

# CHARACTERIZATION OF AGROECOLOGICAL PRACTICES IN TWO ARID AND SEMI-ARID REGIONS OF MOROCCO AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT

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The arid and semi-arid regions of Morocco are faced with issues of land degradation, low water productivity, and high rainfall variability, commonly associated with the impacts of climate change. Agroecology is emerging as an innovative approach capable of addressing several challenges arising from these effects. The present study aims to identify agroecological practices in two specific regions, namely, the central and southeastern parts of Morocco. It seeks to pinpoint the technical, economic, natural, and other factors influencing agricultural production system in these areas. Data were collected from a survey involving 214 farmers through field trips and observations. The collected data were processed using quantitative and content analyses. Key results indicate that crop diversification, agroforestry, livestock farming, agriculture-livestock integration, crop rotations and associations, organic fertilization based on animal manure, and phytosanitary protection based on traditional knowledge are already integrated into current practices. However, these practices are not perceived as agro-ecological; instead, they are often viewed as irrelevant ancestral traditions. Recognizing the scientific value of these agro-ecological adoptions presents promising opportunities for enhancing the traditional conventions in the two studied territories. Nevertheless, for this agricultural system to succeed, it must overcome various economic, social, and productive challenges. To maximize its benefits, there is a need for financial and technical support, continual awareness efforts, favorable policies, and collaboration initiatives among stakeholders. Implementing these measures is crucial to fully harness the potential of agroecology in these regions.