

**A Kingdom of New Cities: The National Aspirations, Urban Imaginaries, and
Politics of Contemporary New City Building in Morocco**

Laurence Côté-Roy
Department of Geography
McGill University, Montréal

Submitted July 2021

A thesis submitted to McGill University
In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

© Laurence Côté-Roy 2021



Zenata Eco-City, October 2018 (Photo: Laurence Côté-Roy)



New city of Tamesna, August 2016 (Photo: Laurence Côté-Roy)



Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Benguerir Green City, November 2018 (Photo: Laurence Côté-Roy)

Acknowledgements

Although producing a doctoral dissertation is often portrayed as—and indeed has frequently felt like—a solitary exercise, the biggest illusion of this enterprise is that it is an individual project. The reflections underpinning this dissertation are the product of countless relationships formed and conversations shared, and were shaped through invaluable external encouragements, support, and forms of care. Upon writing these lines, I am indebted to many people who have each contributed to making this research possible.

First and foremost, I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. Sarah Moser, for her incomparable mentorship, incredible availability, and encouragement throughout my PhD. Her faith in me, her enthusiasm for my research, and her constant readiness to discuss ideas and provide feedback on manuscripts were a tremendous source of motivation and help that were indispensable in the completion of this dissertation. I am deeply thankful for her commitment to my professional development and for the numerous opportunities for collaborations she provided, grant applications she included me in, and conference presentations she enabled, which have made my experience as a PhD student an extremely formative and rewarding one. Thank you also, Sarah, for all the working lunches, snacks, reference letters, and other forms of support, and for encouraging me to aim high, take chances, and believe in my own abilities. I could not have asked for a better mentor to help me navigate the doctoral degree as both an intellectual and personal challenge. I would also like to thank members of my supervisory committee, Dr. Jon Unruh and Dr. Koenraad Bogaert, for their guidance and advice throughout the PhD, and in relation to my future career and professional plans.

Many thanks are also due to my friends and colleagues from the geography department at McGill, as well as past and present members of the New Cities Lab for creating a stimulating and collaborative work environment, for their willingness to share their insights and experiences and provide feedback on ideas, and more broadly for investing their time and efforts in making the department feel like a community. Thanks to Joanna for reminding me that the best way to eat a horse is one piece at a time, to Emma and Kerstin for being great peers and listeners, and to Dave for taking such good care of Burnside Hall 3rd floor spaces, but most importantly of all its occupants. Thank you also to Ellie, Lauren, Sarah, Michelle, and Alyssa who were there from the beginning and whose unfaltering moral support, advice, love, and friendship helped carry me to the finish line, even from far away, and even—or especially—during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This research would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, from whom I gratefully received a master's research scholarship and a Joseph-Armand-Bombardier Doctoral scholarship. I am also thankful for the financial assistance provided by my supervisor Dr. Sarah Moser, the Department of Geography at McGill University, the Institute for the Study of International Development at McGill University, the Rathlyn Fieldwork Award, the Lorne Trottier Science Accelerator Fellowship, which enabled me to conduct two rounds of field research in Morocco and to travel

to various international conferences to disseminate research results and exchange ideas with other specialists in my field.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation and warmest thanks to everyone I met in Morocco and who was involved in this research. I acknowledge with gratitude the kindness and hospitality that was demonstrated towards me throughout my fieldwork by actors of new city development and residents of new cities under construction who graciously accepted to give up their time to be interviewed. I am especially thankful to residents for giving me their trust in sharing their individual and intimate experiences of the projects and for welcoming me into their daily life. Special thanks are also extended to my research assistant for his friendship and reliability, and for his unfailing dedication and all-round positive attitude during fieldwork. Thanks to Aurélie and others who housed me during my time in Morocco, and who generously welcomed me in their lives and introduced me to their friends and family. Thank you for being my home-away-from-home and for showing me Morocco through your eyes.

Enfin, je remercie ma famille, Michel, Mylène, Maude, Laurie et petite Fannie, ainsi que mon conjoint et meilleur allié Simon, pour leurs encouragements et leur amour à travers les hauts et les bas qui ont ponctué mes dernières années aux études supérieures. Votre soutien continu, offert par le biais de votre présence en personne ou au bout du fil, vos envois culinaires et votre écoute m'ont portée à travers cette aventure doctorale. À Simon surtout, merci pour ta patience, ta présence à mes côtés, tes conseils précieux et ton indulgence alors que nos conversations depuis les cinq dernières années ont souvent été accaparées par mon sujet de recherche. Merci d'avoir eu confiance en moi et en ma capacité d'atteindre mes objectifs et d'avoir su habilement m'insuffler cette confiance lors d'instant de doute.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	vii
Abstract.....	viii
Résumé.....	ix
Chapter 1 : Introduction: Investigating Morocco's new cities.....	1
1.1 Setting the scene: Building a kingdom of new cities for national development	1
1.2 Research Focus and Objectives.....	5
1.3 Theoretical assumptions and research approach: New cities as material, discursive, and networked constructions	10
1.4 Thesis structure	12
Chapter 2 : Literature review: New cities, models in motion, and trends in entrepreneurial urbanization.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Contemporary new city building: Emergence of a subfield of urban research	18
2.3 Mobile policies and globally circulating urban imaginaries	33
2.4 Trends in entrepreneurial urbanization	44
2.5 Conclusion	53
Chapter 3 : Methodology	56
3.1 Introduction.....	56
3.2 Conducting 'global' urban research on new cities	57
3.3 Conducting field research in Morocco's new cities: Site selection, field logistics and research context.....	59
3.4 Data collection in Morocco's new cities	65
3.5 Approaches for data analysis	76
3.6 Positionality, reflexivity, and limitations of this research.....	79
3.7 Summary and conclusions	84
Preamble to chapter 4.....	85
Chapter 4 : 'Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?' The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa	86
4.1 Introduction.....	86
4.2 New city models on the move.....	88
4.3 'The last piece of cake': Framing the new city-building agenda through the 'Africa rising' narrative	90
4.4 Enablers, advocates and boosters: Facilitating new cities in Africa	92
4.5 'Deserving the new city' and 'right to development'	98
4.6 'Africa Rising' and problematic assumptions on modernity and development	101

4.7 Fostering a diversity of African urbanisms	103
References	105
Preamble to chapter 5	110
Chapter 5 : A kingdom of new cities: Morocco's national Villes Nouvelles strategy	111
5.1 A kingdom of new cities	111
5.2 National development through new cities	114
5.3 Modernization, persistent authoritarianism, and urban entrepreneurialism in Morocco	116
5.4 Rise of the new city solution: Motives, actors, and projects	118
5.5 Building new cities: Chaos and confusion beneath a 'coherent' national strategy	125
5.6 Conclusion	135
References	137
Preamble to chapter 6	143
Chapter 6 : Fast urban model-making: Constructing Moroccan urban expertise through Zenata Eco-City	144
6.1 Introduction	144
6.2 Models in motion: Mobile policies, urban modelling, and emergent new city models	147
6.3 A Moroccan eco-city: Zenata's national goals and global modeling ambitions	149
6.4 Making a model before a city: Unpacking Zenata's model-making strategies	153
6.5 Fast urban model-making and expertise without content?	161
6.6 Conclusion	163
References	165
Preamble to chapter 7	171
Chapter 7 : Living in a 'promising machine': Resident perceptions and experiences in/of Morocco's new cities	172
7.1 Introduction	172
7.2 'Urban fantasies' from below	175
7.3 Prospects, promises, and possibilities of Morocco's new cities	179
7.4 Living in a 'promising machine': Unfulfilled dreams, visions, and desires in Morocco's new cities	182
7.5 'Standing by' or giving up: Broken promises and demanding better urban futures	194
7.6 Conclusion	198
References	200
Chapter 8 : Conclusion	205
8.1 Chapter overviews	205
8.2 Contributions and significance of findings	209
8.3 Directions for future research	213
8.4 Final comments	216

Bibliography	218
Appendices.....	247
Appendix A: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city-building actors.....	247
Appendix B: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city residents (Tamesna).....	249
Appendix C: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city residents (Zenata Eco-City).....	252
Appendix D: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city residents (Benguerir Green City) ...	254

List of Figures

Figure 5.1 Geographical distribution of Morocco's new cities.....	119
Figure 5.2. Morocco's primary new city-building actors (light gray), their subsidiaries (white), and links to city projects (dark gray) through their affiliations to the government and ties to the king's administration.	128
Figure 7.1. Tamesna (left) and Benguerir Green City (right) in opposition to their non-urban setting ...	183
Figure 7.2. Encroachment of symbols of rurality and rural land uses in Morocco's new cities (left: Benguerir Green City, center and right: Tamesna)	184
Figure 7.3. Example of water wells in the existing town of Benguerir (left) and their contrast with the spectacular architecture of Benguerir Green City's new University campus (right)	188
Figure 7.4 Cloud of dark smoke from neighbouring industries visible from within Zenata Eco-City	191

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Main characteristics of new cities in which I conducted fieldwork	62
Table 3.2 Number of interviews conducted by participant group, interview method, and new city affiliation.....	65
Table 5.1 New city projects in Morocco	120
Table 6.1 Forms of policy research carried out to assemble the Zenata Eco-City project and model	155
Table 7.1 Main characteristics of new cities investigated.....	180

Abstract

Since 2004, Morocco has been engaged in an ambitious national new city-building strategy, introduced by the state to address challenges related to uncontrolled urbanization and to support economic growth across the kingdom. With 19 new city projects currently underway, Morocco is among the most active countries in the world in building new cities from scratch. This doctoral thesis critically investigates Morocco's contemporary city-building activities as a strategy for national development, contextualised in the broader wave of new city construction in the Global South and on the African continent. It explores the interplay between the various scales at which the new city imaginary is deployed, as well as the differing perspectives of those building new cities and those affected by them. First, I situate Morocco's new city building within the enthusiasm for new city development across African countries, by exploring the networks of actors supporting new city construction, and the powerful rhetoric of elite stakeholders and seductive narratives on 'Africa's rise', which are facilitating the proliferation of new cities on the continent. Second, through an overview of Morocco's national 'Villes Nouvelles' strategy and projects, I examine the unique local forces shaping new city building in the kingdom, shedding light on the increasingly speculative, opaque, and ambiguous practices of an authoritarian and entrepreneurial state committed to new city building as a development strategy. Third, I investigate Morocco's ambitions to become a city-building 'expert' in Africa through a critical analysis of Zenata Eco-City, a new city project that is being promoted as an urban 'model' for export, before the new city has fully materialized in built form. Finally, through a focused analysis of three examples of new city projects in Morocco, I explore how the globally circulating new city imaginary and aspirations for the kingdom's urban future are being challenged and reinterpreted through the experiences of residents living in and around or being displaced by Morocco's new cities. This doctoral thesis makes unique contributions to scholarship on the global new city-building trend and expands the theoretical approaches used to examine new city projects by adding to urban policy mobilities literature and theories on urban entrepreneurialism.

Résumé

Depuis 2004, le Maroc s'est engagé dans une ambitieuse stratégie nationale de construction de villes nouvelles dans le but de relever les défis liés à l'urbanisation incontrôlée et de promouvoir la croissance économique dans tout le royaume. Avec 19 projets en cours de développement, le Maroc figure parmi les pays les plus actifs au monde dans la construction de villes nouvelles créées *ex nihilo*. Cette thèse de doctorat analyse la construction de villes nouvelles contemporaines au Maroc en tant que stratégie de développement national, dans le contexte de la prolifération de projets similaires à travers le Sud global et sur le continent africain. Elle explore l'interaction entre les différentes échelles spatiales auxquelles l'imaginaire de la ville nouvelle est déployé, ainsi que les perspectives divergentes des acteurs impliqués dans leur construction et de ceux affectés par leur matérialisation. Tout d'abord, je situe la construction de villes nouvelles au Maroc au sein de l'engouement plus vaste pour ce modèle de développement urbain dans les pays africains. J'explore les réseaux d'acteurs qui soutiennent la construction de villes nouvelles ainsi que la rhétorique puissante des élites politiques et économiques et les récits séduisants sur « l'essor de l'Afrique », qui facilitent la prolifération de villes nouvelles sur le continent. Deuxièmement, par l'entremise d'une présentation de la stratégie nationale et des divers projets en cours au Maroc, j'examine les forces locales qui façonnent la construction de villes nouvelles dans le royaume. Ce faisant, je mets en lumière les pratiques de plus en plus spéculatives, opaques et ambiguës d'un État autoritaire et entrepreneurial engagé dans la construction de villes nouvelles comme stratégie de développement. Troisièmement, je me penche sur les ambitions du Maroc qui tente de se positionner en tant qu'« expert » de la construction de villes nouvelles en Afrique. J'analyse de manière critique l'Éco-Cité Zenata, un projet de ville nouvelle érigée en tant que « modèle » urbain à exporter, avant que la ville ne soit entièrement achevée. Je procède finalement à une analyse ciblée de trois villes nouvelles au Maroc en m'attardant à la façon dont l'imaginaire des villes nouvelles qui circule dans le monde et les aspirations pour l'avenir urbain du royaume sont remis en question et réinterprétés par les citoyens qui habitent à l'intérieur et autour des villes nouvelles ou qui sont déplacés par celles-ci. Cette thèse doctorale apporte une contribution originale aux études émergentes entourant la tendance mondiale de la construction de villes nouvelles en plus d'élargir les approches théoriques utilisées pour examiner les projets de villes en développement en contribuant à la littérature sur la mobilité des politiques urbaines et aux théories sur l'urbanisme entrepreneurial.

Chapter 1: Introduction: Investigating Morocco's new cities

1.1 Setting the scene: Building a kingdom of new cities for national development

The first time I visited Morocco as part of my doctoral research project in 2016, I was struck by the number of construction sites dotting the landscape. From new luxury condos, villas, or more modest apartment buildings to larger infrastructure projects, my attention was drawn to the machinery actively building up new urban skylines, and to the sparkling billboards promoting yet more construction and urban transformation to come. Upon returning to Morocco for further research in 2018, I observed the speed at which the kingdom's urban landscape was changing, noticing that whole neighbourhoods, office buildings, and large urban parks had materialized in the span of my two-year absence. Across Morocco, urban change is progressing at a scale and pace that is unfamiliar in contemporary North American cities and beyond the realm of rapidly urbanizing countries and emerging economies in the Global South. This urban transformation is not unfolding evenly across all cities and regions, and urban poverty is frequently intertwined with the emergence of these impressive landscapes of newness and urban regeneration.

Since the late 1990s, the kingdom of Morocco has been engaged in a veritable urban revolution. Contextualized in the broader wave of urban transformation sweeping the African continent (Grant, 2015; Watson, 2014), the kingdom has actively rolled out plans and made hefty investments to harness the benefits of urbanization and remake the kingdom's cities into competitive centers for the attraction of capital and the promotion of economic growth (Kanai and Kutz, 2011). Shaped significantly by King Mohammed VI's accession to the throne in 1999, and his entrepreneurial vision for development (Bogaert, 2018; Kanai and Kutz, 2011), Morocco's cities have profoundly transformed as dozens of urban mega-projects and infrastructure upgrading schemes have been launched including social housing projects, nation-wide transport infrastructure, and large-scale 'prestige' commercial and tourism-related developments (Barthel, 2010; Barthel and Planel, 2010; Bogaert, 2012, 2015; Mouloudi, 2014).

By far the most impressive expression of Morocco's rapid urban transformation is the kingdom's commitment to new city building. Beyond the new construction and rising mega-projects changing the face of Morocco's existing cities, new cities developed entirely from scratch are emerging around Morocco's main metropolises or being erected on distant greenfield sites, creating completely new urban fabric. New city projects emerging in Morocco are part of

an ambitious state-led initiative that mirrors similar state-driven development strategies based on new city building adopted in other emerging economies in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America (Moser, Forthcoming; Moser et al., 2015). Nationwide new city construction in Morocco was initiated in 2004 through the state-led ‘Villes Nouvelles’ (New Cities) strategy, spearheaded by Morocco’s Ministry of Habitat and Urban Planning (MHU), which outlined the development of over a dozen brand-new cities to address challenges related to rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, and to support economic growth across the kingdom. Since the introduction of the national Villes Nouvelles strategy, and following King Mohammed VI’s promotion and support of ambitious urban investments and megaprojects, construction has begun on 19 new cities of different sizes and driving concepts, involving an increasingly varied array of public, ‘hybrid’, and private actors (Barthel and Zaki, 2011; Zemni and Bogaert, 2009). The multiple new city projects underway in Morocco, and the vast resources mobilized to implement them represent an ambitious strategy of territorial management and national development, where individual new city ventures are closely aligned with broader national public programmes (Barthel, 2016) and central development objectives in the kingdom, while also embodying King Mohammed VI’s city-centric vision for modernization and development.

In Morocco’s major established cities, large-scale billboards and other advertisement posters promote new urban lifestyles and improved living standards for the country’s emerging middle class and economic elite in wholly new urban environments built on a tabula rasa. These ads and the official narratives accompanying new cities under construction in Morocco convey powerful imaginaries and visions of urban futures that are shaped by national development ambitions and globally circulating ideas on ‘world class’ cities that often stand in stark contrast with realities of the urban majority.

1.1.1 Morocco in a world of new cities

Morocco’s current city-building activities do not represent the kingdom’s first experiences with new city development. Like several nations in the Global South and across the African continent, new cities were actively developed across the Kingdom under colonialism, during the French protectorate which lasted from 1912 to 1956, and following Morocco’s independence. Despite the many parallels that can be drawn between contemporary master-planned cities and past new city experiments in the kingdom (Rousseau and Harroud, 2019),

Morocco's 'holistically designed "instant cities"' (Murray, 2015b: 509) are also emerging within a global trend in new city building, which has attracted growing academic attention in recent years (see for example Datta, 2015; Herbert and Murray, 2015; Keeton, 2011; Moser, 2020; Moser et al., 2015; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014). Although new master-planned cities were previously considered a relic of the past, associated with postwar reconstruction (Wakeman, 2016), periods of colonial expansion (Morris and Winchester, 2005) or high modernist post-independence ventures such as Brasilia and Chandigarh (Hall, 2014 [1988]; Rossman, 2016; Scott, 1998; Vale, 2008 [1992]), holistically designed cities planned from a tabula rasa have made a comeback over the last two decades (Keeton and Provoost, 2019; Moser, 2015). Increasingly normalized as a strategy of development, new cities are enthusiastically adopted in emerging economies of the Global South as a solution to pressing urbanization challenges, and as a way to 'leapfrog' development, boost economic growth, and reposition host countries on the global map of 'competitive' cities (Moser et al., 2015).

Over 150 of new cities have been developed in more than 40 countries since the late 1990s, representing the most significant pace and scale of new city construction since the colonial era (Keeton and Provoost, 2019; Moser, 2015). Initially concentrated in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, new city building is now a development strategy that is being adopted in emerging economies in Latin America and increasingly prominently on the African continent (Keeton and Provoost, 2019; Moser et al., 2015). Both in Africa and beyond, the construction of new cities from scratch mobilizes a great amount of resources including land, energy, and capital, frequently normalizing displacements, expropriations, land grabbing and the loss of agricultural land in the name of improved urban futures and seductive claims on the production of 'greener', 'smarter', and more efficient cities (Datta, 2015b; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021; Van Noorloos, Avianto, et al., 2019; Zoomers et al., 2017). In many countries, including Morocco, new cities are enthusiastically regarded by ruling elites as the 'optimal' and at times, the only meaningful option to address urban challenges, as well as an attractive opportunity to experiment with new urban models without being constrained by existing urban fabric and politics (Bhan, 2014; Murray, 2015a, 2015b).

New city building broadly marks a contrast with more standard planning practices focused on implementing piecemeal changes in existing urban settings. However, scholarship on contemporary master-planned developments does not employ a consistent vocabulary to discuss

new city developments, nor does it offer a unanimous definition of the phenomenon. In this research, I focus on how and why a variety of urban mega-projects envision and brand themselves as new cities. My definition of ‘new cities’ is largely based on the promoted ambitions of their builders to create new urban mega developments from scratch, that are (to varying degrees) geographically and administratively separate from established cities, and project a distinct brand, built identity, and an aspirational and ideologically charged vision of the future (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021).

While there is now a growing body of literature focused on analysing examples of new city building globally, there is a dearth of research on countries that have adopted national city building schemes such as Morocco, where most of the new city projects remain unexamined. With 19 new cities under construction, Morocco is presently the country with the most new city projects underway on the African continent, and one of the most active countries in the world in building new cities from scratch after China (Shepard, 2015). Although initial new city experiments in Morocco attracted mixed responses from the media, the general population, and planning professionals (Harroud, 2017a), and several projects have yet to reach a stage of completion, new ventures are being launched nationally and Morocco’s city-building actors are currently enthusiastically promoting their urban expertise across the African continent. While there has been substantial coverage of the kingdom’s new city ventures in national media, Morocco’s overarching city-building strategy and most recent new city projects remain underexplored in academic research. More specifically, no publications to date have examined Morocco’s national city-building ambitions and projects in relation to the global city building trend and its expression on the African continent, and there are presently no investigations of Morocco’s city-building activities beyond the kingdom across other African countries. Furthermore, although there is growing research interest in new city-building schemes worldwide, and an increasing number of scholarly publications on new cities in Africa more specifically (Carmody and Owusu, 2016; Grant, 2015; Herbert and Murray, 2015; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014), few analyses have so far focused on the impacts of new city construction on citizens, and on the embodied or lived dimensions of new master-planned developments.

With the announcement of ever more new city ventures globally there is a need to gain a better understanding of how and with what consequences globally circulating ideas on new cities

are mobilized and adapted in different contexts, the broader implications for urban governance and the production of urban space, the impacts of new city building on the lives of their pioneering and future generations of residents, and the ramifications of city-building programs for national development plans. Given the significant impact of the resource-intensive new city model proliferating around the world both for established cities and promoted urban futures, this thesis seeks to contribute empirical and theoretical insights to the expanding subfield of research on new cities, and current understandings of the global city-building trend.

1.2 Research Focus and Objectives

This doctoral thesis critically investigates Morocco's contemporary city-building activities as a strategy for national development, contextualised in the broader wave of new city development in the Global South and on the African continent. In particular, it explores how and with what consequences new cities under development are transforming the kingdom's urban landscape and modes of urban spatial production; how new cities are more broadly involved in the actualization of national development priorities; what visions for development are promoted through the new city imaginary; and whose vision and interests are advanced or curtailed through the proliferation of new city ventures. Through the investigation of the overarching city-building trend in Africa and Morocco's national city-building initiative, as well as a focused study of three individual new city projects – Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City – this research pursues four main objectives:

- 1)** Situate Morocco's new city-building activities within the kingdom's broader urban development trajectory, national development ambitions, and the global city-building trend and its expression on the African continent.
- 2)** Investigate the global and local networks of actors and knowledge that are supporting new city building and facilitating the mobilization and circulation of new city models and ideas within and beyond Morocco.
- 3)** Analyse the official rationales, motivations, arguments, and urban imaginaries deployed to support and legitimize new city building as a strategy of development.

- 4) Explore the ways in which official new city representations and promoted urban futures are contested, negotiated, or reinterpreted in the built landscape and through the lived experiences of resident populations affected by the new city projects and plans.

This research investigates Morocco's new cities as both an expression of the global city-building trend and a reflection of the kingdom's national aspirations and vision for development. My examination of the new city-building phenomenon in Morocco focuses on how the new city imaginary is enacted at various scales, through an investigation of the interplay between the global city-building trend as it is manifested on the African continent, the Moroccan kingdom's national city-building initiative, and three local examples of new city projects in Morocco. Through my focus on the various actors, networks and narratives mobilized in the development of new cities, I investigate both the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perspectives on Morocco's new cities, embodied by the discourse of city-building actors and the visions and experiences of pioneering new city residents and citizens affected by the projects.

This doctoral thesis seeks to make an original contribution to the expanding body of knowledge and corpus of empirical studies on new master-planned cities developing in the Global South, and to contribute to expanding the theoretical approaches used to examine new city projects, including by engaging with urban policy mobilities literature, and scholarship on varieties of urban entrepreneurialism across contexts (Lauermann, 2018; Phelps and Miao, 2020). Urban policy mobilities literature in particular has only been minimally connected to the study of new cities globally and has never been employed in the analysis of new city projects in Morocco, which represents a conceptual contribution of this thesis. In doing so, this research seeks to contribute to the development of a new vocabulary and set of theoretical tools to explain urban transformation in the form of new city building, a phenomenon almost exclusively concentrated in the Global South (Moser et al., 2015), and draws attention to the limitations and necessary adaptations of dominant bodies of theory rooted in urban experiences of the Global North to explain ongoing urban change beyond Euro-America (Bunnell, 2015a; Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Roy, 2009a; Watson, 2009a).

As a leading city-building actor in the world and on the African continent, Morocco represents a particularly interesting case through which to analyse local expressions of the global new city-building trend and presents opportunities to extend our understanding of more specific

aspects of the new city-building phenomenon that so far remain underexplored. In particular, my empirical context sheds light on the dynamics of new city construction at the scale of a nation in a context where new city building is formally deployed as a national strategy and imbricated with national development goals and the actualization of a state-endorsed vision of the nation's urban future. My research on Morocco's new cities also probes the specific configuration of actors and the power dynamics involved in new city development in the kingdom. It investigates how urban entrepreneurial strategies are enacted in a context where state power is centralized, far-reaching, and opaque,¹ and where the distinction between public and private sector actors is fluid and characterized by frequently overlapping roles. Through the Moroccan case, I also draw attention to the emergence of a new prominent actor in the circulation of new city models and ideas, and critically investigate how this new role for Morocco relates to the kingdom's ambitions to be repositioned on the Global stage.

As a significant empirical contribution of this thesis to a gap in research on contemporary new cities, my analysis of Morocco's new city projects through the preliminary experiences of residents variously impacted by the new developments also provides a foundation for future research on the materiality and embodied experiences of new 'urban fantasies' (Watson, 2014), and for the theorization of the new city-building phenomenon 'from below' (Bunnell, 1999; Mouloudi, 2010). In including the point of view of urban citizens in this analysis of Morocco's national city-building initiative and individual new city projects, this research sheds light on counter-narratives surrounding new city development (Jazeel, 2015), and on the reinterpretation of new city branding campaigns and promoted visions and promises through everyday experiences of new master-planned city spaces.

This thesis more broadly articulates questions on the implications of new city building for urban futures in Africa and in the Global South, what is driving the trend and its particularities on the African continent, and new ways to think about new cities in relation to urban development, urbanization, and the production and use of urban space.

¹ The Kingdom of Morocco is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy in which the king, as Chief of State, retains extensive control over state and political affairs and the country's vision for development.

1.2.1 New cities, Morocco, and Africa

In an effort to understand new city building in Morocco in relation to the broader global city-building trend, this thesis positions Morocco's new city-building activities in relation to new city construction on the African continent, rather than using the more commonly adopted geographic comparative frame of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region or broader context of the 'Arab world' (see for example Barthel and Verdeil, 2013; Barthel and Vignal, 2014; Bogaert, 2015, 2018; Cattedra, 2010; Zemni and Bogaert, 2011). The contextualization of Morocco's city-building activities within the broader trend of new city building on the African continent in this thesis is motivated by two main reasons.

First, over the last two decades, the Moroccan state, namely through efforts spearheaded by King Mohammed VI, has taken distinct steps to reposition the kingdom both economically and politically within the African continent (Moisseron and Daguzan, 2017; Royaume du Maroc, 2015). Through speeches, programs, and legislations the king and state officials increasingly leverage Morocco's African identity, promoting policies that will foster new economic partnerships and means of cooperation with 'African brother countries' (Royaume du Maroc, 2017) to improve diplomatic relationships and expand the kingdom's interests on the continent. As examples of this recent shift, the Moroccan state has been actively lobbying several African monetary organizations to extend the nation's economic interests in Africa (Namane and Gharbaoui, 2017). In 2017, Morocco successfully garnered support for its return to the African Union, and was accepted into to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) following the development of new bilateral relationships with many African countries (Moisseron and Daguzan, 2017). Morocco's religious diplomacy has also been extensively focused on the African continent in recent years, providing assistance to African nations facing the effects of religious fundamentalism by diffusing Morocco's tolerant 'middle ground' Islamic teachings through the training of Imams (Baylocq and Hlaoua, 2016; Côté-Roy, in press). The Moroccan administration has also been exerting soft power across the region (Dorsey, 2018) through a multiplication of Royal visits in over 25 African countries, and diverse infrastructure gifts to African states, such as Tanzania's new football stadium (Doba, 2017) and the construction or refurbishment of mosques in Mali, Guinea, Senegal, and Benin (Baylocq and Hlaoua, 2016; Moisseron and Daguzan, 2017).

Second, new cities in Morocco are emerging as several other countries on the African continent are similarly unveiling ambitious plans for new city projects. Across the continent, attractive predictions for the growth of domestic consumer markets premised on the prophetic expansion of the African middle class (Grant, 2015; Pitcher, 2012; Splinter and Leynseele, 2019) have made real estate and property development attractive sectors of investment, including through the development of wholly new master-planned cities (Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019; Grant, 2015; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014). As my research demonstrates, within this continent-wide excitement surrounding new cities, Morocco not only emerges as the most enthusiastic and active city builder, developing more cities than any country in Africa, but also as a new key player in the city-building trend facilitating the proliferation of new cities on the continent. Several of Morocco's new cities, through their branding and stated ambitions, reflect the kingdom's recent pivot towards Africa. As one of the important contributions of this thesis, my research shows how, in recent years, Morocco's city-building actors have been promoting their urban development expertise within the African continent by circulating new city models and striking financing and consulting partnerships to support other African nations in the development of their own new city plans.

Contextualizing my analysis of Morocco's new city building within the broader African urban context and continental trends is an opportunity to further explore the new networks, connections, and partnerships being developed between Morocco and other African states through new city-building activities. In doing so, I investigate the role of new cities in supporting and advancing the kingdom's ambitions in Africa and analyze the power dynamics that emerge from these new geographies of (urban) development on the continent. While Morocco has traditionally been left out of scholarship on urban Africa by being more frequently analyzed in parallel with urban trends in the Middle East or more closely confined to the Maghreb (see for example Baduel, 2009; Zaki, 2011) this thesis contributes an alternative way of 'worlding' Morocco in urban studies literature (McCann et al., 2013; Ong, 2011). This framing both takes into account the country's own representational ambitions and strategic aim to be considered as an African nation (as opposed to being oriented towards Europe, as Morocco has been for decades), and the possibilities offered by this comparative frame, which situates Morocco within broader analyses of contemporary African urbanism as a new key actor of urban development in Africa.

1.3 Theoretical assumptions and research approach: New cities as material, discursive, and networked constructions

Several of Morocco's new cities, like many new city projects underway in Africa and across the Global South, are at early stages of construction. As plans and visions for the new cities are developed, these new mega-developments are at once built up 'in the place of language, in the architecture of words' (De Boeck, 2011: 279), and through the reality of construction sites. A key focus running through the empirical chapters of this thesis relates to the production of meaning surrounding new cities, and associated processes of normalization and legitimization, as well as the negotiation and opposition of narratives, visions, and discourses surrounding new city building as a development strategy. This thesis is organised around the investigation of these narratives and the various spaces and instances in and through which they are constructed and reinterpreted, including through official reports and policies, international conference events, masterplans, marketing content, promotional websites, videos and other visualizations, material landscapes, and individual experiences. By investigating how new cities are both materially and rhetorically constituted across the kingdom and in Africa more broadly, I also reflect on the ways both of these (material and discursive) processes interact, and on the tensions or contradictions that can arise, from the point of view of various stakeholders – including builders of new cities and residents impacted by their development – as urban visions, wishes, and desires are enacted into built form.

My analysis of the new city-building phenomenon is premised on theoretical assumptions broadly stemming from cultural geography's contributions to conceptualizations of discourse, landscape, and power. As large-scale, resource-intensive projects with national significance, Morocco's new cities and national city-building strategy are aspirational ventures designed to improve the kingdom's existing cities and approach towards urbanization. Beyond strategies developed to achieve more technical or material goals for economic development and infrastructure improvement, new cities also hold symbolic power (Acuto, 2010; Vale, 2008; Watson, 2014) and are key spaces through which various city-building countries in the Global South are representing themselves internally to their own nation, and externally to the rest of the world (Vale, 2008). By understanding (urban) landscapes as 'sites of discursive propagation' (Dixon and Jones III, 2004: 91), this thesis also investigates how Morocco's new cities are involved in the projection of a new image of the kingdom that draws from globally circulating

urban models, narratives, and ideals, while also being shaped by domestic and regional politics, priorities, and prerogatives.

This research moreover rests on the assumption that discourse, in all its forms, encompasses a particular vision of the world and can affect what individuals or groups think and how they act (Hay, 2000). Although discourse is most often conceived of as text and talk, it can also include visual representations (e.g. images, maps, models, drawings, landscapes) (Dixon and Jones III, 2004). Drawing on cultural geography's conceptualisation of discourse and its focus on power, I approach my research with the proposition that:

Any discourse regardless of its claims, cannot create mimesis (reveal the naked truth); rather, through its ideological distortions, it operates in the service of power (Duncan, 1993: 39).

Despite being contextualized within and informed by tangible demographic and socio-economic indicators and trends, the promotion of new city building as a strategy of national development in Morocco rests upon a specific (and selective) framing of the kingdom's most pressing challenges and assumptions on their root causes (Bacchi, 2012). Through the analysis of new city projects in Morocco and beyond, this thesis is less concerned with analyzing or determining the intrinsic 'validity' of new city building as a strategy for development, and more with interrogating the various narratives that produce representations of new cities as ideal investments into urban futures, which facilitate their development. In this research, I focus on the actors that produce and circulate these narratives and their motivations, and what alternative or competing visions are being erased or disregarded as a result. I reframe the construction of narratives surrounding new cities as an intrinsically political and ideological endeavour and interrogate taken-for-granted representations of new city-building as the 'only' or 'inevitable' approach to development (Bacchi, 2012). In doing so, I shed light on the divergent imaginaries and interests underpinning this form of urban development, understanding the built landscapes of new cities as important sites of negotiation of both meaning and uses of space, between those who produce it and those who consume and reinterpret it (Bunnell, 1999; Duncan and Duncan, 1988; Kong and Yeoh, 2003; Ley and Duncan, 1993).

This research more broadly draws on global-relational approaches in urban research (Prince, 2017; Robinson, 2015), which have been developing in recent years, namely following

important contributions within urban policy mobilities literature, and which promote a more topological understanding of cities through their networks and social relationships, rather than solely as bounded objects (Temenos and Ward, 2018). Following Robinson (2006: 121), this thesis engages with (new) cities as:

both a place (a site or territory) and as a series of unbounded, relatively disconnected and dispersed, perhaps sprawling and differentiated activities, made in and through many different kinds of networks stretching far beyond [their] physical extent.

This conceptualization of cities and global-relational approaches in urban research are aligned with overarching objectives in this thesis to analyze new cities, not solely as discrete material constructions, but also as a set of travelling ideas, assumptions, planning principles, and imaginaries, and through the networks of actors and knowledge that facilitate and shape their inception.

1.4 Thesis structure

This introductory chapter has laid out the general context and rationale for conducting this research, the broad objectives and theoretical assumptions underpinning my research approach, and has provided specifications on the research framing. Additionally, this chapter has outlined the broad empirical and theoretical contributions of this thesis towards the expanding subfield of research on new cities as well as the bodies of literature mobilized to analyze the new city-building phenomenon in Morocco and in Africa more broadly. In this section, I present the different chapters that constitute this thesis and contribute to fulfilling the research objectives outlined in the introduction.

Chapter 2, *Literature Review: New cities, models in motion, and trends in entrepreneurial urbanization*, is a critical review of the strands of literature which I centrally mobilize and contribute to in this thesis. Laid out in three sections, this chapter outlines the various contributions of these bodies of scholarship and provides an explanation of their relevance for analyzing the new master-planned city-building phenomenon within and beyond Morocco. First, I provide an overview of the emerging subfield of research on contemporary new master-planned cities in urban studies, with a focus on investigations of the trend on the African continent, and a discussion of gaps in scholarship, specifically in relation to research on

Morocco's contemporary new cities and accounts of new cities 'from below'. Second, I critically review how urban geographers have advanced urban policy mobilities research in recent years and discuss the importance of this body of scholarship for understanding the proliferation of new cities globally, their normalization as a strategy of development, and the emergence of new nodes and networks of circulation of new city models and ideas globally. Third, I discuss adaptations of theories on urban entrepreneurialism and the emergence of attendant concepts to explain urban transformations in globalizing cities of the South. I highlight the ways in which I engage with the concept of urban entrepreneurialism in this thesis to contextualize new city development in Morocco and in Africa, by building on emergent reflections on entrepreneurial states, speculative urbanism and government, and entrepreneurialism in authoritarian contexts.

In Chapter 3, *Methodology*, I present the mixed qualitative methods I used to carry out research in Morocco's new cities and investigate the expression of the city-building trend on the African continent. I begin by outlining the 'global' approaches for conducting urban research (Harrison and Hoyler, 2018) that inform this thesis, including participant observation at industry conferences on new cities, which provided key insights on the global circulation of norms and seductive narratives driving new city development on the African continent (Temenos and Ward, 2018). I then introduce my three field sites: Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City, followed by a discussion of fieldwork logistics and reflections on the particularities of conducting research in Morocco as a 'closed' authoritarian context (Koch, 2013a). The following section lays out my methods for recruiting participants and for data collection in these three new cities, including through elite interviews, semi-structured and conversational resident interviews, mobile or walking interviews, and the compilation of official documentation and grey literature. I then explain the approaches I used to analyse data, providing specifications on the processes of translation, transcription, and coding. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this study through a reflection on my positionality and underrepresented groups in this research.

Chapters 4 to 7 represent the empirical chapters of this doctoral thesis, which have been published in, submitted, or are in preparation for submission to academic journals. Information regarding publication venues, status, and authorship is provided in short statements at the start of each empirical chapter. These statements more broadly serve to situate the article within the thesis and provide additional context where necessary.

Chapter 4, *'Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?'* *The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa*, is the first empirical chapter of this thesis and is published in the journal *Urban Studies* (Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019). This manuscript critically explores the emerging new master-planned city-building trend on the African continent through an investigation into elite stakeholder rhetoric and seductive narratives on 'Africa's rise' which are facilitating the proliferation of new cities on the continent. The manuscript helps to situate Morocco's new city-building activities within the broader enthusiasm for new city development across African countries, as well as the driving narratives promoting the new city model in Africa. The article draws from several empirical examples of new cities planned or underway in Africa, including in Morocco, and examines the various actors involved in new city building across the continent, focusing on the complex networks and vested interests that support the creation of new cities. Building on policy mobilities literature, the article argues for the relevance of critically examining elite stakeholder rhetoric, which is employed to craft optimistic narratives on new city building and shut down critiques of projects across the continent. The chapter probes the consequences of elite stakeholder discourse for future urban development in Africa, through an investigation of the normalized assumptions on progress and modernity that travel with the new city model and reduce the range of urban visions that are put into circulation for Africa's urban future.

Chapter 5, *A kingdom of new cities: Morocco's national Villes Nouvelles strategy* provides the first overview of Morocco's national new city strategy and projects through a critical investigation of the main actors, motives and visions driving new city development across the kingdom. This manuscript is currently being revised for publication in *Geoforum*. It aims to contextualize Morocco's ambitious national city-building strategy within the global trend in new city building, as well as shed light on the particularities of the Moroccan city-building context and the unique local forces driving new city development in the kingdom. While new city building in Morocco is driven by the state and presented as a cohesive strategy in official discourse, the article sheds light on the inherent sources of ambiguity and confusion of the national initiative, embodied by the 'hybrid' role of city-building actors, the national strategy's unclear policy status, and a lack of coordination among new city projects underway. By critically analyzing the national strategy's murky implementation, the article highlights problems of accountability, transparency, and the lack of national coherence, which is presented as a

symptom of the increasingly speculative and opaque practices of an authoritarian and entrepreneurial state that has made an unprecedented commitment to the new city model of development.

Chapter 6, *Fast urban model-making: Constructing Moroccan urban expertise through Zenata Eco-City*, is an exploration of Morocco's ambitions to become a city-building 'expert' in Africa and is presently under review for publication in *Urban Geography*. The manuscript explores the promotion of Morocco's city-building expertise, through a critical analysis of Zenata Eco-City, a new city project that is fashioned into an urban model for export, and both packaged and circulated by its developers ahead of the new city's completion. Contributing to urban policy mobilities literature and expanding research on the global city-building trend and the rise of new city models, the chapter introduces the concept of 'fast model-making' to characterize Zenata's unconventional construction as a 'successful' replicable model long before the city is built. The article investigates the strategic vision supporting the creation of a new urban model intended for the African market, which aligns with Morocco's economic and diplomatic interests on the African continent, and unpacks the new urban model's unique development process. It explores the extensive process of policy research and 'learning' that paved the way for the model's construction and legitimation and analyzes how strategies to package the model for circulation produce narratives about the city's success and the expertise of its developers. In the absence of knowledge derived from the new city's implementation, the article raises concerns that Zenata's form of fast model-making amounts to the circulation of 'expertise without content'.

Chapter 7, *Living in a 'promising machine': Resident perceptions and experiences in/of Morocco's new cities*, is the final empirical chapter of this thesis, and is currently in preparation for submission to *International Development and Planning Review*. The manuscript addresses the gap in research surrounding the 'lived' dimensions of materializing new master-planned city projects worldwide. Drawing on extensive fieldwork and resident interviews in three new cities (Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City), this manuscript sheds light on the realities of residents living in or variously affected by new city development in the Moroccan context. Specifically, the article explores how state-promoted aspirations for Morocco's urban transformation are actually taking form through the kingdom's new cities, and how residents affected by the new cities' materialization variously engage with such promises for improved

urban futures in everyday life. In doing so, it draws attention to prevalent feelings of disillusionment surrounding the new cities' unfulfilled urban promises, primarily experienced through their unattained sense of urbanity, unrealized prospects for inclusive urban living, and unattained visions for orderly and ecologically conscious urban development. In addition to outlining residents' sources of frustration with the implementation of new city plans and broader apprehensions surrounding their development, the manuscript sheds light on the ways in which sources of disappointment in Morocco's new cities are enmeshed with critiques of the state and life in Morocco, and illuminate residents' wishes, desires, and demands for better urban futures in the kingdom. The chapter provides a foundation for future research on resident perceptions and experiences of new cities by suggesting that the themes developed to capture and explain lived realities in Morocco's new cities can have relevance beyond the kingdom to analyse new city projects materializing across the Global South.

Chapter 8, *Conclusion*, completes this thesis with a review of the main chapters and a discussion of how they connect to the literatures and primary research objectives outlined. In this final section, I more broadly explore links between the different sections of the thesis in order to highlight the broader empirical and theoretical contributions of this research overall. I conclude this section by providing several directions for future research on new master-planned city development within and beyond Morocco and the African continent.

Chapter 2: Literature review: New cities, models in motion, and trends in entrepreneurial urbanization

2.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to contextualize my research aims and topic within several key strands of scholarship to which I contribute in this thesis. Through a critical discussion of these bodies of scholarship, I provide relevant background on concepts and phenomena explored in subsequent chapters of this thesis, as well as a justification for my empirical and theoretical contributions to scholarship. The overarching aim of my research is to critically analyze Morocco's ongoing new city-building activities as a strategy of national development, contextualized within the expansion of the new city-building trend across the African continent and emerging economies in the Global South. I have grouped the literature that informs this thesis in three categories: 1) Contemporary new city building; 2) Mobile policies and globally circulating urban imaginaries; and 3) Trends in entrepreneurial urbanization. The intersections and frequent overlap in themes discussed in these areas of the literature provides the basis upon which I build my critical investigation of new city development in the kingdom. Crucially, the categories developed to structure this review of the literature support overarching objectives of this research to analyse the interplay between the various scales at which the new city model is deployed, and the ways in which new cities are shaped at once by those who produce new city spaces, policies, and imaginaries, and those who experience them.

The first section of this chapter is an exploration of the expanding subfield of urban research on new city projects around the world, which represents a foundational corpus of scholarship to which this thesis contributes. In this section, I examine how scholars have analyzed the new city-building phenomenon as a distinct contemporary wave of new city construction, and how they have broadly interpreted the main drivers of the trend. I also introduce the recent and expanding regional focus on new cities in Africa and gaps in the research on Morocco's new cities and resident experiences of new city projects. The second section provides a review of key concepts and contributions from urban policy mobilities literature in urban studies and geography, which I mobilize in this thesis to explicate the rapid proliferation of new city projects, and to analyze circulating urban imaginaries that are shaping new city visions globally. I review current theorizations of *how* urban policy travels, through

various agents, spaces, and urban models, outlining the growing focus on South-South networks of urban knowledge and recent publications on emergent ‘nodes’ of new city-building expertise. The third section is a discussion surrounding urban entrepreneurialism and the recent adaptation of related theories to the context of globalizing cities of the South, which I mobilize in this thesis to contextualize new city development in Africa and in Morocco. In this section, I highlight the ways in which I engage with the concept of urban entrepreneurialism in this thesis by building on emergent reflections on entrepreneurial states, speculative urbanism and government, and entrepreneurialism in authoritarian contexts.

2.2 Contemporary new city building: Emergence of a subfield of urban research

Over the past two decades, more than 150 wholly new city projects developed from scratch have been erected in over 40 countries worldwide, almost exclusively in emerging economies of the Global South (Moser et al., 2015; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). The surge in ambitious new city plans and construction since the late 1990s has attracted rising media and scholarly attention over the last five years, with articles on new tabula rasa developments featured in prominent international media outlets including *The Guardian*, *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Bloomberg*, *National Geographic*, *Le Monde*, and *BBC*. With the rapid expansion of new city plans globally, and the intensification of construction as more and more projects are launched, published scholarship on new city projects around the world has also expanded, and now forms a growing subfield in urban research. In this section, I review the recent empirical and conceptual contributions of this vibrant body of scholarship primarily by discussing how recent publications characterize the global trend in relation to past periods of prolific new city development,² and how scholars have analyzed the rationales behind contemporary new city

² While the focus in this review of the literature is on past and present periods of new city building to highlight the distinct features of contemporary new city projects discussed in the following empirical chapters, it should be noted that new cities are not the sole expression of mega-development around the world. A substantial body of scholarship is dedicated to mega-infrastructure development and large engineering projects, which have been a feature of newly independent states namely in Africa, where projects including dams (Amankwah-Amoah and Osabutey, 2017; Sneddon, 2015), transport networks (Jedwab and Storeygard, 2019), and power systems (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2003; Showers, 2011) were widely developed from the 1960s to spur industrialization and as part of strategies of nation-building (Scott, 1998). While similar aspirations for fast-tracked development underpin both new cities and mega-infrastructure projects, new cities are not as closely connected to objectives of industrialization (Datta, 2015b), and their inception as wholly new urban entities – with politico-administrative systems of management and an important residential component – draw attention to notions of urban governance and citizenship that are absent from primarily infrastructural projects. Recent scholarship explores the more direct parallels between the post-

ventures. I subsequently examine the growing regional focus on African new city projects, exploring how they have been variously conceptualized and critiqued in light of Africa's broader trends in urbanization and changing geographies of investment. I then review scholarship on new cities in Morocco, emphasizing the need for more research on contemporary projects that have received marginal scholarly attention to date. The last section draws attention to the gap in research on the 'lived' realities of new cities through a discussion of nascent studies focused on residents of new master-planned developments.

2.2.1 Defining the global trend: Ruptures and continuities with past waves of new city development

Despite the rapidly growing scholarly interest in the contemporary new master-planned city-building phenomenon, scholars use vastly different terms to describe new city projects under development, and there is no consensus surrounding a single definition of what constitutes a 'new city'. Vocabulary used by scholars to discuss new master-planned ventures include, for example, 'new towns' (Benazeraf, 2014; Bhattacharya and Sanyal, 2011; Keeton, 2011), 'satellite cities' (Splinter and Leynseele, 2019) 'future cities' (Ajibade, 2017), 'parallel cities' (Murray, 2017), 'new urban peripheries' (Buire, 2014a), 'instant cities' (Bagaeen, 2007), 'fast cities' (Datta, 2017) and 'neoliberal utopias' (Daher, 2013). Despite the absence of a common definition, scholars broadly conceptualize new city building, which implies the creation of new urban fabric from scratch, as a striking departure from more standard planning practices, which focus on carrying out gradual changes or interventions in existing urban settings (Murray, 2015b). Contrasting with attempts to further define the new city concept through developing a typology of their forms and functions (c.f. Keeton, 2011; Keeton & Provoost, 2019; Van Noorloos & Kloosterboer, 2018), in this thesis my focus is rather on how and why a variety of urban mega-projects envision and brand themselves as new cities. As such, I adopt a broader definition of the 'new city', which is largely informed by the promoted ambitions of their builders to create new urban mega developments from scratch, that are (to varying degrees) geographically and administratively separate from established cities, and project a distinct brand, built identity, and ideologically charged vision of the future (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021).

independence wave of state-driven large-scale infrastructure projects and the present-day (re)turn to forms of infrastructure-led development in many African states (see for e.g., Enns and Bersaglio, 2020; Müller-Mahn et al., 2021; Schindler and Kanai, 2021).

Far from being a new phenomenon, there have been several waves of new city building in recent history, with construction surging during particular historical periods including imperial expansion and settler colonialism (Morris and Winchester, 2005), the post second World War reconstruction era, and during the years following independence from colonial occupation in many countries (Rossman, 2016; Vale, 2008). The new city projects developed during these key moments in history have received comparatively far more attention than present-day new city ventures. For example, a substantial corpus of research focuses on ‘new towns’ developed in the vicinity of established cities following the second World War including in the United States, the Soviet Union, Iran, the United Kingdom, France, and a number of former British colonies, implemented as a solution to rising housing shortages, the rapid expansion of cities following the post-war population boom, and other systemic urban issues (Chaline, 1997; Choay, 1965; Fishman, 1982; Merlin, 1971; Osborn and Whittick, 1969). The subsequent wave of post-independence new city building in which new cities were constructed as seats of political power in newly independent nations have also been extensively analyzed by scholars, particularly in the fields of architecture and urban planning. Now-iconic new master-planned city projects such as Chandigarh (India), Brasilia (Brazil), and Islamabad (Pakistan), which have come to embody the new city form in the popular imaginary, have been examined as rare materializations of the Modernist planning doctrine and other influential planning theories at the time, as well as the ambitious and sometimes totalitarian visions of their now-infamous creators such as Le Corbusier (Hall, 2014; Kalia, 2000; Scott, 1998; Tauxe, 1996; Yakas, 2001).

Although recent new cities scholarship draws parallels between past and present periods of new city building, pointing out the legacy of utopian thinking and past experiments to improve society through newly planned environments (Datta, 2015b; Wakeman, 2016), or flagging continuities with the top-down approach and monumentalism of Modernist new cities (Murray, 2015b) and colonial new city experiments (Moser, 2015), new city projects currently rising globally are broadly characterised as a distinct trend in new city development, a view that is supported in this thesis. For example, Moser (2015) emphasizes key differences between the preceding wave of post-independence new city experiments and contemporary projects suggesting that, unlike state-led postcolonial capitals, new cities today are overwhelmingly driven by corporate interests and unprecedented private sector engagement, and developed through increasingly complex networks of foreign and domestic actors. She also flags the

departure from the civic and socialist-infused ideals of postcolonial capitals and their design as inclusive ‘cities for the masses’ (Moser, 2015: 33), suggesting that present-day new cities are rather inspired by increasingly entrepreneurial logics of urban development and characterized by exclusionary plans and lavish designs targeting the economic elite (Moser, 2020).

Similarly, Datta and Shaban’s (2017) recent edited collection, which explores the contemporary new city-building phenomenon through the conceptual lens of ‘fast cities’, identifies speed as a distinguishing aspect of contemporary projects, which are driven by the speculative ambitions of (ever more) entrepreneurial states, deployed at an increased pace, and on a grander scale. The shifting trends in urban entrepreneurial development, which are largely seen to underpin and shape new city construction and urban transformations in the Global South, will be discussed in more depth in section 2.4 of this chapter on trends in entrepreneurial urbanization.

2.2.2 New cities for power, profit, and prestige

As new city building progresses globally, there has been growing scholarly interest in understanding the rationales for new city creation, the reasons behind new cities’ appeal and popularity among political elites, as well as the various justifications for these ambitious and resource-intensive projects. Studies that examine the prevalent discourses that frame and legitimize the new city imaginary emphasize the importance of narratives on sustainability and ‘green’ or ‘eco’ development (Ajibade, 2017; Caprotti, 2014; Cugurullo, 2016; Koch, 2014b; Moser and Avery, 2021), high-tech development (Bunnell, 2015b; Cugurullo, 2018; Das, 2019; Datta, 2015b), modernity (Koch, 2010), and global- or world-city aesthetics (Ong, 2011) for promoting new cities as optimal investments and opportunities to develop better, more connected, more resilient, and more competitive cities for the future. Through these narratives and elaborate city branding and marketing campaigns (Kim, 2010; Shoaib and Keivani, 2015), new cities are frequently presented as a one-size-fits-all solution to address a slew of urban challenges and urban crises affecting cities, and particularly those in rapidly urbanizing regions of the Global South (Datta, 2017). Others have more specifically emphasized the premise upheld by builders of new cities worldwide, who promote the appeal of starting from scratch as an opportunity, not only to build cleaner, more orderly cities without being encumbered by the messiness and infrastructure struggles of existing urban environments (Murray, 2015a, 2015b),

but also to implement new forms of governance freed from ‘the messiness of democratic politics’ (Bhan, 2014: 234). In this sense, the rise of privatized modes of urban governance in many new cities (Fält, 2019; Murray, 2015b; Shatkin, 2011), and the promotion of more efficient urban management through tech-infused ‘smart’ cities (Rebentisch et al., 2020), are more broadly fueled by motivations of overcoming the perceived dearth of resources and capabilities of governments and the public sector, which underpin the rationale for many new cities and their increased entrepreneurial engagement with corporate actors.

Several recent publications have identified economic development as a key driver behind new city building, situating new city plans within broader state-driven development strategies and ambitions to ‘leapfrog’ or ‘fast-track’ economic growth and boost the competitiveness of specific sectors (Datta, 2017; Moser et al., 2015). Much of this scholarship focuses on case studies of new cities intended to fuel the growth of the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector in such countries as Malaysia (Bunnell, 2002; Rizzo and Glasson, 2012); Kenya (Van Noorloos, Avianto, et al., 2019); South Korea (Mullins and Shwayri, 2016); India (Datta, 2015b); and Palestine (Chitti and Moser, 2019). In other instances, scholars have outlined how new cities are employed within national strategies of economic diversification and to foster competitive ‘knowledge economies’, particularly in preparation for a ‘post-oil future’ (Moser et al., 2015: 72) through such projects as Masdar in the UAE (Cugurullo, 2016), King Abdullah Economic City in Saudi Arabia (Moser et al., 2015), and Yachay City of Knowledge in Ecuador (Childs and Hearn, 2017). Other studies have shed light on examples of new city projects developed to support extractive economies or erected as a result of a resource boom and the favourable commodity prices of oil and minerals including in Kenya, Mozambique, and Ghana (Cain, 2014; Cardoso, 2016; Childs and Hearn, 2017; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018). New cities have also been analyzed through the broader theme of Special Economic Zones (SEZ), emphasizing how several new city projects are developed as ‘zones of exception’ (Easterling, 2014) designed to entice corporate interest through ‘freer’ business environments, with favorable legislation and tax incentives. New cities created as part of SEZs for example include King Abdullah Economic City (Saudi Arabia), Songdo (South Korea), Cyberjaya (Malaysia), or Hyderabad Information Technology and Engineering Consultancy City (India) (Easterling, 2014; Moser et al., 2015).

Beyond critical investigations of new cities' economic motives and functions, scholarship has additionally focused on the central political and ideological roles of new cities for states, more specifically analyzing the cultural politics of new master-planned cities, reframed as projects in nation-building (Koch, 2010, 2014b; Moser, 2010, 2013). Vale's (2008 [1992]) seminal book *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* on the construction of new master-planned national capitals around the world has been key in emphasizing urban planning and architecture as political 'instruments' in the service of state power and the construction of national identity. More recent focused analyses of new federal- and provincial-level capitals including Putrajaya in Malaysia (Moser, 2010), Dompak in Indonesia (Moser and Wilbur, 2017), Naypyidaw in Myanmar (Seekins, 2009), and Nur-Sultan (previously called Astana) in Kazakhstan (Koch, 2010) demonstrate the various ways in which new cities serve and strengthen state power and ideology. Through the selective and strategic projection of symbols of ethnicity, modernity, 'authentic' cultural heritage, and religion, these new capitals powerfully assert and legitimize rulers and regimes (Koch, 2013b, 2014a, 2018; Moser, 2011; Vale, 2008), often entrench power relations of domination and exclusion (Moser, 2020), and normalize ethno-religious hierarchies (Moser, 2013; Moser and Wilbur, 2017; Seekins, 2009). In her investigation of city building and urban mega-projects in Qatar, Koch (2014b) suggests that there is a need to devote attention to the ways in which such city-building projects 'fit into the leadership's legitimacy projects – in terms of efforts to secure both domestic *and* foreign approval of the country's nondemocratic political configuration' (Koch, 2014b: 1121), a consideration that permeates my own analysis of Morocco's city-building activities under King Mohammed VI's brand of authoritarianism.

Analyses of new city building that have explored the main drivers and rationales for urban projects built from scratch have so far predominantly taken the form of case studies of individual new city ventures (although see Keeton, 2011; Keeton and Provoost, 2019 for a regional focus of the trend in Asia and Africa respectively), even in countries that are building multiple new city projects simultaneously, including Indonesia (over 10), Kuwait (9), Malaysia (4), Saudi Arabia (5), and Tanzania (over 10). As a result, there is a gap in our understanding of how new city-building agendas are materializing in countries that have launched formal strategies deployed at the regional or national scale, the specific ambitions pursued through these extensive new city-building programs, and how individual city ventures included in broader

plans interact towards the achievement of broader national development goals. The critical analysis of Morocco's overarching national city-building strategy in this thesis addresses this gap, while laying a foundation for future comparative research with other countries that have launched nation-wide city-building schemes.

2.2.3 New urban 'fantasies' for a rising Africa

Over the last few years, the African continent has attracted growing scholarly attention, as one of the recent geographic areas in which the city-building trend has been expanding, following the proliferation of projects in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Over 70³ brand new cities have emerged across more than a dozen countries in Africa in just the last two decades (Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018), representing the most dynamic period of new city building on the continent since the colonial era (Grant, 2015; Keeton and Provoost, 2019). Although theorization of the trend and its particularities in Africa is still in development, a growing subset of the new cities literature now focuses on projects emerging across the continent.

Scholarship connects the rise of new city projects in Africa with new geographies of investment and demographic trends on the continent over the last 20 years (Grant, 2015; Keeton and Provoost, 2019; Watson, 2014). Fueled by the resource boom of the early 2000s (Grant, 2015), and attractive provisions for the growth of domestic consumer markets premised on the prophetic expansion of the African middle class (Grant, 2015; Pitcher, 2012; Splinter and Leynseele, 2019), the African continent has benefited from a surge in foreign direct investment (FDI), from increasingly diverse sources including BRICS nations (Grant, 2015). Scholars have suggested that the promotion of Africa's unexploited markets and highly profitable investment opportunities by prominent global financial institutions such as the World Bank (Turok, 2013), and attendant narratives surrounding Africa's 'rise' (Bond, 2014; Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019), have popularized imaginaries of the continent as the 'last development frontier' (Watson, 2014: 216) among investors, attracting rising corporate interest from multinationals, foreign financial institutions, and large-scale property developers (Grant, 2015; Pitcher, 2012). Watson (2014) and Keeton and Provoost (2019), among others, have suggested that new city construction in Africa

³ Due to varying definitions of new cities, this number is open to interpretation. Keeton and Provoost (2019) for example identify over 100 new cities developed over the same period.

spiked in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis as international investors sought investment alternatives in markets less affected by the economic downturn.

Scholarship on the materialization of new city ventures across the continent has outlined both commonalities and variations among projects in terms of their form and function. As one of the first scholars to investigate the wider wave of new city building across multiple countries, Watson (2014) highlights a series of similarities among proposed new city plans on the continent including: their large-scale dimensions; their marketing through seductive 3D or digital visioning plans with marked influences from ‘iconic’ cities including Dubai, Shanghai or Singapore; their mobilization of popular rhetoric on sustainability and new technologies as drivers of modernization; their promoted association to private sector actors; their opaque relationship to existing city plans and governance frameworks; and absent reference to any form of debate or participation that may have taken place. Other scholars have rather tended to focus on the diversity and variations among projects under development. Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer (2018) for example illustrate the diversity of African new cities underway through a typology of projects based on their varying aims and purpose (political/administrative, residential/commercial, or productive cities) and spatial characteristics. In reference to the latter, they categorize new cities based on the variety of spatial relationships that they maintain with existing cities, differentiating between wholly independent new cities, satellite cities built in the vicinity of existing hubs, suburban extensions or new entities within existing cities, and the total restructuring and redevelopment of existing cities (Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018: 1232).

Marking a break with the prevalent ‘anti-urban’ character of many governmental policies in several African countries, following dominant international development discourses and orientations since the late 1970s (Förster and Ammann, 2018; Pieterse and Parnell, 2014; UN-Habitat 2014),⁴ the surge in new cities reflects the broader shift in perceptions surrounding urbanization in Africa over the last decade, going from development challenge to essential (economic) opportunity (Pieterse, 2019). The rapidly growing body of scholarship on new cities in Africa has been largely critical of this new trend, emphasizing the inadequacy of the new city

⁴ Academic reviews of policy responses from African governments and their approach towards urbanization since the late 1970s suggest that this prevalent ‘anti-urban’ stance is namely exemplified by the prioritization of anti-migration policy reforms by many governments and the implementation of large donor programs focused on improving agricultural productivity to counter rural-urban migration and the uncontrolled growth of cities, rather than interventions ‘pro-actively seeking to understand and harness urbanisation processes’ (Pieterse, 2019:48 ; see also Pieterse, 2018).

solution to address pressing urban challenges in urbanizing Africa. As remarked by Pieterse (2019: 50), the development of a new ‘common sense’ framing urbanization as an opportunity, rapidly mobilized by investors and in political discourses to justify increased urban investments, including through ambitious new city ventures, has been accompanied by ‘a dumbing down of the debate and issues’. He suggests that new city ventures promoted by investors and politicians are legitimized through ‘simplistic myths’ (Pieterse, 2019: 50) on African urbanization, including the idea that urbanization is out of control on the continent, or that the (ambiguously and variably defined) expanding middle class could, in fact, sustain the demand for new cities, a critique echoed in other analyses of the trend (see for example Bond, 2014; Watson, 2014).

While the impacts of new city projects that are in a majority of cases still under development have yet to be fully assessed and documented, emergent research has underscored both the potential as well as some early socio-economic and environmental consequences of new cities across African nations. For example, case studies of projects underway suggest that new cities are likely to heighten the vulnerability and marginalization of the urban poor, to increase spatial fragmentation and divides (Carmody and Owusu, 2016; Lumumba, 2013), and to contribute to the privatization of urban space through the proliferation of ‘private cities’ as demonstrated in Ghana (Fält, 2019) and South Africa (Herbert and Murray, 2015; Murray, 2015b). Scholars have also outlined the disregard for sustainable development ideals in a number of new city plans (Watson and Agbola, 2013) and flagged environmental risks associated with climate change as a number of new projects are developed in climate change hot spots (Keeton and Provoost, 2019), and as already vulnerable populations are displaced to make way for the new cities, fostering new forms of ‘climate apartheid’ (Ajibade, 2017; Wamsler et al., 2015). On the topic of displacements, new cities have also been tied to pervasive practices of land grabbing and forms of direct expropriations or indirect displacement, including through land and real estate speculation in areas surrounding new cities (Van Noorloos, Avianto, et al., 2019; Van Noorloos, Klaufus, et al., 2019). As highly resource-intensive projects mobilizing considerable public assets and state funds, and often conceived as enclaves for the economic elite, some scholars fear that new master-planned projects could lead to a form of fiscal deficit in existing African cities (Cirolia, 2014; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018), and divert funding away from established metropolises and their pressing needs (Cain, 2014; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018).

These critiques inform the prevalent conceptualization of new cities in Africa as spaces of contradiction, opposition, and unevenness. Through the notion of ‘city doubles’, Murray (2015a: 92) suggests that new cities are being conceived as ‘the mirror opposites of existing urban landscapes in Africa’ and ‘as a radical alternative to the “failed urbanism” of contemporary Africa’. Likewise, Watson (2014: 229) uses the term ‘urban fantasies’ to characterize projects that ‘are unlikely to materialize’ but where ‘efforts to achieve them will have profound effects on lives and livelihoods’. Carmody and Owusu (2016: 69) similarly discuss new cities in terms of ‘utopian dystopias’ or ‘heterotopias’ that attempt to distance themselves from established African urban conditions to foster new global economic connections, yet remain profoundly embedded in and dependent upon the local labour force for their construction.

Although growing attention has been devoted to examples of new city building across the continent in recent years, several aspects of this trend and the diversity of ways that it is unfolding across the continent are still underexplored. As studies have so far largely focused on individual projects, more critical attention is required on the overarching continental trend. Furthermore, while actors of new city development in Africa have been identified in a general sense (i.e. states and the private sector) and more specifically through case studies, less research has been devoted to the other categories of actors that are actively involved in new city ventures *across* contexts and countries, and fueling the current wave of new city development. More attention is also needed on how and why new city projects are proliferating despite mounting critiques voiced by scholars, media, and activists alike. Chapter 4 of this thesis, *‘Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?’ The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa*, contributes to these gaps by offering insights on the macro-level dynamics driving new city development in Africa through an investigation of the networks of actors and their vested interests in promoting new cities across the continent. While some analyses have emphasized the variations and diversity among projects under development (see for example Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018) this chapter rather focuses on common forces facilitating new city development in Africa, where new city building is being unilaterally applied as a ‘cure-all’ to a range of challenges across extremely diverse political and economic contexts.

2.2.4 New cities in Morocco: Resurgence of a model

Despite the growing attention devoted to various African countries in relation to their city-building activities, few analyses have so far focused on Morocco's new cities, especially in Anglophone scholarship. Much like several other African nations, new city building in Morocco is not a new phenomenon, following experiences with new city construction during the colonial and post-independence eras. Scholars of Moroccan urbanism have devoted considerable attention to past periods of new city development, namely new cities built under the French protectorate, which lasted from 1912 to 1956 (see for example Abouhani, 2009; Gillot, 2014; Jelidi, 2008). Seminal contributions on Morocco's colonial city-building experiments in Anglophone scholarship include Abu Lughod's (1980) critical analysis of segregationist French colonial policies in Morocco, which she examines as a regime of 'urban apartheid' that has had lasting consequences in Moroccan society, which remains highly divided and stratified today. Wright (1987, 1991) and Rabinow's (1992) work on the cultural politics of these colonial new cities also emphasizes the prevalent instrumentalization of architecture and design by colonial administrators as a technique of social control, and as part of deliberate attempts to legitimize the colonial occupation and pacify local indigenous populations. Other experiments in new city building following independence that have received scholarly attention include the reconstruction of Agadir as a new modern city following the earthquake of 1960, the creation of the 'new city' of Hay Ryad in the 1980s in the periphery of Rabat (Serhir, 2017), and the construction of Sala Al Jadida in 1992, a new city project spearheaded by then-King Hassan II to address the housing crisis in Rabat (Navez-Bouchanine, 2012).

The current wave of new city construction under King Mohammed VI has received considerably less academic attention especially beyond Francophone literature on the topic. While recent new city projects have attracted important national media attention and have been analysed through unpublished (and often inaccessible) masters or doctoral theses from local universities, publications on large-scale urban transformations in Morocco have so far overwhelmingly focused on urban mega-projects such as waterfront redevelopments (Bogaert, 2012; Mouloudi, 2014), new marinas (Barthel, 2010), and urban port infrastructure (Barthel and Planel, 2010). Although some of this scholarship does mention new cities in passing (see for example Barthel and Vignal, 2014; Barthel and Zaki, 2011; Cattedra, 2010; Kanai and Kutz, 2011; Philifert, 2014), new cities are primarily conceptualized as one form of urban mega-project

emerging within a broader trend in project-based urbanism (Barthel, 2010; Cattedra, 2010), and as such are rarely investigated through in-depth, focused analyses. Literature on Morocco's proliferating mega-projects nevertheless provides important background on emergent urban trends in the kingdom, new actors of urban development, new dynamics for the funding of projects, as well as the role of the central state in urban development operations, which I use to contextualize new city development in the kingdom.

The few publications that center on contemporary new cities predominantly analyse the government-led new city projects initiated in 2004 by the Ministry of Habitat and Urban Planning (MHU). More specifically, they primarily focus on Tamesna (Harroud, 2017a, 2017b) and Tamensourt (Ballout, 2014, 2015), the earliest projects to be implemented as part of Morocco's recent city-building initiative, leaving more recent projects unexamined,⁵ and a gap in knowledge on the other important city-building actors in the kingdom. These initial analyses of Morocco's new cities, emerging primarily in the fields of planning and architecture, critically examine the inception of government-led projects, some of the inconsistencies and confusion of the governmental approach to new city building, and raise potential consequences as well as current setbacks of early new city projects, providing important context for the analyses presented in this thesis. In a more recent Anglophone publication on Morocco's government-led new cities, analyzed through the empirical example of Tamesna, Rousseau and Harroud (2019) analyze the new city projects as 'failures' that embody the contradictions of a neoliberal shift in planning and social housing production, which has largely benefited private real estate promoters at the expense of local residents and the conservation of agricultural land.

Chapter 5 of this thesis, *A kingdom of new cities: Morocco's national Villes Nouvelles strategy*, contributes to further theorizing the wave of new city development in Morocco by significantly expanding the scope of analysis through an investigation of *all* new city projects underway as part of Morocco's national initiative, as well as the diversity of institutional actors building new cities beyond the government's Ministry of Habitat and Urban Planning. Chapter 5 also presents the first critical analysis of new city building in Morocco, which connects the kingdom's national city-building initiative to scholarship on the international city-building trend and other examples of national development enacted through new city construction globally. In

⁵ One exception can however be found in Barthel's (2016) article on 'eco-urbanism' in Morocco, in which he discusses a few more recent new city projects, including Zenata Eco-City and Benguerir Green City.

doing so, the chapter draws attention to the particularities of Morocco's city-building activities, as well as similarities with other developments, contributing to theorizations of the global city-building trend.

2.2.5 New cities from below

Another aspect of contemporary city building that requires more scholarly attention relates to how 'top-down' master-planned projects are interpreted, shaped, and experienced 'from below' (Bunnell, 1999; Mouloudi, 2010), including by pioneering residents and local populations. Given that a great number of new cities worldwide are at early stages of construction or still exist only at the conceptual stage, rapidly expanding scholarship on the global city-building trend tends to investigate new cities through the 'various representations of the imagined city' (Lynch, 2019: 1152), including through their policies, accompanying rhetoric, or through company websites, masterplans, or seductive 3D models and digital visualizations (see for example Koch, 2014b; Moser et al., 2015; Watson, 2014, 2020). In doing so, these analyses often foreground the views of planners, builders, state actors, and other political or economic elites in shaping new city visions, leaving a gap in urban scholarship both in how such visions materialize and in how they are experienced by those they affect. Despite the predominant top-down focus in investigations of new cities through their promoted plans and the visions of their elite developers, a handful of analyses stand out as exceptions.

Among emergent investigations of new cities from a bottom-up perspective, several scholars explore reactions to new city projects that have yet to materialize. These analyses focus on how 'ordinary' residents (Buire, 2014b; Smith, 2017) engage with depictions of urban futures through new city plans and their potential consequences for their everyday life, specifically by investigating the actions that fill the 'gap between the dream of the plan and its realisation' (Smith, 2017: 34–35). For example, through their investigation of the projected construction of Konza Techno City in Kenya, Van Noorloos *et al.* (2019: 420) demonstrate the impact of new city construction on the lives and livelihoods of surrounding populations and show that the 'mere announcement of a new city can trigger various forms of direct and indirect exclusion'. In her investigation of the planned redevelopment of Nairobi under the Kenya Vision 2030 Masterplan, Smith (2017: 37) similarly investigates the 'anticipatory actions' of individual Nairobians as they engage with the promoted urban imaginaries, for example by pre-emptively moving out of the

areas slated for transformation in reaction to the prospect of expulsion. De Boeck's (2011: 278) investigation of resident responses to the plans for the lavish *Cité du Fleuve* to be built on reclaimed land in the Congo river near Kinshasa demonstrates that, despite the likeliness of their exclusion, local populations 'revel as much in this dream of the modern city' as the ruling elites to which it is catering. For Smith (2017: 35), who observed similar reactions in Kenya, this is attributable to 'disjunctive temporal experiences' in how local residents experience future urban transformations as simultaneously already here and forever out of their reach.

Other analyses have more specifically examined resident reactions to new city plans and projects through protests, legal battles, and other forms of contestation, particularly in reaction to forms of (rural) land dispossession and expulsions. Reflecting broader forms of local opposition or 'blockades' to the materialization of 'global' or 'world' city imaginaries and plans (see for example Goldman, 2011b; Leitner and Sheppard, 2018; Levien, 2013; Narain, 2009; Roy, 2011), these analyses investigate the ways in which local populations use dissent to negotiate their place within the new cities, or to secure compensation for their exclusion from it. Several of these accounts are set in the Indian context, where scholars have shed light on organized civic action and protests in reaction to the development of Dholera Smart City (Datta, 2015b), Lavasa (Datta, 2012; Parikh, 2015), and New Town Rajarhat (Kundu, 2017). In a more recent study, Lynch (2019: 1149) investigates the early organization of opposition to the yet unbuilt Zone for Economic Development and Employment (ZEDE) in Honduras, through the use of official narratives and representations of the new city by local groups to develop and disseminate 'counter-discourses informed by alternative visions of "development."'.

Considerably less research has focused on the 'lived' or embodied experiences of pioneering residents in existing new cities, and their (re)interpretation of promoted visions and plans through everyday life. The most in-depth accounts of residents' lives in a new city are based on earlier new city projects including ethnographic investigations of the Disney-built new town of Celebration in Florida (Ross, 1999), and the new master-planned community of Levittown, New Jersey (Gans, [1967] 2017). In his seminal book *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*, James Holston (1989) analyses the flaws, failures, and subversion of modernist planning principles through Brasilia's materiality and 'lived' reality. Holston draws attention to how residents variously challenge or disrupt Brasilia's vision and plan, including through the reinsertion of traditional Brazilian cultural values, activities, and

modes of urbanity into a city that attempted to negate their existence through both form and function. For example, he demonstrates how pioneering residents rejected a number of Brasilia's 'defamiliarizing' characteristics including the functionalist zoning and the attendant 'antistreet intentions' of the masterplan by reintroducing street market activities in certain neighbourhoods where they had been 'architecturally denied' (Holston, 1989: 24). Holston's broader argument is that the new city's radical premises, plan, and aesthetics in fact created the conditions for its own subversion and the contradiction of intended visions.

Research on the lived and embodied reality of *contemporary* new city projects is still in its infancy, following the progression of new city projects themselves, and requires much closer critical attention. Among the handful of extant studies, two have looked at resident perceptions and experiences of new satellite cities in Luanda (Angola) including the new city of Kilamba (Buire, 2014b; Gastrow, 2017). In her analysis, Buire (2014b) aims to elucidate the specific 'traits of urban life on the periphery' (Buire, 2014b: 303) embodied by the new satellite development of Kilamba, and highlights conflicting attempts by the state and residents to discipline urban behaviours, which shape the construction of residents' new (sub)urban identities. In her analysis of the same new city, Gastrow (2017: 379) investigates forms of 'aesthetic dissent', defined as 'the expression of political dissent via a language of aesthetics and materiality'. She demonstrates that the pioneering residents' rejection of the new city's built aesthetic is intertwined with critiques of the government itself, and what residents perceive as illegitimate alliances with international capital, particularly Chinese developers, supporting the city's construction (see also Reboredo and Brill (2019) for a related discussion of resident perceptions of foreign Chinese developers in the Kilamba project). In the Indian context, Kundu's (2017) investigation of New Town Rajarhat more specifically focuses on what she conceptualizes as 'perforations' of the new city's masterplan, as she investigates the ways in which the new city's materiality is shaped, contested, or appropriated through modifications to the new city's actually existing layout and plan.

Chapter 7 of this thesis, *Living in a 'promising machine': Resident perceptions and experiences in/of Morocco's new cities*, builds on these early analyses of contemporary new cities from below, by shedding light on the as yet unexplored realities of residents living in or variously affected by new city development in the Moroccan context. While a small body of scholarship focuses on the resident experiences and perceptions in materializing city projects,

more attention is needed on how residents adapt to life in a new city, how their daily life is or is not altered there, what are some of the particularities of urban life as a new city pioneer, and how expectations for better urban futures are either met or unattained in the new cities' actualization in built form. Chapter 7 begins to address some of these gaps through an investigation of three of Morocco's new city projects through the eyes of local and resident populations, and their prevalent feelings of disillusionment surrounding the new cities' so far unattained promises.

2.3 Mobile policies and globally circulating urban imaginaries

Urban policy mobilities literature in urban studies and urban geography broadly focuses on how, why, and with what effects urban policies and planning ideas are mobilized globally and shaped through various actors and instances of circulation (McCann, 2011a). Urban geography's engagement and prolific contributions to urban policy mobilities scholarship in recent years provides a helpful conceptual arsenal to analyze new cities under development around the globe. Specifically, I engage with this area of urban literature to explicate the rapid expansion of the new cities phenomenon across the Global South, and in order to critically analyse how the ideas and urban imaginaries informing new city plans take form as part of networked processes of knowledge exchange and circulations of expertise, and become mobilized across contexts. Despite the important contributions of urban geography and urban studies to this literature, the mobilization of policy mobilities scholarship in studies of new cities is still in development.

In this section, I review urban geography's contribution to this vast literature and focus on current theorizations of 'how' urban ideas, policies, and plans travel through various agents, spaces, and situations of circulation and exchange. I examine analyses that have more specifically focused on the contemporary circulation of urban models and best practices, emphasizing the uneven power dynamics and market drivers involved in the global diffusion of 'successful' urban policies and ideas. I then discuss emergent research on the directionality of urban policy flows, which sheds light on new South-South urban idea networks and exchanges, as well as the rise of new centers of urban innovation beyond Euro-America. I conclude this section by examining the small but growing body of research on rising new city 'models' promoted by countries claiming and circulating a new city-building expertise, to which this thesis contributes a new empirical example.

2.3.1 From transfer to mobilities: Geography's approach and contributions to theories on policy circulation

Urban policy mobilities scholarship is an adaptation of the broader 'policy transfer' literature developed in political science, and departs in several ways from political science's diffusionist approach to policy transfer rooted in rational-choice frameworks (Jacobs, 2012; McCann, 2011a; McCann and Ward, 2012b; Peck, 2011; Peck and Theodore, 2010). A significant contribution that urban geographers have made to this literature in recent years has been to introduce a more nuanced social-constructivist understanding of how urban policy is constituted and circulated. In particular, geographers emphasize the historically and culturally contingent nature of policy networks (McCann, 2011a; Temenos and McCann, 2012), and conceptualize policy circulations as a socially and relationally constituted phenomenon, intertwined in 'political economic structures and trajectories' (Temenos and Ward, 2018: 68). As underscored by Prince (2012: 191):

While a number of different, often overlapping, and occasionally conflicting, strands exist within this new literature, they all seek to move beyond the overly normative, ahistorical and ungeographical accounts of policy transfer present in the political science literature.

Urban geographers reject the idea that urban policies travel intact, as a 'preformed thing' (Jacobs, 2012: 414) along linear paths with a pre-defined point of arrival and departure. Rather, by conceptualizing diversified 'mobilities' (instead of unidirectional transfers), urban policy mobilities scholars suggest that policies 'travel' in a much freer fashion along variegated trajectories, and are 'assembled' or 'learned' from a number of sources (McCann, 2011b; McCann et al., 2013; McFarlane, 2011; Robinson, 2015; Temenos and McCann, 2012). Mobilizing concepts of 'mutation' and 'translation' scholars also suggest that urban policies are always in transformation, shaped both by the process of circulation itself, and adaptations in new contexts of implementation (González, 2011; McCann and Ward, 2012b; Peck, 2011; Peck and Theodore, 2010; Temenos and McCann, 2013).

Urban geography's engagement with policy mobilities scholarship is moreover underpinned by a shift in conceptualizations of the city itself, and more specifically calls to increasingly consider the city topologically through networks and connections, rather than solely topographically, as a bounded entity (Jacobs, 2012; McCann and Ward, 2012b). Accordingly,

urban policy mobilities scholarship is more broadly associated with a global-relational approach to urban research (Prince, 2017; Robinson, 2015), which promotes a focus on the networks and social relationships ‘that make up cities and their place in the world’ (Temenos and Ward, 2018: 77), and on the ‘connective tissue that constitutes cities as global-relational nodes’ (McCann, 2011a: 109). Despite the ‘differing variants of “thinking the city relationally”’ (Jacobs, 2012: 418), the global-relational approach in policy mobilities research, which informs this thesis, has been particularly useful in investigating how the networked reality of cities significantly shapes approaches to urban development, by facilitating unexpected exchanges between physically distant spaces, through the ‘establishment of (sometimes dialogic) connections between policy actors and policymaking sites’ (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 170).

While urban geography’s contributions to urban policy mobilities literature is relatively recent, the circulation of urban policies, planning ideas, and models is by no means a new occurrence. Notwithstanding the many parallels that can be drawn between urban policy circulation in the present period, and with the widely documented trans-urban exchanges and travel of urban planning ideas over the last 150 years (see for e.g. Almandoz, 1999; Banerjee and Chakravorty, 1994; Leão Rego, 2011; Watson, 2009b), scholars suggest that there is something ‘distinctive about the flow of planning ideas and practices in the present period’ (Healey, 2013: 1521), which requires closer theorization (see also Huxley, 2013). In his research, Clarke (2012) for example adopts a comparative historical perspective and, drawing on investigations of municipal connections and the transnational municipal movement during the late 19th and early 20th century, suggests that, analysed in relation to urban idea transfers during this period, urban policy circulation in the 21st century stands out as being particularly disorganised, fast, geographically extensive, and anti-political. While underscoring the need for closer investigation of the distinctive characteristics of present-day urban policy circulations within geographical scholarship, especially in relation to past instances of urban idea transfers,⁶ other scholars

⁶ The ‘restricted historical focus’ (Harris and Moore, 2013: 1499) of geographers’ contributions within urban policy mobilities scholarship is underscored in a recent symposium issue published in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (see Harris and Moore, 2013), which promotes the benefits of a closer cross-disciplinary conversation between planning theory and geography on the topic of urban knowledge circulations. The special issue namely draws attention to the vast corpus of studies and contributions within planning history – a field that has long been concerned with retracing and exploring the inter-urban transfer of planning ideas and situating their urban antecedents within a longer historical perspective (see for e.g. Home, 1990; King, 1980) – and challenges the rare engagement with this research in geographical contributions to the expanding policy mobilities literature. While this

similarly suggest that that urban policy exchanges have, over the last two decades, increased in scope, pace, and intensity (Harris and Moore, 2013).

2.3.2 Agents, spaces, and situations of urban policy circulation

Among areas of focus, urban policy mobilities scholarship has dedicated attention to ‘the study of the practices through which policy is made mobile’ (Roy, 2012: 35) with a growing consideration for ‘what exactly is moving when “policy” travels’ (Jacobs, 2012: 414).

Scholarship has critically analyzed the various ways in which urban policies and planning ideas are put into circulation and mobilized with the help of both human and non-human agents (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011; Moser, 2019; Pow, 2014). Research on the human actors of policy circulation has for example underlined the role of global consultancies and traveling technocrats (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Larner and Laurie, 2010; Prince, 2012; Rapoport and Hult, 2017; Temenos and Ward, 2018; Vogelpohl, 2019), private international architecture and planning firms (Rapoport, 2015; Watson, 2020), and policy-makers or charismatic politicians (Bunnell et al., 2018; Bunnell and Das, 2010; McCann, 2013; Phelps et al., 2014) as active agents of policy circulation.

Investigations surrounding the role of these human actors emphasize the ways in which they influence processes of urban policy making and shape global policy landscapes by acting as ‘lobbyists and knowledge brokers’ (Lauermann, 2018: 217), and promoting specific urban transformation agendas through seductive projections, boosterist narratives on successful policies, or formal consulting services, which tend to favour particular interpretations of policy problems and pave the way for a narrow set of solutions (Peck and Theodore, 2010). For example, in her investigation of the global diffusion of sustainable urbanism ideals and proliferating eco-city plans, Rapoport (2015: 113) demonstrates how international private-sector planning firms known as the ‘global intelligence corps’ (GIC), globally circulate and sell masterplans that ‘repeat a similar menu of options’ drawing on a narrow set of precedents and

thesis is primarily concerned with establishing *how* contemporary new city models and ideas travel, and less with how such circulations can be situated within a longer genealogy of urban policy transfers, the adoption of a longer-term historical perspective, which could be mobilized in future research (see chapter 8), can be a productive way to understand *why* urban policies and ideas travel in the way they do, and what historical legacies and continuities shape their pathways, directionality, and conditions of mobility. A historicised approach to urban policy mobilities research could moreover help to refine understandings of the unique aspects of present-day circulations (Clarke, 2012; Healey, 2012; Huxley, 2013).

‘best practices’. Similarly, Bunnell and Das (2010) have shed light on instances of ‘serial seduction’ where consultants from major global firms sell the same urban plans or ideas repeatedly to various actors across contexts, as in the documented case of replication between Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Hyderabad (India), which was facilitated by Global consultancy McKinsey and Company. These analyses further shed light on how urban planning ideas also ‘travel’ through non-human agents of circulation including glossy pictures, slick websites, urban plans, 3D models, policy reports, PowerPoint presentations, and digital visualizations (Bunnell and Das, 2010; McCann, 2011a; Watson, 2020). These ‘policy artifacts’ (Pow, 2014: 289) hold important representational power and are a way in which policy lessons ‘come to life’ for policy actors seeking out ideas from elsewhere (McCann, 2011a; Pow, 2014). Combined with the actions of ‘human’ actors of policy circulation, these elements make up the various ‘technologies of seduction’ (Bunnell and Das, 2010: 282) that are easily transported by policy actors across contexts and policy landscapes.

A narrower set of studies have analyzed how urban policy is promoted, mobilized and shaped in and through particular spaces and ‘situations’ (McCann and Ward, 2012a: 47) of circulation, including industry conferences, seminars or workshops, fact-finding trips, site visits, and walking tours (Cook and Ward, 2012; González, 2011; McCann, 2011a). As situations that bring together internationally dispersed policy actors to exchange and share ideas surrounding urban development and urban futures (McCann, 2011a), such types of ‘mobility events’ (Clarke, 2012: 27) represent key spaces ‘where encounters with specific ideas have the potential to set agendas and provide direction and impetus for policy’ (Temenos and Ward, 2018: 71) whilst also shaping the path along which policies will travel (McCann and Ward, 2012a). As summarized by McCann (2011a: 120):

Conferences, meetings, and fact-finding visits are, then, key relational sites that are central to the social process of teaching and learning about policy and, thus, to the contingent, cumulative, and emergent knowledge production processes that coconstitute urban policy mobilities.

Several analyses have also emphasized how urban study tours in particular represent powerful zones of seduction to buttress or confer legitimacy to particular urban visions and plans (McCann, 2011a; Moser, 2019). In his analysis of Singapore’s state-led activities of policy transfer and circulations of expertise, Pow (2014: 296) sheds light on the highly performative

nature of fact-finding trips organized by local urban authorities, through which the city itself ‘becomes a stage where urban transformation policies are enacted and dramatized’.

(Re)conceptualized as a form of ‘policy tourism’ in her study of Bilbao and Barcelona (Spain), González (2011: 1400) further demonstrates how urban study tours, through itineraries carefully planned by local authorities, serve to project a selective (and partial) representation of the city’s achievements, through which ‘some “sites” get turned into “sights” worth photographing, while others are ignored or downplayed’, often in order to confirm pre-existing views or ‘myths’ about the city’s achievements among visiting policy ‘tourists’.

Recent contributions to urban policy mobilities literature have significantly expanded understandings of ‘how, why and with what consequences urban policies are mobilized’ (McCann and Ward, 2012b: 325), yet several aspects of policy circulations and networked processes of policy-making require more attention. Cook and Ward (2012) and McCann (2011a), among others, have called for more research on conferences as sites of investigation to shed light on how they represent key spaces for the ‘mobilizing and the embedding of urban policies’ (Cook and Ward, 2012: 139). Specifically, there is a need for closer critical attention surrounding the inner-workings and specific mundane, performative, and embodied practices that unfold through instances of policy circulation, and through particular mobility events such as conferences (McCann, 2011a). Furthermore, although extant research has identified key actors and agents of policy circulation and shed light on forms of seduction operating through policy artifacts and the boosterism of politicians and consultants, fewer analyses have employed a discursive approach to understand how stakeholders in urban projects engage in practices of seduction and influence policy circulations through the mobilization of specific rhetoric.

Building upon research on the practices of ‘seduction’ that facilitate urban policy circulation, Chapter 4 of this thesis begins to fill some of these gaps. Adopting a policy mobilities approach for the analysis of the new city phenomenon in Africa, the chapter expands policy mobilities scholarship by suggesting that beyond extant conceptualizations of the agents and actors of policy circulation, elite stakeholder rhetoric constitutes another important factor impacting the mobilization of urban models and policies, and a key way in which visions and ideas on new cities are (re)shaped, normalized and circulated in the African context. Specifically, the chapter sheds light on underexplored dynamics that facilitate policy circulation, emphasizing the ways in which the pervasive elite rhetoric on Africa’s rise and ‘right’ to development not

only works to sustain seductive ‘boosterist’ narratives on new cities (McCann, 2013), but also powerfully serves to stem critiques of projects in Africa. Responding specifically to the call for more attention to be devoted to conferences as sites of enquiry in policy mobilities research, this chapter also demonstrates how international conferences constitute important nodes in the circulation of ideas and policies related to the new city strategy, and key platforms where elite rhetoric is being deployed and critiques shut down.

2.3.3 Mobile models and selling ‘best practice’

The expansive urban policy mobilities literature has also devoted attention to practices of urban modelling, inter-referencing, and the circulation of ‘best practices’ as examples of the processes that profoundly shape urban development and aspirations of urban transformation worldwide (Devisme et al., 2008; Ong, 2011). Scholars have outlined how a small subset of cities globally acquire a ‘model’ status and become widely promoted as successful examples of urban development, or seductive city prototypes for emulation and adaptation in different contexts. Cities such as Bilbao, Barcelona (González, 2011), or Vancouver (McCann, 2013) are among cities that have been elevated as ‘models of best practice in urban development’ (Kennedy, 2016: 103), and whose urban innovations, detached from the original city and packaged into a synthesized set of best practices and recommendations, are widely circulating and being exported to aspiring cities around the world (Bunnell, 2015a; Peck and Theodore, 2010).

In the introduction to *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, Ong (2011) presents urban models and forms of modeling as a ‘global technology’ through which cities relate to and draw from each other, in the hope of carving out a place for themselves on the global stage. She suggests that ‘modeling refers to actual urban projects that have been dubbed “garden,” “sustainable,” “livable,” or “world-class,” that planners hope to reproduce elsewhere in a bid to rebrand their home cities’ (Ong, 2011: 14). As suggested by Peck and Theodore (2010: 170), despite urban or policy models embodying abstractions of a more complex reality, reduced, condensed and packaged to facilitate their circulation, a model’s association to and emergence from an existing place ‘evokes a grounded form of authenticity, implies feasibility, and signals an ideologically palatable origin story’. As such, scholars of policy mobilities conceptualize urban models as relational constructions, emphasizing that a

city's ability to become a model rests upon external appreciation and validation of its urban innovations and success (Hoffmann, 2011; Kennedy, 2016; McCann et al., 2013; Peck and Theodore, 2010; Ward, 2006). As summarized by McCann (2013: 10) 'policy models only become models when they acquire and articulate "outside" disciples and admirers who are, most commonly, located elsewhere'. Kennedy (2016) further specifies that, in order to be successfully 'built-up' into a model, a particular city needs to distinguish itself through the extent and nature of its success, whilst ensuring that its innovations remain within the 'reach' of other cities for purposes of emulation.

The circulation of urban 'models' and 'best practices' is understood as a highly uneven practice rooted in stratified imaginaries and 'power-laden processes of repetition and legitimation, competition, and cooperation' (McCann, 2013: 20), which build up specific places and policies as 'worthy' of emulation (Bunnell, 2015a; McCann, 2011a; McCann et al., 2013; Ward, 2006). Accordingly, some urban models and imaginaries are circulated more widely and more easily than others, typically stemming from a small subset of cities, historically located in the 'Global North', which have the resources to be influential within transnational networks of urban policy knowledge (McCann, 2011a, 2013). By enabling practices of benchmarking and emulation, and by embodying purportedly 'successful' examples of urban interventions, urban models have an 'ordering capacity' (Temenos and McCann, 2012: 1399), and effectively situate cities within a 'global matrix of comparisons' (McCann et al., 2013: 582). The elevation of some cities to the status of 'model' establishes a hierarchy between places that are more 'importers' than 'exporters' of urban policy and ideas (González, 2011; McCann, 2013), or between the roles of cities as 'consumer-emulators' or 'producer-innovators' (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 169).

Scholars have also pointed out that the ability for certain urban models to achieve mobility is conditioned by the pre-existence of a market for the policy solutions they are offering which have, 'in some way or another, been ideologically anointed or sanctioned' (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 171). Often, these policy solutions are compatible with prevalent entrepreneurial or neoliberal logics of urban development (Lauermann, 2018; Peck, 2002), and reflect internationally validated planning idioms including 'smart', 'eco', or 'green' concepts, popularized as answers to eminent contemporary crises such as climate change (Datta, 2017; Rapoport, 2015). In a context of intense inter-city competition for investment, cities discursively and materially constructed as 'models' represent key resources for policymaking and urban

development. As suggested by Ong (2011: 14), an urban model essentially ‘sets a symbolic watermark of urban aspirations on the one hand, and provides achievable blueprints for urban renovations on the other.’ Practices of urban modeling and the ‘speed’ at which some models circulate relies on both ‘supply side’ activities, such as the policy marketing and boosterism of politicians and consultants, and ‘demand side’ activities, which are influenced by more structural conditions including the growing fiscal constraints and narrowing budgets of city governments (McCann, 2013; Peck and Theodore, 2010). Crucially, this context is fueling what Peck and Theodore (2015) call ‘fast policy regimes’, characterized by the growing market for and high-velocity circulation of ‘best practices’ and ‘sure-bet’, ‘quick-fix’, ‘off-the-shelf’, ‘readymade’ policy solutions (McCann, 2011a, 2013; Peck and Tickell, 2002). In this world of ‘fast policy’ (Peck, 2002), city administrators and urban professionals increasingly take on the role of ‘policy entrepreneurs’ (McCann, 2008: 9), carefully searching global policy landscapes for ‘policies that work’, where urban models embody “a hallmark of “success” and “quality assurance” (Pow, 2014: 304).

Although substantial research has focused on the circulation of established urban models across time and contexts (Harris and Moore, 2013), the construction process of urban ‘models’ themselves, and the ways in which they are ‘built up’ and constituted locally, requires much more critical attention (McCann, 2013; Robinson, 2015; Temenos and McCann, 2012; Ward, 2006). As emphasized by Temenos and McCann (2012: 1403), who call for further enquires into the local politics of policy mobilities, there is a critical need for more ‘nuanced tracings’ of the ways in which ‘municipalities fashion themselves into models of “best-practice”’. Chapter 6 of this thesis, *Fast urban model-making: Constructing Moroccan urban expertise through Zenata Eco-City*, is a contribution towards this gap, as it investigates the unique construction process of the Zenata Eco-City model in Morocco, which was assembled through an active search for relevant antecedents from other cities, and influenced by the work of international policy actors and their circulation of expertise. Crucially however, the chapter’s investigation of the Zenata Eco-City case presents a departure from current theorizations of urban models and practices of urban modeling and contributes novel terminology to characterize the unique reality of an urban model that is being constituted and circulated ahead of the city’s completion in built form. Through a discussion of the city’s unconventional mode of fast model-making, the chapter also contributes a deeper conceptualization of the mechanisms by which authority and legitimacy for

urban models can be self-constructed, rather than being imperatively conferred through external validation.

2.3.4 Emergent nodes, networks, and centers of urban innovation beyond Euro-America

Scholarly investigations of urban models and inter-referencing practices have also expanded in new directions in recent years, as researchers have unsettled longstanding assumptions on the ‘North-South’ directionality of urban policy exchanges by outlining the growing importance of ‘South-South’ policy circulations, and the emergence of influential new centers of urban innovation beyond Euro-America (Bunnell, 2015a; Datta, 2017; Harrison, 2015; Moser, 2019; Verdeil, 2005). Scholars have devoted growing attention to new points of reference for urban development emanating from emerging economies, often promoted as more achievable ideals for rapidly urbanizing regions of the Global South. Beyond the established urban ‘success’ stories of influential cities in Europe or North America, more recent analyses demonstrate that places like Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Bogota, Cape Town, or Mumbai are now part of the ‘mental maps of “best cities” for policy that inform future strategies’ (McCann and Ward, 2010: 175) and the ‘aspirational antecedents’ (Bunnell, 2015a: 1990) that are influencing material and policy landscapes globally.

Within this emergent research, attention has primarily been devoted to the ‘ascendancy of Asian powerhouses, from the Gulf States to India and China’ (McCann et al., 2013: 585) and to their circulation of urban ‘models’ within and beyond Asia (see for example Roy and Ong, 2011 for an edited collection on the topic). The exponential economic growth and mode of rapid and orderly urbanization in cities like Singapore, Dubai, Shenzhen and Shanghai have made them appealing points of reference that are increasingly evoked in urban imaginaries of fast-growing cities in the Global South, including in visions for African new cities (Smith, 2017; Van Noorloos and Leung, 2017; Watson, 2020). For example, Murray’s (2015a: 100) investigation of ambitious new city plans in Africa has shed light on the new geographies of comparison underpinning projects like Eko Atlantic, promoted by its developers as the ‘African Dubai’, while Pow (2014: 295) has documented how policy actors in Kigali are similarly seeking to redevelop Rwanda’s capital into ‘Africa’s Singapore’.

Beyond discursive connections with these new points of urban innovation, emergent research also focuses on how South-South networks are established through tangible

engagements related to the financing, design, and construction of urban development plans, as well as formal partnerships for knowledge sharing and consulting. In this respect, much attention has been devoted to analyzing the ‘self-stylized’ Singapore ‘model’ (Pow, 2014: 288) and its various delineations and interpretations, and to the actors, activities, and state-led investments involved in the commodification and dissemination of the city-state’s urban expertise through a lucrative consulting industry (Huat, 2011; Shatkin, 2014). Studies have documented the impressive ‘reach’ of the Singapore model, and the interventions of Singaporean state-owned or private planning consultancy firms in such places as Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, China, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, and India through short training programs or study tours, as well as longer term advisory services on large-scale projects (Pow, 2014; Shatkin, 2014). Beyond Singapore, similar examples of state-supported urban model ‘export’ strategies have been documented in such places as Cape Town (South Africa), or Seoul (South Korea) which has invested in promoting the capital as a model ‘creative city’ (Bunnell, 2015a).

2.3.5 New cities on the move

More recently, burgeoning scholarship on the global new master-planned city-building trend has similarly highlighted how a few countries involved in new city-building ventures, which are not historically considered as points of reference for urban planning innovation (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021), are starting to reposition themselves as ‘leaders’ in city development and actively circulating new city-building models, ideas, and expertise globally. As a phenomenon predominantly concentrated in the Global South (Moser et al., 2015), contemporary new master-planned city-building acutely exemplifies the multiplication of South-South networks of urban policy exchanges and new trends in the location and circulation of emergent urban models.

Saudi Arabia, for example, has actively promoted its expertise in master-planned city-building based on the development of four new ‘economic’ cities, namely by using the space of the Cityquest meeting, an elite non-academic conference on the topic of new cities, as a key node to establish and promote their city-building knowledge (Moser, 2019). Similarly, South Korea has invested in the export of a new ‘ubiquitous-eco-city’ model based on the new city of Songdo (Shwayri, 2013), while the South-Korean state-owned company LH (Korea Land and Housing Corporation) is also actively selling the ‘Korean new-town model’ to cities across the Global South. Company LH is also developing a number of new cities based on its purported model,

including in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021; Watson, 2014). Other new city projects are being developed as ‘models’ or prototypes with ambitions of mass-replication if the original development is successful. For example, this is the case in Rawabi, the new master-planned city currently under development in Palestine, which is heralded as a new model for urban residential development and entrepreneurship to be replicated across the West Bank (Tayeb, 2019).. Similarly Lavasa, a failed new master-planned private city in India, was also initially intended to become a ‘replicable model’ for other future urban developments in India and beyond (Parikh, 2015).

If more research is needed on ‘how a small number of cities become commonly understood as being those worth emulating’ (McCann, 2013: 10), even more research is arguably needed on how cities ‘off’ the conventional ‘map’ (Cohen, 2015; Robinson, 2006) of urban studies are carving out a place for their urban ‘models’ within transnational circuits of urban policy knowledge and ideas, and in so doing are disrupting established geographies of comparison (McCann et al., 2013). Building on the expanding focus on South-South urban policy networks and new centers of urban innovation in emerging economies, as well as budding research on emergent new city models, Chapter 6 of this thesis contributes a novel empirical example of an emergent new city model, through the investigation of Zenata Eco-City and Morocco’s ambitions to be recast as a new city-building expert on the African continent. In doing so, beyond outlining an alternative form of ‘fast model-making’, this chapter also draws attention to under-explored intra-African urban policy flows and emergent urban models being promoted explicitly to globalizing cities on the continent, an aspect that has so far received scant attention compared to the circulation of urban models from Asia.

2.4 Trends in entrepreneurial urbanization

Broadly defined, the entrepreneurial city represents ‘a city governed in ways that encourage private sector solutions to urban challenges rather than dependence on central government support through public expenditure’ (Rogers et al., 2013). Urban entrepreneurialism and the entrepreneurial city stand out as core concepts in urban studies literature and theories in urban geography, which have profoundly influenced scholarly investigations of changing urban development approaches and modes of urban governance over the last three decades. The concept of urban entrepreneurialism represents a helpful way to contextualise new city building

within broader global urban trends, and prevalent logics and rationalities of urban development and management that have characterized urban transformations in the late 20th and 21st century. Reflections surrounding ‘entrepreneurial’ strategies of urban development deployed worldwide intersect in several ways with themes evoked in emergent research on new master-planned cities, as well as urban policy mobilities scholarship. Simultaneously, the expansion of the concept of urban entrepreneurialism has also emphasized its explanatory limits and necessary adaptations to investigate urban transformations in rapidly urbanizing regions of the Global South.

In this section, I briefly review early conceptualizations of urban entrepreneurialism, which were developed to explain shifts in modes of urban governance under the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state in Euro-America, before focusing on the expansion of the concept to other geographical regions, including emerging economies and the Global South. I discuss some of the ways in which the concept of urban entrepreneurialism has been adapted to the context of globalizing cities, namely through discussions on entrepreneurial states, speculative urbanism and government, and entrepreneurialism in authoritarian contexts, which represent key ideas from which I draw in this thesis. I end the section by explaining how my thesis connects to and builds on this scholarship, through subsequent empirical chapters.

2.4.1 Defining the ‘original’ entrepreneurial city

The term urban entrepreneurialism was popularized through Harvey’s (1989) now classic publication ‘From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism’. The term was developed to explicate the impacts of reconfigured city-state relationships on the modes of governance of cities following the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state and the subsequent adoption of neoliberal economic policies in North America and Western Europe, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Through its original conceptualization, urban entrepreneurialism and discussions surrounding the ‘entrepreneurial city’ (Hall and Hubbard, 1996, 1998; Jessop and Sum, 2000) described a ‘changing nature of scales of political governance’ (Scott and Storper, 2015: 2), through which local governments gained more autonomy as well as the increased responsibility to seek out their own sources of financing in response to the reduced intervention of national states in local economies (Brenner, 2004; Harvey, 1989; Jessop, 2002). As a result, modes of urban governance in cities transitioned from ‘managerial’ forms of redistributive urban policies centered on service provision, to more

‘entrepreneurial’ forms of urban governance, driven by an urban politics of growth (Hall and Hubbard, 1996; Harvey, 1989). Theories on urban entrepreneurialism are more broadly associated with discussions on the ‘hollowing-out’ of the national state (Jessop, 1999) and wider discussions on globalization and the internationalization of economies through which scholars such as Yasser Elsheshtawy (2004) argue that some cities have taken on more importance than nation-states as key centers of capital accumulation and economic interaction globally.

Scholarly investigations of urban entrepreneurialism have critically investigated the novel strategies adopted by local governments, centered on the ‘proactive promotion of local economic development’ in conjunction with private sector actors (Hall and Hubbard, 1998: 4). As theorized by Harvey (1989) and others, cities developed entrepreneurial ‘toolkits’ (Lauermann, 2018: 212), which are now well-established modes of urban development designed to attract capital and foster economic growth under an increasingly competitive global economy where capital is perceived as being extremely mobile (Hall and Hubbard, 1996). These include the proliferation of public-private partnerships and increased reliance on private-sector investment, public sector risk-taking in market ventures, growing attention to place branding and marketing (Jokela, 2020, 2020; Kavaratzis, 2004; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006), municipal real estate speculation, and engagement in inter-urban competition (Jessop, 1997; Lauermann, 2018; Peck, 2014). In analyses of the implementation of these entrepreneurial logics and tactics, scholars have pointed out that local governments have tended to promote localized interventions and investments into targeted urban spaces and projects rather than the broader redistribution of resources across a municipality’s territory, a phenomenon that Harvey (1989: 7) describes as a focus on ‘the political economy of place rather than of territory’. Accordingly, analyses of the entrepreneurial city also shed light on its particular aesthetics, associated with the replication of urban forms such as sports stadia, marinas, waterfront redevelopments, luxury real estate, convention centers, world-class leisure facilities, business improvement districts, and spectacular architecture, identified as common entrepreneurial ‘patterns of development’ (Harvey, 1989: 10) of cities seeking to attract investment and compete in the global market economy (Acuto, 2010; Lui, 2008; Marcinkoski, 2015; Ponzini, 2011).

2.4.2 Variations and adaptations of urban entrepreneurialism in globalizing contexts

Beyond recognizing the original concept's persisting relevance today (Peck, 2014), the expansion of the entrepreneurial city framework to diverse geographic contexts in recent years has encouraged the development of more nuanced conceptualizations of urban entrepreneurialism, to reflect the variety of experiences that co-exist under the banner of entrepreneurial governance (see for example the recent special issue directed by Phelps and Miao, 2020 on varieties of urban entrepreneurialism). From analyses initially focused on entrepreneurial cities in North America and Western Europe, critical investigations surrounding the deployment of urban entrepreneurial toolkits have been extended to such places as India (Datta, 2015b; Goldman, 2011b), Turkey (Penpecioglu and Taşan-Kok, 2016), South Korea (Shin, 2017; Shin and Kim, 2016), the Gulf (Acuto, 2010; Bagaeen, 2007; Ponzini, 2011), and post-socialist contexts such as China (Qian, 2011; Wu, 2003, 2020), or Russia (Kinossian, 2012). According to Lauermaann (2018: 210) these geographically and politically dispersed cases shed light on the diversified motivations underpinning urban entrepreneurialism globally, enacted through 'an appropriation of tactics, not an imitation of strategy'. More importantly, the varied political economic realities of places investigated as well as their diverse experiences in terms of global economic integration and engagement with neoliberal policies (Lauermaann, 2018; Shatkin, 2007) – contrasting namely with the context of emergence of urban entrepreneurialism in Euro-American cities – has spurred adaptations of urban entrepreneurialism, and the creation of related concepts, to capture the realities of emerging economies and urbanizing regions of the Global South. These adaptations are particularly relevant to the context of this research and represent the main ways in which I engage with urban entrepreneurialism through my analysis of the new city phenomenon in the following empirical chapters of this thesis.

A prevalent observation among critical analyses of urban entrepreneurial tactics enacted in the Global South, is that, unlike original conceptualizations of the entrepreneurial city (rooted in empirical examples in the Global North), which predominantly analyse urban entrepreneurialism as a strategy enacted by local governments at the scale of the city, current urban entrepreneurial development strategies deployed in the Global South are characterized by the persisting engagement of national states (Datta, 2015b, 2017; Pieterse and Simone, 2013; Pitcher, 2017). As Datta suggests (2017: 13):

what we are observing now is a key transformation in urbanization strategies in the global south as sovereign states and not only cities (as previously understood) are becoming more entrepreneurial and creative in their strategies of accumulation.

Accordingly, a number of scholars suggest that the concept of the ‘entrepreneurial state’ better captures the realities and complexities of entrepreneurial urbanism beyond ‘western versions of entrepreneurial cities’ (Datta, 2017: 13), and can more accurately explicate emergent strategies of urbanization and approaches to urban development in the Global South, including through the creation of wholly new cities from scratch (Datta and Shaban, 2017). Drawing on the experience of large-scale urban transformations in China, Wu (2020: 328–329), for example, characterises state entrepreneurialism in the country ‘not just as a geographical variation of urban entrepreneurialism but rather as an alternative arrangement between the state and the market which is increasingly financialized’, where the state acts ‘through’ the market rather than solely as a facilitator of market dynamics. Using the example of Chinese new towns and edge cities, Wu draws attention to the prevalent role of state-owned development corporations and state-owned financial organizations in developing new urban spaces (Wu, 2020). In his investigation of the development of the new city of Songdo in South Korea, Shin (2017) similarly draws attention to the persisting engagement of the central state in large-scale urban development operations, warranting a more nuanced analysis of local state entrepreneurialism.

Of particular relevance to this thesis is Pitcher’s (2012, 2017) investigation of similar and increasingly prevalent forms of state entrepreneurialism in the African context. Specifically, she investigates the actions of African ‘investor states’ (Pitcher, 2017: 45), which reconcile developmental and market-based policy logics in their mode of entrepreneurial governance by using state companies and assets to seek out investment opportunities and simultaneously expand markets and generate returns for the state. She demonstrates that these ‘entrepreneurial states’ use a variety of ‘public investment vehicles’ including ‘sovereign wealth funds, the pension funds of government employees, or development finance institutions to invest alongside the private sector in shopping malls, office complexes, banks and tourist resorts’ (Pitcher, 2012: 168). Datta (2017: 14) also suggests that beyond deploying strategies, images, and discourses to become a market player like entrepreneurial cities (Jessop and Sum, 2000), the entrepreneurial state is also ‘engaged in an ideology of urban entrepreneurialism that seeks to reinforce and legitimize sovereign power’ (see also Croese and Pitcher, 2019; Koch, 2014b).

Scholars have also clarified original conceptualizations of urban entrepreneurialism by developing attendant concepts to shed light on new prevalent practices driving entrepreneurialism, and emergent technologies and rationalities of rule rolled out to facilitate the implementation of ambitious state-led urban agendas in the Global South. For Goldman (2011b: 575), current theories surrounding experiences and transitions of cities in the West, following neoliberal policies and the shift towards more entrepreneurial models of governance, do not completely capture the ‘magnitude, speed, and the overarching aura of legitimacy of these new governance endeavors’ as they are being enacted across several globalizing cities in the South, often through unprecedented expulsions and expropriations (Datta, 2015b; Sassen, 2014). Drawing on the experience of Bangalore’s (India) transformation into a ‘world-city’ and hub for IT industry, Goldman (2011b: 556) argues that the deployment of urban entrepreneurial tactics of development are more importantly linked to modes of ‘speculative urbanism’ and creating a ‘new art of “speculative government”’ centered on land speculation and sustained through ‘exceptional rules of dispossession enacted in the name of world-city making.’ Drawing on Goldman’s observations, Watson (2014, 2015) has suggested that similar modes of speculative urbanism and government are increasingly characterizing rapid urban transformation and the expansion of new cities in Africa. Likewise, Datta (2015b), writing on the development of the new ‘smart’ city of Dholera in India, suggests that the broader shift from previous forms of industrialization-led urbanization to new ideologies of ‘entrepreneurial urbanization’ to increase economic growth through the promotion of ‘urbanization as a business model’ (Datta, 2015b: 8) is more broadly associated with new state-led ‘regimes of dispossession’ (Levien, 2013). New ideologies of entrepreneurial urbanization enacted through ambitious city-building projects and large-scale urban transformations are more broadly understood as the normalization of forms of ‘bypass urbanization’ (Bhattacharya and Sanyal, 2011), which circumvent the challenges, laws, and democratic processes in existing cities to roll out world-class urban agendas aligned with state-sanctioned growth ambitions.

Connecting to discussions surrounding ‘entrepreneurial states’, a number of investigations of urban entrepreneurialism in emerging economies have more specifically emphasized the necessary adaptation of the original entrepreneurial city concept to convey the experiences of entrepreneurialism in non-democratic contexts with an authoritarian or a highly centralized state apparatus, namely to capture the alternative configuration of ‘public’ and

‘private’ sector actors and related power dynamics. While original conceptualizations and Euro-American examples of urban entrepreneurialism are associated with the proliferation of public-private partnerships and the rise of the private corporate sector as a service provider and city-builder, authoritarian contexts emphasize the need for more nuanced definitions of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ sector, which are characterized by complex entanglements due to the pervasive engagement of many centralized states in national economies. As observed by Ponzini (2011: 257) in the context of state entrepreneurial practices enacted through large-scale projects and spectacular architecture in Abu Dhabi: ‘Here, the entrepreneurial city is more than a metaphor because the government is at the same time a public authority and a private enterprise.’ This observation is echoed in Acuto’s (2010: 274) analysis of Dubai’s ‘hyper-entrepreneurial’ mode of urban development ‘where public and private melt together without clear-cut boundaries’ because of the sheikdom’s entanglements in the national economy and the ‘private’ sector including through ownership of major real estate holdings.

Such enquiries into the modes of urban entrepreneurialism in authoritarian contexts, connect more broadly to recent scholarly discussions surrounding the limitations of neoliberalism – which is frequently evoked as a main driving force of urban entrepreneurialism – as an explanatory tool for urban transformation in the Global South, including in centralized states or monarchies (Bunnell, 2015a; Koch, 2014b; Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Pieterse and Simone, 2013; Watson, 2009a). In their agenda-setting paper on the topic, Parnell and Robinson (2012: 602) argue that:

Taking seriously the suggestion that neoliberalization is just one of many processes shaping cities, we might indicate that diverse and divergent pathways of urban development are not necessarily adding to the emergent “syndrome” of neoliberalization (Brenner et al., 2010b), but potentially to a range of different trajectories of accumulation and political regulation in cities.

Kanai and Kutz (2011) have made similar observations on the explanatory limits of neoliberalism in the context of urban transformation in Morocco, which are particularly relevant to this thesis. Investigating the transformation of the city of Tangier into a competitive global node, they argue that ‘the concept of neoliberalisation is necessary but not sufficient’ (Kanai and Kutz, 2011: 352) to explicate the city’s redevelopment, in light of the monarchy’s control of key (urban) development agendas and newly formed governmental institutions or agencies

overseeing important urban mega-projects (see also Bogaert, 2012 on similar dynamics present in the Bouregreg Valley project in Rabat). Similarly, scholars Zemni and Bogaert (2011: 403) suggest that we understand emergent forms of urban entrepreneurialism in Morocco as part of ‘authoritarian modalities of neoliberal government’ and modes of ‘globalized authoritarianism’ (Bogaert, 2018). For these authors, such expressions better capture the nature of state power in Morocco, which is at once shaped by logics of economic liberalism and persistent forms of authoritarian control, which has been reconfigured, respatialized, and ‘redeployed’ (Hibou, 1998, 2004) through novel arrangements in Morocco’s cities over the last twenty years (Bogaert, 2011, 2012).

2.4.3 New cities and entrepreneurial urbanism

Recent adaptations and expansions of the urban entrepreneurialism concept to better capture strategies of urbanization and urban transformation trends in emerging economies of the Global South provide fertile ground for the analysis of new master-planned cities, which I mobilize in empirical chapters of this thesis to contextualize the new city-building phenomenon across the African continent and in Morocco. New cities scholarship has been broadly connected to forms and variations of urban entrepreneurialism and discussions surrounding entrepreneurial states, often as a way to explain the emergence of new city projects, the particular form they are taking, and the specific governance arrangements introduced to enable them. Recent studies have also emphasized how, in many cases, new cities are not just driven by logics of urban entrepreneurialism, but also exacerbate some of the trends associated with entrepreneurial approaches to urban development. In this vein, Moser *et al.* (2015: 77) suggest that new cities represent ‘arguably even more extreme cases of entrepreneurial urbanism’ than what was anticipated by Harvey’s (1989) initial conceptualization of the entrepreneurial city, which was based on localized investments in *existing* cities, rather than the creation of wholly new cities that intensify trends in the privatization of governance through the normalization of corporate management structures featuring a CEO rather than an elected mayor (Moser, 2020; Moser *et al.*, 2015). Scholars also raise concerns about the mode of speculative urbanization that is driving new city building for political or economic purposes rather than to respond to real demographic demand (Marcinkoski, 2015), which is associated with forms of over building and the emergence of so-called ‘ghost cities’, particularly in China (Jiang *et al.*, 2017; Shepard, 2015; Yu, 2014).

Other analyses have also pointed out the growing appeal of new cities as lucrative ‘playgrounds’ for tech giants who aim to become the main supplier of network technologies and ‘smart’ infrastructure (Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019; Das, 2019), which is significantly shaping urban agendas and governance. Combined with the troubling willingness of government officials to cede public assets and adapt regulations to facilitate tech-driven urbanism, new ‘smart’ tech-infused cities developed from scratch are normalizing a new planning model supported by tech companies, in which the role of technology is no longer to support the city, but in which the city is rather expected to support tech development agendas and companies (Rebentisch et al., 2020).

As projects embodying objectives of national (economic) development, mobilizing public assets including land and funds, and often pursuing objectives of political legitimation (see section 2.2.2 of this review of the literature), new master-planned cities acutely embody forms and logics of increasingly ‘entrepreneurial states’ enacted through a variety of arrangements (Datta and Shaban, 2017). However, more research is still needed on the specific (and diversified) technologies, actors, and mechanisms of (state) entrepreneurialism deployed through new city development across contexts, as well as their implications for modes of urban spatial production and urban futures.

Building on adaptations of the urban entrepreneurialism concept outlined and discussed above, Chapter 5 of this thesis begins to address this gap by shedding light on the particularities of urban entrepreneurialism enacted through Morocco’s new cities, which reflect tensions between economic liberalism and entrenched modes of centralized state control in the kingdom. More specifically, the chapter unpacks the unique ‘hybrid’ identities (Barthel and Zaki, 2011) and murky practices of ad hoc new city-building actors in the kingdom, who exemplify the increasingly fluid and blurry distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ sector actors in urban mega-developments in the Global South. By critically analyzing the ambiguous implementation of the purportedly coherent national city-building strategy, this chapter draws attention to the implications of modes of opaque and speculative state intervention that are increasingly normalized in new city-building operations within and beyond Morocco. Importantly, this chapter contributes insights into new proportions of speculative urban development, rolled out at the scale of a nation by an entrepreneurial state that has made an unprecedented commitment to the new city model of development.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a critical review of the primary strands of literature that are mobilized in this research, and which I have grouped in three categories: 1) Contemporary new city building; 2) Mobile policies and globally circulating urban imaginaries; and 3) Trends in entrepreneurial urbanization. Through a discussion of selected literatures in this chapter, I have drawn out key concepts and ideas that underpin and support the analysis and interpretations presented in subsequent empirical chapters. While presented separately in this chapter, these literatures frequently overlap and intersect in this thesis, and together form the main conceptual foundation on which I build my analysis and formulate my contributions to scholarship. It is through the connection of these three areas of literature that I pursue my research objectives regarding the critical investigation of Morocco's new city-building activities as a strategy of national development, contextualized in the broader city-building trend on the African continent and in the Global South.

Overall, this thesis proposes to expand emergent analyses of new master-planned city building projects and theorizations of the global city-building trend by engaging with policy mobilities literature to explicate the proliferation of projects and normalization of new cities as a strategy of development, whilst contextualizing new city building in Morocco and Africa within prevalent logics of entrepreneurial urbanism and its particular mode of expression through new city-building ventures in the Global South. The connection of policy mobilities scholarship to the new cities literature is still in development and represents a conceptual contribution of this research, while the analysis of the new city-building phenomenon in Morocco draws attention to an underexplored empirical context. Despite having 19 new city projects underway as part of a national initiative, Morocco's city-building strategy and individual projects remain underexamined, especially beyond Francophone literature, and extant analyses of early new city projects in the kingdom have never situated Morocco's city-building activities within the context of the global city-building trend.

Through a critical examination of these literatures, this chapter has outlined some gaps in research which this thesis proposes to begin addressing. Although research on the new master-planned city-building phenomenon (which is itself rapidly evolving) is still in development and as such characterized by many underexplored areas, some gaps are worth noting here, in light of the contributions that this thesis proposes to make. For example, despite the emergence of more

and more studies on new city projects around the world, there have so far been scant investigations of countries, like Morocco, that are building several new city projects simultaneously as part of formal city-building strategies. As most analyses of new city building have so far taken the form of case studies of individual projects, there is a persistent gap in our understanding of macro dynamics and forces driving the city-building trend at larger scales, and a dearth of knowledge on the actors engaged in new city development across multiple contexts. Furthermore, the attention to actors of new city development has so far largely focused on the builders of new city projects, leaving residents overlooked as a category of actors that actively shapes new cities.

Although urban geography has widely contributed to urban policy mobilities literature, gaps persist in our understanding of how, why, and with what consequences urban policies, ideas, and models circulate globally that could further inform our understanding of the global expansion of the new city-building phenomenon. For example, few investigations into the global circulation of urban models have explored the process by which urban models themselves are constructed, and there have been few in-depth investigations into the power of particular elite stakeholder discourses and rhetoric and how they can significantly shape urban policy ideas and their circulation. Although recent research has shed light on emergent urban models beyond the conventional centers of urban innovation considered within urban studies scholarship, the empirical focus on the Asian region has left room for more research on emergent policy flows and forms of urban modeling deployed across the African continent and between African cities.

Finally, despite abundant scholarship on urban entrepreneurialism and the entrepreneurial city, and recent adaptations of these concepts to capture realities of urban transformation in the Global South, a gap remains surrounding the particularities of urban entrepreneurialism enacted through new city building across contexts. Specifically, more research is needed on the variety of actors of urban entrepreneurialism supporting new cities, as well as the modes of state power and state action deployed to enable and support new city ventures and the related consequences for urban futures.

The literature reviewed in this chapter situates my research within broader scholarly approaches and theory that are relevant to my thesis research and objectives, and which have informed my research methodology, fieldwork strategy, and the ways I have interpreted and analyzed my findings. This chapter has more broadly provided a justification for this research by

identifying several gaps in existing literature on new city building, urban policy mobilities, and emergent trends in entrepreneurial urbanization. In subsequent chapters, this thesis addresses a number of these gaps by focusing on the forces, actors, and narratives driving new city-building across the African continent; the particularities of Morocco's national city-building strategy as enacted by an entrepreneurial and authoritarian state; the unconventional development process of a fast new city model for Africa; and the role of pioneering residents in shaping new cities through their daily experiences. In doing so, this thesis makes unique contributions to the bodies of scholarship outlined and advances original arguments to enhance our understanding of the global city-building phenomenon by connecting these literatures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that I employed to conduct research for this thesis. In the following sections, I provide background and describe the qualitative methods I used to critically investigate Morocco's national city-building initiative and new cities under development, contextualized within the broader trend of the construction of new cities in Africa and in the Global South. Based on the theoretical assumptions that underpin this thesis, and my conceptualization of new cities as material, discursive and networked constructions, qualitative methods, which emphasize 'quality, depth, richness and understanding, instead of the statistical representativeness and scientific rigour which are associated with quantitative techniques' (Clifford et al., 2010a: 9), were especially suited to this research. I employed mixed qualitative methods to explore in-depth the global and local forces shaping new city building in Morocco, and the subjective and situated values, meanings, emotions, and knowledges, surrounding their materialization (Clifford et al., 2010a; DeLyser et al., 2010)

My examination of the new city-building phenomenon in Morocco investigates the interplay between the global city-building trend as it is manifested on the African continent, the kingdom's national new city-building strategy, and three local examples of new city projects in Morocco. Through my focus on the various actors, networks and narratives mobilized in the development of new cities, I investigate both the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perspectives on Morocco's new cities, embodied by the discourse of city-building actors and the visions and experiences of pioneering new city residents and citizens affected by the projects. The analysis of new city-building through various scales in this thesis, and its incorporation of a dual (top-down/bottom-up) perspective of new city development is reflected in the selected methodology underpinning this research. Specifically, this research combines 1) emergent qualitative methods in urban studies and policy mobilities research for the investigation of global urban trends, with 2) fieldwork in Morocco, conducted in two phases in 2016 and 2018.

In the following subsections I provide more detailed explanations of the various methods of data collection and analysis I employed throughout my doctoral research and during fieldwork in Morocco. I begin by discussing my investigation of the global circulation of new city models and ideas through participant observation at international conferences. I then present the sites

selected for my fieldwork in Morocco, details on field logistics, and the particularities and ethical considerations for conducting research in Morocco. Next, I present the methods of participant recruitment and data collection employed during fieldwork in Morocco including elite interviews, semi-structured and conversational resident interviews, mobile and walking interviews, as well as the collection of official documentation and grey literature. I then review my methods of data analysis and end this chapter by discussing the limitations of this study through a reflection on my positionality and underrepresented groups in this research.

3.2 Conducting ‘global’ urban research on new cities

The inherently global nature of the new cities phenomenon (as part of an international trend and inserted within global networks of urban expertise), and the objective of this dissertation to connect new city building in Morocco to the wider expression of the trend in Africa, called for a methodological approach that allows for a closer consideration of the global dimensions of the phenomenon in my analysis. Before delving into the details of my fieldwork in Morocco, which constitutes the bulk of the data collection process conducted as part of this doctoral research, this section examines a complementary research method mobilized throughout my doctoral research, namely participant observation (Laurier, 2010) at key international private industry and UN conferences on the topic of new cities and African urbanisation. This largely unanticipated qualitative research method was integrated to this doctoral research after I attended a number of conference events that revealed crucial insights about the global circulation of norms and seductive narratives driving new city development on the African continent. Data collected through this method more particularly informed the development of the first manuscript included in this dissertation (see Chapter 4), but also generated valuable insights that significantly shaped my approach to field research in Morocco, and contributed to my overall understanding of the topic of new cities and their global proliferation.

Recent scholarship on urban policy mobilities has attracted growing attention to the role of international conferences as ‘mobility events’ (Clarke, 2012: 27), outlining their important role as sites and situations of policy circulation and mobilization (McCann and Ward, 2012b). Emerging as a rather novel alternative to complex and costly multi-sited analyses that ‘follow’ urban policies across transnational networks and spaces (Temenos and Ward, 2018), I used participant observation at conferences to produce a ‘single-site but relationally thickened

description of the place of conferences in facilitating the movement of policies across space’ (Cook and Ward, 2012: 137). The integration of this method is more broadly grounded in emergent approaches in urban geography, responding to scholars’ calls for a more ‘global’ urban studies (McCann, 2011a; Robinson, 2016; Roy, 2012). In recent years, and namely following contributions from policy mobilities literature to the field of urban studies, a number of scholars have advocated for a shift in the ways we conduct urban research, critiquing forms of ‘methodological territorialism’ (Temenos and Ward, 2018: 69) to promote more topological approaches that take into account the global-relational nature of cities and sites of urban theory production (McCann, 2011a).

3.2.1 Participant observation at international conferences and ‘mobility events’

I conducted participant observation at a total of four international conferences on the topic of new cities and African urbanization⁷ including one industry conference and two UN conferences.⁸ I employed this method to investigate the global agents circulating new city imaginings, as well as their motivations, and influences. These conferences were attended by a variety of actors such as policymakers and academics, but also entrepreneurs, CEOs of new cities, and representatives from technology companies interested in the business possibilities offered by cities and urbanization in Africa.

I attended these conferences both as a regular participant and as a speaker, taking part in the variety of formal and informal activities that they encompass: official conference presentations, panels or keynote speeches, and workshops, but also spontaneous chats in hallways and around the snack table, networking, and other mundane social interactions. I recorded observations through extensive notetaking and used data-review sessions with colleagues also in attendance to share, compare, and contrast observations and experiences (Laurier, 2010). In the context of my doctoral research, these conferences provided crucial insights on the general climate of discussions surrounding the development of new cities on the African continent, as well as the views of powerful elites and organizations advocating for new

⁷ The manuscript presented in chapter four of this dissertation also draws from research conducted at three additional conference events attended by the manuscript’s co-author.

⁸ These include the International Conference on Chinese and African Sustainable Urbanization (ICCASU, UN-Habitat, 24–25 October 2015, University of Ottawa); the New Cities Summit (21–23 June 2016, Montreal); the UN-Habitat III meeting (October 2016, Quito); and an international academic conference entitled ‘The Path to a Prosperous Future for Africa’ (3 November 2017, Dar Al Maghrib Center, Montreal).

cities as a strategy of development. Participant observation at these events also revealed the role of conferences as key nodes in the circulation of new city models and ideas by enabling the investigation of how they operate as spaces of seduction and persuasion (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Pow, 2014).

3.3 Conducting field research in Morocco's new cities: Site selection, field logistics and research context

As previously mentioned, the other component of the methodology underpinning this research consists of more focused fieldwork in Morocco's new cities. The fieldwork conducted as part of this research took place in two phases, in 2016 and 2018.⁹ During the first phase of field research, spanning five weeks from July 25th to August 31st 2016, I traveled to many locations across the kingdom in order to meet with key institutional or corporate actors engaged in new city-building activities across the country and to gain a better understanding of Morocco's overarching national city-building initiative. For example, I traveled to Rabat, Témara, Casablanca, Mohammedia, Marrakech, and Aïn Harrouda to visit relevant government ministries, as well as institutional or corporate headquarters, to interview relevant actors and collect official documentation. During the second phase of fieldwork, from September 3rd to December 13th 2018, I conducted a more focused analysis of the implementation of Morocco's national city-building strategy and its materialization through three individual projects: Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City and Benguerir Green City. While I used this time to conduct follow-up interviews with actors of new city development, most of this second phase of fieldwork was dedicated to investigating the perceptions and experiences of residents impacted by the new city projects.

3.3.1 Presentation of research sites

The selection of new city projects in which to conduct a focused analysis was guided by several factors, including logistical considerations of accessibility both to the sites themselves and to research participants (Duminy, Odendaal, et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). The three cities selected represent some of the bigger city projects presently underway in Morocco. They have

⁹ Scheduling of field research was influenced by my academic path at McGill: The first phase of research was conducted while I was enrolled in the master's program in geography. I conducted a second round of fieldwork after fast-tracking to the PhD program and completing comprehensive exams.

attracted considerable visibility through media attention nationally and have been the object of elaborate branding and marketing campaigns, providing a substantial corpus of materials to analyse in conjunction with site visits. In accordance with the broader objectives of this thesis to critically analyze Morocco's city-building initiative as a national development strategy, I selected sites that together represent the diverse ways in which the new city imaginary is being implemented across the kingdom (Stake, 1995). The three cities mainly differ in terms of their promoted urban visions and design concepts, and are being developed by three distinct entities (see Chapter 5), providing an overview of the variety of institutional actors involved in new city building across the kingdom. Lastly, the three cities are each currently at different stages of construction and present different social dynamics for urban populations either living in, around, or being displaced by the new city project. I provide more background on each city below before discussing field logistics and the contextual particularities for doing human geography research in Morocco.

Tamesna is among the first new city projects erected in Morocco under the national city-building strategy, and is being developed by the Al Omrane Group, a parastatal agency in charge of implementing the state's vision in housing development. It is located in the rural commune of Sidi Yahya des Zaërs, approximately 20 kilometers from the kingdom's administrative capital, Rabat. The new city of Tamesna spans an area of 8,4 km² and has a projected population of 250,000 residents. The satellite city was launched in 2005 primarily to relieve demographic pressure on Rabat and to promote access to housing for the urban poor and affordable opportunities for property ownership for middle class households. The city was officially inaugurated in 2007 and as of 2018 counted approximately 45,000 residents. While still being sporadically upgraded, the new city has reached an advanced construction stage and includes a growing number of functioning services and commercial establishments.

Zenata Eco-City is among the biggest new city projects underway in Morocco with a projected population of 300,000 residents. It is being built by the CDG (*Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion*), the national institutional asset manager for public pension funds, through its main holding *CDG Développement* (CDG Dev) and subsidiary *Société d'Aménagement Zenata* (SAZ). The new city is being developed over an area of 18.3 km² along the Atlantic sea front between the cities of Mohammedia and Casablanca, the country's economic capital. The new eco-city is located within the largely industrial urban commune of Aïn Harrouda, which is home to many of

Morocco's heavy industries. Zenata is envisioned as an 'eco-city' promoting a sustainability-oriented lifestyle for Morocco's emerging middle class, in new climate-adapted modern urban environments. Despite visible signs of ongoing construction and development in various areas of the site, land earmarked for the new city project is still partly under acquisition. Specifically, several informal settlements, and *cabannons*¹⁰ currently located onsite are in the process of being relocated and expropriated (respectively) to make way for the new city. There are currently approximately 300 households living in the first phase of the Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood development for informal resident relocation on the site of the new city.

*Benguerir Green City*¹¹ is located in the Rehamna province in Morocco, approximately 50 kilometers away from Marrakech, the country's center for tourism. Benguerir Green City was developed as a 'green' knowledge city and business incubator by the SADV (*Société d'aménagement et de Développement Vert*), a subsidiary of Morocco's phosphate mining corporation, OCP group. The new city's site, spanning 10 km², is adjacent to the existing economically depressed town of Benguerir which has a population of approximately 85,000 residents, and which will eventually be incorporated to the new city's masterplan. Regionally, the new green city is promoted as a strategy to boost job creation and economic development. Nationally, Benguerir aims to diversify OCP's business activities and to create a competitive education and research and development node in Africa. Construction of the new city began in 2012 and is now well underway. The city's centerpiece, the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, is fully built and has been operational since 2013. Benguerir Green city's target population is 100,000 residents, with a majority of resident population presently comprising student and faculty living on campus (approximately 6,000). Table 3.1 summarizes the main characteristics of the three field sites.

¹⁰ Self-built properties along the beachfront ranging from simple modest homes to more elaborate multi-story villas with pools.

¹¹ The new city is also referred to as Mohammed VI Green City.

Table 3.1.

Main characteristics of new cities in which I conducted fieldwork

	Tamesna	Zenata Eco-City	Benguerir Green city
Location	Rural commune of Sidi Yahya des Zaers	Urban commune of Ain Harrouda	Rehamna province
Distance to nearest city	Rabat (20 km)	Mohammedia (11 km)	Marrakesh (50 km)
Area (km²)	8,4	18,3	10
Year launched	2005	2012	2011
Project manager	Al Omrane	Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ)	Société d'Aménagement et de Développement Vert (SADV)
Projected population	250 000	300 000	100 000
Current population	45 000	300 (households)	6 000
Urban concept	Satellite City	Eco-City	Green/Knowledge City

3.3.2 Fieldwork logistics and site accessibility

Despite some new cities nearing completion or being well underway, available, affordable, and safe – especially for a solo female researcher – housing options within the new cities were difficult to come by. Consequently, I found accommodation in the nearest existing cities, living in Rabat, Casablanca, and Marrakech while conducting field research in Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City respectively. While this living arrangement was often the only option available, it imposed challenges for accessing field sites daily. In Morocco and elsewhere, new master-planned cities are developed on large portions of land which is frequently located in remote areas or outside of main city centers, with little to no access to transportation networks when the city is still under construction (Datta, 2017; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). In Tamesna for example, public transportation is painfully lacking, making it extremely difficult to get to and from, as well as around the new city without a private car. The city itself, which is extremely vast, is not pedestrian friendly, as sites of activity and services are unevenly spread out across the city and separated by vast uninhabited areas and construction sites. Similar contexts characterize the other new city sites investigated.

While I was able to conduct field visits and interviews on my own during my first phase of fieldwork in 2016,¹² considerations surrounding access to field sites and research participants for fieldwork in the new cities in 2018 led me to hire a research assistant to accompany me in the field. I hired Amir¹³ following a round of interviews with other potential candidates, primarily to help me reach field sites by car, and to act as an interpreter for resident interviews conducted in Arabic and for the subsequent translation of interview data. When we met as part of this research, Amir was a student of architecture from Rabat in his fifth year of a six-year program. He was familiar with the urban development context in Morocco and broad themes relevant to this research. I worked with him throughout my time in Morocco, across the three new city sites, which enabled us to develop a strong collaboration and a consistent approach for interviews across all sites.

Amir's help was crucial to access both field sites and research participants. He provided important access to groups of Arabic-speaking participants, which would not have otherwise been included in this research due to my lack of proficiency in Moroccan Arabic. Furthermore, he helped to ensure my personal safety and wellbeing while working in remote and culturally distant contexts (Caretta, 2015), including by navigating gendered aspects of field research and unwanted advances from participants through the clarification of my role as a researcher and the professional nature of meetings with participants. In contrast, when I visited sites on my own on various occasions, such advances were common and repeated, and affected my sense of personal safety, especially in unpoliced and remote construction sites such as in Zenata Eco-City. Although Amir's contribution as a research assistant provided several advantages throughout fieldwork, our collaboration also imposed some limitations, which I explore in more detail in section 3.6 of this chapter where I examine how my positionality shaped the research.

3.3.2.1 A note on research context and ethics

The Kingdom of Morocco is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy in which the king, as Chief of State, retains extensive control over political affairs and the country's vision for development. Despite the state's purported commitment to a process of decentralization and

¹² I conducted interviews in French, my native language, which is also a language commonly used by government and business executives in Morocco.

¹³ This is a pseudonym I selected to keep my research assistant's identity confidential.

democratization of public action, Morocco's powerful and centralized state apparatus and its opaque mode of governance are characteristic of authoritarian rule (Bogaert, 2018).¹⁴ As suggested by Koch (2013a), conducting field research in authoritarian or 'closed contexts' poses unique challenges and methodological concerns, and requires the adjustment of field methods developed in more 'open' contexts and often informed by divergent notions of power, freedom, and agency. For example, Morocco has limited freedom of press, and prevalent practices surrounding the judicial harassment of journalists as well as their imprisonment (Reporters Without Borders, 2020), highlight the central state's close monitoring and control of representations of the kingdom in public discourse as well as low tolerance for critique. Representatives of the central state are present at every institutional level, down to the street level, where central power is personified by *mqaddems*.¹⁵ *Mqaddems* are broadly perceived by citizens as agents of the state, and sometimes colloquially referred to as 'spies' as they perform their duties in plain clothing and as such are not readily identifiable (especially to an 'outsider'). They are part of the state's non-transparent control apparatus and perform various forms of surveillance locally, which I became acutely aware of through fieldwork and had to take into account in my approach toward participant and data protection.

I was granted permission to conduct my field study by the Research Ethics Board I (Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans) of McGill University on March 7th 2016, followed by renewals approved in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. The public nature of new city projects and their official support by the king make them sensitive topics for critical research. Upon setting out to conduct fieldwork in Morocco's new cities, several projects, including Tamesna, had already been heavily critiqued in the national press, making local authorities wary of journalists and researchers, and reinforcing their impulse to control research agendas as well as access to information. In light of this context, I maintained confidentiality with every research participant in order to minimize any risk of harm related to their

¹⁴ The Moroccan state reflects the 'the dual nature of Moroccan power' (Hachimi Alaoui, 2017: 4) embodied by the institutions and figures representative of Morocco's elected government, and those representative of central power and the king's administration, sometimes referred to as the *Makhzen*.

¹⁵ *Mqaddems* are non-elected representatives of the Ministry of the Interior at the level of neighbourhoods, who are expected to know about and monitor all the households that are part of their local neighbourhood jurisdiction (Bogaert, 2018: 189).

participation in this research and took further precautions to protect collected data, which I always stored in password protected files on my computer.¹⁶

3.4 Data collection in Morocco's new cities

Throughout fieldwork in 2016 and 2018, I used a combination of qualitative methods including interviews (semi-structured and conversational, as well as mobile interviews), site visits, and the collection of official documentation and grey literature to gather data on Morocco's three new cities and the national city-building initiative. These methods were selected for the opportunities they provided for the in-depth exploration of subjective and complex questions relating to the new city phenomenon in Morocco. I conducted a total of 139 interviews between 2016 and 2018, including 29 interviews with actors involved in Morocco's new city development, and 110 interviews with resident populations variously affected by the new cities under development in the three sites investigated (Table 3.2).¹⁷

Table 3.2.

Number of interviews conducted by participant group, interview method, and new city affiliation

	Tamesna	Zenata Eco-City	Benguerir Green city	Other/National strategy	Total
Actors of new city development					
Semi-structured 'elite' interviews	4	8	10	7	29
Local and residents populations					
Semi-structured/conversational interviews	40	22	38	-	100
Mobile/walking interviews	5	2	3	-	10
<i>Total</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>-</i>	110
TOTAL	49	32	51	7	139

During my two phases of fieldwork in Morocco, I logged interview data primarily using an audio-recording device and through note taking and voice memos. I also recorded observations and thoughts in a field journal, took countless photos, videos, and sound recordings

¹⁶ It should however be noted that anonymity cannot be guaranteed for high-profile elites involved in new city developments, who are publicly associated with the project and whose identities are well known.

¹⁷ A full list of participants interviewed for this research is included in Appendix A (city-building actors) and Appendix B to D (resident populations).

of field sites during visits, and documented impressions through various drawings and sketches.¹⁸ Throughout my time in Morocco, informal conversations in cafés, shops, markets or at dinner parties, not necessarily relating to new cities, contributed to shape my understanding and helped me contextualize my analysis of the kingdom's new cities.

3.4.1 Sampling and recruiting participants

Participants involved in this research are categorized in two main groups: actors of new city development, and local populations living in and at the periphery of new cities. The grouping of participants in this way is consistent with my aim of investigating both the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perceptions of Morocco's new cities. While I employed different recruitment strategies for each group, in all cases, sampling was never random. Rather, in accordance with the objectives of purposive sampling techniques and qualitative research more broadly (Palys, 2008), my aim in selecting individuals for interviews was to assemble an illustrative rather than a representative sample (Valentine, 2005), by gathering participants willing to discuss their individual perspective, experience or share their expertise in relation to a common overarching phenomenon (Longhurst, 2010), in this case the inception of new master-planned cities, through the eyes of those involved in their development, and those impacted by it.

3.4.1.1 Actors of new city development

This first category of participants includes 'elite' actors of new city building as well as what some researchers refer to as 'middling technocrats' (Larner and Laurie, 2010; Roy, 2012) in other words mid-level institutional actors and technical professionals including architects, planners, and mid-level government employees (municipal, regional, national levels). The term 'elite' is variously and rather fluidly defined across the social sciences, and there is no consensus surrounding a strict definition of the term (Harvey, 2011). In this research, I use Harvey's (2011: 433) definition of elites as 'those who occupy senior management and Board level positions' including new city CEOs, project directors, department heads or senior government officials. Although Morocco's 'elite' and mid-level actors of new city building have varying degrees of decisional power, responsibility, and direct control over new city projects and their development,

¹⁸ I classified audiovisual materials and other data meticulously everyday, clearing my phone, camera, and recorder after each trip to the field and making multiple backups to prevent loss or confiscation of data.

in all cases these actors were selected because they have access to information on new city projects that is not readily available to regular members of the population, and have directly intervened in the new city projects or policies surrounding their development.

Recruitment of city-building actors was initiated from Canada¹⁹ by reaching out to potential participants through email and using the ‘LinkedIn’ professional network. Due to the public nature of new city-building projects and the widespread national press coverage on projects underway, I was able to collect information on key institutional actors involved in new city-building operations, and search through LinkedIn profiles using these institutional actors as keywords to guide my searches. The profile-based nature of the platform provides transparency when reaching out to actors by giving them the opportunity to consult my personal page and credentials before responding to an interview request, which I believe made this technique of recruitment more successful than reaching out solely through email. Government or state-affiliated actors proved much harder to get in contact with because Moroccan governmental websites are often dated, and professional contact information of particular actors, if available, is often erroneous. Consequently, response rates from enquiries sent to institutional email addresses were very low. I subsequently learned during fieldwork that government employees usually use their personal cellphone and personal email, largely favouring the former over the latter as a mode of communication.²⁰ Upon arrival in Morocco in 2016, I managed to access relevant actors more successfully by making my way to the relevant ministries in person and requesting information about who to contact regarding specific new city projects or programs. After making initial contact with relevant actors, I used snowball sampling techniques for further recruitment, ‘whereby one contact, or participant, is used to help to recruit another, who in turn puts the researcher in touch with another’ (Clifford et al., 2010b: 535). This was an especially useful technique for ‘elite’ actors, who are generally harder to get in contact with and are more selective of who they meet due to their status and limited availabilities (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Harvey, 2011).

¹⁹ In one rather unexpected turn of events, I was able to meet with the project manager who was in charge of developing Phase 1 of Zenata Eco-City’s masterplan while she was travelling in Montreal in the summer, before I myself traveled to Morocco for fieldwork a few weeks later.

²⁰ I was teased about this on a few occasions by government officials, as they remarked that ‘North Americans want to do everything over email’. While I perceived email as a more professional, and less intrusive way of reaching out to participants, email is seen as unnecessarily formal, distant, and inefficient in many contexts, and calling is the social and professional norm.

3.4.1.2 Local and resident populations

The second group of participants included in this research is made up of local members of the population variously impacted by the new city projects under development in the three field sites, including residents currently living in, around, or being displaced to make way for the new city projects. More specifically, Tamesna's advanced construction stage with a well-established resident population enabled me to recruit pioneering residents to learn about their daily life in the new city. In Zenata Eco-City, the ongoing process of land acquisition for the project gave me access to residents being displaced, as well as those recently relocated within the new city's first neighbourhood. Finally, in Benguerir Green City, the new city's proximity to the existing town of Benguerir (to be eventually integrated in the master plan) allowed me to connect with neighbouring residents that have been witnessing the city's development.

I began recruitment while still in Canada, by reaching out to resident groups and associations in Tamesna and Zenata Eco-City through Facebook.²¹ In both cases, I became aware of specific resident groups by combing through press articles and other media documents, enabling me to compile a list of active resident associations. With the permission of Facebook Group hosts, I published a short introductory statement explaining my research intentions and inviting residents to contact me if they were interested to discuss their individual experience and perceptions of daily life in the new city. I was able to make initial contact with several residents in this way, with whom I arranged meetings upon my arrival in Morocco. After these initial contacts, I also employed snowball sampling techniques to make contact with other relevant organizations and residents.

Other residents were recruited using convenience sampling techniques, which rely on the recruitment of available subjects on location (Berg, 2007; Saumure and Given, 2008). Although reaching out to residents through Facebook groups proved effective, it also introduced substantial bias, by limiting recruitment to participants with access to a smartphone, a computer, and internet, and with French-speaking abilities,²² which is a marker of socioeconomic and class distinction in Morocco (Benzakour, 2007). In order to capture 'a polyphony of voices' (Flyvberg, 2001: 139), and a wider range of experiences, I relied on Amir and his fluency in Arabic to help

²¹ Resident Facebook groups were platforms of exchange for new residents to share tips and news, promote services in the new city, as well as communicate grievances on various aspects of daily life.

²² My initial recruitment statement was published in French.

me with ‘on-site recruiting’ (Longhurst, 2010: 109) of residents going about their daily activities in the new cities. We used important centers of activity and moments of socialization as a starting point to recruit participants for interviews, striking up conversation in cafés, *snacks*,²³ in local shops and storefronts, or during market days. Neighbourhood *Gardiens*, men who take up the informal labour of watching over parked cars or residences, were also approached to gain insights on specific neighbourhoods which they oversee.

3.4.2 Methods of data collection

3.4.2.1 Elite interviews with actors of new city development

I conducted a total of 29 elite interviews (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Harvey, 2011) in Morocco between 2016 and 2018, with actors involved in the development of Tamesna (4), Zenata Eco-City (8), Benguerir Green City (10), or more broadly involved in the national city-building initiative (7). I used elite interviews to gather information that was not published on the projects (Duminy, Odendaal, et al., 2014), for example on their funding, any challenges encountered during stages of development, the identity of partners and important stakeholders, and on the origins and influences of the planning concepts and plans. Informed by my previous participant observation at international conferences, I was also able to discuss the various circumstances (events, meetings, partnerships) through which these ideas were encountered, mobilized, and adopted. These interviews were crucial to understand the configuration of actors involved in new city development, their complex ties to the state and private sector, their specific role in new city-building and urban change, and how each achieved national development objectives. I was also interested in examining which types of narratives were employed by elite stakeholders when discussing new cities, and their interpretation of the motivations and ambitions underpinning widespread new city development across the kingdom.

All interviews were conducted at the participant’s place of work, most often in their private office or in a conference room, according to their preference. Interviews lasted between 40 minutes to one hour, following recommendations on elite interviewing techniques, which suggest that 45 minutes is the ideal amount of time to gather sufficient information without having a deterring effect on the interviewee (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Harvey, 2011). I

²³ Snacks are storefronts with limited seating facing the street which offer rapid hot meal options.

used a semi-structured interview format with a majority of open-ended questions to allow the interviewee to express their thoughts more freely (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Harvey, 2011). As suggested by Aberbach and Rockman (2002: 674), ‘elites especially – but other highly educated people as well – do not like being put in the straightjacket of close-ended questions.’

Meetings with actors of new city developments were always scheduled, which gave me sufficient time to prepare, refine, and adapt interview guides. Preparation and preliminary research on the individual interviewed and their role within the new city project was key to have a successful, informative interview, to gain the trust of the interviewee and improve the quality of their answers by showing them I was not ‘wasting’ their time (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Harvey, 2011; Valentine, 2005). Actors interviewed were often busy and highly solicited, and our meetings were frequently disrupted by incoming phone calls or knocks at the door from a colleague, requiring immediate attention. The frequent interruptions and busy schedule of interviewees required me to be strategic about which questions to ask and in what order, as keeping more sensitive or crucial questions for the end could mean not getting a chance to ask them at all.

During interviews, and especially those conducted with senior managers, directors, or new city CEOs, it was often difficult to get clear answers to my questions that went beyond the promotional discourses on new city websites, or brochures. Many high-ranking professionals or public officials are bound by confidentiality agreements, and in many cases they are wary of revealing any challenges or improprieties relating to the project that could affect its ongoing development, chance to succeed, or the confidence of investors. Similarly, the high-profile nature of new city projects, and the close ties of entities building new cities to central power in Morocco (see Chapter 5) also meant that participants avoided openly condemning aspects of the projects and any discussion surrounding the King that could be construed as negative or critical. One strategy I used to encourage answers to tougher, more critical questions was to ask interviewees to think about alternative scenarios, or to discuss their ideal scenario for the city’s development, which was a useful entry point to discuss some areas of tension surrounding projects, or challenges relating to their implementation.

Almost all interviews with elite stakeholders were recorded using a portable audio recording device, after securing written consent by the participant. A majority of interviews was conducted in French with only myself present.

3.4.2.2 Semi-structured and conversational 'resident' interviews

I conducted a total of 102 semi-structured or conversational interviews with local populations in and around Tamesna (40), Zenata Eco-City (22), and Benguerir Green City (38). I used resident interviews to gain insight into 'lived' and embodied experiences of the new cities and the impact of their development on neighbouring communities (Longhurst, 2010; Valentine, 2005). For pioneering residents living in the new cities, mostly encountered in Tamesna, I sought to understand the motivations for their move to the new city, their experience of daily life in the new built environment, and their perception of the project's promoted vision and actual materialization. For residents living around projects or on sites being cleared to make way for the new city, as in Zenata Eco-City and Benguerir Green City, I wanted to understand the impact of the new city's construction on residents' daily activities and future plans, and how they perceived the project's motivations and ambitions in light of the fact they may be left out of the future under development.

The level of structure of questions and exchanges varied during resident interviews, based on the availability, context, and level of comfort of participants in discussing the themes I enquired about in more or less depth. In all cases, I sought to give participants the flexibility and space to focus on the aspects they felt were most important in relation to their life in the city. In accordance with the semi-structured interview format, I often used a set of pre-determined but open-ended questions to guide exchanges, which unfolded in a relaxed, flexible, conversational manner (Longhurst, 2010; Valentine, 2005). In other cases, interviews were less structured, often beginning with a single prompt or general question, which allowed the participant to more fully determine the direction of the interview (Ayres, 2008; Firmin, 2008). Although group interviews are not included as a specific field method in this research, individual interviews sometimes organically transformed into group conversations as other people joined in or simply gathered around us to listen to the exchange, sometimes revealing interesting divergences in opinion and inciting further conversation when others recalled additional elements of interest.

The length of interviews conducted with residents varied based on the interview format and the individual being interviewed, running between twenty minutes to almost two hours. Interviews that were unscheduled and conducted during on-site encounters were generally briefer, while interviews scheduled ahead of time tended to be more in-depth and lengthier. These pre-organized interview meetings often took place in a café or restaurant in the new city,

and on a few occasions in the resident's home. In all cases, the location of the meeting was left up to the resident to ensure they would feel comfortable in the selected location. This also provided a helpful starting point for discussion, during which we would often ask why the participant had selected this meeting place, and what it represented for them in terms of their life in the city.

Interviews were conducted both in French and in Arabic (see section 3.5.1.1 on translation), according to the participants' preference and proficiency. For interviews conducted only in Arabic, my research assistant led the conversation through real-time interpretation, checking in with me as the conversation progressed, and following the pre-existing interview guide. For interviews conducted in French, I led conversations and my research assistant provided translation support only if necessary. In order to minimize bias associated with the translation process and changes in the interlocutor, I laid out and discussed our interview plan ahead of every meeting. Before starting data collection together, I instructed Amir on my research intentions, goals and methods, as well as the ethics of interviewing research participants (Caretta, 2015). Before interviews, I reviewed the question guide with him to make sure we had the same understanding and interpretation of interview questions and to ensure that terms used could be translated in Arabic with the same meaning and connotations (Smith, 2010). After each interview, we reflected on interview questions and rephrased or reframed questions that seemed to be have been misunderstood or interpreted in a way we did not intend (Esposito, 2001).

A majority of pre-organized in-depth semi-structured interviews were recorded using an audio recording device with the permission of the participant. Unscheduled interviews conducted on location were initially documented through notetaking in real-time, as we believed that walking around the city with a recording device, even a discreet one, and my status as a foreigner, would lead residents to think we were associated with the press and make them wary of talking with us. However, we quickly realized that even carrying a notebook and jotting down observations was perceived as extremely suspicious behaviour (Duminy, Odendaal, et al., 2014), as we were accosted by a few apprehensive residents asking if we were representatives of local authorities. In order to gain the trust of participants and make them feel at ease to speak with us, we conducted several on-site interviews without documenting conversations in real-time. In order to document these interviews, we adhered to a slightly shorter set of questions and topics to discuss. After each shorter meeting, most often conducted in Arabic and led by Amir, we would

find a quiet spot out of the public gaze to immediately go back over the conversation and record observations (Laurier, 2010). When necessary, I would prompt my research assistant with questions to help him remember further details, or I would ask him about specific parts of the conversation during which I witnessed specific reactions from the participant. I would record these short debriefs with my research assistant on an audio device and subsequently transcribe these ‘oral’ field notes. While this method for documenting the interviews inevitably generated loss of information, we were as thorough as we could in our documentation of the conversations and acknowledged the limits of what we could or could not recall, which I took into account during the process of data analysis.

While some participants remained wary of speaking with us, exchanges with residents who were willing to discuss their experience in the city was often a cathartic or liberating exchange, where residents were able to voice concerns and challenges about daily life, which in many cases have been dismissed or have yet to be addressed by local authorities. Whenever possible, I used symbolic gestures to thank residents for their time, buying them tea after or during our interview, visiting their home and meeting their family at their request, or offering a car ride to wherever they needed to get to, which was much appreciated in light of lack of transportation in the new cities.

3.4.2.3 Walking interviews and mobile methodologies

As a complement to more standard forms of ‘sedentary’ interview techniques with residents, I additionally conducted a series of walking or mobile interviews in the new cities. Walking interviews are a form of ‘mobile methodology’ where the interview process takes place in motion through the landscape, which is used as a basis for conversational exchange (Evans and Jones, 2011; Warren, 2017). Walking interviews are especially relevant to study the relationship of participants to space and place, where participants often find it ‘easier to verbalise attitudes and feelings when “in place”, producing richer data’ (Evans and Jones, 2011: 850). I used mobile interviews to investigate the embodied experiences of residents in and around new cities, as well as their sentiments towards the new city imaginary and its materialization in built form. Walking interviews were also a way to gain insights on the residents’ everyday life in the city, and to identify routes, sites, or landmarks of importance in their daily use of space.

I conducted a total of 10 walking interviews in all three new city sites (Tamesna: 5; Zenata Eco-City: 2; Benguerir Green City: 3).²⁴ Itineraries and routes taken during the interviews were always determined by participants themselves, who were asked to guide us through a ‘typical’ journey for them in the city, along the streets they usually travel and to the places they usually frequent. Interviews followed a largely unstructured format, using built forms as a prompt for discussion (Evans and Jones, 2011). The duration of interviews was also determined by participants, and were on average longer than most sedentary interviews, frequently lasting over one hour. Interviews were documented using an audio recording device and through short videos and pictures of the landscape.

While I initially intended to conduct ‘walking interviews’ discovering the new city sites on foot, the context in some new cities altered these plans. In Tamesna for example, when I recruited residents for this form of mobile interview, most participants assumed we would visit the city by car.²⁵ The use of a car is seen as a necessity in the new city due to its sprawling nature and the fact that sites of activity are isolated from each other. Although researchers have suggested that conducting interviews from a vehicle does not provide the same ‘multi-sensory stimulation of the surrounding environment’ (Evans and Jones, 2011: 850) that walking offers, having to conduct ‘mobile interviews’ by car was revealing of the city’s context – a new urban fabric that is hostile to pedestrians – and allowed us to see and experience the city in the way it is most commonly experienced by its residents: through the pace and viewpoint of a moving vehicle.

3.4.2.4 Collection of official documentation and grey literature

Field visits and interview data were supplemented with the collection of ‘naturally occurring material’ (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002: 120), specifically official documentation published on the new city projects and programs, as a way of triangulating interview data (Valentine, 2005). As suggested by Duminy *et al.* (2014: 35), triangulation is a technique that can help refine the accuracy of data and analyses when handling ‘ill-structured data’,

²⁴ While the walking interviews were informative, fewer residents had sufficient time or availabilities to take us on a more extensive ‘visit’ of the new city area, and when interviews were conducted on foot, we were dependent upon the weather which became more unpredictable as winter approached, which is a rainy season in Morocco. For these reasons, I was only able to conduct a limited number of mobile interviews.

²⁵ During mobile interviews conducted while driving, the itinerary would still be determined by the participant, who would either be typically driving or sitting in the front passenger seat and giving directions.

characterized by ambiguities, nuanced or incomplete interpretations from research participants. On a few occasions when official documentation did not match information provided during interviews or vice versa, official documents could be used as a basis for follow-up questions or to ascertain the most accurate or up to date version of events or statistics (Duminy, Odendaal, et al., 2014).

The official documents I collected include various written and visual materials such as: new city masterplans and other planning documents, governmental reports as well as legislative and policy documents, national visioning documents, press releases, speeches, newspaper and media articles, developer websites and company reports, as well as promotional brochures or ads for new city projects. Following the importance attributed to the construction of meaning surrounding new cities in my research, such documents were collected because they constitute a part of the official discourse surrounding new cities and visions and ambitions for Morocco's urban future (Temenos and Ward, 2018). Following Bunnell and Das (2010: 282), I understand these documents as 'part of the "stuff" out of which urban spaces and the lives of people in them are remade', and which are directly involved in the circulation of such seductive imaginings within and beyond Morocco.

While a majority of government actors interviewed were very open to sharing documents and readily uploaded files on my USB stick or sent them over email, in other cases, and more specifically when meeting with actors from the semi-public new city development agencies, interviewees were less forthcoming. In such cases, I had to acquire relevant documents by contacting other institutional actors, which was often a painstaking process characterized by red tape and complex bureaucratic procedures. For example, in order to obtain Zenata Eco-City's masterplan from Casablanca's Urban Agency, I had to submit an official request to the Governor of Casablanca detailing my research motives and needs and await a response and official meeting date from the Urban Agency.

I also conducted a part of my documentary research for this project through the university library at the *Institut National d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme* (National Institute for Planning and Urbanism) in Rabat, with the help of a professor there who generously granted me access. This invaluable access to the university's library allowed me to consult several official documents on the national city-building initiative unavailable online, as well as students' theses

relating to new city projects, which are not shared publicly. These secondary sources were helpful for the contextualization of my own analysis.

Finally, a substantial amount of research was conducted online, through the ongoing inspection of new cities' official websites, press and media publications on the projects, official social media accounts, and other video archives. For several new city projects in very early stages of construction or at the planning stage, websites represent important 'sites of discursive propagation' (Dixon and Jones III, 2004: 91), where content published online is presently the 'richest' and at times only readily available source of information on the new city. In order to keep track and maintain access to this content which is often characterised by its temporariness and unpredictable availability,²⁶ I developed the habit of saving pages viewed as PDF on my hard drive or using the Evernote application which allows for the 'clipping' of whole webpages for archiving and annotating.

3.5 Approaches for data analysis

3.5.1 Transcription and coding

My approach for the analysis of field data can be summarized by three steps: transcription of recorded interviews and field notes, translation of interviews conducted in Arabic into French, and finally coding and qualitative thematic analysis of interview data. The stage of data analysis for this research frequently overlapped with the data collection process, where both activities were mutually reinforcing and intertwined (Esposito, 2001). I began transcribing interviews in the field, as a way to reflect on and adjust my interviewing techniques and questions (Duminy, Odendaal, et al., 2014; Longhurst, 2010). All field notes and recorded debriefing sessions conducted during the day with my research assistant were always typed up in the evenings to ensure I captured as many details of my experiences while they were still fresh in my memory (Crang, 2005; Longhurst, 2010). Time spent transcribing interviews and notes in the field also allowed me to identify emergent and recurrent themes in interviews and engage in preliminary forms of analysis, which facilitated the subsequent coding process. Whenever possible, translation of interviews conducted in Arabic was also done in the field, soon after the

²⁶ As a recent example of the unpredictability of online sources, Zenata Eco-City's official website was completely revamped in November 2020, and a lot of previously available information on the project is now inaccessible.

original interview was conducted. A few remaining interviews were translated by my research assistant after my return to Canada, while I also finalized transcription of interviews conducted in French upon my return from Morocco.

I employed a thematic analysis approach to analyze transcribed interview data, relying on coding to help me organize and make sense of the extensive and diverse interview data collected through fieldwork (Bosit, 2003; Boyatzis, 1998). As an important step in the stage of data analysis, coding is a way to facilitate the interpretation of data by enabling its reduction, condensation, distillation, grouping and classification (Bosit, 2003; Boyatzis, 1998). In order to analyse data gathered through elite and key informant interviews, I began by thoroughly reading interview transcripts to immerse myself in their content. I identified preliminary conceptual categories based on recurring themes in the transcripts, a process otherwise known as ‘open coding’ (Boyatzis, 1998; Crang, 2005). Broad categories identified included for example ‘problematization of new cities’, ‘approaches to seduction/legitimation’, ‘stakeholder conceptualizations’, ‘project temporalities’, ‘idealized outcomes/utopian imaginaries’, and ‘perceived challenges’. I used hard copies of all transcripts to perform manual coding, refining thematic categories and codes through each iteration, and developing sub-categories of analysis. Sub-categories were then related to each other and to key concepts and theories mobilized in this research, including entrepreneurial urbanism, the circulation of urban models and planning influences, and the new city-building approach to development in Africa.

Thematic categories I employed were both pre-identified and emergent in the transcripts (Boyatzis, 1998; Cope, 2010; Temenos and Ward, 2018). While some themes, closely associated to questions posed in the interview guide and shaped by my overarching research goals and engagement with theory, were explicit in the transcripts, others were developed through more interpretive analysis (James, 2013), in order to capture ‘underlying aspects of the phenomenon under observation’ (Boyatzis, 1998: 16). For example, I developed codes to identify underlying assumptions on ‘modernity’, ‘progress’, and ‘development’ in the discourse of actors of new city development, as well as their subjective interpretations of actions, concepts, or terms in context, such as the meaning of ‘national development’ or ‘good governance’ (Crang, 2005). I used coloured highlighters to identify prevalent themes and visually represent their association to a coding category (Crang, 2005). I subsequently compiled all highlighted portions of interviews into an Excel Table, organizing excerpts into main thematic categories and sub-categories,

according to the identity of the interviewee (Meyer and Avery, 2009). This allowed me to easily visualize the data to pursue my thematic analysis, and to quickly find relevant excerpts within each thematic category.

I applied similar thematic coding techniques to analyze resident interviews, but used the QDA miner qualitative data analysis software to perform the coding process due to the high number of interviews to be analyzed (Basit, 2003; Crang, 2005; James, 2013). I organized interview transcripts by field site but developed initial broad thematic categories across all three sites to make preliminary connections between the three cities. Sub-categories developed enabled me to further analyze relationships between the data collected in each site, and to capture site-specific trends as well as common experiences among groups interviewed (Cope, 2010). Examples of codes developed during the open coding process include: ‘service provision and governance’, ‘socio-spatial in/exclusion’, ‘perception of urban aesthetics and branding’, ‘interpretation of national improvement’, ‘anticipatory/reactionary actions’, and ‘modifications to the plan’. While I did not systematically code grey literature and official documents collected during fieldwork, I used these documents for the broader interpretation and analysis of data through triangulation of interview data, and as a further source to understand the official aims, intentions and objectives of new city development projects and programs in Morocco (Temenos and Ward, 2018). The themes I identified through the coding process and my broader engagement with other data collected as well as bodies of theory relevant to this research were used to develop the analyses presented in the four empirical chapters of this thesis.

3.5.1.1 A note on language and translation

All interviews were coded and analyzed in French. Interviews conducted in Arabic and subsequently translated in French by my research assistant overall reflect a ‘domesticating’ (Smith, 2010; Venuti, 2004) or ‘meaning-based’ approach to translation (Esposito, 2001), which rather than translating word-for-word, aims to ‘make the equivalent meaning clear in the target language’ (Smith, 2010: 163). This approach to translation as well as the way interview data were collected in Arabic (through a mix of recordings, notetaking, and voice memos) imposed limitations for analysis. Accordingly, interviews translated in Arabic were analyzed in terms of the broader themes, ideas and emotions evoked by residents, rather than for the semantics or

specific word usage of participants which could not always be accurately captured through translations (Esposito, 2001).

3.6 Positionality, reflexivity, and limitations of this research

Over the last three decades, a significant body of scholarship in the social sciences has examined the role of researchers as active participants in the production of knowledge, drawing attention to how researchers themselves significantly shape and influence research outcomes and the research process at all stages (DeLyser et al., 2010). Within this scholarship, the concept of positionality was developed to express the idea that a researcher's particular worldview and position within society – influenced by factors including gender, class, age, education, and ethnicity – shapes the research process by affecting both how researchers perceive others and how others perceive them in a given context. The concept of positionality more broadly conveys the idea that researchers are not neutral, external observers (Moser, 2008), and that completely unbiased research is impossible because 'we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position' (Hall, 1992: 258). As such, knowledge produced through qualitative research is situated, subjective, and always partial (Rose, 1997). The process of critically reflecting on one's positionality, known as reflexivity, is a way to recognize our own position, assumptions, and biases and those of our research participants, and to integrate this into our research practice (McDowell, 1992). Reflexivity is important to distinguish the different power dynamics that exist between researchers and participants (Valentine, 2005), which is especially relevant when conducting research in emerging or developing countries often embedded in the context of (post)colonialism, as was the case for my research in Morocco.²⁷

3.6.1 Power dynamics and positionality

In the context of my doctoral research and fieldwork in Morocco, my positionality can be defined through several aspects of my identity: I am a young, white, able-bodied female, I am a native French speaker with a Canadian nationality, and I come from an educated, secular,

²⁷ A French protectorate from 1912 to 1956, Morocco is still profoundly impacted by vestiges of colonialism and approaches to decolonization today, manifested through profound divides throughout Moroccan society, and inequalities (in terms of levels of education, wealth, etc.) across rural and urban populations (Abu-Lughod, 1980).

middle-class background. These facets of my identity shaped the ways in which I was able to conduct my research activities in Morocco, and my access to both people and places. My whiteness, Canadian citizenship, affiliation to a renowned academic institution, and relative economic privilege enabled me to undertake this research in Morocco in the first place and provided further ease of access to certain individuals or sites throughout fieldwork. For example, I easily gained access to Benguerir Green City's gated green campus, and other construction sites or institutions that are normally inaccessible to local members of the population, due to my privileged position as a researcher from a prestigious north American university. My identity as a francophone but with a Canadian rather than French nationality was also significant in Morocco's postcolonial context, and a determining factor in my interactions with all research participants. Revealing my Canadian identity often led to more open and friendly exchanges with research participants, where I benefited from Canada's positive reputation in Morocco,²⁸ and where the important Moroccan diaspora in Montreal often became an initial source of connection for exchanges. One of the challenges of my research in Morocco was navigating the different power dynamics associated with my positionality, between the different groups of elite and resident participants that I interviewed throughout my field research, sometimes shifting between these positions several times in one day. As such, I 'performed' my identity as a researcher in different ways throughout my time in Morocco's new cities (Valentine, 2005), changing the ways I dressed, talked, as well as my overall demeanor between field contexts.

When interacting with members of the local population or residents of new cities, particularly those from less well-off households without a formal education, I was keenly aware of the power dynamics that were tipped in my favour due to perceptions surrounding my wealth, level of education, and foreign status. This created a distance with a number of residents, with whom it was harder to make an initial connection and establish trust because I seemed to stem from a reality too distant from their own. While still presenting myself as a researcher, I tended to emphasize the student-learner side of my identity in interviews and avoided technical language or jargon that could be misunderstood or seem intimidating. In outlining my research goals to residents, I suggested that they were the real 'experts' or 'specialists' on my topic of

²⁸ In visiting Morocco a few months after Ramadan and *Eid* al-Fitr in 2018, several participants shared with me their appreciation of Canada and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (who they named) because he had wished Muslim communities globally an 'Eid Mubarak' (blessed Eid) in a public address which had been widely circulated in the kingdom.

interest, namely daily life in the new city. In several new cities, my presence was also perceived as an anomaly: In a highly touristic country such as Morocco, several residents could not fathom why I would be interested in visiting a new city under construction, rather than tour Morocco's more well-known vernacular architectural marvels.²⁹ In other cities, my obvious foreign identity made me stand out as an outsider, which raised safety concerns and made us feel out of place and unwelcome in some neighbourhoods. Both in Tamesna and Zenata Eco-City, locals accosted us on numerous occasions, telling Amir to watch over me, hinting at the prevalence of muggings in the city and my status as a white woman, which made me a likely target in their eyes.

Through my interactions with residents, and in acknowledging my position of relative authority as well as Morocco's broader political context, I always ensured that participants were able to provide informed consent (either written or oral) to take part in an interview. This was particularly important in Morocco where cultural norms place a heavy emphasis on hospitality and generosity, which made it likely that some residents may feel compelled to answer my questions to be 'good hosts'. With the help of my research assistant for translation, I always clarified that participation was voluntary, would not be remunerated monetarily, that the interview could be stopped at any time and consent withdrawn at any point. I made explicit my role as a researcher, the purpose of my research, and how I would be using any data collected. Although I explained that my intention as a researcher was to report their experience and perspective within the scope of my doctoral thesis and publications, in some instances participants still believed that we could advocate on their behalf with local authorities.

Power dynamics were completely reversed when conducting elite interviews with actors of new city development, where participants were the ones in a position of authority (Valentine, 2005). While my position as a foreign researcher affiliated with a renowned North American university enable me to gain access to these 'elite' participants,³⁰ my identity as a young female student also placed me in a disadvantaged position in my interactions with powerful new city CEOs, directors, or executives. In explaining my research intentions and outlining their rights as research participants, new city-building actors often found laughable the idea that I could be an

²⁹ In a comical yet rather illustrative exchange, when I told one resident of Tamesna that I was a researcher ('*chercheuse*' in French), he blurted out in disbelief: 'This is Tamensa, you won't find anything here!' (*Tu vas rien trouver ici!*).

³⁰ In many cases, new city-building actors were flattered that the new city project they were working on was getting international attention, which made them more likely to accept a meeting.

agent of coercion, and consent forms were quickly signed and waved away in annoyance. In my interactions with powerful actors of new city development in Morocco, I had to downplay my student identity and emphasize my foreign ‘doctoral researcher’ status in order to be taken seriously. I used a number of strategies to appear confident, professional, and knowledgeable during interviews such as carrying business cards, wearing business casual or more formal attire, and employing terms or jargon to demonstrate my level of preparedness for the interview and knowledge on the topic. While in several instances throughout my fieldwork being a woman negatively impacted my sense of safety in the field by being the target of unwanted attention or advances, and at times being followed (Ross, 2015), I found that gender dynamics during interviews with elites were largely beneficial for my research purposes. As a young woman interviewing primarily male city-building actors, I was often perceived as non-threatening, which helped participants open-up to me and divulge more details on the ongoing projects (Valentine, 2005).

Beyond my own positionality, the positionality of my research assistant is also of relevance in this research (Caretta, 2015; Temple and Edwards, 2002; Turner, 2010). As previously mentioned, Amir was a young university-level architecture student, and aged 22 years old when conducting this fieldwork. Amir is from a middle-class family by Moroccan standards, with one of his parents working as a lawyer and the other working within the government. As a student of architecture, a very well-regarded profession in Morocco, he was placed in a position of authority through many of our interactions with new city residents. Amir was keenly aware of this in the field and observed how it affected our ability to interact with participants. However, Amir’s highly sociable, polite, and easy-going nature (Moser, 2008), and the fact that he was very well-attuned to local customs and cultural norms, facilitated interactions with residents of various social backgrounds. Beyond emphasizing his youth and student status in conversations with locals as a way of rebalancing power dynamics, he also searched for and emphasized commonalities between himself and the research participant whenever possible (such as family roots, sports team allegiances, etc.) to facilitate an initial connection (Valentine, 2005).

3.6.2 Underrepresented groups and research limitations

Due to our individual positionalities, some groups of the population remained out of reach to us and as such are underrepresented in this research. An important limit of this study is

the underrepresentation of women among residents interviewed. My lack of fluency in Arabic meant that it was not possible for me to recruit women participants on my own, and approaching women on the street with Amir was culturally inappropriate, and would likely have affected women's sense of safety due to many reports of attacks on women in the streets of under-policed new cities. While we were able to respect cultural norms during interviews with women participants approaching them when they were in a group, or working in a storefront, most women remained inaccessible, often occupied with childcare duties in the private space of the home. Another group that I had intended to include to this research, but which was difficult to access are residents of informal housing that is presently being cleared to make way for Zenata Eco-City. My position as a white foreign researcher, and Amir's own socio-economic status which also positioned him as an outsider in relation to informal settlements made these spaces inaccessible to us. Because we were unable to secure a local contact to accompany us in these spaces, this group is underrepresented beyond the few interviews we were able to conduct with residents we met on the beachfront or in Zenata Eco-City's first residential neighborhood.

The language barrier between unilingual Arabic speaking participants and myself meant that I was not able to immerse myself in interviews conducted in Arabic in the same way as I would have in my own language, which I recognize as a limit of this research. Concurrently, a further limit to consider relates to translation, as a factor involved in the subjectivity of knowledge production. As suggested by Smith (2010: 163), the act of translating and interpreting is not neutral, and interpreters are actively involved in 'meaning-making' in the research process. While I attempted to mitigate any misunderstandings and sources of bias by going over interview guides with Amir before and after meetings, he is not a professional translator or interpreter. Loss of meaning is inevitable with any instance of translation (Smith, 2010), but there are further sources of bias associated with the use of an interpreter, as conversations were mediated and shaped through the 'triple subjectivity' (Temple and Edwards, 2002: 6) of the interpreter's own views as well as the researcher's and the participant's (Caretta, 2015; Esposito, 2001).

The multiple subjectivities and positionalities involved in my research context are complex and the extent of their effect on the research process cannot be fully comprehended (Rose, 1997). As suggested by Rose (1997: 319), 'we cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it.' My attempts to be reflexive in my research mean that I acknowledge that my accounts and analyses, while rigorous,

are situated and necessarily partial, and shaped by my limitations in understanding and acknowledging all aspects of mine and others' positionality.

3.7 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter, I have provided details and explanations surrounding the methods employed to conduct research on Morocco's new cities, including a global approach for conducting urban research through participant observation at international conferences, and a localized investigation of Morocco's national city-building strategy through two phases of fieldwork in the kingdom's new cities. I presented the selected field sites and outlined the techniques I used for participant recruitment and sampling, as well as the various forms of interviews conducted with 'elite' actors of new city development in Morocco, and local and resident populations of new cities. Following an explanation of my approach for data analysis, I reflected on the limitations of this research through reflections on positionality. In the following empirical chapters, the results of the data analysis process are presented in research articles drawing from various assemblages of these collected data.

Preamble to chapter 4

Following a wave of new city development since the 1990s in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, the African continent has more recently become the ‘new frontier’ of real estate development and a main center for the proliferation of new cities in the world. Despite mounting critiques voiced by academics, journalists, and activists, new city ventures have been rapidly multiplying across the continent, especially following the global recession of 2008-2009. This chapter contributes important insights for the characterization of the global new master-planned city-building trend and the particularities of its expression on the African continent. More specifically, it investigates the actors, networks of interests, and narratives that are facilitating the expansion of the new city-building trend on the continent, as the appropriateness and desirability of ambitious city projects and plans are increasingly scrutinized. It identifies key seductive narratives on ‘Africa’s rise’, which are facilitating the proliferation of new cities on the continent and sheds light on the powerful rhetoric of elite stakeholders employed to actively bypass critiques of projects. The chapter draws on several empirical examples of new cities planned or underway in Africa, including in Morocco, and expands on the role of international conferences as important nodes in the circulation and normalization of ideas and policies related to the new city strategy. In the context of this thesis, this chapter serves to situate Morocco’s new city-building activities within the broader enthusiasm for new city construction across African countries and to shed light on macro-level dynamics involved in the circulation and mobilization of the new city-building imaginary across the African continent.

Publication status and details

The following chapter is published in *Urban Studies*:

Côté-Roy L and Moser S (2019) ‘Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?’ The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa. *Urban Studies* 56(12): 2391–2407. DOI: [10.1177/0042098018793032](https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018793032).

Permission for the inclusion of this article in this doctoral dissertation was granted by SAGE Publications.

Contribution of authors

I am the lead author of this manuscript, which was co-authored with Dr. Sarah Moser. The article is based on original research data from myself and my co-author. I have contributed over 60 percent of the overall work on this publication. Individual author contributions are outlined below:

Laurence Côté-Roy (lead author): contribution of original research material, conducted the documentary research and analysis, conceptualization of original draft and argument, writing of original draft, review and editing.

Sarah Moser (second author): contribution of original research material, conceptualization of original argument, review of original draft, editing assistance, assistance with revisions.

Chapter 4: ‘Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?’ The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa

Abstract

This paper explores the emerging new master-planned city-building trend on the African continent. Situating our research within urban policy mobilities literature, we investigate the ‘Africa rising’ narrative and representation of Africa as a ‘last development frontier’ and ‘last piece of cake’, an imaginary that provides fertile ground for the construction of new cities. Building upon research on the practices of ‘seduction’ that facilitate urban policy circulation, we argue for the relevance of critically examining elite stakeholder rhetoric to understand the relative ease with which the new city development model is being promoted in Africa. We investigate the enablers, advocates and boosters of new cities, represented mainly by states, corporations, non-profits and consultants to render visible the complex networks of relations and private interests that support and enable the creation and circulation of the new cities model in Africa. We also analyse the pervasive ‘right to development’ argument among African elites, which precludes criticism of new city ventures and circulates problematic assumptions about modernity and development. We conclude by discussing how stakeholder rhetoric limits the range of urban visions that are put into circulation and mobilized for Africa’s urban future.

Keywords: Africa, discourse on development, entrepreneurial urbanism, new cities, right to development, urban policy mobility

4.1 Introduction

In the last decade, Africa’s rapid urbanisation rates and growing metropolises have attracted the attention of foreign and local business elites in search of ‘emerging’ markets (McKinsey Global Institute, 2010) with high risk, high return investment opportunities (Grant, 2015; Pitcher, 2012). In the midst of the 2008 world economic crisis, the representation of African states as ‘lions on the move’ (McKinsey Global Institute, 2010), in reference to Asia’s ‘Tiger’ economies, attracted a surge of private capital from foreign entities in search of alternative investment opportunities (Watson, 2014). In 2010, the appeal reached Wall Street and the first wholly African fund, the Nile Pan Africa Fund, was created (Grant, 2015). International private equity firms have turned their attention to Africa and increasingly involved local corporations in their investment portfolios, while many Africa-based private equity firms have also started to emerge (Pitcher, 2012).

With this newfound international interest in the ‘last development frontier’ (Watson, 2014: 216), new urban residential developments and new master-planned cities have begun to spring up across Africa,³¹ as part of a phenomenon that has been spreading across the Global South since the 1990s (Moser, 2015). Initially more concentrated in Asia and the Middle East, plans for new cities are now proliferating in Africa. Unlike post-independence new capital city projects, the new city visions produced over the past 15 years are part of broader strategies to ‘leapfrog’ economic development. They are sustained by corporate–government partnerships, which promote the projects as a one-size-fits-all solution to varied urbanisation challenges (Moser et al., 2015). In many cases, the proposed cities reflect ambitions of ‘smart’ and ‘green’, technology-driven development where corporate digital and network technologies are included in the master plan and leveraged in the city’s branding (Bunnell, 2002; Datta, 2015b; Koch, 2014b; Rapoport, 2015).

These ‘holistically designed’ new cities (Murray, 2015b: 505) are examples of ‘fast urbanism’ (Bagaeen, 2007) and constitute ever-more radical urban interventions, marking a break with traditional planning practices focused on implementing piecemeal changes in existing urban settings. New cities have been characterised as extreme examples of entrepreneurial urbanism (Moser et al., 2015) and speculative urbanism (Marcinkoski, 2015), created to boost the competitiveness of national or regional economies, often leading to new forms and degrees of urban ‘splintering’ (Graham and Marvin, 2001). While some scholars define and emphasise the diversity of these new developments through a typology of new city forms and functions (Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014), we suggest that it is productive to probe the discursive constructions of new cities. New developments that define themselves as ‘new cities’ use this characterisation both ideologically and for marketing purposes, to advance a new vision of modernity and urbanity.

Over 40 new city projects are planned or are underway on the African continent. Although many of these cities are, and may remain, at the conceptual stage, construction has already begun on well over 15 projects (Moser, forthcoming). There is a small but growing body of critical scholarship on these new cities (Buire, 2014b; Cardoso, 2016; Carmody and Owusu, 2016; De Boeck, 2011; Grant, 2015; Herbert and Murray, 2015; Marcinkoski, 2015; Murray, 2015a, 2015b; Pitcher, 2012; Smith, 2017; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson,

³¹ See Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer (2018) for the phenomenon’s geographic distribution in Africa.

2014). The promised new cities rely on the validation of powerful international and private interests in states where a ‘compliant juridical regime’ (Murray, 2015a: 98) rarely requires that cities’ touted benefits be supported with empirical evidence. Throughout the article, we examine some of the macro-level dynamics involved in the circulation of the new city-building imaginary across the African continent to better characterise this phenomenon.

We begin by positioning our research within the policy mobilities literature and outlining how we expand on this scholarship through the analysis of elite stakeholder rhetoric on new cities in Africa. Second, we interrogate the ‘Africa rising’ discourse, a dominant narrative that underpins new city projects. Third, we turn to the enablers, advocates and boosters of new cities in the Global South and examine the complex networks that support the creation of new cities and facilitate the circulation of this development model, using examples from the African context. Fourth, through an analysis of the ‘right to development’ assumption held by many African advocates of new cities, we examine the absence and active rejection of robust criticism of new cities among many African elites, another factor facilitating the circulation and normalisation of the new cities’ model. Finally, we unpack assumptions associated with this rhetoric and examine the problematic implications of elite stakeholders’ uncritical discourse for urban Africa.

This article contributes critical insights on how visions of new urban developments are assembled and circulated through their discourse and supporting networks, to set an agenda for further study of new master-planned cities in Africa and the Global South more generally. The elite stakeholder rhetoric examined in this paper is similar to optimistic discourses that underpin new city projects in other regions of the world, but the sense of Afro-optimism and the ‘Africa rising’ narrative currently provide fertile ground for new city development in Africa and constitute a particularity of the trend on the continent.

4.2 New city models on the move

Departing from other studies of African new cities, our focus is not on what differentiates or characterises individual city projects (c.f. Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018) but rather on what connects them to form a broader trend. We situate this paper within studies of urban policy mobilities and assemblages, which are concerned with the way urban policy ‘moves’ through space, altering both places and policies in the process (McCann, 2011a). Urban policies are

(re)shaped and put into circulation by human and non-human agents, influenced by cultural contexts, power dynamics and institutional frameworks, and do not follow a linear departure–arrival path (Jacobs, 2012). Responding to McCann and Ward’s (2012b: 325) call for researchers to examine ‘how, why and with what consequences urban policies are mobilized’, our research focuses on the agents circulating new city imaginings, as well as their motivations, modalities and consequences. As such, we draw a broad picture of the trend and its defining characteristics, rather than focus on local-level applications of the new city-building phenomenon, which should be addressed in future research.

Building upon nascent research on new cities in the Global South, this article expands on various works investigating ‘the role of seductive projections of various forms in shaping urban policy and material realities’ (Bunnell and Das, 2010: 277). While much of this scholarship sheds light on how digital simulations, images, consultant reports and marketing material shape urban spaces and their imaginary (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Murray, 2015a; Rapoport, 2015; Watson, 2014), we expand on this knowledge by analysing elite stakeholders’ rhetoric as another key factor impacting the mobilisation of urban models. Through this discursive approach,³² we focus on the rhetoric of elite actors involved in the creation of new cities, and analyse how these actors, through the reinterpretation of dominant narratives on development and the construction of a seductive discourse around new cities, circulate normalised assumptions about modernity and progress that pave the way for the implementation of lavish new city projects. In this article, we examine ‘what underpins and constitutes the envisioned futures of African cities in the twenty-first century’ (Cardoso, 2016: 96) and conceptualise the widespread optimism regarding new cities and development as one of the defining features and influences of the African city-building trend.

This paper has been developed as part of a broader project on new city creation, and employs textual analysis methods, drawing from political speeches and statements, official reports produced by corporations and consultancies, participant observation and elite interview data collected between 2013 and 2017³³ at seven international conferences³⁴ on the topic of new

³² We draw on approaches taken by Koch (2014) and Childs and Hearn (2017).

³³ Over 50 interviews were conducted with elite stakeholders over this period.

³⁴ The Cityquest KAEC Forum (2013, 2014, 2015); the International Conference on Chinese and African Sustainable Urbanization (ICCASU, UN-Habitat, 24–25 October 2015, University of Ottawa); the New Cities Summit (21–23 June 2016, Montreal); the UN-Habitat III meeting (October 2016, Quito); the International conference on ‘The Path to a Prosperous Future for Africa’ (3 November 2017, Dar Al Maghrib Center, Montreal).

cities and African urbanisation. The content of these interviews is primarily engaged with through our reflection on the current climate of discussions surrounding new cities in Africa, as well as our characterisation of the views of powerful individuals and organisations advocating for new cities.

The conferences attended constitute examples of what policy mobilities scholars have referred to as ‘mobility events’ (Clarke, 2012: 27), or ‘situations’ (McCann and Ward, 2012b: 329) of policy circulation and mutation. In relation to urban policy, such events represent ‘instances of persuasion and negotiation, ranging from the formal and institutional to the interpersonal persuasive politics through which individual actors conduct themselves and seek to shape the conduct of others’ (McCann and Ward, 2012b: 329). Drawing on Cook and Ward’s (2012: 137) study of conferences as key spaces for the mobilisation and ‘embedding’ of urban policies, we suggest that these conferences are important nodes in the circulation of ideas and policies related to the new city strategy (Moser, 2019).

Our analysis takes a ‘global’ approach to ‘doing’ urban research. We follow Bunnell and Das’s (2010: 282) suggestion that an analytical focus on transnational connections can supplement conventional urban research approaches, which rely on the analytical unit of the bounded place and ontologies of immersion associated with traditional ethnographic research (Roy, 2012). Our focus is on the relational flows of ideas and models, and the rhetoric of political elites and stakeholders that reveals how new cities are imagined as global or universal urban models and put into circulation (Roy, 2012) through a variety of modes including media statements, interviews, official reports and discussions at agenda-setting conferences.

4.3 ‘The last piece of cake’: Framing the new city-building agenda through the ‘Africa rising’ narrative

The conferences we attended featured discussions on Africa’s outlook in the coming decades, and the views of African elites in these discussions provided crucial insights into the dominant discourse on development and urbanisation that underpin mega-projects and major investments on the continent. During a panel about current urbanisation in Africa, emerging markets were referred to by an African presenter employed as a United Nations consultant as the ‘last piece of cake’ (ICCASU Conference in 2015; see note 4), in other words the ultimate untapped investment opportunity that promises to yield attractive profits. The representation of

the African continent as a lucrative business venture is in line with a broader sense of optimism about the continent's economic potential and is an iteration of the 'Africa rising' narrative. Moving away from previous dominant narratives associating Africa with poverty, vulnerability and a state of dependency, the 'Africa rising' narrative, supported by major international financial institutions³⁵ and popularised through international media,³⁶ is based on the (perceived) recent revival of African economies, and the assumption that African markets are poised for unprecedented growth.

As part of this glowing rhetoric of growth opportunity, new cities are represented by elite stakeholders as a testament to a 'rising Africa' (Watson, 2014) where the new cities act as "natural" embodiments of progress and development' (Murray, 2015a: 99). The 'Africa rising' narrative of growth serves as a backdrop to the discourse around new city developments, framing these massive resource-intensive and high-risk planning interventions as necessary investments in Africa's bright future. In her analysis of Africa's new city plans and corporate websites, Watson (2014: 215) shows how the developers' stated ambitions are often to create 'world class metropolises' and to join the 'World Class city leagues'. These observations were echoed in private industry conferences we attended, such as the Cityquest KAEF Forum (2013, 2014, 2015) in Saudi Arabia, the only conference in the world that focuses on new cities (Moser, 2019).

In many cases, new city developments are rationalised by enthusiastic national governments and business elites as key ways to mitigate issues associated with chaotic and unplanned urbanisation. The guiding assumption parallels the bulldozer approach taken by urban renewal advocates in the 1960s in North America: that it is impractical to work on improving existing cities as their messiness, pollution, informal housing and overpopulation make them a lost cause (Grant, 2015). As such, plans for new cities emerge in opposition to a 'failed urbanism' inherited from colonial powers, and are erected as 'city doubles' (Murray, 2015a: 92), or mirror opposites to Africa's existing cities and their challenges.

In contrast to this dominant discourse, scholars characterise the proposed projects as 'fantasy' and part of idealised imaginings of Africa's urban landscape and economic possibilities

³⁵ The Institute of International Finance, the World Economic Forum, and the International Monetary Fund (see Bond, 2014, for a more extensive list).

³⁶ Both Time Magazine (3 December 2012) and The Economist (1 December 2011) published an issue with an 'Africa Rising' cover.

(Grant, 2015; Murray, 2015a; Watson, 2014). For many scholars, accounts that portray Africa as an ‘emerging’ market gloss over the fact that the vast majority of the continent’s population is still severely affected by material poverty (Bond, 2014; Watson, 2014). Along with questions relating to land acquisition, affordability of housing (Adelekan, 2013), as well as dispossession and resettlement procedures, scholars and activists fear that the new developments will only exacerbate existing gaps between rich and poor (Cities Alliance, 2015; Lumumba, 2013; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Wamsler et al., 2015). Although some scholars have published rather optimistic and uncritical accounts of new city plans (Ede et al., 2011; Olawepo, 2010), others critique the new projects for disregarding sustainable development ideals (Adeponle, 2013; Watson and Agbola, 2013), resulting in increased vulnerability to climate change for slum populations displaced to make way for the new developments (Adelekan, 2013).

These critical accounts of the new city projects and their support for more incremental reforms have little traction with political elites, who prefer to support faster, bolder and more profitable development schemes. Accordingly, new city project plans are announced with increasing regularity across Africa (Moser, forthcoming). Although concerns over the new city ventures have been voiced by a handful of African and non-African scholars, these voices are being drowned out by builders of new cities and their advocates who often have vested interests in the projects.

4.4 Enablers, advocates and boosters: Facilitating new cities in Africa

The main actors in new city developments are well known in a general sense: states and the private sector. However, there is a dearth of scholarship that investigates in detail who these actors are, how public and private actors collaborate and how their interests are often intertwined and overlapping. The following sub-sections outline the broad categories of actors involved, and provide examples from new cities in Africa to reveal the complex ties between new city advocates, their particular investment in the ‘Africa rising’ narrative and their stakes in new city projects and circulating visions of development.

4.4.1 States and governments

National governments are main actors in the new city developments, yet they increasingly collaborate with the private sector to varying degrees. Governments that enable and

facilitate new cities illustrate effectively the shift from states' managerial and service provider roles to ever-more entrepreneurial roles that take a business-centred and profit-driven approach (Pitcher, 2017). Forging public–private types of partnerships to enable the creation of these cities is also presented as a way for states to outsource some of their development goals (Murray, 2015b: 512). In the creation of new cities, states function primarily as facilitators, supplying land and crafting legislation that will attract investment and corporate actors, and enforcing the protection of corporations' assets and private property (Pitcher, 2012). This type of relationship is often encountered when new administrative capitals are built, or when new cities are part of broader nation-building or national economic strategies. Examples include Morocco's Villes Nouvelles (New Cities) initiative launched by the Moroccan government in 2004, India's '100 Smart Cities' mission launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, Saudi Arabia's state-initiated four new 'economic' cities and Indonesian President Jokowi's 10 Kota Baru Publik, a plan to build ten new cities. In Angola, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ghana, new city development accompanies the boosting of extractive industries through rhetoric promoting the 'new' developmental state in Africa (Childs and Hearn, 2017). New city projects thus become more formally integrated into wider national development agendas and influence policy.

In other cases, the state is not only the initiator of the project but also its primary financing actor. As Pitcher (2012: 168) emphasises:

[...] these are entrepreneurial states. They are relying on sovereign wealth funds, the pension funds of government employees, or development finance institutions to invest alongside the private sector in shopping malls, office complexes, banks and tourist resorts.

These types of new 'public investment vehicles' from new African 'investor states' (Pitcher, 2017: 45) redefine the usual distinction between public and private actors due to an important overlap in the form and function of both types of entities. On this point, our interviews with actors involved in new city building revealed widespread confusion regarding the status of actors involved in new city building, the same entities being variably characterised as both public and private.

New cities are generally employed as state strategies to reposition a country onto the global stage, and as a way to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and expertise to increase the

country's international status and reputation. The ICT and Innovation associate for Konza Technology City, a state-initiated project in Kenya, for example, saw this as a main motivation behind the plan for the new city, which was propelled by:

the need to provide smart infrastructure that will attract private sector tech companies, universities, and research facilities. This in turn was meant to encourage new investment of venture capital and nurture an incubator for innovation. (Interview, 2017)

Similarly, the head of real estate development for Morocco's new Benguerir Green City explained in an interview that new cities in Morocco and elsewhere are emerging as part of 'national ambitions to restructure cities and to give them a new economic, futuristic, ecological and sustainable impetus, to improve countries' economic standing on the global stage' (Interview, 2016).

4.4.2 Multinational corporations and the private sector

A common feature of new cities in Africa and elsewhere in the world is the increasingly dominant role played by private-sector firms and multinational corporations. These corporate entities are involved in African markets through FDI, which, since 2009, accounts for a more significant economic flow than overseas development assistance (Pitcher, 2012). Multinational corporations are key actors driving Africa's new cities and are leading players in designing, building and selling the idea for new cities. Rendeavour, an Africa-focused subsidiary of the Moscow-based investment firm Renaissance Group, has, for example, made new city building a core component of its business agenda. The major real estate development corporation owns more than 30,000 acres of land on the continent and is involved in the creation of at least seven new cities in sub-Saharan Africa (Rendeavour, 2015).

Multinational companies from the tech and energy sectors are also involved in new city development in response to many new cities' or states' aspirations to showcase 'smart', 'green' or 'eco' urban development ideals. Siemens, Ericsson, and IBM, notably with its 'smarter cities challenge' initiative, are examples of corporations that have embraced the 'smart cities' rhetoric and business strategy, and have positioned themselves as the leaders in 'smart' development, seeing the potential for 'unprecedented growth in emerging economies in Africa' (Interview, 2014). IBM, Cisco and General Electric are additionally involved in many new city projects concentrated in the Global South, such as Kenya's Konza Techno City where all three firms are

investing partners (Daily Nation, 2015). New cities in Africa and worldwide represent ideal investment opportunities for tech giants who aim to become the main supplier of network technologies and ‘smart’ infrastructure. Anil Menon, Global President of Cisco’s Smart + Connected Communities initiative, states that new cities represent a US\$400 billion market for their products (Interview, 2013). This number provides a sense of the financial opportunities tech companies see in new cities and explains their scramble to foster relationships with new cities and promote the model that will lead to sales.

4.4.3 Private foundations and non-profit organisations

New city projects in Africa have increasing support from major non-profit organisations and foundations. These organisations are primarily involved in new cities through their promotion of urban development initiatives, their endorsement of specific projects – often with the help of public personalities or political figures – and their provision of networking opportunities for tech companies, investors and managers of new cities.

The Clinton Foundation’s involvement with Eko Atlantic, a luxury new city project in Nigeria, is one such example of a foundation using its ties and networks to influence Nigeria’s new city-building agenda. Bill Clinton delivered a speech at the city’s dedication ceremony in 2013 in which he commended the Nigerian state’s efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change in dense urban areas. This endorsement by a major public political figure in the capacity of his well-respected global foundation, embedded within a ‘boosterist’ narrative (McCann, 2013), functions as a stamp of approval not only for Eko Atlantic but for other new cities in Africa, while legitimising the project’s contested rhetoric on climate change mitigation.

Clinton’s optimistic endorsement contrasts sharply with criticism of the project published in local and international newspapers denouncing botched environmental impact assessments (Oluikpe, 2015), population displacement (Awofeso, 2011) and the exclusionary resource-intensive luxury development (Lukacs, 2014). Bill Clinton’s validation of Eko Atlantic influences the new city’s representation on the global stage where, before any rigorous analysis has taken place, it is announced as an ‘ingenious engineering feat’ (Eko Atlantic Milestones, n.d.: 13) and a praiseworthy effort for African development.

Other more recent non-profit foundations have started to spring up without such ties to political figures. The New Cities Foundation, created in 2010, does not directly fund urban

projects; rather, it functions as a networking platform. Through the organisation of several annual events, the New Cities Foundation brings together new city leaders with business executives, particularly from technology corporations and real estate companies such as Rendeavour. These conferences are important nodes in the transnational circulation of urban models and ideas, where the global non-profits constitute links between new cities and opportunity-seeking corporations that see new markets in the new city ventures (Moser, 2019).

The two foundations share common sponsors including multinationals such as Cisco, Ericsson, Toyota and Citigroup, while the Clinton Global Initiative also counts General Electric and Microsoft amongst its important donors (Clinton Foundation, 2016; New Cities Foundation, 2016). There is an inherent conflict of interest in the rather incestuous relationship between foundations, donors and new cities. The foundations endorse the new city projects that are created by companies that sponsor their own non-profit activities. It is thus in the best interest of foundations to promote a particular type of urban change from which their sponsors, and ultimately they themselves (in the form of future sponsorship), can benefit. It is no coincidence that the New Cities Foundation's main event in 2016 had an 'urban tech' theme, with sessions showcasing the role that Cisco and other big technology companies can play in urban change (<http://www.newcitiessummit2016.org/>).

Clinton's presence in Eko Atlantic at the city's dedication ceremony and his public endorsement of the project also takes on a different light when one learns that the Chagoury Group, the city's development company through its subsidiary Southenergyx, is a major donor to the Clinton Foundation. Gilbert Chagoury, the Lebanese-Nigerian founder of the Chagoury Group, has given between US\$1 million and US\$5 million to the Clinton Foundation (Clinton Foundation, 2016). Clinton's speech in Eko Atlantic takes on the form of a 'returned favour', where it appears that a public endorsement of a highly controversial project was 'bought' through donations. The example of Eko Atlantic highlights how foundations such as the Clinton Global Initiative and the New Cities Foundation enable networks of actors, which help fund specific interests and advance, normalise, as well as circulate, particular tech-focused urban agendas.

4.4.4 Global consultant firms

Reports produced and circulated by global consultant firms that depict urbanisation as an opportunity – such as the McKinsey Global Institute in their report *Lions on the Move: The Progress and Potential of African Economies* (2010), and prominent financial institutions such as the World Bank – play a significant role in shaping and circulating positive perceptions of new city projects. These reports construct a compelling narrative of Africa as the world's next big venture, which fuels a broader 'optimism industry' (Lay, 2011) and substantiates the seductive 'Africa rising' narrative.

In some cases, these global consultancies are directly involved in the creation of new city projects, advising private actors on aspects ranging from urban planning to the development of 'sound' economic master plans (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Smith, 2017). McKinsey & Company's 'Capital Projects and Infrastructure' branch, for example, mentions helping a private client in the development of a new African city (McKinsey & Company, n.d.). Discussing a prominent new city project under development in Morocco during an interview, the CEO of the city, without being prompted, mentioned that 'we worked with great firms to benchmark our city ... McKinsey, BCG [Boston Consulting Group], Roland Berger ... we worked with the best in the world' (Interview, 2016). The repeated reference to global consultancies throughout interviews with various elite stakeholders in African city projects underscores how they derive a sense of validation from being connected with these renowned firms, which are often involved in new city projects elsewhere (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Datta, 2015b; Smith, 2017). Through the perceived 'expert' authority of global consultancies, and the prestige associated with their name and organisation (Cook and Ward, 2012; Rapoport, 2015), recommendations produced by firms such as McKinsey & Company are enthusiastically adopted by builders of new cities and shape discourses that legitimise new city projects.

Similarly, a senior bureaucrat working on a new city project in North Africa recounted an influential conversation he had with the founder of a global consulting agency, during which the founder confirmed that the city (which is not yet built) represented a good model to replicate elsewhere. This comment at once legitimised the new city-building approach to urban development while encouraging its broader circulation (Interview, 2016). The founder's firm was later hired to consult on the project and the marketisation of its model. Beyond the ability of consultant firms to create hype and generate attractive accounts of economic opportunities, the

representation of new city projects as appealing cure-alls has a persuasive effect on policymakers and officials and serves to validate and normalise mega-projects.

4.5 ‘Deserving the new city’ and ‘right to development’

As we have demonstrated, actors involved in new city projects actively benefit from them and thus have a strong incentive to promote them, at once fuelling the ‘Africa rising’ narrative and using it as a priori justification for their ventures. Beyond the endorsement and promotion of the projects, we contend that the use of a moralising rhetoric by stakeholders and political elites, further facilitates the circulation of the new city model by bypassing and actively rejecting critique. In this section, we examine the ‘right to development’ assumption held by African political elites and stakeholders in new cities, as observed in media statements, conference discussions and interviews. We begin by providing a sense of the widespread use of the ‘right to development’ rhetoric in public discourse on African urbanisation and development, and examine how this argument is deployed to effectively suppress criticism and shut down debate around new city developments. We then provide further insights from participant observations at international conferences and from interviews to show how critique is similarly avoided and repressed at these agenda-setting events.

Accompanying the discourse on Africa’s rise, the ‘right to development’ argument is a powerful statement on Africa’s growth capacities, supported by the sense that something is ‘owed’ to the continent, implicitly referring to reparations for the lasting widespread damage caused by colonialism. Used by prominent African political figures to justify particular development agendas such as the development of brand new cities, this rhetoric conveys the idea, as expressed by Senegalese President Macky Sall, that ‘Development has gone around the world, to Europe, to America, to Asia. It’s Africa’s turn now’ (Sall and Reid, 2013: 8). The framing of development as a ‘right’ and the notion that it is ‘Africa’s turn’ to access these opportunities repositions debates on Africa’s future solely as a moral-ethical dilemma rather than being conceived also as a political issue. Through this framing, new city ventures are presented as a form of compensation for missed opportunities under colonialism. It is in this vein that Ghana’s Minister for Communications, Edward Omane Bohama, legitimised state investment into Ghana’s new ICT hub, Hope City, stating that ‘Ghana could not take advantage of the industrial revolution; the ICT revolution should not pass us by’ (thebizcouch, 2014).

Several media statements made by political elites in Africa outline how the ‘right to development’ narrative is a prevalent rhetoric deployed to fend off critique of new cities as well as avoid discussion on Africa’s approach to urban development altogether. When questioned about Egypt’s plan for a massive new capital and the mounting scepticism surrounding the project, President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, for example, recently commented: ‘Isn’t it our right to have a dream? Is it wrong to have 13 cities like this or what? Don’t we deserve it?’ (Laub and Associated Press, 2017). Referring to Eko Atlantic, Gbenga Oduntan, a law professor (University of Kent, UK), similarly shifts focus away from discussion on current problems in Africa’s cities to a more attractive ‘dream’ of Africa’s urban future:

There is no shortage of doubters and critics of the initiative, which is seen as an exercise in runaway neoliberalism by a country that cannot even ensure 30 days of continuous power supply to its citizens. The truth, however, is that Lagos *deserves* [emphasis added] its dream Eldorado [...]. (Oduntan, 2015)

Such responses bypass critical discussion and divert attention to optimistic depictions of Africa as the ‘continent of promise’, ‘continent on the rise’, and to the achievements of the ‘African lions’, such as they were referred to during interviews and conference discussions. As new cities become symbols of national identity and pride that embody the ‘Africa rising’ narrative, (African) critics are accused of not believing in a country or region’s potential or of being ‘doubters’ and unpatriotic. At the groundbreaking ceremony for Konza Techno City, then-President Mwai Kibaki told the press that he was ‘telling the doubting Thomases to open their eyes wide and see what we are going to come up with’ (Odalo, 2013). Using a biblical reference, Kibaki adopts a moralising stance to discredit critics for their lack of faith in the project, while avoiding explanations, for example, on the allegations of fraud and corruption related to land procurement, generating much of the scepticism over Kenya’s new city (Mumo, 2014).

At a conference co-organised by UN-Habitat and the University of Ottawa, a young female African scholar was confronted with this type of defensive rhetoric when she presented on Eko Atlantic, arguing that it was an elitist project that produced a variety of social exclusions. Her critical analysis was challenged in a hostile manner by senior African business and political elites in attendance, including a UN-Habitat representative. After her presentation she was asked repeatedly by senior African elites, ‘does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?’ without being given a chance to respond. Further remarks were made by several attendees about it being

‘Africa’s turn’ to access modern development, revealing that members of the African elite present felt that development in any form – including new cities – was ‘Africa’s right’ (ICCASU conference in 2015; see note 4). The rejection of the young academic’s critique was compounded by the power imbalance existing between the largely older, male political elite members in attendance, and the junior researcher. This power structure was visually apparent in the name plates featuring the affiliations of important members of the audience and contributed to the dynamic of intimidation that was created during the question period throughout which the researcher was repeatedly interrupted and targeted by accusatory remarks on Africa’s ‘right to development’.

As part of our broader research on new cities, we attended five private industry conferences and two UN conferences, which shed light on the way that new cities are perceived by political and business elites and various new city stakeholders. As ‘mobility events’, conferences represent spaces ‘where encounters with specific ideas have the potential to set agendas and provide direction and impetus for policy’ (Temenos and Ward, 2018: 71). Although conferences are often assumed to be spaces for open discussion and intellectual exchange, these events acted more often as spaces of seduction and persuasion to support the new city model of development, where intimidation and a moralising rhetoric were used to shut down critical discussion on the projects, as shown in the example above.

With the exception of the two UN conferences attended by policymakers, academics and planning professionals, private industry conferences such as the New Cities Summit and Cityquest are invitation-only events also attended by entrepreneurs, CEOs of new cities, representatives from technology companies and various visionaries and ‘thought-leaders’ (Moser, 2019). Both at Cityquest and the New Cities Summit, guest lists are curated by organisers, ensuring only supportive voices are welcomed to the events.³⁷ Attendees are given a sense of importance by being told they belong to a ‘global elite’ who will ‘change the future’ (Moser, 2019). Referring to Cityquest, several executives working on new city projects communicated a similar sense of importance conferred to these exclusive agenda-setting meetings:

³⁷ The micro-level interactions and the powerful performative aspect of these conferences are the focus of a paper by Moser (2019).

We were all trying to reflect on the same issues. It was a very rich exchange ... especially when you realize that in new cities around the world, whether in Morocco, in the United States, in India or in Africa: everywhere we face the same problems, issues, and the same ambitions. It's great when we can converge and share experiences. (Interview, 2016)

This comment also underscores the pervasive framing of the new city model, encouraged through a particular 'global-universal' rhetoric, as a scalable urban solution, transferable anywhere in the world, regardless of context. With the omission of critical voices, which are prevented access at these key industry events, the new city model is presented in an echo chamber of like-minded elites and stakeholders as inevitable, uncontested, unproblematic and universally approved, making the seduction all the more powerful for the elite actors in attendance (Moser, 2019).

This is compounded by the fact that, with the absence of freedom of the press in many African countries, alternative views are underrepresented (Freedom House, 2017). Various African panelists at a recent conference on Africa's future expressed that 'Africa is taking back the place that is hers', that 'Africa is raising her head and looking up' and that the continent is 're-taking charge of its destiny' (Dar Al Maghrib Center conference in 2017; see note 4). This discourse glosses over troubling elitist aspects of urban change in Africa, and avoids broader critical debate over what kind of development is promoted, by and for whom.

As outlined in the previous sections, supporters of new cities often have stakes or vested interests in the projects. Far from disrupting power hierarchies and addressing embedded inequalities, new cities further entrench them to the benefit of the small African elite empowered after independence (Mbembe, 2001; Myers, 2011), the same elite who publicly advocates for the projects and fends off critique on the basis of Africa's 'right' to 'shiny new cities'.

4.6 'Africa Rising' and problematic assumptions on modernity and development

In recent years, new cities have found a particularly receptive audience among African political and business elites, who rationalise them as a necessary strategy to jump-start economies and re-brand countries as modern and progressive (Murray, 2015b). The emergence of brand new cities across Africa is presented as a testament to Africa's growth and development capabilities, and a refutation of persisting assumptions of Africa's 'backwardness'. During an interview, the senior manager of a North African new city stated: 'new cities are the living proof that high-tech and "eco" development is possible in Africa ... that this is feasible in Africa ...

this is really big'. In this section, we unpack some of the assumptions circulated with the new city imaginary and perpetuated through the moralistic argument on the 'right to development' and the pervasive 'Africa rising' narrative as used to gloss over criticism of the new city projects. In doing so, we address their problematic implications for Africa's urban development.

Several assumptions on the new cities model emphasise its indispensability for urban development, a view that is rooted in pessimism about the existing city. Elite stakeholder rhetoric on new cities relies on the assumption that existing cities are a lost cause and that new cities are the optimal solution to address rapid urbanisation (Watson and Agbola, 2013). One CEO of a new Nigerian city stated that the country's capital city was 'totally full', 'scared away investors,' and that 'a new city was needed to attract business ... and provide a modern environment for modern people and activities' (Interview, 2015). Although framed through an optimistic discourse on modernity and future-oriented development for the greater (economic) good of the nation, this assumption often excludes resident populations of the 'hopeless' cities who are unlikely to move to new developments, implicitly positioning them as 'outside' of Africa's urban future. As expressed during an interview with an elite stakeholder involved in the creation of a new city in Morocco: 'New cities are the affair of the state, not of the citizen' (Interview, 2016), and the new cities' 'indispensability' justifies radical actions, such as widespread expropriation in the name of 'public utility'.

Embedded in this assumption is the related belief in a superior model of urbanity: new cities. This belief is tied to a narrow elitist reinterpretation of Africa's rise and 'right to development' as the materialisation of shiny new megaprojects. The commitment to new cities as the optimal model for 'modern' urban development and the scramble to erect the new projects echoes colonial-era logics (Moser, 2015) and an understanding of development as a linear process (Childs and Hearn, 2017), in which some actors are more 'advanced' and others must catch up. Imagining alternative 'low-tech' and environmental modes of transportation in one new African city, based on existing networks and the widespread use of horse-drawn carriages, one senior manager recounted in an interview how his ideas were vehemently opposed by his colleagues and how he was accused of attempting to 'take the country back to the middle ages' (Interview, 2016). Such comments reveal how major stakeholders have a narrow definition of modernity, imagine few alternatives for Africa's development, and are deeply influenced by techno-utopian solutions. In interviews, African political elites repeatedly expressed their desire

to promote the new city development agenda in their own country, motivated by the anxiety of being ‘left behind’ in this new trend for urban development. This assumption discredits and erases alternative visions and versions of urbanity, reducing the diversity of potential ‘urban futures’ and instead paving the way for one form of urban change broadly framed as Africa’s only way forward.

The framing of new cities as solutions also rests on skewed assumptions about the ‘problem’ to which they are responding. This came out strongly during interviews and through multiple conference discussions, in which new cities were frequently presented as rational ‘technical’ solutions to ‘technical’ problems. Framing Africa’s urbanisation challenges solely through the lens of overpopulation and lack of infrastructure positions the new city model as an ideal response, but provides no solutions for – or even space for discussion about – other issues including social injustice, corruption, financial mismanagement, weak legal frameworks for territorial organisation, as well as unresolved land tenure issues. These deeply rooted and complex socio-political matters are likely to be transferred to new cities if they are not more meaningfully addressed and engaged with in the definition and framing of the ‘problem’ that new cities are attempting to solve.

4.7 Fostering a diversity of African urbanisms

This article does not seek to cast doubt on the potential of African societies to transform and expand their economies and improve their urban environments. Rather, we focus primarily on ‘what forms and informs the creation of such urban visions’ (Cardoso, 2016: 100) by examining the power and circulation of seductive rhetoric about ‘shiny new cities’ through the vested interests of their enablers, advocates and boosters. Positioning our research within the broader urban policy mobilities literature, we suggest, through examples of new cities in Africa, that elite stakeholder rhetoric is a key way through which visions and ideas on urban policy and urban models are (re)shaped, normalised and circulated. Although similarly optimistic rhetoric on new cities and complex networks of actors are found in other projects across the Global South, we argue that the ‘Africa rising’ discourse provides a common narrative facilitating the circulation and supporting the adoption of the new city model in Africa.

Our contributions to the growing body of research on new cities and policy mobilities literature are threefold. First, we identify the broad categories and interconnected networks of

actors involved in new city ventures in the Global South. Grounded in examples from the African context, we highlight the private interests that support the projects, and the role elite actors play in producing an optimistic view of new cities in Africa. This provides a starting point to explain the motivations driving the mobilisation and dissemination of the new city model. Second, we draw attention to the widespread rejection of critique through the pervasive ‘right to development’ assumption held by numerous stakeholders and political elites and the omission of critical voices at key industry events. We contend that the resulting lack of engagement with robust criticism on the new projects further facilitates the circulation and mobilisation of the new city model in Africa. Related to this point, our third contribution sheds light on the normalised ideas on progress, modernity and development circulating through elite stakeholders’ rhetoric on new cities, and reinforced through the adoption of a moralising argument. This rhetoric and its assumptions limit the range of visions of urbanity that are put into circulation and mobilised for Africa’s urban future.

The networks and dynamics explored in this paper signal several trends in African urbanisation that can be addressed in future research on new cities in Africa and the Global South more broadly. The seductive narrative about new cities, its assumptions on modernity, the lack of critical voices, and the representation of ‘progress’, primarily through aesthetic and material innovations, depoliticises conversations on Africa’s urban development and mode of urbanisation. According to Bhan (2014: 235) this depoliticisation ‘challenges the possibilities of urban citizenship and belonging’ and ‘creates regimes and hierarchies of valued and unvalued spaces and, in the end, of the citizens that inhabit them’. The elite stakeholder rhetoric on new cities we examined uses progressive language and buzzwords to advance often exclusionary and socially regressive urban development models and growth agendas. Despite the optimism they exude, new cities in many cases perpetuate unequal configurations of power and colonial ideals of modernity. We suggest that critically examining elite stakeholder rhetoric on new cities can draw attention to how urban policy circulation is a politically and socially produced phenomenon, an aspect of policy mobilities that is still under-theorised to date (Clarke, 2012).

References

- Adelekan I (2013) *Private Sector Investment Decisions in Building and Construction: Increasing, Managing and Transferring Risks: Case Study of Lagos, Nigeria*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Geneva, Switzerland: University of Ibadan, Geography.
- Adeponle BJ (2013) The integrated city as a tool for sustainable development – Abuja master plan. *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 3(5): 145–153.
- Awofeso P (2011) One out of every two Nigerians now lives in a city: There are many problems but just one solution. *World Policy Journal* 27(4): 67–73.
- Bagaeen S (2007) Brand Dubai: The instant city; or the instantly recognizable city. *International Planning Studies* 12(2): 173–197.
- Bhan G (2014) The real lives of urban fantasies. *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 232–235.
- Bond P (2014) Africa rising? Afro-optimism and uncivil society in an era of economic volatility. In: Obadare E (ed.) *The Handbook of Civil Society in Africa. Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies* 20. New York: Springer, pp. 233–251.
- Buire C (2014b) The dream and the ordinary: An ethnographic investigation of suburbanisation in Luanda. *African Studies* 73(2): 290–312.
- Bunnell T (2002) Multimedia utopia? A geographical critique of high-tech development in Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor. *Antipode* 34(2): 265–295.
- Bunnell T and Das D (2010) Urban pulse – A geography of serial seduction: Urban policy transfer from Kuala Lumpur to Hyderabad. *Urban Geography* 31(3): 277–284.
- Cardoso R (2016) The circuitries of spectral urbanism: Looking underneath fantasies in Luanda's new centralities. *Urbanisation* 1(2): 95–113.
- Carmody P and Owusu F (2016) Neoliberalism, urbanization and change in Africa: The political economy of heterotopias. *Journal of African Development* 18(18): 61–73.
- Childs J and Hearn J (2017) 'New' nations: Resource-based development imaginaries in Ghana and Ecuador. *Third World Quarterly* 38(4): 844–861.
- Cities Alliance (2015) *Future Cities Africa: New Thinking for Long-term Transformation*. Available at: <http://citiesalliance.org/node/5338> (accessed 25 January 2017).
- Clarke N (2012) Urban policy mobility, antipolitics, and histories of the transnational municipal movement. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(1): 25–43.

- Clinton Foundation (2016) Contributor and Grantor Information. Available at: <https://www.clintonfoundation.org/contributors> (accessed 25 January 2017).
- Cook IR and Ward K (2012) Conferences, informational infrastructures and mobile policies: The process of getting Sweden 'BID ready'. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19(2): 137–152.
- Daily Nation* (2015) Konza City partners with US business lobby. *Daily Nation*, 29 September.
- Datta A (2015b) New urban utopias of postcolonial India: 'Entrepreneurial urbanization' in Dholera Smart City, Gujarat. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 3–22.
- De Boeck F (2011) Inhabiting ocular ground: Kinshasa's future in the light of Congo's spectral urban politics. *Cultural Anthropology* 26(2): 263–286.
- Ede PN, Owei OB and Akarolo CI (2011) Does the Greater Port Harcourt Master Plan 2008 meet aspirations for liveable city? Paper presented at *47th ISOCARP Congress: Liveable Cities: Urbanising World, Meeting the Challenge*, Wuhan, China, 2011. Available on the ISOCARP Paper Platform at: http://www.isocarp.net/projects/case_studies/cases/cs_info.asp-ID=1859.html (accessed 15 September 2016).
- Eko Atlantic Milestones (n.d.) Shaping the future. *Eko Atlantic Milestones* 1: 20. Available at: <https://www.ekoatlantic.com/milestones/EkoAtlantic-Milestones-Issue-1.pdf> (accessed 28 February 2017).
- Freedom House (2017) Freedom of the Press 2017. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/freedom-press-2017> (accessed 4 May 2018).
- Graham S and Marvin S (2001) *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Grant R (2015) Sustainable African urban futures: Stocktaking and critical reflection on proposed urban projects. *American Behavioral Scientist* 59(3): 294–310.
- Herbert CW and Murray MJ (2015) Building from scratch: New cities, privatized urbanism and the spatial restructuring of Johannesburg after apartheid. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(3): 471–494.
- Jacobs JM (2012) Urban geographies I: Still thinking cities relationally. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(3): 412–422.
- Koch N (2014b) 'Building glass refrigerators in the desert': Discourses of urban sustainability and nation building in Qatar. *Urban Geography* 35(8): 1118–1139.
- Laub K and Associated Press (2017) Jordan's plan of shiny city in the desert met by skepticism. *Washington Post*, 8 December.

- Lay T (2011) Letters: Africa's new elite. *The Guardian*, 27 December.
- Lukacs M (2014) New, privatized African city heralds climate apartheid. *The Guardian*, 21 January.
- Lumumba J (2013) Why Africa should be wary of its 'new cities'. In: The Rockefeller Foundation's informal city dialogues. Available at: <https://nextcity.org/informalcity/entry/whyafrica-should-be-wary-of-its-new-cities> (accessed 25 January 2017).
- McCann E (2011a) Urban policy mobilities and global circuits of knowledge: Toward a research agenda. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101(1): 107–130.
- McCann E (2013) Policy boosterism, policy mobilities, and the extrospective city. *Urban Geography* 34(1): 5–29.
- McCann E and Ward K (2012b) Policy assemblages, mobilities and mutations: Toward a multidisciplinary conversation. *Political Studies Review* 10(3): 325–332.
- McKinsey & Company (n.d.) Capital Projects & Infrastructure. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/capital-projects-andinfrastructure/how-we-help-clients/cities> (accessed 6 February 2017).
- McKinsey Global Institute (2010) Lions on the move: The progress and potential of African economies. June. McKinsey & Company. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/middle-east-and-africa/lions-onthe-move> (accessed 27 June 2016).
- Marcinkoski C (2015) *The City that Never Was*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Mbembe A (2001) *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Moser S (2015) New cities: Old wine in new bottles? *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 31–35.
- Moser S (2019) 'Two days to shape the future': A Saudi Arabian node in the transnational circulation of new cities ideas. In: Molotch, H and Ponzini D (eds) *The New Arab Urban: Gulf Cities of Wealth, Ambition, and Distress*. New York: New York University Press. pp. 213–232.
- Moser S (ed.) (Forthcoming) *Atlas of New Cities*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press.
- Moser S, Swain M and Alkhabbaz MH (2015) King Abdullah Economic City: Engineering Saudi Arabia's post-oil future. *Cities* 45: 71–80.
- Mumo M (2014) Scandals mar dream of Konza technopolis. *Daily Nation*, 3 May.

- Murray MJ (2015a) 'City doubles' re-urbanism in Africa. In: Miraftab F, Wilson D and Salo K (eds) *Cities and Inequalities in a Global and Neoliberal World*. London: Routledge, pp. 92–109.
- Murray MJ (2015b) Waterfall City (Johannesburg): Privatized urbanism in extremis. *Environment and Planning A* 47(3): 503–520.
- Myers G (2011) *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Zed Books.
- New Cities Foundation (2016) Members. Available at: <http://www.newcitiesfoundation.org/our-members/> (accessed 25 January 2017).
- Odalo B (2013) Pomp as Kibaki launches Konza technology city. *Daily Nation*, 24 January.
- Oduntan G (2015) Why Nigeria's plans for a dream Eldorado city are not radical enough. *The Conversation*, 22 July.
- Olawepo RA (2010) Perspectives on urban renewal and transportation development in Lagos: Implications for urban development in Nigeria. *African Research Review* 4(1): 273–287.
- Oluikpe N (2015) Nigeria: Eko Atlantic – Experts speak on impact of land reclamation. *Daily Independent*, 22 September.
- Pitcher A (2012) Lions, tigers, and emerging markets: Africa's development dilemmas. *Current History* 111(745): 163–168.
- Pitcher A (2017) Entrepreneurial governance and the expansion of public investment funds in Africa. In: Harbeson JW and Rothchild D (eds) *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order*. 6th edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 45–68.
- Rapoport E (2015) Globalising sustainable urbanism: The role of international masterplanners. *Area* 47(2): 110–115.
- Rendeavour (2015) Our Projects. Available at: <http://www.rendeavour.com/projects/> (accessed 25 January 2017).
- Roy A (2012) Ethnographic circulations: Space–time relations in the worlds of poverty management. *Environment and Planning A* 44: 31–41.
- Sall M and Reid S (2013) Africa's turn: A conversation with Macky Sall. *Foreign Affairs* 92(5): 2–8.
- Smith C (2017) 'Our changes'? Visions of the future in Nairobi. *Urban Planning* 2(1): 31–40.

Temenos C and Ward K (2018) Examining global urban policy mobilities. In: Harrison J and Hoyler M (eds) *Doing Global Urban Research*. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 66–80.

thebizcouch (2014) Thebizcouch On the Road: Hope City Documentary. Accra, Ghana. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yovwD5JuMQ (accessed 28 February 2017).

Van Noorloos F and Kloosterboer M (2018) Africa's new cities: The contested future of urbanisation. *Urban Studies* 55(6): 1223–1241.

Wamsler L, Gudmundsson S and Johannesen S (2015) Drowning Megacities. Available at: http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2015/drowning_megacities/ (accessed 18 January 2017).

Watson V (2014) African urban fantasies: Dreams or nightmares? *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 215–231.

Watson V and Agbola B (2013) Who will plan Africa's cities? *Africa Research Institute – Counterpoints*, 12 September. Available at: <http://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/publications/who-will-plan-africas-cities/> (accessed 6 February 2017).

Preamble to chapter 5

The previous chapter provides context for the present empirical chapter by contextualizing new city-building in Morocco within a broader wave of new city development that is rapidly unfolding across the African continent. More specifically, the previous chapter provides an explanation for how the new city development model is being promoted and mobilized with relative ease across the African continent. Beyond investigating the seductive narratives and networks of actors and vested interests that facilitate the circulation of the new city imaginary by producing an optimistic view of new cities in Africa, the chapter draws attention to the widespread rejection of critique through the pervasive ‘right to development’ assumption held by numerous stakeholders and political elites. In doing so, it also sheds light on the normalised ideas on progress, modernity and development circulating through elite stakeholders’ rhetoric on new cities, which limits the range of urban visions that are put into circulation and mobilized for Africa’s urban future.

Building on the previous chapter, this empirical chapter proposes a shift in focus and spatial scale in the investigation of the new city-building phenomenon, centering on Morocco as a leading city-building country within the African continent. The chapter presents data collected through in-depth elite interviews with new city-building actors in Morocco between 2016 and 2018. It provides the first overview of Morocco’s nationwide city-building activities and projects encompassed in the national ‘Villes Nouvelles’ strategy initiated in 2004. Departing from the previous chapter’s investigation of macro-level dynamics influencing the proliferation of new city plans across the African continent, this chapter investigates the unique local forces driving and shaping new city-building in Morocco. Beyond contextualizing Morocco’s city-building activities within the global city-building trend, this chapter also situates the kingdom’s new city building within recent extensive urban investments shaped by economic liberalism and persistent state authoritarianism in Morocco. Extending the previous chapter’s identification of the broad categories of new city-building actors in Africa, this chapter sheds light on the unique roles and composition of Morocco’s national city-building actors and probes the murky implementation and inherent ambiguities pertaining to the national ‘Villes Nouvelles’ strategy.

Publication status and details

The following thesis chapter is currently being revised for publication in *Geoforum*.

Contribution of authors

I am the lead author of this manuscript, which was co-authored with Dr. Sarah Moser. The article is based on my own original research data and analysis. I have contributed 70 percent of the overall work on this manuscript. Individual author contributions are outlined below:

Laurence Côté-Roy (lead author): contribution of original research material, conducted the documentary research and analysis, conceptualization of original draft and argument, writing of original draft, review and editing.

Sarah Moser (second author): assistance with conceptualization, review of original draft, editing assistance, assistance with revisions.

Chapter 5: A kingdom of new cities: Morocco's national Villes Nouvelles strategy

Abstract

Morocco is one of the most active countries in the world in building new cities from scratch. Nineteen new cities are presently underway across the kingdom as part of a national city-building initiative, launched to manage uncontrolled urbanization and to support economic growth. This city-building initiative is illustrative of the global trend in which states are creating urban mega-projects as part of national development strategies, but also reflects the unique local forces shaping new city building in Morocco. This article provides the first overview of Morocco's new city strategy and projects, which we contextualize within the kingdom's recent extensive urban investments shaped by economic liberalism and persistent state authoritarianism. While new city building in Morocco is driven by the state and presented as a cohesive strategy in official discourse, it is characterized by ambiguity and confusion, embodied by the 'hybrid' role of city-building actors, an undefined policy status, and a lack of coordination among new city projects underway. By critically analyzing the national strategy's murky implementation, we highlight problems of accountability, transparency, and the lack of national coherence, which we relate to the increasingly speculative and opaque practices of an authoritarian and entrepreneurial state that has made an unprecedented commitment to the new city model of development.

Keywords: new cities; urban entrepreneurialism; state-driven development; authoritarianism; speculative urbanism; Morocco

5.1 A kingdom of new cities

Morocco's urban landscape has rapidly transformed over the last two decades, spurred by steady economic and urban growth, and shaped significantly by King Mohammed VI's accession to the throne in 1999. In contrast to his father, King Hassan II, whose deep-seated focus on agricultural development and violent authoritarian practices stunted the country in many ways, King Mohammed VI has supported an assortment of new policies over the past two decades that are motivated by his commitment to economic liberalism, his self-proclaimed democratization efforts, and his ambitions for the country's modernization and development. Following the widespread socio-political unrest during the 2011 Arab Spring, as well as terrorist attacks in Casablanca (2003) and Marrakech (2011), the Moroccan state has taken distinct steps to project a socially liberal, stable, and modern image of the kingdom as a way to ensure national economic welfare, and to reposition Morocco more prominently on the global stage as an attractive site for capital investment (Côté-Roy, in press).

One of the state's key strategies to address inequality and unrest and to achieve modernization and economic growth objectives is the improvement of Morocco's cities. Since the early 2000s, dozens of urban mega-projects and infrastructure upgrading schemes have been launched as part of broader national development and poverty alleviation initiatives, and state-led reflections about how to improve territorial planning and development (Adidi, 2011). In 2004, the ambitious national 'Villes Nouvelles' (new cities) strategy was launched, spearheaded by the Ministry of Habitat and Urban Planning (MHU),³⁸ which outlined the development of over a dozen brand-new cities across the kingdom to address challenges related to uncontrolled urbanization and to bolster economic growth across Morocco. Since the Villes Nouvelles strategy's inception, construction has begun on 19 new city projects³⁹ of different sizes and driving concepts, while being developed by an increasingly varied array of actors with ambiguous roles and competing visions and prerogatives for urban development.

This paper critically examines city building in Morocco since the Villes Nouvelles strategy was launched in 2004 and contextualizes it within broader trends in state-driven urban mega-projects globally. With 19 projects underway, Morocco is the African nation most enthusiastically embracing this form of city-centric development, and after China, it is presently the country constructing the greatest number of new cities in the world. Morocco's national city-building strategy is illustrative of the appeal of new cities, which are increasingly applied as cure-alls for a range of urban challenges and normalized as a strategy of development across the Global South (Moser, 2020; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021), yet the kingdom's unparalleled commitment to the new city model reveals new expressions of bypass urbanization (Bhattacharya and Sanyal, 2011; Datta, 2015b) and speculative approaches to urban development carried out at the national scale.

While Morocco's ambitious city-building plans have captivated national media attention, they have received little scholarly attention. Despite growing academic interest in other types of urban mega-projects in Morocco such as waterfront redevelopments (Bogaert, 2012; Mouloudi, 2014), new marinas (Barthel, 2010), and urban port infrastructure (Barthel and Planel, 2010),

³⁸ The name and structure of this ministry was amended periodically in 2007, 2012, 2013, and 2017 (see Sitri and Hanzaz, 2016). To avoid confusion in our analysis, which examines city projects developed over a period of 15 years, we refer to this ministry by the name it held when the city-building strategy was launched in 2004.

³⁹ Projects labeled as new cities and ambiguously defined 'urban poles' are combined in this article's discussion of Morocco's 19 new cities, to provide a representation of Morocco's overall city-building activities.

scholarship specifically on new cities is still underdeveloped. A handful of primarily French language publications examine Tamesna and Tamansourt, the earliest government-led new city projects, and their implementation (Ballout, 2017; Harroud, 2017a, 2017b; Rousseau and Harroud, 2019), yet no research to date examines more recent projects, provides a comprehensive portrait of Morocco's city-building activities, or connects the kingdom's new cities to the global city-building trend.

In this article, we present the first inventory of all new city projects underway across the kingdom and provide an overview of the actors and ambitions of Morocco's Villes Nouvelles strategy as well as the national context from which it emerged. We situate Morocco's city-building activities within broader tensions between the kingdom's urban entrepreneurialism and entrenched modes of centralized state control that characterize Morocco's recent urban investments and city-building activities, and King Mohammed VI's mode of rule more broadly.⁴⁰ We contrast the state's official discourse, which presents a cohesive national city-building strategy, with the messiness, ambiguities, and incongruities of its implementation. More specifically, we shed light on the troubling issues of accountability, transparency, and coherence of the overarching strategy rooted in the 'hybrid' roles of city-building actors, the national strategy's unclear policy status, and the diversity of projects underway, which reflect uncoordinated approaches for urban and national development. In doing so, we draw attention to the pervasive involvement of the ruling elite in new city building and the modes of opaque and speculative state intervention that are increasingly normalized in new city-building operations within and beyond Morocco. Our analysis is informed by 29 elite interviews conducted by the first author with planners, architects, senior government officials, and new city directors in the summer of 2016 and fall of 2018, as well as fieldwork in three new cities: Tamesna, Zenata Eco-city, and Benguerir Green City. Our research also involved textual analysis of speeches, strategic planning documents, conference proceedings, official reports, and press releases on Morocco's overarching city-building strategy.

The article is structured in five sections. First, we provide a brief overview of scholarship on recent state-driven new city strategies intended to promote national development. Second, we

⁴⁰ The Kingdom of Morocco is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy in which the king is Chief of State. The Moroccan state reflects the 'the dual nature of Moroccan power' (Hachimi Alaoui, 2017: 4) embodied by the institutions and figures representative of Morocco's elected government, and those representative of central power and the king's administration.

examine Morocco's recent urban investments and broader city-centric modernization approaches, which have paved the way for the current wave of new city building. Third, we investigate the official discourse, motives, and actors underpinning the national Villes Nouvelles initiative, and extensive resources mobilized to roll out this strategy of national development. Fourth, we unpack the messiness of Moroccan city-building interventions by critically examining the 'hybrid' roles of city-building actors with opaque ties to the state, the implications of the strategy's confusing policy status, and the lack of coordination among city project visions for national development. We conclude with some reflections on avenues for future research on new cities in the Global South based on our analysis of the Moroccan case.

5.2 National development through new cities

Morocco's current wave of new city building is reminiscent of colonial urban experimentation during the French protectorate in Morocco (Rousseau and Harroud, 2019) and several new city experiments following independence in 1956 (Belarbi, 2011). Although many parallels can be drawn between contemporary master-planned cities and colonial cities developed from scratch (Moser, 2015), Morocco's new cities are also part of a more contemporary trend in global city building in which states are creating urban mega-projects and new cities as part of strategies to foster national development. Since the 1990s, more than 100 brand new cities have been created in South East Asia, the Middle East, and more recently in Latin America and Africa (Moser, 2019). Morocco's national city-building strategy echoes the approaches to national development pursued through new city projects underway around the world, while representing a particularly extreme form of state-driven urban entrepreneurialism and speculative approach to urban development.

Morocco's new cities are illustrative of similar urban mega-developments emerging across the Global South, including prominently across the African continent, which are designed to 'tame' sprawling cities and fast-track national development while addressing housing shortages and a variety of other urgent urban challenges (Murray, 2015a; Watson, 2014). Mass housing-creation programs on the African continent have taken the form of new satellite city developments in Egypt, Tanzania, South Africa, and Angola among others (Keeton and Provoost, 2019). State-driven urbanization schemes such as these assume that the condition of urbanity will inevitably improve income levels and foster economic growth. This use of

‘urbanization as a business model’ (Datta, 2015b: 8) often more broadly aims to derive economic growth from the conversion of rural agricultural land to profitable real estate developments, as exemplified in many of India’s new cities (Datta, 2015b; Goldman, 2011b).

Contemporary new city-building in Morocco can also be situated within the recent proliferation of scholarship that more specifically examines state-driven economic development through new city creation. Much of this scholarship focuses on case studies of new cities intended to fuel the growth of the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector in such countries as Malaysia (Bunnell, 2002; Rizzo and Glasson, 2012); Kenya (Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018); South Korea (Mullins and Shwayri, 2016); India (Datta, 2015b); and Palestine (Chitti and Moser, 2019). Other studies have examined how new cities are created to support ambitious economic diversification strategies and the development of new sectors of investment. New city projects such as Masdar in the UAE (Cugurullo, 2016), King Abdullah Economic City in Saudi Arabia (Moser et al., 2015), and Yachay in Ecuador (Childs and Hearn, 2017) are designed to increase the resiliency of national economies and prepare for a ‘post-oil future’ (Moser et al., 2015). Beyond strategic interventions through individual city projects, a number of states also have, like Morocco, announced the development of multiple new cities as part of overarching national programs including in Indonesia (over 10), Malaysia (4), Kuwait (9), Saudi Arabia (5), and Tanzania (over 10) (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021).

Through investigations of new city projects as national development strategies, scholars have explored the increasingly complex state-corporate partnerships and the expanded role of the private sector in urban development (Datta, 2012; Moser et al., 2015). They have also probed the increasingly fluid distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ sector actors and how their roles are often intertwined in urban mega-projects (Goldman, 2011b; Mouton and Shatkin, 2020; Pitcher, 2012, 2017). This scholarship more broadly draws attention to the increasingly risky and speculative approaches of ‘entrepreneurial states’ (Pitcher, 2012), which employ public assets and public investment vehicles and develop new governance arrangements to invest alongside the private sector as a way of ‘catching up with the speculative world of real estate’ (Goldman, 2011b: 577) and generating revenue for the state. While the enduring power of states and their various modalities of involvement alongside a more active private sector is broadly outlined in recent new cities research, less attention has been paid to the specific (and varied) interactions between state-governmental actors and diversified private sector actors, as well as the new forms

of state power, or actors of urban entrepreneurialism involved in enacting national city-building strategies. Furthermore, despite the growing body of scholarship on new city projects as national economic development strategies, no studies have critically examined national city-building programs even in countries with multiple state-driven new city projects underway.

By investigating Morocco's national city-building rather than examining an individual project, our study aims to provide insight into how new city-building is part of broader national development plans and driven by emergent configurations of state power in urban space. Our investigation of the Moroccan city-building case at the national scale is an opportunity to unpack the complexity of the Villes Nouvelles strategy, and to examine the multiple new actors involved in new city building in Morocco, their relationship to the private sector, the state and ruling elite, as well as their mode of intervention in the development of the new cities planned across the kingdom.

5.3 Modernization, persistent authoritarianism, and urban entrepreneurialism in Morocco

Upon his accession to the throne in 1999, King Mohammed VI projected an image of youth and modernity, embodied in many socially progressive reforms and investments into 'modernization'. These reforms were intended to mark a break with his father King Hassan II's violent and repressive reign known as Morocco's 35 'years of lead', and the legacy of poverty and inequality that followed Hassan II's implementation of neoliberal policies in the 1980s (Rousseau and Harroud, 2019). At the outset of his reign, Mohammed VI made an explicit commitment to economic and political liberalization. His poverty alleviation programs such as the National Human Development Initiative (2005), infrastructure upgrades, and schemes to foster economic growth (Planel, 2009) raised hopes for a genuine process of political liberalization that would lead to democratization (Bogaert, 2018). Aligned with internationally promulgated imperatives of economic liberalization, these programs and reforms, under the guidance of international institutions such as the World Bank, have also sought to make Morocco a more competitive actor on the global stage and a more attractive site for investment (Kanai and Kutz, 2011; Zemni and Bogaert, 2011). Rather than ushering in a new democratic era, Mohammed VI's reforms have introduced new configurations of central state power and new modalities of state action rolled out most prominently in the urban realm (Bogaert, 2018).

As a distinguishing aspect of his reign, King Mohammed VI has encouraged the repositioning of cities as crucial nodes for economic development and the attraction of capital (Zemni and Bogaert, 2011). Over the last two decades, the national vision for Morocco's future has increasingly become entangled with entrepreneurial logics of urban development. Urban transformations have increasingly taken the form of ambitious 'prestige' mega-projects (Barthel and Planel, 2010), treated as 'the preferred vehicles to harness the perceived benefits of globalization through foreign investment, trade promotion and tourism-related revenue generation' (Kanai and Kutz, 2011: 347). Under King Mohammed VI, countless urban mega-projects have materialized across the kingdom since the early 2000s, popularizing a new form of intervention in urban space known as 'project-based urbanism' (*urbanisme de projet*) (Ballout, 2015; Cattedra, 2010; Mouloudi, 2014; Philifert, 2014). New urban mega-projects notably include transport infrastructure, most recently the Maroc LGV high speed rail line from Casablanca to Tangier; waterfront redevelopments, including Casa Marina and Casanearshore; large-scale commercial developments such as the Morocco Mall; urban port infrastructure and special trade zones such as Tanger-Med (Gillot, 2013); and more recently, brand new cities.

Despite ongoing reforms introduced over the last decade to decentralize decision-making and urban policy development towards locally elected bodies of government (Philifert, 2010; Sitri and Hanzaz, 2016),⁴¹ project-based urbanism does not reflect a more transparent or democratic mode of urban planning, but rather a 'transition toward a more diversified and ad hoc planning of the city' (Bogaert, 2018: 80). In recent years, ambitious mega-projects in Morocco have been developed by increasingly diverse entities including PPPs, ad hoc planning societies or state-run limited companies, and new funds or holdings (Barthel and Zaki, 2011), with opaque ties to the centralized state administration, and varying levels of financial and decisional independence (Bogaert, 2012; Kanai and Kutz, 2011; Mouloudi, 2014). The introduction of these new actors of urban development has redefined modalities of state action in the kingdom's cities, through new hybridized institutional structures, indirect modes of control, and complex entanglements with central state power (Barthel and Zaki, 2011; Bogaert, 2012).

⁴¹ In Morocco's authoritarian context, the commitment to *decentralizing* state power and the creation of more independent decentralized elected entities is impeded by the parallel process of *deconcentrating* state power through the creation of entities that represent central power at the subnational scale, and which continue to hold more power than decentralized entities, especially at the local urban scale (Bogaert, 2018).

Project-based urbanism has normalized the privatization of urban project management and the increasingly complex international sources of funding that accompanied the liberal turn in Morocco's economy (Cattedra, 2010). Yet the recent surge of urban mega-projects across the kingdom also draws attention to the crucial role of the monarchy, which retains control over strategic development projects, and Morocco's vision for urban development more broadly (Cattedra, 2010; Mouloudi, 2014; Planel, 2009; Sitri and Hanzaz, 2016), indicating a 'shift towards authoritarian modalities of neoliberal government' (Zemni and Bogaert, 2011: 403). As an extension of project-based urbanism and localized mega-project interventions to the scale of a national urban strategy, Morocco's commitment to new city-building exhibits similar trends in the 'pluralisation of power relations' (Philifert, 2014: 73) in urban development, driven by the speculative logic of urban entrepreneurialism and the persistence of authoritarian control over the kingdom's development.

5.4 Rise of the new city solution: Motives, actors, and projects

Nineteen new cities are currently underway in Morocco (Figure 5.1, Table 5.1). While the Villes Nouvelles strategy initially announced in the early 2000s and spearheaded by the MHU originally outlined the creation of 15⁴² new cities to be ambitiously erected by 2020, the national initiative soon took on new dimensions when more projects were launched, shortly after 2004, by additional institutional city-building actors mandated by the state to develop new city ventures to support national development objectives. The initial plan to build 15 cities was estimated to require investments of 100 billion Moroccan dirhams (approximately \$10.5 billion US) for a projected combined total population of one million residents (La Vie Éco, 2012). With the additional new city projects, total investments are approximately 180 billion Moroccan dirhams (almost \$20 billion US) for all projects underway.

⁴² This number was, even at the time, somewhat arbitrary, as only 11 locations for new city projects were released and confirmed in 2004 (Lahlou, 2015)

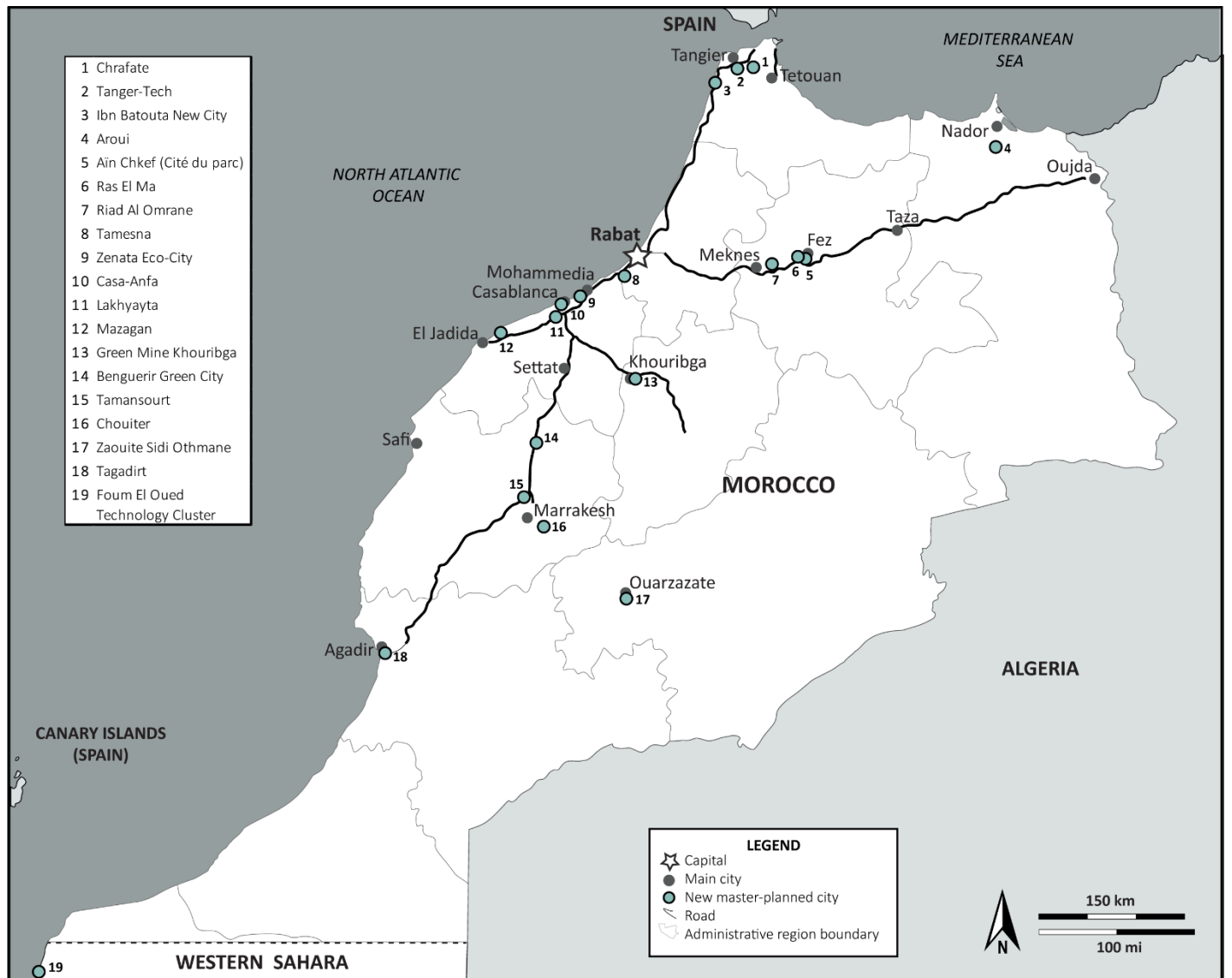


Figure 5.1 Geographical distribution of Morocco's new cities (map: Laurence Côté-Roy)

Table 5.1

New city projects in Morocco

	New city	Project manager	Urban form/concept	Area (km ²)	Launch date	Projected population
1	Tamansourt	Al Omrane Tamansourt	Satellite city	19.5	2004	450 000
2	Tamesna	Al Omrane Tamesna	Satellite city	8.4	2005	250 000
3	Ibn Batouta New City	Al Omrane Al Boughaz	Satellite city	1.20	2006	55 000
4	Chouiter	Alliances Darna	Satellite city	2.17	2007	60 000
5	Chrafate	Al Omrane Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceïma	Satellite city	13	2009	150 000
6	Lakhyayta	Al Omrane Sahel Lakhyayta	Industrial satellite city	12.9	2009	300 000
7	Riad Al Omrane	Al Omrane Meknès	Urban Pole	2.34	2009	80 000
8	Tagadirt	Al Omrane Agadir	Urban Pole	11.3	2009	200 000
9	Zaouite Sidi Othmane	Al Omrane Drâa-Tafilalet	Urban Pole	4.18	2009	80 000
10	Ras El Ma	Al Omrane Fès	Urban Pole	1.91	2010	50 000
11	Benguerir Green City	SADV, OCP	Green city/ Knowledge city	10	2011	100 000
12	Green mine Khouribga	SADV, OCP	Knowledge city	2.94	2014	25 000
13	Foum El Oued Technology Cluster	Phosboucraâ Foundation, OCP	Technopole	1.26	2016	12 000
14	Mazagan	SAEDM, OCP	Urban Pole	13.0	2017	134 000
15	Aroui	CGI, Al Omrane	Urban Pole	14.0	2008	180 000
16	Casa-Anfa	AUDA, CDG Dev	Independent financial district	3.65	2010	100 000
17	Zenata Eco-City	SAZ, CDG Dev	Eco-City	18.3	2012	300 000
18	Aïn Chkef (La cité du parc)	Jnane Saiss développement, CDG Dev	Urban Pole	10.54	2014	270 000
19	Tanger Tech City	China-Morocco partnership (CCCC and SATT)	Smart City	20	2019	-

Beyond financial resources, the state also rapidly mobilized extensive land resources to enable new city construction nationally. Of note are the 10,000 hectares of agricultural land converted for urban development through the state-sanctioned acquisition of land belonging to public agricultural development societies (SODEA and SOGETA) through an agreement with the Ministry of Finance, thus ending the longstanding national priority of preserving fertile land in order to transition to urbanization-led economic development (Rousseau and Harroud, 2019). In other cases, land is being mobilized by state authorities through large-scale expropriations rendered possible through a royal declaration of a project's 'public purpose' (Law 7-81), as is the case in Zenata Eco-City, or through the controversial claim of 'collective lands' (Berriane, 2017), like in the new urban pole in Aïn Chkef (interview, Rabat, 1 August 2016). The hefty investments and the sizable mobilization of land illustrate the state's commitment to brand-new urban developments as 'one of the primary components of the kingdom's national spatial planning action' (interview, Rabat, 17 August 2016).

5.4.1 Framing the program: New cities to manage urbanization and promote economic growth

The idea for a national strategy of new city-building in Morocco emerged in a favorable political and economic context that legitimized the ambitious national initiative. Morocco's Villes Nouvelles strategy was devised amid broader state-driven reforms surrounding approaches to territorial development and spatial planning (Adidi, 2011). In order to address longstanding urbanization challenges and the uncontrolled expansion of cities across the kingdom, the king of Morocco initiated the National Debate on Territorial Planning (*Débat National sur l'Aménagement du Territoire*) between 1999 and 2001 to promote a more coordinated and rational approach to territorial development and the creation of new national planning documents (Adidi, 2011). Launched in parallel of these reforms, the Villes Nouvelles strategy was strategically promoted by its supporters within and beyond the government⁴³ as an innovative national planning intervention that could improve Morocco's territorial organization and fuel more organized urban development. The national program of new city building was presented as an attractive mode of 'prospective' planning, contrasting with longstanding forms of reactive

⁴³ See Harroud (2017a) for his discussion of MHU minister Ahmed Toufiq Hejira's role as a crucial driving force behind the national strategy

‘emergency’ or ‘catch-up’ urbanism (Harroud, 2017b), and promoted as a way to anticipate and organize urban growth to achieve more sustainable forms of urban development.

Echoing broader discourses circulating globally on the pressing need for new cities to address urban crises (Datta, 2017; Murray, 2015a; Watson, 2014), city-building actors interviewed for this research believe that there are presently no viable alternatives to new city building that can address Morocco’s urgent and widespread urbanization challenges due to a lack of funds and expertise to upgrade existing urban centers. Starting in 2004, new cities were enthusiastically promoted as ‘the best solution to structure space and overcome pressures affecting the housing sector’⁴⁴ by government leaders who spearheaded the national initiative and initial new city experiments (ALM, 2004). Significantly, new cities were presented as a key strategy with which to address the national housing crisis and unplanned expansion of cities. As a consequence of rapid, uncontrolled urban growth since Morocco’s independence, the country-wide housing shortage was estimated at more than 840,000 units in 2012 (InfoMédiaire, 2012) and increasing at a rate of 100,000 units every year (MHU, 2004). In 2002, King Mohammed VI officially made ‘decent housing’ a priority for the kingdom’s development, which spurred the creation of a series of programs, including one launched by then-Prime Minister Driss Jettou and his technocratic administration to construct 100,000 units of social housing annually, as well as the *Villes Sans Bidonvilles* (VSB, or ‘Cities without Slums’) program to eradicate all informal settlements from Morocco’s cities. The national city-building initiative was launched in 2004 as an extension of these programs’ objectives and as a timely strategy to achieve broader national development priorities (MHU, 2004: 7).

Beyond a strategy for territorial planning and housing creation, new cities are officially being developed to support or open up new sectors of the economy, create employment, and attract investment (Lahlou, 2015; MATNUHPV, 2019). The first new city projects also had the objective of spurring the creation of private real estate industry in Morocco and resulted in the rise of now-powerful real estate companies such as Addoha, Alliances, and Chaabi, which are in turn creating housing and commercial real estate projects in many new cities in response to generous state incentives (interview, Rabat, 25 August 2016). Through their promoted urban concept and plans, a number of new city projects strategically advertise their alignment with

⁴⁴ Abdelhaï Bousfiha, Secretary general, National Housing and Urban planning council interviewed in Aujourd’hui le Maroc, 21/12/2004

broad development priorities and programs in the kingdom, thereby reinforcing the framing of the Villes Nouvelles strategy as a national-scale planning intervention for the country's overall development. Launched to support and expand Morocco's industrial development in the north, Chrafate and Tanger Tech, for example, align with the *Plan Émergence 2020* (2020 Emergence Plan) and *Plan d'Accélération Industrielle* (Industrial Acceleration Plan), which are focused on sustaining national industrial growth. Other new city projects, such as Zenata Eco-City, branded as a 'model Eco-City for Africa', support Morocco's economic ambitions on the African continent by fostering bilateral city-building partnerships between Morocco and other African states (Côté-Roy, in press). Benguerir Green City, envisioned as a 'knowledge city' and business incubator, is being developed to advance research and innovations in mining engineering, agroindustry, and renewable energies, in accordance with the *Plan Maroc Vert* (Green Morocco Plan) for the development of sustainable agriculture solutions within the kingdom. Following Morocco's broader *Plan Azur* to expand the tourism sector, most new city projects also strategically promote their appeal for tourism, a lucrative industry that contributed more than 8% of Morocco's GDP in 2018 (World Finance, 2019).

5.4.2 Main actors of Morocco's new city-building

New city-building across the kingdom is facilitated by the emergence of new types of institutional actors specifically dedicated to their development. Morocco's new cities are being developed primarily by three broad entities that exemplify the new actors and entrepreneurial arrangements introduced under project-based urbanism: the Al Omrane Group, CDG Développement, and the OCP Group, all of which are involved in new city development through an array of subsidiaries. These three institutional actors and their subsidiaries have divergent roles and prerogatives over Morocco's urbanizing spaces (Harroud, 2017b), but all three have become key players in Morocco's urban development over the last decade. As we will further examine in the next section, the creation of these actors and/or their subsidiaries is illustrative of the increased privatization of urban development operations in Morocco, but also exemplifies the persistent control of the central state through new modalities of intervention.

The Al Omrane Group is a parastatal agency in charge of implementing the state's vision in housing development and urban planning. Al Omrane was created in 2007 through a combination of four types of existing public institutions operating within the planning, territorial

management, and construction sectors (Groupe Al Omrane, 2019a) to provide a more direct tool for action, free from ministerial politics (interview, Tamesna, 28 September 2018). The Al Omrane Group is under the authority of the MHU but operates as a financially independent limited company (Groupe Al Omrane, 2019b). The group, working in partnership with both foreign and domestic developers, is currently building a number of real estate projects across the kingdom as well as four new cities and 16 ‘urban poles’ across Morocco, which are ambiguously defined mixed-use urban developments of slightly smaller scale located near existing, usually medium-sized cities. Al Omrane’s role and responsibilities in these ventures vary between those of master-planner, developer, and city manager based on specific partnerships struck with other government actors or private developers in the context of each project.

The CDG Développement Holding (CDG Dev) is a subsidiary that is fully owned by the CDG Group (*Caisse de dépôt et de gestion*), a public and state-owned national deposit and management fund created in 1959 to invest and manage pension funds in Morocco. The CDG is a central actor in the national economy and is among the kingdom’s first public institutional investors (Oubenal and Zeroual, 2017). The privately managed CDG Dev was created in 2004 and is now a major investor in urban mega-developments, infrastructure projects, and new cities. CDG Dev oversees the construction of new cities through ad hoc subsidiaries for specific projects such as the SAZ (*Société d’Aménagement Zenata*), which was created in 2006 and is currently developing Zenata Eco-City near Casablanca, one of Morocco’s largest new city projects, with a target of 300,000 residents.

Lastly, the OCP Group (*Office Chérifien des Phosphates*) is Morocco’s phosphate mining corporation and the top global exporter of phosphates. The Moroccan state owns 95 percent of the OCP group which became a limited company in 2008, with the remaining five percent being under the ownership of the Banque Centrale Populaire. OCP is developing four new city projects through its ad hoc subsidiaries, including the SADV (*Société d’aménagement et de Développement Vert*), which is developing the new Benguerir Green City project near Marrakesh. The new cities are intended to diversify the mining company’s activities and spur innovation in renewable energies and new technologies, as well as support the kingdom’s sustainable development ambitions.

5.5 Building new cities: Chaos and confusion beneath a ‘coherent’ national strategy

The support and enthusiasm for the new city model in Morocco, and the resources mobilized to roll out a national city-building strategy as a ‘rational’ territorial planning intervention for national development, stand in stark contrast to the reality of the Villes Nouvelles strategy’s implementation. Although driven by the state and presented as a cohesive national ‘strategy’, ‘program’, and ‘policy’ in official state discourse (Harroud, 2017a), city-building in Morocco is characterized by ambiguity, vagueness, and confusion, which impacts its coherence and raises important issues of transparency and accountability in urban development operations and future governance. In this section, we probe the murkiness inherent in the national strategy through a critical analysis of the ‘hybrid’ roles of city-building actors, the confusing policy status and lack of regulation over the national city-building initiative, and the variety of new city projects, which embody competing visions for national development. In doing so, we shed light on the pervasive involvement of the ruling elite in new city building, and the increasingly speculative approach of the state, which rolls out ambitious urban development programs using public assets with little transparency, consultation, or oversight.

5.5.1 Ambiguous roles and conflicting responsibilities: ‘Hybrid’ actors of new city development

As a particularity of the Moroccan context, actors of new city-building present a complex configuration of interests and have a ‘hybrid’ role (Barthel and Zaki, 2011). Although Al Omrane, CDG Dev, OCP, and their specialized city-building subsidiaries have a corporate institutional status with the imperative to be profitable, their ties to the state and its national development priorities through affiliations with government ministries and the king’s administration complicate their corporate mission. By unpacking the hybrid roles and responsibilities of Morocco’s city-building actors, we draw attention to the ruling elite’s pervasive entanglements in new city building, and to the resulting ambiguity that characterizes the actors’ mandates, affiliations, and process of decision-making.

The commercial and entrepreneurial goals of the new city projects are stated clearly by actors of city building. In interviews with high-level executives involved in the development of Zenata Eco-City and Benguerir Green City, the new city projects were presented as a way to reposition Morocco on the global stage, and as the strategic capture of an untapped market. The

description of Benguerir Green City's objective was, for example, to become a 'hot spot' to attract businesses and investment and as a strategy to 'unlock African potential' (interview, Casablanca, 15 October 2018). Although this has still not been achieved, officials at the Al Omrane Group stated their aspiration for the company to be officially listed on the stock exchange, further outlining their corporate orientation for profitability through their urban development missions (Ballout, 2014).

While actors appear to be private entities that are profit-driven, their role is complicated by the promotion of their 'public' mission for national and social development, a mission that is shaped by their subservience to the state. As explained by a senior official working on new city development at Al Omrane's central offices in Rabat:

Even if we have that status of a quasi-private company, we are not a purely private company. We are not a public company, we are a group with a balance sheet, with declarations, with turnover with everything ... but profit is not what matters most to us. (interview, Rabat, 25 August 2016)

Al Omrane's sole purpose is to implement the state's housing strategy, and several interviewees referred to the group's role as the '*bras armé de l'État*', the state's 'striking force', tasked with implementing housing objectives including the creation of social housing. Al Omrane is under the tutelage of the state and counts various ministry heads on its board of directors. As the kingdom's top employer and main contributor to national exports and the GDP, OCP is also a central actor in Morocco's social and economic development (Bono, 2013). Accordingly, actors working for one of OCP's city-building subsidiaries, SADV, also claim that they contribute to the social responsibility and economic development aspect of the new cities under way. A senior advisor in charge of economic development in Benguerir Green City stated that the goal of the new city is to simultaneously advance OCP's activities while boosting development in the surrounding economically depressed region (interview, Casablanca, 15 October 2018). Although the CDG Dev is not directly under state tutelage, the group brands itself as a key partner of the state in national development ambitions and public interest projects (Barthel, 2010).

The hybrid role of Morocco's city-building actors exemplifies strategies implemented by new African 'investor states' (Pitcher, 2017: 45), who reconcile developmental and market-based policy logics in their mode of entrepreneurial governance by using 'state assets or state companies to realize a return on investment either alone or together with private capital' (Pitcher,

2017: 47). As occurs in many other entrepreneurial African nations (Pitcher, 2017), public pension funds and investment-driven parastatals or state-owned enterprises are part of public investment vehicles used in Morocco to implement the Villes Nouvelles strategy in the service of national development. As Zenata Eco-City's director of development described: 'we don't have a purely capitalistic mandate, we are supported by a nation, by a public pension fund, a long-term fund that allows us to do this' (interview, Mohammedia, 26 August 2016).

The so-called private city-building actors' ties to the state also underscore the interventions of the kingdom's ruling elite and central administration in new city building, which further complicate and obscure the roles of city-building actors and blur the distinction between 'public' and 'private' actors (Figure 5.2). Although Morocco's city-building actors are 'directly inspired by the values of economic liberalism, they nevertheless remain under the control of the central authorities, and [are] more specifically subject to royal monitoring and control' (Barthel and Planel, 2010: 182). These 'hybrid' roles are emblematic of the King's particular mode of 'globalized authoritarianism' in which 'Mohammed VI rules via holdings, funds, and specialized state agencies' (Bogaert, 2018: 92). Accordingly, Barthel and Zaki (2011: 209) refer to Al Omrane and the CDG as 'holdings under Royal constraint'.

With their CEOs nominated by the king, the CDG, OCP, and Al Omrane are close to the King's administration and are subject to his will and priorities. The CDG, for example, responds to the direct interventions of the King on important investment decisions (Oubenal and Zeroual, 2017), and as one of the CDG's subsidiaries, CDG DEV has been directly mandated by the King to develop numerous strategic urban mega-projects with national importance, including Zenata Eco-City (interview, Mohammedia, 2 August 2016). Similarly, the creation of a new Green City in Benguerir is widely portrayed as having benefited from the central administration's influence through Fouad Ali El Himma, one of the King's senior advisors and ex-parliamentary deputy for the region (interview, Marrakech, 21 November 2018). In other instances, the king has personally intervened to enable the appropriation of inhabited land to create a new city, as in the case of Tamansourt (Ballout, 2014: 246). The monarchy's broader symbolic influence can also be seen in the way almost all projects have been 'presented' to the king for his 'approval' and 'blessing', even those ostensibly being developed by the private sector (interview, Rabat, 25 August 2016).

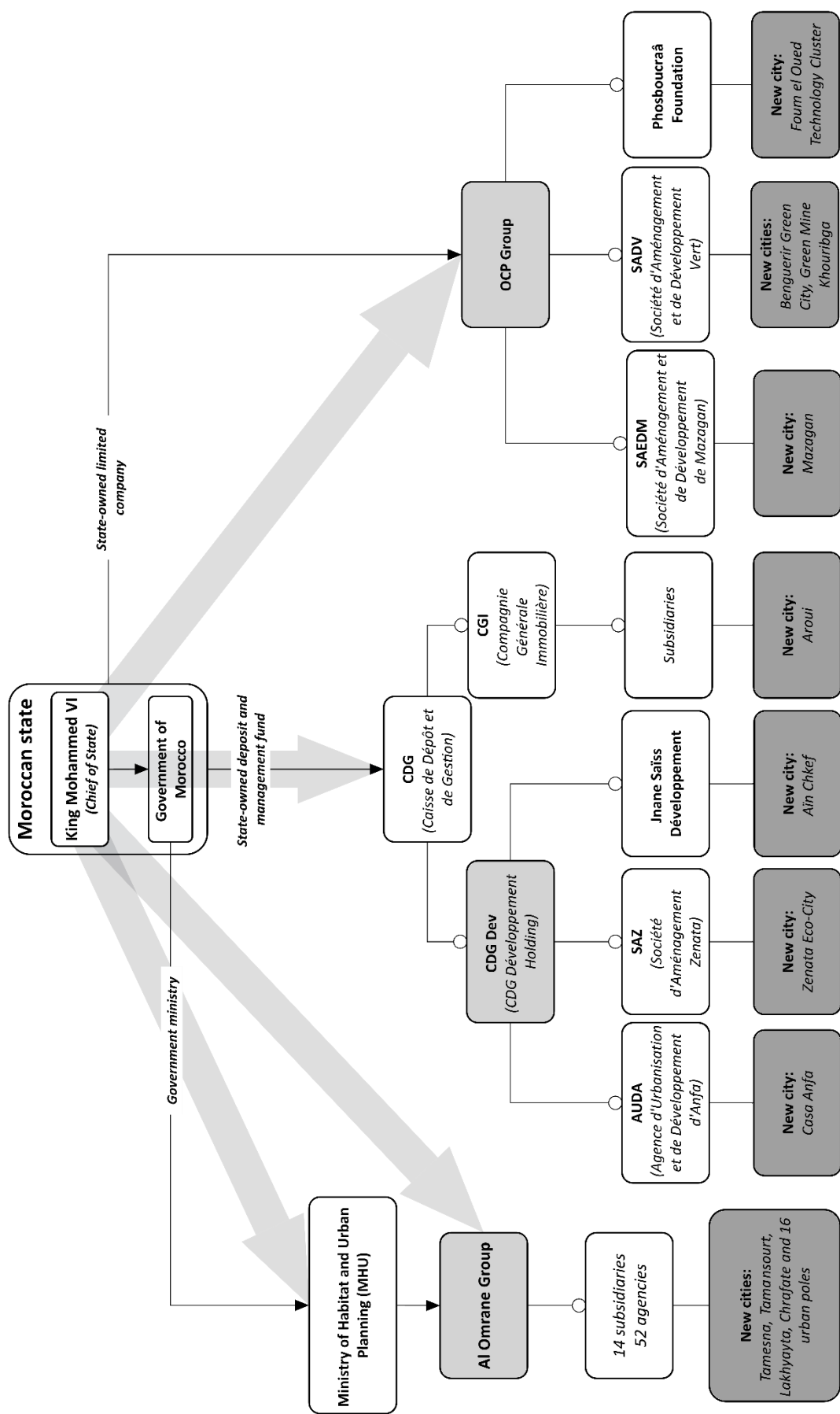


Figure 5.2. Morocco's primary new city-building actors (light gray), their subsidiaries (white), and links to city projects (dark gray) through their affiliations to the government and ties to the king's administration. (Figure author: Laurence Côte-Roy)

The complex configuration of city-building actors, their hybrid ‘public’ and ‘private’ role, and their opaque ties to Morocco’s centralized administration means that there is ambiguity surrounding where the role of the state starts and stops in new city-building ventures. According to Zenata Eco-City’s director of development, this is exemplified by their conflicting responsibilities: ‘in Zenata, we wear two hats, which is a little bit...schizophrenic. We are asked to be both planners and developers, to both negotiate and coordinate, to be moderators. It’s very complicated because we are torn between planning and development. (...) It is not a truly private status’ (interview, Mohammedia, 26 August 2016). The ambiguous roles of actors mean that there is a lack of transparency and clarity surrounding whose interests are represented through new city development. With their hybrid roles, actors of new city building are currently accountable to the market and to an increasingly entrepreneurial state, and more specifically, its centralized and non-democratic apparatus. In this configuration, there is little room for the representation and integration of citizen interests, and it is unlikely that democratization will materialize in urban governance despite officially promulgated priorities for the decentralization of public action (Philifert, 2010).

5.5.2 Bypassing accountability and debate: Rolling out new cities in a legislative void

Beyond the ambiguity that characterizes the hybrid mandate of city-building actors, confusion and uncertainty also stem from the national city-building strategy’s undefined policy status, with implications for the development process of new cities and their future management. Although Morocco’s city-building strategy is frequently referred to as a ‘national policy’ in public discourse and by new city-building actors and stakeholders, city-building activities underway across the kingdom are not currently supported by a formal state policy or specific legislation for new city development, despite several attempts to develop regulation.⁴⁵ The national Villes Nouvelles strategy originated through a simple ministerial circular, the least restrictive administrative document, and does not outline practical aspects of the national initiative, offering only vague objectives and guidelines for new city development (Ballout,

⁴⁵ In the early 2000s, plans were laid out by the government to make a new urban planning code by updating the legislative texts adopted in 1992 (Law 12-90 and 25-90). Under this new code, a section specifically on new city construction would have provided an official basis for the new city strategy. However, this initiative was abandoned in 2007 by the Secretariat General of the Ministry of National Territorial Management without public explanation (Harroud, 2017a). In December 2012, a new law on new cities (Law 24-07) was proposed but never adopted (Ballout, 2014).

2017). New city projects themselves are not legally defined nor are they currently differentiated from other (smaller) types of real estate developments, which poses significant challenges for their financing and construction (interview, Tamesna, 28 September 2018). Furthermore, the so-called ‘national policy’ is not overseen or managed by a specific group or board and does not have a designated budget to handle city-building operations on a national scale (Rousseau and Harroud, 2019). Although the Department of Habitat and Urbanism created the ‘inter-ministerial committee on new cities’ in 2006 to address this issue, the committee is an informal entity without a judicial basis to define its composition, status, and mission (Harroud, 2017b). The committee has only met once in 2007 since the introduction of the national city-building initiative, illustrating its lack of influence over the kingdom’s city-building strategy.

Without a substantive legislative framework surrounding new city building, the objectives of the Villes Nouvelles initiative are general and non-binding, and there are no regulatory mechanisms ensuring the oversight and evaluation of the overarching strategy or of individual new city projects. As a result, there is no formal system of accountability surrounding the national strategy. In the absence of specific legislation, arrangements for the construction and governance of new cities are made on a case by case basis, often through exemptions and exceptions to standard planning codes, processes, and regulations, an approach normalized through project-based urbanism (Mouloudi, 2014), which compromises transparency surrounding decision-making and the cities’ development process.

Morocco’s national city-building strategy is consistent with forms of ‘bypass urbanization’ (Bhattacharya and Sanyal, 2011; Datta, 2015b) which, beyond the bypassing of extant material cities and their challenges by creating new ‘parallel cities’ (Murray, 2017: 31), also reflects the ‘bypassing [of] planning instruments and territorial regulations, local actor constellations, and existing modes of everyday life’ (Sawyer et al., 2021: 680). Although the official state discourse presents the national city-building strategy as solution devised after a ‘careful diagnosis of urban space’ (MHU, 2004: 6), the initiative was preceded by rushed feasibility studies that were limited in scope and did not take into account the needs of citizens, according to a senior executive at Al Omrane (interview, Rabat, 24 August 2016). Several individuals working for Morocco’s main city-building entities and within the government condemned what they perceive as an opportunistic logic guiding the construction of new cities nationally, primarily motivated by the ‘availability’ of large tracts of land that could be easily

mobilized by the state rather than an informed vision on territorial development, and the pressing needs of existing cities with which new projects could come into competition for resources (interview, Rabat, 23 August 2016). The national city-building ‘policy’ was also launched after scarce consultation with relevant ministries, unsurprisingly leading to low governmental support of the Villes Nouvelles initiative’s early projects. This lack of coordination with relevant ministries is currently jeopardizing access to fundamental services including healthcare, transportation, and education in several new cities. Despite being used as a basis to justify city-building operations, Morocco’s national city-building agenda also contradicts formal recommendations included in the National Territorial Planning Scheme (SNAT), the central document of reference for national territorial planning in Morocco. Produced at the outset of the National Debate on Territorial Planning, the SNAT explicitly cautioned against building new cities to manage Morocco’s urbanization (DAT, 2004: 35).

The legislative void surrounding the national city-building initiative has important implications for the future of new cities in Morocco as there is presently no new legislation regulating urban governance in the new cities, even where there is a rapidly growing resident population (interview, Rabat, 12 September 2018). The troubling lack of attention to the future governance aspect of new city development is more broadly revealing of the short-sighted, speculative attitudes of states and stakeholders who hastily roll out risky, ambitious plans for mega-projects by mobilizing extensive public assets and funds, yet demonstrate scant consideration and accountability for their long-term impacts, or the needs of future residents (Datta, 2017; Rebentisch et al., 2020; Sawyer et al., 2021). The unresolved future governance question also suggests that urban governance was never considered as an important variable when diagnosing urban challenges in Morocco, which were primarily conceptualized as issues of housing and infrastructure to be resolved through investments in real estate. This narrow problematization of Morocco’s urban ‘crisis’ that underpins the new city-building solution bypasses key debates and considerations for urban futures, including democratic governance, the protection of arable lands, and mounting challenges of water scarcity in the kingdom. Accordingly, a senior executive at Al Omrane critiqued the rapid expansion of government-led new city projects:

We need to identify constraints and what land we can work on. There are agricultural constraints! How are we still gobbling up all our agricultural land? What are we going to

eat after? There is also the water constraint, the energy constraint... (interview, Rabat, 24 August 2016)

In the absence of supporting legislation, the Villes Nouvelles ‘policy’ more accurately embodies a state discourse that serves to legitimize the construction of urban mega-developments (Ballout, 2014) and the modalities of state intervention to make new cities possible (Bhan, 2014; Goldman, 2011b; Roy, 2009b) including unpopular actions such as population displacement, expropriations, and the conversion of agricultural land in several new city projects (Berriane, 2017).

5.5.3 Project variation and competing visions for development: A ‘Frankenstein urbanism’?

As a further symptom of the ambiguous role of city-building actors and the strategy’s absent regulatory oversight, the great diversity of new city projects currently underway across the kingdom further exemplifies the confusion and incongruities that lie behind the cohesive ‘brand’ of the Villes Nouvelles strategy. The 19 new city projects under construction, the attitudes of their builders, and their competing visions for urban development reflect a lack of coordination and cohesion regarding national development, how it should be achieved through new city-building, and who should benefit, raising concerns for the production of a form of ‘Frankenstein urbanism’ (Cugurullo, 2018) enacted at the national scale.

Moroccan media and city-building actors commonly refer to two generations of new cities under that national strategy. The first generation refers to the government-led projects under the purview the MHU including Tamansourt (2004), Tamesna (2005), Chrafate (2009), and Lakhyayta (2009), all developed by Al Omrane. The second generation refers to the more recent new city projects by the CDG Dev and OCP’s subsidiaries, which were launched mostly after 2010 and feature elaborate urban identities and branding that draw on global planning trends and aesthetics and reflect a more entrepreneurial ethos. In contrast to the first generation, which were government-led and focused on addressing the national housing crisis, second-generation new cities more explicitly attempt to reposition Morocco on the global stage. In an interview about Zenata Eco-City, the city’s CEO stated: ‘I don’t want this project to only have recognition in Africa, or within the MENA region. We want to give it international visibility’ (interview, Mohammedia, 2 August 2016).

Overall, new city projects under construction range from 1.2 to 20 kilometers squared, with projected populations ranging between 12,000 and 450,000 residents. The new cities' main features and driving concepts are also diverse, and include eco-cities, technopoles, smart cities, satellite cities, industrial cities, knowledge cities, and the rather ambiguous 'urban pole'. While a diversity in approaches and projects is not necessarily problematic in and of itself, in the context of Morocco's new city-building strategy, this diversity more problematically reveals an absence of coordination among the various projects included under the overarching strategy, raising questions about the cohesiveness of the national initiative and its ability to reach broader national development goals through new city building.

Planners and government officials demonstrated the absence of coordination among projects and approaches to urban development during interviews, as new city-building actors frequently questioned or critiqued the visions, motives, and projects of other actors involved in new city development. For example, one senior official working on new city building at Al Omrane questioned the legitimacy of OCP's engagement in urban development by stating: 'We were a little unhappy when we saw that OCP was also starting to build new cities... that is not their job... we figured that in that case we would also go mine for phosphates' (interview, Rabat, 25 August 2016). This critique was echoed by a number of actors working for Al Omrane and within various governmental ministries, who frequently suggested that unlike Al Omrane, which among other mandates has the mission of providing housing for low-income Moroccans, actors like the CDG Dev or OCP's subsidiaries and their approach to urban development is purely motivated by profit and their own business interests. The vision underpinning projects developed by the CDG Dev and OCP through their subsidiaries was critiqued by new city-building actors from Al Omrane, who perceived that their approach to national development through new cities is disconnected from Morocco's reality and more pressing needs. Referring to the new Benguerir Green City developed by OCP's SADV subsidiary, one senior executive stated:

They are very proud of Benguerir... this new jewel they are developing... I don't want to disparage it, but cooling down the environment with sprinklers and semi-covered walkways... really, where are we living? We are in Morocco... we don't have means, we don't have petrol, we have nothing.' (interview, Rabat, 24 August 2016)

In other instances, it was Al Omrane's legitimacy and expertise in terms of new city-building that was questioned by a director working for OCP's SADV office in Benguerir, who contrasted

the group's subservience to pressing priorities and state politics with OCP's future-oriented vision for national development through Benguerir Green City:

They [Al Omrane] are subjected to political pressure, and they need to respond to a need for social housing... Tamesna, Tamansourt, they are to ensure the safety and stability of the population like the state wants. For Benguerir we want to see a new city that responds to future needs: sustainability, digital technologies, human development, knowledge. (interview, Benguerir Green City, 22 November 2018)

Actors of Morocco's new city building also have varying levels of expertise and prerogatives to develop urban mega-projects. During interviews, actors working on new city building for Al Omrane frequently brought up the fact that the group had no experience with urban development operations of this magnitude prior to the announcement of the national city-building strategy. Similarly, all actors interviewed recognized that contrary to Al Omrane, the CDG Dev and OCP's subsidiaries hold more financial latitude and means to hire international expertise and consultants, which has shaped divergent visions and approaches to new city development.

While the diversity of projects and visions included in the national Villes Nouvelles strategy does not necessarily preclude each new city project from succeeding individually, the lack of coordination among actors and their approaches raises concerns about the ability of individual projects to work together, within the logic of an overarching state-driven strategy, to achieve stated goals of rational territorial organization and fulfill objectives of national development. In its current expression, city-building in Morocco recalls Federico Cugurullo's (2018) concept of 'Frankenstein urbanism', performed at the national scale. Developed as a critique of 'smart' or 'eco' cities, which he analyzes as 'unsuccessful experiments generated by the forced union of different, incongruous parts' (Cugurullo, 2018: 75), the 'Frankenstein urbanism' concept also captures the current experience of new city building under Morocco's national initiative, where what is being promoted as a cohesive strategy stemming from a uniform vision of urban and national development is in fact actualized as disconnected individual projects that seem to fit oddly together.

Without the support of an overarching regulatory framework and clearly articulated planning policy, and with numerous new city projects being rolled out simultaneously, there are presently no formal mechanisms in place to ensure that new city projects underway, which already face the challenges of attracting residents, investors, and fostering economic activity, do

not come into competition with each other for these assets. As explained by an ex-employee of Al Omrane who worked as a project director during Tamesna's inception, despite the prevalent official discourse on the national city-building strategy associating the initiative with broader objectives of rational territorial planning for the kingdom, new cities were implemented as sectoral projects rather than by engaging in necessary coordinated action at the national scale (interview, Tamesna, 28 September 2018).

5.6 Conclusion

Despite the shortcomings and setbacks of initial new city experiments, which planners are only now slowly addressing (Harroud, 2017a), plans for new cities continue to be rolled out as a key strategy for national development. Started most recently in 2019, the Chinese-financed Tanger-Tech city is a partnership between the China Construction and Communication Company (CCCC) and the Moroccan *Société d'Aménagement de Tanger Tech* (SATT). More importantly, and despite mounting disillusionment among city-building actors and conflicting assessments of the overall success and benefits of the new cities, the Villes Nouvelles strategy is currently employed to promote Morocco's new city-building expertise beyond the kingdom's frontiers and to foster partnerships for the construction of new cities in Africa (Côté-Roy and Moser, forthcoming). There is a pressing need to critically analyze the ongoing commitment to the new city model in Morocco, how the national Villes Nouvelles strategy is transforming Morocco's urban landscape, and according to whose vision and priorities. This article is a contribution towards addressing these questions.

This article provides an overview of Morocco's Villes Nouvelles strategy, its main actors, drivers, and projects. It is the first attempt to identify, characterize, and map all new city projects underway across the kingdom, and provides insight into the kingdom's broad city-building activities and their diverse materializations. As one of the most active city-building countries in the world, Morocco's new city experiments offer insights into the global new city-building trend, while pointing out specificities and incongruities of the kingdom's Villes Nouvelles strategy. We suggest that the themes explored in relation to Morocco's national initiative are relevant beyond the context of Morocco, particularly in comparative research on other countries that have launched nation-wide city-building, and more broadly with other state-driven new city-building

programs in countries with strong centralized or authoritarian states. As such, this article makes three main contributions towards this goal.

First, city building in Morocco exemplifies the increasingly fluid and blurry distinction between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ sector actors in urban mega-developments in the Global South (Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019; Mouton and Shatkin, 2020; Pitcher, 2017). The hybrid roles of Morocco’s new city-building actors suggest that closer attention needs to be paid to the composition of city-building actors and underscore the need to develop new vocabulary to characterize the role of actors beyond the ‘public-private’ dichotomy and the overly general ‘public-private-partnership’. While in many cases the disappearing frontier between public and private sectors is attributed to the encroachment of the private sector (Fält, 2019; Ramachandraiah, 2016), the Moroccan case provides an example in which this ambiguity is driven by the central state and its mode of ‘revamped’ authoritarianism (Bogaert, 2018).

Second, and related to the first point, the Moroccan city-building case provides insights into the ways in which an authoritarian state interacts with global urban trends. In this article, we focus on the consequences of interactions between the logic of urban entrepreneurialism and persistent autocratic modes of control that result in the production of ‘new political rationalities of government and technologies of rule’ (Goldman, 2011b: 575) in the context of new cities. The new ‘hybrid’ institutional configurations that emerged in the Moroccan context demonstrate the relevance of ‘unpacking the state’ (Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018: 1237) to identify new forms of authority and state power in urban mega-projects. As exemplified in the Moroccan case, such new configurations of actors raise troubling questions about transparency and accountability in city-building operations and future governance. In the wake of the Arab Spring and its social unrest, and in light of Morocco’s unrealized democratic reforms under Mohammed VI’s revamped authoritarianism, more research is needed into how new cities play a role in maintaining social stability and state legitimacy, both in Morocco and in other authoritarian contexts. As new master-planned cities emerge in many highly centralized or authoritarian states (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021), more attention should be devoted to how projects ‘fit into the leadership’s legitimacy projects – in terms of efforts to secure both domestic *and* foreign approval of the country’s nondemocratic political configuration’ (Koch, 2014b: 1121).

Finally, although new master-planned cities are frequently conceptualized as top-down and ultra-planned spatial interventions, the Moroccan case sheds light on prevalent forms of

ambiguity and confusion that characterize the kingdom's city-building activities, and which contrast with the cohesive 'brand' of the Villes Nouvelles strategy. The murky implementation of the national strategy demonstrates the inherent ambiguity and chaos that can exist even in top-down, state-driven national planning interventions, and the risks and implications of an absence of coordination and oversight in urban development strategies deployed at a national scale. Legitimized through a discourse of national development and entrepreneurial imperatives of competition, the opaque mode of state intervention through Morocco's national Villes Nouvelles strategy normalizes forms of 'bypass urbanization' and anti-democratic and non-transparent processes of decision-making that will impact the population's urban futures. As ambitious, resource-intensive programs that engage in radical actions such as population displacement, expropriations, and other modes of land acquisition, more research is needed to understand the processes, tools, and mechanisms of decision-making and opaque state intervention in new city-building schemes elsewhere in the world.

References

- Adidi A (2011) De l'aménagement du territoire au développement territorial : Quelle transition et quelle articulation? In: *1ère Conférence Intercontinentale d'Intelligence Territoriale*, Gatineau, Canada, October 2011, p. 11. Available at: <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00960909/document> (accessed 21 May 2019).
- ALM (2004) La solution : Créer de nouvelles villes. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 21 December. Available at: <http://aujourd'hui.ma/economie/immobilier/la-solution-creer-de-nouvelles-villes-83472> (accessed 28 January 2019).
- Ballout J-M (2014) *Territorialisation par « ville nouvelle » au Maghreb. Regard croisé sur les projets d'Ali Mendjeli (Constantine) et de Tamansourt (Marrakech)*. PhD Dissertation, Department of Geography and Planning, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier 3.
- Ballout J-M (2015) « Villes nouvelles » et urbanités émergentes dans les périphéries de Constantine et Marrakech. *L'Année du Maghreb* (12): 55–74.
- Ballout J-M (2017) Un bilan intermédiaire du programme de villes nouvelles au Maroc. *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (29).

Barthel P-A (2010) Casablanca-Marina : Un nouvel urbanisme marocain des grands projets. *Autrepart* (55): 71–88.

Barthel P-A and Planel S (2010) Tanger-Med and Casa-Marina, prestige projects in Morocco: New capitalist frameworks and local context. *Built Environment* 36(2): 176–191.

Barthel P-A and Zaki L (2011) Les holdings d'aménagement, nouvelles vitrines techniques de l'action urbaine au Maroc: Les cas d'Al Omrane et de la CDG Développement. In: Zaki L (ed.), *L'Action Urbaine au Maghreb: Enjeux Professionnels et Politiques*. Paris: IRMC Karthala., pp. 205–225.

Belarbi W (2011) Projets de « villes nouvelles » au Maroc. Entre innovation et reproduction du modèle médinal. In: Baoha M (ed.) *Architectures Au Maghreb (XIXe-XXe Siècles) Réinvention Du Patrimoine*. Perspectives Villes et Territoires. Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, pp. 113–130.

Berriane Y (2017) Development and countermovements. Reflections on the conflicts arising from the commodification of collective land in Morocco. *International Development Policy / Revue internationale de politique de développement* (8). 8. Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement: 247–267.

Bhan G (2014) The real lives of urban fantasies. *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 232–235.

Bhattacharya R and Sanyal K (2011) Bypassing the squalor: New towns, immaterial labour and exclusion in post-colonial urbanisation. *Economic and Political Weekly* 46(31): 41–48.

Bogaert K (2012) New state space formation in Morocco: The example of the Bouregreg Valley. *Urban Studies* 49(2): 255–270.

Bogaert K (2018) *Globalized Authoritarianism: Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco*. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press.

Bono I (2013) Une lecture d'économie politique de la « participation des jeunes » au Maroc à l'heure du Printemps arabe. *Revue internationale de politique comparée* Vol. 20(4): 145–166.

Bunnell T (2002) Multimedia utopia? A geographical critique of high-tech development in Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor. *Antipode* 34(2): 265–295.

Cattedra R (2010) Chapitre I. Les grands projets urbains à la conquête des périphéries. *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (19): 58–72.

Childs J and Hearn J (2017) 'New' nations: Resource-based development imaginaries in Ghana and Ecuador. *Third World Quarterly* 38(4): 844–861.

Chitti M and Moser S (2019) Urban Pulse - Emerging trends in urbanizing Palestine: Neglected city-builders beyond the occupation. *Urban Geography* 40(7): 1010–1017.

Côté-Roy L (in press) Morocco's new cities: Fostering moderate Islam through urban mega-developments. In: Moser S (ed.) *New Master-Planned Cities, Islam, and Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Côté-Roy L and Moser S (2019) 'Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?' The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa. *Urban Studies* 56(12): 2391–2407.

Côté-Roy L and Moser S (forthcoming) Fast urban model-making: Constructing Moroccan urban expertise through Zenata Eco-City.

Cugurullo F (2016) Urban eco-modernisation and the policy context of new eco-city projects: Where Masdar City fails and why. *Urban Studies* 53(11): 2417–2433.

Cugurullo F (2018) Exposing smart cities and eco-cities: Frankenstein urbanism and the sustainability challenges of the experimental city. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 50(1): 73–92.

DAT - Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire (2004) *Les orientations du Schéma National d'Aménagement du Territoire*. Rabat, Morocco: Royaume du Maroc.

Datta A (2012) India's ecocity? Environment, urbanisation, and mobility in the making of Lavasa. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 30(6): 982–996.

Datta A (2015b) New urban utopias of postcolonial India: 'Entrepreneurial urbanization' in Dholera Smart City, Gujarat. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 3–22.

Datta A (2017) Introduction: Fast cities in an urban age. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Kindle Edition. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 1–27.

Fält L (2019) New cities and the emergence of 'privatized urbanism' in Ghana. *Built Environment* 44(4): 438–460.

Gillot G (2013) Le désir d'internationalité, dynamique et vecteur de la mise à niveau des villes marocaines. *Revista de Antropologie urbana* 1(1): 49–68

Goldman M (2011b) Speculative urbanism and the making of the next world city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(3): 555–581.

Groupe Al Omrane (2019a) Historique. Available at: <https://www.alomrane.gov.ma/Le-groupe/Historique> (accessed 20 March 2019).

Groupe Al Omrane (2019b) Présentation du groupe. Available at: <http://www.alomrane.gov.ma/Le-groupe/Presentation-du-groupe> (accessed 17 March 2019).

Hachimi Alaoui N (2017) A 'time' to act: The 2015–20 development plan for greater Casablanca. *International Development Policy / Revue internationale de politique de développement* 8(8). 8. Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement: 189–219.

Harroud T (2017a) Handicaps et contradictions du programme de villes nouvelles au Maroc. *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (29).

Harroud T (2017b) Le programme des villes nouvelles au Maroc : Rupture ou prolongement d'un urbanisme de rattrapage? *Revue Internationale d'Urbanisme - RIURBA* (4): 1–17.

Herbert CW and Murray MJ (2015) Building from scratch: New cities, privatized urbanism and the spatial restructuring of Johannesburg after apartheid. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(3): 471–494.

InfoMédiaire (2012) Nabil Benabdellah, Ministre de l'Habitat, de l'Urbanisme et de la Politique de la ville. *InfoMédiaire*, 22 June. Available at: http://www.infomediaire.net/invite_du_mois/nabil-benabdellah-ministre-de-lhabitat-de-lurbanisme-et-de-la-politique-de-la-ville/ (accessed 28 February 2017).

Kanai M and Kutz W (2011) Entrepreneurialism in the globalising city-region of Tangier, Morocco. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 102(3): 346–360.

Keeton R and Provoost M (eds) (2019) *To Build a City in Africa: A History and a Manual*. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers.

Koch N (2014b) "Building glass refrigerators in the desert": Discourses of urban sustainability and nation building in Qatar. *Urban Geography* 35(8): 1118–1139.

La Vie Éco (2012) Villes nouvelles au Maroc : La tutelle veut accélérer la cadence. *La Vie Éco*, 27 November. Available at: <https://www.lavieeco.com/news/economie/villes-nouvelles-au-maroc-la-tutelle-veut-acceler-la-cadence-23918.html> (accessed 25 June 2019).

Lahlou H (2015) *Villes nouvelles, état des lieux et perspectives: Cas de la ville nouvelle de Tamesna*. Mastère en Management Public (unpublished MA thesis). Institut Supérieur de Commerce et d'Administration des Entreprises, Rabat.

MATNUHPV- Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville (2019) Villes et Zones d'Urbanisation Nouvelles – Département de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville. Available at: http://www.mhpv.gov.ma/?page_id=3465 (accessed 25 June 2019).

MHU - Ministère délégué chargé de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme (2004) Villes nouvelles et villes satellites. In: *Colloque des journées d'études tenues au siège du Ministère chargé de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme*, Rabat, Morocco, 14 December 2004, p. 206. Royaume du Maroc.

Moser S (2015) New cities: Old wine in new bottles? *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 31–35.

Moser S (2019) “Two days to shape the future”: A Saudi Arabian node in the transnational circulation of new cities ideas. In: Molotch H and Ponzini D (eds) *The New Arab Urban: Gulf Cities of Wealth, Ambition, and Distress*. New York: NYU Press, pp. 213–232.

Moser S (2020) New Cities: Engineering social exclusions. *One Earth* 2(2): 125–127.

Moser S and Côté-Roy L (2021) New cities: Power, profit, and prestige. *Geography Compass* 15(1): 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12549>.

Moser S, Swain M and Alkhabbaz MH (2015) King Abdullah Economic City: Engineering Saudi Arabia’s post-oil future. *Cities* 45: 71–80.

Mouloudi H (2014) Les projets d’aménagement des fronts d’eau de Rabat (Maroc). Systèmes d’action et stratégies d’acteurs. *Les Cahiers d’EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (22): 129–130.

Mouton M and Shatkin G (2020) Strategizing the for-profit city: The state, developers, and urban production in Mega Manila. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52(2): 403–422.

Mullins PD and Shwayri ST (2016) Green cities and “IT839”: A new paradigm for economic growth in South Korea. *Journal of Urban Technology* 23(2): 47–64.

Murray MJ (2015a) ‘City doubles’ re-urbanism in Africa. In: Miraftab F, Wilson D, and Salo K (eds) *Cities and Inequalities in a Global and Neoliberal World*. London, GB: Routledge, pp. 92–109.

Murray MJ (2017) Frictionless utopias for the contemporary urban age: Large-scale, master-planned redevelopment projects in urbanizing Africa. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Kindle Edition. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 31–53.

Oubenal M and Zeroual A (2017) Gouverner par la gouvernance : Les nouvelles modalités de contrôle politique des élites économiques au Maroc. *Critique internationale* 74(1): 9–32.

Philifert P (2010) Maroc : Des études urbaines saisies par le changement ? *Géocarrefour* 85(4): 323–331.

Philifert P (2014) Morocco 2011/2012: Persistence of past urban policies or a new historical sequence for urban action? *Built Environment* 40(1): 72–84.

Pitcher A (2012) Lions, tigers, and emerging markets: Africa’s development dilemmas. *Current History* 111(745): 163–168.

Pitcher A (2017) Entrepreneurial governance and the expansion of public investment funds in Africa. In: Harbeson JW and Rothchild D (eds) *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order*. 6th ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 45–68.

Planel S (2009) Transformations de l'État et politiques territoriales dans le Maroc contemporain. *L'Espace Politique* (7).

Ramachandraiah C (2016) Making of Amaravati: A landscape of speculation and intimidation. *Economic & Political Weekly* (17): 68–75.

Rebentisch H, Thompson C, Côté-Roy L, et al. (2020) Unicorn planning: Lessons from the rise and fall of an American 'smart' mega-development. *Cities* 101: 102686. DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2020.102686.

Rizzo A and Glasson J (2012) Iskandar Malaysia. *Cities* 29(6): 417–427.

Rousseau M and Harroud T (2019) Satellite cities turned to ghost towns? On the contradictions of Morocco's spatial policy. *International Planning Studies* 24(3–4): 341–352.

Roy A (2009b) Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning Theory* 8(1): 76–87.

Sawyer L, Schmid C, Streule M, et al. (2021) Bypass urbanism: Re-ordering center-periphery relations in Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 53(4): 675–703.

Sitri Z and Hanzaz M (2016) Pouvoirs et contre-pouvoirs en matière de planification urbaine au Maroc: Pour une nouvelle régulation des pouvoirs de décision. *Revue Internationale d'Urbanisme - RIURBA* (2): 1–26.

Van Noorloos F and Kloosterboer M (2018) Africa's new cities: The contested future of urbanisation. *Urban Studies* 55(6): 1223–1241.

Watson V (2014) African urban fantasies: Dreams or nightmares? *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 215–231.

World Finance (2019) Inspiring a tourism revolution in Morocco. *World Finance*, 6 March. Available at: <https://www.worldfinance.com/wealth-management/inspiring-a-tourism-revolution-in-morocco> (accessed 25 November 2019).

Zemni S and Bogaert K (2011) Urban renewal and social development in Morocco in an age of neoliberal government. *Review of African Political Economy* 38(129): 403–417.

Preamble to chapter 6

The previous chapter contributes an overview of Morocco's national city-building activities through a critical analysis of new city projects, actors, and the official motives and rationales of the national city-building strategy. It contributes original insights on a country using new city-building as part of a formal strategy of national development, while shedding light on the new actors and forms of state power actualized through new city development as well as prevalent forms of ambiguity and confusion that characterize the kingdom's city-building activities. Through a critical investigation of the national strategy's obscure implementation, the chapter discusses issues of accountability, transparency, and the lack of national coherence of city-building activities, which are associated with the increasingly speculative and opaque practices of an authoritarian and entrepreneurial state that has made an unprecedented commitment to the new city model of development.

The next empirical chapter connects the two previous chapters by investigating how new city-building in Morocco relates to and engages with the new city-building trend on the African continent. While previous chapters investigated how the global city-building trend is materializing on the African continent and through the kingdom's national new city-building strategy, this chapter investigates Morocco's ambitions to become a city-building 'expert' in Africa, through the development and circulation of a uniquely Moroccan model for sustainable urban development on the continent. The chapter examines the case of Zenata Eco-City, a new city project that is fashioned into an urban model for export, and both packaged and circulated by its developers long before the new city's completion. Drawing on in-depth interviews conducted with actors involved in Zenata Eco-City's development in 2016 and 2018, the chapter suggests that the case of Zenata Eco-City represents a form of fast model-making, which challenges assumptions on the inception of urban models within the policy mobilities literature. Through a critical analysis of the urban model's unconventional development process, the chapter explores how authority is constructed for an urban model with no city, and how strategies to package the model for circulation are employed to boost claims surrounding Morocco's new city-building expertise.

Publication status and details

The following thesis chapter was submitted to *Urban Geography*.

Contribution of authors

I am the lead author of this manuscript, which was co-authored with Dr. Sarah Moser. The article is based on my own original research data and analysis. I have contributed 80 percent of the overall work on this manuscript. Individual author contributions are outlined below:

Laurence Côté-Roy (lead author): contribution of original research material, conducted the documentary research and analysis, conceptualization of original draft and argument, writing of original draft, review and editing.

Sarah Moser (second author): support for conceptualization, review of original draft, editing assistance.

Chapter 6: Fast urban model-making: Constructing Moroccan urban expertise through Zenata Eco-City

Abstract

This paper explores Morocco's ambitions to become a city-building 'expert' in Africa through a critical analysis of Zenata Eco-City, a new city project that has become an urban model for export. Introduced in 2006 as part of Morocco's national new city-building strategy, Zenata Eco-City is being built in the greater Casablanca area. Despite being in early stages of construction, builders of Zenata Eco-City enthusiastically promote the future city as an urban model for Africa, and have begun to export it long before the project's completion. Building on urban policy mobilities literature and research on emergent new city models, we examine Zenata Eco-City as an example of what we term 'fast model-making', and critically analyze how authority is constructed for a model based on ideas and aspirations rather than on a completed city. We explore the extensive process of policy research and 'learning' used to create and legitimize the model and investigate how promotional strategies to export it produce narratives about the city's success and the expertise of its developers. We conclude by discussing how Zenata Eco-City's fast urban model-making raises concerns surrounding the circulation of expertise without content.

Keywords: policy mobilities; urban models; fast policy; new cities; Morocco; policy learning; legitimization; urban expertise

6.1 Introduction

Since Mohammed VI's accession to the throne in 1999, initiatives to boost Morocco's economic competitiveness have largely been concentrated in the kingdom's cities, viewed as key spaces of intervention in the global race to attract foreign direct investment (Kanai and Kutz, 2011; Zemni and Bogaert, 2011). Actions to improve Morocco's cities have increasingly taken the form of large-scale "prestige" urban mega-projects such as tourism infrastructure, commercial developments, new marinas (Barthel and Planel, 2010), and, more recently, new cities built from scratch. Since 2004, the Kingdom of Morocco has been engaged in vast new city-building activities, including through the ambitious state-led "Villes Nouvelles" (new cities) strategy, introduced to address challenges related to rapid urbanization, housing shortages, and to support economic and industrial development across the country. With 19 new city projects currently underway, Morocco is among the most active countries in the world building new cities from scratch after China (Côté-Roy and Moser, forthcoming).

Morocco's new city-building is part of a global trend in which over 150 wholly new cities have been erected in 40 countries since the late 1990s, primarily as strategies to "leapfrog" national development and bolster economic growth (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). Conceptualized as a form of "fast urbanism", new master-planned "instant" cities embody ambitions for "fast" development and are legitimized as rapid fixes to contemporary urban crises, through expedited construction processes and modes of regulation (Datta, 2017). Globally, the proliferation of these new city projects is increasingly facilitated by emergent South-South networks of urban expertise and the rise of (new) city models and ideas actively circulated by policy actors to policymakers and political elites in emerging economies (Moser, 2019). In the context of the rapidly expanding new city-building trend across African countries (Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014), and Morocco's current economic and diplomatic pivot to Africa (Moisseron and Daguzan, 2017; Royaume du Maroc, 2015), the kingdom has been progressively asserting its expertise in new city building in Africa, positioning itself as a new node in the transnational circulation of new city models and ideas on the continent (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). This claimed expertise can be seen in the increasing circulation of Moroccan urban knowledge and the establishment of partnerships to construct new cities in various African states over the past several years. More recently, national institutional city-building actors have explicitly expressed ambitions for Morocco to become a new city-building "leader" and urban "innovator" on the continent through the decision to fashion Zenata Eco-City as a uniquely Moroccan model for African sustainable urban development.

Launched in 2006 as part of Morocco's national city-building strategy, Zenata Eco-City is a wholly new city presently under construction in the greater Casablanca area. Officially declared a "public utility project" by royal decree in 2006 (SAZ, 2013a), the new city embodies Morocco's ambitions for national development, and is part of broader state-led initiatives to reposition the kingdom as a rising economic actor on the global stage and on the African continent. Despite being in the early stages of construction, Zenata's developers claim to have "cracked the code" of new city development and are actively promoting the project as an exportable model.

This paper investigates the promotion of Morocco's city-building expertise, and the kingdom's participation in broader networks of urban knowledge exchanges through a critical analysis of Zenata Eco-City, and its unique progression to becoming a replicable model for

export long before the city is built. Drawing on and contributing to urban policy mobilities literature and expanding research on the global city-building trend and the rise of new city models, this paper suggests that the case of Zenata Eco-City represents an example of what we term “fast urban model-making”, in which the new city’s official role as an exportable model is detached from the city’s (un)built reality. Unlike other urban models circulating globally that are preceded by actually existing “originary” cities (Ong, 2011: 14) and widely acknowledged “success stories” on their urban transformation or policies (Kennedy, 2016; McCann, 2013; Ward, 2006), the Zenata Eco-City model is being developed, packaged, and circulated well before substantial progress has been made on the project.

This paper critically analyzes *how* Zenata Eco-City is constructed as a new city model promoting Moroccan city-building expertise, in a way that can be characterized as leapfrogging over the city’s implementation. We investigate the strategic vision behind a new urban model intended for the African market, and how it aligns with Morocco’s national development ambitions and interests on the African continent. We unpack the various discursive, material, and performative strategies (McCann, 2008; McCann, 2011) that reify Zenata Eco-City as a model and aid in its circulation. In doing so, we draw attention to how legitimacy and authority are constructed for a fast urban model developed without a city.

This analysis is informed by site visits to the new city and its development offices, as well as nine semi-structured interviews conducted by the first author in 2016 and 2018 with elite actors involved in the city’s development. The actors interviewed, including the city’s CEO, marketing director, financing partners, urban planners, and architects, represent the agents engaged in forms of knowledge exchanges, policy learning, and idea circulations supporting the assemblage of Zenata as an exportable model. This paper also draws on official material including websites⁴⁶ and social media publications, press releases, and public relations documents, as well as marketing and advertising campaigns, all of which present the city project’s vision and constitute the platforms through which the project’s modeling ambitions are enacted.

This article is structured in five sections. First, we provide an overview of scholarship on the global circulation of urban models and emergent research on rising nodes in the transnational

⁴⁶ Since writing this manuscript, the new city’s official website, which informs a part of this analysis, has been taken down and replaced by a new version.

circulation of new city plans and ideas to situate Zenata Eco-City as an example of fast model-making. Second, we contextualize the ambition to develop Zenata Eco-City into an urban model for Africa as a strategic venture that aligns with the kingdom's politico-economic interests on the African continent. Third, we explore the unique process through which Zenata Eco-City is conceived and legitimized as an urban model well ahead of the city's completion. We retrace the urban antecedents and extensive process of policy research and "learning" (Temenos and McCann, 2012) that Zenata's developers present as legitimation for their urban model, and we analyze how the new model is being packaged for circulation through "urban policy artifacts" (Pow, 2014: 289) that construct the project's success and validate the "expertise" of its developers. Fourth, we reflect on the implications and risks of Zenata's fast model-making strategy and the circulation of expertise without content. We conclude by raising further questions surrounding the fate of Zenata's fast model in the context of global circulations of urban policy and suggest that this is not an isolated case of fast model-making in Africa.

6.2 Models in motion: Mobile policies, urban modelling, and emergent new city models

Practices of urban modeling, the circulation of city models, and instances of urban emulation have been explored through the expansive urban policy mobilities and assemblages literature in urban studies and geography. This rapidly expanding body of research focuses on how, why, and with what effects urban policies, models, and planning ideas are mobilized globally and (re)shaped through various local and international actors and instances of circulation (McCann, 2011a). Among analyses of contemporary urban policy circulation, scholars have outlined how a small subset of cities globally acquire a model status and become widely perceived as successful examples of urban development that are emulated and adapted in a variety of contexts (González, 2011; Peck and Theodore, 2010). Cities such as Bilbao, Barcelona (González, 2011), and Vancouver (McCann, 2008, 2013) have been materially and discursively constructed as "models of best practice in urban development" (Kennedy, 2016: 103), and their urban innovations, detached from the original city and packaged into a set of best practices and recommendations, are widely circulated and exported to aspiring cities around the world (Ong, 2011).

Fueled by "fast policy" and the high demand for "best practices" and "policies that work" among cities competing for investment (Peck and Theodore, 2015), cities discursively

constructed as models represent key resources for policymaking and urban development, whereby the process of urban modeling “sets a symbolic watermark of urban aspirations on the one hand, and provides achievable blueprints for urban renovations on the other” (Ong, 2011: 14). The process by which some cities become constructed as desirable and achievable urban antecedents or models and circulate internationally is eminently political and highly uneven (Bunnell, 2015a; McCann, 2013; Ward, 2006), favoring cities, historically located in the Global North, which have the resources to be influential within transnational networks of urban policy knowledge (McCann, 2013). By embodying purportedly “successful” forms or urban interventions, urban models have an “ordering capacity” (Temenos and McCann, 2012: 1399) that effectively situate cities within a “global matrix of comparisons” (McCann et al., 2013: 582), forming a hierarchy between cities that are “exporters” of urban policy and ideas and those that are “importers” (Khirfan et al., 2013; Peck and Theodore, 2010; Robinson, 2006).

In recent years, researchers have unsettled longstanding assumptions on the “North-South” directionality of urban policy exchanges within urban studies literature by outlining the growing importance of “South-South” policy circulations, and the emergence of influential new centers of urban innovation beyond Euro-America (Bunnell, 2015a; Harrison, 2015; Moser, 2019). Growing attention has been devoted to new points of reference for urban development originating in emerging economies, viewed as more politically aligned and achievable templates for rapidly urbanizing regions of the Global South (Bunnell, 2015a; McCann et al., 2013; Pow, 2014). For example, significant attention has been devoted to the “ascendancy of Asian powerhouses, from the Gulf States to India and China” (McCann et al., 2013: 585) and to their circulation of urban models within and beyond Asia. Among these, much attention has been devoted to analyzing the construction of the “self-stylized” Singapore model (Pow, 2014: 288) and its various delineations and interpretations (Shatkin, 2014), and to the actors, activities, and investments involved in the commodification, packaging, and dissemination of the city-state’s urban (among others) expertise through a lucrative consulting industry (Huat, 2011).

More recently, burgeoning scholarship on the global new master-planned city-building trend has similarly highlighted how a handful of countries not historically considered as points of reference for urban planning innovation are involved in new city-building ventures, and how the builders of these projects are positioning themselves as “leaders” in city development. These emergent actors are now actively circulating new city-building models, ideas, and expertise

globally (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). Saudi Arabia has, for example, actively promoted its expertise in master-planned city building based on its development of four new “economic” cities (Moser, 2019), while South Korea has invested in the export of a new “ubiquitous-eco-city” model based on Songdo and other urban mega-developments (Park et al., 2020). A number of new city projects are also being developed as prototypes with ambitions of mass-replication if the original development is successful. This is the case in Rawabi, the new city currently under development in Palestine, which is considered as a new model for urban residential development and entrepreneurship to be replicated across the West Bank (Tayeb, 2019). Lavasa, a failed private master-planned city in India was also initially intended to become a “replicable model” for other future urban development in India and beyond (Parikh, 2015).

The ambition to fashion Zenata Eco-City into a model for export exemplifies trends in rising South-South networks of urban expertise and the emergence of new nodes for the circulation of new city models and ideas. However, the construction of Zenata’s model also disrupts the expected steps and sequencing involved in the development and circulation of urban models globally. Scholars of policy mobilities emphasize that urban models are relational constructions, and a city’s ability to become a model is dependent upon external appreciation and validation of its urban innovations and success (Hoffmann, 2011; Kennedy, 2016; McCann et al., 2013; Ward, 2006). As Hoffmann argues (2011: 57), “urban modeling requires both that a model exists – that is, that a place presents itself as a model – and that other places turn to this site as an example to follow”. As a “self stylized” (Pow, 2014: 288) urban model without an existing originary city, pre-emptively developed and packaged for circulation ahead of the new city’s construction, we suggest that the Zenata Eco-City model represents an example of fast model-making, which we conceptualize as one more expression of trends in “fast urbanism” fueling new master-planned city development in the Global South (Datta, 2017).

6.3 A Moroccan eco-city: Zenata’s national goals and global modeling ambitions

Zenata Eco-City is one of Morocco’s largest and most high-profile new city ventures currently under development as part of the national Villes Nouvelles strategy. Upon completion, the new city is to have 300,000 residents and will span 18.3 square kilometers along the Atlantic coast near the established city of Mohammedia in the greater Casablanca area. The project is overseen by the privately managed CDG Développement Holding (CDG Dev), through the

Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ), an ad hoc subsidiary created in 2006 to manage the new city's development, and is financed through a combination of national and international funds including from the French Development Agency (AFD), the Bank of European Investment (BEI), and the European Union (EU).

Like other new city projects underway in Morocco, Zenata Eco-City was envisioned to provide a solution to mounting urban challenges. Regionally, the new city is meant to resolve the persistent socio-economic imbalance between the eastern and western part of the greater Casablanca area (Agence Urbaine de Casablanca, 2015), and to cater to the needs of Morocco's expanding middle class with affordable housing options and the creation of 100 000 jobs. Promoted as a "land of opportunities", Zenata markets itself as a modern and dynamic service-based city developed on a human scale and inspired by the three pillars of sustainable development (SAZ, 2013a). The new city's vision has been enthusiastically referred to as a "small revolution in Morocco" by its developers (Zenata Eco-City's CEO interviewed in Kadiri, 2017). The approved masterplan, developed in collaboration with award-winning French urban planning and architecture firm Reichen & Robert (<https://www.reichen-robert.fr/en>), features "wind corridors", extensive vegetation and park networks to cool the city down in the summer, over 13 kilometers of pedestrian walkways, as well as climate-adapted architecture with water-saving measures throughout the city (Agence Urbaine de Casablanca, 2015; SAZ et al., 2013).

Officially launched in 2006, construction started in 2012 (SAZ, 2013a), and during site visits conducted in 2016 and 2018, large tracts of land were still under acquisition⁴⁷ and the new city's landscape was still dominated by empty building sites.⁴⁸ While construction has progressed since 2018, particularly with the launch of real estate developments by private partners, and although the city has welcomed a small number of pioneering residents,⁴⁹ the project is still very much under development and is far from being a fully functioning city, according to its own developers.

⁴⁷ Enabled through the project's public interest status, expropriations started in 2008 and are ongoing along the coastline area and across the over 20 informal housing settlements that will be cleared to make way for the new city (SAZ, 2013a).

⁴⁸ In 2018, built components of the city included: the primary motorway access and large arteries of the city's road network, the brand-new Ikea store, phase 1 of the Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood for informal resident relocation, and main sewerage, electricity, and drinking water networks.

⁴⁹ Current residents of the new city under construction (approximately 300 households) are residing in phase 1 of the Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood.

Despite the fact that the city is still under construction, in interviews, media statements, and official and promotional documentation, Zenata's builders, refer to the new city as an "innovative eco-city model" (SAZ, 2013a: 12), an "adaptable model for countries of the South" (SAZ, n.d.), and an "innovative sustainable city model for Africa" (Aujourd'hui le Maroc, 2016). During an interview, Zenata Eco-City's Director of Development further clarified the new city project's ambitions: "We want to make Zenata an exportable model for Africa, for similar countries and contexts" (interview, Mohammedia, 26 August 2016). While Zenata's CEO specified during interviews that he wants to "ensure that the eco-city project is a project with an international positioning and visibility" (interview, Mohammedia, 1 August 2016), objectives for the circulation of the Zenata Eco-City model are largely focused on the African continent, which represents a strategic market into which Morocco has been expanding its investments and interests over the past two decades.

6.3.1 Zenata as model: A strategic venture for Morocco

Zenata Eco-City's promotion as an urban model for Africa and the ambitions for its circulation on the continent should be interpreted as an entrepreneurial and politically strategic venture, contextualized in Morocco's recent pivot to Africa. Under King Mohammed VI's leadership the Moroccan state has strengthened political and economic ties with the rest of the continent (Moisseron and Daguzan, 2017; Royaume du Maroc, 2015), promoting policies that will foster new economic partnerships, and new means of cooperation with African nations (Royaume du Maroc, 2017). With the ambition of becoming a major investor on the African continent, the kingdom has been lobbying several African monetary organizations, resulting in its recent acceptance into the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2017, and a successful reintegration into the African Union the same year (Moisseron and Daguzan, 2017). Morocco's increased engagement on the continent is also exemplified through the kingdom's religious diplomacy across several Muslim African states (Baylocq and Hlaoua, 2016), and forms of development assistance and infrastructure gifts extended to African nations, such as Tanzania's new football stadium (Doba, 2017) and the construction or refurbishment of mosques in Mali, Guinea, Senegal, and Benin (Baylocq and Hlaoua, 2016; Moisseron and Daguzan, 2017).

Over the past several years, the kingdom has also provided urban development assistance to a number of African states engaged in urban revitalization and new city construction. Promoting Morocco's city-building expertise, several private and state-affiliated urban development and real estate companies including Zenata's parent company, CDG Dev, have expanded their activities to emerging African markets and are presently involved in a number of urban development ventures beyond Morocco. In support of the kingdom's attempt to claim a more prominent role on the African continent, Morocco has been circulating urban development expertise and establishing partnerships for the construction of new cities in Africa, including in Diamniadio (Senegal) and Akwaba City (Ivory Coast), where Moroccan company Alliances has contracts to build significant portions of the planned projects (N.A., 2014; Tali, 2014). King Mohammed VI also announced Morocco's involvement in the construction of Ramciel, South Sudan's new master-planned capital, through state-affiliated developer Al Omrane, a central institutional actor responsible for building new cities in the kingdom (Global Construction Review, 2017).

As a new master-planned project envisioned and branded as a model for urban development in Africa, Zenata Eco-City explicitly promotes Morocco's city-building expertise across the continent. Supporting the idea that there is "an intrinsic politics to the policy transfer process, which is rarely, if ever, just about transferring policy knowledge and technology from A to B" (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 169), several actors involved in the Zenata Eco-City project interviewed emphasized that the new city's modelling ambitions are motivated by and wholly reflect King Mohammed VI's and the Moroccan state's diplomatic cooperation policy based on strengthening ties in Africa.

Beyond the strategic alignment with Morocco's diplomacy on the continent, Zenata's developers also view the creation and circulation of a new urban model in Africa as a business opportunity that could position Morocco as a leading urban innovator in Africa. More specifically, Zenata's developers hope that their urban model will fill a void in the market for urban policy ideas by introducing a model that is specifically tailored to the context of emerging African economies by proposing a purportedly more achievable urban development option than globally circulating models originating from countries with strong economies. Zenata Eco-City's Director of Development specifies the market strategy for Zenata's model:

we are positioning ourselves as a model for emerging economies. Singapore is a model for developed countries... for rich countries. I think there is an opportunity to grab. In Latin America, ...in Colombia, they are doing extraordinary things, but they are not positioning themselves like that [an exportable model] yet... (interview, Mohammedia, 26 August 2016)

Through the creation of a new eco-city model intended for African economies, Zenata's developers are strategically capitalizing on the existence of pre-constituted markets for particular urban ideas to increase the model's appeal and to profitably mobilize it (Peck and Theodore, 2010). The idea for Zenata's eco-city model in this sense adheres to the globalization of sustainable urban development ideals and rising demand for "green" and "eco" urban solutions and plans worldwide (Rapoport, 2015), while also responding to the growing popularity of ex nihilo city development across the African continent in recent years, which is increasingly normalized as a strategy of development (Watson, 2014). Branded as urban expertise effectively developed "for Africa by Africa", the Zenata Eco-City model also presents a seductive proposition for increased urban knowledge exchanges and urban policy circulations among African nations in an era of reinvigorated Pan-African nationalism and widespread narratives on Africa's rise (Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019).

6.4 Making a model before a city: Unpacking Zenata's model-making strategies

The unconventional fashioning of Zenata into an urban model before the city is built bypasses the stage of implementation and experimentation of the model's core city-building principles and ideas, and raises questions surrounding how Zenata's urban model is envisioned, how it was developed, and how legitimacy and authority are constructed for an urban model without a city. In this section, we turn to these questions, by investigating the process of active policy research involved in the making of the Zenata Eco-City model, and the strategies deployed to package the model for circulation.

6.4.1 Zenata Eco-City's model as a "veritable invention" and policy learning as legitimization

In order to develop plans and a vision for the new city, Zenata's developers carried out a process of active policy "research", which was key in paving the way for the construction of the new city as a model. Zenata's model in this sense represents a "veritable invention", defined by

McCann (2011b: 145) as “purposive assemblages of parts of here and elsewhere that both shape and serve certain purposes at certain times”. Adopting the role of “policy entrepreneurs” (McCann, 2008: 9), Zenata’s developers spent several years engaging with international policy actors, searching global policy landscapes for best practices and inspiring urban models and innovations (McCann, 2013; Peck and Tickell, 2002) to inform the project’s concept and plans. Management has branded this extensive process of policy research and the mobilization and “learning” of international expertise as a key pillar of Zenata’s “eco-design approach” (*démarche d’éco-conception*), promoted on the project’s official promotional platforms (SAZ, 2013b). Beyond representing a “practical” resource (Temenos and McCann, 2012) for the assemblage of Zenata Eco-City’s plans and urban vision, we suggest that the forms of policy research, and more specifically the process and outcomes of policy “learning” (McFarlane, 2011; Temenos and McCann, 2012), are employed as a political resource by Zenata’s developers to build legitimacy for the new city’s promoted model in the absence of evidence and experience-based narratives about the city’s success.

Among the various forms of policy research carried out (Table 6.1), Zenata’s developers engaged in extensive policy tourism (González, 2011), attending numerous organized urban study tours to draw inspiration and gather information on other cities’ successes and best practices in areas of relevance to Zenata’s own urban concept and vision. Beyond visits to older generations of new cities, including several postwar new towns in England and France, Zenata’s developers visited several European and Scandinavian cities and eco-neighborhoods to gain insights into technical planning aspects including water and waste management and landscape design. The organization of these study tours, and the subsequent creation of formal knowledge-sharing partnerships with European organizations, was significantly shaped by the city’s primary financing partner, the French Development Agency (AFD), which represents an important “informational infrastructure” that “mediates urban policy mobilities and constructs global spaces of comparison and commensurability” (McCann, 2011a: 119). Beyond financing development initiatives, the AFD’s mission is to “promote exchanges of experience and expertise on themes such as sustainable cities, mobility, and eco-neighborhoods” (interview, Rabat, 7 November 2018), which the agency fulfilled by connecting Zenata’s developers to their own network of international, mostly European, experts.

Table 6.1.

Forms of policy research carried out to assemble the Zenata Eco-City project and model

Policy tourism and fact-finding trips	Europe: Spain (Barcelona); France (Montpellier, Nice, île Seguin Rives de Seine)
	Scandinavia: Denmark (Copenhagen); Sweden (Malmeu)
	Asia: India (Chandigarh); South Korea (Songdo); Singapore; Hong Kong; Malaysia (Iskandar Malaysia)
	Latin America: Brazil (Brasilia)
International conferences and mobility events	Ecocity World Summit (Nantes, France, 2013)
	<i>Conférence annuelle du Réseau des Opérateurs et Aménageurs de la Ville Durable en Méditerranée</i> - Annual conference of the Network of Sustainable Mediterranean Operators and Planners (Marseilles, France, 2015)
	<i>Colloque Transformation Numérique des Territoires</i> - Digital Transformation of Territories Symposium (Casablanca, Morocco, 2015)
	Smart City Expo Casablanca (Casablanca, Morocco, 2016)
Partnerships for knowledge exchange	Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA), Iskandar Special Economic Zone, Malaysia
	Smart Region Région Sud, Provence-Alpes-Côte-D'Azur region, France
	Agence Française de Développement (AFD), France
World 'experts' and project advisors	Jan Dictus: GOJA Consulting for Environment and Sustainable Development, Austria
	Alfonso Vegara: Founder and President of Fundación Metrópoli, Spain
Global planning and business consultancies	Boston Consulting Group (BCG), management consulting: Benchmarking, strategic market study, definition of project vision, and development strategy
	Reichen et Robert & associés (RR&A), architecture and planning firm: Zenata Eco-City Masterplan and first phase of project
	McKinsey & Co, management consulting: Benchmarking, strategic market study
	CBRE Group, real estate services consulting: Market study to define middle-class concept for hotels, offices, and residential developments
	Roland Berger, management consulting: Benchmarking, strategic market study, development concept for the new city's healthcare pole
	Landor, brand consulting and design: Urban and territorial branding study, development of city's visual identity and logo

Source: interviews and document research conducted by first author

The sites that Zenata's developers visited also reflect the rise in importance of South-South networks of policy circulation documented in scholarship, in which Asian cities in particular were presented as influential antecedents guiding the project's strategic vision and modeling ambitions. While Zenata's developers studied Singapore as an inspirational case of an established "living eco-city" and employed it as a useful reference for Zenata's similar ambitions to export their urban model, they also singled out Malaysia's ambitious urban mega-developments as a more relatable urban antecedent for their own new city plans. Viewed as a successful example of urban development pioneered by an emerging economy, Zenata's developers were particularly interested in Iskandar Malaysia's Medini City, a new mega-development within the Iskandar Special Economic Zone that includes similar activity clusters as those envisioned for Zenata Eco-City. Following study tours in the region, Zenata's developers also struck a formal knowledge-sharing partnership with the Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA), the federal agency developing Iskandar Malaysia, in 2016.

Zenata's developers also carried out policy research activities with the involvement of global urban planning and business consultancies. Sometimes referred to as members of the global intelligence corps (GIC), these international consulting firms are increasingly viewed as important agents of policy circulation worldwide (Rapoport, 2015), and key forces shaping urban agendas and development plans, including through the promotion of new city building as a development strategy (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). Zenata's developers sought out the expertise of global firms including the Boston Consulting Group, Laurent Berger, Landor, CBRE Group, and McKinsey and Company, many of which are involved in other new master-planned city ventures worldwide (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019; Watson, 2020), to help benchmark Zenata's ambitions as a new city and further define the city's concept, vision, and brand.

Several individuals affiliated with global consultancies or urban-focused foundations also played more direct and determining roles in the development of Zenata and its early ambitions to become an urban model. Jan Dictus of GOJA consulting is one such global urban "expert" who was often mentioned in interviews for his pivotal role in the development of Zenata's "eco" planning concept and urban model. Now an official advisor for Zenata Eco-City, Dictus became involved in the venture following an unplanned encounter with Zenata's CEO at the EcoCity World Summit in Nantes (France) in 2013, attended by Zenata's developers as part of their

policy research strategy. The EcoCity Summit is an example of a “mobility event” (Clarke, 2012: 27) that gathers international experts, thinkers, and policy actors and functions as a powerful zone of seduction and node through which particular urban visions and plans are circulated (Cook and Ward, 2012; McCann and Ward, 2012a; Moser, 2019). In recounting the deciding meeting, Zenata’s CEO explained that his interaction with Dictus at the conference profoundly shaped the ambitions and vision for Zenata, which he subsequently officially began to conceptualize and promote as an “eco-city”.

Echoing broader findings within urban policy mobilities scholarship, the policy research process behind the development of the Zenata Eco-City project and model reflect the growing prevalence of commodified urban policy and knowledge exchanges and the role of international policy actors and external “expertise” in shaping local urban policies and plans (McCann, 2011a; Peck and Theodore, 2010). However, it is important to consider how this reliance on international expertise is (re)interpreted by Zenata’s developers and used to legitimize Zenata as a model, in a way that foregrounds the development of Moroccan expertise obtained through the work of policy learning.

Despite being primarily on the “receiving end” of international expertise and ideas from elsewhere through this process of policy research, actors involved in Zenata’s development represent themselves as “active” importers of urban knowledge, with a high degree of authority over the policy research process and its desired outcomes (Khirfan et al., 2013). For example, during an interview, Zenata’s CEO emphasized their agency and influence in the city’s development by stating: “you need to be wary of consultants who come with ready-made models and absolutely want to impose them” (interview, Mohammedia, 1 August 2016). Engaged in what they view as a form of “import-led transfer”, where “it is the indigenous acquiring agents who initiate knowledge transfer” and “identify the problem and the relevant knowledge that should be acquired according to their own needs” (Khirfan et al., 2013: 3), Zenata’s developers represent their engagement in policy research and the seeking out of external international knowledge as a process leading to the development of domestic urban expertise:

On projects like this one, we are learning, and if we add up international trips and work with international experts, the know-how is mostly located internationally. But on the other hand, there is a real transfer of skills. I joined the team nine years ago when there were six of us. Today we are more than 50, and these 50 people have really acquired

experience through this contact with multiple experts and multiple studies, and today I think that Zenata has clearly developed an expertise on urbanism and urban strategy. (Director of Development, interview, Mohammedia, 26 August 2016)

Beyond representing a practical resource that was used to develop Zenata's plan and vision, the policy research process and the role of Zenata's developers as active "policy entrepreneurs", are mobilized in boosterist narratives surrounding Zenata's eco-city model. Through such discourses, it is more specifically the policy "learning" process understood as including forms of knowledge mobilization and the "translation", adaptation, and "embedding" of ideas from elsewhere (Cook and Ward, 2012; McFarlane, 2011; Temenos and McCann, 2012) that is used to construct legitimacy for the new city model, which is developed and circulated before the city's material existence. As explained by one member of the city's development team:

Today we have about 10 or 12 years of field expertise, of reflections that were conducted with experts but that were shaped internally, that were absorbed, that were really reappropriated, and we wanted to make them into a coherent whole. We weren't just at the mercy of consultants that worked with the SAZ. And today we have come up with a model that is completely coherent and makes sense for the challenges that we identified. (interview, Zenata Eco-City, 25 September 2018)

This narrative, reflected in promotional documentation and echoed by other members interviewed at the SAZ, the company developing Zenata, evokes policy *learning* rather than grounded experimentation as a basis for the "expertise" of Zenata's developers, and the relevance of their new innovative eco-city model, validated through years of policy research and engagement with globally circulating "best practices".

6.4.2 Packaging the Zenata model for circulation: Enactments of expertise and self-constructed narratives of success

Similar to McCann's (2013: 13–14) observations about the boosterist discourses surrounding Vancouver's policy model, Zenata's developers construct legitimacy for the new eco-city model by presenting it as "an innovative design hybrid" combining various antecedents and "parts of elsewhere" in a novel assemblage presented as "a competitive advantage they can mobilize across wider geographic fields". This is particularly evident in the way Zenata's developers position and promote the project as the first eco-city model for African cities,

inspired by international urban development norms and trends, but specifically adapted to the context of emerging economies (Kadiri, 2017). Unlike Vancouver's model however, in the context of Zenata Eco-City, "parts of elsewhere" are yet to be successfully assembled into a material construction (i.e. a city), but have already been (re)made into another abstraction, an urban model, intended for broader circulation.

In order to enable its circulation ahead of the new city's construction, the Zenata Eco-City model has been "packaged" as an "assemblage of policy artifacts" (Pow, 2014: 287) embodied by two primary components: Zenata's "eco-city framework" (*référentiel éco-cité*) and the "eco-city label" (ECL) certification. These two components represent the essence of the Zenata model and the main ways in which the new city's model-making ambitions are "enacted and materialized" (Pow, 2014: 287) in the absence of a built city to showcase Zenata's touted urban innovations. Zenata's "eco-city framework" is a set of planning, development, and management principles that together make up the vision for the project and represent the foundation of the new city's purported model. This vision is synthesized through six core values of sustainable development: nature, proximity, optimization, flexibility, co-development, and diversity (SAZ, 2017), which provide "an easily digestible appetizer for potential emulators elsewhere" (McCann, 2013: 12). More specifically, the project's website defines Zenata's "eco-city framework" as "a concrete and measurable action plan that allows the steering of the city according to selected indicators throughout the city's life cycle, from planning to the welcoming of first residents" (SAZ, n.d. *author's translation*). The "eco-city framework" is organized around three pillars, 15 themes, over 60 objectives, and more than 150 indicators, all of which facilitate the circulation of Zenata's model by reducing the city to a set of legible, measurable, comparable, and therefore more easily replicable principles and ideas (Temenos and McCann, 2012). This intention was echoed during conversations on Zenata's model with the city's CEO: "Do we want to export it? Is it global? Yes. But to give it a global reality we need to standardize it" (interview, Mohammedia, 1 August 2016).

In addition to the eco-city framework, the Zenata model is given legibility through the development of a new urban planning certification. The HQE-Eco-City Label (ECL) is a new certification and urban development norm for sustainable construction that was jointly developed by the SAZ, Zenata's development company, and French certification agency Cerway, operator of HQE (High Environmental Quality) certification products (<https://www.behqe.com/cerway>).

The new ECL certification is based on Zenata's aforementioned "eco-city framework" and is envisioned as a new planning standard for cities in Morocco and internationally, and is to be administered and promoted by Cerway. According to Zenata's developers, the ECL certification exceeds the sustainability requirements of the HQE Aménagement certification but is inherently more flexible in its modes of application, making it especially appropriate and accessible to cities in emerging economies undergoing transition. As explained by Zenata's CEO, this certification is one of the key ways in which Zenata Eco-City is attempting to position its model internationally:

We don't want to only keep this eco-city framework for Zenata. We want to give it a national and international momentum and allow it to be adapted to other projects. We remain a unique example in the world in that sense, and we hope that the certification will legitimize our international standing for projects of this size. (interview, Mohammedia, 1 August 2016)

Beyond facilitating policy mobility, the ECL certification plays a broader performative role in the legitimization of the new city project and model, and the "expertise" of Zenata's developers. Following the signature of a memorandum of understanding between the SAZ and Cerway in 2015, the new ECL certification was announced to the public in October 2016 during an official ceremony at the COP22 United Nations Climate Conference held in Marrakech. During this highly mediatized event organized by the city's development company, Cerway awarded the new ECL certification to the Zenata Eco-City project, thereby making it the first city in the world to reach this new planning standard, an achievement since proudly promoted across the project's various media platforms and through ad campaigns. This "boosterist event" (McCann, 2013: 12) acutely conveys the dual facets of the ECL certification's performative power, which allows Zenata's developers to build authority for their new city model and validate it through their role as both authors and recipients of the new eco-city certification. On one hand, the new certification presents Zenata Eco-City as the successful antecedent on which this new planning standard is based, repositioning the city's developers as experts on urban sustainability. On the other hand, the attribution of the new ECL certification to the Zenata project by the certification agency also constructs the project's success as an "eco-city" despite the city being under construction and far from finished.

By commodifying the urban innovations of a new city that has yet to materialize, the new ECL certification provides a “veneer of internal coherence as well as a readily identifiable visual marker” (Kennedy, 2016: 104) for the new city’s urban model, facilitating its circulation whilst showcasing the achievement of its developers. As explained by one senior member working at the SAZ development company:

A city, or any element you create needs recognition. And recognition often comes through certifications ... So we set off with the French certification agency and they thought it would be great to create a certification that would bring recognition to the SAZ, but also allow it to export its model. (interview, Zenata Eco-City, 25 September 2018)

As components of Zenata’s “modeling technologies” (Ong, 2011: 15), the eco-city framework and the ECL certification represent “enactments” of Zenata’s urban expertise and means through which Zenata’s aspiring “leaders” of new city development “continuously work to authenticate themselves as experts as well as to authenticate the objects of their expertise” (Carr, 2010: 21) in the absence of a functioning city to support their claims of urban planning innovation.

6.5 Fast urban model-making and expertise without content?

Since the official release of the ECL label in 2016, Zenata’s development company has increased efforts and initiatives to promote the new city model and circulate it through various means, reinforcing their claims of urban expertise. For example, an ambitious media and communications campaign in 2017 specifically promoted the new city as an urban model for Africa through promotional videos and increased press and social media presence (SAZ, 2017). Zenata’s developers have also attended several international conferences to present the new model, including the EcoCity World Summit in 2017, as well as the Climate Chance World Summit held in Agadir (Morocco) in 2017 and Accra (Ghana) in 2019, where Zenata’s developers collaborated on the launch of the African Alliance for Sustainable Urban Development. Members of the Zenata Eco-City planning team are also scheduled to take part in the 28th Africa-France Summit on Sustainable Cities and Regions in Bordeaux (now postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19) as well as the 2021 Innopolis Expo in Paris as part of the steering group on Africa, which includes other new city ventures currently under development across the continent. In 2016, the Zenata Eco-City project was also a finalist for the Innovative Global

South Award, one of the World Smart City Awards given by the Smart City Expo World Congress, demonstrating that the new city is gaining growing attention as the first eco-city in Africa and a model for urban development across the continent.

As an urban model conceived ahead of the “originary city” which informs it, the case of Zenata Eco-City embodies what we have termed fast model-making, which we conceptualize as one more expression of trends in “fast urbanism” that are shaping new master-planned city development in the Global South (Datta, 2017). Zenata Eco-City, which has been under construction for several years already, is not fast in terms of the “rapid production and assembly of urban fabric” (Cugurullo, 2017: 67). However, the city’s anticipatory model-making activities exemplify ambitions for “fast” success and the rapid acquisition of expert status by bypassing steps in urban development processes in order to “leapfrog” to end goals, both characteristics of “fast urbanism” (Datta, 2017). As a fast new city model, the case of Zenata Eco-City suggests a profound “reordering of urban temporality” (Murray, 2017: 34), both in terms of the constitution and circulation of urban models, which challenges a number of assumptions within urban policy mobilities scholarship. First, Zenata’s model presents an unusual case through which the model’s developers, and the new city project itself, take on the simultaneous role of “consumer-emulators” and “producer-innovators” (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 169), highlighting the high degree of fluidity and overlap between two roles frequently conceptualized as chronologically distinct and often mutually exclusive. Second, and related to this point, this dual function is intertwined in the construction of authority for Zenata’s “innovative” urban model, where policy “learning”, rather than experience-based policy ideas or forms of grounded experimentation, is used as a basis for expertise to validate the new model. Third, unlike globally circulating urban models of existing cities like Singapore, Vancouver, Bilbao, or Barcelona, which “only become models when they acquire and articulate ‘outside’ disciples and admirers” (McCann, 2013: 10), Zenata’s eco-city model is solely engineered through self-constructed validation and urban success narratives designed to give the *appearance* of external validation and praise.

Detached from the lessons learned from implementation, the Zenata Eco-City model, despite being informed by selective “best practices” elsewhere, cannot claim to possess “sure-bet”, “quick-fix”, “off-the-shelf”, “policy solutions that work”, which is the appeal of many urban models circulating globally (McCann, 2011a, 2013). Rather, in its current form, the Zenata Eco-City model can best be understood as the promotion of a carefully packaged normative

vision for urban futures, whose function is to “direct attention to certain definitions of problems and legitimate specific types of policy solutions” (Temenos and McCann, 2012: 1389), which in this case are drawing on sustainable urbanism ideals as well as the new city approach to urban development.

In this respect, the normalization of the “new city” and “eco-city” imaginaries through the Zenata Eco-City model, and the declaration of expertise of Zenata’s developers in the absence of a finished city stand out as audacious and premature especially in light of the growing list of new master-planned city “failures”, many of which were promoted as “eco-cities” (Rapoport, 2014). Specifically, the documented and repeated tendency for ambitious projects worldwide to significantly scale back their ambitions or to fall short of or compromise sustainability targets at the stage of implementation (Cugurullo, 2016; Datta, 2017; Rebentisch et al., 2020), raises concerns that the promotion of a new city model not rooted in experimentation amounts to the circulation of a form of “expertise without content”. More grounded critical research on the complexities surrounding the implementation of eco-city projects is needed, since “it is precisely these complexities that we need to understand if the experience of existing projects is to be usefully applied elsewhere” (Rapoport, 2014: 145).

As an urban model with no existing city, the case of Zenata Eco-City is presently reminiscent of other African “urban fantasies” (Watson, 2014), which promote seductive visions of urban futures that are disconnected from local material realities (Watson, 2014, 2020). By avoiding the burden of “proof of concept” surrounding the feasibility of the proposed urban plan, Zenata Eco-City is catering to the global market for urban models and seductive urban ideas and planning principles, rather than materially demonstrating the desirability and feasibility of its touted urban “innovations”. In this context, speed compromises accountability (Cugurullo, 2017) for agenda-setting urban visions based on an untested model.

6.6 Conclusion

As Ward (2006: 70) argues, the “process of ‘making-up’ policy is an acutely political one; there is nothing natural about which policies are constructed as succeeding and those that are regarded as having failed”. This article demonstrates the ways in which this observation is embodied in the Zenata Eco-City project. In this article, we suggest that Zenata exemplifies “fast urban model-making”, in which declarations of urban expertise and narratives of the new city’s

success and innovations are packaged and circulated by leapfrogging over the city's implementation stage. We have shed light on the various strategies deployed by the new city's developers to both construct and legitimize Zenata Eco-City as a model ahead of the new city's materialization, and raised concerns surrounding the circulation of "expertise without content".

Our contributions to the urban policy mobilities literature and emergent research on new city models are threefold. First, our analysis of the Zenata Eco-City case sheds light on the emergence of a new model "off" the conventional "map" (Robinson, 2006) of urban studies that has emerged as a novel node in the transnational circulation of new city-building ideas (Moser, 2019). The promotion of Zenata as an exportable model intended for the African market also draws attention to emergent examples of intra-African urban policy transfers, which are still underexplored in urban studies scholarship. Second, we emphasize the entanglements of urban policy mobilities in "political economic structures and trajectories" (Temenos and Ward, 2018: 68) by contextualizing the development of the Zenata Eco-City model within Morocco's recent pivot to Africa, and suggest that the promotion of a Moroccan city-building expertise is aligned with strategic economic and diplomatic goals of the kingdom on the continent. Third, we identify a new expression of "fast urbanism" in the form of fast urban models, which exemplify expectations for "rapid" recognition of expertise and the elevation to the status of urban "leader" and "innovator" while bypassing the typical steps involved in the development and circulation of urban models.

Despite the extensive efforts of Zenata's developers to transform the project into an exportable model for urban development in Africa, and despite several recent attempts to circulate it beyond the kingdom, many questions remain surrounding the fate of Zenata's fast model. First, it remains to be seen whether the Zenata model will be adopted and how it will be adapted in other contexts. Scholars of urban policy mobilities have emphasized the importance of urban models' symbolic association to specific locations, and often the "right" points of origin to ensure their mobility, where this location crucially "evokes a grounded form of authenticity, implies feasibility, and signals an ideologically palatable origin story" (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 170). In this context, will Zenata's model, detached from an actually existing location and in the absence of "stylized but ground-truthed claims" (Peck and Theodore, 2010: 171) about its origins imbue it with sufficient "license to travel"? (Pow, 2014). Second, in what ways is the model likely to be affected by the city's progressive materialization? As Zenata Eco-City's

claims surrounding the sustainability of the project have already been challenged in the media and by local populations following an illegal dumping of polluted water on site (Senhaji, 2020), could reality catch up with the rhetoric, and discredit the model and attendant claims of city-building expertise promoted by Zenata's developers? Conversely, could the model take on a life of its own, as so many other models have (Bunnell, 2015a; González, 2011), and as such remain impervious to the realities, critiques, and contradictions emanating from its original context of inception?

With the seemingly unrelenting appeal of new cities as a development strategy worldwide, and the steady announcement of more new city ventures across the Global South (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021), there will be opportunities to further assess forms of fast urban model-making in the years to come, as well as the consequences of this phenomenon. Beyond the case of Zenata Eco-City, other recently announced new city projects embody characteristics of fast model-making, demonstrating the relevance of this concept beyond Morocco. In 2018, Akon, an American R&B artist whose parents are from Senegal, announced his intention to construct Akon City, a futuristic smart city, near Dakar's airport. As fantastical as the renderings are and as unlikely the project is to be realized as planned, the Ugandan government has recently invited Akon to build a second Akon City in Uganda. While the original Akon City in Senegal only broke ground in 2020, the Ugandan government has already offered a parcel of land for its own Akon City (Noori Farzan, 2021), demonstrating the presence of forms of fast model-making elsewhere in Africa. Future research surrounding examples of fast model-making within and beyond Morocco will shed light on the variety of actors – government, state, private, and celebrity – involved in fueling the emergence and facilitating the circulation of fast models.

References

Agence Urbaine de Casablanca (2015) *Plan d'Aménagement Secteur Zénata: Rapport Justificatif*. Casablanca: Agence Urbaine de Casablanca.

Aujourd'hui le Maroc (2016) Vers le concept d'une ville durable: L'Eco-Cité Zenata au coeur de la COP22. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 10 November. Available at: <https://aujourd'hui.ma/economie/vers-le-concept-dune-ville-durable-leco-cite-zenata-au-coeur-de-la-cop22> (accessed 24 November 2020).

- Barthel P-A and Planel S (2010) Tanger-Med and Casa-Marina, prestige projects in Morocco: New capitalist frameworks and local context. *Built Environment* 36(2): 176–191.
- Baylocq C and Hlaoua A (2016) Diffuser un « islam du juste milieu » ?, Spreading a “happy medium” Islam ? *Afrique contemporaine* (257): 113–128.
- Bunnell T (2015a) Antecedent cities and inter-referencing effects: Learning from and extending beyond critiques of neoliberalisation. *Urban Studies* 52(11): 1983–2000.
- Bunnell T and Das D (2010) Urban Pulse—A geography of serial seduction: Urban policy transfer from Kuala Lumpur to Hyderabad. *Urban Geography* 31(3): 277–284.
- Carr ES (2010) Enactments of Expertise. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39: 17–32.
- Clarke N (2012) Urban policy mobility, anti-politics, and histories of the transnational municipal movement. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(1): 25–43.
- Cook IR and Ward K (2012) Conferences, informational infrastructures and mobile policies: The process of getting Sweden ‘BID ready’. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19(2): 137–152.
- Côté-Roy L and Moser S (2019) ‘Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?’ The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa. *Urban Studies* 56(12): 2391–2407.
- Côté-Roy L and Moser S (forthcoming) A kingdom of new cities: Morocco’s national Villes Nouvelles strategy.
- Cugurullo F (2016) Urban eco-modernisation and the policy context of new eco-city projects: Where Masdar City fails and why. *Urban Studies* 53(11): 2417–2433.
- Cugurullo F (2017) Speed Kills: Fast urbanism and endangered sustainability in the Masdar City project. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 66–80.
- Datta A (2017) Introduction: Fast cities in an urban age. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 1–27.
- Doba M-A (2017) Le Maroc finance entièrement la construction du stade de Dodoma en Tanzanie. *AfricaNow*, 11 December. Available at: <https://africanow.media/maroc-finance-entierement-construction-stade-de-dodoma-tanzanie/> (accessed 29 July 2020).
- Global Construction Review (2017) Morocco agrees to help South Sudan build new capital city. *Global Construction Review*, 8 February. Available at:

<http://www.globalconstructionreview.com/news/morocco-agrees-help-south-sudan-build-new/> (accessed 23 February 2017).

González S (2011) Bilbao and Barcelona ‘in motion’. How urban regeneration ‘models’ travel and mutate in the global flows of policy tourism. *Urban Studies* 48(7): 1397–1418.

Harrison P (2015) South–south relationships and the transfer of ‘best practice’: The case of Johannesburg, South Africa. *International Development Planning Review* 37(2): 205–223.

Hoffmann L (2011) Urban modeling and contemporary technologies of city-building in China: The production of regimes of green urbanisms. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 55–76.

Huat CB (2011) Singapore as model: Planning innovations, knowledge experts. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 27–54.

Kadiri G (2017) Avec l’éco-cité de Zenata, le Maroc veut créer un modèle pour les villes africaines. *Le Monde*, 29 August. Casablanca. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/08/29/avec-l-eco-cite-de-zenata-le-maroc-veut-creer-un-modele-pour-les-villes-africaines_5178122_3212.html (accessed 18 November 2020).

Kanai M and Kutz W (2011) Entrepreneurialism in the globalising city-region of Tangier, Morocco. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 102(3): 346–360.

Kennedy SM (2016) Urban policy mobilities, argumentation and the case of the model city. *Urban Geography* 37(1): 96–116.

Khirfan L, Momani B and Jaffer Z (2013) Whose authority? Exporting Canadian urban planning expertise to Jordan and Abu Dhabi. *Geoforum* 50: 1–9.

McCann E (2008) Expertise, truth, and urban policy mobilities: Global circuits of knowledge in the development of Vancouver, Canada’s ‘four pillar’ drug strategy. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 40(4): 885–904.

McCann E (2011a) Urban policy mobilities and global circuits of knowledge: Toward a research agenda. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101(1): 107–130.

McCann E (2011b) Veritable inventions: Cities, policies and assemblage. *Area* 43(2): 143–147.

McCann E (2013) Policy boosterism, policy mobilities, and the extrospective city. *Urban Geography* 34(1): 5–29.

McCann E and Ward K (2012a) Assembling urbanism: Following policies and ‘studying through’ the sites and situations of policy making. *Environment and Planning A* 44(1): 42–51.

McCann E, Roy A and Ward K (2013) Assembling/worlding cities. *Urban Geography* 34(5): 581–589.

McFarlane C (2011) The city as a machine for learning. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36(3): 360–376.

Moisseron J-Y and Daguzan J-F (2017) *Les ambitions régionales marocaines en Afrique Sub-saharienne : une diplomatie royale*. Observatoire du monde arabo-musulman et du Sahel, October. Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS). Available at: <https://www.frstrategie.org/programmes/observatoire-du-monde-arabo-musulman-et-du-sahel/les-ambitions-regionales-marocaines-en-afrique-sub-saharienne-une-diplomatie-royale-21> (accessed 26 June 2018).

Moser S (2019) “Two days to shape the future”: A Saudi Arabian node in the transnational circulation of new cities ideas. In: Molotch H and Ponzini D (eds) *The New Arab Urban: Gulf Cities of Wealth, Ambition, and Distress*. New York: NYU Press, pp. 213–232.

Moser S and Côté-Roy L (2021) New cities: Power, profit, and prestige. *Geography Compass* 15(1): 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12549>.

Murray MJ (2017) Frictionless utopias for the contemporary urban age: Large-scale, master-planned redevelopment projects in urbanizing Africa. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 31–53.

N.A. (2014) Lancement à Abidjan du projet Akwaba, du groupe Alliances. *Medias24*, 26 February. Available at: <https://www.medias24.com/ECONOMIE/ECONOMIE/9523-Lancement-a-Abidjan-du-projet-Akwaba-du-groupe-Alliances.html> (accessed 12 November 2020).

Noori Farzan A (2021) Akon hasn’t even built his first ‘futuristic’ city yet, but Uganda is giving him land for a second. *Washington Post*, 6 April. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/04/06/akon-city-uganda/> (accessed 19 May 2021).

Ong A (2011) Introduction: Worlding cities, or the art of being global. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 1–26.

Parikh A (2015) *The Private City: Planning, Property, and Protest in the Making of Lavasa New Town, India*. Doctoral Thesis. London School of Economics and Political Science, London. Available at: http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3203/1/Parikh_The_Private_City.pdf (accessed 10 November 2020).

Park SH, Shin HB and Kang HS (eds) (2020) *Exporting Urban Korea?: Reconsidering the Korean Urban Development Experience*. London: Routledge.

Peck J and Theodore N (2010) Mobilizing policy: Models, methods, and mutations. *Geoforum* 41(2): 169–174.

Peck J and Theodore N (2015) *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft at the Thresholds of Neoliberalism*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Peck J and Tickell A (2002) Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode* 34(3): 380–404.

Pow CP (2014) License to travel. *City* 18(3): 287–306.

Rapoport E (2014) Utopian visions and real estate dreams: The eco-city past, present and future. *Geography Compass* 8(2): 137–149.

Rapoport E (2015) Globalising sustainable urbanism: The role of international masterplanners. *Area* 47(2): 110–115. DOI: 10.1111/area.12079.

Rebentisch H, Thompson C, Côté-Roy L, et al. (2020) Unicorn planning: Lessons from the rise and fall of an American ‘smart’ mega-development. *Cities* 101: 102686. DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2020.102686.

Robinson J (2006) *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development*. Questioning Cities. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Royaume du Maroc (2015) *Relations Maroc-Afrique: L’ambition d’une ‘nouvelle frontière’*. July. Rabat, Morocco: Ministère de l’économie et des finances, Direction des études et des prévisions financières. Available at: [https://www.finances.gov.ma/Publication/depf/2014/Relations%20Maroc-Afrique%20%20L'ambition%20d'une%20nouvelle%20fronti%C3%A8re%20actualisation%20juillet%202015%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.finances.gov.ma/Publication/depf/2014/Relations%20Maroc-Afrique%20%20L'ambition%20d'une%20nouvelle%20fronti%C3%A8re%20actualisation%20juillet%202015%20(2).pdf) (accessed 29 July 2020).

Royaume du Maroc (ed.) (2017) Texte intégral du Discours prononcé par SM le Roi Mohammed VI devant le 28ème sommet de l’Union africaine (UA) à Addis-Abeba. Available at: <http://www.maroc.ma/fr/discours-royaux/texte-integral-du-discours-prononce-par-sm-le-roi-mohammed-vi-devant-le-28eme-sommet> (accessed 29 July 2020).

SAZ - Société d’Aménagement Zenata (2013a) Zenata, a Moroccan eco-city (press folder). Société d’aménagement Zenata, Groupe CDG. Available at: <http://www.zenataecocity.ma/sites/default/files/telechargements/press-kit-en.pdf>.

SAZ - Société d’Aménagement Zenata (2013b) Zenata, Éco-Cité Marocaine: Dossier de Presse. Groupe CDG.

SAZ - Société d’Aménagement Zenata (2017) Éco-Cité Zenata: Dossier de presse. Groupe CDG.

SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata (n.d.) Référentiel Éco-Cité. Available at: <http://www.zenataecocity.ma/une-ville-eco-concue/referentiel-eco-cite> (accessed 18 November 2020).

SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata, Reichen & Robert Associés, Agence Ter, et al. (2013) Zenata une Éco-Cité Casablancaise: Phase II Études de la tranche opérationnelle.

Senhaji M (2020) Eaux usées à Paloma Beach: la Société d'Aménagement Zenata livre sa version des faits. *Le Matin*, 23 May. Available at: <https://lematin.ma/express/2020/eaux-usees-paloma-beach-societe-damenagement-zenata-livre-version-faits/337895.html> (accessed 27 May 2020).

Shatkin G (2014) Reinterpreting the meaning of the 'Singapore model': State capitalism and urban planning. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38(1): 116–137.

Tali K (2014) Pôle urbain de Diamnadio: Alliances exporte son savoir-faire au Sénégal. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 26 May. Available at: <https://aujourd'hui.ma/economie/immobilier/pole-urbain-de-diamnadio-alliances-exporte-son-savoir-faire-au-senegal-110148> (accessed 12 November 2020).

Tayeb S (2019) The Palestinian McCity in the Neoliberal Era. *MERIP-Middle East Research and Information Project*, Spring. Available at: <https://merip.org/2019/07/the-palestinian-mccity-in-the-neoliberal-era/> (accessed 01 April 2021)

Temenos C and McCann E (2012) The local politics of policy mobility: Learning, persuasion, and the production of a municipal sustainability fix. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 44(6): 1389–1406.

Temenos C and Ward K (2018) Examining global urban policy mobilities. In: Harrison J and Hoyler M (eds) *Doing Global Urban Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 66–80.

Van Noorloos F and Kloosterboer M (2018) Africa's new cities: The contested future of urbanisation. *Urban Studies* 55(6): 1223–1241.

Ward K (2006) 'Policies in motion', urban management and state restructuring: The trans-local expansion of business improvement districts. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30(1): 54–75.

Watson V (2014) African urban fantasies: Dreams or nightmares? *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 215–231.

Watson V (2020) Digital visualisation as a new driver of urban change in Africa. *Urban Planning* 5(2): 35–43.

Zemni S and Bogaert K (2011) Urban renewal and social development in Morocco in an age of neoliberal government. *Review of African Political Economy* 38(129): 403–417.

Preamble to chapter 7

The previous chapter explores Morocco's ambitions to become a new city-building 'expert' in Africa by investigating the case of Zenata Eco-City, and its unique construction as an urban model for export ahead of the new city's completion. Conceptualized as a form of fast model-making, the chapter sheds light on the ways in which the model is legitimized through policy 'learning' rather than grounded experimentation, and on how the expertise of its developers is produced and validated through the performative power of the model's accompanying policy artifacts. In doing so, the chapter reflects on the consequences of fast model-making and the risks of circulating expertise without content, and suggests that the concept of fast models has relevance beyond the Moroccan context, to explain similar forms of pre-emptive claims to urban success and expertise in other new city-building ventures.

This final empirical chapter not only proposes a further shift in spatial scales, zooming in on the local scale of new city implementation, but also a shift in perspectives, complementing top-down accounts of new city visions with a bottom-up analysis of their actualization. While previous chapters have primarily foregrounded the views of actors involved in new city development, the purpose of this final chapter is to investigate how new cities are perceived, experienced, and 'lived' by resident populations. The chapter draws on extensive fieldwork and resident interviews conducted in 2018 in three of Morocco's new cities: Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City. It investigates how citizens engage with, question, or reinterpret promised urban futures as they are confronted with their actualization, and probes the prevalent sense of disillusionment among residents in reaction to urban promises that are either unmet in the present or perceived as impossible to achieve.

Publication status and details

The following thesis chapter is under preparation for submission to *International Development and Planning Review*.

I am the sole author of this manuscript.

Chapter 7: Living in a ‘promising machine’: Resident perceptions and experiences in/of Morocco’s new cities

Abstract

This paper addresses the gap in scholarship surrounding the lived dimensions of new city projects that are materializing worldwide through an exploration of the realities of residents living in or variously affected by new master-planned city development in Morocco. Since 2004, Morocco has been engaged in ambitious state-led new city-building activities to address challenges related to rapid urbanisation. 19 new cities are currently built or underway across the kingdom, and many now have a small but growing resident population. Drawing on resident interviews in Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City, and mobilizing Kemmer and Simone’s (2021) conceptualization of cities as ‘promising machines’, this article explores how citizens engage with promised urban futures in the new cities. Despite some differences between the projects investigated, I suggest that residents experience common sources of disillusionment in Morocco’s new cities relating to the perception that new cities lack a sense of urbanity, the unattained visions surrounding inclusivity, and the elusive plans for ordered and ecologically conscious urban development. In doing so, this paper foregrounds pioneering residents’ own wishes, desires, and demands for better urban futures, and contributes a foundation for future research on new city development from a bottom-up perspective.

Keywords

New cities; urban fantasies; urban promises; Morocco; resident perceptions; lived city

7.1 Introduction

‘I would say they sold us a dream’. Karim⁵⁰ gestured to the partially built-up urban landscape and the sidewalks encumbered with various debris that was visible from his living room window in the Marina d’Or neighbourhood of the brand-new city of Tamesna in Morocco. He had moved to the new city four years previously with his wife and young son in the hope of offering his family a better future, which, in his eyes, has yet to materialize: ‘Before, there was everything laid out in the plan... it was wonderful, it was really nice. But the existing city, what you find on the ground, that is something else.’⁵¹ The feeling of disenchantment expressed by Karim throughout our conversations echoes countless other interactions I had with pioneering

⁵⁰ Pseudonyms are used in this article to protect the identities of research participants.

⁵¹ Karim, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/10.

residents of Morocco's new cities and with residents variously affected by their development. Since 2004, the Kingdom of Morocco has been engaged in ambitious new city-building activities as part of a state-led strategy to overcome housing shortages and boost economic development nationally. 19 new city projects are presently underway across the kingdom (Côté-Roy and Moser, forthcoming) and are at varying stages of completion, with many projects now including a small but growing pioneering resident population. Morocco's emerging new cities are part of a global trend in new city construction, in which over 150 new cities have been built in over 40 countries since the late 1990s, concentrated in emerging economies (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021).

Despite the rapid proliferation of new city ventures worldwide, few investigations to date have taken into account the materiality and 'lived' dimensions of such constructions in analyses of their impacts on urban development trends and urban futures (Buire, 2014b; Gastrow, 2017; Kundu, 2017; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). Given that a great number of new cities globally are at early stages of construction or still exist only in the conceptual stage, rapidly expanding scholarship on the global city-building trend tends to investigate new cities through the 'various representations of the imagined city' (Lynch, 2019: 1152), including through their policies, accompanying rhetoric, or through company websites, masterplans, or seductive 3D models and digital visualizations (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Moser et al., 2015; Watson, 2014, 2020). Using the trope of urban 'fantasy', a number of these analyses (see for example Carmody and Owusu, 2016; De Boeck, 2011; Lumumba, 2013; Watson, 2015; Watson and Agbola, 2013) critique the dream-like qualities of ambitious urban 'utopias' that in many ways 'are unlikely to materialize' but where 'the efforts to achieve them will have profound effects on lives and livelihoods' (Watson, 2014: 229). While these analyses contribute key insights into the 'worlding' ambitions (Roy and Ong, 2011) of countries engaged in new city construction, and their frequent disconnect with urban realities of the majority (Moser, 2020; Murray, 2015a; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018), these investigations foreground the views of planners, builders, state actors, and other political or economic elites in shaping new city visions, leaving a gap in urban scholarship both in how such visions materialize, and in how they are experienced by those they affect. As Gastrow (2017: 378) suggests, in these analyses of new cities through the aspirations of their builders, 'the city becomes more fantasy than concrete, leaving the question of what grounded engagements with these projects look like unanswered'.

This paper begins to fill this gap in research by shedding light on the realities of residents living in or variously affected by new city development in the Moroccan context. More specifically, this article aims at ‘fleshing out abstract figures and distant fascination for the extraordinary’ (Buire, 2014b: 291) by contributing insights into how state-promoted aspirations for Morocco’s urban transformation are actually taking form through the kingdom’s new cities, and how residents affected by the new cities’ materialization variously engage with such visions for improved urban futures in everyday life. Drawing on the conceptualization of cities as ‘promising machines’, which are ‘imbued with promises for the future’ (Kemmer and Simone, 2021: 573) that seduce and attract citizens who carry their own urban aspirations, I explore how residents in Morocco’s new cities reconcile their expectations with those promoted by the state, and how they negotiate the gap between the imaginary of the plan and the reality of its implementation (Buire, 2014b; Smith, 2017).

This article primarily draws on research conducted during fieldwork in Morocco between September and December 2018, in three of Morocco’s new cities. During this period, I conducted numerous site visits, and a total of 110 semi-structured and walking interviews with residents living in and around or displaced by the new city’s construction in Tamesna (45), Zenata Eco-City (24), and Benguerir Green City (41). These three new cities, presently at varying stages of completion, are illustrative of the diversity of projects currently underway as part of Morocco’s national city-building strategy.

Despite differences in size, vision, and planning concepts of projects investigated, I suggest that residents’ experiences of Morocco’s new cities reflect common sources of disillusionment surrounding promises and prospects for improved urban futures that are either unmet in the present or perceived as ‘forever out of reach’ (Smith, 2017: 31). Drawing on resident narratives in each city, I critically analyze how residents engage with the dream and reality of new cities in their everyday lives by proposing three shared sources of their disappointment. Specifically, I unpack resident experiences of the projects through their perception of the new cities’ unattained sense of urbanity, unfulfilled prospects for inclusive urban living, and elusive visions for ordered and ecologically conscious urban development. These three themes demonstrate common expectations, anxieties, and grievances relating to new city building across Morocco that are variously represented across the cases analysed, and which

I argue can have broader relevance for understanding resident experiences of new city development beyond the kingdom.

This article is organized into four sections. I begin by giving an overview of the few studies that have examined new city projects from a local or resident perspective and present the conceptualization of cities as ‘promising machines’ that I mobilize in this analysis. Second, I provide background on Morocco’s national city-building activities and the promises and possibilities for better urban futures promoted through Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City. Third, I investigate how these aspirations are challenged and reinterpreted through the daily experiences of local and resident populations, specifically by introducing three themes of analysis that relate to the new cities’ disrupted sense of urbanity, inclusive futures, and ordered and ecologically conscious development. Fourth, I discuss the various responses and (re)actions to the new cities’ as yet unattained promises, and I draw attention to the ways in which sources of disappointment in Morocco’s new cities are intertwined with broader critiques of the state and residents’ related demands to achieve better urban futures in the kingdom. I end with a reflection on the importance and relevance of including a resident perspective in research on the new city-building trend and a call to expand this focus in future research.

This paper contributes to the growing scholarship on the global new city-building phenomenon by providing a foundation for the theorization of new city-building from a bottom-up perspective, and particularly through the views and experiences of resident populations. This article understands residents not as passive recipients of the state’s vision for Morocco’s urban transformation, but as central actors of its actualization. Through voicing their disappointment, residents also powerfully assert their own visions and preferences for urban futures. Following Jazeel (2015: 30), this article’s focus on resident voices aims at centering ‘alternative spatial narratives’ surrounding new city building, ‘providing them with as much legitimacy and visibility’ as the claims surrounding the inevitability and desirability of new master-planned city projects.

7.2 ‘Urban fantasies’ from below

Despite the predominant top-down focus in explorations of new master-planned cities through their promoted plans and the visions of their elite developers, a handful of recent analyses stand out as exceptions, by adopting a bottom-up perspective in their investigation. A

majority of these analyses explore reactions ‘from below’ (Bunnell, 1999; Mouloudi, 2010) to new city projects that have yet to materialize. Among these, scholars investigate the (re)interpretation and appropriation of official discourses on new city development by regular members of the population. For instance, in a recent study on the yet unbuilt Zone for Economic Development and Employment (ZEDE) in Honduras, Lynch (2019: 1148) investigates how local groups engage with and mobilize ‘representations of future urban spaces and future urban governance regimes’, as they assess consequences of new city plans on their daily lives.

Other analyses focus more specifically on the consequences and actions that fill the ‘gap between the urban plan and its implementation’ (Smith, 2017: 31) as local populations await the construction of promoted and circulating new city visions. For example, in a recent investigation of the projected construction of Konza Techno City in Kenya, Van Noorloos and colleagues (2019: 420) demonstrate that the ‘mere announcement of a new city can trigger various forms of direct and indirect exclusion’. In her investigation of the planned redevelopment of Nairobi under the Kenya Vision 2030 Masterplan, Smith (2017: 37) investigates the ‘anticipatory actions’ of individual Nairobians as they engage with the promoted urban imaginaries, including by pre-emptively moving out of the areas slated for transformation in reaction to the prospect of expulsion. Other studies grounded in a similar temporality of anticipation more specifically examine local reactions to new city plans through protests, legal battles, and other forms of resistance, namely employed to contest (rural) land dispossession and displacements. Several of these accounts investigate organized civic action in opposition to planned new city projects in India, including Dholera Smart City (Datta, 2015b), Lavasa (Datta, 2012; Parikh, 2015), and New Town Rajarhat (Kundu, 2017). In contradistinction to the documented dissent and opposition to planned new city developments, other accounts rather demonstrate the strong local support for new city agendas, including by those they are likely to displace. Echoed in similar recent findings by other scholars (Gastrow, 2017; Grant, 2014; Smith, 2017), De Boeck’s (2011: 278) investigation of resident responses to the plans for the lavish *Cité du Fleuve* to be built near Kinshasa suggests that, despite the strong probability of their exclusion, local populations ‘revel as much in this dream of the modern city’ as the ruling elites to which it is catering.

Considerably less research has focused on the embodied experiences of pioneering residents in new cities underway, as they become ‘embedded as a corporeal space’ (Brooker,

2012: 40).⁵² While this topic requires much closer critical attention, a handful of recent studies begin to shed important light on the ways in which pioneering residents inhabit new cities and their spaces, documenting various sources of tension and forms of negotiation as residents navigate feelings of belonging and estrangement in the new cities' built landscape (Brooker, 2012; Buire, 2014b; Gastrow, 2017), and develop new (sub)urban identities (Buire, 2014b). Among these tensions, scholars document the negotiation of planned and intended uses of space in the new cities, and the modifications or 'perforations' introduced by resident populations, as initial masterplans are 'ruptured, altered, tweaked and constantly redrawn' through the uses and demands of new city pioneers (Kundu, 2017: 125). Recent analyses also draw attention to the ways in which the new cities' urban aesthetics can represent 'an unstable ground for both complicity and dissent' (Gastrow, 2017: 379) as pioneering residents react to and (re)interpret the new cities' urban landscapes and built forms. For example, through an exploration of resident experiences in Cyberjaya (Malaysia), Brooker (2012: 49), demonstrates that the new city's overly planned and sanitized aesthetic was a deterring factor in the attraction of the targeted resident population, who in many cases opted to live in the more vibrant neighbouring Kuala Lumpur and commute daily to the 'intelligent city' intended as a 'live/work paradise for engineers, and scientists'. In an analysis of the new city of Kilamba (Angola), Gastrow (2017) demonstrates how the pioneering residents' rejection of the new city's 'foreign' materials and design is more broadly connected to political contestation and critiques of the national government itself, and what residents perceive as illegitimate alliances with international capital, particularly the Chinese developers, involved in the city's construction. In her analysis of the same new city, Buire (2014b) sheds light on another form of tension playing out in the new city's built space, in this context between the residents' urban imaginaries and the state endorsed vision for urban futures, embodied by conflicting attempts by the state and residents to discipline urban behaviours in the new cities.

In this article, I expand on this burgeoning focus on bottom-up perspectives of those living in new cities. I shed light on the yet unexplored realities of residents living in or variously affected by new city development in the Moroccan context, and explore similar tensions and

⁵² The most in-depth accounts of residents' lives in a new city are based on previous-generation new city projects, including ethnographic investigations of the Disney-built new town of Celebration in Florida (Ross, 1999), the master-planned community of Levittown, New Jersey (Gans, [1967] 2017), or Brazil's master-planned capital, Brasilia (Holston, 1989).

negotiations enacted in the spaces of materializing new cities and through residents' quotidian reality. I mobilize Kemmer and Simone's (2021: 573) conceptualization of cities as 'promising machines' to critically analyze how citizens engage with, challenge, or reinterpret promised urban futures in Morocco's new cities as they encounter their (im)materialization in the present. While Kemmer and Simone (2021: 574) developed this conceptualization to discuss the existing cities of Jakarta and Rio, I suggest that new master-planned cities represent even more powerful examples of the ways in which cities are 'always holding out prospects for better lives, always attempting to guarantee that things will not remain the same and that whatever changes do ensue are for the better'. Developed from scratch, and detached from the 'messiness' and challenges of existing urban environments (Murray, 2015a), new master-planned cities in Morocco and elsewhere embody the seductive prospect of wholly new urban realities, the promise of a fresh start for their residents, and possibilities for more prosperous days to come through improved living environments and economic opportunities (Datta, 2017; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). Following Buire (2014b: 291), I explore how these visions and promises for urban futures are constituted through and 'oscillate between, on the one hand, expectations of the state and dreams of the inhabitants, and, on the other hand, between these plans and the reality'.

Drawing on resident narratives, this paper examines the ways in which the materiality of new cities rarely matches up with the seductive dreams and visions generated by these new master-planned 'promising machines'. Taking disappointment as a starting point in the exploration of resident perceptions and experiences of Morocco's new cities, this paper develops three themes of analysis that convey shared sources of discontent across projects analyzed. By additionally investigating the various responses to unfulfilled prospects in Morocco's new cities, this paper more broadly responds to Kemmer and Simone's (2021: 586) call for more research into 'how failed promises live on and which acts of anticipation they generate'. Without suggesting that the experiences of residents interviewed in Morocco's new cities are generalizable to all new city projects within and beyond the kingdom, this article nevertheless argues that the broader themes of analysis developed herein to discuss Morocco's new cities represent a helpful starting point to investigate resident experiences in other new city projects worldwide. While grounded in specific local contexts, these themes evoke broader forces and phenomena shaping the global city-building trend.

7.3 Prospects, promises, and possibilities of Morocco's new cities

The creation of new cities and satellite cities also aims at decongesting cities and their centers, which are constantly growing (...) to contribute to the emancipation of citizens, to boost and promote investment and generate new wealth, to encourage tourism, and finally to solve the problems of employment and housing, which are main concerns of the government.

(Abdelhaï Bousfiha, Secretary general, National Housing and Urban planning Council)⁵³

The year 2004 marked the beginning of nationwide new city construction in Morocco, when the state first announced several new city projects. The state-led 'Villes Nouvelles' (New Cities) strategy, spearheaded by Morocco's Ministry of Habitat and Urban Planning (MHU), initially outlined the development of over a dozen brand-new cities across the kingdom to manage the kingdom's urbanization and boost national economic growth. Since the introduction of the national Villes Nouvelles strategy, construction has begun on 19 new cities of different sizes and driving concepts (Côté-Roy and Moser, forthcoming). As demonstrated by the words of Abdelhaï Bousfiha cited above, the objectives pursued through Morocco's national city-building strategy are ambitious and far-reaching, outlining not just a novel 'prospective' approach for more 'rational' territorial development (Adidi, 2011; Harroud, 2017b), and a technical solution to chronic housing deficits and uncontrolled urban expansion, but also a strategy of national development rooted in ambitions to provide more prosperous futures for the kingdom's population. From the outset, the official discourse surrounding Morocco's national city-building initiative outlined a strategy for national improvement, intended to benefit the nation overall, a narrative further supported by the state's widespread mobilization of public land to develop the cities (Harroud, 2017b; Rousseau and Harroud, 2019), and the declaration of some new city projects' 'public utility' (Law 7-81), which allowed the state to conduct expropriations.

As three of the most mediatized, largest, and furthest along projects currently underway in Morocco, Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City and Benguerir Green City, reflect the ambitions of the national city-building strategy and are illustrative of the diversity of projects it encompasses (Table 7.1). Tamesna is among the first new city projects erected in Morocco, and is being developed by the Al Omrane Group, a parastatal agency in charge of implementing the state's vision in housing development. As of 2018, it counted approximately 45,000 residents out of a

⁵³ Cited in 'Villes nouvelles et villes satellites' (MHU, 2004: 24).

projected population of 250,000. Developed near the nation's capital, the new city primarily aims to relieve demographic pressure on Rabat by facilitating access to subsidized housing for the urban poor and by offering affordable opportunities for home ownership to the rising middle class.

Table 7.1

Main characteristics of new cities investigated

	Tamesna	Zenata Eco-City	Benguerir Green city
Location	Rural commune of Sidi Yahya des Zaers	Urban commune of Ain Harrouda	Rehamna province
Distance to nearest city	Rabat (20 km)	Mohammedia (11 km)	Marrakesh (50 km)
Area (km²)	8,4	18,3	10
Year launched	2005	2012	2011
Institutional city builder	Al Omrane	Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ)	Société d'Aménagement et de Développement Vert (SADV)
Company status and affiliation	Private limited company; Parastatal agency	Subsidiary of CDG Dev and CDG Group; national institutional asset manager for public pension funds	Subsidiary of OCP Group; phosphate mining corporation
Projected population	250 000	300 000	100 000
Current population	45 000	300 (households)	6 000
Urban concept	Satellite city	Eco-city	Green knowledge city

Similarly, although at a different stage of construction, Zenata Eco-City is also targeting Morocco's rising middle class. Branded as a 'land of opportunities', its developers promote a new city offering numerous job prospects and an exceptional quality of life in new climate-adapted modern urban environments, aligned with values of sustainability (SAZ, 2013a: 18). It is overseen by the CDG Group, the national institutional asset manager for public pension funds, and developed through its main holding's (*CDG Développement*) subsidiary, the SAZ (*Société d'Aménagement Zenata*). Zenata Eco-City is among the largest new city projects underway in Morocco with a projected population of 300,000 residents. Despite being under construction since 2012 along the Atlantic coastline in the greater Casablanca area, land earmarked for the project is still partly under acquisition.

Specifically, 23 informal settlements and 652 *cabannons*⁵⁴ are in the process of being relocated and expropriated (respectively) to make way for the new city. Approximately 300 households are currently living in the first phase of the Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood developed primarily for informal resident relocation on the site of the new city.

Lastly, Benguerir Green City⁵⁵ is a ‘green’ knowledge city under development by the SADV (*Société d’Aménagement et de Développement Vert*), a subsidiary of Morocco’s phosphate mining corporation, the OCP group, and located in the distant periphery of Marrakesh. Construction of the new city is now well underway with several components of the city having reached completion, including the city’s centerpiece, the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, which has been operational since 2013. The green city’s target population is 100,000, with a majority of residents presently comprising student and faculty living on campus (approximately 6,000). As a particularity of the project, the new green city is being developed on a site adjacent to the existing economically depressed phosphate mining town of Benguerir with a population of approximately 85,000 residents.⁵⁶ The new green city officially aims to boost economic development and job creation in the region and will in time integrate the existing town of Benguerir into its masterplan to form a single urban entity.

Through their urban planning concept and plans, each new city is closely aligned with central development objectives in the kingdom and embodies state-promoted visions for national development (Barthel, 2016; MHU, 2004). Most importantly, the new cities hold out the seductive promise of improved standard of living for future residents, by promoting easier access to housing, employment, as well as improved urban infrastructure. Through the implementation of innovative approaches to urban development, including sustainability-oriented planning principles, Morocco’s new cities are presented in official discourse as carefully planned urban spaces intended to ‘reflect a profile worthy of modern Morocco’ (Ahmed Taoufiq Hejira cited in MHU, 2004: 12).

⁵⁴ Self-built properties along the beachfront ranging from simple modest homes to more elaborate multi-story villas with pools.

⁵⁵ The new city is also referred to as Mohammed VI Green City.

⁵⁶ A majority of participants interviewed as part of fieldwork in Benguerir Green City were residents of the existing town.

7.4 Living in a ‘promising machine’: Unfulfilled dreams, visions, and desires in Morocco’s new cities

‘Urban promises are one expression of how cities channel desire; they haunt us with the expectation of something favorable to come.’

(Kemmer and Simone, 2021: 574)

Through their promoted visions for enhanced urban environments and quality of urban life, new city projects like Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City, underway as part of Morocco’s national city-building strategy, exemplify the power of cities as ‘promising machines’ (Kemmer and Simone, 2021: 573). The following sections investigate how residents living in and around, or variously affected by Morocco’s new cities are engaging with the promises for improved urban futures conjured through new city plans, as many promises are defied in the new cities’ built reality. Specifically, this is investigated through three themes that embody common sources of disillusionment across projects, relating to the new cities’ unattained visions of urbanity, inclusion, and ordered and ecologically conscious urban development. Beyond outlining residents’ sources of frustration with the implementation of new city plans and broader apprehensions surrounding their development, these three themes also serve to elucidate citizens’ own wishes, desires, and demands for better urban futures.

7.4.1 *Dreams of urbanity*

‘When we heard about the new city, we felt hopeful. In truth, we were expecting a city like Casablanca. Unfortunately, we were mistaken.’

(Youssef, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/18)

During fieldwork in Morocco in 2016, one senior government official from the Ministry of Urbanism’s Land Use Planning branch referred to new cities under construction as ‘artificial cities’ (interview, Rabat, 23 August 2016). The official used this characterization to discuss the difficulties of fostering attachment in a city developed from scratch, without a past or history, and without a pre-existing economic function. Throughout my subsequent conversations with resident populations, and especially pioneering residents in the new cities of Tamesna and Zenata Eco-City, this notion of ‘artificiality’ was time and time again evoked to characterize their experiences of the new cities as urban spaces which did not meet their expectations of urbanity,

in other words, as cities that did not feel like ‘real’ cities. In this section, I explore how the first promise that is unmet in the eyes of residents of Morocco’s new cities, is the promise of urbanity itself, which is challenged daily through the intrusion of rurality, deficient urban services, and the absence of vibrant activities and community life.

Like numerous satellite new city developments in Africa and beyond (Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014) new cities in Morocco are frequently developed on greenfield sites and state land reserves in the periphery of major cities, where rural agricultural land is being rapidly acquired and converted for urbanization (Berriane, 2017; Rousseau and Harroud, 2019). In these newly urbanized spaces, conditions of ‘cityness’ are materializing in opposition to the new cities’ rural context of implementation. In Benguerir Green City, for example, the new development stands in stark contrast with the emptiness of surrounding arid lands, while in Tamesna, the city seen from afar forms a pastel-coloured concrete cluster, rising out of an otherwise unperturbed landscape of fallow fields (Figure 7.1). In this context, the new cities seem to constantly battle for the affirmation of their urban character as rural land uses keep seeping back into the plan. As one resident living in Tamesna explained:



Figure 7.1. Tamesna (left) and Benguerir Green City (right) in opposition to their non-urban setting. (Photo: Laurence Côté-Roy)

You know new cities, they were agricultural land before. Tamesna... it was a farm. There were vineyards and everything... so, the state took rural land and they built it there. At one point, there were even donkeys coming in. Al Omrane [the city’s state developer] even wanted to put up fencing around their headquarters to keep out the animals. (Amine, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/13)

During fieldwork in the new cities, I regularly witnessed this encroachment of rurality in the new developments. In Tamesna, I frequently came across empty lots awaiting construction, which were being used as grazing areas for sheep and livestock by local farmers. Cows or horses feeding on food scraps or resting in shaded public areas were not an uncommon occurrence, to the great dismay of locals who had hoped to live in a bustling metropolis like Casablanca (Figure 7.2).



Figure 7.2. Encroachment of symbols of rurality and rural land uses in Morocco's new cities (left: Benguerir Green City, center and right: Tamesna). (Photo: Laurence Côté-Roy)

Pioneering residents also attribute the lack of an urban sensibility in new cities to the slow roll out of urban services and deficient urban governance. Both in Tamesna and Zenata Eco-City's first residential neighbourhood, ineffective or absent garbage removal services and dysfunctional sewerage, street lighting, and frequent power cuts act as constant sensory reminders of promises unmet in the city. Infrequent and unreliable transport options and the emergence of informal means of transportation in the cities⁵⁷ have a similar effect on residents, exacerbating perceptions of the city as a remote rural area (see Buire, 2014b for similarities in Angola), and generating feelings of isolation, especially among households without a private car. The insufficient emergency services in the city, and especially the scarcity of police,⁵⁸ have led to prevalent feelings of insecurity in the neighbourhoods, especially among women residents who

⁵⁷ These namely comprise unauthorized carpooling as well as the prevalent use of *triporteurs*, a small three-wheeled truck usually used for the transport of goods or merchandise, which are being converted for the transport of passengers, posing a number of safety risks.

⁵⁸ In Tamesna prevalent feelings of insecurity, and the lacking sense of urbanity, are further compounded by the fact that the territory is overseen by a small effective of *gendarmes*, tasked with overseeing sparsely populated rural areas, rather than a police force. This situation is attributable to Tamesna's particular governance situation, where the new city in fact falls under the purview of the local rural commune and is governed with the means and prerogatives attributed to rural entities in Morocco.

do not feel they can safely perform their regular activities in the space of the new city where there are frequently reported muggings and attacks on women. For residents interviewed, dysfunctional or absent urban services in the new cities directly impede their sense of ‘cityness’:

Here I only find broken promises. Tamesna is poorly maintained, dirty, unsafe, with no facilities, no gardens, no green spaces... The reality speaks for itself, you only have to take a little tour to understand our daily struggle. This is not a city. It is the opposite of what we were promised. (Youssef, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/18)

Beyond the lack of basic services, conditions of urbanity are also hindered by the absence of a vibrant activity and community life that has yet to develop. Through the frequent characterization of the new cities as a ‘ghost town’ or ‘dead city’, residents communicate pervading sentiments of boredom and demotivation, linked to the few options for entertainment in the cities. Beyond the few cafés and minimalist grocery stalls in Zenata Eco-City’s first residential neighbourhood, there were no commercial or entertainment facilities when I visited in 2018, and the neighbourhood’s distance to other components of the city’s plan or other established cities gave residents few other options for leisure activities. When asking pioneering residents what they most like to do in the new cities, or what spaces they liked to visit, a majority responded that they spend most of their time in their apartment as the city presently offers no other appealing alternatives. In Benguerir Green City, pioneering citizens residing mostly in campus housing at the new university similarly explained that they usually drive all the way to Marrakesh to enjoy the vibrant city’s nightlife and for other outings and activities that are presently missing in the green city. In Tamesna, one resident commented: ‘there were promises made...that this would be a new city, with lots of activities, hotels, shopping malls... but in fact there is nothing’.⁵⁹ In stark contrast with the busy nature of Morocco’s main metropolises, residents overwhelmingly characterize the new cities as places ‘only for sleeping’, or, in the case of Benguerir Green City, as ‘ideal for studying’.

Furthermore, the new cities also pose challenges for cultivating social ties and a sense of community among residents seeking to lay down roots in the new cities. Beyond a lack of spaces of leisure and recreation that could function as meeting places, many residents explain that even

⁵⁹ Nassim, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/12.

in the immediate vicinity of their home, it is difficult to develop neighborly ties and relationships due to the high vacancy rates in the city:

No one lives in front of me in the next apartment. There is a woman on the 4th floor (...) 2 other units have not been sold yet, but otherwise everything is sold, but residents either live abroad or in another city. (Nassim, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/12)

In Morocco's new cities, and especially in Tamesna, the appeal of affordable apartments prompted a number of Moroccans, living both in the country and abroad, to purchase units as long-term investments. When possible, these units are rented out or used as summer homes, but in many cases the market is saturated with rental offers, and units remain vacant. Reflecting the embodied consequences of the global financialization of real estate (Fauveaud, 2020; Shatkin, 2016, 2017), the speculative purchase of housing in the new cities is impacting residents' abilities to foster social connections and a vibrant community life, which many view as a key characteristic of urban living.

7.4.2 Visions of inclusive futures

The framing of Morocco's city-building operations as a strategy of national development, and the promotion of affordable housing options for the rising middle class and urban poor in Morocco's new cities, generated expectations among citizens that new cities would improve living conditions for the majority. Unlike rising luxury new city ventures worldwide that cater to an economic elite through non-equivocal branding and exclusive designs (Moser, 2020; Moser et al., 2015; Murray, 2015a), Morocco's new city plans evoked values of (socio-economic) diversity and inclusivity among residents interviewed. For these residents, promoted urban plans project imaginaries of cities designed to benefit 'ordinary citizens' (Smith, 2017: 31) through improved urban living conditions and the equitable distribution of anticipated economic benefits. Despite officially promoted ambitions, expectations of inclusive futures in the new cities are being defied in several ways in the new cities' built form, and several residents express doubt that promises of inclusion can ever be achieved.

In the three cities analyzed, the commitment to inclusivity is challenged in the first place through the segregated nature of the masterplans, reflected in the cities' layout and built landscape. While all three projects include diverse income groups at the scale of the whole city,

there is scarce interaction between individual socio-economically homogenous neighbourhoods, revealing important socio-spatial divides that interfere with expectations of inclusion in the new cities. In Zenata Eco-City, for example, the first residential neighbourhood developed for the relocation of displaced informal households, is situated on a single peripheral plot of land in the new city, which is far removed from Zenata's commercial district and current employment opportunities. Similarly, in Tamesna, the costliest single-family homes or villas are primarily located in gated areas on the edges of the city, while affordable housing or social housing intended for relocated informal households are concentrated together in other neighbourhoods. Residents interviewed frequently raised concerns about the effects of the cities' segregated organization on the urban poor and marginalized, denouncing the creation of 'ghettos' in the new cities, in stark opposition to expectations of inclusive futures for all.⁶⁰ In Benguerir Green City, despite the officially stated intentions to boost living standards of the population in the existing town of Benguerir, which is to be encompassed in the green city's masterplan, amenities in the new city are inaccessible to the general population: the university campus is gated, and access is monitored by security. Convinced that the new city is not intended for their use, a majority of residents interviewed in Benguerir had never once visited the new neighbouring development. Echoing sentiments shared in all three contexts investigated, one resident in Tamesna told me: 'This city was built to respond to the needs of people without means... but it is the richest people who benefited more than anyone else in the end.'⁶¹

Socio-economic cleavages are further visible in the built landscape, through the stark disparities in terms of building aesthetics and architectural quality between neighbourhoods, which are interpreted by residents as visual expressions of broken promises relating to inclusivity. One resident in Tamesna explained: 'You can find the aesthetical aspect in higher class housing developments. For social housing units, as you can see, it's catastrophic. They're boxes... cages. Cages of 40 or 50 meters squared.'⁶² In Benguerir Green City, spatial and social divides between the new city and the existing neighbouring town are accentuated through the juxtaposition of the green city's spectacular architecture with Benguerir's run-down infrastructure. In opposition to the green city's impressive university campus designed by

⁶⁰ Abdallah, resident of Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/21; Mohammed, resident of Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/30.

⁶¹ Kenza, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/07.

⁶² Mehdi, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/15.

‘starchitect’ Ricardo Bofill, and the ‘smart’ and sustainable building technologies featured in the new research centers, many neighbourhoods in the existing town of Benguerir rely on outdoor water wells (Figure 7.3). In addition to the physical distance from the existing town of Benguerir, the new city’s dramatic aesthetic and first-rate amenities further instill a symbolic detachment from the existing town, and life in Morocco more generally. Capturing this divide, one student living on campus suggested: ‘when you leave campus, you feel like you are coming back to Morocco.’⁶³



Figure 7.3. Example of water wells in the existing town of Benguerir (left) and their contrast with the spectacular architecture of Benguerir Green City’s new University campus (right). (Photo: Laurence Côté-Roy)

Residents interviewed also question the touted inclusive futures through new cities, as many claim that they are being left out of the possibility to experience improved quality of life, namely through the anticipated economic benefits expected to accompany the new cities’ construction. Both in Tamesna and Zenata Eco-City, residents are skeptical of the new cities’ ability to improve their livelihood, citing the current absence of core economic functions and related employment opportunities. In the existing town of Benguerir, where the new city’s construction was promoted as a way to boost economic activity in the region and neighbouring town, a majority of local business holders interviewed reported that they had yet to see any increase in their daily economic activities, with some citizens suggesting that the influx of workers and residents in Benguerir Green City may actually be negatively affecting their

⁶³ Walid, resident of Benguerir Green City, 2018/11/14.

business. Illustrating concerns raised by scholars in other contexts (see for example Cain, 2014; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Watson, 2014) relating to the risk that new cities will compete with existing cities, taking resources away from them rather than supporting their development, one resident explained:

With the new project, there are more and more services near the green city so they [pioneering residents] do not come to Benguerir. (...) The highway is so close, people prefer to shop and eat at big chain stores and restaurants in Marrakech, not here. (Aïcha, resident of Benguerir, 2018/11/23)

Other residents and business owners in Benguerir further express the fear that their overall economic wellbeing will be affected through rising land and real estate prices with the influx of new university staff and foreign researchers looking for housing beyond the campus facilities in the new city.⁶⁴

In Zenata Eco-City, a project that echoes numerous other new city projects developed in Morocco and across the Global South in its extensive land expropriations (Bhattacharya and Sanyal, 2011; Datta, 2015b; Goldman, 2011a; Van Noorloos, Avianto, et al., 2019), residents more specifically question the principle of building an ‘inclusive’ city through expulsions (Sassen, 2014), and more broadly critique the project’s ‘public utility’ status that enables and legitimizes expropriations:

What is the public utility of a commercial development? For me, public utility means you build a road... or, I don’t know, you discover diamonds, you see? Resource wealth, or something that could benefit the whole nation, the whole country. What is the ‘public’ benefit in this expropriation? (Nadia, resident of Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/17)

Because the beachfront residents currently being expropriated to make way for the new city purportedly targeting Morocco’s middle class are themselves members of the middle class or higher-income groups, several residents suspect that the new city in reality aims to attract even higher-income buyers. Among rumours circulating, residents speculate that the new city’s redesigned beachfront area will be intended for foreign buyers, including wealthy Emirati and Saudi investors, thereby further discrediting the project’s ‘public’ and ‘national’ utility in their

⁶⁴ Moussa, resident of Benguerir, 2018/11/21; Khalil, resident of Benguerir, 2018/11/21

eyes. Beyond expressing worries about their ability to relocate elsewhere using the compensation provided for their expropriation, residents of Zenata's self-built beachfront properties currently undergoing expropriation also express concerns that the new city's construction will lead to the privatization of the beach itself, indicating a fear of exclusion from the site and its activities, even beyond their expropriation:

I am 100% sure that no one will be able to fish here anymore. When Saudis will be here, with belly dancers... they won't want to see anyone [on the beach]. In fact, I don't think that even if you want access, they will let you... You will have to pay. It won't be free access. (Selma, resident of Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/10)

Despite the promotion of new cities as socially diverse and inclusive spaces, resident experiences of their exclusionary layout and limited distribution of anticipated benefits reflect the documented tendency of new cities to exacerbate social divides (Carmody and Owusu, 2016; Lumumba, 2013) or to 'engineer' social exclusions (Moser, 2020), rather than the actualization of promises of inclusivity.

7.4.3 Plans for ordered and ecologically conscious urban development

Across the Global South, new city building is supported by a prevalent assumption among their builders and supporters that building cities from scratch represents an optimal investment and opportunity to develop better, more connected, more resilient, and more competitive cities for the future (Datta, 2017; Moser et al., 2015; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). In Morocco, official narratives about the national city-building strategy frame new cities as an important way to enable more coherent and controlled urbanization while embodying ideals of sustainable development, both factors that are driving the appeal of the model for residents and developers alike. In this section, I investigate how such aspirations are reinterpreted by local and resident populations, as visions for ordered and ecologically conscious urban transformation have been variously unmet in the new cities' materializing landscapes, and at times pushed even further out of reach through the residents' own interventions in urban space.

In step with broader trends in the globalization of sustainable planning ideals (Rapoport, 2015) and the rising tide of new 'eco cities' built from scratch around the world (Caprotti, 2017; Cugurullo, 2016; Datta, 2012; Rapoport, 2014), the Kingdom of Morocco now has several

ambitious new ‘sustainable’, ‘eco’ or ‘green’ city projects underway (Barthel, 2016). Seen through the eyes of their residents, however, the ‘green’ credentials and ambitions for sustainable urban living in many new city projects are understood as snake oil. Beyond scaled back sustainability objectives experienced in Tamesna, where several planned and promoted green spaces never materialized, residents more broadly challenge the foundational vision for the new cities’ environmentally conscious urban development, and reinterpret claims on sustainability by situating the projects within their ‘wider scalar context’ (Caprotti, 2014: 13). For example, one resident interviewed in Zenata Eco-City reflected on the new city’s location in the largely industrial urban commune of Aïn Harrouda, which is home to many of Morocco’s heavy industries:

An Eco-City, I don’t know... because there is nothing ecological about the region (...)
The ONEE [Office National de l’Électricité et de l’Eau potable], our electricity producer, has a coal plant over there to supply Casablanca’s electricity. And there is the SNEP [Société Nationale d’Électrolyse et de Pétrochimie]. They produce bleach and all kinds of petrochemicals...you see? Nothing ecological. So ‘Eco-City’ is just a marketing term.
(Zaïna, resident of Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/15)

During walks through Zenata Eco-City, residents frequently drew my attention to the oppressive cloud of dark smoke lining the horizon (Figure 7.4), which they interpret as a visual reminder of the new city’s industrial surroundings and associate with pervasive air pollution: ‘how can it be ecological next to the biggest and most polluting industries in Morocco? They are



Figure 7.4 Cloud of dark smoke from neighbouring industries visible from within Zenata Eco-City. (Photo: Laurence Côté-Roy)

selling wind...dreams! It is all talk...' ⁶⁵ Similar concerns were echoed by residents in Benguerir who contrast claims surrounding the new 'green' city's sustainable infrastructure with the highly polluting and environmentally disruptive extractive activities of its builder and initiator, the OCP phosphate mining corporation, who is seen as the main source of air and water pollution in the region. ⁶⁶ Echoing Caprotti's (2014) critical analysis of Tianjin Eco-City in China, for residents interviewed, no matter how innovative or ambitious the plans and infrastructures for new cities designed with sustainable development principles in mind, promises of more sustainable futures will inevitably remain unattained due to the context in which the new cities are being inserted.

In other instances, residents further express fears that the new city project could in fact enhance environmental degradation and pollution in the area. This is the case in Zenata Eco-City, where anxieties are mainly focused on the possible degradation of the beach through the construction of a new waterfront walkway and the recent erection of large concrete conduits with an end point on the beachfront. Without official knowledge on the purpose of these constructions, they are cause for much speculation among residents:

You don't just take a beautiful beach, decide to build an eco-city and on the beach, remove residents and then use it for dumping... are we going to have sewer just coming out of here like that? ... the message I am getting from this is they are condemning this beach! (Nadia, resident of Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/17)

Aside from the sustainability-oriented rhetoric and planning vision associated with new cities, residents are also challenging the promoted ideal of controlled and orderly urban development that more broadly underpins top-down master-planned urban imaginaries (Datta, 2017; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021; Murray, 2015a). For many residents interviewed, the appeal of life in a new city is strongly driven by desires of and expectations for coherent urban layouts and architectural unity, in contrast to the sprawling, uncontrolled nature of many of Morocco's rapidly expanding cities, and the pervasive presence of informal construction and degraded and inadequate infrastructure. Despite the master-planned and top-down planning approach deployed to build Morocco's new cities, residents find that such ambitions for orderly urban environments

⁶⁵ Selma, resident of Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/10.

⁶⁶ Inès, resident of Benguerir, 2018/11/22.

frequently fall short of ‘the dream of an urbanism under control’ (Buire, 2014b: 304) in what has been built to date, and are further defied through residents’ own interventions.

Challenges to residents’ expectations of order are first experienced through rapidly degrading residential areas in the new cities, where, despite their recent construction, apartment buildings display uninviting cracking exterior walls and peeling paint. Both in Tamesna and Zenata Eco-City’s first neighbourhood, these unappealing aspects of the new developments are associated with a sense of disorder and messiness and broader concerns about the overall quality of housing and urban infrastructure built in the cities that were expected to offer superior amenities and construction. In other cases, the affront to orderly and cohesive urban development is perpetuated by residents themselves. As a further consequence of the widespread purchase of housing as an investment vehicle rather than to fulfill dwelling needs in the new cities, many houses are unkempt, and many are in a perpetual state of unfinished construction as their owners await the ideal time to sell off the asset in which they have no intention of residing. For those living in the new cities, these consequences of real estate speculation negatively affect the sense of planned, ordered development, and the architectural unity of neighbourhoods dotted with various stalled or abandoned construction sites.

Due to the slow roll out of urban services in the new cities, a number of residents have also begun making modifications to the new cities’ masterplans, integrating unintended uses and activities or altering housing units to better respond to pressing needs that are unfulfilled in the city’s current state. One local working in Zenata Eco-City explained the situation: ‘They [the developers] came here, built something, and they didn’t plan anything for the future. Everything is now getting done incrementally by the people who live in the neighbourhood.’⁶⁷ While necessary to address citizens’ everyday needs, resident manipulations in/of the new cities’ built landscape are also paradoxically making promises of orderly development seem increasingly unattainable in their eyes.

Resident-led modifications to the new cities, what Kundu (2017) terms ‘perforations’ in the masterplan, are taking on various forms in Morocco’s new cities, paralleling observations that Kundu made in New Town Rajarhat, India. For example, in the absence of local government oversight, tenants and owners in Tamesna and Zenata Eco-City have made several unregulated

⁶⁷ Salim, informal street security guard (*Gardien*) in Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/21.

alterations and aesthetic additions to the exteriors of their individual apartment units, including by adding metal grids to windows and doors, or by closing off balconies with windows to create an additional room in their apartment. In Tamesna, the absence of a supermarket to service the growing pioneering population has led a number of residents to transform small ground floor apartments, which are not commercially zoned, into small informal corner shops to address some of the local food needs. Additionally, an unauthorized public market or *jouttaya* periodically blocks one of the major arteries in the city, as numerous stalls gather in the city center to sell a variety of foods and goods otherwise unavailable in the city's few shops. In Zenata Eco-City's first residential neighbourhood, delays in the allocation of residential housing permits have caused issues for residents attempting to connect to the electric grid through the local provider. Consequently, many have chosen to hook up their apartment to neighbouring units, creating a complex web of wires and fibres arching over the street, and demonstrating the illicit but necessary manipulations residents make to the city's plan.

For many residents interviewed, these types of modifications are reproducing features of other established cities in Morocco that they attempted to leave behind by moving to the new city. As suggested by one resident in Tamesna: 'If it really is a new city, we need to respect the norms... I can accept irregularities in Yacoub Al Mansour in Rabat, or in Kenitra, but I cannot accept this in a new city'.⁶⁸ Despite currently being essential to daily life in the new cities, residents express ambivalence towards any modifications that alter the architectural unity of the planned neighbourhoods that were intended to display homogenous aesthetics to project a sense of order and cohesion.

7.5 'Standing by' or giving up: Broken promises and demanding better urban futures

'We are tired, generally in Morocco, of this power imbalance, and this relationship to profit, of false slogans... We've had enough. We want to move on. We want *eco-cities*, but we also want *eco-citizenship*, we want things to be coherent. Not just an eco-city and then shitty civic treatment.'

(Nadia, Zenata Eco-City, 2018/10/17)

⁶⁸ Omar, resident of Tamesna, 2018/09/10.

‘This is not how you design a city. The whole process is wrong from the start. A city is designed by studying its needs and those of its citizens...through participation, where every single one can take part in the success of the project.’

(Youssef, Tamesna, 2018/09/18)

‘The green city doesn’t meet the needs of citizens...we need jobs, and we need to be integrated in the new city’s vision.’

(Malik, Benguerir Green City, 2018/11/19)

The previous sections have shown that, while new city projects are steadily materializing across the kingdom, local and resident populations primarily experience new cities through ‘the gap between the dream of the plan and its realisation’ (Smith, 2017: 34–35), a gap characterized not by awaited construction, but rather by expectations and promises so far unmet in the new cities’ built form. In this section, I further probe this gap between expectations and reality, turning more specifically to the various (re)actions it generates among residents as they negotiate with their feelings of dissatisfaction and their future in the new cities. Despite prevalent critiques and common sources of disillusionment among residents of the different new city projects, resident narratives reflect nuanced responses to the new cities, where promises unattained lead some to give up on the dream, and others to ‘stand by the promise’ (Kemmer and Simone, 2021). In all cases, the gap between promises made and those (un)fulfilled in the new cities has created a ‘site for the opening of political contestation’ (Gastrow, 2017: 379) in which sources of disappointment, outrage, and frustration in Morocco’s new cities are intertwined with broader critiques of the state and life in Morocco, and inform demands for better urban futures in the kingdom.

In interviews, a number of residents shared their own stories or those of friends or family members, who, facing the weight of unfulfilled aspirations and mounting challenges in their daily lives in the new cities, have decided to leave. For these residents, the experience of the new cities through their unaccomplished vision of urbanity, inclusivity, and orderly and environmentally conscious development is perceived as a potentially lasting state. Giving up on the possibility that things will ever change or start improving at an acceptable pace, some residents have decided to sell their home, often at a loss, or give up their lease to start their life over elsewhere, often in a nearby established city. In most cases however, and notwithstanding

their numerous critiques and anxieties about the future in the new developments, residents ‘stand by the promise’ (Kemmer and Simone, 2021) and continue to hold on to the hopes and possibilities outlined through the new cities and their plans.

Despite the numerous grievances associated with their experiences of the projects, residents seldom question the appropriateness of the new city model as a form of urban transformation. Rather, they express a deep and pervading desire to see projects succeed, a hope for new cities to ‘work’, for visions of better futures to materialize, and confidence that such visions can be achieved in and through the creation of wholly new cities. Reflecting observations made by De Boeck (2011) and others, this unwavering support of new cities underway is expressed even by residents who do not anticipate that they will benefit from the projects themselves.

Motivated by the steadfast belief that urban promises surrounding the new cities will, in time, become a reality, other residents who have chosen to stay and build their life in the new cities are engaging in various ‘acts of anticipation’ that are an expression of how ‘failed promises live on’ (Kemmer and Simone, 2021: 586), as residents continue to expect their actualization. Aside from actions and ‘perforations’ (Kundu, 2017) deployed to cope with shortcomings in the new cities, as residents await the realization of urban promises and ‘attentively follow their trajectories’ (Kemmer and Simone, 2021: 576), some are beginning to pose actions that denote their confidence in the new cities’ eventual achievement of urban promises outlined. In Tamesna, where the new city is at a more advanced stage of development, this is exemplified in the way some residents have begun to form community associations, including one that now organizes a cultural festival, an annual marathon race, as well as beautification initiatives for social housing neighbourhoods through the production of painted murals. With these interventions, residents are choosing to commit to the new city that will be their home for years to come and committing to the belief that it will, in the course of time, live up to their expectations.

Concurrently, and irrespective of their decision to give up or stand by urban promises in the new cities, residents also engage with the gap between their expectations and reality, by formulating deeper critiques and articulating demands for better urban futures in the kingdom. As an illustration of the ways in which ‘critiques of the state are increasingly voiced through engagement with the results of worlding projects’ (Gastrow, 2017: 380), discussions surrounding unfulfilled promises in the new cities frequently became enmeshed with broader critiques of the

Moroccan state and life in Morocco. For residents interviewed, the grievances they expressed surrounding new city projects and their unattained promises are related to broader grievances surrounding prevalent modes of authoritarian governance and control in the kingdom, and the paternalistic attitude of the state towards its citizens. What residents conveyed through critiques of the new cities is a broader denunciation of the heavy-handed actions of the state and authorities, enacted through evictions, expropriations and forced relocations. In discussions surrounding the hardships they are experiencing as new city projects take form, residents more generally condemned the prevailing ‘anti-poor’ (Watson, 2009b) attitude of the state and the ongoing marginalization of the urban poor even in interventions purportedly intended for their benefit, as reflected in the new cities’ segregated masterplans and the perceived exclusion of the poor from the new cities’ expected economic advantages. During conversations, residents further expressed suspicion, wariness, and distrust of authorities and stakeholders involved in the new cities, whom they often perceive as corrupt or chiefly motivated by profit and economic gain, leading to prevalent doubts about the true beneficiaries of new cities purportedly intended for the majority, and questions surrounding the new cities’ touted intentions for sustainable development. On multiple occasions, residents also rebuked the lack of transparency and communication surrounding project management, and the opaque governance of new cities once inhabited, which gave them few recourses to formally address their dissatisfaction with various problems in the new cities, including insufficient or flawed urban services that have spurred unplanned modifications in the cities and generated a widespread feeling of abandonment by the state.

Aside from outlining residents’ broader sources of frustration with the implementation of new city plans, resident accounts on the new cities and their failed promises, and their deeper, more structural critiques of the new city projects through a critique of the state also illuminate their own demands for better urban futures in the new cities. In addition to the ‘material aspirations of inhabitants’ (Buire, 2014b: 305) in Morocco’s new cities, and their demands for solutions to palliate more technical aspects and deficiencies in individual projects, resident narratives collected also elicit deeper ideological aspirations for more inclusive and participatory approaches to urban development to be actualized through the new city projects. These aspirations are powerfully illustrated in the resident statements included at the start of this discussion section. When asked how projects could be improved, residents across the three cities

formulated similar demands: to be consulted, to be heard, to be considered, to be treated with respect, and not to be left behind in Morocco's urban transformation and vision for the future. Convinced and seduced by the idea of new cities, and while never questioning the new city model itself, residents nevertheless express wishes and desires to see the projects implemented differently, to reflect their own vision of cities 'worthy of a modern Morocco' (MHU, 2004: 12), a vision that is not only determined by the 'worthiness' of the end result, but also by the processes and actions deployed to achieve it.

7.6 Conclusion

Beyond the realm of glossy pictures and flashy billboards depicting distant 'fantasy' urban futures that have yet to take form, Morocco's new cities are, for better or for worse, resolutely underway, and their construction is generating grounded consequences in the present. This paper provides a snapshot in time of the common sources of discomfort and disappointment among residents living in and around or being displaced in three of Morocco's new cities. In doing so, it sheds light on prevalent challenges faced by residents variously affected by the construction of brand-new cities, as well as some of the ways in which state promoted prospects and promises surrounding new city-building are being defied through the daily experiences, actions, and critiques of residents. Drawing on resident narratives in each new city investigated, this paper also illustrates the power of seduction surrounding new cities (Bunnell and Das, 2010; Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019) that act as 'promising machines' (Kemmer and Simone, 2021: 573) as the new city model of urban transformation is rarely questioned by residents despite their overwhelmingly negative experiences of the new city projects. While several residents continue to hold onto the promises outlined through the new city plans, this paper also demonstrates the ways in which residents use the gap between their expectations and reality to formulate deeper critiques of the projects and life in Morocco, and articulate their own demands for better urban futures in the kingdom.

As a great number of new cities globally are still in the planning or early construction stage, extant scholarship on new master-planned cities tends to be 'focused more on the paperwork of planning than actual urban experiences' (Gastrow, 2017: 377), where new city ventures are primarily investigated through the top-down visions, plans, imaginaries and ambitions of new city-building actors, rather than new cities' material existence and the everyday

realities of those they affect (Buire, 2014b; Cardoso, 2016; Lynch, 2019; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). Little attention has so far been paid to pioneering residents and how they perceive and (re)negotiate the new cities, a topic that requires closer critical attention, including through comparative approaches.

This paper is a contribution towards this gap in scholarship and adds to the theorization of the global new city-building phenomenon by providing insights on ‘how the recent wave of “new city” projects are experienced “on the ground”’ (Lynch, 2019: 1149). While informed by the local context of new city building in Morocco, this article provides a fruitful starting point for comparative research on resident experiences of new master-planned cities elsewhere. Beyond being tied to local specificities, the themes of analysis developed to investigate resident experiences also draw attention to broader forces and phenomena shaping new city building globally, and to their grounded consequences. This paper namely sheds light on the material and embodied impacts of global trends including rural to urban land conversions and greenfield development, the financialization of real estate and prevalent forms of speculation, inter-city competition and the competitive regional dynamics of new city development, as well as the globalization of sustainable development ideals. Most importantly, by foregrounding the voice of residents rather than new city builders in the analysis of new city projects, this paper underscores the role of residents, as an often overlooked category of actors that can significantly influence and shape the development of new cities through their views, experiences, and actions in the new developments, often in defiance of the master plan and in ways that are unanticipated by the planners.

As new cities worldwide progressively go from plans on the drawing boards of their creators to acquire a material existence, more opportunities will arise to contrast initial plans with their implementation. In particular, the next decades will be crucial in illuminating how the ‘success’ or ‘failures’ of ambitious new master planned city projects are measured, and according to which and whose metrics of evaluation. Representing a powerful source to develop ‘alternative spatial narratives’ (Jazeel, 2015: 30) on new cities, resident accounts and interpretations of daily life and of urban space in new cities can also provide one metric for the measurement of the new cities’ ‘success’. Probing resident perceptions and experiences of new cities can namely offer a privileged assessment of the livability dimension of new cities, as a way of countering the evaluation of the achievements of new city ventures by their developers,

through predominantly economic and financial indicators. In doing so, resident accounts of life in new cities can help to recenter the importance of cities as places for dwelling, inhabiting, and enacting citizenship, in opposition to their overriding conceptualization as spaces of investment and consumption.

References

Adidi A (2011) De l'aménagement du territoire au développement territorial : Quelle transition et quelle articulation? In: *1ère Conférence Intercontinentale d'Intelligence Territoriale*, Gatineau, Canada, October 2011, p. 11. Available at: <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00960909/document> (accessed 21 May 2019).

Barthel P-A (2016) Morocco in the era of eco-urbanism: Building a critical and operational research on an emerging practice in Africa. *Smart and Sustainable Built Environment* 5(3): 272–288.

Berriane Y (2017) Development and countermovements. Reflections on the conflicts arising from the commodification of collective land in Morocco. *International Development Policy | Revue internationale de politique de développement* (8). 8. Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement: 247–267.

Bhattacharya R and Sanyal K (2011) Bypassing the squalor: New towns, immaterial labour and exclusion in post-colonial urbanisation. *Economic and Political Weekly* 46(31): 41–48.

Brooker D (2012) “Build it and they will come”? A critical examination of utopian planning practices and their socio-spatial impacts in Malaysia’s “intelligent city”. *Asian Geographer* 29(1): 39–56.

Buire C (2014b) The dream and the ordinary: An ethnographic investigation of suburbanisation in Luanda. *African Studies* 73(2): 290–312.

Bunnell T (1999) Views from above and below: The Petronas Twin Towers and/in contesting visions of development in contemporary Malaysia. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 20(1): 1–23.

Bunnell T and Das D (2010) Urban Pulse—A geography of serial seduction: Urban policy transfer from Kuala Lumpur to Hyderabad. *Urban Geography* 31(3): 277–284.

Cain A (2014) African urban fantasies: Past lessons and emerging realities. *Environment and Urbanization* 26(2): 561–567.

Caprotti F (2014) Critical research on eco-cities? A walk through the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City, China. *Cities* 36: 10–17.

Caprotti F (2017) Emerging low-carbon urban mega-projects. In: Dhakal S and Ruth M (eds) *Creating Low Carbon Cities*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 51–62.

Cardoso R (2016) The circuitries of spectral urbanism: Looking underneath fantasies in Luanda's new centralities. *Urbanisation* 1(2): 95–113.

Carmody P and Owusu F (2016) Neoliberalism, urbanization and change in Africa: The political economy of heterotopias. *Journal of African Development* 18(18): 61–73.

Côté-Roy L and Moser S (2019) 'Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?' The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa. *Urban Studies* 56(12): 2391–2407..

Côté-Roy L and Moser S (forthcoming) A kingdom of new cities: Morocco's national Villes Nouvelles strategy.

Cugurullo F (2016) Urban eco-modernisation and the policy context of new eco-city projects: Where Masdar City fails and why. *Urban Studies* 53(11): 2417–2433.

Datta A (2012) India's ecocity? Environment, urbanisation, and mobility in the making of Lavasa. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 30(6): 982–996.

Datta A (2015b) New urban utopias of postcolonial India: 'Entrepreneurial urbanization' in Dholera Smart City, Gujarat. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 3–22.

Datta A (2017) Introduction: Fast cities in an urban age. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 1–27.

De Boeck F (2011) Inhabiting ocular ground: Kinshasa's future in the light of Congo's spectral urban politics. *Cultural Anthropology* 26(2): 263–286.

Fauveaud G (2020) The new frontiers of housing financialization in Phnom Penh, Cambodia: The condominium boom and the foreignization of housing markets in the Global South. *Housing Policy Debate* 30(4): 661–679.

Gans HJ (2017) *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community*. Ebook Edition. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Gastrow C (2017) Aesthetic dissent: Urban redevelopment and political belonging in Luanda, Angola. *Antipode* 49(2): 377–396.

- Goldman M (2011a) Speculating on the next world city. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 229–258.
- Grant B (2014) The edifice complex: Architecture and the political life of surplus in the new Baku. *Public Culture* 26(3): 501–528.
- Harroud T (2017b) Le programme des villes nouvelles au Maroc : Rupture ou prolongement d'un urbanisme de rattrapage ? *Revue Internationale d'Urbanisme - RIURBA* (4): 1–17.
- Holston J (1989) *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jazeel T (2015) Utopian urbanism and representational city-ness: On the Dholera before Dholera Smart City. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 27–30.
- Kemmer L and Simone A (2021) Standing by the promise: Acts of anticipation in Rio and Jakarta. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 39(4): 573–589.
- Kundu R (2017) “Their houses on our land” Perforations and blockades in the planning of New Town Rajarhat, Kolkata. In: *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 123–147.
- Lumumba J (2013) Why Africa should be wary of its ‘new cities’. In: *The Rockefeller Foundation's informal city dialogues*. Available at: <https://nextcity.org/informalcity/entry/why-africa-should-be-wary-of-its-new-cities> (accessed 24 January 2017).
- Lynch CR (2019) Representations of utopian urbanism and the feminist geopolitics of “new city” development. *Urban Geography* 40(8): 1148–1167.
- MHU - Ministère délégué chargé de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme (2004) Villes nouvelles et villes satellites. In: *Colloque des journées d'études tenues au siège du Ministère chargé de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme*, Rabat, Morocco, 14 December 2004, p. 206. Royaume du Maroc.
- Moser S (2020) New cities: Engineering social exclusions. *One Earth* 2(2): 125–127.
- Moser S and Côté-Roy L (2021) New cities: Power, profit, and prestige. *Geography Compass* 15(1): 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12549>.
- Moser S, Swain M and Alkhabbaz MH (2015) King Abdullah Economic City: Engineering Saudi Arabia's post-oil future. *Cities* 45: 71–80.
- Mouloudi H (2010) Reactions ‘from below’ to big urban projects: The case of Rabat. *Built Environment* 36(2): 230–244.

- Murray MJ (2015a) 'City doubles' re-urbanism in Africa. In: Miraftab F, Wilson D, and Salo K (eds) *Cities and Inequalities in a Global and Neoliberal World*. London, GB: Routledge, pp. 92–109.
- Parikh A (2015) *The Private City: Planning, Property, and Protest in the Making of Lavasa New Town, India*. Doctoral Thesis. London School of Economics and Political Science, London. Available at: http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3203/1/Parikh_The_Private_City.pdf (accessed 10 November 2020).
- Rapoport E (2014) Utopian visions and real estate dreams: The eco-city past, present and future. *Geography Compass* 8(2): 137–149.
- Rapoport E (2015) Globalising sustainable urbanism: The role of international masterplanners. *Area* 47(2): 110–115.
- Ross A (1999) *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property Value in Disney's New Town*. 1st ed. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Rousseau M and Harroud T (2019) Satellite cities turned to ghost towns? On the contradictions of Morocco's spatial policy. *International Planning Studies* 24(3–4): 341–352.
- Roy A and Ong A (2011) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sassen S (2014) *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata (2013a) Zenata, a Moroccan eco-city (press folder). Société d'aménagement Zenata, Groupe CDG. Available at: <http://www.zenataecocity.ma/sites/default/files/telechargements/press-kit-en.pdf>
- Shatkin G (2016) The real estate turn in policy and planning: Land monetization and the political economy of peri-urbanization in Asia. *Cities* 53: 141–149.
- Shatkin G (2017) *Cities for Profit: The Real Estate Turn in Asia's Urban Politics*. Ithaca, NY; London, GB: Cornell University Press.
- Smith C (2017) 'Our changes'? Visions of the future in Nairobi. *Urban Planning* 2(1): 31–40.
- Van Noorloos F and Kloosterboer M (2018) Africa's new cities: The contested future of urbanisation. *Urban Studies* 55(6): 1223–1241.
- Van Noorloos F, Avianto D and Opiyo RO (2019) New master-planned cities and local land rights: The case of Konza Techno City, Kenya. *Built Environment* 44(4): 420–437.
- Watson V (2009b) 'The planned city sweeps the poor away...': Urban planning and 21st century urbanisation. *Progress in Planning* 72(3): 151–193.

Watson V (2014) African urban fantasies: Dreams or nightmares? *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 215–231.

Watson V (2015) The allure of ‘smart city’ rhetoric: India and Africa. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 36–39.

Watson V (2020) Digital visualisation as a new driver of urban change in Africa. *Urban Planning* 5(2): 35–43.

Watson V and Agbola B (2013) Who will plan Africa’s cities? *Africa Research Institute - Counterpoints*, 12 September. Available at:
<http://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/publications/who-will-plan-africas-cities/>
(accessed 6 February 2017).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The central focus of this thesis examines contemporary forms of new master-planned city building in Morocco as a strategy of national development. I have explored this overarching topic by: 1) situating Morocco's new city-building activities within the kingdom's national development ambitions, and the recent proliferation of new city-building plans in Africa and across the Global South; 2) investigating the global and local networks of actors and knowledge facilitating new city development; 3) analysing the official narratives and rationales that are supporting new city building as a development strategy; and 4) exploring how official new city visions and future urban imaginaries are reinterpreted, challenged, or negotiated through the lived experiences of resident populations. My research explores the new city-building phenomenon in Morocco through the interplay between the various scales at which the new city imaginary is deployed, as well as the interactions between the differing perspectives of those building new cities and those affected by them. My empirical analysis demonstrates how new city building is increasingly normalized as a strategy of national and economic development across the African continent, and elucidates key drivers, justifications, modalities of implementation, and consequences of new city proliferation within and beyond the Kingdom of Morocco.

This final chapter summarizes the key arguments, conceptual contributions, and empirical findings of the thesis and is organized in three sections. First, I review individual thesis chapters, outline the primary findings in each, and reiterate their contribution to the main bodies of theory mobilized. Second, I discuss the broader significance and contributions of my doctoral research. Third, I offer a number of avenues for future research on new cities and the global city-building trend.

8.1 Chapter overviews

In chapter 1 of this thesis, *Introduction*, I broadly outlined the context of my research and provided general background on Morocco's national city-building strategy, the global city-building trend, and its recent and rapid extension across the African continent. I presented the main questions and objectives driving this research, which focuses on critically examining Morocco's new city building as both an expression of the global city-building trend and a reflection of the kingdom's national aspirations and vision for development. Through an

investigation of Morocco's overarching national city-building initiative, and a focused study of three individual new city projects – Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City – I laid out my aim to elucidate how globally circulating ideas on new cities are mobilized in Morocco and in Africa more broadly, who is involved in the circulation of the new city model, what rationales and narratives are employed to legitimize new city building, and how promoted visions for improved urban futures through new cities are (re)interpreted by those affected by the projects. I presented a justification for the framing of my analysis of new city building in Morocco in relation to the African continent, and introduced the key theoretical assumptions underpinning my research, which draws on the understanding of new cities as material, discursive, and networked constructions.

Chapter 2, *Literature Review: New cities, models in motion, and trends in entrepreneurial urbanization*, reviewed the main strands of scholarship that I mobilized and contributed to in this thesis, which I grouped in three categories: 1) Contemporary new city building; 2) Mobile policies and globally circulating urban imaginaries; and 3) Trends in entrepreneurial urbanization. In this chapter, I characterized some of the recent evolutions in each subfield of literature and the relevance of key concepts and approaches to analyse the global city-building trend and its expression in Morocco and across the African continent. I discussed how scholars have analyzed the contemporary wave of new city construction through its main drivers and pointed out some of the remaining gaps in scholarship including on Morocco's contemporary projects and state-led city-building strategy, as well as resident experiences of new city developments. I outlined the relevance of drawing on urban policy mobilities literature to explicate the proliferation of new city projects, by presenting current theorizations of *how* urban policy travels through various agents, spaces, and urban models, and by positioning my research within the growing focus on South-South networks of urban knowledge and emergent 'nodes' of new city-building expertise. Drawing on theories and adaptations of the concept of urban entrepreneurialism across contexts, I discussed how this thesis engages with emergent reflections on entrepreneurial states, speculative urbanism and government, and entrepreneurialism in authoritarian contexts as a way of contextualizing new city building within broader logics of urban transformation in globalizing cities of the South.

In Chapter 3, *Methodology*, I provided a discussion and explanation of the qualitative methods I used as part of this research, including participant observation at international

conferences on new cities and African urbanization, and mixed methods I employed during two phases of fieldwork conducted in Morocco, in 2016 and 2018. As an example of a ‘global’ approach to urban research, participant observation at conferences, also known as ‘mobility events’ (Clarke, 2012: 27), provided key insights into the global circulation of models and seductive narratives facilitating new city development in Africa. My fieldwork in Morocco investigated both the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom up’ perspectives on new city building through elite interviews with actors involved in new city development across the kingdom, as well as semi-structured, conversational, and ‘mobile’ interviews with locals in Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City. Following an overview of the strategies I employed to recruit participants, as well as an explanation of methods used to carry out data collection and analysis, this chapter discussed the limitations of my research through a reflection on my positionality, the positionality of my research assistant, and how they variously influenced the research process and outcomes.

Chapter 4, *‘Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?’ The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa*, was the first manuscript included as part of the four empirical chapters in this thesis. It explored the rapid expansion of new city building across the African continent through its main actors and driving forces. This manuscript mobilized literature on urban policy mobilities and drew upon elite interview data and participant observation at seven international conferences, as well as the analysis of official reports and documentation produced by corporations and consultancies. The primary findings outlined the vested interests of actors involved in the development of new cities and their role in disseminating seductive projections on Africa’s rise and new city development, while also underscoring the role of the pervasive ‘right to development’ argument employed by African elites to actively suppress criticism and avoid debate on new city building.

Chapter 5, *A kingdom of new cities: Morocco’s national Villes Nouvelles strategy*, contributed the first comprehensive overview of city-building activities in Morocco through a critical investigation of the main new city-building actors, drivers, and projects across the kingdom. This chapter was grounded in emergent literature on new city building and national development, and drew from fieldwork in Morocco’s new cities, interviews with key institutional city-building actors, and documentary research. Primary findings presented in this chapter demonstrated that despite being driven by the state and presented as a cohesive strategy in

official discourse, Morocco's national city-building strategy masks a great deal of ambiguity and confusion. Through a critical analysis of the 'hybrid' role of public and private city-building actors, the strategy's undefined policy status, and a lack of coordination among new city projects underway, the manuscript emphasized issues of accountability, transparency, and the lack of national coherence of the national initiative, rooted in the speculative practices of Morocco's authoritarian and entrepreneurial state.

Chapter 6, *Fast urban model-making: Constructing Moroccan urban expertise through Zenata Eco-City*, explored how Morocco is actively promoting and circulating new city-building expertise in Africa through the unconventional case of Zenata Eco-City and its purported urban model for sustainable city building, which is packaged and circulated long before the new city's completion. The chapter drew on urban policy mobilities literature and expanding research on emergent new city models and was informed by site visits and interviews with elite actors involved in Zenata's development. This chapter demonstrated that Zenata's mode of 'fast model-making', which is detached from the new city's implementation and from any demonstration of its innovative features, challenges assumptions within urban policy mobilities scholarship, particularly surrounding the inception of urban models. Specifically, primary findings revealed the ways in which authority for Zenata's model with no city is derived from policy 'learning' rather than experimentation, and that it is legitimised through self-constructed narratives on the new city's success and on the expertise of its developers. Furthermore, the chapter drew attention to the strategic nature of Zenata's promotion as a new urban model for Africa in light of the kingdom's reinforced political and economic interests on the continent.

Finally, Chapter 7, *Living in a 'promising machine': Resident perceptions and experiences in/of Morocco's new cities*, was an investigation into the underexplored reality of residents living in and around or being displaced by new master-planned cities in Morocco. This chapter addressed the gap in research surrounding the 'lived' dimensions of materializing new city projects worldwide, and added further insights to emergent investigations of everyday life in contemporary new cities by drawing on resident interviews in three of Morocco's new cities (Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City). The chapter revealed that, despite differences among projects investigated, residents share feelings of disillusionment surrounding the new cities under construction, which have yet to achieve promoted prospects for improved urban living. Primary findings in the chapter demonstrated that prevalent sentiments of

disenchantment among residents across the three cities relate to the perception that new cities lack a sense of urbanity, the broken promises surrounding inclusivity, and the unattained visions for ordered and ecologically conscious urban development. Through a discussion surrounding the varied responses to unfulfilled promises in the new cities, the chapter further demonstrates the ways in which negative experiences in Morocco's new cities are intertwined with broader critiques of the state and inform residents' demands for better urban futures in the kingdom. While residents are critical of the new developments and city-building actors, many do not question the new city model and continue to hope for better urban futures under this mode of urban development, but express desires for more inclusive city-building processes.

8.2 Contributions and significance of findings

Overall, this thesis helps to advance understandings of how new city models and ideas are being circulated globally and mobilized in local contexts. Through the research objectives I pursued, the thesis outlines commonalities between the Moroccan city-building context and global city-building examples, and underscores some of the distinctive characteristics and particularities of new city building in Morocco. Until now, and despite ambitious new city-building activities both within and beyond the kingdom, Morocco has received little scholarly attention, especially within Anglophone scholarship. With 19 new city projects underway, Morocco is a leading city-building country on the African continent and represents a particularly relevant case through which to expand our understanding of some of the underexplored aspects of the new city-building phenomenon. In particular, through the Moroccan empirical case, this thesis offers one of the first analyses of a national city-building effort. Furthermore, the investigation of new city building at different scales (Africa, Morocco, and individual new city projects) and from different perspectives (the top-down views of builders, government officials and planners, and the bottom-up views of residents) in this thesis provides an original and thorough portrait of the new city-building phenomenon, which brings into focus novel cross-scalar interactions and power dynamics, and extends our understanding of the consequences of new city development in Morocco.

This doctoral thesis makes original theoretical and empirical contributions to the expanding body of knowledge on rising new master-planned cities in the Global South, and contributes to developing the theoretical approaches used to investigate new city projects,

including by engaging with urban policy mobilities literature, and scholarship on forms and variations of urban entrepreneurialism across contexts (Lauermann, 2018; Phelps and Miao, 2020). Specifically, the mobilization of urban policy mobilities literature to analyse the new city-building phenomenon puts two bodies of scholarship that have only been minimally connected into conversation and represents a conceptual contribution of my doctoral research. Through the four empirical chapters that compose it, this thesis contributes novel perspectives, vocabulary, and concepts to elucidate urban transformation in the form of new city building. Following broader calls to develop a ‘view from the South’ (Watson, 2009a) in the production of urban theory, this thesis provides important grounded research and contextualized insights into urban change and transformations of urban life on the African continent. This is crucial to reimagining responses to urban challenges in cities of the South, and to disrupt dominant urban theories shaped through paradigms and informed by the precedents of cities in the Global North (Duminy, Watson, et al., 2014; Roy, 2009a). Reflections on Morocco’s new cities and urban transformation on the African continent developed in this thesis more broadly position ‘African cities as valid empirical bases for the construction of general urban and planning theory’ (Duminy, Watson, et al., 2014: 3). In addition to the findings and contributions I have made in the four individual manuscripts included in this thesis, taken together these chapters articulate broader theoretical and conceptual contributions to scholarship that underscore the significance of this research.

First, the chapters of this thesis significantly contribute to the theorization and characterization of the global new master-planned city-building trend by helping to answer questions surrounding the conditions of its emergence and proliferation on the African continent, and the drivers supporting its expansion across contexts. Besides tying new city building to broader global forces or local politico-economic conditions that paved the way for the expansion of the new city-building trend, this research also draws attention to the importance of analyzing elite discourse and rhetoric as well as the powerful role that particular narratives play in facilitating the circulation of the new city imaginary and encouraging new city development. At the scale of the African continent, I identified the broadly circulating ‘Africa rising’ narrative as a seductive discourse that supports the creation of new cities as an economic strategy in Africa. In the context of Morocco’s new cities, several chapters of this thesis demonstrate the powerful role of the official state discourse in shaping and normalizing the national city-building strategy

and its rhetoric of ‘public purpose’, which both facilitates and legitimizes the construction of new cities and the mobilization of public assets required for their development. Overall, the chapters of this thesis make an important theoretical contribution to new cities and policy mobilities scholarship by demonstrating how elite discourse and rhetoric significantly shape new city models and how they are constructed, normalized, and circulated. The four empirical chapters further emphasize how elite discourse constitutes a powerful means by which new city-building actors assert their ‘expertise’ and the suitability of building new cities as strategy of development.

Second, in addition to identifying key actors engaged in new city building across the continent and in the specific context of Morocco’s new cities, this research has demonstrated the necessity of both widening the scope of actors considered when analyzing new cities, and the need to develop a deeper comprehension of their roles, their particular composition or identity, and their often opaque interconnections across contexts and scales. For example, this thesis draws attention to the indirect but highly influential role of urban focused private foundations and non-profits. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, these foundations maintain complex relationships with corporations engaged more directly in new city development, often by sustaining inherent conflicts of interest with consequences for the types of urban agendas being promoted and endorsed. Both in Morocco and in Africa, this thesis also demonstrates the increasingly blurry distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ sector actors in urban mega-developments in the Global South (Côté-Roy and Moser, 2019; Mouton and Shatkin, 2020; Pitcher, 2017). As a conceptual contribution of this thesis, my investigation into the hybrid roles of Morocco’s new city-building actors with opaque ties to the central state emphasizes the need to develop new vocabulary to characterize the roles of actors beyond the ‘public-private’ dichotomy and the overly general ‘public-private-partnership’. This thesis more broadly provides insights into how city-building actors conceive of, understand, and perform their own roles and responsibilities surrounding the development of new cities, and productively integrates residents as an underexamined category of actors that is also actively involved in shaping new cities.

Third, by analyzing the new city phenomenon at a variety of scales, and by choosing to contextualize Morocco’s new city-building activities within the broader African urban context – rather than the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region or broader context of the ‘Arab world’ – this research sheds light on novel dynamics and interactions Morocco is cultivating with

other African states engaged in new city building, as well as Morocco's unique engagement with the global city-building trend. Crucially, this thesis demonstrates that city-building in Morocco is not only influenced by the rapidly proliferating new city-building trend in Africa, but that, as a leading city-building country on the continent that is engaged in the circulation of new city-building expertise and a novel urban model, the kingdom of Morocco is also actively involved in the expansion of city building in Africa. As such, this thesis contributes an alternative way of 'worlding' Morocco in urban studies literature (McCann et al., 2013; Ong, 2011) by identifying the kingdom as a new and unexpected node in the transnational circulation of new city models and ideas and an emergent center of urban planning innovation on the African continent. Adding to the expanding corpus of studies on emergent South-South networks of urban knowledge circulation (Bunnell, 2015a; Datta, 2017; Harrison, 2015; Moser, 2019; Verdeil, 2005), this thesis further draws attention to emergent and underexplored intra-African circulations of urban knowledge and city-building expertise, while expanding urban policy mobilities theory surrounding the inception and construction of urban models.

Finally, through an investigation of circulating urban visions and imaginaries and the official rationales underpinning new city building in Morocco and in Africa more broadly, my research deepens our understanding of 'what forms and informs the creation of such urban visions' (Cardoso, 2016: 100). Beyond critically analyzing the substance of urban plans promoted, the four empirical chapters of this thesis reveal the variety of assumptions that new city projects and plans 'carry' with them for their different stakeholders and shed light on how such expectations are (un)met through the new cities' materialization. Chapters 4-7 suggest that new cities under development in Morocco and across the African continent reflect many of the broader assumptions driving new city building across the Global South, including in the ways they embody the expectations of their developers for rapid success and 'fast-tracked' development, are guided by speculative logics of growth and economic expansion, and are sustained by a belief that conditions of urbanity in and of themselves will inevitably lead to prosperity (Datta, 2015b, 2017; Marcinkoski, 2015; Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). In Morocco's new cities more specifically, this thesis also demonstrates how expectations of order and more 'rational' territorial planning associated with master-planned urban development are challenged through the inherent ambiguity and messiness of execution, even in top-down state-driven national planning interventions, as well as through pioneering residents' own interventions in

new city spaces. As an important conceptual contribution of this thesis, Chapter 6 also introduces the term ‘fast model-making’ to characterize expectations for ‘fast’ success, and the rapid acquisition of expert status, which also underlie the development and circulation of new city models and expertise in contexts where model exports precede the stage of new city construction.

My findings also demonstrate that new cities, deployed as a development strategy, normalise and circulate ideas on progress, modernity, and development, rooted in pessimism about existing cities and their insurmountable challenges (Murray, 2015a). These assumptions emphasize new cities as indispensable investments into urban futures, superior models of urban transformation, and the ultimate embodiments of progress, leaving little room for alternative visions and versions of urbanity. Both in Morocco and in Africa more broadly, new city building is also rationalized by city-building actors through an overly narrow problematization of urban conditions, which often eschews considerations of urban governance, corruption, or structural inequalities and poverty. Apart from the assumptions and expectations of elite stakeholders and new city-building actors, this thesis also unpacks the ways in which new cities function as ‘promising machines’ (Kemmer and Simone, 2021: 573) that carry the hopes, wishes, and desires of future residents. Chapter 7 more specifically demonstrates that, for pioneering residents of Morocco’s new cities, visions for improved urban futures through the new city imaginary are not only made up of material aspirations in the built landscape, but deeper ideological aspirations for more inclusive and participative city-building processes and approaches to urban transformation.

8.3 Directions for future research

Through the process of conducting research and writing this thesis, several avenues of future research emerged, both informed by what I encountered through fieldwork and the broader thematic aspects that I was unable to pursue due to the limitations of time and the scope of this study. As the subfield of research on contemporary new cities is still in development and rapidly growing, the following research areas constitute fruitful avenues through which to expand scholarship. First, while this research sheds light on the ways in which new city building is employed as a strategy of development and implemented at the national scale in Morocco, a number of other countries on which there is presently a dearth of scholarship are also rolling out multiple new city projects as part of vast state-led strategies. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this is

the case in Tanzania (over 10), Saudi Arabia (5), Indonesia (over 10), Malaysia (4), and Kuwait (9) (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). A comparative analysis with or among these other countries would be valuable to examine trends, similarities, and variations in national approaches and programs of new city building, including in terms of their main actors, drivers, and modes of implementation.

Second, in the Moroccan context, as well as other postcolonial states developing new cities, comparative analyses could be productively extended to past efforts in new city development – both in the colonial era and years following independence. While parallels between colonial and contemporary new cities have been outlined in a general sense (see Moser, 2015), providing a useful framework for analysis, more research is needed on how these similarities are enacted in specific contexts. While this has not been a specific focus of this thesis, my research allowed me to discern several resemblances between contemporary new cities in Morocco and colonial *Villes Nouvelles* developed under the French protectorate which it would be valuable to probe further. For example, some of Morocco's new cities seem to replicate colonial-era urban forms, such as in Benguerir Green City's plans for a 'green passage' (*coulée verte*) between the new city and the old town of Benguerir, which is reminiscent of green belts used during colonialism as instruments of segregation (Njoh, 2008; Wright, 1991). Analyzing both eras of new city development would more systematically highlight ruptures and continuities between the two periods and provide additional opportunities for the critical analysis of ambitious contemporary new city plans, for example by questioning their rhetoric on newness and claims surrounding urban innovations. In the Moroccan context, an analytical focus on the past in relation to contemporary new cities could also productively adopt a cultural geography approach to explore how notions of tradition, heritage, and cultural identity are mobilized in imaginaries and legitimating narratives for future new cities, and to investigate how vernacular architecture is more broadly evoked or referenced in the new cities' built form. Through my research, I identified such discursive and material references to Moroccan cultural and architectural heritage most prevalently in Zenata Eco-City and Benguerir Green City, which would constitute ideal cases for the expansion of this avenue of research.

Third, while not emphasized as a core theme of analysis, my research has nevertheless shed light on entanglements between foreign and domestic players engaged in various aspects of new city development, a topic that requires more critical attention. For example, in the context of

Morocco, my thesis identified the role of Chinese companies, French companies and foundations, and even Malaysian urban expertise in shaping new city plans in the kingdom. An important avenue for future research would be to further investigate the identities, roles, motivations, modes of intervention, and urban agendas promoted by such foreign city-building actors, many of whom are presently active across the African continent, attracted by the continent's 'rise' and rapid urbanization (Grant, 2015; Watson, 2014). In addition to private companies that are developing new cities across several African countries like Rendeavour (discussed in Chapter 4) a number of state-owned corporations, including from China, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, and Turkey are engaged in the circulation of expertise, design, construction, or financing of new cities (Moser et al., 2021). Future research could also investigate how, in the case of such state-owned corporations, engagement in new city ventures may be guided by or serve national politico-economic interests of the countries involved in their development.

Fourth, and somewhat related to the previous point, it would be valuable to conduct further research on the ways in which new cities may be fulfilling geopolitical functions for nations developing them. While this thesis has more generally examined how Morocco's new city-building activities and the circulation of Zenata Eco-City as a new urban model in Africa can be interpreted as a strategic attempt to advance the kingdom's diplomatic and economic interests on the continent, further research could reveal how soft power is promoted through new cities and how new city projects are tied to 'harder' demonstrations of force and influence. Although not explored in this thesis, Morocco is developing the new city of Foum El Oued Technopole in the Moroccan controlled part of the Western Sahara, thereby further normalizing the kingdom's presence in the region, which is a territory that has been disputed for decades. A number of other countries, including China through the recent construction of Forest City (Moser, 2018), Palestine with Rawabi (Roy, 2016), and Kuwait through the development of a new port and city on Bubiyan Island appear to be using new cities as a way to normalize territorial claims and gain a geopolitical advantage (Moser and Côté-Roy, 2021). While the geopolitical motivations underpinning new city development remain underexamined, this topic carries important implications for national development, international relations, and the proliferation of new cities worldwide.

Finally, future research could devote critical attention to gendered aspects of the new city phenomenon, especially with regards to the experiences of pioneering resident populations. This research has briefly evoked gendered aspects of new cities' research and life in Morocco's new cities, which resulted in the difficult access to women during fieldwork and their underrepresentation as research participants. While exploring the gendered dimensions of living in new cities was beyond the scope of this study, fieldwork interviews revealed the relevance of this topic for future research, as residents often recounted distinct spatial experiences in new cities among men and women, and the significant impact of the new cities' context (with limited services, transportation options, and security) on women's daily use of space and activities. Much more attention needs to be devoted to embodied aspects of new cities, and to the variety of ways in which gender dynamics shape experiences in and of new cities, from how new cities are imagined and designed, built up, lived in, and eventually researched. A critical feminist geography approach that treats the body as a scale of analysis (Longhurst, 1994; Nast and Pile, 1998) could be a particularly rich lens through which to explore these questions.

8.4 Final comments

Sometimes characterized as examples of 'super-fast urbanism' and 'instant cities' (Bagaeen, 2007: 174) new master-planned cities underway across the Global South represent an extremely active trend in urban development that researchers are attempting to grasp, understand, and analyze as it unfolds. Investigating new cities as their plans are announced and as they take form in real time certainly poses challenges for analysis. Throughout this research, I have had to constantly update facts and verify findings as more new city ventures were launched, while other plans were fast-tracked, stalled, or canceled following unpredictable shifts in the world economic order, new political alliances and changes in government, or altered flows of investment. A lot has inevitably changed in the new cities of Tamesna, Zenata Eco-City, and Benguerir Green City since I conducted my fieldwork. Although construction has progressed on all three projects, which have since greeted a growing number of pioneering residents, the impacts of the recent COVID-19 pandemic both on the lives of new city inhabitants and the future of new cities underway, remains to be assessed.

The analysis of new city building in Morocco through the various scales at which the new city imaginary is implemented in this thesis provides a portrait of Morocco's new cities at a

specific moment in their inception, through the ‘polyphony of voices’ (Flyvberg, 2001: 139) and actors that are involved in their actualization. Time limitations and the scope of this research means that this portrait is necessarily partial and incomplete. As indicated above, there is still much to learn and to research on Morocco’s new cities and the broader new city-building phenomenon across the Global South. As new city projects worldwide progress from construction sites to become fully-built and inhabited urban centers, pioneering residents will become increasingly important actors to consider through investigations, and there will be more and more opportunities to analyse how they shape and transform new cities through their uses, experiences, appropriations, and ‘perforations’ (Kundu, 2017). While it is possible that the creation of new cities from scratch might fall out of favour as a strategy of development in the coming years as they have in the past, and especially following post-pandemic fiscal austerity that is likely to affect many countries, new city projects that have been erected since the 1990s still require much more critical attention, and will provide many opportunities for fruitful research on how they evolve over time, on their modes of urban governance, and on the forms and modalities of citizenship they encourage.

Bibliography

- Aberbach JD and Rockman BA (2002) Conducting and coding elite interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 673–676.
- Abouhani A (2009) La planification urbaine au Maroc: Rigueur normative et espace urbain fragmenté. In: Baduel PR (ed.) *Chantiers et Défis de la Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain*. Tunis; Paris: IRMC-Karthala, pp. 289–302.
- Abu-Lughod JL (1980) *Rabat: Urban Apartheid in Morocco*. Princeton studies on the Near East. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Acuto M (2010) High-rise Dubai urban entrepreneurialism and the technology of symbolic power. *Cities* 27(4): 272–284.
- Adelekan I (2013) *Private Sector Investment Decisions in Building and Construction: Increasing, Managing and Transferring Risks: Case Study of Lagos, Nigeria*. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Geneva, Switzerland: University of Ibadan, Geography.
- Adeponle BJ (2013) The integrated city as a tool for sustainable development - Abuja Master Plan. *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 3(5): 145–153.
- Adidi A (2011) De l'aménagement du territoire au développement territorial : Quelle transition et quelle articulation? In: *1ère Conférence Intercontinentale d'Intelligence Territoriale*, Gatineau, Canada, October 2011, p. 11. Available at: <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00960909/document> (accessed 21 May 2019).
- Agence Urbaine de Casablanca (2015) *Plan d'Aménagement Secteur Zénata: Rapport Justificatif*. Casablanca: Agence Urbaine de Casablanca.
- Ajibade I (2017) Can a future city enhance urban resilience and sustainability? A political ecology analysis of Eko Atlantic city, Nigeria. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 26 (2017): 85–92.
- ALM (2004) La solution : Créer de nouvelles villes. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 21 December. Available at: <http://aujourd'hui.ma/economie/immobilier/la-solution-creer-de-nouvelles-villes-83472> (accessed 28 January 2019).
- Almandoz A (1999) Transfer of urban ideas: The emergence of Venezuelan urbanism in the proposals for 1930s' Caracas. *International Planning Studies* 4(1): 79–94.
- Amankwah-Amoah J and Osabutey ELC (2017) Newly independent nations and large engineering projects: The case of the Volta River project. *Critical Perspectives on International Business* 14(2/3). Emerald Publishing Limited: 154–169.

- Anderson B and McFarlane C (2011) Assemblage and geography. *Area* 43(2): 124–127.
- Aujourd'hui le Maroc (2016) Vers le concept d'une ville durable: L'Éco-Cité Zenata au coeur de la COP22. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 10 November. Available at: <https://aujourd'hui.ma/economie/vers-le-concept-dune-ville-durable-leco-cite-zenata-au-coeur-de-la-cop22> (accessed 24 November 2020).
- Awofeso P (2011) One out of every two Nigerians now lives in a city: There are many problems but just one solution. *World Policy Journal* 27(4): 67–73.
- Ayres L (2008) Semi-structured interview. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* Given LM (ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Bacchi C (2012) Why study problematizations? Making politics visible. *Open Journal of Political Science* 02(01): 1-8.
- Baduel PR (ed.) (2009) *Chantiers et Défis de la Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain*. Hommes et Sociétés. Paris: Tunis: Karthala.
- Bagaeen S (2007) Brand Dubai: The instant city; or the instantly recognizable city. *International Planning Studies* 12(2): 173–197.
- Ballout J-M (2014) *Territorialisation par 'ville nouvelle' au Maghreb. Regard croisé sur les projets d'Ali Mendjeli (Constantine) et de Tamansourt (Marrakech)*. Doctoral Dissertation. Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier.
- Ballout J-M (2015) « Villes nouvelles » et urbanités émergentes dans les périphéries de Constantine et Marrakech. *L'Année du Maghreb* (12): 55–74.
- Ballout J-M (2017) Un bilan intermédiaire du programme de villes nouvelles au Maroc. *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (29).
- Banerjee T and Chakravorty S (1994) Transfer of planning technology and local political economy: A retrospective analysis of Calcutta's planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 60(1): 71–82.
- Barthel P-A (2010) Casablanca-Marina : un nouvel urbanisme marocain des grands projets. *Autrepart* (55): 71–88.
- Barthel P-A (2016) Morocco in the era of eco-urbanism: Building a critical and operational research on an emerging practice in Africa. *Smart and Sustainable Built Environment* 5(3): 272–288.
- Barthel P-A and Planel S (2010) Tanger-Med and Casa-Marina, prestige projects in Morocco: New capitalist frameworks and local context. *Built Environment* 36(2): 176–191. =

- Barthel P-A and Verdeil E (2013) Villes arabes, villes durables ? Enjeux, circulations et mise à l'épreuve de nouvelles politiques urbaines. *Environnement Urbain / Urban Environment* (Volume 7). Available at: <https://eue.revues.org/324> (accessed 2 February 2017).
- Barthel P-A and Vignal L (2014) Arab Mediterranean megaprojects after the 'Spring': Business as usual or a new beginning? *Built Environment* 40(1): 52–71.
- Barthel P-A and Zaki L (2011) Les holdings d'aménagement, nouvelles vitrines techniques de l'action urbaine au Maroc: Les cas d'Al Omrane et de la CDG Développement. In: *L'Action Urbaine au Maghreb: Enjeux Professionnels et Politiques*. Paris : IRMC Karthala., pp. 205–225.
- Basit T (2003) Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research* 45(2): 143–154.
- Baylocq C and Hlaoua A (2016) Diffuser un « islam du juste milieu » ?, Spreading a “happy medium” Islam ? *Afrique contemporaine* (257): 113–128.
- Belarbi W (2011) Projets de « villes nouvelles » au Maroc. Entre innovation et reproduction du modèle médinal. In: *Architectures Au Maghreb (XIXe-XXe Siècles) Réinvention du Patrimoine*. Perspectives Villes et Territoires. Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, pp. 113–130.
- Benazeraf D (2014) 'Oil for Housing': Chinese-built New Towns in Angola. Available at: <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/oil-for-housing-chinese-built-new-towns-in-angola/> (accessed 25 February 2019).
- Benzakour F (2007) Langue française et langues locales en terre marocaine : Rapports de force et reconstructions identitaires. *Herodote* 126(3): 45–56.
- Berg BL (2007) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 6th ed. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Berriane Y (2017) Development and countermovements. Reflections on the conflicts arising from the commodification of collective land in Morocco. *International Development Policy / Revue internationale de politique de développement* (8): 247–267.
- Bhan G (2014) The real lives of urban fantasies. *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 232–235.
- Bhattacharya R and Sanyal K (2011) Bypassing the squalor: New towns, immaterial labour and exclusion in post-colonial urbanisation. *Economic and Political Weekly* 46(31): 41–48.
- Bogaert K (2011) The problem of slums: Shifting methods of neoliberal urban government in Morocco. *Development and Change* 42(3): 709–731.

- Bogaert K (2012) New state space formation in Morocco: The example of the Bouregreg Valley. *Urban Studies* 49(2): 255–270.
- Bogaert K (2015) Paradigms lost in Morocco: How urban mega-projects should disturb our understanding of Arab politics. *Jadaliyya* (14 June). Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1854/LU-6867342> (accessed 3 February 2017).
- Bogaert K (2018) *Globalized Authoritarianism Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco*. Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press.
- Bond P (2014) Africa rising? Afro-optimism and uncivil society in an era of economic volatility. In: Obadare E (ed.) *The Handbook of Civil Society in Africa*. Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies 20. New York: Springer, pp. 233–251.
- Bono I (2013) Une lecture d'économie politique de la « participation des jeunes » au Maroc à l'heure du Printemps arabe. *Revue internationale de politique comparée* 20(4): 145–166.
- Boyatzis RE (1998) *Transforming Qualitative Information :Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Brenner N (2004) Urban governance and the production of new state spaces in Western Europe, 1960-2000. *Review of International Political Economy* 11(3): 447–488.
- Brooker D (2012) “Build it and they will come”? A critical examination of utopian planning practices and their socio-spatial impacts in Malaysia’s “intelligent city”. *Asian Geographer* 29(1): 39–56.
- Buire C (2014a) Suburbanisms in Africa? Spatial growth and social transformation in new urban peripheries: Introduction to the cluster. *African Studies* 73(2): 241–244.
- Buire C (2014b) The dream and the ordinary: An ethnographic investigation of suburbanisation in Luanda. *African Studies* 73(2): 290–312.
- Bunnell T (1999) Views from above and below: The Petronas Twin Towers and/in contesting visions of development in contemporary Malaysia. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 20(1): 1–23.
- Bunnell T (2002) Multimedia utopia? A geographical critique of high-tech development in Malaysia’s Multimedia Super Corridor. *Antipode* 34(2): 265–295.
- Bunnell T (2015a) Antecedent cities and inter-referencing effects: Learning from and extending beyond critiques of neoliberalisation. *Urban Studies* 52(11):1983–2000.
- Bunnell T (2015b) Smart city returns. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 45–48.

- Bunnell T and Das D (2010) Urban Pulse—A geography of serial seduction: Urban policy transfer from Kuala Lumpur to Hyderabad. *Urban Geography* 31(3): 277–284.
- Bunnell T, Padawangi R and Thompson EC (2018) The politics of learning from a small city: Solo as translocal model and political launch pad. *Regional Studies* 52(8): 1065–1074.
- Cain A (2014) African urban fantasies: Past lessons and emerging realities. *Environment and Urbanization* 26(2): 561–567.
- Caprotti F (2014) Critical research on eco-cities? A walk through the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-City, China. *Cities* 36: 10–17.
- Caprotti F (2017) Emerging low-carbon urban mega-projects. In: Dhakal S and Ruth M (eds) *Creating Low Carbon Cities*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, pp. 51–62.
- Cardoso R (2016) The circuitries of spectral urbanism: Looking underneath fantasies in Luanda's new centralities. *Urbanisation* 1(2): 95–113.
- Caretta MA (2015) Situated knowledge in cross-cultural, cross-language research: a collaborative reflexive analysis of researcher, assistant and participant subjectivities. *Qualitative Research* 15(4): 489–505.
- Carmody P and Owusu F (2016) Neoliberalism, urbanization and change in Africa: The political economy of heterotopias. *Journal of African Development* 18(18): 61–73.
- Carr ES (2010) Enactments of expertise. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39: 17–32.
- Cattedra R (2010) Chapitre I. Les grands projets urbains à la conquête des périphéries. *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (19): 58–72.
- Chaline C (1997) *Les Villes Nouvelles dans le Monde*. 2nd Edition. Que sais-je? Paris: Presses Universitaires de France - PUF.
- Childs J and Hearn J (2017) 'New' nations: Resource-based development imaginaries in Ghana and Ecuador. *Third World Quarterly* 38(4): 844–861.
- Chitti M and Moser S (2019) Urban pulse: Emerging trends in urbanizing Palestine: neglected city-builders beyond the occupation. *Urban Geography* 40(7): 1010–1017.
- Choay F (1965) *L'Urbanisme, Utopies et Réalités - Une Anthologie*. Collection Points Histoire. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Cirolia LR (2014) (W)escaping the challenges of the city: A critique of Cape Town's proposed satellite town. *Urban Forum* 25(3): 295–312.

- Cities Alliance (2015) Future cities Africa: New thinking for long-term transformation. Available at: <http://citiesalliance.org/node/5338> (accessed 24 January 2017).
- Clarke N (2012) Urban policy mobility, anti-politics, and histories of the transnational municipal movement. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(1): 25–43.
- Clifford N, French S and Valentine G (2010a) Getting started in geographical research: How this book can help. In: Clifford N, French S, and Valentine G (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 3–15.
- Clifford N, French S and Valentine G (eds) (2010b) *Key Methods in Geography*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Clinton Foundation (2016) Contributor and Grantor Information. Available at: <https://www.clintonfoundation.org/contributors> (accessed 24 January 2017).
- Cohen D (2015) Grounding mobile policies: Ad hoc networks and the creative city in Bandung, Indonesia. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 36(1): 23–37.
- Cook IR and Ward K (2012) Conferences, informational infrastructures and mobile policies: The process of getting Sweden ‘BID ready’. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19(2): 137–152.
- Cope M (2010) Coding transcripts and diaries. In: Clifford N, French S, and Valentine G (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, pp. 440–452.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch C (2003) Electricity networks in Africa: A comparative study, or how to write social history from economic sources. In: Falola T and Jennings C (eds) *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, pp. 346–360.
- Côté-Roy L (in press) Morocco’s new cities: Fostering moderate Islam through urban mega-developments. In: Moser S (ed.) *New Master-Planned Cities, Islam, and Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Côté-Roy L and Moser S (2019) ‘Does Africa not deserve shiny new cities?’ The power of seductive rhetoric around new cities in Africa. *Urban Studies* 56(12): 2391–2407.
- Côté-Roy L and Moser S (forthcoming) A kingdom of new cities: Morocco’s national Villes Nouvelles strategy.
- Côté-Roy L and Moser S (forthcoming) Fast urban model-making: Constructing Moroccan urban expertise through Zenata Eco-City.

- Crang M (2005) Analysing qualitative materials. In: Flowerdew R and Martin D (eds) *Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students Doing a Research Project*. 2nd Edition. Harlow, England: Pearson Education, pp. 218–232.
- Croese S and Pitcher MA (2019) Ordering power? The politics of state-led housing delivery under authoritarianism – the case of Luanda, Angola. *Urban Studies* 56(2): 401–418.
- Cugurullo F (2016) Urban eco-modernisation and the policy context of new eco-city projects: Where Masdar City fails and why. *Urban Studies* 53(11): 2417–2433.
- Cugurullo F (2017) Speed Kills: Fast urbanism and endangered sustainability in the Masdar City project. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 66–80.
- Cugurullo F (2018) Exposing smart cities and eco-cities: Frankenstein urbanism and the sustainability challenges of the experimental city. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 50(1): 73–92.
- Daher R (2013) Neoliberal urban transformations in the Arab city: Meta-narratives, urban disparities and the emergence of consumerist utopias and geographies of inequalities in Amman. *Environnement urbain / Urban Environment* 7: 99–115.
- Daily Nation (2015) Konza City partners with US business lobby. *Daily Nation*, 29 September. Available at: <http://www.nation.co.ke/business/Konza-City-partners-with-US-business-lobby-/996-2890134-qegnxdz/index.html> (accessed 6 February 2017).
- Das D (2019) In pursuit of being smart? A critical analysis of India's smart cities endeavor. *Urban Geography* 41(1): 55–78.
- DAT - Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire (2004) *Les orientations du Schéma National d'Aménagement du Territoire*. Rabat, Morocco: Royaume du Maroc.
- Datta A (2012) India's ecocity? Environment, urbanisation, and mobility in the making of Lavasa. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 30(6): 982–996.
- Datta A (2015a) A 100 smart cities, a 100 utopias. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 49–53.
- Datta A (2015b) New urban utopias of postcolonial India: 'Entrepreneurial urbanization' in Dholera Smart City, Gujarat. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 3–22.
- Datta A (2017) Introduction: Fast cities in an urban age. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 1–27.

- Datta A and Shaban A (2017) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- De Boeck F (2011) Inhabiting ocular ground: Kinshasa's future in the light of Congo's spectral urban politics. *Cultural Anthropology* 26(2): 263–286.
- DeLyser D, Herbert S, Aitken S, et al. (2010) Introduction: Engaging qualitative geography. In: DeLyser D, Herbert S, Aitken S, et al. (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 1–18.
- Devisme L, Dumont M and Roy É (2008) Le jeu des « bonnes pratiques » dans les opérations urbaines, entre normes et fabrique locale. *Espaces et Sociétés* (131): 15–31.
- Dixon DP and Jones III JP (2004) Poststructuralism. In: *A Companion to Cultural Geography*. The Wiley Blackwell Companion. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 79–107.
- Doba M-A (2017) Le Maroc finance entièrement la construction du stade de Dodoma en Tanzanie. *AfricaNow*, 11 December. Available at: <https://africanow.media/maroc-finance-entierement-construction-stade-de-dodoma-tanzanie/> (accessed 29 July 2020).
- Dorsey JM (2018) Saudi Arabia v. Morocco: Competing for the mantle of moderate Islam. In: *LobeLog*. Available at: <https://lobelog.com/saudi-arabia-v-morocco-competing-for-the-mantle-of-moderate-islam/> (accessed 27 July 2018).
- Duminy J, Odendaal N and Watson V (2014) Case study research in Africa: Methodological dimensions. In: Duminy J, Andreasen J, Lerise F, et al. (eds) *Planning and the Case Study Method in Africa: The Planner in Dirty Shoes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21–47.
- Duminy J, Watson V and Odendaal N (2014) Introduction. In: Duminy J, Andreasen J, Lerise F, et al. (eds) *Planning and the Case Study Method in Africa: The Planner in Dirty Shoes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–17.
- Duncan J and Duncan N (1988) (Re)reading the landscape. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 6(2): 117–126.
- Duncan JS (1993) Sites of representation - Place, time and the discourse of the Other. In: *Place/Culture/Representation*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 39–56.
- Easterling K (2014) *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space*. London; New York: Verso.
- Ede PN, Owei OB and Akarolo CI (2011) Does the greater Port Harcourt master plan 2008 meet aspirations for liveable city? In: *47th ISOCARP Congress: Liveable Cities: Urbanising World, Meeting the Challenge*, Wuhan, China, 2011. ISOCARP Paper Platform.

Available at: http://www.isocarp.net/projects/case_studies/cases/cs_info.asp-ID=1859.html.

Eko Atlantic Milestones (n.d.) Shaping the future. *Eko Atlantic Milestones* 1: 20. Available at: <https://www.ekoatlantic.com/milestones/EkoAtlantic-Milestones-Issue-1.pdf> (accessed 28 February 2017).

Elsheshtawy Y (2004) *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World*. London;New York: Routledge.

Enns C and Bersaglio B (2020) On the coloniality of “new” mega-infrastructure projects in East Africa. *Antipode* 52(1): 101–123.

Esposito N (2001) From meaning to meaning: The influence of translation techniques on non-English focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research* 11(4): 568–579.

Evans J and Jones P (2011) The walking interview: Methodology, mobility and place. *Applied geography* (31): 849–858.

Fält L (2019) New cities and the emergence of ‘privatized urbanism’ in Ghana. *Built Environment* 44(4): 438–460.

Fauveaud G (2020) The new frontiers of housing financialization in Phnom Penh, Cambodia: The condominium boom and the foreignization of housing markets in the Global South. *Housing Policy Debate* 30(4): 661–679.

Firmin M (2008) Unstructured interview. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* Given LM (ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Fishman R (1982) *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press.

Flyvberg B (2001) *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Förster T and Ammann C (2018) African cities and the development conundrum: Actors and agency in the urban grey zone. In: Ammann C and Förster T (eds) *African Cities and the Development Conundrum*. International Development Policy Series 10. Leiden; Boston: Brill, pp. 3–25.

Freedom House (2017) Freedom of the Press 2017. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/freedom-press-2017> (accessed 4 May 2018).

Gans HJ (2017) *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community*. Ebook Edition. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

- Gastrow C (2017) Aesthetic dissent: Urban redevelopment and political belonging in Luanda, Angola. *Antipode* 49(2): 377–396.
- Gillot G (2013) Le désir d'internationalité, dynamique et vecteur de la mise à niveau des villes marocaines. *Revista de Antropologie urbana* 1(1) :49-68.
- Gillot G (2014) La ville nouvelle coloniale au Maroc : moderne, salubre, verte, vaste. In: Leimdorfer F (ed.) *Dire Les Villes Nouvelles*. Les mots de la ville. Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, pp. 71–96. Available at: <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01272511> (accessed 2 March 2021).
- Global Construction Review (2017) Morocco agrees to help South Sudan build new capital city. *Global Construction Review*, 8 February. Available at: <http://www.globalconstructionreview.com/news/morocco-agrees-help-south-sudan-build-new-capital-city/> (accessed 23 February 2017).
- Goldman M (2011a) Speculating on the next world city. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 229–258.
- Goldman M (2011b) Speculative urbanism and the making of the next world city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(3): 555–581.
- González S (2011) Bilbao and Barcelona 'in motion'. How urban regeneration 'models' travel and mutate in the global flows of policy tourism. *Urban Studies* 48(7): 1397–1418.
- Graham S and Marvin S (2001) *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Grant B (2014) The edifice complex: Architecture and the political life of surplus in the new Baku. *Public Culture* 26(3): 501–528.
- Grant R (2015) Sustainable African urban futures: Stocktaking and critical reflection on proposed urban projects. *American Behavioral Scientist* 59(3): 294–310.
- Groupe Al Omrane (2019a) Historique. Available at: <https://www.alomrane.gov.ma/Le-groupe/Historique> (accessed 20 March 2019).
- Groupe Al Omrane (2019b) Présentation du groupe. Available at: <http://www.alomrane.gov.ma/Le-groupe/Presentation-du-groupe> (accessed 17 March 2019).
- Hachimi Alaoui N (2017) A 'time' to act: The 2015–20 development plan for greater Casablanca. *International Development Policy / Revue internationale de politique de développement* 8(8): 189–219.

- Hall P (2014) *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880*. 4th Edition. Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hall S (1992) New ethnicities. In: Donald J and Rattansi A (eds) *'Race', Culture and Difference*. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 252–259.
- Hall T and Hubbard P (1996) The entrepreneurial city: New urban politics, new urban geographies? *Progress in Human Geography* 20(2): 153–174.
- Hall T and Hubbard P (1998) *The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime, and Representation*. Chichester; New York: Wiley.
- Harris A and Moore S (2013) Planning histories and practices of circulating urban knowledge. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(5): 1499–1509.
- Harrison J and Hoyler M (eds) (2018) *Doing Global Urban Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Harrison P (2015) South–south relationships and the transfer of ‘best practice’: The case of Johannesburg, South Africa. *International Development Planning Review* 37(2): 205–223.
- Harroud T (2017a) Handicaps et contradictions du programme de villes nouvelles au Maroc. *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (29).
- Harroud T (2017b) Le programme des villes nouvelles au Maroc : Rupture ou prolongement d'un urbanisme de rattrapage ? *Revue Internationale d'Urbanisme - RIURBA* (4): 1–17.
- Harvey D (1989) From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71(1): 3–17.
- Harvey WS (2011) Strategies for conducting elite interviews. *Qualitative Research* 11(4): 431–441.
- Hay I (2000) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. South Melbourne, Vic.; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Healey P (2012) The universal and the contingent: Some reflections on the transnational flow of planning ideas and practices. *Planning Theory* 11(2): 188–207.
- Healey P (2013) Circuits of knowledge and techniques: The transnational flow of planning ideas and practices. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(5): 1510–1526.
- Herbert CW and Murray MJ (2015) Building from scratch: New cities, privatized urbanism and the spatial restructuring of Johannesburg after apartheid. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(3): 471–494.

- Hibou B (1998) Retrait ou redéploiement de l'État ? *Critique internationale* 1(4): 151–168.
- Hibou B (2004) From privatising the economy to privatising the state: An analysis of the continual formation of the state. In: *Privatizing the State*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 1–46.
- Hoffmann L (2011) Urban modeling and contemporary technologies of city-building in China: The production of regimes of green urbanisms. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 55–76.
- Holston J (1989) *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Home RK (1990) Town planning and garden cities in the British colonial empire 1910–1940. *Planning Perspectives* 5(1). Routledge: 23–37.
- Huat CB (2011) Singapore as model: Planning innovations, knowledge experts. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 27–54.
- Huxley M (2013) Historicizing planning, problematizing participation. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(5): 1527–1541.
- InfoMédiaire (2012) Nabil Benabdellah, Ministre de l'Habitat, de l'Urbanisme et de la Politique de la ville. *InfoMédiaire*, 22 June. Available at: http://www.infomediaire.net/invite_du_mois/nabil-benabdellah-ministre-de-lhabitat-de-lurbanisme-et-de-la-politique-de-la-ville/ (accessed 28 February 2017).
- Jacobs JM (2012) Urban geographies I: Still thinking cities relationally. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(3): 412–422.
- James A (2013) Seeking the analytic imagination: Reflections on the process of interpreting qualitative data. *Qualitative Research* 13(5): 562–577.
- Jazeel T (2015) Utopian urbanism and representational city-ness: On the Dholera before Dholera Smart City. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1). SAGE Publications: 27–30. DOI: 10.1177/2043820614565866.
- Jedwab R and Storeygard A (2019) Economic and political factors in infrastructure investment: Evidence from railroads and roads in Africa 1960–2015. *Economic History of Developing Regions* 34(2): 156–208.
- Jelidi C (2008) La fabrication d'une ville nouvelle sous le Protectorat français au Maroc (1912–1956) : Fès-nouvelle. *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (16): 77–82.

- Jessop B (1997) The entrepreneurial city: Re-Imaging localities, redesigning economic governance, or restructuring Capital? In: Jewson N and MacGregor S (eds) *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions*. 1st Edition. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 28–41.
- Jessop B (1999) The changing governance of welfare: Recent trends in its primary functions, scale, and modes of coordination. *Social Policy & Administration* 33(4): 348–359.
- Jessop B (2002) Liberalism, neoliberalism, and urban governance: A state-theoretical Perspective. *Antipode* 34(3): 452–472.
- Jessop B and Sum N-L (2000) An entrepreneurial city in action: Hong Kong's emerging strategies in and for (inter)urban competition. *Urban Studies* 37(12): 2287–2313.
- Jiang Y, Mohabir N, Ma R, et al. (2017) Sorting through neoliberal variations of ghost cities in China. *Land Use Policy* 69: 445–453.
- Jokela S (2020) Transformative city branding and the evolution of the entrepreneurial city: The case of 'rand New Helsinki'. *Urban Studies* 57(10): 2031–2046.
- Jorgensen MW and Phillips L (2002) *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London, GB: SAGE Publications.
- Kadiri G (2017) Avec l'éco-cité de Zenata, le Maroc veut créer un modèle pour les villes africaines. *Le Monde*, 29 August. Casablanca. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/08/29/avec-l-eco-cite-de-zenata-le-maroc-veut-creer-un-modele-pour-les-ville-africaines_5178122_3212.html (accessed 18 November 2020).
- Kalia R (2000) *Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City*. Updated edition. New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kanai M and Kutz W (2011) Entrepreneurialism in the globalising city-region of Tangier, Morocco. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 102(3): 346–360.
- Kavaratzis M (2004) From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. *Place Branding* 1(1): 58–73.
- Kavaratzis M and Ashworth GJ (2006) City branding: An effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick? *Place Branding* 2(3): 183–194.
- Keeton R (2011) *Rising in the East: Contemporary New Towns in Asia*. Amsterdam: Sun Architecture.
- Keeton R and Provoost M (eds) (2019) *To Build a City in Africa: A History and a Manual*. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers.

- Kemmer L and Simone A (2021) Standing by the promise: Acts of anticipation in Rio and Jakarta. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 39(4): 573-589.
- Kennedy SM (2016) Urban policy mobilities, argumentation and the case of the model city. *Urban Geography* 37(1): 96-116.
- Khirfan L, Momani B and Jaffer Z (2013) Whose authority? Exporting Canadian urban planning expertise to Jordan and Abu Dhabi. *Geoforum* 50: 1-9.
- Kim C (2010) Place promotion and symbolic characterization of New Songdo City, South Korea. *Cities* 27(1): 13-19.
- King Anthony D (1980) Exporting planning: The colonial and neo-colonial experience. In: Cherry GE (ed.) *Shaping an Urban World*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press, pp. 203-226.
- Kinossian N (2012) 'Urban entrepreneurialism' in the post-socialist city: Government-led urban development projects in Kazan, Russia. *International Planning Studies* 17(4): 333-352.
- Koch N (2010) The monumental and the miniature: Imagining 'modernity' in Astana. *Social & Cultural Geography* 11(8): 769-787.
- Koch N (2013a) Introduction – Field methods in 'closed contexts': Undertaking research in authoritarian states and places. *Area* 45(4): 390-395.
- Koch N (2013b) The 'heart' of Eurasia? Kazakhstan's centrally located capital city. *Central Asian Survey* 32(2): 134-147.
- Koch N (2014a) Bordering on the modern: Power, practice and exclusion in Astana. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 39(3): 432-443.
- Koch N (2014b) "Building glass refrigerators in the desert": Discourses of urban sustainability and nation building in Qatar. *Urban Geography* 35(8): 1118-1139.
- Koch N (2018) *The Geopolitics of Spectacle: Space, Synecdoche, and the New Capitals of Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Kong L and Yeoh BSA (2003) *The Politics of Landscapes in Singapore: Constructions of 'Nation'*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Kundu R (2017) "Their houses on our land" Perforations and blockades in the planning of New Town Rajarhat, Kolkata. In: *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 123-147.

- La Vie Éco (2012) Villes nouvelles au Maroc : la tutelle veut accélérer la cadence. *La Vie Éco*, 27 November. Available at: <https://www.lavieeco.com/news/economie/villes-nouvelles-au-maroc-la-tutelle-veut-acceler-la-cadence-23918.html> (accessed 25 June 2019).
- Lahlou H (2015) *Villes nouvelles, état des lieux et perspectives: Cas de la ville nouvelle de Tamesna*. Mastère en Management Public (unpublished). Institut Supérieur de Commerce et d'Administration des Entreprises, Rabat.
- Larner W and Laurie N (2010) Travelling technocrats, embodied knowledges: Globalising privatisation in telecoms and water. *Geoforum* 41(2): 218–226.
- Laub K and Associated Press (2017) Jordan's plan of shiny city in the desert met by skepticism. *Washington Post*, 8 December. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/jordan-plan-of-shiny-city-in-the-desert-met-by-skepticism/2017/12/08/8041a64e-dbde-11e7-a241-0848315642d0_story.html (accessed 19 December 2017).
- Lauermann J (2018) Municipal statecraft: Revisiting the geographies of the entrepreneurial city. *Progress in Human Geography* 42(2): 205–224.
- Laurier E (2010) Participant observation. In: Clifford N, French S, and Valentine G (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, pp. 116–130.
- Lay T (2011) Letters: Africa's new elite. *The Guardian*, 27 December. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/27/africa-new-elite-congo-kinshasa> (accessed 8 January 2018).
- Leão Rego R (2011) A tropical enterprise: British planning ideas in a private settlement in Brazil. *Planning Perspectives* 26(2): 261–282.
- Leitner H and Sheppard E (2018) From Kampung to condos? Contested accumulations through displacement in Jakarta. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 50(2): 437–456.
- Levien M (2013) Regimes of dispossession: From steel towns to special economic zones. *Development and Change* 44(2): 381–407.
- Ley D and Duncan J (1993) Epilogue. In: *Place/Culture/Representation*. London; New York: Routledge, pp. 329–333.
- Longhurst R (1994) The geography closest in - the body... the politics of pregnability. *Australian Geographical Studies* 32(2): 214–223.
- Longhurst R (2010) Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In: Clifford N, French S, and Valentine G (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 103–115.

- Lui T (2008) City-branding without content: Hong Kong's aborted West Kowloon mega-project, 1998-2006. *International Development Planning Review* 30(3): 215–226.
- Lukacs M (2014) New, privatized African city heralds climate apartheid. *The Guardian*, 21 January. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/true-north/2014/jan/21/new-privatized-african-city-heralds-climate-apartheid> (accessed 7 February 2017).
- Lumumba J (2013) Why Africa should be wary of its 'new cities'. In: The Rockefeller Foundation's informal city dialogues. Available at: <https://nextcity.org/informalcity/entry/why-africa-should-be-wary-of-its-new-cities> (accessed 24 January 2017).
- Lynch CR (2019) Representations of utopian urbanism and the feminist geopolitics of "new city" development. *Urban Geography* 40(8): 1148–1167.
- Marcinkoski C (2015) *The City That Never Was*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- MATNUHPV - Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville (2019) Villes et Zones d'Urbanisation Nouvelles – Département de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville. Available at: http://www.mhpnv.gov.ma/?page_id=3465 (accessed 25 June 2019).
- Mbembe A (2001) *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McCann E (2008) Expertise, truth, and urban policy mobilities: Global circuits of knowledge in the development of Vancouver, Canada's 'four pillar' drug strategy. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 40(4): 885–904.
- McCann E (2011a) Urban policy mobilities and global circuits of knowledge: Toward a research agenda. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101(1): 107–130.
- McCann E (2011b) Veritable inventions: Cities, policies and assemblage. *Area* 43(2): 143–147.
- McCann E (2013) Policy boosterism, policy mobilities, and the extrospective city. *Urban Geography* 34(1): 5–29.
- McCann E and Ward K (2010) Relationality/territoriality: Toward a conceptualization of cities in the world. *Geoforum* 41(2): 175–184.
- McCann E and Ward K (2012a) Assembling urbanism: Following policies and 'studying through' the sites and situations of policy making. *Environment and Planning A* 44(1): 42–51.
- McCann E and Ward K (2012b) Policy assemblages, mobilities and mutations: Toward a multidisciplinary conversation. *Political Studies Review* 10(3): 325–332.

- McCann E, Roy A and Ward K (2013) Assembling/worlding cities. *Urban Geography* 34(5): 581–589.
- McDowell L (1992) Doing gender: Feminism, feminists and research methods in human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 17(4): 399–416.
- McFarlane C (2011) The city as a machine for learning. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36(3): 360–376.
- McKinsey & Company (n.d.) Capital Projects & Infrastructure. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/capital-projects-and-infrastructure/how-we-help-clients/cities> (accessed 6 February 2017).
- McKinsey Global Institute (2010) Lions on the move: The progress and potential of African economies. June. McKinsey & Company. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/middle-east-and-africa/lions-on-the-move>.
- Merlin P (1971) *New Towns: Regional Planning and Development*; (trans. M Sparks). London: Methuen & Co.
- Meyer DZ and Avery LM (2009) Excel as a qualitative data analysis tool. *Field Methods* 21(1): 91–112.
- MHU - Ministère délégué chargé de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme (MHU) (2004) Villes nouvelles et villes satellites. In: *Colloque des journées d'études tenues au siège du Ministère chargé de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme*, Rabat, Morocco, 14 December, p. 206. Royaume du Maroc.
- Moisseron J-Y and Daguzan J-F (2017) *Les ambitions régionales marocaines en Afrique Sub-saharienne : Une diplomatie royale*. Observatoire du monde arabo-musulman et du Sahel, October. Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS). Available at: <https://www.frstrategie.org/programmes/observatoire-du-monde-arabo-musulman-et-du-sahel/les-ambitions-regionales-marocaines-en-afrique-sub-saharienne-une-diplomatie-royale-21> (accessed 26 June 2018).
- Morris J and Winchester S (2005) *Stones of Empire: The Buildings of the Raj*. Reissue Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moser S (2008) Personality: A new positionality? *Area* 40(3): 383–392.
- Moser S (2010) Putrajaya: Malaysia's new federal administrative capital. *Cities* 27(4): 285–297.
- Moser S (2011) Constructing cultural heritage in new cities in Malaysia and Indonesia. *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter* (57): 30–31.

- Moser S (2013) New cities in the Muslim world: The cultural politics of planning an ‘Islamic’ city. In: Hopkins P, Kong L, and Olson E (eds) *Religion and Place: Landscape, Politics and Piety*. New York: Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 39–55.
- Moser S (2015) New cities: Old wine in new bottles? *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1). SAGE Publications: 31–35.
- Moser S (2018) Forest city, Malaysia, and Chinese expansionism. *Urban Geography* 39(6). Routledge: 935–943.
- Moser S (2019) “Two days to shape the future”: A Saudi Arabian node in the transnational circulation of new cities ideas. In: Molotch H and Ponzini D (eds) *The New Arab Urban: Gulf Cities of Wealth, Ambition, and Distress*. New York: NYU Press, pp. 213–232.
- Moser S (2020) New cities: Engineering social exclusions. *One Earth* 2(2): 125–127.
- Moser S (ed.) (Forthcoming) *Atlas of New Cities*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press.
- Moser S and Avery E (2021) The multi-scalar politics of urban greening in Forest City, Malaysia. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 60: 127068. DOI: 10.1016/j.ufug.2021.127068.
- Moser S and Côté-Roy L (2021) New cities: Power, profit, and prestige. *Geography Compass* 15(1): 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12549>.
- Moser S and Wilbur A (2017) Constructing heritage through state architecture in Indonesia’s Riau Islands. *ABE Journal. Architecture beyond Europe* (11). DOI: 10.4000/abe.3643.
- Moser S, Swain M and Alkhabbaz MH (2015) King Abdullah Economic City: Engineering Saudi Arabia’s post-oil future. *Cities* 45: 71–80.
- Moser S, Côté-Roy L and Korah PI (2021) The uncharted foreign actors, investments, and urban models in African new city building. *Urban Geography*: 1–8. DOI: 10.1080/02723638.2021.1916698.
- Mouloudi H (2010) Reactions ‘from below’ to big urban projects: The case of Rabat. *Built Environment* 36(2): 230–244.
- Mouloudi H (2014) Les projets d’aménagement des fronts d’eau de Rabat (Maroc). Systèmes d’action et stratégies d’acteurs. *Les Cahiers d’EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (22): 129–130.
- Mouton M and Shatkin G (2020) Strategizing the for-profit city: The state, developers, and urban production in Mega Manila. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52(2): 403–422.

- Müller-Mahn D, Mkutu K and Kioko E (2021) Megaprojects—mega failures? The politics of aspiration and the transformation of rural Kenya. *The European Journal of Development Research* 33(4): 1069–1090.
- Mullins PD and Shwayri ST (2016) Green Cities and “IT839”: A new paradigm for economic growth in South Korea. *Journal of Urban Technology* 23(2): 47–64.
- Mumo M (2014) Scandals mar dream of Konza technopolis. *Daily Nation*, 3 May. Kenya. Available at: <http://mobile.nation.co.ke/business/Scandals-mar-dream-of-Konza-technopolis/1950106-2302576-format-xhtml-2fswwdz/index.html> (accessed 28 February 2017).
- Murray MJ (2015a) ‘City doubles’ re-urbanism in Africa. In: Miraftab F, Wilson D, and Salo K (eds) *Cities and Inequalities in a Global and Neoliberal World*. London, GB: Routledge, pp. 92–109.
- Murray MJ (2015b) Waterfall City (Johannesburg): Privatized urbanism in extremis. *Environment and Planning A* 47(3): 503–520.
- Murray MJ (2017) Frictionless utopias for the contemporary urban age: Large-scale, master-planned redevelopment projects in urbanizing Africa. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 31–53.
- Myers G (2011) *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice*. London ; New York: Zed Books.
- N.A. (2014) Lancement à Abidjan du projet Akwaba, du groupe Alliances. *Medias24*, 26 February. Available at: <https://www.medias24.com/ECONOMIE/ECONOMIE/9523-Lancement-a-Abidjan-du-projet-Akwaba-du-groupe-Alliances.html> (accessed 12 November 2020).
- Namane W and Gharbaoui S (2017) What Morocco’s apparent pivot to Sub-Saharan Africa means. *The National*, 7 March. Available at: <https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/what-morocco-s-apparent-pivot-to-sub-saharan-africa-means-1.63743> (accessed 31 July 2018).
- Narain V (2009) Growing city, shrinking hinterland: Land acquisition, transition and conflict in peri-urban Gurgaon, India. *Environment and Urbanization* 21(2): 501–512.
- Nast H and Pile S (eds) (1998) *Places Through the Body*. London: Routledge.
- Navez-Bouchanine F (2012) Les nouvelles voies de la négociation dans les politiques de résorption des bidonvilles au Maroc: Entre recasement et accompagnement social. In: Deboulet A (ed.) *Effets Sociaux Des Politiques Urbaines: L’entre-Deux Des Politiques*

Institutionnelles et Des Dynamiques Sociales. Rabat, Paris, Tours: Éditions Karthala; Centre Jacques Berque; Emam-CITERES, pp. 166–218.

- New Cities Foundation (2016) Members. In: *New Cities Foundation*. Available at: <http://www.newcitiesfoundation.org/our-members/> (accessed 24 January 2017).
- Njoh AJ (2008) Colonial philosophies, urban space, and racial segregation in British and French colonial Africa. *Journal of Black Studies* 38(4): 579–599.
- Noori Farzan A (2021) Akon hasn't even built his first 'futuristic' city yet, but Uganda is giving him land for a second. *Washington Post*, 6 April. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/04/06/akon-city-uganda/> (accessed 19 May 2021).
- Odalo B (2013) Pomp as Kibaki launches Konza Technology City. *Daily Nation*, 24 January. Kenya. Available at: <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Pomp-as-Kibaki-launches-Konza-technology-city/1056-1673692-cs02lw/index.html> (accessed 28 February 2017).
- Oduntan G (2015) Why Nigeria's plans for a dream Eldorado city are not radical enough. *The Conversation*, 22 July. Available at: <http://theconversation.com/why-nigerias-plans-for-a-dream-eldorado-city-are-not-radical-enough-44874> (accessed 28 February 2017).
- Olawepo RA (2010) Perspectives on urban renewal and transportation development in Lagos: Implications for urban development in Nigeria. *African Research Review* 4(1): 273–287.
- Oluikpe N (2015) Nigeria: Eko Atlantic - Experts speak on impact of land reclamation. *Daily Independent*, 22 September. Lagos. Available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201509221344.html> (accessed 28 February 2017).
- Ong A (2011) Introduction: Worlding cities, or the art of being global. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 1–26.
- Osborn FJ and Whittick A (1969) *The New Towns: The Answer to Megalopolis*. London: Leonard Hill Books.
- Oubenal M and Zeroual A (2017) Gouverner par la gouvernance : Les nouvelles modalités de contrôle politique des élites économiques au Maroc. *Critique internationale* 74(1): 9–32.
- Palys T (2008) Purposive sampling. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* Given LM (ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Parikh A (2015) *The Private City: Planning, Property, and Protest in the Making of Lavasa New Town, India*. Doctoral Thesis. London School of Economics and Political Science, London. Available at: http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3203/1/Parikh_The_Private_City.pdf (accessed 10 November 2020).

- Park SH, Shin HB and Kang HS (eds) (2020) *Exporting Urban Korea?: Reconsidering the Korean Urban Development Experience*. London: Routledge.
- Parnell S and Robinson J (2012) (Re)theorizing cities from the Global South: Looking beyond neoliberalism. *Urban Geography* 33(4): 593–617.
- Peck J (2002) Political economies of scale: Fast policy, interscalar relations, and neoliberal workfare. *Economic Geography* 78(3): 331–360.
- Peck J (2011) Geographies of policy: From transfer-diffusion to mobility-mutation. *Progress in Human Geography* 35(6): 773–797.
- Peck J (2014) Entrepreneurial urbanism: Between uncommon sense and dull compulsion. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 96(4): 396–401.
- Peck J and Theodore N (2010) Mobilizing policy: Models, methods, and mutations. *Geoforum* 41(2): 169–174.
- Peck J and Theodore N (2015) *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft at the Thresholds of Neoliberalism*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Peck J and Tickell A (2002) Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode* 34(3): 380–404.
- Penpecioglu M and Taşan-Kok T (2016) Alienated and politicized? Young planners' confrontation with entrepreneurial and authoritarian state intervention in urban development in Turkey. *European Planning Studies* 24(6): 1037–1055.
- Phelps NA and Miao JT (2020) Varieties of urban entrepreneurialism. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 10(3): 304–321.
- Phelps NA, Bunnell T, Miller MA, et al. (2014) Urban inter-referencing within and beyond a decentralized Indonesia. *Cities* 39: 37–49.
- Philifert P (2010) Maroc : Des études urbaines saisies par le changement ? *Géocarrefour* 85(4): 323–331.
- Philifert P (2014) Morocco 2011/2012: Persistence of past urban policies or a new historical sequence for urban action? *Built Environment* 40(1): 72–84.
- Pieterse E (2018) The politics of governing African urban spaces. In: Ammann C and Förster T (eds) *African Cities and the Development Conundrum*. International Development Policy Series 10. Leiden; Boston: Brill, pp. 26–52.
- Pieterse E (2019) Debunking myths about African urbanization. In: Keeton R and Provoost M (eds) *To Build a City in Africa: A History and a Manual*. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, pp. 46–56.

- Pieterse DE and Parnell S (eds) (2014) *Africa's Urban Revolution: Policy Pressures*. London, UK: Zed Books.
- Pieterse E and Simone A (eds) (2013) *Rogue Urbanism: Emergent African Cities*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.
- Pitcher A (2012) Lions, tigers, and emerging markets: Africa's development dilemmas. *Current History* 111(745): 163–168.
- Pitcher A (2017) Entrepreneurial governance and the expansion of public investment funds in Africa. In: Harbeson JW and Rothchild D (eds) *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order*. 6th ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 45–68.
- Planel S (2009) Transformations de l'État et politiques territoriales dans le Maroc contemporain. *L'Espace Politique* (7). DOI: 10.4000/espacepolitique.1234.
- Ponzini D (2011) Large scale development projects and star architecture in the absence of democratic politics: The case of Abu Dhabi, UAE. *Cities* 28(3): 251–259.
- Pow CP (2014) License to travel. *City* 18(3): 287–306.
- Prince R (2012) Policy transfer, consultants and the geographies of governance. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(2): 188–203.
- Prince R (2017) Local or global policy? Thinking about policy mobility with assemblage and topology. *Area* 49(3): 335–341.
- Qian Z (2011) Building Hangzhou's new city center: Mega project development and entrepreneurial urban governance in China. *Asian Geographer* 28(1): 3–19.
- Rabinow P (1992) France in Morocco: Technocosmopolitanism and middling modernism. *Assemblage* (17): 53–57.
- Ramachandraiah C (2016) Making of Amaravati: A landscape of speculation and intimidation. *Economic & Political Weekly* L51(17): 68–75.
- Rapoport E (2014) Utopian visions and real estate dreams: The eco-city past, present and future. *Geography Compass* 8(2): 137–149.
- Rapoport E (2015) Globalising sustainable urbanism: The role of international masterplanners. *Area* 47(2): 110–115.
- Rapoport E and Hult A (2017) The travelling business of sustainable urbanism: International consultants as norm-setters. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 49(8): 1779–1796.

- Rebentisch H, Thompson C, Côté-Roy L, et al. (2020) Unicorn planning: Lessons from the rise and fall of an American ‘smart’ mega-development. *Cities* 101: 102686. DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2020.102686.
- Reboredo R and Brill F (2019) Entre le mondial et le local: Inter-référencement urbain et évolution d’un méga-projet sino-sud-africain. *Perspectives Chinoises* 149(4). French Centre for Research on Contemporary China: 9–18.
- Rendeavour (2015) Our Projects. Available at: <http://www.rendeavour.com/projects/> (accessed 24 January 2017).
- Reporters without borders (2020) Morocco / Western Sahara: Judicial harassment. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/morocco-western-sahara> (accessed 14 January 2021).
- Rizzo A and Glasson J (2012) Iskandar Malaysia. *Cities* 29(6): 417–427.
- Robinson J (2006) *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development*. Questioning Cities. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Robinson J (2015) ‘Arriving at’ urban policies: The topological spaces of urban policy mobility. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(4): 831–834.
- Robinson J (2016) Comparative urbanism: New geographies and cultures of theorizing the urban. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40(1): 187–199.
- Rogers A, Castree N and Kitchin R (2013) Entrepreneurial city. In: *A Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford University Press. Available at: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-500> (accessed 24 November 2019).
- Rose G (1997) Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography* 21(3): 305–320.
- Ross A (1999) *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property Value in Disney’s New Town*. 1st ed. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Ross K (2015) “No sir, she was not a fool in the field”: Gendered risks and sexual violence in immersed cross-cultural fieldwork. *The Professional Geographer* 67(2): 180–186.
- Rossmann V (2016) *Capital Cities: Varieties and Patterns of Development and Relocation*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Rousseau M and Harroud T (2019) Satellite cities turned to ghost towns? On the contradictions of Morocco’s spatial policy. *International Planning Studies* 24(3–4): 341–352.

- Roy A (2009a) The 21st-century metropolis: New geographies of theory. *Regional Studies* 43(6): 819–830.
- Roy A (2009b) Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning Theory* 8(1): 76–87.
- Roy A (2011) The blockade of the world-class city: Dialectical images of Indian urbanism. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities*. Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 259–278.
- Roy A (2012) Ethnographic circulations: Space - time relations in the worlds of poverty management. *Environment and Planning A* 44: 31–41.
- Roy A (2016) Reimagining resilience: Urbanization and identity in Ramallah and Rawabi. *City* 20(3): 368–388.
- Roy A and Ong A (2011) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Royaume du Maroc (2015) *Relations Maroc-Afrique: L'ambition d'une 'nouvelle frontière'*. July. Rabat, Morocco: Ministère de l'économie et des finances, Direction des études et des prévisions financières. Available at: [https://www.finances.gov.ma/Publication/depf/2014/Relations%20Maroc-Afrique%20%20L'ambition%20d'une%20nouvelle%20fronti%C3%A8re%20actualisation%20juillet%202015%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.finances.gov.ma/Publication/depf/2014/Relations%20Maroc-Afrique%20%20L'ambition%20d'une%20nouvelle%20fronti%C3%A8re%20actualisation%20juillet%202015%20(2).pdf) (accessed 29 July 2020).
- Royaume du Maroc (ed.) (2017) Texte intégral du Discours prononcé par SM le Roi Mohammed VI devant le 28ème sommet de l'Union africaine (UA) à Addis-Abeba. Available at: <http://www.maroc.ma/fr/discours-royaux/texte-integral-du-discours-prononce-par-sm-le-roi-mohammed-vi-devant-le-28eme-sommet> (accessed 29 July 2020).
- Sall M and Reid S (2013) Africa's turn: A conversation with Macky Sall. *Foreign Affairs* 92(5): 2–8.
- Sassen S (2014) *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Saumure K and Given LM (2008) Convenience sample. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* Given LM (ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Sawyer L, Schmid C, Streule M, et al. (2021) Bypass urbanism: Re-ordering center-periphery relations in Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 53(4): 675–703.
- SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata (2013a) Zenata, a Moroccan eco-city (press folder). Société d'aménagement Zenata, Groupe CDG. Available at: <http://www.zenataecocity.ma/sites/default/files/telechargements/press-kit-en.pdf>.

- SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata (2013b) Zenata, Éco-Cité Marocaine: Dossier de Presse. Groupe CDG.
- SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata (2017) Éco-Cité Zenata: Dossier de presse. Groupe CDG.
- SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata (n.d.) Référentiel Éco-Cité. Available at: <http://www.zenataecocity.ma/une-ville-eco-concue/referentiel-eco-cite> (accessed 18 November 2020).
- SAZ - Société d'Aménagement Zenata, Reichen & Robert Associés, Agence Ter, et al. (2013) Zenata une Éco-Cité Casablancaise: Phase II Études de la tranche opérationnelle.
- Schindler S and Kanai JM (2021) Getting the territory right: Infrastructure-led development and the re-emergence of spatial planning strategies. *Regional Studies* 55(1): 40–51.
- Scott AJ and Storper M (2015) The nature of cities: The scope and limits of urban theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(1): 1–15
- Scott JC (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Seekins DM (2009) 'Runaway chickens' and Myanmar identity. *City* 13(1): 63–70.
- Senhaji M (2020) Eaux usées à Paloma Beach: La Société d'Aménagement Zenata livre sa version des faits. *Le Matin*, 23 May. Available at: <https://lematin.ma/express/2020/eaux-usees-paloma-beach-societe-damenagement-zenata-livre-version-faits/337895.html> (accessed 27 May 2020).
- Serhir S (2017) Hay Ryad à Rabat : De la ville nouvelle au quartier ? *Les Cahiers d'EMAM. Études sur le Monde Arabe et la Méditerranée* (29). DOI: 10.4000/emam.1376.
- Shatkin G (2007) Global cities of the South: Emerging perspectives on growth and inequality. *Cities* 24(1): 1–15.
- Shatkin G (2011) Planning privatopolis: Representation and contestation in the development of urban integrated mega-projects. In: Roy A and Ong A (eds) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 77–97.
- Shatkin G (2014) Reinterpreting the meaning of the 'Singapore model': State capitalism and urban planning. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38(1): 116–137.
- Shatkin G (2016) The real estate turn in policy and planning: Land monetization and the political economy of peri-urbanization in Asia. *Cities* 53: 141–149.

- Shatkin G (2017) *Cities for Profit: The Real Estate Turn in Asia's Urban Politics*. Ithaca, NY; London, GB: Cornell University Press.
- Shepard W (2015) *Ghost Cities of China: The Story of Cities without People in the World's Most Populated Country*. London, UK: Zed Books.
- Shin HB (2017) Envisioned by the state: Entrepreneurial urbanism and the making of Songdo City, South Korea. In: Datta A and Shaban A (eds) *Mega-Urbanization in the Global South: Fast Cities and New Urban Utopias of the Postcolonial State*. Kindle Edition. Routledge Studies in Urbanism and the City. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 83–100.
- Shin HB and Kim S-H (2016) The developmental state, speculative urbanisation and the politics of displacement in gentrifying Seoul. *Urban Studies* 53(3): 540–559.
- Shoaib T and Keivani R (2015) Branding the new city: Exploring place branding in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Place Management and Development; Bingley* 8(3): 254–265.
- Showers KB (2011) Electrifying Africa: An environmental history with policy implications. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 93(3): 193–221.
- Shwayri ST (2013) A model Korean ubiquitous eco-city? The politics of making Songdo. *Journal of Urban Technology* 20(1): 39–55.
- Sitri Z and Hanzaz M (2016) Pouvoirs et contre-pouvoirs en matière de planification urbaine au Maroc: pour une nouvelle régulation des pouvoirs de décision. *Revue Internationale d'Urbanisme - RIURBA* (2): 1–26.
- Smith C (2017) 'Our changes'? Visions of the future in Nairobi. *Urban Planning* 2(1): 31–40.
- Smith FM (2010) Working in different cultures. In: *Key Methods in Geography*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 157–172.
- Sneddon C (2015) *Concrete Revolution: Large Dams, Cold War Geopolitics, and the US Bureau of Reclamation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Splinter E and Leynseele YV (2019) The conditional city: Emerging properties of Kenya's satellite cities. *International Planning Studies* 24(3–4): 308–324.
- Stake RE (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Tali K (2014) Pôle urbain de Diamnadio: Alliances exporte son savoir-faire au Sénégal. *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, 26 May. Available at: <https://aujourd'hui.ma/economie/immobilier/pole-urbain-de-diamnadio-alliances-exporte-son-savoir-faire-au-senegal-110148> (accessed 12 November 2020).
- Taxe CS (1996) Mystics, modernists, and constructions of Brasilia. *Ecumene* 3(1): 43–61.

- Tayeb S (2019) The Palestinian McCity in the Neoliberal Era. MERIP-Middle East Research and Information Project, Spring. Available at: <https://merip.org/2019/07/the-palestinian-mccity-in-the-neoliberal-era/> (accessed 01 April 2021)
- Temenos C and McCann E (2012) The local politics of policy mobility: Learning, persuasion, and the production of a municipal sustainability fix. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 44(6): 1389–1406.
- Temenos C and McCann E (2013) Geographies of policy mobilities. *Geography Compass* 7(5): 344–357.
- Temenos C and Ward K (2018) Examining global urban policy mobilities. In: Harrison J and Hoyler M (eds) *Doing Global Urban Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 66–80.
- Temple B and Edwards R (2002) Interpreters/translators and cross-language research: Reflexivity and border crossings. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1(2): 1–12.
- thebizcouch (2014) *Thebizcouch On the Road: Hope City Documentary*. Accra, Ghana. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yovwD5JuMQ (accessed 28 February 2017).
- Turner S (2010) Research Note: The silenced assistant. Reflections of invisible interpreters and research assistants. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 51(2): 206–219.
- Turok I (2013) Securing the resurgence of African cities. *Local Economy* 28(2): 142–157.
- UN-Habitat (2014) *State of African Cities Report 2014. Re-Imagining Sustainable Urban Transitions*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat. Available at: <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/download-manager-files/State%20of%20African%20Cities%202014.pdf>.
- Vale LJ (2008) *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*. 2nd Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Valentine G (2005) Tell me about...: Using interviews as a research methodology. In: Flowerdew R and Martin D (eds) *Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students Doing a Research Project*. 2nd Edition. Harlow, England; New York: Routledge, pp. 110–127.
- Van Noorloos F and Kloosterboer M (2018) Africa's new cities: The contested future of urbanisation. *Urban Studies* 55(6): 1223–1241.
- Van Noorloos F and Leung M (2017) Circulating Asian urbanisms: An analysis of policy and media discourse in Africa and Latin America. In: Woertz E (ed.) *Reconfiguration of the*

- Global South - Africa and Latin America and the 'Asian Century'*. Europa Regional Perspectives. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Van Noorloos F, Klaufus C and Steel G (2019) Land in urban debates: Unpacking the grab–development dichotomy. *Urban Studies* 56(5): 855–867.
- Van Noorloos F, Avianto D and Opiyo RO (2019) New master-planned cities and local land rights: The case of Konza Techno City, Kenya. *Built Environment* 44(4): 420–437.
- Venuti L (ed.) (2004) *The Translation Studies Reader*. 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Verdeil E (2005) Expertises nomades au Sud. Éclairages sur la circulation des modèles urbains. *Géocarrefour* 80(3): 165–169.
- Vogelpohl A (2019) Global expertise, local convincing power: Management consultants and preserving the entrepreneurial city. *Urban Studies* 56(1): 97–114.
- Wakeman R (2016) *Practicing Utopia: An Intellectual History of the New Town Movement*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wamsler L, Gudmundsson S and Johannesen S (2015) *Drowning Megacities*. Available at: http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2015/drowning_megacities/ (accessed 18 January 2017).
- Ward K (2006) 'Policies in motion', urban management and state restructuring: The trans-local expansion of business improvement districts. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30(1): 54–75.
- Warren S (2017) Pluralising the walking interview: Researching (im)mobilities with Muslim women. *Social and Cultural Geography* 18(6): 786–807.
- Watson V (2009a) Seeing from the South: Refocusing urban planning on the globe's central urban issues. *Urban Studies* 46(11): 2259–2275.
- Watson V (2009b) 'The planned city sweeps the poor away...': Urban planning and 21st century urbanisation. *Progress in Planning* 72(3): 151–193.
- Watson V (2014) African urban fantasies: Dreams or nightmares? *Environment and Urbanization* 26(1): 215–231.
- Watson V (2015) The allure of 'smart city' rhetoric: India and Africa. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 5(1): 36–39.
- Watson V (2020) Digital visualisation as a new driver of urban change in Africa. *Urban Planning* 5(2): 35–43.

- Watson V and Agbola B (2013) Who will plan Africa's cities? *Africa Research Institute - Counterpoints*, 12 September. Available at: <http://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/publications/who-will-plan-africas-cities/> (accessed 6 February 2017).
- World Finance (2019) Inspiring a tourism revolution in Morocco. *World Finance*, 6 March. Available at: <https://www.worldfinance.com/wealth-management/inspiring-a-tourism-revolution-in-morocco> (accessed 25 November 2019).
- Wright G (1987) Tradition in the service of modernity: Architecture and urbanism in French colonial policy, 1900-1930. *The Journal of Modern History* 59(2): 291–316.
- Wright G (1991) *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wu F (2003) The (post-) socialist entrepreneurial city as a state project: Shanghai's reglobalisation in question. *Urban Studies* 40(9): 1673–1698.
- Wu F (2020) The state acts through the market: 'State entrepreneurialism' beyond varieties of urban entrepreneurialism. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 10(3): 326–329.
- Yakas O (2001) *Islamabad, the Birth of a Capital*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Yin RK (2014) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Yu H (2014) China's "ghost cities". *East Asian Policy* 06(02): 33–43.
- Zaki L (ed.) (2011) *L'Action Urbaine Au Maghreb: Enjeux Professionnels et Politiques*. Paris: Karthala.
- Zemni S and Bogaert K (2009) Trade, security and neoliberal politics: Whither Arab reform? Evidence from the Moroccan case. *The Journal of North African Studies* 14(1): 91–107.
- Zemni S and Bogaert K (2011) Urban renewal and social development in Morocco in an age of neoliberal government. *Review of African Political Economy* 38(129): 403–417.
- Zoomers A, van Noorloos F, Otsuki K, et al. (2017) The rush for land in an urbanizing world: From land grabbing toward developing safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and landscapes. *World Development* 92: 242–252.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city-building actors

Appendix Table A. Interviews with actors of new city development in Morocco: List of participants					
	Date	Gender (M / F)	Professional title / Position	Institution / company	Primary project affiliation
1.	2016-07-14	F	Project Manager	Reichen & Robert & Associés	Zenata Eco-City
2.	2016-07-29	M	Senior real estate development and partnership manager	Société d'Aménagement et de Développement Vert (SADV)	Benguerir Green City
3.	2016-08-01	F	General director	Jnane Saïss Développement	Aïn Chkef, La Cité du Parc
4.	2016-08-01	M	Chief executive	Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ)	Zenata Eco-City
5.	2016-08-02	M	Director of Africa Business School	Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P)	Benguerir Green City
6.	2016-08-10	M	Research officer, urban design and public space	Reichen & Robert & Associés	Zenata Eco-City
7.	2016-08-11	M	Project Manager (Anfa Park)	Agence d'Urbanisation et de Développement d'Anfa (AUDA)	Casa-Anfa
8.	2016-08-17	F	Department head, Urban poles and new cities	Ministry of Urbanism and National Planning, Urban Planning Branch	Villes Nouvelles Strategy
9.	2016-08-18	F	Civil Environmental Research Engineer, Head of the Energy Efficiency and Green Buildings Department	Institut de recherche en énergie solaire et en énergies nouvelles (IRESEN)	Benguerir Green City
10.	2016-08-23	F	Department head, Forecasting division	Ministry of Urbanism and National Planning, Land Use Planning Branch	Villes Nouvelles Strategy
11.	2016-08-24	F	Manager of sustainable development and quality, Engineering and social development branch, ex- project chief executive	Al Omrane	Tamesna; Villes Nouvelles Strategy
12.	2016-08-25	M	Department head, new cities	Al Omrane	Villes Nouvelles Strategy
13.	2016-08-26	M	Director of Development	Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ)	Zenata Eco-City
14.	2018-09-10	M	Financial controller and project manager	Al Omrane	Tamesna
15.	2018-09-12	M	Director of urban policy	Ministry of Housing and Urban Policy	Villes Nouvelles Strategy
16.	2018-09-14	M	Professor	Institut National d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme (INAU)	Villes Nouvelles Strategy

17.	2018-09-25	M; F	Head of Land and Social Support Department; Manager for social projects	Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ)	Zenata Eco-City
18.	2018-09-28	M	Ex-project director	Al Omrane	Tamesna
19.	2018-10-15	M	Manager in charge of developing zones of economic activity	Société d'Aménagement et de développement Vert (SADV)	Benguerir Green City
20.	2018-10-18	M	Project Manager, Interim Director in charge of implementation, and Sustainable development manager	Al Omrane	Tamesna
21.	2018-10-19	F	Architect	Casablanca Urban Agency	Zenata Eco-City
22.	2018-10-22	M	Urban Planning director	Aïn Harrouda Urban Commune	Zenata Eco-City
23.	2018-11-07	F	Urban development and design, project manager	Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	Zenata Eco-City
24.	2018-11-16	F	Architect	El Kelâa des Sraghna Urban Agency (Benguerir office)	Benguerir Green City
25.	2018-11-19	M	Senior Project Officer, Faculty of governance and economic and social sciences	Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P)	Benguerir Green City
26.	2018-11-21	M	Architect	Private architecture practice	Benguerir Green City
27.	2018-11-22	M	Director of Institutional, estate and legal affairs	OCP Administrative Center	Benguerir Green City/Tamesna
28.	2018-11-27	M	Lead architect and founder	AEM Agence Elie Mouyal	Benguerir Green City
29.	2018-12-07	M	Director and Professor, School of Architecture, Planning and Design	Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P)	Benguerir Green City

Appendix B: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city residents (Tamesna)

Appendix Table B.

Interviews with local and resident populations in *Tamesna*: List of participants

	Date of interview	Name(s)*	Gender (M/F)	Neighbourhood of residence in the new city	Work/Occupation	Place of work (city)	Language of interview (Fr/Ab)
1.	2016-08-22	Yasmine	F	Ammal 1	Cleaner	Rabat	Ab
2.	2018-09-07	Ayoub	M	Ammal 1	Teacher	Tamesna	Fr
3.	2018-09-07	Kenza	F	Marina d'Or	Doctor	Tamesna	Ab
4.	2018-09-10	Omar	M	L'Oasis	Teacher	Rabat	Fr
5.	2018-09-10	Karim	M	Marina d'Or	Computer scientist	Témara	Fr
6.	2018-09-12	Nassim	M	Marina d'Or	Quality manager in IT company	Rabat	Fr
7.	2018-09-13	Amine	M	Hidayah	Business worker	Rabat	Fr
8.	2018-09-13	Ismail	M	Unknown	Employee in car rental shop	Tamesna	Ab
9.	2018-09-13	Wassim	M	Najah	Private sector consultant	Rabat	Fr
10.	2018-09-15	Mehdi	M	Cité Lavigne	Public servant	Rabat	Fr
11.	2018-09-18	Sami	M	Ammal 1	Waiter in local coffeeshop	Tamesna	Ab
12.	2018-09-18	Bilal	M	Ammal 1	Owner of small grocery stall	Tamesna	Ab
13.	2018-09-18	Safia	F	Ammal 1	Employee in para-pharmacy	Tamesna	Ab
14.	2018-09-18	Meryem and friends	F	Ammal 1	Informal worker: Street vendor (<i>msemen</i>)	Tamesna	Ab
15.	2018-09-18	Youssef; Majdi	M	Ammal 1	Unknown	Unknown	Ab
16.	2018-09-18	Leyla; Sonia	F	Ammal 1	Employees in small local goods and food store	Tamesna	Ab
17.	2018-09-18	Halima	F	Najah	Employee in small local goods and food store	Tamesna	Fr
18.	2018-09-20	Amjad	M	Marina d'Or	Informal worker: Street vendor (bread)	Tamesna	Ab
19.	2018-09-20	Mouad	M	Addoha	Butcher and owner of local butcher shop	Tamesna	Ab
20.	2018-09-20	Sakina and friends	F	Nassim	Informal worker: Street vendor (bread and fresh herbs)	Tamesna	Ab
21.	2018-09-20	Soufiane	M	N/A resident of town of Mers El Kheir	Informal worker: Street vendor (tomatoes)	Tamesna	Ab

22.	2018-09-20	Maïmouna	F	Addoha	Informal worker: Street vendor (toys)	Tamesna	Ab
23.	2018-09-20	Souheil	M	Kasbah Al Omrane	Owner of local coffeeshop	Tamesna	Ab
24.	2018-09-20	Noura and friends	F	Nour	Unknown	Unknown	Ab
25.	2018-09-20	Mourad; Hiba	M; F	Nour	Unemployed; Owner of local clothing store	Tamesna	Ab
26.	2018-09-20	Naïma; Fatima	F	Nour	Stay-at-home mothers	Tamesna	Ab
27.	2018-09-21	Oussama and friends	M	Nour	Underemployed	Tamesna	Fr
28.	2018-09-21	Marwa	F	Town of Aïn Attiq	Informal worker: Street vendor (eggs)	Tamesna	Ab
29.	2018-09-21	Aziz	M	Addoha	Informal worker: cobbler in Nour neighbourhood	Tamesna	Fr
30.	2018-09-21	Laïla and friends	F	Nour	Owners and employees in a small clothes and goods store	Tamesna	Fr
31.	2018-09-21	Othmane	M	Unknown	Principal of professional training school in Najah neighbourhood	Tamesna	Ab
32.	2018-09-21	Joumana	F	Nour	Employee in local pharmacy	Tamesna	Ab
33.	2018-09-21	Marouane	M	Hidayah	Informal worker: street security guard (<i>Gardien</i>)	Tamesna	Ab
34.	2018-09-22	Mounir	M	Unknown	Informal worker: street security guard (<i>Gardien</i>)	Tamesna	Ab
35.	2018-09-22	Bachir	M	N/A resident of town of Sidi Yahya Zaer	Informal worker: street security guard (<i>Gardien</i>)	Tamesna	Ab
36.	2018-09-25	Hilal	M	Addoha	Real estate investor	Abroad (Netherlands)	En
37.	2018-09-26	Moustafa and colleagues	M	Addoha	Informal workers: street security guards (<i>Gardien</i>)	Tamesna	Ab
38.	2018-09-26	Rachid	M	Nour	Informal worker: street security guard (<i>Gardien</i>), Dyar Kasbah neighbourhood	Tamesna	Ab
39.	2018-09-26	Wassila	F	Dyar Al Mansour	Pharmacist in Kasbah al Omrane neighbourhood	Tamesna	Ab
40.	2018-09-27	Abdelkarim	M	Eraya Him	University Professor	Rabat	Fr

41.	2018-09-27	Massyl	M	N/A resident of town of Sidi Yahya Zaer	Informal workers: street security guards (<i>Gardien</i>) Jardin des Yqem neighbourhood	Tamesna	Ab
42.	2018-09-27	Adnane	M	Unknown	Informal workers: street security guards (<i>Gardien</i>), Dyar al Mansour neighbourhood	Tamesna	Ab
43.	2018-10-02	Saliha	F	Unknown	President of local commission for the commune	Sidi Yahya des Zaer	Ab
44.	2018-10-05	Lamia	F	Ammal 1	Owner of local restaurant	Tamesna	Fr
45.	2018-10-18	Rabia	F	L'Oasis	Owner of beauty parlour and beauty products cooperative	Tamesna and Témara	Fr

**all names are pseudonyms*

Appendix C: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city residents (Zenata Eco-City)

Appendix Table C.

Interviews with local and resident populations in *Zenata Eco-City*: List of participants

	Date of interview	Name(s)*	Gender (M/F)	Living status on site of new city	Zone of residence on site of new city	Work/Occupation	Language of interview (Fr/Ab)
1.	2018-10-10	Selma; Miloud	F; M	Residents: <i>cabanons</i>	Paloma beach	Engineer; Casual worker	Fr
2.	2018-10-14	Nasser	M	Not a resident	Casablanca	Taxi driver in Casablanca whose parents owned a <i>cabanon</i> on Paloma beach	Fr
3.	2018-10-15	Zaïna	F	Resident: <i>cabanon</i>	Paloma beach	Employee at a marketing firm in Casablanca	Fr
4.	2018-10-17	Nadia	F	Resident: <i>cabanon</i>	Ouled Hmimoun beach	Business consultant	Fr
5.	2018-10-19	Wakil	M	Resident: <i>cabanon</i>	Paloma beach	Retired	Fr
6.	2018-10-19	Hassane	M	Resident: <i>cabanon</i>	Ouled Hmimoun beach	Business owner in Aïn Harrouda	Fr
7.	2018-10-19	Abdelhakim	M	Resident: new city neighbourhood	Al Mansour-Zenata	Employee in small grocery stall	Ab
8.	2018-10-19	Nabil	M	Resident: new city neighbourhood	Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood	Owner of small grocery stall	Ab
9.	2018-10-19	Ouassim; Majdi	M	Residents: new city neighbourhood	Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood	Owner of small grocery stall	Ab
10.	2018-10-21	Soheib	M	Resident: <i>douar</i>	Douar near Paloma beach	Casual worker for residents of <i>cabanons</i>	Ab
11.	2018-10-21	Irfane	M	Resident: new city neighbourhood	Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood	Unemployed	Ab
12.	2018-10-21	Kazim	M	Resident: new city neighbourhood	Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood	Unemployed	Ab
13.	2018-10-21	Soulaïmane	M	Resident: <i>douar</i>	Douar near Paloma beach	Casual work in Douar	Ab
14.	2018-10-21	Abdallah	M	Resident: <i>douar</i>	Douar 17 near Paloma beach	Casual worker in and around douar	Ab
15.	2018-10-21	Iqbal	M	Landowner	Paloma beach	Casual worker in nearby factories	Ab
16.	2018-10-21	Mounib	M	Resident: <i>douar</i>	Douar near Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood	Owner of mobile sausage grilling kiosk	Ab

17.	2018-10-21 2018-10-22	Bassam	M	Resident: new city neighbourhood	Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood	District Official (Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood)	Ab
18.	2018-10-21	Salim	M	Not resident of the site	N/A District of Sidi-Bernoussi	Informal worker: street security guard (<i>Gardien</i>) (Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood)	Ab
19.	2018-10-21	Fouad	M	Resident: new city neighbourhood	Al Mansour-Zenata neighbourhood	Employment in city of Mohammedia	Ab
20.	2018-10-22	Houcine	M	Not resident of the site	N/A District of Sidi-Bernoussi	Unknown	Ab
21.	2018-10-22	Abbas	M	Not resident of the site	N/A District of Sidi-Bernoussi	Unknown	Ab
22.	2018-10-25	Nader	M	Resident: <i>cabanon</i>	Ouled Hmimoun beach	Retired business owner	Fr
23.	2018-10-30	Mohammed; Laqmane; Assad	M	Resident: <i>cabanon</i>	Zenata beach	Retired workers and active members of local resident association	Fr
24.	2018-11-08	Amane	M	Resident: <i>douar</i>	Zenata beach	Ex-accountant and active member of local resident association (for <i>douar</i> residents)	Fr

**all names are pseudonyms*

Appendix D: List of participants interviewed: Table of new city residents (Benguerir Green City)

Appendix Table D.

Interviews with local and resident populations in *Benguerir Green City*: List of participants

	Date of interview	Name(s)*	Gender (M/F)	Zone of residence in the masterplan	Work/Occupation	Language of interview (Fr/Ab)
1.	2018-11-14	Amjad	M	Benguerir	Taxi driver	Ab
2.	2018-11-14	Walid	M	Green city	Student	Fr
3.	2018-11-19	Wassila; Loubna; Hasna; Fatiha; Charif	F; M	Benguerir	Director and members of local charitable organization for children	Ab
4.	2018-11-19	Malik; Nafis	M	Benguerir	Founders of local cultural organization	Ab
5.	2018-11-21	Khalid	M	Benguerir	Spice seller	Ab
6.	2018-11-21	Moussa	M	Benguerir	Bread seller	Ab
7.	2018-11-21	Fayas; Moukhtar	M	Benguerir	Informal workers: Toilet attendants	Ab
8.	2018-11-21	Tawfiq	M	Benguerir	Barber	Ab
9.	2018-11-21	Samir; Sajid; Anass	M	Benguerir	Cook in local fast-food joint; Turkey deliveryman; client	Ab
10.	2018-11-22	Inès	F	Benguerir	Speech therapist	Ab
11.	2018-11-22	Jawad	M	Benguerir	Director of professional training center in Benguerir	Fr
12.	2018-11-23	Qassim	M	Benguerir	Member of local religious council	Ab
13.	2018-11-23	Aïcha	F	Benguerir	Director of local charitable organization	Fr
14.	2018-11-23	Rahim	M	Benguerir	Director of organization for handicapped and autistic children	Ab
15.	2018-11-24	Sajed and colleagues	M	Benguerir	Phosphate mining workers	Ab
16.	2018-11-24	Nessim	M	Benguerir	Fruit seller	Ab
17.	2018-11-24	Malek	M	Benguerir	Informal worker: street security guard (<i>Gardien</i>)	Ab
18.	2018-11-24	Nadir	M	Benguerir	Butcher in local butcher shop	Ab
19.	2018-11-24	Salah	M	Benguerir	Employee in small grocery stall	Ab
20.	2018-11-24	Imad	M	Benguerir	Butcher in local butcher shop	Ab

21.	2018-11-24	Abdoullah	M	Benguerir	Pharmacist in local pharmacy	Ab
22.	2018-11-24	Safwane	M	Benguerir	Dry cleaner	Ab
23.	2018-11-24	Ilyass	M	Benguerir	Electronic repairman	Ab
24.	2018-11-24	Hicham	M	Benguerir	Seller of electronic goods	Ab
25.	2018-11-24	Achraf	M	Benguerir	Employee in company selling industrial equipment	Ab
26.	2018-11-24	Farid	M	Benguerir	Grocer at small grocery stall	Ab
27.	2018-11-24	Moustafa	M	Benguerir	Waiter at local coffeeshop	Ab
28.	2018-11-24	Anouar	M	Benguerir	Mechanic	Ab
29.	2018-11-24	Nasser	M	Benguerir	Seller at local market stall: Chicken	Ab
30.	2018-11-24	Hamed	M	Benguerir	Seller at local market stall: Vegetables	Ab
31.	2018-11-24	Tariq	M	Benguerir	Seller at local market stall: Clothing	Ab
32.	2018-11-25	Fayssal	M	Cité OCP district	Grocer at small grocery stall	Ab
33.	2018-11-25	Chakib	M	Benguerir	Security guard, discount grocery store	Ab
34.	2018-11-25	Abdel	M	Cité OCP district	Barber	Ab
35.	2018-11-25	Ali	M	Cité OCP district	Retired OCP employee	Ab
36.	2018-11-25	Wakil	M	Cité OCP district	Retired OCP employee, manager of paper and office supplies stall	Ab
37.	2018-11-25	Sami	M	Cité OCP district	Retired OCP employee, manager of small grocery stall	Ab
38.	2018-11-25	Hadi	M	Cité OCP district	Informal worker: street security guard (<i>Gardien</i>)	Ab
39.	2018-11-25	Ammar	M	Cité OCP district	Barber/hairdresser	Ab
40.	2018-11-25	Hamza	M	Cité OCP district	Retired OCP employee, manager of small grocery stall	Ab
41.	2018-11-26	Moussa	M	Cité OCP district	Teacher at local training skills center for professional development	Fr

**all names are pseudonyms*