Urban Planning in the Neoliberal City: Slum Eradication and Population Displacement in Casablanca.

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Introduction

<u>About this work</u>

In the era of globalization, projects of urban poverty alleviation and city transformation are closely connected to demographic change, political objectives and capitalistic economic policies. Worldwide, states have seen urbanization rates increase to unprecedented levels (Beier and Strava 2020: 1). This has entailed the proliferation of different types of informal housing especially in developing countries, such as slums, which have become a major challenge for urban planning and poverty alleviation strategies. Such is the case that the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations specifically recognizes the need to improve the living conditions of slum-dwellers (OHCHR 2000).

In Morocco, King Mohammed VI launched the Cities Without Slums programme (*Villes Sans Bidonvilles*- VSB in French) in 2004, a national initiative officially aimed at addressing pressing issues of urban poverty, unsanitary housing and social marginalization by eradicating slums in the country. Thus, big areas such as Casablanca —the focus of this work— have witnessed the acceleration of resettlement and rehousing strategies, that had been used since colonial times (Navez-Bouchanine 2003a, Bogaert 2018).

With the implementation of the programme, the debate soon arose on whether it would deliver the expected outcomes. On the one hand, UN-Habitat rewarded Morocco with the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award in 2010 and applauded the North African country for having "one of the world's most successful and comprehensive slum reduction and improvement programmes" (Bogaert 2018: 212). On the other hand, the programme has

received ample criticism from the academic community. It has been blamed for the displacement of slum populations, the creation of exploitative class relations (Zemni and Bogaert 2011: 414), the redeployment of state power through the creation of "new state spaces" (Bergh 2012: 412, Berriane 2010: 107) and the augmentation of gentrification[1].

My work stands for the second view, and pays special attention to the element of displacement. Specifically, I examine whether the geographies of urban population displacement and poverty concentration in Casablanca have changed due to slum eradication since the implementation of the VSB programme, and if so, how. Moreover, I explore the different political and socioeconomic consequences of this displacement for slum-dwellers.

My contribution to the field is an exhaustive search of displacement patterns throughout the Casablanca prefecture and the creation of a dichotomy of soft vs. hard displacement, which differentiates extents of displacement in the region. Studying urban dynamics is relevant because they have implications for the broader socioeconomic landscape, with big cities accounting for most of the national economic growth. In Morocco, "three quarters of the national GDP is generated within the urban economy" (Bogaert 2012: 259). The understanding of the different political and socioeconomic consequences of the VSB, the second part of this work, provides leaders with an opportunity to improve the quality of life in urban areas, especially the conditions of the more vulnerable. Hence, I hope to identify relevant lessons learnt from the Moroccan experience that allow for a less slum-dweller discriminatory housing policy in the future.

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[1] Gentrification is defined here as the process of renovation of a city so that it conforms to middle-class taste. This is usually done at the expense of vulnerable populations.

Methodology

The theoretical framework that guides the research is a combination of Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space and a critique to neoliberalism. "Neoliberalism is a contested concept and its variable implementation around the world has produced highly differentiated outcomes" (Davis 2006: 89). In this work, it is understood as the reforms of liberalization, privatization and deregulation that the Moroccan economy has experienced since the early 1980s, and which have integrated urban spaces into the world market (Bogaert 2012: 255). The starting point is that neoliberalism is a highly political as well as an economic project, one that has worsened inequality and poverty rates while at the same time expanded certain aspects of state power in Morocco (Hanieh 2013: 73, Davis 2006: 101).

In this context, Lefebvre's work is a suitable instrument to study the connections between Morocco's urban planning strategies and its political economy. Lefebvre's (1991) main proposition is that space is not a passive locus of social relations, but a social product and a tool for the analysis of society. He argues that spatial organization is always political, with social and political forces using spatial strategies to reorganize socio-spatial relations. In a political-economic sense, these strategies are used by the state to promote different spaces as sites for the accumulation of capital (Brenner and Elden 2009: 369). Utilising this theory allows me to give space a special place, in my attempt to better understand the rationale behind the VSB programme and its effects on the Casablanca slum population.

In order to answer the research questions, this work analyses the prefecture of Casablanca and VSB-related press articles and official policy documents published by different

Moroccan state departments[2]. The press articles were extracted from the digital archives of different newspapers using the keywords "bidonville", "VSB" and "Casablanca" from 2004 to present day[3]. In total, the research comprises 200 press articles and 10 policy documents. This includes pieces about the different prefectures of arrondissement that comprise Casablanca and the provinces next to it[4].

The newspapers under analysis are *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, *Al Bayane*, *L'Économiste*, *Libération*, *Le Matin*, *La Nouvelle Tribune*, *La Vie Éco* and *TelQuel*. It is important to note that these have different political inclinations and affiliations[5]. On the one hand, *Le Matin* and *L'Économiste* are clear pro-regime publications, whereas *TelQuel*, *Al Bayane* and *Libération* are more critical towards the monarchy and governmental policies. In this spectrum, *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, *La Nouvelle Tribune* and *La Vie Éco* stand somewhat in the middle (Media Ownership Monitor n.d). The articles under analysis were randomly selected using the keywords mentioned above. Because some newspapers published far more information about the Cities Without Slums programme in Casablanca than others, the amount of articles cited in this work is unbalanced, with the majority of them belonging to *Le Matin* and *L'Économiste*, pro-regime publications. The purpose of this work is not to analyse media discourses, but to extract objective information about the changing locations of slum-dwellers and then to analyse the different effects of population displacement. This imbalance is a limitation especially for the second part of the research,

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[2] With the exception of one report, which was published by the World Bank.

[3] This is the time period covered in the research because the VSB programme was launched in 2004 and it is still going on.

[4] The Casablanca prefecture comprises eight prefecture of arrondissements: Ain Chock, Hay Hassani, Casablanca Anfa, Al Fida Mers Sultan, Ben M'Sick, Moulay Rachid, Sidi Bernoussi and Ain-Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi. Médiouna and Nouaceur are the provinces adjacent to Casablanca.

[5] In Morocco, media history was characterised by a highly centralized and factional press during the protectorate years, and transformed into a state-dominated media after independence. Over the years, increasing openness has paved the way for the increasing presence of an independent media, although freedom of press is still something to be achieved (Iddins 2015: 289). Morocco is thus an example of the general trend of media ambiguity seeing in the MENA region, playing a role as both a tool of repression and a tool of democratic openness (Khondker 2011: 676).

mainly subjective. I am fully aware of this, and for that reason, whenever possible, I have contrasted the information with other media sources or secondary literature and I have avoided taking the information at face value. At all times, the objective has been to present an accurate picture of the housing situation in Casablanca.

The consulted newspapers are all French-language newspapers published in Morocco. By the same token, all policy documents are written in French. Here it is important to acknowledge that there are certain limitations of not analysing any sources written in Arabic, especially as regards the chapter about the ambiguous effects of displacement. In spite of everything, French is still a very relevant language in Morocco, with a very ample variety of sources to consult. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that a valuable contribution can still be made by analysing texts in this language.

Although, ideally, this work would have had a strong basis of fieldwork research, I argue that text analysis, especially the media sources analysis, is a valuable method that can lay the foundations of a good work. Many press articles, with their different political views and opinions, included interviews with and testimonies of former slum-dwellers implicated in the VSB. These testimonies included both positive and negative aspects of the VSB. Thus, the analysis of press articles allows for the expression and analysis of first-hand information that would not have been possible to obtain otherwise. Whenever possible, this information has been contrasted not only with other media sources, but also with secondary literature information obtained from fieldwork research by various scholars. I believe this combination of texts analysis helps reduce the bias in unbalanced political information and therefore makes a useful research tool. Again, as different actors publish information with different purposes in mind and targeting specific readers (Bryman 2012), the information in this work has always been considered as part of a broader context.

An introduction to slums: places of stigmatisation and urban poverty.

Slums, also called shantytowns, are a type of informal housing characterised by weak structures, unsanitary conditions, lack of access to basic services such as water, electricity or sewage and the illegal occupancy of land.

This topic has attracted a great deal of attention in the academic community. Traditionally, the expertise on slums has been most present in Latin America and South Asia, with different authors studying the main approaches to informal housing from colonial times to present day. For instance, Angotti (2013: 7, 11) argues that urban inequalities in Latin America are not only a by-product of the colonial legacy and an unequal economic system, but also the result of conscious decisions made by policy-makers, who have turned a blind eye on, and even contributed to, the uneven development and fragmentation of cities and metropolitan regions. This has reinforced the formal-informal city divide and the slum has always turned out to be the problem, "considered as shameful and unhealthy, not only for its inhabitants but for the rest of the city and the country" (Milbert 2006: 302). Thus, different strategies of slum upgrading and eradication have been justified by the needs of modernity and beautification of the city.

In India, projects of slum removal are only authorised if considered to be "in the larger public interest". This shows the aspirations of many cities in the developing world to become "world-class" cities (Dupont 2008: 79). The main problem with these strategies, Bolay (2006: 285) argues, is that they fail to address the root problems; "they do not question the urban and economic model that generates the slum in the first place".

This trendsetting work on slum theory has paved the way for further work in other regions of the world. In the Middle East and North Africa, there is a growing literature that seeks

to abandon the myth of regional exceptionalism, and different authors have made valuable contributions in the field of slum eradication. Morocco is a case in point.

Again, one main issue of uneven development is that it "generates cities increasingly made up of homogeneous micro-spaces" (Milbert 2006: 300). Milbert alerts about the risk that "urban societies may lose their internal cohesion". In Morocco, there is already some sign of this: Belarbi (2015: 141, 142) differentiates between external and internal perceptions, which point to external and internal rejections respectively: externally, the centre rejects the periphery, and internally, old slums are better tolerated at the expense of more recent slums, which are more easily rejected. This is supported by Navez-Bouchanine (2003b: 7), who argues that old slums were relatively peripheral at the time of their creation, but became part of the city centres as urban centres kept growing over time. On the other hand, peripheral newer slums have enjoyed a lower degree of integration.

Big cities such as Casablanca have witnessed three main reintegration strategies used since colonial times, namely slum upgrading, rehousing and resettlement (Bogaert 2018: 213). Although some scholars of the developing world have supported slum upgrading[6], it has been the least used strategy in Morocco in the last decades. Rehousing and resettlement, on the other hand, have been widely criticized because they involve displacement, which puts a growing pressure on slum populations, who feel increasingly marginalized vis-à-vis formal housing inhabitants (Bogaert 2018: 209). This is the case because housing is not only a shelter, but "an essential element within people's practices of home-making", as pointed out by Beier and Strava (2020: 9). This means that, when

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[6] For instance, based upon his study of urban Latin America, John F.C. Turner argued that "if governments improved the slum environment by getting rid of unsanitary human wastes, polluted water, etc. most slum dwellers would gradually better their homes and contribute to the upgrading of the neighbourhoods" (in Werlin 1999: 1523, 1524).

displacement takes place, the affected communities suffer from limited spatial and social integration in a new environment, complicated access to the workplace and increasing transportation costs, among others.

As in the case of India illustrated above, these developments show the aspirations of the Moroccan government and its major objective of transforming Casablanca in particular, and the country in general, into a modern hub for finance, international investments and tourism. However, as this work shows in the following chapters, this is happening at the sacrifice of the more vulnerable.

The study unfolds in the following manner: chapter 1 delves into Morocco's historical context in the field of urban planning and the country's political economy. Chapter 2 maps the changing geographies of displacement in Casablanca since the launch of the VSB until present day. Chapter 3 analyses the ambiguous political and socioeconomic effects that the programme has had for the affected slum dwellers. Finally, the study closes with the main conclusions from the research.

Chapter 1- From colonialism to neoliberalism: who decides urban planning in Morocco?

This chapter provides an overview of the history of Morocco's urban planning and political economy. It argues that the different patterns of urbanization that have shaped the country over the years were always part of a larger political and economic project, with both domestic and international actors who sought to fulfil their personal interests involved.

Morocco before independence: a laboratory of urban planning.

Morocco's contact with colonial powers started before the establishment of the protectorate. With the French occupation of Algeria in the 1830s, France and other colonial powers started increasing their trading activities with Morocco (Abu-Lughod 1980: 89). This shifted economic activity towards the coasts, which favoured originally irrelevant coastal cities such as Casablanca. By the mid-19th century, the metropole had become the hub for industry and trade in Morocco.

The official establishment of the protectorate in 1912 paved the way for the urban experiments that the French conducted throughout the occupation years. As Rabinow (1989: 32) argues, colonial Morocco constituted a laboratory of urban planning for the French authorities. Although the French maintained a relationship with the *Makhzen*, in practice real power resided in the colonial government. The latter developed a spatial discourse based on the idea of duality. This discourse took different shapes depending on the governmental strategy used. On the one hand, the idea that Morocco had a dual nature, with territories of submission to the state —*bilâd al-makhzan*— and territories of

dissidence —*bilâd al-sîba*— (Sebti 2013: 42) was used to justify military occupation and destruction of dissident tribes. On the other hand, the idea of dual city was used to separate the *villes nouvelles*[7] built for Europeans from the *ancienne médina* inhabited by Moroccans, and was used in the context of "peaceful penetration" to justify the protection the protectorate granted to the soundness of Moroccan culture (Abu-Lughod 1980: 150).

In practice, this meant a minimal alteration of Moroccan quarters, the creation of a cordon sanitaire[8] around these and the construction of a modern city aimed for Europeans adjacent but separate from the medina. In order for the development of the *villes nouvelles* to take place, land was brought under the French property system. For instance, property expropriation was acceptable if justified as necessary for the public interest (Rabinow 1989: 35). Moreover, European quarters received most of the funds for construction and infrastructure upgrading. In order words, there was a disproportionate allocation of public resources (Abu-Lughod 1980: 162, Rabinow 1989: 41).

This resulted in a reorganized urban hierarchy in the country, with increasing social exclusion and uneven economic development between European and Moroccan quarters. This urban reorganization and uneven development would determine the direction of things after independence. Land expropriation in the economically useful parts of the country (*le Maroc utile*), population growth and increasing migration[9] all converged and contributed to the increasing territorial "stress" that big coastal cities had been experiencing since the second half of the 19th century (Sebti 2013: 40). Casablanca

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[7] They were also called *villes européennes*.
[8] In this context, a cordon sanitaire is a barrier placed in a specific location in order to restrict the movement of people across the two sides of the barrier.
[9] Migration during the protectorate years was both internal and international. Useful spaces of colonial agriculture suffered from dispossessions, which increased unemployment in the countryside. This came together with demographic growth, stimulating rural-urban migration (Sebti 2013: 50). On the other hand, international migration to Moroccan cities increased "particularly since 1880, when foreigners were given the right to buy land and register their titles in Morocco" (Abu-Lughod 1980: 105-106).

witnessed an explosion of European migration: by 1914, "two-thirds of the Europeans in Morocco were in Casablanca" (Rabinow 1989: 36), and by 1936, it was the largest city in the country (Abu-Lughod 1980: 152). Quite often, rural migrants "would initially settle in peripheral slums, with the idea of finding more stable housing in the future" (Cohen and Eleb 2004).

Speculation added to the territorial stress. When foreign investors increased land prices and built comparatively little (Rabinow 1989: 38), those who could not afford housing were pushed outside the centre, which resulted in a spatial extension of the city towards the periphery. As more families saw their lifestyle disrupted by the housing crisis, they had no other means but to settle where they could and construct crude shelters. This is what Maghraoui (2013: 72) has called "soft urbanism". Hence, different forms of informal housing proliferated and Casablanca became the city with the largest slums (Abu-Lughod 1980: 225). This expulsion of vulnerable populations to the outskirts and the consequent proliferation of informal housing is the origin of Casablanca's current problem with slums.

From the 1930s, strategies of slum upgrading and eradication stated gaining prominence. When relocation was not possible due to housing shortage, the colonial authorities proposed a partial upgrading of slums so they could be acceptable as temporary housing (Cohen and Eleb 2004). Sometimes, slums were tolerated because they were seen as a means to the rural migrants' acculturation. Thus, the institutional attitude and public policy towards slums was quite ambiguous already in the colonial period: "they were considered a direct violation of urban norms, but at the same time tolerated as temporary settlement in order to preserve social peace" (Zaki 2008: 116).

These developments shed light on the question about who was the real target of the French urban policy. Urban planning is supposed to contemplate all sectors of a society and

provide them with the basic infrastructure (Studer 2015: 12). However, in colonial Morocco this was only the case in the European quarters.

Morocco after independence: rural to urban migration and neoliberal reform.

Internal migration and state developmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s.

When Morocco gained independence in 1956, it faced several major challenges, the main ones being "the reorientation of the economy away from the colonial structure, the survival to the flight of French capital that came along with the exodus of Europeans and the development of agricultural and industrial systems that were able to cope with population growth" (Abu-Lughod 1980: 241). The agricultural system occupied a special place in the post-independence structuring of the country. Instead of developing the neglected non-irrigated sector, King Hassan II decided to continue with the policy of "developing land for the production of export crops" (Davis 2006: 90). This was done through a new Moroccan elite, comprised by the landlords who bought the arable land that was left available with the departure of the Europeans (Abu Lughod 1980: 242). Given that agricultural land was again in the hands of a few, rural to urban migration continued in the years after independence.

The support the new rural class gave to the state was essential for the prioritization of agricultural development. In turn, the urban industries were ignored. An urban nationalist movement had been growing and gaining importance since the protectorate years, and as migration towards cities continued, their political weight increased. Thus, the royal interest in the agricultural sector and the will to limit the political power of urban spaces led the state to largely ignore both the planning and industrialization of urban concentrations (Bogaert 2012: 258). This meant that informal housing settlements such

as slums were ignored too (Beier and Strava 2020: 7). Since construction was de-emphasized and slums were not being cleared, efforts at this time were aimed at upgrading facilities (Abu-Lughod 1980: 255).

Although Morocco never adopted a strict socialist ideology, the 1970s saw the incorporation of specific characteristics of a state developmentalist model, such as the expansion of the public sector and increasing redistributive policies. According to Davis (2006: 90), in the first years of the decade the state increased public spending "by several hundred percent". There were several reasons for this: first, the redistributive measures were an attempt to prevent another repetition of the attempted coups d'état against the King of 1971 and 1972. Second, the government had made high profits from phosphate production and opted to redistribute them. Third, these public resources were meant to create a "modern middle class, believed to represent a more resolute factor of modernization" (Cohen 2003: 174). However, these had a weak effect on the lower classes, such as informal housing populations.

The high rates of public spending, along with increasing population growth and additional governmental costs damaged the country's economic condition. Eventually, international financial institutions (IFIs) called for the implementation of austerity measures, which prompted the explosion of the so-called bread riots in Casablanca in 1981 (Bogaert 2018: 7), a series of urban mass protests that took place in different Moroccan cities in the 1980s and early 1990s. The year 1981 marked the beginning of a new political and economic period. It was the time when the first significant change in the government's approach to slums took place. It would no longer remain ignorant towards slum-dwellers. On the contrary, soon after the riots, the government started increasing repression, and upgrading strategies were exchanged for operations of slum eradication (Beier and Strava 2020: 8).

From then on, "urban planning was to be oriented towards the expansion of territorial control" (Bogaert 2011: 713).

The neoliberal reform and the Structural Adjustment Programme of the 1980s

In 1983, Morocco adopted a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) sponsored by the IMF and the World Bank[10]. According to the IFIs, the country needed to speed up economic growth or otherwise it would confront massive rates of unemployment and the proliferation of slums, among others (Hanieh 2013: 48). In order to achieve such economic growth, a package of reforms had to be implemented, with policies of privatization, deregulation and liberalization being the main ones. Their implementation started in the 1980s, and accelerated throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

The main premises were the following: by selling public assets and companies to private investors, the indebted public administration would earn some money and at the same time the new privatized firms would slowly become integrated into the global competitive economy (Pfeifer 1999: 23-24). In order to make the sale more attractive, the administration was allowed to deregulate the labour market and worsen working conditions (Hanieh 2013: 52). Finally, Morocco liberalized the national economy by joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) and signing different trading agreements with the European Union and the United States.

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[10] Morocco was not the only country in the region to experience such a reform. Actually, the adoption of SAPs was a widespread phenomenon throughout the Middle East and North Africa region in the 1980s and 1990s. For more information on this regional pattern see Hanieh (2013: 47-73).

Morocco followed the SAP instructions closely[11], and for that reason it was applauded in international publications as "one of the IMF's success stories" (Pfeifer 1999: 23). The results of the reform were at best ambiguous. According to Davis (2006: 91), on the one hand, GDP per capita, life expectancy and infant mortality rates improved. On the other hand, poverty and inequality rates worsened. By the late 1990s, around 10% of the Moroccan population lived in slums. This means that poorer populations such as slum-dwellers were hit hard.

It was at the urban level that these changes were more noticeable. As mentioned before, from the 1980s, strategies of slum upgrading were exchanged for strategies of slum eradication. This was done through the creation of different agencies aimed at intensifying control over urban planning. One of these agencies, the *Agence Nationale pour l'Habitat Insalubre* (ANHI) had the task to carry out and monitor the eradication of slums. The problem with the slum eradication policies, and the reason they failed, lies in the neoliberal reform itself. Slum eradication entailed the displacement and relocation of the evicted populations, but since the state had made huge sales and privatized the economy, it no longer had the necessary means to provide these populations with alternative public housing programmes. Moreover, the liberalization of the economy entailed the liberalization of the housing market, which made it easier for private investors to speculate on land, which in turn pushed housing prices up (Bogaert 2011: 720). The result was the failure of the different agencies to conduct the relocation operations that had been planned in the 1980s.

Hence, the main fiasco of the neoliberal reform in Morocco as regards urban poverty is that it failed to address the root causes of poverty and inequality, and thus it exacerbated

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[11] Actually, Morocco made the second largest profits from privatization in the region, only after Egypt (Hanieh 2013: 50).

uneven development, to the detriment of the more vulnerable populations. This is what we see today in Casablanca, and what the Cities Without Slums programme is trying to hide. Nevertheless, not everyone was worse off with the reform. The King and his political and economic supporters were the main beneficiaries, those who accumulated the wealth generated with the reform. Davis (2006: 101) argues that this helped consolidate certain aspects of state power, while Bogaert (2012: 256) refers to the phenomenon as "new state space formation at the urban scale". In practice, this entailed both a speeding up in the urbanisation of capital and an increasing involvement of the state in urban restructuring. This was the case because, in the new context of integration into the world economy, Morocco must compete to attract foreign investments to the country. Since "cities are the places through which the global economy is coordinated and where surplus value is realised and accumulated" (Bogaert 2012: 259), they started to be intensively redesigned in order to place themselves in the global market (Zemni and Bogaert 2011: 406).

This way, urban planning has become, especially since the accession of King Mohammed VI to the throne in 1999, an essential element in the organization of economic and political life. Different authors have put an emphasis on the strategic nature of urban planning, both in political and economic terms. For instance, Aljem and Strava (2020: 16) have referred to it as "a branding strategy". Similarly, Beier (2019a: 30) has argued that urban planning should be understood as a governmental project that has as an objective the refreshing of the Moroccan state's image as regards both foreign tourists, investors and its domestic population. Thus, in the last decades, urban planning has focused, on the one hand, on luxurious megaprojects (Aljem and Strava 2020: 12), and on operations of unsanitary housing and slum eradication, on the other.

<u>The Cities Without Slums programme</u>

In 2001, King Mohammed VI gave an important speech in which he called for the "elaboration of a regulatory framework and a national programme aiming to eradicate the existing unsanitary housing" (Navez-Bouchanine 2008: 367). This speech proved his commitment to the eradication of slums at the national scale. As regards Casablanca, this moment pointed to its "urban malfunction and socioeconomic crisis" (ONDH 2015: 48). The final trigger for a comprehensive response to the issue of urban slums came with the Casablanca suicide bombings of 2003, whose perpetrators were slum-dwellers from the metropole's shacks (Bogaert 2018: 208).

Thus, the King launched the Cities Without Slums programme in 2004, with the strategic objective of eliminating all urban slums in the country. It involves a total of 85 cities spread all over the national territory (Ministre de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville n.d.). The programme is different from previous slum policy mainly in that the state is now more involved in relocation operations. This is done through a strengthened cooperation with the private sector and the signing of an increasing number of public-private partnerships (Bogaert 2018: 208).

Although the programme was supposed to finish in 2010, it is still in its implementation phase (Bogaert 2018: 212). At the time of writing, 59 cities have been declared "cities without slums" in Morocco, which has meant the displacement of 277,583 households (Ministre de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville n.d.). The percentage of slums in the country has decreased from 8.2% to 4.5% between 2004 and 2014 (CREADH 2018: 27). Of the 25 billion dirhams that the programme is estimated to cost, 10 billion dirhams have been generated thanks to a tax to cement and provided by the state (Bogaert 2018: 212). The money is kept and

administered by the *Fonds Solidarité Habitat et Intégration Urbaine* (ONDH 2015: 28).

Moreover, different international institutions such as the European Investment Bank and

the World Bank have donated to the programme (Bogaert 2018: 212). The remaining has

to be paid by slum-dwellers themselves.

What are the different operations implemented under the VSB?

The VSB programme can be briefly summarised into three different types of operations,

those of upgrading, resettlement and rehousing. These are well-known strategies for the

Moroccan state. Slum upgrading refers to the restructuration that a slum goes through in

order to see its facilities upgraded. The infrastructure is improved through the provision

of electricity, potable water, sewage… The implementation of this strategy is more likely

to take place in old slums located in the city-centres (Banque Mondiale 2006: 30).

However, this strategy was practically abandoned in the 1980s and the two predominant

options during the implementation of the VSB have been resettlement and rehousing

(Bogaert 2018: 213).

Resettlement entails the allocation of land plots in order for slum families to build over

their homes. According to this strategy, it is possible to build more than one apartment in

the same land plot, so families can share some costs (Ministre de l'Aménagement du

Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville n.d.). These

families can make an agreement with a third party, usually a real estate developer, through

which the third party builds the house and bears the costs of the construction. In exchange,

the two families get an apartment each and the real estate developer gets the other one or

two floors. This is called the "third party partner" or R+3 strategy, and it is a way for poor

families to get free housing while the real estate developer gets preferential access to a public plot of land (Bogaert 2018: 220).

Lastly, rehousing refers to the transfer of slum-dwellers to cheap social housing apartments. It is usually applied to slums that are located in densely populated areas that the state wishes to clear for city restructuring purposes (Ministre de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville n.d.). This tends to be real estate developers' preferred option (Banque Mondiale 2006: 36-37).

Who are the main actors involved in the programme?

The VSB programme has seen the participation of an array of both public and private actors, often working in cooperation. This cooperation has been referred to as "territorial governance" at the local level (CREADH 2018: 50), and makes reference to the question of who makes the decisions in the framework of the VSB.

The most important public actor is the state, represented by the King, the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Interior (Banque Mondiale 2006: 24, 25). The King has played an active role in promoting the relevance of tackling the issue of unsanitary housing and the VSB since 2001 and 2004, respectively. In line with this commitment, the Ministry of Housing has gained relevance since the beginning of the 21st century. It supervises Holding Al Omrane, a public entity created from the fusion of the *Agence Nationale pour l'Habitat Insalubre* with other public housing agencies. A clear sign of its importance is the fact that it is in charge of "more than 80% of the operations developed within the VSB" (Bogaert 2018: 214). In addition to Al Omrane, the Ministry of Housing comprises the so-called *Directions Régionales de l'Habitat*, regional departments that work hand in hand with the public agencies and develop city contracts to make sure that

the different actors involved in VSB operations fulfil their obligations (Banque Mondiale 2006: 24).

Then, the Ministry of Interior has the task to supervise the implementation of the programme and coordinate the different actors operating on the ground. The case of Casablanca is interesting here because it shows the existing tensions between ministries. Unlike other cities, Casablanca has not signed a city contract because that would put it under the control of the Ministry of Housing. Given the metropole's strategic and financial importance, it has been placed under the control of the Ministry of Interior, represented at the local level by the wali of Casablanca. Thus, a new public agency called Idmaj Sakan has been created to coordinate VSB operations in the city, pushing Al Omrane into the background (Bogaert 2018: 216).

For their part, the main private actors are real estate developers, banks and microcredit organizations and, of course, slum-dwellers themselves. Real estate developers act in cooperation with Al Omrane (or Idmaj Sakan, in the case of Casablanca) through public-private partnerships in order to provide slum-dwellers with formal social housing. They are usually in charge of building cheap apartment blocks destined to the relocation of slum populations. In order to encourage their participation in the VSB, the government offers them public land at a lower price than the market price. In exchange, the companies must then offer the slum-dwellers cheap social housing that they can afford (ONDH 2015: 20, Bogaert 2018: 214, 215). Related to these are microcredit institutions. Although they have a limited access to resources and have therefore seen their role constrained, since 2004 they are allowed to distribute credits worth up to 30,000 dirhams for the purchase or upgrading of housing (Banque Mondiale 2006: 26). Thus, they are meant to work as a support mechanism for real estate developers and public agencies.

Finally, slum-dwellers are the very reason for the existence of the Cities Without Slums programme. They are one of the most excluded social groups in the country. This social marginalization comes from a strong stigmatisation and a wide perception that they are a threat to security and public health. In spite of these perceptions, they are a heterogeneous population with different social and economic characteristics (Banque Mondiale 2006: 28, 30). These residents live in slums for very different reasons, and this is something that the VSB tends to ignore. Instead, the programme applies technical strategies of relocation to very subjective issues in a way that threatens the agency of the affected populations (Beier and Strava 2020: 18).

Is there any social and financial support for relocated populations?

The Cities Without Slums programme incorporates certain instruments that theoretically support the relocation operations and make them more accessible and affordable to slum-dwellers. One of these is *accompagnement social* (AS, social accompaniment in English). AS is a technique for encouraging slum-dwellers' participation and providing them with some social support when moving to a new area. Specifically, AS organizes information sessions for slum populations and assists them with administrative and financial issues (Bogaert 2018: 218). Although it gives social matters some space, in practice it places technical issues above everything else. Hence, the main objective is that relocation takes place, and the administrative and financial assistance offered are criticised for being a mechanism for speeding up the moving out process (Le Tellier and Guérin 2009: 659).

In order to assist slum-dwellers financially, the state promoted the work of microcredit institutions, as mentioned in the previous section, and created FORAGIM[12] in 2004, "a

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[12] FORAGIM is currently called "Damane Assakane".

guarantee fund for populations with low or irregular income" (ONDH 2015: 28). Through FORAGIM, the access to bank credit for slum-dwellers is facilitated because the risk is shared between the state and the credit issuer (Le Tellier and Guérin 2009: 672). Between 2004 and 2014, approximately 40% of the loans granted were destined for households located in Casablanca (Bogaert 2018: 218, 219).

Brief criticism of the VSB

The government defends having improved the living conditions of thousands of former slum-dwellers. What is more, UN-Habitat rewarded Morocco with the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award in 2010 for having "one of the world's most successful and comprehensive slum reduction and improvement programmes" (Bogaert 2018: 212). As this section indicates, the relocation of thousands of people has indeed taken place. This has involved the cooperation of different actors, and the state has made available different instruments aimed at accelerating the implementation of the programme and the many relocation operations that are part of it.

However, the VSB has received ample criticism as well. Although the next chapters focus on the extent to which the programme really serves the needs of the affected populations, here it is important to make a point. Critics argue that the programme has in fact prioritized the needs of the market (Le Tellier and Guérin 2009: 659). By dealing with relocation as a purely technical issue, the state has transformed former slum-dwellers into participants of the formal market economy (Zemni and Bogaert 2011: 411). The Cities Without Slums is a political as well as an economic project that follows the neoliberal logic. It involves the public and the private, and attempts to modify the local in order to attract the foreign: real estate development, international trade and investments and

tourism. Lefebvre's theory on the production of space (1991) is a valuable tool for it analysis.

The VSB and Lefebvre' theory on the production of space

Lefebvre's (1991) starting point is that space is not a passive locus in the exercise of social relations, but a social product that plays an active role in the existing mode of production. When analysing the different sets of forms and relations that social space comprises, one must also consider the larger context of capitalist development. In the context of this work, this means that an analysis of the VSB programme must consider the different relations in play throughout the implementation years of the project, in a broader context of capitalist production.

In his analysis, Lefebvre distinguishes three dimensions of social space, namely spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. First, spatial practice is identified with the perceived space. It is the dimension that brings the other two together. Second, representations of space refers to the space conceived by urban planners and leaders. It is the dominant space dimension in any society or mode of production. In this work, it refers to the VSB programme itself, to the geographical changes planned by policy-makers and the implementation of the programme. It is this representation that is imposed upon the Moroccan population, or in this case, slum-dwellers. Third, representational spaces refers to the space of the inhabitants and "users". It is the lived dimension of social space. In the Moroccan case, the representational spaces are the lived spatial experiences of all slum dwellers affected by the VSB programme.

As Brenner and Elden (2009: 368) argue in their analysis of Lefebvre's theory, spatial relations of capitalism cannot be reduced to a fix planning framework. A spatial strategy

such as the VSB programme is a powerful instrument that aims at reorganizing socio-spatial relations, which can be contested as well. Hence, social space is produced with the interaction of its three dimensions. It is precisely the uncertain connection between representations of space on the one hand, and representational spaces on the other, that come together within a spatial practice. The next two chapters deal with each of these matters, giving special attention first to representations of space and later to representational spaces.

Chapter 2- Changing geographies of displacement and poverty concentration in Casablanca.

<u>Casablanca's administrative and territorial division: what role for politics?</u>

The Casablanca prefecture (henceforth Casablanca) is one of Morocco's most important administrative subdivisions. It is located in the centre-West of Morocco, surrounded by the Mohammedia prefecture to the North, the Nouaceur province to the South and the Médiouna province to the East. Over the years, Casablanca has experienced several changes in its administrative division, the 2016 division being the latest. Prior to 2016, these four subdivisions comprised Grand Casablanca, one of the former regions in the country. Today, they are part of a bigger area —the Casablanca-Settat region— and Casablanca comprises eight *préfectures d'arrondissement* or districts[13].

Figure 1. The Casablanca-Settat region. Source: Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales, 2015.

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[13] The eight districts, very relevant for the analysis in this chapter, are the following: Ain Chock (Ain Chock), Hay Hassani (Hay Hassani), Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi (Ain Sebaa, Assoukhour Assawda, Hay Mohammadi), Al Fida- Mers Sultan (Al Fida, Mers Sultan), Ben M'Sick (Ben M'Sick, Sbata), Casablanca Anfa (Anfa, El Maarif, Sidi Belyout), Moulay Rachid (Moulay Rachid, Sidi Othmane) and Sidi Bernoussi (Sidi Bernoussi, Sidi Moumen). The names in brackets are the quarters within each district. (Direction Régional de Casablanca-Settat 2018a).

The division into regions and provinces changes occasionally as the high rates of population growth lower the control of the state over the population. Thus, decentralization and the creation of administrative subdivisions become a way for the Ministry of Interior to keep political control over citizens (McMurray 2014: 23) and bring the "administration closer to those administered" (Bogaert 2018: 187). In the Casablanca context, this is something to bear in mind, because, following Lefebvre's theory on the production of space, they are the representations of space that dominate society (Lefebvre 1991: 38). Perhaps the most important development was the establishment of the *wilaya* of Casablanca, which became "the highest authority at the subnational level in Morocco" (Bogaert 2018: 187).

From all the territory that comprises the Casablanca-Settat region, the Casablanca prefecture is the most highly urbanised area. Its surface takes up only 1.1% of the region. In spite of this, it includes 49% of the region's total population (Direction Régionale de Casablanca-Settat 2018b: 16). This shows an imbalance in both population and economic activity rates, one that made big cities experience faster rates of urbanization (Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales 2015: 35), which eventually led to the proliferation of slums. In 2004, there were more than half a million slum dwellers spread across more than 111,000 households in the then Grand Casablanca territory. This means that there were around 500 slums, of which two thirds were only in the city of Casablanca (CREADH 2018: 28). According to the Moroccan state, the proliferation of slums and other forms of informal housing in Casablanca produced a disruption of the urban space that damaged its functioning (ONDH 2015: 47). For that reason, among others, the state launched the Cities Without Slums programme in 2004.

The aim of this chapter is to outline some of the most important projects of upgrading, resettlement and rehousing that have taken place within the framework of the Cities

Without Slums programme. Covering all of them is beyond the scope of this work, so it focuses on some of them and tries to find patterns that are useful for studying displacement in the region. In what follows, I map the changing geographies of displacement due to slum eradication in Casablanca since the implementation of the programme, with a special focus on the Sidi Bernoussi, Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi and Casablanca Anfa prefectures, home to Casablanca's oldest and biggest slums.

Figure 2. The Casablanca prefecture. Source: ViaMichelin.fr

Soft displacement vs. hard displacement: mapping the changing geographies under the VSB programme.

Within the scope of the Cities Without Slums programme, territorial governance is represented by a combination of public and private actors, comprised by the state and its regional and local representatives, on the one hand, and by real estate developers, on the other. Together, they have shaped the urban landscape of Casablanca over the years, "producing goods and services for the common good" (CREADH 2018: 50). Since the implementation of the programme, this production of goods and services has meant the increasing production of social housing. Between 2002 and 2007, 89 construction

agreements were signed by public and private actors for the production of social housing in Morocco. And yet, between 2008 and 2014, the number of agreements peaked to 736, with more than half of the new housing concentrating in three areas, one of them being Casablanca (ONDH 2015: 10).

This acceleration of social housing construction targeting former slum-dwellers points to an increasing displacement due to slum clearance. It is important to remember that, in Casablanca, slums are sub-quarters, small self-contained spaces within the different districts or prefectures of arrondissement. But before turning to the displacement analysis in the different districts, it is important to acknowledge that such analysis is based on a wide variety of sources, most of them coming from Moroccan public media. With this, I want to emphasise that the following analysis does not take every piece of information at face value. Some sources are closer to the Moroccan government than others, and each newspaper has its own agenda. For this reason, whenever possible, the information about displacement patterns has been contrasted with other media sources. The purpose of this analysis is not to analyse media discourses or to assess media reliability, but to find patterns that point to a specific governmental strategy towards slums. Taking this into account, and the Cities Without Slums program as the starting point, how have the geographies of displacement changed in Casablanca since 2004?

Prefecture of arrondissements of Sidi Bernoussi

Sidi Bernoussi is located in north-eastern Casablanca, in the periphery of the city. It is composed by the arrondissements of Sidi Bernoussi and Sidi Moumen, home to some of the biggest and oldest slums in the country (MAP and Le Matin 2007), stigmatised for being the place of origin of the people who committed the suicide attacks of 2003

(Bogaert 2011: 721). In addition, it is the location of one of the most important industrial zones of the region (Jafry 2007a), and originally, it was designed by French planners as a satellite town for Casablanca (Sebti 2013: 52).

Figure 3. Prefecture of arrondissements of Sidi Bernoussi. Source: Google Maps. Edited by the author.

This prefecture is a good example for illustrating that different slum management tactics existed before 2004, and that the VSB meant the acceleration of an already existing process, not the creation of a new one. For instance, Moroccan media discussed two rehousing operations called "Al Yakine" and "Al Mabrouka". These were launched in May 2003 and built 2,113 social housing apartments in Sidi Moumen, relocating slum dwellers from the same area (L'Economiste 2003a).

With the implementation of the VSB, this process accelerated. The national press has illustrated this with several examples. For instance, in October 2006, the Molay Hachim slum in Sidi Moumen was demolished and its population signed a transfer agreement to the Anassi quarter, which is also in Sidi Moumen but more towards the periphery of

Casablanca (L'Economiste 2006). This is what I call "soft displacement", meaning displacement that happens within the same prefecture of arrondissement or across arrondissements from Casablanca. It is displacement that happens towards the periphery, and the affected populations still have to move to a new place and see their living environment disrupted. However, the distance from the original place of residence is not that long, and the same administrative rules apply since they are still in the same subdivision.

This is a common pattern found in the area. Other press articles mentioned, among others, a construction agreement signed in December 2007 for the development of the arrondissement of Sidi Moumen, according to which a new urban centre called "Assalam" would be created. Again, Assalam is located in Sidi Moumen, but more towards the perimeter (MAP and Le Matin 2007). At the same time, there are instances of displacement within the same prefecture that do not show a clear movement towards the periphery, and sometimes displacement even happens across arrondissements. The first is the case of operation "Ikamat Al Boustane" a rehousing project launched in April 2007 targeting 300 families from Douar Peugeot and Ghrib, in the heart of Sidi Moumen (Jafry 2007b, Le Matin 2007a). The second is the case of project "Al Amane" for the resettlement and rehousing of 13,712 households from the Sidi Moumen slums, mainly Douar Sekouila, Douar Thomas, Rhamna and Zaraba (Jafry 2010). Al-Amane is located in the perimeter of Ain Sebaa, but it is close to Sidi Moumen.

Douar Sekouila and Douar Thomas have attracted special attention in the media over the years. The case of Douar Sekouila illustrates again how similar slum measures were implemented prior to the launch of the VSB programme. In September 2003, a housing programme called "Ahl Loghlam" was revived. Through a public-private partnership, it has made several rehousing units available for slum dwellers from Sekouila

(L'Economiste 2003b). Ahl Loghlam is located in Sidi Moumen, so no displacement towards the periphery took place here either. Since 2004, Sekouila has undergone several operations. In June 2005, the state launched resettlement operation "Salam 1" (Haimoud 2005), targeting 6,373 families (Aujourd'hui le Maroc 2007). As mentioned above, "Al Amane" also received a part of the former slum dwellers from Sekouila (Le Matin 2009a). In February 2013, the last shacks were demolished (MAP and Aujourd'hui le Maroc 2013), although it was not until January 2014 that the last inhabitants were relocated to the new sites (El Affas 2014). All this happened within the area of Sidi Moumen. The case of Douar Thomas is very similar. In June 2005, the state launched rehousing operation "Salam 2" (Haimoud 2005, Aujourd'hui Le Maroc 2007). In the following years, slum dwellers from Douar Thomas were also rehoused in the "Al Amane" project (Le Matin 2009a). By early 2014, the rate of relocation completion was 96% (El Affas 2014).

This does not mean that there has not been any displacement outside Casablanca. For instance, in March 2015 the state launched operation "Riad", located in the Médiouna province, the second part of which entailed the resettlement of 650 households from El Menzeh, Bouaâzza Ben Taïbi and Boulahya, slums located in the arrondissement of Sidi Bernoussi (A.E. 2015). In spite of this, there is a clear predominance of displacement within the Casablanca prefecture, or what I have called soft displacement.

Prefecture of arrondissements of Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi

Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi is located in north-eastern Casablanca, but more towards the centre of the city. It comprises the arrondissements of Ain Sebaa, Assoukhour Assawda and Hay Mohammadi. The latter has a particularly rich history. Hay

Mohammadi is a popular working-class industrial and residential quarter. It was home to Carrières Centrales, the oldest slum in the country (Beier and Strava 2020: 4).
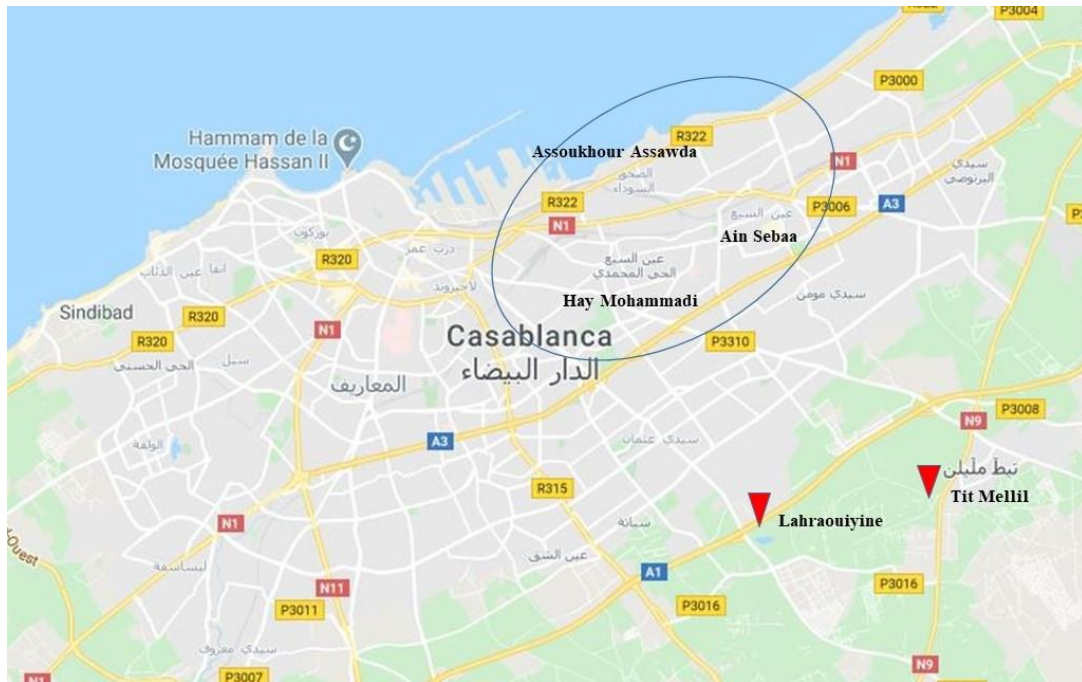

Figure 4. Prefecture of arrondissements of Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi. Source: Google Maps. Edited by the author.

The inhabitants of Hay Mohammadi started the resistance movement against French occupation during the protectorate years. Thus, it is an arrondissement with a strong social and political identity, whose popularity dates back to the colonial period (Belarbi 2015: 140). Today, it still has a very high concentration of slums. Actually, the media reported that half the slum population of Casablanca was located here in 2004 (L'Economiste 2004). For that reason, the prefecture committed to the Cities Without Slums programme, and already in 2004 expressed its will to eradicate, among others, Douar Bouih, Lakrimat, Sidi Abdellah Belhhaj, Kabla and Carrières Centrales.

Throughout the years, different operations and projects have been implemented. For instance, in 2013, *La Vie Éco* reported that multiple families coming from Kariane Sahrawa, Douar Casa, Qamra, Nhaïliya, Larbi Fadli and Hay Adil had been relocated to

social housing apartments to the perimeter of Ain Sebaa, to the quarters of Al-Amane and El Wifaq (Houdaifa 2013). This is an example of displacement within the prefecture, but with a clear component of relocation towards the periphery. More recently, in September 2018, resettlement project "Riad" was implemented in Douar Louassti, where 752 shacks were demolished. Consequently, 976 families were relocated to the Médiouna province, the site where this project has been developed (MAP and Le Matin 2018). This is what I call "hard displacement", meaning not only displacement towards the periphery, but also displacement outside Casablanca. It is the displacement that takes place when former slum dwellers from Casablanca are relocated to Médiouna, Nouaceur or Mohammedia, the surrounding provinces and prefectures.

A concentration that deserves special attention and that has been very present in Moroccan media is Carrières Centrales (Hay Mohammadi), the oldest slum in Morocco. In 2003, before the launch of the VSB, this slum experienced the revival of operation Ahl Loghlam along with Douar Sekouila, in Sidi Moumen (L'Economiste 2003b). This meant displacement towards the periphery, specifically towards the prefecture of Sidi Bernoussi, or soft displacement. In spite of initial relocation programs, by 2004, Carrières Centrales was comprised of 15,000 shacks (L'Economiste 2004).

In late 2007, the decision was made to eradicate the Carrières. Reported by journalists (Eddine Herradi 2007a) and scholars (Beier 2019b: 2) alike, the idea was that an important part of its population, around 30,000 people, were relocated to social housing apartments in the town of Lahraouiyine[14], in the Médiouna province. This decision caught the attention of most national media, given the popularity and history of the slum. Thus,

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[14] Lahraouiyine was part of a bigger project of peripheral urban centres designed for the relocation of slum dwellers coming from Casablanca. This is what Rousseau and Harroud (2019) have called "satellite cities". Tit Mellil and Lhalhal are further examples of satellite cities.

different sources with their different political inclinations observed its demolition process. The objective was to transform the free space after eradication into a green space, as part of a broader project of urban transformation of Casablanca (Le Matin 2010a). By the end of 2011, around 80% of Carrières Centrales had been demolished (Aujourd'hui le Maroc 2011), a situation that prolonged until mid-2014 (El Affas 2014), when new projects were launched.

In June 2014, a new rehousing operation was approved, which entailed the transfer of more slum dwellers to the Tit Mellil town, in the Médiouna province (Le Matin 2014a). In October that same year, 600 families were relocated to Lahraouiyine and the Lhalhal region, close to Lahraouiyine and also in Médiouna (Le Matin 2014b). This meant that by early 2015, 90% of the Carrières Centrales population had been displaced. In March 2015, the state approved the rehousing operation "Al Hamd" and the second phase of the resettlement operation "Riad", both in Médiouna, which entailed the transfer of 414 households from Hay Mohammadi (A.E. 2015). The following year, the last residents of Carrières Centrales, who comprised 48 households, were evicted by force, according to both Moroccan media (Hamza Hachlaf 2016) and political geographer Raffael Beier (2019b: 9). The shacks were demolished and the Carrières ceased to exist. Since mid-2019, the second tramway line of Casablanca functions on its ruins. This was indeed not the very reason behind the demolition of the slum, but it accelerated the process since it increased pressure on the local government to free the space (Beier 2019b: 2, 10).

As these developments show, the former residents of Carrières Centrales were subject to many instances of hard displacement since 2007. Contrary to slum dwellers in the Sidi Bernoussi prefecture, who were mostly relocated within Casablanca, the inhabitants of Carrières Centrales were pushed to the Médiouna province. This shows a different pattern of displacement, one particular to the Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi prefecture.

Prefecture of arrondissements of Casablanca Anfa

Casablanca Anfa, usually called Anfa, is located on the beachfront, in the centre of the city. It is comprised by the arrondissements of Anfa, El Maarif and Sidi Belyout. This prefecture has a very rich history as well. Actually, Anfa was Casablanca's original name, long before the French protectorate in the early 20th century. Until the 19th century, it was a small fishing town (Abu-Lughod 1980: 96). Today, it is one of Casablanca's most luxurious and modern districts, in addition to its financial hub. However, it also has a high concentration of slums. In 2014, ten years after the beginning of the Cities Without Slums program, it was the arrondissement with the highest percentage of slums (22.6%) in Casablanca (HCP 2014).

Figure 5. Prefecture of arrondissements of Casablanca Anfa. Source: Google Maps. Edited by the author.

In January 2005, the state approved a partly upgrading, party resettlement operation involving Douar Sidi Massaoudi, according to which 347 households were upgraded and provided with potable water, electricity and sanitation facilities, among others. Slum

upgrading minimizes displacement, but it does not completely avoid it. Consequently, 114 families were resettled and their houses demolished (L'Economiste 2005). Bachkou, one of Anfa's famous slums, located in El Maarif, was another site of unsanitary environment. Over the years, the media reported unsuccessful attempts by the local authorities to get rid of it. At the end, the last shacks were demolished in 2012 (Mountassir 2012). By 2013, Bachkou, which was home to almost 2,000 households, no longer was (El Affas 2013).

In November 2014, *Le Matin* (2014c) gave voice to a public announcement about a new rehousing operation for the residents of Ârsat Lhaj M'barek, according to which they would receive social housing apartments in Lahraouiyine, Médiouna province. Due to different administrative issues the demolition was delayed, but by late 2015, 450 families out of a total of 500 had already been relocated (Le Matin 2015). This is again an illustration of hard displacement, an operation of relocation towards the periphery that drove residents out of the centre of Casablanca to the Médiona province. According to a journalist working for *La Vie Éco*, by 2016, Anfa still had 36 slums and was home to 5,600 households (Trari 2016). However, displacement operations continued, and in March that same year, several conventions involving the different slums in the area were signed for their residents to be resettled somewhere else and the shacks demolished. This resulted in further displacement outside Casablanca, with plans for all slums in Anfa to be resettled to the Tit Mellil region (Médiona province) and to Ouled Saleh (Nouaceur province).

These results show a pattern of hard displacement in the Casablanca- Anfa prefecture. What is interesting here is that, just like the Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi slums, residents were relocated to the same places, mainly to Lahraouiyine and Tit Mellil, both located in Médiouna. This illustrates a pattern of internal migration, from the economic centre to

the poorer peripheries. Not only Anfa is displacing slum dwellers, but it is also transforming its surface in order to attract tourism and investment. An example of this is the *Ville nouvelle d'Anfa*, a project for a new urban centre launched in 2013 with the stated objective of creating green spaces, building business, health-care, leisure and culture facilities and being home to 100,000 residents, as argued by *L'Economiste* (El Affas 2013). This project, of course, did not include former slum dwellers from the area. If that were not enough, Aljem and Strava (2020: 18) show that it also displaced middle-class residents, a necessary measure to achieve the explicit objective of "social exclusivity".

Prefectures of arrondissements of Al Fida- Mers Sultan, Ben M'Sick and Moulay Rachid

The three prefectures are analysed together in this subsection because they are located in the same area and they follow similar patterns of displacement.
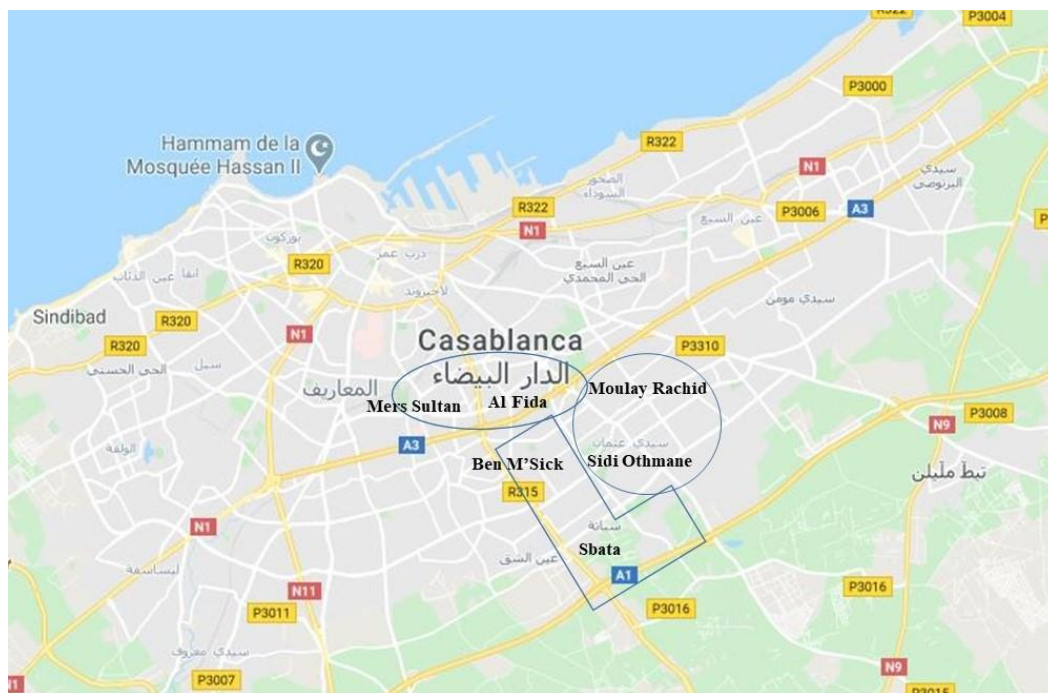
Figure 6. Prefectures of arrondissements of Al Fida- Mers Sultan, Ben M'Sick and Moulay Rachid. Source: Google Maps. Edited by the author.

Al Fida- Mers Sultan is located in the centre of Casablanca. It comprises the arrondissements of Al Fida and Mers Sultan. The latter is also a symbol of Moroccan resistance to colonialism. A quarter that Europeans used to frequent during the protectorate years, it became a symbol of resistance when, in 1955, a group of Moroccans perpetuated a bombing attack against Europeans (Benargane 2017). As regards this area, probably one of the most important projects launched in the context of the Cities Without Slums programme is the rehousing operation "Omar Ibn Al Khattab", aimed at relocating the slum dwellers from the same prefecture (Aujourd'hui le Maroc 2006). Omar Ibn Al Khattab, previously called Derb Milan, is located in the centre of Casablanca. It is now home, among others, to the former residents of Dar Chama, Arsat Bel Chahib, Kouri Hossaine and Kouri Kadour, as reported by *Le Matin* (2009b). Therefore, this is displacement within the same prefecture, but without a clear pattern of relocation towards the periphery.

The Ben M'Sick prefecture is located in the centre-East of Casablanca. It comprises the arrondissements of Ben M'Sick and Sbata, in the perimeter. The Ben M'Sick slums have a long history. In fact, they date back to the protectorate period, when they were places of nationalist movements against the French (Belarbi 2015: 140). Already in the first years of the protectorate, displacements of Moroccan populations led to the concentration of unsanitary housing in places like Ben M'Sick. By the 1920s-1930s, there was quite a concentration of informal housing in the area (Belarbi 2015: 140, La Nouvelle Tribune 2011). Thus, it is not surprising that the VSB has been present there.

The upgrading project "Al Wahda" was approved only one year after the launch of the VSB programme. This project focused on the restructuration of Hay Farrane Al Halwa, located in the Sbata arrondissement. This meant that 670 families benefitted from the upgrading project, whereas 1,628 families were relocated to social housing apartments in

Sbata (Le Matin 2005). This was again, relocation within the same area, without a pattern of displacement towards the periphery. Another example is the "Omar Ibn Al Khattab-4" project, the fourth phase of the resettlement and rehousing project, which in 2006 targeted slum dwellers from the former Al Idrissia commune, in Ben M'Sick, to be relocated in 220 social housing apartments in the Al Fida arrondissement (Le Matin 2006a). Ben M'Sick and Al Fida are close to each other, and in this case, it can be argued that displacement took place towards the centre of Casablanca. In addition to the different operations of slum clearance, this prefecture in general, and the periphery of Sbata in particular, has seen the creation of green spaces, just like other peripheral areas of Casablanca as reported by *L'Economiste* and other Moroccan press (Ali Jafry 2007c). This trend illustrates how slum policies are part of a bigger project of city transformation, and not only one of urban poverty eradication.

Finally, the Moulay Rachid prefecture is located in north-eastern Casablanca, and comprises the arrondissements of Moulay Rachid and Sidi Othmane. This is a more recent concentration. Actually, it was born from Ben M'Sick's growth and it took its name from King Mohamed VI's younger brother (La Nouvelle Tribune 2011). It follows the same trend than the previous divisions. In addition to the creation of green spaces in the Moulay Rachid and Sidi Othmane peripheries (Jafry 2007c), the prefecture has experienced slum eradication and displacement projects within its territory. One example is Carrière Sidi Othmane, one of the first slum eradication projects under the Cities Without Slums programme (Le Matin 2006b). Later on, it experienced the launch of the regional development programme for Casablanca, which included the Moulay Rachid arrondissement and aimed at resettling slum dwellers from the area through the newly launched "Al-Fadl" operation (Al Bayane 2011). Thus, the three prefectures, located in the centre-East of Casablanca, have experienced a pattern of within prefecture

displacement under the VSB programme. At best, it can be argued that this was soft displacement, but without a clear pattern of relocation towards the periphery in some cases.

Prefectures of arrondissements of Hay Hassani and Ain Chock.

Like in the previous subsection, these two prefectures are analysed together because they are next to one another and show similar patterns of displacement. Both are located in the South of Casablanca, and they comprise the arrondissements of Hay Hassani and Ain Chock, respectively. Their history dates back to the protectorate years; they were conceived by French architects as satellite cities to Casablanca, and throughout the years they have become part of it (Marges et Villes n.d.).
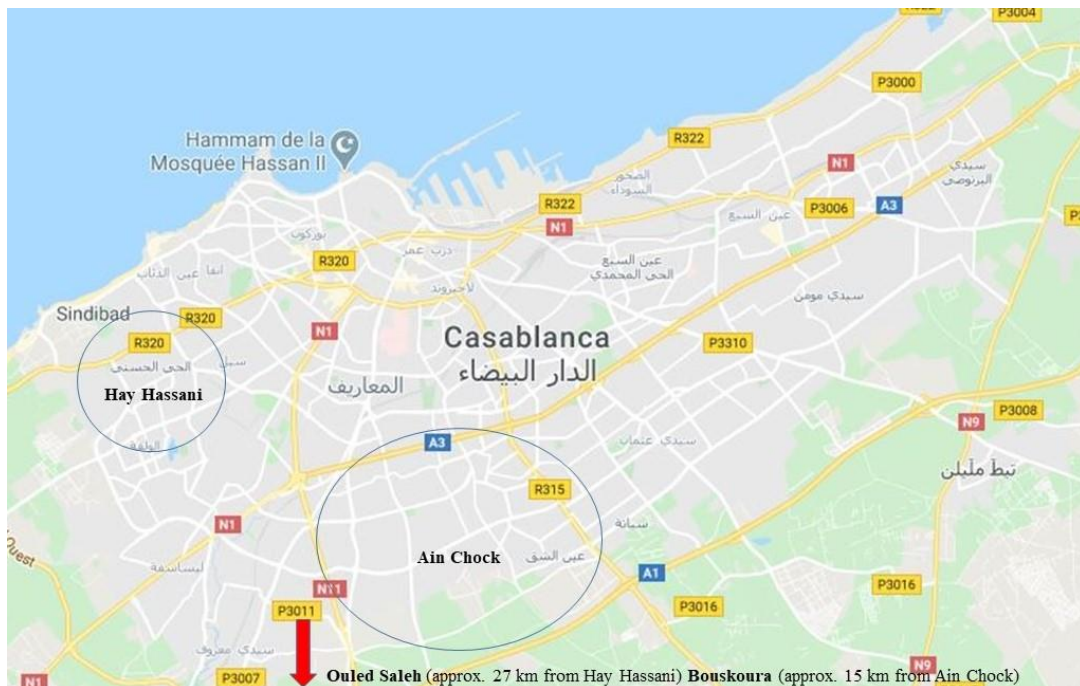
Figure 7. Prefectures of arrondissements of Hay Hassani and Ain Chock. Source: Google Maps. Edited by the author.

Already prior to the launch of the VSB programme, Moroccan media reported on population displacement due to slum demolition happening in the area. For instance, in

2002, the state launched a resettlement operation to relocate the residents of Carrière Schneider, a famous slum in Hay Hassani. It was supposed to temporarily relocate slum dwellers to the area of Sour Jdid, in the centre of Casablanca (Tohry 2002). With the launch of the VSB in 2004, a resettlement project was presented, according to which residents would be relocated to Ouled Saleh, in the Nouaceur province (Article 19.ma 2016). More recently, this pattern of displacement towards the periphery has continued under a new rehousing operation. In July 2018, the Moroccan newspaper *Libération* (2018) published that 395 families from Douar Ouled Rahou and El Ouzazna Errahma, located in the Ennasim and Lissasfa sectors of Hay Hassani, were relocated to a new urban centre called "Annasr", in the Nouaceur province. This is another case of hard displacement.

The Ain Chock prefecture has followed the same steps. One of the slum clearance operations carried out in the area and that has been reported on is that of the "Al Izdihar" project, aimed at relocating 400 households from Douar Laatour, in the California quarter, to Bouskoura, in the Nouaceur province (MAP and Le Matin 2013). This population, who was provided with social housing apartments in Nouaceur, is another instance of hard displacement. Therefore, both prefectures, located in the Southern periphery of Casablanca, have experienced displacement towards the periphery, and, in fact, to a different province.

Main findings and remarks

As this chapter has shown, the Moroccan press has extensively reported on the changing locations of former slum-dwellers from Casablanca since the launch of the Cities Without Slums Programme. The main finding is that there are indeed different patterns of

displacement. However, these patterns are not so much discernible if we take the prefecture as a whole. Rather, it is the study of the different prefectures of arrondissement separately that helps detect the different trends better.

By roughly dividing the different subdivisions into Northern, central and Southern[15] areas, I was able to see different patterns. However, these patterns do not correspond to central vs. peripheral prefectures (the Northern and Southern areas). On the one hand, the Northern prefecture of Sidi Bernoussi showed a clear pattern of displacement towards the periphery, but mostly within the prefecture. This is to say, a pattern of soft displacement. On the contrary, the Southern prefectures of Hay- Hassani and Ain Chock showed a stronger pattern of displacement towards the periphery, one that pushed people out of Casablanca to Nouaceur. This is what I have called hard displacement. The other five prefectures, those located more at the centre of Casablanca show ambiguous results. On the one hand, Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi and Casablanca Anfa have experienced patterns of hard displacement towards the Médiouna province while Al Fida-Mers Sultan, Moulay Rachid and Ben M'Sick have experienced cases of soft displacement, or again, displacement within the prefecture.

This classification of soft and hard displacement is a good way of analysing movements of people because it shows that there are different degrees of displacement. Although moving out of their houses has undoubtedly been a change for all former slum-dwellers, it is important not to generalize, and to make a case-by-case assessment that helps understand what populations have been displaced further. Here it is interesting to recall sociologist Navez-Bouchanine's (2003b: 7) historical explanation about slums: old slums

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[15] Roughly, the Northern area would be Sidi Bernoussi; the central prefectures would be Ain Sebaa- Hay Mohammadi, Al Fida- Mers Sultan, Moulay Rachid, Ben M'Sick and Anfa; and the Southern area would be comprised by Hay Hassani and Ain Chock.

were peripheral at the time of their creation, but they became integrated within the cities as these kept growing over the years. Peripheral slums, on the other hand, were less integrated. In the case of soft displacement, this explanation helps to argue that, in spite of displacement, residents are still within the prefecture, and for this reason marginalization is reduced. On the contrary, hard displacement entails expulsion towards the periphery, which, as Navez-Bouchanine argued, increases exclusion. This is the case of the slum populations relocated to new urban centres in other provinces. The main point is that things are neither black or white, and the distinction between soft and hard displacement allows for an analysis of the greys in between.

The results from this chapter fit in with the data about population growth for the period 2004-2014. According to an official document published by the Ministry of Interior (General Direction of Local Collectivities) in 2015 about the Casablanca-Settat region, the provinces that experienced the highest rates of population growth during the indicated period were Nouaceur and Médiouna[16]. Based on the analysis above, I argue that this may not only be the case due to natural population growth, but also due to slum eradication policies that pushed thousands of people outside Casablanca, to these areas.

In spite of this displacement, the Cities Without Slums programme has not been entirely successful in the region, since Casablanca has not been declared a *ville sans bidonvilles* yet. A further proof of this is that, by 2014, the Anfa, Sidi Moumen and Sidi Bernoussi arrondissements still had quite high percentages of slums, as indicated by the last census carried out by the Moroccan state[17]. Still, other important patterns can be extracted from this analysis. First, there is a clear predominance of resettlement and rehousing operations

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[16] From 2004 to 2014, Nouaceur's population increased by 3.52%, followed by Médiouna with 3.46%. On the other hand, Casablanca's growth was more discrete, with 1.31% (Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales 2015: 10).

[17] According to the census, in 2014 Anfa had 22.6% of slums, followed by Sidi Moumen and Sidi Bernoussi with 15.5% and 11.2% respectively (HCP 2014).

under the Cities Without Slums programme, opposite to the upgrading strategy, which has only taken place a few times since 2004. This has in fact reinforced displacement, since upgrading minimizes the number of people who need to move out. Second, there is a perceptible will to clear terrains that can be transformed into green spaces. Third, the different patterns of displacement, with the strategy of social housing apartment blocks on the one hand, and the remodelling and upgrading of urban spaces in the centre[18] on the other, have reinforced the homogenization of space (CREADH 2018), or what political scientist Isabelle Milbert (2006: 300) has called "an spatial fragmentation that has increasingly created homogeneous micro-spaces".

This homogenization of the space leads to what Beier (2019b: 5-6) refers to as old vs. new peripheries. The older peripheries are specific parts of the city that for some reason enjoy greater recognition, and hence these are the populations that are preserved (or kept close to their places of origin). Then, the new peripheries are the towns where the populations that go through a hard displacement are transferred. They do not enjoy as much recognition. Still, how can this ambiguity towards slums be explained? According to urban development specialist Lamia Zaki (2013: 39, 40), slum-dwellers have been denounced by politicians as a threat to local security, but at the same time they have been used as an all-rounder in times of elections, and therefore not always rejected.

Then why are some slum dwellers kept within the prefecture and others pushed outside? This can maybe be explained through Milbert's (2006: 301) two dimensions of slums: on the one hand, its inhabitants, and on the other, a certain space. According to this, the ambiguity towards slums can be explained because sometimes policies target the populations, and other times they target the space that the authorities want to clear. In my

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[18] An example of this is the *Ville Nouvelle d'Anfa*, mentioned in the analysis of this chapter. Another example of this is the various luxurious megaprojects that the metropole has developed.

work, this could mean that in instances of hard displacement what is really important is the space. On the contrary, cases of soft displacement where the slum population is transferred somewhere else within the Casablanca prefecture might mean that that specific population is, in one way or another, valuable for the public authorities.

This idea of course needs further research, but it could be a potential explanation as to why some populations are more strongly displaced than others. To conclude, this chapter has answered the first research question of this work, that the geographies of displacement in Casablanca have indeed changed since the implementation of the Cities Without Slums programme in 2004. As illustrated above, displacement is always political. Different patterns of displacement have been identified, and I hope they will help to better understand contemporary urban planning in Morocco.

Chapter 3- The subjectivities of displacement and the ambiguous effects of the Cities Without Slums programme.

This chapter focuses on the different political and socioeconomic effects of the VSB. As mentioned in the first chapter, the slum population is highly heterogeneous. People live in slums for different reasons: some seek to build an urban identity, to optimise their financial resources… others may not have a choice, a slum might be the only place they can afford to live in or maybe they have already been evicted from a different place (Banque Mondiale 2006: 28). Whatever their motives, slum-dwellers have seen their lifestyles interrupted by a new urban planning strategy for Casablanca, one that prioritises the service sector over industry and that increasingly invests on tourism and real estate (Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales 2015), as emphasized in the national press (Moubsit 2007). This development plan has led to the implementation of the VSB, which in turn has led to slum eradication and displacement.

In response, slum-dwellers have increasingly used a discourse on rights to raise their concerns and legitimise their actions. The process of political opening that allowed for increasing mobilization in Morocco from the 1990s has also allowed them to transform the human rights notion into a slum-dwellers' rights notion, through which they defend their right to live in the city and to decent housing (Essahel 2015: 117, Zaki 2013: 42). This discourse has been underlined in the academic and press literatures alike, and it has increasingly paved the way for the public manifestation of the positive and negative effects of the Cities Without Slums programme.

The change to formal housing and its social effects.

The major technical result of the VSB is the transfer of thousands of people from informal to formal housing through resettlement and rehousing operations (Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville n.d.) The change to formal housing is undoubtedly the biggest advantage of the VSB programme, which means an improvement in housing conditions. In the Casablanca prefecture, the percentage of households equipped with running water has increased from 87% in 2004 to 93.5% in 2014. Similarly, the percentage of electricity-equipped households has increased from 95.9% to 96.9% (Direction Régionale de Casablanca-Settat 2018b: 93). This increase is due to the increasing clearance of slums and the shift towards formal housing. In order to assess the extent of satisfaction or discontent with such a change, different studies have been conducted over the years[19]. According to the results, beneficiaries were highly satisfied with their new housing conditions, with a majority of them speaking in favour of the new buildings, their internal distribution, illumination, ventilation and common areas such as the stairs, corridors and patios. Interestingly, beneficiaries showed a lower degree of satisfaction towards the availability of public facilities such as schools, green spaces, sport centres, mosques, hospitals and shops around the neighbourhood (Direction de la Promotion Immobilière n.d: 146).

In spite of these housing improvements, a report published in 2018 by a Moroccan research centre specialised on human development alerted that stable purchasing power and mechanisms of social and territorial integration are fundamental in order to fight inequality. Without an affective social and economic policy that linked the housing

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[19] By 2015, the three main sources of information were three surveys conducted by the *Observatoire National du Développement Humain* in 2010, Holding Al Omrane between 2010 and 2012, and the Ministry of Housing in collaboration with UN Women in 2014, respectively (ONDH 2015: 12).

improvements to social integration, the new urban centres would remain spaces of poverty and inequality (CREADH 2018: 38).

In fact, social integration is subject to different perceptions of displacement. On the one hand, the press that is politically close to the government highlights an improvement in the beneficiaries' social integration because they are no longer seen as *gens des baraques,* "shacks people" (Le Matin 2006b). According to these publications, former slum-dwellers see displacement as an opportunity for social upgrade, and sometimes families have voluntarily joined resettlement and rehousing projects, even if these entailed hard displacement. This was the case of some former slum-dwellers from Hay Hassani, who volunteered for a rehousing operation in 2018 although this entailed relocation to Nouaceur (Aujourd'hui le Maroc 2018). On the other hand, some people have experienced displacement as a metropolitan reject, one that points to a loss of identity and social inferiority. This was the case of former slum-dwellers from Casablanca relocated to Lahraouiyine, as highlighted by urban sociologist and geographer Wafae Belarbi (2015: 141). These varying experiences point to different subjectivities, which have previously been shaped by different trajectories both at the personal level, as defended by urban planning specialists Beier and Strava (2020: 18) and at the group level. For instance, former slum-dwellers from Bachkou, interviewed by *La Vie Éco*, argued to be worse off since displacement because they shared a collective solidarity and identity with their former neighbours, which had now been lost (Belouas 2016).

From a social point of view, a common critique to the VSB is the increasing fragmentation and homogenization that it creates. By displacing slum-dwellers, often to the outskirts, the city becomes an increasingly homogeneous space of middle and upper classes whereas the new urban centres become "ghost cities" populated by lower-income populations. Scholars Rousseau and Harroud (2019: 345) studied this. Moreover, the

Moroccan press (Al Bayane 2010a) identified different shortcomings of the VSB, such as limitations in *accompagnement social* (social accompaniment), "a specific methodology designed to accompany slum-dwellers through the process of moving to their new apartment" (Bogaert 2011: 722). Also, and very importantly, there have been delays in the construction and provision of basic facilities and services such as schools, green spaces, hospitals, water, electricity etc. that have added to this fragmentation. This explains the lower degree of satisfaction that residents have shown in the different surveys mentioned above. An example of this is the rehousing operation that was launched to relocate former residents from Douar Sekouila. After the slum was demolished, a journalist working at *Libération* found out that residents were notified that their social housing apartments had not been equipped with water and electricity, so they had to temporarily seek housing elsewhere (Bentaleb 2013).

Perhaps the element that best illustrates this fragmentation and ambiguity is public transportation. In theory, "public transport plays an integrative role by facilitating the movement of people and improving access to different goods and services within the city" (Beier 2019b: 4). However, in order for public transport to fulfil its duty, there must be enough supply and it must reach everyone. Although different bus companies supply public transport within the prefecture along with *petits* and *grands* taxis, these do not operate in the peripheries. There, movement depends on clandestine transport, as pointed out by an official report (Direction Régionale de Casablanca-Settat 2018b). This is the case of former slum-dwellers from Bachkou relocated to Errahma, in the Nouaceur province. Now that they live far away from their workplaces, they must pay extra transport expenses which they did not need to pay before because they used to live in the centre. These extra expenses are a problem for them because their employers will not increase their wages. Moreover, in an interview with *La Vie Éco*, residents informed

against the danger that people get exposed to when depending on this type of transport, and argued that young girls are often sexually harassed (Belouas 2016). Therefore, the lack of transport in some areas where slum-dwellers have been relocated consolidates fragmentation between urban spaces and the homogenization of centre and periphery. It reinforces the feeling of isolation and marginalization (ONDH 2015: 58).

An important development in this context was the creation of two tramway lines across Casablanca, inaugurated in 2012 and 2019 respectively[20]. The tramway has brought slum-dwellers affected by soft displacement closer to the city, since the two lines go through some of the districts with high rates of slums. They "see it as a form of reparations and argue that it has brought into relief existing social fragmentation" (Strava 2018: 27). With this, Strava (2018: 25) refers to the ghettoization and violent repression that slum populations suffered under the reign of Hassan II. This shows the ambiguity of transportation in Casablanca: for some slum-dwellers, it has been made available, but for others it is still a major barrier to integration.

Political contestation and mobilization

Behind the VSB lies an array of public and private actors. The impact these have had on the design and implementation of the programme depend on their political, social and financial resources. The actors with the highest influence are located in the centre of political power, and this power decreases as geographical distance from the centre increases (Banque Mondiale 2006: 27). Yet, the Moroccan population tends to put the

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[20] The first tramway line crosses Darb Ghellaf, Beauséjour, Casa Finance City, Hay Hassani and Ain Diab, and the second line crosses Sidi Bernoussi, Ain Sbaâ, Hay Mohammadi, Derb Sultan, El Fida and Anoual (TelQuel and MAP 2019).

blame on local authorities, often condemned in the press and accused of being corrupt and repressive (Addam 2011).

Scholars Arendel and Watterberg (2013: 141) have argued that the state has followed an "authoritarian" approach with the Cities Without Slums programme. According to them, the VSB is a top-down project that prioritises urban planning over the socioeconomic needs of the affected populations. It is a state strategy that aims to restructure the city by centralizing power and relocating lower-income populations. Moreover, Morocco scholar and specialist Koenraad Bogaert (2011: 726) argues that by integrating them into the formal housing market they become consumers, which ensures that the state can "define, defend and regulate the norms and boundaries for social life". Thus, citizen participation is minimized in line with the authoritarian approach of the programme. An example of this is the fact that the social housing programmes sponsored by the state and private real estate developers have followed a restorative rather than an anticipative approach (CREADH 2018). Rather than preventing the growth of informal housing and urban inequalities in the region, the different actors have reacted late to the problem of slums and have not taken the affected populations' opinions into consideration when dealing with it.

In practice, this authoritarian strategy has had mainly two political effects. The first has been the reduction of a qualitative problem to a technical and quantitative issue (ONDH 2015: 37). This is illustrated by the fact that the studies conducted to evaluate the implementation of the programme have all had a quantitative nature, as the surveys mentioned in the previous section show. By solely allocating numbers and percentages to questions already designed to express a positive feeling towards relocation, the programme has failed to provide with valuable qualitative information that reports about

the political and socioeconomic effects that the VSB has had on the daily experiences of former slum-dwellers.

The second effect has been the increasing use of slum-dwellers by local authorities as electoral all-rounders. In fact, this strategy is not new and it has been used in Morocco since before the existence of the VSB, as expressed by *L'Economiste* (Rboub and Bentak 2002). However, the VSB and the displacement it has entailed have had an effect on those interested in keeping the status quo, such as the local authorities that found their "voter markets" in slum residents and that are now losing them due to the population transfers. In some cases, such as Carrières Centrales in Hay Mohammadi, these actors have even demonstrated against the VSB-led displacement in the name of slum-dwellers (Eddine Herradi 2007b). In 2010, an elected representative from Hay Mohammadi was fired for inciting slum-dwellers from Carrières Centrales to stay there (Al Bayane 2010b). This, by the way, is an illustration of how the Moroccan press tends to put the blame on local authorities, instead of on the king or the central government.

In response to this technical and top-down approach, slum-dwellers have mobilized in demonstrations and sit-ins over the implementation years of the VSB. The reasons for these mobilizations are varied. Many times, they are not against the VSB itself, but against its procedures and specific mechanisms of implementation. Actually, prior to relocation, slum-dwellers seem to value the transfer to formal housing more than the displacement and isolation they suffer afterwards.

For this reason, demonstrations and protests are very often against irregularities such as delays in the allocation of land plots or social housing apartments, or against the exclusion from the program itself. In some instances, the media has reported that parts of slums have been demolished without giving families any land plot or apartment in return, which has left them living in the streets (La Nouvelle Tribune 2015). This was the case of more

than a hundred families from Carrières Centrales who were denied housing in Lahraouiyine (Libération 2011) and of another hundred families from Ben M'Sick who were excluded from a relocation operation due to census issues (Le Matin 2013). In fact, the latter has been a common irregularity in the VSB. Usually, those adults who were already married by the time the last census was conducted have received a land plot or an apartment with the VSB. However, those people who lived with their parents at the time have not counted as VSB beneficiaries and therefore must continue living with them. This affects widows and divorced women as well, also left out of the programme (Le Matin 2013). In other cases, such as the relocation operation for Douar Sekouila, many people were excluded from the operation just because they were not present when the census was conducted (Bentaleb 2013).

Important here is the sentiment of injustice that many former slum-dwellers had. For instance, in Sidi Moumen older residents complained in interviews with different journalists about how newer residents had already received land plots while they were still waiting to hear from the authorities (Le Matin 2010b). In Hay Mohammadi, residents claimed the injustice of having to share an apartment with the neighbours, instead of having one for each family (Le Matin 2010c). Whatever the claim, the people who have participated in demonstrations and sit-ins in Casablanca share the unanimous wish to be heard and taken into account (Addam 2011). The Cities Without Slums programme and the Arab Uprisings of 2011 were a clear incentive for the public manifestation of discontent. In fact, since 2011 there has been a multiplication and change of scale of social and political mobilisations in Morocco, of which slum-dwellers have undoubtedly been a part (Zaki 2013: 49, 50).

Economic difficulties after displacement

If prior to displacement beneficiaries complained about irregularities or delays in relocation, after displacement they started to face financial difficulties directly related to the VSB system. Already when the VSB was launched in 2004, national newspapers alerted that the implication of banks and credit institutions would be necessary in order for former slum-dwellers to be able to pay their mortgages (Aujourd'hui le Maroc 2004). *L'Economiste* explains that, in Sidi Moumen, for instance, social housing apartments that would normally cost 200,000 dirhams would be sold at 100,000 dirhams. The state would subsidize up to 40,000 dirhams, and beneficiaries would be requested to advance the first 28,000 dirhams. The rest would be paid in monthly instalments of 500 or 600 dirhams (Jafry 2007b).

In fact, the subsidies provided by the state through the *Fonds Solidarité Habitat et Intégration Urbaine* more than doubled with the launch of the VSB in 2004. Between 2004 and 2016, the credits remained higher than before 2004, although they dropped in some years[21] (Direction de la Promotion Immobilière n.d.). A journalist working at *La Vie Éco* pointed to another irregularity: no studies were conducted in order to assess whether slum families would be able to pay for all the extra bills that moving to formal housing entailed (Houdaifa 2013).

Thus, one of the main economic effects that the VSB had on many of them was the inability to pay for the mortgage and extra bills. This was the case for former slum-dwellers from Ain Sebaa and Bachkou, among others. In Ain Sebaa, slum-dwellers had to pay 75,000 dirhams for each apartment. In an interview, they claimed that many people

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[21] Although the state increased the credits it issued for the fight against unsanitary housing from 2004, in the years 2007, 2013 and 2016 these dropped, which could have affected slum-dwellers that were being relocated at those times (Direction de la Promotion Immobilière n.d).

living there were unemployed or already retired and therefore it would be impossible for them to afford such a price (Le Matin 2007b). Here, the monthly instalments costed 750 dirhams, to be paid in 25 years. In an interview conducted in 2013 to the president of a local association, the interviewee argued that more than a hundred families could no longer pay for their apartments, and consequently, they had been threatened with eviction (Houdaifa 2013). Very similar was the situation of former slum-dwellers from Bachkou, now relocated to Errahma. Residents argued that they were unable to pay for the water and electricity bills, and to pay back the banking credits. They claimed that life for them was more precarious since displacement, and regretted having abandoned the slum (Belouas 2016).

These financial issues show that, even though in many cases former slum families were happy to join resettlement and rehousing operations at the beginning, they have come to realise that their lives have not become any easier after displacement. In other cases, people did not want to leave their homes in the first place and therefore sought different ways to bypass the programme (Milbert 2006: 305). Initially, some families came up with the ideas of renting or selling their new apartments in order to win some extra money. In order cases, they ceded their shacks to their parents or other relatives or friends (Le Matin 2014a).

However, this did not materialize because, in order for slum-dwellers to get the keys for their new apartments, they first had to demolish their own homes. This was supervised by local authorities and project managers who made sure that the operation did not stop. This was the case, for instance, in Al Fida- Mers Sultan, whose slum-dwellers were transferred under the Omar Ibnou Al Khattab project. The objective was to make sure that neither residents would go back to the slum nor that they would rent or sell the

infrastructure to someone else (Le Matin 2009b). For this reason, it is common to see images of slum-dwellers opposing demolition of their barracks in the press.

In addition to the specific economic difficulties mentioned above, it is important to consider the bigger picture, and the differences between cases of soft and hard displacement. Although slum-dwellers involved in operations of soft displacement have faced economic issues regarding mortgage and bill payments, some might have escaped the extra transportation costs. However, those involved in operations of hard displacement who have kept their jobs in the city will very likely have also faced extra transportation costs. To this, it is important to add that the economic situation is not the same everywhere. Casablanca is the economic metropole and financial hub of the country, but those who have been displaced to other provinces or prefectures have been displaced to areas of higher poverty and vulnerability. According to an official report published in 2018, Médiouna and Nouaceur have higher rates of poverty and economic vulnerability than Casablanca (Direction Régionale de Casablanca-Settat 2018b). This points to a deliberate action of displacing vulnerable populations to vulnerable peripheries instead of keeping them in the city, which has higher economic prospects.

Main findings and remarks

As this chapter has shown, the political and socioeconomic effects of the Cities Without Slums programme are at best ambiguous. Although prior to displacement, many slum-dwellers from different neighbourhoods in Casablanca were hopeful that a better future would start with a resettlement or rehousing operation, after displacement their feelings seem to have changed. This has been especially the case for the beneficiaries of hard displacement operations, who, in addition to water and electricity bills, now must pay for

extra transportation costs in an unsafe environment that reinforces the feeling of isolation. Moreover, beneficiaries of both soft and hard displacement operations are now having trouble paying back credits and mortgages. Thus, although the change to formal housing and the facilities upgrade is undoubtedly an advantage, there are several factors that make this programme not so much beneficial for slum-dwellers.

If the previous chapter focused on Lefebvre's representations of space, the urban planning strategy shaped by the Moroccan state, this chapter has focused more on representational spaces, the lived spatial experiences of slum-dwellers involved in the VSB. As previous chapters have mentioned, it is the interaction of these spheres that creates the social space, which is constantly changing. In the current neoliberal era, these changing spaces and experiences are shaped by a broader political and economic project that seeks the integration of informal housing inhabitants into the state's sphere of influence through integration into the market.

Here it is important to emphasize once again the nature of the sources under analysis. During the research for this chapter, official document sources were more lenient and tended to emphasize the positive aspects of the programme, such as the beneficiaries' high levels of satisfaction as regards the transfer to formal housing. On the other hand, press articles tended to be more critical and emphasized the ambiguous impact of the programme. Although the credibility of these sources cannot be taken for granted, they have pointed out important aspects that need to be improved. The main conclusion from this analysis supports Beier and Strava's (2020) point that displacement is subjective and that it is experienced in different ways by different people. This is to say, there are multiple subjectivities. For this reason, it is crucial that programme managers and state officials start listening to what the population has to say. A positive aspect of the programme is that it has triggered multiple forms of community mobilization (Toutain

and Rachmuhl 2013: 105), such as demonstrations and sit-ins. This shows the existing potential for the emergence of a "more organised civil society" in Morocco, as argued by urban geographer Hicham Mouloudi (2010: 230). In conclusion, standard approaches based on one-size-fits-all solutions leave important elements out of the analysis and risk ignoring the different contexts that shape the lives of the affected populations (Banque Mondiale 2006: 119).

Main findings and observations.

Morocco was indeed a laboratory of urban planning during the protectorate years (Rabinow 1989: 32). Colonial ideas such as the duality of the city and its division between *villes nouvelles* and *ancienne médina* were exploited from 1912 (Abu-Lughod 1980: 150) and paved the way for the consolidation of spatial fragmentation once Morocco gained independence in 1956. Throughout these years, cities like Casablanca expanded towards the periphery and saw the proliferation of different forms of informal housing such as slums (Abu-Lughod 1980: 225). In response, operations of slum upgrading, resettlement and rehousing were already carried out. A crucial point in time was the neoliberal reform of the 1980s, which accelerated from the 2000s. By privatizing and liberalizing the economy but failing to address the root causes of urban poverty, neoliberalism exacerbated uneven development to the detriment of the more vulnerable (Davis 2006) and reorganized state power at the urban scale (Bogaert 2012: 256).

Urban planning became especially important for the Moroccan regime with the accession of King Mohammed VI to the throne in 1999. In 2004, he launched the Cities Without Slums programme, a top-down project of slum eradication and population displacement at the national level. Today, 59 cities have been declared "cities without slums" in the country, which has entailed the displacement of 277,583 households (Ministre de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville n.d.). This programme is an example of what Lefebvre (1991) calls "representations of space", meaning the alterations in space that state authorities and private actors have carried out in order to reshape spatial relations.

Casablanca still has slums. Yet, it has gone through multiple operations of resettlement and rehousing under the VSB, part of the representations of space just mentioned. This work has shown that the geographies of displacement in Casablanca have indeed changed since 2004. This is the main contribution of this work. Specifically, I have distinguished between soft and hard displacement to differentiate trends of displacement. In some cases, slum-dwellers have been displaced either within the same prefecture of arrondissement where the slum used to be or to a different prefecture of arrondissement but still within Casablanca. This is what I have called "soft displacement", a short-distance displacement that does not entail a change of province or prefecture. In other cases, slum-dwellers have been displaced outside Casablanca, either to the Médiouna province or to the Noaceur province. This is what I have called "hard displacement", a long-distance displacement that, in addition to a lifestyle disruption, has meant the transfer to a different administrative subdivision.

Moreover, I have shown that the political and socioeconomic effects of displacement under the VSB are at best ambiguous. Although the programme's main technical objective —the transfer of informal housing residents to formal housing— has been accomplished with the operations of resettlement and rehousing, many other complex effects have derived from this relocation. Among these are bill payments associated to the change to formal housing, like water or electricity, extra transportation costs and other financial issues like inability to pay back banking credits or mortgages. One positive effect from the programme is that the various irregularities have ignited population mobilizations, mainly in the form of demonstrations and sit-ins. This shows that polemic programmes have the potential for the emergence of a more organised Moroccan civil society (Mouloudi 2010: 230), which can pave the way for more democratic processes in the future.

When it comes to social and community perceptions of displacement, the programme has proven to be highly ambiguous. On the one hand, some former slum-dwellers have shown their satisfaction with the change to formal housing because it means they are no longer seem as shacks people, a term used with a highly pejorative meaning. Thus, they see a promising future with higher social recognition and acceptance. On the other hand, other former slum-dwellers have expressed their frustration. They argue that, after displacement, the feeling of isolation and marginalization has increased, and that previously enjoyed collective solidarities and identities have now been lost. Thus, this research confirms that there are indeed multiple subjectivities (Beier and Strava 2020) and that perceptions of displacement highly depend on personal trajectories. For this reason, it is necessary to avoid standard, one-size-fits-all solutions that ignore the specific context and reality of the affected population at hand (Banque Mondiale 2006).

Lessons learnt

One of the main lessons learnt from this research is not to generalise when studying displacement, in this case, in Casablanca. As chapter 2 showed, not everyone was displaced to the periphery or to a different province. The main effects from displacement differ depending on whether someone experienced soft or hard displacement. For instance, in the case of beneficiaries of soft displacement operations, it seems that the change to formal housing has had a higher impact than displacement itself. However, in the case of beneficiaries of hard displacement operations, it is very likely that both the change to formal housing and displacement have had a strong impact. This is very likely the case because, in addition to the new bills and payments that former slum-dwellers now have to make, there are extra transportation costs and social feelings of metropolitan reject that beneficiaries of soft displacement are less likely to suffer from. In spite of

having been relocated to a new environment and having to pay extra costs, these residents still live in the prefecture and thus are closer to their original social and spatial environment.

Thus, social space and practice as understood by Lefebvre is a combination of both the technical changes made by the programme and the subjective perceptions and daily experiences of slum-dwellers. The main lesson to be learnt from this is that development is not only a technical but also a social matter, and that, in order to be successful, development strategies must not only come from above, but also from below.

On a different note, it is important to once again emphasize the nature of the sources used in this work. Having to rely on media sources, in an authoritarian country with limited freedom of press, presents certain limitations. The information obtained cannot be taken at face value, and this means that an extra effort has to be made in contrasting the facts whenever possible. In order to overcome this limitation, and especially when dealing with subjective information and population perceptions like chapter 3 does, a good idea is to resort to academic literature that is based on fieldwork and interviews. This way, it may be easier to obtain first hand, accurate information.

Questions for further research

Although this work has shed light on the displacement dynamics of the VSB in Casablanca and its subsequent ambiguous effects, further research will be necessary in order to clarify why slum-dwellers from certain prefectures of arrondissement experience soft displacement whereas slum-dwellers from other prefectures of arrondissement experience hard displacement. As chapter 2 showed, a trend was perceived at the district level. Does this have anything to do with slum-dwellers being treated as electoral all-

rounders? Or with specific political objectives that justify the peripheral displacement of some slum-dwellers but not others?

Last but not least, this topic is an excellent opportunity for doing fieldwork research. As time goes by and former slum-dwellers build themselves a new life in their new neighbourhoods, it would be very valuable to talk to them and see whether their perceptions on displacement have changed in the middle term, and if so, how. Moreover, it will be interesting to see how the political mobilisation situation evolves in the next years, and whether a more organised civil society develops thanks to this. Although the VSB started in 2004, it is still in its implementation phase, and for this reason it will be necessary to wait a few years in order to find answers to some of the questions that are now being posed.

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