

Post-development Practices of Public Space, Between Cohabitation and “Domination” of New Atmospheres.

The Case of Rabat Dock in Morocco

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Abstract

Public space becomes a major issue during urban restructuring. To better understand this specificity, we chose the Rabat's dock developed as part of the Bouregreg valley development project, as a case study. This space, with its background, has been subjected to a profound restructuring as part of the project.

The study of the social uses and practices of citizens through their manifestations in this space makes it possible to identify the evolution of the relationship between the transformation of spatial structures and the production of landscapes representative of the image of the urban area. The transformations brought by this mega-project in our study area show new urbanities. In front of a tendency to micro-appropriation by the upper social classes and the tendency to a smoothed and polished urbanity, a more diverse and more complex urbanity is found, which oscillates between a consensual social sharing of public (physical) space and / or maintaining old practices.

In order to be able to clarify these issues, we have adopted a methodology combining in situ observation protocols - day and night - and qualitative interviews with the users of Rabat dock.

Keywords: Morocco, urban project, public spaces, social appropriations, uses

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1. Introduction

Public spaces in the Arab cities have moved to the top of the political agenda of urban planning authorities. Whereas they were simply considered as simple spaces "left behind" after an urban development operation, they continue to climb the ranks of urban planning to become today the cornerstone in the transformation of the Arab cities (Berry-Chikhaoui and Deboulet, 2002).

In this context, the sea and river facades of Arab metropolises have become the windows of their new ambitions (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), etc.). In the case of the city of Rabat in Morocco, the banks of the Bouregreg river were a place of work for fishermen and "flaikiyas"¹ (barcassiers), of games and outings for their inhabitants as well as a service area (customs, nautical club, yacht club...). These shores were undefined spaces connecting the twin cities (Rabat and Salé) at very specific points. They were often described as wasteland and bad crowds. At the beginning of the 21st century (2004) the banks of the Bouregreg River in Rabat became a site to frequent, a place to visit, to live, to consume and meet, a scene where to see and be seen. Since then, the socio-economic transformation of the site has accelerated and the reputation of Bouregreg universalised.

This article is based on research² undertaken for three years combining in situ observation protocols - day and night - and qualitative interviews with the users of Rabat dock.

We are going through this case to show how the public space is socially marked, divided, disputed or negotiated, and how the practices (collective or individual - private or public) which take place there, have in common to shake up at a given moment the ordinary rules of occupation of public space.

2. The Bouregreg Valley: a changing site, an ambitious project

"The bouregreg Valley project is one of the icons of Morocco's commitment to water front development and "showcase urbanism" project" (Barthel and Mouloudi, 2009, p.56)

The Rabat's Dock, which lies down below the old medina of Rabat and the Oudayas, facing the city of Salé, have long remained undefined spaces. The only forms of anthropological use and function were seafood gathering, fishing and boat trips, which linked the twin cities at specific points. These banks remained disconnected from the rest of the city for many years, despite the various plans with diversified objectives and development variants that have followed one another since the first half of the previous century³ (Mzaiz, 2011, pp. 132-140).

¹ It should be noted that Brunot, L. (1921) differentiated between "Barcassier / Babriias" and "Batelier / flaikiyas". Because each of them had their own corporation and carried out different activities. However, the term "barcassier" often comes up despite the fact that the clients use the term of flaikiyas.

² This research was carried out as part of a doctoral dissertation prepared at the Institut National d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme (INAU-Rabat) and defended in December 2018.

³ a. The Vizierial Order of January 13, 1954; b. The National Youth Project or "Zévaco Proposition", in 1966; c. The 1972 Development Plan designed by the Town Planning Services; d. The 1983 "Partex" Proposal; e. The Bouregreg Development Plan or "Plan Pinseau" established in 1994; f. The Development Plan drawn up by the Rabat-Salé Urban Agency, based on the 1998 IAURIF Reference Plan.

After half a century of attempts to redevelop the Bouregreg estuary, a specific development plan for the Bouregreg valley was finally driven by a royal will, which gave it strong legitimacy and an ability to mobilise national and international economic and financial actors. The official document, entitled “Parti d’aménagement global de la vallée du Bouregreg” (PAG), displays the ambitions of the project:

« Le Roi Mohammed VI a donné Ses Hautes Instructions pour un aménagement du site exceptionnel de la vallée du Bouregreg, un aménagement qui soit digne de la Capitale du Royaume, à l’aube d’un nouveau règne et d’un nouveau millénaire. Un aménagement respectueux du caractère rare et prestigieux de ce site gorgé d’histoire qui, tout en prêtant attention à sa préservation, fasse preuve de créativité et d’audace». (Parti d’aménagement Global, 2003, p. 7).



Figure 1. Global Planning Party (PAG) of the Bouregreg valley
(Source: Agence pour l'Aménagement de la Vallée Bouregreg)

In this official document, the project is presented as the symbol of a desired opening of the metropolis on ocean space, illustrated in Figure 1. The project is therefore part of a logic of "invention"- to borrow a phrase from Corbin (1990) - of the shores, through a staging that facilitates its social and symbolic appropriation by different actors. Promoted as an “opportunity ... for all the actual and future inhabitants” of the two cities, the project tries to invigorate the capital’s prestige as an attractive destination in the Mediterranean area. The Bouregreg project occupies a territory of approximately

6000 hectares, subdivided into six consecutive sequences⁴. It entails the construction of a port for cruise ships, two marinas, luxury hotels and apartments, commercial centres, a conference centre, offices, a high-class residential islet (Amwaj), an amusement park, a technopolis, a golf course and eco-tourism facilities (Bogaert, 2012, p. 261).

It should be pointed out that in the contemporary development operations observed on a large international scale, the impression of standardization is such that it is sometimes difficult to differentiate a new public space from another, a new neighbourhood from another. It is often felt that the same "solutions" are being implemented here and there: the conversion of brownfields into cultural spaces, the transformation of riverbanks into convivial places, the use of the same materials, the same curves and the same architectural forms, have thus gradually become "imposed figures" of urban planning. Thus, the use of teams of "starchitects" (Gravari-Barbas, 2015) also contributes to this impression of standardization: large public facilities here and there play the role of totem, a signal that a city has entered the international metropolitan competition. The ways in which these stars of architecture and urbanism can be integrated into projects are varied (in some cases, these are urban planners with whom foreign investors are used to working. In other cases, developers have entered into masterwork contracts with city planners or architects who have been advised to them for example, French architect Bernard Reichen or the London firm Foster and Partners, or the British architect Zaha Hadid). And the orders passed on to starchitects are multiples (production of urban and architectural specifications, design of public spaces on the Bouregreg valley and elaboration of detailed master plans).

With regard to the participation of the inhabitants, it should be stressed that in the Moroccan legislative context, the public inquiry is the only time when public consultation is imposed by law on projects requiring the development of a development plan. While the main purpose of the law was to facilitate the implementation of the project by means of this very democratic initiative, the developer, obliged to implement it, came up against the obstacle of a hostile public opinion. Indeed, "the inquiry into the Bouregreg Valley Special Development Plan (PAS) was organized at a very (too) advanced stage of the project preparation procedure [...] as a result, it was the starting point for the mobilization of the inhabitants" (Mouloudi, 2015, pp. 319-404).

Bab Al Bahr sequence (Sea Gate), which interests us here, is the first milestone of the project supposed to create a new centrality, a place of consumption, meetings and territorial marketing. Bab Al Bahr project covers an area of 30 ha, including 530,000 m² dedicated to high standing residential units, hotels (5 stars), services, facilities, as well as a set of entertainment and leisure centres including the Cité des Arts et des Métiers, a craft, commercial and touristic complex. It includes also the tram link between Rabat and Salé and the Hassan II bridge on the BouRegreg. In addition to these two infrastructures, the Bab Al Bahr project has planned the construction of a marina, a port

⁴ The development perimeter is subdivided into six consecutive sequences : Sequence 1: Bab Al Bahr corresponds to the Bouregreg estuary, between the medinas of Rabat and Salé, downstream of the Hassan II bridge; Sequence 2: Assahat Al Kabira, between the Hassan II bridge and the Office National des Chemins de fer (ONCF) bridge; Sequence 3: Kasbat Abi Raqraq, between the ONCF bridge and the Mohammed V bridge; Sequence 4: Sahrij El Oued, upstream of the Mohammed V bridge; it covers the plain located at the bottom of the slopes of the Akreuch plateau; Sequence 5: Al Menzeh Al Kébir; it corresponds to the Shoul plateau; Sequence 6: lookouts on the Hssaine plateau.

on the Atlantic, a tunnel, as well as commercial and tourist facilities, as illustrated in Figure 2. Its overall cost is estimated at 535 million euros (Mouloudi, 2015, p. 160).



Figure 2. The different components of the Bab Al Bahr sequence
(Source: Agence pour l'Aménagement de la Vallé Bouregreg)



Figure 3. The Rabat's dock on the Oued Bouregreg (Rabat) (Moussalih, 2016).

The first public spaces covered by this sequence were delivered in 2007, including the Rabat's dock, as shown in Figure 3, which constitutes one of the main elements that make it up. This public space was designed by the Bernard Reichen agency, Grand Prix de l'urbanisme français in 2005. It consists of a 1.5 km promenade along the Bouregreg River with cafes and restaurants on land and on stilts. A landing stage is reserved for barcassiers which, for a long time and a few dirhams, ensure the crossing between Rabat and Salé from several mooring points. The dock has been fitted out according to classic international standards (street furniture, materials and lighting) that can be found on all waterfronts (Chaline, 1994; 1998) on the planet: cobblestones, protective guardrails in the style of a passenger gangway, designer lighting, etc.

3. How urban transformations affect the social use of public space:

Public planners, through their intervention in spaces - long ignored on purpose or without, and "left behind"-, act on these portions of the city through their legitimacy of action as a guarantor of the public interest and proceed by their own means (financial, human and technical, etc.), their knowledge, know-how and expertise of national and international design offices. Their interventions obey organizational, political, or economic rationalities which depends on the power of the initiators. In this way, they institute, in these interstitial spaces, new rules of use and practices (no swimming, no fishing, no selling, etc.). These new rules are given in legal and architectural configurations. They do not constrain social interactions so much but rather offer directions for their smooth running.

Thus, designers by planning, constructing and implementing their spaces, try to install both their own image, those of the public spaces produced and dictate their modes of use. They predefine the theoretical profiles of the users and anticipate the way or ways in which they will be appropriate. The legal operationalization of public space will undoubtedly have a considerable impact on public spaces use. Because, uses resulting from the legal register do not necessarily correspond to the rules inspired from social register. In other words: "rules on paper" replace "rules in use", and "law in the books" is opposed to "law in action". This standardization of public spaces detaches more than it attaches and considerably or even dramatically reduces "uses" which, according to De Certeau (1980), refers to "ways of doing", "instructions for use" of an object or a space that differs from the modes of use programmed by its inventors and producers.

These ways of doing provide information on "the arts of doing" (De Certeau, 1980) and the "city dwellers skills" to co-produce public space. (Berry-Chikhaoui and Deboulet, 2000).

4. Disappearance of old uses and emergence of the sea promenade

"My father used to swim across the river in the 1930s and 1940s. Today, we cannot help thinking of the barcassiers and fishermen of Salé and Rabat whose activity dates back to the dawn of time. Myself, I remember, as a child, having taken these boats several times and, on the return trip, we bought fresh fish that we brought home. I am

sure that many Rbatis (resident of Rabat) and Slaouis (resident of Salé) remember this.”

(A statement of a resident from Rabat, author’s translation).

In the history of the city, Bouregreg was first a place of work, for fishermen and flaikiyas, a site of games and "outing" for the inhabitants of the city and a space partly occupied by port’s services (Nautical Club, Yacht-Club, etc.). Its banks have never been reserved for walking and promenade.



Figure 4. The flaikiyas in activity after the development of the banks of the Bouregreg river. (Moussalih, 2015).

Beyond social and economic functions, Bouregreg also ensured an identity role, being both a place of memory and festive celebrations, with an important heritage dimension. Statements collected during investigations (semi-direct(structured?) interviews), photos and documents from archives highlight "traditional" uses of the dock (swimming, fishing, passage, etc.). These places were also part of traditional and seasonal practices, such as *the N'zaha* ", a party organized outside the medina and requiring the ascent of the river to reach the vestiges of the Chellah⁵.

⁵ Chellah site is located on the left bank of the Bouregreg, 4 km from the Atlantic coast, and some 100 from the Almohad enclosure in Rabat. It occupies the slopes of two hills. Because of its topographical and geographical situation, the site offered favorable conditions to human occupation from the earliest Antiquity (7th-6th centuries BC): a fertile territory, abundant water sources, forests. and a site open to both the river and the ocean. Chellah site includes a. The ancient archaeological site of Sala; b. The dynastic necropolis of the Mérinides; d. The sacred natural site of the eel pond.

"Oued Bouregreg, otherwise known as the " Grenades Valley "or" Asmir Ravine ", was known and appreciated because, in the spring, the inhabitants of Salé had to cross it to organize picnics at the foot of Challah, at the occasion of the N'zaha festival. The inhabitants of Salé spent pleasant days aboard boats accompanied by musical troupes, "troupe de melhoun" (melhoun (الملحون) Arabic word which brings together all poetry in Maghrebian Arabic, whether Bedouin or urban) cheerful and jubilant atmosphere. They continued their activities by preparing meals before attending theatrical performances, al bissat and halqa (the oldest forms of traditional theater in Morocco), in tents set-up for this purpose. The activity continued until al asr prayer (mid-afternoon), before the crowds returned home»⁶(Author's translation).

Observed in Morocco since the 18th century, but practiced long before, the Spring festivals or *N'zaha* celebrated the renewal of nature (Gillot, 2008, p.58). The tradition of *N'zaha*, which means "outing", is a festivity that celebrates the beautiful spring season, in a friendly, artistic and playful spirit. In Marrakech, this spring ritual takes place in the famous gardens of the ochre city, known as *the Agdal*. In Fez, the tradition of *N'zaha* was to get out of the city and spend a day in the hills planted with olive trees that surrounded the city. The picnic in the green was the highlight of this day: "Dissociated from the wilderness, the countryside has tightened around the element that has become central: lunch" (Gillot, 2008, p. 58).

Today, with the layout of the dock, the emergence of promenade represents a revolution in this interstice space. Inherited from the aristocratic practices of the end of the 17th century (Rieucou, 2012), the promenade became in the 19th century a bourgeois practice, providing entertainment and relaxation to its followers, encouraged to do so by doctors and place of sociability (Delpal, 2002). Beyond the aspects of well-being, it was also an opportunity for ostentatious expression of wealth and a form of urban culture (Turcot, 2005).

The walk as a form of urban expression based on the movement of the body, forms a sort of "ambulatory urbanity" (Rieucou, 2012), in which the bodies cross, touch each other, and slip away: « "This public space "geosymbol of urbanity" constitutes both a spatial and social object [...] functioning as a societal scene, [...] for certain social groups, in [which] they show themselves" (Rieucou, 2012) (author's translation).

Place of a certain cosmopolitan sociability at the same time inclusive and exclusive, it is invested in urban symbolic landmark, an outing, a privileged moment of self-demonstration. It has diversified, adapting to the new lifestyles of permanent and temporary residents to become one of the essential places of the contemporary city and an object cherished by the actors of the urban fabric.

In a few years, the Rabat's dock has become the competitor of Rabat's downtown (mainly avenue Mohammed V). Its massive appropriation by different social strata greatly exceeds the expectations of its designers. It offers indeed a possibility of relaxation and recreation both to the middle and upper social categories and to the working classes. But also, a space of freedom, interaction and socialization for children, youth and women.

⁶ Source <http://www.hespress.com/opinions/251981.html>

5. A public space structured around three archipelagos

“Within each city, the wealthy upper classes develop and reproduce in new forms a position of authority, material and symbolic domination over the lower classes, contained in a codification of social relations”.
 (Dris, 2005, p.207) (author’s translation).

Going from the postulate that the city is the concretization of the image that society makes of itself, and that the spatial structure is the expression of the social structure, "Rabat’s dock" is subdivided socially and spatially into public area and “restricted” access area. Different kind of barriers contribute to a fragmented organization of public space which refers to the figure of the archipelago.

In the light of these archipelagos, Rabat’s dock can be interpreted as a laboratory of urbanity. Its production gave birth to a dual urbanity: the urbanity of the favoured westernized strata (the middle class and the upper middle class) represented by the second archipelago and the urbanity of the disadvantaged class (the poor)- in the first and the third one -, more diverse and more complex. This leads us to question the capacity of public spaces in the Arab world to unite several sociological types that coexist without aggressive interaction.

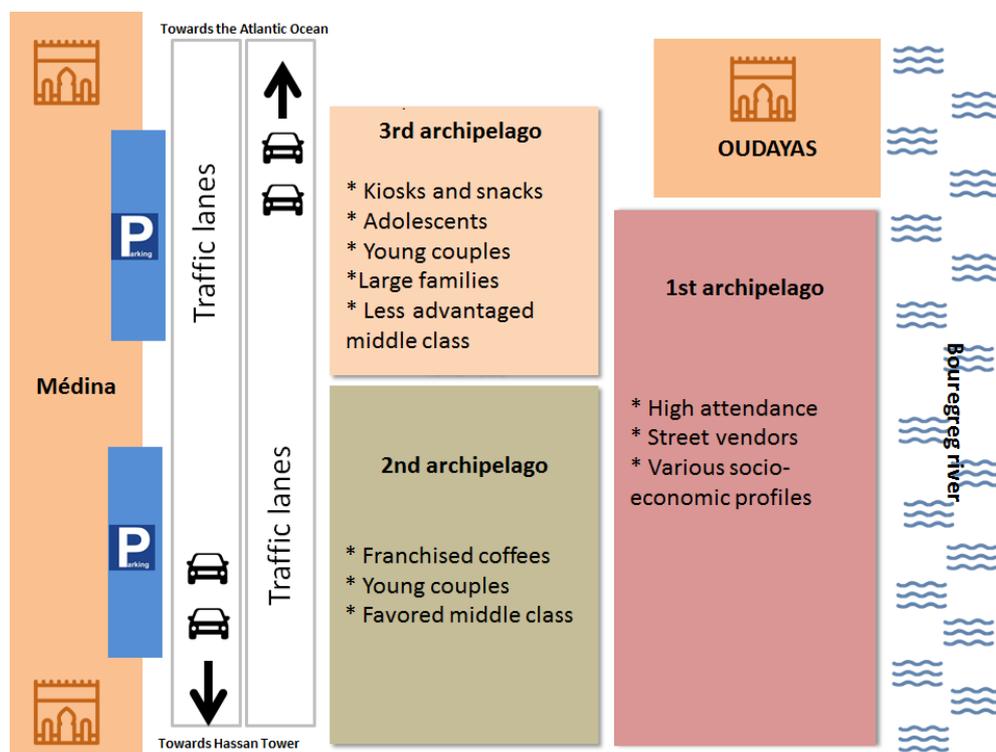


Figure 5. Social fragmentation and archipelago structure of uses within the Rabat quay.
 (Moussalih, 2015).

A selective archipelago

Franchised cafes and restaurants, in the second archipelago, - intended for a higher middle class - which line up on this dock, as does the “Dhow” (restaurant-bar-lounge), a rather luxuriously furnished boat, stowed at the quay in Rabat and which reminds boats stowed in this way on many urban Waterfronts - set up a certain selectivity of the clientele, while nearby, people are walking (especially large families from working classes) and the flaykiyas continue their traditional activity (archipelago number 1). This configuration is not exclusive to the Rabat’s dock, it has already been denounced in other places and for other services (McDonald; KFC and Starbucks) as pointed out by Graioud:

" franchised fast-food places are accessible only to a privileged bourgeois clientele that generally shuns cafe's not only because of the cafe' gender bias but also because of class issues" (Graioud, 2007, p. 534).



Figure 6. franchised cafes and restaurants, in the second archipelago (A. Moussalih, 2015).

This reality reproduces the dominant spatial division in the city. Several filtering factors - explicit and implicit-, of the clientele appear in other public spaces in the city of Rabat, as Serhir (2017) points out:

“in Hay Ryad, when a visitor or a potential client manages to pass the filter, objective or subjective - that, in the latter case, of his own representations -, which gives him access to the city center and that he manages to practice it, he finds himself confronted with another barrier, that of prices. Most visitors find them prohibitive, which dissuades them from buying in a franchised shop or from taking a meal in a restaurant, an ice cream, or even a coffee on the terrace [...] In these ways which operate “spontaneously” a selection of customers there are public screening practices, the most explicit of which is the ubiquity of security guards”

Indeed, these factors contribute to establishing a selectivity within the places, difficult to identify, because other issues and aspects of public spaces, invisible a priori, can act as a barrier to their use by some people, as shown by Karibi (2015, p. 24):

“the frequentation of the different places of the city not being systematic, it takes place in a selective manner, first according to the means of transport and secondly according to the economic accessibility of individuals to the amenities of the urban space. Some people find themselves resigned to restricting themselves to the proximity of their homes” (author’s translation).

Other factors also participate in this selectivity, such as certain objects like potted plants and glass installations on cafe terraces which are transformed into symbolic barriers installing physical and psychological boundaries between the ambulatory public space and the private space. These different barriers contribute to a fragmented organization of public space which refers to the figure of the archipelago. Consequently, these cafes become a meeting place for a young and solvent clientele from the upper middle classes who put their stamp on it, to use the expression of Jolé (2006, p. 119). The place is fashionable for this clientele, but the competition is fierce. In some sense, what has so far been a space for all will perforce become a semi-private if not totally private space for those who are able to afford it.

Shared archipelagos

So what about the working classes? It shares the first and the third archipelago. The first one offers a long walk along the Bouregreg River furnished with relatively spaced benches. This portion of the wharf drains a large crowd of visitors. In this confused space, street vendors set up shop there while waiting for their customers. The third archipelago represents a public space punctuated with fast food kiosks and it is the privileged place for young couples and large families of the lower middle class to have a snack after a long walk. Thus, the massive frequentation of Rabat’s dock by the *underprivileged classes* does not appear as an answer to a need for communion that the inhabitants of the city feel who are swept away by the interminable meanders of everyday life! The desire to move away from the everyday environment of the neighbourhood of residence, the desire to frequent a space charged with symbols of modernism and freedom and the search for a distraction - free or paid - or unusual meetings that can occur in a public space where the socio-economic markings of the day work differently, and mark a momentary break with the banality of everyday life. In his essay on the transformation of Moroccan society in contact with the West, Adam said of leisure in the urban society of Casablanca that “Moroccan man formerly had parties, he had no leisure. The proletarian of Casablanca has free time, he no longer has parties” (Adam, 1972, cited in Berriane, 1992, p.32). The success of this public space, among the working classes, gives city dwellers the opportunity to recreate this festive atmosphere which presupposes an intense collective life.



Figure 7. Formal uses and transgressive appropriations share the first and the third archipelago (A. Moussalih, 2015).

Otherwise, alongside the formal uses of the public space, transgressive appropriations emerge particularly in these two archipelagos. Yes, the layout of the quay of Rabat has led to an evolution of uses in an attempt to bring them up to international standards; the users, for their part, through various practices, tricks and resistance tactics, claim a metaphorical city that resists the dominant city.

The authorities' desire to adhere to the codes and customs of *high places of globalization* (Gravari-Barbas, 2013) is accompanied by an attempt to standardize uses which involves the interference of socio-spatial practices and of standards imposed by designers.

This attempt at normalization takes the form of prohibitions, with a large number of prohibition signs, which aim to eradicate all traditional practices and forms of appropriation of the place by the inhabitants of the popular strata, especially those from the nearby medina (angling, swimming, diving, games, etc.). These attempts encounter daily resistance which is expressed in the form of regular transgressions: the young people continue to swim and dive, the fishermen always hope to bring back fish, while the itinerant merchants always go in a group to another looking for clients.

Teenagers from the old medina of Rabat (in the Al Malah neighbourhood, in particular) and Salé's districts (Moulay Ismaïl and Al Karia neighbourhoods), often in groups, come to dive and swim in Bouregreg river despite the prohibition signs. They seem to reconnect with secular activity. In a space punctuated by numerous prohibition signs which dictate and guide the behaviour of users. Swimming in Bourgreg represents a form of daily resistance which is expressed in the form of regular transgressions.

Gwiazdzinski (2009, p.347) reminds us in this regard that “*adolescents did not wait for the 21st century to change a fountain into a swimming pool during heat waves or transform a public garden into an improvised classroom*”.

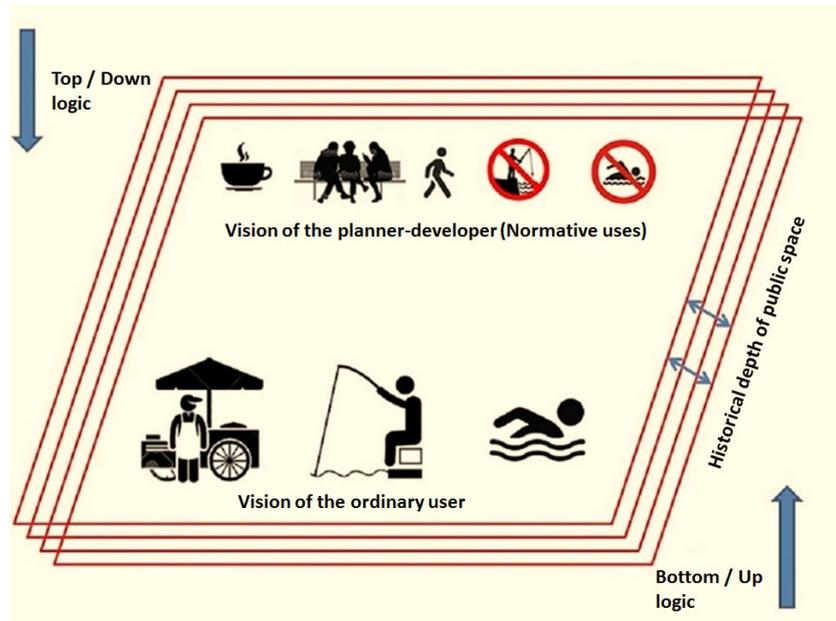


Figure 8. Between standardization and the preeminence of transgressive appropriations (Moussalih, 2015)

The street vendors, for their part, give the quay an image of a permanent market that does not fade until the end of the evening. They furnish the space in an anarchically coherent way. They actually play a compensating role by satisfying the needs of a large part of the users of the Rabat’s dock. The diversity of the offer (juice, popcorn, cotton candy, coffee, tea, cake, games for children, etc.) combined with the accessibility of the price allows users to satisfy their appetites during a walk or while waiting for a show to start.



Figure 9: Swimming in the Bouregreg, an unmissable scene on the Rabat's dock during summer. (Moussalih, 2014)

This ambivalent situation, which expressly challenges the norm, calls out to the way in which designed public spaces are received and appropriated from below.

Formerly “inhabited” (Dardel, 1952) and crossed by the inhabitants of Rabat and Salé, the dock has become a place of symbolic clashes between the logic of traditional appropriations and a model more in line with international standards and clichés of urban marketing. Despite the attempts at control, the dock is a living place where mixed forms of arrangements, coexistence and sharing between activities and men are developed, and between men belonging to different social groups and whose cultural models are more or less distant from each other. It is undoubtedly a relative failure for developers and managers who doubtless dreamed of a sanitized place more in line with the expectations of city dwellers and national and foreign tourists.

Here, the researcher finds material for thought on the “creolization” of spaces, uses and identities in movement (Gwiazdzinski, 2016). These daily practices evolve during major ritual events.

6. A space for social relaxation

“... Where do lovers meet? Parents? Simply unthinkable. In the hotel? Even for those who could afford it, it is impossible⁷ [...] We therefore find ourselves in cars, in the forests, near the beaches, on construction sites or on vacant lots. With this terrible anxiety of being discovered...” (Slimani, 2017, pp. 20-21) (Author’s translation).

Contemporary public spaces (malls, sea promenade, etc.) in the Arab world offer women a meeting space, but also a space for autonomy of movement, opening up and above all anonymity, modulated at their convenience. It obviously allows day and night meetings for couples, at a time when the social standards in this space are not as rigid compared to the community spaces (the neighbourhood of residence, for example) which control their behaviour.

“It must be said that, in general, Moroccan society was subject to the yoke of an ancestral tradition and the weight of a strong community power. Individuals were cared for and framed by these traditions and power, from birth to death. [...] Gerontocracy and paternalism were the two traits characterizing this social organization” (El Ouarti, 1998, p.21) (author’s translation).

In the same vein, Durkheim notes that

“in large cities, the individual is much more freed from the collective yoke [...], each one has all the more facilities for following his own sense that it is easier to escape this control [...], the pressure of opinion is felt with less force in the big centers. It is that everyone's attention is distracted in too many different directions and that, moreover, we know each other less, [...] the sphere of free action of each individual actually extends, and little by little, the fact becomes a right” (Durkheim, 1986, p. 330).

⁷ According to Moroccan law, a hotel establishment is entitled to request a marriage certificate from couples wishing to share the same room.

Rabat's dock also offers to lovers a few places where they can escape the curious gaze of users: cafes, spaced benches. Gradually, the Rabat's dock, especially in the afternoon and evening, during the summer season, becomes a love area. Young couples in love take over the place, meet there often at sunset, and isolate themselves there from the gaze of the curious: lovers take each other's hand; chat in peace, without fear of being heard by the people seated on the nearby benches and exceptionally, taste a furtive kiss. If young girls from wealthy backgrounds can go with their boyfriend, discreetly, to restaurants, cafes, those of popular backgrounds, however, have little choice:

"By frequenting cafe's, a young woman runs the risk of being seen in the company of a male, a fact which can ruin her social reputation" (Graiouid, 2007, p. 534)

Thus, Rabat's dock is among the public places they can frequent with their friends:

"The public space is then, an "outside" where they bypass and deviate from established standards. The romantic encounter subject regulated [in Arab societies] by prohibitions that the public space allows to a certain extent to escape" (Dris, 2005, p. 205) (Author' translation)

By the anonymity and blurring of identities that this place allows, a transgression of ordinary norms is reflected in behavior. It's as if the dock is a space where the social constraint is less strong than elsewhere.



Figure 10. Rabat's dock a love area for young couples in love (Moussalih, 2014)

Public space becomes the place where social constraint is relaxed, where greater freedom is allowed:

"Meetings "with others", "with places", do not lead to the creation of networks of intercommunication, non-surveillance zone or adventure moment only if they occur against a background of anonymity and familiarity" (Couratas, 1996, p. 99) (Author's translation).

Public space would then be the place where we "veil" and "reveal ourselves" according to established standards and the fluctuations that affect them.

In this sense, public space in everyday life, is a reflection of a generalized mercantilism which absorbs all social components, it is a space in which inertia and routine finally take over life. From where, therefore, arises the need for transgression or social escape from an asphyxiating and claustrophobic everyday life (Carretero Pasín, 2002).

7. Conclusion

This paper sheds light on the post-development practices of an interstitial space through the case of the Rabat's dock. The study allowed us to note that the development project of the Bouregreg valley has reconfigured the space and the banks of the Bouregreg river which were once "neglected". In this sense, the creation of a public space with international standards inspired by the aesthetics of the river spaces of globalization (Shanghai, London, Rio de Janeiro, Nice, etc.) such as Layouts, models, lighting, curve, urban furniture, floor covering, restoration equipment, has certainly contributed to provide the city of Rabat with a modern showcase in order to maintain a positive and dynamic image in the global imagination. The approach adopted by Rabat fits perfectly into this framework and is similar to the strategies developed by cities, such as Barcelona, Budapest or Amsterdam. These issues have placed the creation of public spaces in the city on the urban planning agenda.

The political, town-planning, economic and social rationalities are set up as a filter to select populations and activities, the fact remains that the skills of users participate in maintaining traditional practices. In this sense, the co-presence of these two rationalities / competences even seems "problematic", because it supposes a conflictual or consensual management between the two protagonists (the public authority and the population). However, despite these constraints and the restrictions imposed by the public authority, the very clean, civilized, westernized space is marked by local colours. The development of the dock has certainly contributed to the emergence of new urban practices that have found an echo in the society: the promenade as a form of leisure is well integrated. But also, a form of relaxation of rules that manage the presence of women in the public spaces of Arab cities.

Moreover, the massive occupation of this public space by children and adolescents reveals a need for freedom: freedom to play, run, jump, swim, sing, etc. The quay is transformed, thanks to children and teenagers, into a space of experimentation and creativity.

Finally, the stated desire of the public authority is to provide the city with an inclusive public space, the fact remains that within this same public space "islands" emerge, thus marking a social stratification that structures the Moroccan society. The boundaries between rich and poor seem to coexist more or less tightly.

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