peri-urban communes adjacent to Marrakech fare markedly better than the mountain communes of Al Haouz, where distance from paved roads, from hospitals, and from schools compounds into what the region's own planning documents describe candidly as multidimensional exclusion. Health coverage gaps are particularly stark outside the regional capital, where several of the provinces studied in this book historically lacked any permanent mutual-society representation until the organizational expansion documented in Case A.

4.4 Territorial resources by zone

Zone	Dominant territorial resource
Marrakech and peri-urban belt	Tourism infrastructure, craft markets, dense institutional presence
Al Haouz foothills and High Atlas	Agroforestry potential, community-based tourism, seismic vulnerability
El Kelaa, Rehamna, Safi provinces	Agricultural land, mining heritage, weaker service coverage
Essaouira coastal zone	Argan forest, fishing, growing eco-tourism

Read through the cognitive-horizon lens, this table is not simply an inventory. Each resource listed became visible as a resource only once an organization present in that zone accumulated enough situated knowledge to mobilize it — the lake resource near Lalla Takerkoust discussed in Case B, or the fruit-tree potential of Al Haouz's degraded slopes discussed in Case E, existed physically for decades before any organization's heuristic horizon extended far enough to activate them economically.

4.5 Institutional ecosystem: public, private, civil

The region's institutional ecosystem for social entrepreneurship has thickened considerably since the mid-2000s. On the public side, the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), launched in 2005, has financed tens of thousands of local projects nationally and remains, according to several of the directors interviewed for this book, the single most consequential public program shaping the sector's growth. Provincial Directorates of Agriculture (DPA), the National Office for Agricultural Council (ONCA), and the Office Chérifien des Phosphates (OCP), through its territorial-development foundation, appear repeatedly across the case interviews as technical and material partners. On the civil-society side, decentralized international cooperation — German development cooperation (GIZ) prominent among the partners cited in Case B, alongside the United Nations' carbon-finance mechanisms cited in Case E — supplies a second, less visible layer of institutional support that rarely appears in domestic policy accounts of the sector.

A stakeholder map

Stakeholder category	Typical role in the ecosystem
Public institutions	INDH, provincial governorates, DPA, ONCA, communal councils
Technical and financial partners	OCP territorial-development foundation, national cooperative federations
International cooperation	GIZ (Germany), UN carbon-finance mechanisms, bilateral aid agencies
Civil society network	Peer cooperatives, associations, mutual societies, cooperative federations
Beneficiary communities	Members, employees, and their households across the five case territories

This stakeholder map is not static; Chapter 5 shows each of the five case organizations occupying a different position within it, and Chapter 6 argues that an organization's position in this map is itself partly a product of its heuristic horizon — organizations that read their territory accurately tend to attract precisely the partners best matched to their specific needs, a form of institutional self-selection this book's interviews document repeatedly.

4.6 Legal and regulatory framework

Morocco's regulatory environment for social entrepreneurship, described in general terms in Chapter 1, applies to this territory with a few local particularities. The 2017 regionalization of mutual-society governance, discussed at length in Case A, allowed health mutuals to establish provincial representations for the first time, closing a coverage gap that had previously forced rural members to travel to Marrakech for even routine claims processing. Cooperative Law 112-12 has, according to regional cooperative federation figures cited by interviewees, accelerated formation rates in the agricultural sector specifically. And the province of Al Haouz has, since September 2023, operated under an accelerated reconstruction program that has drawn several of this book's case organizations into roles — emergency response, temporary housing coordination, agricultural replanting — well beyond their original mandates, a development discussed further in Part III.

4.7 Infrastructure deficits and their territorial distribution

A territorial portrait would be incomplete without naming, concretely, the infrastructure deficits that give the region's social-entrepreneurship activity its urgency. Road connectivity in the High Atlas foothills remains seasonal in several communes, with winter snowfall periodically cutting off villages the case organizations in Chapter 5 serve. Health infrastructure outside Marrakech itself remains thin enough that Case A's regionalization reform, discussed at length in its portrait, targeted a genuine and previously unaddressed gap rather than a marginal improvement to an already adequate system. Educational infrastructure shows a similar urban-rural gradient, motivating Case D's transport service for rural children and Case E's school-linked tree-planting programs, both designed explicitly to compensate for a public infrastructure gap rather than to duplicate existing provision.

These deficits are not evenly distributed even within the region's rural communes; Al Haouz Province's mountain communes face a compounding disadvantage relative to the flatter agricultural provinces to the east, since altitude and terrain multiply the cost of extending any given infrastructure investment. This geographic compounding is, this book argues, precisely why the region's most effective social-entrepreneurship organizations concentrate disproportionately in exactly these highest-deficit zones: the institutional void, in the terms developed in Chapter 6's theoretical discussion, is deepest where

market and state coverage both face the highest marginal cost of extension, which is also where a territorially literate actor's heuristic horizon does the most work relative to what a generic, cost-driven public or private provider could achieve.

4.8 From territory to organization

This chapter has deliberately worked at the scale of the territory as a whole — its geography, its economy, its institutions, its deficits — before Chapter 5 narrows the lens to five specific organizations operating within it. That ordering is not incidental to the book's argument. Understanding what the five case organizations achieved requires first understanding what the territory itself made both necessary and possible: necessary, in the sense that the deficits documented in this chapter created the specific gaps each organization eventually filled; possible, in the sense that the resources — a lake, a craft tradition, a network of returning graduates, a stand of degraded but replantable slopes — that each organization would go on to mobilize existed, physically, in this territory long before any organization's heuristic horizon rendered them visible as resources. Chapter 5 now turns to that process of rendering visible, organization by organization.

Chapter 5

Five Portraits: Territorial Cognition at Work

The five organizations profiled in this chapter were selected, in the original fieldwork design, to maximize variation in legal form while holding the region constant: a mutual society, an agricultural cooperative, a private social enterprise, a village association, and an internationally registered nonprofit, all active within the Marrakech-Safi region and its Al Haouz extension. Each portrait follows the same structure — organizational profile, the challenge it responds to, its innovation, its governance, its economic model, and the multidimensional value it produces — closing with a short reading of how the organization's heuristic horizon specifically shaped what it was able to see and do.

5.1 Portrait A — A Mutual Society in the Service of Local Health

Legal form: Mutual society (mutuelle) • Sector: Health coverage • Territory: Marrakech-Safi region

Case A operates under a legal framework assembled from three texts: the 1963 Dahir on mutuality, the mutual society's own statutes, and the 2002 law establishing basic medical coverage. Founded in 1963 to provide civil servants with protection against the epidemics and chronic illnesses that marked Morocco's post-independence decades, the organization was, for its first five decades, centralized entirely in Marrakech — members scattered across the region had to travel to the capital for even routine claims. Regionalization in 2017 changed this: three provincial representations, in Rehamna, El Kelaa, and Safi, now bring claims processing closer to members who previously bore the cost, in time and money, of the old centralized model.

The organization's governance follows a representative-democratic structure with three decision bodies: a general assembly of roughly 800 members, an executive board of 8 members elected for renewable terms, and a management office charged with implementing decisions. The general assembly meets at least annually to deliberate financial and oversight reports, set contribution rates, and approve the creation of new services. Beyond its 800 volunteer members, the organization employs a genuinely diverse workforce — secretaries, financial

officers, physicians, IT engineers, technicians, security staff — all of whom receive the same social benefits as ordinary members: health coverage, interest-free housing credit, subsidized travel, and pilgrimage support.

> *« Regionalization let us bring the mutual society closer to members who used to travel four hours just to file a claim. »*
>
> — Executive board member

This single organizational change — moving from centralized to regionalized service delivery — illustrates the cognitive-horizon mechanism with unusual clarity. The decision to regionalize did not originate from a market signal or a top-down state mandate; it originated from the organization's accumulated knowledge of which provinces its members actually lived in and how far they had to travel, knowledge that had built up gradually as the membership base expanded beyond Marrakech itself. The mutual society's regular medical caravans into underserved provinces extend the same logic: they exist because the organization's territorial knowledge told it precisely where coverage gaps were sharpest, information no national dataset could have supplied at the same resolution.

Case A at a glance

Founded 1963 · regionalized 2017 · roughly 800 members · 8-member elected executive board
Three provincial representations added since 2017: Rehamna, El Kelaa, Safi
Services: illness-claim processing, dental and cardiovascular care, rest homes, ambulatory services, interest-free housing credit
International role: leadership of the African Mutual Union; vice-presidency of the World Mutual Union

The organization has also become a regional advocate for the mutualist model at continental scale, its president chairing the African Mutual Union at a moment when, by the organization's own figures, some 82 percent of the African population lacks access to social coverage of any kind. What distinguishes this case is less its scale than its range: an organization that began as a narrow civil-servant health fund now spans clinical services, social assistance, and international advocacy, a range only possible because five decades of territorial presence let it identify needs — and partners — that a newer entrant could not yet perceive.

Financially, the organization's expansion since 2017 rested on a bundle of internal reforms — an enlarged membership base, revised contribution rates, a modernized collection system, and better-informed regional and provincial representations — that together allowed a substantial increase in financial resources without a corresponding increase in member contributions. Interviewees were candid that none of these reforms could have been correctly sequenced without institutional memory of where earlier, less successful attempts at expansion had failed; the organization's own internal archive of prior reform cycles functioned, in effect, as an accumulated heuristic asset in its own right, distinct from but reinforcing the territorial knowledge documented elsewhere in this portrait.

Digitization illustrates the same pattern at a different scale. Before a dedicated IT team — three engineers and five technicians recruited specifically for the task — modernized claims processing, the organization handled some seven to eight thousand case files a year; by the interviewees' own account, that figure had grown to roughly four million files annually within a decade, a transformation that also closed a specific vulnerability the organization's leadership described candidly: paper-based files had occasionally been altered by colluding intermediaries, in one cited instance inflating a 700-dirham claim to 70,000 dirhams before digitization made such tampering far harder to sustain undetected. The organization's accumulated financial surplus — deployed through a national pension fund rather than sitting idle — has since let it propose raising member retirement stipends several times over, a proposal repeatedly delayed by the ministries exercising oversight authority rather than by any shortfall within the mutual society itself, an asymmetry several interviewees pointed to as the clearest illustration of how far the organization's own territorial and financial competence had outpaced the administrative structures still governing it.

A further vulnerability, distinct from the succession risk discussed elsewhere in this book, emerged directly from interviews: national-level reform of Morocco's mutual-society code, under legislative discussion at the time of fieldwork, threatened to bar mutual societies from continuing the kind of direct social-action services — owned clinics, medical caravans, the round-the-clock "Achamil" mobile-care service reachable within a minute's response time — that this book's Chapter 4 and this portrait treat as central to Case A's territorial contribution. Interviewees attributed the proposed reform to private healthcare-sector lobbying against what it regarded as unwelcome nonprofit competition, and described mobilizing civil-society support specifically to defend service

continuity for members in underserved provinces who would otherwise be left dependent on informal, unregulated care. Whatever this specific legislative episode's eventual outcome, it illustrates a structural risk this book's Chapter 6 discussion of cognitive risk anticipates in the abstract: an organization's territorial heuristic horizon can be rendered legally inoperative by a policy change made at a scale far removed from the territory whose knowledge it depends on.

5.2 Portrait B — A Women's Cooperative and the Territorial Economy

Legal form: Agricultural cooperative • Sector: Dairy production • Territory: Commune of Lalla Takerkoust

Case B began as a movement led by rural women engaged in associative work to fight illiteracy and improve the socioeconomic conditions of women in the douar. Recognizing that economic independence was the precondition for everything else they hoped to achieve, the collective founded an agricultural cooperative in 2012 in the commune of Lalla Takerkoust. Seven women make up its founding board; the initial capital came to 4,000 dirhams, supplemented by an annual membership fee of 100 dirhams — waived, in kind, for women who could contribute labor instead of cash. In its earliest years, board members took only travel reimbursement, redirecting all economic surplus to members and salaried staff.

The cooperative today employs 12 people from the local population — 10 full-time, 2 seasonal — and counts 30 cooperators, most of them women. Its governance runs on participatory democracy: a general assembly discusses strategy and reviews accounts, an executive office implements decisions and consults staff during daily and monthly meetings, and what the founders themselves describe as a semi-maternal management style balances reward and correction with genuine consultation, particularly with the staff running the cooperative's shop and workshop, several of whom are being groomed for future board positions.

> *« We created the cooperative to improve the conditions of local women, to help them become independent. »*
>
> — Cooperative director

« I learned sales techniques, marketing, market analysis, and the craft of cheese production, all through the cooperative's training. »

— Employee

What makes this case a near-textbook illustration of the cognitive-horizon thesis is a single strategic choice: the cooperative chose to produce cheese rather than olives, despite olive cultivation being the dominant, and heavily state-subsidized, activity in the surrounding territory. That choice reflected an accurate reading of the local tourism economy that the subsidy structure itself did not capture — a lake nearby, a route frequented by tour operators, and a set of hotels willing to buy from a small, unbranded local producer if the product was distinctive enough to justify the relationship. None of this was visible in any agricultural planning document; it became visible only through the founders' accumulated, situated knowledge of who actually passed through Lalla Takerkoust and what they were willing to buy.

« We work with the tourist establishments, with passing tourists — we built a sales point right on the lake. »

— Cooperative director

International partnerships reinforced rather than substituted for this territorial knowledge. German development cooperation (GIZ) provided technical training in hygiene standards and cheese varieties; the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture supplied goats and facility upgrades; ONCA donated additional livestock and delivered training in administrative management and market analysis; OCP's territorial-development arm contributed soil analysis. Each partnership added a layer of technical capacity, but the cooperative's leadership consistently directed that capacity toward opportunities its own territorial reading had already identified, rather than toward activities the partners proposed independently.

The cooperative's roots run deeper than its 2012 legal founding: an earlier women's literacy association, organized from 2004, had already built the local trust network and organizing capacity the eventual cooperative would draw on, financing its transitional bakery activity — cakes and bread sold near the lake and through Marrakech distribution networks — before formal dairy production began. Canadian development cooperation financed part of the production building itself, on land donated by the commune, while the German association

SOS supplied further technical assistance alongside GIZ's contribution — a genuinely multilateral financing structure assembled incrementally rather than secured through any single grant application. Ten salaried employees, working in two rotating half-day shifts, exemplify this book's knowledge-transmission argument in unusually concrete form: the first-trained shift, having completed the German cooperation's hygiene and production training, possesses skills the cooperative's own leadership describes as irreplaceable, and works full days specifically because that expertise cannot yet be delegated; that first group's ongoing task, alongside production itself, is training the second shift to eventually hold the same competence.

Governance rests on a small, genuinely self-sacrificing core: of the cooperative's seven founding board members, two later relocated to Marrakech for family reasons, leaving five active directors who by their own account receive no salary at all, redirecting what would otherwise be their compensation back into the cooperative's operating capital. Interviewees were explicit that this arrangement was a deliberate choice rather than an oversight — a founding-generation subsidy, in effect, that lightens the cooperative's wage burden during a period when its production capacity is still being built out, including a still-unfinished cold-chain and product-traceability system the cooperative's leadership named directly as its next infrastructure priority for meeting international quality-certification standards.

Case B at a glance

Founded 2012 · 7 founding women · initial capital 4,000 dirhams · 30 cooperators, 12 employees
Core product: goat cheese, chosen over subsidized olive cultivation after reading local tourism flows
Partners: GIZ (Germany), DPA, ONCA, OCP territorial-development foundation
Environmental practice: respects goats' biological rest cycle (October–January), rationed water use, natural inputs only

The cooperative's environmental practice follows the same territorially literate logic as its commercial strategy: it respects the biological rest cycle of its goats, uses natural inputs, and partners with a local association for waste recycling rather than importing an external environmental-management template. The result, by the cooperative's own account and confirmed in interviews with multiple staff members, is a durable double value — economic and social —

generated by an activity that would not have been legible as an opportunity to an outside investor reading only the region's agricultural statistics.

> *« We use labels and a logo for our products, and local and national media help promote them. »*
>
> — Cooperative director

This attention to branding, unusual for a cooperative of this size, again reflects territorial reading rather than generic marketing advice: the founders understood, from years of selling directly to tourists and hotel buyers, that a visible, storied provenance mattered more to their specific customer base than price competition with mass-market dairy producers ever could. The cooperative's recognition through the national Tamayouze award, cited repeatedly by staff as a source of pride, further illustrates how territorial success circulates back into the wider regional narrative about what rural women's entrepreneurship can achieve — a symbolic value this book's four-register checklist in Chapter 6 registers alongside the cooperative's more measurable economic and social outcomes.

5.3 Portrait C — Craft, Dignity, and Disability in the Medina

Legal form: Social enterprise (SARL) • Sector: Handicraft production • Territory: Marrakech medina

Case C was founded in 2013 by a Swiss entrepreneur established in Marrakech's old medina, with the explicit mission of integrating women with physical disabilities into the economic circuit through structured, marketable training. The enterprise today employs 40 people, 38 of them women, working under a management structure built around a majority partner supported by a management team — a shop manager, a production manager, an artistic director — and an administrative cell, with women in disability situations directly involved in weekly management-team meetings and biweekly staff discussions of problems, expectations, and proposals.

> *« Our project targets women in disability situations. We don't treat them as simple laborers; we treat them as beneficiaries. »*
>
> — Founder

« There's a real difference from before. Now I have a decent income, I need nothing, and I'm looking toward the future. »

— Employee, workshop lead

The enterprise's products — embroidered textiles and other handicrafts combining Moroccan techniques (Rbati and Fassi embroidery) with internationally calibrated finishing — sell primarily to a European clientele, supplemented by a smaller Moroccan urban market, financed through a mix of sales revenue, donations, and partner contributions. A skimming pricing strategy targets what the founder calls an "ethical market" of socially conscious consumers, generating enough margin to cover fair wages, flexible schedules, free meals, a childcare service for employees' children, and a formal salary scale ranging from the minimum wage up to roughly 7,000 dirhams depending on production output.

« We were trained in preserving hygiene conditions through the German cooperation partnership. »

— Employee

« The training let me build on what I already knew from daily life. When they taught us communication techniques, I realized these ideas already exist in our culture and religion — the course just reminded us. Now I communicate with others much more easily. »

— Employee, workshop lead

What this case adds to the book's argument is a demonstration that territorial cognition is not only about physical or economic geography; it is also cultural and social. The founder's own account of the enterprise's training curriculum is explicit about this: courses formally introduced as "communication techniques" were, in the employees' own retelling, recognitions of skills and values already present in the local culture, simply given professional structure. The enterprise's heuristic horizon, in other words, extended into the tacit social competencies of the community it served, not merely into its market opportunities.

Case C at a glance

Founded 2013 · 40 employees, 38 women in disability situations · management team meets weekly, staff biweekly
Market: primarily European clients, smaller Moroccan urban segment; skimming strategy targeting the ethical-consumption market
Services beyond wages: free meals, flexible pay, childcare, subsidized housing (symbolic 500 dirhams/month), language and vocational training
Partner: German cooperation (GIZ) for hygiene and production-technique training

The enterprise also runs a zero-waste production process, converting textile offcuts into patchwork products rather than discarding them, and subcontracts part of its embroidery work to five or six local tailors it is gradually integrating directly into the organization. Employees interviewed described the enterprise less as an employer than as an integrated support system — access to CNSS social coverage, orthopedic and psychological care, group and individual coaching — that treated their disability as a condition to be accommodated with dignity rather than a deficit to be managed around.

The founder was candid about a pricing constraint this book's other four cases encounter in milder form: meeting the enterprise's social-benefit costs — fair wages, CNSS contributions, prosthetics, an adapted daily transport service — would require pricing products roughly 20 to 30 percent above what the local Moroccan market will bear, a premium the European market absorbs but the domestic one largely does not, which is part of why European sales remain the enterprise's primary revenue base. A related constraint traces directly to territorial resource limits rather than pricing: natural-fiber textile production does not exist locally at the scale or quality the enterprise requires, forcing raw-material imports despite a deliberate effort toward vertical integration through a newly opened weaving workshop intended, over time, to ease that dependency. The enterprise originally registered as an association, then converted to cooperative form specifically to formalize CNSS registration for its employees — a sequence of legal-form changes driven entirely by the founder's evolving reading of what her workforce's welfare actually required, rather than by any external template.

> *« Now I don't need to ask anyone else for money. I'm independent, I'm a capable woman — I feel like I've accomplished something in life, and I don't wait on anyone. »*
>
> — Employee, formerly a boutique saleswoman before advancing within the enterprise

« The coach taught us how to handle misunderstandings, by talking things through with each other and with management. We don't have the problems between us that we used to. »

— Employee, workshop lead

This last testimony points to something the enterprise's founder herself named directly in interview: that the intervention succeeding here was not primarily technical training in embroidery — most of the women already possessed that skill before joining — but organizational and relational training that let existing skill convert into stable collective enterprise. The distinction matters for how this book reads Case C's contribution to the cognitive-horizon thesis: the founder's outside vantage point, as a long-resident but foreign entrepreneur, let her see an organizational gap — the absence of structures for conflict resolution, task rotation, and collective decision-making — that the women's own, purely local knowledge had not been positioned to identify or address on its own, a genuine instance of external and territorial cognition complementing rather than substituting for one another.

5.4 Portrait D — Young Graduates and the Village They Returned To

Legal form: Association • Sector: Rural social development • Territory: Commune of Aït Faska, Al Haouz Province

Case D crystallizes an initiative led by young rural graduates of Moroccan universities who, rather than joining the exodus toward the cities their degrees might have enabled, chose in 2016 to found an association generating income-producing activities for rural youth in their home commune of Aït Faska, in Al Haouz Province. The association favors a proximity approach, targeting the most vulnerable groups — young rural children and rural women — through sewing and embroidery workshops for young women, transport services for rural children, and a créche for early childhood care.

A ten-member volunteer board — three women, seven men — governs the association by monthly meeting, with meeting frequency rising when the organization's agenda demands it. Decisions follow a participatory process in which beneficiaries submit proposals directly during general assembly sessions. A small salaried staff, including a créche supervisor paid roughly 1,300 dirhams monthly at the standards observed in interviews, complements the volunteer

board, whose members remain committed, unpaid, to strengthening rural women's financial independence.

> *« We don't have pre-designed projects for the villages. The projects come from the communities themselves. »*
>
> — Association coordinator, describing the same participatory ethos observed across the region's most effective organizations

The association funds itself through product sales, modest school fees, and symbolic membership dues from beneficiaries, supplemented by a network of local partners. Its principal activity — training rural women in embroidery and sewing — sits alongside a growing attentiveness to environmental practice, including systematic waste recycling. What makes this case theoretically distinctive within the chapter is its founders' own biography: unlike the other four cases, whose leadership arrived from outside the immediate community (a Swiss entrepreneur, an international cooperation network, a regional mutual-society structure), Case D's founders are the community, returning with formal education but drawing their operational knowledge from a heuristic horizon they had inherited, not built.

Case D at a glance

Founded 2016 · commune of Aït Faska, Al Haouz Province · 10-member volunteer board (3 women, 7 men)
Activities: embroidery and sewing workshops, child transport, early-childhood créche
Financing: product sales, school fees, symbolic membership dues, local partnerships
Distinctive feature: founders are native to the community they serve, inheriting rather than building their heuristic horizon

This inherited-versus-built distinction matters for the book's broader argument, developed further in Chapter 6: it suggests territorial cognition can be acquired through two different pathways — sustained external presence, as in Cases A, B, C, and E, or native membership combined with formal training that adds technical vocabulary to knowledge already held. Case D's founders did not need years of fieldwork to know which families in Aït Faska needed a créche; they needed the cooperative-management and project-design skills their

university education had given them to convert that inherited knowledge into a functioning organization.

Case D's financial model remains the most fragile of the five studied in this book, dependent on a narrow combination of product sales, modest school fees, and a small number of local partnerships that have not yet diversified into the kind of multi-partner network Cases B and E have built over longer operating histories. Board members were candid in interview about this fragility, describing years in which the créche's operating costs exceeded fee revenue and had to be absorbed through informal community contributions rather than any formal reserve. The association's environmental commitments — systematic waste recycling, integrated where possible into its sewing and embroidery workshops — remain similarly modest in scale but consistent in application, reflecting a board culture that treats environmental responsibility as a baseline expectation rather than a funded program requiring dedicated resources it does not yet have.

5.5 Portrait E — Trees, Territory, and Transnational Reach

Legal form: International nonprofit (registered in Morocco and the United States) • Sector: Agroforestry and sustainable development • Territory: Al Haouz Province and beyond

Case E registered as a nonprofit in both the United States and Morocco, founded in Marrakech in 2000 by former volunteers of American humanitarian organizations. Its mission spans ecological agriculture, women's and youth empowerment, and the preservation of plant cover through fruit-tree planting — almond, carob, argan — concentrated in Al Haouz Province, with additional plantings at schools to promote both environmental education and healthier school environments. Farmers who host plantings receive a share of the resulting revenue, a structure designed to align conservation with livelihood rather than treating them as competing goals.

Governance runs through two executive committees, American and Moroccan, that jointly set strategic direction — financing, overall strategy — while operational decisions on target groups, stakeholders, and the scope of specific actions rest with field managers who retain considerable latitude. When a decision affects beneficiaries directly, the organization informs its donors of the planned scope before proceeding, and daily meetings extend the same participatory ethos internally that its programs promote externally.

That daily meeting is, by staff description, a genuinely flat breakfast-table ritual rather than a token consultation: every team member states the day's planned tasks, any decision likely to affect the organization is raised for open discussion—new donor relationships, even a change of office premises, down to soliciting the kitchen staff's opinion on prospective new premises' photographs—and decisions are treated as requiring buy-in from everyone present rather than being handed down. Several staff members interviewed, including senior leadership, had themselves first come to the organization as volunteers, several through the American Peace Corps program, before joining full-time—a recruitment pattern the organization's own staff described as central to its identity, since demonstrated willingness to give one's time to a community precedes and, in the organization's own hiring logic, outweighs formal credentials alone.

> *« There's no direct hierarchy here—yes, there's a president, there are project directors, but decisions are made in consultation. We work like a family. »*
>
> — Project coordinator

Decision-making itself follows a deliberately cost-sensitive filter even for participatory requests: when a community group requests a workshop, staff first evaluate whether the expected number of beneficiaries and the available budget justify the trip and the resource commitment before any commitment is made, a discipline interviewees described as necessary precisely because the organization's participatory ethos could otherwise be exploited by underfunding its own operations. Larger decisions—hiring an outside expert, or any choice affecting the project's overall direction—instead trigger a formal meeting involving donors and the specific staff or contracted specialists concerned, reflecting the same two-tier decision structure Chapter 5's earlier account of Case E's governance described: operational latitude for day-to-day choices, consultation for anything carrying broader consequence.

> *« Our mission is to support community dialogue, to help communities seize opportunities for development and growth. We give them the analysis and the plans they need to build the initiatives that matter to them. »*
>
> — Program director

« We don't have pre-elaborated projects for the villages — the projects come from the communities themselves. We work to produce an inclusive sense in which everyone, women and men, can participate and put forward their ideas. »

— Program director

Case E's economic model directly mirrors the cognitive-horizon thesis at territorial scale. Agriculture supplies roughly 80 percent of local household income across the communes where the organization works, and its intervention logic — soil-resilience planting, water-management training, ecological production techniques — depends entirely on a granular, community-specific reading of which slopes can bear which trees and which villages can sustain which irrigation approach, knowledge accumulated across two decades of continuous presence rather than imported from a generic reforestation template.

« From the Moroccan government we've had support from INDH, a major contributor — they support us in agricultural projects, school construction, decentralization, and agricultural product certification. »

— Program director

« We currently have eleven tree plantations across seven provinces; farmers are paid two to three dirhams per tree, roughly a fifth to a sixth of comparable market rates, because the real return comes later, through the fruit and the carbon financing. »

— Program director

Case E at a glance

Founded 2000, Marrakech · dual US–Morocco nonprofit registration · governed by joint executive committees
Since 2014: over 200,000 trees planted; 11 plantations across 7 provinces as of the most recent count cited by staff
Financing: Moroccan and US government support, INDH partnership, a German social enterprise, UN carbon-credit revenue
Target: one million trees planted by 2030; strategic partnership with Siemens Gamesa on renewable energy

The organization's carbon-credit revenue, reinvested into local communities to sustain climate action, and its INDH partnership on school construction and

agricultural certification place it at the intersection of grassroots territorial work and transnational climate finance — a combination none of this book's other four cases attempts at the same scale. Since the September 2023 earthquake, whose epicenter fell within the province where the organization has worked longest, Case E has been drawn directly into emergency and reconstruction response, a development discussed further in Part III, where the organization's accumulated territorial cognition is tested against a shock its original design did not anticipate.

Field staff interviewed after the earthquake described a specific mechanism worth flagging here, ahead of Part III's fuller discussion: the organization's pre-existing, village-by-village knowledge of household composition, land tenure, and local leadership structures — accumulated for agroforestry planning purposes over two decades — turned out to be directly reusable for emergency needs assessment and temporary-shelter coordination, at a speed no newly arrived humanitarian actor could match. This reuse is, in the terms this book has developed, a demonstration that a heuristic horizon built for one purpose can transfer, largely intact, to an entirely different purpose within the same territory, so long as the underlying relationships and situated knowledge remain current.

5.6 Five portraits, one mechanism: a closing synthesis

Read consecutively rather than separately, these five portraits resist an easy generalization about sector, scale, or funding model, and that resistance is itself the chapter's central finding. A mutual society founded under a 1963 royal decree, a cooperative founded by seven women with 4,000 dirhams of capital, a private enterprise founded by a foreign entrepreneur, an association founded by returning graduates, and an internationally registered nonprofit founded by former humanitarian volunteers: nothing about their legal form, founding capital, or initial scale predicts the durable, multidimensional value each has gone on to generate. What predicts it, this chapter has argued at each turn, is the depth and specificity of each organization's territorial heuristic horizon — the granular, often tacit knowledge of people, resources, and relationships that let each organization see an opportunity invisible to a less-embedded actor, and then direct whatever resources it could mobilize toward that specific, locally legible opportunity rather than a generic template imported from elsewhere.

Three patterns recur across all five cases and anchor the systematic comparison Chapter 6 builds from them. First, every organization's founding

moment involved a specific, nameable act of territorial reading — Case B's founders noticing tourist flows an agricultural planner would not have tracked, Case E's founders learning which slopes could bear which trees only after years of village-level trial. Second, every organization's subsequent growth involved converting external partnerships into territorially directed action rather than territorially neutral compliance — technical assistance from GIZ, OCP, or INDH consistently served an agenda the organization itself had already set, not an agenda the partner brought pre-formed. Third, every organization's most serious vulnerability traces back to the same source as its strength: the specificity that makes its heuristic horizon so effective locally is precisely what makes that horizon difficult to transfer, whether to a successor generation, a new territory, or an entirely new kind of crisis. Chapter 6 now turns this three-part pattern into a systematic, side-by-side comparison.

Chapter 6

Cross-Case Analysis: Heuristic Horizon as an Analytical Category

6.1 Structural similarities across five different legal forms

Read side by side, the five cases display a structural similarity their legal diversity initially obscures. Each organization was founded by an actor — an individual, a collective, a partnership — who had already accumulated years of territorial presence before formalizing any activity. Each identified a specific, previously unaddressed need within its territory rather than adapting a generic program to local conditions. And each mobilized a combination of local and external resources — technical partnerships, international cooperation, public programs — that it directed according to its own prior reading of the territory, rather than allowing external partners to set the agenda.

Organization	Core territorial insight mobilized
Case A — Mutual society	Health coverage, regionalized 2017
Case B — Cooperative	Dairy production, chosen over subsidized olives
Case C — Social enterprise	Craft production for disability employment
Case D — Association	Youth-led rural services
Case E — International NGO	Agroforestry and community development

This table understates the variation in scale — from a 12-employee cooperative to an 800-member mutual society to an internationally financed nonprofit — but it captures the pattern this chapter is built to demonstrate: across radically different scales and legal structures, the mechanism generating value is the same. It is not capital, and it is not legal status. It is the depth of territorial reading each organization brought, or built, before acting.

6.2 Differences and complementarities

The differences between the five cases are as instructive as their similarities. Cases A, B, C, and E were founded by actors who built their heuristic horizon through sustained external engagement — a mutual society's decades of regional expansion, a cooperative's years of relationship-building with tourism operators,

a Swiss entrepreneur's years of medina presence, an American nonprofit's two decades of village-level agroforestry work. Case D, by contrast, was founded by actors who inherited their heuristic horizon by virtue of native membership in the community, then layered formal training on top of it. Both pathways produce effective organizations, but they differ in what they are vulnerable to: built horizons depend on organizational memory and staff continuity, and can be lost if key personnel leave; inherited horizons depend on the founders' continued embeddedness in a community they might, plausibly, eventually leave for opportunities elsewhere.

6.3 Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

SDG	Cases contributing directly
SDG 3 — Good health and well-being	Case A (health coverage); Case C (psychological and orthopedic care)
SDG 5 — Gender equality	Cases B, C, D (women's economic autonomy and training)
SDG 8 — Decent work and economic growth	Cases A, B, C, D, E (stable local employment)
SDG 13 — Climate action	Case E (agroforestry, carbon finance, renewable energy)
SDG 17 — Partnerships for the goals	All five cases (public, international, and civil-society partnerships)

No single case addresses more than three or four goals with real depth, but the cluster of five together covers a striking share of the 2030 Agenda's social and environmental targets — evidence, this book argues, that the multidimensionality of value creation documented in Chapter 5 is not a coincidence of case selection but a structural feature of how territorially embedded social entrepreneurship operates: an organization that reads its territory accurately tends, almost as a byproduct, to identify adjacent needs that a narrower, externally designed program would miss.

6.4 The multiple added value: toward a measurement logic

Each case in Chapter 5 generated value across at least two, and usually three or four, registers simultaneously: social (employment, dignity, capability-building), economic (stable income, market access), environmental (resource-

conscious production, reforestation, waste reduction), and — most visibly in Cases D and E — political, in the sense of strengthening participatory decision-making and community voice in local governance. This book proposes a simple evaluative device for organizations and funders seeking to assess this multiple value without collapsing it into a single misleading index.

A four-register value checklist

Social value: Does the organization build durable capability — skills, confidence, social standing — that beneficiaries retain even if they leave the organization?
Economic value: Does income generated stay substantially within the territory, or does it leak out through externally owned supply chains?
Environmental value: Are the organization's production processes calibrated to the territory's actual regenerative capacity, or borrowed from a generic sustainability template?
Political value: Do beneficiaries participate in setting the organization's priorities, or only in receiving its outputs?

Applying this checklist across the five cases produces a clear ranking by breadth rather than by size: Case E scores across all four registers most explicitly, followed closely by Case B; Cases A and C score strongly on social and economic value with a thinner but present environmental register; Case D scores strongly on social and political value with an economic register still in early formation. None of the five scores poorly on any register — a finding that itself supports the book's central claim, since it would be difficult to explain such consistent multidimensionality without a shared underlying mechanism.

6.5 Observed limits: an honest accounting

Honesty about limitations is, this book has argued from its foreword onward, a condition of taking the cases seriously rather than merely celebrating them. Three limits recur across the interviews. First, financial fragility: several organizations, particularly Cases B and D, remain dependent on a narrow set of partnerships that could not easily be replaced if a single donor or public program withdrew. Second, succession risk: heuristic horizons built by a founding generation are not automatically transmitted to the next; Case C's founder and Case E's original volunteer leadership both represent knowledge concentrations that formal training programs have only partly begun to distribute more broadly within their organizations. Third, scale ceiling: the same territorial specificity

that makes each organization effective locally makes replication elsewhere non-trivial, a tension this book returns to directly in Part III.

6.6 The synthetic conceptual model

The cross-case comparison supports a simple conceptual model, developed at greater length in Chapter 9: territorially embedded social entrepreneurship generates sustainable development value through a three-stage sequence. First, sustained territorial presence builds a heuristic horizon — a stock of situated knowledge about needs, resources, and relationships specific to the territory. Second, that heuristic horizon enables the recognition of opportunities invisible to actors without comparable presence, whether those opportunities are commercial (Case B's cheese), social (Case C's disability-employment model), or environmental (Case E's slope-specific agroforestry). Third, the organization mobilizes external resources — technical partnerships, public programs, international cooperation — but directs them according to its own territorially grounded reading, rather than surrendering agenda-setting to the external partner. It is this third step, more than the first two, that distinguishes the five successful cases studied here from the many externally designed interventions that arrive in this region with comparable funding and comparable good intentions, yet fail to take root.

6.7 Discussion: against the market-failure and institutional-void accounts

Market-failure theory, the intellectual ancestor of the institutional-void framework this section engages, traces to Léon Walras's 1874 general-equilibrium model and its later mathematical formalization through the Arrow-Debreu model of 1954 and Debreu's Theory of Value in 1959, which together demonstrated the conditions under which a market can efficiently allocate goods and services — a Pareto-optimal state in which no redistribution can improve one party's position without worsening another's. Pure and perfect competition, the theoretical benchmark against which market failure is measured, is in practice rarely if ever achieved; Bator's (1958) influential definition treats market failure as the malfunction of an ideal price system meant to sustain wanted activities and discourage unwanted ones. Weisbrod (1975, 1977) and Nelson and Krashinsky (1973) apply this general theory specifically to the social sector, arguing that organizations with an explicit social mission emerge precisely where

market mechanisms cannot price or deliver a needed public good efficiently, and where the individuals needing that good lack the means to pay a market-clearing price for it.

The dominant account of social entrepreneurship's rationale in the Anglo-American literature, traced to Weisbrod's contract-failure theory and later formalized by Nelson and Krashinsky as an institutional-void framework, holds that social enterprises emerge to fill gaps left when both markets and states fail to supply a good or service efficiently. This account is not wrong about the five cases studied here — each did, in a straightforward sense, emerge to fill a coverage gap — but it is incomplete in a way this book's evidence makes visible. The institutional-void framework treats the void as a fixed, objectively given feature of the environment, waiting for any sufficiently motivated actor to notice and fill it. The five cases studied here suggest instead that the void itself is partly constituted by the absence of an actor with the heuristic horizon needed to see it as a fillable gap rather than an intractable condition.

Consider the difference this reframing makes to Case B. A pure institutional-void account would say: rural women in Lalla Takerkoust lacked income opportunities, and a cooperative filled that gap. True, but incomplete — it does not explain why the specific gap the cooperative filled was cheese production rather than the far more heavily subsidized, state-promoted olive cultivation nearly every neighboring producer pursued instead. The institutional void, in other words, was multiply fillable, and which filling occurred depended on the founders' specific heuristic horizon — their reading of tourist flows, hotel buyer relationships, and seasonal demand — not merely on the existence of an unmet need. This book's contribution to the market-failure literature is precisely this move: from void-filling as a generic response to any gap, to void-filling as a cognitively mediated selection among multiple possible responses to the same gap.

6.8 Discussion: social entrepreneurship as territorial imbrication, not territorial location

A second theoretical move this book's evidence supports concerns how social entrepreneurship and territory relate to one another conceptually. Much existing literature treats territory as an independent variable — a context that shapes, moderates, or constrains social entrepreneurship, understood as the dependent variable being explained. The five cases studied here support a stronger claim: social entrepreneurship and territory are not independent and

dependent variables in a causal chain but imbricated processes, each partly constituting the other. The organizations did not simply operate within a given territory; their activity reshaped the territory's own heuristic horizon for the next actor who would come along — Case B's cooperative did not merely use the Lalla Takerkoust lake as a resource, it made the lake newly visible as a resource to other local producers who have since begun similar direct-to-tourist sales arrangements, widening the territory's collective heuristic horizon in a way that will outlast the cooperative itself.

This imbrication has a practical corollary for territorial development policy, taken up again in Chapter 9: because successful social entrepreneurship widens the territory's collective heuristic horizon and not merely its own organizational one, public programs evaluating individual project success by narrow organizational metrics — jobs created, revenue generated — may be undercounting a genuine, if harder to measure, territorial spillover effect.

6.9 Discussion: does territorial embeddedness always correlate with sustainable development outcomes?

The honest answer, drawn from this book's five cases read together, is: not automatically, and not without deliberate organizational effort. Territorial embeddedness is a necessary condition for the mechanism this book documents, but Chapter 6.5's accounting of limits shows it is not sufficient on its own — an organization can accumulate deep territorial knowledge and still fail to convert that knowledge into durable social, economic, and environmental value if its governance is weak, its financing fragile, or its knowledge transmission mechanisms neglected. The correlation this book's evidence supports is therefore conditional: territorial embeddedness correlates with sustainable development outcomes when, and only when, an organization also builds the governance and financing structures needed to act on what its heuristic horizon reveals. All five cases studied here cleared that conditional bar, which is one reason they were selected as cases in the first place; a genuinely representative sample of the region's social-mission organizations, including those that failed or stagnated, would very likely show organizations with comparable territorial depth but weaker governance producing markedly weaker outcomes — a comparison this book's single-region, success-case design cannot itself supply, and which future research, discussed in the General Conclusion, should prioritize.

6.10 Toward a typology of territorially cognitive organizations

The five cases, read together, support a preliminary typology worth stating explicitly, organized along two axes: how the organization's heuristic horizon was acquired (built through sustained external presence, or inherited through native community membership), and how the organization directs external resources once mobilized (tightly to a pre-set internal agenda, or more loosely, allowing partner priorities greater influence). Case A and Case E sit in the built-and-tightly-directed quadrant, having spent decades constructing their territorial knowledge and consistently subordinating partner input to their own strategic reading. Case B sits close to the same quadrant, though with a shorter accumulation period compensated by an unusually sharp initial reading of the tourism opportunity. Case C occupies a distinctive built-but-collaboratively-directed position, in which the founder's outsider heuristic horizon combined genuinely with community input rather than simply directing it. Case D alone occupies the inherited quadrant, its heuristic horizon a birthright of community membership rather than a constructed asset, converted into organizational form through formal training layered on top.

Typological cell	Cases occupying it
Built + tightly directed	Case A, Case E — long external presence, strong internal agenda-setting
Built + collaboratively directed	Case C — outsider founder, genuine two-way knowledge exchange with community
Inherited + collaboratively directed	Case D — native community membership, agenda co-produced through participatory structures

This typology is offered as a preliminary organizing device rather than a finished taxonomy; a larger comparative sample, of the kind Part III's replication agenda calls for, would be needed to test whether these three observed cells exhaust the theoretically possible combinations, or whether other Global South territories reveal organizational forms — an inherited-but-tightly-directed case, for instance — that this book's five-case sample simply did not happen to include.

6.11 From five cases to a wider terrain

Part II closes here, having moved from a territorial portrait through five detailed organizational case studies to a systematic cross-case comparison, discussion of the mechanism against competing theoretical accounts, and a preliminary typology. What remains untested is whether any of this travels beyond the Marrakech-Safi region — whether the cognitive-horizon mechanism this book has documented so thoroughly in one Moroccan territory operates recognizably elsewhere in the Global South, under different legal systems, different colonial histories, and different configurations of market and state failure. Part III turns to that question directly, first through sub-Saharan Africa's own long tradition of territorially embedded mutual and cooperative institutions, then through the Arab world's post-2011 social-entrepreneurship landscape, before proposing, in a final synthesizing chapter, an endogenous model this book hopes future researchers will test, refine, and where necessary discard.

6.12 Entrepreneurial configuration: reading the cases as a system

A final analytical pass, before Part III widens the lens geographically, treats the five cases not as five independent instances of the same mechanism but as a single, interconnected entrepreneurial configuration operating across the Marrakech-Safi territory. This configuration view, borrowed loosely from strategic-management thinking about business ecosystems and adapted here to a territorial social-entrepreneurship setting, asks not only how each organization succeeded individually but how the presence of the other four shaped what each one could become.

Three configuration effects emerge from the interview material. First, a demonstration effect: Case B's directors cited awareness of Case A's decades-long mutual-society model as part of what convinced them formal cooperative structure, rather than informal association, was worth the additional governance burden. Second, a partner-sharing effect: GIZ's technical cooperation, present in both Case B and Case C, appears to have refined its own local engagement approach across the two relationships, with Case C's founder noting that early conversations referenced lessons GIZ staff had already drawn from their parallel work with Case B. Third, a legitimacy-transfer effect: Case E's high international visibility, including its Siemens Gamesa partnership and UN carbon-finance relationship, appears to have made public officials more receptive to comparable,

if smaller-scale, proposals from Cases C and D, according to accounts from staff at both organizations who described public meetings where Case E's example was invoked directly.

None of these three effects would be visible from a single-case study design, and their presence supports a claim this book has made implicitly throughout but can now state directly: territorial heuristic horizons are not strictly organization-bound. They diffuse, imperfectly but genuinely, across a territory's population of social-entrepreneurship organizations, such that the accumulated knowledge of one organization becomes, at the margin, a resource the next organization can draw on more cheaply than it could have built that same knowledge from zero. This diffusion effect is, this book suggests, a further reason territorial concentration of social-entrepreneurship activity — the clustering documented in Chapter 4 around the highest-deficit zones — may be self-reinforcing rather than merely a coincidence of need: successful organizations do not just fill their own gap, they lower the cost of the next organization filling an adjacent one.

6.13 A methodological caveat on configuration claims

This configuration analysis rests on weaker evidentiary ground than the chapter's earlier case-by-case findings, and honesty requires saying so plainly. The three effects described above are drawn from passing references within interviews conducted primarily to understand each organization individually, not from a research design built specifically to trace inter-organizational diffusion. A dedicated network-analysis study, mapping formal and informal ties among the region's social-entrepreneurship organizations more systematically than this book's five-case design allows, would be needed to establish how general or exceptional the three effects documented here actually are. This book offers them as a plausible extension of its core argument, worth testing further, not as an established finding on par with the case-level claims defended earlier in this chapter.

PART III

Comparative Lessons from the Global South

What travels from Marrakech-Safi, and what does not

Chapter 7

Sub-Saharan Africa: Convergent Traditions

7.1 Traditional forms of African social entrepreneurship

Long before the vocabulary of social entrepreneurship reached West and Central Africa through development literature, the region had already built institutions that perform, in substance, the same function this book has attributed to Case A through Case E: rotating savings associations (tontines), village cooperatives, and mutual-aid societies organized around kinship, neighborhood, or occupational ties. These institutions are, in the terms developed in Chapter 2, cognitive-horizon institutions par excellence — their entire operating logic depends on members' shared, situated knowledge of one another's reliability, need, and capacity, information no formal credit-scoring system could replicate at comparable cost.

7.2 Convergences with the Moroccan cases

Three convergences stand out when African traditional forms are read alongside the Marrakech-Safi cases. First, both rely on proximity-based trust rather than formal collateral to mobilize resources — Case B's cooperative extended in-kind labor contributions to members lacking cash capital in a manner structurally identical to tontine flexibility norms observed across Senegal, Mali, and Cameroon. Second, both treat economic activity as inseparable from social obligation — Case A's mutual society's pilgrimage-support benefit and Case B's Aid El Kabir assistance to needy families mirror the redistributive functions West African mutual societies have performed for generations. Third, both depend on intergenerational knowledge transfer to remain viable — Case B's founders explicitly credited older women with teaching the cooperative local production techniques, a transmission mechanism identical to that documented in cooperative studies from Ghana and Senegal.

7.3 Six transferable lessons

- Legal formalization should follow, not precede, an organization's accumulated territorial trust — imposing formal governance structures

too early can crowd out the informal trust mechanisms that make the organization effective in the first place.

- Diversified legal-form ecosystems, as observed across Morocco's mutual, cooperative, associative, and enterprise forms, allow territorial actors to choose the vehicle that best matches their specific accumulated heuristic horizon rather than forcing a single template on all cases.
- International cooperation partnerships work best when they supply technical capacity to a locally set agenda, as in Case B's relationship with German cooperation, rather than defining the agenda themselves.
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer deserves deliberate organizational investment — formal mentorship programs, documented technique transmission — rather than being left to informal chance, since it is this transfer that keeps a territorial heuristic horizon from eroding as founding generations retire.
- Women's economic autonomy initiatives, prominent in both West African and Moroccan cases, function most durably when they build technical skill and market access simultaneously, rather than one without the other.
- Public program design should map its interventions onto existing territorial heuristic horizons — the INDH's demonstrated preference for co-financing locally initiated projects, rather than designing projects centrally, is a transferable institutional lesson African public programs facing comparable rural-coverage gaps could adapt directly.

7.4 African specificities that resist direct transfer

Not everything travels. Morocco's relatively unified national legal framework for cooperatives and mutual societies, itself only fully modernized in 2014, has no equivalent in several sub-Saharan contexts where customary and statutory law operate in genuine, unresolved tension. Land tenure regimes across much of West and Central Africa differ fundamentally from Morocco's, altering how a cooperative like Case B could realistically secure long-term access to the physical resources — grazing land, water access — its model depends on. And the scale of infrastructural deficit in several Sahelian contexts exceeds what even Al Haouz's mountain communes face, meaning some Moroccan solutions calibrated to a moderately connected periphery may simply be premature for territories with far thinner baseline connectivity.

7.5 Two illustrative parallels

Senegal's village-level tontine networks, extensively documented in the microfinance literature since the 1990s, offer perhaps the closest structural parallel to Case B's cooperative model: both rely on a small founding group's accumulated knowledge of member reliability to allocate scarce capital without formal collateral, and both use that trust-based allocation to fund activities — market stalls, small livestock, in the Senegalese case — that a formal bank would consider too risky to finance at comparable cost. The difference lies in scale of ambition: where Case B eventually formalized into a cooperative capable of absorbing GIZ technical assistance and OCP soil analysis, most tontine networks remain deliberately informal, trading the potential gains of formalization against the flexibility and low overhead that informality preserves.

Ghana's susu collectors and associated rural cooperative banking networks offer a second parallel, this time closer to Case A's mutual-society model: both built regional coverage gradually, from an initial urban or semi-urban base, following the same logic of extending an existing trust network outward rather than starting a new one in each new territory. Ghanaian rural banks, like Case A's mutual society, have historically struggled with the same succession and knowledge-transmission risk this book's Chapter 6 identifies as a limit across all five Moroccan cases — evidence, again, that the cognitive-horizon mechanism this book documents is not a Moroccan idiosyncrasy but a pattern with recognizable analogues wherever territorially embedded, trust-based institutions have had to scale beyond their founding community.

7.6 East African cooperative federations and the limits of scale

Kenya and Tanzania's agricultural cooperative federations, particularly in coffee and dairy, offer a third and cautionary parallel, this one closer to Case B's product-choice logic than to Case A's regional expansion. East African dairy cooperatives that scaled successfully in the 1970s and 1980s did so, several agricultural-economics studies suggest, by preserving decentralized, community-level decision-making even as federation-level structures grew — precisely the kind of layered governance this book's Case B has not yet had to test, since its own scale has so far remained deliberately modest. Where East African federations later struggled, the cause was frequently a loss of exactly this decentralized heuristic horizon: as federation bureaucracies grew, decision-making authority concentrated at a level increasingly removed from the

specific villages whose territorial knowledge had made the cooperative model work in the first place. This cautionary pattern deserves direct attention from Case B's own leadership should the cooperative pursue the kind of growth several interviewees described as a long-term ambition, since scaling without deliberately preserving decentralized territorial cognition is, on this comparative evidence, a recurring cause of later stagnation rather than an incidental risk.

7.7 A synthesis: what sub-Saharan Africa confirms and complicates

Taken together, the West African tontine parallel, the Ghanaian rural-banking parallel, and the East African cooperative-federation parallel both confirm and complicate this book's central thesis. They confirm it in the sense that all three sub-Saharan traditions display the same underlying mechanism — trust-based, territorially specific knowledge functioning as a productive resource — that this book's five Moroccan cases display. They complicate it in the sense that the East African federation experience shows the mechanism is not self-sustaining at scale: without deliberate governance design to preserve decentralized heuristic horizons as an organization grows, the same mechanism that enables early success can quietly erode, producing organizations that retain the outward form of territorial embeddedness — local branches, community board seats — while losing the substantive decision-making proximity that made the original model effective. This is, this book suggests, among the most important open questions its five-case, single-region design cannot itself resolve, and a priority candidate for the comparative replication agenda proposed in the General Conclusion.

Chapter 8

The Arab World: A Post-Revolutionary Context

8.1 The post-2011 landscape

Social entrepreneurship's growth across the Arab world cannot be separated from the political rupture of 2011. In Tunisia, Egypt, and beyond, the uprisings exposed the limits of both state-led development models and market liberalization strategies that had, in the preceding decade, widened rather than narrowed regional inequalities. Social entrepreneurship emerged, in this context, not merely as an economic strategy but as a form of civic reconstruction — a way for citizens to rebuild local capacity for collective action after a decade in which formal political channels had, for many, proven unresponsive.

8.2 Comparative snapshots: Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt

Country	Distinguishing feature
Tunisia	Post-2011 cooperative revival; strong donor presence; youth unemployment as central driver
Jordan	Refugee-hosting context shapes social enterprise toward service delivery; strong INGO co-presence
Egypt	Large informal economy; social enterprise growth concentrated in urban centers, weaker rural penetration

The Moroccan cases studied in this book differ from all three comparators in one respect worth naming directly: Morocco's political trajectory since 2011 involved constitutional reform and continuity of monarchy rather than regime change, which produced a more gradual, less donor-saturated evolution of the social-entrepreneurship sector than Tunisia's post-revolutionary landscape in particular. This has costs — slower formal recognition, thinner dedicated funding lines — but also, arguably, a benefit this book's cases illustrate: organizations like those in Chapter 5 built their heuristic horizons over long, uninterrupted stretches of institutional continuity that post-revolutionary contexts, with their governance turnover, have found harder to sustain.

8.3 Islamic economic instruments: zakat, waqf, qard hassan

Islamic economic tradition supplies the Arab world with financing instruments that function, in the terms developed in Chapter 2, as institutionalized cognitive-horizon mechanisms: zakat, the obligatory almsgiving that redistributes a fixed share of wealth to defined categories of need; waqf, the endowment structure that has funded charitable, religious, and educational institutions across the Muslim world for over a millennium, often specifically tied to a defined territory or community; and qard hassan, the interest-free benevolent loan. None of the five Moroccan cases in this book operates as an explicitly Islamic financial institution, but several draw on adjacent logic — Case A's mutual-aid contributions during religious festivals, Case C's flexible salary structure independent of daily sales performance — that resonates with the same redistributive tradition zakat and qard hassan formalize elsewhere in the region.

8.4 Shared perspectives and shared challenges

Across the Arab world, social entrepreneurship organizations report a common cluster of challenges that the Marrakech-Safi cases also encountered in modified form: access to patient, non-extractive capital; regulatory frameworks still calibrated to either pure charity or pure commerce, with limited legal space for hybrid missions; and a persistent gap between urban, internationally connected social-entrepreneurship ecosystems and rural areas where need is often most acute but institutional infrastructure thinnest. The territorial-cognition framework this book proposes offers one partial response to the last of these: rural social entrepreneurship succeeds, this book's evidence suggests, not by importing urban models wholesale but by building — or, as in Case D, activating — situated knowledge that only sustained rural presence can generate.

8.5 Gulf philanthropic capital and the risk of a thin heuristic horizon

A final comparative note concerns the growing role of Gulf-based philanthropic and sovereign development capital across North Africa and the wider Arab world, including in Morocco's own social-entrepreneurship sector. Such capital brings real advantages — scale, patience relative to commercial investors, and an increasing sophistication in impact measurement. It also brings a risk this book's cognitive-horizon framework makes visible with unusual clarity: large capital flows deployed through centralized, headquarters-based decision

processes can, if not deliberately designed otherwise, bypass the territorially embedded organizations best positioned to direct that capital effectively, in favor of larger, more visible, but less territorially literate implementing partners. The German cooperation model observed in Cases B and C — technical capacity supplied to a locally set agenda — offers, this book suggests, a more transferable template for Gulf philanthropic engagement than a purely capital-led model would, precisely because it preserves the territorially embedded organization's agenda-setting authority rather than substituting an external one.

8.6 A global comparative lens: sustainable tourism as a Global South niche

Al Haouz Province, home to Case E's agroforestry work and to several of the region's community-based tourism initiatives, offers a useful bridge between this chapter's Arab-world focus and a wider set of Global South comparators worth naming briefly. Grameen Bank's microfinance model in Bangladesh, Café Femenino's fair-labor coffee cooperatives in Guatemala, Selco India's rural solar-energy ventures, and Nepal's community forestry programs all share a structural feature with this book's five cases: each tailors its intervention to specific local conditions that only sustained, community-level engagement could reveal, rather than deploying a standardized template across dissimilar territories. Fairtrade International's work across Africa and Latin America and Kenya's Green Belt Movement extend the same pattern into explicitly justice-oriented registers, challenging extractive supply-chain structures and combining reforestation with women's empowerment respectively — the latter a close conceptual cousin of Case E's own tree-planting model.

Companion research on Al Haouz Province's own sustainable-tourism sector, conducted by the author alongside a research partner, documents this pattern directly in the same territory this book's Case E operates within. That research identifies three recurring goals among the province's tourism-focused social enterprises — community empowerment through skill development and job creation, environmental conservation through eco-friendly practice and awareness campaigns, and cultural preservation through heritage protection and cross-cultural exchange — pursued through tactics that closely mirror this book's own findings: collaborative partnerships across community, government, and NGO actors; capacity-building and training programs; inclusive, participatory decision-making; and value-chain integration that keeps local artisans and producers central to the benefit-sharing structure rather than peripheral to it.

Three institutional enablers recur across that companion research in ways this book's own case material corroborates. Stakeholder participation — direct community involvement in decision-making, cultivated shared responsibility among tourists themselves, and holistic inclusion of social and environmental goals together — functions as a precondition for legitimacy, echoing Case E's own emphasis on letting projects originate from the communities themselves rather than arriving pre-designed. Diversified access to funding — grants, private investment, and community-level financial support reaching eco-lodges, handicraft cooperatives, and educational programs alike — mirrors the multi-partner financing structures documented across Cases A, B, C, and E in Chapter 5. And supportive institutional frameworks — regulatory policy aligning tourism activity with sustainability goals, and active government-NGO collaboration ensuring compliance without stifling initiative — echo this book's own account, in Chapter 4, of Morocco's evolving but still-maturing regulatory environment for social-mission organizations. Read together, the Al Haouz tourism findings and this book's five core cases converge on the same underlying claim: sustainable value in a Global South territory tends to emerge where sustained local engagement — this book's heuristic horizon, in different vocabulary — precedes and shapes institutional and financial support, rather than the reverse.

8.7 Closing the Arab-world comparison

Chapter 7 and this chapter together suggest a specific, testable claim about where the cognitive-horizon mechanism this book documents is likely to operate most visibly across the wider Global South: not necessarily where institutions are strongest or funding most abundant, but where territorial actors have had the longest uninterrupted stretch to accumulate situated knowledge without the governance turnover, mass displacement, or abrupt institutional rupture that erodes it. Morocco's own post-2011 political continuity, discussed in section 8.2, and the multi-decade operating histories of Cases A and E both fit this pattern. So, in a different register, does the tontine tradition discussed in Chapter 7, whose effectiveness depends on exactly the kind of stable, long-term community membership that political or environmental disruption most directly threatens. Part III's final chapter now turns this observation into a positive proposal: an endogenous model of territorially cognitive social entrepreneurship, built from the Moroccan material but framed, deliberately, for testing well beyond it.

Chapter 9

Toward an Endogenous Model

9.0 International evidence for the mechanism

Before proposing this book's own endogenous model, it is worth situating the Marrakech-Safi evidence within a wider international literature documenting social entrepreneurship's contribution to territorial sustainable development across other Global South settings — a literature this book has drawn on sparingly elsewhere but which, read as a whole, corroborates the cognitive-horizon mechanism from a strikingly broad geographic spread. A Nicaraguan social enterprise's success connecting local producers to international markets (Alter, 2007), Indonesian ecotourism enterprises that raise traveler environmental awareness while strengthening local economic wellbeing (Situmorang & Mirzanti, 2012), and Brazilian waste-recycling cooperatives that simultaneously address unemployment, social exclusion, and environmental degradation (Fischer et al., 2010; Fisher & Comini, 2012) each display the same triple economic-social-environmental value creation this book's Chapter 6 documents across its own five cases, achieved through the same underlying logic: activity calibrated tightly to what a specific territory's population actually needs and can sustain, rather than to a standardized external template.

A Nigerian social enterprise providing durable prosthetics to people with physical disabilities, improving their labor-market mobility and independence (Moses & Olokundun, 2014), parallels this book's own Case C directly, down to the shared emphasis on dignity-preserving employment rather than charity. Indian and Peruvian clean-energy social enterprises — one generating electricity from condensed rice biomass, the other extending clean energy access to underserved populations (Schukla, 2018; Alter, 2007) — parallel Case E's environmental-livelihood integration. And a study of a Bengali social enterprise (Seelos & Mair, 2005) showing that women's education alone could shift an entire local social context, enabling vulnerable-group inclusion and viable economic activity while protecting the environment, offers a striking international parallel to the mechanism this book documents in Case D, where inherited local knowledge, formalized through women-centered training, produced comparable multidimensional change.

A Moroccan precedent worth naming directly

Closest to home, Elkandoussi et al.'s (2011) case study of a Moroccan cooperative found that the organization generated employment and produced goods and services through the responsible mobilization of natural resources, while raising members' own awareness of environmental preservation — socially, the cooperative developed local human resources through appropriate training and education while diffusing values of cooperation, solidarity, and democracy, and economically and socially secured wellbeing through the inclusion of marginalized individuals and the reduction of unemployment, poverty, and discrimination. This 2011 study, predating this book's own fieldwork by roughly a decade, documents precisely the same triple value-creation pattern this book's Chapter 6 formalizes into a four-register checklist — evidence that the mechanism this book calls territorial heuristic horizon has been visible, if not yet named as such, in Moroccan cooperative research for well over a decade, and that this book's contribution is best understood as naming, theorizing, and extending an empirical pattern other Moroccan researchers had already begun to document rather than discovering it from nothing.

9.1 Six principles of territorially cognitive social entrepreneurship

Six principles for an endogenous model

Presence precedes intervention: durable territorial presence, sustained over years rather than project cycles, is the precondition for accurate opportunity recognition.
Knowledge is co-produced, not extracted: the organizations studied here built their heuristic horizons through genuine two-way exchange with beneficiaries, not one-way needs assessment.
Legal form follows function, not the reverse: the diversity of forms observed across Cases A through E shows that no single legal template is necessary for territorial cognition to operate effectively.
External partnerships amplify a locally set agenda: the most durable partnerships observed in this book's cases supplied technical or financial capacity to priorities the organization itself had already identified.
Multidimensional value is the norm, not the exception: organizations that read their territory accurately tend to generate social, economic, and environmental value simultaneously, almost as a structural byproduct.
Heuristic horizons require deliberate transmission: without active investment in mentorship and knowledge transfer, the situated knowledge a founding generation builds can be lost within a single leadership transition.

Each of these six principles deserves a brief word on how it was violated, not just observed, somewhere in this book's broader fieldwork experience beyond the five headline cases — because principles are sharpened as much by their exceptions as by their confirmations. Organizations the author encountered during fieldwork but did not select as core cases, precisely because they had not yet cleared the effectiveness bar Annex 1 describes, illustrate the first principle's violation clearly: several had received substantial project funding before their leadership had spent meaningful time in the specific communes they proposed to serve, and follow-up conversations, where possible, suggested exactly the kind of opportunity misrecognition this book's theoretical chapters predict. The second principle's violation is subtler and appears even among otherwise successful organizations: Case A's own early history, by the organization's own retrospective account, included a period in which centralized decision-making in Marrakech continued well after provincial membership had grown large enough to warrant genuine two-way consultation, a lag the 2017 reform eventually corrected but which cost the organization years of avoidable friction with provincial members in the interim.

9.2 What travels and what does not

Element of the Moroccan model	Transferability
Participatory needs identification	Travels — this book's evidence suggests the mechanism, not the specific finding, generalizes
Diversified legal-form ecosystem	Travels with adaptation to each country's own legal architecture
Technical partnership calibrated to local agenda	Travels — the principle of local agenda-setting is portable even where specific partners differ
Specific product/resource choices (e.g. cheese over olives)	Does not travel directly — the resource mix must be re-derived from each territory's own heuristic horizon
Specific legal-regulatory calibration	Does not travel — dependent on each country's specific cooperative, mutual-society, and associative law

9.3 Recommendations by actor type

This research offers public and institutional actors an alternative reading of social entrepreneurship's contribution to sustainable development — one centered on territorial process rather than on aggregate output statistics. It lets public officials appreciate the genuine diversity of the organizational configurations territorial social entrepreneurship has developed locally, and its demonstrated capacity to mobilize multiple resources and multiple categories of actor simultaneously, which should inform how the state designs public policy and co-constructs local action through a more explicitly partnership-based logic, particularly where sustainable-development implementation is concerned. Given its territorial proximity and demonstrated dynamism, social entrepreneurship functions as a key partner in this pursuit — a finding that should encourage decentralized public actors to open more fully toward the local social-entrepreneurship fabric, strengthening partnership ties and refining the incentive programs already in place rather than treating that fabric as a passive beneficiary of top-down programming. Realizing sustainable territorial development at scale requires building institutional platforms and flexible exchange mechanisms among stakeholders — an open knowledge network accessible to all local actors — capable of sustaining the many local initiatives already working toward sustainable-development objectives across the region.

For territorial development officials

Design public co-financing instruments, following the INDH model, that reward locally initiated projects over centrally designed ones, and invest specifically in the intergenerational knowledge-transfer mechanisms this book has shown to be fragile — mentorship stipends, documented technique transmission programs — rather than funding only physical infrastructure or working capital.

For cooperative federations and mutual-society networks

Build formal channels through which younger cooperatives and associations, particularly those founded by returning graduates on the Case D model, can access the accumulated territorial knowledge of longer-established organizations like Case A, shortening the multi-year accumulation period this book's cases needed to build their heuristic horizons from scratch.

For international donors and cooperation agencies

Resist the temptation to arrive with a predefined project template; the evidence in this book indicates that partnerships succeed in direct proportion to how much agenda-setting authority they leave with the territorially embedded organization, as German cooperation did in Cases B and C and as UN carbon financing did in Case E.

For researchers

Treat territorial cognition as a measurable, comparable construct rather than an unstructured qualitative residue — the four-register value checklist proposed in Chapter 6 offers one starting point, but this book's single-region design invites replication across other Global South territories to test how far the cognitive-horizon mechanism generalizes beyond Morocco.

For social entrepreneurs and organizational founders

Invest deliberately, and early, in the knowledge-transmission channels described in Chapter 2 — apprenticeship pairing, documented procedure, oral narrative practice, structural embedding — rather than treating succession planning as a problem to be addressed only once a founder's departure becomes imminent. The fragility this book's Chapter 6 documents across all five cases is not an inevitable cost of territorial embeddedness; it is, this book argues, a manageable risk that most organizations currently manage only informally, if at all.

9.4 Extending the model: post-mining and post-disaster territories

The author's continuing research since the original doctoral defense has tested the cognitive-horizon framework against two territorial conditions the original five cases did not directly confront: post-mining decline and post-disaster reconstruction. Both extensions are preliminary, reported here as a direction for future work rather than as fully documented cases on par with Chapter 5, but both are consistent enough with this book's central argument to warrant inclusion.

Youssoufia and Benguerir, Morocco's principal phosphate-mining territories, present a structurally different challenge from anything in this book's five original cases: rather than an organization building a heuristic horizon from a

position of relative territorial stability, these territories confront the erosion of a heuristic horizon that had been built around a single dominant industry now in structural transition. Preliminary fieldwork suggests that the organizations best positioned to lead economic diversification in these territories are, consistent with this book's central thesis, not the newest or best-funded entrants but those with the deepest pre-existing territorial knowledge — often former mining-sector cooperatives and associations repositioning accumulated relationships and technical knowledge toward new sectors, rather than sector-agnostic development agencies parachuted in to manage the transition.

Al Haouz Province's post-earthquake reconstruction, briefly noted in Case E's portrait and in Annex 5, presents the opposite condition: a sudden, catastrophic shock to physical infrastructure that left much of the territory's accumulated heuristic horizon — the situated knowledge held by long-present organizations and communities — intact even where buildings did not survive. Early observation from the reconstruction period suggests this distinction matters enormously for response effectiveness: organizations like Case E, whose heuristic horizon predated the earthquake, have been able to redirect that horizon toward emergency and reconstruction needs far faster than newly arrived humanitarian actors, echoing the mechanism described in Chapter 5's discussion of Case E's post-2023 role. If this pattern holds under more systematic future study, it would suggest that disaster-response planning in territories with strong pre-existing social-entrepreneurship ecosystems should treat those ecosystems as a reconstruction asset to be activated quickly, rather than bypassed in favor of externally staffed emergency operations that must rebuild territorial knowledge from zero under time pressure that does not allow for it.

General Conclusion

What we found

This book set out to answer a single question: how does social entrepreneurship contribute to the sustainable development of a territory, and what role does territorial knowledge play in shaping that contribution? The answer, built across nine chapters and five case portraits, is that territory functions not as a passive stage but as a heuristic horizon — a bounded field of situated knowledge that determines what an organization can perceive as a problem, imagine as a solution, and mobilize as a resource. Every one of the five organizations studied here, regardless of legal form, scale, or sector, generated its social, economic, and environmental value through the same underlying mechanism: sustained territorial presence built a stock of situated knowledge, that knowledge enabled the recognition of opportunities invisible to less-embedded actors, and the organization then directed external resources — partnerships, financing, technical support — according to its own territorially grounded agenda rather than an externally imposed one.

What this says about development in the Global South

The implication extends beyond social entrepreneurship narrowly defined. Development interventions across the Global South have long struggled with a recurring failure mode: well-funded, well-intentioned projects that do not take root, precisely because they treat territory as an inventory of resources to be surveyed and deployed rather than as a cognitive structure that must be read, over time, by actors embedded within it. The five cases in this book, and the comparative material from sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world in Part III, suggest a more general proposition — one future research should test well beyond Morocco: development durability correlates less with funding volume than with the depth of heuristic horizon the implementing actor has built, or can access, within the specific territory where the intervention occurs.

This proposition, if it holds under further testing, would carry a specific and somewhat uncomfortable implication for donor practice: due-diligence processes calibrated to financial and governance risk, now standard across international development finance, may need a companion instrument calibrated to cognitive risk — the risk that an otherwise well-governed, well-financed implementing partner simply does not yet possess the territorial knowledge its proposal

assumes. Chapter 6's four-register value checklist and this book's broader case-comparison apparatus are offered as an early, admittedly rough, contribution toward building that companion instrument, not as a finished product ready for immediate institutional adoption.

Limits of the research

Five cases in one region cannot establish a universal law, and this book has tried not to overclaim. The sample, while deliberately diversified by legal form, remains geographically concentrated in Marrakech-Safi and its Al Haouz extension; a comparable study in, for instance, Morocco's Rif region or its southern provinces might surface different mechanisms alongside the ones documented here. The researcher's own positionality — Moroccan, trained partly abroad, embedded in the region professionally but not as a lifelong resident of the specific communes studied — inevitably shaped what became visible during fieldwork and what did not. And the theoretical apparatus itself, built substantially from a francophone proximity-economics literature not always in dialogue with Anglophone social-entrepreneurship scholarship, may require further translation work before it travels comfortably into other academic traditions.

Several further limits deserve equally direct acknowledgment. Theoretically, this book leans on a specific combination of classical entrepreneurship theory and market-failure theory; a fuller account might additionally draw on crisis theory, which explains the dominant system's recurring breakdowns rather than only the gaps that theory leaves unfilled. This book also deliberately excludes institutional social entrepreneurship — state-initiated entrepreneurial action targeting the same social, economic, and environmental challenges this book's five civil-society and private cases address — a genuinely different configuration this book's design was not built to capture, and one worth a dedicated study in its own right. The political and cultural dimensions of social entrepreneurship's territorial contribution, while discussed at several points across Parts II and III, remain less developed than the social, economic, and environmental dimensions this book's four-register checklist treats with more analytical precision — a gap the book's own honesty requires naming rather than papering over.

Methodologically, this book shares the generalization limits common to any multiple case-study design, compounded by a genuine selection bias worth stating plainly: all five cases were chosen because they were locally recognized successes, which means this book's evidence base excludes the organizations that struggled

or failed under comparable conditions — precisely the comparison that would let future research establish how much of the difference between success and stagnation actually traces to territorial cognition, versus other factors this book's design cannot isolate. A related risk, documented in prior research on comparable organizations sometimes termed "development brokers" — nongovernmental actors who direct international cooperation financing disproportionately toward their own staff rather than the populations that financing was intended to reach — was not something this book's fieldwork was designed to detect systematically, though nothing in the interview or document material collected suggested it was present in any of the five cases studied. Confidentiality commitments made to interviewees, honored throughout by preserving anonymity, further limited how fully certain organizational details could be triangulated against external sources, and access to fully audited internal financial data remained uneven across the five organizations, constraining the precision of Annex 8's financial summary.

What remains to be done

- A systematic, comparative test of the cognitive-horizon mechanism across a larger sample of Global South territories, ideally spanning multiple countries and legal traditions, to establish how far the Marrakech-Safi findings generalize.
- A longitudinal study of how the five organizations profiled here — and particularly Case E, now central to Al Haouz's post-earthquake reconstruction — adapt their accumulated heuristic horizons to a shock their founding design did not anticipate.
- Development of a validated, quantitative instrument for measuring territorial heuristic horizon directly, building on the four-register value checklist proposed in Chapter 6, so that funders and policymakers can assess this resource with the same rigor they already apply to financial and human capital.
- A comparative study of the East African cooperative-federation scaling pattern flagged in Chapter 7, testing directly whether growth beyond a founding community reliably erodes decentralized territorial cognition, and if so, what governance designs might prevent that erosion.
- A dedicated study of Case D's inherited-cognitive-horizon pathway against a larger sample of graduate-founder rural associations, to establish whether the built-versus-inherited distinction proposed in Chapter 6's typology holds beyond this book's single illustrative case.

- A sequential mixed-methods extension, combining this book's qualitative case material with a quantitative survey of a larger organizational sample, to strengthen the generalizability limits this book's own methodology openly acknowledges.
- A dedicated study of institutional social entrepreneurship — entrepreneurial action initiated directly by the state rather than by civil-society or private actors — which this book's five-case design deliberately excluded and which may operate through a different, or differently weighted, cognitive mechanism.
- A sector-specific extension of this book's comparative method, examining territorial heuristic horizons within a single sector — agriculture, handicraft, or tourism — across multiple organizations, to test whether sectoral specificity shapes the mechanism this book has so far studied only across sectors.

This book closes, then, not with a settled theory but with a proposition sturdy enough, its author hopes, to be tested, contested, and improved by other researchers working on comparable terrains across the Global South. Territory, read as a heuristic horizon rather than a passive backdrop, is where this proposition begins — and where the next stage of this research program will continue.

Glossary

Heuristic horizon

The bounded field of situated knowledge — of people, resources, risks, and relationships — that sustained territorial presence makes visible to an actor and that absence renders invisible or illegible. Central analytical category of this book, developed in Chapter 2.

Territorial cognition

The accumulated, often tacit, collectively held knowledge a population or organization builds about its own territory through sustained presence; the substance that fills a heuristic horizon.

Proximity economics

A school of territorial development economics, associated with Pecqueur, Gilly, and Benko among others, that treats space as a site of resource creation rather than a passive container of production factors, distinguishing geographic proximity (physical closeness) from organizational proximity (shared networks and codes).

Cognitive resources

A term borrowed from Plumecocq (2012) denoting situated territorial knowledge treated analytically as a resource comparable to capital or labor: something accumulated, transmitted, depleted, and mobilized to create value.

Territorial construction

Pecqueur's concept describing territory as the product of collective negotiation, compromise, and learning among its actors, rather than a natural or administrative given.

Specific territorial resources

Resources whose value depends on the particular local configuration of actors that recognizes and mobilizes them, and which typically do not transfer intact to a different territory even when the physical inputs remain identical.

Social entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial action, by individuals or organizations, directed at unmet social need left unaddressed by both market and state, combining opportunity-seeking behavior with a mission of social rather than purely private value creation.

Social and solidarity economy (SSE)

The institutional sector defined by legal and governance criteria — cooperatives, mutual societies, associations — bound by principles of limited profit distribution and democratic governance; overlaps with but is not identical to social entrepreneurship, which is defined by mission rather than legal form.

Capability approach

Amartya Sen's framework for evaluating development in terms of the real freedoms — capabilities — people have to live lives they value, rather than by income or resource endowment alone; this book extends the concept to treat territorial cognition as a collective capability.

Multiple added value / plus-value multiple

The simultaneous generation of social, economic, environmental, and (in several of this book's cases) political value through the same organizational activity, documented as a structural feature of territorially embedded social entrepreneurship in Chapter 6.

Weak versus strong sustainability

Weak sustainability treats natural, human, and financial capital as substitutable; strong sustainability denies substitutability beyond a threshold, insisting some natural capital has no adequate substitute. Most cases in this book operate, in practice, on a strong-sustainability logic.

Local system of social innovation

A network — an organization together with its public, cooperation, and community partners — that jointly produces, tests, and diffuses innovations addressing a territory's specific development challenges, rather than a single organization acting alone.

Institutional void / joint failure

The gap left when both market mechanisms and state provision fail to meet a given social need, historically treated in the social-entrepreneurship literature as the field's founding rationale (Weisbrod; Nelson & Krashinsky).

Regionalization (mutuality)

In the Moroccan mutual-society sector, the 2017 reform allowing mutual societies to establish provincial representations rather than operating from a single centralized office, discussed at length in Case A.

Zakat, waqf, qard hassan

Islamic economic instruments discussed in Chapter 8: obligatory redistributive almsgiving (zakat), religious or charitable endowment (waqf), and interest-free benevolent lending (qard hassan), each functioning as an institutionalized mechanism of territorially or communally targeted redistribution.

Territorial imbrication

This book's proposed refinement of the standard territory-as-context view of social entrepreneurship: the claim, developed in Chapter 6, that social entrepreneurship and territory are not independent and dependent variables but mutually constitutive processes, each reshaping the other over time.

Boschma's proximity typology

A five-part taxonomy — geographic, cognitive, organizational, social, and institutional proximity — used in Chapter 2 to situate this book's cognitive-horizon construct within the wider proximity-economics literature.

Functionings and capabilities

Amartya Sen's paired concepts distinguishing what a person or territory actually does or possesses (a functioning) from the real freedom to convert that possession into value (a capability); Chapter 2 extends the distinction to territorial resources.

Cognitive risk

A term this book proposes in its General Conclusion for the risk that an otherwise well-governed, well-financed organization lacks the territorial knowledge its intervention assumes — a risk this book argues deserves the same due-diligence attention international donors already give to financial and governance risk.

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Annexes

Annex 1 — Note on Method

Epistemological positioning

The research underlying this book adopts a constructivist epistemological stance: territorial social entrepreneurship is treated as a socially constructed phenomenon, accessible through the subjective, contextual knowledge that emerges from the researcher's engagement with local actors rather than through an observer-independent set of facts awaiting discovery. Constructivism, on this reading, does not designate a single school so much as an alternative ontological stance, centered on lived experience and the researcher's relationship with the actors studied. Validity, within this paradigm, rests on the adequacy and communicability of the knowledge produced rather than on correspondence to an independently verifiable external reality — appropriate, this book argues, to a still-contested, still-emergent field where no consensus definition yet exists and where understanding, rather than measurement, is the more urgent scholarly task.

Reasoning: an iterative hypothetico-deductive process

The research followed a hypothetico-deductive reasoning process, understood not as a single linear pass from theory to test but as an iterative back-and-forth between empirical fieldwork and the theoretical concepts used to interpret it, in which the research design itself — interview guides, the central research question, even the theoretical framework in use — remained open to revision as fieldwork proceeded. This iterative process unfolds across three analytically distinct steps: abduction, in which empirical observation is connected to a general rule through a research question; deduction, in which general rules generate the specific hypotheses to be tested; and induction, in which general rules are in turn derived from what the fieldwork observes. This book's own theoretical reframing — building the cognitive-horizon proposition from material originally collected for a differently framed doctoral thesis — is itself a further iteration of this same process, an induction performed years after the original fieldwork closed.

Why qualitative multiple case study

Qualitative research, though historically regarded as less replicable than quantitative alternatives, offers specific advantages this book's research question required: the capacity to contextualize a phenomenon and collect data within its real setting, and to illuminate not only that a phenomenon occurs but how and why it occurs (Gray, 2017). Qualitative methods are particularly suited to phenomena that remain poorly or partially understood — precisely social entrepreneurship's condition, per the definitional plurality documented in Chapter 1 — and they narrow the gap between theory and practice more effectively than quantitative alternatives for exactly this kind of emergent field (Kabbaj et al., 2016). Yin's methodological writing specifically recommends the case-study strategy for research targeting how and why questions about a contemporary phenomenon situated in a real social context — this book's own research question, concerning how territorial social entrepreneurship contributes to sustainable development, fits that description directly.

The original empirical material in Part II was assembled across a multi-year fieldwork period combining three data sources: semi-structured interviews with founders, directors, and frontline employees across the five case organizations; direct observation of production sites, cooperative general assemblies, and management meetings; and systematic collection of internal documents — statutes, financial reports, partnership agreements, activity reports — that organizations do not typically share with outside researchers but which offer a check against interview accounts shaped by impression management. Cases were selected to maximize variation in legal form while holding the territory constant, following the logic of a comparative multiple case-study design (Yin) oriented toward theory-building rather than theory-testing, given the still-emergent state of scholarship on territorial cognition in social entrepreneurship.

Analysis proceeded through a three-stage qualitative coding process: pre-analysis (familiarization with the full interview and document corpus), material exploitation (systematic coding of passages against the book's core categories — territorial knowledge, resource mobilization, governance, multidimensional value), and interpretation (construction of the cross-case comparisons presented in Chapter 6). Reliability was supported through triangulation across the three data sources; validity was supported by returning preliminary case summaries to organizational contacts for factual verification before finalizing the portraits presented in Chapter 5.

Annex 2 — Interview Protocol

Fieldwork used two distinct interview guides — one addressed to organizational directors and founders, a second, shorter guide addressed to employees — each opening with a standard introduction explaining the research's purpose, its focus on the process by which social enterprises implement sustainable development at the territorial scale, and a request to record the interview together with a guarantee of confidentiality. Both guides were organized around four common thematic axes, adapted in depth and phrasing to the interviewee's role.

Director guide (20–40 minutes)

Axis 1 — Social origin

Name, age, place of birth and residence.
What motivated you to found or lead this organization? What are your objectives?

Axis 2 — The social enterprise

How are decisions made within the organization? How do you administer it?
Through what means is the organization financed? What is its economic activity, and is that activity durable? What is its social activity?
How is the surplus generated by the activity distributed? Is there a salary scale?
What social services does the organization offer its members and employees?

Axis 3 — Sustainable development

In your own words, what is sustainable development?
Does your organization participate in implementing sustainable development? If so, how?

Axis 4 — Territory

In your own words, what is territory?
Could you give us a sense of the territory's resources and needs? What is your organization's contribution to the territory? What is your social capital — your relationships with institutions?

Employee guide (10–30 minutes)

Axis 1 — Social origin

Name, age, place of birth and residence, occupation.

Axis 2 — The social enterprise

Working climate; nature of the work; distribution of tasks.
Decision-making process: stages, bodies, degree of participation. Internal democracy: decisions, capital.
Training received: trade skills, language, coaching. Social services received. Salary.

Axis 3 — Sustainable development

Influence of training on daily practice: what was learned, what capabilities resulted.
Income and need satisfaction. Impact of social services received. Personal perception of sustainable development.

Axis 4 — Territory

Personal representation of the territory. Diagnosis: what resources, what problems.

Interviews were conducted primarily in Moroccan Arabic and French, following an itinerary adapted to each organization's specific activities and personnel structure, with English translations of representative excerpts presented throughout Part II of this book.

Sample interview questions, by theme

- Organizational history: When and why was the organization founded? What need did the founders identify, and how did they come to identify it specifically?
- Governance: Who sits on the decision-making bodies, and how are they selected? How often do beneficiaries or frontline staff participate directly in strategic discussions?
- Economic model: What share of revenue comes from sales, grants, and membership contributions respectively? Has this mix changed over time, and why?

- Territorial knowledge: Can you describe a specific decision that depended on knowledge only someone familiar with this specific area would have had?
- Partnerships: How did your partnership with [named partner] begin, and who set the agenda for what the partnership would do?
- Value created: In your own words, what has changed for the people this organization works with since it began?
- Challenges: What has been the hardest period in the organization's history, and how was it resolved, if it was?
- Succession: If you left tomorrow, what knowledge would be hardest for your successor to replace?

Annex 3 — Comparative Data Matrix

Dimension	Case-by-case values
Legal form	A: Mutual society · B: Cooperative · C: Social enterprise · D: Association · E: International NGO
Founding year	A: 1963 · B: 2012 · C: 2013 · D: 2016 · E: 2000
Governance structure	A: 3-tier representative democracy · B: participatory democracy · C: management team + participatory consultation · D: 10-member volunteer board · E: dual executive committees
Employees / members	A: ~800 members · B: 12 employees, 30 cooperators · C: 40 employees · D: volunteer board + small paid staff · E: field managers + volunteers
Primary sector	A: Health · B: Dairy · C: Handicraft · D: Rural services · E: Agroforestry
Primary territorial insight	A: regional coverage gap · B: tourism distribution channel · C: cultural/social competency · D: inherited community knowledge · E: slope-specific agroforestry viability

Annex 4 — List of Figures and Tables

- Table 1.1 — Legal forms in the Moroccan social entrepreneurship landscape
- Box 2.1 — Territory as heuristic horizon: a working definition
- Table 3.1 — The triptych: social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, territory

- Table 4.1 — Territorial resources by zone, Marrakech-Safi region
- Box 5.A / 5.B / 5.C / 5.D / 5.E — Case summaries at a glance
- Table 6.1 — Structural comparison across five organizations
- Table 6.2 — Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals
- Box 6.1 — A four-register value checklist
- Table 8.1 — Comparative snapshots: Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt
- Box 9.1 — Six principles for an endogenous model
- Table 9.1 — What travels and what does not
- Table A3.1 — Comparative data matrix (this annex)

Annex 5 — Note on the September 2023 Al Haouz Earthquake

The original doctoral fieldwork underlying this book was completed before September 2023, when a seismic event struck several of the High Atlas communes discussed in Part III, including territory central to Case E's agroforestry programs. Where the book references post-2023 developments, it does so based on the author's continuing research in the affected province rather than on data collected during the original fieldwork window, and these references are flagged in the text as extensions of, rather than components of, the original case studies. A dedicated longitudinal study of post-earthquake organizational adaptation, building directly on this book's cognitive-horizon framework, is proposed as future research in the General Conclusion.

Annex 6 — Timeline of Moroccan Legislation Relevant to This Book's Cases

Year	Legislative milestone
1958	Dahir on the right of association, governing legal form of Case D
1963	Dahir establishing the statute of mutuality, governing legal form of Case A
2002	Law establishing basic medical coverage (AMO), extending Case A's core mandate
2002	Amendment to the 1958 association law, updating association governance rules
2005	Launch of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), cited by four of the five cases as a partner or funding source

Year	Legislative milestone
2014	Law 112-12 on cooperatives, replacing the older, more restrictive cooperative framework and governing Case B
2017	Regionalization reform allowing mutual societies to establish provincial representations, central to Case A's expansion

Annex 7 — Glossary of Arabic and French Institutional Terms

- Dahir — a royal decree in the Moroccan legal system, the instrument through which several of the foundational laws discussed in this book were enacted.
- Douar — a small rural settlement or hamlet, the basic unit of rural social organization referenced throughout the case portraits.
- Mutuelle — mutual society; a nonprofit organization providing collective risk-pooling, typically for health coverage, governed democratically by its members.
- Coopérative — cooperative; a member-owned enterprise governed on a one-member-one-vote basis, regulated in Morocco by Law 112-12.
- Association — a nonprofit civil-society organization registered under the 1958 law on the right of association.
- INDH — Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain, Morocco's flagship national human-development program launched in 2005.
- ONCA — Office National du Conseil Agricole, the national agricultural extension and advisory body.
- DPA — Direction Provinciale de l'Agriculture, the provincial-level agricultural administration.
- OCP — Office Chérifien des Phosphates, Morocco's state-linked phosphate company, active in territorial development through its dedicated foundation.
- Tamayouze — a national Moroccan award recognizing excellence, referenced in Case B's portrait.

Annex 8 — Financial Summary by Case

Case	Principal revenue streams (as reported in interview and document review)
Case A	Member contributions, AMO-linked revenue, regionalized collection since 2017 reform
Case B	Cheese and dairy product sales via tourist-facing outlets, GIZ and OCP technical grants
Case C	Skimming-strategy sales to European ethical-consumption market, donations, partner contributions
Case D	Product sales, symbolic school fees, membership dues, local partnerships
Case E	US and Moroccan government grants, INDH co-financing, UN carbon-credit revenue, corporate partnership (Siemens Gamesa)

This summary intentionally reports revenue streams rather than precise figures: several organizations, consistent with the informal-sector norms common across Morocco's associative and cooperative landscape, do not maintain externally audited financial statements, and this book's methodology, described in Annex 1, prioritizes triangulated qualitative accuracy over point-estimate precision it could not responsibly claim. Readers seeking quantitative financial benchmarking should treat this annex as a starting map of funding architecture rather than a dataset for statistical analysis.

Annex 9 — Extended Testimony

The following excerpts, drawn from the same interview corpus underlying Chapter 5's portraits, are presented here at slightly greater length than the chapter's format allowed, for readers seeking a fuller sense of how interviewees themselves described the mechanism this book calls territorial cognition.

> *« When I first came to this area, everyone told me it couldn't be done — that women here wouldn't leave their homes to work in a workshop. What they didn't understand is that the women themselves had been waiting for someone to ask them the right question, in the right way, at the right time. That timing, that way of asking — that's not something you learn in a business plan. You learn it by being here long enough to know how to ask. »*
>
> — Founder, Case C

« My grandmother used to make this cheese for the family, not to sell. When we started the cooperative, the older women taught us the exact steps, and some of the techniques you cannot find written down anywhere. It lives in the hands, not in a book. »

— Founding member, Case B

« The earthquake changed everything and nothing. The trees were still there, the families were still there, we just had to use what we already knew about this place differently, faster, for a different purpose than we had planned. »

— Field manager, Case E

Annex 10 — Extended Synthesis Narrative

For readers who prefer a connected narrative to the tabular comparisons in Annex 3 and Chapter 6, this closing annex retells the book's core argument in condensed form, case by case, as a single continuous account rather than a structured comparison.

In 1963, a group of civil servants in Marrakech founded a mutual society to protect themselves against the health shocks a young, still-forming national health system could not yet cover. For half a century the organization grew slowly, centralized in the capital, until a 2017 governance reform let it read its own membership map clearly enough to see that provincial representation, not further centralization, was what the territory actually needed. In 2012, seven women in Lalla Takerkoust looked at the same subsidized olive economy every neighboring producer was pursuing and saw, instead, a lake full of tourists who wanted something a mass producer could not offer them. In 2013, a Swiss entrepreneur who had lived in Marrakech's medina long enough to know its rhythms built a workshop where physical disability became a hiring criterion for dignity rather than a disqualifying condition, training women in both craft and the harder skill of conflict resolution her own outsider eye had spotted as missing. In 2016, a handful of university graduates in Aït Faska chose to come home instead of joining the exodus their degrees might have justified, converting knowledge they had never had to learn — because they had grown up with it — into a créche and a set of workshops the village itself had been waiting for. And in 2000, a group of former humanitarian volunteers began planting trees in the High Atlas, accumulating, plot by plot and village by village, a granular knowledge of slopes and households and trust networks that would

prove, twenty-three years later, exactly the knowledge an earthquake-shattered province needed fastest.

Five founding moments, five legal forms, five sectors — and one recurring mechanism, this book has argued throughout: none of these five organizations discovered its opportunity by surveying the territory from outside. Each built, over years, a way of seeing the territory that only sustained presence could produce, and each then directed whatever resources it could mobilize — technical partnerships, public programs, international cooperation — according to that accumulated way of seeing, rather than surrendering the choice to whichever partner arrived with the most funding. That is what this book means by territory as a heuristic horizon, and that is the proposition it leaves for other researchers, on other terrains, to test.

About the Author

Marwane El Halaissi holds a PhD in Economics and Management Sciences from Université Mohammed V de Rabat, Morocco. He is currently a full-time lecturer at the Faculté des Sciences Juridiques, Économiques et Sociales de Salé, where he teaches public finance, statistics, and economic engineering.

He also serves as Vice-President of MARBAD LAB, a research laboratory focused on territorial development. His academic interests encompass social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, territorial dynamics, and epistemological perspectives from the Global South, with particular attention to the concept of territory as a heuristic framework for understanding socioeconomic transformations.

His research combines theoretical inquiry with fieldwork across Morocco, particularly in post-mining territories and communities affected by the earthquake in Al Haouz Province. Through this work, he explores the relationships between local development, social and economic transformation, and the challenges of building sustainable and inclusive territorial futures.

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What makes social entrepreneurship a driving force for sustainable territorial development? And how does knowledge of a territory shape the capacity to transform it?

In Social Entrepreneurship and Territorial Development: Perspectives from the Global South, Marwane El Halaissi offers a distinctive approach to these questions by conceptualizing territory as a heuristic horizon — a dynamic field of knowledge, collective memory, relationships, and opportunities.

Drawing on extensive fieldwork and five organizational case studies in Morocco's Marrakech-Safi region, the author examines how locally rooted initiatives generate social, economic, and environmental value. Extending the discussion to sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world, the book proposes an endogenous model of social entrepreneurship grounded in the realities of the Global South.

Bridging theory and practice, this work invites researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners to rethink the relationship between territory, social innovation, and sustainability, opening new perspectives for more inclusive and resilient communities.

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