

## Sustainable Territorial Development In The Face Of Regional Inequalities In Morocco.

Auteur 1 : BENDOURO Siham.

Auteur 2 : ABDELBAKI Nouredine.

---

### BENDOURO Siham

PhD student

National School of Commerce and Management

University Ibn Tofail, Kénitra, Maroc

### ABDELBAKI Nouredine

Professor Research teacher

National School of Commerce and Management

University Ibn Tofail, Kénitra, Maroc

**Déclaration de divulgation :** L'auteur n'a pas connaissance de quelconque financement qui pourrait affecter l'objectivité de cette étude.

**Conflit d'intérêts :** L'auteur ne signale aucun conflit d'intérêts.

**Pour citer cet article :** BENDOURO .S & ABDELBAKI .N (2024). « Sustainable Territorial Development In The Face Of Regional Inequalities In Morocco », African Scientific Journal « Volume 03, Numéro 27 » pp: 1110 – 1133.

**Date de soumission :** Novembre 2024

**Date de publication :** Décembre 2024



DOI : 10.5281/zenodo.14618235  
Copyright © 2024 – ASJ



---

**Abstract :**

The world has experienced profound economic, social, political and environmental changes. These transformations, marked in particular by economic crises and natural disasters, have had an impact on the development of territories in space and time. Inequalities between territories are observed in many different areas, including the economy, demography, education, health...

The objective of sustainable territorial development is to harmonize economic growth, social justice and environmental protection in the long term. However, given the regional disparities, this problem becomes particularly difficult.

Territorial disparities and inequalities between or within different regions result from many factors and can affect the quality of life, economic opportunities and access to public services in these areas.

This article examines territorial disparities by addressing economic, social, environmental and political dimensions. It studies the elements that affect the growth of territories, such as competitiveness, attractiveness, management and sustainability.

Our interest in the case of Morocco is inherent in the fact that territorial development is at the heart of the country's public policies, particularly through strategies such as advanced regionalization, decentralization and the implementation of structuring projects. However, the country faces specific challenges such as disparities between urban and rural areas, natural resource management (water, agricultural land) and climate change impacts. Studying these challenges in a territorial context can provide insights into resilience and adaptation.

Through a literature review based on the writings relating to the subject of territorial development as well as official reports and studies concerning the case of Morocco, the article highlights the historical evolution of territorial development in Morocco (I), the persistence of territorial disparities in terms of social deficits (II) and the new dynamics of territorial development in Morocco (III).

**Key words:**

Territorial development; Sustainable development; Territorial inequalities; Factors of territorial development, governance, Morocco.

---

**Résumé:**

Le monde a connu de profonds changements économiques, sociaux, politiques et environnementaux. Ces transformations marquées notamment par les crises économiques et les catastrophes naturelles ont impacté le développement des territoires dans l'espace et dans le temps. Des inégalités entre territoires sont observées dans de nombreux domaines différents, notamment l'économie, la démographie, l'éducation, la santé...

L'objectif du développement territorial durable est d'harmoniser la croissance économique, la justice sociale et la protection de l'environnement sur le long terme. Néanmoins, devant les disparités régionales, ce problème devient particulièrement difficile.

Les disparités et inégalités territoriales entre différentes régions ou au sein d'une même région résultent de nombreux facteurs et peuvent affecter la qualité de vie, les opportunités économiques et l'accès aux services publics dans ces zones.

Cette communication examine les disparités territoriales en abordant les dimensions économiques, sociales, environnementales, et politiques. Elle étudie les éléments qui affectent la croissance des territoires, comme la compétitivité, l'attrait, la gestion et la durabilité.

Notre intérêt pour le cas du Maroc est inhérent au fait que le développement territorial est au cœur des politiques publiques du pays, notamment à travers des stratégies comme la régionalisation avancée, la décentralisation et la mise en œuvre de projets structurants. Néanmoins, le pays fait face à des défis spécifiques, tels que les disparités entre les régions urbaines et rurales, la gestion des ressources naturelles (eau, terres agricoles) et les impacts du changement climatique. Étudier ces défis dans un cadre territorial peut apporter des pistes de réflexion sur la résilience et l'adaptation.

A travers une revue de littérature se basant sur les écrits se rapportant au sujet du développement territorial ainsi que les rapports et les études officiels concernant le cas du Maroc, l'article met en lumière l'évolution historique du développement territorial au Maroc (I), la persistance des disparités territoriales en matière de déficits sociaux (II) et la nouvelle dynamique du développement territorial au Maroc (III).

**Mots clés :** Développement territorial ; Développement durable ; Inégalités territoriales ; Facteurs du développement territorial, gouvernance, Maroc.

---

## INTRODUCTION

The world has undergone profound economic, social, political and environmental transformations. These changes have been marked by economic crises and natural disasters. These have had an impact on the development of territories in space and time.

Territorial inequalities between different regions, or within a given region, are the result of multiple factors. These can affect quality of life, economic opportunities and access to public services. Observations exist in various fields, including the economy, demographics, education, health, etc.

In economic terms, inequalities between regions are reflected in differences in income, employment, productivity and access to markets. Some regions may be richer and more prosperous than others. This can lead to migration of workers in search of opportunities.

In social terms, territorial social inequalities translate into disparities in access to public services, notably education, healthcare, housing and social services. In other words, disadvantaged territories may have limited access to essential services, which can exacerbate inequalities.

In terms of physical infrastructure, some regions are better developed than others. The gap lies in economic competitiveness and access to services such as transport and telecommunications.

From an environmental point of view, each region has different characteristics, particularly in terms of air quality and water availability. Environmental problems such as pollution and climate change are constantly impacting health, quality of life and economic development. Territories can also differ in terms of technology adoption, innovation and technology-based economic development.

The existence of spatial differentiation and disparity has meant that the development of territories has taken place at sub-national levels. Territories are no longer seen simply as static geographical spaces, but rather as dynamic levers for action and change. Their development is based on a more inclusive, sustainable and locally adapted approach, which increasingly calls for decentralization of power, with the involvement of local players, including citizen participation, and the need to adopt more holistic approaches.

specific to each territory to maximize its potential while aligning with sustainable development objectives.

The world is thus called upon even more to provide prosperity for its territories, ensuring greater stability in the face of external crises and shocks (economic crises, covid 19 pandemics, natural disasters...).

The advent of the issue of territorial prosperity and sustainability thus leads us to question the mechanisms and factors that need to be implemented in order to embark on and consolidate the path towards equitable, inclusive and sustainable territorial development. In order to meet all these challenges and achieve social prosperity and well-being for our citizens, we need to move away from the physical concept of regional planning towards a development concept that combines sustainable development, good governance and the quest for social equity.

Territorial development is thus attracting growing interest as a means of addressing the various challenges and inequalities experienced by different nations, regions, areas and populations. It sees itself as a useful tool for overcoming challenges and promoting equitable, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Nevertheless, promoting a more balanced and inclusive territorial development that reduces territorial inequalities is a complex challenge for many countries, and requires a targeted and balanced development approach, taking into account the specific needs of each region, and introducing targeted policies and investments.

Development strategies need to take into account the various aspects that make up a territory's originality and specificity, as well as its power of attraction for people and activities; such as history and culture, geographical features and others. This article attempts to flesh out the main factors contributing to territorial development, and is structured in two stages. After presenting the principles of territorial development (origin, definition and theoretical foundations) (I), we will examine the main factors that can influence it, while shedding light on the different approaches to the concept (II). The approach we have developed is designed to analyze the factors involved in territorial development, and to identify those that are likely to have a considerable impact on the development of territories (III).

## **I- HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MOROCCO:**

Territorial development in Morocco has a rich and complex history, characterized by political, economic and social reforms. The development of the Moroccan territory has passed through several phases. Different policies have been implemented in the history of the country with the aim of promoting balanced and sustainable development throughout its territory.

Before the colonial era, Morocco was characterized by a traditional territorial structure based on tribal and regional structures. Historic cities such as Fez, Marrakech and Meknes were places of trade and culture, while rural areas were characterized by agriculture and livestock.

The economy has long been dependent on the country's geographical situation and its colonial past, which has made it vulnerable and generally vulnerable to poverty and the demands of growth in Morocco.

Morocco's geography, which is characterized by three distinct areas (central semi-desert and desert), has a development problem, notably in the semi-desert and desert regions. However, the central region has all the conditions needed for agriculture, economic growth, urbanization and industrialization, especially along the Atlantic axis.

During the colonial period, Morocco was influenced by France and Spain, which had a profound impact on the country's territorial development, particularly in terms of administrative division and infrastructure. During the colonial era, Morocco was divided into zones of French and Spanish influence, with a centralized administration under the leadership of the colonial authorities. This period was characterized by economic disparity and concentration of resources. Unfortunately, the colonial forces have concentrated their economic activities in Casablanca, creating a gap between a prosperous and a neglected « useful and useless Morocco », leaving the rest of the country marginalized. After independence, Morocco was confronted with many economic, social and environmental problems resulting from the concentration of wealth in Casablanca, due to imbalances, incomplete urbanization, regional disparities, the improvement of housing conditions due to external and land- based development, capital flight and investment opportunities. It is imperative to introduce effective measures to address these problems and promote a more equitable and prosperous economy for all Moroccans.

After its independence in 1956, Morocco implemented development policies aimed at modernizing the economy and reducing regional inequalities through investment in infrastructure, agriculture, education and health, and the promotion of industrialization and urbanization. It has also undertaken reforms to establish a modern administrative system, dividing the country into regions and province. Over the following decades, the Moroccan government has been launching ambitious territorial development policies aimed at reducing regional disparities. Territorial inequalities will persist after independence due to the failure of some public policy decisions and the lack of effective coordination between the different actors. Efforts to include industrialization, agriculture and infrastructural programs in different regions as the national territory is divided into multiple local territories with each its own specificities. Economic development plans were implemented from the 1960s to the 1990s, focusing on the modernization of infrastructure, the promotion of growth in industry and the increase of agricultural productivity. Rural development and regionalization policies were implemented in 1970 and 1980 to reduce poverty and promote food self-sufficiency in rural areas. This included land reform initiatives, irrigation programs and local development programs.

From 1980 to 1990, decentralization policies were adopted, giving greater autonomy to regions and local authorities.

Indeed, since independence, the development models adopted in Morocco have encouraged a top-down approach to development, and it was not until the early 1990s that the country firmly committed itself to a territorial approach to development.

Since the 1990s, Morocco has experienced important economic, social and political changes which have had an impact on the regions of the country and have led to regionalization and the recognition of important national priorities. Public action in the field of “territorial” has made progress at both strategic (policy development) and institutional (actors) levels Anchoring a new philosophy of development and spatial planning in Morocco with special attention to the regions.

**S. PLANEL** 2009 states that the constitutional revision of 1996 a brings Morocco into an era of change marked by profound economic, social and political transformations whose impact felt at the territorial level. In economic terms, the transformations have focused on the modernization and competitiveness of the Moroccan economy’s players in international trade. In terms of societal transformations, development efforts have focused mainly on housing,

access to services and employment as accelerated urbanization has led to changes in social practices and relations. Finally, political transformations, with a will to decentralize the state apparatus and recognize political pluralism.”

Several constitutional and institutional reforms have followed this new vision, establishing local authorities as the main actors in territorial development by assigning them ever-wider powers and responsibilities. The objective was to strengthen the decentralization and regionalization process in order to establish the foundations of effective governance that will allow the coordination of the different actors in the implementation of projects in the territories in order to better meet local expectations.

The decentralization and regionalization policies of Morocco have been implemented since the 1990s to strengthen local governance and promote regional development. This involved the establishment of administrative areas, the conferring of powers on local authorities and the promotion of citizen participation in decision-making.

The end of the 1990s marked a new territorial configuration, which led to the transformation of the state. The new public policies of spatial planning convey a new relationship to territories. In 1998, the Ministry responsible for land use planning, the environment, urban planning and housing was created. Between 1999 and 2001, the first national debate on spatial planning was held and in 2000, the national spatial plan was drawn up. The overall objective of SNAT was to implement a territorial development approach based on the specific characteristics, the specific characteristics and the dynamics of each territory. This approach is based on the principles of social equity, economic efficiency and resource sustainability. The plan defined priority sectors and territories requiring medium- and long-term investment efforts and interventions. (25 years).

From the 2000s, the concept of territorial development is being redefined. Morocco has taken the path of territorial development as one of its priorities. Indeed, since that time, the strengthening of public action in the territory can only testify to the national will to move from a purely physical conception of the development of territories to a conception marrying good governance of these territories, sustainable development and achieving a certain level of social equity.



The year 2004 saw the holding of the first session of the Superior Council for Spatial Planning and the production of reference documents, namely the National Charter for Spatial Planning and the creation of three regional development agencies (ADR) (North, East, South), the regional investment centers and the 16 regions.

And in order to fight poverty and social exclusion and get the urban or rural population out of poverty is to allow them to have income-generating activities (AGR), the Mohamed VI Foundation for Solidarity was created and the National Initiative for Human Development was set up.

We have indeed moved from a physical design of land use planning to a design that combines sustainable development, good governance of territories and the search for social equity as highlighted by ADIDI 2011 quoted by Y. TACHFINE 2020.

In 2011, a constitutional reform was adopted in Morocco, introducing the concept of "advanced regionalization". The aim of this reform is to give the regions greater political, administrative and financial autonomy, with a view to promoting balanced territorial development and strengthening citizen participation.

The constitution has been an important step in the territorial development of Morocco, reinforcing administrative decentralization and promoting a participatory approach to shaping the future of the country.

Changes in the country at all levels have had an impact on the relationship between the state and its territory. The opening to external influences, decentralization and the emergence of civil society have restructured public policies, which are now co-produced by the state and its partners.

Currently, Morocco is undergoing a transition in all senses of the word: demographic, economic, social, political and territorial. It is at a crossroads because of globalization and the globalization of trade, which require it to bring order to its territory by strengthening the competitiveness of its cities and regions.

In recent years, Morocco has made a commitment to promote sustainable and inclusive development through its 2030 Plan for Sustainable Development, which focuses on poverty reduction, Preserving the environment and promoting social equity across the country.

This development demonstrates the growing importance of territorial development in Morocco, as well as the ongoing efforts to strengthen local governance and promote balanced and sustainable development.

## **II- PERSISTENCE OF TERRITORIAL DISPARITIES IN THE MATTER OF SOCIAL DEFICITS:**

Over the years, successive governments in Morocco have been working to rebuild the country and revitalize its economy. Various plans have been introduced, such as the 1960's five-year plan which puts emphasis on agriculture and industry, and the 1972 plan which emphasized the strategic allocation of projects and resources.

Since the early 2000s, successive governments have put in place several development plans and reforms to stimulate economic growth, improve infrastructure, and strengthen the country's institutions, including the Green Morocco Plan launched in 2008 to modernize and develop the agricultural sector, the Emergency Plan launched in 2009, which aims to promote economic growth through diversification of key sectors such as industry, tourism and services, the Plan Halieutic launched in 2009 and aims to modernize and develop the fishing sector in Morocco with a focus on sustainability, added value and job creation as well as the National Human Development Plan which aims at poverty reduction, Improving access to basic social services, and strengthening human capital.

In the context of the territorialization of public action, Morocco has undertaken during the same period, the development of «integrated projects on the territory». With the declared aim of strengthening the attractiveness and competitiveness of the territories, sectoral strategies<sup>1</sup> and territorialized programs have been set up with the contribution of the State, public enterprises and local authorities. The creation of a few growth poles and business areas has also allowed for the development of activities and employment in some territories of the country; Tangier and Rabat-Salé-Kenitra.

Considering tourism as a key sector for territorial development, Morocco has also invested in the promotion of less well-known regions, to strengthen their attractiveness and increase the flow of tourists.

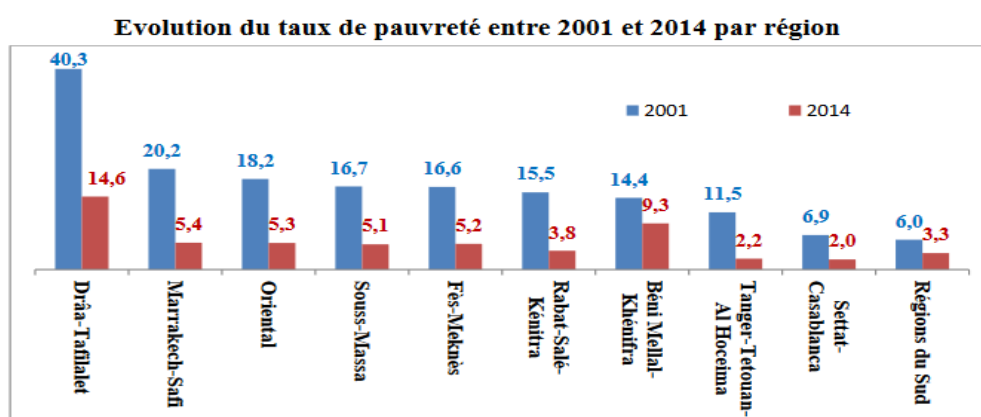
---

<sup>1</sup> Plan Maroc Vert (2008-2020) dans l'agriculture, le Plan Rawaj (2008-2020) dans le commerce, le Plan Halieutis (2009-2020) dans la pêche, la Stratégie énergétique (2009-2030), la Vision 2020 pour le tourisme (2010-2020), le Plan d'Accélération Industrielle (2009-2015) et (2014-2020) et la Stratégie de promotion de la logistique (2015-2030).

Territorial development policies also aim to reduce social inequalities by promoting access to education, health and employment and supporting disadvantaged populations. In parallel, the reforms undertaken by the country have affected different systems, including the education system , **aimed at improving the quality of education, strengthening vocational training and promoting the employability of young people, the health system to improve access to healthcare, modernize medical infrastructure, and strengthen medical coverage as well as a reform** of the business environment to simplify administrative procedures, Reduce barriers to investment, and encourage entrepreneurship.

Inequalities in the level of development of regions in economic, social, cultural and even digital areas can also manifest themselves within cities (differences in equipment between neighborhoods...). Their measurement and evaluation make it possible to compare the level of development of territorial entities and reveal situations of imbalance between these entities. These disparities are measured by social indicators such as illiteracy, school enrolment, water and electricity connections and others.

The structuring programs and projects that have been implemented in the country have certainly made it possible to reduce considerably social and territorial inequalities. The share of poor and vulnerable people in the overall population has been reduced from 38.1% in 2001 to 12.5% in 2014. The national poverty rate decreased significantly between 2001 and 2014 in different regions of the country, <sup>2</sup> as illustrated by the following graph.



Source : HCP, ENCDM 2001 et 2014

<sup>2</sup> Inégalités sociales et territoriales HCP Inégalités sociales et territoriales à la lumière des résultats de l'Enquête Nationale sur la Consommation et les Dépenses des Ménages 2014

However, these strategies and major projects were more in line with the prospect of integrating the Moroccan economy into the globalization of trade and production; since they do not go up from the territory and do not meet precisely its development needs. Indeed, despite the projects and plans for a change which covers all sectors and areas of activity, the initiatives undertaken since the early 2000s have not achieved the expected results. One of the main reasons is that these strategies have been imposed by central government, but not because of specific regional and local needs. As a result, they have not responded effectively to specific challenges that are faced with different policies. Indeed, to stimulate economic development and connectivity between regions, promote balanced territorial development, reduce regional inequalities, and improve the quality of life in all regions of the country, Morocco has invested heavily in major infrastructure projects, such as highways, ports, airports and rail transport networks, and has put in place national and local strategies.

Despite efforts to plan and implement the various development strategies, implementation has been limited. While growth has helped to reduce poverty in all regions, its impact on inequality has varied across regions. The level of subjective poverty is still high, especially in rural areas. According to the simulations of the World Bank and the High Commission for the 2017 Plan, “The reduction in poverty is mainly due to the rise in household consumption: about 90% of this decline is explained by growth, compared with only 10% by a slight decrease in inequality”. The World Bank reports that despite the improvement in living standards and the concomitant reduction of poverty and vulnerability that Morocco experienced between 2001 and 2014, subjective poverty remains high, especially in rural areas. The study certifies that poverty in Morocco has decreased between 2001 and 2014, but reveals that changes in living standards during the same period attest to a convergence among the country’s twelve administrative regions. The pace of regional disparities has not been the same in different territories and regions. The initial reduction of regional disparities in Morocco, which is growing at an annual rate of 4%, could therefore take another 24 years.

Despite the planning and implementation efforts of the State, the study showed that inequality has slightly decreased but not in all regions. The Gini coefficient improved somewhat between 2001 and 2014, from 40.6 to 39.5, as two counterbalancing trends: convergence among regions in terms of development and worsening regional inequalities in some regions. Inequality has actually increased in some cases (as in the regions of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, from 39.9 to 44.2,

and in the South, from 35 to 40.2) while it has decreased in others (Casablanca, Marrakech-Safi and Souss-Massa).”

The National Survey of Household Consumption and Expenditure (ENCDM) revealed that in 2014, nearly 1,605,000 Moroccans had an annual level of spending below the poverty line, a poverty rate of 4.8% at the national level. Almost 79.4% of them live in rural areas, or 1,275,000 people, and the incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas (9.5%) than in urban areas (1.6%). The final consumption expenditure of households per capita, on the other hand, shows significant disparities between regions. The total expenditure of the richest 10% of households was 11.8 times that of the poorest 10% in 2014<sup>3</sup>.

Despite efforts to plan and implement the Said The need for reduction of territorial and social disparities at the national level has been stressed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in several speeches:

"... while Morocco has made clear, globally recognized progress, the national development model is now proving incapable of meeting the pressing demands and growing needs of its citizens, to reduce categorical and territorial disparities and achieve social justice... "4.

"... The extent of the social deficit and the ways in which social and territorial justice is achieved are among the main reasons that led us to call, in the opening speech of the Parliament, for a renewal of the national development model”5.

The work of advanced regionalization initiated by His Majesty King Mohamed VI from 2010 and implemented in 2015, aimed to make the region an important framework for the implementation of territorial policies; through the transfer of powers, financial and human resources to local authorities, who have become key players in the development and implementation of territorial development strategies and programs in partnership with central government, the private sector and citizens.

---

<sup>3</sup> Résultats de l'enquête nationale sur la consommation et les dépenses des ménages, Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2014

<sup>4</sup> Discours, du 13 octobre 2017, adressé par Sa Majesté Le Roi Mohammed VI aux membres des deux Chambres du Parlement à l'occasion de l'ouverture de la première session de la deuxième année législative de la 10ème législature

<sup>5</sup> le Discours de sa Majesté le Roi Mohamed VI adressé à la nation, le 29 juillet 2018, à l'occasion de la fête du Trône,

In the same vein, measures have been taken to encourage local and foreign investment in the regions, including tax benefits and incentives for companies that favor setting up in certain geographical areas. Over the past decade, Morocco has also been working to promote sustainable territorial development by focusing on environmental conservation, natural resource management and renewable energy promotion. The government has put in place a National Development Strategy for the period 2015-2030.

The evaluation carried out by professionals in the various sectors responsible for these programs and projects, tries to highlight conclusive results, including an increase in the power of investments, An increase in production and value chains of the various sectors, and the improvement of living conditions for the workforce in each sector. Nevertheless, the assessments of the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES 2019) have shown that economic growth has slowed down over the period 2014-2018 to 3The EU's European Social Fund is a global fund for the development of employment and training, which is expected to grow by 1% on average per year, and this growth is mainly driven by household consumption and public investment, and remains both a source of precarious or low-skilled jobs and inequality.

The advent of the health crisis Covid19, has further deepened the social inequalities felt at the level of the country's territory. The HCP (High Commissioner For Planning) concludes in its study that by 2022<sup>6</sup>, Morocco is back to the level of poverty and vulnerability of 2014 and that nearly seven years of progress towards eliminating poverty and vulnerability have been lost. The country has been experiencing since 2019 a decline in living standards, which is inherent to the health crisis and inflation and which has resulted in an increase in social inequalities, poverty and vulnerability<sup>7</sup>. According to the HCP, the standard of living has fallen by 2.2% annually over this period, by 2% in urban areas and by 2.6% in rural areas.

The persistence of regional disparities was revealed by HCP and CES. According to the data from both authorities, the national economy has certainly recorded a growth of 8% in 2021, after a year marked by a deep recession of 7.2% due to the health crisis. However, only four regions were able to achieve growth rates above the national average (8%). These are the Fes-

---

<sup>6</sup> HCP Évolution des inégalités sociales dans un contexte marqué par les effets de la covid-19 et de la hausse des prix" ;2022

<sup>7</sup> Social inequalities, as measured by the Gini index, rose over this period by almost two percentage points, from 38.5% to 40.3% at national level, from 37.2% to 39.1% in urban areas and from 30.2% to 31.9% in rural areas. The incidence of absolute poverty has increased from 1.7% in 2019 to 3% in 2021 at national level, from 3.9% to 6.8% in rural areas and from 0.5% to 1% in urban areas. At the same time, economic vulnerability has increased significantly: the vulnerability rate rose from 7.3% in 2019 to 10% in 2021 at national level, from 11.9% to 17.4% in rural areas and from 4.6% to 5.9% in urban areas

Meknes region (12.7%), Beni Mellal-Khenifra (10.4%), Tangier-Tetuán-Al Hoceima (8.7%) and Marrakech-Safi (8.5%).

The CESE (Conseil Economique Social Et Environmental) stresses that “Despite the efforts and progress made by the public authorities, striking inequalities persist and prolong the imbalance that marked the chances of access of regions to economic and social development in our country which, under the effect of the new division of regions The redefinition of geographical areas which define new regions is even taking place. Updated statistical data show that four regions (Casablanca-Settat; Rabat-Salé-Kenitra; Souss-Massa and Fes-Meknes) account for 63.8% of the national Gross domestic product (GDP) compared to 47.4% under the old classification”.

At the regional level, the poverty rate is higher than the national average in the regions of Draa-Tafilalet (14.6%), Beni-Mellal-Khénifra (9.3%), Marrakech-Safi (5.4%), Oriental (5.3%), Fes-Meknes (5.2%) and Souss-Massa (5.1%). These regions comprise 74% of the total poor population. The rural areas most affected by poverty are the regions of Drâa-Tafilalet (20.6%), Beni-Mellal-Khénifra (14.7%), Fes-Meknes (10.5%) and Oriental (9.9%). These rural areas have a poverty rate above the rural average (9.5%) and account for 44.3% of the poor population. The rural area of Marrakech-Safi, where almost 15% of the poor population live, is the main contributor to rural poverty.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the inequalities in the territory of the different Moroccan regions in terms of digital infrastructures also risk marginalizing part of the current population in terms of access to public services and market services in line.

As the advance H. AKDIM 2020 Digital inequalities risk widening the gap between developed and less developed territories, especially with regard to access and use of adequate and useful resources.

Several determining factors explain these disparities including geography (reliefs, soil quality, mountains, climate, presence of water...), historical heritage (colonization triggered a process of urbanization of the coastline to the detriment of the interior) and public policies conducted with a sectoral rather than territorial approach.

According to M. JAFARI and N. EL MOUJADDIDI 2016, the main cause of these social disparities is that strategies have been dropped from the center to the local without the latter



being connected with the territory concerned and its actors. The latter did not participate in its design and implementation. These strategies were territorialized and not designed with a territorial approach. The author concludes that the territory was and will remain the origin of the problem of socio-economic development in Morocco. The spatial organization in Morocco where the territories show a very large divergence in terms of location of activities and population. L.BADRI 2020 argues that Moroccan metropolises (essentially the metropolis of Casablanca and its region) occupy an important place in the country's territorial configuration; This has contributed to further inequalities in the distribution of wealth and population on part of the national territory.

Facing the challenge of a balanced territorialization between the Moroccan regions and to face regional disparities and highlight the development potential of the rural world, in accordance with the High Royal Instructions, a program to reduce territorial and social disparities (PRDTS 2017-2023 ) is based on three important components, namely the basic socio-economic infrastructure through its five axes (bridging the gap, education, health, water and electrification), economic programs and projects aimed at improving the incomes of populations and major structural projects such as motorways, tourism or energy projects... Part of the human development initiative, this program targets 29,000 douars (villages) in 1,272 municipality and aims mainly to subsidize the needs of the populations of certain mountainous or landlocked areas, Reducing disparities in access to basic infrastructure, equipment and local services and strengthening the convergence of sectoral actions, for an envelope of 50 billion.

Projects carried out in the framework of a partnership between different ministerial departments, institutions, regions and local authorities have contributed to a qualitative improvement of the territorial level of the target communities. For example, the number of communities with all basic services increased from 502 in 2016 to 743 at the end of 2023, an increase of 48%. The rate of enrolment in rural areas, especially among girls, has also increased and reached 60% in the targeted areas, an increase of 15% compared to 2017, in addition to the 16% reduction in the time required to reach places of schooling.

Certainly, over the past decade, the Kingdom has made the fight against territorial and social disparities a priority of public policies. However, territorial development in Morocco is a complex and constantly evolving subject as the country strives to promote balanced and sustainable economic growth in all its regions. Each region of the country should benefit from economic growth and improved quality of life. However, challenges remain, such as reducing



disparities between urban and rural areas, creating jobs, and fighting poverty in certain areas of the country. In short, it is worth mentioning that Morocco has certainly made undeniable progress, both economically and socially as well as major structuring projects for the development of basic infrastructure and urban upgrading. However, the current development model has proved to be inadequate to meet the growing expectations of the population.

### **III- TOWARDS A NEW DYNAMIC OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MOROCCO**

Despite the progress made by Morocco in terms of development at the national level, such as the reduction of poverty, improved access to basic infrastructure and support for income-generating activities, the disparities in development between the 12 regions within the regions and between urban and rural areas still persist. The latter face significant inadequacies in terms of access to social services, infrastructure and facilities.

In order to face the economic, social and environmental challenges that its territory must face, Morocco has adopted an integrated territorial approach to strengthen the development and competitiveness of the territory and respond even more effectively to the expectations of its inhabitants.

The current development model still suffers from significant shortcomings in terms of growth, inclusion, solidarity, equal opportunities and sustainability as a result, as identified by the EESC 2019, the increasing polarization of society and the erosion of citizens' confidence in government, administration and intermediate bodies.

The IRES 2019 study also revealed that the country's development process suffers from some remaining challenges that are holding back its economic emergence. To meet these challenges, it was necessary to identify the paths that must be taken to implement a model of inclusive development, competitive and promoting a real emergence of Morocco, offering opportunities to all citizens, creating quality jobs and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The 2021 NMD (New Model of Developpement) report reveals that “despite reforms and public programs in several areas, Morocco has not been able to consolidate its development momentum and that fragilities are evident at various levels”;

In order to reduce social inequalities by alleviating the vulnerabilities caused by the changes that have marked the socio-economic context of the country over the past two decades, Morocco, following a royal will, has set out a roadmap to promote a new development model (NDM) for promoting equitable, inclusive and sustainable development in the country. Published in May 2021, the new development model is a new development framework that proposes four main transformation axes to achieve sustained progress at economic, human, social and territorial levels by 2035.

According to A. ABDOUH 2021, this is a model that aims not only to review the content but also the approaches, instruments and actors of the development process.

This is a set of economic, social and political reforms undertaken to diversify the Moroccan economy, strengthen international competitiveness, create jobs, improve access to basic services such as education and health, and promote social inclusion and the improvement of citizens' living conditions.

In the economic field, Morocco seeks to diversify its economy and promote sectors such as industry, information technologies, tourism and renewable energy to reduce dependence on traditional sectors such as agriculture and ensure a productive economy that creates wealth and jobs.

It has been necessary to move from the sectoral approach of territories, problems and policies, in order to give priority to a global approach, integrating the physical, economic and social dimensions of development and project and allowing equity to be established, social cohesion and inclusiveness, as well as the sustainability of territories.

This approach involves the mobilization and involvement of all territorial actors in the implementation of a strategic vision linking the different scales of the territories.

Through an integrated approach, the country has taken the path of sustainability in its territory. This territorial, multisectoral approach based on a coordination of the actors at different strategic levels and concerns all actions and priorities falling under the three pillars of sustainable development: environmental, social, economic.

Given that territorial development in Morocco is increasingly based on the principle of "Territorial Intelligence" which, according to I. BOUCHIDA and A. AZOUGAGH 2023,

consists of putting all the private and public territorial actors into a homogeneous and effective network in order to achieve pre-established results and objectives. The country may need a new development model to meet the evolving needs of society, adapt to global economic realities, optimize resources, build resilience, to improve its governance and meet the aspirations of its people.

The CES confirms that Morocco has important assets on which it can build to accelerate its development. Its wealth is mainly in its material and immaterial capital, its history, its international influence and its geographical position at the crossroads of civilizations. The country has demonstrated real resilience, in a context of multifaceted regional crises, thanks to the keystone that represents the Moroccan monarchical institution. Over the past two decades, Morocco has made significant progress in economic development, welfare for citizens and the construction of modern infrastructure. With its strengths and achievements, the country now has the right to aspire to a greater development ambition centered on the citizen and conducive to more economic growth.

In order to address several economic and social challenges, Morocco launched in 2021 a new model of economic and social development for the period 2021-2035 to promote sustainable economic growth, inclusive job creation, and improved well-being social welfare for the population as a whole. This model aims to transform the country in depth through several strategies whose objectives are economic diversification, employment promotion, improving access to social services, promoting sustainable development and environmental protection, as well as strengthening governance. The model targets, on the one hand, economic diversification that will allow the country to reduce its dependence on traditional sectors such as agriculture and stimulate growth in higher value-added sectors such as manufacturing, Information and communication technologies, tourism, and renewable energies. It should be noted that the agricultural sector employs 40% of the Moroccan working population but contributes only 12 to 15% of GDP (national Gross domestic) product and uses 80% of water resources, which is a great challenge in view of the severity of water stress and climate change sector and the income generated are even more vulnerable.

The model also focuses on promoting employment, especially for young people and women, and supporting entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprise development. A productive structural economy should be based on the harmonious development of the industrial sector with that of services, which could constitute the real engine of future growth and could

provide more quality jobs for the populations, reduce social and spatial inequalities, and thereby improve living standards, including by promoting the development of urban and rural middle classes.

The transformation process involves the liberalization of entrepreneurial initiative, improving competitiveness, directing private investment and enhancing the social economy. Measures are taken to encourage entrepreneurship and support small and medium-sized enterprises through favorable tax policies and financing programs.

On the other hand, this model prioritizes the development of modern and efficient infrastructures in the areas of transport, energy, water and sanitation, education and health, as well as improving access to basic social services such as education, health, housing and social services, with a particular emphasis on rural areas and deprived neighborhoods. The development of transport infrastructure, telecommunications, energy and water will both support economic growth and improve citizens' quality of life.

On another note, the model is based on encouraging innovation and technological development by fostering collaboration between companies, universities and research centers, and investing in digital skills.

The promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection are important components of the new model, with a focus on natural resource management, climate change, and clean and renewable energy. In parallel, the new model includes reforms to strengthen governance and the effectiveness of public institutions, promote transparency and accountability, and combat corruption.

Promoting the economic and social inclusion of vulnerable populations, one of the primary objectives of the new development model which provides for the establishment of social programs to combat poverty, Improving access to basic health care and social services. The proposed reforms promote the inclusion and development of young people, strengthening women's empowerment in social protection of the poor to strengthen resilience and participation of all Moroccans in the national dynamics of development.

Reforms are also being undertaken to improve the quality of education, promote technical and vocational education, and adapt curricula to the needs of the labor market in order to strengthen human capital and encourage citizens to participate in their country's development and its integration into the knowledge economy.

---

## CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, it may be argued that the implementation of this model requires sustained efforts, significant investments and effective coordination between public and private actors as well as strengthening local governance and promoting regional development.

With the new development model, territories are called upon to become even more a source of wealth creation and anchor the principles of resource sustainability and resilience in the face of the effects of crises and climate change.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<p><b>ADR:</b> regional development agencies (agence de developement régional)</p> <p><b>AGR :</b> income-generating activities (activités génératrices de revenus)</p> <p><b>CESE:</b> conseil économique et social et environmental</p> <p><b>GDP :</b> national Gross domestic product (PIB :produit international brut)</p> <p><b>ENCDM:</b> National Survey of Household Consumption and Expenditure</p> <p><b>IRES:</b> Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (institut royal des études stratégiques)</p> <p><b>HCP:</b> High Commissioner for Planning (haut commissariat au plan)</p> <p><b>NMD:</b> New Model of Development (Nouveau Model De Développement)</p> <p><b>PRDTS :</b> program to reduce territorial and social disparities ( Programme de réduction des disparités territoriales et sociales).</p>
--

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. **Abdouh. A. 2021.**Le nouveau modèle de développement au Maroc : La question de la politique de l'habitat social dans la nouvelle doctrine de l'Aménagement de territoire.. halshs-03437456
2. **Aiello, F., Pupo, V., & Ricotta, F. (2014).** Explaining Total Factor Productivity at Firm Level in Italy: Does Location Matter? *Spatial Economic Analysis*, 9(1), 51–70.
3. **Akdim .H. (Janvier 2020).** Le numérique, outil d'inclusion territoriale et de l'émergence des nouvelles opportunités entrepreneuriales : cas au Sud-Est Marocain ., *Revue Espace Geographique Et Societe Marocaine* .
4. **Bahers, J.B (2014).** Territorial metabolism and recovery-recycling cahin : the example of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) in the Midi-Pyreness region. *Développement Durables et Territoire*, 5(1).
5. **Baudelle, G., Guy, C., & Mérenne-Shoumaker, B. (2011).** Le développement territorial : fondements, mesure et démarche. In *Le développement territorial en Europe*, 29-48.
6. **Benabdelhadi, A. (2017).** La compétitivité territoriale : l'expérience de l'Agence de Développement de l'Oriental. *Revue Organisation et Territoires*, 3.
7. **Banque mondiale et le Haut-commissariat au Plan. 2017.** La pauvreté au Maroc : défis et opportunités Publié conjointement en 2017. Disponible sur <https://www.banquemonddiale.org/fr/country/morocco/publication/poverty-in-morocco-challenges-and-opportunities>
8. **Boidin. B et Djeflat.A. 2009.** Spécificités et perspectives du développement durable dans les pays en développement . [Mondes en développement 2009/4 \(n° 148\)](#), pages 7 à 14 .
9. **Caselle, C., Bonetto, S.M.R., Bechis, S et al (2020).** An interdisciplinary approach to the Sustainable Management of Territorial Resources in Hodh el Chargui, Mauritania. *Sustainability*. 12(12).
10. **Decoster, D.P. (2014).** Why is it tame trust between all to cultivate a process of local sustainable development ? *Local Environment*, 21, 31-35.
11. **Déprés, C., & Vollet, D. (2015).** Management of institutional change in the field of agricultural sewage sludge spreading in France: A double dependence from exogenous and learning factors | La gestion du changement institutionnel en matière d'épandage agricole des boues d'épuration en France, une double dépendance aux facteurs exogènes et aux apprentissages territoriaux antérieurs. *Territoire en Mouvement*, (25-26), 37–51.

12. **Fomperie, F. Maillefert M, and Martinez,E. (2023).** Patrimonialization and sustainability of the territorial conventional regime in Romans-sur-isere :Towards a conventionalist approach of territorial development. *Développement Durables et Territoires*. 14(1)
13. **Gallez, C. (2014).** Contrats de développement territorial in the Grand Paris project : towards negotiated networked development ? *European Planning Studies* , 22(2), 273-286.
14. **Gianfaldoni, P., & Manoury, L. (2021).** Le paradigme du développement territorial durable : les impulsions de l'économie sociale et solidaire. 57e Colloque de l'ASRDLF Territoire(s) et Numérique.
15. **HCP . 2022.** Évolution des inégalités sociales dans un contexte marqué par les effets de la covid-19 et de la hausse des prix" .
16. **Ibourk, A., & Raoui, S. (2022).** Impact of cooperative entrepreneurship on territorial humain develoment in Morocco- Spatial analysis. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 49(6), 914-929.
17. **IRES. MAI 2019 .**Rapport de synthèse de la rencontre sur le theme : Quel modèle de développement pour le Maroc ? Les points de convergence de l'institut royal des etudes Strategiques et du groupe principal des partenaires au MAROC. RABAT, 27
18. **Lemgadar . A, & Lakrari . Y. (2023).** The regional fact and the trend towards regionalization: What lessons for the Moroccan model? ISSN: 2658-8455.Volume 4, Issue 2-1, pp. 338-358.[www.ijafame.org](http://www.ijafame.org)
19. **Lusso, B. (2014).** Factors of the moving image sector emergence and sustainability in the Lille, Lyon and Marseille metropolitan areas | Les facteurs d'émergence et de pérennisation du secteur de l'image en mouvement dans les aires métropolitaines de Lille, de Lyon et de Marseille. *Territoire en Mouvement*, (23-24), 75–91.
20. **Melo, J. B. (2015).** The intersection of race, class, and ethnicity in agrarian inequalities, identities, and the social resistance of peasants in Colombia. *Spatial Economic Analysis*, 63(7), 1017-1036.
21. **Nachoui, M. (2018).** Aménagement et développement du territoire au Maroc : contexte et vision. *Revue Espaces Géographiques et Société Marocaine*, 20-21.
22. **Niang, A., & Bourdin, S., & Torre, A. (2020).** Circular economy, what development challenges for the territories ?. *Développement Durable et Territoires*, 11(1).



- 
23. **Pecqueur, B. (2013).** Territorial development: A new approach to development processes for the economies of the developing countries. *Revista Internacional Interdisciplinar INTERthesis*, 10(2).
  24. **Pecqueur, B. (2014).** Le développement territorial : Une réponse émergente à la mondialisation. Éditions Charles Léopold Mayer. Essai n° 204.
  25. **Pecqueur, B. (2015).** Le développement territorial : une nouvelle approche des processus de développement pour les économies du Sud, 295-316.
  26. **Poirot, J., & Gérardin, H. (2010).** L'attractivité des territoires : un concept multidimensionnel. *Mondes en Développement*, 149, 27-41.
  27. **Rhami, Z. (2022).** Le Maroc au présent : dynamiques territoriales et politiques publiques. Open Edition Book.
  28. **Taghouti, Y., & Abdelbaki, N. (2023).** Les déterminants du développement territorial dans les pays en développement : revue de littérature. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management and Economics - IJAFAME*, 4(1-1).
  29. **Torre, A. (2015).** Territorial development theory. *Géographie, économie, société*, 17(3), 273-288.
  30. **Torre, A. (2018).** Les moteurs du développement territorial. *Revue d'Économie Régionale & Urbaine*, 4, 711-736.