Dissertation title: **Reimagining Spatial Planning in Morocco: A Historical Institutionalist Inquiry and Decolonization Strategies**

Summary of the study

This research provided a historical and institutionalist analysis of urban and spatial planning systems in post-colonial Morocco. The different ways that planning as a set of practices has been consistently conceptualized are generally limited by the way it has developed in the Global North. The main planning theories that have informed our collective understanding of spatial planning have generally seen the light in European or Northern American contexts. While these conceptualizations have been very important in the way spatial planning has developed, they are quite limited and limiting when it comes to contexts in the Global South, namely in post-colonial contexts. This research set out to build a new context-aware approach to understand planning practices from the context and discuss how it has developed and the ways it could be transformed and changed. This research has been framed by two main theoretical approaches. As an analytical tool, this research used HI as a theoretical approach to frame spatial planning as a practice in Morocco historically and institutionally. Additionally, this research built upon this analysis and used institutional design to provide potential ways forward for institutional design in post-colonial contexts. This research has relied primarily on qualitative research methods as it used semi-structured interviews with a number of stakeholders to analyse and discuss its findings. It has also used other methods such as archival research and mapping when needed.

This research started by outlining the main elements of methodology and background needed for contextualizing the study, and has set five main objectives that guided the subsequent analysis and discussions. It then proceeded to a detailed introduction of Historical Institutionalism as the main conceptual approach used for its analysis. HI is a theoretical approach that attempts to position institutions in their historical context to explain the processes behind their creation and change. It provides a useful vocabulary to describe the role of spatial planning institutions in the context of Morocco and their interinstitutional relations. It also helps explain the different ways certain institutions sustain themselves while other stay subjected to stronger ones. Using HI vocabulary and analytical tools, this research identified three main institutional actors connected to state organs. These three institutions regulate the logics and actions behind three main state actors that represent the most influential stakeholders in the devising and implementing of spatial planning strategies and regulations. The first is the areal institutions, referred to in Morocco as the Makhzen, which have control over a specific area. Representational institutions, representing

elected actors and political parties. And finally, functional institutions, referring to the actors with technical and functional roles such as the Ministry of Urban Planning or Planning professionals. The actors used in the analysis vary according to the scale required for the study.

Chapters 3 and 4 focused on the historical development and the current roles of these three sets of institutions. First, this research identified the relational influence that these three sets of institutions have shared throughout Moroccan history, with an emphasis on the role of the colonial institution in shaping post-colonial interinstitutional dynamics. Then, it attempted to position planning practices within this interinstitutional dynamic to understand who was historically responsible for spatial planning in Morocco and how that has shaped its practices into its current framing. In doing this, it was possible to conclude the main feedback mechanisms that help sustain the status-quo and the respective power positions of the different institutions. While areal institutions have a territorial logic based on the need to sustain political stability, representational institutions have been gradually co-opted by the Makhzen as they struggled to survive as serious contenders in the Moroccan political field. Additionally, the historical instability of functional institutions has rendered them subordinate to stronger institutions which has made them much less influential when it comes to decision-making. This historical analysis has allowed a deeper and more grounded analysis of the current dynamics and power relations of these three sets of institutions. Then, Chapter 4 focused the current institutional and territorial structures of Morocco and detailed the interinstitutional structure that is responsible for devising spatial planning strategies. It also focused on the institutional processes behind the making of land-use plans as a case study to analyse interinstitutional power relations in action. This analysis, based on the historical evolution of these institutions has helped trace the different ways colonial institutions have been adapted and adopted by local authorities making institutional structures increasingly rigid and more resistant to change. However, the rigidity of the formal institutional structures does not align with the level of informality that is easily discernible in everyday urban practices in Morocco. Chapter 5 went deeper into how the formal structure of Morocco deals with informality through the historical analysis of two Moroccan cities, Fes and Oujda. The two case studies are different in the sense that Fes has been subject to highly formalized strategies that attempted to control urban growth of the city, while Oujda has developed informally to a large extent. Through the analysis of how both cities and their formal structures have interacted with informality spatially, it was possible to understand the tangling of formality and informality in the Moroccan institutional structure and discuss the different ways the most formalized actors resort to informality when formal laws are too rigid or simply not effective. Ultimately, the analysis of the three chapters provided an understanding of the current practices of spatial planning in the context

of Morocco, both its formal structures and informal institutions, and how both interact with each other.

The work done in these three chapters was necessary for the next part of the research which constitutes the potential ways forward for planning practices in Morocco. After a context-aware conceptualization, it was then possible to provide realistic recommendations for the institutional structure of planning in Morocco. Thus, Chapter 6 used interorganizational coordination literature to provide potential pathways for a future of institutional design that can be effective in the context of Morocco. Overall, this research recommended a cultivation of formal channels where informality is acknowledged and potentially used to reap its benefits in the face of the rigidity of post-colonial planning structures. Additionally, it emphasized the importance of incentivizing the different actors to coordinate and work together taking into consideration their real roles and their historical power positions. Finally, this research concluded by readdressing its first aim, which is the reframing of spatial planning practices in the context of Morocco. This work is hoped to be the start of newer conceptualizations that take into consideration the different ways the exported practice has transformed when encountered with indigenous institutions and what could be learned from that to devise a trajectory for institutional change.