# CAIRO: a 100-years dilemma between capitalist, imperialist policies and the transformation to a Socialism oriented system

The evolution of the capitalist system, how Eurocentric imperialist policies failed to address social economic and political polarization as well as their consequences on the built environment.

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#### **Abstract**

The following thesis attempts to shed some light in the current socio-politico-economic scenery of the South by understanding and reflecting on the true causes of the explosion of urban inequality and segregation that dominates societies in the south periphery of the planet. A number of political, social and economic transformations, starting from the French Revolution are understood in terms of urban development and are thus expressed in a series of images generated by Modernization planning proposals. These images and transformations, presented in a linear historical order, attempt to illustrate the deeper links of contemporary generalized monopoly capitalism to the imperial industrial capitalism and colonial past of such countries. The focus of this thesis is on Egypt and the city of Cairo, where rural and urban development is understood in terms of the practicing of politics, the evolution of the economy and the birth of the market, as well as their physical manifestation in the production of space. The thesis attempts to provide a better understanding of Cairo's urban evolution in relation to this ongoing modernization process, and capitalist-oriented reforms so as to underline the need for the transition to an alternative system than that of capitalism that would allow the majority of the population to live in a higher-state civilization and not in this polarized in all senses environment.

**Keywords:** colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, generalized-monopolies, globalization, polarization, urban segregation, informal settlement, modernization, inequality, poverty, middle classes, low-income population, forms of enclose, politics, Egypt, Cairo.

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century so far, constitutes a precariously dramatic point in the history of our planet and civilization, with all-encompassing issues deeply rooted to the breach between the "autumn of capitalism" and the potential "spring-time of people". Our understanding of the principles and structure of capitalism has exceed the mere exploitation of labour force by capital to the realization of its polarizing attributes in all aspects of social interaction, be it political, economic or social. Capitalism can thus be understood as updated form of imperialism, the other side of the same coin.<sup>1</sup>

From the 1980s, the formation of "generalized monopoly capitalism" resulted in the structural transformation of both the dominant and dominated classes, in the North and South hemisphere. In the North imperialist centres, social polarization has taken the form of opposition between the financial oligarchy, supported by new middle classes and an agglomeration of dominated classes made up of segments whose diverse statuses belie in their common inclusion. In what Amin refers to as "generalized proletariat". In the peripheral countries of the South, where decision making originates from the centres of imperialism (the 'triad') imposing an economic management of deregulated markets, polarization takes multiple forms and it can be economic, social, or even spatial. The degree and type of polarization differ from country's capacity towards emergence.

Countries that are emerging or have emerged have either successfully implemented adaptations of capitalist policies or have already marched towards an alternative system, where people's sovereignty and voice is considered a priority, and thus Socialism has materialized. On the contrary, countries such as Turkey, Iran or Egypt, in a constant attempt to emerge are experiencing great social political and economic polarization. <sup>5</sup> Due either to their hindrance by imperialists powers or the lack of capacity to challenge them due to tremendous corruption, the situation is only getting worse. Meanwhile, successive governments either autocratic or elected by the population maintain the implementation of capitalist policies that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century benefit the global elite while the majority of the population is living under degrading conditions.

The aim of this thesis is to understand this two-faceted coin of Imperialism/Capitalism, how it evolved in the South peripheries, particularly in the case of Egypt and consequently how this evolution along with the socio-economic and political events has shaped urban space to its contemporary form with informal settlement and urban segregation and inequality to its peak. The decision to focus on Egypt, and Cairo in particular, in this attempt to understand the evolution of capitalism in the South peripheries is multifaceted.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Amin, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Amin, From Capitalism to Civilization - Reconstructing the Socialist Perspective, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Amin, 56.

First of all, Egypt was one of the first countries who attempted to overcome the colonial influence by implementing capitalist policies and still has not manage to address its struggles. Egypt's attempt begun with the "world as an exhibition" movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the implementation of westernization policies under the rule of Mohammad Ali continued by Khedive Isma'il which resulted in Egypt occupation by the British and consequently its of primary importance to understand the influence of the colonial powers that lead to the establishment of the first form of Industrial capitalism. Egypt's second attempt was during Nasser's political regime that transformed the Colonial Egypt into an "independent" nation-state in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, during which an alternative form of imperialism was established. The last attempt presented in this thesis, with its catastrophic consequences and the domination of "generalised-monopoly capitalism", developed during Sadat and Mubarak's regimes.

Moreover, the different phases of capitalism with their respected reference to Imperialism centres of the North have never managed to overthrown capital accumulation and this mode of production in spite the recurrent opposition movements that we will see further on. Capitalism according to Marx, is a system in a state of constant transformation and revolution, generating a rapid development of productive forces, which implies constant, simultaneous adjustments in the organization of social relationships. Consequently social and political struggles are inscribed in this process, and thus are translated as both its products and its causes. <sup>6</sup> In the case of Cairo the interdependent cause and effect relationship the new mega-blocks that appear as a result of the implementation of capitalist policies and informal settlement, a structural aspect of capitalism itself, with the transformation of labour force into pools of commodities as well as a physical manifestation of opposition. Understanding Egypt thus can provide valuable insight for other countries of the Global South that show similar symptoms.

Furthermore, due to its strategic geopolitical location, opposite to the Mediterranean sea, Egypt is treated in a similar way as the east block of Europe, similarly, over-exploited by the imperialist centres of Western Europe. Similar "catching-up" policies and austerity measures are implemented, prompted by the IMF and World Bank. Secondly, the paradox of capitalism developed with the resulting long term economic crisis which has now been converted to a more significant socio-economic and political crisis particularly in the case of Greece where I come from.

Over the last 70 years, under the influence of Neoliberal policies and Capitalist, profit-oriented approaches, Cairo has transformed into a dual city. Ethically, socially and spatially segregated between the "Western European" compartment and the "native, Islamic settlement.<sup>7</sup> Cairo and in particular the region of Greater Cairo is turning into a third world Megacity, experiencing one of the most critical phases of urbanization in human history. <sup>8</sup> With an increase in population from 2 million in 1950 to approximately 20 million today, Greater Cairo is characterized by deterioration and decay. Urban inequality and poverty are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Amin, From Capitalism to Civilization - Reconstructing the Socialist Perspective, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> King D., 'Postcolonial Cities', 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 1.

getting worse and worse with successive governments and IMF policies that willingly disregard the actual causes and effects of their strategies, exacerbating the problem and maintaining this dependency relationship between colonizer and colonized in the sake of profit making, leaving the majority of the population to address environmental pollution, or the absence of basic infrastructure for survival. "The "crisis" of the system is due to nothing other than its own "success"", while the possibility for change, which will happen inevitably, remains in the hands of the people, who need to understand that they control the market, which in turn controls the governments, who serve as submissive puppets of the globalized monopolies of the Triad. The crisis of the system, highlights the importance around the discourse of what is demanded for the transition into a higher state of civilized humanity through the long anticipated transition to Socialism.9

Egypt's history of capitalist development is structured in three distinct phases: Capitalism in the form of Colonialism: Former imperialism 1789-1956, Capitalism during the New imperialism: from Bandung to about 1980s and the last and current phase of Contemporary Capitalism: Capitalism of generalized monopolies. For the purpose of this thesis, the two World War periods as well as regional war periods have been excluded apart from specific references due the complexity of those times and the additional parameters involved like diseases, increased mortality, and the restrictions of this thesis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Amin, 41.

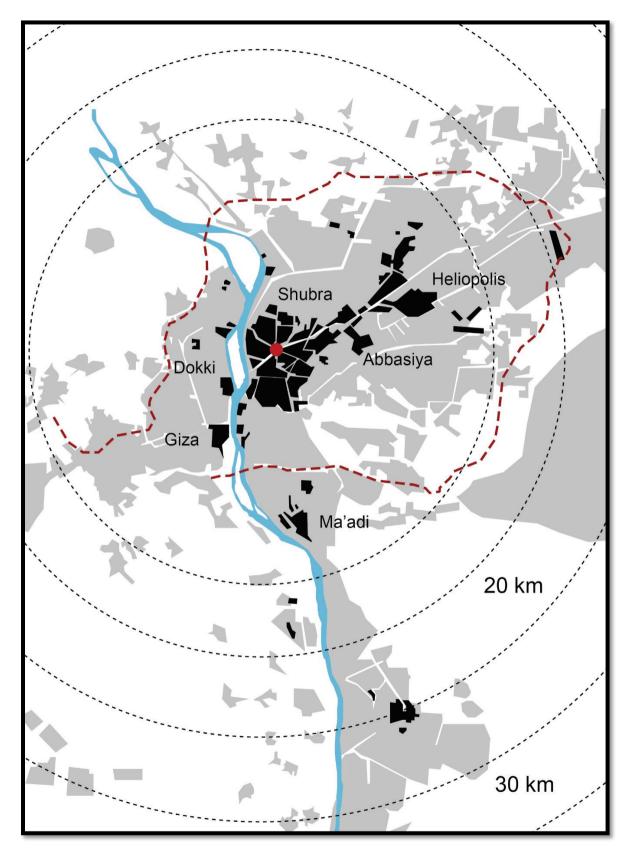


Figure 1. Greater Cairo Region, 1950. Drawing made by the author.



# II. CAPITALISM IN THE FORM OF COLONIALISM,

FORMER IMPERIALISM (1798-1956)

The 19<sup>th</sup> century constitutes a turning point in history when people started looking at the world more as an exhibit rather than an experience. Exhibitions became the tool of consumerism, commercialized services that wanted to shape a new reality between the observer and the exhibit, between the people of a city and the city. <sup>10</sup> The limits between mere representation and the actual reality were blurred and that facilitated the spreading of Modernism ideals developing in the West, all over the world. Exhibition became the means to promote ideas and simultaneously to influence the ideals of the observer. Cairo during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was unable to escape such trends. Various exhibits, were introduced in the country aiming at rendering a new image, the image that served the interests of the colonial powers. In the new "world as an exhibition", Western Europe's world based on modern ideals, everything became just an image, a superficial rendering of the scenery of social and political inequality. <sup>11</sup>

During the 1820s, Charles Lambert, in communications he had with Muhammad Ali, the Governor of Egypt, underlined the importance of establishing a plan. After achieving a certain degree of power (from the Ottoman empire), the country was in need of a plan to move forward. In other words, if the European imperialists wanted to colonize Egypt, a new reality had to be established, a new kind of power. Egypt had to re-shape, re-order and re-form into a country that *appears "enframed"*. Exhibitions may have been about the visual impact and the aesthetics of modern architecture, however colonization and the establishment of European control over Egypt implied changes to the core of the political, social and economic structure of the area as well as the meaning, significance and nature that space is formed and experienced. <sup>13</sup>

The urban form of the pre-industrial Cairo was characterized by the fact that it reflected people's cultural identity. The urban structure, with its street patterns, was a manifestation of three main elements, which today in the architectural discourse express sustainable urban planning; climate, society and the political structure of the city. Even though social divisions based on income revenues were already there, the allocation of different population classes was inclusive and not exclusive. Rich and poor inhabited the same urban blocks, expressing homogeneity and spatial continuity, while public space was transformed according to the needs of all the different social groups. Soon, the glory of the past acquired a nostalgic, historic character and was considered to be an out-dated state of being whereas today it would be considered as the optimal approach. <sup>14</sup>

The Westernization of Cairo begins with the French rule between 1798-1801, where the French lifestyle and language dominated the area. In terms of urban structure, the city was altered mainly for military

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Mitchell, 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Mitchell, 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Mitchell, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, ix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Abou El-Ela, 'Cultural Globalization and Changes in the Urban Form of Metropolis Cities, The Case of Cairo', 3.

purposes. Certain streets of critical importance in communication grids where straightened while internal fortifications and gates in various places around the city where demolished so as to increase regulation. It was not however until Muhammad Ali's rule, as well as his successors, that Cairo was deeply affected by modernization policies.<sup>15</sup>

# Muhammad Ali's regime (1807-1849)

Cairo's industries were mostly military, iron, paper and cotton textile oriented. Subsequently, the first wave of reforms towards the industrialization and modernization of Egypt implemented by Muhammad Ali, had to do with expanding military control so as to further enhance the position and influence of his country in the surrounding regions, which subsequently lead to an invasion to Syria. <sup>16</sup> More specifically, a new type of construction, developed and spread along the whole length of river Nile, up and beyond Cairo to the Mediterranean Sea. This new typology was "barracks and training camps" and along with all military facilities, based on the regulations of April 1822, were placed under one common disciplinary code of imposed power. The barracks were accompanied by schools which aimed at confining the youth. By establishing such disciplinary control over the entire population, on one hand, allowed the government to keep it restricted in particular place, to ensure and regulate its performance, as in the case of a machine, and on the other, to control its minds. Four such primary schools were located in Cairo. <sup>17</sup> This new disciplinary order imposed by the Europeans - including officers, Saint-Simonist <sup>18</sup> engineers, academics etc. - towards the people of Egypt was critical for the dominance of modernism and consequently capitalism as we will see further on. <sup>19</sup>

The Military reform had multiple consequences. On a regional level, as it was mentioned previously, Egypt managed to colonize various regions from Arabia to Sudan in the South and from Greece to Syria in the North. However, it was the European intervention and the politico-economic interests that terminated such actions further weakening Cairo's regime, with the British Occupation in 1882 being the cherry on the cake. Consequently, military control was reversed and imposed domestically, on the political, social and economic space of Egypt, spreading this disciplinary order to all levels of social life.<sup>20</sup> "Education" was thus used by Muhammad Ali as the means to produce an army.

In terms of the agricultural sector, the first important structural change was employed so as to improve production, especially for cotton and thus facilitate exports to the European markets from 1821 onwards.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Abou El-Ela, 1–3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> 'Colonization Of Egypt Timeline'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Saint-Simon, along with others directed attention towards the "social difference". Saint-Simon, was in search of a natural social order, condemning any form of violent opposition. A social order that would benefit the whole society. By so doing, social differentiation would be willingly accepted by all social division. As Rabinow state: "the old Platonic dream of justice modernized."

Rabinow, French Modern, 27–30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, x.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Mitchell, x.

Muhammad Ali's "forced industrialization" policies, were organized around heavy import dependency from Europe. From imported machinery to foreign workforce such as technicians for the industrial development to teachers and advisors for European schools in Cairo. There was a shift from the dispersed mode of appropriation of taxes during Mamluk's reign to that of a centralized government. This change provided employment opportunities that were capable to absorb the rural work force that was still attached to land in the traditional way.<sup>21</sup>

The same principle of order "over the whole surface of society" was executed in the villages and the fields. Control was shared among a new landowning class comprised by the new ruling family, the largest of the landowners, together with European creditors. Hence, it was of primary importance, to acquire all kinds of information in terms of the production process, to mark out the plots, what each individual was doing, the kinds of crops cultivated etc. Everything had to be specified, and monitored.<sup>22</sup> The result was, the confinement of the population, to its particular districts, and gave control to the colonial powers over the movement, production and consumption of the Egyptian agriculture.<sup>23</sup> Living in the rural villages and being forced to labour was almost as oppressive as living in the barracks.<sup>24</sup> The colonizers were allowed to convert local population and land - "the country's productive powers" - into mere commodities. <sup>25</sup> Unless native people complied with the new regulations and forms of control, surveillance guards were there to enact punishments. Their goal was both physical and mental exploitation.<sup>26</sup>

Control over the agricultural production of Nile valley was always<sup>27</sup> critically important, however, it was this type of new control and order over all "the productive powers" or "modern forms of power" by Michel Foucault, that allow the colonial powers to penetrate and reorganise Cairo.<sup>28</sup> Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cairo controlled certain areas of the Nile Valley through the division of land revenue, yet, this method did not comply with the modern industrial ideals nor with the European demand of export crops such as cotton or sugar, that were thriving in Egypt. For the first time in the history of agriculture in Egypt the colonial powers had to convince native farmers to cultivate the land with something that had no use for them in its entirety. The new military and disciplinary reforms were the means to reach such a goal and established the first

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Chaichian, 'The Effects of World Capitalist Economy on Urbanization in Egypt, 1800–1970', 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Mitchell, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Mitchell, 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Mitchell, x.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "La'ihat zira' at al-fallah wa-tadbir ahkam al-siyasa bi-qasd al-najah" or "Programme for Successful Cultivation by the Peasant and the Application of Government Regulations" were the regulations which described everything in terms of agriculture. From how peasants were to work in the fields to the responsibilities of those who were to supervise them. Similar regulations were established for the movement of the population in and out of the villages, as well as the tax payments etc. "Each separate act was stipulated and supervised to coordinate every individual in a single economy of crops money and men."

Mitchell, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Before this new system of supervision, typically, a powerful central household imposed "levies" on relatively less powerful groups which were then responsible for those around them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, ix.

"monopolistic" system in Egypt and thus the first model of political action for its transformation into a "capitalist" state.<sup>29</sup>

Opposition was thus inevitable. Political unrest followed by the new governmental army's attempts to alleviate the pressure, resulted in tens of thousands who refused to comply with the regulations, abandoned their houses and tried to relocate to agricultural areas, free from governmental control, or to find refuge in larger towns or cities such as Cairo. After realizing the failure of the above reforms, an alternative plan was established during the following decade, which placed groups of villages under regional control and thus prioritized the commercial interests of a new class of urban-based landowners. The villages were thus interpreted as private estates, with the same spatial and disciplinary order. These estates are the first step towards private landownership in Egypt. Quoting Timothy Mitchel, "The order of the reconstructed village was to be achieved by reducing its life to this system of locations and the objects to functions contained there, of a framework and what was enframed." 33

Following the increase and movement of the population in the cities, Cairo could not escape the modernization policies initiated in the surrounding rural environment. The rebuilding of Cairo concentrated along the lines of improving public health and the sanitary condition of the city space.<sup>34</sup> European palaces in addition to the renovation of existing facades and the establishment of bare rectangular windows, dominated this period's image of Cairo.<sup>35</sup> Regardless of the fact that the new industrial developments were uniformly distributed all over Egypt and in conjunction with rural communities, cities like Cairo and Alexandria experienced greater concentration.<sup>36</sup>

## Khedive Isma'il's Reign (1863-1879)

The greater influence of the Modernist Westernization of Cairo from which arose the dual character of the city is observed during Khedive Isma'il's reign, historically, referenced as the man who manage to alter the face of Cairo in twelve years and within sixteen he sold it to the British. According to his statement in 1879: "My country is no longer in Africa; we are now part of Europe. It is therefore natural for us to abandon our former ways and to adopt a new system adapted to our social conditions". 37

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 59–60.

<sup>30</sup> Mitchell, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> In 1846, the inhabitants of the village/or estate of Kafr al-Zayat, in the Nile Delta were instructed to create a list with all their belongings and personal fortunes so as to deconstruct the village and re-built it according to this list. Similar measures were employed in other Egyptian villages such as Neghileh, and Ghezaier.

Mitchell, 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Mitchell, 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Mitchell, x.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Abou El-Ela, 'Cultural Globalization and Changes in the Urban Form of Metropolis Cities, The Case of Cairo', 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> 'Colonization Of Egypt Timeline'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Hanna, 'Verdi's Egypt'.

The first step in Isma'il's reforming policy was to redistribute more than 60,000 acres of land in the Nile Valley, to his friend and relatives, as well as military officers and other highly rated personnel, while he, personally, took control over 50,000 acres. <sup>38</sup> According to the Europeans, this attitude of personally motivated decision making and ruling was the biggest problem in Egypt and the rest of the Eastern peripheries, since they discouraged the modern system of law and profit making. <sup>39</sup>

During 1850-1880, Egypt experienced a significant change of state in terms of transportation and communication networks. Particularly important was the construction and opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, built under the supervision of de Lesseps, which further facilitated and strengthen Egypt's international communication/trade. The true motives however, behind such constructions were contradictory interests of the French and the British. If one had to control communication links through the sea, the other had to take control of the land. Consequently, the first critical steps of the establishment of the dependency oriented relationship between colonizer and colonized were already taking place.

Moreover, Khedive Isma'il, passionately continued the urban reforms initiated by his grandfather. In the beginning, he was focused on improving the cities' infrastructure through the construction of supplementary canals and dams to ensure the provision of fresh water as well as infrastructure for gas lighting. By 1867, the city of Cairo was substantially set to enter a new age of city building which was inspired by the "Exposition Universelle" in Paris. 43 Ismail wanted to alter the face of Cairo to such an extent that it would glorify the beauty and prestige that, he personally, experienced in Europe and hence acquire Egypt's respect among the European countries.

The whole process of rebuilding, was a direct response to the *plan* Jeremy Bentham was asking from Muhammad Ali as part of the "world an exhibition" movement which physically manifested the modernist ideals. Consequently, it wasn't a plan to improve the urban environment rather another attempt to impose control and order to the inhabitants of the city, so as to create a beautiful image. By physical manifesting a planned and structure landscape the citizens were supposed to reflect on that order.<sup>44</sup> Isma'il's urban planning strategy was quite ambitious, aiming at re-shaping Cairo before the official opening of the Suez Canal when people from everywhere would come to celebrate. He understood, however, that such an extreme makeover of the existing city through demolition and reconstruction would not be feasible and thus he decided to a create

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Mitchell, 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> By 1877, there were 1.519 kilometres of railways and 13.500 kilometres of irrigation canals. Chaichian, 'The Effects of World Capitalist Economy on Urbanization in Egypt, 1800–1970', 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Abu-Lughod L., Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious, 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> "The exposition was Baron Haussmann's *piece de resistance*, the climax of his career which was fated to end in calumny and rejection only two years later. By then, Haussmann had been Pref et de la Seine for more than a decade and a half, during which he had transformed the Ile de la Cite, planned the peripheral zones, and ruthlessly imposed formal parks and broad boulevards on the antiquated street plan in a manner so associated with his name that even today this method of planning is referred to as "Haussmannizing.", Abu-Lughod L., 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, xii.

a new Cairo along the Western edge of the city. <sup>45</sup> The period that followed, was the greatest in terms of the dramatic alternation of the City's built environment since the 1300s and the growth Cairo experienced under Mamluk's rule. <sup>46</sup>

The Ministry of Public Works was then responsible for the execution of the Isma'iliyah quarter, the redevelopment of the vacant lands of the periphery to Azbakiyah and the development of a greater master plan for the entire city according to the style and image of Paris. Evidently, both the new city and the old became a mere distribution of surfaces, creating enclosed spaces, who attempted to grasp this new order-system both in the material and non-material world. The construction of the canals, railways, telegraphs etc. and the creation of a Western city with all its cultural symbols, the extravagant entertainment buildings such as the National Theatre de Comedie inaugurated in 1868 and the Opera House, the luxurious palaces, as well as the recreational areas did not only alter the cultural image of Cairo, with the demolition of existing deteriorated palaces, the repainting of historic minarets but also its economic structure, with the government's domestic expenditure reaching unpreceded high levels.

Similarly to the model-village, that was aiming at organizing and making transparent the lives of rural Egyptians, introducing a new architecture derived from the various exhibitions in Europe, the new wide streets of Cairo and other towns, were aiming at reflecting the "improvements" in the health sector, and at the same time expand supervision by the military officers. Furthermore, the streets would benefit the "market"/commercial sector which was the focus of attention at the world exhibitions. The previously "dark interior of the city", dominated by the poorly constructed human agglomerations, would be transformed to an easily accessible, well-lit centre that would allow entertainment and business to thrive all day long. Clearly, the need for clean streets was financially motivated and transformed the city into a space of consumption to accompany rural periphery's space of production. Everything that materialized in Cairo was aiming at creating a world exhibit not a reformed, structured civilization. These measures further increased the population's movement towards the urban centres, however, with a significant percentage now being foreign migration that took advantage of the employment opportunities in the Western part of the city that native people were unable to reach. 52

Last but not least, another element that clearly highlights this attempt to order both the urban space and the individual is the relocation and construction of the new schools. On the contrary to Muhammad Ali's military education, during Ismai'l's rule, the focus returned to the "national" literacy level, and the production of the individual. From similar events in Paris, there was this notion of the modernist representatives that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> (Abu-Lughod L., 1971, p. 105)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> (Abu-Lughod L., 1971, p. 105)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, xii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Abu-Lughod L., Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious, 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Mitchell, xv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Abu-Lughod L., Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious, 114.

places such as schools or politico-economic institutions should be at the centre of the city.<sup>53</sup> Ali Mubarak, transformed the Darb al-Gamamiz palace, located in the hearth of the city of Cairo, into a complex of bureaus and schools.<sup>54</sup>

The afore mentioned projects, along with the military reforms that preceded them, underline this new system of political order and the production of a European market in Egypt. <sup>55</sup> If Egypt wanted to move into its modern state, the new order had to be established in all aspects of the society and hence, create new social relations between the agricultural zone and the city. <sup>56</sup> "Enframing can thus be understood as the process or method of dividing up and containing, which operates by conjuring up a neutral surface or volume called space." <sup>57</sup> This whole process with the introduction of private ownership as well as the failure of the state monopolies resulted to the decrease and the loss of control over the domestic resources and the development of enormous debts as well as the transformation of Cairo into a dual City. One hand the Western side of the City, where foreigners enjoyed all aspects of modernity and on the other hand, the Eastern side of the Old Cairo in a state of abandonment and constant deterioration. The highlight of this new era was when Egypt was forced to sell its share of profits from the Suez Canal and thus marks the final phase of Cairo's Western side transformation to a self-contained colonial City after the British invasion. <sup>58</sup>

# **British Occupation (1882-1952)**

The British invaded Egypt and seized control in 1882. Their motive came with a popular upheaval against the harsh government rule which resulted though from the acquisition of financial control by the Europeans. The first priority in the new colony, was to re-establish Cairo's oversight over the rural periphery in order for the "productive capacity of the Egyptian peasant" to reach its full potential and thus allow the country to deal with the financial debts in the European Banks. <sup>59</sup> The British introduced a new "project of calculation" that would allow them to impose the proper tariffs and taxes to each plot of agricultural land as well as the different parties involved, from owner to cultivator. The outcome of this attempt was a "Great Land Map of Egypt" that at least in theory would provide the means for collecting all sorts of information regarding the production process and thus facilitate its regulation. <sup>60</sup> It further "straightened" the road towards

<sup>53</sup> Mitchell, 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Examples of such schools are the "New Government Preparatory and Engineering" and the "School of Administration and Languages" In terms of bureaus he relocated the "Bureau of Public Works", responsible for rebuilding the city, as well as the "Bureau of Endowments" that controlled most of the property and income that needed to be destroyed so as for the new streets to take shape.

Mitchell, 64.

<sup>55</sup> Mitchell, 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Mitchell, 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Mitchell, 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> 'Imperialism in Egypt'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 9.

private ownership and established the basis for the making of the economy. Based on study published by the Ministry of Finance, "La propriete fonciere en Egypte", it is evident that for Europeans private property was synonymous to the foundation of civilized states. Consequently, since such structure was absent from the various regions that belonged to the Ottoman Empire, it formed the main argument in favour of the colonial powers and the imposition of their policies to the native population. In reality, large estates took control over the private ownership system and along with European capital investment, transformed the rural population into "a class of landless workers", forcing them to adapt to this new system of waged-labour. This shift towards the use of statistics and calculus models was not something new in terms of the policies initiated by the Colonial powers, as it facilitated their efforts to create this "illusion of bureaucratic control".

Apart from the agricultural sector and the difficulties or inaccuracies that were evident in the use of statistical analysis, the stock market and the new national currency which were part of the attempt to modernise Egypt were also part of this new modus operandi. The result was a stock-market crisis accompanied by a paper money crisis during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps, the biggest problem during this Colonial regime, was that the British attempted to quantify the "invisible part of foreign trade" 66, including imports and exports as well as the movement of the population both in and out of Egypt but also in and out of Cairo, to which Lord Cromer, the British government representative, referred to as "systematic English inspection".67

This attempt by the British to establish economic statistics as part of singular, national economy, brought on only political uncertainty and dispute throughout the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The unregulated movement of capital and people, coupled by the various social contradictions - the multicultural character of the population, different languages, religions and academic backgrounds - as well as foreign policies prioritizing foreign communities' interests over local, the failure of the system was unavoidable. As Samir Amin expresses, in the absence of the colonial influences, Egypt could have managed to overcome its social polarity as in the case of Japan, however Britain made sure that Egypt would not emerge.<sup>68</sup>

In this period's "model of capitalist/imperialist accumulation" Egypt, with all the modernization plans that took place, remained a servicing periphery for Europe not only in terms of its productive mechanisms but

<sup>61</sup> Mitchell, 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Mitchell, 55.

<sup>63</sup> Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> In 1911, the stock market collapsed, forcing a significant number of companies into bankruptcy. Various excuses were developed so as to cover the true causes and wrong decisions that lead to this event such as the abolition of the "octroi" (the tax on commodities brought into the town from the countryside for sale). The situation only became worse during World War I, when Britain seized the opportunity to interfere and exposed Egypt onto a "sterling exchange standard" forcing the country to deal with all the related issues that sterling was facing during the interwar period.

Mitchell, 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Mitchell, 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 56.

also through its socio-political institutions.<sup>69</sup> The educational and health systems were continuously failing leaving the native population completely excluded from any substantial urban development. Britain controlled even the school curriculum, which was altered, with English becoming the primary language accompanied by an imposed spread of Christianity. The country's health system was completely disregarded since there was not any benefit to be derived in favour of the colonizers.<sup>70</sup>

The Egyptian people however, had one thing in common independent of their income revenues; they never accepted this undermining position that the colonial powers were putting them, resulting in a second wave of political unrest that lasted another 40 years, after the First World War (1919-1967). The main conflict surrounded the two opposing parties of the ruling class, the "landed merchants" and the "industrial bourgeoisie", The main through the establishment of "a bourgeois form of constitutional democracy" with the projected goal of national independence. Although this attempt resulted in an "elected" parliament the extreme tension between imperialism, colonialism and nationalism, since the landed upper class prevented capitalist production, which was the main target both for the British and the industrial upper class, as well as the fact that none of these could deal effectively with the social tragedy that dominated both the urban space of Cairo as well as the rural periphery ended with the military coup of 1952. Then, Egypt won its phenomenological independence and a new era of Modernist policies begins with the "socialist" government of Nasser.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Amin, 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> 'Imperialism in Egypt'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Amin, *The Implosion of Capitalism*, 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> After the first World War, in an attempt to address the political crisis and at the same time control the rular periphery and the population movement various architects, sociologists and academics introduces a new model-village that would replaces the existing ones. In 1933, the Royal Agricultural Society built a model "izba" (housing complex) on its estate at Bahtim, near Cairo, and in 1940 Hassan Fathy build a second izba at the same site. An project of the same architect was the village Gurna, an attempt for the re-definition of national architecture which however proved unable to oppose the modernist ideals of the government. Mitchell, 184–188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Chaichian, 'The Effects of World Capitalist Economy on Urbanization in Egypt, 1800–1970', 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Goldschmidt, Johnson, and Salmoni, *Re-Envisioning Egypt*, 1919-1952, 30–35.

<sup>75 &</sup>quot;It was not by chance that, to counter this threat the British Embassy and the Royal Palace actively supported the formation in 1927 of the Muslim Brotherhood, inspired by "Islamist" thought in its most backward "Salafist" versions of Wahhabism as formulated by Rachid Reda." Amin, *The Implosion of Capitalism*, 57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Abu-Lughod L., Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious, 114.

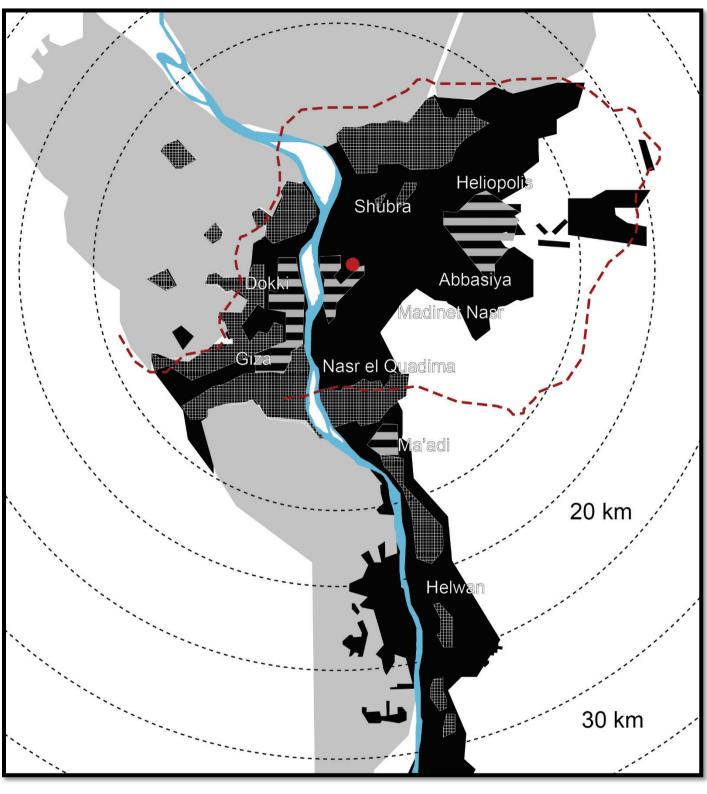


Figure 2. Greater Cairo Map, 1977. Drawing made by the author.



## III. CAPITALISM DURING THE NEW IMPERIALISM

(FROM BANDUNG TO ABOUT 1980S)

Before we start with the new imperialism that begins in Egypt at the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is important to understand the significance of colonialism, as well as the failure of the imperial order and disciplinary control, in the formation of the economy. It was the same organization and arrangement of all the resources in terms of production, distribution, information and trade that from the hands of the political powers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century moved to the powerful hands of the national economy. <sup>77</sup> Karl Polanyi, referred to this as the "Great Transformation" of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which "market relations became disembodies from the wider social ties in which they were previously contained". In the case of Egypt it was only after the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century but the fact remains the same. <sup>78</sup> From an era where the political scenery dominated urban and rural life and led to the formation of the national and hence of national economy, we move to an era where the economy was used to formulate the new politics that would accompany this new system and through which the colonial but also imperial powers such as the United States, would attempt to re-establish their relationship with the colonies.<sup>79</sup>

# Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein's Presidency (1952-1967)

The post-World War political rivalry, reached its peak in the Cairo fire, in January 26, 1952. During this popular campaign, the Shepeard's hotel, a symbol of the British westernization policy, an exhibit of the "Egyptian" Cairo, burned down. A second coup d'état was then carried out, in 1954, which gave permanent control to Nasser. Nasser's presidency and policy making is better understood in three distinct phases/stages that ultimately lead to Saddat's "open-door" policy and the complete transition from a national-state to a global-capitalist-state. <sup>81</sup>

The first phase (1952-1956) constitutes Nasser's attempt to continue Muhammad Ali's modernization/industrialization policies, with primary focus on the consolidation of national independence.<sup>82</sup> The aim was to establish an industrial base, by redirecting capital to the industrial sector and thus to resurrect the built environment.<sup>83</sup> Subsequently, the most important reform was addressed to agriculture and land ownership. Nasser wanted to control the power of the landowning bourgeoisie and simultaneously increase

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Mitchell, 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Mitchell, 84.

<sup>80</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 58.

<sup>81</sup> Chaichian, 'The Effects of World Capitalist Economy on Urbanization in Egypt, 1800–1970', 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Craissati, 'The Political Economy of Nasserism and Sadatism: The Nature of the State in Egypt and Its Impact on Economic Strategy.', 56.

<sup>83</sup> Selim, 'Between Order and Modernity', 183.

the number of smaller landed individuals. He believed that industrialization was the only way to escape the "colonial international specialization" that confined the country into a cotton-exporter.<sup>84</sup> His army seized control over the royal estates in an attempt to redistribute the land, imposed rent controls and granted tenant rights that improved relatively the living conditions in the villages of the rural periphery, until their abolition in 1997. <sup>85</sup> Cooperatives were established in the rural areas to increase regulation while a new public industrial bank and the Permanent Council for the Development of National Production (PCDNP<sup>86</sup>) were formed to ensure military control over private Egyptian capital.<sup>87</sup>

Although, there was a small degree of improvement, the actual motive behind Nasser's policy making, accompanied by the U.S Embassy's attempt to eliminate the communist threat, was the establishment of a political doctrine free from any form of opposition, neither from the "satisfied peasants", "progressive students" nor from the expanding middle class. 88 Concurrently, the few oligarchs who had enough power to obstruct political reforms were now more easily controlled. 89 Consequently, during Nasser's presidency, there were certain social improvements but not the kind of socialism that he or his government were claiming. His approach created a space, "without democracy", a space that excluded any kind of political interaction. 90

The second phase (1956-1961) begun with the nationalization of the Suez Canal, followed by the Suez crisis, initiated by the U.S decision to withdraw investment from the construction of the Aswan High Dam which was also part of Nasser's post-war reforms, attended by additional foreign belligerence towards Egypt, especially Israel. State control over private enterprise was further extended in an attempt to form, according to Nasser, a "controlled-capitalist economy". During this period Nasser attempted to redirect capital investment from the agricultural sector worth LE 45 million into the industrial, yet, only LE 6 million were actually invested in Egypt's industries. Moreover, nationalization measures were the means to implement the development programmes of the National Planning Act of 1957, with the provision of large investments. During this period fifty-five firms, previously owned by Europeans, were now under Egyptian state control.

<sup>84</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 58.

<sup>85</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> "The creation of the Permanent Council for the Development of National Production symbolized the alliance and cooperation between the military and private capital." Craissati, 'The Political Economy of Nasserism and Sadatism: The Nature of the State in Egypt and Its Impact on Economic Strategy.', 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Craissati, 56.

<sup>88</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 58.

<sup>89</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> A group of Communists criticised Nasser's "radicalization of the democratic movement" from the very beginning, highlighting the fact that he embraced the "anti-imperialist" doctrine after the "Bandung Conference" in 1955 and always from the perspective of the Pan-Arab and Pan-African movements.

Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Craissati, 'The Political Economy of Nasserism and Sadatism: The Nature of the State in Egypt and Its Impact on Economic Strategy.', 56–57.

<sup>93</sup> Chaichian, 'The Effects of World Capitalist Economy on Urbanization in Egypt, 1800–1970', 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Craissati, 'The Political Economy of Nasserism and Sadatism: The Nature of the State in Egypt and Its Impact on Economic Strategy.', 63.

<sup>95</sup> Chaichian, 'The Effects of World Capitalist Economy on Urbanization in Egypt, 1800–1970', 35.

The above events led to the third and last phase of Nasser's regime (1961-1967). <sup>96</sup> The post-colonial upper-class dominated both rural and urban economic activities whereas the government was in a constant dilemma between establishing dependency links with the Soviet union or the United States and thus was unable to solidify its power. <sup>97</sup> In his book, "Rule of Experts", Timothy Mitchell, highlights the struggles that continued in terms of land access even after the reforms and how violent acts were kept as the only method to impose control, even for a "socialist" government. <sup>98</sup> <sup>99</sup> Evidently, this lead to the construction of a broader economic and political power based on the "culture of fear". The national Union was replaced by the Arab Socialist Union which initiated a new wave of nationalization including the entire cotton production, banks, insurance companies as well as a large percentage of the industrial and commercial assets. <sup>100</sup>

Under Nasser's presidency, Cairo's urban setting was transformed along the same lines, reflecting the socio-politico-economic uncertainty that dominated the country. <sup>101</sup> Nasser's ambition was to provide Egypt with a "scientific socialist planning" and "an extremely structured environment" which was free from the colonial past and materialized through the construction of new districts, widening existing streets and the erection of massive building blocks. Instead of an actual shift and perhaps a redefinition of the Egyptian culture according to ancient and medieval standards, the strategy implemented was that of the colonial rule, emphasized by its authoritative context and political connotation through the imposition of mega-blocks. <sup>102</sup> It is important though, to mention that it was the first time in the history of Cairo when an official master plan proposal (1956) was presented. <sup>103</sup>

According to the master plan, 15,000 low-income residential units were to be constructed along with six satellite industrial cities at a 40-km radius from Cairo, directed towards a particular industrial/proffesional sector. 104 "Qaha was the centre of agro-alimentary industries while Abou Zaabal sheltered the workshops for repair and maintenance of trains". One of the satellite developments was Nasr City executed by the Ministry of Housing and Defence. 105 By 1966 there were four other similar settlements such as Heliopolis, Sahafeyyern,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Chaichian, 35–36.

<sup>97</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Mitchell, 153–56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> The requests for secure access to the land came from those who owned nothing or almost nothing. In 1965, a survey was conducted showing that after the agrarian reforms, 45% of agricultural families were still landless. Among this 45%, 95% held less than 5 acres, at an average of just over 1 acre per holding, while the top 5% of owners controlled half of the cultivated land. Yet, even such figures do not reflect the actual degree of inequality regarding ownership. Mitchell, 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Craissati, 'The Political Economy of Nasserism and Sadatism: The Nature of the State in Egypt and Its Impact on Economic Strategy.', 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Selim, 'Between Order and Modernity', 184.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 126.

<sup>104</sup> Sims, 'Urban Slums Reports: The Case of Cairo, Egypt', 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Nasr City's urban planning and architectural drawings were assigned to the architect and planner Sayed Karim. Fun fact was the project's brochure addressed to the Egyptian population was in English rather than in Arabic. The whole project was addressed to an educated upper and middle class which were suitable for an environment based on the ideals and theories derived from the World Exhibitions. An orthogonal plan composed of super blocks each containing apartments too expensive for the poor. The apartments ranged from two-bedroom to four-bedroom duplexes. Each "super block" was to include support facilities and large green spaces. Part of the design proposal was the construction of certain administrative buildings to house new ministries or relocate existing ones from the downtown Cairo.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Cairobserver — Nasr City Was Once Egypt's New Capital, but Things...'

and Mohandseen. <sup>106</sup> The "*Decentralization of industries*" as well as improvements in infrastructure were seen as the only way to avoid the massive concertation of the rural population into the city. <sup>107</sup>

The execution of the "1956 Master Plan" presupposed a long term provision of adequate investment as well as the determination and will of central government to proceed with it, which were not the case during Nasser's Regime. <sup>108</sup> The fluctuations from the original planning had catastrophic consequences for the built environment in Cairo as well as the living standards of its citizens. Industrial polarization further increased the demand for labour hands and thus, attracted more migrants. <sup>109</sup>

Evidently, the only difference between the previous modernization policies and Nasser's approach was that instead of expressing the legitimacy of the empires of the colonizers he was aiming at enhancing the political power and ideology of his "national" government, excluding low-class communities. <sup>110</sup> Another example of such superficiality was the construction of the Cairo Tower. On one hand, the concrete tower, attempted to imitate the style of pharaonic antiquities trying to resurface the Egyptian national identity and on the other, constituted an exhibit, such as the Eiffel tower in Paris, a mere representation of the new ruling state. <sup>111</sup> Planning Cairo's districts became a continuation of the same principle of a "world as an exhibition". Modernity was used as the tool to impose political urbanism and not with a positive connotation, but in the sense of addressing economic and political goals as well as securing financial investments for the government's operation. The urge to exterminate evident signs of decline and thus upgrade spatial setting was truly aiming at developing economic activities and attracting investment. In various cases, people resisted the execution of such developments, fearing that their properties, houses and even areas of their local context would be permanently lost. <sup>112</sup>

The old and traditional districts of Cairo that for centuries, were functioning as a well-established metropolis and were even excluded from Khedive Ismail's urban plans, were, at the turning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, absorbing the various migrating population waves, particularly in those districts close to industrial developments where workers were aiming at employment opportunities. In the Sayyda Zainab district, middle-class residents were forced, by the massive arrivals of workers, to move to newly constructed blocks such as Mohandseen in West Cairo. An unprecedented disruption of the original alleyways and land was observed. In the context of complete absence of any kind of building regulations, new constructions were combined with old structures of shops, warehouses, religious buildings etc. Many of the new residents settled in informal housing in the inner parts of the city lacking basic infrastructure while several social housing blocks were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Selim, 'Between Order and Modernity', 184.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Selim, 'Between Order and Modernity', 182.

<sup>111</sup> The "Nile Hilton Hotel", "The Arab League building" and the "Socialist Union Headquarters" are similar examples.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Selim, 188.

constructed in vibrant locations to absorb the growth. These projects in most cases ignored the social and physical context, further increasing overpopulation and unregulated mix-used spaces. <sup>113</sup>

Moreover, new programs were introduced aiming at upgrading or clearing slum settlements which may be an indication of some form of social awareness after a 100 years of building massive new blocks, however, the completely disorientated relationship between the cooperative institutions and governmental bodies such as the Governorate, managing the urban strategies, resulted in the former party to supply middle-and high-income blocks whereas the later was left in charge of the provision of low-income housing. Yet, dominated by the lack of management and investment, the situation was unaltered. From the mid-1960s the condition of the old districts was already chaotic, while Cairo's population was almost 4,220,000 inhabitants. <sup>114</sup> It should be noted here that during the war with Israel (1967-1974) most of the formal development was paused whereas migration continued, with almost 1 million people coming from the Suez Canal Zone alone, marking the beginning of the greater informal settlement development, under the nose of the government. <sup>115</sup>

During these ten years, Nasser's regime managed to close any opportunities for an alternative system towards radicalization. On the contrary it supported the way to the right and the "infitah or opening" to capitalist globalization. Imperial powers such as the United States thus seized the opportunity and "reacquired" control over Egyptian matters. Nasser's change of direction was further extended by his successor, Saddat, who did not hesitate to openly integrate the Muslim Brotherhood into his new oppressive system. <sup>116</sup>

# Muhammad Anwar el-Sadat's Presidency (1970-1981)

From the mid-1970s a new era begins due to President's Sadat decision to expose the country to policies of globalized liberalism. Since the first phase of modernization, the economic system composed of different relationships established between the government and private developments. From now on the role of the government is adopted by the "market". This provided the United states with the means to work as active agent in the matters of regional and global politics, especially through the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the USAID. 118

Regarding agrarian reforms, "high value cash corps" were prioritized along with the mechanization of the sector. 119 The "USAID's Agricultural Mechanization Project" (1979-1987) highlights that Egypt's mechanization attempt was supported by foreigners because of their increase profitability since the required

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Selim, 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 127.

<sup>115</sup> Sims, 'Urban Slums Reports: The Case of Cairo, Egypt', 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Mitchell, 211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 126.

machinery, training technology and expertise were imported directly from the United States. <sup>120</sup> Furthermore, the reforms in agriculture, overlapped with American corporation interests such as "Coca-Cola" and "PepsiCo", leading to large investments in the acquisition and exploitation of Egyptian agricultural land on their behalf. <sup>121</sup> As Amin underlines "programs that substitute for the inventing of new patterns of industrialization so-called foreign aid, associated with empty discourses (good governance, alleviating poverty) are noting but the continuation of colonial discourses. "<sup>122</sup>

Furthermore, another component of the Egyptian economy where the IMF, World Bank and USAID policies, destroyed any chance Egypt had to restructure its systems was the tourism industry, the largest by now, in the Nile Valley, which however was also profitable only for foreign investors while the native population was confined to do the "dirty" work, employed as peddlers, guides or hotel staff. The increasing revenue of foreign inhabitants affected also the import-export policies of the country, with increased imports of food, accompanied by huge loans that maintained the default situation of borrowing and paying back. 124

Concerning urban and regional planning, during the period that had elapsed between the First Master Plan in 1956 and the Second in 1970, Cairo had become the largest industrial centre in the Arab World and the largest city in Africa. The implementation of the liberal-open-door policies, which coincided with the Oil Boom of 1973 that provide a source of income even for the poor communities, not only affected the physical limits of the City which was expanding uncontrollably in all directions, but also introduced new problems, since most of the fertile agricultural land was converted into urban centres of either formal or informal settlements, from private investors or the marginalized population. In the city centre, small scale constructions were replaced by new high-rise super-blocks. Up until now, such policies mostly affected the quality of life of the poor, henceforth, this unregulated urbanism posed a threat to the broader built environment and thus for all residents with deteriorating infrastructure visible everywhere. 126

In 1974, Sadat highlighted the importance of establishing a national, coherent policy in terms of urban development. The idea of expanding towards the deserted periphery was becoming more and more popular and it was confirmed by the Law of New Communities in 1979, which included two new types of satellite constructions. The first was "satellite towns" at a 30-km radius from the main urban centres such as Greater Cairo, and the second "autonomous towns" at a 90-km radius. Fifteen towns were planned in general, prioritizing nine of them, with three in the Great Cairo area. Some locations of this new plan coincided with the Master Plans of 1956 and 1970. The complexity of these projects as well as the fact that they were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Mitchell, 223–225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Mitchell, 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, 143–44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Mitchell, 214–16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 131.

<sup>127</sup> Sims, 'Urban Slums Reports: The Case of Cairo, Egypt', 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 133.

approached on a "sectoral" manner, especially during the construction phase, led to another dead-end and the creation of the "Third Greater Cairo Master Plan, 1981" this time by French consultants. 129

At this point, it is important to mention that the 1970s was a decade were aggressive violence against the population of informal settlements became a common practice. In Egypt it reached its peak in the January 1977 riots. "Slum clearance" was presented as the means to fight crime. Slums were considered places of high criminal activity due to the lack of surveillance and regulation by the state. They were out of the "panopticon" system of supervision that was established during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sometimes slums were even associated with Communist activity. <sup>130</sup>

With the default debt situation and thus the deliberately constant dependency from the United States, the new "liberal" capitalistic policies could not have had any other outcome than transforming Egypt into a U.S market, exploding unemployment, poverty and social inequality and hence allowing the United states to regulate all socio-politico-economic activity in the surrounding environment.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 130-131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 110–11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Mitchell, 240.



Figure 3. Greater Cairo Region 2018. Drawing made by the author.

# IV. CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM – CAPITALISM OF GENERALIZED MONOPOLIES (FROM 1990S TO NOWADAYS)

According to Samir Amin, "contemporary capitalism is a capitalism of generalized monopolies". These monopolies have established a "control network" that allows them to regulate everybody else involved in the market from large to small scale enterprises and thus all systems of production. These "generalized monopolies" are the means for the countries of the Triad to ensure the centralization of capital accumulation on a global scale. Globalization is just another name of imposing capitalism, or in other words the new form of Imperialism that developed during the 1980s and 1990s. <sup>132</sup> In the previous chapter, there was a shift from state control to market control of all aspects of urban and rural life from Nasser's regime to that Saddat's. In this updated version of the system, control is distributed among the banks of the Triad while the "market" works as the field to develop their "financialization" strategy. <sup>133</sup> The "strategy of financialized monopolies" feeds from the default debt situation; the more bodies such as the World Bank, IMF and USAID try to improve the situation by imposing austerity policies, the greater the increase of the debt. In Egypt, this system materialized and took its final form in the transition between Saddat's and Mubarak's presidency during which most of the "liberal" policies either continued or were then implemented for the first time, including planning proposals. <sup>134</sup>

## Muhammad Hosni El Sayed Mubarak's Presidency (1981-2011)

The "Third Greater Cairo Master Plan 1981" execution entailed various conflicts. The lack of systematic supervision from one particular organization, was perhaps the most important. Different administration bodies were involved in the planning practice, aiming at expressing different interests. In spite of the various attempts to decentralize power, the Central government had total control and thus could compete against locally formed decisions in case it judged they interfered with their national policy, and thus could compromise its control over prices in the housing market of the new cities. Evidently, people's interests were not prioritized nor was the real cause for such developments as they were portraying. <sup>135</sup>

The new plan was better articulated and pointing attention towards the transportation system. The result was the construction of forty-five bridges and viaducts as well as Cairo's first underground line (1988) and mega-tunnel sewerage. Funding for this projects came from the USAID and various EECs, who willingly, focused on the transportation system and the construction of the "Ring Road Project" which increased

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Amin, 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> Amin, 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 141.

profitability in the surrounding land, leading back to point zero. The first phase of this masterplan (1979-1989) concluded with a demographic pressure release in the Greater Cairo equal to its population growth in seventy days. <sup>136</sup>

By 1989, only three Cities had developed, with Sadat City and the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan being under construction for more than a decade. In addition, three "satellite cities" had progressed including the 6<sup>th</sup> of October and the 15th of May that were already welcoming people. The delayed population attraction due to the construction of infrastructure which was preferred by the State as opposed to investments in education, health care or housing, as well as the slow pace of the construction itself, show that these developments were not that urgent in the eyes of the Mubarak's government or capitalist elite's that interfere in the decision making. Furthermore, the extreme construction works that were required so as to provide water, power or simply access through road networks to this settlements implied the arbitrary way in which their location was chosen. 137 This arbitrariness was first presented by M. Aly in his study "Away from the Circle". What Aly observed was the in the Nile Valley where more than 50% of the Egyptian population was based, the majority of the various settlements (villages or towns) where developed along the axis of the Cairo-Alexandria highway which preceded them. Consequently, by prioritizing infrastructure and executing such projects independently from their future urban agglomerations the idea of "decentralization" was absolutely utopian. Similarly, if somebody draws a circle of a 180-km radius from the Greater Cairo Region, he will discover that all the new cities and communities that developed from Nasser's era up to Mubarak's are within this circle, encompassing almost 77% of the country's population. <sup>138</sup>

Furthermore, the delayed construction of the new cities, as well as the fact that they were financed solely by the government, on the contrary to the original plan, which was borrowing constantly from the IMF and World Bank, increased the value and renting prices of the new properties, making low-class communities unable to relocate. Subsequently, "the vicious circle of dwelling without inhabitants and of inhabitants without dwellings already noticed in the old centres is reproduced in the new cities". Besides the new cities, major housing programmes were developed in the surrounding desert-periphery by authorities like the Governorate, the Police or the Defence Ministry, which the Ministry of Development was trying to incorporate into its own "New Settlement Programme" dedicated to low-income housing as part of the "Third Greater Cairo Master Plan". The "new settlements" were distributed around the Greater Cairo region so as to impugn self-urbanization that was already spreading. 140

In 1990, the Egyptian economy was under severe recession; "trapped" under Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) induced by the World Bank and the IMF to ensure the payment of the Egyptian debt and move

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 136.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> In Sadat City for instance 341 km of roads provided services to 5,000 inhabitants.

Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 136.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 138.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World, 132.

towards "economic restructuring". It should be noted here, that a significant part of those loans was spent on eradication attempts of the native population from their informal settlements, executed along with the World bank, particularly in those areas close to the Nile Valley were human agglomerations were obstructing the high profitability of tourism activity. The policies induced further privatization of public assets or as architect Khaled Adham says "the selling-off" of desert land around Cairo to private developers. [41] Slum eradication was also part of Mubarak's "liberal" policy to acquire control over previously public land and sell it to private individuals that would invest to alter the face of Egypt. The intended export boom was converted to a building boom that ensured the domination of the real estate by now the third largest sector in Egypt. [42] Military officials were the means for realizing such goals, with the Muslim Brotherhood being at the heart of the events, spreading the new culture of fear as well as the new culture of consumerism in the process of its new military urbanism. In 1997, a presidential declaration gave control over all non-agricultural land, close to the 90% of the country to the military. Downtown Cairo transformed into a military zone dominated by walled plots, watchtowers and surveillance systems. [43]

At the turn of the century, the demographic growth that metropolises such as Cairo were experiencing became a global issue.<sup>144</sup> In particular, Greater Cairo sheltered approximately 15 million people out of the 67 million accounting for the country's total population.<sup>145</sup> The majority of this population, lives in the seventy-eight informal settlement areas that lack access to public infrastructure. Additionally, with public transport being unable to provide services to such a population, private transportation has increased dramatically, causing unprecedent traffic concertation as well as increased pollution. In fact, Cairo is considered one of the most polluted metropolises in the world.<sup>146</sup>

According to David Sims' "Urban Slums Report: The Case of Cairo", there are four distinct types of informal settlements in Cairo alone. The most common is that located on former fertile agricultural land prompted by Nasser's policy-making. The second type is informal development on former desert-land which corresponds to "private residential building", self-made constructions through the process of "hand claim" that even though are considered illegal, their residents have gained some rights over the property "ownership". The last two are found in the old city of Cairo; the "Deteriorate Historic Core" such as Darb el Ahmar and the "Deteriorate Urban Pockets" which are the result of Mubarak's liberal policies. Similarly to the increase in the formal private transport, there was a tremendous increase in informal transportation. The number of "service microbuses" exploded from 14,000 to 60,000 during just the first half of 1990s. 148

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 87–88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 272–303.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Elshahed, 'From Tahrir Square to Emaar Square'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Cairo's population was the largest regarding other metropolises both in Africa and the Middle East.

<sup>145</sup> Sims, 'Urban Slums Reports: The Case of Cairo, Egypt', 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Abou El-Ela, 'Cultural Globalization and Changes in the Urban Form of Metropolis Cities, The Case of Cairo', 5–10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Sims, 'Urban Slums Reports: The Case of Cairo, Egypt', 4–7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Bayat and Denis, 'Who Is Afraid of Ashwaiyyat?', 193.

Furthermore, the military zones were now under the process of becoming the world's most luxurious zones. 149 The "walled plots" became a new type of "walled village" as the "izba" or other housing complexes of the previous period. In both cases, forms of enclosure were establish so to confine the local population, either in or out. 150 Emerging private gated cities or communities for the upper-class society such Al-Rihab, New Cairo, or Dreamland dominated the scenery. These developments, subsequent effect of Mubarak's liberal policies and "selling-off" of state land, further enhanced the notorious image of the "ashwaityaat" as centres of extreme form of poverty and criminality but most importantly, they extended the polarization among the population of the country. The duality that during Khedive Ismai'l's modernization policy was expressed physically in the image of the city of Cairo, was now spreading all over the country, in the tangible and intangible aspects of Egyptian life. Mubarak managed in only 20 years to establish an unpreceded form of urban segregation, by producing a form of "national" urbanism "characterized by closure - or the "surrounding-wall" paradigm – it is not a shared space rather it produces outsiders", where the needs of the people or their right to the city as David Harvey suggests is sacrificed for the beautification and entertainment of an upper-class dominated by consumerism, servicing the "generalized monopolies" of the Triad. 151 The paradox of capitalist-orientated polices accompanied by the paradox of the housing shortage, when for more than 100 years Egypt has been a construction site, yet still the majority of the population does not have access to "proper" housing while half of the buildings are empty and new are being constantly constructed. 152

"Contemporary capitalism's preferred political system, henceforward is plutocracy" and in the case of Egypt it established it roots during Nasser's regime and his strategy of "de-politicization" of society. 153 From the absence of any kind of political debate, imposed by the government, we move to an era of "pointless" debate since the political manifesto of the different parties is irrelevant henceforth, as they act constantly as servants of "generalized-monopoly capitalism". 154 The new system transformed the civilian into a plain consumer, collective thinking retreated in the face of individualism and the polarization of the Egyptian society, between those who afford the strategies of the ruling class and those who are becoming impoverished was unavoidable. 155 During Mubarak's regime, public spaces were gated, supervised and controlled by military forces while public gatherings were considered illegal. 156 Both Sadat and Mubarak managed to pull apart the country's productive system, and to replace it with one, completely incoherent, dominated exclusively by the profitability of private enterprises, subcontractors of the imperialist monopolies. 157

<sup>149</sup> For instance, the traditional Egyptian hotels had to be replaced by hotel complexes that offered a quality of tourism comparable to that in South France, with a number of restaurants and dining rooms, shopping malls, swimming pools even golf courts.

<sup>150</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 197–99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Bayat and Denis, 'Who Is Afraid of Ashwaiyyat?', 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Amin, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Amin, 29.

<sup>156</sup> Lindsey, 'The Anti-Cairo'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Amin, *The Implosion of Capitalism*, 59.

Last but not least, characteristic of this new system, especially in the case of slum eradication, was the deployment of "para-religious" organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Both Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak embraced the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>158</sup> to accompany their attempt to address the social and economic issues in Egypt.<sup>159</sup> The "employment" of "para-ethnic and para-religious" cultural perspectives is a common approach in the South to prolong the "domination of comprador blocs". Subsequently, a form of "pale fascism" spread all over the Egypt, reducing its "democratic" constitution, with catastrophic consequences in education, to a dictatorship legitimized by the national embracement of such religious or ethnic movements. Given the absence of any other institution that could alleviate the pain of the poor masses, religion provided them with a sense of belonging, a national feeling as opposed to the feeling of abandonment by the state, underlining the worst possible face of the new capitalist-imperialist system. <sup>160</sup> In the case of Egypt, such "destruction" and confusion around the legitimacy of Islam was supported both by the Gulf states and the US through the provision of small loans. Clearly not interested in an actual development in Egypt, rather the continuation of the established "lumpen-development" which ensured their profits and domination. <sup>161</sup> Moreover, it offered the US the best excuse for intervening systematically on the occasion of denouncing extreme acts of violence and thus legitimizing its military invasions as "wars against terrorism".

Based on the context, the rebirth of the opposition that Nasser's coup d'état, hypnotized, was unavoidable. Worker strikes in 2007, the formation of protest groups such as "Kefaya" and "April 6 Movement", led gradually to the January 25, 2011 "Revolution", the eighteen-day occupation of Tahrir Square and the end of Mubarak's presidency. 162 The quotation marks in the revolution do not want to undermine such resistance initiatives, however, the continuation of the same kind of policies henceforth, in Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's current presidency, and the construction of the new "administrative capital" to the East of Cairo, along with new mega-blocks for housing that does not serve anyone, underline the fact that their realistic effect and contribution to the required or hoped change is limited and unable to understand the failure of capitalism and imperialism in all its dimensions as a system. The United States' project of military urbanism, which is essential to guarantee the success of present-day globalization, the "preventive" wars waged to ensure its effectiveness are already visibly registered as political failures. The economic and social project which aims at providing a strong position to capital accumulation is interpreted as neoliberal or addressed to the needs of the people only by its own designers. In reality it ensures the optimum profitability, disregarding all kinds of social and political risks for the population of the planet, for the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, WTO, the Triad etc. 163

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> From their perspective, the Muslim Brotherhood supported the interests of the rural rich as well as those of the urban compradors, so as to ensure that the United States would continue to use them as intermediaries in their policies. Amin and Kenz, *Europe and the Arab World*, 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> Amin, *The Implosion of Capitalism*, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Amin, From Capitalism to Civilization - Reconstructing the Socialist Perspective, 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Amin and Kenz, Europe and the Arab World, 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> Amin, The Implosion of Capitalism, 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Amin, From Capitalism to Civilization - Reconstructing the Socialist Perspective, 14.

# V. CONCLUSION: TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SOCIALISM – THE ONLY WAY TOWARDS SOCIAL CHANGE

To conclude, during this period that was under investigation, with all the different motives behind the state, government, private individuals, even the population's support towards such practices of westernization, modernization or privatization in the current phase of the capitalistic system the outcome was to convert the country's image, as intended by the world Exhibitions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to nevertheless "surfaces and enclosures that could be opened, closed, extended, mastered and improved". Quoting the geographer Timothy Mitchell, "Following Marx, it is possible to say that turning labour into a commodity marked a violent act of alienation in which human life, a living force, was reduced to the status of a thing. Following Lefebvre, it is possible to make a parallel argument about land. The "production of space", as Lefebvre termed the transformation of landscape into object, levelled the "natural and sacred contours" of the landscape under the exchange values and sign systems of capital." 164

The various forms and adaptations on capitalism and imperialism throughout the history of Cairo offers valuable insight in understanding that the only way that humankind can move forward and consequently can address the vast and catastrophic social and political issues of our times is by rejecting the system in its totality and not by the implementation of reformed policies that in practice represent the same profits. Colonial imperialism and industrialization where the first step towards the domination of Capitalism. Later on, the capitalist-nationalist regimes further exacerbated the problem with the introduction and development of informal settlement and last but not least the current phase of Military Urbanism is the current neo-liberal capitalist approach that attempts to promote the monopolistic globalization target of the dominant centres. For more than a hundred years Cairo has been fighting with "catching-up" oriented policies that have only manage to increase their catastrophic consequences, which have been described by Mike Davis as the means of a transition to a planet of Slums. The polarization between centres and periphery is just increasing and the social and urban polarization of Cairo affects the majority of an abandoned population.

It is thus evident that the only way to move forward requires a shift in perspective to the Twenty-first century socialism alternative. This shift as expressed by Samir Amin requires the radicalization of our goals and fights and their conjunction with diversity and coherent, strategic action plan which imply political vision and definition of both immediate and long-term ambitions. Consequently, in terms of urban space there should be a shift towards the old city of Cairo instead of the blank deserted regions. The "radicalization of struggles" does not refer to the radicalization of the discourse but rather to the substitution of the prevailing system with alternative projects with the construction of social hegemonies between the various social classes, willing to make compromises rather than containing the social hegemonies currently in place, established by the imperialist classes of the colonizers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Mitchell, Rule of Experts, 79.

People's or Organizations' initiatives such as the "TADAMUN" or "Madd Platform" need to be further supported by individuals, local administration and governance so as to move beyond a vague "coordination" and documentation of the issues and approaches to the level of exchanging viewpoints but instead strive for the "politicization" of fragmented movements. Only in such a way can they fight for what they advocate such as the democratization of local government and high modernist planning or the drastic involvement of the population and the different social classes. <sup>165</sup> Only democratization associated with social progress and the claim of people's sovereignty can strive for negotiations in the form of globalization that is relieved from capitalism and imperialism. <sup>166</sup>

Moreover, it is clear that from the analysis of the different manifestations of capitalism and imperialism that the people of Egypt and generally the people of the South periphery, such as people of Asia and Africa, are not yet ready to fight for this new form of democracy that is needed. On one hand, the form of informal urbanization that has been growing so as to relieve the social and political struggles of Cairo, even though, it has its roots in David Harvey's discourse of the right to the City is unable to tackle the multifaceted issues. A significant amount of the population is still lacking access to basic resources such as water and food which cannot be guaranteed unless there is strategic planning of the required infrastructure. Therefore the current revolutionary approach of DIY is not sufficient. In addition, people often prefer to join non-democratic parareligious/ethnic movements which is also reasonable if one considers the stagnation of current form of urban life and literacy level in Cairo. Drastic reforms to the education and health systems are necessary so as to avoid the pitfalls of contemporary autism and racial discrimination that only facilitates the incentives of the oligopolies and the expansion of capitalist imperialism. <sup>167</sup> Last but not least, the social classes in power, do not show any sign of willingness for transformation and change instead they are trying to use globalization to work in their favour and thus they keep implementing and agreeing on high-modernist, imperialist policies rather than fighting against capitalism. <sup>168</sup> Consequently, the gap of social inequality can only keep increasing along with its physical embodiment in urban space.

It is important to understand, as Amin has clearly expressed that Democracy cannot be exported from Europe neither be imposed by the United States as the various organizations in the North, such as the WTO, World Bank and IMF keep arguing. It can only be achieved as the end-product of the initiatives, actions and struggles of the people of Cairo, or more broadly of the South themselves. In other words, it has to follow the same process it did in Europe during the Enlightenment. Consequently, this implies a deepening of the debate regarding the democratization of societies and thus requires professionals such as engineers, architects, planners, doctors etc., who work along with people, or at least theoretically should work with people, and thus

<sup>165 &#</sup>x27;TADAMUN'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Amin, From Capitalism to Civilization - Reconstructing the Socialist Perspective, 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Amin, 15.

<sup>168</sup> Amin, 20.

can understand their needs and act as active agents in this debate so as for solutions to arose from the people themselves. 169

Such specificity, implies that first and foremost, convergence needs to be achieved on a national level. Only this way can we strive for social and political balance of forces. Changes, alliances and common strategy implementations can serve also in a regional level where motives and interests are more direct and can influence military collisions however on global level such initiatives do not provide significant results rather they can be seen as additional aid to the facilitate national decision making. National, regional and global communication can thus lead to the creation of coherent front of the countries of the South that will dominate the transition to this new world system that will escape imperialism domination but at the same time it will use knowledge from important transformations in the societies of the North centres to understand the complications and possible pitfalls of this new attempt. <sup>170</sup>

Finally, It is along this line, that the anti-imperialist blocs in other parts of the world particularly in Europe where polarization is already on the verge of requiring transformation can help to boost people's sense of internationalism and thus move towards a more socially mindful and equal way of communicating and cooperating and sharing natural resources and cultural and scientific heritage. <sup>171</sup>

The understanding of the development of capitalism throughout history in a country such as Egypt and its physical embodiment in terms of urban space as in the case of Cairo provides insight on the consequences of capital accumulation and such policies for both hemispheres. This "representative democracy" that is being developed in Cairo the last few decades its already in crisis in the capitalist western countries. Revolutionary approaches against it are already happening but they received the usual opposition from the main economic centres thus are in need of a similar radical criticism towards the current discourse regarding human right, non-political civil society, totalitarianism etc. The establishment of such a conjunction in the diversity of the struggles can help to return to return to the idea of universalism that post-modernity and globalized apartheid have been rejecting. Furthermore, it can be used as the means to oppose the US military policy which is the number one aspect of stabilizing the geopolitics in the area. <sup>172</sup>

In his introduction in the Book "From Capitalism to Civilization: Reconstructing the Socialist Perspective", Amin states that "Capitalism as it exists today is a historical phenomenon." and only by abolishing our "still-present heritage" our vision, hope for a better world can be something more than imagination. <sup>173</sup> Personally, I believe that unless we truly understand our actions, choices and incentives all important events that lead us to this very moment of behaving as agents of imperialism with catastrophic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Amin, 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> Amin, 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Amin, 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Amin, 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Amin, 2.

consequences, can we achieve real change. Only if we embrace our heritage, but our true heritage and not its glorifying, misleading illusion that we have created, can we talk about a new world from a social perspective.

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