

# Heritage Governance between the Strategies of Actors and Territorial Development Opportunities: The Case of Khenifra in Morocco

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## Abstract

Khenifra is no longer a modest city by its history and nature. The natural and cultural heritages constitute a special base of growth and prosperity on which territorial development must be founded. However, the abundance and diversity of these existing touristic sites in the province of Khenifra are in need for concrete initiatives of evaluation, empowerment and exploitation, especially those of historic and natural values. The exploitation of this patrimonial wealth is contingent on touristic animation though. However, the sector of tourism is still marginal and has no connection with the economic activities in Khenifra, because it is still confronted with the poor management of heritage. The paper proposes a conceptual framework for the evaluation of the cultural heritage as a pivotal element in sustained development and good governance in the region of Khenifra, based on the analysis of existing literature review and descriptive data. Descriptive results listed that most of the important patrimonial sites are poorly governed and marginalized; therefore, they are not contributing to the touristic attractiveness and economic prosperity of the region.

## Keywords

Heritage Governance, Territorial Development, Tourism, Stakeholders, Attractiveness, Territoriality

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## 1. Introduction

Sustained development is treble sustainability of economic, societal and environmental prosperities for future generations, and heritage is one of these important properties which must be sustained and safeguarded. Indeed, heritage governance is now at the heart of contemporary debates concerning its contribution to the development of territories. Indeed, its evaluation is considered as a responsibility of all the local stakeholders (public and private institutions, inhabitants, the elected, the profit and nonprofit organizations ...) so as to achieve a territorial improvement, prosperity and sustained development.

Therefore, its valorization is a great opportunity for all the stakeholders, seeking to improve the touristic attractiveness of their territory, giving all the needed logistics and resources for its development (Babelon & Chastel, 1995). Heritage governance can be fraught with the dispersed schemes of sustainable tourism which looks for heritage protection and the heavy urbanization against it. Therefore, heritage governance is contingent on a whole-of-governance approach between all the stakeholders including non-institutional partners. Indeed, the word *governance* is broader than the word of government in recognition that governance involves not only institutions, but other stakeholders like civil society, associations and ONGs towards a common objective that is territorial development. The study considers that an urgent intervention for heritage protection is needed in the light of the folded governance schemes, strategies and policies of the local government. The following article suggests that the different schemes of stakeholders must be incorporated in a Whole-of-Government Approach for the protection of heritage and tourism development which are always the prominent drivers of sustainable development in Khenifra. A development is dependent on the willingness of the local stakeholders to work in a holistic approach towards the enhancement of their territory (Azelmad & Nfissi, 2018). Consequently, the absence of these initiatives would downgrade the socioeconomic activity of territories, leading to their touristic bankruptcy. Hence, this article attempts to highlight the importance of heritage empowerment in absence of stakeholders logic for the promotion of historical and natural heritage, which can contribute to the attractiveness of the territory and consequently to territorial development. This article looks to remind us about the importance of local heritage and its colossal roles in sustained local development, taking *Khenifra* as a case of study and suggest a conceptual framework for the evaluation and promotion of this patrimonial wealth in the region, being natural or cultural. At the end, the heritage empowerment is a driving force which relates incorporated contributions of different stakeholders for a general public benefit (Wang & Bramwell, 2012).

## 2. Attractiveness of the Territory and Territorial Development: Synergy and Interdependence

The concepts of territorial attractiveness and territorial development are two

faces of the same coin. Therefore, the analysis of each concept separately from the other is almost incomplete and bias, since the development trajectory of a territory systematically stalks and tracks that of its attractiveness. In other words, an attractive territory must offer a set of conditions (living environment, availability of certain types of services) doomed to attract certain groups of actors or organizations (Bourgain, Brot, & Gérardin, 2010). Henceforward, such conditions would contribute in a mutual way to the activity of the territory (employment opportunities, development of the supply of external resources and improvement of the quality of services), its development and prosperity (Pegui, 2012); consequently, the well-being of inhabitants.

### 2.1. Attractiveness of the Territory: A Polymorphic Concept

The literature on attractiveness is now very abundant. One of the theoretical currents that has largely contributed to its publicity is the new economic geography (Le Roy & Ottaviani, 2011). The attractiveness of a territory is generally equated with the territory's ability to attract and retain mobile factors of production and/or the population. We will define this attractiveness, as the capacity of a territory to be chosen by an actor as a zone of his location as well as an area of his temporary or sustainable activities (Poirot & Gérardin, 2010). This choice is dictated by the provision of a set of conditions in addition to those of competing territories. Conditions redesigned in a perspective of territorial development. However, these conditions consist especially in the valuation of the assets available to the local authority concerned. The attractiveness of its territory reflects the performance of local managers, especially the elected representatives to attract investments in order to preserve their local wealth. It explains their local choices and endeavors, hosting new activities aimed at the protection of rural and urban wealth. After retaining that the attractiveness of a territory reflects the desire to stay and return to this territory, it is to ask the question and to clarify, who are we trying to attract? No doubt, the answer is linked to the temporal evolution of the concept of attractiveness. Historically, investors have been the targets of the attractiveness policies and strategies, offering them all the optimal conditions for establishing their businesses. More recently, it is the individuals (tourists, household...) that we are looking to attract. A truly attractive territory offers greater opportunities and freedom for welfare, action, well-being and prosperity. Day in day out, the communicated policies on attractiveness have been enriched by new dimensions reversed to the choice of individuals, simply because investments, now, are pouring where people want to pour (CDD, 2018)<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.2. Territorial Development: A Collective Production

As an emerging paradigm, territorial development is now a well-established process in number of territories recently, called as *Developing Territories*. The

<sup>1</sup>The Contribution of the Development Council of the European Metropolis of Lille to the Attractiveness of the Mel.

term conditions the *territoriality* as new paradigm for development. The term has replaced what is rather called: *territories*. In other words, the territoriality of a space looks at its ability of the space being a stimulus for development, and not a downfall for development (Campagne & Pecqueur, 2015). In other words, territorial development refers to both a composite stream of research and a proliferation of initiatives, especially public ones, sharing the objectives of controlling the factors that determine the economic performance of more or less large territorial units. These factors are economic, cultural, political, being intrinsically linked to the social and biophysical characteristics of the territories where social actors are involved (Bouayad & Oumhani, 2013). In another perspective, territorial development is an interwoven of research and stakeholders initiatives, especially public ones, sharing common objectives of the factors which determine the economic performance, relating to a certain territory. These factors are sometimes economic, cultural, political or intrinsically linked to the social and biophysical characteristics of territories, where different stakeholders intervene and react (Bouayad & Oumhani, 2013).<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Paquot (2011) clearly states that the notion of *Territorial Development* enriches local development by the integration of three essential dimensions: territories, their stakeholders and land uses or the inhabitants. As a result, development processes are not based solely on the productive actors or the institutions that manage them, but involve all the human components of a territory, taking an oriented collective production towards development.

In relation to the notion of *attractiveness*, *territorial development* aims to make territories more attractive and competitive to each other. It is a new way of conceiving and organizing the future of territories, making their resources more appreciated and enhanced in order to meet local development and territorial management, as it is suggested by the new philosophy of *Advanced Regionalization* in Morocco (Baudelle, Mérenne-Schoumaker, & Guy, 2011).

### 3. Heritage as a Lever of Territorial Development

#### 3.1. From the Concept of Heritage

The notion of *heritage or patrimony* is very interwoven. It is an old term which has evolved over time. After several decades of oblivion or negligence, this notion is recalled again for deliberation in public spheres and academia. Between Choay & Champy (1995) who proposes for us an “Allegory Heritage” or Jeudy (2008) who speaks about the “Patrimonial Machinery”, all opinions are divergent (El Ansari, 2013). Now, the notion of heritage has no longer the same meaning because of its different fields of actions: civic, economic and social. The awareness about its diversity as well as its civic, economic and social value has inevitably modified its perception towards the public. It modified also the ac-

<sup>2</sup>Bruno in A. Bouayad and O. Eddelani, “The role of heritage in the development of territories in reconversion: the case of the old mines of Ahouli and Mibladen (Midelt-Morocco)”, the fiftieth symposium of the Association of regional sciences of French language.

tions towards its conservation, evaluation and management by local authorities.<sup>3</sup> It is “in its broadest sense, both a product and a process that provides societies with a set of resources inherited from the past, created in the present and made available for the benefit of future generations. It includes not only material<sup>4</sup> heritage, but also immaterial<sup>5</sup> heritage and natural heritage”. These resources constitute “vulnerable riches” which necessitate policies and models of development (UNESCO, 2014), not only those which preserve and respect its diversity, but also those which enhances it, as an engine of territorial development.

### 3.2. Historical (Cultural) Heritage: A Legacy of Value

The historical (cultural) heritage refers here to a set of material and immaterial patrimony available to a local authority. Therefore, its protection and management is a duty for all the local participants. These actions of protection are intrinsically actions against poverty, which may improve the inhabitants’ status quo and quality of life. Preserving heritage is directly linked to the empowerment of social cohesion that must have an effect on the feeling of pride and local belonging. Otherwise, preserving cultural heritage and local crafts manufacture (0) must empower the revenues of women, especially in rural and marginalized areas, allowing them to participate in their local economic and social development. In this direction, the city of Khenifra owns a substantial heritage with a priceless value and weak contribution to development. Indeed, the city contains a rich legacy, inherited from its historical and cultural heritage, which manifests itself through a set of historical sites scattered over its territory and a folkloric knowledge and craftsmanship. With regard to the material heritage, we mention here the following monuments (Figure 1):

- The Kasbah of Mouha Ouhamou Zayani built by the Almoravid sultan Ibn Tachfine on the edge of Um Errabia, restored by Sultan Moulay Ismaïl in 1688, as part of the construction of the strategic axis from Meknes through Azrou, Khenifra to Marrakech. It is classified as national heritage in 1933.<sup>6</sup>
- The mausoleum of Mouha Ouhamou Zayani located in the heart of the mountain in Tamellakt.
- Kasbah Oulaiyi located in the old Medina.
- The Adekhsal Kasbah on the Adekhsal Plateau.
- The Khenifra bridge, known as “the humpbacked Portuguese”, attributed to

<sup>3</sup>A rationale for the European Heritage Days organized by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication on 20 and 21 September 2014 under the theme: Cultural heritage, natural heritage, objectives and thematic orientations.

<sup>4</sup>The material heritage refers to sites devoted to culture, achievements of the human hand: museums, monuments, towns and villages of art or character, archaeological and prehistoric sites, gardens, religious buildings, military ... (Cluzeau, 1998).

<sup>5</sup>Immaterial cultural heritage or living heritage refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and know-how—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated with them—that communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (Diamantaki, 2010: p. 10).

<sup>6</sup>Dahir of December 26, 1933, including the classification, No. 1114 of March 2, 1934, p.186.

Moulay Ismaïl, it was used by the merchants as well as the local pastoral movements between Jbel Fazaz and Azaghar Izaïan (Peyron, 2005).

- The French cemetery located near the Regional Center for Education and Training.
- The French court located near the Family Court.
- The French church located on the highest part of the city to promote the symbol of the Catholic religion.
- Medina (ancient monument) located in the center of the city, it is a nucleus monument in Khenifra.
- The Zaouïas (Tidjaniya, Derqawiyya, Qadiriya of Sidi Abdelqadr Jilali, Aïssaoua) are dispersed in the city (Peyron, 2005).

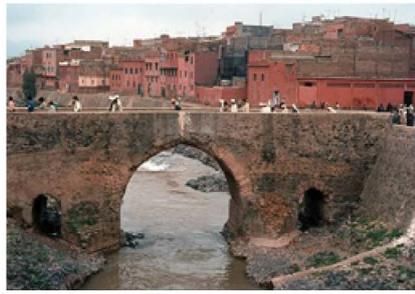
Provincial Delegation of Craft in Khenifra, Morocco. In fact, Khenifra produces different artistic crafts and products. According to local statistics, the sector employs 8000 families<sup>7</sup>, men and women, in tapestry, embroidery (Zayani Carpets, Hanbal, Braided Tents, Shoes ...), basketry, tanning and woodworking, as it is indicated in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**. However, the sector is still informal because most of artisans work at their home, deprived of communal centers where they can thrive their skills and products, which makes their selling informal and cheap. The city of Khenifra is an old Amazigh (Zayan) milieu in Morocco, which is always remembered by its historic leader *Mouha Ou Hammou Zayan*<sup>8</sup>, the Atlas lion in the guerrilla battles against the French and Portuguese colonization in the mountains of Zayan. He inflicted heavy losses upon the French colonizers (around 600 casualties) at the battle of Lahri 1914, restoring the conquered Khenifra (Emmanuel & Henry, 2011). Therefore, Khenifra retains all its authenticity and its oral heritage from its Zayan ancestors, thousand years ago. Now, the cultural heritage (folklore) is a cultural patrimonial wealth, which gathers men and women together for celebration, singing and dancing (Ahidous), as manifestation for bringing honor and glory for tribes. Today, Ahidous is a national heritage and more than a traditional dance in which men and women stand together shoulder to shoulder, in a large circle or in two lines facing in a remarkable order, reflecting the daily life, nature and customs of every region in Morocco (Ben Lancen, 2003) (**Figure 4**).

### 3.3. Natural Heritage: Diversity and Wealth

Natural heritage is a contemporary concept which is recognized lately. In fact, the way we exploit our planet could make it irreparably impoverished or even uninhabitable (Babelon & Chastel, 1995: p. 10). In 1972, UNESCO adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and equated nature and culture. In addition to creating a sustained link with man, the convention officially defines the areas that can be considered as places of natural heritage. In this convention, three categories are highlighted:

<sup>7</sup>Statistics extracted from the Report of Planning and Diagnostic 2014 of Khenifra City.

<sup>8</sup>Mohammed ou Hammou ben Akka ben Ahmed, 1863-1921.



The Portuguese Bridge



The french Tribunal



The rest from the Kasbah of Mouha Ouhamou Zayani



Casbah of Caïd Oulaïdi

**Figure 1.** Some monuments in the city of Khenifra. Source: (Aadach, 2015).

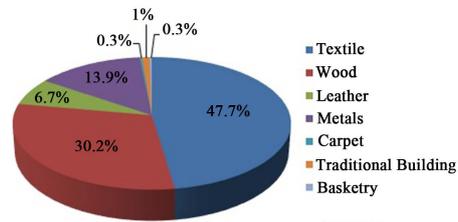
natural monuments (caves, waterfalls, oak trees), geological landscapes, areas constituting the habitat of threatened plant and animal species and finally natural areas of ecological, faunistic and floristic interest (estuary, marshes) (Lefevre, 2015).

Given the great diversity of its physical and climatic conditions, the province of Khenifra owns a great natural potential (variety of flora and fauna). The forest covers 42.7% of the province's surface area (526,000 ha). The characteristic tree species are the Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), the Atlas Black Pine (*Pinus nigra* subsp. *salzmannii* var. *mauretanicus*) or even the Zean oak (*Quercus canariensis*) (CESE, 2017: p. 21). It is a provincial asset whose economic takeoff is slow to take place.

The Khenifra National Park is also part of this natural heritage. It is located in the Middle Atlas range, between Fez and Marrakech, close to the town of Khenifra. The park has more than 220,000 hectares of wooded mountains and its natural resources are exceptional. Several natural landscapes are worth to be noted. The park's waterways are numerous and have earned it the nickname of the kingdom's *Water Castle*, particularly the Lakes of Aguelmame Azegza<sup>9</sup>, Tigualmamine<sup>10</sup>, Aguelmame Abekhan and the Lake of Aguelmame Sidi Ali, sources of Um Rabia (Figure 5).

<sup>9</sup>These are natural lakes of karstic origin, classified as a national heritage of Morocco since 1949 (O.B N. 1919 of 5 August 1949).

<sup>10</sup>UNESCO-recognized sites.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of local artisanal skills. Source: Provincial delegation of craft in Khenifra, Morocco.



**Figure 3.** Some types of local artisanal products. Source: (Aadach, 2015).



Ahidous in 1914



Ahidous in 1950



Ahidous in 2019<sup>11</sup>



The Maestro Mouha Oulhoucine Achibane<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 4.** From the history of the Folklore: a cultural heritage. Source: Regional Delegation of Culture.

<sup>11</sup>From the 19th edition of the national festival of Ahidous, taking place annually in Ain Leuh, under the theme “The preservation of cultural heritage, protection of identity and mechanisms of development”. The festival is an unmissable event for the fans of this authentic art which summons up approximately 50 groups of Ahidous from different provinces of Morocco, including those from Khenifra. This folkloric image communicates how Ahidous becomes, now, part of the national heritage and its identity (Conseil Régional du Tourisme, 2014).

<sup>12</sup>Mouha Oulhoucine Achibane (1916-2016) born in Khenifra (Azrou N’Ait Lahsen, Lkhab). He established his first ahidous team in the early 1950s. After years of experience, he became one of the most known figures nationally and internationally. He animated many festivals in Morocco, Africa, Europe and the US which helped him to spread this cultural heritage, which communicates culture, music, heritage and art of Ahidous and its beautiful folkloric exhibition in the World. The US president Reagan gave him the title of “the maestro” which accompanied him until his death in 2016 (Curtis, 2007).

Tigualmamine Lakes<sup>13</sup>Aguelmame Sidi Ali<sup>14</sup>Aguelmame Azegza Lake<sup>15</sup>Oum Rabia Sources<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 5.** The Natural landscapes in the region (natural heritage). Source: (DUE, 2016).

#### 4. Heritage Evaluation for Territorial Attractiveness

A territory can be valued by its natural and historical (cultural) heritage. However, it is the quality of this heritage that determines its attractiveness. Heritage is a shared territorial wealth and its empowerment must be contingent on the interaction and coordination of different stakeholders: inhabitants, associations, local non-profit organizations and public institutions (Albert, 2010). The appropriation of this concept of heritage by these actors and the awareness of its value is a major challenge for the development of the territories.

#### 5. The Natural and Historical (Cultural) Heritage of Khenifra: A Wealth in Oblivion

As mentioned above, the territory of Khenifra has a natural heritage (water, flo-

<sup>13</sup>Tiglmamine or Tiguelmamine is an Amazigh word “Auelmame” which means lake. It is situating 40 kilometers out of the city of Khenifra in the direction to the Zayanes tribes of Ait Boumzil and Ait Maii, in the heart of the Atlas Mountains. The site is classified as a wonderful national heritage monument of the country.

<sup>14</sup>Lake of Aguelmane Sidi Ali is beautiful natural site that situates between the province of Khenifra and Ifrane. It is surrounded by mountains on the surface of more than 500 hectares. The surroundings of the lake are absolutely magic, with huge cedar forests follow each other at more than 2000 meters altitude. Snowy winter until early spring, it is a beautiful and unique place that is unfortunately lost wild in nature.

<sup>15</sup>Aguelmame Azegza or “the green lake” in Tamazight language. It is a natural jewelry in the middle Atlas, which is about 30 km from Khenifra and at an altitude of about 1500 m. the Aguelmam Azegza site covers an area of approximately forty hectares. In the middle of this site lies a majestic Azegza Lake surrounded by cedar and oaks trees, which make it as wonderful plateau.

<sup>16</sup>Oum Errabia is the second river in Morocco. It takes its source from the heights of Jebel Hayane at an altitude of 1240 m in the rural area of Oum Errabia and flows into the Atlantic Ocean at the commune of Azemmour. Its length is 550 km a 10-minute walk from the car park to discover the sources of this natural heritage, one of the most spectacular resurgences of the underground hydraulic system in the region, which is left in the maintenance of the local inhabitants.

ra, and fauna) and a cultural richness emanating from its history: these resources of the natural and cultural heritage are levers of economic development, especially through the valorization and the promotion of the activities generating resources, but also by encouraging investment in appropriate sectors, including tourism.

Physically speaking, the history of the area is almost forgotten. The material heritage, which manifests itself through the historical monuments, mentioned before, is now in total oblivion; therefore, it is not protected (its features fade away day in day out) by the local stakeholders or the local authorities. As a consequence, the development of touristic activities which generate wealth and jobs from the cultural heritage becomes almost impossible. As a matter of fact, taking a look the urban plans of Khenifra manifests that no urban planner has taken the initiative to delimit the historic sites for their protection and restoration, which means that the protection and enhancement of such a richness is not at all a concern for the actors of the city. This deprives the city in particular and the province in general of opportunities for the development of cultural tourism, which can contribute to the attractiveness of the territory. Already, the city of Khenifra had developed its economic and social environment activities since its existence, doomed to meet the demand of the local population. It is about craft activities related to the agropastoral label of the region such as tapestry, tannery, pottery and woodworking. Despite its diversification, and with the emergence of other new activities such as ironwork, these skills are now unable to get rid of its archaic practices and traditional techniques. Therefore, such craft skills could not update its styles, tools and ways of manufacture so as meet the new commercial demands. As far as its immaterial (cultural) heritage is concerned, Khenifra brings together a diversity of homogeneous collective rites of songs and dances, inherited from its history. This type of heritage has no territoriality for development and continuation, as it does not succeed effectively in enhancing the cultural identity of the city and the inhabitants (Zayan). Effectively, the lack of cultural events in Khenifra has impeded the local artists to thrive, communicate and market their products at the local level. Hence, they feel forced to participate in other national events and festivals, internationally popular. As described above, the region of Khenifra is naturally excellent. Its physical and climatic conditions offer natural landscapes likely to be among the most attractive Moroccan territories. Yet, in the absence of appropriate planning, this natural wealth is now inevitably confronted with informal uses, putting its sustainability at risk. These include wild campsites informally settled on the natural sites, such as Aguelmame Azagza, Sources of Oum Rbia, Sources of Arougou, ... etc. These sites undergo continuous degradation due to the solid and liquid discharges pollution, which is an alarming situation that requires an urgent intervention of all the stakeholders.

## **6. Tourism in Khenifra: A Very Modest Sector**

Tourism is a pivotal economic activity which has a big impact on a big equili-

brium of employment, external balance and investment, as well as its multiple stimulations of the economy at all levels through its spillover effects. It is known as a sector that creates jobs, provides foreign exchange, distributes wealth and promotes local products (Idir, 2013: p. 4).

Therefore, awareness of the economic value of heritage, often through tourism, makes historic and natural sites an important challenge for growth. However, the development of tourism depends not only on the presence of a heritage potential in a territory, but on the attention given to it by the various actors and their ability to value it in order to extract the different tourist uses (Idir, 2013: p. 4). Heritage management goes hand in hand with its touristic valorization; therefore, the creation of new touristic sites and products would increase the attractiveness of the territories and build offers of activities, wealth and jobs (Idir, 2013: p. 3). At the same time, the value of heritage in Khenifra is never been steered towards the strategies of local stakeholders. Already, the shabby state of the historic monuments and the natural sites is a clear hint of indifference to preserve and valorize its wealth, which would contribute to the local development of tourism.

In addition to the tourist depreciation of the heritage, Khenifra is short of touristic institutions which can support the economic activities of the city. The city has only 8 hotels in which only two of them are classified with 3 stars. The lack of hostels in the middle of the mountains, quality restaurants, entertainment and relaxation areas, tourist circuits, adapted spaces for exhibitions and meetings and a flagship event... deprive the city of economic activities that want to evolve in a value-added environment, and of the attractive framework for the skills that economic development requires. In short, Khenifra has a wealthy potential for the tourism of mountains, ecology, culture and sport. The mentioned potential always constitutes real opportunities for territorial development that are hardly met in one region. To sum up, tourism is confronted with the poor management of heritage; therefore, it has a minim contribution to the local economic activities.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the diversity of Khenifra's heritage can create real opportunities for tourism and socioeconomic prosperity; therefore, a factor for the attractiveness of the territory and territorial development in general. Unfortunately, the different components of the natural and cultural heritage are insufficiently devalued and developed, particularly in the tourism sector. The fact weakens the efficient contribution of the tourism sector in the territorial development of the region. In this way, interventions of local and national stakeholders are mandatory for heritage governance and protection against any abuse in spite of the different actors' governance schemes and approaches. The study is significant to heritage governance in Khenifra as there is a large gap in this field of research, especially on how governance is manipulated by the dis-

persed socio-economic and political tendencies and interests. The study sheds light on the roles of heritage as an important richness for territorial development, which still suffers from oblivion and negligence. It indicates how heritage good governance is directly linked to the empowerment of women, social cohesion and finally the feeling of pride and local belonging. The study examined also how the region of Khenifra possesses a rich cultural and natural heritage but with weak contribution to sustained tourism and development. Hence, future studies in this field could explore more in depth how associations and ONGs can be empowered in relation to the weaknesses in the rule of law for heritage governance and protection, discussing for example the de jure rules and legislation in relation to their de facto outcomes for the protection of cultural heritage in Morocco. Further discussions may shed light on the roles of the new generations and their added values for the development of the existing cultural heritage, questioning their own initiatives throughout their new projects and ideas.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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