

**Local Responses to Slum Resettlement:**

**The Case of Tamesna, Morocco**

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## Introduction

### The New City: A Plan for Social Inclusion

On March 13, 2007, the construction of the new city of Tamesna was officially launched by King Mohammed V. The new city emerged as a result of a debate dating back to the early 1990s about how the state should respond to the steady growth of informal settlements in the rural region of Sidi Yahya Zaer (SYZ), which lies past Rabat's southern suburbs (CERAU, 2009). While the housing types within these settlements are diverse, they are generally characterized by construction from recycled materials, poor building standards, exposure to the elements, illegal housing tenure, and lack of essential services such as plumbing, electricity, and trash collection (AREA, 2005). Often termed *assken ghir la'eq* (substandard housing) or *dor sfih* (shantytowns; literally: homes of tin) in Arabic; or *bidonvilles* in French, these settlements have always been viewed by authorities in a pejorative light because of their poor living conditions and existence outside the formal housing sector. Many more pejorative terms exist in Darija (Moroccan Colloquial Arabic), including *bararak* and *qasdir* (literally: aluminum). In English, the closest translation to the disparaging terms used by described this type of settlement is "slum." Each of these terms carries roughly the same devastating social meaning: in Casablanca, a young girl in high school reportedly killed herself after classmates taunted her, calling her "*bint al-bararek* [daughter of the slums]" (Goud, 2014). Regardless of terminology or nomenclature<sup>1</sup>, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Agency have long viewed this type of housing as a problematic eyesore demanding heavy-handed state intervention (Abu-Lughod, 1980). They are "black spots" on the urban fabric, a manifestation of a backwards, rural way of life brought too close to the urban world of Rabat, Morocco's capital city.

These informal settlements first appeared in SYZ during the era of the French protectorate. Until the 1980s, the number of households in these settlements numbered only a few hundred (AREA, 2005), and their presence was tolerated by authorities. The region's distance from the capital city made it unattractive for rural migrants searching for employment in urban centers. By the 1980s, a massive drought coupled with structural reform of the agricultural sector sparked large-scale rural-to-urban migration. By this point, more migrants sought residence in SYZ due to less

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I choose to forego the pejorative terms often used to describe the type of settlements in SYZ targeted in the resettlement process. Terms such as "slum" fail to describe the specific features of different housing types and are too often used to disparage the populations that live in these types of housing (Gilbert, 2007). The term "informal settlement," while carrying less of a negative connotation, poses its own problems. Informal construction is not always substandard housing, but in fact sometimes includes high-end, luxury housing. Some of the settlements in SYZ actually exist in a grey area of legality, as their housing titles have historically been recognized by local authorities but do not meet the standards set by the Interior Ministry (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017). In order to avoid as many of these challenges as possible, I refer to these settlements using the word "douar." In Darija, *douar* refers to a rural settlement lacking public infrastructure. In official census documents, the name of each of the informal settlements begins with "douar." I choose this term because it is the most neutral and most suitable to the local context.

expensive land prices. The region's informal population continued to rise through the 1990s and 2000s while the pace of urban development in the region quickened.

Initial proposals for the region were modest compared to the new city project which was actually built. These early proposals called for the development of a new town designed to rehouse the residents of the informal settlements in SYZ (Kingdom of Morocco, 2004). Relocates from informal settlements would be resettled into freestanding, single-family homes on state-provided plots of land. In contrast, the plan that was ultimately approved by state authorities called for the development of a new city that would include 250,000 housing units for a wide range of social classes (Lahlaou, 2016). The plan also called for the resettlement of residents of SYZ's informal settlements into state-subsidized apartments. The new city was meant to be a new center of economic activity, which would offer employment and vial urban amenities for all its inhabitants. Authorities promised their plan would provide improved housing for SYZ residents and promote the goal of social inclusion through the construction of housing for all social classes (ibid).

### **Why Aren't the "Beneficiaries" Benefitting?**

Construction of the new city began in 2007, and the first SYZ residents transitioned to new homes in 2010. Authorities set the goal of finishing the resettlement process for SYZ residents by the end of 2010. However, as of December, 2016 – the most recent available data, only two thirds of the targeted residents have settled into new apartments (ADS, 2016). The remaining third of residents refuse to complete the resettlement process. But if the new city was designed specifically to serve the housing needs of these residents, why do so many refuse to resettle? And what forms does resistance to resettlement take?

Interviews with the intended beneficiaries of the resettlement process (douar residents in SYZ) uncover the reasons that nonmovers are dissatisfied with the resettlement process. Many are concerned the apartments are not large enough to accommodate larger families, cannot afford the cost of social housing, and are disappointed with the quality of life offered in Tamesna. Even though most douar residents want badly to leave the douars for improved housing, they refuse to accept the housing offered by authorities. They express their refusal in a variety of ways, which include individual as well as collective modes of resistance. Some residents refuse to leave their homes in the douar unless authorities provide additional apartments for their children, others remain because they refuse to take on a costly mortgage to pay for their replacement housing, and still others demand land plots instead of apartments. Relocated residents also resist. Residents move into social housing but then refuse to make payments, build illegal extensions, or participate in demonstrations to demand better housing maintenance and urban infrastructure. These actions create major delays in the resettlement process and pressure authorities to reconsider the options they are willing to provide to beneficiaries of resettlement.

The resettlement plan sparked such a high level of resistance from its intended beneficiaries because their needs are not always prioritized in the planning process. The plan for the new city of Tamesna is based on public-private cooperation. A public company, Al Omrane, manages the city's development by contracting private developers (CERAU, 2009). Al Omrane has to create incentives for private developers to develop in Tamesna. However, private sector interests often conflict with the desires of residents. For example, in 2005, authorities shifted their proposed

resettlement strategy from providing land plots to providing apartments (ibid). The new plan offered the prospect of lucrative returns for private developers, who could mass-produce these apartments alongside market-rate units on a relatively small area of land (Martin and Mathema, 2008). Additionally, the development of infrastructure (such as mosques, schools, and manufacturing centers) has lagged badly behind the development of housing (Lahlaou, 2016). Developers are eager to produce housing because it offers immediate returns for developers, however shared infrastructure does not (Hanzaz, 2016). As a result, developers mass produce housing without investing in the infrastructure to support future residents.<sup>2</sup> While authorities claim the purpose of the resettlement project is to advance the needs of SYZ residents, the planning process that has been implemented appears to reflect a prioritization of private sector objectives over the needs of the local population.

Authorities in Morocco follow a familiar global pattern by claiming to promote social inclusion while prioritizing private sector goals (Miraftab, 2004a; 2009). Miraftab (2009) explains that in this era of neoliberal development, official promises to promote social inclusion are often little more than a smokescreen for other ambitions. In neoliberal development projects, state authorities prioritize the interests of the private sector in hopes of spurring investment and growth over social welfare aims. All the while, they justify such policies through claims they empower disadvantaged groups (ibid). The plan for the new city of Tamesna reflects these tendencies: a quasi-public company manages the new city by contracting private developers and attracting them by the offering state-owned land at symbolic prices (Lahlaou, 2016). While these companies are required to build a certain percentage of social housing units in their projects, they remain major recipients of state support. Their vision for the city takes precedence over the vision of housing beneficiaries.

While authorities plan the city around their own vision of urban development, residents take action to assert their own vision for the city. Through a variety of individual and collective actions, residents lay claim to a “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996). This right to the city is not one or even several legally enforceable rights (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013; Marcuse, 2009). It includes a right to access a wide variety of urban spaces and services and a right to participate in the production of urban space (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013; Marcuse, 2009). Residents show authorities they are unwilling to accept housing options that do not reflect their social values and established patterns of living. They are also unwilling to accept a minimal level of infrastructure and service provision in their new neighborhoods. Instead, they expect their new homes and neighborhoods to reflect the same high quality of life offered to higher-income urban residents. A variety of individual and collective resident actions pressures authorities to consider resident demands and take seriously their demands for a true right to the city.

### **Residents’ Claims on the City**

The SYZ residents targeted for resettlement are not passive recipients of the project offered to them by authorities. Residents of the affected communities find effective ways to express their dissatisfaction and push authorities to make concessions. The actions taken by residents include

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<sup>2</sup> Hanzaz (2016) explains that this challenge exists throughout the rapidly urbanizing rural areas in Morocco. Developers build and sell housing quickly, but skirt regulations requiring them to develop other infrastructure before selling residences.

unorganized, individual refusals to cooperate with various aspects of the program, which cumulatively place enormous collective pressure on authorities. They also include more organized, collective efforts to pressure authorities to meet specific community demands for housing.

Through a variety of methods, some intended as political action and others not, SYZ residents assert their influence over the development of the new city of Tamesna. While plans for resettlement to the new city are driven by local authorities who respond to top-down directives, smooth implementation depends largely on cooperation from residents. Residents have so far managed to create huge delays in the resettlement process and forced authorities to reconsider the limits of what they are willing to offer residents.

In this paper, I examine why community resistance to the resettlement program in Tamesna occurs. First, I contrast residents' experiences of resettlement with the official narrative of resettlement. I seek to understand why so many SYZ residents do not feel the resettlement program in the new city adequately addresses their housing needs. Second, I examine the various forms which tenant resistance takes and analyze the types of pressures these actions place on authorities.

Understanding SYZ residents' responses to the resettlement process provides insight into how communities assert their right to the city. In the context of a planning process that claims to be inclusive but arguably offers no meaningful avenue for community participation, SYZ residents find ways to assert housing demands. This case provides valuable insight into how housing programs that claim to be socially inclusive can fall short of housing goals. It suggests that planners can and should play an expanded role advocating for the needs of local communities instead of taking for granted that housing provision will automatically achieve authorities' vision for social inclusion.

## **Literature Review: Neoliberal Urbanism and the Responses of Marginalized Groups**

### **Introduction**

Over the past several decades, urban areas throughout the world have experienced rapid change in governance, emphasizing community empowerment (Miraftab 2004a; 2009). These are characterized by governments' decentralization measures, and partnership with the private sector for urban service provision. These changes reflect a broader shift to neoliberal modes of governance (ibid; Peck et al, 2009). Authorities justify neoliberal urban policies by claiming greater efficiency, cost recovery, and citizen empowerment (Miraftab, 2004b). Because these policies favor the interests of the economically powerful, they are more likely to increase socio-economic inequalities, thereby disempowering marginalized communities (ibid). However, these deprived and displaced communities under neoliberal policies tend to respond by demanding inclusion in the benefits of urban life (Holston, 2009). Relying on unorganized, individual direct actions (Bayat, 2000) as well as collective organizing (Holston, 2009; Miraftab, 2009), marginalized urban residents assert their "right to the city" (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013; Lefebvre, 1996; Marcuse, 2009).

### **The Emergence of Neoliberal Urban Development**

The slum resettlement program in the new city of Tamesna reflects a broader urban development context that shapes housing programs on a global scale. The 1970s marked the beginning of a global shift toward a new mode of urban governance. Neoliberal governance emphasizes that the role of the state is to create favorable environments to attract private investment and foster the growth of the free market (Harvey, 2007). This marks a break from a conception of the developmentalist state, in which the state takes the lead in national development by directly funding and managing infrastructure development and national industries. Neoliberalization refers to the gradual implementation of neoliberal policies and modes of governance (Peck et al, 2009). This shift began with a withdrawal of the state from the roles it previously filled, such as social development. This withdrawal of the state has been referred to as "roll-back neoliberalization." The process of neoliberalization also includes "roll-out neoliberalization," in which the state plays an active role in promoting opportunities for private investment and introducing market-based forms of governance (Peck et al, 2009). The process of neoliberalization exists as a continuous cycle of both roll-back and roll-out neoliberalization (ibid). These policies aim to encourage individuals to take personal responsibility for their own incorporation into the market, rather than the role of the state being to "foster the material costs of social policies" (Bergh, 2012: p. 411). This shift toward neoliberal governance has influenced policy on a global scale, including the global North and South (Smith, 2002).

As centers of economic production, the shift to neoliberal governance has particularly shaped urban areas, and changes in the cities occur rapidly (Peck et al, 2009). Peck et al (2009) describe the broad policies that define neoliberal urbanism. They explain: "The overarching goal of [neoliberal] policy experiments is to mobilize city space as an arena both for market-oriented growth and for elite consumption practices, at the same time securing order and control amongst marginalized populations" (p. 58). Authorities reorganize cities and turn them into sites of

investment to generate revenues. To this end, authorities reduce government services, privatize social services, and subsidize private corporations to invest in cities (ibid). These policies produce large commercial centers and ultimately increase socio-spatial inequality (ibid).

Brenner and Theodore (2002) explain that neoliberalism does not exist in an absolute form anywhere. Instead, authorities implement neoliberal policies gradually through a process of neoliberalization (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). “Actually existing neoliberalism,” a term coined by these authors, refers to the gradual implementation of neoliberal policies as they interact in unique ways with local institutions (ibid). This is why the process of neoliberalization does not look the same in any two contexts.

The introduction of neoliberal urban policies results in deep socio-spatial patterns of exclusion, which Smith (2002) refers to as global patterns of gentrification. State-led efforts to attract private businesses to cities and promote high-end development urban land values. As land values rise, the poor who cannot afford to remain in their homes are forcibly displaced to make way for high-value real estate development. Once they are removed from their homes, they resettle in the urban peripheries. Elites attempt to increase value from urban land through the recapturing of urban centers and the market-driven segregation of low-income communities to isolated areas (Weber, 2002). Therefore, we see a rise in investment for high-end projects, and urban land becomes increasingly unaffordable to lower-class residents, who are often forced to seek housing elsewhere. Neoliberal urban policies benefit middle-and upper-classes to the detriment of the housing rights of the poor, resulting in large-scale displacements and social class segregation.

The implementation of these policies has predictably given rise to a host of urban crises. Low-income populations have struggled to adapt to the withdrawal of various social supports. Consequently, the 1990s marked the beginning of a period of “crisis displacement,” in which municipalities attempt to address social crises through partnership with the private sector (Peck et al, 2009: p. 64). Peck et al (2009) explain the types of policies (“mutations”) introduced as part of this crisis displacement:

These mutations entail a number of significant institutional realignments at the urban scale, these include: the empowerment of business-led networks and agencies in distributive struggles over resources; the mobilization of new forms of local economic development policy that embrace cooperation and industrial ‘clustering’; the deployment of community-based programs and shadow-state initiatives to combat social exclusion; the promotion of new forms of coordination and inter-organizational networking among previously distinct spheres of local state intervention; and the creation of new regional institutions to promote metropolitan-wide place-marketing and (limited forms of) intergovernmental coordination. (ibid: p. 64)

Furthermore, roll-out neoliberalization (Peck et al, 2009) often occurs by establishing public-private partnerships (PPPs) (Miraftab, 2004b). PPPs exist in a variety of forms, and generally involve a contractual relationship between a private company, a government body, and sometimes civil society groups to supply a particular service for citizens (ibid). PPPs are supported across the political spectrum because they supposedly increase efficiency, reduce taxpayer burden, and promote citizen empowerment (ibid). According to proponents of PPPs, private actors need to



compete with each other to prove they can provide the best service at the lowest price. PPPs are thought to promote citizen empowerment by including citizen groups or NGOs in the partnership (ibid). Based on this reasoning, municipal governments throughout the Global South increasingly rely on PPPs to provide services to their citizens.

Miraftab (2004b) explains that for PPPs to achieve equity and empowerment goals, governments must have strong democratic power to negotiate on behalf of citizens and “regulat[e] unequal power relations” (ibid: p. 93). Otherwise, private actors may use their uneven financial and institutional power to assert their own interests. However, marginalized citizen groups have less power to negotiate with private entities. Because governments throughout the Global South are implementing policies of decentralization, PPPs are often established between lower-tier levels of government and private companies (ibid). However, low-tier levels of government have limited negotiation resources (ibid). Most of the time, private entities dominate the negotiations with the public sector. They pressure public authorities to engage in partnership arrangements that mostly benefit private companies. Authorities devote more efforts to reduce private sector risk than to ensure equitable service provision (ibid).

While the urban theorists mentioned above have contributed to the discourse that critiques urban neoliberalism by attempting to identify universal trends, Parnell and Robinson (2012) provide an important critique that challenges this broad theory. They argue that critiques of urban neoliberalism are often based on individual case studies located in Northern cities; these neoliberal cases cannot be generalized to cities throughout the world (Parnell and Robison, 2012). Observers who rely on these theoretical neoliberalist critiques tend to overlook important local factors that influence urban development (ibid). This is particularly the case for urban contexts in the Global South, where many places have been skipped over by the influxes of global capital that are generally credited with giving rise to neoliberal urbanism (ibid). In this paper, I consider this critical view by closely scrutinizing the specificities of urban development in Morocco. While I argue that many of the general observations surrounding neoliberal urbanism hold true for Morocco, I strive to identify the specific ways in which neoliberal policies interact with local institutions to understand the specific case of urban development in Tamesna, Morocco.

### **Social Housing Programs in Neoliberal Urbanism**

The global shift in urban governance impacts policies on informal urban housing. By the start of the twenty-first century, informal housing became a major focus for urban policy on a global scale (Arabindoo, 2011; Gilbert, 2007). Global institutions, primarily the UN and the World Bank, developed strategies to combat “slums.” They defined slums as settlements of illegal, substandard housing (Arabindoo, 2011). These global strategies to overcome slums rely on the principles of neoliberal governance, and most notably partnership with the private sector in order to achieve social aims. These strategies seek to clear slums, build new low-income housing, and rehabilitate slum residents to integrate them into the formal economy (ibid).

The impact of these policies on slum residents is uncertain at best. As with other redevelopment processes that involve the displacement of poor or disadvantaged residents, slum clearance programs often relocate the slum inhabitant far from urban economic centers (ibid). Additionally, authorities are rarely concerned with the wellbeing and quality of life of former slum residents

after they have been resettled (ibid). This lack of concern is evidenced by a lack of follow-up studies to assess the material changes in residents' lives (ibid: p. 641). However, little evidence supports the claim that slum clearance programs effectively improve the living conditions of marginalized populations. They do serve to "clean up" urban areas and to create aesthetically pleasing city spaces. Municipalities throughout the world thus market their "slum free cities" to claim "world class status" (ibid).

The slum clearance programs that emerged over the past several decades prominently align with neoliberal principles. Ultimately, these programs aim to eliminate slums through partnerships with the private sector. Additionally, they emphasize the role of slum residents' participation in decision-making; however, this participation is merely symbolic; teams of experts have already decided the outcomes of these major programs (ibid: p. 641; Koster and Nuijten, 2012: pp. 162-163). As a result, the socio-economic needs of slum residents are not taken into account. Because many slum residents find their new social housing unsuitable, many end up moving to other slums (Koster and Nuijten, 2012). The public authorities attempt to reduce public expenditure and to partner with private actors; this however results in the dismissal of residents' housing needs. It remains that the discourse of individual responsibility and rhetoric of participation stand as powerful political tools; their purpose is to shift the responsibility and success of the programs onto the urban poor, rather than relying on the state for its success (ibid).

Efforts to eliminate slums (often referred to as "slum improvement") are framed as efforts to alleviate poverty and improve social conditions worldwide. However, Gilbert (2007) shows that slum clearance policies almost always leave so-called beneficiaries worse-off than they were before the "improvement" of their homes. These programs often require the forced displacement of slum residents. The effects of displacement are wide-ranging, disrupting the residents' social networks, increasing the traveling time to commute to work, and raising housing costs (ibid: pp. 707-708). The beneficiaries often find their new housing inadequate for their housing needs, primarily because of the high costs associated the new housing, from mortgage payments to utility payments (ibid).

Gilbert argues that the global drive to create "cities without slums" ultimately does more harm than good. It denigrates the residents of settlements deemed as "slums" and grants corrupt state authorities a justification to clear informal areas to make way for new developments. Authorities are often more interested in physically clearing low-income than they are in actually assisting slum residents. The global emphasis on slum-free cities provides them an easy justification to do so. Gilbert explains:

The very word 'slum' confuses the physical problem of poor quality housing with the characteristics of the people living there. And, with so many unscrupulous governments in power around the world, the stereotype may be used to justify programmes of slum clearance. After all, how better to create cities without slums than by obliterating the eyesores? (p. 710)

According to Gilbert, the idea of slum improvement provides an easy justification for authorities to implement large-scale urban development programs because diverse forms of housing can be considered "slums" when politically convenient. The term "slum" represents more of a value

judgment than it does a technical term. The overall connotation of “slum” refers to “bad housing.” This however, varies greatly between countries and between social groups. As housing standards rise, housing that would previously have been considered acceptable inevitably become slums. In addition, the living standards associated with settlements termed “slums” vary greatly between households; some households having much better quality housing than others. Still, authorities use the language of slum improvement to gain the legitimacy to clear broad areas of majority low-income settlements. To facilitate this, they implement slum improvement programs that usually fail to meet the needs of residents.

Quercia and Galster (1997) explain that in policy contexts where public agencies are increasingly expected to behave like private actors in order to attract private capital, housing authorities inevitably face conflicting demands. For instance, in the United States, public housing authorities are expected to work with private sector to promote mixed-income developments as housing sites. This is done for those who cannot afford market rate housing (Quercia and Galster, 1997). Housing authorities endeavor to draw development plans attractive to private developers (*ibid*). However, attracting private capital often conflicts with the housing needs of the most deprived (*ibid*: p. 564-565). Housing authorities are not intentionally dismissive of the housing needs of the poor; rather a neoliberal policy environment demands that incentives for the private sector be prioritized (*ibid*). In the words of the authors: “[I]t is the legislative and regulatory changes that implicitly seem to require [housing authorities] to choose solvency over helping the neediest” (*ibid*: p. 566).

Kapp and Baltazar (2012) examine the case of a *favela* upgrading program in Belo Horizonte, Brazil to show the impacts of neoliberal slum upgrading programs on local communities. Although the authorities emphasized the concept of local participation in the program, in practice the desires of the community were not reflected in many planning decisions. Kapp and Baltazar found that the program “in principle opposed authoritarian planning, but...retained many of its features” (p. 163). While the *favela* improvement program included the same discourse of inclusion popular in many neoliberal urban policies (Miraftab, 2009), the discourse served to mask the less appealing implications of the program for local residents. Many residents found that the new offered housing lacked essential qualities such as adequate space, affordability, and adequate maintenance. As a result, authorities faced substantial community resistance to the program (Kapp and Baltazar, 2012). This case illustrates the tendency for neoliberal slum programs to use the concept of participatory approaches which in reality facilitates the displacement of low-income populations into housing that they would otherwise refuse.

This global shift to neoliberal urbanism policies has impacted municipalities throughout the world, including their approaches to informal housing. The start of the twenty-first century marked the beginning of a new global drive to create a world full of “cities without slums.” While authorities gravitated toward a language of social inclusion and full citizenship rights, these programs were often targeted to better serve the needs of private development, rather than the needs of local residents. Instead of providing housing solutions for low-income households, these programs more often denigrate low-income communities (Gilbert, 2007) and push them to accept new unsuitable housing (*ibid*; Kapp and Baltazar, 2012; Koster and Nuijten, 2012).

## **The Role of “Social Inclusion” in Neoliberal Urbanism**

Miraftab (2004a; 2009) notes that one of the prominent features of neoliberal policy is its discursive emphasis on social inclusion. Authorities argue that neoliberal governance creates more inclusive urban spaces that better serve marginalized communities. However, the authorities’ emphasis on social inclusion overlooks serious power imbalances in urban society (Miraftab, 2004a). Authorities center their discourse around symbolic inclusion while the neoliberal policies they introduce create significant material losses for many of the most marginalized residents (Miraftab, 2004a; 2009). Urban residents who are already marginalized suffer the greatest consequences of neoliberal urbanism. The urban poor often risk losing access to their homes to the high-end development projects. The discourse of social inclusion masks the material dispossession of the poor resulting from neoliberal urban policies (Miraftab, 2009).

Macleod (2011) explains that a prominent feature of the neoliberal city is its lack of space for democratic politics. Urban authorities view the objective of promoting economic growth as an inherent good that does not require public debate. In their drive to open up new spaces for investment, authorities de-politicize the city. Macleod explains:

[G]overning through a stage-managed consensus is serving to depoliticise 21st-century capitalism’s deeply antagonistic social relations, suturing alternative political spaces and neutralising dissenting voices and the agonism viewed to be mandatory for a ‘properly’ political urban landscape.” (Macleod, 2011: p. 2632)

While authorities take for granted that their economic growth programs will best serve all members of the urban population, in reality, their policies serve elite interests at the expense of other groups. For example, elite desires to make cities “clean and safe” for investment often result in policies to keep out undesirable populations, such as the homeless (ibid: p. 2625).

Fahmi and Sutton (2013) illustrate the tendency for a social inclusion discourse to mask neoliberal dispossession using the case of the development of New Cairo City in Egypt. This town was established to solve problems in Cairo, especially the lack of access to housing. However, the result has reproduced the same social problems that already existed in Cairo. A large portion of the market in this new city has benefitted wealthy expatriates, who mostly buy second homes or retirement homes. A large portion is also spent on elite entertainment venues, especially golf courses. The state funds social housing development in New Cairo City for low-income residents who have been displaced by development projects in Cairo’s city center. However, many displaced people targeted to resettle in New Cairo City found that the new housing was highly inappropriate mainly because of the high cost and distance from the city center, where many worked. As a result, many of these low-cost apartments remain empty. The experience of the development of New Cairo City reflects the tendency for elite views to prioritize their needs over those of low-income residents, even when development projects are ostensibly designed to serve social needs.

Similarly, Turke and Alte (2013) illustrate the case of Istanbul, Turkey to explain how neoliberal urban policies resulted in private interests prioritized over social goals. The authors showed that over the last several decades, the role of the Turkish state has changed. Rather than directly funding urban infrastructure and social housing, the state authorities strive to enable market forces

to fulfill the same functions. Authorities create strategies profitable for the profit of private developers who invest in infrastructure and social housing. However, a lack of monitoring and enforcement often prevents social goals from being reached. Authorities are concerned with promoting the development of profit-generating mega-projects. They are not interested in gaining the participation of local landowners in planning. Gentrification is a common result of urban projects due to rising costs of real estate and the lack of social housing development.

These cases of urban development in Cairo and Istanbul underscore the patterns of exclusion that neoliberal urbanism produces, despite the authorities' emphasis on social inclusion. Urban authorities partner with private actors to lead urban development projects; however, they lack the power to ensure that private actors take seriously the equity and concerns of marginalized urban residents. Although authorities state their support for social goals, their commitments to the private sector prevent the attainment of these goals.

### **Asserting a “Right to the City” in the Context of Neoliberal Urban Development**

A major outcome of neoliberal urban development is the displacement of many low-income communities throughout the world. This displacement does not take place without reactions from the groups affected. Using a variety of means, displaced residents demand their “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996), and reclaim their right to access to urban space and participation in urban planning decisions.

Lefebvre (1996) first popularized the term “right to the city;” however he did not give a detailed explanation of what a right to the city entails (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013). He described the right to the city as “a cry and a demand” that city residents expressed by demanding full access to the city (Lefebvre, 1996). Chaskin and Joseph (2013) provide clarification of the term, arguing that a right to the city is based on two broad categories of rights: rights to appropriation and rights to participation (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013: p. 484). Appropriation includes access to the “environments, amenities, and opportunities.” Participation includes the right to participate in decision-making process as these affect urban planning and the production of urban space (ibid: p. 484). Neoliberal urban policies systemically create forms of exclusion that deny economically disadvantaged residents of their rights to appropriation and participation. As authorities plan urban development projects that revolve around the needs of finance capital, they produce spaces for the enjoyment of affluent classes, which often requires the removal of those who are less well-off (ibid: p. 481; p. 485).

Marcuse (2009) provides further clarification of what the right to the city means, and explains that it does not refer to a legally enforceable right (Marcuse, 2009: p. 192). It is not centered on the geographic space; rather, the “city” represents society (ibid: p. 193). The “right to the city” is a collectivity of rights that include the right to transparency and information, public spaces, access to urban centers, and services (ibid: p. 193). However, the right to the city is distributed unevenly. Some groups within society possess access to a broad range of rights included in this collectivity of rights, while others are denied many of those rights. Groups who are denied their right to the city take steps to claim it. These steps include expose, propose, and politicize (ibid: p. 194). They “expose” by drawing attention to the rights denied to them, “propose” by crafting alternative policies, and “politicize” by building popular support their proposals (ibid).

Holston (2009) explains that most urban residents in the world lack their right to the city. Most urban residents are impoverished and live on the peripheries of cities, while large cities benefit from the cheap labor they provide. This is a manifestation of what Holston refers to as “differentiated citizenship,” where rights are distributed unequally among citizens in a society (Holston, 2009). Due to urbanization, marginalized and privileged residents come into closer and closer contact with each other, which opens space for conflict. In cities throughout the Global South, citizens battle systemic inequalities in their demands for their right to the city. For example, the millions of people who illegally construct homes on urban peripheries assert their right to inhabit the cities (ibid). Citizens take action to expose the contradictions between a state discourse of inclusive citizenship and the inequalities they face and demand real equality (ibid).

Miraftab (2004a) explains that demands for the right to the city are a common response to the contradictions embedded in neoliberal urban policies. The same policies that promote a discourse of citizenship participation and social inclusion result in the material dispossession of disadvantaged communities, resulting in new forms of exclusions (Miraftab, 2004a; 2009). This neoliberal contraction opens up a “thousand tiny cracks” for resistance (Miraftab, 2004a: p. 17). Citizens in the Global South aim to expose this contradiction and mobilize for their right to the city.

Not all responses to neoliberal urbanism take the form of organized social movements. As Bayat (2000) explains, neoliberal urbanism gravely threatens the livelihoods of low-income urban residents. The groups who are most heavily impacted, however, lack any kind of formal organizational structure to advance their opposition to neoliberal policies. For example, many low-income city residents work in the informal sector, so they cannot form a union and go on strike. Therefore, they face significant structural challenges to organize against neoliberal encroachments into the resources they rely on to survive. Despite the structural difficulties of opposing neoliberal urbanism, ordinary city residents throughout the world find ways to challenge and subvert neoliberal policies. They often assert their rights through simple, everyday acts that are not intended to be overtly political. Bayat refers to this kind of resistance as “the quiet encroachment of the ordinary.” He explains:

[T]he notion of ‘quiet encroachment’ describes the silent, protracted but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives. This is marked by quiet, largely atomized prolonged mobilization with episodic collective action—open and fleeting struggles without clear leadership, ideology or structured organization.” (pp. 545-546)

For example, residents of informal settlements may assert their right to housing by consistently rebuilding their settlements after demolition, making demolition attempts futile. They also assert their rights to basic services by illegally tapping into electric grids. After gaining access to electricity this way for so long, any efforts to remove this access become too politically costly. Then, quiet encroachment explains why authorities often fail to force these residents to pay for the electricity they access. The simple act of not paying bills forces authorities to extend the service free of cost. In cases like these, residents do not act with the explicit purpose of gaining new legal rights. They also do not organize collectively. In fact, individuals who engage in quiet encroachment may intentionally avoid overt political action to escape legal repercussions. These

individuals simply take action to make direct improvements to their lives. Over time, these direct actions accumulate to create significant material gains.

Bayat goes on to explain that as quiet encroachment becomes more successful in making material gains, it may eventually lead to more sustained, organized movements. In some cases, residents of informal settlements organize collectively to demand the legalization of their settlements and service provision. This has been the case in Mumbai, where residents organized a response to a city-wide revitalization plan to remake Mumbai into the image of Shanghai (Mahadevia and Narayani, 2008). For municipal authorities, this means to “use real estate for city transformation.” This plan is based on authorities’ desire to turn Mumbai into a competitive, world-class city. It has produced new forms of marginalization for residents of the city’s informal settlements. They face the intensified threat of the demolition of their homes as authorities pursue slum clearance to make way for high-end developments. In response to this marginalization, new social movements emerge. With some success, slum residents have organized demonstrations to demand authorities protect their homes.

A case in which disadvantaged residents engaged in individual direct action to assert claims on the city occurred in Singapore, although without long-term success in changing the urban development trajectory (Dobbs, 2002). In this case, state authorities aimed to eliminate the lighter industry from the city’s river to make way for high-end riverfront development. The boat builders who faced eviction for this urban development plan faced the loss of their way of life, source of income, and social life (*ibid*). Many were strongly opposed to eviction, even when offered compensation or replacement housing and business sites (*ibid*). Many of the boat builders participated in acts of “foot-dragging,” or simply refusing to leave (*ibid*: p. 298). Through their reluctance to leave, they created delays in the development process and frustrated authorities (*ibid*). While all the boat builders were eventually evicted, their acts of resistance demonstrate that they did attempt to assert their right to access to the city.

For low-income urban communities throughout the world, the impact of neoliberal urbanism is enormous. Many face displacement as a result of slum improvement programs or as a result of new urban development projects. Community responses to these kinds of displacements take many forms and meet varying degrees of success. Sometimes communities organize collective resistance to demand legal rights to their housing, but often the responses to displacement are less organized and take the form of what Bayat (2000) calls quiet encroachment. In these cases, communities manage to assert their rights through everyday actions to claim access to housing and resources. These forms of resistance accumulate to pose effective challenges to the neoliberal urban politics that threaten the livelihoods of low-income communities.

## **Conclusion**

Globally, neoliberal urbanism has resulted in serious material losses for disadvantaged groups. The changed policy environment complicates housing authorities' efforts to provide housing for the poorest urban residents. The imperative that they attract private capital contradicts their goal of providing quality housing for the neediest (Quercia and Galster, 1997). Despite the reduced emphasis on providing for the poor, authorities use a discourse of social inclusion to advance neoliberal policies (Miraftab, 2004a; 2009). Disadvantaged groups utilize this contradiction to advance claims for their right to the city, using a variety of methods. When residents are displaced from their homes or workplaces, they respond by demanding their right to access urban spaces. In what follows, I analyze residents' responses to displacement through urban development in the case of the new city of Tamesna, Morocco.



## **Background: Slum Resettlement in the New City of Tamesna**

### **The Development of the New City: High Ambitions with Numerous Setbacks**

This study revolves around the slum resettlement program in the new city of Tamesna. This section describes the process of the development of the new city and is followed by a discussion of the slum resettlement program there.

After Tamansourt, Tamesna was the second new city to be constructed as part of King Mohammed VI's new city strategy (Lahlaou, 2016). Tamesna is located twenty kilometers southeast of Morocco's capital city, Rabat, to the southeast of the major suburb of Temara. It is located in the rural commune of Sidi Yahya Zaer, on land that historically has been used for agriculture (CERAU, 2009: p. 8). Figure A shows the location of Tamesna. The total area of the new city composes 840 hectares (Lahlaou, 2016: p. 38). The plan for Tamesna was created by Al Omrane and l'Agence Urbaine de Rabat-Salé (ibid: p. 39). Planners developed the new city of Tamesna as a strategy to decrease the population density of Rabat, construct large numbers of social housing, and provide a site to resettle slum residents (A. Lamine, field interview, May 24, 2017).

**Figure A: Location of Tamesna**



*l'étude de SDAU de Rabat-Salé, Rapport justificatif, 1995; cited in CERAU, 2009*

Officials first presented proposals for a new city in Sidi Yahya Zaer in the 1990s. The first such proposal was presented in 1993, although it was not until 2004 that a plan was finally approved (CERAU, 2009). The first approved plan for a new city in Sidi Yahya Zaer was announced on July 22, 2004 (Lahlaou, 2016: p. 39). This plan called for the establishment of a new city, to be named Noor Zaer, in the the region of Sidi Yahya Zaer (Kingdom of Morocco, 2004). Noor Zaer would serve as a site for the resettlement of approximately 1,500 households from informal settlements in SYZ (ibid). They would receive plots of land in SYZ on which they would built new homes according to technical standards set by Al Omrane, with the company's assistance. The new town of Noor Zaer would provide improved housing for the residents of SYZ designed on much the same model as the existing settlements.

The plan for the new city in the region of SYZ was abruptly changed in 2005 (Lahlaou, 2016: p. 40). The new plan that was introduced was much more ambitious than the initial plan put forth in 2004. It called for the establishment of a city that would house 250,000 inhabitants, including 10,000 households to be resettled from housing deemed “slums.” These 10,000 households were to include 4,000 households from slums in SYZ, 4,000 from slums in Temara, and 2,000 from slums in Rabat. This plan called for all the households to be resettled through the process of *relogement*, meaning all the social housing provided would be apartment units. The city would be composed of social housing, economic housing, and market-rate housing. Social housing includes housing units targeted for beneficiaries of the VSB program. This type of housing is not to exceed 12,000 MAD, of which the state subsidizes one third of the cost. Economic housing is capped at a cost of 25,000 MAD and is available to households who do not own other property.

The king launched the construction of Tamesna on March 13, 2007 (ibid: p. 29). According to the plan for Tamesna, the following features would be built:

- 50,000 housing units
- Thirty hectares devoted to secondary or tertiary economic activities
- 100 hectares devoted to green space
- 100 hectares devoted to community facilities including education, health, security, and recreation (ibid: p. 29)

The 2005 plan for the new city of Tamesna calls for the creation of the new city in the rural commune of Sidi Yahya Zaer. This plan calls for mixed-income housing developments along with economic infrastructure and community facilities. It reflects a desire to build a populous, largely self-sustained, mixed-income city. However, this plan has been met with significant delays. Many of the housing units have been built, but a large number of these units remain vacant. Tamesna’s current population of around 55,000 people falls short of its goal of housing 250,000 (Lahaou, 2016: p. 27). Additionally, the development of much of the infrastructure required to support this population has been delayed. Developers are eager to develop housing rapidly because it can be sold for an immediate return, but they lack a financial incentive to develop shared infrastructure. While developers are contractually obligated to provide infrastructure, Al Omrane has had difficulty enforcing these obligations (A. Lamine, field interview, May 24, 2017). This challenge represents the difficulty of holding private developers accountable to their obligations to provide infrastructure beyond housing.

By summer 2016, 17,407 of the target 50,000 housing units have been built. Of these, 11,760 are subsidized apartments for low-income households. An additional 12,869 housing units are currently in the process of construction, of which 3,426 are to be subsidized apartments for low-income households. This means that 30,276 total housing units are either constructed or currently under construction, and about half of this total are designated as low-income housing (Lahlaou, 2016: p. 51).



*In the image above, blue ovals indicate the geographic locations of the largest slums in SYZ. The numbers correspond with the following douars:*

- 1 – Douar Sodea*
- 2 – Douar Souq and Douar Nadi*
- 3 – Douar Motawakil*
- 4 – Dayt Al Arab*

*(Source: ADS, 2015: p. 11)*

The first priority for developers in Tamesna was to develop housing. In contrast, the development of infrastructure to support a growing population is held up. So far, twelve schools and a central park have been constructed (Lahlaou, 2016). Many other infrastructural developments remain under construction, including a hospital, a cultural center, a recreational center, and three youth centers (ibid: p. 27). Additionally, planners have failed to develop a strong economic base for the new city that could attract a growing population (ibid). The master plan for the city includes an industrial area that could be a major employment center for the local population; however, in May 2017, no facilities had opened (ibid). Facilities for a large fish market were built using funds from USAID, but the facilities have yet to be put to use. As a result, many residents must commute to Rabat for work, but much of the planned transportation infrastructure to provide access to the city has yet to be developed. Officials have plans to develop a branch of the Mohammed V University in Tamesna, but these plans have yet to come to fruition (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 24, 2017). The lack of an economic base within the city remains a barrier to population growth and a major challenge for planners.

One report to evaluate the success of the new city strategy found that Tamesna faces many of the challenges common to new cities, which includes a lack of regulation, lack of spatial organization (including services and infrastructure), and absence of a framework for intervention (CERAU, 2009: p. 15). Al Omrane continues to struggle to provide infrastructure and attract investment (ibid). In another evaluation, Lahlaou (2016) found that the new city lacks a legal framework to ensure development will proceed as planned and create a dynamic city (Lahlaou, 2016: p. 40).

According to this report, this lack of a legal framework is the reason for significant delays in infrastructure development. Tamesna continues to suffer from inefficient management, and many plans for the city are never actually implemented (ibid).

### **The Role of Each Stakeholder in Slum Resettlement**

This resettlement project, which is the focus of this research, was outlined in the agreement for the establishment of the new city of Tamesna (ADS, 2015: p. 5). This agreement assigned roles to various actors. The public real estate company, Al Omrane, is responsible for the management of the program. A separate branch of the company, Al Omrane-Tamesna, was established in June 2006 to plan and manage the city. Al Omrane-Tamesna was specifically tasked with:

- Implementing the plan for the new city
- Supervising infrastructure planning and development
- Promoting the new city to attract residents and investors
- Selling semi-equipped lots to private developers
- Clearing slums in Sidi Yahya Zaer (Lahlaou, 2016: p. 41)

Al Omrane is responsible for providing social housing through partnership with the private sector. Twenty percent of the city is managed directly through Al Omrane, while eighty percent of the city is managed through public-private partnerships (ibid). In the case of public-private partnerships, Al Omrane develops semi-equipped blocks and then sells those blocks to private developers for development. These deals are made with condition that the private developer must allocate a certain number of social housing units per block (CERAU, 2009: p. 32). Typically, companies are required to dedicate twenty percent of the housing units they develop in Tamesna to social housing (A. Lamine, field interview, May 24, 2017). In order to promote goal of mixité social (social mixing), developers are required to develop social housing projects in close proximity to market-rate housing. This policy is designed to ensure the integration of different social classes (Lahlaou, 2016).

Local government bodies also play key roles in the slum resettlement process. The *qiyada* (municipality) of Sidi Yahya is responsible the coordination of various stakeholders and for supervising the resettlement of beneficiaries (ADS, 2015: p. 7). Authorities from the *jam'aa* (rural commune) of Sidi Yahya Zaer are responsible for providing building permits, constructing roads, gaining the cooperation of the local population, collecting the financial contributions of beneficiary households, and ensuring integration of the new city into the commune (ibid). Authorities from the *'amala* (province) of Skhirat-Temara and from l'Agence Urbaine provide planning expertise and technical support (ibid).

A team of social workers from L'Agence de Développement Social (ADS), is the social operator responsible for managing the AS process during the transfer phase of operations. ADS is a public agency, which was established by the state, operates mainly on state funding, and works closely with state-funded projects, but its administration formally operates independently from the state. ADS works on a variety of development projects nationwide, and one of its missions is to provide support from slum residents going through the resettlement process in the urban region of Rabat and its suburbs (ADS et al, 2007). Their work in Sidi Yahya Zaer began in January 2014. The team

of workers from ADS assist slum residents through the administrative process of resettlement, assist households in filing complaints when necessary, monitor the demolition process, and inspect the social housing units for quality.

The Regional Committee responsible for monitoring the resettlement project is composed of representatives from Al Omrane, ADS, the Ministry of Housing, the Urban Agency of Rabat, the qiyada, and the province. Regional Committee members collaborate to monitor the progress of the slum resettlement program and approve any proposed changes to the program (ADS, 2015).

### **The Douars Targeted for Resettlement**

The rhetoric surrounding the development of Tamesna describes the new city's development as if it takes place on a blank slate. The 2009 general plan for the commune of Sidi Yahya Zaer discusses the zoning plan that will be put in place to guide the development of the new city without reference to what this zoning code would replace (Mukhatat aj-jama'i li tenmia, 2010). A report on the new city, issued by the Ministry of Housing in conjunction with a research center at a national university for architecture and planning, explains simply that the land designated for the development of Tamesna was formerly state-owned land (CERAU, 2009: p. 18). This description glosses over the more complicated legal status of this land and the inhabitants occupying it.

The land occupied by Tamesna was not simply empty before the development of the new city began. Authorities' failure to appreciate this fact largely explains why they failed to anticipate many of the challenges they currently face in the implementation of the resettlement process. By 2005, the land designated for the development of Tamesna was occupied by several thousand households living in informal settlements (douars). Authorities saw the residents of these informal settlements as slum residents who simply needed to be resettled in the new city. However, the circumstances of these households, and their connections to their homes, presented clear challenges for the resettlement process. As will be discussed in the case study, these factors play a major role in shaping residents' reactions to resettlement. For background, this section provides some information on these douars and the communities who inhabit them. While published information on these douars is extremely limited, I make use of the reports<sup>3</sup> that are available. I also use information provide by authorities and community leaders in interviews.

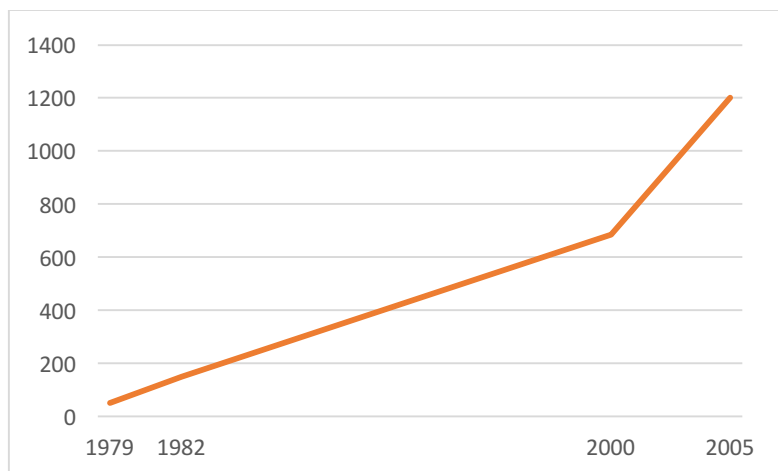
The douars in SYZ first appeared during the era of the French protectorate, but during this period the number of households numbered only a few hundred (AREA, 2005). The population of the douars began to rise dramatically during the 1980s. For example, in Douar Akkari, the douar with the most historical information available, the number of households rose from fifty in 1979 to 150 in 1982. (ibid). This period coincided with a major restructuring of the agricultural industry in Morocco and a major nationwide drought, both of which pushed many small-scale, rural farmers toward the cities in search of new employment opportunities (Davis, 2006). The number of households continued to climb steadily throughout the 1980s and 1990s, then began to skyrocket again in the early 2000s. Presumably, news about the resettlement process spread and many households sought out housing in SYZ in order to benefit from social housing. By 2000, the number of households in Douar Akkari had reached 686, and by 2005, this number nearly doubled

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<sup>3</sup> The available reports (AREA, 2005; Panex, 2008) were commissioned by Al Omrane.

to 1200 (AREA, 2005). Figure B lists the demographic growth of Douar Akkari in the years for which data is available. For other douars, data is not available until the 1990s or later.

**Figure B: Demographic Growth in Douar Al Akkari**



*Source: AREA, 2005*

Most douars in SYZ gained administrative recognition in 1997, which means they had their own electoral districts (ibid). This administrative recognition occurred despite the precarious legal situation of the douars.

Determining the legal status of land in Morocco is notoriously difficult due to the multiple overlapping systems of land ownership (Abu-Lughod, 1980; Wright, 1991). In addition, lines between formal and informal land ownership are blurred because land titles that are not recognized by the Ministry of the Interior are sometimes validated by the commune (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017). For the purposes of this project, I am not able to delve more deeply into the details of the historical legal status of the land currently occupied by the new city. The government documents that verify that legal status of this particular land are not publicly available, and the government officials with whom I interacted insisted that they were unable to locate or provide such documents. However, as will be discussed later on, the legal status of the land on which residents built their homes, and the residents' perception of the legal status of their land, deeply influences residents' reactions to the resettlement progress.

One douar that stands out as a special case is the case of Douar Sodea. This douar first came into being during the protectorate period when the protectorate government worked to promote agriculture in that area. An investor called "German" employed individuals in the local population to work in the fields (AREA, 2005). These workers built homes for their families on the land on which they worked. After independence, a state-run agricultural company called SODEA (for which the douar is named) which employed an even larger number of Moroccan workers in addition to the workers who had been there from the protectorate period. The new workers also built their homes on the land on which they worked. In 2003, however, the company was disbanded and its land was transferred into the ownership of Al Omrane (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 24, 2017). Douar residents remain the homes they have historically inhabited, but without a recognized legal right to their homes.

After the plan for resettlement was passed in 2005, the qiyada commissioned a census to determine the total number of douar residents in SYZ who would be targeted for resettlement. This initial census counted a total of 1347 households living in the douars (AREA, 2005). After numerous complaints of undercounting from residents, a new census was conducted in 2008, which found the total number of douar households in SYZ to be 2,772 (Panex, 2008). This number was eventually updated to 3,027 after residents submitted additional complaints (ADS, 2015).

### **Social Housing in Tamesna**

Resettlement in Tamesna occurs through a process called *relogement*, which involves the resettlement of douar residents into apartment units (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017). Social housing apartments are between forty-five and forty-six square meters and include a salon, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen (ADS, 2015). Social housing developments are to be incorporated into housing developments that also include market-rate housing. Some of these housing developments are developed and managed directly by Al Omrane. Others are run by private developers, who are required to build social housing in exchange for development rights in Tamesna (A. Lamine, field interview, May 24, 2017). Housing developers are required to make twenty percent of their units social housing units (ibid). However, more developers than not failed to follow through on their commitment to build social housing. Only two developers, Addoha and Marina D'Or, developed the required social housing units (ibid). The others, which one Al Omrane official estimated to be around six, failed to build any social housing units (ibid). The same official explained that contractually, the consequence for failing to build social housing units should be for the removal of development rights in Tamesna (ibid). However, he said he could not confirm whether any private developer had actually faced this kind of consequence.

### **Steps for Individuals in the Resettlement Process**

The resettlement process relies on a semi-voluntary structure in which beneficiaries are responsible for participating in a drawing to select their future social housing unit, gathering the necessary paperwork to prove their eligibility for social housing, making the preparations to finance their new homes, and scheduling a time to have their individual homes in the douars demolished (ADS, 2015). ADS set up an office in Tamesna where beneficiaries can meet with social workers who guide them through these steps (ibid). In most cases, a beneficiary who resettles meets with ADS social workers once they have decided they are ready to move into new housing (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017).

The first step a beneficiary must take in order to begin the resettlement process is to gather the required personal documents. In addition to basic personal identification documents, each beneficiary must also present an administration certificate identifying the beneficiary's address, place of work, and presence at the housing drawing. Each beneficiary must also submit a certificate of lack of ownership (*shahadat 'adm almilkiya*) a form certified by the tax collection agency stating that the beneficiary does not own any property aside from the home in the douar. Owning any other property would make the beneficiary ineligible to receive social housing. Finally, each beneficiary must also submit a statement of honor confirming all the information presented is accurate. Once the beneficiary supplies ADS with all the required documents, ADS shares the



beneficiary's file with Al Omrane so the company can make arrangements for the beneficiary to move into an apartment.

Once the beneficiary has submitted all the required paperwork, all the documents must be notarized. Then the beneficiary is ready to move onto the next and for many, the most cumbersome stage of resettlement: financing their new homes. All beneficiaries become the legal owners of their new apartments, which means they are responsible for their financing. In the resettlement project in Tamesna, developers are contracted to provide apartments for a total cost of 120,000 MAD each. The state subsidizes 40,000 MAD of the total cost, while beneficiaries are responsible for the remaining 80,000 MAD. Most households who have resettled paid this amount in full, typically through some combination of household savings and informal loans from family members or acquaintances. Beneficiaries who are unable to pay the amount in full have the option of taking out a bank loan. Beneficiaries who meet the eligibility requirements may take out a loan with the bank Bank Populaire. Loans for the social housing costs of beneficiaries are backed by the state through a program called FOGARIM. Under this guarantee, the government guarantees 70% of sub-prime mortgage loans made to low-income or irregular-income residents (Martin and Mathema, 2008). Bank Populaire is currently the only bank involved in making loans to beneficiaries. While other banks made such loans early on in the program, they later pulled out due to high losses. Bank Populaire remains involved because it is partially state-owned and therefore obliged to participate in state projects. However, bank representatives now insist that all beneficiaries make an advance payment of 20,000 MAD (ADS, 2015b: p. 13). The advance payment requirement is a heavy burden for many households and represents a significant barrier in their ability to access finance.

Once all the administrative requirements are completed and arrangements are made to finance the home, the beneficiary is ready to schedule the demolition of their home in the douar and move into their new apartments.

### **The Resettlement Process So Far**

Table 2 shows the total number of households targeted for resettlement as of December 2016. The chart shows the douar from which each household originated and their current status in the resettlement process.



**Table B: Status of Households Targeted for Resettlement**

Locality	Name of douar	No. of households	Households who have participated in the housing lottery	Designated social housing site	Homes in douars demolished	Resettled households	Remaining to be resettled
SIDI YAHIA ZAERS	EL KHAMMALI	256	256	Amal 1	226	211	30
	EI AKKARI	781	780		701	699	80
	EI AKKARI Reclamations	107	106		54	54	52
	MERS LKHIR	35	35		35	35	0
	EI AKKARI Reclamations	121	121	Nassim	39	39	82
	SKHIRATE	1	1		0	0	1
	SOUK EL KDIM	1,040	518		252	252	266
			143	Marina d'or	129	129	14
			369	Amal 2	247	247	122
	EI AKKARI Reclamations		1		1	1	0
	DAIT EL ARAB	107	107	Ennour (Adoha)	67	67	40
	EL MOUTAWAKIL	225	223		109	109	114
	ENNADI	234	232		147	147	85
	RICH EL GHABA	19	19		19	19	0
	SODEA	101	0		0	0	101
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,027</b>	<b>2,911</b>		<b>2,026</b>	<b>2,009</b>	<b>987</b>

Source: ADS, 2016

As seen in this chart, the total number of households designated for resettlement is 3,027. Of these, 2,009, or about two thirds, have been resettled into social housing. The remaining households have not fulfilled the requirements of the resettlement process for a variety of reasons, which will be discussed later on in this paper.

## Research Questions and Methods

In the slum resettlement program in Tamesna, authorities promote the program as a measure for poverty alleviation that will allow SYZ residents to enjoy full inclusion into urban life. The new city project emerged out of an extensive debate over how best to address the emergence of informal settlements in SYZ. While the new city project ostensibly emerged from a desire to meet these communities' housing needs, it has been met with substantial resistance on the part of SYZ residents. The following questions form the basis for this thesis: Why has community resistance on the part of SYZ residents occurred in response to being relocated to Tamesna? And what forms do community resistance take?

To answer these questions, I begin by examining how local authorities describe the objectives of the slum resettlement project. I contrast this official narrative with the narratives of beneficiaries to understand how their experiences of resistance contrast with the process described by authorities. I compare how current residents of both the douars and social housing view the douars, how they view the social housing, and what kind of housing they want. Their answers to these questions provide insight into the major reasons for dissatisfaction with the program and the demands SYZ feels are not being met. I also ask what kinds of actions residents take that stall the resettlement process, from individual actions to organized community actions. Finally, I examine official responses to resident resistance to understand how this resistance pressures authorities into making concessions.

I take a qualitative research approach that includes document analysis and a series of in-depth interviews with residents, government officials, and developers. I use planning documents to outline the official goals of the resettlement program and the roles of the different stakeholders involved. The most important documents I rely on include conventions between Al Omrane,<sup>4</sup> local government bodies, and the Agency for Social Development.<sup>5</sup> These conventions lay out the roles of each of the different actors involved in the resettlement process. I also use program evaluations by the Ministry of Housing in conjunction with other research centers to identify the goals outlined for the new city project and understand the progress of the new city's development. I look to reports commissioned by Al Omrane and conducted by research offices to provide background information on the region of SYZ and the communities that inhabit its settlements. Finally, I utilize reports written by the Agency for Social Development to analyze the progress of the resettlement process and the challenges faced by beneficiaries within this process.

The bulk of material for this project comes from interviews with three different stakeholder types: residents, market actors, and state representatives. The resident interviewees include both residents who continue to live in the douars and residents who have transitioned to social housing. I asked about their impressions of the douars, their impressions of social housing, their reasons for either staying in the douars or resettling to social housing, and their preference in housing type. These

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<sup>4</sup> Al Omrane is the company that manages the new city of Tamesna, whose role will be described in greater detail in the following section

<sup>5</sup> The Agency for Social Development (ADS) is the public agency responsible for guiding SYZ residents through the resettlement process. Its role will also be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

questions were designed to gain an understanding of the challenges residents face in the resettlement process. They are also designed to capture residents' impressions of the resettlement process and whether they feel it is designed to benefit them. I also use semi-structured interviews with local authorities and social housing developers to provide general context and to understand their goals from the program. I asked about the specific roles each actor plays in the process, their goals for the resettlement process, their challenges in meeting those goals, and how they attempt to address the concerns raised by residents in their interviews. Interview questions were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The interviews with residents are divided into two main sample groups: residents who remain in the douars and residents of social housing in the new city of Tamesna. I conducted all interviews during Spring 2017. All interviews were conducted in Darija. I used a semi-structured interview design, in which I began with a set of basic questions for members of each group about their impressions of housing in the douars compared to social housing in Tamesna, about challenges they faced in the transition from housing in the douars to housing in social housing, and about their housing goals for the future. The list of questions for both groups of interviewees, and their translations into Darija, are listed in the Appendix. These questions led to broader conversations about individual experiences in the resettlement process.

The interviews include these two main groups of residents in order to understand both the motivations of residents who remain their housing in the douars and the residents who choose to make the transition to social housing. The interviews with these groups also allow for a comparison of the different ways members of each group influence the resettlement process. The total number of resident interviews collected include thirty-three residents of the douars and twenty-five residents from the social housing in Tamesna. Within these groups, I strove to include a diverse range of residents from different douars and different housing groups. Table A displays the numbers of residents from each category and each douar and each social housing development:

**Table A: Resident Interviewees**

	<b>Douar Residents</b>		<b>Social Housing Residents</b>		<b>Total</b>
	Douar Souq	11	Amal 1	6	
	Douar Akkari	7	Amal 2	5	
	Douar Motawakil	5	Noor	8	
	Douar Nadi	5	Nasseem	6	
	Douar Sodea	5			
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>33</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>58</b>

Several douars targeted for resettlement were excluded from this sample because few households remained in the douars at the time of the fieldwork or the douar had already been entirely demolished. One social housing project, Marina D'Or, was excluded simply because the time constraints of local authorities did not allow me to access this housing development.

For security purposes, I was required to be accompanied by a local authority to each of my research sites. The official who accompanied me was the *moqadem* for each neighborhood. The moqadem is employed by the Interior Ministry to monitor specific neighborhoods and monitor activities within those neighborhoods. The moqadem introduced me to households and explained that I was a student conducting an independent research project, and they should feel free to answer any questions I might ask. The moqadem always waited outside the home once I began each interview. While the role of the moqadem often gave residents the initial impression that my work was associated with local authorities, I asked the moqadem to emphasize that my work was independent. I stressed this fact again before beginning the interviews. While I still risked being associated with authorities, I found that in general respondents seemed less hesitant to talk to me when they understood I had official permission to conduct my work so they did not have to fear consequences for participating in my study. I also believe that my positionality as an obvious foreigner made it clear that I was not connected to authorities. I always explained that participation was entirely voluntary. However, I found that more often than not, residents were eager to share their experiences and describe their housing challenges. Many people seemed excited that someone was interested in hearing their stories and giving value to their experiences. One of my happiest moments as a researcher occurred when a younger family member pointed out one of my interviewees, an elderly woman, that I was not providing her any material assistance. The elderly woman responded, “Yes, I understand, but she is helping us with her pen, and that is better than with money! She will write about our suffering.”

I used a convenience sampling approach to select participants (Kothari, 2004). This was the best sampling method available to me because of my limited access to research sites. When I arrived at a research site, I began knocking on doors to try to interview as many residents as possible before the day ended. I spoke with any adult member of the household who was willing to be interviewed and did not limit my sample to only those who were designated as heads of household. Because I conducted my fieldwork during the day and during the work week, a majority of my respondents were women who do not work outside the home. I did not choose particular homes to approach or attempt to randomize the sample. Because the sample was not random and because of the small sample size relative to the population of program beneficiaries, I cannot claim that my sample is representative. However, my intention is simply to understand the most important challenges beneficiaries face and their responses to those challenges. I chose a multiple case-study design (Creswell, 2009) to compare experiences of residents who have diverse circumstances.

I conducted four open-ended interviews with community leaders who advocated on behalf of resident associations. These interviews include two interviews with community leaders from Douar Sodea, one interview with a community leader from Douar Souq, and one community leader from the housing development Noor 2. I asked these interviewees about the histories of their organizations, the goals of their organizations, and their strategies for organizing.

Finally, I also conducted a series of open-ended interviews with local officials and social housing developers to gain an understanding of how these actors respond to the actions of residents. These interviews include an interview with the representative of the *qiyada* (municipality) of Sidi Yahya who is responsible for monitoring the resettlement process, an official from Al Omrane, a representative from the housing developer Marina D’Or, the director the branch of Bank Populaire, and two social workers employed by the Agency for Social Development. I asked these actors

about the complaints and demands expressed by beneficiaries and about how they respond to those demands. I also used these interviews to gather information about the progress of the resettlement process that was not available in written reports.

I did not audio-record any resident interviews because I worried asking residents if I could record them would cause them to question the motives for my research. I sought advice from practitioners who work with the residents and Moroccan researchers, who all advised that I not ask residents to record interviews. Instead, I took detailed notes during and immediately following interviews. I did request permission from developers and local authorities to record their interviews, and when they agreed, I audio-recorded the interviews using a handheld recorder. I also took detailed field notes to record my observations during field visits. After each field visit, I typed up the interview notes and translated them into English. Then, I completed two separate rounds of coding to draw out major themes in the data. In the first round, I searched for more general themes, and in the second round, I used more specific codes to understand impressions of the resettlement process.

## Case Study

### Introduction

Authorities who are responsible for the new city project, including the Ministry of Housing and Al Omrane, promote a narrative which states the new city was developed to meet several social goals. The most important of these goals include increasing the supply of affordable housing, providing social housing, and promoting the mixing of different social classes (Lahlaou, 2016). From this perspective, the resettlement process provides beneficiaries with improved housing along with the opportunity for social mobility. How does this narrative compare to the narratives of the project's beneficiaries? To find out, I analyze beneficiaries' impressions of housing in the douars, their impressions of housing in Tamesna, and their explanations of why they take actions that disrupt the resettlement process. Interviews with beneficiaries reveal that they experience major barriers in the resettlement process that prevent beneficiaries from successfully integrating into the new city. As a result, many of the beneficiaries are left with the feeling that the project of resettlement to the new city was never really intended to benefit them. They express their dissatisfaction with the resettlement process by taking many different actions that slow the process, forcing authorities to reconsider the terms of the process.

I begin this chapter by analyzing the official narrative surrounding slum resettlement in Tamesna. I draw upon official project documents and interviews with project administrators to construct this administrative narrative of the project and its theory of intervention. I then turn to understanding the perspectives of douar residents who are subject to relocation to Tamesna to question whether they see the project in the same way as administrators. Given some of the observed contrasts between these perspectives, I outline the ways in which current and former douar residents contest elements of the relocation process and renegotiate the terms of their inhabitation in Tamesna. I conclude this chapter with some interpretation of this contestation and its potential to influence the ongoing process of relocation to Tamesna.

### Constructing the Official Narrative Surrounding Slum Resettlement in Tamesna

The development of the new city of Tamesna took place in the context of a broader shift toward more inclusive urban politics. Lahlaou (2016) explains that national human development goals include "a true "urban politics" (*politique de la ville*) based on planning efforts to make urban areas more integrated and more inclusive (ibid: p. 6). New cities are designed to contribute to this goal through the creation of zones for economic activities, green spaces, and *mixité sociale* (social mixing) (ibid: p. 8). Authorities claim new cities achieve *mixité sociale* because they are planned to be mixed-income developments that include housing for multiple income levels (ibid).

The former Minister of Housing, Abderrahmane Chorfi, echoes this view of new city development in an article written in 2010. He wrote that new cities are designed to respond to the need for low-income housing and create opportunities for employment and social mobility. He wrote that the development of new cities is especially intended to serve the needs of low-income residents, who cannot afford housing in Morocco's major urban centers (Chorfi, 2010: p. 51). Al Omrane also promotes this view of new city development. A 2012 publication lists the goals of new cities, and these include the development of social housing, the creation of employment opportunities, and

“offering a quality of life that responds to the aspirations of residents” (Al Omrane, 2012). This perspective centers the needs of low-income residents in the new city project.

This emphasis on social goals in the official discourse surrounding urban development stands out within the region. In a paper on urban megaprojects in Mediterranean region, Barthel and Vignal (2014) note that Morocco is unique for using large-scale urban development projects to work towards social inclusion for low-income citizens. According to these authors, the new city projects in Morocco are unique because they are not high-end projects designed to attract the most investment, but designed to meet the housing needs of urban residents who struggle to afford adequate housing.

Significant social goals are also tied to the general project of slum resettlement, which became a national priority with the implementation of the VSB program in 2004. A 2010 publication from Al Omrane explains that the goals of the VSB program include:

reduction of poverty and urban divide, human development via urban inclusion and social integration of poor households, reinforcement of social cohesion and promotion of urban diversity... [and] ensur[ing] social advancement of populations. (Al Omrane, 2010)

According to this perspective, slum resettlement is not only a project of providing improved housing conditions to slum residents, but is also a project of inclusion in urban society and a higher standard of life. This perspective is also reflected in a 2007 report published by ADS, the Ministry of Housing, and l’Agence Français de Developpement. This report explains that access to housing is closely related to access to urban services, resources, and employment opportunities. This is why the VSB program aims to support a change in the total way of life of slum residents, in which they gain access to a wide variety of resources related to housing (ADS et al, 2007).

This narrative of the slum resettlement process is also present at the local level in SYZ. A 2005 report commissioned by Al Omrane-Tamesna lists the objectives of the resettlement program in Tamesna as the development of social housing, the development of diverse housing types to promote social mixing, the development of public infrastructure, and the creation of an environment that “ensures the participation of the population and local actors in the process of urban development” (AREA, 2005).

The importance of social inclusion is also written into the partnership agreement between Al Omrane and ADS. This agreement establishes the role of ADS as a social operator tasked with guiding SYZ residents through the resettlement process. This agreement explains that ADS’s mission in the project is to communicate with slum residents and sensitize them to the program’s goals. ADS’s work should ultimately support the integration of beneficiaries into urban life in Tamesna (ADS, 2015: p. 7).

Private sector actors also center social priorities in their explanations of why they operate in the resettlement process in Tamesna. A representative of Marina D’Or, a company that entered into a development agreement with Al Omrane-Tamesna in 2006, explained in an interview that the company views social housing development as a social responsibility. Even though the company has faced challenges in the development of social housing, they remain committed to this mission

because they see it as the right thing to do (A. Mania, field interview, May 24, 2017). Similarly, the director of the Tamesna branch of Bank Populaire said in an interview that the bank extends credit to SYZ residents partially for social and humanitarian reasons (M.Y. El Alaoui, field interview, May 24, 2017).

At the levels of both national and local planning, authorities emphasize objectives of social inclusion and access to a higher quality of life for beneficiaries. But do beneficiaries' experiences actually reflect these objectives? How do their narratives of the resettlement process compare to the official narrative? The next sections explore their reactions to the project.

### **Contrasting the Official Narrative of Slum Resettlement in Tamesna**

Authorities established an initial goal of resettling all douar residents to Tamesna by 2010 (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017), but by the end of 2016, only two-thirds of households in the douars had resettled (ADS 2016). While there are multiple reasons for this delay, resident resistance to the resettlement process has played a major role in blocking the resettlement process and pressuring authorities to respond to demands for improved housing assistance. This does not mean that douar residents do not want better housing—in fact, the vast majority do. While residents are eager to improve their housing conditions, many are unwilling to accept the conditions of the resettlement process as laid out by local authorities. These residents express their discontent through many kinds of actions, some individual and some collective. As a result of these actions, authorities are forced to consider altering the terms of the process. This section explores resident perceptions of housing in the douars versus their perceptions of Tamesna. Residents' perceptions of their housing options reveal important reasons they hesitate to resettle to social housing in Tamesna. The next section describes the actions taken by residents that stall the resettlement process and authorities' responses to these actions.

As explained in the Methods section, the resident interviewees are divided into two groups: those who continue living in the douars and those who have resettled in social housing. In this section, I begin by discussing the housing perceptions of douar residents and then discuss the housing preferences of social housing residents.

#### **How Douar Residents View the Douars**

Of the thirty-three douar residents I interviewed, thirty-one expressed a desire to leave the douar and move into better-quality housing. Resident perceptions of the douars are overwhelmingly negative. When I asked douar residents about their satisfaction with the douars, they often laughed, as if the answer to the question should be obvious. I often received an initial response similar to this one: "There is nothing here. See for yourself. Just dirtiness, and that's it." Another woman said simply: "Life here is lacking." For many, the disadvantages to living in the douars were clear, and they say they obviously want better quality housing.

I asked residents to expand on reasons for their dissatisfaction with the douars. They complained of isolation, lack of access to services, and exposure to the elements. The most common complaints of the douar residents are listed on the next page in Table C along with the number of residents who voiced the complaint.



**Table C: Resident Complaints About the Douars**

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>No. of Interviewees</b>
Lack of access to amenities	10
Lack of trash collection	9
Exposure to the elements	8
Lack of transportation	5

As shown in Table C, the most common complaints of residents about the douars is a lack of access to amenities like markets, hospitals, pharmacies, schools, etc. This complaint is especially common in Douar Sodea, where all five resident interviewees voiced this type of complaint. Of all the douars, Douar Sodea is the most physically isolated and farthest from the municipality of Sidi Yahya. One woman in Douar Sodea said she has to travel on rough terrain for fifteen minutes to reach the closest pharmacy or bathhouse. In the past, she has fallen and injured herself several times on her way to these places. Even in douars located closer to Sidi Yahya, access to certain resources remains a challenge. Several residents pointed out that the closest fully functioning hospital is located in Rabat and takes two hours to reach by public transit. Those with special medical needs must budget many hours of time to travel to doctor's appointments. Others fear not being able to make it to the hospital in time in case of an accident. The other major complaints include irregular trash collection, exposure to the elements (especially rain and heat), and lack of access to transportation.



*Many douar residents complain about a lack of trash collection in the douars (Source: Author).*

One special complaint came up among three interviewees in Douar Souq. Residents of this douar noticed a decline in the douar since over half of its residents resettled in Tamesna. For these

residents, seeing their neighbors' homes demolished around them has been painful. The hardship of living in poor housing conditions in the douar is multiplied by the loss of their neighbors. One of these interviewees said she wanted to move to social housing just be near her neighbors again.

Despite their desire to leave the douar, residents do acknowledge certain aspects of the douars they like. These are listed below in Table D:

**Table D: Positive Aspects of the Douars**

Positive Aspect	No. of Interviewees
Good relationships with neighbors	8
Low costs	5
Plentiful space	5
Proximity to amenities	4

The most commonly named benefit to living in the douars is the ties between neighbors. Close relationships between neighbors characterize all of the douars. Residents like the sense of community they experience there. They also appreciate the security of knowing they can rely on their neighbors for help in difficult circumstances. Douar residents commonly told me that in the douar, everyone knows everyone, and as a result they do not fear crime or theft within the douar. One resident of Douar Akkari explains: “Here we are like brothers and sisters. It is not like in the buildings [social housing].” He saw the strong sense of community as something that would inevitably be lost in the transition to social housing. Another sentiment many residents expressed is that the sense of community in the douar is like the sense of community in the ‘arobiya, or countryside. This particular description of neighborliness in the douars stood out to me because it was not the first time I heard the douar compared to the ‘arobiya, but it was the first time I heard this comparison made in a positive light. In my interviews with local authorities and housing developers, these actors blamed the beneficiaries for their difficulties adjusting to social housing, blaming their “rural culture.” By “rural culture,” they meant their expectation to receive services for free, unwillingness to live and their unwillingness to take care of communal spaces. I noticed that when douar residents spoke of a rural culture, they spoke of meaningful community ties.



*An informal motor drives through Douar Sodea. The new city of Tamesna is seen in the background (Source: Author).*

Low costs are an obvious benefit to living in the douars. The vast majority of douar residents own their homes<sup>6</sup>, with less than one percent renting (AREA, 2005). While housing costs in the douars rose rapidly in the 1990s and early 2000s, most of the homes sell for 10,000-20,000 MAD (roughly \$1,000 to \$2,000 USD). This is much less than the 80,000 (roughly \$8,200 USD) cost of a social housing unit in Tamesna. Additionally, residents of the douars do not pay for electricity and pay very little for water from community taps. In contrast, residents of social housing must make costly monthly payments for both water and electricity.

The final two positive aspects listed in Figure E may seem surprising: plentiful space and proximity to amenities. These benefits are far from universal. While the douars are generally perceived as overcrowded, three residents of Douar Souq and two residents of Douar Motawakil spoke about the benefit of plentiful space. These are two of the oldest douars in SYZ, and some of the families have lived there for many decades. They are more likely to have large homes made of more permanent construction materials. For these families, moving into a fifty square meter apartment is much less appealing. Two residents of Douar Akkari and two residents of Douar Motawakil said they like that their homes are close to many amenities. These douars are located close to the village of Sidi Yahya, so they have easier access to the amenities there compared to residents of douars further from Sidi Yahya.

Residents' experience of life in the douars is not uniform. Their impressions of housing in the douars depend on the length of their residency, the quality of their housing structures, and their proximity to resources. However, a large majority of residents clearly desire a better quality of housing. While residents are often sad at the prospect of losing community networks, they are eager to escape the harsh living conditions of the douar and resettle in higher quality housing.

### **How Douar Residents View Social Housing**

While residents are usually eager to leave the douars, they are not necessarily eager to resettle in social housing in Tamesna. Of the thirty-three douar residents interviewed, only eighteen expressed a clear desire to move into social housing. While their descriptions of the douars are mostly negative, their impressions of social housing in Tamesna are also generally negative. Most everyone who lives in the douar maintains close relationships with people who have already moved into social housing in Tamesna, and they are aware of the challenges faced by households who have resettled. The most common complaints about social housing from the perspective douar residents are listed in Table E:

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<sup>6</sup>Ownership in this area is not recognized by state authorities, although in some cases illegal housing titles have been validated by local authorities. Ownership means that the resident purchased the home or plot of land from a previous occupant, and the resident does not pay rent to someone else who claims ownership.

**Table E: Negative Perceptions of Social Housing**

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>No. of Interviewees</b>
Lack of space	9
Lack of work opportunities	4
Poor housing quality	4
Distance from amenities	3
High costs	3

The most common complaint by far is that the apartments are too small. In interviews, douar residents often referred to the social housing in Tamesna as “cages” or a “prison.” For larger households, the small size of the apartments makes them unappealing, especially when more space is available in the douars. This problem is especially acute for parents who have adult children. In many cases, these adult children have married and started their own families in the years since the census for the project was conducted in 2008. They want to move into their own apartments instead of crowding in with their parents. Other households worry their adult children will have nowhere to go if they marry in the near future, so they want single adults to benefit from social housing individually as well. Many of these households have submitted complaints to the qiyada asking for more apartments to be distributed to adult children who were not counted as separate households in the census. However, authorities are notoriously slow to respond to these complaints. Many of the interviewees I spoke to had been waiting years for their complaints to be answered.

Residents are also disappointed in the quality of life offered in Tamesna. While they may see social housing as better than the douar, it still fails to meet their expectations. One of the most common complaints is a lack of work opportunities. While plans for Tamesna include an industrial zone (Plan General d’Aménagement, 2005), no manufacturing sites have been established yet. Residents also complain about the minimal amenities that have been established. For example, one man said it was ridiculous that a city planned to house 250,000 people had only one small health center and no hospital. One man expressed a common sentiment that Tamesna is a city of only housing with no jobs or services. He said, “Tamesna is housing and nothing else [*tamesna hiya sukna wa safi*].”

Residents also hear that many of the apartments require costly maintenance and repairs due to problems like mold and poor quality of plumbing. Finally, many are wary of the high monthly costs associated with housing in Tamesna. One resident said that even though his family suffers in the heat and rain in the douar, those challenges were much easier than making monthly payments for a mortgage, water, and electricity in Tamesna.

In general, douar residents did not have many positive sentiments about housing in Tamesna. One of the most common reasons residents gave for wanting to resettle in social housing was that any type of formal housing carried inherent benefits over living in a douar. One woman listed numerous complaints about social housing, including the cramped quarters and that she did not want to have to live “on the roof,” by which she meant the fourth story, where her assigned apartment is located.

Still when I asked whether she wanted to move to Tamesna despite these complaints, she said, “Of course! Look around you. I want to be finished with the douar.” Another woman told me, “[Social housing] is not like the slums, they are clean, they have everything [*addiyor mashi bahal abbararek, homa naqiyyin, kolshay fihom*].” I also spoke to one woman who seemed to have only negative things to say about her impression of housing in Tamesna. Still, when I asked if she would prefer living in Tamesna over living in the douars, she looked at me incredulously and said “Of course!” When I asked her why that was the case if she had such a negative impression of social housing, she told me, “Tamesna is a city, that’s all [*Tamesna medina wa safi*],” by which she meant living in a city is simply better than the douars.

Another woman, a single mother with a teenage daughter, said she wanted to move to Tamesna to provide a better life for her daughter. She explained that she and her daughter were eager to move into an apartment, but they had not been counted in the census and they also do not have enough cash on hand to qualify for housing finance. This woman made her living cleaning homes and was unable to save large sums of money. They suffered from especially difficult conditions in the douar, living in a one-room shack without a toilet. This woman built the shack from materials left behind when her brother’s home was destroyed and he left to resettle in Tamesna. She and her daughter were counted as part of her brother’s household, but she does not get along with her brother’s wife. Desperate to leave her housing conditions, she told me she had considered moving to the ‘*arobiya* to build a better quality house.<sup>7</sup> However, her daughter insisted on holding out for an apartment in Tamesna. The mother agreed to wait for social housing in order to give her daughter the life she wants. She believes the city will provide more educational and employment opportunities for her daughter.

Other positive perceptions of social housing in Tamesna include the perception that the city is clean and that it is closer to amenities. The most common positive perceptions of social housing in Tamesna are listed in Table F.

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<sup>7</sup> This woman has been prevented from making significant improvements to her home because authorities forbid the reconstruction of demolished homes.

**Table F: Positive Perceptions of Social Housing**

<b>Positive Aspect</b>	<b>No. of Interviewees</b>
Anything is better than the douar	3
Cleanliness	3
Proximity to amenities	3

While interviewees did not have many positive things to say about the social housing, this does not seem to reflect a fondness for the douars. Instead, it reflects the higher expectations douar residents have for social housing. They expect that apartment buildings offer a higher housing quality and that the city will offer a higher quality of life. Tamesna falls short of resident expectations for resettlement, but most residents saw social housing as clearly preferable to housing in the douars.

### **Why Haven't Douar Residents Resettled?**

Most of the douar residents I interviewed want to move into social housing, but many others say they either want to stay in the douar or demand another resettlement option. Eighteen residents want to move into social housing in Tamesna as soon as possible. Most of these households have not yet moved because there are no apartments available for them or not enough apartments available for them. Many families who were counted as one household in the last project census in 2008 argue that they should be counted as multiple households. The most common reason for these complaints is that adult children have married and now have their own children. In other cases, single adults who were counted as living with a parent or sibling want to benefit individually. In total, nineteen of the residents I interviewed said at least one person in their household submitted a complaint to benefit from an additional apartment.

In interviews, authorities expressed skepticism that the douar residents who submit formal complaints genuinely want to move into social housing. Authorities express the sentiment that these people simply want to receive everything for free, and they are stalling the process because they want to continue to enjoy low-cost living in the douar. They also feel that many of the formal complaints are unreasonable, such as complaints for single adults to receive their own subsidized apartments. Authorities feel many residents who refuse to move are only acting selfishly to maximize their personal benefits. However, many of the residents I spoke to showed a genuine commitment to resettlement. For example, one woman completed every step of the resettlement up until demolishing her home in the douar. She made a 20,000 MAD down payment and took out a loan, for which she has been making monthly payments on time for two years. She pulled out receipts of her payments to prove this fact to me. While she continues to pay for her apartment, she refuses to actually move in until authorities provide her adult son with his own apartment.

The issue of financing is the second most common reason households who want to resettle have not yet done so. Beneficiaries are required to contribute 80,000 MAD toward the cost of their homes. Those who cannot come up with the cash may take out a loan backed by FOGARIM, but they are still required to pay 20,000 MAD up front. Often, the same households who report that they have submitted complaints to receive more than one apartment say they also struggle with the

means to finance the apartments. If Al Omrane made more apartments available to them today, they still would not have a means to pay. Those who cannot finance their homes are left with no options unless a charitable organization is willing to support them.

Others refuse to move for more complicated reasons. Many residents are dissatisfied with the resettlement policy that has been presented to them by authorities. Seven total residents, one in Douar Souq, one in Douar Motawakil, and five in Douar Sodea, complained that they were not provided land plots as initially promised. These residents said that authorities told them in 2004 that resettlement would involve providing them land plots in the new city, not apartment units. Then abruptly in 2005, authorities told them the resettlement plan had changed without offering any explanation or seeking public input. These residents find the apartments unsuitable because of their small size and because of the drastic lifestyle change they require. Many also see land as more valuable than apartments. They refuse to resettle until authorities respond to their demands for land plots.

Five other residents simply want to remain in the douar. This group includes one resident from Douar Souq, one resident from Douar Akkari, and three residents from Douar Motawakil. For the residents from Douar Souq and Douar Akkari, this preference did not come from any particular fondness for the douar. These residents expressed the same complaints about the douars as other residents, such as poor protection from heat and rain. However, they felt the challenges presented by social housing would inevitably be worse. They worried about housing large families in small apartments and affording costly monthly payments. The residents from Douar Motawakil, however, compose a different case. These residents have long family histories in the douar. They claim their families have lived on land in the douar for over eighty years. They hold titles to plots of land composing multiple acres. This land has been in their families for generations. When families originally purchased the land decades ago, they did not realize the land had been illegally subdivided. The residents I spoke to claimed to have notarized documents proving their legal ownership of their land, but an official later explained to me that these documents had likely been obtained through bribes (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017). In any case, these families live in spacious, well-equipped homes. They see no incentive to move into costly and cramped apartments.

Eight residents, three from Douar Motawakil and five from Douar Sodea, refuse to consider leaving their homes unless Al Omrane provides compensation for their land. These demands are specific to Douar Sodea and Douar Motawakil because of the specific histories of these douars. As explained above, residents of Douar Motawakil believe they are the legal owners of the land on which their homes sit, although authorities disagree. For these residents, however, legal rights to the land are less important than the historical fact of their ties to the land. One woman explained, “We are old [residents of this douar], we should receive compensation [*hina qadam, khsana t’awid*].” They say Al Omrane cannot require them to leave their homes without providing monetary compensation. Residents of Douar Sodea also claim a unique historical relationship to their land. Up until 2003, they were employed by the state to work for the SODEA agricultural company. When the company disbanded, they were not given any kind of severance package. Now, the community claims they have a right to the land they worked for generations in service of the country. None of these residents name a specific monetary amount they feel they are owed,

but insist that monetary compensation for their land is a necessary prerequisite before they would consider resettling.

Finally, two residents claim they do not care whether they live in the douar or in social housing in Tamesna. They do not see a significant difference between the level of hardship found in the douar compared to the level of hardship found in social housing.

Although there are some exceptions, most residents of the douars say they are eager to move into higher quality housing. They like certain aspects of living in the douars, such as close ties between neighbors, but they still want badly to escape the harsh living conditions in the douars. However, they are not willing to accept a resettlement plan under any circumstances. Most residents want authorities to provide multiple apartments to accommodate larger families, others need assistance with financing, and still others are unwilling to accept apartments at all.

### **How Social Housing Residents View the Douars**

Social housing residents also express overwhelmingly negative impressions of housing in the douars. Of the twenty-five social housing residents I spoke to, twenty-one said they would choose social housing over housing in the douars. For most, this was an easy choice. They were happy to leave the harsh living conditions of the douars and resettle in their apartments. Four of the interviewees said they prefer living in the douars. The most common complaint social housing residents made about housing in the douar is the lack of protection from harsh weather conditions. They remember suffering in the rain and heat. After this type of complaint, they complain about lack of access to electricity and water. While all of the douars are equipped with electricity, they suffer from frequent outages and faulty wiring, presenting a fire hazard. In most of the douars, running water is only available at a community tap. They (usually the women) have to wait in line and then carry water to their homes. Table G lists the most common complaints social housing residents make about their former housing in the douars.

**Table G: Social Housing Residents' Complaints About the Douars**

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>No. of Interviewees</b>
Poor housing conditions	14
Poor access to electricity	7
Poor access to water	5

In general, social housing residents have many the same complaints about the douars as the douar residents, especially regarding poor housing conditions. However, only social housing residents complain about lack of access to water and electricity. This is likely because residents still living in the douars have not yet experienced the level of services provided in Tamesna. For residents who have resettled, however, the thought of going back to the struggles with water and electricity in the douar is difficult.

Social housing residents also remember the positive aspects of living in the douar. Like current douar residents, they say that close ties between neighbors was one of the best things about living



in the douars. Nine interviewees brought up this benefit, making it the most common positive aspect of living in the douars mentioned by social housing residents. After this, six social housing residents mentioned the benefit of low cost of living. Many find making monthly payments for their mortgage, water, and electricity bills is a difficult burden. They miss not having to worry about keeping up with these payments. Four residents also miss the amount of space they had in the douar. Their homes in the douar were more spacious than their apartments in Tamesna. Three residents also said that security was better in the douars. Crime rates were lower because neighbors all knew each other. Finally, three residents said they were actually closer to more amenities in the douars. These three are former residents of Douar Dayt Arab and Douar Souq, two douars located closest to the village of Sidi Yahya. They miss living in close proximity to the weekly market in Sidi Yahya.

Table H, below, summarizes the positive aspects of the douars mentioned by social housing residents:

**Table H: Positive Aspects of Living in the Douar from the Perspective of Social Housing Residents**

<b>Positive Aspect</b>	<b>No. of Interviewees</b>
Neighbors	9
Low cost of living	6
Space	4
Security	3
Proximity to amenities	3

While social housing residents remember certain positive aspects of living the douars, most recalled the struggles of living in the douar more than any of its benefits. One of the residents described the douar as “*hofra li katih fih*,” or “a hole you fall into.” This statement reflects the common sentiment among social housing residents around the douars.

### **How Social Housing Residents View Social Housing**

While most social housing residents say they do not miss the douars, they are not necessarily satisfied to be living in social housing in Tamesna. Twenty-one out of twenty-five interviewees say they would choose social housing over the douars, but the social housing falls far short of their expectations. Beneficiaries do not want housing that is merely better than the douar; they want housing that offers them access to resources and a dignified life.

Interviewees’ most common complaints about social housing are listed in Table I:

**Table I: Resident Complaints About Social Housing**

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>No. of Interviewees</b>
Poor maintenance	14
High cost of living	8
Lack of space	8
Isolation, lack of amenities	6
Lack of transportation	5
Lack of integration with neighbors	5
Housing authorities are unresponsive	4
Tamesna remains empty	3

Resident complaints about social housing are numerous. They include complaints about the quality of the apartments themselves and complaints about lack of resources offered in the new city of Tamesna.

The most common complaint among residents is that the apartments they receive are poorly maintained and require costly repairs. Many beneficiaries move into their new apartments and immediately face expensive costs to repair plumbing or remove rotting floorboards. For example, one resident of Amal 2 complained that whenever someone runs water in her apartment, it drains into the apartment below her, causing flooding for her neighbors. Similarly reports of plumbing issues are common throughout the social housing developments. One interviewee told me, “There is nothing well-maintained, anywhere in Tamesna [*ma kaynsh heta shay haja msloha, fi tamesna g’a/*].” The problem of maintenance is so bad that one woman exclaimed, “This place is just like the douar! [*bahal addouar, bahal hena*].” Many residents report having to spend as much as 10,000 to 20,000 MAD on immediate repairs. One resident of Amal 2 said she spent 90,000 MAD on repairs for the apartment in the year since her family resettled. Complaints about poor housing maintenance are common in projects developed both by Al Omrane or by a private developer.

This complaint is compounded by a lack of responsiveness from housing authorities, which four residents complained about. They said they submitted multiple complaints to housing authorities (Al Omrane or Addoha) requesting vital repairs, but received no adequate response. One interviewee reported that officials from Al Omrane had come to inspect her apartment, but never made any of her requested repairs. Residents of Noor had similar complaints about Addoha, the housing developer responsible for their housing. One interviewee showed me multiple complaints he submitted, but said he never received any response from Addoha.

The next most common complaints include high cost of living and lack of space in the apartments. Many residents struggle with monthly mortgage payments along with water and electricity bills. They struggle to make these payments and risk accumulating expensive late fees when they fall behind. Additionally, many larger households struggle to accommodate all family members in the apartments. One interviewee reported that he lived in one apartment with his elderly parents, his brother, his wife, and their two children. He and his brother submitted requests to Al Omrane requesting to receive separate apartments, but Al Omrane has so far refused. This interviewee also complained about housing officials who do not appear to care about beneficiaries’ housing needs.

He says that after continuous attempt to request more apartments, he was told, “You have already benefited, now God help you and God help us.”



*In April 2017, maintenance is underway on the sanitation system in the Amal 1 housing development. The maintenance crew reports these buildings have required a significant amount of maintenance since they were developed in 2010 (Source: Author).*



*An undated photograph shows an illegal housing extension built by beneficiaries in Amal 1 (Source: Mohammed El Aamrani)*

Residents also have many complaints about the quality of the new city of Tamesna. They expect Tamesna to offer a similar quality of life offered by other Moroccan cities. They complain that the city lacks a wide range of amenities, including educational and employment opportunities. Residents pointed out that Tamesna lacks a weekly market, so they still do most of their shopping in the village of Sidi Yahya. Several others complained about the lack of a fully-equipped hospital.

By far the most common complaint about Tamesna is that the city lacks work opportunities. While beneficiaries must take on much greater living expenses, they struggle to find employment opportunities to manage this burden. They also worry about the futures of their children, who are unlikely to find many employment opportunities in Tamesna. Residents are aware that official plans include a manufacturing zone, and many say that such a zone would provide good work opportunities for their adult children searching for a way to build their own lives. Many are aware of the existence of a manufacturing zone in the neighboring city of Ain Aouda, and hold this example up as what Tamesna should provide. They see the absence of such a zone as evidence authorities are not genuinely interested in providing opportunities for social mobility.



*The facilities for a fish market have been built in Tamesna. They have yet to be opened (Source: Author).*



*Social housing versus market-rate housing: According to housing officials, there should be no difference in the quality of social housing and market-rate housing. However, In the Amal 1 housing development, Al Omrane repainted the buildings that house market-rate occupants, but not social housing occupants. A social worker from ADS explained this different treatment exists because market-rate occupants have high expectations (Source: Author).*

A lack of higher education opportunities compounds the lack of work opportunities. One woman explained that her daughter just graduated from high school and was eager to enter some kind of training program and develop an employable skill. No such opportunities for career development exist in Tamesna. A social worker at ADS told me that a center to train young women in different work skills is under development. Still, the fact that this center is still not open over ten years after the establishment of Tamesna explains residents' disappointment.

Finally, residents also complain about a lack of integration with their neighbors. Two reported open conflicts with neighbors, while three said they do not know any of their neighbors. The lack of integration is especially hard for residents because they compare it to the close ties between neighbors in the douars. One resident spoke at length about how her neighbors in the douar would always help each other in times of need, but said her neighbors in the Nassim housing project don't have the same kind of community. One resident of Noor 1 explained that the housing development houses people from many different douars along with people who bought market-rate apartments. She blamed the lack of social integration in the housing development for lack of security and high crime rates. This interviewee referred to market-rate apartment owners as "*nas li shariyin*," or "people who bought [their homes]." *Nas li shariyin* are distinguished from *nas li mostafidin*, or people who benefitted from social housing. This distinction in language exists even though all of the residents are technically homeowners.

While social housing residents have many complaints about social housing, they note many benefits of social housing over the douars. The most common benefits of social housing mentioned by social housing residents are listed in Table J:

**Table J: Positive Aspects of Social Housing from the Perspective of Social Housing Residents**

Positive Aspect	No. of Interviewees
Cleanliness	10
Calm	5
Proximity to amenities	4
Housing quality	3

As seen in this table, social housing residents most often report they like Tamesna because it is "clean [*nuqiya*]." When I pressed interviewees further about what exactly it means for a city to be clean, they responded by contrasting their current housing to their former housing in the douars. For example, one resident told me, "a house is not a slum [*addar mashi hiya al baraka*]." For this woman, there can be no comparison between the quality of housing in the douars and the quality of social housing. Another interviewee expressed the same sentiment when he said, "The important thing is that it's better than the douar." When I asked what makes social housing better than the douar, he looked at me as if I had asked the most obvious question. He responded, "The douar is unsanitary housing [*assaken ghir al-la'eq*]."

These statements demonstrate the inherent value residents see in moving out of the douar and into formal housing. One beneficiary described that moving into social housing put him on "a better level." He went on to explain that "when the environment around you is clean, you feel the cleanliness in yourself [*kayna nithafa fi al mohit, wa heta fi al-nufs dyalek*]." Statements like these

reflect the strong social stigma that surrounds housing in the douars, which explains why most interviewees would quickly choose social housing over housing in the douars.

Some other benefits interviewees list about social housing include the level of calm in the city, proximity to amenities, and improved housing quality. In general, none of these benefits compare to the most important benefit offered by social housing, which is simply a path out of the douar.

### **Why Did Social Housing Residents Choose to Resettle?**

Given the semi-voluntary structure of the resettlement process, it comes as no surprise that most social housing residents say they prefer social housing to the douars. The twenty-one residents who prefer social housing followed the standard resettlement procedure, which means they took initiative to begin the resettlement process. They chose to begin this process because they were eager to leave the douars and optimistic about the social housing offered in Tamesna.

Three of the residents who prefer social housing moved into the douar in the early 2000s with the specific intention of benefitting from social housing. These residents were single young men when they moved into a shack in the douar from their parents' homes. They heard about official plans to resettle douar residents in SYZ, so they moved in order to benefit. One of these residents explained that he did not have the financial resources to afford a market-rate apartment, so he bought a shack so that he could buy an apartment at a heavily subsidized rate. He now has a wife and a young child. These residents do not have anything positive to say about life in the douars, which they saw as a means to an end. They are also not fully satisfied with social housing because they had high expectations for the apartments. Still, they never had any intention of staying in the douar for long.

The four residents who state a preference for housing in the douars have distinct experiences from most of the twenty-one residents who prefer social housing. The four residents who prefer the douars are former residents of Douar Khammali, Douar Akkari, or Mers El Kheir. They did not resettle voluntarily, like the others. Instead, they were forced to resettle because their homes stood on the site where Al Omrane planned to build the Amal 1 housing development or where Addoha planned to build the Noor housing development. They also did not make financial arrangements before moving into their apartments. To expedite the process and remove the residents from the land quickly, officials provided them with loans for the full cost of their apartments. They did not have to put any money down or provide proof of income. Residents who took out large loans struggle with larger monthly payments, and many do not have the financial resources to make these payments. One interviewee explained that she only made mortgage payments the first four months after she moved into her apartment. After that, she says, she did not have any means to pay. The bank used to call her about her delinquent payments, but she says now they have stopped calling. Another woman in a similar situation stopped paying the bank two years ago after her husband became sick. She says that now the bank is calling her and threatening to evict her family.

These residents, who did not choose to resettle, are less satisfied with the resettlement process because they are less prepared to handle its financial demands and more likely to feel like resettlement was forced upon them against their will. One resident lost access to his source of work. He explained that he used to have regular work in agriculture in Mers El Kheir, near his



former home in the douar. Now, he says he takes construction work when he can find it, but this work is less regular and he sometimes has to travel to Rabat or Temara. For this beneficiary, the resettlement process caused displacement from his home and his source of income. Additionally, it forced his family to crowd into a much smaller space. He says authorities have been totally unresponsive to all of his complaints, so he remains bitter about the entire resettlement process. When I asked if he would return to the douar if he could, he told me, “Yes, one hundred percent.”

All of the social housing residents who prefer the douar were forced to leave their homes at the beginning of the resettlement process, but not all residents who were forced to leave their homes at this time prefer the douar. Two of the residents I interviewed resettled under the same circumstances, but they still prefer social housing for the same reasons as other residents who voluntarily resettled. Still, the struggles faced by the four residents who prefer the douars indicate that the resettlement process is significantly more difficult for residents who are rushed through the process.

While some beneficiaries would have preferred not to move at all, most express clear preferences for social housing over housing in the douars. For these residents, any formal housing option is better than the harsh conditions they suffered when they lived in the douar. Still, residents have multiple complaints about their apartments and about services provided in Tamesna. They are disappointed by housing quality because they have much higher expectations for social housing.

### **Individual Actions that Complicate the Resettlement Process**

Interviewees feel their desires are ignored by authorities in the resettlement process. They say authorities show no concern for the complaints they submit regarding their housing. Still, beneficiaries find ways to assert their demands and pressure authorities to respond. Many of the actions they take are individual acts of “quiet encroachment” (Bayat, 2000). In these cases, beneficiaries take direct action to improve their lives. A large number of individual actions eventually push authorities to reconsider the terms of the resettlement process.

### **Demands for Sufficient Apartment Provision**

One of the most common complaints residents express about social housing is that the apartments are too small to accommodate larger families. This is the primary reason households refuse to move out of the douars. Most of the interviewees who submitted complaints to receive more than one apartment said that if authorities would accommodate their requests, they would move to Tamesna immediately.

When the first beneficiaries were resettled in 2010, they were evacuated from douars on land Al Omrane wanted to use immediately for housing development. Because they were determined to resettle these residents as soon as possible, authorities granted many of the requests made by residents to receive more apartments than the 2008 census designated (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017). Once authorities focused on the rest of the douars, they found other residents expected their complaints to be answered the same way as the earlier residents. Al Omrane argued the difficulty of providing apartments to all the residents who demanded them would be too great.

As years passed, the residents who demanded more apartments proved they would not go away quietly. Hundreds of households choose to stay put in their homes in the douars until authorities meet their demands. After the Arab uprisings of 2011, state authorities are reluctant to use physical force to make these residents resettle (ibid). The result is essentially a stalemate. Social workers in ADS try to convince these households to resettle and wait for complaints to be answered later, but they do not have the resources to seek out all the households who refuse to start the resettlement process (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017).

In 2013, a new *qaid*<sup>8</sup> was appointed to Sidi Yahya. As a show of goodwill, the new qaid decided to open up a complaint process for all the douar residents. For a period of one year, residents could submit requests for their households to be recounted as multiple households for the purpose of resettlement. By the time this period closed, the number of complaints totaled 2,652 (Qiyada of Sidi Yahya, n.d.), a figure almost as high as the official number of beneficiaries. Officials in the qiyada then studied each complaint to determine which are valid. Valid complaints are those submitted by residents with an established residency in the douars and who have dependent children (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017). In an interview, Lfayaz Mohammed, who is the qiyada official responsible for monitoring slum resettlement in SYZ, told me the qiyada finished reviewing all these cases in 2015. However, the Regional Committee<sup>9</sup> has not met to approve the qiyada's reviews and make plans to provide additional apartments.<sup>10</sup> While authorities from the qiyada have determined which complaints are valid, Al Omrane does not have a plan to make more apartments available to accommodate these households. The residents who submitted complaints have been left in limbo for nearly three years. They have not received any correspondence from the qiyada about whether their requests for more apartments have been approved. As a result, they feel even more ignored by authorities.

Only time will tell how this stand-off between residents and authorities will play out. Residents have so far created a major delay in the implementation of the resettlement process. Those who I interviewed insisted they would not consider resettlement until their demands for more apartments are met. In the meantime, Mohammed Lfayaz reaffirmed that authorities are unwilling to use physical force to compel residents to resettle (field interview, Lfayaz, 24 April 2017). They fear the political consequences that could emerge from open conflict between residents and the state. Residents' persistence has already compelled the qaid to open up an avenue for resident complaints to be heard. However, the governance structure of the resettlement program prevents the qiyada from being able to act upon resident complaints. The qiyada has the power to determine which households have a right to be counted in the census, but it does not have the power to allocate additional funding or commission the development of more apartments. The qiyada has created an expectation among residents that their complaints will be taken seriously, but is forced to wait for the other members of the Regional Committee to act upon its findings.

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<sup>8</sup> The qaid is appointed every four years as head of the *qiyada*, the administrative unit below the rural commune.

<sup>9</sup> As explained in the Background section, the Regional Committee includes representatives the qiyada, the rural commune of Sidi Yahya Zaer, the *'amala* (province), Al Omrane, and ADS.

<sup>10</sup> While the qiyada has determined the number of valid complaints out of the 2,652 complaints submitted, they were unwilling to share these numbers with me because they have not yet been approved by the Regional Committee.



As the process of answering residents' complaints drags out, authorities risk opening the door to even more complaints. Since the period for submitting complaints closed in 2015, residents have continued to come forward to attempt to submit new complaints. On the day I went to the qiyada to interview Lfayaz Mohammed, a woman came into his office because she wanted to submit a complaint for her newly married son to benefit from his own apartment. Lfayaz told her the period for submitting complaints had ended years ago, so she left without being able to submit a complaint. I asked Lfayaz if other douar residents often came to his office with similar requests. He said such requests are common, but he does not keep track of them because the period for complaints ended.

The longer authorities go without responding to the complaints, the more complications they create in the long run. The more time that passes, the more households are likely to subdivide. More children will marry and have children of their own. Already, nearly three years have passed since the period for complaints ended. If they manage to respond to the complaints submitted between 2014 and 2015, authorities will later have to deal with the residents who claim to have formed new households since 2015.

The residents who submit complaints for more apartments do not organize to collectively demand action from authorities. Instead, individual households choose to remain in their homes in the douars until their demands are met. Authorities remain skeptical about the legitimacy of such claims, believing most of the residents who make these complaints are only trying to maximize their personal benefits (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017). However, the persistence of residents in their demands eventually caused the qiyada to establish a new procedure to evaluate claims for more apartments. This decision raised resident expectations that authorities will take action to respond to their claims.

Authorities are running out of options to resettle the thousands of residents who want to be counted as separate households in the census. In my interview with Lfayaz, I asked how he expected the situation to end: would the Regional Committee eventually agree to supply the apartments demanded by residents, or would they have to force residents to move? Lfayaz insisted authorities would never be willing to use force because of the political cost. He said that eventually the Regional Committee would respond to the qiyada's study of resident complaints, which he believes will solve the conflict.

The fact that Lfayaz believes the Regional Committee will ultimately have to comply with residents' demands underscores the effectiveness of their actions. Thousands of individual decisions to remain the douars instead of participating in the resettlement process accumulated into a major headache for authorities, who do not have the resources to convince them all to move. The ADS branch that runs the accompagnement social process is responsible for convincing residents to participate in the process, but this team only consists of eight people. Their time is filled by assisting residents who voluntarily participate in the resettlement process; they do not have the staff to knock on doors and consult with residents who refuse to participate (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017). As a result, qiyada officials expect the Regional Committee to eventually give in to their demands for more apartments. This victory for residents is far from certain, but the fact that authorities feel compelled to respond to the large number of resident complaints shows how powerful residents' actions are. They manage to exert an extraordinary

amount of pressure without any official coordination or organizing. This collection of individual actions will likely force authorities to make huge concessions in apartment provision.

### **Just Staying Put: The Case of Douar Motawakil**

Other residents also refuse to leave their homes in the douars, but for a different reason. As explained earlier, some of the families living in Douar Motawakil are among the oldest inhabitants of SYZ. They live in spacious, well-equipped homes on land their families have claimed for generations. They are happy with their housing situations, and they have no desire to move into apartments they describe as cages. Their response is simple: They do not move. They are unwilling to participate in the resettlement process, so they do not. Again, authorities are hesitant to use force because they do not want to create open conflict with the residents.

Douar Motawakil residents who do not want to leave their homes claim their long family histories in the douar make them different from other douar residents. They describe SYZ as their “bilad,” or place of origin. This distinguishes them from other residents of the douar, who came *min bura*, or from outside. From their perspective, this difference means they are entitled to a different set of rights than those who moved to SYZ more recently. One of the residents told me, “When my father came to this place, it was totally empty. He bought this land and built this home. The others came later and built their shacks. We aren’t like them. How can [authorities] treat us the same?”

Residents’ claims are also based on perceptions of legal ownership. The two interviewees from Douar Motawakil who do not want to move insist they hold property titles for their land. This claim also distinguishes them from most of the douar residents in SYZ, who understand that their purchases of homes in the douars were illegal. The oldest inhabitants of Douar Motawakil purchased their land under less clear circumstances. After speaking to these residents, I asked Lfayaz Mohammed, in the qiyada of Sidi Yahya, whether any of the douar residents hold legal property rights (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017). When he answered no, I asked how it could be that some of the residents were so convinced of their property rights. Lfayaz explained that some of the oldest residents bought their land from the original landowner. However, the land was zoned for agricultural use and could not be legally subdivided for residential use. When the landowner sold parcels of the land, these sales were technically illegal (ibid). However, the residents who inherited the land from their parents do not necessarily realize the land sales were illegal. Often, the residents who made the initial illegal purchase paid local authorities to notarize their property titles (ibid). This leaves their descendants, who inherited the land, confused about the actual legal status of the land. According to Lfayaz, they may genuinely believe they hold land rights, but their property titles would not be recognized by the Interior Ministry (ibid).

The residents of Douar Motawakil who do not want to move express mixed sentiments about moving to Tamesna. When I asked if they want to resettle to Tamesna, they initially told me no. They are satisfied with their housing conditions, and they have no desire to downsize to an apartment or take out a costly loan. When I followed up with the question of whether authorities could do anything to convince them to move, they told me they might be willing to move if they are offered high enough financial compensation. They were not willing to specify a figure that would motivate them to resettle, but agreed in principle that they might accept compensation. They are absolutely unwilling to accept a resettlement plan without compensation. Because they make

historical and legal claims on the land, they argue authorities are obligated to provide fair compensation before they can take away their land. One woman explained matter-of-factly, “We are old, so we should receive compensation [*hena qadam, khasna t’awid*].”

These residents and authorities remain stuck in a stand-off similar to the one between authorities and residents who demand additional apartments. These residents of Douar Motawakil remain in their homes, so far without interference from authorities. They refuse to begin the resettlement process, and authorities have few tools at their disposal to convince them to participate. In contrast to the residents who demand additional apartments, Lfayaz is less convinced these residents will successfully pressure authorities to make concessions. He explained that their claims about representing a special group are baseless; their residence in SYZ is illegal, just like the rest of the population targeted for resettlement. He did not believe Al Omrane would consider offering financial compensation. When I asked how he expected the situation to be resolved, he said that eventually the Douar Motawakil residents would realize they do not have a valid argument and will have to abide by the same conditions for resettlement as other residents. For authorities in the qiyada, it seems inevitable that Douar Motawakil residents will eventually realize they have to resettle and cooperate with the resettlement process. However, these residents remain just as convinced that the opposite is true, and authorities will eventually have to recognize their rights and concede to their demands. This became especially clear to me when one of the interviewees invited me to return to his home to have lunch with his family. Also present with us were two young men he hired to repaint the interior walls of the home. Instead of preparing to move out of their homes, this resident was investing in improvements to his home.

Only time will tell how this conflict will ultimately be resolved. One ADS official reports that now that so many residents have completed the resettlement process voluntarily, the accompagnement social team may direct more of their efforts toward proactively convincing unwilling residents to participate in the resettlement process (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017). The residents I spoke to in Douar Motawakil, however, demonstrate a clear determination to stay in their homes and claim what they believe is owed to them. So far, resistance to resettlement remains an act of individual households. Households making similar claims have not organized collectively to demand a recognition of their right to their land. If they organize in the future, authorities may begin to see these residents as a more serious threat to the resettlement process and reconsider the conditions of their resettlement.

### **Refusal to Comply with Housing Regulations**

Another means through which authorities challenge official plans is through their refusal to follow building regulations once they move into social housing. Mohammed El Aamrani, a social worker with the ADS team in Tamesna, explained in an interview that residents make many unapproved modifications to their apartments. Al Omrane waits long periods of time to enforce building use regulations, if these regulations are ever enforced at all (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017).

Beneficiaries were not offered the chance to provide any input on the design of the social housing developments. After moving in, they find ways to shape their living environment by making unofficial modifications to their homes. The modifications are so many in number that housing

authorities (Al Omrane and other social housing developers) struggle to keep up with the enforcement of regulations. Social housing residents make long-lasting changes to their housing, asserting their right to control the design of their living spaces.

One type of illegal modification residents make is to build extensions out of their windows. They build extensions in order to accommodate their families' needs for extra space. The images on the next page show some of the extensions built by residents of Amal 1:



*Illegal housing extensions in Amal 1 (Source: ADS archives)*

Residents of ground-floor apartments also extend their living space by making claims on the yard surrounding their apartments. For example, the image on the next page shows an illegal construction outside one of the apartments. The resident constructed a fence to claim a small garden and create extra storage space. These types of construction demonstrate residents' inventiveness in dealing with the lack of space in their apartments.



*An illegal extension off the ground floor (Source: Mohammed El Aamrani)*

Residents also shape their environments by beautifying their living areas. The images below depict artwork created by social housing residents on both the inside and outside of their buildings.

However, residents are not allowed to create artwork in public spaces without approval from Al Omrane. These efforts show residents' refusal to accept a sterile living environment and their desire to personalize their living space.



*Murals drawn on the walls of social housing developments (Source: Mohammed El Aamrani)*



*Painting inside a social housing development (Source: Mohammed El Aamrani)*

A final modification residents make to their apartments is a modification in their use. Residents are only allowed to use their apartments as a residence, not for any secondary use. However, some use their apartments for unapproved commerce activities. This was the case for one of the residents I interviewed. In her case, forced displacement from the douar was displacement from not only her home, but also her source of income. She ran a *hanoot*, or small basic goods store out of her home in the douar. When she was required to leave her home and move into social housing, she was not provided access to a space for a new hanoot in Tamesna.

When Al Omrane commissioned a census, they counted the number of households residing in the douars and the number of registered hanoots in the douars. All residents who had a hanoot in the douar were entitled to receive a space for a hanoot with fifty percent of the cost subsidized. Many of the douar residents who ran commerce activities out of their homes were not counted as hanoot owners in the census because their hanoots were not legally registered. This meant they were not eligible to receive a subsidized hanoot when they resettled. Some of these beneficiaries opted to



illegally use one of the rooms in their apartments as space for a hanoot. The image on the next page shows one of these illegal hanoots.



*A makeshift hanoot run out of a ground-floor apartment (Source: Mohammed El Aamrani)*

Residents who use their homes for non-residential uses or make illegal modifications to their homes take action to make social housing match their needs and desires. They assert their right to control their living spaces. These actions are so numerous that housing authorities cannot effectively enforce the regulations. Residents make small gains through their persistence in using their living spaces as they see fit.

### **Refusal to Make Mortgage Payments**

As explained earlier, social housing residents complain of the high cost of living in their apartments. One of the simplest responses to this challenge is to stop making mortgage payments. This was the response of two of the social residents I interviewed. Both were among the group who were forced to resettle in 2010 and now say they prefer living in the douar. When I asked these residents about why they were not paying, they explained their financial circumstances do not allow them to make the monthly payments. For these residents, however, their failure to pay is not only a result of difficult financial circumstances. They also believe that their status as beneficiaries should mean they do not have to pay. One woman told me, “We should not have to pay. We are beneficiaries; we are not like [market-rate] homeowners [*ma khasnash nkhls*o, *hena mostafadin, mashi bahal li shariyin*].”

In this statement, this woman points out the contradiction between the official discourse surrounding the program and its material impact on her life. The project of resettlement from housing deemed to be “slums” into social housing is framed as part of a national project of alleviating poverty. Al Omrane describes its work in the VSB program as “a key instrument of public authorities’ strategy for decent housing, poverty reduction and urban inclusion” (Al Omrane, 2010). The logic behind state provision of subsidized apartments is that the communities living in substandard housing do not have the financial resources to afford housing on their own. This woman points out that even the subsidized apartments are too costly for many former douar residents like herself. In her view, if authorities are really interested in helping douar residents,

they should provide housing free of cost. Being a “beneficiary” should not mean being burdened with high costs.

To find out more about how authorities respond to residents who do not keep up with their mortgage payments, I interviewed Moulay Youssef El Alaoui, the director of the Tamesna branch of Bank Populaire. He explained that the bank extends credit to beneficiaries because the bank has a longstanding relationship with both the state and Al Omrane. Because Bank Populaire receives state funding, it contributes to state projects like the VSB program.

When I asked if the bank faces any challenges in extending credit to housing beneficiaries in Tamesna, he responded that the only challenge is that some residents do not make the required monthly payments. He claimed he was unable to provide numbers of households who are delinquent in their mortgage payments. While this number was not made available to me, a number of factors indicate that the number of households who do not pay is significant. First, according to El Alaoui, at least two other banks were originally involved in extending credit to beneficiaries through the FOGARIM guarantee. All banks besides Bank Populaire quickly pulled out of agreements to extend credit to beneficiaries because of high default rates (M. Y. El Alaoui, field interview, May 24, 2017). Even with a seventy percent guarantee from the state, default rates are too high for banks to avoid losses. According to El Alaoui, Bank Populaire remains involved because of its longstanding commitments to the state and Al Omrane and because directors want to support the humanitarian mission of VSB. However, high default rates led the bank to change the conditions under which it lends. When the resettlement process first began, the bank provided mortgages for the full cost of apartments. Now, beneficiaries are required to make a down payment of 20,000 MAD. This change of policy was a direct response to a large number of early beneficiaries failing to make their monthly payments. The down payment requirement is intended to ensure that households who take out mortgages have some financial resources and have a stake in paying off the full cost of their homes. A beneficiary who puts no money down may be less concerned about losing an apartment compared to a beneficiary who has already invested a large sum in the home.

The results of individual household refusal to make payments have been mixed. As beneficiaries who resettled at the beginning of the resettlement process assert their perceived right to live in their homes without making costly payments, bank officials have responded by making it more difficult for other beneficiaries to finance their homes. The residents who do not keep up their payments pose a significant challenge for authorities because any efforts to compel residents to pay would undermine the humanitarian goals of the resettlement program. The residents I spoke with who refuse to pay are confident in their right to live in their homes without the burden of mortgage payments. They would sooner move back into informal housing before they would make the payments. Authorities can hardly evict housing “beneficiaries” without inviting serious skepticism about the state’s commitment to social goals. A housing program that leaves many of its beneficiaries homeless would create a serious image problem for housing authorities who promote ideals like social inclusion.

El Alaoui and social workers from ADS state that to their knowledge, no beneficiary households have ever been evicted from social housing in Tamesna (M. Y. El Alaoui, field interview, May 24, 2017; M. El Aamrani, field interview, February 26, 2017). They acknowledge that authorities

would not want to face the political blowback of evicting beneficiaries. El Alaoui says when beneficiaries are delinquent in their payments, the bank contacts them and tries to work out a restructured payment plan. When this does not work, the bank submits a complaint to the courts. According to El Alaoui, this is where the bank's involvement in debt collection stops. The courts become responsible for deciding how to enforce the payment of the mortgage. El Alaoui claimed not to have information on the status of any legal proceedings against beneficiaries.

Nonpaying beneficiaries have managed to remain in their homes for years without making payments. Again, these beneficiaries have not organized themselves to place collective demands on authorities, but their individual actions accumulate to create a challenge for authorities. There is no indication that authorities will take more aggressive action any time soon to pressure these beneficiaries into payment. This represents a significant gain for those residents who refuse to make payments. Their refusal to pay asserts a right to housing access without the burden of an unaffordable mortgage. They point out the contradiction between the official discourse of poverty alleviation and the material hardship created by resettlement.

### **Community Action to Demand More Equitable Resettlement**

So far, this paper has analyzed unorganized, individual responses to the resettlement process. These individual actions accumulate and eventually put significant pressure on authorities in a process Bayat (2000) calls "quiet encroachment." However, beneficiaries also respond to the resettlement process through organized movements. In some cases, groups of residents organize themselves to place collective demands on authorities. As discussed below, these collective movements achieve varying degrees of success.

#### **Unanswered Demands: Community Organizing in Douar Souq**

Douar Souq is one of the douars where residents formed an association to respond to the resettlement process. I spoke to a man who served as the president of the association before it was eventually disbanded. When I spoke to the man<sup>11</sup> who described himself as the association's president, he spoke as if the association continues to be active. However, in the qiyada, Mohammed Lfayaz explained to me that the residents' association in Douar Souq fell apart as many douar residents moved to Tamesna. He explained that the association no longer officially exists because its leaders failed to file the necessary paperwork.

While the association no longer exists, the interviewee provided information on the reasons the association was formed and about his experiences interacting with authorities. He explained that the association was originally formed to act as an intermediary between douar residents and authorities. The association would help explain the resettlement process to the residents and communicate the needs of residents to the authorities. The association quickly found that authorities did not seem to be interested in listening to the needs of residents. The association has organized around numerous key issues but has always been met with refusal.

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<sup>11</sup> This man prefers not to be named.



One of the key areas around which the association has organized is the issue of land plots. Residents were told in 2004 they would receive land plots in a new city called Noor Zaer. When they were told in 2005 the resettlement plan would be switched to apartments, the association tried to negotiate with authorities to return to the plan for resettlement to land plots. The association believed residents would be better served by land plots for several reasons. First, the living arrangements would more closely resemble living arrangements in the douar. Each household would have its own freestanding home and space to keep livestock such as chickens, which is an important source of income for douar residents (AREA, 2005). The idea of living stacked on top of neighbors in close quarters is not appealing to many douar residents, who are used to the space available in the douar. Like many of the interviewees, the former president of the association described social housing in Tamesna as a prison. Second, the apartments are too small to accommodate larger households. Many of the parents in the douar worry about where their children will be able to find housing once they marry. If they were allowed to construct homes on land plots, they could build another story for a grown child. In a fifty square meter apartment, households have no options to expand their living space to accommodate growing households. Third is the issue of expense. Apartments are more expensive than self-built homes, and most of the douar residents have very limited financial resources. The extra expense of apartments is infeasible for too many households. Finally, the douar's many elderly and disabled residents cannot climb stairs and worry about being assigned apartments above the ground floor. For all these reasons, the association focused its early efforts on advocating for land plots.

After they were told the resettlement plan had changed, the leaders of the association set up a series of meetings with representatives of Al Omrane and local government bodies. They were repeatedly told that the decision about the resettlement plan had already been made by higher powers, so there was nothing they could do. When the association realized they were not accomplishing much by negotiating for land plots, they refocused their efforts on advocating for larger apartment sizes. Again, officials told them that the decision about the size of apartment offered to beneficiaries had already been made. The association failed to pressure authorities to provide larger apartments as well. The association's former president explained that authorities' unwillingness to listen to the residents proved detrimental to the resettlement process. Most of the households in Douar Souq who have not resettled have submitted complaints requesting more apartments for their families. Provision of larger apartments or land plots could have forestalled many of these complaints. The other major reason households from Douar Souq have not resettled is that they cannot afford to finance the apartments. Land plots, which would have been significantly less expensive, could also have lessened the issue of expense for many of these households.

Another issue the association focused on includes the provision of infrastructure and services in the new city of Tamesna. Douar residents were disappointed to see the slow development of the new city. Two major areas of focus for the association were public transportation and schools. Many residents have to commute regularly to Rabat or Temara, but transportation from Tamesna to these places remains badly lacking. The bus system is unreliable and slow, so residents still have to plan multiple hours for their commutes. Tamesna does not offer the public transportation benefits residents expect from a city. Additionally, the few schools in Tamesna were badly overcrowded during the new city's early years. News coverage from 2015 describes students studying in classes over sixty students (Kanin, 2015). The need for classrooms is so great that students are divided into two groups, one group that studies on an early morning schedule and

another that studies later in the afternoon. The association met with representatives of Al Omrane to try to convince them to improve the public transportation options and build more schools. Again, the former president states authorities were unwilling to consider these demands.

Finally, the association advocated on behalf of residents who faced special difficulties with the resettlement process, including widows and the disabled. The association helped Al Omrane identify households who have special needs so that they could work out special arrangements. In some cases, this meant connecting the poorest households to charitable associations willing to cover the cost of their apartments. In other cases, the association helped households with a disabled family member file special requests for apartments on the ground floor. This is one area in which the association was successful, because this type of work aligns with Al Omrane's resettlement plan. The association received official support their work that facilitated the resettlement process.

Today, the association no longer exists. Lfayaz believes this is because a large number of the douar residents were eager to resettle and did not want to wait to negotiate the terms of resettlement. Approximately half of the households in Douar Souq counted in the 2008 census have resettled in Tamesna (ADS, 2016). The former president acknowledges the association faced a difficult challenge because the residents are not united. Households moved into the douar at different points in time, and the douar does not have a history of collective organizing. While the association brought up many complaints regarding the resettlement process, it was unable to effectively mobilize residents to push for change. Authorities ignored all the major demands put forth by this association. Despite the existence of a formal structure to represent residents, this association did not succeed in changing the terms of the resettlement process.

### **Community Action in Noor**

A similar residents' association was formed in Douar Dayt Arab in 2009. The leaders of this association also planned for their association to serve as an intermediary between the community and authorities. The nine-person committee focused on explaining the resettlement process to residents of the douar and helping them understand how resettlement would improve their lives. According to the former president of this association, many douar residents did not understand the process (B. Edkhaila, field interview, May 4, 2017). The nine core members who formed the leadership committee of the residents' association wanted to assist members of their community who were confused about the resettlement plan. The association also worked closely with the Agency for Social Development to identify and assist households who face special challenges in the resettlement process. Their goal, as stated by the former president, was to support the state's goal of eliminating slums in the region (*hna mshina m'a addoula fi maharbat dor as-safih*); (ibid).

When most of the residents moved into social housing in the Noor 2 housing development, this association was reestablished as an advocacy group for beneficiaries in Noor 2. In May 2017, I interviewed Bouchta Edkhaila, the president of this association, to learn about the advocacy work of this association. Edkhaila also served as the president of the former residents' association in Douar Dayt Arab. He explained that the residents' association in Noor 2 emerged out of the association in the douar. He established a new residents' association after moving to Noor 2 in 2013 because new challenges quickly emerged for beneficiaries in social housing. One of the main goals of the new association is to assist beneficiaries in their adjustment to housing in mid-rise

apartment buildings. Edkhaila explained that beneficiaries are used to the living arrangements in the douars, where each household is responsible only for the uptake of their individual home. One challenge beneficiaries face in social housing is that they have to cooperate to take care of shared facilities in the apartment buildings, such as stairwells, yards, and the building exterior. The association encourages residents in each building to form a *sundiq*, or a fund for building maintenance. Typically, each household would contribute a small monthly fee toward this fund. Edkhaila acknowledged this mission has so far achieved limited success. After trying to establish and head a *sundiq* for his building, he resigned because so many residents were unwilling to participate. Already burdened with higher costs of living in the douar, they refused to make an extra contribution for building maintenance.

In its attempts to help residents adjust to new living arrangements in social housing, the association in Noor 2 works in service of state aims. It aims to ensure residents successfully adjust to life in social housing. In its other work, the association brings complaints about the resettlement process to the attention of authorities. Edkhaila explains that after resettling, many beneficiaries were disappointed with their housing and neighborhood conditions in Tamesna. Beneficiaries found their apartments in need of major plumbing repairs. Addoha, the private housing developer that manages Noor 2, remained silent in the face of numerous resident complaints regarding plumbing and other maintenance issues. The association submitted multiple written complaints on behalf of all the residents in attempts to pressure Addoha into making necessary repairs. Edkhaila says that after many written complaints, there was a “partial response” (*tajawab nisbi*) from Addoha, and the company made some of the most necessary repairs (ibid).

The association also demands improved services and infrastructure in Tamesna. Edkhaila says Tamesna “lacks the proper standards for a city,” and that this problem is especially acute in Noor 2 (ibid). The association in Noor 2 sent multiple written complaints and organized three demonstrations to demand Addoha provide the neighborhood with resources beyond housing. Their biggest complaints surround overcrowding in the schools and mosques and increased security (ibid). Edkhaila says Addoha completely ignored written complaints, but after the demonstrations some of the problems improved. Overall, the community remains highly dissatisfied with the quality of life offered in Noor 2, and the association continues to advocate for improved standards in the neighborhood. The association established a Facebook page called “Voice of Noor” to share information about problems in the neighborhoods and help organize demonstrations.<sup>12</sup>

The former residents of Dayt Arab who now live in Noor 2 established an association to organize their community to improve living conditions in their neighborhood. One possible reason these residents succeeded in forming an association is that Dayt Arab is one of the oldest and more established douars in SYZ, so the community has close social ties. Still, cooperation among the community remains a significant challenge for the association (ibid). While the association attempts to call attention to numerous complaints in Noor 2, Edkhaila so far describes the official response as “very weak.” Even with a formal organization, residents struggle to gain the attention of authorities.

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<sup>12</sup> This Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/sawtnour/>.

### **Residents United: The Case of Douar Sodea**

The case of Douar Sodea is a special case among the douars in SYZ targeted by the resettlement program. To date, not a single household has resettled to Tamesna. The residents have staged a collective resistance to the resettlement process, creating significant pressure for authorities to meet their demands for a different form of resettlement.

Residents of Douar Sodea leverage the historical narrative surrounding the douar to assert special rights. First inhabited in 1920, Douar Sodea is the oldest douar in SYZ, and according to one community leader, it is the oldest douar in the entire prefecture of Skhirat-Temara (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017). The douar emerged under unique circumstances. When the French Protectorate came to power in Morocco, French authorities decided to use the land in SYZ for agriculture, and the protectorate employed the local population to labor in the fields. One community leader, Kaddour Tourrabi<sup>13</sup>, describes their labor as forced labor (ibid). The work was also difficult: laborers had to clear stones to prepare the fields for planting for extremely low pay. Another community leader, Mohammed Zoheir, cites the rate of pay as one dirham per day (M. Zoheir, field interview, March 22, 2017). According to Tourrabi, these forced laborers participated in the resistance against the French colonizers. He describes these laborers as true patriots who were loyal to Morocco. Therefore, the state owes a huge debt to Douar Sodea.

After Morocco gained its independence in 1956, the laborers who worked for the French protectorate continued to live off the land. In the 1970s, the Moroccan state established an agricultural company called SODEA (Société de Développement Agricole). This state-run company continued to employ the same laborers who worked under the protectorate government and also employed new laborers who migrated from other regions in Morocco. This time, laborers were employed under a contract. They continued to work for SODEA until the company was eventually disbanded in 2003 (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017; M. Zoheir, field interview, March 22, 2017).

All the residents of Douar Sodea are former employees of SODEA and their families. This fact provides the douar with a stronger sense of community compared to the other douars in SYZ. All the employees of SODEA participated in a labor union, which has now been transformed into a residents' association. Mohammed Zoheir, who leads this association, was also the president of the labor union (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017; M. Zoheir, field interview, March 22, 2017). Residents of the douar have a long history of collective organizing for their rights in the labor union, which provides them with an advantage to organize for their housing rights.

As residents of the douar and its community leaders describe, all residents of the douar are united in their opposition to resettlement in Tamesna. They have two main demands. First, they are staunchly opposed to resettlement to apartments. They demand to be resettled to plots of land. Second, they demand monetary compensation for the removal from their homes. They see the right to land and the right to monetary compensation as their inherited right as the region's original population and as former employees who served the state (M. Zoheir, field interview, March 22, 2017). They also see Al Omrane's acquisition of the land as corrupt. Both Zoheir and Tourrabi

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<sup>13</sup> Tourrabi is an elected representative for the douar.

described the price Al Omrane paid for the land as “a symbolic price,” citing the cost as twenty MAD per square meter (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017; M. Zoheir, field interview, March 22, 2017). They understand that Al Omrane intends to sell this land to a private development company for a much higher price, and they argue the residents are the ones who should benefit from this land sale, not Al Omrane.

The historical legacy of the douar lies at the center of residents’ narrative of their resistance. They describe their community as a “special case” that is not like the other douars. When I interviewed residents of Douar Sodea, I asked them a question I asked residents of all the douars: *How long have you lived in the douar?* Each resident of Douar Sodea responded by asking, “Don’t you know Douar Sodea is not like the other douars?” Several residents explained using the same language: “This is the land of the fathers of our fathers, it’s the land of our birth [*hadi al ard dyal jadod jadodna, dyal ziyada wa khalooq*].” For residents, this unique history means they should not be treated by authorities the same as residents of the other douars. One resident explains, “The others are not part of the history of Sidi Yahya. [To treat] us like the others, it’s not possible! [*hadook madakhalinsh fi tarikh dyal sidi yahya. Bahalna bahal nas akhrin, mayomkinsh!*]”

Residents’ refusal to leave the douar should not be confused with satisfaction with living conditions in the douar. Like most of the other douar residents in SYZ, all the residents I interviewed in Douar Sodea are highly dissatisfied with their living conditions. They also suffer from exposure to the elements, irregular access to water and electricity, and isolation from transportation and other resources. Still, they are not willing to leave their douar for any type of social housing. They demand social housing that suits their way of life and the financial compensation to make that housing affordable. In our interview, Tourrabi outlined multiple reasons residents do not want to resettle into apartments. They do not want to have to climb stairs to access their homes, they do not want to have to share living space with their neighbors, and they want housing that can accommodate multigenerational households (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017). Residents of the douar want to resettle into higher-quality housing, but they also want recognition of the historical legacy of the douar and housing that matches their living preferences.

Zoheir explained that the community felt betrayed when the resettlement plan was abruptly changed in 2005. Both Zoheir and Tourrabi reported that no authorities made any attempts to open up a dialogue with the community about the resettlement plan (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017; M. Zoheir, field interview, March 22, 2017). Zoheir and Tourrabi worked together to negotiate with Al Omrane to gain the rights to land plots and monetary compensation. Zoheir reported that the two set up over twenty meetings with officials in Al Omrane, the most recent of which was in February 2017. Zoheir says that in these meetings, Al Omrane officials refused to take their demands seriously. Instead, they insisted residents needed to go along with the resettlement process established by the state. The director of ADS, the actor that is supposed to help beneficiaries communicate with authorities, was present at the meetings but did not participate in the discussion. Officials did not record the proceedings of the meetings, which Zoheir sees as evidence that they know what they are doing is corrupt and the way they interacted with the residents was not in the spirit of real negotiation.

Residents of Douar Sodea also contest the number of households counted in the 2008 census. The research bureau that conducted the census determined the number of households in the douar to be 256. Al Omrane was unwilling to provide anyone in the community a complete list of the households counted in the census, but residents argue it is far too low. The official census only counted households with dependent children. The residents argue every married couple of single person over the age of eighteen should be counted as a beneficiary. In 2010, Zoheir undertook his own detailed census of the douar. He listed the members of each household and the length of each family's residence in the douar. His census found the total number of beneficiaries to be approximately 400. The residents use Zoheir's census to argue for an increase in the number of social housing units. Predictably, Al Omrane refuses to recognize the legitimacy of Zoheir's census (ibid).

As long as authorities refuse to recognize their demands, the residents of Douar Sodea remain steadfast in their refusal to leave the douar. Unlike in other douars, where many households are eager to leave once their individual circumstances allow them to do so, the residents of Douar Sodea make decisions about resettlement collectively. Their collective refusal to resettle creates a dilemma for authorities in Al Omrane, who plan to incorporate the land where Douar Sodea is located into the new city of Tamesna. Another company purchased the land, and Al Omrane has to continue paying fees as long as the area remains undevelopable due to its continued inhabitation by douar residents. Al Omrane lacks much leverage to pressure the community to leave. Authorities are hesitant to use force to resettle any residents because they are worried about the political fallout. Tourrabi credits the Arab Spring for making authorities especially committed to avoiding conflict with citizen groups (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017). The result has so far been a standoff. The community refuses to leave, and authorities refuse to acknowledge the validity of any of their demands.

In an interview at the qiyada, I asked Lfayaz Mohammad how he expects the conflict with Douar Sodea to be resolved (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017). He said that eventually, the residents will have to accept the resettlement plan that has been presented to them. He expects that if enough time goes by, the residents will realize they have nothing to gain through their continued refusal and will choose to benefit from subsidized apartments.

In Al Omrane, officials express less confidence that the residents of Douar Sodea will eventually give in. In May 2017, I interviewed Abdelaziz Lamine, the director of marketing the Tamesna branch of Al Omrane (A. Lamine, field interview, May 24, 2017). He also referred to Douar Sodea as a "special case" and said he expects authorities will continue to focus their efforts on resettling residents of the other douars rather than convincing residents of Douar Sodea to resettle. Once the other douars have been resettled, then authorities will begin serious negotiations with the residents of Douar Sodea. He expects at least some of their demands, including resettlement to land plots, will be met. He explained that authorities should wait and resettle Douar Sodea residents last so that other douars do not try to organize and create similar demands.

Again, only time will tell the eventual outcome of the current standoff between Douar Sodea and authorities. However, it seems clear that the community will not simply decide to resettle quietly, as the authorities in the qiyada expect. They are too united and persistent in their demands to give in easily. Because of residents' shared history and long experience of community organizing, they

are able to effectively block the resettlement process and assert pressure on authorities. This is why at least some authorities in Al Omrane acknowledge they will have to give in to some of residents' claims. The residents of Douar Sodea powerfully assert claims based on their community's history.

### **Conclusion: Contrasting Administrative Logic with Resident Experiences**

Authorities claim that resettlement accomplishes major social goals. The administrative logic guiding the resettlement program is that resettlement in Tamesna provides better quality housing and access to resources for social mobility. However, residents are dissatisfied with the resettlement process because from their perspective, it falls short of these goals. They have higher expectations for their housing than what authorities are willing to provide. This is a source of tension that motivates residents' resistance to the resettlement process.

The following summary tables list the key social goals associated with the resettlement program and explain how different actors interpret and react to those goals. Table K lists the major social goals authorities claim resettlement achieves and explains the administrative logic of how each goal should be met. Table L lists the reasons residents argue social goals are not being met. Table M explains the contrast between the administrative logic and residents' complaints. Finally, Table N lists the actions residents take to expose a goal that is not being met and demand action. Residents do not take action on all the goals listed in the other summary tables. Instead, they focus their action on the most immediate concerns.

The narrative of SYZ residents' reactions to the resettlement process is far from straightforward. Most are eager to leave the difficult living conditions of the douars and resettle to social housing. While most express many complaints about the apartments provided in Tamesna, a majority still prefer these apartments over housing in the douars. Still, the resettlement plan falls short of what most residents expect. They expect social housing in Tamesna to provide all the benefits they imagine come with living in a city, including quality housing and access to resources and opportunities. Different residents utilize many different methods to express dissatisfaction with the resettlement process and pressure authorities for the right to housing that is closer to their expectations. Some of the residents participate in collective organizing to push for formal changes in the resettlement program, while others assert their rights through individual direct-action. Over time, these actions force authorities to acknowledge and acquiesce to some residents' demands.

### **Summary Tables:**

**Table K: Administrative Logic Explaining How Social Goal Will Be Met**

<b>SOCIAL GOAL</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE LOGIC</b>
Better quality housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social housing provides better sanitation and is more durable than housing in the douars</li> </ul>
Better quality infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The douars lack almost all urban infrastructure; the new city provides access to schools, hospitals, etc.</li> </ul>

Social and economic mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The new city provides educational and employment opportunities</li></ul>
Social integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The mixed income housing scheme in the new city ensures social mixing</li></ul>
Participation in planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The social support process, implemented by ADS, provides residents with a link to authorities and assistance in the resettlement process</li></ul>



**Table L: Residents' Complaints Regarding Social Goals**

<b>SOCIAL GOAL</b>	<b>RESIDENTS' COMPLAINTS</b>
Better quality housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social housing falls below acceptable technical standards because of poor building maintenance</li> <li>• For lower-income households, social housing is unaffordable</li> <li>• Apartments do not provide enough space to accommodate larger households, or accommodate family expansion</li> <li>• Residents of Douar Sodea and others complain that apartments do not reflect their desired housing choice</li> </ul>
Better quality infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure development continues to be delayed</li> <li>• For most residents, access to infrastructure in Tamesna is not much better than it was in the douars</li> </ul>
Social and economic mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of higher education opportunities in Tamesna</li> <li>• Lack of employment opportunities in Tamesna</li> <li>• A few social housing residents say they are worse off because they lost their source of income and face higher living costs</li> </ul>
Social integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Tamesna, residents do not know most of their neighbors. They miss the strong community bonds in the douars.</li> </ul>
Participation in planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major planning decisions were made without any input from residents</li> <li>• Authorities do not respond to residents' complaints</li> </ul>

**Table M: Contrasting Administrative Logic and Residents' Complaints**

<b>SOCIAL GOAL</b>	<b>CONTRAST BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE LOGIC AND RESIDENTS' COMPLAINTS</b>
Better quality housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents and authorities generally agree that social housing provides relief from the harsh living conditions of douars; however, residents are not satisfied just because social housing is better than the douars. They are unhappy with maintenance issues and poor building quality</li> <li>Residents care about more than the technical quality of housing. They also require housing that is affordable to them and that respects cultural preferences and family arrangements</li> </ul>
Better quality infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorities say infrastructure development takes time and will continue to improve, but residents expect infrastructure to be present from the time they move</li> </ul>
Social and economic mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authorities claim the new city provides opportunities that residents have not found to exist</li> </ul>
Social integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While housing developments are mixed-income, residents do not often interact with their neighbors</li> </ul>
Participation in planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents point out that formal planning structures do not actually allow input in the decision-making process; authorities simply try to convince them to resettle</li> </ul>

**Table N: Resident Responses to Incomplete Goals**

<b>SOCIAL GOAL</b>	<b>RESIDENT RESPONSES</b>
Better quality housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some households refuse to resettle until other family members are provided their own apartments</li> <li>Some households refuse to resettle because the apartments are unaffordable</li> <li>Some households refuse to resettle because they want land plots to build housing that matches their preferred lifestyle</li> <li>Residents of Noor 2 sent collective written complaints to Addoha</li> <li>Some residents expose poor housing conditions on social media</li> </ul>
Better quality infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents of Noor 2 organized demonstrations to demand better infrastructure</li> </ul>
Participation in planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some residents make illegal modifications to their homes</li> <li>Resident associations attempt to voice community concerns to Al Omrane</li> </ul>

## **Discussion**

### **Introduction**

Interviews with current and former douar residents in SYZ and Tamesna reveal that most want to secure housing outside the douars, but many are still unsatisfied with the social housing provided in Tamesna. The fact that residents desire to leave the douars does not mean they are willing to accept any housing alternative. Approximately one-third of the residents targeted for resettlement refuse to move to social housing unless key demands are met. Other residents moved into social housing units, but push authorities to make improvements to their living conditions. Residents' responses reveal that their vision of quality low-income housing differs markedly from the social housing plan implemented by authorities. Residents push for housing that is truly affordable, well-equipped, close to urban amenities, spacious enough to accommodate large families, and that matches their established living patterns. In pushing for these demands, residents challenge authorities' claims that the resettlement program is designed to serve their housing needs and support their social inclusion. They point out the ways in which they have been excluded from the amenities promised in the new city and participation in the new city's planning. Their resistance to the resettlement program carries important implications for planners about the importance of genuine local participation in housing programs.

### **Shortcomings of a Market-Based Approach to Social Housing**

Many of the representatives of local government and private sector actors express a commitment to the social goals of the resettlement program. They want to ensure the best housing outcomes for douar residents. However, like Quercia and Galster (1997) observed in the reform of public housing authorities in the United States, institutional constraints make it difficult for them to prioritize residents' needs. The plan for the new city's development depends on Al Omrane establishing contracts with private developers to develop housing and infrastructure. This means Al Omrane is under pressure to ensure private developers have incentives to participate. However, their efforts to ensure that social housing development is attractive for private capital inevitably contradict their goal of providing quality housing for slum residents (Quercia and Galster, 1997).

In interviews, the community leaders who advocate passionately for Douar Sodea spoke directly about the conflict between resident needs and private interests. They both explain see the decision to resettle douar residents to apartments instead of land plots as evidence of authorities' prioritization of private interests. They explain that developers are able to build multiple housing units on the same area of land that would provide only one land plot (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017; field interview, M. Zoheir, March 22, 2017). They both identify profit motive as the reason Al Omrane chose to ignore their advocacy for land plots (*ibid*). Because Al Omrane has to ensure its own bottom line and make social housing development profitable for other developers, they refused to accommodate residents' desires for land plots.

The market-led approach to slum resettlement in Tamesna also means that few mechanisms are in place to hold housing officials accountable to low-income residents. State authorities put Al Omrane in charge of the development of Tamesna (CERAU, 2009). While Al Omrane was formed from a merger of eighteen state agencies, it now operates as parastatal company that operates

independently from the state (Martin and Mathema, 2008). As Kaddour Tourrabi explained in his interview, while Al Omrane works on state projects, it is still primarily concerned with making money (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017). None of the representatives of Al Omrane are elected officials, and no structure is in place to allow residents input into the development process. This explains why no residents said they feel Al Omrane takes their concerns seriously. Residents of the douars feel representatives of Al Omrane are unwilling to seriously consider their preferences in deciding what kind of social housing they would be offered. Many reported submitting complaints that have gone unanswered for years. Similarly, social housing residents feel Al Omrane and other developers ignore their complaints for better maintenance and infrastructure. State authorities' decision to place Al Omrane at the head of Tamesna's development reflects a common trend in neoliberal urban governance. An essentially private sector actor controls major development decisions in Tamesna, not a democratically elected local government (Macleod, 2011; Theodore and Brenner, 2002). Urban authorities increasingly rely on undemocratic governance institutions to make planning decisions, which undermines public accountability and democratic governance (ibid).

Parnell and Robinson (2012) put forth an important critique about the utility of viewing forms of urban development everywhere as forms of neoliberal urban governance. While I do not intend to dispute that the "analytical lens" of critiquing neoliberalism may be overused in academic analysis of contemporary urban development, I argue that the implementation of obvious "roll-out" neoliberal urban policies in the case of Tamesna demonstrates a continued need for updated analyses of modes of neoliberal governance. While the case of Tamesna inevitably exhibits local specificities (Theodore and Brenner, 2002), I argue that these local specificities have actually allowed state authorities to implement neoliberal policies more swiftly and with fewer compromises.

Parnell and Robinson argue that one reason neoliberal theory is inadequate to explain much of global urbanization is that so many places in the world are not connected to "the circuits of neoliberalization," i.e. remain isolated from the movements of global capital (Parnell and Robison, 2012: p. 601). They refer here to places in the Global South where the state has never been present as a guarantor of social welfare, i.e. where there is no state to "roll-back" (ibid: p. 601). Until the development of Tamesna began, the region of SYZ clearly matched this description. For decades, informal residents of SYZ lived and worked outside the bounds of state oversight and assistance. Until Al Omrane began to resettle douar residents to social housing in the new city, state authorities never implemented any plan to improve their housing conditions. Until 1997, the state did not recognize the existence of most of the douars in SYZ (AREA, 2005). So for SYZ residents, no state support ever existed to be removed. However, the new government institutions introduced in Tamesna "rolled-out" market-based forms of governance. These institutions streamlined neoliberal policies more quickly and completely than in many Western contexts. No democratic local bodies of government existed to mitigate the institution of neoliberal modes of governance (Theodore and Brenner, 2002). The development of the new city of Tamesna represents the introduction of state intervention in SYZ, but it is a state intervention grounded in the promotion of the private sector and lacking democratic accountability.

## What “Right to the City” do Residents Envision?

Residents are clearly dissatisfied with the social housing provided by authorities. But what kind of housing choices do residents want? What kind of resettlement program would ensure residents their right to the city? The organized resident advocacy and direct action of residents point to a number of key demands.

### *A Right to True Affordability*

One of the largest challenges residents face in the resettlement process is paying for the new housing. Most moved into the douars because of the low housing costs. While subsidized by the state, the social housing apartments are still several times more expensive than the average cost of a home in the douars (AREA, 2005). Additionally, residents must begin paying bills for water and electricity. Some of the better-off households manage to keep up with their payments and invest in improvements to their homes. In my interviews, the households who reported no financial difficulties were those who settled in the douars more recently. They chose to purchase homes in the douars because they expected to benefit later from social housing. Therefore, it is not surprising that these households were more prepared for the move. Other households who lived in the douars longer and possess fewer financial resources struggled more with the high housing costs.

This challenge motivates some residents to organize for the more affordable mode of resettlement, resettlement to land plots. The community leaders I spoke with in Douar Souq and Douar Sodea all explained that one of the biggest motivations for their demands for land plots is their relatively affordability (K. Tourrabi, field interview, April 27, 2017; M. Zoheir, field interview, March 22, 2017). While the community leader in Douar Souq explained that his residents’ association was unable to unify residents in support of this demand, community leaders in Douar Sodea succeeded in rallying residents to collectively refuse resettlement until the demand for land plots is met.

Other residents participate in individual acts of refusal to make payments. This includes residents who do not leave the douars because they cannot afford housing and residents who move into social housing but then fail to make monthly payments. Some social housing residents explain that they simply do not have the funds to make their payments, while others refuse on moral grounds. For example, as mentioned earlier, one woman argued, “We are beneficiaries; should not have to pay, we are not like the homeowners!” In this statement, she claims a right to secure housing without the burden of high monthly payments. She also points out the contradiction in the authorities’ narrative of the social benefits of resettlement. She describes social housing residents as “beneficiaries” (*mostafadin*), the same word used by authorities in planning documents. She argues residents are not really “benefitting” if they have to abide by the same payment conditions as other homeowners. She argues that she does not really receive a “benefit” if the bank continuously calls her and threatens to evict her.

Residents who agitate against high housing costs point out the contradiction between the official narrative of the resettlement process and residents’ lived experiences. Authorities and housing developers claim that resettlement to social housing improves residents’ quality of life over life in the douars. Some of the residents, both in social housing and the douars, say they would rather live in the harsh conditions of the douars than worry about the monthly payments. Authorities ignore

the high value residents place on true affordability, assuming that even a more expensive apartment is necessarily an improvement over housing in the douars. When residents oppose the payments required by the resettlement plan, they send a message to authorities that they do not truly “benefit” from resettlement in housing they cannot afford. To enjoy a true right to the city, they require quality housing regardless of each household’s ability to pay a specified price.

### *Rights to Maintenance and Urban Amenities*

Residents also refuse to accept housing that falls below their expectations for housing quality and access to resources. This is why residents in the Noor 2 housing project organized to submit collective complaints to Addoha and lead demonstrations demanding better maintenance and amenities. Their actions challenge the official narrative about the goals of the resettlement process. They make claims on the city by exposing the low quality of maintenance and amenities to which they have access. As Marcuse (2009) explains, exposing rights that are lacking is the first step taken by city residents to claim their right to the city (p. 186).

These resident actions taken to expose poor living conditions also undermine the official narrative surrounding slum resettlement. Authorities claim resettlement will provide quality housing and new opportunities for inclusion into urban society. However, residents reveal that they continue to struggle with poor housing conditions and still do not have access to the resources they expect to find in a city. They struggle with mold and plumbing issues that require costly repairs. Many hoped moving to a city would provide resources like employment, schools, higher education opportunities, healthcare, transportation, and access to resources like mosques and stores. They were disappointed to find that they continued to struggle with isolation from vital amenities after resettlement. Their efforts to lobby housing developers for better maintenance and amenities shows authorities that they expect a better quality of living than authorities currently provide. For them, a right to the city means they deserve access to high housing qualities and urban amenities even though they live in social housing.

### *A Right to Participate in the Production of Space*

Residents also claim their right to participate in the production of space (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013: p. 484). State authorities and housing developers denied residents this right when they made decisions about the design of social housing without consulting residents about their desires for their housing. Developers built apartment blocks they acknowledge require significant lifestyle changes for former douar residents (A. Lamine, field interview, May 24, 2017, A. Mania, field interview, May 24, 2017). While many residents are attracted to the modern, urban housing, many others are unhappy with the size and style of the apartments. They do not want to adapt to living in close quarters with their neighbors. When they compare social housing to the douars, they see the apartments as “prisons” or “cages.” The prison-like housing does not allow residents many opportunities to individualize their living spaces.

Residents claim a right to participate in the design of their living spaces when they build illegal additions or make illegal modifications to their homes. In some cases, such as the construction of additional rooms, their illegal extensions address the inadequacy of the apartments to accommodate larger households. In other cases, residents illegally convert parts of their apartments

to use for commercial purposes. These residents engaged in commercial activities in their homes in the douars. They have not found alternative sources of income in Tamesna, so they resort to using parts of their new homes for the same informal commercial activities they practiced in the douars. In these cases, residents take direct action to modify their homes to meet an immediate need for space or income. In other cases, residents act to beautify their spaces by painting murals on building exteriors or painting the walls of shared stairwells. In cases like these, they assert a right to personalize their living spaces and participate in their design. In all these cases, residents assert that they should not be forced to accept housing designs that are not appropriate for their lifestyles. They take direct action to alter the design of their homes and create space suitable for their needs.

### *A Right to Housing that Respects Familial and Cultural Values*

Closely linked to the demand for participation in the production of space is residents' demand that their social housing reflect longstanding familial and cultural values. This demand is most clear in residents' mobilizations for land plots instead of apartments. They explain that land plots better match the housing arrangements residents established in the douars and better accommodate multigenerational households. One social worker at ADS pointed out that many residents want more space because the ability to accommodate guests, especially visiting family members, is important to them (M. El Aamrani, field interview, March 12, 2017). They expect to use one room as a salon, reserved to receive guests. This means even less space is available to use by household members on a daily basis (ibid). The small space of the apartments does not respect households' cultural preferences for multigenerational living and reception of guests.

### *Exclusive Claims on the City*

Struggles for a right to the city are not necessarily based on securing rights for all residents; they can be elitist and exclusionary (Holston, 2009). Some douar residents advocate for their own right to the city by claiming their cases are different from other douar residents. This is the case for the residents of Douar Sodea and some residents of Douar Motawakil, who claim their family ancestry in the region predates that of any other residents. Douar Sodea residents claim their unique history and connection to the state entitles them to a more favorable resettlement plan than other residents. This is why one resident of Douar Sodea exclaimed in an interview, "To treat us like others, it's not possible!" Similarly, residents of Douar Motawakil claim they deserve special treatment because of their long family histories in the douar. This reflects the point made by Marcuse (2009) that different groups possess different rights to the city; struggles for a right to the city may be exclusive.

### **Implications for Planners**

This case indicates that planners should be wary of the "tiny cracks for resistance" that emerge when they make promises about social inclusion without following through on those promises (Miraftab, 2004a: p. 17). Authorities and developers involved in the planning of the resettlement program framed the program's goals in terms of promoting social inclusion and mobility. When program planners did not follow through on these commitments, residents responded by refusing to participate in the resettlement program.

In Tamesna, no stakeholder holds an official title of “planner,” but many stakeholders participate in the process of program planning. The challenges faced by residents and consequently, their resistance to the program, suggests that a role could be created for planners to act as advocates for the residents (Davidoff, 1965). Residents report that they have many countless complaints to housing authorities to request their concerns be addressed, but all felt that authorities did not take their concerns seriously. Residents of Douar Sodea managed to set up multiple meetings with representatives of Al Omrane, but still received no indication that their concerns were being taken seriously. Planners could advocate on behalf of residents to pressure authorities to take their concerns seriously.

To ensure the multifaceted needs of residents are reflected in program planning, structures for participation must be built into all stages of program planning. In Tamesna, no efforts to engage residents began until the resettlement process was scheduled to begin. At this point, ADS team members in Tamesna were tasked with guiding residents through a process that had already been established by authorities. Planners needed to engage community members from the beginning of the planning process to gain residents’ trust and incorporate their desires into social housing design. Additionally, channels of communication need to be opened between residents and housing developers after residents move into social housing. Many residents report that when they tried to submit complaints to Al Omrane or Addoha requesting either critical repairs or additional apartments for family members, they were told they had already benefitted from an apartment so now they had to make due. A system needs to be in place to hold housing developers responsible for maintaining high-quality housing even after residents move in. When participation is not built into the program structure, beneficiaries take disruptive action to assert their housing needs.

Residents’ actions in this case study show that the “beneficiaries” of housing programs will take action to demand real social inclusion, or their right to the city. They see the contradictions between what authorities promise and what they actually provide. Sometimes, beneficiaries mobilize collectively to demand their right to participate in designing their homes and their right to enjoy access to a wide variety of urban amenities. In other cases, beneficiaries engage in acts of individual direct action to claim the right to the type of housing they want. In both of these cases, they expose the contradictions between official discourses of social inclusion and the actual results of resettlement. They also take steps to create the kind of housing they want.

Residents’ actions in this case study demonstrate that housing beneficiaries demand housing that provides real social inclusion and opportunities for mobility. When authorities fail to provide housing that meets this conditions, residents find new ways to pressure authorities to address their concerns. However, the fact that beneficiaries take action to address their own needs does not substitute for planning. Residents who are unsatisfied with the resettlement plan have taken actions that have disrupted the resettlement process, creating major delays and frustrating authorities. The standoffs they create result in residents remaining in substandard housing for years and program authorities facing extra costs as the resettlement process drags on. A planning process that engages residents at all stages of the process and holds authorities accountable to residents’ input would create more optimal outcomes for all stakeholders.



## Significance of the Case and Prospects for Future Research

The evidence in this case provides insight into urban development challenges that is relevant to many urbanizing contexts throughout the world. The case of Tamesna is an example of peripheral urban development, in which rural land at the outskirts of large urban areas becomes a site for new urban development (Keivani and Mattingly, 2007). Peripheral urban development has become an increasingly global trend, as international firms seek new, low-cost development opportunities (ibid). As Keivani and Mattingly (2007) argue, the impact of urban development on the residents of peripheral areas is often overlooked. This case sheds light on some of the challenges faced by peripheral residents and how planners can address those challenges. When urban development begins, residents are forced to make major lifestyle changes. Even when authorities create programs to assist local residents, such as the resettlement program in Tamesna, many residents struggle with the adjustment. Planners must respond to the social and economic needs of these populations instead of only providing technical housing solutions.

Further research is needed to understand the long-term effects of resident responses on program outcomes. While residents have so far managed to stall the resettlement process, only time will tell whether their resistance will actually pressure authorities to make serious concessions. A follow-up study would produce valuable insight for community planners seeking to identify effective methods to advocate for community demands.

Other researchers could explore whether resistance to the program results in better or worse outcomes for residents. Somewhat counter-intuitively, Hooper and Ortolano (2012) found that participation in social movements resulted in worse outcomes for individuals. In their study of a housing resettlement program in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, they compared residents who participated in social movements to demand higher-quality housing options to residents who resettled without participating in social activism. They found that residents who participated in social movements reported less satisfaction with their housing (Hooper and Ortolano, 2012). They explain this finding with the fact that residents who participate in social movements hold higher expectations for their housing (ibid). They also overestimate community organizations' ability to negotiate for better housing (ibid). Additional research could discover whether this outcome also holds true for SYZ residents.

Longer term studies could also reveal new information about the benefits and challenges of resettlement. At the current moment, social housing residents continue to struggle to find employment opportunities and lack access to important amenities. Over time, further development could alleviate these problems and improve residents' quality of life. Perlman (2010) points out that long-term studies of resettlement programs can reveal dramatically different results compared to short-term studies. When Perlman first conducted her study of the resettlement of favela residents in Rio de Janeiro, she argued that the resettlement process harmed residents by disrupting their social and economic networks (Perlman, 1977). When she returned thirty years later, she found that residents who resettled to public housing were actually much better off than residents who chose to remain in the favelas (Perlman, 2010). She found that over time, residents of public housing adapted to the transition and found more opportunities for social mobility (ibid). Thirty years from now, social housing residents in Tamesna may enjoy these same advantages. A longer-

term study with a larger population sample could provide an answer to whether most residents benefit from resettlement.

Other research could more fully explore how individual differences among the douar population affect resettlement. In my interviews, I realized that individual residents report dramatically different levels of satisfaction with the resettlement process. Based on my research, I hypothesize that several key factors most likely impact whether residents report satisfaction with the process. First, residents who have stable income are more likely to report satisfaction because they find housing costs less burdensome. Those with smaller household sizes are also more likely to report satisfaction with the resettlement process because they can comfortably accommodate all family members in the apartments. Residents who are less established in the douars have fewer attachments to the douars and are more willing to move. In particular, those who arrived to the douars in the early 2000s seemed especially eager to resettle. Additional research could test these hypotheses and determine other factors that impact individual resettlement outcomes.

Finally, one topic I did not have time to pursue in depth is the process of land acquisition in the resettlement process. One official report states that the land on which Tamesna is located is all state-owned (CERAU, 2009: p. 8). However, interviews with officials indicate that the division of land ownership is actually more complicated (M. Lfayaz, field interview, April 12, 2017). Before transfer of the land into the ownership of Al Omrane, some of the land was state-owned, while the rest was owned by individual property owners. I never managed to find an answer as to whether any private property owners received compensation for their land. “State” ownership of land is more complicated than it initially sounds. Land in Tamesna is owned by different government agencies, and I never discovered details of the process of how it was transferred into Al Omrane’s ownership. Further research could explain the process of land acquisition and outcomes for former landowners.

Of course, these suggestions barely skirt the surface of the possibilities for future research in Tamesna. The area has gone under rapid change in a short period of time, and many questions remain unanswered regarding the impact of urban development on the region’s long-term residents. I hope this study will inspire other researchers to continue work in this area to better understand the long-term impacts of resettlement on the local population.

Resettlement programs with similar goals as the program in Tamesna can be found in many urban contexts throughout the Global South, as cities throughout the world strive to become “slum-free” (Gilbert, 2007). Housing authorities who implement resettlement program promote goals of poverty alleviation and social mobility for disadvantaged residents, but resettlement’s impact on residents is far from predictable (Perlman, 2010). Housing authorities rarely conduct evaluations of resettlement programs that critically address whether social goals have been met (Arabindoo, 2011). Instead, they operate under the assumption that resettlement will automatically achieve broad social goals (*ibid*). Qualitative research on residents’ reactions to resettlement can tell more complicated stories and explain the challenges residents face in the resettlement process. More academic research on individual impacts of resettlement could help housing authorities anticipate and better address such challenges.

## Conclusion

This study of Tamesna illuminates the contradictions that emerge when housing authorities work toward competing goals of providing quality housing to poor residents and creating financial incentives for private housing developers. This paper focuses on residents' reactions to these contradictions, focusing on the methods they use to assert their housing demands when the official planning process affords them few opportunities to do so. Interviews with residents of Tamesna and Sidi Yahya Zaer reveal that these residents are highly active in asserting their demands, both through collective organizing and through individual, unorganized actions. Interviews with local government authorities and representatives of housing developers confirm that residents' resistance to the resettlement process has created years-long delays in resettlement. Residents' continued resistance has forced authorities to consider major compromises, although only time will tell how successful residents will be in winning their demands.

This study illustrates the long-term challenges inherent in a slum resettlement process that excludes its intended beneficiaries from effective participation in decision-making. When authorities fail to seriously consider the needs of intended beneficiaries, those intended beneficiaries take action to assert their vision of a right to the city. The case of the Tamesna highlights the need for a planning process that seriously considers the needs of residents from the beginning of the planning process. It also shows the need for an established role for planners to advocate on behalf of residents. Only when the planning process seriously considers residents' own vision of an inclusive city can a true right to the city be achieved.

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## Appendix

### Interview Questions

#### *For Residents in Tamesna:*

How many people are there in your household?

How long have you lived in Tamesna?

What are some of the things you like about your home in Tamesna?

What are some of things you don't like about your home in Tamesna?

What are some of the things you like about your community in Tamesna?

What are some of the things you don't like about your community in Tamesna?

Where were you living before Tamesna?

How long did you live there?

What are some of the things you liked about your previous home?

What are some of the things you did not like about your previous home?

What are some things you liked about your previous community?

What are some things you did not like about your previous community?

Can you describe your reasons for moving to Tamesna?

In general, do you prefer living in Tamesna or Sidi Yahya Zaer? What are the most important reasons for your choice?

In the future, do you expect you and your family will stay in Tamesna?

Is there any other information you would like to add?

***For Residents in Sidi Yahya:***

How many people are there in your household?

How long have you lived in Sidi Yahya Zaer?

What are some of the things you like about your home here?

What are some things you don't like about your home here?

What are some things you like about your community here?

What are some things you don't like about your community here?

What are the most important reasons you have not participated in the resettlement program to Tamesna?

In the future, do you expect to move to Tamesna? Why or why not? If not, do you think you expect to remain in Sidi Yahya Zaer?

Is there any other information you would like to add?



***For Local Officials:***

Can you describe how the decision was made to establish a new city in Sidi Yahya Zaer?

How would describe the effect of the development of the new city of Tamesna on the residents of Sidi Yahya Zaer? What are some of the benefits the new city provides residents? What are some of the challenges it creates for them?

Can you describe the role of the your agency in the planning and management of Tamesna?

What are the main goals your agency has set for the development of the new city of Tamesna?

To what extent have those goals been reached?

What are the major barriers to achieving those goals?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your agency's work in Tamesna?

***For Housing Developers:***

How long has your company been involved in housing development in the new city of Tamesna?

Can you describe your company's role in housing development in Tamesna?

To what extent have these goals been accomplished so far?

What are some of the greatest barriers to accomplishing these goals?

What are some of the measures your company takes to address the needs of resettled residents?

To what extent are these measures effective?

Is there anything other information you would like to provide about your company's work in Tamesna?