In the time of megaprojects: re-scaling class temporalities along a Moroccan high-speed rail corridor

Strava, C.

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Ethnos

Journal of Anthropology

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/retn20

In the Time of Megaprojects: Classed Temporal Scales along a Moroccan Highspeed-Rail Corridor

Cristiana Strava

To cite this article: Cristiana Strava (24 Aug 2023): In the Time of Megaprojects: Classed Temporal Scales along a Moroccan Highspeed-Rail Corridor, Ethnos, DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2023.2240538

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2023.2240538

Published online: 24 Aug 2023.

ETHNOS
https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2023.2240538

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

In the Time of Megaprojects: Classed Temporal Scales along a Moroccan Highspeed-Rail Corridor

Cristiana Strava

Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Capitalizing on its comparative political and social stability in the region, the Moroccan regime has been attracting global and regional investors with the promise of new 'megaprojects' that aim to radically transform local natural, economic and social landscapes. Inaugurated in 2018, Morocco's (and Africa's) first high-speed rail line (LGV) is a flagship megaproject. Part of a wider 'development corridor', this 2-billion-euro infrastructure has become invested with political, ideological, and affective meanings related to ideas of mobility and future prosperity, even as it violently displaced informal housing communities and created disruptions along the existing network. This paper focuses on the LGV's temporal dimensions and organizes the discussion around three overlapping time-scales, which I identify as co-productive of the politics, promises and experiences of contemporary megaprojects. Scaling emerges as a political process of spatiotemporal re-ordering that contributes to the consolidation of unequal social orders while also providing a conduit for their critique.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 20 September 2021; Accepted 20 July 2023

KEYWORDS *Temporalities*; *Affect*; *Speed*; *Rail infrastructure*; *Futures*; *Morocco*

Introduction

On November 15, 2018, King Mohammad VI together with the French president Emanuel Macron inaugurated Morocco's, and Africa's, first high-speed rail corridor or *ligne grand-vitesse* (LGV), linking the city of Tangier to the Kingdom's de facto financial capital, Casablanca.[1] The two heads of state boarded the train at Tangier's new state of the art station, after they were symbolically handed by the Director General of Morocco's National Railway Office (ONCF) the first tickets to be printed. True to its name, Al Buraq (Ar. Lightning)[2] and the new 323 km high-

CONTACT Cristiana Strava c.strava@hum.leidenuniv.nl

speed line have reduced the 5-hour journey between the country's two business poles to less than half (2 h 10 min).[3] As part of the 2.1 billion-euro investment in the line, a fleet of twelve silvery, bullet-like, Alstom trains runs forty daily trips between the two cities (twenty in each direction) (Figure 1). The symbolism of the occasion and its key actors did not pass unnoticed either in the local or foreign media.[4] While regime-controlled newspapers insisted on the significance of designating Tangier as the head of the line – a historically neglected urban centre in the post-independence era owing to the North's association with political contestation – local opposition groups criticised the post-colonial politics of France's central role and majority share in the LGV's financing, engineering, construction, operation and maintenance (cf. Lahlou 2016). Dissenting voices vehemently questioned the financial soundness and social necessity of investing in what many perceive to be a frivolous, national branding exercise.[5]

Boarding the train somewhat less ceremoniously during a research trip in spring 2019, I was prepared to encounter tell-tale signs of what many sceptical Moroccans had warned me would certainly be a white-elephant: restrictively expensive empty train cars, bar the occasional business consultant shuttling between their company's offices.[6] Instead, I was greeted by packed off-peak, mid-week trains, fully occupied in both the first and second-class carriages. The novelty had not yet worn off; several passengers in my car were eagerly taking selfies from their plush turquoise seats and exchanging words of praise for the 'Buraq', already referring to the train with the inflection that one reserves for a treasured old pal. Hailed almost immediately as a resounding commercial, social, and technological success (Beziat 2018), the line transported over 2.5 million passengers in its first year of operation (Agence Marocaine de Presse 2019), and was ranked eight globally by that year's 'World Speed Survey' (Hartill 2019).

A growing body of scholarly interventions has made it commonplace to speak of infrastructures as becoming visible only in moments of breakdown or rupture (Larkin 2013; Star and Ruhleder 1996). But just as breakdown of infrastructure can

Figure 1. Computer rendering of Al Buraq train. Source: ONCF.

render visible larger social and political questions (Collier 2011; Elyachar 2010), the successful introduction of new infrastructures can throw into relief social disaffection with existing ones, contestations over access, and act as a catalyst for reckonings with historical experiences of structural violence (Harvey and Knox 2015; Baumann 2019). Expanding on fieldwork conducted on the introduction of light-rail in Casablanca since 2013 and recent research on the new high-speed line since its inauguration, in this paper I extend this treatment to 'speedier' and more monumental spaces and vehicles of mobility, like the LGV and the wider urban 'development corridor' it is part of. As it will become evident, the LGV has not been a development unanimously welcomed and celebrated, but its incipient success has been a valuable conduit for channelling and structuring conversations about the politics of speed, mobility and (tiered) belonging in Morocco. As an infrastructural megaproject intended to re-order space and time – that is to say, rescale relations of geographical, social and political proximity (cf. Carr and Lempert 2016) – on a magnitude not seen since the colonial period, the LGV lends itself particularly well to an ethnographic exploration of the politics of scale in contemporary North Africa.

Specifically, this paper focuses on the temporal dimensions of Moroccan high-speed rail, and organizes the discussion around three coexisting and overlapping time-scales (among many possible others), which I identify as co-productive of the politics, promises and experiences the LGV has helped channel. Part one highlights the significance of colonial logics and legacies for present developments, and unpacks the ways in which monumental projects set in place in the first half of the twentieth century over-determine the contours of current opportunities for material and political life. In using the term 'colonizing time' to frame this discussion, I intend to signal both a historical time-period and the asymmetrical power dynamics that made possible the first attempts of spatiotemporal re-scaling during the French occupation. Part two documents the building up of contemporary experiences of infrastructural decay that my interlocutors associated with the existing rail network. By documenting the affective vocabularies deployed by my interlocutors in response to both routine delays and the contrasting reality of the LGV, this section highlights the ways in which everyday experiences of scalar breakdown have come to index communal and individual perceptions of political belonging. The final section rounds off the discussion with a look at 'present futures'. I highlight the work done by official narratives and marketing messages deployed about and along the LGV corridor. This reveals how megaprojects hinge on an inversion of temporal scales for maintaining their aspirational allure, while also masking their exclusive and exclusionary nature. Below I begin with a few contextual, conceptual and methodological clarifications.

A 'Two-Speed Morocco'

Serving as the infrastructural 'backbone' of a larger 'development corridor' along the Atlantic coast that includes the newly inaugurated port of Tanger Med 2[7] and the special economic zone of Casablanca Finance City (CFC), the LGV ties together one of several megaproject clusters that King Mohammad VI has launched as part of his

Politique de Grands Chantiers (Megaprojects Agenda), intended to establish Morocco as the region's political and economic power-house.[8] While many Moroccans have embraced this vision and are eager to partake of the prosperity it is meant to foretell, a considerable number do not find themselves included in it and have questioned the logics behind these aspirations. The LGVs advanced technical attributes (in comparison to existing rolling stock), state of the art material surfaces, and aspirational encoding as part of official staging and promotional narratives has provoked ambivalent affective and political responses among a broad swathe of Moroccans. Contrasted with the every-day disappointments and feelings of prolonged indignity and exclusion associated with using the decaying, existing rail infrastructure (as I will detail), the LGV is glossed by many as another form of *hogra* – the Maghrebi dialectal term meant to index the routine, affective experience shared by the masses when faced with pervasive corruption, structural neglect and elite contempt (Sánchez-García and Touhtou 2021).

The way that the majority of middle – and lower-class Moroccans have come to articulate these differentiated and unequal experiences of political and material life has crystalized in the oft-heard refrain: 'A Morocco in two speeds (*un Maroc à deux vitesses*)'.[9] Analyses of Morocco's political economy bear out this anecdotal observation, if in somewhat different terms. Frequently described as an exception in the aftermath of the Arab Spring events that destabilized neighbouring regimes in the region, Morocco has enjoyed a relatively stable socio-political trajectory in recent decades. King Mohammad VI's accession to the throne in 1999 and his nominal commitment to democratization efforts have allowed his regime to position Morocco as a 'high-security' and business-friendly hub for the implantation of neoliberalization agendas and foreign capital (Bergh 2012; Hanieh 2016; Hibou and Tozy 2020). Since the early 2000s, megaprojects have emerged as the preferred and privileged platform for the expansion of these logics and practices, frequently legitimized in political terms by their promised economic returns and as motors for greater social development (Bogaert 2018). For the majority of Moroccans, however, this has not translated into increased economic or social gains, but instead led to the rising financialization of urban space and a drastic rescaling of spatial and temporal experiences along class-lines (Amarouche and Bogaert 2019; Rousseau and Harroud 2021). Until now, this has been most visibly translated into the mass displacement of poor and working-class communities away from urban centres, and the creation of new wealthy enclaves in their place (Aljem and Strava 2020). I contend, however, that Moroccan megaprojects should be further analysed for their role in an ongoing, redistributive process of scale-making in which relations of proximity and the access to, or exclusion from, speedy infrastructures are also shaping the contours of political belonging. Thus, in this context, studying the re-scaling of temporal relations along the LGV corridor as both techno-scientific process and classed affect can highlight the significance of speed for official and emic conceptions of contemporary social and political citizenship.

In a recent volume on the sociology of speed, the authors pose fundamental questions about what has become a taken-for-granted aspect of advanced capitalist

societies: an incessant and teleological drive for acceleration (Wajcman and Dodd 2016). By historicizing how speed is produced, and asking how it is paid for, who gets to have access to it and under what circumstances, I follow Wajcman and Dodd's call for peeling back the seductively smooth surface of speed and the infrastructures that make it possible, in order to explore ethnographically the ways in which projects like the LGV corridor are imbricated in longer histories and wider systems of economic (re)production and political governance that structure power, knowledge and social relations (cf. Ferguson 2006). In doing so, scale emerges as a process rather than a given (Bird-David 2017), wherein the 'mega' of megaprojects is not only made possible by large financial investments (and associated estimates of value and risk) or geographical and material bulk (Flyvbjerg 2014), but also requires projection, disruption, or re-arrangement of existing temporal orders, which high-speed infrastructure throws into stark relief.

Identifying these processes and experiences of temporal re-scaling ethnographically has in turn required an adjusted methodological approach, not least owing to the convergence of fieldwork that this paper is based on with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In trying to capture the multiple scales and nodes through which the LGV corridor is articulated as a megaproject, while navigating the challenges posed by both pandemic restrictions as well as pre-pandemic neoliberal university labor conditions, my ethnographic practice has entailed a 'patchwork' approach (Günel *et al.* 2020). As such, this paper is based on several short-term field visits between 2018 and 2023, combining participant-observation on both the existing and new rail corridor, the collection of 'mobility biographies' in conversation with regular rail users, interviews with planning experts and representatives of the rail operator (ONCF) and special economic zones (CFC), and archival as well as (online) desk research.

From this ethnographic patchwork, affective images and reactions emerged as an important dimension to both official projections and emic perceptions of 'two-speed Morocco'. By affect I understand the 'various dispositions, feelings, moods, or sensations people experience during encounters with infrastructure sites, facilities or processes' (Parks 2016), and which mediate and feed into experiences and articulations of social and political belonging. In doing this, I follow a by now established 'turn' in anthropological theorizations of space and, more recently, infrastructure, which trains attention on the phenomenological experience and affordances of our built environment (cf. Masquelier 2002; Gregg and Siegworth 2010). This turn is particularly apt for theorizing shifts that have occurred in the context of progressive delegitimization of social justice vocabularies, and their replacement with the NGO-ization of issues like inequality, in Morocco and elsewhere (Harvey 2003; Berriane 2016; Strava 2020). By paying attention to alternative affective articulations captured by terms like *hogra* or 'a two-speed Morocco', I argue that we can better discern the agentic and political uses of re-scaling temporal orders, as well as the role of emic experiences of time as a valuable medium of political expression under authoritarian rule (cf. Appel 2018, 47; Ferguson 2006).

Anthropology has a long and venerable tradition when it comes to the study of individual and communal ideas, representations, and attitudes towards time (Durkheim

1912; Fabian 1983; Gell 1992; Lucas 2005). Spanning the discipline's history, engagements with time have mirrored broader orientations at the heart of ethnographic epistemologies, reflecting ideas about cultural constructivism and variability (Munn 1992; Bear 2016). Nevertheless, colonial regimes, and, later, national unity governments, made the standardization of time not only into a key marker of modernity, but also a crucial tool for performing and scaling particular relations of power and control – over both people and territory (Barak 2013; Prasad 2013). So, while in the early days of the French Protectorate Morocco was treated as a place suspended in time and regularly denied coeval existence with European actors (Wright 1991, 85–90; cf. Barak 2013), in the following sections I approach Moroccan society and space, and its infrastructuring at the hands of various political regimes, as firmly situated within, and structured by, the time-scales of global capital and mobility flows (Newcomb 2017; cf. Buier 2023, 10–11).

I . Colonizing Time

The idea of speed and acceleration has been intrinsic to conceptions of modernity since the Industrial Revolution, a time when progressive visions of history were frequently imagined as a fast-running railway (Conrad 1999). Significantly, the monumental changes wrought by the exponential expansion of rail infrastructure across the world – and attendant technological advancements in communication – ushered in not only unprecedented transformations in travel and the spread of information, but became central conduits for the global scaling of specific political, cultural, and economic logics and their agendas (Bear 2007). The concomitant sense of shrinking distances led some to declare an 'end to geography' (cf. Virilio and Bratton 2006) or at least identify a dramatic compression of 'time-space', as an effect of the spread and acceleration of capitalist forces in particular (Harvey 1989). What has often been left out of such (predominantly) sociological analyses, however, is a more systematic treatment of and historical attention to the instrumental role that colonial forces, subjects, and territories played in the (re)production of such images and feats of global spatiotemporal proximity, with colonies frequently acting as testing grounds for ideas and practices to be later re-imported into the *metropole* (Wright 1991, 85). Which is to say, paraphrasing Star and Ruhleder (1996), that current ideas and narratives about the (spatiotemporal) scale of modernity as manifested in the development of speed(y) infrastructures are themselves *embedded* in other structures and other times.

Similarly, the current push for 'mega-infrastructure' projects is not unprecedented, either globally or in the context and history of Morocco. Seminal studies on the African metropolis (Simone 2000; Gandy 2005) have showed, for example, that paying attention to colonial legacies is crucial for unpacking the current politics of 'spectacular and speculative' (Boeck 2011) designs in both the new 'boom' regions of Sub-Saharan Africa as well as further afield. Highlighting some of the key moments and material manifestations found in the history of Morocco's infrastructural politics and practices will help to render visible the genealogical relationships between previous modernization agendas and the strategic development of current projects like the LGV. In

using the term genealogy, I draw loosely on Foucault's work (1976) as a way of training attention on the highly contingent but also power-laden configurations of current ideas and practices of 'developmental' time and their indebtedness to prior logics and infrastructural projects (cf. Koopman 2013).

Arriving in 1906 to 'pacify' the locals, and guided by the belief that 'a construction site is worth a battalion' (Lyautey in Wright 1991, 3), the French transformed Morocco into a colonial 'laboratory' for monumental infrastructure, where paternalistic and essentialist notions of (historical) time, space, and ethnicity were frequently reproduced through the planning and construction of worker housing and 'modern' industrial transportation networks (Rachik 2002). Treating Morocco as a stagnant society where the passage of time had left no trace and the influence and history of contact with Europe was wilfully ignored, over a period of roughly fifty years French administrators developed a series of technocratic approaches that reordered space and time in the interest of colonial productivity. While I focus here on the role of transport technologies, with a brief look at the complementary role of colonial urban planning, it should be noted that these are but two aspects of this approach (cf. Wright 1991; Rabinow 1989).

Coincidentally, the inauguration of the new LGV corridor took place a little over 100 years after the French began to lay down the first narrow gauge lines in 1912. Developed with the twin goals of moving military troops and extracting natural resources (coal, manganese, and phosphate), Morocco's first and main trunk of rail was completed in 1915 to connect the country's major regions. Nicknamed by the locals *Babor lebghel* (Ar., 'the mule boat') due to the fact that the first trains were pulled along by mules or horses, the early embodiment of the rail provides an unwittingly witty parallel to the steed of today's LGV. Stretching from Marrakech in the west-central desert to Oujda on the Algerian border – via the port of Casablanca on the Atlantic coast and the city of Fes in the Middle-Atlas Mountains – the main line became known as the *Chemins de fer strategiques* (Fr., Strategic railways) owing to its crucial role in the military expansion and control of an otherwise considerable territory (in orange, Figure 2). Significantly, the trunk's extension eastwards would also allow connection to the already existing colonial railways in Algeria, further facilitating the movement of troops and equipment as deemed necessary.[10]

Once military control had been secured, this early backbone made possible settler expansion and occupation of regions identified as economically profitable (Maravall 2019). Branching off from this main artery, the *Chemins de fer de penetration* (Fr., Infiltration railways) spread like capillaries into the main mining and agricultural regions, and served the purpose of implanting *colons* (Fr., settlers) while extracting both labour and natural resources (Zhiri 2006). One of few such ventures to run a profit for the entirety of its operation (ibid: 165), the colonial freight rail network (and later road network) closely mapped out the commercial ventures of the French in Morocco[11] and effected a powerful time–space distortion. Concretely this meant that certain regions – what Resident general Lyautey famously dubbed 'le Maroc *utile*' (Fr., useful Morocco) – became the staging ground for technocratic and technological 'firsts' such as the first electrified freight train operational in 1927 (Rivet 1996).

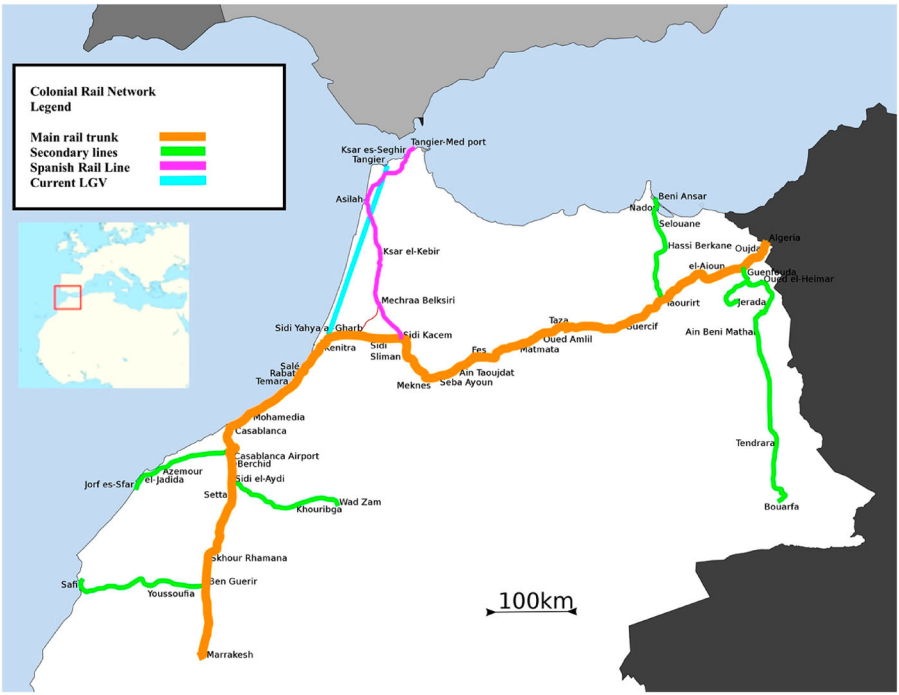

Figure 2. Sketch of colonial rail network in Morocco. Source: Tachfine, modified by author under CC BY-SA 3.0.

By default, less resource-rich regions in the country's south-eastern part ('le Maroc *inutile*') were relegated to economic, social and political neglect as a function of infrastructural disconnect, with impacts felt to this day as Rousseau and Harroud (2021) have argued for the case of urban de-development, and as I detail for the case of rail mobility in the next section.

The expansion of the rail and road network was accompanied by other markers and objects that signified and communicated the growing ascendancy of colonial chronotopes (cf. Bakhtin 1981). Train stations serviced by the expanding rail network were soon equipped with clock towers, and in places public clocks were installed by the colonial administration on the minarets of centrally located mosques (Abu-Shams and González-Vázquez 2014). Together with the new rhythms and spatiotemporal rearrangements produced by the rail lines, the standardization of time measurement via the introduction of rail and the synchronization of timetables signalled the growing control of the colonial administration over the organization of social life in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly in urban spaces.[12]

At the same time, selected aspects of Moroccan society underwent 'museumification' (Hamadeh 1992), or what Timothy Mitchell has referred to as the necessary 'staging of the modern' by the careful invention and curation of the 'non-modern' (2002: xxvi). It was thus that concomitant to the expansion and fast-paced

technological upgrading of the first rail lines, the French instituted a policy of architectural preservation as early as 1916 which aimed to freeze in time the development of historical towns (*medina qedima*) and consolidate the creation of the infamous 'dual-city' form, or what Janet Abu-Lughod provocatively called a French colonial 'urban apartheid' (1980). A scheme legitimized with the thin veneer of Orientalist views on zoning in Arab cities,[13] preservationist approaches were officially articulated along lines of concern for local traditions and their safeguarding. Far from providing Moroccan society with a sense of historical continuity (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), these policies fixed forms of spatial and social organization, political power and ritual to an extent that would later hinder flexibility and change. For example, colonial urban planners segregated quarters for 'Moroccan Muslims' from those for 'Jews' as well as the new European quarters – the famous *villes nouvelles* – using circular roads and wooded areas, which doubled as *cordons sanitaires* meant to keep disease like measles or malaria at bay from urban centres. Beyond any aesthetic or hygienic agenda, this spatial re-organization also indexed in highly visible ways ideas about social and political contagion, essentially operating as a riot-proof measure buffering the European quarters from potential 'indigenous revolts' (Bogaert 2015).

By allotting the majority of available land to the colonizer and re-ordering relations of proximity, such policies effectively fenced in so-called 'indigenous' areas, causing serious overcrowding which persists to this day, particularly in the case of Morocco's main urban centres, Rabat and Casablanca (Sakib 2007). The effects of these colonial approaches to time and space were fundamental in the sense that they produced a particularly rigid asymmetrical re-scaling of socio-political geographies. Taken together with the re-scaling of relations of proximity linked to the introduction of the rail network, colonial infrastructuring work emerges as a powerful vector for overdetermining both the technical possibilities as well as rhythms and directions of mobility for decades to come.

II . Time in/of Disrepair

In the decades following independence (1956) and the delayed nationalization of the railways (1963), the network changed little due to lack of vision and structural investments (Zhiri 2006, 166). This situation was further compounded by a toxic combination of political and economic factors: Morocco's infamous period of state-sponsored violence and repression known as the 'Years of Lead' (*Sanawāt ar-Ruṣāṣ*, 1963–1999) directed financing into development of other infrastructural megaprojects which extended across space and time the colonial logic of militarization of territory (Rachik 2002). In Casablanca, Haussmannesque boulevards and highway corridors originally designed by colonial planners were completed during Hassan II's rule, thus enabling the efficient and swift movement of policing forces in response to outbursts of popular dissent, such as the 1965 student protests or the 1981 'Bread Riots'. Against this background, and further aggravated by the erratic application of structural adjustment reforms (cf. Cohen and Jaidi 2014), starting in the 1980s the rail network and equipment inherited from the French entered a prolonged period of neglect and

defunding, interrupted by brief, syncopated moments of minor investment in passenger travel during the mid-1990s.[14] Concomitantly, regions dubbed as '*inutile*' during the colonial period – the drought-prone southern desert regions and politically dissident communities in the northern Rif mountains – have continued to experience political, economic and infrastructural marginality well into the mid-2000s (Bogaert 2015; CESE 2018).

It is thus that in the advent of the LGV's inauguration, a different image and parallel experience of rail travel continued to unfurl for many Moroccans. Hanane, one of my long-term interlocutors in Morocco, is a lower-middle-class professional in her early-thirties who is dependent on the commuter rail service between the coastal cities of Kenitra (her residence) and Casablanca (her work). I have known Hanane since she was a student combining university studies with various unpaid internships, and occasional visits to her family in Morocco's north, endeavours requiring a multiple-hour commute between two or more cities along the busy Atlantic rail corridor. During a conversation that took place after my first trip on the LGV, I asked her to expand on what she called her '*carriere de navettiste*' (Fr., career as a commuter). Switching between black-humour and simmering frustration, Hanane described the reality of her daily mobility:

> 'Maybe I was more patient when I was younger, but during the last few years I feel like there is one *panne* (Fr. Breakdown) after another, *kul nhar kayn shi haja* (Ar. every day some new occurrence). Last month I spent hours in a *navette* (Fr. commuter train) stuck in the middle of a field, with sheep and cows moving past faster (laughs). The worst was last year when they cancelled several routes because of [construction on] the *Buraq* [LGV]. […] People speak of a *Maroc a deux-vitesse*s, but in reality, it is more like one speed for the rich (*annass labas elihum*) and a lot of waiting and delays for the rest of us.'

As Hanane's observation suggests, the production of speed and accelerated mobility for some has not only meant the increase in delays for others, or the occasional technical necessity of service suspension, but is also registered affectively as the routine ('*kul nhar*') accumulation and indignity of breakdown. This feeling of stagnation, or even involution as the image of the cow field intimates, suggests that Moroccans in Hanane's position have come to consider infrastructural decay not as a natural function of the obsolescence that plagues all material forms (cf. Edensor 2005), but as a politically manufactured form of neglect or *hogra* (cf. McCallum 2019). Several of the 'mobility biographies' I collected along the Atlantic rail corridor echoed these experiences and affects.

For Hamid, who was a more sporadic rail user, the contrast between the new LGV line and the existing five-hour service was further experienced as a loss of social mixing and conviviality. A retired former bank clerk from Tetouan (a mid-sized town south-east of Tangier), Hamid relied on the original Tangiers-Casablanca line to visit his children and grandchildren in the capital, Rabat, and claimed to not mind the slower service: 'You get to strike up conversations, share food you brought for the long journey, relax and enjoy the scenery, like we are doing now' (in reference to where our conversation was taking place). Hamid admitted that delays were often frustrating, remembering a particularly uncomfortable night a few years back when his train was

stuck outside of Sidi Kacem (a key node on the existing rail network). 'But we were all in it together, those in first class were as stuck as those in second class! Now those with the means (*nass lli endu al-fluss*) take the *Buraq*.'

While the arrival of the LGV had translated into a decrease in social mixing for Hamid, what was once experienced as a somewhat dated yet reliable service was also increasingly contrasted by other users with the literal parallel material reality of the LGV after the latter's inauguration. Research interlocutors invariably pointed me to an online collective mobilization initiated in 2015. After a commuter train between Casablanca and Rabat was delayed for more than five hours during a planned one-hour journey, the online group *ONCF en retard* (ONCF delays)[15] was formed, ostensibly to put pressure on the national operator to effect improvements. This quickly grew into a massive online, citizen-generated archive that has since acted as both conduit and repository for the physical and affective experiences of frustrated rail users – and a medium to which younger users like Hanane frequently referred me for proof. The majority of the posts record (with almost minute precision and photographic evidence) either the delay of specific services or the material decay of train equipment and station facilities. Signing off with the hashtag '#Baraka' (Moroccan vernacular, 'enough'), the majority of users see mirrored in the worn out, 'decomposing' material surfaces (some used graphic language like '*merdique*', French for 'shitty') of the old train stock the realities of a particular timescale, that of disrepair and ruination. Sharply contrasting with the material attributes of the high-speed rail fleet, the state of existing equipment and facilities was experienced by rail users as further evidence in support of their embodied experiences of political disenfranchisement.

Dictated by topographical and technical engineering requirements, the LGV line has indeed been built alongside the existing commuter corridor. In other words, what others have called the overdetermining aspect of infrastructural materialities (Rodgers and O'Neill 2012) – their capacity to fix certain spatiotemporal regimes once put into place – can be seen manifested in the legacies of colonial rail in Morocco. As such, the relative material durability of lines laid down a century ago, while advantageous from an engineering perspective, has allowed those confined to breakdown further scope to articulate their experiences of political and social disconnect. In this context, contrasted to the fluid, high-speed experience offered by the LGV, those who continued to rely on the existing rail network were united by the affective experience of relegation to another, parallel timescale, marked not only by 'time in and of disrepair' but also attendant material ruination. To those engaging in this effort of citizen-led documentation, this has come to powerfully connote a particular class position in Moroccan society, as Hanane and Hamid's comments above also attest.

This perception has been made possible by a series of related transformations that have taken place over the course of several decades. Most notably, as forms of political repression aided by the introduction of neoliberal logics and reforms led to the devaluation of higher-education, the de-regulation of labour markets and a weakening of the middle-classes (Cohen 2004), struggles over class have become displaced onto other markers like consumer tastes and access to certain goods and services (cf.

Bourdieu 1987). Thus, if until the arrival of high-speed rail class inequalities, as a relation of speed and proximity, had been somewhat masked by such common denominators as the existing rail and road network, the symbol-laden materiality and incipient success of the high-speed line not only shattered the illusion of this shared time-scape; it made amply visible the role of infrastructure in scaling (back) local forms of mobility, be they geographic or social.

This rescaling was routinely concretized both through the communal and personal participation in, or exposure to, the temporal scale of slowness and infrastructural decay captured by Hanane's reflection and the *ONCF delays* group. However, in the absence of significant and sustained investment in repair and maintenance, the 'unruly timelines of things' also began to express themselves to particularly violent and disruptive ways (cf. Edgerton 2011; Jackson 2017, 179). It was thus, that a month before the LGV's much feted inauguration, on October 16, 2018 time came to a disastrous halt: a commuter train on Hanane's regular route derailed north of Rabat, near the bridge of Sidi Bouknadel, killing seven and injuring 125 passengers in one of the deadliest rail accidents in almost three decades.[16] The less than transparent investigation and legal trial that followed the accident tried to concentrate agency and assign responsibility in an otherwise distributed socio-technical system onto the train driver alone.[17] Leaked documents and rumours about the malfunctioning of signalling infrastructure, automatic braking systems, and absence of electronic displays in the driver's control room, however, have been collectively read once more as confirmation of the extent of infrastructural ruination as a form of *hogra,* to which the great majority of Moroccans felt confined to daily.

III . Present Futures

As a robust body of literature has established by now, during the second half of the twentieth century in particular, processes of material decay and the affect-laden temporalities associated with the ruination enacted through colonial-imperial projects radically disturbed normative understandings of modernization and its claim to a linear progressive time (Stoler 2008; Schwenkel 2013; Howe *et al.* 2016; Yarrow 2017). Nevertheless, this has not prevented contemporary governments and transnational capital from continuing to discursively and materially promote such visions of future prosperity (cf. Enns and Bersaglio 2020). To round off the discussion of the three time-scales mediated through and made palpable by the LGV corridor, I now turn to the visions of promise that accompany this megaproject cluster and which saturate both official discourses and urban landscapes across present-day Morocco. Anchored in the promotion of exclusive housing projects these developments further extend the parallels with colonial-era practices discussed above. Emerging from this discursive and visual reservoir is an image of contemporary Moroccan life that is not only 'governed, at almost every scale as if the future is what matters most' (Adams *et al.* 2009, 248), but also enacts a sort of scalar inversion, in which the future is already 'present', albeit not for all, and not everywhere at once.

During fieldwork conducted in 2019, this future appeared to always be just around the corner, and could often be glimpsed from a position of physical movement: riding

on new tramway lines introduced in 2012, or sitting in the backseat of a shared taxi, urban Moroccans are confronted with it daily. Adorning the tops and sides of buildings, large advertisements promote the most recent 'exclusive' real-estate project or the phased completion of 'cultural megaprojects' designed by starchitects like Christian de Portzamparc (Casablanca's new Grand Theatre) or Zaha Hadid (Rabat's new Opera House). While the costliest among these visions are meant to signal to foreign investors the country's aspiration of establishing itself as a global business and financial hub, ordinary Moroccans are also greeted daily from construction-site fences with glossy renderings of high-end condominiums sporting on-site squash courts, while behind these Potemkin displays of 'not-yet' places construction has often stagnated or been altogether abandoned in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis.

Owing to the LGV's incipient success as the backbone of the emergent Tangier-Casablanca development corridor, both cities experienced a boost to their image as the country's main business poles, accompanied by the creation of new residential projects at speeds rivalling that of the train. Set to accommodate by 2020 residential as well as office buildings on prime real estate land accumulated through the contested dispossession of an old slum settlement and a disused military airport, Casablanca Finance City (CFC) offers a prime example of how mega-infrastructure projects like the LGV are also closely tied in with the redrawing of spatiotemporal lines of belonging through the redevelopment of urban space and the financialization of land (cf. El El Kahlaoui 2017). Although physically not yet completed or even operational, in 2016 the CFC was awarded second place in a top of successful African special economic zones (Yeandle 2016).[18] The generic aesthetics of gleaming surfaces and geometrically razor-sharp lines used on CFC promotional materials powerfully asserted not only Morocco's ambitions but also its increasingly firm claim to membership in the club of economically developed nations (Figure 3). Touted as the first (green) business centre in Africa, the CFC's managing entity has so far attracted upwards of a hundred international firms and investors through tax incentives, exchange control facilitation measures as well as other benefits for expatriates.

When interpellating Moroccans like Hanane, these images were not dramatically different in terms of their visual content and its symbolic encodings. Centred on the logic of 'trickle-down' economics, the majority of state messages targeting the masses shifts the framing of these projects towards potential gains such as job-creation (the CFC if supposed to generate 100,000 new jobs) and not-quite yet defined positive spill-over effects of foreign-investment in the country. Their most immediate impact however could be seen in the structuring and stoking of aspirations about class mobility. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the incorporation of high-end residential housing development within the CFC, and its branding as a natural extension of the high-speed rail corridor.

If we consider the discursive practices that enable this rescaling of chronological time-lines to the effect of 'staging the future in the now' (cf. Anderson 2010) the primacy of carefully crafted, exclusive yet comfortingly generic, visual narratives appeared to be crucial for the workings of such anticipatory action (cf. Dinzey-Flores and Demshock 2020). During an on-site visit with one of the planners

Figure 3. The new Casablanca Finance City economic zone, with the Burj, or Tower, close to completion, 2019. Photo by the author.

working on the residential areas inside the CFC, I was not only handed a wealth of brochures and architectural renderings, but also walked through sample apartments and computer simulated environments of what is to become 'Casablanca's new heart' (*nouveau coeur*).[19] Staying close to the brochures' script, the planner offered me a practiced pitch, stressing that the housing projects of the new Finance City – the majority of which have been sub-contracted to some of the largest Belgian and French developers in the field[20] – would be the '*nouveau quartier emblématique du Maroc de demain*' (the

emblematic neighbourhood representing the Morocco of tomorrow). Verbally walking me through the neighbourhood's layout, the planner explained with a tone of admiration the self-contained aspect of the CFC: 'Equipped with spas, sport courts, state of the art security, medical clinics, the EFI (French International School), and carefully curated retailers, there is nothing that has been left to chance'. Upon inquiring whether any social-housing had been included in the project the answer was firm and swift: '*On fait pas du social [ici]*' (in French, ambiguous formulation which can mean 'we don't do social housing', but also 'we don't do charity'). With names like *Park Condominium* or *Aérocity* and restrictive price tags[21] the housing mega-projects accompanying the high-speed rail appeared to articulate, at least for the moment, a deferred future of social mobility for most Moroccans.

And yet, outside of eventful or tragic occurrences like the train derailment, there is a risk in understanding the Moroccan adage of a 'two-speed' country as only instances of protest and indignation. As an articulation of the embodied and affective experiences of classed positions, it is more capacious than that, communicating both a certain frustration in the face of overlapping, scalar hierarchies, as well as an affective state akin to longing (cf. Appel 2018). Longing for membership in the normative, linear, teleological time of a developmentalist state which is indexed here by the LGV and its attendant real-estate projects. While this desire should not be seen as unanimously shared across all social and economic classes, the aspirations and claims for inclusion in the geographical and temporal scale of 'high-speed' Morocco have been carefully curated, narrated and popularized by the visual and multi-media campaigns mobilized by the monarchy in support of its vision. In this sense, the aspirational visualizations accompanying both rail and housing developments along the LGV corridor animate more than benign conceptions of potential prosperity. As demonstrated by Bogaert (2018) in his foundational work on the emergence of megaprojects in Morocco during the early 2000s, prestige urban redevelopment projects and their attendant special legal and administrative regimes are increasingly becoming a preferred and agile tool of governance for the Moroccan regime. As these projects continue to expand and incorporate larger spatial and temporal scales, and as they constantly work to prefigure transport, housing, and even educational futures, they produce an incessant and overwhelmingly unidirectional re-ordering of time and space as a relationship of access to (costly) speedy infrastructures and/or socio-geographical proximity (or lack thereof). The professed neutrality and benignly benevolent aspirations of re-modernization projects like the LGV cluster can only hold off intensifying claims for a 'one speed Morocco' for so long (cf. Datta 2019), as questions about who gets to partake of this 'present future' and whether the majority of Moroccans can realistically hope to be within its reach are multiplying.[22]

Conclusion

Recent anthropological attention to the 'time of infrastructure' has highlighted the previously ignored processual nature of large-scale projects. From prospecting and planning, to tendering, engineering, financing, construction, and inauguration,

infrastructural developments are often referred to in terms of their 'project timeline'. Techno-scientific as well as financing and marketing discourses about modern infrastructural projects have tended to favour certain images and imaginations about these timelines, ones that project seamlessness of phase transition, smoothness of operation, and, ideally, barrier-free, effortless use. As scholars, but also as users of such infrastructures, we are cognizant that such frictionless situations are rarely found in the real world. While circularity, breakdown, deferral, stagnation, and abandonment are much more likely to define the temporal registers of megaprojects (Gupta 2018, Appel 2018, 59), this reality does not foreclose the desire of those confined to experiencing them from longing for the myth of 'speed and progress'. By unpacking the historical, social, and political conditions and context around the much-celebrated introduction and incipient success of high-speed rail in Morocco, my aim has been twofold: to question this trope of scalar flow and speed-mediated progress; and to document the ways in which the LGV brought into stark relief the ongoing and unequal scaling of geographical and temporal relationships of belonging. Articulated in the words of interlocutors like Hanane, scale thus emerges as a political process of spatiotemporal re-arrangement meant to regulate and consolidate particular power relations – that is via acceleration for some, and prolonged deferral for many.

As existing work on the culture and sociology of speed in other places has already argued, 'the experience of speed has always been political' in the sense that speed – and the pleasure and status it was meant to encode – was offered to users based on criteria including their ability to pay, their race, their gender, and certain logics of governmentality (Duffy 2009). Thus, to paraphrase Lauren Berlant, it becomes evident that the extension of modern high-speed infrastructure 'in a certain direction' and to a certain population, should not be 'conflated with the repair of what wasn't working' (2016, 393). As the case of the Moroccan LGV corridor poignantly demonstrates, in certain contexts, the introduction of newer and faster forms of mobility not only occludes the troubled existence of previously built infrastructures but might also attempt to foreclose conversations about the historical legacies and structural violence that have prefigured them. In this way, paying attention to the scale-making of megaprojects in relation to time can help us document their political currency for (re)ordering not only people and territory, but also the 'imagined relationships' and tiered hierarchy between past, present and future (cf. Ferguson 2006).

Finally, whereas urban planning and infrastructural projects in the twentieth century were often studied as markers of either colonial or nationalist modernization agendas (Mitchell 2002; Holston 1989), drawing on this discussion of the affective reactions toward the LGV and the temporal scales articulated through it, I propose that the development of prestige projects like Africa's first high-speed rail (and the development corridor it is part of) affords us a multiscalar perspective on the staying power of historical materialist forces and assemblages. By tacitly if not always outright aspiring towards an age of 'frictionless capitalism' (Gates *et al.* 1996), current megaprojects signal less a shift from public-works of the past, than a re-working of the enduring logics of power and capital into trans-national short-term, modular and revenue-driven conceptions of socio-economic development (cf. Aljem and Strava 2020).

Such envisioned smooth gliding of capital and its benefits however is not equally accessible to all. As attested by the affective registers and temporal scales manifested in the wake of the LGV's introduction and parallel running, mega-infrastructure projects in Morocco emerge as powerful articulations of unequal forms of belonging in which existing fractures in the coeval experience of social-geographies become exacerbated. Through the ethnography assembled in this article I have argued that amid this growing rift possibilities beyond the aspirational remain open. By mediating and giving shape to the different, yet overlapping, time-scales traced above, megaprojects like the LGV can help articulate alternative political vocabularies for those who feel indefinitely delayed on the edges of 'high-speed' Morocco.

Notes

1. Projected expansion will link Marrakech with the coastal, tourist destinations of Essaouira and Agadir, leading to criticism regarding the network's target users (Kadiri 2018).
2. The LGV trains are named after the mythical steed said to have carried the prophet Mohammad on his Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and to Heaven and back (Gruber 2012). For a discussion on how mythical pasts are recuperated as part of futuristic nationalist projections see Ayona Datta's work on India (2019).
3. The slower 5-hour service continues to operate and be used by those who are unable to afford or disinclined to splurge on the LGV service.
4. See for example Jean-Claude Coutausse's photo-essay in Le Monde, November 16, 2018.
5. Fifty one percent of the total cost (1.2 billion euro) was covered by a combination of high-yield French treasury loans and a 300-million-euro French Development Agency (AFD) grant, with the remainder covered by the Moroccan government (20%) and investments from several Gulf Cooperation Countries' Development Funds (30%).
6. The cost of a one-way LGV ticket ranges between 25 and 40 euros (depending on 2nd or 1st class, on- or off-peak), with the regular 5-hour journey billed at half the lower price. For a sense of proportion, in 2019 minimum wage in Morocco was set at 250 and 300 euros per month, for private and public sector, respectively.
7. Inaugurated on 27 June 2019, and adjacent to four special economic zones (SEZs), the port is currently Africa's largest port by container capacity.
8. 200 urban, industrial, and transportation infrastructure mega-projects are currently underway in Morocco.
9. The phrase has been in circulation for a long time and is used more broadly to comment on the classed experience of everyday life in contemporary Morocco. See for example Boutieri (2012). For a discussion on the plurality of middle-classness in Morocco see Basty-Hamimi (2011).
10. The line was also tied in with visions of much larger rail network, the famous and never completed Trans-Saharan route, meant to link France's possessions from North to West Africa (see Starostina 2010).
11. This pattern can be observed across the French colonial empire in Africa. See Chaléard *et al.* (2006).
12. For a comparative example see On Barak's work on Egypt (2013).
13. See Cohen and Eleb (2002, 319) for how these categories were used for administrative purposes and had limited applicability in the everyday lives of the city's inhabitants. See Gottreich on nineteenth century Marrakech for how Moroccans practiced this zoning in complex and fluid ways (2007, 73).
14. This entailed the creation of the RER-type service, connecting suburban areas with Casablanca's centre, and the introduction of the first fast commuter trains (*trains navette rapide*, TNR) between the latter and Kenitra. Very little was done to expand or upgrade the line outside of

major urban corridors, tacitly aiding the reproduction of the *utile* vs *inutile* socio-spatial distinction.

15. https://www.facebook.com/ONCF-en-retard-467996443375850/
16. In 1993, also near Rabat, a passenger train collided with a freight transport killing 14 and wounding more than 100 passengers (Alami 2018).
17. Recent STS literature uses the term 'moral crumple zone' to describe the tendency to misattribute responsibility to human actors with otherwise limited control over the behaviour of distributed or semi-autonomous systems (Elish 2019).
18. Internationally, its establishment has not been without controversy. In May 2019 the European Union placed the CFC on a 'grey list' of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions (Reuters 2019).
19. When I (ruefully) asked what had happened to the old one and if it couldn't be 'resuscitated', my interlocutor politely ignored me.
20. Most notable among these is the Bouygues Group, a multi-billion-euro conglomerate with a long history of real-estate investments in Morocco dating back to the reign of Hassan II.
21. In 2019 real-estate prices inside the CFC ranged between 2,500 and 5,000 euro per built square meter (Aljem and Strava 2020, 18).
22. Most recently, this was captured by the emergence of the Hirak contestation movement in the northern Rif region, whose demands were articulated around infrastructural inclusion (transport and education specifically). See El Kahlaoui and Yousfi (2020).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Susann Baez Ullberg and Gabriella Körling for the opportunity to present this research during the workshop they organised in 2019, and later for the invitation to co-edit this special issue with them. I am most grateful to my interlocutors in Morocco who made the fieldwork for this paper possible, and to Natalia Buier for reminding me to remain critically attuned to the historical materialist dimensions of infrastructure. Generous commentary and feedback from three anonymous reviewers have helped improve earlier versions of this paper.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was partly funded by a teaching relief grant from the African Studies Assembly at Leiden University.

References

Abu-Lughod, Janet L. 1980. *Rabat: Urban Apartheid in Morocco*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Abu-Shams, Leila & Araceli González-Vázquez. 2014. Juxtaposing Time : An Anthropology of Multiple Temporalities in Morocco. *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, 136:33–48. doi:10.4000/remmm.8817

Adams, Vincane, Michelle Murphy & Adele E. Clarke. 2009. Anticipation: Technoscience, Life, Affect, Temporality. *Subjectivity*, 28(1):246–265. doi:10.1057/sub.2009.18

Agence Marocaine de Presse. 2019, February 27. ONCF: Al Boraq augmente son réseau et ses dessertes. Available at: https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/entry/oncf-al-boraq-augmente-son-reseau-et-ses-dessertes_mg_5c76abade4b0031d95643b32 [Accessed July 27th, 2019].

Alami, Aida. 2018. 'After a Fatal Train Accident, Citizens of Morocco Ask if Prestige Is Prized Over Safety.' [online] *CityLab*. https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2018/10/morocco-deadly-train-accident/574336/ [Accessed 2 Aug. 2019].

Aljem, Sanaa & Cristiana Strava. 2020. Casablanca's Megaprojects: Neoliberal Urban Planning and Socio-Spatial Transformations. *TRIALOG. A Journal for Planning and Building in the Third World*, 135(4):12–20.

Amarouche, Maryame & Koenraad Bogaert. 2019. Reshaping Space and Time in Morocco: The Agencification of Urban Government and Its Effects in the Bouregreg Valley (Rabat/Salé). *Middle East-Topics & Arguments*, 12(1):44–54.

Anderson, Ben. 2010. Preemption, Precaution, Preparedness: Anticipatory Action and Future Geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(6):77–798.

Appel, Hannah. 2018. Infrastructural Time. In *The Promise of Infrastructure*, edited by Nikhil Anand, Akhil Gupta and Hannah Appel. Duke University Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four*, edited by Micheal Holquist, 84–258. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barak, On. 2013. *On Time: Technology and Temporality in Modern Egypt*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Basty-Hamimi, Florence. 2011. Une classe moyenne au Maroc? *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, 102:31–42. doi:10.3917/lcdlo.102.0031.

Baumann, Hannah. 2019. Disrupting Movements, Synchronising Schedules: Time as an Infrastructure of Control in East Jerusalem. *City*, 23(4-5):589–605. doi:10.1080/13604813.2019.1689727

Bear, Laura. 2007. *Lines of the Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy, and the Intimate Historical Self*. Columbia University Press.

———. 2016. Time as Technique. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 45:487–502. doi:10.1146/annurev-anthro-102313-030159

Bergh, Sylvia I. 2012. "Inclusive' Neoliberalism, Local Governance Reforms and the Redeployment of State Power: The Case of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) in Morocco. *Mediterranean Politics*, 17(3):410–426. doi:10.1080/13629395.2012.725304

Berlant, Lauren. 2016. The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 34(3):393–419. doi:10.1177/0263775816645989

Berriane, Yasmine. 2016. Construire l'espace du social: Les multiples figures de l'intermédiation dans les maisons de jeunes à Casablanca. In *Le gouvernement du social au Maroc*, edited by Béatrice Hibou and Irène Bono, 45–92. Paris: Karthala.

Beziat, Eric. 2018, 15 November. Le Maroc inaugure le premier TGV d'Afrique, Made in SNCF. *Le Monde*. https://www.lemonde.fr/entreprises/article/2018/11/15/le-maroc-lance-le-premier-tgv-africain-made-in-sncf_5383754_1656994.html

Bird-David, Nurit. 2017. Before Nation: Scale-Blind Anthropology and Foragers' Worlds of Relatives. *Current Anthropology*, 58(2):209–226. doi:10.1086/691051

Boeck, Filip de. 2011. Inhabiting Ocular Ground: Kinshasa's Future in the Light of Congo's Spectral Urban Politics. *Cultural Anthropology*, 26(2):263–286. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1360.2011.01099.x

Bogaert, Koenraad. 2015. The Revolt of Small Towns: The Meaning of Morocco's History and the Geography of Social Protests. *Review of African Political Economy*, 42(143):124–140. doi:10.1080/03056244.2014.918536

———. 2018. *Globalized Authoritarianism: Megaprojects, Slums, and Class Relations in Urban Morocco*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1987. *Distinction: A Social Theory of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Boutieri, Charis. 2012. In Two Speeds (A deux vitesses): Linguistic Pluralism and Educational Anxiety in contemporary Morocco. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 44(3):443–464. doi:10.1017/S0020743812000414

Buier, Natalia. 2023. The Anthropology of Infrastructure. *Focaal*, 2023(95):46–60. Available from: doi:10.3167/fcl.2022.012401 [Accessed 19 June 2023].

Carr, Summerson E. & Michael Lempert. 2016. *Scale: Discourse and Dimensions of Social Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Chaléard, Jean-Louis, Chantal Chanson-Jabeur & Chantal Béranger. 2006. *Le chemin de fer en Afrique*. Paris: Éditions Karthala.
Cohen, Shana. 2004. *Searching for a Different Future: The Rise of a Global Middle Class in Morocco*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Cohen, Jean-Louis, Monique Eleb & Jean-Louis Cohen. 2002. *Casablanca: Colonial Myths and Architectural Ventures*. New York: Monacelli Press.
Cohen, Shana & L. Jaidi. 2014. *Morocco: Globalization and Its Consequences*. Routledge.
Collier, Stephen J. 2011. *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
Conrad, Peter. 1999. *Modern Times, Modern Places*. New York: Knopf.
Conseil Economique, Social, et Environnemental du Maroc (CESE). 2018. 'Focus du Rapport Annuel 2017: Les inégalités régionales et territoriales'. https://www.cese.ma/media/2020/10/Focus-Les-inégalités-régionales-et-territoriales.pdf [accessed April 19, 2023].
Coutausse, Jean Claude. 2018, November 16. Lors du voyage inaugural du TGV au Maroc, images d'une campagne au garde-à-vous. *Le Monde*. Available online: https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/11/16/lors-du-voyage-inaugural-du-tgv-au-maroc-images-d-une-campagne-au-garde-a-vous_5384437_3212.html
Datta, Ayona. 2019. Postcolonial Urban Futures: Imagining and Governing India's Smart Urban age. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 37(3):393–410. doi:10.1177/0263775818800721
Dinzey-Flores, Zaire Z. & Alexandra Demshock. 2020. Staging Safety in Brooklyn's Real Estate. In *Futureproof*, 156–174. Duke University Press.
Duffy, Enda. 2009. *The Speed Handbook: Velocity, Pleasure, Modernism*. Duke University Press.
Durkheim, Émile. 1912. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. London: Oxford World's Classics.
Edensor, Tim. 2005. Waste Matter - The Debris of Industrial Ruins and the Disordering of the Material World. *Journal of Material Culture*, 10(3):311–332. doi:10.1177/1359183505057346
Edgerton, David. 2011. *The Shock of the old: Technology and Global History Since* 1900. Profile Books.
Elish, M. C. 2019. Moral Crumple Zones: Cautionary Tales in Human-Robot Interaction. *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*, 5:40–60. doi:10.17351/ests2019.260
El Kahlaoui, Soraya. 2017. Au nom de la modernité: dépossession de la petite paysannerie et urbanization. *Economie politique du Maroc, Revue Marocaine des Sciences Politiques et Sociales*.
El Kahlaoui, Soraya & Fayrouz Yousfi. 2020. Using a Human Rights Discourse in Rallying for the Freedom of Hirak's Political Prisoners in Morocco. *Rowaq Arabi*, 25(1):31–42.
Elyachar, Julia. 2010. Phatic Labor, Infrastructure, and the Question of Empowerment in Cairo. *American Ethnologist*, 37(3):452–464. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01265.x
Enns, Charis & Brock Bersaglio. 2020. On the Coloniality of "new" Mega-Infrastructure Projects in East Africa. *Antipode*, 52(1):101–123. doi:10.1111/anti.12582
Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes is Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Ferguson, James. 2006. Transnational Topographies of Power [1998]. In *Accelerating Possession: Global Futures of Property and Personhood*, edited by B. Maurer and G. Schwab. New York: Columbia University Press.
Flyvbjerg, Brent. 2014. What You Should Know About Megaprojects and Why: An Overview. *Project Management Journal*, 45(2):6–19. doi:10.1002/pmj.21409
Foucault, Michel. 1976. *La volonté de savoir*. Paris: Gallimard.
Gandy, Matthew. 2005. Learning from Lagos. *New Left Review*, 33:37.
Gates, Bill, N. Myhrvold & P. Rinearson. 1996. *The Road Ahead*. London: Penguin.
Gell, Alfred. 1992. *The Anthropology of Time. Cultural Constructions of Temporal Maps and Images*. Oxford: Berg.
Gottreich, Emily. 2007. *The Mellah of Marrakesh: Jewish and Muslim Space in Morocco's Red City*. Indiana University Press.

Gregg, Melissa & Gregory J. Siegworth. 2010. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Gruber, Christiane J. 2012. al-Burāq. In *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 08 August 2019. doi:10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24366. First published online.
Günel, Gökçe, Saiba Varma & Chika Watanabe. 2020. A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography. *Member Voices, Fieldsights*, 9.
Gupta, Akhil. 2018. The Future in Ruins: Thoughts on the Temporality of Infrastructure. In *The promise of infrastructure*, edited by Nikhil Anand, Akhil Gupta and Hannah Appel. Duke University Press.
Hamadeh, Shirine. 1992. Creating the Traditional City: A French Project. *Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise* 241–259.
Hanieh, Adam. 2016. Absent Regions: Spaces of Financialisation in the Arab World. *Antipode*, 48 (5):1228–1248. doi:10.1111/anti.12257
Hartill, Jeremy. 2019. China Powers Ahead as New Entrants Clock in. World Speed Survey. *Railway Gazette International*, (July) https://www.railwaygazette.com/uploads/media/Railway_Gazette_World_Speed_Survey_2019.pdf.
Harvey, David. 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
———. 2003. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
Harvey, Penny & Hannah Knox. 2015. *Roads: An Anthropology of Infrastructure and Expertise*. Ithaca, New York, London: Cornell University Press.
Hibou, Beatrice & Mohamed Tozy. 2020. *Tisser le temps politique au Maroc. Imaginaire de l'Etat à l'âge néolibéral*. Éditions Karthala.
Hobsbawm, Eric & Terence Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
Holston, James. 1989. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília*. University of Chicago Press.
Howe, Cymene, Jessica Lockrem, Hannah Appel, Edward Hackett, Dominic Boyer, Randal Hall & Matthew Schneider-Mayerson, et al. 2016. Paradoxical Infrastructures: Ruins, Retrofit, and Risk. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 41(3):547–565. doi:10.1177/0162243915620017
Jackson, Steven J. 2017. Speed, Time, Infrastructure. *The Sociology of Speed: Digital, Organizational, and Social Temporalities*, 169.
Kadiri, Ghalia. 2018, 15 November. Maroc: derrière l'inauguration du TGV, un réseau ferroviaire en souffrance. *Le Monde*. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/11/15/tgv-marocain-derriere-l-inauguration-un-reseau-ferroviaire-en-souffrance_5383812_3212.html.
Koopman, Colin. 2013. *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Lahlou, Mehdi. 2016. Le Maroc et la Ligne à Grande Vitesse. In *Focus sur Tanger: Là où l'Afrique et l'Europe se rencontrent*, edited by Dieter Haller, Steffen Wippel and Helmut Reifeld. Rabat: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Bureau du Maroc.
Larkin, Brian. 2013. The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 42:327–343. doi:10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155522
Lucas, Gavin. 2005. *The Archaeology of Time*. New York: Routledge.
Maravall, Laura. 2019. The Impact of a 'Colonizing River': Colonial Railways and the Indigenous Population in French Algeria at the Turn of the Century. *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 34(1):16–47. doi:10.1080/20780389.2019.1581059
Masquelier, Adeline. 2002. Road Mythographies: Space, Mobility, and the Historical Imagination in Postcolonial Niger. *American Ethnologist*, 29(4):829–856. doi:10.1525/ae.2002.29.4.829
McCallum, Stephanie. 2019. Railroad Revolution: Infrastructural Decay and Modernization in Argentina. *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society*, 2(1):540–559. doi:10.1080/25729861.2019.1688908
Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. University of California Press.

Munn, Nancy. D. 1992. The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21:93–123. doi:10.1146/annurev.an.21.100192.000521
Newcomb, Rachel. 2017. *Everyday Life in Global Morocco*. Indiana University Press.
Parks, Lisa. 2016. Infrastructure and Affect. *Technosphere Magazine*, HKW, 15 November, https://technosphere-magazine.hkw.de/p/Infrastructure-and-Affect-87QTfwD1o1XJ9n6dRaYRR2.
Prasad, Ritika. 2013. "Time-Sense': Railways and Temporality in Colonial India. *Modern Asian Studies*, 47(4):1252–1282. doi:10.1017/S0026749X11000527
Rabinow, Paul. 1989. Governing Morocco: Modernity and Difference. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 13(1):32–46. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.1989.tb00107.x
Rachik, Abderahmane. 2002. *Casablanca: l'Urbanisme de l'Urgence*. La Fondation Konrad Adenauer: Casablanca.
Reuters. 2019, July 6. Morocco's finance hub to change tax regime after EU criticism. Accessed from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-eu-tax/moroccos-finance-hub-to-change-tax-regime-after-eu-criticism-idUSKCN1U10C4.
Rivet, Daniel. 1996. *Lyautey et l'institution du Protectorat français au Maroc (1912-1925)*. 3 vol. Paris: L'Harmattan.
Rodgers, Dennis & Bruce O'Neill. 2012. Infrastructural Violence: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Ethnography*, 13:401–412. doi:10.1177/1466138111435738
Rousseau, Max & Tarik Harroud. 2021. Du 'Maroc inutile' au Maroc en déclin. La décroissance territoriale et son traitement politique dans un pays du Sud. In *Déclin urbain. La France dans une perspective international*: Editions du Croquant.
Sakib, Mohamed. 2007. *Caryane centra: Le bidonville ouvrier des Carrières centrales, en quête de son destin*. Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain: Casablanca.
Sánchez-García, Jose & Rachid Touhtou. 2021. From Hogra to Hirak: Neocolonialism, Memory and Youth Political Dissidence in the Rif. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud*, 19(1):204–223.
Schwenkel, Christine. 2013. Post/Socialist Affect: Ruination and Reconstruction of the Nation in Urban Vietnam. *Cultural Anthropology*, 28(2):252–277. doi:10.1111/cuan.12003
Simone, AbdouMaliq. 2000. On the Worlding of Cities in Africa. *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 2-4:38–44.
Star, Susan. L. & Karen Ruhleder. 1996. Steps Toward an Ecology of Infrastructure: Design and Access for Large Information Spaces. *Information Systems Research*, 7(1):111–134. doi:10.1287/isre.7.1.111
Starostina, Natalia. 2010. Ambiguous Modernity: Representations of French Colonial Railways in the Third Republic. In *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History*, vol. 38, Michigan Publishing: University of Michigan Library.
Stoler, Ann Laura. 2008. Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination. *Cultural Anthropology*, 23(2):191–219. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1360.2008.00007.x
Strava, Cristiana. 2020. Dissenting Poses: Marginal Youth, Viral Aesthetics, and Affective Politics in Neoliberal Morocco. *Focaal*, 1:1–18.
Virilio, Paul & B. H. Bratton. 2006. *Speed and Politics*. Semiotext(e).
Wajcman, Judith & Nigel Dodd. 2016. *The Sociology of Speed: Digital, Organizational, and Social Temporalities*. Oxford University Press.
Wright, Gwyneth. 1991. *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*. University of Chicago Press.
Yarrow, Thomas. 2017. Remains of the Future: Rethinking the Space and Time of Ruination Through the Volta Resettlement Project Ghana. *Cultural Anthropology*, 32(4):566–591. doi:10.14506/ca32.4.06
Yeandle, Mark. 2016. *Global Financial Centres Index Report #19*. Long Finance and Financial Centre Futures.
Zhiri, Touria. 2006. Quel avenir pour les chemins de fer du Maroc. In *Le chemin de fer en Afrique*, edited by Jean-Louis Chaléard, Chantal Chanson-Jabeur and Chantal Béranger. Karthala Editions.