

Chapter Title: A 'Time' to Act: The 2015–20 Development Plan for Greater Casablanca  
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Book Title: Development As A Battlefield

Book Editor(s): Irene Bono, Béatrice Hibou

Published by: Brill. (2017)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h2fv.15>

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# A 'Time' to Act: The 2015–20 Development Plan for Greater Casablanca

*Nadia Hachimi Alaoui*

## Abstract

This chapter examines conflicts of development focusing on the 2015–20 Development Plan for Casablanca, which was the subject of a broad consultation process initiated and implemented by the Wali of Casablanca, the King of Morocco's direct representative. The study highlights the competing visions, power relationships and struggles that led to the completion of a hundred or so development projects. Unlike studies on urban development in Morocco, which mainly focus on opposition and protest against development projects, or on engendered loyalties and alliances, this chapter highlights the tactical alliances and various mediations that helped define the development plan. This encourages us to understand the state not as a 'referee' but as an 'arena'. The Casablanca development project represents a period when the balance of power and the competing forces at work in Morocco—the interconnected relations of state and society—could be brought up to date.

## 1 Introduction

It was a speech made by the King to Parliament in October 2013 that placed a development plan for Casablanca on the agenda. At the opening of the parliamentary session—which every year begins with a royal speech, King Mohammed VI focused on the irresponsibility of politicians in carrying out their mandate. To back up his argument, he pointed to the lack of development in Casablanca, its 'glaring' inequalities and the weakness of its public facilities. 'Mismanagement' by elected officials, said the monarch, was 'the source of problems' that had led to 'this city, one of Morocco's richest' being 'the city of the most glaring social disparities, [...] the finance and business centre, but also a centre of poverty [and] unemployment'.<sup>1</sup> The King did not

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1 Address by His Majesty the King at the opening of the first session of the third legislative session of the ninth Parliament, 11 October 2013 (MAP, 2013).

restrict his remarks to a list of problems but also called for change: he voiced his desire for people to come up, 'as a matter of urgency, [with] a diagnosis to identify the origins of the problem and the means to remedy it.' He drew up the terms and called for the participation of all the inhabitants of Casablanca. Finally, he stated the goal of the changes: the 'transformation of Casablanca into an international financial hub.'

This disavowal of the political class was not in itself anything new under the reign of Mohammed VI. It was rooted in the crisis concerning political brokerage and the difficulties the political class was experiencing in renewing its ranks (Iraki, 2005; Zaki, 2009; Tozy, 2010). These difficulties were preventing elected officials—at both the national and the local levels—from assuming the function of 'intercession' between the monarchy and the people, a function assigned to them by the Moroccan political system (Tozy, 1991). However, the October 2013 speech was distinguished both by the explicit reference to the elected officials of Casablanca and by its development imperative. A brief summary of the place occupied by development in the modes of government employed during the reign of Mohammed VI will highlight the reasons for the King's demand for change.

The use of the vocabulary and repertoire of developmental is emblematic of the authoritative discourse with which Mohammed VI marked a break with the old order. His reign, which began in 1999, has been marked by the rise of the developmentalist agenda in the exercise of power. The monarch decided on and launched various 'programmes', 'initiatives' and 'visions' of development; these continued to punctuate the first fifteen years of his reign.<sup>2</sup> In the context of the state's economic and institutional transformation, the figure of the King as developer has encouraged the reconfiguration of the repertoires of state action (Catusse and Karam, 2009): the 'managerial' turn in modes of government (Jobert, 1994; Ogien, 1995; Hibou and Tozy, 2002), in line with the rising importance of donors on the public agenda, has furnished the measures necessary for this change to occur; the multidimensional nature of developmentalist action, meanwhile, has created many new areas for state intervention. As a 'Builder King with social concerns' (Catusse and Vairel, 2010), the monarch has continued to promote the technocratic and economic concerns that have distinguished public action since independence. The social dimension

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2 As a brief overview: the 'policy on major infrastructure projects' for land development, the 'slum-free city' programme and the 'major projects' policy for urban development; the national initiatives for 'Human Development' and for 'Social Development'; and sector-specific visions for economic development, such as the 'Plan Azur' for tourism, the 'Plan Maroc Vert' for agriculture and the 'Emergence' programme for new world businesses.

may indeed set Mohammed VI's developmentalist project apart from others, but it also carries over the same apolitical understanding of change. The result is that social action is 'technologised' and the political dimension of inequality remains largely ignored. Thus, efforts in the domain of public action have focused on correcting the *effects* of social and regional inequalities, not their *causes*: this 'myopia' (Bec, 2014), despite leading to significant technical and material advances,<sup>3</sup> has hampered action to reduce the inequalities constitutive of the social and political status of individuals. These inequalities have instead been intensified by the neo-liberal orientation of the economy and by its 'financialisation' (Bono et al., 2015). The unequal nature of the way benefits have trickled down to the population has been the subject of violent protests, but the localised nature of the demands expressed, along with their geography—confined, as they have been, to marginal regions—have limited their scope (Bennafla and Emperador, 2010), leaving largely unaffected the national consensus on the development model. In the wake of the 'Arab Spring' of 2011, the creation in Morocco of the February 20 movement, a motley coalition of Islamist sympathisers, human-rights activists and hard left parties (Smaoui and Wazif, 2013), has given a high profile to these challenges, which had previously remained scattered. During the 'sit-ins' or big marches that took place in February and March 2011, the political violence of the slogans employed admittedly spared the person of the monarch (Tourabi and Zaki, 2011), but the concentration of the demonstrations in the major cities of Casablanca, Tangier and Marrakesh, where the central government was highly active and where the new King could most effectively showcase his modernisation project, gave them a particular resonance (Hibou, 2011a). The socio-economic dimension of these demands, expressing a desire for greater equity in the distribution of the fruits of development, brought to light the limits of the model's capacity to integrate disparate groups, and thus called the consensus into question, however implicitly.

Thus, the royal speech of October 2013 seems to me to be part of the wider *dispositif* set up in response to the demonstrations of 2011: like the address of 9 March 2011, which called for constitutional reform and the holding of fresh legislative elections (Dupret and Ferrié, 2011), the October 2013 speech positioned the King as 'the' agent of change—in this case, both economic and social. This allowed the monarchy to maintain the initiative and to define its

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3 Figures with regard to properly equipped households and home ownership have experienced marked growth over the past fifteen years, as shown by the general census of population and housing in 2014, which can be found at [http://www.rgph2014.hcp.ma/Presentation-des-principaux-resultats-du-RGPH-2014\\_a374.html](http://www.rgph2014.hcp.ma/Presentation-des-principaux-resultats-du-RGPH-2014_a374.html) (accessed on 20 June 2016).

terms. This reading is confirmed by the launch, by the King a few weeks earlier, of a development plan for Tangier (Atlas Info, 2013; Morocco, 2014), an initiative that was repeated for Marrakesh in January 2014. In addition, the national dimension given to Casablanca by the King—whose demand for change was uttered within the very precincts of Parliament—drew on the unique symbolic position that the city occupies in the economic geography of the Kingdom and in the historical geography of Moroccan social movements, which gives any public action in the economic capital a national character. The time difference between the social unrest of 2011 and the ‘economic and social’ response to it explains the decision to resort to the artifice of urgency: the ‘critical state’ of Casablanca, as set forth in the royal speech, revives the link between, on the one hand, the desire for change on the part of social actors, and, on the other, the monarch’s ability to listen and understand (*Le360*, 2013a). The sense of urgency in the royal speech—given the central role of the monarch in defining the political dimension and its lexical content<sup>4</sup>—imposed the need for action at a time when the discredit of local officials had disqualified their participation in advance, thus opening a ‘time’ for state interventionism. This took the shape of the launch of a broad consultation on the definition of a five-year development plan, initiated and implemented by the Wali of Casablanca, the King’s direct representative in these territories. This process, which lasted nearly a year, bore fruit in September 2014 when around one hundred projects were placed on the agenda and EUR 3 billion mobilised through cross-financing involving the state, local authorities, public and private operators and major patrons from Casablanca.

This chapter will be devoted to a study of the consultation process, the terms of its implementation, and the conditions of the production of the measures and actions of development that have been settled on, in order to grasp what ‘development’ means in the Moroccan context. It thus highlights the ‘battlefield’—to use the term employed by Béatrice Hibou and Irene Bono in the Introduction to this volume—in and through which the development plan has been ‘shaped’ (Berman and Lonsdale, 1992). This is a field in which conflict, the balance of power, and resistance are expressed in statements that mask them. This way of rendering the political dimension invisible thus places development within an area of consensus whose hidden face covers the deeply

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4 The press editorials that followed the speech are enlightening: ‘Gouvernance de Casablanca: incompetence sur toute la ligne’ [Governance of Casablanca: incompetence all down the line], *L’Economiste* (2013); ‘Discours royal: Halte à la mauvaise gouvernance [Stop bad governance]’, *L’Observateur* (2013) and ‘L’état critique de Casablanca au cœur du discours royal’ [The critical state of Casablanca lies at the heart of the royal speech] *Le360* (2013a).

asymmetrical and inegalitarian nature of the resources mobilised by actors in the negotiations that, in Morocco, shape the actions of 'development'.

This chapter is based on research conducted as part of the preparation for my PhD thesis, which is dedicated to the figure of the *wali* and his practices of government. It is based on a combination of research tools and techniques: first, participant observation, which led me to join the focus group set up by the state's representative and participate in the work of the 'Mobility and Public Space' committee and the drafting of its proposals; an ethnographic approach, which enabled me to observe the development plan 'in the making', and involved, during the eight months over which the process was spread, many different observation sites (various working groups, public meetings and official ceremonies, meetings of the city council, etc.); I also conducted, further along in the process, a dozen interviews with community figures, administrators, and politicians so as to capture the way key players understand and intervene in the process; and, finally, I collected and analysed various kinds of data (correspondence, documentation, and grey literature) circulated in the course of the process.

## 2 The Wali, Actor of the Royal Demand for Change

The day after the royal speech of October 2013, the King's demand for change led to the appointment in Casablanca of a new Wali. The setting of the stage for the appointment of Khalid Safir, along with his intrinsic qualities, led—elliptically—to this regional representative of the state being positioned as the individual responsible for taking action.

As the main state authority in the region, the Wali represents both the King *and* the government in the region, a singular status that duplicates the dual nature of Moroccan power. As a devolved authority of the Ministry of the Interior, the Wali occupies a 'crucial' place in the modes of government of the region (Moujahid, 2009): his role can be considered equivalent to that of the *Préfet* (prefect) in France before the decentralisation of 1982.<sup>5</sup> However, unlike the functions of the Prefect (Bouabid and Jaidi, 2007), the tasks and the skills of the Wali are not explicitly recognised from the legal and institutional perspective.<sup>6</sup> Beyond the statement of his kingly functions, making him the

5 Until the passing of the law on regionalisation in January 2016, the Wali was the executive of the regional council and the prefectural council of the Greater Casablanca Region; until that date, these authorities' scope for intervention was limited to the conurbation of Casablanca.

6 On this subject, see Morocco, (2005).

guarantor of public order and respect for the law, the Wali has little authority of his own (Bahi, 2005); the authority he does have is limited to coordinating the state's services in the region and facilitating private investment.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, the activities authorised by the Ministry of the Interior (which supervises local authorities), the delegation of government power, and his formal status as representative give the Wali several different positions in the local politico-administrative field and place him at the centre of gravity of local affairs. The low degree of institutionalisation of the Wali's function (Akhmisse, 2004), however, means that the capacity for action and initiative of this representative of the state repose on essentially immaterial resources, such as the prestige accruing to him as representative of the King. The terms of appointment of Khalid Safir in Casablanca, following the royal speech, highlight this dimension. At the time of the speech, the post of Wali in Casablanca was in fact vacant: a few weeks earlier, the appointment to the Ministry of Finance of the regional representative then in the post meant that the Wali was not liable for negligence in regional governance. In addition, the King's appointment of Khalid Safir, without prior recourse to the decision of the Council of Ministers, violated the new rules established by the constitution adopted two years earlier, which made such consultation obligatory. This means of appointment thereby strengthened the perception of a direct link between the sovereign and the new representative of the state, thus symbolically conferring the power of action upon the new Wali. As a senior figure in the Infrastructure, Finance, and Interior ministries, Khalid Safir combined, at the age of 47, different registers of expertise that reinforced the impression of his ability to 'act': he had been educated at the prestigious *École polytechnique*, and embodied the technocratic power upon which Mohammed VI relied in order to establish his reign; in addition, as a former prefectural governor in a district in Casablanca between 2006 and 2009, he was both an expert in 'regional' affairs and in the community fabric of the city.

As an actor 'designated' from above as being responsible for implementing change, the Wali intervenes only indirectly in the definition and implementation of local public policies: he ensures the coordination of local authorities, which control institutional, legal and financial resources (there are three of these in Casablanca—namely, municipality, prefecture, and region), the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior (the supervisory authority), and various government entities. Coordinating public action is difficult in Casablanca due to the dispersed nature of the city's government: the urban fabric is institutionally fragmented and divided among a myriad of institutions and

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7 The Wali is the authority in charge of regional investment centres.

authorities, competing or complementary depending on the case (*La Vie Éco*, 2003). Thus, there are '114 politico-administrative units' and '60 technical units' (Kaioua, 2015), consisting of public and private operators, active in Greater Casablanca. These structures are not fully autonomous and are functionally interdependent: they each operate as a core or as an enclave interconnected with, or in competition with, others so that they constitute a link in a chain via which localised decisions coexist with centralised decisions. The weakness of the municipal budget,<sup>8</sup> the subordination of local taxation to state taxation,<sup>9</sup> and the very low level of devolution of departmental budgets turn the central government into a key player in the definition of local public policies. This dispersal of power centres gives a significant role to mediation—and this function is specifically assumed by the Wali, whose many and varied positions at different levels of public action and the authority conferred on him by the state place him in a privileged position when it comes to holding negotiations with all decision-making centres, which is an indispensable condition for the mobilisation of resources. However, economic transformations in the state and changes affecting management (de Miras, 2005) and decentralisation (Iraki, 2010) in city government have rendered more complex the modes and working conditions of negotiation. First, the technique of five-year planning, through which resources for services and amenities were once mobilised (Zair, 2007), was finally abandoned—after a brief renaissance—in 2000; this deprived the state of a 'time' for organising a consultation by simultaneously bringing together dispersed power centres. Furthermore, planning by projects, of the sort now underway, has increasingly regionalised the planning of public action. But at the local level, the space established by the state for consultation—namely, the prefectural technical committee (which brings together around the Wali the regional administration, the external services of the state, and elected officials), has proved ineffective in the face of the many varied power centres. Indeed, the implementation, at the beginning of the new millennium, of the 'trptych of institutional decentralisation + the privatisation of public services + the participation of civil society' has ensured the rise of new actors and new dispositifs of government, and this has increased the dispersal of decision centres. Following his appointment, the first consultations undertaken by Khalid Safir with political and administrative leaders specifically highlighted this

8 The budget of the city of Casablanca is MAD 3 billion, of which MAD 2 billion is reserved for operating expenditure, MAD 200 million for investment, and MAD 800 million for compulsory expenditure.

9 The city of Casablanca is apportioned only 16 per cent of its tax revenues, which are accumulated centrally before being redistributed by the state.



dispersal. The consultations aimed to ‘identify the projects being planned and the potentially available resources.’<sup>10</sup> A first list was drawn up, bringing together actions that had been scheduled, those that had been budgeted for and were awaiting additional funding and, finally, those that had been scheduled but not budgeted for; it highlighted a need for funding to the tune of MAD 13 billion. Placing these projects on the agenda required negotiation: on the one hand there was a need to hierarchise priorities and, on the other, a need to mobilise funding resources dispersed between many people and groups in the region. By drawing on the royal dimension of his appointment and the unifying nature of the concept of development, the Wali took the initiative. Two months after his inauguration, he launched extensive consultations for the scheduling of a development plan for Casablanca, which simultaneously placed an entire set of forces in a position to negotiate with the state representative, thereby giving the latter the means to act.

### 3 The ‘Enlarged Think Tank’, An Expression of Consensus with Regard to an Apolitical Vision of Development

Consultation for the definition of the development plan took shape with the forming of a focus group, the ‘enlarged think tank’, and in the subsequent establishment of six ‘administrative commissions’. In total, between January and September 2014, the date of the presentation of the finalised development plan to the King,<sup>11</sup> this consultation involved nearly ‘800 people’<sup>12</sup>—community figures, private and public agents, experts, regional and central officials and local politicians. The operationalisation of the consultation process and its technical nature turned the think tank into a standardised tool whose forms of bureaucracy aided its depoliticisation and facilitated consensus with regard to its implementation, ensuring that highly fragmented social, economic, political and administrative forces formed an alliance around the development project.

The instrumentation of the consultation resulted in the deployment of a scheme designed and implemented by the state’s representative, which led, firstly, to a division of labour within the focus group. Thus, the think tank was

10 Interviews, *wilaya*, city council, Casablanca, January 2015.

11 The ‘Plan de développement de Casablanca 2015–2020’.

12 Figures published by the Wali. *Discours de Monsieur Khalid Safir, le Wali de la région du Grand Casablanca, Gouverneur de la Préfecture de Casablanca*, meeting to report back on the work of the think tank, 16 January 2015. The speech can be read online: <http://www.casainvest.ma> (accessed on 20 June 2016).

organised into eight groups defined by development themes and each group was divided into subgroups—the 'committees'.<sup>13</sup> From January to April 2014, these groups worked on defining proposals and on finalising a deliverable for the Wali. Subsequently, a ninth group—the 'oversight committee'—took over: this was responsible for synthesising all the proposals and linking up with the six administrative commissions set up in parallel. Placed under the responsibility of senior government officers from the Ministry of the Interior—the governors—these commissions were charged with 'structuring the proposals' of the focus group, 'retaining the "most realistic" of them' and 'studying their financing options'.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, working procedures were defined and a ranking of participants in the focus group carried out; this was formalised in a letter of 'general purpose'<sup>15</sup> addressed by Khalid Safir to the eight leaders of the think tank. Each working group would be composed of a 'chair', a 'secretariat', 'seven permanent members' and 'six or seven temporary members.' Khalid Safir co-opted the chairs of the working groups, chosen from the ranks of the elite members of the community and from the Casablancon economic milieu, and approved the appointment of members within the various working groups, leaving the flexibility for each group chair to incorporate new members—the 'temporary members'—in answer to 'specific needs'. In addition, the guidance letter 'proposed' working stages—four in total—so as to 'structure the agenda' of the groups; the letter also prescribed the 'methodology of simple consensus'—that is to say, of creating one 'deliverable per working group'. And finally, the role of chair, held 'responsible for running the working groups, the schedule and the effective participation of members', was formalised.<sup>16</sup> This system was completed, at the setting up of the think tank in January, by the organisation of a 'harmonisation meeting' in the *wilaya*, with all the members of the working groups present, in order to identify the working areas for the committees that comprised these groups.

The administration of the think tank was entrusted to the Regional Investment Centre (Centre Régional d'Investissement: CRI), a regional public body that depends administratively and hierarchically on the Wali. A secretariat was

13 *Groupes de travail dans le cadre du Think tank élargi: présentation de Monsieur le Wali du Grand Casablanca*, dinner to launch the activities of the working groups, *Wilaya du Grand Casablanca*, internal document, 9 December 2013.

14 *Discours de Monsieur Khalid Safir*, 16 January 2015.

15 *Lettre de mission générale destinée aux présidents des groupes de travail: réflexion sur la stratégie de développement du Grand Casablanca*, internal document, 2 December 2013.

16 *Lettre de mission générale destinée aux présidents des groupes de travail: réflexion sur la stratégie de développement du Grand Casablanca*, internal document, 2 December 2013.

made available to the focus group; it was responsible for running the schedule of working group meetings, organising meetings with regional officials at the request of members of the working groups, and assisting the oversight committee in the shaping of the various deliverables submitted by the eight working groups. Thereafter, this secretariat ensured coordination between the oversight committee and the administrative commissions and assisted the Wali in writing and editing the various reports published during the process. The director of the CRI liaised between the Wali and the members of the focus group; he was responsible for the formal exchanges that took place between the Wali and the participants.

While the think tank was working, the Wali intervened directly in March 2014 by organising a study day devoted to international experiences<sup>17</sup> in order to 'inspire the model for transforming the metropolis of Greater Casablanca'. The finalisation of the development plan was preceded by meetings in the summer of 2014 between the Wali and the chairs of the working groups.<sup>18</sup> The process was also punctuated by several official meetings whose ceremonial nature, protocol, and introductory addresses made by the Wali all served to underline the royal dimension of the proceedings. In this manner, the launch of the consultation with civil society was the occasion, in December 2013, of a formal dinner in the presence of the Wali and members of Casablanca's voluntary sector elite; the handing over of the deliverables created by the eight working groups were the subject of ceremonial sessions at the *wilaya* throughout the month of April, in the presence of the Wali, officials of the regional administration and local political representatives. Furthermore, the completion of the development plan was celebrated in September 2014 with a royal closing ceremony at the Palace of Casablanca during which the ten financing agreements between the local authorities, government departments, private delegates and sponsors from Casablanca, who made it possible to mobilise EUR 3 billion, were officially signed. Finally, the official dissolution of the think tank, in January 2015, one year after it had been set up, was marked by a ceremonial event at the *wilaya* at which the creation of an observatory of civil society was announced, in line with recommendations from the working groups.

The launch of the consultation on 'developing Casablanca', and its implementation, thus enabled the state's representative to act on time and space. The consultation process would indeed form a 'space-time' for the negotiations, simultaneously bringing together a set of players available to deal with

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17 *Expériences nationales et internationales pour inspirer le modèle de transformation de la métropole du Grand Casablanca*, workshop, Club Attijariwafa Bank, 8 March 2014.

18 Interviews, Chairs of focus groups, Casablanca, July and October 2014.

the state's representative. This space-time would be divided into different negotiating venues: the groups and subgroups of the think tank and the administrative commissions would comprise formal arenas for consultation, bringing together community figures, economic operators, and administrators, with the Wali at the centre. This manufacturing of alliances makes use of the consensus as to the apolitical nature of development; in so doing, it eventually led to the exclusion of local officials from the formal consultation, moving the scene of political negotiations to the informal spaces opened up in the margins by the formal dispositif of consultation.

#### 4 Schemes of Participation and the Establishment of Formal Arenas for Reflection

The concept of development and its multiple meanings, economic and technical, opened up room for manoeuvre for the establishment of the think tank and formal consultation arenas, which in turn helped to unite the diverse forces making up Casablancon society.

The definition of the think tank's working themes drew, first, on a plurality of imaginaries and representations of the way Casablanca could be transformed, as evidenced by the statements issued by the eight focus groups: 'Casa, a place of economic prosperity', 'Casa, a place for living', 'Casa, a city for all', 'Casa, a city of leisure, culture and history', 'Casa, a city of dreams', 'Casa, a model of devolution and decentralisation', 'Casa, a city in the vanguard' and 'Casa, a city of knowledge.' The pluralist field of development thus gave the think tank an opportunity to marry together the diversity of voluntary associations in Casablanca, allowing it, for example, to bring together the representatives of 120 Casablanca's associations. General themes were then classified into 'working areas', which in turn gave rise to subgroups (committees) which thus created more formal arenas for consultation: the group 'Casa, a place for living', for example, was divided into six committees—'Housing, urban planning, infrastructure', 'Mobility and public space', 'Security and solidarity', 'Health and emergencies', 'Environment' and 'Administrative Services'—in which participants were brought together because they belonged to the same profession or were members of the same community association.

Secondly, the economic understanding of development established a fundamental position for representatives of the economic base and allowed experts from consulting firms, new actors on the public stage (*Leaders*, 2015), to be appointed to the working committees. In this way, senior executives of multinationals or large private companies in Morocco, senior figures in

consulting firms and employees of international companies were the vital core of those co-opted members of the working groups, as was the case, for example, with the majority of the 30 participants of the group ‘Casa, a place for living’, of which each subgroup had ‘its own’ expert. The prospect of ‘developing Casablanca’ certainly had an impact thanks to its moral and civic character,<sup>19</sup> but this is insufficient to explain the attraction of the think tank; three years earlier, a similar (albeit less developed) initiative on the part of the mayor of Casablanca had left the local economic scene largely indifferent.<sup>20</sup> The participatory momentum generated by the Wali found its strength in the ‘constellation of interests’ (Hibou, 2011b, 26) through which the relationship between individual actors and the state is formed: the participants most active in the working groups were simultaneously engaged in certain economic interests and professional or social logics that made it opportune for them to be close to the government. The group ‘Casa, a place for living’ and two of its committees—‘Mobility’ and ‘Security’—were an emblematic case: the experts who worked on formalising the proposals of the ‘Mobility’ committee won major contracts with the Ministry of the Interior, including the restructuring of the public transport bus system in Casablanca;<sup>21</sup> one of the most dynamic members of the ‘Security and solidarity’ committee (a property developer in Casablanca) and, less visibly, the chair of the group ‘Casa, a place for living’ (an owner of land on the outskirts of Casablanca) were both engaged in land recovery operations that put them in direct contact with the regional government, which held dispensational power with regard to urban planning.<sup>22</sup> Also, the quest for positions as senior civil servants was another incentive, as in the case of one of the active members of one of these two committees, whose profile (as an engineer from a major French college) fitted in with the social transformations of the state and its elite.<sup>23</sup> The logic of ‘notables’ was another of the

19 Public-spiritedness constituted, at least in the language used by members of the think tank, a form of legitimation. The text published on the Facebook account of the chair of the group ‘Casa, a city for all’, spoke volumes: ‘When the Wali contacted me to suggest I joined the “Think Tank for Casablanca” that he was setting up [...] I admit that I did not hesitate [...] because, given my activist ethics, I do not believe that we can evade our responsibilities when our Country is appealing to us—in however modest a way.’

20 The newspaper *L’Économiste* (2010), close to Casablanca’s economic circles, gave a sceptical reception to the announcement of this municipal development plan: ‘Yet another development plan for Casablanca: what for?’

21 ‘Analyse du contrat de gestion déléguée’, *Valyans-M’dina Bus: accompagnement à la définition du plan de redressement de la société*, July 2008, Partie II. Documents confidentiels.

22 Interviews, Casablanca, 2014.

23 Interviews, Casablanca, 2014.

driving forces making the think tank so attractive, including for the chairs of certain working groups, who, faced with the prospect of the establishment of an observatory of civil society, started competing with one another for the Wali's favour. It was not that, in the decision-making process, the local level alone was decisive in strategies of self-promotion and of company growth; the royal dimension of the process too was a more general factor in the attractiveness of the think tank, and the Wali constantly reminded people of this when he was interacting with participants. This is what explains the lively participation of all those attending official meetings: their presence displayed the extent of their co-optation, and—even more so—their proximity to the state. While everyone undoubtedly attached a specific meaning to this proximity, it is certain that for many this relationship had its roots in a political economy in which positions of influence and positions of accumulation overlapped.

The establishment, in the wake of the think tank, of six administrative commissions opened up arenas for consultation, this time connecting the Wali with officials of the regional administration and external services of the state. The technical nature of development legitimised the central place of the regional administration, whose expertise had been the historic engine of its expansion in the region. The names and the working themes of these commissions this time took the administrative categories on the basis of which development issues could be discussed,<sup>24</sup> thus emphasising the importance of infrastructure and urban development issues. In addition, the schemes implemented when the commissions were set up allowed the Wali to involve the thirteen governors then in post in Casablanca through the principle of the co-chairmanship of committees. Indeed, given the absence of hierarchically established links between these governors and the Wali,<sup>25</sup> their mobilisation (which was essential both administratively and operationally), would have been made difficult or at least complicated without their presence on these committees.

In a bureaucratic environment characterised by the tendency of government bodies to split, the unifying character of development has certainly constituted a powerful resource for mobilising the regional services of the state in these commissions. But here too, the reactions triggered by the appointment of Khalid Safir following the royal speech and his proximity to the King were instrumental in mobilising local bodies; it is indeed significant that, in the

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24 Thus, these commissions were constituted under the themes 'Major structural projects', 'Highways and road infrastructure', 'Housing and urban regeneration', 'Mobility and urban transport', 'Human development' and 'Governance and local public services'.

25 While the Wali coordinates and supervises the activity of governors, the relationship—in terms of authority—between the governors and the Wali is not institutionalised.

corridors of power, the Wali was given the nickname ‘the post-speech man’.<sup>26</sup> Conversely, the involvement of regional authorities in the development plan was effectively staged, as was evident at the dozen or so public meetings that took place with members of the focus group, thus demonstrating that the state was unified behind the Wali and thus also behind the King, of whom the Wali was the envoy for the implementation of the development plan.

## 5 The Exclusion of Elected Officials and the Opening up of Non-Formalised Forums for Consultation

The preparation of the development plan was, however, marked by the exclusion of local elected officials from the formal consultation forums. While they did play a part before and after the process at public meetings, they were not members of the focus groups. Nor were they incorporated into the administrative committees that were drawing up the development plan. Nor were they even consulted by the think tank participants in their roles as elected politicians. When they *were* consulted, it was in an individualised manner, or was the result of formal representational protocol. This exclusion, however, did not mean that elected representatives did not play a part; simply that they were relegated to the margins of the formal process. Negotiations with city councillors actually took place outside the formal dispositif of consultation, in non-formalised places and spaces that connected the Wali, politicians, and policy makers of the central government.

The technical and apolitical nature of development made it possible to remove local representatives from the consultation process. They were initially sidelined by the ‘negative’ and ‘accusatory’ character of the King’s speech, which imposed a form of silence. The interpretations of the royal address by officials of the Ministry of the Interior strengthened this silencing effect, with the announcement, the day after the speech, of the ‘launching of an audit’ (*Le360*, 2013b) of the accounts of the city council. The exclusion of elected representatives was also partly the result of competition between community representatives and local politicians, who, at the local level, tussle over the legitimacy of the implementation of public action (Benidir, 2010). Only in a very exceptional case did the chair of the focus group ‘Casa, a place for living’—whose association had, three years earlier, been put in charge (alongside the administration) of a programme to renovate the medina of Casablanca—take the initiative to consult with a representative of the city council, unlike

26 Interviews, *wilaya* and central government, 2014, 2015.

what occurred in other groups. The dimension of 'expertise' underlying the concept of development, and the way it is interpreted apolitically, naturalised the absence of elected officials within the working groups of the think tank, especially as this very negative view of the political dimension and of politicians in Morocco is shared by social actors; it characterised many of the debates that took place within the group 'Casa, a place for living', where the management of local elites was regularly denounced and the lack of communication with local politicians was completely taken for granted. The elected officials, in their turn, interpreted this isolation in different ways, depending on their positions, their trajectories and their characters, leading some to adopt silence for fear of sanctions, and others to flaunt their non-participation, interpreting it as a badge of resistance, while yet others developed a certain indifference, so that exclusion came to be seen as a form of voluntary self-deposition of elected officials.<sup>27</sup>

At all events, these different logics of exclusion prevented local officials from claiming loudly and clearly any formal role in the consultation process. Instead, the situation meant that these officials were placed in a bargaining position essential for the continuation of the process. Ultimately, after all, it is the elected officials who have the legal resources necessary for the adoption of local public policies: the measures taken and announced as part of the development plan require the approval and the vote of the Municipal Assembly. And it became necessary to submit matters to the vote of councillors early in the consultation process because of the dispositifs on which the financial and institutional architecture of the development plan rested. Such was the case with mixed local development companies (LDCs), whose capital came from the city council and the state, thus necessitating the vote of the municipal assembly. It was thus to this space of negotiation that the relationship between the Wali, the regional and national governments, and the elected officials shifted.

The creation of LDCs was a result of the first consultations undertaken by the Wali after his arrival in the *wilaya*.<sup>28</sup> These instruments made new financial schemes possible, in particular lifting the constraints related to the underfunding of the region. A further advantage was that they circumvented the obstacle of the dispersal of power centres when projects were implemented by consolidating local and central decision-makers on their boards. The negotiations initiated by the Wali for the legal creation of these instruments and for their effective implementation opened up, in the course of the negotiation process, forums for negotiation with elected officials. In such a context, the elected officials drew firstly on the provisions relating to the holding of the municipal

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27 Interviews, city council, 2014 and 2015.

28 Interviews, *wilaya*, January 2014.



assembly and, secondly, on the instability of the majority on the council, as illustrated, for example, by the municipal assembly of 27 March 2014, which was meant to vote on the creation of three new LDCs. Postponed three times for want of a quorum of councillors, the vote—during the meeting of 27 March—marked a significant move on the part of the state’s representative, who used his influence and the supervisory role he exerted over the city council. Through the regional administration, the Wali intervened to support the chair of the city council in mobilising elected officials and ensuring a majority of favourable votes (*L’Économiste*, 2014). Each governor was made responsible for mobilising the chairs of each of the political groups represented on the council. The drafting of the agenda for the council session, submitted in advance to the Wali’s for his approval, also made it possible to negotiate with the mayor (the chair of the council) over the order of priorities for the vote. Under pressure from the Wali, the mayor himself became very active, bringing together at his home on the day before the vote all the council’s political forces so as to negotiate a majority of votes for the items on the agenda.<sup>29</sup> When the assembly was convened, conditions thus seemed ripe for the adoption of the LDCs listed under item 2 of the agenda: the elected officials who had been mobilised were confident and the majority had been assured. But after having ensured that the administrative point that directly concerned him had been dealt with, the mayor halted the session, on the pretext of an altercation with a member of the opposition, and postponed voting on the provisions relating to the creation of LDCs to a later meeting. The establishment of these LDCs was deferred for an entire month based on the decision of the municipal executive, which did not adopt the principle of creating new companies until 28 April (*Le Matin du Sahara*, 2014), after cancelling the meeting of the municipal assembly three times. And it was not until seven months later, during the October session, that the legal provisions for LDCs were definitively adopted, obliging people to act—while the development plan was being defined—‘as though’ they existed, but to manage ‘without them’ all the same.

In addition, the close financial supervision exercised on the city council by the General Management of Local Groups (Direction générale des collectivités locales, DGCL) opened up room for manoeuvre for the central government, which enabled it to influence, during the process, the relationship between the city council and the *wilaya* in a discreet, non-formalised manner. The financing for projects, even those approved by the city, required—if these projects were to be effective—prior negotiations with the DGCL as the DGCL administered the funds generated in the form of VAT, funds which were redistributed

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29 Interviews, regional administration, city council, March 2014.

by the state to local communities. This arrangement contributes 70 per cent of the investment budget of the city council and is, for example, the main source of capital provided by the council for the creation of LDCs. LDCs were viewed with suspicion by the central government, as the strengthening of regional decision-making instruments would entail a reduction of its own influence in the region. The negotiations with the city council for the vote on LDCs thus enabled the central government to influence how they would be made up and thus negotiate its place in how they would be structured.

Political negotiation thus moved to the margins of formal spaces for reflection, shifting into individualised spaces where the administration and political representatives are brought together, which has led to the concealment of conflict, power relations, and, in short, of politics. It also explains why, faced with a process of consultation that had excluded them, elected officials often preferred to choose silence rather than protest, while exercising their power, if only to create difficulties.

## 6 The Concealment of the Political Dimension

The political dimension, then, is expressed at different levels in the consultation process, but the dispersed architecture of the *dispositif* leads to the concealment of this political dimension, hiding power struggles over the definition of development policies. The consensus around an economic and technical vision of development upon which the consultation was built does not, in fact, remove the political dimension. It prevents neither the coexistence of divergent and conflicting visions of the choices, solutions and priorities of development, nor competition with regard to the definition of target populations and regions to be developed.

The shifting of political negotiations to the margins of the formal arenas of the *dispositif* of consultation is one way in which the political dimension is concealed. Using their institutional and legal prerogatives, as I have mentioned, the elected officials who were excluded came back into the fray by increasing their bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the regional and central administrations. This repositioning led to a placing of the political dimension within the invisible sphere of negotiation, masking its highly individualised and asymmetric character and favouring political actors able to negotiate with the state, such as those in a position to influence how elected city councillors would vote. This explains why the only occasion on which the consultation process undertaken by the Wali was the subject of public criticism from local councillors was precisely the eve of the first municipal session during which LDCs were put to the

vote. By using a press conference (*Média 24*, 2014) to denounce their exclusion from the process, some thirty or so elected officials<sup>30</sup> marginalised by the mayor tried to join the negotiations opened with the mayor and the administration to obtain a majority in the assembly's vote by highlighting their capacity to create difficulties. The political bargaining power of local elected officials can be understood only if we remember their role in the Moroccan political system: they primarily have a function of intercession, in that they are meant to 'raise' the social demands of various segments of the population (Tozy, 1991). This function—and thus the negotiations related to it—is individual in character: negotiations materialise through officials' haggling in the electoral context and their seeking positions of power and accumulation that help strengthen their electoral base. Thus, for one influential member on the city council whom I observed during the process, what was at stake in the negotiation with regard to the vote on LDCs was a place on their boards, so as to subsequently 'have the means to influence' the implementation of projects.<sup>31</sup>

The central government, meanwhile, drew on its ability to mobilise—or not—financial resources in order to influence the definition of the development plan; its masterly inactivity resulted in the political dimension being concealed in a second way. The elevated rail service project is undoubtedly the most explicit example. As a technical solution advocated by the mayor, and adopted in principle by the city council a year earlier, the project was met with reluctance on the part of the central government, which preferred a less expensive, technological option—the development of a Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS). The lack of technical and financial assistance proffered by the central government in the context of the steps taken by the mayor during the consultation process, when he approached foreign donors to finance the elevated rail service, limited his room for manoeuvre given the weakness of the municipal budget. The difficulties of reconciling the divergent views of the administration and the mayor were resolved thanks to an alliance between the Wali and the mayor when the council voted on the development plan's specific measures at the end of the process. This alliance ensured a compromise that involved, on the one hand, the extension of the tram line instead of the creation of a BRTS and, in return, on the other hand, the abandonment of the elevated rail service project.

In formal consultation forums—that is to say, the think tank's working groups—the political dimension was redeployed in the economic, technical

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30 The city council has 147 councillors from 16 districts backed by the city council. In total, the city has 500 local councillors.

31 Interviews, city council, 2014.

and normative spheres, leading to a third way in which the political dimension itself was concealed. The work of the committee 'Mobility and public space', in which I took part, is particularly illuminating in this respect. The nature of the members co-opted led to urban transportation issues being addressed solely from the viewpoint of mobility. Thus, when defining working guidelines,<sup>32</sup> the vast majority of participants at the meeting were managers or employees of large companies, with no one representing the captive population of public transport users in Casablanca. The participants' concerns were solely focused on the proper functioning of the city's economic activities, and the international examples used as benchmarks by the experts from the consultancy Valyans, which ran the meeting, were selected in view of the economic and developmental challenges they involved.<sup>33</sup> Regional inequalities in access to public transport were indeed denounced, but only on the basis of the needs of new business centres and residential neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Casablanca. The needs of populations marginalised by the high cost of public transport, which largely explain the massively informal nature and the dysfunctions of this sector, went largely ignored. Thus, the consultation gave voice to an essentially economic approach to mobility and the public transport service; this is itself a highly political position, being based on social class. In addition, the meetings organised with public service operators and administrators<sup>34</sup> to provide material for the committee were a pretext for each to defend competing visions for the development of urban transport, but the operational and technical dimension of those involved always came first, which resulted in any controversy being confined to purely technical statements. Lastly, when finalising the proposals of the committee, consensus was built on the unquestioned authority of the experts who had drafted the final report submitted to the Wali: in the actual functioning of the committee, only two members—two employees from the private sector—took any action to identify concrete proposals. These proposals went back and forth between them and the leader of the group 'Casa, a place for living', before being submitted for discussion to all its members at the last meeting of the focus group. The proposals provoked a

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32 Feedback meeting of the focus subgroup 'Mobility and public space', Regional Investment Centre, Casablanca, 29 January 2014.

33 Transport systems in the cities of Bristol, Bucharest and Kaunas were presented. The Bristol system was chosen for its organisation of freight, the Bucharest system for its fight against pollution, and the Kaunas system for its intelligent transport service.

34 I was instructed by the committee to conduct interviews with the delegate from the bus transport service, the public operator in charge of the trams, the municipal official in charge of highways, and the regional official in charge of traffic management; I was then asked to summarise the situation for all the participants.

lively debate that revealed the contradictory visions of the participants as to the 'best' transport solutions to present to the Wali. By proposing that the experts from Valyans be entrusted with drawing up the details of the final deliverable, 'in the form of a harmonious and easy-to-digest PowerPoint',<sup>35</sup> the chair of the working group was able to put an end to the debate and avoid arbitration, shifting that decision to the question of formatting. This, which he was in charge of, concealed the political choices that had been made, giving way, in the final document, to the options preferred by the consultants.

The avoidance of the political dimension was not just a mechanical effect related to the architecture of the process. It also resulted from the Wali's effacement in the face of the conflict, which can be understood as a fourth way in which the political dimension was made invisible. The schemes set up by the state's representative, and his whole way of acting, testify to a desire to 'defuse' the expression of the political dimension. Thus, the methodology of 'simple consensus' set out by the Wali—that is to say, the creation of one deliverable per working group, limited the controversies within the think tank. The segmentation of the feedback process for the proposals of the eight working groups also prevented any confrontation between these groups over their choices and differing proposals, even though they sometimes found themselves working on the same themes. In addition, during the process the ways in which deliverables were to be submitted to the Wali assumed a character that did not lend itself to controversy. One of the first feedback sessions of one of the eight working groups, for example, took place in the hall of the city council in the presence of its elected members. The meeting was an occasion for intense polemics, which however were aimed not at questioning the appropriateness of the proposals submitted, but at allowing each elected official to defend 'his or her' territory, or 'his or her' population.<sup>36</sup> This explains why subsequent meetings with the other working groups were held *in camera* in the *wilaya*, in the presence of senior officials from the Ministry of the Interior and representatives of elected bodies alone, in order of rank, giving these meetings a ceremonial and solemn nature not conducive to controversy. The study day<sup>37</sup> organised during the process, which brought together all the local political representatives, regional officials, and members of the think tank—that is to

35 Mustapha Mellouk, chair of the working group 'Casa, a place for living', at the meeting to finalise the deliverables of the group 'Casa, a place for living', Hôtel des Arts, Dar Bouazza, 16 March 2014.

36 Interview, think tank members, April 2014.

37 *Expériences nationales et internationales pour inspirer le modèle de transformation de la métropole du Grand Casablanca*, workshop, Club Attijariwafa Bank, 8 March 2014.

say, nearly 500 people—certainly opened a space for debate (the only one that took place during the process) even though the visibility of the focus group in the public space and the sidelining of elected officials created tensions. But the debates, dedicated to the study of models of development in other countries, focused on what was driving the transformation of *foreign* capitals,<sup>38</sup> thereby setting aside the issues related to the Casablanca development plan and ipso facto defusing controversy with regard to the plan's definition. Conversely, the staging of the day's events, chaired by the Wali and including all the traditional codes and symbols of the state, showed that it was under the aegis of the state, and around its emblematic figure, the Wali, that harmony and unity were established between widely dispersed forces.

If the way in which he embodies royal power gives the Wali power of action, it still weakens him: it makes any form of protest and criticism potentially destabilising since 'to challenge the approach being made and the negotiations to which it has led mean challenging royal authority' (Bono, 2010). Questioning, in any way, the preparation of the development plan thus comprises a potential threat—or at least is perceived as such by the state's representative. This aversion to the 'political' dimension thus positions the Wali not as an actor in the conflict, but as an actor situated in an 'elsewhere' of the conflict, in the space of consensus that is built in the context both of the asymmetry of power relations between actors and of the asymmetry of the resources each is able to mobilise when faced with the state.

## 7 The Blur of the Concept of Development—The 'Adjuster' of Conflicting Temporalities

The conflicts that arose were not only linked to negotiations over the definition of public policies, they also had a time dimension. The preparation of the development plan, indeed, involves several dispositifs for action: the state of 'urgency' that imposes the need for action, the royal order authorising the action of the state's representative, the concrete imperatives of development that require consultation and, finally, the participation that expands the circle of negotiations. Although they are all implemented in order to serve 'development', these dispositifs produce disjunctions because of their different relationships with the 'time' of public action, whether the short 'time' of urgency, the long

38 The study day was structured as six panels, each dedicated to a 'metropolitan transformation model' and including presentations from a representative of a major foreign consultancy firm and a political leader from the city in question.

'time' of development (which is the 'time' of results), the intermediate 'time' of negotiation with decision-making centres and the pre-intermediate 'time' of consultation with civil society or, finally, the uncontrollable and discontinuous time of the King, a time that cannot be discussed and is punctuated by accelerations and expectations.

Because of his central position in the process, the Wali finds himself at the intersection of these temporal requirements, whose overlap produces tensions. So the 'short time' of urgency comes into 'opposition' with the 'long time' of development (Callens et al., 2007): the language of urgency employed by the King puts the population in the position of expecting immediate solutions and forces the Wali into a position where he needs to meet this expectation. Thus one can understand how, during the consultation process, a 'Plan of priority action for the short term' was implemented, the measures of which were subsequently integrated into the development plan. Furthermore, the royal dimension of the development plan requires the state's representative to meet the expectations of the King, whose monitoring of regional public action is embodied in royal visits (Goeury, 2014): these are the object of the Wali's temporal expectations, disturbing the temporality of public action. The prevailing perspective during royal sojourns has thus resulted in moments of acceleration and intensification in the pace at which the development plan is drawn up.<sup>39</sup> The temporal stakes of the royal visits act both as a constraint and as a resource with regard to the actions of the state's representative. On the one hand, they strengthen the negotiating power of elected officials, who themselves are not responsible for the conduct of the process. Such was the case throughout the months of March and April, during the negotiations on the creation of LDCs; the delay in which fuelled the King's discontent and led to the cancelling of his stay in Casablanca (*Panorapost*, 2014). On the other hand, the planning of the ceremony at which the development plan would be presented to the King accelerated negotiations with the central government.<sup>40</sup>

The synchronisation of the times for negotiation is, in turn, hampered by the dispersal of decision-making centres: political time (that of the city

39 The prospect of a royal visit in March 2014 first led to the hasty finalising of the proposals of the working group 'Casa, a place for living'; thereafter, the date for reporting back on the group's work was subject, throughout the month of March, to successive schedule changes: the meeting at which progress would be reported, scheduled for 20 March, was postponed to 27, then to 28 March, finally being held on 11 April, the day after the cancellation of the royal stay in Casablanca.

40 Interviews, regional and central governments, Casablanca, 2015.

council), administrative time (that of the Ministry of the Interior but also that of government entities), and the time of technical entities (the companies to which local public services are entrusted, and on which the financing of urban infrastructure mostly relies),<sup>41</sup> subject negotiations to many different logics. To these, the process of consultation with civil society adds a further time requirement since it presupposes the adoption of measures or projects that result from these consultations. But the simultaneity of consultation with civil society and negotiations with those centres that possess financial and legal resources means that either what is able to be approved by the central, regional and municipal administrations or what will be proposed as a result of the consultation must be anticipated. In addition, the time of consultation with civil society comes into conflict with the time of the King: the royal agenda made it necessary, in extremis, to bring forward by three weeks the official ceremony, originally scheduled for the end of October, at which the development plan would be presented, which led to the cancellation of the consultation scheduled with officials from the think tank for the 'finalisation' of the development plan, and thereby to the presentation of the plan as the result of consultation when this was not in fact the case.

The interweaving of these different times was facilitated, first, by the participatory schemes that created the think tank, the rhetoric and instruments of which were the same as those advocated by international donors: the 'strategy of extraversion' with regards to participation (Bayart, 2009, xxv) provided the means to supervise very closely the consultation with civil society, which facilitated its synchronisation with the time constraints imposed by the other political and technical dispositifs. Thus, the co-option by the Wali of the leaders of the working groups and his proximity to the vast majority of these leaders have allowed him to influence the nature of the proposals and the pace of their development. The constraints affecting the Wali's actions were, for example, fully internalised by Mustapha Mellouk, head of the working group 'Casa, a place for living', in his report to the participants: the 'urgency', 'the need to formalise proposals very quickly, to identify quick wins' and to be 'realistic' in the definition of proposals are all injunctions which use, verbatim, the guidelines and the lexicon used by Khalid Safir. Similarly, Mellouk's hesitation with regard to the issue of the elevated rail service reflect the Wali's indecision with regard to how to schedule it within the development plan, an indecision itself caused by the unfinished nature of the negotiations between the central

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41 In Casablanca, at the turn of the new millennium, water management, sanitation, the supply of electricity, transport and waste collection were entrusted to private companies in the form of public-private partnerships.



government and the mayor. This also explains the choice, made by the head of the working group, not to formalise his position on the subject in his final proposals.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the experts involved in the think tank were—without their knowledge—important intermediaries for the Wali's actions: co-opted because of the expertise they had managed to acquire previously through their professional practice, consultants have a detailed knowledge of what is possible in terms of public policy, as I observed in the case of the 'Mobility' committee and its largely conservative proposals. The 'areas for improvement', 'target models' and 'priority projects' proposed by the committee drew on the knowledge acquired by Valyans while working alongside the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior, which had entrusted the consultancy with numerous studies on urban transport. The proposals submitted to the Wali therefore stuck to the projects being planned or studied by the Ministry of the Interior as the regulator of urban transport.<sup>43</sup> Finally, the combination of 'hybridisation with genuine creativity' (Bayart, 2009), upon which the schemes of participation were based, provided the instruments of persuasion that enabled the Wali to exercise his authority and ensured that he was able to influence the pace and content of the consultation; the participatory dimension was thus harmlessly combined with the repertoire of administrative authoritarianism, as evidenced by the lexical content of the 'General Letter of Mission',<sup>44</sup> 'proposing' the working stages and the methodology of consensus, or—indeed—the 'harmonisation meeting',<sup>45</sup> 'supervising' the think tank's guidelines and accompanied by the Wali's recommendation to 'work in complete freedom and think without taboos'. The dimension of participation also managed to combine with the unquestioned character of the state's authority and that of its representative, who provided the flexibility to change the agenda and the modalities of consultation and to adapt them to various time constraints.

Second, the blurring of the concept of development has opened up room for manoeuvre when it comes to adjustments imposed by the disjunctions

42 Meeting to finalise the deliverables of the group 'Casa, a place for living', Hôtel des Arts, Dar Bouazza, 16 March 2014.

43 The proposals recommended the implementation of a target model for the organisation of the transport system, the adoption of a fund for urban transport and the professionalisation of large taxis, measures that had either already been adopted or were being planned.

44 *Lettre de mission générale destinée aux présidents des groupes de travail: réflexion sur la stratégie de développement du Grand Casablanca*, internal document, 2 December 2013.

45 *Procès verbal de la réunion d'harmonisation avec le groupe Casa-Lieu de Vie*, internal document, 16 January 2014.

between the time requirements of different dispositifs for action and those related to the realisation of the development plan. The segmentation of the times of development, between short term, medium term and long term, authorised the implementation of a 'plan of priority actions for the short term', which was accompanied throughout the process by a readjustment of the lexicon surrounding consultation, now refocused on defining development actions for the 'medium term' and the 'strategic' dimension. In addition, the indeterminate nature of development provided some elasticity for the articulation of the time of negotiations for both the short times of urgency and the long times of development. Thanks to their multiple meanings, all public action measures could be described as a 'development project'. Thus, the negotiations over the priority action plan focused on 'immediately financeable actions'<sup>46</sup> or projects that were already planned and budgeted for, and whose implementation was hastened by the simultaneous negotiations that took place in the centres of power during the process, bogged down as they were in the tangle of channels of decision-making and funding.<sup>47</sup> A similar type of adjustment prevailed for the actual scheduling of the development plan: discussions focused on measures 'that were achievable'<sup>48</sup>—that is to say, on actions already announced and others that were scheduled and awaiting funding. The process, however, allowed for the hierarchising of priorities, the redefining of the modalities of implementation through the creation of new local development companies, and the mobilisation of financing to the tune of EUR 3 million. In addition, conflicting temporalities reinforced the strongly 'managerial' dimension of development: the central place given to the planning of infrastructure, roads and the urban fabric has removed the oppositions between the notions of urgency and development. The fact that such projects are now underway or, in some cases, the fact that work resumed and was intensified following the adoption of the priority action plan or the development plan have thus made visible the active will of the state and its power to transform the city.

Third, the material nature of the media's presentation of the development plan has opened up room for manoeuvre to cope with constraints on the visibility of the action of transformation undertaken by the state. The presentation of the development plan has assumed different shapes, has taken place under different rubrics and has been prefaced by different 'introductory

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46 Interviews, regional government, Casablanca, January 2015.

47 *Programme global et actions prioritaires pour la mise à niveau de la région du Grand Casablanca*, press dossier, 10 February 2014.

48 Interviews, regional administration, Casablanca, January 2015.

paragraphs' and thematic 'statements',<sup>49</sup> all of which have made it possible to interweave the different times of public action with the time constraints of the requirements for 'publicising' the process. The expectations raised by the royal statement, indeed, led the Wali to increase the number of public meetings: between November 2013 and December 2014, four press conferences<sup>50</sup> were devoted to the action taken by the state's representative, forcing the disclosure of actions and projects as yet uncertain because of the negotiating process. The royal ceremony that was held in order to deliver the development plan to the King also marked the symbolic moment at which the negotiation process ended, making it necessary to formalise the development plan when negotiations were still incomplete for certain projects. Thus, the replacement, in the supporting materials, of the heading 'urban transport' by the much vaguer term 'urban mobility' made it possible to include urban highway projects while concealing the fact that consultation with regard to the elevated rail service project had been abandoned, though it had been announced during the first conferences.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the formatting of the report presented to the King in September 2014, describing four 'development poles', made it possible to keep quiet the details of projects not yet finalised, even if the deadline imposed by the date of this royal ceremony made 'results', with regard to these projects, necessary. Such was the case with the elevated rail service, whose unfinished state was hidden by a convoluted formulation that evoked future transit lines in 'capacity mode', without specifying the nature of the 'capacity' solution decided upon. In addition, the priority actions of the 'emergency plan for the period 2014–15' were indistinguishable from those that fell within the longer term of the preparation of the development plan, but were nonetheless presented as the fruit of consultation.

49 *Programme global et actions prioritaires pour la mise à niveau de la région du Grand Casablanca*, press dossier, 10 February 2014; *Plan de développement 2015–2020, rapport présenté lors de la cérémonie royale*, 26 September 2014; *Plan de développement 2015–2020*, press dossier, 22 December 2014; *Discours de Monsieur Khalid Safir, le Wali de la région du Grand Casablanca, Gouverneur de la Préfecture de Casablanca*, meeting to report back on the work of the think tank, 16 January 2015.

50 The press conferences of 12 November 2013, 11 December 2013, 10 February 2014 and 22 December 2014.

51 During the press conference of 11 December 2013, the plans for an elevated rail service were announced; the conference of 10 February 2014 reported the completion of technical studies and the ongoing finalisation of the necessary financial package. Then, during the ceremony at which the development plan was presented to the King, the development of a dedicated transport system was announced, without specifying its nature.

## 8 Conclusion

As a manifestation of the royal speech cited at the opening of this chapter, the development plan took shape via the meanings that the various actors assigned to the royal words, based on their understanding, their position, their behaviour and the resources they could mobilise in order to participate in and to influence the process. The Casablanca Development Plan was thus achieved in and via a tangle of interests, logics, power relations and competition. The space-time opened for the process of negotiation was an arena in which, in singular forms, expression could be given to conflicts that were either directly related to the definition of the projects, or connected with competition that went well beyond that process of definition. The analysis of the process of the definition of the development plan has highlighted the conflicts that make up the plan; it has also led to progress in the understanding of the nature of those who drive development projects in Morocco. My study has thus tried to fill a gap in the major works on the development of major urban projects; works which affirm, more than they question, the royal dimension. Based on this premise, these works primarily focus attention on the objections and protests aroused by the implementation of development projects or the loyalties and alliances that form around the allocation of these projects. Such relatively Manichean readings present development as an 'instrument' outside society, placed at the service of building the consensus by which the monarchy perpetuates its hegemony. I have instead tried to show that the development plan is not so much the instrument of consensus as it is its 'object' and its 'product'. This consensus is affected by the practices and political struggles that traverse society. It is formed in the asymmetry and unequal power relations that constitute it. The process of constructing the development plan highlights the strength of the interpenetration between the state and society, and the many forms it takes, whether that be through the dependencies, the competition, the workarounds or the 'resistances'—as shown more specifically in the chapter by Adriana Kemp and Talia Margalit in this volume—that have led the players to shape it. The arrangements, alliances, and various mediations that have helped to define the development plan thus suggest that we view the state not as a 'referee' (Waterbury, 1975), but as an 'arena' (Aymes et al., 2015): the 'development' of Casablanca, marking the start of a 'time to act', thus comprised, first and foremost, a time in which the balance of power and the competing forces at work in Morocco—relations in which the state and society are interconnected—could be brought up to date.

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