

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.12426996

THE POLITICAL STANCES OF FAMILIES AND THE COURSE OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOUNTAINOUS AREAS OF THE BENI MELLAL- KHENIFRA REGION

Younes Seif Ennasr^{1*}, Hamid Khatrani¹, Khalid El Alaoui¹, Ijja Boumzil², Manal Brik²,
Hicham El bouazzaoui², Mouad Ibourk², Said Sghir²

¹. *Laboratory of Spatial Planning, Environment and Sustainable Development, Department of Geography, Hassan I University, Settat, Morocco. Email: y.seif@uhp.ac.ma*

². *Dynamic Laboratory for Landscapes, Risks and Heritage, Department of Geography, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Beni Mellal, Morocco.*

Received: 15/09/2025

Accepted: 14/04/2026

Corresponding Author: Younes Seif Ennasr

(y.seif@uhp.ac.ma)

ABSTRACT

Political engagement offers a democratic avenue for advancing development in the mountainous regions of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region, through elections that provide an opportunity to elect representatives capable of improving and enhancing the standard of territorial development. However, this is hampered by a local population that is unaware of the importance of elections and lacks impartiality, and by elected representatives who lack the genuine will and sufficient knowledge to manage local affairs in a democratic and rational manner. This perpetuates the fragility of mountainous areas, deepens spatial, economic and social disparities, depletes them of their resources and inhabitants, and creates unstable regions.

KEYWORDS: Mountains, Territorial Development, Elections, Fragility, Democracy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. General Introduction

Political mechanisms are key factors in the development of mountainous areas, within the framework of territorial governance, by regulating the relationship between the local population and territorial stakeholders. The activation of political, institutional and democratic aspects is a societal necessity, requiring a clear and explicit political agreement through the adoption of a set of mutually agreed powers, which will enable the realisation of true democracy in the mountains of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region. This involves strengthening the political participation of mountain communities, boosting their trust in institutions, and making these institutions a cornerstone of development in mountainous areas. Political participation requires a thorough understanding of the principles, dimensions and objectives of such participation, as well as its implications for the development process.

Territorial governance requires a set of criteria for its success in the short, medium and long term, reflected in the presence of actors capable of fostering development based on the specific characteristics of the mountains, in line with the aspirations of the local population. This can only be achieved by selecting actors based on impartial judgement aimed at choosing the right person for the right role, free from political, economic, social or ideological pressures.

The political stances of families influence the selection of suitable or unsuitable actors based on criteria set by these families, leading to positive or negative changes in the mountainous region depending on these stances. A range of factors has

directly and indirectly influenced the choices made by mountain families, which has had a negative impact on the current state of development in this geographical area.

1.2. Reasons for choosing this research topic

The significance of this research lies in examining the political practices and stances of families in the mountains of the Beni Mellal region, and their relationship to the current state of development in these mountains, its present and future implications, and its impact on the path towards local democracy and the bottom-up approach to regional development.

1.3. Study Area

The Beni Mellal-Khenifra region was formed from three former regions: Meknes-Tafilalet, Chaouia-Ouerdiga, and Tadla-Azilal, and is located in central Morocco; This region derives its importance from its vital geographical location on the regional map of Morocco, serving as a link between the various regions of the Kingdom, particularly Casablanca-Settat, Rabat-Sala-Kenitra, and the historical regions. This region occupies a geographical location characterized by significant socio-cultural weight and has historically played a strategic role as a major corridor for the movements of various Moroccan sultans, whether to the traditional capitals of Fez and Marrakesh or toward other areas such as the oases of the Tafilalet-Sijilmasa region; This factor has contributed to giving the region a historical dimension that enriches its mountainous terrain, in addition to its abundant natural and human resources.

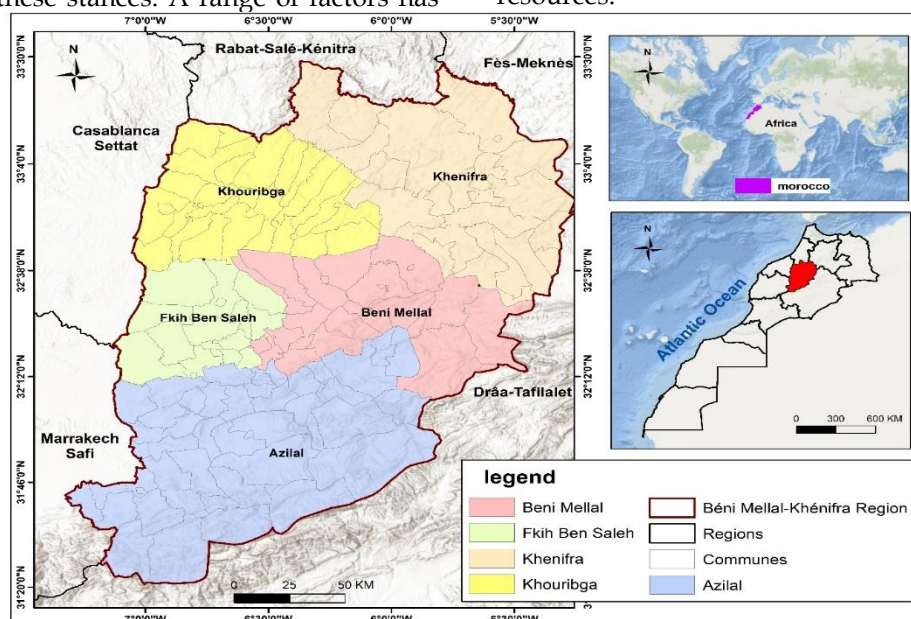


Fig. 1. Location of the study area on the regional map of Morocco

The Beni Mellal-Khenifra region is distinguished by its strategic location and great wealth, as it lies along the major tourist corridor Fez, Meknes, and Casablanca, as well as in the heart of the High and Middle Atlas Mountains, which are renowned for their rich sites, resources, and natural landscapes. The region is also distinguished by its agricultural wealth in the Tadla Plain and the Central Plateau, and its mineral resources in the Phosphate Plateau. This region covers an area of approximately 37,428 km²; its mountainous areas occupy a significant portion (the provinces of Azilal, Beni Mellal, and Khenifra). It is bordered to the north

by the Fez-Meknes and Rabat-Sala-Kenitra regions, to the east and south by the Draa-Tafilalet region, and to the west by the Casablanca-Settat and Marrakech-Safi regions; the city of Beni Mellal serves as its administrative capital.

The selection of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region as the study area was based on several factors:

- It is a mountainous region, with more than half of its area covered by mountains;
- According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index, the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region is among the poorest regions at the national level.

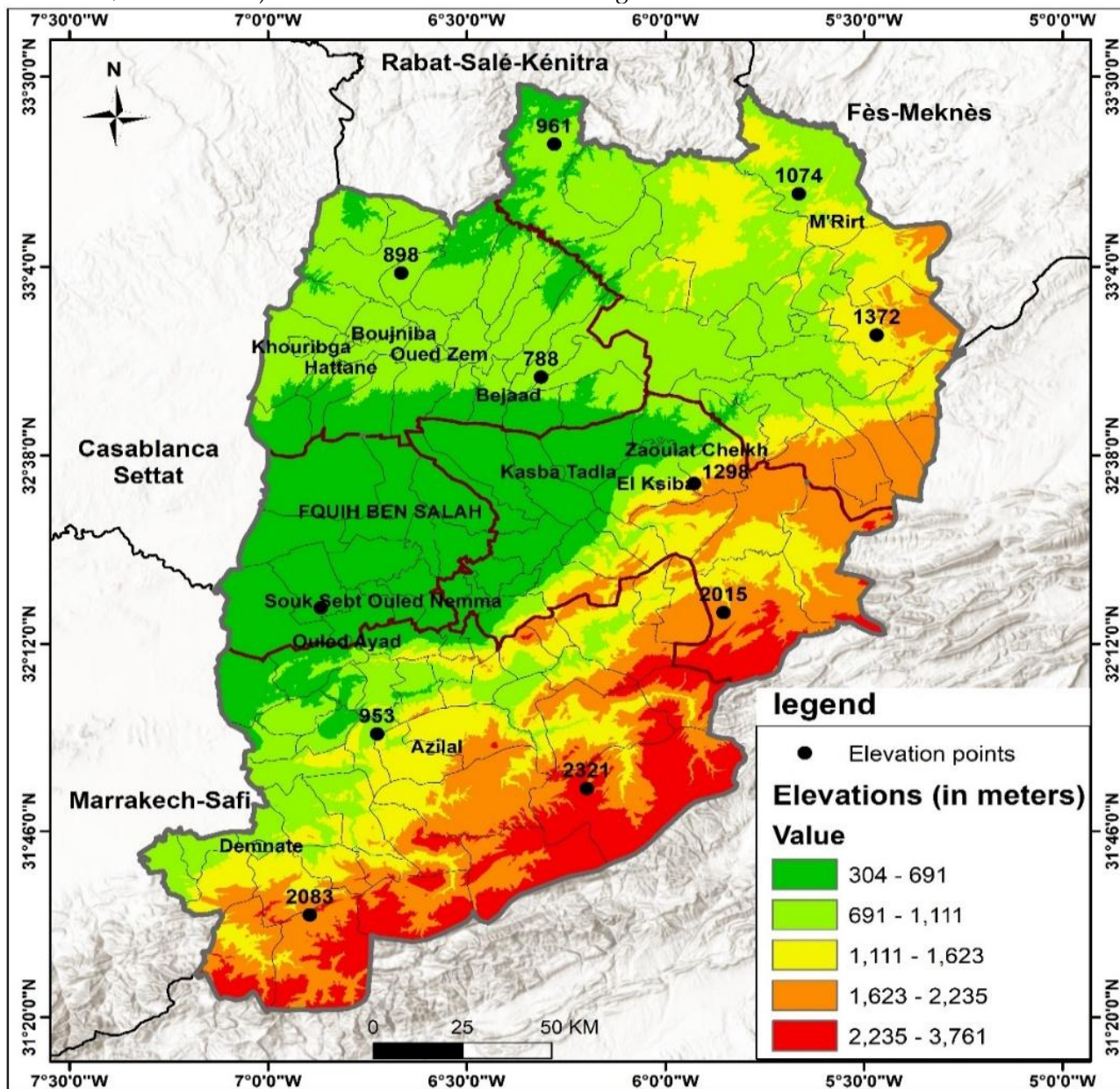


Fig. 2. Territorial division and elevations in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region

1.4. Research Problem

Political activity in the mountainous areas of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra province is a key factor in

perpetuating the fragility of this area, due to the weak political structure of families and their biased choices, which produce an elite incapable of

managing local affairs in an effective and efficient manner. A failure to recognise the consequences of these political stances leads to the depletion of these areas' various resources, which are in a state of deterioration and imbalance, and contributes to the displacement of the local population through internal and external migration.

1.5. Research hypotheses

The mountain population in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region is considered unaware of the importance of elections and political choices in local democracy; consequently, local governance is undertaken by actors incapable of fostering territorial development, leading to the accumulation of various manifestations of economic, social and spatial fragility in the mountains.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Field research is the primary methodological tool relied upon in this study to ascertain the political attitudes of mountain households and their implications for development.

2.1. Fieldwork in the mountainous areas

The field questionnaire is one of the most important tools in geographical research, enabling the collection of a variety of data on a specific geographical phenomenon. Based on the research topic, its objectives and main themes, and in addition to the field survey, the questionnaire was formulated

with a set of open-ended and closed-ended questions, designed to elicit accurate geographical information from the field and to gauge the opinions of the local population in the mountain communities of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region.

The field research questionnaire included multiple questions covering resource management, economic and social aspects, the level of facilities and infrastructure, and the nature of the relationship between mountain households and territorial actors, whilst also examining the degree and level of the mountain population's propensity to migrate.

The sample size was carefully determined to ensure scientifically valid results that could be generalized to mountainous regions, with a total of 910 household heads surveyed; this figure was derived from the use of optimal stratified random sampling to obtain results that accurately reflect the realities of life for mountainous households.

2.2. Principles for selecting sample strata

The study sample was selected on the basis of the multidimensional poverty index, according to which the mountain communities in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region were divided into categories and strata; this index is based on an assessment of a set of basic needs in the classification process, namely education, health, access to water, electricity and sanitation, means of communication, and housing conditions; According to the data presented in the following table (High Commission for Planning, 2014, p. 2.):

Table 1. Components and indicators of multidimensional poverty

The dimension	Ingredient	Deprivation Index		Weighing
Education	Teaching children	If a family has a child of school age (6-14 years) who is not attending school.	1/6	1/3
	Adult education	If there is no family member aged 15 or over who has not completed five years of schooling	1/6	
Health	Disability	If a family member is unable to perform any of the following functions: sight, hearing, walking, memory (recall and concentration), personal care and communication	1/6	1/3
	Child mortality	If a child under 12 months of age dies in the family	1/6	
Living conditions	Drinking water	If the family cannot reach a source of safe drinking water within a 30-minute walk from their home	1/18	1/3
	Electricity	If the household does not have electricity	1/18	
	Disinfection	If the household does not have a private toilet or a sanitary means of disposing of waste water	1/18	
	Floor covering	If the floor of the dwelling is in poor condition, or consists of sand or earth	1/18	
	Method of preparation	If the family uses wood, charcoal or manure for cooking	1/18	
	Ownership of assets	The family does not own a car, a tractor or a lorry, nor do they have at least two of the following: a telephone, a television, a radio, a motorbike, a bicycle or a fridge	1/18	

The method for calculating multidimensional poverty differs between urban and rural areas; approximately 60.8% of multidimensional poverty in

cities is attributed to a lack of educational services (36.8% relating to adult education and around 24% relating to children's education). Deprivation of

health services also accounts for around 24.5%. As for multidimensional poverty in rural areas, it is linked to a lack of educational services (around 54.5%), deprivation of basic infrastructure (around 21.2%), and prevailing housing conditions (15.3%) (High Commission for Planning, 2014. p. 2).

Based on the principle of stratified sampling, the statistical population was divided and classified into strata that are similar, closely related in characteristics and homogeneous, where the variation within the population is greater than the variation within each

stratum; this division ensures the representation of all households comprising the mountain community in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region. In order to understand the real problems within this area, with a view to identifying the mechanisms and factors governing its development status.

Accordingly, and based on Fig No. 3, four basic strata and segments have been identified in the mountainous areas of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region (comprising multiple local communities), as follows:

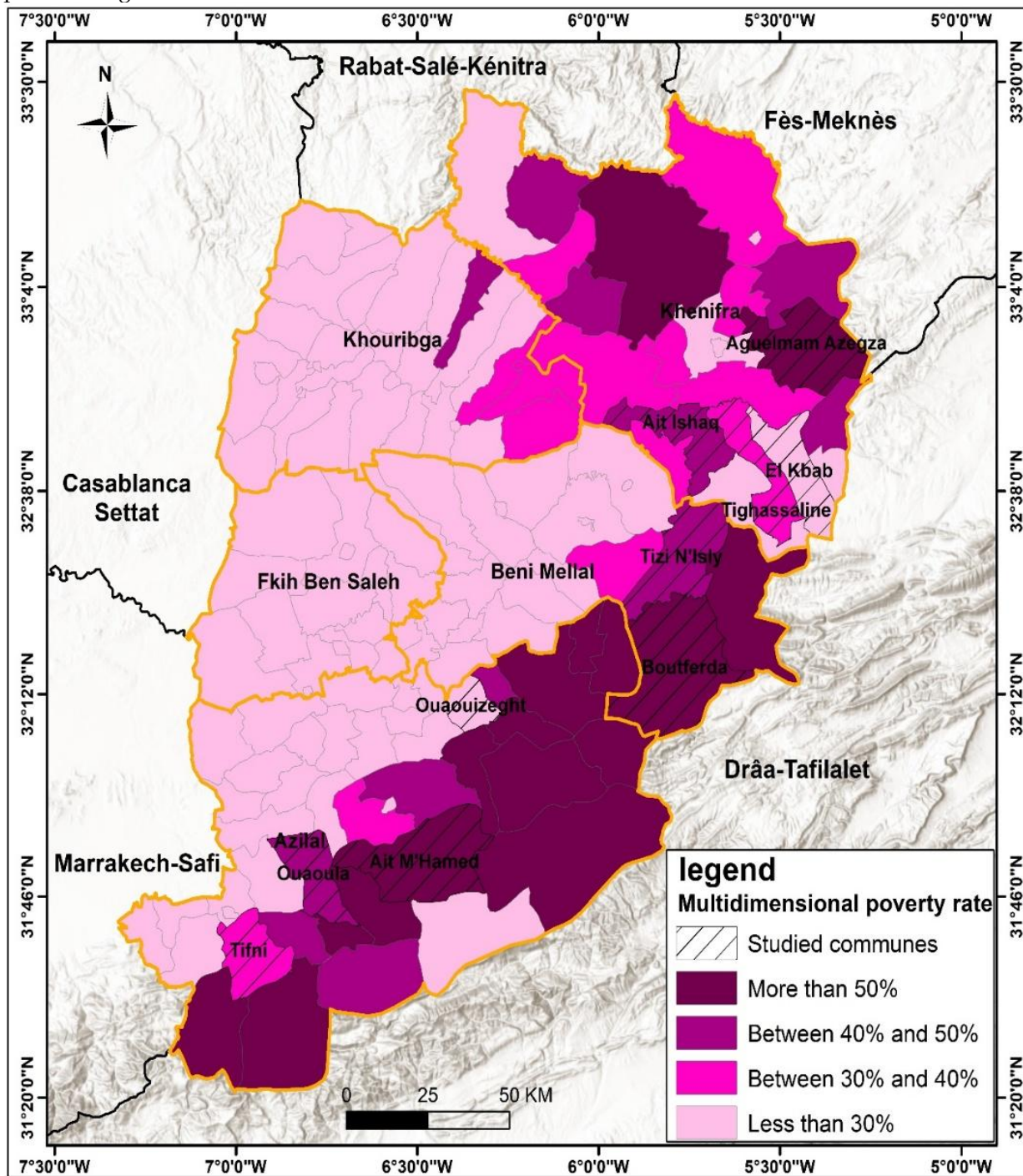


Fig. 3. Multidimensional poverty in the mountainous areas

Based on the map above, the statistical population of the mountainous region of Beni Mellal-Khenifra is divided into four main categories, the representation of which in the research sample must be taken into account in a manner consistent with their demographic weight; these categories are as follows:
 -Category 1: where the multidimensional poverty index exceeds 50%;
 -Category 2: where the multidimensional poverty rate ranges between 40% and 50%;
 -Category 3: where the multidimensional poverty rate ranges between 30% and 40%;
 -Category 4: where the multidimensional poverty rate is below 30%.

The local communities comprising each segment and stratum are as follows:

- Determining the size of the statistical sample representative of the statistical population in

mountainous areas based on the number of households

The principle of stratified sampling is based on first forming homogeneous strata within the population, and then drawing a random sample from each stratum; When representing a stratum within the total sample, significant consideration is given to its actual demographic weight within the population and the degree of dispersion within each stratum; once the sample size has been determined, the individual elements and components of the sample are drawn at random.

As regards the procedure followed to determine the total sample size, in addition to the partial size for each stratum, this is done by focusing on the number of households, according to each stratum or segment, whilst calculating the standard deviation for each stratum separately; as shown in the table below:

Table 2. Calculation of the standard deviation for all mountain households

Class	N (number of households)	σ (Pattern deviation)	nxσ
The first class	34632	1751.39	60654138.48
The second class	23445	1362.53	31944515.85
The third class	20904	1012.92	21174079.68
The fourth class	14369	1071.81	15400837.89
Total	93350		129173571.9

In this regard, a precise calculation is used to determine the sample size, which is scientifically representative of the statistical population and allows for accurate field results that can be generalised; the calculation is based on the following principles:

- A margin of error of 5%;
- Homogeneity ratio of 50%;
- Diversity ratio of 50%;
- Equivalent to a draw in statistical normal tables 3.

The calculation is carried out according to the following formula:

$$\frac{50 \times 50}{0.0000070448} = \frac{900 \times 3^2}{129173571.9} = 910 \text{ Sample size}$$

The sample size used in this study is estimated at approximately 910 households, and the proportion of each category is derived from this sample size using proportional allocation as follows:

- _ The first class: $0.0000070448 \times 60,654,138.48 = 427$ households;
- _ The second class: $0.0000070448 \times 31,944,515.85 =$

- 225 households;
- _ The third class: $0.0000070448 \times 2,117,4079.68 = 149$ households;
- _ The fourth class: $0.0000070448 \times 1,540,0837.89 = 109$ households.

- Determining each region's share of the sample size:
- Determining the sample size for each region in the first class:

The sample is distributed across the three regions in the first class as follows:

We have a statistical sample representing the first class, comprising 427 households distributed across 17 local communities, grouped according to those with similar characteristics, based on the multidimensional poverty index.

Therefore, 423 divided by 17 equals 25.12, and consequently, the number for each region is as follows:
 -25.12 x 13 local communities in the Azilal province = 327 households in the Azilal region;
 -25.12 x 2 local communities in the Beni Mellal province = 50 households in the Beni Mellal region;
 -25.12 x 2 local communities in the Khenifra province = 50 households in the Khenifra region.

- Determining the sample size for each region in the second class:

With regard to the statistical sample for the second class, there are 225 households across the three regions; thus, 225 divided by the 12 local communities covered by

the study equals 18.75. Consequently, each region's share of the total sample is as follows:

-18.75 x 5 local communities in the Azilal province = 94 households in the Azilal region;

-18.75 x 2 local communities in the Beni Mellal province = 37 households in the Beni Mellal region;

-18.75 x 5 rural communities in the Khenifra province = 94 households in the province of Khenifra.

• Determining the sample size for each province in the third class:

As for the statistical sample for the third class, it comprises 149 households; this number is divided by 10 local authorities, giving a quotient of 14.9. It should be noted that the mountainous areas of the Beni Mellal region do not have local communities belonging to the third class; therefore, communities in the Azilal and Khenifra regions were used. The distribution of the sample is as follows:

-14.9 x 2 local communities in the Azilal province = 30 households in the province of Azilal;

-14.9 x 8 local communities in the Khenifra province = 119 households in the province of Khenifra.

• Determining the sample size for each province in the fourth class:

The sample size for the fourth class is 109 households; this number is therefore divided by 7 local communities, yielding a quotient of approximately 15.57. The distribution of the sample by region is as follows:

-15.57 x 4 rural communities in the Azilal province = 62 households in the Azilal region;

-15.57 x 3 rural communities in the Khenifra province = 47 households in the Khenifra region.

The sample was carefully distributed and the household questionnaire completed in the following local communities and douars:

Table 3. Local communities and douars comprising the study sample in the mountains

Class	The region	Local authority	The villages	Total number of households in each neighbourhood	Proportion of villages in the sample	Number of households surveyed by village	Sample size by group and region (households)	Sample size by segment (households)
The first class	Azilal	Ait Mohamed	takost	546	100%	327	327	427
	Beni mella	botferda	Ait baafar	154	100%	50	50	
	Khenifra	Aklmam azakza	Ait wahi	198	100%	50	50	
The second class	azilal	wawla	wazent	303	100%	94	94	225
	beni mellal	Tizi nisli	Ait Mahend Ouzad Oudoro	137	100%	37	37	
	khenifra	Ait ishak	Ait bobrahim	190	100%	94	94	
The third class	azilal	tifni	ifasfas	79	100%	30	30	149
	khenifra	tiksalin	Ait hamza	130	100%	119	119	
The fourth class	azilal	wazaget	Ait sidi mhaned mhaned	219	100%	62	62	109
	khenifra	lakbab	Ait widir	155	100%	47	47	

The field research required a focus on ten rural communities in the mountains of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region, in order to examine the realities of mountain households and to closely assess the impact of development programmes and projects on the development status of the local population. These rural communities were selected in order to study all the segments and strata comprising the mountain population, with a view to obtaining accurate results representative of the mountain statistical community in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region, so that these findings could be generalised in an accurate and scientific manner.

The douars were also selected based on household size and their mountainous nature; by highlighting the

various douars that have significant demographic weight within the local community, and to include them in the field study sample, with a view to completing the questionnaire and utilising it to understand the developmental reality of mountain households, interpret it and forecast its future prospects.

In selecting the study sample, the Multidimensional Poverty Index was used, with a focus on the geographical location of local communities within mountainous areas, and care was taken to ensure that the lower, middle and upper mountain areas were represented in the sample, whilst also giving consideration to communities with significant demographic

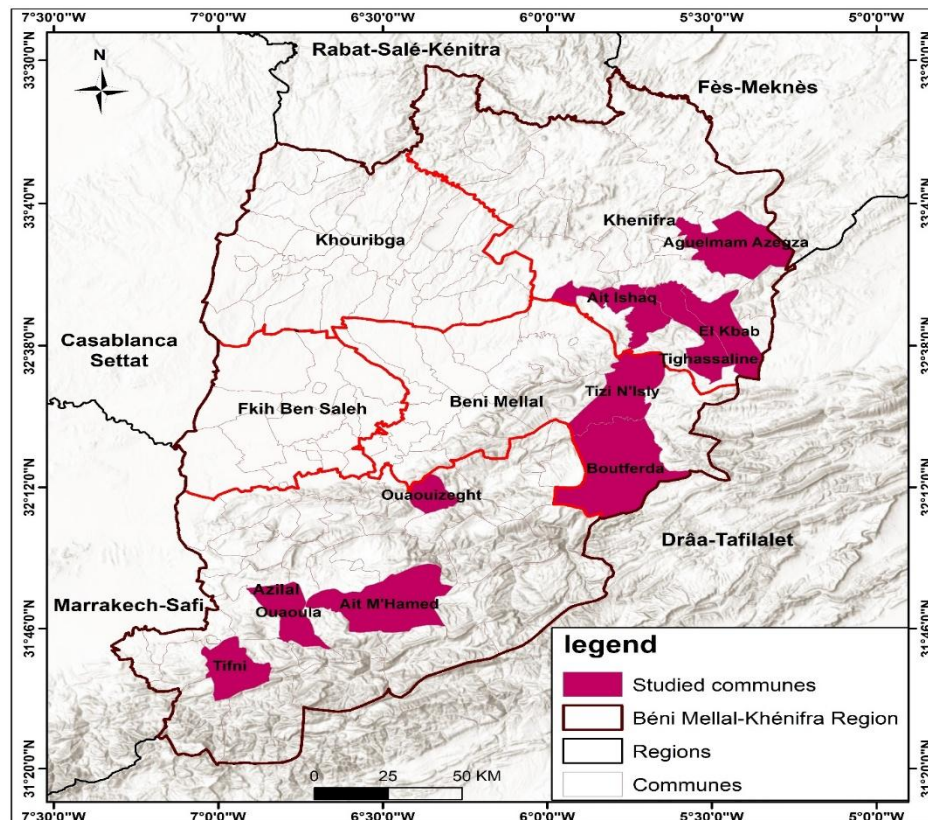


Fig. 4. Mountain communities studied in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Political participation of mountain communities and strengthening the pillars of decentralisation

The political participation of mountain communities is a vital pillar in the implementation of the principle of election and the selection of appropriate local representatives, as this embodies decentralisation and the pluralism of decision-making centres by granting authority and powers to those concerned or their representatives. Decentralisation may stray from its proper course if mountain communities fail to recognise the importance of elections, their scope and their implications for development. Furthermore, decentralisation loses its effectiveness if there is a lack of competent, honest and responsible local representatives within the framework of strengthening the powers granted to them.

3.2. Mountain communities in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region lack mechanisms for development work as local actors

One cannot discuss the region without examining the link between the mountain population and various actors, particularly elected representatives

and civil society, and analysing the nature of the relationship between them and its implications for development.

The role of elected representatives is vital in meeting the needs of the mountain population in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region; any imbalance between the concerns of the local population and the roles of elected representatives leads to a breakdown in the management of the mountainous territory.

Population pressure is one of the cornerstones of shaping development policies in mountainous areas within the framework of local democracy. The power of the local population is reflected in their choice of elected representatives who demonstrate competence and integrity in managing local affairs.

An examination of the reality of the mountain population reveals a lack of mechanisms and foundations for development work, as evidenced by the electoral process and its impact on the future of mountain areas and the shaping of their development. This situation has been exacerbated by the low level of education among most heads of mountain households.

3.3. The importance of the electoral process in fostering regional development

Most of the mountain households surveyed do not have sufficient awareness to enable them to grasp

the importance of elections and their fundamental role in the development of mountainous areas; this is achieved by selecting the right representative, who strives to meet their aspirations and expectations.

The role of households in the territorial development process in the mountainous areas is weak, due to a lack of awareness of the importance of electoral participation in selecting the appropriate local representative who works hard to achieve development goals; approximately 87.6% of mountain households in Boutfarda do not fully appreciate the role of the electoral process and its developmental implications for the territory and the situation of the local population; through the election

of representatives who contribute to the development, planning and management of mountainous areas in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region, with the lowest rate being around 60.3% in the commune of Laqbab.

In the eyes of some mountain households, elections are regarded as merely a routine process of little significance, as they do not alter the developmental reality of the mountains in any way; from this perspective, they have been stripped of their developmental substance and reduced to purely formal political dimensions, serving only a superficial democracy.

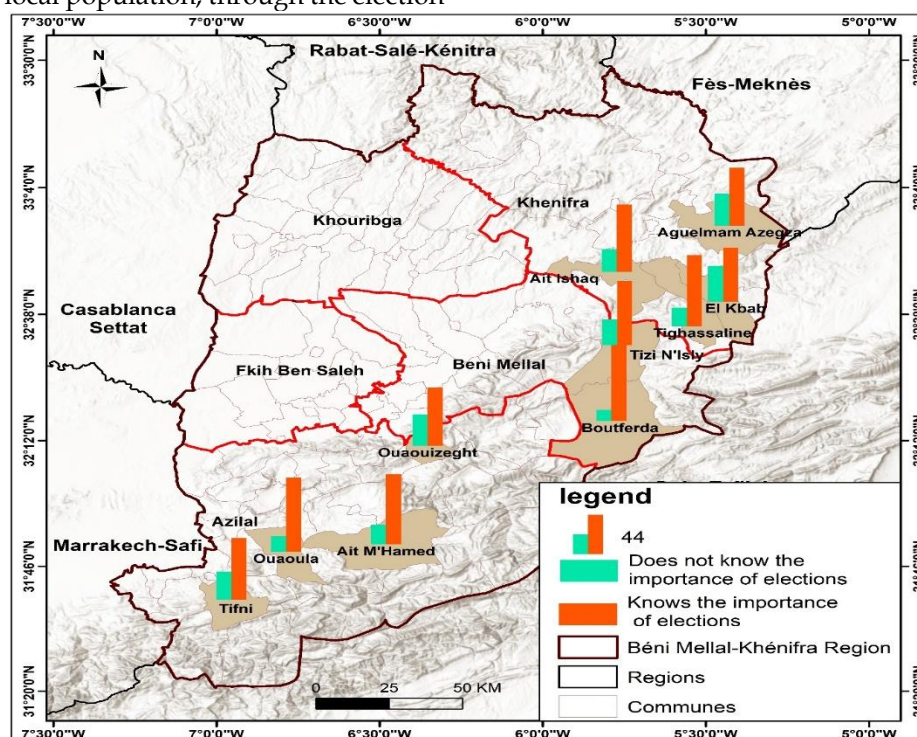


Fig. 5: Mountain Communities and the Importance of the Electoral Process in territorial Development

3.4. Developmental considerations in selecting the appropriate political actor

The map reveals that most mountain households do not fully understand how to choose the right representative for the region's development; their choice is heavily influenced by kinship ties. Across all the mountain communities studied, the highest proportion is found in the Tifni community at around 71.8%, and the lowest in the Aklemam Azkza community at around 55.1%; Emotional attachment comes as a secondary choice and criterion, which negatively affects their choices and, consequently, the region's development prospects and the principles of territorial development in the mountains. Only a small proportion of mountain households emphasised the need to select elected

representatives based on competence, considering this to be the cornerstone of development and effective territorial management.

The electoral process in the mountains of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region is influenced by indicators of poverty and vulnerability; as the higher these indicators rise, the more they influence voters' choices, making them susceptible to a range of compromises that contribute to deepening the crisis in local governance, by producing an elite incapable of understanding the territorial approach to mountainous areas.

There is a wide gap between families' aspirations and the reality they face in the mountains, which has contributed to deepening the issue of loss of trust in various local actors.

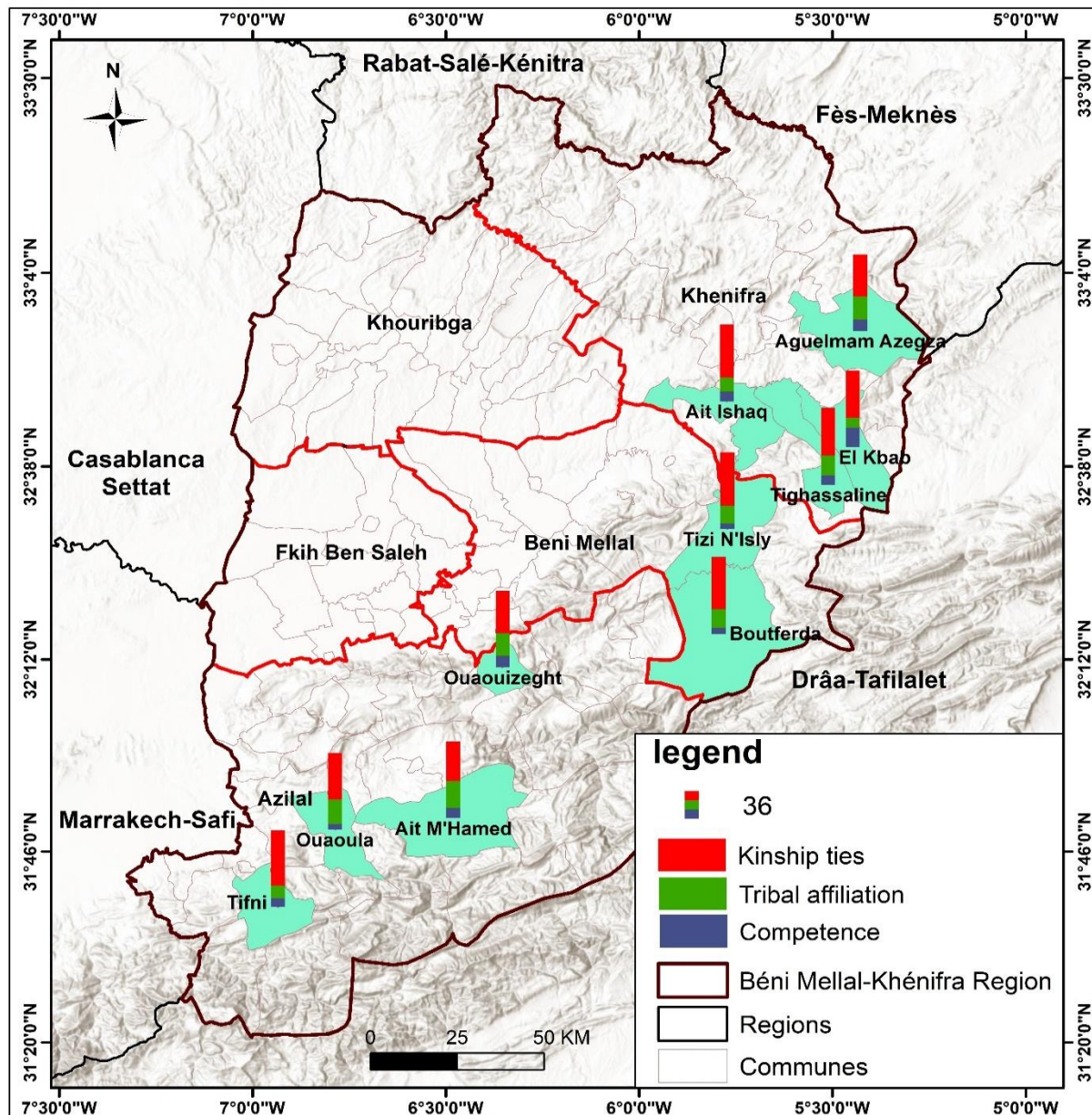


Fig. 6: The criteria used by mountain communities when choosing a political representative

3.5. Rates of household participation in the electoral process

The concept of the territory is based on ownership by mountain households, who are thus regarded as the primary actors within this territory, owing to their knowledge, understanding, methods and expertise in dealing with the area, as well as their perspective on planning, preparation and management.

With the modern concept of the state and territorial structures and their levels, a group of actors has emerged alongside the local population, providing direction and a perspective for laying new foundations for the joint and consensual management of this territory. From this perspective,

the local population has gained a degree of choice regarding certain actors (elected representatives). Consequently, there is public involvement within the framework of local democracy in the selection of elites who contribute to shaping the identity of the territory, through the development work adopted and implemented by local actors.

Among the indicators of a loss of trust in elected representatives are the population's aversion to and disengagement from political participation. Participation in local elections is one form of political behaviour that reflects the degree of interaction between the local population and local actors, which is governed by developmental factors particularly economic, social and environmental ones that have a direct impact on mountain communities.

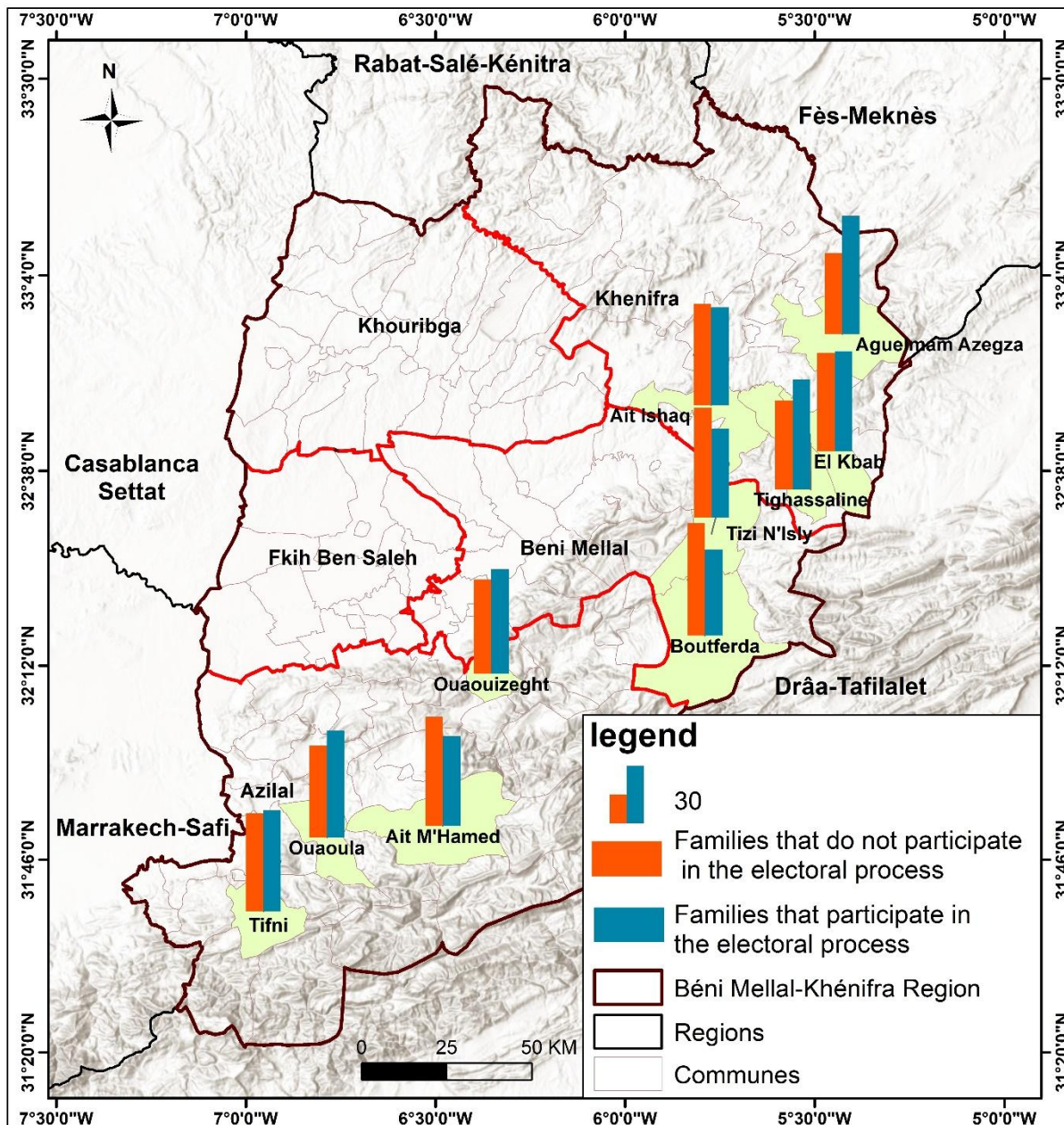


Fig. 7: Turnout rate among mountain households in the electoral process

Based on the data shown on the map, some mountain communities do not participate in the electoral process, particularly in the commune of Boutferda, where the figure stands at 56.7%, Tizi Nisli at 55.2%, Aït Mohamed at 54.9%, and Aït Ishaq at around 50.9%, alongside significant rates in the other communities studied; according to these households, these elections are merely empty slogans that do nothing to change the precarious reality in which they live. They have ceased to participate in the electoral process, having lost hope that their various development aspirations will be met.

The mountain population in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region expressed that trust in the various stakeholders has been shaken after they failed to

fulfil their promises to the mountain population. They also view the elections as a mere formality, as a group of elected representatives have failed to deliver tangible development achievements on the ground for the region, with the exception of a few who possess a sense of responsibility and have contributed, directly or indirectly, to bringing about certain changes and developmental transformations that have benefited the region.

In this context, mountain families continue to aspire to and strive for the fulfilment of what they consider to be simple expectations, namely education, healthcare, the construction of roads, the provision of transport and employment opportunities. All mountain families emphasise the

necessity of achieving these essentials, which guarantee stability and a livelihood in the region.

There is a shared responsibility amongst the various stakeholders in the region, starting with the local population, who lack sufficient knowledge and the necessary dynamism, and after careful consideration of the appropriate actor for the region's development; through the selection of elected representatives who play a pivotal role in creating local momentum in the mountains, and consequently developing the region in accordance with a vision derived from the wishes, opinions and aspirations of mountain families.

3.6. Development outcomes and the low level of political participation among mountain communities

The fact that most mountain communities do not participate in electoral processes is a clear indication of a lack of confidence in the capabilities of local actors. The real reason for the population's refusal to participate is that most elected representatives fail to honour their promises to families and do not meet the population's expectations; the slogans used as temporary campaign slogans fade and disappear once the electoral process is over; Consequently, the reality faced by mountain families in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region does little to encourage engagement in the political process (elections), which families view as futile and incapable of bringing about change in development. This results in the emergence of a group of officials with no connection to the local area, who do nothing to make the mountainous areas more attractive or dynamic.

3.6.1. Low educational standards and political instability among mountain communities

Mountain regions cannot achieve significant progress and development without investing in their human capital, without establishing a strong and effective education system and planning for a sufficient number of facilities, structured in a balanced and logical manner, serving the interests of mountain families as the driving force and backbone of future development.

Education is a cornerstone in the building of society and the development of the mountainous areas. The local population cannot play political roles whilst remaining ignorant of the mechanisms of political action and unaware of the fundamentals of decision-making; this ignorance facilitates control over the course of development and perpetuates the region's fragility. Promoting a high standard of education will undoubtedly contribute to raising the

level of development in the mountains and help to lift the region out of the crisis it has been experiencing for years.

3.6.2. Rising Poverty and Political Instability

Mountainous communities face difficult economic and social conditions; this reality allows for the exploitation of these communities' misery and poverty in various political processes; This exacerbates the crisis in local governance, undermining its cohesion and making it reliant on actors who do not serve the collective interest and are not grounded in sound development practices, as they are produced and selected as elites tasked with managing local affairs. In the absence of genuine territorial actors, the local approach is lost, and the top-down, centralized, and sectoral approach remains dominant in the management of the region, producing visions that do not serve local specificities nor align with the requirements of genuine local democracy.

3.7. Development Prospects for Mountainous Areas in Light of the Political Stances of the Local Population

The political stance of the local population plays a significant role in the development of mountainous regions, serving as a pivotal factor in the emergence of certain elites who manage local affairs. This stance also helps explain the nature of the relationships between various territorial actors and the population, through socio-economic and cultural determinants.

Development efforts in the mountains do not help to strengthen the confidence of the mountain population in the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region in local actors; rather, they deepen the local population's doubts regarding these actors' ability to improve their living conditions.

The local population's reluctance to engage in political participation contributes to the persistence of vulnerabilities in mountainous areas. Local development in these areas can only be achieved through the involvement of all households and by rallying around capable, ambitious territorial actors who possess the necessary competence, knowledge, integrity, sense of responsibility, innovation, and developmental dynamism.

The failure of the development model in the mountains does not mean that the population should abandon all its responsibilities toward its territory; rather, it requires exploring how to contribute to the emergence of an ambitious political elite, through whom the principles of effective territorial planning and management for the mountainous regions of the

Beni Mellal-Khenifra region can be established, and their reality transformed for the better.

CONCLUSION

The political stances of mountain communities are a key factor in mountain development, through appropriate choices that establish an ambitious development path reflecting the expectations and aspirations of the population, within the framework of local democracy, and creating areas of significant attraction and stability. They provide a suitable

framework for living, contributing, innovating, and regional competition. However, the reality in the mountains of the Beni Mellal-Khenifra region reveals the absence of a genuine territorial development policy, as these areas are not given the status they deserve as geographical areas with unique characteristics, neither in effective territorial planning and management nor in raising awareness among the local population regarding the importance of appropriate political choices and in the scale of investments allocated to them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Advisory Committee on Advanced Regionalisation, 2011, Report on Advanced Regionalisation, Volume I.
- Asaad M., 2019, The Local Actor and Perceptions of Local Development in the Casablanca Region, in *The Field: Land and Society in Morocco: Transformations, Dynamics and Challenges*, ed Azhar M & al., Publications of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Hassan II University, Mohammedia.
- Bahou A., 2019, Steps in Field Research in Physical Geography, A Methodological Guide to Research Preparation, ed Malki M, Forum Publications Series on Research Methods and Tools in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Rabat Net Press, Rabat.
- Belkaid H., 2016, Spatial and environmental analysis of the risk of forest fires in Algeria: the case of Maritime Kabylie, PhD thesis in Geography, University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis, France.
- Berriane M & Aderghal M., 2012, Rural Tourism, Territorial Governance and Local Development in Mountain Areas, Research Team on the Region and Regionalisation, a partnership between ONDH and universities. (www.academia.edu).
- Driouech F, 2010, Distribution of winter precipitation over Morocco in the context of climate change: downscaling and uncertainties, PhD thesis, Earth, Environmental and Space Sciences, University of Toulouse, France.
- Ellatifi M, 2012, The Forestry and Forest Products Economy in Morocco: Current Situation and Prospects, PhD thesis in Economics, Montesquieu University, Bordeaux IV.
- High Commission for Planning., 2014, Key Findings of the Multidimensional Poverty Map: Regional and Dynamic Perspectives. p. 2.
- Idali M & al., 2015, The Territorial Project and the Dialectic of Theory and Practice: A Socio-geographical, Cultural and Electoral Approach, and in *The Territorial Project: A Strategic Tool for Local Development - The Case of the Mountainous Community of Ighzeran*, ed Baksi M & Zahrouni M, Proceedings of the Fifth Session of the Ighzeran Development and Culture Forum, First edition, Fez.
- Jebrati F., 2004, The territorial mobilisation of local development actors in the High Atlas region of Marrakesh, PhD thesis in Geography, Joseph Fourier University, Grenoble I, France.
- Khalqi Y & al., 2015, The Integrated Cultural Landscape and the Problem of Sustainable Local Mountain Development: The Case of the Azilal province, featured in *The Territorial Project: A Strategic Tool for Local Development - The Case of the Mountain Community of Ighzeran*, ed Baksi M & Zahrouni M, Proceedings of the Fifth Session of the Ighzeran Development and Cultural Forum, First Edition, Fez.
- Karzazi M., 2019, A Study of Rural Planning and Development in Morocco: The Case of Tarifa-Berkane in the Eastern Region, 1st edition.
- Karzazi M, 2019, The Role of Elected Representatives and Stakeholders in Local Government and Civil Society in the Development of Local Communities in Rural Morocco, in *Research Approaches in Rural Geography*, ed Malki M & al., Publications of the University Institute for Scientific Research.
- Laboratory of Geographical Research, Planning and Cartography., 2015, Land Dynamics and Socio-Economic Transformations in Morocco: A Case Study, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sais, Fez, Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah University.
- Malki M., 2019, Methodological Guide to Research Preparation, Forum Publications Series on Research Methods and Tools in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 1st edition, Rabat Net Press.
- Mossaoui S., 2019, Fieldwork and Obstacles to Geographical Research in Mountainous Areas: The Case of the Asni Community in the Western High Atlas, *Research Methods in Rural Geography*, Publications of the University Institute for Scientific Research, Rabat.

- Motaqi B., 2019, *Man, Space and Development*, a peer-reviewed journal, Najah Jadida Press, Casablanca, Issue I.
- Paul V., 2013, *Reducing regional inequalities: what role for national spatial planning policy?*, Official Journal of the French Republic.
- Sghir S., 2020, *Advanced Regionalism and Territorial Development*, Publications of the Laboratory for Territorial Research and Management, Communication and Modelling, Multidisciplinary Faculty of Khouribga, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Beni Mellal, 1st edition.
- Tachfine Y. 2020. *The Approach to Territorial Development: Definitions, Methodology and an Overview of Public Policy in Morocco over the Past Two Decades*. *Organisation et territoires* No. V.
- Tissi M & Saidi J., 2015, *The Development Process in the Rural Mountains: From Sectoral Intervention to Territorial Project, A Case Study of the Province of Chefchaouen (Western Rif), and in Territorial Project: A Strategic Tool for Local Development – The Case of the Mountainous Community of Ighzeran*, ed Baksi M and Zahrouni M, *Proceedings of the Fifth Session of the Ighzeran Development and Cultural Forum*, First edition, Fez.
- Waz M., 2017, *Sociological Approach to Forms of Local Organisation in Morocco*, 1st edition, National Printing and Publishing House, Marrakesh.