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THE MOROCCAN PARTY OF JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT:  
DO ISLAMISTS GOVERN DIFFERENTLY?

Miquel Pellicer and Eva Wegner



**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE**  
**ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES**  
**MEDITERRANEAN PROGRAMME**

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## **Abstract**

This paper investigates local government practices during the first tenure of office of the Islamist Moroccan Party of Justice and Development (PJD). We consider three cases of PJD governance, the towns of Ksar al-Kebir, Temara, and Oued Zem. We evaluate the performance of PJD mayors compared to their electoral promises and the average local governance in Morocco, marked by widespread clientelism, inefficiency, and detachment from the populace. We study the role of the program in PJD governance, the extent to which PJD mayors have been involved in corruption or have used clientelistic practices, the implementation of the party's proximity promise, and how PJD mayors have managed their budgets. Our analysis is based on qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered through field research in 2003, 2007, and 2008. We find that, generally, PJD mayors fare better on corruption and proximity as well as in increasing investment in their municipalities. At the same time, they have governed in the same type of ad-hoc coalitions built on the distribution of office and some evidence suggests that their governance has not been free from clientelistic practices. The increase in investment has been achieved through de-cumulation of reserves or through borrowing, for they have not succeeded in increasing tax collection, a sign of the limits to their efficacy.

## **Keywords**

Islamists, Morocco, Local Government





## 1. Introduction\*

This paper investigates local government practices of the Moroccan Party of Justice and Development (PJD), an Islamist party which is governing municipalities for the first time since the municipal elections of 2003.<sup>1</sup> It asks whether its practices differed from the typical style of local government in Morocco, which is marked by widespread clientelism, inefficiency, and detachment from the populace.

The key electoral promise in the PJD's campaign in 2003 had been precisely to remedy these defects. Similar to its message at the national level – where it is in opposition since 2000 – it had presented itself as the clean, programmatic party, whose ambition was to “moralize” the management of government, and whose governance would respond to the needs of the citizens. However, as Shefter (1994) argues, this is typical for outsider parties. Programmatic appeals are all they have to offer to win the support of the population. This may change, however, when parties gain access to state resources which makes them more likely to engage in clientelistic practices.

Our paper looks at three cases of PJD governance from 2003-2009, the towns of Ksar al-Kebir, Temara, and Oued Zem. We evaluate the performance of PJD mayors compared to their electoral promises and the average local governance in Morocco: we study the role of the programme in PJD governance, the extent to which PJD mayors have been involved in corruption or have used clientelistic practices, the implementation of the party's proximity promise, and how PJD mayors have managed their budgets.

Our analysis is based on qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered through field research in 2003, 2007, and 2008. The qualitative data consists of interviews with PJD mayors and municipal councillors, and with councillor from their governing coalitions and from the opposition, as well as of documents and observations from the 2003 electoral campaign. The quantitative data consists of budget data from the respective municipalities from 2000-2007 and socio-economic census data from 2004.

We find that, generally, PJD mayors fare better on corruption and proximity as well as in increasing investment in their municipalities. At the same time, they have governed in the same type of ad-hoc coalitions built on the distribution of office and there is evidence suggesting that their governance has not been free from clientelistic practices. The increase in investment has been achieved through de-cumulation of reserves or through borrowing, for they have not succeeded in increasing tax collection, a sign of the limits to their efficacy.

Our paper is organized as follows: Section 2 gives some background information on the prerogatives and practices of municipal councils. Section 3 discusses the background, style and content of the PJD's electoral campaign in 2003. Section 4 analyses PJD governance in Oued Zem, Temara, and Ksar al-Kebir. The latter is divided in two parts: The first discusses the cases on the basis of qualitative evidence, the second on the basis of the budget data. Section 5 discusses the results and provides concludes.

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\* An earlier version of this paper was presented in Workshop 10: ‘Spaces for Change? Decentralization, Participation, and Local Governance in MENA’ at the Tenth Mediterranean Research Meeting, Florence & Montecatini Terme, 25-28 March 2009, organised by the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute.

<sup>1</sup> The PJD had officially boycotted the 1997 municipal elections. This was a decision, not by the Islamists who had just entered the party, but by the MPCD founder and then leader, the late A. Khatib. The Islamists then participated as candidates without affiliation and won around 100 councillors. For the reasons behind the boycott, see Wegner 2009, forthcoming.

## 2. Local Governance in Morocco in Theory and Practice

### *Evolution of legal prescriptions: From total supervision to a “tutelle de proximité”*

From a legal/ formal perspective, municipal councils have seen their power enlarged since the first municipal charter (*charte communale*) of 1960.<sup>2</sup> According to this first charter, all relevant acts were controlled beforehand. The role of the municipal councils was consultative at best.

This charter was substantially reformed in the mid-1970s when King Hassan II aimed to integrate and co-opt the opposition.<sup>3</sup> This reform provided for the expansion of budgets, power, and independence of the municipal councils (Maghraoui 2002). The tutelage was softened, for example, the municipal council was now entitled to decide about the local economic and social development plan within the goals defined by the national plan. Important decisions, however, were still heavily controlled by the regime: Decisions regarding budget, loans, or taxes, only entered into force once they were approved by the governor (art. 31). Moreover, the ministry of interior could ask for a new examination of decisions of the municipal councils (art.32). The resources controlled by local politicians increased, for example, through decisions about the creation, organization and management of the municipal public services. Indeed, as Maghraoui (2002) points out, municipal councils became “sources of immense wealth”. In sum, enlarging the prerogatives of the municipal councils and enhancing their capabilities for patronage, the 1976 charter was still characterized by a 'heavy tutelage' (Fikri 2005).

The 2002 reform of the charter was part of other reforms towards decentralization and de-concentration in Morocco. The state was now organized in three administrative levels, regions, provinces, and municipalities. The new charter, again, increased the formal power of the municipal councils vis-a-vis the regime.<sup>4</sup> Importantly, the council, at an absolute majority, could now contest the governor's implementation of their decisions or could have recourse to the ministry of interior or to the administrative tribunal; the time frame in which governments had to approve acts was shortened. There was also an increase of the mayor's power, especially in the realm of the administrative policing and of the appointment of higher cadres. (For an overview of the prerogatives of municipal councils, see table 1). Moreover, there was a decentralization of the tutelage, i.e. it was rather enacted by the governor or his local representative (the pasha) than by the ministry of interior: it had become a “*tutelle de proximite*” (Fikri 2005).

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<sup>2</sup> Dahir n°1-59-315 of 23 June 1960.

<sup>3</sup> Relevant texts: Dahir n° 1-76-583 of 30 September 1976, about the municipal organization, and Dahir n° 1-76-584 of 30 September 1976 about the municipal budget.

<sup>4</sup> Law n° 78-00 promulgated by Dahir n° 1-02-297 of 3 October 2002.

**Table 1: Overview of selected prerogatives of city councils**

Areas	Prerogatives
Finances and taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Votes budget and administrative account</li> <li>• Decides about the opening of special accounts &amp; new loans</li> </ul>
Economic and Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopts social and economic development plan</li> <li>• Promotes local economic development</li> <li>• Encourages investments into infrastructures and equipment; participation in companies</li> <li>• Concludes partnership agreements</li> </ul>
Local Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates and manages municipal services:</li> <li>• Manages water, electricity, waste disposal, street lightning, public transport</li> <li>• Creates and manages industrial and commercial equipment , markets, slaughter houses, intercity bus stations</li> </ul>
Urbanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopts local regulations on construction</li> <li>• Participates in programs of urban restructuring, resorption of precarious housing, rehabilitation of old city centres</li> <li>• Realises or participates in the execution of housing programs</li> </ul>
Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decides about the creation and organisation of local hygiene offices</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural infrastructure and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains and manages socio-cultural infrastructure: social centres, centres for the young, the old, and women, municipal libraries, theatres, sport complexes, kindergartens, etc.</li> <li>• Promotes social, cultural and sport activities</li> <li>• Implements programs against illiteracy</li> </ul>

(Adapted from Burn et al. 2005)

Additionally, the new charter contained provisions for the professionalization of local governance. Municipal councillors gained more resources (for example off-time to attend the sessions of the council and commissions, free transportation for the presidents to reach the bureau of the municipality, insurance for accidents suffered by council members within their service, indemnities for councillors), but also had new requirements (for example, literacy of the mayor and the budget rapporteur, impossibility to hold simultaneously mandates as regional and provincial treasurers, impossibility for mayors to have their residence abroad). Among such provisions to increase the seriousness of the work was also one stipulating that the administrative account could be simply rejected, but has to be motivated. In the past, such rejection, or threatening to reject it had been one way to blackmail the mayor into giving some extra favours to councillors.

### **Practice**

Since the mid-70s' expansion of prerogatives and resources of municipal councils, there has been a flurry of corruption scandals in the context of local governance. As Catusse (2002) points out corruption in local government is rampant. It is a system from which most local legislative and executive actors benefit. Typically, corruption is only prosecuted by the regime when political accounts are to be settled.<sup>5</sup>

As to the councillors these have, irrespective if running for opposition parties or others, often been individuals with no commitment to their parties and who were, accordingly, “willing to change political affiliation under administrative pressures, or if it otherwise suited their interests” (Maghraoui

<sup>5</sup> In the case discussed by Catusse (2002), one indicator of this is that it was not the court of accounts investigating the case but some sort of ad hoc brigade of the ministry of interior, whose report was not published.

2002). This low level of institutionalization of parties is considered an indicator of clientelism (Stokes 2007). Indeed, in Morocco, vote-buying or other clientelistic strategies to win votes are not controlled by parties but are individual enterprises of businessmen or other local grandees.

Besides the lack of prosecution, the bent of the municipal councillors towards clientelism or outright corruption – as well as their feeble attachment to their party – is surely linked to the absence of political power of these councils. Whether the reform of the charter and the increase in power of the councils have the potential to change this, or were even intended to change it, is unclear. Indeed, it has been criticized that the competences of mayors and councils remain relatively abstract, general, and ambiguous. Especially the relationship between the councils' competences and those of other national agencies, ministries, etc. remains vague thus leaving a considerable margin for the regime to intervene in or even take decisions of local government.

### **3. PJD campaign and performance in 2003**

#### *Political Context: PJD on the defensive after May 16 2003*

In the PJD's overall political strategy, the municipal elections of 2003 were supposed to play an important role. The party had performed well – and better than it expected – in the 2002 parliamentary elections (it had won 42 seats out of 325, becoming the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest party in parliament) but, for reasons ranging from ideological (not to govern with the “leftist” USFP), over political (fear of loss of support because of governmental responsibility) to organizational (some party leaders believed that the PJD did not have experienced enough members for government) the Islamists had not entered the governmental coalition.<sup>6</sup> Instead, the aim was to focus on the municipal elections and gain experience - and increase support - through governing municipalities and, possibly, a few of the larger cities.

Around one month before the scheduled date of the municipal elections in 2003, however, came the terrorist attacks of 16 May. In these attacks, five simultaneous suicide bombings in Casablanca left 45 dead and nearly 100 injured. The fact that these attacks had been carried out by Islamists put substantial pressure on the PJD to prove that it was a moderate party and loyal to the Moroccan constitution. The party was confronted with a national campaign against Islamist terrorism and political Islam alike, which were both presented as a threat to the Moroccan nation. Approximately 1,100 terrorism suspects were arrested in the ensuing crackdown. The courts sentenced more than 50 people to life in prison and 16 people to death. The national TV stations, 2M and T.V.M., which broadcasted all other party leaders declaring their solidarity with the families of the victims and their firm commitment to fight terrorism in Morocco, boycotted the PJD. Opposed parties started a campaign for the banning of the party and held it morally responsible for having paved the way for terrorism. The PJD's strategy in the municipal elections needs thus to be understood in a political context where the party was on the defensive.

#### *Campaign*

A very clear signal of the party's defensive approach was, that after pressure from the ministry of interior, it decreased its coverage way below the 50% it had planned previous to the attacks. Withdrawing already prepared electoral lists, the PJD eventually covered 51% of the city districts, 74% of the municipalities with more than 25.000 inhabitants (out of a total 104 of these municipalities), and only six percent of those with less than 25.000 inhabitants (out of a total of

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion and different opinions inside the party about joining government in 2002, see Wegner forthcoming, and Pellicer and Wegner 2009.

19.451).<sup>7</sup> Importantly, it enacted a system of partial coverage in the bigger or touristic cities, so that it could not win a majority in such places.<sup>8</sup>

Part of a broader image campaign to demonstrate moderation was the promotion of women and technocrats into high ranks of the electoral lists by the national party leadership. The intervention in favour of women was to show that the PJD was an open and moderate party<sup>9</sup>; the intervention in favour of technocrats was additionally motivated by them presumably being more likely to know how to deal with the technicalities of budgets and city finances more generally. Moreover, during the campaign, the PJD tried to hide its recent origin as “Islamist party” - instead, the campaign videos emphasised the long history of the old MPCD party, i.e. the party that the Islamists had overtaken in the 1990s and renamed PJD in 1998.

The style of the electoral campaign was professional. Besides some speeches of national and local leaders, the typical campaign meetings showed a video of the party's history and achievements (sometimes there was also a video with some component about the needs of the particular municipality, for instance, in Meknes), and, importantly, power-point presentations of the whole list: each of the numerous candidates for the municipal council was presented with a focus of his degree of education.

As to the content of the campaign, even if some of the electoral meetings we observed started with a prayer, there was little “Islam” in it. Instead, as already stated some months before, the party's primary concern at the communal level would be to “moralize the management of public affairs”<sup>10</sup>. There was a strong criticism of those local politicians that used their positions in the city councils to advance their private, material, interests and, in that context, of the lack of attachment of politicians to their party. Strong emphasis was also made on the promise of proximity with the people, that is, on responsiveness to their needs and demands. Finally, the campaign stressed, of course, the better local governance the PJD would provide to the Moroccan citizens. In sum, the PJD's campaign centred on remedying the (well-known) flaws of local governance in Morocco: corruption, the lack of responsiveness of politicians to the electorate, and their inefficiency in improving the living conditions of the populace.

## **Results**

The PJD won 320 299 votes and still came out as second strongest party in the total of the circumscriptions of the city districts (*arrondissements*) and the cities with more than 25.000 inhabitants. Nevertheless, it gained only 8/81 councilors in Rabat, 10/71 in Sale, 16/131 in Casablanca, 14/81 in Fes, and 6/81 in Marrakech, hardly a majority for governance in any of these cities.

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<sup>7</sup> Statistics of the Ministry of Interior published in *Libération*, 1.9.2003. Elections in municipalities with more than 25.000 inhabitants, as well as in the newly created city districts in cities with more than half a million inhabitants, were enacted via a proportional list vote. In municipalities with less than 25.000 inhabitants, they were enacted via majority single ballot vote.

<sup>8</sup> In Casablanca, the PJD covered 8/16, in Fes 4/6, in Marrakesh, Rabat and Salé 3/5, in Tanger nothing.

<sup>9</sup> The party leadership stipulated that each list had to have at least 10% of women (interview with a PJD leader, 4.09.03. It also provided material incentives for local party bureaus if they ranked women higher in the lists (interview with a PJD leader, 6.11.03).

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Saadeddine El-Othmani in *Le Matin du Sahara*, 22.4.2003.

Instead, the PJD governed in only 13 municipalities (including *arrondissements*)<sup>11</sup>. Table 2 shows the demographic profile of these municipalities, using data from the *Haut Commissariat au Plan*.<sup>12</sup> Of all the data made available by the *Haut Commissariat au Plan*, we have selected indicators of the wealth of the municipality (poverty, percent of households with satellite dishes and percent of households with at least one mobile phone) as well as of education (percent of analphabetism and percent of college graduates in the municipality); in addition, we report the percent of houses that recorded as “slums” (*bidonvilles*, in French).

**Table 2: Demographic profile of all PJD-governed municipalities**

<b>Comune</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Poverty</b>	<b>Satellite</b>	<b>Mobile Phone</b>	<b>Analph</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>Slums</b>
sidi bernoussi	1	1.4	54	80	21	9	7.2
tabriquet	1	4.2	46	76	27	8.6	4.7
tahla	1	6.6	32	66	35	6.8	1.8
meknes	1	7.2	48	73	27	8.9	4.2
kasba tadla	1	7.9	44	72	33	5.9	6.4
temara	1	8.5	44	78	27	10	30.7
chefchaouen	1	8.6	62	69	26	9.2	2.1
ksar el kebir	1	9.2	55	64	32	6.6	3.6
azrou	1	9.4	51	71	31	8.2	6.3
oued zem	1	10.6	36	63	35	4.8	8.5
ouislane	1	13.6	27	66	35	3.2	7.6
oum el guerdane	0	18	40	60	36	1.1	0.8
issen	0	20.9	19	56	57	1	0.7
<hr/>							
Avg PJD	0.85	9.7	43	69	32	6.4	6.5
Avg Total	0.55	14.3	32	59	44	4.8	6.8
Avg Urban	1	7.9	46	72	30	7.9	8.1
PJD Urban	1	7.9	45	71	30	7.4	7.6
Avg PJD Urban Without Temara	1	7.9	45	70	30	7.1	5.2
Avg PJD Case Studies	1	9.4	45	69	31	7.1	14.3

<sup>11</sup> The list of PJD-governed municipalities was obtained at the central seat of the PJD. Interview 9.09.2008. The party was not always capable to head the communes in which it had won the largest number of seats – according to PJD councillors in these cities because of corrupt practices of other parties. In Casablanca Hay Hassani and in Larache, for instance, the PJD was the strongest party, but did not manage to get its candidate elected as district mayor. In Larache, the party was not even part of the governing coalition.

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.hcp.ma/Profil.aspx>, last accessed 31 January 2009

The upper panel of the table shows the data for each of the PJD-governed municipalities, ordered by poverty in ascending order, while the lower panel provides some relevant averages. Most of the places are urban (11 out of the 13), confirming findings on PJD support in the 2007 parliamentary elections (see Pellicer 2008). In terms of demographic characteristics, the towns present quite some variation. The indicator of poverty, for instance, ranges from 1.4 in the Casablanca neighbourhood of Sidi Bernoussi, to 20.9 in the southern rural village of Issen. The percent of college graduates ranges from around 1% in Issen to 10% in Temara. A closer look at the data, however, reveals that much of this variation is linked to the urban/ rural divide. This is most clear in the indicator of poverty, where the indicator jumps from 13% for the poorest of the urban towns to 18% for the “richest” of the rural ones.

Are the PJD-governed municipalities typical compared to the rest of Morocco or do they tend to display a particular profile? The lower panel of the presents some relevant comparisons. The first row shows that average for all the PJD towns. Comparing this to the second row that shows the average Moroccan municipality (Avg Total) makes clear that the PJD towns tend to be well off. All the indicators agree in that respect: in resources (with less poverty and more satellite dishes and mobile phones in PJD towns) and in education (with less illiteracy (Analph) and more college graduates in PJD towns). Interestingly, the percent of slums is similar to the national average.

These results, of course, may just reflect a composition effect arising from the urban/ rural divide mentioned above. Thus, if we consider only, among the PJD-governed towns, the urban ones, the picture changes considerably. Thus a comparison of the third and fourth row makes clear that, among the urban settlements, the PJD-governed ones do not stand out particularly.

This last comparison, however, is misleading in one respect: the number of slums. Inspection of the PJD-governed urban municipalities shows that there is an obvious outlier: the town of Temara. While all the towns the PJD governs have less than 10% of slums, Temara displays more than 30%. This biases the average substantially upwards. Thus, the average has been recalculated in the last row excluding the observation of Temara. In that way, it is apparent that, while the PJD-governed towns are typical in terms of wealth and education, they tend to have less slums. The same result is also obtained when comparing each PJD-governed town with the average of the urban settlements of the same province (not reported); in that case, the result held even for Temara, where the percentage of slums was much lower than in the nearby town of Skhirate, where the PJD does *not* govern.

Finally, it is worth examining how typical are the PJD towns in our case studies. In the last row of the table, the average of Oued Zem, Ksar el-Kebir and Temara are shown. On average, these towns appear as slightly poorer than average as well as with less education, although the difference is not large. The amount of slums is particularly big, as expected, given the prominence of Temara.

In sum, the PJD governs mainly in urban settlements. These are quite typical urban settlements on average in terms of wealth and education, but with a clearly lower percentage of slums. This is an noteworthy result regarding PJD support. Slums are particularly responsive to clientelistic mobilization strategies, due to the poverty of their inhabitants as well as to their sensitivity to public action (from promises of reallocation, to permissiveness to extract illegally services such as electricity). Thus, the data suggests that, at least from the point of view of electoral mobilization, the PJD follows a less clientelistic strategy than the average.

#### **4. Case Studies: PJD governments in Ksar al-Kebir, Temara, and Oued Zem**

This section analyses the extent to which PJD local governance has been different to the typical local governance in Morocco. We study this first by analysing the role of the party, corruption, and proximity, based on qualitative evidence. Second, we analyse the evolution of revenues and expenditures in PJD-governed towns compared to the average, on the basis of budget figures. The considered cases of PJD-governed municipalities are Ksar al-Kebir, Temara, and Oued Zem.

#### 4.1 Qualitative evidence

##### Criteria for discussing PJD local governance

Following the discussion of the standard flaws of local governance in Morocco and the PJD's claims to remedy them, we will assess the extent of the PJD's difference in actual governance according to three broad criteria.

The first is the role of programmatic issues in PJD governance and the importance of the party, as an organization. If program and party are strongly present in the decisions of PJD mayors, this would give evidence that PJD local governance goes against this typically being an "individualistic" enterprise of local notables with little loyalty to their party. Here, we will look at how the party built the coalitions necessary to win the presidency (mayor)<sup>13</sup> and, more generally, how the mayors relate to the program and the party organization.

The second criteria is the extent to which PJD mayors have been involved in corruption scandals, have attempted to increase the transparency of local management, or appear to use clientelistic means to gain support. Corruption, lack of transparency and clientelism are obviously those factors that the PJD has condemned most noisily in its campaign, and they stand for the most lamented flaws of local governance in Morocco. Here, we will discuss the involvement of PJD mayors in corruption scandals and claims regarding their use of clientelistic means.

The third criterion is the extent to which the PJD has implemented its proximity promise either through its responsiveness to citizens or through the involvement of citizens/ associations in local governance. To "listen to the ordinary citizens" and to be available to them was another major promise of the PJD and the detachment of the political elites from citizens is a major complaint of voters. Here we will discuss the "government style" of PJD mayors and whether the implementation of this promise involves citizens. It has to be borne in mind, though, that "proximity" and clientelism are not always neatly separated.

Finally, we will try to assess how much the PJD lived up to its claim to improve governance and increase the efficiency of local governance. As, obviously every mayor claims to be active, this issue will be discussed through an analysis of the budgets.

##### Role of the party/ role of the program

After the elections, the PJD aimed to gain as many mayors as possible. The party leadership had decentralized the necessary coalition building but had put conditions according to which the decisions should be taken: the integrity and competence of other councillors and how the respective parties had performed so far in the local management.<sup>14</sup> A first observation regarding the PJD's approach to local governance is thus that the *policies* promoted by the other parties were not among the criteria on which local alliances were to be built.

Broadly speaking, it appears that in practice, the main criterion was whether it was possible to form a coalition with people that were not completely de-legitimized by their record of previous municipal management. The PJD's tolerance of who fit into that category seems to have been rather broad. Different from the party's discourse, honesty came to be viewed as a relative concept. Indeed, PJD councillors argued that "nobody was 100% honest" and no one was "100% bad".<sup>15</sup> Sometimes, though,

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<sup>13</sup> The PJD did not win an absolute majority in any municipality in 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with a PJD leader, 17.11.03.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with a PJD Vice-mayor of a municipality, 12.11.03.



PJD councillors had to "close their eyes vis-à-vis some councillors or parties".<sup>16</sup> As a result, the PJD often found itself in "tough" coalitions, not so much from an ideological but from a personal point of view as the party coalesced, in the words of one of its councillors with "all sorts of people, illiterates, corrupted".<sup>17</sup>

In Ksar al-Kebir, Oued Zem, and Temara, this broad picture appears to be confirmed. In the first case, the PJD governs with only one other party, in Temara and Oued Zem it is in a multi-party coalition (eight in Temara, five in Oued Zem), out of which several have only one or two councillors. Even if asked directly whether policies played a role in the coalition-building process, or whether there was any action plan as to what would be the goals of the coalition, PJD mayors said that this had not been the case. In Temara, where the PJD governs with councillors out of which many had already been in those previous local governments which the PJD criticized so heavily (one councillor even since 1976), the governing coalition did draw up a small charter, but this document did not address content but was a "declaration of honour".<sup>18</sup> In Oued Zem, there was no document of any type. Generally, PJD mayors as well as members of their governing coalition confirmed that the formation of bureaus had followed the Moroccan standard pattern in which the bargaining concerns essentially the posts to be distributed to the parties (who is first vice-mayor, etc.). Hence, what PJD councillors viewed as key difference in their style of coalition building was that – as they claimed – they did not buy their way into the mayor's chair. In sum, it seems that the way the PJD approached the constitution of its local bureaus was already a step towards the normality of local governance in Morocco: Political content was not important to form these alliances while the integrity of the fellow bureau members could not be bothered with too much.

A minor consideration of the party's program and the party in itself could also partly be seen in the responses to questions concerning the party's campaign in 2003 or concerning the reasons given for electoral support. In one case, the mayor could not recall the program and suggested to get the program from the national party office. As to the support, it was more ambiguous. On the one hand, the mayor of Ksar al-Kebir stated that the PJD – as a "brand" - had had quite some appeal in 2003 and that one could have put "anyone" and she would have gotten elected. In this way, the PJD councillors would also be dependent on the party. At the same time, in Ksar al-Kebir and in Oued Zem, the personal appeal of the mayor was also emphasised, for example the fact that the PJD mayor of Oued Zem had been a teacher in a secondary school there for decades and thus was known to many people or that the PJD mayor in Ksar al Kebir had been a member in several previous municipal councils.

Finally, an ambiguous picture also emerged regarding the role of a party as an organization in defining local policies. On the one hand, PJD councillors claimed that there was a "standardized", formal control of the local party over the councillors. Party regulations stipulated that decisions regarding votes and policies were taken by committees composed of councillors and local party members. On the other hand, a party institution, the association of municipal councillors that had been created to support, coordinate and control the PJD's councillors was largely inactive. Moreover, PJD mayors appeared to be rather detached from the national party organization. Generally, there was little reference to the national party office, neither positively or negatively.

### Corruption, Clientelism and Transparency

None of the PJD mayors has been involved in a large-scale, publicly known corruption scandal. According to a municipal councillor from the opposition in Temara, however, the mayor was linked to an illicit affair. He had exempted someone from a tax that is put on idle properties, arguing that the

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with a PJD Vice-mayor of a municipality , 6.12.03

<sup>17</sup> Interview with a PJD Vice-mayor, 12.04.04.

<sup>18</sup> Interview, Temara, 15.11.08.

property should be exempted because it could not be built on. Later, however, it was sold and that person constructed on that property. It is not clear in which way – if any – the mayor benefited from this exemption – a councillor from an opposing party even suggested that he was insinuated by the regime to grant this exemption.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, it still goes against a more legalistic approach. In Temara, moreover, a report by the court of accounts discussed many irregularities in the use of public goods, such as the provision of transportation and gasoline, or the covering of phone bills for people that were not entitled to it (Cour des Comptes 2007). This report also pointed out some irregular decisions by the council, such as the increase in the height limit of houses in some areas. Again, this does not mean that the PJD there benefited from corruption but is surely not a signal for increased transparency.

Although there is little “hard” evidence to support this claim, it seems sensible to assume that this type of irregularities is almost unavoidable in the type of multi-party coalitions on which the PJD had to rely in Temara and Oued Zem – even if its own councillors were totally “clean”. Indeed, if the PJD had abstained from the direct buying of its majority, it appears unrealistic that it could gain *and maintain* this majority without having to tolerate some small scale corruption, i.e. look the other way when members of its governing coalition benefited from their position. This idea is also supported by the fact that PJD multi-party coalitions collapsed in four towns in the period from 2003 – 2009 and that in both, Temara and Oued Zem, the PJD had encountered problems with its coalition.<sup>20</sup>

Clientelism, as much as corruption, is of course not a strategy that would be related by PJD mayors themselves. In all three towns, however, clientelistic practices of the PJD were pointed at by councillors from the opposition. The most recurrent claim regarding Temara and Ksar al-Kebir was that it would be suggested to a company gaining a public contract to give a donation to an association close to the PJD which would then provide assistance for marriages, funerals, feasts, or school materials to needy families. As a councillor from the opposition put it, the PJD was not buying votes in the “traditional way”, i.e. on election day, but “throughout the year”. These claims cannot be verified, but their recurrence and the similarity in which this was described lends some credentials to it.

In Ksar al-Kebir, it appeared also that the PJD mayor had targeted areas in which the party had had comparatively little support in previous elections: the new pavement for the medina (the old city centre) was referred to as a successful support strategy as the PJD had then won this area easily in the 2007 parliamentary elections.<sup>21</sup> In Oued Zem, a similar picture was provided by a member of the PJD's coalition. According to this councillor, the PJD was targeting the poorest areas, i.e. of illegal housing (around 30% in Oued Zem), not only through providing some basic infrastructure to these places (water, pavement), but also through providing sheep, school-bags, etc.<sup>22</sup> These latter practices cannot be clearly disentangled from responsiveness to the problems of the population and it is not clear whether these types of services come with an explicit, and monitored, demand for electoral support.

In sum, the result regarding the PJD's claim to moralize the management of public affairs is mixed: There is no evidence that PJD mayors have been actively corrupt or that they have channelled funds to PJD voters. Yet, they are likely to have looked the other way on small-scale corruption in their administration to stabilize their coalitions and to have used some resources to increase support.

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with a municipal councillor, Rabat 20.11.08. Now, the file with these charges is put on hold but not put to trial. The fact that this could be done at any moment weakens the authority of the mayor vis-a-vis the regime substantially.

<sup>20</sup> In Temara, councillors governing with the PJD had allegedly blocked the budget in 2006 over an argument over construction permits. Interview with a municipal councillor, Rabat, 20.11.08.

<sup>21</sup> Interview, Ksar al-Kebir 14.11.08.

<sup>22</sup> Interview, Oued Zem, 27.11.08.

## Proximity

The style of PJD mayors differed in the three cities. The proximity promise, in the sense of accessibility and “taking care of people's problems” was most obviously implemented in Oued Zem. There, the mayor was spending his mornings driving through the city, talking to people, and inspecting works. The mayor was particularly emphasising that a major difference compared to the previous bureaus had been the change in style. Citizens came to him with their demands and he was looking at the issues they complained about. Indeed, the city hall was full with people with issues to be solved, papers to be signed. However, while Oued Zem's city hall was clearly a place that was open to the inhabitants, this “proximity” looked quite traditionalistic. That is, the mayor was taking care of individual problems. Although this was done in a un-pompous and relatively unhierarchical way, it was still a top-down approach.

Different from Oued Zem, Temara's city hall was empty. The mayor was sitting behind an impressive, and empty desk, in a room full of pictures showing him with the king or the governor. In that town, the mayor rather emphasised his spending in “*équipement de proximité*”, that is sports facilities and green spaces, not his openness to the people. In Ksar al-Kebir, the style was yet again different. According to councillors from other parties, the party was good at communicating its achievements for the citizens to the citizens.<sup>23</sup> Here the mayor had adopted a very professional posture. Sitting at his desk, crowded with papers and books on topics such as street lighting, he took pride in the fact that he did not waste time signing papers. His self-perception was more one of an efficient manager in service of economic development. His account focussed more on his good relations with the governor and the civil servants in the ministries, either in Rabat or the delegations than on his relations with the citizens.

In none of the three cases were there signs of proximity understood as citizen involvement in a more political sense. To “listen to the citizens” was to take care of personal problems, not to look for a political solution with them. Moreover, even this type of proximity was only present in a clear way in one of the cities.

## **4.2 Analysis of budget data**

Important evidence can be derived by analysing the patterns of revenues and expenditures of the PJD-governed municipalities. For our three case studies, we succeeded in obtaining key items of the municipal budget from 2001 to 2007, with, in some cases, the previsions for 2008.<sup>24</sup> The budget structure is shown in Table 3. The budget is generally divided into current revenues and expenditures and investment revenues and expenditures. Current revenues are the revenues earned on a regular basis, and consist of: 1. local taxes collected by the municipality, 2. local taxes collected by the state, and 3. a part of the nation-wide VAT. Municipalities obtain more VAT if state tax collection in the town is low (as a way of compensating for a low tax base deemed not to be the fault of the municipality) and if the own municipal collection is high (to reward municipal tax collection efforts).

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<sup>23</sup> As one councillor from Larache observed, if the PJD in Ksar al-Kebir changed a light bulb, it would make it known. Interview, 25.11.08.

<sup>24</sup> For the case of Temara, only the years from 2003 to 2007 were provided, for the demarcation of the municipality changed in 2002, rendering the figures before and after that date incomparable. The data for 2001 in reality included six months from 2000 due to a change in the accounting accounting term, and has been annualized for comparability. For Ksar el Kbir, data for 1999/2000 was also provided.

**Table 3: Structure of the budget**

Current Revenues	Taxes collected by the Municipality
	Taxes collected by the State
	VAT
Current Expenditures	Personnel
	Debt service
	Others
Investment Revenues	Previous reserves
	Borrowing
	VAT investment
Investment Expenditures	Works
	Acquisition of goods (real estate or others)
	National and Integrated Projects <sup>25</sup>

Current expenditures are the type of expenditures that recur every year, such as salaries of civil servants, payment of debts and general operating costs (others). There are also revenues deemed to be used for investment. One can use the previous stock of treasury (i.e. the accumulated wealth of the municipality), one can borrow, or one may receive a special VAT allocation especially assigned for investment. Finally, the investment expenditures include works (such as roads or cultural centres), acquisition of goods (such as new buildings or cars or trucks for municipal use) and participation in national or integrated programs (such as the well known national program *Villes Sans Bidonvilles* to eradicate slums and relocate its inhabitants in standard housing).

#### PJD vs. Average Urban Municipalities

The first question to consider is whether PJD-governed towns differ from the average in their budget structure. To perform these comparisons, we have collected average budget figures from various sources. Data for the totality of local collectivities (*collectivités locales*) come from a report by the Ministry of Finance (2008). This report publishes a consistent series from 2002 to 2007. The shortcoming of these data is the degree of aggregation. The totality of *collectivités locales* includes, besides the municipalities, also the regions and the provinces. Since these have very different prerogatives and are funded differently, budget comparisons of PJD towns with these total average could be misleading. However, the comparison is still likely to be useful, for municipalities form the lion share of the budget of the *collectivités locales* (81% of current revenues in 2007, for instance). To complement these data, we have also collected data for the total of urban municipalities. Given that all our case studies are urban, this benchmark is obviously more appropriate. The problem in this case is to find consistent series starting from 2001. We have collected information from some available monthly reports by the Ministry of Finance (*Bulletin Mensuel des Collectivités Locales*) and from the reports published by the *Collectivités Locales* Directorate of the Ministry of Interior (*La Lettre des Collectivités Locales*). Having doubts on the consistency of the series, we have opted for using these data only for the most recent years, 2006 and 2007.<sup>26</sup>

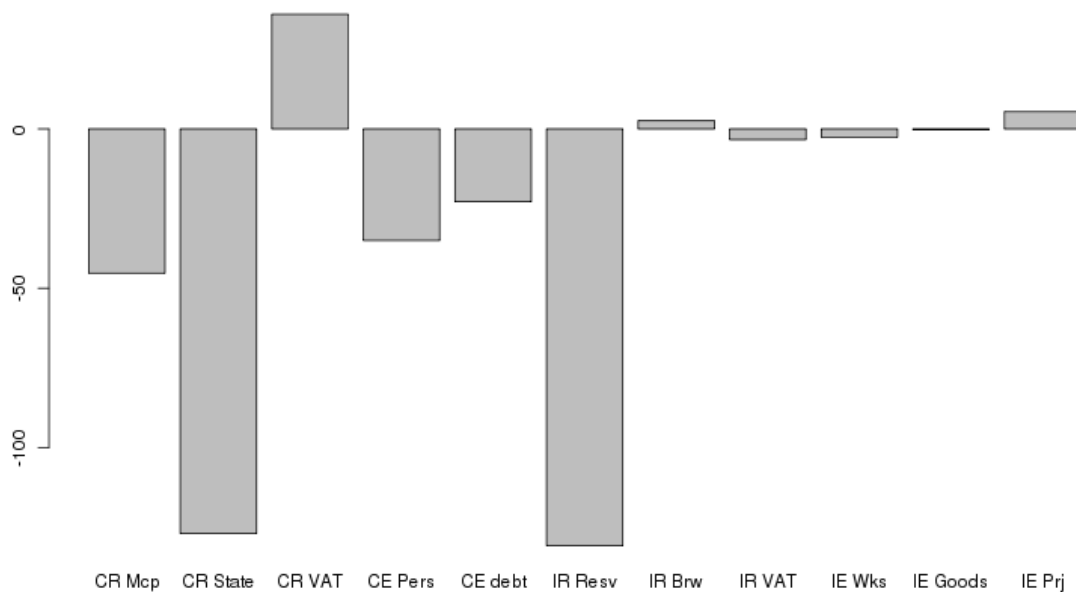
<sup>25</sup> Strictly speaking there are two different entries: *Projets Intégrés* and *Programmes Nationaux* which we have conflated here under the heading National and Integrated Projects.

<sup>26</sup> Budget data are considered “sensitive information in Morocco and are therefore difficult to obtain.

In order to make meaningful comparisons, we have divided all budget items by the relevant population. Thus, the numbers provided should be interpreted as Dirhams per person during a year. The population data comes from the aforementioned *Haut Commissariat au Plan* data. It comes from the census carried out in 2004 and thus does not account for population variation over time.

Figure 1 compares selected budget items of our three PJD-governed municipalities with the average of urban municipalities, for 2006 and 2007. In particular, it shows the difference between the average of the three PJD towns with the average of urban towns. Bars below the zero line show that dirhams per inhabitant are lower than average in the PJD towns.

**Figure 1: Budget items: Difference PJD average and Urban average in 2006/07**



The figure shows that PJD towns regularly earn and spend less than average. In particular, PJD towns extract substantially less taxes than average, particularly when it comes to taxes collected by the state. In compensation, given the low state tax collection in these towns, they can benefit from some more VAT allocation. The fact that they extract less from taxation suggests that either they are poorer than average or that they are not well managed. As we saw before, there is some evidence that the PJD towns in our case studies are indeed poorer than average, although the difference disappeared when considering only the urban municipalities where the PJD governs. It seems thus plausible that they manage tax extraction worse. Particularly because the difference is substantial: for taxes extracted by the municipality, PJD towns 108 DH per inhabitant, whereas the urban average is 153, almost 50% more.

In comparison, current expenditures, although they also tend to be lower than average in the PJD towns, are less markedly so than tax collections. In other words, PJD towns appear to be saving less than average.<sup>27</sup> Regarding resources available for investment, the most marked difference are reserves.

<sup>27</sup> It has to be noted that we do not have figures for current expenditures other than Personnel and Debt service, so that the total difference between current revenues and expenditures cannot be accurately computed. However, for the average of urban municipalities, these other expenses are not so large, less 20%, so that the observation is not likely to be affected by this.

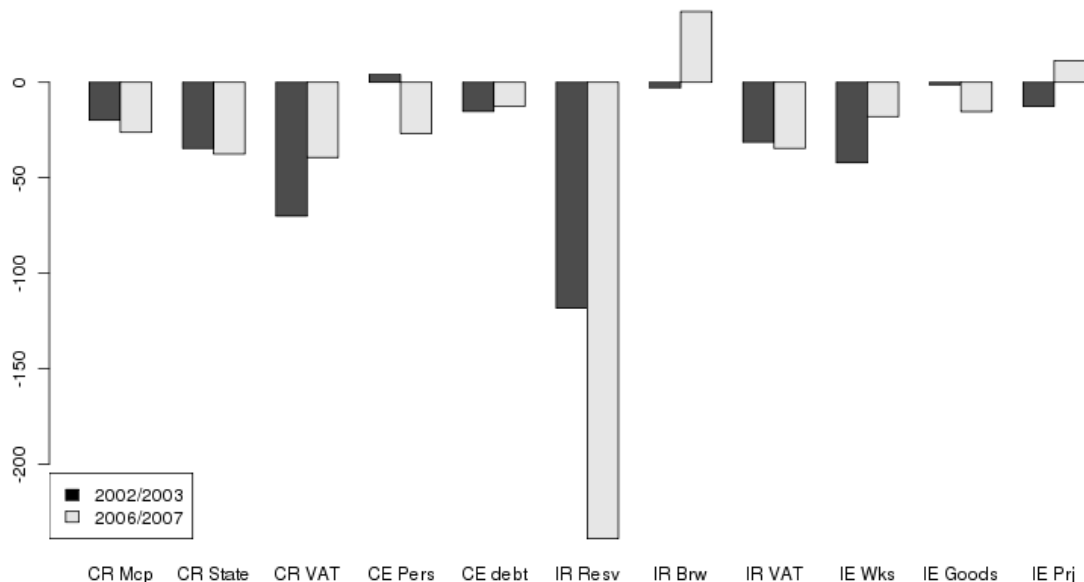
PJD towns dispose of substantially less reserves than average. Perhaps surprisingly, this could be a sign of management efficiency, for there is a consensus that Moroccan *collectivités locales* tend to accumulate too much in reserves.<sup>28</sup> This is due, among others, to the need to have the investment decisions reviewed by the *tutelle* and to the lack of expertise and management resources needed to program and follow pluriannual investments.

Finally, investment expenditures in our three PJD-governed towns, in contrast to the rest of the entries, are rather average. The figure for integrated and national projects is even larger in PJD towns. Overall, the picture that emerges when comparing PJD towns with the average of urban municipalities is ambiguous. On the one hand, towns governed by the PJD appear less efficiently managed than average in that they extract less taxes while not being substantially poorer than average. On the other, they seem to be able to mobilize their reserves to achieve investment levels comparable to the average.

#### Changes in PJD towns relative to the average

All these differences, however, could be due to the current PJD administration or to the characteristics of the towns where they won support in the first place. In order to disentangle these two, Figure 2 compares the PJD town to the average for the current as well as the previous election terms. In particular, it shows the difference in the different budget items between the PJD towns and the average. In this case, the average corresponds to the total of the *collectivités locales*, for the data for urban settlements are not reliable enough, as mentioned above.

**Figure 2: Budget items: Difference PJD average and Total average, for 2002/03 & 2006/07**



<sup>28</sup> See Burn et al. 2005. In a similar vein, a civil servant from the Ministry of Finance that also held the office of Vice mayor of Rabat, argued that one of the biggest problems of municipal management was that resources were not spent, but rather accumulated too much (Interview 2.11.2007).

The overall patterns are not so different from those in the previous figures: PJD towns earn and spend less than average in current terms and have less reserve, while the picture for investment expenditures is more mixed.<sup>29</sup> A close inspection of the figure, however, yields interesting additional insights. The most interesting of these regards resources for investment. PJD management has almost doubled the distance to the average relative to the previous administrations: they have *de-cumulated* reserves relative to the average at a significant rate. Similarly, they have passed from almost average borrowing to a substantial positive difference. In other words, PJD administrations have indeed mobilized large amounts of resources for investment relative to the previous administrations in their towns. This is reflected in investment expenditures: expenditures in works, which were in the previous term substantially lower than average, have almost caught up; participation in national and integrated projects passed from being below average to being above average. Equally important is the fact that tax collection has *not* improved in PJD-governed towns relative to the average. This applies both for the taxes collected by the state as well as for the taxes collected by the municipalities.

The message from this comparison is therefore clear: PJD administration has been responsible for bringing investment to average levels. This has been done through borrowing and, most importantly, through de-cumulating reserves relative to the average. The deficit in tax extraction relative to the average, however, is not the result of PJD governance, although it is noteworthy that they have not improved it in any way.

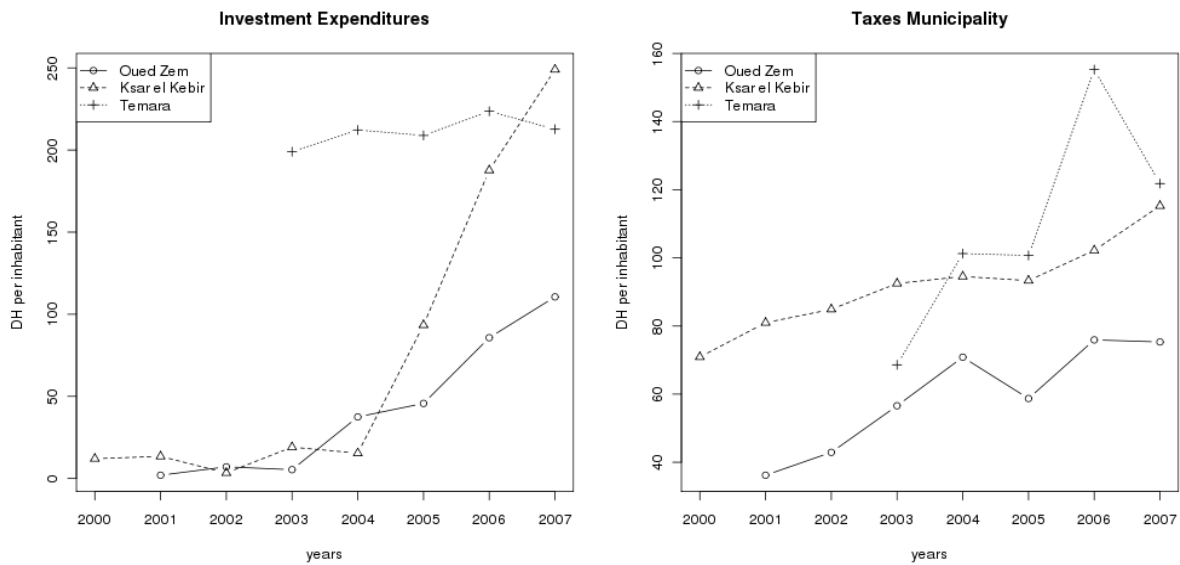
#### Differences within PJD towns

The previous discussion has conflated the figures of the three PJD municipalities in our case studies. This is useful for obtaining a general picture of PJD administration, but can mask important differences across PJD local governments. Here, we examine more carefully the two main trends considered above: investment expenditures and local tax extraction. Figure 3 plots the evolution of these two variables for the three PJD-governed towns from 2001 to 2007. Consistently with what the previous data showed, the evolution of the two variables contrasts sharply. Investment expenditures pick up significantly after 2004, the first year of PJD rule. For municipal taxes, although there is a trend, this is much smoother, and does not show signs of a trend break in 2004: tax collection per inhabitant increased somewhat, but the coming of the PJD did not make such a difference.

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<sup>29</sup> VAT revenues, contrary to the figure above, are lower than average in PJD towns. This is because provinces and rural municipalities are primarily financed with this instrument. Taking this into account, it is natural that our three PJD towns obtain less VAT revenues compared to the total average, even if they obtain more compared to the average of urban municipalities.

**Figure 3: Evolution of Investment Expenditures and Municipal Taxes in the three PJD towns**



Equally revealing are the differences across the different PJD towns. Regarding municipal tax collection, for instance, a slight change in trend can be detected in Ksar al-Kebir in 2005. This is clearly not the case in Oued Zem, where collection of municipal taxes seems to have rather stalled upon the arrival of the PJD.

The differences across PJD towns are most interesting regarding investment expenditures. In Ksar al-Kebir, the change in trend is truly dramatic, from around 20 DH per inhabitant to around 250, a more than 10-fold increase. The increase is also very meaningful for the case of Oued Zem, which started in even lower levels, close to zero, and was investing around 100 DH per inhabitant by 2007. In contrast, there is no apparent evolution in Temara, where investment levels were already substantially higher by the time PJD came to office, and where the figure has been fluctuating during the PJD rule at around 200 DH per inhabitant.

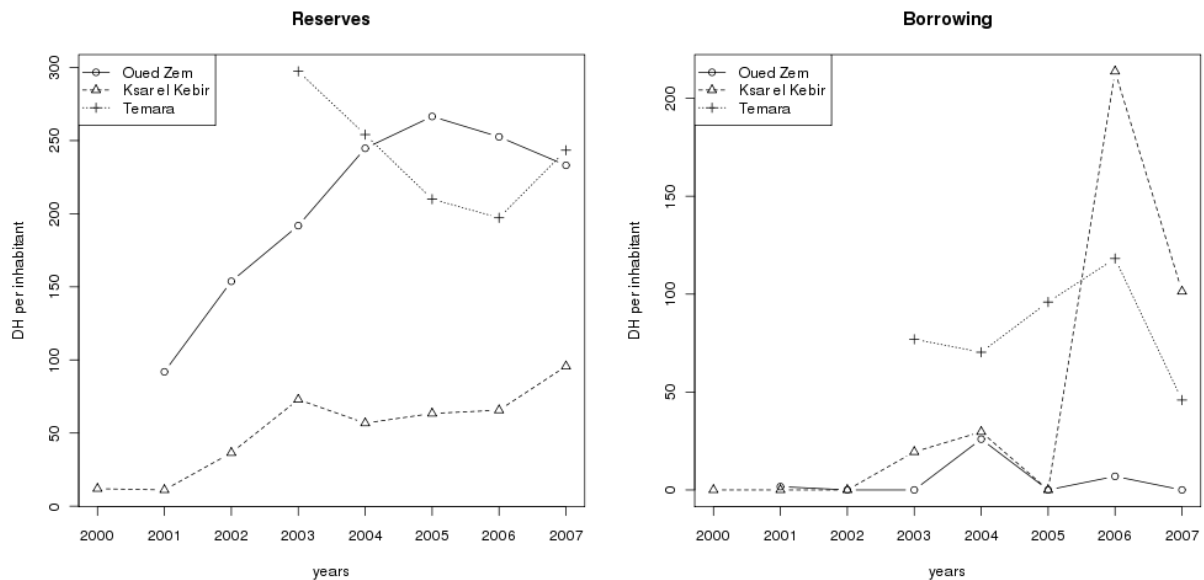
These different evolutions in investment expenditures are highly significant. They appear to have had important electoral implications. Indeed, the number of votes for the PJD remained essentially stable in Temara from the 2003 local elections to the 2007 parliamentary elections. In contrast, in Oued Zem, the figure rose from 3200 to 8160. In Ksar al-Kebir, the increase also appears to have been significant: whereas in 2003, they obtained 40% of the seats, in 2007 they obtained around 11000 votes, with the next force reaching less than 1000. In the latest municipal elections (June 2009), the PJD moreover won absolute majorities in Ksar al-Kebir and Oued Zem (in this case even more than 70 % of seats) but failed to reach it in Temara. Voters, therefore, appear to be judging PJD mayors strongly on visible improvements.

The increase in investment thus paid off, but where did the resources come from? Here, again we can observe significant differences across the PJD-governed towns. Figure 4 shows the evolution of reserves and of borrowing for the three municipalities. The main insight from these figures is that, whereas in Oued Zem, the increase in investment was financed mainly on the basis of reserves, Ksar al-Kebir rather followed the path of borrowing. The left panel of the figure, depicting the evolution of reserves clearly shows how these were increasing steadily up to 2004, at which point they levelled off and then started to fall. Reserves in Ksar al-Kebir, in contrast, were low to start with, so that there was no scope for de cumulating in order to finance investment; reserves were maintained during the PJD tenure of office. Thus, Ksar al-Kebir had to resort to borrowing. The amount borrowed was



actually very large, reaching around 200 DH per inhabitant in 2006. This is around 4 times more than the average for urban municipalities in the nearby year of 2007.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 4: Evolution of Reserves and Borrowing in the three PJD towns**



In sum, the performance of the different PJD governments differs significantly. Ksar al-Kebir appears to be the town where most efforts have been made in good management. Tax collection accelerated slightly and investment levels sky-rocketed. This has had important electoral rewards but carried the cost of borrowing. In Oued Zem, results are mixed: tax collection has not improved, but investment has also increased substantially. No borrowing was needed in this case for the town had high reserves at its disposal. Finally, Temara has witnessed the least changes, although it was also clearly the most developed place, starting from a much better situation, particularly in terms of investment expenditures.

## 5. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The picture that emerges from our analysis of PJD local governance is mixed. The PJD appears to govern in a somewhat different manner than other parties, but their arrival in local government has not been revolutionary. They do not appear to follow the large scale clientelistic, unprogrammatic, inefficient, and distant path that is the norm in Moroccan local governance, but are also far from acting as a unified, programmatic, efficient and clean party of change. This emerges from all the different themes that we have addressed in this paper.

First, the party program and the party national structure only played a relatively minor role. This became apparent, for instance, in the way PJD majors have formed their bureaus. The choice of coalition partners was not made on the basis of programmatic affinity, but by distributing office to potential partners.

Second, clientelism and corruption, although not practised in a large scale have not been completely absent either. Clientelism seems not to be practised in the most obvious ways, such as

<sup>30</sup> No data is available for average urban borrowing for 2006.

through vote buying, but possibly in more ambiguous ways, such as by providing “club goods” that will likely provide electoral returns. As to corruption, even if hard to detect, does not appear to have been performed directly by the PJD, although it seems sensible to consider that PJD may sometimes turn a blind eye on the petty corruption of others.

Third, PJD rule appears to feature more proximity to the people than what is typical in Morocco. It appears very far from the extreme case of majors not living in the towns they govern. But they also seem to be far from a participatory model. Rather, the model followed seems to be one of “top-down”, traditional, proximity.

Finally, the analysis of revenues and expenses shows that PJD mayors have been more efficient than average, but in a selective manner: they have efficiently promoted investment, but have not increased tax collection significantly. This evidence actually links back to the semi-clientelistic practices of the party: The logic behind PJD actions appears to have been clearly electoralist: reward neighbourhoods with investment, without forcing the population to pay the taxes they are supposed to pay.

To be fair, the PJD has not governed these towns alone. They had to make do with, often unreliable coalition partners that pursued their personal interests through their office. Moreover, they had to operate with the existing civil servants, many of which are do not have a level of education necessary to perform their tasks or are not especially motivated to perform their tasks. And, of course, they had to govern within the margin set by the regime. These three factors have surely affected the extent to which the PJD was able to implement its electoral promises.

The fact that PJD has not acted in local governance as a unified party is further revealed in the differences that can be observed across PJD-governed towns. This is clear regarding budget allocations. Whereas Ksar al-Kebir and Oued Zem have seen large increases in investment, this has not been the case in Temara. The two former, in turn, have financed their investments in different ways, with deaccumulation of reserves in the case of Oued Zem, and with borrowing in the case of Ksar al-Kebir. Similarly, some variation appears to be in terms of corruption or, at least, in the notoriety of it, with Temara being the only one with irregularities, according to the court of accounts.

These differences can be due to several factors. First, the starting points of the different municipalities were very different. PJD majors in Oued Zem and Ksar al-Kebir inherited a situation where investment was extremely low, so that raising it was simpler than in Temara, which started with much higher levels. The same applies to the sources of financing, with Oued Zem having much more scope for investment financing out of own reserves than Ksar al-Kebir. Second, the personality, educational background, and political experience of the three mayors may account for some of these differences. Finally, the three towns differ in their strategic importance for the central authorities. Temara stands out particularly for being substantially bigger in size and more strategically situated (next to Rabat and not far from Casablanca) than the other two. This might have limited the scope for action of the mayor of Temara - more than for the others - and could also explain why corruption charges became so notorious. To the extent that this last reason is relevant, a conclusion suggests itself that PJD local governance, not only is at present not revolutionary in its novelty and scope, but that, even if it were, it would not have been allowed to revolutionize the system.

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