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Article

Fragmenting a Metropolis Sustainable Suburban Communities from Resettlement Ghettos to Gated Utopias

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Abstract: The paper examines the impact of the Greater Cairo Master Plan and New Towns Policy on urban housing crisis through some case studies focusing especially on New Cairo City, to the east of downtown Cairo. The empirical research attempts to qualitatively examine the complex reasons for the failure of various policies and implementations in meeting housing needs of middle and low-income people. This has resulted in the emergence of nearly empty new towns, and the increasing fortification of the affluent nouveaux riche within exclusive desert condominiums and gated communities, a phenomenon which aggravated social injustice and housing inequality. These communities' global architectural styles and marketing strategies are linked to neo-liberal economic policies and private entrepreneurial urban governance related to individualised rights of seclusion, privacy and consumption. Influenced by expatriates in the Gulf monarchies, these desert enclaves are located in Greater Cairo's western desert (6th October City: Dream Land, Gardenia and Beverly Hills) and in the eastern suburbs (New Cairo City: Katameya Heights, Golf City, Al Rehab City, Mirage City, Arabella). Surrounded by golf courses, recreational and commercial facilities, these luxurious residential districts tend to be exterritorial with their construction, maintenance and economies, being largely controlled by international property development firms, whilst locally underlining the ever-sharper social disparity between rich and poor. Whilst exclusive lifestyles and security measures are defining features of these desert resort communities, these gated enclaves do not exist in isolation from their geographical and cultural environments, as noted in New Cairo City.

Since 2000 New Cairo City was established as a result of merging Greater Cairo Master Plan's eastern new settlements (1, 3 and 5), creating a large suburban community. Initially the area was inhabited by 1992 Cairo's earthquake victims officially relocated to public housing units in settlement (3), which were later regarded incompatible with the development of golf gated communities. To a certain extent, New Cairo City encapsulates most of the features and problems of Greater Cairo's urban situation, in terms of a hybrid mixture of decayed public resettlement housing for the poor and up-market private gated resort communities for wealthy expatriate groups. New Cairo City, regarded as heterotopian spatial layers with diverse fragmented communities and as venue for new claims by global capital investment, 'juxtaposes in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible' (Foucault 1997, p.356). The empirical study adopted a qualitative ethnographic analysis of the on-going contestation between resettled urban poor's right to the city, residents of gated communities, real estate and property speculators and official urban policy. A small area survey was administered within New Cairo City, with in-depth interviews recording narratives of both secondary stakeholder agencies (policy makers, urban planners, NGOs activists, real estate agents) and primary stakeholder groups (urban poor households within resettlement housing and affluent residents within gated communities). The study proposed a stakeholder approach to the sustainable development of new suburban communities in the context of real estate investment and urban planning policies,. Such approach would advocate public– private partnership and grass roots co-operation between home owners, relocated urban poor, land developers, housing experts and local authorities, in order to create inclusive and sustainable urban spaces.

Keywords: New Cairo City – gated communities- resettlement housing- contested spaces- sustainable urban development

1. Greater Cairo Master Plans – 1980s and 1990s

According to Fahmi and Sutton (2008) the continuous urban problems evident in Greater Cairo's overcrowded conditions, its inefficient housing supply, poor infrastructure and deteriorated environment have contributed to the launching of a Greater Cairo Master Plan in 1981 which was approved by the Egyptian authorities in 1983. The 1983 Master Plan originally planned for 10 New Settlements ostensibly to house 2–3 million people (Sutton & Fahmi 2001). These were organised into "development corridors" to create urban poles to the east and west and around the earlier new towns. In the event only 9 out of the 10 New Settlements were proceeded with and concern was expressed that as they were sited in the "hostile" desert they would probably be unpopular with people. The first phase was launched in 1987–1988 with 10,000 housing units in 6 of the New Settlements. They received a population boost following the 1992 earthquake when some of the resulting homeless families were relocated to the New Settlements. The Plan's attempt to restructure the existing metropolitan area was promoted through a scheme of 'Homogeneous Sectors'. This sought to break up

the ‘‘mononuclear’’ arrangement of the city by restructuring it into 16 homogeneous sectors. Each sector was to be an autonomous urban unit of 500,000–2,000,000 people and to be relatively self-sufficient in jobs and services.

Several new secondary centres were to be created in these homogeneous sectors. Some progress has been made including the rehabilitation of the old core of Cairo in Gamalia-North. Delay was nevertheless noted in the implementation of the concept of homogeneous sectors (HSs) because of financial constraints, weak urban planning and land management processes at a local level, and poor linkages with planning authorities. More significantly, delay was attributed to the lack of coordination between the HSs policy based on a decentralisation strategy and the New Settlement policy directly related to the deconcentration of population activities from the existing Greater Cairo Region (GCR) agglomeration.

The years 1991 and 1997 saw some modifications to the 1983 Master Plan. Population forecasts were increased upwards to 16 million for the year 2000 (GOPP/ IAURIF 1991). The Ring Road route was deviated 2 km to the east through the desert for military reasons, with a western arc in this road being introduced on arable land on Giza’s outer fringes towards 6th October City and New Settlements 6a and 6b. The Ring Road, while representing the more successful infrastructural side of the Plans, has served to segregate inner Cairo from expanding outer fringe areas of higher class residences. Such modifications affected the location of some new settlements as well as contributing to the cancellation of the Green Belt project between Cairo and the Eastern New Settlements. This gave way to the emergence of ‘New Cairo City’ effectively merging New Settlements 1,3,and 5 (Figure1). There was also more concern with the ecological protection of archeological areas in the South and East, as well as with environmental improvements within the Old Medieval City (relocation of polluting establishments from North Gamalia to New Settlement 3) and within Sayeda Zeinab district (removal of slaughterhouses and tanneries).

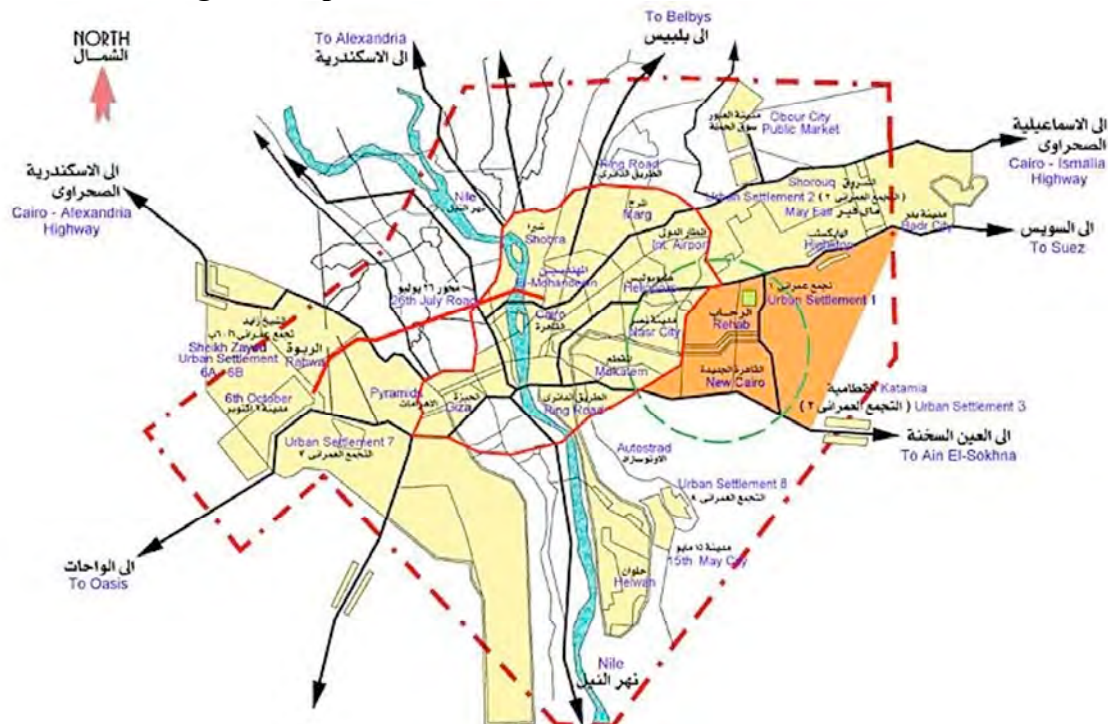
In addition to the contribution of the ring road to transportation communication, the 26th July road axis, introduced on Giza’s western outer fringes, has boosted private development and land speculations within 6th October New City including Sheikh Zayed New Town (Western New Settlements 6a and 6b). Whilst the state was forced to re-house thousands of victims of the 1992 Earthquake within Eastern New Cairo City (Sutton & Fahmi 2001) and within Badr New Town (El-Noshokaty 2002), the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC) has recently handed over the management of some of these new towns to private promoters and speculators who constructed villa complexes, enclosed elite compounds, and gated communities (Denis 1997).

One of the major factors behind the relative failure of the GCR Master Plan 1983 and its 1991–1997 modifications made by the General Organisation for Physical Planning (GOPP) and Institut d’Aménagement Urbain et Regional de’Ile de France (IAURIF) stems from the basic inability of the new towns to attract population, with changes in housing finance being part of restructuring the

Egyptian economy since 1991 in accordance with the IMF agreement (Sutton & Fahmi 2001, p143). According to Stewart (1996, p. 475), poor basic services and lack of social and educational infrastructure have also discouraged families from settling in new towns. Families preferred to remain in familiar if crowded environments in Greater Cairo rather than relocate to remote desert cities with unattractive monotonous architecture. As new town housing proved to be too expensive for workers, it eventually attracted speculators rather than residents, as in New Cairo City (Fahmi 2008a).

The Plan's aims of controlling urban growth and east- west expansion, reducing population concentration in the inner city, protecting arable land to the north and south of Cairo, and upgrading public facilities have in large part not been achieved. Indeed, it can be argued that, not only has Greater Cairo not been mastered or planned, but that the Master Plan of 1983, as revised in 1991-92, no longer really exists in an effective way. Instead Cairo's continued development has been carried out by private entrepreneurs and property speculators rather than by the city's planners, thus contributing to the emergence of unplanned gated desert resorts (Fahmi 2008).

Figure 1. Updated 1997 Cairo Master Plan and New Settlements



القاهرة الكبرى

الشركة العربية للمشروعات والتطوير العمراني (تطوير)

Source: Based on Greater Cairo Atlas 2000 Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities-General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP)-Urban Planning Center for Greater Cairo Region- Cairo and Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Economique, Juridique et Sociale (CEDEJ)-France

2. Definition of Gated Communities

According to Hook and Vrdoljak (2002) , the term ‘gated community’ lends itself to the amalgamation of the spatial and the social; ‘gating’ referring to a form of spatial fortification and ‘community’ to an organised social body of persons. Blakely and Snyder (1999) define gated communities as: residential areas with restricted access in which normally public spaces are privatized. [Gated communities] are security developments with designated parameters, usually walls or fences, and controlled entrances that are intended to prevent penetration by non-residents (p. 2).

Blakely and Snyder (1999) identify three main categories of gated communities in the US, namely: ‘lifestyle’, ‘prestige’ and ‘security-zone’ communities. In ‘lifestyle communities’ shared public space is privatized and controlled more as a social statement than as a safety device (examples include retirement, golf/leisure and suburban ‘new town’ communities similar to Cairotopias). These developments reflect ‘a notion of shared territory and exclusive rather than inclusive sharing values’ (Blakely & Snyder 1997, p. 55). Similar to New Cairo City, suburban ‘new towns’ are lifestyle communities where both residential and commercial/industrial developments occur simultaneously, within the same spatial confines, providing residents with not just gates, but with schools, shopping centres, offices, parks and recreational facilities.

Hook and Vrdoljak (2002) noted that South African security- park could be defined as an amalgamation of Blakely and Snyder’s ‘lifestyle’, ‘prestige’ and ‘security zone’ communities, as they typically incorporate ostentatious entrances, controlled aesthetics, roving patrols and golf/leisure facilities within a walled-in security-ridden interior)

' The golf estate lifestyle has captured the hearts and minds of discerning South Africans who yearn for the freedom of living in a secure, rural setting amongst people of like-minded persuasion who seek a lifestyle of real quality. . . We recognize the special nature of golf estate development, where superior lifestyle and security are paramount to a discerning audience. . . where standards are nonnegotiable (Dainfern promotional brochure, 1999 in Hook & Vrdoljak 2002)

Imagine a world of open spaces and freedom. A world of peace and tranquillity. A world of guaranteed security. Imagine this idyllic world within your world (Dainfern promotional brochure 1999 in Hook & Vrdoljak 2002)'

The gated enclave’s pragmatic rationale for extreme and elaborate control of space appears to serve a series of overt functions, ranging from crime-prevention, provision of ‘the good life’ and the opportunity of membership in an exclusive community. Such functioning is in accordance with Foucault’s (1997, p. 356) definition of the role of the heterotopia in terms of either creating ‘a space of illusion that exposes real space as still more illusionary’, or creating a space that is ‘other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged, as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled’.

Since the heterotopia is a differential space, different from the places which surround it, heterotopia 'has the power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible' (Foucault 1997, p. 354) .

Foucault (1997, p. 352) claims, the heterotopia is 'a place that lies outside all places and yet is localizable'. Soja (1995, p. 15) notes that ' [T]his complex juxtaposition and cosmopolitan simultaneity of differences in space. . . charges the heterotopia with social and cultural meaning'. In addition heterotopia presuppose a system of opening and closing , with accessibility being significant to Foucault's (1997) concern with the power of space in terms of how a place is open or closed to public entrance, how it maintains boundaries, barriers, gateways and disallows thoroughfare, loitering or anonymous entrance

As both place of 'otherness' and highly specified social function, heterotopia demonstrate a certain amount of friction between its normative and extraordinary identities, thus underlying its ability to represent a point of de-stabilization, for current socio-political or discursive orders of power. It is this very over-arching functionality that Hetherington (1997) targets in his definition of heterotopia as 'spaces of alternate ordering':

'heterotopia organize a bit of social world in a way different to that which surrounds them. That alternate ordering marks them out as Other and allows them to be an example of an alternative way of doing things (Hetherington 1997, p. viii) .'

For Hetherington (1996a,b, 1997) the typical 'alternate ordering' that defines the heterotopia is based on a number of utopias. Foucault considers heterotopia as the theoretical conversion of the idealized notion of the utopia into pragmatic, 'real-world' terms (cf. Foucault, 1997). Both utopias and heterotopia 'have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites. . . in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect' Foucault (1997, p. 352).

However, whereas utopias are ideal sites with no real place, and remain fundamentally unreal, heterotopia are 'real sites' of 'effectively enacted utopias' (Foucault, 1997, p. 24). Foucault (1997) adds that heterotopia are the "real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society. . . which constitute a sort of counterarrangement, of effectively realized utopia, in which all the real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned'" (Foucault 1997, p. 352).

Although heterotopia might be conceptualised as a vehicle of progressive political aims and agendas for 'reforming', rearranging for reordering space, it is just as easily a site and means of reactionary politics (Foucault 1997) As Hetherington (1997) states:

'Heterotopia are places of Otherness, whose Otherness is established through a relationship of difference with other sites, such that their presence either provides an unsettling of spatial and

social relations or an alternative representation of spatial and social relations' (Hetherington 1997, p. 8).

Genocchi (1995) questions :

'How is it that we can locate, distinguish and differentiate the essence of this difference, this 'strangeness' which is not simply outlined against the visible. . . how is it that heterotopia are 'outside' of or are fundamentally different to all other spaces, but also relate to and exist 'within' the general social space/order that distinguishes their meaning as difference? (Genocchi 1995, p. 38).

Genocchi (1995) argues that to concretize the notion as site and physical area is to undermine the concept itself through a form of self-contradiction as noted in Hetherington's (1997) terms:

'trying to identify sites as heterotopia is self-refuting because. . . the concept depends on maintaining its undefinable incommensurate character. . . it is this which gives heterotopia their power; to locate a heterotopia as a site and name it as such is to remove all of its alterity and make it a space like any other (Hetherington 1997, p. 47).

In the current study heterotopia is considered a conceptual idea about space rather than as any particular place, as 'a practice. . . that challenges. . . functional ordering. . . while refusing to become part of that order, even in difference' (Hetherington, 1997, p. 47). Therefore heterotopia exist in a relational or comparative capacity, in terms of incompatible juxtapositions or combinations, through effected difference and otherness (as will be noted in the socio-spatial contradictions and discrepancies within New Cairo City. Given that heterotopia are those 'other' places which arise around points of crises and particularly around crises of living space, it would seem that Greater Cairo's gated enclaves could qualify as heterotopias, This will enable one to deny notions of space as an innocent, transparent, apolitical medium and assert instead how space has played a crucial role in reinstating certain structures of power in more insidious ways (Hook & Vrdoljak 2002).

3. Gated Resorts East and West Greater Cairo Region

Kuppinger (2004) noted that exclusive residential communities in Egypt appeared in the 1980s in the form of Holiday villages along the North West Mediterranean Coast (Cole and Altorki 1998), with Greater Cairo Region recently experiencing unprecedented mushrooming of exclusive privatized public spaces. This ranges from shopping malls (such as City Stars in Madinat Nasr near Heliopolis), upscale hotels (New Cairo City's JW Marriot Hotel), private clubs, to gated residential communities with its marketing advertisement targeting wealthy globalized clientele familiar and interested in the articulation of western architectural styles and security technologies.

According to Kuppinger's (2004) analysis of Gardenia Park's marketing advertisement, 'Gardenia Park's super prime location in Sixth of October City at 12.5 kilometer distance from the Giza Pyramids promises the prospective residents of its 250 villas a dazzling array of future services ranging from police station, fire station, to hospitals , mosques, churches, schools, universities diverse shopping, and cultural palaces. The Club House includes a 120 person ball room, an Olympic size pool, and tennis and squash courts. Gardenia Park promises its residents a very well selected community where extreme privacy and security is guaranteed through only one entrance gate and a professional property-management team. Construction in the community is restricted to villas only. The community guarantees the pleasure of an exceptional residing by greenery and privacy, complimented by facilities to insure the health and happiness of your family. In short, the amenities rival those of luxury hotel' (in Kuppinger 2004, with modifications by author) .

In addition to upscale luxurious Hotels which were planned for international tourists, business travellers and the local elite (Sami 2000), Saad (2002) highlighted 'A World of Weekends' where privatized public spaces such as Magic Land (with dolphins, seals and a dinosaurs' jungle), and the Dreamland Amusement Park were advertised as parts of new (resort) towns and exclusive places of leisure and recreation . These places "are built on extensive grounds and boast vast green areas, as well as swimming pools, mini zoos, kids corner, and sometimes even golf courses' ... with 'countless lakes, streams, waterfalls and ponds' for a leisurely weekend away from the city (Saad 2002).

2.3. Golf Tourism in Egypt and Emergence of Gated Enclaves (Cairotopias)

In 2005 there were almost 32,000 golf courses worldwide, with each course averaging 30 hectares, and with nearly 2.5 million acres of land requiring about 18 million gallons of water to keep each course green and lush for a year. Such Golf industry includes property development, airlines, hotels chains, resorts and tour operators, as well as television and sports programming, media publications.

As one of the most rapidly expanding types of extensive land-use, golf course development has often attracted controversy when proposed as a policy to promote special-interest tourism. A common feature in Egypt since 1990s was the full support of the government for golf tourism and related property resorts development and luxury housing. Inspired by the US model, golf was popularised in the Egypt as part of the suburban lifestyle and business dealing. The televising of US golf championships and pursuit of 18-hole courses has led to massive use of chemical fertilisers, and an industry of special grass for turfing. 'Signature' courses designed by big names in golf competitions have also been globalised, as local authorities believed that large-scale golf course development would raise Egypt's tourism image and would attract business investors. This new exclusive neo-liberal model would be linked to the concept of urban renaissance which, 'justifies and bears witness to the

performativity [sic] of liberalisation policy and to the new delegation of competences that will remake Egypt for transnational business people' (Denis 2006)

'gated communities meet the wishes of wealthy Egyptian to replicate the American dream. It's the ambition of any American family to have their own home with a backyard, a garage and a little pool. Egyptian see this on TV or when they travel . . . better than living in a high-rise' (a resident of Soleimania Golf Village in Gauch 2000).

According to El Alfy (2006) over the last decade, the sport of golf has developed from a niche pastime into a full-fledged sport, increasing the demand for golf courses, golf tournaments and consequently opened a new industry of golf tourism. Until 1995, the only three courses were the Mena House, Gezira Sporting Club and Alexandria Sporting Club, dating back to the turn of the 20th century during the British occupation sought to create private sporting clubs for wealthy expatriate residents of Egypt. Since the 1950s revolution, Golf was viewed as an imperialist sport played only by the wealthy, thus leading to the nationalization of private clubs and seizing parts of the golf lands for public use. However with the real estate boom of the early 1990's came heavy investment in development projects related to golf.

Egypt's tourism receipts, which contribute close to 39.3 percent of total service receipts, rose by 10.7 percent in 2006/07. The government hopes to attract 14 million tourists and generate \$10.5 billion in tourism revenue by 2010/11, up from 9.8 million tourists and \$8 billion in revenue in 2006/07. The World Travel and Tourism Council in Egypt is predicting close to an 8 per cent rise in tourism arrivals in the country by 2005, as a result of the increase in the number of golf tourists. There are already around 16 international standard golf courses currently operational across Egypt, including the Mena House Golf Course, which directly overlooks the Pyramids, and the Cascades Golf Resort on the Red Sea, with more coastal courses and golf resorts under development. These golf homes were sold at a rapid rate and thus began the local birth of golf real estate development. Today there are no fewer than 14 working golf courses in the Egypt ranging from real estate projects in and around Cairo to Red Sea tourist developments, with 20 more courses in the planning phase.

According to the general manager of first Egypt's golf periodical, Golf in Egypt (GIE), which was first released in December 1998,

' As an industry, golf and golf real estate is already more than a LE 1 billion business and shows no sign of slowing down. I foresee tremendous growth in the next two decades, especially in golf tourism, and this growth will fuel further investment into the development of dozens of new golf courses. Golf tourism presents an interesting opportunity for the country since tourists who play golf tend to seek higher levels of service and accommodation. This is in stark contrast to the current masses of low-end tourists who make up the vast majority of

holiday makers coming to Egypt Perhaps one day Egypt can emulate Dubai and attract mega-wealthy golf real estate buyers and pump millions of dollars into our economy.’

Golf tourism, now being vigorously promoted by the Egyptian government, extracts a high social and environmental cost. As in the case of Greater Cairo's Western desert , communities have lost their reclaimed land to unscrupulous developers often linked to or themselves part of the political elite. According to Kuppinger (2004), various reclamation projects for newly graduates were launched during the 1960s and 1970s in the western desert along Cairo Alexandria High Way. The scarcity of water provision and high expenses of maintaining the land for agriculture led to the failure of most land reclamation projects, which were later leased to real estate speculators and business people who invested bank loans in golf courses and gated resorts (Soleimania and Dreamland), particularly with the increase in land prices which largely affected the supply of social housing for low income groups (as in the case of New Cairo City's Katameya) (Box 1).

**Box 1. An advertisement about Greater Cairo Region's
Golf Courses and Clubs**

Pyramids Golf and Country Club Soleimania – Alexandria- Cairo Desert Road

A true oasis with no less than 34 huge artificial lakes and magnificent landscaping, the Pyramids Golf and Country Club Soleimania lies off the Cairo Alexandria Desert Road and is part of a large development. Home to several different golf courses and 99 holes in total, a round of golf here suits all abilities, with more challenging holes available for the more expert players. Close to the Pyramids of Giza and just a 30-minute drive from Cairo Airport, the facilities at this top golf course are superb and include a huge driving range, a large clubhouse with several restaurants and even a swimming pool.

Dreamland Golf and Tennis Resort - 6th of October City Road, Dreamland City

The Dreamland Golf and Tennis Resort is home to a noteworthy, 18-hole golf course, complete with all of the facilities that you would expect at a top course, such as power carts, electronic swing analyser and refreshments around the course, which are always particularly welcomed on hot days. Situated in the suburbs of Cairo, this golf course is well known for its regular golfing tournaments and superb tennis resort, and is part of the enormous Dreamland City development, where you will find a shopping centre, cinemas, theme part and much more besides.

Source: http://www.cairo.world-guides.com/cairo_golf_courses.html

Golf clubs and resorts and luxury villas in gated communities with access to golf facilities contributed to the bubble economy of property development as well as a victim of the recent Egyptian construction crisis¹. Many projects were left unfinished while others went into bankruptcy (such as the case of Dreamland in Western Desert). Since its inception in 1994. Dreamland Golf resort has turned

into a symbol of the new spatiality (Mitchell 1999), until the Dreamland company was effectively bankrupt by 2000 ² (Mitchell 2002). More recently a draft of a new master plan for New Giza is proposed as a result of the construction of Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) by 2010, on 50 hectares of land two kilometers from the Giza pyramids on the Cairo-Alexandria Western desert road. New Giza, a massive 600-hectare site just 20km from Cairo, will be a landmark development for Egypt. It will combine luxury residential areas, a five-star hotel, restaurants, shopping, spa, sporting facilities, parks – and a high-end golf course. According to Thomson Perrett & Lobb, an international golf course architecture firm who will lead the New Giza project,

‘ We have a wonderfully dramatic landscape with the Pyramids for a backdrop, so it is a very special site. The movement of the land is fantastic and there will be outstanding views across the desert. There is also a deep quarry with sheer sides which we will restore and make a unique feature – it will be a very exciting course to view and play... New Giza is going to be a beautiful place to live and visit, with green areas, trees, parks, lakes and, of course, a world-class golf course.’

Nevertheless it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the adverse environmental impacts of desert development golf courses on natural resources, as the excessive use of water for golf courses to maintain lush turfs and large expenses of digging wells, pools and artificial lakes put tremendous additional pressure on already limited and contested water resources for agriculture ³. With more than 18 golf courses being built in the Eastern Desert (along the Red Sea Coast), where ground and storm waters are extremely scarce, water desalination poses a costly and less-environmentally compatible solution. Chemicals used to fertilise turf and to fight off weeds and pests contaminate underground water and streams while posing health threats to course workers, caddies and even golfers themselves.

Since 1990s, in accordance with the 1990s IMF structural adjustment agreement, neoliberal economic restructuring of the Egyptian economy opened up new avenues of investment and profiteering, particularly with the deregulation of government land, which accommodated the massive transfer of desert land surrounding Cairo from public to private ownership. A new legislation allowed for the transfer of desert land to private ownership, with developers securing considerable stretches of prime real estate at relative proximity to Cairo (Kuppinger 2004). The 1990s neo-liberal economic policies and mechanisms of entrepreneurial urban governance have contributed to recent emergence of privatized public spaces and to the predominance of private firms constructing enclosed and demarcated gated communities within Greater Cairo's Metropolitan area. The Egyptian government sold large portions of un-reclaimed public desert land (100 km²) to real estate developers to finance housing development with the support of major public and private banks (such as Dwellings Finance Organizations and Construction Housing Bank) (Box 2) (Figure 2). In addition to making land available at cheap rates, the government heavily subsidizes developers by constructing new roads and

bridges and other infrastructural elements in record time. Mitchell (1999, p.28) indicates that these developments ‘represent the most phenomenal real estate explosion Egypt has ever witnessed’

“The state is even involved as a developer, since the largest single builder of Cairo’s new neighborhoods, far larger than the builders of Dreamland, is the Egyptian army. Military contractors are throwing up thousands of acres of apartments on the city’s eastern perimeter to create new suburban enclaves for the officer elite”(Mitchell 1999, p. 29).

During the early 2000s, nearly 320 real estate companies planned the construction of 600,000 villas and luxury apartments in private cities (80 gated communities) with such names as Dream Land, Beverly Hills, Belle-Ville (the largest unit ‘Galleria’ 622m2 costs LE1.95 million) and Gardenia Park (a 684m2 villa costs LE 2 million). These gated communities in Greater Cairo Region exhibit strong influences from the Gulf monarchies. Nevertheless in 2003 only 60,000 housing units had been built and a decline in property prices reflected the failed attempt by real estate agencies to attract middle-class buyers. With a three bedroom apartment (138m2; without air-conditioning) being listed at LE 135,240, Wahish (1999) indicated that such price even if paid in installments was totally out of the reach of most middle class Cairenes.

Figure 2. Advertisement about Gated Communities



Box 2. A Sample of Advertisements about Gated Communities

Al-Rehab city: Promoters: Talaat Mustafa Group (50 years experience); Bankers: National Bank of Egypt and Misr International Bank

Al-Hayat residence 'Elegance' Promoters: International Company for Iskan and Taameer; Bankers: Bank Misr; Location: extension of Heliopolis; Prices: Start from LE 620,000 for 510 m²

Dreamland 'Legend City' – Promoters: Bahgat Group; Bankers: National Bank of Egypt; Location: west of Cairo near Fayoum Highway

Al-Saraya (The Palace) 'Everyone's talking about us' – Promoters: Bautex; Bankers: Bank Misr; Location: 6th of October City

Yasmin Center; Promoters: Modern Engineering Co.; Bankers: Egyptian Land Bank; Location: al-Oboor City

La Siesta Villas 'Free from pollution and crowds' – Bankers: Saudi Egyptian Bank; Location: Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road (near Cairo)

Al-Yasmin Promoters: Eastern Weavers Co.; Location: 10th of Ramadan; Prices: From LE 199,000

Beverly Hills 'For better living' – Promoters: SODIC (6th Of October For Development and Investment; Bankers: National Bank of Egypt; Location: On 2550 acres on the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road (towards Cairo)

Source: Various issues of Al-Ahram newspaper

4. Stakeholders' Narratives and Contested Landscape

Between 2005 and 2007, a small area survey was administered in New Cairo City with 90 primary stakeholder respondents through informal discussions with 35 residents of gated communities, 35 local residents within Resettlement Housing and 20 housing owners. The empirical survey involved on site direct interviews with house occupiers ranging from owners to tenants. Information about the vacant housing units were gathered through telephone interviews with non occupier owners or tenants, and through informal discussions with neighbouring local residents and gate keepers (Box 3). Secondary stakeholders included urban planners from the General Organisation for Physical Planning (GOPP) and local authorities from the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC) who expressed the official view concerning New Settlements and New Town housing

policies. The Egyptian Centre for Housing Rights (EGHR), an NGO, provided a critical perspective regarding official housing policies whilst addressing the need to consider the social dimension of housing provision.

The selected stakeholders' narratives revealed the on-going spatial contestation between urban poor's right to the city, and between residents of golf resorts and gated communities and official urban policy. This is in accordance with Chang's (2000) notion of urban areas as 'sites of spatial conflicts' or 'contested landscapes' between groups of people with divergent motives in and claims on the city.

Box 3. Primary Stakeholders (90 respondents)

<p>Housing Tenants (occupiers) (35)</p> <p>Resettlement Public Housing (25)-Inner city urban poor (tomb dwellers- Zabaleen- Gamalia)</p> <p>Public housing (10)- Middle to low middle income</p>
<p>Housing Owners (55)</p> <p>Youth housing (10) Middle and low middle income Urban Youth (owners- non occupiers)</p> <p>Public -Private Development Housing (10) Middle income professionals (owners- occupiers)</p> <p>Katameya Heights Gated Communities (20)</p> <p>Upper middle income (owners occupiers)(15)</p> <p>Land developers and Investors (owners-non occupiers- speculators) (5)</p> <p>Al Rehab City (15)</p> <p>Upper middle income (owners occupiers)</p> <p>Land developers and Investors (owners-non occupiers- speculators) (5)</p>

4.1. Gated Communities and Golf Resorts for the Rich -New Settlements (1 and 5)

Since 2000 *New Cairo City* was created as a result of merging the eastern new settlements 1, 3 and 5, with newly established private gated communities in the desert to the East of the Ring Road, approximately 35 km east of Cairo (Figure 3). Initially the area was named Katameya, and was inhabited in 1992 by earthquake victims officially relocated by the government to public housing in settlement 3. In 1996 low income tenement housing, which overlooked the newly created Katameya Heights , was truncated . The official reason given was 'building irregularities' but incompatibility with nearby villa developments and with 'gated communities' appears more likely.

According to an owner of a privately-upgraded public housing flat ,

"Some of the unoccupied low income housing stock is decayed even before being allocated to people. The government is encouraging private developers to buy these units for upward filtering to middle class standards. We might even seek bank loans to buy land collectively and build a condominium for our grown up children. The future is here since owning your home has many advantages. It is a great investment."

Recently, the government encouraged private investment in housing development with nearly 38 % of the planned residential area being implemented mainly for upper-income levels. The government's responsibility was to develop the town's infrastructure, public services and low-income dwellings, while the private sector were involved in the production of luxury housing and entertainment, as the town became a resort for high-class gated communities (Figure 4)

The first phase of development included Golf City which consisted of luxurious residential districts, to encourage middle and high-income families to move out of Cairo to its 521 villas with prices ranging from US \$258 000 to US \$430 000 (one US \$= 6 LE – June 2006 rates) . It is surrounded by a newly constructed 18-hole golf course with hundreds of newly planted palm trees. The second phase incorporated JW Marriott Hotel and Mirage City with additional 330 villas (215 occupied), ranging between 700- 900 square metres with landscaped gardens (Box 4). In response to high demand for property in Katameya Heights, another 150 feddan of land were purchased in 2003, with a waiting list of over 400 interested buyers for 280 prototype villas (with prices ranging from LE 2 million) .

Unlike Katameya Heights, Al Rehab City represents more mixed social classes and land uses. It is a fully fledged community, which creates a comprehensive integrated residential scheme at the North East side of New Cairo City, at the intersection of the Eastern Ring Road with the Cairo/Suez Road. It covers an area of 10 million square meters to accommodate 200,000 residents. There are 10 phases, each covering an area of 220 feddans. Each phase is a complete district offering two kinds of housing arrangements: villas and apartments. All facilities are interconnected throughout the ten different phases to include educational, medical, commercial, sports club, recreational and maintenance facilities. As an extension to Al Rehab, a new mega-project Madinaty (My City) which will includes 80,000 residential villas, townhouses and apartments (with prices ranging between LE 4,000 to LE 5,000 per square meter) as well as recreational and commercial areas, schools, medical facilities and hotels.

Box 4. Advertisement about New Cairo City's Golf Courses and Clubs

The Katameya Heights Golf and Tennis Resort- Fifth District

A game of golf at the championship Katameya Heights Golf Resort is popular with both locals and visitors to the city, and is just a 20-minute drive from Cairo Airport, being close to both the Maadi and Heliopolis districts. In total there are 27 holes available here, which can be played as either 18-hole or 9-hole courses, suiting those looking for a quick round. A drive range, caddies and power carts are just some of the services on offer here.

JW Marriott Mirage City and Golf Course –Mirage City

The JW Marriott Mirage City and Golf Course is a relatively new addition to the golfing scene in Cairo and is known for its enormous clubhouse and golf academy. Covering around 250 acres / 100 hectares and standing alongside the Marriott Hotel, this excellent golf course is home to 18 holes, stretching for just under 7,000 yards and featuring a staggering 45 lakes. Other unforgettable highlights include dramatic waterfalls, numerous streams and ponds, and also three restaurants within the actual clubhouse.

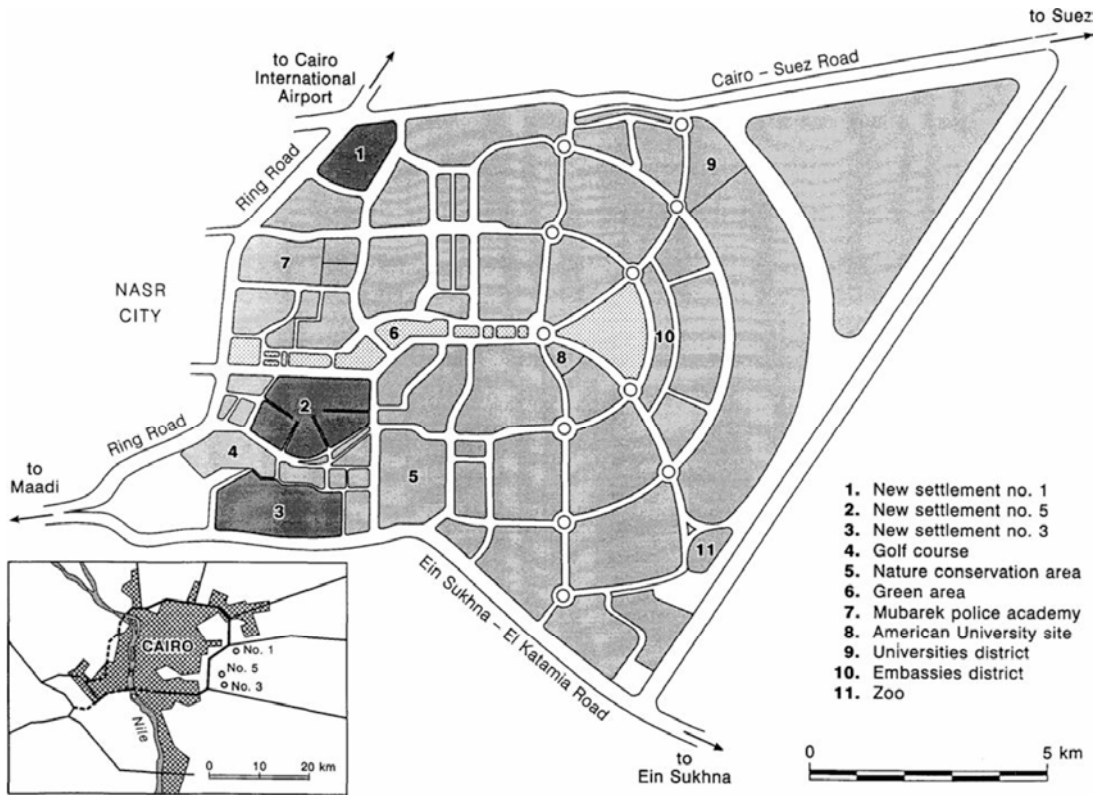
Source: http://www.cairo.world-guides.com/cairo_golf_courses.html

In addition to Arabella, another two gated communities are in the process development: Lakeview, a 500-villa luxury development, and Cairo Festival City, a US \$3 billion 2.5 million square metre which includes mixed-use commercial, residential and hospitality and retail property (owned by Carrefour and by Majid Al Futtaim of Dubai). In addition, despite the building industry's recession (as a result of inflated prices of building materials and uncontrollable land speculations), DAMAC Properties (a Dubai based real estate company) is developing new desert resort enclaves, Centre Ville and Hyde Park in New Cairo City.

According to a property developer at DAMAC,

" Spread across 4.7 million square meters, Hyde Park is an exclusive 3000 villas development. It is a gated community ensuring total safety and 24 hour security amidst lush greenery. Located on New Cairo's Ring Road, it's an ideal location that offers luxury and convenience. With over 14 villa types and 30 finishing styles to choose from. Reminiscent of Old Downtown Cairo's belle époque architecture, Centre Ville is a sprawling 640,000 square meter site which offers luxury apartments and retail in several architectural styles evoking the grandeur and charm of the glorious and historic 1920s. A private gated community with 24 hour security and controlled entry, it provides total privacy and peace of mind."

Figure 3 New Cairo City and New Settlements 1,3, 5



Source: Sutton and Fahmi (2001)

Figure 4. New Cairo City's Gated Communities



Source: the author (2007)

Gated communities in both Katameya Heights (20 cases) and Al Rehab City (15 cases) represent unplanned speculative and private 'luxury' housing development and villa compounds owned by upper middle income elite (Figures 5a,b & Figure 6). Despite the excellent conditions of these private housing development, villa compounds are partially occupied by owners who are either commuters (n=25 cases) or real estate property speculators (n=10 cases). Whilst some cases (n=25 cases) regard optimistically their houses as homes for the younger generation, owners of vacant housing (n=10 cases) were in favour of property speculations and investments as they held them off the market in expectation of higher future prices.

A managing director of an urban development area at Katameya Heights, argues:

"Our objective is to create an integrated community where people find everything. Although most people can not afford a villa, we also offer small flats for LE 80,000 to LE180,000 that can be purchased by installments. At least 70 per cent of all housing units have already been sold. Egyptian expatriates are among our main target groups. Now that we have these communities, we can encourage them to return, and offer an alternative to those who tend to buy holiday homes abroad.

Some may believe that New Cairo City could eclipse Cairo as a destination for holiday-makers and conferences, but a lot of people choose their hotel on the basis of luxury and convenience. For the travelling executive who may be occupied in meetings for most of his stay, a few rounds of golf and a quick trip to the pyramids could be all he's looking for. Cairo may have to let her satellite cities grow up."

A resident of Katameya Heights, believes that her neighborhood is only improving:

"I moved to Katameya because it was quiet and peaceful—and the apartments were well priced. Since then, there has been a huge, maybe 40% increase in the price of apartments in Katameya. Katameya has a good future, especially with the opening of the American, the French and the German Universities. It already has good international schools for the children and excellent transportation. I still go into Cairo to visit friends and family. Known for its golf club and family atmosphere, Katameya is constantly developing, as is the cost of living there. If your family would like to rent a home there, expect to pay anywhere from \$3,000 to \$6,000 USD a month. But there are areas of Katameya, which are less expensive.

"Katameya is pretty diverse. There are upper, middle and upper lower class areas. The upper class areas have the most impressive villas and are well laid-out in general. The lower class areas are less aesthetically pleasing but are still very nice and tend to be much cheaper."

Another respondent adds

" The isolation of Egyptian suburbs and satellite cities can be problematic for many new residents. My wife liked being in the city, with her close friends and family. But after living here, she has changed her mind and likes it more now."

An owner of a villa in Katameya Heights indicates:

"This is a dream house , no doubt. I will not be able to move in to the villa for another two years. Then I will use it as an alternative to my North Western Coast villa, but definitely not as a permanent residence, since it is far from where I work. Most probably once I retire and do not need to commute to Cairo, I will permanently move here with my children and grandchildren".

Figure 5a. Katameya Heights Golf Resort



Source: the author (2007)

Figure 5b. Katameya Golf Resort



Source: the author (2007)

Figure 6. Al Rehab City



Source: <http://www.alrehabcity.com/panorama.htm>

A resident in Al-Rehab City expressed preference for privacy of living in a more secluded place, especially the lack of densely populated apartments:

"In Al-Rehab, I don't know my neighbors very well. I only know my next door neighbor because by chance he knew my father. It's nice knowing your neighbors, but I prefer privacy. I

have my own privacy in El-Rehab. I want to raise a family in El-Rehab's quiet and clean environment. I would feel more comfortable, safer for my kids to go to their schools. They can go wherever they like without me having to worry about their health or safety. It's easier to breathe out here. I want them to have that too."

Another positive view was emphasized by a resident in Al Rehab City:

"It takes only 25 minutes to get here, which means I can spend all my weekends there. Resorts like this one are essential for people to refresh themselves before starting another working week, and for children to play and spend some time away from Cairo's pollution."

An official at the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC) attempts to justify their policies:

"To provide housing for poor and limited-income families, the authority must raise funds elsewhere. The only way was to encourage businessmen to invest in real estate, and sell them land at high prices."

In contrast urban planners at GOPP expressed opposition to these gated communities:

"The government has sold or leased vast areas of desert, supplied with infrastructure, to private investors at very low prices to be used for luxury housing. The investors received large loans from national banks to implement the projects, pouring people's savings into glossy dwellings that will serve only a fraction of society."

More radical opinions were expressed by respondents at the Egyptian Centre for Housing Rights (ECHR):

"these resorts are symbols of social inequality, tangible manifestations of the rise of the nouveaux riches who are obsessed by the dream of the lavish life-style. Why did the government offer land at such low prices for luxury housing? This land should have been sold at double or triple the price, and the profit could have subsidised limited-income and youth housing projects. Why should the government provide such projects with infrastructure when many impoverished areas are still deprived of these basic needs?"

Moreover Dwellings Finance Organizations and the Construction Housing Bank financed upper income and private housing units in addition to the upward filtering of old public housing. Such properties were mainly owned, on mortgage and installments schemes, by middle income urban youth (n= 8 cases). Tenants and owners (n= 8 cases) who could not afford to develop their property expressed the need to sell their flats currently regarded as frozen or dead assets. Despite official media propaganda regarding this project, negative attitudes were expressed by a those middle income resident

"We have to cope with difficult terms of financial payments for housing units. We have to pay installments with increasing interest rates. There are cases where a government employee whose income is LE150, must make monthly payments of LE70. Whilst the houses need a lot of modifications, the unaffordability to pay installments would lead to subsequent eviction. Most jobs go to people who do not live in here."

4.2. Resettlement Housing for the Poor - New Settlement 3

Government- sponsored resettlement public housing (6 storey two bedroom units) was mainly assigned on a tenancy basis to inner city urban poor including tomb dwellers and Zabaleen (Figures 7a,b) . However, lack of utilities and infrastructure facilities, inconvenient location and inefficient transport system have contributed to creating temporary occupancy and partial vacancy (n= 10 cases). Whilst inclined to return to inner city areas because of the lack of job opportunities and housing management, limited development opportunities and substandard property, those resettled urban poor (n= 25 cases) with more mobility within informal housing expect no future in Katameya New Cairo City.

Various heads of households described their lives after eviction from inner city poverty areas to the Eastern desert settlements, as "Out here, there is nothing..." where some of them moved twice, choosing to live initially in temporary tin huts or tents on vacant land within fringes of Eastern cemetery, and then forced again to resettle to Cairo's eastern desert communities (Sutton and Fahmi 2002b) (Figure 8);

"While most investment and development goes to the 'golf people' , we have nothing. There is no sufficient water supply , no permanent electricity... We don't have proper sanitation. All we have got is a water tap. There are about 300 families here. Some of us don't get any water, so we have to share. The local officials told us that in a week's time we would be provided with all facilities. "

"Before our eviction from inner city districts in Cairo, the local authorities claimed that they were concerned for our welfare and that the move to Katameya will improve our livelihoods and that we will be provided with better alternative accommodation. We had managed to save some money with such great difficulty to introduce modifications to our original homes which will now be destroyed to give way to development projects . We couldn't do anything, we had no choice, so we packed up our few belongings, tried to salvage what we could from our homes."

" Even though officials claimed that we will be compensated for losing our Cairo houses, we can't afford to pay for Katameya's accommodation which costs approximately LE 50000 (1US\$= LE 5.5). How can we save to pay the installments ? Who will give us a loan? "

"What about our livelihood? We are skeptical about the official's intentions, but what could we do? We are poor people, and we have no options Nobody is going to help us. I worry about how I am going to feed my children."

Figure 7a. Resettlement Housing



Source: the author (2007)

Figure 7b. Resettlement Housing



Source: the author (2007)

According to official proposals at Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC), the new (re)settlement of Zabaleen garbage collectors and tomb dwellers in Katameya, would be equipped with complete piped networks of water supply and sanitation, roads network, open space, vocational training and health care centres, libraries, schools, etc. (Fahmi & Sutton 2006; Fahmi 2005). Residents would be provided with a soft loan, 90 percent of which would be paid over 40 years giving the residents a sense of ownership.

“The project is based on transparent dialogue with local inhabitants in both planning and management processes.”

In contrast a more negative reaction to resettlement housing in Katameya was expressed by the Zabaleen who were to be evicted from their settlements in Muqattam:

“We have been assigned flats in buildings, housing which we are not accustomed to. I have a big family which will be obliged to live in a 80 square metres (or less) ‘box’. These new (resettlement) housing units do not have courtyards and extra areas for rearing animals.”

Moreover residents of Gamalia district, who were forced to leave their decayed housing in Medieval Cairo area to resettle in the eastern new settlements, expressed their dissatisfaction,

“Those who had little money rented a place in Manshiet Nasser or somewhere else nearby. They said that at least they were close to their source of livelihood in the bazaar and Gamalia. In Katameya we are out there in the desert far from Cairo.”

Similar opinions were confirmed by Bab al Nasr tomb dwellers who had already been evicted from North Gamalia to the eastern settlements yet expressed their anxiety about being moved to the desert (Sutton & Fahmi (2002b), Fahmi (2008b),

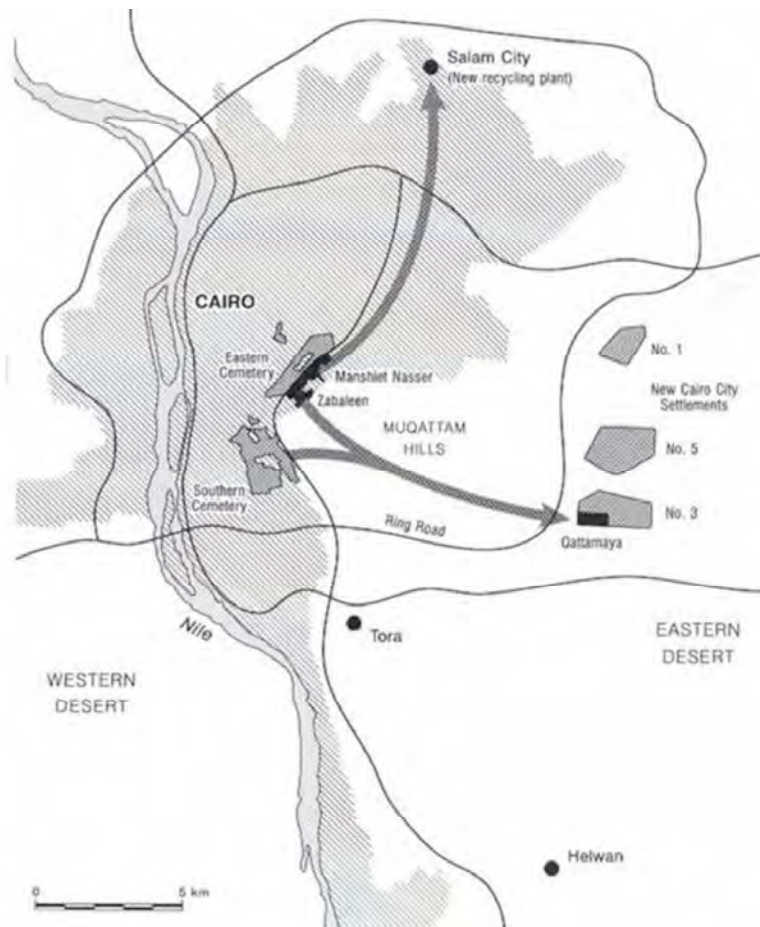
“We have to spend 6LE (One US\$) a day on transportation taking us at least two hours going to and coming from Cairo. This is quite expensive for us. Katameya is so far from the city, where we seek work. Otherwise our families will starve. We are considering going back to Cairo even if it is difficult to find accommodation.”

This is clearly evident in one of the respondent’s statements at Egyptian Centre for Housing Rights (ECHR) concerning evicted garbage collectors and tomb dwellers.

“Future supply of land for housing in Muqattam area, the cemeteries and Gamalia district is constrained for the poor urban population while the cost of the cheapest house in the new location is artificially raised by bureaucratic controls and speculations. Government 'low-cost' housing projects within the new Eastern desert communities have delivered too little, since they often ended up in the hands of middle-class groups.”

These narratives indicate that the trauma of evictions of urban poor people (tomb dwellers , Zabaleen garbage collectors and residents of the medieval city) is mainly attributed to the social and economic disruption caused to those forced to move from their inner city homes, which would be cleared for land developers to make large profits by doing nothing more than clearing inner city areas from the poor and holding the empty land for speculation (Fahmi 2005; Fahmi & Sutton 2006; Sutton & Fahmi 2002a; Sutton & Fahmi 2002b). Where provision was made for resettlement in New Cairo City, this was almost at a distant site far from urban poor's places of work in Greater Cairo's inner city areas . Whilst resettlement housing lacked sufficient infrastructure and services, other upgraded low-cost housing projects often ended up in the hands of middle-class groups.

Figure 8. Population Eviction from Cemetery Areas and Zabaleen Garbage Collectors' settlement to New Settlement 3



Source: Fahmi & Sutton (2006)

4.3. Primary stakeholders' attitudes and evaluations

Table 1 demonstrates housing types and features within study areas, whilst revealing the complex interrelated factors contributing to New Cairo City's spatial fragmentation (see Figure 9 for patterns of housing mobility). Such factors range from housing conditions/ management, type of occupancy / vacancy, funding agency, housing history/ mobility and future housing expectations. Primary stakeholders' attitudes and evaluations were affected by such factors as socioeconomic characteristics, housing conditions, design characteristics and management.

- *Resettlement public housing* (25 cases in 6 storey two bedroom units) are mainly assigned on a tenancy basis to inner city urban poor including tomb dwellers and Zabaleen. However, a lack of management and infrastructure have contributed to creating temporary occupancy and partial vacancy. Whilst inclined to return to inner city areas because of the lack of job

opportunities, those resettled urban poor with more mobility within informal housing expect no future in Katameya New Cairo City.

- *Public housing* (10 cases) are partially occupied by middle to low-middle income tenants as part of New Town Policy. Tenants expressed their dissatisfaction with monotonous architecture and the lack of jobs and infrastructure. They expected no future within their decayed 4-5 storey two bedroom units as they tend to return to inner city areas.
- *Youth housing* (10 cases in 4-5 storey two-three bedroom units) were initially an upward filtering of old public housing mainly owned, on mortgage and installments schemes, by urban middle and low middle income youth. Whilst housing conditions are well managed despite being mostly vacant, those first home owners were partly optimistic about the future as a result of un-affordability and inability to pay installments regularly.
- *Public-Private Housing* (10 cases) have been modified by middle income owners-occupiers' private investment. The original 4-5 storeys
- *Public housing units* (10 cases) which are only partly occupied have been subjected to vertical extension with the addition of new rooms for future married children .
- *Gated communities* (35 cases) in both Katameya heights (20 cases) and Al Rehab City (15 cases) represent unplanned speculative and private 'luxury' housing development and villa compounds owned by upper middle income elite. Despite the excellent conditions of these private housing development, villa compounds are partially occupied by owners who are either commuters or real estate property speculators. They regard optimistically their houses as homes for the younger generation.

Table 1. Matrix of Survey Area

Survey areas	Youth housing (10)	Resettlement public housing (25)	Public housing (10)	Public-private development housing (10)	Gated communities (35)
Type of housing					
Population characteristics	Urban middle and low middle class youth (owners-mortgage and instalments)	Inner city urban poor (tomb dwellers zabaleen (tenants))	Middle to low middle class (tenants)	Middle class Owners long term instalments (future mortgages)	Upper middle class (owners)
Housing design characteristics	4-5 storey two-three bedroom units (100-150 square metres)	5-6 storey two bedroom units (60-80 square metres)	4-5 storey two bedroom units (80-100 sq.metres)	Originally 4-5 storeys Privately initiated Modifications Vertical Extension-Addition of new rooms	Villa compounds
Housing conditions /management	well managed (upward filtering of old public housing)	Decayed-lack of management lack infrastructure	Decayed-monotonous architecture	Modified privately by owners/tenants	Excellent condition
Type of occupancy/ Vacancy	Mostly vacant	Mainly vacant Temporarily occupied	Partially occupied	Partially occupied	occasional occupancy-partial vacancy Commuters/ weekenders
Funding agency	Private-public partnership and investment	public	public	public housing and owners' private investment	Private
Housing history/ mobility	First home owners	Second home (first formal home) mobility within informal housing	First home tenants	First home owners	Second-third home
Future housing expectations	Partially optimistic Concern about affordability and ability to pay instalments	No future Lack of jobs Lack of infrastructure Decayed housing Tendency to return to inner city areas	No future Lack of jobs Lack of infrastructure Decayed housing Tendency to return to inner city areas	Optimistic Real estate speculation	Optimistic Home for young generation Real estate speculation

Figure 9. Schematic Diagram showing Housing Mobility within New Cairo City

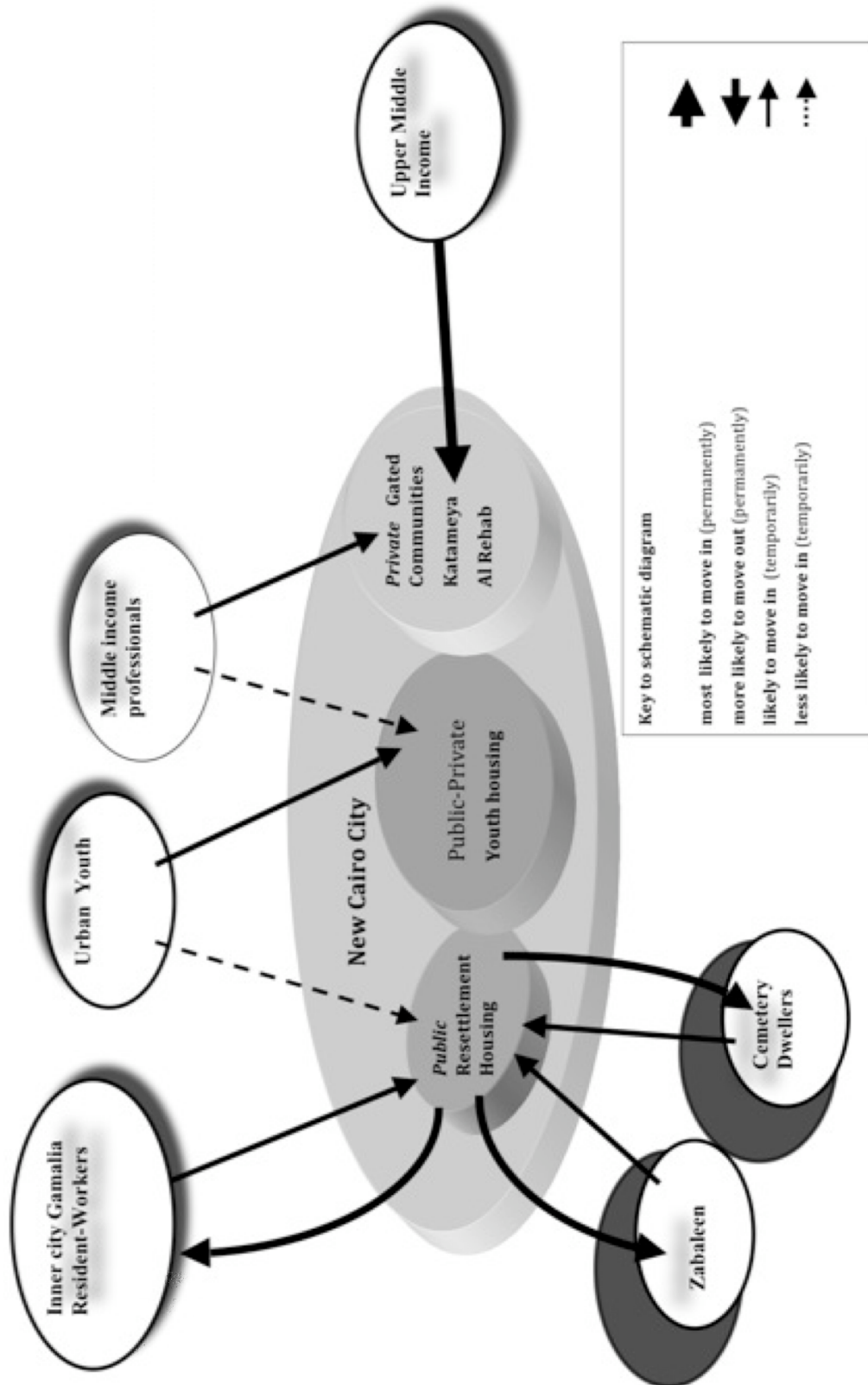


Figure 10. New Cairo City's Fragmented Communities



1. Gated communities
2. Semi-Gated communities
3. Semi-detached villa compounds
4. Attached housing compounds
5. Youth Housing (Public-Private) Development
6. Resettlement Public Housing

4.4. Vacant Dwellings within Survey Areas

Table 2 shows that less than two thirds of the sampled housing were vacant. Nevertheless there were variations amongst different housing types as percentage of vacancy ranged from 100% within Eastern suburban Autostrade development; 70% within Public housing; 68% within Resettlement public housing; 60% within both Youth housing and Katameya heights gated communities; 53% within Al Rehab City gated communities and 30% within Public-private development housing .

Table 2 indicates that no incidence of unfinished and unoccupied buildings was found amongst 39% of the total sampled houses, compared to 28% with minimal incidence of vacant dwellings . The remaining third of the total sampled houses recorded the highest property vacancy with this percentage rising to nearly 43% within the Eastern suburban Autostrade development (5 cases) and in the gated communities of both Al Rehab City (8 cases) and Katameya Heights (9 cases) . Whilst retired owners tend to live permanently in their gated private compounds, others, especially in Al Rehab City, travel to Cairo for work. This commuting pattern is greatly facilitated by the recent extension of the western section of the ring road..

Both minimal and high incidences of unfinished and unoccupied buildings were also prevalent within Youth Housing (6 out 10 sampled cases), Resettlement Housing (17 out of 25 sampled cases) and Public Housing stock (7 out of 10 sampled cases). The vacancy rate dropped when residents invested in housing modifications, as noted within Public-Private Housing development, where only 3 out of 10 sampled cases were partially unfinished and unoccupied. Nearly 20% of the vacant houses were finished but unoccupied by owners or tenants. Such a phenomenon was mainly evident in gated communities amongst 9 sampled houses of Katameya Heights and 8 sampled houses in Al Rehab City. This was attributed to owners' inclination towards property speculations in expectation of higher future house prices, others held housing for future occupancy for married offspring .

Table 3 indicates various reasons given by absent owners during telephone interviews. Other informal discussions with neighbouring local residents within New Cairo City's Resettlement Housing, and with the gate keeper (*bawab*) in the Eastern Maadi-Katameya suburban Autostrade development were quite informative about housing vacancy. Inability to afford to develop property was mainly mentioned by nearly 40% of respondents (Table 3), especially within resettlement housing (12 out of total 17 vacant cases), Youth housing (4 out of 6 vacant cases), and Public housing (6 out of 7 vacant cases) (see Appendix). Lack of utilities and infrastructure facilities, inconvenient location and inefficient transport system were mentioned by more than two thirds of the respondents. These were mainly within resettlement housing areas (15 cases), where people expressed satisfaction with their original inner city residence areas and discontent with the resettlement housing because of limited development opportunities and substandard property. This opinion was further confirmed by tenants and owners of Public Housing Units (7 cases) and Youth

Housing Units (6 cases) who could not afford to develop their property, and who expressed their need to sell their flats currently regarded as frozen or dead assets. Nearly 40% of those owners of vacant housing were in favour of property speculations and investments, particularly within Gated Communities in Al Rehab City (5 out of 8 vacant cases) and in Katameya Heights (all 9 vacant cases) and its suburban Maadi-Katameya eastern Axis development (3 out of 5 vacant cases) , with owners leaving their housing units vacant as they held them off the market in expectation of higher future prices.

Table 2. Incidence of Vacant Dwellings within survey areas *.

<u>Survey areas</u>	%	Total (90)
No incidence of unfinished and unoccupied buildings	39%	35
Plots with finished-and occupied buildings by plot owners or tenants		
Minimal incidence of unfinished and unoccupied buildings	27.7%	25
Plots with unfinished buildings		14
Foundation, lintel and roofing stages		11
Plots with finished-but unoccupied buildings-	33.3%	30
Occupied by paid security guard/gate keeper households		

Field Survey (April-June 2005)

* Types of housing (vacant dwellings highlighted in parenthesis)

1. Youth housing (10) **(6) (60%)**
2. Resettlement public housing (25) **(17) (68%)**
3. Katameya heights gated communities (15) **(9)(60%)**
4. Al Rehab Gated communities (15) **(8) (53%)**
5. Private residential blocks (5) **(5) (100%)**
6. Public housing (10) **(7) (70%)**
7. Public -private development housing (10) **(3) (30%)**

**Table 3. Reasons for minimal and high incidence of vacant dwellings
by type of housing**

	1(6)	2 (17)	3 (9)	4 (8)	5 (7)	6 (3)	7 (5)	Total (55)
Owners' un-affordability to develop property	4	12	-	-	6	2	2	26
Property owners' speculations and investment	-	-	9	5	-	1	3	18
Bureaucratic (inheritance) arrangements / inaccessibility to property	-	3	3	-	1	2	-	9
Unofficial property allocation	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	4
Lack of utilities and infrastructure facilities	5	15	-	2	4	2	3	31
Limited development opportunities (decayed/ derelict/ substandard property)	4	17	-	1	5	3	1	31
Insecure (stagnant/inflated) property market	5	-	2	4	-	3	2	16
Lack of security and safety within area	3	11	-	-	5	2	2	23
Inconvenient location and inefficient transport system	4	15	-	-	5	1	-	25
Investment for future generations	-	-	9	5	-	3	3	20
Satisfaction with existing residence	1	8	5	1	2	-	2	19
Lack of housing mobility outside local area	2	8	-	-	3	-	-	13

Total number add up to more than (55 cases) as respondents gave more than one answer- Field Survey (April-June 2005)

Key:

1. Youth housing
2. Resettlement public housing
3. Katameya heights gated communities
4. Al Rehab Gated communities
5. Private residential blocks
6. Public housing
7. Public -private development housing

5. Conclusion

The failure of official New Town policies and Greater Cairo Master plan guidelines has contributed to the emergence of suburban gated communities, which was mainly attributed to the massive deregulation of desert land, within a neoliberal globalizing framework as a result of increasing private rather than public investment in housing as part of restructuring the Egyptian economy in accordance with the 1990s IMF structural adjustment agreement. Such suburban desert resort enclaves accommodated an unprecedented land speculation and construction boom that reflected features and models of urban spatial fortification, with investments being exclusively directed towards profitable luxury housing and upscale spaces of entertainment and leisure. This will aggravate Greater Cairo's urban polarisation with duality of peripheral informal and marginal settlements, and planned exclusive suburbs (Bayat and Denis 2000). On the one hand there is the urban poor's exclusion and dislocation from the emerging globalized cityscape as they are forced to move out of inner city districts to peripheral spontaneous settlements (*ashwa'iyat*) . On the other hand a new class of affluent nouveaux riche millionaires recently abandoned the city for the newly emerging exclusive desert enclaves and condominiums, leaving Cairo with its high density, traffic congestion, and environmental pollution and moving to new suburban houses..

The peripheral unplanned speculative and private luxury housing within the gated communities of New Cairo City has affected eastern and western new settlements in a way not predicted by the Master Plan nor by the GOPP. Most of this ring-road associated housing development has been private rather than public, and higher class rather than lower (Sutton & Fahmi 2001, p145). To a certain extent New Cairo City, whilst replicating old social divisions and unresolved housing problems and ghettoisation, would appear to encapsulate most of the features and problems of Greater Cairo's urban situation. This stems from its nature as a hybrid mixture of new town, overspill estate, low cost re-housing scheme and speculative middle class developments. New Cairo City is made up of contrasting urban elements : unplanned but decidedly up-market private gated community of Katameya Heights incorporating upper middle class elite residents and property speculators and a decaying and inadequate resettlement housing project for victims of the 1992 earthquake and other relocated urban poor who often prefer to return to their inner city informal housing.

New Cairo City's housing market is increasingly dominated by property speculation by the middle classes, with speculative house building, resulting in empty dwellings and near complete but unoccupied flats and houses. There are the plots with finished but unoccupied dwellings, ranging from resettlement accommodation, completed but too expensive, too remote or too unsatisfactory for the anticipated relocatee occupants, to unoccupied and under-occupied gated communities built speculatively for commuters or second home dwellers in self-styled resort or golf complexes. There are also speculative dwellings acquired through the upward filtering of ostensibly low-income

housing as well as dwellings acquired as a middle-class family's future investment. Some of these new residents return to their former inner Cairo dwellings but keep hold of their new flat, now an additional vacant dwelling. Other families cannot afford the rents or mortgage payments or resent the remoteness, distance or desert environment of the new settlement and abandon their allocated dwelling, which then proves hard to re-let. New towns in particular have failed to attract population away from inner Cairo locations.

The pertinent need for security measures and the exclusion of the urban masses highlighted the contested nature of New Cairo City's gated enclaves (Cairotopias) (Kuppinger 2004, 2005). Whereas their physical features tend to accentuate their globalised nature, these gated communities do not exist in isolation from their geographical and cultural environments. This is noted in the existence of new fortresses of leisure and consumption (golf gated communities) close to poor resettlement housing, thus engendering reactions, debates, and challenges among local poorer populations. Further spatial contradictions could be noted as middle income groups occupy less exclusive development such as (Al Rehab City) which promises comfort of living and safe family apartments at relatively affordable rates, while other gated golf communities emphasise exclusive luxurious lifestyles and tight security measures as they address the nouveaux riche's quests for social distinction, sentiments of fear, obsessions with privacy (Katameya Heights, Arabella and Mirage City). Whereas there is the wish for social distinction and segregation in Egypt's highly polarized society, the geographical distance to the city might not be as attractive to residents of gated communities who seem to use their new houses as second, or weekend resort homes.

Within New Cairo City's gated enclaves, exclusivity, social status, and the assurance of a peaceful, quality lifestyle are all collapsed into a discourse of crime-prevention, sentiments of fear, obsessions with privacy. The excessive nature of gated enclaves' security measures operate to fulfil a series of functions beyond this basic preventative objective. The policing and gate-keeping procedures of New Cairo City's enclaves operate not simply outwardly, as signs of deterrence and exclusion to the unwanted outsider, but inwardly also on residents themselves. This is something like civil co-ordinates, the discursive reference points of a new and preferable moral social ordering (Hetherington 1996a,b, 1997). This is elaborated in Foucault's criterion of heterotopias as 'juxtaposed incompatibilities' which emphasises the ways in which the gated enclave is a compromise-function, a paradoxical balancing of dangerous with safe spaces, communal with private, accessible with impenetrable (Hook and Vrdoljak 2002.).

Establishment of the New Cairo City's heterotopic gated enclaves is not only motivated by security measures, crime-prevention and a new sense of community, but rather about inscribing a historical structure of privilege into space. As Foucault (1993) and Soja (1989, 1995) stress space is an instrumental and fundamental means of transposing the logic of power into the forms of material practice. Such practices of power realized in space in actual places may function as a practical and

concrete precedent against which further relations of power may be expanded and elaborated. As gated enclaves justify their elaborate controls of space, they concretise the right of exclusion, separation and privilege. Such spatiality represent an ideological mechanism which structures the lives, experiences and subjectivities of its residents. New Cairo City's gated enclaves represent a new and separate world, with new social, moral and political enclosure which relinquishes selective and exclusive rights and prerogatives to its residents, rights of self-entitlement, violent self-protection, self-government (Hook and Vrdoljak (2002)). The 'rights of privilege' might be linked up more generally to discursive strategies in Egypt's neo-liberal economic transformation, for broader projects of alternate social ordering, in which a 'rights' of exclusion and entitlement are imposed and tactics of conflation are managed where the codes of class, affluence and status are embedded rather in terms of appeals to nature, moral order, safety, environmental quality.

In conclusion therefore a stakeholder approach is proposed which would involve grass root cooperation and public-private partnership between resettled people and NGOs, residents of gated communities and real estate agents, and tourism planning experts and local authorities in order to resolve the imbalance between resort golf enclaves and low income accommodation (Fahmi and Sutton 2008). Such cooperation could aim to diversify housing production and tackle the phenomenon of gated communities and associated housing segregation through the encouragement of more mixed residential development. The stakeholder approach calls for more restrictions on property and land speculations within new settlements, for consideration of environmental impact of golf courses on natural desert resources, for improvement of infrastructure and transport facilities, for spreading security of housing tenure and for the lease of public land for subsidized low income housing and upward filtering of decayed housing stock

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Endnotes

¹ Recently Hurghada's Red Sea tourism development included such resort communities as El Gouna 'The Lagoon' and Oberoi Sahl Hasheesh ' Valley of Hasheesh' . Since the late 1990s there has been a shift to more global gated enclaves as noted in the case of Foster and Partners' Serrenia resort directed towards UK purchasers and Gamsha Bay proposed by the Dubai based real estate company DAMAC. Similar to Dubai Gulf resort enclaves, Gamsha Bay includes various districts within a master plan ranging from Downtown , Emerald park, Red Sea retreat, Creekside villas, Riviera residences, Royal Crescent golf course, the Enclave, X-treme sports world). These integrated resort communities are the equivalent of small gated towns, with its luxurious residential units and international hotels, surrounded by golf courses, recreational and commercial facilities and diving centres.

² In 1994 Misr bank and National bank lent the owner of Dreamland (Bahgat Group) 454 million LE to buy 2045 feddan of public land (1 feddan= 4200 square metres = 1.038 acres) from Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities (MHUUC) (land price was estimated 50LE/square metre increasing to 3500LE/square metre by 2008). In 2008 both banks, owning 85% of Dreamland's shares , auctioned 831 feddan to pay Bahgat Group's 12 billion LE debts .

³ There are negative effects on the environment, in terms of the tremendous waste of scarce water supplies (Gauch 2000, Hammond 1999). This has been addressed during Egypt's National Sustainable Tourism Conference on Golf Course Development with the underlying theme 'National Golf and Environment Plan 2002', Sharm El Sheikh (28–30 October 2002) where four issues were discussed (Hassan 2000):

- ◆ integrating environmental management into existing golf course operations;
- ◆ sustainable development of new golf courses in Egypt;
- ◆ accreditation for environmentally responsible golf courses; and
- ◆ a pre-release review of the national environmental guidelines for golf course development

According to Hassan (2003) the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) emphasised the need for conserving water and biodiversity to encourage 'desert-style' golf courses and stated that the 'ideal' desert course design is islands of grass surrounded by sand and desert vegetation .TDA (2002) identified the need for an independent, industry-led and non-governmental coordinating body to provide technical support , environmental awareness. Six criteria for regulatory enforcement in new 'desert-style' golf course developments were determined. : reducing turf area; using less water-intensive desert landscape plants; more efficient irrigation systems; water reuse; preserving the natural 'desertscape' and topography, reducing surface water aesthetics, and generous buffers from water bodies particularly in case of seaside courses.

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