

***Faire le Bordel: The Regulation of Urban
Prostitution in French Morocco***

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations:.....	2
Introduction:.....	3
Marrakesh, 1932- Put on the red light: The (re)construction of the <i>quartiers réservés</i>	6
Rabat, 1932- Sexual healing: Colonial medicine, <i>clandestinité</i> and <i>le peril vénérien</i>	13
Casablanca, 1936- All I want is a room somewhere: <i>La police des moeurs</i> , commercial space and urban inequalities	20
Fez 1937; Meknes 1952- Nothing's gonna stop us now: International opinion and ideological resistance.....	28
Morocco, 1956- We (re)built this city: Nationalism, sexual commerce and urban space	36
Conclusion	41
Bibliography.....	43

List of Abbreviations:

CADN- Centres des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes

Introduction:

"Faire le bordel." A literal translation might render this phrase as "to make a brothel." In colloquial French, however, its meaning would be closer to "to make a mess" or "to screw things up." In the case of France's Moroccan Protectorate, this proved to be apposite, as the creation and management of brothels brought to light the weaknesses of the colonial state and the messiness of its regulation.

Whilst Moroccan cities¹, French regulation/bureaucracy² and prostitution in imperial contexts³ have all received much historiographical attention, little has been given to the question of prostitution in French Morocco.⁴ I propose to help fill this gap through an examination of colonial administrative documents and French language Moroccan nationalist publications, all located at the CADN.⁵ Naturally, this approach has limits: the voices of the prostitutes themselves are obscured and these documents often reveal more about the colonial administration than its female subjects. Thus, I do not propose to rediscover the "lived experience" and sexual practices of Moroccan women. Nor will I provide a detailed study of colonial discourses on race, gender and sexuality.⁶ Rather I will undertake the much humbler task of examining what the regulation of urban prostitution says about the ambitions, ideals and bio-political capabilities of the French colonial state.

¹ See: A. Adam, *Casablanca: essai sur la transformation de la société marocaine au contact de l'occident* (2 vols, Paris, 1972); J.L. Abu-Lughod, *Rabat, urban apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton, 1980); G. Wright, *The politics of design in French colonial urbanism* (Chicago, 1991) and J-L. Cohen & M. Eleb, *Casablanca: colonial myths and architectural ventures* (New York, 2002).

² See: P. Rabinow, *French modern: norms and forms of the social environment* (Cambridge, 1989) and C. Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: the origins of modern immigration control between the wars* (Chicago, 2006).

³ See: L. White, *The comforts of home: prostitution in colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990); S. Garon, 'The world's oldest debate? Prostitution and the state in imperial Japan', *The American Historical Review*, 98 (1993), pp. 710-732 ; P. Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics: policing venereal disease in the British Empire* (London, 2003) and P. Howell, *Geographies of regulation: policing prostitution in nineteenth-century Britain and the Empire* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁴ The sole exception of note, being: C. Taraud, *La prostitution coloniale: Algérie, Tunisie, Maroc (1830-1962)* (Paris, 2003).

⁵ All translations are my own unless otherwise acknowledged.

⁶ These topics are well covered by Taraud, *La prostitution coloniale* and the 1950s ethnography: A. Arrif (ed), J. Mathieu & P-H. Maury, *Bousbir: la prostitution dans le Maroc colonial* (Paris, 2003).

Many early, seminal studies of French imperial bureaucracy focused on the rhetoric and aspirations of colonial administrators. Moroccan cities were presented as 'social laboratories',⁷ dominated by a modern, scientific state engaged in objective experiments and aiming to use colonial innovations to solve metropolitan problems.⁸ This typology was often underpinned by a broader conception of the colonial (and indeed, modern) state, heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault and the idea of panoptic surveillance which aimed to create 'docile' and visible bodies.⁹ The idea that the colonial state was capable of engaging in objective experimentation was predicated upon its being able to understand, count and control its population. In short, this line of argument assumed that the French colonial state had bio-political ambitions and succeeded in knowing, disciplining and coercing its subjects.¹⁰ However, more recent work has nuanced this understanding, calling into question the "colonial-city-as-laboratory" trope¹¹ and highlighting the dysfunctionality of French colonial rule.¹² I will argue that the case of Moroccan prostitution strengthens these "revisionist" arguments and should further encourage historians to move their focus away from the lofty ambitions of French colonial regulation, towards its messy workings-out on the ground.

⁷ Rabinow, *French modern*, p. 9.

⁸ For a similar line of argument see: Wright, *The politics of design*; Cohen & Eleb, *Casablanca* and R.F. Betts, *Assimilation and association in French colonial theory, 1890-1914* (Lincoln, 2005).

⁹ M. Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Paris, 1975). For a Foucauldian take on French regulation see: J. Matlock, *Scenes of seduction: prostitution, hysteria and reading difference in nineteenth-century France* (New York, 1994).

¹⁰ For a study of prostitution which presents the French state in these terms, see: D. Maghraoui, 'Fragments of history in colonial Morocco: prostitution in the *quartier réservé* of Casablanca', in M. Rieker & K.A. Ali, *Gendering urban space in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa* (New York, 2008).

¹¹ For critiques of the "French-colonial-city-as-laboratory" trope, see: Rosenberg, *Policing Paris* and 'The international politics of vaccine testing in interwar Algiers', *The American Historical Review*, 117 (2012), pp. 671–697 and K. Ngalamulume, *Colonial pathologies, environment and Western medicine in Saint-Louis-du-Senegal, 1867-1920* (New York, 2012). For similar arguments concerning other imperial cases see: W. Anderson, *Colonial pathologies: American tropical medicine, race and hygiene in the Philippines* (London, 2006) and H. Tilley, *Africa as a living laboratory: empire, development, and the problem of scientific knowledge, 1870-1950* (Chicago, 2011).

¹² On the French Empire, see: M. Thomas, *The French empire between the wars* (Manchester, 2005); G. Wilder, *The French imperial nation state: negritude and colonial humanism between the two World Wars* (Chicago, 2005) and E. Amster, *Medicine and the saints: science, Islam and the colonial encounter in Morocco: 1877-1956* (Austin, 2013). Other works which bring out the weakness or dysfunctionality of colonial endeavours, include: Howell, *Geographies of regulation*; M. Vaughan, *Curing their ills: colonial power and African illness*, (Cambridge, 1991); G. Prakash, 'The body politic in colonial India', in T. Mitchell (ed), *Questions of modernity*, (Minneapolis, 2000) and A.L. Stoler, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley, 2002)

I will home in on five particular moments between 1932 and 1956, each of which sheds light on wider themes. Part I considers the foundation of the (not so innovative) *quartiers réservés* and the regulatory ambitions of the French state. Parts II and III examine French medical control and policing. Moving forward to the early 1950s, Part IV highlights the ideological stubbornness of the colonial administration in spite of the failings of its regulatory system. The final part examines the demise of regulation in a climate of nationalist ferment and imperial collapse.

Colonial administrators aimed to spatially confine, bureaucratically control and medically monitor sexual commerce. However, as will become clear, they fell woefully short of their ambitions, as "criminal" activity escaped prosecution, venereal diseases spread and prostitution spiralled out of control. The gulf between expectations and reality and the state's inability to master its subjects and cities, serve to counter-point French rhetorical ambitions and functionalist, Foucauldian readings of colonial government.

Marrakesh, 1932- Put on the red light: The (re)construction of the *quartiers réservés*

Dans les villes de quelque importance, la création de quartiers réservés s'impose. Non pas de quartiers gigantesques... mais des quartiers réservés contenant au maximum 3 ou 400 femmes qu'il sera facile de tenir bien en main et où la visite sanitaire pourra être effectuée 2, 3 fois par semaine et même tous les jours.¹

The period 1921-1933 saw the elaboration of the French regulatory system, whose rationale is here expressed by Barenoud. The city was conceptualised as a space of sexual license, the French believed that they were capable of exerting control over female Moroccan bodies whilst arguments were articulated through the lens of public health. Worried that venereal disease would ravage French soldiers and by extension, the entire colonial project, administrators argued that the best means of combating this scourge would be to regulate and spatially confine sexual commerce.² This *système français* attempted to restrict urban prostitution to two specific spaces. The *quartiers réservés* served as "red light districts." Spatially enclosed and situated at the periphery of cities or within the *nouvelles médinas*, prostitutes within these *quartiers* could exercise their trade legally. Notable *quartiers* included Bousbir in Casablanca, Moullay Abdullah in Fez, Oukassa in Rabat and Bab el Khemis in Marrakesh. Women were subject to a system of tight judicial and medical surveillance. Each girl would be *inscrite* on to a register, receive a card bearing her name and photograph and thus become *soumise* to colonial regulation. These cards gave women access to the medical dispensaries, which, along with police stations, were central to the French regulatory apparatus. The second locus of regulated sexual commerce was the European *maison de tolérance*.

¹ 21 March 1932, Marrakesh, Dr. Barneoud, Director of the Bureau of Municipal Hygiene of Marrakesh to the Director of Health and Public Hygiene (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'In larger towns, the creation of *quartiers réservés* is a necessity; not enormous *quartiers*... but *quartiers réservés* containing at most 300 or 400 women who will be easy to control and where medical visits can be carried out 2 or 3 times a week and perhaps even every day.'

² 22 April 1937, Report on the creation of the *quartier réservé* of Marrakesh, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

Generally, these were established in cities such as Casablanca which had seen large European immigration. The *maisons* held a minority of the *filles soumises* (around 90 out of 600 in Casablanca).³ Whilst these houses were situated beyond the confines of the *quartier réservé*, the women residing within were nonetheless subject to legal and medical control.

In all cases this system aimed for strict regulation. Room sizes and prices were to be controlled by the colonial administration. Legislation from Oulad Cebbah, Tadla and Midelt makes clear just how far the French state tried to extend its control into the day-to-day running of the *maisons* and *quartiers*, often relying on local elites to implement their legislation.⁴ Brothels were never to be established 'à proximité de maisons d'éducation, des édifices consacrés à l'exercice des cultes ainsi que des casernes, des prisons, des hôpitaux ou autres établissements publics.'⁵ Further, illuminated only by a red light, they should not display any exterior sign or emblem, either on front doors or in windows and a specific rule prohibited the display of French national flags.⁶ Finally, it was 'formellement interdit aux filles soumises... de sortir dans le Centre sans autorisation du Contrôle... de racoler ou provoquer les passants par des paroles ou par des gestes, soit dans la rue, soit de leurs fenêtres soit sur un seuil de leur porte.'⁷ In Midelt this control was further extended so that women were prohibited from frequenting brasseries, theatres or cafes or indeed from leaving the *quartiers* at all after dark.

So far, this all seems rather Foucauldian. The *quartier réservé*, in particular, seems a prime example of an 'espace analytique', 'hétérogène à tous autres et fermé sur lui-même.'⁸ In theory, the partitioning of the *quartiers* would allow administrators to know and locate every individual,

³Taraud, *La prostitution coloniale*, p. 129.

⁴ For more on *la politique des grands caïds*, see: S.G. Miller, *A history of modern Morocco* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 97-99.

⁵ 20 November 1933, Regulations at Kasbah-Tadla, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'near schools, buildings dedicated to religious worship, as well as barracks, prisons, hospitals or other public buildings.'

⁶ 1930, Midelt, Caid Ali Ou Moha, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

⁷ 7 September 1933, Le Caid des Oulad Cebbah-Oulad Ali, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'formally prohibited for *filles soumises* to go out in the centre of town without official permission... to solicit or accost passersby verbally or through their actions, be it in the street, from their windows or from their doorway.'

⁸ Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, pp. 143-145.

'analytical space' 'heterogeneous to all others and closed in on itself.' (trans. A.Sheridan).

facilitating panoptic surveillance and regulation of the body. As Alain Corbin argued, the *système français* aimed to 'enfermer pour observer, observer pour connaître, connaître pour surveiller et tenir en son pouvoir.'⁹ The *quartiers* were to become liminal spaces, straddling several binaries. The strong injunctions against *racolage* (soliciting/accosting) sought to make prostitutes invisible to the general public and in particular, colonial soldiers. Meanwhile, judicial and medical regulation aimed to render them totally transparent and visible to the French state. With prostitution confined to brothels, situated in urban peripheries and shorn of exterior symbols, sexual activity became domesticated and private. Nonetheless, sexuality was inherently public in so much as it took place in clearly delineated spaces established for a specific, widely-understood purpose. Finally, the *maisons* and *quartiers* themselves were un-French in so much as they were strictly separated from any symbols of colonial civilising progress (e.g. schools and hospitals) and prohibited from displaying national colours. However, in so much as they were central to the Protectorate's medico-legal apparatus, they were a fundamental aspect of the colonial project.

Whilst the *quartiers* might have straddled these binaries, the *système français* was underpinned by a logic which sought to classify and divide its population. Arguments in favour of legal but regulated prostitution were grounded in the belief that controlling and medicalising sexual commerce was preferable to suppressing it and thereby driving it underground and encouraging the spread of venereal disease. Whilst these might appear to be reasonable goals, they were achieved by controlling supply (confining and professionalising women) with very little focus on reducing demand. This was a fundamentally gendered way of thinking about sexuality, viewing female bodies as docile and controllable and male bodies as inevitably lustful, hyper-sexualised and able to escape colonial domination. The administration took an Augustinian view, seeing sexual commerce (and male lust) as "necessary evils" and thus not worth controlling. This gendered conception of sexual appetite sat in apparent contradiction with the practice of regulation on the ground. Whilst colonial

⁹ A. Corbin, *Les filles de noce: misère sexuelle et prostitution (19e siècle)* (Paris, 1982), p. 34. 'confine in order to observe, observe in order to understand, understand in order to discipline and control.'

administrators paid lip-service to a free market sexual economy, in reality, they created a state monopoly on legal prostitution: limiting the number of women who could lawfully exercise this trade and restricting commerce to confined spaces. Following the administration's own logic, there would almost inevitably be a mismatch between legal supply and male demand, fuelling a clandestine market. Indeed, the administration appears to have recognised this paradox from the beginning, accepting that Marrakesh had up to 20,000 clandestine prostitutes who could not all fit into a single *quartier*.¹⁰ Other than advocating prison sentences and repatriation for clandestine women and paying lip-service to anti-poverty schemes, the French had few proposals to overcome this problem. Thus, from the start, non-interference with male sexuality appeared impossible to reconcile with a desire to tackle venereal disease and the policy of confining prostitution.

Nonetheless, this does not appear to have been of grave concern to French administrators, partly due to the racialised assumptions which underpinned regulatory discourses. Perhaps recognising that the *système français* could not accommodate a situation where demand for sexual services outstripped supply, Barenoud argued that 'vouloir empêcher la contamination de la population indigène est une utopie. Il faudra donc se borner, du moins momentanément à éviter la propagation des maladies vénériennes dans la population européenne et militaire.'¹¹ This brings several themes to light. This was a racialised discourse which saw (disproportionately urban) European bodies and public health as fundamentally more valuable than their Moroccan counterparts, undermining French claims to be leading a *mission civilisatrice* spreading European standards of living, public health and prosperity across the Mediterranean. On the ground, French colonial policy was marked by these "in the meantime" discourses: postponing universalist goals until a later date and, for the time being, focusing on the immediate interests of French settlers.¹²

¹⁰ 21 March 1932, Barenoud to the Director of Health.

¹¹ *ibid.*

'aiming to stop the spread of venereal disease among the indigenous population would be a utopian project. We must, for the time being, limit ourselves to stemming the spread of these diseases within the European and military populations.'

¹² J. McDougall, 'The secular state's Islamic empire: Muslim spaces and subjects of jurisdiction in Paris and Algiers, 1905-1957', *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 52 (2010), pp. 553-580.

This also suggests that regulation should not simply be conceptualised as a European attempt to control and pacify female, Moroccan bodies. The control of French and European bodies, in particular those of male soldiers, was as, if not more, important. A focus on the venereal health of the *filles soumises* was not an end in and of itself. Rather it was part of a military ethos: an indirect means of controlling the body of the French soldier, ensuring he was fit for service. Thus, regulation became racialised, with clandestine commerce only becoming a concern once European bodies entered into the equation. In theory, the French would be able to combat venereal disease among the most valuable population group (soldiers) whilst spatially confining prostitution and still taking a light-touch approach to male sexuality.

However, most importantly, the development of these quartiers reinforces the idea that despite imperial rhetoric, colonial cities were not simple laboratories of modernity. French colonial administrators adopted a range of strategies when dealing with issues of regulation, urbanism and hygiene: experimenting in situ, borrowing from the métropole and at times, resisting any innovation whatsoever. The *quartier* system was instituted during the inter-war years when international opinion was rapidly swinging against the idea of legal, regulated sexual commerce, with abolitionists arguing that state-run systems placed unacceptable limits on personal freedom. Thus, from the word go, the French were out of kilter with international norms, introducing policies closer to those pursued by Axis Japan than, for example, the British Empire.¹³ However, these approaches to regulation were part of a broader French tradition which had spread globally in the nineteenth-century. *Quartiers réservés* and *maisons de tolérance* had existed in France since the eighteenth-century, their construction being heavily influenced by the work of social reformer Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet. The late nineteenth-century had seen the rise of *néo-réglementarisme*, a series of arguments which grounded their defence of regulated sexual

¹³ Compare: Howell, *Geographies of regulation* & Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics* with Garon, 'The world's oldest debate?'

commerce in concerns over venereal disease and public health.¹⁴ The establishment of the Moroccan *quartiers* played into this tradition and sought to extend it beyond French borders. However, in adopting a pre-existing system, French administrators demonstrated their reluctance to use Moroccan cities as laboratories for new ideas. It is true that inter-war Casablanca, for example, was a *tabula rasa* in a way that eighteenth-century Paris had never been. Combined with the relatively small European population and the vast powers which the colonial state enjoyed, this may have allowed the French to elaborate a system of sexual commerce which was exactly to their liking, rather than compelling them to develop one in the context of existing patterns of trade and regulation. In addition, Casablanca, Rabat and other *villes européennes* saw some experimentation and social innovation, for example, Henri Prost's introduction of zoning.¹⁵ However, the transfer of existing systems and institutions from *métropole* to colony suggests that the relationship between the two was dialectical rather than parasitic and that in some fields, the colonies were anything but laboratories.¹⁶

The *système neo-réglementariste* had been far from successful in mainland France. Venereal disease had proliferated, clandestine prostitutes became locked in cycles of police raids, prison sentences and hospital stays before being ejected back into the city to carry on their trade as before.¹⁷ Thus, the introduction of the *quartiers réservés* in Morocco was not simply an example of the French sticking with a functioning status-quo. Rather, it marked a stubborn failure to innovate in spite of past failures and ***further buttresses ideas that rather than being Rabinow's 'pragmatic technicians',¹⁸ French administrators were often resistant to change and clung to outdated intellectual frameworks and regulatory systems.***¹⁹ Barenoud's fatalism when faced with the

¹⁴ For a detailed account of *neo-réglementarisme*, see: Corbin, *Les filles de noce*.

¹⁵ See: Cohen & Eleb, *Casablanca*, p. 111.

¹⁶ For similar arguments, regarding colonial policing, see: Rosenberg, *Policing Paris* & 'The international politics of vaccine testing in interwar Algiers'. Tilley, *Africa as a living laboratory* makes a similar argument regarding British colonies.

¹⁷ See: Corbin, *Les filles de noce*.

¹⁸ Rabinow, *French modern*, p. 16

¹⁹ Ngalamulume, *Colonial pathologies* makes a similar points regarding administrative responses to the development of germ theory.

problem of *clandestinité* seems emblematic of a broader intellectual paralysis. In short, the transfer of the *système français* reveals an administration which was bereft of ideas and anything but experimental.

Once one abandons the idea that Moroccan cities were always laboratories, there is no need to assume that the French colonial state *must* have been rational and successfully coercive. Indeed, the construction of the *quartier réservé* in Marrakech highlights the occasional incompetency of the French administration. The construction had been contracted to M. Debachy, a cowboy builder who had already acquired a bad reputation after his hydro-electric factory in St. Claude had contaminated the town's drinking water.²⁰ The entire project was marred with logistical problems as it was based on figures from Casablanca, a larger and growing, city.²¹ Finally, the Pasha of Marrakesh, benefiting from *la politique des grands caïds*, viewed the project more as means of filling his pockets and less a sincere attempt to improve public health and order.²² In short, based purely on a reading of colonial documents, it is clear that despite its ambitions to know, count, control and therefore improve its subjects, the colonial state was anti-experimental, beholden to corporate interests and aware of the limits of its own projects. Failure and disappointment marred the regulatory project from the beginning and would only become more apparent as time passed.

²⁰ 22 April 1937, Report on the creation of the *quartier réservé* of Marrakesh.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² For a detailed account of the Pasha's involvement, see: Teraud, *La prostitution coloniale*, pp. 87-99. For more on the links between corporate interests and the colonial project, see: Miller, *A history of modern Morocco*, pp. 111-117.

Rabat, 1932- Sexual healing: Colonial medicine, *clandestinité* and *le peril vénérien*

Ces prostituées, ignorant les principes les plus élémentaires de l'hygiène, sont contaminées dans une proportion considérable.¹

With colonial doctors estimating that up to 80% of clandestine prostitutes carried venereal disease, it is unsurprising that *clandestinité* and *le peril vénérien* became discursively synonymous.² Throughout Epaulard's letter, syphilis is presented as a 'véritable péril pour l'état sanitaire des troupes du Corps de l'Occupation.'³ Exactly the same signifier is used to describe women who 'échappent au contrôle sanitaire.'⁴ For the administration's doctors, unregulated prostitution had itself become a disease which threatened the colonial body politic. Thus, the administration aimed to tighten the medical control of prostitutes whilst creating the *police des mœurs* to struggle against clandestine commerce and other forms of urban vice. The measures taken to suppress *clandestinité*, however, were contradictory and messy and highlighted the limits of the administration's biopolitical capabilities.

1932 in Marrakesh had seen regulatory optimism and close collaboration between Moroccan elites and French administrators in establishing the *quartier réservé*. Despite the *quartier* system having failed in France, administrators in Marrakesh argued that Bab el Khemis could shield French soldiers from *clandestinité* and venereal disease. However, elsewhere, in particular in Rabat, the centre of colonial administration, unease had set in. This underlines both the ideological stubbornness of the French administration and the disparate and fragmented nature of its

¹ 28 January 1932, Rabat, The Colonel Dr. Epaulard, Director Responsible for the Health of the Troops in Morocco to the Commander General of the Troops in Morocco, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'These prostitutes, ignorant of the most basic principles of hygiene, are disproportionately infected [with venereal disease].'

² Documents never explain the methodology underpinning these estimations. However, whilst the precise figures cited could be questioned, venereal disease was undeniably a problem for the French military.

³ 'a real peril for the health of our soldiers.'

⁴ 'escape sanitary control.'

bureaucracy.⁵ *Quartiers réservés*, for example at Casablanca, Fez and Rabat had been in existence for several years as had *bordels militaires de campagne* in rural areas. Despite the rhetoric and aspirations of French planners, the *quartiers* had apparently done little to stem the spread of venereal infections. Assuming the accuracy of French statistics, incidence of venereal disease among French troops was 6,608 in 1928 (77.39 per 1,000). By 1931, this had risen to 9,445 (118.50 per 1,000). Worryingly, a disproportionate part of this growth came from syphilis: the most debilitating venereal disease. Incidence had risen from 1,594 (24% of total infections) in 1928 to 2,635 (28%) in 1931.⁶ The reason for this rise was simple. Despite the construction of *quartiers réservés*, male soldiers continued to pay for cheaper, clandestine services whilst "European" commercial premises (e.g. bars) provided new spaces for sexual commerce which competed with the state-regulated form. Thus, fewer and fewer soldiers frequented the *quartiers* and consequently ran a greater risk of infection.

Recognising that the *quartiers* had failed within a decade and perhaps acknowledging that this was linked to the fixed supply of legal prostitutes, Epaulard called for a mass education programme within the military. Colonial doctors would highlight the dangers of visiting clandestine establishments and the perils of venereal disease (showing pictures of infected organs) all the while encouraging visits to the *cabine prophylactique* and distributing condoms.⁷ Evidence does not point to this project's success. In 1940, with the spectre of WW2 looming, the French military and its health was naturally of concern to colonial administrators. With rates of infection still as high as 100 per 1,000,⁸ doctors at Rabat renewed their calls to tackle demand for sexual services. New ideas included the introduction of film projections, showing the grisliest effects of venereal disease. Doctors suggested coupling this with the construction of gardens and the expansion of sporting

⁵ The idea that "the Empire" was not a monolithic entity, is a recurring theme in: Thomas, *The French empire between the war*; Ngalamulume, *Colonial pathologies* and Amster, *Medicine and the saints*.

⁶ 28 January 1932, Epaulard to the Commander General.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ 24 January 1940, Report by the Central Commission on the Prevention of Venereal Disease, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

activities and reading rooms,⁹ apparently assuming that afternoons of horticulture, Zola and *pétanque* would take the soldiers' minds away from more fleshly desires. Renowned dermatologist Eugene Lepinay was particularly concerned about air-force pilots, claiming that up to 80% of this young, transitory population was infected. Lepinay proposed the introduction of a propaganda tour-bus, moving from town to town to spread a message of personal hygiene and abstinence, again focusing on the importance of sport in encouraging chastity.¹⁰

However, the French were only willing to extend their control so far. Punishments were never introduced for soldiers who contracted venereal disease or made use of clandestine services, despite the fact that they were helping to fuel a supply of sexual commerce which undermined the French regulatory system. Instead, they were encouraged to identify the woman or establishment which had infected them in order to facilitate police raids. These women could then be treated and hopefully, repatriated to the countryside. Voices suggesting that infected soldiers should prove that they had visited a *cabine prophylactique* by presenting a certificate, seem to have been ignored.¹¹

This fundamentally gendered approach to regulation relied on a series of intellectually inconsistent propositions and highlighted the messiness of French ideology. The *quartier* system was based on the premise that male sexual desire could not be controlled or suppressed. If the French administration could not limit male sexual desire, it had a responsibility to make sure that casual encounters took place in the safest environment possible. Yet, by instituting a system which fixed the number of regulated prostitutes receiving regular health checks (in spite of massive demographic growth) it failed to provide sufficient healthy supply for male demand. Unwilling to change course or loosen the terms of regulation (i.e. increase supply), the French turned their attention to curbing demand. Whilst this approach may not have been misguided *per se*, it fundamentally contradicted a central premise of the regulatory system: the unquenchable nature of

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ 15 February 1940, Report by Captain Dr. E Lepinay, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

¹¹ 25 August 1938, Fez, Lt-Colonel Dr. Lacquièze, Officer Responsible for Public Health, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

male sexual desire. This might highlight a gulf between social reformers and urban hygienists (for example, Barenoud, inspired by Parent-Duchâtelet) who held fast to ideology; and medical practitioners (for example, Lepinay), concerned with public health, who probably had more contact with local actors and displayed a more intellectually flexible approach. This leaves one with an odd impression: the colonial state rigidly held to some elements of its doctrines (the need to spatially confine prostitution) but was far more flexible and ready to improvise when it came to the principles underpinning these doctrines (the impossibility of limiting male sexual appetite). Another way of framing this apparent contradiction is to argue that the ultimate policy recommendations of social reformers and hygienists- the *quartiers* - were taken as scripture. However, medical professionals were given relative freedom to construct public health priorities around the central idea of spatial regulation. This further nuances the colonial-city-as-laboratory trope and brings out both the pragmatism and obstinacy of policy makers.

Secondly, the apparent failure to stem the rise of venereal disease highlights the limits of Foucauldian readings of colonial regulation. The logical end-point of panoptic regulation would be the internalisation of regulatory impulses and as a result, self-discipline without state intervention. As Foucault put it, 'la perfection du pouvoir tende à rendre inutile l'actualité de son existence.'¹² In other words, soldiers would recognise the importance of public health, the risk posed by clandestine prostitutes and the need to restrict their sexual activity to government-approved spaces. In reality, the relentless spread of venereal disease suggests that French soldiers continued to flout the laws, making use of an abundant supply of clandestine women and failing to self-discipline in line with the administration's diktats.¹³ French soldiers knew they could escape serious punishment and in some cases may have seen venereal disease as a blessing which exempted them from combat. The administration had an intellectually inconsistent approach to regulation and, due to its failure to

¹² Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, p. 202.

¹³ 'The perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary.' (trans. A. Sheridan).

¹³ Other historians have highlighted the inability of the French colonial administration to use regulation to create docile subjects (or their reliance on force and repression in doing so). See Rosenberg, 'The international politics of vaccine testing in interwar Algiers' & Amster, *Medicine and the saints*. For a similar argument on the British Empire, see: Vaughan, *Curing their ills*.

institute punishment mechanisms, was unable to coerce its subjects. In short, male, military bodies were out of control.

The French medico-regulatory apparatus was little better at controlling its female subjects. Question marks hang over the rates of venereal infection among *filles soumises* residing in the *quartiers réservés*. Unsurprisingly, colonial documents rarely raised this issue. Between October and December 1937, 121 soldiers claimed to have contracted venereal infections in the *quartiers réservés*.¹⁴ However, reliance on the testimony of soldiers who may have been hesitant to admit to frequenting clandestine brothels, casts doubt on this figure. Some evidence points to administrative shortcomings. Dr P.E. Flye Sainte Marie claimed that Dispensaries in Fez were ill-suited to their purpose, lacking staff and medicine.¹⁵ Dr Vartages, Head Doctor of the Subdivision of Casablanca, writing in the 1930s, claimed that Bousbir's dispensaries were unhygienic and staffed by under-qualified practitioners. This rendered prophylactic measures ineffective and meant that Bousbir's prostitutes 'constituaient le foyer de contamination vénérienne le plus dangereux de Casablanca'.¹⁶

According to Bouquet, writing in 1940, the municipal administration had overcome these problems.¹⁷ However, even if one accepts the claim that conditions were generally hygienic, administrative documents highlight other shortcomings in the system of medical surveillance. As the debates surrounding the construction of Bab el Khemis in Marrakesh show, administrators were aware that the *quartiers réservés* could never hold all urban prostitutes and that this might fuel *clandestinité*. Yet they refused to expand the *quartiers*, permit women to engage in regulated prostitution outside assigned spaces or allow any *filles insoumises* to register for regular medical checks, despite recognising that this might curb the spread of venereal disease. *Néo-réglementariste*

¹⁴ 28 February 1938, Rabat, Morize, Head of the Administrative Service, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

¹⁵ 24 November 1937, Fez, Dr. P.E. Flye Sainte Marie, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

¹⁶ Cited in: 14 March 1940, Casablanca, Bouquet, Head of Municipal Services in Casablanca, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'constituted the most dangerous source of venereal infection in Casablanca.'

¹⁷ *ibid.*

rhetoric placed concerns for public health above all other considerations and argued for the *quartiers* in such terms. However, despite this apparent commitment to public health, other priorities got in the way, from the ideological: keeping city spaces pure and undefiled, by confining sexual activity;¹⁸ to the more material: the significant costs of registering all clandestine women and providing them with medical treatment.¹⁹ In this sense, public health, military and imperial concerns often overlapped but also risked starkly diverging.²⁰

This led to a bizarre and ineffective system of punishment and surveillance. Women arrested for clandestine activity would be sent to the colonial hospital where they would be tested and treated. At this point, administrators hoped to *inscrire* women who had already been arrested three times and send them to the *quartier réservé*. In practice, this proved to be a logistical nightmare, not least because the number of women arrested outstripped the number of free spaces in the *quartier*. Thus, generally, the French resorted to sending these women back to their tribes of origin.²¹ Of course, rampant urban migration meant that a steady flow of new women was arriving to replace those who were expelled. Regardless, in most cases, after a brief spell in prison, *filles insoumises* would be '*renvoyées à la circulation*',²² leaving them free to carry out their trade as before. This led to the observation that '*ce sont toujours les mêmes qu'on reçoit au Dispensaire*'.²³ Thus, whilst the French system may have removed some women from the sexual marketplace for a short period of time, the overall effect on net supply was marginal.

Despite its ambitious rhetoric, the French state was unable to guarantee its soldiers' well-being or encourage "good behaviour" on their behalf. Further, its tactics for dealing with clandestine

¹⁸ 1930, Midlet, Caid Ali Ou Moha.

¹⁹ 5 August 1936, Casablanca, The *Contrôleur Civil* of Casablanca to M. Cary, (1MA/200/620), CADN

²⁰ For more on these 'self-contradictory imperatives' see: Amster, *Medicine and the saints*, pp. 111-112. Wilder, *The French imperial nation state*, pp. 21-22 makes a similar argument. For similar observation regarding the British Empire, see: Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics*, p. 58.

²¹ See: Taraud, *La prostitution coloniale*, pp. 169-171.

²² 'sent back into the city.'

²³ 25 August 1938, Dr. Lacquièze.

'we always receive the same girls at the Dispensary.'

prostitutes did nothing to mitigate the central contradictions of regulation: the impossibility of guaranteeing mass public health whilst limiting medically-regulated supply. The central irony was that venereal disease was fundamentally tied up with the colonial project. As Hannah-Louise Clark has argued, 'civilisation also meant *syphilisation*'²⁴. The spread of venereal disease was seen as a danger to France, its military and its very "race." However, this spread was intrinsically linked to the Empire's *mission civilisatrice*, the urbanisation it provoked, the commercial spaces it encouraged and the sexual encounters these trends facilitated. Many of the central challenges facing the Empire were embedded in the colonial project itself. Several of these themes: the incapacity of the French state and the inherent weaknesses and contradictions of the colonial project, come to light if one turns one's attention to the Protectorate's police files.

²⁴ H-L. Clark, 'Civilization and Syphilization: A Doctor and his disease in Colonial Morocco', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 87 (2013), p. 113.

Casablanca, 1936- All I want is a room somewhere: *La police des mœurs*, commercial space and urban inequalities

Des Casablancais sont venus me demander avec insistance de faire une campagne de presse pour attirer l'attention des pouvoirs publics sur la question de la prostitution dite "clandestine" à Casablanca et dont aucune autorité ne paraît actuellement se soucier.¹

Morocco's "Wild West" boom-town, Casablanca, encapsulated the promises, aspirations and shortcomings of the French colonial project. Burgeoning industrial capitalism, rural land seizures and French settler policies worked together to bring mass-immigration- both Moroccan and European - to a former fishing village. Having sat at just 20,000 in 1907, Casablanca's population would hit 1.3 million by the 1950s.² This mass urbanisation brought with it new, "European", commercial spaces and unsurprisingly, heightened demand for, and supply of, sexual commerce. Bousbir was one of the first *quartiers réservés* to be established and was situated in Casablanca's *nouvelle médina*. However, against a backdrop of mass migration, commercialisation and extreme urban poverty, varied forms of clandestine prostitution evolved alongside and competed with the state-regulated form. These included barmaids and dancers, women who used their homes or hotel rooms for illicit sexual activity, street-walkers and finally, poverty-stricken rural immigrants who turned to sex-work to top-up their meagre incomes. Indeed, by the 1950s, it was estimated that only 2.13% of prostitutes exercised their trade in a legally regulated form.³ An examination of colonial police documents sheds light on the claim that French Morocco saw the growth of "dual cities", highlights the importance of spatial factors in shaping daily interaction with the colonial state

¹ 2 June 1936, Casablanca, J. Goulven, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'Many citizens of Casablanca have come to me demanding that I start a press campaign to bring the question of "clandestine" prostitution in Casablanca to the attention of the public authorities to whom, currently, it seems to be of little concern.'

² Maghraoui, 'Fragments of history in colonial Morocco', p. 24.

³ Arrif (ed), *Bousbir*, p. 71.

and most importantly, emphasises the limitations placed upon the French administration's biopolitical ambitions.

Joseph Goulven was a French lawyer who petitioned the colonial administration to take harsher measures against *clandestinité*. Goulven presented the concerns of European *colons* as he lobbied for more effective controls over a 'scourge' which threatened to contaminate the entire colonial project. This discourse was *néo-réglementariste, par excellence*, playing into a broader fear of *filles insoumises* who circumvented colonial law and medical surveillance and thus risked infecting soldiers and settlers with venereal disease. In a 1936 letter, Goulven presented a list of women suspected of clandestine prostitution. He then moved to discuss 'l'indolence administrative' and, even more controversially, claiming that there were at least 168 clandestine women known to the police, argued that the forces of law and order did not intervene because they profited from the trade. According to Goulven (citing a "Dr. Chic"), "on ne sait pas où commence le souteneur et où se termine le policier."⁴ Goulven finished his diatribe by warning the administration of a massive rise in venereal infections and a call to 'épurez Casablanca et réglemenez ensuite.'⁵

Sources do not allow one to make a definitive judgement on the integrity of Casablanca's police force; although foul-play would hardly be surprising considering the graft and corruption which marred the construction of Marrakesh's *quartier réservé*. It is clear, however, that the urban police faced several challenges, stemming from the shortcomings of French administration and the paradoxes of the colonial settlement. As the *Contrôleur Civil* of Casablanca noted in 1936, 'Casablanca est une ville de 260.000 habitants, qui est loin d'être dotée des services qu'exigerait raisonnablement un tel chiffre de population.'⁶ Even if metropolitan politicians aimed to turn Casablanca into an innovative laboratory of modernist social policy, on the ground, bureaucrats and

⁴ 'it is hard to tell where the police officer ends and where the pimp begins.'

⁵ 2 June 1936, J. Goulven.

'Purify Casablanca and then regulate.'

⁶ 5 August 1936, The *Contrôleur Civil* of Casablanca to M. Cary.

'Casablanca is a town of 260,000 inhabitants, which does not benefit from the public services which such a large population would normally require.'

administrators faced budgetary constraints as well as diminishing resources *vis à vis* a mushrooming population. Experimentation and the extension of state control were necessarily hampered. This problem became more acute as the Protectorate's administration, and in particular its doctors, were increasingly divided over which forms of clandestine prostitution should be targeted.

In a memo, dated 13 March 1940, Dr M. Valade, Director of Casablanca's Bureau of Municipal Hygiene discussed the varied forms of clandestine activity. Valade concluded by focusing on 'entraîneuses, barmaids, artistes [et] filles galantes'⁷: clandestine prostitutes who benefited from new, "European" commercial spaces, for example, bars, dance-halls and hotels. Valade argued that 'cette catégorie pourrait être sans inconvénient négligée. Elles sont en nombre infime...; l'élévation des tarifs en interdit pratiquement l'usage à la troupe; il s'agit en général des femmes gagnant largement leur vie, ayant notions d'hygiène et les moyens matériels de les appliquer.'⁸ Valade expressed the same over-arching priority as the administrators who encouraged the construction of Marrakesh's *quartier réservé*: controlling and protecting European, military bodies. The fact that these '*filles galantes*' were too expensive for the average French soldier and knew how to protect themselves from venereal disease meant that the forces of law and order could turn a blind eye to their commerce. By contrast, one month earlier, Eugene Lepinay had expressed a starkly diverging view, presenting commercial spaces as sordid rather than sophisticated. Claiming that the *maisons de tolérance* had fallen out of fashion, Lepinay observed that "European" clandestine prostitution was taking place in a wide range of commercial establishments, for example, dance halls and bars and that it was in these commercial spaces that 'nos français, soldats ou officiers, vont maintenant se contaminer.'⁹ Taking a slightly more pragmatic line than some of the strictest proponents of the

⁷ 'hostesses, barmaids, artists, high-class women.'

⁸ 13 March 1940, Dr M. Valade, Director of the Bureau of Municipal Hygiene of Casablanca, (1MA/200/620), CADN

'This group can, without too much worry, be neglected. They are very few in number; their rates are more or less beyond the means of our troops; they are generally women who are making a living, aware of basic measures of hygiene and sufficiently well-off to apply them.'

⁹ 15 February 1940, Report by Dr. Lepinay.

'our Frenchmen, be they soldiers or officers, will get infected.'

quartiers réservés, Lepinay argued that the women working in these establishments needed to be subject to sanitary control.¹⁰

Thus, whilst Valade and Lepinay shared an over-arching assumption: European, military bodies needed to be protected from disease; the means by which they proposed to do this differed drastically. Much-demonised colonial medicine seemed hapless in the face of commercialised sexual activity which subverted its regulatory regime. With medical practitioners- whose public health arguments were central to *néo-réglementarisme* - at odds over which forms of *clandestinité* the *police des mœurs* should target, it is unsurprising that the forces of law and order would struggle to suppress clandestine prostitution, in any of its forms.

Casablanca police files highlight numerous occasions when a Moroccan girl, working as a clandestine prostitute in the medina, found with a French soldier, would be seized by the forces of law and order, sent to a hospital, dispensary or police station and then repatriated to her tribe of origin or released back into the city (undoubtedly to carry on her sex-work until being arrested again). In Fez, Dr P.E. Flye Sainte Marie argued that most arrests took place around the gates of the medina or near military camps and targeted a 'population plus ou moins flottante.'¹¹ Thus, one might conclude that police strategies were determined purely by racial considerations: despite the central administration's desire to control European bodies, urban police forces were happy to focus their efforts on destitute Moroccan women, hoping to send them back to the countryside. Europeans would be left to carry on illicit activity, as they pleased.¹² This analysis would reinforce a broader narrative which sees colonial cities as segregated and dualistic and the category of "race" as

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ 24 November 1937, Dr. Flye Sainte Marie.

'A population which is, for the most part, transient or rootless.'

¹² Works with a focus (albeit a sophisticated and persuasive one) on the racialised discourses surrounding the regulation of sexuality, include: Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics* & Taraud, *La prostitution coloniale*.

central to French imperial regulation.¹³ Although these lines of argument have some merit, historians of colonial sexuality have often overlooked the constitutive effect which the spaces within which sexual activity took place, exercised upon policing and regulation.¹⁴

Goulven claimed that the *police casablancaise* was too quick to claim that it was 'désarmée' and unable to enter commercial spaces.¹⁵ Clearly, police responses to this charge were unlikely to admit to corruption. Nonetheless, these responses are interesting and provide an image of a force increasingly frustrated by its inability to hold the entire body politic in its bio-political grip. Writing in light of Goulven's morality campaign, the Chief Commissary of Casablanca's Administrative Police argued that 'la prostitution clandestine a toujours été recherchée et combattue par tous les moyens à la disposition de la police.'¹⁶ He continued that even if 'les lieux où s'exerce la prostitution clandestine sont connus relativement vite, le temps nécessaire pour y mettre un terme est toujours très long'.¹⁷ Policing prostitution was not as simple as observing 'X ou X maison' and then closing it down.¹⁸ Laws protecting commercial properties such as bars and hotels made it difficult for the police to raid these establishments without concrete proof of criminal activity. This rendered these spaces more "private" than the nooks and crannies of the medina and limited the police's ability to control and discipline the European, urban population.

Police files show several examples of women who were strongly suspected by the police but were unable to be prosecuted. For example, a Mme. Mattei was suspected of using a hotel room for

¹³ See: Abu-Lughod, *Rabat, urban apartheid in Morocco* and F. Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris, 1961)

¹⁴ For histories of sexuality and its regulation which ground elements of their analyses in the "spatial turn", see: G. Chauncery, *Gay New York: gender, urban culture and the makings of the gay male world, 1890-1940* (New York, 1994) & M. Houlbrook, *Queer London: perils and pleasures in the sexual metropolis: 1918-1957* (Chicago, 2005).

¹⁵ 2 June 1936, J. Goulven.

¹⁶ 25 June 1936, Casablanca, The Chief Commissary of Casablanca's Administrative Police to The Divisionary Commissary, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'clandestine prostitution has always been sought out and fought with all the resources available to the police.'

¹⁷ *ibid.*

'the places where clandestine prostitution takes place can be discovered quite quickly, it inevitably takes a long time to put a stop to these activities.'

¹⁸ *ibid.*

sex-work, but was unable to be investigated due to the commercial freedoms enjoyed by hotels.¹⁹ A Mme. Serour, pedicurist, was also suspected as were several clairvoyants and laundresses, all of whom could practice their (perhaps occasional) trade under the privacy and protection that came with a legitimate commercial establishment.²⁰ Finally, several '*femmes galantes*' such as Mme. Andrée Murat, the mistress of a conductor, were able to see clients, for example, in hotels, safe in the knowledge that their life of 'ease' would guarantee their security.²¹ The police faced the same problem in the *ville indigène*. Whilst they celebrated their success in arresting a Jewish madam who ran a brothel in a house at '46 Rue de Ctd [sic]' no fewer than 15 hotels were suspected of being complicit in commercialised sex-work and trafficking. One of them, the Hotel Cécil was only closed for violations of licensing laws and another, at 71 *Jardin Public* was closed after a raid by the *police des moeurs*, only to be re-opened under the guise of a sewing shop by two women, 'réellement expertes à dépister la police.'²² In short, police documents give the image of a force overwhelmed by the challenges it faced, with new establishments opening quicker than existing ones could be closed and a ready stream of women, both European and Moroccan, flocking to the sex trade.

Thus, police officials concluded that the commercial freedom of Moroccan hotels was regrettable as it allowed 'de femmes galantes plus ou moins entretenues... ne racolant jamais mais sachant adroitement se faire rechercher par une clientèle attirée'²³ to escape punishment and presumably spread venereal disease. ***One could argue that a masculine colonial state, fascinated by the idea of the call-girl, was simply labelling European women as prostitutes in spite of limited evidence of wrong-doing.*** Nonetheless, it is likely that at least some of these spaces were used for sexual purposes, especially as evidence from the 1950s shows that high-end night-clubs such as the Sphinx, controlled by the Pasha of Marrakesh, were used to provide sexual services to American

¹⁹ 27 June 1936, Casablanca, The Chief Commissary of Casablanca's Administrative Police, Report on the Suppression of Prostitution, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*

'truly expert at evading police control.'

²³ *ibid.*

'well-to-do, "kept" women, never needing to solicit, but rather, knowing how to maintain a regular clientele.'

soldiers.²⁴ Assuming that these commercial spaces were used for non-regulated sexual activity, this highlights a central inequality and inconsistency in French regulation. Moroccan women were not only more likely to be disciplined by the French state because they were female and Moroccan. The economic deprivation which their ethnic identity entailed meant they were significantly less likely to be able to access the commercial spaces which afforded European women protection. Race and class were important categories in so much as they shaped access to these safe haven commercial spaces, both for the women supplying sexual services and the men consuming them. Thus, Europeans, able to start/frequent a business or access/afford hotel rooms (and not face discrimination in doing so) were far more likely to evade the full weight of the regulatory system. Crucially, European women, working in commercial spaces frequented by French soldiers, were rarely subject to medical surveillance and still risked spreading disease throughout the military population. In this sense, the French system created a two-tier workforce in sexual labour, broadly along ethnic lines. The likes of Fanon and Abu-Lughod have probably overstated the binary nature of colonial cities and the extent of urban segregation. Nonetheless, "race" and ethnicity were vital in determining the nature of one's economic opportunities and interaction with the colonial state's apparatus. In short, regulation was discriminatory and ethnicity shaped daily life in colonial urban spaces. However, this was due to spatial and material factors more than strictly ideological ones.

The central irony was that imported French commercial spaces and the laws which protected them, both fundamentally tied up with the broader colonial project, served to undermine another aspect of this project: the control of European and in particular, military bodies. Coupled with an underfunded police force which seemed hapless in the face of urbanisation and burgeoning sex trades, as well as a medical establishment which could not decide where resources should be targeted, it is unsurprising that much *clandestinité* escaped surveillance. Inter-war medical and police files paint a picture of a state which was confounded by rapid change it could neither control

²⁴ Movement for Colonial Freedom, *Prostitution and the white slave trade* (London, 1955).

nor understand. Most strikingly of all, a supposedly pragmatic and innovative state was still clinging to the same shibboleths nearly two decades later.

Fez 1937; Meknes 1952- Nothing's gonna stop us now: International opinion and ideological resistance

Sans vouloir passer pour un esprit subversif et ami du paradoxe, il est possible de dire que l'institution des quartiers réservés est une façade trompeuse qui donne une fausse apparence de sécurité et laisse pulluler en dehors de son enceinte une prostitution clandestine qu'elle éloigne de la surveillance médicale par les exactions inhérentes à son fonctionnement.¹

La suppression des quartiers et des maisons closes, qui ne groupent sans doute que la minorité des prostituées, est une mesure à déconseiller.²

The spread of venereal disease and the incapacity of the *police des mœurs* brought to light the shortcomings of the inter-war regulatory regime. Administrative documents suggest that this sparked debate within the colonial bureaucracy. The central question was whether the French should stick to a tried and tested, if ineffective approach, or find new ways of dealing with sexual commerce. Whilst responses diverged, it is clear that into the 1950s, proponents of the *quartier* system continued to hold the upper-hand.

Dr P.E. Flye Sainte Marie was the Head of Fez's Regional Laboratory. Horrified by the failings of the *système français* and the apparent obstinacy of the French administration, he launched a wide-ranging attack on the regulatory *status-quo*. Marie recognised that clandestine prostitutes posed a risk to public health and undermined state regulation. However, rather than seeing this an excuse to strengthen the existing system, he proposed to develop and modify it, reinforcing the idea

¹ 24 November 1937, Dr. Flye Sainte Marie.

'I do not wish to come across as a subversive character or to put the cat amongst the pigeons. However, one could argue that the *quartier réservé* is a deceitful facade which gives a false appearance of security and leaves a clandestine trade to proliferate beyond its walls. All the while, the nature of this system pushes clandestine women ever further from medical supervision.'

² 12 February 1952, Meknès, General Miquel, Head of the Region of Meknes to the *Directeur de l'Intérieur*, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'The suppression of the *quartiers* and of the *maisons closes*, which undoubtedly, only hold a minority of prostitutes, is a measure to be discouraged.'

that medical professionals, located outside the imperial centre at Rabat, were most likely to encourage innovation. Marie articulated his argument in the following terms. There were two types of prostitute. The first was eminently dangerous: the clandestine; the second, somewhat less so: *la fille soumise*. For Marie, the ideal solution would be finding a way of moving as many women as possible from *clandestinité* into the *quartiers réservés*.³ The primary advantage of this approach would be that the French state could assure the health of all prostitutes whilst confining them to a single space, reinforcing disciplinary mechanisms. However, Marie recognised that in all likelihood, many clandestine prostitutes would refuse to take part in regular medical examinations and would recoil at the idea of being 'séquestrées au quartier réservé et y... exploitées sans limite par des patronnes cupides.'⁴

In many ways, this seems a sensible argument. Despite the French state's claims to know what was best for sex-workers - confinement and medical examinations - many women may have interpreted their interests in different ways. For example, the French state hoped to limit *racolage*, ostensibly because mobile street-walkers were harder to track but no doubt also because street-walking was far too public a practice in colonial urban spaces.⁵ However, for many women, street-walking and actively seeking clients may have been preferable to having clients procured for them, even if it put them at greater exposure to venereal infection. As Luise White has argued, street-walking was not necessarily the most 'vulnerable kind of prostitution' as it allowed women to select their clients. Indeed, White suggests that women who were resident in rooms and had clients procured for them were more likely to have been subjects of violence.⁶ ***As a result, for some women, submitting themselves to the risks of venereal disease and police interference, may have been the lesser of two evils.***

³24 November 1937, Dr. Flye Sainte Marie.

⁴ *ibid.*

'confined to the *quartier réservé* and incessantly exploited there by greedy madams.'

⁵ Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics*, p. 300. makes a similar point regarding the British Empire.

⁶ White, *The comforts of home*, pp. 14-16.

Marie also highlighted another factor which drove women towards *clandestinité*: the fear of professionalisation.⁷ Sequestration in the *quartier* required one to be *mise en carte* and therefore define oneself as a prostitute by trade. This necessitated frequent medical examinations, constraints on mobility, confiscation of earnings by madams and the need to see a certain number of clients per day. For Moroccan women who were simply looking to top-up their income at times of need, or indeed, for Europeans who could earn more working in a dance-hall, it is unlikely that this was an attractive set-up. Whilst clandestine prostitution was hardly an attractive trade, it did entail some freedom: the freedom to choose when and where to work as well as the freedom to keep one's earnings. Despite their apparent medical benefits, the *quartiers* could never offer this liberty.

Marie proposed several solutions to circumvent these problems. Firstly, he argued that many Moroccan women were driven to prostitution by hunger and poverty. He therefore proposed 'une intensification de la lutte contre la misère et des distributions de nourriture aux affamés.'⁸ This was followed by the obligatory nod to the benefits of *pétanque* and Zola as he called for reading rooms for sexually frustrated soldiers and argued that 'une propagande active en faveur des divers exercices sportifs, pourrait... avoir un effet heureux.'⁹ However, it is Marie's ultimate conclusions which are the most striking. Rather than regurgitating arguments in favour of spatial confinement he proposed a 'régime de la prostituée libre, surveillée.' Marie argued that clandestine women should be allowed to become *mise en carte* without being obliged to live in the *quartier réservé*. In short, he recognised that spatial confinement was an unsustainable policy. Marie's proposed system may not have alleviated all fears of professionalisation; however, it seems reasonable to argue that this approach would have encouraged women to accept medical visits and would have removed the 'spectre of confinement.'¹⁰

⁷ Similar arguments appear in: Teraud, *La prostitution coloniale*.

⁸ 'an intensification of the struggle against poverty as well as increase in food hand-outs to the hungry.'

⁹ 24 November 1937, Dr Flye Sainte Marie.

'a campaign promoting varied sporting activities could have a positive effect.'

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Whilst Marie might have been the most extreme critique of the *système français*, other medical professionals expressed similar reservations. For example, Epaulard argued that 'la fréquentation des maisons de tolérance est peu agréable et les relations clandestines, par leur discrétion même, offrent infiniment plus d'attrait que le commerce charnel en quelque sorte public.'¹¹ Whilst the *quartier réservé* made sexual commerce semi-public, clandestine activity offered the chance of privacy and discretion. Lepinay provided a similar reflection, arguing that French soldiers wanted cleaner and more welcoming bedrooms than those offered in the *quartiers*.¹²

However the central problem with all of these arguments and of colonial administrative documents in general, is that white, male officials claimed to represent and speak for Moroccan women and the masses of the French military. Women may have preferred street-walking and despised professionalisation whilst soldiers may indeed have valued discretion. However, the voices of these actors are largely lost from the historical record, obliging the historian to impute motivation or argue for the universality of human experience by relying on oral histories taken from other periods or geographies. In so much as one cannot rediscover the subjectivity of those who provided or consumed sexual services, one can never fully account for the failure of the *quartiers*.

Nonetheless, Lepinay, Epaulard and Marie's attempts to speak on behalf of French soldiers and Moroccan women were far more convincing than those of many of their fellow administrators. By the early 1950s there had been some relaxation of the law in specific local contexts. For example, prostitutes in the towns of Midelt and Khénifra could be *mises en carte* without being obliged to live in the *quartier réservé*.¹³ More importantly, during the inter-war years and in particular in the

¹¹28 January 1932, Epaulard to the Commander General.

'Visiting the *maisons de tolérance* is a far from pleasant experience and clandestine services, simply by virtue of their discretion, are far more attractive than their semi-public equivalent.'

¹²15 February 1940, Report by Dr. Lepinay.

¹³12 February 1952, General Miquel, to the *Directeur de l'Intérieur*.

aftermath of WW2 and the creation of the UN, France had come under increasing pressure from the "international community." The argument that state monopolies on regulated prostitution infringed upon human rights and were an example of slavery, became increasingly salient. Deontological legalism had trumped utilitarian arguments on public health.¹⁴ Thus, France had seen the "*fermeture*" of 1946 with the domestic regulatory apparatus being gradually dismantled and replaced by a system of prohibition.¹⁵ Nonetheless, French colonies remained an exception to this rule and the government continued to defend the existing Moroccan system with vigour. This encouraged growing international pressure on France, culminating in the 1955 publication *Prostitution and the White Slave Trade* by the Movement for Colonial Freedom, a British Civil Rights Group, founded in 1954 and with strong links to the Labour Party. This pamphlet berated France for not extending the domestic *fermeture* to its colonies. Rather than focusing on the public health elements of regulation, this document focused on the sordid reality of the sex trade. Glaoui, the Pasha of Marrakesh received particular criticism, being described 'as the most powerful man in Morocco' and as drawing 'a substantial portion of his enormous revenue from the brothel business.'¹⁶ Bousbir was described as 'a sordid dreary bazaar of commercial vice, surrounded by high, forbidding walls' and the Casablanca's *Bureau de Tourisme* came under fire for providing tourists with brochures on the *quartier*.¹⁷ This focus on human rights and liberties came to a head with a stark condemnation of the French system in these terms: 'it is intolerable that the traffic in women should have been practically turned into a State institution by the Administration of the Protectorate and that officials, paid by the French taxpayer, should have become purveyors of brothels on the pretext of suppressing prostitution.'¹⁸

¹⁴ See: Howell, *Geographies of regulation*, pp. 220-227.

¹⁵ For a provocative and convincing account of this change, emphasising the growing force of "Americanization", see: M-L. Roberts, 'The price of discretion: prostitution, venereal disease and the American military in France: 1944-46', *The American Historical Review*, 115 (2010), pp. 1002-1030 & 'The Silver Foxhole: the GIs and prostitution in Paris, 1944-45', *French Historical Studies*, 33 (2010), pp. 99-128.

¹⁶ Movement for Colonial Freedom, *Prostitution and the white slave trade*.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*

Facing this international pressure, colonial officers seemed only more determined to defend their system. However, significantly, the idioms through which they articulated their support for regulated prostitution, had shifted. At this point it is worth returning to General Miquel, who opened this chapter. In defending the *système français*, Miquel accepted that most prostitutes escaped French control, but argued that closing the *quartiers* would lead to a rise in clandestine prostitution and venereal disease.¹⁹ This is a far cry from the idealistic rhetoric of the system's founders. This was no longer a system which would purify urban spaces and protect military bodies. Instead, it was marginally better than the alternative and might prevent some infection.

However, it is what comes next that is striking. Rather than articulating his argument in terms of protecting French bodies, Miquel argued that Moroccans were unable to deal with their own illnesses and were ignorant of prophylactic measures.²⁰ Regulation was no longer articulated as part of a military ethos. Rather it was a means of protecting Moroccans and ensuring their rise to a state of *civilisation*. In this sense, it appears that due to increased scrutiny and the wider spectre of decolonisation, the French were ever keener to demonstrate that their Protectorate guaranteed Moroccan interests. Earlier in this document, Miquel had argued that in countries with a Berber heritage, the regulation of prostitution was particularly difficult,²¹ seemingly returning to the romantic associationist discourses of Hubert Lyautey,²² just as the sordid reality of the colonial project was becoming more apparent.

This claim to speak for Moroccans and to articulate arguments in terms of Moroccan interests was apparent beyond Meknes. In 1950, M. Fines of the *Direction de l'Intérieur* argued that the closure of the *quartiers* would create strong opposition among certain Moroccans, presumably not referring solely to the Pasha of Marrakesh.²³ M. Malpertuy, the *Contrôleur Civil* in Casablanca

¹⁹ 12 February 1952, General Miquel, to the *Directeur de l'Intérieur*.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

²² See: Wright, *The politics of design* & Miller, *A history of modern Morocco*.

²³ 6 July 1950, Rabat, M. Fines, to the Head of The Service of Municipal Control, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

made a slightly more nuanced argument, accepting that the instability of Casablanca's workforce, its miserly salaries and its limited purchasing power, contributed to *clandestinité*, whilst nonetheless arguing that 'les quartiers réservés... font partie intégrante des moeurs musulmans.'²⁴ Thus, a project which had been initially justified in utilitarian idioms on French public health, was now presented as being not only in Moroccan interests but also as a fundamental part of "Moroccan culture." Forcing the suppression of the *quartiers* would be ***an act of hypocrisy*** on the part of an international community, which claimed to recognise the wishes and aspirations of emerging post-colonial nation states. This tendency to reformulate arguments and reconceptualise the goals of regulation gives the impression of an Empire which was clutching at straws in order to justify long-standing but ineffective policies.

In arguing that Moroccan women shunned the *quartiers* because they preferred to street-walk or disliked professionalisation, one naturally imputes motivation. However, this is a far more convincing line of argument than those provided by the French: that regulated prostitution was an essential aspect of Moroccan civilisation. This could be seen as part of a broader tendency within the administration to essentialise Moroccan culture and claim to speak for Moroccan society, despite failing in its ambition to understand, count and control its subjects.²⁵ ***Sources from the 1950s suggest that despite the presence of dissident voices, the French imperial centre was beholden to its own ideology and keen to be seduced by its own rhetoric, to the point where this had become a constraint on activity. Unwilling and unable to innovate, the French were far from being 'pragmatic technicians.' Inter-war administrators had apparently convinced themselves that things would be different in Morocco; that although the quartier system was far from perfect, it***

²⁴ 27 February 1952, M. Malpertuy, The *Contrôleur Civil*, Head of the Region of Casablanca, to the *Directeur de l'Intérieur*, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'the *quartiers réservés* are central to Muslim customs.'

²⁵ Cohen & Eleb, *Casablanca* and Wright, *The politics of design*, both bring out "Mauresque" architecture's tendency of to slip into pastiche.

could nonetheless serve their goals. By 1952 the failure of this system had once again become apparent and international opinion increasingly presented state-regulated prostitution as contrary to basic human rights. However, administrators seemed only keener to cling to their existing system whilst finding new and acceptable discourses through which to defend it. Administrators might not have been scientific experimenters and were incapable of holding Morocco's population in their grip. However, they were keen to do what it took to hold a fraying Empire together and showed striking capacity for adaptation. This flexibility, however, became more apparent in the four years that followed, as French arguments were turned on their head and the regulatory system was dismantled.

Morocco, 1956- We (re)built this city: Nationalism, sexual commerce and urban space

Les milieux nationalistes et bourgeois, et particulièrement ceux d'Istiqlal se félicitent de cette décision, que, dit-on, les autorités françaises n'avaient jamais osé prendre.¹

Despite French officials' stringent defence of regulated prostitution, the closure of Bousbir in April 1955 would mark the extension of the domestic *fermeture* to Moroccan shores. Across the 10 months that followed, the *quartiers* in Fez, Meknes, Rabat and Marrakesh were shut down. This process took place in the context of Sultan Mohammed's (later Mohammed V) return from exile, negotiations with nationalists over Morocco's future and a transfer of competencies from French to Morocco hands. Indeed, by March 1956, just a few weeks after the final closures, the Kingdom of Morocco would become independent. French acquiescence to the closure of the *quartiers* suggests that the administration finally saw no choice but to cede ground to nationalists, recognising the inevitability of independence and the fact that regulated prostitution could no longer be justified in the international sphere.² For the nationalists, by contrast, this symbolised the overthrow of colonial occupation and the defilement of urban space which this **had provoked**.

The most informative source on Morocco's *fermeture* is a French report, written on 17 January 1956, in Meknes, shortly after the closure of the El Mers *quartier*. This report reflects the total inversion of French discourses on prostitution. Four years earlier, regulated prostitution had been presented as integral to 'moeurs musulmans' and partially justified through Moroccan support. Now, the anonymous author argued that in general, the *fermeture* was viewed favourably in the medina. Moroccan opinion was once again invoked, but this time to justify the closure of the

¹17 January 1956, Meknes, Report on the Closure of El-Mers, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'Nationalist and bourgeois groups, in particular, Istiqlal, are congratulating themselves on this decision, which, they say, the French authorities would never dared to have taken.'

² Concerns over prostitution were linked to post-colonial nationalisms elsewhere. See: G. Forbes, 'The politics of respectability: Indian women and the Indian National Congress' in, D.A. Low (ed), *The Indian National Congress: centenary hindsight*, (Delhi, 1988) & G. Hershatter, *Dangerous pleasures: prostitution and modernity in twentieth-century Shanghai* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 288-9.

quartiers and perhaps to give the impression that the French continued to protect Moroccan interests. The author then detailed the nationalists' complaints. Firstly, regulated prostitution was 'contraire aux principes religieux musulmans'.³ The second argument was spatial, claiming that the 'proximité de cet édifice de plaisirs était incompatible avec la présence voisine de la Mosquée du quartier.'⁴ The final concern was the profits 'scandaleux réalisés par quelques européens propriétaires des locaux.'⁵

The problem with this source is that the voices of the nationalists themselves are absent, their arguments being filtered and perhaps selected by French officials. Thus, a letter written on 2 January 1956 by the Pasha of Fez, might give a more representative view of Moroccan grievances. The Pasha proved to be a strong opponent of the *quartiers*, closing down Moullay Abdullah on 31 January 1956, an event which pointed to the broader unravelling of French indirect rule and a breakdown of co-operation with local elites. The interaction between local politics and the central administration was a recurring theme in the regulation of prostitution. Thus, it seems fitting that several arguments were grounded both in local identity and the idea that legislation should apply equally across the Moroccan nation as a whole. The Pasha argued that the *quartiers* in other cities had been closed (notably Rabat and Casablanca) and that it would be 'déhonorant de voir maintenir celui de Fes, Capitale de la science et source de la dignité.'⁶ This plays into a broader divide between colonialists who stressed the local in policy making and their critics (albeit comparatively recent ones in the case of the Pasha) who aspired to consistency across the nation as a whole.⁷ More interestingly, however, the Pasha presented spatial and religious arguments, highlighting the incompatibility of the *quartier* with Islamic principles and in particular, protesting

³ 17 January 1956, Report on the Closure of El-Mers.

'contrary to Islamic religious principles.'

⁴ 'it was inappropriate to have a building, dedicated to fleshly pleasures so close to a mosque.'

⁵ 'scandalous profits earned by the European owners of these spaces.'

⁶ 2 January 1956 The Pasha of Fez to General Agostini, Head of the Region of Fez and to the *Contrôleur Civil*, (1MA/200/620), CADN.

'degrading to see the *quartier réservé* of Fez, Capital of science and source of dignity, left intact.'

⁷ See: F. Ait Mous, 'The Moroccan nationalist movement: from local to national networks', in, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 18 (2013), pp. 737-752.

against the *quartier's* location close to shrines.⁸ This ties in with the report from Meknes and with broader themes in Moroccan nationalism's interaction with an urban environment that both disgusted and nourished it.

Nationalist party political groups leave little trace of their opposition to prostitution. Indeed, between 1951 and 1956, the nationalist newspaper *Al-Istiqlal* made no reference to sexual commerce, its primary "social" concerns being linked to working conditions and standards of medical care. Nonetheless, in his *Independence movements in Arab North Africa*, Allal Al-Fasi, founder of the Istiqlal Party, highlighted the 'eradication of official prostitution' and greater efforts to end clandestine activity as a key nationalist goal. This would sit alongside broader efforts to re-moralise Moroccan society, for example by struggling against alcohol and drugs and limiting the influence of 'false ulemas and certain sufi adherents.'⁹ The CADN holds a selection of nationalist tracts, covering a variety of topics, produced by the Istiqlal Party, smaller groups and individual nationalists.¹⁰ The Istiqlal tracts, in particular, fused Islamic and nationalist idioms and present a recurring fear that "French" urban spaces and products contributed to the erosion of Moroccan sovereignty and a degeneration of the nation's morality.¹¹ Tracts discovered throughout 1954 condemned cinemas, smoking, alcoholic beverages, French milk, public transport, Coca Cola, lemonade, biscuits and sugar, calling for boycotts of these goods and services.¹² Prostitution, another commercial service facilitated by French administration, made the occasional appearance. A tract discovered on 7 February 1955 condemned 'l'excès de la prostitution pendant la nuit.'¹³ On 27 June 1955 two prostitutes in Khouribga found Arabic language tracts pinned to their door, with the message: 'Du parti de l'Istiqlal Nationaliste. O vous, prostituées si vous ne vous mariez pas ou si vous ne cessez pas

⁸ 2 January 1956, The Pasha of Fez to General Agostini.

⁹ A. Al-Fasi, *Independence movements in Arab North Africa*, (Washington, 1954), p. 367.

¹⁰ (1MA/200/363), CADN and (1MA/200/364), CADN.

¹¹ Similar discourses emerged in Algeria, see: McDougall, 'The secular state's Islamic Empire'.

¹² For an account linking Western consumer goods/spaces and nationalist politics in Egypt, see: N. Renyolds, *A city consumed: urban commerce, the Cairo fire and the politics of decolonisation in Egypt* (Stanford, 2012)

¹³ 'the excesses of prostitution during the night.'

vos activités, nous vous tuerons ou vous serez incendiés- Que Dieu maudisse les débauchées.¹⁴

Interestingly in both cases, it is the immorality of illicit sexual activity- taking place in what were conceived as specifically *Muslim* spaces- and of the women themselves which was the object of nationalist ire, rather than the system which facilitated sexual commerce *per se*.

Taking these tracts together with the Pasha's argument brings to light wider themes in the unravelling of the colonial project. Urban space had been a central colonial concern. Moroccan cities were to be modernised whilst retaining their "traditional character;" prostitution would be spatially confined and "European" ideas, institutions and products would raise Morocco to new levels of civilisation. These goals were articulated in terms of cultural preservation, the introduction of civilisation and moral custodianship of European and Moroccan populations. The development of Mauresque idioms and the cultivation of local elites would help retain the "timeless essence" of Moroccan spaces. Simultaneously, the introduction of republican values and the regulation of vice would serve, perhaps paradoxically, to de-sacralise these spaces whilst purifying them. Each one of these concerns would be appropriated by nationalists and turned against the French administration.¹⁵ Urban space was to be reclaimed and re-sacralised: that is, cleansed of vice, and rendered specifically *Moroccan* and *Muslim*. The centrality of purification narratives to nationalist discourses meant that semi-public, regulated, "French" prostitution was a natural target as were the goods and services which were seen as tied up with colonial presence and conducive to moral decay. The control and delineation of public space became a central point of conflict between colonial administrators and Moroccan nationalists, as each tried to inscribe their own vision of "civilisation", progress and purity onto these spaces. Symbolically, a statue of Hubert Lyautey, erected in central Casablanca in 1934, would, on the eve of independence, be moved behind an iron

¹⁴ 'From the nationalist Istiqlal Party. Prostitutes, if you do not marry or cease your activities we will kill you or you will be burned to death. May God curse debauched women.'

¹⁵ For an insightful argument on the links between colonial discourses on hygiene and nationalist politics, see: Amster, *Medicine and the saints*, pp. 138-141.

fence in the garden of the Consulate of France, largely removed from public gaze.¹⁶ However, beyond the nationalist elite's symbolic statements, these tracts suggest that European goods, urban spaces and their association with nation and religion became central concerns, on the ground, for individuals who negotiated their relationship with the colonial state on a day-to-day basis.

Whilst comparatively little literature exists on the contest between colonialists and nationalists over Moroccan public spaces, Algeria is increasingly well covered.¹⁷ I hope that this chapter might provide a springboard for further investigation into the broader relationship between nationalist politics and urban space in Protectorate and post-colonial Morocco.

¹⁶ Miller, *A history of modern Morocco*, p. 119.

¹⁷ See: J. McDougall, 'The secular state's Islamic empire' & 'La mosquée et le cimetière: Espaces du sacré et pouvoir symbolique à Constantine en 1936', *Insaniyat. Revue algérienne d'anthropologie et des sciences sociales*, 39-40 (2008), pp. 47-63.

Conclusion

French administrators imported a failing regulatory system, and the gendered assumptions underpinning it, to their Moroccan Protectorate. Whilst this system might, at first glance, appear classically "Foucauldian", in reality, it was intellectually inconsistent and unevenly implemented. The colonial state was unable to medically control its military population whilst French presence facilitated the growth of clandestine prostitution and the spread of venereal disease. Continued insistence that prostitution should be spatially confined, in spite of rampant population growth, fuelled a mismatch between supply and demand and created a two-tier labour market, insulating many European women from police surveillance. Faced with these apparent failings, administrators were both recalcitrant and pragmatic, refusing to overturn the *système français*, whilst finding new idioms through which to justify it. As the imperial project crumbled in the mid-1950s, concerns over the *quartiers réservés* seem to have become tied up with broader debates over public space and morality.

This account has focused on the dysfunctionality of colonial regulation, the state's inability to understand its population and the limits of imperial authority. Moroccan cities certainly saw innovation. But they were not exclusively laboratories. French administrators were quite happy to import failing systems and the worn-out intellectual baggage which underpinned them and were often stubbornly opposed to reshaping regulation when its failings became clear. Whilst the administration may not have created "dual cities", ethnicity was nonetheless a vital category, shaping individual relationships with the colonial medico-legal apparatus. Most importantly, the French state was anything but a bio-political juggernaut. The administration consistently failed to observe, know and discipline its populations (both European and Moroccan) and when it succeeded, could only do this unevenly and inconsistently. The control of urban space was central to the colonial project, yet this control was only ever superficial, partial or fragmented. Thus, it is little surprise that the re-appropriation of urban space was a central and achievable nationalist goal. The

regulation of prostitution reminds us that the French state was rarely omnipotent and panoptic and that its failure to achieve its goals was often tied up with the institutions, practices and economic changes it imposed upon Moroccan society. In short, *en faisant des bordels, l'administration a fait le bordel.*

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

CADN

Box (1MA/5/469)- Questions sanitaires

Box (1MA/200/363)- Nationalisme marocain: tracts

Box (1MA/200/364)- Nationalisme marocain: tracts

Box (1MA/200/620)- Lutte contre la prostitution

Printed Sources

Primary

A. Al-Fassi, *Independence movements in Arab North Africa* (Washington, 1954)

Al-Istiqlal, 1951-1956

A. Arrif (ed), J. Mathieu et P-H. Maury, *Bousbir: la prostitution dans le Maroc colonial* (Paris, 2003)

Movement for Colonial Freedom, *Prostitution and the white slave trade* (London, 1955)

Secondary

J.L. Abu-Lughod, *Rabat, urban apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton, 1980)

A. Adam, *Casablanca: essai sur la transformation de la société marocaine au contact de l'occident* (2 vols, Paris, 1972)

F. Ait Mous, 'The Moroccan nationalist movement: from local to national networks', in, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 18 (2013), pp. 737-752.

N. Al-Sayyad, *Forms of dominance: on the architecture and urbanism of the colonial enterprise* (Aldershot, 1992)

R. Aldrich, *Greater France: a history of French overseas expansion* (Basingstoke, 1996)

E. Amster, *Medicine and the saints: science, Islam and the colonial encounter in Morocco: 1877-1956*, Austin (2013)

W. Anderson, *Colonial pathologies: American tropical medicine, race and hygiene in the Philippines*, London (2006)

- L.A Benton, *Law and colonial cultures: legal regimes in world history, 1400-1900* (Cambridge, 2002)
- R.F. Betts, *Assimilation and association in French colonial theory, 1890-1914* (Lincoln, 2005)
- S. Carmona-Benito, *Ellas salen, nosotros salimos: de la situación de la mujer marroquí y su sexualidad a la prostitución en las calles de Casablanca* (Barcelona, 2007)
- G. Chauncery, *Gay New York: gender, urban culture and the makings of the gay male world, 1890-1940* (New York, 1994)
- H-L. Clark, 'Civilization and syphilization: A doctor and his disease in colonial Morocco', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 87 (2013), pp. 86-114
- H-L. Clark, 'Soigner au bled: cadres et éducateurs en médecine en Algérie pendant l'époque coloniale,' Conference Proceedings, *Les politiques de santé*, Algiers 18-19 January 2014
- J-L. Cohen & M. Eleb, *Casablanca: colonial myths and architectural ventures* (New York, 2002)
- A. Corbin, *Les filles de noce: misère sexuelle et prostitution (19e siècle)* (Paris, 1982)
- J.M. Dueck, *The claims of culture at empire's end: Syria and Lebanon under French rule* (Oxford, 2010)
- F. Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris, 1961)
- G. Forbes, 'The politics of respectability: Indian women and the Indian National Congress' in, D.A. Low (ed), *The Indian National Congress: centenary hindsights* (Delhi, 1988)
- M. Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Paris, 1975)
- S. Garon, 'The world's oldest debate? Prostitution and the state in imperial Japan', *The American Historical Review*, 98 (1993), pp. 710-732
- T. J. Gilfoyle, 'Prostitutes in history: from parables of pornography to metaphors of modernity', *The American Historical Review*, 104 (1999), pp. 117-141
- E. Guttreck, *The Mellah of Marrakech: Jewish and Muslim space in Morocco's red city* (Indiana, 2007)
- J. Harsin, *Policing prostitution in nineteenth-century Paris* (Princeton, 1985)
- C. Henriot, *Belles de Shanghai: prostitution et sexualité en Chine aux XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris, 1997)
- G. Hershatter, *Dangerous pleasures: prostitution and modernity in twentieth-century Shanghai* (Berkeley, 1997)
- M. Houlbrook, *Queer London: perils and pleasures in the sexual metropolis: 1918-1957* (Chicago, 2005)
- P. Howell, *Geographies of regulation: policing prostitution in nineteenth-century Britain and the Empire* (Cambridge, 2009)

- P. Levine (ed), *Gender and empire* (Oxford, 2004)
- P. Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics: policing venereal disease in the British Empire* (London, 2003)
- A. McClintock, *Imperial leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest* (New York, 1995)
- J. McDougall, *History and the culture of nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge, 2006)
- J. McDougall, 'The secular state's Islamic empire: Muslim spaces and subjects of jurisdiction in Paris and Algiers, 1905-1957', *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 52 (2010), pp. 553-580.
- J. McDougall, 'La mosquée et le cimetière: Espaces du sacré et pouvoir symbolique à Constantine en 1936', *Insaniyat. Revue algérienne d'anthropologie et des sciences sociales*, 39-40 (2008), pp. 47-63.
- D. Maghraoui, 'Fragments of history in colonial Morocco: prostitution in the quartier réservé of Casablanca', in M. Rieker & K.A. Ali, *Gendering urban space in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa* (New York, 2008)
- J. Matlock, *Scenes of seduction: prostitution, hysteria and reading difference in nineteenth-century France* (New York, 1994)
- S.G. Miller, *A history of modern Morocco* (Cambridge, 2013)
- K. Ngalamulume, *Colonial pathologies, environment and Western medicine in Saint-Louis-du-Senegal, 1867-1920*, New York (2012)
- S. Ossman, *Picturing Casablanca: portraits of power in a modern city* (London, 1994)
- P. Ouston, *France in the twentieth century* (London, 1972)
- C.R. Pennell, *Morocco: from empire to independence* (Oxford, 2003)
- G. Prakash, 'The body politic in colonial India', in T. Mitchell (ed), *Questions of modernity*, Minneapolis (2000)
- P. Rabinow, *French modern: norms and forms of the social environment* (Cambridge, 1989)
- A. Rao & S. Pierce, 'Discipline and the other body: humanitarianism, violence and the colonial exception' in A. Rao & S. Pierce (eds), *Discipline and the other body: correction, corporeality and colonialism* (Durham, 2006)
- N. Reynolds, *A city consumed: urban commerce, the Cairo fire and the politics of decolonisation in Egypt* (Stanford, 2012)
- M-L. Roberts, 'The price of discretion: prostitution, venereal disease and the American military in France: 1944-46', *The American Historical Review*, 115 (2010), pp. 1002-1030
- M-L. Roberts, 'The Silver Foxhole: the GIs and prostitution in Paris, 1944-45', *French Historical Studies*, 33 (2010), pp. 99-128

- C. Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: the origins of modern immigration control between the wars* (Chicago, 2006)
- C. Rosenberg, 'The international politics of vaccine testing in interwar Algiers', *The American Historical Review*, 117 (2012), pp. 671–697
- Z. Selik, *Urban forms and colonial confrontations* (Berkeley, 1997)
- P. Sluglett, *The Urban Social History of the Middle East: 1750-1950* (Syracuse, 2008)
- A.L. Stoler, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley, 2002)
- A.L. Stoler, *Race and the education of desire: Foucault's History of sexuality and the colonial order of things* (London, 1995)
- J. Surkis, *Sexing the citizen: morality and masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Cornell, 2011)
- C. Taraud, *La prostitution coloniale: Algérie, Tunisie, Maroc (1830-1962)* (Paris, 2003)
- M. Thomas, *The French empire between the wars* (Manchester, 2005)
- E. Thompson, *Colonial citizens: republican rights, paternal privilege and gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York, 2000)
- H. Tilley, *Africa as a living laboratory: empire, development, and the problem of scientific knowledge, 1870-1950*, Chicago (2011)
- M. Vaughan, *Curing their ills: colonial power and African illness*, Cambridge (1991)
- L. White, *The comforts of home: prostitution in colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990)
- G. Wilder, *The French imperial nation state: negritude and colonial humanism between the two World Wars*, Chicago (2005)
- G. Wright, *The politics of design in French colonial urbanism* (Chicago, 1991)