

**State Intervention and Neoliberal Land Privatization in Morocco:
Soft Power Mediation of Collective Land Disputes**

Said El Hamdaoui¹, Dr. Souad Eddouada²

Science Step Journal / SSJ

2025/Volume 3 - Issue 10

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17448983>

To cite this article: El Hamdaoui, S., Eddouada, S. (2025). State Intervention and Neoliberal Land Privatization in Morocco: Soft Power Mediation of Collective Land Disputes. Science Step Journal 3(10). ISSN: 3009-500X.

Abstract

This paper examines how the Moroccan state intervenes in collective land disputes, focusing on the shift from coercive measures to non-violent strategies that support land privatization under a neoliberal agenda. Based on two years of ethnographic fieldwork in Boujaad, the study draws on semi-structured interviews with five state officials and twenty right-holders, selected through purposeful and snowball sampling. The findings reveal that the state increasingly employs persuasion, dialogue, and negotiation—forms of soft power—to de-escalate tensions and gain community compliance, thereby preventing conflict escalation while facilitating the transfer of communal lands to private investors, often framed as development projects. Although these non-coercive interventions present the state as a mediator, they ultimately serve a neoliberal land commodification agenda, maintaining order but raising concerns about accountability and justice for right-holders. Future research should therefore examine the long-term socio-economic impacts of such policies and propose safeguards to protect community rights.

Keywords: Collective lands, state intervention, soft power, land privatization, neoliberal agenda

¹ Doctoral candidate, Laboratoire de Littérature, Arts et Ingénierie Pédagogique, Ibn Tofail Kenitra University, Kenitra, Morocco, said.elhamdaoui1@uit.ac.ma

² Associate Professor in the School of Literature, Languages and Arts, Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Morocco, Eddouada@yahoo.com

Introduction

Collective lands are a type of land held communally by groups of rights-holders called *Sulāliyin*, who are typically members of an ethnic group connected through patrilineal lineage (Eddouada, 2021). In Morocco, collective lands account for approximately 15 million hectares of land; the majority is pastoral, with the remainder used for agriculture. These lands have historically been pivotal to the livelihoods, stability, and identity of their long-standing right-holders. Beyond serving as sources of subsistence and cultural heritage, collective lands have also attracted interest for investment and capital accumulation, especially given their vast extent across the country. In recent decades, large portions of these lands have been targeted for urbanization and private development. For example, vast tracts of collective land have been privatized for building housing developments (such as in Bouknadel, Salé) and luxury apartments (e.g., in the Riyad district of Rabat). This large-scale privatization has converted so-called “idle” communal lands into individual property. Notably, much of this conversion has occurred in urban or peri-urban areas (for instance, Mehdiya in Kenitra) and in strategic rural zones (such as the NOOR solar energy mega-project in Ouarzazate). These expropriations were often justified under the banner of development and promises of job creation, but in practice, they involved meager compensation and were led by elites in power. Unsurprisingly, such actions have sparked protest movements over the past decade in response to the growing commodification of collective land in Morocco.

For *Sulāliyin* (men) and *Sulāliyat* (women) – the members of communities holding collective land rights – these lands are far more than market commodities. They form an integral part of cultural and social identity, providing livelihoods and enabling the intergenerational transmission of values and customs. Many collective lands are rich in water and natural resources, which have made them targets for agribusiness and large-scale investments touted as drivers of rural development and employment. However, recent scholarship reveals that collective lands have remained insecure and prone to conflicts arising from various intertwined issues. These include land grabbing by powerful actors, encroachment by outsiders, gender and social inequalities in land rights, struggles over access to pastoral areas, tensions between customary tenure and formal law, abuses of power by local authorities, lack of formal land titles, and exclusion of women from inheritance, among others.

Despite the prevalence of such tensions, agrarian studies have not fully illuminated the wide range of state intervention strategies in collective land conflicts. Here, “state intervention” refers to any form of involvement by the state in collective land matters – a patronage role that can include approving acquisitions, sales, exchanges, or partnerships concerning *Sulāliyin* properties, as well as ratifying peace agreements or reconciliation terms between collective groups (Interior Ministry website, author’s translation). The sweeping legal powers granted to the state in this domain indicate that, in effect, the state is the ultimate owner of collective lands. It reserves the right to intervene whenever it deems “necessary,” defining necessity in terms of whether land use aligns

with state agendas to “better utilize” these lands. Because the boundaries of state versus local authority are not clearly delineated, this ambiguity creates space for abuse and extensive land grabbing. State actors may justify land takeovers in the name of attracting investment and creating jobs for the common good, either through direct government action or via private companies and elite interests connected to the regime. Corrupt practices have been reported, including local officials and Interior Ministry representatives manipulating land deals (for instance, setting artificially low sale prices for collective lands and transferring them at “symbolic” prices to private or public developers). Such abuses often proceed unchecked due to weak regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms. As a result, indigenous collective landholders frequently suffer new grievances as their lands are taken. Another common abuse is the state unilaterally determining the compensation price for a collective land parcel slated for sale or lease – prices that often do not reflect market value and instead favor buyers connected to political or economic elites. Without robust legal safeguards and oversight, preventing these abuses is exceedingly difficult.

In this context, it is critical to understand *how* the Moroccan state intervenes in collective land disputes and *to what effect*. The present study aims to cast light on the state’s role in such conflicts, investigating the methods it employs and the implications of its involvement. The following section will outline the specific research questions guiding this inquiry, followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework and the state’s positioning in Morocco, before presenting the methodology and findings of the study.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following key research questions:

1. How does the Moroccan state intervene to resolve conflicts over collective lands?
2. To what extent do these state intervention strategies facilitate the privatization or “land grabbing” of collective lands under a neoliberal agenda?
3. What are the consequences of these state interventions for collective landholders and for the overall process of conflict resolution?

By answering these questions, the research seeks to deepen understanding of the state’s dual role as conflict resolver and as enabler of land appropriation in Morocco’s collective land disputes.

Defining the State in Morocco: Perspectives from Bourdieu and Laroui

Defining what exactly constitutes “the state” is an elusive task. Pierre Bourdieu (2018) cautions against relying on spontaneous or preconceived notions of the state, offering instead a working definition: the so-called state can be viewed as the “bureaucratic field” that legitimately monopolizes the means of both symbolic and physical violence. In other words, the state holds the recognized authority to enforce order and exert power within a given territory. Similarly, Moroccan historian Abdallah Laroui (2006) observed that countless debates have tried to pin

down the concept of the state without reaching a fixed definition. Laroui argues that the state is ultimately understood through the direct experience of citizens: the state is embodied in the individuals and institutions through which people encounter its power.

During my fieldwork, when interviewees spoke of “the state,” they often attached a host of negative labels to it, depicting it as the source of various ills. These perceptions of the state are rooted in how the community has experienced state power in their lives. In the realm of collective lands, the state’s presence is most strongly felt in moments of coercion or control – for instance, forced evictions, interventions in land conflicts, compiling lists of land rights holders, banning local protests, implementing rehousing schemes, mediating negotiations over land access, initiating development projects, or directly grabbing land in the name of the “common good” or “development”. To people on the ground, the state is thus perceived as an entity with authority far exceeding their own, one that shapes their entire relationship to land. Indeed, no cession, transfer, sale, lease, or change in possession of collective land can occur without the state’s official approval. While collective land by law is meant to be inalienable (unable to be sold to outsiders), in practice, this principle is easily overridden whenever a decision is made to appropriate those lands. Capturing the concept of “the state” in a single definition remains challenging, as it depends on how the state manifests itself and on the position of those defining it. In this study, rather than try to define the state abstractly, I consider the state in practical terms via its institutions – chiefly the Rural Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior. According to Article 31 of Decree No. 2.19.1086 (20 January 2020), this Directorate “is entrusted with exercising guardianship on behalf of the Minister of the Interior over the ethnic groups (tribes) in accordance with the laws and regulations governing them, as well as administering and preserving their property, defending their interests, and restructuring collective lands, in addition to supporting government programs in rural areas” (author’s translation). In simpler terms, the Ministry of the Interior – through its Rural Affairs Directorate – is the central authority managing collective lands. It operates as the legal *Guardian* of these lands, reinforcing the notion that the state claims an overarching ownership and final say in their use.

From Public to Private: The Impact of Neoliberalism on Morocco’s Land Policies

Morocco’s contemporary land policies cannot be separated from the wider influence of neoliberalism. Neoliberal ideology seeks to diminish the state’s role in the economy and transfer control to the private sector. It is rooted in classical economic liberalism, advocating for unfettered markets and minimal state intervention in economic affairs. As Cohen and Nathan (2007) describe, neoliberal policy involves adopting measures that reduce government involvement and expand the role of private capital as much as possible. The underlying presumption is that shifting economic control from the public to the private sphere will improve efficiency and overall economic performance.

In recent years, a “global land rush” has dramatically increased demand for land worldwide – particularly so-called “idle” or underutilized lands – for purposes of urbanization and investment. In Morocco, this trend translated into the appropriation and exploitation of collective lands through aggressive privatization programs implemented after the country’s independence in 1956. Structural adjustment policies in the 1980s and 1990s further propelled this shift, as Morocco was pressed to cut public spending (including on health and education) and liberalize its economy (de Janvry et al., 1992). A series of land reform initiatives ensued, fundamentally reshaping the status of collective lands and the lives of rural communities. These land-grabbing policies remain ongoing – more and more collective lands continue to be appropriated for private development or investment ventures. What we observe is a broad transformation from public or communal ownership to private ownership, aligned with neoliberal principles that prioritize private enterprise, foreign investment, and market-driven growth.

Negotiating Power and Authority: The Ministry of Interior and the Guardianship Council (*Wisaya*) in Land Disputes

The Ministry of the Interior exercises its authority over collective lands in part through a governing body known as the Guardianship Council (*Conseil de la Wisaya*), which is charged with managing collective land affairs. This council brings together all key stakeholders with mandates related to collective lands. In fact, a central council exists alongside regional councils, each with jurisdiction over collective land issues in its area. According to the official Collective Lands website, the council’s board includes a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture; the Director-General for Internal Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior (or his representative); the Director of Rural Affairs of the Interior Ministry (or his representative); and two *Sulāliyin* deputies (*Nouabs*, or collective land delegates) appointed by the Interior Minister for renewable two-year terms.

In theory, any decision affecting collective lands must be deliberated within this council and gains legitimacy only if all these stakeholders consent. The council’s responsibilities include approving concessions, transfers, sales, leases, partnerships, and resolving disputes related to collective lands among tribal groups – all under the directives of the Interior Ministry. A unanimous agreement among council members is ostensibly required to proceed with major actions, and the stated purpose of concentrating these powers is to improve governance and bring administration closer to citizens.

On the ground, however, most collective land right-holders have little awareness of the Guardianship Council or its composition. Especially in rural areas, local people do not typically know about this higher board that manages their lands. Their direct dealings are instead with local authorities such as the *Qaid*, *Basha*, *Mqaddam*, *Sheikh*, and most visibly the *Naïb* (the elected collective land delegate). These figures are the face of the state that rural communities recognize and interact with regularly. Despite their presence, the research participants I interviewed

expressed low trust in both the appointed local authorities and their own elected delegates. In some cases, *Nouabs* (delegates) have stayed in their positions for decades without change, breeding suspicions of corruption and collusion. Many right-holders recounted past experiences where their collective land was sold or leased without their consent but with the delegate's approval. Such incidents convinced them that some delegates had been bribed and had profited by signing away communal lands, effectively betraying the interests of the community. This mistrust extends to the broader system: communities often believe that local intermediaries and officials are complicit in dispossessing them of their lands, even as those officials claim to act for the community's benefit.

Given this background of contested authority and legitimacy, the state's approach to intervening in land disputes becomes critically important. How does the state assert its role as the ultimate decision-maker while maintaining social order and quelling dissent? The following methodology section describes how this research examined those questions through fieldwork.

Methodology

To investigate the state's policy presence in Morocco's collective land issues and reveal the various forms of state intervention, this study adopted a qualitative ethnographic research design. A two-year ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in the collective land areas around Boujaad (in the Khouribga province of the Middle Atlas), which provided rich, contextual data. The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. Over the course of the fieldwork, I carried out multiple visits to the field site and conducted interviews with five state officials (local representatives of the Ministry of the Interior) as well as numerous members of the *Sulāliyin* communities (collective land right-holders). The state officials interviewed – including *Qaids* and other authorities – provided valuable background on the region's geographic, political, cultural, economic, and social context, as well as insight into official procedures and perspectives on collective land management. Interviews were chosen as a key qualitative instrument because they allow researchers to explore, explain, and understand complex social phenomena through the participants' own experiences and viewpoints. Qualitative interviews can yield holistic perspectives and in-depth context, capturing human nuances, behaviors, and beliefs that quantitative methods might overlook. In contrast to statistical data, qualitative data embrace the inconsistencies and richness of human narratives (Lim et al., 2023) and support an interpretive approach to social reality. This approach aligns with a constructivist paradigm where knowledge is co-created through interaction, and it encourages reflexivity – the researcher actively reflecting on their role and bias – with the understanding that subjectivity can be a source of insight rather than a threat to validity (Neale, 2021). Rather than acting as a detached observer, I engaged with participants and their stories to make sense of the world around us, which is consistent with ethnographic best practices.

Sampling and Data Collection

The selection of research participants followed a purposeful sampling strategy rather than an ad hoc or convenience approach. This meant defining clear criteria for inclusion to ensure the data's relevance and credibility. Participants were chosen only if they had specific characteristics aligning with the research objectives – notably, direct current or prior involvement in collective land transactions or disputes. Those without such involvement were excluded. Applying these criteria led to securing twenty collective land right-holders as key participants, in addition to the five state officials mentioned above. Throughout the interviewing process, if certain interviews yielded repetitive information that did not contribute new insights, that data was set aside to maintain focus on unique and valuable information. At times, I discarded or downplayed interview data that was redundant or lacked added value, ensuring the analysis remained robust and not skewed by repetition. To broaden the participant pool and capture a wider range of perspectives, I also employed a snowball sampling technique. Leveraging the social networks I built in the community, I asked initial participants to refer other potential participants. This approach proved highly effective in identifying additional right-holders involved in land dealings and conflicts. Through these referrals, the sample expanded organically while still meeting the purposeful criteria. The snowball method was instrumental in reaching individuals who might otherwise have been inaccessible, and it is acknowledged as a useful strategy in qualitative research for studying community-based issues (Hair et al., 2020).

Interviews were conducted with sensitivity to ethical considerations. With each participant's consent, conversations were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and enable detailed analysis. Recording allowed me to capture participants' responses verbatim, preserving their exact words and meanings. This practice significantly enhanced the validity and reliability of the data by preventing errors or memory lapses that can occur with sole reliance on written notes. Interviews typically lasted between 50 and 90 minutes, providing ample time for participants to share their experiences and for follow-up questions to delve deeper. After each interview, I transcribed the audio recordings into text. While transcription was time-consuming, it was a crucial step for thorough analysis, yielding a rich textual dataset that could be reviewed repeatedly. Transcription ensured that subtle details in speech – tone, emotion, emphasis – were not lost, and it facilitated careful coding and theming of the data during analysis. Throughout the study, participant anonymity was strictly maintained. Many interviewees requested that their names not be revealed, given the sensitivity of criticizing state actions. In response, I assigned pseudonyms to all participants (for example, calling a participant "Mohammed" instead of his real name) and omitted any identifying details in the findings, as promised to the participants. This ethical safeguard helped protect participants from potential repercussions and encouraged frank dialogue about their experiences.

Mapping out the Fieldsite

The field research was centered on the Boujaad region, which provided a concrete setting to study collective land disputes. Boujaad is a city located on the eastern phosphate plateau of Khouribga Province, at an altitude of about 670 meters above sea level. It lies approximately 140 km from the city of Khouribga in a straight line, and about 40 km from the Middle Atlas mountain range to the west. The city's climate is continental, marked by long, sweltering, and dry summers and bitterly cold winters. Most of the annual rainfall occurs during the winter months, but even then, the total precipitation rarely exceeds 300 mm per year. A historical note on nomenclature: local lore suggests that "Boujaad" derives from the valley's name by which the city was established. Some say it comes from the Arabic *Abu Jada*, meaning "father of Jada" (Jada being a type of fragrant plant that once grew abundantly), while others link it to a legend of the area being a wolf's breeding ground (with *Abu Jada* interpreted as "father of the audacious (wolf)"). Regardless of the exact origin, the name carries a cultural significance to the inhabitants.

Administratively, Boujaad city oversees three main rural districts (*caïdat*): Shougrane, Bni Zrantel, and Bni Bataw. Within the Shougrane district are four tribes: Rwashed, Shougrane, Tashraft, and Ain Qaichar. My research focused on the Shougrane tribe, particularly two long-contending sub-fractions (*fakhdat*) within it, locally known as Ait Bihi and Jrayyat. These two sub-groups have a history of rivalry over land claims. According to an official from the Rural Affairs Directorate in the Shougrane area, the collective land attributed to this tribe is estimated at 112,000 hectares – a vast territory indicative of the high stakes involved in its control and use.

The economy of Boujaad and its surrounding areas is mixed. The city benefits from seasonal tourism, especially from an annual regional festival known as the *Moussem*, which attracts visitors and pilgrims and contributes significantly to local revenues. Agriculture remains an important livelihood in rural parts of Boujaad, with inhabitants farming crops and raising livestock. Another notable aspect of the local economy is outmigration – over the years, many residents have emigrated, particularly to Europe, and they often send remittances back home or invest in local property. Trade also features in the local economy; for example, Boujaad is known for the selling of traditional carpets and other artisanal products, which can be found in local markets.

Despite the city of Boujaad having infrastructure like daily access to tap water, the rural peripheries under its jurisdiction face chronic water stress. In the villages and grazing areas I visited, inconsistent rainfall and recurrent droughts have made water a scarce and precious resource. Rural residents primarily rely on groundwater wells, and sometimes they must walk several kilometers to reach the nearest functional well for water for their households and livestock. This environmental challenge is part of a larger trend of climate change and aridification affecting Morocco, but it is also exacerbated by what locals perceive as uneven development policies by the

state. One shepherd, Mohammed, who herds goats on a collectively-owned pasture called *Elfandi* in Shougrane, explained the situation in vivid terms:

“Rangelands were open to all the pastoralists where water and grass were available in abundance. Now, with successive years of drought and a shortage of rain, we have to trek miles before we get to the nearest wells for water and grass. We occasionally used to hold sit-ins in front of our rural council; we wrote complaint letters; we gave statements to the media outlets – and all that we usually get are rosy promises, nothing but a crafty web of lies. We just wanted our voices to be heard,” he added.

Mohammed’s account highlights not only the environmental hardship but also a sense of neglect and frustration. While drought is a natural phenomenon (and Morocco is not immune to global climatic changes), local people clearly tie their plight to anthropogenic factors – specifically, to the state’s development policies that have favored some regions (the “useful Morocco”) over others (the “non-useful Morocco”). The term “useful Morocco” vs. “non-useful Morocco” dates back to the colonial era and refers to the dichotomy between areas deemed economically valuable and those considered marginal. The continued lack of infrastructure and support in rural Boujaad feeds into this historical narrative of a two-speed development in Morocco, where the state is seen as prioritizing urban centers and resource-rich sites while neglecting peripheral communities.

The situation becomes even more volatile when environmental stress overlaps with conflict over resources. Mohammed went on to recall a particularly dire incident from a decade ago that underscored the severity of land conflicts:

“I still remember the bloody fight that erupted over a parcel of collective land called Mrah Lghrab between Jrayyat and Ait Bihi – two main long-standing contesting tribes who both laid ownership claims to it. Houses and cars were burned, women and children were injured and taken to the hospital, and men were taken to jail. The local authorities (Qaid, Basha, Sheikh, Mqaddam, and the Royal Gendarmerie) intervened and put an end to the fight by force, and they declared that land an ‘isolated zone,’ denying both tribes access to it since then.”

This violent clash, as described by Mohammed, illustrates the high stakes and deep emotions tied to collective land ownership. The disputed parcel *Mrah Lghrab* became a flashpoint due to overlapping claims by the two sub-fractions of the tribe. The conflict escalated to such a degree that it resulted in arson and bodily harm, reflecting how intertwined land is with tribal honor, livelihood, and identity. The intervention by the local authorities was heavy-handed – deploying force to stop the fighting and then using administrative power to cordon off the land indefinitely as an “isolated zone” (literally, a prohibited area). This measure effectively punished both sides by removing the land from use altogether, presumably until a legal resolution could be found (which, given the complexities, might never happen).

The aftermath of this intervention raises critical questions. On one hand, the decisive action by authorities prevented further bloodshed, demonstrating the state's role in imposing order. On the other hand, declaring the land off-limits to all did not resolve the underlying dispute; it merely froze it. Such a solution may be legally expedient, but it is arguably unjust to both groups who claim ancestral rights to the land. It also underscores the limitations of legal and administrative approaches in resolving conflicts that are deeply rooted in cultural and historical contexts. Removing access to land as a conflict resolution strategy can breed resentment and may not be sustainable in the long term. As Mohammed suggested, genuine peace might require more nuanced, culturally sensitive approaches that address the root causes of the conflict and reconcile competing claims in a way perceived as legitimate by local communities.

This field site mapping – the environmental challenges, the neglect of rural needs, and the eruption of violent conflict – sets the stage for examining how the state intervenes in such disputes. The following sections delve into cases and narratives of state interventions in collective land conflicts, highlighting themes of empathy, trust-building, negotiation, and the balance of power.

Voices of Hope: Empathy and Trust in State Interventions for Land Disputes

Throughout Morocco, the state's interventions in both minor and major land conflicts have increasingly emphasized active listening and empathy toward local people's grievances. As one Ministry of Interior representative explained to me, showing genuine concern for protesters' voices can be a crucial strategy for defusing tension and building trust. This approach marks a shift from coercive tactics to what officials view as a more pacifying and inclusive style of conflict management.

One illustrative case involved a local official named Khalid, who served as a *Qaid* (a local governor under the Ministry of Interior with administrative authority over a rural district). Khalid recounted to me his first encounter with a conflict in which a 10-hectare parcel of collective land had been ceded to a private investor. This land deal was executed through a lease contract signed by the Ministry of Interior, as the legal trustee of collective lands, with a foreign investor (whose name was kept anonymous). The investor was granted the large tract of communal land at a symbolic price of only 500 MAD (Moroccan dirhams) per hectare. According to Khalid, this compensation was woefully insufficient, given that the number of rights-holders in the community had grown significantly in recent years (meaning the payout per family would be trivial). The lease agreement had been negotiated with the community's *Nouabs* (delegates of the collective land) – described as tribal notables – but notably, it was done without the knowledge or consent of the broader rights-holding community. In effect, a few representatives consented to the deal on behalf of many, reflecting an imbalance of information and possibly abuse of trust. Indeed, as defined by the official *Naïb Guide* published by the Interior Ministry, a *Naïb* (delegate) is “the legal representative of the group he represents, charged with carrying out tasks related to managing the group's affairs and

property... intervening in all transactions concerning the group's property and safeguarding its legal status". In principle, delegates should act in the community's interest, but in this case, their actions sidelined the actual landowners' wishes.

The outcome of this particular investment was disastrous. The foreign investor failed to develop the land as planned – the project did not take off, and eventually the investor abandoned the venture and left Morocco for Spain. In his wake, expensive agricultural equipment and machinery, worth millions of dirhams, were left behind to rust. More importantly, the local right-holders ended up with nothing: they had lost access to their land (which had been tied up in this failed investment) and received no compensation (the promised lease payments were not delivered once the investor fled). Feeling cheated and desperate, the community resorted to legal action – they filed a court case to reclaim their land and seek justice. However, the judicial process moved at a glacial pace, dragging on for an “inordinate amount of time” before the right-holders could finally reach a settlement or compromise solution. (Details of that settlement are discussed in a later section, but it was eventually resolved through state mediation.)

It was in the midst of the community's outrage over this situation that Khalid, the newly appointed *Qaid*, found himself responsible for restoring calm. Facing a crowd of angry, dispossessed landholders, he recognized that conventional authority and force might only inflame the situation further. Khalid described the difficulty of reaching out to the protestors at first – they were distrustful and furious at what they saw as collusion between the state and the investor that had robbed them of their land. In response, Khalid adopted a stance of listening and empathy. By attentively hearing their demands and acknowledging their grievances, he slowly earned a degree of trust from the protesters. He understood that before any negotiation or solution could be proposed, the people needed to feel that the state actually cared about their plight. “People needed the state to listen to their voices,” he told me, “to listen to us, to someone they can trust and give them hope, and show empathy.”[83][84] In line with this, when Khalid convened a meeting with a local governance body called the “*Jmaâ*” (a traditional assembly of community representatives), he intentionally spoke very little and listened much more. This approach of minimal talking and active listening was a conscious strategy to allow community members to vent their frustrations and to signal that the state was finally hearing them.

The impact of this empathetic approach was notable. According to what I observed and what community members later shared, nearly all the collective landholders I met had become accustomed to feeling ignored; their earlier efforts to voice grievances (through petitions, protests, and media statements) had typically met with empty promises or outright silence. Khalid's willingness to hear them out – and crucially, to validate their anger as legitimate – began to break down the communication barriers. It opened a door for dialogue where before there was mostly acrimony.

The State as the Ultimate Arbiter: Balancing Interests in Collective Land Management

While Khalid was working to rebuild trust on the ground, parallel efforts were underway to resolve the dispute through negotiation. Recognizing that the original lease deal (500 MAD/ha) had been unacceptable, the authorities facilitated a new round of talks with another investor. These negotiations aimed to strike a “win-win” compromise that could placate the community while still achieving the state’s goal of attracting investment. Through persistent mediation, Khalid (in his role as *Qaid*) managed to persuade the new investor to significantly increase the compensation, from the token 500 MAD per hectare to 1500 MAD per hectare. Tripling the rate was no small concession; according to Khalid, it was a daunting process because the right-holders kept pushing for more, driven by years of pent-up frustration, and the investor was wary of the project’s profitability if costs rose. Nonetheless, through a series of meetings and careful facilitation, the *Qaid* convinced the investor to accept these terms as the only viable path forward.

Despite this outcome, it was evident that mistrust lingered. The collective right-holders, even as they agreed to the improved deal, harbored doubts about the *Qaid*’s intentions and abilities. Their skepticism was understandable: a previous investor had failed them, and they questioned whether the new arrangement would be any different. The community’s distrust was not only about money but about whether the state – represented by Khalid – was truly on their side or simply stage-managing another transaction that ultimately served outsiders. Such wariness underscores how deep the sense of betrayal had been.

Nonetheless, the renegotiated deal did bring a temporary resolution to a longstanding conflict that had kept the community from accessing their land for years. The skillset Khalid displayed – persistence in negotiation, persuasion, and leveraging the authority given to him by the state – proved decisive in closing the deal. In the community’s eyes, Khalid’s success in securing a better offer earned him a measure of gratitude. Several right-holders expressed relief that, at last, they would receive some compensation and see activity on their land. Tellingly, Khalid noted that their gratitude extended beyond this land issue: once he had solved their land-related problem, people started bringing personal issues to him as well, entrusting him to help with a variety of other grievances. In a sense, by acting as an effective mediator and showing responsiveness, Khalid became not just a state official but a *patron* figure to the locals – someone who could arbitrate and fix problems.

This case exemplified a significant shift in the dynamics of collective land management. The state, through its local representative, emerged as the necessary arbiter for disputes: without state intervention, the conflict had festered, but with the state stepping in, a path forward was found. At the same time, this outcome was double-edged. On the surface, the state’s involvement showed it *could* address people’s concerns and was willing to negotiate rather than coerce. However, ultimately, the land was once again ceded to an investor (albeit under better terms) – meaning the

community still lost direct control of their land. The “meagre share” of compensation they received, while initially pleasing relative to nothing, remained small once divided among all families, and it could never fully replace the value of the land itself. Moreover, the community’s concession set a precedent that collective lands could indeed be pried away, given the right inducements and approach.

When I later followed up with Khalid, who by that time had been promoted to *Basha* (a higher rank) and transferred to a different region, he spoke with a tone of victory about the project’s outcome. According to him, the new investor had succeeded where the first had failed: the land was now cultivated and “teeming with different varieties of fruit and vegetable plants,” and, importantly, the investor had provided employment opportunities to villagers who needed jobs. In Khalid’s view, this validated the state’s approach; the community not only got paid but also got work opportunities, so ostensibly everyone benefited. However, for the right-holders who talked to me, seeing their ancestral land flourishing under someone else’s ownership was bittersweet at best. As one of them put it, the land had become a “lost treasure enjoyed by an outsider rather than the rightful claimants themselves”. The sense of dispossession lingered, even if the sting of immediate conflict had been salved.

Officials like Khalid and others I interviewed reflected on the lessons of such cases. They became keenly aware that showing care and empathy for local concerns could diffuse volatile situations. Another Interior Ministry official, Yassine, emphasized to me that the state apparatus now orients itself toward avoiding open confrontations, instead favoring *peaceful modalities* of intervention. This includes carefully listening to the needs of the people and reciprocating where possible, all while upholding the law (or at least the state’s interpretation of it). Yassine’s point was that the state tries to resolve disputes amicably, not purely out of benevolence, but because it is a more effective means of maintaining stability and achieving its objectives (like land privatization) without generating resistance. Another veteran official, Nourredine, who had served as a *Qaid* and was now a *Basha*, proudly recounted that he had resorted to force only once in his career to resolve a land dispute between two tribes – implying that in all other instances, softer methods had sufficed.

These testimonies suggest that the state’s “soft” approach – empathy, negotiation, compromise – is not necessarily because it has embraced community rights or democratic principles, but because it is pragmatic. As Nourredine hinted, even when the state appears to champion human rights or the public good by showing care, its deeper concern is maintaining stability and removing obstacles to land privatization. In other words, the state has learned that by wearing a *velvet glove* (soft power) instead of wielding an iron fist, it can achieve its aims with less backlash.

Indeed, the state’s use of “win-win” rhetoric and negotiations has signaled a commitment to non-violent conflict resolution – a departure from the days of readily using coercion. By presenting deals as mutually beneficial and avoiding force, the state cultivates an image of benevolence and

reasonableness. However, a critical examination reveals an underlying paternalism: the state assumes the role of the “real owner” and decision-maker of collective lands, while local communities are treated as passive beneficiaries or, at times, mere sharecroppers on what was once their own land. The Moroccan state’s policy has effectively reasserted that these lands are available for national development projects and investment “incubators,” even if that means uprooting traditional communal ownership. This trend echoes a worldwide neoliberal land rush, where ostensibly idle or underutilized lands (often in peri-urban areas) are relinquished at symbolic prices for large-scale investments, purportedly in the name of progress and economic growth. In Morocco, this has been at the expense of local communities, who are left with diminishing land assets and often only token compensation.

The case study and others like it show the importance of acknowledging and addressing marginalized communities’ demands in land disputes. The strategies of active listening and compromise – essentially soft power tactics – have proven to be viable alternatives to violent repression. They allow the state to quell conflicts and proceed with its land policies with minimal unrest. However, they also highlight the need for critical scrutiny of these policies. While conflicts may be smoothed over in the short term, the structural issues of unequal access to land and resources remain. The state’s role as the *Guardian* of the land, when unchecked by accountability, can perpetuate unequal power dynamics and unequal outcomes. In this context, social movements and community activism are crucial for challenging the status quo, raising public awareness, and pushing for more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. Without such pressure, the state’s arbitration may continue to favor elite interests under the guise of maintaining order and fostering development.

Land without Compromise: A Story of Persuasion and Trust

Another narrative from the field further illustrates how the state leverages attraction and persuasion as effective strategies in managing collective land issues, thereby avoiding outright force. A state representative named Adil, also a Qaid, shared with me a scenario where he successfully convinced a domestic (Moroccan) investor to engage with a group of collective land right-holders on more favorable terms. In this case, the land in question was a 15-hectare tract of collective land that had previously been rented to an investor who, similar to the earlier story, failed to deliver on the project and left. The land had reverted to the community, which was wary of any new deals.

Adil initiated the process by sending an official invitation to the right-holders for a meeting, where a new investor’s proposal would be discussed. Initially, the community agreed to consider the deal, but they were dissatisfied with the financial terms offered; much like the prior case, the compensation was seen as insufficient. Recognizing the hesitation, Adil used his expertise and local knowledge to play the role of a mediator-advocate. He essentially sold the idea of the land’s value

to the investor – emphasizing that the land was fertile and strategically located, and that with the right approach, the investor could make a considerable profit. Adil's pitch was designed to make the investor see that paying the community more was not just charity, but a sound business decision because "he could make a fortune out of it".

Adil's persuasive efforts paid off. He and the investor reached a compromise: the land would be rented at 1500 MAD per hectare (the same improved rate as in Khalid's case). When this offer was presented, the collective right-holders were pleasantly surprised and very satisfied. Many of them considered it a good deal – not only were they receiving triple the kind of compensation that had been initially floated, but the arrangement was portrayed as beneficial for both sides. The investor gets the land for his project, and the community receives a decent income stream. The right-holders felt they had *won* something significant through this negotiation, which made them happy with the outcome.

From the state's perspective (and Adil articulated this clearly), the most important outcome was not merely the higher rent or the project itself, but the climate of mutual trust that was built in the process. By structuring the deal as a collaborative win-win and treating the community as a partner whose consent mattered, the state crafted a narrative of itself as a "developer" of collective lands rather than a "dispossessor." Adil pointed out that this trust was "molded by the state" intentionally – a trust that would make future dealings smoother because once people see the state can deliver positive results, they become more willing to cooperate in the next project. In other words, each successful compromise potentially paves the way for further land transfers, as communities become less inclined to resist if they believe the state will ensure they benefit.

Adil contrasted two images of the state in this context. In one, the state is a "collective-land developer": it intervenes to bring investments that provide jobs, build hospitals and schools, and support local entrepreneurship in rural areas. This portrays the state as uplifting the community by integrating collective lands into broader economic development plans. In the other image, the state is a "land dispossessor", simply expropriating lands and giving nothing back, leading only to increased social inequalities. The state, naturally, prefers to be seen as the former. By ensuring that deals come with some community benefits (jobs, infrastructure, compensation), the state can frame its actions as development rather than dispossession. Adil invoked Gramsci's theory of hegemony (as discussed by Bates, 1975) to explain how the state exerts this subtle power. Hegemony involves the dominant power (the state) creating and spreading a certain ideology or narrative that justifies the status quo, thereby securing consent from the subordinate groups rather than relying on brute force. In Marxist terms, it's about ruling more through ideas, values, and leadership than through coercion alone. "Man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas," as Bates (1975) summarized Gramsci. In this case, the idea is that the state is bringing *progress* and *common good* to the community – an idea compelling enough to conceal, or at least soften, the inherent contradiction that these communities are losing their land in the process.

Thus, using soft power – the power of attraction and ideas – the state can penetrate local communities (viewing them in Gramscian terms as “subaltern groups”) and persuade them to go along with land deals they might otherwise fiercely resist. By circulating an official narrative of “development” and “shared benefit,” the state garners consent or at least acquiescence to policies that ultimately lead to more land being privatized. Adil’s success with the investor and the community stands as a microcosm of this hegemonic process: the community was led to believe (and in some respects, it became true for them) that everyone gains.

The concept of soft power as a deliberate strategy is well articulated by the political scientist Joseph Nye (2021), who described it as the ability to achieve objectives by attraction rather than coercion. Nye notes that a country (or by extension, a state authority within the country) can shape others’ preferences and actions through the appeal of its culture, values, and institutions, rather than through threats or payments. In practice, soft power can be wielded internally via things like popular culture, public diplomacy, and institutions that foster voluntary compliance. Morocco’s state, similar to others, has increasingly adopted a domestic soft power approach in dealing with collective lands. Instead of sending the military or police to evict people (hard power), it sends officials like Khalid and Adil to persuade communities to relocate or accept compensation. This may take the form of offering relocation housing programs (where communities are given new housing in exchange for leaving their land) or direct financial compensation packages (cash or alternative plots of land). Even at times of tension, the state tries to manage dissent not by crushing it outright, but by what scholar Zakia Salime (2021) calls “nodes of affective entanglements” – essentially bureaucratic processes that manage hopes and frustrations. An example is the state-run agency MASEN (Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy) in the Ouarzazate solar project; as Salime noted, MASEN engaged locals with short-term work contracts, handled their complaints bureaucratically, and kept them waiting for positive responses, thereby channeling their anger into a kind of limbo of hope. This strategy prevented sharp confrontations because people were led to believe that positive outcomes were forthcoming if they remained patient and cooperative.

Overall, these tactics have enabled the state to avoid direct showdowns with local communities even as it advances land acquisitions. Promises of jobs, development, and compensation create a buffer of goodwill or at least diminished resistance, allowing land to be absorbed into state-sanctioned projects without the kind of violent clashes or entrenched standoffs that would attract negative attention.

From Compromise to Cooperation: Harnessing Soft Power for Sustainable Development in Conflict Zones

The Moroccan state’s recent experiences in collective land disputes reflect a broader shift in governance: a move away from overt force and toward soft power tactics to maintain peace and order while pursuing development goals. This shift is evident in the political landscape, where

persuasion and attraction have become preferred tools for the state to achieve its aims. High-ranking officials in the Ministry of Interior acknowledge that optimizing the use of force has been supplanted by a recognition of the efficacy of softer approaches. However, they also caution that in employing flexibility and compromise, they must not compromise the rule of law itself. As one state representative told me in an interview, *"The law is flexible, but one has to be careful not to break it to the benefit of inadequate compromises."* This statement underscores that any compromise between disputing factions must remain within the bounds of legality. In practice, this means that while local authorities might bend certain procedures or be lenient to broker agreements, they are mindful not to set precedents that outright violate statutory regulations or encourage lawlessness.

All the state representatives I spoke with agreed that alternative measures are necessary to address persistent challenges around collective lands. Their proposals for sustaining peace and preventing future conflicts were multifaceted and developmental in nature. One major suggestion was to establish tangible development projects for communities that rely on now-restricted rangelands. For instance, if a collective pasture has been closed off to prevent disputes or environmental degradation, the state could introduce new economic projects for the pastoralists so that competition over land is reduced. They proposed creating designated protected rangelands with clear boundaries to stop encroachment, coupled with investments in those areas (e.g., planting resilient fodder crops or water points) to alleviate pressure on grazing resources.

Another suggested measure was formalizing land rights by registering and titling certain parts of collective lands – particularly the irrigable perimeters – and demarcating them via the cadastre (official land survey). This is based on the idea that clear property demarcation and official titles could preempt boundary disputes between groups. However, titling collective land is a double-edged sword: while it might resolve internal ambiguities, it also often transforms communal tenure into individual ownership, potentially facilitating future sales (which is arguably part of the state's agenda). The officials also mentioned forming cooperatives to help local people valorize their produce (for example, if they grow particular crops or make artisanal goods) and generate jobs. Cooperatives could enable communities to benefit financially from their land's produce without alienating the land itself.

They further discussed the role of the state in incubating and financing local projects. For sustainable conflict resolution, the state would need to provide support, such as affordable credit to community members to start small businesses, thereby giving them an economic stake that isn't solely tied to owning large expanses of land. Essentially, if people see viable livelihoods beyond subsistence farming or grazing on communal land, they might be more open to cooperative land use arrangements or even to transferring some land for projects, because they themselves are shareholders in the resulting enterprises.

However, the officials were realistic in noting that all these measures would remain illusory without genuine political will and systemic change. They stressed that unless there is accountability for those who abuse power, and a willingness to revise existing laws that govern collective lands, these well-meaning suggestions would not materialize. The current legal framework around collective lands is outdated and ambiguous, often favoring administrative discretion over community rights. The officials admitted that no development plan can succeed if the fundamental governance issues are not addressed – including corruption, lack of transparency, and centralization of authority. “These measures would be relegated to the unattainable realm if there is no political will,” one *Qaid* noted bluntly[140]. Indeed, if high-level commitment to reform is absent, local initiatives can be easily undermined.

There was also an acknowledgment that any sustainable solution must respect the value systems and human dimension inherent in the land issue. The state must recognize that for right-holders, collective land is not just an economic asset but a cornerstone of their identity, culture, and history. Development interventions must therefore be sensitive to local customs and the emotional significance of the land. Imposing solutions purely from a technical or economic standpoint – without community buy-in or cultural sensitivity – could backfire and reignite conflicts, no matter how logical those solutions might appear on paper.

In sum, the consensus among these state actors was that inclusive and multi-stakeholder engagement is needed. The Ministry of Interior cannot do it alone; all relevant state bodies (the Guardianship Council, sectoral ministries, local elected councils) must cooperate and operate within their proper mandates. Crucially, each must also be kept in check by the rule of law – meaning if a local official exceeds his authority or engages in malfeasance (like the corrupt *Nouabs* who sold land under the table), there should be legal consequences. Enforcing the law against such abuses would go a long way in restoring faith among right-holders that the state’s interventions can be fair.

As we turn to the conclusion, it becomes clear that Morocco’s approach to collective land disputes – emphasizing soft power and negotiation – has had complex outcomes. It has maintained surface-level peace and allowed the state’s land privatization agenda to proceed with fewer disruptions. But it has also resulted in accelerated loss of communal lands and left many underlying issues unresolved. The conclusion will summarize these findings and reflect on future pathways, including what might be needed to ensure that conflict resolution in this arena can be more equitable and sustainable in the long run.

Conclusion

The discourse surrounding Morocco’s collective land rights remains highly contentious, involving multiple stakeholders vying for control of valuable resources. The Moroccan government, which in earlier periods prioritized security and would respond to unrest with heavy-handed tactics, has

in the past decade adopted a more conciliatory approach toward dissent in land disputes. The state now actively seeks peaceful resolutions and avoids direct confrontation. This shift in strategy – from coercion to persuasion – has indeed helped prevent violent clashes in many instances. However, it has also coincided with a surge in land expropriation and privatization, often justified under the banners of progress, development, and the “common good.” Under the veneer of resolving conflicts amicably, the state has facilitated a faster conversion of communal lands into private holdings. The concept of communal ownership is gradually disappearing as more collective lands are titled in individual names or transferred to investors.

Our findings highlight that the Moroccan government has taken measures to ensure that the benefits of land deals accrue largely to the ruling class and investor interests, while any harms – such as loss of land and livelihood – are borne by the collective right-holders. The state projects an image of promoting development and prosperity through these interventions, but it has been cautious in instituting substantive land tenure reforms or robust conflict-resolution mechanisms that might limit its own power or redistribute rights more equitably. Instead, it operates within legal grey areas and ad-hoc solutions that safeguard the state’s interests and those of its elite allies. Right-holders may receive some compensation or local investment as a result of negotiations, but these are calibrated not to upset the overarching agenda: the neoliberal commodification of land.

One key insight from this study is that state intervention without strong accountability is prone to abuse of power. In numerous cases, collective lands have been removed from their rightful communities and ended up in the hands of the ruling elite or large corporate entities. While on paper these initiatives promise jobs or development, they ignore the fact that the original landowners are no longer owners – they become laborers on or neighbors to what was once their own land. For example, when agribusiness investments come into former collective lands, they may indeed create agricultural jobs, but this obscures the reality that the community has lost its land capital. State-led projects that aim to “valorize” or improve the productivity of collective lands often proceed as if helping right-holders maximize their property’s potential, yet they fail to acknowledge that those lands cease to be an integral part of the community’s identity once privatized. Instead, the lands are treated as commodities in a market, severing their social and cultural ties to the community.

The initiatives observed also indicate that the Moroccan state is intent on pursuing its land-grabbing policies to fulfill a neoliberal vision of development, even if it comes at the expense of legitimate right-holders. By using persuasion and incentives rather than outright force, the state has found an effective means of conflict resolution that avoids the spectacle of violent repression. These soft interventions have been effective in the sense that they quelled local protests and prevented conflicts from erupting openly. However, they have also functioned as a strategy to neutralize resistance while continuing the underlying process of dispossession. Essentially, soft power has served as an alternative route to achieve what hard power could not – the acquisition

of communal lands – by securing a degree of consent or at least reduced opposition from the communities involved.

Despite being aware of the legal ambiguities surrounding collective lands, the state has been hesitant to enact clear legislative reforms to settle the issue. This reluctance raises questions about the state's motives. It suggests that maintaining a level of ambiguity allows the state flexibility to intervene as it sees fit, case by case, without being tightly bound by statutes that might favor communities. In other words, not clarifying the law keeps the power dynamics tilted in favor of the authorities. Unfortunately, it also perpetuates uncertainty for right-holders and often pits communities against each other or against the state in protracted battles over who has legitimate claims.

In conclusion, the Moroccan case demonstrates the delicate balance the state tries to strike between resolving conflicts and advancing a policy agenda. On the one hand, the shift to negotiations, empathy, and local engagement has prevented many conflicts from escalating violently, which is a positive outcome for stability. On the other hand, these same conflict-resolution methods have been co-opted to further a neoliberal land privatization project, raising critical ethical and social justice concerns. The state's interventions have, intentionally or not, accelerated the erosion of communal land rights and redefined property relations in rural Morocco in favor of capital and the state.

Future research directions – and indeed policy considerations – emerging from this study include: (1) a comparative analysis of state intervention strategies in different regions or countries to see how unique or common Morocco's approach is, (2) longitudinal studies on communities that have given up land under these “soft” interventions to evaluate the long-term socio-economic impacts on those right-holders, and (3) focused research on the role of legal reform in safeguarding collective land rights. It would be especially valuable to explore alternative models of conflict resolution that *empower* communities – for instance, community-led negotiations or participatory mapping and titling processes – and to assess whether those could lead to more equitable outcomes. Additionally, examining the intersection of gender with collective land rights (as women in some tribes have been historically excluded from land ownership) could provide insight into whether these state interventions are alleviating or exacerbating gender disparities, an area touched upon by Eddouada (2021) but needing further exploration.

In practical terms, moving forward, if Morocco aims for sustainable and just development, it should consider establishing independent oversight for collective land transactions, clarifying the legal status of these lands in consultation with the communities, and ensuring that any conflict resolution mechanism includes the voices and consent of the actual right-holders. The state's soft power approach has thus far maintained order and facilitated development projects, but true

peace and legitimacy will depend on transparency, fairness, and shared decision-making in managing Morocco's collective lands.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the right-holders and local officials in Boujaad who generously shared their time and perspectives. I also thank colleagues at the Laboratoire de Littérature, Arts et Ingénierie Pédagogique, Ibn Tofail University, for helpful feedback on earlier drafts. Any errors are my own. All interviews were conducted with informed consent, and participant anonymity has been preserved.

References

- Balgley, D. (2019). Assembling land access and legibility: The case of Morocco's Gharb region. In *The Politics of Land*. Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Bates, T. R. (1975). Gramsci and the theory of hegemony. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36(2), 351–366. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2708933>
- Berriane, Y. (2017). Development and countermovements: Reflections on the conflicts arising from the commodification of collective land in Morocco. In *Development as a Battlefield* (pp. 247–267). Brill Nijhoff.
- Bourdieu, P. (2018). *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1989–1992*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Cohen, J. N. (2007). The impact of neoliberalism, political institutions, and financial autonomy on economic development, 1980–2003 (Doctoral dissertation, Princeton University).
- de Janvry, A., Sadoulet, E., Fafchamps, M., & Raki, M. (1992). Structural adjustment and the peasantry in Morocco: A computable household model. *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 19(4), 427–453.
- Eddouada, S. (2021). Land rights and women's rights in Morocco: Cooperation and contestation among rural and urban women activists. *History of the Present*, 11(1), 23–52.
- Hair, J. F., Jr., Page, M., & Brunsveld, N. (2020). *Essentials of Business Research Methods* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Heywood, A. (1994). *Political Ideas and Concepts: An Introduction*. London: Macmillan.
- Jonckheere, S., Liversage, H., & Rota, A. (2017). Pastoralism and land tenure security: Lessons from IFAD-supported projects. Paper presented at the Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, Washington, DC.
- Kahlaoui, S. E. (2022). Claiming their right to possess: The Guich Oudaya tribe's resistance to land grabbing. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 28(1), 36–56.
- Knott, E., Rao, A. H., Summers, K., et al. (2022). Interviews in the social sciences. *Nature Reviews Methods Primers*, 2, 73. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43586-022-00150-6>
- Lim, W. M. (2024). What is qualitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 33(2), 199–229.
- Liu, Y. (2018). Introduction to land use and rural sustainability in China. *Land Use Policy*, 74, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2018.01.032>
- Moroccan Ministry of the Interior. (2022). *Terres Collectives* [Web portal]. Retrieved September 13, 2022, from <http://www.terrescollectives.ma>
- Mrabi, M. A. (2014, March 27). Terres collectives : énième promesse de réforme. *L'Économiste*(4242).
- Neale, B. (2021). *The craft of qualitative longitudinal research*. London: Routledge.
- Nye, J. S. (2021). Soft power: The evolution of a concept. *Journal of Political Power*, 14(1), 196–208.
- Hao, P. (2021). Do landholdings affect social mobility in China? A study of rural migrants in Jiangsu. *Cities*, 111, 102977. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102977>

- Rignall, K. E. (2016). Solar power, state power, and the politics of energy transition in pre-Saharan Morocco. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 48(3), 540–557.
- Salime, Z. (2021, April 6). Life in the vicinity of Morocco's Noor solar energy project. *Middle East Report Online*.
- Shi, L., Lamb, Z., Qiu, X., Cai, H., & Vale, L. (2018). Promises and perils of collective land tenure in promoting urban resilience: Learning from China's urban villages. *Habitat International*, 77, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2018.04.006>
- USAID. (2011). *USAID Country Profile: Property Rights and Resource Governance – Morocco*. United States Agency for International Development.

• عبد الله العروي، مفهوم الدولة، المركز الثقافي العربي للنشر، المغرب، ط8، 2006.

• عبد اللطيف فضل الله، معلمة المغرب، ج3، منشورات دار الأمان، الرباط، 2014، ص. 1039.

• علوي، مولاي الزهيد. 2018. *مناطق المغرب غير النافع في سياسة الاستعمار الفرنسي: منطقة تافيلالت نموذجاً*. دورية كان التاريخية، مج 11، ع 41، ص ص 117–112. <https://search.emarefa.net/detail/BIM-888427>