Building from Scratch: Egypt's New Cities, from the Colonial Era to the Present

By

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Abstract

New master planned cities are increasingly being built in the world, and are becoming a key approach to economic development and nation-building in the Global South. Egypt has been a particularly active country in constructing new cities from scratch, since antiquity to the present. The British colonial occupation was another energetic period of city-building, which continued decades after Egypt achieved independence. More recently, with the global surge of new city projects and broad forces such as neoliberalism, finance reforms, and the financialization of real estate, the Egyptian state has announced several new city projects, including a lavish new capital to replace Cairo. This thesis compares new city-building in Egypt over three distinct time periods. My study starts during the British colonial occupation, followed by the post-independence era of socialist Arab nationalism, and finishes with the contemporary era of city-centric development. The key findings point to the similarities between contemporary projects and colonial projects, which rely on some of the same key tenets and involve similar power structures.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Situating the study: City builders of Egypt

On March 13th 2015, the Egyptian government, led by President el-Sisi, unveiled plans for the construction of a new capital city for Egypt, the ambitious New Capital City Cairo (Al-Aees, 2018). Promotional material about the city shows a 'world class' metropolis, with wide, orderly streets and gleaming office towers. Advocates of the new capital predict that it will change the course of Egypt's history and function as a 'powerful bridge between Egypt's rich past and its vibrant future' (*The Capital*, 2015: Online).

Building this new capital is not an isolated project for Egypt but one in a long line of new city projects attempted since antiquity. Multiple Pharaohs constructed new capitals as a way to cut ties with past leaders, to leave a legacy, legitimize their authority, and dedicated to particular gods for auspicious reasons. Many of these cities were inhabited and later rededicated to other gods or eventually sacked and abandoned (Serag, 2017).

City building was revived with vigor when Egypt was colonized in 1882 by the British, initiating many new policies intended to control the colonized and harness the wealth of the country to be exported back to Britain (Home, 1990). The British occupation initiated the design and construction of many new master-planned cities in colonies across the empire, including in Egypt. These were built to support the imperial project and designed to control and contain the colonized while accommodating the expectations of the colonizers. A near century of occupation resulted in many planned neighborhoods, towns, and cities built from scratch that reflected the British planning norms of the era such as racial segregation, zoning (Home, 1990), many of which live on in former colonies in Asia and Africa (Moser, 2019).

For years, anti-British sentiment grew in Egypt, as Egyptians resented the foreign presence and British control over what came to be the country's most important asset: the Suez Canal. In 1956, with the rise of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt became an independent nation. Egyptian nationalists seized control of the Suez Canal and sought to change many of the laws, corporate endeavors, and power structures left by the British (Tignor, 2016).

After independence, Egypt continued to plan and build neighborhoods and cities from scratch, often drawing on colonial planning philosophy and internalizing colonial values (Moser, 2015). At least twelve new cities were planned and subsequently built in post independent times. These cities and other mega-infrastructure projects were key parts of the newly independent state's strategy to address persistent inequalities and urban challenges and to create a break with the colonial era.

Influenced by the recent global surge of new city projects and broad forces such as neoliberalism, finance reforms, and the financialization of real estate (Moser, 2015), in the last decade, the Egyptian state has announced several new city projects. The most ambitious project is 'Capital City Cairo', a new city being built from scratch to replace Egypt's existing capital and attract international attention and, ideally, investment (Al-Aees, 2018). New Capital City Cairo is an ambitious project in both its domestic goals and its international ambitions. After decades of urban sprawl and an ever-increasing population, the new capital is meant to free up real estate in Cairo and prevent the further expansion of the city limits. The new capital is also a project intended to rebrand Egypt as a 'modern' and cosmopolitan state, open for business on the world stage.

This research project examines the differences and similarities in new city projects across these three major eras in Egyptian history. Examining these three major eras reflects changing

practices in the discipline of planning and development in Egypt and shed light on how the goals, drivers, and key actors of new city projects have shifted over time and across vastly different political regimes. This project also explores the extent to which forces driving these urban mega-projects have changed from the imperial British occupation, to post-independence decades of socialist Arab nationalism, to the present-day era characterized by authoritarian leadership, neoliberal policies, and the financialization of real estate.

1.2 Research aim and questions

This study examines the complex dynamics in new city-building in Egypt, comparing and contrasting three distinct time periods. While Egypt has constructed new cities from scratch for thousands of years of antiquity, driven by spiritual beliefs and imperialism, my study starts during the British colonial occupation, followed by the post-independence era of socialist Arab nationalism, and finishing with the contemporary era of city-centric development. This research focuses on three main questions:

1) What were the principal tenets of British colonial city building in Egypt, and how did it reflect the planning philosophies and approaches of the time?

2) How did the development of new cities in post-independence times perpetuate power structures and engage similar philosophies than in colonial times?

3) What is motivating the construction of a new capital city and how will it involve different stakeholder, new power structures and new sources of influence and financing?
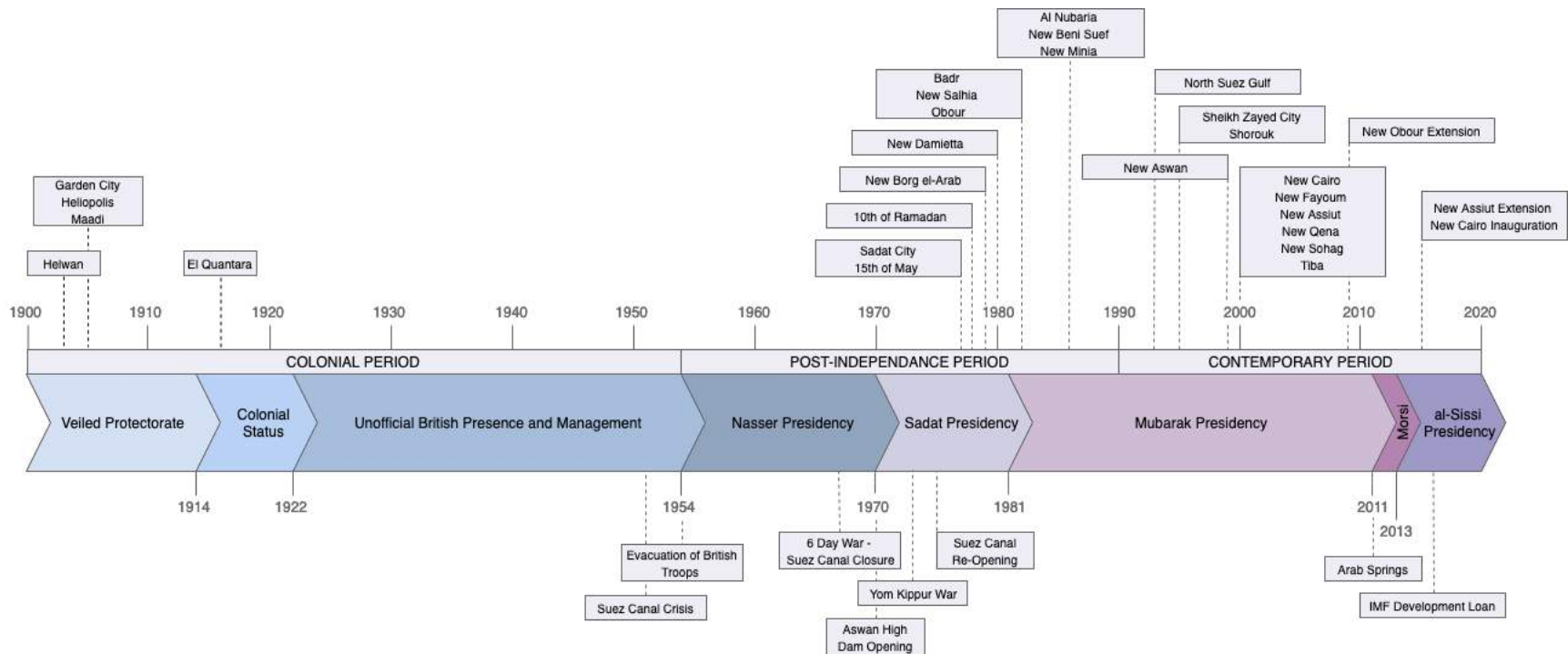
Figure 1: Timeline of Historical Events and New City Building in Egypt

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To understands Egypt's creation of new cities through time, it is critical to examine the historical and theoretical factors which gave birth to new cities and can serve as a strong basis of understanding for the prevalence of new master planned cities in many parts of the world. This chapter explores the academic scholarship regarding city branding and cultural identity traits and their embeddedness in the urban fabric, specifically when looking at new master-planned projects. I will then consider the different streams of contemporary new cities and the way in which they challenge the traditional vision of the city and present many challenges in their realization and functioning. In looking at the history of a single country, and looking at the evolution of localized planning policies and practices, I will fill the gap in literature in creating a project at the intersection of a historical and geographical study of Egypt. I intend to bring together analysis of different traditions and projects through contrasts and comparisons, which have so far been missing or presented separately and without cross analysis in the existing literature.

2.2 Historical and theoretical underpinnings of New Cities

While in recent years, New Cities have noticeably been appearing in many parts of the world and in impressive numbers (Moser, 2015) the tradition of building new cities from scratch is far from being new. Possibly the first formalized academic thought regarding the creation of new cities lies with Athelstan Spilhaus (1968) presentation of the experimental city project in Minnesota. The author envisions this experimental city to be the solution to urban ills, with

which 'we would not have the pollution, the traffic congestion, the riots, and many of the other ills that develop when cities become too large' (Spilhaus, 1968: 711). Spilhaus (1968) makes a thorough case for the experimental city, exploring in depth the numerous novelty systems of which it is to be composed, in matters of communication, transport, construction, and waste collection and recycling (Spilhaus 1968; Evans *et al.*, 2016). Yet, the most important element of Spilhaus's project, lies with the ideological background on which it stands. The experimental city is a project driven by the thought that cities as they are being managed are out of control entities which sprawl and spread absorbing all that surrounds them (Spilhaus 1968; Evans *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, Spilhaus denounces the ineffectiveness of outdated services and accommodation, which would take years to rebuild and are too expensive to upkeep efficiently (Spilhaus 1968; Evans *et al.*, 2016). The key to sustainably bettering the urban landscape thus lying with constructing cities from scratch, and managing them as controlled environments. The experimental city does not promote the existence of cities as organic entities, it seeks to control the built environment as well as the behaviors of its inhabitants.

Spilhaus is not the only thinker to theorize around the issues visible in traditional urban centers, and recommending new cities as sustainable alternatives. This is true considering Le Corbusier's plan for a high modernist city. Le Corbusier's city is characterized by its 'modern' efficiency, geometric organization, and ordered formality (Scott, 2005). Its organization is not only expressed in visual building terms, but also in its 'segregation of function' (Scott, 2005: 110), each element of the environment being built to have one function only. Much like in the experimental city, the high modernist city does not consider any element of agency or organic organization: both are thought out as being completely and permanently controlled environments. The main difference between Le Corbusier and Spilhaus would be that Le

Corbusier's plan does not rely on the premise of a city being built from scratch, on the contrary as 'no compromise is made with the pre-existing city; the new cityscape completely supplants its predecessor (Scott, 2005: 104). While Le Corbusier's approach to building from scratch differs from Spilhaus's, it is theoretically the same. Both prioritize novelty above all else, whether it emerges from destruction of existing features, or relocation away from past projects.

It appears that sustainability is the main theoretical underpinning for these new city trends. Sustainability does not refer to the current meaning of sustainability, highly tied to ecological perspectives. In this case, sustainability looks at the survival of the city itself. This is consistent with a worry of avoiding for the city to become overcome by people overtime, and progressively become inefficient and obsolete. This is a critical underpinning to consider when looking at the field of new cities overall; the desire for an everlasting city, thought out and managed carefully to remain a perfect environment through time. Planners are no longer looking to create a livable or enjoyable city for the inhabitants, but build an oasis of artificial perfection in which human agency is suppressed to promote control and organization instead.

One of the main issues pointed out by this portion of literature regards population. Spilhaus argues that it is easy to make new cities populous, through various techniques and controls which shape migration patterns and processes (Spilhaus 1968; Evans *et al*., 2016). There is no consensus in the literature as to whether this is true, and while many studies look at the ever-growing urbanizing population in the world, there is no telling how far planners can truly encourage people to settle in one place over another (Prescott, 1970). The stark reports of the evolution of Spilhaus' Minnesota Experimental city show very disappointing figures in terms of population (Evans *et al*., 2016). This points to one of the issues that needs to be further addressed

in the scholarship: building new cities is one thing, but can the building focus on the inhabitants rather than address the needs and dreams of the planning community?

There is no inherent new city culture, and it is hard to clearly outline the basis on which new cities are founded. This section seeks to outline some of the ideological idea that may be cornerstones to the planning of new cities, the foundational ideas and reflections that may trigger the creation of new cities. Keeping this literature in mind, we can look at the case of Egypt, and explore the rationales of new city building at a local scale to explore local motivations not yet found in educational literature.

2.3 Identity and branding in new master planned cities

The built environment constitutes a testimony to the history and culture which it has seen develop over decades and centuries and becomes conveyed through architecture and distinctive planning. There are crucial aspects which make up the identity of a city, usually constituting an accurate reflection of the identity of its inhabitants and their way of life. One of the identity elements intrinsic to the city, is its representation of religion (Olson *et al.*, 2013). Religious elements are embedded throughout the city, both through the presence of built places of worship, with distinct features and recognizable styles, as well as through the occasional existence of public worship or wholly sites (Olson *et al.*, 2013). In geography, religion holds a central place in the making of a place, as it imbues a geographical area with meaning and experience personal to all in different ways. (Olson *et al.*, 2013) Religion has become more and more discussed in recent scholarship, along with the increased presence of religion in our daily lives, as well as the increasing existence of alternative spiritualties and the progressive shaping of an important non-religious way of life (Olson *et al.*, 2013). In addition to this, religion and religious motives have

become embedded in urban design as a way to be tied to a broad regional cultural context (Olson *et al*., 2013). Moser (2012; 2018) explores the way in which new cities are using Islamic themes and 'pan-Islamic idioms' in the development of Middle Eastern and South East Asian cities, to create a superficial yet global Islamic culture. The author further explains the ways in which new cities 'are not only expected to spark economic growth but to function as public statements about the aspirations and ideology of the state, whether they are to nurture high-tech ambitions, reinforce an official national narrative or communicate religious alliances' (Moser, 2012: 50).

The urban environment is often used to express deeper meanings. Cities have been built with the ulterior motive to further and establish political power, serving as a constant and eternal reminder of the order to live by. Religion and political power are two identity traits intrinsic to cities and their expression in new cities can be seen as mere replicas of real traits, taken out of their contexts and put to an artificial use by planners. New master planned cities are built from scratch, and do not go through times accumulating culture and history in a natural way, the built environment attesting for the years it has lived. New master planned cities often resort to the replication of historical traits, creating artificial environments and false or misguided celebrations of culture and past historical periods.

New Master planned cities are strategically built to be ahistorical, but nonetheless often seek to engage the history of the area in which they are located, through the exploration of distinct time periods and reflection of temporal elements in the built environment. A former colonial city often exhibits symbols of its past, and interestingly, certain new cities exploit colonial histories in their planning to tie themselves to a national context. In colonial times, urban planning, served an official purpose: creating efficient societies for colonial entities to easily assert their power and extract valuable raw resources (Legg *et al*., 2008; Ashcroft, 2011).

Moreover, colonial urban planning served as a social, cultural and political tool as 'urban planning proved invaluable in efforts on the part of European powers to realize the twin objectives of domination and socio-political control' (Njoh, 2009: 301). The literature around this topic explores the way colonial planning and architecture symbolized the entrenchment of the colonizer and became a tool to inspire respect and manufacture imperial legitimacy (Njoh, 2008, 2009; Mitchell, 1988). The power exerted was both political and cultural, in that it would ensure the disappearance of traditional local customs and architecture and its replacement by imperially accepted components (Legg *et al.*, 2008; Mitchell, 1988). The study of this body of literature helps us understand some of the mechanisms in place in Egyptian societies, that have influenced its urban history thus far.

In addition to this, some of the literature reflects the current trend of utilizing colonial motives and resort back to colonial rationales of building in the creation of new cities. Moser (2012; 2013) reveals the stark similarities in using pseudo-religious motives in the urban environment in the Middle East, which replicates the sort of false cultural setting created in colonies, to suit European ideals and visions of a region, no matter how misguided these ideals may have been (Moser, 2015; 2018). Egypt is a country with both an important colonial history and an involvement in building a colossal contemporary new city, and can as such be a valuable case study to further inform existing literature on this matter.

In the same way, the post-colonial and post independent times were pivotal moments in terms of planning and urban branding. There is a significant break between colonizing and colonized societies, characterized by the expression of 'an oppositional form of knowledge that criticized Eurocentric conceptions of the world' (King, 2000: 262). Then, the city is positioned as a political tool, serving one main purpose: re-asserting national sentiment and cohesion

through the re-appropriation of cultural elements (King, 2000). In its break with colonial times, post-colonial planning kept features of colonial planning and embedded it in post-colonial societies (Moser, 2015). Post-colonial planning is inspired by urban trends and the linkages between these foreign inspirations and reclaimed traditional elements became a reflection of global imperialism. This trend can be seen through new cities' persistent will to imitate and resemble cities such as Dubai, Singapore or Shanghai (Watson, 2014).

Existing scholarship makes no mention of a subsequent shift between post-independent and contemporary trends of planning. Instead, post-independent planning appears to have been the force shaping contemporary new cities. The one defining feature of contemporary new cities would have to be the obsession with modernity or indeed illusions of it. In fact, contemporary new cities' constant expression modernity uniqueness and innovation only result in them becoming ordinary and standard, with many common feature from master-plan to master-plan no matter the location (Watson, 2014). There is little scholarly attention paid to the ways in which new cities evolve in the years after they are built. Part of this absence is due to the fact that since most new cities are still underway, there has not yet been enough time to examine the ways in which they may evolve over time. There is no telling whether it is possible to manage and control a city sufficiently to prevent its population from shaping it and progressively building and appropriating proper cultural elements in the urban environment. Looking at certain Egyptian master planned project might provide some insight as to the evolution taking place in master planned cities, which is not otherwise explored in current academic literature.

2.4 Objectives and ambitions of contemporary master planned urban projects

Recently, there has been a shift in the very way of conceptualizing new cities. Diverging from the original vision of the new city as a fix to the ills of existing urban centers, new cities are

now conceptualized as having a purpose going beyond those originally outlined. Different ideals and objectives which shape the conceptualization of new cities can thus be identified to be studied in depth.

New cities are being built and labeled as being 'smart' cities. They are geared towards and centered around technological innovation. These cities are built with the purpose to create cities in a new way, to avoid many of the ills and issues currently plaguing cities. Existing literature draws a blurred picture of the fields of Smart cities and Eco cities, as both seem intertwined and connected in more than one way. Master planned smart cities are orienting technological improvement towards a respect of the environment, and developing specifically to do so (Rapoport, 2014). These cities are reinventing the city and transforming it into a purposeful use of the urban environment to live in harmony with nature and in a sustainable ecological perspective (Rapoport 2014). These new cities can be qualified as mega projects or mega developments (Moser *et al.*, 2015; Caprotti 2014) as per 'their scale, strategic positioning within national environmental-economic transitions and ecological modernization strategies, and their roles as key mediators of urban and national imaginations' (Caprotti, 2014: 13). These cities not only represent an emphasis on technology or ecological projects but the 'materialization of flows of capital, knowledge and ideology in the urban arena' (Caprotti, 2014: 16). They serve a much deeper purpose, shaping new societies with distinct social links and relationships.

Similarly, new cities dubbed to be entrepreneurial have introduced novel elements to the creation of cities, completely changing their organization, notably by introducing important elements of spatial exclusion, segregation and resistance (Hall *et al.*, 1996; Watson 2014). Indeed, 'Though the language of the master plan emphasizes that "the New Capital City is for all the people", evidently "all" will not be equally welcome everywhere' (Vale, 1992: 173).

Furthermore, this model's establishment of a new mode of urban governance impacts social justice in major ways (Hall *et al*., 1996), importantly through 'removal of less powerful actors who are occupying land earmarked for urban renewal and extension' (Watson, 2014: 227). This new mode of urban governance is being justified by the theory that 'postwar forms of urban government are often ill-equipped for pursuit of the new entrepreneurialism and are increasingly interpreted as part of the problem of poor economic performance' (Jessop, 1997: 10). Lastly this model of urbanization promotes linkages and connectedness between local and global scales, often to the demise of local inhabitants (Hall *et al*., 1996).

As Egypt's new capital is set to integrate elements of the smart city, eco city and knowledge city model, I will use this literature to question the ways in which this city will be an answer to some of the developmental concerns currently faced by the country.

2.5 Conclusion

Despite the burgeoning scholarship on new city projects across the Global South, Egypt's new cities have not received any scholarly attention. This study seeks to bridge this gap by identifying the major waves of new city building in Egypt from colonial times to the present in order to gain insight into how city-building approaches, ideologies, and actors have and have not changed over time. Despite claims by city-builders that they are building from scratch as a break with the past, I suggest that new cities often perpetuate ideologies and assumptions about 'modernity' and 'development'.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 The principal methods for piecing together Egypt's new city trends

My research fills the current gap in literature in understanding the evolution of new cities in Egypt, focusing specifically on three main waves of new city building in the country: the colonial period, the decades following independence, and the past decade. This thesis investigates the forces that drive and shape planned city building in Egypt and seeks to tease out some of the differences and similarities of new city building across periods. I focus on identifying the main actors, the ideas they were inspired by, the financing, and planning philosophies of each era, and the ambitions for new city projects in each era. My research seeks to compare and contrast these three waves of new city-building, which required the collection of a great deal of data over a period of over a century.

This research thus required the use of several methods. The main research method in the writing of this thesis consists of library research, using scholarly texts to understand planning philosophies and practices in each era, the major forces driving and shaping new city-building in each era, and the key stakeholders. However, given my focus on the recent decision to construct a new capital in the country, grey literature became a key component of my research, and provided me with an opportunity to conduct an analysis of grey literature, to interpret the events unfolding in this modern project.

3.2 Library and online research

In order to collect data on new city-building in three eras, I used multiple databases, including Scopus and Google Scholar. I was informed in designing the process by Flick *et al*.'s (2004) method of 'computer supported research' (Flick *et al*., 2004: 269) to find relevant and

supporting literature in a systematic way and select the best possible sources for the purpose of my research. Scopus is an efficient software, granting access to a large database of materials and with malleable criteria to personalize my search and adapt it to the project at hand. My first goal using this software was to find foundational texts. As I had broadly designed the topic of each chapter of my thesis with my supervisor, I was able to conduct keyword searches on the topics and that would be of use to refine my search and find relevant data. Some key books and articles on Egypt's urban history allowed me to identify sub-themes and categories that I wanted to explore, to build, detail and ground my arguments.

Initially, I limited my search to peer-reviewed academic work in English. While these criteria were adequate, it quickly appeared that I needed to make changes to them as the results were limited. I found it hard to find detailed and precise materials that were appropriate given the focus of my research. The first step taken to fix this issue was to extend the scope of languages used in the conduction of my research, by researching materials in French. To do so, I used the database of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) as well as that of the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Both of these are large databases that allowed me to find many additional texts. After thoroughly looking through these databases, in both French and English, and testing various entries to find the most suitable and pertinent texts, I was able to classify the materials I had by theme.

I used published academic scholarship to research planning practices in the colonial era (Chapter 4) and the era of post-independence in Egypt (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 examines the current wave of new cities, particularly the construction of Egypt's new capital city, New Capital City Cairo. For this reason, my search for information was not very efficient, as only a handful of sources answering to my criteria could be found. I was able to find important and relevant

academic sources crucial to understand to understand the broader social, political, and economic context of Egypt in recent years even but could not access much information about the recent development of new cities specifically.

I turned to grey literature to find more information about the current Egyptian projects and their perception. Indeed, with the rise of the internet in the last decade, and prevalence of news and information dissemination online, grey literature offers a new kind of access to current events (Schöpfel *et al*., 2010; Corbin *et al*., 2014). This is confirmed by Hess's (2013) finding that 'the World Wide Web and information communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionised the way individuals communicate with one another' and this revolution world ruled by information grey literature – in its many different forms - provides a raw form of information (Hess, 2013; Corbin *et al*., 2014), very often descriptive which can be capitalized upon to broaden the scope of research projects (Hess, 2013). This kind of descriptive information 'is almost like reading field notes collected for another purpose. Such largely uninterested findings can stimulate thinking' (Corbin *et al*., 2014), and thus served as the data for my analysis and interpretation. As I am not an Arabic speaker, I looked into articles in English published in Egyptian newspapers and was surprised to find there were a wide number of articles I could access in newspapers such as *Egypt Independent*, *The Egypt National Post*, or *Egypt Today*. While these papers have written a number of articles providing descriptive coverage of the construction of new cities in Egypt, I found these papers to be quite descriptive in many cases. I looked at newspaper sources foreign to Egypt to find more information, and came across several articles written mostly by North American sources such as Bloomberg or NBC, which explored the development of new city projects, with a more critical point a view. I also accessed government websites and information, through the *New Urban Community Authority*, and *the*

State Information Service website, which can both be accessed in English. Lastly, I accessed

details of the masterplan and renderings of the new city, by exploring the websites of the

planners (5+UDC and Cube Consultants), once again available in English. When looking at grey

literature, I tried to be aware of the potential bias existing in the sources and it helped to design a

selection process in the compilation and review of materials. Moreover, as pointed out by Paez

(2017), 'despite the potential challenges involved in searching for evidence in gray literature, it is

important for grey literature to be included in a systematic review, given its potential to provide a

balanced view of the evidence (Paez, 2017: 236-237). Selecting grey literature allowed me to

broaden the scope of my research significantly and increase the amount of material I was

reviewing to fully assess the importance of the projects I was exploring.

3.3 Construction of visual support

As this research process was almost overwhelmingly textual, I wanted to support this

research with some key figures that would make sense of the data I had collected on the many

new city projects in three major waves. For this reason, I started building a timeline that included

all three time periods examined in this thesis (Figure 1). In the course of my readings, any

important event or time period mentioned became a part of this timeline. This process was

helpful to visualise exactly how events unfolded and were related to each other. In another effort

to visualise the topics that I was researching, I created maps (Map 1-4), that depict the new city

projects being built at different times, and showing the different generations of construction on

which my thesis focuses. Again, this process was helpful in cultivating a better spatial

understanding of my research and visually displaying information that could then be analyzed.

In order to maintain an idea of all the different cities I was working with, I created a table that outlines the different information I considered to be important about each of the cities I was studying (Table 1, Appendix). This tool made it easy to visualise, in the way of a dataset, the information I had to analyse. This table allowed for a visualisation of the factual similarities and differences that exist within and between time periods and cities, and was key to my investigation of the urban entities I was researching.

3.4 Limitations of the study

When designing my research topic and questions, I decided to focus on three major time periods that represent different political regimes in order to make comparisons across eras. This required a great deal of data collection, which I have presented in maps, a timeline of projects, and in the text of the thesis. However, the thesis does not aim to include every single aspect or element of the new city projects, but rather focuses on the planning philosophies, main actors, goals, and ideologies of the projects in order to offer a meaningful comparative analysis across three major time periods. While the new cities I examine in each of my three empirical chapters provide insights into Egypt's changing political, economic, and social, I was unable to conduct field research or conduct interviews, which would yield a different type of information and would allow the expansion of this topic into different areas. This thesis is intended as an introduction to the forces and actors shaping new city building and an exploration of why new cities have consistently been adopted as a development model in Egypt across different political regimes and how the projects change or remain the same over time. Interviews would reveal tensions and conflicts among the ruling elites who advocated for these projects, the reasons for

their failure or the gap between the vision and the reality, and would provide insight into how

residents respond to and negotiate these projects.

Chapter 4: Urban Practices in Colonial Egypt

4.1 Introduction

Like many countries on the African continent, Egypt was colonized by the British, gaining independence only in the years following World War II. The colonial period, in which, at this state, I am most interested, started in 1882, when Egypt became occupied by British troops in the aftermath of the Anglo-Egyptian war (Tignor, 2016). From this point on, Britain maintains a presence in Egypt, which became a part of the Ottoman empire as early as 1517. This becomes a period of veiled protectorate, a long period of white settlement and unofficial British rule. It was only in 1914 that a unilateral declaration was issued, formally declaring Egypt a part of the British empire (Tignor, 2016). The status of Egypt remained the same until 1956 (Tignor, 2016). After a lengthy and tenuous period of conflict over the Suez Canal, the country becomes able to declare a long-awaited independence from the British.

British imperialism is characterized by its will and insistence to assert control on the colonized people, particularly through the construction and modification of the built environment, subsequently tailored to fit colonial ideals of control and domination. It is in the context of British imperialism that this study of the evolution of Egyptian urban planning begins, in regards to new city building. This chapter will seek to provide an understanding of what drove the construction of new cities in the colonial period, and gage the full extent of the planning philosophies and power structures of the times. To understand fully the complexities of the topic, I will first look at colonial rationales for new city building, broadening the scope of research by examining formally declared goals, as well as possible unofficial ambitions of the colonial enterprise. Secondly, I will look at the way in which, starting in Britain, planning became a full-fledged systematized discipline, internationalized through its thorough implementation in

European powers' vast empires. To ground our understanding of the situation, we can establish a map representing all the different new city projects of the time, to gain a better idea of spatial patterns. Lastly, I will narrow the focus to examine the example of Heliopolis, a 20th century new city: an illustration of the mode of new city building prevalent in Egypt at the times.
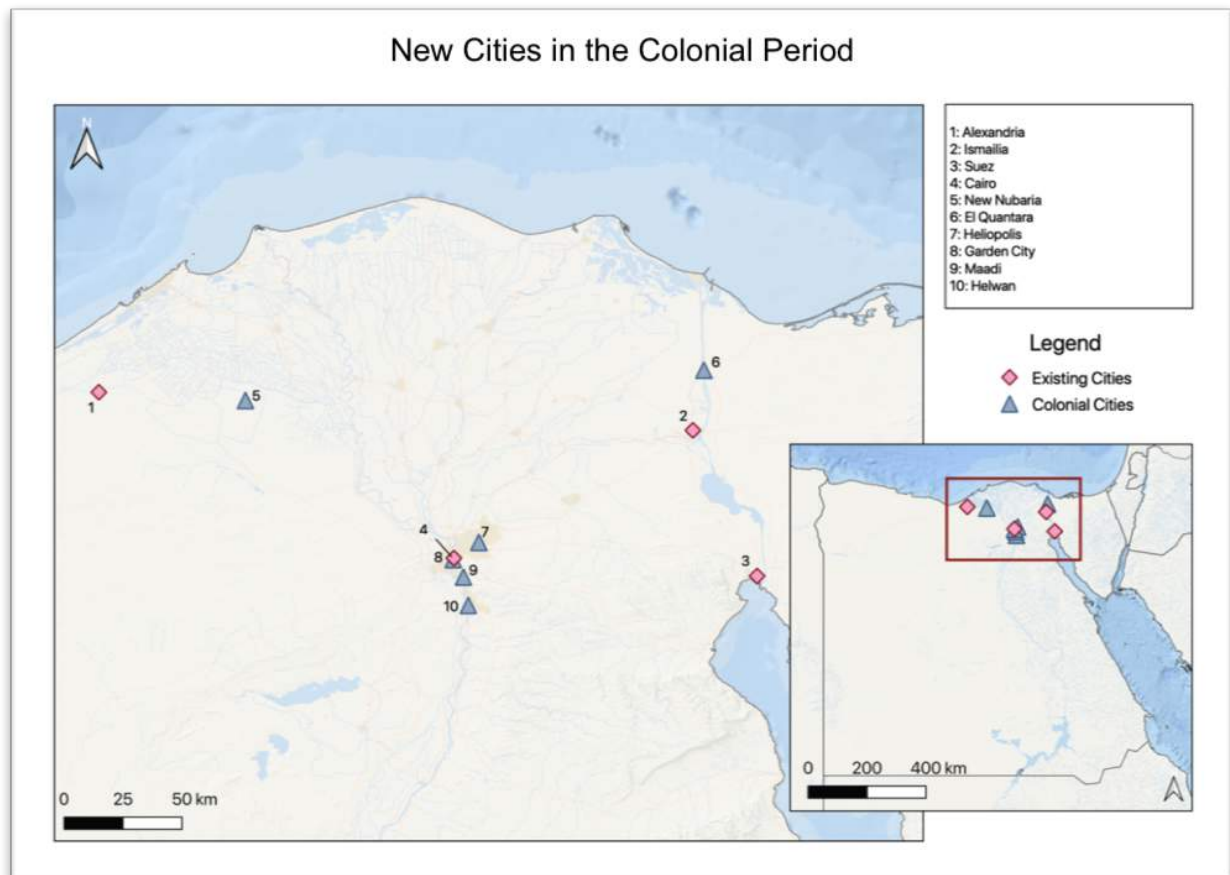
Map 1: New Cities in the Colonial Period

4.2 The colonial rationales for new city building

By the beginning of the 20th century, British imperialism was a system well in place and operating, with central goals and motivations. City building is a key part of the colonial toolkit, and a key strategy for the expression of power and domination (Moser, 2018), allowing colonial authorities to 'influence the structure and purpose of the built environment' (Njoh, 2007: 1).

The official discourse regarding colonial urban planning identified the rationales and goals of the enterprise as being noble ones. The objectives set were meant to ensure that sound architectural standards were met, to create a safe and durable built environment for the local inhabitants (Njoh, 2007). Another important goal set out by the colonial entities was to employ urban planning as a tool of public health, to protect the lives of the inhabitants of a given country or city, by providing them with a sanitary environment, preventing the spread of pandemics, if not eradicating them completely (Njoh, 2007). While these official goals seem to be positive ones, Njoh (2007) argues that they masked the broader and, in hindsight, accomplished goals of the colonial enterprise, ones completely disinterested from the wellbeing of locals. The author denounces the existence of whole communities, which saw their lifestyles and habits altered in a new, and sometimes inappropriate built environment. These hidden goals are identified as, but are not limited to 'self-preservation', 'cultural assimilation', 'political domination', 'social control', 'territorial conquest', and 'the perpetuation and consolidation of colonial rule' (Njoh, 2007). These goals act as a series of interconnected mechanisms all working in the same direction. In this way, political domination, being one form of social control was a key ingredient, in both time and space, to the establishment and the perpetuation of colonial rule. Self-preservation and cultural assimilation on the other hand, would act more so as processes, forcefully precipitated by the British onto the colonized population, to ensure the smooth and lasting course of territorial conquest.

As such, colonial urban planning, emerged as a discipline with undeniable purposes and goals, 'particularly those relating to profit, prestige and political power – of the colonial powers' (Njoh, 2007: 1). Njoh (2007), explores the ways in which colonial powers asserted power and control on colonized indigenous people, including through a strategic use of ideology, put into

effect efficiently by the practice of colonial urban planning. Although urban planners were meant to act as apolitical members, it is through their work that broad political goals and achievements were attained. The focus placed on the wellbeing of the local people and inhabitants often being overshadowed by the political nature of their work (Njoh, 2007, Myers, 2003). Urban planners were responsible for the establishment of colonial sovereignty and the defence of land from other European power. This was done in part through the construction of comprehensive road networks to ensure a possibility of fast and efficient travel for the army and the police if need be. Urban planners were also responsible for the design of 'the monumental structures that served as the home of the colonial governments and symbols of European superiority' (Njoh, 2007: 11), features necessary for colonial domination.

As mentioned, the emphasis in the British mode of planning was placed strongly on safety and sanitation in the city, and 'their evolving theories about health, race and human habitats were highly influential in shaping colonial policy in urban landscapes' (Moser, 2018: 242). While this seems to be an irrefutable act towards the colonized populations, it appears to be in fact an act geared to further British status in the colonies. Indeed, Moser (2018: 242) explains how 'great care was taken to develop ways to safeguard the white population from the perils of the tropics, which were seen to take a particularly hard toll on the "white" body', further denoting how 'concern about disease in the colonies was intimately linked to power relations between the rulers and the ruled' (Moser, 2018: 242), showing the hypocritical nature of the British focus. The sanitation practices transferred by the British to the colonies were in fact appropriate to the British standards, and were meant for the British population abroad to live comfortably. In the case of Egypt specifically, this is explained by the long period of veiled British governance, during which British and Europeans settled in Egypt, essentially forming white settler

communities in the country, which needed to feel at ease and safe in the country they had chosen to reside in, and allowing for the transfer and internationalization of various practices.

4.3 The systematization and internationalization of the planning process

In the years between the two world wars, Britain was focused on recovering from destruction and making efforts of construction and reconstruction in difficult times. It is precisely in these difficult times that the discipline of urban planning emerged. It is in this same period, that Britain's empire was at its largest, Britain priding itself on having control over an empire on which 'the sun never sets'. It is because of this extensive empire, that town planning could emerge in Britain, providing any British creations with a great market for export or transfer (Home, 1990). A complex process quite accurately summarized as the export of planning, using 'the network of colonial relationships to convey such phenomena - on a selective and uneven basis — to the dependent territories' (Home, 1990: 23). Colonial urban planning took many forms and followed different movements over time. Some cities, though not most, were left untouched by the British, as they 'did take an interest in the conservation of great historic cities such as Cairo, Alexandria and Jerusalem' (Home, 1990: 24). Most cities, which did not present obvious historical or cultural important (according to European norms), were either re-built or built from scratch, something visible in the case of Egypt. Home (1990) presents an interesting classification for the ways in which this export was made, pointing to the formalized nature of the transfer process. Home (1990) starts by elucidating categories of colonial status, differentiating between places under direct rule, protectorates under indirect rule, precolonial urban societies and white settler societies. According to the author, places under direct rule, saw a very particular kind of new communities emerge, that were based on important road creations

and improvements, the clearance of slums and the creation of housing in their stead (Home, 1990). These cities were usually port cities, 'designed mainly to facilitate the evacuation of raw materials from the colonial territories for onward transmission to the metropolis' (Njoh, 2007: 10). The communities that emerged in protectorates under indirect rule were in their way vastly different to that. They relied on clear layouts, and were the home to administrative headquarters, usually to facilitate activities such as mining or railway transport (Home, 1990). Precolonial urban society were, according to Home (1990), identifiable through the important conservation and the creation of important Garden Suburbs and of Parks. Finally, white settler societies mostly saw the emergence of company town and of Garden cities. As previously stated, Egypt's place in this classification is unclear, but one could say that its status oscillates between a white settler and a protectorate under indirect rule status. Indeed, the period of veiled protectorate saw some creations emerge, creations that are compliant with those described in the white settler category, including in its mention of Garden Cities.

The Garden city movement was founded in 1899, with Ebenezer Howard's creation of the Garden city association. This revolutionary movement – for its time – relied on Howard's wish and mission to create 'balanced areas of residential, industrial, and commercial spaces, surrounded by greenbelt and agricultural areas, to produce a healthy living environment— smokeless, slumless communities— for the urban dweller' (Hutchison, 2010: 286). These utopian urban communities were initially built in Letchworth, England, known as the first successful implementation of the Garden city. The second one being Welwyn, and both being built in Hertfordshire, north of London (Buder, 1990). These cities were in accordance with Howard's very particular plan, thought out to create a harmonious 'blend of the city and nature, but without the problems of pollution and overcrowding found in the large industrial city'

(Hutchison, 2010: 287). According to the Garden city movement the ideal city should be built in a radial pattern, and extend over 6,000 acres (Howard, 1902). The garden city plan further includes the existence of six boulevards, 120 feet wide, meant to extend from the center. In these plans, there is a clear separation of different land uses, both the boulevards and the many open parks creating strict boundaries for the order of the town (Howard, 1902). These boundaries are not only present within the city, but also around it: a greenbelt surrounding the garden city, mostly made of agricultural land use (Howard, 1902). The many different land uses that are included in the plan of this city theoretically allow its self-sufficiency. In the broader plan, Ebenezer Howard (1902) plans for garden cities to exist as a ring positioned around larger cities, all connected by rail. At the high time of imperialism, the Garden City movement becomes international and no longer limits itself to Europe. This internationalisation of the Garden city movement will be tremendously driven by colonialism, the dominant force in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The garden city movement is one that holds importance in the colonial urban history of Egypt, particularly when looking at the case study of Heliopolis, a compelling example of twentieth century British colonial urban planning.

4.4 Heliopolis, a British new town in Egypt

In 1905, a Belgian entrepreneur, the Baron Édouard Empain, made the decision to create a New city, with a specific goal in mind: to prove to Egyptians that they are not exploiting their land the right way (Ilbert, 1985). Indeed, up until then, Egypt's urban settlements were all located near the banks of the Nile, known as the only place in which it was feasible to build a city (Ilbert, 1985). Empain's mission becomes to prove to them that a city can, in fact, thrive

even located away from the river, a demonstration that 'the desert was as profitable and habitable as the banks of the Nile' (Ilbert, 1985: 37). He chooses a location ten kilometers to the North east of Cairo, in an area at the time considered to be completely in the desert (Ilbert, 1981). By founding the Cairo Electric Railways and Heliopolis Oases Company, Empain successfully manages to be the sole man in charge of planning and becomes fully in control of the construction and possible future expansion of the city (Ilbert, 1981). As previously stated, Egypt's governance status, prevents us from characterizing Heliopolis as a colonial town. One can however justify its characterization as white settler town, a Garden city, born from paternalist rationales, and thought out as a spectacle of architecture compliant with the pleasantries of the European lifestyles of the time.

Heliopolis, possibly due to its nature of a fully planned city is one that is quite carefully zoned by Empain. Social classes are meant to coexist peacefully within the bounds of the city, but there are no areas in which they can live together. In the South and the East of the city, neighborhoods are created to welcome opulent residents in more than comfortable estates (Ilbert, 1981). The neighborhood of Korba, located precisely in this south-east area is described as holding 'd'opulents immeubles de rapport et d'élégantes villas [accueillant] une population bourgeoise et cosmopolite' [Opulent buildings of high standing and elegant towns [home to] an upper class and cosmopolitan population.] (Volait, 2003: 3), the home of white settlers, mostly Europeans. On the opposite side of the city, to avoid any contact, is the much lower income 'indigenous' neighborhood. This part of the city is the home of Egyptians, the 'population autochtone, de condition très modeste, travaillant à la construction et à l'entretien de la ville ou au service domestique de la population bourgeoise' [indigenous population, living in poor conditions, working to the construction and upkeep of the town, or in the service of the upper-

class population] (Volait, 2003: 4). The rest of the town is also organised hierarchically, however less strictly, still providing us with a reminder of the British colonial obsession with race and class separation. The rest of the town, is meant to house public servants, for whom different types of houses and bungalows are built and assigned depending on their ranks and statuses. Heliopolis's zoning and subsequent organization is dominated by the existence of large avenues, such as the *Rue de Rivoli* (named after the famous Parisian street) or yet again the *Avenue des Pyramides*, described as 'un parkway structuré en deux chaussées séparées par un terre-plein central verdoyant et arboré auquel font écho les jardins privés devançant les constructions à l'alignement' [a parkway structured as two sidewalks separated by a strip of greenery an foliage echoed by the private gardens which precede the construction of the street] (Volait, 2003: 3). All of these elements of design being consistent with Howard's plans for Garden cities. As a part of the organisation of Heliopolis, Empain is quick to install Metro and Tramway lines, to ensure the connection of the city to other urban poles, as well as to Cairo, the center of activity (Ilbert, 1981). Empain also ensures the creation of a thorough and effective sanitation system, draconian rules and regulations based on the British system of legislation 'la plus avancées en matière de salubrité de l'habitat' [the most advanced in matters of habitat hygiene and sanitation] (Volait, 2003: 3). This is in accordance with the official British objectives for colonial urban planning as previously discussed. Heliopolis once it's construction is finished, holds enough jobs to not be classified as a dormitory-city for Cairo and has a little over thirty thousand inhabitants, as preconized by Howard's plan for the functioning of Garden cities.

Architecturally, Heliopolis is a very particular creation, especially given the 'slightly affected architecture of the town - oriental even if in pseudo-taste - [projecting] the image of a "modern" type of town but, nonetheless, "Egyptian" in character' (Ilbert, 1985: 40). Meant to

become one of the important cities of Egypt, Heliopolis' principal architectural purpose is to remind the British of Egypt's place as a stop on the way to India (Mitchell 1988, Volait, 2003), especially through the extensive use of 'une esthétique indo- sarrasine' [an Indo-Saracen aesthetic] (Volait, 2003: 5). For this reason, Heliopolis is built in a very particular, and some would say, unusually artificial architecture. One of the main features of the city lying with the construction of a replica of the Saint Sophie basilica of Istanbul, at the very center of the new city (Volait, 2003). The residence built for the Baron Empain, is another one of the landmarks of the city. It is a mansion 'improbable et fulgurant caprice néo-khmer ou néo-hindou construit par Alexandre Marcel en 1907-1911 en béton armé d'après les brevets de l'entrepreneur français François Hennebique' [Unlikely and dazzling neo- Khmer or neo-Hindu whim built by Alexandre Marcek un 1907-1911 in reinforced concrete after plans made by French entrepreneur François Hennebique] (Volait, 2003: 3). It is also described as one of the many characteristic 'pseudo-Oriental Chateaux' [pseudo-Oriental castle] (Ilbert, 1985: 39) that make up Heliopolis. Apart from these landmarks, Heliopolis is built at the crossroads of a variety of architectural movements in vogue in the Europe of the time. It is important to note that the architecture prescribed by Empain, while aesthetically pleasing to the European eye, amateur of Beaux-Arts buildings and Art-Déco décor, faces an important issue of practicality and feasibility given the context in which it is transferred. For this reason, Heliopolis will become a symbol of architectural eclecticism, mixing traditional European motives with practical indigenous elements (Ilbert, 1985). Volait (2003) remarks the existence of traditional looking European houses, holding within them 'salamliks', the central reception hall of a house, completely closed off without any windows (an unusual room to have in Europe), which holds the of remaining fresh at all times, even in the most arid of climates. In the same way, Ilbert (1985) reports on

studies made during the planning of Heliopolis, to find the necessary elements to include in the 'ideal basic habitat' to 'provide the fellahin with a satisfactory environment' (Ilbert, 1985: 39). The word *fellahin* referring to the working man, usually working at the service of the higher classes of Europeans living in Heliopolis. For example, the original windows thought out by Empain's planners were modified, to supress the fancier, and more fragile windows originally thought of, by 'more customary openings' (Ilbert, 1985: 39), considered more suitable and appropriate. While efforts to adapt foreign practices were made in Egypt, Heliopolis represents one of the largest financial investments made in the region, and fails to be a convincing example of colonial attention to local matters especially considering its inclusion of 'an enormous hotel (at that time the largest and most luxurious in the world), the cathedral and other Christian churches, the clubs, the race course and Luna Park (one of the world's first)' (Ilbert, 1985: 38).

4.5 Conclusion

Overall, the study of Heliopolis, with its complicated mixture of orientalist architectures and intense patterns of racial and status-based exclusion makes it appear as a colonial endeavour. This new city corresponds to the search for a spectacle for the imperial power, and a habitable haven for the white colonizers, fitting most of the unofficial motivations set out by the colonial power of the century. The study of Heliopolis especially confirms the theory that colonial urban planning was based on inadequate transfers, which introduced societies to patterns of segregation previously unknown to them. Further than that, this city is a testament to the colonial era of paternalist and orientalist creations, in no way motivated by the improvement of the lives of locals, but oriented to ensure the comfort of rich expatriated Europeans. Heliopolis is considered a successful urban endeavour by some, especially as it has now become an upper-class

neighborhood of Cairo. Overall, the main elements of colonial city building constituted a process

of inadequate transfers to the Egyptian setting, fulfilling problematic and unfavorable goals,

permanently altering societies. Heliopolis never quite managed to separate itself from its colonial

origins of exclusion and separation, hindering its abilities to thrive in time, and perpetuating

colonial patterns further transporting them into modern times.

Chapter 5: New cities in a newly independent Egypt

5.1 Introduction

In 1947, Egypt finally becomes an independent country, free from the British colonial power who had been occupying the country for a century. In 1947, the Suez crisis precipitates the partial withdrawal of British troops from the country, nonetheless maintaining an important political involvement there. The violence of the crisis leads to the growth and exacerbation of both national and anti-British feelings. Ultimately, in 1952, the Egyptian revolution breaks out, eliminating the Egyptian monarchy as it had been set up by the British, fully dislodges all British military and political occupation in Egypt to finally establish the modern republic of Egypt (Botman, 1991, AbouKorin 2010). The decolonization process is a long and tenuous one, determined to build the foundation for the future of the independent nation (Botman, 1991). I can study the trends and patterns of Egypt's post-colonial urban planning, its complex construction of a number of new cities in the span of only a few years. This will enable me to establish the dynamics and existing pervasive patterns which I can witness overtime. To do so, I will first look into the notion of post-colonial city, to examine the different forms and main tenants of the overall concept. I will also consider the details of Egypt's National Urban Policy Security (NUPS) plan (UN Habitat, 1993), to reflect on the goals it set out and the reasons why it was put in place. Lastly, I will review the apparent ramifications of the NUPS, to conclude on the possible successes and failures of the program.

New Cities in the Post Independent Period

1: Alexandria
2: Ismailia
3: Suez
4: Cairo
5: New Borg El Arab
6: New Damietta
7: El Salheya El Gedida
8: Al Nubaria
9: Obour
10: 10th of Ramadan City
11: Badr
12: El Shorouk City
13: Cheik Zayed City
14: 6th of October City
15: Nasr City
16: 15th of May City
17: New Fayoum
18: New Beni Suef
19: New Minya
20: New Assiut
21: New Aswan
22: Toshka
23: New Qena
24: New Tiba
25: Sharq El Owainat

Legend
○ Post - Independant Cities
◇ Existing Cities

Map 2: New Cities in Egypt in the Post Independent Period

5.2 The post-colonial city

Many countries lived through decades of uninterrupted colonial occupation and control, years during which locals had no authority over any aspect of the management of their countries and surroundings, including in matters regarding urbanism and the built environment. This refers to 'distinctive social, spatial, and cultural characteristics of towns and cities in recently decolonized countries where European traders, settlers, and colonial officials had lived (or were still living) and whose urban development they had largely controlled' (King, 2009). After the decolonization process, an important process began, consisting in reclaiming a so far impersonal and un-national urban landscape. From this emerged a whole new concept referred to today as

the post-colonial city (King, 2009; Chamber *et al.*, 2015). As explored by King (2009), the postcolonial city can, and has been defined in three different ways throughout the years. At first, it referred to the cities which were the control hubs of vast imperial powers: the decision-making cores of the colonial machine. In this way, cities such as Paris or London, were once considered post-colonial cities (King, 2009; Chambers *et al.*, 2015). At the time of the fall of empires, these cities were left with a completely new function, and had to go through a transformative process, to find their place in the new world order. King also explores the cities, located in colonized countries, which were central to the colonial process. In their presence in a host country, the colonizing force often focused on the development of one city specifically. This city became both the symbol of the colonial power, as well as the practical hub of centralized production, transport and export: the foundation of the exploitative and extractive colonial relationship (Chambers *et al.*, 2015). These cities had to be completely remodelled to erase the colonial ideals they represented and enforced. Such cities had to be reclaimed by locals, who had so far been kept out of decision making processes and were newly responsible for their running. These cities were also heavily charged with social and cultural elements of power and domination (Short, 2012). To ensure the compliance of local populations, colonizers often resorted to architectural processes meant to inspire respect and intimidate any movement of resistance or revolt. Colonial powers legitimized their stay by engraving their presence in the built environment. A large part of making the city postcolonial consisted in what could seem like superficial acts, which hold great national and patriotic significance (Short, 20212, Chambers *et al.*, 2015). Indeed, 'in different colonial towns and capital cities, the architecture and urban design of the imperial power, whether modest or grandiose, had been consciously conceived to convey cultural as well as political authority' (King, 2009: 2). Necessary changes range from changing street names to

removing statues: destroying all symbols and remnants of past colonial presence. The most important challenges in remaking cities to fit postcolonial ideals were rooted in social conflicts and issues. Colonial powers would set up important ethnic and racial divides within the cities they inhabited (Myers, 2003), clear boundaries to ensure colonial elites were not in contact with local lower classes: 'dual cities, ethnically, socially, and spatially segregated between the "European" town and "native" settlement' (King, 2009: 2). As King (2009) points out, the issues that exist with rebuilding and rebranding existing newly independent colonial cities. The making of the postcolonial city appears to be a timely process, unwieldy and unstable, especially seeing as 'endowing the city with a totally new national identity, one that draws on its own vernacular cultures, representational spaces, and modes of signification, was not only a much longer-term project but also, because of competing regional, ethnic, linguistic, and other tensions in newly established nation-states, a deeply contentious one' (King, 2009: 2). King points out that in many contexts, these postcolonial cities could not change and thrive. The most important reason for this lies with the creation of a power vacuum where colonizers used to be. This means that local elites would take their place and continue perpetrating existing inequalities: profiting those who are already in positions of power and privilege. The last type of postcolonial cities will be the central focus on of this chapter. Those are cities who were constructed for the sole purpose of breaking with past colonial rule. These cities, built from scratch, comply with and advance all of the new national ideals promoted by recently appointed independent governments (Yeoh, 2001). They represent huge projects, spread out over decades. They are complex innovative plans, which often rely on careful zoning, and newfound symbolic architecture, often derived from local culture and religion (Yeoh, 2001). Such a plan was put in place by president Sadat in Egypt in 1979 (Sadat, speech), for the creation of a number of master-planned cities, who in the long

term disappointed the ideals they were created to confirm.

5.3 Egypt's post-independent urban plan

In 1974, President Sadat announced to the whole of Egypt his plan for a new and improved national urban landscape (Sadat, 1974). Sadat's plan was motivated by the so far limited geographical development in Egypt, where only three main cities were successful, functioning and habited: Cairo, Suez and Alexandria. Sadat's ambitions plan was twofold, it relied both on the modernization and updating of existing hubs, as well as the building of nineteen new cities. Sadat promoted the 'establishment of new cities, a number of harbours and towns attached to them along our long maritime coast, lines' (Sadat, 1974), completely altering the map of Egypt as it had existed so far. The purposes for the construction of these new cities were multiple. Firstly, Sadat focused on the economic prospects of Egypt. He believed urban development to be a driver for economically productive activity (Selim, 2016). Developing infrastructure and the built environment in many different parts of the country would ultimately allow for an integrated administration, more production, and create different available markets of consumption as well as more possibilities for export (Selim, 2016). At the time, Sadat views that this program is 'unavoidable and is necessary in order to take advantage of our outlets along two of the most important seas of the world. Both are rich in trade, transport and tourist movements. The aim is also to realise a real and integrated Egyptian, existence in all parts of the country' (Sadat, 1974). The building of new infrastructure and updating of dated ones also meant improving the quality of life of Egyptians. At a time of new-found independence, it was paramount for Sadat to ensure citizens a better life then under colonial rule, and to strengthen nationalist sentiment. City names in this post-colonial era thus reflect the values and ideology of the newly-formed state. For example, Sadat City is named after the head of the government,

while 6th of October City commemorates the start of the Yom Kippur War, now celebrated as Egypt's Armed Forces Day.

One of the main challenges which motivated this new plan was a sense of concern around the constant and rapid increasing population of existing cities and of Cairo especially (Barrada, 2005, AbouKorin, 2010). The problem with this growth was the progression of urban sprawl on agricultural lands. The agricultural lands were usually located directly outside of the boundaries of the city, which made the prospect of widening the bounds of cities almost impossible without forgoing massive holdings of agricultural land. Two conflicting and yet simultaneous movements emerged, one that consisted in the city moving onto agricultural land met with a difficult but necessary attempt to protect and extend arable lands to adapt for the ever-increasing urban population (Barrada, 2005, AbouKorin, 2010). Egypt faced a dire need to produce enough food for a growing population, but with decreasing amounts of land on which to produce. The country does not have much fertile land outside of the Nile basin, and it thus makes it extremely important for the government to contain urban sprawl, and protect the supply of available agricultural resources. The creation of new cities was in large part meant to solve this contradiction, providing a place to live for the growing population as well as increasing the national food supply by creating cities focusing specifically on the promotion and protection of agricultural land uses.

The last important goal of this plan was to change the situation as it had been left by the British upon independence. Urban development had been privileged in Alexandria, Suez and Cairo only, cities deemed to be useful in the colonial process. Within these cities divides and inequalities among individuals were great, the British having built class, ethnic and racial divides in the very organization of cities (Yeoh, 2001, Dorman, 2007, Reynolds, 2017). Sadat's goal was

thus to modernize existing cities while attempting to sooth tensions and inequalities that were still perpetrated by the urban environment there (Selim, 2014). The construction of new cities on the other hand was there to solve the regional inequalities that existed, to bring development to all parts of the country and give access to comfort not only to those inhabiting the main three cities.

Sadat's plan, the National Urban Policy Study (NUPS), truly started as early as 1973 (Mahmoud *et al.*, 2011). Before any official plan was even introduced, as the war with Israel precipitated the construction of new cities, strong points of defence in the case of a war on Egyptian territory. The first cities built were the cities of 10th of Ramadan and Sadat. 10th of Ramadan was located halfway between Cairo and Suez, whereas Sadat was built between Alexandria and Cairo (Stewart, 2996). The reason for these positions was to put significant space in between cities, in order to avoid the development of new cities as satellites of already existing cities. The third city, New Borg el-Arab was planned to be 50 kilometers to the west of Alexandria (Stewart, 1996). These three cites began to be constructed in 1973, and the plan they were later integrated to added the creation of two other new cities. Bader was to be to the south of 10th of Ramadan, so as to be about halfway between Cairo and the Suez Canal and the fifth and final independent city of the plan, Alamal, was never built (Stewart, 1996). The aim was for these cities to reach a population of 500,000 which was considered to be the optimal amount for the city to function effectively and productively. Beyond these cities, the program also set up a number of satellite towns with industrial areas, located around Cairo (Barrada, 2005; Stewart, 1996). These were supposed to be much smaller in size, their populations being predicted to only reach between 150,000 and 250,000 inhabitants (Stewart, 1996). The growth of the satellites and

informal settlement around Cairo exceeded all expectations, and quickly became overwhelming and quickly merged to create a larger Cairo area (Barrada, 2005).

5.4 The long-term effects

Years after Sadat's plan's implementation, it presents clear examinable successes and failures, based on the goals it had set out. One of the first goal set out by the plan was the preservation of agricultural land from urban sprawl. The plan could have at least halted the process of urban sprawl, mitigating the loss and avoiding to worsen the situation, but it failed to do so. During the time of the implementation of the plan, the country still lost about twenty percent of its arable lands directly to urban expansion (Barrada, 2005). In this respect, the plan did not work, especially seeing as it is estimated that the land created by this program represents between one and two percent of the country's overall arable land holding (Barrada, 2005). To this day, Egypt is still facing an important problem regarding its internal food supply and production, and the plan does not seem to have had much of an impact on alleviating that burden.

Another major goal of the project was to reduce the level of congestion in Cairo and manage the rapid and ever growing population. The strategic positioning of the new cities was meant to encourage populations to move and settle away from Cairo to create integrated dynamic hubs of activity, to decentralize the administration of Egypt. Instead of this, Cairo's population has consistently increased over the years (Barrada, 2005; AbouKorin, 2010). On the other hand, the new cities' populations were stagnant from the moment of their creation (Barrada, 2005), and they never provided a true outlet for Cairo's population problem. Issues have increased exponentially in Cairo; the city being almost constantly congested with traffic polluting and degrading the environment without finding a way to reach sustainable lifestyle options there

(Dorman, 2007). Furthermore, recent reports have shown Egypt's administration to still be centralized around Cairo: the administrative and economic heart of the country. This also means that the efforts made to resolve the unequal development of the different regions of the country failed. This has in time created a vicious circle, where the divide is so great between Cairo and its surroundings, that there is an important rural to urban migration pattern, which contributes to – and strengthens - the pressure of Cairo's growing population (Dorman, 2007).

Sadat's plan was also supposed to change an improve Egypt's economic and financial situation. A lot of capital was injected into this program to create all of the infrastructure necessary to make these cities viable and successful. This capital was not used for a directly productive endeavour and for some time did not improve Egypt's rate of economic growth (UN Habitat, 1993). Overtime, Egypt did find a return on this investment. Today, about twenty five percent of Egypt's industrial production comes from the new cities (Barrada, 2005). However, even though the process of production has been decentralized, direct benefitting has not translated for the population. New cities have been successful in being an important part of Egypt's industrial production, but this has not translated into the direct improvement of lifestyles for local populations.

5.5 Conclusion

The process of decolonization and independence is complicated, and creates the bedrock of a country's new national identity. Egypt's decision to remodel its identity through the creation of new cities, represented an innovative and resourceful approach, that entrenched itself in an already long tradition of new city building. Overall, Sadat's plan was a tremendously ambitious one, that appears to be disappointing in light of the goals it had set out to satisfy. In the decades

following independence, Egypt made considerable progress toward their development goals, yet urbanization and population growth outpaced planning and construction, leading to the failure of many of these new cities, later absorbed by neighboring existing cities as they expanded. One of the most important goals was for this plan to improve the state of Cairo and limit its sprawl. In that regard, the failure of the plan becomes apparent, especially given the rather recent decision to abandon Cairo as a capital and instead focus on the construction of the New Capital City Cairo, another ambitious planned city, which presents its own set of new ideals and challenges.

Chapter 6: Contemporary New Cities

6.1 Introduction

For centuries, Cairo has been known as the Egyptian capital. The late 1960's and early 1970's saw the emergence of concerns, regarding the exponentially fast growth of the population, and its progressive overpowering of the built environment. In the 1970's urban plans were made to adapt the built environment to its population, in part by creating a number of satellite towns, in close proximity to Cairo. These towns were absorbed by the city, joining the greater Cairo area and creating a megalopolis of over 20 million people. After the 21012 revolution, Egypt went through a democratic transition, pushed to address the multitude of 'poor urban settings', so far ignored (Mohamed *et al*., 2015). In 2013, President Sisi was elected to rule Egypt, presenting a plan to change the geography of Egypt and its administrative organization. Sisi's vision included 'extending the provinces of Upper Egypt eastward, all the way to the Red Sea, as well as westward, toward the Western desert', extending 'into the Sinai, thus inhabiting both the eastern and western sides of the Canal' and developing 'autonomous self-government, allowing each of the provinces to manage its own affairs, including raising funds, promoting investments, and providing services' (Aly, 2014: 3) To do so, several new cities project were spearheaded by the government, including the New Nile Valley Project, to urbanize and bring life to a part of Egypt for centuries completely desert. However, the most important project is the ambitious project of building a new capital in Egypt: New Capital City Cairo. I will explore the different factors going into the building of the capital to assess its implication and the future opportunities it will provide for the country.

New Cities in the Contemporary Period

1: Alexandria
2: Ismailia
3: Suez
4: Cairo
5: El Amal City
6: El Shorouk City
7: New Cairo
8: Toshka
9: Sharq El Owainat

Legend
◉ Contemporary New Cities
◇ Existing Cities
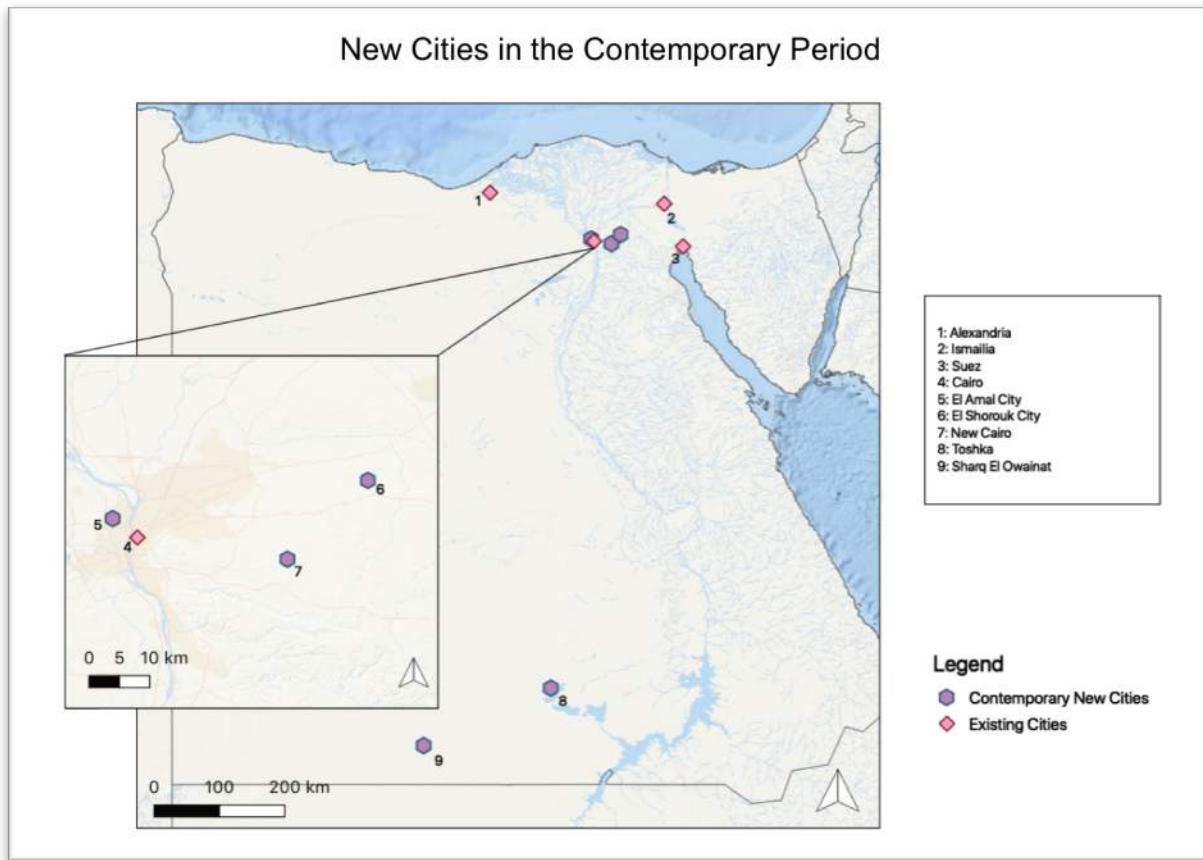
Map 3: Distribution of New Cities in Egypt in the Contemporary Period

6.2 The utopian promise of a new capital: A magic bullet to address the country's challenges?

The project to build a new capital was originally introduced in 2000, spearheaded by the government and presented as a practical solution to the issues of population and overall worsening condition. There is limited literature to outline the reasons for the construction of the new city, yet questions persist in the literature as to the honesty which surrounds the project. President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi offers the vision of the new city as being far more than just a construction endeavor, but an important symbol of power.

The idea to build this new capital was introduced by President Sadat, but the city is now most often associated with the current President and Field Marshall Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Sisi has

made a point to present the new city not just as the capital or a replacement of Cairo, but as a new and innovative administrative and financial capital to provide a renewal for the country while alleviating the population burden too heavily weighing on Cairo and preventing the wellbeing of many citizens (Serag, 2017). The new city so far does not emphasize any concern for population, and no explanation has been provided as to the mechanism which will be attracting population away from Cairo (a fully functioning and inhabited city for centuries) and towards the new capital (which so far does not exist beyond a masterplan).

On the other hand, the new capital city's head planner Dan Riegelstein has discussed the new city as 'not meant to replace the old one, rather it represents the natural progression of Greater Cairo Region to the East' (Serag, 2017: 5). The cities are planned to be separated by only 45km, which has been reported as an important source of concern for scholars and planners. The past expansion of the city paired with its history of progressively absorbing satellite does not bode well for the future of what could be just another satellite (Serag, 2017). Riegelstein's vision of the city is a fair one, which is a stark contrast to Sisi's many promises about the New Capital. The new capital is an ambitious project, which will require important amounts of effort to ever be successful. Does this project have a chance of being the renewal and push that Sisi is promising for Egypt? So far, Egyptian urban centers are nearly all located on the banks of the Nile river, or in close proximity to the Suez Canal (Serag, 2017, AbouKorin 2018). Egypt is more and more centralized by the day, with the central government concentrating more power, and provincial governments left with progressively less funding and capacity as time goes by (Serag, 2017). The dramatically rising population in Cairo could thus be considered not as an ill in itself, but rather as a symptom of a much more important issue. The more concerning fact is that Cairo is the only place in Egypt to migrate to, that provides opportunity and chances for

growth (Serag, 2017). Building a new capital and relocating the government will serve to remove the government further from their constituents but will not be serving the purpose of bettering lives. The decision to build a new capital may well be related to the important uprisings which occurred during Egyptian Revolution of January 2011, as part of the broader Arab springs. The streets were flooded with popular protests, led by youths. The streets were the locus of these uprisings and they reached the very windows of the governments. There is a legitimate reason to wonder if removing the government from the people, to a more secluded location, harder to reach and populated only with public servants and wealthy members of society, is not a way to avoid another uprising. In any case, the building of the new capital will make the central government harder to reach, weather that be in an effort to give more power to provincial governments or a way to safeguard their current power and rule from the top down without accountability is a matter left to be discovered in the future. Only the future will tell how successful New Capital City Cairo will be, but the details of the masterplan are enlightening as to its potential and the issues it has to address.

6.3 The master plan

The master plan for the new capital was unveiled publicly and has since been profusely published about in the media. Cube Consultant is an Egyptian planning firm, founded in 1990 by Professor of Architecture Ashraf Abdel Mohsen, responsible for creating the Master Plan for the new capital in coordination with the 5+ UDC consulting firm[1] (Figure 2).

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[1] All information regarding the master plan was accessed through the official websites of 5+UDC, Cube Consultants, and the official New Capital website.

Figure 2: Master Plan for New Capital City Cairo (5+UDC)

The location of the project is an area composed of 12 different valleys, which the masterplan incorporates as being 12 different districts, each with their own distinctive features and characteristics. Throughout the city, and connecting all the different sectors together is the green river, a large area of greenery accessible to all for leisure and outdoor activities. In total, there will be about 20 residential districts, which will be contracted out to private corporations for their own development. If the plan is to be respected, to keep all of these residential districts separate, it appears that they will be gated in some ways, to distinguish each of them from the others. These residential districts are predicted to reach a population of 6.5 million. Among the other districts included in the masterplan, there is the development of office parks, several commercial districts and largescale shopping malls, a large central business district, as well as plans for an international airport. In addition to these, the masterplan includes a medical district and a compound of national and international schools and universities as well as technology and

science research centers and laboratories: the building blocks to a knowledge cluster within the city. According to the plan, cultural elements will be scattered throughout the city, with the existence of conference centers, galleries, exposition centers, and a modern opera house. Perhaps one of the most important zones will be the governmental zone, at the geographic core of the city. This zone is to become the home of the ministries and the official government buildings.

The city is thus planned to include a variety of different zones and presents important challenges in terms of connectedness and mobility. To ensure swift mobility throughout the city, the masterplan provides a proposal to create and extensive road network, with a large eight-lane highway running through the city. While it is not detailed yet, the masterplan does make a provision for a public transit system composed of buses, metro lines, buses, and minibuses. The masterplan is ambitious, and it does more than simply plan the organization of the city. Paired with numerous renderings and computer generated images, it is meant to convey the very spirit of the city to be. If anything, the master plan displays luxury throughout. No matter the element displayed, whether it be roads, building or greenery, there is an overwhelming suggestion of wealth and luxury. There are in most renderings gold undertones as well as countless displays of fountains, ponds or intricate artistic designs made of gold or silver. Beyond the overwhelming opulence and extravagance, it is visually hard to make out the predominant architectural style. There is a combination of pseudo-cultural motives (incorporation of the pyramids in the design of certain buildings, replication of antique columns…), consistent with the idea of Egypt projecting a nationalist world-image (Eastwood *et al*., 2009). Certain buildings in the city are also heavily influenced by international designs. Notably, one of the government buildings is set to look very similar to Washington DC's capitol building. Finally, the master

plan boasts impressive modern architecture. An example of architectural modernity regards the design of the opera house. Even when striving to be modern, the plan seems to fall short of originality. The opera house, one of the cultural highlights in the city, is strongly reminiscent of the Sydney Opera House (Figure 3). Any planner today comes after centuries of history and impressive buildings to be inspired by. There is nothing wrong with drawing from all the things which came before your time and building upon them. However, in the case of new cities, there is a constant promotion of novelty and innovation. This brand-new city is being marketed as something never seen before, when in fact it incorporates many elements from the past and from the outside world, and will most likely display the same elements of planning and design than do other new cities.

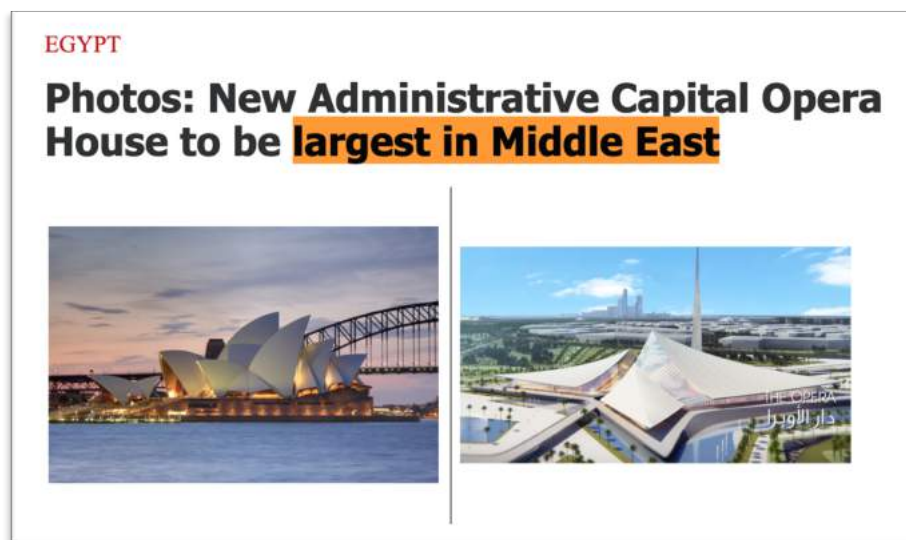*Figure 3: Opera House Design Comparison*

6.4 Ideological interests and the will to garner international importance

There are practical reasons which are driving the construction of a new city, but the decision to build a new capital has important ideological underpinnings which are crucial to explore as well. Per Sisi's project and the way he presents it, the importance to resonate on the

world stage transpires and is made clear. Egypt is considered as part of the global south, with strong regional ties to many middle-eastern countries. As the new capital is a project driven by the government, it has important underlying goals and symbols attached to it. This city seems to be the government's chance to invade the world stage and change perception regarding Egypt's status as still 'developing' to instead be considered as a leading world power. There are two ways in which the marketing of the town is attempting to do so, notwithstanding the luxury conveyed in the project's very planning and renderings previously explored. The first political dimension is the plan's several mentions of the scale and resonance of the city at different scales. This is shown through the promises of the plan, to have the largest urban park in the world - or at least larger than central park (Elbaum, 2018) - and to build the highest tower in Africa (Andiva, 2017). Each of these promises deserve to be explored individually to understand the claim they establish on an international stage. The promise to have provide the largest urban park within the bounds of New Cairo is symbolic in its will to rival cities like Singapore or Moscow which boast important quantities of green spaces. However, from the masterplan and the renderings, similarities between the expected look of new Cairo's so called green river, and central park in New York City clearly emerge (Figure 4). Many have explored the process of Manhattan transfer, the process by which skylines all over the world are being modeled upon New York's skyline, and becoming symbolic of a countries entry on the economic and political world stage (King, 1996). New Cairo's proposed skyline is not necessarily close to New York's but similar to many of those in the world, all characteristics a process which effectively models cities one after the other and creating countless lookalikes (King, 1996).

Figure 4: Park Design Comparison

Not only is the Egyptian government building this city to project power, they are also building it, and branding it, to assert their place in a regional and continental setting (Figure 5). The case of Egypt is complicated, as it is for other north African countries, which are tied to different groups. Egypt is an African country, but is also tied to the regional context of the Middle East.

Figure 5: Building Design Comparison

The claims that New Cairo will provide the highest tower in Africa has a way of positioning Egypt as a leader both on the African continent and in the Middle East, in a more insidious way. Building towers has developed as a strategy for cities to assert themselves as economic powers and political entities to be respected on the global stage (Ooi, 2011; King, 1996). The world's highest tower, the Burj Khalifa was built in Dubai in 2010. Far More than being a tall building, it had become 'the brand icon of Dubai's aspirations to be an ultra-modern global business center' (Ooi, 2011). To have the Africa's tallest building would assert the place of Egypt as a world leader, and take over as a global hub of attractiveness in the Middle East and in Africa (Figure 4). There is a lot of pressure and many expectations for the city to fulfill, which are much more grounded in political strategy than they are in urban planning. Here, the master plan is both a product and a tool of political power, to assert power within and outside of the country.

6.5 The complicated dynamics of funding and international investment

While the project is driven by the Egyptian government and will most likely constitute a show of national pride and interest, the investment is not, and never was Egyptian. The government and the military are the official owners of the city. To be so effectively, they created a new administrative body, the Administrative Capital for Urban Development (ACUD), was created to allocate contracts regarding the different services and districts of the city (Mohamed, 2019). Contracts are being discussed with French and Dutch corporations for the transit system within the city, as well as the setup of cleanliness services for the city (Mohamed, 2019). According to Chairman Ahmed Zaki Abdeen 'ACUD will be turned into a holding company

with subsidiaries operating in different fields, as companies of water, electricity, technology, maintenance, safety, and transportation will be funded' (Mohamed, 2019). The project to build a new capital city was first to be brought to life by the signature of a memorandum of understanding signed between an important Dubai planning firm and the Egyptian government (Barnes, 2018). The memorandum was withdrawn only a few months later, for unclear reasons, ranging from dissatisfaction regarding the progress of the planners, to disagreements as to the organization of the future city. This is far from being the sole issue to have occurred with the funding for the new city. Talks are in progress with many different interested party, but it appears that to this day the largest investor in this project is Chinese company China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) (Barnes, 2018, State Information Services, 2019). CSEC has signed a memorandum to undertake the construction of the governmental district of the city, which is to include a new parliament complex, 12 ministerial buildings, a convention center and an exhibition area, and investment valued at around 45 billion USD. While CSCEC was also to be responsible for the construction of sewage and road networks, they pulled out of the project after a few months over disagreements with the ACUD (Barnes, 2018). Recent news has revealed that another large Chinese land development corporation is to be involved with the construction of the city. China Fortune Land Development Company (CFLD) will become involved with the second phase of development of the project which will include the construction of shopping malls, universities, hospitals and factories (Barnes, 2018, State Information Services, 2019).

While the project has been hailed by president Fattah Abdel Sisi as being a form of Egyptian renewal and an investment in the future of the country, the funding it has received makes it a pawn in a much larger geopolitical game. The reported strong ties between the

Egyptian and Chinese governments have enabled Egypt to secure important funding for the new capital project, to 'symbolize Egypt and China's mutual cooperation for future generations' according to Chinese ambassador to Cairo, Song Aiguo (Andiva, 2017: Online). The ambassador has also been open about the place of the new capital in China's one belt one road initiative (Andiva, 2017). The initiative aims at recreating a silk road: an '"economic belt" or corridor linking China with Mongolia, central Asia, Russia, Iran, Turkey, the Balkans, central and eastern Europe, and ultimately Germany and the Netherlands' (Ferdinand, 2016: 949-950). Interests in the projects are thus mixed but do not seem to align completely, which could cause a multitude of issues in the future, and will possibly even determine whether this city ever sees the light of day.

6.6 Conclusion

New Capital City Cairo is one of the most prominent new cities being built in the world, and is even larger, more extravagant, and more expensive than King Abdullah Economic City in Saudi Arabia. This ostentatious project positions Egypt as a powerful peer of Gulf states and projects an image of a modern, 'world class' country that is open for business. Importantly, the withdrawal of foreign investment in the project indicates its high level of uncertainty. Moreover, this same foreign investment crystalizes the issue of knowing who stands to benefit from the construction of this city, whether it be foreign interest or the domestic government. While Egypt might, in the long run, benefit from the investment in infrastructure, the involvement of China in the project is reminiscent of the way in which Britain took part in investing in urban infrastructure during the colonial times. In any case, the local population certainly does not appear to be the central concern of the project, and it is hard to make out how they are to benefit

from any of it. This project has historical significance for the country, in its construction of a new national identity and attempt to change the place of the country on the regional and global international scale. Watching the progression of the project in the near and far future will give us precious insight as to the possible successfulness of new capital cities, a type of project seen more and more in different parts of the world.

Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusion

The construction of new cities built from scratch has a long history in Egypt. The importance of the building tradition, shines through both the number of cities built throughout times (Map 4), as well as the pervasiveness of the modes of planning.
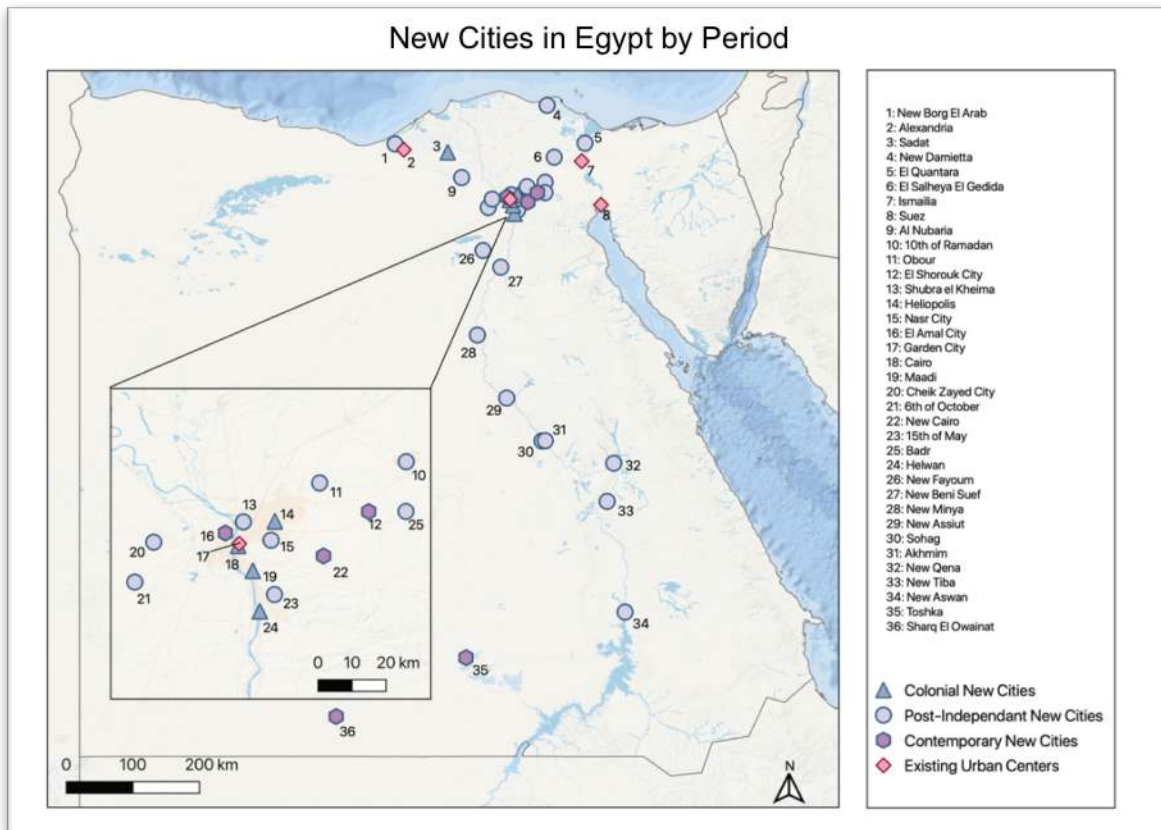
Map 4: New Cities in Egypt by Period

There are important similarities in building, which cross cut times, and can be summarized for our three time period of interest in the table below.

Table 1: Comparison of Findings across Time Periods

	Colonial new cities	Post-independence new cities	Contemporary new cities
Inspiration and antecedents	- Garden Cities	- Colonial Cities	- Smart Cities - Eco Cities - Master-planned Capitals
Strategic goals	- Project British power onto the population. - Expand hygiene and sanitation Systems. - Impose strict zoning based on race and social status.	- Reclaim ownership of the land so far controlled by the British. - Assert national sentiment and pride. - Prevent sprawling cities from growing further. - Protect arable lands from urban sprawl and develop different geographic areas in the country.	- Position Egypt as a leader within North Africa, the Middle East and the World. - Assert the power of the current government. - Provide a solution to the issue of Cairo's urban sprawl so far addressed inadequately.
Source of financing	- Public investment provided by the British government in projects where it was the main stakeholder. - Private investment in projects directed by wealthy individuals.	- The Egyptian state as the most important source of financing. - Some support from the USSR, both politically and financially. Financial amounts were not disclosed.	- The Egyptian government. - Foreign investors, Dubai previously and China currently.

Types of residents targeted	- Europeans as the primary core residents. - Wealthy Egyptians. - Poor Egyptians as the workforce to build the towns and serve Europeans.	- Many different cities built with wide ranging targets. The whole population is at the center of the project of changing the Egyptian urban landscape.	- Foreigners and wealthy upper classes. - Civil servants as the new city is set to host the government buildings and become the administrative capital of the country.
Ownership of land used for the cities	- Bought from the Egyptian government by the British government during the period of veiled protectorate.	- Egyptian Government.	- Egyptian Government.
City branding and image projected	- Projection of organization and grandeur through clear zoning and impressive architectural features. - Strategic use of nature as a part of the built environment. - Communication of the image of a world leader, comparable to cities such as New York or Dubai. - A shallow use of cultural motives to serve European orientalist expectations.	- Projection of a strong nationalist rhetoric through city names and dedicated spaces in the build environment.	- Luxury is projected through the renderings and serves the positioning off the city. - Pseudo-cultural elements at the intersection of tradition and modernity: building new things to celebrate the past. - Incorporation of nature within the built environment.

There are some key elements to be taken away from comparing three eras of new city building. First and foremost, the state consistently acts as a crucial actor, stakeholders, and decision-maker in the process of building new cities, particularly through acquiring land and determining land use (Shatkin, 2017). Moreover, this statement also concerns foreign governments. This refers to the British government and its shared but important place in urban design in Egypt during colonial times, and to the Chinese state. The Chinese government being involved in the contemporary New Capital City through important financial investment and their positioning of the city as a stop on the Belt and Road Initiative. Moreover, the involvement of the state is crucial in understanding the process by which new cities have become instrumental in building, asserting, and strengthening state power, both domestically and internationally. This stands true for all Egyptian new cities of the time periods studied here.

Additionally, culture is a recurring element of interest in all new cities, used and displayed in different ways throughout time. A parallel can be drawn specifically between colonial new cities and contemporary new cities, in their use of problematic cultural motives. As stated, colonial new cities would display almost fictitious cultural elements to please European orientalist expectations of Egyptian culture. In contemporary times, there are similar superficialities in the cultural traits exhibited. In the new capital, cultural motives are meant to convey a global cultural far surpassing the country's own, supposedly uniting culture, tradition, and modernity. In a sense, the most culturally significant master-planned new cities created were built during post-independent times, created at a time when Egypt was regaining control over its history and their territory which had been suspended for so long.

Furthermore, the study of these three time frames shows the continuity over times of master planning new cities as a strategy to address broad concerns of state administration,

development and economics. If past projects are to be an indication of the future of contemporary projects, then the new capital does not bear much of a chance to thrive before being submerged by Cairo's sprawl.

It is interesting to note that when comparing motivations to build new cities, there is never a concern towards equity. While we can see broad economic or cultural motives addressed the poorer demographics and less privileged classes of the population are never directly targeted to benefit from the construction of new cities. Even in post-independent times, when new cities were built for the country as a whole, it was never an explicit goal to cater to the lower class' dissatisfaction or quality of life specifically.

While similarities exist across all three time periods in different ways, contemporary master-planned cities seem to have much more in common with colonial new cities than with post-independent new cities. There are numerous points of comparison which point to this conclusion, whether it regard the involvement of foreign governments, the targeting of upper classes, the use of nature in the urban environment, the reflection of pseudo-cultural motives, or the projection of an image far superseding that of Egypt and instead positioning it on the world stage. New master-planned cities in both time periods involved similar power structure, in which the upper classes benefit from the built environment around them to shelter them from other cities and from the rest of the population and their living conditions. In colonial times, garden cities were the refuge of the elites, benefitting from pleasant architecture and scenery, greenery and sanitation. In the same way, with the construction of the new capital, elites are given the chance to escape the congestion, pollution and overall infrastructural decay of Cairo, to find a haven in a new hub of modernity. Colonial New Cities have not been successful endeavours, as they have for the most part been absorbed by sprawling cities and become neighborhood or

towns absorbed by the greater area denomination. It does not bode well for the future development of the new capital if similarities are to persist, and the new city grows to know the same fate as most colonial cities die.

While this thesis outlines the major eras of city-building in Egypt and provides a comparative analysis of each era, there is scope for further research. The next few years will be crucial in the development of the new capital, which is far from completion. Future research would benefit from on-the-ground fieldwork in Egypt and interviews with planners, government officials, developers, investors, and residents in order to evaluate. This would shed light on how these projects come to be, who is driving them, how their plans mutate and are compromised, and how residents use and adapt the cities, often in unpredictable ways unanticipated by planners.

In their pursuit of innovation, sustainability, grandeur, and most importantly, control over land, new master planned cities may be helping to shape a new world order that may further entrench social divisions in the same way cities built before them did.

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Appendices

Table 2: Compilation of New Cities in Egypt

City	Location	Purpose	Date / Mode announced	Investor / groups driving the project	Investment amount	Target population	Achieved population
Helwan	Neighboring Cairo	The Khedivial Astronomical Observatory to observe Halley's comet built there. RAF Helwan, a major British airfield, which was later used by the Egyptian Air Force	1903 / 1904	Site of investment for wealthy British.	Unknown	Unknown	600000
Heliopolis	North East of Cairo	Built to prove it was possible for Egyptians to thrive in the desert. Has become an upscale neighborhood of Cairo.	1905	Baron Edouard Empain under the Heliopolis Oasis Company name.	Unknown	Unknown	140000
Maadi	12 km upriver from downtown Cairo	Result of the construction of the railway built between Cairo to the north and Helwan to the south. Precise location resulted from land speculation by the Mosseri Cousins. Has become an upscale neighborhood of Cairo.	1904 / 1905	Mosseri Cousins and retired officer Captain Alexander J. Adams	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Garden City (Cairo)	Bordering downtown Cairo	Created in an attempt to attempts to "Europeanize" Cairo, and	1905	Private European investment	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

		replicate garden cities built throughout Europe					
El Quantara	50 km to the South of Port Said.	Developed by the British for wartime effort.	1916	British Government / Army	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
10ᵗʰ of Ramadan City	Ismailia desert road, 49.3 Km from Cairo		Presidential decree (249/**1977**) Amended by presidential decree (567/**1980**)	Government supplemented by private investment	22.9 billion pounds including: - Housing sector: 8.1 million pounds - Utilities sector:13.9 billion pounds - Services sector: 7161.1 million pounds -Agriculture sector:144.8 million pounds	2.1 million in 2023	650000
Sadat	North West of Cairo – 93km along Cairo / Alexandria desert road	Center to middle and west deltalt, a residential, commercial, recreational, industrial, service, and agricultural scheme (agriculture and food security) to serve the region	Presidential decree 123 - **1978**	Government	Total 5.3 Billion Housing sector: 1.5 Billion Utilities Sector: 3.3 Billion Services Sector: 384.2 Million Agriculture Sector: 77.6 Million	1.5 Million	300 000
15ᵗʰ of May	south east of Helwan, 35 Km far from of Cair	Residential areas - services – industrial - tourism and recreation → drive population away from major existing cities	presidential decree (119 / **1978**)	Government	4.5 Million 4.9 million pounds including: - Housing sector: 2.9 Billion - Utilities sector: 1.7 Billion - Services sector: 305.4 million - Agriculture sector: 30.7 million pounds - sanitation: 445 200	500 000	250 000

6ᵗʰ of October	17km away from Pyramid area and 32km from downtown Cairo.	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	presidential decree (504 / **1979**)	Government	27 Billion - Housing: 12.03 Billion - Utilies: 14. 06 Billion Services: 670.7 Billion	By 2027: 6 million	1.5 million
New Borg El Arab	60 km away from Alexandria 7 km away from the North Coast	Residential areas - services -tourism and recreation. Industrial focus: five industrial parks and many producing factories. Explicit goal to decrease congestion in Alexandria.	Presidential decree (506/**1979**)	Government + private sector	Up to 2015, 3.3 billion: - Housing: 660.3 million - Utilities: 2.8 billion - Services: 217.9 million - Agriculture: 23.6 million	750 000	150 000
New Damietta	along the Mediterranean Sea and it is 4.5Km far from New Damietta Port.	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Cabinet decree (546/**1980**)	Government	5.3 billion: - Housing sector: 2.2 billion - Utilities sector: 2.7 billion - Services sector: 281.8 million - Agriculture sector: 58 million - Other investments: 220 million	500 000	150 000
Badr	Along Cairo – Suez Road, 47 km away from Cairo	Drive population away from major existing cities	Cabinet decree (235/**1982**)	Government	Total investments from 1982 to 2014 amounted to 2.4 billion pounds	650 000	160 000
New Salhia	40km away from Ismailia	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Presidential decree (1237/**1982**)	Government	622.6 Million - Housing: 8.1 million - Utilities: 524.3 million - Services: 110.1 million -Agriculture: 20.1 million	120 000 in 2022	42 000

Obour	Along Cairo – Belbais desert road	drive population away from major existing cities	Cabinet decree (1290/**1982**) + extension by presidential decree (66/**2009**)	Government	6093 million: - Housing: 1313 million - Utilities: 3571 million - Services: 1103 million - Agriculture: 106 million	600 000	550 000
Al Nubaria	Along Cairo - Alexandria desert road, 79 km away from Alexandria.	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Cabinet decree (375/**1986**)	Government + private sector	1.1 billion: - Housing: 254.8 million - Utilities: 697.1 million - Services: 145.7 million - Agriculture: 11.1 million	125 000	35 000
New Beni Suef	Along the Nile between Cairo and Menia, 124km away from Cairo.	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Cabinet decree (643/**1986**)	Government	2.8 billion: - Housing: 806.7 million - Utilities: 1.7 billion - Services: 220.7 million - Agriculture: 71.6 million	268 000	75 000
New Minia	North east of the Nile, 250km away from Cairo.	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Cabinet decree (278/**1986**) Built in 1991	Government + low private sector involvement	4673 million: - Housing: 2294 million - Utilities: 2044 million - Services: 288.5 million - Agriculture: 45.3 million	638 000 by 2050	45 000
North Suez Gulf		Creating an industrial hub.	presidential decree (458 / **1993**).	Government	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Sheikh Zayed	38 km from downtown Cairo	Create a residential hub and town to locate university campuses.	presidential decree (325/**1995**)	Government + private sector	5.067 billion - Housing: 999 million - Utilities: 1.346 billion - Services: 2.608 billion - Agriculture sector: 120 million	675 000	330 000
Shrouk	Along Cairo – Ismailia desert road	Drive population away from major existing cities	presidential decree (325/**1995**)	Government	Total 5.8 billion Housing: 2.3 billion Services: 198.3 million Utilities sector: 3.2 billion Agricultural: 57.9 million	500 000	170 000
New Aswan	West bank of the Nile, 12km away from Aswan city.	Creating an industrial hub.	Presidential decree (96/**1999**) extended by cabinet decree (807/**2015**)	Government	2.3 billion - Housing: 747 million - Utilities: 1.1 billion Agriculture: 17.8 million - Services: 350.3 million	850 000 by 2023	Unknown
New Cairo	15 Km away from Almaadi and 10 Km away from Nasr City .	Replacing the existing capital and being the new administrative capital of the country.	presidential decree (191/**2000**)	Government + important international private sector support and participation	4.6 billion pounds including: - Housing: 6.6 billion - Utilities: 17.3 billion - Services: 453.3 million - Agriculture: 107.7 million	4 million	1500
New Fayoum	Along Cairo – Assuit eastern road , 100 Km away from south Cairo	urban community (Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation ....) divided into 3 districts in addition to tourist , recreational ,	Presidential decree (193/**2000**)	Government + private sector	1 billion including: - Housing: 261.6 million - Utilities: 648.8 million - Service: 72.9 million - Agriculture: 32.8 million	Unknown	Unknown

	regional , industrial and southern extension zones						
New Assiut	East of the Nile (Cairo/ Sohag Road), 15km away from Assiut city .	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Presidential decree (194/**2000**)	Government	3.8 billion: - Housing: 1.6 billion - Utilities: 1.9 billion - Service: 380.7 million - Agriculture: 25.4 million	750 000	30 000
New Qena	North of the Nile, 8km away from Qena city	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Presidential decree (197/**2000**)	Government	2.9 Billion: - Housing: 1.2 Billion - Utilities: 1.5 million - Services: 346 million - Agriculture: 13.4 million	130 000	Unknown
New Sohag	18 km away from Sohag city.	Residential areas - services - industrial - tourism and recreation	Presidential decree (196/**2000**)	Government	3.2 Billion including: - Housing: 1.1 billion - Utilities: 1.7 billion - Service: 260 million - Agriculture: 25.9 million	820 000 by 2050	Unknown
Tiba	14km north east of Luxor city, 10km away from Luxor International Airport	Emphasis on Tourism	Presidential decree (198/**2000**)	Government + private investment	2680 Million -Housing 1141.284 million -Utilities 1231.034 million -Service 269.3 million -Agriculture 17.1 million.	238 000	21 000
New Akhmim	Unknown	Unknown	Presidential decree (195 / **2000**)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
New Toshka	90 km north west of Abou Simbel city	Part of the New Valley Project, to develop urban settlement in a so far untouched part of the country	Announced in 1997, Broke ground in 2017	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	80 000

Sharq el Owainat	South West of Abou Simbel city	Unknown	Announced in 1997, Broke ground in 2017	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
New East Port Said	Northern entrance of the Suez Canal	Creating a port / industrial zone to facilitate industrial transport + Urban stretch	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1 Million	Unknown
East Owainat	365km south of Cairo.	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	45 000	Unknown
New Luxor	East of Luxor city	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Up to 2015: 3.675 million: Electricity: 1 million Roads and Communications: 250 000 Drinking water: 500 000 Sanitation: 1 million Agriculture: 25 000 Administrative equipment :900 000	200 000	Unknown
New Farafra City	Unknown	3 environmentally friendly communities/ villages to be set up.	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown