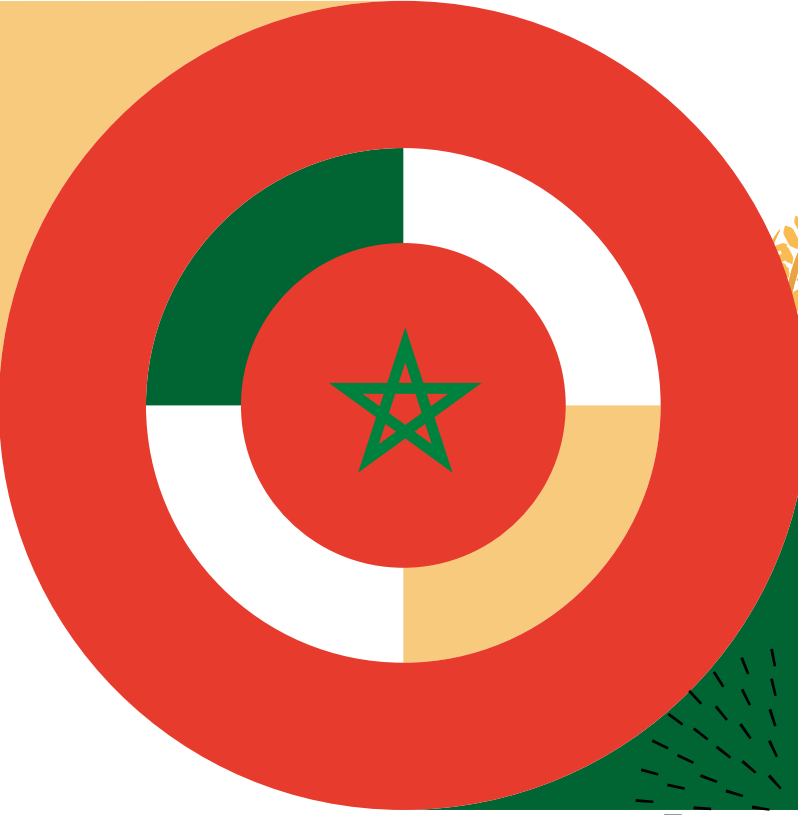



The impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on small-scale food producers in Morocco



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Summary

Russia's war on Ukraine caused great disruption to the global food market, whether in terms of food or inputs for food production supplying (fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, energy). The great weight of the two countries in that global food market played a major role in that.

Although Morocco is not a major customer of these two countries products and despite the initial assurances given by Moroccan officials, it soon seemed to be affected by the results of this war, especially by high food and energy prices. Morocco depended on the global market, whether in terms of selling its agricultural produce, which is mainly destined for export, or in terms of supplying basic food consumption, especially wheat, and also supplying production inputs (fertilizers and energy), all of this made Morocco in the eye of the storm.


Russia's war on Ukraine came to deepen the deterioration of the small farmer's situation: the rise in the prices of production inputs, the inability to sell the product, the shrinking of production, and the high cost of consumer goods, a large part of which is supplied from the local market.

What are the mechanisms by which Morocco is affected by the war in Eastern Europe? What are the effects of this war on macro-economic indicators? What are the implications for small food producers? Does it have repercussions on the final consumer? What are the structural factors causing vulnerability to global shocks? What alternatives and recommendations could be put forward to address this situation? In this study, we endeavor to answer these questions.



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Preface: “Tropic of Chaos”

In 2014, the World of Knowledge series published an Arabic translation of the book *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*, written by Christian Parenti. The author defends the thesis according to which violent changes in the climate exacerbate previous conditions of economic and political crises and military interventions, to produce what he calls a “catastrophic convergence”, explaining it by saying: “I call this collision of political, economic, and environmental disasters the catastrophic convergence. By catastrophic convergence, I do not merely mean that several disasters happen simultaneously, one problem atop another. Rather, I argue that problems compound and amplify each other, one expressing itself through another.”¹

These disasters cluster in a geographical area that the author calls the “Tropic of Chaos”, located between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, a belt of newly independent, economically and politically crisis-ridden states that encompass the Middle Earth zone. In this inter-orbital strip, climate change is beginning to hit hard. Communities within this strip are heavily dependent on agriculture and fishing, and are therefore directly threatened by shifts in weather patterns. This region was also on the front lines during the Cold War, and the subsequent neoliberal economic restructuring since the end of the seventies.

The author attributed this disastrous gathering that laid the seeds of instability in the Third World to a combination of many factors, foremost of which are; 1) the Cold War, whose numerous proxy wars in developing countries left a legacy of armed groups, cheap weapons and smuggling networks; 2) the economic policies of neoliberalism calling for extreme privatization and lifting of economic oversight - imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on many economies in the Third World or the Global South - which led it towards a permanent crisis and severe inequality. In these societies, the state has become an empty shell with no institutional capacity to guide economic development or deal with social crises.²

1 *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*, Christian Parenti, translated by Saad Eddin Kharfan, *The World of Knowledge*, Issue 411, April 2014, Kuwait, p. 22.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 23

The Russian-Ukrainian war broke out in the region that underwent the most violent transformations that have given rise to the so-called “New World Order”. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of its bloc in 1990, the neoliberal policies applied earlier were violently generalized in Chile, and with the defeat of huge workers’ struggles in Britain (miners...) and in America (airport workers...). The generalization of capitalist globalization has not led to the establishment of a “new order”, but to a chronic and painful chaos of which the working classes of the North and the peoples of the South have been victims, as well as to the destruction of the environment and the depletion of its resources. The entanglement of economic interdependencies resulting from capitalist globalization affects the farthest country at the most distant point of conflict, especially if there are giants competing over spheres of influence and wealth.

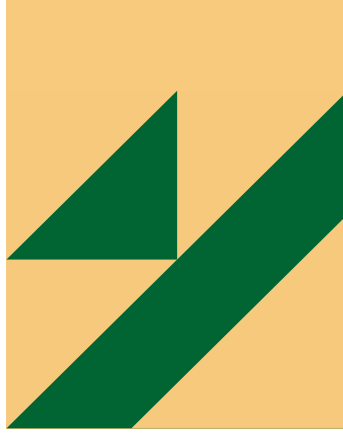
As the Laotian proverb goes: “when two elephants fight, it is the ants that die.” This is not about imperial paper tigers or clay giants, as has been said, but rather economic superpowers armed with the deadliest life-killing munitions on the planet, first and foremost nuclear weapons. The thesis of the German revolutionary Marxist - Rosa Luxemburg - is once again confirmed by linking war and militarism to capitalism’s tendency to expansion, and the need to link the struggle against war with the whole struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

As for Morocco, it lies at the far north end of the Tropic of chaos, influenced by the catastrophic convergence described above, though not with the same intensity. Contrary to the official discourse which made Morocco an exception spared by the influence of world events (economic or political...), reality has become stronger than any statement.

The reassuring speeches issued by government officials at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic could not prevent the implementation of a 3-month quarantine and a health emergency that is still being extended until now, just as current reassurances from government officials that the situation is under control, and that international value chains interrupted by the Russia-Ukraine war will not affect the supply of commodities (especially food). “The Russian-Ukrainian crisis will not have any effect on our grain imports,” said government spokesman Mustapha Baïtas.³ But the effects of the war, combined with a global economic recession, are beginning to affect food production (inputs of fertilizer, seeds, and energy) and its consumption (prices and abundance).

3 <https://bit.ly/3EZVhb2> - 10/03/2022.

What are the mechanisms by which Morocco is affected by the war in Eastern Europe? What are the effects of this war on macro-economic indicators? What are the implications for small food producers? Does it have repercussions on the final consumer? What are the structural factors causing vulnerability to global shocks? What alternatives and recommendations could be put forward to address this situation? In this study, we endeavor to answer these questions.



Section I:

Effects of the Russo-Ukrainian War on the Food Market

1. The Weight of the Two States and the Effects of the War on the World Food Market

When the war between Russia and Ukraine broke out, the global capitalist economy was in the midst of what the international financial institutions call an incomplete and shaky recovery from the worst effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The combination of shocks (climatic conditions, inflationary pressures, especially in the United States, the continued sanitary lockdown in China... etc.) and the shock of the war have led to turmoil in global food markets.

Although price inflation is not the result of the Russian-Ukrainian war, but rather a precedent for it, according to the report of the Arab Organization for Development and Agriculture (AOAD), "the world price of wheat measured at the price of US wheat reached US\$245 per ton in 2020, which is the highest since 2014," and the report added: "However, these prices are likely to increase due to developments in wheat trade following the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022."⁴ The organization also expressed this dire impact by stating, "In addition to the prolonged effects of the coronavirus pandemic on food security conditions, the effects of climate change, and unrest in some countries, the Russian-Ukrainian war has added further challenges to the food security situation."⁵

4 ibid.

5 "أوضاع الأمن الغذائي العربي 2021"، المنظمة العربية للتنمية والزراعة- جامعة الدول العربية
<https://bit.ly/3B58m10>

Food prices have been near record highs due to epidemics and climate conditions in the previous year (2021). The uncertain recovery from the impact of the largest economic shutdown in the history of capitalism, a shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, is compounded by turbulent climate conditions. "The shutdown led to the total or near-total shutdown of several sectors, resulting in the loss of millions of jobs and with them disposable income, and wiped out household savings." Since food security, according to many international organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is determined by an individual's ability to purchase food or have the resources to obtain food based on his or her preferences, the actual demand for food will be significantly reduced due to this lack of capacity.

Given the disparity in income expenditure between poor households and their rich counterparts, the former are threatened by severe retrenchment in food expenditure due to rising prices, and by a greater proportion of non-nutritious starchy ingredients than other healthy foods (vegetables, fruits, and fish). In its report on the Arab region, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) said: "substantial price variations may lead to shortages of goods, which might affect the ability of people to acquire food, among other items. This is especially true for individuals or households that spend a high share of their income on food. High and rapidly rising food prices may negatively affect poor households and individuals as they might forgo eating despite feeling hungry or opting for less nutritious, cheaper foods."⁶

Plowing and harvesting operations have been disrupted by military operations, affecting the international market supply of grains and vegetable oils since Russia and Ukraine are their main producers, and energy supplies from Russia have been disrupted, leading to higher prices of coal, gas and oil. Russia is also blocking fertilizer exports in response to Western sanctions.

In a globalized capitalist economy in which capital flows in search of guaranteed returns, the war-induced uncertainty and its uncertain prospects are leading to deflationary pressures, reduced credit guarantees and fear among global investors. All of these elements feed into each other to cast further doubt on the optimistic outlook of the international financial institutions (led by the World Bank) for the recovery of the global capitalist economy following an uncertain way out of the pandemic. This in turn brings about the return, or rather, the resumption of the protectionist trends and trade wars that were evident long before the pandemic and the war. A UN report issued in 2012, titled "The Global Partnership for Development: Making Rhetoric a Reality,"

6 "رصد الأمن الغذائي في المنطقة العربية"، اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا (الإسكوا)، الأمم المتحدة، بيروت- لبنان، 2020

predicted that after long forecasting free trade for the developing world, “the current economic situation has lured [rich] governments back into using protectionist trade policies.”⁷

To realize the magnitude of the disaster caused by Russia’s war in Ukraine, we can look at the position of the two countries in the global food market and the size of their supply to Arab countries, as Russia is the first exporter of wheat in the world, and Ukraine is the fifth in the world. The two countries contributed 13.1% and 8.5%, respectively, to global wheat exports in 2021. Ukraine provides about 13.2% of Arab countries’ grain imports, about 18% of their wheat imports, and about 16% of their imports of vegetable oils. Russia provides about 9.5% of Arab countries’ grain imports, about 18% of their wheat imports, and about 10.6% of their imports of vegetable oils.⁸

This is not only a matter of higher food prices at the end-consumer level, but also of food inputs, especially fertilizer, as Russia and Ukraine are the largest exporters of fertilizer. Once again, the effects of the war have come together to drive up food prices. The energy supply crisis, caused by Russia’s oil import ban and punitive measures, has driven up the price of energy on the world market. A July 2022 FAO report also noted a significant increase in input prices (fertilizer and energy) due to the war, and stated that this increase would lead to a decrease in the use of these inputs, reducing yields and harvests, which could lead to higher prices and threaten global food security in the coming years.

2. A looming food crisis

Thus, all the features of a global food crisis are taking shape and could be more serious than the previous one - in 2007 and 2008. According to the World Bank, every 1% increase in world food prices pushes an additional 10 million people into extreme poverty, especially as world prices for most food commodities increased at unprecedented rates between 2020 and 2021.⁹

FAO’s 2022 projections indicate that as many as 181 million people in 41 countries could face a food crisis or worsening levels of acute food insecurity, and the report further underscores this risk: “Most of these analyses do not

7 “The Rapproach of Hunger. Food, Justice, and Money in the Twenty-First Century,” David Rieff, translated by Ahmed Abdel Hamid Ahmed, World of Knowledge Series, Issue 500, November 2022, Kuwait, p. 86.

Op. Cit. ,”أوضاع الأمن الغذائي العربي“ 2021” 8

Op. Cit. ,”أوضاع الأمن الغذائي العربي“ 2021” 9

take into account the effects of the war in Ukraine... The global food security situation is likely to deteriorate significantly.”¹⁰ As for the fate of Zero Hunger, one of the most important Millennium Development Goals (2030), FAO bemoans the world that is heading in the wrong direction “when we are only eight years away from the date of eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms (SDG targets 2.1 and 2.2)”.¹¹ This is not the first time that the world’s rulers have made such promises. At the World Food Conference in Rome in 1974, Henry Kissinger, then U.S. Secretary of State, declared that “ within the decade no child will go to bed hungry, no family will fear for its next day’s bread, and no human being’s future and capacities will be stunted by malnutrition...”.¹² Indeed, the United States is a master at using “food aid” not to ensure that a child gets dinner before going to bed, but for economic purposes (getting rid of surplus), and as a political weapon against the superpower’s rivals.¹³

Africa [the Tropic of Chaos] is once again at the epicenter of this food crisis where widespread hunger is fueled by declining incomes, rising prices and scarcity. Of the 24 countries designated by the FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) as hunger hotspots in 2022, 16 are in Africa. Africans represent 62% of the total number of food insecure people in the hotspot countries.¹⁴

These people and countries are currently facing critical conditions due to high food prices and the impossibility of obtaining sufficient quantities of food, as explained by the “Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM)” network in its statement published on September 5, 2022. Contrary to what many media are reporting as being solely related to the war in Ukraine, “the global food crisis we are facing is above all a profound and structural crisis of the neoliberal capitalist mode of production”.¹⁵ The network also links an important part of the responsibility for the food crisis to massive speculation in grain markets where four transnational corporations from the north control 70% of the global grain market and are making huge profits.

10 “The Importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation...”, Op. Cit.

11 - “موجز عن حالة الأمن الغذائي والتغذية في العالم، إعادة توجيه السياسات الغذائية والزراعية لزيادة القدرة على تحمل كلفة الأزمات الغذائية الصحية”، 2022، منظمة الزراعة والأغذية للأمم المتحدة.

12 “The Roproach of Hunger”, Op. Cit. p. 65.

13 “صناعة الجوع (خرافة الندرة)”， تأليف فرانسيس مور لاييه وجوزيف كوليتز، ترجمة أحمد حسان، سلسلة عالم المعرفة، العدد 64- أبريل 1983، المجلس الوطني للثقافة والفنون والآداب- الكويت.

14 “Towards a Pan-African Approach to Food Security”, Hafez Ghanem, 2-11-2022, <http://bitly.ws/xhWH>

15 <https://bit.ly/3PL0o43> 9/5/2022

Of course, international organizations, led by the FAO, do not hold accountable the real culprit of this crisis: the globalized capitalist system and the violent deep economic transformations it has brought about. Its solutions remain subject to the same prevailing order: the market, cash as a means of food supply, humanitarian aid directed towards the most vulnerable segments in moments of crisis, as is currently the case, as well as advocating for a structural transformation of food systems that does not deviate from the same neoliberal line dictated by the World Bank.



Section II:

Effects of the war on food, the economy and the situation of small-scale food producers in Morocco.

With the outbreak of the war, Bank Al-Maghrib issued a “crisis statement” on March 22, 2022, in which it referred to “the international situation marked by events related to the war in Ukraine.... In particular, rising commodity prices, continued disruptions in global production and supply chains, and increasing inflationary pressures.” While the outcome and duration of this conflict are uncertain, its impact has become tangible in financial markets, commodity prices, global trade and economic activity in general. The Moroccan national economy is not immune to the consequences of these developments, at a time when it is facing difficult climatic conditions due to the high deficit in rainfall.”¹⁶ This represents this institution’s expression of the Catastrophic Convergence the author of “Tropic of Chaos” was referring to.

The State, along with employers and their institutions, held a meeting to establish vigilance mechanisms in the face of the impact of the Russian war in Ukraine. In March 2022, Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, and Nadia Fattah Alaoui, Minister of Economy and Finance, held a working meeting with the Moroccan bank, TAMWILCOM, the Foreign exchange office, and the presidents of the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises and the Professional Association of Moroccan Banks, devoted to the review of the national economic and financial situation, the study of the possible effects of the Ukrainian crisis on the Moroccan economy and the proposal of solutions for economic operators to address the current situation.

16 <https://bit.ly/3gQqJAJ> - 22/3/2022

It is not the first time, in the wake of the pandemic and the lockdown, that an economic vigilance committee has been set up involving the State and employers' organizations, which has caused the discontent of trade union leaders who have called for their involvement, or the setting up of a social vigilance committee.

The opacity and reassurance methods are no longer effective, especially with the ease of access to information, and the accountability logic imposed by the international financing institutions. The expansion of economic interdependence with the world, which was not the case in the past, requires the State and employers to be particularly vigilant in the face of any possible external shocks.

This, of course, was intended to reassure employers that the State would support them, as it did during the pandemic and the so-called economic recovery. In his Throne Speech marking the twenty-first year of his reign, the King announced the allocation of 120 billion dirhams [about 11 billion Euros] to overcome the impact of the coronavirus and ordered the creation of the Mohammed VI Fund for Investment. To help employers overcome the impact of the war, the government launched a 45 billion dirham [4.1 billion Euros] Sovereign Wealth Fund in October 2022, one-third of which is provided by the state budget and the remaining two-thirds by national and international investment bodies.¹⁷

When the state speaks of the "national economy", it is of course the private sector and business that, according to neo-liberal doctrine, should receive the largest possible share of public funds to stimulate and sustain them in the face of fluctuations. As for the greater part of the population, the state only invokes it out of concern for maintaining social stability and political peace. State intervention is limited to temporary support targeting those who are most severely hit by the crises, which the State has called "General Welfare".

While the State has allocated 45 billion dirhams [4.1 billion euros] to support businesses, only 10 billion dirhams [about 900 million euros] have been allocated to emergency measures to deal with the effects of drought, most of which is intended to structure farmers' debt, especially small scale farmers, who rely on bank loans to pay for their agricultural activities at the beginning of each agricultural season.¹⁸

Hence, "state intervention," within a context where the State and the World

17 <https://bit.ly/3B5862K> - 19/10/2022

18 <https://bit.ly/3VqVETe> - 17/2/2002

Bank repeatedly stress the need to “ revisit the role of the State,” is merely the same old neoliberal dogma: That the state is a vehicle for the transfer of productive wealth to those at the top of the social hierarchy, as Naomi Klein argues in her book *The Shock Doctrine, The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, and that the result is an unjust distribution of wealth in which small producers and workers are the victims.

1. Energy price shocks

According to Dr. Leila Benali, Morocco’s Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, Morocco’s natural gas consumption is about one billion cubic meters per year. On the other hand, Morocco’s domestic gas production is only about 110 million cubic meters per year, which makes Moroccan gas meet only 11% of Morocco’s total natural gas consumption.

The Bank Al-Maghrib’s statement (March 22, 2022) highlights the gravity of this point: “At the international level, the upward trend in energy prices, linked to the recovery in demand and to concerns about the evolution of supply, has accelerated significantly since the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine and the imposed sanctions on Russia. As a result, the price of Brent crude oil reached an average of \$95.8 per barrel in February. Taking into account the expectations of international institutions, the price of Brent is expected to average \$106 per barrel for the entire year 2022.”

The rising cost of oil and gas has an impact on the rising cost of transportation and thus on the prices of raw materials in general and the prices of food and its production inputs in particular. Because bread is a sensitive issue, which has already sparked uprisings (the bread uprising of June 20, 1981), as well as struggles and the establishment of the coordination against the high cost of living in 2007, the regime places great importance on social stability, which Najib Boulif, former Moroccan Minister of Transport (of the Islamic Justice and Development Party - PJD), expressed when he said: “The balance between the economic and the social is very important, and the support for investment must be based on specific indicators, taking into account the social aspect first”.

The state announced that it will bear the difference in the price of wheat within the country due to its increase as a result of the repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, in addition to the doubling of price allocations to about \$3.2 billion until the end of April 2022, including only gas and flour, as well as an exceptional financial support for road transport professionals.

This vulnerability to global energy price fluctuations is due to structural measures taken by the state, which has removed safeguards that have kept fuel prices within sustainable limits. Previously, the state intervened as a stabilizing agent between the world market and the domestic market. However, since the last decade of the twentieth century, measures have been implemented to remove these safeguards, the most important of which are:

- The privatization of Samir oil refinery, whose production and storage capacity was well established, in 1997. In 2002, the state acted on the principle of “beneficial crisis”, taking advantage of the fire at the facility in November 2002 to grant private operators permission to import oil tax-free. This tragedy culminated in the company’s bankruptcy in 2015.
- The definitive abandonment of the price control mechanism in November 2015, by which the state set the final selling price of fuels, as the state used to intervene through public finance to keep the internal price level at an appropriate level. In 2015, the sector was liberalized and left to market relations and calibration with the global market. The Government is currently undertaking to completely abolish the compensation fund that subsidizes certain foodstuffs and butane gas, in line with the advice of the World Bank, on the grounds that these subsidies benefit the rich more than the poor and weigh on the national budget, and plans to replace it with direct financial transfers to those categorized as the poorest.

2. Fertilizer prices rise

Fertilizer prices have increased by 41% in the local market during the 2021-2022 agricultural season, compared to the previous season. In September 2022, international rating agency Fitch Writing revealed that Moroccan fertilizer prices are expected to rise from the current \$200 per ton to \$270 by the end of the year, due to global storage concerns and constraints. In its statement referred to above, Bank Al-Maghrib explained that “For raw phosphates and their derivatives, prices were held roughly steady between January and February at \$175 per ton for raw phosphates and increased by 6.8% to \$187 per ton for diammonium phosphates. These prices are expected to increase further through the remainder of 2022, in line with rising prices for agricultural commodities and for inputs to the fertilizer industry.”

The report of the Thematic Working Group on Food Security at the Moroccan House of Councillors provided detailed data on the relationship of the rising prices of fertilizers that are used in the sugar industry and its impact on this sector, even before the war broke out:

— “Since September 2021, fertilizer prices have been trending upward in the domestic and international markets, especially nitrogen fertilizers: urea %46, from 474 dirhams per qintar to 1,500 dirhams per qintar, an increase of 216%, and ammonites by 33.5%, from 337 dirhams per qintar to 1,500 dirhams, an increase of 346%.”

— “Potash fertilizers, potash chloride and potash sulfate prices have increased by 42% to 830 dirhams per qintar and 1,300 dirhams per qintar respectively.

“These costs represent an unsustainable burden on farmers and require urgent joint solutions from the government and the sugar industry to sustain this increase and maintain the incomes of farmers who have already been adversely impacted by successive years of drought,” the group’s report concluded. “This situation poses a significant risk that farmers will abandon sugar farming as net profit margins continue to decline due to drought and unprecedented increases in the cost of inputs.”

High input prices, including fertilizer and fuel, have sparked protests by organized farmers, who, under the umbrella of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Morocco, staged a three-day strike on Oct. 26, 27 and 28, 2022. These were large farmers who own tilling and harvesting machines, whereas small scale farmers remain unorganized, hoping for the generosity of the sky or the meager support of the state.

It is believed that Morocco will benefit from higher fertilizer prices, as phosphate export revenues will double, helping to support the government’s finances. But this is limited by opposing trends in the high cost of energy and food imports, as well as intense competition in the international fertilizer market. The high revenue figure for 2020 is due to reduced supply in a context of lower Chinese exports and lower stocks in India and the US.

3. Food prices rise

The “Catastrophic Convergence” of shocks described in the book *Tropic of Chaos* has been evident in Morocco’s vulnerability to the Russian-Ukrainian war and other shocks. The World Bank’s Spring 2022 report on Morocco

opened with a paragraph that sounded like a direct quote from the book: "However, Morocco is once again suffering the impact of a string of adverse shocks. The beginning of the agricultural season has been unusually dry, and a poor cereal crop is to be expected for 2022. This coincides with a slowing of the global economy and rising international commodity prices, adverse trends that severely intensified following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Importantly, these shocks have turned out to be mutually reinforcing given that the drought is forcing Morocco to import larger volumes of cereals at substantially higher prices due to the war."¹⁹

After attempts to provide reassurance, the government spokesman, Mustafa Paytas, was forced to recognize the fact and confirmed the repercussions on the country, mainly the increase in prices of a series of materials, due to the Russian-Ukrainian crisis.

The Bank Al-Maghrib statement (March 22, 2022) reads, "The prices of agricultural products have increased by 18.4%, wheat prices, in particular, have increased by 35%."²⁰

Thus, Morocco has been adversely affected by a war that is geographically distant from it, due to the liberal economic policy adopted for decades that has made its doors open to all shocks. The policy of economic liberalization, the emphasis on exports, monetary reforms (leading to fluctuations in the exchange rate of the dirham) and dramatic budget cuts in material support for consumption (the compensation fund) have removed the obstacles that had previously succeeded in "mitigating" the effects of global market volatility.

Although Morocco supplies the world market (especially Western Europe) with agricultural products, a large part of the Moroccan food table depends on this same market: cereals. Morocco imports only 20 to 30% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine, but it remains under the burden of price shocks on the world market, while imported wheat represents 40% of Moroccans' consumption. The situation is exacerbated by a severe dry season that has reduced domestic production.²¹

"Morocco is one of the world's largest grain importers, with grain imports in 2019 costing about 1.4 percent of GDP. " According to the report of the thematic working group of the House of Councillors, "wheat has topped the

19 "Morocco Economic Update, The Recovery is Running Dry", International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank Spring 2022.

20 <https://bit.ly/3gQqJAJ> - 3/22/2022.

21 "أثر الغزو الروسي لأوكرانيا على الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا"، <http://bitly.ws/xivC> - 14/4/2022.

list of national imports for the past ten years, with imports of this commodity reaching 13.5 billion dirhams, followed by corn (5.4 billion dirhams). Thus, cereals alone accounted for 69.6% of total imports of agricultural products in the Kingdom in 2020, against 75.7% in 2011. As for maize imports, which were entirely covered by domestic production in the 1980s and 1990s, they amount to 1 billion and 123.3 million dirhams in 2020”.²²

The High Commission for Planning published in November 2022 an information note on the evolution of indicative prices, in which the figure of food prices increased by 0.7%. The increases in food products recorded between September and October 2022, include, according to the same note, the prices of oils, fats and vegetables by 2.5%, milk, cheese and eggs by 1.7%, meat by 0.7%, bread and cereals by 0.3%, sugar, jam, honey, chocolate and candy by 0.2%. In a comparison between prices in 2022 and 2021, the note announced that the the index of prices at consumption increased by 8.1% during October 2022. This increase was due to the increase in food prices by 13.8% and non-food prices by 4.3%.²³

The economic liberalization policy recommended by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund has made the country unable to withstand external shocks. According to the report of the thematic Working Group of the House of Councillors: “Previously, the grain production chain was regulated by the state. The latter’s interventions took the form of appropriate measures to ensure market regulation, support producers and consumers, and the framing of market supply of grain products and derivatives. In the late 1990s, the liberalization of the grain market began with the lifting of restrictions on activities related to the cereal chain, and the establishment of freedom of trade, manufacture and import of cereals and cereals and their derivatives.” Of course, this is not a call by this group to abandon the policy of “liberalization of the grain market”, as this is part of the constitutional entity (which was approved in 2011) within which this group operates.

4. The effects of the war on small-scale food producers

First of all, it is necessary to recall a political and social reality that makes small food producers (small farmers) bear the cost of crises over which they have no control. Small farmers in Morocco (similar to small craftspeople) have been deprived of both their weapons and their organization. After the declaration

“أزمة روسيا وأوكرانيا...” .Op. Cit. 22

23 <https://snrtnews.com/article/60022 - 11/22/2022>.

of independence of Morocco from France, the state/monarchy was keen to disarm this social class. The dismantling of the National Liberation Army in 1958 by a military operation (called Hurricane/Swab) in cooperation with the French and Spanish armies, and the military repression of the uprising in the Rif region (formerly affiliated with Spanish colonialism) in the same year, aimed at disarming the small farmers who associated the kick-out of the colonizer with the restitution of their stolen lands.

The small Moroccan farmers remained deprived of any political expression of their aspirations and interests, especially after the Communist Party broke with the farmers' masses because of its refusal to call for independence from France in order to preserve the Soviet Union's alliance with Western democratic forces against Nazi Germany since the mid-1940s, thus missing the opportunity for an alliance between the urban industrial proletariat and the village farmers. Moreover, the nationalist populist left refrained from voicing the demand for the expropriation of large colonizers' lands and that confiscated lands be returned to their original owners. The defeat of farmers allowed the monarchy to use the rural world through its local elites to counterbalance urban political forces (the parties of the national movement), and established a tyrannical regime that is still in place today.

Thus, the state was able to exploit this wealth/land recovered from the colonizer to facilitate the birth of an agrarian bourgeoisie that would constitute the most important social base of the monarchy. Small farmers bore the burden of financing the development of capital through the tax mechanism. The rural sociologist Paul Bascon (a former member of the French and then Moroccan Communist Party) pointed out in an interview published in *EIMounadhel(a)* magazine in 1978: "If we look at the relationship between prices and taxes, we will clearly see that it is the farmer who is bearing the cost of development (and sugar and gasoline show this), which is true in all countries."²⁴

The small farmers' lack of political expression has meant that they have been overtaken by their great rivals and the army of mediators and speculators. A 2021 report by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (a constitutional institution set up by the king in 2011) did not hide the fact: "Small farmers and Mediterranean farmers, poorly organized and insufficiently equipped, encounter many difficulties in selling their products. They constantly suffer from the pressure of speculation and the multiplicity of intermediaries, which escalate the price of the final sale to the consumer."²⁵

24 <https://bit.ly/3Fm05q> - 7/02/2008.

25 "من أجل مقارنة مبتكرة ومندمجة لتسويق المنتجات الفلاحية"، المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي والبيئي، إحالة ذاتية رقم 56/2021.

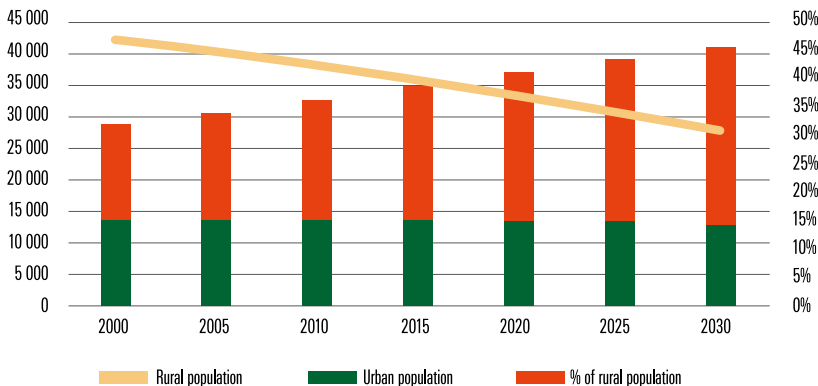
Just as the COVID-19 crisis has taken its toll on small farmers and agricultural workers, these are also caught up in an unequal confrontation with the war crisis; this time they found themselves caught between the prices of inputs (fertilizers, fuel, seeds) and the selling prices of the product.

The policy of economic liberalization makes the small farmer a weak part in an unequal confrontation, one in which he is always the loser. "If we take the reference price of soft wheat announced by the competent authority, which is set at 280 dirhams per quintal (2021), the actual market price remains between 220 and 230 dirhams per quintal. There is therefore a significant gap between the reference price and the price actually applicable. In addition, this price varies depending on the wheat quality (high quality, medium quality)."

The continued effects of the COVID-19 crisis, war, and drought trio combine to drive the rural population, which makes up a significant portion of small-scale food producers, out of arid areas into the cities, thereby swelling their populations. Ultimately, the base of food producers has been reduced and the numbers of consumers have become much larger. A World Bank report released in October 2022 predicts that "climate-induced changes (water availability and crop yield) on rainfed agriculture could result in out-migration to urban areas of up to 1.9 million Moroccans (about 5.4 percent of the total population) by 2050."²⁶

This will exacerbate a long-standing trend in which the village base (primarily food producers) is shrinking while urbanizations (primarily food consumers) are increasing.

Overview of Urban and Rural Population Development between 2000 and 2030²⁷



²⁶ "Morocco: Climate and Development Report, Executive Summary", World Bank Group, October 2022.

²⁷ IBID, "Morocco Economic Update...". Op. Cit.

Morocco enjoys a solvency position, which is the result of its political stability, unlike the rest of the countries in the region that suffer from difficulties in accessing the international financial market, and the fact that the country is a good pupil in the eyes of international institutions and is still able to service its debt without difficulty, as the World Bank report (Spring 2022) states: “The risks posed by such twin deficits [budget and current account deficits] are mitigated by a comfortable stock of foreign exchange reserves, the solid structure of Morocco’s public debt, and maintained good access to international financial markets . . . Net FDI flows are expected to remain stable over the medium term, covering a substantial portion of Morocco’s external financing needs”.²⁸

This allows the state to take financial measures to “mitigate” the shocks of war and severe drought, but it will not change the reality of the small farmer, who is a grain of wheat caught between the grindstones of much larger forces: global market pressures and internal competition on the one hand, and the reality of a country whose policy is based on supporting the large investor. The state’s agricultural policy as described in the “Green Morocco Plan (2008-2020)” and its revised version “Green Generation Plan (2020-2030)” is based on making the large agricultural investor the leader of the sector’s economic development (or what they call the creator of the highest added value), with social benefits in the form of crumbs called “solidarity farming”.

The incomes of small producers and livestock breeders have been reduced due to the high cost of inputs (fertilizers, fodder, fuel...) This was exacerbated by drought, especially since most of the fallow agriculture, which produces mainly cereals, belongs to them. In April 2022, Mohamed Seddiqi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests, announced that 53% of the area under cereal cultivation, about one million and 600 hectares, had been lost, adding that only 21% of the nationally cultivated area was in good condition, while 16% of the area was in medium condition and 10% was in poor condition.²⁹ The cultivated area shrank from 4.35 million hectares in 2021 to 3.6 million hectares in 2022, and the cereal harvest reached 3.4 million tons in 2022 compared to 10.3 million tons in 2021.

These manifestations of the crisis have resulted in the loss of more than 200,000 jobs in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector this spring, according to a note from the High Commission for Planning.³⁰

A 77-year-old farmer said, “The drought is severe, extremely severe. Plants,

28 IBID, “Morocco Economic Update: The Recovery is Running Dry”. Op. Cit.

29 <https://bit.ly/3B7Hpud> - 15/4/2022.

30 <https://bit.ly/3HbZHP3> - 10/19/2022.

especially those planted in the fall, have been severely damaged... People are selling their sheep, some have sold 90% of them to provide feed for the few that are left. There is a significant lack of groundwater... The fall harvest has gone with the wind. We are heavily in debt, buying fuel, seed and everything at a high price.”³¹

For agricultural workers, big capitalist farm owners took advantage of the crisis to squeeze wages and impose a rapid rate of productivity (cost-effectiveness). “The sheer scale of unemployment and the influx of villagers (especially women with cheap labor) has also allowed them to bargain for wages, lay off and replace them with workers who have come into temporary employment contracts without job guarantees or social protection.” The minimum agricultural wage is still below the general minimum wage. The Ministry of Agriculture’s 2020 Green Morocco report did not hide the fact that this disparity has increased rather than decreased: “The gap between the guaranteed minimum agricultural wage and the guaranteed minimum wage has increased significantly, from 572 dirhams in 2008 to 853 dirhams in 2020”.

The government’s 2011 commitment to align farmers’ minimum wages with the legally applicable general minimum wage has yet to be fulfilled. This commitment, which was part of a social agreement with the trade union centers on April 26, 2011, was intended to isolate the trade union movement from the February 20 Movement and its achievements in terms of popular and labor elevation. In the latest social agreement reached between the government and central trade unions on April 30, 2022, the government again made the same commitment, while postponing it to 2028 in the form of “progressive unification”. However, this is likely to have a similar fate to that of the earlier one in 2011, as long as it is not supported by militant pressure.

31 <https://bit.ly/3XVcwTs> - 22/2/2022.



Section III:

the effects of the war on small-scale food producers - a field study

Most official reports focus on macro-economic indicators (foreign trade, balance of payments, trade balance, indebtedness, etc.), while the inventory of the real situation of small-scale producers is hampered by the absence of their own means of struggle to carry out this task, unlike large-scale farmers, especially the capitalist ones, who are organized into a body and have the possibility of exerting influence on political decisions.

If the effects of the pandemic and the quarantine that accompanied the near-total economic lockout on small farmers are visible to the eye, it is currently very difficult to have an appraisal of how they have been affected by the war. As such, farming and harvesting have not stopped due to compelling conditions, as was the case in the lockdown during the quarantine period, but have been affected by limited access to inputs and lack of funding.

Digging through official reports and press follow-ups on the situation of small food producers and the effects of the war on them is like looking for a needle in a haystack. As noted above, it is difficult to get a handle on the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on small-scale food producers. There is no activist voice - on a mass scale - which takes it upon itself to be the voice of the small farmer. It was therefore essential to reach out to the small farmer and conduct field research on the subject.

The research focused on two areas with different characteristics. The first is in the "west", with Atlantic plains, arable soils and average rainfall. The second is in a semi-desert area on the outskirts of Ouarzazate. The work has not been easy, given the farmer's instinctive apprehension of those who carry pen and paper, always reminiscent of the ghost of the state employee

coming to inventory property and impose taxes, such apprehension is ever present. In addition to the inherited fear (although less intense due to the change in context since 2011) over decades of repression, and the individual characteristics of some who thought this was a lucrative business, all of this made it difficult to communicate with the small farmer, limited the number of samples interviewed, and caused some caution with regard to the information reported by some of the respondents.

Field researchers Ibrahim Hatami (West) and Mohamed Hadi (Ouarzazate region) attempted to identify the situation of small farmers and their vulnerability to the war raging in Eastern Europe.

1. The West Region

Definition of the area covered by the field survey

The research focused on a set of Dwawir (villages in the Moroccan colloquial expression), namely: Oulad Hamid El Marja, Dar El Gueddari, and Khenichet.

Oulad Hamid El Marja

It is geographically dependent on the Sidi Slimane region and the Boumouaïz community. Its population is estimated at 9,072, according to the 2004 census. The area has a variety of agricultural potential, producing vegetables, fruits, and meat. The region is rich in fertile land and has a labor force in agriculture, which ranks first in economic activity in the area and the region as a whole.

Khenichet

It is a small village community located in the province of Sidi Kacem in the west. Its population is 20,899 according to the 2004 official census. The Khenichet region is characterized by its nature and its fertile agricultural field, which makes it an important agricultural pole, as well as the rich hydrographic network embodied by two important rivers in Morocco, Oued Sebou and Oued Querga. The Khenichet region produces wheat, poker, fruits and vegetables...

Dar El Gueddari

It is located in the Ermilate commune in the Sidi Kacem of the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region. It belongs to the Dahs Community, which includes 14 douar and is estimated to have a population of 209 according to the official population

census in 2004. The area is characterized by the cultivation of greens, citrus and wheat.

Outcomes of the field survey

Data on farmers' conditions

The field researcher interviewed 29 farmers, most of whom (22 respondents) were between the ages of 18 and 45, and 27 of them were males. The researcher stated that it was difficult for him to interview women because of farmers' conservative attitudes.

Regarding the relationship of respondents to the land they cultivate, the proportion of collective ownership was low, while the proportion of private and rented land constituted the majority. About 34% reported that they owned their own land, 41% rented it, while the percentage of collective ownership did not exceed 25%. Most of these farms are small (58%), medium (35%) and very small (7%).

As for the types of agriculture, these are divided into farming which combines the "bour" or rainfed and irrigated scheme (69%), the irrigated scheme (27%), while the rainfed only scheme has a small percentage (4%), which is explained by the fact that the region is in an area with regular rainfall.

Farming patterns have changed in the region as subsistence farming has declined in favor of commercial farming.

The percentage of subsistence farming according to the respondents was (0%), while the mixed type consisted of subsistence/marketing (79%) and marketing (21%). This makes the farmer vulnerable to shocks passed through market mechanisms, especially those related to input prices, most of which are procured through the market.

The provision of basic needs from the market has become the norm, indicating the strong penetration of monetary relations in the Moroccan rural world. 48% of respondents report getting a quarter of their basic needs from the market, and 28% get 50%. This is most evident in the case of seed (83%) and fodder (45%).

The impact of war on small farmers

It is very difficult to draw a line between what is affecting small farmers and the impact of war, inflation and drought. But this "Catastrophic Convergence" seems to be making their situation worse.

When asked about the Russian-Ukrainian war, 26 respondents (out of 29) said they had heard about the war, the same number confirmed that it was directly affecting their situation. 38% of respondents said they were affected in the purchase of inputs and basic materials, the prices of which increased due to the war.

However, in addition to the fact that the war affected their situation, respondents pointed to other factors, mainly inflation (high prices) and drought, as all respondents answered that they were severely affected by these factors.

The combination of these factors led to higher prices for both aspects of farmers' lives - production (inputs) and consumption, which led to a decrease in their purchases.

Respondents reported difficulties with supply, all (29) referring to 1) fodder, which they said was due to drought and high prices; 2) seeds, which were due to high prices; and 3) fertilizer, which was due to the same reason (high prices).

2. Ouarzazate Region (Southeast)

Definition of the area covered by the field survey: the villages of Amrezgan and Ait Zeinab.

The region of Ouarzazate, which lies between the Great and Little Atlantic, is located on the banks of Oued Draa. It is characterized by hot summers and very cold winters. With an average rainfall that does not exceed 200 mm per year, they occur in the form of stormy showers in autumn with some tropical fluctuations that produce thunderstorms in the hot season when the temperature reaches 45°, and stormy sand winds, especially in summer and autumn.

Most of the population is engaged in agriculture and pastoralism, and the problem of drought has been acute in the region, especially in recent years, with a negative impact on subsistence agriculture as a whole, as the commercialization of products in the region is very new, and is generally limited to local markets, with the exception of some modern crops such as "watermelon / dellah", which is sold in remote areas, that is, outside the region, which is also the case with for olives.

Most farm workers practice irrigated agriculture on small areas and rainfed farming. Irrigation water often comes from "communal springs" or ponds left by rivers, and in recent years, wells have become the main source of irrigation water.

Tiouine Dam has recently been built to provide the city of Ouarzazate with drinking water and to feed the reservoir of al Mansour Ad-Dhabi dam. The villages of the region are relatively irrigated by this dam, which discharges water. However, the biggest beneficiary of the dam's water is the large solar project located around the city of Ouarzazate.

The inhabitants are conservative and cautious about state measures and what follows, which makes it difficult to communicate with them about their situation and how to improve it, as those contacted often refuse to answer the questionnaire questions for fear of any repercussions, or simply for lack of confidence that their situation can be changed. The situation is even more acute when it comes to women. The latter are not directly employed in agriculture, as they are only family caregivers, although their workload is very heavy. Recently, there have been exceptional cases of women engaged in agriculture and livestock and various women's cooperatives in activities directly and/or indirectly related to agriculture.

In general, the region suffers from severe drought, scarcity and fragmentation of irrigated areas, water scarcity, high costs of drilling wells and covering the expenses of their operation. The use of solar panels has recently become widespread, and it seems to be relatively useful although it does not solve the problem in depth, along with its waste of water in dry areas.

Summary of the field survey

Data on farmers' situation

The field researcher interviewed 16 farmers, ranging in age from 30 to 72, including one woman. These ages can be explained by the fact that agriculture in the drylands does not provide jobs, which pushes young people to migrate to urban areas or abroad.

As for the relationship of the interviewees with the land they cultivate, the percentage of collective ownership is low (25%), while the percentage of private land constitutes the majority (56%) with a decrease in the number of land tenants (13%), plus one interviewee who works on a quota basis (Khammès, i.e., works in exchange for one fifth of the production, according to the Moroccan expression).

Most respondents indicated that the property area was either small (37.5%) or medium (62.5%), but no figures were provided. The majority of exploitation is mixed between irrigated and rainfed (50%) and irrigated (44%), with a very small percentage of rainfed only (6%).

According to the respondents, cereal cultivation ranks first (68.75%), followed by vegetables (43.75%), fruits and milk (25% for both), meat (12.5%), and other products (31.25%).

In contrast to the “West” region - where the commercialization pattern predominates in the disposal of products - subsistence consumption constitutes the largest pattern in the study region. (62.5%) of respondents stated that their production is for subsistence, while the percentage of both subsistence and commercialization is (37.5%), with no pure commercialization pattern. This is due to the poverty of the region and its distance from markets, with the exception of the cultivation of red watermelon, which depletes the waters of a dry region; this crop is marketed in the domestic and external market, in which only large capitalist farmers invest.

However, with respect to the provision of basic necessities from the market, this percentage is higher in Ouarzazate than in the west. 37.5% of respondents report that they get 1/4 of their needs from the market, and 25% get 100% of their needs from the market. These figures may be completely inaccurate, as the respondent base in the Ouarzazate region has shrunk.

Regarding details on market provision of production inputs: (56.25%) responded that they get fertilizer from the market, (62.5%) get seed, and (50%) get fodder.

Impact of the war on small farmers

A similar finding was made in relation to the effects of the war on small-scale farmers and the difficulty of separating them from the effects of other factors (high inflation/prices and drought).

All respondents said they had heard about the Russia-Ukraine war, and only one denied that it had any direct impact on their situation. When asked about the signs of these impacts, respondents indicated the following:

Field of influence	Percentage of respondents (100%)
Marketing of products	18.75
Purchase of inputs	25
Cost of commodities	12.5
Purchase of inputs and high cost of commodities	62.5
Marketing of product and cost of commodities	68.75
All	25

The same is true for both survey areas (West and Ouarzazate), suggesting that external shocks affect areas of varying resilience. 68.75% of respondents answered that they were severely affected by drought, and 50% that they were severely affected by high prices.

Respondents confirmed disruptions in the supply of production inputs. 81.25% indicated that there were disruptions in the supply of fertilizer, with reasons being high prices and lack of supply. 56.25% reported disturbances in the supply of seeds for the same reasons (high prices and lack of supply). 87.5% confirmed the difficulty of access to fodder, for reasons related to drought and high prices.

In the context of rising fuel prices, 93.75% of respondents said that transportation prices had increased. Overall, these high prices resulted in a decrease in consumption (81.25%), and for the materials affected by this decrease, the responses are as follows: (62.5%) for production inputs, and (81.28%) for basic consumption materials.

3. Respondents' demands

After decades of repression under the late King Hassan II, the villagers' struggle resumed in the mid-1990s of the twentieth century. It reached its peak in the mid-2000s with the struggles of the inhabitants of Tata (south of the country) in 2005 against the pricing of health care services in public hospitals, and the uprising in Sidi Ifni (2005-2008) over a list of demands that included employment and the provision of road and hospital infrastructure. The culminating point was the popular movement in the Rif region in northern Morocco (2016-2017) for numerous demands that included economic, social and human rights related issues.

The country witnessed the birth of a movement called "Tansiqiya Akal [Land in Amazigh]," but it was dominated by Amazigh identity/culture, as well as the weight of village elders who intervened in the process, aborting the birth of a movement specific to small-scale landowners.

In 2011, beet farmers revolted in the Doukkala region (the western plain) in a struggle to free themselves from the adhesion acquiescence contracts ("purchase of inputs and sale of products at prices fixed by the company") that bind them to the sugar production company (COSUMAR).

In the last twenty years, there has been no struggle by farmers for land and its resources. The only exception was when small landowners in Moroccan villages rose up against the state's plan to delimit forest ownership, which deprived them of a large area they had the right to exploit. It was a one-sided class war that received little press coverage. The State was able to mobilize a significant amount of land, as the High Commission for Water, Forests and Combating Desertification announced the results of its strategy related specifically to this issue, which went from 24,000 hectares per year, between 1995 and 2004, to 300,000 hectares per year, during the period between 2005 and 2014... The total forest property reached 9 million hectares, of which 7.15 million hectares were approved, representing 71%.³² This plan was to meet the demands of investors and the expectations of the World Bank to eliminate the difficulties of access to real estate, which are summarized - according to them - by the scattered legal status of real estate ownership, with the World Bank report published in 2017 indicating the need to: " Addressing the problem of accessing real estate in line with companies needs... improving access to industrial real estate by clarifying, simplifying and enhancing the transparency of regulations and ensuring planned offers at the lowest possible cost.

The state is also working under the "Green Morocco Plan" and the "Green Generation Plan" to make collective lands open for private investment. Under the headings "Creating a New Generation of Entrepreneurs and Young People" (180,000 young people) and "Creating a Rural Middle Class" (400,000 families)³³, the land wealth will boost the real estate capital of major landlords and agricultural investors through what it calls "the mobilization and valuation of agricultural collective lands".

The state will mobilize one million hectares of collective land to encourage young entrepreneurs. But these will serve as foot soldiers that will pave the way for the seizure of these lands by large national and foreign investors, as these young entrepreneurs will be trapped in debt and crushed by competition, leaving the field open to the one who can ultimately invest: the large investor. Eventually, these small farmers will lose the possibility of individually conserving their land, which used to be collective property, to the benefit of those who have the means to acquire it.

The absence of an organized small farmers' movement and the refusal of the organized workers' movement (unions) to raise the demands of this social class has resulted in the absence of demands that primarily address the issue

32 - <https://shortest.link/99do> - 11/2/2015.

33 - "مشروع نجاعة الأداء"، وزارة الفلاحة والصيد البحري والتنمية القروية والمياه والغابات- قطاع الفلاحة، مشروع قانون المالية 2022.

of ownership: ownership of the land and the resources found on it (forests, livestock) and inside it (primarily water). This was evident in the respondents' statements and their responses to the demands section of the field survey form.

Respondents' demands did not extend beyond aspects that would make it easier for them to remain in their smallholder status, and would relieve them of the weight of tax obligations, competition, and the repercussions of frequent shocks (natural or economic/political).” There is no demand for changes in real estate structure or tax policy that are actually in favor of large landowners and agricultural capitalists. The majority of respondents (76%) in the West asked for direct financial support, subsidizing commodities and inputs, and easier access to funding.

Regarding other demands not included in the survey form, the list of demands submitted by the respondents was as follows:

- Establishment of local markets for the sale of crops;
- Construction of infrastructure;
- Supply of seeds;
- Marketing of local products;
- Supply of fertilizers;
- Providing water.

“For the Ouarzazate region, 62.5% of respondents also requested direct financial support, subsidization of consumer items and inputs, and access to funding.”

As for the demands that were not included in the survey form, the list of requests is as follows:

- Opening of routes;
- Improvement of the collective spring flow;
- Provision of mechanisms;
- Assistance in the drilling of a collective well;
- Improving the river's side;
- Financing of income generating projects;

- Improving small farmers' conditions;
- Periodic release of water from the dam;
- Facilitating the life of citizens;
- Protecting the purchasing power ;
- Solar energy for small farmers;
- Subsidies of production fertilizers;
- Employment opportunities

4. Conclusions

■ a. Since the introduction of the capitalist mode of production by colonialism in Morocco at the beginning of the twentieth century, the small farmer (and the small producer in general) has been subjected to a violent process of transformation: acquisition of their land, unjust taxation, deprivation of the traditional solidarity mechanism following its removal.

Professor Hedi Haroui wrote about this: "Overwhelming the population by legitimate or illegitimate tax duties, and arrangement duties, the heroic successes of the "Makhzen movements" [Makhzen is a Moroccan term meaning the central state], the despotism of the Makhzen in the cities and tribes, especially the leaders, and the persistence of Spanish and French colonialism in Morocco, if this situation led to anything, it was to exorbitant food prices, a stifling trade crisis, and the severe subordination of the overwhelming majority of the population, both rural and urban... One of the results of these natural disasters was the emergence of a constant social movement in search of subsistence, so that people were no longer able to cope with poverty and carry out duties, some of them sold their lands at the lowest price, and others mortgaged them and moved to the cities, especially to the West and to Casablanca, where the proletariat was formed in the early 20th century."³⁴

■ b. Since the onset of colonialism, the acquisition of agricultural land and other natural resources, such as water, has been accelerated by military repression and a legal arsenal (the Dahir -Royal Decree- of August 12, 1913, for the registration of real estate, and the Dahir of April 9, 1919, which placed collective lands under the authority of the State). After independence in 1956,

34 - "القبيلة، الإقطاع والمخزن، مقاربة سوسولوجية للمجتمع المغربي الحديث 1844 - 1934"، عبد الهادي الهروي، أفريقيا الشرق.

the land taken over represented more than one million hectares, of which the State retained 657,188 hectares, of which 362,812 hectares were transferred to private owners. In 2003, 90% of the recovered colonial agricultural land was acquired by large landowners, capitalists and state officials.³⁵

■ c. This process has left the small farmer defenseless in the face of the shocks that have occurred since the mid-1980s, as agriculture has been drained by an export-oriented agricultural policy that depletes natural resources (water, soil and vegetation). The structural adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund in 1983 turned villages and deserts into hell, with tens of thousands of peasant families fleeing to the cities or their suburbs to serve as cheap farm labor for the owners of large capitalist farms, a significant part of whom belong to foreign investors, due to facilities in the business climate (a labor law providing for flexibility) and tax and real estate privileges.

■ d. This process of impoverishment and displacement has left the small farmer vulnerable to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated economic shutdown, income suspension, and currently the devastating combination of the Russia-Ukraine war, global recession, inflation and drought.

■ e. The state manages public finances, based on the most important principles of the Washington Consensus: keeping the budget deficit and austerity under control and directing them to stimulate the private sector, which is better able to create wealth and jobs. The small farmer/food producer is at the bottom of the government's priority list, as s/he is not a "major economic leader", unlike foreign investment and large corporations.

■ f. The fragmentation and lack of organization of small-scale food producers within a regulatory framework of their own has meant that their voices remain unheard. Of course, only the State has the ability to grasp the extent of this social class's resentment, relying on the arms of the Ministry of the Interior (an army of junior civil servants) and a broad array of development organizations. But this resentment surfaces when the state takes supportive measures in an effort to hold down their discontent. However, this support is no more than painkillers to hold them over until the shock is over. The small farmer finds him/herself being abused again by the huge tax machine, seed, fertilizer and pesticide companies, large (Agricultural Loan Fund) and small (microfinance institutions) lending institutions, mediators and speculators.

35 - "دفاعا عن السيادة الغذائية بالمغرب"، أطاك المغرب، الطبعة الأولى يوليو 2019، <https://bit.ly/3VbQvgY>

g. The demands of small (and even medium) farmers do not go beyond the demand for these painkillers. They understand that asking for more requires an organized voice that they lack. Even the medium-sized farmers organized in the framework of the Federation of Professional Associations in Morocco (the Union of the Agricultural Sector and Owners of Agricultural Equipment in Morocco) did not have higher demands: to be taken into account in taxation, an emergency support program for all agricultural matters (pesticides, machinery, fertilizers...), and the need to enhance quality and efficiency control of inputs.³⁶

h. These policies have led to the near total extinction of small-scale agriculture, along with the disappearance of small local markets selling free-range eggs and chickens, local cereals and sheep, and their replacement by large markets, where racks are filled with processed food products, mostly imported from abroad, that are full of fertilizers, pesticides and preservatives, which are priced at international levels. Meanwhile, there has been a shift from a system that respects land and water resources to an extractive industrial system that does not consider the destruction of land fertility, forms of water and air pollution, nor the climate. It has been forgotten that until the first half of the twentieth century, people could “properly feed themselves with organic fertilizers, calves, horses, rare tractors, and lots of job opportunities”.³⁷

i. The small farmer still preserves in his imagination the remains of the old tribal society, where “cooperation” and “family and tribal solidarity” were the pillars of his productive and social life. This calls for an alternative perspective based on the values of solidarity and collective cooperation, not those established by the pervading monetary economy in every aspect of society, and the values of brutal competition in application of the slogan “Get rich”. Of course, this is not a romantic invitation to return to a timeless past, but rather the idea that there is a possibility to build a society based on solidarity and cooperation, contrary to the spirit of capitalism based on brutal individual competition. The question here is how such a society can be built before the extractive/productive/consumerist tendency of capitalism destroys the resources of the planet necessary to build such a society.

36 - <https://bit.ly/3iDzH4V> - 11/11/2022.

37 - “الديون والنظام الاستخراجي”، نيكولا سيرسيرون، ترجمة جمعية أطاك المغرب، فبراير 2018، ص 89.



Section IV

Food sovereignty in the face of structural dependence and circumstantial shocks

We have preferred not to raise the issue of food sovereignty in the previous chapters in order to avoid downplaying demands. Instead, we set out from the reality of small farmers, their demands and ambitions, and the measures and provisions taken by the state as part of a public policy based on encouraging large-scale investments and export agriculture under the “Green Morocco Plan” (2008-2020) and its revised version “Green Generation” (2020-2030).

The food sovereignty claim is absent among those directly concerned: small-scale food producers and consumers. For now, it seems to be carried by small organizations in Morocco, which have no real public extension so far, led by the ATTAC Maroc Association and the Moroccan branch of the North African Network for Food Sovereignty. Its efforts do not go beyond the realm of advocacy and reflection to disseminate the perspective of food sovereignty.

On the other hand, the concept of “food sovereignty” seems to have been dominated by the State and incorporated into its documents. One of the most important documents is the report issued by the king-appointed committee tasked with drafting a “new development model.”

The concept of food sovereignty as developed by the movement “The peasants’ way - Via Campesina” is based on the right of each country to maintain its capacity to produce and develop its basic food, while respecting cultural and productive diversity. Food sovereignty requires the protection of natural resources, including land, water and seeds. The organization rejects trade liberalization and structural adjustment programs, led by multilateral organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have facilitated increased control

of agricultural policies by multinational corporations, globalizing poverty and hunger and destroying local productive capacities and rural communities... The concept has expanded to include the right of peoples to healthy, culturally appropriate and sustainably produced food, a real and comprehensive agrarian reform that guarantees farmers their full rights to land, one that revitalizes the interdependence between producers and consumers, and ensures the survival of societies.³⁸ All these principles are in contradiction with the concept of "food security" as promoted by the World Bank, the FAO and the political regimes.

1. FAO is the shadow of the World Bank

The FAO uses the concept of "food security" as an alternative to the concept of "food sovereignty". The former is characterized not only by dependence on the world market for food, but also by its inclusion in the same model of globalized capitalist accumulation, where the provision of food is the prerogative of those who are able to do so according to capitalist logic, and where "Public-private partnerships will be extremely important for investments in agrifood systems".³⁹

The FAO said this despite acknowledging that the same policies that have undermined the world's "food security" are for the most part inconsistent with food and agricultural policies to promote healthy diets, "and in many cases is actually inadvertently undermining food security and nutrition outcome." We don't know why the organization used the expression "inadvertently" when it comes to conscious interventions by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to steer agricultural policies toward the global market!

According to a study by the "Working Group on Food Sovereignty in Tunisia - GTSA", the concepts of "food security" and "food sovereignty" are completely contradictory. As "we are exposed to a conceptual dualism that is highly contradictory, in which each concept prevails within an agricultural and agronomic vision that represents different and opposite expressions of a political, economic, social and societal projects." The study concludes that the concept of food security "is not free of serious fallacies that reflect the interests of the liberal world order, through its international financial institutions, governments and corporations, and its use of food weapons in accordance with the agendas of controlling peoples' wealth and capabilities. "Food security is, after all, only an expression of ensuring the sustainability of

38 "دفاعا عن السيادة الغذائية بالمغرب" Op. Cit.

39 "موجز عن حالة الأمن الغذائي والتغذية في العالم، إعادة توجيه السياسات الغذائية والزراعية لزيادة القدرة على تحمل كلفة الأزمات الغذائية الصحية"، 2022، منظمة الزراعة والأغذية للأمم المتحدة.

the security and interests of global investors in the food trade in exchange for further starvation of the people and the impoverishment of small and medium-sized farmers.”⁴⁰

Actually, food security is the concept adopted by the FAO, which strongly criticizes anything that protects the domestic market, in line with free trade agreements. “Trade and market interventions” can constitute “trade barriers to nutritious food, undermining the availability and affordability of healthy food patterns” according to the FAO.⁴¹ This is a replay of the broken CD that the World Bank has been reiterating: Global trade and a free and open global market is the answer. Anything that impedes the flow of goods and capital, and on top of it willful public intervention, is a distortion of the market, whose “invisible hand” (according to liberal doctrine) can overcome its crises.

FAO has copied this in a literal way, criticizing subsidies to agriculture from countries as a distortion of the market: “The distribution of subsidies is largely inequitable, distorting the market and damaging the environment.”⁴² Surprisingly, the FAO is calling for the same policies that “undermine food security”, calling countries to “consider their commitments and flexibilities under WTO rules.”⁴³ As for the victims of these policies, the organization cited the same strategy as the World Bank: to target the most unfortunate of these victims with social protection policies and targeted support if necessary: “As for the victims of these policies, the organization lays out the same strategy as the World Bank: target the most desperate victims with social protection policies and targeted support where necessary: “social protection policies may be necessary to mitigate possible trade-offs from repurposing, particularly short-term income losses or negative effects on livelihoods, especially among the most vulnerable populations.”⁴⁴ The FAO advocates policies that destroy the productive base of small-scale farmers, together with social support measures that mitigate their risk of losing their livelihoods, while limiting support to “the most vulnerable populations.”.... This resonates with what the World Bank is calling for.

For the FAO, the solution is to follow the suggestion of the World Bank (and other global financial institutions), which would allow it to achieve food security: “Removing or reducing border support and market price controls

40 غداؤنا، فلاحتنا، سيادتنا. تحليل للسياسات التونسية على ضوء مفهوم السيادة الغذائية ، مجموعة العمل من أجل السيادة الغذائية، يونيو 2019، ص 11 - 12.

41 “ موجز عن حالة الأمن الغذائي والتغذية في العالم... ” Op. Cit. ,

42 ibid.

43 ibid.

44 ibid.

for commodities that are priorities for a healthy diet reduces their prices, particularly in markets with high border protection. As a result, the percent of the global population for which a healthy diet is affordable increases..., while the cost of a healthy diet falls relatively more than that of the average diet,"⁴⁵ emphasizing "ethical" concepts that the history of crises in the capitalist system has made impossible to apply, mainly "transparency of markets and trade" : "Market transparency and policy dialogue should be strengthened, as they play key roles when agricultural markets are under uncertainty and need to adjust to shocks affecting supply and demand" and disruptions need to be minimized to ensure that international markets keep functioning and that food and agricultural trade operates smoothly.⁴⁶

The bottom line is that the right to food, according to the FAO, must necessarily be through market mediation and cash payment. When it comes to "food insecurity," FAO associates it with individuals' ability to "afford a healthy diet." For those who cannot afford it (severe food insecurity), states and organizations must urgently intervene to solve the issue.

As for those who are completely incapable (either for economic reasons or due to conflicts) of supplying food through market mechanisms, international organizations are campaigning for food aid and sympathy from those responsible for the global food crisis. The World Food Program (WFP) regularly organizes fundraising campaigns for victims of food shortages as a key means of fighting hunger and supporting victims of climate change and conflict. These organizations forget that the South countries are the ones that finance the development of the North countries (through mechanisms of unequal exchange, the debt system, the remittance of transnational corporations' profits, etc.) Following the explosive crisis caused by Russia's war against Ukraine, these countries (especially in Africa) have become Europe's refuge to help it overcome the energy crisis, thanks to the development of wind and solar projects producing green hydrogen, such projects are devouring vast areas to grow energy torpedoes and drain the water needed for the production of green hydrogen, thus helping to further kick small farmers and shepherds off their land.

Op. Cit. , "غداؤنا، فلاحتنا، سيادتنا"...." 45

46 " The Importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for Global Agricultural Markets and the Risks Associated with Tthe War in Ukraine ", 6/10/2022, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

2. The misappropriation of “food sovereignty”

Since independence, the entire policy of the Moroccan State has been to deepen food dependence on the global capitalist market. In the introduction of ATTAC Note on the “Report of the Special Committee on the New Development Model”, it is stated that: “The first recommendations of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the early 1960s were on the need for Morocco to rely on export agriculture as a foundation for the “development model” after independence and its financing through loans.”⁴⁷ The report of the Development Model Committee was issued in 2021, four years after the World Bank’s report entitled “Morocco in Horizon 2040”, where it declared that the old development model had reached its limits, and called for the continuation of neoliberal structural reforms, much of which Morocco had successfully implemented, but the Bank called for more audacity in their implementation to the letter.

However, it seems that the novelty of the “new development model” does not go beyond the same content of the economic options that have deepened Morocco’s food dependence on foreigners and oriented its agriculture to meet the needs of its old and new colonizers. Thus, the report of the New Development Model Committee addressed the concept of “food sovereignty” under the broad title: “For food sovereignty based on a modern high added value, inclusive and responsible agriculture”. The Committee’s report referred to the official agricultural policy of the last two decades as having “attached importance to the protection of traditional agriculture and solidarity with the establishment of a modern, productivity-based and export-oriented agriculture”. Without breaking with that policy, the report offers management recommendations that do not diverge from the same perspective: “Increase the local valorization of agricultural production”, “Work for the development of the food industry and support the full integration of agricultural value chains, which are a source of local added value and decent jobs”, “Stimulate investment”, “Develop marketing channels”, “Support the development of family farming, fallow land and livestock farming”⁴⁸ etc.

It is therefore a simple borrowing of the concept of “food sovereignty”, but filled with the same content as the policy options based on a large-scale capitalist agriculture oriented towards export, that is to say, the same specialization established by colonialism - and deepened with the structural adjustment program and coated with social powders reduced to “support to solidarity agriculture”.⁴⁹

47 <https://bit.ly/3uqD7uq> - 9/9/2021.

48 “النموذج التنموي الجديد، تحرير الطاقات واستعادة الثقة لتسريع وتيرة التقدم وتحقيق الرفاه للجميع”، التقرير العام، اللجنة الخاصة بالنموذج التنموي، أبريل 2021، ص 83 - 84

49 *ibid.*

Solidarity farming projects are a gateway to open up productive agricultural areas in the face of capital investments that have been closed for decades. At the top of these areas is the production of argan oil, prickly pears, and saffron... Until the early 2000s, these areas were for subsistence and limited to small producers, especially women. Through the "Green Morocco" plan, it has been oriented towards commercialization and has created production cooperatives, in which those women who used to collect these crops have become paid employees, working in big markets or in cooperative complexes, primarily to produce an export-oriented product. For example, argan oil, according to the website of the Ministry of Agriculture, was "low, reaching about 4,000 tons in 2010, and as this oil is highly prized by European and American consumers for its nutritional and cosmetic virtues, the government wants to develop its production towards export. The goal is to increase it to 10,000 tons by 2020."⁵⁰ The Moroccan consumer has lost a product with high nutritional value, and has been driven to the production of cosmetics and hygiene products intended mainly for the foreign market and tourists.

For the State, the concept of "food sovereignty" is one of the sovereign prerogatives of the State, which is literally stated in the report of the Parliamentary Working Group of the House of Councillors: "There is no doubt that the challenge of food security has become as central an issue as other security issues such as social security, political security, energy security, health security... Etc."

The concept of "food security" and with it "food sovereignty" is reduced to the creation of a "strategic stock of basic foodstuffs". These are the guidelines of the King on which the Temporary Working Group on Food Security of the House of Councillors has relied to formulate this concept: "The publication of this report comes in an exceptional context, given the national agenda, which places the need to create an integrated national system relating to the strategic stock of commodities at the heart of urgent issues, as well as in view of the emergency crises that cast a shadow on various countries and nations."

Thus, the concept of "food sovereignty" is narrowed down to a purely managerial measure (strategic reserve) for "emergency crisis management". Among these measures, we can cite, for example, the reference made in the report of the Parliamentary Working Group on procurement aimed at guaranteeing supply during periods of declining prices on the international market, along with measures to increase storage capacity and build up reserve stocks.

⁵⁰ <https://rb.gy/atike8> - 23/02/2022.

Of course, the concept of strategic reserves is not a royal invention that guided the parliamentary working group. Rather, it has been taken from the literature of the World Bank, which does not isolate this concept from the global food supply and commercial marketing. The World Bank “is standing ready to respond with all available tools adapted to the nature of vulnerabilities and deficiencies in countries, including agricultural and food reserve risk management in countries exposed to such shocks, whether due to rising energy or fertilizer costs, or other factors such as drought-related crises or climate change”.⁵¹

Thus, “food sovereignty” is not a bottom-up approach to restructuring society, undertaken by those who are affected by food production and consumption; small farmers, stockbreeders, fishermen and agricultural workers. They are merely subjects of a sovereign state monopoly, rather than agricultural policy makers. The state treats them as victims of “emergency crises” and intervenes to ensure their “food security” through targeted social protection.

Therefore, the concept of food sovereignty as presented by the State, linked to “strategic reserves”, is inseparable from the liberal policies that have liberalized the agricultural sector and opened it up to private investment (national and foreign), and from the delineation that has been established since the beginning of the 1980s with the structural adjustment program, which has made agriculture not a priority for meeting the food needs of the population, but a channel for the accumulation of capital and the provision of hard currency. Thus, the concept of strategic reserves remains linked to the same pillars that deepen food dependency, since the replenishment of these reserves is linked to the supply of the world market, through mechanisms that the Parliamentary Working Group considered as innovations, such as acquisition in periods of low prices and diversification of supply sources.

The concept of food sovereignty means, first and foremost, breaking the dependence on the international market, namely, that a country produces what it consumes first and foremost, and not that it specializes in producing what preserves the same level of consumption for the population of the Nordic countries.

But the very concept of strategic reserve is hampered by the global market that the state and the World Bank (and even FAO) insist on using as key means of ensuring food security. In 2002, most countries had enough food reserves for about 107 days. In 2015 the figure was only 74 days.⁵²

51 <http://bitly.ws/xivT> - 30/7/2022.

52 “The Roproach of Hunger...”, Op. Cit. p. 21.

The global market is not a harmonious arena in which equals-strength actors exist and work in harmony based on their comparative advantages, according to classical liberal dogma, with each country specializing in its own “gift of factors of production.” Indeed, the world market is an arena in which the great economic powers crush down those weaker states and impose upon them a specialization that was determined centuries ago by military might (colonialism) and decades ago by military superiority, the loan system and free exchange. A study on food sovereignty issued by the Moroccan Association ATTAC also pointed to the increasing tendency of impoverishment of small farmers “following policies of generalized economic openness and the implementation of free exchange agreements with the major world powers,” and criticized the mechanisms of that agreement, which opens the Moroccan market wide to exports of the European Union (cereals, milk, its derivatives, oils and meat), but which has maintained the same core of the European protectionism (export schedules, minimum entry price, product safety and quality standards).⁵³

Those who associate the concept of food sovereignty with times of shocks and the concept of strategic reserve are oblivious to the fact that those who hold the keys to that reserve are the major food producers and those monopolizing their marketing. So in times of shock, these would prefer export bans to secure their strategic stocks rather than responding to the food security demands of countries that would not be able to pay in those periods of shock.

3. Report of the Thematic Working Group on Food Security of the House of Councillors: In the Footsteps of FAO

The Thematic Working Group on Food Security of the House of Councillors considers that the agricultural policies adopted by the State in Morocco so far are part of its commitment to ensure “food security”. According to this group, “the issue of food security has been, and continues to be, a national concern in the public policies of many structuring sectors in our country. The programs implemented have combined in their main pillars the activation of strategic pillars of the food and nutrition system in the sectors of agriculture, fisheries, water, forestry and health through the Green Morocco Plan launched in 2008 to strengthen the foundations of food sustainability and enhance the sustainability of natural resources.”⁵⁴

This is a false testimony, because these policies have deepened the country’s

Op. Cit. دفاعا عن السيادة الغذائية بالمغرب. 53
Op. Cit. , “دفاعا عن السيادة الغذائية بالمغرب...” 54

reliance on export-oriented agriculture and the development of large-scale capitalist agriculture and have increased the dependence of our food security on the international market.

These schemes have made Morocco a major platform for the export of water-consuming agriculture, deepening the water crisis in the context of a severe drought. Despite this, the group's report insists on expanding these irrigated areas on the grounds that they will "contribute to ensuring food security," but also associates this with this impossible task: "ensuring that export-oriented agriculture valorizes water, taking into account its direct and indirect cost to the state and society." It is a call for the implementation of a dictate from the World Bank, which called for real water pricing, instead of solidarity-based pricing, supported by public funds, and will impose the weight of the measure on small farmers who are unable to keep up with the rise in water prices.

The agricultural policy adopted in Morocco since "independence" has led to the large capitalist farmer driving the "agricultural development" cart, which has swept away subsistence agriculture and thrown the small farmer to the margins. According to a paper issued by the European Union and the OECD on July 13, 2021: "In the sector, a minority of modern farms export, while the majority of subsistence farmers operate for the domestic market. Out of the 1.5 million farms, only 1% of them cultivate an area of more than 50 hectares while 70% have less than five hectares. These are mostly family farms, which are not sufficiently covered by Moroccan agricultural and rural development policies."⁵⁵

This is part of a global system in which large corporations monopolize the production, marketing and speculation of food. "This food system is part of the extractive model of accumulation and acquisition for which colonialism laid the foundations of its structures in the Maghreb/North African countries in the nineteenth century, in response to the demands of urban centers in the North in general. This model of accumulation and acquisition in turn relies on the commercialization of nature and the privatization of natural resources, resulting in severe environmental degradation."⁵⁶

This model pushes small farmers to the margins of production, often leading to their amputation. The Moroccan state's agricultural policy is based on stimulating the large capitalist farmer, using public finances massively in the process, leaving a few crumbs for the small farmer, calling it "support for

55 "Promoting Investment Climate Reforms in the Agri-Food Sector in Morocco - Paper on the First Private Sector Dialogue", July 13, 2021, EU-OECD, webinar.

56 <https://bit.ly/3VvGTi0> - 24/7/2020.

solidarity agriculture". The language of figures is more expressive: the amounts allocated to the development of commercial agriculture in the framework of the finance law for the year 2021 amount to about 88 million dirhams, while only 4 million dirhams have been allocated to support solidarity agriculture!⁵⁷

The group's recommendations were nothing more than "management measures" that fit into the same existing system, namely the capitalist accumulation model in its neoliberal phase: "reserve storage", "the creation of an independent national institution for sovereignty and food security", "the strengthening of financing mechanisms", "the adoption of a new generation for agricultural assembly", "the increase of profitability", "the incorporation of new techniques in agriculture", etc. They are rather aimed at the large capital investor who has access to finance and infrastructure, not the farmer who is deprived of them.

In his 2015 book *The Reproach of Hunger*, David Rieff criticized the concept of "food security" considering it as essentially a "a fundamentally apolitical, technical concept" setting it alongside the concept of "food sovereignty", whose advocates say: "no durable solution can be based on the current global food system, which they view as too dependent on profit and on global commodities markets that are beyond the control of anyone except a business and technocratic elite."⁵⁸

4. For an effective food sovereignty

The State's policy is to make large-scale agricultural investment a pioneer of development that ensures "food security" and, at the same time, a front line for the conquest of foreign markets. The small farmer and the agricultural worker only appear in state documents when it comes to "training the human resource" that will work for these enterprises, or when referring to targeted support in case of shocks and crises.

According to the state, "food security" is a sovereign prerogative of the state and its experts.

Food sovereignty will not be achieved without a final break with a logic that treats food as a merchandise to be obtained through the mechanisms of performance and the global market. This certainly requires a shift away with a

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Op. Cit. مشروع نجاعة الأداء، 57

58 "The Reproach of Hunger...", Op. Cit. p. 26.

trait that has shaped Morocco's political and social history for decades: the lack of organization of small farmers, the strengthening of cooperation between them and the workers of the large capitalist farms, and the subordination of public policies in the agricultural sector to the interests of the real producer of food and the consumer.

The realization of food sovereignty also assumes a different perspective from the capitalist accumulation model, which is based on the fact that the private sector and the capitalist investor (domestic and foreign) are the pioneer of agricultural development, which must be supported by public finance and provided with an appropriate investment climate and equipped with infrastructure.

The logic of the public sector, which started to be abandoned in the early 1980s with the implementation of the structural adjustment program, must be reconsidered. This implies real sovereignty in its actual meaning, as defined in the Declaration of the Nyéléni Forum in Mali in 2007, a concept that places "the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. . . It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users."⁵⁹

It is impossible to apply this perspective while maintaining the model of capital accumulation, where the state's strategy is to restructure society from bottom to top, to adapt it to private investment: privatization, outsourcing of services, public-private partnerships, use of public finances to support the private sector... etc.

It is also impossible to address food sovereignty without reconsidering the logic of public service in all sectors, especially the strategic ones, including: energy, transport, finance and banking, and the media.

59 <https://bit.ly/3iDCJ9a> - 13/4/2021.

Recommendations

Therefore, in light of the results of this study, we formulate the following recommendations:

- 1.** Break with export-oriented, water-consuming and soil-depleting agriculture and replace it with crops that meet local needs, in which small producers and farm workers are organized into cooperatives and are under their close oversight alongside consumers. It is inconceivable that an arid region like Zagora, Tata and Ouarzazate (southeast) would grow watermelons, which consume water, and export them to overseas markets, while consuming imported grains.
- 2.** A public financing policy that commits to support the, while reducing the possibility of resorting to monetary credit and compensating it with credit in the form of production tools and inputs (fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, fodder...) rather than resorting to the market mechanisms that benefit large investors, traders and speculators.
- 3.** A public transportation policy that allows small producers to sell their products in local and national markets, preferably in the local market. Actually, local and short marketing cycles would save energy and thus reduce emissions.
- 4.** A public energy policy in which state-owned public enterprises are the sole producer and distributor of energy, as opposed to what is currently in place. The agricultural sector is a major consumer of energy, whether in production or marketing. This sector must not remain an open field for large companies whose profits are drawn from the sweat of a small food producer. Moreover, this would allow avoiding being affected by global energy crises, as the global food crisis (2007-2008) was preceded by a rise in the price of fuel which, from the end of 2006, had an impact on the price of fertilizers needed by the agricultural industry.
- 5.** Break with the policy of turning land into a real estate container to attract private investment (local and foreign), and give land to those who cultivate it. While striving to encourage cooperative work by convincing the small farmer of the viability of this cooperative work, and providing examples of such viability through public cooperatives.

- 6.** Put an end to land grabbing, natural resource plundering and extractive policies through popular and comprehensive agricultural reform. This reform must end appropriation of water, seeds, and land by national investors and transnational corporations, and guarantee the fair rights of small producers over productive resources.
- 7.** Integrate a unified agricultural vocational qualification into the programs and curricula of the public school, instead of resorting to institutions for vocational qualification, whose task is to provide “human resources” for large-scale private investment.
- 8.** Develop agro-ecology as an alternative model to a liberal and productivist model by placing food-producing farmers, distributors and consumers at the center of food policies and not within the logic of markets.
- 9.** Reduce significantly industrial farming and rely on direct consumption of plant products and proteins of plant origin. The first mode channels much of agricultural production into processed, energy-intensive, and crop-wasting foods. Writer Michael Pollan summed this up nicely when he wrote, “there would be plenty of grain for everyone if we actually ate it as food and didn’t use it to make meat.”⁶⁰
- 10.** Provide real social protection, not just support limited to periods of shock and crisis. Such social protection cannot be achieved by targeting the most unfortunate victims of neoliberal policies by giving them painkillers. Free public service in all sectors, and universal coverage of small farmers and agricultural workers by effective pension schemes, is what is needed.

60 - “The Roproach of Hunger.”, Op. Cit. p.20.



Conclusion

“The Reproach of Hunger”

The state continues to address the issue of food, with the notion of taking measures to overcome moments of crisis and shocks. However, its policy structure is the same as it has been for decades: an export-oriented agriculture to generate hard currency, and a dependence on the world market to ensure the supply of basic food needs.

But the frequency of shocks since the 2007-2008 food crisis, the energy crisis in the global market, the coronavirus pandemic, and, last but not least, Russia's war in Ukraine make dealing with the food crisis with the logic of overcoming the moments of shocks, beyond the limits of reason. Crises and shocks have become so frequent that they have become the natural state of a struggling global economy, not moments of exception.

Yet, Morocco's ability to tap into its creditworthiness to obtain liquidity from the global market to mitigate those shocks is limited. “Debt inflation will one day trigger a default crisis like it did at the beginning of the 1980s, raising the threat of a new structural adjustment program. A program of austerity and opening up the country's economy would have far more devastating effects on the country and its food sovereignty.

This gets deeper with the tensions between the world's imperial powers seeking a safe exit from multiple crises, at the expense of each other, but in the final analysis at the expense of the peoples of the southern half of the world, mainly small food producers, capitalist agricultural workers, and food consumers.

The demand for food sovereignty, and its intersection with all aspects of the sovereignty of peoples over their resources, mainly land and its benefits, remains one of the most important axes for which popular organizations such as Via Campesina, the North African Network for Food Sovereignty, and the Farmers' Unions are mobilizing. Only the struggle of these organizations, combined with the mobilization that emanates from the bottom of the social hierarchy, of which the smallest farmers are one of the pillars, will be able to destroy the catastrophic convergence endured by the “Tropic of Chaos” since its colonial domination.

In November 2022, the World of Knowledge series released a translation of *The Reproach of Hunger, Food, Justice, and Money in the Twenty-First Century* by David Rieff, eight years after the release of the translation of *The Tropic of Chaos*. Although the author of *The Tropic of Chaos* is counting on capitalism to fix itself and put an end to catastrophic climate change, *The Reproach of Hunger* raises questions that belie that false hope: "If we do not agree on how societies should be ordered, we are unlikely to agree about how poverty can be alleviated and hundreds of millions of poor people can enjoy at least a measure of what development experts call food. Is capitalism the answer or the root of the problem? Can there be nutritional transformation without political transformation? Are the challenges to the global food system analogous to an engineering problem that one can expect to be largely solved by technical innovation, scientific innovation, and of course money, accompanied by some lashings of "good governance" and "transparency"? Or is greater social justice what matters most, and with it the need to stop thinking of food as a commodity like any other and start thinking of it as a human right?"⁶¹

Faced with the calamities caused by global capitalism and the fierce rivalries of the imperial states, the latter and their economic institutions call for adaptation. But adaptation here means imposing the costs of the crisis on the populations and small producers of the North and the South, while adapting nature to the needs for the continuation of the same cycle of global capitalism, which is being painted green: green capitalism, green energy, green agriculture, etc. The painting of capitalism in green aims to give it a new and acceptable face so that it can continue to plunder natural resources and exploit the people who are necessary for its functioning.

There can be no exit from the depth of the crisis in all its representations (food, environmental and economic) without the destruction of that system based on competition and free enterprise, and the creation of a cooperative logic whereby free direct producers decide who produces and what they consume.

Capitalism will continue its barbaric spiral, with short pauses called moments of recovery. But unless it is undermined and replaced by a social solidarity system, it will destroy the conditions of life on planet Earth. In the face of the current world situation, the cry of the German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg takes on its full meaning: "socialism or barbarism". It is either we select the former, or accept a state where wars and violence become the last solutions to the division of food and energy, as portrayed in Hollywood disaster movies.

61 Op. Cit. P- 34 - 35.



