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Planning Knowledge
A regional perspective
in the era of Globalisation

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The local and the global in the development of planning knowledge

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Abstract

This essay attempts to stimulate debate among planners in academia and practice, particularly in the context of the Arab World, about the range of knowledge required to develop the profession of planning in the region. It thus discusses the development of planning knowledge between the specificity of contingent practice with a particular geography and history, and the globally, more universal resources. Subsequently, the paper challenges the global planning intellectual community to bring more attentiveness towards locally situated planning practices in a way that allows the growth of planning knowledge beyond importing foreign 'concepts and practices', through 'reflexive' critical thinking. This challenge does not involve developing 'canons' of knowledge transfer that expects a 'universal' planning practice, but rather a critical questioning of the assumptions underpinning planning. This paper kindles such debate through six sets of questions: the idea, and tools of planning,dynamics of development, the wider context, planning expertise and education. In conclusion, it promotes this exercise of 'questioning', experimenting with planning knowledge and knowledge transfer, rather than awkwardly applying general concepts to the particularities of diverse planning practices.

The global and the particular

In this essay, I hope to stimulate debate about the range of knowledge which needs to be developed to meet the challenges of planning work in the specific contexts of the Arab world. Does this just involve adapting the body of knowledge developed globally or does a distinctive body of knowledge need to be developed for different parts of the world? These days, we academics increasingly live in an apparently global intellectual community, sharing our ideas, research and teaching programs at conferences and in journals (Jasanoff, 2012). We draw on concepts, datasets and narratives from many different parts of the world. Yet in our field we are also encouraged to recognise that planning activity consists of distinct practices, each situated in specific circumstances with a particular geography and history (Campbell, 2006). Our universities, though sharing some common features, each have distinctive features, reflecting local and regional contexts. While some of our students will end up working in international circuits, most will provide the professional personnel for municipal planning offices and consultancies, working on development plans, creating projects and doing regulatory work in places embedded in local cultures and practices. How then to draw on global knowledge resources in our field, while grasping local dynamics? When should such resources be rejected as embodying ideas and practices alien to local culture and traditions? What alternative resources need to be accumulated in such contexts, and what messages for the global planning intellectual community does this effort teach us?

These questions are currently actively debated within the global planning academic community. A few years ago, I discussed the general issue of the 'universal' and 'contingent' elements of planning knowledge. What travels "well" and what is contingent on situational specifics? (Healey, 2012). This drew on a collection of papers on what happened when planning concepts "travelled" from one situation to an other (Healey & Upton, 2012). For some time now, papers in the academic planning literature have been highlighting the adverse consequences of importing concepts from dominant discourses into circumstances
Some time now, papers in the academic planning literature have been highlighting the adverse consequences of importing concepts from dominant discourses into circumstances quite different from the imaginations of those promoting them. Watson (2009) argues that 'planning theory' with a 'South' perspective needs to be developed to challenge the 'North' (That is to say North American and Western European dominance of global planning discourses).

Getting it wrong

As the critics of Western hegemony point out, the history of planning endeavours is full of examples where planning concepts relevant to one situation have been imported inappropriately into a very different situation. For example, Fawaz and Moumtaz (2017) discussed how the concept of individualised property rights articulated in planning concepts originating from France was imposed on the communal land ownership traditions of rural Lebanon. Vidyarthi (2010) describes the introduction of the American neighborhood unit into urban planning in post-independence India. Presented as a universal design for all housing, it was soon appropriated just by the affluent. Perera (2010) reports on his struggles as young local expert to insert a local perspective into a major regional development project in Sri Lanka.

In the Arab world, regimes of planning law have been imported from France and the UK as part of the post-WW1 colonial package, with little attention to longstanding systems of land and property allocation, as Fawaz and Moumtaz (2017) point out. Housing schemes assuming mid 20th century ideal Western nuclear families have been constructed in places where households are composed of much more complex arrangements of family obligations and

with different customs related to the in ternal organization of a dwelling. Sometimes it has been powerful leaders who have adopted grandiose Western models of urban development, clearing city centers of poorer people[1]. More recent examples include the adoption of 'urban regeneration' models driven by private sector developers and real estate speculation. clearing city centres of poorer people1 . More recent examples include the adoption of 'urban regeneration' models driven by private sector developers and real estate speculation. Marketed as creating modern built forms in old harbour and industrial areas, such projects have often displaced poor people directly, or by gentrification of the areas around them. In the global literature, such practices have led to a general criticism of 'neo-liberal' urban development projects. Yet probing into the particularity of such projects in different parts of the world suggests that what is going on, who gains and who benefits is much more complex than such broad generalizations suggest.

If the global planning intellectual community takes up the challenge of being much more attentive to the situatedness of planning practices, perhaps the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. Yet there is a vigorous global flow of planning knowledge of modes of analysis, designs, techniques and methods of evaluation and regulation, which flow through the 'circuits of knowledge and power' (Roy, 2010) that flow globally. These circuits are formed through professional networks and aid agencies, through planning consultancies which operate internationally, through the academic journals which are still dominated by western-based scholars (Kong & Qian, 2017), through the role of Western planning schools in developing programs in other parts of the world, and the flow of planning academics and students trained in the West and then returning home. It is not the circuits themselves which are the problem here, but the lack of critical thinking about the assumptions underpinning planning concepts and the algorithms built into planning techniques. Within our globalized planning intellectual community there are valuable resources to encourage such critical thinking, from Donald Schon's emphasis on 'reflexive practice', continually probing what lies behind the surface of problems and ideas (Schon, 1983), to Michel Foucault's proposal that we 'excavate' the conceptions, assumptions and habits which condition (or 'discipline') prevailing practices (Rabinow, 1984). This is not such an easy habit to develop. In developing it, it helps to travel outside one's own taken-for-granted world. In the next section, I reflect on some experience from my own biography[2].

Experiencing 'elsewhere'

After a few years in planning practice in a municipal planning office in London, I started a PhD in which I hoped to explore how planning ideas influenced the process of 'urban change' (Healey, 2017)3. Through the turn of fortune, I was able to explore this idea empirically in the then rapidly urbanizing contexts of Venezuela and Colombia. I prepared for this experience by reading a great deal about planning, about 'development' and about the history and geography of this part of the world. Through this reading, I was already prepared to challenge the then dominant notions of development as a linear progress to economic prosperity and liberal democracy[4]. But I did not know when I started out what I needed to know. Latin-America was about as far away as I could get from my own British background. Venezuela at the time was a lively young oil-rich democracy, full of hope for its future, and building apace. The high end of this building effort was influenced by US real estate development concepts, with which I was quite unfamiliar at the time. Perhaps 50 % of urban development in terms of housing provision was achieved through a squatting process, creating what these days we often refer to in the literature as 'informal' development, because it does not comply with formal law. The national government was attempting to build housing opportunities for workers' but built many fewer homes than the vigorous squatters who were skilled in land invasion practices and in making use of physical and political networks.

I encountered not just one stream of western ideas, but several, carried by different circuits of 'trade and aid'. Each had different conceptions of what planning meant and how urban development should be managed. Each connected to different groups of local professionals, which exacerbated local co-ordination problems.

From this experience, I learned that there were different ways in which land could be urbanized, each with a particular nexus of actors and resources, and that there were different ways in which 'planning' was conceived and practiced, insights which have shaped my thinking ever since. This led me to look much more carefully and critically at how development and planning were practiced in my own country. development and planning were practiced in my own country. The experience helped me to look into the world I had come from more as an 'outsider' looking in. What structured the institutionalized cultures of practice in which planning work in Britain was given meaning and had material effects? How far was this changing as planners and others was challenged such ways of going on ? This attitude of critical reflection was especially helpful in the 1990s, when many of us planning academics in Europe began to meet up and undertake joint research projects. Coming from different parts of Europe and different national cultures, we had to learn to 'e xcavate' our different cultural, institutional and professional assumptions and practices, and locate them in the contexts which gave rise to them. Our legal traditions are different, as are the distribution of power and resources between levels of government, attitudes to towns and 'nature', the professional formation of those who do planning work and the respect in which academics and professionals are held in the society. These all affect what is understood by 'planning', 'planners' and a 'planning system.'

It is never possible to stand completely outside one's own background, as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz argued many years ago (Geertz, 1983). However hard I try to explain my background, I can never see all that someone from elsewhere might see. Even now, the essay style in which I am writing these reflections comes from a particular Western tradition, and my rather long sentences, discursive presentation of argument and use of the first person to present my thoughts comes from a literary style rather than a more formal scientific style. The references I use reflect what I remember and the material I have been reading recently. My book Collaborative Planning (1997), which has come to occupy a symbolic place in the 'global' story of 'planning theory,' is deeply positioned within the particular challenges of my own country, with its imperial past and hyper-centralized government arrangements[5]. Translating from English into another language (and vice versa) inevitably means some loss of meaning. Learning from others through probing questions.

My experience suggests that the challenge of understanding and practicing planning is greatly enriched by sharing experiences from different contexts. But our objective in such sharing should not be to develop some 'canon' of tenets, techniques and good practice, which we can carry about from place to place in our professional store of knowledge. Instead, we should consider ourselves as sharing a set of debates about challenging questions which recur in our field. There may be no definitive answers to such questions but honing our thinking about them should help in probing the specific realities in which we do our research, practice and teaching. The following questions give a suggestion of what I have in mind. Readers may consider refining or challenging them, from experiences in another part of the world. In this short essay, I can only sketch brief thoughts about them.

There is no order of importance to the questions, as in any situation all are likely to come into play. I organize them into six sets. The first relates to the idea of planning itself; the second to the tools of planning work; the third to the dynamics of development which planning work seeks to shape, manage and/or regulate; the fourth to the wider context of this development effort; the fifth to expertise in the planning field; and finally, the sixth focuses on the challenge of teaching such expertise.

The idea of planning

As any review of planning theory shows, as a global 'community of inquirers' in our field, we cannot agree on what we mean by 'planning' (Healey, 2012). Yet in much of our literature, we refer to 'planning' and 'planners' as if the meaning was perfectly clear. Some claim that planning is a general activity, which we all engage in, or at least all governance agencies. John Friedmann argued that planning was about the application of knowledge to action in the public domain (Friedmann, 1987). Others consider planning to be what a formal 'planning system' and those who operate it do (Faludi, 1973). Others again see planning as a form of 'place governance,' in which many people may have a role[6]. Wrapped up in these debates are questions about the purposes and values embedded in the idea of planning, the focus of planning activity as practiced, how this affects who does planning work, and who is expected to and actually does gain and lose from planning activity. In the Arab world, what is understood by planning in different countries and how does this idea get translated into practices? How far is the idea itself seen as an external colonial imposition and how far a valuable tool for promoting better futures, for whom and how?

The tools of planning work

Since even within the global discourse there is no settled meaning for the planning idea, generalizing across contexts about the instruments used to do planning work might seem an impossible and inappropriate task. Yet if we assume the planning idea focuses in some way on shaping ongoing development processes to pursue the interests of a collectivity of some kind, we can discuss the 'typical' instruments used in such work. A great deal of attention has been given over the years to the form and processes of making 'development plans', from zoning plans and master plans, to broad development strategies. These relate to situations where the agency undertaking such planning work expects to guide indirectly how development unfolds. There is some overlap between this kind of tool and the production of 'project plans'. Here the planning agency expects to have much more control over the actual development process, and as a result can engage in details of the programming and financing of development, as well as its purposes and design. Then there are instruments for regulating the ongoing flow of investment in maintenance and change. There are also many ideas about how to manage the interaction between all the parties (stakeholders)[7] whose concerns are necessary for, or affected by, the actions proposed and pursued through planning work. Finally, there is an array of techniques for evaluating performance. There is a considerable literature in our field which seeks to compare instruments across different contexts, but typically this is focused around a specific meaning of planning, for example the comparisons of spatial planning systems in the EU Compendium (CEC, 1997) or of approaches to development exactions in land use planning systems across the world (Alterman, 1988). A specific focus is needed in order to take account of the different institutional contexts in which particular instruments are developed and deployed. But there might also be some merit in linking the discussion within the planning field to that in the fields of policy science, policy analysis and public administration. For example, regulating land use and development change is a key task of many spatial planning systems. How often do we compare the approach to regulation developed for this purpose to other regulatory activity, as with financial regulation, 'health and safety' concerns or traditional communal arrangements for managing how land is used and developed?different contexts, but typically this is focused around a specific meaning of planning, for example the comparisons of spatial planning systems in the EU Compendium (CEC, 1997) or of approaches to development exactions in land use planning systems across the world (Alterman, 1988). A specific focus is needed in order to take account of the different institutional contexts in which particular

instruments are developed and deployed. But there might also be some merit in linking the discussion within the planning field to that in the fields of policy science, policy analysis and public administration. For example, regulating land use and development change is a key task of many spatial planning systems. How often do we compare the approach to regulation developed for this purpose to other regulatory activity, as with financial regulation, 'health and safety' concerns or traditional communal arrangements for managing how land is used and developed?

Development dynamics

How, in our field, do we address the relation between the 'object' of planning, and the 'subject' or agency of planning? The history of thought in our global planning discourse shows that this has been a contested issue for many years. Back in the mid 20th century, the planning agency was taken to be an all-powerful government which could control development, whether of the national economy, regions or cities, or the detailed development of plots of land. Although there have been some times and places where this could be said to happen[8], mostly development happens through multiple forces, of which formal government and planning agencies may be only one. This implies that those involved in the planning field need some understanding of these multiple forces and their evolving dynamics. Once again, each situation will be different. But we need some concepts or analytical frames through which to grasp specific development dynamics. This is where global discussion about how to understand urban and regional development dynamics is particularly helpful, especially these days when the spatial reach of so many relationships relevant to particular places may stretch to many other places and parts of the world. It alerts us to the recurrent issue of who gains and who loses, but also to the possibility of alternative ways of promoting place development.

The wider socio-political and environmental context

Paying some attention to global planning discourse is even more important. These days it is hard to avoid recognition that our little local "worlds" are tied into a planetary world where the environmental conditions of existence are changing rapidly around us, partly through human action. The cultural and political worlds which provide the specific institutional context for any planning work in practice do not exist in isolation from each other. Nor are they static. Influences from outside are continually being woven into the evolving concepts and practices in any place management and development work. This means it is helpful to look at global discourses to become aware of ideas and techniques in circulation which may come to land in our specific situation. It also means, as with development dynamics, that it is worthwhile engaging with global debate about the different ways the relation plays out between the planning agency and the wider socio-political context in which it is positioned. This helps to develop the reflexivity that enables us to see, in a particular situation, what are the opportunities and limits for particular kinds of action and direction. The challenge is to absorb the global debate without being blinded, trapped by the blinkers of some internationally fashionable idea.

Who does planning?

Back in the early 1970s, two influential contributors to the emerging corpus of planning theory presented two different views of who did planning work. For Andreas Faludi (1973), this involved expertise of the kind which only those trained in a particular way could perform.

John Friedmann (1973) came to a different conclusion. If planning was about 'societal guidance' – shaping urban and regional futures – then many people and many forms of knowledge were involved in this process. Only some were trained professionals in promoting and managing development. The tension between the professional planner and everyone else who cares about and gets involved in place development in some way continues to reverberate in debates in our field, particularly in the discussion of consultation and participation processes. No plan, project or even regulatory judgement can be made in many planning systems these days without some effort to consult 'stakeholders' and to provide opportunity for public comment. But what do we mean when we use these terms? What does a trained planning expert bring to the process, compared to all the other experts he or she has to interact with? And who exactly is 'the public' in question (Inch, 2015). And does a citizen protest group also do 'planning work' (see Legacy, 2017)? These days, there are no settled answers to such questions. Each context will have a distinct configuration. Yet raising the questions is an important contribution of global planning discourse.

Learning to be a planning professional

How do all these troubling questions affect the design and delivery of our teaching programs and of any subsequent education and training opportunities offered to practitioners? While we may ourselves be involved in research and practice, our core role in academia is to pass on our knowledge to the next generation of practitioners and academics. Even though our university situations are likely to be very varied, maybe we all are faced with many challenges as we think about our role and practice as teachers. Do we just teach modules and course units which we are assigned by our departmental head, or do we look critically at how our assigned unit fits into an overall program structure, and maybe as a result seek to change that? Do we focus on fostering students' capacities for critical reflection on planning and development, or do we seek to prepare them to "fit" into concepts and practices? Do we make sure that they are well-grounded in global discourses about our field, so that they can work and study elsewhere with more confidence, or do we insist that they learn through detailed engagement with the specific particulars of our own country and its planning practices and challenges? And how do we think about the composition of our student body, which maybe includes people from multiple countries and with multiple experiences of urban and regional situations?

Enriching local knowledge

Towards the end of the 1970s, I began to look in detail at the practices of local plan-making in England. I read and analyzed a great number of plans, and eventually published the results in a book with the prosaic title Local Plans in British Land Use Planning (1983).
This sounds very specific, though it should have been more so, as the plans were all from England. The publishers were uncertain if the book would sell[9] and wanted me to develop the implications for readers outside Britain. I thought about this and added a short section at the very end. I stressed that the form and content of the British planning system, though parts of it have been exported to former colonies, was "historically specific to Britain in the second half of the 20th century." I therefore encouraged "skepticism about the relevance to anywhere else of any method or procedure developed in the British context" (p. 285).
I still think it is really important that we planning researchers devote careful and deep attention to the specific practices of the everyday world of planning practices which surround us, especially where these are not yet well-researched. So long as we keep our critical antennae attuned to what shapes these practices in a particular way and how these forces are evolving, we can avoid some of the interpretive dom ination coming not just from the global academic

discourse in our own field, but from other sectors of our own societies. For example, these days the development industry and the popular media in my country propagate a strong anti-planning myth, which rarely stands up to careful research inquiry. We therefore have a role as intellectuals to understand exactly how plan-making, project development and regulatory practices evolve in particular circumstances, and what their influence and impacts are likely to be. And we have to convey that understanding to those 're-forming' the tools and practices of planning systems or designing urban regeneration interventions and environmental management projects. This means publishing in media which such actors read, in a language and style which is accessible to them.But following this trajectory of local engagement, as researchers and policy advisers, is time-consuming as we get enmeshed in local details and local networks. Have we anything then to say to a wider academic audience, whether part of a regional academic intellectual community (as we have had in Europe through AESOP, and which maybe this new journal will help to foster in the Arab world) or to the global planning discourse? I have found this a continual challenge in my own work, even today, when I am trying to think who in our 'global' academic community might be interested in my recent intense experiences of local development where I now live. My answer usually goes something like this. What exactly is the question I am interested in, and why might other researchers elsewhere be interested in it? What frames of analysis do I find useful to make sense of what I am doing, what I am suggesting to others, and what I am telling others about 'what is going on here'? Who elsewhere is interested in such frames, and does my experience have any comment to make back to them? With such questions in mind, I can find wider support to help my local work and make contributions to these wider discussions. That is hopefully a key role for this new journal and will also inspire more contributions from planning academics in Arab con- texts which not only challenge and enrich planning ideas and practices in this part of the world, but also challenge and enrich global planning discourses.

From probing questions to locally innovative solutions

My argument in this brief essay is that intellectual inquiry and practice in our field needs to develop through continual critical interaction between detailed knowledge of particular circumstances and the wider discussion of such experiences. If we immerse ourselves too much in the particular, we may fail to see the challenges and opportunities arriving over the horizon. If we spend our time globally with just a broad and wide-angle lens[10], our generalizations will ring hollow. But maintaining a critical tension between the wide angle and the micro-focused lens is never easy. It demands not just the translation of concepts and vocabulary from one domain to another. It may also involve inventing whole new analytical schema to capture dimensions neglected in global planning discourses drawing explicitly or implicitly on quite other situations.

Current thinking in our field is much more helpful to this critical effort than it used to be. There is more emphasis these days on the importance of situated experiences. Planning intervention is presented less as a piece of technology to insert in ongoing relations of place governance to fix specific problems. Instead, it is considered by many as a practice of continual innovative experiment, to explore what really is the problem, whose problem it is and what kinds of intervention might make a difference and for whom (Balducci et al., 2011). Probing questions work well in helping to define the possibilities (and impossibilities) for such experimentation. In contrast, imported technologies and best practice solutions tend to be 'awkward fits' into the reality of any particular situation.

So, I hope this new journal will become a forum for exchanging experiences and honing skills in thinking innovatively - not just about how to address particular local problems, but about the kinds of concepts and analytical approaches which are helpful in probing the particulari-

ties of this part of the world. I anticipate that the readership will reach out to practitioners and well as academics just because it is in the language which most people use. I hope too that now and again, some of the intellectual energy that builds up through such discussion is translated back to enrich global planning academic discourse. I look forward to the development of this new intellectual forum in our field.

Notes
1.See examples in Nasr and Volait, 2003.
2.See Healey 2017 for an expanded autobiography ..
3.This was of course a hugely vague and ambitious project, which had to be narrowed down.
4.The Marxist ideas of Andre Gunther Frank were particularly influential in critical Latin American development ideas at the time (Frank, 1967).
5.Yet many readers seem to have found it useful in opening up horizons of thought relevant in other contexts.
6.I take this last position (Healey, 2010)
7.This term has come into general use in Anglophone public policy discussion in recent years. It sometimes refers to specific agencies which need to be involved in specific decision areas. Or it may refer to all those who have a 'stake' in something (a service, an area) about which a decision is to be made.
8.Examples where the national state controlled the flow of resources included, in theory, the USSR. See also Britain during World War II. Some cities have also had significant control over resources through their local tax base and ownership of urban land (for example, Amsterdam and Stockholm in Europe and Hong Kong in China).
9.Actually, it did quite well!
10.This metaphor of a camera with a wide angle and a more focused lens comes from Etzioni, 1967.

About the author

Patsy Healey is professor emeritus in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University, UK. She is a specialist in planning theory and the practice of planning, strategic planning and urban regeneration policies. She has undertaken research on how planning strategies work out in practice and on partnership forms of neighbourhood regeneration experiences. Recent books include Collaborative Planning: shaping places in fragmented societies (1997, 2nd ed., 2006) and Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies (2007) and Making Better Places (2010). She was Senior Editor of the Journal, Planning Theory and Practice, until 2009. She was awarded the OBE in 1999, became an Honorary Fellow of the Association of European Schools of Planning in 2004, was awarded the RTPI Gold Medal in 2006 and is a member of the British Academy and the Academy of Social Sciences. From 2012-2015, she was chair of a local development trust in Northumberland and is still a trustee. Recent publications include joint editorship of The Routledge Handbook of Planning Research Methods (2015), as well as book chapters in 2015, 2017 and forthcoming, and journal articles in 2015 and 2018.
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Planning Knowledge for the Arab World in a Global Context

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Abstract

The Royal Town Planning Institute describes town planning as combining elements of both a science and an art. This combines technological or scientific rationality with the art in recognising the importance of complexity, politics and local culture in shaping where the best development outcomes should be located. In responding to Healey's paper, we argue that, whilst the purpose, principles and aspirations of planning might be broadly generic, (in responding to global and local agendas in terms of how decisions are made about the use of space and making places better and more inclusive), it can never be a wholly rational or technical process. Local context is critical. Therefore, it is important to remember that all planning systems have their own distinctive characteristics, rooted in a country's historic, administrative, political and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the majority of those who practise planning will do so in very localised contexts related to specific cities or places. Local planners must seek local solutions for local problems designed to improve local quality of life. Nevertheless, in an increasingly globalised and interconnected world, learning from international experience can be hugely valuable. However, the application of such insights into different country contexts needs to be carefully, critically and reflectively translated and transformed to meet local circumstances. From this perspective, local planning knowledge becomes critical.

Introduction

Inevitably, Patsy Healey has produced an interesting and challenging thought piece for the planning academy and practice, particularly within an Arab context, drawing upon her vast professional and academic experiences. It is a very personal piece where at times she implies she has been a little surprised at how far her ideas, rooted in English planning practice, have travelled and taken root around the world. This response focuses on the Arab World from the wider perspective of the Middle Eastern and North African countries (MENA) stretching from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east. A common characteristic is that most of the citizens in these countries, 91%, practise the Muslim faith. This creates a specific cultural context within which planning fits and raises interesting questions as to whether there are particular types of planning practice, knowledge and education that meets the specific regional and/or country contexts. A key question is surely, whether there is sufficient homogeneity in the 'Arab World', or are the specificities of each country so unique, that we need to consider different bodies of planning knowledge, not only for, but within the MENA countries?

In this paper, we respond to some of Healey's ideas and themes and begin to think through what this might mean for planning knowledge, planning practice and planning education as each country, in their own way, seeks to respond to new local and global challenges. This is particularly important because, having signed up to the New Urban Agenda and its associated implementation plan, all countries are "striving to improve capacity for urban planning and design the provision of training for urban planners at national, subnational and local levels" (UN-Habitat, 2016, Article 102). There is an expectation that all signatory states will report on their implementation of their capacity building for planning and the universities should have an important role to play in delivering critical and reflective planning education. This therefore requires some local self-reflection on what type of planning knowledge is relevant, how planning education is being taught and how rapidly the curriculum adapts to the unprecedented changes in societal needs, wants and expectations.

These reflections are based on personal experiences of having visited and worked in several Arab countries over the last few years, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. We do not pretend that our understanding of the planning contexts is comprehensive and indeed readily acknowledge that our perspectives are partial, but there is currently, as in many other parts of the world, an appetite for planning reform. There is a growing appreciation driven by a combination of local factors (e.g., the Arab Spring) and international concerns (delivering the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda) that current planning systems are ripe for reform. For example, how do we deal with the global challenges of climate change and yet build resilience into our urban development; how do we meet local societal needs in terms of the provision of affordable housing; how do we attract exogenous investment in growth and diversify economies many of which have been in the past fifty years or so heavily reliant on fossil fuels; and, how can local resources be more efficiently, effectively and inclusively utilised and managed? These are to a large extent common, complex and 'wicked' planning problems (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Difficult decisions have to be made about who has the right to develop land and whose interests are being served (or compromised) by such decisions. How land is to be used, and how should development be co-ordinated, surely has to be at the heart of formal place-making agendas. This is also central to what formal spatial planning should deliver, however this term may be locally defined and at whatever scale it operates. We would argue strongly that whilst it is relatively easy to identify limitations with any existing planning system, and to propose system reform, unless the behaviours of the planning actors and the culture of planning practice changes, inertia sets in, fossilising existing and embedded institutionalised traditions, customs and practices (Shaw and Lord, 2007).

In this short paper, we reflect on the six key questions that Healey (2018) proposes in relation to some of the challenges for planning practice, planning research and planning education in the MENA countries. There is a complex inter-relationship between the context for planning, which can be framed in terms of both a wider global policy context and the dynamics of local development, the purpose and tools of planning and the need for appropriate human capital/ expertise able to efficiently and effectively play the 'planning game' (Lord, 2012).

The context for planning

In an increasingly interconnected and globalised world, there is a growing realisation of the need for collaborative work between countries to meet both global and local policy priorities. Most countries in the world have now signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This sets a highly ambitious agenda to deal with a broad range of social, economic and environmental challenges.

> *"We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path. We would argue that central to this agenda is the need for some system and mechanisms to ensure a coherent, co-ordinated and managed process of land use change. " (United Nations, 2016)*

The last part of the quote firmly advocates that prospects for planning, as an activity which needs to be institutionalised and practised, leading to positive outcomes, can never have been more important. But, even where there is a well-established profession, such as in the UK, and planning might be perceived to be flourishing, public sector planning services are being squeezed by austerity, the numbers of students entering universities to study planning are relatively low and the planning profession as a whole is experiencing massive shortages. In many countries there is a critical shortage of planners and it remains a relatively "Cinderella" profession compared with other built environment professions. In many parts of the Global South and the MENA countries in particular, the shortages of trained planners are desperate. Nevertheless, planners and the planning profession itself have a duty to become strong advocates of the idea that planning can add value, deliver positive outcomes and is worth investing in, although in practice this can be challenging. "Planning is critical to providing clarity and confidence for investments by markets so that they are able to deliver good development" (Adams et al., 2016, p. 1), largely through co-ordinating the actions of other stakeholders.

To achieve such ambitious, aspirational, and some might suggest idealistic goals, will require integrated, collaborative and partnership action that we would describe as planning. In 2016, 167 countries and numerous other agencies endorsed UN-Habitat's Urban Agenda. This is seen as a key commitment to the mechanism to achieve meaningful interventions to deliver the core sustainability goals. It is difficult to argue with these, what some might see as, normative goals, but what has been widely recognised is that meaningful interventions will be required to design, plan, implement and evaluate whether the interventions are making a difference. Land use, town and country, spatial, territorial, or whatever other planning term you wish to use, the key is that planning is often seen as a deliberative process designed to co-ordinate investment decisions, mediate conflict and make decisions as to how space within a nation state and, increasingly importantly, urban areas should be used. Planning is being seen as a key instrument of spatial governance and policy. Planning is an activity whose main purpose is to co-ordinate, regulate and frame the development process, with the intention of delivering goals and aspirations that are societally determined. Arguably, once again planning is an activity whose time has come.

The system of planning

Healey identifies three schools of thought as to what planning is: the application of knowledge to action in the public domain; what the rules of a formal system are and who operates them; or more generally; concerned with place governance. At its core, planning as an activity needs to co-ordinate different stakeholder interests in seeking to provide a spatial framework as to what development is necessary and where it should be located. These frameworks can be expressed as spatial plans (Kenawy et al., 2017). It needs to regulate development and it needs to be "fleet of foot" to respond dynamically to rapidly changing and evolving circumstances and situations. It can operate at a variety of different scales – national, regional and local – with the actors who operate the system needing to both synthesise and co-ordinate the actions of others to reach a general view as to the best way forward and also have a focus on ensuring a range of stakeholders work together to deliver agreed outcomes. Planning, therefore, should be seen as an analytical, fore-sighting and problem orientated activity that also has an important focus on delivery. To take a musical analogy, the planners need to be involved in both composing (developing the plan) and conducting the orchestra (or key actors) to work together collaboratively. All this takes place within a complex, messy and rapidly changing policy environment where uncertainty is the key. Hence, planning as an activity needs to be flexible, dynamic, adaptive and indeed modest in terms of what it can achieve. It can never be a system that creates and guarantees delivery, because in many cases it is only one of many framework conditions that can help deliver outcomes that are set within national contexts which are politically and societally driven, increasingly shaped by wider global perspectives and agendas. Whilst planning remains critical, it must remain modest in terms of what it can achieve. Furthermore, whilst planning might be considered a generic activity, as the world and the Arab countries themselves become more urbanised, the need for more effective urban management of the cities becomes more prominent. Exactly what the tools of planning should be, how they should be organised and at what spatial scales planning activities should occur must be framed by local contexts, institutional frameworks and capacities.

In Saudi Arabia, the country and its cities have developed rapidly over the last 50 years, although more recently there is a growing realisation that city development has not been as efficient and effective as it could be. To this end, in 2013 UN-Habitat was engaged to provide support and guidance and to initiate planning change through the Future Saudi Cities Programme. This work was given further impetus in 2015, when the Saudi government launched Vision 2030, an aspirational programme for change. This envisions a process of societal transformation, much of which will have significant spatial implications. This potentially places planning at the heart of any process seeking to overcome long-established and well-known challenges regarding the lack of horizontal and vertical integration between sectoral ministries, all of which have specific development targets which "land" in places, but in a largely uncoordinated manner. The National Transformation Programme, which is the implementation plan to deliver the Vision, requires all key stakeholders to deliver SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time limited) goals. The Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs (MoMRA), the body primarily responsible for planning, has committed itself to two key targets: updating the National Spatial Strategy and developing a new Planning Act. The latter will bring about fundamental system reform. This Act, which is still being developed, has five key perspectives at its heart. It seeks to develop co-ordinated and integrated (both vertically and horizontally) spatial visions and plans at a variety of spatial scales (national, regional and local); to ensure inclusive stakeholder engagement in the processes of planning; to emphasise the focus on development management and compliance; to be concerned with effective implementation; and, to be part of a driver for greater efficiency in governance currently characterised by overlapping roles, responsibilities and jurisdictions in the planning system. Whilst it might be relatively easy to deliver system change, what might

be more challenging will be to deliver culture change in terms of how stakeholders interact with the system. For example, at the moment, there is a National Plan, but it is now nearly 20 years old and does not have a strong implementation arm. Every five years, the Ministry of Economy and Planning produces an aspatial five-year programming and funding plan. By linking revisions to the National Spatial Plan to the five-year economic planning cycle, stronger links between strategic spatial visions and implementation could be achieved relatively easily.

Most countries in the world have a formal planning system, whose power, purpose and legitimacy stem from a state authority. At the same time, it is also important to recognise that, in many parts of the world, much development is not formally regulated by the state, and informal planning processes are the predominant mechanisms shaping land use change and city development. Such informality often becomes the norm in those countries that lack institutional infrastructure and/or human planning capacity, and are then often overwhelmed by development needs. Sometimes, these informal processes are, in practice, the most dominant form of planning. For instance, in Egypt approximately 16 million people (out of an estimated total population in 2018 of 99 million) are currently living in 422 informal areas that have been categorised as unsafe by the state authority (Madbouly, 2016). Although the nomination of these areas as 'unsafe' is controversial for many scholars, we are referring to the official report in this paper. In total, 35 of these are considered dangerous, where, for example, fire could lead to life-threatening consequences for the residents, and they require immediate remediation measures (El Fouly and El Aziz, 2017). These informal areas also represent a huge pressure on natural resources. For example, 81 % of informal areas in the Greater Cairo Region are located on privately owned agricultural land (Osman et al., 2019). The spread of informal areas, in the heart of the capitals of MENA countries, has become a barrier to development and foreign investment, since investors perceive these areas to be unsafe. Consequently, upgrading of informal areas is seen as a cornerstone in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. To what extent should planning education reflect formal as opposed to informal planning practices?

At a simple level, planning is the process, formal or informal, by which decisions are made to permit or restrict development on particular parcels of land. Whilst spatial planning has traditionally been viewed as a terrestrial (land-based) activity, within Europe increasing attention is being placed on the opportunities and risks that the marine environment offers. The idea of a more integrated, territorial development approach combining the planning for land and sea over the whole area where a nation state has a degree of jurisdictional competence is beginning to take purchase. This territorial approach or 'one space perspective' (Kidd and Shaw, 2021) is starting to gain traction in Europe and has begun to take root in some parts of the Arab world, especially where significant natural resources (mainly oil and gas) are found offshore. A key question in terms of planning knowledge is to what extent does the planning knowledge available reflect these formal and informal systems of planning and these new conceptions of territoriality?

The capacity to deliver

Whilst there is a growing importance and potential for planning to help address societal challenges from a number of different perspectives, one of the key but often under-debated aspects of change is the human capacity to deliver. In the West, we are often fortunate that the public institutions are well established and often have significant capacity to deliver. Despite the pressures of austerity, the smallest planning departments in local authorities in England will often have 15 -20 professional planners and other support staff (Shaw, 2018). A Mackenzie report (2015) on human capacity gaps in Saudi Arabia suggested that, in comparison to the

USA, there was a shortage of 2,500 public sector planners per 30 million residents and yet the planning schools in KSA were only producing about 80 planning graduates a year, many of which increasingly ended up working in the private sector or outside the profession altogether. So, even before system reform in Saudi Arabia is activated, there is an acute shortage of university-educated planners. The situation is probably going to become more

desperate as existing university provision is threatened by a combination of low student demand, poorer quality student intake, internal university politics and perversely for planning graduates, difficulties in accessing public sector employment opportunities, meaning planning positions are often being filled by individuals from non-cognate disciplines. This in part, because traditionally, the Civil Service has centrally controlled all public sector jobs. Once the entrance exam is passed (a combination of an aptitude test, first degree results and length of time without a job), the applicant becomes a nominated candidate who can take up most civil service positions, without reference to the recruiting department, who simply receives the candidate. The proposed reforms, combined with a growing importance of planning at the national, regional and local scales, would suggest that the demand for planners will increase significantly. However, unless the existing gaps can be backfilled, it remains unlikely that any system reform can deliver its intended outcomes because of the lack in human capacity. This relates to both new human capacity and retraining the existing capacity to do things differently. "Planning is a vehicle, which cannot be fixed by only looking at the engine. You need to change the way the machine is driven" (McNulty, 2003, quoted in Shaw and Lord, 2007, p, 63). Universities will have a significant role to play in determining what knowledge and skills are required for planning practice in the 21st century and have a great opportunity to reshape the curricula to meet local needs.

Some final reflections

The twin challenges of rapid urbanisation combined with environmental uncertainty mean that planning as an activity, defined more generally as being concerned with the processes we use to determine what type of development should be appropriate in what space (primarily on the land, but also increasingly within a marine environment), has arguably never been more critical. The challenges are multi-dimensional and multi-faceted and require a cadre of professionals to critically draw together a number of strands and themes that balance the need for a socially just and inclusive society, that further economic growth to create jobs and wealth, that give meaning to life, and yet fully respect environmental limits, from the local to the global. We as global inhabitants, in our many societies, have an insatiable appetite to use land. How this land is managed and whose interests are served (or compromised) by these decisions are at the heart of this activity we call planning. However, even if we believe that this is the core of what we need to do, how do we persuade others that planning is an activity that has to be invested in to secure our future and how do we train the new cadre of professional planners to deliver this critical agenda? Planning tends to be a national activity that obtains its legitimacy to operate from the state authority within which it operates; therefore, local contexts, political, administrative and cultural, remain critical to planning systems and planning education. Many have bemoaned the dominance of an Anglo-American centric hegemony in the planning academy (Stiftel and Mukhopadhyay, 2007; Davy, 2018), but differences do matter (Kunzmann, 2019).

ArcPlan as a new journal offers the potential for serious debate in the Arab world on what type of planning is required in different countries, and importantly, how to deliver a modern, flexible, desirable planning education that attracts high quality students and meets societal imperatives.

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Decolonizing planning education: perspectives from the Global South

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Abstract

Planning curricula taught in universities in colonised territories bear the strong imprint of these relations. This leaves planning graduates ill-equipped to respond to the current realities of cities produced by coloniality, and they graduate with technicist ambitions to transform these cities into "orderly", controlled, and largely middle-class environments based on Global North urban models. This paper argues that a process of decolonising planning curricula (and their institutional homes - universities) is required to produce planning graduates sensitive to the contextual issues facing them. Also important is democratisation of university access – epistemologically and through imparting a sense of ownership. The paper will consider seven ways in which Global South planning schools need to decolonise if graduates are to be able to respond to the context-related particularities of cities in these regions, but also in any other part of the world. These are: rethinking of planning theory and history; diversification of authoritative texts and sources of information; the importance of place and context; promoting experiential learning; encouraging self-reflection on values in pedagogy; inter-student dialogue and interaction; and teacher diversity and exposure of students to different voices of authority.

Keywords:

Planning education; planning curricula; decolonisation; Global South

Introduction

Planning curricula taught in universities in previously and currently colonised territories often bear the strong imprint of these colonial relations. In regions previously under colonial rule, cities and towns are now significantly changed, but these older planning pedagogies and planning models and concepts persist. Under contemporary colonialism (or imperialism) there is a constant and ongoing reshaping of built environments as well as forms of knowledge production and professional training. This often leaves planning graduates ill-equipped to respond to the current realities of cities produced by coloniality, and they often graduate with technicist ambitions to transform these cities into "orderly", controlled, and largely middle-class environments based on urban models from other parts of the world. These may be EuroAmerican (or Global North) models but may also be models from other colonising powers.

The purpose of this paper is not specifically to analyse these colonial impacts on cities, but rather to consider the kinds of qualities which planning curricula in these (or perhaps any) parts of the world should aim to achieve if planning graduates are to be able to directly address the planning issues and concerns of these complex environments. The paper considers seven aspects of curriculum reform: rethinking of planning theory and history; diversification of authoritative texts and sources of information; the importance of place and context; promoting experiential learning; self-reflection on values in pedagogy; inter-student dialogue and interaction; and teacher diversity and exposure of students to different voices of authority.

This paper refers to the need to "decolonise" planning education with a focus of concern on the Global South context, and this opens up questions regarding terminology. I use the term 'Global South' as more than a metaphor for underdevelopment, which has been its dominant usage. Following Dados and Connell (2012, p. 13) I understand it to reference "an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy and access to resources are maintained…". It thus includes countries and regions previously colonised by imperial powers as well as territories still under direct or indirect political and economic control and hence described as neo-colonial territories. The Arab World includes all of these trajectories. I also understand the term 'Global South' to refer not to a geographical south, but to an intellectual perspective on planning and urbanism from the South (Watson 2016). As an example of this, Yiftachel (2016) suggests a different epistemology of learning about and from South(east) cities. Drawing on a deep understanding of a single city – Jerusalem – he argues that cities like this can be used, not as universal models, but as a window to see the relational nature of urban forces, the rise of new categories and concepts, and the transformations which they bring about over time.

The paper will first consider the kinds of problems encountered in universities and planning programmes which are, or have been, shaped by coloniality. It will then discuss the qualities of planning education which should be aspired to, not only in contexts shaped by wider forces with perhaps questionable agendas, but in any context where planning aims to promote human development and sustainability.

The shaping of knowledge production and universities

There is now a significant literature which points to ways in which the global political-economy of knowledge production and dissemination is skewed by an Anglo-American hegemony reinforced by university resourcing, the dominance of the English language in teaching

and publication, the concentration of large academic publishing companies in Global North regions, and the growth of market-linked principles in the operation of universities and the production of graduates (Connell 2007; de Souza Santos 2017; Paasi 2005). A recent detailed analysis of citation patterns in the fields of urban geography and urban studies (Kong and Qian 2017) shows the still dominant position of the Anglophone world in the production and circulation of urban knowledge, although contributions from other regions, especially China, are growing. Top ranking universities are invariably located in the Global North and high impact academic journals are almost always in English and with editors and editorial boards also from these parts of the world. In planning journals as well, Yiftachel (2006) notes, "gatekeepers" of theoretical knowledge (primarily journal editors and editorial boards) are rarely in the Global South-east. Universities and scholars operating outside of this global 'core' of knowledge may be seen as marginal and less relevant, and are often seen as sources of data exportation rather than as sources of new conceptualisation (Paasi 2005).

Also underlying patterns of Northern knowledge hegemony is the concept of 'international' knowledge, usually regarded as in some way superior to local and contextual knowledge. It is invariably abstract and detached from context, and it is this kind of knowledge to which many scholars and institutions aspire. Yet frequently these concepts are based on assumptions which in some way can be related to particular geographic places, and hence their claims to generalisability need to be closely scrutinised. It is this abstract and generalisable concept of knowledge which makes it acceptable for academic texts, university curricula, and many other aspects of knowledge production to be spread across the globe, and usually outwards from the centres of power, resources, and highly ranked institutions and publication channels. A belief in the value of abstract and a-contextual knowledge also allows the similar spread of policies, plans, and programmes from one part of the globe to another – a process sometimes referred to as the 'best practice' approach to interventions of various kinds. . Healey (2018, p. 2) asks an important question in relation to this: does the challenge of planning work in the Arab world "involve adapting the body of knowledge developed globally or does a distinctive body of knowledge need to be developed for different parts of the world?" An emerging useful body of work on urban policy mobilities (see Bunnell 2015) points to the need to understand the complexities of such travelling ideas: how they are beginning to emerge from various sites not only located in North America and Europe, what processes underlie their transfer, and how aspects of context determine the how and to what ends they are used. The kinds of questions posed by Healey, Bunnell, and others lead us to interrogate the concept of 'international' knowledge and 'best practice' global transfers of ideas of all kinds.

Linked to an interest in processes of coloniality and decoloniality has been an emerging literature on the University. Mbembe (2016) argues that in relation to the institution of the University, the decolonisation project is back on the agenda world-wide. He points to two aspects of this agenda: the first is a critique of the dominant Eurocentric academic model or epistemic coloniality – "that is, the endless production of theories that are based on European traditions" (Mbembe 2016, p. 36); the second is what an alternative model of a university may look like. Here he points to the need for "democratization of access", financially, epistemologically, and as a sense of ownership, implying that neither students nor staff should feel strange or as an outsider. He questions universities which attempt to be replicas of Oxford or Cambridge as well as those teaching what he refers to as obsolete forms of knowledge with obsolete pedagogies. These traditions he sees as detaching the known from the knower, producing knowledge that is universal and independent of context, and as such cannot be questioned. Instead he calls for 'classrooms without walls' in which all are co-learners and in which the university is a platform for distributing different kinds of knowledges. Here he echoes De Sousa Santos (2017) who calls for 'pluriversities' rather than 'universities' which value a multiplicity of contextual knowledge rather than primarily abstract, universalised,

and detached forms of knowledge. Neither of these writers suggest that universities should discard the rich Eurocentric critical tradition, but rather they are questioning its foundational truths and its relevance for often very different contexts.

University planning programmes and curricula

University planning departments and their curricula have not been immune to the wider global processes affecting patterns of knowledge production and the nature of universities, discussed above. In countries subject to earlier eras of colonisation, foreign governments established planning laws and regulations to control urban settlement, state departments of planning to operate these systems, and eventually universities to train local professionals for new institutions, including planners. On the African continent, planning laws were inevitably adopted, sometimes verbatim, from colonising countries (Home 1997; Nunes Silva 2015) and English Land Law, Roman-Dutch Law, the French Civil Code, and Portuguese Common Law still shape planning law and practice, often with little subsequent change (McAuslan 2003). Much of the Arab World also experienced colonisation or annexation (in various and complex forms) by Britain, France, Italy, and Russia, and Palestine continues to feel the brunt of Israeli occupation. Planning systems and models show a strong influence of 'Westernisation' either through colonisation or the circulation of planning consultants and advisors (Yarwood 2011). However, it is recognised that an extensive circulation of influence and ideas occurs within the Arab World, as well as the use of planning as a process of violent occupation as in the case of Israel/Palestine (Yiftachel 2010).

While information on planning systems and planning curricula in the Arab World is not easily available in English, Tawil and Baeumer (2018) state that in Jordan and the Middle East, planning is considered a new discipline, and where it is offered, it is usually aligned with the teaching of architecture and engineering. Socio-economic aspects of planning tend to be ignored and planning is instead presented as a technocratic and reactive exercise. Planning (along with architecture), they suggest, is often seen as facilitating urban modernisation and growth with little concern for heritage and culture. In a similar vein, Madbouly (2009) says that in the MENA regions, the physical aspects of planning are emphasised in curricula and there is a growing gap between the nature of planning being taught and the needs of society. In Egypt, for example, planning is taught in architecture departments and programmes train students in producing classical master plans, reflecting expertise-based technologies and top-down, non-participatory approaches.

Assessments of Sub-Saharan African planning curricula by the Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS) (Diaw et al. 2002; Odendaal and Watson 2018) indicate the extent of the disconnect between the way planning is taught and the actual issues which will confront planners when they graduate and work in the African context. Many of these planning curricula were shaped by colonial histories and planning practices which envisaged controlled, orderly, predictable, and compliant urban futures in which cities could be managed through master plans, zoning controls, and high building standards. There is no informality in these desired cities. Along with these inherited curricula are national planning laws which are also little changed since colonial times, requiring that planning students understand this way of planning. Cities in which informality is the norm in both shelter and livelihoods, and where urban population growth is rapid in situations of state resource and skill constraint, render Northern planning prescriptions less than appropriate – although policy mobility across Global South territories (also highly variable) is emerging. Students taught according to these texts and concepts find themselves ill-prepared to address the very different issues in African cities. In addition to published sources of information, many PhDs in African planning schools are undertaken in Europe or the US where scholarships are more plentiful

and post-graduate degrees have higher status. These academics frequently return to jobs in African universities and apply their training in courses they teach. And where there are professional planning bodies which accredit planning programmes these, too, attempt to ensure curricula conform to the requirements of national planning legislation. For example, until recently, the Nigerian professional accreditation body did not mention informality in its curriculum requirements as it is regarded as the antithesis to "modern" and "orderly" cities. Hence there are a whole set of structural factors which reinforce the inherited status quo, leaving it very difficult for progressive planning academics to transform curricula. It is very likely that such structural factors constrain curriculum change in many parts of the Arab World as well.

Decolonising planning curricula: seven key aspects

This section of the paper will discuss some important ways in which planning curricula in Global South regions can 'decolonise' although this needs to happen along with parallel efforts in universities as a whole and ideally within the wider planning profession.

1. Re-thinking the teaching of planning theory and history

Most planning curricula include courses on planning theory and planning history, sometimes combined. Conventionally, planning history courses begin with the 'founding fathers' of planning over 100 years ago, including British Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities and Patrick Geddes' city-region, French architect Le Corbusier and American Frank Lloyd Wright. Courses then track European and American zoning laws and master planning, its shift to rational comprehensive planning and systems thinking, and approaches to communicative and collaborative planning. Recent years have seen the diversification of planning thought to cover agonism, complexity theory, new institutionalism, justice, the post-political, and other perspectives, and only much more recently have these ideas been challenged from positions using terms such as insurgency, ethnocracy, Global South, and post-colonialism. Most of the unfolding story of planning has been written by authors located in Global North regions and most (there have been exceptions) are ideas shaped by this context. A recent book on key thinkers in spatial planning (Haselsberger 2017) has only one of 16 chapters on a planning theorist outside of Europe, the UK, and America (and the exception is from Israel). As a result, we know very little about planning concepts which originated in other parts of the world, and very little about indigenous forms of planning developed and practised elsewhere. Texts on these "other" regions usually record the establishment and development of Western planning ideas.

A decolonised planning curriculum certainly needs to include this Western canon as the imposition of these ideas on colonised territories and through processes of coloniality explains much of the way Global South cities and regions are currently shaped by planning. But there are other histories of planning which can be surfaced in a new planning curriculum. Roberts (2018: 283-4) explains how her approach to teaching planning history and theory (in an American context) "seeks out Black placemaking history and methods and is based on an epistemology of planning, preservation, and research …(which) is a process of looking back, believing there's wisdom there, and applying that knowledge to current dilemmas while refraining from romanticizing some mythic past". She explains how her teaching and research develops planning theories and histories which are concerned with "how Black planning imaginaries can disrupt cunning and virulent white/colonial spatial imaginaries in historic Black communities. Essentially, how might historical and contemporary Black imaginaries be made visible and instrumental in a discipline often implicated in gentrification and cultural erasure?" The method Roberts (2018) is proposing here suggests that new stories of

planning history can be elicited from those who have been marginalised and dispossessed by planning actions.

2. Diversifying planning texts

Linked to point one above, in all planning courses an effort needs to be made to diversify what are referred to as authoritative texts and sources of information, and where possible to draw on relevant published work from sources outside of the Global North and on local sources. This does not suggest disregarding the international canons of the day; however, these can be approached from a critical and deconstructing perspective – as all sources of knowledge should be. Raewyn Connell, in her book (Connell 2007) and in a later article urging planning theorists to also draw from sources outside of the Global North (Connell 2014), points to rich strands of theorising in social science which question Northern assumptions and offer alternative perspectives. For example, Alatas (2006) documents social-scientific thought in the Arab World; Comaroff and Comaroff (2011) offer anthropological perspectives from Africa; and Prebish (1981) developed a global economic framing from Latin America. However, Connell (2007) argues that these Southern theorists have generally been disregarded in the development of Western theorising.

In planning, Yiftachel's writing on ethnicity and planning, informed by the context of Israel/Palestine, has been an important voice arguing for recognition that much of mainstream planning theory, which claims universality, is in fact shaped by a Global North context (Yiftachel 2006). Bhan (2016) draws on research on "basti" (informal settlement) evictions in Delhi, India, to challenge the dynamics of contemporary urbanism across 'urban peripheries' more generally. This research allows Bhan to suggest new Southern theorisation of the 'judicialisation' of planning, of urban citizenship, and of impoverishment and inequality. Porter (2010) draws on in-depth research in Australia and other settler-colonies, to expose the ways in which Western planning ideas stereotype culture, persist in the dominance of Western norms and laws, and exclude other voices of difference and dissent –as a process of dispossession of indigenous populations. Roy (see 2016 and numerous earlier publications) has called for attention to the way in which the 'field of action' is structured by imperial practices, and to question taken-for-granted theoretical categories such as formal/informal, global cities and so on. She calls for new ways of understanding the dynamics of urbanism and for taking into account global processes of 'worlding' (the 'art of being global') rather than conceptions dominated by world city and global city discourses.

In the context of Southeast and Central Asia, Perera (2016) argues that subaltern classes are often unable to engage in open protest where state or corporation-produced space does not fit their needs. However, they shape urban space in more subtle and covert ways through 'indigenization' of space. Miraftab (2018) takes the idea of 'insurgent planning' to colonial and postcolonial contexts and to a reliance on the direct actions of citizens to bring about change. She proposes a framework structured by the concepts of 'invited' spaces of action (sanctioned and tolerated by dominant groups) and 'invented' spaces of action (opened up through resistance and ostracised and criminalised by dominant groups). The recent Companion to Planning in the Global South (Bhan et al. 2018) compiles southern perspectives on a wide range of planning issues.

3. The importance of place and context

A central theme running through the work of all the authors above is a rejection of abstract planning knowledge which claims to be universal and equally valid in every part of the world. These authors all emphasise the importance of understanding place and context in planning theory and practice, and efforts to decolonise planning curricula need to acknowl-

edge and highlight place difference. Students need to be careful of pseudo-universalised language, a failure to surface the assumptions which frequently underlie planning positions, and statements that come from a standpoint of 'nowhere'. Simply applying ideas and strategies developed elsewhere in the world (the 'best practice approach') without a very thorough understanding of context almost inevitably leads to poor, and sometimes disastrous, planning. The argument here is that any planning idea needs to be informed by an in-depth and critical analysis of the political, historical, socio-economic, and environmental aspects, as well as local knowledges, that shape the context under study. In curricula, this can be supported through drawing on local case studies and precedents as much as possible, basing planning studios in local communities and projects, and in research projects the use of the case study research method encourages deep immersion in local conditions (Flyvbjerg 2004; Duminy et al. 2014).

This is the issue explored by Patsy Healey (2018) in her article which leads this special issue of the journal (also Healey 2012). Here Healey considers the development of planning knowledge between the "specificity of contingent practice with a particular geography and history" and planning which draws on global, more universal, resources. Her argument is that there needs to be:

> *'continual critical interaction between detailed knowledge of particular circumstances and the wider discussion of such experiences. If we immerse ourselves too much in the particular, we may fail to see the challenges and opportunities arriving over the horizon. If we spend our time globally with just a broad and wide-angle lens, our generalisations will ring hollow (Healey 2018, p. 14).*

4. Promoting experiential learning

An important way for students to learn about place and context in a decolonised planning curriculum is through experiential learning, outside of the classroom and in the communities whose lives are fundamentally affected by planning actions. The experiential learning process potentially shifts the mind-sets of students such that they begin to understand the realities of life in informal settlements, and the importance of producing plans that build on these everyday needs and capacities. It encourages mutual-learning, dialogue, reflection, and the development of contemplative knowledge, so that students may begin to enhance their interpersonal skills. It encourages students to adopt an openness to the experiences and perceptions of the many and diverse residents who live and work in the cities we study, and with whom we hope to plan. It emphasises the value of seeking-out, appreciating, and respecting local knowledge, while, at the same time, allowing students the time and space to examine their own values and intentions. It nurtures an empathic approach to planning.

As an example of this kind of 'engaged scholarship', Petti (2018) describes the first university in a refugee camp: Campus in Camps located in the Dhiesheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem, Palestine. The university was founded to address the numerous social and spatial interventions needed in Palestinian refugee camps and was termed a 'university without walls'. It set out to explore what the role of the university is in the greater transformation of society; how knowledge produced inside the walls can be useful and relevant for students living in marginalised communities; what kind of structures and institutions can produce this knowledge; how the production of knowledge based on information and skills can be shifted to processes of learning based on shifts in perception and critical approaches; and how theory can be reconciled with action, combining a rigorous understanding of problems with pragmatic and effective urban interventions (Petti 2018, p. 336).

Experiential learning was also embedded in curriculum change projects developed by AAPS

(Watson and Odendaal 2013) where an emphasis was placed on studio projects run in local poor communities and using NGOs (in this case Slum Dwellers International) as the mediator between students and communities. Students were asked to engage with communities directly to understand everyday problems of their environment and then to discuss with them what alternative planning interventions would work best. This approach to studios was also adopted in the planning programme at the University of Cape Town, but some hard lessons were learnt from these experiences. Winkler (2018a), reflecting on these studios, argues that there are a number of concerns which need to be overcome in a shift of teaching and learning from merely facilitating instrumental engagements with communities, to implementing transformative engagements that encompass values of democracy, reciprocity, power sharing, and social justice through the co-production of knowledge. It is not simple to work around the dominant culture of higher education characterised by scientific and technocratic knowledge, where problem-solving is shaped by expertise, and where exams, marks, and timetables are inevitably a preoccupation for both students and academics.

5. Self-reflection of values in pedagogy

In a decolonised planning education, it is necessary to encourage students (and teachers) to critically reflect on their own values and standpoints when developing curricula and when undertaking studio projects, theory papers, and research. This involves raising students' awareness of global social issues, poverty, inequality, social justice, intercultural learning and competence, respect for others, and their personal relationships to the social and natural world. Mbembe (n.d.) draws attention to the work of African philosopher Ngugi wa Thiong'o who calls for a perspective which can allow us "to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to other selves in the universe". By 'other selves', Mbembe argues, he is also referring to non-human actors, and recognising the need to also overcome anthropocentricism and humanism – the split between nature and culture.

Banks and Lachney (2017) write about the need to confront neutrality and violence in engineering curricula with arguments that have direct relevance for planning education as well. Planning programmes are often linked to engineering programmes, but beyond this the kinds of practices which the authors suggest are 'engineered violence' (decisions which result in demolition of buildings or shelters of various kinds, decisions which exclude poor communities from land and infrastructure) are also relevant for planning. Curricula which position these disciplines in apolitical or neutral terms raise the 'neutrality problem' by creating a false separation between the profession and politics, negating the understanding that all forms of knowledge-production are situated in socio-political contexts. They argue that:

> *"Violence need not always be as intentional or direct as it is in interpersonal interactions and can, in fact, be obscured by one's mundane work schedule. We contend that when engineers refuse to take an explicit position in such cases, or export concerns of violence to policy makers, elected officials, or managers, they are just as likely to perpetuate violence as to prevent it" (Banks and Lachney 2017, p. 5).*

This applies to planning as well. They therefore call for an integration of definitions of violence (interpersonal and structural) into curricula, and highlight how systematic injustice is a kind of negligence.

As an example of integrating social justice sensibilities into a curriculum, Larsen and Gärdebo (2017) show how students were encouraged to reflect on planning and regeneration projects in a Swedish city. Using tools of analytical thinking, critical reflection, and peer review along with experiential learning in the identified sites, students were asked to assess how these projects which claimed to be inclusive and sustainable also disrupted and marginal-

ised certain sectors of the population and violated social justice values.

6. Inter-student dialogue and interaction

Points have been made above about the importance of experiential learning, interaction, reflection, and peer-engagement in the classroom. Planning curricula also frequently ask for group-work in which students need to interact with each other to produce a common product. This kind of experience is an important precursor to planners' professional work which frequently requires working in interdisciplinary teams on projects.

Where there is student diversity in terms of culture, background, class, race, gender, and other identities, then in effect a curriculum is setting in motion a process of intercultural learning. However, especially in group-work, intolerances can become complex and systemic, and can give rise to tension, conflict, and marginalisation of students who might not fit a dominant positionality. These kinds of tensions amongst students can arise from unhealed wounds, a lack of awareness of what is said and how it is said, and a misinformed understanding of different histories and ways of being. These tensions cannot go unacknowledged or unresolved and require constant surfacing and dialogue, sometimes with the help of mediation

7. Academic/teacher diversity and exposure to different voices

In any learning process, it is important to move beyond the established academic cohort to bring different facilitator voices and experiences into the classroom or studio (or outside of it) to diversify perspectives on knowledge and dialogue. Diversification of gender, culture, race, language, and so on can open up new ideas about planning.

An interesting example of doing this was the AAPS student-community engagements in which Slum Dwellers International (SDI) was the mediating organisation (Watson and Odendaal 2013). It is important for students to spend time physically in these communities, but also for community members to come into the university and the classroom as teachers and assessors of student work. In the learning partnership between schools in the AAPS organisation and the NGO SDI, an effort was made to engage with community members as 'community professors' involved in teaching and feedback on student work. By attributing the label 'professor' to community members, the understanding of who holds knowledge was turned on its head and students were sensitised to the limitations of planning professionals as experts.

Conclusion

The establishment of the new journal Arcplan is one important step forward in drawing attention to planning ideas, practices, and pedagogies which emerge in the Arab World. These are ideas and perspectives which do not appear often in mainstream and English-language planning and urban studies journals. At the same time, a colonial influence (from many different parts of the world) on plans for towns and cities as well as on university planning programmes appears to be persistent and perhaps growing. This paper has argued that the training and educating of planners in the region will be critical for the establishment of alternative and hopefully counter perspectives which move the region in the direction of more socially just, equitable, and sustainable environments. In the longer term, such shifts could provide the basis for changes in countries' planning law and planning professional bodies, but such change is of course deeply enmeshed in both local and global political dynamics. It is also recognised that the kinds of shifts in planning education called for here, moving

towards what might be called decolonial planning curricula, are highly ambitious. There are both structural and agency-driven factors which work against most kinds of change in curricula, and often wider university and political change is a pre-condition for such shifts. The Campus in Camps initiative (Petti 2018) described above, which allowed very different planning pedagogies to emerge, or student protests such as those which happened in South Africa and opened the way for discussions on decolonised curricula (Winkler 2018b), are indications that wider radical transformation sets a context in which planning curricula are more amenable to change.

Notes

1.The regions addressed by the Arcplan Journal, and covering the Middle-East, North-Africa, Levant, Mediterranean, and the Gulf.

2.Referring to the relationship of coloniality to the narrative of modernity (Mignolo 2007).

3.Decolonial thinkers question an over-geographical determinism in critiques of Eurocentrism and argue that coloniality can be experienced everywhere and including in the West (Mignolo 2007).

4.Lecture, University of Witwatersrand 2016. Available at: https://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf

5.AAPS website: https://www.africanplanningschools.org.za/

6.Mbembe (n.d.) https://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf

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[In]visibilities: The Academic City versus Ordinary Cities Mediatizing Planning Knowledge in Egyptian Universities

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Abstract

How far does imaging the city in planning schools represent contextual urban realities? In Egypt, I noticed two conflicting realities: There is the Academic City, constructed through the teachings in academia (in urban planning schools) and there are the multiple, present lived cities, or what is referred to in this paper as Ordinary Cities.
Planning education in this study is conceived of as the communication and passing on of planning knowledge between current and future planning practitioners. The process of passing-on relies on mediating narratives and tools, for example drawings, digital and physical models and 3-D visualizations and the like. This paper aims investigates the kind of 'city' that planning students are exposed to in the process of becoming planning professionals by addressing two main questions: which city is visible for students of planning and how does the use of media in education privilege certain imaging / imagining over others?
This study is conceptualized around McLuhan, et al.'s (1967) concept of the medium as the message. Following a qualitative inductive reasoning approach, several data collection techniques were utilized: interviews with staff and students, focus groups, and Facebook polls. Egypt is investigated as a local case study to reflect on the global phenomenon of the mediatization and digitalization of urban planning.
It was demonstrated that most student projects related more to the imagined needs of a middle and upper-class market. The Academic City showed to largely resemble 'urban,' 'formal,' 'new' cities, which are not representative of the diverse socio-economic urban conditions within Egypt. The employment of media in planning education, that make apparent these urban visibilities and invisibilities, has a strong agency in this process. In the end, it is argued that the inclusion of the diverse realities of the urban within the academic discourse and design studios would guarantee that future urban planners have a better understanding of their professional responsibilities.

Keywords:

Planning Education, Planning Communication, Mediatization, Academic City, Exclusivity/Inclusivity, Egypt

Terminology

The term/concept mediatization stems from studies in the field of media and communication studies and refers to the interrelationship and interaction of media and society. According to Hjarvard (2008 p. 105):

> *"Mediatization is to be considered a double-sided process of high modernity in which the media on the one hand emerge as an independent institution with a logic of its own that other social institutions have to accommodate to. On the other hand, media simultaneously become an integrated part of other institutions like politics, work, family, and religion as more and more of these institutional activities are performed through both interactive and mass media".*

It is argued in this paper that the mediatization concept extends to the field of urban planning, its education, and its communication.
It is also important to note the difference between mediatization and the wider concept of mediation.

> *"Mediation refers to communication via a medium, the intervention of which can affect both the message and the relationship between sender and receiver. [...] Mediation describes the concrete act of communication by means of a medium in a specific social context. By contrast, mediatization refers to a more long-lasting process, whereby social and cultural institutions and modes of interaction are changed as a consequence of the growth of the media's influence"* (Hajvard, 2008, p. 114).

It should also be clarified that for instance Altheide and Snow (1988:195) – employ 'mediation' in the way 'mediatization' is employed in this article

Introduction

How far does imaging the city in planning schools represent contextual urban realities? As a previous student and current practitioner of planning, I noticed two conflicting realities: the city as it is dealt with in Egyptian schools of planning especially at the undergraduate level, and the status quo of urban realities in Egypt. There is the city that is taught and planned in academic design studios in which everything appears formal, neat, and well-designed and there is the other city that is informal, lacks basic services, and some call it chaotic. There is the Academic City, constructed through the teachings in academia (in urban planning schools) and there are the multiple, present lived cities, or what is referred to in this paper as Ordinary Cities.

This discrepancy between the knowledge and perception of urban planners and that of inhabitants has been recognized since the 1970s as a general phenomenon inherent in planning. For example, in 1975, Donald Appleyard pointed out that "the planner sees his model of the projected city as a totality, from above; the inhabitant sees the present reality, from street level. The planner's map is a multicolored physical reality; the inhabitant constructs and constantly revises his mental map as experience interacts with memory" (Appleyard, 1975). In this paper, it is argued that this criticism of professional planning practice remains valid today and that a change in planning education has still to be achieved – in the Global North and the Global South. Taking Egypt as the empirical setting of this study, I am intrigued to understand the impact and agency of rhetoric, as well as didactic and imaging tools employed in planning education to render a large part of urban realities invisible.

In design and planning, constructing the image of a city – making its qualities comprehensible and visualizing its future development – is a creative act influenced by a series of factors. From the side of the planner, it is impacted by the contracting authorities and the planners' socio-economic background, cultural literacy, and academic education. At the same time, the image of the city is also influenced by the emergence of communicative and collaborative planning approaches as well as the current discourses about the public sphere as a free medium between the state and the society (see Healy, 1996, 1997; Habermas, 1991).

In this sense, the mediums of communication that build the basis of planning education are central. McLuhan and Fiore (1967) pointed out in their book, *The Medium is the Massage* [1]*: An Inventory of Effects* the importance of communication mediums/media, stating that,

> *"All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the massage. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments"* (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 26).

So, if in the academic education of planning media is the message, mediatizing planning impacts (1) the planning knowledge transmitted and communicated between its actors: planning professors and students, and (2) the communicated embedded meanings within the tools used to transfer this planning knowledge. Accordingly, media tools used in communicating the products of urban planning (like posters, 3-D models, etc.) on their own (even without a content) demonstrate an ability to also deliver a message (Hall, 2015).

This paper aims to investigate and ignite discussions about the kind of 'city' that planning students are exposed to in the process of becoming planning professionals and the purpose of the employed mediums/media in these processes. Accordingly, two main questions guide this research: Which Academic City is made visible for students of urban planning, and

how does the use of media in the education of urban planning privilege certain imaging/ imagining over others?

Concept, outline and methodology

In this paper, the Academic City is perceived as the result of the urban planning knowledge communicated about cities in planning schools in Egypt. This study is conceptualized around McLuhan, et al.'s (1967) concept of the medium as the message. In this sense, messages are extracted from both: the educational content provided to planning students and the analysis of the mediums/media employed to communicate this content.
This paper starts by situating the research within the global discussions about planning education and planning communication/mediatization [2]. Next, and in order to answer the first research question, the Academic City in Egypt is presented by investigating the educational content students are exposed to, and the mediums/media employed in communicating this content. Finally, the meanings that arise from these explorations are presented as an abstracted comparison of the Academic City versus lived Ordinary Cities (current urban conditions for the majority of the population in Egypt) to answer the second research question

(Figure 1).

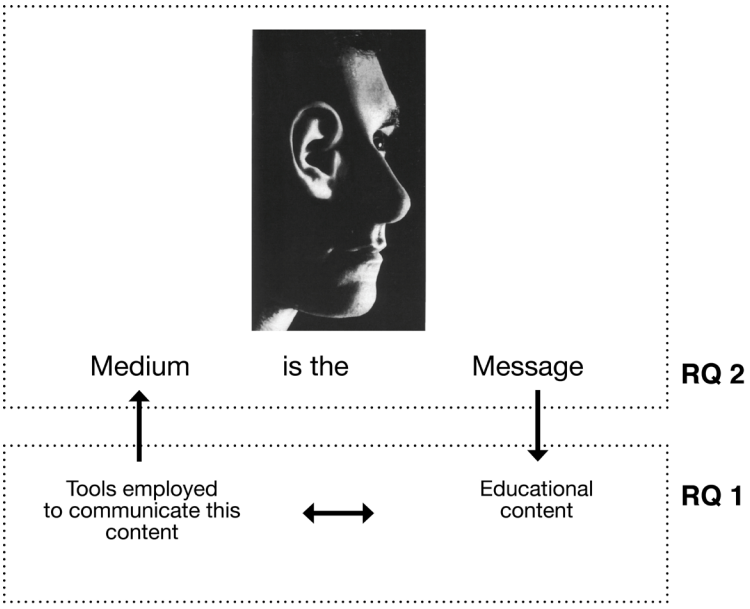

Figure 1: Conceptual framework and paper outline (based on and image from Mcluhan & Fiore, 1967)

The research purpose is both exploratory and analytical. The research follows a qualitative inductive reasoning approach. Several data collection techniques were utilized for triangulation and validation purposes. Primary data were collected from analyzing the education materials in one of the three public planning programs in Egypt (representing around 33% of the planning graduate market). Data included semi-structured interviews with 10 planning professors and 4 planning professionals, a Facebook poll in June 2018 attracting 71 planning students and graduates, a focus group with 5 teaching and lecturer assistants in September 2018, another focus group with a planning practitioner and architecture student in October

2018, another Facebook poll in October 2018 attracting 28 planning graduates, and an online survey that attracted 16 planning students/graduates, 7 teaching and lecturer assistants, and 5 professionals.

Data were collected between September 2017 and April 2019. Participants were targeted through purposive sampling. Maximal variation sampling (heterogeneous sampling) was used as a strategy to select participants with variation in perspectives (Lund Research Ltd, 2012; Palys, 2008). Secondary data was drawn from a review and analysis of the literature about urban planning education, urban planning communication, and media and communication studies. The collected data were analyzed by human coding and thematic analysis of interviews and surveys, as well as a content/visual analysis and process documentation of samples of students' projects.

Development of planning education and communication

Physical planning practice originated in the 17th century in the USA and the UK. It was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries that demand for institutionalizing planning emerged as a response to the consequences of the industrial revolution in cities and the social and urban problems they witnessed (Shetawy, 2004; Silver, 2018). According to a number of scholars (e.g., Moser, 1993; Healy,1996; Beauregard, 1996), planning was first acknowledged as a professional practice in the 1890s, specifically in 1893 during Chicago World's Fair when a model for a downtown design was proposed. According to Shetawy (2004), in this year, various planning traditions began to appear in the field of planning practice. These can be classified into three groups: physical traditions, applied traditions, and transformative traditions. Physical traditions refer to the classical convention of planning which deals with city problems in a physical manner and hence focuses on physical problems of cities. Physical traditions include the rational comprehensive planning approach which involves fields of urban design, town planning, regional planning, and transport planning. Applied traditions emerged after the Second World War and refer to planning practices that derive their analysis from other disciplines like sociology and political science. They include the advocacy planning approach which involves fields of social planning, corporate planning, economic planning, and project planning. Finally, transformative traditions appeared during the early 1960s as an attempt to "deconstruct planning practice" (Shetawy, 2004, p. 73). Transformative planning aims to not only deal with physical, social, and economic issues, but also issues of diversity and 'communicative actions' (Healy, 1996). It includes the collaborative planning approach which involve fields of development planning, environment planning, gender planning, and cultural planning (Shetawy, 2004).

On the other side, It was not until 1914 that planning education and planning theory began to emerge when the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) introduced the first syllabus for planning education, which was then spread to Europe through The Modern International Congress of Architecture (CIAM- Les Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne). By the late 1920s, university-based urban planning education had been introduced yet stayed fairly vocational until after the Second World War (1939-1945) (Shetawy, 2004; Gold, 1998). As expected, after the war, the necessity for physical planners was at its maximum. In 1947, the Programme of Education and Research in Planning was established at the University of Chicago, which marked a turning point in the history of planning theory. This is when planning started to be recognized not only as a professional activity but also as an academic discipline. The classical planning approach, that is characterized by being physical and rational comprehensive, dominated both theory and practice until 1960 when advocacy planning started to emerge solely from planning theory based on the article by Paul Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning" that was published in the Journal of the American Institute of

Planners in 1965. Beginning in the 1960s, planning theory began to develop independently from planning practice while staying connected through planning education (Shetawy, 2004; Silver, 2018).

In Egypt, until 1950 planning functioned according to the Subdivision Law (52 of 1940) following European standards. However, there was no specific institution responsible for it (Sims, 2003). In fact, British and European planning education was imported into all countries with a history of colonization. This in part explains the disconnect between the real city and the Academic City in Egypt (and elsewhere). In the 1950s, planning began to be institutionalized in Egypt and was practiced as a physical master planning approach. In the 1960s, five-year national development plans emerged. Later in 1973, planning became officially recognized by the formation of the General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP). In 1964, the first planning department was established in the Faculty of Engineering, Al-Azhar University. Currently, there are three public planning schools/programs in Egypt: two departments within the faculty of Engineering, Architecture section (Ain Shams University and Azhar University) and one faculty of Urban and Regional Planning (FURP) in Cairo University.

Although this research focuses on the case of planning education and communication in Egypt, by acknowledging that nowadays we live in a time that is characterized by being highly internationalized/globalized and mediatized (see Friedmann, 2005; 2012, Healy, 2012; Healy, 2013; Hepp 2013; McLuhan, et al., 1967; Watson, 2016), the findings of this research can contribute not only to the local context of Egypt but also to global planning discussions. In fact, although this study could be allocated among and contribute to studies about planning in the Global South (i.e., Frank & Silver, 2018; de Satgé & Watson, 2018; Diaw et al, 2002; Odendaal & Watson, 2018; Watson, 2018), its intention is to stay away from geographical literature divisions like north-south and east-west. In this sense, this study is not about contextual divisions but rather about development in space, media, and time.

In order to link this paper to the wider discussion about planning education as well as planning communication, it was important to not only look at the development in planning practice and education, but also at the development of media and communications to understand planning communication in more depth. In simple terms, communication is the "exchange of messages through some channel and in some medium" (Danesi, 2009, p. 69) which happens in different modes: gestural, vocal, visual, signaling, etc. Mediums/media refers to any means/forms/devices/systems used to transmit information, such as the printing press, telegraph, penny press, film, radio, TV, and the internet (Danesi, 2009). In other words, media refers to the medium or tools of communication that are used to deliver a certain message. In this sense, planning communication is about the communication of urban planning knowledge and projects among urban planners and between planners and the general public. This study focuses on the communication of planning among actors in the planning education system (mainly the staff and students).

An example of the link between planning communication and planning education is the work of Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, who in 1968 performed an experimental analysis of the city of Las Vegas in their research studio for graduate students at Yale School of Art and Architecture. Their analysis was published in 1977 in their book Learning from Las Vegas. Although at that time Las Vegas appeared to be a city with architecture without architects, Venturi et al. were the first to embrace this commercial city by providing new media to read it. They aimed to first use the established classical mediums/media of representation from the planning tools of the 17th century (i.e., black and white plans, Nolli maps, etc.) to understand Las Vegas then develop new media by embracing existing symbols in the urban environment to reread the city (Figure 2). Hence, the construction and employment of new mediums/media to understand and visualize the phenome-

non of the everyday city of Las Vegas delivered the message that Las Vegas is as important as other cities built by architects and planner

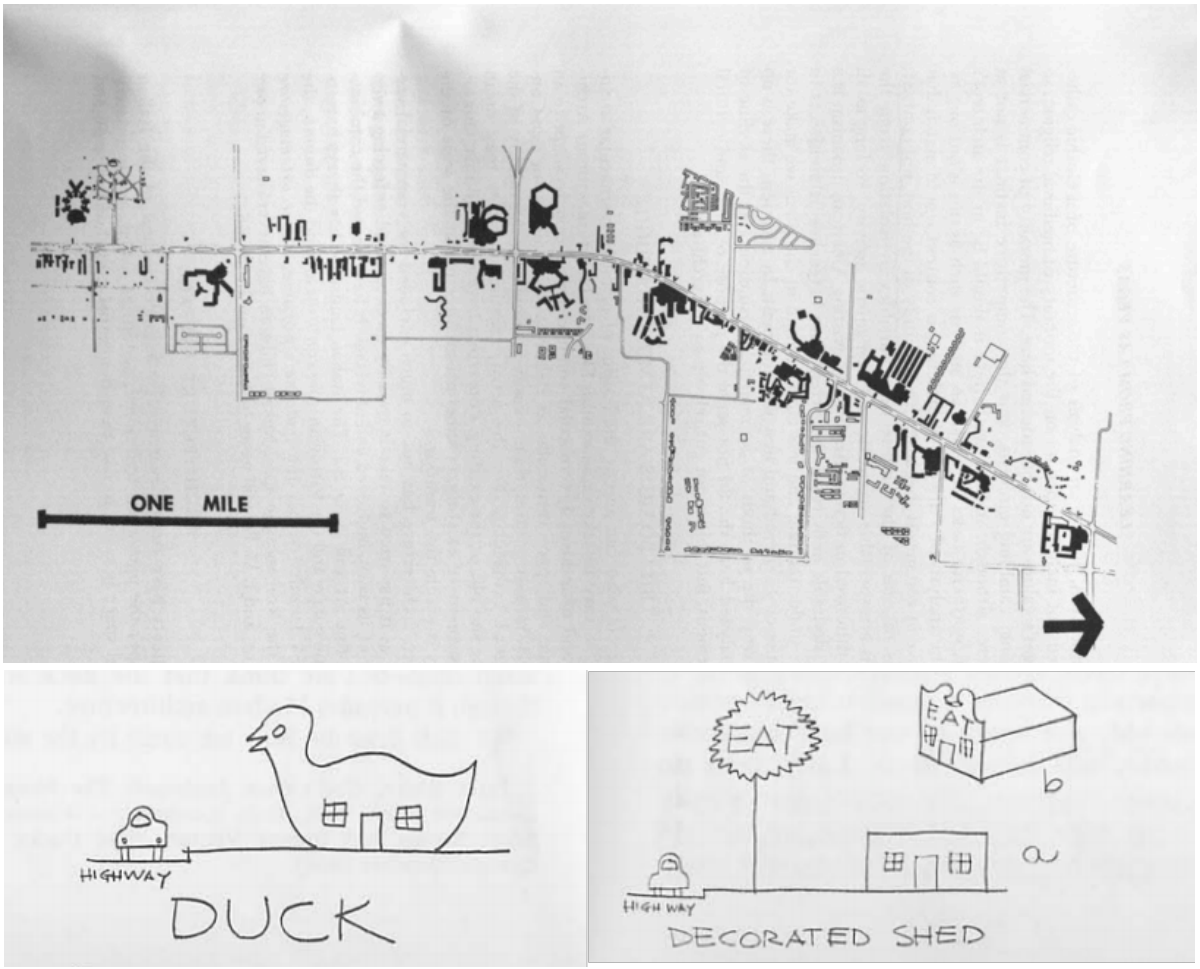

Figure 2: Classical and proposed media to read Las Vegas By Venturi Et Al. (1977)

The Academic City in Egypt

As mentioned earlier, the Academic City in this paper refers to the taught city in planning schools. In order to investigate the planning knowledge communicated between planning professors and students, the content of planning courses was classified according to a matrix of three variables for the type of intervention area(s): urban areas/rural areas, formal areas/informal areas, and new satellite cities without existing communities/existing built environments with existing communities(inhabitants). This classification was developed in a focus group conducted in September 2018. Based on this classification, courses in the analyzed case study over a period of 7 years (2012-2018) were mapped

(Figure 3).

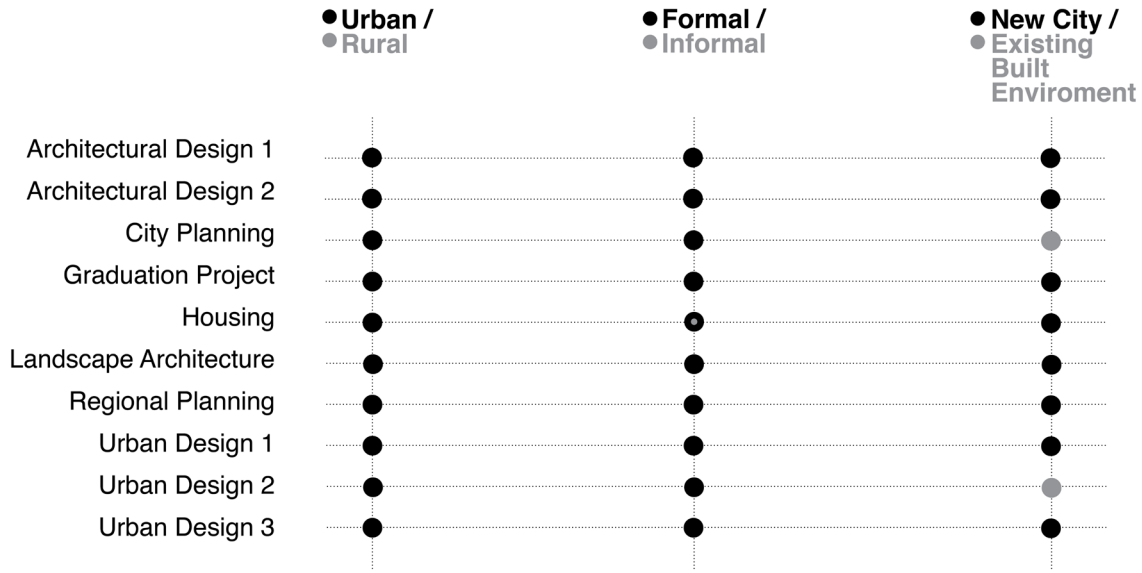

Figure 3: Intervention areas of planning courses in the analyzed planning school in Egypt

This mapping provides an analysis of the coursework projects that planning students deal with during their undergraduate education. This analysis shows that all coursework projects are situated in urban areas. Moreover, all of the projects but one are situated in formal areas. The only exception is the housing course which includes theoretical input about informal areas. At the same time, although the case study areas in the city planning course include parts of informal or deteriorated areas, students are asked to exclude them from their analysis. Moreover, almost 75% of the projects are situated in new areas in comparison to only around 25% in existing built environments. This reflects the absence of an existing social community for students to study and include in their proposals. In general, this mapping offers an insight on the type of case study areas students deal with (urban, formal, and new areas) which in turn formulates the population students deal with and are expected to satisfy – middle and upper-middle classes – and consequently (re)constructs the *Academic City* dealt with in urban planning schools in Egypt.

Next, in order to gain a deeper insight on the content of these courses, courses in the analyzed case study were classified into four types: intervention courses (design-oriented courses), observation courses, theoretical courses, and management courses. This classification was developed in the second focus group discussion conducted in October 2018. Intervention courses refer to courses that mainly deal with new settlements and include courses on urban design, housing, architecture design, etc. Observation courses are courses which focus on the students' soft and technological skills and include courses such as site analysis and technical writing, etc. Theoretical courses are courses without a coursework project which focus mainly on theoretical input and include courses such as city management, urban economy, etc. Management courses are courses that focus on dealing with existing communities and include courses such as city planning and urban design. The following figure shows that most courses are intervention courses (design-oriented courses), strikingly representing 56% in comparison to 12% for observation courses, 21% for theoretical input, and 12% for management courses (Figure 4).

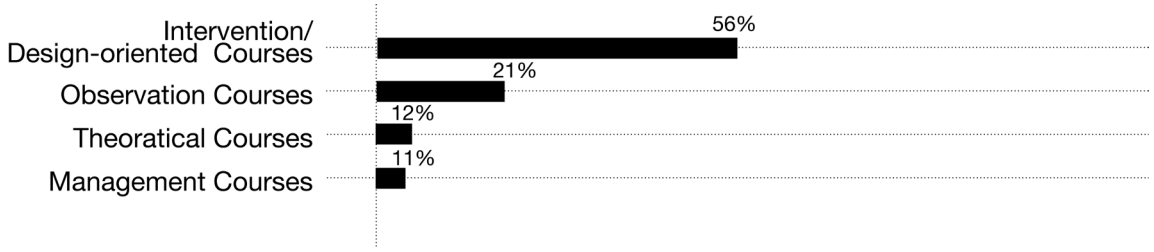

Figure 4: Types of courses in the analyzed planning school in Egypt (Author)

This analysis reflects the dominance of intervention/design-oriented courses in the education of urban planning in Egypt. This is in line with the perception of most of the interviewed professors that their department produces urban designers not urban planners. However, the conducted Facebook poll which showed that 46% of graduates identify themselves as urban planners in comparison to 54% identifying themselves as urban designers. This discrepancy raises several questions including but not limited to the conflict between the graduates' self-perception and the professors' expectations of them as well as the definition of both urban planning and urban design. In general, the difference between urban planners and urban designers is in the scale of the city they deal with: urban planners deal with larger scale developments, land use, and zoning, etc., while urban designers focus more on the aesthetics of spatial design, facades of houses, etc. The analyzed case study shows that in planning education in Egypt, urban planning courses focus on projects in existing built environments while urban design and housing courses focus on the development of new cities. Ten years ago, Mostafa Madbouly (the current Prime Minister of Egypt and previous Minister of Housing) reported on planning education and practice in the MENA region. He highlighted that in spite of the inclusion of other disciplines in urban and regional planning programs (i.e., sociology, economics, and environmental sciences), "planning education in Egypt – in almost all universities – had always been based on classical master planning (survey – analysis – plan)" (Madbouly, 2009, p. 103). At that time, he claimed that this was expected to change in order to cope with the new comprehensive definitions of planning worldwide (Madbouly, 2009). However, the analysis of this paper shows that planning is still taught in a technical manner that is very similar to classical master planning. The comprehensive definitions of planning are only reflected in the teaching of planning as a multilevel discipline based on local, regional, and national spatial levels, not as an interdisciplinary field. At the same time, and as presented in the historical development of planning traditions, many other forms of planning have taken the place of classical master planning, for instance, strategic spatial planning as well as participatory planning, which are conceptualized to be more inclusive of other disciplines (Davoudi, 2015; Pinson, 2004). Consequently, it is important to mention that while courses which include a physical intervention are essential, especially among planning scholars who view planning as an intervention-based discipline, the problem is not that the courses are interventionist (Madbouly's critique) but rather the nature of the intervention; being too technical/physical.

In fact, almost all of the interviewees considered the status quo of planning education to be driven by the traditional classical master planning approach. In this approach, which highly depends on physical interventions, social aspects are often neglected in favor of the expected product. In this sense, planning becomes more product than process oriented. During the interviews, many professors stressed the importance of including political and socio-economic courses in the planning curriculum. Accordingly, in this study, the time (which also reflects the grading weight) given to social versus physical aspects in planning courses

was mapped in the analyzed case study (Figure 5).

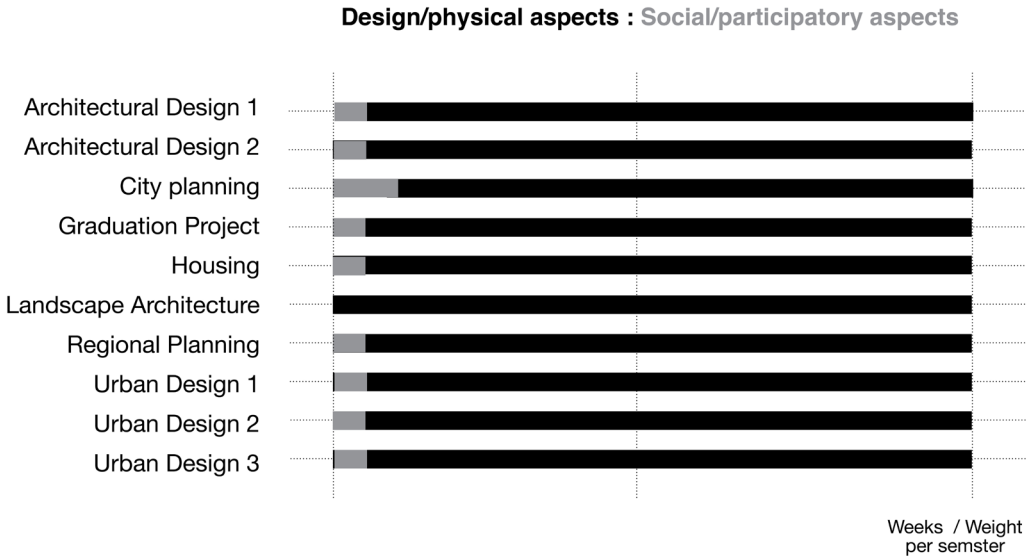

Figure 5: Analysis of courses in the analyzed case study (Author)

Figure 5 illustrates that for the most part, the courses provided in the studied planning school focus on physical requirements. For instance, in the city planning course, only two weeks per semester address topics related to social aspects of planning and only one assignment addresses social aspects of the studied community. While it may not be an issue of how much time is allocated to social aspects since they feed the process again later in the planning process of the studied case study, the interviews show that even when social aspects are included, they are studied in a simpler manner – for example, the participation of existing actors is limited to hearing their opinion during the first phases of the project (the site analysis). This contradicts the two-way feedback process needed in planning practice where planning represents a dynamic long-term process. In fact, during the focus group conducted in September 2018, teaching and lecturer assistants mentioned that students use social analysis as an entry point for their project, and only some of them (those who are interested in the social dimension of planning) take these skills further in the rest of the assignments. They added that although this is usually acknowledged by the course teachers, it remains an unofficial requirement of the students and is considered as merely a bonus task. This limited inclusion of the socio-economic aspects of planning affect both the construction and production of the Academic City that is dealt with in the education of urban planning in Egypt. Consequently, students become involved in expert-exclusive physical planning processes and are not asked to include the target inhabitants in these processes.

Other scholars have presented similar findings. For example, Dessouky (2016) in her paper "Architecture and urban education in Egypt: producing designers that are ready to respond to the social and environmental circumstances of the Egyptian context" maintains that there is a general interest in intensifying design-oriented courses at the expense of environmental and social courses, which even if present, are either too theoretical or elective courses. This leaves students with little interest and time to explore spheres outside the physical design. In turn, this results in students overlooking the socio-economic dimensions of planning and affects their perception of planning as being only a technical/physical activity. This consequently shapes their planning practice when they graduate (Dessouky, 2016).

Simultaneously, various international scholars have advocated the importance of including non-physical elements in planning education and practice. For instance, Varesi and

Mahmoudzade (2016, p. 99) argue that the "non-physical dimensions constitute the conceptual ground upon which the physical dimension is set". For them, physical dimensions include land use, infrastructure, pedestrian network, mobility, façades, etc., while non-physical dimensions include social, cultural, and spiritual aspects. They claim that the importance of conceptual urban planning (non-physical aspects of planning) is that it is a 'prerequisite' for physical urban planning (Varesi & Mahmoudzade, 2016). In the same vein, Forester (1982) encourages planners to understand the political economy as he believes that it will help them provide better analysis and "empower citizen and community action" (Forester, 1982, p. 67). These arguments are also supported by several other scholars, including Castells (1972, 1977), Krumholz (1982), Duhl (1968), and Grooms & Boamah (2017).

However, it remains important to clarify that the social and physical/design aspects of planning go hand in hand. This analysis does not aim to reinforce the division between both but rather to highlight the status quo. It is not about either this or that: planning is about designing a space for people. This makes urban planners also designers who are not only social or not only physical. Nevertheless, the previous analysis shows that the Academic City (1) is situated in and deals with new, urban, and formal areas, and hence focuses on middle and upper-middle classes; (2) adopts classical planning approaches and processes; and (3) limits the inclusion of socio-economic aspects and has a dominant focus on physical aspects. This in turn illustrates the type of exclusive city/ies made visible to planning students during their undergraduate education

Mediums employed to communicate the Academic City

Traditionally, the field of media and communication studies was viewed by media scholars as a separate sphere from society; however, in the contemporary age, it is regarded as interlinked and interdependent (Hajvard, 2008). This section focuses on mapping the tools/mediums/media employed in the planning, design, and communication process of the previously presented Academic City – not the visual product per se but the function of this product in the planning process. Driven by McLuhan's (1964) premise that the medium is the message, that is, "it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 9), Table 1 maps the processes of urban/city planning and housing design and the corresponding media tools employed and their purpose in the studied case study [3].

	Communication mode	Media employed	Purpose of the employed media
Urban/city planning process (most probably in new satellite cities that do not have existing communities/ inhabitants)			
Site impressions	Team visit the site (usually located in an existing com-(munity	Team take photos and present them during tutorial time	Documentation, presentation, and visualization
Map updating – Base map	Team visit the site (usually located in an existing com-(munity	Team map the site and cross check with existing CAD maps for later GIS Map Grouping and Production	Documentation, presentation, and visualization
Urban survey	Team discussions and reevaluation of students' work	Printed CAD drawings	Documentation, presentation, and visualization
Socio-economic survey	Demographic studies, site observations, and interviews in the case of projects in existing built environments	Demographic tables and documentation of face-to-face interviews	Analysis and visualization
SWOT and stakeholder analysis	Role play of the involved actors	Flashcards	Communication and exploration
Asset mapping	Team might visit the site again	Graphics on printed 2-D base maps of the site	Documentation, presentation, and visualization
Vision setting	Team meetings to discuss their vision for the studied area	Interactive workshop in the studio on printed 2-D base maps of the site	Communication, exploration, presentation, and visualization
Defining strategies and projects	Team discussions and discussions in the studio with the staff	Graphics on printed 2-D base maps of the site	Documentation, presentation, and visualization
Final presentation	Team present their final product	Printed poster and oral presentation, maps for proposed .actions In rare cases, written reports	Documentation, presentation, and visualization

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Defining strategies and projects	Team discussions and discussions in the studio with the staff	Graphics on printed 2-D base maps of the site	Documentation, presentation, and visualization

Table 1: Media Employed Throughout Planning And Design Processes In The Analysed Case Study

This mapping shows that what is common amongst all of these modes of communication is the strong role played by graphics and visuals. In fact, most of the interviewed professors stated that the role of graphics and visualizations [4] usually outweighs the content produced, especially in the final submission. Likewise, most graduates (22 out of 28) reported through the Facebook poll in October 2018 that they believed that 70% of their grade was affected by the graphics they employed in their graduation project. One of the professors clearly stated that, "The first step of design depends on visualization" (Interviewee 1, 2018). In the same vein, one of the graduates claimed that, "The style of presenting final graduation projects is an important part in the whole project process. Accordingly, some students develop and/ or slightly manipulate some elements of the project to make it look better" (Interviewee 2, 2019). Accordingly, samples of graduation projects in the analyzed case study were chosen to investigate this phenomenon further (presented in Figures 6 and 7).

In general, graduation projects over the past seven years in the analyzed case study have

typically been of a mega scale, located in new communities, and if there has been an existing built environment, most students have demolished the existing buildings (see Figures 3, 4 and 5). This shows the inclination of graduation projects to neglect the pre-existing conditions and to omit incremental building-in-context approaches (see Table 1). Moreover, this shows the tendency of graduation projects to only focus on land reclamation of new areas and neglect the urban management of the existing built environment.
By looking at the medium(s)/media employed to communicate graduation projects, it was found that the graduation projects investigated in this study were submitted as posters accompanied by an oral presentation. Most projects in the analyzed case study were presented with digitally drawn plans and elevations with 3-D model shots and were printed on high quality poster papers that are expensive for the average student. It was also noted that some students employed external commercial offices to visualize a project's elements with computer software. In fact, it was normal to find visualization studios nearby planning schools offering their service to visualize and present students' work. Accordingly, a sample of the top ranked graduation projects (Grades A and B) were investigated further to analyze their

content. Some of these samples are presented in Figures 6 and 7.

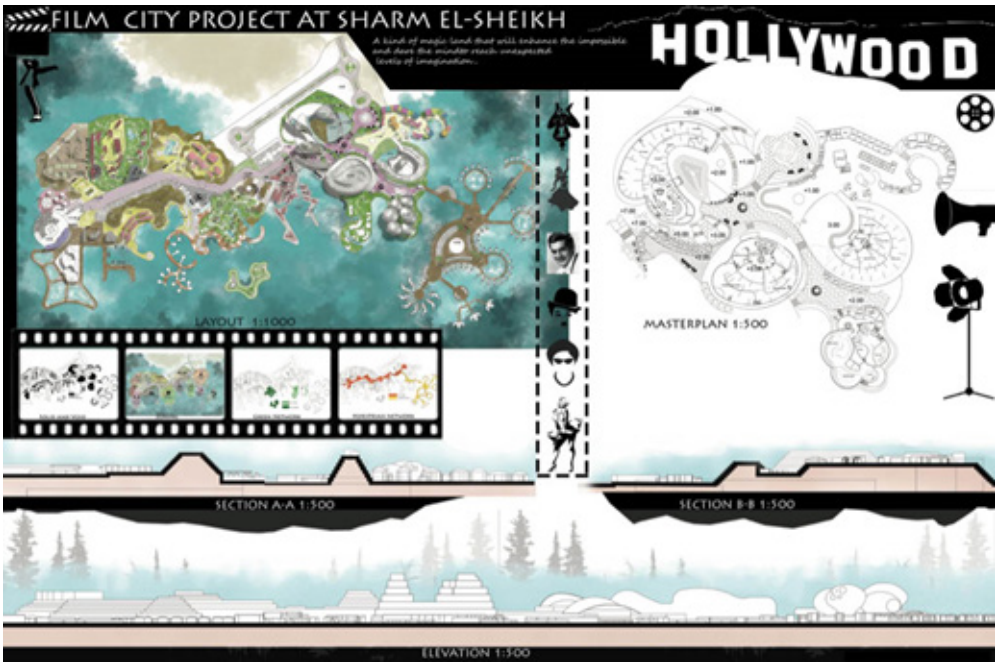

Figure 6: Sample of graduation project (Sample A). Source: Anonymised student

Figure 7: Sample of graduation project (Sample B). Source: Anonymised student

The samples show that the project studies (socio-economic and environmental studies – i.e., target beneficiaries, climate study, topography analysis, etc.) represented around 20-30% of the final poster. The projects demonstrated a use of imported icons that are not always present or relevant to the Egyptian culture, climate, or context. For example, some of the trees used in the project layout or elevations either do not exist in Egypt or are very difficult to grow in a desert climate as they need a lot of water. At the same time, some of the projects' titles and brands (e.g., Hollywood in sample A) were imported from Western/global brands. Furthermore, most of the best practice examples that students referred to in earlier phases of the projects were shown to be foreign, demonstrating that planning education in Egypt is highly globalized. However, what is argued here not only concerns the disadvantage of migrating plants or plans or practices from foreign contexts but also the "invisibility" of the existing Ordinary Cities which is manifested also in amending the existing qualities of the studied sites in planning schools to meet these external standards. What these examples show suggests that there are various aspects of the local context of Egypt that are unknown to the students. Students' lack of awareness of the consequences of importing planning and design aspects from abroad means that they also have little awareness of the local properties in the local context of Egypt.

Simultaneously, while interviewing some of the planning graduates in the case study, it was found that in some cases, students applied modifications to make their projects more appealing and presentable. Part of these modifications included altering the real properties and characteristics of the site itself, such as tilting the direction of the north arrow or enlarging the area of a natural source of water so that a more attractive project could be created. For example, the student who created 'Sample B' stated that,

> *"The project took place in the western desert and it was open for each student to choose one specific area for his/her personal project. In this respect, the size and the shape of a small natural water resource was slightly manipulated during the*

developing process of the project in order to create a more attractive ecolodge area that was designed to surround this natural source of water in a circular shape" (see Figure 6).

Accordingly, the student questioned whether this example reflected how some students were unable to differentiate between their role as planners and that of visualizers.

In the same line, the role of visualizations [5] in the academic life of planning students was emphasized throughout almost all of the interviews. It was mentioned that the presentation of projects and how fascinating or eye catchy they are is an important factor in obtaining a good grade. One of the interviewed graduates stated that, "It is recommended to have projects with a lot of details, entrances, and intersections to be appealing and competitive." She added, "Sometimes the project's presentation plays a relatively more important role than the content itself, although I love colors and presentations, but I was quite stressed from the process of presenting my project." Moreover, she mentioned that after graduation, she recognized a gap in her knowledge. Her job was in social/urban development with a particular focus on people with disabilities and she stated that, "As this field was not covered enough during my studies, for example my project was full of stairs and levels without any ramps or considerations of those with disabilities." In fact, according to Nazmy (2016) 15% of Egyptians have disabilities. Moreover, during the interview, the student raised several questions including asking why architects and urban planners are schooled with the mindset that visualization in their work is of great importance. She asked, "Is it because architects/planners won't be able to sell their projects without the use of visualizations? Or is it architects/planners who raise the level of expectations and demands from clients to expect these fascinating presentations?" She concluded that, "Sometimes a simpler and more dynamic method of presenting ideas, one that involves citizens, would help more in increasing participation and engagement and could in fact be better for the investor."

The studied case study shows that the majority of academic design projects are to a certain extent virtual or include aspects of virtuality which at a certain point overrides the intended design behind them. By making this second layer of meaning more dominant, fewer elements and factors are built upon and made visible from the current reality. This raises a question about the factors that need to be built upon and visualized based on the current reality in order to be creative. Accordingly, it is argued that these kinds of graduation projects aim to create a better image of reality, a better future, and a better city, by making the current reality and the Ordinary Cities invisible.

When looking at planning practice, the use and role of visualizations has increased in Egypt since 2009 and when the Cairo 2050 strategic plan was issued, full of graphical presentations, 3D rendered images started to overtake the promotion of planning projects (Interviewee 3, 2019). Since then, planning practice and the Egyptian market have shown an increased dependence on the use of visualizations. While this shows that graduates who are taught the importance of visualizations are capable of finding a job in this market based on their graphics and visualization skills, it also demonstrates a change in the media employed both in academia and in practice.

On the one hand, the analysis of the medium/media of communication shows that students focus on the physical and design aspects of planning, which supports the previous analysis of the educational content of courses. On the other hand, the analysis shows another extra finding – the strong emphasis on the graphical aspects of planning, which in some cases could result in the decontextualization of planning/design. In fact, it is the approach to the physical and graphical aspects in classical master planning which is the problem, rather than physical and graphical work per se. Based on Henri Lefebvre's views of space as a product of

the interrelations among representations of space (mental/conceived space), representational space (social/lived space) (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), and spatial practice (physical/perceived space), the *Academic City* focuses mainly on the representations of space.

Returning to the communication/mediatization theme, by looking at the mediums of communication as including an embedded message in themselves, the use of colored posters, even without content, could mean that urban planning education is increasingly reflective of the culture of popular media. To what extent both fields import and export from each other still requires further research. However, although posters are used as just a "medium" to communicate urban planning projects, there is in fact a message transmitted through them on how projects are best communicated through attractive visualizations. Suddenly the shape of the elements and the layout of posters start to develop an independent dynamic of their own without the inclusion of real context problems or societal needs. Following McLuhan, it is not whether something is beautiful or not, but what message it carries – and certain visualizations are preferred over others and implicitly also carry other information. The use of posters could encourage or discourage the inclusion/exclusion of certain aspects of the projects in order to achieve more attractive communication. Overall, this shows that (1) the *Academic City* largely depends on the use of visualizations and (2) the use of these mediums/media and visualizations in (re)constructing the *Academic City* privilege certain imagings/imaginings over others.

The Academic City versus Ordinary Cities

Cities, in general, inhabit complex dimensions, and city planning aims to manage this complexity. The urban reality is a result of and reflects "economic, social, political, and cultural systems of society" (Mekawy & Yousry, 2012, p. 2). Nevertheless, the high level of urbanization in Egypt is not followed by the necessary planning to guide it (Hendawy, 2015; Mekawy & Yousry, 2012; Shawkat & Hendawy, 2016). For instance, in Egypt it is reported that:

a) According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the rural population accounts for 57.8% while the urban population accounts for 42.7% of the total population in Egypt. The number of people living in urban settlements in Egypt was 43% in 2006 in comparison to 42.2% in 2017. Accordingly, the percentage of those living in urban settlements in Egypt decreased with a percentage of 1.86% in the 10 years from 2006 to 2017 (CAPMAS, 2017).

b) 98% of the Egyptian population live in an existing built environment while most of the population in projects of new cities live on around 2% of the land. Furthermore the annual population growth rate in new cities is 5.8% is versus a planned growth rate of 95% (Shawkat &Hendawy, 2016) . In 2019, around 7 million lived in new cities (Keeton and Provoost, 2019) which equates for around 7% of the total population in Egypt.

c) 45% of the areas in Egypt are formal areas and 65% are informal (60% are unplanned areas and 5 % are unsafe areas) (Algohary & El-Faramawy, 2010), and 40% of the population in the Greater Cairo Region live in informal areas (El-Shahat & Khateeb, 2013).

These statistics show that most populations live in rural areas, in existing built environments, and most areas are informal. According to Kipper (2009), "Given the spatial and demographic size of informal areas, it is only a slight exaggeration to say that they represent the normal situation in Egyptian cities" (Kipper, 2009, p. 13). However, the previous study of the Academic City shows that most projects provided to students relate to urban, formal, new areas. This certainly reflects a gap between the needs (context) of the wider population versus what

planning students are exposed to during their undergraduate studies and hence prepared for after their graduation. In fact, several interviewees mentioned that planning education deals with the commercial city. For instance, according to some of the interviewed planning staff, "The education system is aligned with market needs [needs of decision makers, policy makers, millionaires] not the society's needs [the majority of the general public]." The following figure presents this dichotomy.

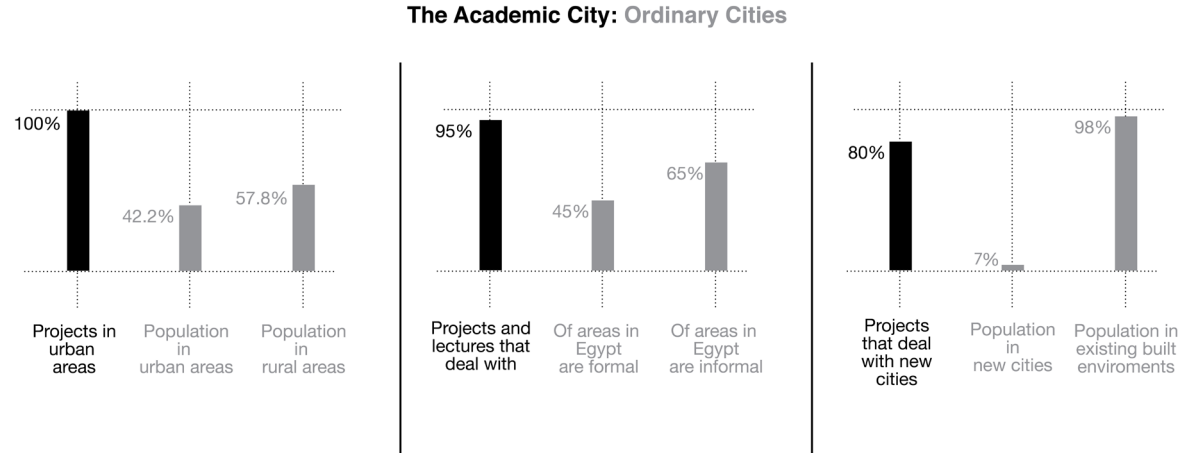

Figure 8: The Academic City versus Ordinary Cities in Egypt (Author Based On Algohary & El-Faramawy, 2010; Hendawy, 2015; Keeton and Provoost, 2019; Shawkat & Hendawy, 2016; World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017)

This is not only the case in the analyzed case study, but rather a general trend in planning education in Egypt, which lacks reference to informal urbanism "as an independent topic in the curricula" (Safey Eldeen, 2014). Nevertheless, it is important to mention that planning theory and reference to informal areas are introduced to postgraduate students in some courses. However, only a minority of 5.8% of bachelor graduates pursue their masters after graduation (CAPMAS, 2016). At the same time, it is also noteworthy to mention that all planning schools in Egypt are situated in Cairo and Giza urban governorates.

Planning education in a globalized/mediatized world

Planning education in this study is conceived of as the communication and passing on of planning knowledge between current and future planning practitioners and hence shapes graduates' planning practice. This process of passing-on the knowledge of urban planning has been shown to rely on mediating (certain) narratives and tools, for example, drawings, digital and physical models and 3-D visualizations, and even text. This paper, therefore, focused on the way academic planning education shapes graduates' production of the image of the Academic City and hence favors certain narratives, imagings, issues, and milieus (mainly middle and upper-classes) over others.

By reflecting on the consequences of the conflicts between the Academic City versus Ordinary Cities in a globalized/mediatized age, what could a curriculum created differently look like? Nermin Dessouky (2016), in her paper "Architecture and Urban Education in Egypt: Producing Designers that are Ready to Respond to the Social and Environmental Circumstanc-

es of the Egyptian Context," argues that planning education should produce planners and architects who are aware of and responsible for the society and the environment (Dessouky 2016). Similarly, Fischler (2012) states that,

> *"Planning education is at its best when it enables students to acquire a good understanding of the process of urban change (and of all actors and factors involved), to develop the ability to frame urban problems comprehensively and critically, to learn to design places and processes, to become good team players and communicators, and to understand their own learning process" (Fischler, 2012).*

In the same vein, Polat et al. (2013, p. 748) state that "architecture and planning education aims at a student profile capable of creative thinking and observation, problem description, and synthesis-analysis using data from different disciplines" . All of this demonstrates that planning education should encourage social skills such as critical thinking, communication skills, and management skills. Accordingly, the necessary role of the planner in Egypt was investigated further in the focus group discussion in September 2018. It aimed to translate the necessary role of the planner to the necessary skills for practicing planning in order to compare both to the skills reinforced in the process of (re)constructing the Academic City (Table 2).

Planning Practice		**Planning Education**
Necessary role of planners in the Egyptian context	**Necessary skills of planners in the Egyptian context**	**Skills focused on in Egyptian universities in the process of (re)constructing the Academic City**
Communication & knowledge about entities and actors influencing decision making Knowledge about other planning researchers in the field	Technical skills Communication and coordination skills Coordination skills between actors Public speaking for urban issues Critical thinking skills Analytical thinking Socio-spatial skills Accepting diversity	Technical skills Drawing skills Visualization skills Presentation skills Structure thinking Reasoning and justification

Table 2: Necessary role of the planner versus the skills focused on in the process of (re)Constructing the Academic City (Author based on focus group, September 2018)

Table 2 shows that the current education of planning students focuses on technical and presentation skills more than on communication and critical thinking skills, which accordingly reinforces the classical approach of planning, which is physical, graphical, and product oriented. Hamrouni (2013) categorizes the roles of planners into six profiles: the ration-

al planner, the advocate, the facilitator, the political economy planner, the entrepreneurial planner, and the activist planner. The previous analysis shows that planning graduates are prepared to be either rational planners in the case of constructing new cities in the desert, bringing with them expert technical knowledge, or political economy planners in the case of constructing new gated communities for the higher classes of society.

At the same time, this study shows that it is almost impossible to have content without a medium; in fact, "'those tools are shaping and controlling 'the scale and form' of the interactions between students [educators], and all others with vested interest in what goes on in [planning education]" (Hall, 2015). Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that while this study highlights the visibilities of the Academic City, it also constructs other (in)visibilities and it does not exclude the ability of students to "construct their own reality on the basis of previous experiences and come to their own understanding" (Godemann & Michelsen, 2011, p. 7). Consequently, what is promoted is the importance of awareness of both diverse ordinary realities and the impact of the tools employed in not only (in)visualizing the Academic City but also constructing it and hence shaping planning education.

Accordingly, in the current age of 'new informational media,' "Education must shift from instruction, from imposing of stencils, to discovery – to probing and exploration and to the recognition of the language of forms. As the audience becomes a participant in the total electric drama, the classroom can become a scene in which the audience performs an enormous amount of work" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 100). Hence, a planning curriculum done differently would need to focus on not only the product of planning but also on a flexible planning process, the tools employed in both, the awareness of students about the consequences of the elements and tools they employ in their projects, and the specific planner skills needed by students in the studied context. It is not about producing an attractive product, but about a different aesthetics than can also represent/develop/include social, economic, etc. factors in a better way.

A flexible planning process could be implemented by mimicking what happens in reality during the planning process. For example; this can be achieved by including continuous new inputs to students during the semester, rather than only defining the project constraints in the first phases of a project's site analysis. Through this, the planning process would allow for more adaptations and feedback. At the same, this can also be achieved by aligning the projects in academia with ongoing real ordinary projects and needs. In this context, various planning education studies have recommended 'experiential learning' in which students work with communities to develop plans (see Baldwin & Rosier, 2017; Kotval, 2010). Experiential learning is "a purposeful process of engaged, active learning in which the student constructs knowledge, skills, or values by means of direct experiences in authentic, real world contexts" (Kassem, 2007).

In terms of the tools employed in planning processes and products, educators need to educate themselves on the influence of the media they employ and require from students and the implicit messages included in them. This is in order to make sure that the employed media communicate the intended messages and role of planners (Hall, 2015). Both the educational content as well as the tools employed to communicate it help to (re)construct the Academic City in particular and the planning curriculum in general. This reflects the contribution of this study to both planning education and communication.

Conclusion

The dominance of narratives and imaging in design and planning education towards the exclusive, formal city and the masking-out of the needs of the majority of the population

results in a planning education that reflects only an exclusive sphere of the society, which is neither representative nor as diverse as the multiple ordinary realities present in the country. Students start their planning and design processes by assuming that most of the existing buildings, site conditions, and local communities are not present. Instead of building upon the available qualities and tackling the current urban challenges, they are rendered 'invisible'. This accordingly has a major impact on professional practice, students' future role in practice, as well as students' self-image of their role in practice. The extent of this impact needs to be investigated and discussed in future research.

It was demonstrated that most student projects related more to the imagined needs of a middle and upper-class market. Students plan for a society that reflects a homogenized middle-class norm, thereby creating a limited idea of the actual needs of the population or society. In this context, issues of inclusion and accessibility are out of sight of planning students. Hence, it can be argued that Egypt's planning education produces a discipline responsible only to the middle and upper-middle class elites of the country, and through this practice reproduces the current urban assumptions, schisms, and disruptions.

The previous analysis also shows the kind of planning knowledge communicated in planning schools in Egypt, through which the planning curriculum and projects are presented and materialized (visualized). Planning education in Egypt reproduces an exclusive sphere that emphasizes aesthetic and commercial aspects over societal and socio-economic aspects of planning, rather than viewing the social as also physical and spatial. To a certain extent, it appears that in planning, the social economy of a city is refigured by spatial design. In their struggle for attention and visibility, students strive for a certain spatial complexity and visual beauty; however, their projects remain in the virtual realm, reflecting the demands of an upscale real-estate market.

Accordingly, a particular Academic City is envisioned and constructed based on these invisibilities and subjective perspectives (the commercial, (upper) middle-class city). The Academic City largely resembles 'urban,' 'formal,' 'new' cities, which are not representative of the diverse socio-economic urban conditions within Egypt. As an example, the Academic City of undergraduate design studios is focused on future urban environments that only attract a minority of the Egyptian population. The Academic City therefore excludes a large part of the society and ignores the existing local conditions and communities. The employment of media in planning education, that make apparent these urban visibilities and invisibilities, has a strong agency in this process. For instance, the use of certain media such as posters implies the inclusion/exclusion of certain content of the visualized projects in planning schools. This means that the medium(s)/media used not only (re)construct the Academic City, its perception, and inception but also indicate its meaning(s).

However, even if the practice of planning, planning education, and communication is embedded in a planning-political context that exclusively promotes the commercial global status quo, the inclusion of the diverse realities of the urban within the academic discourse and design studios would guarantee that future urban planners have a better understanding of their professional responsibilities. Finally, while the study investigated planning education in Egypt as a case study, in a globalized/ mediatized age, the study of local contexts ground planning in ordinary everyday practices that could also relate to other contexts.

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Notes
1.As stated on the website run by McLuhan's estate, the original title of the book was 'The Medium is the Message' and 'Massage' was a mistake by typesetter which Marshall McLuhan liked and kept (McLuhan, n.d.).
2.In this paper, planning communication is about the communication of urban planning knowledge and projects among urban planners and between planners and the general public. This study focuses on the communication of planning among actors in the planning education system (mainly the staff and students).
3.In the studied case study, city planning and housing represent one course that is extended over two semesters. The first semester focuses on city planning and the second semester focuses on housing.
4.Visualizations in this article refers to the diagrams and illustrations used to communicate urban planning knowledge (including ideas, analysis, concepts,.....etc.)
5.The diagrams and illustrations used to communicate urban planning knowledge (including ideas, analysis, concepts ...etc.)

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Mennatullah Hendawy is a multidisciplinary urban planner and designer who aims to inspire sustained and empowered urban development by communicating research for a just socio-spatial reality. She is currently a research associate and PhD candidate at The Technical University of Berlin. She is also an associated researcher at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) in Erkner, Germany and an assistant lecturer in the Department of Urban Planning and Design in Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt. She is interested in how to enable vulnerable groups in society and how to develop communities in an integrated manner. She practices urban planning, design, and education as approaches to empowerment with an aim to cover the gap in theory building in contested urban contexts. As a multipotentialite interested in intersections, she deals with urban planning as a developmental multidisciplinary field. In particular, she is interested in experimental methodologies, grounded theory and participatory action research through which she aspires to put values into action by connecting justice with media and urban planning.
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Capacity Building and Urban Transformation
A Critical Missing Link in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Planning Reform Agenda

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Abstract

Many planning systems within the Arab world are in the process of reform. Whilst much emphasis is placed on the institutions and instruments of planning, an often overlooked and undervalued element of any reform agenda is the capacity and willingness of the key actors who engage with planning practice to change their customs and practices. This is not just about capacity building but involves more fundamental culture change, both within the formal, often public agencies of planning, but also from all the actors that engage with planning. In this paper, we explore many of the challenges of capacity building in relation to the planning reform agenda currently being implemented in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We argue that if the National Transformation Plan, associated with 'Vision 2030' is to be fully realised, a positive, integrative, co-ordinated planning system must be central to the delivery process. This in turn means the value of good planning, and conversely the cost of poor planning, needs to be properly understood if the human capacity to deliver is going to be built.

Introduction

In recent years, many nations around the world have embarked upon a programme of planning reform (Gunder, 2016; Gunn and Hillier, 2012; Hrelja, 2011; Holman, Mossa and Pani, 2017; Mäntysalo and Saglie, 2010; MacCullum and Hopkins, 2011). Although the specific aims and scope of these reforms vary from context to context, a common feature has been the goal to 'modernise' planning systems.

It has been argued that some of the best examples of the modernisation agenda in planning can be found in the Middle East where planning reforms have occurred in parallel to broader economic, social, and environmental change (Elsheshtawy, 2004, 2008; Rizzo, 2014; Singerman and Amar, 2006). The ideal end state of these reforms is conceived to be the birth of new planning systems that embrace information technology and are modern with respect to how the development process is animated but remain environmentally and culturally attuned to the various settings of the Middle East.

However, achieving this new brand of modern Middle Eastern planning can only partly be accomplished by system reform. Academic research shows us that, in addition to the legislative and procedural ways in which planning systems function, the behavioural aspects of how a system is enacted in practice are also of fundamental importance in fully realising any reform agenda.

These behavioural or cultural aspects of system reform are often a forgotten aspect of the reform agenda. The aim of this paper is to highlight the importance of these issues if the changes in the planning approach and in the way the system itself operates are to be fully realised. In this contribution, we survey the literature on this 'behavioural insights' take on planning before going on to present evidence from a project on national scale planning reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, part of a broader suite of measures designed to engineer a wider economic and environmental change in the Kingdom. In the case of modernising planning, we argue that this systemic reform can only be effective if it is accompanied by reforms to education and training to support the development of more contemporary planning practices.

Policy and Practice: The 'Hard' and 'Soft' Aspects of Reform

There is a rich history of exchange between the planning academy and practice. Some classic texts have had profound impacts on how planning is practised. Good examples can be found in early expressions of planning's technocratic and utopian impulses that infused much of planning practice, particularly in Western contexts, in the middle decades of the twentieth century – Howard's (1902) Garden Cities of Tomorrow and Geddes' (1915) Cities in Evolution stand out as the seminal texts that provided the academic basis for this style of planning.

This well-rehearsed history (see for example, Fainstein and DeFilippis, 2014) then understands a strain of planning thought that has its origins in the 1960s as developing into the 'Communicative Turn' by the end of the 1980s/early 1990s. Again, the most important philosophical statements on the subject can be understood as providing academic legitimation for changes in practice – particularly the enhanced status of community consultation and participative decision making (Forester, 1989, 1999; Healey, 1992, 1997, 2003). The influence of this thinking on practice can clearly be seen in policies such as neighbourhood planning in England, where simply soliciting community consultation has given way to a more fundamental shift of some planning powers to communities and local businesses (Sturzaker and Shaw, 2015; Lord et al., 2017; Sturzaker and Gordon, 2017). Similar echoes of communicative

planning in theory can be seen in practices designed to enhance public participation in decision making in other nations such as the USA (for example, Dandekar and Main, 2014).

Subsequent work has been important in making the case for planning to have greater cognisance of economics. Often understood as a regulatory brake on development, many of the most recent reforms to planning in diverse settings can be understood as resulting from a desire for planning to work with, rather than against, the grain of the market. Early statements using the New Institutional Economics as an organising framework emphasised planning's capacity to manipulate transaction costs to encourage variations in development outcomes (Webster, 2005). More recently, others have advocated less adversarial forms of planning practice that pay greater attention to the effects planning decisions have on real estate markets (Cheshire and Sheppard, 2005; Nathan and Overman, 2011).

The degree to which the academy has always been able to influence planning practice varies between contexts and over time. There is no clear agreement between authors on how wide the theory-practice gap might be (Alexander, 1991, 2010; Brooks, 1998; Goodman, Freestone and Burton, 2017). However, what can clearly be seen is that academic interventions are consistently made in an attempt to encourage practice to make space for new voices/information. The communicative turn championed communities' right to be heard in deciding the character of the developments with which they would have to live. Similarly, those working at the interface between economics and planning have often argued that market signals should be accorded more significance in the planning process.

The response, when these academic arguments have had most traction, has usually been for policy makers to change the system. However, changing the system to create space for community voices, or market signals, does not necessarily mean that those spaces will be filled or that those voices and signals will be heeded. This would only be the case if the systemic reform was accompanied by a similar behavioural shift in the working practices of the planners who people the system – stated elsewhere as a process of organisational 'culture change' (Shaw and Lord, 2007). An alternative way of thinking of this is through analogy with computer hardware and software. In the same way that IT hardware defines computational limits and capacity, so too the planning system describes a legal architecture that represents the limits of planning power. However, choosing software to animate any hardware is a far more open question and demands a qualitative assessment of what the programme is designed to achieve and how. A preoccupation with hardware (policy, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where a process of planning reform can be seen as a political imperative.

The Context for Planning Reform in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has developed quickly since its birth in 1932. Extremely rapid processes of urbanisation have largely been managed by the Department of Town Planning, a division within the Ministry of Planning and Rural Affairs (MoMRA). National, regional, and local plans have been prepared and the local authorities (known as Amanah and Balydia) have managed the co-ordination and regulation of development at the local level. Planning law has evolved through the issuing of numerous Royal Decrees designed to address specific issues. Thus, the overall regulatory framework that has emerged is complex, and at times, contested and contradictory. Whilst development is reasonably well regulated by the state, there has been a growing realisation that the system is ripe for reform (UN Habitat 2016). There is a lack of horizontal and vertical integration with planning, the process is highly centralised, and there is a general lack of stakeholder involvement in both the preparation and delivery of local plans. In this paper, there is neither the time nor

space to provide a critical review of the current state of the planning system in Saudi Arabia, but some illustrative examples serve to exemplify the three issues highlighted above.

A National Plan (2000), prepared by international consultants on behalf of MoMRA and approved by the Cabinet, sets out the development trajectory for the Kingdom. It has not been updated in nearly twenty years. Paralleling this process, the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MoEP) produces five-year economic plans, updated regularly, which detail the spending priorities of all the other Ministries, but are largely spatially blind. The lack of integration between MoMRA's National Plan and the MoEP's five-year strategies has resulted in the National Plan having limited levers and mechanisms for implementation. In its preparation, many of the critical stakeholders (other national Ministries, the private sector, local authorities, community groups, etc.) have been excluded from the process. It remains a largely technical exercise divorced from day-to-day decision making. Similarly, at the regional scale, plans have been prepared, often by international consultants. These are largely aspirational documents and lack any efficient levers for implementation. At a local level, this lack of integration and stakeholder involvement is even more pronounced. Local plans, when they are prepared, are often produced by planning consultants, funded by MoMRA, who have little or no engagement with the local communities. Furthermore, many of the public service functions, housing, schools etc., sit within their own Ministries, who are responsible for local delivery and pay little attention to local plans prepared by MoMRA, and instead deliver their services in isolation. The widespread use of planning consultants, often international in character, in part is a function of the acute capacity gaps, in terms of numbers, skills, and knowledge, affecting Saudi planning practice. Such limitations of local capacity are generally well understood.
Two recent internal initiatives have provided an impetus for planning system reform. Firstly, in 2013, MoMRA, in partnership with the United Nations Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), agreed to implement a "Future Saudi Cities Programme" designed to promote sustainable urbanism. At its heart were five key planning reform objectives:

- Provide a better urban environment in the seventeen biggest cities, in accordance with the standards of city prosperity and well-being;

- Reduce urban sprawl and manage urbanisation in a more thoughtful manner;

- Seek institutionally sustainable solutions and co-ordination between Ministries and partners for urban development;

- Raise the institutional and technical capacity of planning actors and agencies; and,

- Involve all segments of the population, especially women and youth groups, in urban planning and implementation processes.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in 2015, a national policy document 'Vision 2030' was published which ambitiously sought to foster an economic, social, and spatial transformation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, positioning itself at the heart of the region. The spatial dimension to this 'Vision' suggests that the economy is to become more diversified, and that new and enhanced opportunities will be provided so that citizens can enjoy a better quality of life, whilst at the same time the urban system will deliver greater resilience and sustainability in the face of long-term environmental change. Given the implications that this agenda has for the way land is used and development co-ordinated, it can be argued that an efficient and effective spatial planning system should be at the heart of this transformation process. 'The Vision' is being implemented through a 'National Transformation Programme'. In the Programme, all the key stakeholders need to ex-

plicitly identify what actions they are going to take to contribute to the realisation of 'The Vision'. The Department of Town Planning, within MoMRA, is committed to delivering two key targets. Firstly, it seeks to facilitate the creation of a new National Spatial Strategy with an emphasis on co-ordination and integration between sectoral ministries including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy and Planning, which provide the public sector resources to the other sectoral Ministries whose spending will have spatial effects. This integration will be critical to ensure that the spatial implications of policy initiatives are properly understood and explicitly articulated. Integration is also needed to ensure that more effective, co-ordinated public sector implementation mechanisms are achieved, particularly that investment in critical place-specific requirements, including infrastructure, can better ensure the delivery of more sustainable and people friendly outcomes. Secondly, and of longer term importance, is the development of a new Spatial Planning Act. This work is still ongoing but has been subject to a process of wide-ranging consultation. A White Paper for the Act, published in 2018, succinctly describes the Act as being,

> *'A key enabler for the co-ordination and integration of the planning system to deliver its spatial programme or economic, social and environmental transformation, reflecting and aligning with Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Programme, to deliver a better future. The Act, its planning processes … will be a key enabler to driver development and achieve the Kingdom's aspirations. It supports the Kingdom's Vision to reshape not only the economy … and direct development through more efficient governance and a whole-of-government approach. (MoMRA 2018, 1)*

The White Paper advocates a new approach for planning. It is concerned with the principles (approach) and instruments (system) for planning reform, with a clear focus on delivery and outcomes. As part of a comprehensive process of reform, the Spatial Planning Act will become a single Royal Decree, which will enable the legal management of spatial development throughout the Kingdom. The Act will be supported by Implementing Regulations which provide greater detail and can be updated and amended to reflect changing policy priorities. There are five interrelated focal areas for action:

- Comprehensive coverage of Spatial Plans at national, regional, and local level, which will set the context for more binding masterplans or land subdivision plans at the local level. The focus of these spatial, or framework, plans is to provide clear guidance for new development and reduce conflict or inconsistency between sectoral plans and strategies (horizontal integration) and ensure consistency (vertical integration) between government entities at different scales;

- A clear, transparent framework for managing land and an enforceable and efficient development management system through which decisions are made;

- Clear mechanisms for compliance and enforcement which allows the relevant authorities to enforce fines and place restrictions on developers that are not in accordance with approvals or provide incentives to align development with their plans;

- The establishment of critical financial mechanisms for leverage funding to help to resource/fund the planning system (fees and charges) as well tools to unlock finance for infrastructure, services, and facilities (infrastructure levies, betterment taxes etc.);

- Initiation of governance reform for each spatial jurisdiction within the Kingdom, so that it is clear which specific government entity has responsibility for leading planning activities within its jurisdiction. (MoMRA, 2018)

The reform sets a new approach to planning, one that is more inclusive, designed to be entrepreneurial, and focused on enabling the delivery of positive outcomes. It seeks to give more power and responsibility to local planning authorities. However, there is growing acknowledgement that simply changing the planning system is insufficient without the pre-requisite human capital. This is not just about whether there is already sufficient human capacity within the planning service, but also whether they can and will change their modes of working, and perhaps most importantly, whether other actors who interact with the planning system will change their customs and practices. This is what we describe as culture change. It is a complex, multidimensional, and multi-layered challenge, but without achieving changes in customs, practices, and norms, which are deeply embedded in institutional and personal working practices, structural reforms of systems and processes often fail because of embedded inertia.

> *'Culture change permeates every single aspect of our approach to planning reform. We have to reform the way we go about planning as well as reforming the system itself. Planning is a vehicle, which cannot be fixed by only looking at the engine. You need to change the way the machine is driven.' (McNulty, 2003, quoted in Shaw and Lord, 2007, 63)*

These are not easy challenges to face and require sustained long-term commitment, strong partnership between critical actors, and a willingness to adapt and react to lessons learnt through experience. Embedded in the proposed system reform agenda is a planning approach (practice and culture), which moves from what might be currently characterised as a slow, unresponsive administrative model of city/urban management to one that is flexible, adaptive, inclusive, and responsive to changing situations and circumstances. Decision-making becomes much more open, transparent, and reflexive and the planning service and the activities it promotes will constantly evolve to meet changing needs and opportunities. Plans are therefore no longer idealistic blueprints to be implemented, but are rather strategic frameworks whereby co-ordination and integration of planning activities with other key strategic actors becomes the key. Strategic plans provide a framework that is articulated with sufficient flexibility to be adaptive and that allow negotiations to determine precisely where and when future development can occur. At the same time, the planning process maintains a strong regulatory function that permits (or prevents) specific types of development occurring in particular localities. Such an approach implicitly recognises the complexity of the modern world with its inherent lack of simplistic linearity. This requires a new, different, or re-trained cadre of officials and civic leaders, empowered to respond quickly, and openly, to rapidly changing and evolving circumstances.

The planning process, and those that undertake planning (in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere), have often been perceived as being overly bureaucratic, rigid, and inflexible, relying too heavily on a set of rules and regulations which can be ambiguous and contradictory. Too much time, and too many resources, seems to be spent on producing plans that, in practice, have little impact or influence on the ground. To overcome such negative connotations, one of the critical roles for planning and planners moving forward will be the importance of strong advocates for the value and benefits of good planning which can positively contribute to the aspirations of 'Vision 2030'. Indeed, arguably this Vision, or indeed any national transformational process, cannot be realised without a strong, efficient, and effective planning system. The critical question is how can others understand the importance and value of good planning, in part as a counter argument to the negative views outlined above? An alternative argument is that without good planning the costs to society will be enormous.

Within the Saudi context for example, the World Bank (2016) has highlighted how the capital city Riyadh, like many other places in the Kingdom, is characterised by low-density sprawl.

The approval of land subdivision plans, which effectively regulate where development can occur, has been poorly co-ordinated. Often approved within urban growth boundaries, but far away from the built-up areas, the costs to predominantly public sector infrastructure providers for these haphazard scattered plots are astronomical. Furthermore, the area contained within approved land sub-division plans are fully serviced, but characterised by isolated, scattered, and sprawling housing units. The World Bank (2016) has estimated that this lack of integration and co-ordination has led to a significant increase in the costs of service provision. They have suggested this could be 35% more for sewerage and water provision and up to 80% more for electricity supply compared with other, better planned land subdivision plans, closer to the core (World Bank 2016). Hence, a more integrated and co-ordinated system should generate substantial cost savings.

Also, alongside this need for a strong advocacy role articulating the importance and value of planning (both from a positive delivery perspective and from a resource efficiency viewpoint), it will be important to symbolically demonstrate that the planning system's institutions and embedded practices have also changed. With MoMRA being the lead agency responsibility for state led planning, it has a responsibility to lead and show how it is reforming its own customs and practices. For example, it could change its own internal structures based on functional units to demonstrate to the outside world that it takes the planning reform agenda seriously. If it does not rise to such challenges, then some of its planning functions might be transferred to other bodies – indeed, this process has already begun. Recently, regional planning, which was a MoMRA responsibility, has been devolved to some of the Regional Development Agencies and, in the Mecca Region, a special Royal Commission is being established to take on this role. Here, the importance of regional planning is recognised, but a new institutional framework is emerging to manage the process.

In the remainder of this paper, we briefly review the three interconnected layers of capacity building that will be required if the reform agenda is going to succeed. First, we review the extent to which there are sufficient planners capable of delivering the existing system, let alone a reformed system, which we suggest will require additional human resource. Second, we explore the role and challenges that the universities face in trying to help build capacity, primarily through their role in initial planning education. Finally we explore the scope for enhancing and changing the working practices of all those who engage in, or interact with, the planning service.

Reviewing the Capacity Gap.

It is difficult to establish how many individuals are actually employed in the Saudi planning system, and then to identify whether they have the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding to practice as professional planners. Such a task becomes even more complex when many aspects of the planning service have been, and continue to be, sub-contracted out to consultants, the majority of which are international businesses. Many of these consultants work for both the public and private sectors. Furthermore, benchmarking against other countries is similarly difficult, because we do not really know how many practising planners choose to join a professional body, or choose to practise planning, but outside any professional association. These issues notwithstanding, in the following paragraphs we seek to illustrate how acute the professional planning skills shortage is in Saudi Arabia.

In Saudi Arabia, professional planners can align themselves with the Saudi Council of Engineers. This body aims to promote the standards of those practising engineering within the country, and there is a group, or section, who specifically identify themselves as being town planners. This is the closest entity within Saudi Arabia to a professional body that

represents the planning community. Currently, there are 990 registered planners within the Saudi Council of Engineers. This gives a rough ratio of one professional planner per 34,343 residents. Of these, about two thirds (664 registered planners) work in the public sector. Of these, 14% work for national Ministries. Even within MoMRA, there are less than 25 registered planners (some of whom work in other parts of MoMRA beyond the Department of Planning division). Most local authorities have less than 5 planners (the median figure is one) and only the big cities of Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam have some planning capacity, with more than 40 registered planning staff per city (but often working across a range of agencies, e.g. Amanah and Balyadia).

By contrast, in the UK (which has a population around double that of Saudi Arabia), the professional body representing planning and planners, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), has approximately 25,000 members. This gives a ratio of 1 professional planner per 2,640 residents. Of those members working, 49% reported that they worked in the public sector (RTPI 2017), although many others provided some consultancy services to the public sector. This gives a rough estimate of 11,000 members of the institute working in the public sector across the UK as a whole. This would suggest that on average, the planning department/ division in each local authority could have up to 25 professional planners. This is only a very crude indicative average; the actual figure will vary significantly depending on the size of the local authority, and the numbers employed on a full-time or part-time basis. Furthermore, this figure significantly under-estimates the actual numbers of individuals involved in delivering the planning service. Figures from the Local Government Association suggested that in 2010, the average number of staff employed in a local authority's planning service were closer to 50 full-time equivalents (Local Government Association 2010). Even within this context, many planning units consider that they are significantly under-resourced and the problem has become more acute following almost a decade of austerity and severe constraints on public expenditure (Centre for London, 2015, Planning Futures 2017).

However, the numbers of planners involved in delivering the current system in Saudi Arabia are measured; one of the undeniable elements is that there is a significant shortage of what might be described as professional planners. Benchmarked against other countries, the international consultants McKenzie suggested there was an immediate shortfall of 2,500 planners (when compared to the USA, per 30 million resident population). This was for the operation of the existing rather than the new emerging system, where it has been argued new planning practices will probably require additional human resources (Shaw 2018). Furthermore, a report by UN-Habitat (2016a) suggested that the situation was getting worse as good quality planners were leaving the local planning agencies to work for more enterprising and entrepreneurial agencies such as the Development Agencies, Royal Commissions, other special bodies and the private sector. Whilst many will still be arguably serving the public interest, nevertheless, all the evidence points to an acute shortfall in the numbers of suitably qualified planners.

Reviewing the Supply Gap

A second layer in terms of trying to address the human capacity problem relates to increasing the supply of professional planning staff though initial university education. In many countries, initial entry into the profession is via an accredited undergraduate or postgraduate programme that delivers generic or specialist planning training. Currently, there are five key providers of planning education in the Kingdom (including one female only private university delivering specialist urban design training). On average, these universities (King Saud University in Riyahd, King Abdulaziz in Jeddah, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, and the University of Dammam) collectively produce on average about 80 plan-

ning graduates per year, of whom a relatively small proportion end up working within the public sector. Within this context, interviews with key academics in each of these universities revealed that whilst the numbers graduating remained relatively stable, many of the institutions had either suspended recruitment, or were considering doing so, for a number of different reasons. These included staff shortages (as many Faculty were being seconded to various planning agencies), and the low numbers of applicants combined with the lower academic ability of the intake, which made the planning programmes susceptible to closer internal institutional scrutiny and possible suspension or closure on viability grounds. All accepted that there was an acute shortage of newly qualified planners and called for central government support for planning education as a discipline and a profession. Already they have begun to do this by supporting an Executive Master's convergence course at King Saud University for those already working in planning roles, but lacking the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities. This experimental programme is over-subscribed, which is perceived as a good initial indicator of the need for more sustained measures to overcome an absolute skills shortage in planning.

More recently, the best planning graduates have sought the best jobs working for such agencies as the Royal Commission, the Development Agencies and the private sector (for example Aramco). This is a change from traditional practice where public service jobs offered relatively high wages and good security. However, there has been a longstanding problem of matching individual knowledge and skills to employment specifications due to the process of making public appointments. Access to the public service is via a centrally controlled Civil Service application process. An applicant's success is weighted according to three elements: an aptitude test, the GPA score derived from the first degree, and length of time since the candidate graduated. Once a candidate has been successful in the Civil Service Exams, they gain what is known as 'nominated' status. This means they are eligible to take a Civil Servant job, even if their background education, experience, and skill sets do not match the job specification. Once a department or division has a vacancy approved, the job is advertised to the 'nominated' candidates who can choose where they work, often based on family ties. An appointment usually occurs without further reference to the department or division concerned, and a successful candidate just "appears" in their new place of work. This can often lead to situations where staff are not fully committed to the role and promotion is based on time served, rather than performance management or the delivery of agreed outcomes (UN-Habitat 2016a).

Thus, despite both a significant shortfall in the supply of planners and evident demand for more, there is little evidence that initial planning education is going to be able to close this gap. Assuming the expressed need for planners remains constant, at about 2,500, at the current rates of production of planners (about 80 graduates per annum), it would take 30 years to produce sufficient Saudi planners to deal with existing deficits, and this does not take into account the losses to existing capacity due to retirement or seeking alternative employment opportunities. This is an indication of the scale of the problem and an important issue to address, even without planning reform.

Retraining the Existing Planners

Whilst there are undeniable shortages, there are also a large number of actors who are already interacting with the planning system as it is currently being operationalised. We have argued that planning reform is on the horizon and that an often forgotten aspect of any reform agenda is the human capacity to deliver. All those who currently engage with the system will have to change their behaviour and norms, otherwise, despite system reform, inertia often sets in. Already, UN-Habitat (2018) has been running a number of bespoke

training courses, the range of which (e.g., Urban Economy and Municipal Finance, Climate Change and Compatible and Resilient Cities, Capacity Development for Urban and Territorial Government, Training in Urban Monitoring etc.) illustrates the substantive and procedural issues to be covered. Furthermore, when any new system reforms become finalised, there will be a need for re-training of all those engaged in the system. It remains highly likely that, for the foreseeable future, many planning activities will continue to be delivered by consultants, mainly from overseas. They have developed their own customs, norms, and traditions in their planning practices. They too will need updated skills and knowledge to reflect on the new system outlined above. This retraining of those engaged in planning practice will need a continuous programme of support, as early reflective practice on the operation of the new processes and procedures should highlight what works well and why. This identification and dissemination of best practice requires those engaged in planning practice to subscribe to a process of continuous professional development and lifelong learning.

Without embedding new norms, customs, and practices, and building human capacity for action, any planning reform agenda is likely to be stymied through inertia and the actors carrying on with their existing and learnt patterns of behaviour. This paper would argue that insufficient attention or resources are usually devoted to the human capacity to deliver reform.

Conclusions

The evidence we have presented outlines the root and branch reform of the planning system which is being proposed for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The programme of reform is seen by the Kingdom as fundamental and providing a vision of a modern planning system fit for the demanding purpose to which it will be put – the creation of some of the most exciting, ambitious, new, and sustainable urban development anywhere in the world. However, we show that both the comprehensive nature of the approach and the resultant systemic reform to the rules and instruments of planning will require a similar programme of reform in the existing norms and customs of practice. Building the capacity of the actors and changing the behavioural aspects of those actors already operating in a system is a frequently underestimated, but critically important requirement of any successful planning reform process.

This marriage of policy and practice may be achieved in a number of ways. Firstly, rigid top-down prescription regarding what counts as acceptable or good practice could be codified into the next phase of system reform. This disciplinary approach has been identified as a feature of centralised nations such as the UK, where normative assessments of good and bad practice have been understood as determined almost entirely by the central state. For critics, this form of 'identity regulation' (Inch, 2010) has resulted in rigid caricatures of what good planning practice comprises that leave little flexibility for planners to enact the 'spirit' of the system attuned to local circumstances rather than simply replicating identikit policies.

A second approach may be to invest in training. In this respect, a range of possibilities exist from bespoke short courses delivered on specific issues – what is known in the English vernacular as 'continuing professional development' – to more sustained education and training. Common subjects to be dealt with through continuing professional development include the use of information technology and aspects of planning law. Beyond such short courses, it might also be desirable to consider the opportunities presented by international higher education, particularly for senior and senior-track planners. Post-graduate study, both at Master's and Doctoral levels, can provide senior planners with the opportunity to undertake sustained study and develop a corresponding degree of expertise that is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve through other means. As there is ample evidence that institutions take on the charac-

ter of those who direct them, there are perhaps other good reasons to believe that there are dividends to investing in the education and training of the leaders of the new system.

Such is the scale of the planning reform agenda in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that some form of accompanying programme will be necessary to support the parallel development of the planning profession to enable it to enact the new system to its full potential. The transformative effects of education are well known. It is likely that the next stages of planning reform agenda in the KSA will turn as much on the training and development of those people operating the new system, as it will on systemic reform. Without the capacity and willingness of the actors to change, planning reform ambitions often flounder because of system inertia. The importance of human capital is a critical but underestimated component of system reform, both in terms of the approach to planning and the frameworks and regulations within which planning fits.

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Unsafe Areas, Risk and Defiant Urbanism in Cairo

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Abstract

Defiance is a state of discursive determination to face pervasive forces that threaten lives and livelihoods. This paper examines how dwellers in one of Cairo's "unsafe areas" defy urban policies as they go about making a living and shaping their built environments. "Unsafe areas" are a sub-category of unplanned or informal settlements that are deemed life-threatening by state agencies and slated for demolition or upgrading. Through ethnographic investigation and a quantitative audit of the built environment in the "unsafe" shelters [1] of Ain el Seera, this paper shows how successive policies and local popular practices have interchangeably contributed to the production and aggravation of risk. It also devises a built environment audit that considers ecological factors and broadens the conception of risk beyond the physical conditions of the built environment, which is the primary focus of the government's audit. The paper argues that governmental policies and practices on one hand and dwellers' responses on the other are locked up in a dialectic of power. While state agencies seek to assert sovereignty over space and capture prime real estate values, dwellers innovate modes of asserting their right over the built environments and livelihoods. The dialectic manifests not only in the physical deterioration of the built environment but also in how the community perceives itself and their relationship with state agencies, at times con forming to or diverging from stigmatisation, ruination, and forced evictions. The outcome is a perpetual mode of defiance where neither the state nor the dwellers win over urban space. Nevertheless, such a mode opens ways to reimagine urban built environments, which could expand the rights to the city.

Keywords:

ecological risk, unsafe areas, forced eviction, urbanism, Cairo

Introduction

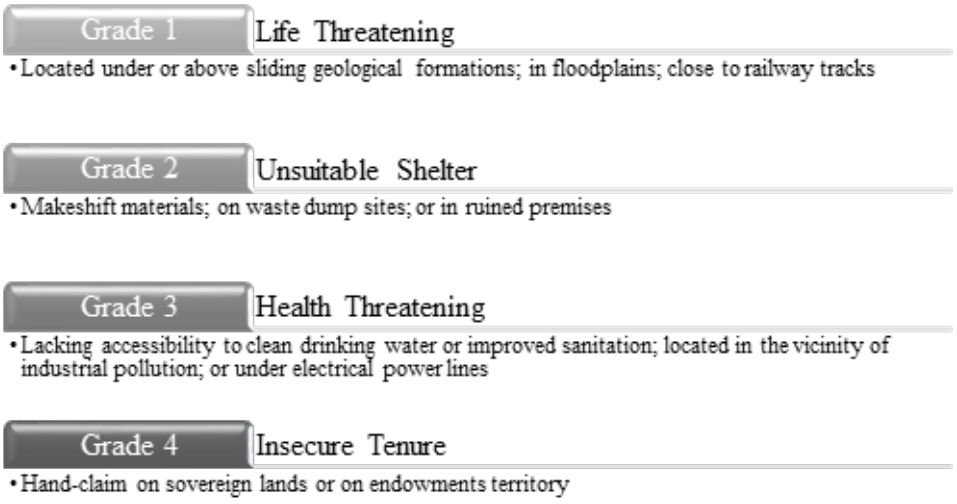
In 2015, at least 15.5 million Egyptians lived in precarious built environments that are pejoratively called slums (ashwai'yat) (The Census of Egypt, 2017). In 2016, 45 million Egyptians resided in those settlements according to the short-lived Ministry of State for Urban Renewal and Informal[2] Settlements (2015 ,عبـد المنعـم) . According to the Informal Settlements Development Fund (ISDF), in 2018, there were between 351 to 417 settlements in Egypt without safe housing: 7% of them were life threatening, 17% hazardous to health, and 5% with insecure tenure [3]. In 2007, the Egyptian Ministry of Local Development claimed that 1171 out of 1800 ashwai'yat in Cairo occupied around 39-40% of the total built-up area and housed around 40% of the 19+ million inhabitants of the capital (GTZ Participatory Development Program in Urban Areas, 2009). Whether on hand-claim lands or in planned neighborhoods, ashwai'yat are generally associated with hazards, crime, and youth radicalisation. Although critical studies have long tried to dissociate those stigmas (Salem, 2016), the discourse has persisted and consecutive regimes have adhered to policies of neglect, de facto regularization, belting, and bulldozing.

In 1992, violent confrontations broke out between state-security forces and radical Islamists in one of Cairo's densely populated neighborhoods (a.k.a. Embaba Republic) considered ashwai'yat. In the same year, a 5.8 mB earthquake hit Cairo causing 545 deaths and driving around 50,000 into homelessness. Both incidences sparked state-controlled media-sensationalism equating slums with urban dangers. In 2008, a landslide in Mokattam Hills wreaked havoc on Duweiqa, a densely populated area, and compelled the government to establish the Informal Settlements Development Fund (ISDF). [4] The fund is mandated to study and design development plans for those settlements. Copying UN-HABITAT's criteria for unsafe areas, it issued a nationwide map in 2008/9 which was later modified to establish a National Strategy for Slum Development 2012-2017 [5] (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2015). Meanwhile in 2014, a Ministry of Urban Renewal and Informal Settlements was established to coordinate the interventions of public entities and non-governmental actors and resolve the growing phenomenon of precarious settlements.

The Ministry was dismantled after nine months and the overlapping mandates between state agencies remained an obstacle against swift interventions (2015 ,عبـد المنعـم). It was not until 2015 that state agencies frantically declared Egypt free of Ashwai'yat after a Presidential speech vowing to stop "others" gloating at Egypt's poverty. [6]This oath started a media avalanche on state-owned and private satellite channels as well as on social media, airing and hailing state intervention and the policy of relocating households to social housing estates in the periphery of urban agglomerations. The media gives the impression that the state has finally assumed its long-overdue responsibility towards 47% of its citizens.[7] State propaganda stresses the magnitude of social housing projects to the extent that it precludes any critical examinations of such 'policy of numbers'. Will the construction of more housing estates in the desert (the "weapons of mass construction" as Arjun Appadurai suggested in Mehrotra, 2012) ameliorate risks of living in ashwai'yat? Will the policy of eviction alleviate precarious livelihoods?

Unsafe Areas in Egypt

The ISDF classifies informal settlements into two main categories: unplanned and unsafe. The latter is classified into four grades as in the chart below (Khalayfa, 2011):



Theoretical Approach: What is Risk and How to Assess It?

Risk refers to "the potential for realization of unwanted, negative consequences of an event" (Rowe, 1977 as cited in Tierney, 1999, p. 216). Risk could be natural or technological (human-made). In urban areas, both types of risk intertwine in manners that make it difficult to separate, with unequivocal precision, the exact causes of the unwanted or negative consequences. This is particularly evident in the case of risk associated with the urban built environment. Built environments are not only the physical structures or buildings but the infrastructure, utilities, amenities, and services that support them, along with and the ecological (human and non-human) agents that inhabit them. In other words, whether natural or human-made, the compound impact on the built environment could emanate simultaneously from physical, administrative, and ecological risks.

Due to this inherent complexity of causes and effects, the identification and assessment of built environment risk are organically associated with the tools used to identify, assess, mitigate, and prevent risks. One of several methods used internationally to assess risk of the built environment are the built environment audits (BEAs) .[8] These are audits of the physical conditions of buildings and infrastructure as well as their impact on the life chances of dwellers (Graham & Marvin, 2001). As such, BEAs are intrinsically imbued with assessment of both the collective goods (physical phenomena and perceptions) and the users (collective and individual). Goods are assessed according to their functional use and users according to "how much of a good they are assumed to hold" (Lewis, 2012) with implications on the distribution of risk, rights, and justice.

Basically, BEAs are normative-evaluative. That is, they contain "public interest criterion" or distributive justice at their core (Lewis, 2012, p. 46); they are value-laden (Rauschmayer, 2001). Sen (1992) argued that a 'upiquitous egalitarianism' informs any evaluation of goods and that BEAs support the design of policies: welfare egalitarians use them to design equal welfare policies; utilitarians seek equal utiltiy per capita; and libertarians advocate equal liberties. Similarly, Low argued that the built environment distributes "equal freedom and equal life chances" (Low, 1994: 19 as quoted in Lewis, 1991). Nonetheless, not every BEA has fairness or justice at its core. As tools of data collection and policy, they reflect class, ethnic and gender biases of their designers, and could have detrimental policy implications for justice, equity, and equality (Lummis, 2010).

Firstly, BEAs vary in the way they conceive of individual-users either as deserving an absolute portion of a good (an average of a good held in equal measure by each user) or as deserving a relative proportion dependent upon circumstances (e.g., persons with disabilities should be apportioned more of some goods than others). Lummis (2010) distinguished 'strict egalitarians' (equal shares to equals) from 'proportional egalitarianism' (unequal shares to unequals). Similarly, Lewis (2012) criticised BEAs that follow strict egalitarianism while neglecting heterogeneity within and across communities, thus assessing the distribution of goods as well as of risks unjustly. A nuanced BEA would simultaneously a) average out heterogeneities between individuals to produce a metric that reflects a homogenous value (absolute portion) of a particular good, and b) assign a relative weight to heterogeneity (e.g., age or disability) to produce values reflecting differential shares of the good that compensate for relative under-privileging. For instance, safety from house-collapse should be a criterion of absolute egalitarianism in urban policy. Nonetheless, in the case of individuals with high degrees of vulnerability of income, tenure security, health, or disabilities, the same criterion should be of a proportional egalitarianism.

Secondly, audits vary in terms of their approach to goods – as ends (functional use) or as means-to-end. Access to housing for dwelling is a functional use; it is different from access to a house for saving or real estate investment. Assigning an absolute value of a certain good to citizens irrespective of their heterogeneity is a legal right and countries are ranked according to their per capita access to BE goods. This indicator assumes that citizens' preferences are satisfied and that accessed goods have fulfilled their end-state of utility (Rawls, 1999). Ditto, an environment's general sense of safety could be operationalized as a 'utilitarian end-state of' freedom from threat or pain. This approach assumes that access to goods, e.g. housing, is sufficient means-to-end; it leaves out from the audit any metric/assessment of heterogeneous ends and eschews any consideration of the differential qualities of goods as ends or of differential capabilities of users of goods as means-to-end.

Lewis (2012) classified BEAs based on their approaches to individuals and goods into three types: opportunity audits evaluate BE in reference to actual distribution of goods; satisfaction audits evaluate BE according to equal distribution of citizens' preferences; while capability audits evaluate BE in terms of equal distribution of opportunity and agency (Lewis, 2012). Audits used by government agencies in Egypt focus entirely on building and construction specifications, using a single template that misses out on neighborhood heterogeneity and thus on equitable perceptions of rights and wellbeing. Left out are aspects of health, education, work/livelihood, and socio-cultural institutions (عبد الحليم, 2011).

Similarly, Egypt does not possess a national urban policy and responsibilities over urban af -fairs are spread across multiple agencies (World Bank, 2006). Apart from the national census conducted every ten years and a few non-periodical surveys, data on urbanisation is generally accessible through international organisations or donor agencies with permission under bilateral agreements with the government. Accordingly, existing data sets of the urban BE reflect the prerogatives of disparate agencies and hence are difficult to compare (United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2016). The UN-Habitat Global Urban Observatory defined BE as being made up of six sub-sectors: housing, urban development, drinking water, sanitation, electricity, and transportation. Its data is of the general resources type (Shawkat & Hendawy, 2016).

A Cairo-based urban observatory expanded this classification in order to monitor public expenditures on the built environment using financial data from the national budget (http://10tooba.org/bedi/en/). Based on budget analysis, the same group also devised what they labelled the 'built environment deprivation index' (BEDI). The index combines data from the national map of unsafe areas and the UN-Habitat Slums indicator to audit the built

environment according to affordability, crowding, durable housing, secure tenure, safe water, and sanitation.

BEDI identifies potential risks in the built environment that go beyond the strictly technical criteria followed by the ISDF. Compared to official assessments, which rely heavily on technical and engineering criteria, BEDI is more comprehensive. It considers multiple causes of risk and their compound effects. Its normative underpinnings are spatial justice and the right to freedom from risk. The discussion above indicates that an understanding of risk is organically tied to analysing the normative underpinnings of the tools deployed to identify, assess, mitigate, and prevent risk. Hence, the theoretical approach of this paper is not one of theorising informal settlements. Instead, it takes off from a theorisation of risk and its associated methodologies as references for understanding informal and unsafe areas.

Methodology

The main method deployed in this paper to identify and assess risk is a built environment audit inspired by BEDI (discussed above), supplemented with questions on actual and perceived risks related to housing conditions, amenities and basic infrastructure, tenure status, health, work and income, education and skills, and social, administrative, and natural risks. To ensure sufficient understanding of the conditions of dwellers and the built environment in both neighbourhoods, multiple ethnographic methods were used before the design of the audit. These included walking tours with tracking applications; photo shoots with informed consent; GIS assisted base mapping; focus group discussions with youths, adult male and female dwellers, and senior citizens; and in-depth interviews with district officials, acting managers of non-governmental associations active in both neighbourhoods, and craftsmen and workers in tanneries. Interviews and discussions focused on actual and perceived risk as well as participants' coping mechanisms. Fieldwork took place after demolition orders were repeatedly issued by district authorities; a period characterised by heightened community vigilance and scepticism towards researchers and state personnel.

The audit involved semi-structured questionnaires designed to reflect Amartya Sen's approach to capabilities (opportunity + agency) (1992, 2000), Wolfgang Sachs' approach to environmental justice and development (2010), and Henri Lefebvre's conception of the right-to-the-city (as a cry and a demand to participate and appropriate the city) (Harvey, 2009; Verso Editors, 2017). Household heads and other members who contributed to the household income responded to five sets of questions. Each set focused on sources of risks experienced in the past six months and expected to recur in six months' time.

Findings from all methods were organised around four main themes as follows:

a) the ISDF's National Map of Unsafe Areas and the basis of its classification of areas according to topographical and building conditions;

b)the institutional structures, legislations, and practices of state agencies and local authorities[9] which could mitigate or aggravate risk;

c) the actual spatial forms of 'unsafe areas' including their location, population and built-up densities and quality and use of open spaces;

d) the dwellers' actual and perceived risks beyond building conditions, including their assessment of work, health, skills and education, tenure status, social and non-human environments, and risks emanating from local government practices.

The Study Area

Ain el Seera is a shiyakha or sub-unit in the administrative district of Masr el-Qaddima that has two sub-areas or neighbourhoods listed as unsafe grade 2 on the Governor of Cairo's list (#5725) released in 2017 [10], namely, Ewa'at (shelters) of Ghaba and Lasilki (shown surrounded by yellow footpaths in the map below). Both neighbourhoods were established in the 1980s by the municipal government under President Sadat and injected into the green open spaces between public housing blocks constructed earlier under President Nasser in 1963. The objective was to accommodate households who had lost their homes due to natural disasters.

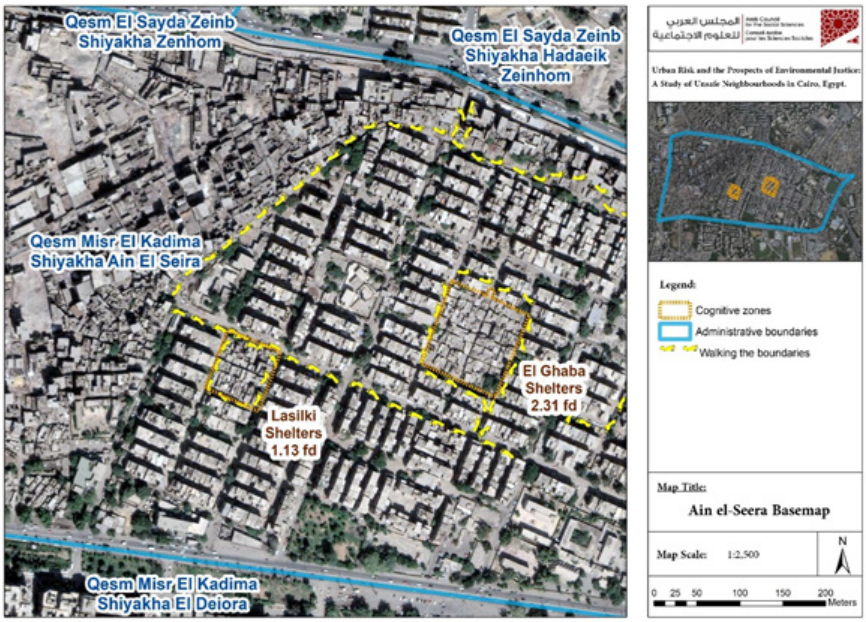


Figure 1: Ain el-Seera administrative boundaries and cognitive zones

Ain el Seera was famous for the leather tanneries' enclave contiguous to Magra al-Oyoun, a 700-year old aqueduct slated for the UNESCO Map of Historic Cairo. The shiyakha including both neighbourhoods under study experienced economic and built environment deterioration after the demolition and relocation of most tanneries to Badr city, 45Kms north east of Cairo governorate in 2017. Youths and senior citizens interviewed stated how the closure of tanneries put thousands of workers out of business and reduced households' capacity to maintain or fix their built environments, thus contributing to decay and deterioration, as shown in the photos below taken from Ghaba and Lasilki respectively. Participants also mentioned that once Magra al-Oyoun is placed under the UNESCO map, real estate values will rise making demolitions and evacuation of lands around the aqueduct expedient.

Figure 2: Ghaba Zone; snippet of the built environment condition

Figure 3: Lasilki Zone; snippet of the built environment condition

Designed as single-floor row blocks, each shelter originally consisted of two rooms and a shared bathroom for two households, which had implications for privacy and capacity to house new household members. Overtime, all dwellers modified the original design by adding rooms or floors. Unlike Lasilki, Ghaba shelter, tucked between housing blocks and screened-out of sight, grew into a hideout for outlaws – a process that lowered sub-letting rents and exacerbated deteriorating incomes and allowances for maintenance. Although Lasilki shelter has the same design, its location on the main road allows better accessibility and higher subletting rents. Both neighbourhoods contain kharabat sites, or deserted lots used as dumpsites and open defecation spots, for illicit deals and temporary shelters for stray animals and occasionally, the homeless.
Demographically, based on the survey of all (361) households (HHs), 41% were older than 45 years; 35% were aged 31-45 while only 24% were aged 15-30 years. There were more females in both neighbourhoods than males and 82% of HHs were headed by married couples compared to 23% HHs with single, separated, or widowed heads. Although 52% of dwellers did not read and write, 48% had formal vocational or elementary education.

Compared to Lasilki, dwellers of Ghaba shelter are more likely to be divorced and have single

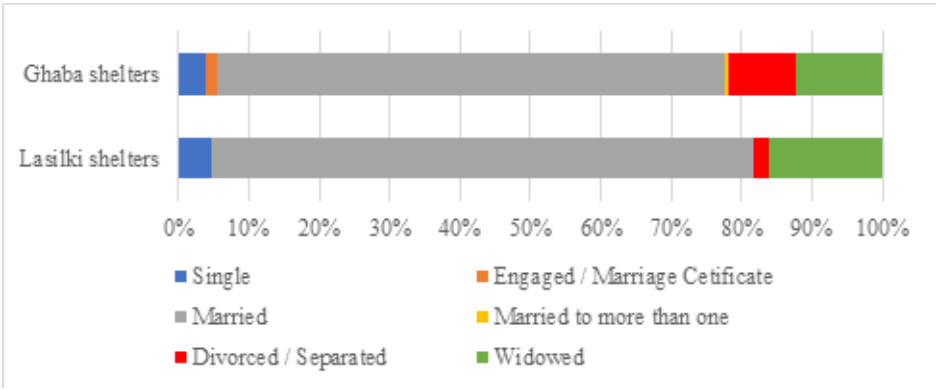


Figure 4: Marital Status Compared

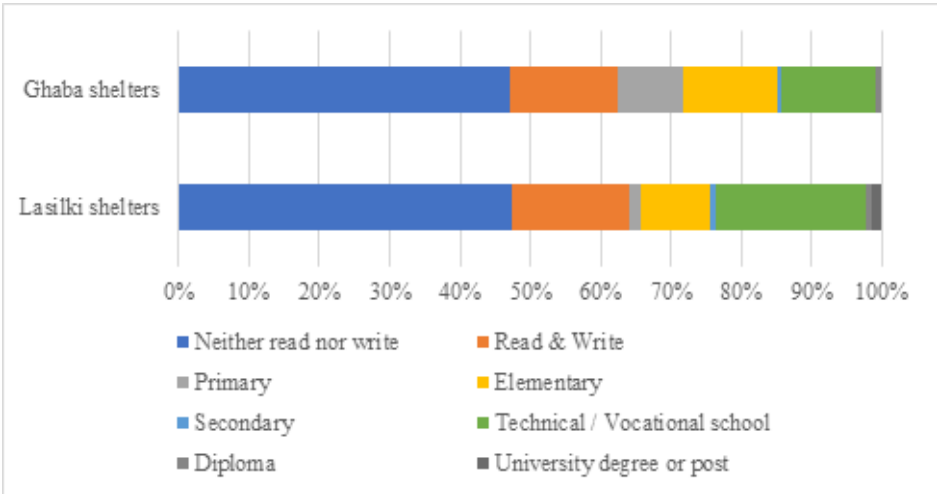


Figure 5: Educational Status Compared

household heads, with more incidences of graduates from vocational secondary schools and academic high education.
Compared to the early days of the shelters, most current dwellers moved to the neighbourhood due to low rents and proximity to potential work.

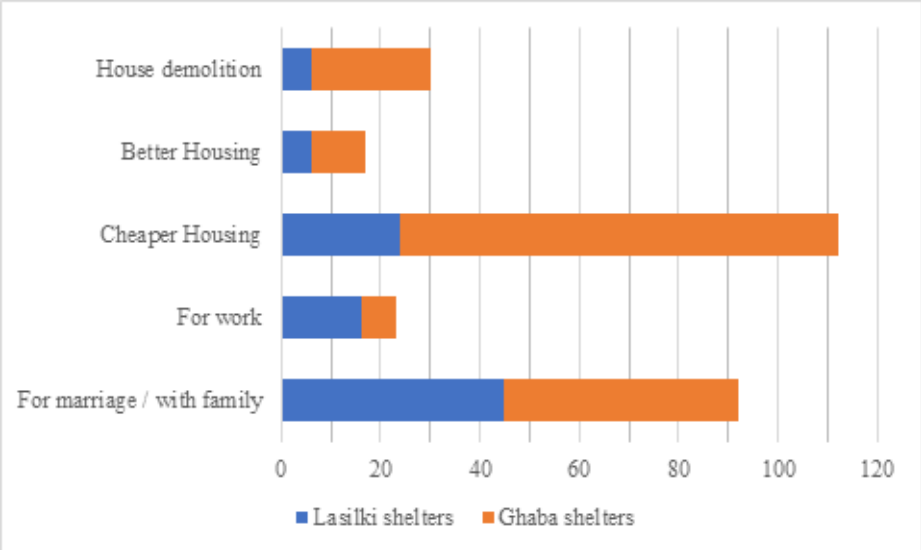


Figure 6: Reasons for Moving to the Area Compared

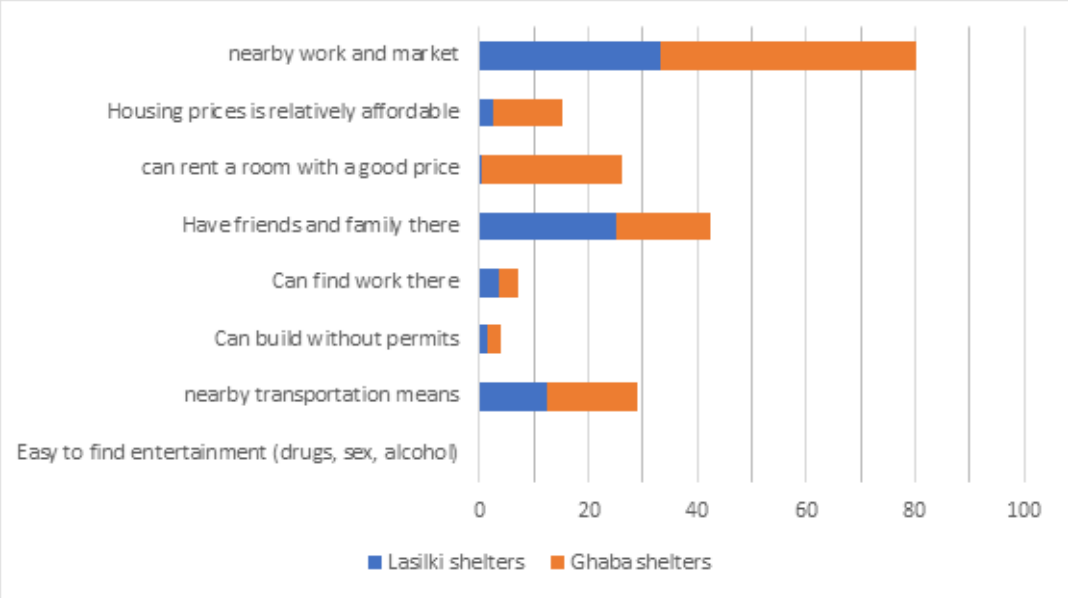


Figure 7: Perceived Characteristics of Areas in Comparison

There were nuanced differences between both neighbourhoods that must be acknowledged in the identification, assessment, and mitigation of risks as will be argued in the sections below.

Analysis of Findings

In this section, I discuss the findings from the desk research and fieldwork. To support the main argument, I structure findings around four main themes or forces that interact to produce what I argue to be defiant urbanism. The four forces are a) state policies towards informal settlements and unsafe areas, b) the protracted processes of ruination and stigmatisation, c) the real estate frenzy or the "weapons of mass construction", and d) the local popular practices and perceived risk.

State Policies: From Benign Neglect to Bulldozing

In this section, I underscore the main policies targeting informal settlements since the 1920s and argue that national policies are behind the systematic and protracted ruination and dilapidation of the built environments and urban risk in the so called "unsafe areas".

State policies targeting informal settlements started in the 1920s [11] when Ezbet el Saayda (عزبــة الصعايــدة) was established in Imbaba by a family from Qena in Upper Egypt (عبــد الحليــم, 2011). Back then, the municipal government swapped land with squatters and asked them to relocate to a plot in Manshiat Nasser. The post-independence governments did not favor this 'exchange' strategy; instead, they devised ad hoc policies. The diagram below depicts the major milestones of state strategies since the 1960s.

Throughout the 1960s and 70s, state-sponsored housing and infrastructure continued to decline. Meanwhile, the Open-Door policies encouraged private sector investments in high-end housing. The 'popular' classes (shaabi) began to provide for themselves in cahoots with corrupt municipal authorities. The strategy of benign neglect continued well into the 1980s, albeit with de facto regularisation (extending electricity, sanitation, and roadways). Upon signing the Camp David Accord in 1979, international development organisations, predominantly the United States Development Agency (USAID), pumped more financial and technical assistance into upgrading programmes across the urban spectrum. Community Development Associations (CDAs) played a crucial role in syphoning off aid monies into 'beneficiary' groups in the absence of dwellers' participation. The latter continued to provide for themselves and the term iskan ahali (self-built housing) came to surface.

The year 1992 was a threshold, sparked by an earthquake and the discovery of a radical Islamist stronghold in Embaba. A Presidential speech in May 1993 acknowledged the urgency of 'upgrading' informal settlements and a National Strategy for Ashwai'yat (Khalifa, 2015) was issued. The strategy addressed deficiencies of existing laws. Its goals were to improve the living standards of informal settlements, integrate them into formal cities, and provide infrastructure and secure control [12] (Hegazy, 2016). Nevertheless, three main factors continued to influence policies in the 1990s: foreign donors' conditions for financial assistances, the state's concern for national security, and the complexity of urban development in terms of the large number of agencies with conflicting mandates.

International assistance continued to play a substantial role in upgrading until 2019 [13], albeit in partnership not only with CDAs but with private consultancy firms as well. Meanwhile, the government experimented with discursive policies such as the still-born belting strategy in 2004. In 2015, the ISDF released the National Map of Unsafe Areas, which distinguished between unplanned (settlements built off planning standards) and unsafe areas (life-threatening and insecure tenure). Earlier in 2014, a Prime Ministerial Committee (Mehleb Committee) convened to recover lands grabbed in violation of legal procedures such as the Green Belt in 6 October city, with the threat of bulldozing other areas such as Warraq el Arab, Qorsaya,

and Geziret el Dahab as encroachments on agricultural lands.

Ruination, Stigmatisation, and Local Popular Counter-Tactics

Beside national policies, other practices were implicated in the process of dilapidation. In 2016, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) estimated that 3.2% of all households in Egypt and 8.4% in Cairo lived in unsafe buildings. Around 3000 houses collapsed annually, while 300,000 were prone to collapse due to sub-standard construction in Cairo. Between July 2012 and June 2013, 192 persons lost their lives and 824 families became destitute due to house collapse. Around 11% of houses collapsed due to dilapidation caused by inefficient monitoring and enforcement of building rules, insecure tenure, disincentives for owner and tenant maintenance under the old rental law, absence of appropriate planning, and natural disasters (EIPR, 2016). EIPR pointed at the faulty processes to assess risk, loss, and monetary compensations. More intriguing, EIPR also reported that 73,408 out of 225,567 dilapidated buildings slated for demolition in Cairo since 2006 could be renovated and conserved (EIPR, 2016).

In 2017, the Governor of Cairo issued decision #5725/2017 listing 30 settlements in Cairo as either 'extreme-risk' (dahemat al khotourah) and designated for eviction and demolition or 'grade 2' designated for 're-planning'. As mentioned above, there was no operational definition of 're-planning'. Except for the Masaken Zainhom Project in central Cairo in 1988, where a strategy of in-situ re-development was implemented, eviction remained the easiest policy option (e.g., Duweiqa landslide in 2008 and Maspero Triangle in 2009/2010). Observations of demolitions in Massoud Shaks or Akshak Massoud, one of Ain el Seera's 'extreme-risk' settlements, showed how evictions were accompanied by state arbitrary violence. The municipal authority accompanied by state security forces pushed people out of their dwellings and demolished buildings at random. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Solidarity sorted dwellers into eligible groups, who were not allowed to carry any belongings except their LPG cylinders.

Issuing eviction notices was also arbitrary. Before the 1980s, eviction orders were issued through the administrative court and obliged governors to evict and demolish in fifteen days. Residents had fifteen days to challenge orders through emergency courts. In the 1990s, legislative amendments banned emergency courts from challenging administrative court orders and placed eviction entirely under governors' discretion. These amendments opened 'back doors' for residents to stave off evictions through political maneuvering. Interviews with residents of Ain el Seera shelters revealed how they were able to mobilise politicians to delay evictions ordered as far back as the 1980s.

Pre-eviction surveys by municipal officers were equally, yet indirectly arbitrary. Surveyors listed unit occupants available at the time of the survey regardless of their tenure status. Since units in unsafe areas were frequently sub-let or rented min el batten by word of mouth, without written proof of rent, surveyors assumed that occupants were the lawful tenants. Securing the name on the surveyors' list was the initial step for entitlement to units at the relocation housing estates. Unit owners recognized the risk of absenteeism and started forcing occupants to sign promissory notes (wasl amana) equivalent to the expected market value of the relocation unit. The notes were a lingering threat that owners would present to police authorities in case of default and aggravated an already precarious situation. This practice subjected occupants to various forms of extortions.

Recognising this, municipal officers revisited the area post-midnight. In one interview at the Ghaba shelter of Ain el Seera, one occupant narrated how the municipal officer tricked him

into rushing to the municipality office to fill out relocation documents. When he returned, the building had already been demolished. These mal practices generated a spiral of opportunism whereby occupants deliberately ruined buildings to qualify for demolition and relocation. Others would file 'divorced' on the pre-eviction survey and rent units in unsafe areas. Couples would reunite upon receiving two units at the relocation site. Wacquant et al. (2014) identified strategies to cope with territorial stigma from dissimulation: mutual distancing and elaboration of micro-differences, lateral denigration, retreat into the private (family) sphere, exit, studied indifference, defense of neighbourhood (individual or collective), and stigma inversion (hyperbolic claiming). While dwellers innovated with multiple strategies, they were adamant in how they perceived their neighbourhoods as expressed by a young man from Ghaba, who said, "[T]his is the Republic of Ain el Seera."

Although there were hardly any pre- and post-eviction assessments of the social conditions, other state practices contributed to the systematic ruination and deterioration of the built environments in unsafe areas. For instance, law 144 (2006) prohibited dwellers from renovating buildings or maintaining utilities if their neighbourhood fell within a heritage buffer zone such as the cases of Hattaba and Arab el Yassar around Saladin Citadel and Magra el Oyoun in Ain el Seera.

Besides systematic ruination, stigmatisation was a violent strategy. Labelling an area unsafe was accompanied by labelling its residents as criminal. There was "an unfortunate fusion between precarious neighborhoods and precarious people" (Perlman, 2016, p. 39), evident in the manner in which the government referred to those areas not only as life-threatening built environments but also as unsafe residents. "The populations of these disparaged districts are nealy always painted in darkest and more exotic hues than their demography warrants" (Wacquant, Slater, & Pereira, 2014). "Their cultural differences are exaggerated and turned into divergence if not hostility to dominant national norms [. . .] while their vulnerable class position is downplayed or ignored altogether" (Wacquant et al., p. 1274).

By clubbing risk into the singular category of faulty construction or topographical dangers and by stigmatising areas as risky settlements and groups without distinction, state-controlled media consolidated the view that demolitions and evictions were the only solutions to "save the civilization façade (al wajiha al hadariya) of the City Victorious" and that relocation into desert housing estates was synonymous with "providing dignified lives for our people (ahalina) in ashwa'iyat". This propaganda justified massive construction of housing estates in the desert. On 17 October 2018, the media advisor to the ISDF stated that the fund spent EGP 24bn (US$ 1.35m) on new housing estates for relocation between 2014-2018 [14].

Media reports of the relocation schemes of four communities (Duweiqa, Izbet Khair Allah, Batn el Baqar, and Dar El Salam) to Asmarat in 2017 stated that only 1400 households out of more than 8035 were relocated, leaving several families seeking shelters with relatives and friends or becoming 'homeless'. Similarly, in October 2017, the municipality of Al Khalifa district issued eviction orders to residents of Ain Al-Hayat. ISDF relocated 57 out of 270 families to Asmarat; the rest awaited demolition of their houses and workshops (الحبـال, 2017). If this strategy were to continue, we should expect an increase in the already large number of 'homeless' countrywide – estimated at 12 million in 2015 (Mounir, 2015).

Weapons of Mass Construction [15]

The technical discourse on risk and the strategies of stigmatisation and protracted ruination should be examined in the context of broader financial stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes underway in Egypt since 2014. Two factors are pertinent: a) the place of

the real estate sector in the growth of Egypt's national economy and b) public expenditures on the built environment. Between the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16, overall investments in real estate including acquisition, ownership, construction, and building and related services rose from 42 billion Egyptian Pounds (approximately US$ 2.3 million) to 51 billion EGP (US$ 2.8), at a 20.4% annual rate of increase, while 29.1% (12,498,000 units) of the country's habitable housing stock (22,306,000 units) remained vacant (Census of Egypt, 2017).

Compared to overall investments, the sector received 13%, making it second to the gas and oil sector. Over the same period, the sector's contribution to gross national product (GNP) jumped from EGP 356 billion (US$ 20 million) to EGP 425 billion (US$ 23.6), making it first on the list, followed by the gas and oil sector. This concentration of real estate investments and contribution to GNP were the result of multiple factors: the low costs of construction and building activities – e.g., cheap labour, funding support from national and private banks, in addition to favourable governmental mechanisms for allocating and pricing land for developers (2017 يوسف). This level of primacy contradicted the share of built environment in the national budget. In the financial year 2015/16, only 10% of national outlays went to the built environment, 92% went to the central Ministries mandated with the wide range of built environment-related activities (9.1% of the national budget). Municipal governorates received 0.9% only of the entire budget. This meant that improvements to the built environment including maintenance and upgrading received scant allocations from the central budget, leaving the tasks of adequate housing and basic amenities and infrastructure predominantly to the private sector and to residents.

This national trend has direct implications on state policies towards unsafe areas. In 2017, President Sisi announced that the ISDF would not receive outlays from the national budget. Instead, the fund would generate revenues from three main sources: a) 25% of property taxes, b) residual funds from the New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA), one of four public economic authorities mandated with the provision, brokerage, and sales of lands, and c) profits for the sale of commercial units constructed over lands confiscated from unsafe areas after evictions.[16,17] This decision means that ISDF's capacity to upgrade unsafe areas is tied to factors beyond its institutional mandate. Firstly, the rate of property tax collection remains low considering the reluctance of state authorities to discourage private investments in real estate markets. Secondly, NUCA has declared no-profit, no-loss financial status for the past four years, thus preventing it from contributing to ISDF revenues. Lastly, ISDF's capacity to construct and sell commercial units is a function of land availability in unplanned and unsafe areas – the evacuation of which resides within the Governor's discretion, not with the ISDF. In reverse logic, the rate of evictions – forced or negotiated – is a function of the rate of revenue generation through land and real estate investments.

The Social Production of Risk

In this section, I analyse dwellers' responses to actual and perceived risks in the built environment.[18] The charts below compare Ghaba and Lasilki and indicate how ecological risks are more pronounced than natural risks. The former are associated with drug abuse, sexual harassment, bullying, and violence associated with indebtedness and money lending. Similarly,

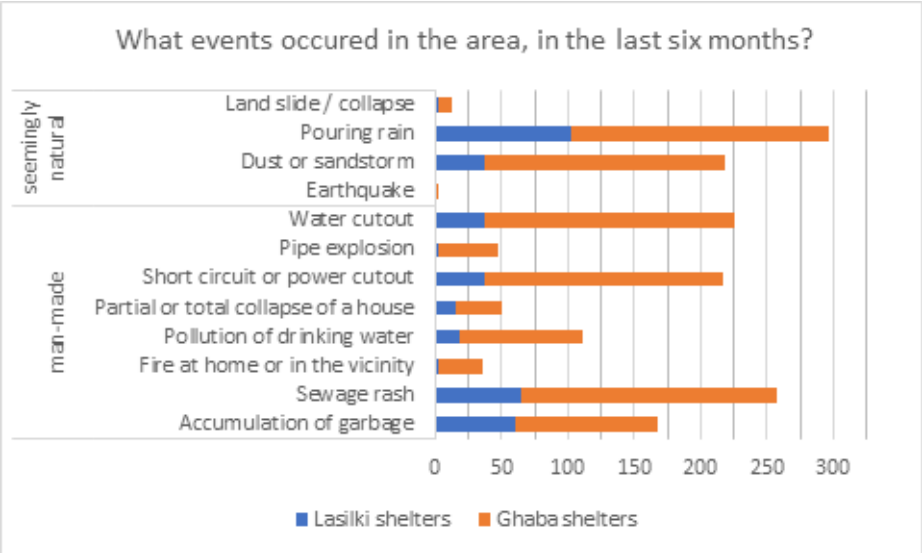


Figure 8: Actual Built Environment Risks Compared in Numbers

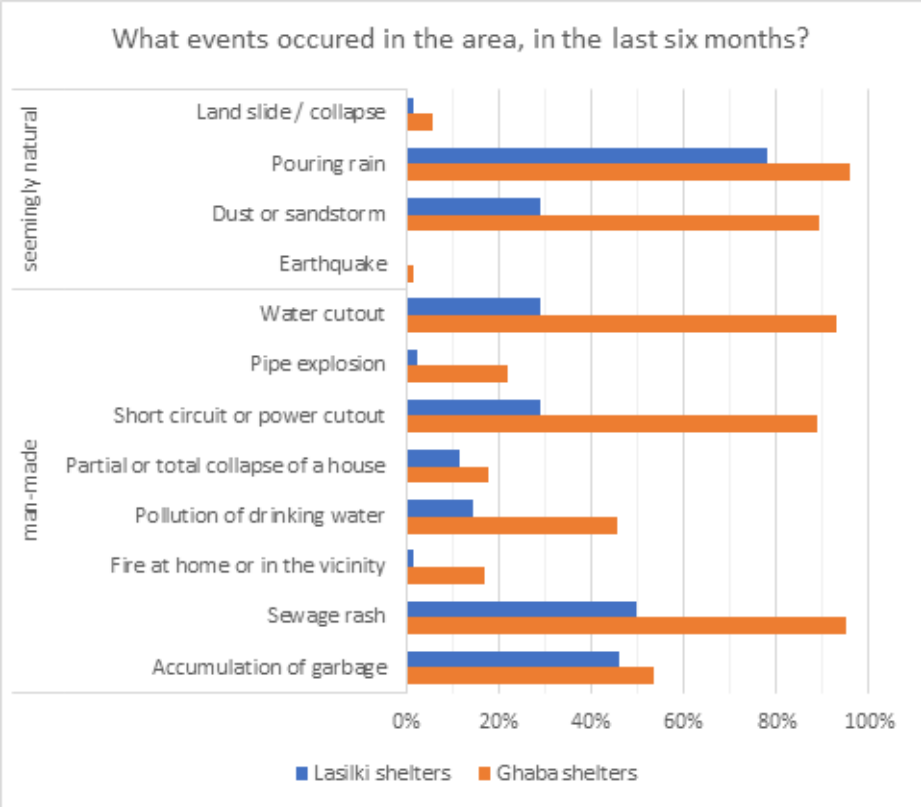


Figure 9: Actual Built Environment Risks Compared in Percentages

most dwellers perceive the threat of eviction as most threatening to livelihoods.
Ghaba dwellers are exposed to actual risks of water and electricity cuts three times more

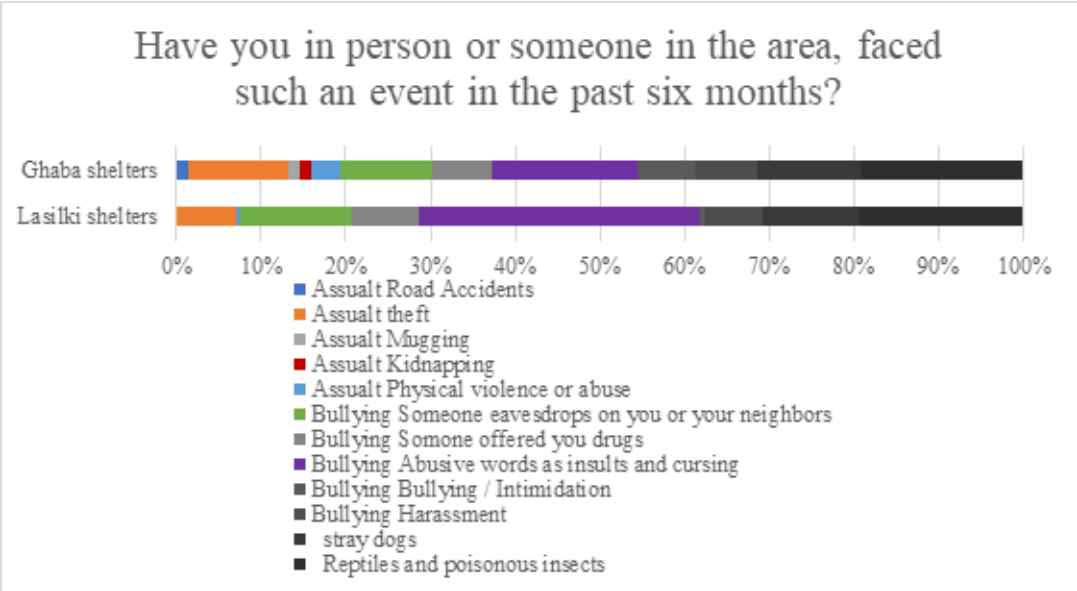


Figure 10: Actual Social and Ecological Risks Compared

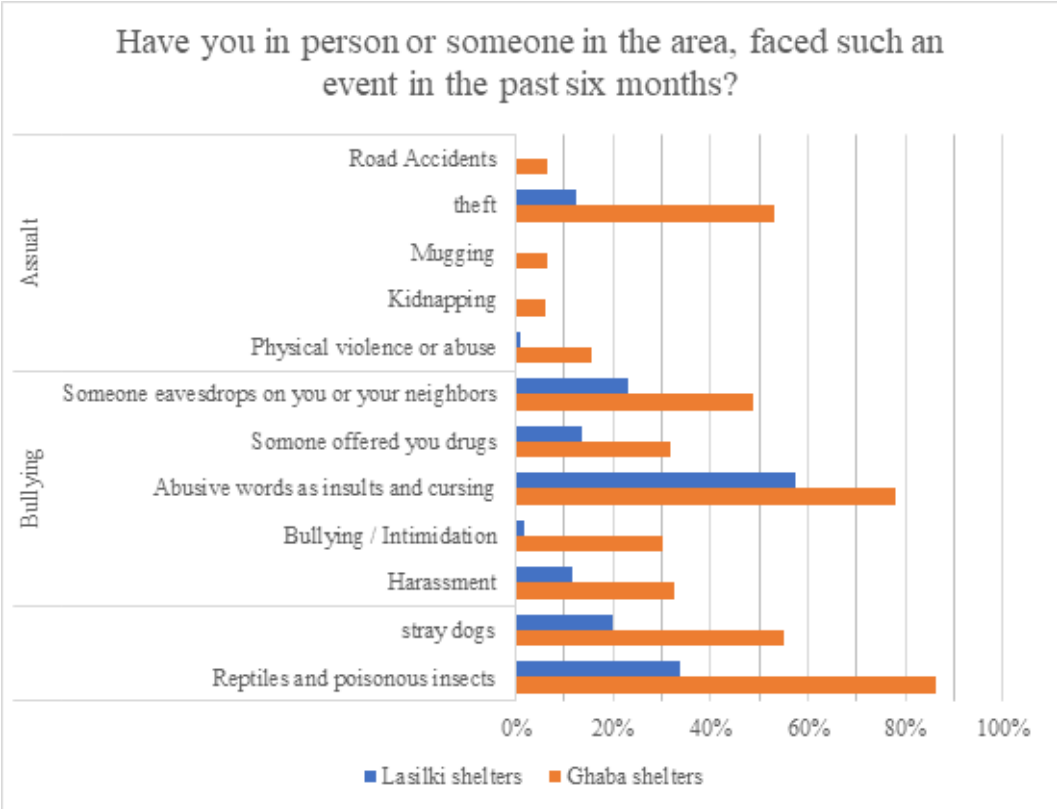


Figure 11: Actual Social and Ecological Risks Compared in Percentages

than Lasilki and sanitary overflows twice as much.
The probability of abduction in Ghaba is 50 – 300% points higher than in Lasilki.

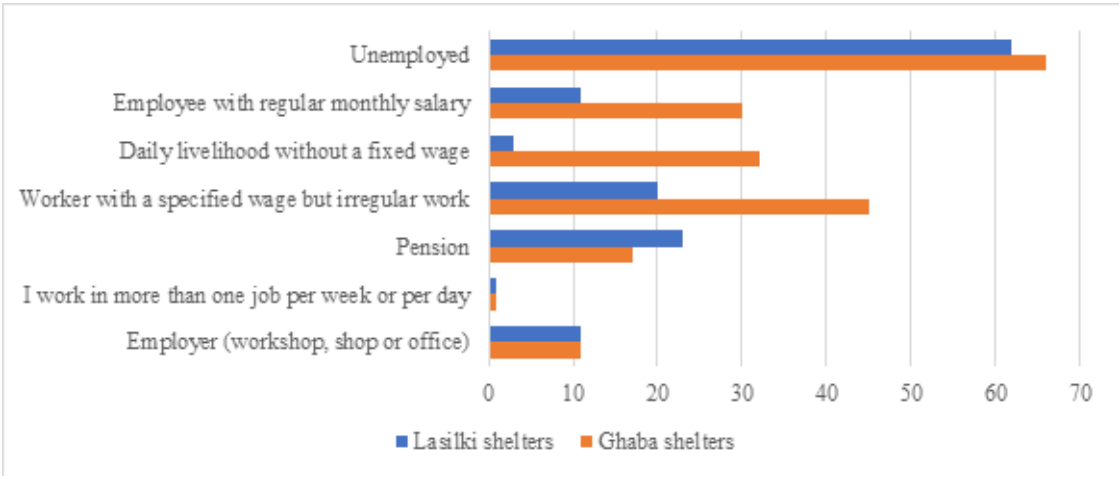


Figure 12: Work Status Compared

Figure 13: Work Vulnerabilities Compared

Ghaba scores more vulnerabilities in working conditions than Lasilki.
Except for the threat of forced eviction, Ghaba dwellers are exposed to health risks more

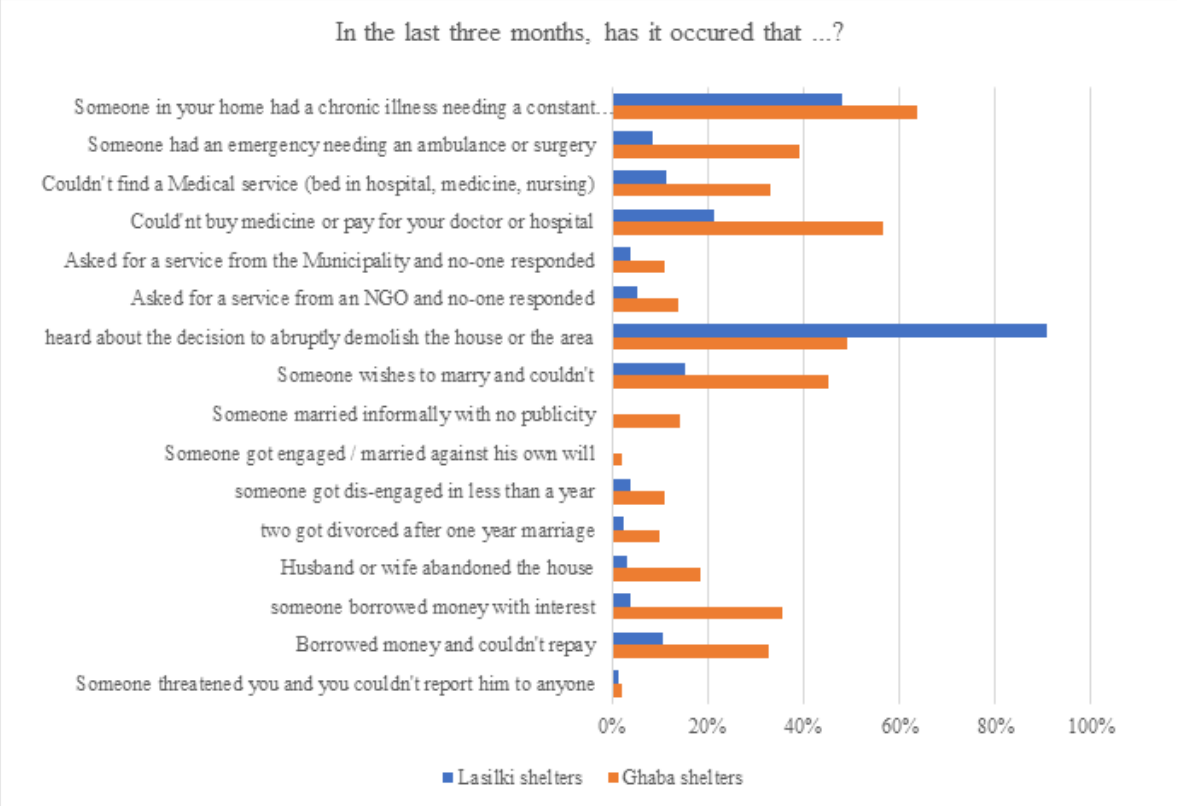


Figure 14: Social & Health Risks Compared

frequently than their Lasilki neighbours as shown below.
The nuanced differences in actual and perceived risks between the two neighbourhoods indicate that risk identification and assessment should consider heterogeneity within and across communities. In contrast, ISDF does not consider such distinctiveness. It does not account for livelihoods or economic and physical flows across neighbourhoods. To the fund, Ain el Seera or other areas are identical in terms of the unwanted consequences of risk. While conducting the audit, Ain el Seera and the neighbourhoods that make it up – including Souq, Iwa'at Ghaba (Ghaba shelters), Ard Meet Maskan (land of 100 houses), Chicago Square, Ard el Ahlam (Dreams Land), and Iwa'at el Laskilki (Lasilki shelters) – displayed comparable vulnerabilities to risk. Yet, they are not enlisted as unsafe!

Conclusion

Internationally, risk governance covers the identification, assessment, mitigation, and prevention of risk. It is driven by the need for safety standards to regulate technologies and involves the management of public concern and scepticism over risky technologies, the design of legislations for environmental impact assessments, and the production of accurate data for insurance companies to set premiums. As indicated by the case study in Cairo, except for the immediate regulation of building standards, street setback lines, and heritage buffer zones, risk governance is an entirely alien concept. The existing laws governing Cairo's built environment seem poised to alleviate physical risks. However, when seen from on-the-ground practices, whether local authorities or the livelihoods and perceptions of dwellers, and when placed against the imperatives of real estate and the prohibitive regula-

tions over access and use of public spaces, the 'bare acts' and their associated bylaws mean stripping citizens from the right to shape and appropriate the city.

Beside laws, stigmatisation and systematic ruination of built environments stand out as manifestations of state symbolic power. Wacquant et al. (2014) argued that stigmatisation in the twenty-first century – unlike the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' "traditional topography of disrepute" – utilises professional mass media and art in manners that appear 'democratised'. It propagates a mental image of social disintegration and "elicit[ed] revulsion often leading to punitive corrective measures" (Wacquant et al., p. 1270). "Territorial" stigmatization [was] not a static condition or a neutral process, but a consequential and injurious form of action through collective representation fastened on place" (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1270 emphasis in original). When combined with material precarity (wage and income uncertainties, work and physical harrassments) stigmatisation has become a force for inscribing marginality in urban settings. It produces ghettoisation and marginalisation and triggers revulsion and condemnation, while at the same time glorifying state punitive actions against vulnerable groups and unsafe 'time-bombs'.

The interests of the ISDF, the Governor, municipal district officers, and the Ministry of Antiquities among other agents shape risk estimates and give rise to contestations among the various constituencies of dwellers, urbanists, and public agencies (Rayner & Cantor, 1987). The UN-Habitat and the ISDF have created a 'risk establishment' that propagates the concept of unsafe areas as a putative threat to 'national order'. This is not to deny the existence of life- threatening hazards but to emphasise how institutional interests drive the 'scientific' community's (engineers and development practitioners) assessments of risks. It is also to draw attention to how financial and real estate prerogatives inform risk and shape solutions (demolitions, evictions, relocations, and building more units in the desert). Political power, organisational agendas, and economic interests drive the science of risk. The field is shaped by who pays its bills!

The discrepancies between the 'objective' risks identified by engineers and the dwellers' perceived risks were striking. Dwellers have tolerated a wide range and degree of hazards for decades with no respite. Their ability as groups and individuals to devise 'cognitive shortcuts' to assess the perceived dreadfulness of risky events generated inherited knowledge and coping mechanisms that early dwellers passed on to newcomers! Over years, dwellers have developed collective perceptions of hazards distinct from, yet related to, how risk probabilities are discussed and conveyed by state experts and officials. "Social agents create[d] and use[d] boundaries to demarcate that which is dangerous" (Tierney, 1999, p. 221). Nonetheless, state policies and defiant popular practices are locked up in a dialectic of pow er interchangeably contributing to the production and aggravation of risks.

Notes

1.Shelters or "ewa'at" are the physical structures provided by municipal authorities to host households who lost their houses due to natural disasters.
2.The Ministry was founded in July 2014 (Presidential decree #189) and dissolved in December 2016.
3.http://isdf.gov.eg/InfoDetails.aspx?info=1 accessed on 2/3/2019.
4.Presidential decree #305 in 2008.
5.This study focuses on the modified map
6.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQHKb8k1ctI
7.The population in precarious neighborhoods is 45 million of a total population of 94,798827 (Egypt Census 2017).
8.Examples include Environmental Assessment of Public Recreation Spaces (EAPRS) and Systematic Audit of Green Space Environments/Park and Open Space Resources (SAGE/POSR)

9.The study also planned to examine the financial and business models of the institutions mandated with unsafe areas; however, the task proved difficult in the absence of laws to regulate the rights to information.
10.2017 الوقائع المصريةالعدد 247 (تابع) في 2 نوفمبر سنه
11.One account dated it to 1914 when a royal decree was issued enjoining holders to resubmit lands previously allotted to them as public utility.
12.ISDF and other government authorities identify three insecure tenure statuses: a. extension on privately owned agricultural land, b. informal areas on state-owned land (hand-claim), c. Cities of the Dead or Cemeteries.
13.The German International Cooperation (GIZ) ran the Participatory Development Program in partnership with the ISDF and GOPP between 2004 and 2019
14.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uICKp5HyQeQ&t=0s&index=2&list=PLEq1WBvF_Mbku-qp-Su69rB-0mEwvL53Xl
15.The idea originated in Arjun Appadurai's Fear of Small Numbers (2006) and was reworked by Rahul Mehrotra (2012) and here in the context of mega real estate housing projects in Egypt.
16.Interview with Hisham Gohar, Information System Department Manager at ISDF, on 27 March 2019.
17.http://www.tadamun.co/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/KYG-181.jpg accessed on 20 December 2019..
18.The total number of valid questionnaires – not the total number of households interviewed – is reflected in the charts inserted under the findings' section

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The Influence of Islamic Sects on the Architecture of Mosques (Madrasa – shrines)

Mai A. Hawas

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The Sunni Sufi sect, the Shiite sect, symbolism, Sufism, architecture elements, Safavid period, Mamluk Period

Islamic architecture relies on the comprehension of symbols, monotheism and aesthetic values and the architectural design of Mosques is considered a fundamental milestone in the development of The Art of Place (Fenon Al Makan) in terms of symbols and archetypes. Mosques are considered to be a physical demonstration of Islamic beliefs and symbols, drawing on the imagination and creativity of craftsmen and architects. In this book *"The Influence of Islamic Sects on the Architecture of Mosques",* the reader traverses through various chapters that discuss the fields of aesthetic values, semantics and sensuality through which the forms and elements of mosques are presented in relation to the spirituality of Islamic beliefs. This book is important for both professional and non-professional readers as well as those who are interested in understanding the cultural and symbolic influences that shaped Islamic architecture.

Appreciation of the book is based on subjective reasons, starting with the comprehensiveness of the argument in which the author discusses the diversity of sects with subjective balance, and also presents the fundamental and conceptual beliefs that form the essence of both Sunni and Shi'ite thought and spirituality. Both represent two essential sects which form the Islamic Schools, each school with its own interpretation faculty based on a different approach to Sufism. This includes a different interpretation for Holy Quran verses and also of some of the Hadith of the Prophet (Peace be upon Him). Both are interpretations representing the Sufism worldview, and as such have influenced architectural form, the selection of Quranic verses and the location of these verses in the mosque, the ornaments and patterns types and colors. The interpretation of each sect's perspective can therefore be considered – in addition to a number of other factors – as a comprehensive approach to Islamic architecture.

Another factor that has deeply influenced the different interpretations is the duality in the worldview between the different social systems, namely, the monotheistic social system and the substitute social system. These have shaped the inherent cognitive paradigm in each sect, making it possible to distinguish each Mosque through an understanding of the formative language that manifests the duality of the spiritual sects. They also shed light on the richness of the art and architecture produced by Islamic civilization as well as the fact that they are all are based on the principle of the Unity of Islam. This fact is fundamental to understanding Islamic architecture and its richness and inclusiveness. Islamic art and architecture are based on the same values with no compromise or transformation and this is applicable across Islamic civilization, from east to west, and north to the south. These spiritual values deepen the variety in creation, and also reflect the endless variety in the creation of The Ultimate Creator. As the concept of replication nature in art is not accepted in Islamic thought, artisans have used the concept of composition. Utilising this concept, the architecture of Mosques is based on the spiritual understanding of beliefs rather than a consideration of materialistic influences, such as geography, climate and building techniques. This is fundamental to comprehending Islamic buildings, as is understanding the descriptive approach using these materialistic factors. However, although these material factors have a certain impact, they are not considered to have essential or pivotal roles in the minds and souls of the architects, builders or artisans in interpreting formative values such as the principles of unity, median, privacy and equality (which differs from the modern term) to express Islamic aesthetic perception and the importance of beauty in expression.

Another subject that that is an important initiative for this study is the influence of Western civilization. Islamic civilization has been profoundly influenced by Western development methodologies and world view without being able to analyse the consequences. This is one of the characteristics of cognitive cultural dependence on the Western world view and as a result, there is a lack of depth in approaching the study of Islamic cultural heritage, especially in the studies of Islamic art and architecture. Studies have created explanatory models; however, these have been less than successful in comprehending the soul and jurisprudence of Islamic spirituality as manifested in all forms of art and architecture. As such, the term 'Islamic architecture' has been understood in terms of the architectural style that reflects the visual characteristics of certain architecture forms but denies the inward spiritual meaning of these forms.

In the first two chapters, the author presents a wider range of definitions as a basis to explain the definition of culture; that is, each society has within its culture many patterns that reflect the same values. Another important subject that is presented is the interpretation of the humanitarian phenomenon from a sociological point of view. Human beings are a complex phenomenon and they have influenced the process of form giving in Mosques, which also reflects the world view of the builders.

Another main reason which assures admiration for the work presented is the streamlined and balanced approach in both its philosophical and empirical methods, which widens the basis of readers from different disciplines and interests for this sort of cultural heritage study of Islamic art and architecture. It is also related to, and inspired by, the traditional and perennial school, which clarifies that all traditional cultures have a metaphysical world view.

When presenting the analytical review to the Sufi school, terminologies and basic factors forming both the Sunni and Shiite sects demonstrate that differentiation between the two schools plays a role in the process of interpreting the architectural manifestation of each school/sect, thus contributing to the process of understanding the society that produced it. The analysis should take into consideration the difference in the interpretation of some of the Quranic verses and Hadith of the Blessed Prophet (Peace be upon Him) as each school/

sect has its own world view and interpretation of the Ultimate Truth – God, faith, the role of prophecy and Imama, and the manifestation of tawheed (monotheism) which have all influenced the urban nature of Islamic old cities.

This book can be considered among the research efforts undertaken to understand the heritage of our ancestors, including their experiences and the spiritual reasons behind their choices. To be aware of the ultimate aim – Ghaya – and spiritual values, it is then necessary to analyse the findings in order to identify the original characteristics that distinguished our society from others, thus helping to progress in harmony with our nature (Fitra). The art and architecture of Mosques integrate the spirituality of Sunni and Shi'ite sects, and the author's analytical study of these sects provides many valuable historic and philosophical references that demonstrate the Sufi approach in both sects. The author thus provides the basis of a comparative study between the influence of Sunni Sufism and Shiite Sufism in the architecture of the Mameluke and Safavid eras.

A comparison is established between the influence of Sunni Sufi beliefs on the architectural elements of the Mameluke era as well as the influence of the Shiite Sufi beliefs in the architectural elements of the Safavid era. In each period of time, society embraced a different spiritual sect which had a dominant influence on literature and arts. The study also discusses the fundamental role of symbolism in the interpretation process of art and architecture in both eras in which the manifestation of the symbolism of each sect is considered a world view, based on the metaphysical knowledge inherited and demonstrated by the Sufi thinkers of both eras. The exclusivity of composition in both architectural eras leads the author to elaborate deeply on Sufi literature in order to shed a light on the factors that impacted form and the factors that provided the intellectual basis for the artisans and architects in both eras. It is clear that symbolism is not related to the external forms only; it also relates to the inward, to the essence of forms. According to Martin Lings, in order to comprehend the essence of forms, it is a prerequisite to understand the meanings of numbers, geometric patterns and how form giving can start by using simple forms. The Arabic library has very few researches on the subject, which means that this work has an important role and it is a serious and abstract effort to enrich the Arabic library

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Emotional Cities: Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860-1910

Ben Prestel

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The extended urbanization of the Global South and the growing influence of post-colonial critiques within urban studies are transforming how scholars within urban studies study cities and urban processes. The rapid growth of Global Urban History (GUH) has been one example of this shift. The aim of GUH is to disrupt traditional regional categories of urban history, such as Europe and the Middle East, producing historical accounts of cities and urban processes that do not place EuroAmerica as the center of gravity, as the paradigms of modernization and westernization do. *Emotional Cities*, a new monograph by the historian Joseph Ben Prestel, exemplifies the potential contribution of GUH to our understanding of cities and their formation. Grounded in the practices and experiences of the inhabitants of Berlin and Cairo from 1860-1910, this volume offers a geographically innovative and theoretically sophisticated account of urban transformation in these two cities. This volume makes a notable contribution to urban theory and to considerations of what is studied when we analyze the city and urban transformation.

Prestel analyses historical accounts of emotions – like love, rationality, excitement, passion and nerves – to pursue an argument that links them not only to reactions about changes in the city but to the formation of certain urban forms, such as the suburb. He explores the utility of emotions as a category of analysis for urban historians and urbanists more broadly. To avoid Eurocentric paradigms such as modernization and westernization that are commonly used when studying urban change – and which would place Berlin in a privileged position in relation to Cairo – Prestel focuses on the social negotiation undertaken by the (predominately middle-class) inhabitants of Berlin and Cairo that addresses urban transformation through "emotions". Emotions are a useful category of analysis both because of their social character and their central role in social practice. Prestel is interested in not what emotions "really are"

but how these practices are depicted. He writes, "Emotions are a particularly useful category … because they forge a break from dichotomies between body and mind, nature and nurture, or materiality and representation, by addressing the very fault lines of these binaries" (15). Emotions forge a connection between social context, actors' bodies and their minds.

In focusing on emotions, Prestel draws from "practice theory" and the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977) that "overcomes the dichotomy between approaches of pure subjectivity and pure objectivity … approaching emotions as a kind of practice" (13). As Prestel outlines, this focus on emotions – and in turn practice – also marks two significant shifts in how studies of cities have been undertaken. First, it contributes to the scholarship that has purposefully moved away from the history of cities and their urban plans to the history of city dwellers and their practices and daily lives (Fahmy 2002; Thrift 2004). Second, it resolves the scholarly separation between a "material world" on the one hand and its "representation" on the other. Prestel writes that such an approach means that scholarship "risks becoming bifurcated into a reality of peoples' everyday lives, best accessed through unpublished sources, and a world of discourse, reflected in printed books, magazines and newspapers" (17). Emotions are able to circumvent this split, according to Prestel, because they are located at the level of practice and explicitly at the intersection of subjects' bodies, minds and the social.

The book is structured around six chapters, with each chapter addressing either Berlin or Cairo and a certain set of emotions in relation to urban change. In Chapter One, we begin in Berlin in the 1860s, during which time the city was undergoing rapid urban change with an influx of immigrants from the countryside. The rise in Berlin's population soon produced new forms of nightlife for which the dancehall became emblematic and was accompanied by the practice of placing private adverts in newspapers for matchmaking. The new folk psychology concept of morality *(sitte)* became a central subject of concern among social commentators and the state in Berlin as the rise of these dancehalls and personal adverts seemingly threatened to violate this morality. Prestel argues that urban change was mainly discussed in terms of emotions around *sitte* and this impacted "practical debates, including conflicts between landlords and city council or entrepreneurs and the police" (22). Prestel details in Chapter Three how contemporary observers' concern over morality expanded to actions in Berlin that caused emotional excitement. This also produced a change in scale from a focus on dancehalls to a wider focus on the streets of Berlin and its entire central neighborhood, which in turn had national implications now that Berlin was the capital of the German empire. By 1900, studied in Chapter Six, social commentators deemed it impossible for urban environments to engender the self-control of emotions. This chapter outlines how a focus on caring for the body through physical exercise and emotions produced new spaces in Berlin. While Prestel is careful not to suggest the creation of the suburb can be reduced to emotions, he argues, "emotions did play a pivotal part in the emergence of Berlin's suburbs and discussions about physical exercise … these arguments illustrate how debates about urban emotions became intertwined with material change in the city" (161).

In Chapter Two, the reader is taken to 1860s Cairo and the emerging discourse on rationality *('aql)*. Cairo was also undergoing rapid urban change at this time as capital derived from the cotton trade was being ploughed into the urban fabric. Yet, this money was also being invested in a bourgeoning print media produced by a new urban middle class. In the media, this new middle class discussed the link between the transformation of Cairo and the flourishing "rationality" or 'aql. Prestel details the development of a distinctly Cairene concept of *'aql* by focusing on the writings of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, the founder of Islamic modernism, and Ali Mubarak, who was in charge of public works and education in the Khedival government. In their work, both men argued that the urban environment brought about the control of passions through rationality that came from men's hearts. However, Prestel also shows that a notable gender divide was present in relation to emotions and urban change as women (and

the rural population) were placed as the irrational counterparts of urban men. Prestel writes, "Rather than being interested in men's hearts, the police focused on women's hymens" (69). This line of thinking led to severe restrictions on women's mobility and the types of leisure spaces and urban practices that were allowed to form.

Significantly for Prestel, the debate about rationality continued at the turn of the 20th century. It first shifted in 1880 when the United States re-entered the world market for cotton and urban renewal in Cairo came to a virtual halt. The new urban middle-class now felt a threat to its position and the spheres of policing women and praising men began to blur: "The city could now also be portrayed as a threat for *'aql*" (73). The debate subsequently intensified with the British occupation of Egypt in 1881. As Prestel explores in Chapter Four, questions of rationality were central to debates that concerned colonial rule. Urban transformation in the period of British occupation was, according to Egyptian commentators, making men lose control. By 1900, this view of the city as a threat to rationality had engendered a shift in ideas about the countryside. As described in Chapter Six, what was once seen as the place of irrationality was now viewed as a place to reform emotions through physical exercise. Social commentators linked the suburbs and physical exercise, contending that they provided Cairenes with strong and healthy bodies, rationality and positive emotions. In this regard, Prestel argues that the suburbs in Cairo were more than an outcome of technical innovation or changes in work life – they were also "tied to the critique of city life and its detrimental effects in a specifically local context" (188).

Although the book is theoretically and geographically innovative, its impact is diluted somewhat by the format. It seems rather old fashioned that its temporal structure is linear, starting in the 1860s and then finishing in the 1900s. Moreover, the switching between cities is difficult for the reader because Prestel highlights how emotions transform through time, geopolitical context and urban space – as outlined above with respect to the concept of 'aql. Furthermore, Prestel does not give the reader much historical and social context about the cities under consideration. In comparative works of GUH, where the reader is likely introduced to at least one city they are unfamiliar with, more historical and geographical background is necessary than would otherwise be the case. It is curious, for instance, that Prestel does not explain to the reader that Ali Mubarak was an engineer in charge of public works for Ismail and the Khedival government in his analysis of Mubarak's novel *'Alam al-Din.*

More critically, though, Prestel could have done more to illustrate why putting the two cities into dialogue is analytically productive and likewise to present an actual comparative analysis between the two. In the book's all-too-short conclusion, he finally undertakes a substantive comparative analysis of the two cities. In the summary, he introduces three implications of his analysis of Cairo and Berlin in relation to GUH. First are the "parallel processes" observed in the 1860s and 1870s where contemporaries of Cairo and Berlin began discussing the effects of the cities' transformation on the emotions of their inhabitants. As Prestel notes, in both contexts, concerns about loss of control were tied to the rise of new neighborhoods devoted to entertainment and leisure activities. In turn, the concerns led both to reform projects that sought to change the city and new ideas about the suburbs as spaces to counteract the deleterious effects of urban dwelling. Second, Prestel outlines the "particular universalisms in a connecting world" where he argues that the seemingly universal scientific category of emotions, drawn from the rising authority of natural sciences, offered authors in Berlin and Cairo a flexibility that meant it could be grounded in their specific locality. "The category of emotions thus functioned as a particular universalism – a universalism, which allowed for particularistic claims" (195). Finally, the third implication is "difference as an effect of connection" (196). Prestel argues that differences need to be situated in a global historical context because dynamics such as capitalism and the spread of natural sciences contributed to what later became viewed as divergent phenomenon: "The debates in Cairo and Berlin show that

the middle-class actors who propagated arguments about emotions in both cities often held the same jobs, including government clerks, doctors, and journalists…. Differences between cities appear in a different light from this perspective" (196-197). Although these comments are analytically insightful, they should have been generated throughout the book. Rather than a passing remark in the conclusion, for instance, "parallel processes" could have formed a chapter following Chapters One and Two, which would have fleshed out the importance of bringing Cairo and Berlin together.

By offering insight into the role of emotions in the development of cities and urban life, *Emotional Cities* speaks to both post-colonial approaches to urban studies as well as work in non-representational, urban assemblage and affect theory. However, the book's contribution to these bodies of scholarship is never explicitly addressed, particularly in the case of the latter scholarship. Indeed, although Prestel offers possible avenues to advance theories of affect and emotion in urban contexts, he does not place his research into dialogue with scholars such as Amin and Thrift (2002) and Farias and Bender (2012), missing an opportunity to engage directly with related work in urban studies. Overall, however, *Emotional Cities* makes a strong case for the way in which emotions not only react to urban change but also participate in processes of urbanization and the creation of certain urban forms, such as the suburb. In this regard, Prestel's book is a notable advancement in how we study the history of cities.

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Strengths Challenges, Opportunities and Pitfalls in and for Strategic Spatial Planning

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Abstract

The purpose of the essay is to contribute to the debate on existing planning approaches and the search for new ideas. Therefore, after briefly dealing with the logic, aims and critiques of the current statutory planning, the essay, starting with the history, aims and critiques, sketches the contours of a more radical strategic planning. In this way it invites theorists and professionals (public and private) to reflect on their perception and their approach to how plans, policies and public services are conceived and delivered, with the objective of enabling the (structural) change needed in an open and equitable way. The essay relies on a selective review of the planning literature, a dissection of strategic planning processes all over the world and the author's experience in practice.

Introduction

What type of planning is up to dealing with the (structural) challenges ahead? Traditional spatial planning is more concerned with pragmatic negotiations around the immediate in a context of the seeming inevitability of market-based forms of political rationality.

A growing literature and an increasing number of practices, all over the world, seem to suggest that strategic spatial planning may be looked upon as a possible approach that is able to cope with the challenges and to embed structural change. This essay reflects on the problems and challenges planning has to cope with, the need for a transformative agenda and the logic and shortcomings of statutory planning. It then introduces strategic planning as a complement to statutory planning. I rely on the theoretical literature, a dissection of strategic planning processes all over the world and my experience in practice

From Developments, Problems, Challenges to the need for a transformative agenda

World society is facing major developments, problems, and challenges: poverty, persistent inequality, environmental issues (global warming, flooding), the crisis of representative democracy, diversity, an ageing population in some parts of the world and young people and woman entering the labor market in other parts. I am fully aware that these problems and challenges are structural and ever changing and hence resistant to description in terms of fixed categories. Moreover, there is a growing awareness that a number of planning concepts cannot be achieved solely through physical hard planning and the fact that (in addition to traditional land use regulation, urban maintenance, production and management of services) governments are being called upon to respond to new demands. For me, there is ample evidence that the problems and challenges that regions, city-regions and cities are confronted with cannot be tackled and managed adequately on the basis of the intellectual technical-legal apparatus and mindset of traditional planning. Hence my call for a transformative agenda to cope with the continuing and unabated pace of change driven by structural developments and challenges. Transformative practices focus on the structural problems in society; they construct images or visions of a preferred outcome and how to implement them (see Friedmann, 1987). Transformative practices simply refuse to accept that the current way of doing things is necessarily the best way; they break free from concepts, structures and ideas that only persist because of the process of continuity. It is precisely the discontinuity that forces us outside the usual boundaries of reason. My focus on transformative practices does not imply that the day-to-day problems are not important for me. They are important! But there is evidence that, for whatever reasons, spatial planners are often left out (or leave themselves out) or else are reduced to being mere providers of space when major decisions are at stake. My call implies the abandonment of bureaucratic approaches and the involvement of skills and resources that are external to the traditional administrative apparatus.

Aims, logic and critiques of statutory planning

Aims and logic

To steer developments in a certain direction, statutory plans are used as a control tool for the actions of third parties, as a (legal) framework for spatial development and the building rights of

owners. They claim legal equal rights; they focus on bureaucratic and political control and legal certainty for investors. For some, an additional aim is also to avoid clientelism and corruption within the permit policy. But, today, the main rationale seems to be the pursuit of legal certainty as a basis for the permit policy. As a consequence, documents have to set out land uses and formal requirements very carefully and very accurately while eliminating uncertainty as much as possible. Planned residential subdivisions give land and property owners' certainty of investment returns. In this way, land use planning and economic growth are intrinsically connected. Progress is equated with order, with buildings, urban markets need it. In the logic of statutory planning there is no way of managing city growth without some form of grids and regulations. The challenge seems to be how to redefine the use of zoning to make it more functional to polity life and to spatial governance for developing local citizenship through proper spatial choices.

Critiques

Traditional statutory plans remained more of an administrative framework for development than an action plan aimed at the implementation of visions and concepts.

They entailed false assumptions of certainty and static context. The approach to planning via a single policy field (that is, spatial planning) met fierce opposition from other and usually more powerful policy fields. Although land-use plans had formal status and served as official guidelines for implementation, when it came down to the actual implementation, other policy fields which, because of their budgetary and technical resources, were needed for the implementation were easily able to sabotage the spatial plans if they wanted. Most statutory plans are designed for situations of stability and predictability in which plans can serve as blueprints offering investors and developers the certainty they want.

The interpretation of statutory plans in terms of form and content (comprehensive, detailed, etc.) is in effect often a negation of change, dynamics, uncertainty, etc., meaning that they soon become outdated, are often utopian, are often not based on sufficient and correct data, and do not take into account resources or the time factor or even the possibilities for their implementation. In short, they focus on legal certainty that makes the plans far more rigid and inflexible and less responsive to changing circumstances. In this way they seem unsuited for dealing with the dynamics of society, the challenges mentioned, changing issues, changing circumstances and a changing context. They force planners and politicians to make choices before the time is right to do this and the mainly comprehensive nature of land-use plans is at odds with increasingly limited resources. In addition, most land-use plans have a predominant focus on physical aspects, providing physical solutions to social or economic problems.

Strategic planning: History, aims and critiques

History

The word "strategy" has its roots within a military context (see Sun Tzu, 1994 [500BC]). The focus is on accurate understanding of the real situation, realistic goals, and focused orientation of available strength and persistence of the action. In the early 1980s, the state and local governments in the US were called upon to use the strategic planning approach de-veloped in the corporate world. In the 1960s and 1970s, strategic spatial planning in a number of Western countries evolved towards a system of comprehensive planning at different ad-ministrative levels. In the 1980s a retreat from strategic planning could be witnessed, fueled not only by the neoconservative disdain for planning, but also by postmodernist skepticism, both of which tend to view progress as something which, if it happens, cannot be planned (Healey, 1997). Instead, the focus of urban and regional planning practices was on projects, especially for the

revival of rundown parts of cities and regions, and on land-use regulations. In the 1990s, a growing literature and an increasing number of practices seemed to suggest that strategic spatial planning could provide an answer to the shortcomings of statutory planning (Healey 1997; Albrechts 2004, 2013; Tibaijuka, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2009). It is not surprising that these ideas and practices started to travel. The Barcelona model (see Borja and Castells, 1997) became very influential. UN-Habitat promotes local economic develop-ment through strategic planning. Here the strategic approach "implies careful consideration of the various trade-offs and making difficult choices". It demands harnessing and mobiliz-ing the local human, social, financial and natural capital towards the common vision, goals and objectives that the community aspires to achieve. With support from UN-Habitat and the African Network of Urban Management Institutions, strategic plans based on the *Millennium Development Goals* were drawn up. Integrating the MDGs within planning made it possible to rectify certain major shortcomings encountered in master planning. The ap-proach made available a strategic spatial framework with time horizons and indicators of objectives. It gave an understanding of the realities and trends in the implementation of the MDGs at the urban level. The approach made it possible to acquire information to identify the actions to take "in order to improve living conditions and access to basic social services at the urban level. It made available indicators for monitoring the strategic plan and, thus, strengthened public accountability" (UN-Habitat, 2009: 61- 62).

Aims

The motivations for using strategic spatial planning in practice vary. However, the objectives have typically been to construct a challenging, coherent and coordinated vision and to frame an integrated long-term spatial logic (for land-use regulation, for resource protection, for sustainable development, for spatial quality, sustainability, equity, etc.). It aims to enhance action-orientation beyond the idea of planning as control and to promote a more open multi-level type of governance.

Critiques

The critiques focus on very different registers of the strategic spatial planning approach. Economic, political and ideological critiques draw a link between the rise of strategic spatial planning and the strengthened neoliberal political climate. Questions are raised whether strategic spatial planning practices are able to resist the hegemonic discourses of neo-liberalism. Some attack the militaristic and corporate terminology of strategic planning. Other critics argue that the results of strategic planning, in terms of improvement of the quality of places, have been modest. They ask whether actually existing practices of strategic spatial planning really follow their normative groundings and they point at its weakness in theoretical underpinnings. Still others question the conditions under which visions would materialize, the lack of concern about the path dependency of the resources, and a too sequential view of the relationships between visioning, action, structure, institutions and discourse. Concern is raised about the legitimation of strategic spatial planning, the role of expertise and knowledge, and how to introduce transformative practices.

Gradually a more radical approach of strategic planning has developed that takes the critique into account and is clearly different from the military and the corporate stance.

Towards a more radical strategic planning

In the next paragraph I sketch the contours of a more radical strategic planning that opens some perspective to broaden the scope of possible futures and to organize the relationship between (all) actors in a more open and equitable way. I therefore use a what, a how, and a why

question, a brief introduction into the four track approach and an indication of the possible output.

What?

Strategic spatial planning is a transformative and integrative public sector led, but co-productive socio-spatial process through which visions/frames of reference, justification for coherent actions and the means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and what it might become (see Albrechts, 2004).The term 'spatial' brings into focus the 'where of things', whether static or dynamic; the creation and management of special 'places' and sites; the interrelations between different activities and networks in an area; and significant intersections and nodes in an area that are physically co-located (Healey, 2004, pp 46). The focus on the spatial relations of territories allows for a more effective way of integrating different agendas (economic, environmental, cultural, social and policy agendas). As these agendas have a variable reach, they also carry a potential for a 'rescaling' of issue agendas down from the global, continental, national or regional level, and up from the municipal level. The search for new scales of policy articulation and new policy concepts is also linked to attempts to widen the range of actors involved in policy processes, with new alliances, actor partnerships and consultative processes (Healey 1997; Albrechts, et al, 2003). Places become both the text and context of new debates about fundamental socio-spatial relations, about thinking without frontiers (Friedmann, 2011, p 69), providing new kinds of practices and narratives about belonging to and being involved in the construction of a place and in society at large (see also Watson 2014).

How?

Strategic spatial planning focuses on a limited number of strategic key issues; it takes a 'collective' critical view of the environment in terms of determining strengths and weaknesses in the context of opportunities and threats. Much of the process, which is inherently political in nature, lies in making tough decisions about what is most important for the purpose of producing just, structural responses to problems, challenges, aspirations, and potentials. Thus, strategic planning involves choice, valuation, judgment, and decisions that relate to envisioned agreed upon ends and to the selection of the most appropriate means, not in a purely instrumental sense, for coping with and implementing such ends. In strategic planning, the overall picture that inspires choices is not given by a comprehensive analysis, but rather by synthetic long-term visions. Visions must symbolize some perceived and desired 'good', some qualities and some virtues (diversity, sustainability, equity, livability, inclusiveness, accountability) which the present lacks. Speaking of sustainability, spatial quality, virtues and values is a way of describing the type of place people want to live in, or think they should live in. Where statutory planning ends up - as a result of its legal status in a closed system - the political potential of strategic planning lies in its dimension to broaden the scope of the possible and imagine the impossible. This implies the development of relational more-than-human perspectives as a way to broaden the concepts used (see Metzger, 2014).

Strategic spatial planning focuses on place-specific qualities and assets (social, cultural and intellectual, including physical and social qualities of the urban/regional tissue) in a global context. Strategic spatial planning studies the external trends, forces and resources available. It identifies and gathers major actors (public and private with a focus on civil society organizations that will speak for ordinary citizens rather than special interest groups and all those who may have, directly or indirectly, a stake in a strategic planning process). Strategic planning aims for a broad (multi-level governance) and diverse (public, economic, civil

society) co-productive process. It creates solid, workable long-term visions/frames of reference (a geography of the unknown) and strategies at different levels, taking into account the power structures (political, economic, gender, cultural), uncertainties and competing values. Strategic spatial planning designs plan-making structures and develops content, images and decision frameworks for influencing and managing spatial change. It provides frames of reference that give direction and justify specific actions. It is about building new ideas and processes thus, generating ways of understanding, ways of building agreements, and ways of organizing and mobilizing for the purpose of exerting influence in different arenas. Finally, strategic spatial planning, both in the short and the long term, focuses on results and evaluation, feedback, adjustment and revision. Strategic planning is action or project oriented.

Strategic spatial planning relates to the pattern of purposes, policy statements, frames, plans, programs, actions (short-, medium- and long-term), decisions and resource allocation that define what a policy is in practice, what it does, and why it does it – from the point of view of the various affected publics. This stresses the need to find effective connections between political authorities and implementation actors (planning officers, individual citizens, community organizations, private corporations, developers and public departments). Most actors will not go on the long march unless they see compelling evidence, within a reasonable period of time, that the process is producing acceptable results. Therefore, short-term results are required to build the credibility, needed to sustain efforts over the long haul and needed to help test visions against concrete conditions.

Why?

Strategic spatial planning is not just a contingent response to wider forces, but is also an active force in enabling change. Strategic planning cannot be theorized as though its approaches and practices are neutral with respect to class, gender, age, race and religion. Therefore, the why question deals with values, meanings and related judgments and choices formed with reference to the ideas of desirability, the good society and betterment. Without values, we risk adopting a pernicious relativism where anything goes.

Four Tracks

Strategic spatial planning is operationalized in a four-track approach. The four tracks can be seen as working tracks: one for the visions, one for the short-term and long-term actions, a third for the involvement of the key actors and, finally, a fourth track for a more permanent process involving the broader public in major decisions. The proposed tracks may not be viewed in a purely linear way. The context forms the setting of the planning process but also takes form and undergoes changes in the process. In the first track, the emphasis is on the long-term visions. In this sense, the long term constitutes the time span one needs to construct/realize (parts of) the vision. The envisioning process translates complex interrelations between place qualities and multiple space-time relational dynamics into multiplex, relational spatial imaginations (see also Healey, 2006). The visions are constructed in relation to the social values to which a particular environment is historically committed. The creation of visions is an imaginative, conscious and purposive action to represent values and meanings for the future(s). Power is at the heart of these values and meanings. To avoid pure idealistic thinking, the views of social critics have been integrated into track 1. In track 2, the focus is on creating trust by solving problems and framing answers through short-term actions. It concerns acting in such a way as to frame decisions in view of the visions constructed in track 1 and to tackle problems in view of these visions. As both the technical skills and the power to allocate sufficient means to implement proposed actions are usually spread over a number of diverse sectors, actors, policy levels and departments, track 3 involves relevant

actors that are needed for their substantive contribution, their procedural competences and the role they might play in acceptance, in getting basic support and in providing legitimacy. Integration in its three dimensions – substantive, organizational and instrumental (legal, budget) – is at stake here. The fourth track is about an inclusive and more permanent empowerment process involving citizens in major decisions.

Output

The end product consists of an analysis of the main processes shaping our environment, which amounts to a dynamic, integrated and indicative long-term vision (frame), a plan for short-term and long-term actions, a budget and a strategy for implementation. It constitutes a consensus or (partial) (dis)agreement between the key actors. For the implementation, credible commitments to action engagement (commitment package) and a clear and explicit link to the budget are needed where citizens, the private sector, different levels of governance and planners enter moral, administrative and financial agreements to realize these actions. Reference could be made here to the rich tradition of collective labor agreements.

A major challenge in strategic planning consists in the dialectic between movements that seek democratization, collective decision-making and empowerment of citizens on the one hand and the established institutions and structures that seek to reabsorb such demands into a distributive framework on the other. A crucial element in this respect is the way in which people are excluded or included in strategic planning processes and the way the relationship between people – technologies of government, norms of self-rule (Roy, 2009) are organized. The question concerning who is to be considered an actor in a particular context or situation remains a fundamental issue.

Actors discover layers of stakes (see also Healey, 1997b) that consist of existing, but perhaps as-yet unconscious interests, in the fate of their city, their region. Hence the need for strategies that treat the territory of the urban not just as a container in which things happen, but as a complex mixture of nodes and networks, places and flows, in which multiple relations, activities and values co-exist, interact, combine, conflict, oppress and generate creative synergy (see also Healey, 2007, 1).

In some places, the process of "discourse structuralization" and its subsequent "institution-alization" becomes perhaps more important than the plan as such. In this way, new dis-courses may become institutionalized,that is, embedded in the norms, attitudes and prac-tices, thus providing a basis for challenging current ways of doing and for structural change. The spectrum for change cannot be so open that anything is possible, as if we could achieve anything we wanted to achieve. Conditions and structural constraints on `what is' and `what is not' possible are imposed by the past and the present. These conditions and constraints have to be questioned and challenged in the process, given the specific context of time and place. So, in order to imagine the conditions and constraints differently, we need to deal with history and to overcome history. This defines the boundaries of a fairly large space between openness and fixity.

Epilogue

Strategic spatial planning invents or creates policies and practices in relation to the context and to the social and cultural values to which a particular place or society is historically committed as something new rather than as a solution arrived at as a result of existing trends. In some places actors are receptive, finding real value in a new planning idea and a political opportunity to deploy it, whereas elsewhere the idea falls on barren ground, is actively resisted, is transformed into something quite different or is simply misunderstood. The spread

of ideas occurs in varied ways depending on the context. Crucial in this respect is the (in) tolerance of the context for real shifts in power relations and the danger that weakly theorized models are adopted elsewhere in equally under-theorized or invisible power contexts.

Strategic planning needs an arena in which a plurality of interests and demands, opinions, images, conflicts, different values and power relationships are addressed. In these arenas actors may reflect on who they are, what they want and in this way articulate their identities, their traditions, their values. Strategic planning practices cannot simply be extracted from the context where they emerged, uprooted and "planted" somewhere else (see also Healey, 2012, p. 190). Experiences or ideas-in-practice must be looked upon as occasions for planners to challenge their own knowledge and values and crititcally engage with their activity as a praxis. Strategic planning that acknowltedges the irreducible nature of living space as a social product historically and culturally determined but also geared at broadening the scope of the possible and imagining the impossible takes planning beyond its traditional boundaries of theory, profession, planning laws, regulations and traditions. It implies that This challenges the combination of knowledge (traditional scientific, tacit/experiential knowledge of local communities) with the creativity of the design of alternative (even impossible) futures. It raises uncertainties for those involved in the process. How to combine providing certainty for developers, citizens with probing futures? How to combine flexibility with robustness? The call for constructing a new governance culture through a more collective decision making and empowerment of citizens – co-production – (see Mitlin, , 2008; Roy, 2009; Watson, 2014) challenges the established institutions and structures and aims for a shift in power relations.

About the author

Louis Albrechts graduated and received his PhD from the University of Leuven, Belgium. He was full professor at the University of Leuven for 1987 to 2007 and is now emeritus professor. He has been visiting professor at a number of European Universities and visiting research fellow at the University of West Australia, Perth. Louis Albrechts is corresponding member of the German Academy for Research and Planning, founder and editor of European Planning Studies, member of the editorial board of several international journals, chair of the first (Shanghai) and second (Mexico-City) World Planning Schools Congress, chair of the third joint AESOP/ACSP congress in Leuven, second president of the Association of European School of Planning, chair of UN-Habitat HS advisory board and chair of the planning commission in his hometown. He was also in charge of the strategic plan for Flanders (1992-1996) and perform the scientific coordination for the Flanders transport plan (1999-2000). He is author/editor of 18 books, some 90 chapters in international books and over 60 articles in leading international journals with blind peer review. His work has been published in 10 languages. His current research and writings focus on the practice and nature of strategic spatial planning, diversity and creativity in planning, public involvement in planning and bridging the gap between planning and implementation. He lives in Beringen in Belgium.

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The Reality of the Strategic Planning in Egypt

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Strategic Planning (SP) was introduced in Egypt in the first half of the 2000s, after decades of applying the comprehensive planning approach in the planning process throughout the 20th century. The SP was first introduced by the UNDP and the UNHABITAT, and was officially adopted by the planning authorities in Egypt in 2006. It was mainly used in the re-planning and upgrading existing cities and villages. This was done through an ambitious initiative that is entering now its third stage. It is important to note that there are two main bodies that are responsible for the official planning activities in Egypt and are both affiliated to the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities. The first one is the General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP), which is responsible for the planning of existing settlements, as well as making regional plans. The second one is the New Urban Communities Authority, which is responsible for the planning of new settlements.

The SP approach has been significantly applied by the GOPP in the re-planning and upgrading attempts of the existing settlements, cities and villages, since the mid-2000s. The initial reception of the SP approach among the planning consultants and the GOPP officials was of a great anticipation and hope for a better change towards fulfilling the needs of the local communities, enhancing the built environment and improving the stagnant situation of many Egyptian settlements. The concepts of having a vision that leads to the formulation of strategic plans to be realized by implementing strategic projects - within a span of five years and to be revisited and modified according to the needs afterwards- was quiet appealing. Moreover, the engagement of strong citizen participation during the SP process was highly appreciated.

The strategic plan became a binding document in the Egyptian Planning system since 2006. Before its application in Egypt, the Master Plan was the legal binding document for the Egyptian cities and villages. The Master plans that were previously formulated for the Egyptian cities remained a legal binding document specially when issuing building permits and identifying land uses. Most of the Master plans expired when the Strategic plans started to get finalized and approved since 2007/2008. The building regulation law (no.119) issued in 2008 identifies the role of the strategic plan as well as clearly stating the broad lines of the strategic planning process. The strategic plans should be revised and updated every five years to coop with the changing variables in the local context. The same law also indicates

that once the strategic plan is approved by the related governmental bodies, detailed plans should be made for the areas in need within the city or village. These plans clearly indicate the street networks, block divisions , as well as the specific land uses for each block. Hence, this is considered the link with the traditional land-use planning. In this case the building permits are issued based on the approved detailed plans , which are made within the broad-lines of the strategic plans.

As mentioned in the law, the Strategic Plans for the cities and villages are made by the consultant planners or the consultant planning offices registered at the GOPP. To start the SP project, a tender is usually announced by the GOPP for the consultant planning offices to bid for. The wining office will then start the SP process in coordination with both the city and provincial officials.

Now with more than a decade that passed since the implementation of the SP approach in Egypt, several aspects are being questioned in relation to the whole approach and its implementation. Questions related to *Visions, actors, citizen participation as well as the actual implementation* of the formulated Strategic plans are raised.

In this article I aim to share some reflections on the above mentioned aspects, based on my experience as a planning consultant who has been engaged in the making of strategic plans for five Egyptian cities as well as a strategic regional plan for one of the peripheral regions in Egypt. I am also incorporating the points of views of other experts and consultants who were engaged in Strategic Planning projects in Egypt, in order not to provide a biased point of view in this article.

Inception of the Plan Making Process

Following the formation of the planning team, and the initial contact with the city, a nomination of the stakeholders and actors who are to be involved in the plan making is issued by the governor. Throughout the duration of the plan making a series of workshops and meetings are organized to include all related voices from the stakeholders list in the different phases of the planning process. The Plan making process usually goes through three phases: 1- Present situation analysis and documentation, 2- Vision formulation and defining of key strategic projects, and 3- Finalization of the Strategic Plan of the city. According to the official Terms of References (TOR), the plan making process should not exceed a period of 9 months. However, in most cases, the plan making duration exceeded this period by years that reached 7 years in some cases. In earlier work (see Serag, 2016), I reflected on the dynamics of citizen participation and the involvement of the different stakeholders in the planning process, which already had several drawbacks. In many cases there were several conflicts of interests as well as the inconsistency of participation of the different stakeholders in the different meetings and workshops that resulted in a situation of unfamiliarity with what was being discussed.

Visions

Usually the initial step of the plan making process that is the documentation and analysis of the present situation goes smoothly. Based on this step, the planning team together with the stakeholders work on formulating the vision for the future. This steps usually goes smoothly as well, with the planning team taking into consideration the different aspirations and suggestions of the stakeholders, while benefiting from the existing assets of the city or settlement.

Yet at this point, it is important to discuss whether the visions formulated during the SP approach get really implemented and respected during the plan making and later during its implementation or they are just consumed and produced for the sake of administrative purposes.

Based on experience, the formulated vision is usually respected during the plan making process. However, even this level of respect varies from one city to the other. In order to realize the vision, the strategic plan is set on specific strategic projects. These projects are discussed in the plan making process. However, in some cases, some of these projects would be neglected in the final phases in such a way that the Strategic Plan becomes irrelevant to the vision. In other cases, the strategic projects incorporated to realize the SP are evident. It can be argued that the link between the set vision and the strategic projects is usually affected by the personal interests of some of the stakeholders, apart from the common good. In many cases the vision formulation is considered by many stakeholders as a purely symbolic action that is made during the SP formulation, before heading to the important part of the SP that is setting the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). (El-Wakil, Serag).

Other opinions , consider that usually the vision in itself, reflects the wishes of the city and is usually formulated in accordance with the community, an opinion that is shared among some of the city officials and consultants. (Iraqi, Saad)

Although the vision forms an integral part of the plan making process, when it comes to the implementation phase, in some cases the executive personals of the city and the central government might neglect its existence. Tis is done while taking some decisions related to implementation, that might be irrelevant to the vision itself. This point of view is shared with other planners, who were involved in similar Strategic planning projects.

An example on that could be given from the Strategic Planning project of the city of Mansoura in the Egyptian Delta. Mansoura city is one of the largest cities in the Delta and is also the capital of Dakahleia governorate (province). The planning team together with the stakeholders formulated the city vision that was based on the key principle characteristics of the city as well as its assets and potentialities. The city is known for its medical institutions as well as its university and riverfront overlooking the Nile. The vision was formulated to direct the future development towards enhancing its role in medicine, science and beauty (because of the Nile). Among the major problems in the city is the rail lines that bisect the center of the city, causing havoc in terms of the organization of different land uses as well as the pollution that is produced. Complying with the vision , the planning teams suggested to divert the rail lines passing through the city to its outer fringes. A proposal that was hailed by both the citizens and the governor, accordingly this action was approved in the strategic plan. However, despite its importance, this action was not taken seriously by the officials among the GOPP and transformed it into a recommendation instead of a strategic action/project to avoid possible conflicts with the Ministry of Transportation.

Another strategic project suggested to realize the vision for the city was to make a central park for the city. Despite the initial acceptance of the idea and its incorporation in the strategic plan. The city officials based on the demands of some of the local stakeholders discarded the project, since they believed that the land assigned for the public park is too valuable and should be assigned instead for residential uses. Thus, one of the main projects that was to help in achieving a better quality of life in the city , which in turn would have realized the beauty aspect in the vision was totally marginalized.

This incident was repeated as well in the city of Meet Ghamr, also in the Egyptian Delta, when the park suggested by the planning team to strengthen the recreational role of the city's river part was discarded by the city officials. Despite the initial appreciation of the proposed project, the land was assigned to the more valuable residential use.

Implementation

Initially the SP approach was looked to with aspiration by the planning experts and consultants in Egypt to improve the planning process in general and bring it to the level of the ordinary citizens. The main impact of this approach was expected to happen in the re-planning and upgrading of the existing cities more than that of the new cities. The general notion is that the SP approach could be applied in a relatively easier manner in planning new cities and settlements rather than existing ones.
From the point of view of some consultants, only one component of the Strategic plans for the existing cities, was realized that is setting the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for the cities and villages.

The UGB was a crucial element specially in the settlements that are located in the Nile Valley and Delta, where the urban expansion, usually takes place on the expense of agricultural areas. These areas are considered relatively scarce, especially that they only form less than 5% of the total area of Egypt. According to many actors and citizens alike their main concern is usually how to include their lands within the new UGB, hence enabling them to either sell their lands for construction or transform them into built up areas. In either case the total revenue is much higher than that of keeping their lands or selling them as agricultural lands. As such in most cases many of the suggested strategic projects might never get implemented, since they are not considered as priorities to many of the involved actors. (Saleh)

Usually the set duration for the plan making within the strategic planning process is officially 9 months. However, in almost all cases the duration for the plan making exceeds this with several years. The plan is usually formulated because of the analysis phases of the current situation at the inception time of the plan making process. Accordingly, with several years separating the inception and the finalization of the plan, the outcome would not respond to the changed situation and demands several years later. (El Wakil)

Hence, many components of the plan are considered obsolete. It is important to mention that there were a lot of hurdles in making the strategic plans in the period between 2011 – 2014, because of the state of instability that Egypt witnessed as a result of the two revolutions in 2011 and 2013 and their consequences. (Serag)

When it comes to implementation it is the shortage in resources and funds, that is to blame in terms of the implementation drawbacks. This argument is shared almost by many of the involved actors , consultant planners, city officials and the General Organization for Physical planning officials. The plans are good on paper, but they are never really fully implemented. In some cases, they are not implemented at all. (Saad, Iraqi).

According to a former top official of the GOPP, there is another constraint when it comes to plan implementation, that is the period in which the Strategic plan is formulated. As mentioned earlier the plan should be made within a period of 6 to 9 months. However, in reality and owing to reasons ranging from corruption to bureaucracy, it takes several years to make the plan. Accordingly, when its ready for implementation it becomes irrelevant to the existing contextual settings. (ELShahed)

An example on this is the strategic planning project for the city of Meet Ghamr that was commissioned in 2008 and was supposed to be finalized within a period of 9 months to one year. However, the plan was approved in 2014. At the beginning the plan finalization and approval was delayed because of bureaucratic hurdles and later on it was delayed because of the inter-revolutions events. Accordingly, several parts of the set plan had to be revised

and updated because of the changes that took place in the built environment during that period, meaning that it took almost 6 years to finalize the SP project.

Citizens

In the SP planning process, citizen participation is considered an integral part. The role of citizens materializes through their involvement in the discussions of the different stages of the plan making process. In theory they are usually represented through the citizens' councils who should convey their needs and opinions. Before the 2011 revolution, representatives of these councils were regularly invited to attend the plan making workshops. However, based on experience these councils in many cases reflected the points of views and interests of its members and not the wider public. In other cases the councils were dominated by strong key members who managed to dominate the arena most of the time to push forward their personal interests (Elwakil). Accordingly the whole set up in terms of public participation should be changed to express the opinion of the wider public. In most cases the council members would not attend the workshops in a consistent way which allows for several drawbacks later on during the decision making process. As mentioned earlier, the main concern for many citizens is the definition of the UGB rather than stressing the community needs. Usually at the end of the plan making process and before approving the plan, the strategic plan is displayed in the city hall for 15 days before calling for a public plan hearing session. The session is open for anyone who would like to express his / her opinion about the plan making, and that is when the rest of the citizens get to express their opinions, needs and demands, when it's a little too late. (Serag)

Stakeholders

Despite the importance of the stakeholders in the strategic planning process, it is argued that in many cases they were not seriously considered or identified within the Egyptian context. As mentioned earlier the list of stakeholders is identified at the beginning of the SP process and is given afterwards to the consultancy planning team. The list should include, community leaders, NGOs, CBOs, Businessmen, and representatives of the local councils. Unfortunately, the stakeholders identified would not attend the SP making workshops regularly and, in some cases, would never attend at all.

During the final plan hearing sessions for the cities of Mansoura and Sherbeen in the Egyptian Delta, several objections were made by some of the stakeholders against the final UGB and to a lesser extent towards some strategic projects. Their main reason for the objections was that they never heard about any of the interventions in the SP project. This happened despite the fact that the planning team organized several workshops during the plan making process, and official invitations were sent to inform them about the workshops. However, not everyone among the stakeholders took the SP project seriously, and skipped several workshops, until the day when it was supposed to be set for approval.

Perhaps this is because of ignorance on the importance of their participation, which negatively affects the outcome of the planning process. An academic and consultant argues that some key stakeholders are usually left outside the plan making process, although their participation is critically needed. An example on that is the land owners; since many of the problems that usually face the plan implementation are related to the conflict between the spatial location of proposed services (educational, health, etc..) and the state of the land ownership on which they are going to be constructed. In that case the land owners will not donate their lands without proper compensation. At the same time, the representation of the private sector is not taken

seriously as an integral part of the stakeholders. Accordingly, when discussing the implementation of the strategic projects within the plan, there is usually a shortage in terms of investments, since there was no clear involvement of the private sector in the process (El Kholey). In that case, it is argued that the stakeholders' involvement was dealt with superficially, throughout many of the SP projects that were initiated within the last 12 years in Egypt. For example during the Strategic plan making of Meet Ghamr city the only really involvement came from one of the investors who wanted to invest in his land by building a hotel that would have fitted within the general vision and Strategic Plan of the city. Ironically, all the other representatives of the private sector and the NGOs, did not provide any initiatives or will of contribution in setting the vision of the city or suggesting/investing in any strategic projects.

Contextual hurdles

In addition to the issues raised above, to many planners the introduction and the application of the Strategic planning in the Egyptian context faced several hurdles; these could be highlighted as follows:

a) Both the key officials and some consultants at the time of introduction of the SP were not familiar with its essence, hence the concepts were not considered seriously. In several cases , the officials would pretend that they understand and realize the importance of the SP, however, this was not true. (Serag & ElWakil)

b) The SP approach was not clear enough to the people working on it. For example the SWOT analysis should illustrate the external threats to the city and among those are other competitor cities, however, these elements where not considered in the studies. In some cases, construction companies were awarded the SP projects, while their main specialization was contracting works. As such, the criteria for distributing the SP projects were not clear. (Elkholy)

c) As previously mentioned, the stakeholders and the involved actors did not/ don't understand the concepts behind the SP and its importance towards providing a better willed future for the city, hence, they focused mainly on achieving superficial personal gains rather than working towards realizing a better future. (El-Wakil)

d) Corruption played a great role in several projects in ruining the essence of the SP. In many cases, consultants sub contracted the works to staff planners from the GOPP , who carried all the works and provided the necessary approvals from the authorities. Accordingly, the outcome didn't have anything to do with the SP or the aspirations of the local population. In some cases the making of new Strategic plans was based on "cut and paste" actions from previous SP plans that were made by the same sub-contractors, hence irrelevant to the context.(ElKholy)

e) The Strategic Plans usually stall before the implementation phase because of the lack of funding and conflict when it comes to land ownerships. (Elwakil, Elkholy, Saad, et al)

f) In terms of priority projects, the concept to some consultants is represented in the form of a wish list with no proper study of the environmental, social or economic impacts.

To some consultants, the SP projects were waste of time, money and the way they were made affected negatively the future. While to other consultants the SP projects were set on paper in a good way but never implemented at the end. To them, the real problem comes in binding to

the plans, and respecting the planning decisions, because of the poor resources allocated for the implementation of the plans. And this is evident in the agricultural land run by the urban sprawl despite the fact that the SP worked towards limiting it. However, both parties agreed that the lack of funding and the non-binding decisions are among the main hurdles that stand against the proper application of the SP in Egypt.

To come back on track

In the discussions, most of the consultants, officials and academics reflected on how to bring back the strategic planning process back on track. They have highlighted the following issues:

a) The SP process should be directed towards city administration and management and not to the city's physical aspects exclusively. The local governments should use the SP as a tool for regulating the investments and services. At the age of privatization there are many private sector service providers in the city, hence, through SP the local government can regulate the service provision rather than directly providing services. This should be the focus of the SP process, rather than focusing mainly on achieving an outcome of physical planning, which is mostly done on paper. (Elkholy)

b) It is important to emphasize the mechanisms of the Strategic planning process and the implementation of the plans. It is argued that this is a prerequisite to ensure a proper SP product at the end. A further attention should be made to the role of the stakeholders to ensure their ownership and partnership in the SP process, which in that case will rely on collective actions to ensure a proper outcome. (Shaaban)

c) The importance of achieving community awareness concerning the strategic planning process, not only within the governmental institutions but also within the local community. This is done to ensure a better contribution from the stakeholders and the local community in the SP process.

d) Related to the above, a good level of transparency should be realized to ensure that the local community that is to be affected by the planning outcome is informed periodically with the decisions and proposals that prelude to the planning outcome. This transparency will ensure that the SP process and product are not overtaken by the very few who actually were involved in the SP planning process.(Taha)

e) A proper follow up of the implementation of the SP product should be ensured by the local development partners and stakeholders to cover all sectors related to city planning. This is done to alleviate the possible deviations from the original plan as well as to realize a proper follow-up of the implementation. The follow up can be carried out by a local committee to be formed by the local governor, and given particular powers for the follow up, and are not necessary related to the same stakeholders who contributed to the plan making. (Taha)

f) A proper allocation of funds should be provided as well as proper powers and law binding decisions to be applied by the local authorities in order to ensure the proper implementation of the SP plans. (Serag)

As seen from the previous discussion, the strategic planning process and practice in Egypt are currently facing serious challenges that caused the SP to be taken away from its essence. The values that the SP was based on when it was first introduced within the Egyptian context, are marginalized and in many cases became subject to achieving personal gains. Perhaps if the

recommendations and suggestions that were provided by the related consultants, officials and academics are taken into consideration, only then the SP process can achieve its real goals within the Egyptian context.

However, despite the several drawbacks discussed earlier, applying the strategic planning approach in Egypt resulted in some positive outcomes, that affected the planning approach and practice in Egypt significantly. Some of these positive outcomes can be illustrated as follows;

a) The application of the strategic planning approach and making it a legal binding instrument within the planning system, helped to a certain extent in regulating the chaotic depletion of scarce agricultural lands that was lost annually to the unplanned cities' expansions. As mentioned earlier, most of the strategic plans included the definition of the Urban Growth boundaries that limited such a chaotic expansion.

b) The Strategic planning process allowed for the active and real engagement of the citizens and stakeholders in Egypt. Previously citizen participation was merely an expression used to invite the citizens for plan hearing sessions without really taking into account their opinions except in limited cases. Despite the misuse of such right, it is to be mentioned that in some cases real citizen participation resulted in tangible positive results that were reflected in the final approved strategic plans.

c) The introduction of the SP approach in practice led to its introduction within the urban planning education in the Egyptian universities. This is because many of the planning consultants are academics , hence they managed to make a clear knowledge transfer of the strategic planning process to the planning students who acquired it as a legitimate tool for the planning practice afterwards.

List of Interviewees

1- Prof. Dr. Shafak El Wakil , consultant and professor of urban and regional planning- Ain Shams University
2- Prof. Dr. Mohamed Serag, consultant and professor of Architecture and urban planning- Al Azhar University
3- Prof. Dr. Ahmed El Kholy , Consultant and professor of urban and regional planning – Bahrain university
4- Dr. Hany Saad, consultant and associate professor of Architecture – Al Azhar University
5- Dr. Fahima El Shahed, former deputy Minister at the General Organization for Physical Planning – Ministry of Housing
6- Eng. Shawkey Shaaban, former vice president of the General Organization for Physical Planning – Ministry of Housing
7- Eng. Osama Taha, former manager and head of the planning team at the General Organization for Physical Planning – Ministry of Housing
8- Eng. Hamada Al Iraqi , former City planning official, Sherbeen city
9- Eng. Mohamed Saleh, city planning consultant

Open ended interviews were held in the period between April – June 2018.

About the author

Prof. Dr. Yehya Serag is the Head of the Architectural Engineering Department at the Faculty of Engineering and Technology in the Future University in Egypt, and on leave as a Professor of Urban and Regional planning from Ain SHams University. He is also a regional and urban planning consultant with about 20 years of academic and professional experience. Since the beginning of the so-called " Arab Spring revolutions", Prof. Serag has been interested in studying and analyzing the impacts of politics on urbanism and the built environment. Among his interests in this field: city transformation as a result of war or revolutions, urbicide: the deliberate destruction of cities and its causes, and post war/conflict reconstruction strategies. He academically worked with several students from Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Palestine in research topics related to the previous field. Professionally, Prof. Serag was involved in projects focused on regional planning, strategic and detailed city planning. He is also a member of the Regional Studies Association in the United Kingdom, as well as being one of its representatives in Egypt.
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Weaponised Architecture: Architecture as Agency of War

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Abstract

Wars represent an extreme form of political conflict that escalates into violent confrontation between rival positions. When the city becomes the theatre of this conflict, it falls into a state of ambivalence; each side interprets the architecture and the spaces of everyday life in its own way. As such, the architecture of the city is no longer perceived according to its mere physical characteristics; instead, new meanings and different functions are identified following the visions and goals of the combatants. For instance, what is assumed to be a shelter for one side, can be seen as a target for the other. This duality of position, held by architectural and urban elements during wars, is a crucial feature depicted in the strategies and tactics of both attackers and defenders. The subjectivity of the architecture replaces its objectivity and exposes it to new meanings and functions for its users whether these be civilian residents or military commanders.

This paper aims at analysing the position of the city and its architecture in warfare in terms of its perception and deployment in military operations and resistance. What are the direct, indirect, long-term, and short-term impacts of urban destruction on a city's identity and that of its inhabitants? The second question is what is the dual role the city and its architecture can play for both military control and resistance? The first part of the paper highlights and reviews relevant literature tackling the relation between the city and its architecture during war. The second part of the paper considers the invasion of the city of Nablus in Palestine by the Israeli army in April 2002 as a study case enabling in-depth analysis of this expanding urban phenomenon. The case of Nablus shows how the city and its architecture are used for both military control and resistance as well as socio-spatial resilience. Using the concept of inverse geometry in terms of the Israeli army, the analysis demonstrates how several pre-established concepts of visibility, frontier, wall, outside, inside, domestic and public are blurred and reinterpreted in moments of crisis in order to adapt to situational needs, these being military control or resistance that often happen in the same space and time but on different X,Y,Z coordinates. Consequently, the multiplicity and complexity of architecture and its space is, in this paper, called rhizomatic space after Deleuze and Guattari. This space is capable of being bent, wherein buildings reveal near-infinite interiors, capable of being traversed through all manner of non-architectural means, composing a larger scale rhizome.

1. Introduction

1.1 Cities and War

With Cities predate the modern nation-states by several millennia, representing centres of power as well as culture, economy, religion, politics and other aspects of everyday life. As centres of human life, and due to their practical and symbolic importance, cities have always been focal points of military strategy. However, the nature and tactics of modern urban warfare, witnessed since the beginning of WWII, have differed significantly from those of ancient, medieval and early modern urban fighting tactics; the frontier lines have not only moved from the fields to the city boundaries, but also moved from the city walls into city streets. World War II provided numerous and different cases of direct combat inside the cityscape – these cases witnessed the very nature of urban combat, where the architecture of the city mattered. Many lessons were drawn on the role of architecture as an active as well as a passive agent of war (DiMarco, 2002).

In the post-cold war era, a new type of warfare has been evoked: cities have become its key sites – "*Warfare, like everything else, is being urbanised*" (Graham, 2004). The city-as-target has shifted to becoming the site, the stage and the field of warfare. The classical symmetrical confrontation between state armies in open fields has come to an end. Wars are now entering the cities from within; city spaces, public and private spheres, places of everyday life and urban services have turned into the new sites of war. This new generation of war, this new form of confrontation, means the city is now perceived as the "*very medium of warfare – a flexible, almost liquid medium that is forever contingent and in flux*." (Weizman, 2006).

The urban platform of war is not static but dynamic, ever changing, and differs from one city to another, highlighting the significant differences between urban and non-urban fields of battle. Cities and towns differ in their shape, size, layout, population and style of architecture. Spencer and Amble (2019) argue that current and future urban warfare will attack different types of cities including megacities, medium-sized and even small urban centres, where each typology of settlement requires a unique approach.

Furthermore, modern cities are becoming ever larger, containing many districts and suburbs, allowing the city to be divided into dozens of individual, mutually supporting, miniature fortresses. The occupation of one part of the city does not necessarily achieve the objective set by the operation; other parts of this city as an 'organ' will continue to function and its network and urban system will continue to attack and counterattack the assailant. In addition to that, each district contains different microenvironments, ranging from wide streets to narrow alleyways and, via corridors and courtyards, to rooms, terraces and rooftops (Evans, 2007). Moving from one microenvironment to another, being dominated by elevated buildings, not knowing who or what is concealed by walls, doors, windows or who or what is lurking on rooftops and below pathways is a source of physical and psychological stress for soldiers (Glenn, 1996).

Accordingly, and due to its vertical and horizontal complexities, the city has the capacity to "swallow" greater amounts of manpower than the open field. Eyal Weizman describes the absorption of manpower during the battle of Nablus 2002 as follows:

> *"Although several thousand soldiers and hundreds of Palestinian guerrilla fighters were manoeuvring simultaneously in the town, they were saturated within its fabric to a degree that they would have at any given moment been largely invisible from an aerial perspective" (Weizman, 2007).*

The built environment creates a network of highly physical, structured but fragmented sequences of enclosures that require large quantities of personnel and offer no possibility to regroup or reinforce (Evans, 2007).

1.2 Architecture as a Political Practice

The 20th century is particularly rich in examples of architecture being harnessed in the service of political, especially totalitarian, ideology. One recalls the Nuremberg rallies, for instance, and Adolf Hitler's vision of the New Berlin, to be renamed Germania, with its massive, neoclassical architecture and grandiose dimensions.

Clausewitzian understanding considers war as an extension of politics, or in other words, a political instrument. Tom Vanderbilt in his article "War as architecture" argues that architecture can become a weapon of war. He further draws examples from Eyal Weizman'spresentation (part of a panel entitled "Architecture, Violence, and (In)Security"), showing how the Israeli settlements in the West Bank are erected as 'panopticoan" structures overseeing Palestinian villages and towns, and also showing how the Israeli highways connecting these panopticon structures tower over Palestinian farmland, creating sovereignty in three dimensions. Weizman uses the word 'architecture' in a double sense, indicating both the built structure that sustains the occupation (walls, bridges, tunnels, settlements, checkpoints, and military bases) and a metaphor of the constructed nature of political issues.

On the other hand, the destruction of architecture can also be a political asset. From a political point of view, buildings become targets not because they are political but because they are politicised – considering why and how, and by whom they were built, regarded or destroyed (Bevan, 2006).

The individual accounts of destruction, together with the reading of a larger context of urban space and its devastation, give way to examining the "imaginative geographies through which political violence works" (Philips, 2011). This is complementary to the opinion that contemporary warfare and terror now largely boil down to contests over the spaces, symbols, meanings, and support systems of urban areas or structures (Graham, 2004). In regards to this concentration on the destruction of cities in modern war, Hewitt came up with the term 'place annihilation' (Hewitt, 1983), After all, now wars are no longer subject to Clausewitz's definition of the battlefield, and one never knows where terror might strike. The built environment, the city, has become the new theatre of operations. Thus, urban structures become victims. This total war against urban structures starts to resemble urbicide; namely, the total razing down to the ground of every single structure is reminiscent of the compete erasure of an ethnicity. As has been noted: "[T]he concept of genocide entails an understanding of destruction in relation to that which is destroyed" (Coward, 2009).

1.3 Architecture as an Agency of War

Considering enclosure as a conceptual framework through which to understand architecture, we find that architecture embodies the physical boundaries that created the distinction between interior and exterior. This distinction between these two spaces can be assumed to expand to include the division between visible and invisible, veiled and unveiled.

Enclosure hence materialises the concepts of visibility and protection. The inside, the invisible and the protected, is located on one side of the limits of enclosure, whereas the outside, the visible and the unprotected, is located on the other. Bernard Tschumi states that "*architecture*

is defined by the actions it witnesses as much as by the enclosure of its walls" (Tschumi, 1994). Hence, architecture can be perceived as an advanced form of enclosure that, in addition to the concepts of visibility and protection, includes a structural embodiment of social interactions for the people using it. And here lies exactly one of the major differences between the urban and open fields of battle; architecture demonstrates, whereas nature diminishes these clear limits that define the enclosure.

Paul Virilio (1989) demonstrates that "f*or men at war, the function of the weapon is the function of the eye*", the battlefield is in fact a field of perception; thus, visibility and the perception it creates is a vital and decisive factor in war, and this is what brought the art of camouflage to the tactics of war. Camouflage, as an 'art' of alluding the visual perception of an object, was used to protect likely targets from offensive airstrikes at the end of WWI and during WWII (Zardini & Cohen, 2011).

Architectural elements are physical manifestations of concepts like 'limits,' including the visual ones, and the concept of compartment that together define specific ranges of view or control. The visual power of domination over inmates demonstrated by the panoptical prison emerges not only from the arrangement of architectural elements it encompasses, but also from the perception it creates in the imagination of inmates. The axial line of sight directed toward the observation tower at the centerre without seeing the guard himself, and a lack of other lateral options of view, facilitate the switch of authority perceived by inmates. The tower itself as a physical entity exchanges roles with the guard. This exchange might not occur without the change of perception imagined in the mind of the inmate and without this direct visual relationship (Glenn, 2003). As noted earlier, visibility, protection, and social experience distinguish the architectural context from the open field, and consequently, their respective fields of battle. The range of view and range of weapon are shorter and restricted by buildings (Glenn, 1996). Artillery and aircraft have proved ineffective in street fighting. Tanks also find it difficult to move through the narrow rubble-filled streets, and due to their restricted field of view, they have shown inefficiency in targeting fighters on rooftops and are unable to lower their guns enough to destroy basements (Evans, 2007).

Buildings offer good fields of fire, observation, and surveillance capacity over the adjacent spaces. These characteristics can be usually exaggerated inside the dense urban fabric and can also be modified by other man-made constructions. The 'panoptical' domination is exaggerated by the fact that the architectural elements functioning as 'observation towers' can operate in any direction, and they are not only observational, but also lethal instruments. A Palestinian fighter caught in the battle of Nablus 2002 said: *"Israelis seem to be everywhere: behind, on the sides, on the right and on the left. How can you fight that way?"* (Weizman, 2006). Buildings are not only used to establish ambushes and hideouts for snipers and anti-tanks units, but they can also be knocked down to obstruct and block routes of movement used by the attacking army; in other words, even a demolished structure can be used as means of domination and control over battle space, a fact that shows the implicit power inherited in the physical character of architecture.

Defenders may use the city's overground and underground features to hinder the attackers mobility, in addition to employing heavy fire power against the offensive forces. Buildings, as well as rubble, barricades, underground elements like sewers, subways, basements, and tunnels all together define the limits of enclosure between the interior and exterior spaces and zones of control (Evans, 2007). The combatants' ability to control these sites, creating a matrix of enclosures, or battlefield, is a feature exclusive to the nature of the built environment; this complexity of interconnected elements cannot be established in an open field of battle.

In the coming sections we want to investigate how the city and its architectural meaning, perception, and position are distorted in war zones and the colonial context. We want to test the previous discussed themes on the dual role the city and its architecture can play for the combatants and resistance in the complex urban context of Nablus.

We will show how the city and its architecture were used for both military control and resistance during the diverse Israeli military invasions of the Nablus old town between 2002 and 2017 using surveys and interviews with diverse user groups between 2003 and 2017.

2. Weaponised Architecture & Rhizomatic Spaces: Nablus During The Israeli Military Invasions 2002

Nablus is the largest Palestinian city and is located 70 km to the north of Jerusalem (Figure. 1). Nablus was founded by the Canaanites in the middle of the third millennium BC, located at the eastern entrance of the actual city on a large hill that is now called "Tel Balata". Nablus has struggled with many invaders and occupiers throughout its long history. It was invaded by the Egyptians, the ancient Hebrew tribes, the Assyrians, Babylonians, the Persians, Greeks, Seleucids and in 63 BC the city finally fell to the Romans. In 72 AD the historic city was destroyed and Nablus was rebuilt by the Romans on its present site (al-Dabbagh, 1965). The urban fabric of the old town core of Nablus (traditional Arabic city morphology) has attracted the Palestinian resistance to take refuge in its maze-like alleyways since the first intifada of 1987. The density and morphology of the old town has hampered Israel's capability to control this space and move within it. This, in turn, has led to the mythical construction of Nablus as the "impenetrable city". the "Castle of Resistance", and the "Mountain of Fire" in the Palestinian discourse according to common perception (Doumani, 2004).

Figure 1: Nablus Location

These factors influenced how both the Israeli military and the Palestinian resistance prepared for the event of Israeli military re-occupation in April 2002. On the Palestinian side, the legendary immunity of Nablus' urban fabric reinforced the perception that the Israeli army would not risk entering the old town or try to hold it in any military operation on the ground.

After a series of suicide bombings in Israeli cities, the military decision to launch 'Operation Defensive Shield' and to reoccupy Palestinian cities was undertaken. On the eve of the 3rd of April, 2002, the Israeli military invaded Nablus city from different access points and directions. The Israeli army used the main military bases and Israeli settlements surrounding the city as their headquarters from which to launch military operations. During its main attacks, the Israeli army was well equipped with detailed maps and aerial photographs of the old town.

Methodological note: The analysis of Nablus old town throughout 19 years of frequent Israeli invasion focuses on Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 and the aftermath of the operation due to the huge physical impact that operation had on the old city's urban fabric for many years to come. This period of time was also chosen due to new military techniques that challenged military planning based on the position of architecture and the city as a theatre of war and resistance, introducing the inter-disciplinary approach that was used to document and analyse the damage inflicted on the Nablus old town centre during the frequent Israeli military invasions from 2002-2005 and other series of surveys during 2015-2020. This approach was drawn from differently structured questionnaires and inventory tables. These forms were initially drawn from inventory tables and questions that reflect the value, historical significance and nature of the destroyed buildings. The second form was a damage assessment table that aimed at documenting the scale and the nature of the damage. The third form aimed at documenting and assessing the ongoing renovation projects. The documentation was not only meant for buildings, it also extended to the inhabitants, where more than 140 interviews were carried out after the 2002 Israeli military invasions. The focus of the fieldwork was the city user group's evaluation and perception of three topics – identity, collective memory and value of the city in the renovation process post military invasion. The first questionnaire focused on the city and its importance for the inhabitants as the main elements of their cultural identity. The second questionnaire focused on inhabitants' reflections on the damage and destruction that had significantly affected their city as well as their opinion about the ongoing renovation projects.

2.1 Walking through Walls: Rhizomatic and Inverted Spaces for Control and Resistance

The old town of Nablus has an urban fabric that is significantly different from the modern districts of the city. The modern city features wide open streets, detached houses, apartment buildings, setbacks, and open spaces. In contrast, the highly dense, built-up area and attached urban structures have created a masonry terrain that makes the old town permeable only by a puzzle-like maze of pathways with a hierarchical flow – from straight wide open to very narrow, irregular, crooked paths.

After the Israeli army had surrounded the old city, there were five days of fighting concentrated in two parts of the old city: the Kasbah and al-Yasmeneh. The Israeli soldiers had good street maps and aerial photos of the town and they seemed to know where to go and what houses to enter and search.

Recalling its previous experience in the old town, the Israeli army saw the morphology and structure of Nablus itself as the major line of defence preventing it from controlling the city. Consequently, re-organising this space and destroying the city became the only possible effective strategy to establish military control over Nablus. This can be read in the Israeli army commander Aviv Kokhavi's view of how the old town should be reorganised, despite the fact that it is a densely populated area:

> *Kokhavi [chief of military units] was adamant that the only way to "control the flow of terrorists out of the city" was to exercise some basic acts of urban planning, in effect to reorganise the complexities he so admired into a simplified urban layout that will serve his operational needs, and to dig deep trenches all around the city "and [build] a road running across its length from east to west, channeling all access in and out of the city into two check points, one at each side of the city" (Kokhavi, 2007).*

Reconstruction of the Israeli military invasion, based on the work of Abujidi (2014) and Weizman (2007), reveals how the Israeli army used tactical military planning to control the city and how the Palestinian resistance countered this planning. The Palestinian fighters closed all the entrances of Nablus old city ahead of the Israeli military invasion of the city. Based on news of the previous invasion of Palestinian cities such as Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Jenin, they knew it was the turn of Nablus, which was the last city to be invaded. The entrances were blocked with sandbags and sand filled trash cans and home-made mines were planted, thus blocking the logic of movement. Palestinians followed the classical perception of paths as routes of movement and the facades of city buildings as impermeable edges. However, once Israeli troops surrounded the old city, they started to penetrate within the urban fabric in a counter-classical way (Abujidi, 2014; Weizman, 2007).

The Israeli army understood urban fighting in Nablus as a spatial problem. The surveillance that architecture offers for those who live inside the city is significant. The axial, linear perception of the battle space imagined by the Palestinian defenders was encountered by a non-axial, non-linear swarming principle that was more effective in negotiating and navigating with the irregular, non-linear spatial context of the old town. As such, the Israeli army had its own perception of the architecture of the city; it was an "inverse geometry" interpretation. Paths were no longer routes along which movement occured; rather, they were edges, impermeable and forbidden elements, and walls, ceilings, and floors became the potential entrances and markers of new paths within the city. The dense urban fabric inspired the Israeli commanders to adapt the technique of passing through walls to conceal their movement: *"[S]oldiers moved within the city across hundred-meter-long 'overground-tunnels' carved through a dense and contiguous urban fabric."* Their movements were thus almost entirely camouflaged, with troop movements hidden from above by virtue of always remaining inside buildings (Weizman, 2006).

One of the tactics the Israeli army used was to drill in and explode holes into the thick walls, moving from one house to another or from one enclosure to another, to enable them to remain in the invisible, protected, interior side of the battlefield. The soldiers marked these holes with entrances and exits to guide them through. Paths, then, became imagined lines that connected two successive points, demarcating directions of movement only by labelling those holes – a tactic used before in Balata refugee camp in March the same year and used later in the military invasion of Jenin in 2002.

According to Abujidi (2014), in mapping the diverse routes, the Israeli army showed that their penetration was from different directions simultaneously, entering from the west from Al Fatimyeh School. This route was not completed – it proved to be too long to gain easy access to the old town and instead bulldozers were used to clear out the blocked western entrance of Alhadadeen market. The army entered the city from the southern neighbourhoods, taking two routes – along the Alaqabeh steps and via the Alyasmeeneh quarter (Figure. 2). From the north, they swarmed through the area of the Suq Albasal market. It was noticed that the forced routes technique, as documented on the ground and reconstructed from interviews [1], was used mainly in the southern parts of the city, and near the main northern entrance of Alhusien main square outside the old city limits. The other northern eastern entrances were opened by bulldozers.

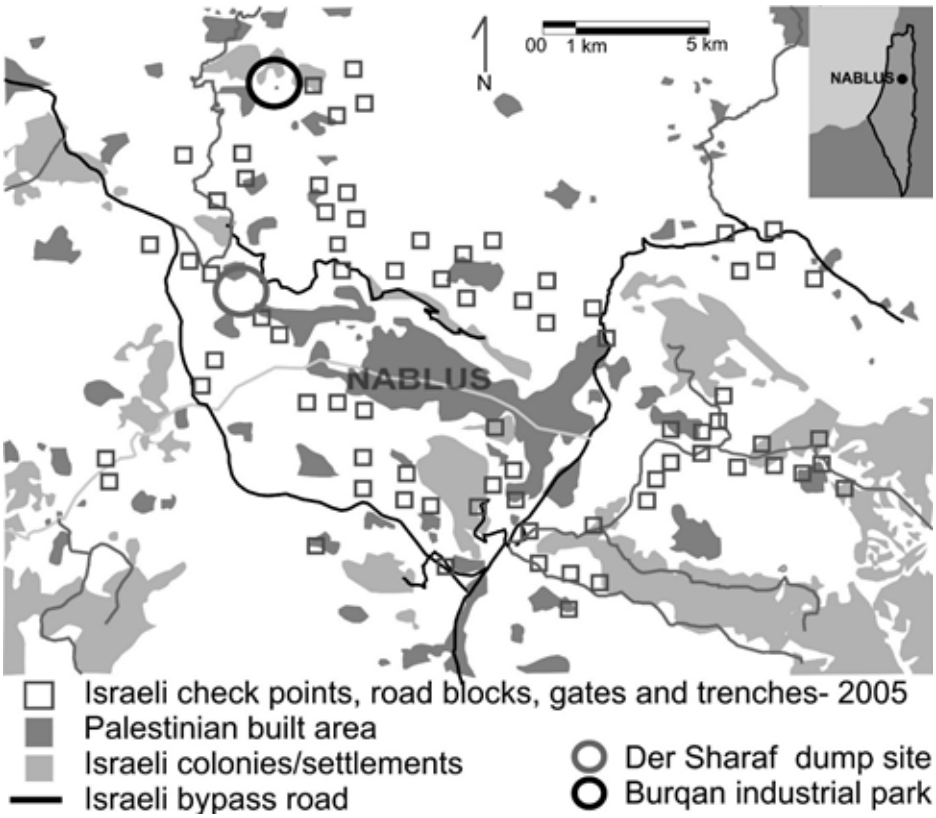

Figure 2: A Reconstruction Of The Israeli Military Invasion In 2002. (Abujidi)

> *"They came through the roof, ran down the stairs here and went straight to the children's' room - that's right there", says Aisha as I followed her down the narrow staircase leading from the roof terrace to her apartment on the first floor of the family home in the old city of Nablus. "I begged them not to scare the children, but they just laughed in my face and started overturning the furniture, emptying the drawers, making so much noise – the children were crying, they were so frightened. But the soldiers didn't care". We continue to the next room, the living room, where she points to a wall with a built-in bookcase: "And this is where they left. They blew up the wall and continued to our neighbour's house." (Abujidi, 2014)*

From this example, we see that the Israeli army invaded the entire environment of life inside the old town, merging private and public spheres and forming new frontier lines. They were in fact deforming and converting the hierarchical, geometrical, and Cartesian territoriality into another flexible, shifting, and nomadic one. Aviv Khkhavi explains the conceptual framework of this strategy saying, *"A state military whose enemy is scattered like a network of loosely organized gangs . . . must liberate itself from the old concept of straight lines, units in linear formation, regiments and battalions, … and become itself much more diffuse and scattered, flexible and swarm-like… In fact, it must adjust itself to the stealthy capability of the enemy ... Swarming, to my understanding, is simultaneous arrival at a target from a large number of nodes, if possible, from 360 degrees"* (Weizman, 2006).

These tactical units were swarming inside the old town fabric. *"Swarm has no form, no front, back of flank but moves like a cloud*" said Shimon Naveh (Weizman, 2006), describing the movement of Israeli soldiers. These movements appeared to be a realisation of rhizomatic

spaces[2] by perceiving the city as a set of organisational patterns, comprising a multiplicity of small groups progressing according to circumstances, and flexibly reacting to and accommodating different contingencies. In other words, the urban life that is structured in the built environment was attacked in a process of deconstructing and reconstructing the structure of urban life.

Moving like a cloud, or *"Like a worm that eats its way forward, emerging at points and then disappearing*" meant penetrating and moving between specific points within the urban structures of the town. The process was similar to that of structuring and urbanising a nomadic lifestyle; nomads move according to specified key sites, based on a spring or tree, for example, and each site becomes a point of reference by itself with no one point determining the end of the journey, a very strong representation of the concept of rhizome. If the site is good, they stay longer, if not they proceed to the next destination. Like nomadic tribes, the sites identified by the Israeli army inside the old town were scattered and could not be mapped and boundaried as exclusive territory, but instead were seen only as paths between key points of reference. As such, the Israeli 'worm' neglected boundaries and territories but claimed key points – which contradicts natural urban behaviour. Urban architecture structures are part of the everyday life of their users. This explains the difference in the special interpretation perceived by both sides. City residents stuck to their houses as city defenders thought that interior spaces were untouchable and open spaces would host the fight. Accordingly, in the 2002 invasion of Nablus, some buildings could host the three human components of urban combat inside their limits. Inhabitants, defenders, and attackers were located in the same building with floors, ceilings, and walls separating them. The invisibility offered by the architectural enclosures turned homes into ambivalent spaces (see Figures. 2, 3). However, the Palestinian fighters took some time to understand the inverse nature of the field of battle; hence, some of them continued to hide and wait on street corners. Israeli soldiers who dominated the interior of surrounding buildings were able to eliminate them by setting up sniper outposts inside the old town houses taken over by the Israeli army (see Figure. 4).

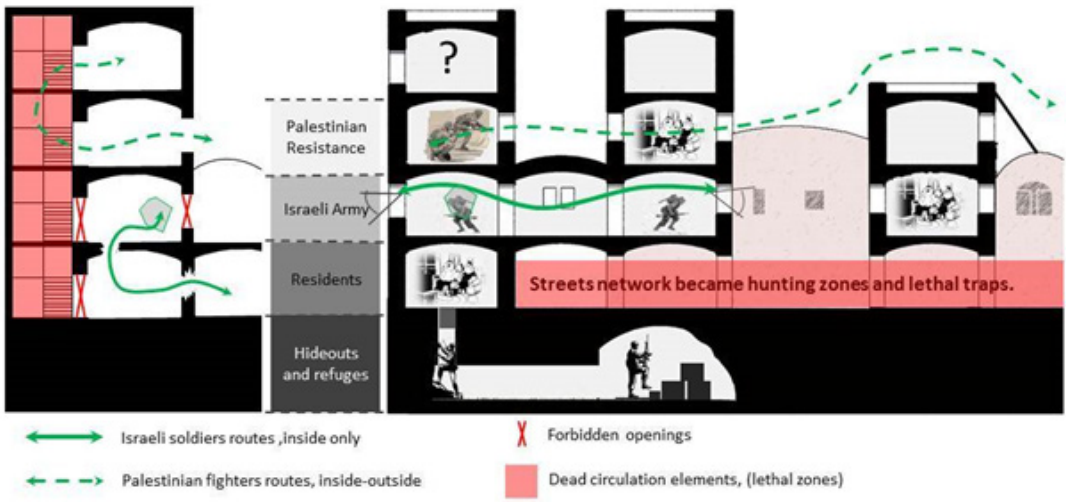

Figure 3: Section That Demonstrates The Spatial Flow Layers For The Israeli Army And Palestinian Resistance -(Kittana)

Figure 4: Location Of Snipers' Outpost Inside Nablus Old Town During The Israeli Invasion 2002. (Abujidi)

In response to this new nature of confrontation, Palestinian fighters began to conceal themselves and tried to use their knowledge of the space to counter Israeli surveillance. The Palestinian resistance members used a more elastic method; it could be described as the Parkour principle. Once the Israeli army was able to penetrate within the tissue of the city, the resistance members were forced to hide and conceal their movements as much as possible. Some had been captured or eliminated but many were swallowed by the very fabric of the city. The cognitive map followed by the Israelis was countered by the mental map followed by Palestinian resistance members, and the destructive tactics of motion were countered by smooth methods of penetrating within spaces.

The Palestinian armed resistance, the claimed target of the Israeli operation, though poorly armed, were able to manoeuvre inside the old town by relying on their deep knowledge of the spatial structure and the hierarchy of the city fabric. The fighters had the capacity of flexible movement and could efficiently hide due to their familiarity with the city and its complex spatial structure. Basem Abu Sareyah[3] , one of the wanted Palestinian gunmen, described his journey of extricating himself from the Israeli ambush in one of the Israeli invasions in 2004. He skilfully used his mental image of the space to navigate his escape route. After being noticed in a cave with other Palestinian fighters, Israeli soldiers fired gas grenades against them. He knew that his cave was connected with another house by a narrow

tunnel that was closed by a brick wall at the end. He moved along the tunnel, broke the brick wall and surprised the Israeli soldiers in the kitchen of that house. They thought that he was a suicide bomber and fled to the living room. He then proceeded to another room where he surprised another Israeli soldier. He was saved by a window that opened onto a small courtyard, through which he knew that he could climb the sewer pipes of the neighbour's house and disappear inside that building. From the neighbour's house, he managed to move to the rooftop and find his way out of the Israeli ambush.

Based on intensive surveys inside the old town (Abujidi, 2014), 28 positions for snipers and military outposts inside the old town were located, a technique that was used first in 2002 and became common during Israeli invasions into Nablus, figure 4 shows the location of these 28 positions[4]. The dense urban fabric, irregularity of building orientations. and asymmetric arrangements of openings through walls and rooftops offered snipers several key point options; structures such as the minarets of mosques, bridge-rooms over streets, and screened walls were visibility control agencies that imposed themselves on both residents and fighters, creating a panoptical domination over private and public spaces. This domination was extended by the irregularity of buildings and openings as it was not possible to predict where the sniper might be positioned. Abujidi (2014) argues that snipers and forced routes played important roles as surprise elements in the battle of April 2002; these two techniques were not usually adopted during the first Intifada. These strategies enabled the Israeli army to control the area of battle with its heavy machinery and were an important developmental shift in the Israeli military's strategy inside Palestinian urban areas. During the military invasions, special measures were added to the Israeli surveillance and military control network. Between 2002 and 2005, frequent military Israeli invasions occurred in the old town of Nablus and the nearby Balata refugee camp. In all instances, the Israeli army used its existing physical network of control to infiltrate and control urban space and dominate the city. During these events, new, temporary physical networks of control were superimposed on the existing networks (see Figure. 4), consisting of sniper and military outposts, iron gates, temporary roadblocks, trenches, and a dividing system. This system divided Nablus new town into east and west with a physical demarcation line called "Tora Bora" by the residents. This comprised a mound of dirt constructed by the Israeli army near the destroyed governorate building (*Muqata'a*) and the city prison.

The trauma and experience of transforming inhabitants' homes into military bases or routes of movements reflects this dual role of houses inside the old town where a temporary spatial reconfiguration of the house's spatial layout took place to serve both the soldiers and the displaced families.

The Dilal family's home was occupied, and 20 people were crammed into one room for almost 48 hours. Among them were two elderly people with heart problems, one pregnant woman, and eight small children. The rest of their home was transformed into a military base where soldiers could rest and meet between operations.

The Awad family was also confined to one room of their home while soldiers took over the rest of the house. One floor was reportedly transformed into an intelligence centre, another into a prison, and the basement into a makeshift interrogation centre. We had already begun to hear stories from young men returning from interrogation – affectionately referred to as "Hell" in Arabic – while others went missing. In alleys we would find men handcuffed and blindfolded, being led into jeeps while soldiers aimed their guns in our direction as an unspoken warning against speaking or photographing.[5]

These examples embody the capability of architectural enclosures to be subdivided into unorthodox uses of spaces. One room of the house was used as a survival container while other rooms served offensive missions. In both cases, the architectural enclosures were not meant to serve the use they had now been put to.

2.2 Nablus the Inverted City: Domestic Space as Military Domain (Inverse Geometry)

The notion of privacy disappears during times of invasions as public and private are reconfigured by military fiat. A private house can be the target of a search operation, can be used for interrogation, or can be transformed arbitrarily into a "temporary" military outpost – challenging notions of ownership and privacy on the grounds of "security". The Israeli army has a unique power to immediately transform any portion of urban or rural space by declaring it a "military area". Giorgio Agamben describes this issue in his definition of the state of exception:

> *"It is obvious that we frequently can no longer differentiate between what is private and what is public, and that both sides of the classical opposition appear to be losing their reality. The state of exception consists, not least, in the neutralization of this distinction. (Agamben, 2004)*

Many public buildings, such as schools and mosques, were transformed into temporary shelters for the city's displaced inhabitants. Another issue was the curfew laws that confined people to the interior of their houses, regulating the use of public space outside. They also restrained the use of private houses, making looking from a window or sitting on a balcony a risk in itself. Thus, here, the most intimate private space was invaded and redefined, an example is described by one of our interviewees as follows:

> *"Go inside, he ordered in hysterical broken English. Inside! I am already inside! It took me a few seconds to understand that this young soldier was redefining inside to mean anything that is not visible, to him at least. My being "outside" within the "inside" was bothering him. Not only is he imposing a curfew on me, he is also redefining what is outside and what is inside within my own private sphere".*

This is a realisation of new definition of enclosure, of inside. The visible was outside even if it was inside the limits of the enclosure, meaning that what defined the limits was not only the physical boundaries, but more importantly the visibility through these boundaries.

3. Conclusion

In The Occupied Palestinian Territories, architecture was weaponised as early as the 1948 Israeli Arab war in which architecture was instrumentalised as a political weapon in different forms. This was either by the building of war architecture to suppress Palestinian subjects such as by building the Israeli colonial apparatus of surveillance and control (Jewish settlements, Israeli only bypass roads, checkpoints, military bases, and the Apartheid Wall) or by targeting Palestinian architecture and the built environment (house demolishing policies and destruction during military invasions). The third form was transforming or manipulating the Palestinian architecture and its spaces to serve military operational objectives. Thus, by admitting that the city is inherently a battlefield, we then acknowledge the impossibility of neutrality in everything that is part of this city – architecture, objects, humans and their

behaviours. The terms of *battle* do not refer to a fatalistic violence between human bodies, but rather, a systematic violence that these bodies have to face in the way relations of power are structured. The city intensifies such violence as it frames it. This is why the city does not become a battlefield at a precise moment, it simply changes – sometimes drastically – its degree of intensity when framing a more explicitly stated conflict than usual. In Nablus, during the battle, soldiers moved within the city across hundred-meter-long 'overground-tunnels' carved through a dense and contiguous urban fabric. Their movements were thus almost entirely camouflaged, with troop movements hidden from above by virtue of always remaining inside buildings. Although several thousand soldiers and several hundred Palestinian guerrilla fighters were manoeuvring simultaneously in the city, "*they were so 'saturated' within its fabric that very few would have been visible from an aerial perspective at any given moment*" (Weizman, 2006). They were thus able to bend space to their own particular navigational needs, as Geoff Manaugh argues. Manaugh brands the liminal territories that are tactically occupied in the Die Hard series as "*Nakatomi Space: wherein buildings reveal near-infinite interiors, capable of being traversed through all manner of non-architectural mean*". *Nakatomi Space* is an interesting concept that so succinctly describes such a complex idea – what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari would call 'rhizomatic space', which, at its most basic, is a theoretical, non-hierarchical space constructed of elaborate connections and multiple points of access. Such rhizomatic space lends itself and its capacities to resistance, making it able to multiply its techniques and appropriation of spaces, referred to as 'rhizomatic resistance' by the authors. This is clear in the different forms of spatial configuration. The Palestinian Resistance employed the urban fabric and its architecture for resistance, using different forms and techniques – from barricading the city, to the re-colonisation and appropriation of occupied Palestinian land architecture (Bab Alshams movement) or to the strategy of tunnelling in Gaza in 2014.

Hence, when architecture is weaponised or decolonised, the power of architecture as a political weapon is at its highest, confirming a common practice in many other sites of the world in which cities and architecture prove to be a crucial agent of oppression and emancipation.

Notes

1.Interviews with around 120 inhabitants who witnessed the events of destruction and the invasion of their houses, which were used as military outposts or as passages for Israeli soldiers to other adjacent houses in the neighborhood.

2.The Rhizome Concept is used here to disclose the spatial complexity inside the dense urban fabric. The main elements of rhizomatic space that are deployed for this paper allow for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points and explain city spatial flows and their perception and deployment during Israeli military invasions in Nablus old town.

3.In an interview with one of the authors (2013)

4.The Israeli army generally occupied strategic buildings, forcing the inhabitants to either evacuate to neighboring buildings or to stay in one room of the house (or one apartment, in case of multi-family buildings) along with the soldiers.

5.Diaries: Live From Palestine, Nablus Invasion Diary I: Occupied Homes and Minds, Anna Baltzer ,14 March 2007,http://electronicintifada.net/content/nablus-invasion-diary-i-occupied-homes-and-minds/6808

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Strategic spatial planning in Lebanon in the eyes of the stakeholders: A panacea?

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Abstract

Many Building on recent experiences of strategic spatial planning in Lebanon, the paper seeks to challenge prevailing narratives about the emergence of strategic spatial planning as a "cure-all" tool. The article aims to reflect on a recent argument made by Louis Albrechts that contours the way forward to a transformative agenda and re-discusses the concept of strategic spatial planning. Based on a full-fledged analysis of practices of strategic planning initiated by Lebanese local authorities, the paper reflects on the perception of different stakeholders on strategic planning as a catalyst for change. It investigates the capacity of strategic planning to cope with the needs of running cities and to guide traditional regulatory planning. The paper concludes with an outline of an agenda for further research.

Keywords

Strategic spatial planning, Lebanon, unions of municipalities, planning system, democracy, urban challenges

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Introduction

In recent years, strategic spatial planning (SP) has gained growing interest among scholars and researchers – a notion that was developed in response to finding appropriate planning concepts so that cities deal better with their new challenges. The expanding literature, using theory and existing practices, suggests that strategic planning is a potential solution to cope with the massive challenges faced by our cities, with many scholars considering traditional approaches to planning as no longer sufficient.

However, strategic spatial planning is under pressure. On one hand, it is considered the answer to a region's evolving needs, showing great capacity to cover a wide range of values. On the other hand, various critical points of view question its ability to provide, potentially, a "cure-all" expected outcome in various contexts.

The case is also similar in developing countries in which Lebanon serves as a good example to investigate the issues. Strategic planning in Lebanon is a tool initiated by International Organizations (IOs) as part of a knowledge transfer process and has been part of the regional and municipal planning toolbox since 2002 (Darwich, 2018). It has proven itself by trying to fill the gap created by a reluctant state on one hand, and the weak capacities of local authorities to perform efficient planning and development on the other. Moreover, SP has attempted to form a bridge between the loose ends of national planning and the outdated local land-use plans.

A recent reflection conducted by Louis Albrechts (Albrechts, 2018) covers the overall frame of strategic planning processes and practices worldwide. It relies on a SWOT analysis of the strategic planning practices as an ongoing planning approach. Efforts are made to sketch out a new, clear-cut normative approach in an attempt to develop the theory of strategic spatial planning towards what he calls "a more radical strategic planning"(Albrechts, 2018, p.1)

Albrechts (2018) argues that strategic planning is still a relevant tool that fills the gaps and complements the shortcomings of statutory planning. He offers a comprehensive role for strategic planning encompassing an important aspect of framing the arena of regulatory planning:
"The objectives [of strategic planning] have typically been to construct a challenging, coherent and coordinated vision and to frame an integrated long-term spatial logic (for land-use regulation, for resource protection, for sustainable development, for spatial quality, sustainability, equity, etc.)" (Albrechts, 2018, p.5). The discussion on the relationship between SP and statutory planning has had significant focus in the literature, with many researchers and scholars highlighting the difference between SP approach and the traditional approach. Moreover, many authors have examined the relationship between both approaches and it is safe to say that this relationship can be framed as a contested one.

Centred on Lebanon, Albrechts' (2018) article provides elements of discussion to this debate on the relationship between two co-existing planning tracks in Lebanon: statutory and strategic. Are we looking at two parallel trajectories or do they converge at some point? Moreover, the article also argues that strategic planning in Lebanon grew outside the regulatory framework, as in other parts of the world, and has created a parallel track which raises the concerns of its legitimacy and sustainability.

The objective of the article is to examine Albrechts' (2018) theoretical discussion from an empirical perspective with a particular focus on the capacity of SP to guide traditional land-use planning. The examination is based on Albrechts' argument that one of the SP objectives is to provide a reference frame that includes coherent land-use planning (Albrechts, 2018). The article focuses on strategic spatial planning in Lebanon, responding to a call in the interna-

tional literature for detailed case studies in order to systematically assess strategic planning effectiveness in different regulatory, institutional and territorial contexts. The author relies on the results of a national conference[1] she recently organised, which provide the flesh and blood for the discussion. The conference reflected on the evaluation of strategic planning implementation in Lebanon spanning the last 16 years from various stakeholders' point of view. This is complemented by the author's observations and 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews held with numerous stakeholders involved in SP.

Although the author's argument is empirical, it is based on a hands-on experience in Lebanon. It reflects on Albrechts' (2018) approach and re-discusses the concept of strategic spatial planning. This is coupled by insights on the legitimacy and sustainability of SP, where the author calls into question whether an additional clear-cut normative approach termed "radical" is the way forward to a transformative agenda.

This paper is concerned with exploring the implementation of strategic spatial planning "*à la Libanaise*". Firstly, it discusses the relationship between SP and the Lebanese planning system and its position in the overall planning landscape. Secondly, it discusses the relationship between SP and the regulatory framework based on the investigation of the interrelated processes between different planning echelons. Finally, the paper concludes with an outline of an agenda for further research, questioning the relevance of adding a new normative grounding layer that the upcoming strategic plan should follow.

Exchanging experiences based on case studies is extremely difficult without understanding the planning system in the country under discussion. In the following section, the author outlines the Lebanese planning system in order to explore the positioning of SP as a planning practice in the system and subsequently to investigate the relationship between SP and the institutional framework.

1. Strategic Planning in Lebanon: a new practice within a fragmented planning system

There Modern Lebanon was established in 1920 under the French mandate (1923-1946) following an Ottoman Era which extended from the early 16th century. During the French era, the planning system witnessed major changes where efforts focused on the establishment of a new administrative framework reinforcing the role of the state (Ghorayeb, 2000). Hence, at the administrative level, one of the main innovations introduced was administrative centralisation (Ghorayeb, 1997). Meanwhile, the spread of modernism, which was introduced in the 1930s, added hygienic, functionalist and aesthetic concerns in the new planning tools. Change was enacted mainly through zoning, land use, infrastructure and transportation projects that focused on economic development.

It was not until the early 1950s, during the Chehabist era[2], that the Ministry of Planning was created (an autonomous administration) following Lebanese independence in 1943 (Verdeil, 2012). This was followed by the creation of the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU) in 1959.

The Ministry of Planning as an institutional organisation was entrusted to prepare a national developmental plan while coordinating major investment projects (large-scale and state-led infrastructure projects). Its power ranged from economic planning and statistics to regional planning. The ministry, unable to fulfill its duties, was terminated in 1977 and was replaced by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR).

The Urban Planning Code promulgated in 1962 defined the prerogatives of the DGU. Its main function is to elaborate master and local plans and provide guidance to the planning projects of the municipalities that lack technical services (Fawaz, 2004). The DGU work falls under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works and the Higher Council of Urban Planning (HCUP), which approves and verifies the implementation of urban plans. The Code has also introduced the concept of a master plan, which is a simple land-use plan specifying the rights of construction and easements at the plot level. DGU is one of the current main actors in the urban planning field endowed with large regulatory powers that fall under the law of urban planning, which was last updated in 1983. It is still effective today (Fawaz, 2004).

The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), replacing the Ministry of Planning in 1977 after the end of the first phase of the civil war[3] (commonly known as the 'two-year' war), was created with a direct link to the Council of Ministers with financial resources. It gained a central role in the post-war period during the reconstruction phase. Its responsibilities cover different functions related to construction and development projects. After its foundation, the CDR was first assigned with the task of developing reconstruction and rehabilitation projects, and it was later assigned with the National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territory (NPMPLT) in 2009. It was the first national plan that aimed to guide regional and local action towards a balanced development of the territory (Verdeil, 2012).

The Lebanese planning system remains centralised and statutory by nature, obeying a top-down hierarchy of planning levels. Traditionally characterised by a strong emphasis on land use and zoning issues, this is still the case today. The institutional planning track initiated by the DGU and the CDR is perceived as not being able to keep up with new cities' dynamics (UNhabitat, 2013). Considered to be the only official actors in urban planning and development in Lebanon, both institutions have faced major challenges in response to today's urbanisation and regional needs. Hence, urban planning in Lebanon has remained almost exclusively limited to its regulatory dimension. Nowadays, urban and rural policies rely on outdated land-use oriented master plans[4] elaborated by the DGU, which are static and plagued with bureaucratic inefficiency (Harb and Atallah, 2015), and on a national master plan (NPMPLT) produced by the CDR, which lacks implementation procedures (UNhabitat, 2013).

At present, the considerable and ever-increasing complexity of the Lebanese urban settings, as far as urban sprawl, forced displacement, public service delivery and efficient frameworks for integrated and sustainable development are concerned, is causing rapid changes at all levels. Moreover, communitarian, political and administrative fragmentation are augmenting territorial complexity. This situation is inviting new actors, new practices and new approaches in dealing with design, territorial planning and service provision issues across cities and villages in Lebanon. Accordingly, a parallel non-institutionalised supplement to formal planning is taking place.

Many examples illustrate the new actors' direct intervention in the planning and development field. In the 1990s, the state entrusted private companies (Solidere, Linor, Elyssar) with the planning and reconstruction of certain areas after the civil war (Clerc, 2002). As for political parties, in 2006, after the war against Israel, the development of Beirut's southern suburbs was conducted by Waed construction company led by Hezbollah (Fawaz, 2009). In 2011, the Syrian crisis fostered the involvement of IOs and humanitarian NGOs in supplementing the services provided by the state to both refugees and host communities. This has contributed positively to the development of many rural and urban areas in Lebanon. In 2015, local NGOs became involved in solid waste management and were able to provide collection and recycling services (GIZ, 2014). All of this showcases the growing role of a broad umbrella of independent actors in supporting the state. Although their initiatives are fragmented, their

contributions aim to face the challenges of insufficient state involvement in the planning and development process.

Both tracks, the institutional and non-institutional, resulted in a landscape of fragmented planning practices that were inscribed in a context of weak state intervention in the development of the territories, especially following the civil war (1975-1990) (Gates, 1998). This was manifested by a policy of laissez-faire where due to the lack of sufficient resources, the state struggled to provide public services and carry out a national planning policy (Leenders, 2004). This context provided a fertile platform for the rise of new territorial planning actors – 'unions of municipalities' – who tried to fill the gap of insufficient state intervention.

In an attempt to deal with heavy challenges at the regulatory, administrative, financial and political level, municipalities joined forces and grouped under a "new" administrative structure called Union of Municipalities (UoM) (Darwich, 2014). Today, more than two thirds of the municipalities are part of unions, reaching 58 unions in 2018 (UNhabitat, 2018). Faced by the deficit of the regulatory planning framework, unions of municipalities[5] felt compelled to produce spatial plans that were able to respond to the current regions' needs (social, economic and environmental etc). Efforts were made to introduce a new planning approach that could break through inflexible bureaucratic and technocratic principles, towards a strategic approach that included participation, transparency and flexibility. Hence, since the beginning of the 20th century, regional and municipal development plans, entailing a strategic approach and urgent responsiveness to the new regions' needs, arose from the "bottom up". This led to the "mushrooming" of strategic plans in many Lebanese regions, followed by an international *recipe* transferred by international organizations to unions through a knowledge transfer process[6] (Darwich, 2018). Since 2008, more than 20 strategic plans have been or are being implemented. However, the legal status of SP remains non-binding.

It is noteworthy to mention that the elaboration of strategic plans in Lebanon was based on the same methodology. In previous research[7] texts, the author presents the various strategic plans elaborated based on a thorough desk review. She shows that all the methodologies adopted to develop strategic planning final reports were almost the same. They were all based on the following step-by-step approach: 1) a diagnosis for the region following a SWOT analysis, 2) a future vision, and 3) concluded by identifying priority projects.

2. Strategic planning and regulatory institutional planning in Lebanon: A contested relationship

Today, the planning landscape in Lebanon is framed by two tracks: the institutional track that comprises the regulatory planning framework (DGU local detailed master plans and the CDR NPMPLT) and the non-institutional track that constitutes a large number of actors implementing ad-hoc projects that are linked to various issues, in particular, human rights, environmental issues and local development. Both tracks are in tension and trapped by regulatory tools that are faced by the non-binding strategic planning trying to find its place in the fragmented planning system. Despite that, SP is prepared from outside the statutory land-use planning system, that is determined by the national planning laws. Therein lies the paradox of strategic spatial planning: How does it relate to the existing statutory planning instruments that manifest non-strategic features yet cannot be ignored in strategic spatial planning? In other words, is the new strategic planning a parallel planning track to the traditional system? Or is it, on the other hand, a strategy that cross-cuts regulatory planning while mitigating the state's shortcomings? (Figure 1)

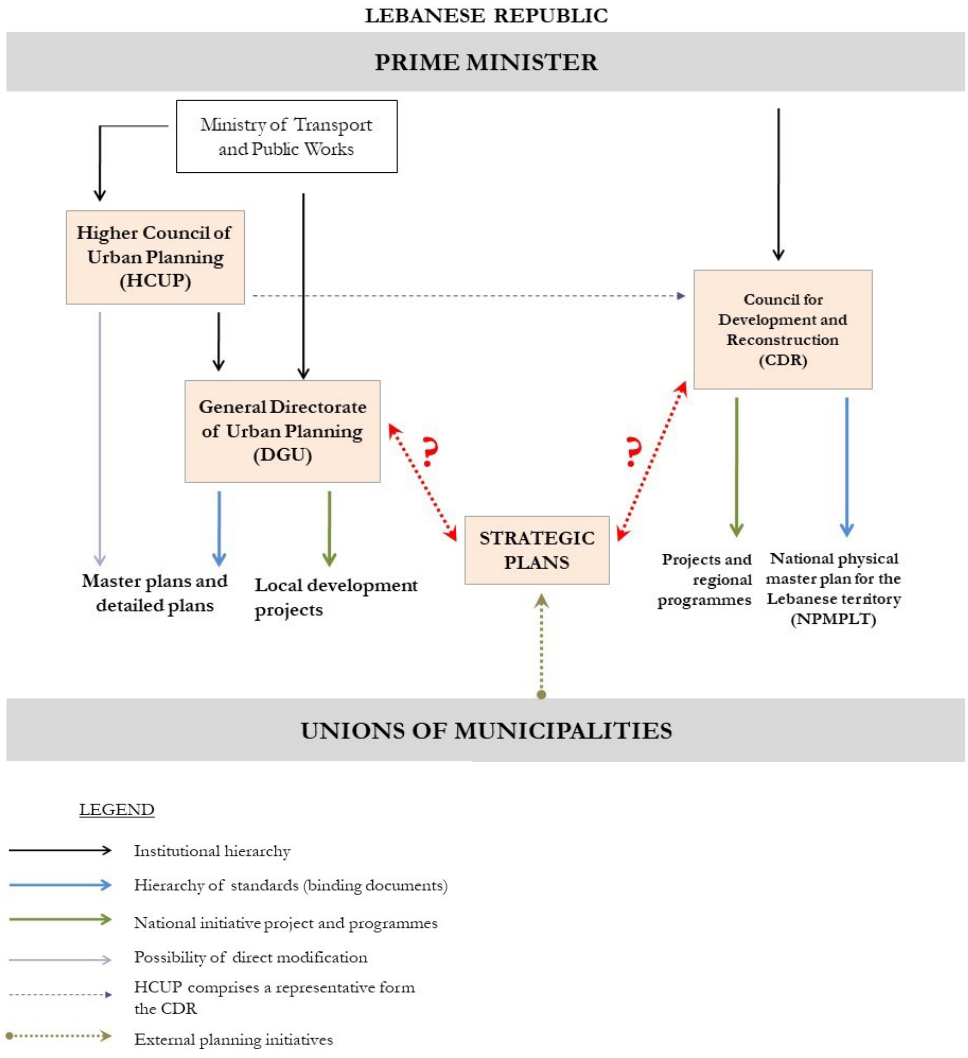

Figure 1: The Lebanese planning system. Source: Author's research (Darwich, 2018)

According to the literature, strategic spatial planning has introduced a different approach to urban planning. Alongside its usage in formal and traditional planning tools, many scholars have investigated the relation between both tracks – especially since each deals with a different perspective (Salet et al., 2003; Adams et al., 2006; Albrechts et al., 2003; Albrechts and Balducci, 2013; Mantysalo, 2013; Mantysalo et al., 2015; Allin and Walsh, 2010). While statutory regulatory planning tools of comprehensive and detailed development master plans deal with certainty, formal rigidity, zoning, land property and fixing legal rights (Mantysalo et al., 2015), strategic planning is being sought to deal with uncertainty, informal flexibility and a myriad of challenges faced by our cities (climate change, globalisation, competitive markets, diversity of actors, resources management, sustainability etc). Strategic planning tends to take a broader scope than statutory land-use plans where, according to Albrechts, SP is considered as the ultimate solution: "At some point in time strategic planning became the new hope of the community of (mainly academic) planners in Europe and beyond to overcome the shortcomings of statutory planning at local and regional tiers of planning and decision making" (Albrechts, 2015, p. 511).

The strategic perspective in planning, urban or regional, is regarded as additional and complementary to traditional planning, while land-use plans continue to play a significant role at the local level. Nevertheless, vertical coordination between both approaches is the key element for ensuring coherent spatial development (Mantysalo et al., 2015).

In this section, the author investigates the relationship between the emerging domain of strategic spatial planning, the traditional land-use regulations produced by the DGU, and the national master plan NPMPLT of the CDR as a site of contestation and tension. While the national master plan takes the form of indicative and guideline planning, local detailed master plans continue to take place at the local scale. This occurs alongside strategic plans that play a significant role in attempting to fill the gap created by the national master plan, which lacks implementation procedures, and the outdated plans of the local DGU.

Based on Figure 1, the following diagram (Figure 2) illustrates the three analytical inter-relations that are addressed by the author. The figure shows the vertical and horizontal coordination across the scales alongside the types of plan-making. This highlights the contested relationship between the different planning practices.

SP in Lebanon has been implemented for the last 16 years without any attempt by the involved national or local stakeholders to revise it – until recently, when a national conference was held to re-question the efficiency of the on-going practice. Other than that, no studies to date have investigated this issue. Hence, the author relies on the results of the national conference to provide the foundation of the discussion. The conference reflected on the evaluation of strategic planning implementation in Lebanon spanning the last 16 years from various stakeholders' points of view. The results are complemented by the author's observations and 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews held with numerous stakeholders involved in SP.

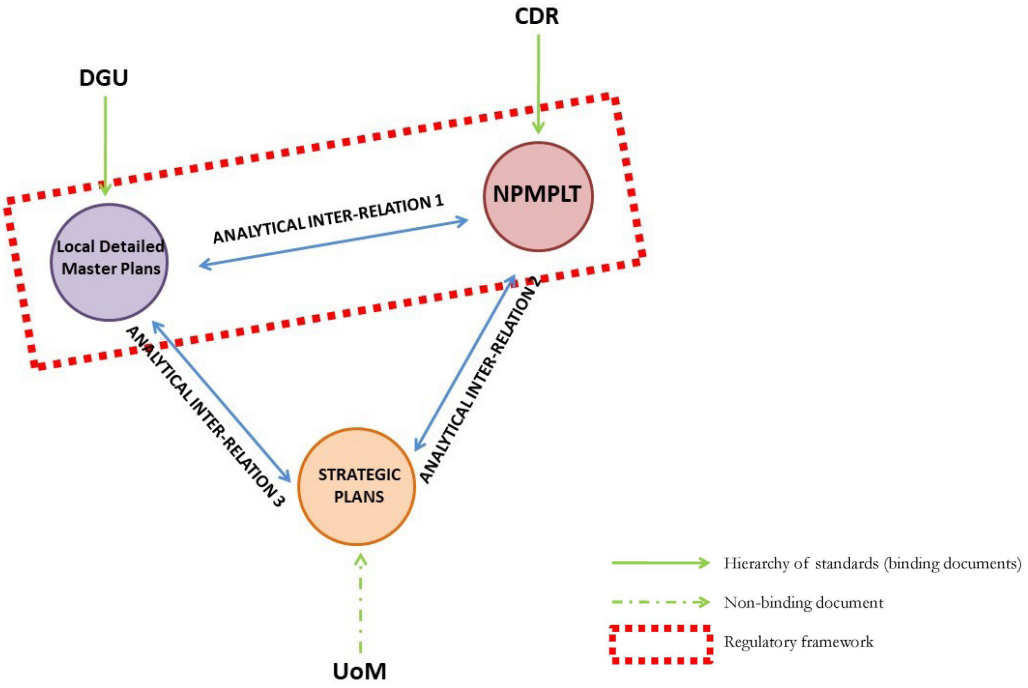

Figure 2: Existing planning tools in Lebanon. Source: Author's research.

2.1 Analytical inter-relation 1: The regulatory framework in tension: NPMPLT and DGU tools

It is difficult to establish Before investigating the relationship between the regulatory framework and SP, it is important to shed light on the challenges of the regulatory framework and highlight the limitations and shortcomings of the regulatory tools.

On one hand, the national document has many restrictions and deficiencies. NPMPLT is a comprehensive land-use plan for the entire Lebanese territory. It serves as a reference for municipal and ministerial actions. It was prepared in 2004 but approved in 2009. According to Telvizian[8], the plan provides general guidelines but lacks implementation procedures on different echelons (Expert interview, 2017). This is consistent with many practitioners' point of view of the national document. According to Yazigi[9], the document is considered obsolete since many developments (demographic, political and economic) have taken place since first being published in 2009 that render several of the orientations of this document as irrelevant (Expert interview, 2017).

On the other hand, the DGU local detailed master plans are also considered outdated: "Certain detailed plans date back to forty years, and are still enforceable and legally binding, ignoring totally the deep transformations occurred in due course" (UNhabitat, 2013). Irrespective of this, the DGU has a very rigid administrative structure that hinders effective performance: "[T]he process is long, tedious, and extremely bureaucratic, and it adapts to a planning approach that has become quite obsolete" (Harb and Atallah, 2015, p. 198).

The principle of hierarchy between both planning levels has brought institutional ambiguity. At the level of the local detailed master plans conducted by the DGU, Saliba, head of the Department of Private Land Consolidation and Subdivision at the DGU, acknowledges the outdated status of the plans and explains the synergy gap between the upper planning echelon NPMPLT and the DGU local detailed master plans. He affirms that NPMPLT is the first overarching level of planning to be considered fully comprehensive despite all the comments about it. It covers the entire Lebanese territory and gives the general direction for all sectors. However, Saliba believes that the conformity between the two planning echelons, the national NPMPLT and the local detailed master plans, as stated by the law, has not always been fulfilled:

> *'According to article 4 of the urban planning law of 1983, elaborating local detailed master plans for cities and villages was to be done according to the comprehensive plan of NPMPLT, mainly for land uses. Considering that NPMPLT was not implemented until 2009, the reality is that the work of DGU was being done prior to that date and outside the course of this plan. Practically, many elaborated plans were implemented in a way which didn't allow us to frame them later on in the context of the comprehensive plan. (Saliba, conference 2018)*

Hence, the planning institutional setup in Lebanon, under the jurisdiction of two state institutions, is compounded by serious constraints. However, formal planning is coupled with informal planning tools in which both are in use and coexist and overlap in varying geographical ranges and scales. Local authorities instigating strategic planning have made the situation even more complicated, thus blurring the vertical coherence and relationship. This was clearly expressed by Saliba when he was asked about the positioning of SP in the planning system:

> *I can't acquaint on what level I should place it [strategic plans]. Is it on the level of the national master plan that has more guiding roles and should frame SP? Or on the level of the local detailed master plans which are usually more on-ground and that apprehend thoroughly the local realities and needs of the communities into consideration? I am not sure. (Saliba, conference 2018)*

This discussion has brought scalar effect in terms of institutional arrangements expanding to the legal structure. Saliba questions the implementation of SP in a non-binding way. He believes that there is an issue in situations like this. He states that,

> *In the presence of the legal context, there are several problems. Some of them are standing in between the role of the DGU and the tools it is using. These tools are dictated by the 1983 urban planning law, and strategic planning which has now become more generalised on all Lebanese lands via either municipalities or municipal unions. However, it remains informal and non-binding. (Saliba, conference 2018)*

Hence, the institutional ambiguity of the Lebanese urban planning system has been intensified in the midst of implementing a new approach via strategic planning which does not have a clear status in relation to local and regional governments. National institution representatives and experts have reaffirmed the limitations of the regulatory framework in place. They have acknowledged regulatory planning as the starting point of urban planning in Lebanon. Nevertheless, they believe that many of its policies are outdated and are rendering the process irrelevant. Saliba confirms this, and uses it to explain the discrepancy between the regulatory framework and SP:

> *The problem is that the current urban planning law which tackles the issue of organising land uses is 35 years old. It dates back to 1983, which is a gap in time enough to make this law un-subtended with today's needs and to have a scope that caters to these strategic plans. (Saliba, conference 2018)*

Therefore, the Lebanese planning system shows a tradition of reliance on regulatory planning that is now being challenged by a more strategic approach perceived as a more effective way to respond to cities' growing needs. Alongside the non-binding SP, two binding plans (NPMPLT, local detailed master plans)[10] are firmly defined in form, content and process by the Lebanese planning legislation, making the regulatory issues central to plan-making. While these instruments regulate the land use and give general orientation to zoning, strategic planning gives more attention to the future vision of a certain area while trying to provide solutions to the major challenges faced by our regions and urban areas. It is therefore questionable whether both planning tracks are parallel, or if they cross cut at some point. This is at the heart of the following analysis. Based on the first relationship, in the following, the author investigates the link between SP and each tool of the regulatory framework (NPMPLT and DGU local detailed master plans).

2.2 Analytical inter-relation 2 - SP and NPMPLT

Discussing NPMPLT in respect to SP has brought divergence in the way different stakeholders call a plan "strategic" before delving into the relationship between both. According to Chahrour, the Director of Planning and Programming at the CDR, NPMPLT fulfills all the requirements of a strategic plan. He states that,

> *The comprehensive plan NPMPLT has all the qualifications of strategic planning: first, it is long-lasting since it is a 25-30-year plan. Second, it is comprehensive. Third,*

> *it is of a national characteristic. Fourth, it can be evaluated. Fifth, its successes can be measured within 2 or 3 years. The characteristics of strategic planning are all combined in it. (Chahrour, conference 2018)*

However, according to experts, NPMPLT is seen as an additional zoning document applied on a higher echelon that lacks strategic vision and assessment. Yazigi states that, "Although NPMPLT represents today a reference document with a long-term vision of the Lebanese territorial development, however, in practice it is still a land-use plan" (Expert interview, 2017). Moussawi[11] confirms this and reflects on the inability of strategic plans to fulfil their role, whereby with the absence of a national strategy, SPs cannot be framed under a developmental umbrella. He believes that after 14 years since the elaboration of strategic plans, and having reached the majority of municipal unions all over the country, one must rethink whether scattered strategic plans can be considered pieces of the same development puzzle in the absence of the full picture:

> *With the forfeit of a national strategy, there's no development. Strategic planning on a national holistic level does not exist. They talked about a national strategy called NPMPLT, but it is a plan to organise Lebanese lands. In any case, many strategic plans that I have worked on took place before 2009 [the date it was published] and it did not take its directives into account (Moussawi, conference 2018).*

Muhieddine[12] shares the opinion of Moussawi and confirms the absence of a strategic national document. However, he believes that strategic plans within a non-coherent developmental framework still play a significant role in solving regions' needs despite being ad-hoc documents. He states that,

> *There's no strategy to direct any local or regional strategic plan. It is missing. And for this reason, regional strategic planning is a planning which is limited to solving some local problems that local authorities and communities suffer from. As to the national strategy, it is not a strategic plan but rather a mere strategy for organising lands. (Muhieddine, conference 2018).*

Synthesising the different stakeholder's points of view shows that there is no single perception of what is "strategic" or what has a direct impact on how SP relates to other tools. The concept is considered to be ambiguous and fuzzy. There is a deep chasm between the positive judgment of national stakeholders regarding the "strategic" qualities of NPMPLT – at least theoretically – and the practitioners' stance that contradicts the national argument. Hence, it seems that there is still much inexperience and lack of awareness among stakeholders on what is the scope, aim and norms of a "strategic" plan, and consequently how to manage the scope of each planning tool and reconcile the entire institutional setup with SP at its heart. In a context where SPs are taking place in an organic way without any prior normative grounding, support in a legal context or clear-cut national guidelines, the capacity that SP has, in this case, to influence spatial policies of local detailed master plans, appears to be very modest. The following section provides a full analysis in this regard.

2.3 Analytical inter-relation 3- SP and DGU local detailed master plans

When investigating the relationship between SP and DGU local detailed master plans, there is a very clear distinction between the scopes of both, which is not the case in regard to NPMPLT. According to Saliba, strategic plans have a vital role in dealing with burdensome and time-consuming statutory planning processes. He states that, "SPs are providing the dynamic aspect of planning with the rigid framework in hand. The strategic plan sometimes

is an attempt at compensating for the lack of dynamism" (Saliba conference, 2018). However, Saliba acknowledges the difficulty for the DGU to adopt the SP tool because of the DGU's administrative burdens on top of the outdated law at hand. According to Saliba, this is mainly related to the lack in human resources on the level of expertise. For example, according to Saliba, the General Directorate of Urban Planning has no expertise related to economics or sociology, the fields which make up the basic thinking process of a strategic plan. On top of this, he believes that the financial resources allocated to the DGU are very limited and this is what hinders the performance of the directorate (Saliba conference, 2018). According to Harb and Atallah (2015), the DGU, being poorly staffed, is not able to perform effectively, which is why the DGU outsources some of its service to urban planners and urban planning firms, requiring them to propose master plans for selected cities and towns. According to Verdeil (2007), this is also the reason why a large percentage of Lebanese territory has not been covered by cadastral mapping.

From the experts' perspective, SP has grown outside the regulatory planning framework. According to Osmat[13] and Moussawi, many strategic plans were previously totally detached from the statutory framework (Expert interview, 2017). Osmat refers to the EU's ARLA programme (implemented in 2002) to illustrate that in the past, there has been no link between many elaborated SPs and local detailed master plans. Osmat led a local team of Lebanese experts, who were assigned to support local authorities in order to enhance regional development throughout the preparation of SPs. All sectors were taken into account whether they were social, economic, environmental, political, etc. However, the issue of planning through investigating land use and zoning was not taken into consideration:

> *We thought it would make the process more complicated. The first step was to conduct a SWOT analysis of the region in hand which we could use to build on in order to decide the main area of intervention. The second step was action oriented where we pinpointed the main projects to be executed. (Expert interview, 2017).*

These SPs also did not take into account the NPMPLT guidelines, since by that time (in 2002) the national plan had not yet been published.

Muhieddine has a different point of view regarding the establishment of SP outside the regulatory framework; he believes that both tracks should be complementary to ensure a sustainable SP. He states that,

> *I consider that SP that covers all regions' aspects and sectors should be complementary to land use and zoning, because it's a problem if I have a vision that is not translated to urban planning, and if I start organising land use directly without a social and economic vision, then it's a problem as well. For this reason, we stand in front of two approaches and we are not finding the link between them. (Expert interview, 2017).*

When asked about the reason behind the various approaches to SP elaboration and implementation, Muhieddine explains by discussing the wider understanding of expertise and its role in elaborating SP where countries differ on the meaning of professional expertise and the role of planners. Muhieddine believes that in Lebanon two approaches exist: The first is more focused on urban planning as taught by the Department of Urbanism in the Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture and that is related to land-use spatial planning. The second is more socio-economic, where social and economic experts are part of the think tank. Muhieddine states that,

> *When I come to the department of urban planning in the Faculty of Fine Arts, I am looking at an approach highly marked by the organisation of lands. Whereas when it comes to the role of the social expert, or the sociology expert, they have their role, but it does not reach a level where it is merged with urban planning. The way I see it is that it should be a combination of both approaches which is not happening in many cases. (Muhieddine conference, 2018).*

This section has provided a thorough investigation of the relation between SP and the regulatory framework. It has shown SP as a parallel track to the statutory one while highlighting the loopholes of the regulatory framework itself. Based on the various points of view, a significant divergence was identified between the national representatives and the experts'/ practitioners' perception of SP. While Chahrour (CDR) considers NPMPLT to be a strategic national plan, none of the experts, including Saliba (DGU), confirms that. This is indicative of the tension between both national institutions entrusted to provide planning guidelines. This might be attributed to the flexibility that the CDR enjoys while reporting directly to the Prime Minister, bypassing all the ministries to avoid bureaucratic delays. The institutional administrative framework of the DGU is considered to be obsolete, static and plagued with bureaucratic inefficiency. At the level of experts, many points of view based on different practices are present which is indicative of the ambiguous scope, content and aim of SP applied in Lebanon.

The investigation of the link between SP and the regulatory framework unveiled the following: 1) the complexity of the Lebanese planning system; 2) the fragmented practices; 3) the embedded tension between different planning actors; and 4) the discrepancy with the existing planning tools, reaching the point where one might question their worth after the litmus test of practice. This puts into question the perception of researchers and scholars that perceive SP as a panacea and a cure for all the prevailing ills.

3. Paving the way forward: Strategic spatial planning, a catalyst for change in Lebanon?

All the preceding falls in line with the international evolution of planning practices: cities are indeed facing new challenges and are confronted by the limitations of traditional planning practices. Lebanon is no exception to this rule. Planning system types have evolved differently in many countries depending on a country's legal system and institutional framework. However, despite the disparities, strategic planning remains at the forefront of controversial planning debates and is assumed to be a panacea. This discussion was fuelled not only by the retreat of traditional planning practices that were considered no longer relevant, but also by SP's large capacity to cope with societal developments, problems and challenges. Albrechts believes in the power of SP. In his article (2018) he proposes a clear-cut normative approach termed "radical" and suggests it is the way forward to a transformative agenda. It is based on a four-track approach[14], and more importantly it calls for SP to enable change based on a set of values and notions that include legitimacy, co-productiveness and democracy. In a more recent article, Albrechts continues his argument following the same normative spirit, along with other researchers (Albrechts et al., 2019) who sketch the contour of what they call "a more imaginative and inclusive" (Albrechts et al., 2019, p.1) strategic spatial planning approach that revolves around three similar yet core issues: imagination to broaden the scope of the possible, social justice, and legitimacy that can be guaranteed through co-production. Although to a certain extent they have remodelled the same ingredients of the "radical" approach in a new normative mould described as "imaginative and inclusive", they still believe in the capacity of SP as a catalyst for change. So, is this the case in Lebanon?

Today, Lebanon is compliant to the international trend and is adopting more strategic approaches, frameworks and perspectives for cities and regions. However, SP implementation has not resulted from the evolution of its institutional planning system. Rather, the latter stopped evolving at a point in time[15] and SP was "planted[16]" in 2002 by IOs[17] (Darwich, 2018). This explains the un-readiness of the institutional setup to integrate SP and the ambiguity around its scope and implementation. Thus, SP cannot be investigated without looking at the local specificities and the embedded institutional and political frameworks. It is deeply tied to and dependent on the country's context.

Secondly, national and local planning has been traditionally very statutory with little room for strategic flexibility in the regulatory system. Although it was recognised that SP should complement the statutory planning system, this has so far not always been the case. There is an absence of conformity and complementarity between the different planning echelons – primarily the national master plans, and secondly across the local detailed master plans. Strategic plans have been introduced to fill the gap between the overly generic national master plan NPMPLT and the zoning land use that was introduced as a project-based approach accompanied by a vision. Labelled as non-binding, at the intermediate level between them, SP aims to improve the coordination of different development projects, while avoiding the legal burdens and administrative bureaucracy and rigidity of statutory master plans.

Thirdly, an important aspect of SP development in Lebanon is that it is non-binding. In addition, it has been investigated from outside the statutory land-use planning system. Mantysalo (2015, p.350) refers to this as "informality", which ideally means the detachment of SP from the statutory track. He links it to the question of legitimacy. According to Mantysalo et al. (2015, p. 315) ensuring a strong linkage between statutory and strategic planning safeguards the entire planning system. He states that, "Strategic capacity must somehow be (re-) incorporated into the statutory planning system, in order to safeguard the legitimacy of strategic planning, and, in fact, the legitimacy of the whole planning system itself." By labelling strategic plans as binding, are we we providing the same rigid framework that characterises the statutory plan? Would this not affect the flexible, more-open, dynamic framework of SP? And if the situation remained as is, would we end up trapped between what Mantysalo (2013, p. 51) refers to as “the impossible choice” between a legitimate rigidity of statutory planning and an illegitimate flexibility of strategic planning?

In line with Mantysalo (2013), Albrechts in his view of a more radical SP argues that it "is not meant as a substitute but as a complement for other planning tools” (statutory planning) (Albrechts, 2015, p. 520). In this context, Albrechts puts forth the issue of democracy, co-productiveness and citizen effective participation as central elements in SP to also ensure its legitimacy. He states that,

> *The results of strategic spatial planning processes cannot be judged solely by the implementation of a plan or strategy. Broadening the scope of possible futures and giving voice to certain groups must be considered as important and valuable outcomes of a strategic planning process. Strategic planning gets its legitimacy through a combination of its performance as a creative and innovative force, its potential to deliver positive outcomes, and a formal acceptance by the relevant government level. (Albrechts, 2015, p. 519)*

Linking this to the Lebanese context, the issue of legitimacy is not only questionable in terms of ‘informality’, but the issue of co-productiveness, explored through citizen participation that guarantees representative democracy, is also at stake.

In Lebanon, individuals are restricted to vote in the districts of their official town of origin not where they reside[18]. Hence, people who vote during municipal elections in a certain area are not always those living in it. Relating this to strategic plans, according to Chahrour, one of the fundamental problems facing a strategic plan is its lack of representative democracy. He states that,

> *There is a fundamental problem in local development which is democracy. In Lebanon, the municipality does not represent the people living in the area. If you take any municipality, especially urban ones, the people who vote for the municipal council are not concerned with its services and plans. They make up 10%. This is the first problem in which if it isn't solved, local planning will become futile. The people who want to vote for a municipal council and hold it accountable have to reside in that area. This is an essential structural problem in Lebanon. In most areas now, the municipality represents the people who spend the weekend in it and those who own lands. For the municipality, it is not about the people who live in the area, but real estate investors who have power in the area. (Chahrour, conference 2018)*

Based on the aforementioned, three points and the investigation of SP as a new planning practice, the author has illustrated "strategic planning à la Libanaise" and reflected on its capacity to guide traditional regulatory planning. Although sketching a holistic picture of SP practice is not straightforward, what is presented here is an analysis of its major stakes that have helped model the Lebanese SP episode. This is achieved from the point of view of planning practices and development processes that have evolved over the last decades. Ideally, this will shape a clear understanding of SP in practice that feeds into the theoretical and practical framework.

It can be safely said that Lebanon, as a developing country, appears to be among territories that have enthusiastically embraced SP as a potential planning tool. As elsewhere, the newfound enthusiasm for SP appears to be driven by many factors, among which some might be similar while others differ from the international trend. Just like Europe, the US, the UK and many other countries (see Albrechts et al., 2016), the spatial planning system in Lebanon is witnessing a shift. It was, for a long time, focused on physical land-use issues, not far from the international blueprint approach. However, a decade ago, SP was integrated into the planning system and became a de-facto planning device that is being currently used by regional and local authorities.

In Lebanon, the new processes of strategic planning did not succeed in drawing up spatial rationales which coordinate urban visionary development and land-use planning. The driving forces behind these processes were, and still are, imported through IOs to Lebanese local authorities, accompanied by increased concerns about regional spatial problems such as environmental climate change, increased socio-economic challenges and urban sprawl. As a response to these challenges, processes of strategic planning are increasingly being customised and sometimes remodelled to fit the specific context of the country. This also involves drawing up not only new scales of planning but also new forms of governance.

The case of Lebanese presented here has also fuelled the discussion on one of the main challenges facing the informal aspect of SP – its confrontation with the institutional planning framework at a time when SP struggles to meet an equivalent legitimacy. SP is acknowledged nowadays as a highly important tool in many countries and is considered as a potential solution to cope with major challenges concerning the society and the environment. However, strategic planning processes in Lebanon (among other countries) are neither statutory processes nor binding ones, which raises questions about the legitimacy and sustainability of such processes.

After almost two decades of SP in Lebanon, the Lebanese planning system and political institutional setup has shown its inability to absorb SP as a new planning approach. Although national institutions entrusted to manage the spatial realm acknowledge the limitations of the prevailing planning tools, there is in parallel an absence of radical and drastic planning reform to date. This relates to Albrechts' (2015, p.512) argument that strategic planning needs a specific political and institutional context and is sensitive to specific intellectual traditions. Hence, he contends that SP implementation requires a climate that is conducive to new ideas in planning systems and governance structures. Does Lebanon fit this criteria? This also links to a number of investigations (e.g., Albrechts et al., 2016) on whether SP's capacity to deliver the desired outcomes is dependent on the local specificities of each context (legal, political, societal, cultural, and professional attitudes towards spatial planning).

Following this rationale, one might question the extent to which strategic planning impacts, or success pillars, are dependent on the adopted methodology, be it based on three tracks (Van den Broeck, 1987), four tracks (Albrechts, 2004, 2010, 2018) or even five. Whether it is called 'radical' (Albrechts, 2018), 'imaginative' or 'inclusive' (Albrechts et al., 2019), what difference would it make when it comes to the potential success of SP?

For SP to be able to produce actual and effective changes, maybe it would be more convenient to set a clear-cut approach that provides a common ground and manages expectations of what is meant by SP values and notions (democracy, social justice, representativity, co-production, participation, etc.) in different contexts rather than delving into a methodological and normative discussion on the making of strategic plans. Are those (values and notions) not the main pillars that SP should be built upon and strive to achieve?

At the end of the day, the fundamental question might not only be related to the step-by-step approach needed to strategise the future of a territory, but also to the values that lie underneath. This is so because the effectiveness of strategic planning should be measured by the extent to which it is a catalyst for change towards "more just and fair communities" (Albrechts et al., 2019, p.13), irrespective of the adopted method. Based on the latter, one can answer the ongoing debatable questions: Is the SP model of planning useful? Is it worth sustaining? If yes, what are its success pillars? Can it be "operationalized in a four-track approach process" (Albrechts, 2018, p.6) as elucidated by Albrechts?

Going back to the Lebanese case in particular, strategic spatial planning is still an ongoing practice taking part in a hybrid planning setup where both the statutory and strategic are game players. However, based on the first evaluation of strategic planning, it might be more suitable to investigate the most relevant way of contextualising strategic planning as an international model in the Lebanese context, rather than mimicking its methodological application with no localisation and adaption endeavours. This is actually the case because strategic spatial planning is not a make-or-break situation; rather, it is rather a process conditioned by a specific context.

The discussion on SP in Lebanon has opened the door to a myriad of questions that need to be addressed and require further investigation: How should the institutional planning system be adapted? What does it take to transform the agenda à la Libanaise? And meanwhile, how can the tension between land-use planning and strategic planning be solved? Maybe then, concrete conclusions can be drawn or suggestions made for the new wave of strategic plans taking place. Accordingly, one could answer the "million dollar" question: what is the future for strategic planning?

Notes

1.On 30 June, 2018 and under the patronage of the Lebanese University (Urban Planning Department), the author organised the first national conference to evaluate strategic spatial planning in Lebanon, an ongoing practice since 2002. The conference presented 19 speakers who are the relevant stakeholders in strategic planning (strategic planning experts, national planning institution representatives, municipal mayors, IO representatives, academics and practitioners).

2.The 'Chehabist era' is considered as a key period for urban planning in Lebanon, where the legal and regulatory emergence of urban planning dates to the presidency of Fouad Chehab, the Lebanese nation's moderniser (Verdeil, 2010). Assisted by French experts in urban planning, Chehab undertook institutional reforms that framed the field of urban planning based on several expert proposals (Favier, 2004; Ghorayeb, 2000).

3.15 years of civil war (1975-1990)

4.DGU local detailed master plans are legally binding for citizens. There are no binding laws to update these plans after a certain period. In other words, there is no allocated time frame for these plans, some dating back 40 years, and they are still enforceable and legally binding (UNhabitat, 2013)

5.According to the Municipal Act (No. 118 of 30 June 1977), a municipal union is formed of several municipalities. It can be established or dissolved by courtesy of a government's decree through the Minister of the Interior and Municipalities or upon the request of member municipalities. The union is a financially autonomous legal personality that manages its own finances and budget. However, it is not administratively autonomous, since the union council is not directly elected by the people, but rather composed of delegates of member municipalities (UNhabitat, 2018).

6.In previous research, the author examines the genesis of SP in Lebanon. The study found that SP was transferred to unions by IOs through development and humanitarian aid programmes. Accelerated by the Syrian crisis and the substantial number of refugees settling in many regions, IOs empowered and supported local authorities in managing their regional challenges while investing in SP (Darwich, 2018).

7.Darwich, 2018.

8.Dr. Leon Telvizian is an architect, urban planner and one of the experts who has worked on many strategic plans in different regions.

9.Dr. Serge Yazigi, architect, urban planner and one of the experts who has worked on many strategic plans in different regions. Yazigi was also the head of the team of experts that further developed the strategic plan for the Akkar region in 2014.

10.While local detailed master plans are binding for citizens, NPMPLT is binding for line ministries and public administrations.

11.Dr.Ali Moussawi is a socioeconomic development researcher and expert in local strategic planning.

12.Dr. Abdallah Muhheiddine is a sociology researcher and was previously the manager of Mount Lebanon Area in UNDP. He closely supervised the elaboration of the Dinniyeh region strategic plan.

13.Dr. Bachir Osmat is a senior socio-economic development expert and previously the team leader of the local experts in an EU funded programme called ARLA (implemented in 2002).

14. 1) vision, 2) short- and long-term actions, 3) key stakeholders' involvement and 4) broader public participation.

15.The early 1990s, especially after 15 years of civil war (1975-1990). This is indicative of the current use of the 1983 urban planning law.

16.In his article, Albrechts (2018) uses this term to explain how SP can be extracted from a certain context and transferred to another with no adaptation to the context: "Strategic planning practices cannot simply be extracted from the context where they emerged, uprooted and 'planted' somewhere else" (Albrechts, 2018).

17. SP was mainly influenced by the agenda/recipe provided by IOs. Hence, the tradition that influenced SP in Lebanon is European – Italian cooperation, UNhabitat, UNDP, EU, AFD, etc. (Darwich, 2018).

18.For example, while a large proportion of Lebanon's population currently resides in Beirut, only a small percentage of them are registered to vote and run for elected office. This system of population and voter registration is a direct outcome of French colonial and early post-independence policies (Abou Rish, 2015).

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Would Egypt Revert to its Municipal Management Setup with Inclusive Jurisdictions over Desert Land?

On the Institutional History of the Fall of Municipalities and the Rise of Authorities

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Abstract

Over the last decade, Egypt has dedicated immense resources to swiftly maneuver the upsurge in public outrage and its destabilizing pressure for change. However, the state's relentless and determined efforts are yet to address its urban management and governance setup that continues, as a molding structure, to paralyze the inclusive production of urban growth and development. The chief aim of this article is to enrich the knowledge associated with Egypt's de-evolution from its decentralized municipal management setup (1889-1960) into a sectoral and authoritarian setup with significant adverse impacts on the strategic spatial planning of its built environment. The method applied in this relies on data mining and a systematic literature review to investigate the evolution of urban management legislation during modern Egyptian history along with examining the associated production of urban growth. The research contributes explicit evidence that the municipal urban management setup (1889-1960), which was altered and significantly overturned by various legislations enacted in 1954, 1960, 1979, and 1981, was outstandingly more efficient in stimulating integrated and coordinated development across the Nile Valley and its desert fringes. The present sectoral and authoritarian setup will continue to have significant adverse impacts on the production and maintenance of Egypt's built environment. For initiating good governance and smart growth, the research strongly advocates for systematic institutional reform towards decentralization through reverting to Egypt's municipal setup and its extended spatial jurisdictions.

Keywords

municipal management, strategic spatial planning, smart growth, good governance.

1. Introduction

With nearly 25 percent of the Arab world's population, Egypt has a central and prominent role in accelerating mutual development and consolidating the stability of the region. Misguided urban growth and development policies can have severe consequences with reverberating impacts on a broad regional scale. Two recent official statistics for Egypt signal an alarming set of threats to the sustainability and resilience of Egyptian society. First, there has been a dearth of population numbers decongested from the Nile Valley into the newly established New Urban Communities (NUCs) (Figure 1). Regrettably, since its early initiation in 1977, and under the jurisdictions of the New Urban Communities Program (NUCP) in 1979, the amount of population decongested from the Nile Valley into desert areas was less than two percent of the Egyptian population in 2017 (1,585,046 out of 94,798,827 inhabitants) (CAPMAS, 2017a). Such a meager outcome is a result of four decades of continuous NUCP development, despite the colossal sum of financial resources invested through the government and the private sector.

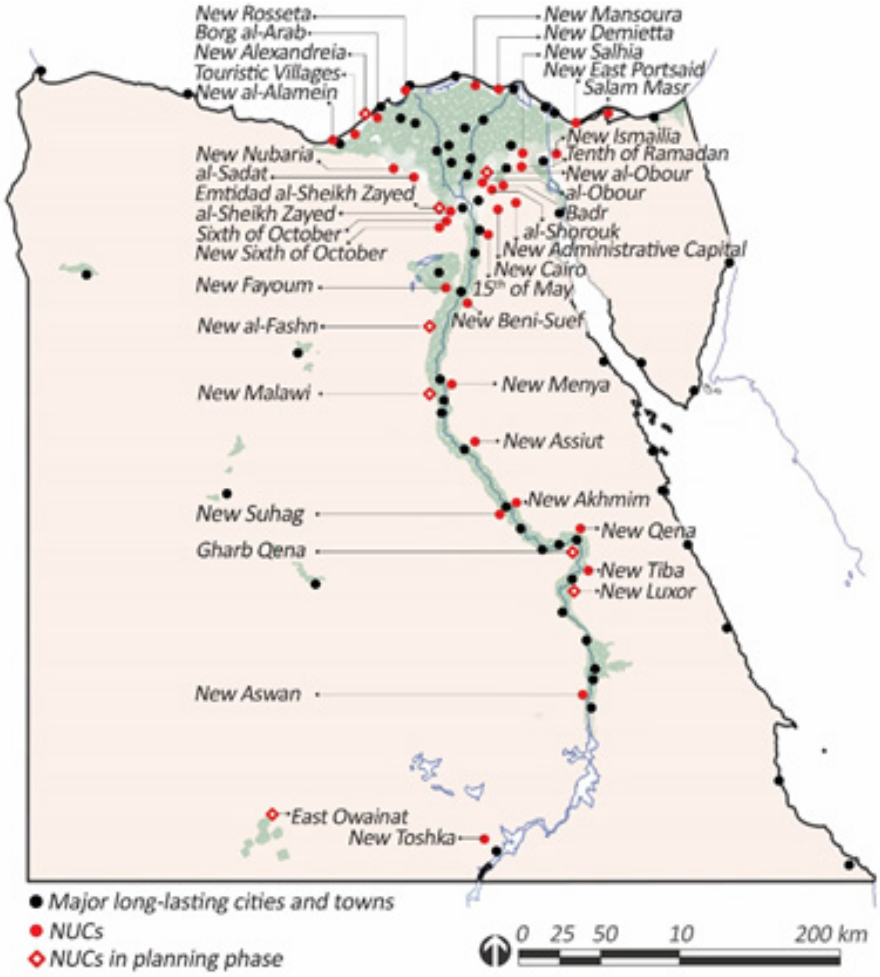

Figure 1: Egypt's New Urban Communities (NUCs) in relation to major long-lasting cities and towns. Source: Researcher.

The second threat to be addressed is manifested in the massive scale of urban expansion over agricultural land, which is one of the major threats the NUCP was geared to countermeasure. Between 1983 and 2016, Egypt lost more than 403,900 acres and recorded a decline in the arable land per capita of less than 0.1 acres in 2015 (EEAA, 2016, p. 150). Both indicators demonstrate a sizable threat that confronts present and future nourishment rates and agro-industrial production (EEAA, 2016, pp. 148-150).

Egypt is dedicating much effort and resources to counter the challenges posed by the forgoing threats and also by many others that include, but are not limited to, urban and suburban sprawl (Gouda, Hosseini, and Masoumi, 2016, p. 13), informal growth (Khalifa, 2011, pp. 43-47), impacts of climate change (Banhardt & Hartenstein, 2016, pp. 157-158), and water scarcity (El Bedawy, 2014, p. 108). However, less attention is allocated to dealing with the underlying institutional structure of the long-standing policy, legislation, and administrative setup that has been in placation mode for decades. It is a mode that has failed to deliver grassroots reforms to pacify the civil society (Khirfan, 2017, p.21). Within the urban development field, the majority of threats mentioned above are highly associated with the persistent and long-term mobilization of a weak institutional setup, lack of an agreed strategic vision and appropriate steering structures, and problem identification mechanisms (Elsisy et al. 2019, p. 155). Also, there is a long-term absence of participatory management (Ibrahim and Singerman, 2014, p.101). A swift and comprehensive reform is argued to be a crucial aspect of transformation and for forestalling further unrest and crises (Ikram, 2018, p. 31). The research in hand advocates for a reform that is stimulated by earlier institutional structures for urban management that were successfully adopted within the Egyptian context. A reform is necessary that will accelerate the realization of *Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy for 2030*, geared towards achieving social justice and inclusion, and the establishment of transparent and efficient government institutions (MMAR, 2016, pp. 125-320).

1.1 Good Governance and the Role of Municipal Institutions

There Within the interacting nexus of the state, market, and civil society, good governance has a central role in fabricating social order (Khirfan, 2017, p. 10). It is the participation and democratization of the local civil society in all areas of decision-making that determines the quality of governance systems (Allen, 2009, para. 18). Efforts that eclipse societal guidance in planning and require urban planners to create "superior" plans will most likely fail, unless they are properly communicated to those who have the power to decide, the people themselves (Friedmann, 1969, p. 311). Broad, multi-level governance and diverse participatory involvement during the planning process are advocated in strategic spatial planning in order to influence and manage spatial change in a culture of transparency and participation (Healey, 2007, pp. 212-282). Smart Growth, which is weighed among the fundamental and unifying subsystems of sustainability (Freilich and Popowitz, 2010, p. 4), advocates for encouraging community and stakeholder participation in development decisions, ensuring participatory planning, and that the land-use planning process is predictable and fair (SGN, 2002, p. 3; Mohammed et al. 2016). Additionally, it advocates building a system where revenues and resources can be shared more cooperatively among municipalities and centers within regions to promote rational coordination of transportation, public services, housing, community institutions, recreation, and to avoid a destructive competition tax base (Duany et al. 2000, p. 262). In this context, municipalities (or baladyat in Arabic) have a central role as a *"political and administrative unit with their own territory"* (Pahl-Weber and Henckel, 2008, p. 214). Globally, Municipalities are crucial structural elements in managing growth. As Reimer (1999, p. 290) maintains, *"municipal governments are somehow valuable in and of themselves, they constitute a crucial element in the march toward modernity."* Municipalities are capable of acting as the long arm of the state, as the facilitators and/or enablers

that contribute to institutional, locally representative collaboration and cooperation with business, industry, and other municipalities (Granberg, & Montin, 2014, p. 9).

1.2 Municipalities versus Authorities, the Self-inflicted Impairment of Coordinated and Orderly Growth

Before delving into the main body of this research, it is important to illustrate what is inferred by authorities (or generally hayāt) within the Egyptian context. These authorities represent governmental bodies established by presidential decrees to manage and administrate a service or facility (Law No. 61/1963, Article 1). They emerged in 1961, replacing the 1950s' so-called institutions (or mo'assassat). Since their establishment, many of them have gained exclusive spatial jurisdictions either as alternate or parallel institutions to municipal bodies. The argument of this research depicts that authorities, as parallel institutions, and with exclusive spatial jurisdictions, undermine growth management and inclusive economic development as they are often less capable of sharing growth benefits or co-ordinating different cross-functions and responsibilities (e.g., urban planning, ho using, transportation, education, and healthcare). Additionally, through their exclusive spatial jurisdictions, they disrupt the inclusive spatial jurisdiction of governorates' municipal institutions with uncoordinated and sectoral actions that disrupt the efficient management of regional growth. Municipal annexation of development areas is a sound base for area-wide action and orderly growth (The National League of Cities, 1966, p. 2). A widely accepted definition of municipal annexation is as follows:

> *Municipal annexation is the addition of territory to a municipal corporation as an integral part. Generally, it involves joining all or part of the territory of an unincorporated, less populous, or subordinate local unit to that of a larger unit, usually incorporated, … offering a more complex array of municipal services…. The major purpose of annexation is to promote orderly urban growth. (The National League of Cities, 1966, p.1)*

According to Wang, (2012, p. 22), municipal annexation is positively associated with the financial condition of local government, particularly in terms of expenditure level, revenue level, operations ratio, and debt service ratio.

2. Research Methodology

The research in hand aims at decoding the institutional evolution of legislation concerned with municipal planning, management, and the finance of urban growth in Egypt between 1834 and 2018. Its timeframe of analysis departs from the first official decree issued to establish a local institution concerned with the organization of the built environment during modern Egyptian history, Alexandria's Conseil de L'Ornato. The research information was collected through data mining and analysis of more than 120 consecutive laws and decrees published in the Egyptian Official Gazette (al-waqa'i' al-misriyya)[1] over the timeframe 1834 – 2018, and through a systematic literature review of a wide range of commentary literature. The review and analysis aims at assessing the level of attainment of the legislation and its association with the reviewed legislation and the aforementioned principals of Smart Growth and New Urbanism in terms of urban planning, management, and finance structures at the municipal level. Subsequently, it aims at linking major urban growth patterns with their corresponding institutional setup of urban planning, management, and finance that influenced their nature and growth trajectory.

3. The Rise of Municipalities during Modern Egyptian History

It As part of its modern history, the process of organizing and restructuring Egypt's built environment began in earnest during the late reign of Muhammad Ali and the early reign of his successors (Mostyn, 2006, p. 95). During the early 19th century, Alexandria had a central role in driving such a transformation. The city was a vibrant international trade center and a strategic port served by the Mediterranean from the north, and by the new Mahmoudia Canal linking the city with Cairo to the south (Shalabi, 1987, pp.13-15). Owing to the booming economic activities in Alexandria between 1806 and 1840, the city witnessed a twelve-fold increase in population size (Reimer, 1993, p. 59). The new growth needs meant the city had to organize to maintain health and safety conditions, accommodate a migrating population, and facilitate efficient transportation routes for goods. The *Alexandria Ornato Commission, or Conseil de l'Ornato*, which was later synonymous with *majlis al-tanzim*, was officially established in 1834 as the first official modern street and building commission in the Middle East (Reimer, 1993, p. 56; Reimer, 1999, p. 304). The Ornato was primarily set up for physical planning and regulation of urban space (Reimer, 1999, p. 305). It fell under the authority of the central government (Reimer, 1999, p. 304), and had appointed members (Reimer, 1993, pp. 60-61). The chief responsibilities for the Ornato, as a local specialized commission, consisted of mapping and planning streets networks, ensuring street alignments, issuing building permits and demolition approvals, safeguarding public health, monitoring streets, surveillance, traffic regulation, planning the water supply and drainage network, and settling property disputes (Shalabi, 1987, p. 26; Reimer, 1993, p. 67; Reimer, 1999, p. 305).

The commission was able to create significantly progressive transformation in the urban planning of Alexandria (Reimer, 1999, p. 75). After its proven success, and based on several requests from governors and the relentless effort of the Minister of Public Works (*Nazer Alashghal Ala'ma*) Ali Pasha Mubarak, Tanzim regulations were mainstreamed around Egypt in 1868 (Shalabi, 1987, pp. 34-41). Following that, it became the role of Tanzim Departments, which were subordinated to the Ministry of Public Works, to exercise coordinated control over the development of Egyptian cities. In each Department, intervention decisions were made based on regulations, members' specialization, or voting among the commission's consultative assembly (Abd-Alraheim, 2015, p. 1020-1025).[2]

With the establishment of the Egyptian Parliament in 1866 (Badr, 2017, p. 41), municipal councils were founded at governorate and directorate levels, but without legal personality, and with secondary competences over their Tanzim Departments (Allam and Abdelazeim, 2000, p. 118; Badr, 2017, p. 41). Shalabi (1987, p. 169) points out that the early establishment of municipalities emerged as a result of mutual dialogue between the central government and local residents. This was preceded by the residents' hesitation and reluctance to pay the high municipal expenses. In Alexandria, the most resistance and hesitation came from the European community, as the establishment of a municipality ended many of the privileges granted to them by Muhammad Ali, particularly those exempting them from the payment of property taxes. Shalabi (1987, p. 61) also states that the government of Ryad Basha, the Egyptian Prime Minister, communicated with the governor of Alexandria in 1888 to stress the urgent need to proceed with the establishment and recognition of the Alexandria Municipality (Shalabi, 1987, p. 61). After prolonged negotiations with several European Consulates in Alexandria, the Alexandria Municipality was established as the first municipality in the Middle East to be a *"locally elected, legally responsible and fiscally autonomous urban government"* (Reimer, 1999, p. 292).[3] According to the High Order of January/1890, the authority of the municipal council was manifested in the council's jurisdictions to direct and oversee the physical planning of the city and the operation and management of its different departments. The approval of the Ministry of Public Works was only necessary in particular municipal projects that exceeded a specified limit (High Order of January /1890, Article 30).

Different municipalities started to form in cities and rural centers based on a local consensus to pay common fees for initiating local development (Allam & Abdelazeim, 2000, p. 122). They had legal jurisdictions over their Tanzim Departments, and were recognized under one legal act that organized their election procedures through Law No. 22/ 1909, and Law No. 30/1913. After the Egyptian struggle was crowned by the 1919 revolution, municipal councils were constitutionally recognized by the 1923 constitution to be locally representative and publicly accountable (Articles 132 and 133). Municipalities were subordinated to the Ministry of Health as vital urban management institutions that prioritized interventions geared towards safeguarding public health and safety (Allam and Abdelazeim, 2000, pp. 120-125). The progress in municipal development continued until the unification of the municipal structure under the Municipal and Rural Affairs Law No. 145/1944. The Law affirmed that municipal councils were had full jurisdiction over the planning and development of their territories and over their Tanzim Departments (Articles 9, 12, and 19). Later on, all municipal and rural councils became subordinated to the new Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs that was established in 1950[4] (Figure 2).

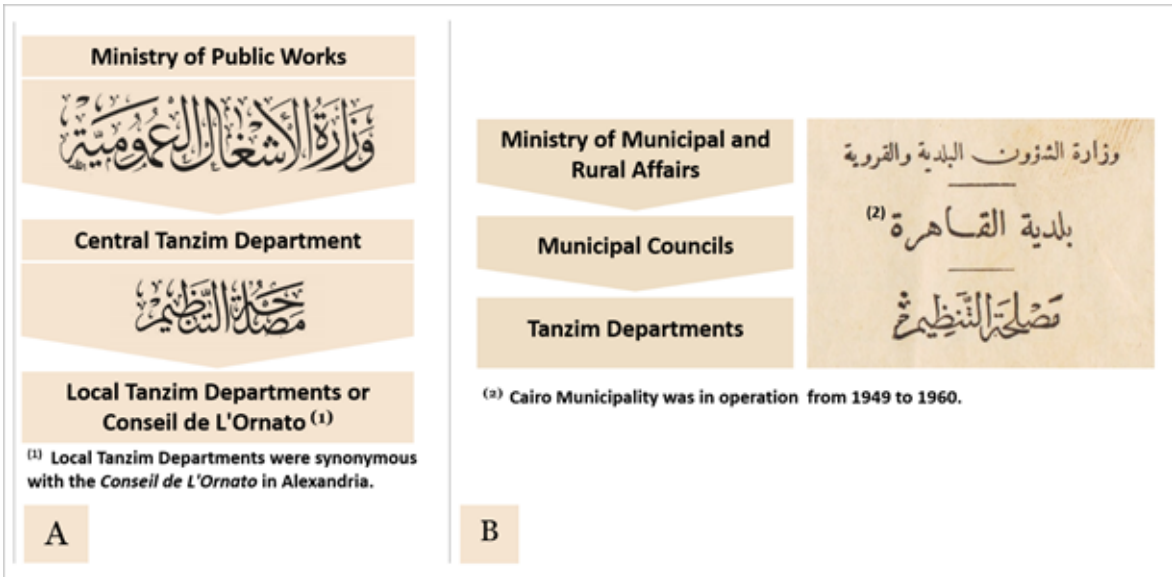

Figure 2: A compound figure illustrating two basic and dominant Institutional structures for urban management in Egypt. The first was before the self- representative power of municipalities over Tanzim departments between 1934 – 1890 (A), and the second after the establishment of municipalities between 1890 – 1960 (B). Source: Analysis by researcher, official logos are adopted after (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, 1955).

According to Rageh (2007, p. 37), the active control of municipalities over their urban areas helped achieve a balance between local duties and responsibilities in cities and villages, and the obligations of the central government. The municipal system was positively associated with enhancing the quality of life and the efficient regulation of urban growth (Allam and Abdelazeim, 2000, p. 127; Rageh 2007, pp. 35-61).

New expansions of urban areas were planned within the administrative jurisdiction of each municipality. New developments were financially annexed to the municipal councils on the city level or governorate level. In most cases, urban growth took the form of new neighborhoods, and in special cases, new exurban settlements that were developed with the support of foreign or national companies operating based on concession contracts. Among those

new exurban developments were al-Raml and al-Ma'amoura in Alexandria, Ras al-Bar north of Damietta, al-Awqaf city (or al-Mohandessin) in Giza, Heliopolis and Nasr City in Cairo. These were new urban developments, built and operated by special enterprises, but under the supervision of municipalities or Tanzim Departments and within their spatial jurisdiction (Allam and Abdelazeim, 2000, p. 166). Also, most of them, and despite the infringing colonial influence under the foreign concessions policy, were financially annexed to help support old cities and villages within their governorates (Hegab, 1985, p. 171). To lend some evidence to this argument, Cairo City Governorate, (formerly known as *muhafazat masr*), extended the perimeter of Cairo to encompass Heliopolis, the new privately developed city extension to the far north-east of Cairo, and to collect house tax on its new buildings erected by the Cairo Electric Railways and Heliopolis Oases Company (Ilbert, 1981, p. 15). The Company was the colonial enterprise that carried out most of the construction and planning costs of Heliopolis, a project that was exceptionally facilitated by the Egyptian Government as an innovative pilot project for desert habitation. When the quasi-colonial era came to an end, public concessions were limited to 30 years only[5], and municipal annexation of new developments was mandated. According to the Presidential Decree No. 815/1959, revenues from building Nasr City, developed by Nasr City Corporate subordinated to Cairo Municipality, were to be distributed as follows – the total investment cost to return to the central government, and the project revenues to be distributed equally over Cairo Municipality and Nasr City Corporate (Decree No.815/1959, Article 9).

From new city extensions to summer resorts, Ras El-Bar, the charming summer resort, was annexed to Damietta Municipality in 1938 and was under its municipal control. The resort city constituted a significant financial asset in summer seasons until it was announced as an independent municipality in 1954 (Law No.496/1954).

Alexandria Municipality manifested a great response to the public well against the monopoly of the coastal suburban development of al-Raml (Shalabi,1987, pp. 129-130). The municipality was in chief control despite the imbalanced civil representation towards the European minority and its associated bias towards European neighborhoods in development and the spatial distribution of municipal resources (Shalabi,1987, pp. 129-130). The active municipal response against Alexandria and Ramleh Railway (*Strada Ferrata tra Alessandria e Ramleh*) was evident despite the fact that the railway concession granted to the company connecting Alexandria with al-Raml[6] was signed before the establishment of Alexandria Municipality (Pellecom, 2010, pp.4-6). When the municipality became more strained by the increasing expenses of managing the increasingly

expanding metropolis, they negotiated with the company to divide the profits of operating the railway since the company already enjoyed the use of municipal land (Shalabi,1987, pp. 129-130). The municipality forcibly withdrew the concession when the negotiations failed. Years later, the company won a legal case to receive compensation. However, the railway became a public service owned by Alexandria Municipality in 1929 (Alshulaqani, 2013, p. 106; Pellecom, 2010, p. 16).

Alexandria Municipality (1890-1960) had full spatial jurisdictions and local sovereignty in determining the regulation for land sale within the municipal territories (Baladiyat al-Iskandariah, 1905, pp. 1211-1212). Municipal land could only be sold through a public auction with a value not less than the one previously estimated by its subordinated land appraisal committee (Baladiyat al-Iskandariah, 1905, pp. 1211) (Figure 3).

القسم الرسمي

بلدية الاسكندرية

لائحة

مبيع الاراضي البلدية

رئيس القومسيون البلدى بالاسكندرية

بعد الاطلاع على القرار الصادر من القومسيون فى جلستى ٢٢ فبراير و ٣١ مايو ١٩٠٥ ومصادقة نظارة الداخلية بمكاتبتها الرقيمة ٦ يونيه سنة ١٩٠٥ نمرة ٢٢٠٥ ف (ب)

قرر ما هو آت

(المادة الأولى)

تحصر الأراضى البلدية فى جدول و يعتمد القومسيون لكل جزء منها ثمنا بناء على رضه عليه مجلس التنفيذ

لا يجوز فى حال من الاحوال بيع تلك الأراضى بأقل من الاثمان الواردة بذلك التقديرات

وتجمع هذه الأثمان فى الثلاثة الشهور الأولى من كل سنة

Figure 3: A Municipal Land Sale Act published in the Official Egyptian Gazette in 1905. Source: (Baladiyat al-Iskandariah, 1905, pp.1211).

Cairo Municipality (1949-1960), was the last major municipality in Egypt to be established among a number of municipal and rural councils. The research in hand was extremely fortunate to encounter a rare book published on behalf of Cairo Municipality in 1957 that illustrates the spatial strategic planning of Cairo over a 50-year program.

In 1956, under the jurisdictions of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, the locally self-represented council of Cairo Municipality issued and approved the Master Plan of Cairo. The program was developed in cooperation with national and international experts over two years of extensive studies (Cairo Municipality, 1957, p. III). It deployed various planning measures that, if realized, would have introduced a tremendous transformation to the physical structure and the management of the Greater Cairo Region.

The Master Plan contributes valuable evidence into how quality decision making is a result of a quality administrative setup with an integrated consultative and participatory structure. Here, one must present two paragraphs of the book preface, which were written by Dr. Shafik El Sadr, the Director of Cairo Planning Commission subordinated to Cairo Municipality:

> *Late in the summer of 1949, the Municipality of Cairo was created by a special act. Prior to that date, the miscellaneous services of the unplanned Metropolis, the largest city in Africa and the Near East, were dispersed among the various governmen-*

> *tal departments, each within its competence, often overlapping or conflicting. The growth or retard of projects followed the vicissitudes of fortune, the exigencies or the sally of the moment. In 1949, Mr. Mahmoud Riad, the Director General of the Municipality of Cairo, then Deputy Director, a planner by nature, mediated over and advocated a long-term plan, a consistent policy for the city. Upon his recommendation, the Municipal Council approved in July 1953 the constitution of the "Cairo Planning Commission" and charged it with the task of a fifty years' programme. (Cairo Municipality, 1957, p. III)*

Primarily, the Master Plan, which built on a broad and detailed set of regional and local studies and surveys, rested on controlling the excessive growth of the city and developing multiple railway lines for an efficient regional access to its congested quarters. Instead of today's ring road around GCR, two clockwise and counterclockwise ring railway lines were suggested to encompass the city for delivering regional accessibility that was efficient and safe, and for connecting the city with the new heavy industries planned outside the city (Cairo Municipality, 1957, p. 13). New central railway and tramway networks for the mobility of passengers and freight transport were deployed as a smart approach to funnel traffic into the tight roadways of the historic city, and to connect with its main markets, thus, limiting traffic congestion by using the narrowest right of way. Figure 4 illustrates one of the proposed traffic plans included within the Master Plan of Cairo and ratified by Cairo Municipality.

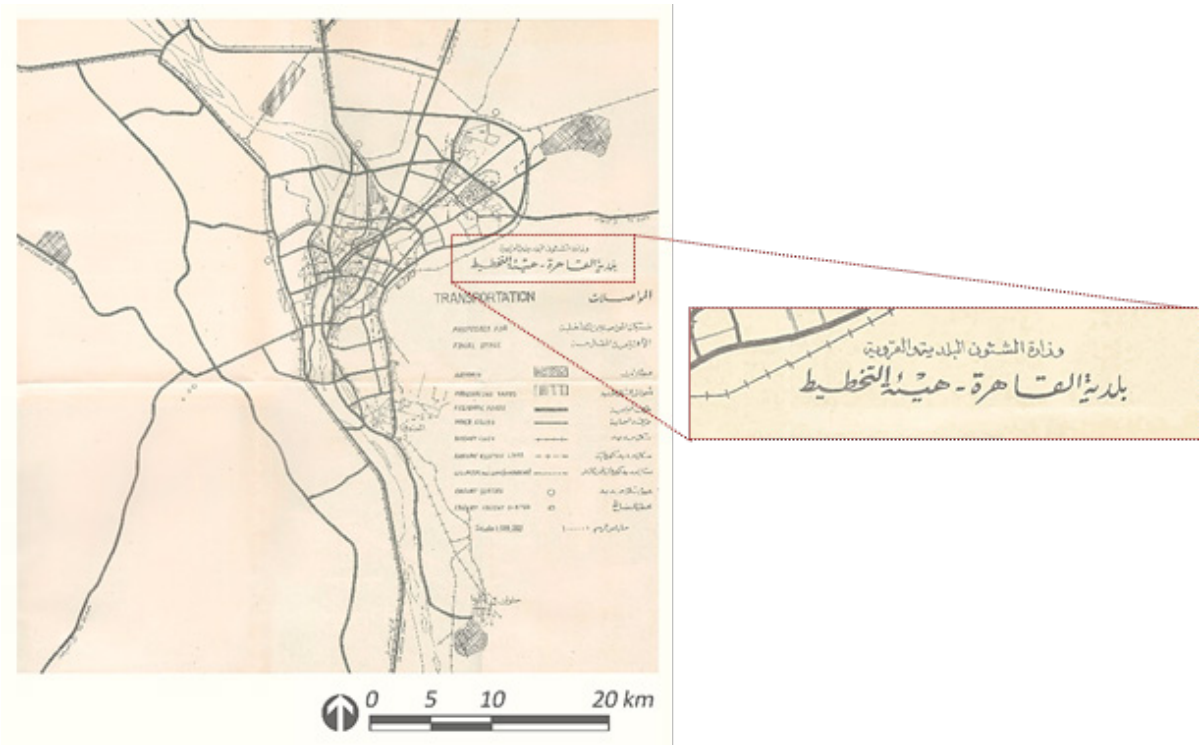

Figure 4: The planning of the transportation network was under the jurisdictions of Cairo Planning Commission subordinated to Cairo Municipality (1949-1960). Source: (Cairo Municipality, 1957, p.146).

The Master Plan promoted infill development and balanced density over suburban growth (Cairo Municipality, 1957, pp. 3-6). To control urban growth and to ensure the densification of infill areas, the program promoted the establishment of two city limits. The first was for ur-

ban development activities and the second for wide-scale, non-urban functions that helped sustain the city's economy and operation involving agriculture, industry, and desert tourism (Cairo Municipality, 1957, p. 11). The management of the city was addressed and the program also recommended one unified unit for the planning and administration of the transportation network under the supervision of the municipality (Cairo Municipality, 1957, p. 12). Such critical institutional reform remains unrealized until today.

It is worth mentioning that the two historical buildings of the Alexandria Municipality and the Cairo Municipality were looted and vandalized in 2011 and eventually destroyed or demolished. The Cairo Municipality building near Tahrir Square, which was previously dedicated to the Arab Social Union, and then, the National Democratic Party, was eventually brought down in 2015 despite being structurally safe for the initiation of rehabilitation efforts (Hawas, 2015). However, as the next section will illustrate, the heartbreaking loss of both historical buildings was not the end of Egypt's municipal history, the real end was in the early 1950s.

4. The Fall of Municipalities and the Rise of Sectoral and Authoritarian Management and Governance

After a long path of institutional development and evolution, all municipalities that had been on a progressive transformation since 1866 were abruptly dismantled in 1960 by the Local Administration Law No.124/1960, that introduced a complete reform. The Law stipulated the abolishment of municipalities and the establishment of local councils consisting of appointed and elected members from the National Union (*aletihad alqaumi*) (see Law No.124/1960, Articles 10 and 31; and Albass, 2018, p. 96). According to Rageh (2007, p. 38), the Law contributed to restraining real popular participation and authorizing central ministries to dominate the management and finance of the local councils at the levels of governorates, cities, or villages (Rageh, 2007, p. 38). One year later, in 1961, the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure was established to handle the competencies of the dissolved Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (Decree No.1356 /1961).

The abolishment of municipalities and the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs was not the first adopted measure to end municipal history. According to the legal review conducted throughout this research, the spatial jurisdictions of municipalities were gradually impaired by the spatial confinement of municipal land to non-desert areas by newly emerging authorities with special mandates over desert land. Starting from the 1954, new authorities were granted surpassing privileges to direct and manage desert developments without institutional association with the governorates' self-representative planning and decision-making.[7]

At the very outset, and under the pretext of agricultural development and reconstruction of desert areas, the Permanent Authority of Land Reclamation was established with central control over fallow fields and wastelands that could be reclaimed, cultivated, and reconstructed (Law No. 169/1954, Article 1). Five years later, a parallel authority with nearly the same jurisdictions emerged, the General Authority for Desert Development subordinated to the Ministry of War. It was entitled with the control and development of vast desert areas over and above the governorate's jurisdictions and outside cities and villages (Decree No.572/1959, Article 2). Both authorities were permitted, independently, and without municipal coordination, to perform activities of housing and agricultural development, to improve transportation, and to encourage new industries. On the policy side, they were permitted to draw the general policy of desert development to increase national income, and to plan a housing policy that fulfilled the establishment of new cities and villages. On the financial

side, they enjoyed an independent financial personality that could be supplemented by the State's General Budget allocations, loans, and by their exclusive profits (Law No. 169/1954, Article 1; Decree No.572/1959, Articles 1-15). They continued to undergo different phases of legal transformations in 1961, 1962, and 1969, until they were merged together in 1975 to represent what is known today as the General Authority for Reconstruction Projects and Agricultural Development (GARPAD) (Figure 4). The new Authority became subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and entitled with agricultural reclamation in desert areas (Decree No. 269/1975, Articles 1-7).

Four years later, the New Urban Communities Authority was established by Law No. 59/1979 with the right to utilize, control, and profit from the desert land outside existing cities and villages that were not designated for agricultural reclamation by GARPAD. The spatial planning and development of new settlements outside the current cities and villages became the sole responsibility of NUCA (Law No. 59/1979, Article 1), even if these settlements were located within the local jurisdiction of governorates. NUCA is the authority entitled to select possible sites to build new settlement sand to prepare, with no obligation to coordinate with the Governorate or municipal level, general and detailed plans in accordance with the General State Plan (Article 7). Since their early initiation, NUCs were to remain outside their corresponding governorate's municipal jurisdictions. A distance of land not exceeding five kilometers is allocated around any NUC from all sides to be determined by the NUCA. It is prohibited to dispose of it in any way, utilize it, or incorporate it in the planning and establishment of any facilities, projects, or buildings in any way except with the approval of NUCA (Article 8).

Only after the completion of its necessary components and based on the proposal of the Ministry of Housing Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC), can NUCs be annexed to governorates (Article 50). Unless such a proposal takes place, the NUC remains independent from local supervision and free from its hosting governorate's administrative and financial annexation.

Further legislation that enabled uncoordinated authoritarian management and development was drafted. According to Decree No. 540/1980, the north coast of the Mediterranean Sea from the west of Alexandria city until the western border of Egypt became a territory under the utilization and supervision of the MHUUC.

On the south-eastern side, according to Law No. 175 /1982, the Red Sea coast is a touristic zone and falls under the utilization and supervision of the Ministry of Tourism (Article 1) and under its new subordinate authority, the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). This is the same as major segments of the Nile coast and three islands within the river basin in Cairo Governorate (Decree No. 43/1975, Articles, 1.2.and 3). The sectoral management, control, and utilization were extended to the industrial sector and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) became responsible for the management and utilization of industrial areas (Decree 350/2005). The investment and free zones sector also came under the mandate of the General Authority of Investment and Free Zones (Decree No. 284/1997).

In parallel, new laws were drafted to reinforce the de-annexation of desert areas. The Desert Land Law No. 143/1981 stipulated that NUCA was the only authority with the right to carry out urban development in desert areas. Desert land became legally defined as the land situated two kilometers from the *cordons*[8] of old cities and villages in desert governorates (outside the fertile patch of Nile Valley and Delta), or land two kilometers from *zemam*[9], for non-desert Governorates (Article 1). Ten years later, Law No. 7/1991 with respect to the provisions of private state properties or (*amalk aldawla al khassa*), affirmed that GARPAD, NUCA, and TDA had the right to practice owner authority over the land designated to them (Article 2).

In parallel to the subsequent legislation enabling the proliferation of new authorities, new laws altering the Local Administration Law No.124/1960 were drafted, starting with the Local Governance Law No. 57/1971, abolished by the Local Governance Law No.52/1975, which was in turn abolished by the present law that has been partially suspended since 2011, the Local Administration Law No. 43/1979.

Notwithstanding the fact that the laws mentioned above constituted a significant transformation and empowerment to local governance systems (Badr, 2017, pp.44-47), and despite the insufficient human, technical, and economic capacities to implement them at the local level (Houaidy,1981 p. 234), none of them has ever interfered with the jurisdictions given to GARPAD, NUCA, TDA, or IDA.

Furthermore, the extreme shortage in human resources and technical planning expertise at the local level still represents a chronic, unresolved condition that significantly contributes to inducing informal growth (Nada, 2014, p.168). A summary of the legislative transformation towards independent authorities, outstripping municipal jurisdictions in desert development and utilization, is provided in Figure 5.

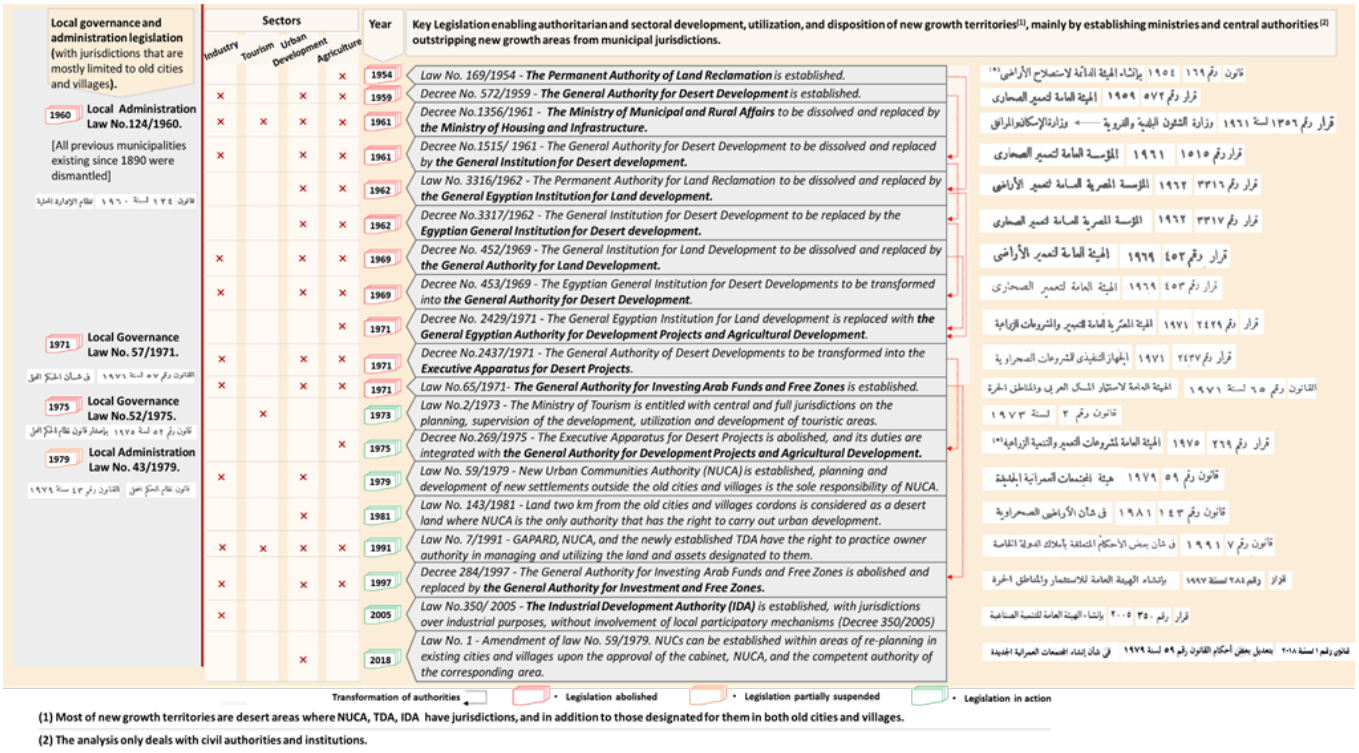

Figure 5: Legislative transformation towards a sectoral and authoritarian institutional structure significantly outstripping municipal jurisdictions over desert development and utilization (1954-2018). Source: Researcher.

It may become a subject of argument that the overlapping mandates between governorates and authorities and the weak civil representation at the local level are somehow ameliorated by the spatial strategic planning carried out by the General Organization for Urban Planning (GOPP).[10] However, it should be noted that, apart from old cities and villages, the planning of NUCs is more controlled by NUCA than the GOPP in terms of planning the physical growth

and expansion of NUCs. The authority has the right to modify the general plan of NUCs through its subordinated body denoted as the Planning and Projects Department (*qeta'a altakhteit wal mashareie'*) and with the approval of the MHUUC (see Decree No. 165/2018, Article 2).

Apart from desert areas, and in old cities and villages, the Unified Building Law No. 119/2008 abolishing the Urban Planning Law No. 3 /1982, enables the popular council, executive apparatuses, and NGOs to provide their feedback on spatial strategic planning and to define local priorities and the needs of urban development. However, the strategic plans require no formal approval from local self-represented popular councils at the local level (see Law No. 119/2008, Chapter 1, Section 3, Articles 11, 13, 15), or the detailed plans (Decree 144/200, Chapter 1, Section 4, Article 18). In this sense, holding the local community accountable for realizing development objectives is highly questionable. On the other side, participatory planning in the development of NUCs remains legally ambiguous in terms of process or structure. NUCA is responsible for establishing a Board of Trustees (BT) for each NUC that gains a considerable number of residents. It appear that the BT, that has no institutional reference to the governorate or its local popular council, will act when the ship has already taken course, and when most of the NUC Master Plan has been realized with no room for major improvements to consider.

It is worth mentioning that Law No. 1/2018, the most recent amendment of Law No. 59/1979, stipulates that NUCs can be established within areas subject to re-planning in old cities and villages. Such a decision can be officially authorized upon the approval of the cabinet, NUCA, and the competent authority with jurisdictions over the corresponding area (Article 1).

5. The Long-term Absence of Municipal Institutions, Impacts on Decision-Making and Spatial Planning in Egypt

In general, municipalities are institutionally designed to act as a stable, long-term, and self-representative decision-making organizations with enduring immunity against instability, short-termism, and misguided policies. The following paragraphs aim at illustrating the devastating impacts generated by the absence of strong municipal institutions and the rise of authorities. They are typically perpetrated by deliberate top-down measures with uncoordinated actions, impermanence in policy-making and administration, or by implementing and sustaining outdated and unverified legislation that deviates concentration on local priorities and neglects strategic challenges and potential development opportunities.

The most evident case to be addressed is the strategic spatial planning of GCR. It is more than evident that the present physical structure of GCR is mainly attributed to a series of conflicting decisions generated by various institutions. First and foremost, the national concentration of the population in GCR through the planning of new settlements surrounding Cairo and Giza cities was never suggested by the 50-year program' of the Master Plan mandated by Cairo Municipality in 1956. New towns surrounding Cairo and Giza were first suggested in 1969 by the Cairo Planning Commission. It was the new authority that acted in disassociation from local municipal institutions and after the dissolution of the Cairo Municipality in 1960. The Commission came up with a master plan suggesting the development of four satellite towns, to be constructed in part, and over ten years (Azadzoi et al. 1985, pp. 97-99). Later on, in 1983, the GOPP, which took over the jurisdictions of the Cairo Planning Commission (see Decree 1093/1973), presented a new GCR Master Plan suggesting the establishment of ten new settlements outside a future ring road surrounding GCR. The policy was mainly oriented to achieve the deconcentration of Cairo and to build these

new towns as alternative housing areas for informal areas (Azadzoi et al. 1985, pp. 103-104). The ten settlements were planned with a maximum population of 250,000, each aiming at providing middle and low-income housing (Sims, 2014, pp. 127-128). After the establishment of NUCA, the new towns planning was eventually altered to support the establishment of housing that mainly serves high-income groups and enables the proliferation of exclusive gated communities. As a result, the challenges of informal growth in GCR have heavily escalated. At present, GCR manifests a model of uneven growth with various patterns of spatial inequality and extreme segregation (Mohamed, 2015b, pp. 220-231).

Apart from GCR, on the north coast west of Alexandria, the sectoral management of the MHUUC that was stipulated by Decree No. 540/1980, has significantly contributed to the waste of large tracts on the Mediterranean coast to build inefficient sprawling patterns of low density and seasonal occupancy resorts. It was such a terrible decision to ignore the strategic advantage of the region to decongest and rehabilitate Alexandria through a municipally integrated and coordinated development scheme.

In Upper Egypt, the situation is much worse as NUCs have rapidly fallen behind their target populations. One of the prominent cases is the city of New Aswan. A massive NUC with a location that was carefully selected and engineered to fall within the legal jurisdiction of NUCA instead of the Aswan Governorate (Alhowaily, 2020, p. 245). It was initiated by NUCA in 1999 on a site that is 12 kilometers to the north of Aswan city and two kilometers from the administrative boundaries (or cordon) of West Aswan village. Regrettably, with governmental investments exceeding 1.9 billion EGP by 2017 (NUCA, 2017), it has only managed to attract less than one hundred residents (CAPMAS, 2017a) instead of the 70,000 residents targeted by NUCA for 2017 (NUCA, 2017). It is important to pinpoint that the problem is not confined to the failure of attaining the target population number, but also in introducing an uncoordinated, uncorrelated, and uneven model of growth (Alhowaily, 2017, pp. 10-11).

6. Conclusion

This study contributes important evidence that Egypt's experience in spatial strategic planning lacked consistency in protecting a progressive transformation of knowledge and expertise aimed at developing and sustaining municipal institutions for the regulation of urban growth and management. During the development of municipalities between 1869 and 1960, different legislation was drafted to shape their competences, jurisdictions, and their financial share of governmental resources. After being dismantled in 1960, and after their spatial jurisdictions over desert areas were gradually revoked from 1954, the production, active control, and maintenance of the Egyptian built environment started a downward spiral towards inefficient and uncoordinated management of growth.

In proximity to nearly every major long-lasting city by the Nile Valley and Delta, there is an unannexed NUC that is being developed in an institutional and economic duality, and with exclusive and superior spatial jurisdictions. For NUCs, the centrally determined urban growth boundaries are hardly distinguishable from the former concession limits that demarked the boundaries of real estate developments during Egypt's quasi-colonial history. Instead of regulating growth, these boundaries are used to support an institutional and economic duality, aimed at the municipal de-annexation of suburban growth that enables an uneven distribution of resources and assets.

Centralized ministries and authorities that continue, with a wide margin of independence, to plan, control, and finance desert expansion, can only operate with a partial toolbox in meeting Egypt's urban and rural challenges. They operate on a sectoral basis that sorely lacks the

underlying institutional capacity of local participatory mechanisms and integrated technical capacities. There is a stressing need for an integrated approach that is sensitive to how development is actually proceeding; municipal governments that listen to their inhabitants are much more capable of serving such a need, especially in dealing with the issue of their deep-seated structural problems.

Under the present urban management setup, Egypt is seriously challenged by the possibility of unintegrated, irresponsive, and uncoordinated urban growth. It is up to decision-makers and legislators to shift this course by mainly reforming the four-decades-old NUCP policy that has already failed to channel population growth out of congested old cities and villages. Inefficient and uncoordinated growth patterns that merely support short-term economic profits and wealth transfer will further stand out as mere by-products of economic exploitation. They will never support a sustainable business model for safeguarding national security or providing a significant contribution to boost long-term economic development. The diversification of the economy beyond the over-exploitation of construction material resources and the housing sector, which is already flooded with more than 12.5 million empty housing units (CAPMAS, 2017b, p. 255), is an indispensable prerequisite that is strongly interlinked with initiating comprehensive institutional reform. The municipal annexation of new growth territories in desert areas is essential to reverse the present decay by revitalizing the dormant assets of old cities and villages, stimulating the co-production of growth, and activating the generation of intrinsic means of funding and investments by the local civil society. The ever-increasing domination of centralized ministries and authorities over municipal jurisdictions must be legally restrained and calibrated.

The time is now ripe to revisit the former municipal structure abolished in 1960 and to further develop its management capacity as a potential structure of reform. Subsequently, it is also time to merge the working capacities of the economic authorities such as NUCA, GARPAD, IDA, and TDA under the mandate of governorates and their municipal councils, and to gradually limit their direct intervention in governorates by either development, utilization, or disposition of local assets. In a multi-factored and multi-sectored governance, municipalities should be responsible for comprehensive planning that is animated by the active engagement of local planning expertise and the regular participation of the local society. Municipal development efforts must be subjected to the supervision of network institutions and various ministers should be followed up for continuous feedback and adjustment according to national plans and objectives. Such cognitive transformation and legislative reform will help decolonize our institutional practices, ensure equitable and integrated development, formulate distinctive urban solutions, and disassociate the implementation of long-term strategic spatial planning objectives from the inevitable interruptions associated with regime change. It would also help rationalize development, generate an equitable distribution of resources, and reinforce local identity through stimulating active engagement and eradicating urban illiteracy.

Last but not least, this article is not a call to eliminate strict legislation enabling central control and top-down supervision of local institutions. Overly strong municipal governments may hinder and obstruct policies and actions that are perceived, centrally, to aim for the common good. In the age of contested realities and escalating geopolitical tensions, we must ensure the efficient generation of our built environment. It is our role to disentangle the complexity of today's subtle reality through a careful and gradual transition towards institutional empowerment and self-organization and consultative decision-making.

Notes

1.The Egyptian Official Gazette (al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyya), was the official newspaper established in 1828 by Muhammad Ali, and was primarily used to publish official orders, decrees, and laws.

2.Other commissions for the physical organization of the built environment were also established in Alexandria for relatively short durations after the establishment of the Ornato, such as diwan dawri, lagnet altassdier (see Shalabi: pp. 11-53), and also majles ala'ian (see: Lafi, 2007, p. 33).

3.Reimer's (1999 p. 292) argument that Alexandria was the first municipality in the Middle East must be examined along with the information presented by Lafi (2007, pp. 141-142), who provided information that the Jerusalem Municipality under the Ottoman rule was established earlier in 1863.

4.The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs was established by Law no.5/1950 replacing the Department of Municipalities or maslahat elbaladeiat. In 1961, the Ministry was abolished and replaced by the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure (Decree No.1356/1961, Articles 1, 2). It must be noted that a Ministry with the same title has continued to operate in other Arab countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, since 1975. On the other hand, the municipal management setup is the basic urban management setup in other Arab countries, including the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the United Arab of Emirates, the State of Kuwait, the Republic of Tunisia, the Sultanate of Oman, and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

5.Formerly, any concession or monopoly to exploit a resource of natural wealth in the country or a service of the general public interest was only to be granted by law and for a limited time (Article 137, Egypt's Constitution 1923). The time was later determined by Law No.129/ 1947, Article 1, to not exceed 30 years.

6.al-Raml or *er-ramleh*, emerged as a suburban development near a small village called Alramlah. The area was ten km from downtown Alexandria and started to gain importance and to get populated due to the increasing land prices in Alexandria and the lack of opportunities to expand within the long-lasting city (Reimer, 1988, p. 536).

7.In this context, it is worth mentioning that at the time when municipal land was gradually overtaken through newly established authorities in Egypt during the 1950s, there was a different policy within the Syrian Region of the United Arab Rebublic (1958-1971) . Such a policy was evident in Law No. 122/1959 that affirmed and mandated the transfer of ownership of unconstructed State property built within the boundaries of municipalities, or future urban growth territories to municipalities, to enrich their financial resources and to reduce the budget deficit (see: Explanatory Note of Law No.122/1959).

8.Cordon (الكـردون), or the urban growth boundary is set centrally through the GOPP and its regional office in coordination with the local actors and the approval of the Supreme Council of Planning and Urban Development (see: Nada, 2014, p. 150). In the old Urban Planning Law No. 3 /1982, the urban growth boundary denoted the administrative border defining the jurisdictions of the corresponding local administrative unit. In the new Unified Building Law No.119/2008, it denotes the adminstrative boundries of the city. Unlike the old law, the 2008 law stipulates a new definition, the future urban growth limits or *alhaiez alomrany,* which defines the limits of the urban growth area planned within the General Strategic Plan for urban development (by the GOPP) according to clear landmarks and coordinates (Law No.2008, Chapter 1, Section 1, Article 2).

9.Zemam (الزمـام): is the limits defining agricltural and non-agricultural land including the built-up area and what penetrates it including water bodies and street networks that belong to a village (Law No.2008, Article 2).

10.The authority was established in 1973 by Decree 1093/1973, as a central body subordinated to the Ministry of Housing and Construction, and subject to its supervision and control (Decree 1093/1973, Article 1). It sets out the general policy of urban planning, prepares the urban development programs all over the state through its regional centres, coordinates between them and the production programs, and requires public services to meet present and future needs (Decree 1093/1973, Article 1). The planning competences of the GOPP regional centers show problematic overlapping with the competences of regional centers subordinated to the Ministry of Planning and Follow-up (Rageh, 2007, p. 46).

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Anas Alhowaily obtained his Bachelor's degree in architecture and Environmental Design in 2010 from the Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport. He received his Master's degree in urban development in 2015, and his Doctoral degree in urban and regional planning in 2019 from the Technical University of Berlin. As an architect and urban researcher, he has organized and participated in different international projects, conferences, workshops, programs, and conducted several study visits to his areas of specialisation. His research interests fall within the fields of Smart Growth, participatory governance, and urban resilience. In 2020, Anas was granted the Arab Land Initiative's Research Innovation Fund to investigate policy and regulatory constraints to good land governance in Upper Egypt.

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Culture and Informal Urban Development - The Case of Cairo's Informal Settlements , Ashwa'eyat'

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Hassan El Mouelhi's published PhD thesis entitled "Culture and Informal Urban Development - The Case of Cairo's Informal Settlements ,Ashwa'eyat' " reveals deep and innovative insights into particular mechanisms of informal urban development in Cairo.

Greater Cairo, a mega city of about 20 million inhabitants, has gone through a process of rapid and uncontrolled growth. Weak governmental institutions in an unstable political and economic situation have failed in providing appropriate housing for the continuously growing urban poor population and nor have they kept pace with the growing need for proper infrastructure. Sustainable urban planning and land management are also missing, leading to informal settlements on former desert and agricultural land throughout the entire Greater Cairo region. Meanwhile informality has become the "way of life" for about 70 % of Greater Cairo's population.

Assessing the historic development of Cairo's Ashwa'eyat in general, the thesis explores the relevant literature on urbanization in Egypt and Greater Cairo and sums up the state of the art/scientific discourse on urban informality in the global and in the local Egyptian context. The author has carried out extensive field work in carefully selected informal settlement areas of Greater Cairo, which are representative of the characteristic types of informal housing estates in terms of their location and history of development as well as the social, ethnic and economic structure of their population, mostly rural migrants from Upper Egypt.

Based on a theoretical discourse including the fields of anthropology and urban sociology, the interrelations between culture, built environment and human behavior are deeply evaluated and applied to the particular context of informal Cairo. The author develops criteria to describe and analyze the importance of cultural values as a crucial element in understanding how informality performs in Cairo. The study focuses on Upper Egyptians as a target group who have carried their traditional rural background into different informal settlements of urban Cairo. The main questions that this research tries to answer are: How do those people behave in their urban spaces, and why in this particular manner? How are cultural factors influencing their behaviors? How far can the urban development of informal areas be considered as the outcome of interactions between cultural factors and the physi-

cal urban characteristics of the areas? How the informal settlers act and interact in all phases of establishing and consolidating their built environment will not be properly understood without integrating these "hidden rules." The author identifies four main groups of cultural factors – place of origin of inhabitants, their religious background, the relationship they have developed with the urban economy and their relationship with the urban society. These "soft" or invisible factors are correlated with "hard" and visible ones such as use patterns of urban space and physical characteristics of urban space within the range of informal housing areas. Exploring relations between the inherent cultural values of informal residents, their behaviors and the process of informal urban development is the focus of this research. The way inhabitants interact among their families and neighbors, among different interest groups, as well as in relation to formal governmental institutions, is seen as a factor that has been neglected so far and should take a more decisive role amongst all parties concerned with informal urban development.

This kind of informal governance, which is emerging in Cairo's Ashwa'eyat is far more decisive in organizing daily lives and in establishing power relations than the formal urban governance system. It can be summarized in the residents' traditional background, their Upper Egypt rural lifestyles they have carried with them and that they have been transforming gradually and adapting in a process of developing their built environment. The book shows how the urban space is being shaped by cultural values, by negotiations among families and neighbors, and how it is shaped through interactions with the governmental institutions. All this is illustrated in detail by photos, graphs and statements of the inhabitants.

This book presents a most valuable compilation of typical informal settlements in Greater Cairo analyzed through a sensitive survey in five areas, combining different methods such as observation and photo-documentation, participatory observation, mapping and mental mapping, group discussions, semi-structured interviews and projective techniques. This is particularly true of the detailed survey in Ezbet El-Haggana and Ezbet El Nassr. An additional study in the Upper Egypt village of origin of the inhabitants of Ezbet El-Haggana (Ashraf El Ghawasa) allows for complementary insights and more direct comparison of traditional rural and transformed urbanized values and behavior patterns in the city. Three more areas were also studied to support the analysis: Ain Al Sira, Ezbet El Nakhl, and Istabl Antar.

This research offers a better understanding of the complexity of the ongoing informal processes of urban development and informal habitat in Greater Cairo by shedding light on hidden cultural values that determine the physical patterns as well as the power-relations of informal governance. But more than this, it considerably deepens and enlarges the knowledge about the role and importance of local inhabitants in supporting appropriate and sustainable urban development.

Recognizing the hidden cultural values of local residents and their patterns of social interaction could allow for not only a more qualitative and locally appropriate evaluation of informal settlements, but also point towards a further future impact on sustainable development and integrated urban planning. The thesis does not claim transferability of results to other cultural and regional contexts; however, the general approach towards informality and the integration of cultural values as a complex and dynamic dimension will play a vital role in any case wherever a socially inclusive urban environment is going to be formed and wherever residents are a vital stakeholder within a participatory decision-making and realization process of a more successful urban space.

About the book author

Hassan El Elmouelhi is a lecturer and senior researcher at Berlin Technical University, Habitat Unit – International Urbanism and Design, and the Urban Development Department–Campus EL Gouna. His research and teaching interests vary between international urbanism, culture, and urban informality in relation to urban development and governance, in addition to the localizing of global agendas. He leads the integrated term-project in informal settlements on the Urban Development Master Program at TU Berlin Campus EL Gouna. He co-coordinates the cooperation project "RealcityLab: Practice orientation in architectural education" funded by BMZ (2016-2019), with Helwan University, Egypt, and acts as co-principle investigator in the BMBF research project "Neighborhood Management in Informal Areas-Hurghada, Egypt" (2018-2020) in partnership with IUSD-Cairo, Ain Shams University. He is also a principle investigator for the DAAD short measure project Urban Mobility Mapping in Hurghada-Egypt (2019). His PhD from TU Berlin-International Urbanism is entitled "Culture and informal urban development: A case study of Cairo's informal settlements". He has participated as a lecturer, consultant, and expert in many international activities regarding urbanism in the Global South, for example, Germany, Egypt, Tunisia, Tanzania, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, and India.

About the review author

Dr. Sonja Nebel started her career at RWTH Aachen, where she taught at the Institute for Urban and Regional Planning (Prof. em. Gerhard Curdes) with a focus on urbanisation and housing in Africa, Asia, and Latin-America. After a four-year DAAD Guest Professorship at the Faculty of Architecture, Damascus University, Syria, she joined the Habitat Unit in 2000. With a regional focus on MENA she carried out various exchange programs between Habitat Unit and universities in Egypt, Algeria, Syria, et al. She coordinated the Dual Degree Urban Design Master Program in cooperation with Tongji University in Shanghai and contributed to the establishment of the Urban Management Master Program, where she is still running a course on city profiles in order to monitor urban development. Sonja Nebel has been involved in various research activities, starting with a long-term DFG research, a cross-cultural comparison on the urban transformation of indoor-outdoor living space in different areas of Lusaka/Zambia, La Paz/Bolivia, and Bangkok/Thailand. She has continued her research on informal urbanization and urban rehabilitation in Syria and other MENA countries. She has also been involved in the DFG program "Megacities- Megachallenges" in the Pearl River Delta China. In 2008, Sonja Nebel took over a Professorship at the newly founded German University of Technology in Muscat/Sultanate of Oman, at the Department for Urban Planning and Architectural Design. Her research activities continue with a focus on urbanization patterns and mechanisms in the Gulf region. She is a permanent member of the oikos human settlements research network as a specialist in urban development, urban conservation, urban planning, upgrading, and sustainable development, with a focus on North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

A Reflexive Reading of Urban Space

Mona A. Abdelwahab

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In *A Reflexive Reading of Urban Space,* Mona Abdelwahab, brings together the disciplines of architecture, urban design and planning theory in a new proposition for reading urban space. The proposition is developed through a study of Cairo, the Egyptian capital, a complex, multicultural, and high-density city. Similar to other dense cities in the region, Cairo is facing urban governance challenges. Some studies have been reflecting on Cairo's green space reduction, while others debate issues of social segregation of living places, population density and rapid urbanization. These issues affect urban quality of life and well-being. In this book, the author goes beyond day-to-day challenges to reflect on growing tensions between conflicting visions and power struggles in planning Cairo's urban space as a megacity. Specifically, Abdelwahab develops a new form of integrative reading of urban space, through 'reflexive reading strategies'. Theis reflexive reading is focused on multiple urban relations between urban dwellers and the urban fabric.

The study of Cairo's urban space is most interesting. Cairo exacerbates the complexity and hectic nature of the study of urban space in megacities, with a particular emphasis on its relation to time, people, and context. Planners, architects as well as urban designers have much to learn from Cairo in terms of planning (or the lack of it) but mostly from the discourse on urban space – 'it is not possible to attempt to read urban space either as a whole phenomenon or through a pre-defined structure' (p. 210). Cairo's urban space helps to highlight that the multiple spaces of architecture, philosophy, and society, do not represent dissimilar urban spaces but different perspectives that co-exist even when in conflict. Abdelwahab demonstrates, through 'reflexive reading' of Cairo, that urban spaces, can be divisible, non-homogenous, multiple, complex, and dynamic yet they are still a unit. Previous readings of the urban space, in contrast to a 'reflexive reading' expanded in this book, often considered either an understanding of the whole phenomenon of urban space or a particular aspect of it.

The book is divided into two parts. In part I (*Preliminary Reading of Urban Space*), Abdelwahab interrogates the development of associated concepts and definitions of space-place nexus. In philosophy, from the classic readings of Plato's *chóra* (i.e. the intelligible space) and Aristotle's topos (i.e. the sensible place), to modern synonymous space and place, as well as

the emergent reversion to neo-chóra through Derrida's discursive deconstruction reading of Cairo's urban space (or Khōra, Chapter 3). In this part also, the author introduces an intermediate interlude which adopts the notion of 'reflexivity' (p. 94) that re-visits reading(s) of urban space. From planning theory, reflexivity entails continuous reflection between different levels of interpretation, interaction with empirical data, interpretations of underlying meaning, critical interpretations of ideology, power and social discussion, and self-reflections on text and authority (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). Abdelwahab adds that a 'reflexive reading' recognises the complexity and dynamics of the urban space and explores the multidisciplinary approaches of reading it in architecture, social studies and philosophy. For example, Chapter 3 (*Cairo-Khōra*) comprises a metaphorical, reflexive, transdisciplinary 'walk' through Cairo. It is a virtual walk in time since the city's foundation in 969 AD, continued through the Islamic city, the modern city, contemporary presidential Cairo and the recent revolutionary city.

This interplay between theory and empirical evidence or a reflexive reading, in my view, helps to solidify the idea that there is no single and coherent reading of urban space in the contemporary city. Reading urban spaces requires a cross-disciplinary approach involving planning theory, social sciences, urban design and behavioural sciences. In this vein, the book complements the work of Howe and Langdon (2002). First, Howe and Langdon (2002) argue that 'There has been a noticeable silence among planning researchers concerning the notion of reflexivity' (p. 209). Abdelwahab's new reading strategies seek to develop an integrative reading of place through recognition of the singular (influenced by discourse, institution, etc.); and temporal (influenced by reading perspective in space and time) attributes of a reading. Secondly, Howe and Langdon (2002) propose a detailed reflexive approach to planning theory drawing upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity is primarily generated in the fields of sociological research, which, according to Howe and Langdon, provide a necessary background for urban studies. Comparatively, Abdelwahab's 'reflexive' endeavours were encouraged, among other motives, by the visit of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, considered the founding father of 'deconstruction', to Cairo in 2000. Deconstruction is a way of criticising, not only both literary and philosophical texts, but also political institutions. Derrida and deconstruction guided Abdelwahab's reflections on the chaos and conflict between Cairo and Cairo's dwellers. Derrida's visit developed a deviation from the consensus reading of Cairo in the literature. In my view, the inclusion of Derrida's perspectives provide a critical interpretation of the urban space when compared to Bourdieu's notions, which are hermeneutic. This Derrida-inspired reflexivity helped Abdelwahab to reflect critically on established norms and theories within planning and urban design.

In part II (*Three Reflexive Readings*), Abdelwahab delves around the evocative description of the Egyptian capital urban space through architecture and social spaces. Abdelwahab's rationale is to consider approaching the theoretical mess of urban space in order to approach the empirical mess of Cairo's urban space (p. 203). First, she offers a reflexive reading through a study of 'The Cultural Park for Children' (Chap. 4), a urban regeneration project of the district of Al-Sayyida Zeinab initiated by Cairo Government. The 'Cultural Park for Children' won both a national award for its schematic design as well as an international award for the urban designing process, which reflects a likely agreement between the national and international perspective of Cairo's space and its architectural image. Secondly, she re-approaches social space (Chap. 5), through two reflexive instances: a reading of Canter's (empirical based) and Relph's (phenomenological) models of place. Thirdly, she presents a reading of architecture space (Chap. 6), which considers Markus's discourse on architecture (1982) and Tschumi's post-structuralist approach (1975). In the final part (*To be Continued*), Abdelwahab acknowledges that reading urban spaces requires a continuous, multidisciplinary interpretation.

What can we learn from this book? Investigating the production or reproduction of urban space entails a cross-fertilization of interest and power relations through different paradigms, and disciplines. The book is helpful in presenting a new multidisciplinary reading of urban space. Abdelwahab suggests that urban spaces require reading through sequential fragments of people and place. Operating at different scales between conceptual space and reality, the sequential reading helps recognition of the dynamics of place as a transformational process without hierarchies. The key take home message is that 'reflexive reading strategies' of urban space help to bring together various actors involved in the design and planning processes, identified as the authors of urban space as well as its primary readers. The empirical study of Cairo's urban space aids in demonstrating the complex nature of the study of urban space with a particular emphasis on its relation to time, people, political and institutional context. The book, therefore, works as a 'reading tool' that planners and urban designers could use to better understand the dynamic socio-spatial relations of the urban space.

About the book author

Mona A. Abdelwahab is Associate Professor in Architecture, Department of Architecture and Environmental Design at the Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Egypt. She received her PhD in Architecture from Newcastle University, UK. She followed her post-doc studies at the Department of Spatial Planning, University of Groningen, NL, where she co-founded 'YA-AESOP- Booklet Series: Conversations In-Planning'. She is a founding member of Khotout Association for Design Studies and Planning, and co-founder and editor-in-chief of 'Arcplan': Arabic cities planning e-journal.
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Dr. Eduardo Oliveira's prime scientific interests are within the fields of spatial planning instruments such as strategic spatial planning and place branding. His research involves also economic geography concepts and the embedding of these in evolutionary governance systems. His current research focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of strategic spatial planning instruments in supporting the social and economic development of less-developed communities, whilst assessing its effect on environmental sustainability. His works have been published in several academic journals and books. Eduardo is a lecturer at the Working Group Economic Geography of the University of Kiel, Germany where he investigates the relationship between strategy-driven and context-sensitive frameworks for sustainable territorial governance as catalysts of regional development. He holds M.Sc. from the University of Minho in Portugal and University Science Malaysia, and a Ph.D. from the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. He held positions at the University Louvain, Belgium, and Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL.

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