

RESEARCH REPORT

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH LAND POLICY CHANGE:

The “Soulaliyate” Movement

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Civil Society and Policy-making

The increased role of civil society actors is a major recent phenomenon attributed to the advancement in communication as well as to the social, political and economic transformations. This program looks at a wide spectrum of civil society actors and their role in policy-making. We study how civil society actors organize themselves into advocacy coalitions and how policy networks are formed to influence policy processes and outcomes. We also look at policy research institutes and their contribution to the translation of knowledge to policies. The media's expanding role, which some claim to be a major player in catalyzing protests and revolutions in the Arab world, will also be explored.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Soulaliyate* are rural women who have been denied their rights to collective lands due to deeply rooted patriarchal traditions. In order to assert their economic and social rights, they have organized into associations and have benefited from the support of civil society organizations and the media. The objective of our research is to understand the strategies through which these rural and poor women have managed to gain limited recognition of their rights with public authorities, and to bring about modest change in land policy. For this purpose, I shall draw on the analytical framework provided by the “Advocacy Coalition Framework” (ACF), so as to describe the process leading to the adoption of government measures in favor of the economic empowerment of the *Soulaliyate*.

ACF views the policy process as a competition between coalitions of actors who advocate beliefs around policy problems and solutions. This competition takes place within policy subsystems, defined as the set of actors who are actively concerned with an issue, and regularly seek to influence public policy related to it. These actors have belief systems about how a given public problem is structured, and how it should be approached.

The ACF perceives policy change as the transformation of a hegemonic belief system within a policy subsystem. This can be the result of four pathways of policy change. First, policy-oriented learning can push a hegemonic coalition to refine and adapt its belief system, in order to realize its goals more efficiently. Second, policy change can result from non-cognitive events originating outside the policy subsystem (i.e., external shocks), which changes the balance of power among subsystem actors by modifying resources and constraint patterns. Third, internal shocks, indicating major failures of the policies and behaviors of a dominant advocacy coalition, may galvanize minority coalition members to reverse the balance of power within the policy subsystem. Fourth, there are conditions under which agreements can be reached between previously warring coalitions.

Owing to the limitations of ACF (Section Six), we will supplement it by borrowing from social movement theory.

The interest of this issue lies in the importance taken on by the question of gender equality in Morocco, since the changeover government came to power in 1998. It also stems from the challenges surrounding collective lands in Morocco:

First, there is the financial challenge, owing to the fact that part of these lands are by now located within the limits of the urban perimeters in several cities, and thereby, become the object of covetousness among investors, real estate developers, in particular.

Secondly, the economic challenge lies in overcoming the land impediment, which stands as a hindrance to the implementation of economic and social development projects.

Thirdly, there is also the political challenge: the future of these lands affects nearly ten million Moroccans, whose sympathy and support is eagerly sought by political men (and women) during elections; not to mention problems related to land-use policy administration and implementation.

Furthermore, the challenge is also a social one: women being excluded from the material and financial proceedings from these lands, whilst enduring poverty and precariousness.

This study relied on qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Different methods and instruments (media and document reviews, focus group discussions, and interviews) were gathered for data generation and analysis:

- ▶ **Documents:** analysis of documents focused on laws and regulations regarding collective lands, government reports, and documents on land policy. Other documents included civil society reports, and brochures on the *Soulaliyate* movement, women’s rights, and governance.
- ▶ **Media review:** an extensive review of more than 15 newspapers, both local and international – in different languages (Arabic, French, and English) – was carried out that dealt with the *Soulaliyate* movement’s issues (protests, activities, outreach, etc.), collective lands policy and land grabbing, corruption and cronyism, social movements, and advocacy coalitions. In addition, other media reports and programs were reviewed, such as national TV chains and electronic websites (local, national, and international).

- **Interviews and focus groups:** twenty individual interviews (face to face, or phone interviews) with male and female members of ethnic communities were conducted, each interview lasting at least one hour. Four focus groups gathering 70 *Soulali* (mainly *nouabs*) and *Soulaliyate* were set up. Other interviewees comprised the Governor of the Directorate of Rural Affairs (Ministry of Interior), the president and manager in charge of *Soulaliyate* issues of the Democratic Association of Morocco’s Women (ADFM), and three female activists from the Democratic League of Woman’s Rights (LDDF). During these interviews, various questions were tackled: *Soulaliyate* stories of dispossession and marginalization, forms of collective action, role of civil society, interactions with public authorities, land tenure and policy, national dialogue on communal lands, etc.

I shall first frame and describe the issue at stake, i.e., land-use and the *Soulaliyate* right to land.

Section Two then introduces the public policy subsystem, focusing on its main actors.

Section Three examines the external determinants that have had a part in the change of collective lands policy.

Section Four focuses on the two ‘camps’ competing around collective lands, with a focus on the ‘Advocacy Coalition’ built around the *Soulaliyate*’s movement.

Section Five highlights the changes introduced into land policy and their limits.

Lastly, Section Six briefly discusses the main findings of this research.

DESCRIPTION AND FRAMING OF THE ISSUE

Principles of Collective Land Management

Collective land is land owned by a group of inhabitants sharing the same origin and belonging to the same race. Article 1 of the *dahir* (Royal Decree) of April 27th, 1919, regards as collective property cropland or rangeland of which tribes, tribal clans, *douars*, or other such groupings, hold the right of use on a collective basis. In order to protect indigenous tribal lands and to keep the population in check, the Protectorate had, as early as 1919, brought in severe restrictions to collective land ownership rights, coupling them with the placing of tribes under trusteeship, which had only a right of use (World Bank, 2008). Hence, the rights granted by legislation to these lands are non-transferable, imprescriptible, and unseizable.

While the *dahir* of 1919 remains valid, in general, some modifications have been introduced since its promulgation. Hence, a law issued in 1951 permits the cession of collective lands located in urban or suburban areas, provided that the Trusteeship Council agrees on the selling prices, to which half of the proceeds are devoted to infrastructure building.

Similarly, a regulation issued on November 13th, 1957, allows the sharing of collective lands among the heads of households, in equal partitions of land area, unless the assembly of delegates, or *j'maa*, deems it otherwise in order to take into account soil quality.

In 1969, a law was adopted allowing the privatization of collective lands located in irrigated areas to the benefit of right holders.

As Table 1 shows, collective land covers an area of 12 million hectares, that is 41.6% of all Moroccan land, farmed by 4,563 ethnic communities.

Land Policy and Women's Right to Land

According to N. Bouderbala (1999), the barriers that used to stand in the face of women with their access to land property are, for the most part, the same as those encountered today. Indeed, women's exclusion from the right-holders' lists is still being enforced. Also, in the case of 'melk' lands (private property), women's inheritance shares, though unequal by comparison with men's, are sidestepped by *urf* or custom, drawing on a variety of deceptive maneuvers.

The example of *Soulaliyate*, who are denied the right to land, can be accounted for by the weight of traditions, rather than by the law on collective lands. Going through the law on collective land ownership makes it possible to realize that discrimination against fellow community women is not expressly stated. It is the result of benefit criteria laid down by the committee of the elected members of the ethnic community or *j'maa*, which manages the collective lands under the trusteeship of the Interior Ministry (Daoudi, 2011). The *nouab* (interview 1) justify such exclusion by the need to preserve the "pureness" of the ethnic community, which could be altered in case a woman from said community would marry an outsider, that is, a man from outside her tribe.

The *Soulaliyate* issue was brought to public attention in the 2000s as the process of urban sprawl was engulfing suburban areas, including collective lands. As a result, speculation began to take root, and real estate developers were eager to acquire collective lands for a low price. The problem is that only men, considered as head of household, benefited from this compensation (either financially or in kind) generated by these sessions. This was especially the case with the Haddada community – a tribe living on the outskirts of Kenitra town (Wheeler, 2012). We will elaborate more on this point in the Section Four.

TABLE 1: LAND DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO LEGAL STATUS

LEGAL STATUS	AREA (HA)	%	MANAGEMENT/TRUSTEESHIP
Collective lands	12,000,000	41.6	Ministry of the Interior (Department of Rural Affairs)
Melk	8,000,000	27.7	
Guich lands	210	0.7	Ministry of the Interior (Department of Rural Affairs) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance (Department of State Property)
Habous lands	100	0.3	Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs
Estate			
Public	320	1.1	Ministry of Equipment
Private	1,045,000	3.6	Ministry of Economy and Finance (Department of State Property)
Forest	7,200,000	24.9	High Commission for Water and Forests
Total amount of lands	28,875,000	100	

Source: Intelec study, quoted in World Bank, 2008.

It is worth mentioning the fact that our issue is framed under the land policy subsystem, for three reasons: First, collective lands are tightly managed by the Ministry of Interior. Second, the feminist movement, while very vibrant, did not use to put women’s economic and social rights on top of their agenda. Third, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs – led by an Islamist woman – sidestepped the *Soulaliyate* issue, which might be explained by her reluctance to get involved in a debate that may encroach on inheritance laws, which discriminates against women.

THE ACTORS OF THE SUBSYSTEM

The Moroccan land-use policy subsystem is comparatively small in terms of influential organizations and interests. There are five sets of actors that are actively involved in virtually all issues within the subsystem: the ethnic communities or right-holders, the Ministry of Interior, investors and real estate developers, local communes, and civil society actors:

- The ethnic communities or right holders: a right-holder is every fellow of the community, member of an ethnic grouping (tribe, clan, 'douar' or any other group) owning land jointly with others and entitled to a right of use on a collective basis. He must be the head of a household, which means that he must be married for at least 6 months, and must contribute to the common charges of the group on equal footing with other members.

The right-holder's position also holds for the widow of a community member, with at least one male child.

The *j'maa* establishes the list of right-holders. In practice, this task is performed by the *naïb*.

- The Ministry of the Interior and state priorities: The Department of Rural Affairs of this ministry has trusteeship regarding the management and enhancement of collective lands. The Ministry of Interior is also vital to the implementation of the Green Morocco Plan, a national strategy set up in 2008 aiming to promote Moroccan agribusiness. In order to expand production, Morocco started leasing land for agriculture projects. In this regard, collective lands represent a big asset, which the Moroccan state is keen to put at the disposal of investors interested in agricultural projects.

One may think that the *Soulaliyate*'s rights or state's economic interests' nexus can be dealt with, so it turns into a win-win game. In other words, the Moroccan state can hit two birds with one stone: it sells or rents collective lands to investors and, at the same time, achieves distributive justice in favor of rural women. However, this interpretation of the Moroccan state priorities may be misleading for two reasons. First, the neoliberal model that Morocco has been implementing since the 1980s gives primacy to economic issues such as liberalization, privatization and fiscal austerity, while issues of distributive justice are considered residual, and of secondary importance. Secondly, it is not sure that the Moroccan State is keen to impose gender justice in favor of the

Soulaliyate on reluctant rural communities, where patriarchal values are still prevalent. If it decides to do so, it will alienate male leaders and provoke social tensions within these communities.

Thirdly, it is worthwhile noting, that local state sectors brokerage power acts as a mechanism to produce legitimate land deals and localize capital accumulation. At the same time, some local official authorities representing the ministry of interior with reigning governance – especially 'Qaids' and Governors – may get involved in corruption and malpractice when dealing with collective land transfers (examples are provided by the Transparency-Morocco annual reports).

- Investors and real estate developers: These actors are looking for business opportunities, in a context of sprawling urbanization and land scarcity. It is worth noting that political interferences may occur, and can be detrimental to collective land right-holders. In this regard, two examples are worth mentioning. The first case is related to Addoha – a privately-owned corporation whose CEO, Anas Sefrioui, is close to the palace, particularly to Mounir Majidi, the King's personal secretary – who managed to get hold of land across Morocco at low prices (Transparency-Morocco report), including collective lands.

Even more telling is the case of the acquisition of 3000 ha of collective lands near Ouarzazate – a city in pre-Saharan Morocco, by the Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy (MASEN) – a private company with public funds, in order to set up a concentrated solar power plan (Rignall, 2012). MASEN's project is to be linked to the strategy of the Royal holding company called Nareva, aimed at acquiring a big stake in renewable energy markets.

The process of land transfer was not transparent: while the *nouab* (collective land representatives of the Ait Oukroun ethnic community) gave their formal ascent for the sale. The local population was never informed of the process of site selection, and the terms of the sale have no mandated procedure for consulting with them.

In addition, the sale price of the collective lands to MASEN was at 0.09 Euro per square meter, compared to 1.1 Euros in Ouarzazate.

- Local communes and politicians: There is competition between local communes and ethnic groups insofar as the rural commune is legally qualified to draw up a plan for the economic and social development of its own territorial division, which allows it to make decisions regarding the use of collective lands within its area (Alaoui, 2002).

Needless to say, local elected officials and politicians seek to attract electors in this respect, in order to reinforce their political power. It is equally true that the same politicians seeking to achieve their own objectives may manipulate members of ethnic communities, whose number is sizeable.

- Civil society actors: The issue of *Soulaliyates*' rights to land was endorsed and promoted on a societal level by human rights' activists and human rights organizations. Of particular significance for our subject is the importance of the advocacy work carried out by feminist associations working to foster women's fundamental rights and promote gender equality, like the Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), the Union de l'Action Feminine (UAF), the Association Marocaine des Droits des Femme (AMDF), the Ligue Democratique des Droits de la Femme (LDDF), and Jossour. The characteristic feature of their plea lay in that it contributed to challenge and undermine patriarchy as a multi-secular “system of oppression”. This movement particularly distinguished itself through the important mobilization efforts shown in the defense of the “Action Plan for Integrating Women into Development”.

On another level, the issue of collective land-use attracts the interest of farmers who gather into producers' organizations. Morocco counts four to five thousand agricultural cooperatives, over twenty national sectorial associations (fruits, ovine, bovine, etc.) and national federations such as Union Marocaine de l'Agriculture (UMA), Moroccan Union of Agriculture, the Confédération Marocaine de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural-Comader, and the Moroccan Confederation of Agriculture and Rural Development (Umagri-Fert, n.d.)

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EXTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF THE CHANGE IN COLLECTIVE LANDS POLICY

In order to understand how the *Soulaliyate* movement has managed to spur a first change in the collective lands policy, it is important to examine the environmental variables, which are external to this political subsystem. Changes in the political system have opened political opportunities defined as “consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure” by Tarrow S., *Power in Movement*, as cited in (Meyer, 2004).

The *Soulaliyate* movement managed to take advantage of these opportunities in order to champion its cause and promote policy change. In addition, socioeconomic dynamics in Morocco, since the 1990s, have directly and positively impacted on the *Soulaliyate*'s capacity to mobilize for their rights to land.

Opportunities Provided by Political Liberalization

The Moroccan political system is a unique construct, in the sense that the Moroccan version of the Arab Spring did not result in radical changes and political uncertainty. This relative stability is due to the gradual changes Morocco has gone through since the 1990s, which culminated in 1998 with the appointment of a ‘progressive’ government comprised of former nationalist opposition. The quick reaction of the King to the February 20th movement, and constitutional reform, has allowed the country to cross the turbulent Arab Spring with minimal casualties. This is not to say that Morocco has become a true democracy, the King still holds important prerogatives regarding strategic issues, among other things. Nevertheless, the constitutional reform took political liberalization further and brought about some important provisions in favor of gender equality. Hence, they contributed to boosting struggles for women and their social and economic rights.

To borrow an expression from J. N. Ferrié and Baudoin Dupret (2011), we can say that Morocco has known two de-escalation phases, which have helped the country circumvent the strong political uncertainty that has characterized the political context of the region, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

The first phase took place at the end of the 1990s and came as a crowning achievement of a series of measures of liberalization for the political system. Indeed, a wave of social movements swept through the country in 1990, threatening to destabilize the regime. Young people living in precariousness, occupied public space, and took an active part in riots. Rather than cracking down on them, the regime responded by more open-mindedness. Hence a chain of initiatives, among which the creation of the Advisory Council for Human Rights (1990), the Ministry for Human Rights (1993), the Council for Youth and Future (1991), as well as two constitutional reforms in 1992 and 1996. This process was to result in the coming to power of the nationalist opposition in 1998, in the context of what is commonly referred to as the ‘consensual changeover’.

The second phase of de-escalation was directly related to the 20th of February movement set in motion in 2011, and whose slogans were not aiming at overthrowing the regime, but were rather targeted against authoritarianism, corruption, crony capitalism, and social injustice.

The King's response to defuse the movement consisted in initiating an important constitutional reform. Such reform was to consolidate the prerogatives of the head of the government and of parliament, whilst preserving important powers.

Yet this constitutional reform, while acting as a stabilizer of the political system, opened up political opportunities for the *Soulaliyate* movement to advance its cause, taking advantage of regime's openness in general, and gender equality provisions, more specifically.

Constitutional Provisions in Support of Gender Equality

The new Moroccan Constitution contains significant dispositions, whose aiming at consolidating Morocco's march towards gender equality. This new achievement has strengthened two previous initiatives: the National Plan of Action for Integrating Women into Development (presented in 1999) and the new Family Code (enacted in 2004).

The text of the new Constitution derives its force from the rights bestowed on women on equal footing with men (ADFM, 2011).

In this respect, Title II of the new Constitution opens up on an enshrinement of the principle of equality between men and women regarding civil, political, economic, cultural, and environmental rights. It then introduces the concept of the effectiveness of rights and freedoms by providing for affirmative action measures, as well as for instruments, particularly the “Authority for Parity and the Fight against all Forms of Discrimination”.

Finally, the new Constitution recognizes the predominance of the international conventions ratified by Morocco over national laws, and the urge to attune these accordingly.

Main provisions of the new Family Code

The reform of the *Mudawana* (Family Code) affected sensitive issues, especially marriage, polygamy, and divorce.

- ▶ The family is sited under the responsibility of both spouses. Husbands and wives have equivalent rights in house management.
- ▶ Minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years old (previously, it was 15 for women).
- ▶ Matrimonial guardianship: women no longer need permission from a male guardian to marry.
- ▶ Polygamy is not prohibited, but measures are adopted that make it very complicated. For instance, those who want to marry another wife must obtain a judge’s permission and provide documentary evidence of their financial situation.
- ▶ Repudiation: the husband’s right to unilaterally divorce his wife is abolished, and women are given the right to divorce on the same grounds as men.

SOCIOECONOMIC DYNAMICS CHARACTERIZED BY THE ACTIVISM OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In Morocco, as in other Southern countries, the emergence of civil society was strongly facilitated by the state's withdrawal from the economic and social sphere, thus paving the way for non-state actors to occupy the public arena.

Simultaneously, the political liberalization process, since the 1990s, has helped foster the rise of non-governmental organizations and associations for the advocacy of women's rights, and human rights in general.

Our concern in this present section is to describe the context within which the movement of the *Soulaliyate* was to develop, that is, during the 2000s. An upsurge of social and democratic struggles was witnessed, in response to great serious socioeconomic and spatial inequalities. Trade unions, civil society associations, some members of the political left, and others, led such struggles. The revival of the fighting spirit among trade unionists can be accounted for by the deterioration of social and economic rights, and the failure of the social dialogue; subsequent to the refusal of the government to fulfill the unions' claims.

Collective actions were undertaken, particularly, one national strike and several sectorial strikes (in education, health, local collectives, etc.) Of special interest are the different struggles fought by "the Coordinated Action Against the Increase of the Cost of Life", as well as the "National Association of Unemployed Graduates".

Taking advantage of the liberalization of the regime, these "new social movements" were to put forward their social and cultural claims. The most powerful and most publicized social mobilizations have been human rights movements, women's movements, the *Amazigh* cultural movement, and the movement of unemployed graduates, among others.

ADVOCACY COALITION STRATEGIES

The building of advocacy coalitions around the *Soulaliyate* issue is to be understood within the broader context of an ongoing struggle between modernists and conservatives in Morocco. Of special interest are the hot public debates around “universal versus local” values opposing Islamist conservatives to reformers, and modernists. While the former advocate for preserving and enhancing Morocco’s “Islamic” identity as key to reasserting an independent national identity, free of Western influence, the latter regard the use of religion in the political sphere as a tool of social control, which unduly restricts individual choice.

The growth of the Islamist party for Justice and Development (PJD) during the last 15 years has exacerbated the schism between two models of society: one in which the Islamic heritage of the modern state should increasingly define its outlook and parameters, and those who favor a more secular nature of both state and society (François, 2015).

Social and cultural battles between tradition and reform often play out in the human rights field. Issues of women’s rights, personal freedom, homosexuality, the right to have sex outside of marriage, the right to break Muslim fast openly during the month of Ramadan, all regularly provoke national debates.

So it comes as no surprise that feminist activists endorsed the *Soulaliyate*’s movement for the right to land. They focused their narrative and public discourse on universal values and gender equality as deep core beliefs.

In terms of ACF configuration, we can think of this social dynamic as an emergent advocacy coalition in support of the *Soulaliyate* right to collective land.

We will first show how a Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition came to be born, highlighting its strategies. Then, we will focus on the role of male *nouabs* as the core of an Anti-*Soulaliyate* group of actors.

The Building of Pro-*Soulaliyate* Advocacy Coalition

The *Soulaliyate* movement came into being following the urban sprawl into rural areas surrounding the cities, as well as the transformation of little old towns into urban centers. Such urbanization resulted in a revalorization of collective lands, thereby arousing the eagerness of investors and property developers. Examples were many (interview 2), whose lands had been transferred to the State for a pittance (from 0.28 Euro to 1.1 Euros per square meter), in order to

build public equipment (such as a faculty of sciences, an airport, a campus). This was also the case with the real estate group Addoha, closely linked to the personal secretary of King Mohammed VI. Addoha took advantage of the mediation with the Ministry of the Interior to appropriate collective lands, located on the road linking the cities of Salé and Rabat, at the trivial price of 5 Euros per square meter (Middle East Eye, 2015).

Another factor, which has exacerbated this social conflict, lies in the looting activities and illegal appropriation of collective lands by third parties, certain right-holders, and *nouab* (Ministry of Interior, 2014).

On the other hand, several *Soulaliyate* women, who work in land farming, have found themselves unable to dispose of the land, as in the case of transfer or rent due (*urf*). The latter deny this right to widows with a female child, divorced women, and women that have married an “outsider”, a Moroccan who is not a fellow tribesman (interview 3).

The *Soulaliyates* from Meknes (interview 4) told me that their brothers cornered the usufruct from the olive tree plantation lands and appropriated the proceeds from olive sales.

A third factor, which prompted the *Soulaliyate* movement, was the state of precariousness and deprivation women have been living in. Being denied any access to the proceeds of collective land transfers or rents, these women have been compelled to live in overpopulated shantytown dwellings. Furthermore, they could not find a decent job due to illiteracy. By contrast, men continue to receive land plots fit for habitation, or money, as in the case of land transfer.

The case of Madam Rkia Bellout, a retired executive who used to work for the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and a *Soulaliya* woman, from the Haddada tribe, is very instructive in this respect (Le Monde, 2001). Feeling a lot of bitterness and humiliation because of this discrimination, she decided to set up a protest group made up of all the *Soulaliyate* of her community (Box 2).

It is worth mentioning here, that this emergent social movement was facilitated by the mobilizing structures that *Soulaliyate* were able to set up, as they built neighboring relations, and shared family and social ties. In this regard, micro mobilization mechanisms (Ward M, 2015) – whether formal or informal – were instrumental in channeling *Soulaliyate*’s collective action.

Gradually, the ingredients of an Advocacy Coalition working in favor of *Soulaliyate* women were put in place. In this respect, the ADFM and the Forum Marocain des Alternatives (FMAS) created “the Network of women’s rights to collective and Guich land ownership”, comprising 14 associations. The network had two main objectives: short term, to stop the transfer of collective lands, and, longer term, to have a new law passed so that both women and men benefit on equal footing from the development or transfer of collective lands (Programme échanges et partenariats, 2010). The LDDF took control of the question from 2011, through its local branches. For instance, some *Soulaliyate* started to pour into branches situated in the region of Beni Mellal-Tadla-Azilal.

Other associations joined in that common effort, among which the Association Marocaine des Droits de l’Homme (AMDH) and the association of “Le Troisième Millénaire”, in South-Eastern Morocco.

Finally, groups of *Soulaliyate* have created local associations for the defense of their rights; that is, as an example, the case of the “Association des femmes *Soulaliyates* pour le développement” in the region of Tadla-Azila, whose main objective is the advocacy for the changing of discriminatory laws endured by the association founders.

The System of Shared Beliefs and the Resources of the Advocacy Coalition

The deep core beliefs of the Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition are the values of gender equality and social justice. This coalition worked to highlight the commitments laid out in the text of the new Constitution of 2011. This is especially the case in Article 19, which enshrines the equality between men and women in civil, political, social, cultural, and environmental rights. The coalition’s core belief system also taps into the universal principles established by the CEDAW, as well as the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (particularly Article 3). By defending the right to land ownership for *Soulaliyate*, the Advocacy Coalition therefore only required of Morocco that it implements its own commitments, both on internal matters and internationally.

As for the “policy core beliefs”, it consisted of replacing the *dahir* of 1919: Governing with a new law guaranteeing the right to land ownership for men and women alike, on an equal basis. To achieve this, the state is to play a protective role with respect to *Soulaliyate* to help them enforce their legitimate rights.

The third level of motivations and beliefs is composed of the material interests of the *Soulaliyate* movement, which seeks to improve their socioeconomic condition

by taking advantage of collective lands with the proceeds they generate. In this regard, the *Soulaliyate* movement advocates for measures that should be taken to insure a proper enforcement of the new law.

The resources of the Advocacy Coalition: Whereas the Pro-*Soulaliyate*’s coalition seems to be lacking support amid the circle of decision-makers, it can, however, count on the financial and logistical input supplied by a number of foreign partners. For example, the ADFM benefits from a partnership with UN/ Women and Women’s Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP) – an international NGO operating in the Southern countries, and focusing its action on feminist leadership and women empowerment. The LDDF receives support from the ISCOS Marche Onlus – an international cooperation institute operating under the aegis of the Italian Confederation of Workers’ Trade Unions, CISL.

It remains true that the lack of financial resources is a serious deterrent standing in the face of the *Soulaliyate*’s movement. It can hardly find the funds to pay for the charges of its members’ trips, or of lawyer fees, when, for example, one of their cases was to be brought before court (interviews 3/4).

The coalition still manages to partially make for this deficit, thanks to the loyalty and determination of *Soulaliyate* women, who were willing to bear the costs of certain activities. The fact remains that the Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition is currently confronted with a lack of financial resources to keep fighting for the *Soulaliyate*’s right to land.

***Soulaliyate*’s Women as Policy Activists**

Finally, it is important to underline the fact that the movement managed to come to life thanks to the pioneering and determined role of dedicated women, who, between them, have accumulated years of experience in civil service, as is shown with Madam Rkia Bellout (Box 2), and Ms. “K” (interview 5).

It turned out too that illiteracy was not an insurmountable barrier preventing rural women from playing an active role in the *Soulaliyate* struggles. This is especially the case of two women we interviewed: Ms. “F” and “N” (interview 5).

Forms of Collective Action

It is important, in the first place, to underscore the major part played by advocacy structures, which have rechanneled *Soulaliyate* women’s protests to improve their political impact. The networks we have discussed earlier and the local associations created by the *Soulaliyate* themselves, “provide organizational resources that are crucial to the translation of grievances or convictions into action: leaders, know-how, communication technologies, etc.” (Kübler, 2001)

In addition, “these settings favor cognition processes necessary for individuals to develop a feeling of political efficacy” (Kübler, 2001).

Regarding the forms of mobilization and joint action, they have been varied and plural. We should first highlight the struggles led at the local level by the *Soulaliyate* themselves, with the backing of feminists, as well as human rights organizations. The sit-ins before the premises of the local authorities constitute a common practice resorted to by *Soulaliyate*. What is decried during these sit-ins is not only the deprivation of *Soulaliyate* from their rights to land, but also the financial misappropriation of funds, along with the corruption which characterizes the transactions involving collective lands, and which some *nouabs* and representatives of local authority take part in. Actually, even some civil servants from DAR (Directorate of Rural Affairs) have been involved in these malpractices (As-Sabah, 2016). These protests are sometimes crushed, and the women leading them beaten up or imprisoned arbitrarily (interviews 3/4).

Sit-ins are also held before the DAR in Rabat, or before the Parliamentary building (according to Le Monde newspaper, Madam R. Bellout managed to rally 1000 *Soulaliyate* women for a sit-in in front of Parliament in April 2007).

Turning to justice is also a form of joint action, which the members of the Advocacy Coalition may have recourse to. Thus, in March 2009, six *Soulaliyate* from the commune of Mahdia went before the administrative tribunal of Rabat, in order to question the State, in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior, as the legal guardians of collective lands. The Prime Minister and the MOI demanded the adjournment of the transfers of the lands in question, and protested against women’s disqualification from compensation operations. They also demanded that current practices and decisions of the trusteeship authority regarding the cession of lands, be considered as illegal, while still recognizing the right to compensation for already transferred land (ADFM & FMAS, 2009). However, the legal case was disregarded as the representative of the State asked the complaining party, i.e. the *Soulaliyate*, to provide proof of their tribal membership (ADFM, 2009).

These forms of collective action soon attracted the attention of public opinion and the media, which become partners and supporters of the *Soulaliyate* movement. In this way, many local media (national newspapers, television channels, local websites) have provided media coverage of the Pro-*Soulaliyate* coalition’s struggles. Highly renowned newspapers like Le Monde, La Croix or The Guardian have relayed

the concerns of the *Soulaliyate*. The speech of Madam Naima Amar – a ‘Soulaliya’ woman – at the Forum Mondial des Droits de l’Homme, held in Marrakech in 2014, was unanimously valued and hailed.

More generally, members of the advocacy coalition have played a vital role in supervising and backing the *Soulaliyate* women’s movement. As a pioneer in advocating women’s rights to own land, the ADFM has articulated its action around the following points: Empowerment and backing; mobilization and creation of networks; awareness raising and questioning of policy-makers.

One of the moves worthy of attention is the memorandum presented by the ADFM before the commission of “National Dialogue” on collective lands, organized by the Ministry of the Interior (ADFM, 2014).

This memo emphasizes the need to enshrine the equality of rights whether they relate to access to property, usufruct rights, or compensation. It also insists on the need for women to benefit from all initiatives related to the ownership of collective lands.

The memo also stresses the critical urge to modify the 1919 *dahir*.

It should be noted that the strategic recommendations advocated by the LDDF roughly intersect with those of the ADFM. However, LDDF believes that it is also important to put an end to the Ministry of Interior’s tutelage over collective lands, and to allow ethnic communities to freely manage them, as used to be the case before the colonization era.

This being so, we have noted the rather limited coordination – due in part to competition among feminist NGOs – between the network managed by the ADFM and the approach carried out by the LDDF.

The “Anti-Soulaliyate” Group of Actors

It is difficult to speak of an Anti-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition, as there is no coordination among actors who prefer the status quo. Thanks to the interviews with different stakeholders and desk reviews, we were able to single out at least three actors who were either indifferent to *Soulaliyate*’s cause – this was the case of investors and local communes – or strongly opposed it – as was the case of the *nouab* and male leaders of rural communities.

As of 2014, there were 7,812 *nouab* representing 4,563 ethnic communities, that is to say, an average of 1.7 *nouab* per community (Ministry of Interior, 2014).

The institution of the *naib* is strongly challenged by the right-holders: the legitimacy of 1,000 *nouab* has been challenged over the period 2010-2014. There have

been 268 dismissed from office, while 26 have been replaced. Among the reasons for this defiance is the fact that some *nouab* were chosen undemocratically.

Second, the *nouabs* complain about the lack of means at their disposal, and the absence of incentives. This late argument does not withstand criticism. The *naib* function is on a voluntary basis, and is regarded as charity work.

The *Soulali* men put forward the argument of the *urf*, which dictates that only men are the heads of household. Consequently, they alone are entitled to collecting the usufruct and the income generated from collective lands. Such an argument refers us back to the ‘Deep Core Beliefs’ system of the members of ethnic communities, a patriarchal system that fosters male domination both within the household and in society, and confines *Soulaliyate* women to a procreative role.

As for investors and local communes, two main factors help explain their silent strategy. First, they have not interested in challenging *Soulali* men’s power. Second, gender equality has never been on top on their agenda. Actually, accounting for the *Soulaliyate* issue would make their land transactions more complicated, and even more expensive.

1. Miss “F”

Being handicapped and poor, Fatima was not able to finish high school, but still managed to become a poet (*amazigh*), was employed at the Afak association for Handicap in Ouarzazate (hand-woven Berber carpets).

In 2008, Fatima set up an association in her ‘douar’ to help empower rural women (literacy classes). She also took advantage of the “Initiative Nationale de Développement Humain (INDH), to promote income-generating activities (goat breeding).

In 2009, Fatima wanted to set up a business (an agricultural project) on her late father’s land. As the local department of agriculture asked her to produce a document certifying land ownership, she turned to the *naib* to get it. To her astonishment, the latter told her that being a woman deprived her of any right to collective land. She managed to convince the tribe’s members to get rid of the reluctant *naib*. So an election was held, and Fatima won by 272 votes to 60 from her rival.

Being elected *naiba* in a male-dominated environment pushed her to take new initiatives in defense of collective lands. She initiated a training program about legal aspects of communal land management, to the benefit of the community’s *nouab*. She has also brought together 50 *naibs* in order to establish a right-holder’s list of collective lands. Currently she is planning to create a coalition of tribal representatives, with the aim to empower them through technical training in the farming sector.

2. *Soulaliyate*’s icon

Rkia Bellot graduated from Rabat’s Law faculty. She retired a few years ago, after having been a civil servant at the Ministry of Finance for 39 years. Being a member of the Hadada community, she had asked to benefit from the proceeds generated by the cession of collective lands to real estate developers and public institutions. However, the ‘j’maa’s *naib* told her that she was not entitled to any right to land because she was a woman. She felt anger, frustration and injustice, and decided to fight for her right to land. She first sought help from a lawyer, but he told her that her chances of success were very small. Then, she got in touch with a feminist NGO called “Union de l’Action Féminine” (UAF). Unfortunately, she was told that the *Soulaliyate* issue did not fit into the UAF’s agenda. So, along with a small group of *Soulaliyate* women, Bellot approached the ADFM. At the same time, this small group issued a petition (signed by 1144 women and 390 men) asking for equal access to collective land (Femmes du Maroc, 2015).

As a new member of the ADFM, she took part in all the activities targeting *Soulaliyate* women. In 2009, she won, along with another *Soulaliyate*, Menana, the Lesieur Cristal Khmissa Award, in recognition of her contribution to fostering Moroccan women’s participation in all sectors.

Finally, the absence of female ‘naibates’ contributes to the marginalization of *Soulaliyate* women, which does not help them to advocate their rights.

As far as the system of “Policy Core Beliefs”, *Soulali* men are not opposed to transfer, sale or tenancy of collective lands, provided this is done for a fair price. It is worth noting that men’s interests may not coincide with *nouab* ones; the latter being inclined not to exercise greater care with respect to land-sale prices, so long as they get a “quota-share” in the form of “commissions”, betraying their propensity for corruption.

Out of the seven *Soulali* men we interviewed (interview 6), only one took a favorable view towards accessing of *Soulali* woman to the land of her ancestors with equal footing to men. Indeed, the men that we have interviewed argued that feminist associations are the agents, which pushed the *Soulaliyate* to rebel and demand enforcement of their right to land. A rich *naib* from the small locality of Sidi Yahya – in the Gharb region – told us that, “it is the Western countries that are putting pressure on Morocco in the name of human rights and gender equality, to the extent that they it is a prerequisite condition for foreign investors in Morocco.” Some human rights activists have informed us that this person was graciously thanked for having given his accord to transfer some 345 hectares to benefit the MedZ company, a branch of the public group *Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion*, and the Edonia World company. This vast area served to set up the Atlantic Free Zone (AFZ).

POLICY OUTCOME: A FIRST CHANGE IN FAVOR OF SOULALIYATE WOMEN

Even though the *Soulaliyate* movement managed to achieve some success in their struggle for land, their achievement turned out to be limited and modest. This is mainly due to a lack of political will.

Ministerial Circulars Recognizing Soulaliyate Right to Land

The strategies of the Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition were quick to bear fruits, with the Minister of the Interior (MOI) having adopted two circulars (i.e., internal notes or instructions to administrative services and branches of a ministry) that granted Soulaliyate women the right to land. In addition, this coalition contributed to organize a national debate on the future of collective lands.

The Ministry of Interior's response to the *Soulaliyate* women's protests occurred virtually overnight, following their first public demonstration in April 2007. The Ministry issued a circular in 2007 requesting the governor of Kenitra's province to make sure that women appear, as men do, on the list of right-holders, so they can benefit from the proceeds of collective land transfers. This circular advocates persuasion, and no voluntary approach is anticipated for its enforcement. The arguments supporting the ministerial circular refer mainly to the gap between the "habits and customs" and "the evolution of the national and international context, as well as the progress of women's rights in different fields". This initiative is considered as a pilot experiment by the MOI. It is meant to be persuasive and to draw on dialogue to change 'old' practices.

The second circular, issued on 25th of October 2010, is of a more general nature since it is addressed to all the 'walis' of the regions, and all the governors of prefectures and provinces, who are asked to take good care that women get their part of the actual material compensations resulting from the real estate transactions. It is also stated elsewhere that no compensation distribution will occur in future if women are not included in the right-holders' lists. In addition, to "the old and obsolete customs" argument, this circular also draws on Islamic precepts, which "do not discriminate against women".

The third circular, issued on 30th of March, 2011, lays down the *Soulaliyate* usufruct rights and their rights to benefit from collective lands income. Interestingly, this third circular is based on CEDAW, and Article 19 of the Constitution.

In the wake of such breakthroughs, five women were elected as representatives or 'naibats' of the *j'maa* in Kenitra's province in 2014 (MAP Communiqué, 2014).

Soulaliyate women's success stories have drawn international attention. On a recent visit to Morocco, Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of the UN Women's Program, delivered a special address to *Soulaliyate* women, congratulating them on their achievements (Wheeler, 2012).

While such circulars are important steps in the right direction, male members of the *j'maa*, especially the *nouab*, fiercely resisted their enforcement. Local authorities did not evince much readiness to guarantee field follow-up.

Field findings were modest: 29,253 women have benefited from 82 million dirhams, as of 25th of October 2010, compared to 520 million dirhams for men (L'Economiste, 2012).

On the other hand, 267 ethnic communities only have drawn up lists of certified right-holders over the period 2000 - 2012 (Ministry of Interior, 2014).

Some civil society organizations did not take long to react, as was the case of LDDF (in the Tadla-Azilal region), which engaged in a dialogue with local authorities to get the ministerial circulars properly enforced ("Dossiers de Tadla", 2012).

Confronted with such resistance and lack of political will from certain officials, ADFM and FMAS launched a "civic petition" demanding for the instatement of a specific law in favor of the *Soulaliyate* (Communiqué between ADFM and FMAS, April, 2012).

The National Dialogue on Collective Lands: A Setback for the Pro-Soulaliyate Coalition?

Initiated by the MOI in 2014, the National dialogue on collective lands set two objectives (MAP Communiqué, 2014):

- ▶ To develop a prospective, consensual and participative vision in order to take into account the mutations at work, and respond to the expectations of different stakeholders.
- ▶ Promote and value collective lands and put it them at the service of economic and social development, while working to improve right-holders' living conditions, from a human development perspective.

The debate involved the representatives from public administration, economic and social actors, to civil society organizations and *Soulaliyate* women.

Five regional meetings were held in the towns of Oujda, Ifrane, Ouarzazate, Marrakech and Kenitra.

According to ADFM’s leaders (interview 7), civil society organizations took an active part in these meetings, and were confident that their recommendations will be incorporated in the synthesis reports.

Seeking out this information, I managed to obtain the aforementioned document on “National Dialogue”, which has not been circulated so far, and which captures the proceedings from those regional meetings.

The main recommendations retained were as follows:

- ▶ The gradual privatization, to the benefit of right-holders, of collective farmland land designed for housing.
- ▶ The transfer of collective farmlands to the benefit of the state and local communes through tender procedure or, exceptionally, through direct agreement.
- ▶ Collective rangelands must preserve their collective character.

At the same time, a set of institutional, legal and administrative reforms should facilitate the implementation of such strategic orientations.

However, and much to our surprise, only three lines were dedicated to the *Soulaliyate* rights to land ownership: according to the “National Dialogue” document, the regional meetings “have underscored the need to foster the human development programs, and to encourage the investment and development initiatives targeting the young, taking good care to grant special attention to the *Soulaliyate* women’s issue” (Ministry of Interior, 2014, p. 20). Such a way of addressing the strategic issue of rural women’s empowerment will unquestionably discontent all members of the Pro-*Soulaliyate* Advocacy Coalition.

DISCUSSION

Our analysis of the issue of land-use and the *Soulaliyate* women's right to land has helped us to highlight the usefulness and relevance of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). The interactions between a favorable institutional, socio-economic environment, and the activism of the Pro-*Soulaliyate* coalition, resulted in limited change to the land-use policy, as previously illustrated with the adoption of two ministerial circulars recognizing *Soulaliyate* women's right to land. We were also able to identify an uncoordinated group of actors who either adopted a silent strategy towards the *Soulaliyate* issue – local communes and investors, in particular – or fiercely opposed the right of women to collective land, the *nouab*.

The concept of “deep core beliefs system” proved to be relevant to the understanding of competition between pros and cons of the *Soulaliyate* issue. Though the Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition managed to introduce some change in land-use policy, it failed to challenge *urf*.

Critics of the ACF point out that sharing deep core beliefs, while necessary, is not sufficient to form a coalition, and make it work properly and efficiently. So to help comprehend coalition emergence, persistence and strategies, we supplemented the ACF literature by borrowing from social theory; we used concepts such as “mobilizing structures” to highlight the dynamics of the *Soulaliyate* women's movement (Notes 2).

On another level, although the ACF recognizes that policy change results from the interactions between individuals, groups, and organizations, it is still unable to explain the precise conditions, which lead to policy change. To have effect, endogenous and exogenous shocks need to be framed, interpreted, and translated, activities that typically fall within the competences of policy activists.

This was the case with the *Soulaliyate* movement, which benefited greatly from the entrepreneurial spirit of some of its members. The members took the lead, and forged links with their neighborhoods, as well as with feminist associations and human rights organizations and networks.

More generally, a complementary approach to policy change issues seems relevant, as different theories and frameworks provide different perspectives to explain them (Cairney, 2013).

- ▶ It is worth mentioning, as our research shows that conditions for policy learning, through cross-coalitions, interactions were not fulfilled in the Moroccan case. Firstly, the Ministry of Interior tightly controlled the venues in which coalitions could interact, debate, and possibly negotiate. It was the Ministry of Interior – in charge of the guardianship of collective lands – who set up collective lands held regionally since in 2014, designed the agenda, selected the participants, and unilaterally decided their format. For instance, feminist leaders from ADFM found it very difficult to take part in regional fora, as they had to intervene with the Minister of Interior directly to be allowed acceptance by the organizers. This is due mainly to the authoritarian nature of the political regime, where there is little space for non-state actors to engage with public policy decision-making and public officials.
- ▶ Secondly, the attributes of actors led to a high level of conflict around collective lands issue. As we have already mentioned, the *Soulali* men, especially the *nouabs*, are deeply attached to maintaining and defending patriarchal values and the *urf*, which represent their deep core beliefs. Conversely, the Pro-*Soulaliyate* coalition is very committed to gender equality and the economic empowerment of rural women. Therefore, there is little room for compromise or negotiation.
- ▶ Thirdly, the fact that there is no structured Anti-*Soulaliyate* coalition leads us to conclude that ACF's hypotheses about the learning process are not applicable to our case study.

The Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition used different forms of collective action from street protests, sit-ins and to resorting to justice by advocacy techniques, capacity building, and strong media coverage.

However, the success that Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition turned out to be very limited in its scope. The ministerial circulars have not been implemented properly, and the majority of *Soulaliyate* women have not felt the impact in their daily lives.

The promised “National conference on collective lands” has been postponed many times, and the ADFM's proposal to draft a law that guarantees *Soulaliyate* women's right to land, on an equal footing with men, remains a pious wish.

While we have no intention of thoroughly investigating the reasons for such minor change to Moroccan land-use policy, we want to point out some factors that may help get a better understanding of this complex issue.

First, the Makhzen – the central power in Morocco – seems to be worried about alienating a whole range of tribes who oppose the access of men and women on equal footing to collective lands because of their deep attachment to customary norms (*urf*). The State considers such an issue very sensitive, as it can spark protests and tensions within ethnic communities, even among members of the same family. In addition, the implementation of such comprehensive plans, as the Green Morocco plan or the national renewable energy strategy, are contingent upon the availability of collective lands for investors, public institutions, and real estate developers, which cannot materialize without the consent of ethnic communities. In other words, peaceful and cooperative relationships with ethnic communities are key to achieving economic modernization and growth.

Secondly, while it is necessary to change laws and regulations in order to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, their implementation is hindered by the prevalence of conservative values, which are deeply enshrined in society. In this regard, the Pro-*Soulaliyate* advocacy coalition has failed to bring about a transformative change in the hegemonic belief system; a parallel with Moroccan family law reform (NCF) may be very instructive, in this regard. Although the NCF is gender-sensitive and contains improvements in favor of women’s rights, existing practice shows that women have to struggle with regional customs, and how judges’ procedures differ regarding family law. According to Sonneveld (2015), “in cases of divorce, the law states that children must stay with their mothers until they reach 15 years of age.” In practice, however, women in some regions leave children under ex-husbands’ guardianship”. She found that “the law therefore fails to conform to regional customs and complicates divorce processes”. Furthermore, judges may have varying views on child marriages, which further complicate legal proceedings.

Thirdly, while the policy entrepreneurship theory helps explain the leading role of a minority of female leaders in the *Soulaliyate* movement, existing evidence shows that in practice it can be challenged. What happened to one of the leads of the *Soulaliyate* movement is a case in point (Notes 3).

Lastly, widespread corruption and bad governance, at different levels of the Moroccan bureaucracy, represent a high barrier to *Soulaliyate*’s empowerment.

Are there any alternative pathways to major change in the land policy sub-systems? Given the research findings we have presented so far, it seems rather unlikely to witness any dramatic change in the short run. However, some dynamics might occur in the case of internal or external shocks. If the Pro-*Soulaliyate* coalition manages to gather momentum, so as to expand the scope of conflict beyond the land policy subsystem, and try to rally high-level officials and legislators to its cause. Actually, the ADFM leaders we interviewed have raised their concerns about the lack of resources, as an important impediment to their fight for *Soulaliyate* right to land. They have also expressed their hope that international donors, especially the European Union, will be more supportive of their cause. In addition, capitalizing on media and public opinion sympathy, providing information and analysis, expanding the coalition membership base, and enhancing skillful leadership, are vital to reversing the balance of power and advancing the coalition’s aims.

This internal dynamic of the policy subsystem might trigger or amplify external shocks brought about by changes in the legislature, and/or at the King’s level, as the main layer in Moroccan political landscape. As a matter of fact, some political parties, specifically the “Authenticity and Modernity Party”, considered as close allies to the Palace, have made a strong and written pledge (Authenticity and Modernity Party, 2016, p. 32) during the very recent parliamentary elections (October 7th, 2016) to promote women’s rights to collective land, on equal footing with men. Being the second biggest party, one might expect that the Pro-*Soulaliyate* coalition will seize this golden opportunity to promote its agenda, and make political representatives accountable.

A second external shock might come from King Mohamed VI, who could intervene as final arbiter, in case of a conflict to resolve the stalemate between the *Soulaliyate* coalition and the Anti-*Soulaliyate* actors, the *nouabs* mainly. As a matter of fact, this is not just a hypothetical conjecture in so far as the King has already stepped in to settle the heated debate around the Family Code in 2003. The monarch who has championed gender equality and women’s rights is well positioned to balance the different interests, and to reinforce his leadership and legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

Soulaliyate are rural women who have been deprived from their right to land, because of customary norms (*urf*) regulating collective lands management.

My research has consisted of describing the mechanisms through which these women managed to change land-use policy so to get recognition for their property rights. I have drawn extensively on the analytical framework provided by the 'Advocacy Coalition Framework' (ACF) to describe the process of policy change within the land-use policy subsystem, where five main actors were active: right-holders from ethnic communities (*j'maa*), the Ministry of Interior, investors and real estate developers, local communes, feminist associations and human rights organizations.

I supplemented ACF with concepts I borrowed from social movements frameworks, namely the concepts of 'structures of mobilization', and the 'political opportunity structure', to highlight the dynamics of the *Soulaliyate* issue. At the micro-level, policy entrepreneurship theory helped us point out the leading role played by a few *Soulaliyate*, in order to bring about policy change.

Policy change was the result of interactions between a favorable institutional context and socioeconomic dynamics on one hand, and endogenous factors on the other.

Hence, the gradual liberalization of the political system and the promotion of gender equality, have opened up opportunity spaces for advocating in favor of *Soulaliyate* women's economic and social rights. Similarly, the socioeconomic momentum that Morocco witnessed has favored the concurrence between the *Soulaliyate* women's struggles and the actions of civil society organizations.

Endogenous factors, consisting of the Pro-*Soulaliyates* advocacy coalition, formed around the *Soulaliyate* women's social movement. Strongly committed to gender equality values and women's rights, this coalition used different forms of action to claim its demands: field struggles, media and public opinion sensitization, street demonstrations, sit-ins, training in female leadership, and advocacy and communication techniques.

Strengthened by the entrepreneurial spirit of *Soulaliyate* leaders, this activism led to policy change in the land-use subsystem; the Ministry of Interior issued three circulars recognizing *Soulaliyate* women's rights to land ownership. Similarly, a national dialogue on collective lands was initiated in 2014. This being so, it appears that these changes, despite their importance, have not proven to be sufficiently strong to guarantee the full entitlement of *Soulaliyate* women, for their right to the land of their ancestors and on an equal footing with men.

NOTES

1. According to MacCarthy, mobilizing structures are “those agreed upon ways of engaging in collective action which include particular ‘tactical repertoires,’ particular ‘social movement organizational’ forms, and ‘modular social movement repertoires.’ I also mean to include the range of everyday life micromobilization structural social locations that are not aimed primarily at movement mobilization, but where mobilization may be generated: these include family units, friendship networks, voluntary associations, work units, and elements of the state structure itself” (McAdam, MacCarthy, & Zald, 1996).
2. In doing so, we followed D. Kübler (2011).
3. Being elected *naiba*, this leader managed to set up, with the help of the other *naibat* and *nouabs*, a new right-holders list. In order to prevent any malpractice or scheming, this list was based on two strict criteria: to be of lawful age; minors cannot be included on this list. Unfortunately, the *Qaid*, as well as members of the ethnic community, fiercely opposed this approach, which led this leader to step back and withdraw from the battle for *Soulaliyate* (interview 8).

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ABOUT THE AUB POLICY INSTITUTE

The AUB Policy Institute (Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs) is an independent, research-based, policy-oriented institute. Inaugurated in 2006, the Institute aims to harness, develop, and initiate policy-relevant research in the Arab region.

We are committed to expanding and deepening policy-relevant knowledge production in and about the Arab region; and to creating a space for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas among researchers, civil society and policy-makers.

Main goals

- ▶ *Enhancing and broadening public policy-related debate and knowledge production in the Arab world and beyond*
- ▶ *Better understanding the Arab world within shifting international and global contexts*
- ▶ *Providing a space to enrich the quality of interaction among scholars, officials and civil society actors in and about the Arab world*
- ▶ *Disseminating knowledge that is accessible to policy-makers, media, research communities and the general public*

ABOUT THE ASFARI INSTITUTE

The Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship is a regional hub of a dynamic community of academics, practitioners, policymakers, and members of the general public interested in exploring traditional and innovative forms of associational life, locally-grounded policy debates and in advancing realistic solutions to the obstacles to effective civil society and citizenship in the Arab world. In doing so, the Institute provides training workshops and programs beside regular teaching at AUB, encourages and provides evidence-based research in areas related to political participation, accountability and good governance, produces policy/practice recommendations to improve citizens' engagement and civil society roles in mediation, deliberation and self-organization. It also promotes public awareness of civil society and civic engagement best practices in the region through its monthly meetings and seminars and stimulates fruitful dialogue among the region's varied publics through its programmatic activities of workshops, conferences and publications.

The Asfari Institute is a research center hosted at AUB since 2012 and is a solid partner in consolidating AUB commitment to serve, educate and engage the Lebanese society. The Institute is mobilized to develop the first MA program in the region related to civil society, citizenship, and transformative change. Among its new activities is the consolidation of two new lines of work: Civil society, law and governance and Active citizenship in contentious contexts.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Nouab (Sidi Slimane, Gharb, March, 2016)

Soulaliyate (Beni-Mellal, October, 2015)

Soulaliyate (Fkih Bensalah, October, 2015)

Soulaliyate (Ifrane, phone interview, March, 2016)

Soulaliyate (Ouarzazate, March 2016)

Soulali men (Sidi Yahya, Gharb, November, 2015)

ADFM leaders (Rabat, March, 2015)

Interview and email exchanges (Fes 2015, April, 2016)

Governor of the Directorate for Rural Affairs, Ministry of Interior (Rabat, April, 2015)

