

## **The creation of S.M.E and the territorial dynamics the wilaya of Bejaia (Algeria).**

**IFOURAH Hocine<sup>1</sup>**

Laboratoire de Recherche en Management et Techniques Quantitatives  
Docteur, Maître de conférences (A), Faculté des Sciences Economiques,  
Commerciales et des Sciences de Gestion. Université de Bejaia, **Algérie.**

[hocine.ifourah@univ-bejaia.dz](mailto:hocine.ifourah@univ-bejaia.dz)

**HENCHIRI Jamel Eddine**

Unité de recherche : Recherche, Entreprise et Décision (RED),  
Professeur à l'Institut Supérieur de Gestion de Gabès, **Tunisie.**

[jamel.henchiri@gmail.com](mailto:jamel.henchiri@gmail.com)

**MAAMRI Moussa**

Laboratoire de Recherche en Management et Techniques Quantitatives  
Maître de conférences (B), Faculté des Sciences Economiques,  
Commerciales et des Sciences de Gestion. Université de Bejaia, **Algérie**

[moussa.maamri@univ-bejaia.dz](mailto:moussa.maamri@univ-bejaia.dz)

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### **Abstract:**

This paper seeks to study the double dimension of the firm's creation and the territorial dynamics in order to appraising the determinants of entrepreneurship dynamism and territorial development. What can explain the entrepreneurship dynamism in the region of Bejaia? It is also an occasion for us to make an analysis about the territory factors that influence the firm's creation in Bejaia. In this aim, we present the results of case study undertaken in Bejaia, a locality which is situated in the north-est of Algeria, which constitute the territory that we will explore.

**Keywords:** Territorial dynamics, firm's creation, territory, territorial attractivity. Bejaia.

**JEL classification codes :** L 29, L 22, R 11, R 58.

### **Introduction:**

Analysis by local and territorial development has introduced innovative elements to the classic definition of the concept of "territory". The latter is no longer considered merely as a simple spatial step or a neutral administrative level corresponding to the scope of public policies. It is a social construct, a complex dynamic system. It is the direct result of the relationships woven by a plurality of actors in constant interaction. At the same time, we are witnessing a renewal of spatial approaches to development that are more focused on new territorial

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<sup>1</sup> **Corresponding Author.**

configurations and thus on singular "bottom-up" dynamics. In this innovative conception, space is composed of several distinct parts, characterized by specific territorial dynamics that involve the spatial variable. This is about "territories". Contrary to the classical conception (Weber 1909, Marshall 1920, Hottcling 1929, Perroux, Liptetz, harvey ...) which considers space as homogeneous, it is currently considered as "heterogeneous". In this conception, the most favorable and most attractive territories are those that offer the most advantageous economic, social, cultural and institutional conditions to businesses. These factors of territorial attractiveness are either the result of a given historical context, a recent construct of the voluntarism of local actors or a combination of both. This attractiveness means that a concentration of activities is created around a geographical area giving rise to "clusters". In this type of territorial configurations, membership in a value system seems to have a favorable impact on the dynamics of business creations and entrepreneurship. This refers to a *"relatively homogeneous system of value and thought, an expression of a certain ethic of work and activity, of the family, of reciprocity, of change, which in a way conditions the main aspects of life"*<sup>2</sup>, and represents one of the characteristic features of a local community in an industrial district.

Several authors also insist on the presence in developing countries of a young, abundant, knowledgeable and highly resourceful workforce, which gives them a competitive advantage. According to them, this would be a major distinguishing feature between the Local Productive Systems of the South and the North<sup>3</sup>. A local productive system (SPL), a concept derived from that of an industrial district, is a set of interdependent enterprises (of small, medium and large size), located around the same local area (local or sub-regional). The system of regulation in a local productive system uses both the rules of the market and those of a well-defined social code (rules and values). Co-operative relationships, for its part, in this type of system are dictated, in this kind of system, by their regional and local roots<sup>4</sup>.

Our contribution will therefore, on the dialectic creation of businesses-territorial dynamics; with the first assumption that the emergence of new companies can only be a sign of dynamism and territorial development, on the one hand. On the other hand, the second hypothesis is that even if it is clear that the dynamism of a territory is due to the creation of enterprises, it is firstly correlated with the personality of the entrepreneur. What can explain the dynamism experienced by the wilaya of Bejaia in terms of business creation? This will include examining the territorial factors that are at the base of this own dynamic. To answer these questions, we will rely on the results of a field survey carried out with some companies of the wilaya of Bejaia.

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<sup>2</sup> G.Beccatini (1992). Le district marshallien : Une notion socio-économique. In Benko et Lipietz, Les régions qui gagnent, PUF, Paris.

<sup>3</sup> A.Ferguene (2002). PME, territoire et développement local : le cas des pays du sud, Deuxièmes rencontres des Sud sur « Développement local et coopération décentralisée entre régions de la Méditerranée », 10 et 11 Octobre, MARRAKEH.

<sup>4</sup>B.Lévesque, J.L.Klein et J.L.Fontan(1998).Les systèmes industriels localisés : état de la recherche. UQAM.

## 1- The dialectic enterprise-territory creation

The problem of business creation and its relationship to the territory has been of interest to regional economic specialists for several decades. In particular, they focus on regional disparities in business start-ups. The theoretical argument developed to respond to this concern has necessitated an unavoidable recourse to three disciplines: the labor economy, the industrial economy and the space economy. On the other hand, it seems that innovative start-ups are subject to faster growth in some countries than others. Especially since in the territorial approach of development, based on actors and networks, the role of the company (particularly the SME) is unavoidable. This clearly suggests that the sustainability of these companies is not only the result of the qualities and managerial skills of their leaders. The environment, business climate and environment in which these units emerge and evolve are equally important as long as they ensure, or at least promote, rapid expansion and sustainability for businesses in general younger in particular. It is, so to speak, clear that the entrepreneur is only the product of the environment to which he belongs, which is most often local or regional.

The early 1980s saw the acceleration of the pace of internationalization of economies and the emergence of new technologies that led to unprecedented changes in economic structures. This has subsequently led to a reversal of the trend in some countries, with the decline of old industrial regions and the development of new regions. It has been shown that the very success of these new regions is characterized by endogenous development based on the exploitation of local resources. In this perspective, business creation is the result of private decisions. Nevertheless, the creation of a company is not only closely and deliberately linked to an individual choice, itself linked to an origin, a local identity, but also to a necessity.

### 1-1- The territory: historical landmarks

The territorial component, although mentioned quite early in the economic literature (especially through the work of Marshall (1890)), was not introduced into economic calculations as it was considered to make no contribution to understanding economic phenomena. The territory was in fact, victim of systematic rejection. A reversal of the course of events took place during the 1950s, a period marked by the birth of two streams of research: PERROUX's reflection on space and polarized growth, on the one hand, and the work of PONSARD who came back on the work of VON THUNNEN, LOSCH, WEBER and CHRISTALLER, on the other hand. The research in space economics is further enriched from the sixties thanks to the work of Walter ISARD who will found in 1961, in collaboration with François PERROUX "*Association of Regional Sciences of French Language*". The territorial component has been more recently integrated into the economic analysis of the firm's evolution thanks to the work of KRUGMAN and ARTHUR (1995).

In addition, we are witnessing the emergence of a new entrepreneurial society which, according to Boutillier, "*in the strategy of the network enterprise or in that of the State in the context of public policies aimed at (c) promote the creation of*

*enterprises*<sup>5</sup>. In this new economic logic, the local area is increasingly becoming a frame of reference for development policies. A territorialized approach to development is emerging, in the sense that development is the result of "*a multiplicity of actors organized in networks, formal and informal, and maintaining intense and economically fruitful relations between them*". Small and medium-sized enterprises are at the heart of this new approach; because of their territorial roots and the relationships, they have with the territory in which they are located.

## **1-2- Return of the entrepreneur on the economic scene**

The entrepreneur is often associated with the act of starting a business. Indeed, it is from him that emanates strategic decisions. Defining himself as the initiator of any new organization, as at the origin of the very idea of a project, the entrepreneur refers to this obstinate individual by the concretization of a project idea, of which he is the bearer, in the form of an organization. "*To undertake is to translate thought into action and action into reflection*"<sup>6</sup>.

The entrepreneur's design aspires a way of thinking (entrepreneurial spirit, entrepreneurial culture ...), individual or collective behavior (risk taking, sense of responsibility, initiative, development and exploitation of opportunities ...), diversified situations (business start-ups in existing companies, within an association ...)<sup>7</sup>. Boutillier and Uzunidis (2010) argue that the entrepreneur's return to the global economic scene took place in two ways: a first that is based on public policies to support business creation as well as the procedures for easing and outsourcing large companies; and by the mediatization of some successful experiences in the business world (like the famous Bill Gates, Steve JOBBS ...). The state can be, in this sense, a key player in stimulating entrepreneurship through the establishment of a favorable political, social and cultural environment. As it can through the law, regulation, restrict or prevent it. It is with this in mind that we are witnessing the proliferation of political and economic initiatives focused on the enhancement of the territory through the creation, attraction and development of businesses. The purpose of these policies is to create a business climate that is conducive to the emergence, development and flourishing of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial performance. The establishment of companies in a territory will then contribute to improving the relevance of the entrepreneurial context while increasing investment opportunities, development and strengthening of agglomeration trends and networking of public and private institutions. It is also essential to seek to improve the effectiveness of public policies, particularly through operations that tend to combine public actors and private operators. These policies are materialized by attempts to improve

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<sup>5</sup>S. Boutillier(2005). *Entrepreneuriat et développement territorial, évolution de la création d'entreprises dans le territoire dunkerquois (Nord-France) entre 1993 et 2005*. RCSR, Vol.33 (Numéro spécial). 39-58. France.

<sup>6</sup> P.Calame et al(2005). *Territoires : penser localement pour agir globalement*. Ed. Charles Léopold Mayer. Paris.

<sup>7</sup> J.M. Degeorge, A.Hounounou, O.Rousset(2010), 100 fiches sur l'entrepreneuriat, Bréal, Paris.

governance and adopt strategies for sustainable development that will lead to a conception of the so-called "entrepreneurial"<sup>8</sup> city.

## **2- Presentation and interpretation of the results of the survey**

With a total area of around 3261 km, the wilaya of Bejaia is located in the north-east of Algeria, located between the Djurdjura, Babors and Bibans. Its relief is dominated to 75% by mountains. It currently has 52 communes and 19 dairas. Its population is estimated according to the general population census of 2008 at 912,577 inhabitants [National Statistical Office, 2017], where more than 90% of the population is under 65 years of age. The literacy rate is 75.4%. Its oil and commercial port, ranked second near those of the capital Algiers is one of the most important of the Mediterranean. The wilaya comprises three industrial zones: that of the commune of Bejaia, that of EI-kseur and that of Akbou. In addition, there are around thirty activity zones scattered throughout the Bejaia area. It represents an important industrial center, where the concentration of many industries is denoted. With an ever-increasing rate of growth of the SME population, the wilaya has a total of 19,374 units in 2014, of which 4,638 are industrial enterprises [Bejaia wilaya SME Directorate, 2014]. It is ranked fourth in the number of creations nationally and ranked first in the wilayas of eastern Algeria. The concentration rate advanced at the end of 2012 by the Ministry of Small and Medium-sized Enterprise and Industry is 21.23 SMEs per person, which placed it at the top of the ranking of the wilayas of the is Algerian. Established as a real agro-food cluster, the wilaya is particularly active in the beverage production sector, where a cluster is officially created at the end of 2014.

The official statistics provided by the management of the small and medium enterprises of the wilaya of Bejaia as well as the file of the CNAS (Caisse Nationale des Assurances Sociales) allowed us to identify the sectors of activity present and especially those which predominate in the study area. Under the constraint of time and cost, we reduced the target sample to 100 industrial enterprises. At the end of our survey, our final sample was reduced to 70 companies. Therefore, our final sample is made up of 30% of SMEs belonging to the agro-food sector, followed by the Construction and Public Works (BTP) sectors with 19% of the chemical industry and the Iron and Steel Industries (ISMME) (with 15 % for each of these sectors), the wood and paper industry, and textiles, accounting respectively for 13% and 8% of the 70% companies that responded.

Most of our sample consists of businesses in the small business category (employing 10 to 49 employees), or 50 units accounting for more than 71% of the total. These results represent fairly well the reality of the field within the studied territory, since the official statistics affirm the predominance of this category in the total population of companies of the wilaya. We will point out that the measures taken by the public authorities for the creation of enterprises have caused a reversal of the trend. The adoption of the investment code of 1993, putting on equal footing the private investor and the public investor, has consolidated the proliferation of your

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<sup>8</sup> N.Levratto, O.Torres(2010). Le classement européen des villes entrepreneuriales. Méthodes, résultats et portée. Revue Innovations, vol 3. N° 33.

SME. More than 80% of the sample studied is made up of companies created after the year 2000.

### 2-1- The motivations for the creation of SMEs in the Wilaya of Bejaia

It is important for our object of study to seek to determine the typical profile of contractor surveys. It is therefore necessary to dwell on the socio-cultural characteristics of this key player in economic dynamism, in particular: geographical origin, level of education and the reasons for creation.

The majority of entrepreneurs in the sample come from the Wilaya of Bejaia. Being a native of the region seems, a priori, a key factor of choice of location. This also testifies to the degree of attachment of these creators to the region, as evidenced by the results of the investigation, the details of which will be provided later. A significant proportion of entrepreneurs surveyed have a university level of study (50% of the total answers), or come from vocational training (40% of the total responses). These results show the positive correlation between the level of education and the decision to embark on the entrepreneurial adventure.

Table I highlights the possible combinations of survey responses on motivations for starting a business.

**Table 1. What were your motivations for starting your business?**

| Reasons for creation                         | Frequency  | %           |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Business opportunity                         | 20         | 16%         |
| Participate in the development on the region | 25         | 20%         |
| Imitation of a family success                | 10         | 08%         |
| Creating the own job                         | 35         | 28%         |
| Professional experience in the same field    | 20         | 16%         |
| Practicing an ancestral profession           | 5          | 04%         |
| Others                                       | 10         | 08%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>125</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source:** statistics from the field investigation, Bejaia 2019.

The desire to escape unemployment is a determining factor in the creation of a business. The interviews revealed that this reason is even more present among entrepreneurs from vocational training or university-educated entrepreneurs who believe that their specialties are not required in the labor market. The desire to participate in the development of the region is ranked second. This desire is all the more accentuated by the feeling of belonging to a community, comes in third position, the reason for the existence of a business opportunity. According to the interviews carried out, it is in this case to seize the opportunity of a favorable environment for investment, a virgin market or a sector with strong demand.

Many entrepreneurs reported only previous experience, whether in the field in which they have invested or in other areas (management, technology ...), influenced their decision during the process of creating their businesses. In ten (10) cases, the entrepreneurs state that having one or more entrepreneurs in their entourage (family or friendly) has strongly encouraged them to do the same. Finally, an insignificant

portion of the surveys, ie five (05) respondents (out of 35), declared that they wanted to practice an ancestral profession.

The availability of capital is, in our view, a basic component of the decision to start a business. So the lack of financial resources is certainly a hindrance to the creation of activities. It is in this context that we analyzed the origin of the sources of financing of the companies surveyed. It is clear that the use of family resources is common among entrepreneurs. The second largest source of financing is the banking sector. The latter helped finance the creation of 24 SMEs. Nevertheless, some creators stated in interviews that the conditions required by banks are often binding, particularly with regard to guarantees and delays in processing cases. This state of affairs has forced some of them to use their entourage to finance their projects.

## 2-2- Logic of territorial construction, location factors and territorial dynamics

The approach we propose to adopt revolves around the search for a resource-building dynamic that gives the territory a competitive advantage representing, so to speak, a source of territorial attractiveness. But long before that, attachment to the region is a factor that has its weight in the logic of insertion of the creators of SMEs in the territory in question. In order to analyze the impact of localization on the development of a territorial dynamic, we have, at first glance, tried to expose the degree of attachment of surveys to the territory and then examined the logic of a territorial construction. In this sense, Table 2 presents a ranking chart of the degree of attachment to the region.

**Table 2: The degree of the attachment to the region**

| Degree of attachment          | Frequency | %             |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Very important                | 36        | 51.43%        |
| Important                     | 24        | 34.28%        |
| Not important                 | 08        | 11.43%        |
| <b>Total of the responses</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>97.14%</b> |
| Without response              | 02        | 02.86%        |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>70</b> | <b>100%</b>   |

**Source:** statistics from the field investigation, Bejaia 2019.

The answers obtained confirm that a majority of creators are very attached (with more than 50% of answers, either respondents) or simply attached (with 24 answers, or 34.3% of all responses) to the region. This suggests that the feeling of belonging to a community has contributed to the initiation of the decision to create businesses on the one hand, this is also the consequence of the lack of professional mobility of entrepreneurs surveys. To consolidate this observation, we undertook to interview the entrepreneurs targeted by the survey on their perception of the territory. The answers are recorded in Table 3.

**Table 3. What are your conception on the territory?**

| Conception of the territory     | Frequency | %     |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| As source of production factors | 6         | 08.57 |

|                                 |    |        |
|---------------------------------|----|--------|
| As an area to build and develop | 64 | 91.43% |
| <b>Total</b>                    | 70 | 100%   |

**Source:** statistics from the field investigation, Bejaia 2019.

Entrepreneurs overwhelmingly survey (64 respondents) consider the territory as a space to build and develop. Our interviews on this aspect, revealed that surveys consider that they contribute effectively to territorial development in the sense that their companies create jobs for the local population, provide tax resources to local communities, meet the demand for goods and services local population and generate added value. Although it is clear that the perception of these entrepreneurs of the territory is limited to the factors mentioned, it does not preclude a pretense of a territorial logic, nevertheless, by talking with them. We realized that they do not develop a collective strategy and that they lack coordinating mechanisms, which can have a negative effect on the dynamics of territorial development. Indeed, the coordination mechanisms of actors, such as Boschet and Rambonilaza support (2010). Have a special place in the process of territorial development, allowing the *alignment of isolated individual actions so that they are part of a collective that shares the same vision of the future*. The relational dimension, widely defended by approaches in terms of social capital, generates positive externalities for the actors of a territory, which are favored by the trust, the norms and the shared values, which in turn act on the anticipations, and the behaviors of these actors. One of the positive effects of this is an improvement in the effectiveness of individual and collective actions, a better flow of information, a sharing of resources and effective decision-making.<sup>9</sup>

### **2-3- The dialectic choice of the location / choice of the activity sector**

It is important at this stage to seek to determine the factors that underlie the choice of location. This involves, among other things, explaining what drives the companies created to focus on a given geographical area, in particular the role of the proximities, the quality of the workforce.

The proximity of the place of residence seems to be the predominant factor (see appendixes), which again testifies to the attachment of investigations to the region but also to their professional immobility. The interviews with the contractors revealed that they do not tend to take risks by venturing on land unknown to them. In addition, their family responsibilities are an element to take into account since they limit their mobility. The availability of resources and basic infrastructure is the second most important factor in the sample studied. Indeed, the wilaya of Bejaia is well endowed with resources (electricity, gas, water, natural resources, labor). It also has a relatively large road network, an airport, a railway infrastructure and a nationally ranked second largest port in terms of traffic volume after those of Algiers. Added to this is the existence of three industrial zones and 25 business parks.

All of these elements, according to respondents, are attractive factors for companies that are created. The proximity of the market is ranked third. The

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<sup>9</sup> C. Boschet et T. Rambonilaza(2010). Les mécanismes de coordination dans les réseaux sociaux : un cadre analytique de la dynamique territoriale. Revue d'Economie Régionale et Urbaine RERU, n° 3, p569 p593. Bordeaux.



existence of a market upstream and downstream is a determining factor in the choice of location. This reinforces the finding that there is a correlation between the geographic proximity of markets and the choice of location. The knowledge of the region is a factor that has its weight in the process of choosing the location, this factor is ranked fourth, with 24 responses. Investing and establishing in a region they know is, according to these creators, an advantage to exploit especially since it allows them to appeal to people around them to accelerate the administrative formalities, extremely long, of on the one hand, and to hire people from their family (family character of Algerian SMEs), on the other hand. Finally, state aid is not a determining factor in the location of the companies created. In the end, the results show that the choice of location for the sample studied, obeys not only classical factors (availability of resources, basic infrastructure, etc.), but also social considerations (attachment to the region, feeling of belonging).

The quality of the relations between the companies, their intensity, the choice of the nature of the relationships are paramount in the process of developing a logic of territory. Therefore, we will try to determine if the choice of location is influenced by the origin of the inputs that will be used by the companies created? Do survey contractors consider this aspect and in what proportions? A summary of the results is provided in the Table N°04.

**Table 4: The link between the choice of the sector of activity and the origin of the raw materials**

| Sectorial sector of implementation        | Origins of the raw materials |                      |               |                   | Total      |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
|   | From the same zone           | From the same wilaya | Other wilayas | Foreign countries |            |
| Proximity of companies in the same sector | 4                            | 6                    | 4             | 2                 | 16         |
| Proximity to complementary companies      | 8                            | 12                   | 16            | 6                 | 42         |
| Proximity of the suppliers                | 10                           | 14                   | 8             | 4                 | 36         |
| Proximity of the client companies         | 18                           | 22                   | 20            | 06                | 66         |
| Others                                    | 2                            | 8                    | 2             | 2                 | 14         |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>42</b>                    | <b>62</b>            | <b>50</b>     | <b>20</b>         | <b>174</b> |

**Source:** statistics from the field investigation, Bejaia 2019.

Relationships related to geographical proximity, especially of the client-supplier type, seem to exist between the companies surveyed, but remain insufficient. In addition, the supply of raw materials is frequently made to companies located in the rest of the wilaya of Bejaia, in other wilayas, or even in foreign countries. A small proportion of companies have relationships with companies in the same industry. The link with the latter is then limited to simple neighborhood relations imposed by geographical proximity. This reflects the fact that the surveys consider companies in the same industry as competitors, actual or potential, and nothing more. The interviews even revealed that they did not even consider

cooperative relations with their alleged competitors. Another observation emerges from the interviews carried out: the establishment within the business parks was made not primarily to take advantage of the proximity (agglomeration economies), but above all because these areas made it possible to welcome industrial enterprises and their needs in terms of premises, workshops, etc. The rest of the surveys chose the "other reasons" option. This is justified either because the invested sector is pristine, or because these are sectors whose demand is in full expansion.

Response to the question concerning the origin of the employees employed by the companies surveyed, it appears that the majority of companies employ employees from the Bejaia wilaya, that is to say nearly 57% of the companies that answered this question. A relatively insignificant share of companies employ employees from other regions. In 24 cases, (more than 34% of total investigations), no response to the question was provided. In seeking to understand the reason for this abstinence, we discover that some of the surveys claim to ignore the precise origin of their employees.

The qualification of employees constitutes in economic theory a factor that has its weight in the establishment of the company. It is in this sense that Table 5 was constructed.

**Table 5. Did the presence of skilled labor influence the location of your business?**

| Qualifications          | Frequency | %          |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Skilled worker          | 26        | 37.14      |
| Has a "know-how"        | 16        | 22.86      |
| Cheap worker            | 24        | 34.29      |
| Holds a spill of skills | 14        | 20         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>70</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source:** statistics from the field investigation, Bejaia 2019.

Reading the table tells us that in 26 cases (ie 37.14% of the total sample), the contractors believe that their employees hold the qualifications required to practice within their respective units. In 24 cases, contractors stated that labor is cheap. In the rest of the cases. Recruitment was done because employees hold know-how in the field in question (22.86% of answers) or have a variety of skills. These results lead to the conclusion that surveys recruit well above all for qualification and for gains in labor costs. In our view, the workforce provides a certain competitive advantage to the study area. We can, therefore, conclude that the wilaya of Bejaia contains a reservoir of labor, which is a determining factor in the choice of the location of their companies.

**Conclusion:**

The field survey allowed us to draw a series of observations. First, the entrepreneurial adventure gives these creators the opportunity to create their own job. Another finding that comes to the fore relates to the commitment shown by the surveyed entrepreneurs to the region. Note that there is a correlation between being

native to it and location. This shows, moreover, the lack of immobility of the investigations. They have openly testified to their desire to participate in the development of the region. A large proportion of the companies surveyed do not maintain links with other companies in the same sectors of activity. This state of affairs, characterized by the virtual absence of business-to-business relations within the industrial zones, limits the chances of triggering an organizational proximity. The reservoir of labor with which the wilaya is endowed contributes, rightly, to favor the territorial dynamics. In fact, the companies surveyed found on the spot the workforce they need. In the end, the territorial dynamics of the wilaya of Bejaia can be explained by the desire of the surveys to escape unemployment, the pronounced will of entrepreneurs to develop the region and by participating in the reduction of unemployment while generating income. resources, the existence of business opportunities, resources and basic infrastructure especially with regard to the availability of industrial land.

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