

From Planning to Strategic Territorial Management

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ABSTRACT

Territorial action in Morocco has been characterized since the colonial period by conflicts between spatial, institutional, and territorial logics. During the colonial period, there was a predominant intention to control the national territory and modernize the country. Shortly after gaining independence, Morocco gradually engaged in a top-down territorial planning policy, with the main objective of improving the living conditions of its citizens. Today, things have changed; the centralizing development approach has become obsolete in the face of two key dimensions: territorial diversity and the presence of various territorial actors, including humans. This is where strategic territorial management comes into play. Therefore, the aim of this article is to study the transition from territorial planning to strategic territorial management in the municipality of Settat through participative governance. A qualitative method was adopted for this purpose. Documentary analysis and questionnaires were essential tools for data collection. The results indicate that strategic territorial management at the municipal level faces several challenges, primarily related to the inefficiency of development policies. This inefficiency is mainly attributed to a lack of citizen participation in the territorial decision-making process.

Keywords: Territory, strategic territorial management, gouvernance, territorial planning, participation.

INTRODUCTION

In the face of increasing globalization and the emergence of multiple territorial crises, the imperative need for research and the development of new tools for territorial management has become crucial, both for developed and developing countries.

Territory is not merely a geographical location; rather, it is a system managed by various actors (the State, private sector, local authorities, etc.). It has become an essential player in development, prompting developing countries to engage in a new policy of territorial développement. In a context of rapid and complex transformations driven by rampant globalization, territories are undergoing significant changes. Traditional borders between nations are fading, giving rise to new challenges such as climate issues, mass migrations, economic disparities, and global health crises. These dynamics necessitate a proactive and innovative approach to territorial management to address current challenges and anticipate future ones.

In Morocco, the evolution of territorial action has been marked by distinct periods, each characterized by

specific approaches. During the colonial period, the country was shaped by strategies of exploitation and modernization, profoundly influencing territorial structures and dynamics. Following this period, independence was marked by a policy focused on managing territorial disparities inherited from colonialism, with an emphasis on reducing development gaps between regions.

A significant evolution occurred with the adoption of a territorial approach, marked by a commitment to a policy of collective territorial management. This approach embraced a bottom-up perspective, aligning with the principles of strategic territorial management. The State demonstrated a strong willingness to share responsibility for public action with various stakeholders involved in territorial development.

This transition towards a bottom-up approach underscores the recognition of the importance of local dynamics and the participation of local actors in the development process. The State sought to promote inclusive territorial governance involving local authorities, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders in decision-making and policy implementation.

The gradual evolution of territorial action in Morocco reflects an adaptation to contemporary challenges, including the management of socio-economic disparities, the promotion of sustainability, and the stimulation of local development. This more inclusive approach encourages active participation of citizens and local actors, strengthening the legitimacy of public policies and contributing to the effectiveness of territorial interventions.

In summary, the history of territorial action in Morocco demonstrates a shift towards a more participatory, inclusive, and integrated territorial management. This reflects the State's commitment to working closely with various territorial actors, placing humans at the center of this process, and viewing governance as a tool for collective decision-making with the goal of ensuring balanced and sustainable development across the entire territory.

In this regard, our problem statement is primarily grounded in this reflection, seeking to address the following question : How can the transition from territorial planning to strategic territory management through participative governance contribute to territorial development?

In this context, the utilized methodology and formulated structure can be outlined as follows: Documentary research and analysis with a comprehensive overview of literature on strategic territory management and participative governance. Contribution to territorial development through a novel approach to territorial management. Employing a qualitative method based on a questionnaire involving relevant stakeholders to collect necessary data. The objective is to introduce the audience to the issue of territorial development.

To address our research problem and achieve the assigned objectives, we have structured our paper using the following framework, considering the integration of context, research problem, its significance, and its methodology:

Firstly, emphasis is placed on the theoretical foundations of the research, defining its key components, and briefly shedding light on its literature.

Secondly, we elucidate the adopted research methodology, sampling, and data collection tools.

Thirdly, we analyze the historical evolution of territorial management policies in Morocco since independence.

Finally, we endeavor to respond to the central question of our problem statement through an amalgamation of the two axes : the presentation and discussion of results obtained from the survey.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- **Strategic territorial management: A combination of several concepts**

The concept of strategic territorial management is relatively recent and still lacks operational clarity, as it is not yet well-established (Découtère, 1996). Research in this field is scarce, with only a few pioneers delving into the subject (Casteigts, 2003). However, these studies often take the form of sectoral reflections or seek to analyze distinctions and similarities between strategic management in businesses and cities (Favoreu, 2000, p.18). Other studies focused on strategic management within territorial public organizations concentrate on specific components or management tools, such as decision-making processes and strategic planning (Steiss, 1985; Vinzant, 1996).

Various research endeavors have addressed aspects such as comparative studies related to territorial management practices in metropolitan organizations (Hernandez, 2006), an examination of territorial management within a paradoxical framework that intertwines administrative and political aspects for territorial managers (Maname, Becheikh, 2022), and a recent study investigating the contribution of territorial management to enhancing the attractiveness of Foreign Direct Investments (Hmid, Abbadi, Laamari, 2023).

In this context, the concept emerged as a proposal first formulated by the Community for Territorial Planning Studies (C.E.A.T) during a seminar in French-speaking Switzerland in the autumn of 1995. The Swiss school is recognized as one of the pioneers in establishing this notion, as documented in the work titled “Strategic Territorial Management : Towards Considering Territories in New Public Management” (Découtère, Ruegg, Joye, Dominique, 1996).

According to this school of thought, the idea of management primarily originates from the private sector. It is essential to note, however, that the private sector differs from the public sector, and a company is not synonymous with the State. The private sector aims to obtain a reward, primarily in the form of profit, in return for productive activity. In contrast, the State’s profitability is not monetary, and the public sector’s goal is not profit-driven; it is concerned with meeting collective needs (such as education, health, security, etc.). Its profitability is primarily measured by the satisfaction of citizens’ needs (Passet, 1996). Strategic territorial management can refer to “partnerships that can be established between citizens, elected officials, and civil servants” (Lamrzelle, 1997). Alternatively, it can be defined as a set of “policies, actions, approaches, and multiple projects of public authority applicable to territories” (Huteau, 2002). Therefore, strategic territorial management is the result of an inductive approach that focuses on regulating territorial relationships, i.e., “the management of all human interrelations contributing to the production of territories” (Hernandez, 2003).

- **Why territorial ? and why strategic ?**

To comprehend the integration of the concepts of « territorial » and « strategic » into the realm of management, we turn to the explanation provided by Casteigts, 2003. He elucidated that the term « territorial » is employed because strategic territorial management goes beyond merely focusing on the actions of territorial collectivities or land planning; rather, it represents a novel configuration with the aim of implementing public policies within a project tailored to the specific territory. As for the term “strategic,” it functions as a tool to ensure the coherence of short-term actions, medium-term objectives, and long-term purposes. This characteristic enables strategic territorial management to amalgamate individual projects into a common endeavor.

Hence, there are two overarching purposes for strategic territorial management. The first, termed “strategic,”

aims to guide the production of the territory with a long-term vision through a participative approach. The second, termed “operational,” reflects the goal of increasing the capacity of a collectivity and its stakeholders to consider territorial changes, the threats, and opportunities they generate. This is achieved through management methods, tools, and processes encompassing consultation, collaboration, and information dissemination (Découtère, 1996).

● **Specific process of formulating and implementing development policies within the framework of strategic territorial management :**

According to the Swiss school, to enact public policies in line with the principles of Strategic Territorial Management (STM), public entities must consider four key principles that address the management challenges they may encounter in their operations:

- Territorial effectiveness: Signifying the ability of a territory to generate employment, wealth, and well-being while reproducing lived proximities through a process of innovation and learning.
- Territorial Equity: This is primarily a social issue that addresses cohesion among different territorial scales (regional disparities), inequalities in accessing resources, and participatory democracy (user participation in decision-making processes).
- Territorial Sustainability: This involves intergenerational solidarity and the consideration of the physical space (ecosystem and the impact of human activities on space), encompassing dimensions of purely sustainable development.
- Territorial Creativity: It encompasses the mechanisms that local authorities can employ to create projects shared by users or citizens, establishing coherence across policies at various scales, and emphasizing the importance of the learning concept.

● **Territorial management and territorial planning: what articulation?**

In its relationship with territorial planning, the term “planning” involves arranging systematically (Casteljardac, Monod, 1996). Some consider planning as a universal and fundamentally human activity that responds to an anthropological need to plan and organize communal life in a specific geographic area (Desjardins, 2017).

In 2003, Hernandez distinguished three types of planning : proactive planning, accompanying planning, and territorial planning as a public will. Territorial planning emerged in France in response to the effects of World War II (territorial inequalities and imbalances). It is essential to note that there are several definitions for this concept. One comprehensive definition is, It is a voluntary and deliberate action by a community on its territory to ensure a better distribution of activities and populations while reducing disparities and improving the local or overall performance of a given place (Subra, 2007). Territorial planning includes infrastructure construction programs, decentralization initiatives, urban policy development, and rural space renovation. It is based on financial planning and the collaboration of private and public partners (Boeuf, 1995).

Based on these objectives, we can identify several differences between territorial planning and the principles of strategic territorial management. Despite significant similarities between the two, the following table illustrates these differences.

Table 1. Difference between territorial planning and strategic territorial management

Territorial Planning	Territorial Management
Territory: A mere support for activities with a spatial dominance over the territorial aspect.	Territory: A pivotal actor in development and a dynamic component of territorial management issues.

Equitable distribution of activities across the territory.	Enhancing the capacity of territories to generate these activities.
Top-down approach.	Bottom up approach based on the principles of participation and coordination.
Objective of territorial rebalancing and arbitrating competition among territorial administrative units.	Applied at lower territorial levels, favoring competitive relationships.

Source : authors

Participative governance as an essential foundation for strategic territorial management :

● Genesis and precision of the term governance :

Historically, the concept of governance was first introduced in an article by the American economist Ronald Coase titled « The Nature of the Firm » in 1937. According to the author, the use of organization or enterprise can sometimes be more effective than the market to achieve this objective. He referred to the methods used by the company to achieve this as “governance.” Neo-institutional economists, especially Olivier Williamson, rediscovered this theory in the 1970s, leading to works defining governance as the means by which companies effectively coordinate their activities. The term “corporate governance” began to be used in American business circles in the 1980s. By the end of that decade, the concept was introduced in English political science as part of a research program on the restructuring of local power, Gaudin (2002). The notion of governance also emerged in the late 1980s in the field of international relations, where international financial institutions used the term “good governance” to define the criteria for good public administration in countries undergoing structural adjustment programs, (Laghrissi, 2010). Regarding territories, especially at the urban level, governance has become essential to describe negotiation methods that bring together the strategies of territorial actors, (Casteigts, 2003). Thus, the concept of governance has been used by several disciplines (economic, political, and environmental). Its definition has been addressed by various institutions, organizations, and authors.

For example, according to Charreaux, governance encompasses « all organizational mechanisms that have the effect of delimiting powers and influencing the decisions of leaders, in other words, governing their conduct and defining their discretionary space. » According to the UNDP, governance is the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority for the management of a country’s affairs. It includes the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and various groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights, fulfill their obligations, and negotiate their differences, (Janati and Zerouali, 2004). According to the World Bank, « governance is how power is exercised in the management of the economic and social resources of a developing country ». While for the OECD, « governance is an objective notion that includes the mechanisms, processes, relationships, and complex institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations and to which they turn to settle their differences, » (Bakkour, 2013).

● Governance in the context of a participatory approach:

The participatory movement gained momentum in the late 1960s, notably marked by the influential article by Sherry Arnstein (1969) titled « A Ladder of Citizen Participation, » which continues to be frequently referenced today. This article, along with subsequent contributions, including the major theoretical work of Pateman (1970), places citizen participation at the core of the democratic process. This participatory trend was integrated into the field of public administration in the 1980s and gained importance in the 1990s

(Bacqué and Sintomer, 2011; OECD, 2001), where it is still considered essential, despite mixed results (Bherer, 2011; Côté and Gagnon, 2005; Monédiaire, 2011; Ryfe, 2005, cited by Yates, 2015).

Regarding governance, a theory of integrated citizen participation began to emerge in the context of governance literature, particularly since 2002 when the UNDP published its international report on human development. While citizen participation is a constitutive element of territorial governance, participative governance at the territorial level goes further by creating essential conditions for the exercise of the right to participation. This notably involves providing suitable participation tools (participatory mechanisms) and adequate media support.

Participative governance can be defined as one of various institutional strategies related to governance, ultimately aiming to stimulate citizen engagement : « *Citizen engagement is the desired outcome or logical end of participatory governance* » (United Nations, 2007, p. 7, cited by Yates, 2015). The participatory approach, by giving populations the opportunity to influence decisions that affect them, increasingly becomes a fundamental pillar of human development, conceived as “a process that enables individuals in a society to expand their capabilities for choice and action within that society” (UNDP, 1992). By establishing partnerships among various parties involved in an issue, the participatory approach seeks to reconcile top-down and bottom-up methods. Thus, targeted communities transform into genuine development stakeholders (Lazarev, 1993). The emergence of this approach stems from its numerous potential advantages: the effectiveness of actions taken, sustainability of results, etc. Although it can be implemented in various ways, the participatory approach is “an iterative process” (Charba, 2017).

Participative governance aims to strengthen territorial action by promoting increased transparency and profound information sharing within a process involving all stakeholders, such as government, administration, and potential beneficiaries, designated as “directly concerned actors.” This approach aspires to collective decision-making whenever possible. The first argument in favor of participative governance relies on obtaining more precise and comprehensive information, potentially increasing the effectiveness of decisions and outcomes. In the context of poverty reduction, the second argument for participative governance lies in the effective engagement of actors in this reduction. This is significantly facilitated by participative governance compared to traditional hierarchical decision-making processes, which are naturally closed to the examination and participation of citizens outside the circle of political and administrative actors involved.

The participation of individuals in the consultative and decision-making processes of public entities can be justified not only on democratic grounds but also on substantive bases. Indeed, “citizen knowledge,” as opposed to expert knowledge (Callon et al., 2001), can be perceived as an added value in the context of the decision-making process. Furthermore, this participation can be pragmatically justified on the idea that decisions resulting from a participative process will enjoy broader acceptance and, therefore, will be more easily implemented (Korfmacher, 2001). Under the pressure of citizens expecting to be consulted on matters that concern them, businesses gradually follow this logic similar to that of public organizations. They implement various initiatives self-described as “participative,” drawing inspiration from the model of “strategic conversation” (Lehmann, 2013). Citizen participation is put forth as a response to the legitimacy crisis of power, reshaping the relations between the state and civil society (Blondiaux, 2008, as cited by Goehrs, 2017). A fundamental aspect that promotes citizen participation is that of digitalization. Digital social networks are participating in the transformation of our society. In addition to traditional social relationships, new forms of digital sociability are developing in a virtual space (Vienne and al, 2017). Therefore, digitalization can facilitate the participation of citizens in the territorial decision-making process. Territorial communication can also constitute a main element in promoting citizen participation. Posters, advertising panels, digital communication are points that encourage citizens to participate (Libaert, 2010).

METHODS

In the context of our research, we have chosen to focus on the contribution of strategic territorial management through participatory governance to enhance the effectiveness of territorial actions and tailor development projects and programs to the needs of the population. The study upon which we have relied adopted a qualitative exploratory approach aimed at deepening the understanding of strategic territorial management. This approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of Moroccan perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of development projects tailored to specific territories, employing a participatory approach that involves the local population in the territorial decision-making process.

The selection of the qualitative approach is justified by the limited empirical knowledge concerning strategic territorial management and participatory governance. Our objective is to address this gap by examining the experiences and perceptions of citizens involved in the establishment of these territorial development projects. Through the exploratory approach, we also aim to identify key factors that promote citizen participation in the context of strategic territorial management.

- **Representative sample**

Most textbooks define a sample as a subset of elements drawn from a larger set known as the population. Royer and (Zarłowski, in Thiétart, 2003) define a sample as the set of elements from which data will be collected. The sampling process always involves three key questions: what is the population, what sample represents it, and how should this sample be chosen?

The method of sample selection is primarily done through Reasoned Sampling – the second category encompasses methods of sample selection through reasoned choice. Unlike probabilistic methods, which aim to eliminate the researcher's subjectivity, reasoned choice methods fundamentally rely on judgment. They allow for a precise selection of sample elements to more easily adhere to the criteria set by the researcher. The results of a sample selected through reasoned choice can lend themselves to analytical generalization.

Thus, for selecting individuals to be interviewed, reasoned sampling was implemented. This method involves targeting key individuals who are likely to provide relevant contributions to the study. In this case, key individuals were chosen based on their knowledge or involvement in territorial management, governance, and citizen participation. This approach maximizes the quality of collected data by ensuring that interviewees are competent and experienced in the studied field. Additionally, it reduces the risk of biases or measurement errors that could arise from choosing a broad and less targeted sample. The use of reasoned sampling to select relevant key individuals is an effective method for ensuring the quality of data collected in a study. This approach maximizes the relevance of the interviewed profiles to obtain precise and meaningful results.

- **Sample profile of the surveyed population :**

In this section, we meticulously examine the general characteristics of the surveyed population to gain a deeper understanding of the socio-demographic profile of our sample. The gathered information focuses on three essential aspects: gender, occupational category, and professional status of the participants.

Gender stands as a fundamental parameter in our analysis, providing an assessment of the male-female distribution within the sample. This gender differentiation offers significant insights into potential variations in perception, experience, or behavior based on gender differences within the studied population.

Occupational category of the participants is another critical aspect of our investigation. By scrutinizing the various professional categories represented in our sample, we can discern the socio-professional dynamics within the surveyed population. This thorough analysis enables us to identify potential disparities or specific trends associated with different professional sectors.

Furthermore, the examination of the professional status of the participants complements our understanding of the general characteristics of the studied population. By distinguishing between statuses such as employed, self-employed, or others, we can pinpoint nuances and specificities related to various forms of professional engagement within our sample.

The detailed analysis of these socio-demographic characteristics contributes to contextualizing our findings and provides a solid foundation for interpreting the conclusions of our study. These data also add value by shedding light on potential disparities or convergences in responses and attitudes based on specific socio-demographic variables, thereby enhancing the scholarly rigor of our analysis.

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DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

In this article, the research objectives have been taken into consideration, guiding the selection of research tools. Firstly, document analysis was employed to gather data on the research topic from sources such as articles, reports, books, and other relevant documents. This method facilitated the collection of reliable and readily accessible data without requiring direct interaction with study participants. Subsequently, a questionnaire was utilized to collect data from participants. The questionnaire was distributed to a targeted group simultaneously, making it an effective tool for gathering data in an efficient and systematic manner.

The number of questionnaires distributed is 100, however the number received is limited to 60 questionnaires.

The questionnaire was conducted in the French language for ease of understanding for the respondents as it was distributed online using Google Forms.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections and includes 26 questions which address the different facets linked to governance and strategic management of territories.

- Section 1 : Personal data
- Section 2 : Perceptions regarding strategic management of territories
- Section 3 : Perceptions regarding governance as a collective decision-making tool
- Section 4 : Adaptability of development strategies to the territorial context.
- Section 5 : Citizen participation in territorial decisions

Lastly, participation in forums and seminars related to the research topic provided an avenue for collecting

additional data on the opinions and perspectives of participants.

Evolution of territorial action in morocco : A historical perspective

Territorial management during the colonial period

With the arrival of the French, a new era began in Morocco. Their primary aim was to control and exploit the national territory, necessitating the reform of territorial institutions through modernization and standardization. To achieve this, the colonizers established modern territorial frameworks with the introduction of the “Protectorate system” (Boujrouf, 2005). In this context, the central point of Morocco (Fes-Marrakech) was shifted to the Atlantic coast. Resident General Lyautey decided to divide the colonial territory into two parts: a “useful Morocco” comprising Fes, Casablanca-Marrakech with agricultural and mining zones, and an “useless Morocco” consisting of the rest of the territory with very simple modes of production (El Bouzaidi and Boudouah, 2016). This period witnessed spatial modifications, as Moroccan cities were reshaped to resemble French cities with colonial-style buildings and wide avenues. Colonial authorities also implemented a territorial management policy aimed at modernizing and developing the country.

Geographically, Morocco underwent its first division by the colonizers in 1933, with a division into six major regions (Northern region, Sebou basin, Moroccan meseta, Atlas mountain ranges, Eastern Morocco, and Saharan Morocco). In summary, the territorial management during the French colonial period in Morocco was characterized by centralization and the reorganization of territorial administration through a system of direct governance. In 1956, Morocco finally gained its independence.

Policy control and challenges in managing territorial imbalances

Immediately after gaining independence, Morocco faced the challenge of managing territorial disparities inherited from the colonial period. In response, the state initiated numerous reforms, launching new development initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment rates, promoting democracy, and formalizing mass association.

The reform efforts began with the introduction of a Five-Year Plan for 1960-1964, intending to transform the colonial economy into a national one. The failure of this plan led to the implementation of a Three-Year Plan for 1965-1967, aligning with international recommendations. This plan yielded similar results to the 1960 quinquennial plan. Consequently, the state launched two additional five-year plans, the first for 1968-1972 and the second for 1973-1977, along with a three-year plan for 1978-1980 (Mohaine, 2019).

A centralizing approach dominated during this period, with the objective of controlling the national territory. Territorial reforms, unsuitable for Morocco, failed and resulted in territorial imbalances. This compelled the state to engage in a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1983. Due to rural vulnerabilities caused by drought, a new Five-Year Plan was launched between 1981-1985 but was abandoned by the end of 1983 due to climatic phenomena. These territorial phenomena compelled the state to consider a framework titled « territorial planning » (El Bouzaidi and Boudouah, 2016).

The rise of territorial planning policy

A genuine territorial planning policy only began in Morocco in the 2000s, following the enthronement of King Mohammed VI, who announced a change in direction through a new vision for territorial planning. These changes directly or indirectly impacted the population through the formulation of references for territorial planning and human development actions (National Human Development Initiative in 2005).

In 1997, Morocco underwent a territorial division into sixteen regions, accompanied by the establishment in

1998 of a specialized Ministry of Territorial Planning, Environment, Urbanism, and Housing.

The organization of a National Debate on Territorial Planning between 1999 and 2001 is considered a catalyst for addressing territorial planning issues (Adidi, 2011). This debate addressed major economic, social, and environmental challenges in Morocco.

In 2001, a National Charter for Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development was launched. It was considered the outcome of the national debate, defining the legal and institutional framework for spatial planning (Nachoui, 2018). A year later, a National Territorial Planning Scheme (SNAT) was introduced, consisting of seven volumes and 1607 pages, serving as a reference for territorial planning.

In 2005, the SNAT was translated into Regional Territorial Planning Schemes (SRAT) covering a twenty-year period. The SRAT aimed to guide regional economic and social development policies, ensuring coherence among regional-level sectoral strategies (Tachfine, 2020). The dependence of all territorial planning policies and strategies on the centralizing state became obsolete with the increased involvement of other development partners. In this context, the state was compelled to share territorial issues, becoming a co-producer and regulator in response to territorial challenges. This is where strategic territorial management comes into play.

Presentation of results and study area

The land from which the study sample originates is the city of Settat. In the middle of Morocco, in the Casablanca-Settat region. Lies the city of Settat. It is located 57km from the city of Casablanca to the north and 166 km from the city of Marrakech to the south. The city extends along the banks of the Ben Mousa River, which penetrates the city from north to south, thus forming a natural passage between Upper Chaouia and Lower Chaouia. The origin of the city dates back to the presence of a gushing spring on the right bank of the river, which was formerly used as a resting station for travelers heading to Marrakech or other regions. According to the High Commission for Planning, the results of the latest census for the year 2014 indicate that the population of Settat is 142,250 people. The following map shows the geographical positioning of the Settat city:



Fig 1. geographical positioning of the Settat city

Source: official website of the municipality of Settat

Descriptive results :

As mentioned earlier, we selected 100 targeted individuals to respond to our questionnaire, but only 60 people responded. The main results related to their personal data are summarized as follows :

• **Gender distribution and residential zone :**

	<i>Residence area</i>		
<i>Gender</i>	Rural	Urbain	Total
Female	8,47%	33,90%	42,37%
Male	5,08%	52,54%	57,63%
Total	13,56%	86,44%	100,00%

The male gender represents 57.63%, with 52.54% residing in urban areas and 5.08% in rural areas of the Settatt province, while the female gender represents 42.37%, with 33.90% residing in urban areas and 8.47% in rural areas of the Settatt province.

• **Level of studies**

<i>Level of studies</i>	Percentage
Primary education	1,69%
Secondary education	10,17%
Higher education (bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate)	88,14%
Total	100,00%

The rate of 88.14% indicates that the majority of the surveyed individuals have a high level of education. This adds significant scientific value to our study and legitimacy in terms of responses.

• **Professional category**

<i>Professional category</i>	Percentage
Self-employed	15,25%
Elected	16,95%
Entrepreneur	8,47%
Civil servant	33,90%
Employee	11,86%
Unemployed	13,56%
Total	100,00%

The diversity in the professional categories of the individuals interviewed highlights a rich and balanced representation of various professions within the sample, suggesting a broader scope and a more inclusive perspective on the research topic.

● Perceptions regarding strategic management of territories

Que représente le management territorial pour vous ?

60 réponses



The majority of respondents, 83% to be precise, correctly identified that territorial management encompasses all actions aimed at guiding and developing a territory in an integrated and concerted manner. This suggests a strong understanding of the concept of territorial management within this specific population.

Quel est l'objectif principal du management territorial pour vous ?

60 réponses



The prevalence of responses indicating that the main objective of territorial management is to promote the economic and social development of a territory in a sustainable manner underscores the significance attributed to the research issue by the surveyed individuals. This convergence of opinions suggests a shared understanding of the importance of balanced and sustainable development, highlighting a collective awareness of the challenges in territorial management. These findings, therefore, enhance the validity and relevance of the research within the context of respondents' perceptions and expectations regarding territorial management.

Quelle est la différence entre le management territorial et le management d'entreprise traditionnel ?

60 réponses



Upon reviewing the provided responses, it is evident that territorial management encompasses a holistic approach, considering the complexity and interconnectedness of various aspects within a territory. This includes promoting social well-being, preserving the environment, valorizing local culture, and addressing the needs of the population. This undoubtedly reflects the skills of the people interviewed and the quality of

the sample selected.

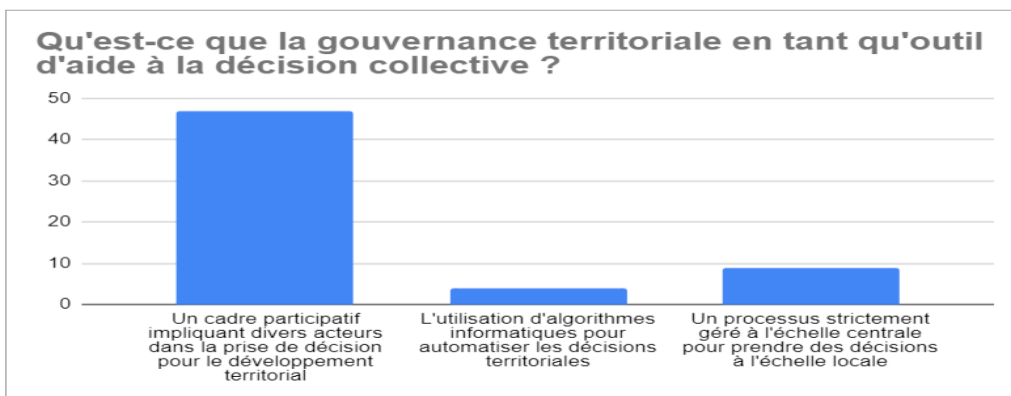
Selon vous quels acteurs sont généralement impliqués dans le management territorial ?

60 réponses



Regarding the results of this question, the response rate of 85% among others indicates that the majority of individuals involved in the research are aware of the importance of strategic territorial management. It highlights that territorial affairs should not solely concern a specific actor but rather be a collective matter involving all territorial stakeholders. This approach has enhanced the quality of the collected data by ensuring that respondents are knowledgeable and experienced in the studied field.

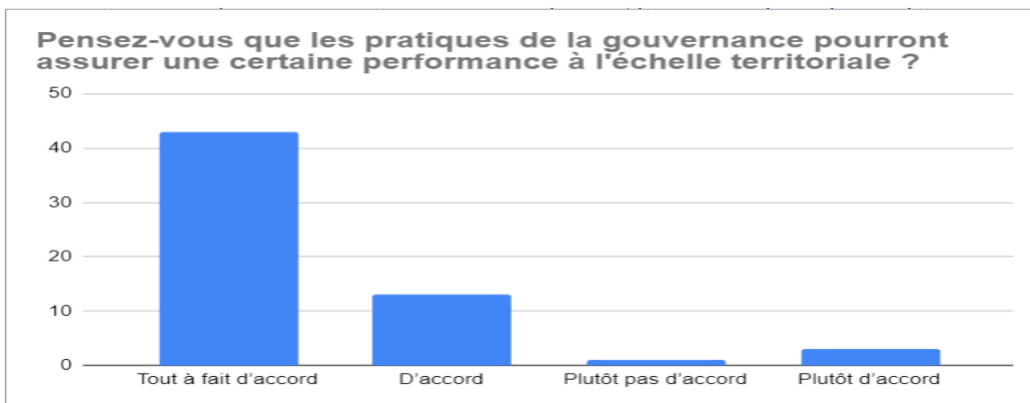
● **Perceptions regarding governance as a collective decision-making tool**



The collected results regarding governance as a tool for collective decision-making highlight the significance attributed to the process of concerted and negotiated decision-making by the involved stakeholders. These data reveal that the concept of governance is perceived as a crucial lever to foster fair and representative participation in the decision-making process. Stakeholders appear to acknowledge the value of a collaborative approach, where decisions are made transparently, inclusively, and result from constructive dialogue among all stakeholders.



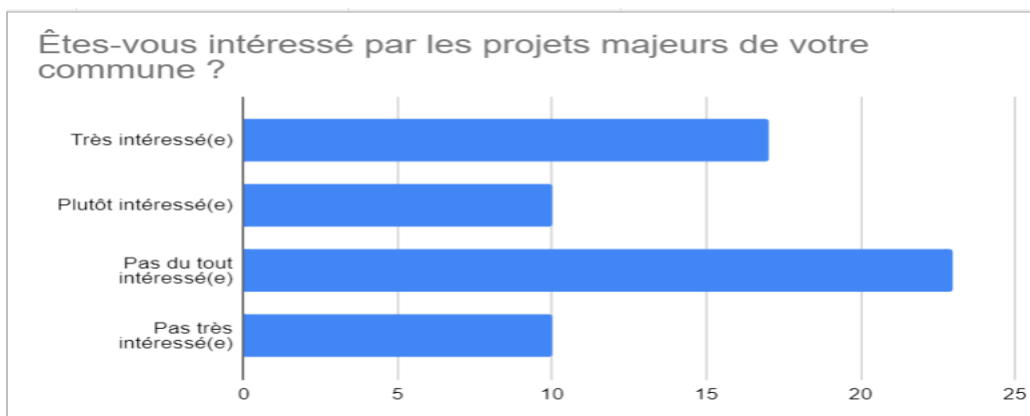
It also suggests that stakeholders consider collaboration and negotiation as key elements to achieve decisions that reflect the varied needs and aspirations of different stakeholders within the territory. In summary, these results underscore the recognition of governance as a tool promoting more democratic, participatory, and effective governance in the context of territorial management. This understanding of governance as a facilitator of collective decision-making through openness to the participation of different stakeholders as well as through the promotion of transparency indicates a preference for decision-making mechanisms that incorporate diverse perspectives and allow for a better understanding of territorial issues. It also suggests that stakeholders consider participation and transparency as key elements to achieve decisions that reflect the varied needs and aspirations of different stakeholders within the territory. In summary, these results underscore the recognition of governance as a tool promoting more democratic, participatory, and effective governance in the context of territorial management.



Analysis of responses to this question reveals a consensus, with the majority of respondents agreeing that governance practices can ensure and enhance the performance of territorial action. This positive perception underscores the acknowledgment of the importance of governance mechanisms within the context of territorial management.

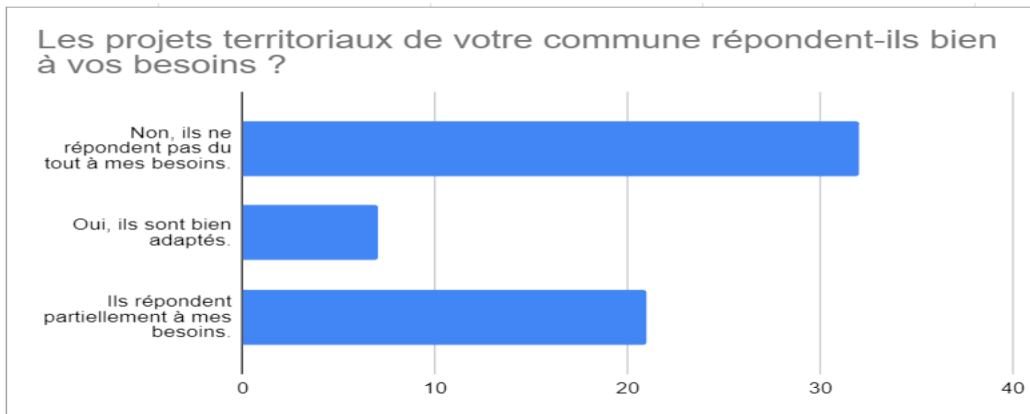
This favorable perspective also suggests that respondents recognize the positive impact of governance principles on mobilizing stakeholders, coordinating actions, and achieving territorial objectives. These results highlight the significance attributed to the quality of governance mechanisms in the context of territorial management and emphasize the aspiration for decision-making practices that promote effective and sustainable territorial action.

● **Adaptability of development strategies to the territorial context.**

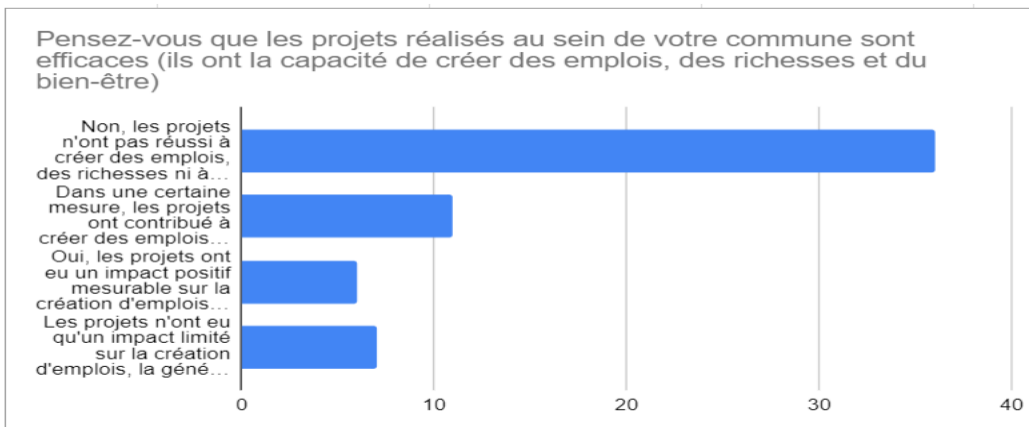


Regarding this question aimed at understanding the interest given to territorial projects by the population,

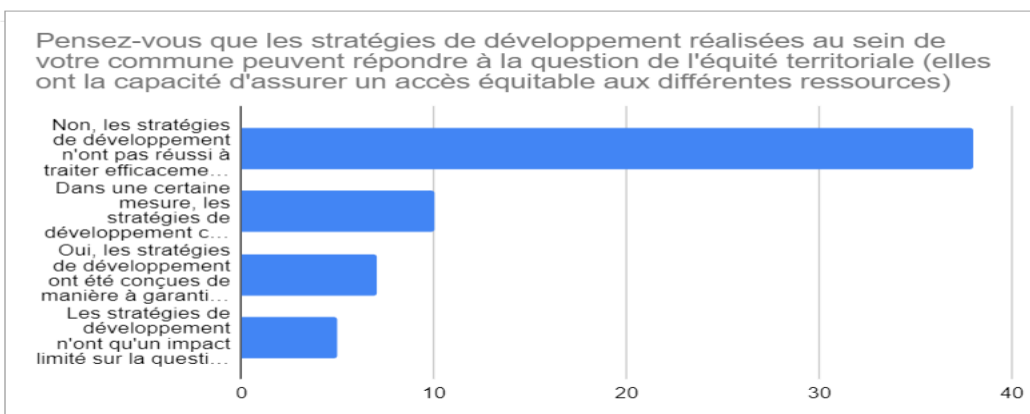
the majority of individuals expressed their lack of interest in various projects implemented by the municipality. This indicates the lack of involvement of citizens in territorial decision-making.



More than half of the surveyed individuals stated that the territorial projects adopted by the municipality do not meet their needs, while nearly 35% of these individuals declared that these projects partially meet their needs. The explanation for these responses helps us understand that the projects implemented by the municipality are far from meeting the expectations of the population due to the lack of citizen involvement.

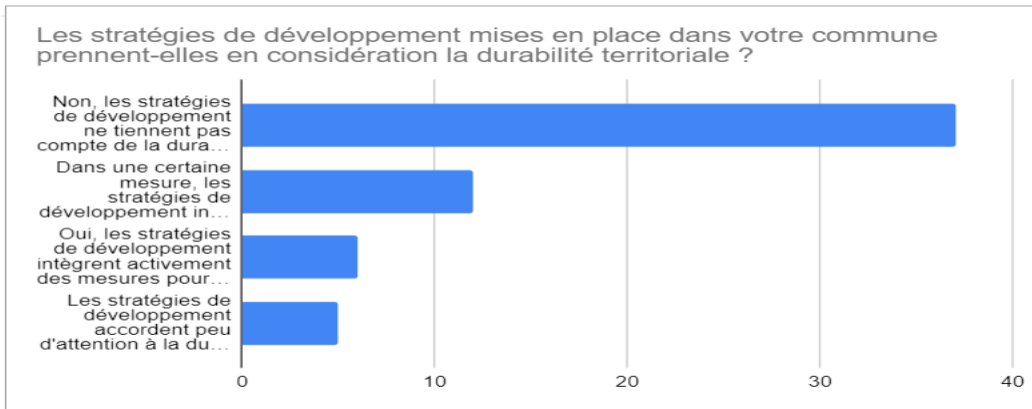


As mentioned in this question, effectiveness is measured by the ability of territorial projects to create jobs and wealth. According to the collected responses, which represent more than 63% of the total, these projects have not succeeded in creating jobs, generating wealth, or significantly improving well-being. This explains the lack of adaptability of development strategies to the territorial context.



Regarding territorial equity (the ability to ensure equitable access to various resources), nearly 17% of the

respondents answered that to some extent, development strategies contribute to addressing the issue of territorial equity, while more than 60% declared that no, development strategies have not succeeded in effectively addressing the issue of territorial equity. This allows us to understand the lack of adaptability between the development policies adopted by the municipality and the expectations of the population.



In terms of sustainability and considering the environmental challenges facing Morocco today, analyzing the collected responses from the surveyed individuals reveals that 10% of the responses were positive, while 20% of these responses were positive to some extent. On the other hand, over 60% of the collected responses were negative, leading us to conclude that the territorial development policies and strategies implemented by the municipality do not take into account the environmental aspect, which is the most crucial aspect today. Individuals also expressed their concerns about unpleasant odors emanating from some companies.

Citizen participation in territorial decisions

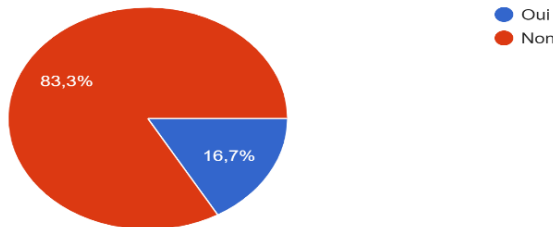


Êtes-vous au courant des activités, projets et stratégies de développement dans votre commune ?	Si oui, précisé à travers quels moyens ?					Total général
	Autres moyens	Bouche-à-oreille	Site d'internet	Via des élus	Voie d'affichage	
Occasionnellement	0,00%	37,93%			13,79%	51,72%
Oui,		6,90%	6,90%	10,34%	3,45%	27,59%
Pas du tout	0,00%	3,45%	3,45%			6,90%
Régulièrement Oui,		3,45%	3,45%	6,90%		13,79%
Total général	0,00%	6,90%	48,28%	17,24%	10,34%	100,00%

Regarding citizen participation in the implementation of territorial development policies, based on the analysis of the obtained results, it can be observed that more than half of the surveyed individuals are not

aware of the territorial strategies implemented by the municipality. According to the pivot table, among those who are aware, almost 50% learned about them through word of mouth. This indicates a lack of communication between the municipality and its citizens.

Avez-vous déjà été impliqué(e) dans des processus de concertation d'un projet au sein de votre commune ?
60 réponses

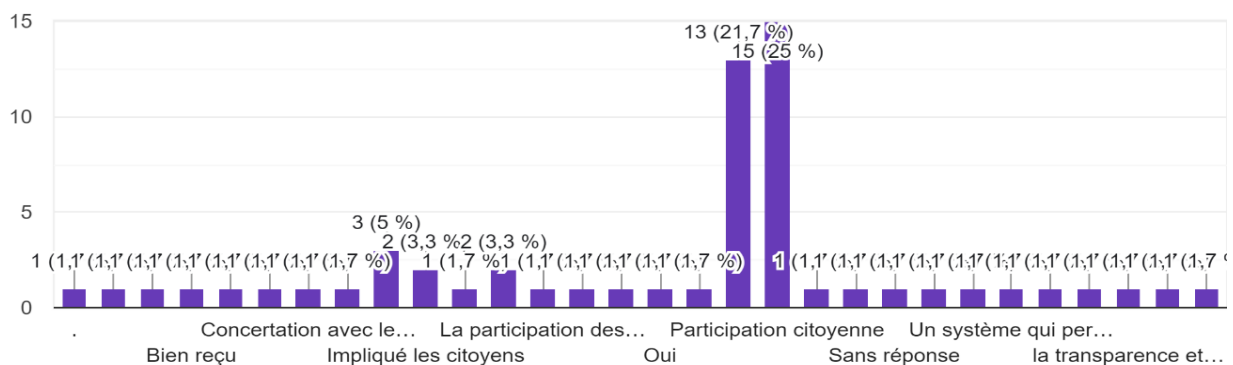


Si oui, précisé via quel moyen						
Quelle est votre statut actuel ?	Ateliers de conc	Autre	Enquêtes ou sor	Réunions publiq	Total général	
Auto-employé (e) (travailleu				8,33%	8,33%	
Elus	16,67%			16,67%	33,33%	
Entrepreneur (e)					0,00%	
Fonctionnaire (secteur publ		8,33%	16,67%	8,33%	33,33%	
Salarié(e) (secteur privé)			8,33%	8,33%	16,67%	
Sans emploi	8,33%				8,33%	
Total général	0,00%	25,00%	8,33%	25,00%	41,67%	100,00%

Concerning citizen involvement in a participatory process for a territorial project, the analysis of the collected responses revealed that 83% of the participants have never participated in the implementation of a territorial project. On the other hand, according to the presented analyses in the dynamic cross-tabulation, the individuals who did participate were elected officials and public sector employees through public meetings. Unfortunately, these results clearly highlight the lack of citizen participation.

Pour vous, dans l'idéal, la démocratie participative, ça devrait être :

60 réponses

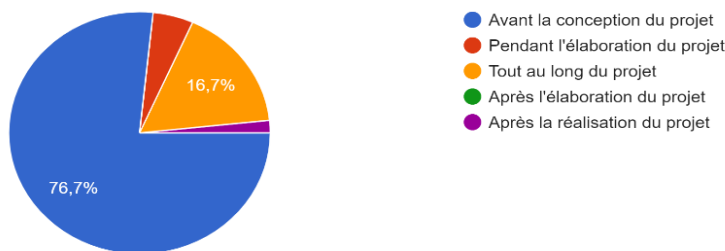


Regarding the social representation of participatory democracy, all participants expressed terms with

significant meaning related to the concept of participatory democracy. These terms reveal a profound understanding of the concept of participatory democracy, highlighting key notions such as citizen participation, consultation with citizens, and transparency.

The fact that all participants used terms with significant meaning in the context of participatory democracy suggests several important points. It reflects the high quality of the selected sample. Individuals included in the study appear well-informed and aware of the issues related to participatory democracy. This enhances the credibility of the obtained results, indicating that the responses are not random but rather reflect a deep and informed understanding of the matter.

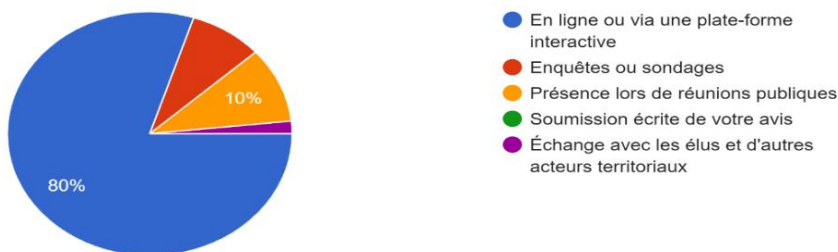
À quel moment préféreriez-vous donner votre avis sur les projets ?
60 réponses



Regarding the consideration of citizens' opinions in the design of territorial projects, a trend emerges among the majority of respondents: they prefer to express their views even before the project design begins. This preference underscores a proactive perspective and a willingness for citizen participation from the early stages of the decision-making process.

The preferential choice to provide input before the project design suggests several significant implications. Firstly, it demonstrates these individuals' desire to play an active role in shaping policies and projects that will impact their territory. They aspire to be involved from the outset, indicating a preference for an inclusive approach where their opinions are considered before final directions are established. This highlights the importance placed on genuinely engaged and collaborative participatory democracy.

Via quels moyens préféreriez-vous principalement donner votre avis sur les projets ?
60 réponses



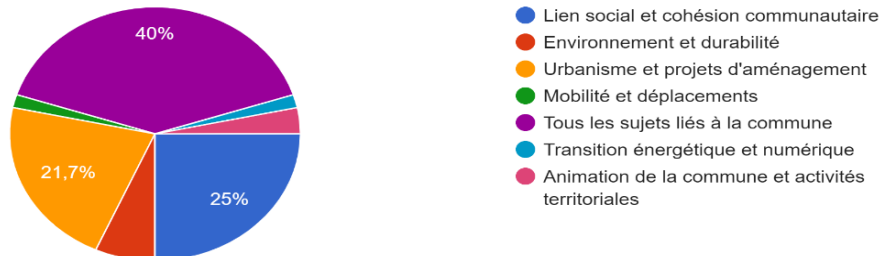
In the context of the current shift towards information and communication technologies, the obtained results highlight a distinct preference among individuals for online participation and expressing their opinions through interactive platforms. This trend reflects the growing impact of digital tools on how citizens choose to engage in democratic and participatory processes.

The inclination towards online participation can be interpreted as a response to the ease of access and

flexibility offered by digital platforms. By allowing individuals to contribute to the design of territorial projects from any location connected to the Internet, this approach eliminates traditional barriers and promotes broader and more diversified participation. It attests to an adaptation to contemporary realities, where digital connectivity becomes an essential means of communication and social interaction.

Dans quels domaines ou sujets seriez-vous intéressé(e) à exprimer votre avis ?

60 réponses



For this question, aimed at analyzing the types of subjects that capture citizens' attention, an interesting trend emerges from the analysis of responses. Nearly half of the respondents expressed a marked preference for giving their opinion on a variety of topics related to the city. This diversity of interests suggests widespread civic engagement and a desire to actively participate in discussions and decisions that affect their community.

Among the remaining respondents, a clear subdivision emerges between those who prioritize social projects and those who show a particular interest in energy projects. This distinction highlights the diversity of concerns and priorities within the population.

This analysis reveals a diversified participatory dynamic within the population, emphasizing the importance of considering this plurality of interests to promote inclusive and informed governance at the local level.

Quels sont les facteurs qui peuvent constituer des freins pour votre participation à l'action territoriale en matière de concertation ?

60 réponses



When examining the obstacles and barriers to citizen participation in the collective and territorial decision-making process, the results reveal a series of significant challenges. The majority of participants expressed that they have not been adequately informed, highlighting a significant deficit in territorial communication between the municipality and citizens.

Another category of participants identified time constraints as a barrier to their participation. This suggests that the current mechanisms implemented by the municipality may not be aligned with the availability and

schedules of citizens.

Furthermore, the lack of adaptability between the participation mechanisms established by the municipality and the needs of the population has been emphasized.

DISCUSSION

Based on the principles of negotiation, participation, and innovation, the adoption of strategic territorial management demonstrates the state's commitment to a new territorial policy. For a long time, the state was considered a crucial and almost sole actor in development, relegating secondary communities to a supportive role. Today, the situation has changed, and the state has begun to engage in a policy of shared territorial action. This is primarily due to the recognition of the existence of multiple actors and the transformations brought about by territorial production. Therefore, the state is no longer solely involved in territorial decision-making, as was the case during the Makhzen organization (Planel, 2009).

In the context of result analysis, in line with the theoretical framework, it has been observed that territorial management, as an approach based on principles and collective decision-making through participation, faces challenges at the level of the studied municipality. The implemented development projects and policies do not align with the territorial specificities, and their effectiveness, in terms of job creation and wealth, proves limited for the population.

This observation appears to be in contradiction with the principles of strategic territorial management, as defined by (Decoutère et al, 1996), emphasizing the importance of efficiency in formulating policies and development strategies tailored to the territory's peculiarities.

Regarding territorial efficiency, defined as the projects' and development strategies' ability to ensure equitable access to resources, and the principle of territorial sustainability, the results reveal an overall mismatch of development projects. They do not adhere to the principle of territorial equity or sustainability. This conclusion seems contradictory to the author's previous work, emphasizing the importance of formulating policies and development strategies in line with the principles of strategic territorial management.

In the analysis of results regarding citizen participation in the developmental decision-making process, a notable observation revolves around the deficiency of territorial communication emanating from the municipality. Simultaneously, the literature, particularly the works of (Libaert, 2010), underscores the crucial importance of public and territorial communication in involving citizens in local decision-making processes.

The lack of citizen involvement in this territorial decision-making process is particularly striking. The registered participants primarily consist of elected officials and bureaucrats, already engaged by the nature of their professional status. This observation leads us to establish a connection between the lack of certain project performance aspects and citizen participation, which may appear contradictory to the findings of (Yates, 2015) in the literature.

The observation of the diversity of expressions and synonyms used to describe participatory democracy by the majority of individuals reflects the quality of the chosen sample, thus supporting the works of (Bakkour, 2013) in the literature. A similar remark was made regarding the capacity of participatory governance to strengthen the decision-making process, in accordance with the studies by (Korfmacher, 2001).

On the other hand, the analysis of the obtained results highlights the strong willingness of the population to participate in the development of territorial projects. This willingness has been manifested by choosing to

participate before the development of projects through online engagement. This reflects the potential role of digital transformation in territories in the context of participatory governance (Vienne and al, 2017). The growing trend towards participation in various aspects of strategic territorial management underscores citizens' strong desire to contribute to decisions that affect them.

The transition from spatial planning to strategic territorial management is also observed through the territorial project, which is considered a new methodology breaking away from the centralized approach to development (Elkadiri, 2007), is based on the participation of various local actors throughout all project phases. It is a comprehensive project that mobilizes development potential to structure the territory with long-term objectives. This approach was tested in four regions of the Kingdom in 2009: Doukkala-Abda, Gharb-Chrarda-Beni-Hssen, Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate, and Chaouia Ourdigha. These regions are characterized by strong rurality with great potential but suffer from basic public services, unemployment, and low investments (El Bouzaidi and Boudouah, 2016).

The new approach, based on territorial specificities, was also realized through the feasibility testing of two approaches: "Localized Productive Systems" and "Territory Projects." The involved areas underwent a thorough evaluation, allowing for an understanding of each territory's specificities—its profile, identity, vocation, resources, and development axes. This new approach was primarily based on a participatory approach involving local actors, civil society, and the organization of workshops (Tachfine, 2020).

The transition to strategic territorial management was also realized through the advanced regionalization reform initiated in 2011 and implemented in 2015, marking a significant milestone. Territorial communities have evolved into "indispensable actors and partners to the central power" of the state, citizens, and the private sector in designing and executing territorial development strategies. The number of regions was reduced to twelve from sixteen. Advanced regionalization also aims to promote participatory democracy through the role assigned to the region, which is tasked with establishing consultation mechanisms with the private sector and civil society for the execution of its development plan (Tachfine, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If it is nearly impossible to overcome certain constraints imposed by territorial production and to quickly correct the dysfunctions of territorial action, it is possible to reform our governance by establishing a true foundation of principles related to strategic territorial management.

Participation and consultation in the territorial decision-making process are now a real challenge for the studied municipality. This imposes a rethinking of the relationships between decentralized entities of the State and the citizen, the State and the territories. It requires a complete revision of our approach, a constant search for coherence, and an adaptation of our technical supports. It demands greater sharing of responsibility among stakeholders, synergy, and the integration of policies.

Certainly, territorial action based on territorial planning has evolved significantly over the years. All stakeholders in territorial development now agree that an effective and efficient strategic management of territories, based on good territorial governance, decentralization, consultation, and the participation of all actors involved in territorial affairs, is the cornerstone of territorial development. However, breaking away from the centralizing approach that has prevailed since the country's independence proves to be a long-term endeavor. This is due to the almost complete absence, at least in the immediate term, of a genuine culture of sharing and participation among many decision-makers and territorial actors.

Promoting effective and inclusive territorial management is essential to ensure the sustainable development of local communities. However, numerous challenges hinder the implementation of effective policies, notably the lack of citizen participation in the decision-making process. In this spirit, we propose a series of

recommendations aimed at enhancing citizen participation and improving territorial governance. By encouraging active citizen engagement, fostering transparency, and strengthening local capacities, we can create more resilient and prosperous communities. The following recommendations are designed to guide local decision-makers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders in their efforts to promote inclusive and participatory territorial management.

- **Strengthening participatory governance:** Encourage active citizen participation in the decision-making process by implementing formal mechanisms for consultation and collaboration.
- **Improving territorial communication :** Develop effective communication strategies to inform citizens about territorial issues and decisions, using varied channels accessible to all.
- **Promoting information sharing :** Establish online platforms or hold regular public meetings to share relevant information about territorial development projects and decisions made.
- **Encouraging transparency and accountability:** Ensure that decision-making processes are transparent and that decisions made are explained and justified to citizens, thereby enhancing trust in local institutions.
- **Awareness and education:** Organize awareness campaigns to inform citizens about the importance of their participation in the decision-making process and the benefits of effective territorial management.
- **Encouraging diversity and inclusion :** Ensure that citizen participation reflects the diversity of local populations by including marginalized groups, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals in consultation processes.
- **Building local capacities :** Invest in strengthening the capacities of local civil society organizations so they can play an active role in promoting citizen participation and monitoring decision-making processes.
- **Utilizing new technologies :** Harness digital tools and online platforms to facilitate citizen engagement, enable public consultation on development projects, and foster collaboration among stakeholders.
- **Establishing feedback mechanisms:** Establish formal mechanisms to gather feedback and concerns from citizens, ensuring that this feedback is taken into account in territorial decisions.
- **Intersectoral collaboration :** Encourage collaboration among different actors involved in territorial management, including local governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and academic institutions, to develop integrated solutions to local challenges.

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