

Mohammed Aqil Cheddadi¹ and Hafsa Rifki^{1,2}

¹: Keio University ; ²: Hassan II University

Moroccan Sociocultural Practices of Space: Coping with Marginalization in Bidonvilles and Social Housing

Abstract

This article examines the everyday adaptation practices of marginalized inhabitants in present-day Morocco as they respond to their urban domestic environments and resist recent slum relocation projects. We first address urban policies implemented during the French protectorate era (1912–56), many of which have continued to impact Moroccan cities in the twenty-first century. Our research emphasizes the inadequacy of current urban policies and architectural designs, as well as their incompatibility with inhabitants' ways of living and spatial needs. We explore how different socio-spatial practices in traditional medina cities, shantytowns, and social housing complexes illustrate marginalized social groups' adaptation to official policies and sociocultural changes. Acknowledging that the built environment expresses the beliefs, cultures, and social backgrounds of inhabitants, we aim to illustrate their ways of living through case studies of two marginalized communities in the Douar El-Garaa shantytown in Rabat, and a social housing complex in the suburbs of Casablanca. Our findings identify socio-spatial appropriation and adaptation practices that are rooted in sociocultural habits codified by Islamic customs and other Moroccan cultural norms.

Keywords

adaptation; marginality; self-built space; slums; social housing; social practice of space

In its most basic social dimension, space results from interactions between individuals. The interface between users and the built environment subsequently creates a social product. Henri Lefèbvre made this well-known argument for the social production of space resulting from different social practices and aspirations.¹ In informal residential architectures such as self-built spaces, inhabitants' cultural models and social codes are often conveyed, but such informal dwelling ways may be perceived as chaotic and random because they diverge from planning norms and policy dictates.² Far from being a monolith, economically marginalized populations often build and practice their living spaces in diverse ways. Their strategies to cope with exclusion manifests both physically through adaptive spaces, and socially through adaptation mechanisms such as solidarity movements.

When discussing the spatial practices in Moroccan residential dwellings, urban sociologist Françoise Navez-Bouchanine developed the concept of 'models of habitation' (*modèles d'habiter*).³ Throughout her work, she used this concept as a reference model for residents to illustrate their ways of living and dwelling, thereby informing the

‘practices of appropriating and re-appropriating space’.⁴ Navez-Bouchanine defined the appropriation of space as:

The process by which individuals and groups make efforts to occupy, control, regulate and organize to their convenience the space they consider to be theirs or in which they have to establish a usage. It is not understood if it is not linked to its sociocultural framework [...] and] it cannot be understood without considering essential variations in space and time.⁵

Physical transformations undertaken with the aim to (re)appropriate living spaces reflect modes of organization and representation, which reveals the cultural models of habitation. To understand the practice of space in marginalized contexts, we consider the inhabitants’ sociocultural model in light of the community’s shared socio-religious rules and norms. In this regard, local Islamic religious customs (*urf*) explain the sociocultural principles that define the spatial appropriation practices of traditional populations.⁶ By understanding how these customs shaped historic Moroccan towns, we infer the later models of habitation in informal settlements and social housing (SH), which are typically inhabited by traditional and conservative social groups.

Applying Navez-Bouchanine’s concept of models of habitation as a framework, we analyse two case studies: the shantytown of Douar El-Garaa in Rabat; and the SH complex in Lissasfa, on the outskirts of Casablanca. We illustrate specific ways of life, and demonstrate the presence of the embedded traditional spatial and social adaptation patterns that inform the social practice of these spaces. Our fieldwork in El-Garaa in 2018 included semi-structured interviews, a survey of self-built and self-organized settlements, and observations of the socio-political mobilization that emerged under the threat of forced relocation to SH outside Rabat, which we assembled from news media and social media coverage as well as interview responses. For the SH complex in Lissasfa, we utilized participant observation, semistructured interviews conducted in 2018, and an analysis of inhabitant-enacted transformations in residential spaces with consideration of their sociocultural models. Both case studies demonstrate the adaptation strategies of marginalized populations standing against official policies that would cause further socioeconomic and geographic exclusion. These strategies involve political activism, the organization of informal solidarity networks, and the adaptation of residential spaces.

We begin by examining the emergence of slums and the subsequent proliferation of SH policies in contemporary Morocco, arguing that this is the primary strategy that has marked the urban landscape. Utilizing the frameworks of the *modèles d’habiter* and sociocultural models (*urf*), we analyse the gap between rigid, standardized spaces and the reality of the domestic sphere in marginalized settings. Our research shows that residents lose the freedom to shape their living spaces according to their own sociocultural models and must conform to and enforce the intent of planning policies that are rooted in a colonial past and enacted in an authoritarian present. This situation has been compounded by the historical background of urban planning in Morocco.⁷

The Emergence of Slums and the Proliferation of Social Housing in Morocco

Throughout the twentieth century, Morocco experienced a crucial phase of urban development that was conditioned by political, demographic, and sociocultural changes. In 1914, amid the colonial war at the beginning of the protectorate period (1912–56), the French

Resident-General in Morocco Hubert Lyautey appointed the urban planner Henri Prost to work on master plans for major Moroccan cities.⁸ Modern planning concepts were used to design the new colonial towns, with careful consideration given to security and control, which resulted in zoning intended to separate colonial Europeans from Moroccans.⁹ This policy impacted the over-densification and deterioration of the medinas, the historic Muslim towns of the Maghrib region typically enclosed by ramparts.¹⁰ Policy also forced the immigrant population overflow to settle outside the walls of the medinas, which created the first Moroccan bidonvilles. Bidonville is a French term originating in the Maghrib that describes slum barracks. Originally made of flattened metal oil cans (*bidon*), bidonvilles evolved with the adaptive use of other recovered materials into neighbourhoods with more durable, permanent dwellings. Locally, they are known by the North African Arabic term *douar*, a word with negative connotations that refers to a slum whose inhabitants have rural – and ostensibly backward – origins. These unplanned settlements developed rapidly and spontaneously on the periphery of major cities such as Casablanca that required a rapid influx of workers to support the increasing economic and industrial activity. Such neighbourhoods do not adhere to authorities' normative codes of aesthetics and building standards, instead forming a distinct visual and social counterpoint to the desired urban core. These factors led to their negative reception by planners and policy administrators.¹¹

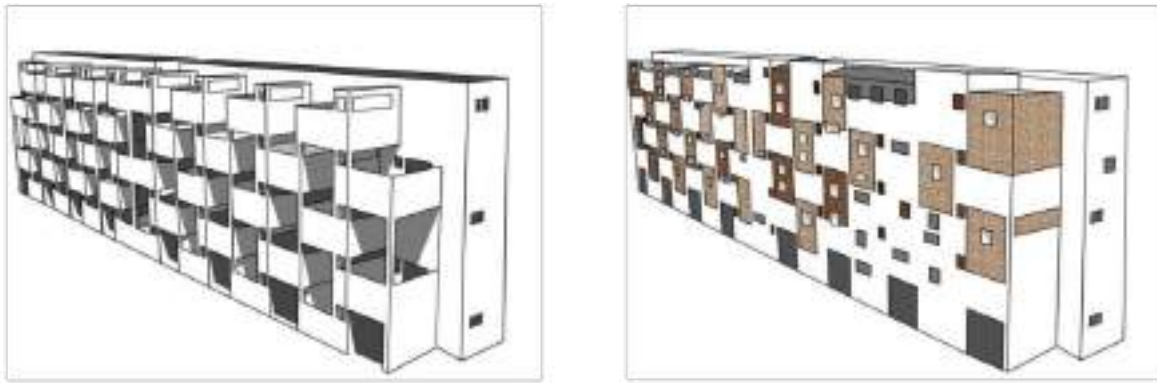
The high rate of urbanization and the spread of bidonvilles in Morocco first created and then continued to feed the ever-growing need for housing. In 1952, the French protectorate launched a new phase in its colonial policy by commissioning Michel Écochard to lead a team of urban planners to deal with the spread of bidonvilles, and to facilitate social control and policing.¹² After studying Moroccan housing habits, Écochard's team developed planning tools inspired by European modernism, including a housing plan on a reproducible evolutionary grid (8×8 m *trame*) that allowed for progressive growth [Figure 1]. In 1952, designers experimented with this system in Carrières Centrales (currently known as Hay Mohammadi), an SH development in the suburbs of Casablanca. With modern construction, this housing incorporated the traditional patios, a form that represented the dominant architectural models from medinas and rural areas and was supposedly adapted to the locals, and focused on hygienic aspects such as natural light, airflow, and greenery.¹³



Michel Écochard Archive, courtesy of Aga Khan Documentation Center, MIT Libraries (AKDC@MIT), 1948.

Figure 1: Carrières centrales in Casablanca. Construction of the low-rise 8x8m grids and high-rise residential buildings, including Nid d'Abeille.

Casablanca's projects combined modernist concepts with vernacular elements (patios, introversion, evolutivity) and industrialized construction, which allowed for an interplay between formal and informal ways of dwelling that was cognisant of social requirements [Figure 2].¹⁴ In the long term, demographic pressure and high-rate urbanization resulted in inhabitants carrying out the transformation of their residences on a scale that surpassed the evolutionary habitat model's original scope.¹⁵ Écochard's SH experiments gave way to uncontrollable and unsupervised urban growth, against the central authorities' control-driven rationales. Despite the impression that Écochard had executed 'under-appreciated public housing', his experimental grid system was reproduced in a rigid and controlled way that became the standard for shaping housing policies in Morocco for decades.¹⁶



Salma Cheddadi, 2021.

Figure 2: 'Nid d'Abeille', meaning 'Beehive' in French, was designed by Swiss architects Georges Candilis and Sadrach Woods (left). It was part of the 'Moroccan Habitat' (type P) housing projects in Casablanca (1952). The consequent transformations that the inhabitants made to the building's vertical courtyards adapted the living space to their needs and cultural patterns over time (right).

After Morocco's independence in 1956, the housing crisis increased at an alarming rate, and the mismanagement of urban housing continued for decades. Urban planning authorities considered the spread of the bidonvilles and informal housing as major contributors to a so-called '*habitat insalubre*' (unhygienic habitat) that was prone to fires, violence, and disease.¹⁷ Riots broke out in Casablanca's bidonvilles (and later the rest of the country) because of inflation and the aggravation of the dire socioeconomic situation in 1981. This resulted in the creation of the Urban Agency of Casablanca, the first of its kind in Morocco, in 1984. The Urban Agency was formed under the authority of the Ministry of the

Interior in order to reinforce social control over its mission.¹⁸ The Agency hastily applied planning tools commissioned by the French urban planner Michel Pinseau to 'secure the city' and implement a de-densification plan for disadvantaged areas, including a large-scale SH policy roll-out.¹⁹ These planning decisions marked the start of the conflicts between Morocco's poor, urban residents and the central authorities, as they directly impacted the urban development of post-colonial Casablanca and shifted the dynamics in the rest of the country to push matters of urban territorial control at a rapid pace. Consequently, the government rushed the approvals for SH operations, police stations, and public infrastructure to structuralize unruly neighbourhoods.²⁰

Following the terrorist bombings of Casablanca on May 16, 2003, the perpetrators of which originated from *douars*, the official discourse increasingly depicted these settlements as hubs of poverty and ignorance: the bidonvilles were home to the *fi'at al-mohamasha* (marginalized segments [of society]). The insinuation was that these populations were somehow inherently prone to extremism, rather than suffering from socio-economic marginalization.²¹ As these districts remained beyond the control of the authorities, intrinsically segregated and un navigable to outsiders, the gravity of the situation called for a move beyond discourse to large-scale action.

Consequently, the Moroccan government launched the national programme *villes sans bidonvilles* (VSB; Cities Without Slums) to eradicate shantytowns in more than 85 cities. By the end of 2020, VSB had impacted more than 453,906 residents and completed 66 per cent of

its targeted bidonville-clearing, although these results were not exceptional when compared to similar projects throughout the Global South.²² The numerical statistics can be misleading when assessing a programme as extensive as VSB, particularly as the most recent report focuses on quantitative assessments and lacks qualitative evaluations regarding social outcomes such as gender equality and integration into the formal job sector.²³ While the sustained policy of labelling the slums ‘unsanitary habitats’ is a form of exclusion through stigmatization, the social concerns of the inhabitants are seldom seen as a legitimate government matter in need of official intervention.²⁴ The VSB’s razing and relocation operations in the bidonvilles were and continue to be motivated by the principles of ‘urban ordering’, ‘urban cosmetics’ and the state’s ‘obsession with security’, all of which serve the elite urban stakeholders at the expense of the geographically and economically marginalized urban population.²⁵ This disconnect has encouraged a reluctance to cooperate with rehousing initiatives and the frequently use of political resistance strategies by displaced residents.²⁶

The history of contemporary Moroccan urbanism is defined by informal urbanization models. Such models are the primary driving forces for urban growth in Morocco and the wider Arab world, to the extent that they form a parallel to institutional planning efforts themselves.²⁷ The current state of urbanism was deeply affected by the colonial policies of racial segregation, which subsequently shifted to Moroccan socio-economic segregation after independence, thereby shaping a deeply fragmented socio-spatial landscape.²⁸ This situation led to a crisis in national urbanism that manifested in reactionary strategies that alternate between an ‘urbanism of emergency’ and ‘catch-up’ policies.²⁹ This fixation on dealing with informal housing has indelibly marked Morocco’s urbanization, just as it has helped shape the slum management and SH policies of the Middle East and the Global South.³⁰

Post-colonial urban policies and their colonial antecedents also mark the output of urban planners who continue to reproduce imported urban practices that do not reflect the sociocultural reality of the targeted populations. Through language and design principles, these modes of city-making convey rationales based on modernist ideals and hygienist rationales, but they are unadaptable to the traditional (and often conservative) ways of living of a large part of the Moroccan population. Instead, as our fieldwork shows, these Moroccans expressly wish for flexible residential spaces that serve their need for introversion, adaptability, and, most of all, community cohesion. Post-colonial, authoritarian policies exacerbate and cause further socio-economic exclusion of a marginalized population by rejecting their spatial production skills, and failing to accommodate their culturally based housing needs.

Adaptive Ways of Living: The Past of the Medinas and the Present of the Bidonvilles

The phases of colonial, national, and current urban policy have continued to impact Moroccan cities, creating a rupture between the historical modes of city-making and new social housing measures. After gaining independence, authorities in many Arab countries pushed a modernist development agenda as part of their efforts to differentiate themselves from the colonizers of the past. While self-built forms of habitation might have served as the basis for the study and reinterpretation of a fitting urban model for new developments, this type of housing was often depicted as archaic, and a symbol of deterioration that modern thinkers should disregard.³¹ In

contrast, rigidly designed SH operations rooted in modernist rationales exemplify ‘anti-adaptive neighbourhoods’, as they cannot adapt and evolve to the environment or the inhabitants’ needs.³² The disconnect between the cultural reality of the socio-spatial needs of urban Moroccans and modernist social housing design reflects the disregard of planners and the authorities for the desired models of habitation. In Morocco, the importation of modernism was accompanied by a radical shift in how the fabric of the urban landscape was viewed, which caused a fracture in the ways of making and thinking about the city. Social housing became a rigid, authoritarian urban planning paradigm for the contemporary age.³³

Relationships with traditional forms of urbanity in the medinas have been severed by recent housing developments [Figure 3]. The pre-protectorate medinas of Morocco and the Maghrib region more broadly featured a high degree of adaptability, resilience, and flexibility over time pertaining to environmental, social, and spatial changes.³⁴ Courtyard houses based on traditional rural dwellings reflected the introverted nature of social groups, and their versatility within the medinas allowed them to adapt to the needs of inhabitants for millennia.³⁵ Besim Hakim looked to legal texts and behavioural guidelines to conduct his survey of Mediterranean Arab-Islamic cities’ building and planning principles, concluding that *urf* (customary law) is an essential, tacit factor in social and spatial organization.³⁶ *Urf* codifies the local socio-religious norms that modulate social interactions, and thereby explains the sociocultural models that shape the habitation patterns of religiously conservative Moroccans. We have embraced this understanding of how *urf* guided the growth of medinas over millennia to support our interpretation of the urban formation and spatial appropriation patterns of the typically traditional and conservative social groups in the bidonvilles at the neighbourhood and housing unit levels.³⁷



Google Earth, 2018.

Figure 3: A satellite image of the medina of Rabat, Morocco.

Decision-making processes in the bidonvilles demonstrate social cohesion. The negotiation of space is consensus-based and enacted between proximate neighbours, illustrating the principle of *husn al-jiwar* (the protection of neighbours).³⁸ For example, negotiations between neighbours in cul-de-sacs can result in the appropriation of semi-private spaces and forge a strong sense of belonging and security.³⁹ Similarly, the principle of *hishma* (the cultural concept of shame and humility) is reflected in bare windowless exterior house walls, and the centrality of the interior courtyard that illustrate the vital need for introversion, and a separation between public and private spaces.⁴⁰ Inhabitants appropriate the areas immediately adjacent to their homes through fluctuating daily use (parking, unloading), and decoration (vegetation, flooring) to mark the threshold between the public and private realms.⁴¹ Private space inside the house is subject to *hurma* (sanctity), which is also connected to the Arab-Islamic notion of privacy.⁴² Homes are sacred spaces, and are guarded against what is foreign, which in spatial terms translates to the minimization of external openings that might expose the interior. *Hurma* also refers to women and a gendered (primarily feminine) domestic space in which men and women perceive and practice different spatial rules. These customs result in multi-functional rooms that accommodate visiting guests or distant relatives. Here, the religiously bound social rules and processes governing growth, interaction, and negotiation are part of a set of cultural norms. However, they are open to contextual interpretation, which allows for them to adapt and evolve according to need.

The initial growth process for pre-modern medina cities reveals the incremental and evolving qualities that allowed them to adapt to the social transformations of the inhabitants. We will use the *modèles d'habiter* lens to focus on the sociocultural archetypes of the dwellers, as they play a fundamental role in informing interactions with the living space in a constant dynamic of 'shaping and reshaping'.⁴³ The convergence in the spatial practices within in the diverse physical, social, and environmental layers and the different typologies of urban homes in medinas across the Maghrib is primarily rooted in how the Moroccan *urf* informs these models of habitation.⁴⁴

Our understanding of the built environment through socio-spatial practices assumes that modes of spatial appropriation play an active and creative role.⁴⁵ Some medina-rooted growth mechanisms (self-organization, emergent behaviour) are operational in the bidonvilles and *douars*. Historically in the medinas, the urban elite and administration, like judges and trade guilds, supervised development with minimal intervention, but such supervision does not take place in the *douars*. Still, we argue that there is a close resemblance between the traditional models of habitation and spatial practice in the medinas, bidonvilles and *douars* at the essential and substantial levels, which is independent of their respective building typologies. Medina housing types and *douars* emerged from the same traditional rural architecture, characterized by introversion and multi-functionality, but their potential for versatility resulted in a distinct spatial morphology, observable via the organic and emergent nature of self-organized urban growth. In these dwellings, we argue that *hishma* influenced the long, bare, windowless walls used to separate interior and exterior spaces and reinforce the internalization of the dwelling. As a result of progressive growth, exterior spaces were gradually appropriated as semi-private and private spaces through negotiations between close neighbours, resulting in sinuous streets [Figure 4]. Also similar is the high density, resulting from the incremental nature of construction. These spatial patterns and long-standing sociospatial appropriation practices

show the persistence of the traditional sociocultural systems of *urf* in today's Morocco, and the adaptation of related models of habitation at work in the bidonvilles, *douars* and the medinas.



Aqil Cheddadi, 2018.

Figure 4: Example of a straight alleyway in Douar El-Garaa slowly evolving into a sinuous one with long bare walls, reminiscent of the same street shapes as the medinas.

The diversified architectural space of the bidonvilles shares a close *urf* with the medinas, but their interpretations depend on historical and social differences, are marked by their surroundings, and have unfolded over space and time.⁴⁶ We observe a dichotomy between planned urbanization and the reality of self-generated urbanization, which results in urban policies that often fail to understand the sociocultural needs and suppress the adaptive models of habitation in favour of top-down-driven city-making. This is especially apparent in VSB operations.

Coping with Marginalization: From *Douar* to Social Housing

The bidonvilles are associated with a stigmatized image of poverty, social outcasts, and unrest. This myth of marginality is enabled by authorities, planners, and the media, and has dire consequences, aggravating rather than alleviating the socio-economic situation of bidonvilles dwellers. Alongside other scholars, we argue that there is a disparity between the aberrant depiction of the informal settlements and the complex, creative, and diverse lived reality of these adaptive urban spaces.⁴⁷ Our fieldwork activities in February and March of 2018 in the shantytown called Douar El-Garaa in the Yaacoub El-Mansour district of Rabat illustrate the survival and adaptation strategies used by marginalized groups to respond to and resist official policies [Figure 5]. At the time of our fieldwork, it was the oldest –and the sole remaining – bidonville on Rabat’s urban perimeter. Located in one of Rabat’s most developed and populated districts, El-Garaa population was estimated to 3000 families in 2019.⁴⁸ Our survey was conducted when El-Garaa’s community was under imminent threat of forced displacement and resettlement outside of Rabat. By undertaking semi-structured interviews, we aimed to observe the architectural nature of housing infrastructure and to understand the changing needs of the dwellers. By surveying interactions with the built environment and conducting site observations, we aimed to depict the models of habitation that shaped El-Garaa over time. We interviewed five households consisting of married couples with children or multi-generational families living under the same roof. At the time of our fieldwork, residents were responding to the increasing number of forced evictions from El-Garaa.



Google Earth, 2018.

Figure 5: A satellite image showing the position of Douar El-Garaa in Rabat, Morocco.

We witnessed the political mobilization of the dwellers, which manifested as frequent, organized sit-in protests in which some of our interviewees participated. These events became a central part of our efforts to understand residents' demands in reacting to marginalizing planning policies and their impact on embedded sociocultural systems. Our fieldwork questions probed the claims and wishes of El-Garaa residents regarding their living environment and the ongoing displacement and rehousing operations. Their responses expressed multi-generational attachment to their homes, where they felt 'connected to the Douar, the home where [their] parents and grandparents lived'. This universal attachment to place in the face of dispossession inspired inhabitants to uphold their inalienable right to their homes.⁴⁹ One respondent insisted that they 'refuse[d] to be moved out of Rabat, [their] home city, and be separated from [their] community'.

For over a century, generations of rural migrants settled in Douar El-Garaa, bringing evolving social needs, aspirations, and the many constraints that accompany and bring about marginality. The settlers learned to cope with and adapt to their architectural surroundings according to their needs in the extra muros setting. The history of El-Garaa presents a clear example of urban-spatial appropriation.⁵⁰ During the colonial period, many newcomers to Rabat settled on the city's outskirts and the squatter settlement Douar Dbarh emerged in the 1920s. Douar Dbarh gave way to the Yaacoub El-Mansour district due to a modernist slum clearance project initiated by Écochard in the 1950s.⁵¹ Douar El-Garaa and neighbouring Douar El-Kora were what remained of Douar Dbarh following the clearance. Our survey found that, until 2002, most dwellings were of a single storey, and were self-built from found and scrap materials. Such building materials are illegal, as they do not conform to building regulations, but the use of more durable materials can lead to reprimands and building restrictions by the local authorities.

Our interviewees revealed that in 2002 and 2009, under the pressure of the growing population and the accompanying socio-economic conditions, two coordinated waves of informal reconstruction and incremental upgrading took place. During these times, the construction materials consisted of bricks and reinforced concrete, with the intention of creating structures strong enough to allow for future upgrades and the addition of more storeys when needed [Figure 6]. The interviewees noted that the neighbourhood-scale upgrade operations were only possible because they coincided with election campaign periods. This is significant, because it shows the ability for large-scale solidarity and coordination, modulated by *urf*, to achieve informal urban operations that are intolerable in normal circumstances. This success suggests that the authorities permitted these otherwise illegal construction activities in the hope that their candidates would gain political approval from the *douar* voters.



Aqil Cheddadi, 2018.

Figure 6: Dwellings of Douar El-Garaa made in durable materials. The ones marked with a red X-shaped symbol (dwelling to the left) were to be imminently demolished by the authorities).

As part of our site study, we noticed that the advantageous geographical location of the *douar* provided easy access to the surrounding public transportation network and the urban infrastructure of Yaacoub El-Mansour. Many of the younger dwellers had access to higher education and could integrate into Rabat's formal job market. The dwellers expressed satisfaction with the community and the adaptability of their living spaces, but frustration regarding the illegal character of the construction and transformation of their dwellings and neighbourhoods, and the repression that resulted. They expressed aspirations to improve their situation, and their ultimate hopes to live in 'larger and more accommodating housing' with the government's help. Residents enacted sustained adaptation strategies through community solidarity, the sociocultural principles of *urf*, and incremental spatial adjustments to their dwellings.⁵² Community mobilization, often resulting from solidarity against marginalizing economic and political forces, is a coordinated action to advocate for their 'right to the city'.⁵³

Over time, and taking advantage of periods of political opportunity, the dwellers have achieved spatial adaptations through community initiatives to mitigate marginalization. They have assisted each other with self-built public infrastructure, including access to water, sewage, and electricity, and self-developed community spaces such as mosques, hammams, and *zawiyas* (Sufi mausoleums and places of worship). El-Garaa's constructions are built in the public domain, which was set up as a lease during the protectorate era. Although the inhabitants did not own land, they were legally entitled as they benefited from the usufruct, and owned the construction despite its informal nature.⁵⁴ One of our interviewees showed us official documents (issued by the colonial authorities) dating to 1924, explaining that the inhabitants had been paying low lease fees until the 1990s, when the governmental authority stopped sending invoices and started promoting a rehousing plan which did not materialize. This situation caused a status of irregular usage, falling within a legally grey area. Land lots surveyed during colonial planning in Rabat were linear and part of a grid, but after the construction and occupation of the *douars*, the organic urban fabric evolved with an intricate network of sinuous streets. In an exercise of ownership, the inhabitants reshaped their homes using incremental building techniques as a strategic approach to building and expanding their houses beyond their lot boundaries while constantly enacting the principles of *urf* to negotiate space with their close neighbours. The streets abandon modernist concepts such as grid alignment to serve as spaces for circulation.⁵⁵ At the intermediate urban scale, strong community ties and traditions inform the relationship between adjacent dwellings through the principle of *jiwar* (neighbourhood), which establishes a framework for using and managing this shared infrastructure. This association organizes neighbouring residential units that operate on both spatial and social levels in which the local *urf* modulates transactions between neighbours for the incremental modifications and spatial expansions undertaken by each house. For example, the addition of an extra storey might elevate a dwelling in such a way that it could overlook the private spaces of a neighbour. In that case, the dictates of *hishma* would initiate a process of negotiation to find spatial trade-offs, such as overhanging structures or bare walls with no openings (see Figure 4).⁵⁶ Inhabitants mark and appropriate areas that border their homes to mediate the separation between the public and the private, materializing *urf* in the creation of buffer spaces [Figure 7]. The ownership of these bordering areas is conspicuous in the semi-public alleyways of the *douar*, where these spaces become areas to hang laundry or park, with personalized vegetation or distinctive flooring or paving.

Inside the house, traditional models of habitation consist of an essentially gendered space. A typical example provided by our respondents noted their need for *ifraq* (principle of gender separation in *urf*) to separate the sleeping rooms of male and female children when they come of age. On average, dwellings are home to one or two families and are composed of two to three rooms per storey, including a bedroom and a living room, but due to limited space (25 to 50 square metres per home), multi-functional rooms predominate and serve as living rooms during the day and gender-segregated sleeping rooms at night. Domestic space is subject to multiple transformations to accommodate the changing needs of residents, meaning the house is constantly evolving through the 'shaping and reshaping' of space.⁵⁷ User-occupants adapt and expand their homes and interior spaces to shifting conditions, such as changes in the family structure or an improved socio-economic situation.



Aqil Cheddadi, 2018.

Figure 7: A street in Douar El-Garaa shows the appropriation of bordering areas for parking, storing daily items, and hanging laundry.

The outskirts of Rabat faced bidonville-clearing programmes in the first decades of the 2000s that threatened to displace the residents of El-Garaa. Despite inhabitants' adaptation efforts, the clearing projects were poised to overturn the efforts of self-produced urbanism and the very right to the city itself. Dwellers adopted a coordinated resistance strategy to remain in place, inspired by the 'art of presence' activism implemented in Douar El-Kora, which successfully halted displacement efforts through refusal, and resulted in an in-situ rehousing project that was initiated in 2010.⁵⁸ El-Garaa dwellers looked to the success of this political mobilization to leverage networks of solidarity, and to exercise collective power over urbanization processes.⁵⁹

During our fieldwork, the inhabitants of Douar El-Garaa expressed their demands regarding improving their social situation, citing their 'constitutional right to suitable housing'. Many respondents described their fear of being 'displaced to subpar housing at the outskirts of Rabat and becoming further [socially and geographically] marginalized'. ElGaraa dwellers rejected the resettlement plans because they feared moving forcibly to areas 'where there is nothing', thus losing access to job opportunities, their places of employment, and their children's schools, as well as the severing of community ties and solidarity networks. The government subsidizes vacant lots and SH apartments in the suburbs of Rabat as part of the relocation programme, but the *douar* inhabitants complained about their fiscal unattainability. Subsidized SH apartment prices start at 120,000 Moroccan Dirhams (MAD). This is a

significantly high cost for low-income, urban families relying on unstable employment in the informal sector, which often does not pay the legal minimum monthly wage, set at 2570 MAD for individual workers in 2018.⁶⁰ Several inhabitants expressed their lack of desire to live in the proposed apartments, stating that they were ‘unfit to live in’ because of their poor quality and unsuitable design, adding that they would have to ‘invest at least another 80,000 MAD for rearranging and upgrading the apartments’.⁶¹

One activist respondent suggested that ‘the government should keep its commitments regarding their so-called social justice policy’. The demolition of houses by the authorities forced inhabitants out of their homes, which was described by residents as ‘expelling practices that are against human rights’. Residents insisted that the government was regarding them in an unfair manner because of their lower socio-economic status, and that they were ‘treated like third-class citizens’. In spite of the social stigma attached to *douars*, they expressed pride in being ‘people of the douar’ (*ulad douar*), and insisted on their ‘right to the home in Rabat where [they] were born, now live, and in which [they] might die’. The community mobilization in El-Garaa involved news media outlets and social media. The inhabitants organized weekly meetings to coordinate sit-in protests in central public spaces in Rabat. Despite all the efforts, this coordinated mobilization did not have the same successful outcome as that in Douar El-Kora. The families of Douar El-Garaa were made homeless after the forced demolition of their homes in the summer of 2019, leaving them in a dire situation after violent clashes with the authorities [Figure 8].⁶² The inhabitants of El-Garaa were dispossessed as a direct result of an official operation, pushing them to seek refuge in the homes of their friends or families; some moved to other bidonvilles, and several families ended up living roofless among the rubble of the *douar*, resorting to setting up temporary camps with whatever furniture they could salvage.

The situation became urgent. As compensation for the demolished homes, officials responded by further subsidizing the SH apartments, bringing the cost down to the still unachievable 100,000 MAD, or by proposing lands in Aïn Aouda, a satellite town in suburbs located 30 kilometres from the capital. Many families were not made beneficiaries and could not apply for the compensation packages in time.⁶³ Several respondents complained about the ‘lack of transparency of the authorities’ concerning eligibility criteria. As of April 2022, there was no official announcement regarding future development projects on the same site. The SH programmes failed to deliver on their stated objectives and instead left people who once had homes and a community without either. Professor of urban politics Bogaert argues that the VSB programme was part of a neo-liberalization project, which, ‘instead of reducing urban poverty [...] only – or even intentionally – succeeded in displacing that poverty’, especially in the land-scarce cities.⁶⁴ By overturning the *urf* dynamics of the *douars*, the authorities left the people of El-Garaa without spatial or social agency, consequently alienating their models of habitation.



Google Earth, 2021.

Figure 8: satellite images showing Douar El-Garaa in 2018 (top) before and after its demolition in 2019 (bottom).

Researcher of planning Raphael Beier conceptualizes bidonvilles as places ‘through which people foster their integration or reintegration into urban society’, and we likewise interpret the socio-spatial practices of the *douars* as adaptive to the dwellers’ needs, ways of living, and community support mechanisms.⁶⁵ The resettlement programmes of the Moroccan government, in contrast, have sought to discipline the bidonville dwellers by casting them into the fiscally unattainable formal housing market, and gaining more social control over residents due to their difficulties in re-producing their own spaces.⁶⁶ This policy of using the conditions

of marginalization to punish the people is a sustained approach to the urban margins that has persisted since the struggles of the post-independence period.⁶⁷ As a result, bidonville residents often carry out political action in protest, converting the *urf* of their residential setting into a communalism of resistance.⁶⁸ Firmly attached to the self-constructed environment in which they are used to living, they refuse to move out, and express their fear of losing their rights to their dwellings [Figure 9].



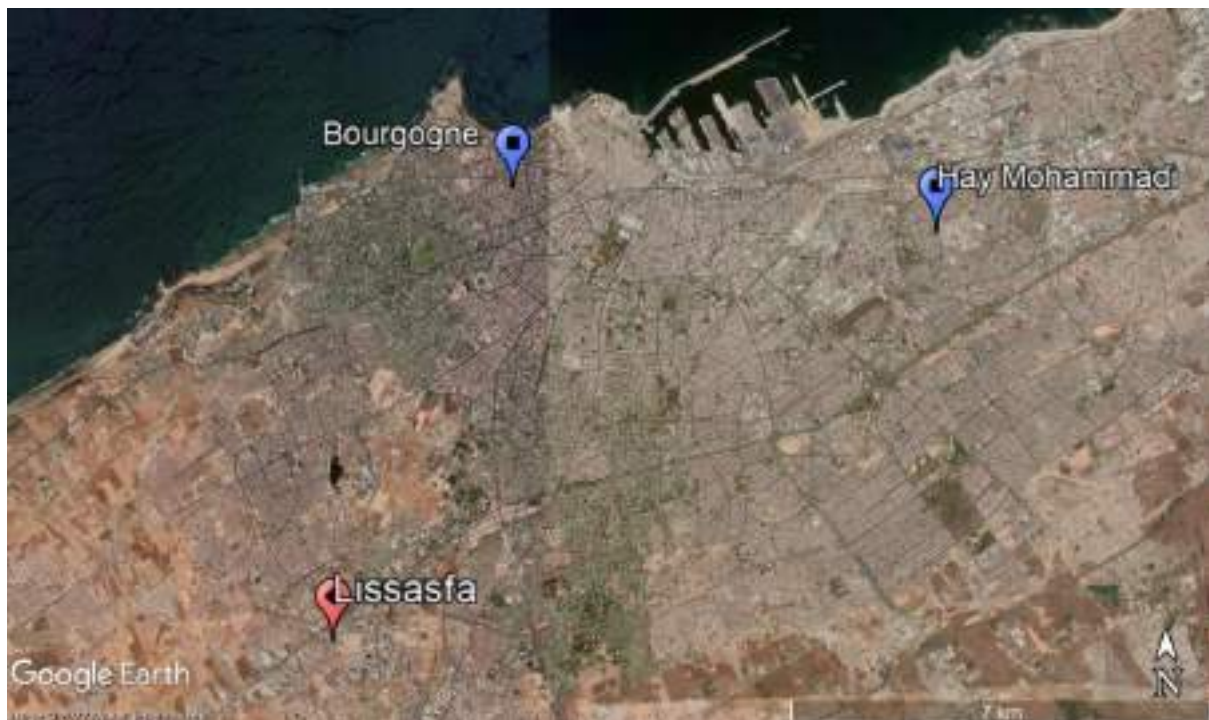
Aqil Cheddadi, 2018.

Figure 9: A wall with 'lan nar'hal' graffitied, meaning 'we will not move out'.

From Stigmatization to Socio-spatial Marginalization in Social Housing Resettlement The government and real estate developers advertised so-called ‘adequate housing’ (*a-ssakan al-la’iq*) by associating social housing with the preservation of ‘citizens’ dignity’ (*karamat al-muatin*) and promoting social advancement to encourage the relocation of dwellers from the bidonvilles.⁶⁹ For example, they marketed modern, concrete housing to reduce their social stigma. Such campaigns ‘influenced residents to believe in resettlement as the only way out of their situation in the bidonville’.⁷⁰

During our second case study, we conducted ethnographic fieldwork between January and June 2018 in a social housing (SH) complex in the Lissasfa neighbourhood in Sidi Maarouf on the outskirts of Casablanca [Figure 10]. The Lissasfa complex is comprised of close to 960 SH apartments, with an average of five family members per household. The complex is part of the government’s New Social Housing Recovery Plan (Nouveau dispositif de relance de l’habitat social).⁷¹ Between 2010 and 2020, the programme was instituted as a follow-up to VSB. The government mobilized state-owned lands for real estate developers to build SH, which allowed new dwellers to purchase subsidized apartments of between 35 and 55 square metres, with one or two rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. These were offered at a so-called ‘affordable price’ compared to the market value. Although this helped control the cost for

buyers, a new form of geographical marginalization resulted as SH residents were displaced further from the city centre to suburban and under-developed areas. Our interviewees originally lived in different types of informal housing like bidonvilles, slept in available spaces at their places of work, or shared rooms in other buildings that were unsuitable for living.



Google Earth, 2018.

Figure 10: A satellite image of Lissasfa's position in the outskirts of Casablanca. Some of the inhabitants used to live in Bourgogne or Hay Mohammadi.

We focused on one four-storey building, with the aim of illustrating a new form of geographical marginalization that followed the resettlements from informal housing to SH [Figure 11]. Fifteen households occupied the building. The family composition principally consisted of married couples with between two and six children. We interviewed nine individuals from five homes using semi-structured interviews. Our analysis of inhabitants' adaptation responses was based on a comprehensive approach that considered gender and family roles in a socio-spatial framework.



Hafsa Rifki, 2018.

Figure 11: Social housing building in Lissasfa. The dwellers operated physical changes on their building's façade where all balconies turned into interior spaces.

We accessed the site weekly during six months of visits, which allowed us to build a deep understanding of the daily life activities of the inhabitants on different days of the week, at different times of day, and for occasional events including illness, naming ceremonies, funerals, and religious holiday periods like Ramadan and Eid Al-Adha. A primary reason for choosing this site was our primary informant, whom we refer to by the pseudonym Amina, was significant in our selection of this SH. Amina, a woman in her late thirties who used to work for an acquaintance of the authors, migrated to Casablanca from a rural area at a young age and worked as a full-time, resident housekeeper in middle to upper-class homes, changing employers frequently due to poor working conditions. After Amina married, she temporarily lived in a city-centre *douar*. Following the eradication of the *douar*, she moved to another suburban *douar*, and then to the SH in Lissasfa in 2010. Her position facilitated our participant observation and interviews, enriching our research with qualitative data that reflected inhabitants' models of habitation before and after their resettlement.

The displacement of urban poor populations to the hinterlands is a global trend in neoliberal policy that marks the disengagement of governments that favour private entrepreneurs over their responsibilities to low-income citizens.⁷² SH policies in Morocco projected social integration at the start, but they have ultimately resulted in perpetuating socio-economically segregated cities while serving to give developers access to previously neglected areas in land-scarce urban areas.⁷³ The Moroccan government selected real estate developers to be responsible for resettlement projects, including the set-up of local infrastructure, equipment, and essential services. United Nations evaluations have criticized the developers' disengagement from the responsibility of establishing public facilities, but have commended the improvements to the sanitary living conditions when compared to the circumstances in the bidonvilles.⁷⁴ As noted in our examination of El-Garaa, the supposedly affordable prices of the

housing units are still excessive in relation to the financial capacity of the displaced population. The Lissasfa complex's inhabitants did not improve their economic situation following their move to SH, and some even felt their situation to have been further degraded. Amina's spouse, who works as a driver, expressed his economic grievances:

My family's monthly income is 3500 MAD. Every month I pay 1000 MAD to the bank [mortgage] and 500 MAD for water, electricity, and gas. What remains after that? What can I do with 2000 MAD monthly for a family of five? Covering food, transportation, health, school necessities, and every other expense. We last the month with the mercy of Allah and more debts, as we take [informal] loans from the local shop [around 500 MAD], and I ask for a pay advance from my employer [about 1000 MAD], who sometimes agrees.⁷⁵

The job opportunities available in the urban centre, which was within walking distance of the bidonvilles, became inaccessible from the rehousing developments in the suburbs, due both to long distances and a failing network of public transport. Back in the bidonvilles, families could minimize household expenditures and avoid both costs and monthly payment deadlines for utilities like water and electricity, especially when working family members stayed overnight at their places of employment. Life in the suburbs and a daily commute translated to increased rental, transportation, and living costs. Most SH residents work in the informal sector and gain unstable and variable income, meaning they can barely meet these new expenses.

Transportation from suburban SH negatively affects women in particular. Once active contributors to the household income through informal domestic work in the city, they are often unemployed following relocation. The relationships and bonds based on *urf* in the *douars* that connected families and responsibilities like watching over children are lessened in the new configuration of the SH's concrete, multi-storeyed buildings. Our interviewees typically became stay-at-home mothers as their families expanded, only occasionally taking part-time jobs under challenging conditions when their spouses' revenue was insufficient. The longer and costlier commute often conflicts with household chores and parenting responsibilities, such as escorting children safely to and from school, making it more difficult for them to integrate into the job market. To make up for the difference between unstable income and higher spending, men work longer hours, hold multiple jobs, often through the informal economy. Amina's husband explained that some people take out micro-loans to pay for extra expenses like the start of school. Such loans have high variable interest rates and loaners have a poor understanding of the implications. These changes in employment conditions are part of an architectural problem directly caused by the new SH situation. This confirms that displacement creates new socio-economic challenges that only further displaces rather than solves urban poverty.⁷⁶

In contrast to the adaptive bidonville and medina neighbourhoods discussed above, which accommodate the changes to dwellings and the streetscape introduced by resident households, SH are often 'anti-adaptive'.⁷⁷ In a specific example, as inhabitants of an antiadaptive neighbourhood, the residents of the Lissasfa complex face limitations to the

physical transformations they can make to their domestic spaces, because they receive harassment from local authorities when it is determined that modifications are about to happen. Due to the smallness of living spaces compared to the social needs, the inhabitants *reclaim* whatever margin they find to readapt the architectural layout. One of our interviewees corroborated this point, saying that ‘some people expand into the toilet, they only leave a metre. They take about half of it, put it in the bedroom, and add a closet. My neighbour did it, and the result is splendid.’⁷⁸ These layout modifications are usually guided by *urf*, and encourages coordination between neighbours to carry out construction simultaneously, thus minimizing mutual harm. These limited reshaping of space demonstrate basic knowledge about construction systems; as another interviewee noted, ‘It was me who demolished the wall. [...] There is no post in it. You just don’t touch the posts that support the house. As for the bricks, they won’t do anything to you’. When asserting awareness of the danger related to selfconstruction, they added, ‘We shouldn’t destroy it ourselves, but we took the risk, and we made the danger. The plan they [designers] made must remain as it is.’

Rather than planning the incremental additions made according to the practices of *urf* and arranging beneficial expansions into the urban streetscape as seen in *douars* and traditional housing, Lissasfa’s inhabitants accommodate the evolving cultural requirements for the separation and expansion of space by investing in mostly cosmetic upgrades, largely to the interior rather than the structure, when money is available.⁷⁹ Even in the same condominium, inhabitants express their need to differentiate their standardized space through aesthetic modifications (such as traditional decorative plaster) that are especially prevalent in entrances, hallways, and reception spaces, thus serving as socio-economic distinctions. Amina corroborates the scale of the modifications, noting that, ‘When we received it eleven years ago, my house was nothing like this. Only walls were standing, just rubber [cheap materials], no plaster [...]. Afterwards, we repaired it little by little. Each time, we added something, depending on our income’.

SH apartments illustrate the spatial concretization of a traditional sociocultural model of habitation in which inhabitants continue to appropriate the standardized dwellings within their new setting. Although the social use of space can change from one social class to another, and from one region to another, the model of habitation we observed in our fieldwork is a clear reflection of principles embedded in traditional daily practices, also observed in bidonvilles and medina dwellings. Domestic space is gendered in Arab-Muslim habitats, and the differentiated relationship between public and private life informs its spatial organization. The cramped space in the SH apartments raises the issue of *hurma* and the gendered segregation of sleeping areas, meaning that the rooms will systematically change function between specialized and versatile use. Amina favours a clear separation between the couple’s closed sleeping space (*bit n’aas*), and the sleeping spaces of the rest of the occupants of the flat, including children, and close or distant relatives. This is reflected by the statements made by members of the other households we interviewed. In addition to such ‘gender segregation’, she also mentions a ‘segregation by age group’. If the children are still young, they will share the same space at night, but a problem arises when children of different genders come of age, leading to *ifraq*. In this case, *bit n’aas* (parents’ bedroom) will turn into an extra *bit l’glas* (living room) or *bit dyaf* (reception room). Usually, the *bit l’glas* is multi-functional in all flat configurations and accommodates daily uses such as dining, watching television, relaxing, or playing. In contrast,

the *bit dyaf* will play an essential role in preserving *hishma*. Typically the closest room to the entrance area and the most embellished with decoration, it is specialized during the day to accommodate any unforeseen guests and must stay tidy and hospitable. This room serves as a semi-private buffer to the more intimate spaces of the flat in the SH configuration.

Other aspects of the design of the Lissasfa complex required physical transformations to comply with cultural requirements, such as the reconfiguration of walls for the expansion of private space.⁸⁰ Female interviewees unanimously condemned the presence of balconies in the initial designs for the complex, because such openings into the domestic setting contravened *hurma* by potentially compromising their privacy and exposing them to view by an outsider. This poorly considered, non-adapted design feature intruded on their cultural principles, depriving women of the comfortable use of their kitchens, where most of their daily activities occur. We observed an instance in which the interior space of the kitchen was extended onto the balcony to remedy this perceived design flaw. The residents adapted the balcony by walling it off, installing an appliance, and expanding the counter space beneath a small window [Figure 12]. Thus, due to the rigidity of the designs, the adaptation was limited and did not substantially change the relationship of the apartment to the complex as a whole, but rather imprinted the socio-spatial practices of the female members of the family on the standardized model, consequently accommodating domestic space to the *urf*.

Over time, relationships between neighbours within the complex, especially those living on the same storeys, become highly cohesive and show solidarity and trust. Inhabitants of the same building self-organize and manage their shared spaces, including the maintenance and cleaning of the entrance, stairs, and landings, which become places for socialization. A cohesive sense of *jiwar* often results in a mutual trust where doors of the same landing are left open to neighbours, allowing free entrance to children. *Jiwar* often ensures spatial solidarity during significant life events such as births, marriages, and funerals, for which neighbours happily lend their apartment rooms to accommodate each other's needs for extra space and gender-separated spaces.



Hafsa Rifki, 2018.

Figure 12: The residents enclosed the balcony and gave space to an expanded kitchen worktop.

SH is standardized, so inhabitants' appropriation of space originates in their sociocultural backgrounds. Continuing their social practices from the bidonvilles and other informal settlements helps them cope with the anti-adaptiveness of the designed space and their new socio-economic and spatial marginality. Physical transformations are a reclamation of the ownership of space, but they violate the established housing norms and regulations instituted by planners, developers, and designers. When institutional and formal supports cannot deliver adequate housing results and instead create anti-adaptive spaces, the neighbourhood becomes the birthplace of different forms of solidarity and socio-spatial dynamics.

Conclusion

Moroccan urban planning authorities impose rigid restrictions on architectural codes that conflict with the phases of growth and change in cities. These policies result in anti-adaptive urban areas that rapidly deteriorate for lack of evolutivity, and reinforce aspects of marginalization, from economic involvement to women's roles in the workforce.⁸¹

Inhabitants of bidonvilles and SH continue to convey their sociocultural models, needs, and aspirations through the informal shaping and reshaping of their own spaces. Domestic spaces reflect the sociocultural characterization of incremental spatial appropriations that strike a delicate balance between design-imposed openness and the need for privacy and protection. Models of habitation also inform the specialization of areas within the domestic sphere, showing an interplay between patterns of multifunctionality and fixism, depending on the users, their family composition, and their living environment.

Our fieldwork illustrates the collective character of socio-spatial adaptations in Moroccan *douars* and SH. We show that they refer to shared sociocultural models rooted in *urf*, and thereby demonstrate the converging models of habitation inside El-Garaa and the Lissasfa SH complex, irrespective of the physical structure that comprises the housing itself. In our case studies, we observe similar socio-spatial needs rooted in the socio-religious principles of *urf*, such as *hishma*, *hurma*, and *jiwar*, and how they have been translated through comparable spatial appropriations.

These practices of spatial appropriation manifest to different extents and correlate with the degree of inadequacy between the proposed spaces for relocation and the models of habitation currently in use. When the standardized spatial models that are imposed are not adaptive to the inhabitants' sociocultural practices, the appropriation is more pronounced. We argue that this demonstrates a gap between the spaces as designed and as practised. Inhabitants bridge the divide by physically modifying their habitat to enhance their residential satisfaction and comfort, as seen in the integration of the balcony into the enclosed kitchen area in the Lissasfa complex. Displaced inhabitants develop coping mechanisms and learn to see contingencies as productive experiences, but in the process lose their ability for political mobilization to advance their social demands.⁸²

This relationship to socio-spatial marginalization creates lively neighbourhoods where the inhabitants develop and cultivate their sense of belonging and form close social ties. In marginalized contexts, these ties manifest in acts of solidarity, especially in the interactions of close neighbours. In the case of collective social demands for government action, solidarity ties can scale up to organized networks for socio-political efforts like the coordination of the El-Garaa sit-ins. One-sided resettlement policies lead to further social and economic marginalization, which takes root in the divergence between the models of habitation and the way residents are perceived, misunderstood, or left unconsidered in the standardized designs that the planners put forth for SH projects. As a result, the *social* aspect of social housing operations is not sufficiently addressed, and the role of housing is reduced to that of mere shelter from the elements.⁸³ The embedded socio-spatial practices that are deeply seated in the local culture should be considered and respected, lest, in the words of Moroccan architect and professor Mohammed El Malti, those policies that 'may appear today as a victory in the fight against insalubrity [turn out to] be a "civilizational error"'.⁸⁴

Our fieldwork and analysis show the socio-economic challenges of the post-colonial period and the subsequent neo-liberalization of social rehousing operations that have created the disconnect between dwellers and designers. Our findings do not, however, suggest an inherent lack of potential contemporary housing approaches to address Moroccan needs. The rapidity of urban growth, the vast demand for housing, and the market all point to the urgency of producing ‘housing for the greatest number’.⁸⁵ However, current urban-making models are outdated and largely inadequate, and there is a need to fill knowledge gaps related to marginalized populations’ models of habitation through on-site, qualitative surveys. Research that considers post-colonial and neoliberal policies through the anthropology of space could develop models for urbanism and housing that incorporate spatial flexibility and involve the inhabitants in fulfilling their socio-spatial and cultural needs. For example, mixed-use neighbourhoods might plan for gradual growth using an ‘open-ended development’ model, through which users could continue to change and adapt their habitat through processes of micro-change and renewal, resulting in long-lasting, lively, engaged neighbourhoods.⁸⁶ Recent United Nations housing programmes have likewise emphasized the importance of strategies for the co-creation of space by designers and inhabitants. The implementation of site-specific studies of the cultural habits of potential dwellers is far from widespread, especially in urban contexts characterized by mass reproducibility and cost efficiency.⁸⁷ We have conclusively determined that communication between designers and inhabitants, such as the interviews and site studies we conducted in Morocco, would allow for a move away from anti-adaptiveness and provide more potential to engage malleable and culturally adaptable living spaces that are attentive to the factors involved in socio-economic marginalization. We argue that such dwellings, and the right of inhabitants to change and adapt those dwellings, are fundamental human needs.

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 5. Françoise Navez-Bouchanine, *Habiter la ville Marocaine* (Casablanca; Paris: G. Morin and L’Harmattan, 1997), XXI.
 6. Besim Salim Hakim, ‘The “Urf” and its Role in Diversifying The Architecture of Traditional Islamic Cities’, *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 11.2 (1994): 112–13.
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39. *Ibid.*, 26–27.
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51. Abu-Lughod, *Rabat*, 227–30.
52. Mohammed El Malti, 'L'urbanisme et la question de la ville', in *Accès aux services de base et considérations spatiales, Rapport du cinquantenaire de l'indépendance du Royaume du Maroc* (Rabat: Royaume du Maroc, 2006) 179.
53. David Harvey, 'The Right to the City', *New Left Review* 53 (2008): 23–40.
54. Benefiting from the public domain's land also implies that the lease contract and the construction built on it can be passed on as inheritance. Building an informal construction on a public domain also makes it legally difficult for the government to expropriate and evict the inhabitants from the slum.
55. This change is similar to that of Azemmour's medina, a part of which used to be a Portuguese colony with an orthogonal urban form, and later transformed –through gradual socio-spatial appropriation– to a more spontaneous Arabic-Islamic urban form after it was conquered back. See Jorge Correia and Muath Taher, 'Traditional Islamic Cities Unveiled: The Quest for Urban Design Regularity', *Gremium* 2.4 (2015): 21–36.
56. This is similar to the negotiation process for creating a *sabat* (roofing structure for shade) in the medinas. See Hakim, *Arab-Islamic Cities*, 114.
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58. Mona Atia, 'Refusing a "City without Slums": Moroccan Slum Dwellers' Nonmovements and the Art of Presence', *Cities* 125 (2022), 7: 102284, doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2019.02.014.
59. Harvey, 'The Right to the City', 40.
60. El-Garaa's inhabitants depend on irregular and informal income. The monthly income of the surveyed families varied greatly, ranging between 1000 and 1800 MAD, which is well below the 2570 MAD legal minimum wage for an individual as of 2018. This type of income is precarious by Moroccan standards and makes it hard for the inhabitants to purchase SH apartments without working multiple jobs and living in debt for decades,

- compounded by high interest rates. For a detailed analysis, see Belkadi, 'Assessment of Affordability and Desirability of Housing', 98–105.
61. All quotations related to Douar El-Garaa are excerpts from focus group interviews conducted by the authors with the inhabitants in Rabat, Morocco, February–March 2018.
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 65. Raffael Beier, *From the City to the Desert: Analysing Shantytown Resettlement in Casablanca, Morocco, from Residents' Perspectives* (Logos: Verlag Berlin GmbH, 2019).
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 67. Strava, *Precarious Modernities*, 37.
 68. AlSayyad, 'Urban Informality', 41.
 69. Bargach, 'Rabat', 106. With the Ministry of Habitat and City Policy's backing, social and economic housing developers promoted a social advancement message in advertisements. Developers included state-owned operators such as Groupe Al Omrane. 'Produits', Groupe Al Omrane, accessed June 4, 2022, <https://www.alomrane.gov.ma/Notre-reseau/Al-omrane-souss-massa/Produits/Projets>.
 70. Beier, *Desert*, 302.
 71. Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville [Morocco], *Logement Social*, accessed July 17, 2021, http://www.mhpn.gov.ma/?page_id=964.
 72. Gülsüm Baydar, Kıvanç Kılınç, and Ahenk Yılmaz, 'Discrepant Spatial Practices: Contemporary Social Housing Projects in Izmir', in *Social Housing in the Middle East: Architecture, Urban Development and Transnational Modernity*, ed. Kıvanç Kılınç and Mohammad Gharipour (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019), 291–92.
 73. Ibid.
 74. United Nations Habitat III, 'Kingdom of Morocco – National Report', Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Rabat: United Nations, 2016), 49.
 75. We see Amina's family as socio-economically representative of a large segment of SH inhabitants. For detailed statistics, see Direction de la Promotion Immobilière, 'Étude sur l'évaluation du programme de logements sociaux à 250,000 DH et du programme de logements à faible valeur immobilière de 140,000 DH' (Rabat: Ministère de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville, 2013).
 76. Bogaert, *Globalized Authoritarianism*, 206.
 77. For characteristics of anti-adaptive neighbourhoods, see Ian Carter and Stefano Moroni, 'Adaptive and Anti-Adaptive Neighbourhoods: Investigating the Relationship between Individual Choice and Systemic Adaptability', *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science* 49.2 (2021): 2.
 78. Residential spaces are subject to strict regulation regarding layout and surface area. The standard size of toilets is often considered as large and wasteful by the inhabitants.
 79. Navez-Bouchanine refers to these as 'tinkered solutions'. Françoise Navez-Bouchanine, 'Villes, associations, aménagement au Maroc. Quelques clés de lecture', *Les annales de la recherche urbaine* 89.1 (2001): 113.
 80. This embodies Navez-Bouchanine's notion of the 'practices of shaping and reshaping' domestic space. Navez-Bouchanine, 'Que faire des modèles d'habiter?', 295.
 81. Nurit Alfasi, Amitai Raphael Shnizik, Maureen Davidson, and Alon Kahani, 'Anti-Adaptive Urbanism: Long-Term Implications of Building Inward-Turned Neighborhoods in Israel', *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 13.4 (2020): 18–9.
 82. Strava, *Precarious Modernities*, 135.
 83. Raffael Beier and Cristiana Strava, 'Losing or Gaining Home?', in *The Everyday Life of Urban Inequality: Ethnographic Case Studies of Global Cities*, ed. Angela Storey, Megan Sheehan, and Jessica Bodoh-Creed (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 9.

84. El Malti, 'L'urbanisme', 180. El Malti borrowed the French appellation '*une erreur civilisationnelle*' from Jean-Christophe Bailly, *La Ville à l'œuvre* (Paris: Les Éditions de l'Imprimeur, 2001).
85. Rouissi, 'Housing for the Greatest Number', 439.
86. Alfasi et al., 'Anti-Adaptive Urbanism', 19.
87. United Nations, 'Learning from Local Building Cultures to Improve Housing Project Sustainability', accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/learning-local-building-culturesimprove-housing-project-sustainability>.

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Contributor Details

Aqil Cheddadi is a licensed architect and a Visiting Lecturer (full-time) at the faculty of Policy Management at Keio University Shonan Fujisawa Campus. Cheddadi received his MArch from the Moroccan National School of Architecture in Rabat, and obtained his master's in Media & Governance from Keio University. His research focuses on informal and emergent practices of city-making, including slums and historic towns of Morocco, as a case study.

Contact: Faculty of Policy Management, Keio University SFC, 5322 Endō, Fujisawa, Kanagawa 252-0882, Japan.

E-mail: aqil@sfc.keio.ac.jp

Hafsa Rifki, MArch, is a licensed architect and a dual Ph.D. candidate at Keio University's Kobayashi Laboratory for Community Design in Tokyo and Hassan II University's Department of Sociology in Casablanca. Her research focuses on migrants' place-making processes, examining the relationship between spatial quality and social structure in the context of creating a home away.

Contact: Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University SFC, 5322 Endo, Fujisawa, Kanagawa 252-0882, Japan.

E-mail: hafsa@keio.jp

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