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Tunisia's Regional Inequalities of Development: The Human Development Index and Human Poverty Index by Governorate in Tunisia

الفوارق الجهوية للتنمية في تونس: مؤشر التنمية البشرية ومؤشر الفقر البشري
حسب الولاية (المحافظة) في تونس

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Abstract:

In this article, our aim was at first, to analyze the regional disparities and territorial inequalities of human development in Tunisia. The first part of the article was devoted to the Factorial components analysis. Moreover, the second part was centered on the progress of synthetic indicators of human development in every region, thanks to our approach based on the HDI (Human Development Index), the HPI ((Human poverty Indicator) and a synthetic indicator of human development in every region and governorate.

Keywords: Human development; Regional development; HDI (Human Development Index); HPI (Human poverty Indicator).

الملخص:

هدفنا في هذا المقال هو أولاً تحليل الفوارق الجهوية والتفاوت الإقليمي في التنمية البشرية في تونس. في الجزء الأول، وقع اعتماد التحليل الإحصائي لدراسة تطور كل جهة بين 1975 و2015. إضافة إلى ذلك، ركز الجزء الثاني على تقدم المؤشرات التآلفية للتنمية البشرية في كل منطقة، وذلك بفضل نهجنا القائم على مؤشر التنمية البشرية (HDI) ومؤشر الفقر البشري (HPI) والمؤشر التآلفي للتنمية البشرية في كل منطقة ومحافظة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التنمية البشرية؛ التنمية الإقليمية والجهوية؛ مؤشر التنمية البشرية؛ مؤشر الفقر البشري.

Introduction:

In the previous research, (Bousnina A., 2006), we have shown that the experience of human development in Tunisia is characterized by an improvement in socio-economic indicators, by the existence of certain economic performances undeniable which is expressed by the improvement of economic ratios, which has not remained without effects on purchasing power and on the increase in GDP per capita. Similarly, social indicators have recorded an undoubted improvement, which is reflected in the increase in life expectancy on the one hand and in the increase in literacy and schooling on the other. This has had repercussions on the evolution of the HDI and the synthetic indicator of human development, which have made significant progress in recent decades, both in absolute and relative terms, which has allowed improve Tunisia's ranking more substantially than most other countries.

However, these performances and this progress should not hide the existence of certain indisputable limits of the Tunisian development policy, in particular the persistence of regional disparities and the geographical distribution of the various services of the development policy (Bousnina A., 2012).

In this regard, one may wonder is this territorial distribution egalitarian or unequal? Is it equal or unequal regional development, and has developmental policy favored some regions over others?

To answer these questions, we are going to focus our interest on the regional variations of human development, and this is through two very useful statistical methods for the study of regional disparities: firstly, the Factorial Analysis in Principal Components and secondly our approach based on the composite human development indicators by region, or the HDIs, HPIs and synthetic human development indicators by region and by governorate.

However, the study of regional inequalities through synthetic indicators by region and by governorate was confronted with 2 major methodological problems, namely the administrative division and the availability of data. As such, the unavailability of certain components of the HDI and the HPI has forced us to substitute them with other data that can reflect the evolution of the socio-economic situation and human development in general. For the HDI for example, the economic index or the standard of living by region is approximated by the average expenditure (per person or per household), and this is because of the unavailability of the GDP per capita (through the PPP) by region or by governorate. Sometimes, this economic index is approximated by the unemployment rate because the average expenditure is not available by governorate.

The same goes for the health index because the other component of the HDI, namely life expectancy, is not available by region and by governorate in 1966, which is why the health index was approximated in several cases by the infant mortality rate.

This problem also concerns the Human Poverty Index or the HPI. Because of the unavailability of the probability of dying before age 40 and of the proportion of children suffering from underweight, we found ourselves obliged to replace these variables by the general mortality rate and by the infant mortality rate.

We will therefore begin with a diachronic analysis based on PCA (Principal Component Analysis) in order to identify the level of regional development between 1975 and 2014. In the second part, we will focus our interest on the analysis of regional disparities thanks to the composite indicators of human development, in this case the HDIs, the HPIs and the synthetic indicators of human development by region and by governorate.

• Principal Component Analysis

Factorial Analysis in Principal Components facilitates the elaboration of an overall coefficient of development which can express the level of development reached by each governorate. This PCA can be carried out in two ways: the first concerns a PCA analysis of 23 variables (13 in 1966 and 18 in 1975) which are sometimes different between 1966 and 2014 and the second concerns a PCA of 18 common variables for all the periods (1975, 1984, 1999, 2004 and 2014).

The common variables (which are available for all periods) between 1975 and 2104 concern the various areas relating to human and socio-economic development, namely education, health, economy and standard of living. These are the following variables:

1. Literacy
2. Male Literacy.
3. Female Literacy.
4. The level of education of the population (women).
5. The level of education of the population (men).
6. Hospital beds.
7. Child (infant) mortality rate (IMR).
8. Unemployment index.
9. The population employed in services.
10. The population employed in manufacturing industry.
11. Population Density.

12. Proportion of households connected to the sanitation network (ONAS).
13. Proportion of households with a bathroom (SB).
14. Running water supply (Water).
15. Electrification rate.
16. Urbanization.
17. Proportion of rudimentary housing (Log.rud).
18. Proportion of households with 2 or more rooms.

The correlation between the first PCA factor and these variables is very high. This correlation exceeds (in 2004, for example) 0.9 for several variables such as literacy or urbanization or running water supply. It is 0.8 for the electrification rate, 0.7 for the connection to sewers and 0.6 for the economic variables.

The first PCA factor, which expresses the level of socio-economic development, summarizes the main data (71% in 1975, 65% in 1984, 65% in 1999, 64% in 2004), the other components of the PCA express respectively 10% and 8% in 2004. These three factors restore more than 82% of the variance in 2014.

Examining the scores of the governorates on factor I make it easier for us to analyze the degree of development of each governorate. Table 2.1 allows us to clearly see the regional hierarchy and the ranking of the regions according to their scores and their level of development.

In 2004 for example, the three highest positive scores were recorded in the District of Tunis while the last four places were occupied by the governorates of the Center West and by Jendouba. After the District of Tunis, the best scores are still recorded in Monastir and Sousse (followed by Sfax and Nabeul) unlike Mahdia whose score is negative, which is diametrically opposed to the position of the other governorates of the Centre-East. Mahdia -and Zaghouan too- are therefore closer to the inland regions which -all- record a negative score, and this concerns the governorates of the Northwest and especially those of the Center West whose level of development is the lowest in the country (both in the educational and health level than at the economic level and basic equipment).

The intermediate position (between the two antipodes, namely the Capital and the Center West) is occupied by the regions of the South which record a positive score (except Gafsa and Tataouine) in particular thanks to the improvement of socio-collectives services (Bousnina A., 2012).

Table (1): Scores of governorates on factor I between 1975 and 2014

Gouv.	1975	Rank	1984	Rank	1999	Rank	2004	Rank	2014
Tunis	2,852	1	2,423	1	1,993	1	1,830	1	1.437
Ariana	-	-	1,081	4	1,188	4	1,511	3	1.354
B. Arous	-	-	1,788	2	1,482	3	1,582	2	1.337
Manouba	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,700	6	0.631
Nabeul	0,352	6	0,330	7	0,493	6	0,346	8	0.550
Zaghouan	-0,558	13	-0,868	19	-0,891	19	-1,021	19	-0.232
Bizerte	0,148	8	0,092	11	0,081	14	0,007	14	0.366
Beja	-0,586	14	-0,725	17	-0,661	18	-1,111	21	-0.380
Jendouba	-0,852	15	-1,042	20	-1,203	21	-1,328	23	-0.878
Le Kef	-0,210	10	-0,727	18	-0,565	17	-0,700	18	-0.205
Siliana	-0,968	17	-1,075	21	-1,124	20	-1,091	20	-0.440
Sousse	1,068	3	1,024	5	1,025	5	1,058	5	1.101
Monastir	1,205	2	1,261	3	1,515	2	1,455	4	1.012
Mahdia	-0,475	12	-0,611	16	-0,482	16	-0,436	17	-0.017
Sfax	0,855	4	0,719	6	0,484	7	0,548	7	0.465
Kairouan	-0,954	16	-1,345	24	-1,490	23	-1,381	24	-0.802
Kasserine	-1,026	18	-1,247	23	-1,656	24	-1,440	25	-1.001
S.Bouazid	-1,239	19	-1,234	22	-1,343	22	-1,245	22	-1.073
Gabes	-0,019	9	0,213	10	0,214	9	0,151	11	0.176
Medenine	-0,239	11	0,018	12	0,132	12	0,278	9	-0.104
Tataouine	-	-	-0,403	15	-0,093	15	-0,197	16	-0.373
Gafsa	0,202	7	0,016	13	0,124	13	-0,060	15	-0.347
Tozeur	-	-	0,232	8	0,405	8	0,277	10	0.334
Kebili	-	-	-0,357	14	0,188	10	0,116	13	-0.290
Tunisia	0,447	5	0,227	9	0,182	11	0,151	11	0.382

Source: Elaborated by our calculations, based on NIS data

It should be noted that Tunisia's score was 0.151, which places it in eleventh place, showing the regional imbalance where most of the country (14 governorates) is below the national average.

In summary, the governorates can be divided into two large equal groups (12 governorates each): the first is characterized by positive scores (ranging from Tunis, which has the highest score, to Bizerte, whose score is close to 0) and the second is characterized by negative scores ranging from -0.06 in Gafsa to -1.44 in Kasserine which ranks last.

We can compare the results or scores obtained for the different periods in question. For this, and like the method of fractional scores, we brought the scores to a fixed reference (which is the highest score, always recorded in Tunis) to be able to compare the evolution of the different regions and know the improvement or decline in the position of each governorate.

Despite the improvement in the scores of several regions, some governorates have experienced an undeniable decline in their position over the past thirty years while others have experienced a stabilization of their rank.

Referring to 1975 and then to 1984 (thanks to the similarity of the administrative division with 2004), we first notice the improvement in the position of Gabes and Medenine thanks in particular to the importance of the industrialization of the first and the diversification of tertiary activities (including tourist activity) for the second. The same goes for Nabeul and especially for Monastir thanks to their diversified economy and the tourist "take-off" of these two regions. This improvement is also observed in the governorates of the South such as Tozeur or Kébili in which there is a high level of development of infrastructure and socio-collective equipment.

Finally, we note an improvement in Ariana's score from 2004, after the creation of the governorate of Manouba which was integrated into Ariana before 2000 and which is often late compared to the other governorates of the District of Tunis because of the weakness of its socio-economic indicators.

On the other hand, there is a drop in the rank - even in the score - of Gafsa which recorded a negative score in 2004, unlike 1975 to 1984 and 1999, thus reflecting the deep crisis in the region based in particular on the "mining economy".

In addition, other governorates experienced a certain stabilization of their situation between 1975 and 2014. These include Sousse, which maintained its "privileged" position behind the District of Tunis and Monastir (still occupying the first ranks). Similarly, this stabilization concerns disadvantaged regions whose "marginalization" has been constant throughout recent decades: evidenced by the consistently negative scores of all the governorates of the North-West and Center-West throughout the period 1975-2014 (if not since 1966): it is a "**dominated and exploited periphery**, which is continually being emptied of its human and economic content" and which remains disinherited "because of unemployment, insufficient investment and the severe natural conditions" (Sethom H., 1992, pp. 217-221).

• Evolution of the HDI by region and by governorate

HDI by region

Thanks to the availability of data on life expectancy from 1975, our HDI is very close to that defined by the UNDP (except for the economic index because of the unavailability of GDP/Hab PPP). Thus, the HDI represents the arithmetic mean of the following three components:

1. The economic or standard of living index: approximated by the average expenditure per person (at current prices).
2. The education index: measured by the adult literacy rate (10 years and over) (in %)
3. The health index: measured by life expectancy at birth.
4. The indices are calculated on the basis of the formula mentioned above. However, changing the indicators involves changing the minimum and maximum values, as shown in the following table:

Table (2): The minimum and maximum values of the components of the HDI

	Minimum value	Maximum value
Expense per person	40	2000
Literacy rate	0	100
Life expectancy	25	85

The calculation of these 3 indices and the HDI gives us the following results:

Table (3): HDI by region between 1975 and 2015

Région	HDI in 1975	HDI in 1984	HDI in 1994	HDI in 2000	HDI in 2004	HDI in 2010	HDI in 2015
District-Tunis	594	721	823	870	803	826	860
North-East	504	635	759	801	775	813	721
North-West	387	529	689	754	704	748	623
Center-West	363	523	669	716	711	734	554
Center-East	580	661	795	837	806	839	750
South-East	430*	581	732	791	780	770	660
South-West	-	591	728	788	747	723	686
Tunisia	479	623	757	806	767	800	728

*This index concerns the entire South **Source:** Elaborated by our calculations, based on NIS data

After 1966 (period during which the South occupied the last place and recorded the lowest scores), the regional typology has not been upset since 1975 and the level of development of the regions (and subsequently their ranks) has not been changed (except for nuances): "The Capital always retains the first rank, it is followed by the governorates of the Center-East (Sousse, Monastir and Sfax) while Cap-Bon (and the North-East generally) and the South occupy an intermediate position before the disadvantaged areas of the Centre-West and North-West whose scores are negative" (Belhedi A., 1999, p.12.). In addition, the regions that have reached the average HDI are - as usual - the coastal areas of the country, namely the Capital, the Northeast and the Center East.

On the other hand, if we use a synthetic HDI, we can more easily integrate the multifaceted aspect of human development by taking into consideration the different aspects of regional development, which will allow us to show more clearly the economic and social inequalities between different regions.

Table (4): Synthetic index of HD between 1975 and 2015

Région	DT	NE	NW	CW	CE	SW	SE	Tunisia
Synthetic index of HD (1975)	744	582	468	442	634	537*	-	537
Synthetic index of HD (1984)	814	679	557	534	730	671	631	673
Synthetic index of HD (1994)	868	756	664	628	808	759	749	761
Synthetic index of HD (2000)	889	796	709	681	833	785	785	794
Synthetic index of HD (2004)	878	800	708	706	837	808	815	804
Synthetic index of HD (2010)	835	760	622	616	781	668	730	748
Synthetic index of HD (2015)	723	597	493	419	643	527	523	609

*This index concerns the entire South **Source:** Elaborated by our calculations, based on NIS data

If we take the better endowed region (District of Tunis) and the less developed one (the Center West), the comparison of the scores of the two zones (in the different areas) allows us to know the evolution of the gaps and their aggravation or on the contrary their attenuation. The general evolution of the various indices (economic, social, and educational) between 1975 and 2015 shows very clearly the persistence of regional inequalities for certain indicators and the attenuation of disparities for others.

First, there is a very significant attenuation of the gaps in several areas such as poverty, mortality, electrification and economic indicators. These differences varied, in 1975, between 100 and 250 points (640 for electrification) while the difference varies between 40 and 86 points in 2000 and in 2004 for most cases and it has dropped very sharply for electrification not to exceed 18 points or 1.8%.

Secondly, we should note - on the other hand - the persistence of inequalities in other areas in which interregional disparities are still considerable. In addition to the difference in terms of literacy (254 points in 2000 and 187 points in 2004), the gap in terms of urbanization and running water supply remains dizzying with a difference in 2000 of 617 and 501 points respectively. This difference also remained very significant in 2004 - despite the slight drop- with differences of 601 and 410 points.

Nevertheless, the general improvement of the indicators had as a corollary the reduction of the overall disparity, that is to say by referring to the synthetic HDI. This reduction was gradual since the difference between the extremes was 240 points in 1994, 208 points in 2000 and 219 points in 2010.

Moreover, the regional stratification which emerges from the analysis of the evolution of the synthetic HDI is similar to that which emerges from the study of the classic HDI. Although the North-West and Central-West HDIs recorded the fastest average annual growth, these two regions occupy the last place in 1975, 1984 and 1994. Likewise, the same order has been maintained, during all these years with the intermediate place of the North East, while the first and second places are occupied respectively by the Tunis region and the Center East.

Also at another time, and following the example of the classic HDI, we find that none of the interior regions reaches the level of the national threshold, and only the coastal areas of the eastern facade (District of Tunis, North-East and Center East) were able to achieve this performance. The persistence of this lacuna during all the phases of the study (1975, 1984, 1994, 2000, 2004 and 2010) clearly indicates the chronic and lasting nature of the regional imbalance.

On the other hand, the analysis by governorate of the "classic" HDI and the synthetic index of human development can confirm this geographical dichotomy favoring the coastal governorates.

HDI by governorate

Like the HDI by region, our HDI by governorate is very close to the classic HDI thanks to the availability of data on life expectancy and literacy. On the other hand, the economic index is approximated by the unemployment index (due to the unavailability of the DPA by governorate). The calculation of the 3 indices and the HDI gives us the following results:

Table (5): HDI by governorate between 1975 and 2015

	HDI (in 1975)	HDI (in 1994)	HDI (in 2000)	HDI (in 2004)	HDI (in 2010)	HDI (in 2015)
D. Tunis	702	775	779	803	826	814
Nabeul	680	762	797	803	817	761
Zaghuan	592	609	637	689	829	623
Bizerte	590	704	725	752	802	716
Beja	552	665	684	717	769	610
Jendouba	448	638	680	683	721	503
Le Kef	521	627	635	686	771	627
Siliana	470	625	639	703	738	599
Sousse	660	759	770	808	826	799
Monastir	682	786	802	842	877	836
Mahdia	643	684	748	765	785	626
Sfax	683	759	767	800	852	673
Kairouan	529	651	663	707	769	553
Kasserine	517	599	603	680	689	520
S.Bouzid	504	670	725	723	732	514
Gabes	603	711	733	761	768	671
Gafsa	592	656	677	716	692	588
Medenine	634	742	759	799	796	581
Tunisie	616	715	736	767	800	698

Source: Elaborated by our calculations, based on NIS data

It appears from these tables that the classification of governorates (mentioned above) was respected since the highest level of human development was recorded in the coastal regions, both in 1975 and 1994 and in 2000 and 2015. The six most important HDIs and the first six places concern the governorates of: Tunis, Nabeul, Sousse, Monastir, Sfax and Medenine. On the other hand, the lowest scores were recorded in 1975 in Jendouba and Siliana, in 2000 in Kasserine and Kef and in 2015 in Jendouba, Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid.

However, the use of the "classic" HDI may conceal certain indisputable shortcomings, in particular because of the limited number of variables used. For example, the most developed region of the country - in this case the Capital - only occupied third place in 2000 because of the high unemployment rate (unlike Monastir and Nabeul) whereas it is obvious (as seen in the previous paragraphs) that the best indicators in most socio-economic areas are recorded in the District of Tunis. In addition, and due to the limitation of the number of variables, the increase or decrease in the value of an indicator can directly affect the level of the HDI: this is shown by the case of Kef and Sidi Bouzid which have in reality a close level of development, but which recorded in 2000 a difference - in favor of the HDI of Sidi Bouzid - of almost 100 points because of the high level of unemployment in Kef (although the education and longevity indices are less reared in Sidi Bouzid).

In short, the classic HDI has certain drawbacks because it is limited to 3 variables, which means that the significant increase or decrease in a single indicator can significantly affect the level of the HDI. This is why the synthetic index can reflect - more clearly than the HDI - the socio-economic progress and the progression of human development by integrating the standard of living, the infrastructure, the demography..., and this, without neglecting the economic, educational and longevity index.

The calculation of the synthetic human development index since 1975 gives us the following results:

Table (6): Synthetic index of HD between 1975 and 2015

	HDI (in 1975)	HDI (in 1984)	HDI (in 1994)	HDI (in 2000)	HDI (in 2004)	HDI (in 2010)	HDI (in 2015)
D. Tunis	703	755	828	840	852	817	723
Nabeul	521	626	727	760	776	796	638
Zaghouan	444	463	589	636	684	765	535
Bizerte	496	583	691	719	745	778	616
Beja	441	496	624	651	684	677	517
Jendouba	384	437	581	615	647	632	427
Le Kef	425	495	620	648	699	701	526
Siliana	369	433	576	615	678	665	502
Sousse	575	697	784	798	822	787	699
Monastir	609	727	816	831	843	820	701
Mahdia	455	508	631	688	728	712	555
Sfax	561	640	721	740	776	802	614
Kairouan	392	441	570	609	672	686	450
Kasserine	374	430	560	591	665	601	414
S. Bouzid	356	401	555	627	665	696	395
Gabes	475	579	712	743	769	721	567
Gafsa	531	585	706	732	755	647	490
Medenine	442	573	709	745	808	741	518
Tunisia	493	593	705	734	769	763	609

Source: Elaborated by our calculations, based on NIS data

In terms of evolution, the most substantial progress has been observed in Sidi Bouzid and Siliana, which are the only governorates (along with Medenine) which recorded an HDI TAAM above 2% between 1975 and 2000. This rate is largely higher than that of the most developed regions with a TAAM of 0.7% and 1.2% respectively in Tunis and Monastir. Nevertheless, these performances and this progression nonetheless conceal considerable disparities. Despite all the regional development actions undertaken since independence, the gap between certain regions remains -until today- very significant reaching in 2010 nearly 220 points between the synthetic HDI of the District of Tunis (or Monastir) and that of Kasserine. The score for this region was still very low in 2010 since it was well below the national average of more than 160 points. Also in 2004, the gap remains very wide between the first and last ranks with a difference of more than 220 points between Tunis and Jendouba. The score of the latter is lower than the average of the country by more than 120 points.

In this regard, it should be noted that out of the 18 governorates concerned, only 7 of them reached in 2000 - and also in 2004 - the national threshold, and they are all coastal, which once again reflects the chronic and structural nature of the regional imbalance (this remark is also observed in 1966, 1975, 1984 and in 1994).

On the other hand, and following the example of the analysis of the evolution of the synthetic HDI by major region, the study of the evolution of this index by governorate shows the persistence of certain inequalities and the reduction of other disparities. In terms of employment, the gap between the "extremes" is still considerable due to the very high unemployment rate in certain governorates such as Le Kef and Kasserine. The gaps also persist in terms of running water supply, literacy and urbanization with a difference ranging from 270 points to 780 points. These inequalities have, on the other hand, decreased significantly in other areas such as longevity, mortality and electrification.

Moreover, the classification of the regions - thanks to the attribution of a rank to each governorate according to its synthetic HDI - shows that the regional typology was not upset between 1975 and 2010. Indeed, the first 9 places were occupied by the same governorates (all coastal in general) in 1975, 1984 and 1994 as well as in 2004 and 2010.

The Capital, Monastir and Sousse have always occupied the first 3 places while Nabeul conquered fourth place from Sfax (which occupied it before 1994) while Gabes and Medenine saw a gradual improvement in their scores, unlike Gafsa who occupied fifth place in 1966 and 1975 and whose situation deteriorated from the 1980s with the crisis in the mining economy.

Similarly, the most "disadvantaged" regions kept the same rank and maintained their last places during this period. What is very paradoxical is to find not only that **the first 9 places** were always occupied by the same 9 zones, but also to notice that **the last 5 places** are always occupied by the same governorates (all interior). These

are Sidi Bouzid, Kasserine, Kairouan, Jendouba and Siliana; in other words, it is the entire **Center West and 2 North-West** governorates which represent the most marginalized areas of the country.

In addition, the regional typology of development can also be studied using other human development indicators which take into account above all the social and human aspect such as the Human Poverty Index or the HPI. This is what we will study in what follows.

- **Evolution of the HPI by region and by governorate**

HPI by region

Compared to the HPI (human poverty index) as defined by the UNDP, our HPI by region retains illiteracy and the proportion of people without access to running water (data available by region and even by governorate) and this is unlike the other two indicators, namely:

1. The probability of dying before the age of 40 (which is approximated in some tables by the TBM, and in others it has been neglected because general mortality has clearly decreased in Tunisia and no longer allows a differentiation between regions)
2. The proportion of children (under 5 years old) suffering from underweight, and which is approximated by the TMI index.

Calculating these indices and the HPI gives us the following results:

Table (7): HPI by region between 1975 and 2015

Région	HPI in 1975	HPI in 1984	HPI in 1994	HPI in 2000	HPI in 2004	HPI in 2010	HPI in 2015
D.Tunis	260	179	093	069	72	152	089
NE	418	315	195	157	158	161	207
NW	492	397	284	249	260	225	299
CW	539	437	320	280	282	235	388
CE	337	253	160	125	119	137	170
SW	406*	333	180	142	126	248	208
SE	-	369	211	169	142	200	235
Tunisia	345	315	198	160	153	175	201

*This index concerns the entire South

Source: Elaborated by our calculations, based on NIS data

Throughout the study period, in 1975, 1984, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2010 and 2015, human poverty was highest in the Northwest and Center West and lowest in the District of Tunis and the Center East. Despite the general improvement in the indicators (reduction of the HPI by 309 points) and particularly in the interior regions (with the regression of the HPI by 232 and 257 points respectively in the Northwest and the Center West between 1975 and 2004), human poverty is still high in these regions mainly because of the poor supply of running water and illiteracy, particularly in the Center West.

On the other hand, the District of Tunis has experienced the least progress (-190 points) because its level (69 in 2000) is close to the ideal (0), and if we eliminate illiteracy which is still not negligible, the Capital's HPI would be very close to the ideal state (with an index equal to 36). This regional divide can be confirmed by studying the evolution of the HPI by governorate between 1975 and 2015.

HPI by governorate:

Table (8): HPI by governorate between 1975 and 2015

	HPI (1975)	HPI (1984)	HPI (1994)	HPI (2000)	HPI (2004)	HPI (2010)	HPI (2015)
D. Tunis	324	226	113	083	72	152	089
Nabeul	564	373	227	169	138	159	175
Zaghouan	604	493	327	273	210	144	268
Bizerte	536	393	242	205	166	171	201
Beja	576	472	325	294	245	205	278
Jendouba	609	508	388	358	290	251	340
Le Kef	566	472	334	306	236	203	275
Siliana	638	519	381	324	249	233	304
Sousse	488	279	145	108	85	152	114
Monastir	460	234	118	086	71	099	095
Mahdia	605	470	321	256	181	187	252
Sfax	515	362	226	183	138	126	232
Kairouan	650	546	385	343	276	201	367
Kasserine	649	531	399	374	289	278	371
S. Bouzid	663	566	415	332	270	237	430
Gabes	576	418	221	168	127	204	184
Gafsa	552	435	228	186	141	280	228
Medenine	615	478	276	226	148	175	284
Tunisia	543	394	243	199	154	175	201

Source: Elaborated by our calculations, based on NIS data

This table shows that the regional typology has been maintained with the same ranks for almost all the governorates. Of course, these are the same indicators used for the calculation of the HDI, but it should be noted that for the HPI by governorate it is the arithmetic mean of 3 variables and not of 9 or 10 indices. The persistence of the same regional stratification can be attested by the classification of the different governorates over the entire period 1975-2015. Indeed, the last 5 places (where human poverty is the highest) are often occupied by the same 5 areas, namely the 3 governorates of the Center West (Kasserine, Kairouan and Sidi Bouzid), Jendouba and Siliana. Similarly, the first 7 places are maintained by the coastal regions, ie. the District of Tunis, Monastir, Sousse, Nabeul, Sfax, Gabes and Bizerte.

Like the HDI, it is only those governorates that have reached or approached the national threshold and recorded an HPI lower (or very close) to the national HDI, unlike other regions - such as Kasserine or Jendouba - where human poverty affects more than a third of the population (this is why the gap between the extreme regions is still considerable, bordering, in 2000, 300 points and in 2004 nearly 220 points between the District of Tunis and Kasserine).

On the other hand, the use of other indicators and other methodologies brings out *the same regional typology reflecting the marginalization of the interior and the development of the coast*. For example, UN studies using a Human Lack Indicator (HLI) show very significant interregional disparities in education and quality of life. According to these studies, the governorate of Tunis with only an HLI of 15% in 1984 is clearly in the lead, the governorate of Sidi Bouzid with a rate of 56% (i.e. a difference of nearly 41 points) comes in last position with markedly behind the national average. In 1994, Tunis still kept the first rank and Sidi Bouzid was in the last rank. In this respect, the coastal/interior divide is striking since 1984 as well as 1994. We find the District of Tunis, Monastir and Sousse in the leading pack while the interior regions of Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, Kairouan, Jendouba and Siliana remain at the bottom of the ranking (ONU, 2001, p.69).

The persistence of the same regional typology is attested by this UN classification. Indeed, these five governorates mentioned above - ranked last - are exactly the same with reference to our HDI or our HPI or the HLI as calculated by the UN. Even if another HLI is calculated in 2004 and then in 2011, the regional classification remains almost the same (for example, in 2004, the HLI is equal to 150 in Tunis and 440 in Kasserine; in 2011, this HLI is lower than 175 in the Center East and it is almost 400 in the Center West).

Conclusion

This article has attempted to show that despite the significant improvement in indicators in all regions (thanks to the increase of the HDI and the regression of the HPI), interregional disparities remain considerable and the uneven regional development remains thorny. This inequality is evidenced by the persistence of the same regional typology since 1975 (if not since 1966) which favors coastal governorates to the detriment of inland areas. Throughout this period, the same regional stratification was maintained with the same ranks for almost all the governorates since the two best positions are always monopolized by the District of Tunis and the Centre-East while the last two places are "the prerogative" of the North-West and the Center-West while the intermediate position is occupied by the North-East and the South.

For both the HDI and the HPI, the last 5 positions are occupied by the same governorates (all inland) and the first 9 places are occupied by the same areas (often all coastal). This explains the delays for the governorates at the bottom of the ranking compared to the national average and especially in comparison with the better off regions. Both for the classic HDI and for the synthetic HDI and for the HPI; we find that none of the inland regions reaches the level of the national threshold, and only the coastal areas of the eastern facade (District of Tunis, North-East and Centre-East) were able to achieve this performance. The **persistence** of this lacuna during all the phases of the study (1975, 1984, 1994, 2000, 2004, 2010 and 2015) clearly indicates the chronic and lasting nature of the regional imbalance. The multiplicity and the change of statistical methods of classification cannot, in any case, transform the persistence of the same "law" of regional development in Tunisia, which remains an uneven development clearly characterized by the same regional stratification and by the magnitude of the economic and social **inequalities between the marginalized and dominated interior (the periphery) and the coast (or the center) with its most developed regions.**

In summary, "the hierarchical structure of development remains" and "the gaps between regions persist without spectacular improvement or over-deepening"; Bchir (1998, p.53) poses the problem of unequal development with acuity. If we rely on this conclusion, we are able to affirm that there are *several Tunisias in the same country, distinguishing "developed Tunisia" and "underdeveloped Tunisia"*.

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